

LYA U12 SOCCER COACHES MANUAL

Age Group Philosophy

The emphasis is on having fun, building character, continuing to build technical skill, while further developing tactical awareness in the framework of a team. At this stage players continue to learn more about team concepts, positioning, and awareness of other players on the field.

Age Group Skill Focus:

Players at this age group at the end of the season should demonstrate the following

- Learn to receive the ball cleanly under pressure
- Pass the ball accurately short and medium distances
- Learn to shoot with power and finesse
- Learn to defend in groups of 3 players
- Learn to attack in groups of 3 players
- Learn to create and take advantage of space when in possession
- Have a basic understanding of 9 v 9 team shape and roles on the field
- Move up and down the field as a unit minimizing gaps between lines (backs, mids, forwards). 10 steps between lines is a good rule of thumb.
- Learn the basic rules of the game: throw-ins, offsides, goal kicks, corner kicks

Typical Practice Format 75 Minutes in Length:

6pm to 6:10pm | **INTRO GAME**

6:10 to 6:20pm | **FUN ACTIVITY WITH SKILL FOCUS**

6:20 to 6:40pm | **MAIN ACTIVITY**

6:45 to 7:15pm | **END GAME / SCRIMMAGE 9 v 9**

LET THE KIDS PLAY! Minimize the amount of instruction and get the kids on the field playing

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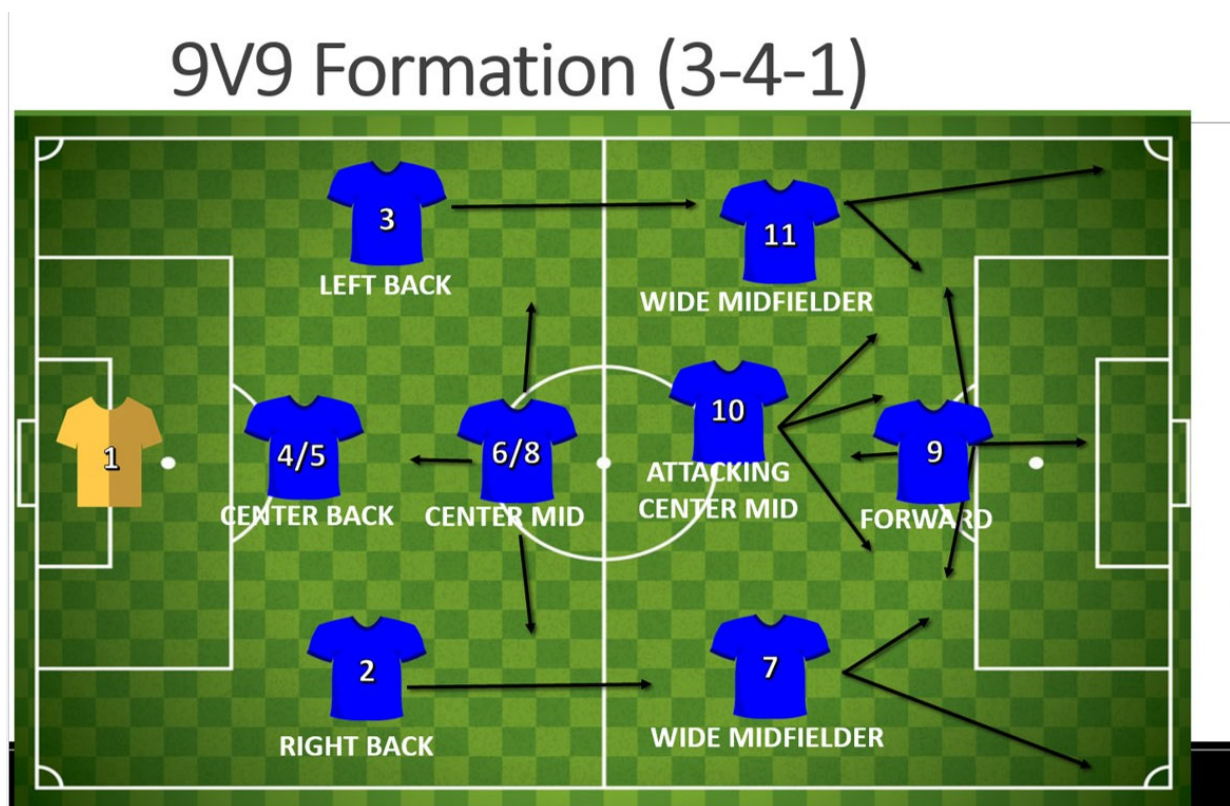
BASIC GAME RULES AND RECOMMENDED FORMATION

Basic Rules

- 9 v 9 including keepers
- Size 4 soccer ball
- Offsides rule in effect*
- Throw-ins when ball out of bounds on touchline
- Goal kicks and corner kicks when ball out of play over endline
- Entire ball must cross out of bounds line for the ball to be out of play
- All referee decisions are final

*For a full set of rules see the document FIFA Laws of Soccer

Recommended 9 v 9 Playing Formation (back to front):



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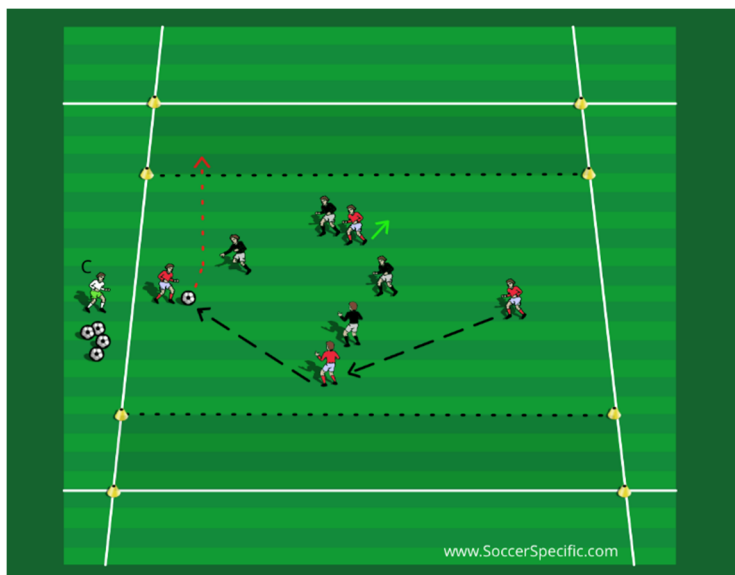
INTRO GAME: END ZONES

Setup:

As players arrive give them a ball and allow them to dribble around the field or pass with a partner
Once you have 6 players, split them into teams and begin playing a game

End Zones:

- Create end zone areas at each end of the field or use half the center circle at one end and the goal box at the opposite end
- Teams score a point by dribbling the ball into the end zone or designated area and then stopping the ball in that area for a point
- Once you have 8 or more players you can split the group and play two games of 2 v 2 or 3 v 3 by splitting the field in half vertically



End Zone Targets

- 2 teams of 4 or 5 players play in half of the 4 v 4 playing field
- 1 player from each team is a TARGET at one end of the playing area: one TARGET in the midfield circle and one TARGET in the goal box
- Teams score by passing to the TARGET player that is on their team
- Rotate TARGET players every 2 minutes

Coaching Points:

- Players look for opportunities to dribble forward to end zone or pass forward to targets
- Awareness of space on the field

Note:

If teams are uneven, switch players so the teams are balanced or you may create one team with more players than the other team. For example: play 4 vs 3 with the team of 3 consisting of stronger players

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INTRO GAME: MULTIPLE GOALS GAME

Setup:

- As players arrive place them in teams of 2 to 4 players
- Teams play across half of a 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 field
- Use cones to create two goals each 4 yards wide towards the corners of the playing area



Objective:

Teams score a point by dribbling through one of the two cone goals at the end they are attacking. Players must have control when dribbling through the cone goal for the point to count

Progression: Teams score by passing the ball on the ground through one of the cone goals

Coaching Points:

- Players attack the goal if there is space in front of them
- If the other team is blocking a goal, move the ball into space on the other side of the field and attack the other goal
- Defenders work together to block off paths to goal

Note:

If teams are uneven, switch players so the teams are balanced or you may create one team with more players than the other team. For example: play 4 vs 3 with the team of 3 consisting of stronger players

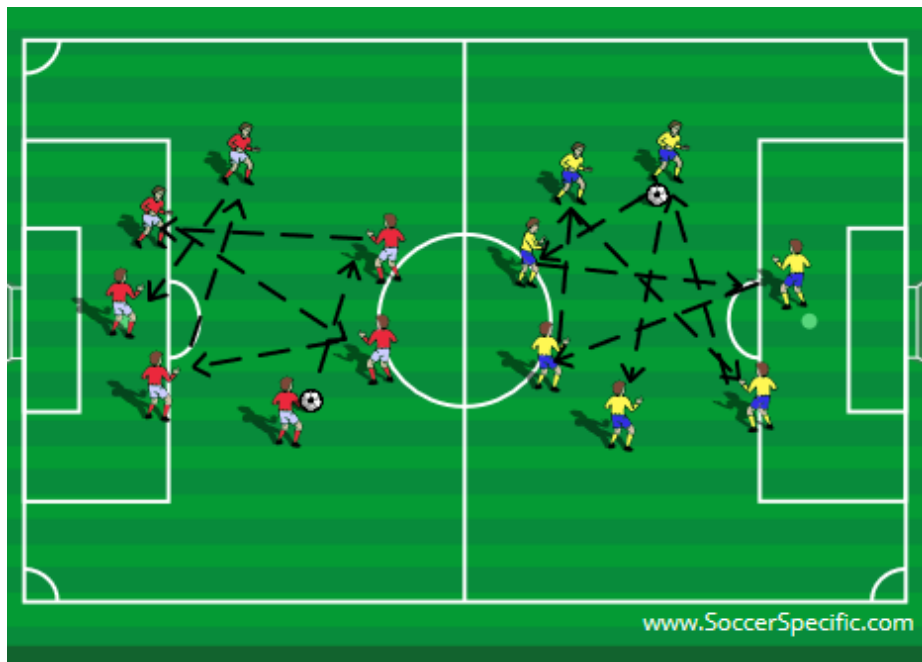
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FUN ACTIVITY WITH SKILL FOCUS: PASSING CIRCLES

SKILL FOCUS: PASSING AND RECEIVING

Setup:

- Players split into two teams of 5 to 7 players
- Each team form a circle in one half of the field or in half a 9 v 9 field split the field in half vertically
- Each team has one soccer ball



Objective: teams pass the ball amongst themselves using the inside of the foot and keeping the ball on the ground. The team that connects the most passes in the specified time period, wins the round

Instructions:

- Form a circle and players pass the ball across the circle to a teammate using the inside of the foot
 - Pass the ball with your second touch
 - Make sure everyone is receiving passes
- Play 90 second round and count the number of passes completed
- Progression: add a second soccer ball in each half
- Progression 2: back to one soccer ball each half, after a player makes a pass, he must sit down on the ground and then get back up before being available to receive a pass
- Progression 3: call your teammate's name before passing it to her

Coaching Points:

- Receive with the inside of the foot so that the ball ends a step in front of you
- Pass with the inside of your foot to push it across to a teammate
- Be aware of which teammates have not received a pass
- Think ahead to where/to whom you are going to pass BEFORE you receive the ball



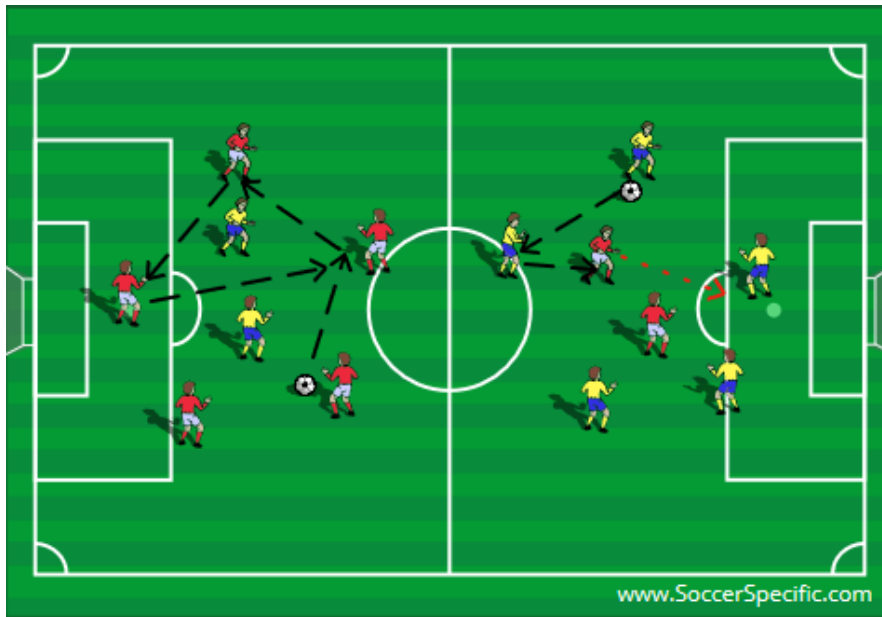
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FUN ACTIVITY SKILL FOCUS: KEEPAWAY HALVES

SKILL FOCUS: PASSING, RECEIVING, AND MOVING WITHOUT THE BALL

Setup:

- Players split into two teams of 5 to 7 players
- 4 v 1, 4 v 2, or 5 v 2 in each half of the field or split half a 9 v 9 field in half vertically
- One soccer ball each group of players



Objective:

Attackers keep ball away from defenders. Defenders win the ball and attack the goal.

Instructions:

- 1 or 2 players from each team go into the other team's half of the field to defend
- Group of 4 or 5 keep the ball away from the 1 or 2 defenders keeping the ball in their own half of the field
- 4 v 1, 4 v 2, 5 v 1 or 5 v 2 keepaway each half of the field
- When the defender or defenders win the ball, they win a point and then win 3 points when they score a goal
- Ball out of bounds, coach send in a 50/50 ball
- Play one minute and switch defenders
- Team with the most points at the end of the game wins the game
- Progression: defenders pass the ball out to the coach on the side for a point

Coaching Points:

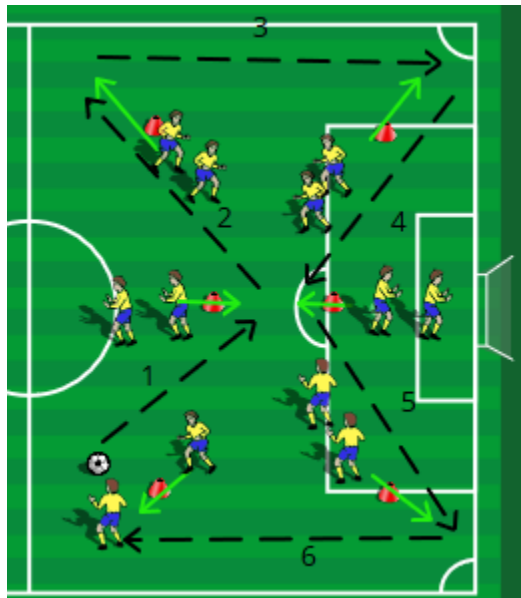
- Quick and accurate passing
- Think ahead before the balls comes to you
- Defenders work together to close down passing lanes
- Defenders quick attack when the ball is won and attackers quickly transition to defending

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FUN ACTIVITY WITH SKILL FOCUS: INSIDE-OUTSIDE PASSING PATTERN SKILL FOCUS: PASSING ACCURACY AND ANGLES OF PASSING

Setup:

- Half a 9 v 9 field
- 6 cones set up as shown
- 2 or 3 players per cone
- Start with 1 soccer ball and progress to 2 soccer balls



Instructions:

- Players follow the passing pattern
- Start next to the cone and wide players open outside the cone to receive a pass
- The inside players move inside the cone to receive a pass
- Follow your pass move to the next cone
- The cones represent the defenders' space
- Encourage players to play 2 or 3 touches (setup touch, then a pass)
- Add a 2nd soccer ball opposite the first ball

Coaching Points:

- Backpedal away from the cone and face into the field of play so you can see where the ball is coming and where it is going
- Good setup touch so players can quickly make the pass
- Passing accuracy and pace

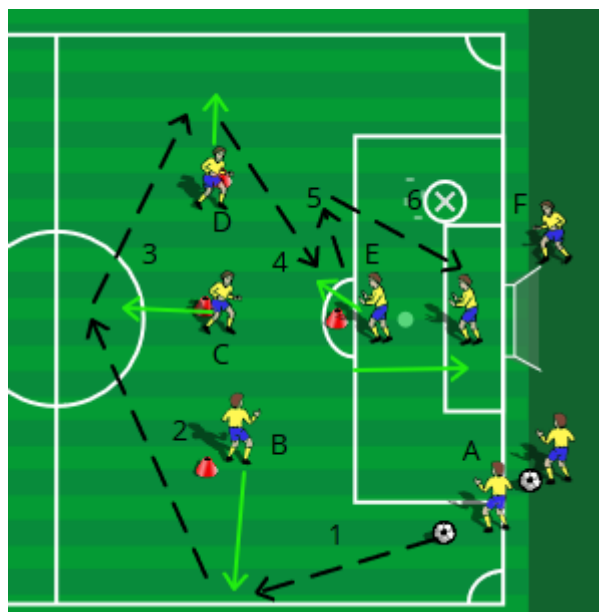
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FUN ACTIVITY SKILL FOCUS: PASSING PATTERN FINISH ON GOAL

SKILL FOCUS: PASSING and SHOOTING

Setup:

- Half a 9 v 9 field with cones placed as shown for player starting positions
- One player start in goal, with 2nd keeper resting
- 3 players start beside the goal with a soccer ball to begin the pattern
- 2 players next to each cone (1 will be active, 1 resting each turn)



Instructions:

- Player beside the goal with the ball (A) pass to player B “outside” or “wide” of the cone B starts next to
- C moves away from the cone to receive a pass from B
- D moves away from their cone wide facing into the field to receive a pass from C
- D pass the ball into the feet of E (your TARGET striker in a game)
- E pass back to D and D shoots on goal
- Keeper retrieves the ball and then precedes to position A
- Players rotate to next position and player E moves to next keeper position and shooter D becomes the target E

Coaching Points:

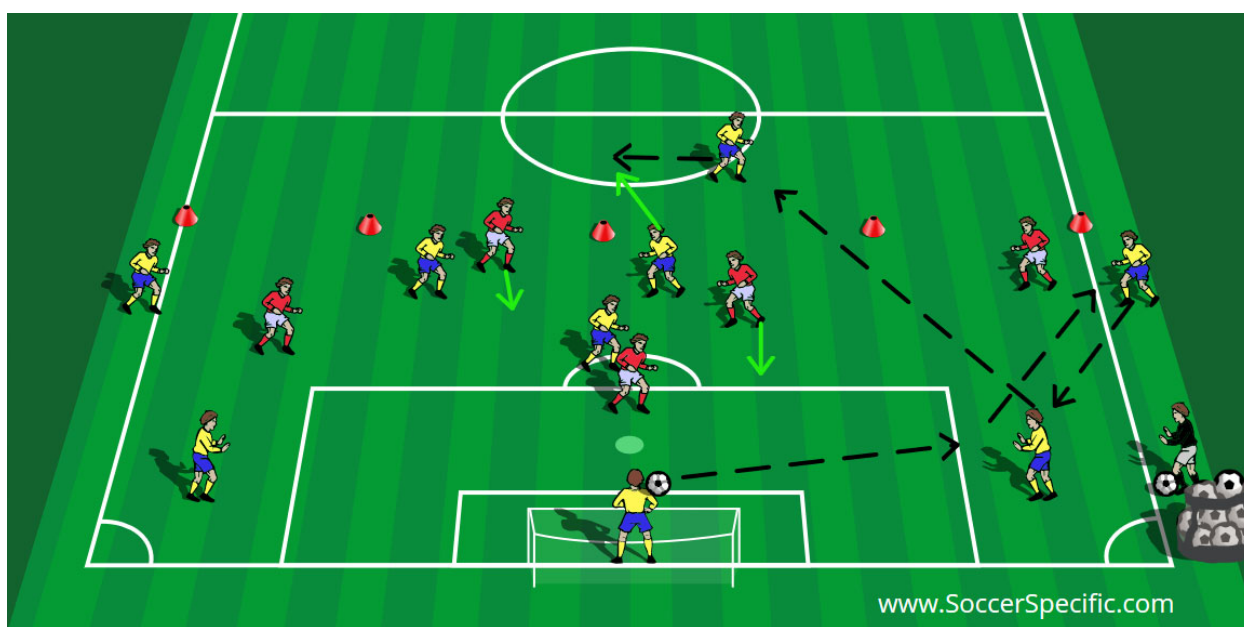
- Players in positions B, C, and D face into the field before receiving a pass
- Passing accuracy
- Shooting power and accuracy

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MAIN ACTIVITY: 9 v 5 Buildout to Midfield vs Attack

Setup:

- Split players into two teams
- Half a field with goal on one end and a lines of cones 10 yards from midfield creating the “midfield target zone”
- Team of 9 (Buildout Team) includes a keeper plus 8 field players playing away from the goal
- Team of 5 include 2 forwards plus 3 midfielders facing the goal
- ALT: 8 Buildout players including keeper versus 4 or 5 players facing the goal
- Coach serve a ball into play



Objective:

- Buildout team of 9 to pass or dribble and possess the ball in the “Midfield zone”
- Team of 5 stop them from building out and when winning the ball attack the goal
- Ball out of bounds coach serve a new ball into play
- Restart play each time a point is scored
- Play for 6 to 10 minutes and rotate players/teams

Progression:

- After buildout team earns a point, they can keep playing and pass back to keeper and repeat the sequence to earn additional points
- Buildout team connect two passes in Buildout zone to earn points

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MAIN ACTIVITY: 9 v 5 Buildout WIDE vs Attack

Setup:

- Split players into two teams
- Half a field with goal on one end and 2 cone gates setup opposite end
- Team of 9 (Buildout Team) includes a keeper plus 8 field players playing away from the goal
- Team of 5 include 2 forwards plus 3 midfielders facing the goal
- ALT: 8 Buildout players including keeper versus 4 or 5 players facing the goal
- Coach serve a ball into play



Objective:

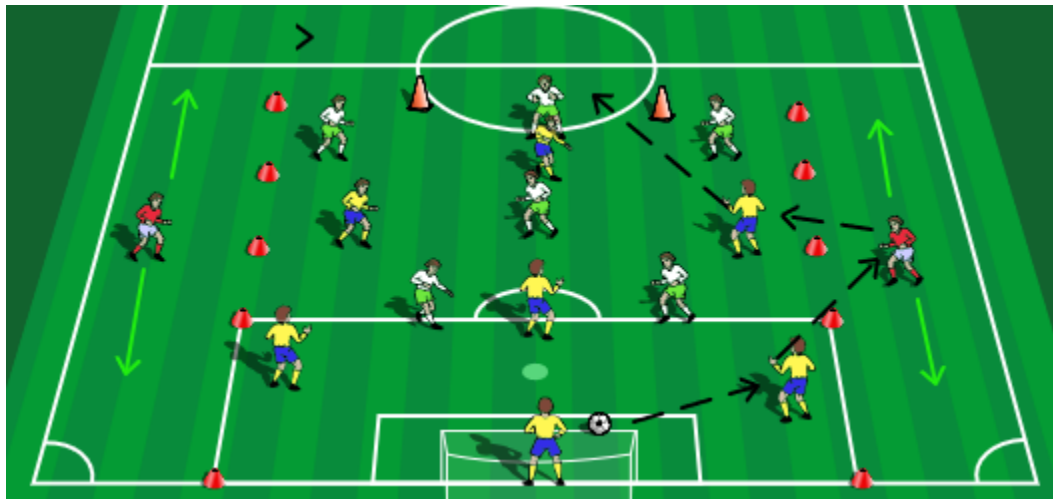
- Team of 9 buildout to dribble through cone gates to earn points
- Team of 5 stop them from building out and when winning the ball attack the goal
- Ball out of bounds coach serve a new ball into play
- Restart play each time a point is scored
- Play for 6 to 10 minutes and rotate players/teams

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MAIN ACTIVITY: 6 v 6 + 2 Wide Neutrals to Goal

Setup:

- Half a 9 v 9 field with goal at one end of field
- Cones mark wide channels 5 to 8 yards from touchlines
- Goal at midfield end 7 yards wide marked with cones or corner flags
- 2 teams of 6 players play 5 v 5 + keepers
- 1 player in each wide channel as a NEUTRAL play with whichever team has the ball



Instructions:

- Teams play 5 v 5 plus keepers to goal
- Either team can pass to player in wide channel so effectively it becomes 7 v 5
- Players in wide channel must remain wide
- Players can go out and defend the wide channel which creates an overload centrally
- Play 3 minute game and then switch NEUTRALS
- Play another game teams switch directions

Coaching Points:

- Win the ball and if no direct path forward, pass to the open player WIDE
- WIDE players move up and down the field to get in an open position
- WIDE players think ahead towards your next open pass

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END GAME: 9 v 9 Scrimmage

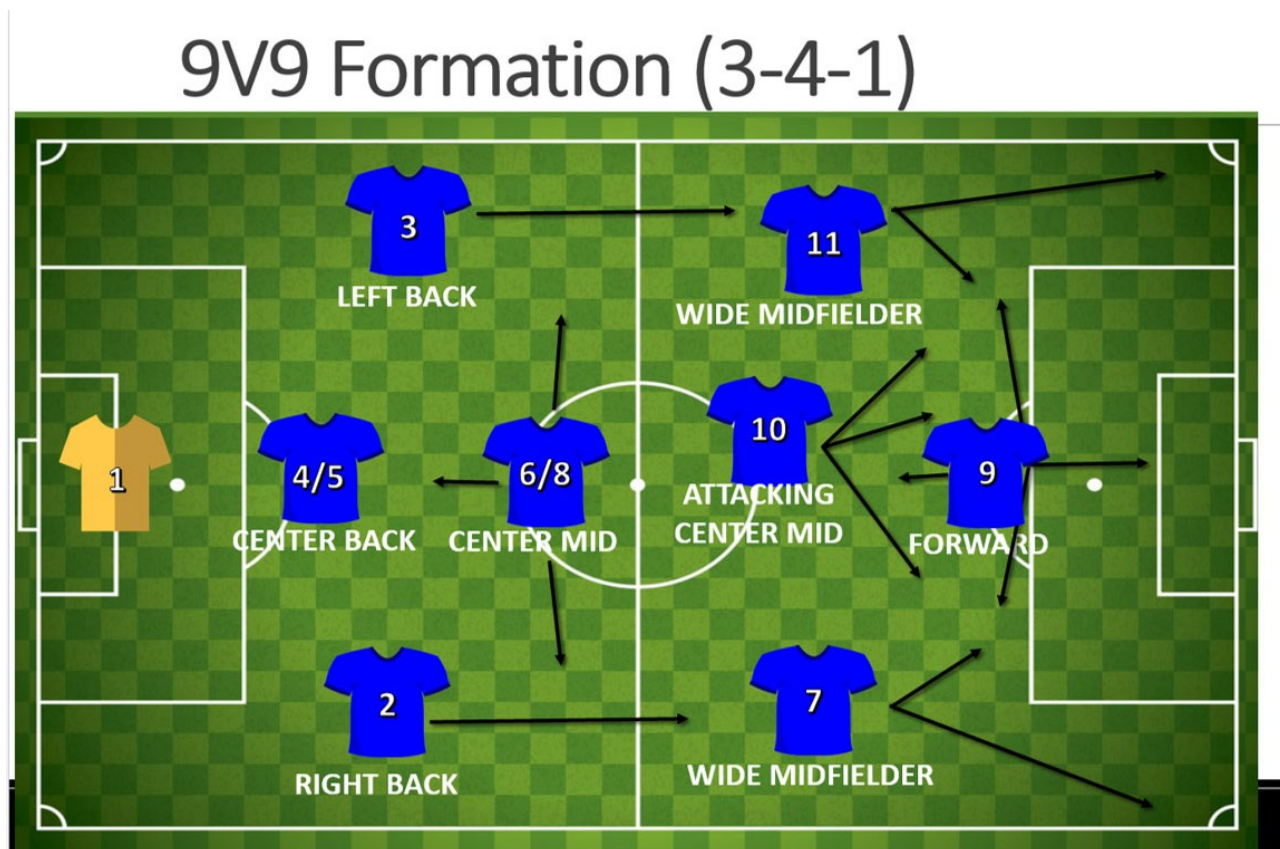
Objective:

- For the last 30 minutes of each practice, teams sharing a practice field scrimmage each other using normal game rules

Instructions

- Game day rules apply
- Scrimmage for 20 to 30 minutes
- Add a 2 minute half-time for players and coaches to analyze the first half of play and adjust play as needed
- Allow coaches one moment during the game to FREEZE play, step onto the field and adjust team shape and positioning

Recommending playing formation (back to front):



If teams are uneven or one team has more players, swap players to balance it out to maximize playing time and challenges for players