

**GAMES & ACTIVITIES FOR**  
**SOCCER PLAYERS**  
**U6 - U12**

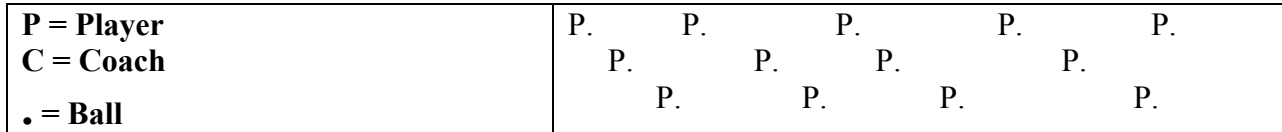


by  
**Serge Lipovetsky**

## WARM-UP GAMES

### “SHOW ME”

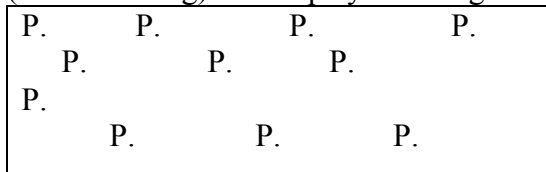
As players arrive at practice, I ask them to show me a “cool” trick (something they can do with the ball). I then have all the other players try that “cool” trick. It can be anything like dribbling (close to their body, far away from their body, different directions/speed, throwing it up in the air and then controlling it with a body part, heading a ball, etc.). Have a different player show you a trick.



C

### RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT

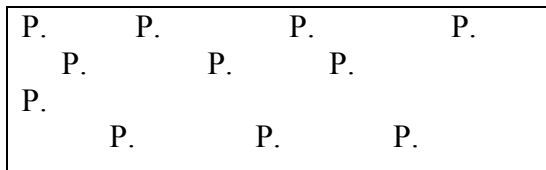
Have everyone dribbling their balls inside a specific area. When coach says, “Red Light,” everyone must stop immediately with their foot on the ball. When coach says, “Green light,” everyone must go (start dribbling). Have players change directions/speed; find an open space.



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### BODY PART DRIBBLE

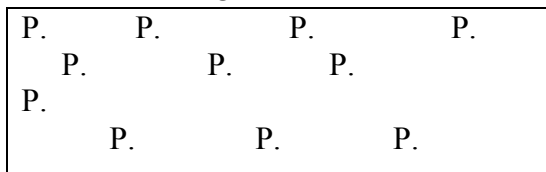
Continue with same commands as previous game, but add a body part when stopping play (Red Light). The players must put their body part that the coach calls out on the ball as quickly as possible.



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### MATH DRIBBLE

All the players are dribbling inside a specific area. When the coach calls out a math problem, they must solve it and then get into groups of however many is the answer (i.e.  $2+2=4$ , they would get into groups of four). For the younger ages (U6), call out a number instead of a math problem. Can even hold up fingers and not call out the number so they dribble with their head up.



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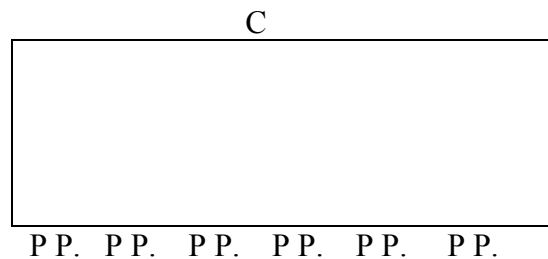
## OVER & UNDER / SIDE TO SIDE (STRETCHING)

Players are in pairs and have their backs facing each other. They pass one ball, with their hands, from one side to another (side to side). Then ask them if they can come up with another way they can pass the ball to their partner. They pass the ball over their head and then through their legs (over & under). Then combine the two activities as the players have to execute whatever commands the coach calls out.

## COORDINATION GAMES

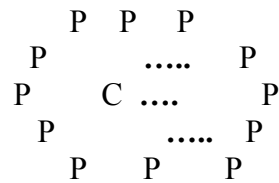
Players must bring balls from one side of an area to the other with whatever body parts the coach calls out. This game can actually be done with or without a ball as well as with one or more players. Can make it competitive as players try to get to the opposite side as quickly as possible; who can finish first?

(i.e. Bring a ball with one hand and two heads, bring a ball back with two chests – two players)



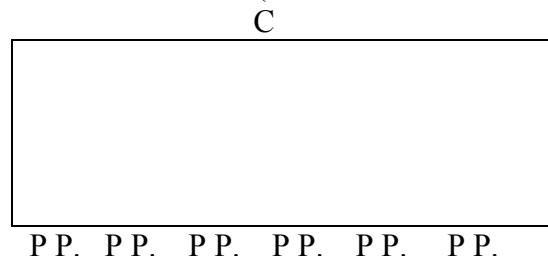
## FETCH IT!

All the players bring their ball together for the coach. The coach then tells the players how to bring the ball back to him/her and then throws/kicks the players' ball away. The players must go and "fetch" their ball as quickly as possible and bring it back to the coach. The older the players are, the more they can work in groups.



## TRAFFIC LIGHTS

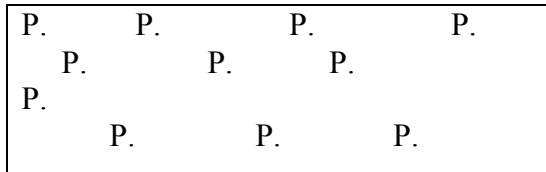
All the players are on one side while the coach (or designated player) is on the opposite side. The coach is the traffic light. When the coach has his/her back turned to the players, they must dribble toward the opposite side. When the coach is facing the players, they must stop. Players that are caught moving, with or without the ball must return to their starting position. The only signals that players should receive are visual (from the coach that he/she is turning around).



## FUN GAMES

### EVERYBODY'S IT!

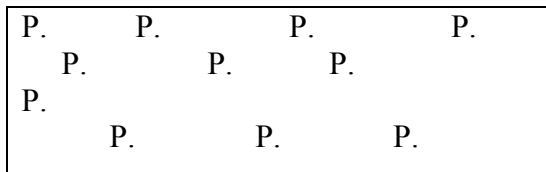
All the players dribble their ball inside a specific area and try to tag anyone they can because everybody is it! For every person a player can tag, they get one point. How many points can you score? Remember to tag softly, not hard. Also, players can only tag on the shoulder, back, or arm.



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### KNEE TAG

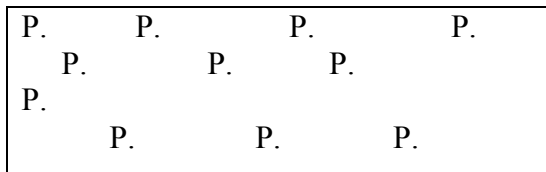
You can play this tag game with or without the ball. All the players are inside a specific area and try to tag other players' knees. Players score one point for each time they tag someone's knee. Remind the players to be careful and avoid knocking heads!!!



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### HOSPITAL TAG

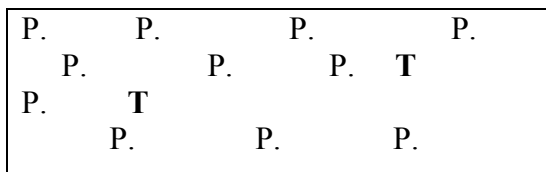
Everyone is dribbling a ball inside a specific area and trying to tag other players. Every time a player is tagged, they must hold that body part. After a player is tagged three times, they must go to the "hospital," they go to the coach. The coach gives them a special activity (i.e. martian pushups, star jumps, donkey kicks, etc.).



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### CHAIN TAG

Play this game without balls. Everyone is inside a specific area with two distinguished taggers. Once a player is tagged, they must link arms with the tagger. Eventually, there will be a "chain" of taggers with a few players still running around. Ask the taggers if there is an easier way to tag all the free players. Maybe the two chains combine to make one chain. See if they can solve the problem.

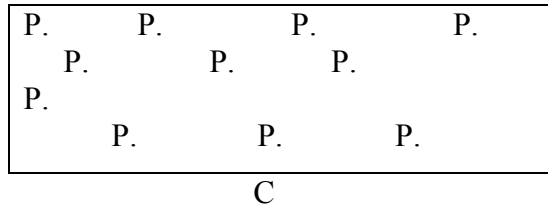


*T = Tagger*

C

## COLOR TAG

Every player is wearing a different color and is dribbling their ball inside a specific area. When coach calls out their color, they leave their ball and try to tag as many people as possible. When players are tagged, they have to remain frozen until one of their teammates tags them to unfreeze them. When the coach calls out a different color, everyone is unfrozen and the new color called out is the tagger; the old tagger retrieves their ball and continues to play.

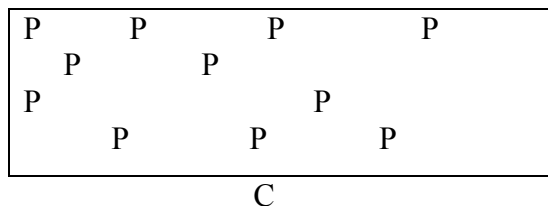


## TAIL TAG (3 Versions)

Play this game without soccer balls. Everyone has a pinnie (tail) tucked into the back of their shorts. Players must stay inside the grid and try to pull other players' tails.

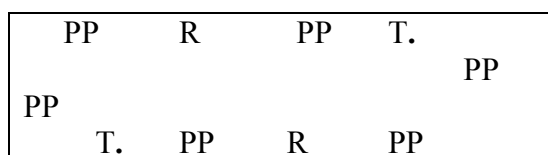
- 1) When you pull someone's tail, throw it on the ground and keep playing. If your tail is pulled, keep playing. The last player with a tail wins!
- 2) When you pull someone's tail, keep it! How many tails can you get? The player with the most tails wins!
- 3) Play the same as previous versions, this time have players hook arms with a partner. They have to work with a teammate. If the two separate, they must get back together quickly, sit down and get back up together.

\*Players cannot tail guard (cannot hold their tail to keep other people from stealing it; they must move around inside the area and/or use the boundaries). They cannot steal tails from other players' hands either.



## HOOK & LOOK (ELBOW TAG)

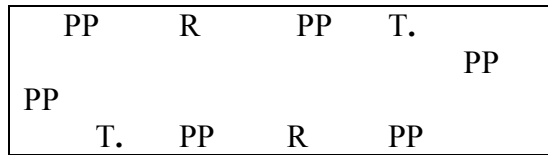
Have players hook arms with a partner. Then have two players with a ball in their hand (as taggers) and two players free (as runners). The taggers must tag a runner to become free. When they tag a runner, drop the ball and run. Taggers are not allowed to throw the ball. The runners are safe when they hook arms with a stationary player (players that are hooked together). When that happens, the partner on the far side must release and is now a runner. Depending on the size of the group, you can have more than two taggers and two runners playing. You can also have the players that have their arms hooked moving (walking).



**T = Tagger**    **R = Runner**

### Ground Version:

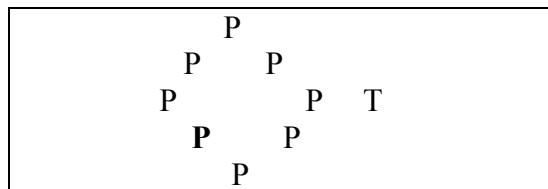
Players are now lying on their stomachs side by side with their partner, instead of standing and having their arms hooked together. Play the same way. Do not allow players to jump over the players that are laying down (safety issue).



### CIRCLE TAG

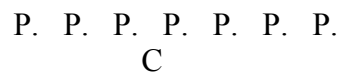
A group of players have their arms hooked together. One person is designated the target player. There is one tagger outside the circle who is trying to tag the target player. If the tagger can tag the target player, he/she wins. If the target has not been tagged within 30-60 seconds, switch the tagger and target player.

**P = Target Player**



### HEAD/CATCH GAME

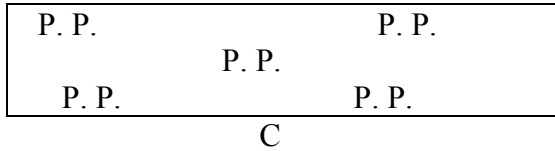
Players line up and either head the ball back or catch the ball and then throw it back to the coach. They must do the opposite of what the coach says as he/she is throwing the ball to the player. If the player doesn't perform the opposite of what the coach says, they sit down.



# TECHNIQUE – DRIBBLING GAMES

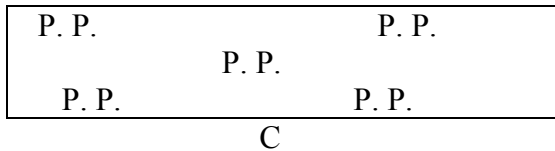
## TRUCK & TRAILER

Players are in pairs as they each dribble a ball inside a specific area. One player is the “truck,” which is the leader, while the other player is the “trailer,” who is the follower. Have each player take turns on who leads and who follows. You can use 0 to 2 balls for this game.



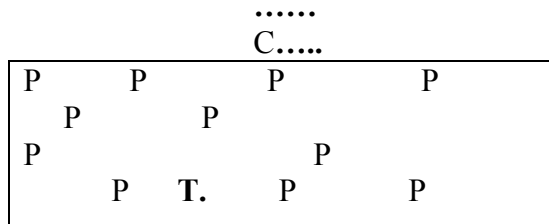
## SHADOW DRIBBLE

This game is similar to Truck & Trailer, however now one player is the “person” (leader) while the other player is the “shadow” (follower). The “person” tries to lose his/her shadow. Remember, the players are playing inside a specific area so they have to be aware of the other players! Ask the players, “Can you lose your shadow?” Let the players switch the roles.



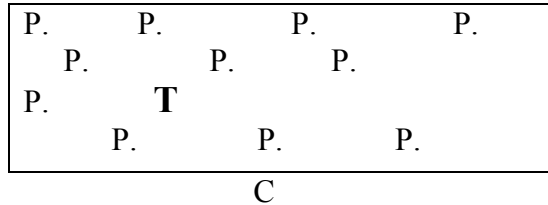
## KING/QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE (PAC-MAN)

All the players are inside a specific area. There is one player who is the “Animal Doctor” which is trying to pass his/her ball into other players (below knee level). The other players are animals, which are trying not to get hit with the ball by the “Animal Doctor.” When an “animal” (player) is tagged by a ball, he/she must go and get a ball and become an “Animal Doctor.” The last animal left is the King/Queen of the Jungle! Make sure to play this game several times to allow for many different players to “win”.



## SNAKE IN THE GRASS

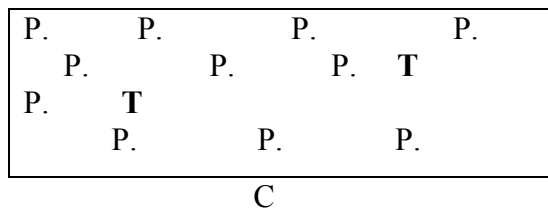
All the players are inside a specific area. There is one player who is the “Snake” which is trying to tag players that are running around. The snake can only move around on his/her belly, on the ground, while all the other players are dribbling their balls with their feet, standing up. If a player is tagged on the foot, ankle, or leg he/she must give their ball to the coach, out of bounds, and become a snake. The last person dribbling their ball in the boundaries wins! They become the King/Queen Cobra! Make sure to play this game several times to allow for many different players to “win.”



## STUCK IN THE MUD

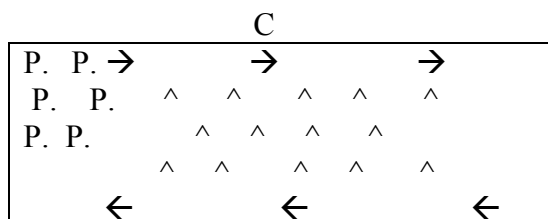
All the players dribble their ball inside a specific area. There are 2-3 taggers, either wearing or holding a pinnie, that run around without a ball and try to tag as many players as possible. If a player is tagged, he/she has to stop immediately and open their legs wide. They are “stuck in the mud” and cannot move again until one of their teammates frees them. A teammate can free them by crawling through their legs and both players start dribbling again. If a tagger is near and a player is underneath a “stuck” player, he/she may remain underneath without being tagged; therefore he/she is safe. Once the tagger is away, the player underneath may continue moving through and continue dribbling. If the taggers “freeze” every player, they win! Otherwise, play for a minute or two and then switch taggers. Make sure to allow everyone the opportunity to be a tagger; kids love it!

\*You can also let the players dribble through “stuck” players’ legs to free them.



## RACEWAY

Set up a “raceway” for players to dribble their balls through/around. Have every player dribble their balls, under control, as fast as they can and see who wins. You can also do this activity in pairs for older players. They would have to pass the ball together (i.e. wall passes and possibly take-overs; introduction to combination play) to get around/through the track.



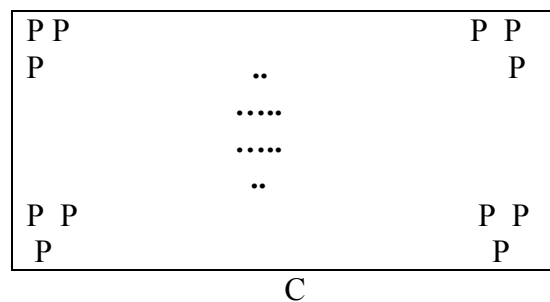


## FOUR CORNER CAPTURE

Players are in teams in the four corners of the rectangle or square. Start off with all the balls in the middle. When the coach says, "Play," each player can go and get a ball and dribble it back to their corner (home). Once all the balls are out of the middle, players can then go and steal balls out of the other corners. Players are not allowed to keep balls in their home; they must continue to go and get other balls. When the coach says, "Stop," the players must go back to their corner (home) and count how many balls they have. If a player has a ball when the coach stops play, he/she may take that ball back their corner. The coach asks the players, "How many balls do you have in your home?" The team with the most balls wins!

\*You can modify this game in many ways:

- Players carry balls with their hands, individually and cooperatively
- Players can play together by passing each ball back their home, in pairs or small groups.

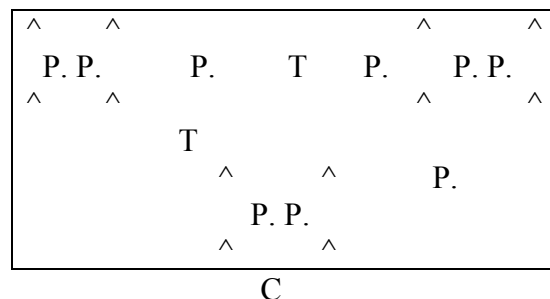


## PHONE BOOTH TAG

Three or four phone booths are set up within a designated area. A phone booth is made by placing four cones one yard apart in a square. Each phone booth is a safe base for the players in them. However, there can only be two players max in a safe base at one time. This means that if there are two in a phone booth and another player enters, somebody must get out. A tagged player becomes it. This game should at first be played as a simple tag game, where one or two players are it and they are chasing the remaining players.

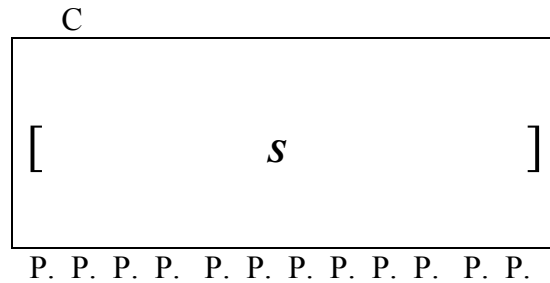
\*Once the players have the idea, then each player must have a ball at their feet with the exception of those players who are IT. Players are now dribbling in and out of the phone booths. If a phone booth is over-crowded, the first player in must give up his/her ball to the IT person, or if the dribbling player gets tagged outside of the phone booth.

\*Decrease the amount of phone booths if players are "hiding out" in them. This makes it harder and adds more repetition for dribbling and changing directions!



## SHARKS & MINNOWS

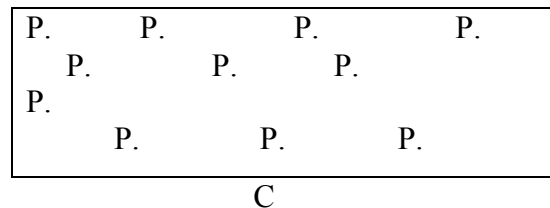
All the players are fish (anything in the sea, except a shark) while either the coach or a designated player is a shark. The fish are trying to dribble from one side of the area to the other without getting their ball stolen from a shark. If a shark steals their ball and scores a goal, they leave their ball in the goal and become a shark. The last fish remaining is the King/Queen of the Ocean! Make sure to play this game several times to allow for many different players to “win.”  
**S = Shark**



## KNOCKOUT

### Individual

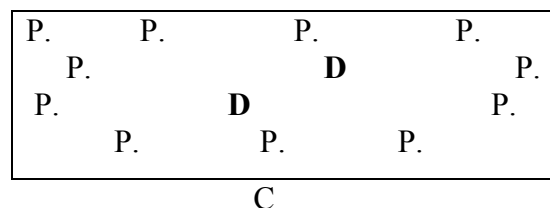
Everyone has a ball and must maintain possession of his/her ball and at the same time knock other balls out of the area. If a ball is knocked out of bounds, the player retrieves their ball, do a “special activity” and then comes back into the activity area.



### Team

In a specific area, players dribble around, trying to maintain possession of their ball. “Defenders” try to knock all the balls out of the area. If a player’s ball is knocked out, he/she stays inside and helps the “Offense” keep the balls in play. Play with 2-3 “Defenders” at a time. To make it more competitive, see which teams of defenders can clear all the balls out the fastest. Or, see which group of “Attackers” can keep the ball(s) in the longest.

### D = Defenders



## 1v1's

There are many ways to play 1v1 with your players. Here are a few:

- Have them throw/kick the ball into open space and then have them battle it out for possession. Who ever can keep the ball the ball for 5 seconds wins. Repeat many times!
- There are two designated balls, one is a goal and the other is the attacking ball. If the defending player wins/steals/intercepts the ball, he/she then immediately becomes the attacking player. To score a point, the attacking player must hit the ball that represents the goal. If a goal is scored, the ball is still in play, however the defender that was just scored on, now becomes the attacker. If you are lacking balls, you can use cones for goals.
- Play 1v1 to 2 lines. Player must dribble over opponent's line with good ball control.
- Play 1v1 to 2 small goals. Player must finish (pass or shoot) into opponent's goal.

*A = Attacker D = Defender*

a) A   D .  	b)    A. D .  	c)  A.   D	d)  [   A.        D   ]
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## ATTACK OF THE CRABS

Two equal teams. One team is in a crab position, sitting between the six yard line and the edge of the penalty box. The other team is standing at the 18 yard line with one ball per player. Players with the ball attempt to dribble through the maze of crab players. Once a player gets through the maze and enters the goal box (six yard box) with the ball under control, they shoot at goal, pick up the ball and start again. Defending team is permitted to move but must remain in the crab position.

The crabs attempt to kick attackers' balls out of bounds. If the ball is kicked away, the attacking player may pick up their ball and run to the starting spot and begin again. Coach keeps track of time and goals scored. At the end of one minute, teams reverse roles. Emphasis is placed on players dribbling through the crabs and crossing the six yard line before shooting on the goal. The coach should emphasize the following:

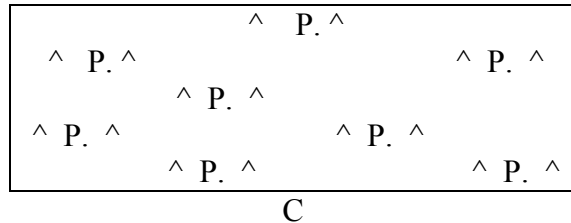
- Players cannot shoot till they get to the goal box.
- Change directions quickly to avoid crabs.
- Communicate with teammates for defense and offense.

P.				
P.			D	
P.		D		
P.		D	D	]
P.		D		

## BRIDGE TO BRIDGE

Each player dribbles their ball through each “bridge.” If a player is already dribbling through a bridge, a player must find a different bridge to dribble through. When players get a feel for this activity, reduce the amount of bridges. Coach can ask the players, “How many bridges can you cross?” At first, the players should have high numbers. Once the coach reduces the amount of bridges, the numbers will reduce and the game will become harder.

^ = *Cone*

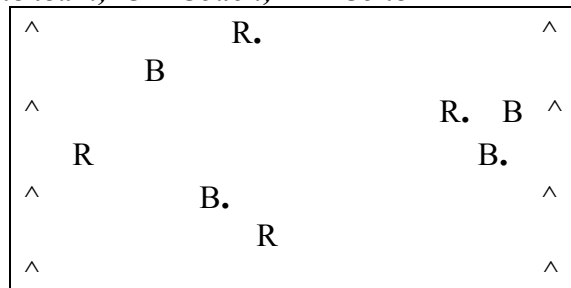


## SMALL SIDED GAMES (SSG’S)

### THE DUTCH GAME

Two teams play 4v4. Each team has four cones on their goal-line to defend. Each team is given two balls therefore there will be four balls in play at a time. The team that has the most cones when the coach stops the game wins. In order to obtain a cone, an attacker must knock over a cone with his/her ball. Then he/she can take the cone back to their “home” (goal-line). It is up to the players and teams to keep possession of the balls. One team can actually have all the balls at one time. You can play with or without boundaries. When playing with boundaries (sidelines and goal-lines) there is a sense of direction (like playing the game).

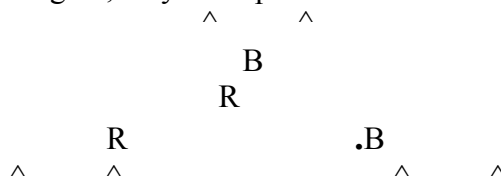
*R = Red team, B = Blue team, C = Coach, ^ = Cone*



### TRIANGLE GOAL GAME (2 versions)

*2v2 or 3v3*

Two teams play each other inside a “triangle” of small goals (goal size: about 2 yards apart). There are three goals that the teams can score. Players score by dribbling or passing through them. When a team scores, the other team gets the ball at that particular goal. The new attacking team cannot score in that goal; they must pick one of the other two goals to score in.



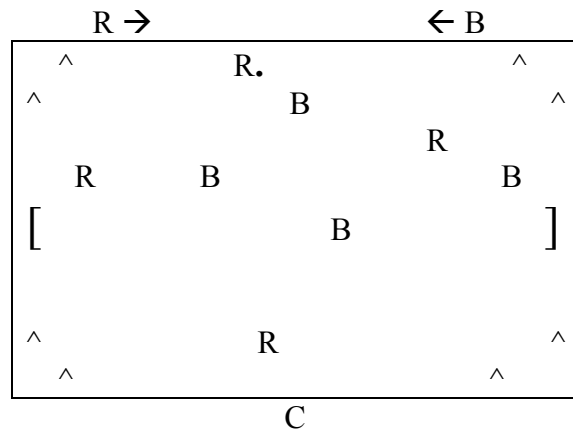
### **Team (4v4 to 8v8)**

Two teams play each other in general space. There are two triangles (8x8x8 yards) with neutral GK's in them. The GK's cannot come out of the triangles and the field players cannot enter them. To score a goal, a player must pass through the triangle to a teammate. If a GK wins the ball, he/she then plays the ball to the opposite team. Play for a specific amount of time or to a determined score. Team with the most points wins!

### **MULTIPLE GOAL GAME**

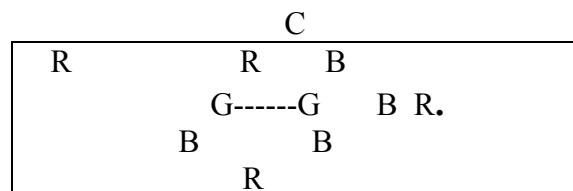
Two teams play each other to six goals (three per side). Use the main goals in the middle and then add two goals in the corners (with small goals or cones). Play the game, except that there are now more goals to score in! This causes teams to change the sides of the field (switching the point of attack) as well as keeping their heads up. Communication and vision are other factors in this modified game. There are also more opportunities for players to score and be successful!

**R = Red team; B = Blue team**



### **MOVING GOAL GAME**

Two teams play each other, 4v4 to 8v8, in general space. Two neutral players hold pinnies together to make a goal. This goal is a moving goal and these two players can walk around the field together. They cannot stop a team from scoring by blocking a shot/pass; they can only change directions while walking as they are linked together. The teams score by passing to a teammate through the moving goal. Begin with each team has a ball to score and then progress to only one ball on the field. Play for a specific amount of time or to a determined score. Team with the most points wins!

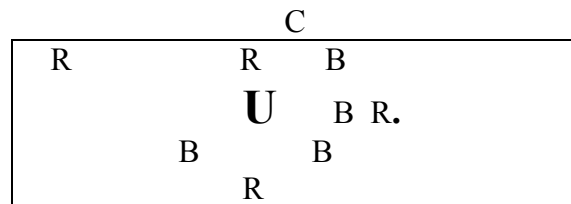


## BARREL BALL (HIT THE CAN!)

Two teams play each other, 4v4 to 8v8, in general space. There is a barrel/can in the middle of the playing area/field. If the attacking team can hit the barrel/can, they score a point. Since there is only one ball and one goal, the ball is always in play. Once a team is scored on, it is their ball and they can score immediately. The only time the ball is out of play is if the attacking team plays the ball into the barrel/can; which is worth three points! Play for a specific amount of time or to a determined score. Team with the most points wins!

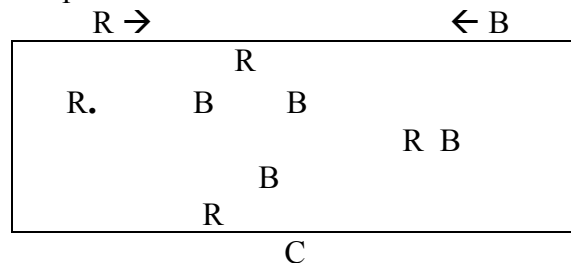
\*Can modify ways to score goals (i.e. 1 point for hitting the goal from the ground, 3 points for hitting it with a volley or header from the air, and 5 points for heading the ball into the barrel/can).

*U = Barrel/Can*



## LINE SOCCER GAME

Two teams play each other, 4v4 to 8v8, in a specific area. Each team can score by dribbling over the opponent's goal line (represents a goal). Once a goal is scored, it is a turnover. The opponent begins play from their goal line. Play for a specific amount of time or to a determined score. Team with the most points wins!



## ZONE SOCCER GAME

Two teams play each other, 4v4 to 8v8, in a specific area. Each team can score by passing over the opponent's goal line (represents a goal) to a teammate. For a goal to count, the ball must be passed over the goal line to a teammate. Once a goal is scored, it is a turnover. The opponent begins play from their goal-line. Play for a specific amount of time or to a determined score. Team with the most points wins!

To work on timing of runs, you can change the way the teams score. Make it where a player must receive a ball directly on the opponent's goal-line to score. This way, you will not have players "hanging out" in the "end zones". This change also allows you to incorporate the Offside Rule, so players learn how to beat being offside.

