

COUNTDOWN

WHY USE IT

Countdown is a very popular game with the players as it is fast paced and exciting. As the number of players on both teams start to dwindle the importance of decision making increases.

SET UP

The area is a 30x20 yards rectangle with a 3 yards end zone marked at both ends. Two teams of 6 players nominate a target player to stand in the opponents end zone and the remaining players spread out in between the zones. The coach stands on the sideline with a large supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the game is to be the first team to have all players in the opponents end zone. To achieve that goal the players must combine passes with the target player. If the target player is able to control the ball and place their foot on top of the ball in the end zone, the player making the final pass joins the target player. If the ball leaves the area the coach restarts and makes a pass to the opposing team. Continue the sequence until the last player on either team makes the final pass to a target player and then play again.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - There are numerous attacking and defending competencies that a coach can focus on in this activity. Defensive compactness to prevent penetrating passes into the target players and movement by players to create width are just a couple of objectives.
- + Coaching tips - There are times in a training session the coach will just want to 'let the game be the teacher'. Once players understand the rules and objectives, give them the responsibility to work on their own tactics. Typically, discussions will occur on who to start as the target player and which player the team wants to be the last to pass.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

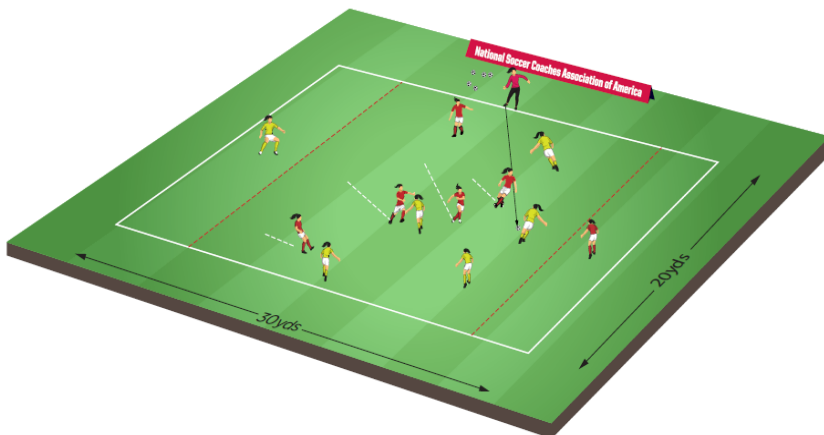
- + Less challenging: Start with 2-3 target players to provide more room in between the zones at the start.
- + More challenging: Add a second ball, insist on a passing combination before passing to the target, introduce a touch restriction, if a ball leaves the field the team must send back a target player and change the shape of the field to create different challenges.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

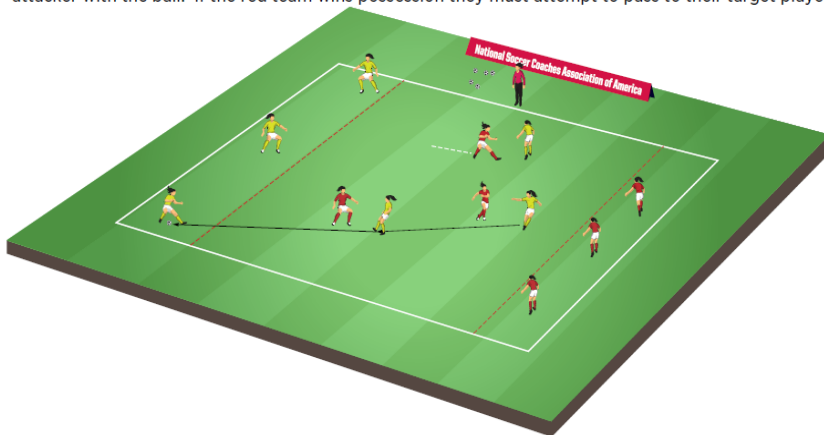
Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

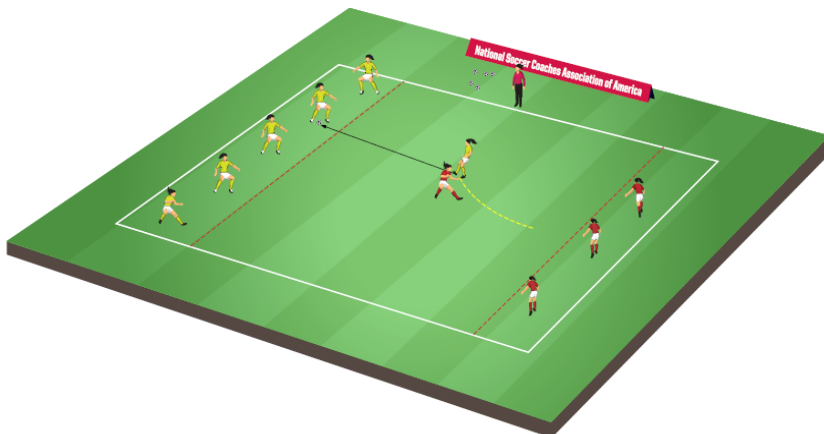
Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and 1v1 defending.



- + The coach passes to the yellow team who have 5 players in-between 2 end zones.
- + The yellow team must attempt to pass the ball into a yellow target player standing in the red team's zone.
- + The red team applies immediate pressure with the 2 nearest defenders closing tightly around the yellow attacker with the ball. If the red team wins possession they must attempt to pass to their target player.



- + The game has progressed and both teams have successfully sent 3 players to the end zone.
- + The yellow team has possession and the coach has insisted on a passing combination before a pass can be made into the end zone by either team. The yellow team achieves this goal and a successful pass is made.



- + The excitement builds as both teams trade players into the end zone.
- + Inevitably the game rests with the last player from each team in the center of the area.
- + A 1v1 duel ensues and the yellow player dribbles past the red defender before making the winning pass.