## IST PLAY PHASE:Small-Sided Games

OBJ ECTIVE: To deny chances, win the ball back and score.
ORGANIZATION: Mark out two $30 \times 20$-yard fields. Free play:Teams play 4 v 4 on goal lines or 5 v 5 on goals. There are no permanent goalkeepers. One player from the defending team always covers the goal. Play for 30 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Defend the goal, stay compact, move with the ball
GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What's your top priority when you're outnumbered? 2) How can you keep the opponent away from the goal even though you're outnumbered?

ANSWERS: 1) To defend the goal. 2) Form a compact unit, block the direct path to the goal; steer attackers onto the wings; play ball-oriented defense; cover each other; block shots.

NOTES: First break: Coach asks questions, players continue playing to discover answers. Second break: Players share answers with coach and each other.


## PRACTICE (Core Activity): From 1v 2 to $2 \mathbf{v} 2$

OBJ ECTIVE:To prevent the opponent from scoring.
ORGANIZATION: Mark out two $42 \times 44$-yard fields. Divide players into two teams and position them as shown. Play begins with a pass from $A$ to $B$. As soon as the pass is played, C runs in to help D. If the defenders win the ball, they counterattack on the goal line, Player A runs in to help B, and teams play 2 v 2 until a goal is scored. Afterward, A rotates to B's position and C rotates to D's. Play for 30 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Close opponents down, defend the goal, attack the ball
GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What's the job of the defender behind the attacker? 2) What's the job of the other defender?

ANSWERS: 11 Intercept the ball if possible; otherwise stop the attacker from turning around to face the goal. 2) Support the first defender, pressure the attacker and win the ball.


## PRACTICE (Less Challenging): 1v 2 after Forward Pass

OBJ ECTIVE:To prevent the opponent from scoring.
ORGANIZATION: Same as Core Activity, except teams play 1v 2, and Player A stays out of the game after the opening pass, even if the defenders win the ball.

KEY WORDS: Close opponents down, defend the goal, attack the ball
GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1) What's the job of the defender behind the attacker? 2) What's the job of the other defender?

ANSWERS: 1) Intercept the ball if possible; otherwise stop the attacker from turning around to face the goal. 2) Support the first defender, pressure the attacker and win the ball.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this Less Challenging activity if the Core Activity is too difficult. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase.


PRACTICE (More Challenging): 2 v 2 in Middle
OBJ ECTIVE:To prevent the opponent from scoring.
ORGANIZATION: Same as Core Activity, except teams play 2 v 2 (Player A dribbles onto the field). Play continues until a goal is scored by either team.

KEY WORDS: Close opponents down, defend the goal, attack the ball
GUIDED QUESTIONS: 1] What's the job of the defender behind the attacker? 2) What's the job of the other defender?

ANSWERS: 1) Intercept the ball if possible; otherwise stop the attacker from turning around to face the goal. 2) Support the first defender, pressure the attacker and win the ball.

NOTES: Start with the Core Activity and decide whether the level of challenge is appropriate for the players. Switch to this More Challenging Activity if the Core Activity is too easy. Spend a total of 30 minutes in the Practice Phase.


## 2ND PLAY PHASE:The Game

OBJ ECTIVE:To prevent the opponent from scoring.
ORGANIZATION: Mark out an $80 \times 84$-yard field. Divide players into two teams of nine. Each plays a 1-4-3-1 Play according to the Laws of the Game and the standards of play found in the U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives. Play for 30 minutes with two breaks.

KEY WORDS: Close opponents down, defend the goal, maintain contact, attack the ball

GUIDEDQUESTIONS: 1) How can you keep the opponent from scoring? 2) What do the inside defenders need to do on forward passes? 3) How can the midfielders help in this situation?

ANSWERS: 1) Form a compact unit, block the direct path to the goal; steer attackers onto the wings; play ball-oriented defense; cover each other; block shots. 2) Intercept the pass if possible; otherwise stop the receiver from turning around to face the goal. 3) Support the first defender, pressure the attacker and win the ball.

## Five Elements of a Training Activity

1. Organized: Is the activity organized in the right way?
2. Game-like: Is the activity game-like?
3. Repetition: Is there repetition, when looking at the overall goal of the session?
4. Challenging: Are the players being challenged? (is there the right balance between being successful and unsuccessful)
5. Coaching: Is there proper coaching, based on the age and level of the players?

## Training Session Self-Reflection Questions

1. Did you achieve your goals? Yes/No
2. What went well?
3. What could you do better?
