



# BCSA Small Sided Games



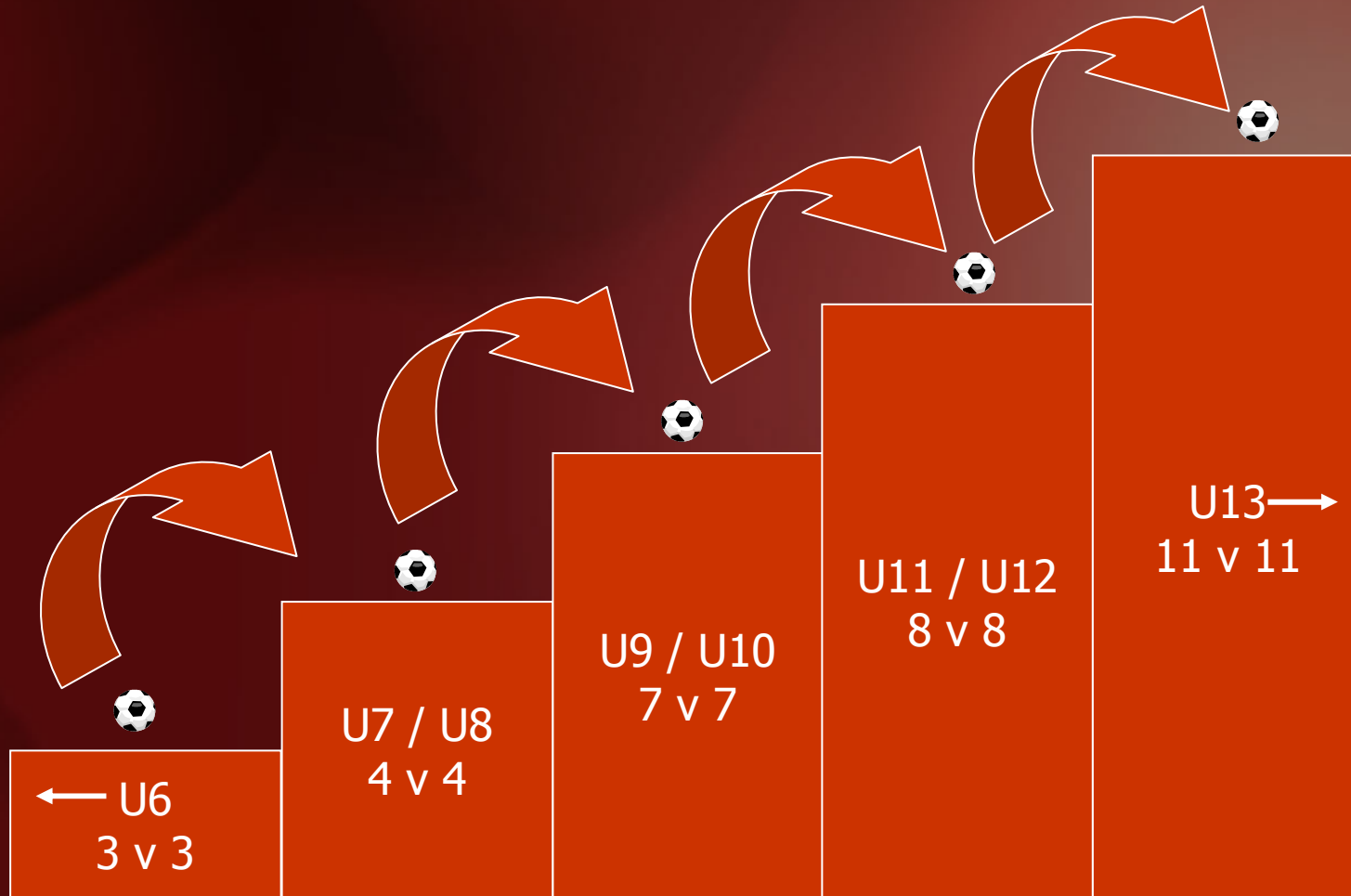
# Technical Department

**Mark Parker, Director of Grassroots Development**  
**Senior Staff Coach**

- ❁ **Small Sided Games or Mini Soccer are any game played with less than eleven players per side.**
- ❁ **Eleven-a-side soccer is an adult game devised by and for adults to enjoy.**
- ❁ **The BCSA includes all age groups up to adult, the U12 and younger play Small Sided Games.**

- ❁ **The objective of small-sided games is a staircase approach for young players to grow into the adult game of 11 versus 11**

# B C S A Stairway of Development





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# Benefits of Playing Small Sided Games

*Small side games offer many positive challenges that foster player development*

*These include;*

- ⚙ **The opportunity to repeatedly touch the ball**
- ⚙ **Repeatedly experience basic tactical challenges**
- ⚙ **The ability to actively participate is fun, we know players develop when they enjoy themselves**
- ⚙ **When players enjoy themselves, they remain consumers of the game**
- ⚙ **Player retention should be the number one priority of all youth coaches**



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# Benefits of Playing Small Sided Games

- ⚽ **It challenges players from a point of view where it becomes difficult for players to participate in all facets of the game i.e. attacking and defending**
- ⚽ **Tactical awareness from a positioning point of view is easier communicated**
- ⚽ **The game is not as complicated as the adult 11 v 11 and easier to understand.**



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# **Benefits of Playing Small Sided Games**

- ❁ **Players playing in the 11 v 11 format under the age of 13, whom are routinely structured into formal positions at ages when their spatial awareness and technical range do not lend themselves to a practical understanding of large group tactics**
- ❁ **Players have fun and personal growth within and outside of the game due to enjoyment, as a result of smaller fields and simplified rules**



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# Benefits of Playing Small Sided Games

- ❁ **Individual participation and development is fostered due to the players receiving more playing time**
- ❁ **Due to individual involvement the general health and fitness increases**
- ❁ **Confidence and self-esteem is promoted as a result of responsibly presented to players from scoring or attempting to stop the opponents from scoring**



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# Benefits of Playing Small Sided Games

- ❁ **Playing small sided games players are encouraged to use freedom of expression**
- ❁ **By playing and exploring the game, children will find gravitate to positions they prefer and feel comfortable with.**
- ❁ **Due to the limited numbers and small field a player can rotate to being a forward, midfielder and defender during the course of the game**



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# Benefits of Playing Small Sided Games

- ❁ **As the players become older we they will discover their best position**
- ❁ **The focus is on the PLAYER and PLAYER DEVELOPMENT and coach**
- ❁ **The so called "*dominant*" player is prevented from holding onto the ball due to the smaller area of play**



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# Benefits of Playing Small Sided Games

- ❁ **Contrary to belief, Small Sided Games increase participation numbers**
- ❁ **Five four-a-side fields can be accommodated on a full sized field.**
- ❁ **4-a-side field;  $5 \times 8 = 40$   
11-a-side field;  $11 \times 2 = 22$**
- ❁ **Experience is gained in all areas of the game.**



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# Educational Values Small Sided Games

- ❁ **The shift to small sided games for is based on educational research on the way children learn best**
- ❁ **Children's academic education is progressive, so should their soccer education be**
- ❁ **Practical studies are ongoing in regard to improving in the game for children**



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# Educational Values Small Sided Games

- ❁ Evidence shows that from the small sided game format, the players exercise physical fitness increases
- ❁ Evidence shows that psychologically children prefer the small side game format.



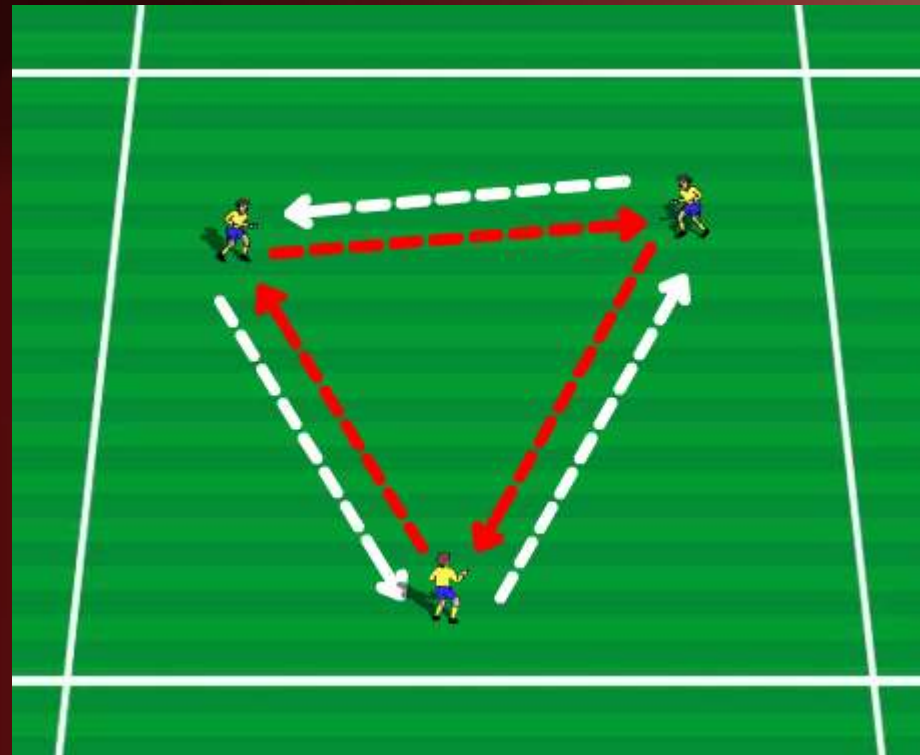
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# Lines of Interaction or Confrontation

- ❁ **Lines of interaction or confrontation are the possible passing connections and or 1 v 1 encounters between players**
- ❁ **By adding additional players to the field of play the level of complexity of the game increases**

# Complexity versus Simplicity

## Lines of Interaction or Confrontation Example



**6 Lines of Interaction or Confrontation**



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# Lines of Interaction or Confrontation

⚽ 2-players	2	⚽ 10-players	90
⚽ 3-players	6	⚽ 11-players	110
⚽ 4-players	12	⚽ 12-players	132
⚽ 5-players	20	⚽ 13-players	156
⚽ 6-players	30	⚽ 14-players	182
⚽ 7-players	42	⚽ 16-players	240
⚽ 8-players	56	⚽ 18-players	306
⚽ 9-players	72	⚽ 20-players	380
		⚽ 22-players	462

# 11 vs. 11 On Smaller Field

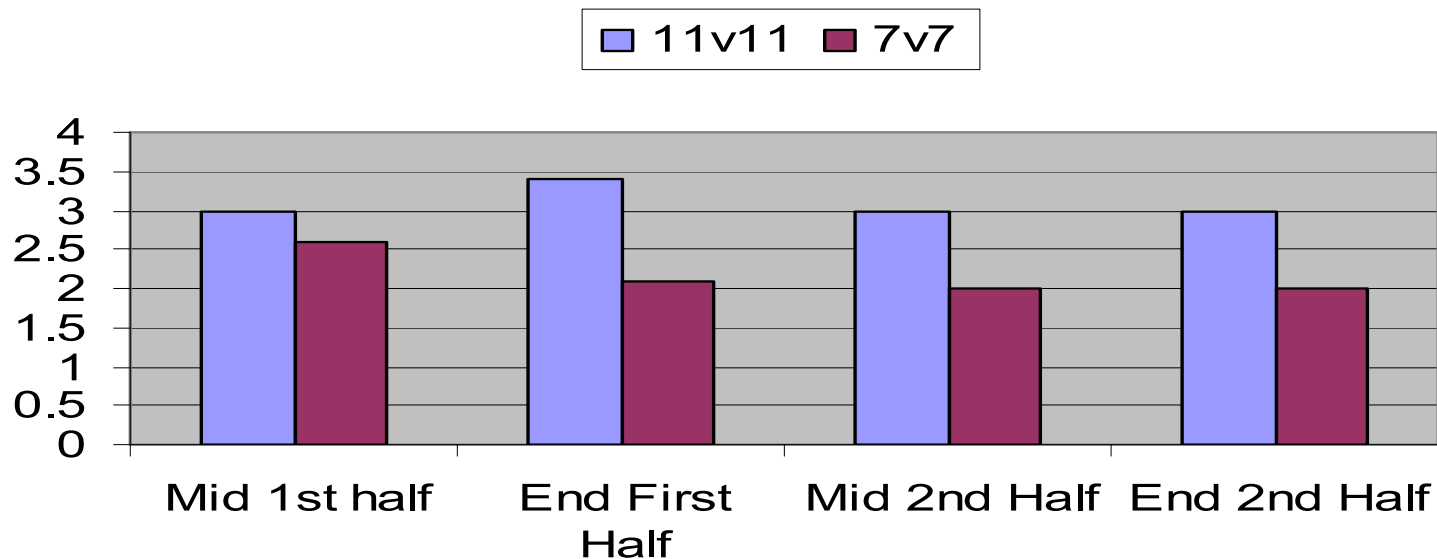
- ❁ **High Lactate Levels - Over 4200 yards covered in 50 minutes**
- ❁ **Ball contacts - 38 average in midfield, only 20 on defense**
- ❁ **Tactics and rules too complicated for this age group**
- ❁ **Conclusion: Totally inappropriate for this age group, high danger of "burnout"!**



- ❌ **Field is still too big**
- ❌ **Hard to distribute players evenly**
- ❌ **No build up in midfield, goals are scored from long uncontrolled passes causing breakaways or mistakes by opponents**
- ❌ **No attacking imagination used or learned**
- ❌ **Conclusion: Better than 11 vs. 11 but still not the best format**

- ⚽ **Players cover 4236 yards in 25 minutes, compared to a professional Bundesliga player who covers only about 1000 yards more in the same period.**

**Lactate Levels in mmol/l - 11v11  
against 7v7**



# **8 vs. 8 on 75 x 55 Meters**

- ❁ **Teaches all the building blocks - dribbling, shooting, passing and ball control followed by tackling and heading**
- ❁ **Frequent 1 vs. 1 situations**
- ❁ **Attack oriented game - frequency of shots much higher than any other game**
- ❁ **Few opportunities for tactical mistakes, therefore accent is on technical training**
- ❁ **20 x 30 fields should be used for training**

# 8 vs. 8 on 75 x 55 Field

- ⚽ **Optimal physical load on players**
- ⚽ **Teaches flexible attacking and defending**
- ⚽ **Lots of ball contact - less talented players are involved more**
- ⚽ **More opportunity to practice basic elements of good soccer**
- ⚽ **More opportunities to attack and defend**

- ⚽ **Conclusion:**
- ⚽ **Provides the best vehicle for enjoyment and activity**
- ⚽ **A must for players who do not have a high level of technical development.**

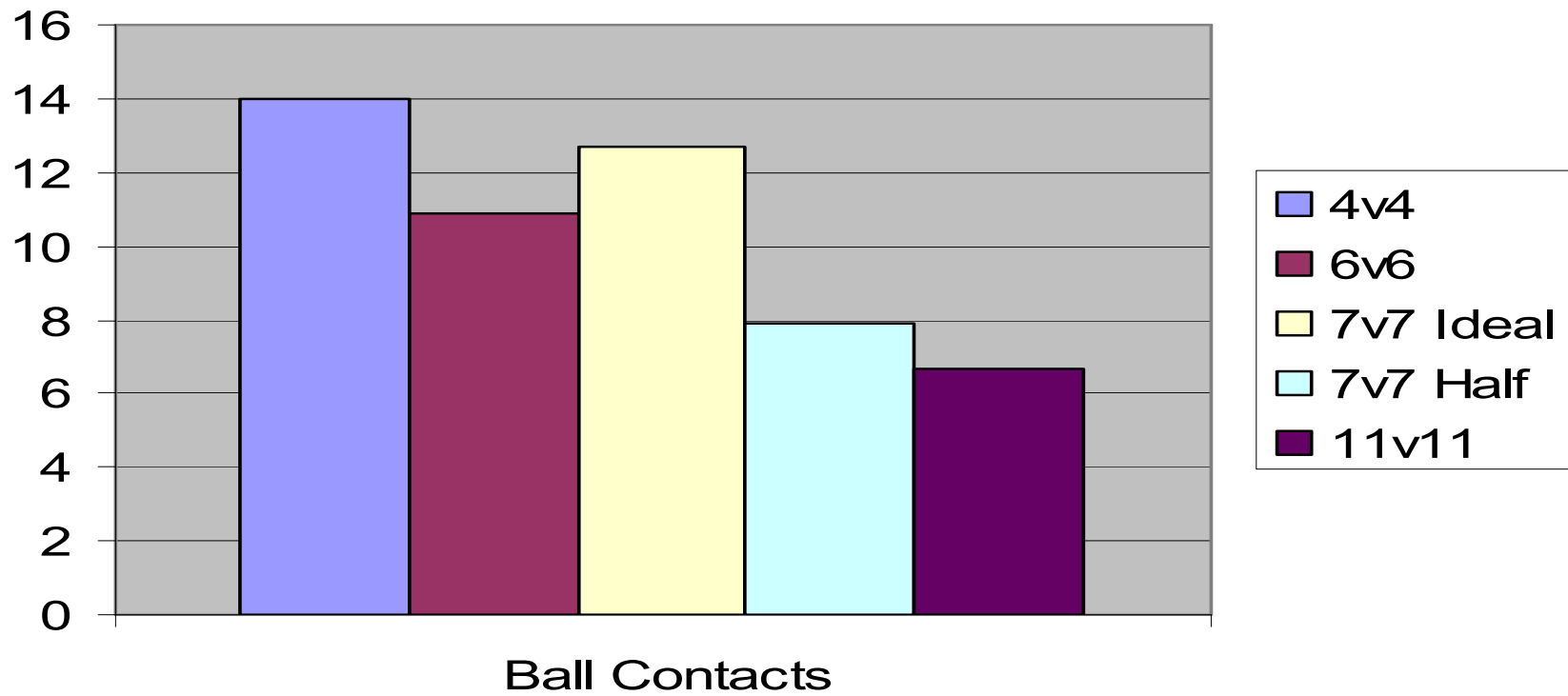
# 8 vs. 8 on 75 x 55 Meter Field

## **Conclusion:**

**The ideal game for young players with good technical ability, but it must be used in conjunction with 4 vs. 4 training and tournaments**

# Number of Ball Touches per Player In 10 Minutes

## Touches on the Ball Per 10 Minutes





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# Training Objectives of Small Sided Games

- ❁ **Player centered that provides maximum fun and enjoyment**
- ❁ **Players are challenged**
- ❁ **Confidence is dramatically increased**
- ❁ **All players with varying ability find success**

# Developmental Considerations

- ❶ **Children like to compete with each other**
- ❷ **Skills need to be developed in playful environment**
- ❸ **Players don't learn when situation demands skills or tactics they haven't yet learned**
- ❹ **If they encounter the same situation many times by repetition, they learn and be able to deal with it**
- ❺ **Rules like offside, detract from the ability to learn the basic game**

# Developmental Considerations

- ❁ **Commonly accepted now that ages 8 to 12 are ideal for developing technique and coordination**
- ❁ **In spite of this many coaches continue to implement adult rules and strategies, which hinder this development**



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# Coaching Considerations

- ❁ **It's not sufficient to substitute smaller games for 11 vs. 11**
- ❁ **Basic concepts encountered during the game like passing, control, dribbling etc must be taught via coaching**
- ❁ **Positional responsibilities should not take priority until players have mastered the basic fundamentals of the game**
- ❁ **Development is a long term process, the players' enjoyment should take precedence over that of the parents individual goals "fun games that teach soccer fundamentals may not be the most exciting to watch for parents"**

- ❁ **4 vs. 4 or 5 vs. 5 (with goalkeeper) training and tournament games are a must for technical and basic tactical development**
- ❁ **7 vs. 7 or 8 vs. 8 (with goalkeeper) provides the ideal game for players who have already acquired enough technical development to allow them to cope with more testing tactical decisions**
- ❁ **Imperative that 4 vs. 4 is used regularly in training**

- ❁ **The 11 vs. 11 is totally inappropriate for players under 12 years of age as they encourage poor decision making bad technique and tactile habits eventually leading to “Kick and Run” soccer**
- ❁ **“Kick and Run” soccer does not develop the building blocks - close control, passing, dribbling and ball possession**



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# IMPLEMENTATION OF SMALL SIDED GAMES

## Logistical Issues

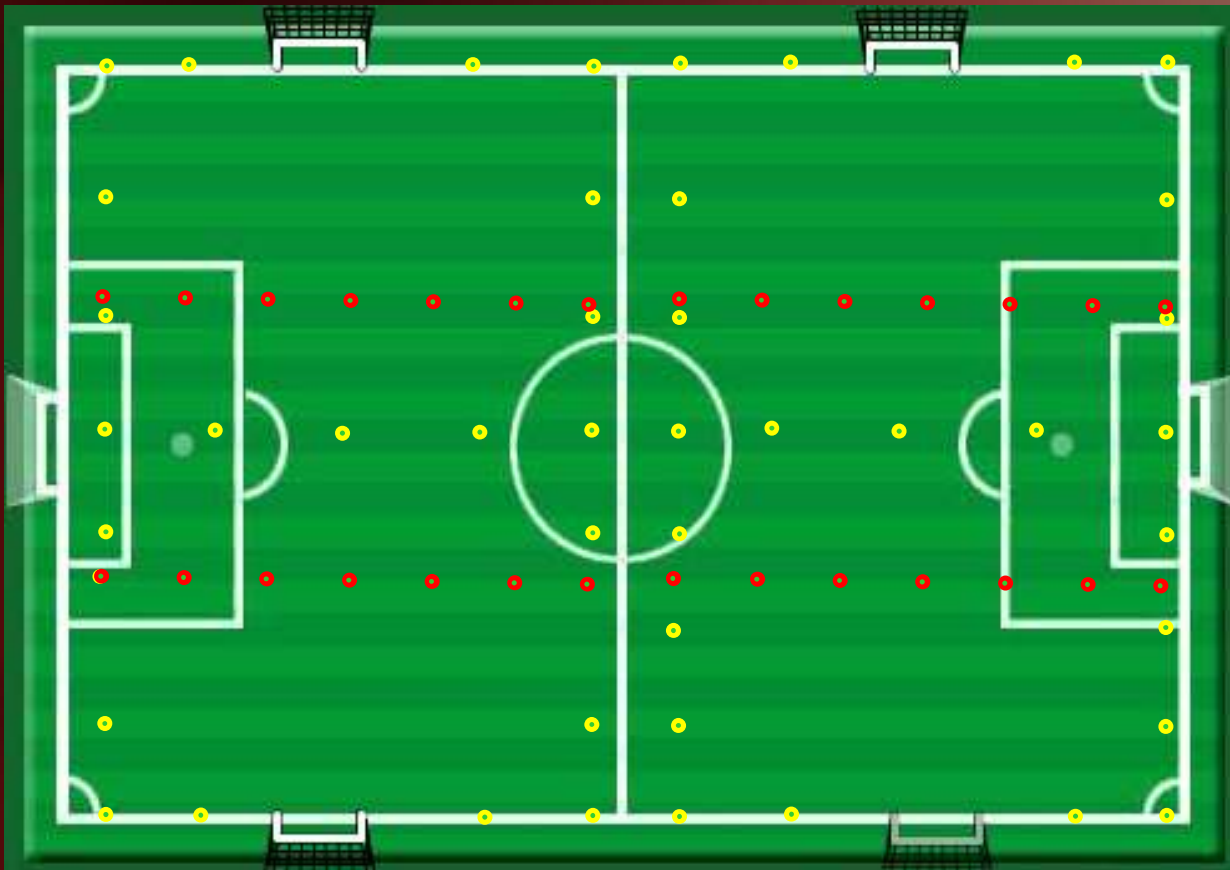
- ⚽ **FIELD AVAILABILITY** - Markings and size
- ⚽ **COACHES** - Field Coordinators / Facilitators
- ⚽ **ROSTER SIZE** - Less structured 'teams' for U6 & U8 more jamboree style
- ⚽ **GOALS** - Cones or corner flags will be adequate



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# IMPLEMENTATION OF SMALL SIDED GAMES

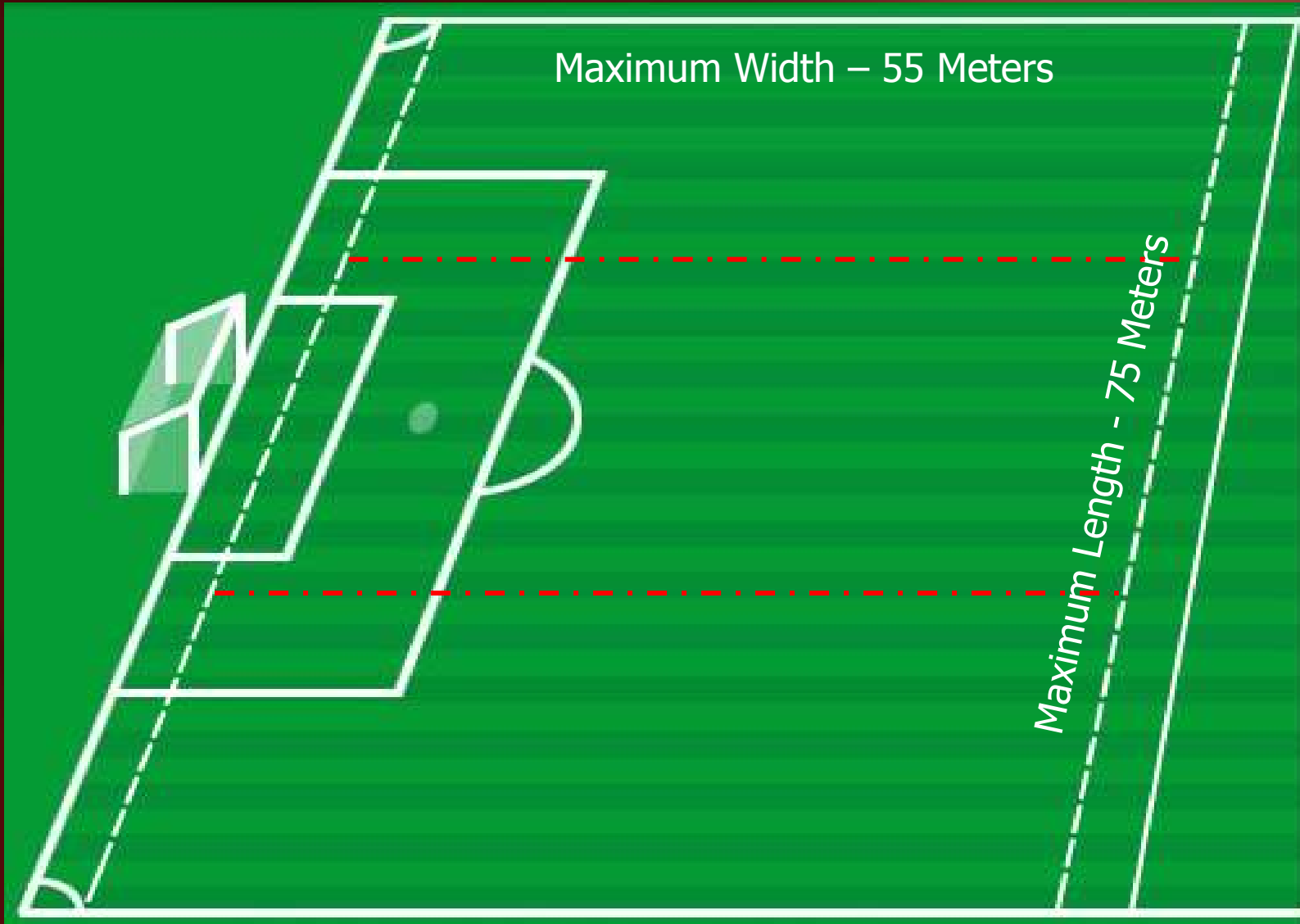
- Diagram of the dual field layout:





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# IMPLEMENTATION OF SMALL SIDED GAMES



- ❁ **Technical abilities will accelerate due to increased time with the ball. Further, the ball skill demands are now realistic on a smaller field.**
- ❁ **Athletic growth is enhanced due to continuous movement.**



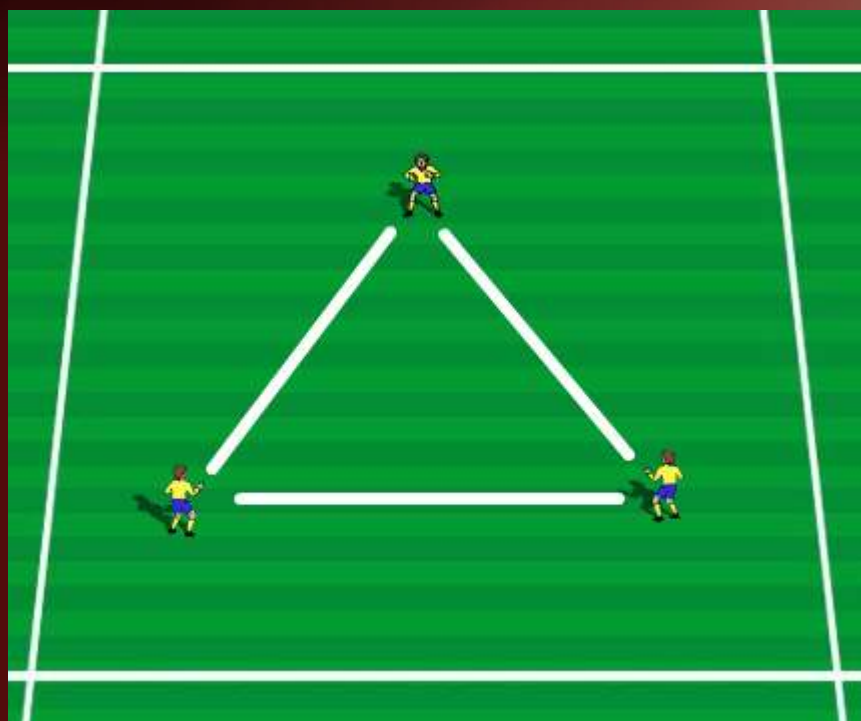
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# **IMPACT ON PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**

- ⚽ There is a greater demand on mental concentration. The game is more fun to play because the players are always involved.**
- ⚽ More opportunities for problem solving are created for the players to work out together. Hence “teamwork” is promoted!**

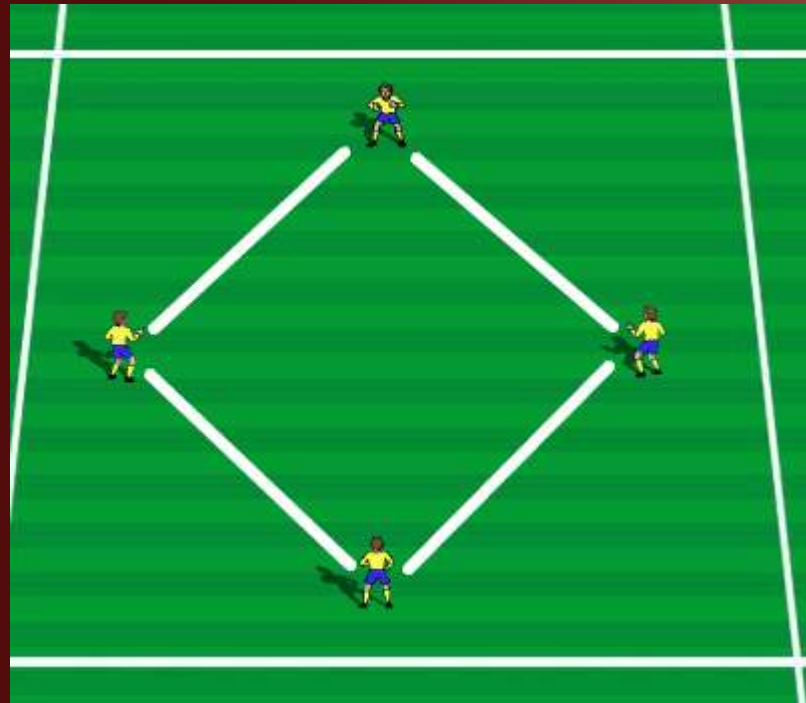
- ⚽ This match environment now demands ***transition*** and thus tactical awareness. The players are involved on both sides of the ball, so there is no hiding in the weeds.
- ⚽ There is a greater demand on individual and group tactics. The team tactical concept of compactness is enhanced in the small sided game.

## Triangles (3 players)



## Diamonds (4 Players)

The diamond provides the fundamentals of Attack and Defence - Length, Width & Depth





**Attacking Shape**  
**Forward**  
**Back**  
**Left**  
**Right**



## Defending Shape

Provides:

Pressure

Cover

Balance



## Ideal Attacking Shape

Provides:

Length

Depth

Width

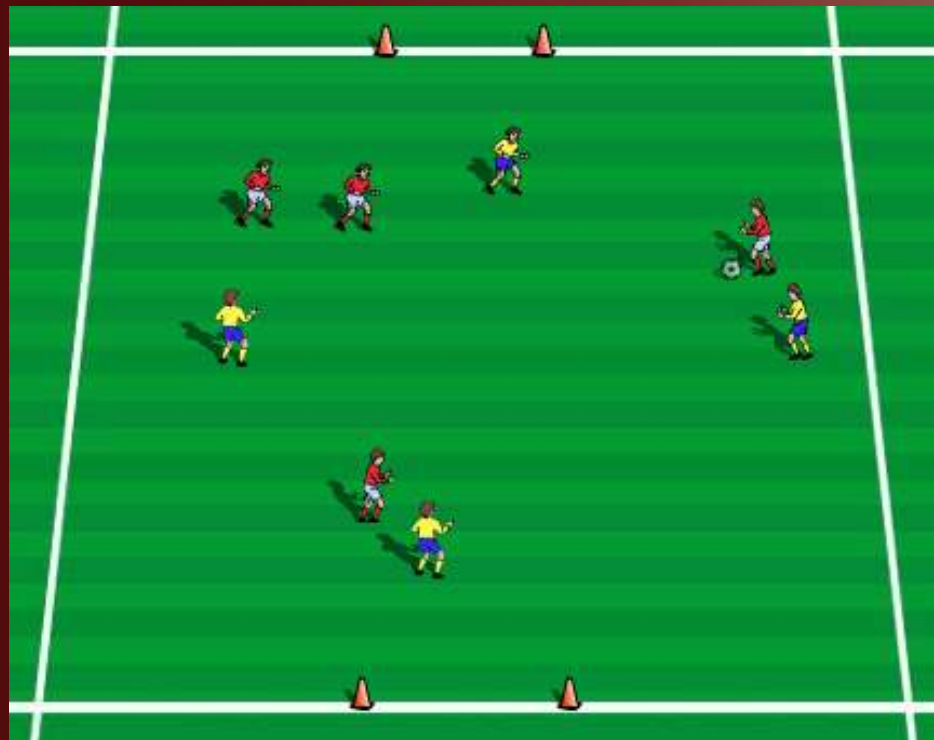


## Defending Shape

Pressure (1<sup>st</sup> defender on the ball)

Cover (2<sup>nd</sup> defender closest to ball)

Balance (3<sup>rd</sup> defender cover)



**Possible team formations are**

**1-2-4-1**

**1-2-3-2**

**1-3-2-2**

**The small-sided game allows coaches a perfect opportunity to observe and analyze the individual and collective responses of players under quick game-like conditions.**

All over the world, soccer leagues have begun to realize...  
**Soccer is viewed differently by young players than by older players**

**Young players cannot fully grasp the complexity of a full 11 vs. 11 game and learn best through a progression of building blocks**

**Without the building blocks, many players are thrown into more tactical situations bypassing technical and personal growth**

**We set the young players up for failure if we continue at the larger numbers at the younger age groups**



**Thank You**