



National Soccer Coaches Association of America

"THRIFTY" ACTIVITIES and GAMES





Thrifty Activities and Games

When I was in college I took a summer job working for the Boy's Club camp north of Indianapolis. One week of the camp was devoted to sports. Naturally I ran the soccer portion of "Sports Week". What I learned during that time is that I had to teach without many resources. We had eager children who wanted to learn soccer but we had very limited amount of equipment. So I learned how to be "thrifty".

I used old coffee cans for small goals, trash cans or bicycle flags for bigger goals, and towels to make boundaries. It challenged me as a young adult who was trying to teach soccer to children from the urban setting. Even though I didn't have all of the resources I desired I wouldn't trade that experience for anything. Being resourceful was an important lesson for me to learn as a future teacher and coach.

While this publication was created for those coaching in a non-traditional setting, any one coaching soccer can benefit.

Thrifty activities are those that don't require a lot of equipment and set up time. The simplicity and ease of these activities are meant to aid coaches that don't have enough resources such as cones, small goals, and balls.

While these activities will illustrate proper equipment being used think of other items you can use to substitute? Example: Use old towels or dish clothes for cones, bicycle flags for goals, coffee, tin cans, or backpacks for objects to hit or small goals.

In this publication there are thrifty activities for dribbling, passing, shooting, receiving, and team-building games. There are three activities presented for each of these categories. These can also be called "spotlight" activities. Spotlight activities are an individual or small group activity that focus on a specific element of the game.

Additionally there are "spotlight" games. Spotlight games are directional and usually go to goals. The spotlight games shown in this publication are thrifty ones that will also work on team related concepts.

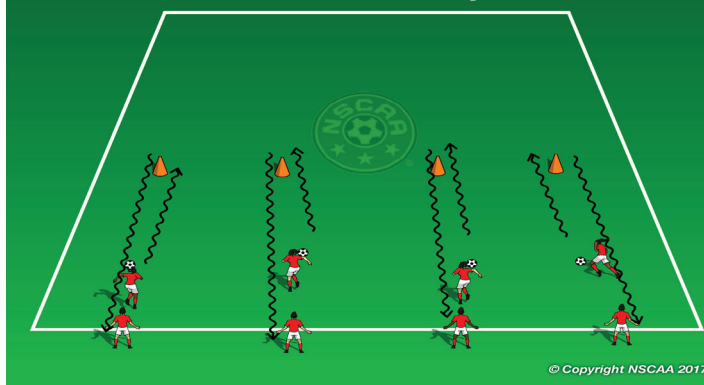
To close I hope that this publication will not only show easy activities but most importantly bring joy to children playing the game.

-Vince Ganzberg-



Dribbling

Teammate Relay

**Equipment needed:**

Balls: 4 Cones: 4 Players: 8-12

Why: To work on running and turning the ball

Setup: Place a cone (bag, towel) 10 yards from start.

Progression of activity:

1. Without ball run around cone and tag teammate
2. With ball dribble, stop once, dribble around cone and back
3. With ball dribble stop once before and after dribbling around cone

Equipment needed:

Balls: 4 Cones: 8 Players: 8

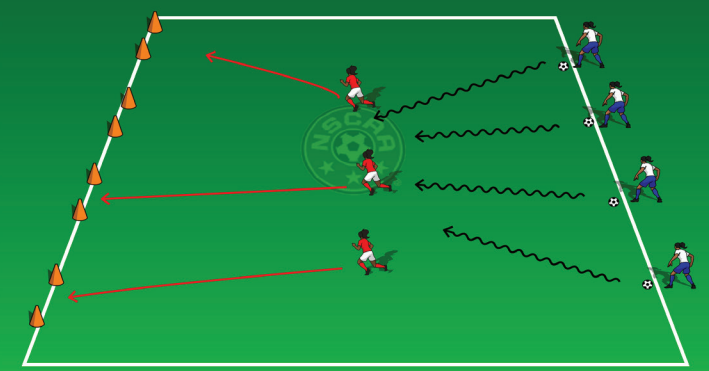
Why: To work on running with the ball

Setup: Place cones (bags or towel) 10 yards. One player has a ball, three do not. Three are in the middle of playing area.

Progression of activity:

1. On command players in middle run through an open goal. Other players try to be the first to run in the open goal. First player through open goal wins and other three start next round in middle.
2. Same as above except run with the ball.
3. Same as above except one player in middle stays and tries to knock a ball out of the area.

Open Goal

**Equipment needed:**

Balls: 4 Cones: 4 Players: 8-12

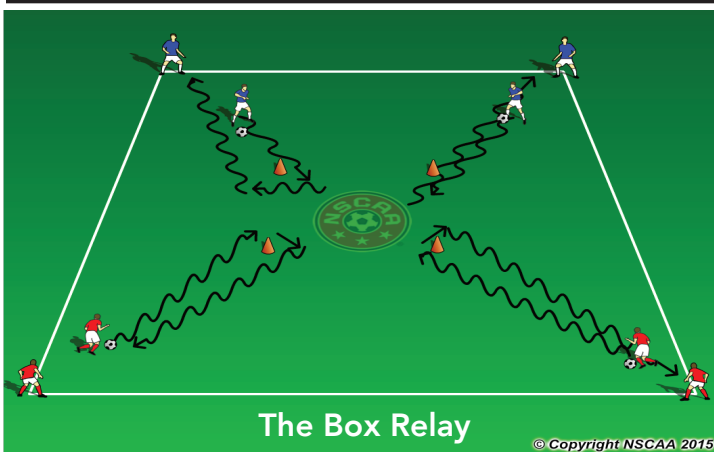
Why: To work on running and turning the ball

Setup: Make a 10x10 box in middle. 2-3 players in each corner with one ball per.

Progression of activity:

1. On command players run without ball around first cone then tag waiting teammate(s). Repeat 2-3x.
2. Same as above except with the ball.
3. Same as above except now player dribbles completely around first cone then through the box to a second cone. Dribble back through the box to waiting teammate(s).

The Box Relay

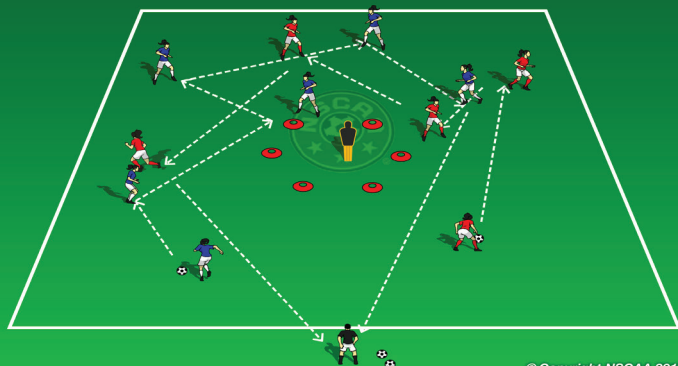


Tip: Turn the ball as if giving it a little hug



Passing

Trash Can Passing



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Equipment needed:

Balls: 2 Cones: 4 Players: 8-12

Why: To work on short, medium and long passing

Setup: Place a trash can/barrel in middle of area. Put cones (bags, towels) around trash can.

Progression of activity:

1. Two teams. Each team starts on opposite sides. Coach passes in the ball. Team is challenged to pass around the trash can and back to the coach.
2. Same as above except one player from each team is allowed to knock ball out of the area.
3. Two teams-one ball. Point scored when they go around barrel and back to coach.

Equipment needed:

Balls: 1 Cones: 3 Players: 4-5

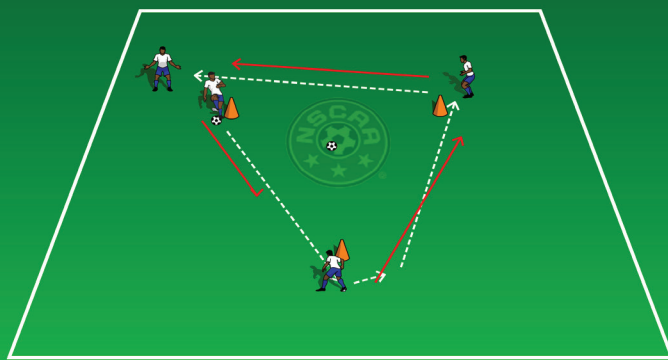
Why: To work on passing and receiving the ball

Setup: Make a triangle 10-15 yards. Two players start on one end while others start at a cone.

Progression of activity:

1. On command first player passes ball with right foot to second. Passer always follows pass. Continue until everyone gets back to original starting point. First team to do so wins.
2. Same as above except go the other way and use left foot.
3. Same as above except make triangle shorter or longer depending on ability level.

Triangle Relay Race



Equipment needed:

Balls: 1 Cones: 3 Players: 4-5

Why: To work on passing and receiving the ball away from an opponent.

Setup: Make a 10x10 Triangle.

Progression of activity:

1. One player is in the middle of the triangle. The other three take a place on the outside of the triangle. Objective is to pass the ball through the triangle without the defender touching it. A point is scored after 4 consecutive passes. Play for 45-60 seconds then change defender.
2. Same as above except middle player now has to dribble ball out of triangle.

3v1

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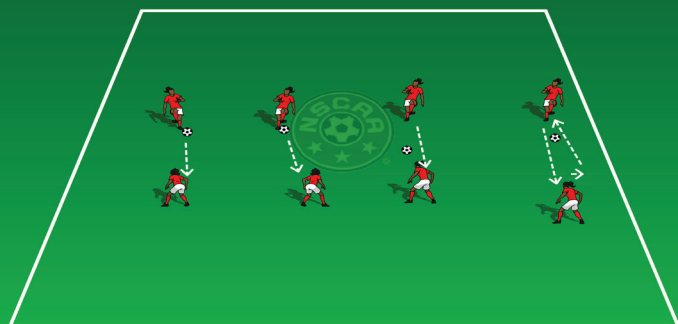


Tip: To make a push pass-take your foot off the gas



Receiving

Hot Potato



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Equipment needed:

Balls: 1 per pair Cones: 8 Players: 8

Why: To work on receiving the ball on ground or in air.

Setup: Two players stand 10 yards apart to start.

Progression of activity:

1. Player passes to other on ground. Receiving player has one touch to get the ball as close to the cone as possible. Repeat. Whichever player gets the closest to the cone earns the point.
2. Same as above except ball is tossed, punted, or chipped into the air. Player receiving has one touch to get as close the cone as possible.

Equipment needed:

Balls: 1 per pair Cones: 0 Players: 8-12

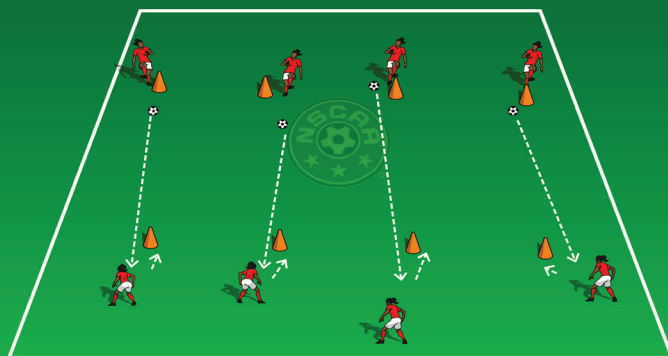
Why: To work on receiving with one or two touches

Setup: Two players stand 10 yards apart to start.

Progression of activity:

1. Players pass back and forth until the coach says "stop". Whoever has the ball or last touches the ball loses a point.
2. Same as above except they must take two touches. One to receive-one to pass back
3. Same as above except players toss ball in air to the other. Player has to collect ball in air and either catch it or collect it and toss back.

Horseshoes



Equipment needed:

Balls: 2 Cones: 4 Players: 4-5

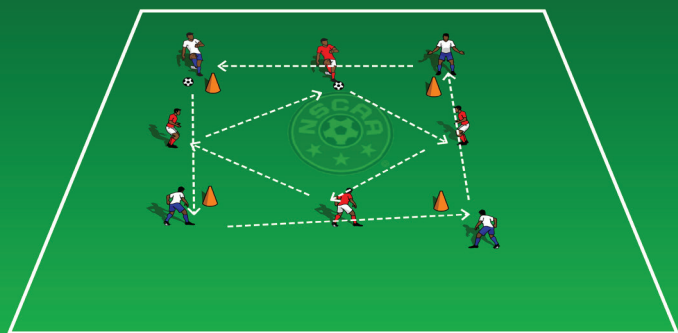
Why: To work on passing and receiving.

Setup: Make a 10-20x10x20 yard square.

Progression of activity:

1. Two teams and one ball.
2. When coach says "go" players pass ball to their teammates. When the ball gets back to its original starting point the game is over. First team to get the ball back to the original starting point wins.
3. Same as above except when it comes around the first time they have to go the other way.

Diamond Passing Relay



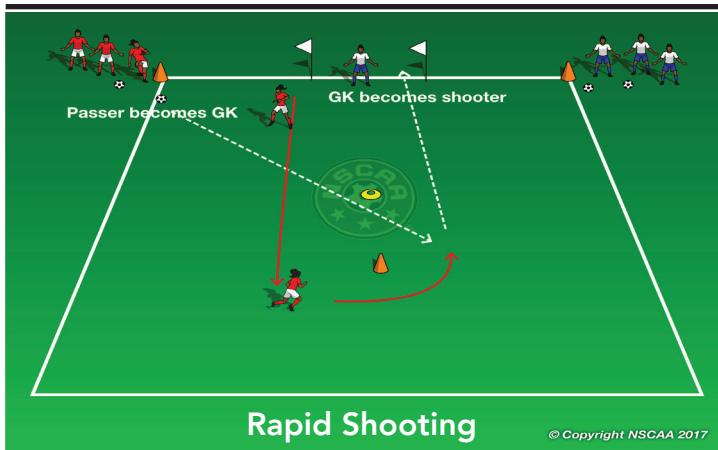
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Tip: To make a push pass-take your foot off the gas



Shooting/Finishing



Rapid Shooting

Equipment needed:

Balls: 4-5

Cones: **Flags** 4:2

Players: 8-12

Why: To work on shooting a rolling ball

Setup: Two teams. Running cone-20 yds, Shooting cone 12-15 yards

Progression of activity:

1. One team starts by passing ball to teammate who runs around a cone. Player shooting must shoot before shooting cone. The passer then becomes the goalkeeper and the goalkeeper becomes the shooter. Teams alternate. Team that scores the most goals win.
2. Same as above except switch sides

Equipment needed:

Balls: 4-5

Cones: **Flags** 3:2

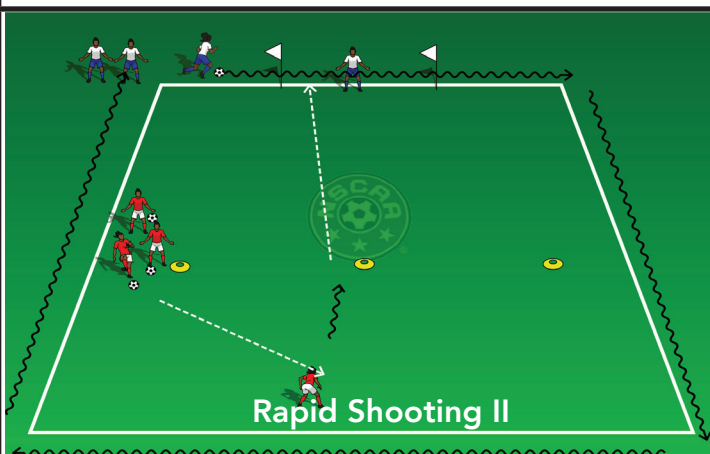
Players: 8-12

Why: To work on shooting after dribbling

Setup: Two teams. Shooting cones 12-18 yards from goal-

Progression of activity:

1. One team is the shooting team. The other team starts at one corner. When "go" is called the team not shooting dribble around the area one at a time until everyone has gone around once. Note: one player from dribbling team is in goal. The shooting team tries to score as many goals before the team dribbling finishes.
2. Same as above except instead of dribbling, the non-shooting team passes ball around area 2-3x



Rapid Shooting II

Equipment needed:

Balls: 4-5

Cones or **Flags**: 4

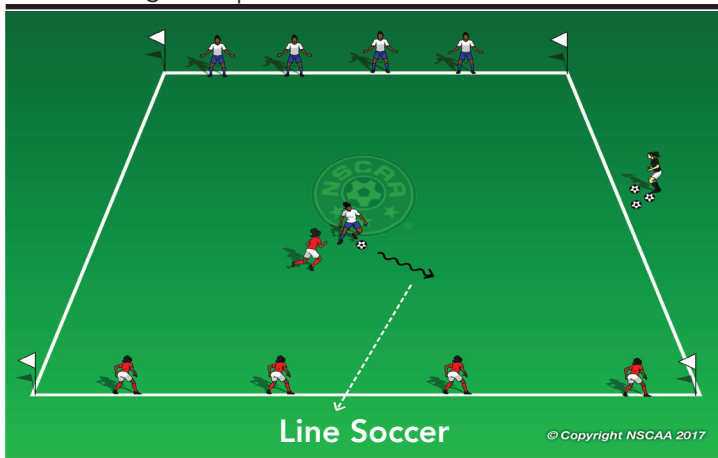
Players: 8-10

Why: To work on shooting with pressure

Setup: Playing area with flags or cones as goals.

Progression of activity:

1. Two teams. Player on each team receives a number. Coach calls out a number and those players play 1v1. Other players stay on goal line and attempt to stop the ball from going past them. Attacker is trying to score across line by shooting
2. Same as above except coach calls 2-3 numbers at once.
3. Same as above except losing team makes goal smaller.



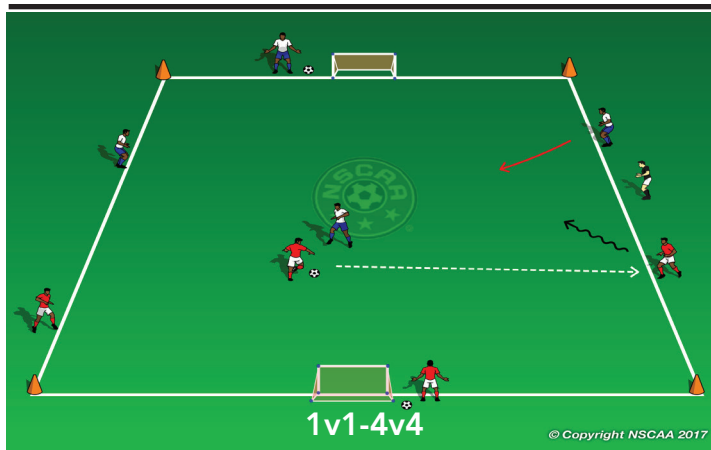
Line Soccer



Tip: To keep the shot low, use laces, head and shoulders over ball



Thrifty Games (Teamwork)

**Equipment needed:**

Balls: 4-5

Cones: Goals 4:2

Players: 8-10

Why: To work on individual and small group play**Setup:** Two teams. Start off 1v1. When player passes to teammate they dribble on. Opponent also adds player. Whenever attacker passes to teammate they dribble on field. The team that scores 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, 4v4 win. Does not have to be in order.**Progression of activity:**

1. Play 1v1 to 4v4
2. Start 4v4 then go down. Teams do not have to score in order.
3. Start 1v1. When attacking team passes to teammate, opponent adds two players.

Equipment needed:

Balls: 1-2

Cones: Goals 4:2

Players: 8-10

Why: To work passing and teamwork**Setup:** Playing area with flags or cones as goals.**Progression of activity:**

1. Play 3v3-4v4.
2. The team that has more players score on their team win. Example: If one team scores three goals but only one player scored vs the other team has two goals but have two different players score. The "other" team wins.
3. Make a rule that same player can't score twice in a row.

**Equipment needed:**

Balls: 1-2

Cones: Goals 4:2

Players: 8-10

Why: To work on acknowledging teammates**Setup:** Playing area with flags or cones as goals.**Progression of activity:**

1. Play 3v3-4v4. Goal only counts if they can tell the coach the last two sequences before the goal. Example: Player A scores. Player A then needs to tell the coach that Player C passed to player D who passed the ball to them to score.
2. Same as above except player scoring does a high or low five with teammates involved in the scoring play.
3. Same as 1 or 2 except player scoring also has to remember how they won the ball back from opponent.

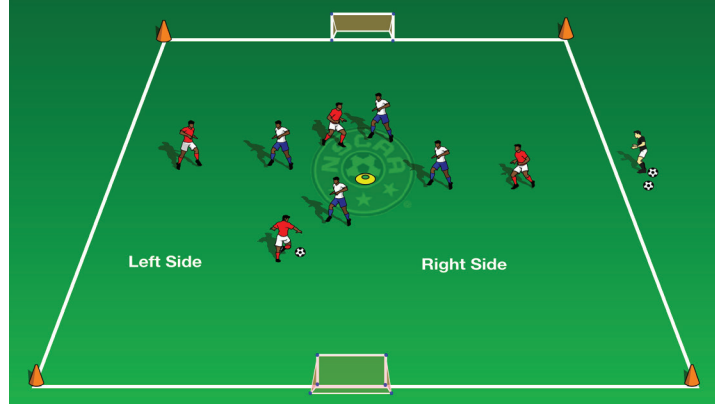


Ask: Why is this game important? Why is it important for our team?



Thrifty Games (Spatial)

Double Side



Equipment needed:

Balls: 1-2 Cones: Goals 5:2 Players: 6-10

Why: To work on horizontal spatial awareness

Setup: Two teams. Place one cone in middle of field that divides the two sides.

Progression of activity:

1. Play 3v3-4v4
2. Goal only counts if attacking team has players in both sides. If all attacking players are in one side then the goal doesn't count.
3. Same as above except if the defending doesn't have players in one side then the goal is worth double.

Equipment needed:

Balls: 1-2 Cones: Goals 5:2 Players: 6-10

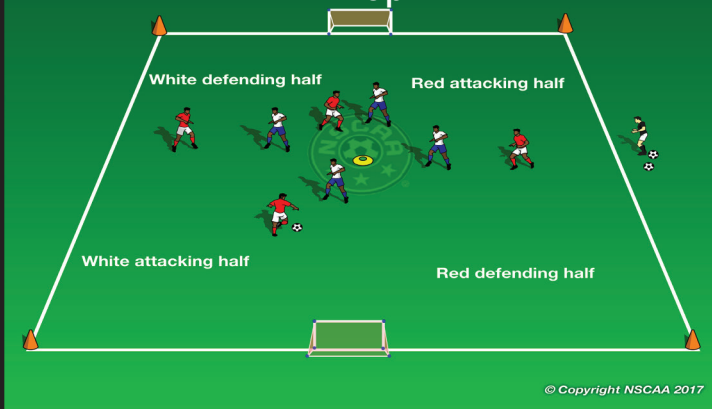
Why: To work on vertical spatial awareness and transition.

Setup: Two teams. Place one cone in middle of field that divides the two halves.

Progression of activity:

1. Play 3v3-4v4
2. Goal only counts if attacking team has all players in their attacking half of the field.
3. Same as above except if the defending doesn't have players in their defending half then the goal is worth double.

"All Up"



Equipment needed:

Balls: 1-2 Cones: Goals 8:2 Players: 6-10

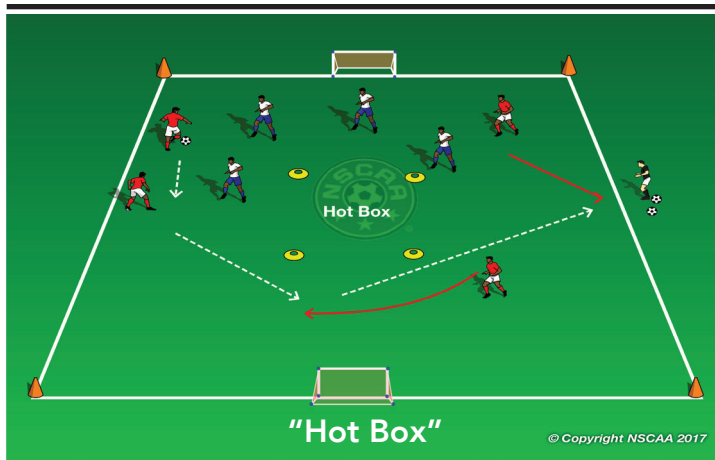
Why: To work on horizontal spatial awareness

Setup: Two teams. Make a 5x5-10x10 box with cones in middle of field. The ball is not allowed to go in the hot box.

Progression of activity:

1. Play 3v3-4v4
2. Same as above except allow the ball to go in the box but it can't stop.
3. Same as above except one player from the attacking team can go in the box but can only be in for 3 seconds.

"Hot Box"



Ask: Why is this game important? Why is spreading out important?



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