



## NSSDC Coaching Clinic 2 Learning Through Small Sided Games

### Introduction

This document is to supplement the on field coaching clinic the NSSDC ran on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010 focusing on developing players through the use of small sided games.

Using small sided games during training is a great method to teach players specific aspects of the game in a more realistic setting. The reason for this is small sided games present the same challenges players face week to week during games but in a fun and controlled environment.

This document will demonstrate how coaches can use small sided games as a method to develop specific aspects of the game in training.

### Let the game be the teacher

Players learn through, listening, seeing and doing please see chart below for some examples:

<b>VISUAL</b>	<b>SEEING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrations from coach</li> <li>• Watching Games (live or on TV)</li> <li>• Watching others</li> <li>• Through various media (video games, Internet)</li> <li>• Tactical Sessions on board</li> </ul>
<b>AUDITORY</b>	<b>HEARING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach giving instruction to players</li> <li>• Team and group discussions</li> <li>• Working in pairs or groups where players provide feedback</li> <li>• Team Talks</li> </ul>
<b>KINASTHETIC</b>	<b>DOING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practicing individual skills or in groups</li> <li>• Playing games</li> <li>• Exploring and solving problems during training session and games</li> </ul>

Recent studies have shown that players learn best through doing, and therefore it is important for coaches to provide players with an opportunity to solve soccer problems by themselves and for the coach to guide players with questions when needed. Horst Wein (2004) demonstrates this in his book *Developing Game Intelligence for Soccer* (See Below)

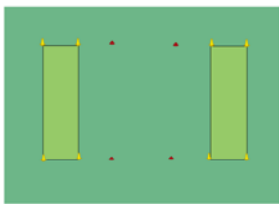
**TELL ME:** AND I WILL FORGET

**SHOW ME:** AND I WILL REMEMBER

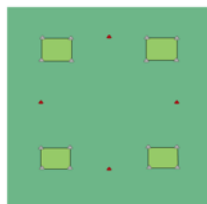
**INVITE ME:** AND I WILL UNDERSTAND

Small sided games are a great way to allow players to solve problems by themselves and the coach can affect the games in many ways to bring out the specific coaching points they have been focussing on during the session in more realistic game like situations. Below are some examples:

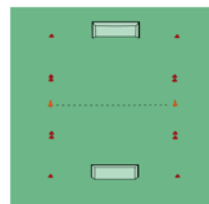
**Field Layout** – Setting up the field in different ways is a great way to bring out various principles of the game, below are some examples:



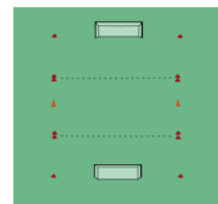
**Marking End zones where players have to dribble or pass to a player in the end zone to score**



**Marking areas where players have dribble or pass to a player in the area to score**



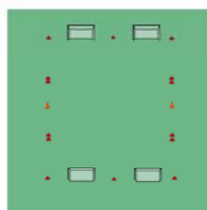
**Dividing the field in half**



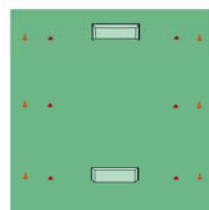
**Dividing the field into thirds**



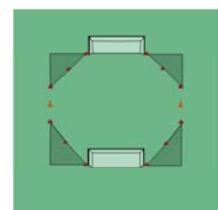
**Using target players, pass into the target player to score**



**Setting up 4 goals to create width and awareness of space**



**Marking out channels on the side of the field.**



**Channelling the sidelines towards the goal**

**Conditioning the game** – Placing conditions on the game is a great way to allow players to solve specific problems based around your topic. Below are some examples:

Game Condition	Topic
Limit touches on the ball	To develop quick passing
Pass to striker before you can score	Looking to pass forward
Players must complete a set number of passes before they can score	Passing and Support
Players can't pass to the player they just received the ball from	Passing, support and mobility
Can only score from a header or volley	Volley and heading techniques

**Neutral Players** – Adding neutral players to play with the team in possession when working on attacking topics will allow the attackers to be more successful as there will always be a spare man available. There are many ways to introduce neutral players into a game below are a few examples:

Neutral players could be placed on the perimeter of the field to create width and depth.

Neutral players could be used to provide extra support for the team in possession in the game

Neutral players could be restricted to the midfield 3<sup>rd</sup> of the field to create an advantage in the midfield.

Neutral players could be restricted to the channels in the wide areas to provide width or deliver crosses when working on crossing and finishing

Neutral players could be placed on either end of the field to create depth and provide support in front and behind the ball

## Practical Examples

All these examples can be adapted to suite the age and ability of the players.

### Small Sided Game 1 Topic - When and where to Dribble

Diagram 1

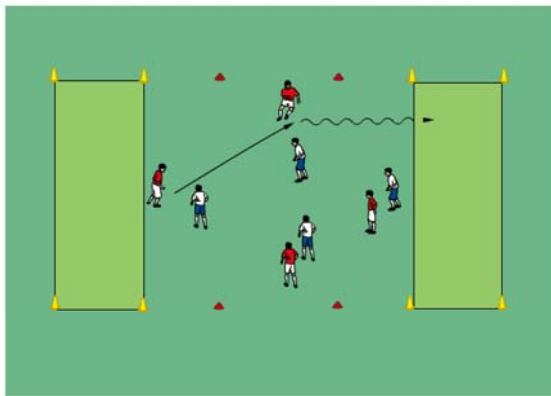
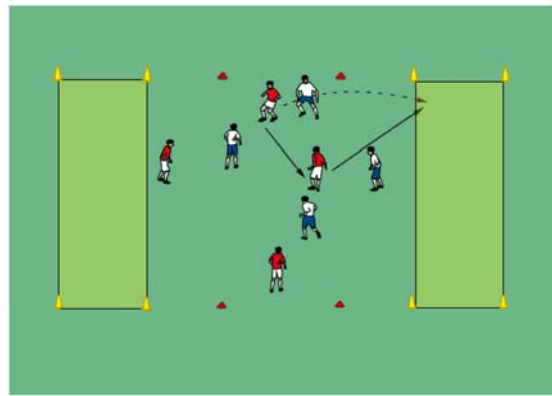


Diagram 2



Set up a field with 2 end zones of 3-5ydsyds. Players play a 4v4 and attempt to dribble into the opponent's end zone. Defending players are not allowed in either end zone, this allows the attacking team the opportunity to pass or dribble into their own end zone to keep possession if the pass or dribble forward is not on.

#### Coaching Points

- Players are encouraged to dribble and take on defenders in 1v1 situations when space is available
- If space is not available players should keep possession by:
  - Looking for the forward pass
  - Passing to team mate in a better position
  - Passing back to a team mate in their own end zone
  - Dribbling into their own end zone
- Movement of support players to create space for the player on the ball
- Support behind dribbling player in case possession is lost
- Quality of end product

#### Progressions

- On entering the end zone players now turn and look to attack opposite end zone
- Players score by passing to a team – mate in the end zone (See diagram 2)
- Add neutral players to give the attacking team an advantage

## Small Sided Game 2

### Topic – Passing, support and movement off the ball

Diagram 1

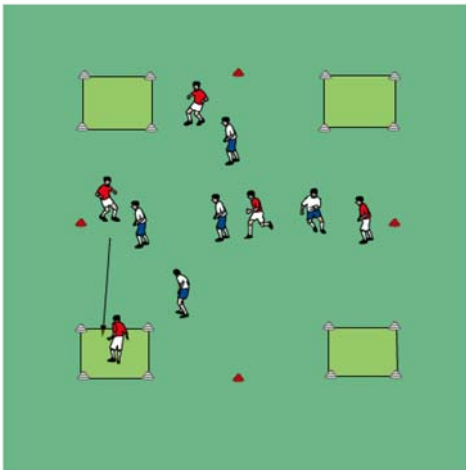
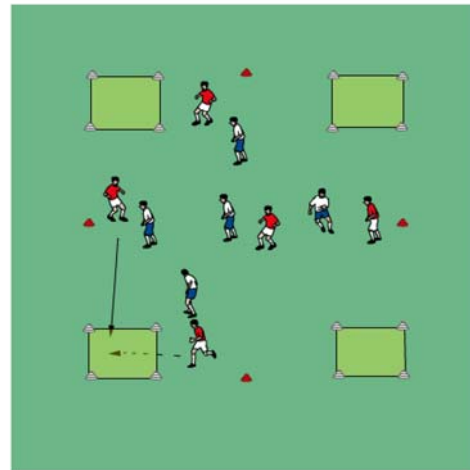


Diagram 2



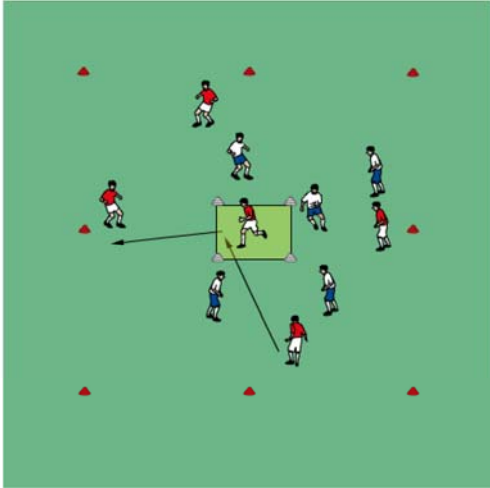
Set up a field as shown in the diagram with 4 boxes marked out in each corner of the field, players play a possession game and score a point by connecting a pass with a team-mate who is inside one of the boxes.

#### Coaching Points

- Spread out as a team to create space
- Provide good supporting angles and movement off the ball
- Quality of the Pass
- Quality of 1<sup>st</sup> touch (away from pressure)
- Look for opportunities to score
- Communication

#### Progressions

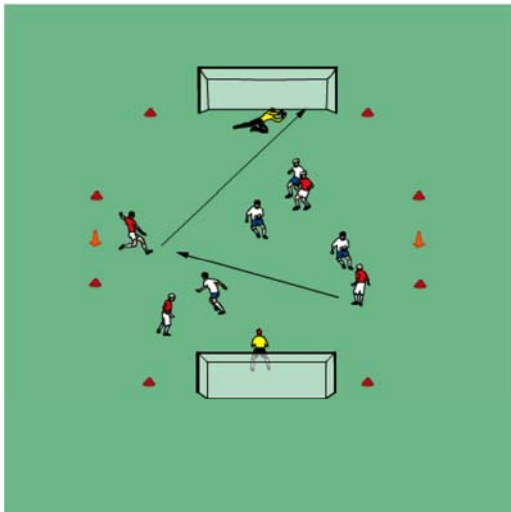
- Pass must be played into the box for a team-mate to run onto (see Diagram 2)
- Limit touches on the ball
- Player receiving the ball in the box can't pass back to the player they just received the pass from
- Player receiving the ball in the box has to play a wall pass on exiting the box
- Add neutral players to give the attacking team an advantage



A Variation of this exercise if working on support in central areas is to mark out a box in the center of the field, players play a possession game and score a point by connecting a pass with a team-mate who is inside one of the boxes.

Coaching points and progressions as in previous exercise

### Small Sided Game 3 Topic – Shooting



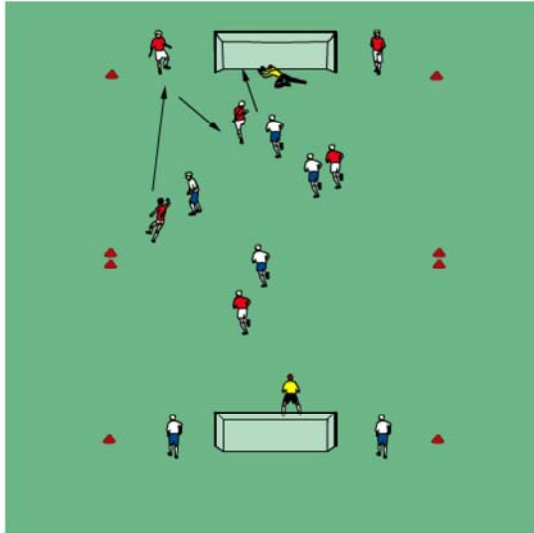
Set up an octagon shaped field 30yds in length (see diagram). Players play a 4v4 game plus keepers and players are encouraged to shoot at every opportunity. Play always starts with the keeper.

#### Coaching Points

- Spread out to create space
- Take shooting opportunity when space is available
- Quality of shot selection, accuracy and technique
- Quality of support and movement off the ball by other players
- Follow up shots for possible rebounds

## Small Sided Game 4

### Topic – 1 touch Shooting



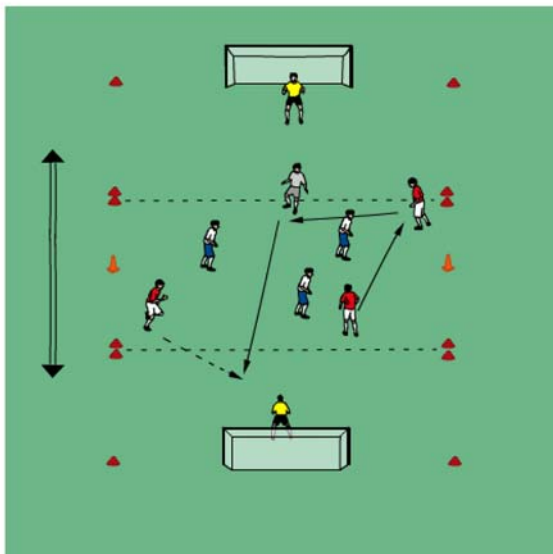
Set up field, Players play a 4v4 game with 4 target players (see Diagram) the ball must be passed into a target player who passes the ball back for a 1 touch finish. Play starts with the keeper.

#### Coaching Points

- Spread out to create space
- Take opportunity to pass to target players when space is available.
- Quality of runs to support target player to create goal scoring opportunities
- Quality of shot selection, accuracy and technique
- Quality of support and movement off the ball by other players
- Follow up shots for possible rebounds

## Small Sided Game 5

### Topic – Penetration



Set up a field as shown in the diagram, dividing the field into thirds, players play a 3v3+1 in the midfield third and after making a set number of passes they can pass into a player making a run into either of the attacking thirds who then attempts to score past the keeper. Players are offside if the ball is played as they enter the attacking third

#### Coaching Points

- Spread out to create space
- Provide good supporting angles and movement off the ball
- Quality of the Pass
- Quality of 1<sup>st</sup> touch (away from pressure)
- Look to create opportunity for penetrating pass off the final pass if possible, if not maintain possession until opportunity arises
- Quality of shot on goal.
- Communication

#### Progressions

- Teams play in one direction
- Limit touches on the ball

## Small Sided Game 6

### Topic – Crossing and Finishing

Diagram 1

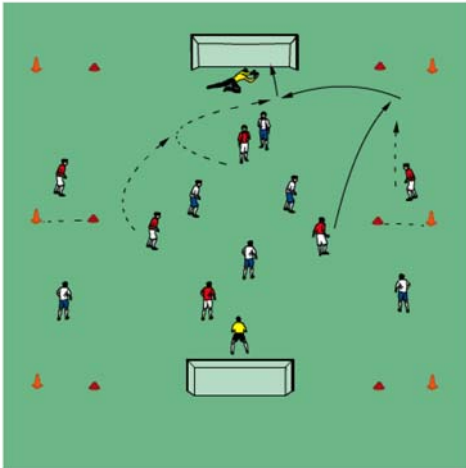
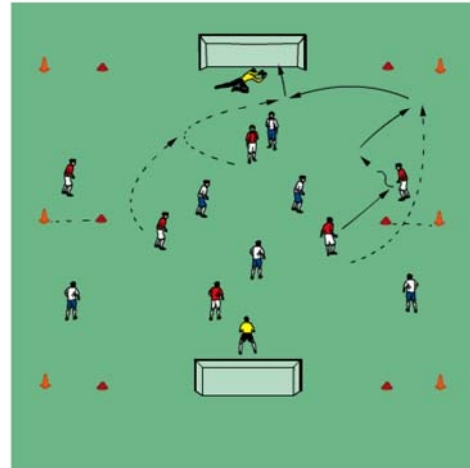


Diagram 2



Set up a field with 2 wide channels marked by cones. Players play a 4v4 game with a target player from each team on each wing (see Diagram). Goals can only be scored from a cross and 2 points are given if the goal is scored by a header or a volley. Play always starts from the keeper

#### Coaching Points

- Spread out to create space
- Take opportunity to pass to wingers when space is available
- Cross selection and quality of delivery
- Timing and quality of runs of players to receive cross
- Quality of shot
- Quality of support and movement off the ball by other players

#### Progressions

- Limit the wingers to 2 or one touch
- If space is available on receiving the pass the winger comes inside to create space for an overlap (see Diagram 2)

## Small Sided Game 7

### Topic – High Pressure Defending



Mark out a field with a centre line marked by cones. Players play a 4v4 game with the condition that all players must be in opponents half to score

#### Coaching Points

- 1<sup>st</sup> defender pressures
- 2<sup>nd</sup> defender Supports
- Other defenders provide cover and balance
- Stay compact and work as a unit
- Apply pressure at all times
- Double team on the wings
- Keeper act as a sweeper
- Communication
- On gaining possession attempt to score quickly

#### Further Resources:

Dutch Soccer Drills by Henry Kormelink, Volumes 2, 3, 4, and 5, feature many small sided games based on various themes.

Game Situation for Soccer – Themed Exercises and Small Sided Games – by Wayne Harrison

Soccer Made in Brazil – Adapted games for soccer DVD

Small Sided Games of the Worlds Top Teams DVD from World Class Coaching

Small Sided Games to Develop Game Intelligence in Soccer DVD – Volumes 1 and 2 with Horst Wein