

# Practice Through Play

*David Baird*



*Conductive Learning, Compulsory Fun*

# Introduction

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**Practice** through **Play** has a simple objective. To support coaches and parents/guardians to create fun and conducive learning environments at football training. It is the hope of myself and the other contributors that this resource will encourage and support coaches to reach this objective.

The recommended player age group for this resource is 8-14 years old, however we appreciate that this may vary depending on experience and ability level. Thank you to the coaches who have contributed their favourite practices and games. Amongst some tried and tested content we also hope you will find some new ideas and concepts. Kindest Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Baird', with a stylized, cursive script.

David Baird

## Practice

**Fun and engaging practices.  
Maximizing involvement to  
promote player development  
through trial and error.**

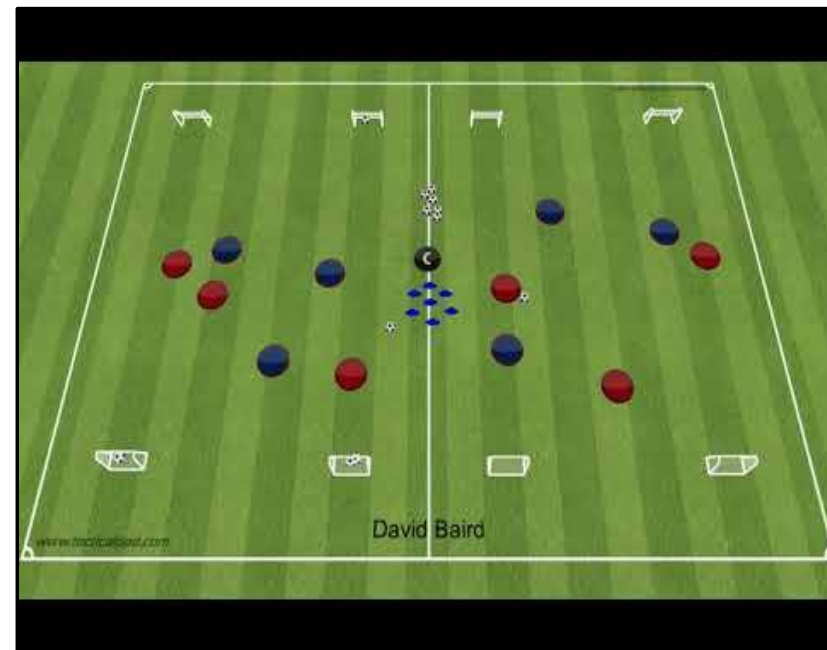
## Play

**Play games with inventive  
adaptations to support or  
stretch individuals. Learn  
by doing.**



## Practice 1

Fun practice 'Volcanoes v spaceships' with lots of technical repetition.



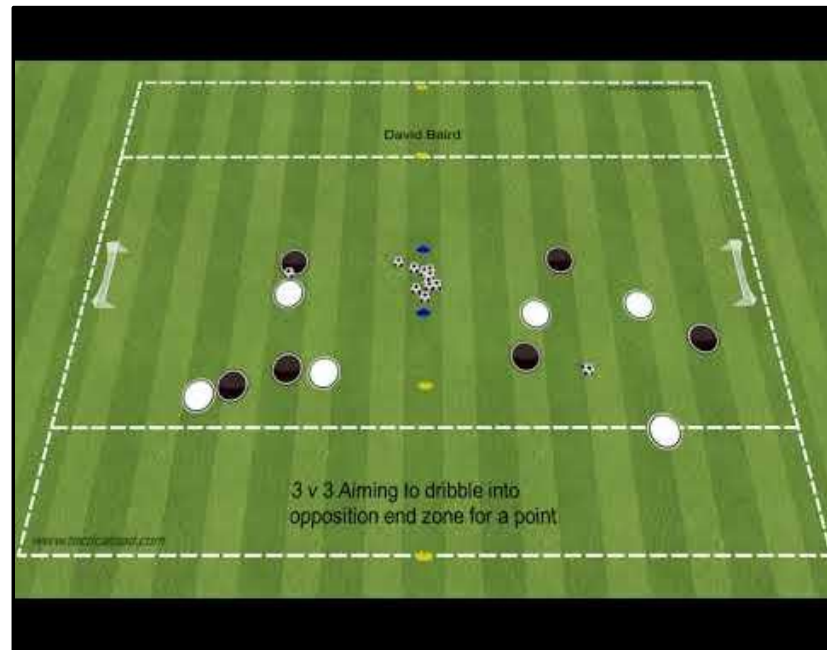
## Play 1

Small sided games with the fun game of volcanoes v spaceships working as the scoreboard alongside the games.



## Practice 2

Work on close control, changes of direction and pace in this gates practice.



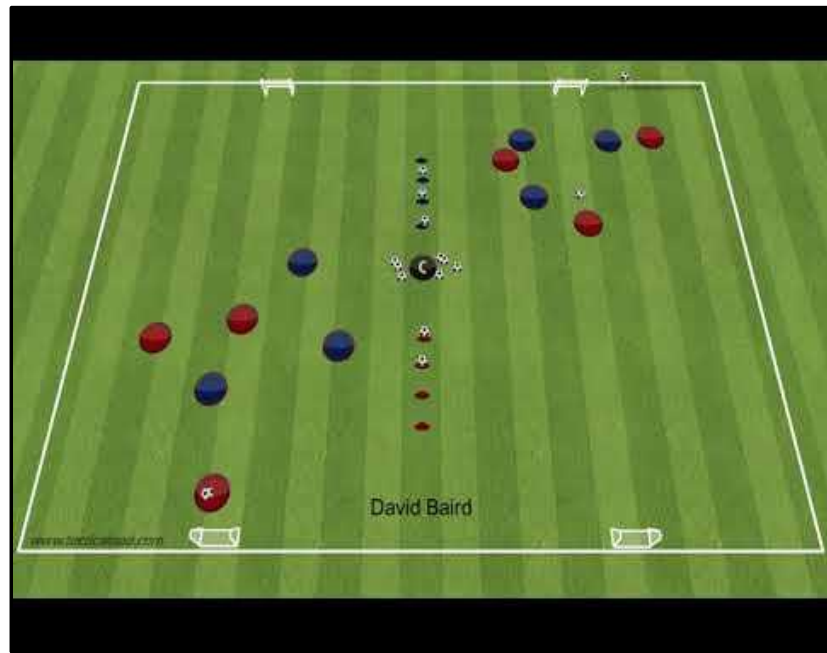
## Play 2

3v3 Games with the challenge of dribbling into the oppositions end zone.



## Practice 3

3v3 Environment that creates plenty of attacking overloads and situations to defend outnumbered.



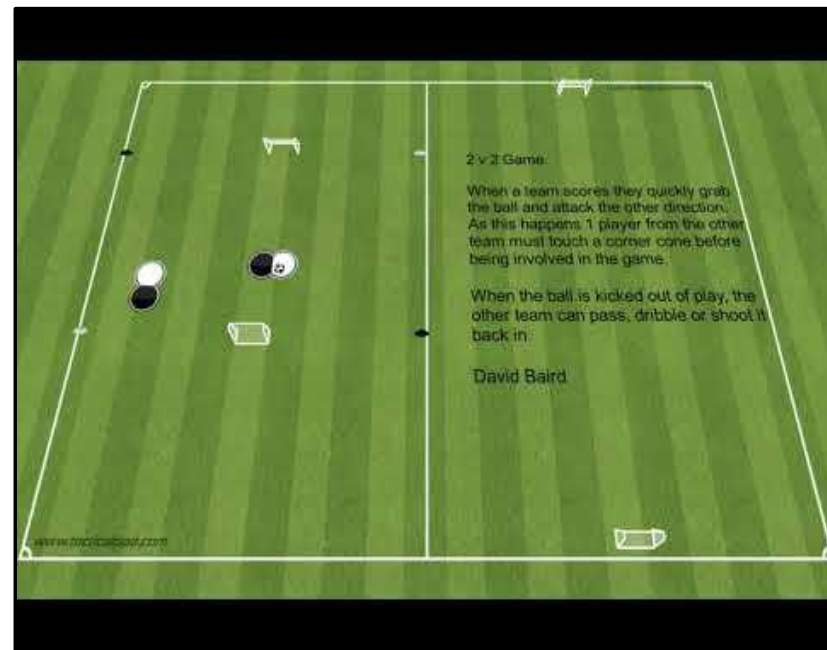
## Play 3

3v3 Games with a fun 'Connect 4' incentive in the middle which works as a scoreboard.



## Practice 4

Players have autonomy here, choosing what to practice. 1v1, 1v2, 2v1 or 2v2?



## Play 4

2v2 Game to encourage quick decisions and technical competencies.

# Coach Considerations



Content shown is just a guide. Adapt numbers accordingly.

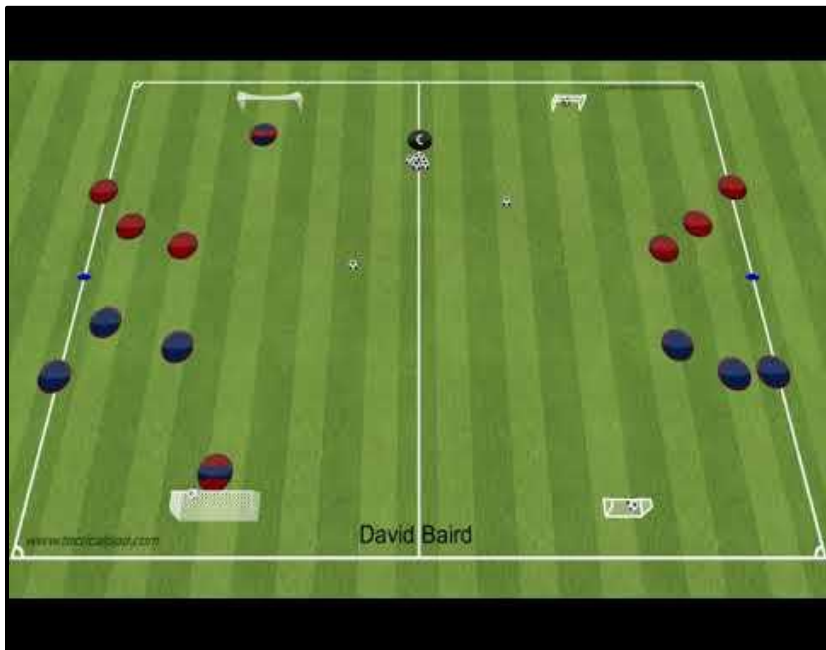
The important thing is to maximize involvement. Use the **playmaker** idea where needed, which is someone who plays for the team in possession or use uneven teams - this is fun and challenging for players.

Kids love scoring goals. Many of the games shown can be adapted to become **multi directional** - score in either goal? Or add more goals, 4/6 goal games? These slight adaptations create new scenarios for players both in an attacking and defending sense. Jumpers for goalposts are absolutely fine.

Football is unpredictable. Therefore we should try to play within unpredictable environments as much as possible.

The **bonus ball** idea is a great way to keep tempo high and keep players thinking. I would recommend the coach always has footballs at their feet to play into the practice or game when a ball goes out of play or where they see fit to engage and test players.





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## Practice 5

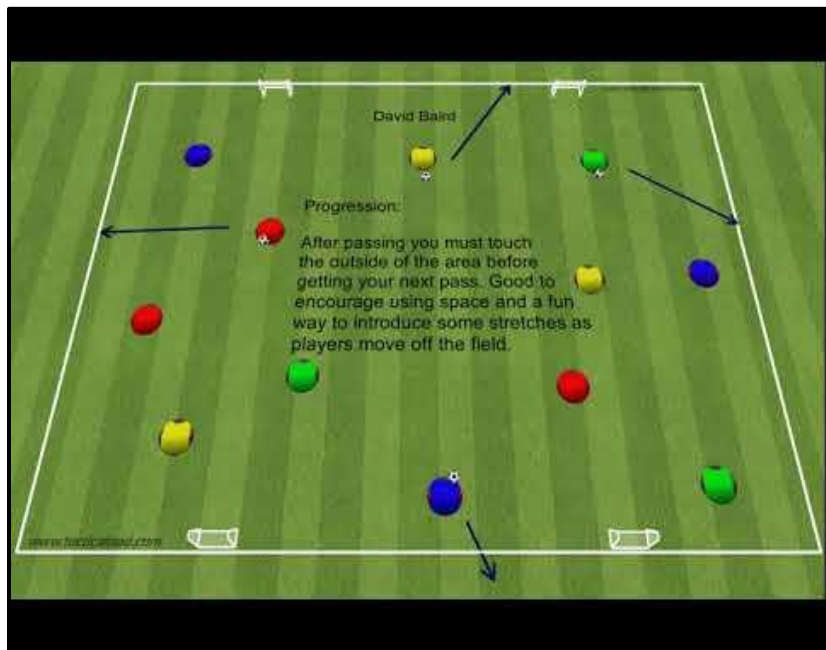
Coach shouts the number of players to enter the field and plays a ball in. Utilise the bonus ball idea where possible.



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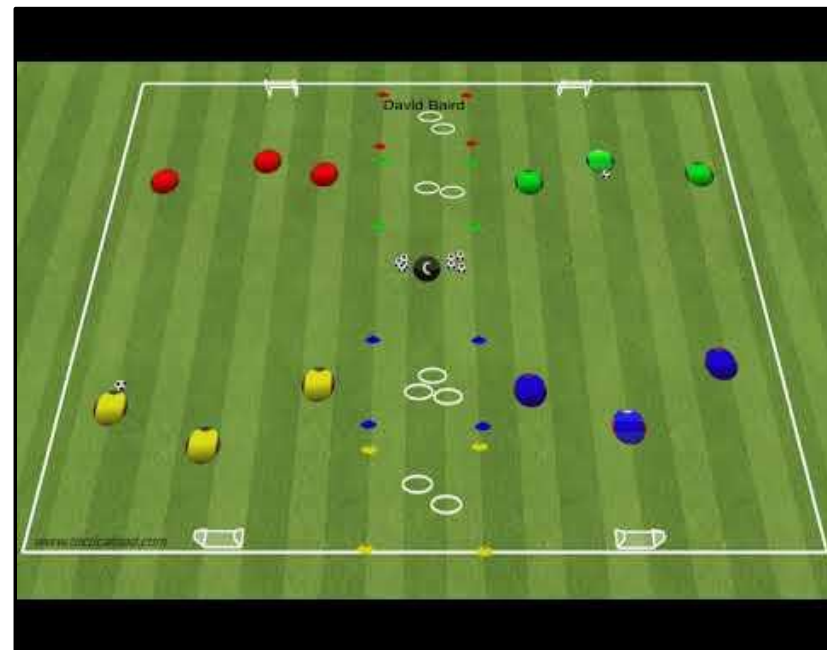
## Play 5

Best v Rest. Uneven team games are a great way to support players within your session and stretch certain individuals.



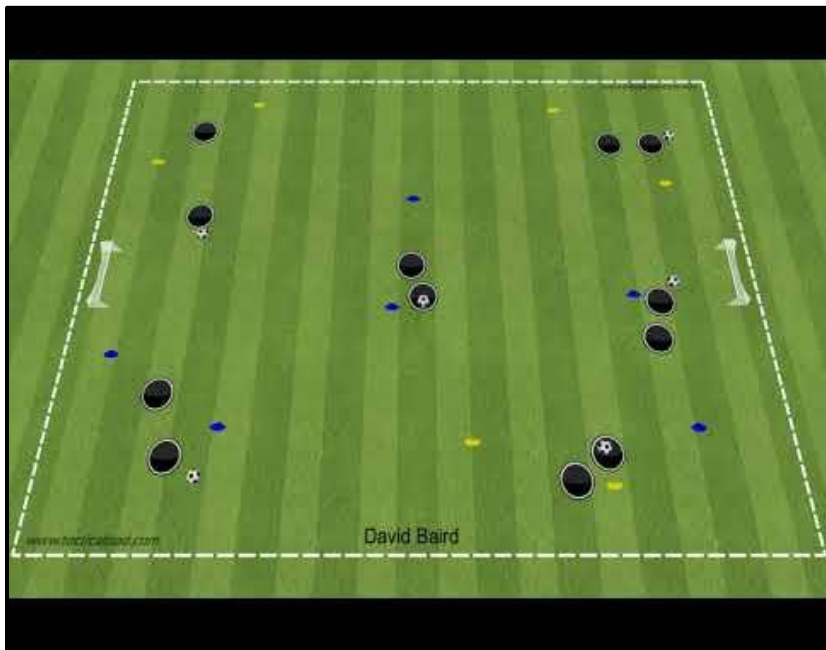
## Practice 6

Scanning a crucial behaviour that is worked on in this environment.  
Progression shown in animation.



## Play 6

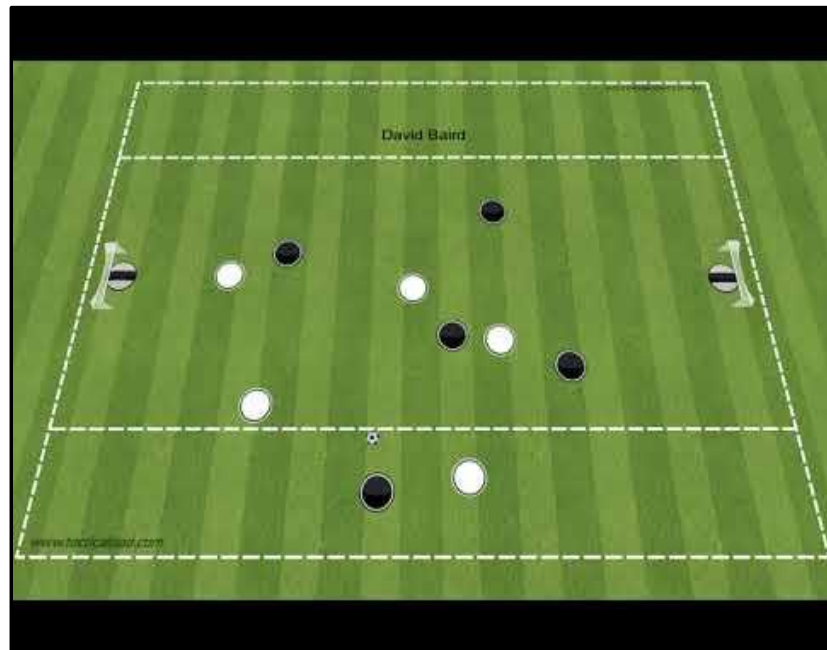
3 v 3 Games with a fun incentive in the middle which works as a scoreboard.



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## Practice 7

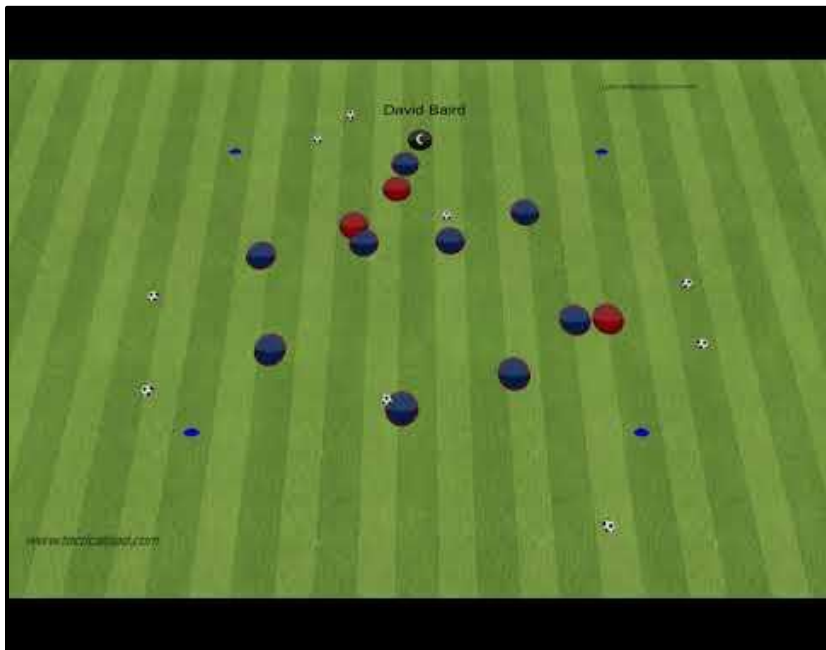
Defenders run the line between 2 cones. Attackers try to get past. Fun and competitive exercise.



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## Play 7

Game with a wide zone to allow players to get on the ball in areas where they might dribble.



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## Practice 8

An environment for some players to practice pressing and tackling while the other must spread out, pass and move.



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## Play 8

Play this game to improve spreading out, finishing and decision making with the ball.

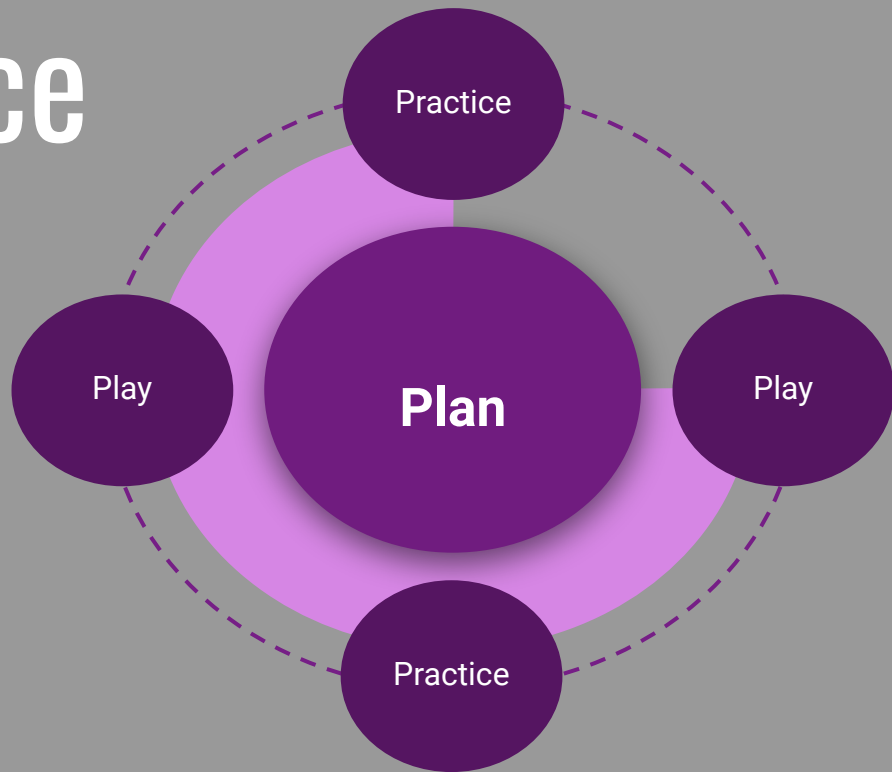
# Using This Resource

*You might plan to structure a session in one of the following ways:*

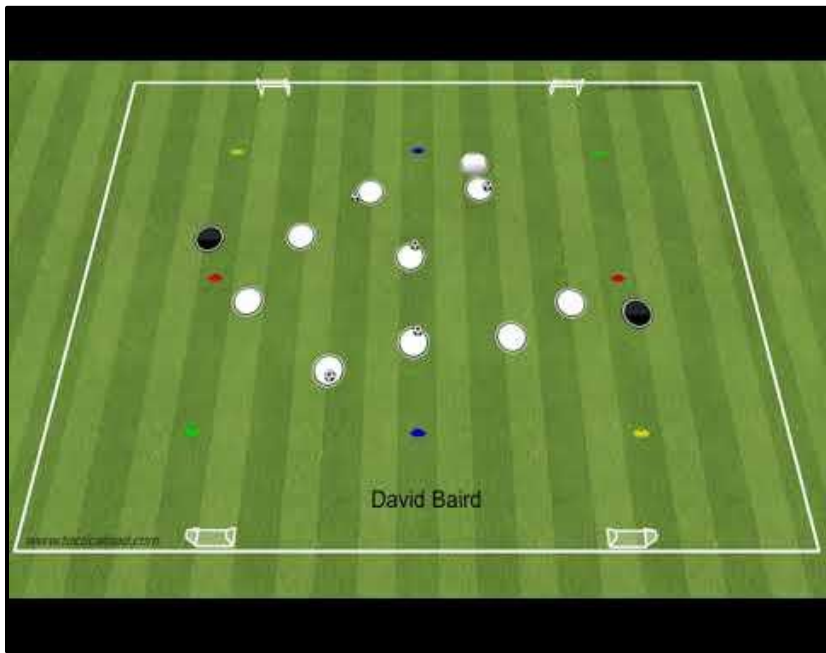
***practice** - play - **practice** - play*

***play** - play - play - play*

***play** - **practice** - **practice** - play*



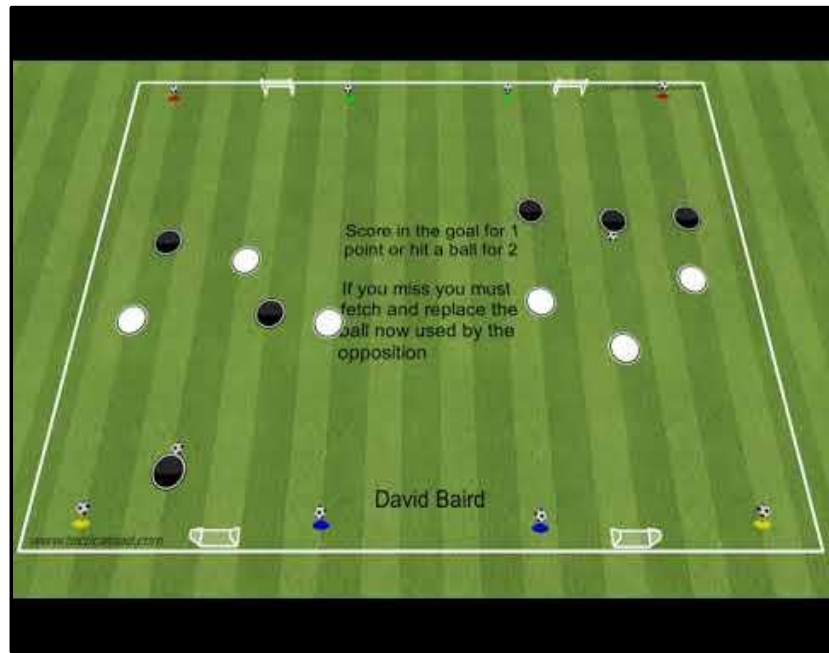
*You may choose content from this resource that have a common theme to create a session? Or content that doesn't link in at all? Chaos is a great teacher. Your plan may go out the window when delivering if a component of your session is going really well and achieving its objectives. Therefore you simply prolong that activity.*



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## Practice 9

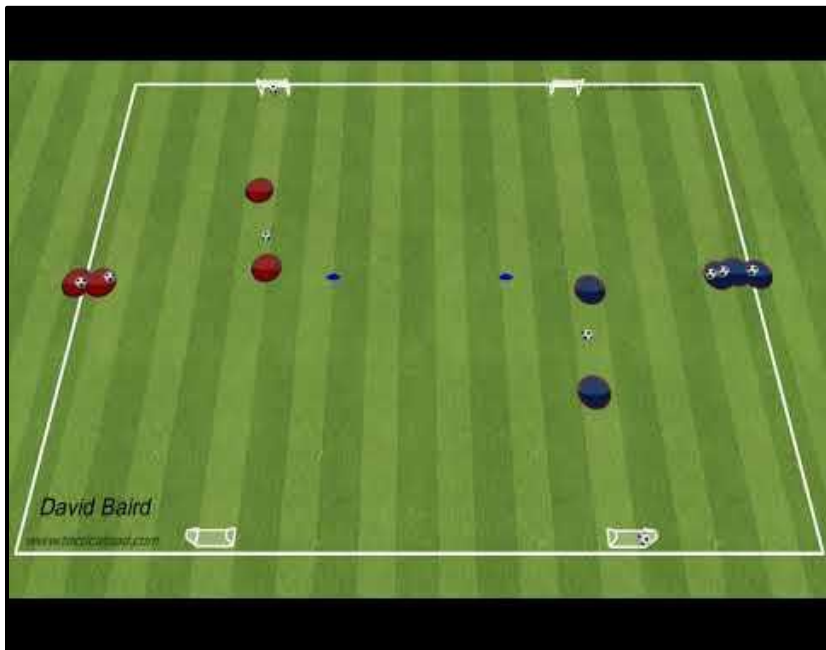
Players who don't have a ball must stand still, those with the ball must create angles to pass while avoiding defenders.



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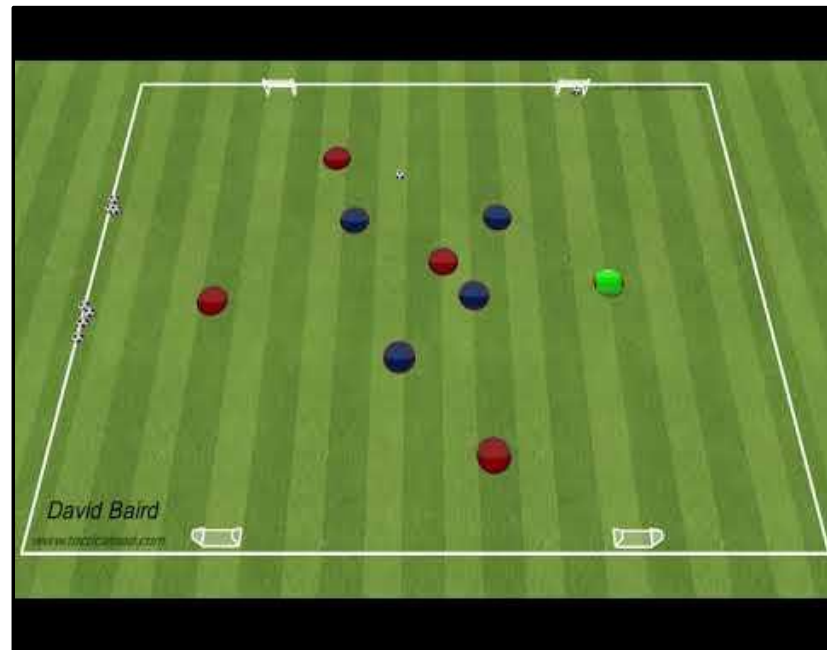
## Play 9

3v3 With various targets to aid deception and disguise when passing/dribbling.



## Practice 10

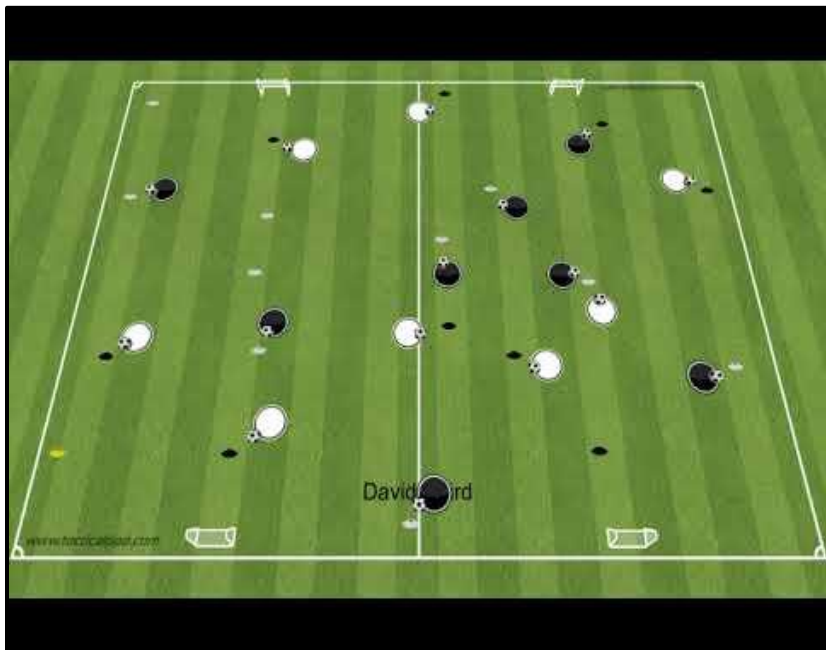
A shooting practice with different variations for players.



## Play 10

4v4+1 With the condition teams must make a minimum of 3 consecutive passes before scoring in any goal.





## Practice 11

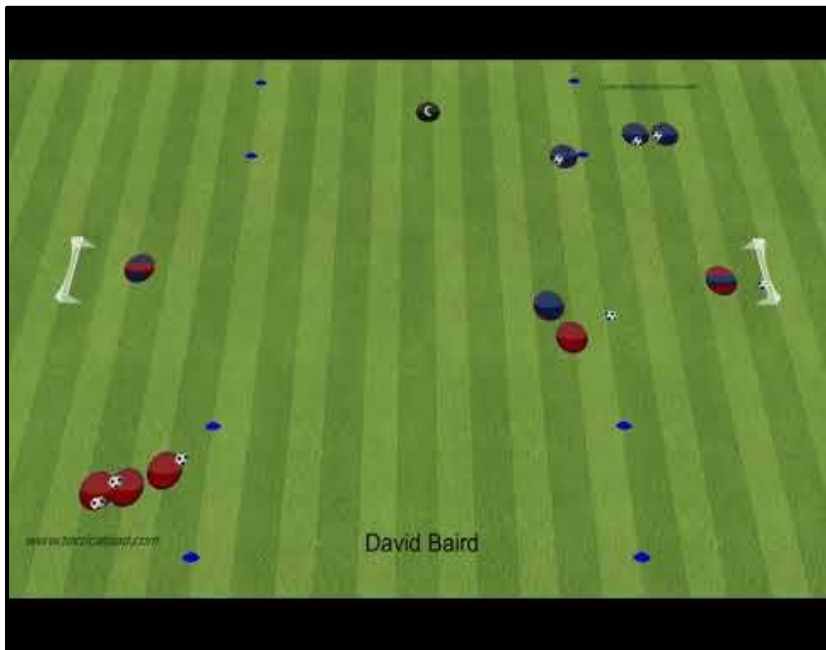
There are black cones with white underneath and vice versa. Aim is to get as many of your teams cones on top as possible.



## Play 11

The idea of the previous practice is brought into the games now and acts as the scoreboard in the middle.

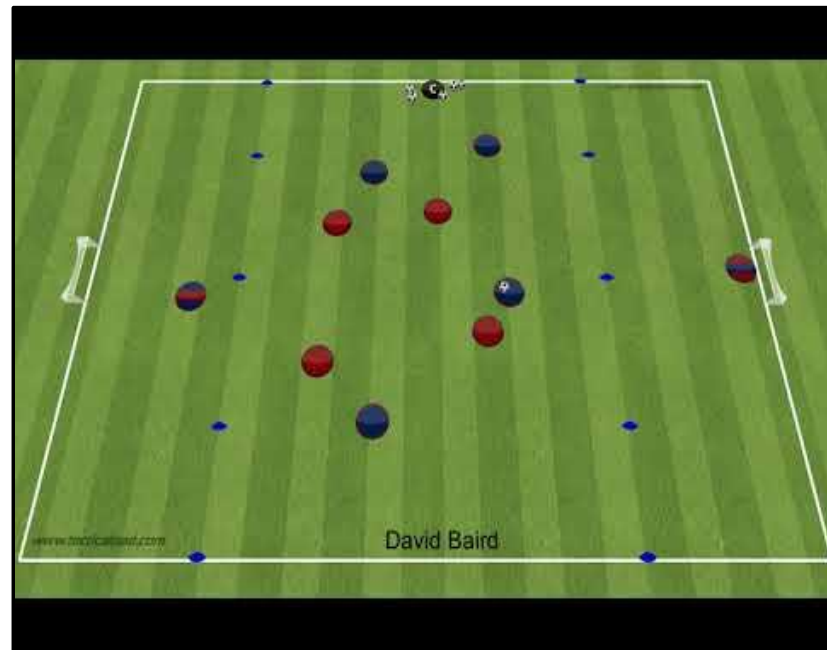




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## Practice 12

Players attack, defend, then join their own line ready to go again in this quick paced 1v1 practice.



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## Play 12

A game to encourage running with the ball. You must dribble into oppositions end zone before being able to score.

# Suggested Area Sizes



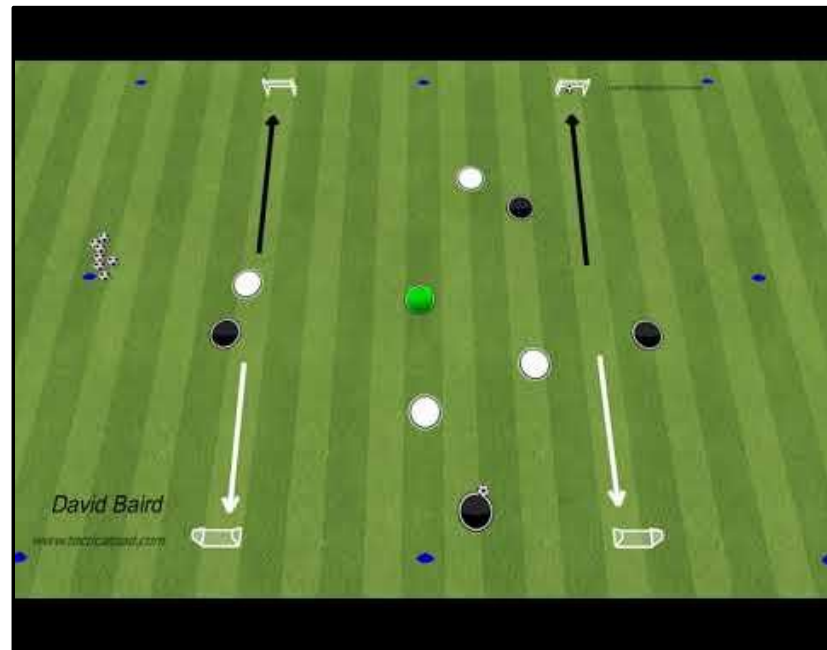
Use the area size for both the 'Practice' and 'Play' aspect of your session to minimise transition time from one component to another.

<u>Players</u>	<u>Area (yards)</u>
6v6	55 x 40
5v5	45 x 35
4v4	40 x 25
3v3	30 x 20
2v2	25 x 15
1v1	15 x 12



## Practice 13

1v2 Practice towards 2 mini goals. Group split into 2 and would be working at the same time to maximise involvement.



## Play 13

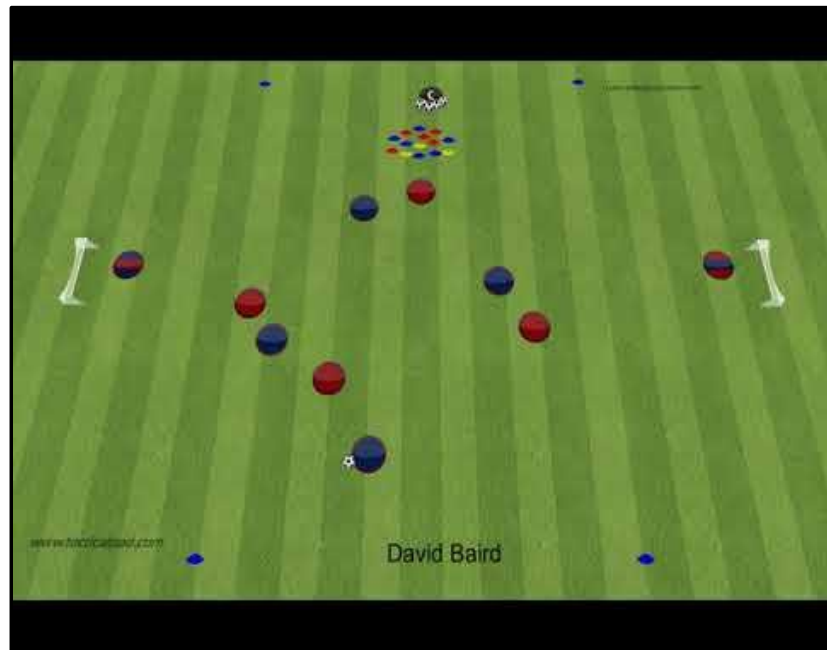
4v4+1 With each team tasked with attacking and defending 2 goals.



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## Practice 14

Fast paced practice, plenty of opportunities for players to practice passing, dribbling, shooting and defending.



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## Play 14

Find the coin. 5 Seconds to look under a cone when you score/coach picks you for positive play. Progress to throw used cones away.



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## Practice 15

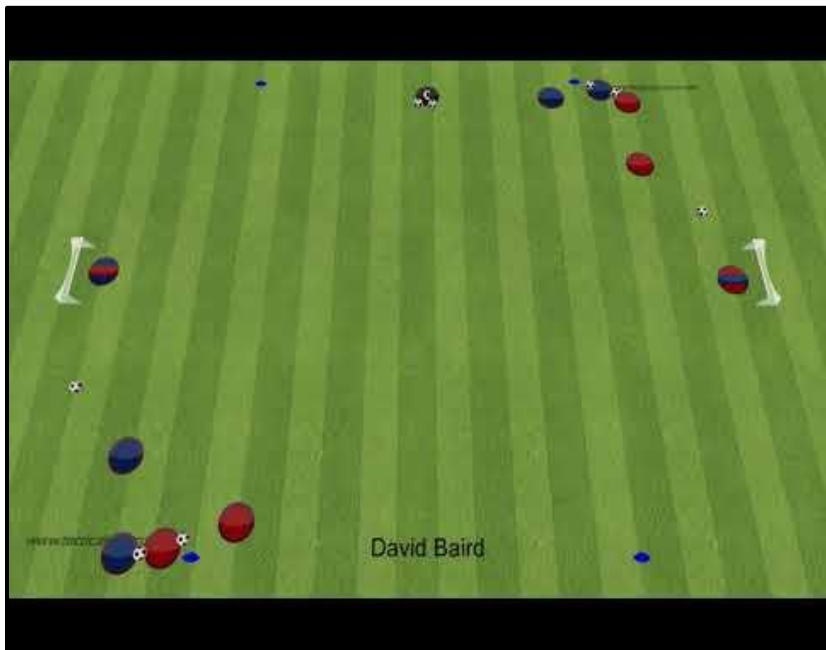
2 Defenders attempt to guard 3 gates, players get a point for each gate they get through.



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## Play 15

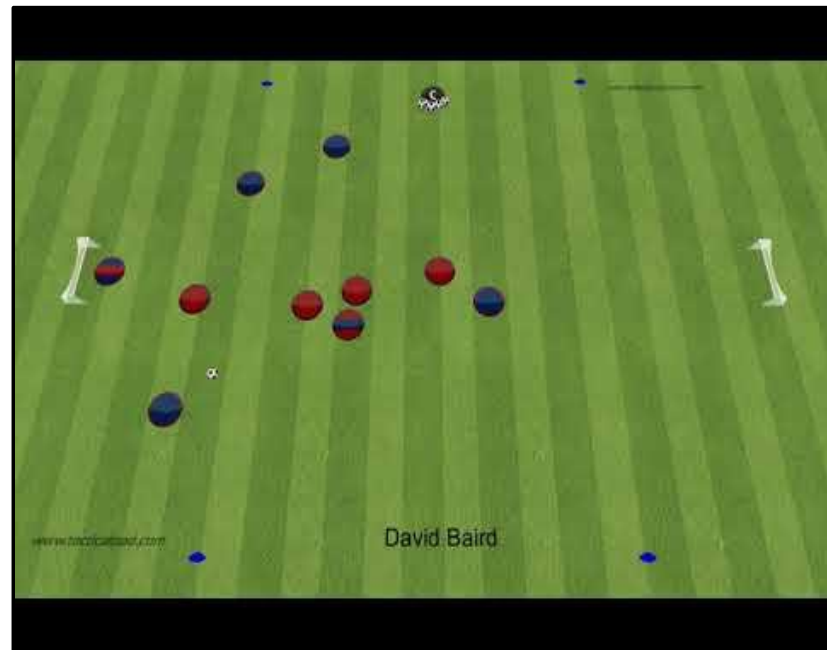
An environment to engage players in dribbling and the decision making of when / where to dribble, pass or shoot.



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## Practice 16

Simple shooting set up that can be easily adapted into fun races or 1v1s to goal. Can also vary the feed to work on volleys.



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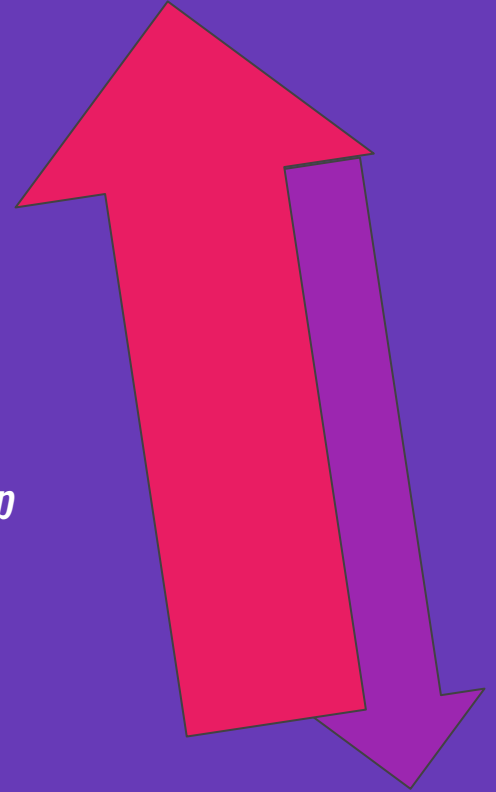
## Play 16

5v5 The GK for team in possession must join the play, staying higher than the line of cones.

# Environment UP

# Instruction down

*Plan sessions to create positive learning environments and reduce instruction from the coach, especially generic instruction to the group that may only be relevant to some players. Set the environment so everyone is practicing or playing football then support or stretch individuals relative to their specific needs and ability level.*



# 4 Step Development Model

## 1. ENVIRONMENT (*up*)

Use the wheel shown to design conducive learning environments.

## 2. INSTRUCTION (*down*)

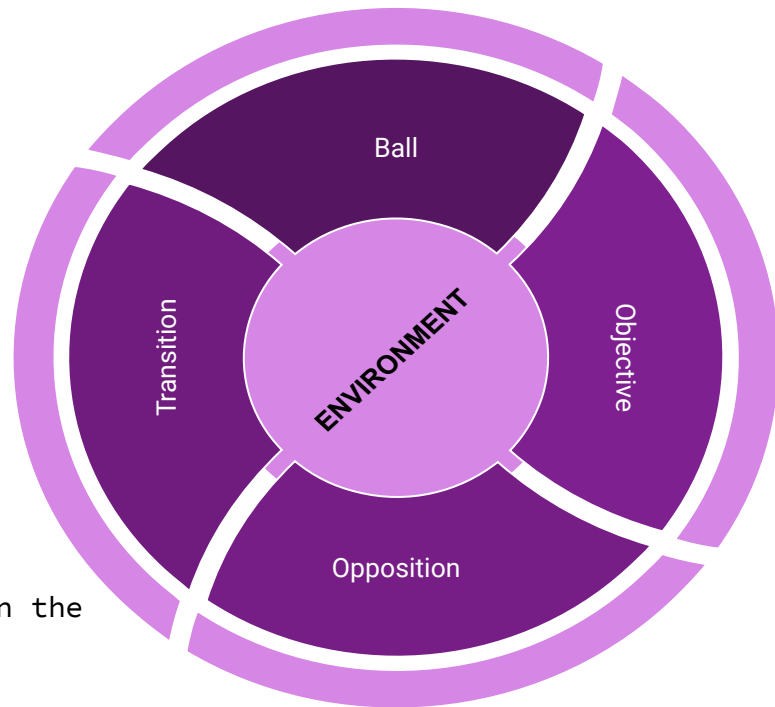
Be mindful of over instruction. Show patience and constraint as players try and solve the problems created by your environment.

## 3. FEEDBACK (*throughout*)

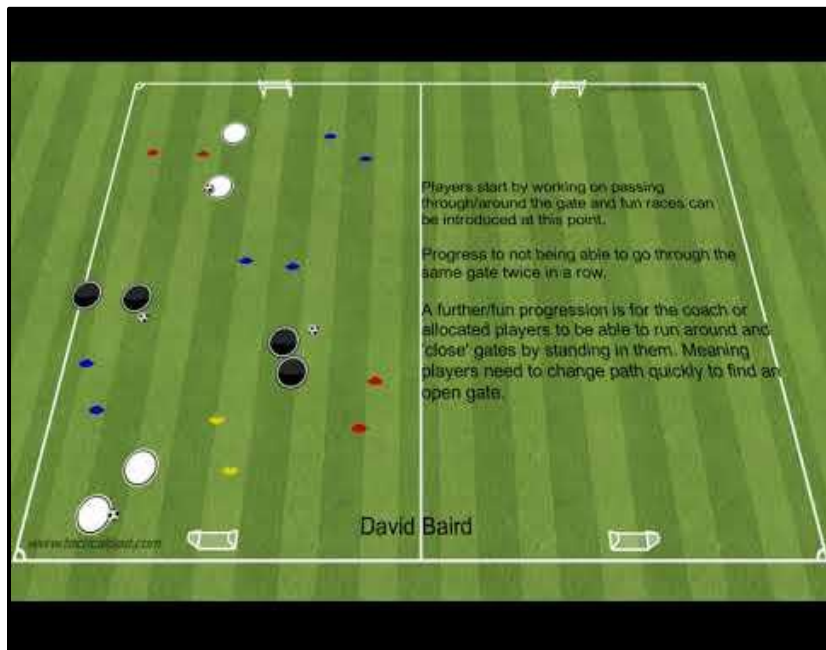
Observe as players confront the challenges within your environment and provide constructive feedback. Either through coaching points or using Q & A depending on the needs of the player.

## 4. REFLECTION (*always*)

Reflect on the planning and delivery of every session and ask players for their feedback. Be brave, try new things, make mistakes. Players develop by playing, coaches develop by coaching

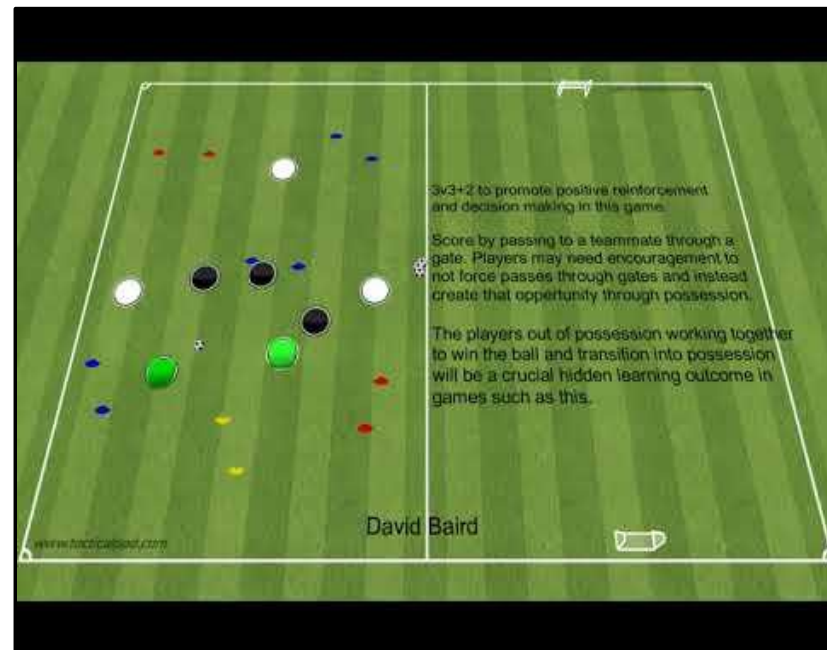






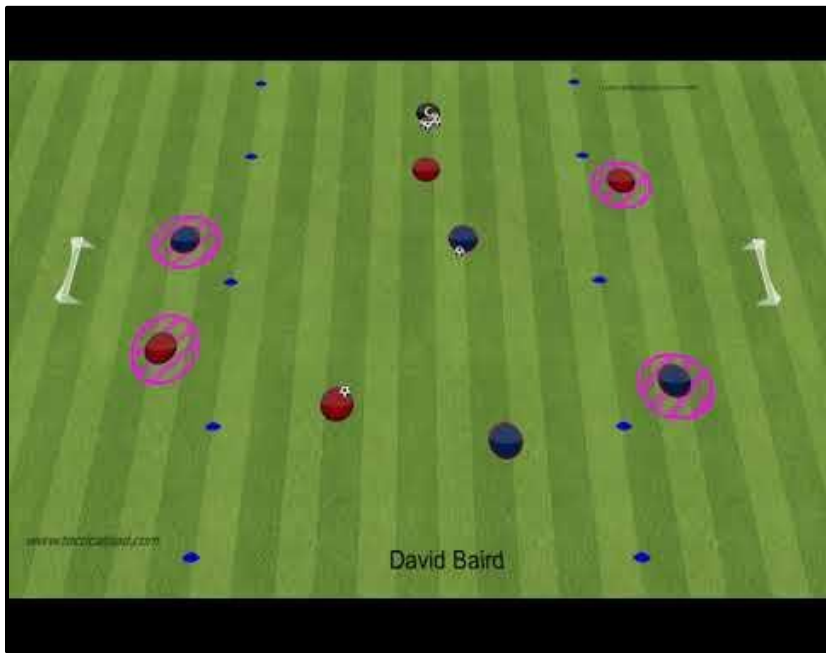
## Practice 17

Plenty of passing and receiving repetition in this easily adapted practice.



## Play 17

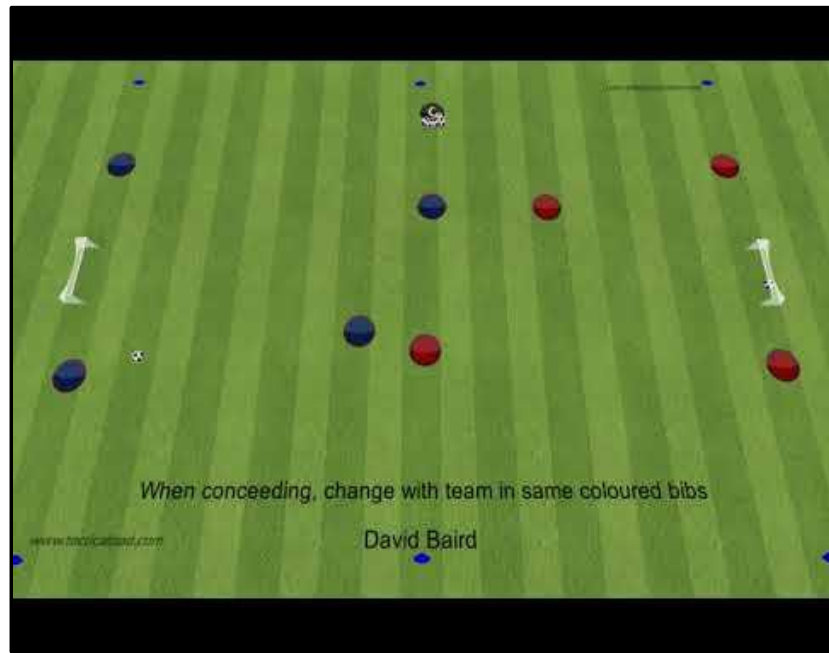
A possession based game to encourage passing, moving and teamwork.



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## Practice 18

Work on scanning, quick passing and moving in this environment. Rotational progression shown in animation.



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## Play 18

2v2+4 Game with a lot of hidden learning and disguised fitness. Encourage players to find quick solutions to goal.



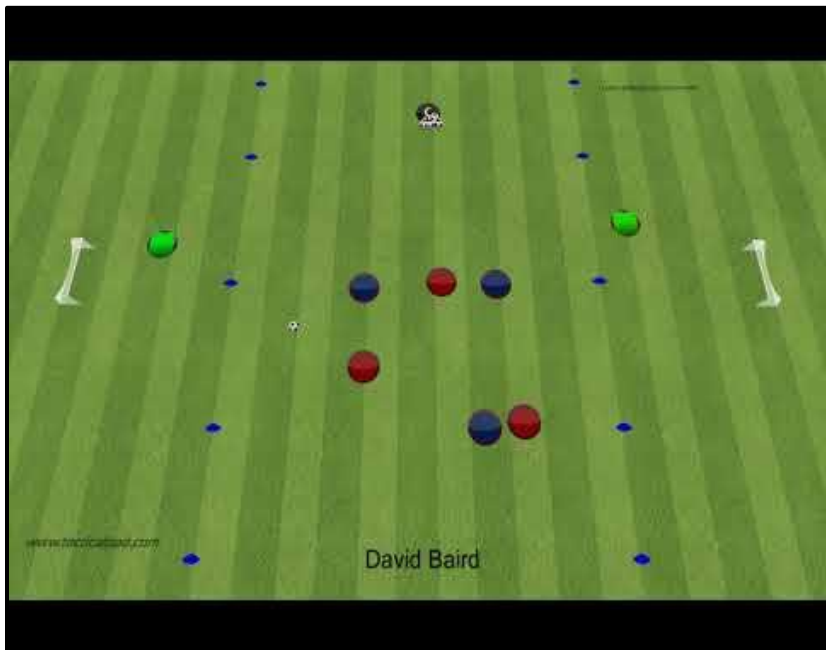
## Practice 19

Simple 1v1 exercise involving a wall player that players may want to use or use as a decoy before taking the defender on?



## Play 19

Attack and defend 2 goals with 1 keeper. Scanning and switching play likely to be crucial for success.



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## Practice 20

Look to play the ball from 1 target player to the other in this possession practice.



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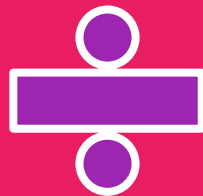
## Play 20

Use your own zone for unopposed possession if needed but to score must pass/receive in opposition zone. Shooting progression shown.

# Conducive Learning

*The practices and games shown are designed to grant players freedom to practice and problem solve. As a coach we should resist the temptation to give answers and solve problems for players as this would take away their ownership of learning. This is something that's crucial to their development and to the development of football!*

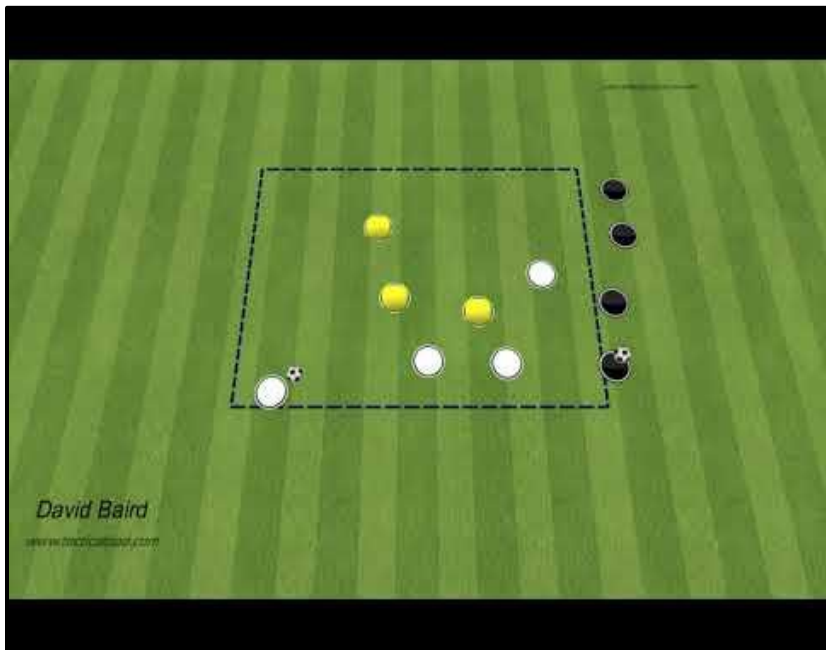
*Don't tell them how the game should be played. Let them discover how the game could be played.*



# Compulsive Fun

*Be the best part of their week.  
Some players will come to training because they love the  
game, some will come because they love the coach.*

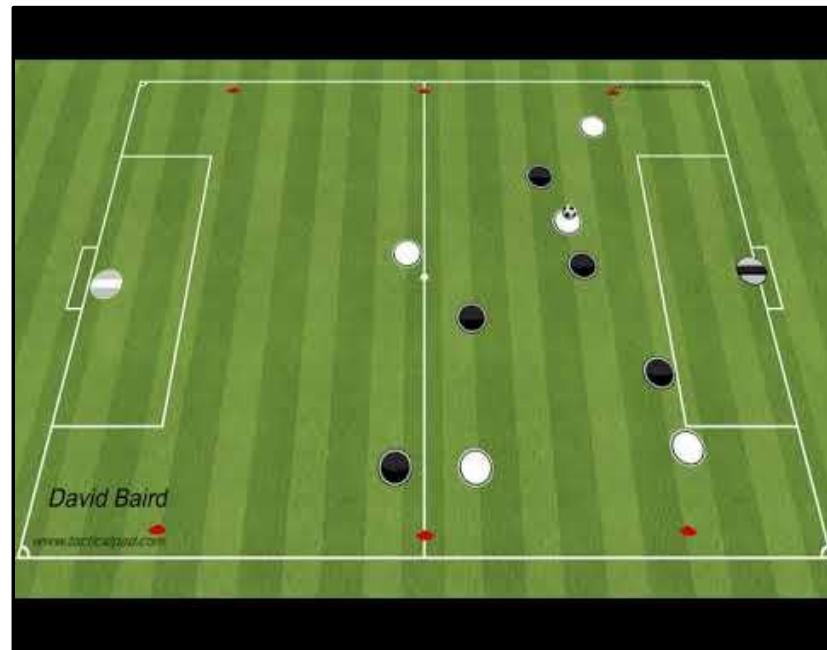




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## Practice 21

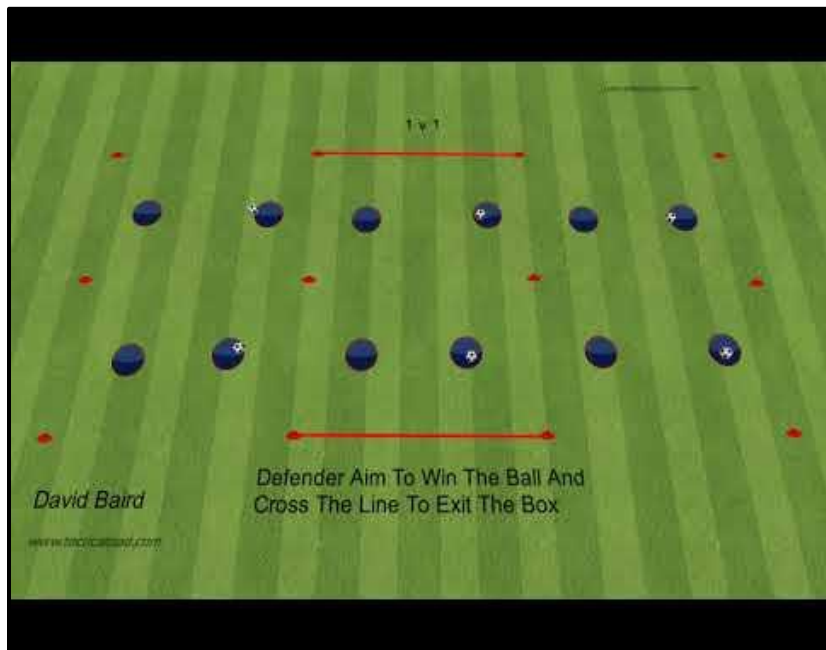
Promote a ruthless approach in players as they try get from 1 side of the area to the other by the quickest/safest means possible.



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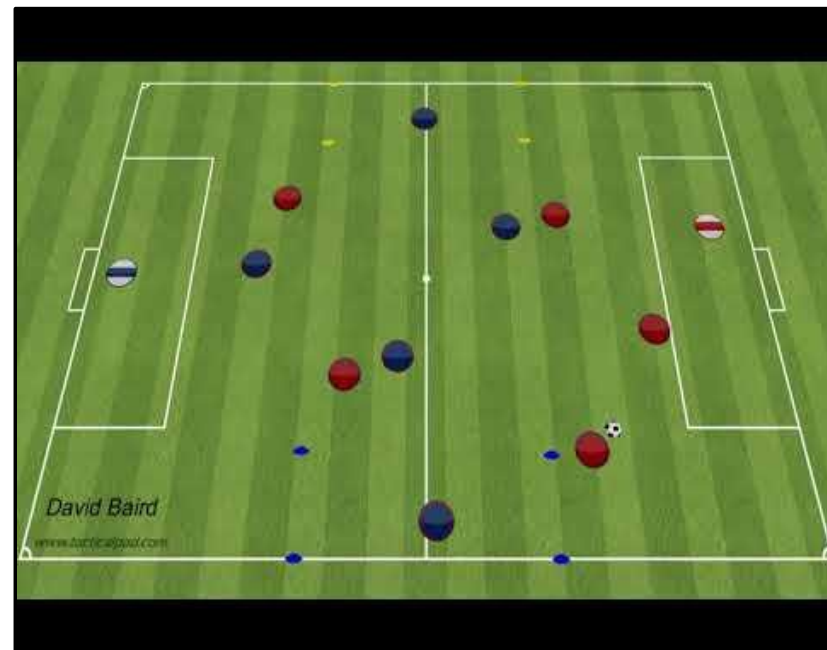
## Play 21

If a player loses possession of the ball they must run around a cone before re-entering the game.



## Practice 22

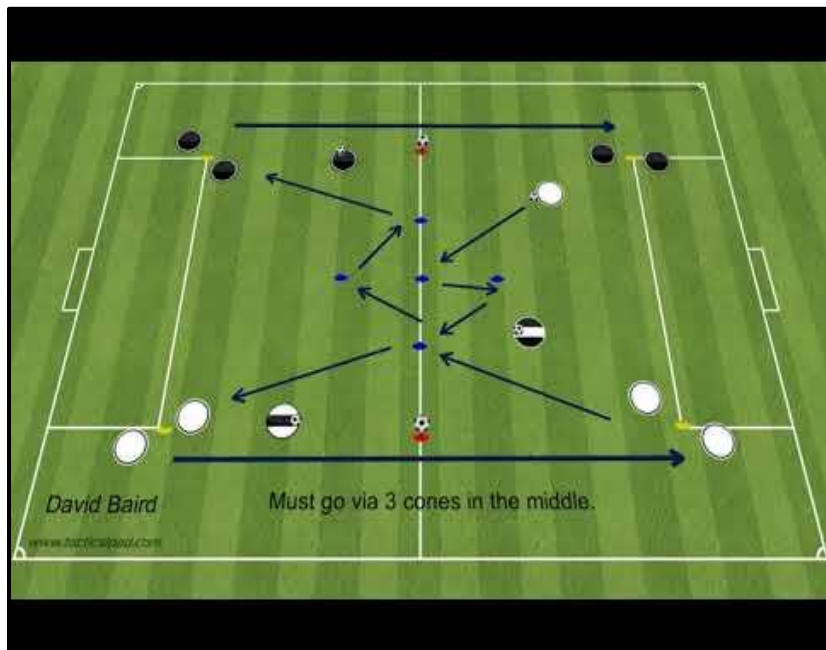
Grids to practice 1v1s. Can be used as a competition with players moving up and down the grid if they win or lose their 1v1.



## Play 22

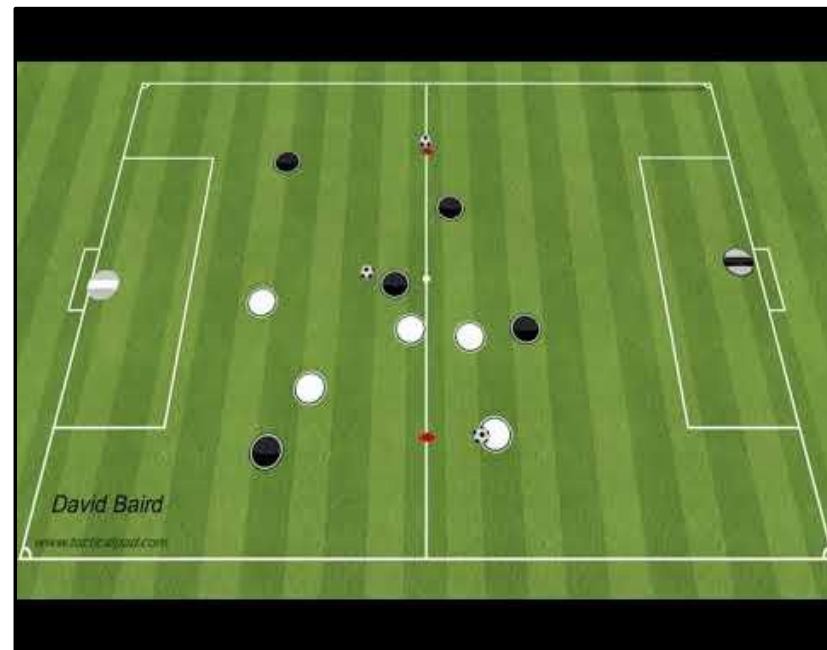
A team can only score when it has freed any of it's players within the coned areas. Closest opposition player must fill the box.





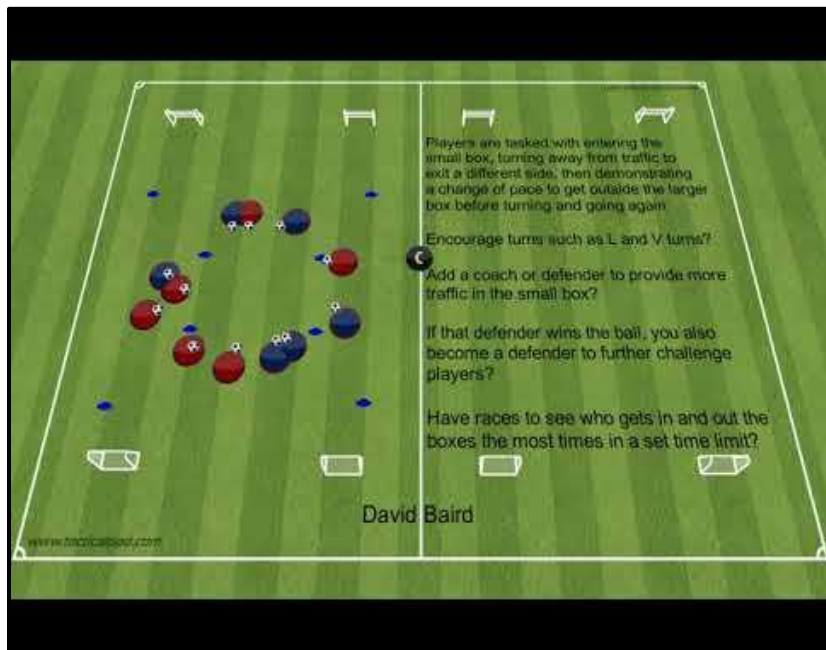
## Practice 23

Foot skills practice to get players moving and changing direction with the ball at their feet.



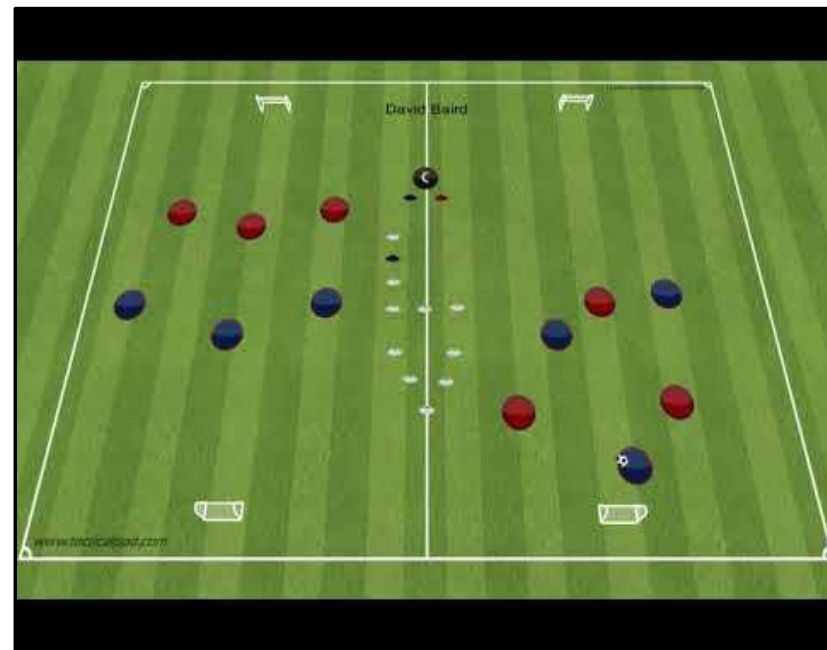
## Play 23

Goalscorers replace the ball taken by the other team who re-start play immediately. May apply this to the ball going out of play too.



## Practice 24

This challenging environment can be adjusted to encourage close control, changing direction and changing speed.



## Play 24

A game where coaches reward goals and positive play using central scoreboard. You may want to reward turning, L and V turns etc.

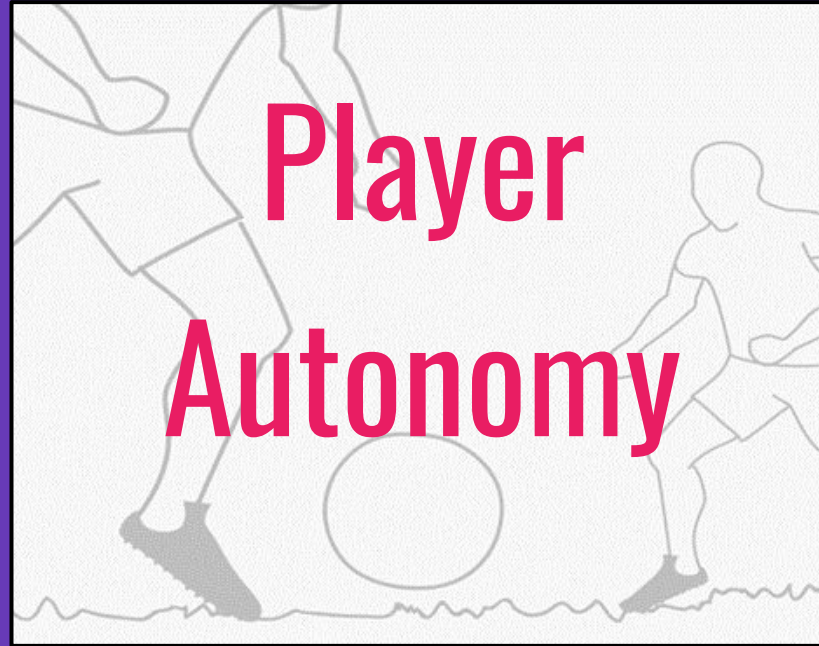
Allow the players to pick the teams.

Allow the players to pick/design the practices or games.

Allow players to be captains or referees in games.

Ask players what they would like to do at training.

Build in some free play during sessions, let them be kids interacting with other kids.



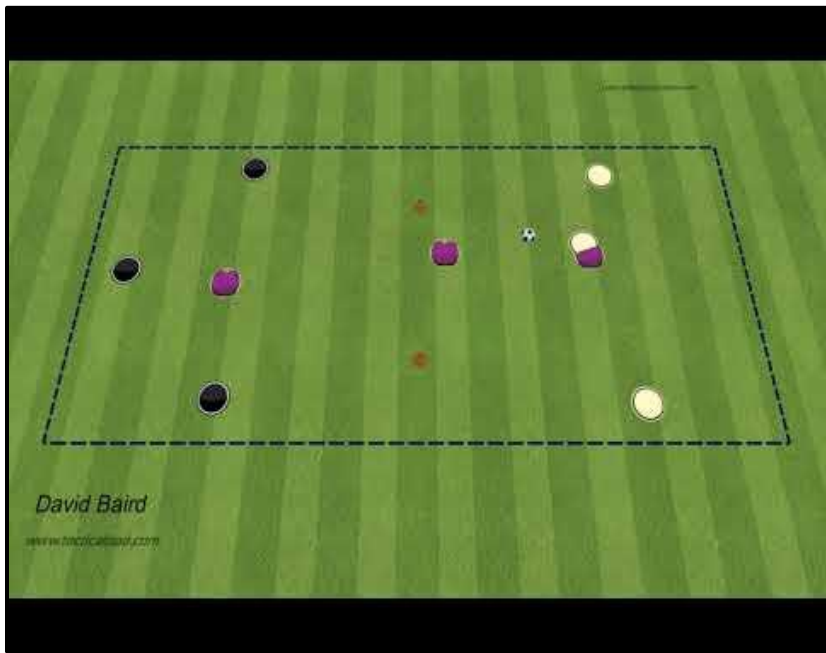
Let players know they can set up a practice or game on arrival.

Allow the players to make their own decisions when playing.

Ask questions to understand them and their thought processes better.

Take a genuine interest in them as people not just players.

Welcome new ideas.



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## Practice 25

6v3 Rondo to work on angles and technique for passing and receiving.



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## Play 25

Skill and strategy a key part of this fun 'knock over the cones' game. Ensure you have plenty of bonus balls ready.



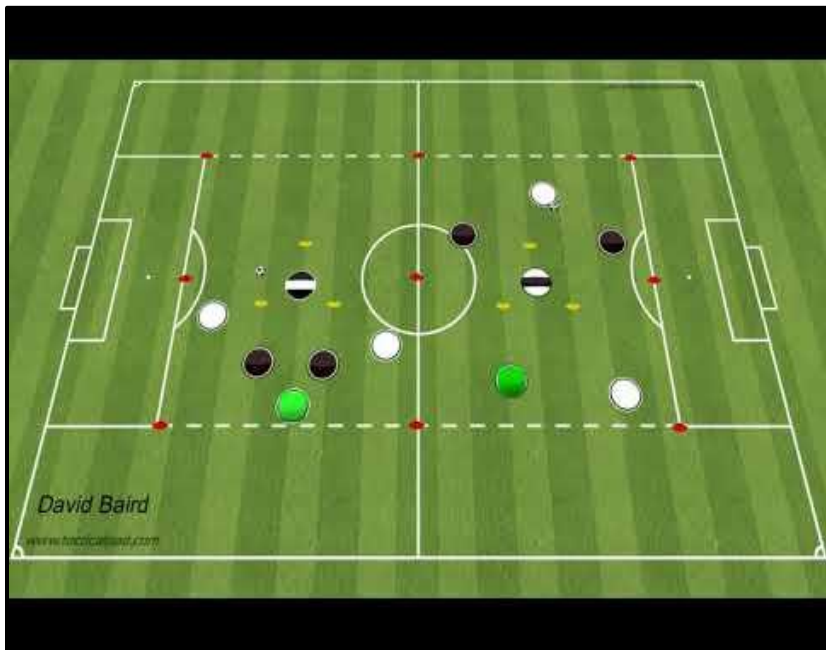
## Practice 26

A challenge to perform as many turns/skills as possible being aware of obstacles, other players and defenders.



## Play 26

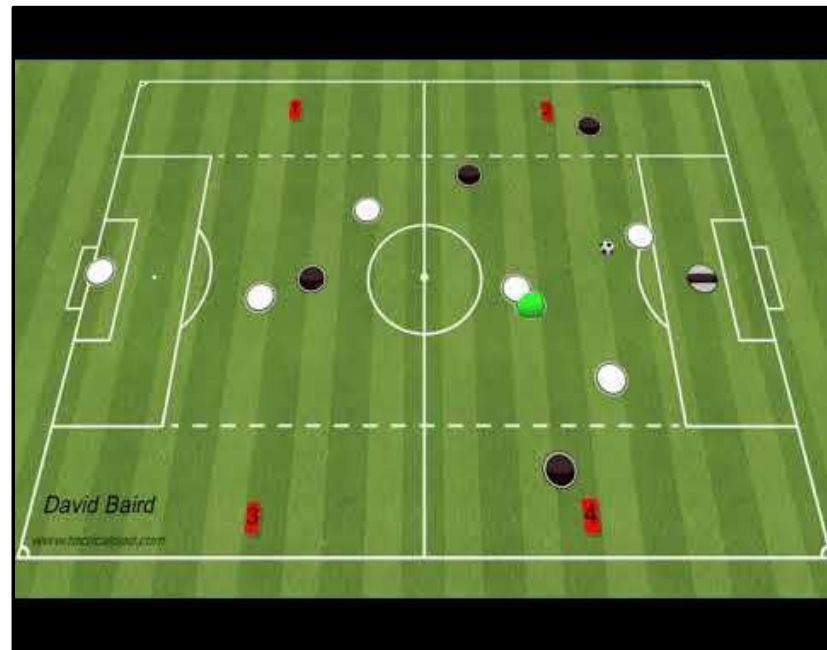
Cones all over the pitch to test scanning, passing and ball manipulation. Goal for other team if you hit a cone while playing.



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## Practice 27

Central coned area represents a goal. Teams aim to make a minimum of 2 passes before shooting through the area which has a GK.

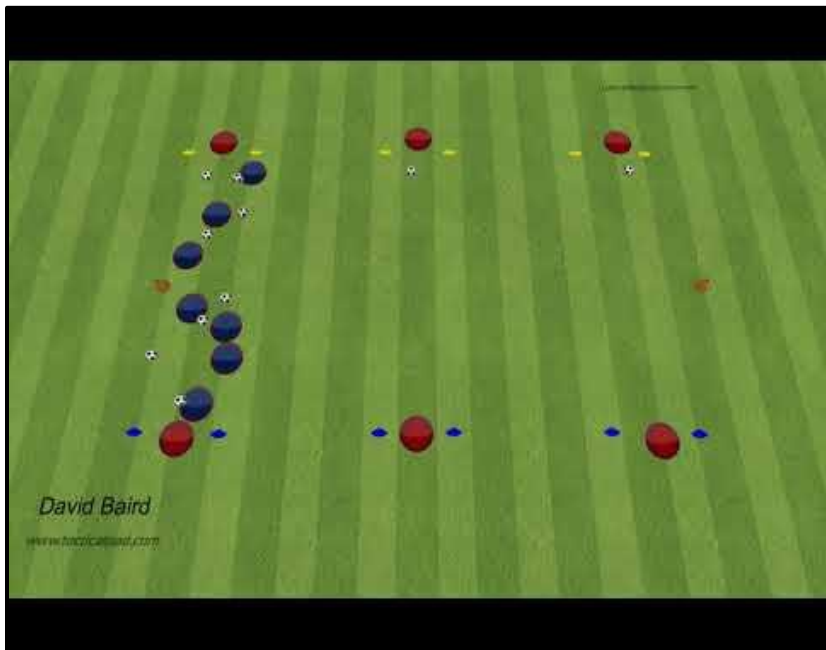


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## Play 27

Touch the ball in 2 zones before scoring. Progression: The amount of zones you visit before scoring is how many goals awarded.

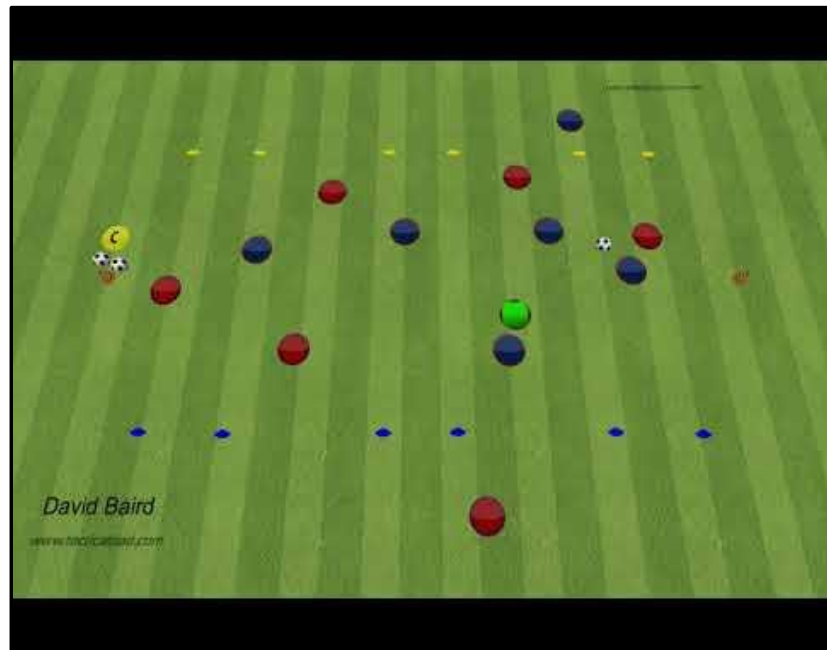




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## Practice 28

How many passes can be made before the dribbling team get across the grid 6 times? Everyone avoid footballs colliding.



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## Play 28

The environment here promotes switches of play and goalkeeper footwork/diving. Score through any of the 3 gates provided.

# ***‘Where are the coaching points?!’***

This resource aims to limit instruction and promote conducive learning environments through practice and play.  
To develop critical thinking players I believe it's important to encourage critical thinking in coaches.

## **Conventional Approach:**

*Coach educator provides coach with preconceived coaching points.*

*Coach provides all players with preconceived coaching points.*

*Players receive second hand coaching points that may not be relevant to their individual needs. May actually be counterintuitive.*

## **Suggested Alternative:**

*Coach educator provides coaches with ideas and environments to promote learning.*

*Coach implements these environments / adaptations relevant to the players.*

*Individual players are engaged in a two way communication with the coach to be supported / challenged where necessary.*

***Avoid 'Blanket Coaching'. Meet players where they are on their journey. You aren't delivering a session for 15 players.  
You're delivering a session for Meghan, Rosa, James, Christopher, etc.***





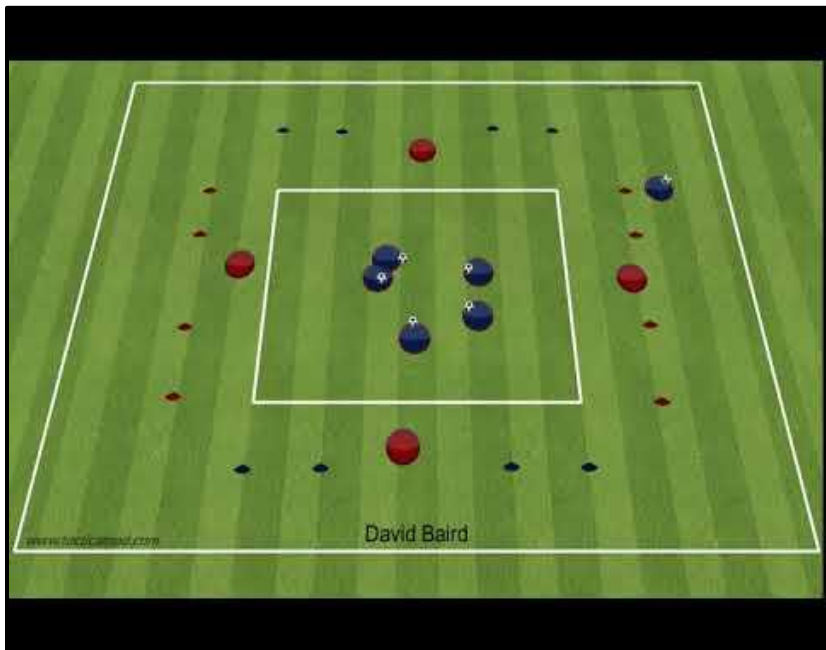
## Practice 29

2v1 With oncoming second defender. Short eight second games with appropriate rest between rounds for players.



## Play 29

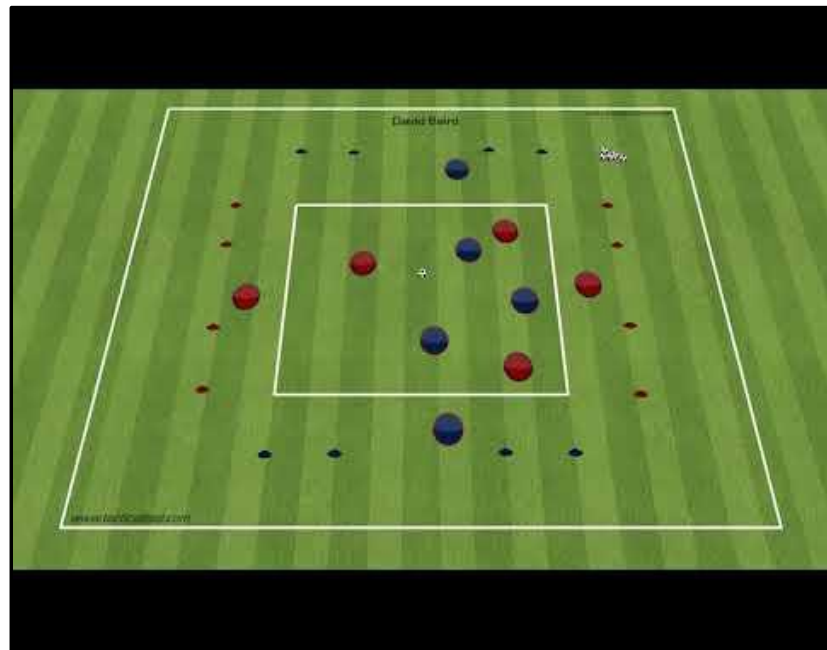
Eight second games to promote quick solutions to goal. Simple rotation as shown, apply a relevant work to rest ratio for players.



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## Practice 30

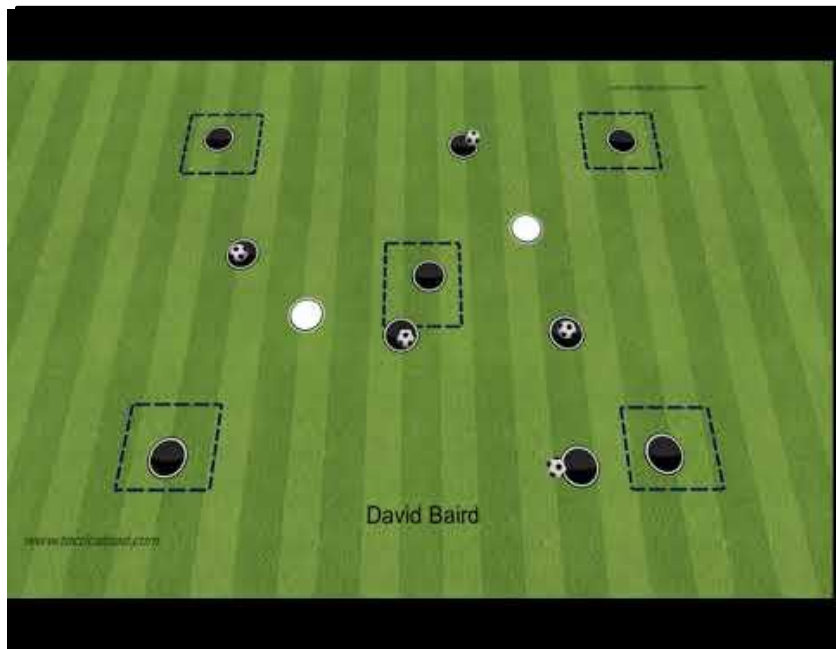
1 Defender guards 2 gates which the attackers are trying to get through for a point. Swap defenders frequently.



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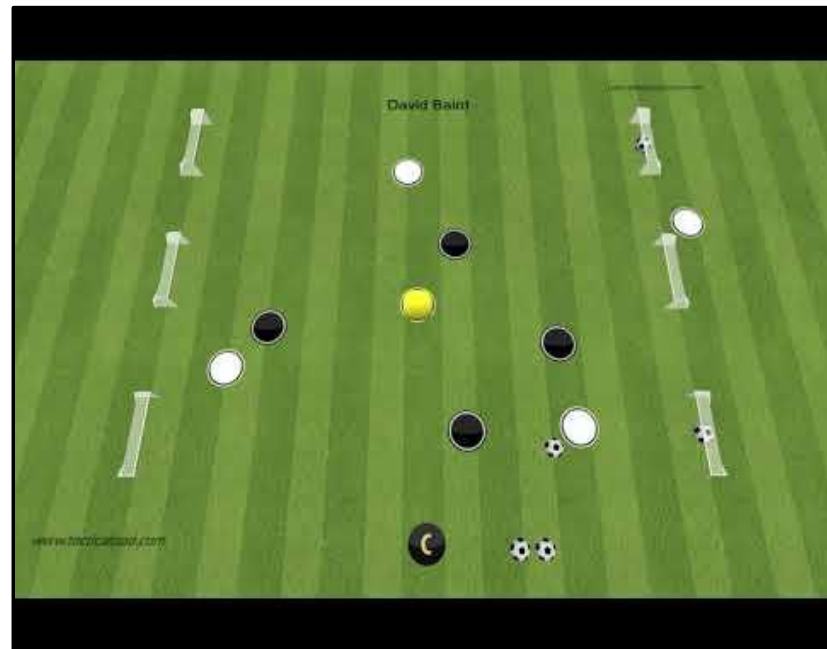
## Play 30

Multi directional game with lots of passing, turning, moving, scanning and defending.



## Practice 31

Short movements to receive a pass are practiced throughout and communication will help players get success.



## Play 31

Be patient and allow players to discover the benefit of reacting quickly and moving away from the ball at times.



## Practice 32

GK Distribution, 1v1 attacking/defending and finishing are all part of this competitive practice.



## Play 32

Score to earn a bonus shot, but take the opportunity quick so you can get back on to help your outnumbered team asap.

*Presenting children with the opportunity to play in challenging and fun situations allows them to test their understanding and capabilities, while constantly pushing those boundaries.*

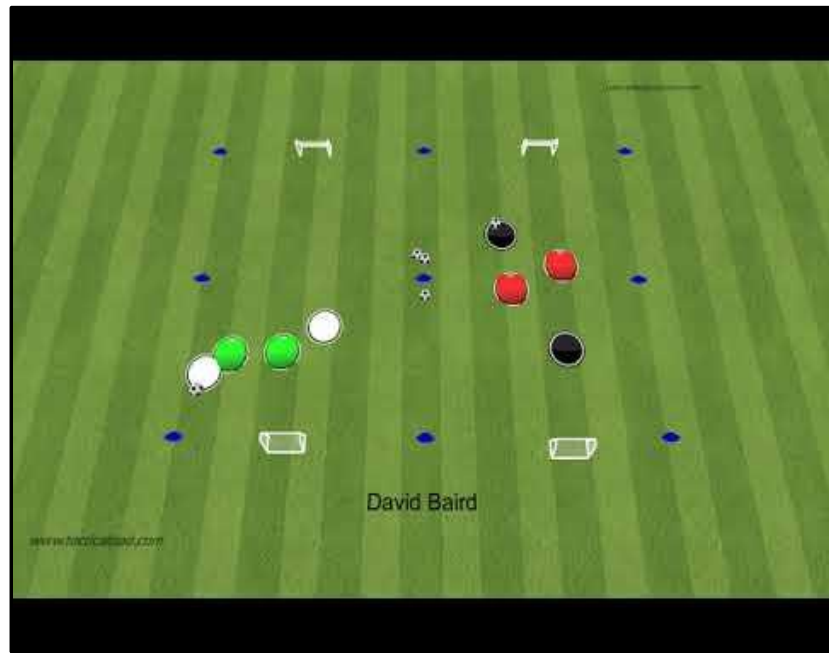
*Showing patience and support during this process is the Lionel Messi of coaching tools.*



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## Practice 33

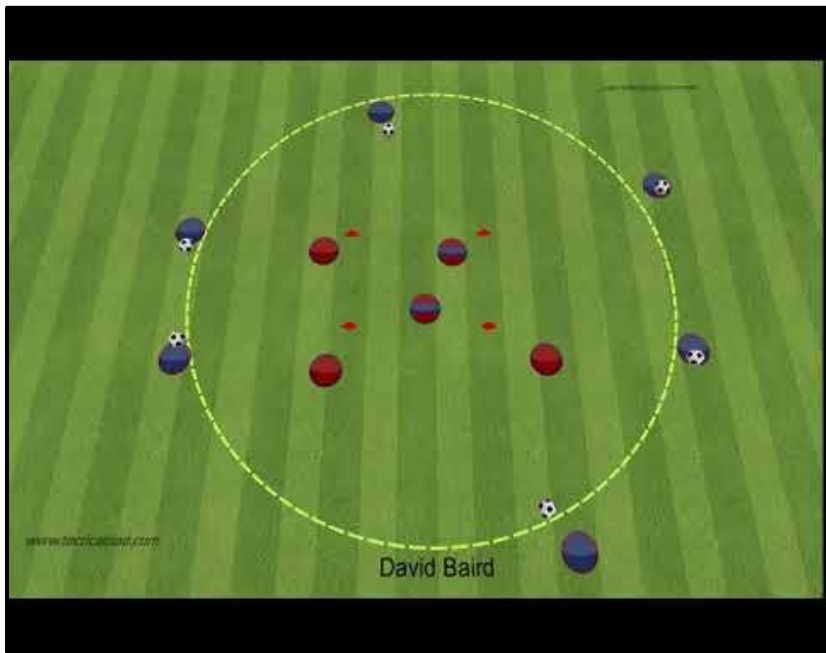
Scanning to receive before driving away with the ball.



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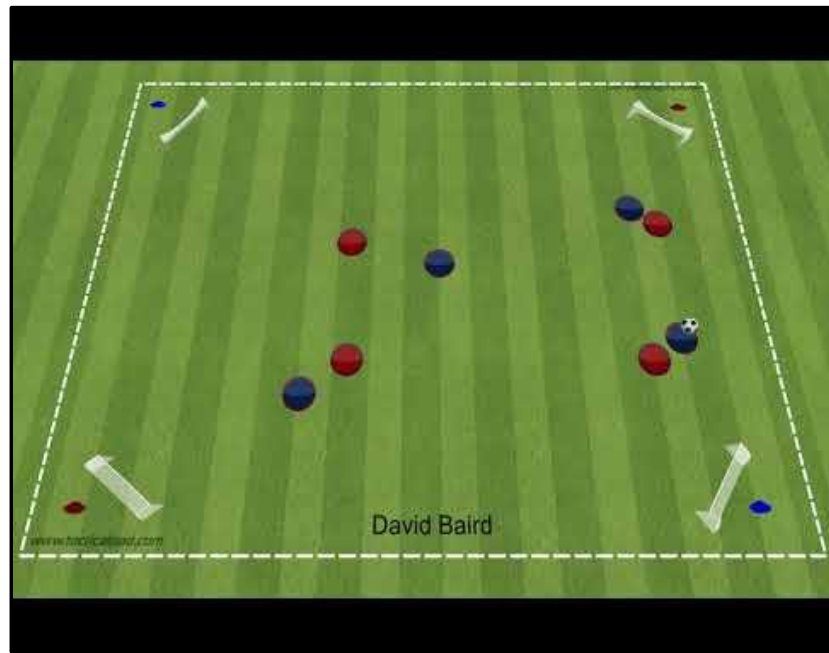
## Play 33

Coach sets the time limit but doesn't tell the players. When the whistle goes, whatever team had scored the last goal has won.



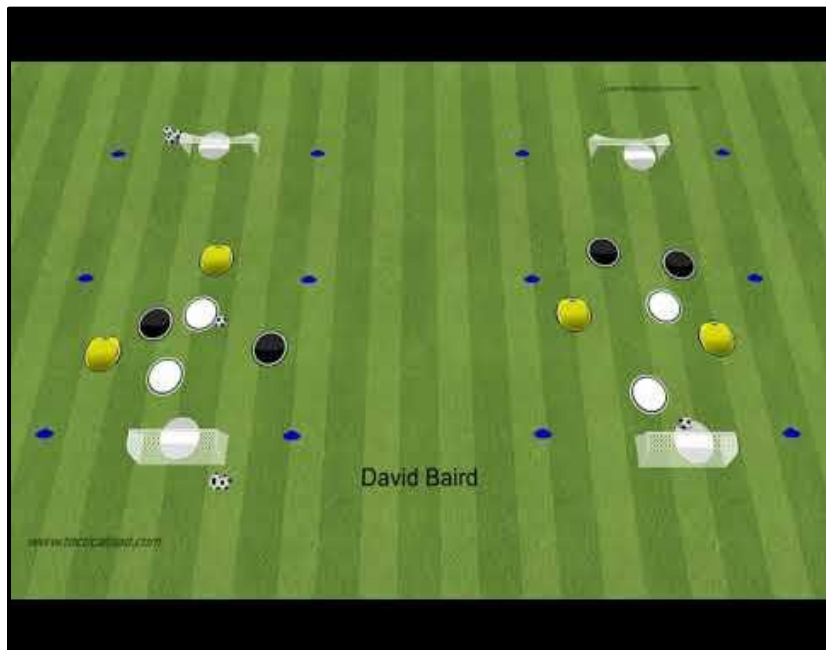
## Practice 34

Find players in the middle with a pass for a point. Defenders work on screening to prevent this.



## Play 34

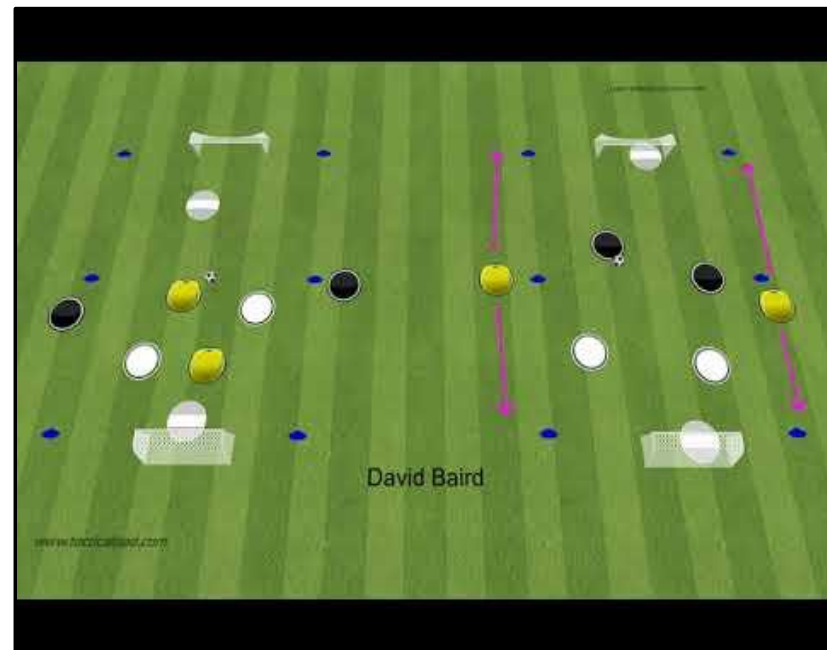
3 Passes minimum before scoring in either goal? Or score in one and must score in the other next? Adaptable environment.



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## Practice 35

Two teams join to play 4v2, team with the last touch defends the next ball. Fun and competitive overloads practice.

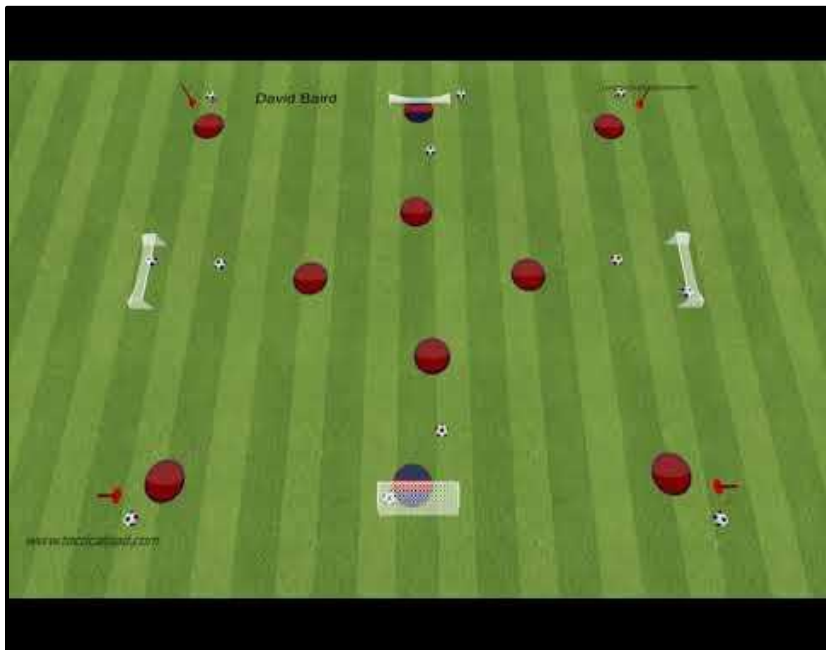


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## Play 35

Winning team stays on. Team in possession can use the wall players. Transition to attack opposite goal when your team scores.

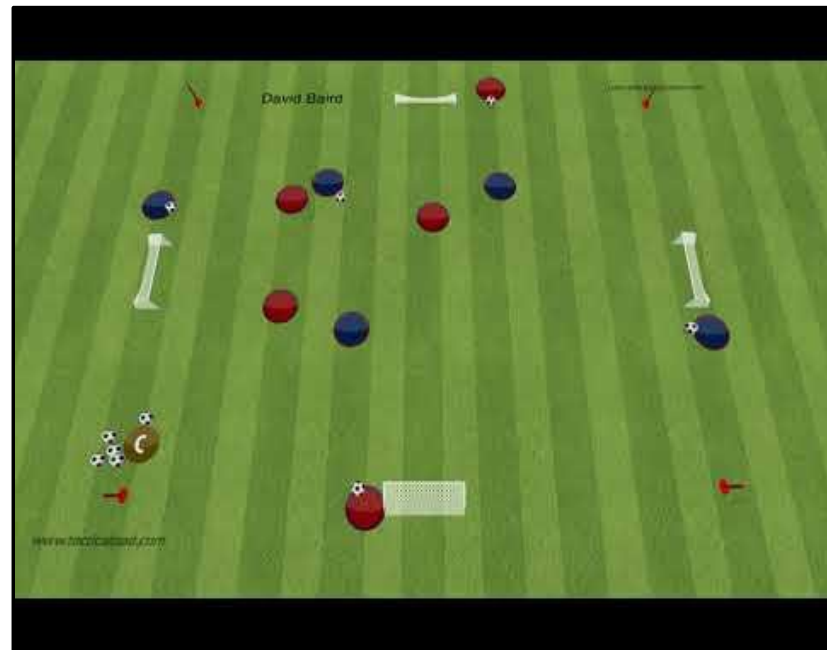




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## Practice 36

Finishing practice that can be easily made competitive. First to a set amount of goals? Miss and become the GK?



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## Play 36

Each team has 2 goals they can attack and players waiting to drive in the pitch and keep the tempo high.

# Enhancing the Environment

Give players open and honest feedback

Ask for open and honest feedback from them

Enthusiastic body language

Have fun

Reflect on sessions:

What went well?  
What was challenging?  
Adaptations for future?

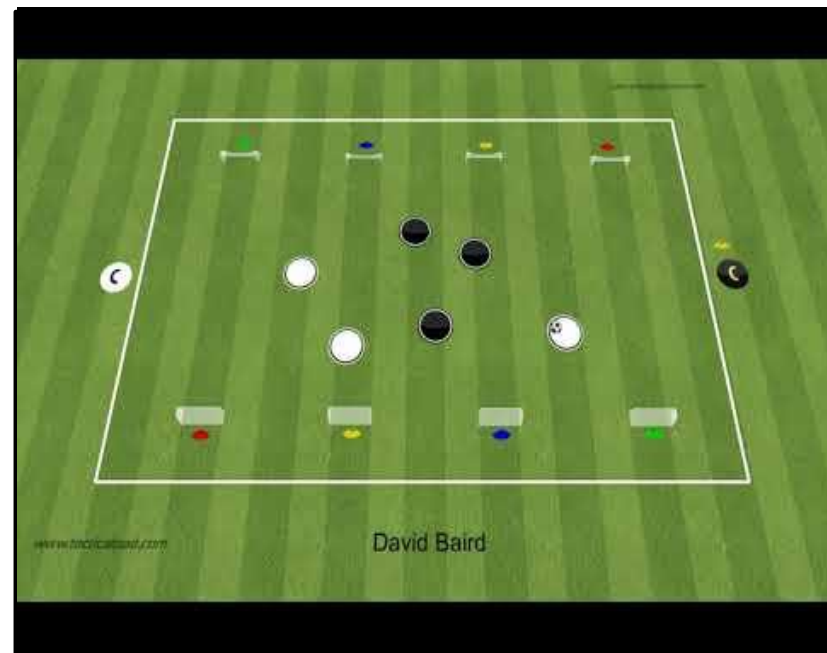
Ask open questions that engage players to think about the session and the learning involved

Prepare sessions so there is a seamless transitions between components, keeping players engaged



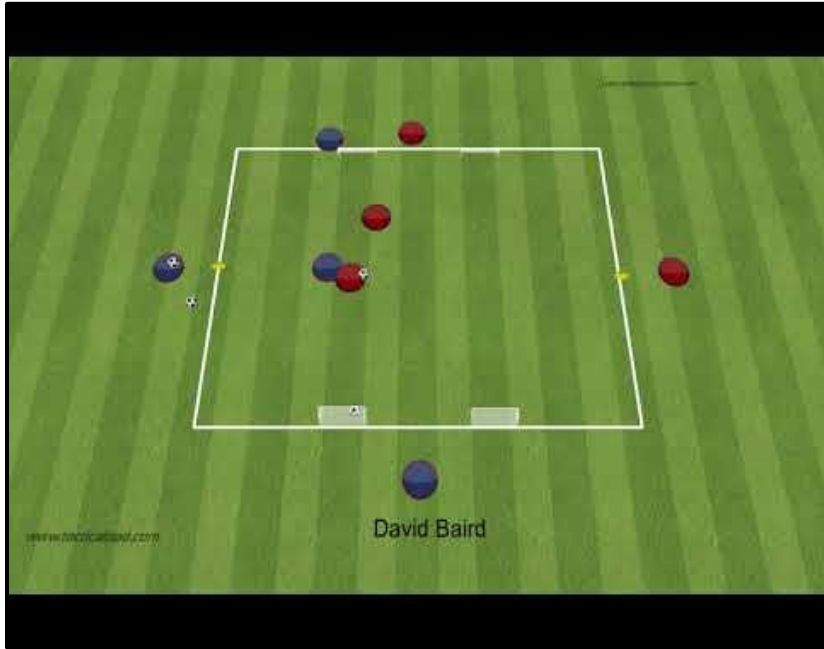
## Practice 37

Coach for each team signals what goals are open to their players. Scanning and strategy key consideration for the players.



## Play 37

Scanning. Team can only score in the goals their coach is indicating by raising coloured cone (s).



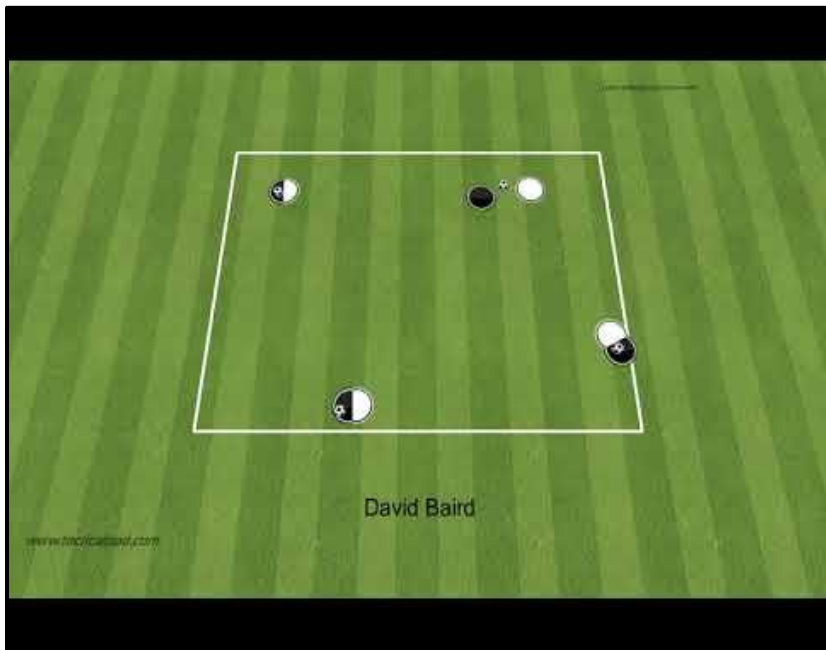
## Practice 38

Defenders practice defending outnumbered and recovery runs while attackers play quick in an attempt to get success.



## Play 38

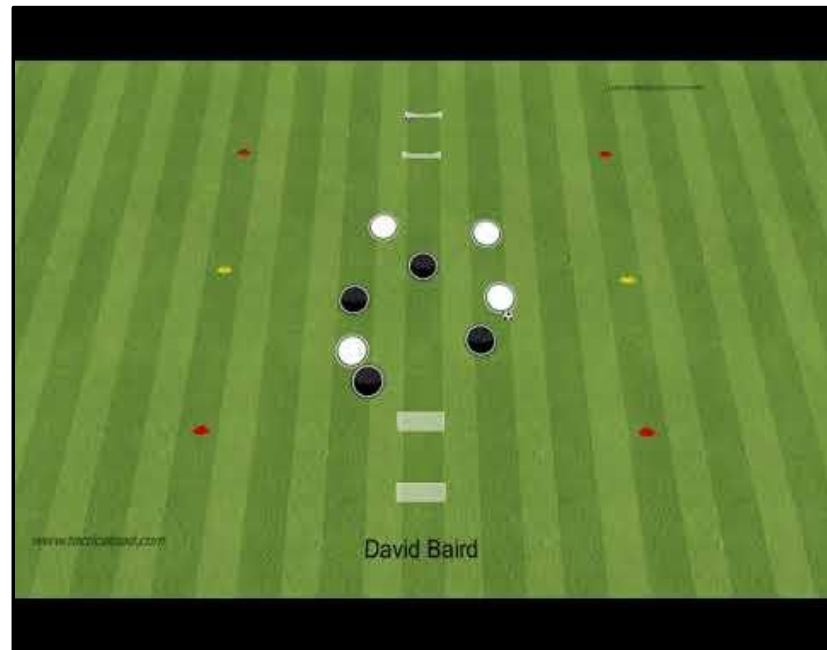
Wide players help the team in possession by getting wide early on turnovers. Then being creative with the ball.



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## Practice 39

2 Players battle to take / keep 1 ball.  
Short time limited activity facilitated by  
coach. Swap partners often.



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## Play 39

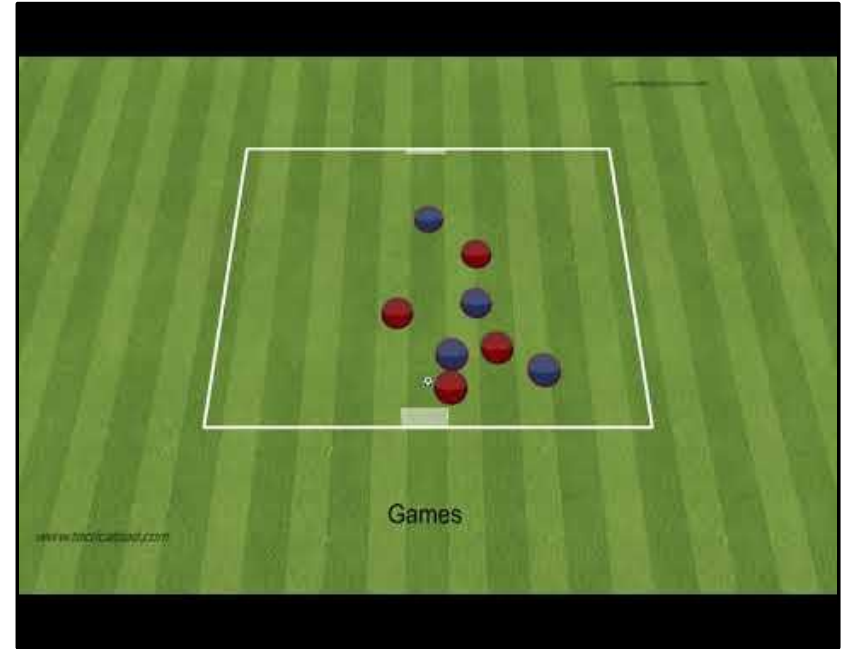
Game where players can score in either goal.  
Must dribble across the red line of cones  
before scoring in the back goal (unopposed).



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## Practice 40

Playground. Unstructured and child led play.



---

## Play 40

Games. Football with no conditions or instructions.

**Recurrent Plan  
(example):**

*practice*

*play*

*practice*

*play*

**PLAYGROUND**

Unstructured and child led  
play. Football or otherwise.

**GAMES**

Games of football with no  
conditions or instruction.

I RECOMMEND PERIODICALLY ADDING A PLAYGROUND/GAMES  
ENVIRONMENT TO YOUR SESSION PLAN.

THIS IS REALLY ENJOYABLE FOR PLAYERS AND ALLOWS DEVELOPMENT OF  
INDEPENDENT THOUGHT AND SOCIAL SKILLS.

**Anomalous Plan  
(example):**

*playground*

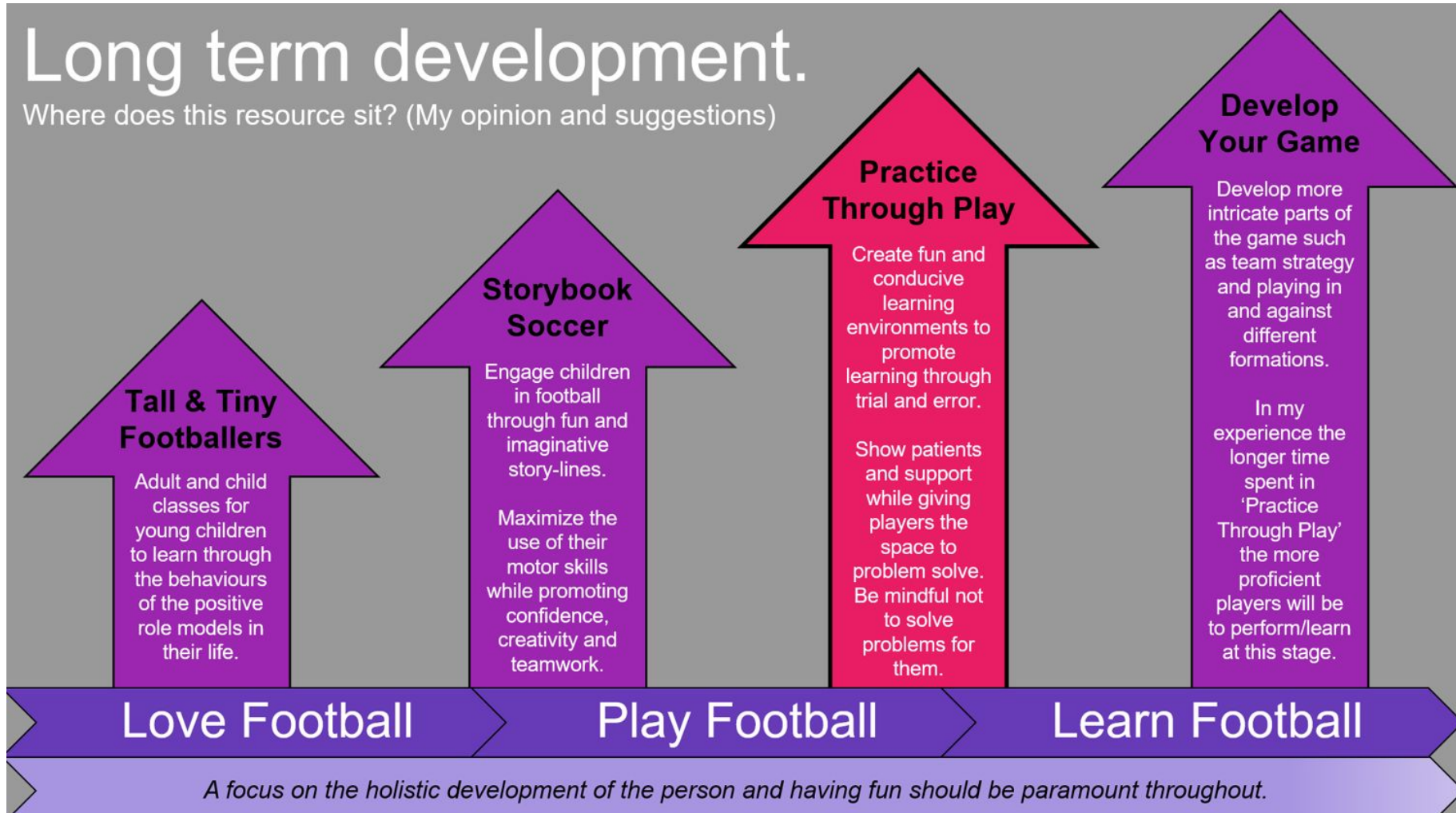
*play*

*practice*

*games*

# Long term development.

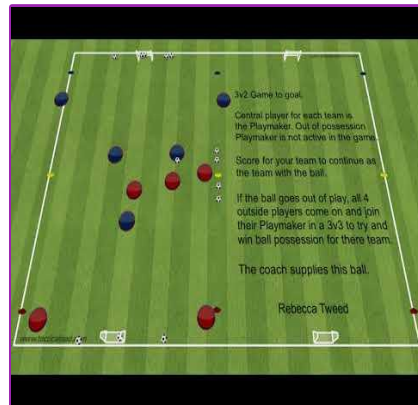
Where does this resource sit? (My opinion and suggestions)





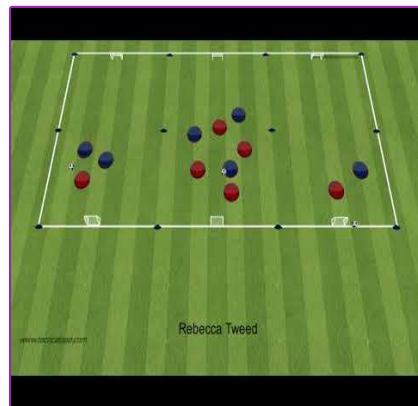
# Contributing Coach

Rebecca Tweed



## Practice 41

*Fast paced and fun 3v2 practice. Score to keep possession for your team, overturn possession and score to give your team the upper hand. A great way to stretch or support certain individuals by making them Playmakers.*



## Play 41

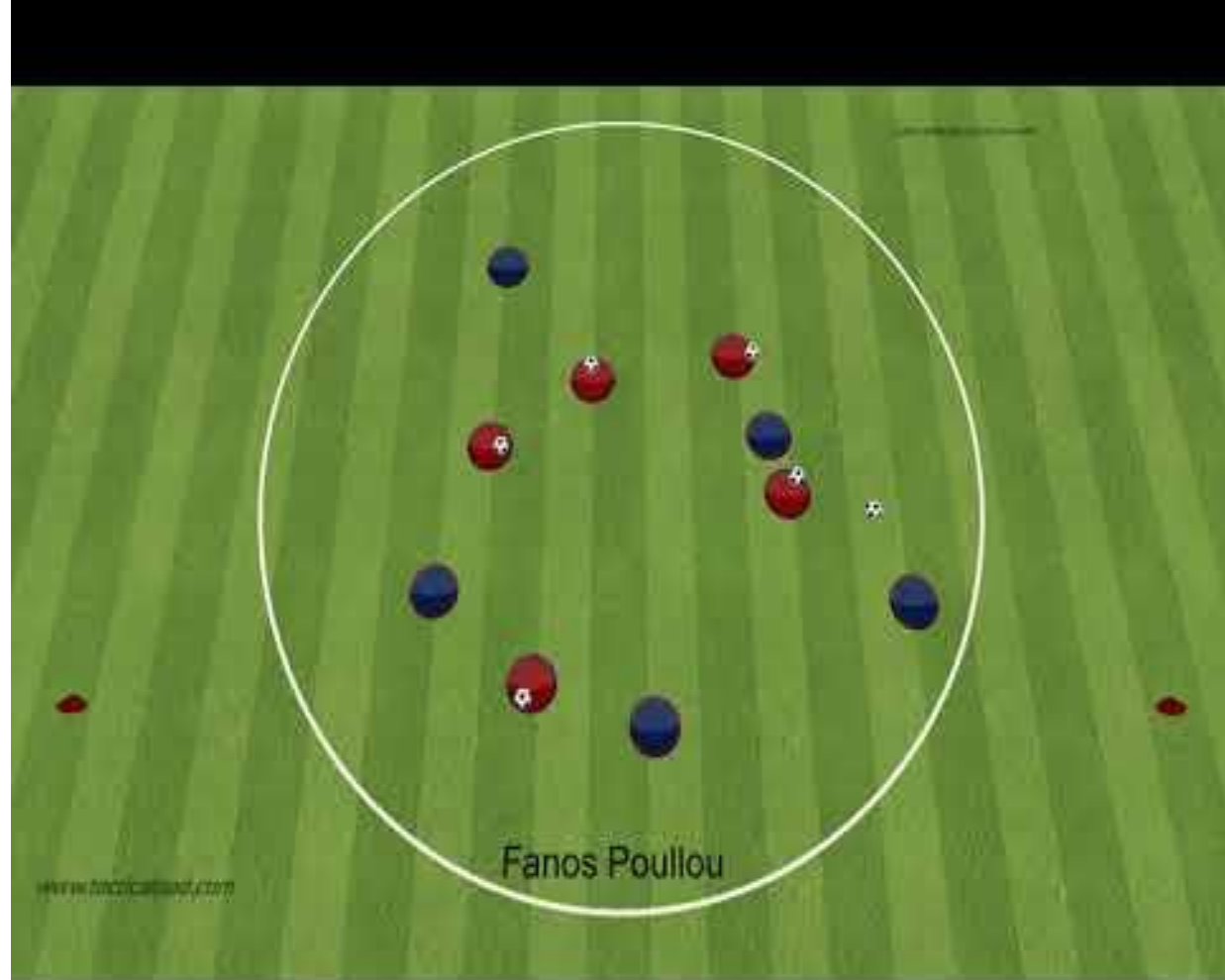
*Player autonomy is crucial to player and person development. 2v2 Shown as an example but numbers can be flexible. The more players do this game the more adventurous/brave they are likely to become.*

# Practice 42

— — —

**Contributing Coach:**  
**Fanos Poullou**

*The red team working on running with the ball with an aim of making things difficult for the blue team who are trying to pass and move avoiding the reds. Swap roles after a set time.*

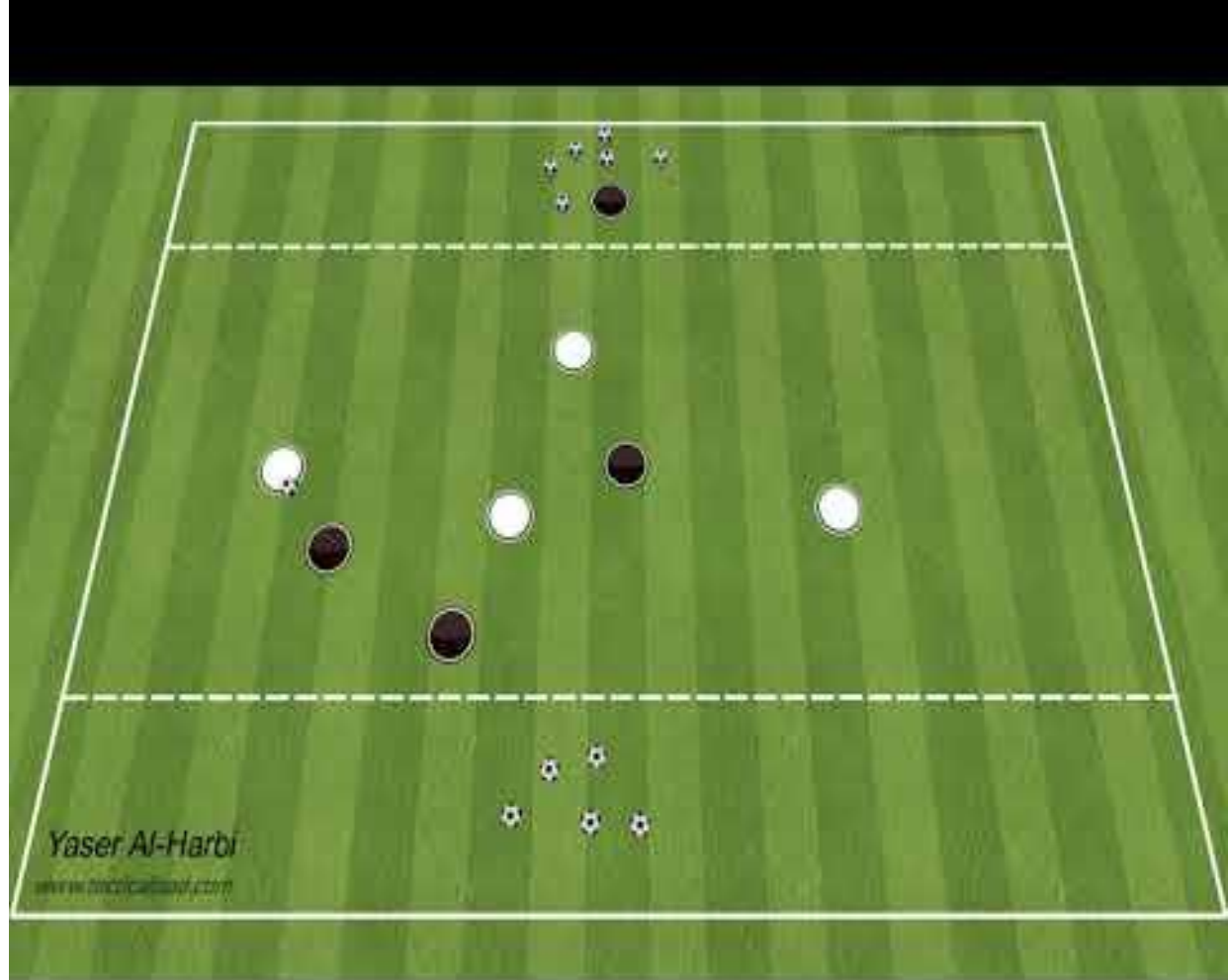


# Play 42

— — —

**Contributing Coach:**  
**Yaser Al-Harbi**

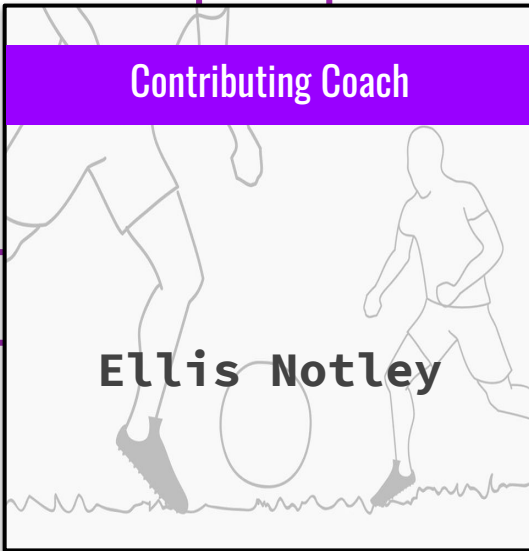
*The team with the least footballs in their zone at the end of the timed game is the winner. However when you put a ball in the other teams zone you need to play a player down, constantly challenging players in this fun environment.*





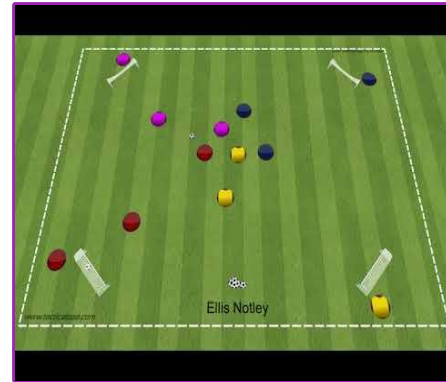
### Practice 43

*Coach will shout a number (players) and a colour (cone). Those players must touch the cone and their goal before entering game.*



### Practice 44

*Score to get a point for your team, conceding team also get a point taken away from their score.*

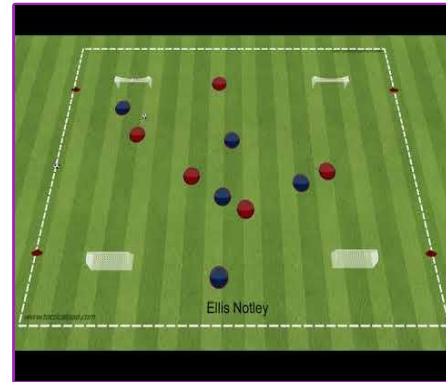


### Play 43

*When a team concedes they must quickly swap with the team currently passing the ball. This group must be scanning to be aware and ready for the next game.*

### Play 44

*A great environment for players to problem solve and find ways to connect with the wall player.*



# Contributing Coach

Mohammad Saeed Bakr



## Practice 45

*On the call from the coach (or player?) the attacker attempts to dribble through a gate without being dispossessed by the live defender. Swap roles as shown and frequently swap partners.*

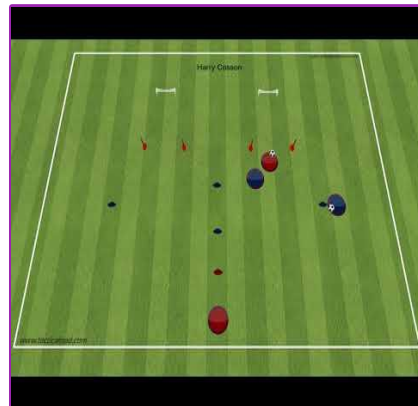


## Play 45

*2v1 With pressuring 2nd defender. It is recommended you change the starting point of the football to the other side after a set amount of time to work different angles and scenarios.*

# Contributing Coach

Harry Cosson



## Practice 46

*Practice taking a positive first touch away from oncoming pressure.*

*Swap defenders frequently and ensure there is transition for defenders winning the ball.*



## Practice 47

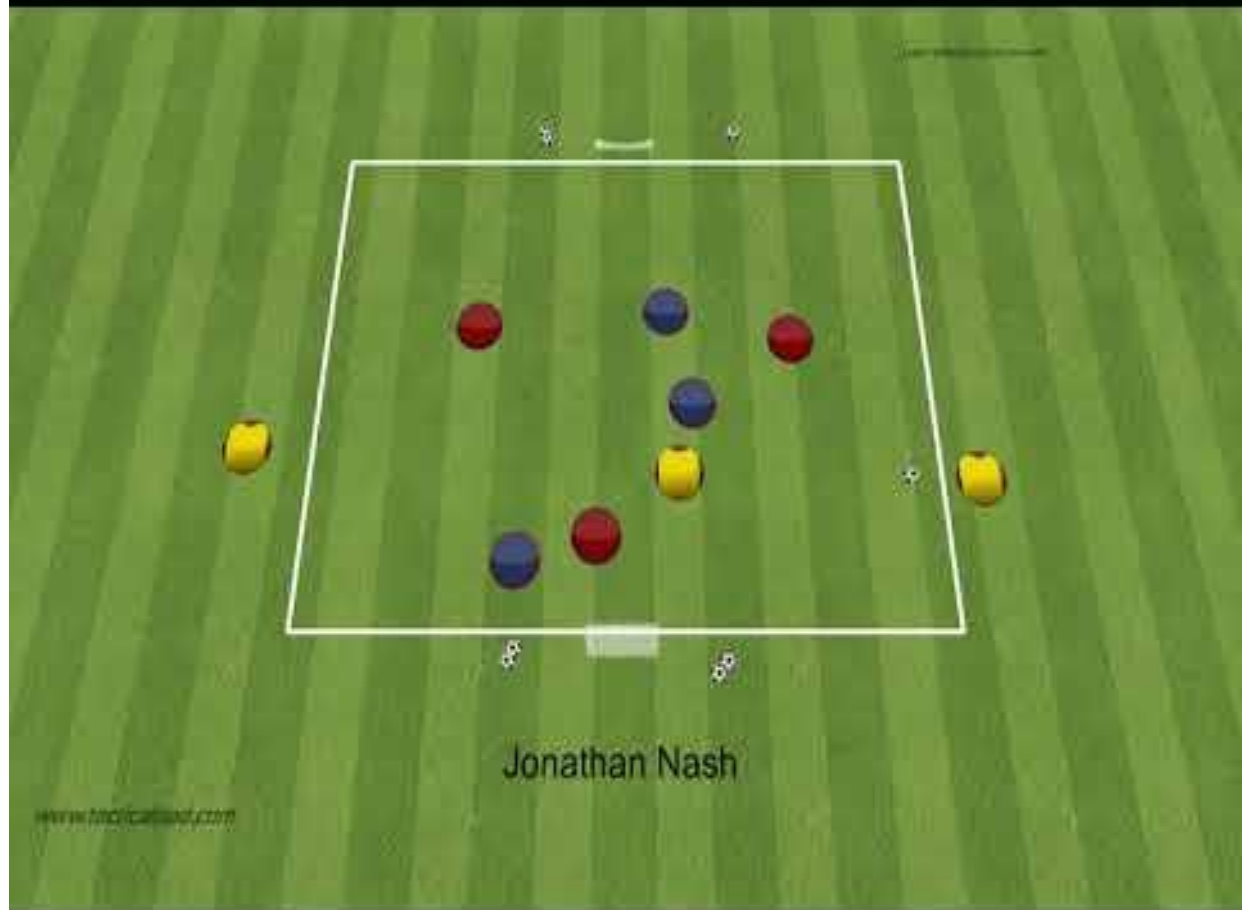
*Fun game of statues. A 1v1 in a challenging situation with traffic around the tight area.*

# Play 46

— — —

**Contributing Coach:**  
**Jonathan Nash**

*3v3+3 Game with the first team to score winning and the winning team staying on. Score a goal and grab the ball to continue the game, now shooting the other way. Conceding team swap with the 3 playmakers.*





# Play 47

— — —

**Contributing Coach:**  
**Jonny McClean**

*3v3v3 Game. When attacking if you score you get to attack the next team also. On winning the ball aim to drive over the line and automatically start the next attack against the other team of 3. High tempo, constant game giving players an adequate work to rest ratio.*





# Example Session Plan



## 1: Practice 24

Set up a 10x10 box in the middle of one pitch, players must dribble through the box and off the pitch for a point before turning to repeat.



## 2: Play 2

Quickly split group to start two 3v3 end zone games on each pitch. Can pick up 10x10 box from previous practice once they are playing.



## 3: Practice 50

6 Players on each pitch should allow this practice to work well with lots of repetition.



## 4: Play 42

Progression from end zone game that should further encourage running with the ball, or may choose just to finish on 3v3 games.

### Environment:

Expecting 12 players so set up two 30x20 pitches side by side. Run practice 24 on one pitch before splitting the group for Play 2 running on both pitches. Keep groups split for Practice 50 and Play 42 frequently mixing up the players to keep opposition fresh. Contingency if needed at any point is just play small sided games allowing them to practice through play.

### Considerations:

If numbers are lower than expected run everything with one group on one pitch. If higher utilize the playmaker idea in games or simply play 4v3s. Utilize bonus ball throughout to keep tempo high and players engaged / practicing / playing.

# Blank Session Plan

**1:**

**3:**

**2:**

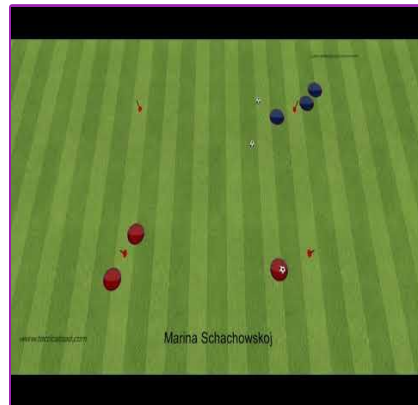
**4:**

**Notes:**

**Considerations:**

# Contributing Coach

**Marina Schachowskoj**



## Practice 48

*A practice to focus on technique and teamwork as all players work together to get this flowing*

*Passing, dribbling and communicating are all key throughout.*



## Practice 49

*A rondo where you work with a partner. On losing the ball you and your partner can attempt to win it back before the defenders exit the rondo at either of the empty sides of the rondo. Encouraging transition.*



## Play 48

*Each team has a designated area they must try and get the ball to / keep the ball in. The coach times throughout the game, whoever has the ball in their area for the most amount of time wins.*

# Play 49

— — —

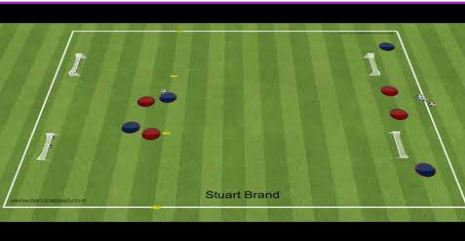
**Contributing Coach:**  
**Darren Wilson**

*1v1 Practice with recovering defender, evolving into a 3v3 game. Utilise the bonus ball where appropriate.*

*4 Goal game on 3v3 transition. Rotation as shown.*



# Contributing Coach: Stuart Brand



## Practice 50

*Players are given the opportunity to practice shooting before transitioning to a 2v2 game.*



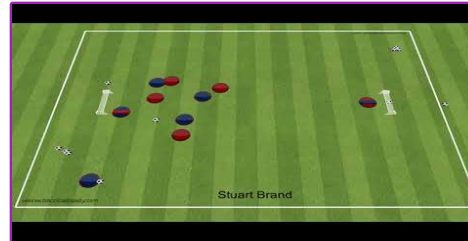
## Practice 51

*Quick and decisive play is likely to mean success in this 2v2 game with potential transition.*



## Practice 52

*From an uncomfortable position as a defender can you recover quickly to prevent the attackers scoring? Can the attackers be clinical?*



## Play 50

*1v0, 2v1, 3v2, 4v3 Then 4v4 with lots of opportunity for hidden learning. Utilizing the bonus ball during 4v4 will prolong games.*



## Play 51

*3v3 In the box plus 2 wall players just outside the area. Creating chaos near the goal to help players problem solve, how do I get a shot on goal?*



## Play 52

*Use target players as a disguise and go for the other goal? Or vice versa? Just one decision amongst many in this game that will also challenge teamwork.*

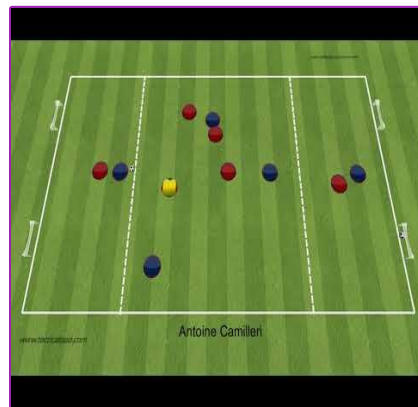
# Contributing Coach

Antoine Camilleri



## Practice 53

*Some mobility work for players leading to a 1v1 battle with focus on disguise and change of direction.*



## Play 53

*An adaptable game with a lot of learning outcomes. For example striker movement, 1v1 attacking and defending, support play for the striker, combination play and third player runs.*

# Contributing Coach: Kenneth Vandesteene



## Practice 54

*Attacker chooses which gate to dribble through. The defender must quickly react and run through the same coloured gate before entering the 1v1.*



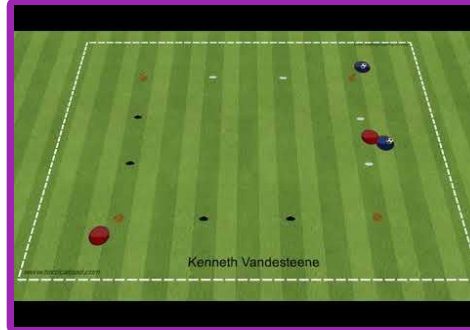
## Practice 55

*Simple, fun and fast paced 1v1 set up to allow players to practice and explore different scenarios for attacking and defending.*



## Practice 56

*3 Defenders try and block 4 gates, really testing the player on the ball to exaggerate movements and try get through a gate.*



## Practice 57

*1v1 Set up that players can be creative and work on transition when winning the ball.*



## Practice 58

*Players really enjoy a fun game of rock, paper, scissors and the excitement builds as they race through the gates.*



# Play 54

— — —

**Contributing Coach:**  
**Raffaele De Vita**

*An exciting 2v2 game.*

*The progression shown allows  
players to have even more  
time with the ball at their  
feet.*





# Play 55

— — —

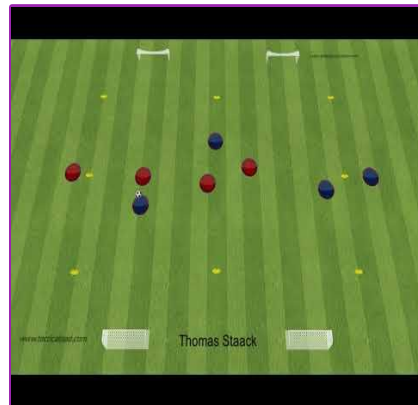
**Contributing Coach:**  
**Ian Ross**

*GK + 2 v 3 In each half to encourage playing out and trying to find the numbers advantage in the other half. Progression shown where front 3 can recover back when the ball crosses the half line putting pressure on the opposition front 3 to find quick solutions to goal.*



# Contributing Coach

**Thomas Staack**



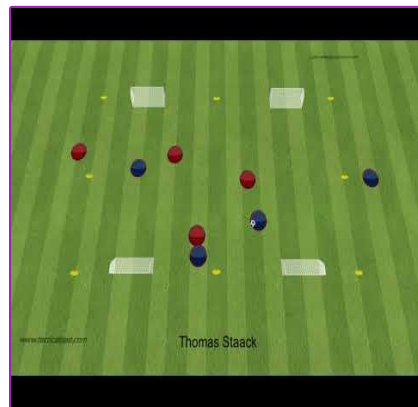
## Play 56

3V3 With 1 player who rotates into the game every time their team scores. If a team goes 3 goals ahead the other team bring their player on for 4v3 until gap reduced. Attack and defend 2 goals.



## Play 57

3V3 With 1 player who rotates into the game every time their team scores. If a team goes 3 goals ahead the other team bring their player on for 4v3 until gap reduced. Attack and defend 2 diagonal goals.



## Play 58

3V3 With 1 player who rotates into the game every time their team scores. If a team goes 3 goals ahead the other team bring their player on for 4v3 until gap reduced. Attack and defend 2 reversed goals.

# Nominated Charity

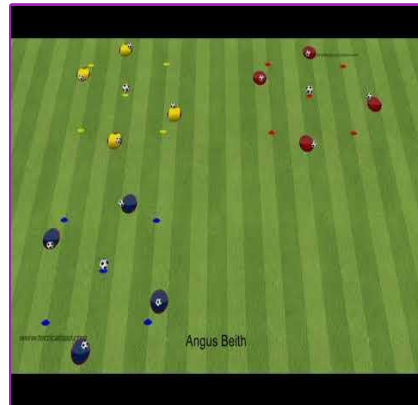
Although Practice Through Play is a free resource, we have nominated the West Lothian Youth Foundation as a charitable organisation to support should the reader be in a position to donate. More information about the West Lothian Youth Foundation can be found on their website.



Make a donation: <https://gf.me/u/ybi92r>

# Contributing Coach

Angus Beith



## Practice 59

*A fun race with plenty of variations to encourage close control and changing direction with the ball.*

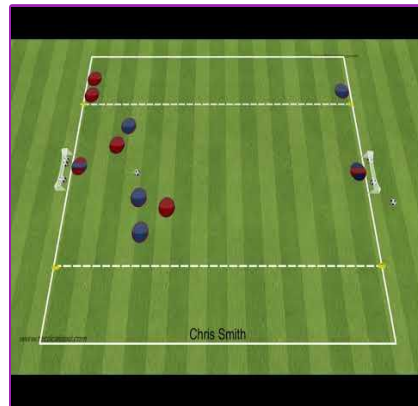


## Play 59

*4v4 With a team of 4 on the outside that can be used for wall passes. The team that scores grabs the ball to attack the other goal while the conceding team must quickly transition with the team on the outside.*

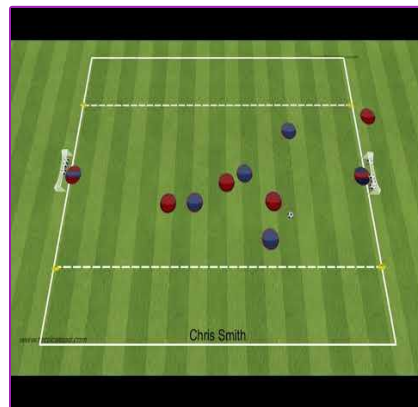
# Contributing Coach

Chris Smith



## Practice 60

*An overload practice with a lot of transition work and competition, building towards 5v5.*



## Play 60

*A 5v5 game where the goalscorer must run around both goals before rejoining the game which gives the opposition a chance to take advantage of an overload in attack.*

# Contributing Coach

Ana Bruni



## Practice 61

3v3+2. The challenge is to be the team that makes the most passes in possession. Turnover possession by dribbling out of the area. Who can put together the biggest number of consecutive passes?



## Practice 62

2v2 In the central area, players must dribble out of the area for a point and for their teammate on that side to dribble in. Can only go back out the side you entered from once passing the yellow cones.

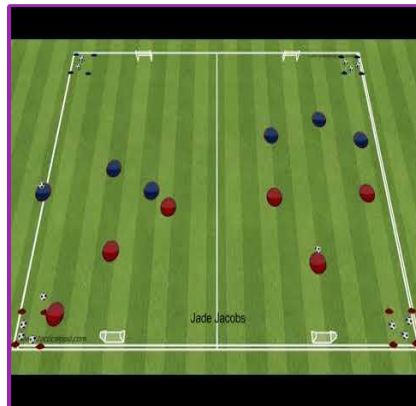


## Play 61

4v4 Turned into a 2v2 by the middle line which players cannot cross. Must dribble into the end zone before scoring, initially unopposed but can progress to allowing defenders in the end zone.

# Contributing Coach

**Jade Jacobs**



## Play 62

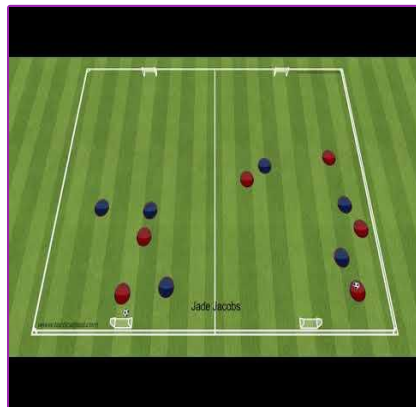
*The player who scores must dribble the ball from the goal into their teams den. Conceding team grabs a ball from their den to continue the game. Win the game by having all of the footballs in your teams den.*



## Practice 63

*Shooting game with the aim of achieving 21 points to win. 2 points for 1 touch finish*

*1 point for 2 touch finish. First team to 21 wins, however if you go over 21 your team will go back to 16 points.*



## Play 63

*2 Games run side by side and if you score, you join your team on the other pitch. The only time you do not move is if you're the last player from your team on a pitch. First team to 10 goals wins.*

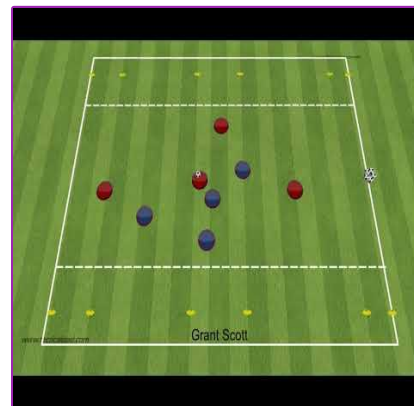
# Contributing Coach

**Grant Scott**



## Practice 64

*1v1 Practice with the incentive of taking on the oncoming defender who will want to win the ball to transition for a point.*



## Play 64

*A game to encourage dribbling and driving with the ball away or past defensive pressure.*



# Contributing Coach

**Scott McLennan**



## Practice 65

*1 Team practice moving the opposition to score centrally while the other work on being compact, winning the ball and then breaking out to a gate which will win them possession to attack centrally.*

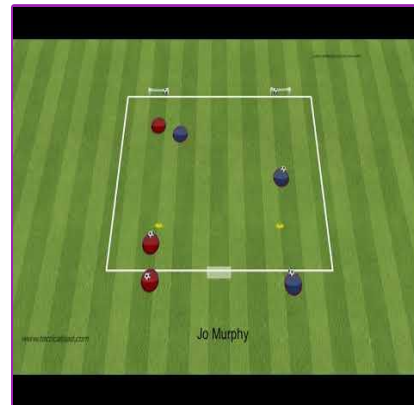


## Play 65

*Timed game where 1 team attempt to score centrally and the other go through gates on the outside. At half time teams swap roles.*

# Contributing Coach

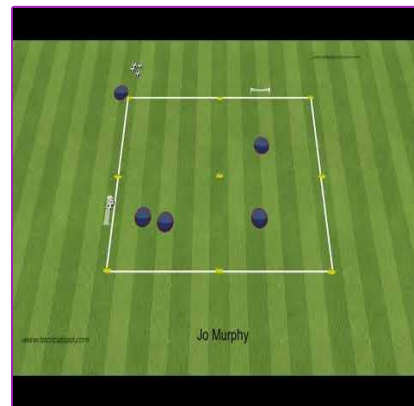
Jo Murphy



## Practice 66

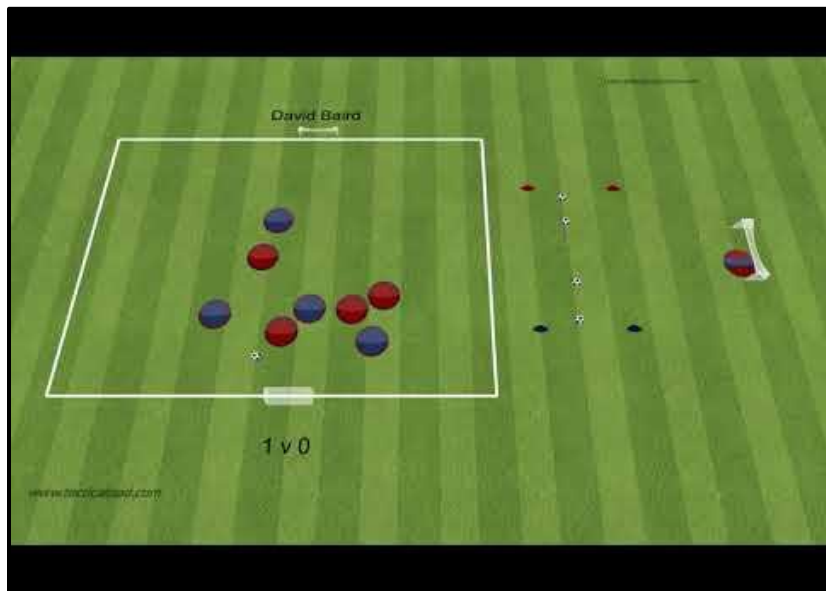
*1v1 Set up that can be progressed to score in either goal and further progressed to 2v2.*

*Transition for defenders when they win the ball.*

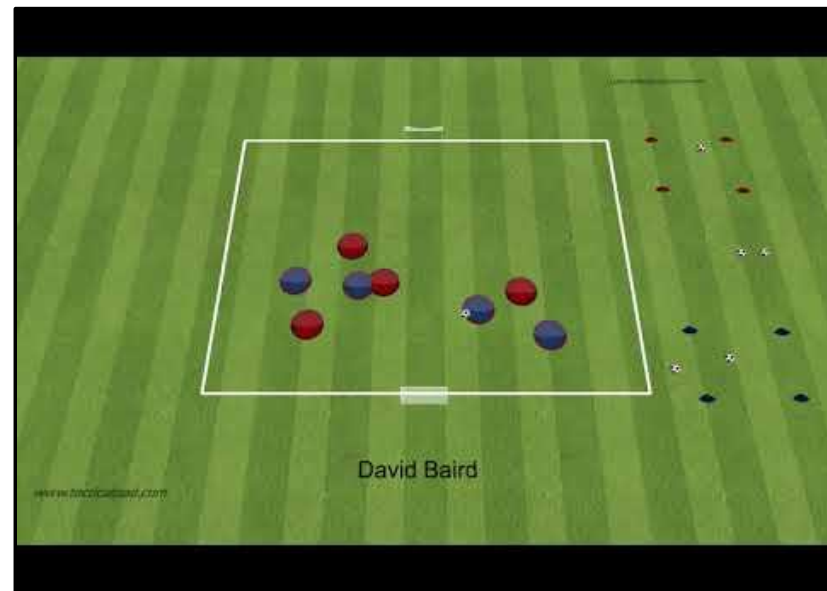


## Practice 67

*1v2 Set up to encourage creativity and confidence when taking players on.*



Play 66



Play 67

Some coaches may be familiar with some of my previous work around creating fun and conducive learning environments, such as '**Scoreboard Soccer**'. Play football but reward players via fun games or technical practice which act as the scoreboard. Throughout this resource there are examples of this but I have also used keepy up challenges, fun races and even board games! Is there anything you (or your players) can think of that would be fun and engaging to run alongside a small sided game of football?

# The GAME Game

At the end of training, ask 2 players to agree on a number between 1 and 12. Show them the field set up they have chosen and let them know this will be the set up for small sided games at the next session. Their homework is to plan a game within that set up and explain it to the team during the next training session.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

# Goalkeepers

There is of course a place for GKs in the majority of practices and games throughout this resource where they will benefit from trial and error / learn by doing. Here are some additional ideas for GKs that you may find useful.



**Contributing Coach:**  
**Lorna Esson**

*GK rolls ball into player who picks it up to distribute an over arm through to the GK diagonally opposite to work on distribution.*



**Contributing Coach:**  
**Lorna Esson**

*Shout colour for the GK to touch before receiving volley. Can add some shooting / 1v1 to goal also.*



**Contributing Coach: Kieren Elder**

*GK 1v1 Battle with 2 additional attackers to utilise and test the opposition GK.*



**Contributing Coach: Jenna Fife**

*GKs throw, volley, catch and follow the coaches instructions. Call 'ball' GKs race to dive on footballs outside the area. A fun progression can be to take some of those footballs away.*



**Contributing Coach: Jenna Fife**

*Utilise other GKs, strikers or coaches in this shooting/reaction practice. Cones are laid in front of the goal so the ball may deflect and test the GKs reactions and mobility.*



**Contributing Coach: Ross Ballantyne**

*Handling, low diving and reacting all included in this practice for GKs.*



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# Contact

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**David Baird**

*Email:*

DavidBaird.coach@gmail.com

*Social Media:*

#PracticeThroughPlay

@CoachDavidBaird





A minimalist line art illustration in light gray on a black background. It depicts a soccer game in progress. In the upper left, a player's leg and foot are shown in mid-air, about to kick a ball. In the lower center, a soccer ball is on the ground. To the right of the ball, another player's leg and foot are visible, also on the ground. The bottom of the image features a wavy line representing the grass field.

**Thank You**  
#PracticeThroughPlay