

An Introduction to Small-Sided Games



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Dear Coach,

If you're reading this, the chances are you've heard of small-sided games, but may not have used them...not knowingly, at least.

In fact, I'm certain you will have used them. After all, in its basic form a small-sided games is exactly what it sounds like, a game between two teams of fewer than normal players – normally 4- or 5-a-side.

Small-sided games are popular for many reasons, some specifically relating to player development, others down to practicality. How many of us are able to run a full 11v11 game in training with limitations on space and player availability?

Using small-sided games in training gives a number of coaching benefits:

1. More player participation
2. More touches of the ball
3. More passes attempted
4. More 1v1s attempted
5. More goals scored
6. More goalkeeper participation
7. Different games mean different problems to solve and skills to use

I put together ***An Introduction to Small-Sided Games*** to show you how the small-sided game in its simplest form can be developed to coach specific skills and tactics.

The games are taken from my coaching manual ***64 Small-Sided Soccer Games***. To highlight the breadth of what can be achieved with games I've selected one game from the beginner, intermediate, and advanced sections of the manual.

But fear not! Those ratings are only relative. The basis of small-sided games is that “the game is the teacher” so even if you – or your assistants – have little or no soccer knowledge, your players will still be learning. And you'll look like the professional soccer coach you dream of being!

I hope you enjoy the games.

Yours in soccer,

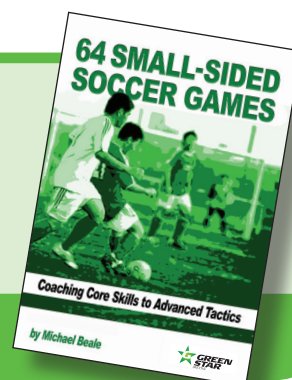


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64 SMALL-SIDED SOCCER GAMES

Small-sided games are acknowledged throughout the coaching profession – from grassroots to the top of the professional game – as one of the best ways to coach soccer skills and tactics.

Find out more at www.coach-soccer.com/64ssgs



Two Goal Game

Set up

- Pitch size: 30 x 20 yards (minimum) up to 40 x 25 yards (maximum)
- Two teams of four players
- Two keepers
- No offside
- If the ball leaves play, you have a few re-start options:
 1. The coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
 2. The players take a roll in
 3. The players take a throw in
 4. The players make a pass in
 5. The players dribble in

Rules

- Play for a set time period and then change ends.
- The keepers can change with the team or stay in the same goal and play for the opposite team.

KEY

BALL MOVEMENT

SHOT ON GOAL

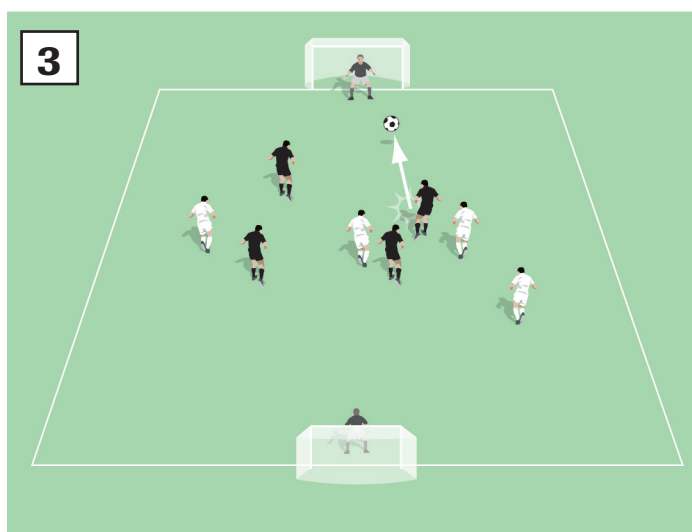
PLAYER MOVEMENT



1. The white team is in possession in a simple 4v4 game.



2. Pressure from the black team leads to the whites conceding possession.



3. The black team attacks the white goal.

Possession

- Add One

Set up

- Outer pitch size: 30 x 30 yards
Inner pitch size: 15 x 15 yards
- Two teams of four players
- No goals

Rules

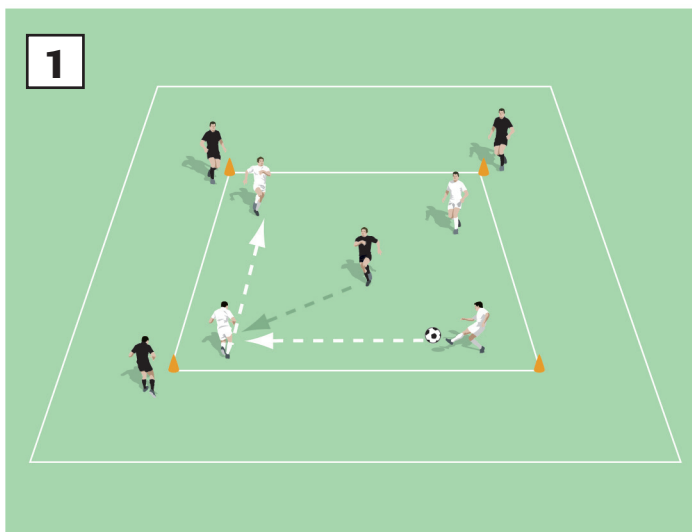
- One team act as the passing team.
- The other team act as the defending team.
- The passing team spread out into the 15 x 15 yard area and begin the game by playing 4v1.
- After 30 seconds, an extra defender is added to make the game 4v2, then another for 4v3, and then 4v4.
- The game is played for 2 minutes.
- The passing team must count the number of successful passes that they make.
- The teams rotate roles for the next game and the new passing team tries to beat the number of passes made by their opponents.

KEY

BALL MOVEMENT

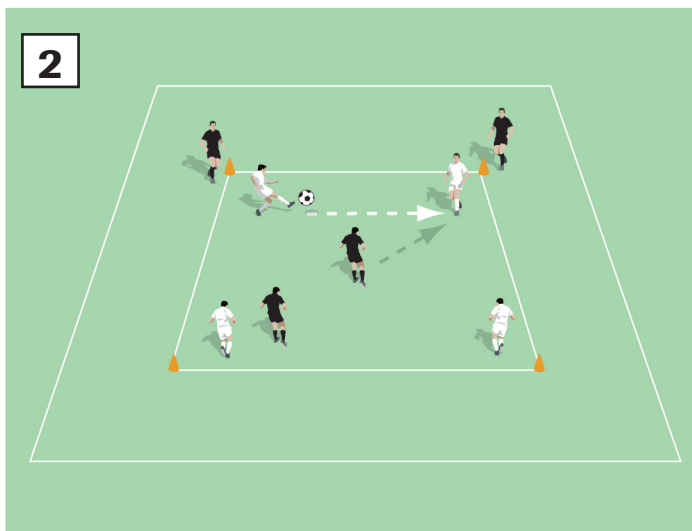
PLAYER MOVEMENT

1



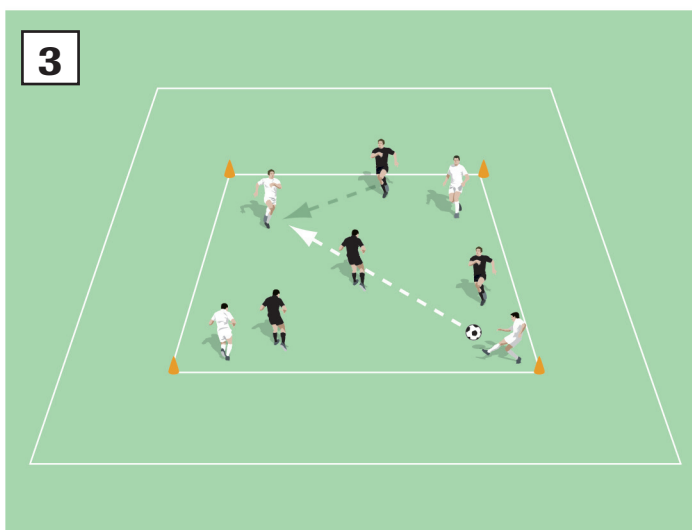
1. To begin with, this is a simple 4 v 1 possession game.

2



2. Adding one more defender makes it a bit more of a challenge.

3



3. 4 v 4 takes it to another level. Which team can make the most successful passes?

3 Zone Playmaker Game

Set up

- Pitch size: 40 x 30 yards, divided into three narrow strips
- Each zone has a target goal at each end
- Two teams of four players

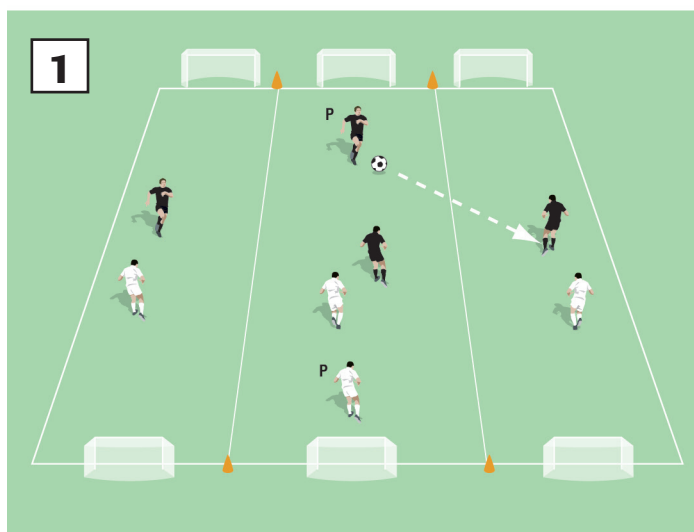
Rules

- Three players on each team go into their own 1v1 zone.
- One player from each team is the “playmaker” (P in the diagrams).
- Possession starts with the playmaker and the teams take it in turns to start a move.
- The playmaker can play in any zone and move freely between them
- The other players must remain in their starting zones.
- The playmaker’s job is to pass to a team mate and support them, creating a 2v1 situation.
- The opponents’ playmaker can support their defender to create a 2v2 situation.
- The game is played for four periods of 2 minutes.
- Each player has one period as the playmaker.

KEY

BALL MOVEMENT

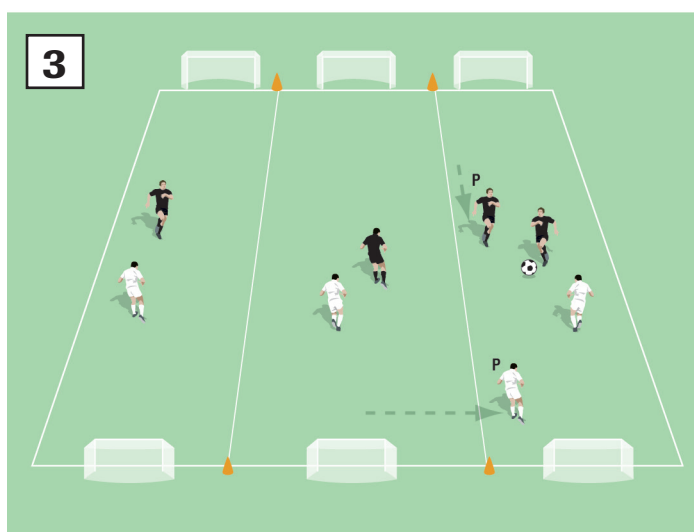
PLAYER MOVEMENT



1. This is a game of 1v1s with a “floating” playmaker.



2. The black playmaker passes to the right and follows to create a 2v1.



3. The white playmaker follows to try and create a 2v2 before the black team has a chance to score.