**SMALL-SIDED GAMES: How to effectively train your players in variable and complex environments Kindle Edition (**~$7:70 to download)

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***Quick Summary of Small Sided Games for UWA Coaches – Suzi Wood 25 May 2020***

Focus of book is to develop a common language and understanding through training using small sided games.

Develop a game model for training with;

* Set of guidelines that interrelate and influence decision making process to;
* Generate new behaviours on the field and
* Coordinate behaviour between players

Design your game model according to the strengths and weaknesses of your team. Each team has their own game plan due to makeup of team!

Small sided games uses the idea of complexity to encourage coaches to move beyond linear drills. The idea being that the more players train under variable conditions and constraints, the more adaptive they become. Key questions the authors ask coaches to consider are;

* What do I want to practise (which principle or combination of principles )?
* What is the focus point of the task? Desired outcome?
* What constraints can I apply to help players achieve the desired outcome?

The authors supply up to #50 examples of Small sided Games that apply some of the key principles and constraints described below. Many coaches already do a number of these activities but perhaps the value of this book is clearly articulating the common language / training systems across our club.

Consider the four dimensions of game model to include key principles to guide player movements / decisions during;

* Attack
* Defence
* Offensive transitions
* Defensive transitions

Use small sided games to mimic real game situations however with added constraints. The key constraint areas include;

* Space constraints – shape of field, player density, asymmetrical field, special zones
* Time constraints – duration of game, amount of rest, objective vs time
* Player constraints – number of players, numerical balance ( less or more on one team), joker
* Scoring constraints – traditional scoring, goals in a row, value of goal / points / other measures
* Technical constraints – limit number of touches, techniques allowed or not.
* Tactical constraints – enhance or reduce elements eg defensive system or positions….
* Goal Constraints – number of goals / gks, score from either side
* Rules constraints - add new rules, remove rules,
* Umpiring constraints – self umpiring, permit flow, lose neutrality
* Sensitive constraints – limit vision, calling, different types of balls etc

**Principles in Attacking**

* 1st Touch game – generates higher tempo and better combinations. Execute close to defender so defender cannot follow the ball
* 3rd Man passing to maintain ball possession when pass between Player A to B blocked
* 7 metre game – most goals scored within 7metres of goal. Plan different patterns of movement in front of goal to create more scoring chances (Anticipation, 2ndpost, 90’Angle etc)
* Conservation – maintain possession when under pressure (protect ball, quick turns, body feints etc)
* Counter Cover – to control defensive transition (move players from help side to ball side, reduce distance between players)
* Draw and Pass – draw the defender to reduce their reaction / interception time. Dynamic passes, vision fakes etc
* Face the Play – Orientation of body when receiving ball. Should be facing bigger portion of field ( prescanning etc)
* Give and Go – Elimination tool. Change of pace / acceleration important element in order to get ball back.
* Guard – Every ball carrier has a close teammate behind ( escape pass)
* Left foot – vulnerable space for defenders. Maximise passing lines via defenders left foot and help read passes.
* Open vision – Awareness of context before possession - Prescanning crucial
* Overlap – players from behind ball carrier overlap to become new offensive passing options.
* Play the angles – players on and off the ball need to maintain awareness of best angles to receive ball ( position of teamates, opposition and playing zone of field)
* Stick to Stick – Off the ball work to ensure stick to stick passes remain open. Quick execution also.
* Vital Space – Making sure attacker has established the space to receive ball in front of defender always and prevent opponent from anticipating same thing.

**Principles in Defensive Transition**

* Anticipation – Standing in from of opponent when team loses ball to block passing lines ( press after loss)
* Back home – when press cant be executed, players close out the centre, run back towards goals ( to reduce area to defend) and delay opponent
* Block the Hotline – block the most dangerous passing line.
* Press After Loss – player closest to ball to exert pressure immediately after ball is lost. Close down escape options and perhaps regain ball.

**Principles in Defending**

* Ball and Play Awareness: defenders remain aware of ball and defender at same time. (eg Ball watching error)
* Channeling – opponent to less risky area of field / where you have more numbers / forehand /backhand as determined etc.
* Don’t get Eliminated – understand defense as a collective process rather than an individual error.
* Doubles – players combining to apply pressure on ball carrier.
* Find your player – man to man close to goal, communication key.
* Interception – capacity to read passing lines and position off the lines important for good interceptions.
* Reverse Pressure – Put pressure on ball carrier. Not always about regaining possession, but to hinder vision, decisionmaking to allow teammates to anticipate / intercept.
* Vital Space – Defenders vital space is in front of attacker so any ball passed will be reached by defender rather than attacker.
* Zonal Adjustments – when numerical parity is broken ( fewer defensive players), close the significant zones and leave less risky zones unattended

**Principles in Offensive Transition**

* Escape – After regaining ball possession escape from the zone where regain occurred.
* Find T&S – Time and Space – If not oriented well after regaining ball then give ball to someone else who has better space / time to move the ball.
* Order through possession – at moment of transition – relationship between players to be considered. Prioritise maintenance of possession rather than execution of a quick break
* Width and depth – at transition need immediate width to give options and depth behind last defender to split their vision.