

# HUNT4SOCCER

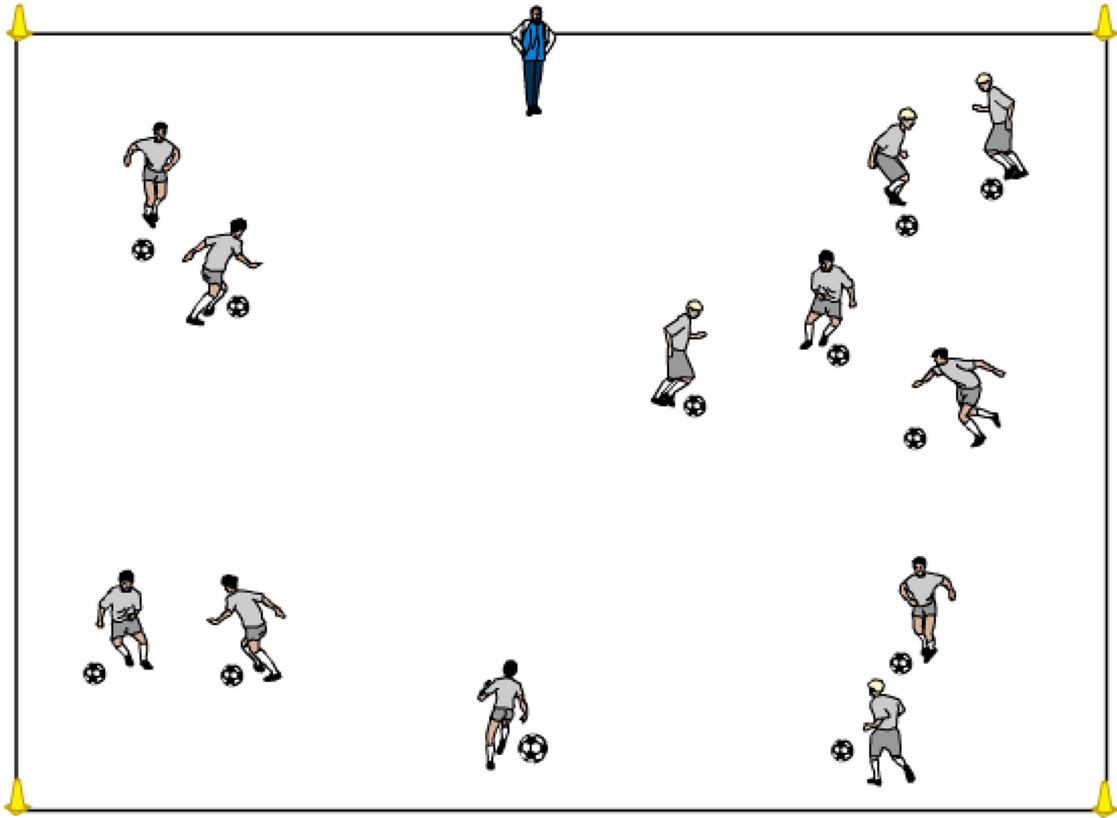
## *Working with 8- to 12-year-olds:*

1. Children of the same age may differ a good deal in motor skill development. A child's motor skills develop in a particular sequence: first they learn to crawl, then to walk, and then to run, jump and hop, in that order. There is a developmental sequence in learning a single technique too. As players practice a particular technique such as kicking they use their bodies more effectively each time and reach a higher level of development in that technique.
2. Children progress through motor development sequences at their own rate. Players of the same age may be at different development levels because of differences in motor ability and in the amount of time they have practiced the technique. The important thing is that each player shows continued progress.
3. Children of the same age will differ in physiological development (bone growth and muscular strength). Stars within their sport are often more advanced physiologically than others their own age.
4. They are loaded with energy and must be given rest periods.
5. Compared to other periods in a child's life these are the slow years in physical growth, making it the best time to learn new techniques.
6. Children like to play with others but side by side, rather than together – “Me first...” rather than “Let's both do this...” It's a difficult time to teach tactics. Indeed the focus should be on teaching ball skills.
7. Children have not yet learned the skills of compromise and team play. Expect frequent argument. Do not interfere with their arguments, as it is a part of their learning process.
8. You should not expect the children to play a team game the way adults would.
9. You should bend the rules to fit their physical and mental maturity. Fewer players result in more touches with the ball. Equipment suitable to their age and size results in better play.
10. Team games call for social and mental skills that they are just starting to develop.
11. They have not learned to accept mistakes – their own or others.
12. They lack the ability to make quick decisions.
13. Adult reactions to their efforts are often mistaken and become a blow to their self-confidence.
14. They are in need of understanding and encouragement.

The HUNT4SOCCER program will have four stations at each session. The stations simply serve as a way to organize the training space, to divide the players into smaller groups for more repetition and to make the circumstances more manageable for the coaches. The training session will progress through dribbling to passing to shooting to small-sided games.

## Hospital Tag

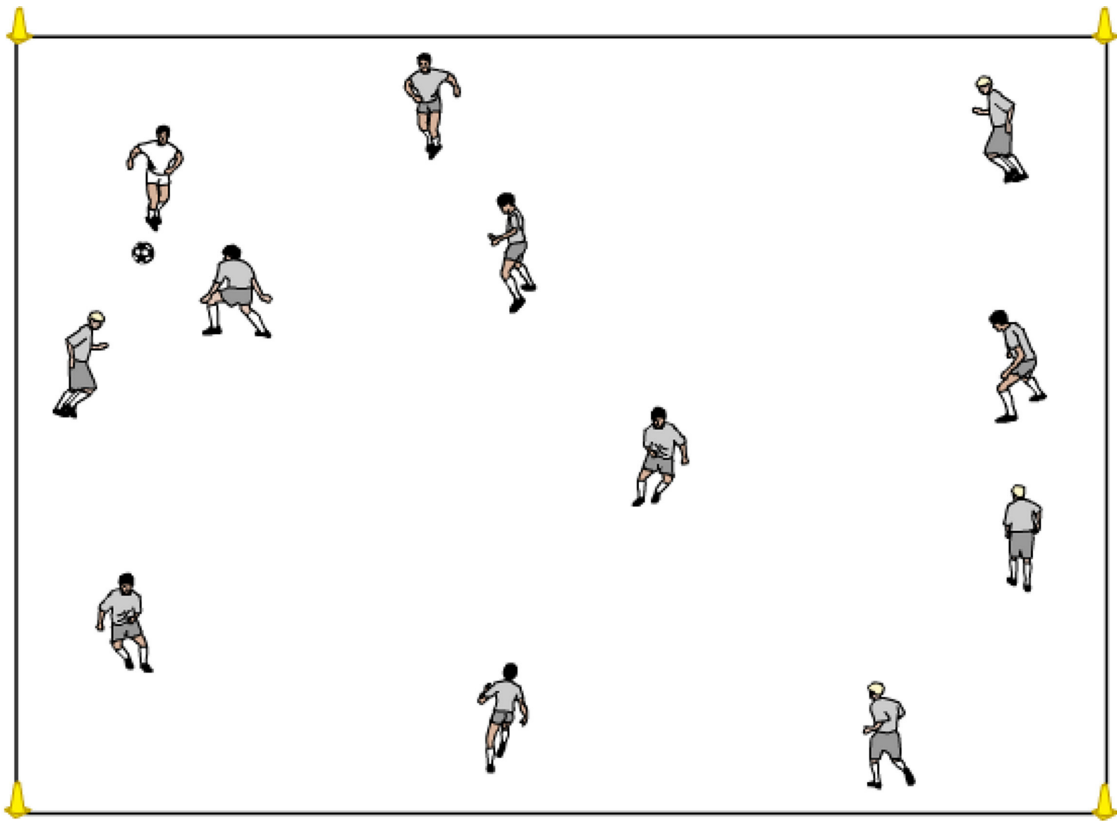
The activity is played with one ball per player in a 20 x 20 yard grid. Players dribble and try to tag other players. Each time a player is tagged the spot touched is now 'injured'. The player must hold that spot and continue dribbling. The second time they are touched, they hold that spot, but do not release the first spot. The third time they are touched, the player goes to the 'hospital' to see the 'doctor' (coach) and do some minimal activity to get 'healed' and rejoin the game. Play for eight to ten minutes.



## Pac Man

Each player has a ball in this activity and they are all placed around the outside of the grid. Use a 20 x 20 yard grid and the space used could be larger if numbers dictate. One player with a ball (Pac Man) dribbles and tries to pass the ball to hit another player in the legs with the ball. Players try to avoid getting hit with the ball. Once a player is hit he gets his ball and becomes a Pac Man. The activity continues until all of the players have been hit and have their ball.

Variation: two or three players are "it" (Pac Man or Pac Woman) to start, each with a ball

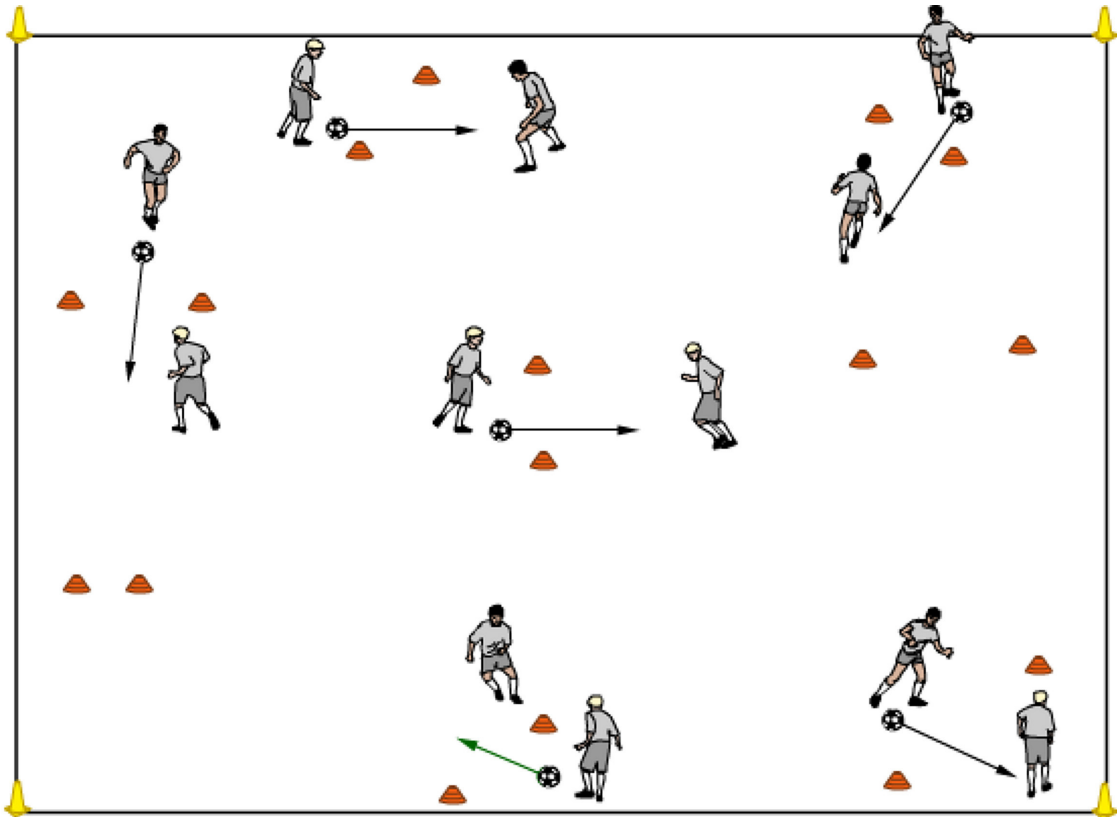


## Gates Passing

The players pair up and have one ball per pair. The grid is 25 x 25 yards and is marked with tall cones. Disc or flat cones are used inside the grid to make 'gates' that the players pass the ball through to their partner. The 'gates' should vary in width and angles. The pairs dribble and pass around the grid and try to make clean passes through the 'gates' to the partner. Begin the activity with no time limit, but encourage the players to see how many 'gates' they can pass the ball through.

Variations:

1. set a time limit (30 seconds) to get through as many 'gates' as possible; the next time each pair tries to break their own record
2. do not require the players to pass through different 'gates'
3. encourage passing with a variety of foot surfaces

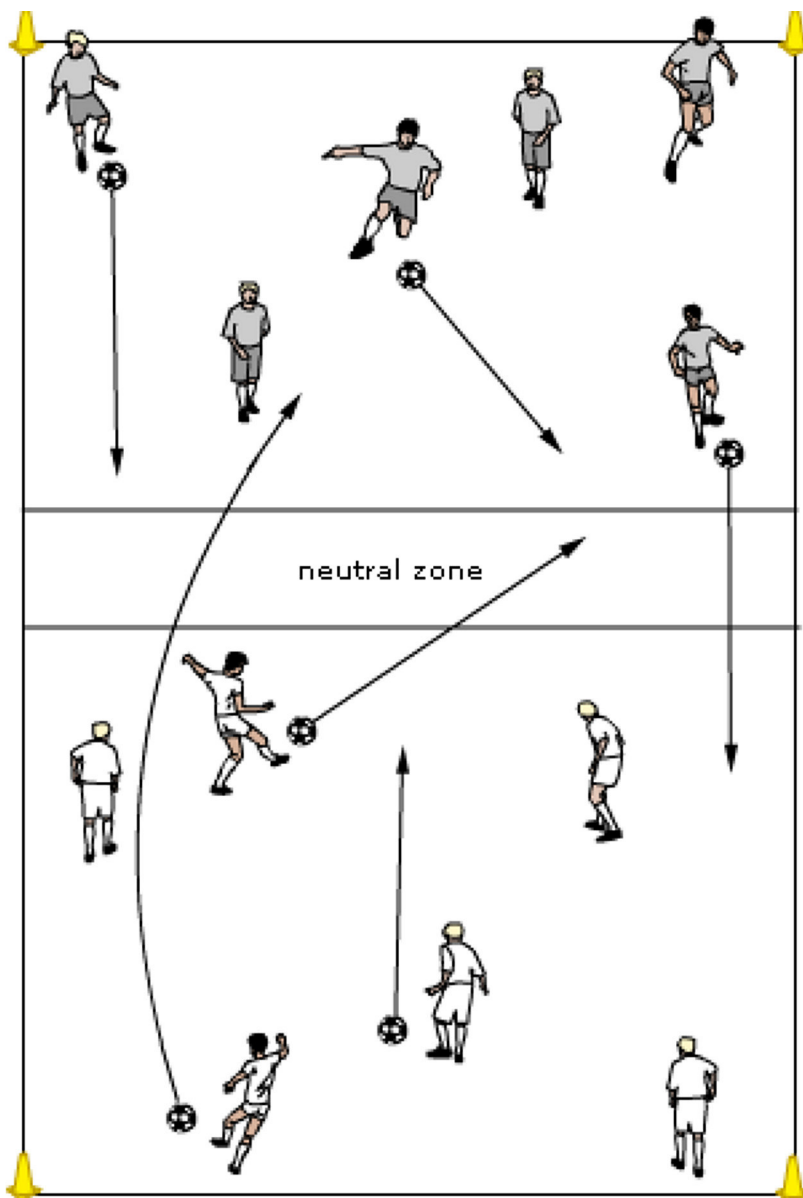


## Junkyard Soccer

Divide the players into two teams with half as many balls as there are players. The activity should be played in a 40 x 25 yard grid with a 10 yard neutral zone in the middle. Each team starts with the same number of balls on each side. On the coach's signal both teams make long passes into the other team's side. The objective is to pass the ball quick enough to get all the balls on one side. When this occurs, award one point to the team without any balls on their side or end the game. No one is allowed in the neutral zone, this should prevent players from getting hit with a blind kick. If a ball stays in the neutral zone the coach can go to put the ball back into play.

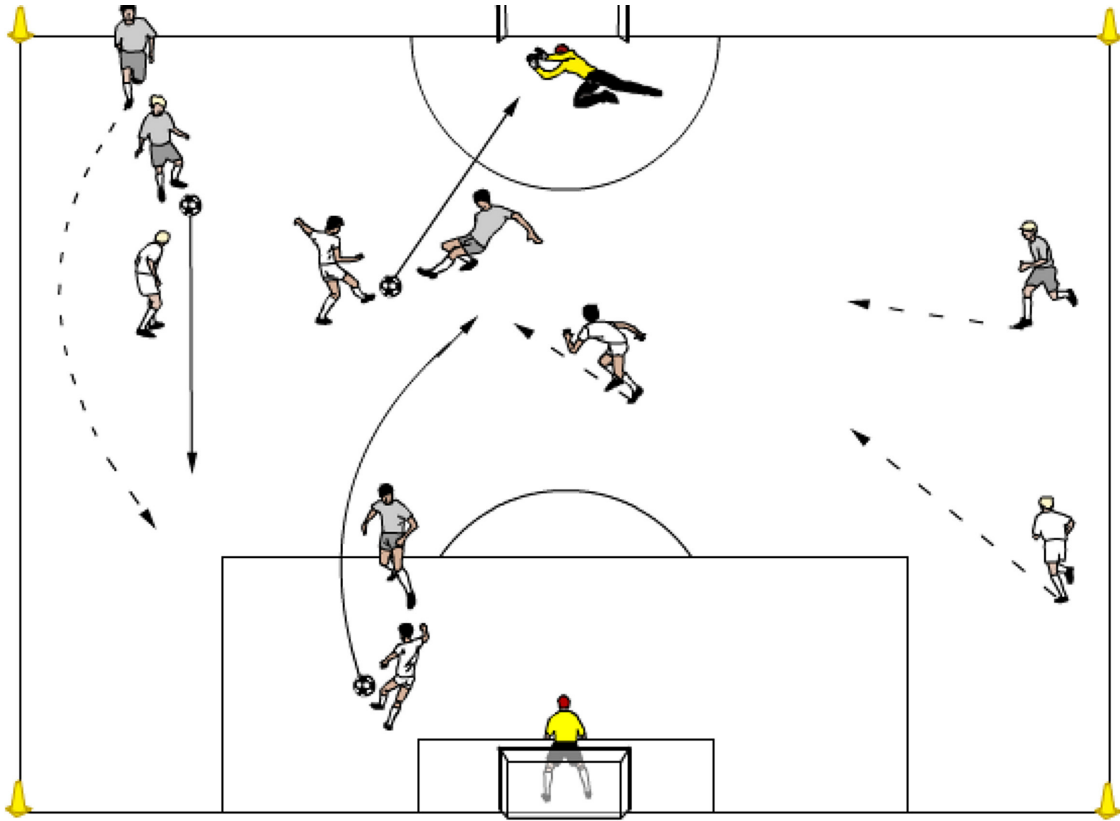
Variation:

The activity can be played with a time limit in which the team with the least number of balls wins the round.



## Balls Galore

Two teams of six, including goalkeepers with three balls in the game. Play on half of a field with goals. Play a small-sided game with the exception of playing with more than one ball.



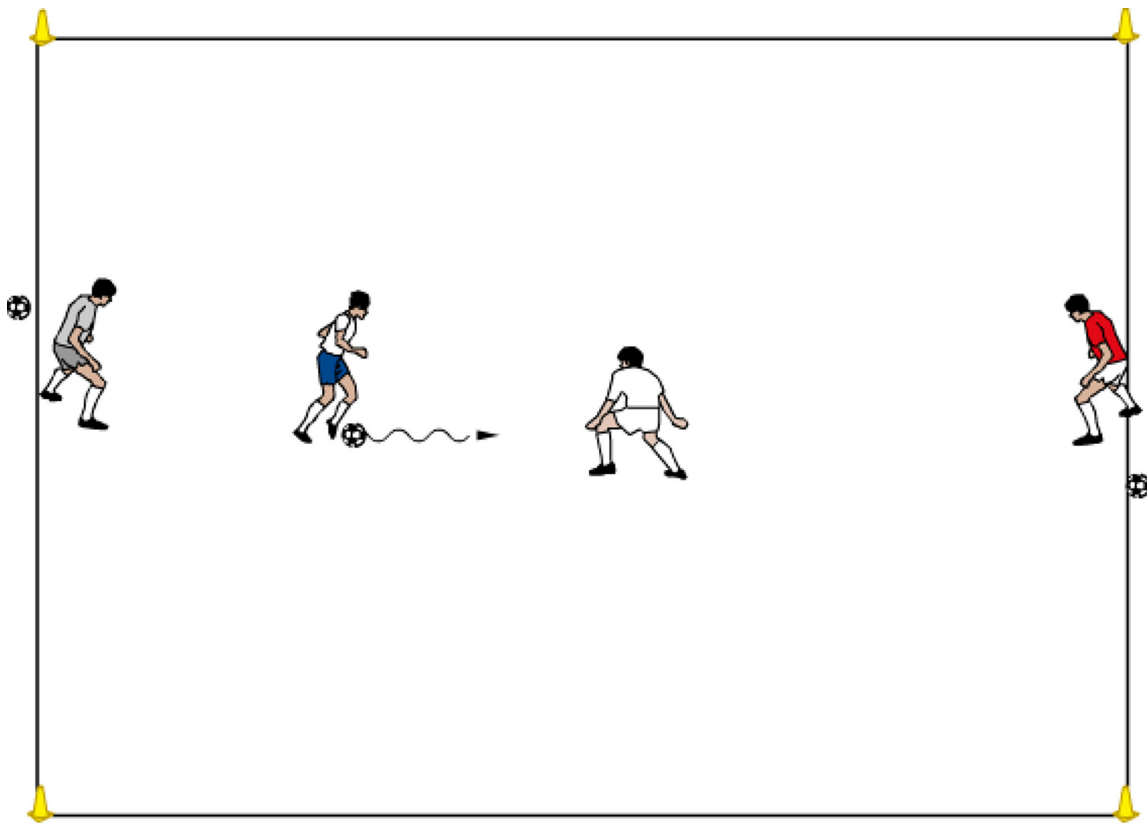
## Group Round Robin

Divide the kids into four teams of three and use goalkeepers. Play a 4 vs. 4 game on a 30 X 25 yard field with goals. Place two teams on the field with the remaining players placed evenly around the field. The spare balls are with the coach who acts as the server. The server plays a ball and both teams try to score. If a goal is scored or the ball goes out-of-bounds the server immediately plays in another ball. The coach determines the length of each round, usually one to four minutes. At the end of each round you can either place two new teams on or take off the team that has been on the longest.



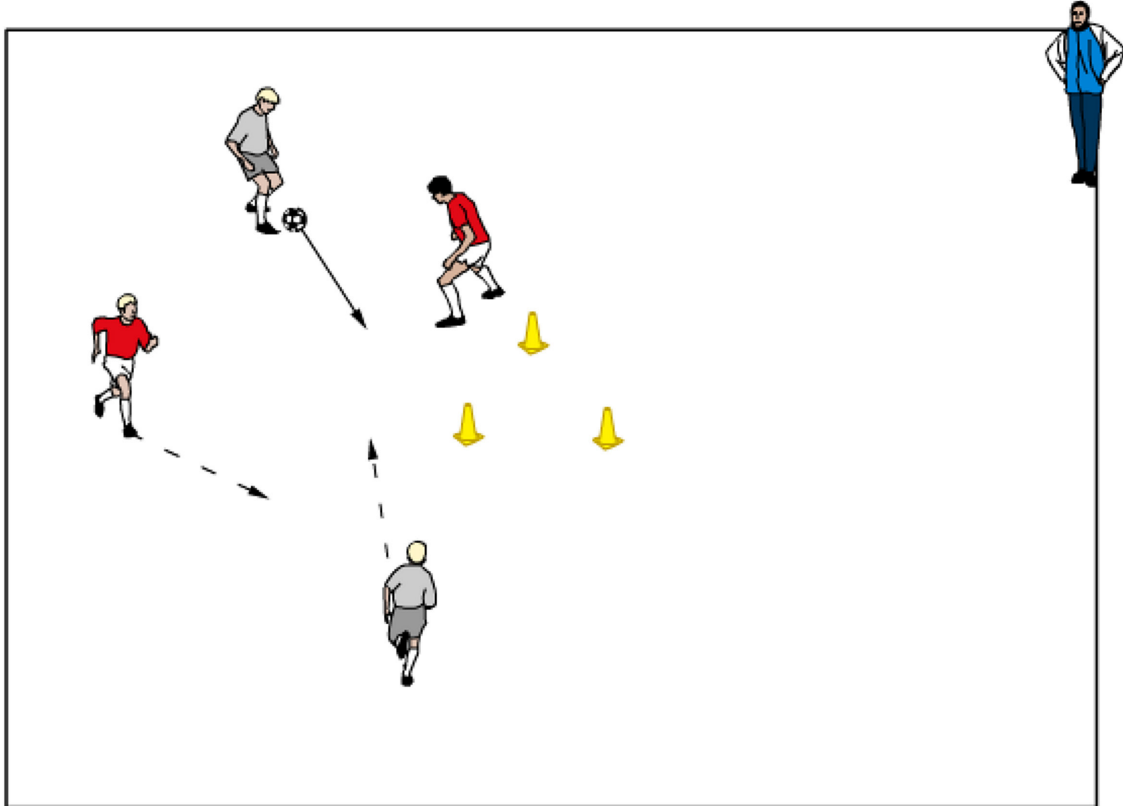
## 1 versus 1

Put the players into groups of four. Two players serve as the 'goals' on each end of the playing area, about 15 x 10 yards. Two players are in the middle playing one on one. The 'goals' stand with their feet apart and goals are scored by shooting the ball knee height or lower through the goal. The 'goals' should each have a spare ball to put into play after a goal has been scored through their legs or the ball has gone over the goal line. They then run to fetch the ball that has gone out of play and run back to their position on the goal line as the 'goal'. A ball that goes out over the touchline is the responsibility of the players in the middle to fetch. Play for 30 seconds to 1 minute and then have the players switch roles.



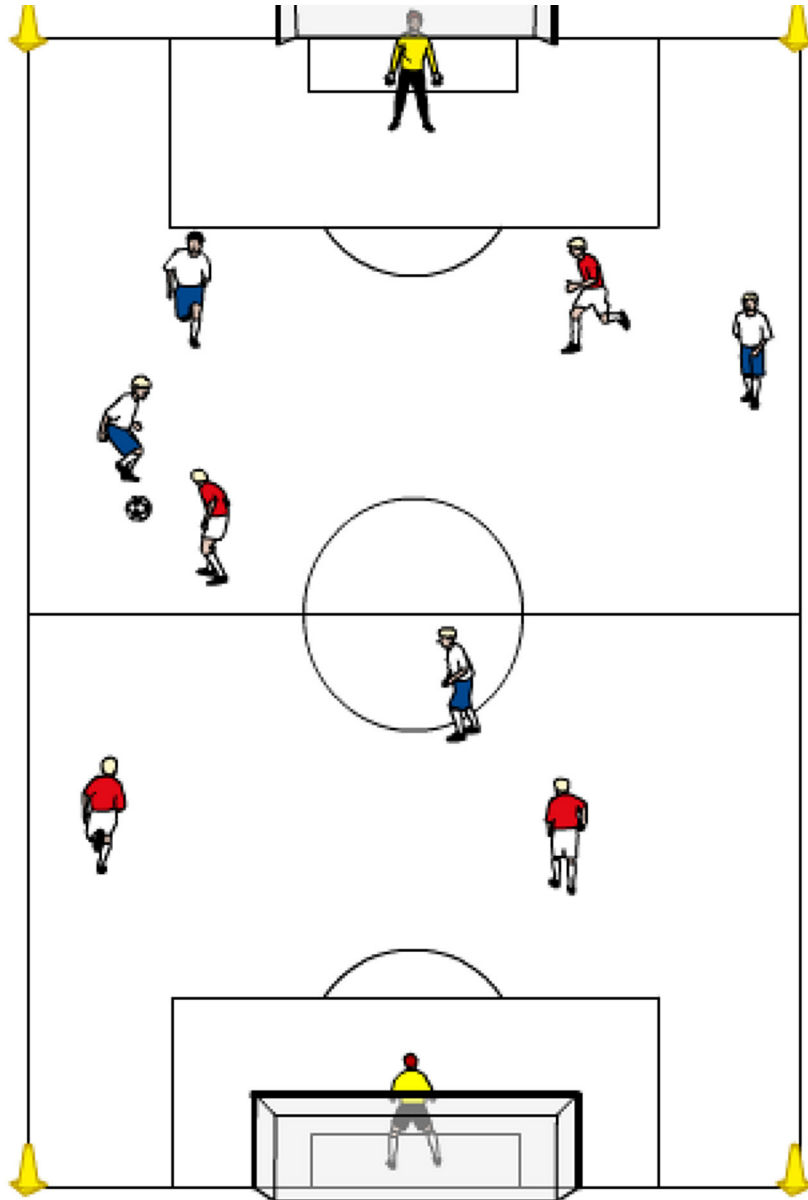
## 2 versus 2 Triangle Goal

Divide the players into groups of four and then in that group into pairs. A goal is made with three cones in a triangle shape with one yard between each cone. The pairs play two-on-two and score by hitting a cone with a shot. Play for 1 to 2 minutes per round and a 30 second rest between rounds. Play two to three rounds depending upon the players' energy. Be sure to have a sufficient space between the groups for safety.



## 4 versus 4 Match

Play a four-on-four match. Use the US Youth Soccer U8 rules of play, regardless of the age group. Do however use a size four ball.



### *References:*

The Baffled Parents Guide to Great Soccer Drills  
By, Drs. Tom Fleck and Ron Quinn  
Published by Ragged Mountain Press  
P.O. Box 220  
Camden, ME. 04843

US Youth Soccer Small-Sided Games Manual  
[www.usyouthsoccer.org](http://www.usyouthsoccer.org)