



U.7 Guided Discovery Methodologies

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Guided Discovery Coaching U.7

Young children learn from everything they do. They are naturally curious; they want to explore and discover. If their explorations bring pleasure or success, they will want to learn more. During these early years, children form attitudes about learning that will last a lifetime. Children who receive the right sort of support and encouragement during these years will be creative, adventurous learners throughout their lives. Children who do not receive this sort of support and interaction are likely to have a much different attitude about learning later in life. Their ability to learn new soccer skills is much the same as learning a new language . Human language is a remarkable way to communicate. No other form of communication in the natural world transfers so much information in such a short period of time. It is even more remarkable that in three short years a child can hear, mimic, explore, practice, and finally, learn language. Young soccer players develop in a similar pattern. There is a clear window of opportunity for this process to take place, usually up to thirteen years of age. It does not mean children or adults cannot learn after this window but it is a lot more difficult. PureSoccer through our Guided Discovery Philosophy is looking to optimise the learning experience during the six to thirteen window of opportunity ages. Guided Discovery coaching will have a positive influence on building awareness , responsibility and self esteem for young players. The player is placed at the centre of all our activities and programmes. The **Game** is the teacher, the Player is the Student, the Coach is the facilitator.

Guided Discovery Coaching U.7

Our approach is based on allowing the game become the teacher to improving technique and awareness. Grassroots soccer coaches of all levels should place an emphasis on coaching technique, setting aside a proportion of training to include repetition of this skill. It is this time that will allow the coach to support the growth of a players technical knowledge and help to in-grain the correct movements so they can be repeated at every training session. This will ensure that the technique skills become habitual. Technical focus must be adopted and developed through small sided games and not in static drills. Developing awareness requires experiences in game situations. Awareness training will develop players who are capable of thinking for themselves, solving problems and making correct decisions at the right time. A typical six or seven year old kid is full of energy and short on concentration. They will bounce off the ground and each other, they will not listen to you for long, they will not stand still, they seek individual not team achievement. They want to run with the ball or kick it forward not pass it. Every child's development is unique and complex. Although children develop through a generally predictable sequence of steps and milestones, they may not proceed through these steps in the same way or at the same time. A child's development is also greatly influenced by factors in his or her environment and the experiences he or she has.

Do's

- ⚽ Do praise, praise and praise.
- ⚽ Keep the players constantly active.
- ⚽ Use simple games to allow technique and awareness development.
- ⚽ Wait for quiet before speaking
- ⚽ Come down to their height level.

Don'ts

- ⚽ Do not criticise, their self esteem will not take it.
- ⚽ Do not make speeches they are not interested.
- ⚽ Do not do drills requiring queuing they have no patience.
- ⚽ Do not Shout.

Guided Discovery Principles

- 👤 Is a teaching methodology where our coaches ask meaningful questions of the players in order for them to think about the problems they are faced with in the game.
- 👤 The Guided discovery coaching environment allows players and coaches to think for themselves by facilitating player solutions rather than coach 'Yell and Tell' solutions.
- 👤 The players will be educated to learn the game through the 3 v 3 game format and game based drills specially designed for their age group

Goals of effective questioning:

- ✓ This process allows players to actively get involved in the process
- ✓ Empowers the player to discover the solutions to a soccer problem
- ✓ Develops patience in both the coach and the player which is required for the discovery process to have an effect on their behaviour.

Why is it important to Ask Questions?

Our Coaches will understand the art of “asking questions.” These questions will encourage players to practice problem solving within the training environment and in the game. The use of simple questions is appropriate during training sessions at this age group. Each question by the coach elicits a single correct response discovered by the player. This effect leads the player to discover the sought tactical concept, principle of play or technical idea. During training sessions and matches our coach guides (facilitates) the players, through effective age appropriate questioning, to self discovery. The coach facilitates learning by linking the activities at training to questions to enhance the learning experience

For the questions to be effective they must be asked at the time of the task or activity. This will enhance the learning experience. Do not ask the questions at the end of training they will have forgotten most of the answers.



Examples of Questions?

Examples of Simple Question

- ⚽ How do you make a short pass to a team mate?
- ⚽ How do you take a shot on goal?
- ⚽ Where do you think this pass should go?
- ⚽ How do you feel about that pass?



Importance of Questions

PureSoccer Coaches will only need to understand simple questions at this age and apply them accordingly. Why and How questions enhance the players' ability to make decisions, one of the central goals of empowerment. Rudyard Kipling has a beautiful poem on the art of questioning.

I keep honest serving men.....

I keep six honest serving-men, they taught me all I know;
Their names are **What** and **Why** and **When**
And **How** and **Where** and **Who**.
I send them over land and sea,
I send them east and west;
But after they have worked for me,
I give them all a rest.



Goal of PureSoccer for U.7

The goal is to introduce young players to the game in a friendly, non threatening, non competitive environment. We seek to maximise the number of touches a players gets with the ball during training. The use of two feet is encouraged from day one. The coach as facilitator sets of the games in the appropriate size area for the age group. An area 20 by 15 metres is ideal for a three v three at this age. The coach can ask the players to perform skills that stretch the players e.g. learn drag backs. Now ask the question , what is a drag back?, can someone demonstrate it for me. This same process should be applied with a step over etc. Do not be afraid to test them they have a fearsome ability to learn. This process will help develop more “soccer intelligent” players who are capable of making decisions during training and matches. Players consistently coached with this method will be more adaptable to the demands of the modern game. This coaching methodology is also likely to produce more technical and creative players. The best players in the world put thought, energy and insight into developing their game and are constantly probing and questioning their respective managers. Guided discovery simply means that the coach raises questions and provides options or choices for the players, guiding the players to answer the questions. It is important for coaches to allow players to think about questions and help encourage them to find the answers. If players are having difficulty with a question a coach can redirect or rephrase a question so they can think carefully about what has been asked. Encouraging young players in finding solutions to answers will improve their sense of worth and self belief.

Target by end of Seven Years

Technical

- ⚽ The player will attempt to use both feet
- ⚽ They can run with ball without tripping
- ⚽ They can pass and shoot and start learning distance control

Tactical

- ⚽ They will learn not to bunch
- ⚽ They will know what a defender is and an attacker is but should play in all positions

Awareness

- ⚽ They will have adjusted to a coaching environment
- ⚽ They will know which direction to play
- ⚽ They will love playing football

Why is Active Learning important?

Active learning means that the player is involved in what he/she is doing during training or matches. Players are directed by means of questions, tasks, training games and so on to discover the new information. Quite simply players do not remember very well something they are told. The table below is part of training folklore, but is so relevant that it warrants being repeated in the PureSoccer coaching methodology. It was a piece research first carried out some time ago by IBM, but it was repeated by the UK Post Office more recently. A group of workers were divided randomly into three sub groups, each of which were taught something quite simple, the same thing using three different approaches. The results speak for themselves. One thing they show that particularly concerns PureSoccer is how dramatically recall declines when workers are only told something.



Telling v Empowering

	Told	Told & Shown	Told, Shown and Experienced
Recall after 3 weeks	70%	72%	85%
Recall after 3 Months	10%	32%	65%

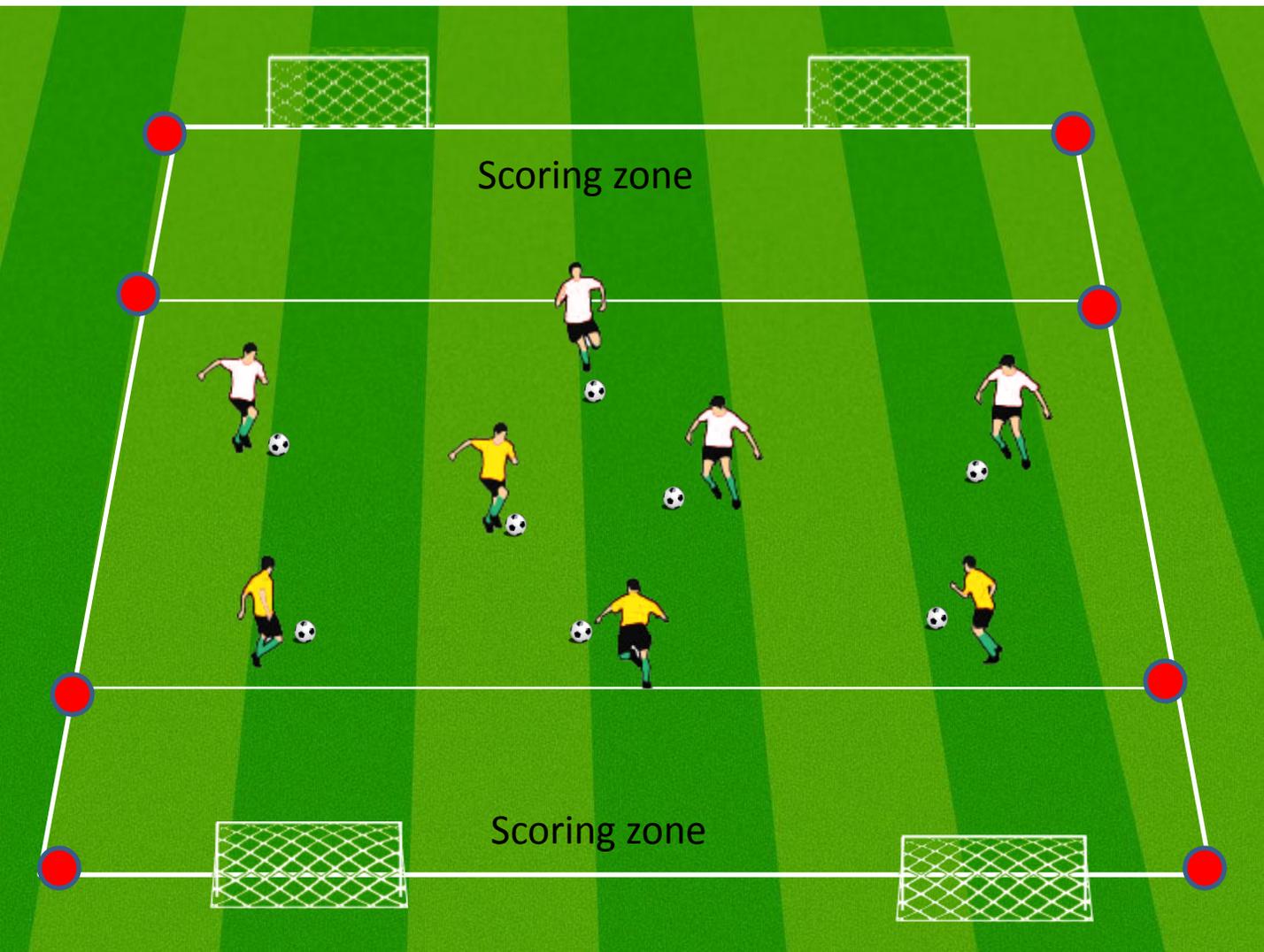


Session Planners

The role of the coach at the U.7 age group is as facilitator, helper, organiser and motivator. The coach should be patient, enthusiastic and imaginative. The coach should experiment with fun activities and should include all players. The environment and the activities are more important than technical coaching at this level. Let players use their imagination with the ball. 3 v 3 is the preferred game format attacking two goals which gives the players more opportunities to get touches of the ball and create more scoring opportunities.

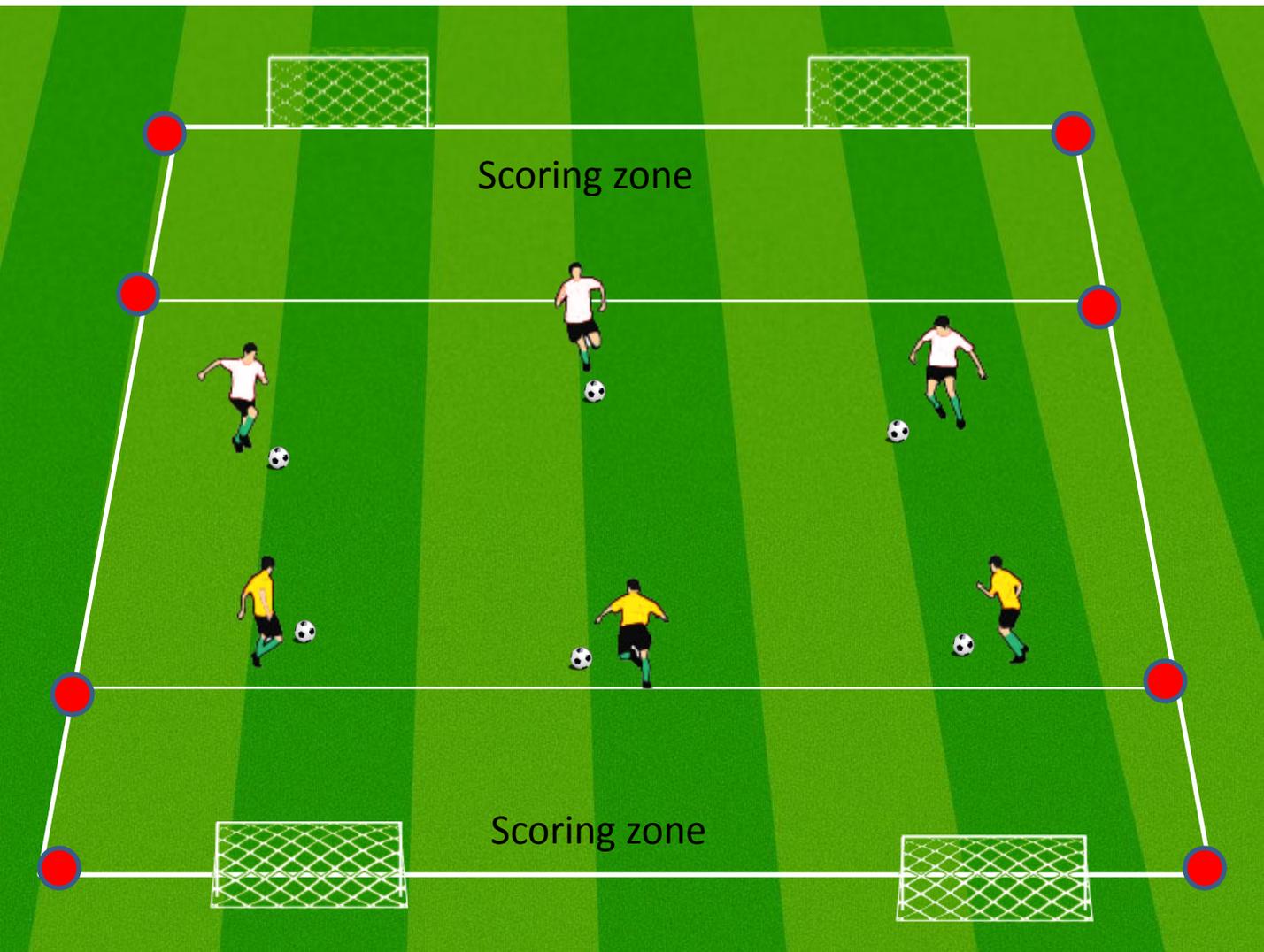


1. Dribbling



- ⚽ Dribble with your eyes up looking around at all times
- ⚽ Change pace and tempo of dribble
- ⚽ Try half turns with change of direction and pace, sole of foot, Cruyff turn and step over.
- ⚽ Any player who has a favourite move might like to try it
- ⚽ Let the players have free play and some fun
- ⚽ Good ability to manipulate and move the ball

2. Toe tapping with the ball and shoot



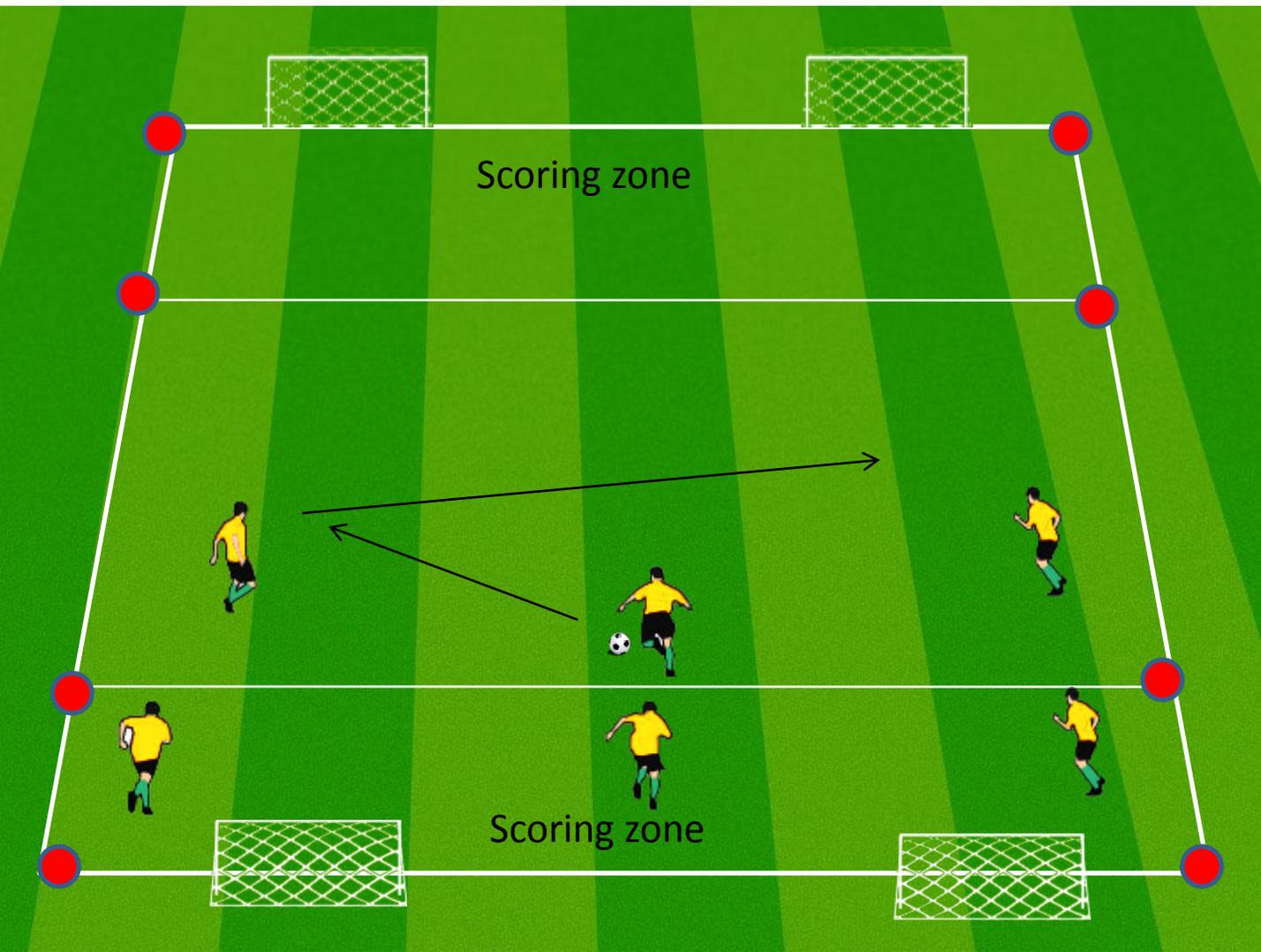
⚽ Players use various movements tapping the ball with their feet

⚽ Tap with various parts of your body

⚽ Tap moving in any direction

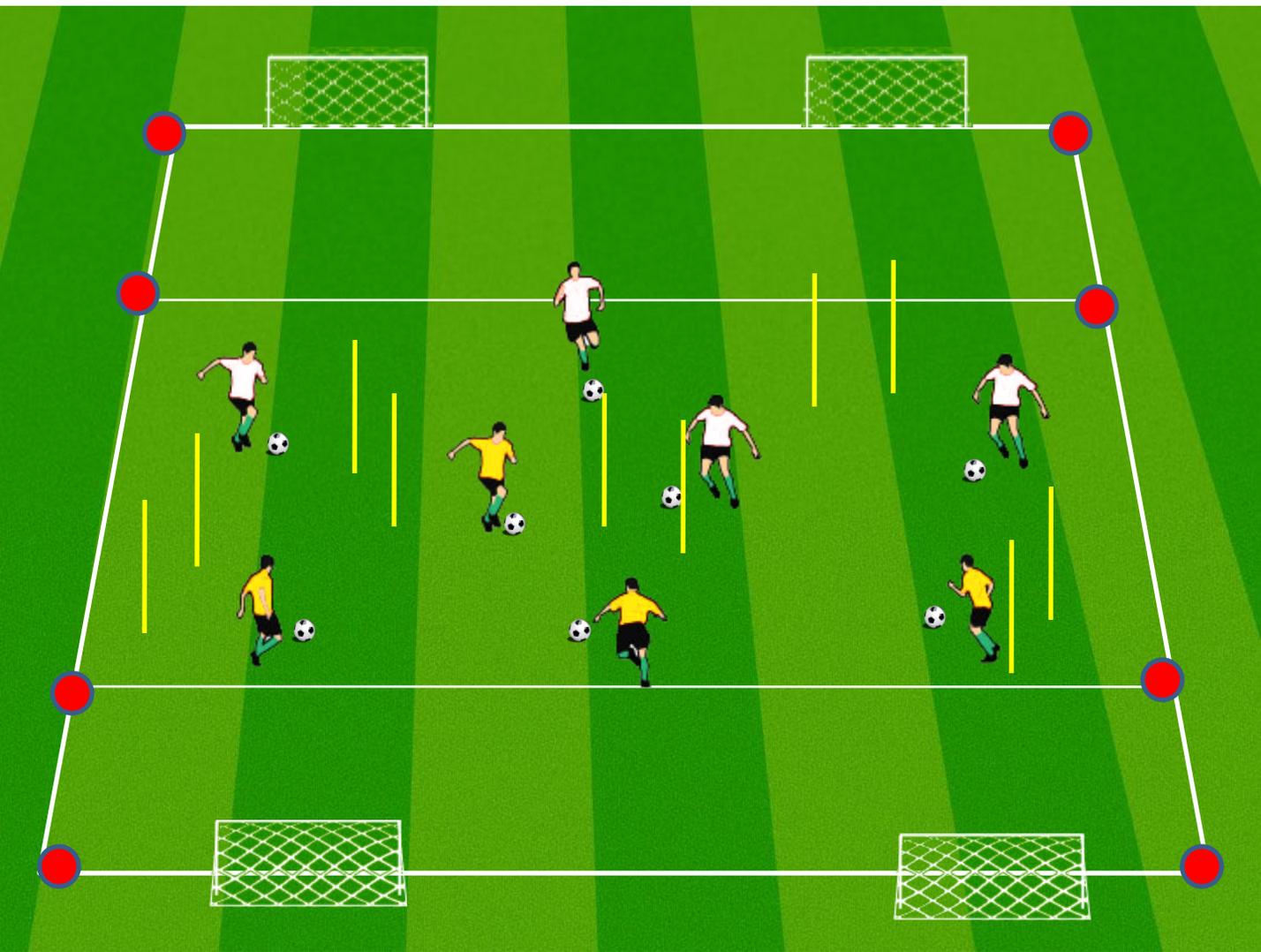
⚽ Tap with both feet then get a shot on a goal

3. Pass and move with shot



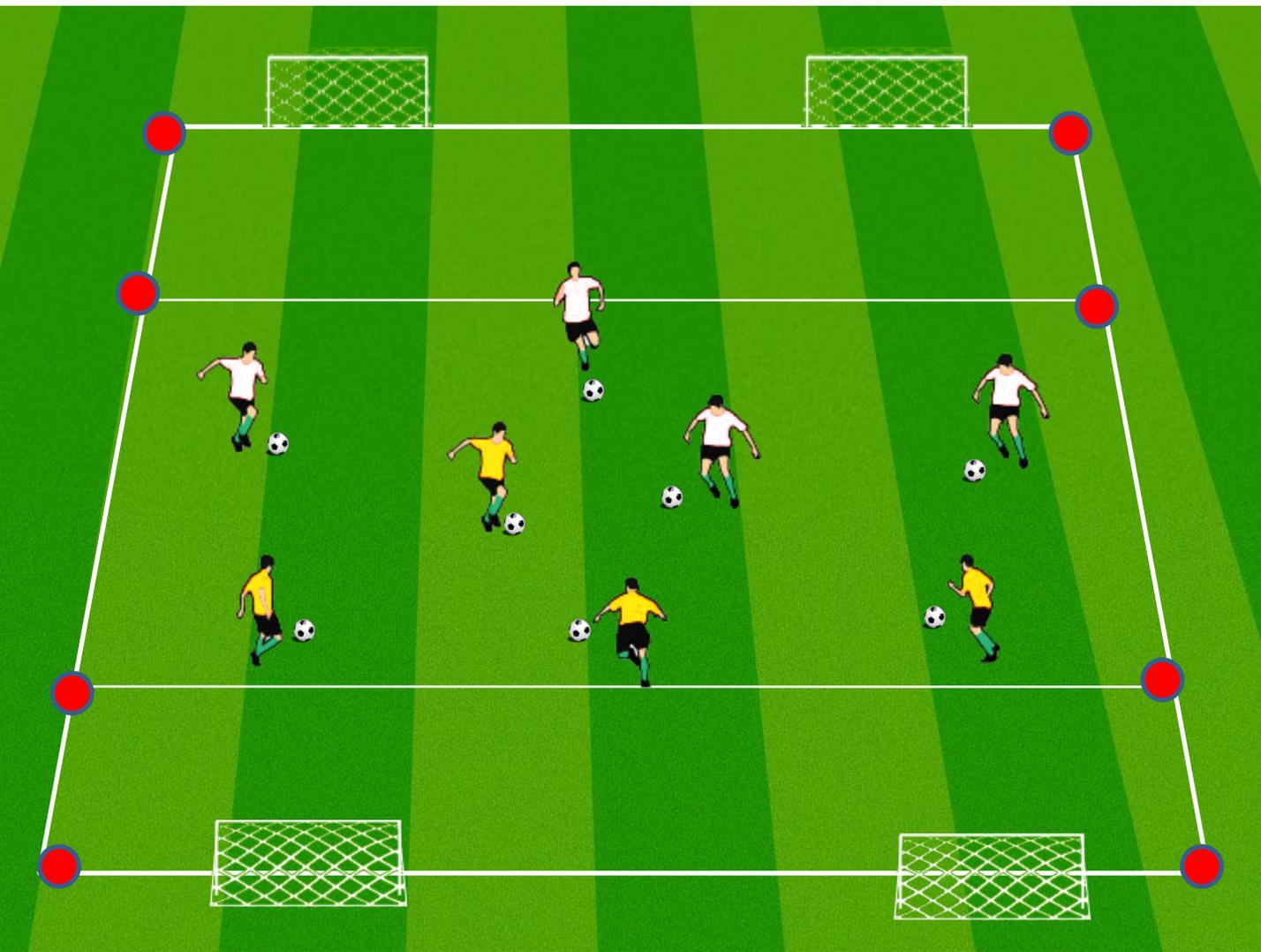
- ⚽ Players pass and move down the pitch
- ⚽ Last player who touches the ball can score on either goal
- ⚽ Encourage the kids to use both feet

5. Dribbling – thru the gates



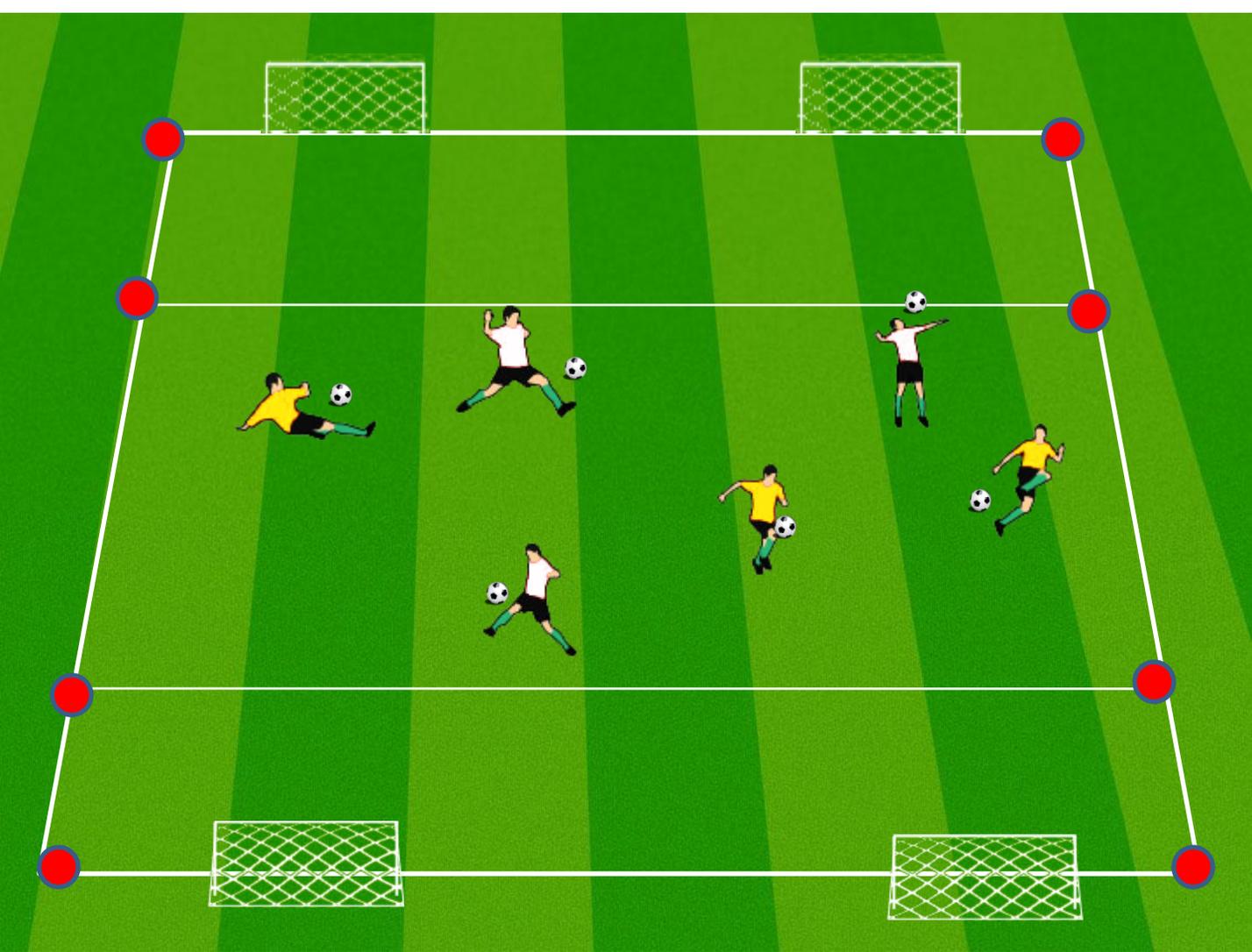
- ⚽ Players dribble through gates at various speeds
- ⚽ How many can the go through in 30 secs.
- ⚽ Let them try to beat their initial score (competing against themselves)
- ⚽ Players to look up when dribbling to see where the gates are located
- ⚽ Go through the gates front ways and back ways
- ⚽ After they go thru a gate can they score in zone

6. Copy your team mates



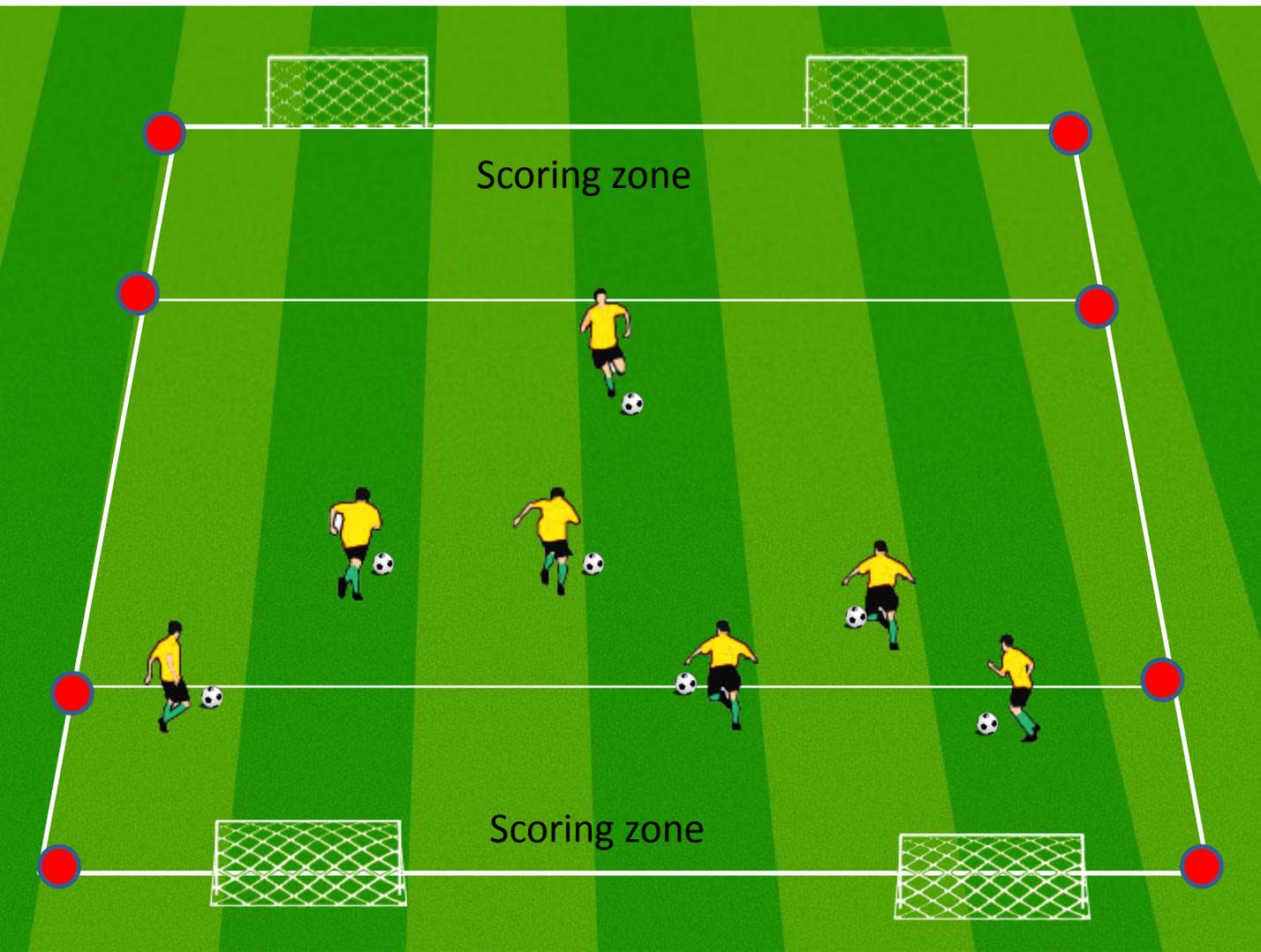
- ⚽ Important to have challenging activities when resting
- ⚽ Stand on one leg, close one eye
- ⚽ Keep your balance on one leg
- ⚽ Keep the ball up on your knee
- ⚽ Ask the players to make up some activities and lead
- ⚽ Alternate legs
- ⚽ Hop on one leg
- ⚽ Throw ball up in air clap twice before it comes back down

9. Juggling with a bounce



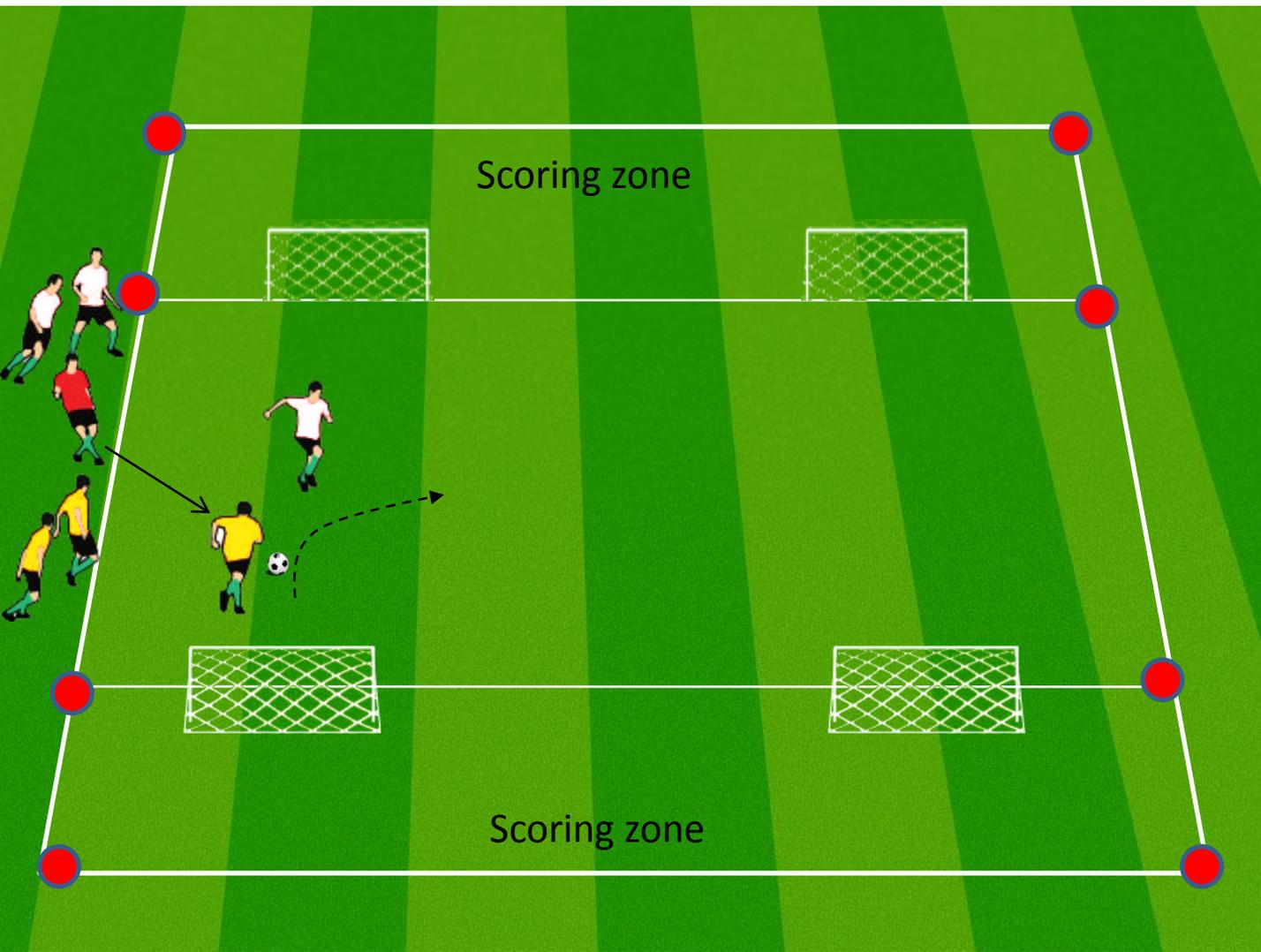
- ⚽ Players start with ball in their hands and juggle with thigh, knee, foot
- ⚽ The ball is allowed to bounce
- ⚽ Keep juggling going with various parts of body
- ⚽ Use both sides of body
- ⚽ Let players show off if necessary
- ⚽ Let players make up some games

10. Sharks and fishes



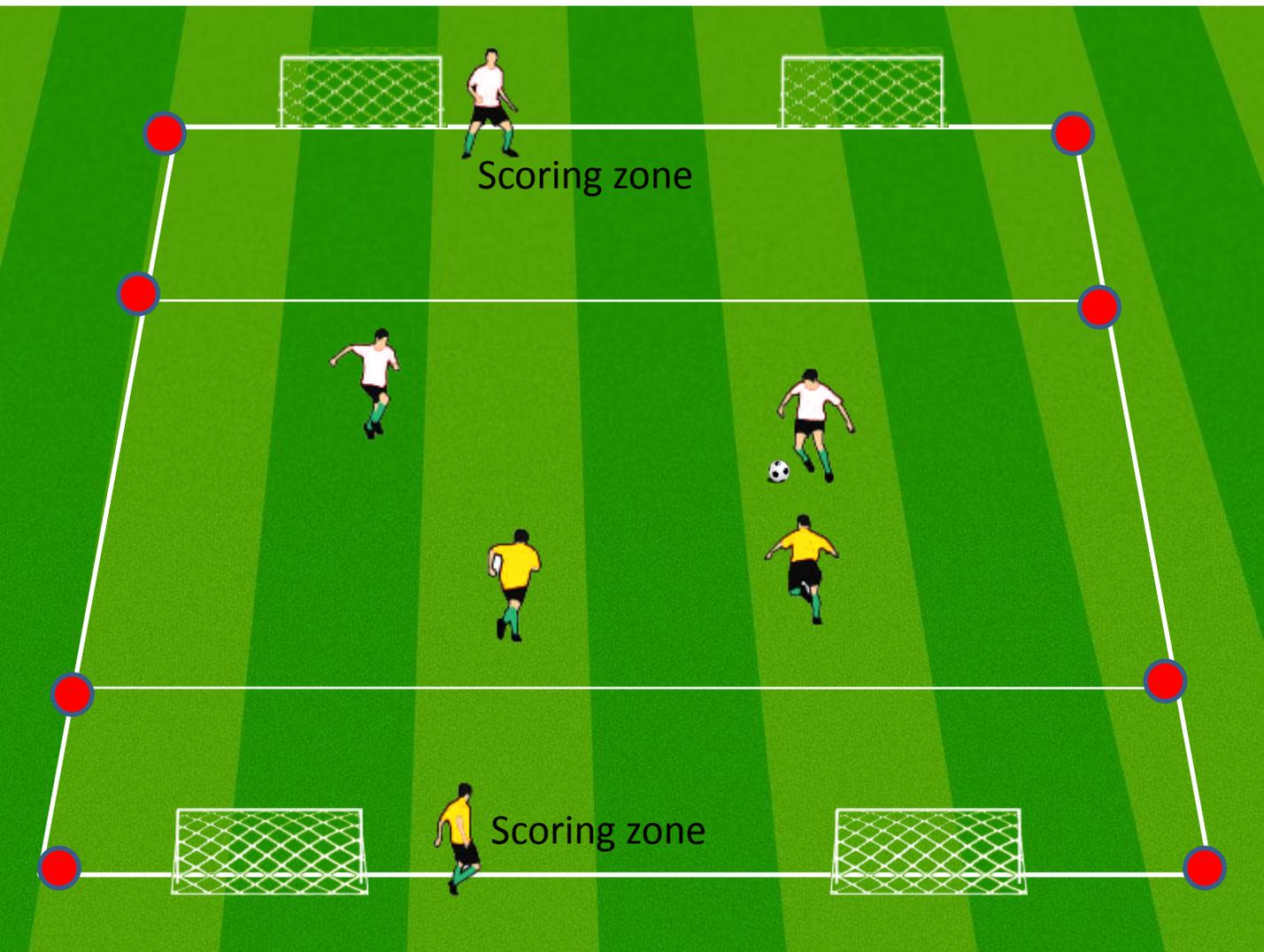
- ⚽ Can the fish make it to the other side
- ⚽ One player starts as a shark with a ball and he tries to hit the fishes below the knee
- ⚽ If players get hit with a ball they go out and get a ball and become sharks
- ⚽ Coach to probe players for best way to succeed

11. 1 v 1 on two goals



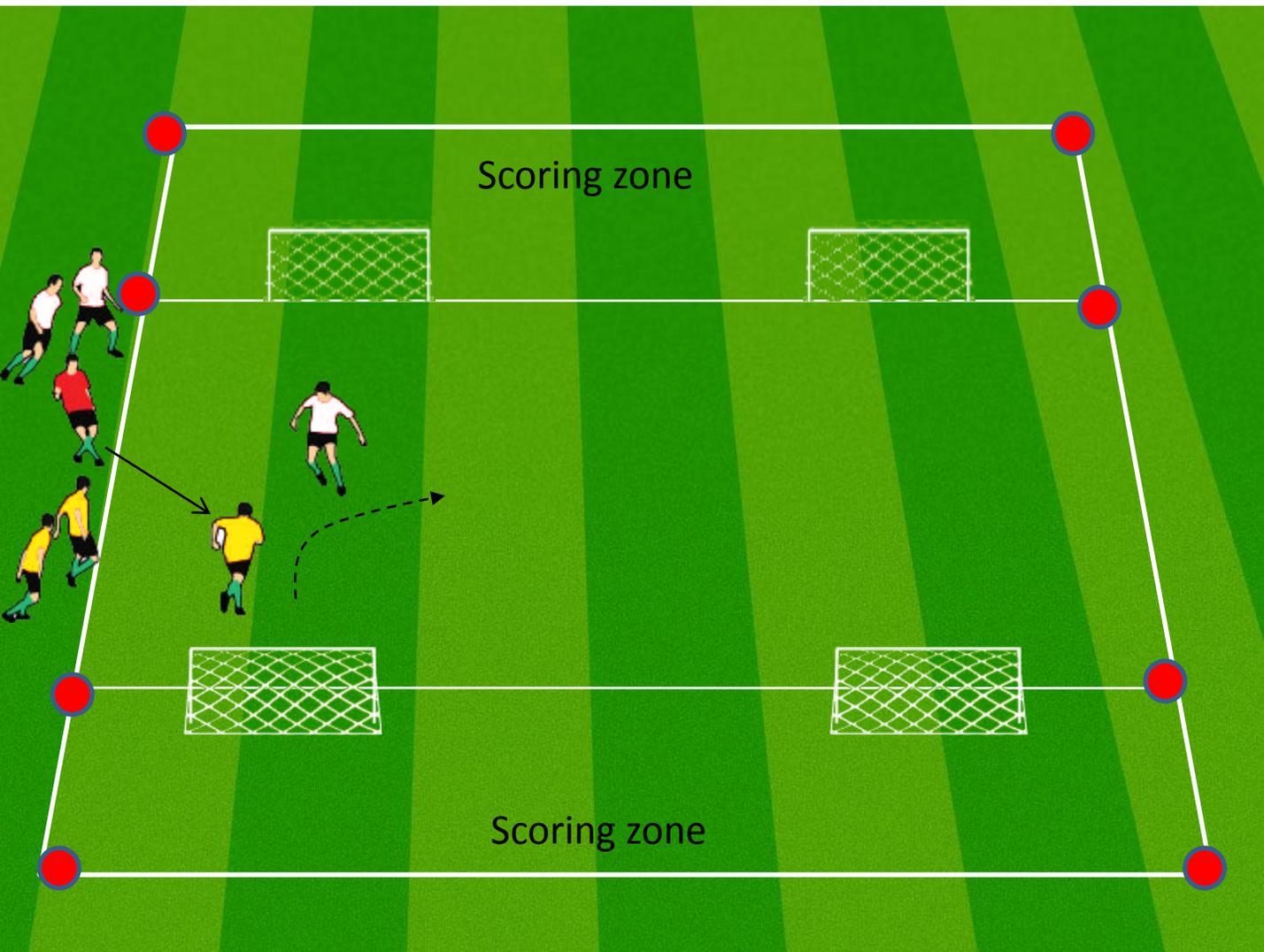
- ⚽ Play 1 v 1 to either goal
- ⚽ If the defender wins the ball they become the attacker
- ⚽ Let the players be creative and use their imagination
- ⚽ Coach can serve

12. 2 v 2 on two goals



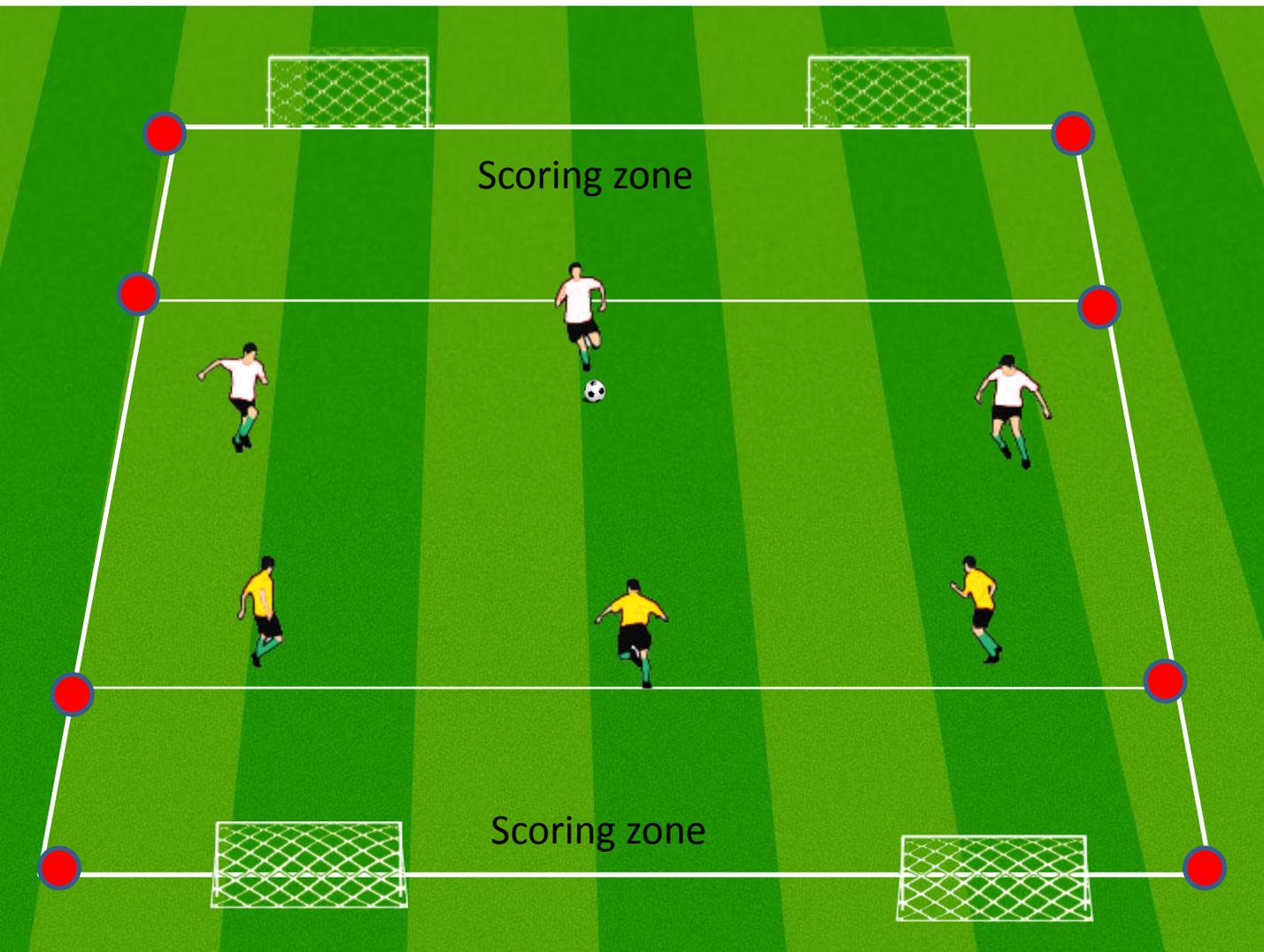
- ⚽ Play 2 v 2 to either goal
- ⚽ If the defenders wins the ball they become the attackers
- ⚽ Let the players be creative and use their imagination

13. Numbers game



- ⚽ Each team numbers themselves 1-3
- ⚽ Coach calls out different combinations e.g. 2 and 3 etc
- ⚽ The game will allow 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3
- ⚽ Let the players play and experiment
- ⚽ Let the players enjoy the game

14. 3 v 3 on four goals



- ⚽ Players look to score in either goal
- ⚽ Score with 1 or 2 touch in scoring zone
- ⚽ Players are encouraged to be creative
- ⚽ Ask players for solutions to problems encountered
- ⚽ Encourage 1 v 1, 2 v 1 overloads

Summary

Pure Soccer are advising clubs to develop an appropriate playing and training environment, which allows solutions to soccer problems to come from within the players themselves. Use simple questions to facilitate this process in other words use **GUIDED DISCOVERY PRINCIPLES** Remember that at the U.7 level training looks more like the game on a smaller scale; fun is still very important so continue to do fun activities that promote agility, balance and co-ordination movements and comfort with the ball. Sessions should consist of small sided games to give players more touches on the ball. Give the players a licence to explore and experiment.

