



FREE PRINTABLE PDF

FOOTBALL TRAINING SESSION PLAN

Four complete sessions for youth and adult teams

4	16	60-90
COMPLETE SESSIONS	GUIDED ACTIVITIES	MINUTE EXAMPLES

Pitch diagrams, coaching cues and adaptable challenges.
Includes printable session, practice and review sheets.

Choose your session

We build each session around one clear outcome. Choose a starting point, then adapt it to your players.

Group	Session focus	Time	Pages
A | Youth 8-12	Pass and support	60 min	4-6
B | Youth 13-17	Receive, turn and attack	75 min	7-9
C | Adults 18+	Keep it. Win it back.	75 min	10-12
D | Adults 18+	Play through pressure	90 min	13-15

CHOOSE BY NEED

Newer players or limited space? Start with A. Working on forward receiving? Use B. Want better reactions after losing the ball? Choose C. Have two goalkeepers and a build-up focus? Choose D.

Make the plan fit your team

Age bands are starting points. Adjust space, pressure and instructions to ability. Page 16 covers younger players, different numbers and missing equipment. Use the quick summaries on page 17 and copy the sheets on pages 18-20.

BEFORE PLAYERS ARRIVE

Check the surface, secure goals and leave clear run-off space. Keep water available and add breaks in heat. Begin gently, build the pace and stop an activity if a player feels pain or becomes unwell. A coach should supervise youth sessions.

Explore our football training

One outcome. Connected practices.

Plan what you want players to recognise and do in the game.

01 | SET THE OUTCOME

Choose one behaviour you can observe: showing for a pass, receiving forward or reacting together after a turnover.

02 | PREPARE THE SPACE

Count players, set out the areas and keep spare balls nearby. Every activity page gives a starting size and a way to change the challenge.

03 | WATCH, THEN ADJUST

Let the activity run. Ask one short question, make one change and watch again. Finish by connecting the session to match play.

Read the diagrams

Team A

Team B

Neutral / target

Ball / pass

Player movement

Cone / gate

G = goalkeeper. Diagrams show starting positions, not fixed routes.

USE THE FULL CLOCK

Activity times include brief explanations, rotations and coaching pauses. Separate water/setup breaks are shown in each timeline. Keep water available throughout and shorten a game if extra recovery is needed.

Coach with two clear cues

Use the coaching points beside each diagram. Give players time to try. The success check is something to look for, not a pass/fail test or a promised result.

Pass, move and support

Help the player on the ball by offering a clear passing angle, then move again after passing.

60 MIN **12 outfield players | no goalkeepers needed**

Minutes	Session timeline
0-10	Pairs through gates
10-22	Find a new angle
22-25	Drink + set up two pitches
25-40	3v3: choose a gate
40-42	Drink + open the full pitch
42-57	6v6: support to score
57-60	Walk, collect kit + reflect



EQUIPMENT + SPACE

12 balls, cones, two bib colours; four mini goals optional. Allow approximately 40 x 30 m for the full session.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Players look up, pass into a teammate's path and move to offer a new option.

ASK YOUR PLAYERS

Where can you move so your teammate can see you?

Finish: Ask each pair to name one movement that helped a teammate. Choose one support habit to repeat next time.

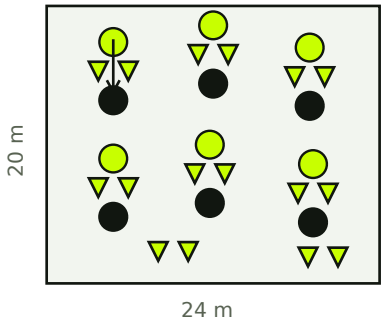
Prepare and practise

Activities 1-2 | Pass, move and support

01 Pairs through gates

10 MIN

24 x 20 m



All players shown

Look before choosing the next gate. / Pass where your partner can move onto the ball.

Set up: Six pairs, one ball per pair. Scatter eight 2 m gates inside the area.

Play: Pass through a gate to your partner, then both move to a different gate. Avoid gates another pair is using. Begin at walking pace; gradually add jogging and changes of direction. Reset with your partner if the ball leaves the area.

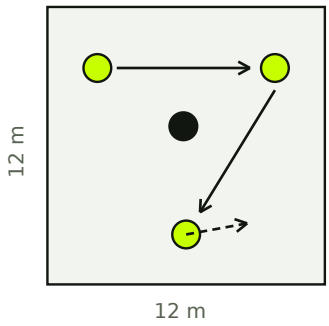
Easier: Widen the gates and shorten the passing distance.
Harder: Receive across the body before finding a new gate.

Look for: Both players move after the pass.

02 Find a new angle

12 MIN

Three 12 x 12 m squares



One of three identical areas

Move out of the defender's shadow. / Open your body to see two options.

Set up: Three groups of four; one ball in each square. All four begin as passers.

Play: Pass to any teammate, then move to offer a new angle. Teammates adjust to keep passing lanes open. After four minutes, play 3v1. The defender wins a point by taking possession or forcing the ball out; passers score for four passes. Rotate the defender every minute. Restart from any passer.

Easier: Make the square larger or return to four passers.
Harder: Use a slightly smaller square.

Look for: The receiver has more than one passing option.

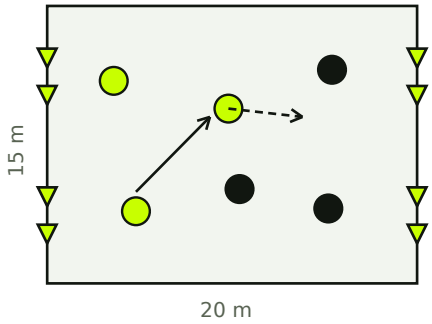
Apply it in the game

Activities 3-4 | Pass, move and support

03 3v3: choose a gate

15 MIN

Two 20 x 15 m pitches



One of two simultaneous games

Spread out to offer different options. / Pass, then support the next action.

Set up: Two games of 3v3. Put two 2 m gates on each end line. Each team attacks the opposite pair.

Play: Score by dribbling through either attacking gate under control. After a point, the conceding team passes in from its end line. Pass in from the sideline when the ball goes out; opponents stand 3 m away. Change opponents halfway through the block.

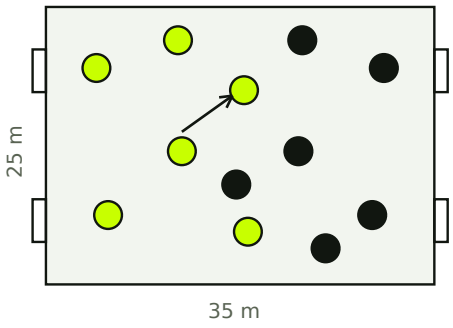
Easier: Widen the gates and playing area. **Harder:** Narrow the gates while keeping both scoring options.

Look for: Players move the ball toward the less crowded gate.

04 6v6: support to score

15 MIN

35 x 25 m



All players shown

Offer support beside and ahead of the ball. / Keep moving when the first option closes.

Set up: Two teams of six. Two mini goals on each end line; no goalkeepers. Each team attacks the opposite pair.

Play: Play freely and score in either attacking goal. No offside. After a goal, the conceding team restarts from its end line; use pass-ins for other restarts, with opponents 3 m away. If using gates, score with a controlled dribble through a gate.

Easier: Increase the width. **Harder:** Reduce the width slightly if possession is comfortable.

Look for: Watch three attacks: did the passer offer a new option?

Receive, turn and attack

Check the space before receiving and choose whether to turn forward or protect and return the ball.

75 MIN **12 outfield players | no goalkeepers needed**

Minutes	Session timeline
0-12	Receive on the move
12-27	Turn or return
27-30	Drink + set up two pitches
30-48	3v3: receive beyond
48-51	Drink + open the full pitch
51-71	6v6: recognise the space
71-75	Walk, collect kit + reflect



EQUIPMENT + SPACE

12 balls, cones, two bib colours; four mini goals optional. Allow approximately 45 x 35 m for the full session.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Players recognise pressure before the first touch and keep possession when a turn is unavailable.

ASK YOUR PLAYERS

What did you see before the ball arrived?

Finish: Ask players for one example of a useful turn and one example of keeping the ball instead. Revisit the decision next session.

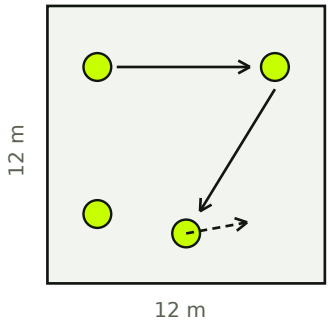
Prepare and practise

Activities 1-2 | Receive, turn and attack

01 Receive on the move

12 MIN

Three 12 x 12 m squares



One of three identical areas

Check space before the pass arrives. / Let the first touch prepare the next action.

Set up: Three groups of four. One ball per group; players spread out inside their square.

Play: Pass and move to a new support position. Before receiving, check both shoulders and direct the first touch toward a new passing option. Begin with easy movement, then increase the pace. Change passing direction often. Restart from the nearest player if the ball leaves the square.

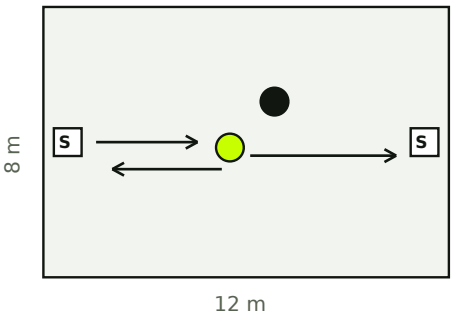
Easier: Slow the passes and allow extra touches. **Harder:** Play 3v1, rotating the defender every minute.

Look for: Players look away from the ball before receiving.

02 Turn or return

15 MIN

Three 12 x 8 m corridors



One of three identical areas

Check the defender's position early. / Protect and return when the turn is blocked.

Set up: Each group of four has two end servers, a receiver and a defender. Servers stay on opposite end lines.

Play: One server passes to the receiver. The receiver can turn and pass to the far server for a point, or return it to keep possession. The far server starts back the other way after a point. The defender may intercept or tackle once the first pass travels. On a regain or ball out, restart with the original server. Swap all four roles every 90 seconds; reverse the starting end too.

Easier: The defender starts 2 m farther away. **Harder:** The defender starts closer.

Look for: Players choose a turn rather than forcing one.

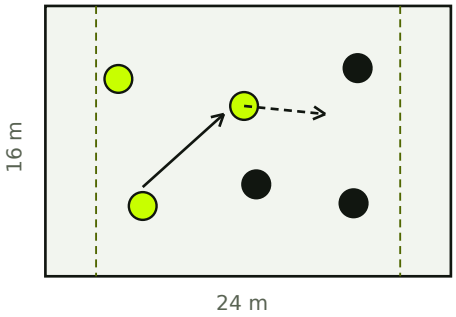
Apply it in the game

Activities 3-4 | Receive, turn and attack

03 3v3: receive beyond

18 MIN

Two 24 x 16 m pitches



One of two simultaneous games

See the next space before receiving. / Time the run instead of waiting in the end zone.

Set up: Two games of 3v3. Mark a 3 m end zone at each end, included in the pitch length.

Play: Attack opposite ends. Score by passing to a teammate who receives under control in the attacking end zone. Players may enter either zone freely. After a point, the conceding team restarts from that end line. Use pass-ins for balls out, with opponents 3 m away. Change opponents halfway through.

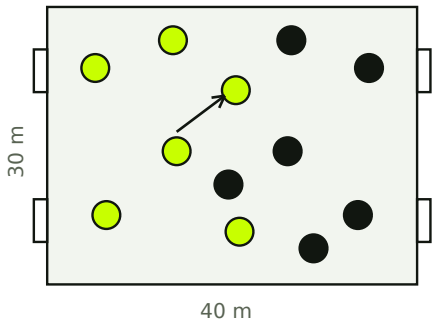
Easier: Make the pitch wider. **Harder:** Reduce the end zones to 2 m.

Look for: Receiving players turn when free and combine when marked.

04 6v6: recognise the space

20 MIN

40 x 30 m



All players shown

Receive facing forward when the space allows. / Use a teammate when pressure prevents the turn.

Set up: Two teams of six. Put two mini goals on each end line; no goalkeepers.

Play: Attack the opposite pair of goals. Play freely, with no compulsory turns or pass count. No offside. The conceding team restarts from its end line; use pass-ins for other balls out, with opponents 3 m away. With gates, score by dribbling through under control.

Easier: Increase the width to give receivers more time. **Harder:** Reduce the width slightly.

Look for: Watch three receptions: did the first touch fit the pressure?

Keep the ball, react together

Support possession and organise the first response when the ball is lost.

75 MIN **12 outfield players | no goalkeepers needed**

Minutes	Session timeline
0-12	Pass, prepare and react
12-27	3v3: keep and regain
27-30	Drink + combine the areas
30-48	5v5 + 2: react to loss
48-51	Drink + reset teams
51-71	6v6: press or recover
71-75	Walk, collect kit + reflect



EQUIPMENT + SPACE

12 balls, cones, two team bib colours plus two neutral bibs; four mini goals optional. Allow approximately 45 x 35 m for the full session.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

The nearest player pressures the ball when possible; teammates close passing options and recover if the press is beaten.

ASK YOUR PLAYERS

Can we pressure the ball now, or do we need to recover?

Finish: Discuss one coordinated press and one moment when recovery was the better choice. Pick one team cue to use next time.

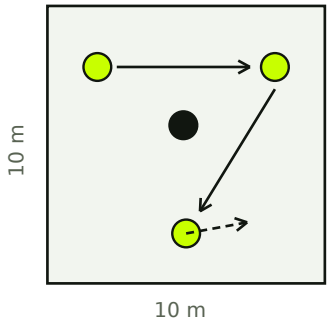
Prepare and practise

Activities 1-2 | Keep the ball, react together

01 Pass, prepare and react

12 MIN

Three 10 x 10 m squares



One of three identical areas

Adjust your angle while the ball travels. / Close down under control when defending.

Set up: Three groups of four, one ball per square.

Play: For three minutes, pass and move freely, adding controlled changes of direction and gradually increasing the pace. Then play 3v1. Four passes earn a point; a regain or forced ball out earns the defender a point. Restart from any passer and rotate the defender every minute.

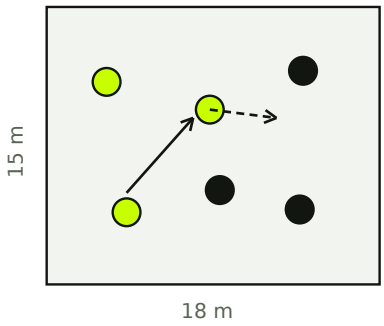
Easier: Use a larger square. **Harder:** Reduce the square slightly.

Look for: Support moves before the receiver becomes trapped.

02 3v3: keep and regain

15 MIN

Two 18 x 15 m areas



One of two simultaneous games

Keep useful distance from the ball carrier. / Nearest player pressures; partners block the next passes.

Set up: Two simultaneous games of 3v3. Keep spare balls beside each area.

Play: Score one point for four consecutive passes. On a turnover, the new team keeps possession and starts its own count. Restart with a pass-in to the opponents of the team that last touched the ball; defenders give 3 m. Change opponents halfway through the block.

Easier: Increase the area. **Harder:** Reduce space slightly while allowing free touches.

Look for: Players react as a group after possession changes.

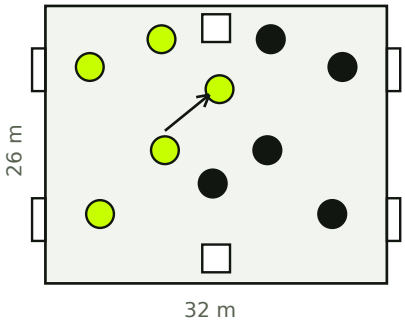
Apply it in the game

Activities 3-4 | Keep the ball, react together

03 5v5 + 2: react to loss

18 MIN

32 x 26 m



All players shown

Pressure only when you can affect the ball. / Close nearby routes; recover together if beaten.

Set up: Two teams of five plus two neutrals inside the pitch. Neutrals support possession. Two mini goals at each end.

Play: Attack the opposite pair of goals. Neutrals support possession but cannot score; they switch teams immediately on a turnover. No offside. After a goal, restart from the conceding end; use pass-ins otherwise, with opponents 3 m away. Every three minutes, each team swaps one player with a neutral. With gates, score by dribbling through under control.

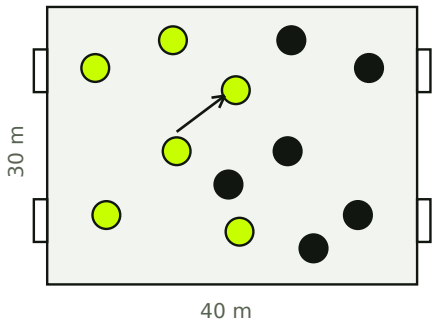
Easier: Add width to help possession. **Harder:** Limit neutrals to two touches if play allows.

Look for: The first defender has support rather than pressing alone.

04 6v6: press or recover

20 MIN

40 x 30 m



All players shown

Recognise whether the ball can be pressured. / Stay connected when pressing or recovering.

Set up: Two teams of six, with two mini goals at each end. Return the neutral players to their teams.

Play: Play a free game, attacking the opposite pair of goals. No offside. The conceding team restarts from its end line. Use pass-ins for other restarts, with opponents 3 m away. If using gates, a controlled dribble through a gate scores.

Easier: Increase space to allow more controlled possession. **Harder:** Reduce space slightly if decisions remain clear.

Look for: Check three turnovers: did the team respond together?

Build from the back

Create and recognise options to play through, around or beyond the first line of pressure.

90 MIN **14 outfield players + 2 goalkeepers | 16 total**

Minutes	Session timeline
0-12	Prepare to receive forward
12-30	GK + 4v3: find a route
30-33	Drink + move to full pitch
33-55	7v7 + GKs: progress together
55-58	Drink + reset the game
58-86	7v7 + GKs: free game
86-90	Walk, collect kit + reflect



EQUIPMENT + SPACE

16 balls, cones, two bib colours and two securely installed goals. Allow approximately 60 x 45 m for the full session.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Players offer width and depth, recognise the free player and progress while keeping control.

ASK YOUR PLAYERS

Where is the pressure, and which route does it leave open?

Finish: Ask players to identify a time they played through pressure and a time they used another route. Choose one build-up cue to repeat.

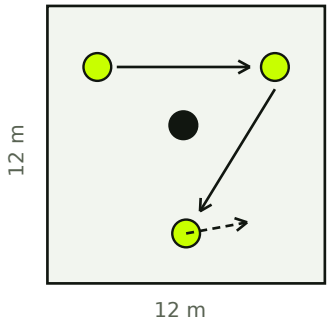
Prepare and practise

Activities 1-2 | Build from the back

01 Prepare to receive forward

12 MIN

Four 12 x 12 m squares



One of four identical areas

Check both sides before receiving. / Offer a passing angle outside the defender's line.

Set up: Four groups of four. Put one goalkeeper in each of two groups. One ball per square.

Play: For four minutes, pass and move, adding turns and quicker footwork. In GK groups, pair up: goalkeeper and server practise gentle handling and movement; the other pair passes. Then all groups play 3v1. Four passes earn a point; a regain or ball out earns the defender a point. Rotate defenders each minute; restart from any passer.

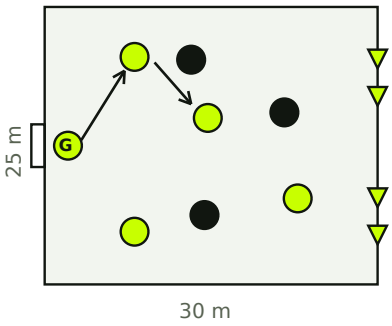
Easier: Increase the area or return to four passers. **Harder:** Reduce space slightly.

Look for: Players prepare their body shape before the ball arrives.

02 GK + 4v3: find a route

18 MIN

Two 30 x 25 m pitches



One of two simultaneous games

Use width and a supporting option behind the ball. / Carry forward if no opponent engages.

Set up: Each pitch: one goalkeeper and four builders against three pressers. A goal at one end; two 3 m exit gates at the other.

Play: The goalkeeper starts. Builders score by dribbling through an exit gate under control. Pressers can win the ball and score in the goal. Reset from the goalkeeper after a score or ball out. Rotate outfield building and pressing roles every three minutes; goalkeepers stay in goal.

Easier: Pressers begin 3 m farther away. **Harder:** Narrow the exit gates.

Look for: Builders choose the available route instead of forcing a pass.

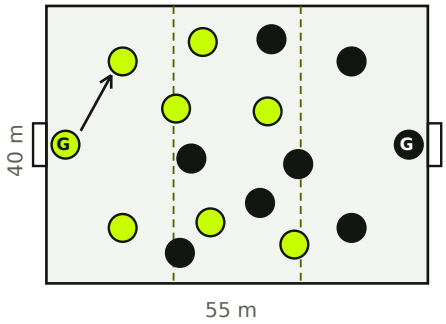
Apply it in the game

Activities 3-4 | Build from the back

03 7v7 + GKs: progress together

22 MIN

55 x 40 m



All players shown

Create options through and around pressure. / Support the next pass as the ball advances.

Set up: Seven outfield players and a goalkeeper per team. Mark thirds as visual references; players may move freely between them.

Play: Play to normal goals. A goal counts double if that possession began with your goalkeeper and included a controlled pass or carry out of your defensive third. Otherwise it counts one. Use offside, throw-ins and normal goal/corner restarts; restart from the conceding goalkeeper after goals.

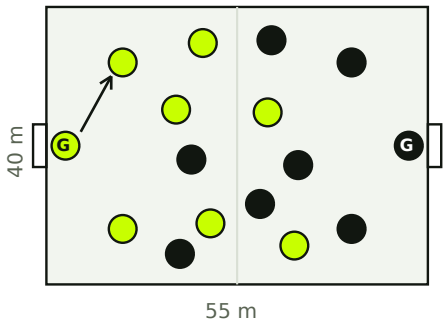
Easier: Opponents allow the first goalkeeper pass before pressing. **Harder:** Reduce the pitch width by 3-5 m.

Look for: The team keeps control after leaving its defensive third.

04 7v7 + GKs: free game

28 MIN

55 x 40 m



All players shown

Read the pressure before selecting a route. / Keep supporting when the first option is closed.

Set up: Keep the same teams: seven outfield players plus one goalkeeper each.

Play: Remove the bonus scoring. Play with normal scoring, offside, throw-ins and goal/corner restarts; use a centre restart after goals. Allow players to choose how to build. Include a short recovery and feedback pause halfway through this block, then restart promptly.

Easier: Increase the width or protect the first goalkeeper pass. **Harder:** Use a narrower pitch if decisions remain clear.

Look for: Watch three build-ups: did the team find a controlled route?

Adapt the session

Change one thing at a time. Keep the learning goal clear.

Situation	Simple adjustment
Younger children	For ages 5-7, use short, playful blocks, simple rules and 3v3 or 4v4 games. Start with A, reduce the area and explain one task at a time. Take breaks when attention or movement quality drops.
Mixed ability	Give a newer player more space or a supporting neutral. Challenge an experienced player with stronger opposition or a smaller area. Avoid making every player follow the hardest rule.
Odd numbers	Add a neutral who supports the team in possession. Rotate the role at each break. For pair work, create one group of three and rotate the middle player.
Fewer players	Use 3v3 or 4v4 and bring the boundaries in. Keep the same problem: find support, receive forward or react after a turnover. Recount players before each activity.
No goalkeepers	A-C work with gates. With 16 outfield players, D uses two 5v3 practices: a deep passer replaces each GK, with a gate replacing the goal. Finish 8v8 to four mini goals; restart from the end line.
Limited time or heat	Keep a gradual warm-up. Shorten playing blocks, add water and shade breaks, and retain a short game plus reflection. Stop when the group cannot work comfortably.

THE USEFUL CHALLENGE

If players cannot find success, make it easier. If the task is automatic, add realistic pressure. Keep watching their decisions and involvement.

More youth training ideas from AFA

Your pitch-side summary

Use these reminders with the full instructions on the session pages.

A Pass, move and support

60 minutes | 12 players | Pages 4-6

10 min Gates > 12 min Support angles > 15 min 3v3 gates > 15 min 6v6 game

Look for: Players look up, pass into a teammate's path and move to offer a new option.

B Receive, turn and attack

75 minutes | 12 players | Pages 7-9

12 min Receive on the move > 15 min Turn or return > 18 min 3v3 end zones > 20 min 6v6 game

Look for: Players recognise pressure before the first touch and keep possession when a turn is unavailable.

C Keep the ball, react together

75 minutes | 12 players | Pages 10-12

12 min Rondo > 15 min 3v3 possession > 18 min 5v5 + 2 > 20 min 6v6 game

Look for: The nearest player pressures the ball when possible; teammates close passing options and recover if the press is beaten.

D Build from the back

90 minutes | 14 outfield + 2 GKs | Pages 13-15

12 min Prepare > 18 min GK + 4v3 > 22 min Build-up game > 28 min Free game

Look for: Players offer width and depth, recognise the free player and progress while keeping control.

Allow the separate water/setup breaks and final reflection shown in each full timeline.

Build your own session

Write one clear outcome, then connect the activities to it.

TEAM / AGE GROUP

DATE / COACH

PLAYERS / GOALKEEPERS

TOTAL TIME / AVAILABLE SPACE

SESSION OUTCOME: WHAT SHOULD PLAYERS RECOGNISE AND DO?

EQUIPMENT / SETUP BEFORE ARRIVAL

Clock	Activity / organisation	Coaching cue	Minutes

TOTAL MINUTES (INCLUDE WATER, TRANSITIONS AND REFLECTION)

PLAN B: CHANGE IN ATTENDANCE, SPACE OR WEATHER

Draw your practice

Use circles for players, arrows for passes and dashed arrows for movement.

PRACTICE 1 / OBJECTIVE

PLAYERS / TIME / AREA

RULES / SCORING / RESTARTS

TWO COACHING CUES

MAKE IT EASIER

MAKE IT HARDER

PRACTICE 2 / OBJECTIVE

PLAYERS / TIME / AREA

RULES / SCORING / RESTARTS

TWO COACHING CUES

MAKE IT EASIER

MAKE IT HARDER

Review. Repeat. Improve.

We use the final few minutes to decide what the next session needs.

DATE / SESSION / PLAYERS

1 | WHAT WAS OUR INTENDED OUTCOME?

2 | WHAT DID PLAYERS ACTUALLY DO? NOTE ONE EXAMPLE.

3 | WHAT HELPED? WHAT MADE THE TASK TOO EASY OR TOO HARD?

4 | WHAT WILL WE REPEAT OR CHANGE NEXT TIME?

ASK THE PLAYERS

What helped you find an option? When did you need support?
What could you try in the next match?

LINK SESSIONS OVER TIME

Repeat a useful practice with one adjustment. Compare the same behaviour across sessions. Record what you see without turning every activity into a score.

Keep training with our free guides

Train with purpose.



Bring the session to life.

At Alicante Football Academy, our training connects technical work, decision-making and game situations.

Use these plans to organise your next session. Adapt the challenge, give clear feedback and keep players involved.

Keep developing your game

Explore Alicante Football Academy

More free training resources

52-week football training plan

Soccer conditioning workouts

Created by Alicante Football Academy
Original session examples. Adjust to your players, facilities and training week.