

# An Introduction To SMALL-SIDED GAMES

Fewer Players = More Touches



**FREE  
EBOOK**

**SOCCER COACH** WEEKLY



# 64 Small-Sided Games

## SOCCER COACH WEEKLY

**Soccer Coach Weekly** offers modern and easy to use football (soccer) drills, coaching sessions, practice plans, small-sided games, warm-ups, training tips and advice. The resources are created for the grassroots youth coach following best practice from around the world and insights from the professional game.

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To subscribe to Soccer Coach Weekly call Duncan Heard on +44 (0)1483 892894

Dear Coach,

If you're reading this, the chances are you've heard of small-sided games, but may not have used them...not knowingly, at least.

In fact, I'm certain you will have used them. After all, in its basic form a small-sided game is exactly what it sounds like, a game between two teams of fewer than normal players – normally 4- or 5-a-side.

Small-sided games are popular for many reasons, some specifically relating to player development, others down to practicality. How many of us are able to run a full 11v11 game in training with limitations on space and player availability?

Using small-sided games in training gives a number of coaching benefits:

1. More player participation
2. More touches of the ball
3. More passes attempted
4. More 1v1s attempted
5. More goals scored
6. More goalkeeper participation
7. Different games mean different problems to solve and skills to use

I put together **An Introduction To Small-Sided Games** to show you how the small-sided game in its simplest form can be developed to coach specific skills and tactics.

The games are taken from my coaching manual **64 Small-Sided Soccer Games**. To highlight the breadth of what can be achieved with games I've selected two games from the beginner, intermediate, and advanced sections of the manual.

But fear not! Those ratings are only relative. The basis of small-sided games is that "the game is the teacher" so even if you – or your assistants – have little or no soccer knowledge, your players will still be learning. And you'll look like the professional soccer coach you dream of being!

I hope you enjoy the games.

Yours in soccer,

Michael Beale



# Wide Pitch

## Set up

- Pitch size: 30 x 20 yards (minimum) up to 40 x 25 yards (maximum)
- Place the goals on the longer touchlines, making the pitch wide
- Two teams of four players
- Two keepers
- No offside
- If the ball leaves play, you have a few re-start options:
  1. The coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  2. The players take a roll in
  3. The players take a throw in
  4. The players make a pass in
  5. The players dribble in

## Rules

- The game is played on a wide pitch that is short in length. This encourages the following tactics from the teams:
  1. Shooting from distance
  2. Passing the ball into wide areas to create crossing opportunities

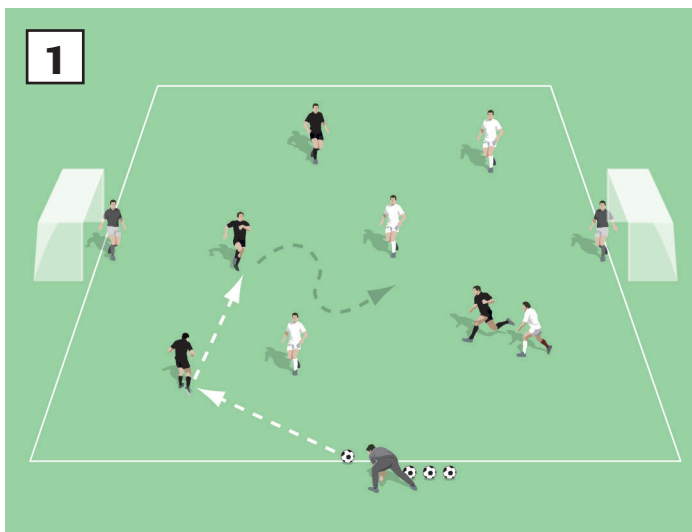
### KEY

BALL MOVEMENT

SHOT ON GOAL

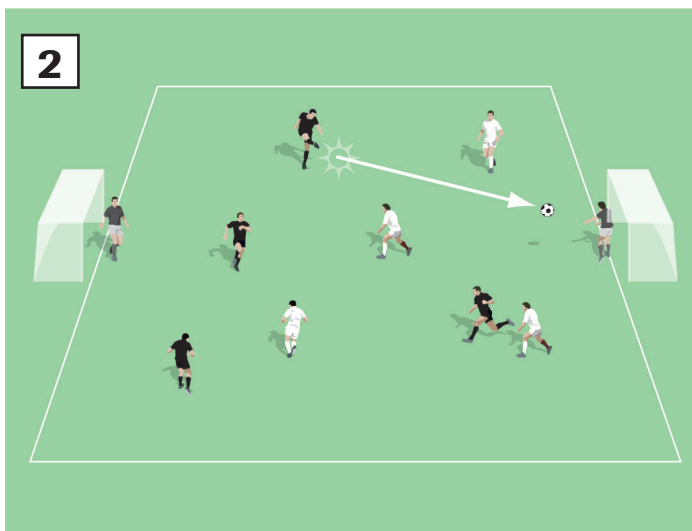
PLAYER MOVEMENT

1



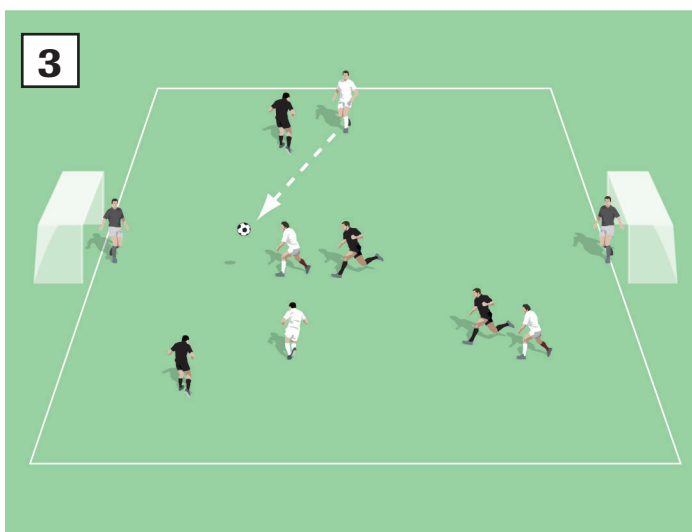
1. The coach feeds the ball to the black team to begin attacking the white goal.

2



2. The wide pitch should encourage your players to shoot from distance.

3



3. It should also encourage your players to get wide and get crosses on goal.

## Possession v Pressure

### Set up

- Pitch size: 30 x 20 yards (minimum) up to 40 x 25 yards (maximum)
- Two teams of four players
- Four keepers
- No offside
- If the ball leaves play, you have a few re-start options:
  1. The coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  2. The players take a roll in
  3. The players take a throw in
  4. The players make a pass in
  5. The players dribble in

### Rules

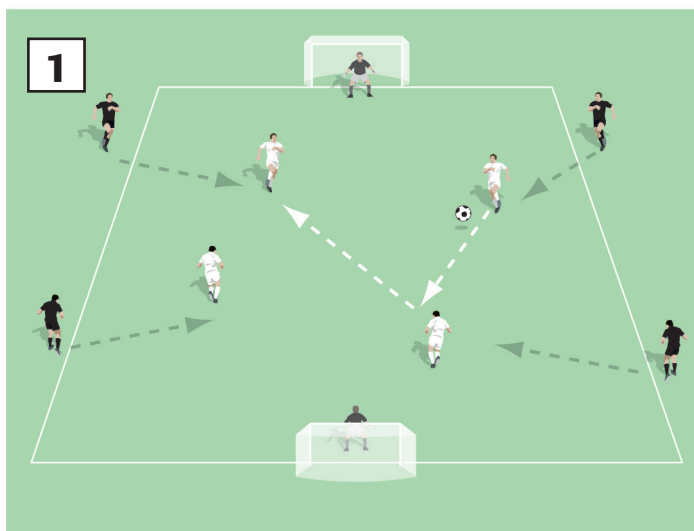
- One team starts on the pitch and passes the ball around.
- On your whistle, the team on the outside must race onto the pitch and try to win the ball and then score a goal.
- The passing team must try to keep possession.
- The passing team can use their keepers to keep possession of the ball.
- The pressuring team have 30 seconds to win the ball and score a goal - if they fail then the passing team is awarded the goal
- Rotate the teams for the next game.

#### KEY

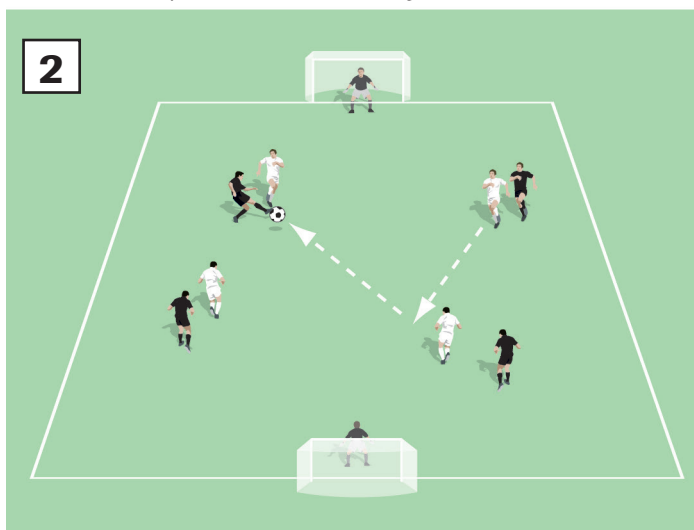
BALL MOVEMENT

SHOT ON GOAL

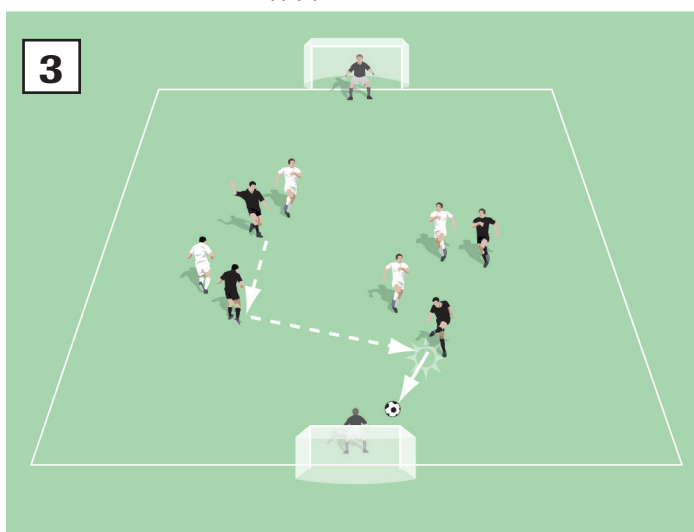
PLAYER MOVEMENT



1. The white team pass the ball around amongst themselves.



2. The black team enter and apply pressure on the white team.



3. The black team win possession and create an attack.

## Possession - Add One

### Set up

- Outer pitch size: 30 x 30 yards  
Inner pitch size: 15 x 15 yards
- Two teams of four players
- No goals

### Rules

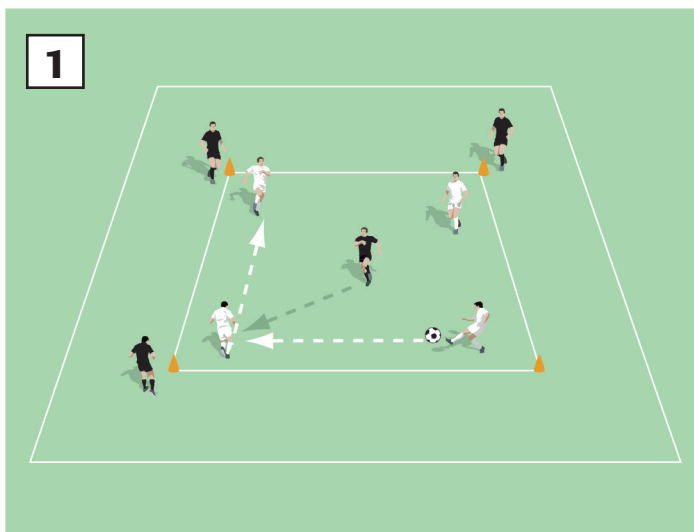
- One team act as the passing team.
- The other team act as the defending team.
- The passing team spread out into the 15 x 15 yard area and begin the game by playing 4v1.
- After 30 seconds, an extra defender is added to make the game 4v2, then another for 4v3, and then 4v4.
- The game is played for 2 minutes.
- The passing team must count the number of successful passes that they make.
- The teams rotate roles for the next game and the new passing team tries to beat the number of passes made by their opponents.

#### KEY

BALL MOVEMENT

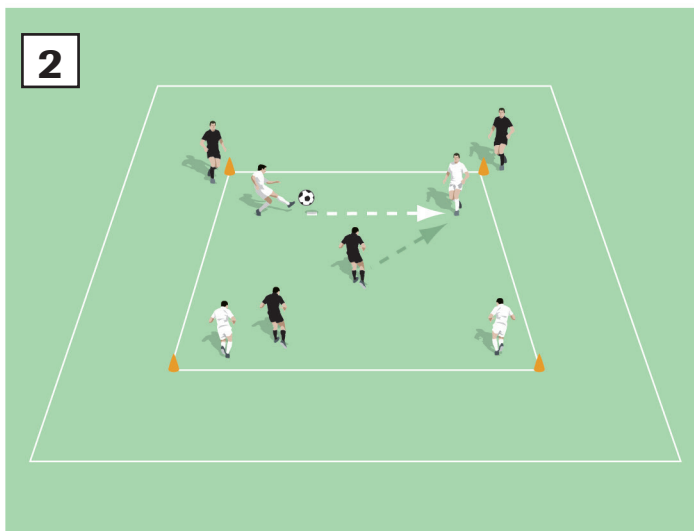
PLAYER MOVEMENT

1



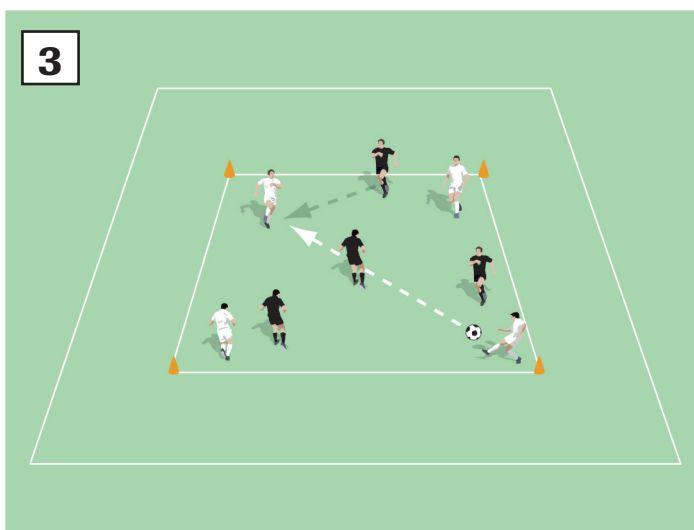
1. To begin with, this is a simple 4 v 1 possession game.

2



2. Adding one more defender makes it a bit more of a challenge.

3



3. 4 v 4 takes it to another level. Which team can make the most successful passes?

## Overload Game Continuous

### Set up

- Pitch size: 30 x 20 yards (minimum) up to 40 x 25 yards (maximum)
- Two teams of four players
- Two keepers
- If the ball leaves play, pass a new ball onto the pitch

### Rules

- To start the game, the first player on the black team enters the pitch and has three touches to score against the white goalkeeper.
- Immediately after this ball has been played, two white team players enter the pitch to create a 2 v 1 situation against the black player.
- The game continues until all the players are on the pitch. The series of attacks is as follows:

Black	V	White
1	V	Gk
1	V	2
3	V	2
3	V	4
4	V	4

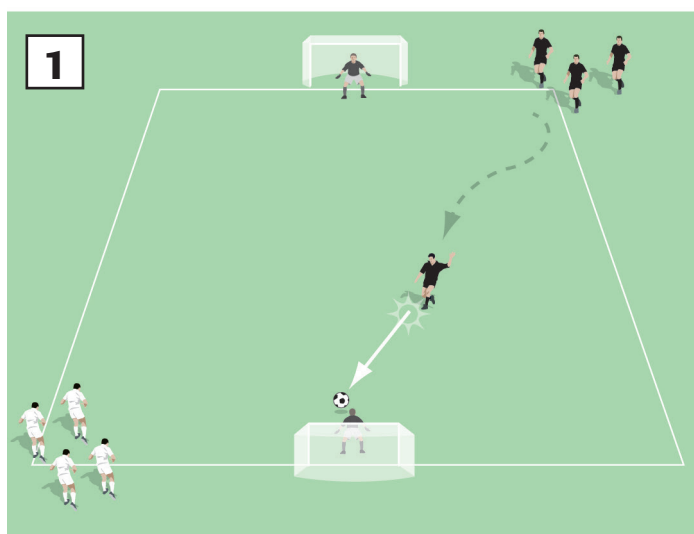
- When all the players are on the pitch, the game continues for a set time period.
- The next game starts with the white team attacking first.

#### KEY

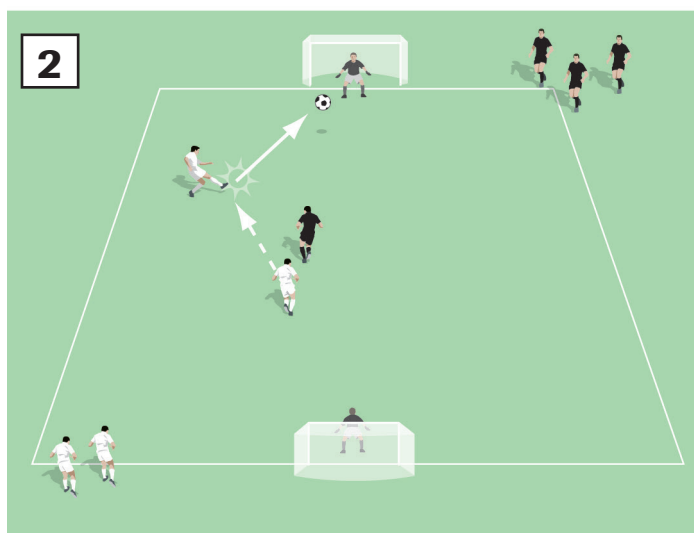
BALL MOVEMENT

SHOT ON GOAL

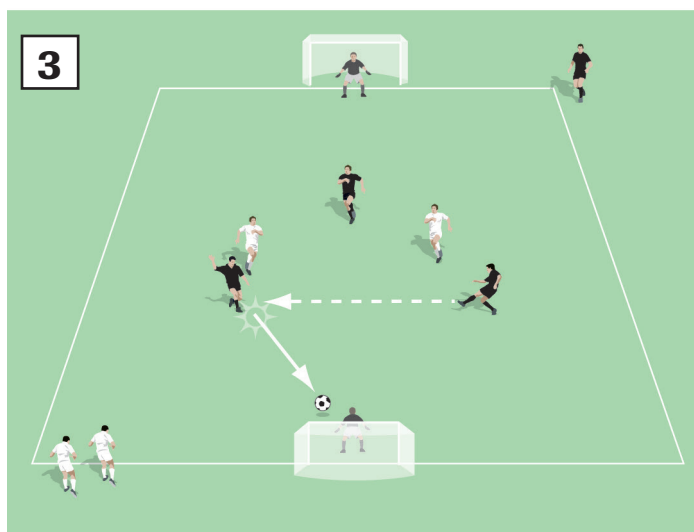
PLAYER MOVEMENT



1. Enter the pitch, three touches and shoot!



2. Two opponents enter and try to score in the other end.



3. Move on to 3 v 2 etc. for a different challenge each time.

# Middle or Wide Advantage

## Set up

- Pitch size: 30 x 20 yards (minimum) up to 40 x 25 yards (maximum)
- Two keepers
- Two teams of four players
- One team play with all four players on the pitch
- The other team play with two players on the pitch and two wide players off the pitch
- This set up gives the teams different tactics when in possession and when defending.

## Rules

### White team

The white team have all four players on the pitch.

When in possession they need to pass the ball quickly in order to create an opening to score a goal.

In defence, this team can pressure quickly as they have the extra players and attempt to force the black players to play inside and not towards their wide advantage.

### Black team

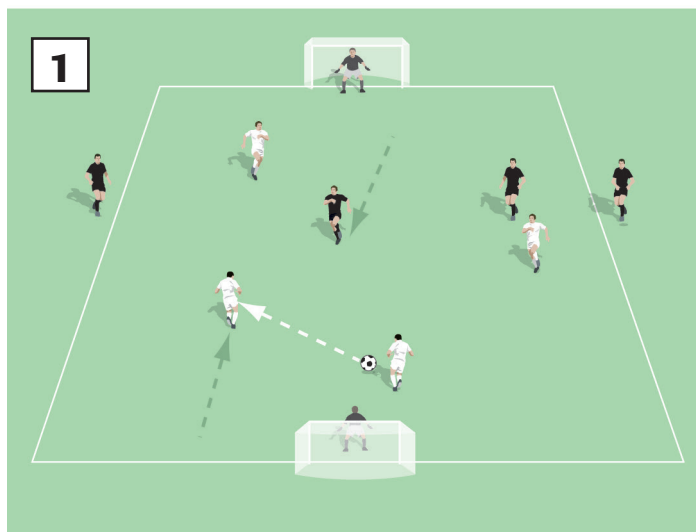
In possession the black team need to try to pass out wide quickly. This enables them to get another one of their players into the game.

The receiving wide player can choose to dribble down the outside unopposed or dribble onto the pitch and attempt to score. In defence, the black team must try to drop off and reduce the space for the white team to exploit.

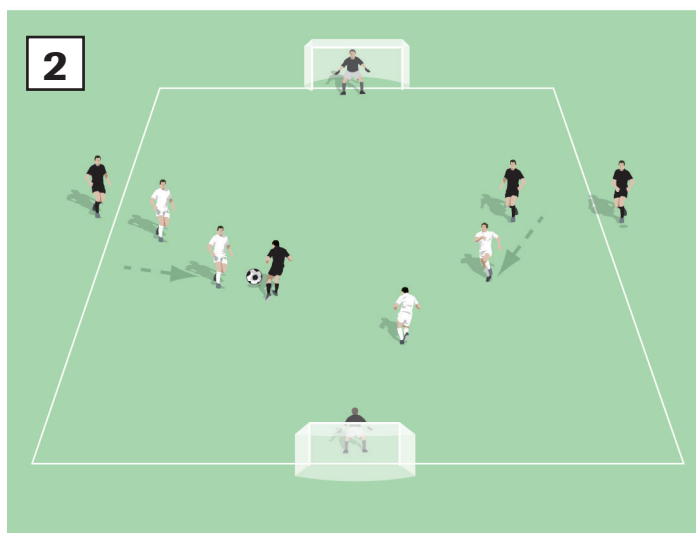
### KEY

BALL MOVEMENT

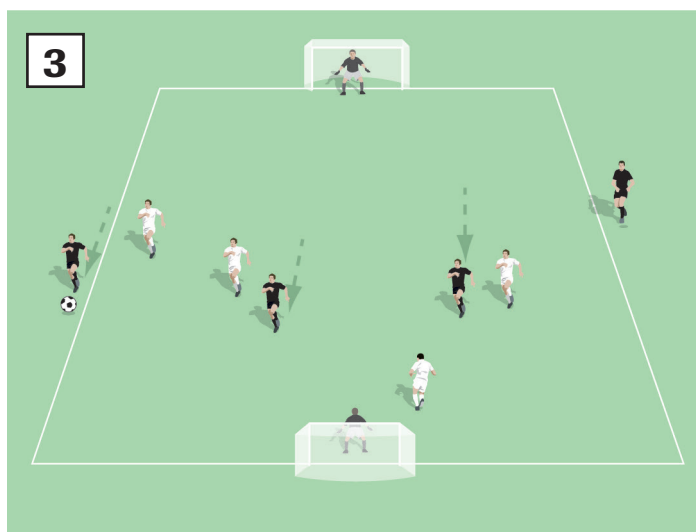
PLAYER MOVEMENT



1. Start with 4v2. The team in possession must look to use their use their numbers advantage to score quickly.



2. The black team have won possession but the white team are forcing them inside preventing use of their wide players.



3. But the black team manage to get the ball wide and the attack is on.

## Two Goal and End Zone

### Set up

- Pitch size: 30 x 20 yards (minimum) up to 40 x 25 yards (maximum)
- Two goals, one at either side of the pitch
- Two end zones, 5 yards deep, at either end of the pitch
- Two teams of four players

### Rules

- This game is a combination of two games - the Two Goal Game and the End Zone Game.
- Each team attacks one goal and one end zone. The aim of this game is to score a goal in the goal or by dribbling out and stopping the ball in the end zone.
- You call out the name of the game to be played.
- The players must react to your call in order to change games quickly and take up any advantages.

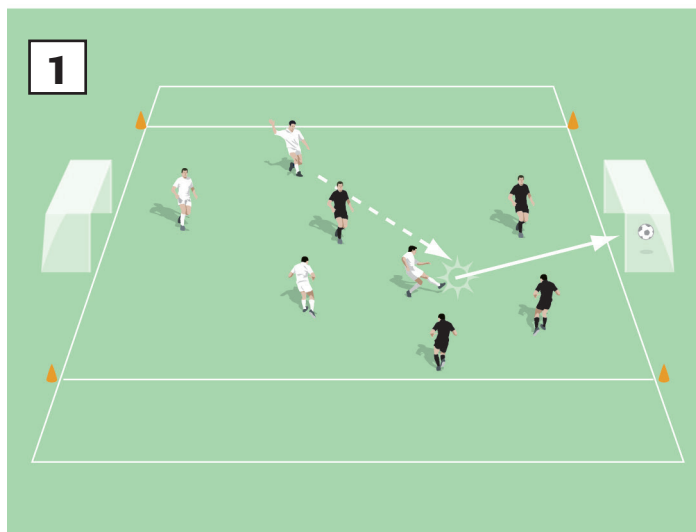
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BALL MOVEMENT

SHOT ON GOAL

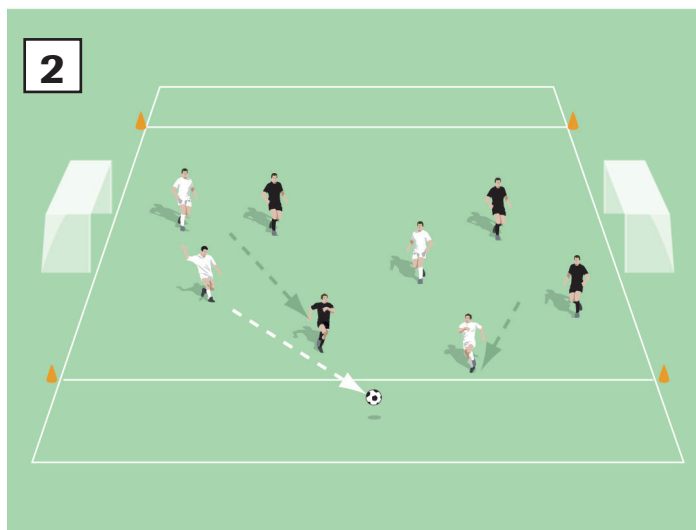
PLAYER MOVEMENT

1



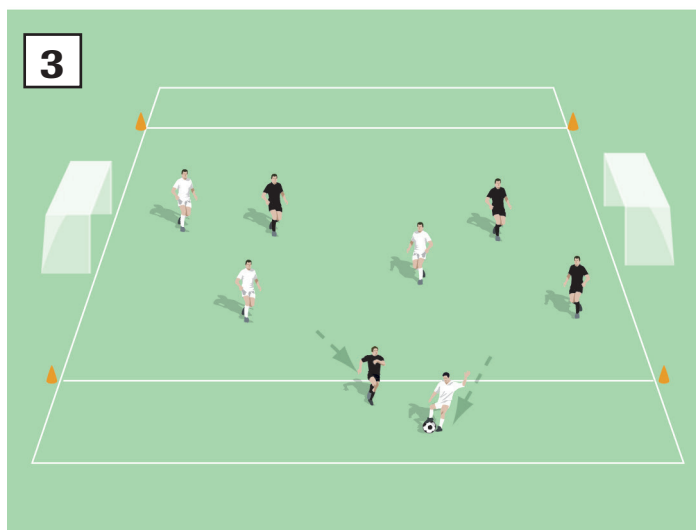
1. The teams start 4v4 attacking the normal goals.

2



2. When you call for the end zone game, the attack shifts and white team try to get it to a player in an advanced position.

3

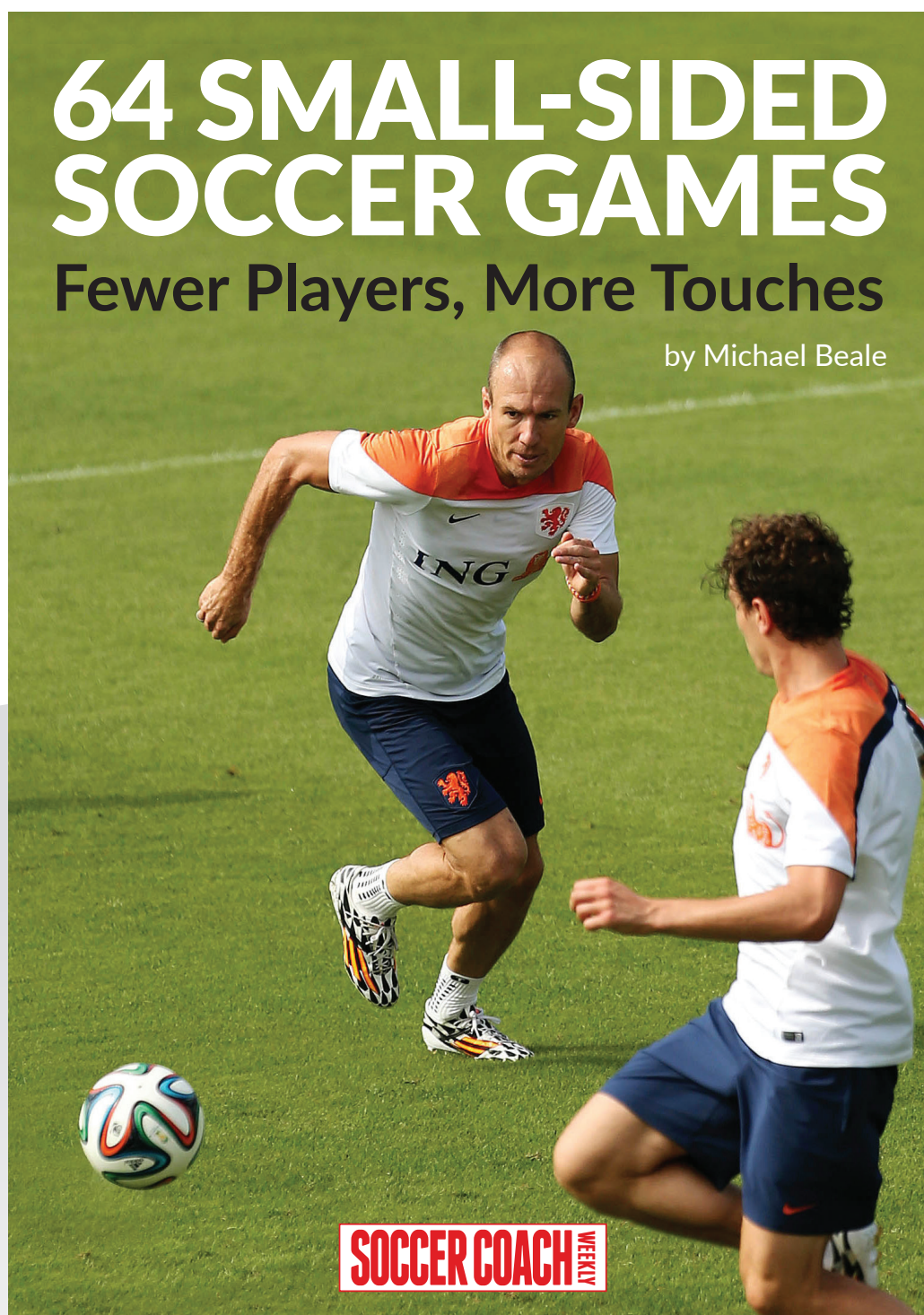


3. The white player must stop the ball in the end zone to score a "goal".



This free ebook is a sample from the  
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