



4v4 – A way forward for the 7-10 year olds



Being able to recognise the constantly changing nature of a game of soccer, being able to see the situation as it is developing, making the right decisions for the circumstances and execute the required skill or technique with precision is what makes the great players stand out. Playing 4v4 allows players to practice all these elements of match play and as such is a vital tool in the process of learning to play soccer, especially in the 7-10 age bands where freedom and enjoyment should be the priority.

4v4 presents the players with numerous football problems that have to be solved, but it also has a simple framework where the players can concentrate on their own game and learn how to cope and deal with the problems at their own pace without being pressurised.

If the players are presented with a problem they really cannot solve, the coach is there to help, guide and support their learning but not dominate it. The coach should aim to be inclusive and try to understand why players make the decisions they do. For example, ask why a player has made a certain decision. It may appear like an error of judgment to you but there could be a logical reason for the decision.

The solution to the problem may just need modification and the player's basic idea may well be sound; in which case it should not be treated as a mistake. 4v4 comes closest to presenting the most match-like situations where the number of players is small enough to allow a high percentage of ball contacts while also encouraging width, depth and movement giving all the options necessary for playing forward or keeping the ball (i.e. options in all directions).

In 4v4 so many soccer-relevant situations appear in such a short time span that it is possible for players to problem-solve very quickly. Nothing ever happens twice in exactly the same way in a soccer match although many similar scenarios often repeat themselves and this is certainly true of 4v4. This fact alone makes 4v4 vital to the process of learning to play a game which places a great emphasis on reading situations and coming up with the solutions to the problems these situations may present.

4v4 generates many match situations, involves all the players, with small numbers guaranteeing repetition of opportunity to problem solve and learn (i.e. see it, make a decision, execute a skill. Above all 4v4 is a GAME and kids love a game. So with the coaches there for guidance and support at the right time and in the right way we can definitely let the 4v4 game be THE TEACHER.

The components of 4v4 in the context of the three moments in the games are outlined below and as you can see have a direct correlation to 11 v 11 match play. This information has been presented as one from a conglomeration of coaching information. It includes information from FIFA, CSA and Toronto FC.



Problems to solve in 4v4



When in possession	Gaining possession	When not in possession
Dribble, turn, run with the ball, pass and receive and shoot	Create space: end to end and side to side	Stop play going forward
Support the player with the ball in front and from behind with a good angle and distance		Support the challenging player for the ball with a good angle and distance
Movement in front and behind the ball in order to receive pass and move defenders; consider timing and angles of the runs	Loss of possession – recover and be compact	Cover the space, mark players or track players



Problems to solve as a sweeper while in possession



OBJECTIVES:

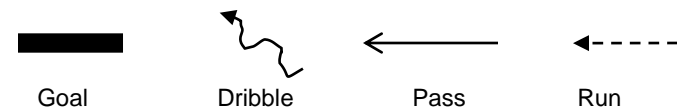
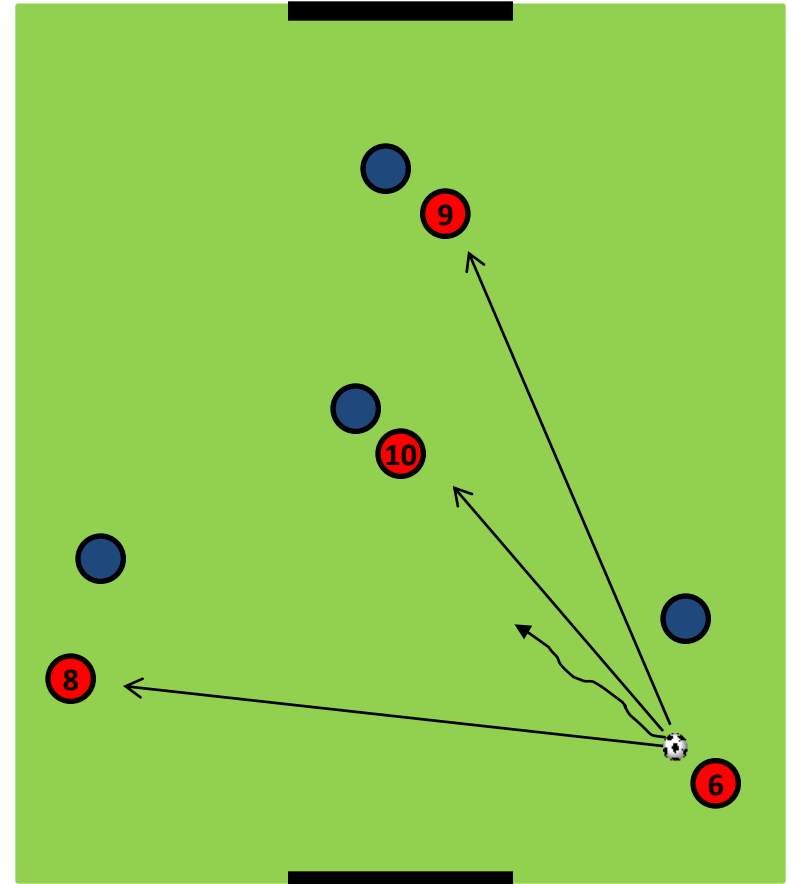
- ✓ Keep the ball
- ✓ Begin an attack
- ✓ Try to score
- ✓ Break out from back

SKILLS REQUIRED:

- ✓ Dribbling
- ✓ Turning
- ✓ Running with the ball
- ✓ Screening
- ✓ Passing
- ✓ Receiving
- ✓ Shooting

MATCH AWARENESS:

- ✓ Angles and distance of support
- ✓ When to play forward
- ✓ When to play through midfield
- ✓ When to pass backwards
- ✓ When to keep possession
- ✓ Read and react to play as it happens
- ✓ Communication – provide information to each other (man on, turn, shield)





Problems to solve in midfield while in possession



OBJECTIVES:

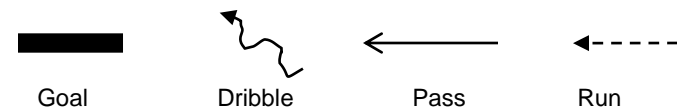
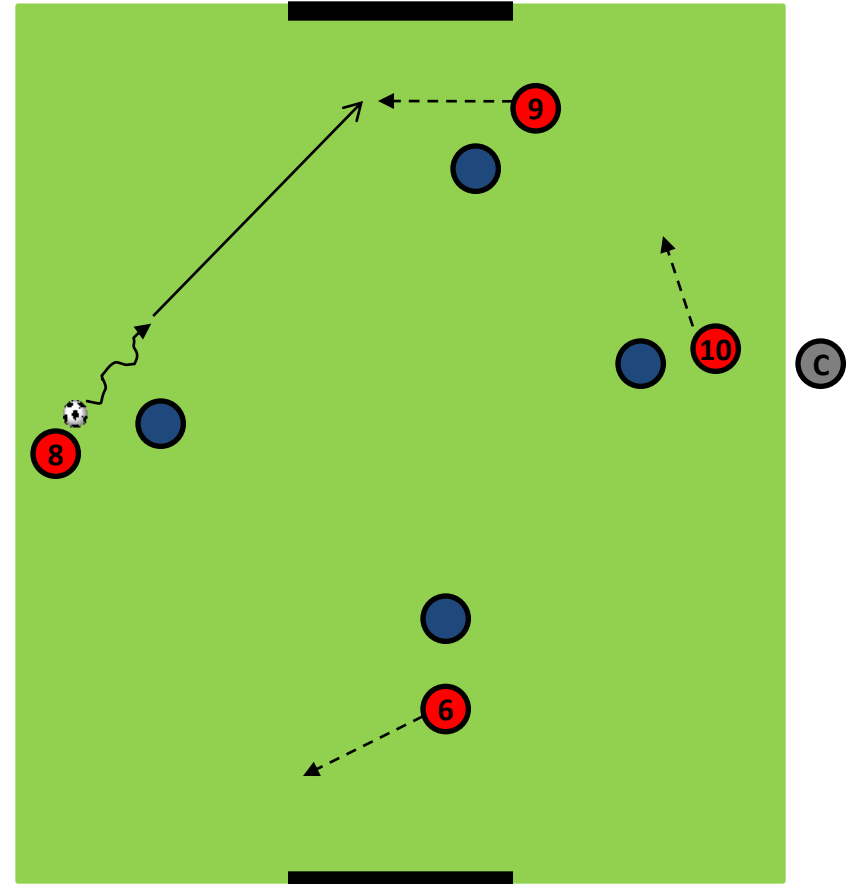
- ✓ Carry on momentum of attack
- ✓ Look to play forward and support
- ✓ Look to support a 3rd man run

SKILLS REQUIRED:

- ✓ Dribbling
- ✓ Turning
- ✓ Running with the ball
- ✓ Screening
- ✓ Passing
- ✓ Receiving
- ✓ Shooting
- ✓ Combination play

MATCH AWARENESS:

- ✓ Angles and distance of support
- ✓ When to play forward
- ✓ When to pass backwards
- ✓ When to keep possession
- ✓ When to switch play
- ✓ Communication – provide information to each other (man on, turn, shield)
- ✓ Dictate the tempo





Problems to solve as a striker while in possession



OBJECTIVES:

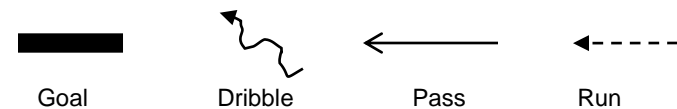
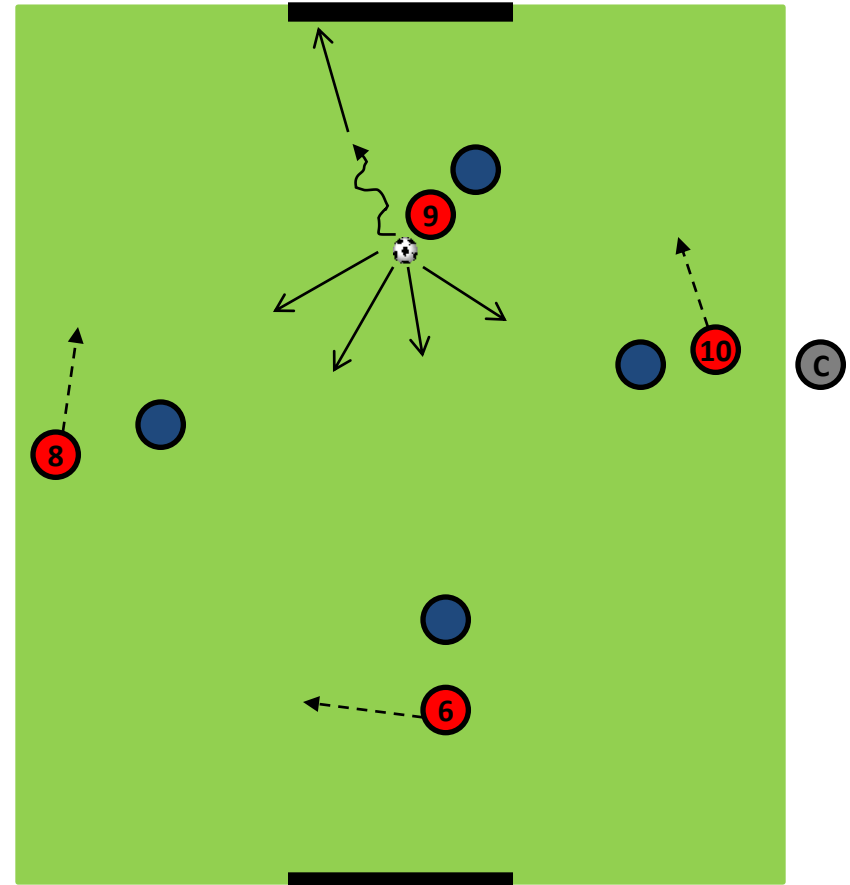
- ✓ Scoring
- ✓ Moving your opponent
- ✓ Finding space
- ✓ Linking the play

SKILLS REQUIRED:

- ✓ Receiving (holding the ball and bounce the ball back)
- ✓ Creating and finding space (dummy runs)
- ✓ Beating your opponent 1v1
- ✓ Dribbling
- ✓ Turning
- ✓ Screening
- ✓ Passing and moving
- ✓ Finishing

MATCH AWARENESS:

- ✓ Create space for yourself and others
- ✓ Play on the shoulder of defender
- ✓ Early movement (anticipate and gamble)
- ✓ Late movements as defenders follow the play
- ✓ Move defenders and get across front of the defender
- ✓ Combine and link the team
- ✓ Hold up the play





Problems to solve as a sweeper when not in possession



OBJECTIVES:

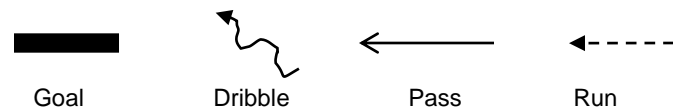
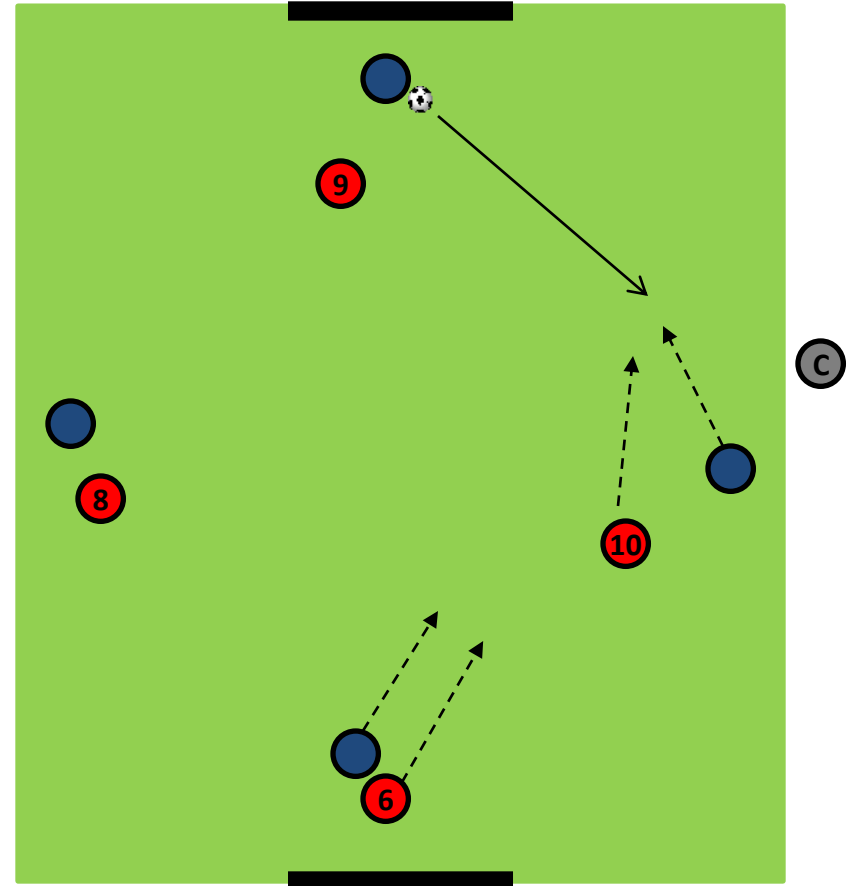
- ✓ Do not concede a goal
- ✓ Mark your opponent effectively
- ✓ Win the ball

SKILLS REQUIRED:

- ✓ Stay between your goal and the opponent
- ✓ Read the play
- ✓ Spoil or intercept the pass
- ✓ Stop turns
- ✓ Delay
- ✓ Tackle

MATCH AWARENESS:

- ✓ Stop forward pass
- ✓ Force play in one direction
- ✓ Apply pressure
- ✓ Close down as ball travels
- ✓ Read play and attempt to intercept pass
- ✓ Do not get detached from team stay connected/compact





Problems to solve as a striker when not in possession



OBJECTIVES:

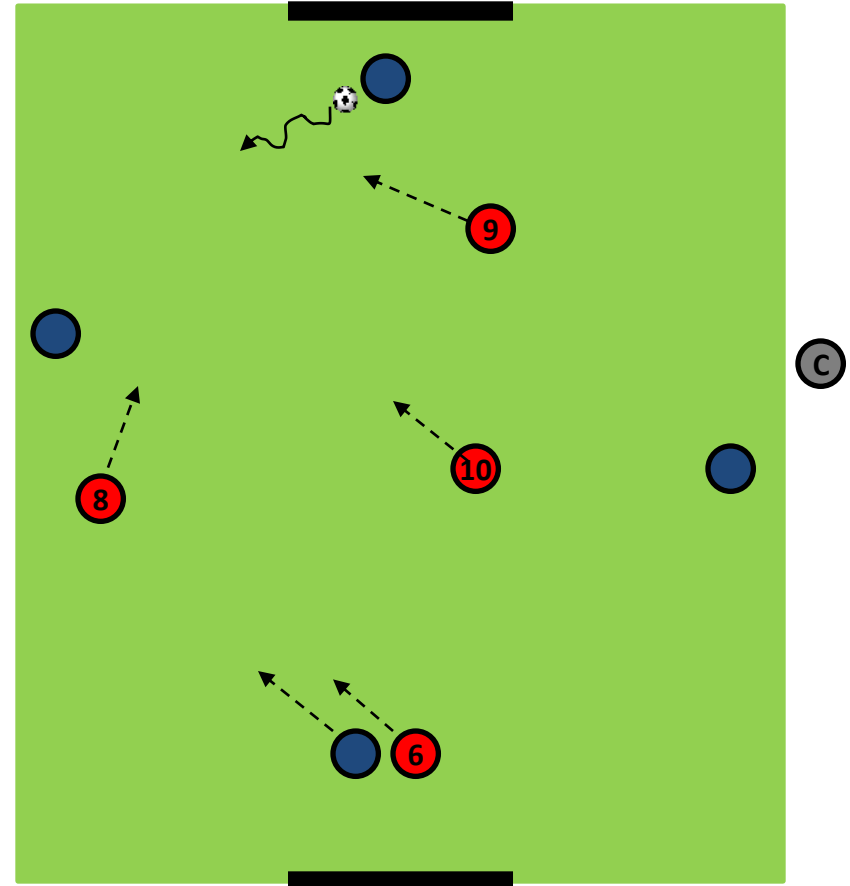
- ✓ Spoil build play
- ✓ Prevent long passes forward
- ✓ Delay opposition
- ✓ Force play in one direction
- ✓ Win the ball

SKILLS REQUIRED:

- ✓ Effective use of approach
- ✓ Spoil play
- ✓ Intercept the ball
- ✓ Tackle

MATCH AWARENESS:

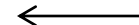
- ✓ Stop forward pass
- ✓ Force play in one direction
- ✓ Apply pressure
- ✓ Close down as ball travels
- ✓ Read play (press or drop)
- ✓ Do not get detached from team stay connected/compact



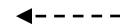
Goal



Dribble



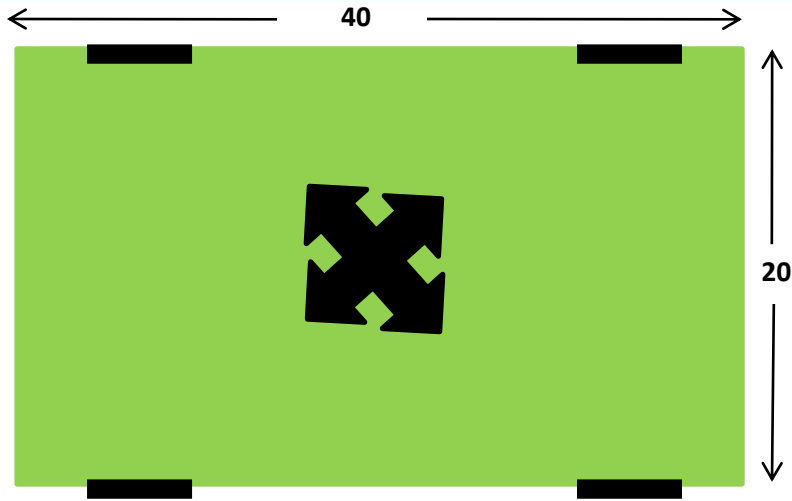
Pass



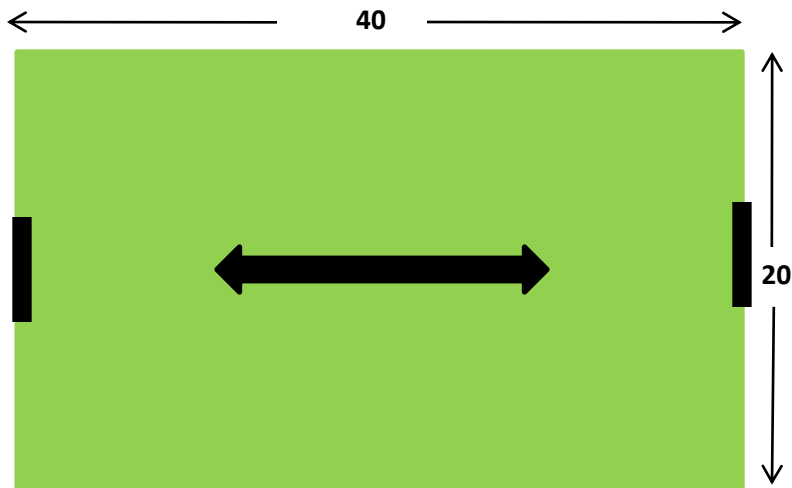
Run



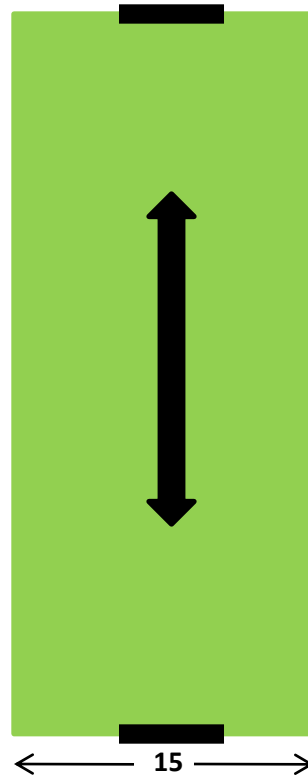
Modify pitch to change the emphasis of play



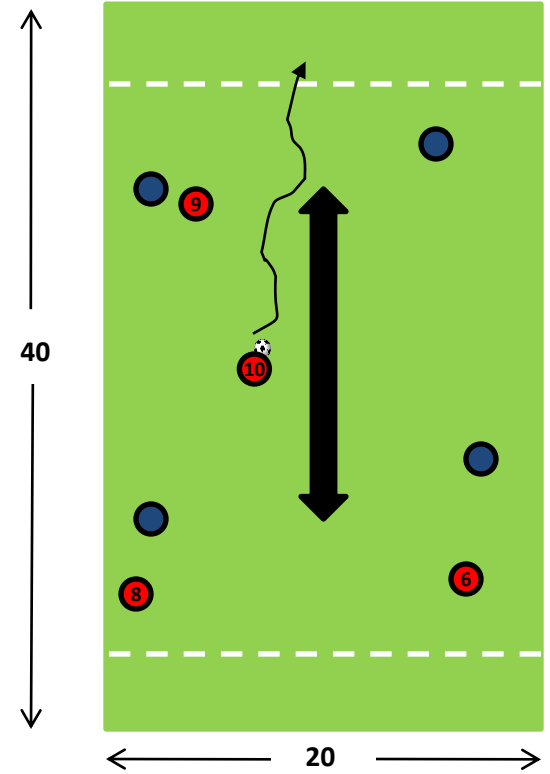
4v4 switching the play



4v4 normal play



One touch play to a maximum of three



4v4 (1v1) play
Dribble over end line