



23

SOCCER SMALL-SIDED GAMES

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SIDED GAMES

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3v2 Buildup to Mini-Goals

How the Drill Works:

Three attackers attempt to build the ball out of their defensive third against two defenders and pass the ball into either of the two mini-goals. If the defenders win the ball, they attempt to score on goal.

Purpose:

Develop ability to move the ball forward out of defensive half. Players improve their movement off the ball, passing angles and decision-making.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up two, 44x54-yard fields. If space does not allow for two fields, set up one field.
- One full-size goal should be placed on an end line of each field. Position one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rotate in every four repetitions.
- One the other end line of each field set up two mini-goals evenly across the line. If minigoals are not available, use cones to set up three-yard wide gates instead. See diagram for more information.
- Break the players into two even groups and assign them to a field. Each field should have at least five attackers and three defenders. Assign jerseys to each team accordingly.
- One team will start as the attacking team and attempt to score in the mini-goals. This team will form a line outside each post of the full-size goal. One attacker starts on the field. All the soccer balls should be placed with this group. See diagram.
- The other team will start as the defenders and attempt to win the ball from the attackers and score on the full-size goal. Two defenders start on the field while the other defenders rest on the side.
- Play four, five-minute games. Rest, rotate players and make coaching points between breaks.

Instructions:

1. Three attackers with one ball start the game by dribbling forward on to the field.
2. The two defenders are live as soon as the attackers start dribbling.
3. The attackers attempt to play 3v2 and score in either of the two mini goals.
4. The defenders try to prevent the attackers from scoring, win the ball, and then score on the full-size goal.
5. Goalkeepers are encouraged to help their team build out of the back.
6. The turn is over if either team scores, or the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason. New players rotate after each turn. A new ball is always started from the attackers on the end line.
7. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
8. Players rest and reset the soccer balls at between games. Players switch sides after each game.

9. Play four, five-minute games. Adjust the time as needed.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch.

Add another defender – If the attackers are scoring too easily, add another defender to play 3v3.

Width – Decrease the width of the field to make it more difficult on the attackers without adding another defender.

Coaching Points:

- Let the players play a few turns or a whole game before giving any coaching points. See if the players can figure it out themselves!
- Teach the players to work on their triangle and making the space as large as possible to stretch the defenders. The three attackers should be able to pass and dribble through the two defenders consistently.
- Remind the players that they can use the goalkeeper to possess the ball.
- Challenge the defenders to work together and force play to one side of the field. Making the play predictable will help the defenders find their moments to win the ball.

3v2 to 2v2 to Mini-Goals Game

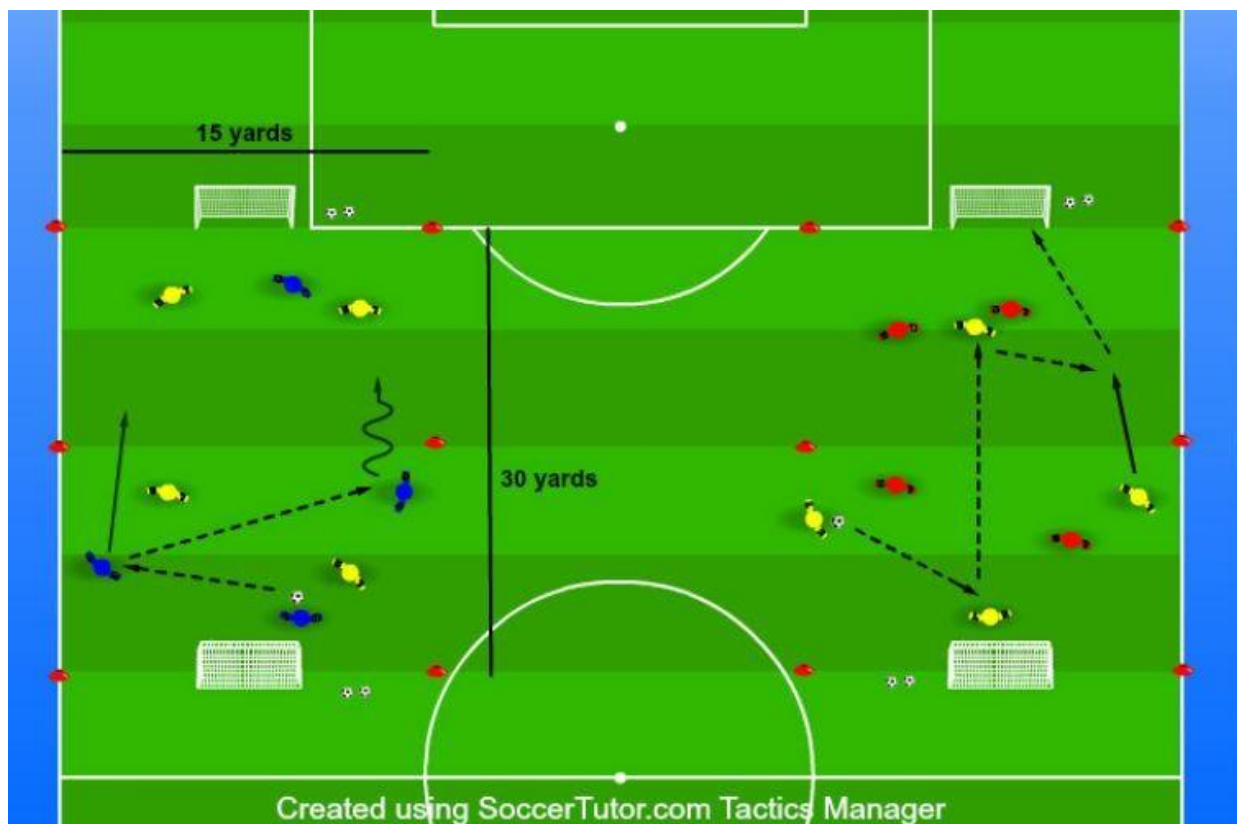
How the Drill Works:

Two teams of four players compete against each other to mini-goals with specific game rules. Teams can only have two defenders in each half when defending. When in possession of the ball, teams can play 3v2 in their defensive half and 2v2 in their attacking half.

Purpose:

Develop ability to take advantage of 3v2 opportunities and advance the ball forward.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up a field 15x30 yard field for every eight players. Make sure to use cones to mark the out-of-bounds and half line.
- One mini-goal should be placed on each end line of each field. Use cone gates if minigoals are not available.
- Divide the players into teams of four players and assign jerseys. Each field should have two teams on it. If there is an odd number of teams, or space does not allow for more fields, rotate teams after each game.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the mini-goals.
- Play four, four-minute games with at least a two-minute break between games. Play as many games as needed.

Instructions:

1. Two teams of four compete against each other to score the most goals. No more than two players can be in a half when defending. When in possession of the ball, teams can play 3v2 in their defensive half, but can only play 2v2 in their attacking half.
2. Players can dribble or pass into their attacking half. Passes can be made forwards and backwards between halves.
3. Play kick-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. If the ball goes over either end line, the team that did not last touch it starts a new ball in their defensive half.
4. The team with the most goals at the end of the four-minute game wins the round.
5. Rest between rounds and reset the soccer balls.
6. Four, four-minute rounds are suggested. Switch teams and players as needed between rounds. Make coaching points during the breaks.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

3v3 to 3v3 – If 3v2 to 2v2 is too difficult, allow teams to play 3v3 in each half of the field. This means one player will always be left back to defend the striker.

Tournament – Make a tournament out of it. Three points for a win, one point for a tie and zero points for a loss. Rotate teams after each round to play a different team. See which team has the most points at the end of the tournament!

Coaching Points:

- Make sure the players understand the rules of the game.
- Teach the players to move together and create space for each other. Players should make the field as big as possible with their positioning and constantly adjust their position to provide good passing angles.
- Educate the players to create a numbers-up situations in the back to help move the ball forward.
- Encourage the attackers to be creative in their attacking half! Take players on 1v1 and use quick combinations to score!
- Challenge the players to communicate and give instructions to each other.
- Remind players to immediately react when they lose the ball.

3v2+GK to Goal

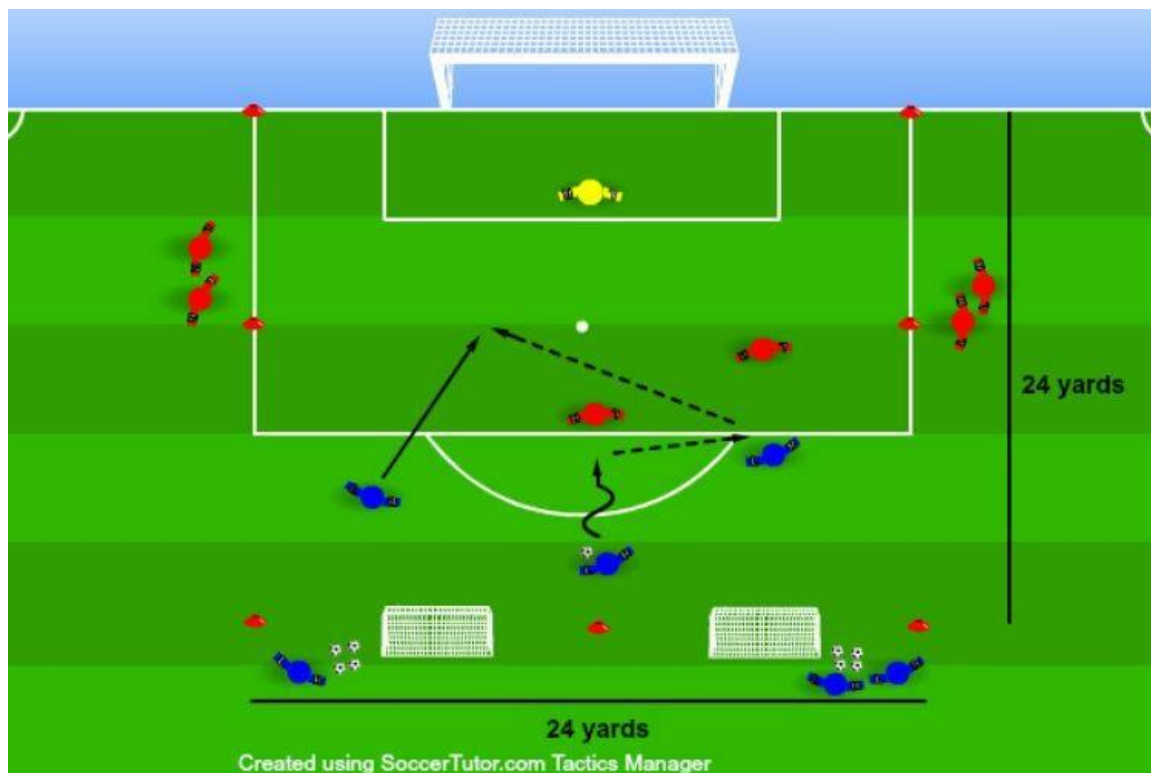
How the Drill Works:

Three attackers attempt to create chances and score goals against two defenders and one goalkeeper. The defenders and goalkeeper attempt to prevent goals and score in the two minigoals.

Purpose:

Develop abilities to dribble and pass forward in a numbers-up situation. Players improve 1v1s, 2v1s and short passing combinations to create scoring opportunities.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one 24x24-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed on one end line of the field. Position one goalkeeper in the goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rest to the side and rotate in every four repetitions.
- One the other end line of each field set up two mini-goals evenly across the line. If minigoals are not available, use cones to set up three-yard wide gates instead. See diagram for more information.
- Divide the field players in to two teams of six players. Assign each team to a jersey color.
- One team will start as the attacking team and defend the mini-goals. Three attackers step on the field with one ball. The other three players will rotate in after each repetition.
- The other team will start as the defenders and defend the full-size goal. Two defenders start on the field above the half-line. The other four defenders start on either side of the field and take turns rotating in after each repetition.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the mini-goals.
- Play two 10-minute halves before switching sides and roles.

Instructions:

1. The three attackers start with one ball and attempt to score in the full-size goal.
2. The two defenders and goalkeeper attempt to win the ball and score in either of the two mini-goals.
3. If the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, a new ball is started with three new attackers at the top of the field. Two new defenders step on as well.
4. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
5. Players rest and reset the soccer balls at halftime. Players switch sides at half to work on both roles.
6. Play two, 10-minute halves. Adjust the duration of the activity to fit training needs.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch.

Coaching Points:

- Teach the attackers to dribble forward to commit and defender before passing to the open player. If no defender commits, encourage the attackers to shoot.
- Challenge the defenders and goalkeepers to prevent the attackers from scoring!
- Players should look to take advantage of 2v1 situations to create scoring opportunities.

3v3 Game

How the Drill Works:

Two teams of three players compete against each other to mini-goals.

Purpose:

Develop the entire player through experimentation and game-like scenarios. Allow players to have many soccer actions throughout this small-sided game.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up a field 20x30-yards. Set up one field for every six players if space allows.
- One mini-goal should be placed on each end line. Use cone gates if mini-goals are not available.
- Divide the players into teams of three players. If there is an odd number, one team will play with four or two players. No neutral players.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the mini-goals.
- Play four-minute games. At least four games are suggested. Play more games if time allows.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete against each other and attempt to score goals in their opponent's goal.
2. Play kick-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. Play goal kicks and corners if the ball goes over the end lines.
3. The team with the most goals at the end of the four-minute game wins the round.
4. Rest between rounds and reset the soccer balls.
5. Four rounds are suggested. Switch teams and players as needed between rounds. Make coaching points during the breaks.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Tournament – Make a tournament out of it. Three points for a win, one point for a tie and zero points for a loss. Rotate teams after each round so they play someone different. See who has the most points at the end of the tourney.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage the players to get involved and stay involved. This game allows players to get many touches and constantly effect the game on both sides of the ball.

- Teach the players to constantly move and work off of each other to create space to score goals.
- Challenge the players to dribble and take defenders on!
- Remind the players to move the ball quickly and immediately react when they lose the ball.

4-on-4 End Zone

How the Drill Works:

Two teams compete against one another and attempt to complete a pass to one of their teammates running into an end zone on either end of the playing grid.

Purpose:

Develop decision-making and timing of runs. Players improve their passing and movement off the ball.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up a 30x25-yard field with five-yard end zones on each end line.
- Divide the players into teams of four and assign jerseys. If there are more than 12 players, make two fields.
- Gather all the soccer balls on one sideline for the players to use if a ball goes too far away.
- Play three, five-minute games. Add more time or games if time allows. Rest and make coaching points between games.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete to connect a pass to their teammate running into either end zone.
2. Play kick-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds.
3. Players cannot stand inside the end zones to receive a pass. Players must be outside the end zone when the ball is played.
4. Teams are awarded one point each time they complete a pass to a player running into an end zone. As soon as teams score, they play the ball back into the middle and attempt to score in the opposite end zone.
5. Defenders can not defend in the end zones.
6. Teams can score in either end zone when they switch from defense to offense, but once they score in one end zone on offense, they must score in the other end zone before being able to score in the first one.
7. Play three, five-minute games. Team with the most points at the end of each game is the winner. Rest and make coaching points between games.

Variations:

Number of players – Add more players and create a 5v5 or 6v6 game. Adjust the field size accordingly.

Touch limit – Limit the players' touches to three, two, or one-touch depending on skill level.

Number of passes – Teams must compete a certain number of passes before attempting to score. Teams have to connect three, or four, consecutive passes before finding a player running into the end zone.

Coaching Points:

- Instruct the players to time their runs into the end zone. Players should make hard runs and use their voice to demand the ball.
- Remind the players to communicate and make eye contact when making a run into the end zone.
- Challenge the players to keep their eyes up to find their teammates and deliver passes on time.
- Teach the players to pass the ball in front of the running players allowing the running player to receive the pass easily without adjusting their run.

4v4 Game

How the Drill Works:

Two teams of four players compete against each other to mini-goals.

Purpose:

Place players in a game situation to develop the entire player. Players work on attacking, defending and transiting. Playing 4v4 allows players to get many actions per game.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up a field 20x30-yards. Set up one field for every eight players if space allows.
- One mini-goal should be placed on each end line. Use cone gates if mini-goals are not available.
- Divide the players into teams of four players. If there is an odd number, one team will play with three or five players. Have the teams in a 1-2-1 formation.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the mini-goals.
- Play four, five-minute games. Adjust the duration of the activity to fit training needs. Rest and make coaching points between games.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete against each other and attempt to score goals in their opponent's goal.
2. Play kick-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. Play goal kicks and corners if the ball goes over the end lines.
3. The team with the most goals at the end of the five-minute game wins the round.
4. Rest between rounds and reset the soccer balls.
5. Four rounds are suggested. Switch teams and players as needed between rounds. Make coaching points during the breaks.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage the players to compete at game-speed. Players will get many actions in this game and allow them to experiment as they develop.
- Teach the players to constantly move off of each other and provide good passing angles.
- Challenge the players to take defenders in 2v1 and 1v1 situations.

- Remind the players to constantly communicate and work together on both sides of the ball!

4v4+4 Wide Players

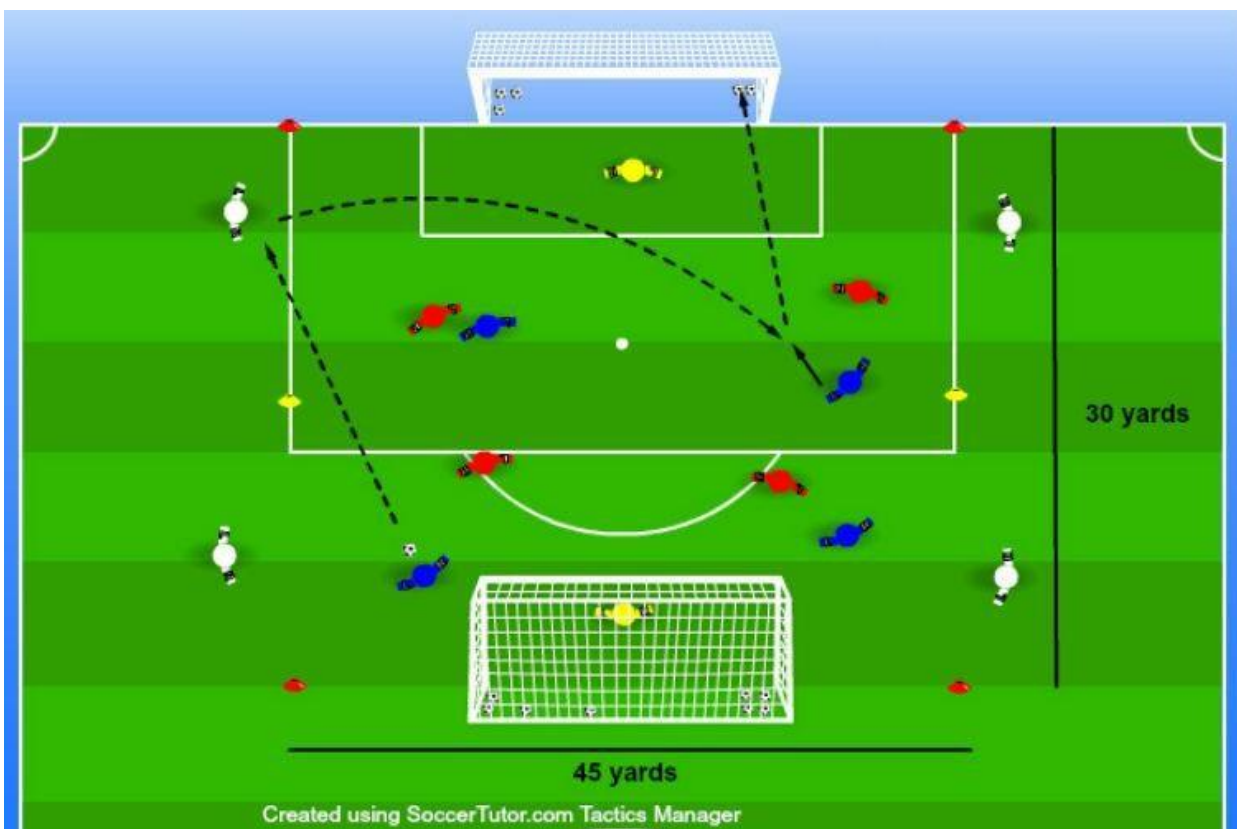
How the Drill Works:

Two teams of four players plus goalkeepers compete against each other on full-size goals. Teams must complete one pass to one of the four wide neutral players before scoring on goal.

Purpose:

Develop the entire player through a game-like activity. Players work on their ability to play wide and score goals from wide passes or crosses.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one, 30x45-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed on each end line.
- Divide the players into three teams of four field players and one goalkeeper. If there are only two goalkeepers available, position them in goal without assigning them to a team.
- Two teams start on the field while the third team spreads out evenly along the two sidelines to start as the neutral wide players. Teams will rotate after each round.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed in the full-size goals.
- Play four-minute games. Teams should play each other at least twice.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete against each other and attempt to score goals in their opponent's goal.
2. Teams must connect at least one pass to a wide neutral player before attempting to score on goal.
3. If the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, a new ball is started with the goalkeeper of the team that did not last touch the ball.
4. Players can not steal the ball or defend the neutral players.
5. If a team scores a goal, a new ball is started with that team's goalkeeper. Make it, take it.
6. Neutral players are free to move along the sidelines.
7. The team with the most goals at the end of the four-minute game wins the round.
8. Between rounds, reset the soccer balls and rotate teams.
9. Teams should play each other at least twice. Team with the best record at the end wins the activity.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Neutral touch-limit – Give the neutral players a touch limit.

Score from a cross – Players must score from a neutral player cross. Passes can be on the ground or in the air.

Scoring points – Three points for a header out-of-the-air. Two points for a one-time finish. One point for a two-touch finish.

Coaching Points:

- Teach the players to play wide. The outside is where the space and open players are.
- Remind the wide neutral players to pick their head up and deliver a good cross to players running into the box.
- Encourage the players on the field to make hard runs into the box to get on the end of the crosses.
- Let the wide neutral players know that they do NOT need to cross the ball every time they get. Wide neutral players can help keep possession and set other players up without always crossing the ball.
- Challenge the players to score often and work on both sides of the ball!

5v2+GK Creating Chances

How the Drill Works:

Five attackers attempt to create chances and score goals against two defenders and one goalkeeper. The defenders and goalkeeper attempt to prevent goals and score in the three counterattack gates.

Purpose:

Develop ability to create chances and score goals.

Diagram:



Setup:

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- Set up two 45x24-yard fields.
- One full-size goal should be placed on one end line of each field. Position one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, rotate them in every three minutes.
- On the other end line of each field, use cones, or poles, to make three gates as shown in the diagram below. Each gate should be eight to ten yards wide.
- On each field, select five attackers and two defenders. The attackers and defenders should be in different colored jerseys. The attackers will set up in a 4-1 formation and attack the full-size goal. The two defenders and goalkeeper will defend the full-size goal and attack the three counter-attack gates. If there are extra players, have them rotate after each game.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the gates.
- Play four, three-minute games. Add more games or time to fit the training's needs. Rest and make coaching points between games.

Instructions:

1. The five attackers start with one ball and attempt to score in the full-size goal.
2. The two defenders and goalkeeper attempt to win the ball and score in either of the three counter attacking gates.
3. If the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, a new ball is started with the attacking team back at their starting positions.
4. The team with the most goals at the end of three minutes wins the round.
5. Players rest and reset the soccer balls between rounds. Switch attackers and defenders as needed between rounds. Make coaching points during the break.
6. Play at least four, three-minute games.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch.

More difficult for the attackers – Add another defender if the attackers are scoring too easily.

Less difficult for the attackers – Take off a defender to help the attackers score more easily.

Coaching Points:

- Teach the attackers to move the ball quickly to create openings and space to shoot. Attackers should take advantage of 2v1s and switching the point of attack.
- Remind the attackers to stay spread out to create space for themselves and their teammates.
- Challenge the defenders and goalkeepers to prevent the attackers from scoring!
- Attackers should dribble forward to commit a defender and then pass to the open teammate before making runs into the box. If no defender steps to the player on the ball, then the attacker should look for a shot.
- Encourage the players to compete at game speed!

5v5 Round Robin

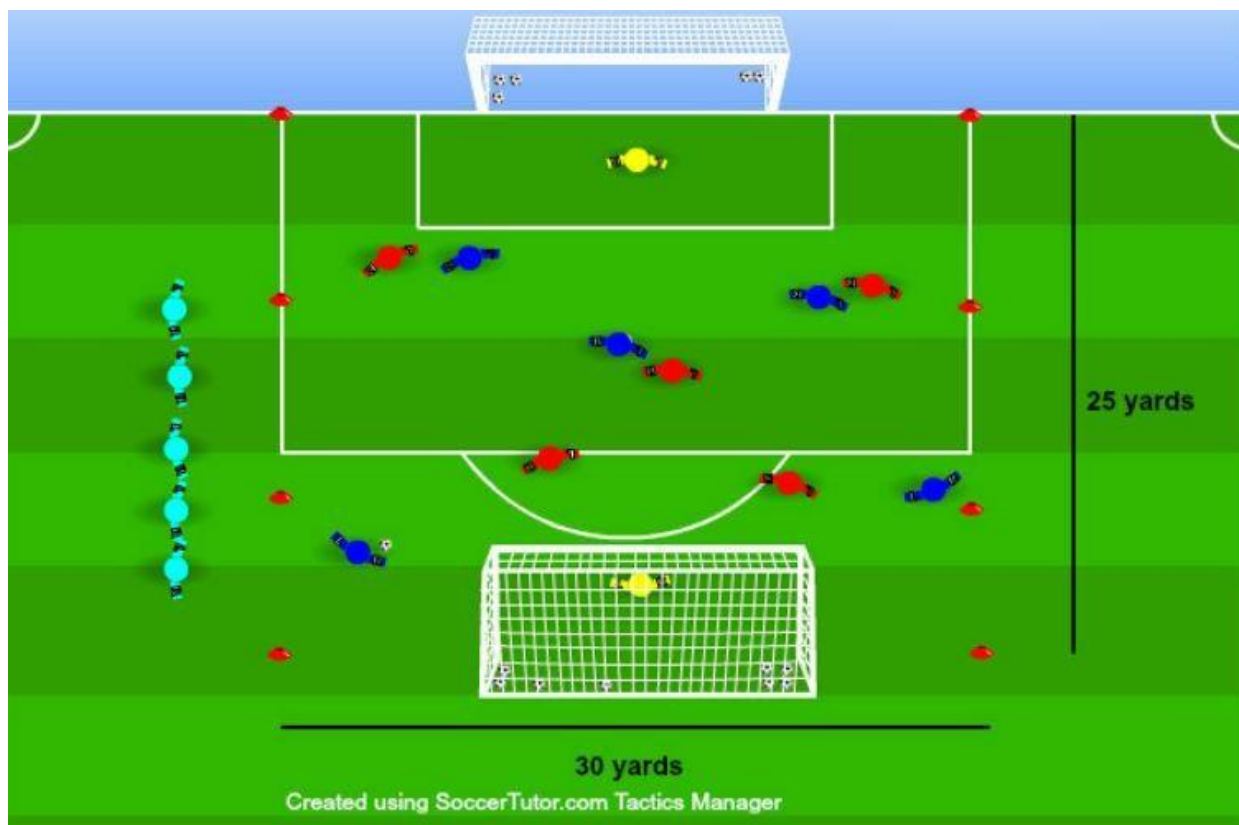
How the Drill Works:

Teams of five players, plus goalkeepers, compete against each other on a small field with fullsize goals. Teams play fast-paced, four-minute games against every team and keep track of their wins, losses, and ties. Team with the best record at the end of the round robin tournament is declared champion.

Purpose:

Put players in a tight competitive space where goals can be scored easily if players are not completely engaged. Develop ability to attack and defend in a small space.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one, 25x30-yard field.
- One full-size should be placed on each end line.
- Divide the players into teams of five players. If there are enough goalkeepers for each team, assign a goalkeeper to each team. If there are only two goalkeepers, position one goalkeeper in each goal.
- Two teams start on the field. The remaining teams rest and collect any stray soccer balls. Teams rotate after each round.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed around both goals.
- Play four-minute games. Each team should play each other at least twice.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete against each other and attempt to score goals in their opponent's goal.
2. If the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, a new ball is started with the goalkeeper of the team that did not last touch it.
3. If a goal is scored, the goalkeeper from the team that just scored starts a new ball.
4. The team with the most goals at the end of the four-minute game wins. Ties are also possible.
5. Rotate teams between rounds and reset the soccer balls.
6. Three points for a win. One point for a tie. Zero points for a loss. Teams keep track of their points.
7. Teams should play each other at least twice. Play more rounds if desired. Team with the most points at the end of the activity is the champion!

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Game time – Adjust the amount of time per game depending on the physical load the players need.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage the players to compete against each other! Try to create a competitive environment and push the players to give everything.
- Teach the players think quickly and constantly stay involved on the small field.
- Challenge the players to immediately close down their opponents and prevent shot attempts.
- Push the goalkeepers to be brave and get to every shot!

5v5 Two Goal Game

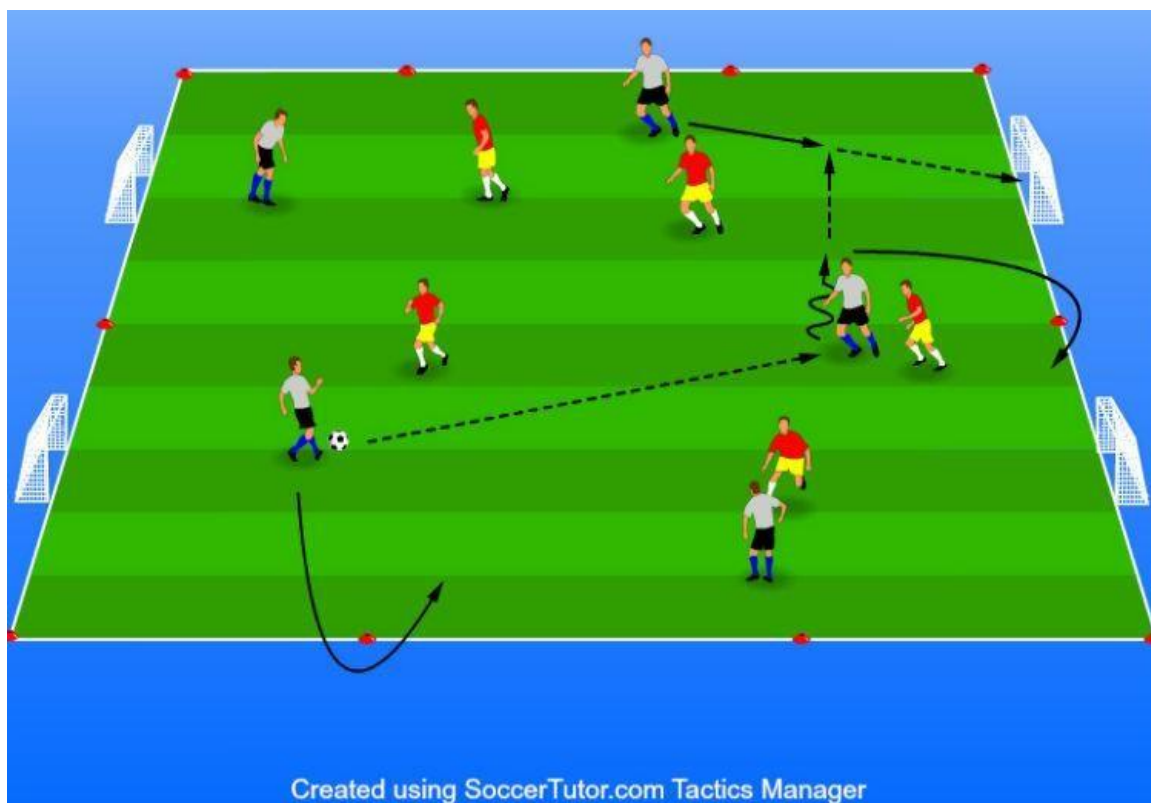
How the Drill Works:

Two teams of five attempt to score in their opponent's two mini-goals. After every pass, the passer must run around the nearest cone, along the outside of the grid, before being able to receive the ball again.

Purpose:

Develop team possession and individual passing, dribbling, and decision-making skills. Improve players' movement after completing a pass.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up a 35x30-yard field. Make sure there are at least four cones on the four sides of the field. These will be the cones players must run around.
- Place two goals on each end line. The goals should be 20 yards apart. If mini goals are not available, use cones to create three-yard wide gates.
- Divide the players into two teams of five players and assign jersey colors to each team. If there are more than two teams, have the third team rest and rotate in after each game.
- Gather all the soccer balls on one sideline for players to use if the ball goes too far away.
- Each team should play at least three, four-minute games. Add more games or time to fit the training needs. Rest and make coaching points between games.

Instructions:

1. Teams play 5v5 attempting to score in their opponent's mini-goals.
2. Each time a player completes a pass to a teammate, the player that passed the ball must run around the nearest cone before being able to receive the ball again.
3. One point is awarded each time a team scores.
4. Play four-minute games. Rotate teams after each game.

Variations:

No goals – The game is played without goals forcing teams to try and maintain possession for as long as possible. Same rules apply. Teams are awarded one point for every five consecutive passes they complete.

Number of players – Add or subtract players to meet the training needs. Adjust the field size accordingly.

Neutral players – Add one or two neutral players to help the flow of the game if needed.

Coaching Points:

- Adjust the field size according to skill level and focus.
- Encourage players to run around the nearest cone as fast as possible so they can rejoin their team in possession and provide a passing option.

- Challenge the players to protect the ball while their teammates get open. Players may need to take a touch or two before their teammates adjust their support angles.
- Stress the importance of communication and teamwork.
- Remind the players to have an idea before they receive the ball. Players should constantly be thinking what the next two or three actions of the game should be.

6v5 to 3v2 to Goals

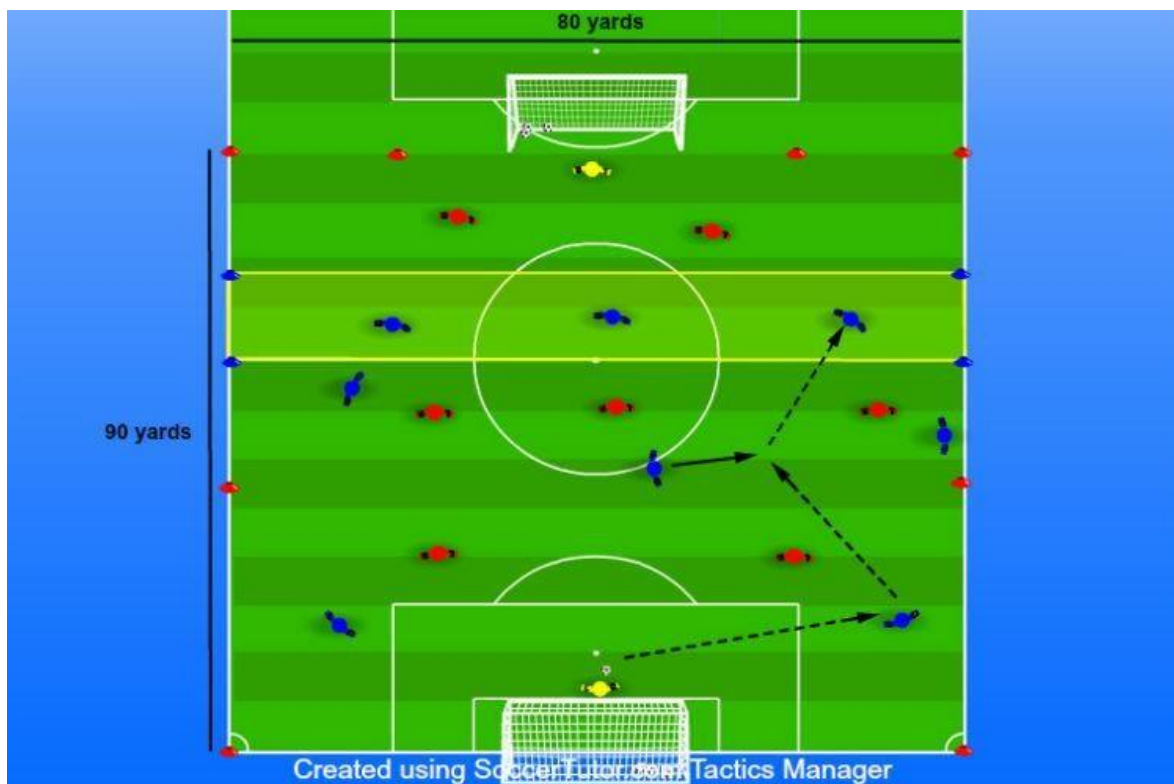
How the Drill Works:

Six attackers and a goalkeeper attempt to build out of the back against five defenders. The attackers attempt to play the ball, on the ground, to one of their three target players in the neutral zone. Once the target players receive the ball, they turn and play 3v2 to goal. If the defending team wins the ball, they attempt to counter and score in the attacker's goal.

Purpose:

Improve a team's ability to build out of their half and find their target players with forward passes.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one, 90x80-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed on each end line.
- Mark a five-yard neutral zone, 20-25 yards away from the defender's goal. See diagram.
- Position one goalkeeper in the full-size goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rest behind the goal and rotate in every three minutes.
- Divide the players in to two teams. The focus group, the attacking team, should have five field players and a goalkeeper in their defensive half with the addition of three field players in the neutral zone. The attacking team should be in a 1-2-4-3 formation.
- The defending team should have five players in the opponent's defensive half and two players and a goalkeeper behind the neutral zone. The defending team should be in a 12-3-2 formation. See diagram for more information.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the focus team's full-size goal.
- Play three sets of eight minutes with two minutes of rest between each round.

Instructions:

1. The focus group always starts a new ball with their goalkeeper. The goalkeeper and five field players attempt to keep possession of the ball, build out of their own half, and connect a pass, on the ground, to either of their three teammates in the neutral zone.
2. The team defending the focus group, attempts to press the attacking team, win the ball close to goal, and score. Only five field players are allowed in the focus group's defensive half.
3. When the players in the neutral zone receive a pass, the three of them immediately turn and play 3v2 to goal. No extra defenders or attackers can join this part of the game.
4. If the two defenders win it, they attempt to quickly play forward to their teammates and counter.
5. The two defenders preventing the three neutral zone players can not step into the neutral zone until one of the attackers takes a touch. Attackers can dribble out of the neutral zone towards goal to create scoring opportunities.
6. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on either sideline. If the ball goes out-of-bounds on either end line, or either team scores a goal, a new ball is always started with the focus team's goalkeeper.

7. Play three games of eight minutes with a two-minute break between each game. Rotate players and positions between each game. Make coaching points during breaks.

Variations:

Increase buildup difficulty – Add another player on the team preventing the buildup if the focus team is easily passing into their neutral zone players.

Decrease buildup difficulty – Take a player preventing the buildup off the field if the focus team is not moving the ball forward to their neutral zone attackers 50% of the time.

Space – Change the space to increase or decrease the difficulty for the team building out of their half.

Coaching Points:

- Set up players in their game positions and formations. Make it as game-like as possible.
- Set up the team preventing the buildup to bring out certain actions from the team attempting to build out of their defensive half. For example, if the attacking team needs to play wide, have the defending team stay compact and not let anything through the middle.
- Teach the focus group to move the ball quickly from side-to-side and play forward when space opens. Players should play simple and quick to keep the defenders shifting.
- Encourage the players to turn and play forward when possible! Players should constantly look for openings to receive the ball, turn and create opportunities going forward.
- Remind the players inside the neutral zone to continually adjust their positions make themselves available for a pass!
- Challenge the 3v2 players to compete and make it difficult for each other!

6v5 Two Goal Buildup

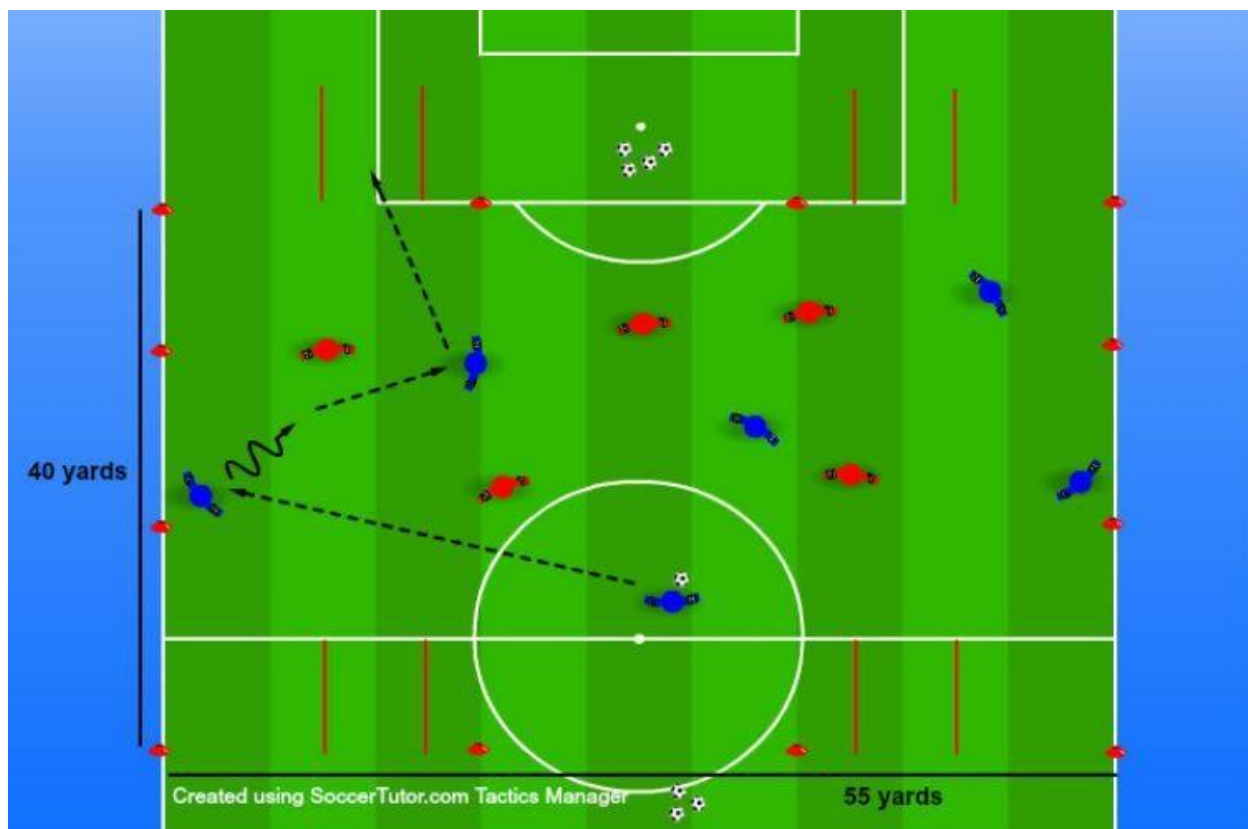
How the Drill Works:

One team of six attempts to move the ball forward in their opponent's half and score by dribbling or passing through either of their opponent's gates. Five defenders attempt to win the ball and dribble, or pass, through either of their opponent's gates.

Purpose:

Develop a team's ability to switch the point of attack quickly and play forward.

Diagram:



Setup:

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- Set up one, 40x55-yard field.
- Set up two, four-yard gates on each end line. Use poles or cones to mark them. See diagram for more information.
- Divide the players into one team of six and one team of five. Extra players will rest outside the field and rotate in every four minutes.
- The team of six will be the attackers and the focus group. Position the players in a 2-3-1 formation.
- The team of five will be the defenders. Position them in a 3-2 formation.
- The soccer balls should be divided evenly between the two end lines.
- Play four, four-minute games before resting and rotating players.

Instructions:

1. The attackers start with the ball and attempt to dribble or pass through either of their opponent's gates.
2. The defenders attempt to prevent the attackers from scoring, win the ball, and score in either of the attacker's gates.
3. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. If either team scores, a new ball is started with the attackers.
4. Play four-minute games. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
5. Make coaching points and rotate players during the break. Play for 30 minutes.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Mini-goals – Use mini-goals instead of gates.

Easier for the attackers – Take off a defender if the attackers are struggling to score 50% of the time.

More difficult for the attackers – Add another defender if the attackers are scoring more than 50% of the time.

Coaching Points:

- See if the players can figure out the necessary actions to score before giving them answers. Let the players play a game before having a discussion with them about actions to find success.
- Teach the players to move the ball side-to-side to open forward passing lanes and score!
- Encourage players to be creative and move the ball quickly if dribbling is not the best option.
- Challenge the defenders to stay compact and make the attackers play around them!

6v5+GK Attacking

How the Drill Works:

Six attacking players play against five defenders and one goalkeeper. The attacking team is the focus group and attempts to create goal scoring opportunities in the opponent's defensive half. The defensive team attempts to prevent goals and score on either of the two mini-goals.

Purpose:

Improve goal scoring opportunities in the opponent's half. Attackers look to create 2v1s, switch the field, and take players on to create goal scoring opportunities.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one, 60x80-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed in the middle of one of the end lines.
- Two mini-goals should be spaced evenly along the opposite end line of the full-size goal. See diagram for more information. Use cones if mini-goals are unavailable.
- Position one goalkeeper in the full-size goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rest behind the goal and rotate in every three minutes.
- Divide the players in to two teams. The focus group, or the attacking team, should have six players and be in a 1-3-1 formation. The defensive team should have five field players and one goal keeper in a 1-3-2 formation.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed between the two mini-goals.
- Play three, six-minute rounds. Adjust the duration of the activity to meet the training session's needs.

Instructions:

1. The attacking team will start with the soccer ball.
2. The attacking team attempts to score on the defensive team goal.
3. The defensive team attempts to prevent the attacking team from scoring and score on either of the two mini-goals.
4. The team with the most goals at the end of the round is the winner of that round.
5. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. If the ball goes out-of-bounds on either end line, or either team scores a goal, a new ball is always started with the attacking team.
6. Play three, six-minute rounds. Rotate players and positions between each game. Make coaching points during breaks.

Variations:

Increase scoring difficulty – Add another player on the defensive team, or take off an attacker, if the attacking team is scoring too easily.

Decrease scoring difficulty – Take a defensive player off the field, or add an attacker, if the attacking team is not scoring.

Space – Change the space to increase or decrease the difficulty for the attacking team.

Coaching Points:

- Set up the defensive team to bring out the actions the attacking needs to perform to find success.
- Teach the attackers to create 2v1s, switch the field, and take players on. Attackers should mix short combinations with longer passes as well as changing the pace of the game as needed.
- Encourage players to shoot and take chances around the box.
- Remind the players to constantly move and work off of each other to create space and opportunities.
- Challenge the defensive team to prevent the attacking team from scoring!

6v6+GK Buildup

How the Drill Works:

Six players and a goalkeeper attempt to build out of the back against a team of six players. The focus group, the team building out of the back, attempts to pass or dribble through either of the two gates that are positioned just past half field. The team preventing the buildup, attempts to win the ball and score on the full-size goal.

Purpose:

Improve a team's ability to build the ball out of the back and into the opponent's defensive half. Develop players' vision and movement when maintaining possession in their defensive half.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one, 60x80-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed in the middle of one of the end lines.
- Two pole gates should be spaced evenly along the opposite end line of the full-size goal. Each gate should be at least six yards wide. Use cones if poles are not available. See diagram for more information.
- Position one goalkeeper in the full-size goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rest behind the goal and rotate in every three minutes.
- Divide the players in to two teams. The focus group, the team building out of their defensive half, should have six players and a goalkeeper and be in a 1-4-2 formation. The team preventing the buildup play should have six field players and be in a 1-3-1 formation.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the full-size goal.
- Play three, six-minute rounds. Adjust the duration of the activity to fit the training session.

Instructions:

1. The team building out of the back will start with the soccer ball and attempt to pass or dribble through either of the two pole gates.
2. The team preventing the buildup attempts to win the ball and score on the full-size goal.
3. The team with the most goals at the end of the round is the winner of that round.
4. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. If the ball goes out-of-bounds on either end line, or either team scores a goal, a new ball is always started with the team building out of the back.
5. Play three, six-minute rounds. Rotate players and positions between each game. Make coaching points during breaks.

Variations:

Increase buildup difficulty – Add another player on the team preventing the buildup if the focus group is scoring too easily.

Decrease buildup difficulty – Take a player preventing the buildup off the field if the focus group is not having success.

Space – Change the space to increase or decrease the difficulty for the team building out.

Equipment – If no poles are available, use cones to mark out the counter goals.

Coaching Points:

- Set players up in their game positions and formation.
- Set up the team preventing the buildup to bring out certain actions from the team attempting to build out of their defensive half.
- Teach the focus group to move the ball quickly from side-to-side and play forward when possible. Players should play simple and quick to keep the defenders moving.
- Encourage the players to turn and play forward when possible!
- Remind the players to constantly move and work off of each other to create space and opportunities.

7v7 Game

7v7 Game

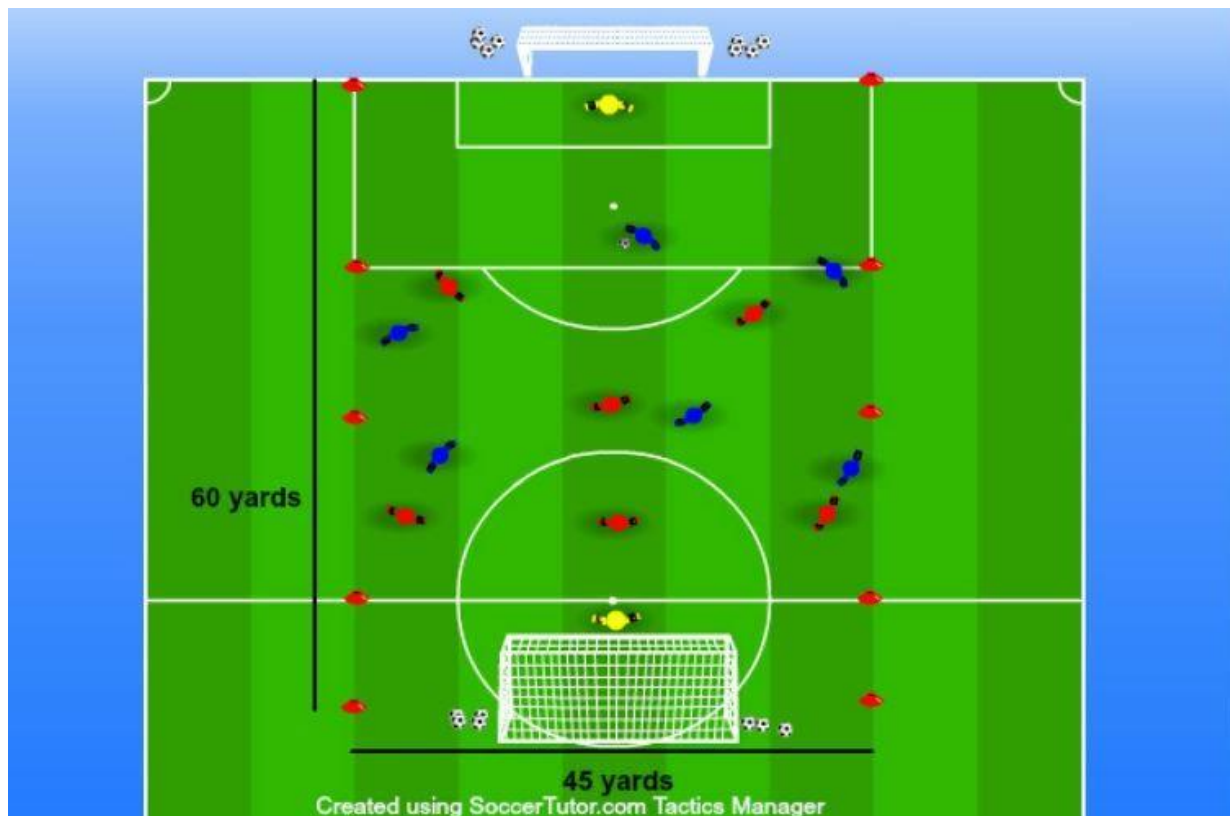
How the Drill Works:

Two teams of seven players, including goalkeepers, compete against each other to full-size goals.

Purpose:

Allow players to compete in a game-like environment. Players will develop their entire game and experiment through success and failures in the match.

Diagram:



7v7 Game

Setup:

- Set up a field 50-60x35-45 yards.
- One full-size goal should be placed on each end line. Position one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, rotate them in every five minutes.
- Divide the players into two teams of six. If there are more than 12 field players, rotate in the substitutes every five minutes. Set up the teams in a 1-3-1-2 formation.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the goals.
- A 20-minute game with two 10-minute halves and a four-minute halftime is suggested.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete against each other and attempt to score in their opponent's goal.
2. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. Play goal kicks and corners if the ball goes over the end lines.
3. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
4. Rotate substitutes every five minutes if there are more than 12 field players.
5. Rest during halftime. Make coaching points and tactical switches during the break.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Coaching Points:

- Challenge the players to compete at a game-like pace!

- Teach the players to constantly move off of each other and provide good support angles in their team shape.
- Encourage the players to be creative when going forward. Lots of movement off the ball and mix in short and long passing combinations.
- Remind the players of certain actions they should focus on. Pick two or three key actions and use those words during the game.

8v8 Game

8v8 Game

How the Drill Works:

Two teams of eight players, including goalkeepers, compete against each other to full-size goals.

Purpose:

Allow players to compete in a game environment. Players will develop their entire game and experiment through success and failures in the match.

Diagram:

23 SOCCER SMALL-SIDED GAMES



8v8 Game

Setup:

- Set up one, 60x55-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed on each end line. Position one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, rotate them every six minutes.
- Divide the players into two teams of seven. If there are more than 14 field players, rotate in the substitutes every four minutes. Set up the teams in a 1-3-1-3 formation.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the goals.
- A 20-minute game with two 10-minute halves and a three-minute halftime is suggested. Adjust the duration of the game to fit the training needs.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete against each other and attempt to score in their opponent's goal.
2. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. Play goal kicks and corners if the ball goes over the end lines.
3. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
4. Rotate substitutes every four minutes if there are more than 14 field players.
5. Rest during halftime. Make coaching points and tactical switches during the break.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Coaching Points:

- Challenge the players to compete at a game-like pace!
- Teach the players to constantly move off of each other and provide good support angles in their team shape.
- Encourage the players to be creative when going forward. Lots of movement off the ball and mix in short and long passing combinations.
- Remind the players of certain actions they should focus on. Pick two or three key actions and use those words during the game.

9v7 Buildup End Zones

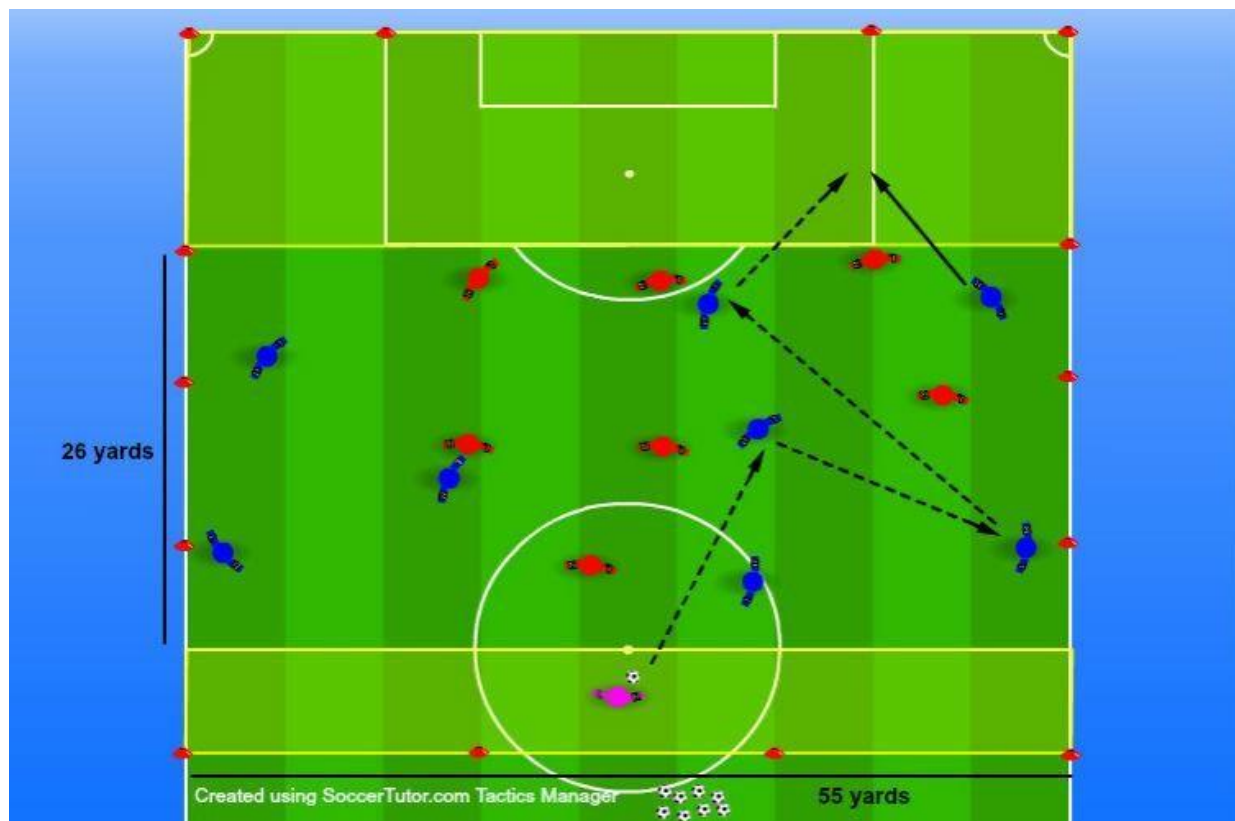
How the Drill Works:

One team of nine attempts to move the ball forward in their opponent's half and score by dribbling or passing into their opponent's end zone. Seven defenders attempt to prevent the attackers, win the ball and dribble in to the attacker's end zone.

Purpose:

Improve a team's ability to maintain possession and move the ball forward into their opponent's half.

Diagram:



Setup:

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- Set up one, 26x55-yard field. On each end of the field, set up a 10-yard end zone. See diagram.
- Position one goalkeeper in one of the end zones.
- Divide the players into one team of eight and one team of seven.
- The team of eight will join the goalkeeper and defend the end zone the goalkeeper is positioned in. They should line up in a 1-3-2-3 formation.
- The team of seven will defend the end zone with no goalkeeper in it and be in a 3-3-1 formation.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed behind the end zone the goalkeeper is in.
- Play three, six-minute games. Rotate players and positions between rounds. Make coaching points during natural stoppages of play.

Instructions:

1. The goalkeeper starts with a ball and punts, or throws, the ball into the air for the players inside the field to battle for it.
2. Both teams attempt to score by dribbling into their opponent's end zone or passing the ball to a player running into their opponent's end zone.
3. The team with the goalkeeper can use them to pass to keep possession of the ball and switch the field. The goalkeeper must stay inside the end zone.
4. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. If either team scores or the ball goes behind either end zone, a new ball is started with the goalkeeper.
5. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
6. Make coaching points and tactical switches during the break. Rotate players and positions as needed. Play three, six-minute games.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Coaching Points:

- Teach the players to move the ball quickly from side-to-side to open space to play forward and into the end zones. The team with more players should have the advantage and constantly move the ball.
- Remind the team with less players to stay compact and do not let the other team play through them.
- Encourage the players to constantly move and create good passing angles.
- Challenge the team with less players to score and beat the team with more players.
- Make sure the goalkeeper stays involved and helps their team keep possession and switch the point of attack.

9v7 High Pressure Game

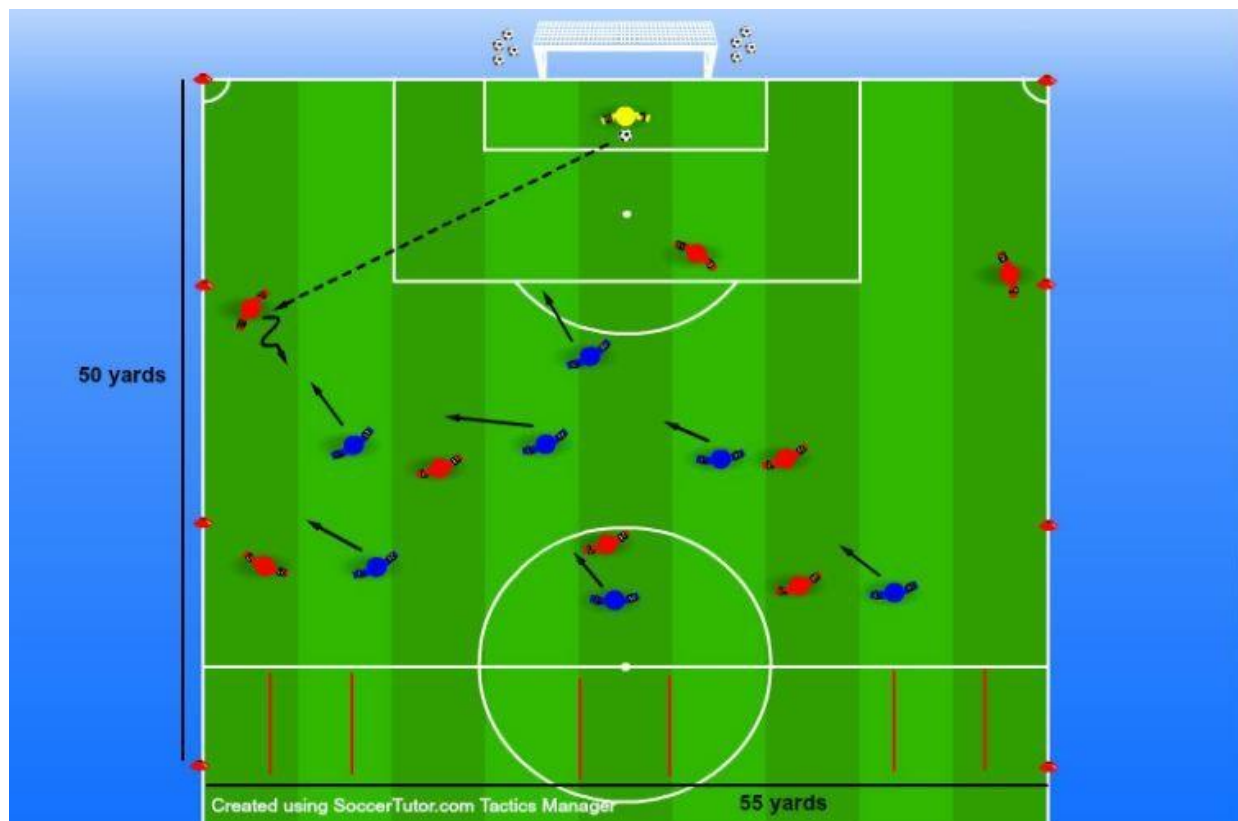
How the Drill Works:

A team of seven attempts to prevent a team of nine from building out of the back and scoring on either of the three gates. The team of seven tries to win the ball high up the field from their pressure and create scoring opportunities.

Purpose:

Improve a team's ability to high press their opponent and win the ball to create scoring chances.

Diagram:



Setup:

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- Set up one, 50x55-yard field.
- Place one full-size goal on one end line. Position one goalkeeper in the goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rotate every four minutes.
- On the end line opposite of the full-size goal, set up three, four-yard gates evenly across the end line. Use cones or poles to mark the gates. See diagram.
- Divide the field players into two teams. One team of eight and one team of seven. If there are extra players have them rest on the side and rotate them in every four minutes.
- The team of eight will join the goalkeeper and defend the full-size goal. Position them in a 1-4-1-3 formation.
- The team of seven will defend the three gates and attempt to high pressure their opponent. This team will be the focus team of the activity and should be in a 3-3-1 formation.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the full-size goal.
- Play three, eight-minute games with two-minute breaks between each game. Rotate players and positions between each round.

Instructions:

1. The goalkeeper starts with a soccer ball and helps their team build out of their half. The team building out of the back attempts to pass the ball through either of the three gates for a point.
2. The team starting without the ball, attempts to win the ball high up the field from their defensive pressure, and score on goal.
3. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. If either team scores, or the ball goes over either end line, a new ball is started with the goalkeeper.
4. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
5. Make coaching points and rotate players between games. Play three, eight-minute games.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Change the difficulty – If the team pressing is struggling to win the ball, add one more player to their team. If it too easy for the pressing team, take off one player from the pressing team.

Coaching Points:

- Give coaching points to the team building out of the back to bring out what the game should look like for the pressing team. Help the pressing players with a few tips at the beginning but see if they can figure the rest out before giving them more information.
- Teach the pressing team to move together as a group and close down the space quickly. The team pressing should cut out passing angles and get close enough to the player on the ball to put their head down.
- Challenge the players building out of the back to move the ball quickly and look to play through the high pressure.
- Make sure the goalkeeper stays involved and helps their team keep possession.

9v9 Game

9v9 Game

How the Drill Works:

Two teams of nine players, including goalkeepers, compete against each other to full-size goals.

Purpose:

Allow players to compete in a game environment. Players will develop their entire game and experiment through success and failures in the match.

Diagram:



9v9 Game

Setup:

- Set up one, 80x80-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed on each end line. Position one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, rotate them in every five minutes.
- Divide the players into two teams of nine. If there are more than 18 field players, rotate substitutes every five minutes. Set up the teams in a 1-2-3-2-1, or something similar.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the goals.
- A 20-minute game with two 10-minute halves and a four-minute halftime is suggested.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete against each other and attempt to score in their opponent's goal.
2. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. Play goal kicks and corners if the ball goes over the end lines.
3. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
4. Rotate substitutes every five minutes if there are more than 18 field players.
5. Rest during halftime. Make coaching points and tactical switches during the break.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Coaching Points:

- Challenge the players to compete at a game-like pace!
- Teach the players to make the field big and stretch the defense with their positioning. Players can then move in and out of their positions to create openings to play forward and score.
- Encourage the players to mix short and long passes together to create space.

SMALL-SIDED GAMES

- Remind the players of certain action they should focus on. Pick two or three key actions and use those words during the game.

11v7 Scoring Goals

How the Drill Works:

One team of 11 attempts to create chances and score in their opponent's half against seven defenders. Game is played to full-size goals with goalkeepers.

Purpose:

Develop a team's ability to move the ball in their opponent's half and create chances. Players improve their movement off the ball and their finishing composure in and around the box.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one, 48x80-yard field.
- Position one full-size goal on each end line. Place one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rotate every four minutes.
- Divide the field players into one team of 10 and one team of six.
- The team of 11 players will be the focus group and attack the team of seven defending their goal. The team of 11 should line up as they would in a game. Position the players in their game formation. The team of seven should be in a 1-4-2 formation.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed behind the focus team's goal.
- Three, six-minute games should be played with a two-minute rest between rounds. Rotate players and positions between rounds.

Instructions:

1. The focus team's goalkeeper will always start a new ball. The goalkeeper and 10 field players attempt move the ball and score on the team of seven.
2. The team defending the focus group, tries to prevent the attackers from scoring, win the ball, and counter on their opponent's goal.
3. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on either sideline. If the ball goes over either end line, or either team scores, the focus team's goalkeeper starts a new ball.
4. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
5. Make coaching points and tactical switches during the break. Rotate players and positions as needed. Play three, six-minute games. Adjust the duration of the activity to meet the needs of the training session.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Number of defenders – Increase, or decrease the difficulty for the attackers by adding, or subtracting players to the non-focus team.

Coaching Points:

- Let the teams compete for a few minutes before making coaching points. See what the players can solve themselves!
- Teach the focus group to move the ball quickly side-to-side to keep the defending shifting! This will create openings to play forward and shoot!
- Remind the attacking team to play what the game gives them. If the middle is too compact play around the defense!
- Encourage the defensive team to prevent goals and stay compact and organized! Defensive team should constantly be talking and giving each other directions.
- Challenge the focus group to take chances and be creative going forward!
- Make sure the goalkeepers stay involved and help their teams keep possession and switch the point of attack.

Break the Line

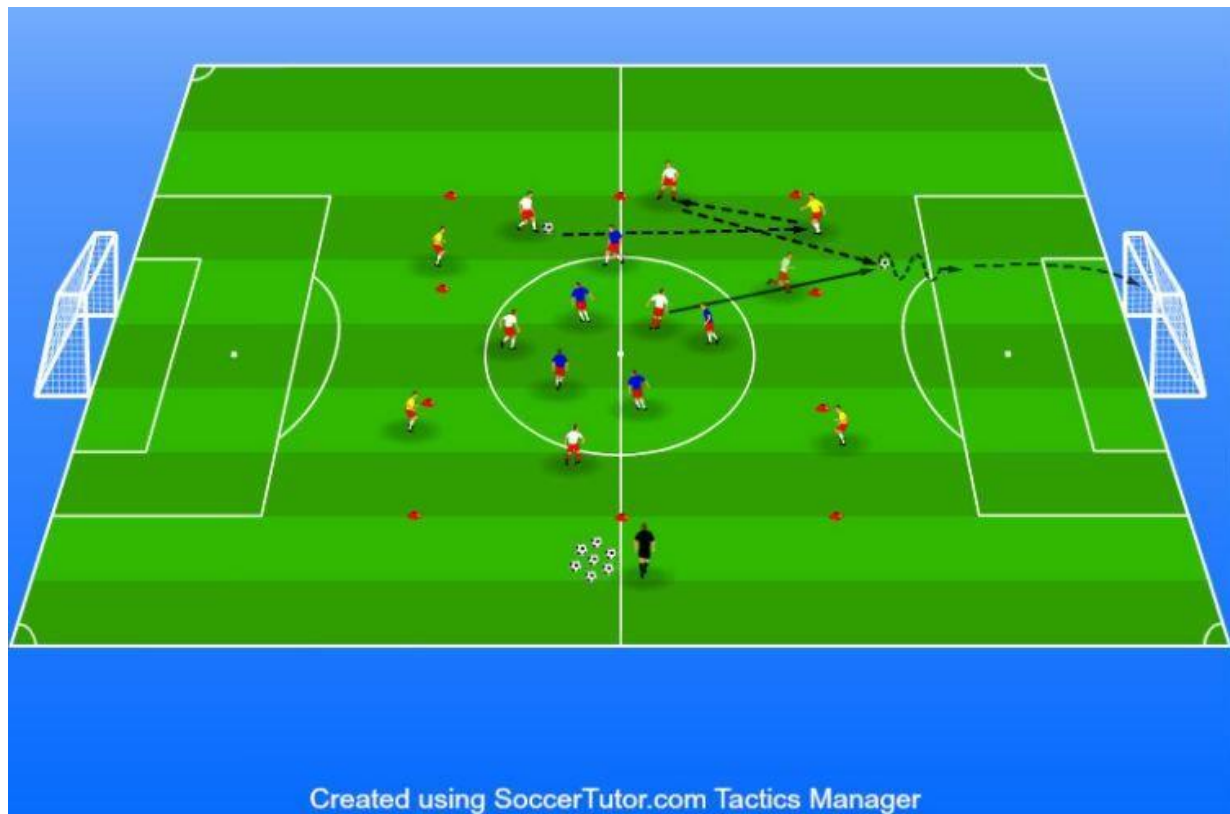
How the Drill Works:

Two teams play possession inside the playing area while attempting to complete 3rd man combination (up-back-through) to break out of the box and into a scoring position on goal.

Purpose:

Develop combination play to break out of pressure. Forces players to think multiple passes in advance.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up a 40x40-yard square. Adjust the size of the square to fit the skill level and number of players.
- Set up one, full-size, 20-yards off each end line. See diagram for more information. If full-size goals are unavailable, use cones to set up two smaller gates.
- Select four players to start as neutral players. Assign a separate jersey color to them. Position two neutrals on each end line of the square. See diagram.
- Divide the remaining players in to two teams of five players. Assign each team a different colored jersey. Both teams start inside the playing area. If there are extra players, make a third team, or add players to make it 6v6, or 7v7.
- If available, position one goalkeeper in each goal.
- Gather all the soccer balls and place them outside the playing area.
- Have the coach stand near the soccer balls to pass a new ball in as needed.
- Play three, five-minute games. Add more time or games if time allows. Rest and make coaching points between games.

Instructions:

1. The two teams play possession inside the square attempting to find a combination using one of the neutrals on either end line. Neutrals can be used to keep possession as well.
2. Teams score a point by completing an up-back-through with a neutral player and releasing a player out of the box to finish on goal in no more than two touches.
3. The pass out of the box, must be to a player onside.
4. Teams can not defend outside the square.
5. Teams are allowed to attack either goal when in possession. If the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, a new ball is started from the coach and is given to the team that did not last touch it.
6. Play three, five-minute games. Rotate neutrals and rest between games. Make coaching points as needed during natural stoppages.

Variations:

Number of players – Play 6v6 or 7v7 depending on number of players available. Adjust the size of the playing square accordingly.

Touch limit – Limit the number of touches players get. Three-touch, two-touch, or one-touch depending on the skill level.

Pass Rule – Teams must complete three, four, or five passes before being able to break out of the box.

Coaching Points:

- Teach the players to use the entire playing area to create openings.
- Educate the players on the up-back-through pattern and different ways to complete the pattern.
- Remind the players the game-like application of this activity. Players playing forward to their striker, receiving a lay-off, and then playing a through ball to a player breaking past the defenders.
- Challenge the players to think multiple passes in advance.
- Encourage the players to constantly move and create good angles of support.
- Challenge the defending team to win the ball back quickly and transition into offense!

Numbers Game

How the Drill Works:

Two teams compete to goals as the coach calls a random number of players into the game. Coach could call 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4 throughout the duration of the game.

Purpose:

Develop the ability to attack quickly in different scenarios. Players must immediately react to the situation called and send the appropriate number of players.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one, 44x42-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed on each end line.
- Position one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rotate every four repetitions.
- Divide the players into two teams and assign pennies. Have each team form lines, or groups, on each side of their respective goal. See diagram for more information.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed with the coach on one sideline.
- Play two, 10-minute halves with a three-minute halftime break. Make coaching points during the break. Adjust the duration of the game to fit the needs of the training session.

Instructions:

1. The coach shouts “1v1, 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4” and passes a ball into the field for either team.
2. Both teams react to the command by sending the right number of players on to the field. If 2v2 is called, both teams send two players on to the field.
3. That group called competes until the ball goes out-of-bounds, or either team scores.
4. As soon as that group has finished their turn, they return to their team, and the coach starts a new group of players with another situation.
5. Play for 10 minutes before resting, resetting all the soccer balls and making coaching points.
6. Play two, 10-minute halves. The team with the most goals at the end of the game is the winner. Adjust the duration of each half to meet the training session’s needs.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Any number combination – Shout 3v2, 2v1, 4v2, or any combination to change the situations. Assign one team to the first number called and the other team to the second number called!

Coaching Points:

- Challenge the players to react quickly to the number called! Teams should communicate who the next players up are so they are prepared for the next turn.
- Teach the players to close down the attackers on the ball quickly!
- Encourage the team that receives the ball first to attack if the moment is on or keep the ball for a bit before looking to score. Take what the game gives them!
- Remind the goalkeepers to help their team in possession and to give defensive commands when they are defending.
- Push the players to be creative and not to be afraid to make mistakes!

Three Zone Game

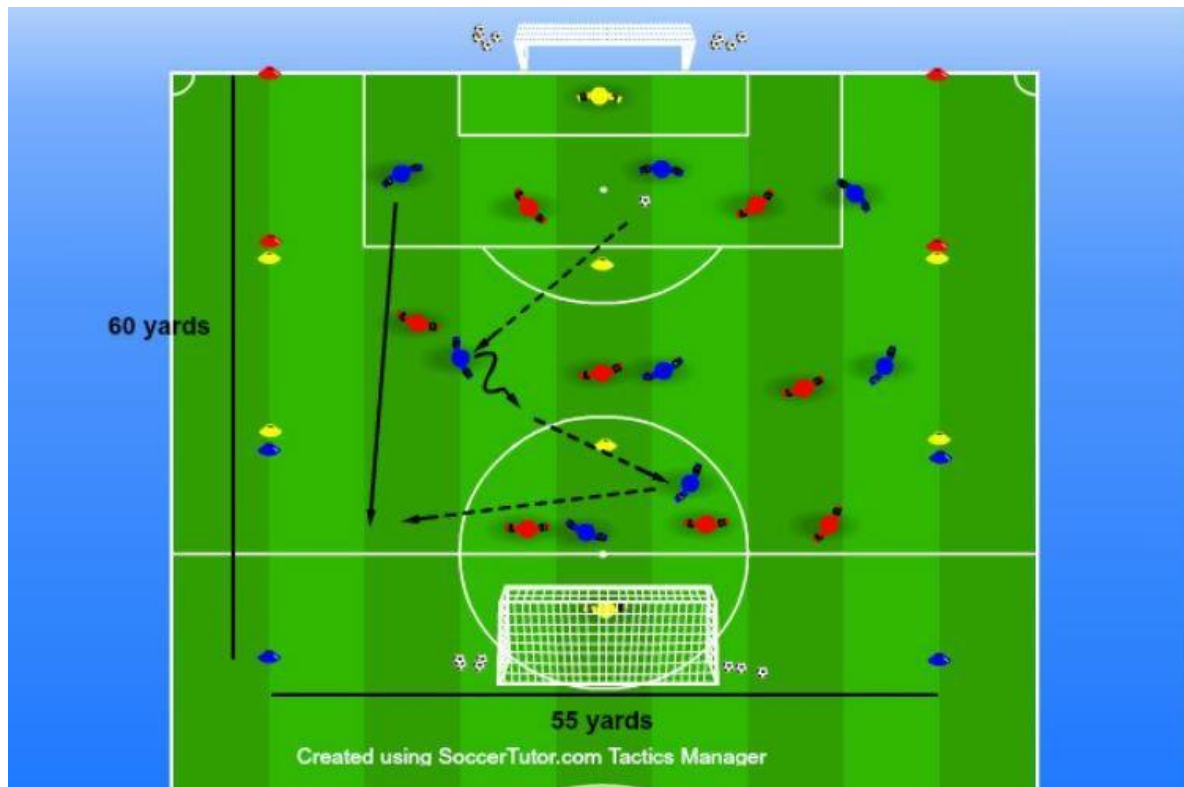
How the Drill Works:

Two teams of nine players, including goalkeepers, compete against each other on a field with three zones and full-size goals. Only four players on offense are allowed in each of the three zones. When defending, no extra players can enter the zones. Three players start in their defensive zone, three players start in their midfield zone, and two players start in their attacking zone for each team.

Purpose:

Develop ability to join the attack and support their team moving forward. Players learn to support play and build out of their defensive zone.

Diagram:



Setup:

- Set up one, 60x55-yard field. Using different colored cones, mark out three even, horizontal 20-yard zones. See diagram for more information.
- One full-size goal should be placed on each end line. Position one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, rotate them in every five minutes.
- Divide the players into two teams of eight. If there are more than 16 field players, rotate in the substitutes every five minutes. Set up the teams in a 1-3-3-2 formation.
- Position three players in each team's defensive and midfield zone. Position two players in each team's attacking zone.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the goals.
- A 20-minute game with two 10-minute halves and a three-minute halftime is suggested.

Instructions:

1. Two teams compete against each other and attempt to score in their opponent's goal.
2. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. Play goal kicks and corners if the ball goes over the end lines.
3. Players must stay in their zones unless they are joining the attack in the zone higher up the field. Only ONE extra player can join another zone at a time. Defensive zone players can join the midfield or attacking zone. Midfield zone players can join the attacking zone.
4. Players can only defend in their zone. Players cannot move zones to help defend.
5. A ball must be passed into the next zone to advance the ball. Players cannot dribble forward to the next zone. The ball can move freely forwards and backwards through the zones as long as it is being passed from zone-to-zone.
6. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
7. Rotate substitutes every five minutes if needed.
8. Rest during halftime. Make coaching points and tactical switches during the break.

Variations:

Touch-limit – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

Two zones – If there are not enough players for three zones, make two zones and decrease the dimensions of the field. Same rules apply.

Coaching Points:

- Teach the players to join the attack as the ball advances forward.
- Remind the players only one player can join at a time, but that they must return to their original zone after their team turns the ball over. Players must work up and down the field.
- Encourage the players to constantly move off of each other providing good support angles so that they can advance the ball forward.
- Push the players to think quickly and have an idea of where the ball should go before they receive a pass.

