

Mini Soccer

What Game Format and
Development Model is Best?
*A Study by the Sports
University of Cologne*

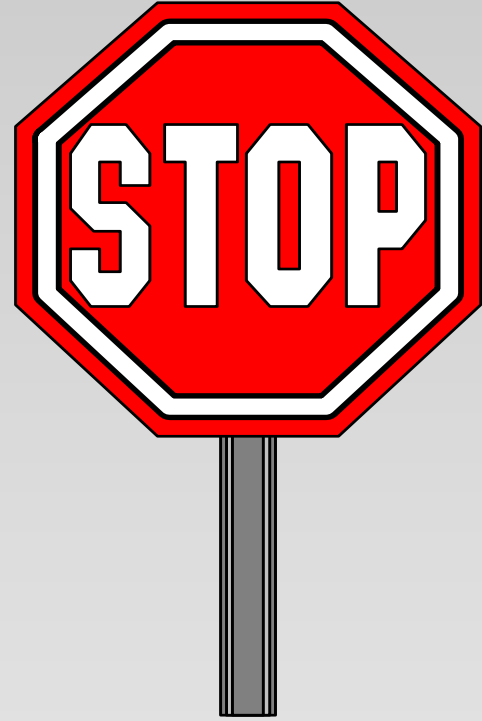


The Study.

- Conducted by the German Football Association, in conjunction with Sports University of Cologne on 6-10 year olds.
- 1992 - 11v11 on 68x95 yard fields
- 1994 - 4v4 and 7v7 on 40x30 and 50x70 yard fields respectively
- 1995 - 6v6 and 7v7 Games on 40x36yard and 36x55 yard fields respectively
- 2 x 5 yard wide goals used in all cases

11v11 On Smaller (68x95) Field

- High Lactate Levels -
Over 4200 yards
covered in 50 minutes
- Ball contacts - 38
average in midfield,
only 20 on defense
- Tactics and rules too
complicated for this
age group
- **Conclusion: Totally
inappropriate for this
age group, high
danger of "burnout"!**



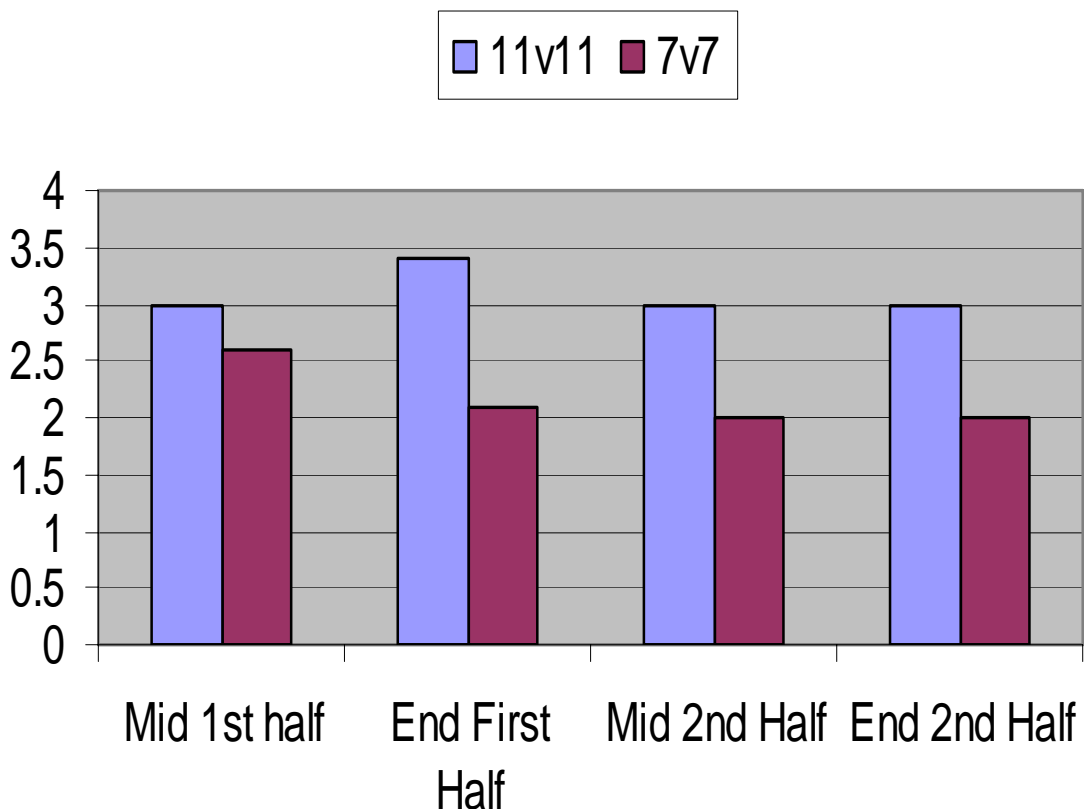
7v7 on Half Field (50x70 yards.)

- Field is still too big for this age
- Hard to distribute players evenly
- **No build up in midfield, goals are scored from long uncontrolled passes causing breakaways, or mistakes by opponents.**
- No attacking imagination used or learned
- **Conclusion: Better than 11v11 but still not the best format**

Physical Stresses

Players cover 4236 yards in 25 minutes, compared to a professional Bundesliga player who cover only about 1000 yards more in the same period

**Lactate Levels in mmol/l - 11v11
against 7v7**

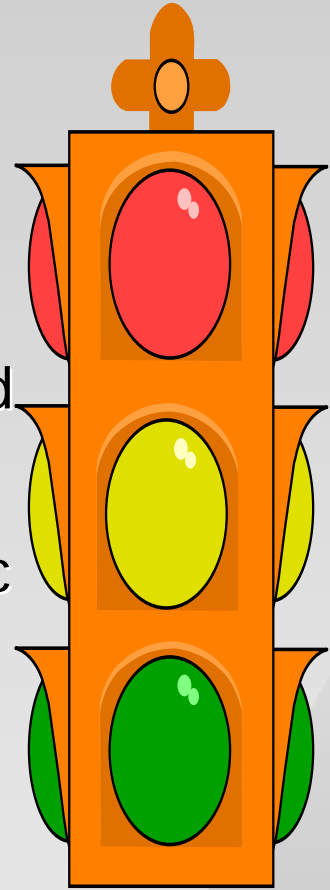


4v4 on 40x30 (5v5 with GK)

- **Teaches all the building blocks** - dribbling, shooting, passing, ball control followed by dribbling and shooting
- Frequent 1v1 situations
- **Attack oriented game** -frequency of shots much higher than any other game
- Few opportunities for tactical mistakes, therefore accent is on **technical training**
- 20x30 fields should be used for training
- **Conclusion: Provides the best vehicle for enjoyment and activity. A must for players who do not have a high level of technical development.**

7v7 in Smaller (35x55) Field

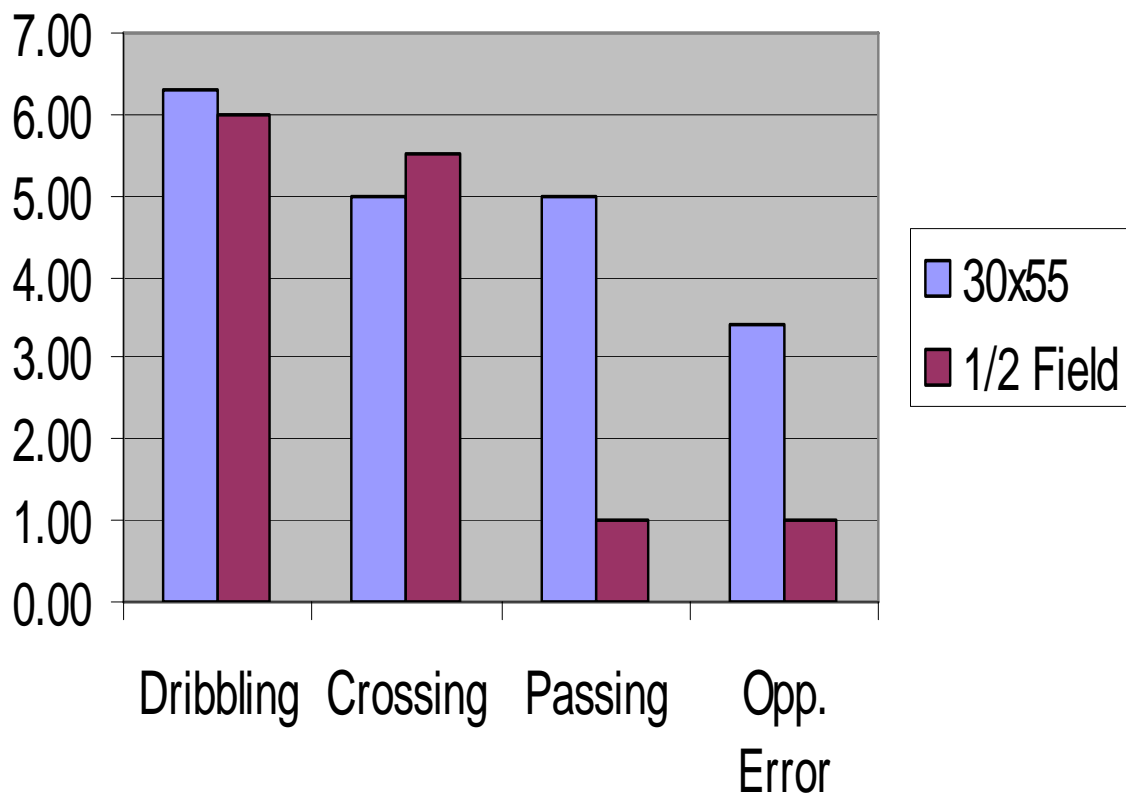
- Optimal physical load on players
- Teaches flexible attacking and Defending
- Lots of Ball Contact - less talented players are involved more
- More opportunity to practice basic elements of good soccer
- More opportunities to attack and defend
- **Conclusion: The ideal game for young players with good technical ability, but it must be used in conjunction with 4v4 training and tournaments**



Attacking Tactics in 7v7

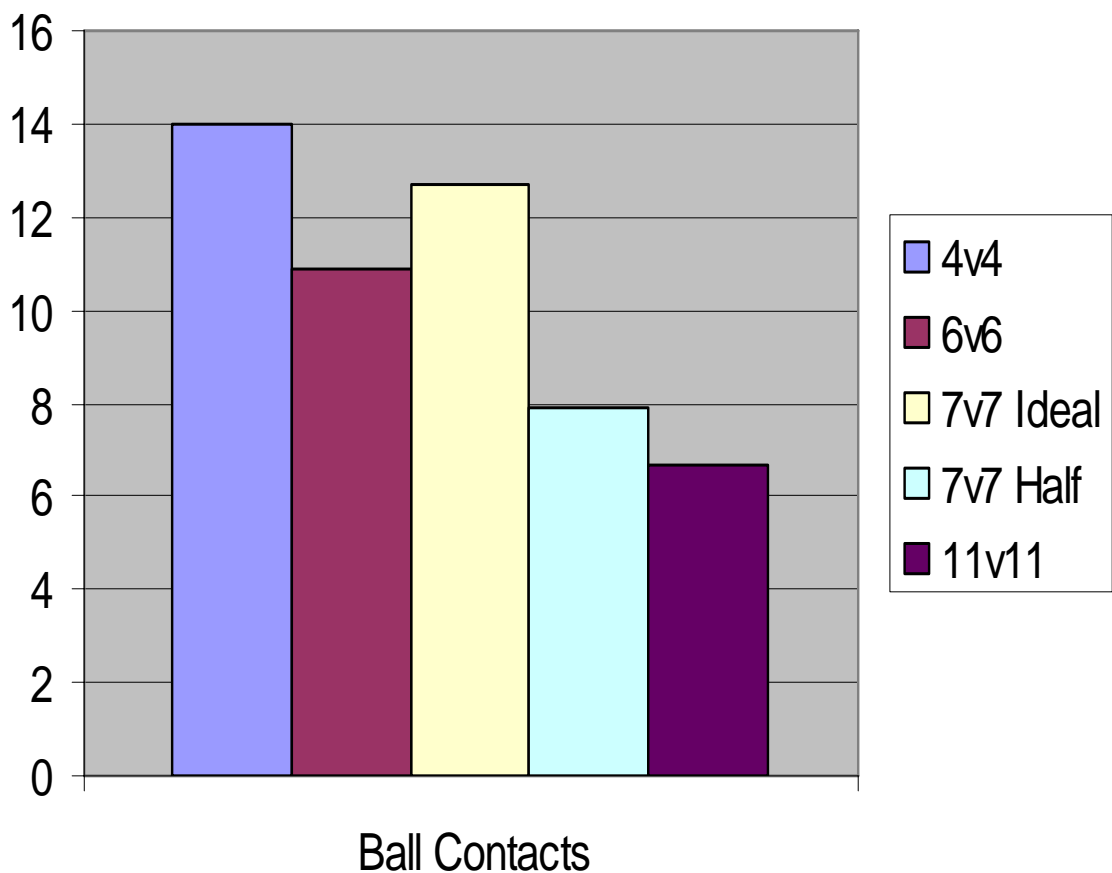
Ideal Field Vs Half Field

Methods used to set up shots on Goal
per 10 minutes- Ideal Field vs Half Field



Number of Ball Touches per Player in 10 Minutes

Touches on the Ball Per 10 Minutes



Average Score at Half Time

- 7v7 in Ideal Field 7-6
- 7v7 in Half Field 4-2
- 11v11 Junior Field 2-1

Training Objectives

- Provide maximum fun and enjoyment for the players
- Challenge Players
- Develop playing ability incrementally
- Create opportunities for success, regardless of ability

Developmental Considerations

- Children like to compete with each other
- Skills need to be developed in playful environment
- Players can't learn when game demands skills or tactics they haven't yet learned
- If they encounter the same situation many times over, they learn to deal with it
- Complicated rules, such as offside detract from the ability to learn fundamentals
- Commonly accepted now that ages 8 to 12 are ideal for developing technique and coordination
- In spite of this many coaches continue to implement adult rules and strategies, which hinder this development

Coaching Considerations

- It's not enough to merely substitute smaller games for 11v11
- Basic concepts such as passing, control, dribbling and ball possession must be taught
- Players should not be forced into rigid positional responsibilities until they have mastered the basics
- **Development is a long term process, and the player's enjoyment should take precedence over that of the parents - games that teach soccer fundamentals may not be the most exciting to watch**
- By changing conditions and variations of the training games, the coach can alter the playing style of the children



Conclusions:

- 4v4 and 5v5 (with goalkeeper) Training and Tournament Games are **a must for technical and basic tactical development**
- **7v7 in a 35x55 or 40x60 yard field provides the ideal game** *for players who have already acquired enough technical development to allow them to cope with more testing tactical decisions*
- **4v4 MUST** be used regularly in training and tournaments
- 7v7 in half field and 11v11 are totally inappropriate for players under 12 years of age as they encourage Kick and Chase Soccer
- **Kick and Chase games do not develop the building blocks** - close control, passing, dribbling and ball possession