



U14 CURRICULUM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The U14 Player: Considerations	3
The 11v11 Formation	6
Training Philosophy	11
Technical theory	12
Tactical theory	13
Psychosocial theory	14
Physical theory	15
Session Outline	16
Part 1: Warm-ups & Rondos	18
Part 2: Functional Training	19
Part 3: Scrimmage	27
Part 4: Cool down & Debrief	28
Game Day Considerations	29

THE U14 PLAYER: **CONSIDERATIONS**

U14 PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS

1 The U14 Player has a desire for increased independence from their parents.

The coach will have an increased role. Coach behavior and language will largely influence the players' behavior and language.

2 The U14 Player has the ability to use solve problems with multiple variables.

Show them the numerous variables involved in the game and how they relate to each other.

3 The U14 Player is going through puberty and physical development.

As their bodies change- help them continue to build their soccer engine, become agile with longer limb lengths, and add strength to muscles that have recently grown.

U14 PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS

4 The emotions of the U14 Player are more unpredictable.

→ Players will need emotional stability from their coach. Simplicity in games and exercises at practice will help them learn to compete harder without less frustrations.

5 The U14 Player is starting to find their own commitment level with the game.

→ Players at this age will tend to fall into one of three groups by the end of this age:

- dropping out of the sport
- like to play but not their main sport
- soccer becomes their main sport and focus

Coaches must help players through this decision making process, and support every player even if soccer becomes a secondary sport for them.

However, commitment to the team regardless of these choices should be taught to the players and parents at this age.

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.

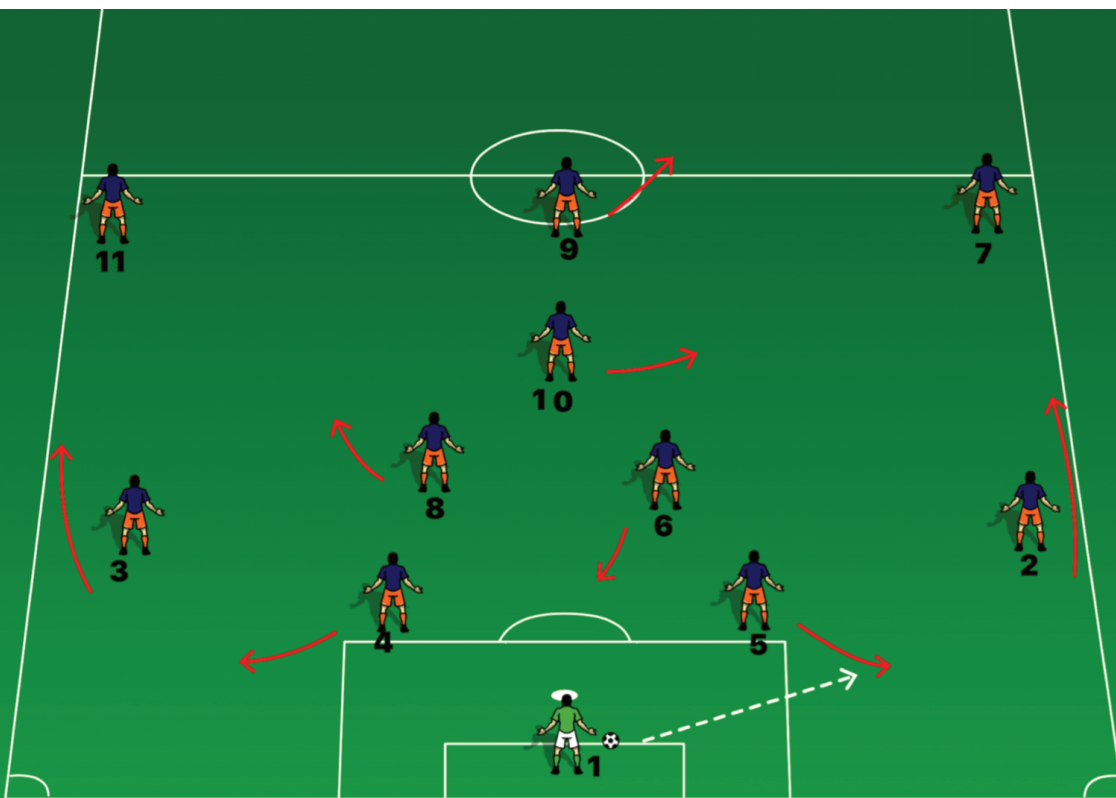
#10 – Attacking Center Midfielder.

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.

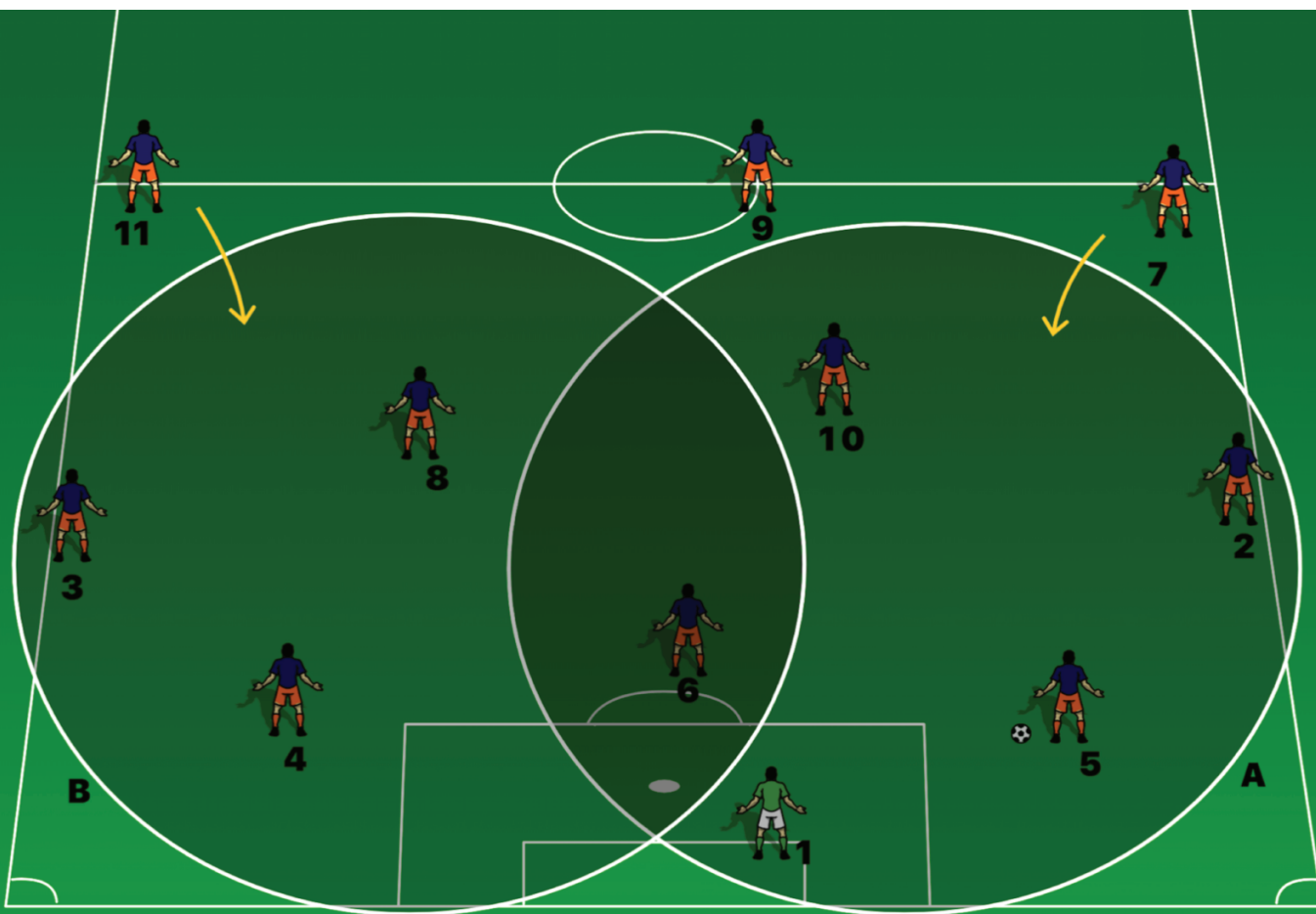
#6: Takes a low angle toward the ball.

#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



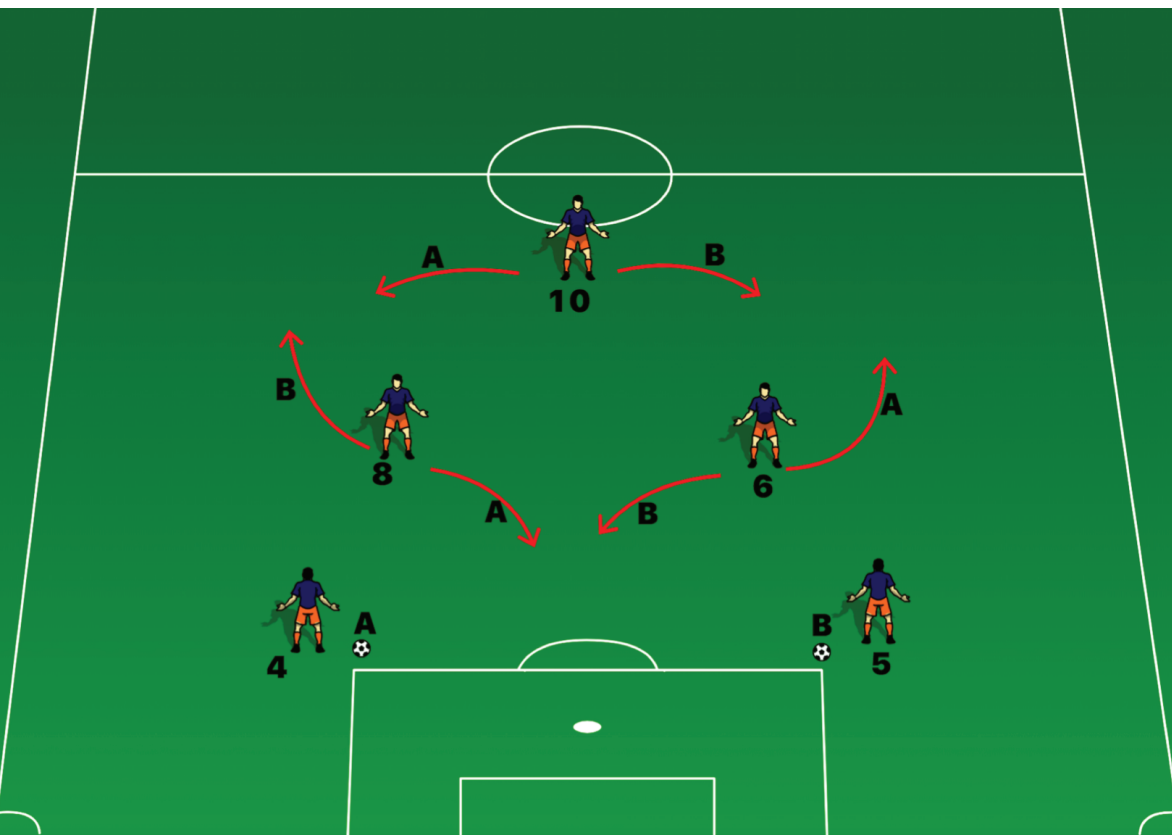
PLAYING FROM THE BACK

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**

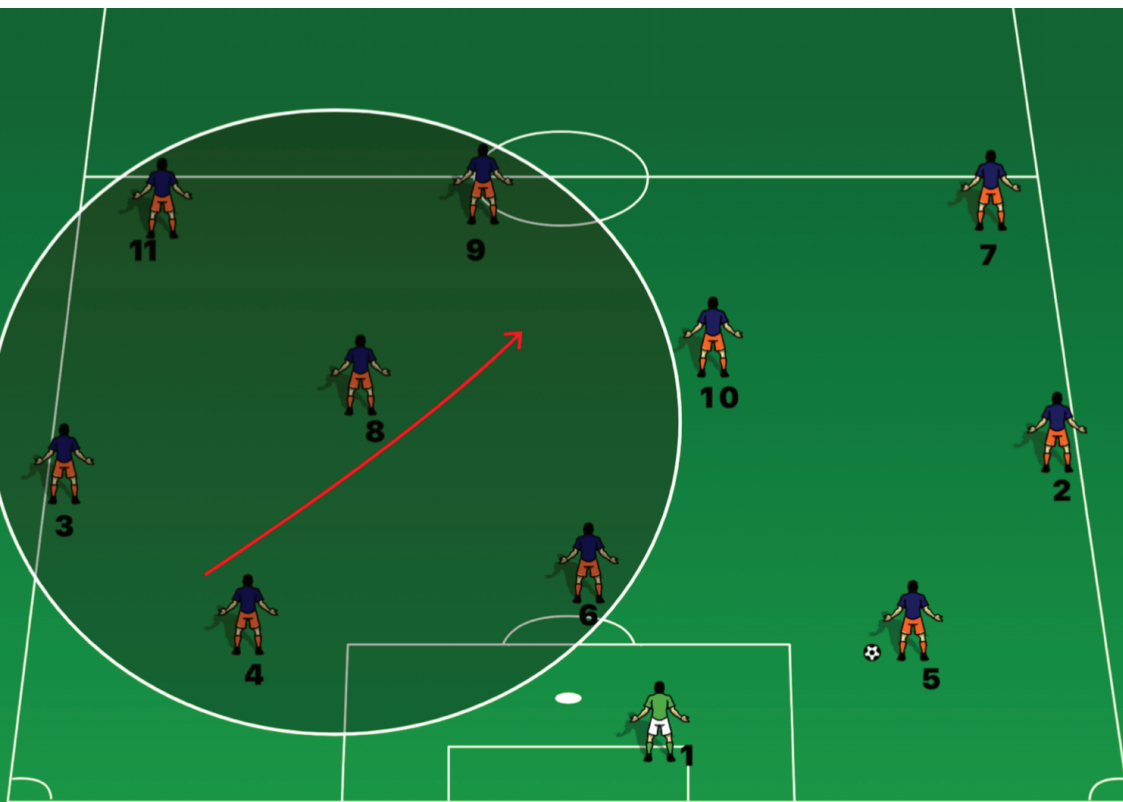
FROM 4/5

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.

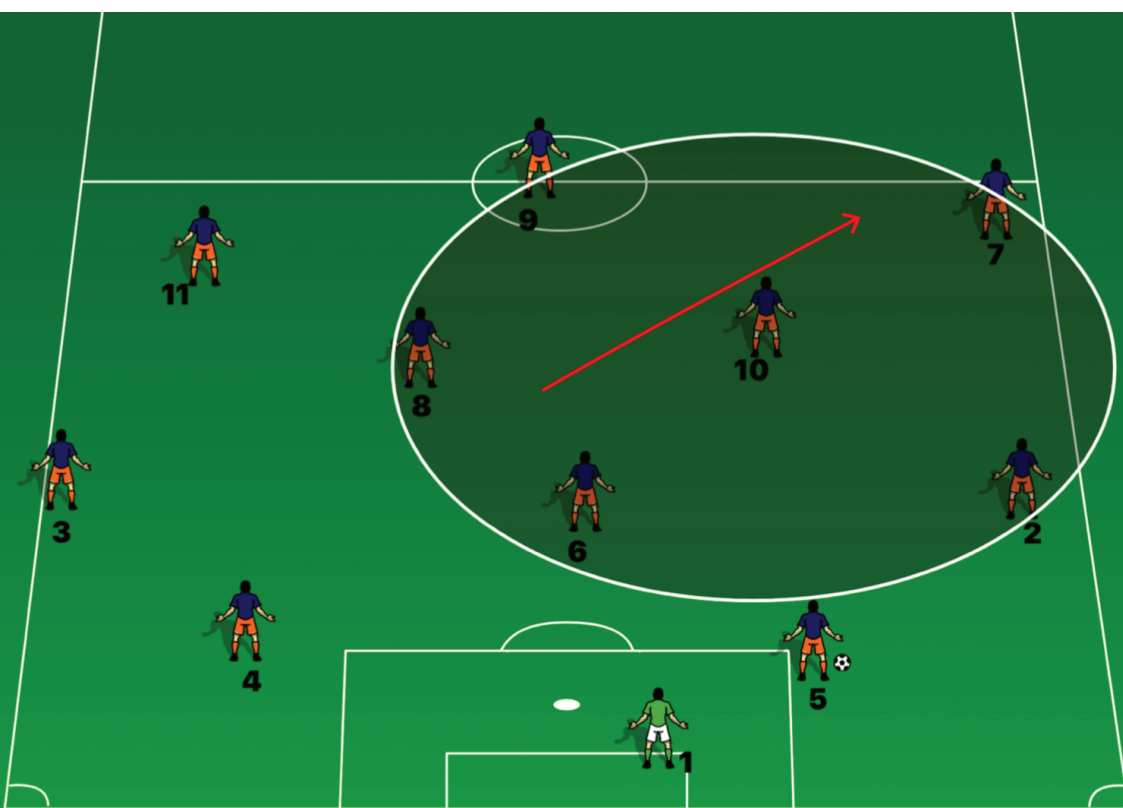
THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



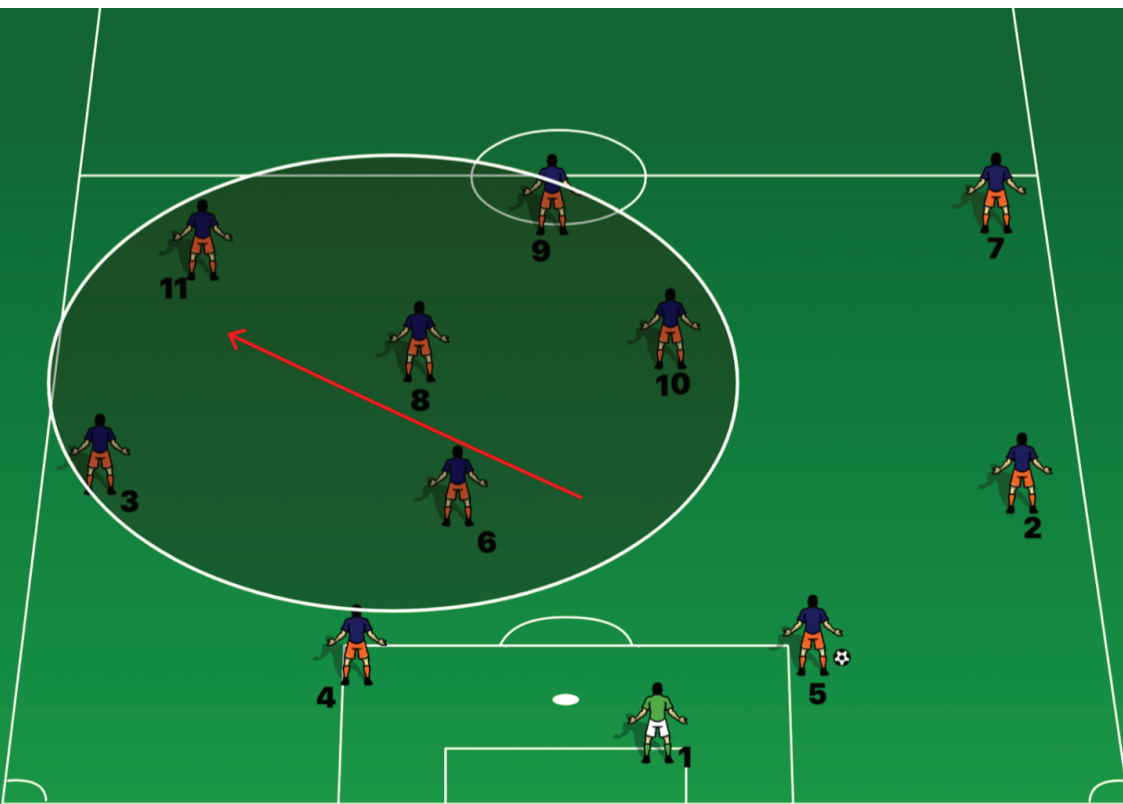
BREAKING
THE FIELD
INTO

**2-3-1
SEGMENTS**

Diagonal
progressions
left to right.



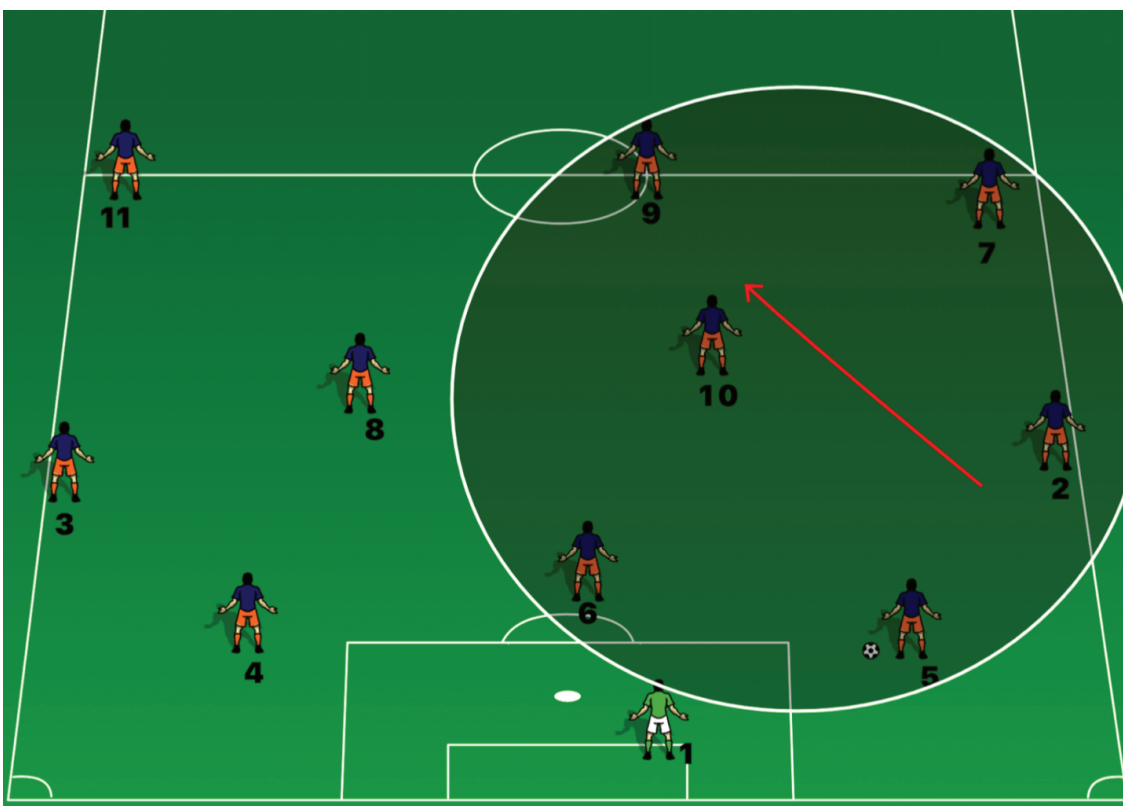
THE 11-V-11 FORMATION



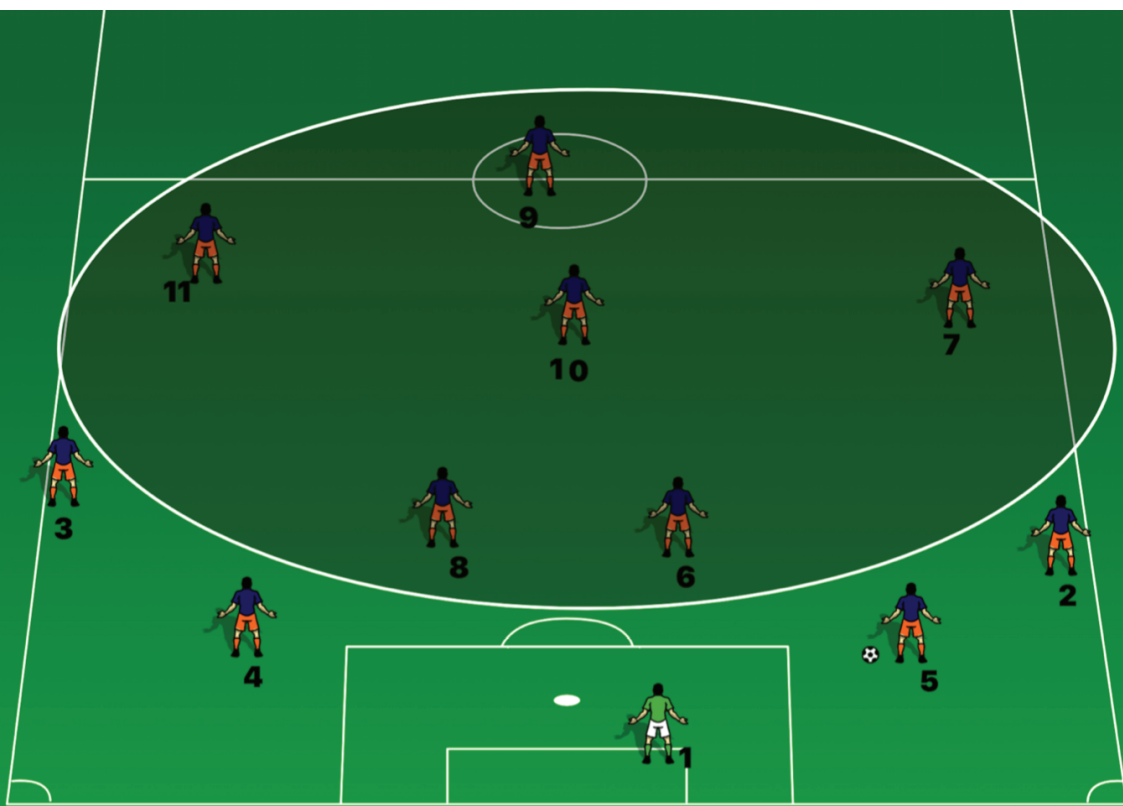
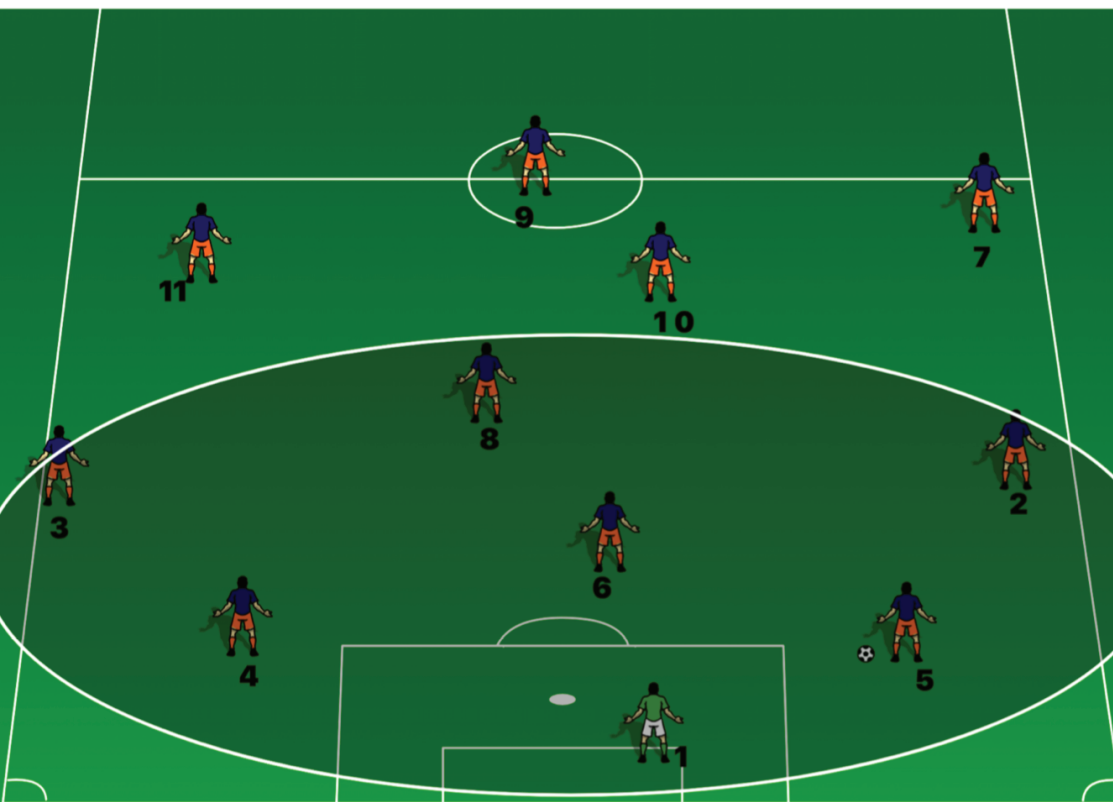
BREAKING
THE FIELD
INTO

**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

Players at this age may be in very different maturation stages, so longer passes and flighted balls may come later for some.

This age is very self-critical so positive feedback and praise are important.

Players may go through quick growth spurts that leave them a bit uncoordinated and lacking single-leg balance.

These players need to know that while they may 'lose' some of their technical ability, it will come back to them within a year to 18 months.

It's a coach's role to help guide players through that period and to help them maintain their confidence.

- **Passing**

- Chipping
- Bending and swerving balls
- Driving crosses to back post
- Longer range driving with instep

- **Bouncing Ball**

- Mastering spinning balls
- Judging and anticipating flighted balls
- Flicking and playing these first-time

LESSONS

- **Receiving**

- Chest and thigh for aerial balls
- Outside of instep
- Bouncing balls with head

- **Dribbling**

- 1v1 acceleration in final third
- Turning quickly for ball retention

- **Finishing**

- Outside foot striking
- Half-volley and volley
- Introducing chipping over GKs

- **Throw-ins**

- Mastering moving throw-in
- Aiming throw to where player needs to receive

- **Heading**

- Defensive and attacking heading
- Introduce diving headers
- To pass to teammate

- **Crossing**

- Driving the ball to the back post
- Lofting the ball
- Knowing the qualities of in-swinging and out-swinging crosses

TACTICAL

THEORY

Players at this age should be taught to see the larger 11v11 field as smaller segments of the tactics and shapes they know, primarily the 2-3-1.

The role of the 3rd attacker/defender should be introduced, and how to transition to this role as the ball moves from player to player.

Forming the 2-3-1 shape within the larger game should allow players to understand their role of depth/width on the larger scale. Players not in the immediate 2-3-1 ball-side shape should be taught how to prepare to be in those shapes as the ball gets closer to them.

Players need to understand all positions and not be pigeon-holed into a set position yet. Rotation of players among the team both positionally and during the run of play is important.

- **Principles of Defending**

- Role of 3rd defender
- Compactness as a group
- Defending set-pieces and runners in the box

- **Principles of Attack**

- Role of 1st and 2nd attacker
- Creating larger spaces to play in
- Penetration in wide areas

LESSONS

- **Playing Together in Small Groups**

- 2-3-1 Shapes
- Recognizing when to pass to nearest teammates and when to play away to 3rd attackers

- **Restarts**

- Deciding if it's a goal-scoring opportunity or if team should maintain possession
- Running across the face of defender, and behind the shoulder of defender
- Creating (attacking) and denying (defending) separation in the box

- **Halftime Analysis**

- Feedback, pros, and cons to each layer (gk, back-4, midfield 3, front 3)
- Discuss what the other team is trying to do
- Any adjustments for second-half

- **Combination Play**

- 3-Player combinations
- Combination into penetrating pass

- **Target Play**

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

- **Communication**

- Giving information on every pass "man-on" or "turn"
- Team volume on defense. "I have ball" "Pressure" "Tackle" etc. on every play
- Peer feedback during stoppages of play should be encouraged

PHYSICAL

THEORY

Players at this age will go through growth spurts that leave them feeling uncoordinated. Coaches must help players maintain confidence during this time.

Strength and power continue to increase rapidly at this age so maintaining good movements in warm-up and cool down will set the tone for how they view “athleticism”. Think quality over quantity.

Educating players and families about healthy nutrition options for school, home, and pre/post playing is extremely important. We want to help form these good habits as early as possible.

Core and rotational stability should be present. Ankle, hip, thoracic spine and shoulder mobility should be continually worked on.

- **Warm-up**

- Players should use the warm-up to prepare for excellence both mentally and physically. A professional approach to warm-up is now crucial
- Agility between running and plyometric movements should be done each day

LESSONS

- **Endurance**

- Players will need to cover much more ground than ever before
- Encourage players to run on their own and at home

- **Speed and Direction**

- Players should be cued toward ‘soccer movements’ rather than just running
- Coaches should give plenty of opportunity for players to change speed

- **Body Resistance**

- Higher volumes of body-weight exercises can be done
- Players should be competent in completing sets of 20 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 at this age should work on focusing techniques. The ability to focus for an entire half/match is a valuable asset that players at this age should continue to work on.

This age player is seeking acceptance from older peers in their schools now, and this will have them pushing boundaries. When around their team, they should be continually pushed toward proper language and behaviors that match their age.

Emotional control still needs to be addressed and assessed at all times. Players continue to work on strong discipline at this age. Team discipline should also be taught and discussed.

- **Atmosphere to Retain**

- As players decide what the game means to them, they need a coach ready to help keep them in the sport
- Continuing to foster a player's passion for the game is crucial

LESSONS

- **Emotional Discipline**

- Cards for dissent and retaliation should not be tolerated
- Coaches must teach players to problem solve logically instead of emotionally

- **Focus**

- Pre-game visualization should be taught and utilized
- Post-game meditations and reflections

- **Communication**

- Players who do not communicate should be addressed and encouraged to do so
- Team Volume is a result of each individual giving information

- **Respect**

- Coaches/ Teammates/ Referees/ Opponents
- The rules of the game. Fair play should be maintained

SESSION OUTLINE

SESSION OUTLINE

PART 1 25 MINUTES

- Warm-up
- Club Rondo
- Technical work with ball

PART 2 35 MINUTES

- Small-sided games
- Directional activities
- Games to targets and zones

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

Warm-up

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

- **Plank** – 4 x 10 sec hard squeezes
- **Push-ups** – 25 reps
- **Single Leg 1/4 Squats** – 2 x 20 per side
- **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.

- **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.

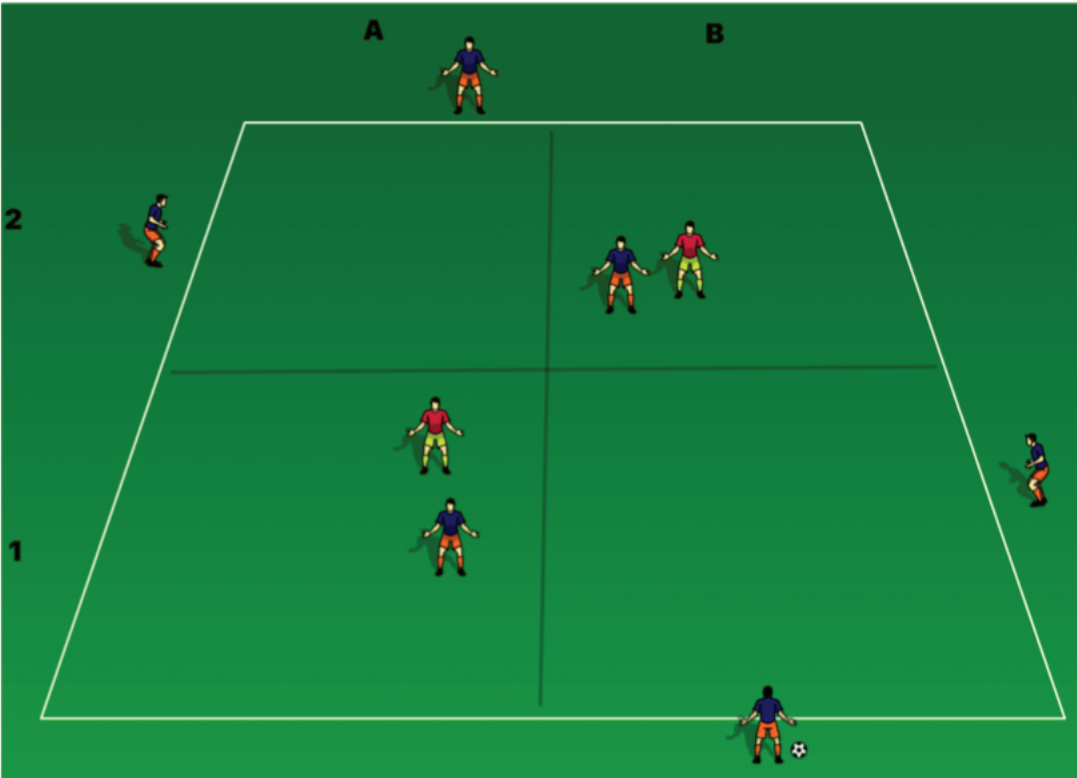
- For example:
If playing 6v6, the team attacking the large goal could be in the roles of the 6/8/10/7/9/11 and the defending team could be in the roles of 2/3/4/5/6



PART 2

35 MINUTES

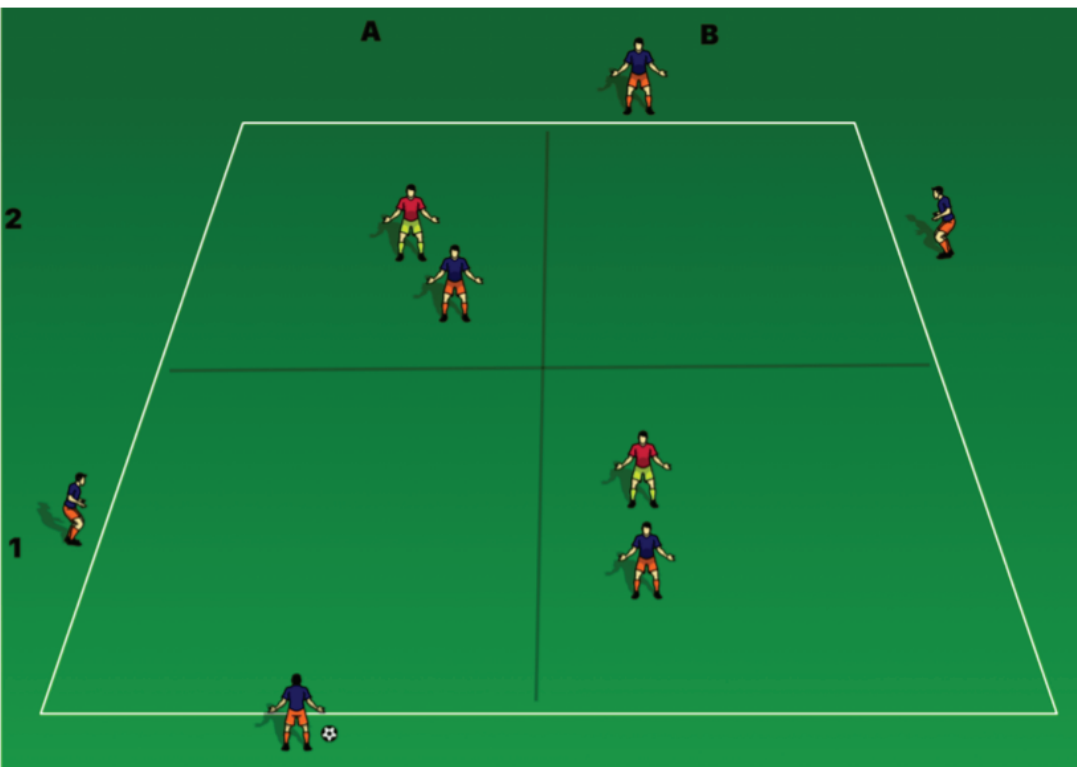
FUNCTIONAL TRAINING



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.



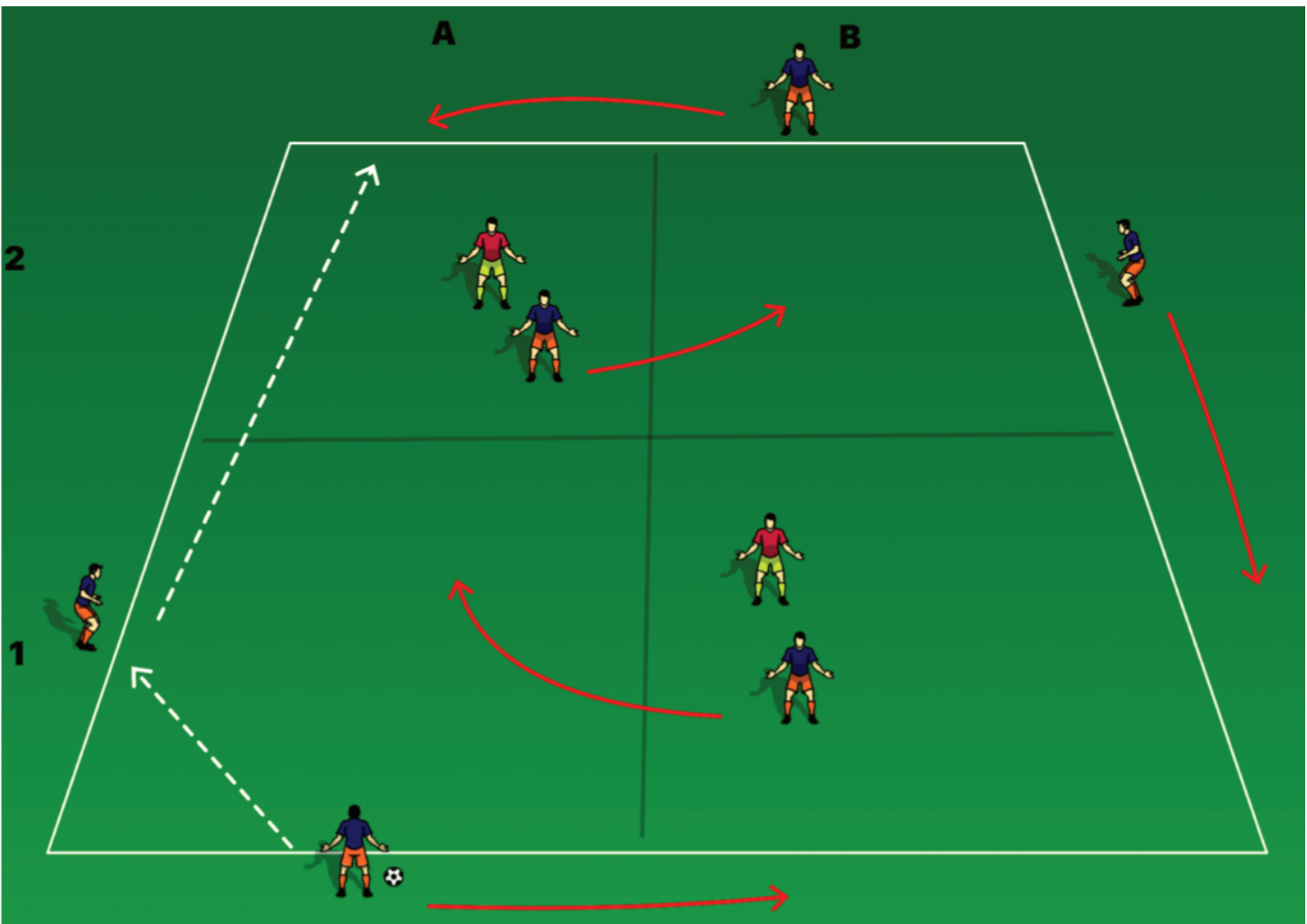
The shadow lines in the diagrams are only to show quadrants for movement.

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

- **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

- **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 exposed to all positions
- No player should always be the goalkeeper, at this age they should all still be identified as ‘soccer players’ and not as ‘positions’
- 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.