



Game Day Challenges

Now that the season is at the mid-point, coaches should have a good idea where their team stacks up relative to the other teams in their bracket. As we have fewer players and teams, due the unusual circumstances of the past 12-months, there are more obvious imbalances than in previous seasons.

Do you have a dominant team, or dominant player(s)?

If you have a dominant player, that player can be challenged individually to make scoring more difficult. Being told “you can’t score” isn’t fun, but helping a player understand that there are other ways to score, and that they are part of a team, can actually increase their technical and tactical ability, rather than dominating with pure physical prowess.

Below is a list of ten challenges (5 individual & 5 team) that can be implemented to try and manage the game-day competitive environment.

Individual challenges:

- 1) Shoot with non-dominant foot. (Identify the appropriate foot for a younger player.)
- 2) Teammate needs to score before same player shoot again. (“Playmaker” role.)
- 3) Shoot from a one-touch finish (Need to incorporate a teammate in attack.)
- 4) Shoot from outside the penalty area. (Long-range shots are lower percentage chances.)
- 5) Play with a maximum of three touches per possession. (Emphasis on passing.)

Team challenges:

- 6) Retreat to the half-way line when the other team has a goal-kick, or the goalkeeper has possession of the ball. (This is similar to the build-out line concept used at 5v5 and 7v7.)
- 7) Everyone must score a goal before any player can score a second goal. (This prevents dominant players from quickly running up the score.)
- 8) Rotate positions. Placing dominant players at the back and allowing less-developed players to play at the front will make it less likely that a team will score. (However, it also makes it highly unlikely that the other team will score.)
- 9) Team must complete a set number of passes or everyone needs to touch the ball before a shot can be taken. (Emphasis on possession and teamwork to build an attack.)
- 10) Pass the ball back to own goalkeeper on each possession. (Places ball closer to own goal, but also helps to develop the ability to build out of the back.)