



# U16 CURRICULUM

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# THE U16 PLAYER: **CONSIDERATIONS**

# U16 PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS

**1** The U16 Player has an attention span that can handle longer, more complex directions.

The coach will have an opportunity to give longer and more complex thoughts during training and games – but this should not be mistaken for lengthening coaching points within the session.

**2** The U16 Player is emotionally sensitive to praise and recognition.

While they are close to adulthood, with recent changes physically and emotionally, they are still very fragile to the type of feedback they are getting from their coach.

**3** The behaviors of the U16 Player are largely influenced by their peers.

The fear of ridicule and desire to conform with peers is a strong motivator. Knowing this, coaches must set the norms and acceptable behaviors for the group, not the players.



# U16 PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS

## 4 The U16 Player is sometimes worried about their changing body shape and composition.

Players are concerned with their appearance and are self-conscious about body changes. Coaches must educate players on proper nutrition, and fueling their body for the demands of the game.

## 5 The U16 Player can understand and grasp moral principles.

This age is where players need a concrete moral compass around them, as many of these personal beliefs will be learned in this stage. Coaches need to put 'right and wrong' above all else and not bend the moral lines.

## 5 The U16 Player should leave this stage the most well-rounded as possible. Their weaknesses should be addressed in a constructive manner.

Due to their nature of being self-conscious around peers, players tend to only showcase and work on their strengths. Coaches need to work with and educate players on how to move past the fears of training weaknesses if the players want to progress in later stages of the game.

THE 11-V-11  
**FORMATION**  
(1-4-3-3)  
VARIATION: 1-4-2-3-1

# THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



## 1-4-3-3

### #1 – Goalkeeper.

The GK should learn to provide support to defenders in possession, how to distribute balls on the ground and how to stay connected with the team in possession

### #4 & 5 – Center Backs.

CB's should learn how to support the midfield in possession, how to switch the point of attack and how to make the field larger in possession.

### #2 & 3 – Outside Backs.

These players should learn how to create width in possession, make overlapping runs and different types of penetrating passes. They should know the concept of balance and the differences of playing on the weak-side and ball-side.

### #6 – Defensive Center Midfielder.

The 6 should learn how to support the attacking players and how to provide good options to defenders in possession. Their positioning should remain central and allow them to switch the point of attack.

### #8 – Center Midfielder.

The 8 should have the ability to cover a large area, and move to support both the 6 and 10 in possession. They should be comfortable playing penetrating passes as well as the final pass.

### #9 – Striker.

The striker should learn how to provide depth in attack, how to stay high and central and how to receive longer passes from the backs. Receiving balls sideways-on with the outside of the foot is a crucial technique.

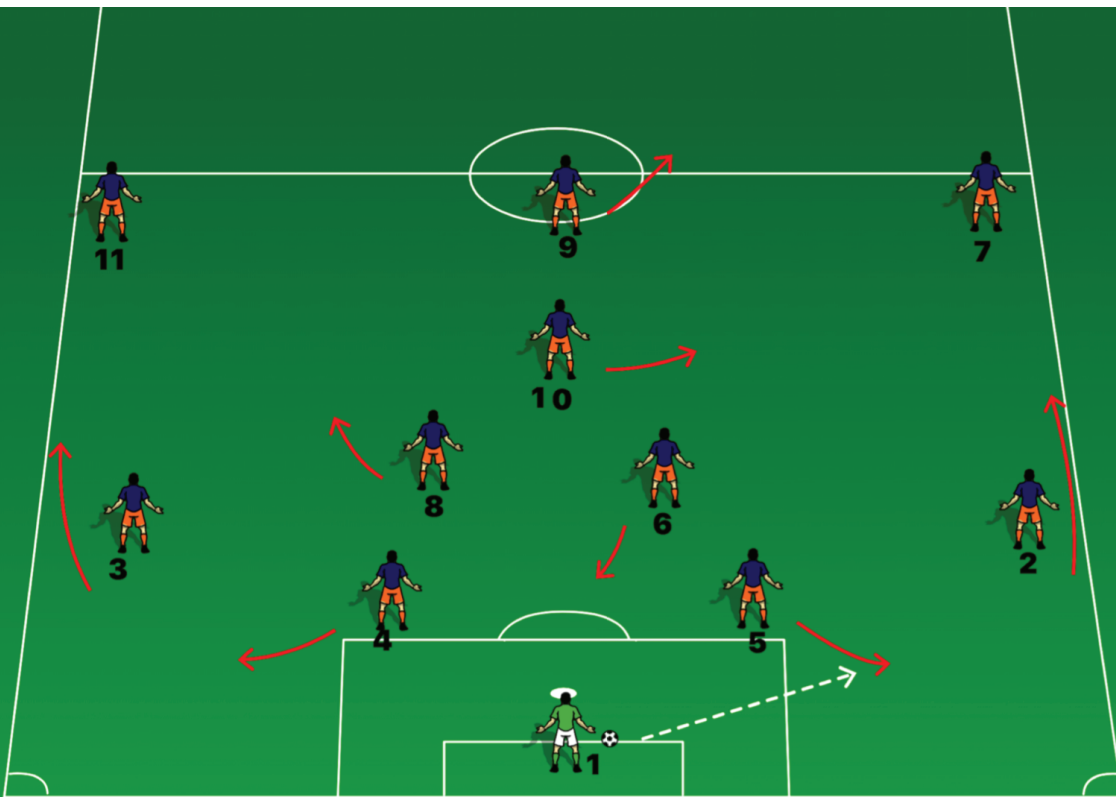
### #10 – Attacking Center Midfielder.

The 10 should be available for the ball from the backs and other midfielders. They provide support underneath the 9. They should learn about different types of penetrating passes and how to attack on the dribble. Productivity in attack with goals and assists is needed.

### #7/11 – Wingers.

These players should create width in attack, be able to make penetrating runs and be available to check back to the ball in possession. Player should have the ability to penetrate off the dribble and serve various types of passes from out wide.

# THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



## BASIC MOVEMENTS FROM THE BACK

**#1:** Supports the ball at an angle.

**#2/3:** Create width and play sideways with body position open to the field.

**#4:** Opens the field to potentially switch the point of attack.

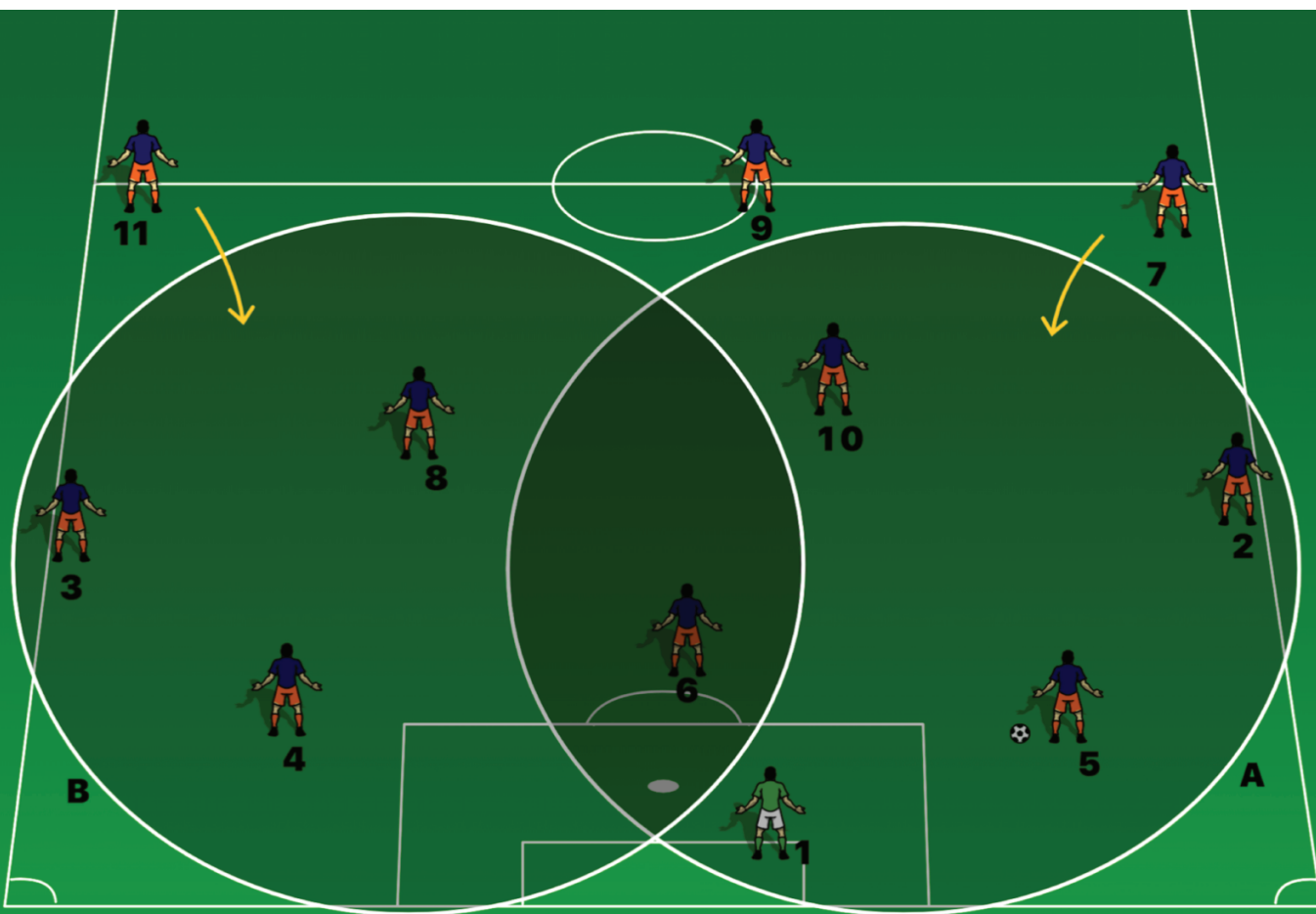
**#6:** Takes a low angle toward the ball.

**#8:** Pivots away from the ball

**#10:** Rotates toward ball as higher option in middle

**#7/11:** Stay high and wide creating width and depth higher up the field.

# THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



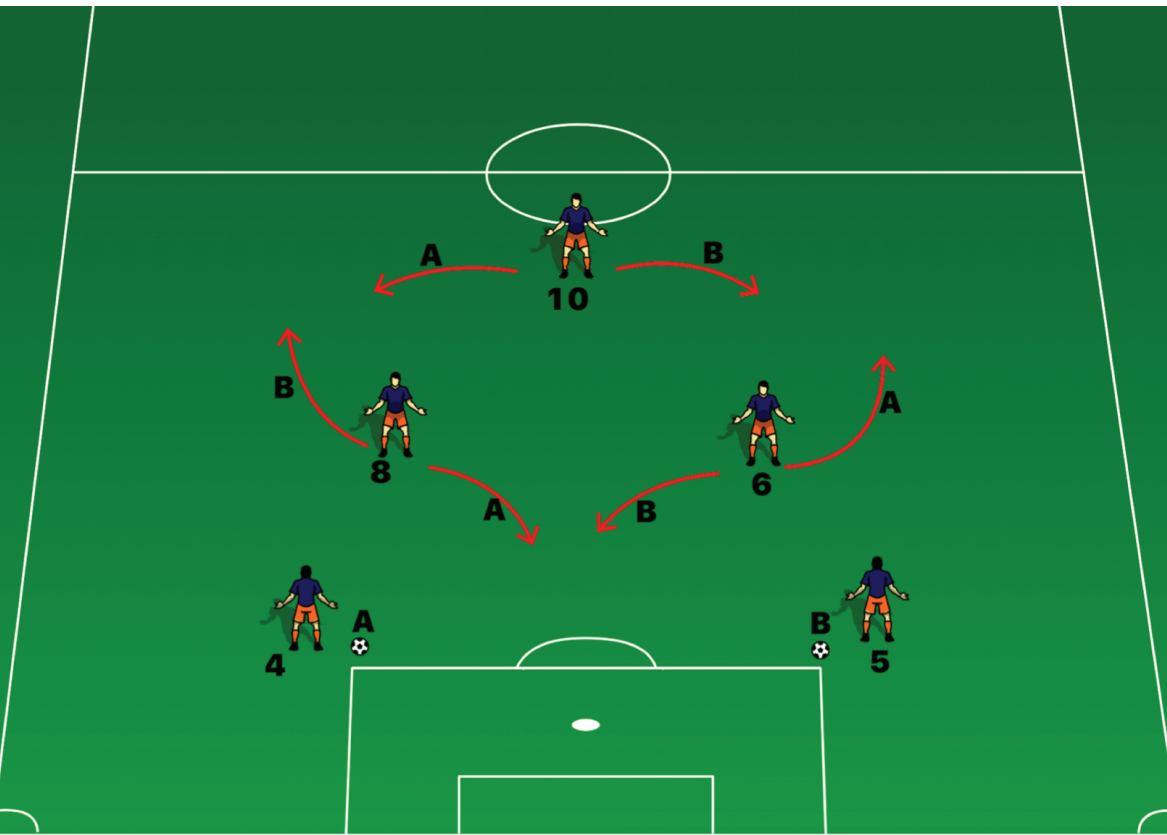
## PLAYING FROM THE BACK

Players 2/3/4/5 should rely on finding passes in these two zones A and B.

Showing natural groupings of 1/2/5/6/10 and 1/3/4/6/8 will help this age group simplify the game into smaller spaces.

The 7 and 11 should come to the ball as a target to help in possession if other options are covered.

# THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



6/8/10

**PIVOT  
MOVEMENT**

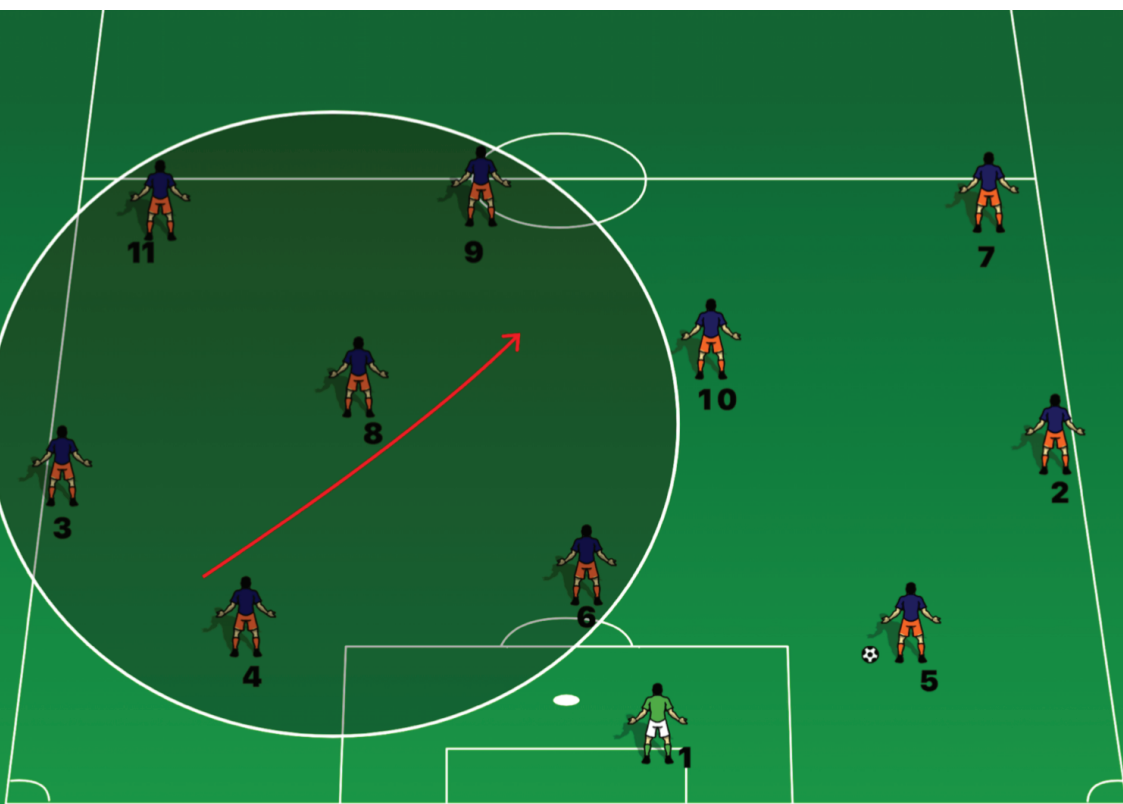
FROM 4/5

Clockwise from the 5 (Ball B in Diagram)

Counter-clockwise from the 4 (Ball A in Diagram)

The arc nature of these movements are to create passing lanes earlier in the players' movements and are intended to be taught as illustrated in this diagram.

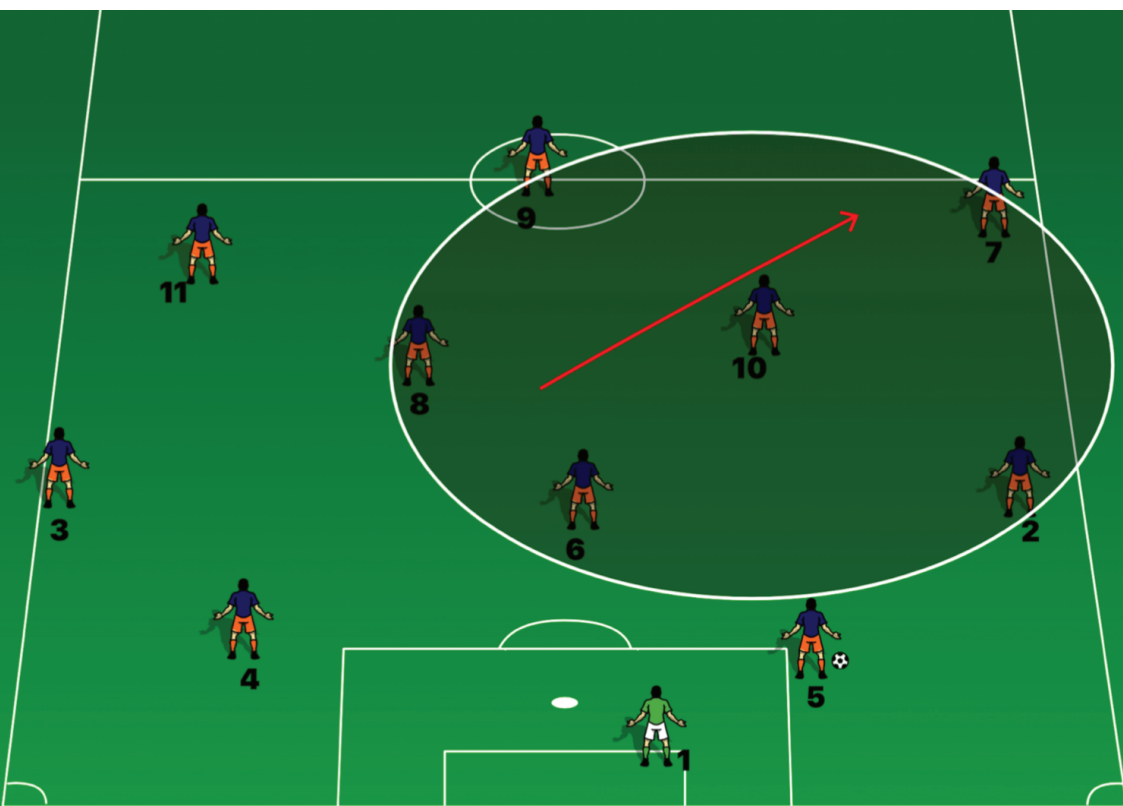
# THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



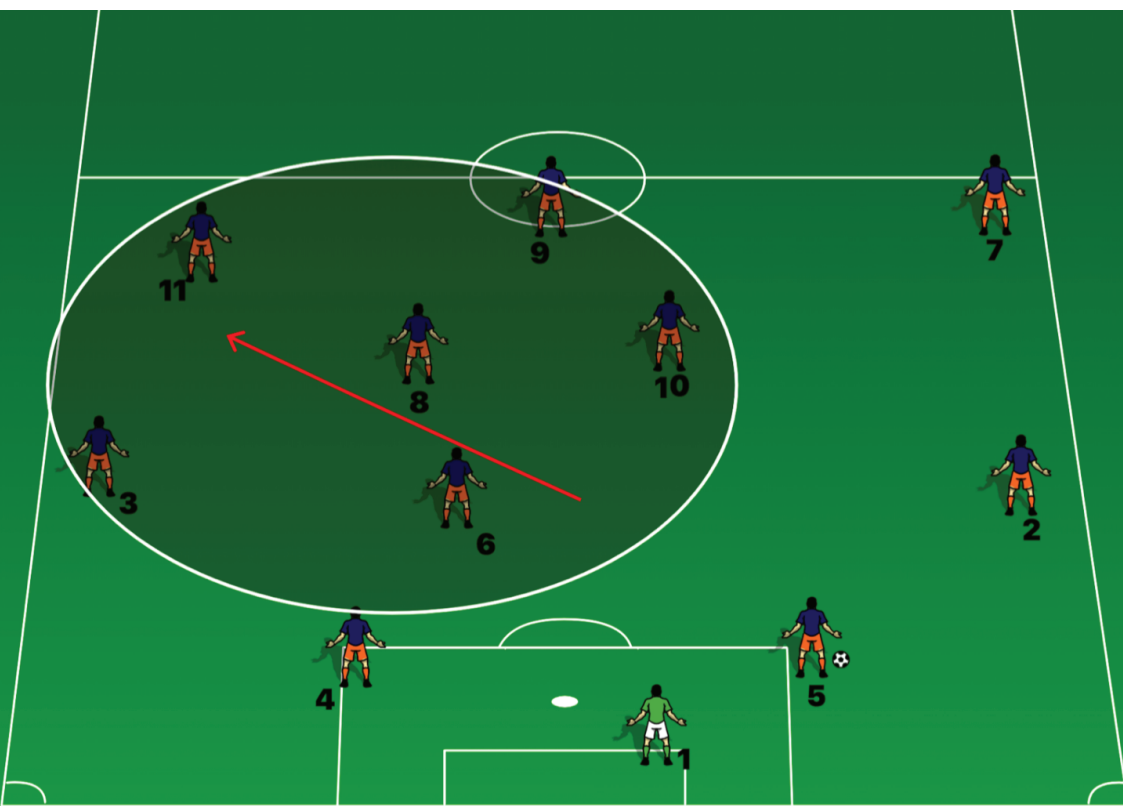
BREAKING  
THE FIELD  
INTO

**2-3-1  
SEGMENTS**

Diagonal  
progressions  
left to right.



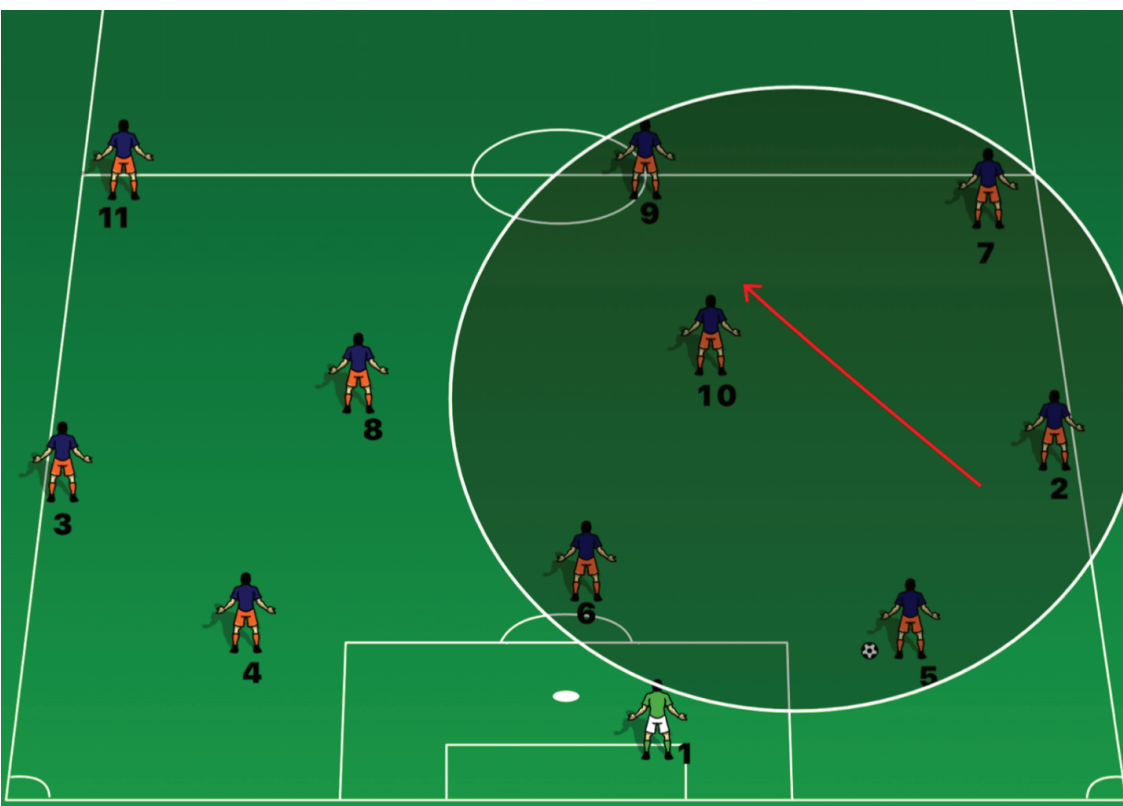
# THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



BREAKING  
THE FIELD  
INTO

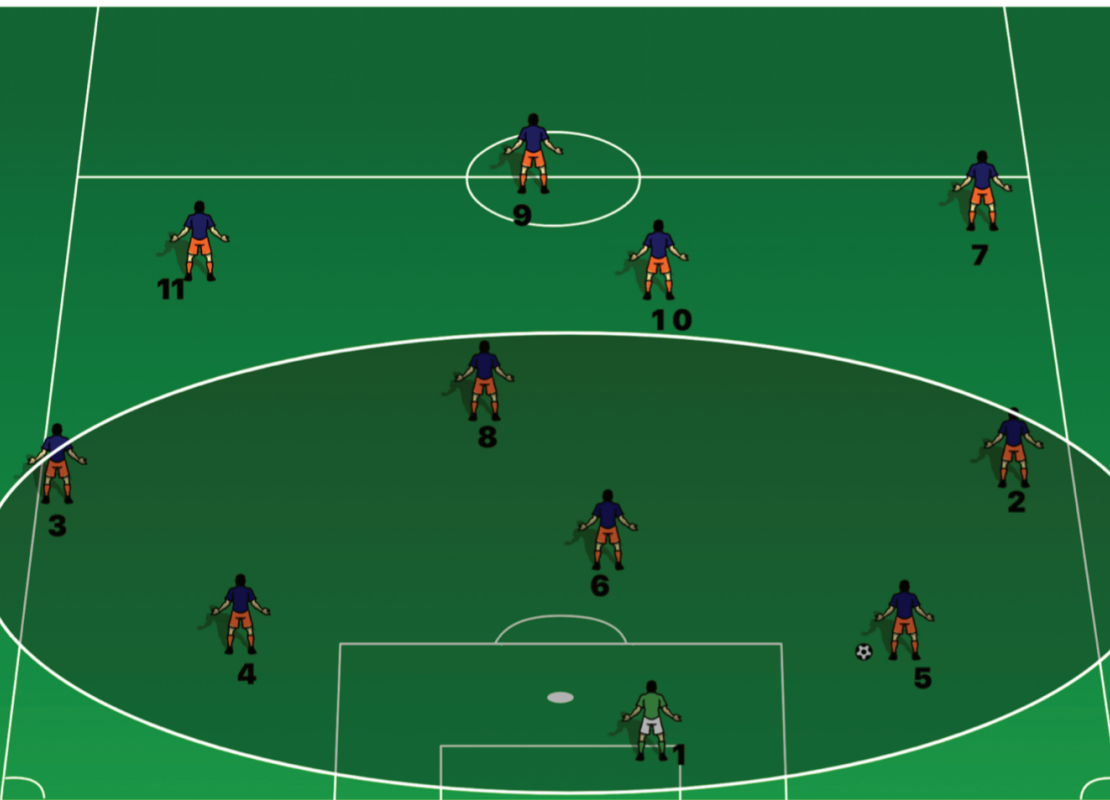
**2-3-1  
SEGMENTS**

Diagonal  
progressions  
right to left.





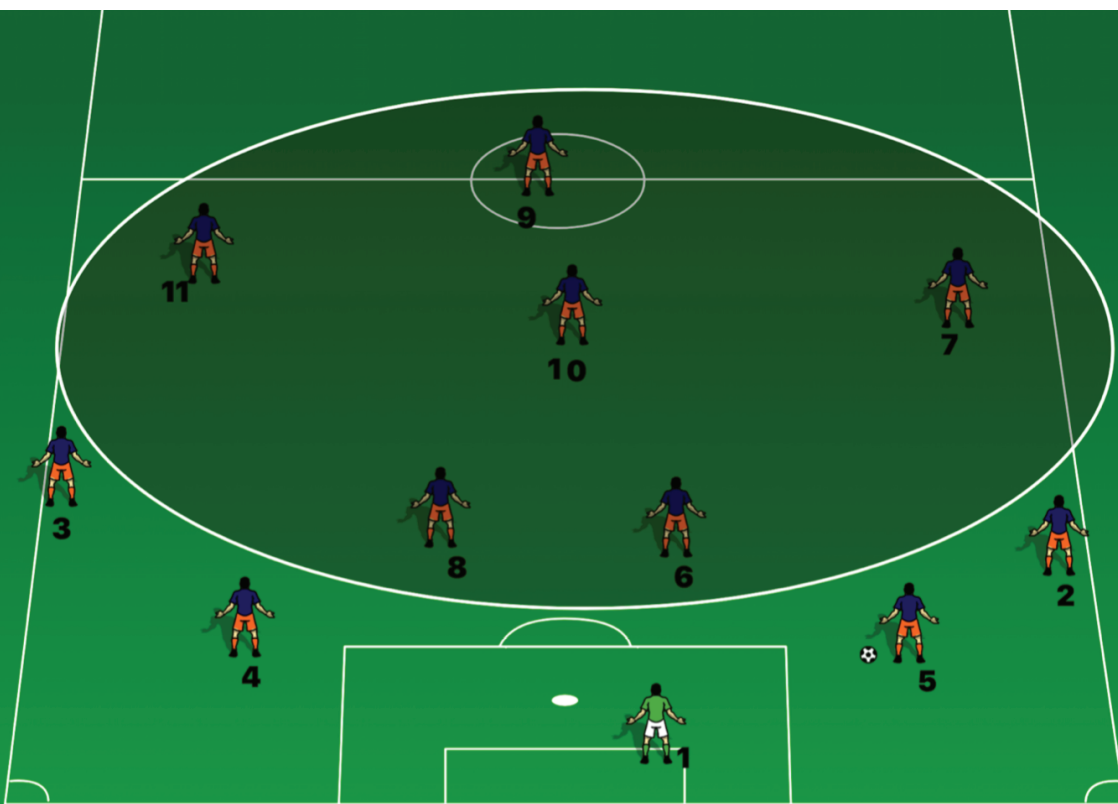
# THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



BREAKING  
THE FIELD  
INTO

**2-3-1**  
**SEGMENTS**

North/South  
pogressions.



# TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

# TECHNICAL

## THEORY

This stage of development should encompass ALL technical aspects of the game.

As players leave this stage of the game, they'll be entering more of an adult style of play and technical weaknesses should be avoided at all costs.

The focus in this age starts to be much more tactical/mental/physical and the ownership of technical development should fall more on the individual player.

# LESSONS

- **Finishing**
  - Chipping to score
  - Airborne kicking (scissor kick, volley, side volley)
- **Set Piece Runs**
  - Running across the face to gain separation to the ball
  - Running behind and creating separation away from the ball
  - Creating vertical separation with timing and physicality of jumping
- **Repetition**
  - SSG's should be played in the correct size and shape, with proper numbers and rules so that technical repetitions come out
  - Coaches should create sessions that allow for various technical skills to come out in repetitive nature

# TACTICAL

## THEORY

Every type of set piece should be taught and rehearsed.

Defending in the midfield, and in attacking areas should be taught.

Diagonal passing to break lines, penetrating runs off the shoulder of defenders and switching the point of attack are all key attacking concepts in this age.

Central players should be introduced to the topic of tempo and the ways they can control it.

Match analysis post-match and during the next training session should be utilized.

Coaches should introduce team-pressing and lines of confrontation at different stages of the match.

### • Principles of Defending

- Midfield defending and defending in the middle and attacking thirds
- Team pressing
- Lines of confrontation

### • Principles of Attack

- Diagonal passing to break lines
- Runs ahead of the ball at full speed
- Switching the point of attack at full speed to break lines

# LESSONS

### • Individual Decisions

- Individual tactical decisions should be praised as soon after the moment as possible
- Coaches should foster tactical leadership and encourage players to help problem solve with each other in real time

### • Restarts

- All set pieces should be taught and rehearsed at full speed in training
- Tactical framework for throw-in set pieces should be given. Players should see these as opportunities to score when taken in the final third, even if it's not a 'long throw'

### • Halftime Analysis

- Individual and team feedback should be given
- Harsh critiques and feedback should be saved for a future date, as players in this age are already emotionally on-edge following a poor-performance.

### • Communication

- Players should be encouraged to communicate when to press as a group, when to step the back- line up, and when to set a line of confrontation.
- Strong negative peer to peer communication should not be tolerated. Players need to learn how to critique without demeaning at this age.

### • Tempo

- Central players should learn the basics of tempo and how to control it
- When to speed the game up/ slow the game down
- Score line, time left in match, environmental factors, momentum, critical moments are all factors that should be taught

### • Target Play

1. Play forward into player with back to goal
2. Support underneath at angle
3. Penetration pass or dribble

# PHYSICAL

## THEORY

The Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands (SAID) principle is now in full effect at this age. As players are driven to more intense work rates, distances covered and personal strength/fitness plans, their physical adaptations will also increase (up to a certain point).

The idea of 'overtraining' should be less of a focus than 'under-recovery'. Players need to be given ample time to recover from demanding sessions and matches in order to maximize adaptation and minimize risk of injury.

Educating players and families about healthy nutrition options for school, home, and pre/post playing is extremely important. The fuel the players consume will directly effect training response and recovery rates.

Speed, acyclic speed, power and strength should all be routinely trained on a weekly basis.

Periodization: coaches should try to schedule 2 weeks of minimal physical work (or completely off) every 12 weeks.

# LESSONS

### • Warm-Up

- Players should use the warm-up to prepare for excellence both mentally and physically
- A professional approach to warm-up should be the norm
- Plyometric movements should be done between the warm-up and full session

### • Acyclic Speed

- Players should train their top-speed over various shorter distances
- Encourage players to train for speed on their own and at home and no longer just go for a 'jog'

### • Cyclic Speed and Direction

- Full speed agilities should be trained
- Coaches should give plenty of opportunity for players to change speed and direction at the same time, while also getting to top speed in short distances

### • Body Resistance

- Higher volumes of body-weight exercises can be done
- Players should be competent in completing sets of 30 of the following:
  - Push-ups, sit-ups, lunges, squats, bird-dogs, and rotational planks

### • Post-Session and Homework

- Players should get in the habit of a cool down at this age. This includes meditation/reflection
- Further stretching, foam rolling and exercises should be done each day at home

# PSYCHOSOCIAL

## THEORY

Players in this age are emotionally unstable and at times volatile. Teaching players to be level-headed and logical in matches and training is critical.

Personal accountability should be at the forefront of team-talks, and players should be coached to bring the very best they can for themselves and for the team every time they're playing.

This can also be related into how they prepare, how much time they dedicate to improving on their own and how driven they are to succeed outside of just the practice and games.

# LESSONS

- **Emotional Discipline**

- Cards for dissent and retaliation should not be tolerated
- Coaches must teach players to problem solve logically instead of emotionally
- Coaches need to model a strong moral compass at all times

- **Focus**

- Pre-game visualization should be taught and utilized
- Post-game meditations and reflections are of high importance at this age

- **Respect**

- Players should be taught to have respect for Coaches, Teammates, Referees, and Opponents
- The rules of the game. Fair play should be maintained

- **Atmosphere to Improve**

- Almost all players in this stage have committed to the game and are likely to continue throughout their youth playing years.
- As retention becomes less of a focus, personal improvement and desire to improve can be addressed more frequently.

# SESSION OUTLINE

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## **PART 1** 25 MINUTES

- Warm-up
- Plyometric and agility work
- Club Rondo

## **PART 2** 35 MINUTES

- Directional activities
- Games to targets and zones
- Functional training should be used as much as possible

## **PART 3** 25 MINUTES

- Scrimmage
- 11v11 including GKs  
Stop play teaching moments
- 1-4-3-3 formation

## **PART 4** 5 MINUTES

- Cool-down activity
- Debrief
- Visualization, meditation, self-reflection



## Warm-up

To be done off the field (except agilities) and prior to the teams' scheduled training time.

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- **Plank** – 4 x 10 sec hard squeezes
- **Push-ups** – 25 reps
- **Single Leg 1/4 Squats**
  - 2 x 20 per side
  - 2x5 per side explosive single-leg jumps with stable landing
- **Lunges** – 2 x 15 per side
- **Agilities**
  - Forward/backward/sideways movements at full speed
  - Transitioning between each of those movements
- **Movement Prep**
  - Dynamic warm-up

## Club Rondos

To be done immediately after warm-up and during the first few minutes of each practice session. Coaches should limit the amount of touches on the ball to challenge players.

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- **4 Players** – 3v1
- **5 Players** – 4v1
- **6 Players** – 5v1
- **7 Players** – 5v2
- **8 Players** – 3v1 x2

Once you get to 8+ players, start two and three groups of the same games above.

# PART 2

35 MINUTES

# FUNCTIONAL TRAINING

## SMALL-SIDED GAMES

The small-sided games that are provided to the players should be on the part of the field that matches the topic.

- For example:  
Working on building from the back should be done in the defensive third of the field during training.

The players should know what hypothetical 11v11 player they as it relates to the small sided game.

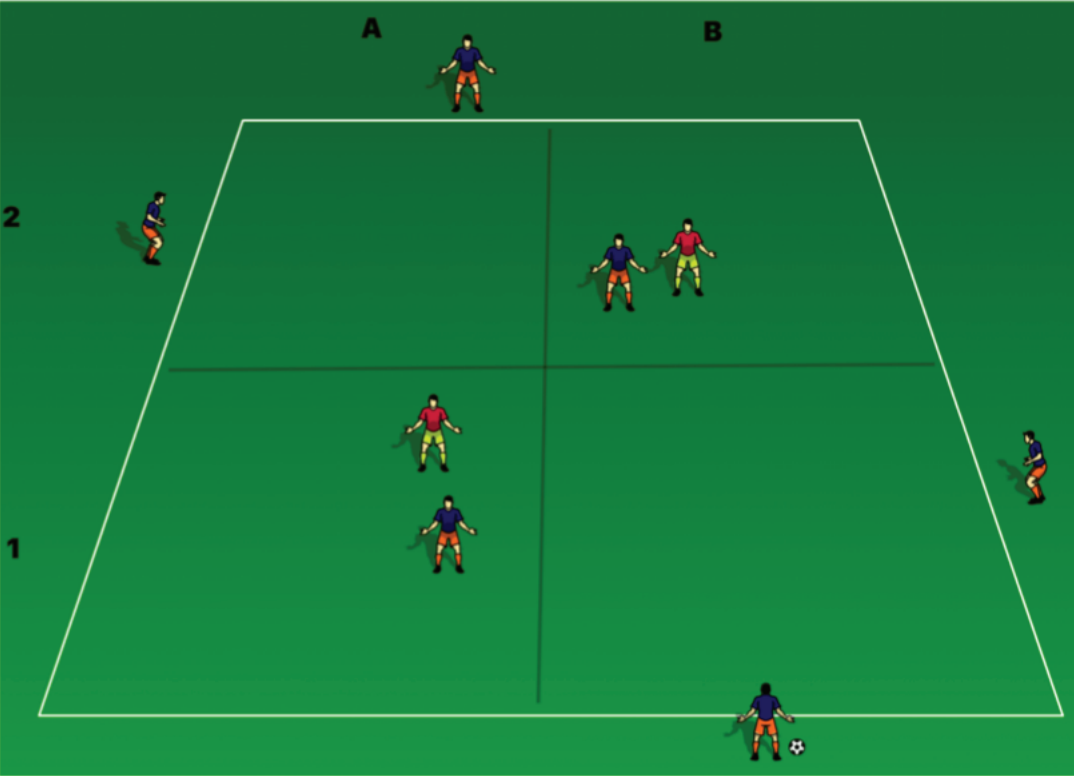
- For example:  
If playing 6v6, the team attacking the large goal could be in the roles of the 6/8/10/7/9/11 and the defending team could be in the roles of 2/3/4/5/6



# PART 2

35 MINUTES

# FUNCTIONAL TRAINING



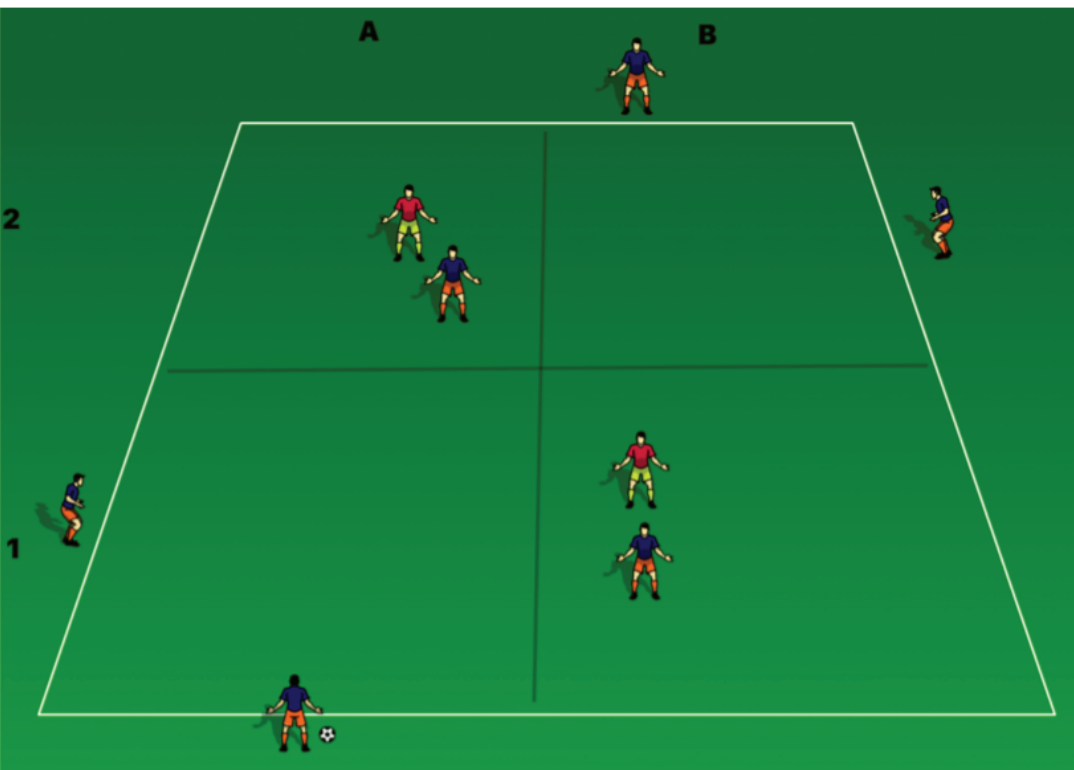
## MIDFIELD MOVEMENTS IN GRID

Possession game with a 2v2 in the middle and 4 neutral players on the sides of a box.

Spacing should be roughly 25x25 yard grid.

The shadow lines in the diagrams are only to show quadrants for movement.

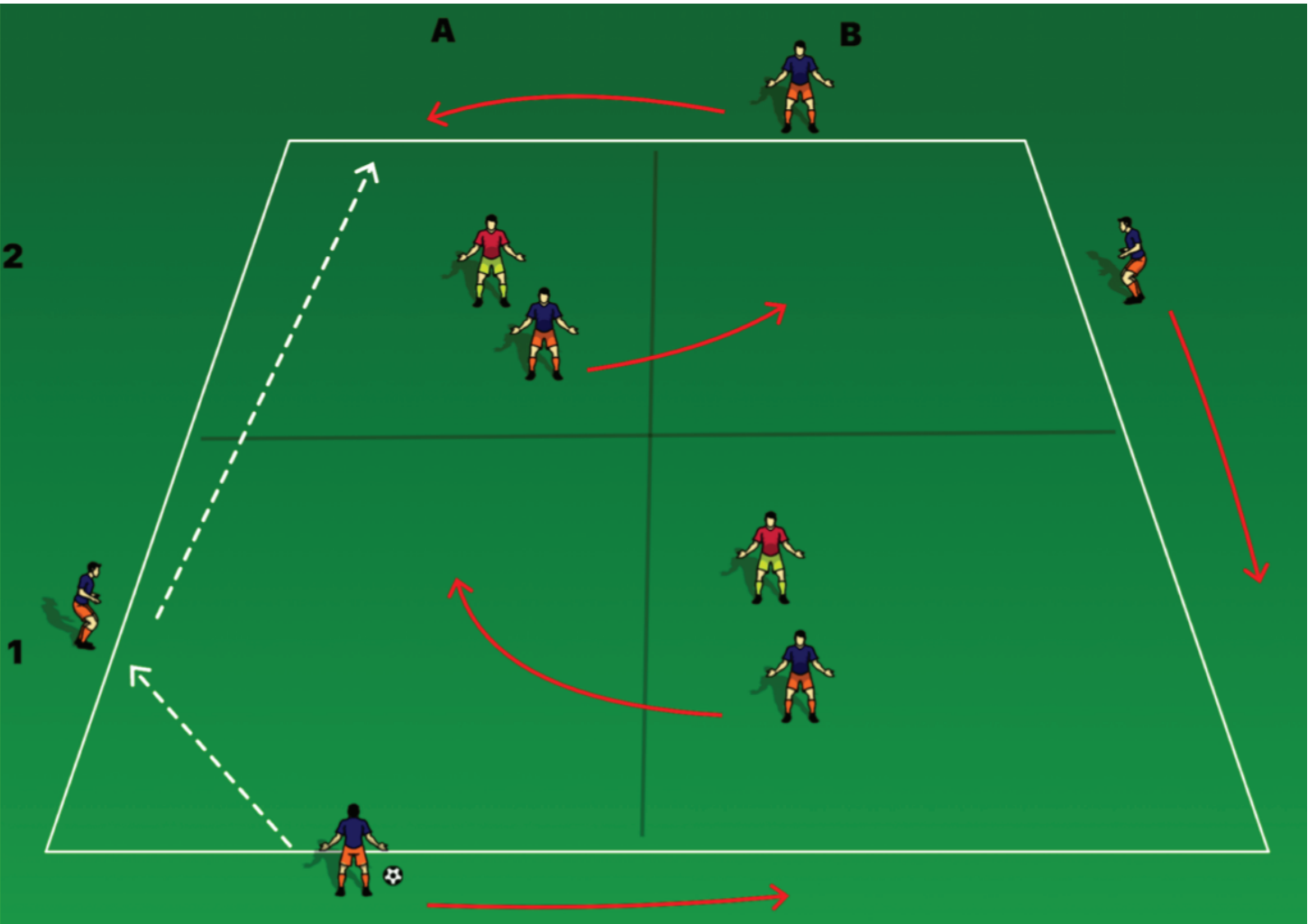
Players should learn to maintain 3 (but no more than 3) players in both lanes A and B, as well as lanes 1 and 2.



# PART 2

35 MINUTES

# FUNCTIONAL TRAINING



## MIDFIELD MOVEMENTS IN GRID

As players get the ball in new spaces, movements around the entire game should be coordinated to maintain:

- 1) Three players in lanes 1 and 2, and A and B
- 2) The 2 players in the middle maintaining a diagonal to each other
- 3) Support of the ball closest on the strong side

# PART 3

25 MINUTES

# SCRIMMAGE



**11v11 Scrimmage**  
• 25 minutes

## Cool Down

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- **Static Stretching of Hamstrings and Quads**
  - Seated Figure-4 hamstring stretch
  - Laying on side quad stretch
- **1/2 Kneeling HF Stretch with Twist**
  - Hands in front of body
  - Twist upper torso toward knee that's up
- **1/2 Kneeling HF Stretch with Diagonal Reach**
  - Hand reaches across/up and in front of face
  - Reach with opposite hand of knee that's up
- **Ankle Rolls**
  - While standing, roll one ankle out and feel the 'stretch' on outside of foot

## Debrief

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- **Ask:**
  - What did you learn?
  - What did we do well?
  - What can we improve on?
- **Positive Recap**
  - Individual & Group
- **Reflection/Meditation**
  - Eyes closed, quiet
  - Cue them to think about:
    - “What did you do well”, “What would you do different”
    - “How did you prepare”, “Think about the moments you were focused”, etc.

# GAME DAY CONSIDERATIONS

# GAME DAY CONSIDERATIONS

- Players should be identified as field-players or goal-keepers at this age
- Field players should still be playing various positions as games allow
- Playing time should be as close to equal as possible
- Opportunities and rosters should rotate equally and evenly based on team numbers
- Coaches should aim to interact with parents on a weekly basis. Informing them of what the kids are learning, what to look for and praise during games, and what the focus is in the upcoming weeks. It is crucial to have parents who are well informed and educated in the development process of their son/daughter.