



## THE SMALL SIDED GAMES DOCUMENT

This is a living freely available document that grows as coaches from all around the world read it and add their own games or variations on the games shown. If you have any suggestions contact us at [info@footballtricks.com](mailto:info@footballtricks.com) and we will include them. Please forward this on to anyone you think will benefit from it.

Version 2.0 December 2007

## INTRODUCTION

This document has been written to compile all the possible small sided games (SSGs) but how you coach them is up to you. Our advice is let the games teach the players how to play and keep your coaching minimal.

There is no correct size for each pitch. Our suggestion is 30m x 20m but change the size of the pitch if you feel it is necessary. The same rule applies to the size of the goals make them smaller if they can score too easily and bigger if it is too difficult.

To make the document more useful we have grouped the games by the layout necessary for each game. This way you can change from game to game without having to move the cones you have already laid out.

If you would like scientific proof of the benefit of SSGs then email us [info@footballtricks.com](mailto:info@footballtricks.com) and we can send you the studies done by the Sports University of Cologne, University of Abertay Dundee or the Department of Exercise and Sports Science at Manchester Metropolitan University.

The bottom left hand corner of each page shows you how old your copy is email [info@footballtricks.com](mailto:info@footballtricks.com) to see if a newer copy is available.



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## [www.footballtricks.com](http://www.footballtricks.com)

Footballtricks.com is a terrific website which tries to bring the fun back into learning how to play. We have articles on all aspects of coaching and we strive to make coaching more enjoyable for both you and your players.

We have made a selection of DVDs that would make the perfect Christmas present for that soccer mad player you know or the coach who wants to improve. Both of our DVDs can be bought online and if you would like more information or like to purchase them follow this link:-

<http://www.footballtricks.com/View.aspx?nID=166>

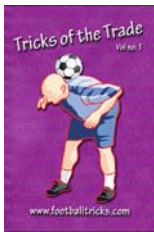


### **'1 to 1- Parent Player Coaching' DVD**

This DVD is approx 3 hours long and is for the parent who wants to spend some quality time with their children as well as help them improve. The DVD turns all the drills into fun games. A must for all parents who want to help their child be the best they can be.

If you would like to view a sample of this DVD then follow this link:

<http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.showvids&friendID=236739092&n=236739092&MyToken=f1890e1e-414e-4b46-93ef-adc3faa1d2fa>



### **Tricks of the Trade 1**

A 90 minute DVD which takes you step by step through how to do some of the most amazing juggling tricks with a ball. A terrific present for that player you know who loves soccer/football.

If you would like to view a sample of this DVD then follow this link:

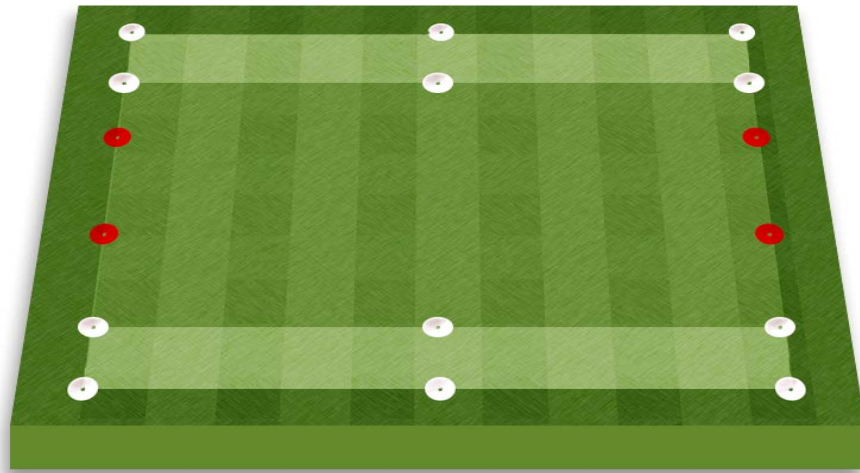
<http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.showvids&friendID=236739092&n=236739092&MyToken=f1890e1e-414e-4b46-93ef-adc3faa1d2fa>

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## **Introduction to Version 2.0**

SSG Doc Version 1.0 came out in July 2007 and has been a remarkable success with a minimum 15,000 copies in circulation worldwide. Many coaches expressed a desire to help but many seemed to be hindered by not being able to draw the necessary diagrams to accompany the SSG's on a computer.

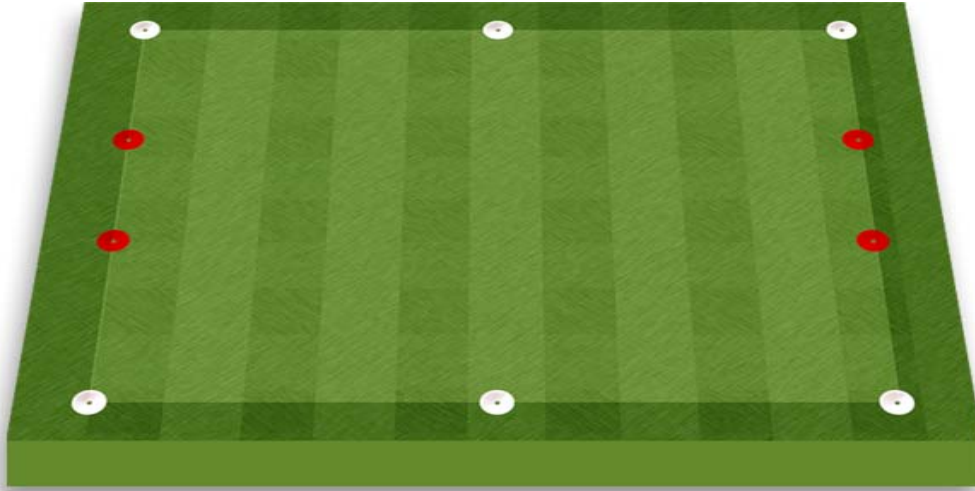
To solve this problem for Version 3.0 we are simply going to ask for you to send in suggestions for the 'Channel Play' diagram below. Please send to [info@footballtricks.com](mailto:info@footballtricks.com) and remember we all benefit from each suggestion sent in.



Contact [info@footballtricks.com](mailto:info@footballtricks.com) with your suggestions for this chapter.

## **Chapter1 – Standard 4 v 4**

All the following games will use the following standard 4 v 4 pitch in the diagram below unless a new diagram is shown.



### **\*New\* Player Coach**

A normal game of 4 v 4 but have a player or players with you on the sideline and if he spots a mistake based on the 'Topic of the Day' he names the player and tells the coach what happened and then he substitutes on for that player.

NB Have bibs ready for each team. This is great for when you have odd numbers.

### **\*New\* Palota**

A normal 4 v 4 game but when a goal is scored the goal scorer must leave the pitch until their place is taken by the scorer of the next goal and so on.

NB Make the goals big so there are plenty of goals. This is useful at grassroots level as it stops 1 player dominating.

### **\*New\* Throw-Head-Catch**

This is a game all about the player's movement. The game is played with the ball in the hands and the players are not allowed to run with the ball. The only way to move the ball is for one player to throw the ball to another player who heads the ball to another player who catches it. A goal can only be scored from a header.

***Progression*** Instead of heading the ball the players have to volley the ball to pass and score.

***Progression #2*** Instead of simply catching the ball the player must control pass with chest/thigh etc before catching the ball.

### **\*New\* Get in behind them**

You need to slightly modify the layout by bringing the goals on to the pitch by 5m. Play a normal 4 v 4 but you can only score through the back of the goal.

NB This is terrific when you need to encourage your players to run beyond the ball.

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### **\*New\* Solo**

A normal 4 v 4 game but when the coach shouts out 'SOLO' the player with the ball has to try and dribble the other team and score on their own.

### **\*New\* Coach's Ball**

A normal 4 v 4 game but when the ball goes out of play the coach throws in a new ball to any part of the pitch. The players have to react to the new situation.

**Variation** Have balls spread around the perimeter of pitch. Name each side e.g. AC Milan, Liverpool, Real Madrid or Bayern Munich when the ball goes out the coach shouts what side he wants a new ball taken from.

### **\*New\* Keeper Catch**

Two teams plus 1 goal keeper who is free to move anywhere on the pitch. To score a goal a team must kick the ball straight into the goal keeper's hands.

**Progression** Two teams plus 1 goal keeper each. The goal keeper is an extra player when his team don't have the ball.

### **\*New\* Waves**

Play with 3 teams of 4 on the pitch and it might be better to use on a bigger pitch depending again on the age of the players. Have 1 team defending each goal and a team in the middle.

You the coach give the ball to the middle team and they are to attack one end of the pitch. If they score then you give them another ball and they immediately attack the team at the other end. If they fail to score then the teams swap and the last defending team attacks the other end.

If the attacking team wins a throw in then that is counted as a goal and they attack the opposite end again. If the attacking team give away a throw in then that is regarded as a miss and the teams swap.

### **Win by 1**

Normal game of 4 v 4 but you can never lead the game by more than one goal so when a team leads they need to simply maintain possession. The game needs to go to a time limit and we suggest 4 minutes. If a team scores a deliberate own goal or goes in front by two then they automatically lose.

**Progression** Start the game with one team leading by one goal.

**NB** With younger players they may lose interest if they score early so maybe take 1 player off from the leading team and ask the others can they survive 30 seconds with a player missing.

### **Gone in 60 Seconds**

Normal game of 4 v 4 but when every goal is scored it doesn't count for 60 seconds and is wiped out if the other team scores within that 60 seconds. If the same team scores again inside 60 seconds then the first goal counts immediately and the second has the normal 60 seconds till it counts.

**NB:** This can be a great game at grassroots level as the players will run to get the ball after each goal and so the game keeps going.

**Progression** Similar to the game 'Win by 1' the team that has scored cannot score again within that 60 seconds or they wipe their own goal out so they need to keep the ball and slow down the game.

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### **Total Football**

Normal game of 4 v 4 but a goal doesn't count unless each member of the team has touched the ball in the move leading up to the goal without an opposing player touching the ball.

**Progression** All players in the team must touch the ball in opposition half.

**Variation** Instead of all the players have 1 player designated as the target player who must touch the ball in each move. Make this the best player in each team so that they are challenged with extra defenders.

### **5 Pass Game**

Normal 4 v 4 game with goals counting as usual but you can also get a goal by stringing together more than 5 passes without the opposing team touching the ball. The only condition is that a pass doesn't count if you pass straight back to the person who passed to you. You can vary the number of passes depending on your players.

**Progression #1** For the 5 passes to count as a goal none of them can be passed backwards.

**Progression #2** For the 5 passes to count they must all be in the other team's half

**Variation** After 5 passes you can score in either goal.

### **Passing Points**

A goal is worth the number of passes in the move that created it. Every time the other team touches the ball the count has to restart.

NB Encourage players to take opportunities and not take unnecessary extra passes to build up goal total.

### **2 Touch**

Normal 4 v 4 game but each player can only have a maximum of 2 touches before another player must touch the ball. If a player has more than 2 touches it is a free kick.

NB: Don't allow players to shield the ball when they have used up their 2 touches this isn't game realistic.

### **3 v 5**

The team of 3 have no restrictions at all but the team of 5 are limited to 2 touches before another player must touch the ball.

**Progression** Team of 5 go to 1 touch and the team of 3 go to 2 touch.

### **Game of 2 halves**

Normal 4 v 4 game except when a team is in its defensive half of the pitch each player is limited to 2 touches maximum before another player touches the ball but in the attacking half they have no restrictions. Encourage defenders to relax under pressure and to play the ball out of their own half and if necessary introduce a condition that the ball must stay on the ground.

**Progression** Each team must have 1 player in attacking half at all times.

### **2 Touch 1 Touch**

Normal 4 v 4 game but 2 players on each team are restricted to 2 touches maximum and the other 2 players are restricted to 1 touch maximum before another player touches the ball.

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**Progression** A player has either 1 or 2 touches depending on how many touches the player who passed it to them had. The number of touches must follow the sequence 2 touch then 1 touch 2 touch then 1 touch etc.

### **Different Strokes**

A normal 4 v 4 game but each player has a different restriction. 1 player has a maximum of 2 touches, 1 player has only 1 touch, 1 player must run with the ball, 1 player must always play the ball forwards.

You can experiment with what restrictions you use it could be must overlap the player they passed to, must play a 1 – 2 etc that is up to you as the coach.

### **All Up**

A normal 4 v 4 game but a goal doesn't count unless everyone on your team is in the attacking half.

**Variation** If all attackers are over the halfway line the goal is worth 2 pts but if all the defenders are back in their own half as well then the goal is only worth 1 pts.

### **Bounce**

A normal 4 v 4 game but a goal only counts if it is scored by a 1 touch finish from a backwards pass. This encourages midfielders to support the player with the ball.

**Progression** The backwards pass must be either a header or a volley.

### **Pressing Game**

A normal 4 v 4 game but if the ball is won in the opposition's half and a goal is scored without the ball leaving the half then that goal is worth double.

### **Pass & Move**

A normal 4 v 4 game but after every pass the player who made the pass must sprint 4m in a certain direction. It is up to you as the coach what you ask them to do i.e pass then run 4m backwards, to the right or forwards. You can give the whole team the same restrictions or each individual player their own direction.

### **Switcheroo**

A normal 4 v 4 game but as soon as a goal is scored the teams play in the opposite direction. The team that scored starts with a goal kick as quickly as possible.

**Progression** Play with one goal at one end and two goals at the other so when the teams change direction the players have different problems to solve.

### **Throw in – Throw out**

Play with 3 teams of 4. Two teams play each other in a normal 4 v 4 game and one team is off the pitch. However whenever the ball goes out for a throw in the team that gave away the throw in has to leave the pitch and their place is taken by the third team.

NB: This is a rapid transition game and the team who are taking the throw in can take it immediately. Make the pitch smaller so the ball goes out more if you find the third team are off the pitch for too long.

### **5 second countdown**

A normal 4 v 4 game but when a player loses the ball the team has 5 seconds to pressurise and win it back. They get a bonus goal for winning the ball back and retaining possession. If the team fails to regain possession after 5 seconds they have to drop back into a defensive shape.



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### **Corner (freekick) Game**

A normal 4 v 4 game but every time the ball goes out for a throw in it is a corner. Place extra balls near the corners of the pitch so play can restart quickly.

### **Opposites**

A normal game of 4 v 4 but when a player passes the ball with their right foot then the 1<sup>st</sup> touch of their team mate must be with their left foot and vice versa.

### **Man to Man**

Each player is paired with a player from the opposing team and they are the only ones allowed to tackle each other.

### **Show Time**

A normal game of 4 v 4 but the coach gives out bonus goals for players expressing their talent i.e. bonus goals for great 1 v 1 moves to beat a player, nutmegs, defence splitting passes, interceptions etc.

NB: It is important that bonus goals are given not just when the player is successful but also when the thought behind the attempt was right.

### **Colour Match**

A Normal game of 4 v 4 but all players on both teams wear the same colour bibs so players have to communicate with each other verbally.

**Variation:** Play with no bibs on. It will have the same effect with the players having to communicate verbally.

### **Head Height**

A normal game of 4 v 4 but a free kick is given against the team who touched the ball last before it went above head height.

### **The 'No Sin' Bin**

Normal 4 v 4 game but the 2 teams alternate with having one player off the pitch at a time for 60 seconds so the games fluctuates between 4 v 3 in favour of one side or the other.

NB: It is best to number players from 1 to 4 to make it easier for the players to know when to go off.

### **Forfeits**

Normal 4 v 4 game but when a goal is scored one of the players from the team that conceded the goal has to run around entire pitch before they can join back in the game. The game continues while the player is running. You can vary it so the player has to do 30 juggles with a ball or a skill circuit instead of running.

NB: Again it is best to number the players from 1 to 4 so No. 1 goes for the first goal and so on.

### **Big Goal, Little Goal**

A normal 4 v 4 game but you make one goal twice the size of the other and so one team needs a goal keeper and one team doesn't. You play the game in 2 halves so both teams get to defend the big goal.

Contact [info@footballtricks.com](mailto:info@footballtricks.com) with your suggestions for this chapter.

### **Splitters**

A normal game of 4 v 4 but a bonus goal is awarded for a pass between 2 defenders if the player receiving the pass shoots with their first touch.

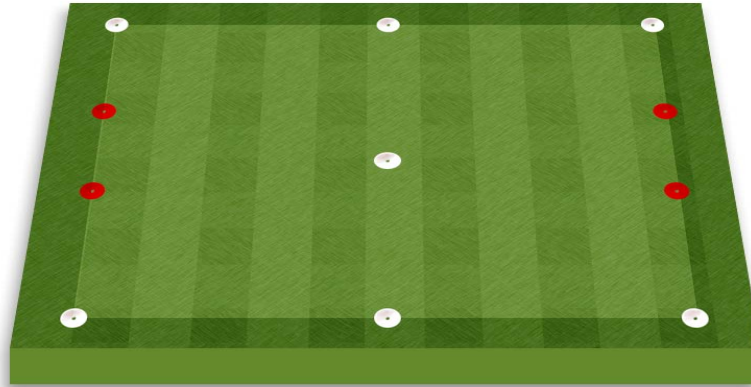
NB: You as the coach must make sure that the play is realistic and that players are not shooting from anywhere to get a bonus goal.

### **Pole Soccer**

Normal 4 v 4 but replace the goal with a pole stuck in the ground. A goal is scored by hitting the pole. We would suggest you put the pole inside a 2m square marked out by cones to stop players standing next to it to defend.

Variation: Place down 3 or 4 poles randomly and either team can hit any pole.

### **4 Square Soccer**



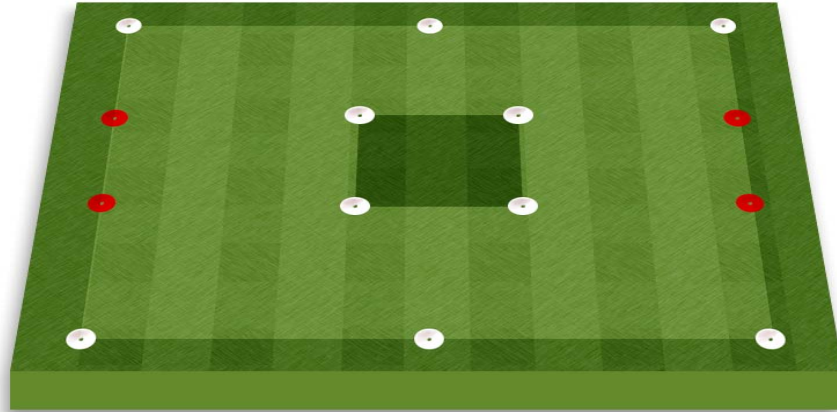
Place a cone down in the centre of the pitch to divide it into 4 square sections. Give the 4 players on each team positions i.e attacker, left midfield, right midfield and defender. Each player can only move between 2 squares. The defender the 2 squares in front of the goal they are defending, the attacker the 2 squares in front of the goal they are attacking etc.

**Variation:** A player can move anywhere but if they pass the ball from inside one square then they must leave that square to touch the ball again. This will ensure that the players are constantly moving after a pass.

You can divide the pitch up into triangles. If you leave the cone in the middle but take away the 2 cones on either sideline the pitch is divided by a giant X marked out by the white cones. Same rules apply if they pass the ball from inside one triangle then they must leave it to touch the ball again.

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### No Go Zone



Place down 4 extra cones to form a 5m square in the centre of the pitch. This is the no go zone which no player can enter but the ball can pass through it.

**Progression** Give out bonus goals if a ball is successfully passed forwards through the two sides of the square facing the goals.

### Midfield Maestro (use No Go Zone setup)

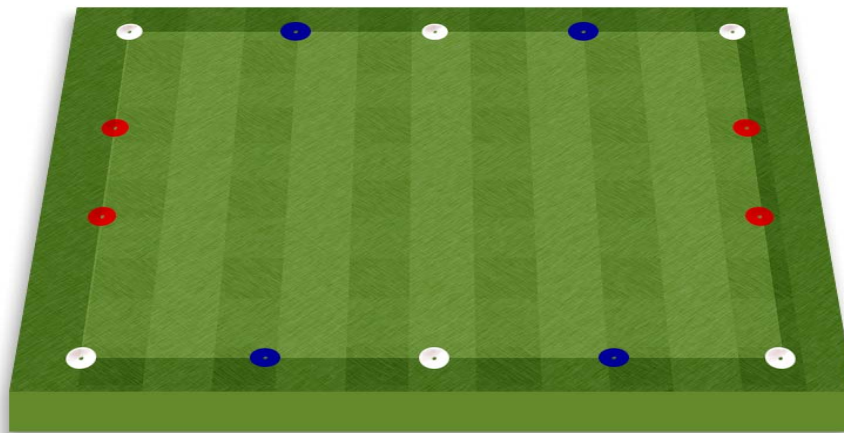
Play with 1 floating player who cannot be tackled when they are in the No Go Zone. A goal doesn't count unless the midfield maestro has touched it in the build up.

### \*New\* Boxed Off

Play 4 v 4 but use the No Go Zone as a 4 sided goal and ignore the red cones. You can play with 1 or 2 goal keepers.

**Progression** A goal is worth 2 if you can pass through the box to another player on your team.

### Stevie G Shooting



Place down 4 extra cones to form a 6m zone (blue cone to blue cone) in front of each goal. It is a normal 4 v 4 game with players allowed to move anywhere but a goal doesn't count unless struck from outside this zone

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### **Sweeper Safe**

#### **(Use Stevie G Shooting setup)**

It is a normal 4 v 4 game but you designate 1 player from each side to be a sweeper. If they have possession of the ball in the zone in front of their goal (blue cone to blue cone) then they cannot be tackled.

### **Shooting Zones**

#### **(Use Stevie G Shooting setup)**

It is a normal 4 v 4 game but if a player scores from inside the zone closest to goal (blue cone to blue cone) it is worth 1 point. If a goal is scored from the next furthest zone out (white cone to white cone) then it is worth 2 points. Goals are worth 3 & 4 points respectively if scored from the zones inside your own half.

*Progression* Must a volley or header within closest zone

### **\*New\* Beat the Offside Trap**

#### **(Use Stevie G Shooting setup)**

Zones closest to the goal are free and the goals are replaced by a ball placed on top of a cone. All players must play in the central zone marked off with the blue cones. Players can dribble into the end zones or pass the ball in for another player but once the ball enters the end zone that team has only 3 seconds to knock the ball off the cone to score.

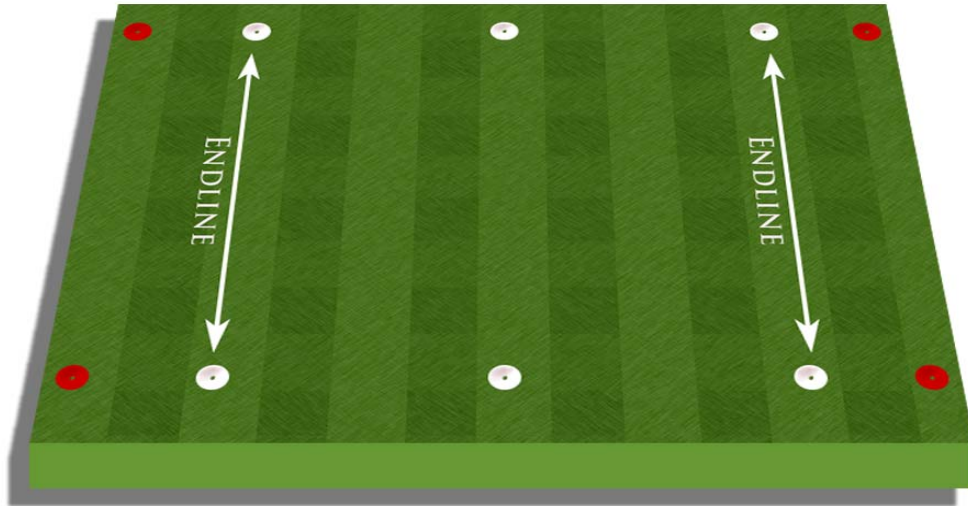
*Progression* Have 2 balls on top of 2 cones in each end zone and place a goal keeper in there as well.

Contact [info@footballtricks.com](mailto:info@footballtricks.com) with your suggestions for this chapter.

## **Chapter 2 – Different Set ups**

This chapter deals with SSGs that require you to set up a specific pitch area to accommodate the game.

### **Line Soccer**



Play 4 v 4 but there are no goals to shoot into however a point is awarded when one player is able to run with the ball over the opposing teams endline.

NB: You can vary it so that the ball has to be stopped on the endline or stopped within 3m of the endline.

Variation: You could play Soccer Rugby were the ball is not allowed to be passed forward so you have to run with the ball to go forwards.

### **End Zone Soccer**

(use Line Soccer setup)

Play 4 v 4 with each team having their own end zone to defend (between endline & red cones). The players are free to move anywhere on the pitch but a goal is scored when a team is able to pass the ball to one of their own players inside the opposing end zone.

Variation #1: A goal only counts if the team mate inside the end zone can both receive a pass in the end zone and complete a pass to a team mate back outside of the end zone.

Variation #2: Each team has a player permanently in the opposing end zone. This player can rotate out of the end zone when a pass is played to them. The passer goes inside the end zone instead.

Variation #3: Have your goal keepers in the end zone.

Variation #4: Both teams can score in either end zone.

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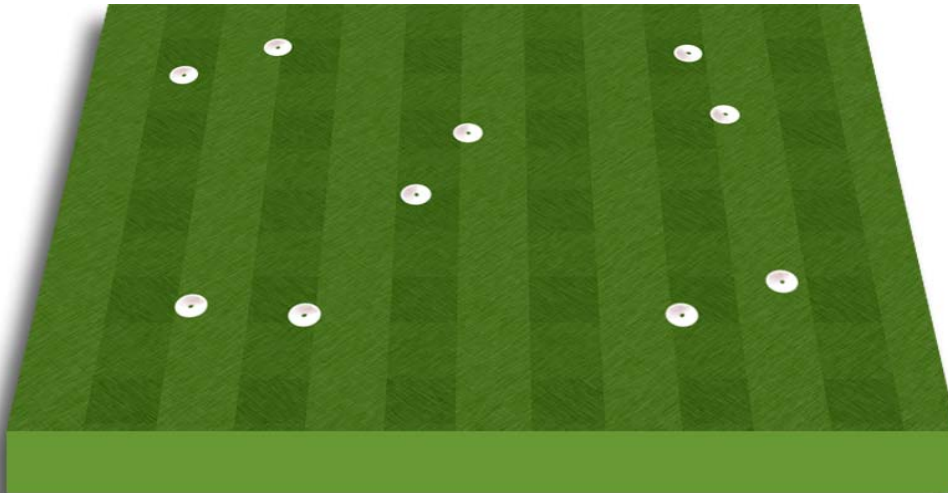
#### **4 Goal**



Normal 4 v 4 but both teams have 2 goals to attack and 2 goals to defend.

**Variation:** Remove the goals from the top left and bottom right hand corner of the diagram and play on a pitch where the goals don't line up.

#### **Passing Gates**



Play normal 4 v 4 but to score a goal the ball must be passed through any of the sets of cones to another member of your own team without the opposition touching the ball. The cones are placed randomly in sets of 2 about 1m apart.

**Variation:** Instead of having the cones in sets of 2 have them in sets of 3 and forming a triangle. A goal is now scored by passing through the triangle to a team mate.

#### **Double Sided Goal**

(No diagram necessary)

Play 4 v 4 with 1 goal in the middle of the pitch and a neutral goalkeeper. Both teams can score from both sides of the goal.

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Variation: Use 2 neutral goalkeepers and make the goal a triangle still in the centre of the pitch. Both teams can score in any side of the triangle.

### **Cone Knockdown**

(No diagram necessary)

Have no pitch markings at all. This time what you do is place 4 white cones down in a line with about 5m between each cone and place a ball on top of each cone. Now do exactly the same thing about 20m away but with blue cones.

Play a normal 4 v 4 but to win the game one team has to knock all the opponents' balls off the cones using the ball in play is the winner.

**Variation:** If you knock an opponent's ball off a cone that ball is captured and the player who knocked it off has to carry it while they are playing.

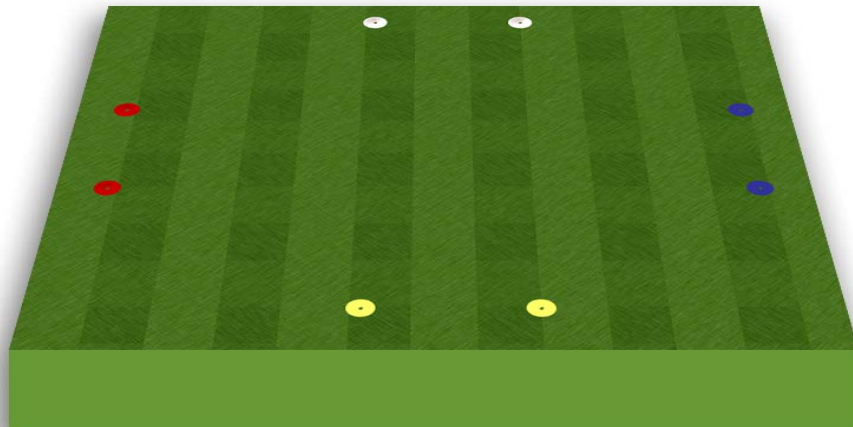
**Variation:** Mix the blue & white cones together so that a player can quickly capitalise on a mistake.

### **Sweeper Cutout Game**

(no diagram necessary)

Instead of one goal at each end of the pitch evenly spread out 3 x 2m wide goals at each end. Play a normal 4 v 4 but designate 1 player from each team as the sweeper. You cannot score in a goal if the sweeper is standing behind that goal.

### **North, South, East & West (or Chaos Soccer)**



Play 2 normal games of 4 v 4 across each other so one game is happening between the white goal and the yellow and a totally separate game is happening between the blue and red goals. In the middle is Chaos as the games cross over each other.

Variation: Play with four teams of 4 and one ball. Each team starts off with 5 points but if a goal is scored in their goal then 1 point is deducted from their total. When all a teams points are gone they still play but don't need to defend their goal anymore. The last team with a point left is the winner.

Variation: Play the 5 Pass game in this setup. Two teams play 4 v 4 but after 5 passes they can score into any of the 4 goals.