

## **A session plan to improve passing, support play and keeping possession (8-12 yr olds)**

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**Age range:** About 8 to 12.

**Objectives:** To improve passing, support play and keeping possession as a team.

### **Measure of success**

At the end of the session your players will be able to:

- Understand why and how to move into a place where they can receive a pass.
- Work together to keep the ball away from opposition.

### **Pre-requisites**

Before taking part in this session your players need to be able to:

- a) Pass the ball reasonably accurately over a short distance using any part of the foot.
- b) Catch a ball using both hands.

**Number of players:** Whole squad.

**Equipment required:** Three different coloured training vests, some flat cones, two small goals (or poles to use as goal posts) and several balls.

### **Timing**

Each activity should last between five and 10 minutes. The whole session (including drinks breaks and the warm-down at the end) will last approximately one hour.

## **Warm-up: Netball/basketball**

*Why play this game? It's not soccer!*

Allowing your players to carry the ball but limiting the number of steps they can take with the ball in their hands encourages them to look for a team mate to pass to.

It also encourages players not in possession of the ball to move to place where they can receive a pass - an essential element of "real" soccer.

Netball/basketball is also a great way to get your players moving, warm and ready to take part in the session ahead.

### **Set-up**

Mark out a 20-yard square with flat cones with a small goal on each end line.

Divide your players into teams of between four and six.

If you have more than 12 players, set up two playing areas and play two games alongside each other.

### **How to play**

Players can score points by throwing the ball into the goal (or to a target player standing on an end line).

The number of steps that can be taken with ball in hand should be limited according to the age/skill of your players. Two or three steps is usually about right.

### **Variation**

Older players can play "tag handball", in which possession is lost if the player with the ball is tagged by an opponent.

## **Game 1 - 3v1 Keepaway**

### **How to play**

Four players are positioned within a small area (three attackers and one defender). The defender can be identified by using a coloured vest or by holding a cone.

- The attackers must try to keep possession from the defender using two balls.
- The three players in possession may move anywhere within the area.
- The defender's goal is to "tag" (not tackle) the players in possession.
- Once a player is tagged by the defender they switch roles.
- A goal is scored for every 10 passes the attackers can make.

Try to get your players to think: "If she goes there, then I'd better go over here."

## **Game 2 - Three Colour Keepaway**

**Set-up:** Divide your players into three teams of between four and six, wearing different coloured training vests.

**How to play:** Using the same playing area(s), two of the teams try to keep the ball away from the third team, the defenders.

If a player gives the ball away or the ball goes out of play, the team that lost the ball becomes the defenders.

Teams in possession earn a point for every five passes they can put together without the defenders touching the ball.

Play for 10 minutes. The team with the most points wins.

### **Variations**

1. To improve movement and encourage your players to get their heads up, tell the team in possession it can't pass to its own colour - if the teams in possession are wearing red and yellow vests they must pass red to yellow to red, etc.
2. The defending team earns a point if it can intercept a pass.
3. To make the game more like "proper" soccer, place a small goal at each end of the playing area. Now the teams in possession can shoot and score when they have made X number of passes. For young players, "three passes and shoot" is about right. Older players can be set a target more appropriate to their skill level.

### Game 3. SSG - no tackling

Set up a 30x20 yards playing area with a goal at each end and play a SSG (small-sided game) with the condition that tackling is not allowed.

The only way the ball can be won is to intercept a pass or force the player in possession to make an error.

Play for five or 10 minutes. At the end of that time, the team with the most goals wins. If no goals have been scored, the team in possession when you call "time" is the winner.

Finish the session with small-sided games of soccer. No coaching!