

# Part 6e ASB Mini Football (9-12 years)

**FOOTBALL SPECIFIC TRAINING**, Playing together with Purpose - Learning

## Stages of the Framework



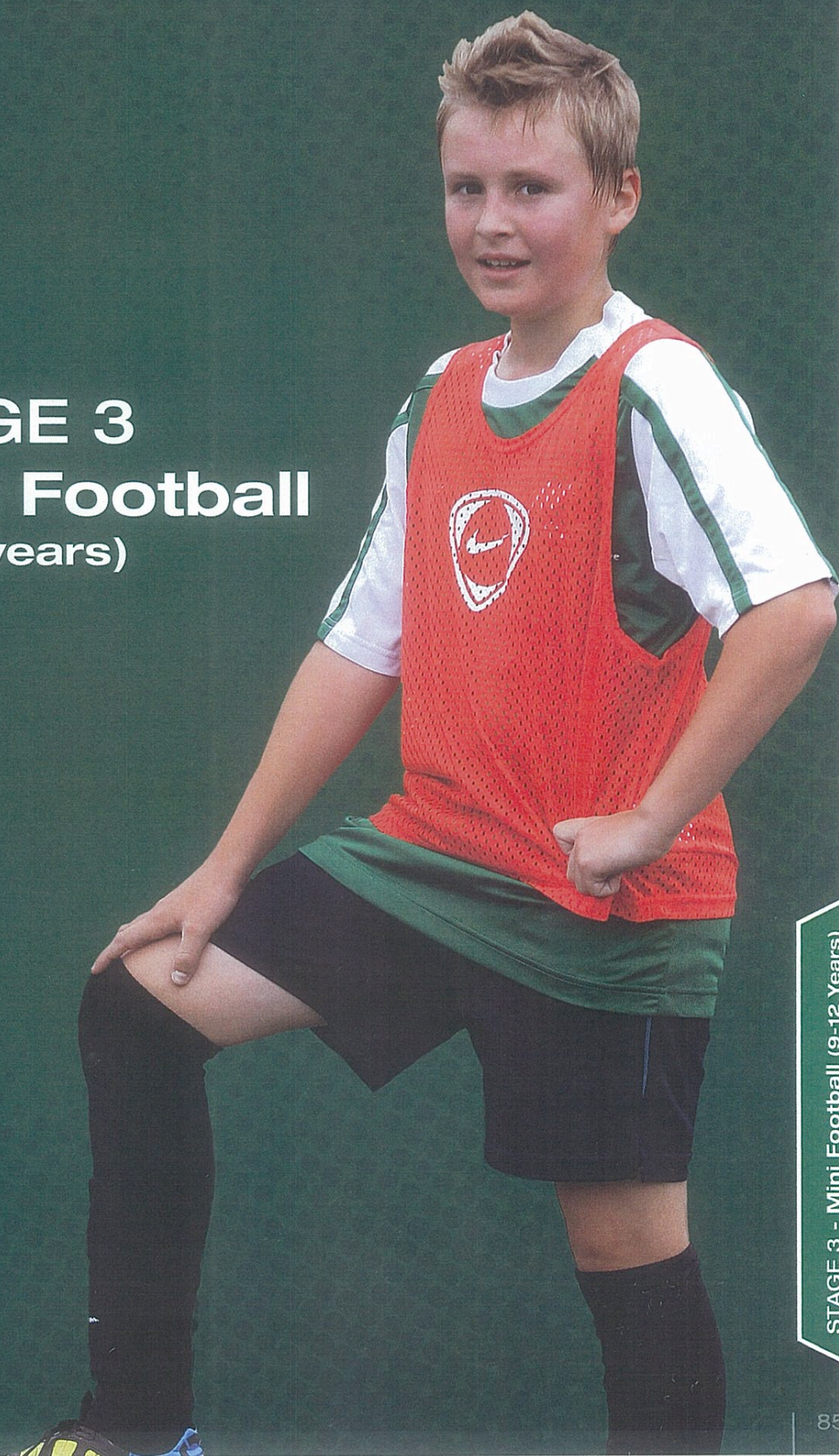




# STAGE 3

## ASB Mini Football

(9-12 years)





### Mini Football - Developing the football specific movement and technical capabilities to support lifelong participation in football

The Mini Football player's experience should be filled with motivational and competitive challenges, with a growing emphasis placed on the learning of football skills within the context of the game. Mini Football players are hungry to learn, so coaches should apply game-based approaches to learning the more advanced skills required in the game. As players progress through Mini Football, they start to develop a greater understanding of how the game is played both in attack and defence, and will start to understand how to create and deny time and space. In summary, the season should offer motivation, competition and learning, to develop a well-rounded player.



#### TECHNICAL & TACTICAL

##### Characteristics

Players are hungry to learn new skills. Basic tactical development with reference to roles within a team

Players are becoming interested to learn the relevant skills required in the game

Players are more aware of the concept of team

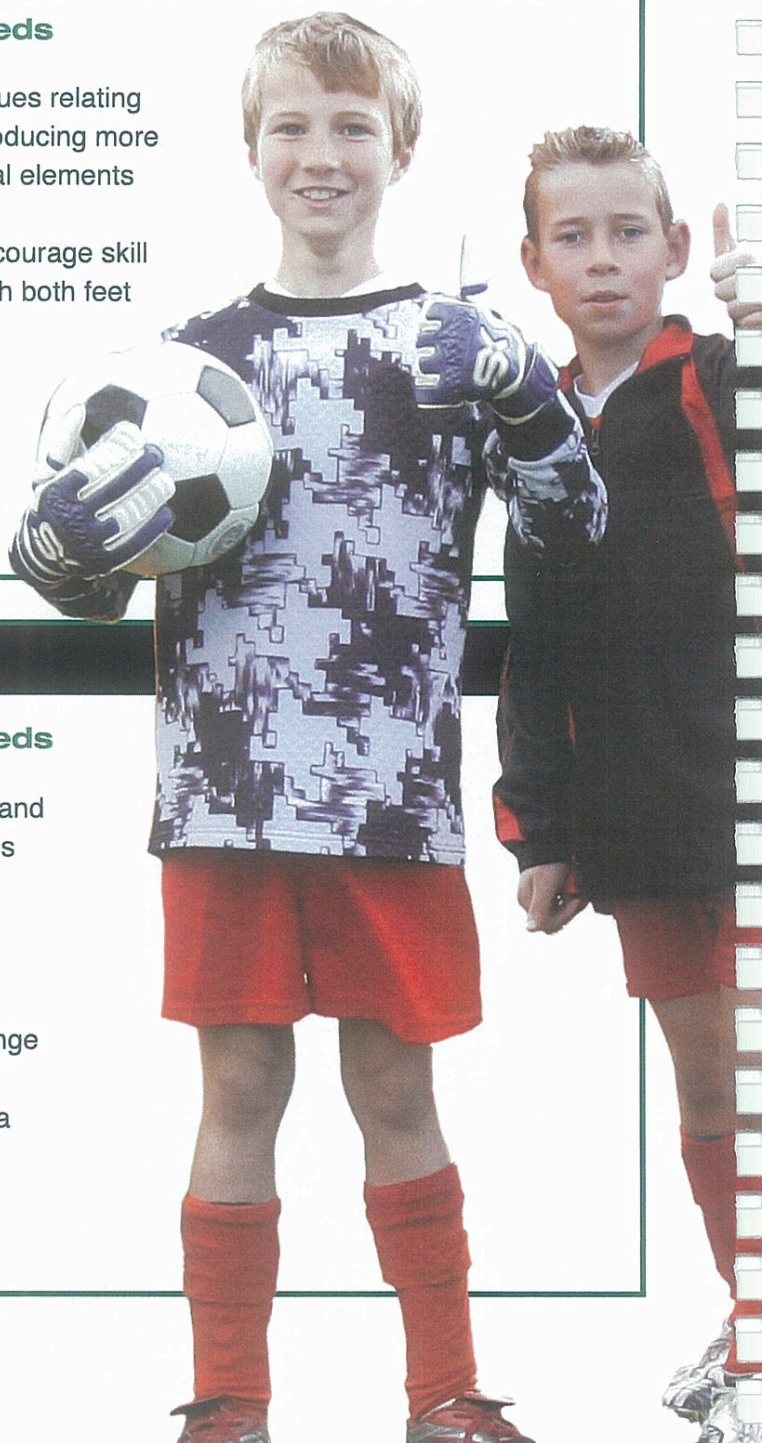
Players become more tactically aware of the principles relating to creating and denying space

##### Meeting Needs

Refining techniques relating to roles and introducing more advanced tactical elements

Enthuse and encourage skill development with both feet

Link training to matches with basic tactical development



#### PHYSICAL

##### Characteristics

Adapt to the physiological changes occurring within age groups and genders

Enjoy the opportunity to challenge others in the area of physical contacts

Very active and energetic

Physical changes are present in girls

##### Meeting Needs

Focus on agility and speed techniques within football contexts

Use competitive games to challenge the physical development of a player





## What does the Mini Football Player want and need?

This is the stage to ensure core skills are in place for long-term participation in football. On top of this, we strive to create a motivational environment that promotes a desire to play the game with all players.

At this age, players are generally competitive and have a desire to learn through playing. Coaches must provide them with a challenging environment that offers lots of opportunities to learn new skills and apply them within a game.



### MENTAL

#### Characteristics

- Critical of self and others
- Capable of and enjoy problem solving
- Can be sensitive to criticism
- Individually competitive

#### Meeting Needs

- Reinforce individual improvement and progression
- Assign individuals tasks to develop awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- Challenge players with questioning and problem solving games
- Promote self-initiative



### SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL

#### Characteristics

- More responsibility and ownership for developing team culture
- Peers opinions are important to individuals
- Fairness is important to players at this stage
- Start to become more aware of and recognise the value of others

#### Meeting Needs

- Equal opportunities for all
- Start to develop a team culture through trust, responsibility and ownership
- Emphasise teamwork throughout sessions



# Part 6e ASB Mini Football (9-12 years)

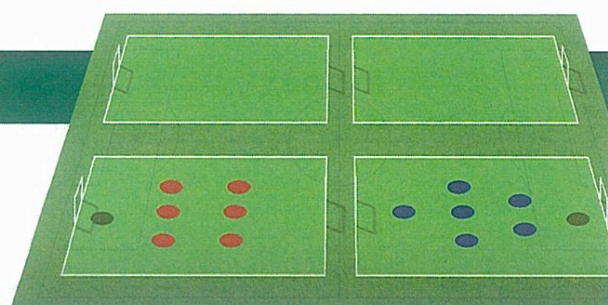


## 1. GAME DAY

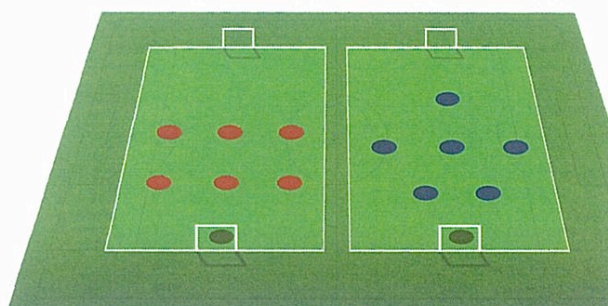


### Game Day - Setup (9-10 Years)

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Format                      | 7v7* <small>* 5v5 specific to the Girls Junior Framework</small> |
| Minimum field size          | 45 x 30m   |
| Maximum field size          | 55 x 35m   |
| Minimum goal size           | 3.8 x 1.9m   |
| Maximum goal size           | 4 x 2m   |
| Ball size                   | 4  |
| Contact time                | 75-90 minutes  |
| Contact frequency           | 3 x per week including Game day                                  |
| Max. Mini Pitches per field | 4  |
| Formal competition          | Home & away  |

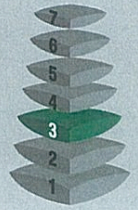


Maximising the use of one football field



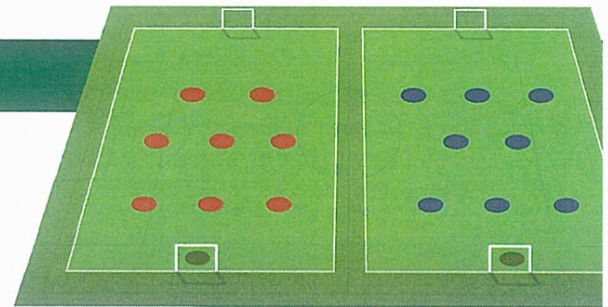
Max. size field (physically mature or talented players)



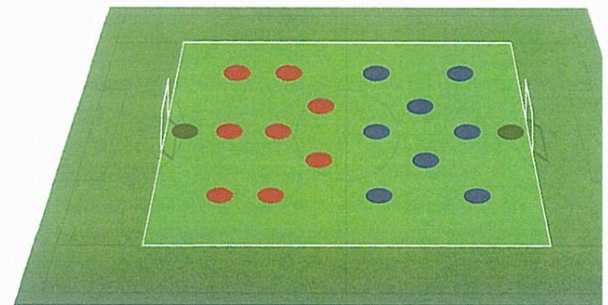


## Game Day - Setup (11-12 Years)

|                             |                                 |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Format                      | 9v9*                            | * 7v7 specific to the Girls Junior Framework |
| Minimum field size          | 60 x 45m                        |  |
| Maximum field size          | 70 x 50m                        |  |
| Minimum goal size           | 4 x 2m                          |  |
| Maximum goal size           | 5 x 2m                          |  |
| Ball size                   | 4                               |  |
| Contact time                | 90 minutes maximum              |  |
| Contact frequency           | 3 x per week including Game day |  |
| Max. Mini Pitches per field | 2                               |  |
| Formal competition          | Home & away                     |  |



Maximising the use of one football field



Max. size field (physically mature or talented players)

Mini Football sees the introduction of formal competition for game day and this is reflected in the larger playing structures and more traditional methods of running game days.

The development from 7v7 through to 9v9 at Mini Football reflects the developments in mental awareness that take place at this stage. Players develop a greater understanding of how to play the game both in and out of possession, as well as the principles associated with creating and denying space and time.

Please note that in girls-only football at the Mini Football stage smaller sided games are played for longer, with 5v5 continuing from Fun Football with the gradual progression to 7v7. This unique gender intervention aims to accelerate the technical development of the female player by increasing the number of touches on the ball.

Success for a Mini Football coach should be measured purely by individual and team development of technical skills and basic tactical understanding. Game day becomes more important to the development of a player at this stage, so this should not be overly focused on winning. Long-term development should be at the forefront of the game day experience.

Mini Footballers will start to favour particular positions, however they should be encouraged to try new positions to develop a greater understanding of the game and to raise their awareness of areas they need to work on. The structures outlined for both 7v7 & 9v9 are guidelines to assist coaches in assisting the development of the Mini Footballer.

### The benefits of structures within 7v7 & 9v9 football are as follows:

- 1 Greater understanding of the game through context and reference to areas of the pitch.
- 2 Greater enjoyment through effectiveness and players working cooperatively in a team.
- 3 Players experience different positions within a framework that helps them develop a shared understanding.

Although structures are crucial to developing the player, they should be gradually and subtly introduced. They are simply a framework to work from.

### Beware of these traps:

- 1 Information overload from the coach, resulting in confusion and low confidence.
- 2 Over-emphasis of structures detracting from the key ingredient of fun and the players ability to explore the game and express themselves through football.
- 3 Negative structures and tactics in order to gain results.



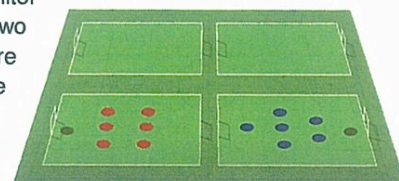


## 1. GAME DAY *cont..*

### 9-10 years: 7v7 Playing Structures

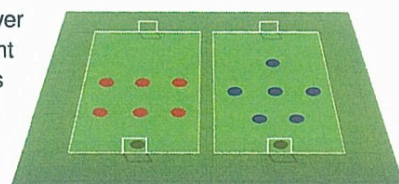
#### 1-3-3 (developing towards 4-4-2)

This is the first introduction of playing structures to a player, so it is simple, easy to monitor and focuses on working closely together as a team. This playing structure produces two compact units when defending and natural width when attacking. This particular structure helps players develop an understanding and feel for playing on two lines in relatively close proximity, making combination play and basic organisation in both attacking and defending moments of the game relatively easy. The 1-3-3 structure lays the basic foundations for a traditional 11-aside 4-4-2 formation and exposes players to opportunities to develop their understanding of basic combination play in wide areas.



#### 1-2-3-1 (developing towards 4-3-3)

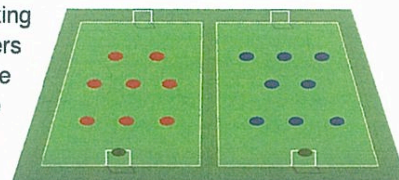
This structure which may be seen as a progression from the 1-3-3 introduces the players to playing on three lines with the inclusion of a central forward playing in front of a 3 player midfield. This introduction of a forward player adds greater depth to the team from front to back and encourages the development of early forward passing and supporting runs from midfield players. The structure helps players to understand the attacking and defensive responsibilities of wide players and encourages defenders to build up play through using players in the midfield line. The structure naturally predisposes players to greater passing and support angles which in turn encourages teams to adopt a short passing game.



### 11-12 Years: 9v9 Playing Structures

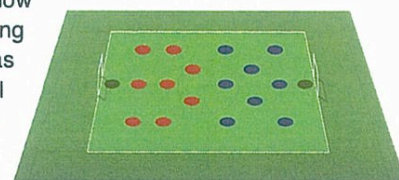
#### 1-3-3-2 (developing towards 4-4-2)

At 9v9 a forward line of players are added to the structure creating a 3-3-2 formation. The structure now develops understanding of playing on three lines and provides balanced coverage across the whole pitch. The structure enables players to remain within close proximity of each other promoting opportunity for combination play in both attack and defence. The attacking structure utilising two forwards and wide midfield players can help develop your players understanding of how to create and score from crossing opportunities as well as how the two forwards can effectively combine. Discovering how to quickly move the ball from one side of the pitch to attack down the other using central players as the pivot becomes a key learning opportunity for players utilising this structure. In defence the small distances between the three lines helps players to quickly create a short and tight structure that can move cohesively from side to side, forward and backwards while reducing space and time for the opposition to play.



#### 1-3-2-3 (developing towards 4-3-3)

The 9 aside structure includes the introduction of two wide forward players to the forward line and an extra player to the midfield line. This structure continues to promote the use of a short passing game and building play through midfield as passing and support angles can be created with relative ease. In attack forward players develop an understanding of how to combine on a line of three and wide forwards gain exposure to creating and exploiting 1v1 situations. In addition with two central midfield players moving the ball into wide areas and maintaining possession of the ball in the centre of the pitch becomes easier. Central midfield players can start to develop an understanding of how to support the attack when the ball is with the forwards and the wide defenders should be encouraged to explore how and when to enjoy in the attack when the ball moves to their side of the pitch. In defence the structure enables the team to defend from the front using the three forward players to quickly pressurise the opposition to deny time and space. In addition the structure will help wide forwards learn how to support midfield players and wide defenders when the ball is played behind them.







## What a typical Saturday morning looks like for the Mini Footballer

Mini Football sees the introduction of home and away fixtures for clubs.

### Option A: Playing 2 Small Sided Games within 1 game day (optimal)

#### 7v7

- 10 minute station activity (Football Coordination or Football Technique)
- 25 minute game
- 5 minute rest/changeover period
- 25 minute game (against the same opposition or a different team)

FOOTBALL TECHNIQUE  
10 minutes

or

FOOTBALL COORDINATION  
10 minutes

SMALL SIDED GAME 7v7  
2 x 25 minute games

#### 9v9

- 10 minute station activity (Football Coordination or Football Technique)
- 30 minute game
- 5 minute rest/changeover period
- 30 minute game (against the same opposition or a different team)

FOOTBALL COORDINATION  
10 minutes

or

FOOTBALL TECHNIQUE  
10 minutes

SMALL SIDED GAME 9v9  
2 x 30 minute games



# Part 6e ASB Mini Football (9-12 years)



## 1. GAME DAY *cont..*

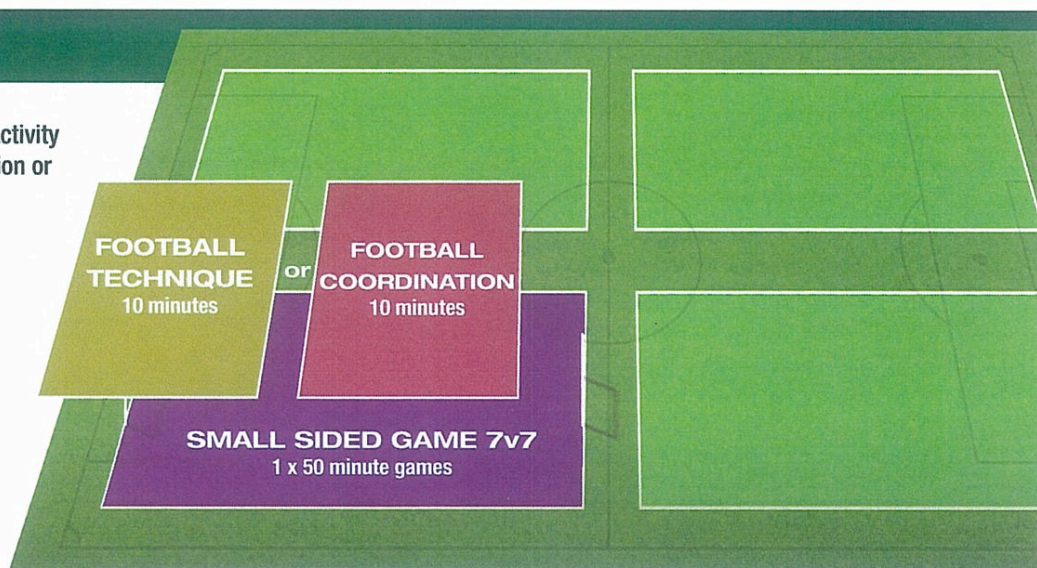
### Why?

- There is less chance of a scoreline blow-out with shorter games, so confidence and motivation are increased.
- More emphasis can be placed on development as opposed to winning, particularly if teams play each other twice. This can promote more positive and attacking football rather than negative football in order to protect a winning result.
- Coaches have more opportunity to change teams around and try players in different positions across two games.
- With players playing two shorter games, they should be less focused on winning and much quicker to move on from a negative result.

### Option B: Playing 1 Small Sided Game within 1 game day

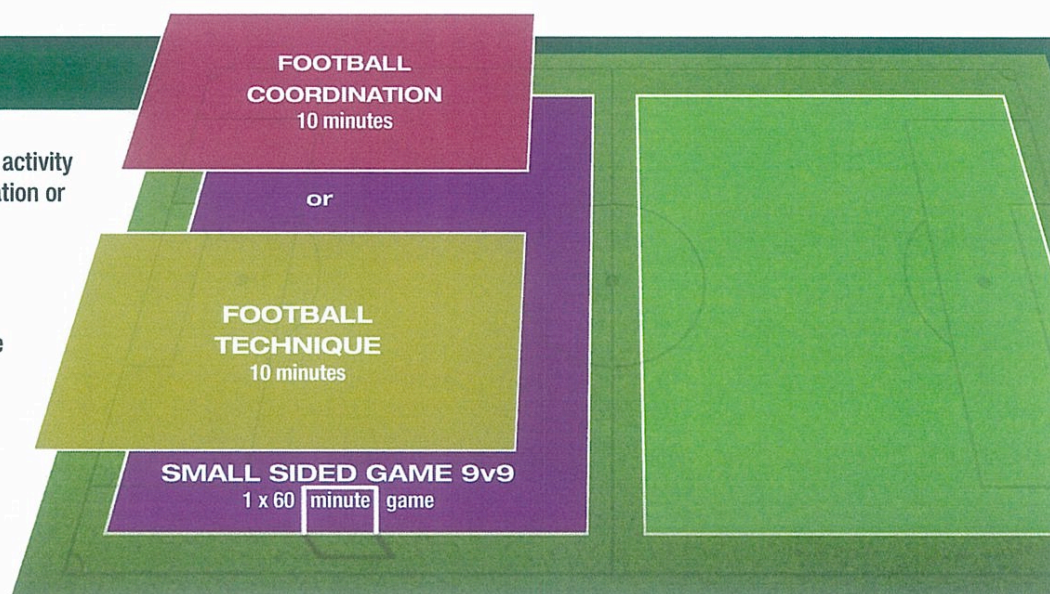
#### 7v7

- 10 minute station activity (Football Coordination or Technique)
- 25 minute half
- 5 minute half time
- 25 minute half

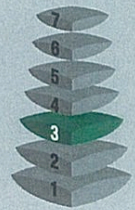


#### 9v9

- 10 minute station activity (Football Coordination or Technique)
- 30 minute half
- 5 minute half time
- 30 minute half







## Organisation Requirements

Here are some useful guidelines around the number of teams that can be formed out of the number of Mini Football players within a club.

| NUMBER OF MINI FOOTBALL TEAMS (7v7) | NUMBER OF PLAYERS (7v7 + 1 Sub per team) | NUMBER OF PLAYERS (7v7 + 3 Subs per team) |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 team                              | 8  | 10  |
| 2 teams                             | 16                                       | 20  |
| 3 teams                             | 24                                       | 30  |
| 4 teams                             | 32                                       | 40  |
| 5 teams                             | 40                                       | 50  |
| 6 teams                             | 48                                       | 60  |
| 7 teams                             | 56                                       | 70  |
| 8 teams                             | 64                                       | 80  |

| NUMBER OF MINI FOOTBALL TEAMS (9v9) | NUMBER OF PLAYERS (9v9 + 2 Subs per team) | NUMBER OF PLAYERS (9v9 + 4 Subs per team) |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 team                              | 11  | 13  |
| 2 teams                             | 22  | 26  |
| 3 teams                             | 33  | 39  |
| 4 teams                             | 44  | 53  |
| 5 teams                             | 55  | 65  |
| 6 teams                             | 66  | 78  |
| 7 teams                             | 77  | 91  |
| 8 teams                             | 88  | 104                                       |



# Part 6e ASB Mini Football (9-12 years)



## 2. TRAINING



The Mini Football training structure and supporting curriculum for players is focussed on creating technically proficient players that can apply fundamental football techniques effectively in the game context. This stage of development has been defined by many in the football world as the 'golden years of player development' due to the child's willingness to learn as well as the bodies readiness to adopt football specific techniques. Coaches play a crucial role in taking advantage of this opportunity. Through constantly promoting technical excellence and refining the basic football techniques into effective game skills, coaches can help their players move towards youth football and beyond, equipped with the tools necessary to play the game with confidence. This will foster a lifelong enjoyment and commitment to the sport. The Mini Football grading process is used to prescribe the right training programmes and content to the right players based on their specific football development age and needs. Training at this age should be highly motivating filled with challenges and competitive games, without losing the key ingredient of fun.

As with Fun Football, we use Small Sided Games for training. However, in Mini Football more emphasis is placed on players developing a greater game understanding through games, while not neglecting opportunities for the development of skills. These models ensure the Mini Footballer's needs are met through training structures that are appropriate for the player's age and stage of development.

### Mini Football Training Models

There are three models available within Mini Football, depending on the availability of coaches, players and facilities. Clubs should strive to deliver station rotation long term to achieve the desired outcomes. The table below summarises the difference between the three models.

| MODEL                             | DESCRIPTION   | MIN. REQUIREMENTS                   | OPTIMAL                                     |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>1. Team-based Training</b><br> | A team of players and coach train together throughout the season. Rather than working through stations, time is allocated to the key training components                                      | 1 coach<br>with 1 area available    | 1 coach<br>with 2 areas available           |
| <b>2. Dual Training</b><br>       | Two Mini Football teams train together, based on similar ability levels   | 2 coaches<br>with 2 areas available | 2 coaches<br>with 2 or more areas available |
| <b>3. Station Rotation</b><br>    | Lots of Mini Football players train together, depending on availability of players, coaches or facilities. This may be an interim step for clubs to operate for a training additional evening | 3 coaches<br>with 3 areas available | 3 coaches<br>with 3 areas available         |





## 1. Team-based Training - The Preferred Model \*

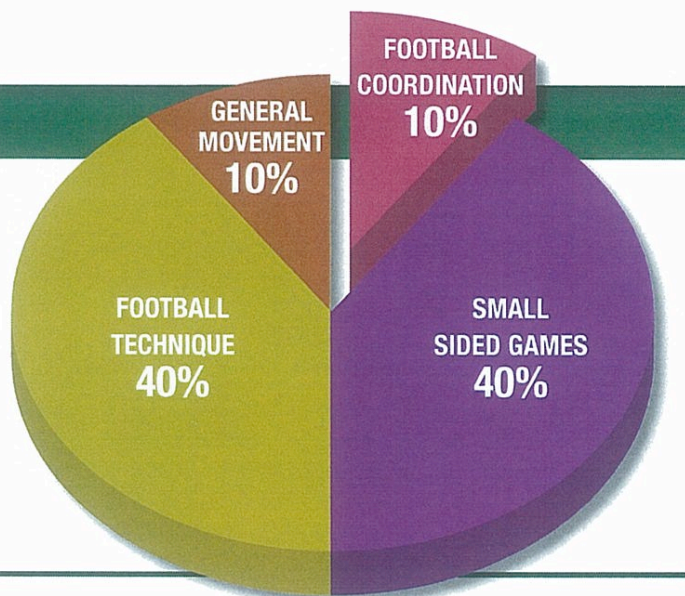
### Reasons why it's the preferred model

- 1** **Players are training and playing with players of a similar ability**
- 2** **The Mini Football player is able to develop a greater understanding of team related principles which apply to the game**
  - Through regular exposure to the same players in the team environment, players start to develop an understanding of the individual and collective qualities of their teammates and can use this to improve their own performance
  - The coach is able to cater to the needs of the players from observations in both training and games across the duration of the season, and link the two environments to deliver specific outcomes
- 3** **Sessions can be adjusted based on the needs of players**
  - The coach can extend or reduce one of the session components based on how the players are progressing through that particular session

### Focus on Training

Four key training components (General Movement, Football Coordination, Football Technique and Small Sided Games) with time allocated as follows

- 10% General Movement
- 10% Football Coordination
- 40% Football Technique
- 40% Small Sided Games



Coaches should use the above training percentages as a guide to construct their weekly and season long training programmes. These percentages have been established to ensure that coaches maximise their time with the players through focussing on the areas that will make the biggest difference to their football development. Coaches can choose activities from the Mini Football training curriculum to construct a motivating and highly relevant football training session for their players.



# Part 6e ASB Mini Football (9-12 years)



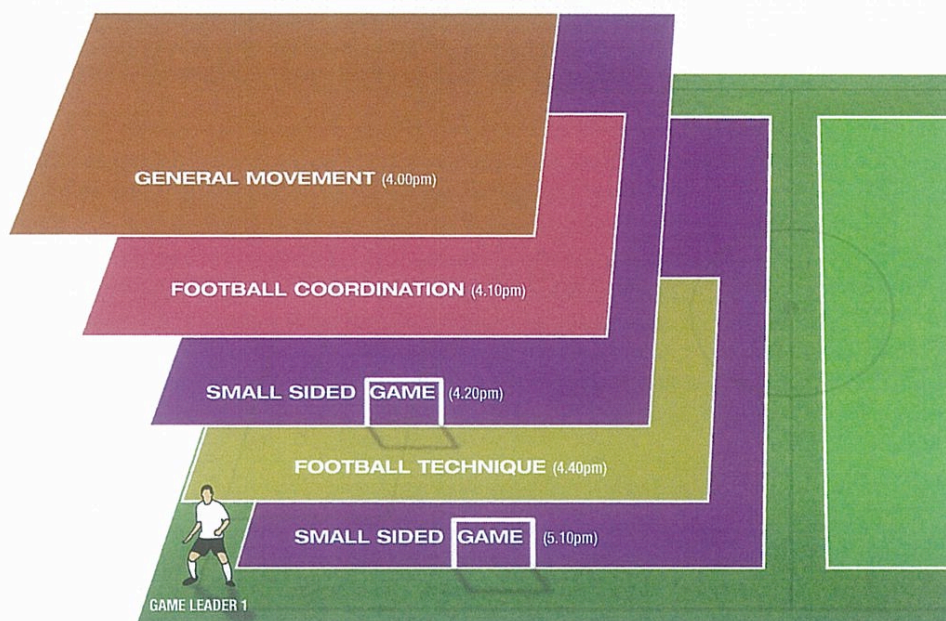
## 2. TRAINING *cont..*



### 1. Team-based Training \* *cont..*

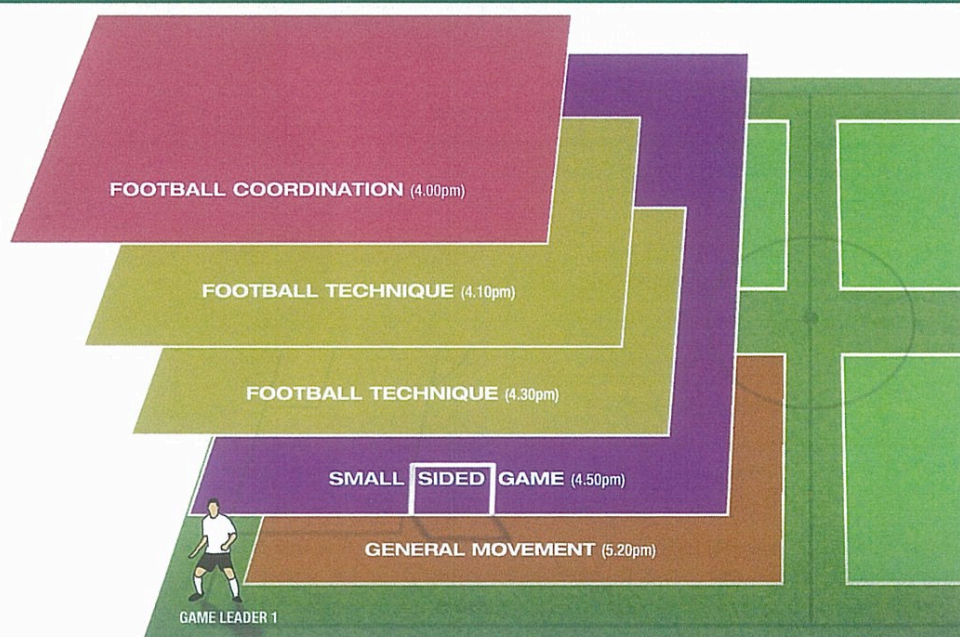
#### Team-based Training - Example of Structure 1.

- Coach observes a Small Sided Game, then breaks down possible techniques outside the game and allows players to apply what they have learnt in the 2nd Small Sided Game
- Whole part whole approach



#### Team-based Training - Example of Structure 2.

- Gradual progression of a session by working through similar activities with similar outcomes
- Progressive Approach





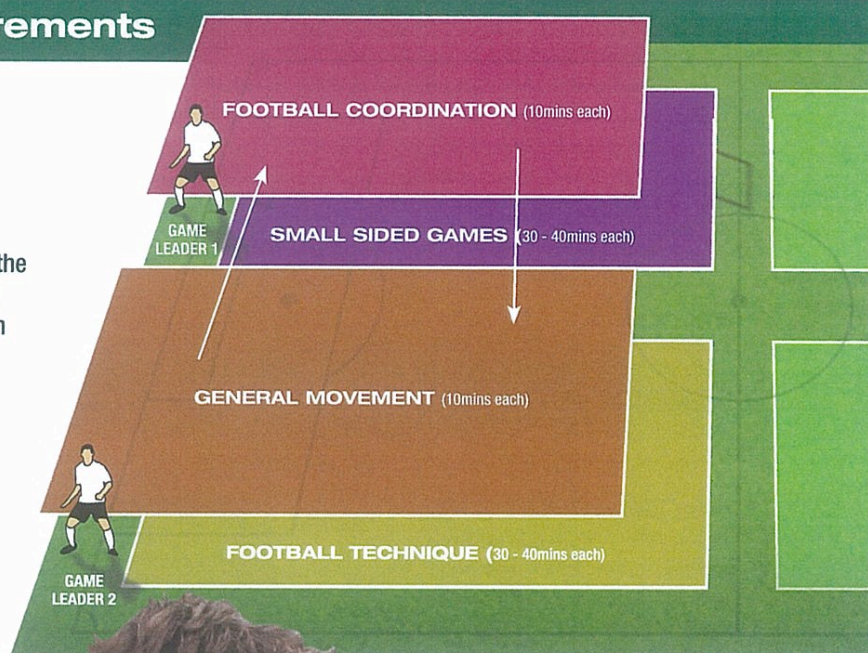
## 2. Dual Training \*\*

### Two Mini Football teams train together

This model has been designed to remove the pressure off a single coach to plan, manage and organise a whole training session. It also has the advantage of progression and interchanging of players following a grading, to ensure the best players are playing with and against the best players.

### Dual Training - Requirements

- Two coaches with two teams of players training together at once
- Rather than each coach working through the activities over the duration of the session, coaches have allocated activities and then swap groups or activities
- More time is spent in Football Technique and Small Sided Games





# Part 6e ASB Mini Football (9-12 years)



## 2. TRAINING *cont..*



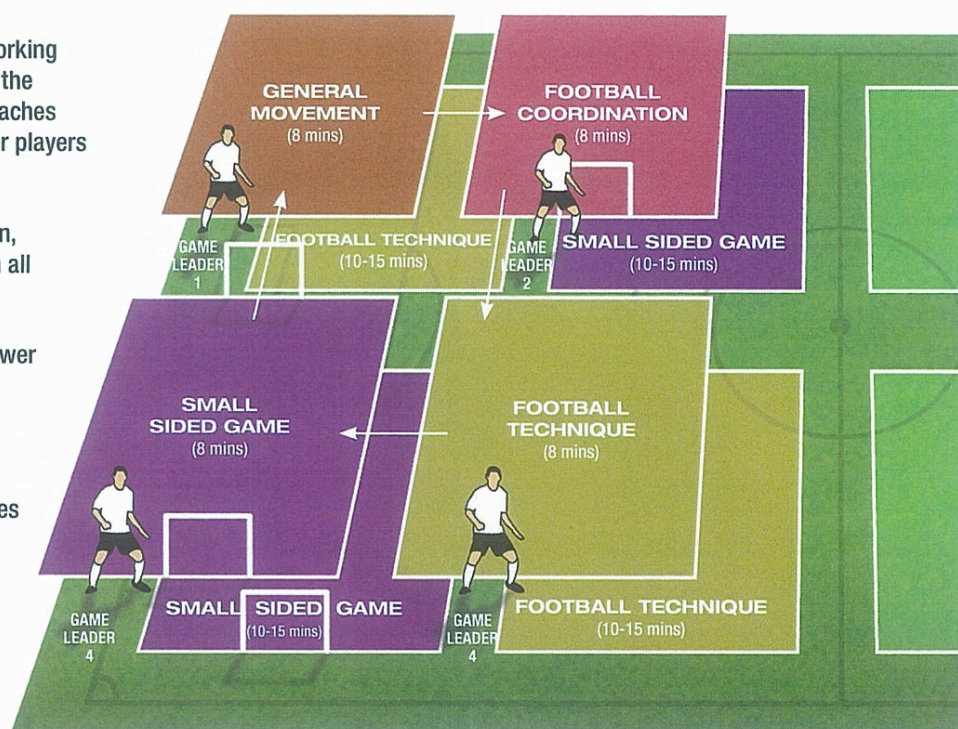
### 3. Station Rotation \*\*\*

Station rotation at Mini Football increases in complexity due to an increased emphasis on two particular key components of training. With a greater emphasis on basic team understanding through Small Sided Games, station rotation removes the flexibility to really meet the needs of particular groups of similar ability players and therefore is not the preferred delivery model at this stage. It can however be utilised to help clubs offer their players and coaches some variation and flexibility if used on the following circumstances:

- It is used as an irregular training method in order to offer variety and motivation (i.e. once per month).
- It is used as a tool to bridge the gap from two contacts per week to three (including a game).
  - Coaches do not need to necessarily coach their team.
  - Provides a more technically focused session away from the team environment and can keep development at the forefront of Mini Football.
  - Clubs can secure 3-4 coaches for a particular training night for the whole season (regardless of which teams or players train).

### Station Rotation - Requirements

- Rather than each coach working through the activities over the duration of the session, coaches have allocated activities for players rotate.
- 8 minutes per upper station, rotating clockwise through all once (32 minutes in total)
- Then 10-15 minutes per lower station, rotating clockwise through all once (40 – 60 minutes in total) which is reflective of the greater focus on Small Sided Games and Football Technique





# SEASON PROGRAMME



## Maximising the week

Mini Football can be delivered during the winter or summer, depending on facilities. The Mini Football season operates for 20 weeks with a recommended three contacts per week, including game day. However, it is recognised that not all players will want to commit to two training sessions as well as games, so clubs may opt to run station rotation for one of the two training sessions.

The advantage of this is that the training session can go ahead regardless of numbers. It only requires the commitment of a number of Mini Football coaches, regardless of their affiliation to particular teams.

## 20 week Season Schedule Example

| WEEK 1                     | WEEK 2                     | WEEK 3                     | WEEK 4                     | WEEK 5                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day | MFSC Training Game Day     | Training Training Game Day |
| WEEK 6                     | WEEK 7                     | WEEK 8                     | WEEK 9                     | WEEK 10                    |
| Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day | MFSC Training Game Day     | Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day |
| WEEK 11                    | WEEK 12                    | WEEK 13                    | WEEK 14                    | WEEK 15                    |
| Training Training Game Day | MFSC Training Game Day     | Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day |
| WEEK 16                    | WEEK 17                    | WEEK 18                    | WEEK 19                    | WEEK 20                    |
| MFSC Training Game Day     | Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day | Training Training Game Day |

 Mini Football Skills Challenge

## Mini Football Skills Challenge

*'Recognise, monitor and track the development of the Mini Football player'*

The progression from Fun Football to Mini Football can be seen in the more advanced skill challenges on offer.

The skills challenges are a motivational tool for players. They have been designed to help players track their progress throughout the football season while encouraging them to practice more outside the formal training environment. Coaches are encouraged to share in this process by both organising regular skills challenges and helping players to accurately measure their performance across the battery of tests. The information generated serves four main purposes:

- 1 To motivate players to practice more
- 2 To guide them towards more meaningful practice (develop their weaknesses and strengthen their strengths)
- 3 To help them feel a sense of achievement when they attain new levels of performance
- 4 To raise awareness among coaches of the specific development needs of individual players helping them to select and utilise more relevant training content to enhance player development

It is recommended that the Mini Football skills challenge occurs monthly so that players are enthused and motivated to improve on their individual scores.

**The Mini Football skills challenge involves circuits that call on key skills: Dribbling, Turning, Shooting, Passing, Juggling**

Recognition is granted on individual improvement across the duration of the season, in order to promote practice and effort. On the completion of the final skills challenge, players are awarded recognition for achieving particular levels of competency. The key is to focus on improving individual scores rather than scoring highly within the group. This will continually motivate players and let them to see their individual improvement over time – although the competitive nature of the Mini Football player will naturally result in comparisons across the group.