



GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDE

Orono Westonka Soccer Club
Updated 2026



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

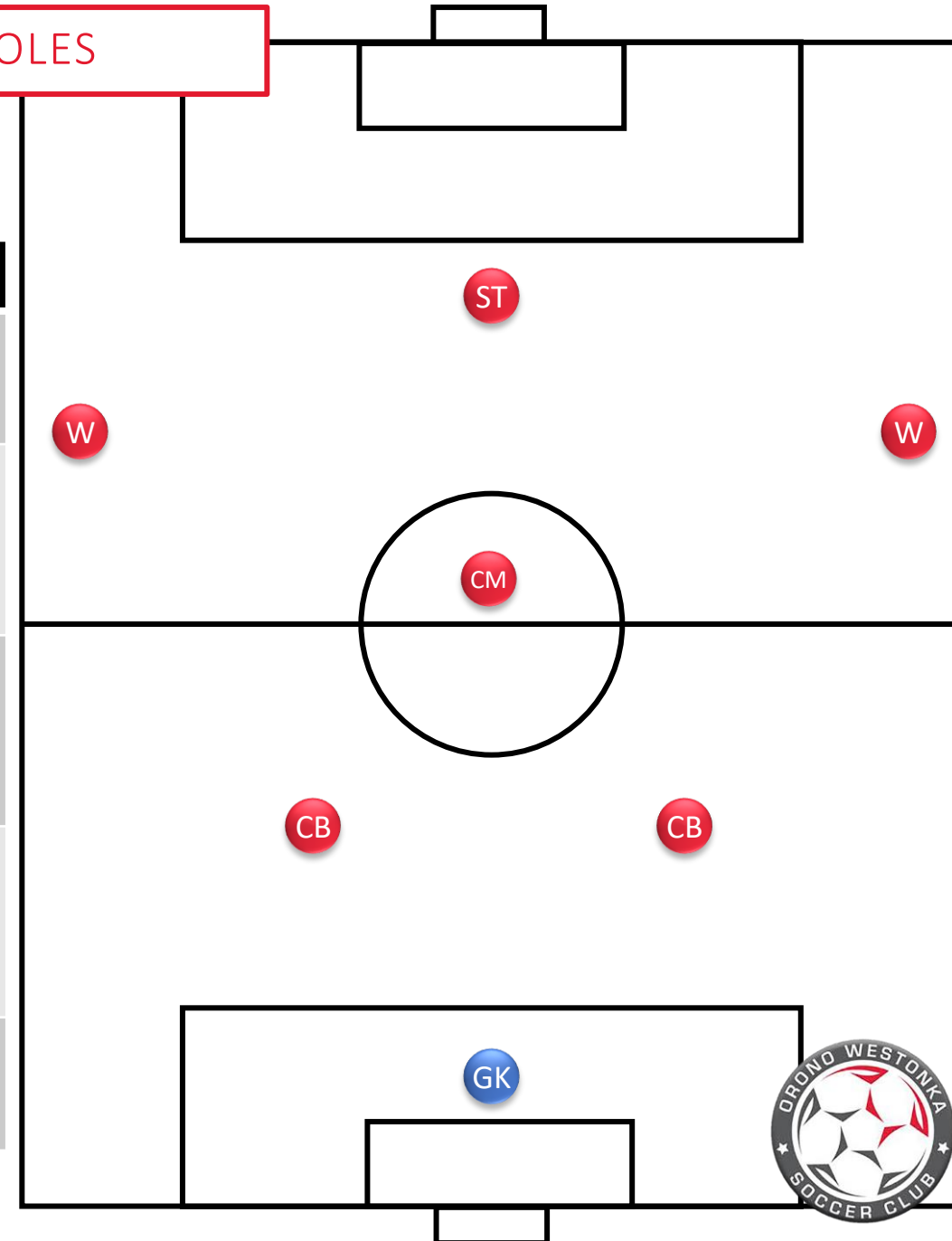
- Purpose of Games** – games are a tool for development. We seek to win games, but only as a method for developing players, not as the main objective. Much of this packet is built on this premise.
- Role of the Coach** – during games, coaches are to allow players to find solutions. Coaches should create the structures for players to experience the game, and guide players in their discovery, but coaches should avoid over-coaching or dictating player actions during the game. Coaches should use pregame, halftime, and postgame talks to give most information to the players.
- Playing Time & Positions** – playing time should be fair – allowing all players to experience the game in a meaningful way:

Age	Playing Time	Positions
U9-U10	Should be mostly equal - Work out a rotation that every player plays a similar amount of minutes	Every player should play every position during the season, and rotate positions frequently in the game.
U11-12	Should only be equitable – the stronger players can play more, but each player should play at least 60% of the game. (8 minute rotations, or 4 segments per half)	Every player should have 2-3 positions that they play most of the time, while giving frequent opportunities to play elsewhere.
U13+	Should be fair - Every player should play at least half of the game. (12 minute rotations, or 3 segments per half)	Every player should have 1-2 main positions , while occasionally playing in other positions.

7V7 FORMATION & ROLES

RECOMMENDED FORMATION: 2-3-1

Position	Attacking Roles	Defensive Roles
Striker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create depth on the field by staying high - Make runs behind the defense - Check in to connect play & help the team build - Move in the box to score from crosses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put pressure on the opposing defenders - Anticipate the counterattack: be available to show for the ball or run behind the defense
Winger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create width high on the field - Make runs behind the defense - Check in to connect play & help the team build - Create chances by crossing into the box - Cut into the box to score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put pressure on the opposing defenders - Get compact (close to CM) to block fwd passes - Drop on weak side to track opposition W - Anticipate the counterattack: be available to show for the ball or run behind the defense
Central Midfielder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to create space to receive the ball - Play forward passes to front 3 (into feet and into the space) - Help the team switch point of attack - Create chances by shooting from distance - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize midfielders/wingers into compact line - Block forward passes into opposition striker - Collect loose balls and second balls in midfield - Recover into defensive line if defenders are pulled out of position
Defender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create depth & angles to receive the pass - Play forward passes (into feet and space) - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize into a compact shape protecting the center of the field - Manage the depth to prevent opponents from running behind - Track runners into the box - Block and clear crosses and shots
Goalkeeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create depth & angles to receive the pass - Play forward passes (into feet and space) - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Block opposition shots on target - Help organize the team into a compact shape - Sweep up through balls behind the defensive line



RECOMMENDED FORMATION:

3-1-3-1

9V9 FORMATION & ROLES

Position	Attacking Roles	Defensive Roles
Striker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create depth on the field by staying high - Make runs behind the defense - Check in to connect play & help the team build - Move in the box to score from crosses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put pressure on the opposing defenders - Anticipate the counterattack: be available to show for the ball or run behind the defense
Winger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create width high on the field - Make runs behind the defense - Check in to connect play & help the team build - Create chances by crossing into the box - Cut into the box to score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put pressure on the opposing defenders - Get compact (close to CM) to block fwd passes - Anticipate the counterattack: be available to show for the ball or run behind the defense
Central Attacking Midfielder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to create space to receive the ball - Play forward passes to front 4 (into feet and into the space) - Make runs behind the defense - Create chances by shooting from distance - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put pressure on the opposing defenders - Get compact (close to ST) to block fwd passes - Anticipate the counterattack: be available to show for the ball or run behind the defense
Central Defensive Midfielder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to create space to receive the ball - Play forward passes to front 4 (into feet and into the space) - Help the team switch point of attack - Create chances by shooting from distance - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize midfielders/wingers into compact line - Block forward passes into opposition striker - Collect loose balls and second balls in midfield - Recover into defensive line if defenders are pulled out of position
Fullback (RB or LB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to create space to receive the ball - Play forward passes to front 4 (into feet and into the space) - Make forward runs to create 2v1 with winger - Create chances by shooting from distance - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize into a compact shape protecting the center of the field - Manage the depth to prevent opponents from running behind - Track runners into the box - Block and clear crosses and shots
Center Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create depth & angles to receive the pass - Play forward passes (into feet and space) - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize into a compact shape protecting the center of the field - Manage the depth to prevent opponents from running behind - Track runners into the box - Block and clear crosses and shots
Goalkeeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create depth & angles to receive the pass - Play forward passes (into feet and space) - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Block opposition shots on target - Help organize the team into a compact shape - Sweep up through balls behind the defensive line

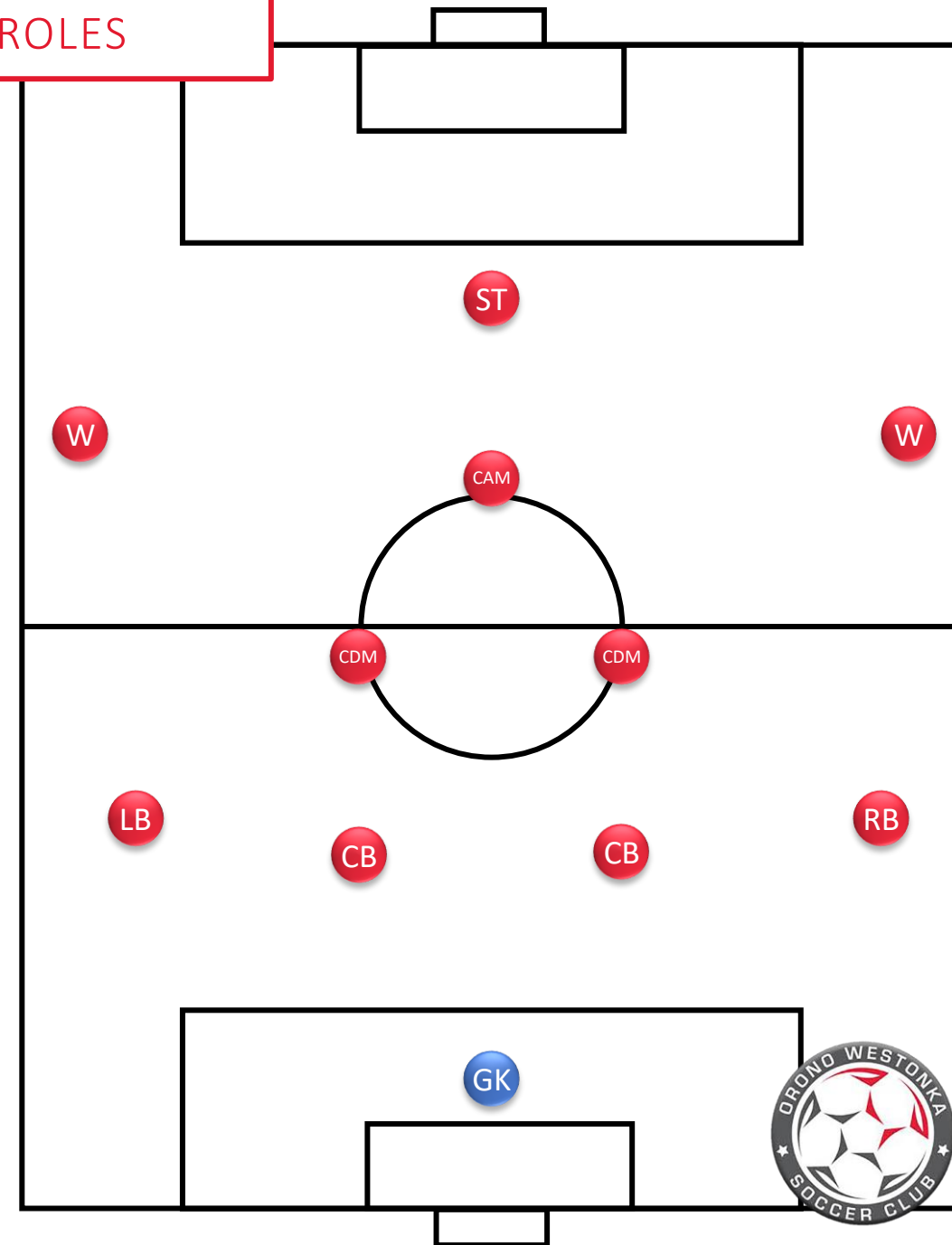


RECOMMENDED FORMATION:

4-2-3-1

11V11 FORMATION & ROLES

Position	Attacking Roles	Defensive Roles
Striker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create depth on the field by staying high - Make runs behind the defense - Check in to connect play & help the team build - Move in the box to score from crosses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put pressure on the opposing defenders - Anticipate the counterattack: be available to show for the ball or run behind the defense
Winger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create width high on the field - Make runs behind the defense - Check in to connect play & help the team build - Create chances by crossing into the box - Cut into the box to score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put pressure on the opposing defenders - Get compact (close to CM) to block fwd passes - Anticipate the counterattack: be available to show for the ball or run behind the defense
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Central Defensive Midfielder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to create space to receive the ball - Play forward passes to front 4 (into feet and into the space) - Help the team switch point of attack - Create chances by shooting from distance - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize midfielders/wingers into compact line - Block forward passes into opposition striker - Collect loose balls and second balls in midfield - Recover into defensive line if defenders are pulled out of position
Fullback (RB or LB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to create space to receive the ball - Play forward passes to front 4 (into feet and into the space) - Make forward runs to create 2v1 with winger - Create chances by shooting from distance - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize into a compact shape protecting the center of the field - Manage the depth to prevent opponents from running behind - Track runners into the box - Block and clear crosses and shots
Center Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create depth & angles to receive the pass - Play forward passes (into feet and space) - Support the attack & provide counter balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize into a compact shape protecting the center of the field - Manage the depth to prevent opponents from running behind - Track runners into the box - Block and clear crosses and shots
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WARM UP

•**Purpose** – To prepare players physically, mentally, technically, and tactically for the game.

•**Arrival** – based on the age of the players, allow for 20-30 minutes of warm up time. For ages 13+, have players arrive 45 minutes before kickoff to allow for a 30 minutes warm up. Younger players should arrive 30 minutes before kickoff to allow for a 20-minute warmup.

•**Dynamic warm-up** – have players form two lines to move across a 15-yard space to do the following dynamic exercises:

- Jog
- High knees
- Butt Kicks
- Full kicks
- Sideways lunge
- High skips
- Build up sprints

Younger players physiologically do not need to do dynamic warm-ups, but it is good rehearsal for older ages.

•**Team talk** – gather the players to go over the gameplan for the day. More information on the next page.

•**Rondos/GK warmup**– separate players into groups to do 4v2 or 5v2 rondos. Assistant coach takes goalkeeper to do specific goalkeeper warmup

•**Shooting/Long Passing** – separate attacking and defending players. Attacking players combine to shoot at the goal. Defending players play short-short-long to build up range of passing.



PREGAME TALK

In the pregame talk, include the following points:

- **Context of the game** – give the players a context for the game – why it is a unique opportunity to play
- **Revisit coaching points** – reassert the coaching points you coached during the session.
Do so by:
 - **Asking questions:** “we talked about 1v1 attacking this week... what are good situations to take players on 1v1?”
 - **Showing, not telling:** use cones, tactics boards, or live demonstrations to illustrate your points
 - **Keeping it simple:** don’t go on too long – keep your points short and clear
- **Give starting lineup**– give the players the starting lineup for the day – feel free to give brief individual instructions at this time.
- **Final encouragement**– give the team final motivation as they begin the warm-up that they can take into the game.



COACH BEHAVIOR



Coaches should exhibit the following attributes & behavior on the sideline of the game:

- Respect** – the coach should lead the team in creating a respectful environment of the game. The coach should not publically disagree with officials, speak negatively to or about opposition players, teams, or coaches, or create a hostile environment within the game.
- Composure** – coaches should not put undue pressure on the players by shouting across the field or becoming overly emotive. Encourage the players, but do not make yourself the center of attention.
- Player Freedom** – allow the players to play. Do not over-coach, telling them what decisions to make in the moment. Give instruction before the situation occurs, then allow the players to make their own decisions on the field. Allowing players to make mistakes is vital in the learning process.
- Bench engagement** – keep players on the bench engaged in the game. Make sure bench players are sitting and watching the game, unless they are intentionally warming up to enter the game. Dialogue with bench players and continue the learning process, even when the players are off the field.



HALFTIME TALK

In the halftime talk, include the following points:

- **Player feedback** – allow players to give their opinion and observations from the first half. Use leading questions to
- **Revisit coaching points & give additional solutions** – reassert the coaching points you gave during the pregame talk & address any consistent issues you are seeing in the first half. Do so by:
 - **Asking questions:** “we talked about 1v1 attacking this week... what are good situations to take players on 1v1?”
 - **Showing, not telling:** use cones, tactics boards, or live demonstrations to illustrate your points
 - **Keeping it simple:** don’t go on too long – keep your points short and clear
- **Give starting lineup**– give the players the starting lineup for the second half – feel free to give brief individual instructions at this time.
- **Final encouragement**– give the team final motivation as they begin the warm-up that they can take into the game.



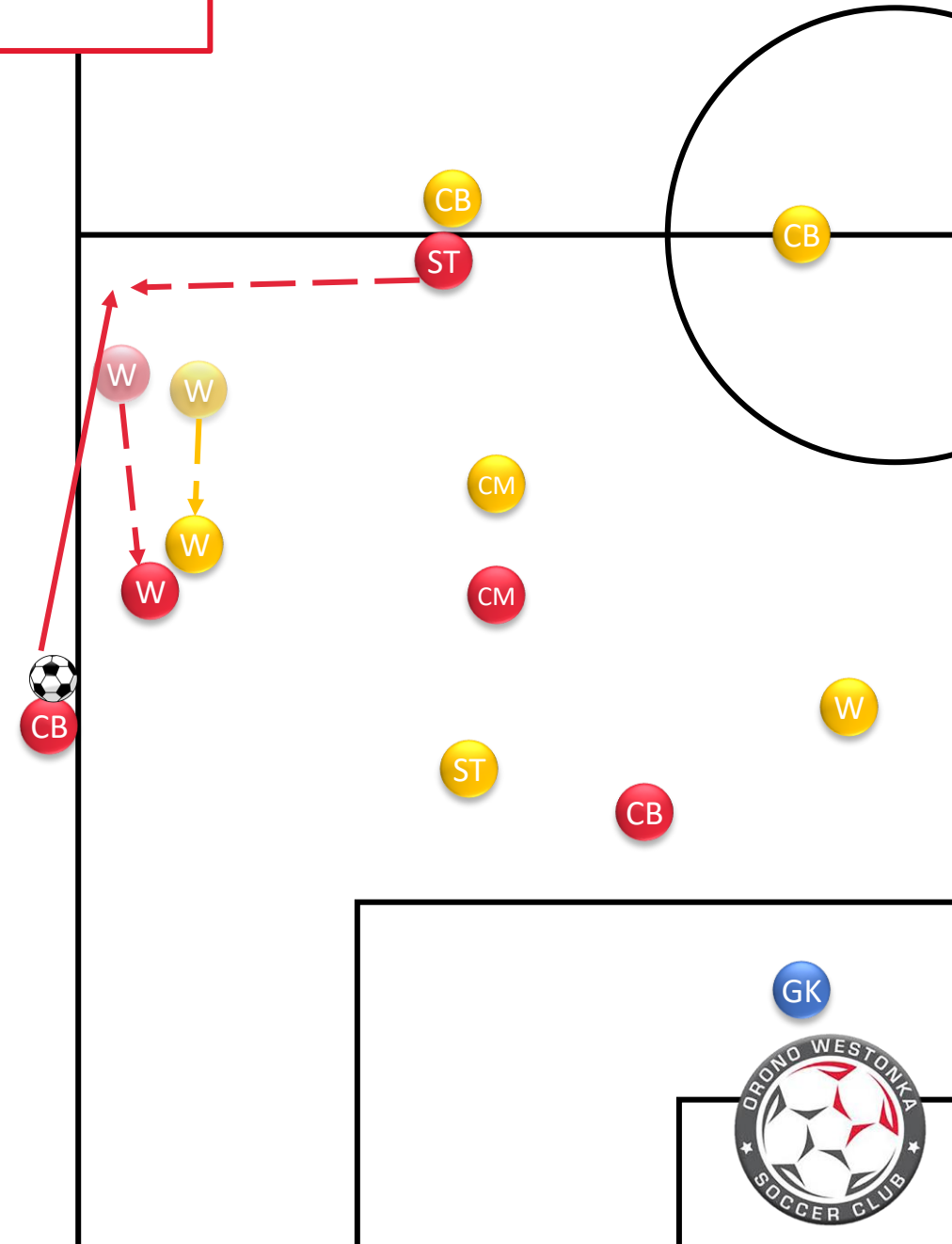
THROW-INS

- Objective**– keep the ball and forward and up the line. Avoid throwing backwards (unless it is completely clear), or square across the field – if you lose the ball, lose it close to the opposition goal.

- 2 Player movement to create space** – Have one player check towards the ball, as he or she is checking, another player moves into the space the player has left. Throw to the second player

- Throw in technique** – when throwing the ball in, the player must use 2 hands, starting the motion behind the head and coming straight over the top. Both feet must be on the ground, out of play, when throwing in.

- Get the throw in quickly** – encourage players to get the throw back into the field quickly, before the defense is set. There is no offside on a throw-in, so you can start a quick attack via a throw in.



GOAL KICKS

When playing out from a goalkick, always play short to a Center Back, then teach the players to use one of these options:

Pass around – have wide player to check & receive ball, who then can play forward

Combine through – use the checking midfielder to play 1-touch out of pressure

Play over – play a long ball over the opposition's pressure for attacking players

