



Player Development

Principle Based Guide
U7-U12



VISION

A community driven, nationally
recognized leader in the
development and the growth of
soccer.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide
leadership to our members by
building vibrant communities
through a player-centred
approach embracing the values
of fair play, respect and a
passion for the game of soccer.

VALUES

Respect
Player-Centred
Innovation
Integrity
Quality
Inclusion



About This Document

This document serves to provide information about Soccer Nova Scotia's philosophy on Player Development to the greater soccer community of Nova Scotia.

While much of the content of this document is self-explanatory and familiar, other concepts may be new to some - we hope that it sparks curiosity for players, parents and coaches to research some of the ideas presented in more detail.

By providing a framework and language around things such as moments of the game, principles of play and session design, as well as providing sample sessions, we believe that we can better align all levels of soccer in Nova Scotia.

Please contact your Club Licence Consultant if you would like more information on anything in this document

"The needs of the player comes first"

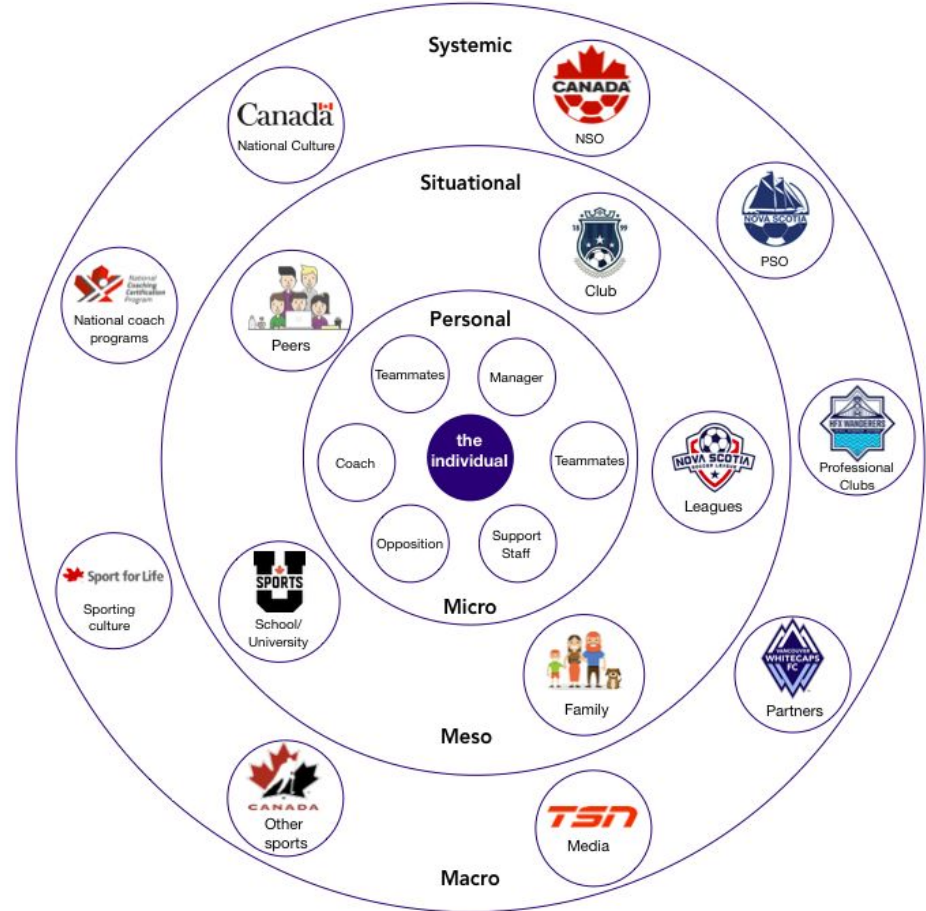
Development Environment

Every child that plays soccer is influenced by multiple factors that impacts their development. From obvious influencers such as their parents and coaches to wider societal factors like other sports and national culture, there are many things that we need to be aware of when working with children.

Our aim is to inspire children to love the sport, play for the entirety of their life and reach the highest level of which they are capable. In order to do that we must ensure that the child is at the centre of our thoughts when designing programs and training sessions.

Individual(s) and team behaviours emerge from interactions with their environment, therefore it is important that immediate influencers of the child, people such as teammates, coaches, managers and parents are conveying a consistent message to the player.

The diagram to the right gives an example of factors that may influence a player in Nova Scotia.



The SNS Player

As seen in the Development Environment on the previous page there are multiple stakeholders within the Nova Scotian macro-system that affects our players. While there may be different criteria by which stakeholders identify players for their programs the diagram below shows key features of what will be seen in a Soccer Nova Scotia player. They fall into 5 inter-connected categories:

- Mentality
- Soccer Intelligence
- Ability to execute
- Physical Attributes
- Character



Mentality

Displays emotional control under stress

Is a "4-moment" player

Intrinsically motivated to improve



Soccer Intelligence

Adapts to ever changing game conditions

Makes quick and effective decisions

Demonstrates tactical and situational awareness



Ability to Execute

Proficient in 1v1 scenarios

Possesses multiple tools to solve a problem

Confident to express themselves and play with belief



Physical Attributes

Uses their personal attributes to their advantage

Meets the demands of the 11-aside game



Character

Demonstrates the values of SNS

A leader on and off the field

Interacts positively with teammates, coaches and officials

The 4 Moments of the Game

Although the game is complex and fluid, we break the game into 4 main moments:

Attacking Organization (AO)

When we have established possession of the ball

Defensive Transition (DT)

The moments immediately after we lose the ball

Defensive Organization (DO)

When the other team has established possession

Attacking Transition (AT)

The moments immediately after we win the ball

These terms are important to help establish a consistent language between players and coaches. These will be used in all session plans provide by SNS to show what moment of the game we are working in



The 4 Moments of the Game



Even though a session may be focused on a certain moment of the game, it is important to make the practice as game realistic as possible. For this reason all activities should include a minimum of 2 moments, but allow for all 4 moments, of the game (also known as sequencing).

A simple example is an Attacking Organization session doing a 1v1 to goal. A session without sequencing would see the play stop when the defender wins the ball - this obviously does not happen in a game. **A more game-realistic activity would have an objective for the defender once they win the ball, eg. pass to a target or dribble to a certain area.** This allows the attacker to immediately go from AO to DT and the defender to go from DO to AT. Ideally, activities will allow for all 4 moments of the game to be present, so even if we are focusing on AO, we are implicitly training players how to act in all moments of the game.

The primary focus is the development of the individual player, however players are always dependent on their teammates to achieve their collective goal. Therefore it is important to develop a players understanding of, and that players show commitment to, all 4 moments of the game.

NEED TO KNOW...

Within the 4 moments of the game each Club will have their own philosophies and beliefs around how the game should be played. For example, in DO some clubs may defend with a '*high press*' while other may decide to have a '*low block*'. It is important to understand your Clubs *Game Model* to ensure that the identity of a team is consistent with the philosophy of the entire Club.

The SNS Approach and the Principles of play

As highlighted, the game is broken into 4 main moments. This is broadened into 2 moments when we look at how we view the game, these are:

1. When we have the ball (AO & AT)
2. When we do not have the ball (DO & DT)

In each of these moments we have specific objectives we are trying to achieve that are supported by the principles of Attacking or Defending.

When we have the ball (AO & AT)

Objectives: **discover, create and exploit gaps/space.**

Attacking Principles to support our objectives

- Penetration
- Mobility
- Support
- Width/Depth
- Improvisation

When we do not have the ball (AO & AT)

Objectives: **recognize, reduce & deny gaps/space.**

Defending Principles to support our objectives

- Delay
- Pressure/Support
- Cover/Screening
- Tracking/Marking
- Balance

Our Approach

In Possession

When we have the ball our objective is to: **discover, create and exploit gaps/space.**

Examples:

Discover: Scanning the field, looking for gaps to move into, looking for gaps to play the ball into

Create: Create space/gaps either for yourself or a teammate (by a dribble, by movement off the ball)

Exploit: Dribble through a gap, pass through a gap, run into the space



Discover



Create



Exploit

GAPS

In Possession

Recognize

GAPS

Out of Possession



Reduce

Deny



Our Approach

Out of Possession

When we do not have the ball our objective is to: **recognize, reduce & deny gaps/space.**

Examples:

Recognize: Scanning the field, looking for most dangerous space, prioritizing danger

Reduce: Making a gap smaller: getting pressure on the ball, getting closer to a teammate, dropping to prevent space behind backline

Deny: Getting high pressure on the ball, closing gaps completely, tackling.

The Session Design

Principles of Session Design

Here are some key principles that we believe should be applied in all training sessions

- **Representative learning design** - *what players see and feel is representative of the game (decision making, opposition, direction etc.)*
- **Keep perception and action coupled** - *a player should be allowed to see something and act accordingly - not be prescribed how to act regardless of the situation - or act not without any situational context*
- **External focus of attention** - *focus on the outcome of the act, not the act itself*
- **Repetition with variability** - *whatever the focus of the session is, ensuring that players get appropriate repetition but in different scenarios (eg. players are not always making the same pass, facing opposition in same position etc.)*
- **Create the problem - not the solution - via constraints** - *don't tell players how to do something, create the problem and allow them figure out how to do it. Manipulation of constraints e.g. Task constraints (rules, regulations, number of players on either team, starting position of players, ball feed)*

The Environment

Soccer is a complex sport in which players must continually make decisions based on multiple factors, eg. **position of teammates, position of opponents, physical and technical abilities of other players, position of the ball, weather conditions, scoreline, minute of the game etc.**

As these demands are faced by players during a game it is important to replicate this in the training environment. In other words, sessions should be representative of the game where players have to continually make decisions based on what they see in front of them and not be told how they *should* do something.



The Session Design



Affordances

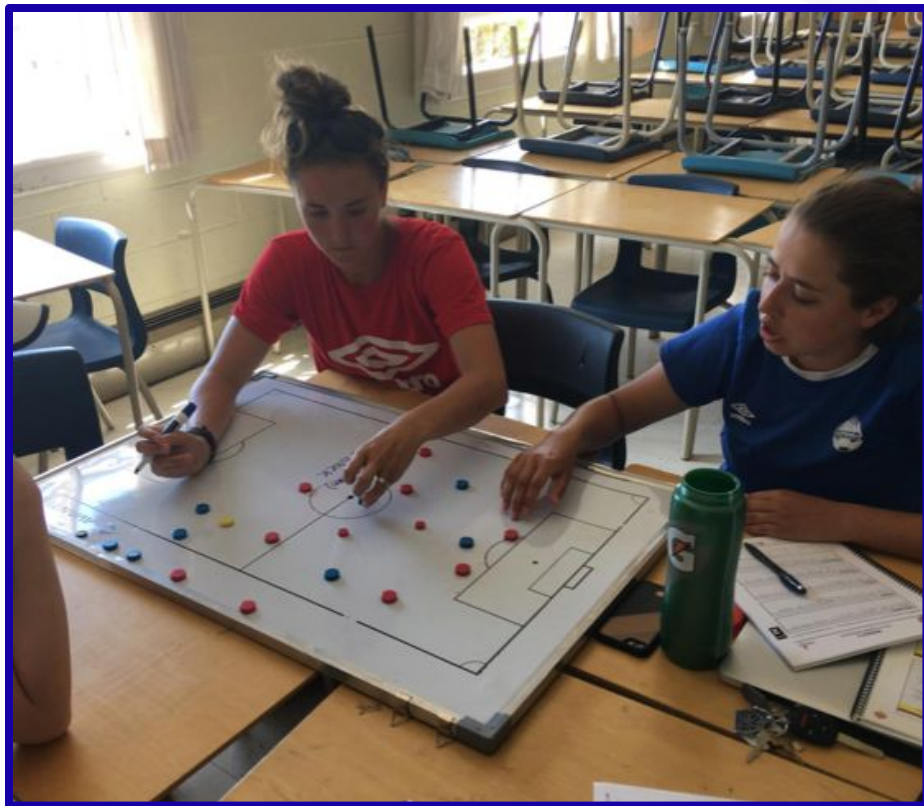
An affordance is what the environment offers the individual. Designing in affordances in the training environment is important because it allows for players to make their own decision based on what they see.

An example of an affordance would be a gap between two defenders. An attacker perceives there is a gap and acts appropriately - possibly by dribbling between them or playing a penetrative pass to a teammate (depending on the individuals capabilities).

A key factor of affordances in a dynamic environment is that they continually emerge and dissolve. For example if a defender moves then the gap could get bigger or smaller, and therefore impact the decision of the attacker.

CLICK THE IMAGE TO REVIEW THE VIDEO

The Session Design



Football (Soccer) Interactions

Football interactions are the soccer-specific actions we use when we play the game. These include things like passing, dribbling, shooting, tackling, running (with and with the ball), shielding, pressing etc.

Football interactions are how players utilize affordances during training and games. In a game situation a player will decide which soccer interaction to use based on the situation (affordances) and their own personal constraints.

NEED TO KNOW...

Sometimes players are told by coaches which football interaction to use at specific moments (eg. pass, don't dribble). This can lead to players being told they are wrong even if they have successfully completed a task.

Understanding affordances and football interactions allows us to focus on the outcome of an action, rather than which action was used.

Non-Linear Pedagogy

Constraints Led Approach

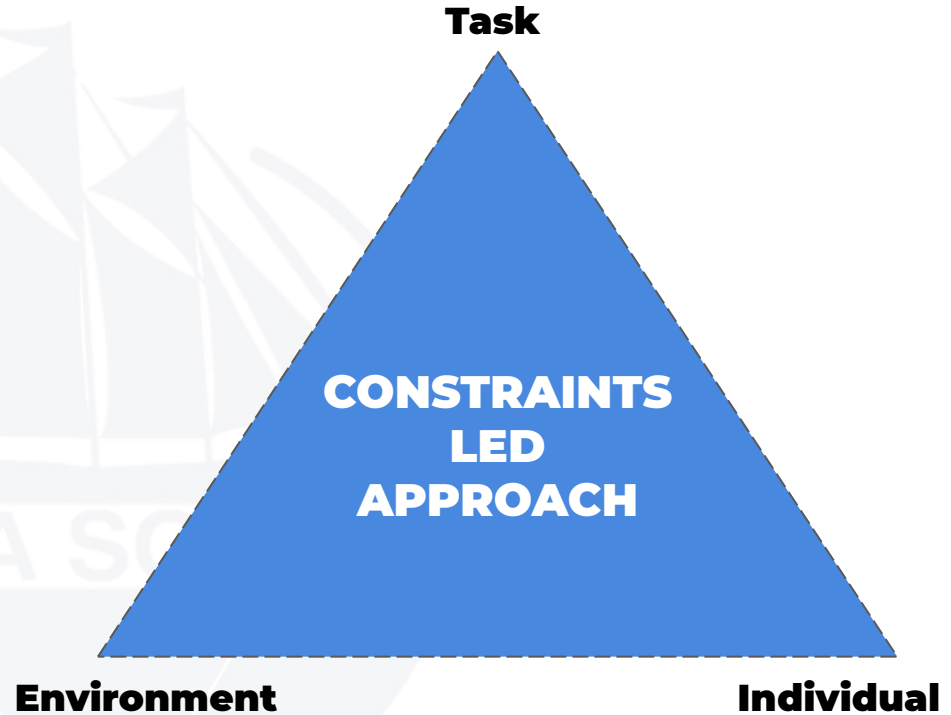
We believe that all players grow and develop at their own speed and therefore our coaching methods must reflect this.

The Constraints Led Approach looks at the relationship between 3 types of constraints:

- Environmental constraints
- Individual constraints
- Task constraints

The way in which an individual perceives the environment is key to how they act within it. The constraints listed above should not be viewed as positive or negative, they are simply factors that will affect the way in which an individual perceives their environment and therefore how they choose to interact with it.

These constraints are not fixed and will change over time as players grow, develop different skills.



[CLICK THE IMAGE TO REVIEW THE VIDEO](#)

Constraints Led Approach



Environmental Constraints

Environmental constraints include things such as the weather (windy, raining, high humidity etc.) and playing surface (playing on turf vs grass).

These are situational based on the day and will impact the decision a player makes at any given time. For example, playing in heavy wind or rain will elicit a different reaction in certain situations to playing in 30 degree heat.

Other environmental constraints are socio-cultural and take into account things such as family, friends, school, media etc. For example, the youngest child in a family whose older siblings all play soccer is likely to be more exposed to, and more culturally attuned to, playing soccer than an only child whose parents have no interest in the sport.

Constraints Led Approach

Personal Constraints

Personal constraints are factors unique to the individual such as height, speed, power, and even a player's motivation levels and emotional state. Knowing that all players have different constraints means that not all affordances are equal for all players.

Sessions should create an environment where players are given problems to solve and not prescribed which soccer interaction to use. This is because due to their own personal constraints players will find different solutions to the same problem.

Example: Player A and Player B both have a breakaway from half. In both cases the attacker is afforded (a) a large space between the attacker and goal, (b) no defenders in front of them, (c) the goalkeeper is near the top of the box, (d) defenders chasing from behind.

Player A is speedy and confident in their 1v1 finishing - based on their attributes the soccer interaction they decide to use is to sprint with the ball to the net before finishing.

Player B is slow but has great long range accuracy - based on their attributes the soccer interaction they choose is to chip the keeper from half.

In both instances the player has found a solution to the problem based on their individual constraints - neither is wrong and the player has owned the decision.

Doing drills where there is no decision making for players means that there are no affordances for players to explore and act upon - if we want to best replicate the demands of the game in our training environment we must ensure players are challenged in the same way they are challenged in games.



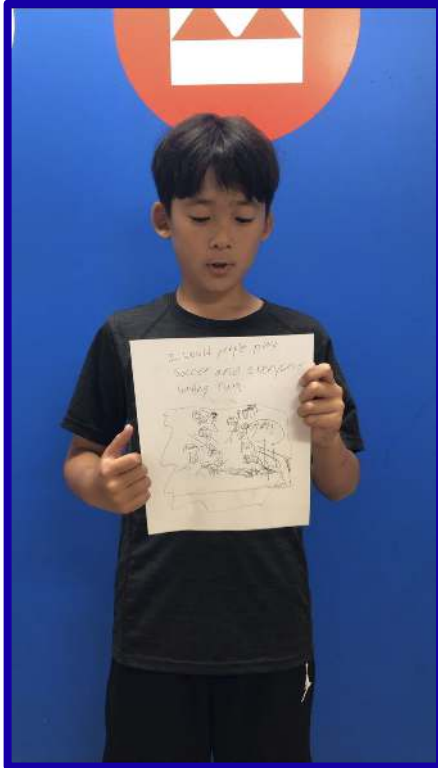
The Session Design

Task Constraints

Task constraints are typically put in place by the coach through the session design. Here are some of the constraints that a coach can determine in a session:

- Number of players (and their position within the activity)
- Neutral players
- Size of playing area
- Starting positions of players
- Starting position of the ball
- Target - Is it to goal? Is it to a player? How many targets?
- Scoring systems
- Zones within the playing area
- Restarts (where and how - throw-ins etc)

Adding, removing or adjusting any of the above constraints will affect what a player perceives. An important challenge for coaches is to understand what constraints to use and how they will affect a players behaviour





Player & Coach Development Club Licence Integration

CLASSROOM

Workshop to explore the SNS
player development framework
& principles

01

FIELD SESSIONS

Staff will lead two/three field
sessions with the same team
during the week to introduce
the player development
principles

02

LEAGUE GAME

Staff will lead a league fixture
with the team they have
worked with all week with an
emphasis to transfer the
principles & identity of the
player development framework

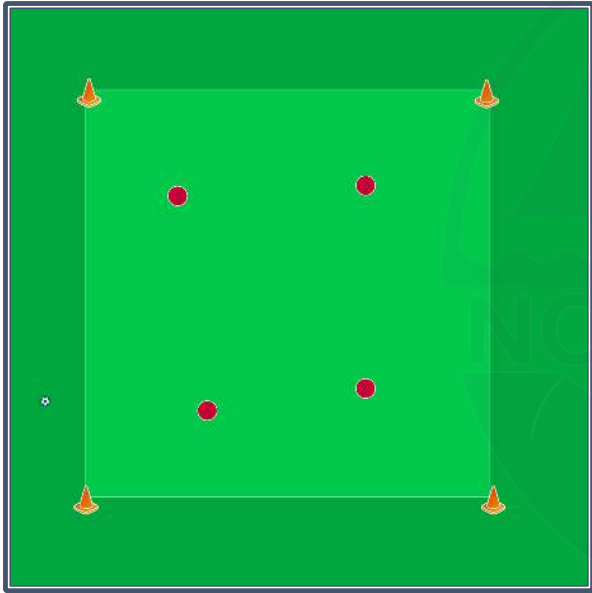
03

CONTACT YOUR CONSULTANT TO BOOK

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Searching for Gaps

Emphasis: Finding Space on the Dribble



Organization

4+ Players

Objective

Warm Up Activity to start player's ABC's of physical literacy

Task Variables

- Size of field
- # of players,
- Task for Players (pass with hands, feet, etc.)

Soccer Interactions

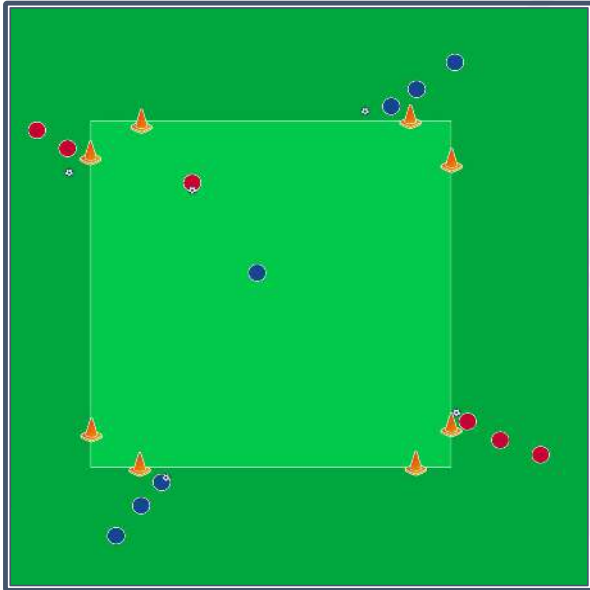
- Passing
- Movement off the ball
- Dribbling

Click the image for animation video

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Searching & Exploiting Gaps

Emphasis: Dribbling OR Defending



Organization

1v1

8+ Players

Objective

Explore space on the dribble in central areas-encouraging creativity

Task Variables

- Size of field
- # of players

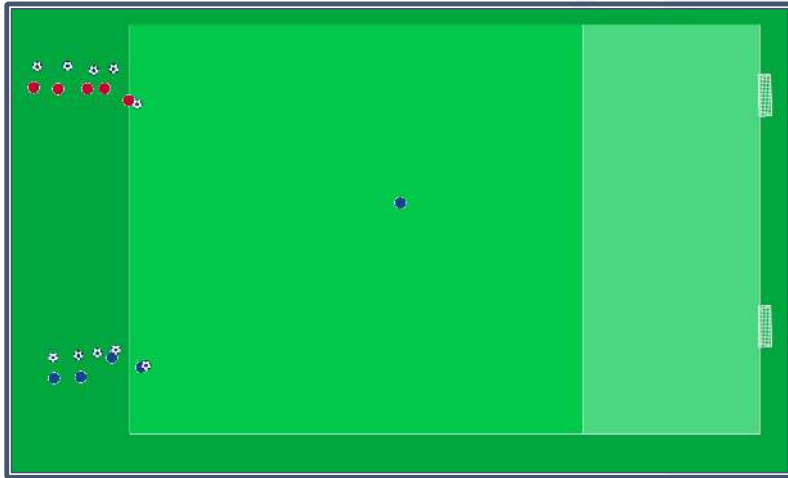
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the Ball
- Dribbling
- Pressure
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Exploiting Gaps OR Restricting Gaps

Emphasis: Dribbling OR Defending



Organization

1v1

Objective

Explore space on the dribble in central areas-encouraging creativity

Task Variables

- Size of field
- Scoring zone size
- Starting points
- Size of goal (gk)

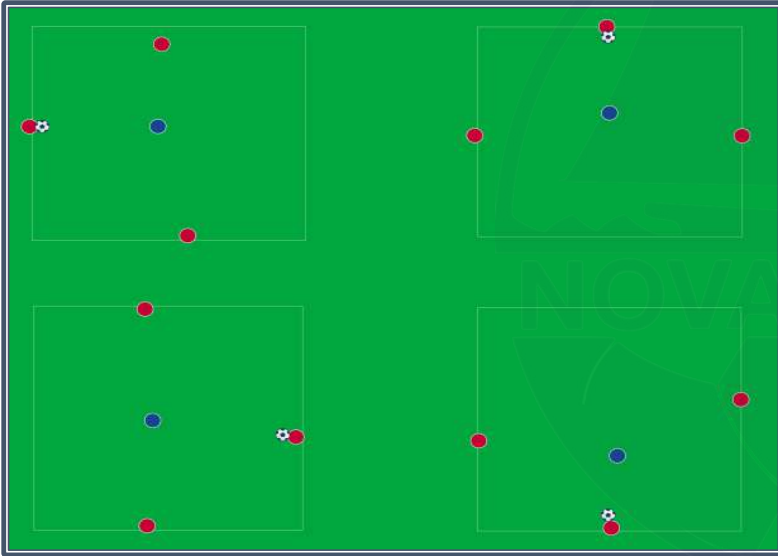
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the Ball
- Dribbling
- Pressure
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Passing and Moving

Emphasis: Passing & Movement of the Ball



Organization

3v1

Objective

Create, find use the free player.

Task Variables

- Size of field
- # of players
- Location of ball feed

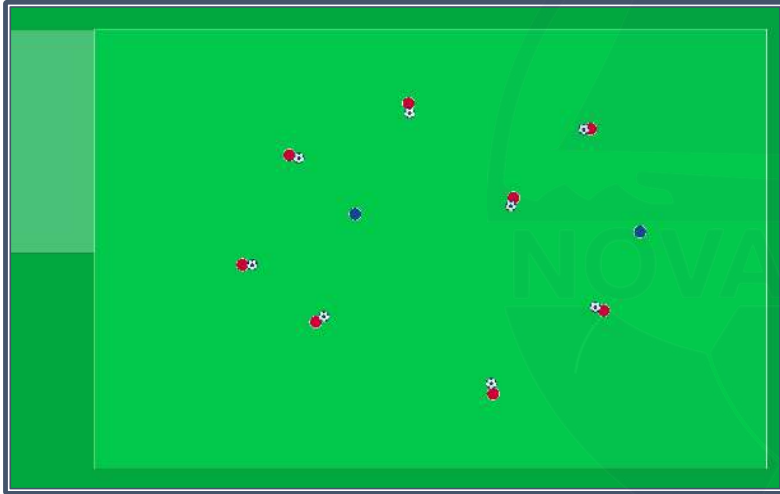
Soccer Interactions

- Passing
- Movement off the ball
- Pressure
- Tackle
- Combination play

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Physical Literacy

Emphasis: Running with the ball and dribbling



Organization

6:1, Chased:Chaser ratio

Objective

Warm up activity for a dribbling and running with the ball session. Players with balls are called “jokers”, players that don’t are “Batman”. Batmans is trying to tag the Jokers and send them to “jail”. To get out of jail, another joker has to come give the joker in jail a high five to free them.

Task Variables

- Size of field
- Amount of taggers
- Amount of total players
- With or without ball

Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Running with the ball

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Physical Literacy

Emphasis: ABC's of Physical Literacy



Organization

5:1, Chased:Chaser ratio

Objective

Physical Literacy, dribbling warm up activity. Players run from one side of the grid to the other side of the grid while avoiding getting tagged by the “bulldog” (tagger). If they get tagged they join the bulldog as a baby bulldog. Once players get to the other side, they try and get back to the other side again without being tagged.

Task Variables

- Size of field
- Amount of taggers
- Amount of total players
- Ball/No Ball

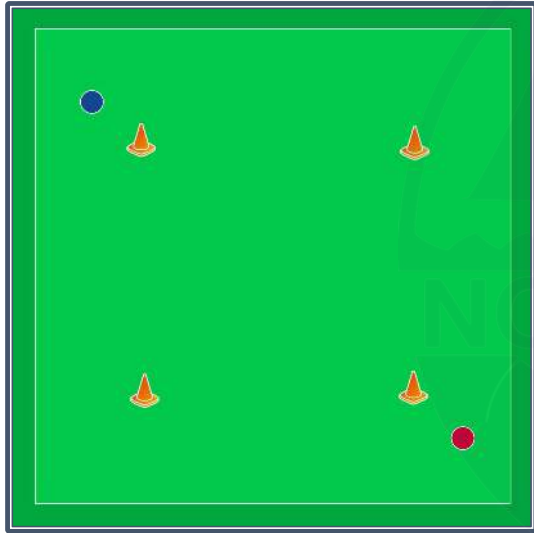
Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Running with the ball
- Pressure
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Physical Literacy

Emphasis: ABC's of Physical Literacy



Organization

1v1

Objective

Warm up activity for a dribbling and running with the ball activity. Both players are trying to tag each other by running around the track as fast as they can. When the coach says “CHANGE” they change directions. Go for a set amount of time (30 seconds max).

Task Variables

- Size of Box
- Ball/No Ball

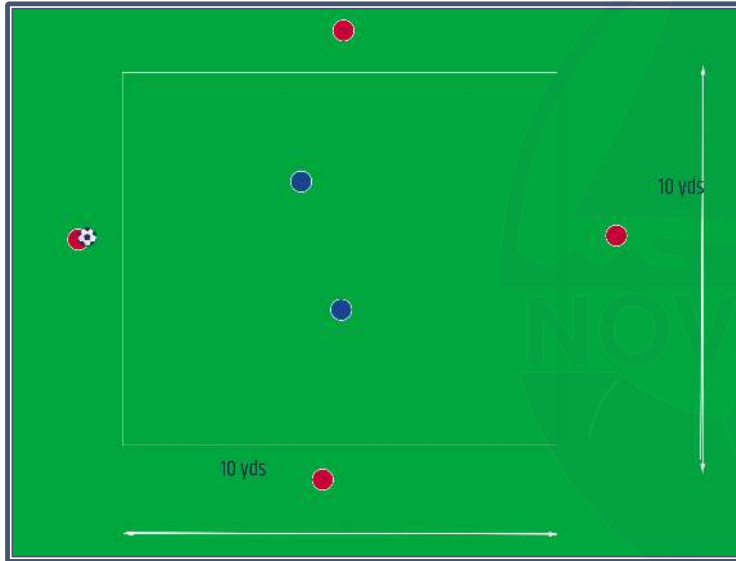
Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Running with the ball

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Passing and Moving

Emphasis: Support angles and passing



Organization

4v2

Objective

Warm up activity for a passing session. 4v2 in a small 10x10 box. Players in the middle are trying to win the ball while the 4 are trying to maintain possession. Work for a set amount of time OR until they win the ball a certain amount of times.

Task Variables

- Size of field
- Amount of total players
- Touch Restriction

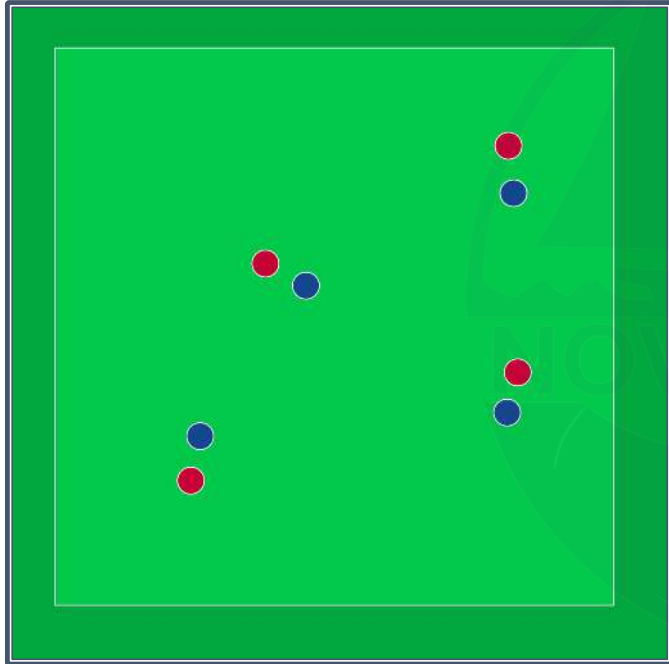
Soccer Interactions

- Passing
- Moving off the ball
- Pressure
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Physical Literacy

Emphasis: ABC's of Physical Literacy



Organization

Every player for themselves

Objective

Warm up activity with high levels of physical literacy. Players all have pinny's tucked into their shorts like tails. Tails should look like fox tails and not bunny tails (long tail sticking out). Can be done many ways, steal and keep pinny, or steal and drop pinny.

Task Variables

- Box size
- Number of players
- Touch Restriction

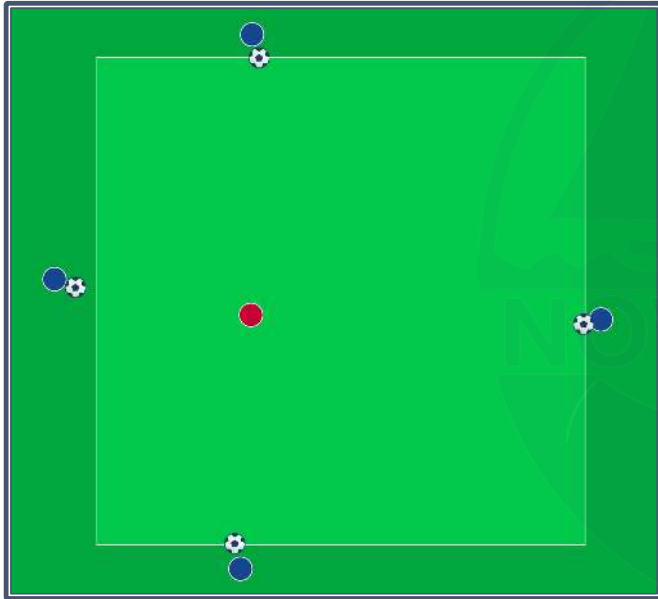
Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Running with the ball
- Body shape to protect

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Dribbling

Emphasis: search, discover and exploit gaps



Organization

- 4 players with a ball, 1 defender without a ball

Objective

- Dribbling at pace, dribbling under control. Typical game of tag, however, tagger does not have a ball to start and taguees do have balls, then add a ball to the tagger if it is too easy. Work for a certain amount of time OR swap when you tag someone.

Task Variables

- Field space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

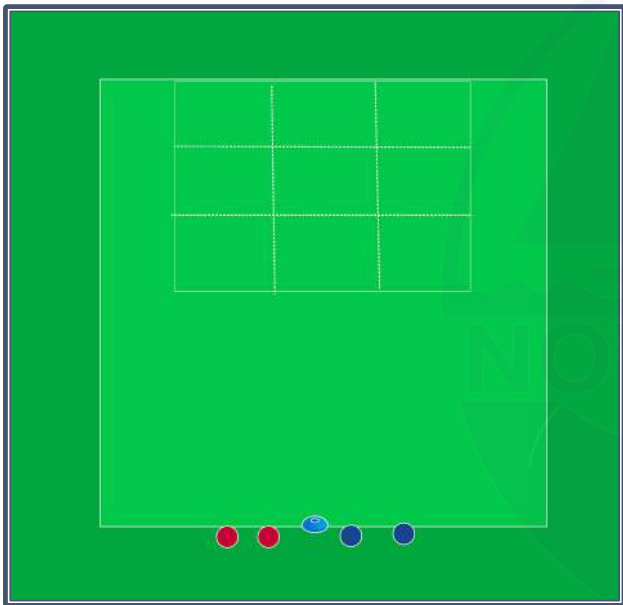
Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Physical Literacy

Emphasis: ABC's of Physical Literacy



Organization

- 2 teams of min 2 players

Objective

- A grid is set up into 9, as in tick tack toe. Players are in 2 teams and in a relay like situation and look to get 3 in a row by placing objects such as cones or pinnies. First team to get 3 in a row wins. Both teams should only have 3 objects, after all three are placed down, the next player runs up and moves the pinny into a new box.

Task Variables

- Field space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

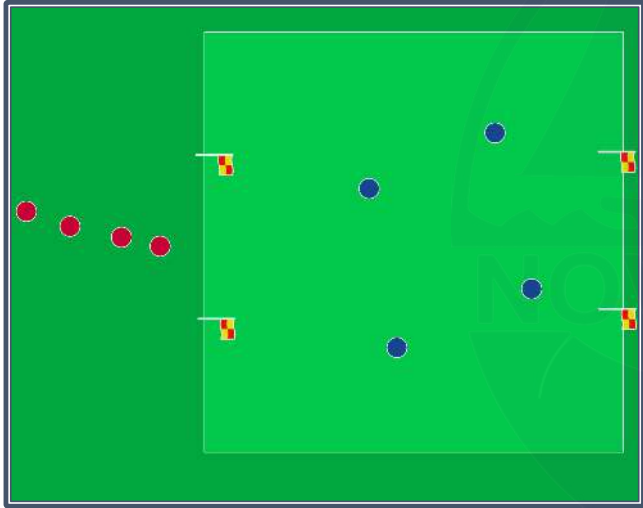
Soccer Interactions

- Running
- Communication

Principle Based Sessions – Warm Up Activities

Theme: Physical Literacy

Emphasis: ABC's of Physical Literacy



Organization

- 2 teams of min 3 players

Objective

- Players look to run one at a time to the other end of the grid without being tagged. Other team is trying to tag the players before they reach the other end

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

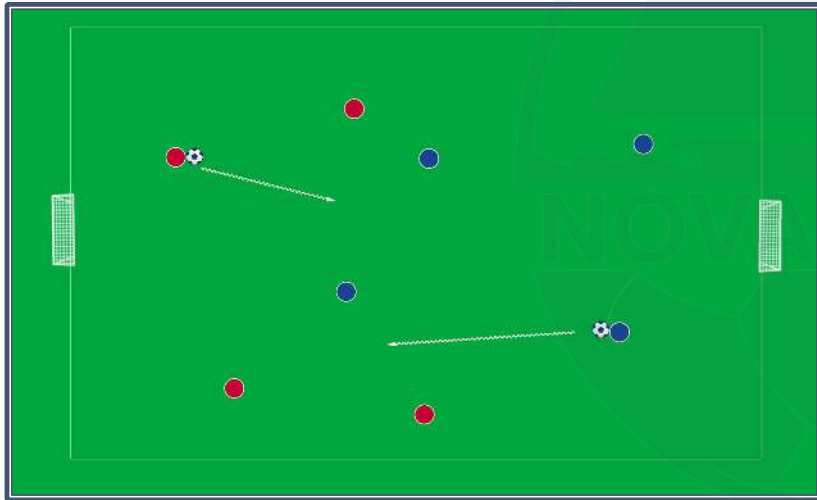
Soccer Interactions

- Running
- Communication
- Change of direction
- Chasing

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Game

Emphasis: search, discover and exploit gaps OR deny, close, reduce gaps/space



Organization

- 5v5+

Objective

- Create, find and use gaps

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

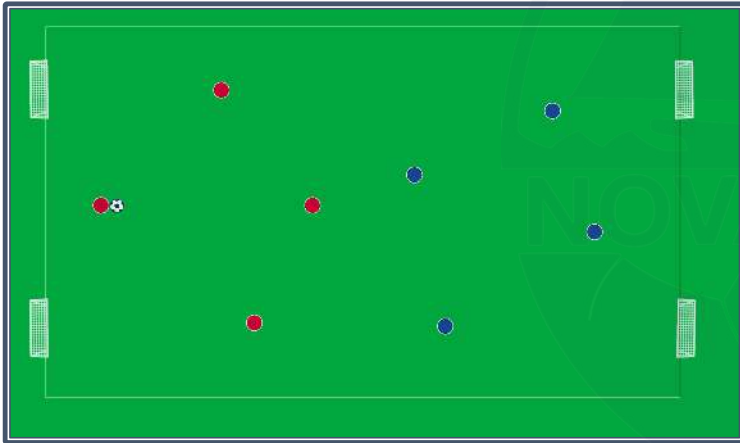
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Movement off the ball
- Pressure
- Tackle
- Combination Play

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Game

Emphasis: search, discover and exploit
gaps OR deny, close, reduce
gaps/space



Organization

- 4v4+

Objective

- Create, find and use gaps on the weak side of the field (switching the ball)

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

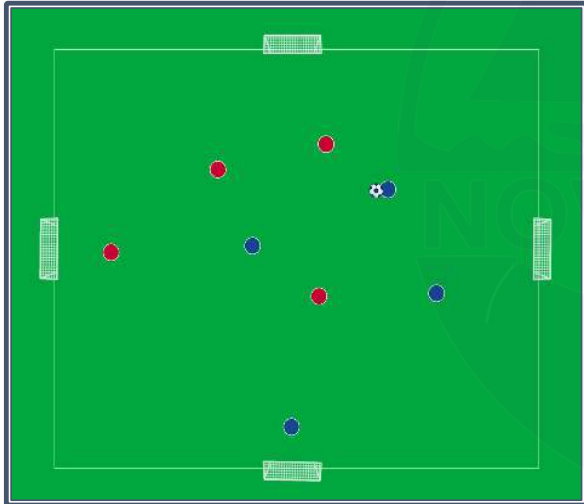
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Movement off the ball
- Combination
- Pressure
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Quality Final Acts

Emphasis: search, discover and exploit gaps OR deny, close, reduce gaps/space



Organization

- 4v4+

Objective

- Create, find and use gaps on the weak side of the field (switching the ball)

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

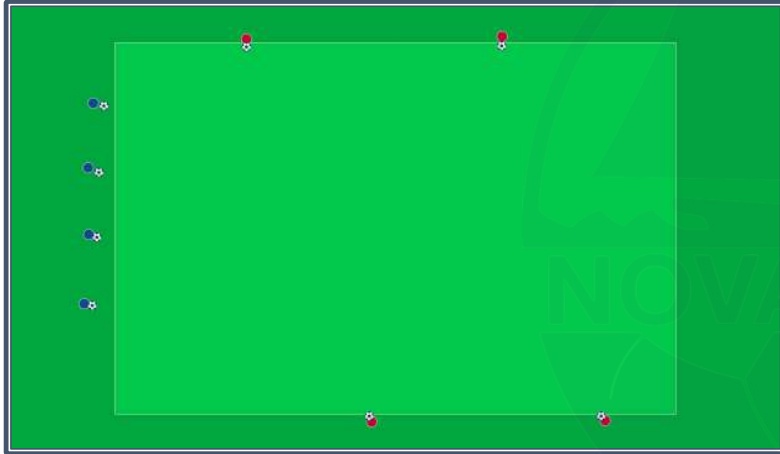
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Movement off the ball
- Combination
- Pressure
- Tackle
- Shooting

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Ball Control/Manipulation

Emphasis: Passing OR
dribbling/running with the ball



Organization

- 2 Equal teams

Objective

- Passing accuracy, dribbling/running with the ball, ABC's of physical literacy. Players run across the grid with a ball at their feet, while the players on the opposite team try to hit either the player or their

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players

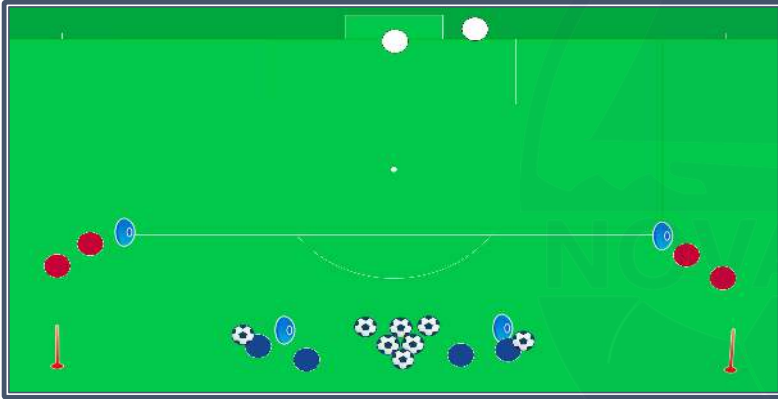
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Shooting
- Passing
- Physical literacy

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: 1v1

Emphasis: Breakaways OR Defending
from Behind



Organization

- 1v1 to goal

Objective

- 1v1 attacking and defending skills. Attacker(Blue) starts dribbling to goal and on their first touch the defender (red) is allowed to start chasing. If the defender wins the ball they try and pass it back to their red teammates. Blue is trying to score.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Shooting
- Back Pressure
- Tackle
- Goalkeeping 1v1 skills

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Possession to develop Final Acts

Emphasis: Attacking or defending Quality Final Acts from central spaces



Organization

- 3v3+

Objective

- Possession in the middle of the field to create dangerous opportunities. Players are playing possession until they have connected 3 passes and then the team in possession passes to a player who is running outside the box to receive it and go down to score on a breakaway without a defender. Can add a chasing defender if need be.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

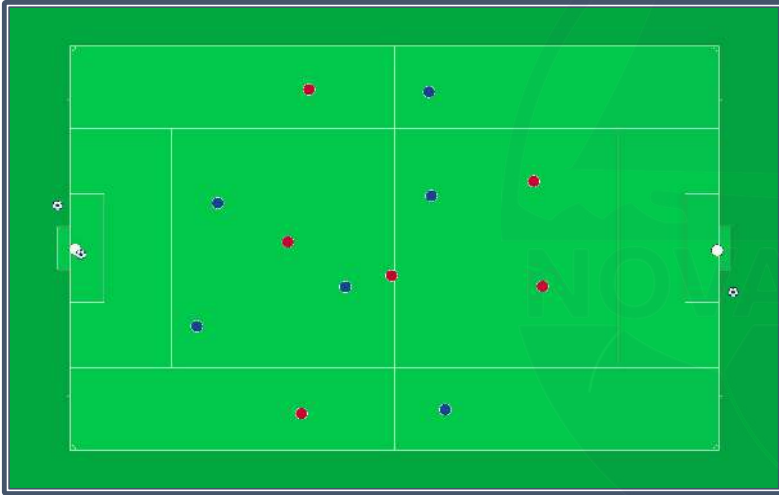
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Pressure
- Tackle
- Goalkeeping 1v1 skills

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Utilization of wide players

Emphasis: Width and Depth in attacking or defending moments



Organization

- 2 equal teams with wide players

Objective

- Create dangerous chances from wide service/use width in possession. Typical game, however, isolated wide players to deliver crosses from wide spaces to score on. Can have goals off wide delivery worth more points.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

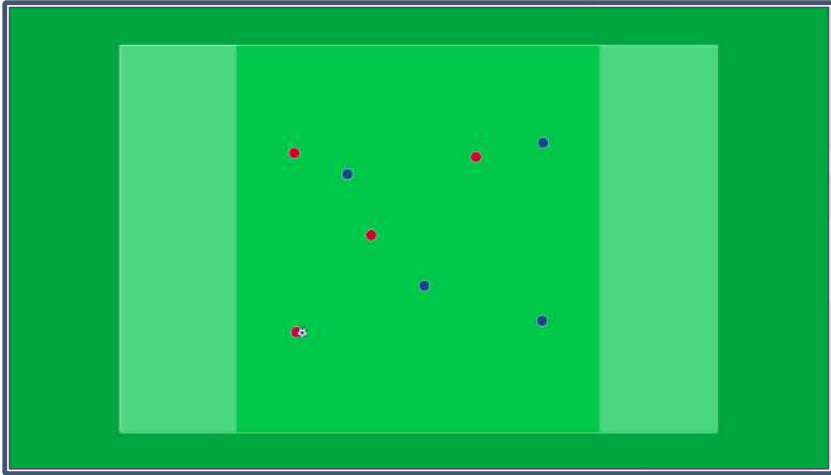
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Pressure
- Tackle
- Movement of the ball
- Crossing
- Shooting
- Movement off the ball

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Getting beyond the backline

Emphasis: Exploring gaps/space behind backline OR defending space behind



Organization

- 2 equal teams

Objective

- Explore and exploit gaps/space behind defenders on the dribble or connecting a thru pass. Regular game for players, however, instead of scoring on a goal, they score by dribbling into the endzone.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

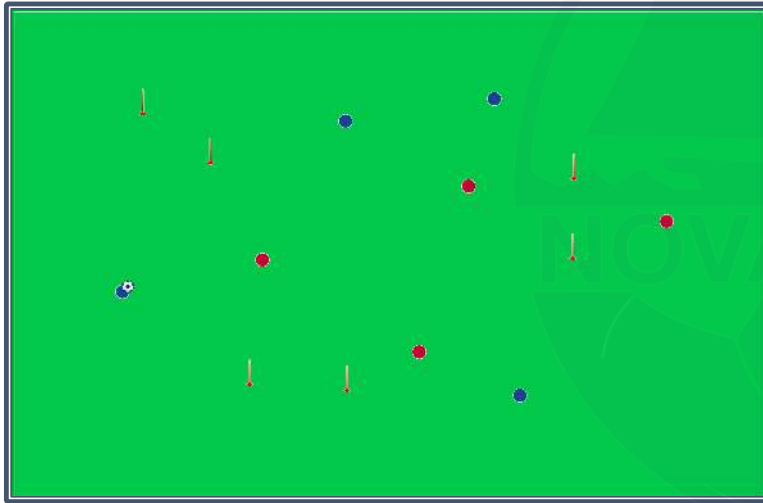
Soccer Interactions

- Running with the ball
- Dribbling
- Pressure
- Tackle
- Movement of the ball
- Crossing
- Movement off the ball

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Dribbling & Ball Manipulation

Emphasis: Width and Depth in attacking OR defending



Organization

- 4 attackers, 4 defenders

Objective

- Possession, dribbling through gates. Two teams playing against each other. To score, the attacking team must pass it to an opponent through one of the many gates.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

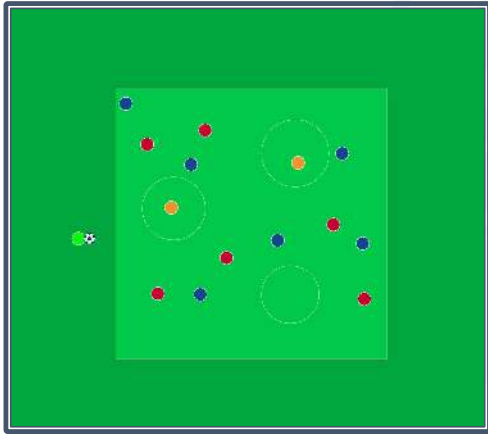
Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Defensive Pressure
- Taking space
- Passing
- Possession

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Maintaining possession

Emphasis: search, discover and exploit gaps OR deny, close, reduce gaps/space



Organization

- 5v5+2 neutrals on attacking team

Objective

- Keep possession, finding space and open players. Look for target players in space. Trying to get it to a player in one of the three zones for points. Everytime the team in possession gets the ball in a zone they get a point and they keep going to get as many as possible.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Defensive Pressure
- Finding open space
- Passing
- Possession
- Defending when numbers down
- Decision making

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: deny, close, reduce gaps/space

Emphasis: Back Pressure, Delay,
counterattacks



Organization

- 3v3 and 1 keeper

Objective

- 3 attackers attack the net against one defender. 2 other defenders start behind the attackers and recover to defend. Quick transition to score on goal

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Transition
- Passing
- Dribbling
- Finding space
- Speed of play
- Defending on transition
- Back pressure
- Finishing

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: 2v1 Overload Opportunities

Emphasis: Dribbling, Combination,
Passing to beat players



Organization

- 2 attackers and 2 defenders, one at each end

Objective

- 2v1 to dribble across the line. Attackers turn once they cross the line to attack the other end in another 2v1

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

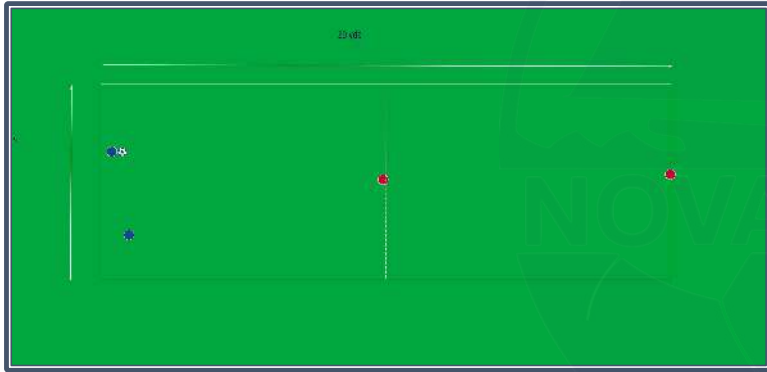
Soccer Interactions

- Movement
- Passing
- Dribbling

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: 2v2

Emphasis: Dribble, Combination,
Passing to beat Player



Organization

- 2 attackers and 2 defenders

Objective

- 2 attackers attempt to score by crossing the end line, if they score they transition to the other side and attack another 1 defender. If the defender wins the ball, both defenders become the attackers and vice versa

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

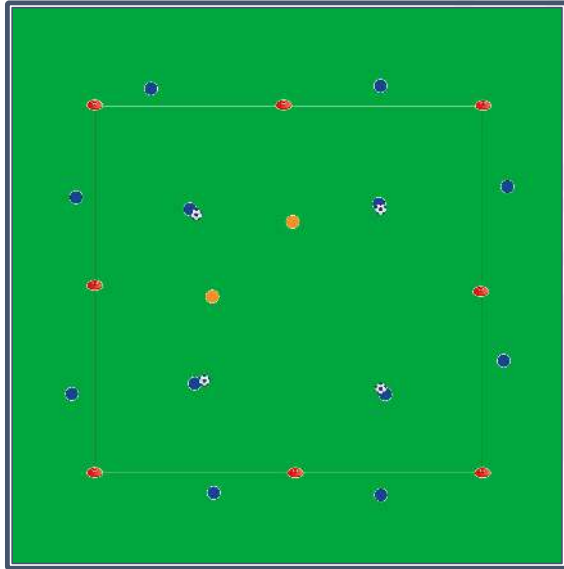
Soccer Interactions

- Movement without the ball
- Passing
- Dribbling
- Transition
- Press
- Tackle
- Defend to create 1v1

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Search, discover, exploit gaps/space

Emphasis: Passing & Movement off the ball



Organization

- Min 5 players inside the grid with balls, 5 outside the grid. 2 defenders inside the grid

Objective

- Dribble inside of the grid to try to find open players on the end lines. Dribble to the players on the outside and they enter the grid. Defenders try to win the ball from the attackers.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Finding open players
- Finding space
- Press
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Quality Final Acts

Emphasis: Finishing in the Box OR
Defending in the Box



Organization

- 3v3 inside the grid. 3 players outside of the box that can play players inside the grid

Objective

- Score inside the 18 yard box, keeping possession and looking for goal scoring opportunities.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Finishing
- Passing
- Support play
- Movement without the ball
- Tackle
- Pressure

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: 2v1 to Goal

Emphasis: Attacking in the box OR
Defending in the box



Organization

- 2v1 and 1 keeper

Objective

- 1 attacker looks to score on net as 2 defenders pressure on the attackers first touch.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

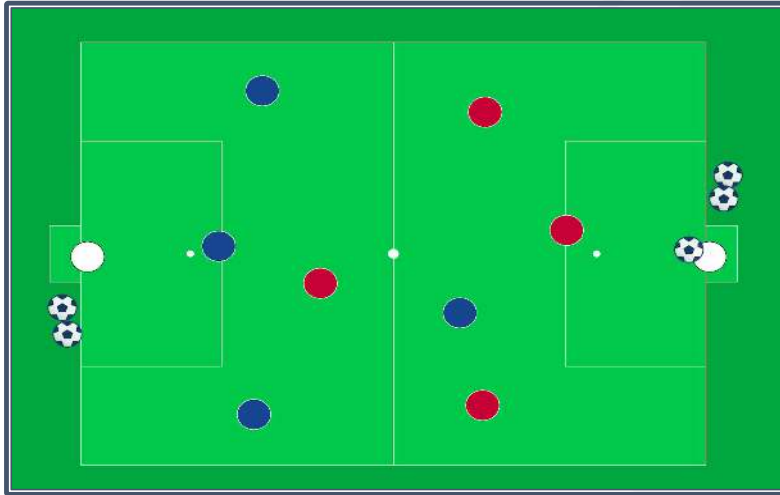
Soccer Interactions

- Finishing
- Passing
- Speed
- Tackle
- Pressure/Back pressure

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Playing out of the Back

Emphasis: Passing and movement off the ball



Organization

- 2 grids of 3v1. Net and keeper at both ends

Objective

- 3 attackers vs 1 defender in a grid. Attackers look for the opposite keeper on other side. The opposite grid has another 3 attackers and 1 defender. The keeper passes to the attackers when they receive the ball from the other side. If the defender wins the ball, they look to score on net.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

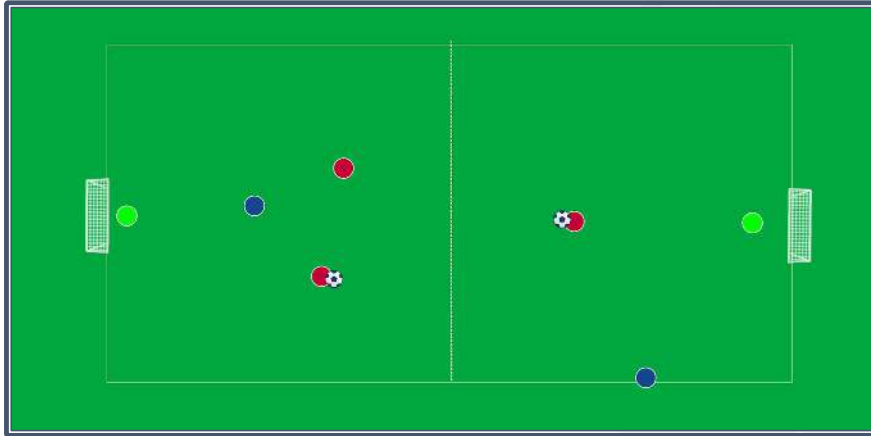
Soccer Interactions

- Finishing
- Penetrating passing
- Possession
- Tackle
- Pressure/Back pressure
- Movement off the ball
- Transition

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Quality Final Acts

Emphasis: 2v1 or 1v1 to goal



Organization

- 2v1, 1v1

Objective

- 2 grids, one with a 2v1 and another with a 1v1. Attackers look to score on goal.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

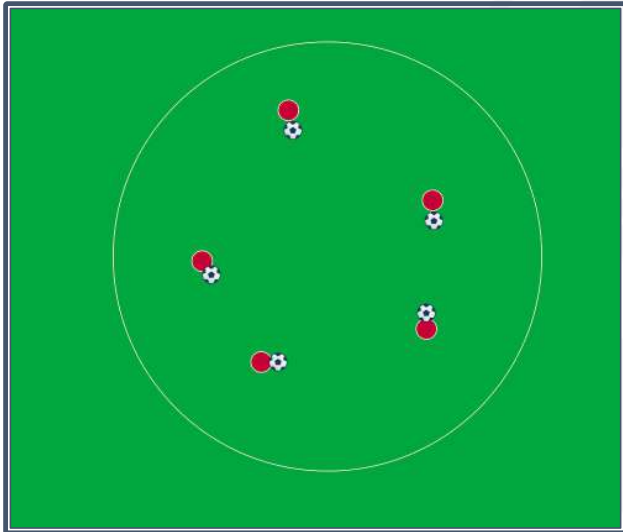
Soccer Interactions

- Finishing
- Passing
- Dribbling
- Tackle
- Pressure
- Movement off the ball
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Ball Manipulation/Shielding

Emphasis: Ball retention on the dribble
OR protecting ball



Organization

- Min 5 players

Objective

- Players dribbling in a grid and look to keep their ball inside their grid while also looking to kick the opponents ball out of the grid.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

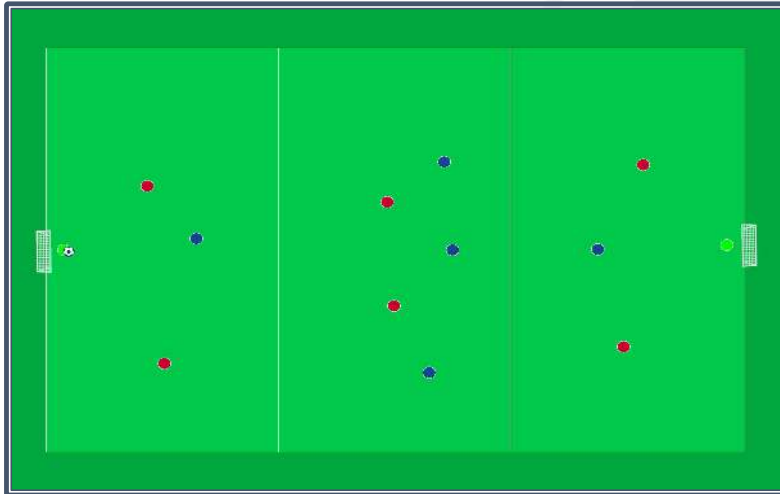
Soccer Interactions

- Finding space
- Shielding
- Dribbling
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Overload or Underload
Scenarios

Emphasis: Game Manipulation based
off of numbers around the ball



Organization

- 2 teams of 6 players. 2 keepers.

Objective

- 2 teams are put in underload and overload situations. The field is divided into 3 sections, players are restricted to their grids. Grids are divided into a 2v1, 3v2 and 1v2. Teams look to score on goal and work their way to the striker who is against 2 defenders.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

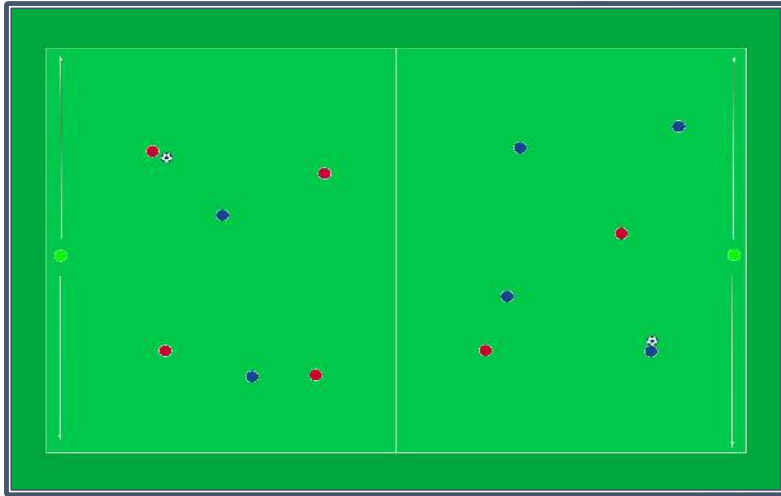
Soccer Interactions

- Passing
- Shooting
- Pressure
- Tackle
- Dribbling
- Movement off the ball

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Overload Opportunity to maintain Possession

Emphasis: Passing and Movement off the Ball



Organization

- 2 teams: minimum 4v2, 4v2 + neutral

Objective

- Players are divided into 2 teams and 2 grids. Each grid has a 4v2, where the attackers are looking to play a target player in the opposite grid. Players look for space and an opportunity to play a forward pass.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

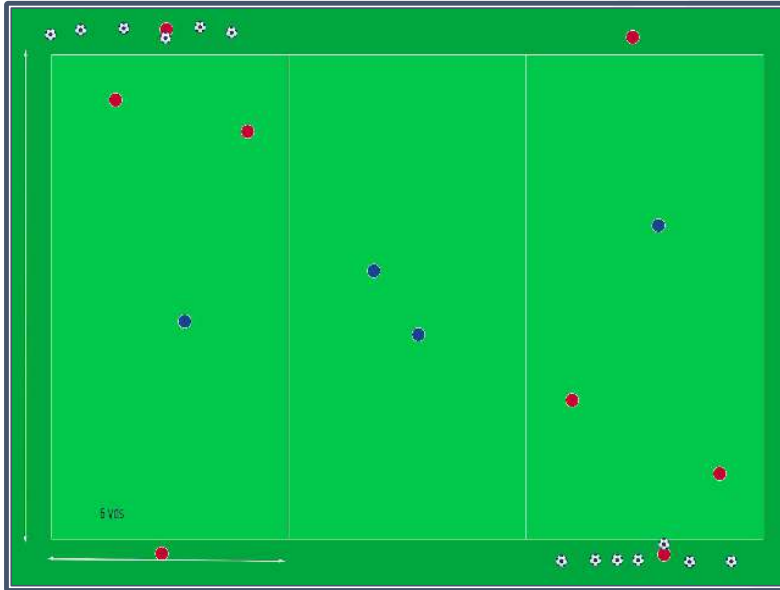
Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Pressure
- Defending
- Tackle
- Passing
- Movement off the ball
- Transition

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: 2v1

Emphasis: Switching the ball to maintain possession



Organization

- 2v1, with 2 target players

Objective

- A target player on the outside looks to play the attackers who are in a 2v1 situation. The attackers look to play another target player on the other side of the grid.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

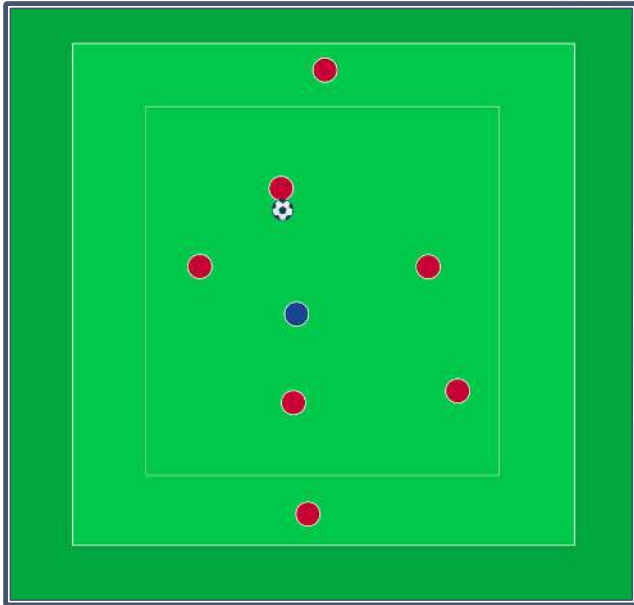
Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Pressure
- Tackle
- Passing
- Movement off the ball

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Possession

Emphasis: Passing & Movement off the ball



Organization

- 5v1 inside the grid, 2 targets outside the grid

Objective

- 5 players look to keep the ball and find 2 outside targets. There is one player defending inside the grid.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

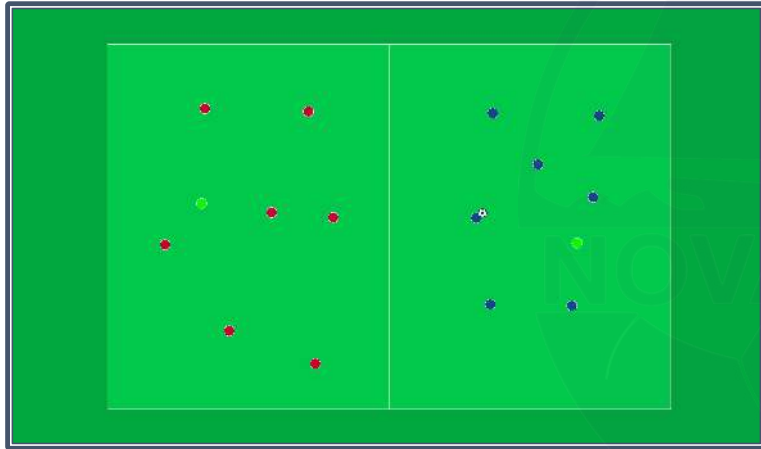
Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Passing
- Movement off the ball
- Tackle
- Press

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Possession

Emphasis: Passing & Movement off the ball



Organization

- 7v7 with 2 target keepers

Objective

- 2 teams play possession in the grid. Players look for an opportunity to play the ball to their target keeper.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Passing
- Movement off the ball
- Tackle
- Press
- Transition

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Ball Manipulation OR
Defending Principles

Emphasis: Dribbling (change
direction/speed) OR 1v1 Defending

Organization

- 1v1

Objective

- 1 player looks to dribble to cones that are placed on either side. 1 defender is placed across from them. The attacker looks to trick the defender and touch the cones before the defender. .

Task Variables

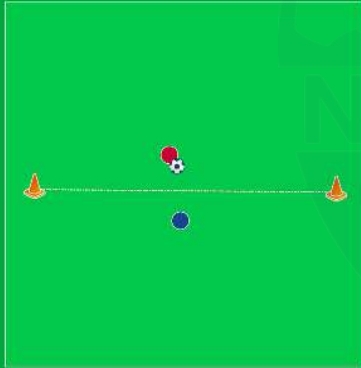
- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Dribbling
- Turn
- 1v1 defending

Player is trying to get to
either cone before their
partner.

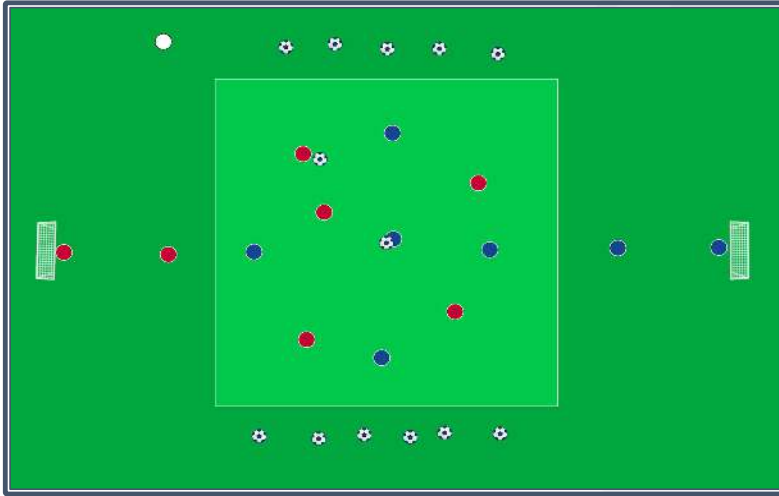
Rotate after each go.



Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Quality Final Acts

Emphasis: Combination to goal



Organization

- 5v5 in the grid. 2 setters and 2 keepers.

Objective

- 2 teams each have a ball and look to pass and move. Each team has a setter outside of the grid. On coach's command, the players with the balls play the setter who plays the ball back to them to shoot on net.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

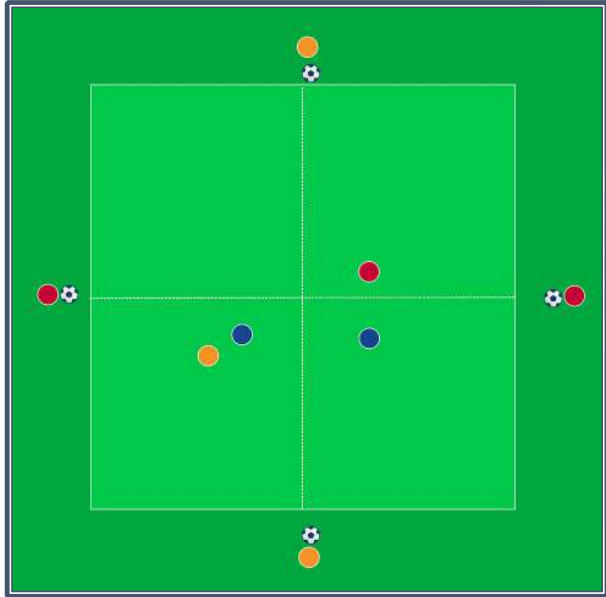
Soccer Interactions

- Passing
- Dribbling
- Movement off the ball
- Wall pass
- Shooting

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: 1v1

Emphasis: Passing and Receiving to switch the ball OR denying the switch



Organization

- 2X 1v1 inside the grid. 4 target players.

Objective

- Inside of the grid there is 2 1v1's and 1 player each side on the grid. The attackers inside of the grid look to make space to receive the ball. Once they get the ball they look to play another player on the outside of the grid.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

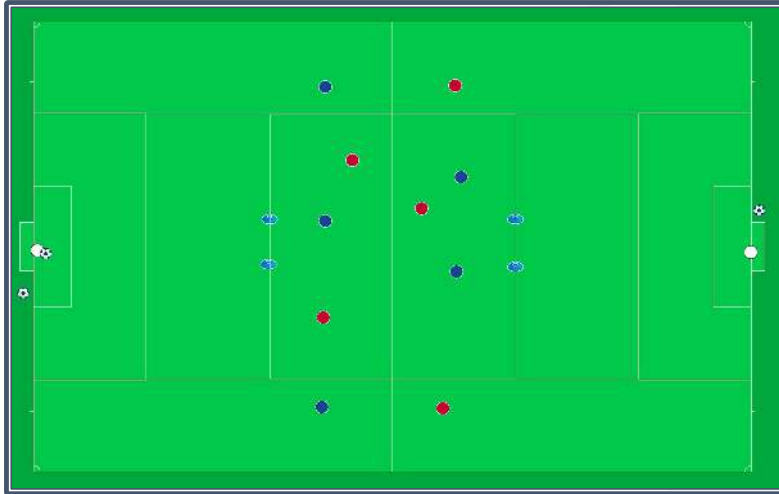
Soccer Interactions

- Passing
- Dribbling
- Movement without the ball
- Pressing
- Tackle

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Playing out of the back

Emphasis: Utilizing width and depth to break lines



Organization

- 3v3 in the grid. 2 wingers on each side for both teams. 2 keepers.

Objective

- Keeper plays out to the attacking team, dribbles into a 3v3 possession. The attacking team looks for a target player in the wing. The target player runs to goal to shoot on net. If the defenders win the ball they gain possession and look to score on goal.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

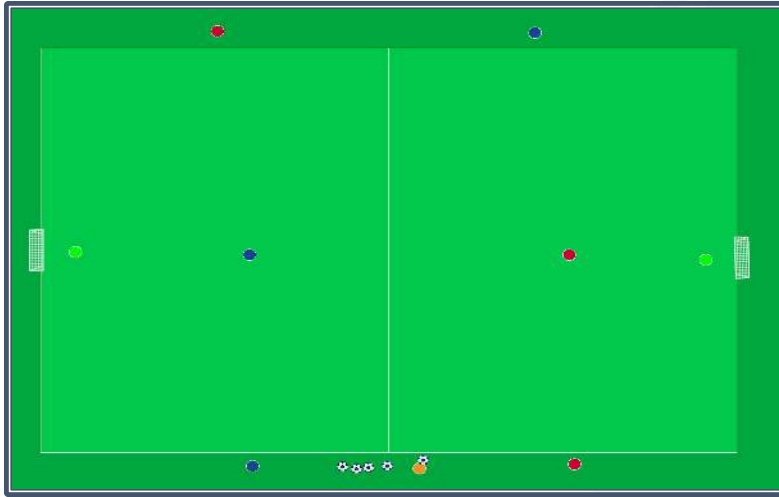
Soccer Interactions

- Passing
- Dribbling
- Movement without the ball
- Pressing
- Tackle
- Shoot
- Transition

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: 1v1

Emphasis: 1v1 to goal



Organization

- 1v1

Objective

- Players are in a 1v1 situation with 2 target players on the outside. Players receives a ball from the target player at looks to shield the ball from the defender and look for goal. If the defender wins the ball they lay the ball to their outside target player, get the ball back and look to score on net.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

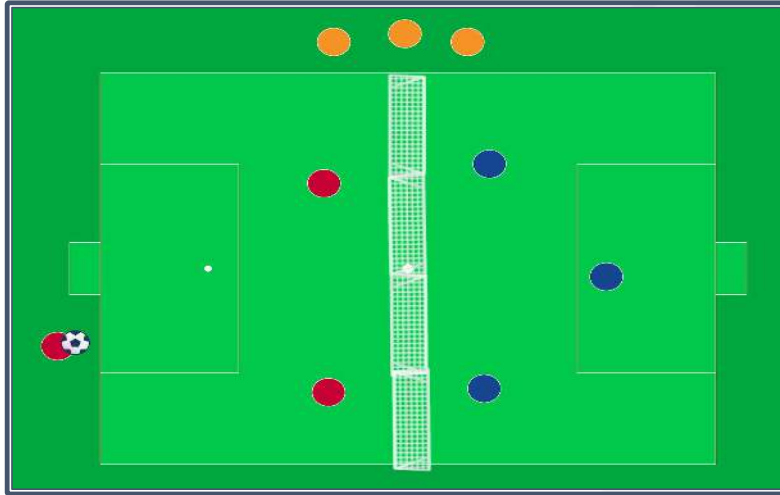
Soccer Interactions

- Passing
- Dribbling
- Tackle
- Shoot
- Shield

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Ball Manipulation

Emphasis: Technical development



Organization

- Min 3v3

Objective

- 2 teams are separated by a net or bench. Players must keep the ball up in the air with their team and hit the ball over the net. Teams get a point when the ball bounces on the opposing team's side.

Task Variables

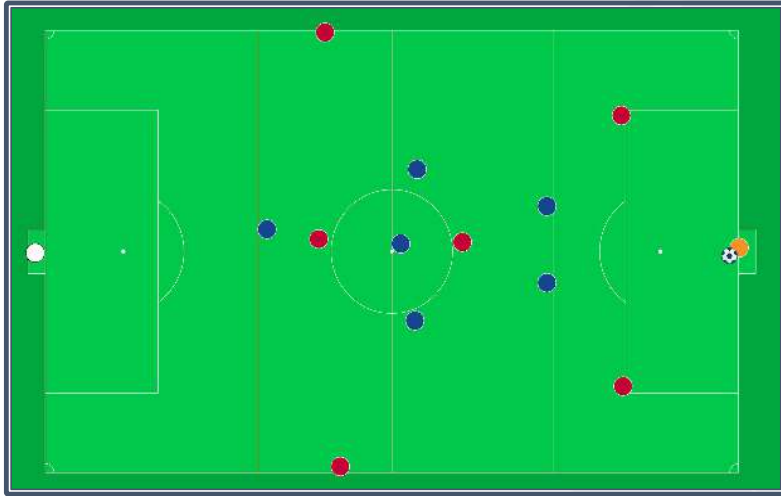
- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Volley
- First touch
- Head
- Juggle

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Game
Emphasis: Coach's choice



Organization

- 7v7

Objective

- Team looks to keep possession and score on net. 7v7 turns into a 9v9 as teams move up the field.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

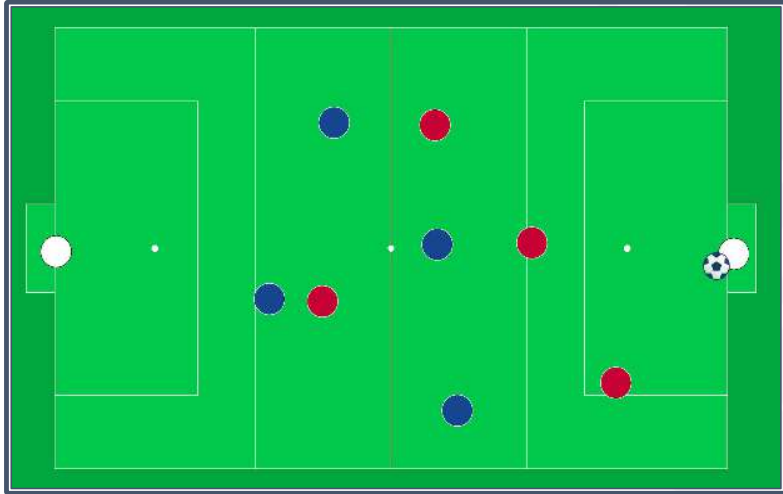
Soccer Interactions

- Pass
- Dribble
- Shoot
- Press
- Tackle
- Movement without the ball
- Transition

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Possession to Goal

Emphasis: Maintain possession to break line with pass to goal



Organization

- Min 4v4

Objective

- Players play possession. Team in possession looks to play the ball into an endzone for a player to run onto. The player then looks to score on net.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

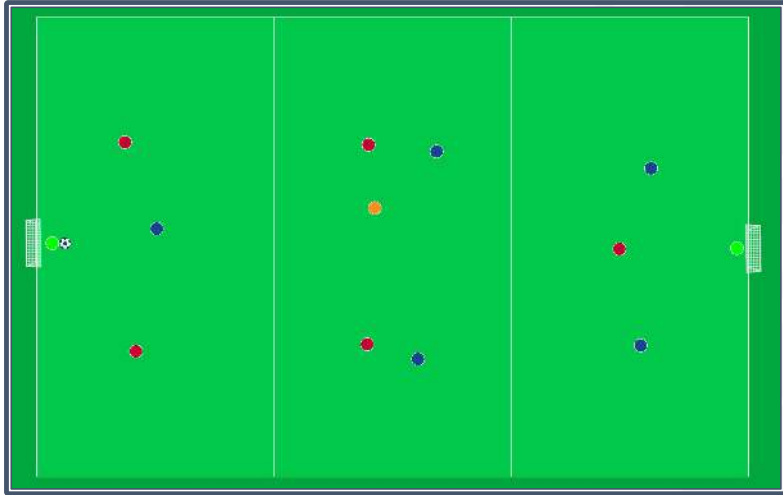
Soccer Interactions

- Pass
- Dribble
- Shoot
- Press
- Tackle
- Movement without the ball
- Transition

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Break lines with a pass

Emphasis: Create, use, exploit gaps/space



Organization

- 5v5, 1 neutral player

Objective

- The field is divided into thirds, 2 teams play possession. The team in possession looks to pass their way through the third to play a striker who looks to score on net. Other team looks to win the ball and transition

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

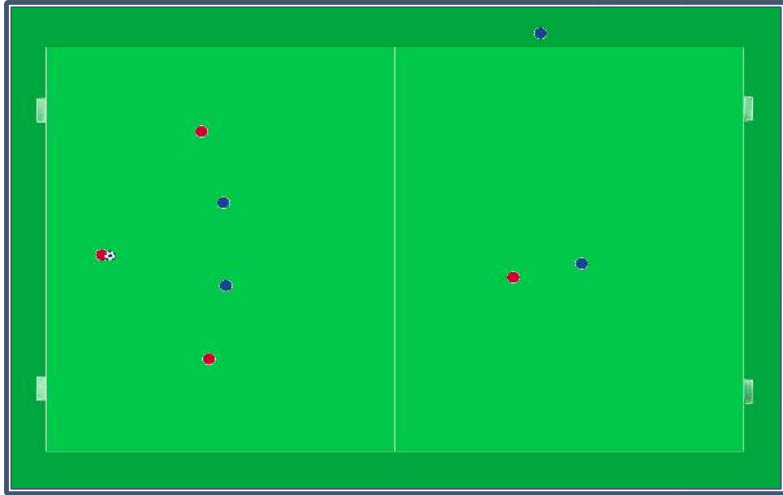
Soccer Interactions

- Pass
- Dribble
- Shoot
- Press
- Tackle
- Movement without the ball
- Transition

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Attacking Overloads/
Defending Underloads

Emphasis: Create, use, exploit
gaps/space



Organization

- 5v5

Objective

- Field is divided in halves. The attackers are in a 3v2 and look to dribble over half. 2 attackers a 1 defender join the other half where another defender and an attacker are waiting. Attacking team looks to score.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Pass
- Dribble
- Shoot
- Press
- Tackle
- Movement without the ball
- Transition

Principle Based Sessions – Main Activities

Theme: Quality Final Acts

Emphasis: Overloads centrally to goal



Organization

- 2v1

Objective

- 2 attackers receive the ball and look to score on goal against 1 defender.

Task Variables

- Field Space
- Number of players
- Location of ball feed

Soccer Interactions

- Pass
- Dribble
- Shoot
- Press
- Tackle
- Movement off the ball



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Canada Soccer

Special Mentions

To those organizations
that provided their
principles & content for
the development of this
document

