

Small-Sided Games Introducing Challenges

Why?

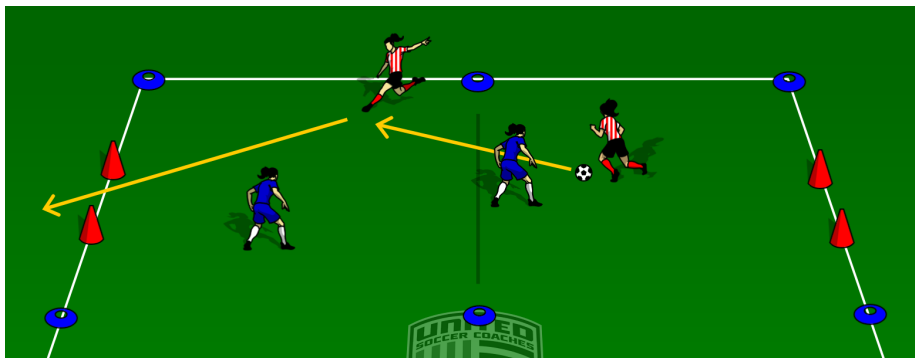
Sometimes the other team does not provide a sufficient level of challenge, resulting in an unbalanced score-line, or a coach may want to prepare players for more difficult opponents

By including challenges in practice, players will be ready to try to implement them in games

Players can be challenged individually, as a group, or the entire team

Format

- The simplest format to introduce challenges is a 2v2 game
- Additional players can be added once the challenge has been understood



Do you have a single dominant player?

- **Playmaker** – Teammate has to score before first player can score again (by spreading the ball around, other players can become engaged in the game instead of relying/watching a teammate score most/all of the goals)
- **Goalkeeper** – if playing with goalkeepers, a scoring player becomes the goalkeeper for their team (this allows other players to impact the game)
- **Touch challenge** – by challenging a player to use fewer touches, they are encouraged to pass rather than dribble (possession & support play)
- **Non-dominant finish** – shoot with non-dominant (usually left) foot only

Do you have a dominant team?

- **Passing** – the team must complete a set # of passes (or everybody on the team needs to touch the ball) before shooting (possession & support play)
- **Back Pass** – all attacks start with a back pass – either back to the goalkeeper, or if the ball is won in the opponents' half, it is played back to a player at the half-way line (build-up play)
- **1-touch finish** – a player attempts to shoot with their first touch which requires a pass from a support player (support & finishing)



Small-Sided Games

Introducing Challenges

Technical & Tactical development

In order to develop a specific topic (technique or tactic), challenges can be added to small-sided games. Smaller numbers allow the challenge to be met by multiple players on numerous occasions. Rotate players after each game so that they are able to play with and against teammates.

Dribbling

- Minimum # of touches per player (player must take at least # of touches)
- Dribble-in restarts – get a game restarted quickly (transition to attack)
- Perform a (designated) move before attempting a pass (1v1)

Passing (& Receiving)

- Teammate must score before a player can score again (playmaker role)
- Every player on a team touches the ball before a goal can be scored
- Two feet – a player must use both feet during an individual possession
- Pass v Kick – loss of possession if a player kicks the ball without purpose
- Coach your pass – passing player must provide information with their pass
- Call for pass – player must call for the ball in order to receive a pass

Shooting

- Shoot from outside a box or before a line for any shot/higher scoring goal
- One touch finish – require teamwork before a shot
- Left foot finish – develop non-dominant foot (technique)
- Shoot from a cross provided by a wide player
- Miss & Run – shooting player retrieves ball if shot is missed (accuracy)

Support Play

- Point per player – a goal is worth the number of players in opponents' half
- Back pass – play ball backwards (if possible) after winning possession
- Combination play – perform a combination with a teammate (e.g., overlap or wall pass) before shooting
- 2 many – if two players from the same team go to the ball, a foul is called and opponent receives possession (angle and distance of support)
- Place cones on field to designate channels (up) and zones (across)

Systems of play

- Scoring player becomes goalkeeper for their team
- Rotate positions after a team scores a goal
- Play within a desired system (e.g. 2-1 vs. 2-1) and encourage movement along (left/right) and between (up/back) lines of players