WHY SMALL-SIDED GAMES?

- More touches on the ball
- More decisions to be made
- Greater concentration
- More individual attention by the coach
- More goals scored
- More goalkeeper’s actions
- More transitions from defence to attack and vice versa
- More enjoyment and learning
SOME STATISTICS

• Players touch the ball five times more often in 4-a-side football and 50% more in 7-a-side

• Players are three times more often in one-against-one situations in 4-a-side football and twice more often in 7-a-side

• Goals are scored every two minutes in 4-a-side football on average and every four minutes in 7-a-side

• Goalkeepers are involved in the action two to four times more often in 7-a-side football than in 11-a-side football

• The ball is out of play 8% of the time in 4-a-side football, 14% in 7-a-side and 34% in 11-a-side
## AGES AND SMALL-SIDED GAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small-sided games</th>
<th>6-8 years</th>
<th>9-10 years</th>
<th>11-12 years</th>
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<td>4 v 4</td>
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Pitch
- The dimensions of the pitch should be suitable to the age, skills and number of children
- It is important to follow a logical development in which children move on from 4-a-side games (without goalkeepers) to eventually playing 9-a-side football

Goals
- The size of the goals should also be suitable for the age of the children
- A suggested goal size to start with in 4-a-side is a 3 metre goal gradually increasing to a 6 metre goal in 9-a-side
- Cones, poles and markers can be used to make different goal sizes
TECHNIQUES IN PLAY AND GAME FORMAT

- Small-sided games allow the coach to adapt the rules in order to promote a specific aspect of the game. For example: dribbling, shooting, passing, heading, etc.

- The smallest format of a small-sided game is 1v1

- Gradually, players can be added (2v1, 2v2, 3v2, 3v3, etc.)

- Small-sided games can be intense. Therefore the coach-educator should control the intensity of the activities.
EXAMPLES OF ORGANISATION
In the philosophy of grassroots, we have to take team spirit into account and we recommend playing football as a team.

However, in duels and 1 v 1 situations there can be specific objectives that give children the opportunity to develop basic individual tactics: attacking and defending.

Advanced positioning can be introduced once the players have acquired enough experience to be able to take up a position in open space.

A logical development of playing systems will see a 3 v 3 game eventually become 9 v 9 with various configurations in between such as 4 v 4, 5 v 5, 6 v 6, 7 v 7 and 8 v 8.

Having a numerical advantage also requires a great deal of tactical flexibility.