



## The Importance of Small Sided Games for the Development of Youth Soccer

Development over winning can be a difficult concept for young players and inexperienced coaches to focus on. Developing youth players skill and understanding of the game will result in wins later in the players careers.

Smaller sides games such as 4v4 helps keep all players on the field involved and moving. Players are able to gain confidence which in turn increases their touches on the ball.

It is important to the development of the youth player to include 1v1 drills during training. 1v1 is used as a building block to the development and understanding of the game.

Know when to coach and when NOT to coach. Never coach in the moment or when the player has the ball. Do not create joystick players. Let them think and react for themselves. Coach the players around the ball for shape and or positioning. If you need to coach the player with the ball wait until after the play is over and then make your coaching point.

Resist keeping score to help parents remain calm and not become over bearing. Having players take risks like dribbling out of the back without the fear of losing the game or being screamed at by the spectators on the sidelines. Having a player realize dribbling out of the back is not always a great idea instead of the player being yelled at helps them develop and become a smarter player.

### Statistics

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Statistics back up the benefits of small-sided football compared with 11-a-side football. Some of these statistics show that:

- 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.

### RECOMMENDED WEBSITE FOR DRILLS ON SMALL SIDED GAMES:

<https://www.soccercoachweekly.net/soccer-drills-and-skills/small-sided-games/>