

4 *Use Small Sided Games in Training*

It should be a FIFA policy that soccer coaches use small-sided games for training before players reach the age of 13. The 4 v 4 system speeds up development of technical ability and game intelligence.

4 v 4 is the smallest sided game you can have that has all the elements of a real soccer match without any of the confusions that surround learning soccer.

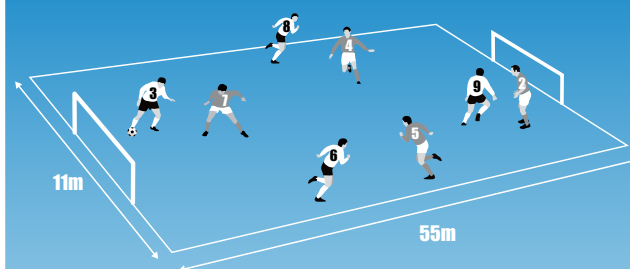
In a real soccer match children have the option of passing the ball forwards, square or backwards. Three children cannot do this because one of the directions will be missing. With five the extra one duplicates one of the elements, which clutters the picture.

4 v 4 also provides the minimum numbers needed for all of the parts that make up a soccer game. One player is up front for penetration. Two are needed for width and one holds back to supply depth. In 4 v 4 the responsibilities are very clear. All tasks are covered and none are shared which keeps things simple.

The benefits

- Technique is improved because players have a far greater number of ball contacts.
- The emphasis on control, passing and shooting provides the fundamental building blocks of soccer.

Rapid break from defence to attack



- It is fun for all the players, they are all involved, they attack and defend.
- The number of passes is increased and therefore the one touch control, one touch pass, sequence is used all the time.
- It is also a good indicator of players' fitness because players are constantly running and playing the game.

4 v 4 is soccer learning at its best. It is fun, creates match situations and promotes an extremely effective learning environment. Small "pictures" are clearer for children and space and options are more compatible with their abilities.

"Failure happens to me all the time. It happens every day in practise. What makes you better is how you react to it"

Mia Hamm, former soccer player, US Women's Team