

Under 12 Keep Away

This is a simple keep away type passing game submitted by Coach Gerry Sanders on the soccer coach e-mail list.

Start at 5v1, progressing through 5v2, 5v3, etc, to 5v5 helps the learning curve and adjusts for ability, age, etc.). Numbers up or "attacking team" has to move ball from one point to another with the following simple restriction:

A through (forward) pass may only be followed by a square or back pass made to someone other than the person who passed it last.

This forces numbers up (attacking) players to constantly move into receiving position to initiate pass from player with ball. Someone must rotate to fill space behind passer for possible back pass. Passer must look up and anticipate where to pass next because of limited number of eligible receivers.

Players can easily learn to make overlapping runs and diagonal runs to position themselves to receive pass. Other usual coaching points apply.

Defenders, on the other hand, while numbers down, are allowed ANY pass. This forces "defenders" to focus on quick transitions and counterattacks, quickly spreading field when in possession, as well as playing good defense generally.

At the same time, this condition forces "attacking" team to quickly respond to counterattack, and upon recovery of ball, to quickly restore shape.

Each side scores 5 points for getting ball to goal, and one point for each consecutive pass. Two squads, each playing 5v3 for example, can be challenged to see which team can score the most points in a set period of time.

This pattern can obviously be elaborated with other conditions and restrictions.

One could be to allow players receiving a ball played forward to play a second ball forward or play back to the player who gave them the ball, but *only on their first touch*.

In other words, as soon as you take a first touch without playing forward, you're restricted to playing back or square and to a different player.

Another possibility might be to impose a 1-touch or 5-touch restriction on the numbers-up team: if you don't play the ball with your first touch, you must use 5 touches (to force shielding and holding the ball under pressure).