

Small-Sided Games

"As part of the Learning Process"

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Introduction

Is enough importance given to the concept of small-sided games? Paul Smalley, in the first of three articles, aims to provide a series of practices introducing small-sided games as a key part of the learning process.

Paul believes that the small-sided game is often used as the token competitive practice to conclude the coaching session, and not always

engineered to its potential. This environment provides the ideal setting for the coach to nurture the young player in the understanding of the game and also to allow them to experiment freely - where do we strike the balance? To allow too much free play allows the coach to stand idle, not utilising their expertise, to intervene excessively reduces the element of problem solving, taking the decision making away from the player.

Can we structure the small-sided game, be innovative and creative, and provide fun and active 'conditions' which enable the players to focus and achieve their potential. By placing constraints and giving specific objectives to the small-sided game situation, players can be introduced to the tactical aspects in isolation, allowing time to develop the necessary qualities and understanding required to achieve at a high level.

Organisation

- Area size 20yds x 10yds
- Start the practice, from the end or side of the practice
- Objective, run the ball under control past the end line

Alternative Conditions

- Use the players on the outside (S) - one or two touch
- Players on the outside can pass the ball to another (S) before its played back into the area

- Pass to the players on the outside, then change positions
- Change over with the ball "Take"
- One/two with player on the outside.
- Score through the small goals at each end. Goals approximately 5 feet wide

Key Teaching Points

- ▶ Angles to receive
- ▶ Individual creation of space
- ▶ Angles of support (S)
- ▶ Movements with the ball

X O = Players

S = Server

-----> = Movement

—————> = Path of ball

————— = Endline

Organisation

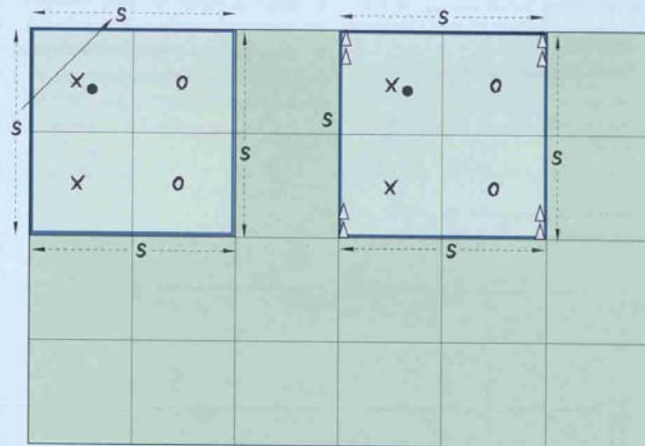
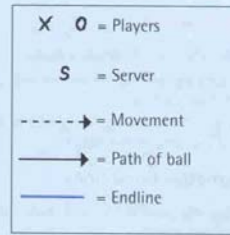
- Area size 2 v 2 (20yds x 20yds)
- Start the practice, from the end or side of the practice
- Objective, run the ball under control past any end line

Alternative Conditions

- Use the players on the outside (S) - one or two touch
- Players on the outside can pass the ball to another (S) before its played back into the area
- Pass to the players Servers (S) when appropriate
- One/two wall pass with player on the outside.
- Progress to score through the small goals at each end
- Players move on the outside

Key Teaching Points

- ▶ Angles to receive
- ▶ Individual creation of space
- ▶ Angles of support
- ▶ Movements with the ball
- ▶ When to support in front/behind the ball
- ▶ Diagonal runs and crossovers
- ▶ Overlap runs
- ▶ Blind side runs



Organisation

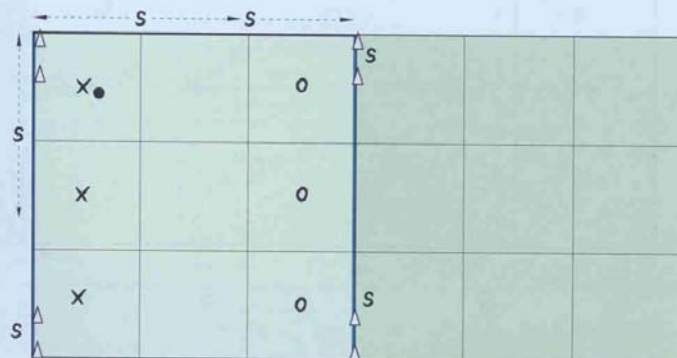
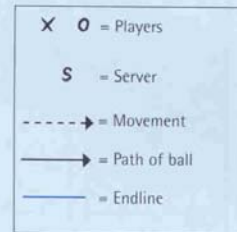
- Area size 3 v 3 (30yds x 30yds)
- Start the practice, from the end or side of the practice
- Objective, run the ball under control past the end line

Alternative Conditions

- Use the players on the outside (S) - one or two touch
- Players on the outside can pass the ball to another (S) before its played back into the area
- Pass to the players on the outside, then change positions
- Wall pass with player on the outside.
- Score through the small goals at each end
- Change over on the outside
- Change angles of attack
- Progress to score through one of the goals, retain possession, attack the opposite end

Key Teaching Points

- ▶ Angles to receive
- ▶ Individual creation of space
- ▶ Angles of support
- ▶ Movements with the ball
- ▶ When to support in front/behind the ball
- ▶ Diagonal runs and crossovers
- ▶ Overlap runs
- ▶ Blind side runs



Organisation

- Area size 5 v 5 (50yds x 50yds)
- Start the practice, from the end or side of the practice
- Objective: Keep ball or get from one side of the area to the other.

Alternative Conditions

- Use the players on the outside (S) - one or two touch
- Players on the outside can pass the ball to another (S) before its played back into the area
- Pass to the players on the outside, then change positions
- Change over with the ball
- One/two wall pass with player on the outside.

- Score through a set of small goals at each end
- Rotation of positions on the outside
- Rotation/player inside/outside
- Change over on the outside
- Change angles of attack
- Score through a set of the goals retain possession, attack the opposite end

Key Teaching Points

- ▶ Angles to receive
- ▶ Individual creation of space
- ▶ Angles of support (S)
- ▶ Movements with the ball
- ▶ When to support in front/behind the ball
- ▶ Diagonal runs and crossovers
- ▶ Overlap runs
- ▶ Blind side runs

