

TACTICAL TIPS

“Small-Sided Games”

The old phrase that “the game is THE best teacher” certainly rings true for the game of soccer. Players can certainly learn technical aspects and tactical concepts simply by playing a game. The best way to coach techniques and tactics via games is through the use of small-sided games -- 4v4, 5v5, 3v3+1 (neutral player), etc.

And always have a theme with a small-sided game.

Following are some ideas for small-sided games.

THEME: “Penetration via the Dribble”

Set up two goals on each endline. Players score by dribbling through the cones. This works Attacking Principle #1 -- “Penetration”.

THEME: “Penetration via the Pass”

Set up endzones at each end or just have endlines. Each team places a player in the endzone or beyond the endline. Players score when they complete a pass to a teammate in the endzone or over the endline. This, too, works Attacking Principle #1 as well as Attacking Principles #2 (Support Width, Support Depth and Mobility).

THEME: “Possession”

You can have one central goal or two goals on each endline. If you have an even amount of players -- Ex. 10 -- play 4v4+2 (neutral players). This will make for numbers-up situations when in possession of the ball. If you have an odd number of players you can go 4v4+1.

THEME: “Speed of Play”

Play to goals or play “Line Soccer” but limit the touches. Start with no touch restrictions. Then progress to 3-touch, 2-touch and finally to 1-touch.

THEME: “Attacking Support”

Mark out a center line in the grid. In order to score, the team has to have all its players in the attacking half of the field.

THEME: “Speed of Play Through the Midfield”

Mark out 3 Zones in the grid. The Middle Zone should be slightly larger than the two end zones. Play with no touch restrictions in either end zone but have a 3-touch, 2-touch or 1-touch restriction in the middle zone.