

**LWYSA**  
**Training Program**  
**Book 10**  
**Conditioning Games**  
**for**  
**Soccer Practice**



**Written by Jimmy Gabriel**

**Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association**  
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# **WELCOME TO THE LAKE WASHINGTON YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION FAMILY OF PROGRAMS**

In 1967, a group of individuals got together and formed an Association for our youth, centered around the game of soccer, which has endured and developed the following organizational philosophy.

## **VISION**

To be recognized by our membership and soccer community as a world-class provider of youth soccer services.

## **MISSION**

To promote the game of soccer and to provide opportunities for all youth under the age of nineteen who register with us, to play affiliated soccer at a level commensurate with ability and interest. We will emphasize the development of self-esteem, good sportsmanship, fitness, achievement, teamwork and skill through the playing of the game; and provide educational opportunities to further develop all players, coaches, referees and administrators.

The Vision and Mission statements above are our creed. Following in this thought, the Association takes great pride in its approach of teaching life's lessons to our youth. This environment is intended to create an enjoyable soccer experience as well as develop young athletes.

Many individuals have contributed to the success of the Association Programs over the years. To all those individuals, the Association is truly grateful for the contributions and sacrifices they made in behalf of our youth.

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# Conditioning Games for Soccer Practice

## Introduction

Whenever I read a coaching book I come away with the feeling that during my reading I have come to know that coach and what makes him tick. Most of the books I've read have been based on a particular coach's method of coaching and managing players. After all we read the book to get to know what makes that coach tick and also to find out what in the coaches opinion has brought the team success.

As we read their story we are often inspired by their motivational expertise, the simplicity of their tactical thinking and the way they can hold everything together in even the toughest of circumstances. We may adopt some of these methods in the hope that we too can achieve the success that they have acquired in their illustrious careers. Well I'm sorry but you won't be getting any of these 'Magic Formula' in this book not unless you believe that the 'Magic Formula' lies in playing the game.

This book is about teaching soccer players to improve their playing ability by exposing them to the game during practice sessions. From a coaching stand point that doesn't sound brilliant and it's not but it does make sense especially if you've been playing, coaching and studying this game as long as I have.

In this book I have placed the games in groups of four similar types and have managed to come up with ten different groups of games. Each group of games is based on a certain theme such as Overload Possession, Shooting or Positional Games. In each game I have included rules along with coaching points for offense and defense and a diagram of the game in an attempt to allow the coach to understand the coaching points and the set up of each game.

The last two chapters explain how to arrange different coaching sessions using this book, for example, knowing how to pick a selection of games for a 'defensive session'. I then explain how I would arrange a 'midfield session' then an 'attacking session' before finishing with a 'balanced session' that includes a bit of offense, midfield and defense. The last chapter shows the ways that you can invent your own games by explaining the many different and varied methods of game conditioning that there are.

Last but not least I invite you to use the space at the back of the book to write down your own favorite game and to send it back to me so that I can select the best games and share them with others.

I wrote this book to encourage coaches everywhere to expose their players to the game of soccer and by so doing allow them to learn from soccer's greatest teacher the 'Game' itself.

## Overload Possession Games

In my career as a professional player I was fortunate enough to travel on tours to many foreign Countries where I played against local select teams and other touring teams who had been invited to play in that country. Quite often another foreign team would be scheduled to practice on a field right after our team had finished and I would take time to watch the players during their warm up. Almost always the team would warm up by having a group of players form a possession circle with two defending players positioned in the middle. When either defender succeeded in touching the ball or forced a possession player to commit an error the two defenders changed places with the player who had made the error and his pre-nominated buddy.

I must admit that I enjoyed watching foreign teams play this game admiring the wonderful one or two-touch ball control the players showed while performing this exercise. I also noticed that the players appeared at times to be having a great deal of fun testing their teammates ball skills by passing the ball a bit too hard or by making it spin so much that a first touch pass could become an extremely difficult accomplishment. In particular I remember that I enjoyed watching the Middle European or South American teams play this game because of the wonderful touch and timing they showed in their ball control and passing skills. With those players it didn't seem to matter whether the ball was passed on the ground or in the air the receiving player always appeared to have the skill to control and pass the ball instantly.

When I decided to write this book I thought that several versions of these Overload Possession Games would be a nice way to start the book just as I believe that it is a nice way to start any practice session. Most recently I have acquired a U'12 boy's team to coach and I have exposed them to the 'Overload' warm up routine on several occasions before games. They appear to enjoy the game while warming up their control and passing techniques and that suits me fine because I want those kids to start their practice having fun as there will be plenty of time to get serious later.

From the young players to the older professionals in both men's and women's soccer this game is an excellent way to start the soccer practice. Warming up technical and tactical skills is just as important as warming up the physical muscles and this simple game prepares the players to make technically clean and tactically aware plays from the get go. I only wish that the teams I played for had adopted this game as a warm up exercise

## Overload Possession

### Game one

### One touch possession game

Size of Practice Area

15 yards long by 10 yards wide

Number of Players

Players form pairs  
6 to 8 possession players and 2 defenders

Game Rules

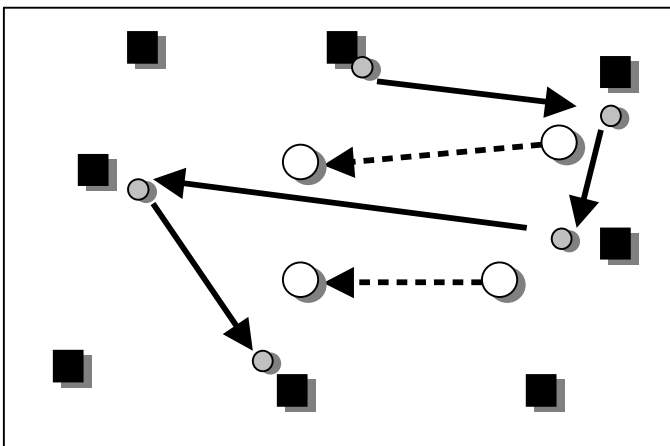
Possession players are limited to one touch  
The defenders must combine to either get a touch of the ball or force the possession players into an error  
When a possession player commits an error that player and partner change roles with the defending pair

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Being on the alert to deliver accurate first touch passes

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Working together to put pressure on the ball  
Supporting the player putting pressure on the ball  
Communicating with each other



## Overload Possession

### Game Two

**One possession player is positioned between the two defenders**

Size of Practice Area

15 yards long by 10 yards wide

Number of Players

6 to 8 possession players and two defenders

Game Rules

Players form pairs

Possession players must touch the ball twice

One possession player must stay in the middle of the area between the two defenders

Defenders combine to get a touch of the ball or to force the possession team into an error

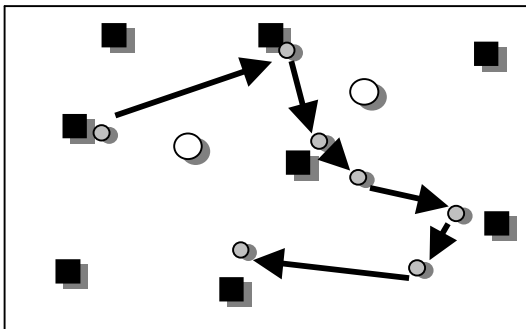
When a possession player commits an error that player and partner change roles with the defending pair

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Quick foot skills to control the ball and pass it on  
Using the middle possession player to vary the passing rhythm

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Combing together to put pressure on the ball



## Overload Possession

### Game Three

Size of Practice Area

Number of Players

Game Rules

Coaching Points

[Offensive]

Coaching Points

[Defensive]

### Split team game

Each area should measure 15 yards long and 10 yards wide

Two teams of eight players

Six players on one team versus two defenders from the other team

The six players attempt to retain possession of the ball inside their grid using one touch play

The two defenders attempt to touch the ball or pressure the possession team into making an error

The defenders count the number of errors they have forced on the opponents

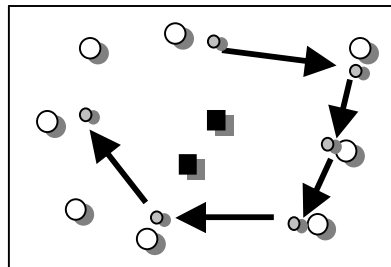
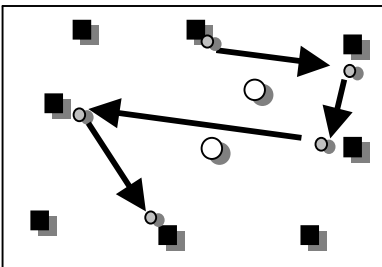
The defenders work 60 second sessions then change with two other teammates

Retaining ball possession through passing accuracy, touch and timing

Two players joining forces to apply pressure on the ball

Defensive positioning of the first defender  
Support positioning of the second defender

Communication from the supporting player to the player closing the ball





## Three Team Games

I began designing these games when I was coaching the Everton Reserve team during my seven-year spell with Everton in the 90's. My reason for doing so was to get the younger players to be more comfortable when possessing the ball because of the variety of passing options these games presented to them.

As I view the games from the 2002 World Cup and see the clean passing and control matched with explosive dribbling technique I think back to the time when I coached the Everton Reserves and the hours we spent together polishing up their technical ability by playing these games. Obviously some players were more polished than others but I do believe that any failure on their part to step up to the senior level had little to do with the lack of technical quality in their game.

Everyone who coaches soccer at a reasonably high level knows the importance of possessing the ball from back to front in order to carry the attack forward under control.

It is also clear to a coach that as the team possesses the ball forward they cannot rely solely on North to South direct passing moves and that at certain times must switch the point of attack from East to West and vice versa to retain the flow of the forward movement. It is this type of forward to back and side-to-side passing movements that we seek to perfect in our Two versus One Ratio Games. However these games are not just about possessing the ball because they can also be used to provide a unique type of challenge for the defending players who are faced with this overload of opposing players.

One of my favorite games in this series is a simple 8 v 4 game in a tight area that allows the defending team to present a diamond style defending shape in order to get the touch needed to enable them to become part of the combined possession teams. Of course as in the 'Overload Possession' games the rule is that the defending team need only to touch the ball or to pressure a possession player to pass out of bounds to force an interchange of the defending and possession team that made the error.

This game presents a huge challenge to both the possession teams and the defending team because of the intense pressure a small but organized group of defenders can put on the ball carrier and nearest supporting players.

In my practice sessions I would introduce the 2v1 games early in the session first to give the possessors a feel of the ball and second to get the defending players to bring the aggressive atmosphere into their play.

I believe that this type of starting game sets the tone of the session and brings a realistically fast tempo of play to the training games.

My enduring wish is that these games will continue to help players to develop a "See it and Do it" type of reaction to their play-making skills, because the higher level you get to in soccer, the quicker your decision making needs to be.

## Three Team Games

### Game One

### Three team possession

Size of Practice Area

25 yards square

Number of Players

Three teams of 4 players

Game Rules

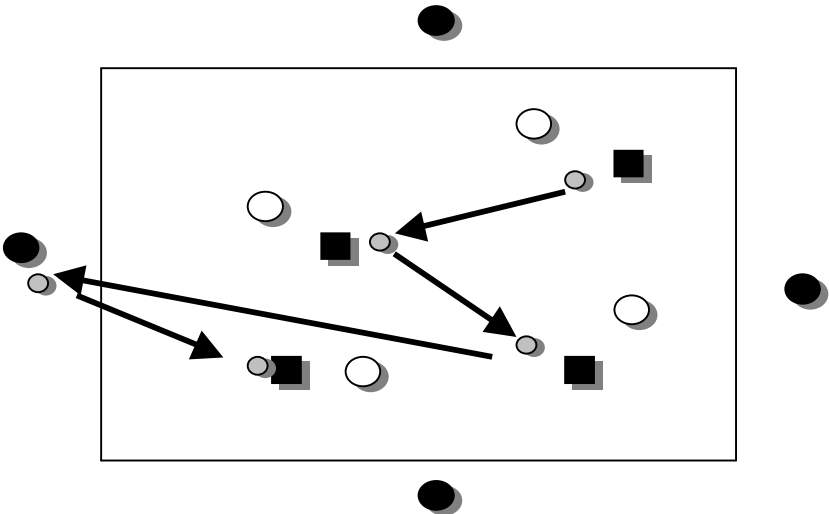
Two teams vie for ball possession while the third team supports the play from outside the area  
The players inside the playing area play all in  
The players on the outside are limited to one touch

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Deciding when to retain possession of the ball inside the playing area and when to use the players on the outside

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Combining together to put pressure on and around the ball



## Three Team Games

### Game Two

**2 teams possessing the ball while 1 team defends**

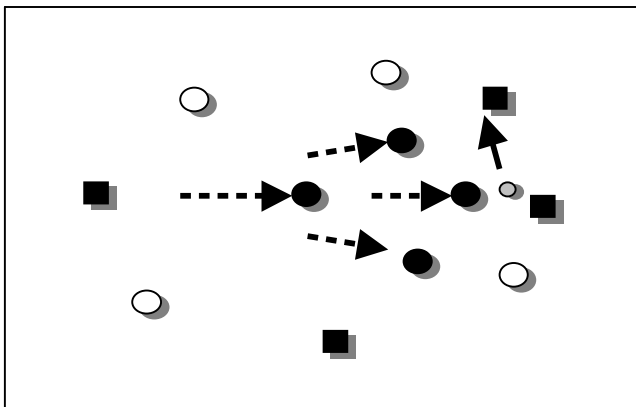
Size of Practice Area 35 yards long by 25 yards wide

Number of Players 3 teams of 4 players

Game Rules Two teams combine together to possess the ball while one team defends  
Any touch of the ball, force out or forced error by the defending team causes the team that made the error to exchange places with the defending team

Coaching Points [Offensive] To retain possession of the ball by simple passing combinations

Coaching Points [Defensive] To close the ball carrier and to support the player closing the ball carrier  
Closing the ball means getting the ball carriers eyes onto the ball and so taking away that players vision



## Three Team Games

### Game Three

Size of Practice Area

Number of Players

Game Rules

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

### Waves

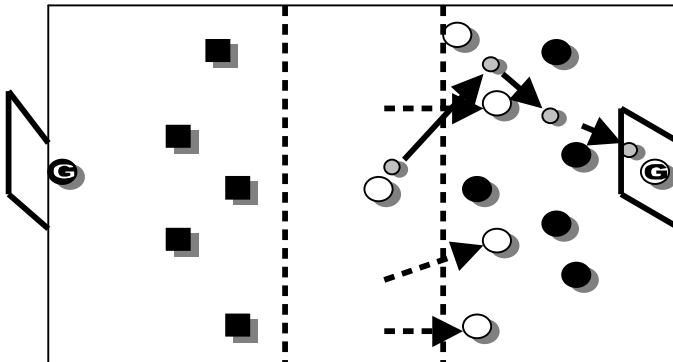
50 yards long by 40 yards wide  
A goal at either end of the pitch  
Pitch is divided into three sections  
End sections are 20 yards long and the  
middle section is 10 yards long

5 players per team plus keepers

The middle team attacks a goal  
If the attack is successful the team re-  
gathers in the middle section before  
attacking the other goal  
If the attack is unsuccessful the teams  
change roles  
The team that scores the most goals wins  
the game

Spread players across the field  
Penetrate central and wing areas

Combine as a defensive group



## Even Sided Possession Games

Most of the practice sessions I run involve at least one game of 'Even Sided Possession'. I do this because these games can be used to help the team to develop a style of play and I believe that style of play is every bit as important as any system of play might be. In fact if we look closely at some of the best teams in the World we can see that they have developed a style, system and tempo of play that when all three are working smoothly turns them into awesome soccer powers. Of these three the style of play is the most natural because it was first developed a long time ago on the streets of Europe or the beaches of South America or even more recently on the grassy playing fields of North America. The style of play reflects the 'comfort zone' of the players, the system of play is the team's 'battle plan' and the tempo of play reflects the teams 'speed and power'.

So to make our players feel comfortable we should spend some time working on their style of play and because these possession games lack goal targets they are the perfect type of games to get the job done. These games involve retaining possession of the ball on the attacking side and regaining possession of the ball on the defensive side without the need to defend a goal or to attack one. This allows the players to concentrate for a certain period of time on attempting to possess the ball in a comfortable controlled manner and when they lose possession of the ball to join forces with their teammates to concentrate solely on getting it back as quickly as possible. The purpose of the games should also be to isolate and polish a game related skill so let's look at some examples of how we can accomplish this.

To polish up our passing skills a possession game could be limited to 'one touch' only. This rule demands that the player's concentration is placed on passing the ball first touch to a teammate and because of the 'one touch' rule the player will be forced to select a target to pass to before the ball arrives. So the 'one touch' rule has immediately raised the demand on the players by calling on them to use their vision to survey their passing options before the ball arrives.

In another game the coach allows the players the choice to pass first touch or to control and pass the ball by playing a game of 'one or two touches' so that the players decide how many touches to take whenever they receive a pass. If the coach wants the players to concentrate specifically on retaining ball control the condition might be that the receiving player must 'touch the ball twice' to force that player to control the incoming pass before delivering the ball to a teammate. This way the choice is taken away from the player but the technique of first touch control is highlighted by the demands the coach puts on the game. Defensively the players could be instructed to match up with an opponent and stay with that mark so they can begin to learn the discipline involved in defensive play.

As a college coach at the University of Washington I have witnessed incoming freshmen on a yearly basis that come to us with great attacking and possession skills but are undisciplined in the area of defending and especially in the particular skill of staying with a mark. For the sake of the players who are college bound, coaches must start to educate their best players on refining their defensive skills and these skills begin with a player being able to stay with and be responsible for a particular mark.

If the coach wanted to work on the players' vision the game selected could be 'one touch and no communication' or if the practice was to include organizational work for the captains these captains would be the only two players allowed to talk on either team.

Should the coach wish to make the game more competitive then a certain amount of uninterrupted passes by one team could count as a point. Also any team creating and executing a 'wall pass' would be given a point.

So there are many different ways to make these possession games interesting to the players while also using them to polish up the players' technical and tactical skills.

Coaching and playing soccer in England and America opened my eyes to the joy players felt from engaging in rhythmic passing sequences that transferred the ball across the allotted practice area and back with the only challenge being to evade the defensive pursuits of their opponents.

I believe that joy was based in the players recognizing their own ability to keep possession of the ball in their own unique manner while denying their opponents the opportunity to strip them of the ball. That inner joy is what causes the players to keep returning to the playing field no matter how tough the practices or how discouraging the game results.

All professional coaches know that the players must have their own space at some time during the practice and that space can be found in the 'Even sided possession games'. It worked for the professional players I coached at Everton FC and believe me it will work for your players to.

## Even Sided Possession Game

### Game One

### Must touch the ball twice

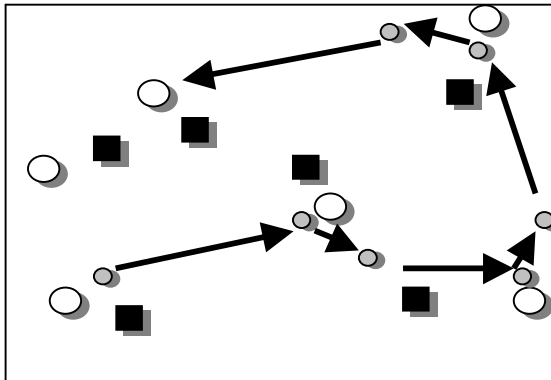
Size of Practice Area 40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players 6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules  
Players must touch the ball twice  
Once to control the ball and the other to pass it

Coaching Points  
[Offensive] Controlling the ball into space so that the pass can be made

Coaching Points  
[Defensive] Getting close enough to the receiver to make a defensive decision on the opponents first touch  
That decision should be to tackle or steal the ball or to attempt to block the passing lane



## Even Sided Possession Game

### Game Two

### Man for Man marking

Size of Practice Area

40 by 40 to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules

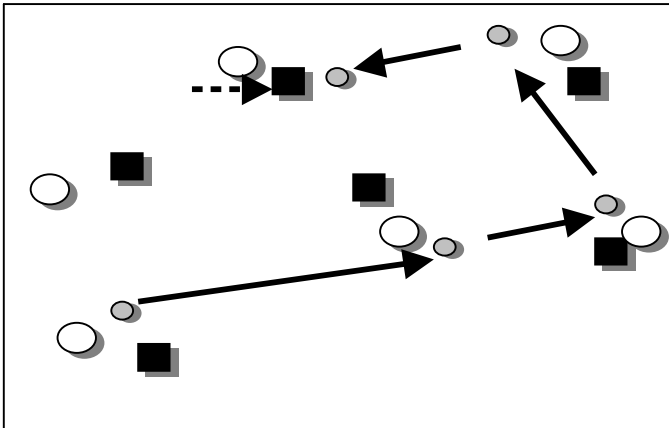
Normal soccer rules  
Players are assigned an opponent to mark when the team is on defense

Coaching Points [Offensive]

Using fake movements to try to shake off the marker and create space to gather the ball

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Showing the discipline needed to continue marking the opponent





## Even Sided Possession Game

### **Game Three**

### **One touch no communication**

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules

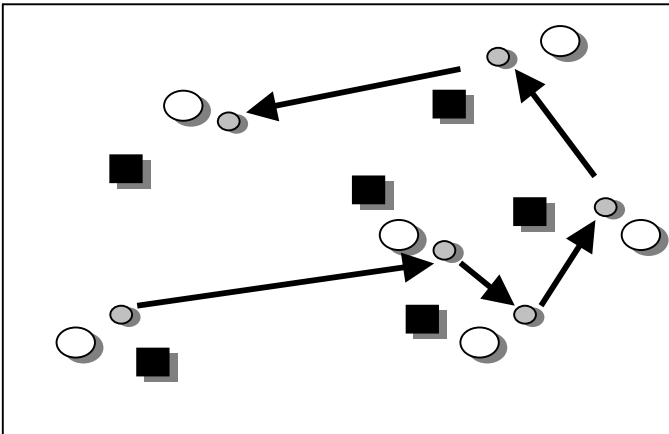
Normal soccer rules except that players are limited to one touch play and cannot communicate with each other

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Players on the possession team must continually survey their passing options before they receive the ball  
Players must move into support positions early and in view of the pass receiver

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Players on defense must pick up opponents and stay with them to put pressure on the possession team



## **End Zone Games**

I use End Zone games to work on players' ball possession while working towards a targeted end zone area. That end zone almost always measures five yards wide and can be located stretched across both ends of the field. One of the objects of these games is to create a midfield area for the players to practice their 'build-up approach' skills without having to worry about finishing off the play with a shot on goal. Unlike the possession games in the previous chapter these games do have a target to attack and defend and as the idea is to take the players step by step through the demands of the game these games represent an added demand over the possession games. This added demand calls for a team shape, formed by the positioning of players, to assist the free flow of attacking and defending plays that form the basic strategy for this type of game. Because End Zone games give the players an area to attack and defend these games call for a more positional involved transition from offense to defense and vice versa by the players than the possession games do. The team shape needed calls for more North to South and East to West coordination by the individuals in order to create balanced attacking and defending fronts. These games are also played to provide the players with the chance to learn about their team shape responsibility when attacking or defending in the midfield.

In College and High School soccer practices where coaches can call on larger player numbers to make two full teams these games should become an introductory part to a team system of play. End Zone games can provide the coach with a basic training game in which changes to the teams system of play can be made. At the U of Washington practice sessions, End Zone games have become part of the players' daily routine and have been a tremendous help to the coaches when they attempt to identify and polish a system of play or to pass information on to the players about changes to the system that they feel are necessary. Most coaches today study their opponents for the next game and often feel the need to make a change of tactics enabling their players to double team an outstanding opponent or to take advantage of the opposition's weakest link. By working on these tactical changes on the practice field the coach can make an assessment of how much the changes affect the system of play that the team uses and whether it is worthwhile to make

the adjustment or not. The End Zone game allows coaches to witness the effect changes of possession have on the ebb and flow of the midfield build up and defensive positioning without taking the team into a full scrimmage game to do so.

I don't know what I'd do without them.

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## End Zone Game

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### Game One

### Dribble into End Zone

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules

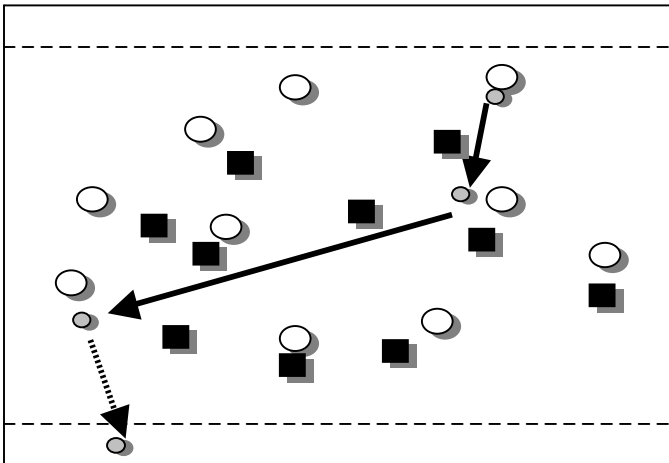
Two teams attack the opponents End Zone and defend their own  
A point is scored by dribbling the ball into the opponents End Zone  
Defenders cannot defend inside the End Zone

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Working as a team to open up a path for an attacker to dribble the ball into the opponents End Zone

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Working as a team to defend the End Zone and midfield area



## End Zone Game

### Game Two

Size of Practice Area

### Widened Field Game

35yds long by 50yds wide to half field where the end zones are wider than the field length

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules

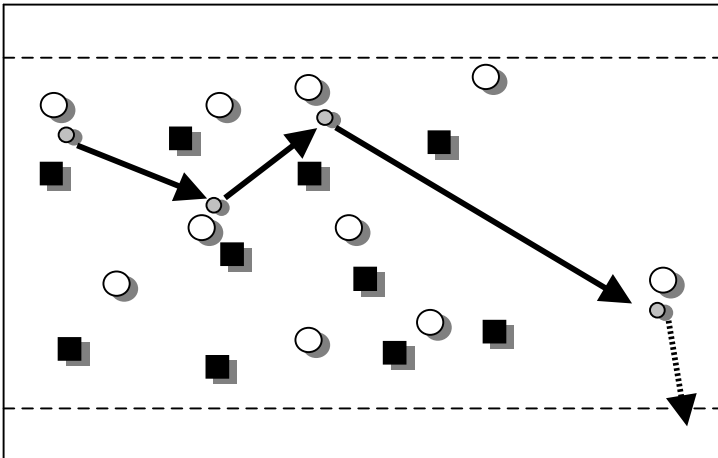
Normal End Zone game rules where the ball must be dribbled into the End Zones

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Play switching from east to west and vice versa to open up space for players to dribble quickly into End Zone

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Closing down and double teaming the ball carriers to take away dribbling opportunities  
Marking on the weak side



## End Zone Game

### Game Three

### Two ways to score

Size of Practice Area

50yds by 50yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules

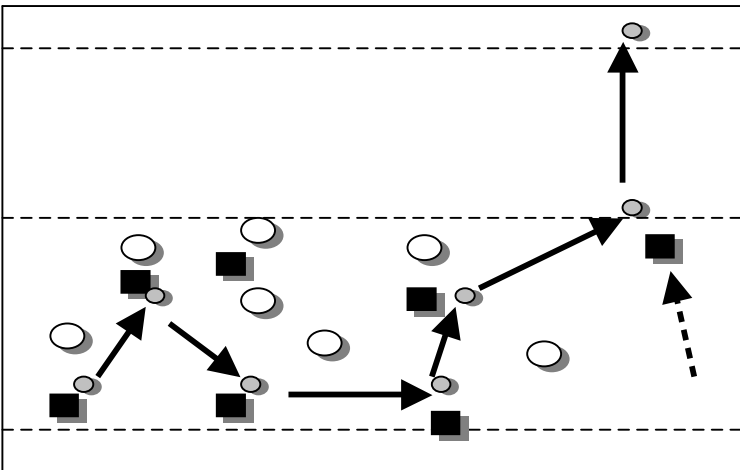
Retaining possession of the ball for seven consecutive passes in their defensive half of the field scores a point for that team  
Dribbling the ball into the opponents End Zone scores a point

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Possession the ball to draw the opponents away from their defensive area  
Taking advantage of the space left by the defenders to send penetrating passes for attacking breakaways

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Pressing to stop the attackers scoring through consecutive passing and looking for any threatening forward runs by opponents



## Small Goal and Gate Games

When I was a young lad growing up in Dundee, Scotland I used to play small goal games with my school or street buddies. All we did to create a pair of goals was to take off our jackets and place them two or three yards apart to form a goal at both ends of our chosen pitch. That pitch was either a schoolyard or a side street although on odd occasions we'd walk a few miles to a City park to play on a grass surface. It really didn't matter what surface we played on as long as the pitch was the right size for the number of players on each team and the goals were well defined whatever we used as posts. Almost always the rules were normal soccer rules except that goalkeepers could not guard the small goals and any player defending these goals could not use their hands or arms to stop a shot or header. Of course there were times when we managed to convince a couple of outfield players that they showed promise as future goalkeepers in the Scottish Premier Division [It was called the First Division in those days] and they would volunteer to play in a larger goal [six yards wide] but those times were few and far between and usually only occurred when we played in the grassy parks. In my experience very few Scottish players wanted to play in goal as we all thought that we could dribble the ball with our feet better than we could catch it with our hands. Playing a game to small goals serves a useful purpose whether the game is played by small kids on the street or by professional players during practice sessions. These games teach the players how to answer the basic tactical and technical demands of soccer while providing the players with an entertaining experience.

The other use of the small goals would be for gate targets that could be placed in different areas of the field for the purpose of giving the team on the ball a secondary target to aim for if the first target is too well defended. These types of games encourage the players to play heads up soccer so that they can take advantage of the opponent's defensive weakness. This type of approach eventually transfers itself to the eleven a side game where players are always on the look out for a defensive weakness. I saw a game in which Manchester United Captain Brian Robson exposed a rookie full back on the opposing Sunderland team by passing the ball time and time again to the United left-winger Lee Sharpe. Robson figured quite correctly that the winger was too fast and experienced for the young player and the success that Lee Sharpe had against the young defender proved him right. Sharpe danced around the young rookie for most of the first half and either scored or set up teammates to score on three occasions. The Sunderland manager subbed the young lad at half time but the damage was done as United won 3-0. The gate games teach the players to look for and to expose weaknesses in the defending teams strategy and that can be translated directly to the 11-a-side game.

## Game to Small Goals or Gates

### Game One

### Score from behind the goal

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules

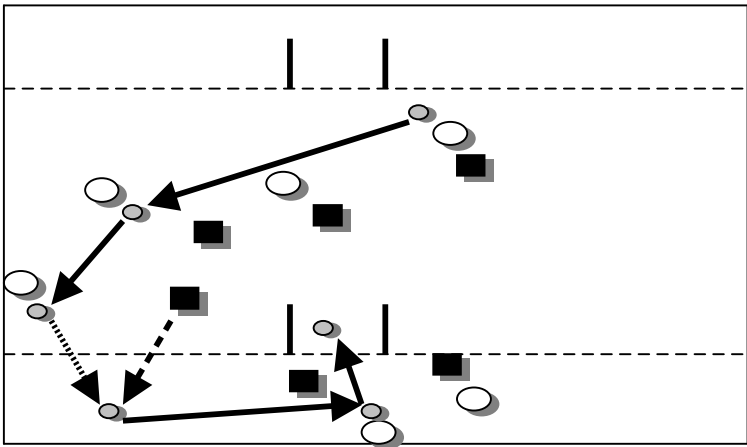
A goal is scored from behind the goal  
No goalkeeping allowed

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Forwards taking up position behind the goal to receive a pass  
Players dribbling the ball into the End Zones to cross shoot or pass the ball  
Getting players to think more about their overall positioning

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Forcing defenders to reposition themselves once the ball has been carried into their End Zone





## Game to Small Goals or Gates

### Game Two

### Attacking and Defending Two Goals

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules

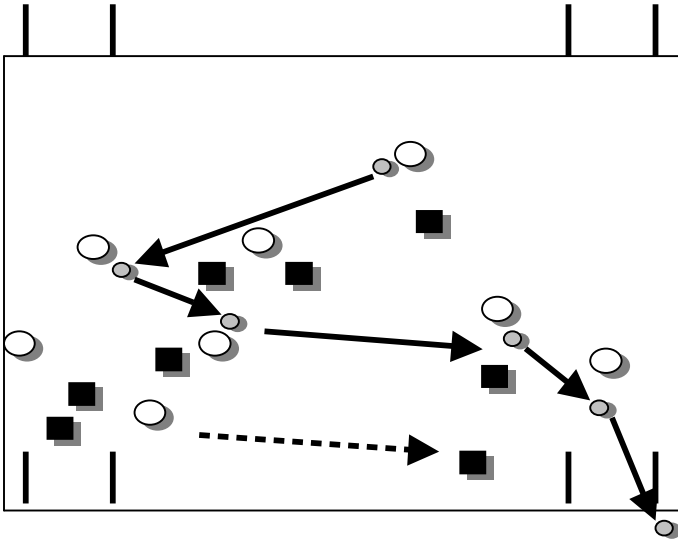
Teams defend two goals and attack two goals  
No goalkeeping allowed

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Switching the point of attack from the more heavily defended goal to the other goal

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Closing down the ball with numbers while making sure that both goals are protected  
Switching the defensive forces quickly from one goal to the other when necessary



## Game to Small Goals or Gates

### Game Three

### Four Gate Dribbling Game

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10

Game Rules

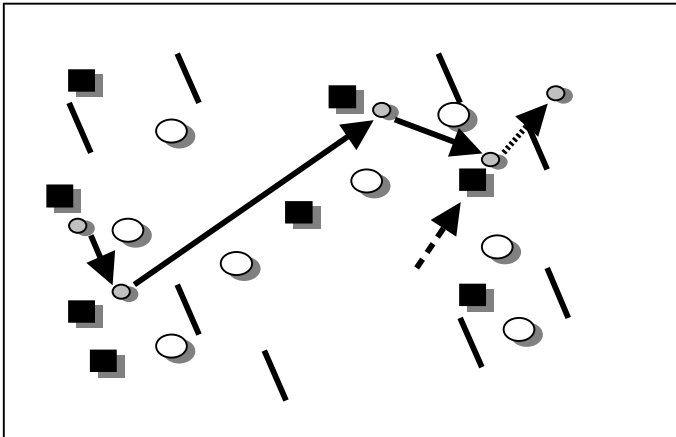
Players score a point for their team by dribbling through a gate

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Passing the ball around until an opportunity to dribble through a gate opens up  
Aggressive dribbling skills

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Putting pressure on the ball carrier while attempting to spread out to cover all gates  
This would force the attacker to dribble past a player to score



## Conditioned Games

Conditioned games are normal scrimmage games to goal that have had the rules changed by the coach to allow the players to practice a specific technical or tactical skill. I first started conditioning games to get away from coaching through drills mainly because of the negative attitudes shown by the players when they were exposed to drills for what they considered to be a long period of time. I remember thinking that I had to listen to these players because they were obviously telling me something that I needed to know if my sessions were to produce the type of soccer players I was hoping for. My first thought was to examine the drills and break them down into degrees of difficulty so that I could understand exactly what each drill did to advance the players' skill level. I found out that there were four stages of drill progression starting with a one-dimensional drill. This drill had the players concentrating on one skill whether that skill was a technical skill like passing or heading the ball or a physical movement skill like distance running or sprinting. The next step was to have a drill that combined movement with the technique practice to become a two-dimensional drill. Step three was to have a drill that served three purposes by coordinating the movement towards a goal or down a wing and therefore combining thought, movement and technical skills. The fourth step was to add opposition to the mix making the drill a four-dimensional drill and although the opposition could be a smaller or larger number the drill would begin and end with the coaches call therefore eliminating the magical fifth element that makes game playing so exciting. That fifth element is transition, which in game playing demands an immediate change of positioning and the adjustment in tactical awareness that comes from one second being on offense and the next second being on defense. I experimented with conditioned games for years looking for ways to turn the boredom of drills into the excitement of games without losing the individual practice time normally used for polishing individual skills that drills provided. It was easier than I thought because with a simple condition I found that I could allow the players to play with the gusto they desired while they worked continuously on a particular technical skill.

My time coaching at Bournemouth and Everton taught me that I should certainly encourage the players to polish their skills in their own time but that whenever I had the numbers to pick two teams that I could help them polish those skills while playing a game. During these years I learned that conditioned games would allow the players to benefit from all the challenges that came with playing the game while allowing me to polish the parts of their game that needed polishing.

## Conditioned Game

### Game One

### Man to Man Marking

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

Normal rules plus each player is defensively responsible for an opponent and vice versa  
No one else except the keeper can stop a players mark

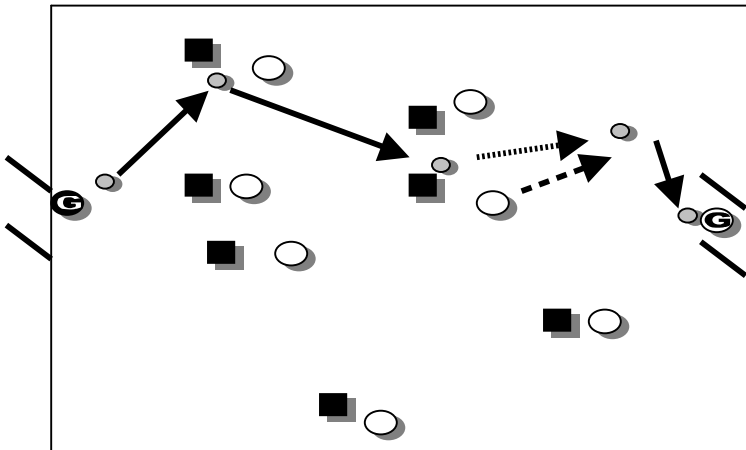
A penalty kick is awarded to the player who is illegally stopped by an ineligible opponent

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Aggressive forward runs and dribbles to lose the mark

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Tight marking position and high levels of concentration to stay focused on the mark



## Conditioned Game

### Game Two

### Two Spare Attacking Players

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10 plus 2 goalkeepers

Game Rules

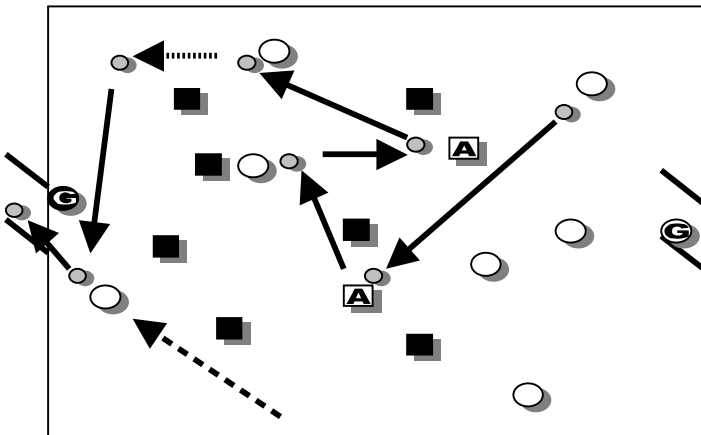
Normal soccer rules except that there are 'two free players' who always join the attacking team

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Using the numerical advantage to possess the ball into the attacking area

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Gathering the defenders together to present a solid front against the attackers numerical advantage



## Conditioned Game

### Game Three

### Heading Goals Game

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds to half field

Number of Players

6v6 to 10v10 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

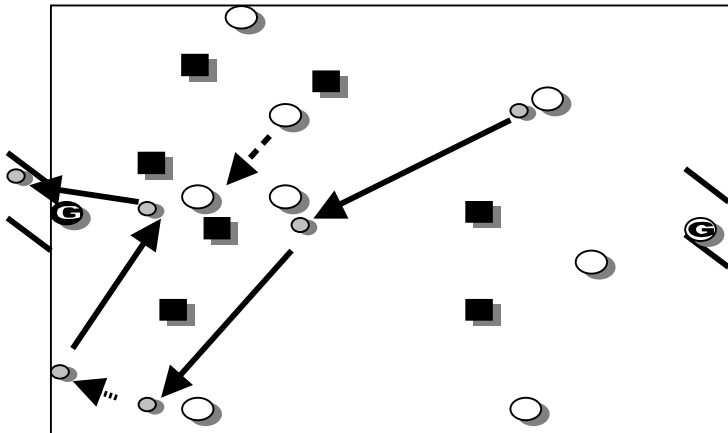
Normal soccer rules except that a goal can only be scored with a header

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Players positioning themselves wide to get a good angle for a cross  
Strikers moving into space and onto the cross  
Accurate and powerful headers on target

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Covering the wide crossing spaces  
Challenging strongly for cross balls  
Goalkeeper leaving the goal line to collect crosses



## Finishing Games

The series of shooting games that I have designed are meant to cover the whole spectrum of shot taking from longer-range shots to close up tap-ins. I began developing these types of games for younger players at Bournemouth and continued to develop and use them for the reserve players at Everton. The games are designed to allow the forwards to practice all types of shots, including rebounds, taking them forward in a step-by-step format to allow them to benefit from the gradual progression. These games can also benefit the defenders and goalkeepers by placing them in realistic defending positions rather than exposing them to the usual 1v1 drill situations. I remember when as a player at Everton I enjoyed playing forward in the small-sided games that almost always completed our practice sessions. I felt that continually putting myself in goal scoring positions could only benefit me especially when part of my on field duties was to move forward on any attacking free kicks or corner kicks to lend height and power to the attack.

On many occasions I was asked by various managers to step up from my halfback position to play forward and I usually ended up scoring a goal or two. I can only trace the ability to score goals back to the practice sessions and the hours I spent shooting and heading for goal in the realistic setting of game playing. The experiences I had as a player taught me to make shooting practice a fundamental part of all training sessions. These finishing games are designed to make the midfielders concentrate on power shooting while the center forward concentrates on following up the shots for rebounds. The ancient art of rebounding is a must for all forwards because there are easy goals to be had for a minimum amount of effort. When a teammate has a shot the center forward follows it up just in case the shot comes back off a post or cross bar or the goalkeeper coughs it up by mishandling it opening up the opportunity for the forward to score.

The games also allow the players to practice any and all types of shots from power shots to placed shots to lobbed shots to curved shots to chipped shots. Like most coaches I save my finishing session to the last part of the practice mainly because the players enjoy the session so much that any following session is a bit of a let down for them. I also believe that finishing practices are the most important ones in any session and need

to be included in every practice session. Let's be honest what can be more exciting to a player than scoring goals and by the same token what can be more important to the team effort? Make sure that your forwards and midfielders sharpen their shooting skills by practicing shooting every day.



## Finishing Game

### Game One

Size of Practice Area

Number of Players

Game Rules

Coaching Points [Offensive]

Coaching Points [Defensive]

### Long Shots and Rebounds

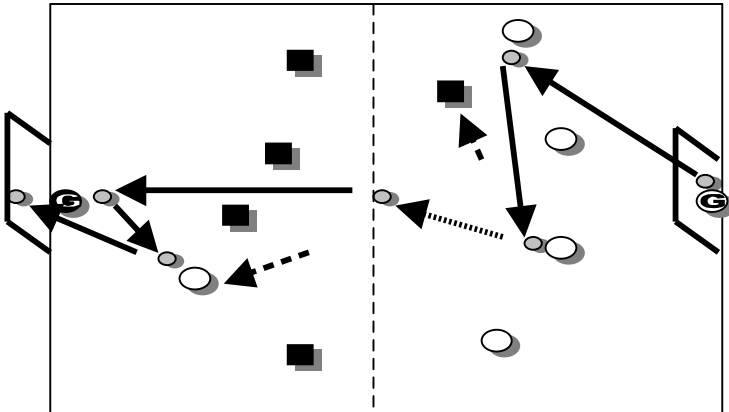
40yds by 40yds

5v5 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Each team has a Goalkeeper and 4 Defenders in one half of the field plus one forward in the other half  
Players must stay in that area  
Defenders shoot directly on goal  
Forwards score from rebounds only

Creating space for power shots  
Lone forward looking for rebounds

Attempting to block shots on goal  
Beating the lone forward to rebounds



## Finishing Game

### Game Two

**Any outfield player can score**

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds plus 2 Goals

Number of Players

5v5 plus a Goalkeeper

Game Rules

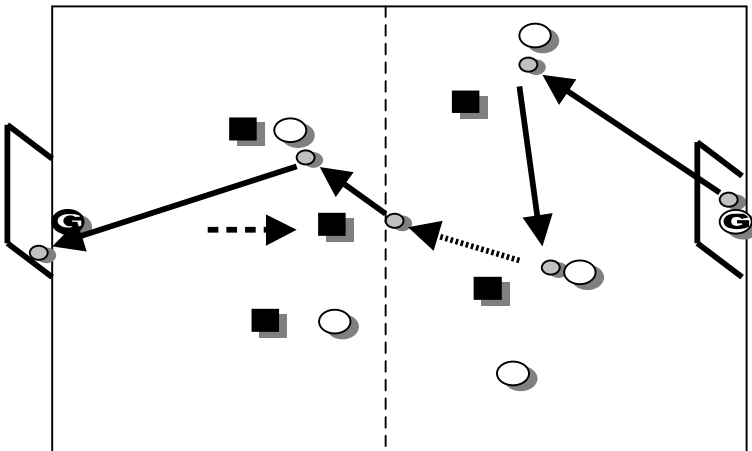
Defenders and Forwards remain in designated field area  
Players can score as normal

Coaching Points [Offensive]

Power shots from defenders  
Placed shots from forwards

Coaching Points [Defensive]

Blocking the power shots  
Marking the 2 forwards



## Finishing Game

### Game Three

### Overlapping Player

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds plus 2 Goals

Number of Players

5v5 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

Players stay in designated area except one defender who can overlap into the attacking zone

All outfield players can score

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Power shots and placed shots

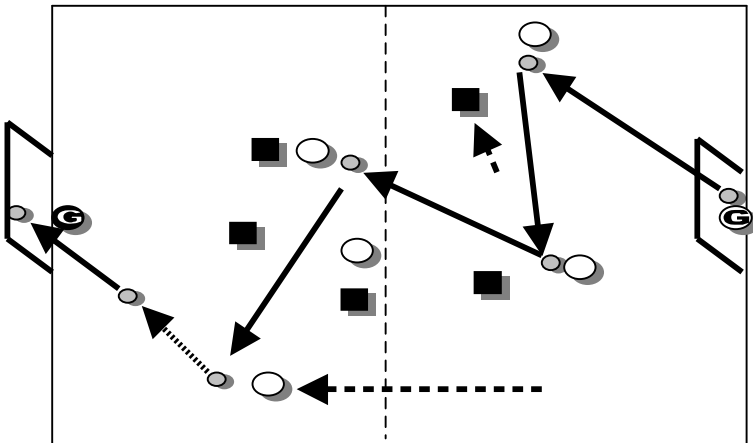
Timing of overlapping runs

Overlapping player getting back into position

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Blocking shots and man marking

Picking up overlapping player



## Wing Attack Games

Wing play has a wonderful history of creating magical goals as I discovered when watching the 1953 English FA Cup Final between Blackpool and Bolton Wanderers. Blackpool's right winger the great Sir Stanley Mathews had been to the final twice before but walked away empty handed when his team suffered defeat on both occasions. This time Sir Stanley was in no mood to walk off Wembley empty handed again so late in the game he collected the ball on the right dribbled by one defender to the inside cut by another to the outside and crossed the ball back to a supporting teammate who crashed it into the net for the winning goal. I was twelve years old at the time and I can still remember the excitement of that moment as if it happened yesterday. I remember thinking that if I was ever good enough I would play my soccer for an English team so that I would have a chance of playing in the Cup Final at Wembley Stadium which I eventually did with the 1966 FA Cup winners Everton FC.

Wing play has always been huge in soccer; from as far back as I can remember until the present day more than 50% of all goals are scored from crosses. As a young boy I used to practice my heading by throwing the ball against my bedroom wall, heading the rebound across my bed against another wall and diving across the bed to attempt a save. Of course I was imagining that I was playing for Scotland against England and I must admit that some of my goalkeeping for England was a bit suspect. All of the practicing paid off because I became a good header of the ball and the leaping ability I developed allowed me to compete in the air with players taller than I was. However crossing is not just about putting the ball in the air for players to head towards the goal it's about hitting the ball into an unguarded space so that an attacking player has a chance to latch on to the ball and score by using a header or volley. To hit that space the crosser might have to bend the ball around defenders, hit the ball over them or even drive the ball in behind them. Whatever route the ball must take to hit the target space the crosser should be able to recognize that route and the crossing technique that will execute the play successfully. This game allows the wide players the opportunity to practice their crosses in a setting that realistically reflects the same patterns of play players experience in their full field games.

Like all finishing sessions I like to use these games as the last workout of the practice session so that players leave the practice field excited about the work they have just done. I would also put a crossing game into my practice at least once a week [twice if the team has four practices a week] so I could share the finishing time with the shooting games. Head coaches will tell you that there is nothing more important than scoring goals and I can tell you that the greatest feeling in the World of soccer is to rise above your opponents with a well timed leap and crash a power header into your opponents net. These games will help the players to get your team goals while they experience the thrill of a lifetime.

## Wing Attack Game

### Game One

### Attacking players feed the wingers

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds plus 2 Goals  
2 Wing Areas and a half way line

Number of Players

6v6 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

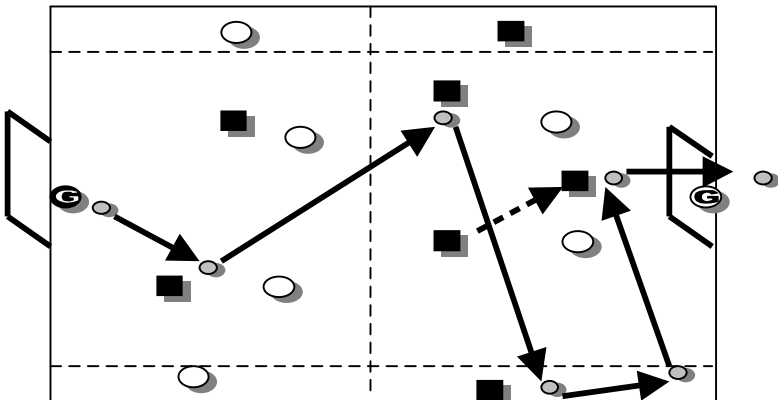
Normal soccer rules except that wingers, defenders and attackers have their own field areas  
Each winger has one touch to control the ball and another to cross  
Attacking players only can feed the wingers

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Attackers feeding the wingers and breaking quickly into position to receive the cross

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Defenders staying with attackers  
Defenders and the keeper challenging for cross balls



## Wing Attack Game

### Game Two

### Advancing Defender

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds plus 2 Goals  
2 Wing Areas and a half way line

Number of Players

6v6 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

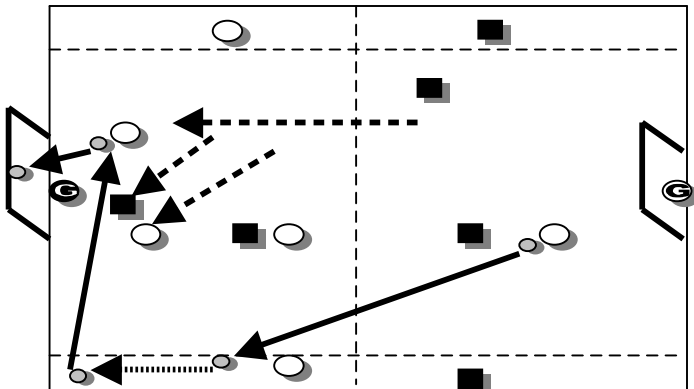
Normal soccer rules except that wingers and attackers must stay in their own field areas however one defender can advance into the attacking zone

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

The extra attacker gives the forwards a numerical advantage  
Wingers should try to cross to the free player

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Both defenders and goalkeeper must combine forces to eliminate the numerical advantage



## Wing Attack Game

### Game Three

### Weak side winger can advance

Size of Practice Area

40yds by 40yds plus 2 Goals  
2 Wing Areas and a half way line

Number of Players

6v6 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

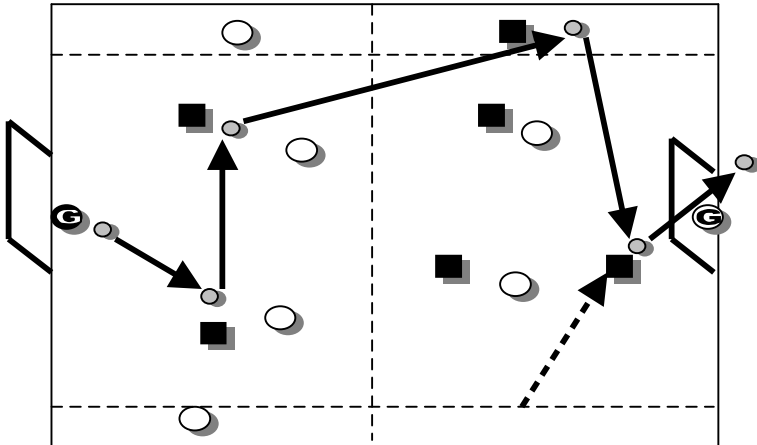
Normal soccer rules except that defenders and forwards must stay in their own areas  
However weak side wingers can advance into the attacking area

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Strong side winger finding the open  
attacker with the cross

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Defenders and goalkeeper combining their  
efforts to negate the numerical advantage



## Positional Games

In my opinion positional games come as a much needed introduction to soccer practices especially for the youth players. Most coaching clinics I have attended promote drills encouraging 1v1 and 2v2 play so I have taken that a stage further and designed games that put players into 1v1 and 2v2 situations in a 6v6 game. My idea is to isolate two players to vie with each other to control a piece of field property without having to endure the blinkered and exhausting experience those 1v1 drills provide. My experiences as a player taught me that I had to vie with an opponent to gain control of my assigned area of the field and if I won that battle offensively and defensively I made a huge contribution to the team cause. As I advanced up the soccer ladder I was made aware that not only was I expected to succeed in my own position I was also expected to lend assistance to any nearby team mate who was struggling with his own personal dual. Head coaches I played for in the 60's and 70's judged their best players not only on how well they did their own job but also on how much assistance they gave to their teammates. That is the secret of the best teams; their players do their own jobs while always being ready to help out their teammates. However to start this process the players need to know how to do their own jobs and the positional games I've designed will teach them to do that.

The first stage is to isolate individual players in positions so that they can learn the responsibility of marking an opponent on defense and possessing the ball on offense. The second stage is to link two players together against two opponents so that each player has immediate support either on offense or defense when the ball is in their area. The third stage is to link three players in one half of the field whether that half is either side of the half-way line or down one side of the field. The use of the half-way line to divide the players calls for 3v3 offensive and defensive plays while using one side of the field by splitting it down the middle introduces the three players to offensive and defensive wing play. I believe that training the players to play in different positions by using the games in this section will allow them to pick up the idea of how each position should be played and therefore be better prepared for a positional change when they step up into the college ranks. As it is most of the incoming college players spend too much of their freshman season sitting on the bench while they await the day that the coaches will be satisfied enough with their progress to put them on the team.

At the University of Washington positional games are reserved for the final part of training on days when the first team players are dismissed from the practice after a two game weekend. The young players appear to enjoy these practices and the ones who make an effort to figure out the significance of team play by playing hard and asking the coaches questions after the practice appear to develop more quickly.



## Positional Games

### Game One

### 1v1 in a 6v6 Game plus keepers

Size of Practice Area

45yds long by 30yds wide plus 2 Goals  
The field is divided into 6 sections

Number of Players

6v6 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

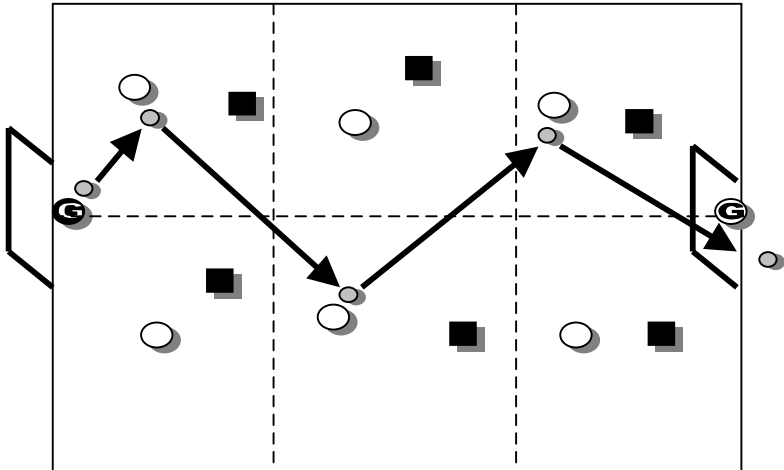
Normal soccer rules except that each  
outfield player is matched off with an  
opponent in a designated area

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Ball control, dribbling, shooting, passing  
and space finding skills against an  
opponent

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Marking, tackling and stealing the ball from  
the opponent



## Positional Games

### Game Two

### Forward movement by a support player

Size of Practice Area

45yds long by 30yds wide plus 2 Goals  
The field is divided into 6 sections

Number of Players

6v6 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

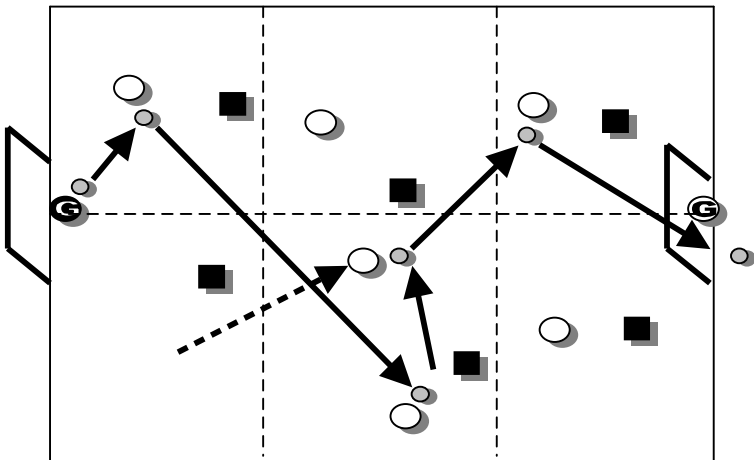
Normal soccer rules except that players are confined to their grids  
Also an attacking player can move one grid forward to support a ball playing teammate

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Supporting at the right angles and the ball carrier using the supporting player

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Closing on the ball while also attempting to block off the supporting player



## Positional Games

### Game Three

### 2v2 in a 6v6 Game plus keepers

Size of Practice Area

45yds long by 30yds wide plus 2 Goals  
The field is divided into 3 sections

Number of Players

6v6 plus 2 Goalkeepers

Game Rules

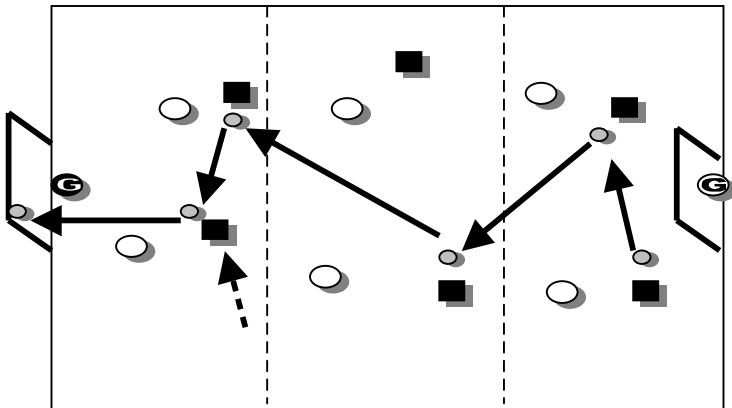
Normal soccer rules except that players are grouped in twos and given a third of the field to play

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Working with a teammate to advance the ball safely through skillful dribbling and passing to a teammate in another grid  
Looking for shots on goal

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

Working with a teammate to defend the assigned area of play by supporting the player challenging for the ball



## Full Team Games

When I came to Seattle and began coaching at the University of Washington I realised that we had the number of players needed to put two full teams on the field so the head coach Dean Wurzberger and I threw some ideas about and ended up with a game we called the midfield break game. This game was played by two full teams on a full field with a cone line spread across the field seven yards outside each penalty area. The object of this game was to allow the teams to vie for ball possession in the midfield area while an attacker was released by dribbling over the endlines into the attack zone. That attacker had five seconds to advance on goal and get his shot off with only the keeper to oppose him as no defenders were allowed into the end zone.

We found that the exercise, while being popular with all of the players, was especially good for the strikers and the goalkeepers because it presented them with game winning moments on a much more regular basis than a normal game would. We found that our strikers became better finishers and our keepers became better 1v1 competitors saving us a number of times during the season. Obviously youth team coaches do not have the number of players nor the full field space required for these games but High School coaches and College coaches do.

As an 'A' License coaching instructor for the USSF I have had the occasion to put on full field 11v11 games in order to coach a particular point. That point could be setting an offside trap or beating the offside trap, dropping the team deep to defend or counter-attacking, playing a controlled game out of the back or pressing high in the opponents defensive half of the field. All of these coaching points have to be eventually made by the coach in a full field 11v11 situation because it is a realistic setting for these coaching points to be made. If the soccer powers demand that coaches require the knowledge to make their coaching points in this type of situation then it seems to me that they are pointing these coaches to full field 11v11 games as a preferred way of coaching.

'A' License coaching teaches the coaches that coaching starts with watching your team play a game, analyzing that performance to separate the good play from the bad and preparing a session or series of sessions that will eliminate the bad play while accentuating the good play. The analysis begins with a recognition of the good and bad in the overall team performance before breaking down the performances of the offense and defense then the different groups of players involved on offense and defense and last but not least the individual performance of each player on offense and defense. That's a lot of analyzing and an even greater amount of work to put things right but everything begins with the big game and the closer your practices can be to the big game with players playing in their normal positions the easier it will be for the coach to identify and deal with those problems.

The greatest thing about coaching is that your expected to analyze every play whether it be a defensive or offensive play and that takes total concentration but how wonderful it is to be totally concentrated on the game you love. The next best thing to coaching on game day is to coach in practice and the closer you can get the practice atmosphere to the game day atmosphere the easier it will be for you and the players to recognize and resolve the problems.

## Full Team Games

### Game One

Size of Practice Area

Number of Players

Game Rules

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

### Midfield Break Game

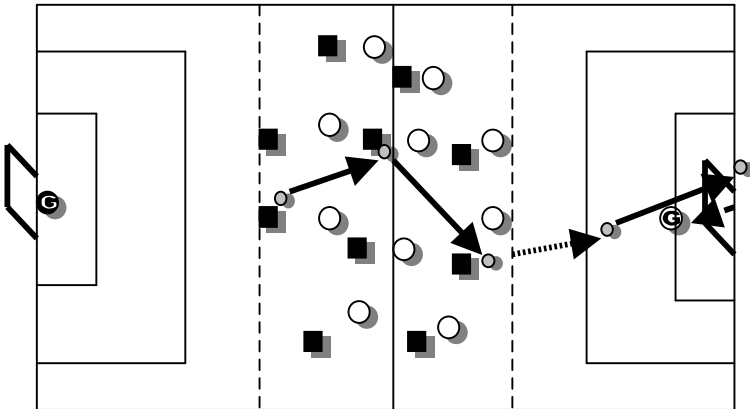
Full field with a coned line 30yds from each end line

2 full teams

Normal soccer rules except that an attacking player can only advance the ball into the opponents end zone by dribbling the ball over the coned line  
That player then has 5 seconds to get the shot off

Aggressive dribbling moves  
1v goalkeeper finishing skills  
Changing the point of attack to give a player space to break forward

Strong tackling in front of the line  
Staying with the mark to deny space



## Full Team Games

### Game Two

Size of Practice Area

Number of Players

Game Rules

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

### Midfield Break Game

Full field with marked lines 30yds from end lines and from the penalty area to the 30yd line

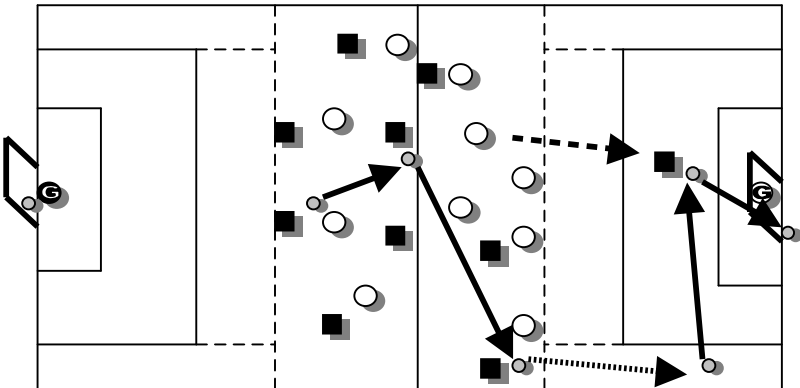
2 Full teams

Normal soccer rules except that an attacking player must dribble the ball over the 30yd line and between the penalty lines to go for goal

If the break is into a wing area the player can only cross the ball to a teammate who can enter the central area in support

Central penetration shot accuracy  
Wing penetration crossing accuracy

Defend strongly along the 30yd line



## Full Team Games

### Game Three

Size of Practice Area

Number of Players

Game Rules

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]

### Half field Pressure Game

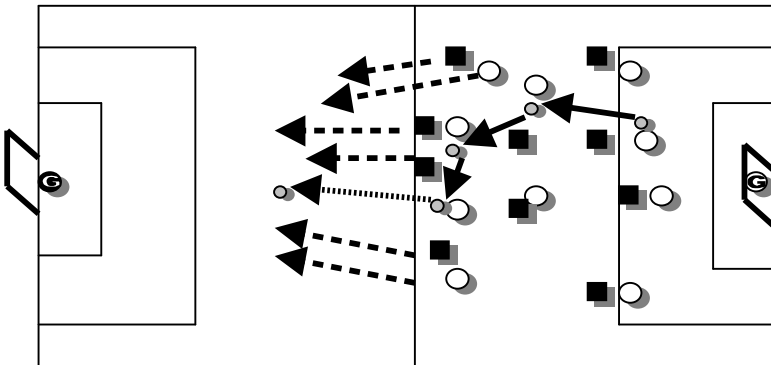
Size of Practice Area

Number of Players

Game Rules  
Normal soccer rules except that a team can only enter their attacking half by a player dribbling the ball over the half way line  
A pass over the half way line gives the opponents a free kick from the point the ball crossed the half way line

Coaching Points  
Changing the point of attack to open up dribbling opportunities  
Aggressively dribbling at defenders on or near the half way line

Coaching Points  
Pressing the ball and marking the support players in the attacking half  
Dropping back and forming a defensive shape quickly when ball possession is lost



## How to use these games in practices

There are four different types of practices that a coach can use these games for and they are Defending, Midfield, Attacking and a mix of all three which I would call a balanced practice session. If I were to select games for a 'Defending Practice' I would start with Game Three [Split Team Game] in the Overload Possession series to allow my players an easy introduction to the theme of the session.

My next game would be Game Two [2 teams possess 1 team defends] in the Three Team Game series to boost up the defensive group understanding and open up chances for me to insert my coaching points. I would follow that with Game One [Must touch the ball twice] from the Even Sided Possession series and play it on the same size of field that the previous game was played on. In my experience this puts the tempo of play through the roof and demands a tremendous amount of skill from the players trying to manouever the ball. My next game would be Conditioned Games Game Two[Man for man marking plus a sweeper] that requires players to be responsible for a specific mark with each team having a sweeper free to tackle anyone. This defensive responsibility has a huge part to play in all defensive situations especially dead ball plays and should be taught early so that players grow up in the game knowing that they must be able to defend as well as attack. Finally I would end the session with a cut down version of Full Field Games Game Three [Half field pressure]where a team cannot enter their attacking half untill one of their players has dribbled over the half-way line. This gives the players a collective responsibility to defend from front to back by pressuring the ball as a team.

My two hour defensive session would be this;

**Overload Possession**      **Game Three**    [ Split team]  
**Three Team Games**      **Game Two**    [ 2 teams possess 1 team defends]  
**Even sided possession**    **Game One**    [ Must touch the ball twice]  
**Conditioned Games**      **Game Two**    [ Man for man marking plus sweeper]  
**Full Field Game**          **Game Three**    [Half field pressure]

If my session was only 1½ hours long I would drop one of the Conditioned or Full Field Games.

The midfield build up session would be more about possessing the ball and would go something like this;

**Overload Possession**      **Game Two**    [ Possession player in with defenders]  
**Three Team Games**      **Game One**    [ Three team possession]  
**End Zone Games**        **Game One**    [ Dribble into End Zone]  
**Positional Games**        **Game Two**    [ Overlapping attacker]  
**Full Team Games**        **Game One**    [ Midfield break]

Again if the session is less than two hours long use only one of the last two games.

My attacking session would consist of these choices of games;

**Overload Possession**      **Game One**    [ 1 touch possession]  
**Three Team Games**      **Game Three**    [ Waves]  
**Conditioned Games**      **Game Three**    [ Heading Goals Game]  
**Wing attack Games**      **Game Two**    [ Advancing Defender]



The reason I've put only four games in this session is because I have decided to concentrate the last hour of this particular session on working with the players to improve their crossing and heading ability.

Because of the natural connection between these last two games I would be against putting a finishing game anywhere in the session.  
 The mixed session could go something like this

<b>Overload possession</b>	<b>Game Three</b>	<b>[ Split team game]</b>
<b>Three team Game</b>	<b>Game two</b>	<b>[ 2 team possession v 1 team</b>
<b>defending]</b>		
<b>End Zone Game</b>	<b>Game one</b>	<b>[ Dribble into End Zone]</b>
<b>Small Goals Game</b>	<b>Game two</b>	<b>[ Attack and Defend Two Goals]</b>
<b>Wing Attack Game</b>	<b>Game One</b>	<b>[ Attacking players feed wingers]</b>

This session would allow my players to start with two defensive types of games followed by two midfield games and finished by a crossing and finishing type of game.

I started the balanced or mixed session of games with a theme game because I wanted the practice session to be fast and intense so I started with a defensive game because they set a faster tempo of play than most other games. Once that fast tempo has been established you can get the players to play almost any game and the tempo will stay hot. If I wanted a more relaxed practice session I would begin with a possession type of game and gradually introduce them to games requiring more thought and movement [like attacking a goal or end zone] as the session began to heat up. Crossing and Finishing sessions would always come at the end of practice for the simple reason that players get the biggest kick from finishing sessions and whatever follows these sessions is sure to be a downer to them.

My advise is to end all of your coaching sessions on an upbeat note by giving the players some sort of finishing game. As far as the content of the session is concerned I believe it all depends on the previous games performance and what the coach saw that needs some polish before the next game. If I had a team for two training days a week I would make a decision based on their last game on which of the three standard sessions [Defending, Midfield or Attacking] the team needed to work on most. The first session of that week would be full of games on the topic that I felt needed to be worked on and the second session would be a mixed session. That way the problems are adressed straight away in the first session and the coach and players can both enjoy a more relaxed second session.

# How to make your own game

This last chapter is dedicated to showing the coaches the various ways that they can make their own conditioned games after all this book has been produced to spark off the genius in you. There are many ways to condition games so I will list them and add a short description of what I mean.

First we must know the tools we need to set up our games and they are;

## **Cones, Corner flags, Bibs, Balls, Goals, Field and Stop Watch.**

Perhaps we could survive without some of these tools but if we are to coach our players in the proper environment I would suggest that we come armed with most of them.

Now we can get to the different types of conditioned games.

### **Field Size**

We use the size of the field to add or take away pressure on the ball carrier. A small field would make things crowded and therefore limit time and space to control the ball whereas a large field space would give the player on the ball more time and space to decide the next play.

### **Field Shape**

The shape of the field can help the coach to get some points across easily for example a long narrow field should encourage the players to pass the ball forward early to the front players whereas a short wide field area should encourage them to switch the point of attack and dribble the ball quickly into the more open attacking space.

### **Soft Targets**

Soft targets are things like end zones to be dribbled into or the number of consecutive passes in a possession game that would score a point for a team. It could even be passes to players outside of the playing area who pass back to a player on the same team as the original passer and therefor score a point.

### **Small Goals**

Two goals made up of cones or corner flags and placed at either end of the field or four small goals placed apart on either end of the field. The cones or corner flags can also be used as gates and placed in different areas of the field as targets to shoot or dribble through.

### **Full Size Goals**

Normal size goals to use as realistic targets in shooting or crossing and finishing games.

### **Touch Restrictions**

Using touch restrictions to highlight a technical skill in any game for example one touch to promote first touch passing or shooting and two touches to promote control and pass whereas one or two touches gives the players a chance to decide for themselves wjich play they choose.

### **Voice Restrictions**

Asking the players to be silent when playing makes them depend more on their eyesight and therefor promotes the early vision which leads to clearer decision making. Giving some players the right to speak when others must remain silent promotes leadership and instructional qualities in those players.

### **Passing Height**

Keeping the pass below knee height forces the receivers to get into open passing lanes in order to receive the pass. Making the pass over waist height forces the

receiver to practice collecting the ball out of the air and the passer to practice the chipped and lobbed passes.

### **Passing in Sequence**

This type of passing is usually done in possession play where players are numbered and must pass to the next number up except the last numbered player who must pass to number one. This encourages the players to anticipate the pass and to get into open space where the passers can see them.

### **Goal Scoring Restrictions**

The one touch restriction on goal attempts falls in line with the fact that 60% of all goals are scored from a one touch shot or header. This restriction teaches the forwards to position themselves in such a way that any pass to them could immediately result in a shot on goal. The restriction of scoring a goal with a header makes the game an aerial duel in which forwards, defenders and goalkeepers get a great work out.

### **Numbers of Teams**

The most teams I would have on the field or surrounding the field is three and these games have provided the players with the advantage of having twice the number of players to pass to when possessing the ball. The advantage for the defenders is that they must combine their forces in a unified effort to attempt to regain possession of the ball.

### **Odd Player**

A practice can't always have even numbers of players and the odd player at times has to don a different colored bib and play for the team that has possession of the ball. I will usually give the bib to a midfield player because of the more central role the player is expected to take up.

The odd players sometimes has to be reminded that they cannot tackle or do any defending work.

### **Team Movement**

In some games I like to work on team togetherness and the rule that all players except perhaps the keeper must be on or over the halfway line before a goal can count is a good way to do this. The penalty for the lazy defenders is that the goal will not count however if a forward on the defending team is the lone player that fails to get back on or over the halfway line the goal counts double.

### **Number of Goals**

We always need to look for ways to make the practice more realistic and making a rule that the the first team to get ahead by two clear goals is the winning team usually provides the desired effect. This is especially true when the coach tacks on some extra running for the losing team.

### **Positional Area Restriction**

I believe that restricting players to certain areas eventually helps them to understand their positional roles even though those players may feel somewhat uncomfortable early in the practice. We as coaches are not there to make them happy all the time and must at times convince the players that what they are doing is necessary for their future success.

### **Two Different Targets**

Some days we might have half a pitch to play on with only one goal to shoot at so to make a competitive game we must use the goal as one target and the half way line as another. We can turn the half-way line into an end zone and the team defending the goal can exchange places with the team attacking the goal by dribbling the ball into that end zone. All goals that count must be scored in the normal goal being guarded by the goalkeeper. This double target area game is

perfect for teams who have only one goalkeeper who would remain guarding the goal regardless of the team attacking it.

### **Extra Offensive Players**

I like games where the team on the ball has a numerical advantage because I believe it makes the players possessing the ball more comfortable. Sometimes I'll give the possession team a one player advantage but most times I like to give them a two player advantage.

### **Scoring and Changing Direction**

Many of the games to end zones can be spiced up by having the successful team change direction upon scoring, immediately attacking the opposite end zone. I believe that this type of game keeps the players on both teams on the alert and brings more tactical awareness to the game.

Of course there are many ways to condition games so that coaching points on offense and defense can be brought to the players attention. I would like to challenge you the reader to use the last page of this book to invent your own favourite conditioned game and send it to me so that I can select another forty or so to put in a follow up book. The coaches will be identified alongside their conditioned game and I will select my favourite game in each of the brackets. The last page will have the same format that I used in this book with a game discription and a diagram area. Come on have a go there's lots more conditioned games out there than I've described in this book.

Record your game here:

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## Game Name

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### Game One

Size of Practice Area

Number of Players

Game Rules

Normal soccer rules except that

Coaching Points  
[Offensive]

Coaching Points  
[Defensive]



**Notes:**