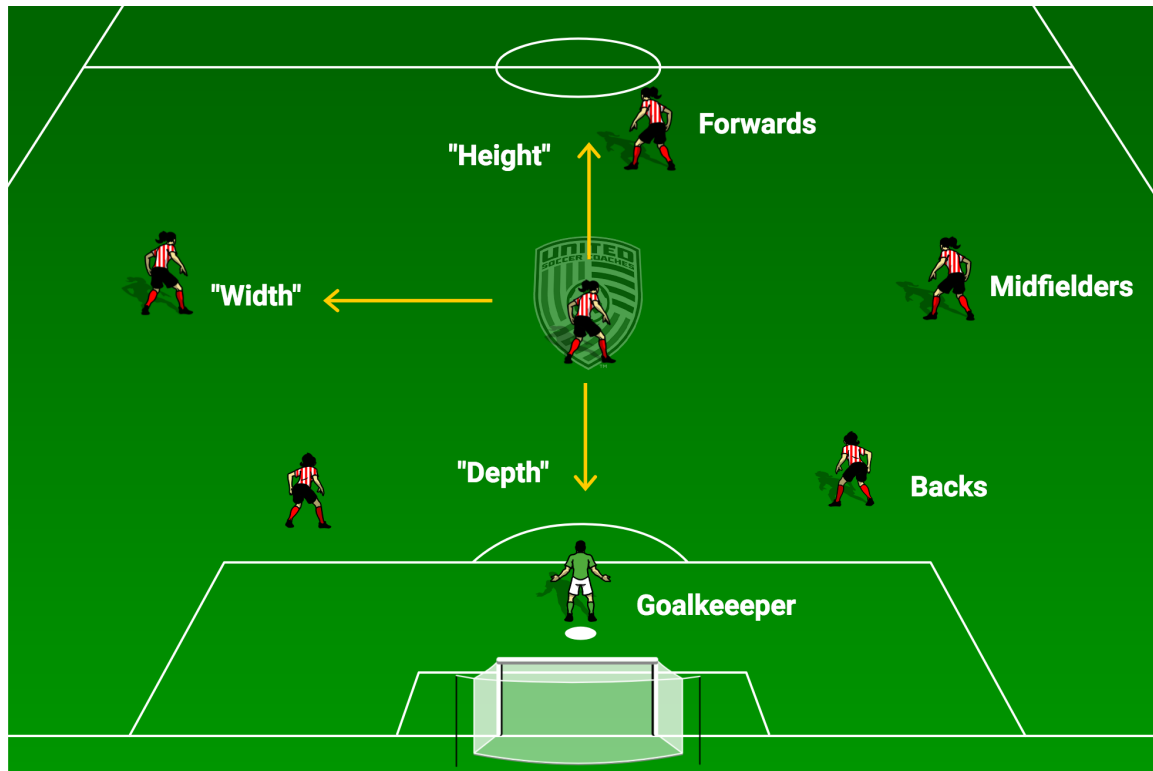# Principles of Play : Attacking

Shape (Width, Depth, Height) & Mobility

"How do I teach players to spread out?"

Do players understand the concept of giving a teammate space? They will often "spread out" because you tell them to, but do they understand why?

- Have a player stand next to a teammate with the ball:
    - *"Are you helping the player with the ball to dribble, pass, or shoot?"*
    - *"Where could you go to help your teammate?"*
    - *"What is the difference between being in space and being open?"*
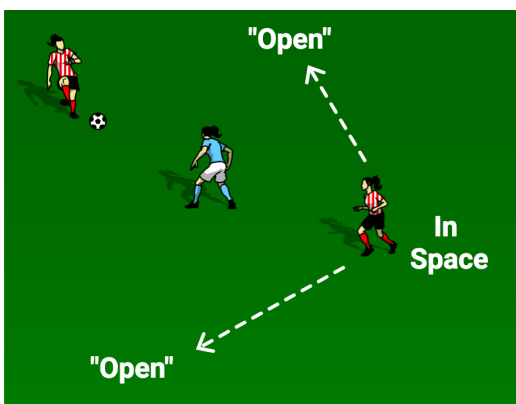
"In Space"
= Away from other players, but passing channel blocked by another player.
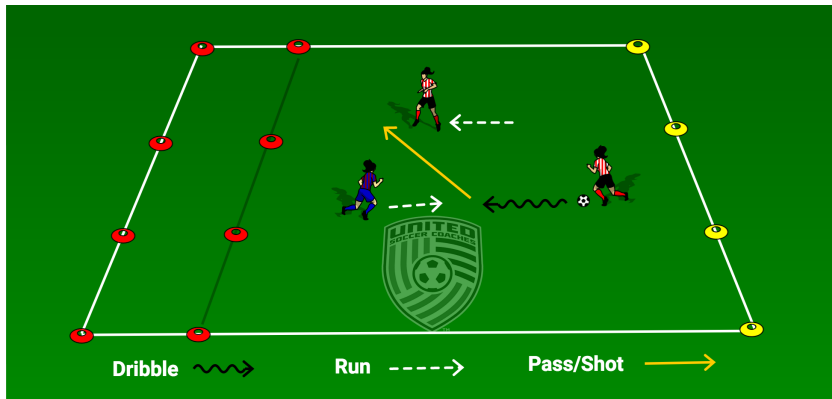
"Open"
= Able to receive a direct pass.

Players need to think about where to move (angle and distance of support) to stay open as much as possible as play develops.

Compiled by: Andrew Ransome, SASC Dir. of Coaching (v.4/23)

Small-sided games

2v1

- Two attackers play against a single defender.
- Attackers attempt to score at one end of the field and defender attempts to play in the opposite direction.
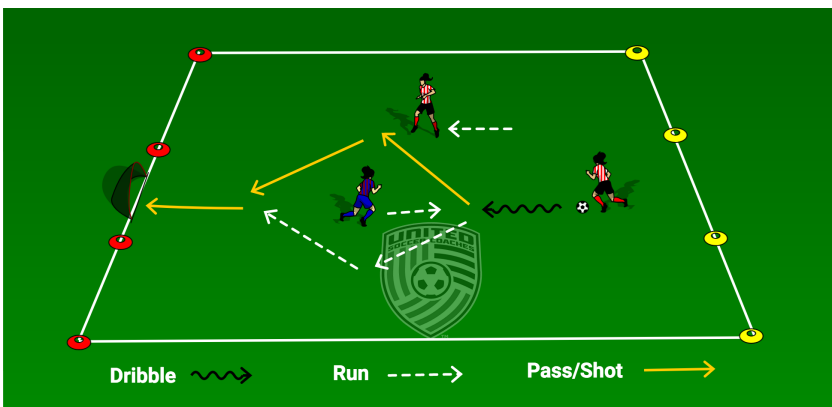- Rotate players between positions/roles.

Dribble 〰〰➤   **Run** - - - - ➤   **Pass/Shot** ➡

End-zone

= Largest area to find space.
(Similar to the space found when building out of the back, or into an opponent's half.)

Dribble 〰〰➤   **Run** - - - - ➤   **Pass/Shot** ➡
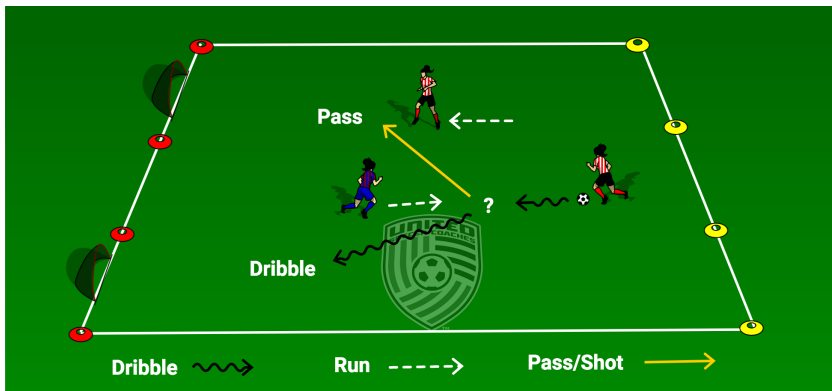
2 goals

= Either attacker can look to penetrate and score.
(Use to develop wing play and concept of crossing towards goal.)

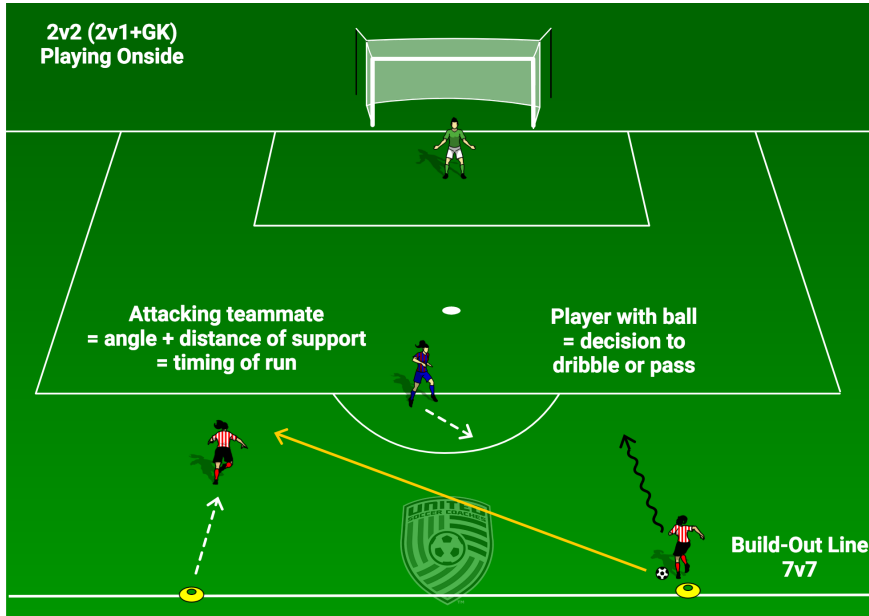**Dribble** 〰〰➤   **Run** - - - - ➤   **Pass/Shot** ➡

1 goal

= Either attack a small goal or a small gate in the middle of the field.
(Play "around" and attack the space "behind" the defender.)

2v2 (2v1+GK)

- Two attackers play against a defender and goalkeeper.
- Use to help players understand onside/offside.
- Attacking against two lines of defenders (back and goalkeeper).
- Rotate positions/roles.

2v2 (2v1+GK)
Playing Onside

Attacking teammate
= angle + distance of support
= timing of run

Player with ball
= decision to
dribble or pass

Build-Out Line
7v7

2v2 (channels)

- Each team has a left and right player who stays in their channel.
- Attack a small goal in the middle of the field.
- Rotate players so that they play both sides of the field.

2v2
Free Play

2v2
Left &
Right
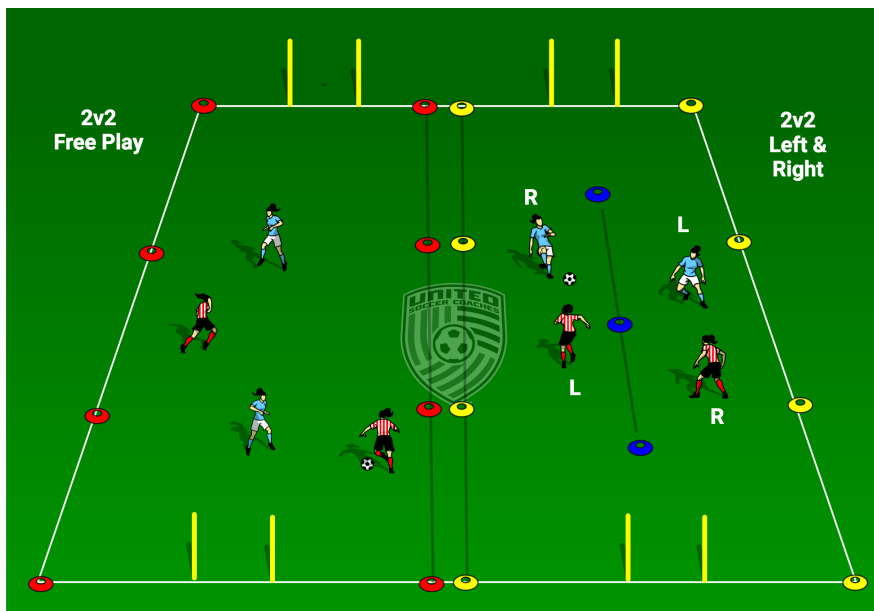
Emphasis on developing **width**.

(Note: a player can defend the goal if they are closer to their goal than the last cone.)

3v3 (channels)

- Play 3v3 with a Left, Center, and Right player on each team.
- Left and Right players stay in their channel to provide width.
- Central player can play on either side to provide support.
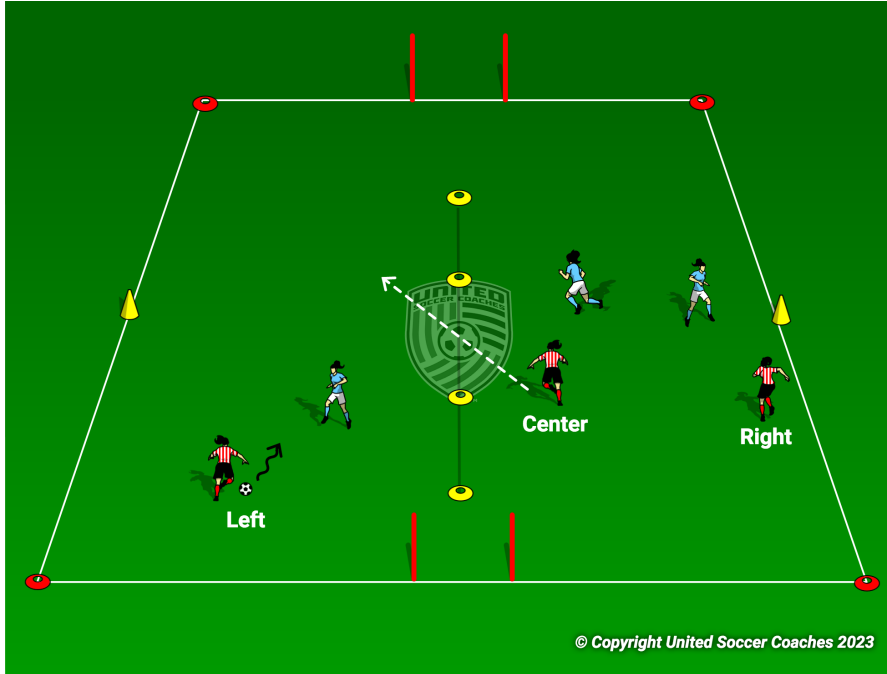
Emphasis on developing **width**.

"Center" player can move to support to create height and depth, as well as provide a central "pivot" to switch play from one side of the field to the other.

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3v3 (zones)

- Play 3v3 with a Back, Midfielder, and Forward.
- Back and Forward stay in own half to provide depth/height.
- Midfielder can play in either half to link play between back and front half.
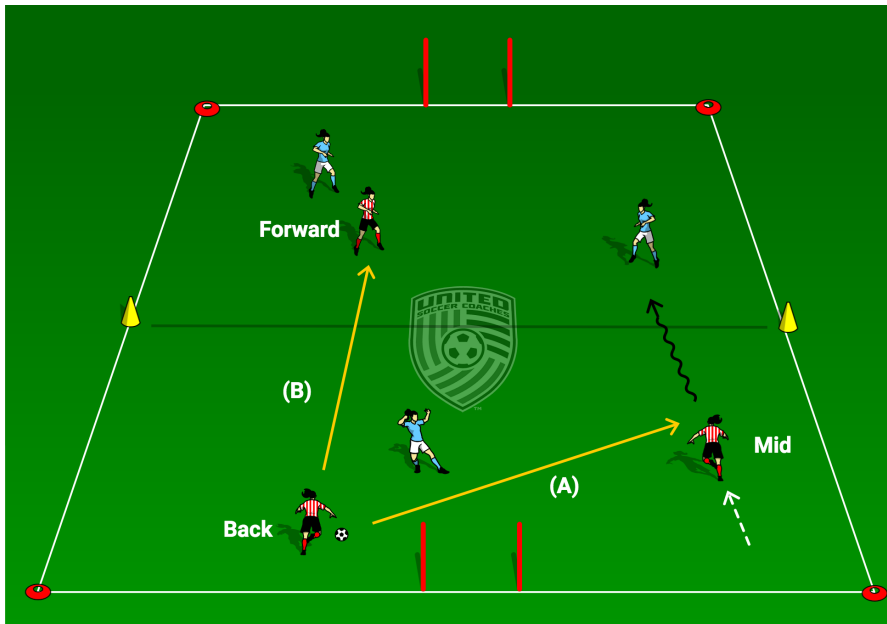
Emphasis on developing **height/depth**.

Option (A): Back passes to Midfielder who dribbles/passes forwards.

Option (B): Back passes to Forward and Midfielder runs up to support.

(Midfielder role could be fluid to allow either player in the back half to support an attack.)

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3v2 (2+GKv1+GK)

- 2 attackers plus a goalkeeper play against a defender and goalkeeper.
- If defender wins ball, they try and quickly shoot on opposite goalkeeper.
- Opportunity to set-up several passing opportunities.
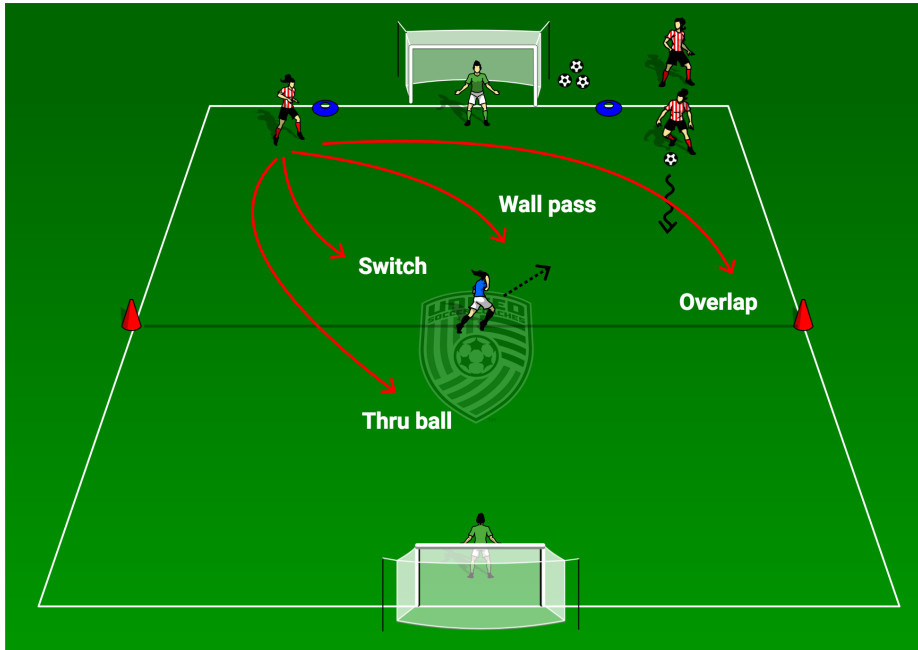
Overlap
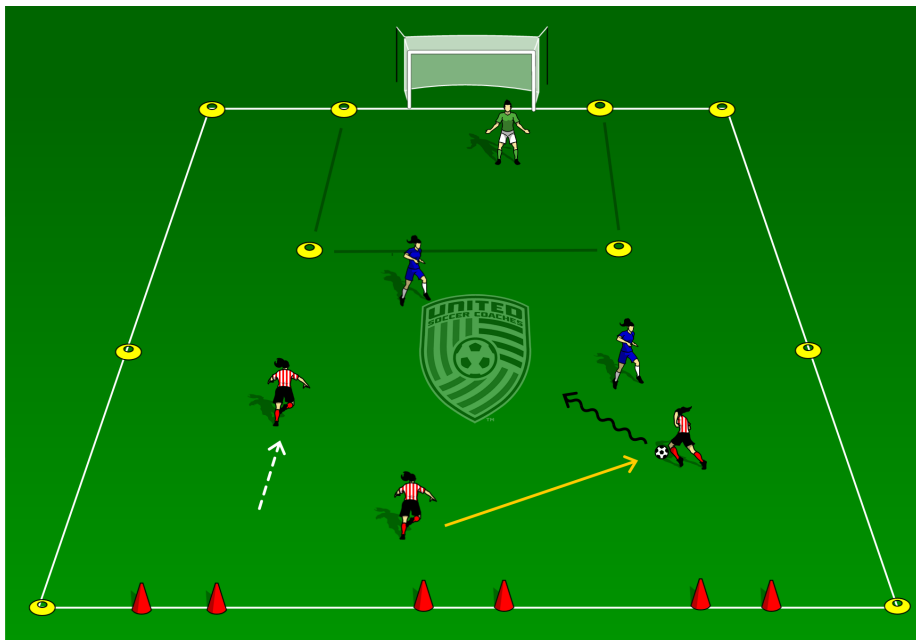= Supporting player runs behind and around dribbler.

Wall-pass
= Quick 1-touch pass around opponent.

Switch
= Pass to opposite side of the field.

Thru ball
= Pass ahead into space.

3v3 (3v2+GK)

- Set up a field with a full-size goal and penalty area at one end.
- 3 attackers play against 2 defenders and a goalkeeper.
- Defending team can counter-attack to mini-goals on the half-way line.

3 attackers try to create different shaped triangles to provide width, depth, and height in attack.

Challenge: attacking group must try to create a scoring opportunity inside the penalty area.

3v3 (2+GK)

- Each team plays with two out-field players and a goalkeeper.
- *"Which player is almost always open?" (Goalkeeper = rear support/reset.)*
- *"Do we need a goalkeeper when we have the ball?" (GK = supports play.)*
- <u>Challenge</u>: require a team regaining possession to play back to their own goalkeeper to initiate an attack.
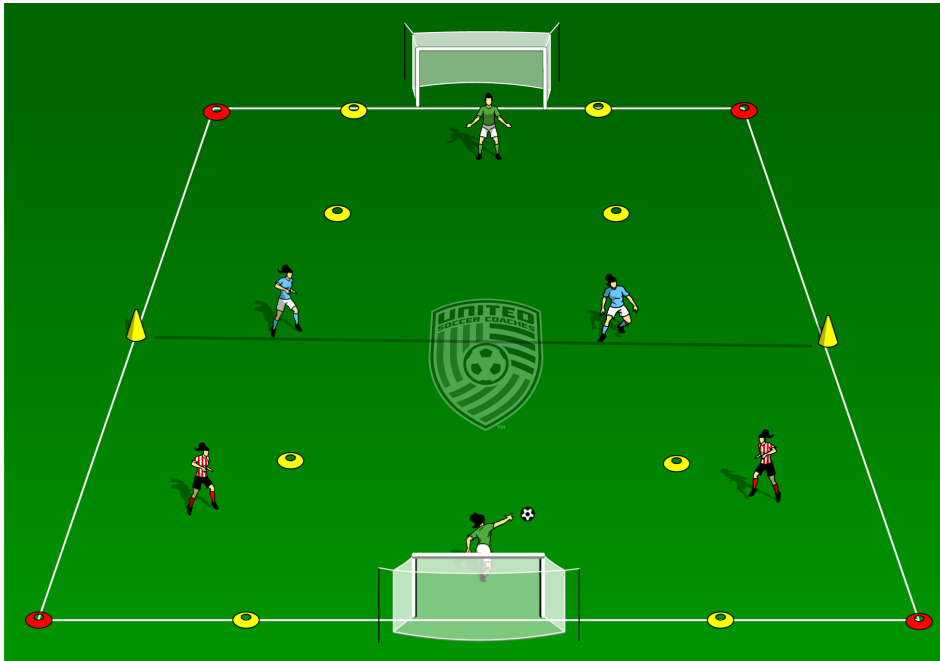
Play with a "build-out" line (use half-way line) on any goalkeeper possession so that the attacking team can learn to build out of the back.

Does the goalkeeper support play on their own throw-in?

Notes:

- When developing a concept, start with the smallest number of players possible to unclutter and simplify the field so players can more easily see their options (e.g., basic support = 2v1; staying onside = 2v2…)

- Overloading the team being coached gives a numerical advantage, and usually increases the possibility of success.

- After a concept has been introduced, remove any artificial challenges (e.g., cones on the field) and observe whether players can demonstrate understanding. (Some concepts will take several practice sessions before showing up in game play.)

- Progress to playing with even numbers to more closely replicate the final game.

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"Attack vs Defense"

- Divide group according to position: GK + backs vs. midfielders + forwards
- Midfielders + forwards attack a full-size goal.
- GK + backs attempt to stop attacking group and counter-attack to small goals. (At this point they are "attacking" while the mids+forwards "defend.")
- Use different restarts: (e.g., kick-off, goal-kick, corner-kick, throw-in.)
- Rotate players between positions.

In the above example, the preferred game-day formation (1-2-3-1) is being taught with each team possessing multiple lines of field players. The coach can either work with the unit defending the big goal (GK + backs + mid) or the unit attacking the big goal (mids + forward) to establish roles associated with each position.

Note: Player roles will change depending on whether the group of players is in possession of the ball (attacking) or does not have possession (defending).

The coach may also want to think about playing style within their own (back) half of the field (safety to prevent goals) versus playing style in their opponents' (front) half of the field (risk to score goals).

"Team vs. Rest"

- Create a full-size team and play against the rest of the players.
- If there are no additional players, the coaches can step in to create some opposition so that players need to think about choices with the ball (dribble, pass, or shoot) and how to move to create appropriate support.
- This creates an overload in favor of the team, which will hopefully allow them to be successful in possessing and penetrating with the ball.
- Use different restarts: (e.g., kick-off, goal-kick, corner-kick, throw-in.)
- Rotate players between groups and positions.

In this 7v7 format example, a full team is training to play out of the back on a goal-kick in a 1-3-1-2 formation. The goal is to progress the ball out to one of three mini-goals on the half way line.
(The opposing players are positioned behind the build-out line as required in the game. The additional number of available players will determine the number of opposing players.)
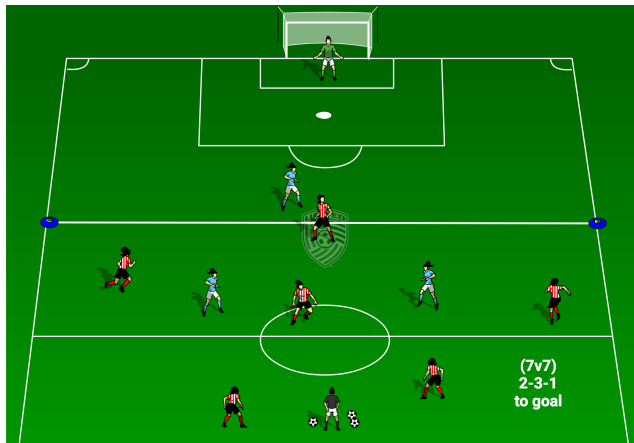
In this 7v7 format example, one team is playing with all of their field players in a 2-3-1 formation against a goalkeeper and strategically placed opponents.
The goal is try to create and finish as many goal-scoring opportunities as possible.
(The opposing team tries to quickly play the ball back to the coach.)

Note: The expectation is that the team with more players will be successful, but this is not always the case as attacking players may not always see the best option available, and a smaller, well-organized defense can be highly effective in disrupting the flow of the game.

Try to coach only the full team and one concept at a time, otherwise the activity can be confusing. Maintain the flow of play, so that players have the opportunity for as much repetition as possible.