

WAFootball.



WOMEN & GIRLS COMMUNITY COACHING HANDBOOK

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide contains:

- Drills and skills to teach, with step-by-step instructions and videos
- Basic game plan information
- A glossary with football terms
- Information on further resources you can access
- Contacts at WA Football who are always happy to help if you need anything!

If you see anything **highlighted like this**, it is explained in the glossary at the end of the manual.

Many drills in this guide have a video demonstration - you can find a QR code in the 'Video Library' section at the end.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact one of the WA Football staff listed on page 4 - they are happy to help!

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CONTACTS

For more information, or to speak with one of our WA Football staff, please see the contact information below. We would be happy to help with any question you may have!

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DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Coaching opportunities provided by WA Football - reach out to us and we can run something at your club!

Coach Mentor Program

Accomplished female coaches will come down to assist with your training and games

Female Coaching Academy

Short workshops designed to address footy fundamentals, catering for any age and skill level

Coach Your Way Program

For those new to coaching, a two-layered approach to fast-track education and development. Run it at your club!

Coaching Females Workshops

Education session covering communication styles, strength and conditioning, and female health

Networking Events

Connect with your peers across WA football's coaching landscape and gain rare opportunities to some fantastic events!

*Have a specific coaching topic in mind for your club?
Contact us and chances are that we can deliver it!*

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

If you would like to attend one (or more) of our courses listed on the previous page, please register your interest via the QR code here.

We will provide more information on the courses directly, at which stage you can decide whether you would like to sign up.

For any more information, or if you have any questions, please feel free to email us via the contacts on page 4.

Interested in our
coaching programs?
Register here



FURTHER RESOURCES

These resources are publicly available and perfect if you want to dive into any coaching topics further.

RookieMe Coach - includes a comprehensive drill library and step-by-step instructions for each drill. Note: you must be a registered coach to access this for free

Play AFL Website - contains a number of coaching resources including videos and guides. There are lots of videos for skill development, as well as the three topics below:

- **Women & Girls Toolkit** - coaching considerations specific to women and girls
- **Prep To Play Toolkit** - coaching women & girls athletes' fundamental movement patterns and strength and conditioning
- **AFL Coaching Tackle Curriculum** - comprehensive instructions for proper tackle technique, including considerations for each age group



COACH

ACCREDITATION

Throughout the season, coaches need to complete modules and attend events and programs, to earn valuable points to build their Coach Accreditation, which is split into 5 tiers:

1. Registered (< 90 points): You're a registered coach but haven't completed any training. To coach a team or be listed on a team sheet, you will need to progress to the next tier (Registered Accredited)	2. Registered Accredited (90 points): This is the minimum requirement for you to be able to coach on game day
3. Bronze (100 points): You're beginning your coaching career! At Bronze level, you'll be able to access extra learning modules and video content	4. Silver (200 points): You are developing your coaching skills. At Silver level, you'll gain access to extra learning opportunities, exclusive development sessions, and recognition for your ongoing commitment to improving your coaching craft
5. Gold (400 points): The top level of coach accreditation - a recognition of excellence, commitment, and leadership in the coaching community. To be a Gold Tier coach, you'll need to complete the Advanced Coaching Course. You've reached the peak of the coaching pathway, demonstrating a deep understanding of the game, a drive for continuous improvement, and the ability to inspire those around you	

To apply for WAFLW / AFLW roles you will need to have completed at least the Elevate or Advanced course, which replaced the previous Level 2 and 3 courses.

To register as a coach, visit <https://afl.androgogic.com.au/login> to create your account

For more information, visit the Play AFL website to find their handbook on the Coach Accreditation Framework

WOMEN & GIRLS COACHING

Research has shown that having fun and playing with friends is very important to the majority of girls and women who play community football.

Therefore, it's vital that training sessions are fun and engaging, to ensure players continue attending and are motivated to improve their skills. You can do this in the following ways:

- **Teach them the game.** Don't oversimplify it for them just because they're girls - teach them what they need to know to succeed, not only the basics;
- **Have variety in training sessions.** Some consistency is good, but avoid doing the same exact drills every session;
- **Make it clear what the aim of the drill is.** Players don't need to know everything, but generally like to know the 'why' behind what they do at training; and
- **Give players opportunities to lead** parts of training (especially if you have multiple age groups within your team, you can give the older girls added responsibility).

Of course these are general guidelines only, and may not apply to all women & girls players. However, they're certainly a good starting point!

KICKING

Kicking is hard to master, but teaching the correct technique early makes it a lot easier as players develop.

It can be difficult as a coach to give players the 1-on-1 support that they need to improve their kicking, but the instructions and troubleshooting in this section should help to simplify things for players to understand and remember.

FUNDAMENTALS

KICKING



Grip:

1. Hands spread evenly, with most fingers on the front panels of the ball
2. Laces of the ball should be facing the target ("Laces to faces" & "Nose to toes" - see next page)

Ball drop:

1. Hold ball in line with kicking leg
2. Ball guided down onto foot, with one hand coming off the ball (i.e. if kicking on right, keep right hand on the ball for longer)
3. Make sure ball is 'guided' down, rather than lifted and 'thrown' up in the air



Impact and follow through:

1. Ball should hit end of the foot, just before toes
2. Make sure toes are pointed
3. Follow through with leg swing - momentum should continue forward for more power. Players should take a step after they kick, not stand still
4. Ideally, ball will spin backwards through the air



TROUBLESHOOTING KICKING

ISSUE

FIX

Ball flight is too loopy



Ensure laces are facing the target, not upwards
Point toe on impact
Avoid leaning backwards

Not enough power on kick



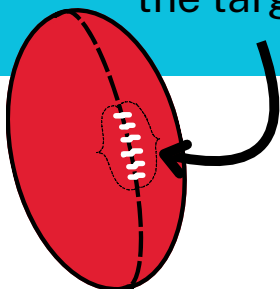
Take bigger step into kick
Avoid leaning backwards
Keep momentum going forward after kick

Ball doesn't spin properly

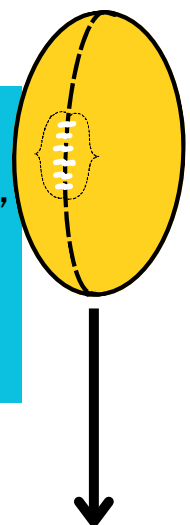


Ensure laces are facing the target, not upwards
Make sure ball is not lifted up before ball drop

“Laces to faces”
Laces of the ball to face the target



“Nose to toes”
Ball facing straight down, so there is a direct line from your nose, through the ball, to your toes



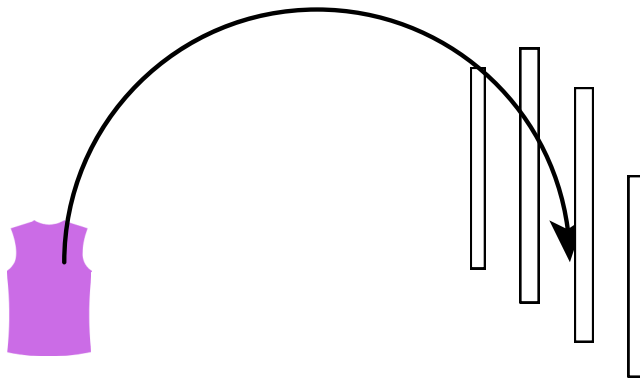
FUNDAMENTALS

GOALKICKING

Unlike normal field kicking, set shots for goal shouldn't be low and flat - the flight should be high and arched (see image below):



Field kick - direct and low so it travels to your teammate as quickly as possible (harder to defend)



Goal kick - high and long as it needs to go over the player on the mark and also carry over the goal line without being touched

DRILL - KICKING TECHNIQUE

NO-STEP / 1-STEP KICKS

Equipment

1x footy per pair

Numbers

Any (pairs)

Aim

Kicking technique

Partners stand at least 10-15m apart, with one ball between them. The kicker must balance on one foot (their non-preferred foot) and then kick to their partner, without taking a step.

This improves their ability to generate power on their kick through their leg swing and also improves balance as they kick.

Once they have done some with no steps, progress to one step kicks. Can also progress to three-step kicks, which will allow them to practise with more momentum.

Coaching Cues

- Point your toe
- Kick it low and flat to your teammate
- Lean forward - should plant your kicking foot after the kick

Progressions

- Kick on non-preferred side

DRILL - KICKING TECHNIQUE

TENNIS BALL KICKING



Equipment 1x tennis ball per pair	Numbers Any (pairs)	Aim Kicking technique
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Partners stand at least 10-15m apart and do kick-to-kick with a tennis ball, instead of a footy.

The round nature of the tennis ball can make it easier to see where there may be deficiencies in technique. For instance, it is very obvious with a tennis ball when the toe is not pointed for the kick, as it will generally go high in the air, rather than low and flat.

This also allows them to practise a one-handed ball drop.

Coaching Cues

- Point your toe
- Kick it low and flat to your teammate
- Lean forward as you kick, not back

Progressions

- Kick on non-preferred side
- Kicking on the run
- Use larger round balls e.g. soccer ball

DRILL - KICKING WARM UP

ABC KICKING

Equipment

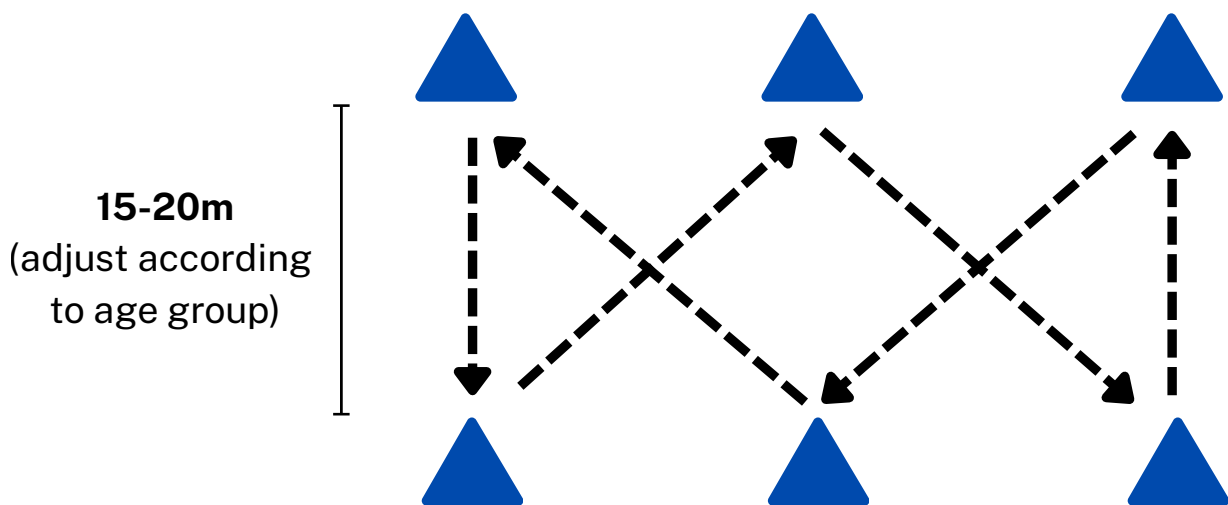
6x cones
2-3x footys

Numbers

12+ players

Aim

Kicking



Start with at least two players behind every cone and with one footy. The footy is kicked in the direction indicated above, allowing for both straight kicks and kicks at a 45 degree angle. Players follow their kick and go to the next cone.

Progressions

- Reverse direction of ball movement
- Increase the number of footys in the drill - can have 2-3 going at once
- Increase distance between cones
- Note: this can also be done as a handball drill

DRILL - KICKING WARM UP

TRIANGLE KICKING

Equipment

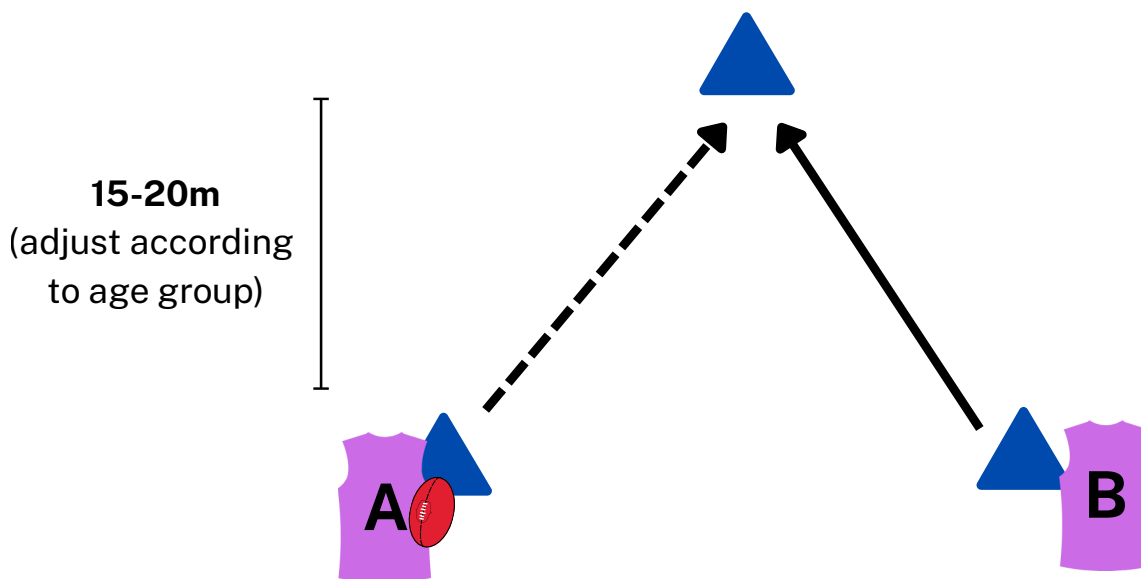
3x cones per pair
1x footy per pair

Numbers

Any (pairs)

Aim

Kicking to
advantage



Cones are set up in a triangle shape. Player A starts with the ball on one cone, with Player B on another cone. Player B runs to the free cone, with Player A trying to time the kick to get to Player B when they reach the cone. Keep repeating, with players alternating kicks.

This drill teaches players to kick to the advantage of a teammate on the run, rather than straight to them (as that is easier for opposition to defend).

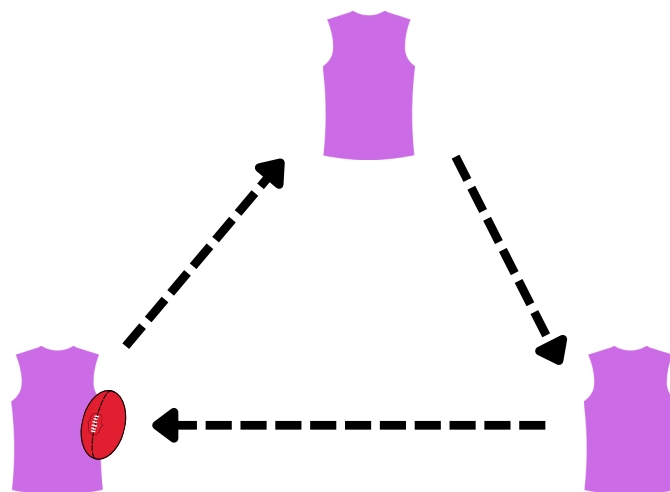
Progressions

- Increase distance between cones
- Introduce third player who stands on the mark at a cone

DRILL - KICKING WARM UP

PLAYTIME KICKING

Equipment 1x footy per group of three	Numbers Any (threes)	Aim Kicking types
--	--------------------------------	-----------------------------



Players kick in a triangle, however must do a different type of kick each time the ball comes back to them. For example, a player may do a drop punt, then a banana kick, then a kick on the run etc. Players can be as creative as they want.

See the next page for a list of different types of kicks.

Progressions

- Increase distance
- Instruct players to lead for the ball
- Instruct players to kick on their non-preferred side
- Just before they kick, get a teammate to call out the type of kick they need to do. They then have to react quickly and execute that style of kick

DRILL - KICKING WARM UP

PLAYTIME KICKING

Drop punt (standard kick)

Running drop punt

Non-preferred kick (opposite foot)

Banana (also called snap)

Checkside

Dribble kick

Torpedo



Banana

Kick around the body, hitting the belly of the ball - footy curves around



Checkside

Kick on the outside of the foot - footy curves around the opposite way to a banana



Dribble kick

Kick footy into the ground - footy curves along the ground



Torpedo

Kick footy on an angle to get maximum distance



See videos at the end of the manual!

DRILL - KICKING WARM UP

5 STAR KICKING

Equipment

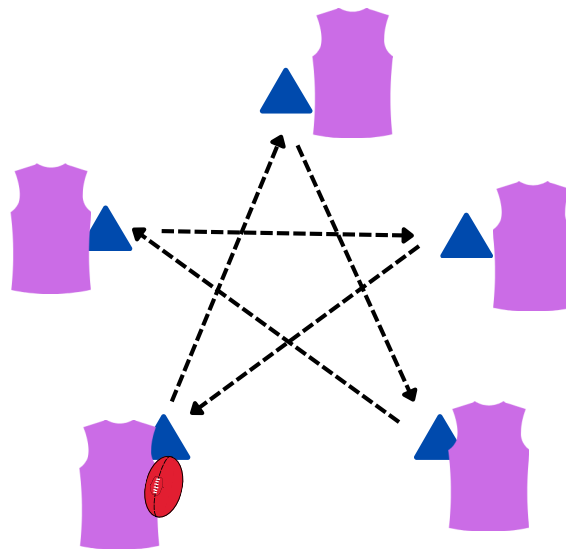
5x cones
2-3x footys

Numbers

10+

Aim

Kicking



Cones are set up in a star shape, with an even number of players behind each cone. Players kick in the direction indicated, joining the cone they kicked to after they kick. The ball moves continuously.

Introduce more footys when the group is confident. Also change the direction halfway through (i.e. clockwise to anticlockwise). Note: this can also be done as a handball drill.

Progressions

- Increase distance
- Instruct players to kick on their non-preferred side
- If enough numbers, have pairs at each cone. One player marks the ball, then handballs to the other player on the run, who kicks to the next cone

DRILL - KICKING UNDER PRESSURE

5v2 KICKING

Equipment

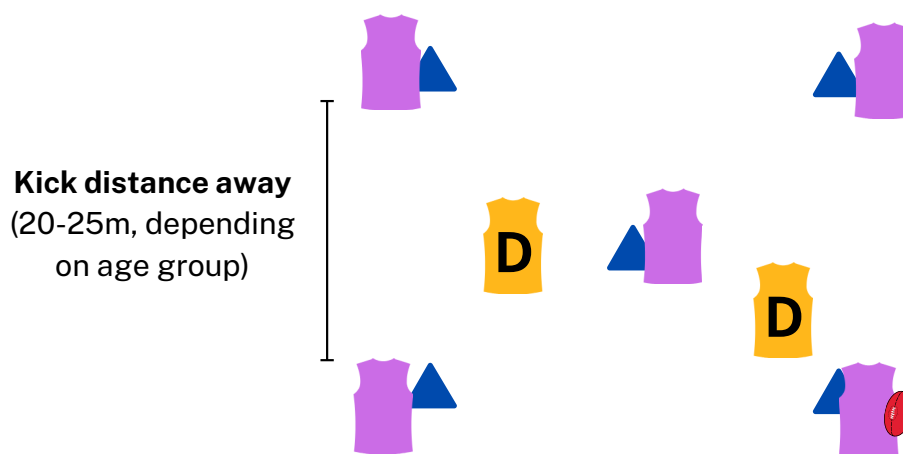
5x cones, 1x footy,
2x bibs

Numbers

7 players

Aims

Kicking to advantage
Hitting targets under pressure



Player set up as per image. The two defenders start somewhere in the middle of the square and can move freely (attackers must stay more or less on their cone).

Attackers kick between each other, while keeping the ball off the defenders. Attackers get 1 point for every mark they take on the outside of the square, but 3 points for every time the person in the middle marks it. Allocate a timeframe and see how many points they can gain in that time, then swap roles.

Progressions

- Add in -2 points every time a defender wins the ball
- Add extra defender
- You can remove the scoring from this drill, however players love competition amongst each other!

DRILL - KICKING UNDER PRESSURE

3 TEAM KICKING

Equipment

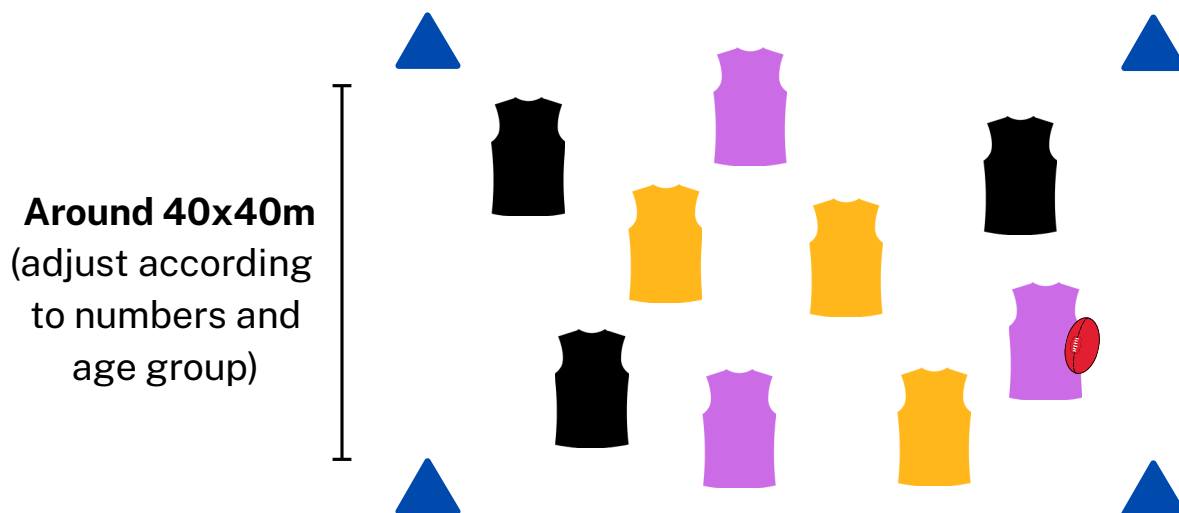
4x cones, 1x footy,
2 sets of coloured bibs

Numbers

9+ players
Coach

Aim

Kicking under
pressure



Split players into three even teams. Each team will need to be wearing a different colour. Coach nominates a 'defending' team. The other two teams work together with kicks to 'keep-it-off' the defending team. Normal football rules apply.

When the ball turns over, the team that caused the turnover (i.e. through a dropped mark or misskick) then becomes the defending team. The coach makes this call.

Progressions

- Defending team changes every time ball hits the ground
- Make area bigger or smaller (can also use space within 50m arc instead of cones)

HANDBALL

The ability to handball well is important for the standard of the game, as handballing is often what gets the ball from congestion to space.

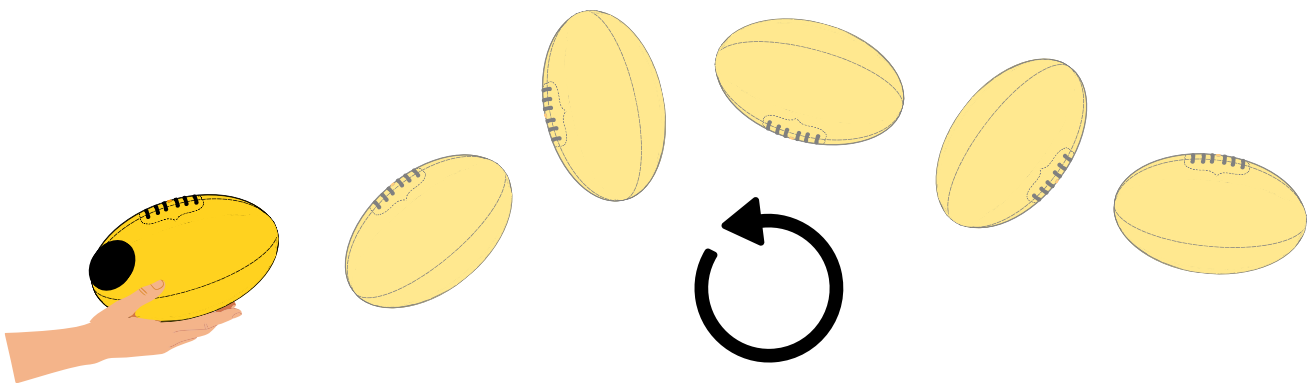
As players develop and move into higher grades, they'll need to be able to handball with both their preferred and non-preferred hands - best to start practising early!

FUNDAMENTALS

HANDBALL

Step-by-step:

1. Hold the footy in your non-dominant hand, with the ball tilted slightly upwards and pointed towards the person you're aiming for. Your body should be slightly side on to that person
2. Make a fist with the other hand (**IMPORTANT: Keep thumb on the outside of the fist**)
3. Take a step towards your target with your non-dominant foot and hit the top panel of the end of the ball with your fist (highlighted black in the picture below)
4. The ball should spin backwards as it travels towards the target - this allows it to move more efficiently through the air



Top Tip:

Encourage players to practise handballing with both their dominant and non-dominant hands, as both are useful during games!

DRILL - HANDBALL WARM UP

HANDBALL SQUARE

Equipment

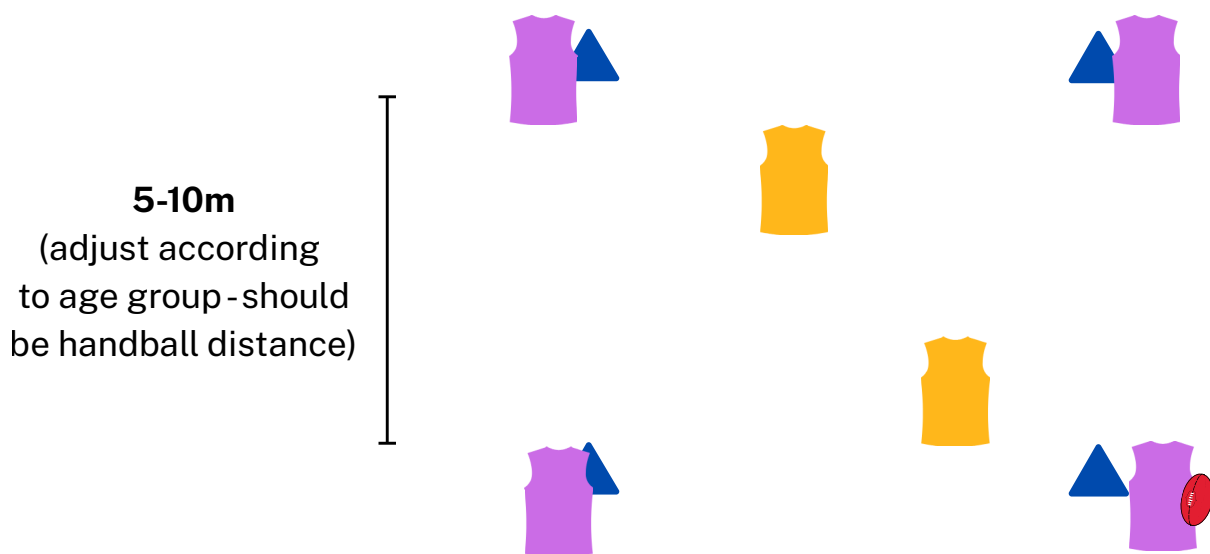
4x cones
1 footy

Numbers

5+ players

Aim

Quick
handballs



One player stands on each square around the outside, with two defenders in the middle. Attacking team (players on the outside) work the ball amongst themselves, trying to keep the ball away from defenders. Attackers must stay on the cones, but defenders can move freely.

Attackers should be able to turn their body to protect the ball and as they handball to a teammate.

Progressions

- Remove one attacker. Attackers can now move laterally to the free cone to receive ball
- Encourage attackers to handball with both hands

DRILL - HANDBALL UNDER PRESSURE

HANDBALL SPRINKLER

Equipment

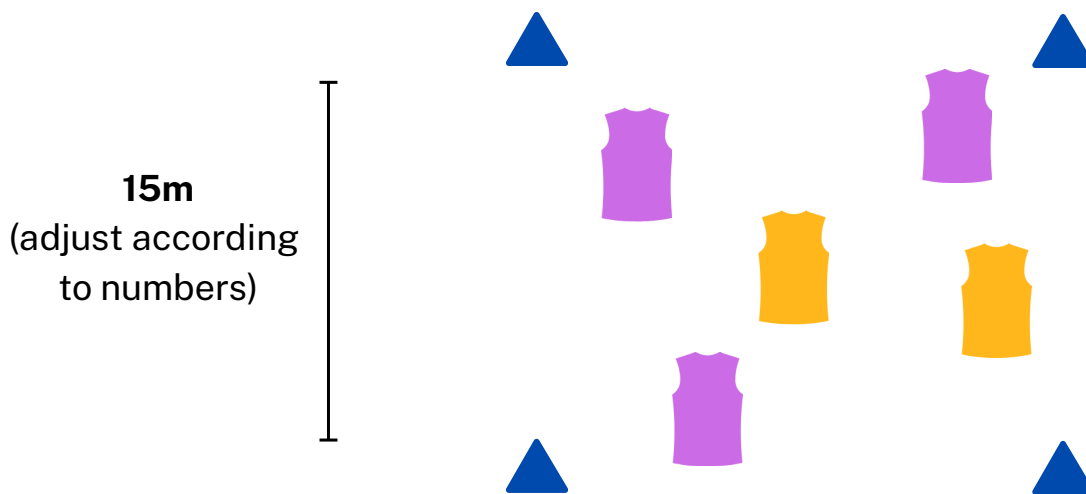
4x cones
1x footy

Numbers

5+ players
Coach

Aim

Handball under pressure



Three attackers and two defenders start in the square (can be any numbers you want, however attackers should always outnumber defenders). The defenders start the drill on their stomachs. When the coach feeds the ball into an attacker, all defenders get to their feet (“pop up” like a sprinkler) and try to intercept, while the attackers try to keep it off them.

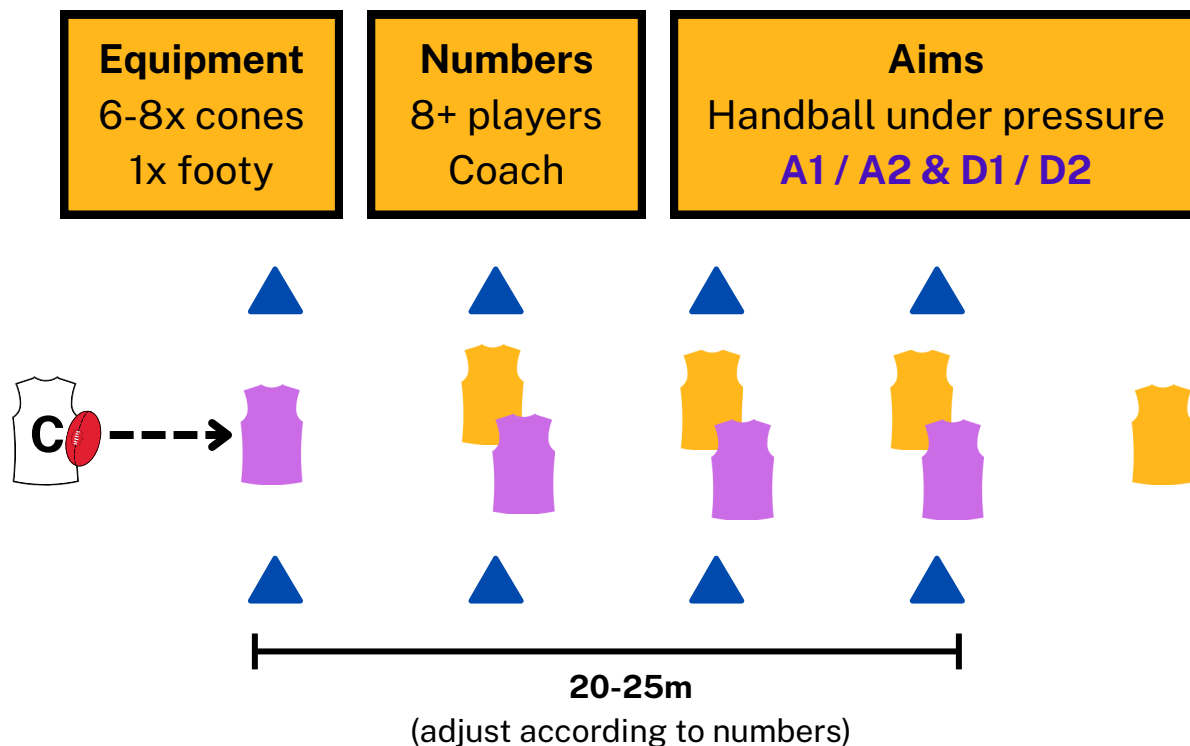
Attackers must work to create space within the square, to make it easier to complete handballs.

Progressions

- Change numbers or square size
- Have some or all defenders face away from the ball to begin

DRILL - HANDBALL UNDER PRESSURE

HANDBALL CHANNEL



Teams split up evenly and set up as above. The coach feeds it to the first attacker, at which point the drill starts and everyone can move. Attackers try to get past the opposite end of the cones, without going outside the relatively narrow box. Defenders try to intercept (drill stops if so).

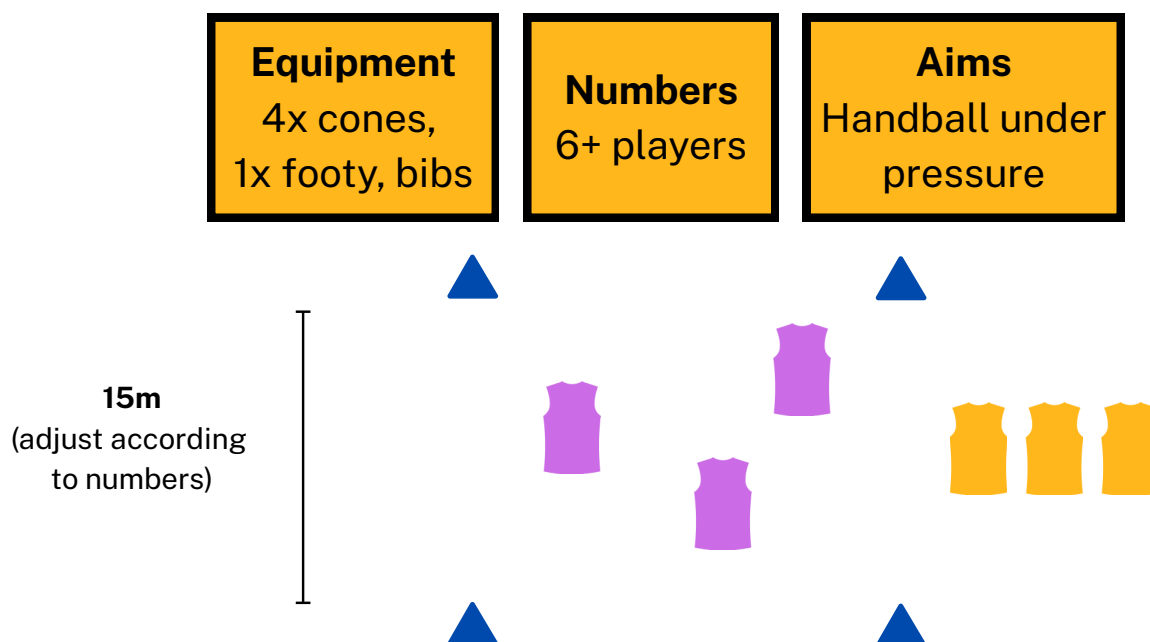
Encourage defenders to cover the most dangerous (the ball carrier) as quickly as possible and attackers to create space.

Progressions

- Change numbers or square size
- Have a target about 20m away from the end of the square who attackers need to kick to, once they've worked their way through

DRILL - HANDBALL UNDER PRESSURE

JUST ONE MORE



Players split into two even teams; one team wears bibs. The attacking team all start in the square and handball amongst each other. The defending team all start outside the square, with one player entering the square to defend every time that the attacking team completes three handballs. Attackers must keep it off the defenders, with more defenders coming in until the teams are even.

The drill can either stop when attackers have completed three handballs with all defenders in, or once there is a turnover.

Coaching Cues

- Attackers - create space within the square, don't crowd around the ball or it is easier for the other team to defend

Progressions

- Increase the number of handballs required
- Give one team an outnumber

MARKING

Learning how to mark with proper technique can give kids confidence when the ball is coming to them, rather than being afraid of it hitting them.

Laying the foundations early can also make it easier to take contested marks once they develop, which is a great skill to have!

FUNDAMENTALS

MARKING



CHEST MARK

The easiest way to take a mark. As the ball comes in, the player hugs the ball to their chest and wraps their arms around it securely.

Troubleshooting: if the ball slips through too easily - bring your arms closer to your chest. If your arms are too far away, it creates a gap between your arms and your chest for the ball to slip through.

OVERHEAD MARK

Taking a mark in the air, out in front. This type of mark is harder to do, but also harder for opposition players to defend as they have less chance to spoil.

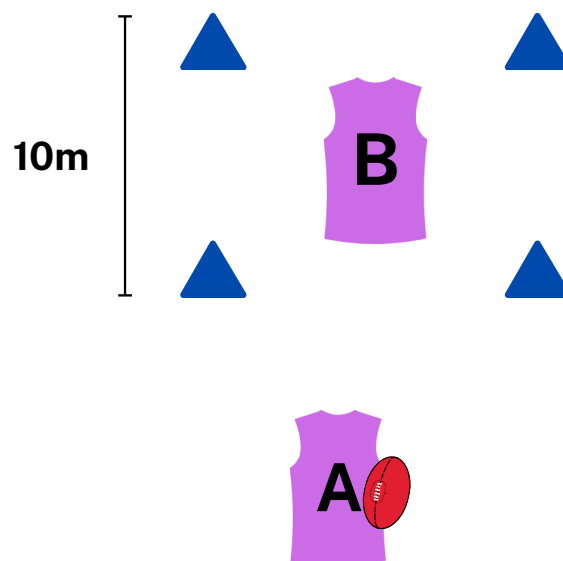
Top tip: for overhead marking, create the letter W with your hands as you mark the ball. This way, your thumbs will stop the ball from slipping through.



DRILL - MARKING TECHNIQUE

4 CONE MARKING

Equipment 4x cones per pair 1x footy per pair	Numbers Any (pairs)	Aims Marking Footwork
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Player B starts in the middle of the four cones. Player A stands a kick distance away and kicks a high, loopy kick, aiming for one of the four cones. Player B must try to take the mark (make sure the kick has enough airtime so it can be marked).

This drill teaches players to re-organise their feet when going up for a mark, as they may need to move backwards/forwards and left/right, depending on where the kick goes.

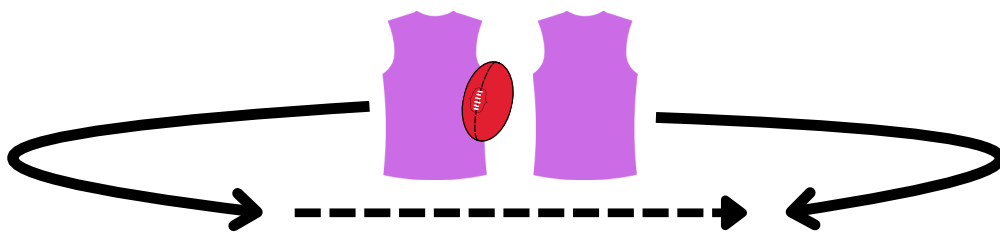
Coaching Cues

- Take the ball at its highest point - jump to meet it
- Read the hips of the kicker to see which direction it may go in

DRILL - MARKING TECHNIQUE

MARKING ON THE LEAD

Equipment 1x footy per pair	Numbers Any (pairs) Coach	Aims Marking out in front Kicking to advantage
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Two players start back-to-back, then on the whistle, run in the opposite direction. On the second whistle, they both turn back to face each other and continue running, and the player with the ball kicks to the other player. Then reset and swap roles.

It is important that the kicker steadies before kicking, but also that they challenge themselves to kick without slowing down too much.

Coaching Cues

- Mark the ball out in front of you - don't stop running to mark it

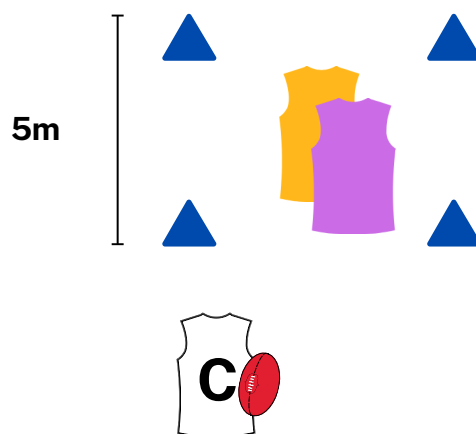
Progressions

- Have non-kicking player practice different types of leads (i.e. straight in front, 45 degree angle, to the side)
- Direct players to kick as soon as they can after the whistle

DRILL - CONTESTED MARKING

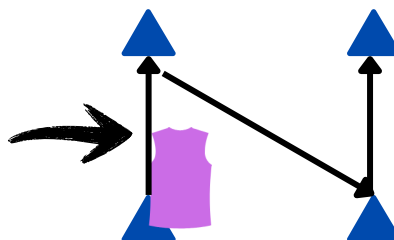
LETTER RUN MARKING

Equipment	Numbers	Aims
4x cones 1x footy	2+ players Coach	Marking on the lead



Two players start in the middle of the cones, one who is marking and the other who is defending. The coach calls out a letter of the alphabet, and the marker runs that shape between the cones. They can do it in any direction they like, and the defender must follow. As they finish the letter, the run towards the coach who kicks it, and the marker must try and take the mark in front of the defender.

Note: the easiest letters to use are N, Z, O, C, L, & I. Example for the running pattern for N, before the player leads up towards the coach



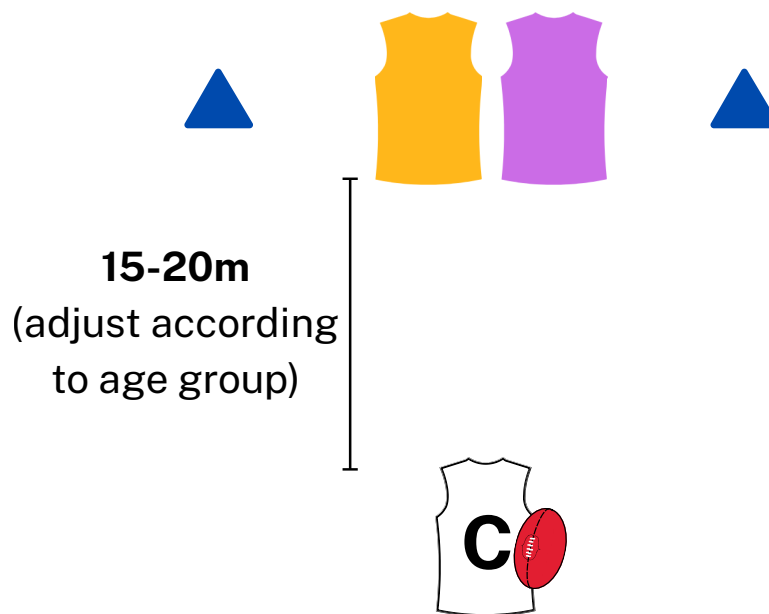
Progressions / Regressions

- Remove the defender to make it easier
- Increase the length of the kick to make it harder

DRILL - CONTESTED MARKING

1v1 CONTESTED MARKING

Equipment	Numbers	Aims
2x cones 1x footy	2+ players Coach	Marking Contest



Two players start in the middle of the cones, side to side. On the coach's whistle, they each run around the nearest cone and then converge back in the middle. The coach kicks the ball to them as they reach the middle.

Players must decide whether to make body contact or run and jump at the ball, and whether they go for the mark or try to spoil.

Progressions

- Include extra cones - make sure opposite cones are of the same colour, then call the colour for the players to run around

TACKLING

Proper tackle technique is important to protect both yourself and the player that you are tackling. There is an onus on you as the tackler to protect the opposition player.

Learning how to tackle, but also how to receive tackles, is one of the most effective ways of reducing the risk of injury.

FUNDAMENTALS

TACKLING

#1 Priority

Protect yourself and the person you're tackling!

Step-by-step:

1. Take **short, quick steps** on approach. Bigger steps make it harder to change direction if the opposition player tries to step around you
2. **Stay low** as you tackle, as this gives a better base of support and avoids accidental high contact
3. Make contact first with your **inside shoulder**. People often try to grab with their hands first, but this is much easier to break through. Try also to pin the arms at this stage
4. **Chin to back**: position your head next to their back so that you can keep it safe
5. **Drive your legs** as you tackle to use your momentum to get them off balance

When taking someone to ground in a tackle, drop your own body weight and roll them. This protects their head from hitting the ground and avoids landing in their back (which results in a free kick).

For more information, see the **AFL Coaching Tackle Curriculum** on the Play AFL website.

DRILLS - TACKLE TECHNIQUE

PAIRS TACKLING

Equipment

Footy

Numbers

Any (pairs)

Aims

Tackle technique

Pairs start facing each other, in a **kneeling** position. Players take turns completing the following steps (do multiple reps of each step before moving onto the next one).

1. Make shoulder to shoulder contact (no arms)
2. Wrap partner in a tackle, then release
3. Wrap partner, then gently bring them to ground

Once they are confident, repeat the same actions **standing**, **walking** and finally **running**. At each stage, make sure to practise front-on, side-on (both sides) and from behind.

Only progress as your players are ready. This progression may happen over the course of the season, depending on the age level and experience of the players.

Coaching Cues

- Quick steps, stay low, inside shoulder, chin to back, drive your legs (see previous page)

Progressions

- Repeat for tackling side-on (both sides) and from behind
- Players to try and fight the tackle and get a handball out
- Tackler holds a tennis ball in each hand, to stop “grabbing”

DRILL - TACKLE TECHNIQUE

TACKLE SQUARE

Equipment

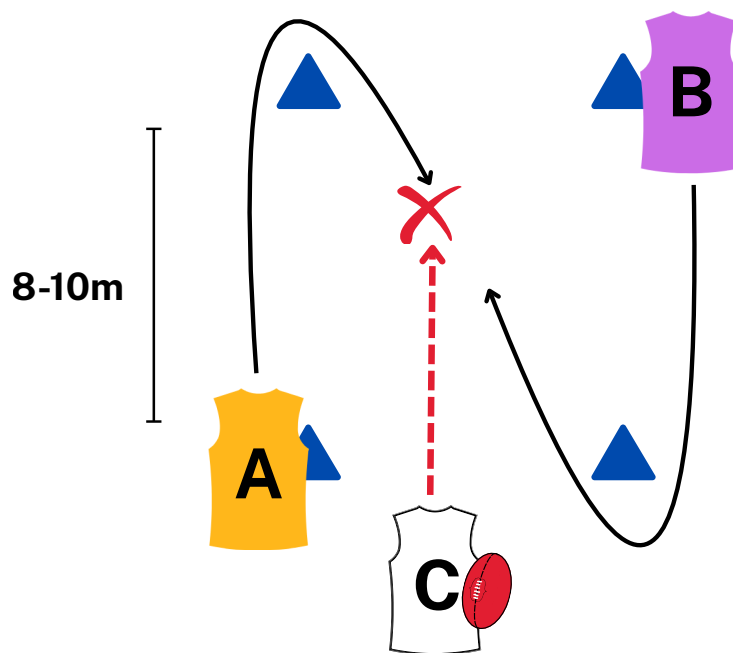
4x cones
1x footy

Numbers

2+ players
Coach

Aims

Tackle technique
Ground balls



Players A and B start at diagonal cones. On the whistle, they both run around the cone in front of them and into the square, at which point the coach will roll a ground ball to Player A. Player A collects the ball and tries to run straight to the end of the cones, while Player B tries to tackle.

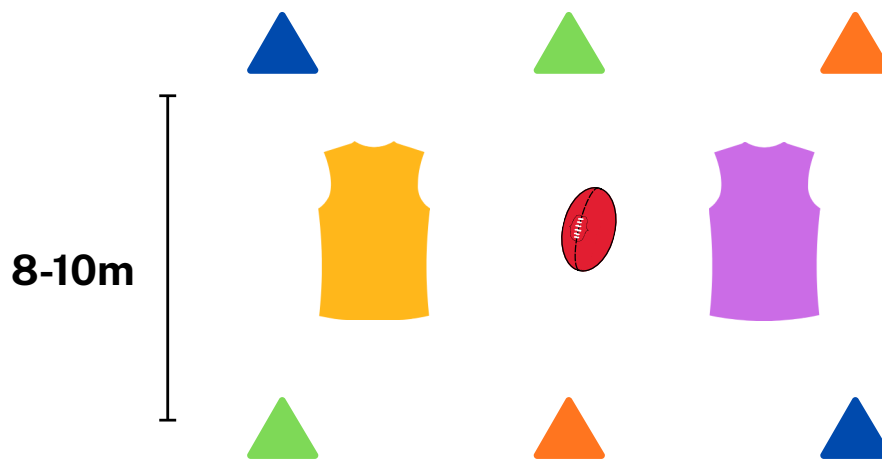
Coaching Cues

- **Corral** the player with the ball to one side, don't let them step around you
- Lead with your inside shoulder when tackling

DRILL - TACKLE TECHNIQUE

COLOUR TACKLING

Equipment	Numbers	Aims
6+ cones (various colours), 1x footy	Any (pairs) Coach	Tackle technique Ground balls



Players start in the middle of the six cones (two of each colour). The coach calls out a colour. Players must run around the closest cone of this colour, before competing for the ball in the middle of the drill (can be placed in there to begin with, or rolled in).

The player who wins the ball must try to get through and handball back to the coach, with the other player attempting to lay a tackle.

Coaching Cues	Progressions
• Turn your body to pick up the ground ball (protect the head) • Lead with your inside shoulder when tackling	• Add additional cones • Make the drill 2v2

GROUND BALLS

Like tackling, proper ground ball technique is vital to reduce the risk of injury, especially protecting the head to avoid concussions.

FUNDAMENTALS

GROUND BALLS

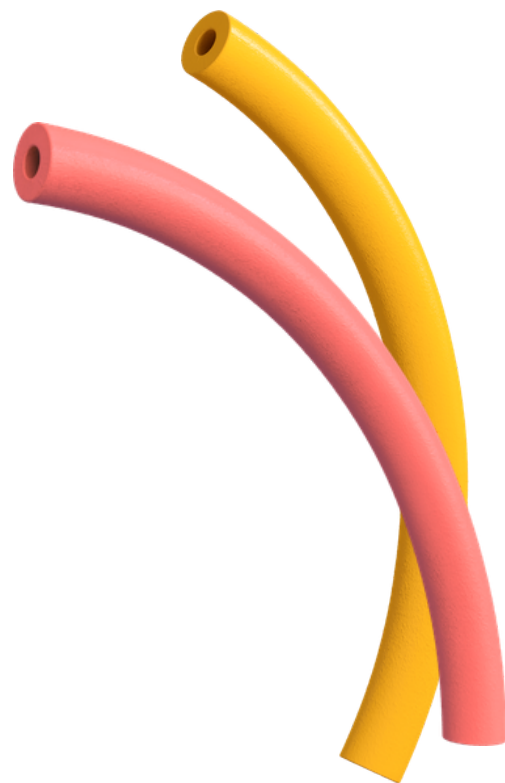
Step-by-step:

1. On approach, take smaller steps so you don't overrun the ball
2. Bend at the knees to pick up the ball and get low - fingertips should feel the grass
3. Keep your feet behind the ball, to stop it if it rolls through your hands
4. For **contested** ground balls: turn your body to be side on so your head is protected.

Follow the QR code to the Video Library (page 58) to view a video demonstrating proper ground ball technique.

Top Tip:

Use bump bags or ordinary pool noodles to create more pressure for ground ball practise!



DRILL - GROUND BALL TECHNIQUE

GROUND BALL CIRCUIT

Equipment

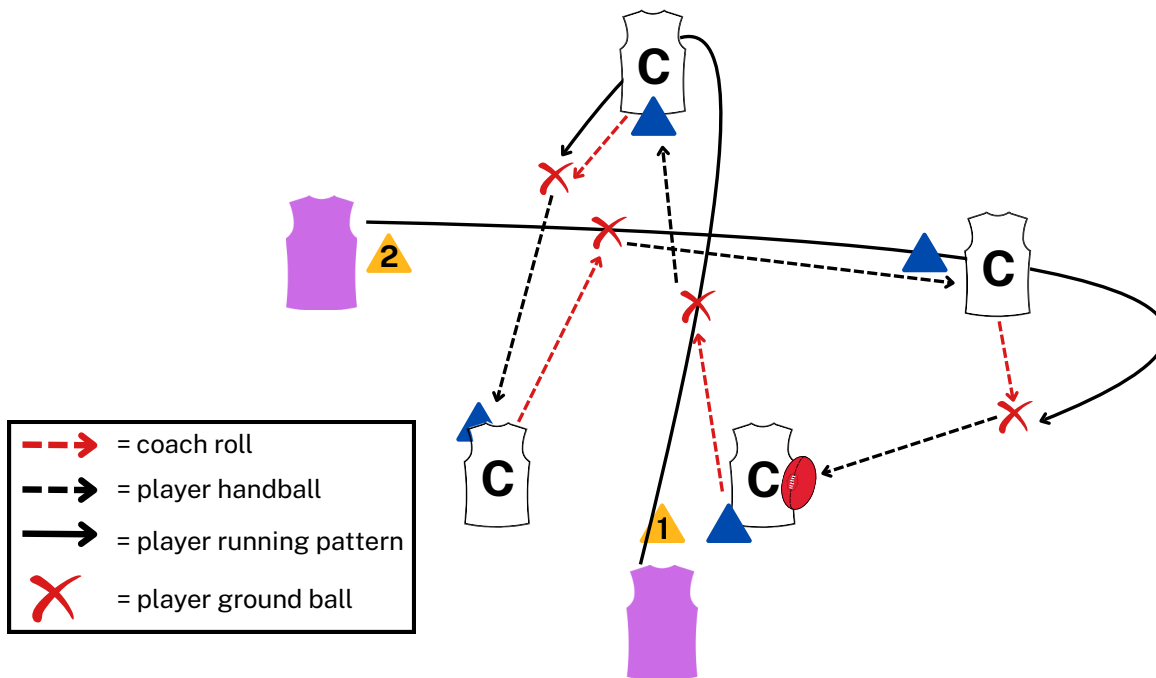
6x cones
2-3x footys

Numbers

6+ players
4x coaches / helpers

Aim

Clean hands
Ground ball technique



Players split up evenly between cones 1 & 2, with coaches (or helpers e.g. injured players) standing on the other cones. The coach rolls the ball for the first player at cone 1 to collect and then handball off to the next coach, in the pattern indicated. Once this player has completed two ground balls and handballs, they join the back of the line at cone 2. Similarly, the player at cone 2 follows the pattern; their second handball will be back to the first coach.

Coaching Cues

- Bend at the knees
- Fingertips should feel the grass

Progressions

- Add extra balls once the players have grasped the drill
- Reverse the direction

DRILL - GROUND BALL TECHNIQUE

FRONT & CENTRE GBs

Equipment

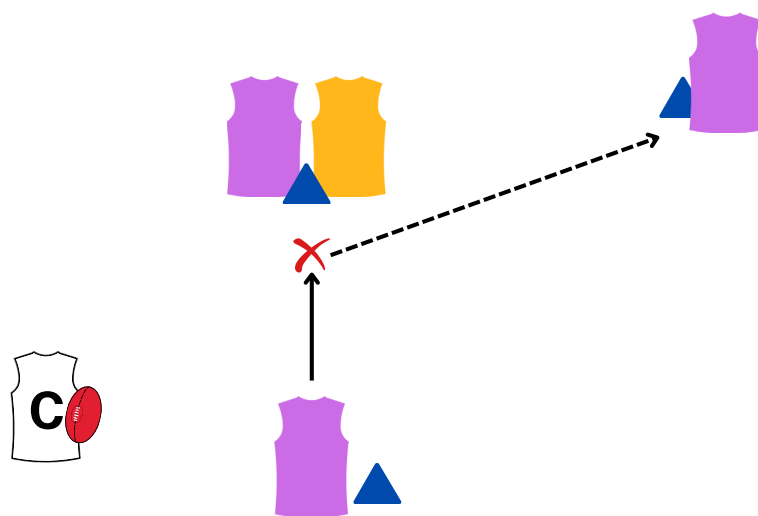
2x cones,
1x footy, bibs

Numbers

4+ players
Coach

Aims

Front & centre ground balls
Marking contests



The coach kicks a high ball on their heads, and they try to mark or spoil. The third player has to try and time their run to get the ball when it hits the ground, then kick to another target while on the run (the target can be wherever you like, or even a shot on goal).

Note: if one of the players mark the ball, that's great! You can either restart the drill or have them play on with a handball to the **front and centre** player running past.

Coaching Cues

- Time your run - you may need to **tread water** rather than overrunning the ball

Progressions

- Add additional players (and/or more defenders)
- Have the front and centre player start from side-on

DRILL - CONTESTED GROUND BALLS

2v1 GROUND BALLS

Equipment

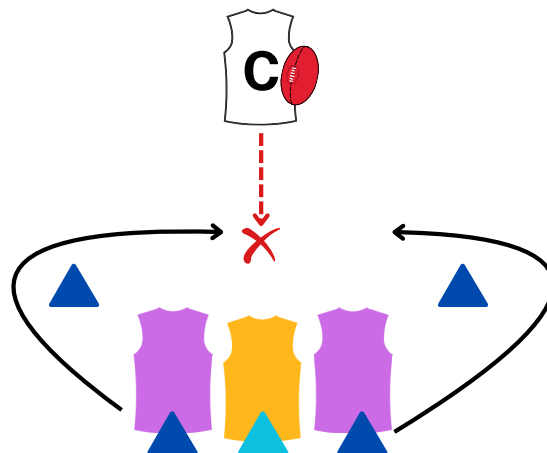
5x cones,
1x footy, bibs

Numbers

3+ players
Coach

Aims

Ground balls
Teammate support



Players split evenly among the three starting cones (the middle cone is defenders and will need bibs). On the coach's whistle, the two attackers run around the cone nearest them, with the defender choosing one player to follow. As they go around the cones, the coach rolls a ground ball; the player with the defender on them has to pick up the ground ball and then handball to their teammate.

The aim is to pick up the ground ball cleanly, then pass to the teammate who is not under pressure.

Coaching Cues

- Player with the defender picks up the ball - focus on the ball
- Teammate to position themselves to make the handball easier

Progressions / Regressions

- Give the attackers a head start
- Add a target for the attackers to handball / kick to

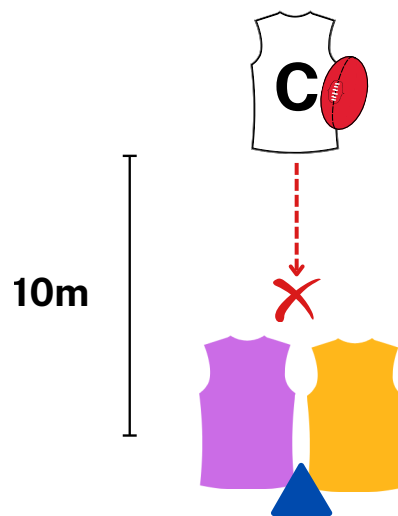
DRILL - CONTESTED GROUND BALLS

CHAOS GROUND BALLS

Equipment
1x footy

Numbers
2+ players
Coach

Aims
Ground balls, contest,
fitness



Players line up in pairs behind a cone. The coach stands out in front and rolls the ball to the first pair who fight to win the ball and handball it back to the coach. The coach then handballs / knocks it on in a random direction for the player to repeat.

Each pair repeats this three times total before going to the back of the line. The drill is continuous, so is quite exhausting - it is important that players have a rest after their three reps.

Coaching Cues

- Protect yourself when picking up the ground ball - turn to the side, don't lead with your head
- Drive your legs to create space once you pick it up

SMALL-SIDED GAMES

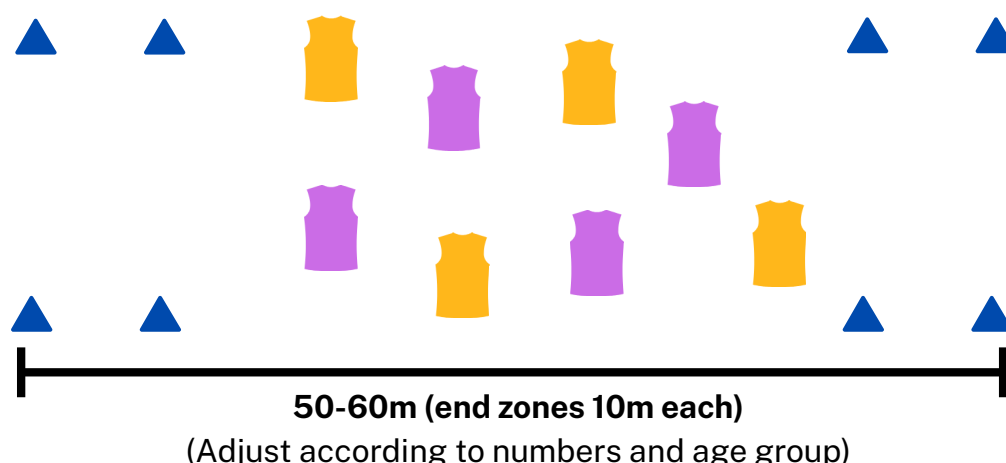
Small-sided games are drills which incorporate more game-specific scenarios with fewer constraints. Although not full football games, they generally focus on multiple skills and game sense, rather than isolating a single skill.

Both skill drills and small-sided games are useful for training - ideally both would be incorporated into each training session.

SMALL SIDED GAME - KICKING

END BALL

Equipment	Numbers	Aims
8x cones, 1x footy, bibs	8+ players Coach	Kicking under pressure, transition running, running patterns



Players are split into two even teams. The coach feeds the ball into one team, who then try to move the ball (through handballing and kicking - normal footy rules apply) to their “end zone” which is marked out with cones. The team must receive a possession within the end zone to score a point. The ball is then turned over to the other team, who try to score in their end zone at the opposite end. Team with the most points wins.

Progressions / Variations

- If an odd number of players - give one player a different coloured bib and they are always on the attacking team
- Teams keep possession of the ball when they score, see how many times they can work up and down the field without the ball being turned over
- Limit to only kick or handball (adjust field size accordingly)

SMALL SIDED GAME - HANDBALL

HANDBALL GATES

Equipment

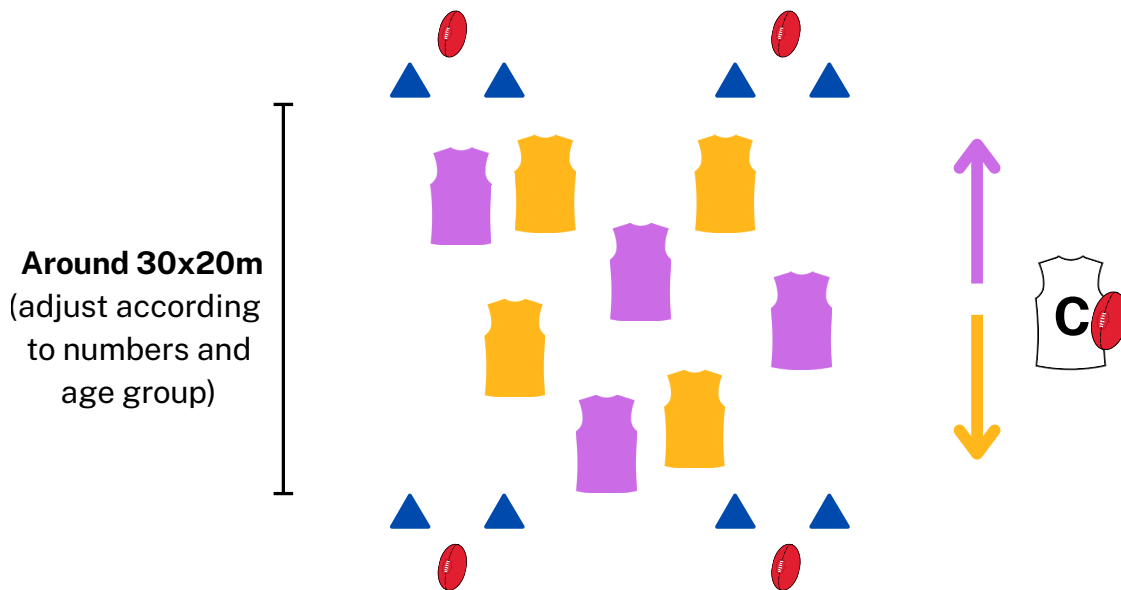
8x cones/poles,
5x footys, bibs

Numbers

8+ players
Coach

Aims

Handballing under pressure, **transition** running



The coach feeds a footy into the square (either to a player or as a loose ball). The team that wins possession of the ball must try to score a “goal” by handballing through one of the sets of cones at their attacking end; the other team defends. If a goal is scored, the other team picks up the ball behind the nearest set of cones (not the goals that were just scored through) and try to get a goal up their end. The drill is continuous, so players must quickly switch from attack to defence.

Coaching Cues

- Stay switched on - change from attack to defence quickly

Progressions

- Teams can score through any goal
- Use different coloured cones for each goal and call out the target goal

SMALL SIDED GAME - TRANSITION

TRANSITION HANDBALL

Equipment

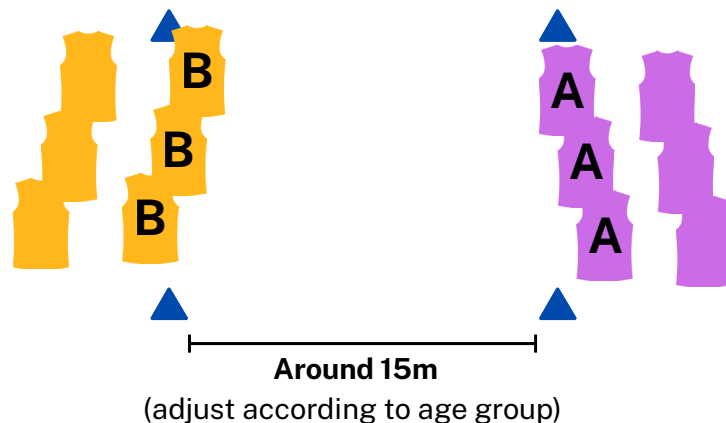
4x cones,
1x footy, bibs

Numbers

12+ players
Coach

Aim

Transition from attack to
defence



Teams line up between the cones in groups of three - all bibs should be on one side, with non-bibs on the other. The coach feeds the ball to Team A, who work it up the other end and handball to Team B. Team A then have to defend Team B who try to move it to the other end themselves. Team A complete their rep once Team B have successfully handballed to the other end (they should end up at the same end that they started from). The drill runs continuously.

Coaching Cues

- Stay switched on - change from attack to defence quickly

Progressions

- The player who handballs it to the opposition exits the drill, so it becomes a 2v3
- Increase teams to 4 or 5
- Can be done as a kicking drill

SMALL SIDED GAME - CONTEST

FIFO

Equipment

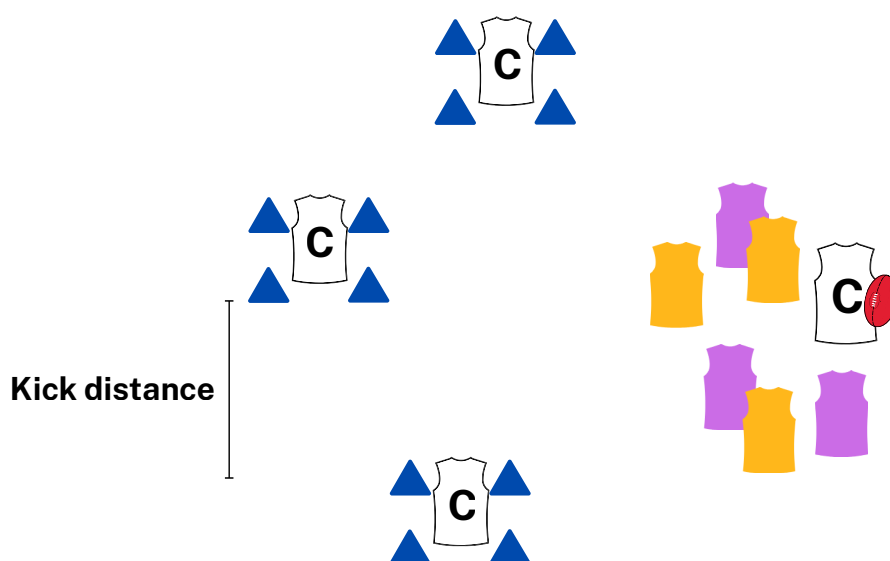
12x cones,
1x footy, bibs

Numbers

6+ players
4x coaches

Aims

Handballing under
pressure, **transition** running



Players are split into even teams, with both teams starting around the coach with the footy. To start the drill, the coach kicks it to any one of the other coaches, at which point the players must run to those cones. The first player from each team to reach the cones starts in the square where the coach (note: can be a helper / other player) rolls the ball in. Players must try to win the ball and use their teammates to spread and kick to one of the other two remaining coaches. After the last one, they work it back to the original coach, where the drill finishes.

Coaching Cues

- Keep space to be a handball option if your teammate is already hunting the ground ball

GAME PLAN BASICS

The following pages contain basic information about creating game plans. This information won't be relevant for a lot of younger age groups, where it's most important to develop fundamental skills.

However, you can of course use as much or as little of this as you would like to! If you would like to learn more, don't forget to check out our coaching offerings which are listed on page 5.

GAME PLAN BASICS

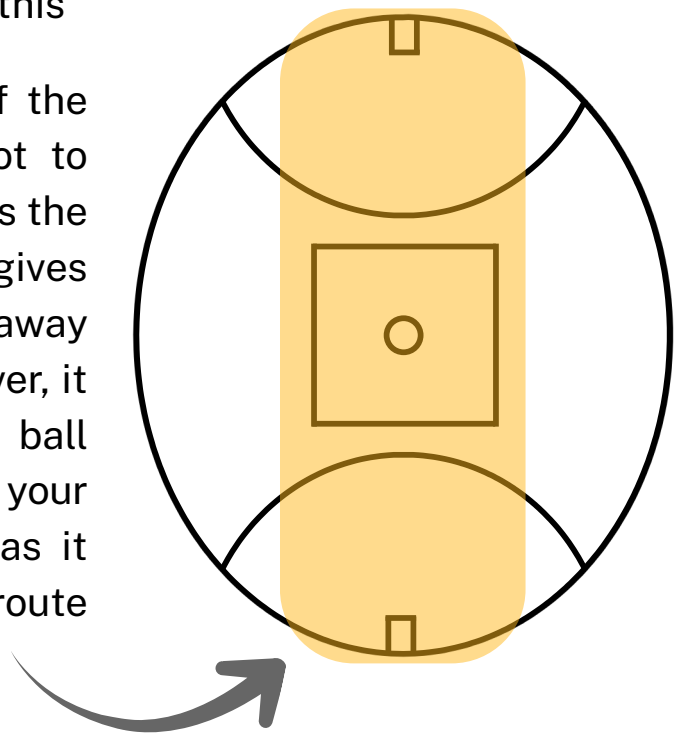
OFFENCE

“What we do when we have the ball”

When we have the ball, it is important to create as much space as possible. This makes it easier to move the ball either by kicking, handballing, or running.

To create more space and move the ball effectively, the following concepts are important:

- **Switch the ball or change lanes:** kick the ball laterally across the ground, or on an angle, rather than straight ahead. There are usually fewer numbers (and more space) in this part of the ground when you are able to do this
- **Corridor:** the middle portion of the ground, which is the best spot to have the ball when in attack. It is the most direct way to goal and gives you more room to move as it is away from the boundary lines. However, it can be dangerous to turn the ball over when in the corridor in your defensive half of the ground, as it then becomes the most direct route to goal for the opposition team



GAME PLAN BASICS

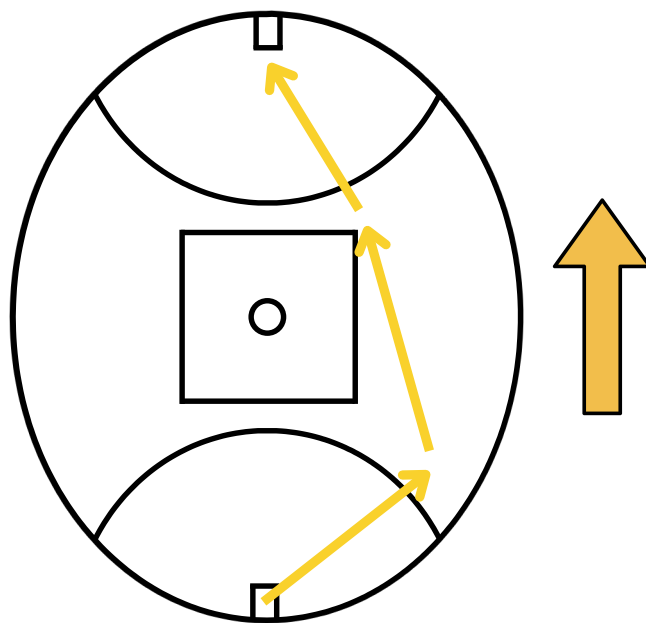
OFFENCE

“What we do when we have the ball”

Given what was outlined on the previous page, we may want to move the ball from our backline similar to the example below. From deep in our backline, we move towards the boundary line (the **skinny side**) - if we don't maintain possession of the ball, it is easier to force it over the boundary line to create a **stoppage**. And if the opposition wins it, it will be much harder to kick a goal from that position.

As we move up the ground and inside our forward 50, we want to get as close to the **corridor** as possible. After all, it's much easier to kick a goal from straight in front than on an angle!

Of course, this is just an example; you may want to try and **switch** or **change lanes** so that you're getting to space on the ground that is less congested with players.



GAME PLAN BASICS

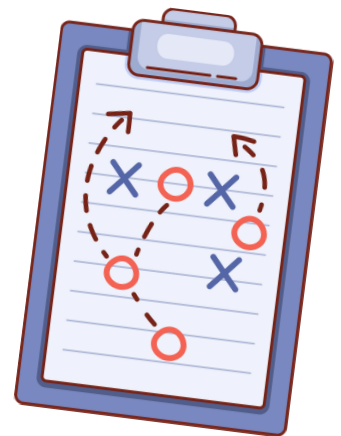
DEFENCE

“What we do when we don’t have the ball”

When we don’t have the ball, we want to take space away from the opposition and ensure that all opposition players are covered.

There are different strategies that coaches may use in defence:

- **1v1 defence:** also called “man-on-man”. Every player is responsible for one opposition player when defending, similar to sports such as netball. This is simple to understand and best for younger age groups or lower levels
- **Locate or cover:** players may start on one opponent, but in defensive transition each player covers the opponent closest to them, no matter who that may be. More similar to sports such as soccer, where matchups are more dynamic
- **Zone defence:** the most complex type of defensive set-up. This involves players protecting certain sections of the field, rather than a direct opponent. This is done at AFL/W level and is extremely structured, so not ideal for junior or amateur players



GAME PLAN BASICS

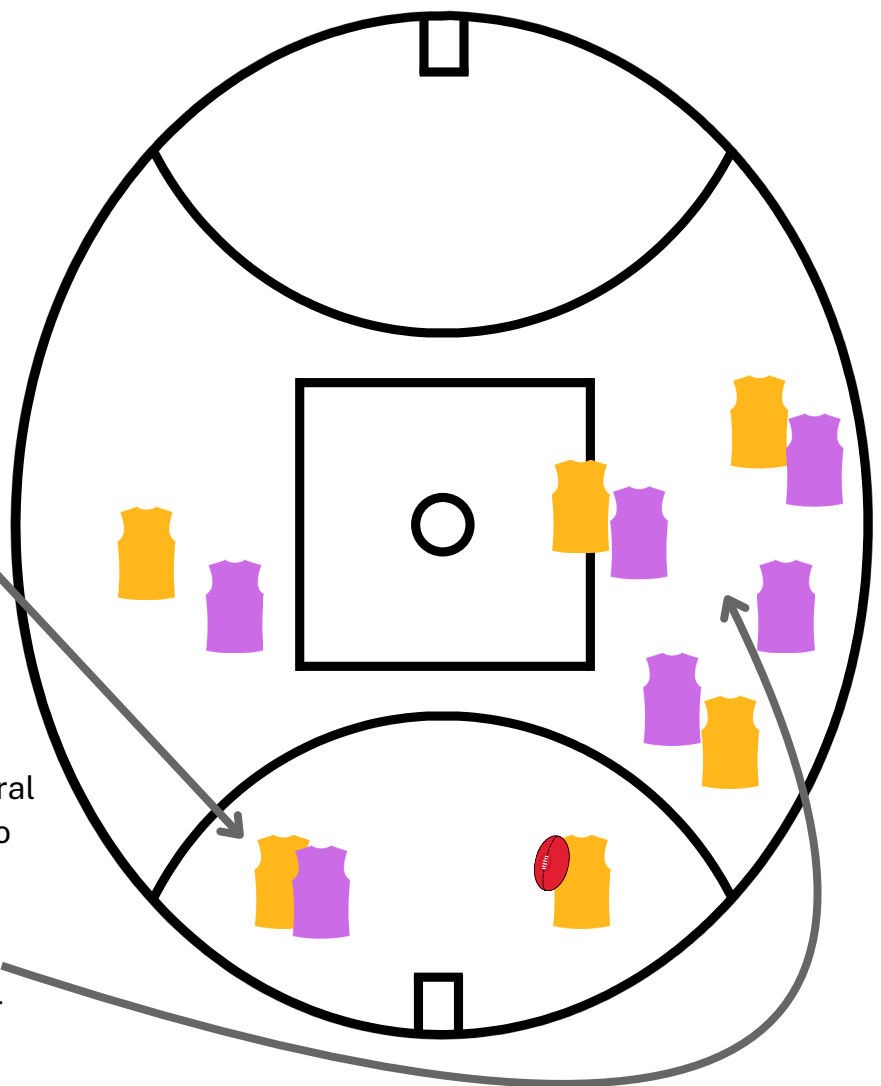
DEFENCE

“What we do when we don’t have the ball”

Creating a **skinny side** of the ground and forcing the opposition to move the ball that way is an effective way to defend. Moving more numbers to the area where the opposition want to kick makes it much harder for them to move the ball quickly and effectively. When we have the ball, we want space, so it follows that we want the opposite when they have the ball. Example below:

The opposition team (yellow) have the ball in their defensive 50. Ideally, they would want to **switch** the ball laterally to the other side of the ground, where there is more space

However, our team (purple) have enough players covering the lateral options, so the opposition have no choice but to kick **down the line** where there are lots of numbers, making it hard for them to keep possession of the ball (and easier for us to turn it over!)



GAME PLAN BASICS

CONTEST

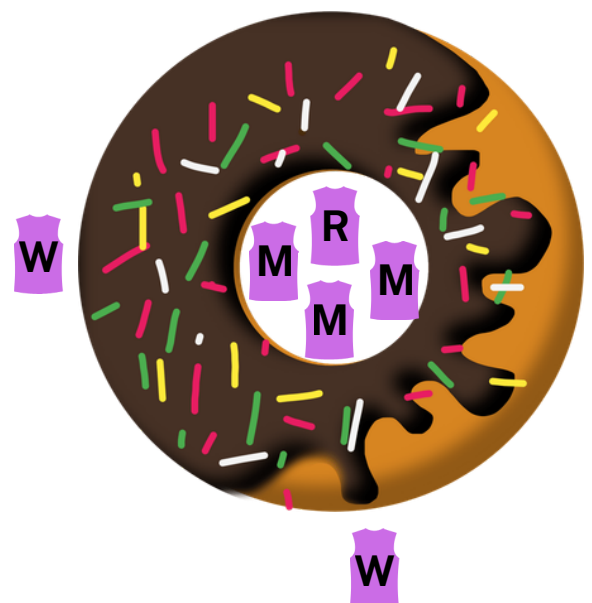
“What we do when the ball is in dispute”

When the ball is in dispute (in a **contest**) it is important to get the balance right between having players in position to win the ball, whilst also making sure there is enough space so that it is not too crowded.

The main source of a contest is **stoppages**, so midfield players are quite often involved. Midfield players can be split into three types:

- Ruck - often a tall player who tries to tap the ball to their team's advantage in stoppages
- Inside mids - also called “on ballers”. Those who are closest to the ball in stoppages and work with the ruck to win the ball
- Wings - outside midfielders, who start further away from the stoppage as they try to create space

You may want to think of a stoppage as a doughnut. In the middle of the doughnut, where the ball will be, starts the ruck and inside mids. On the outside of the doughnut, however, will be the wings. If they creep into the area which is the doughnut itself, they will make the stoppage too crowded - so even if we win the ball, they will be too close to be a good handball option



GAME PLAN BASICS

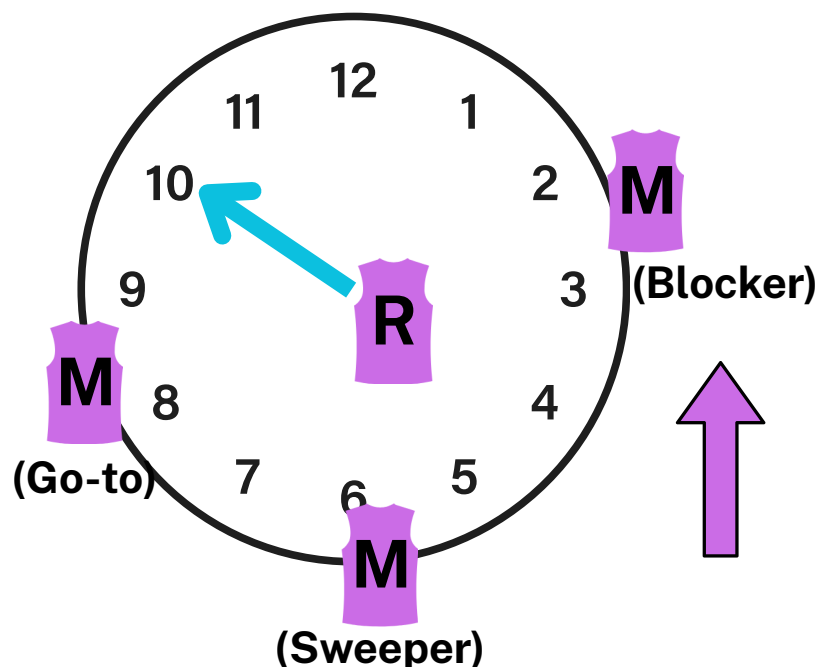
CONTEST

“What we do when the ball is in dispute”

Inside midfielders often have specific roles within a **stoppage**. The roles work together to try and win the ball, while also stopping the opposition winning the ball. These roles are often referred to as:

- **Go-to:** the player who is aiming to win the ball from the ruck tap
- **Blocker:** the player who tries to stop their opposition player (often the opposing Go-to player) from impacting the stoppage, to make it easier for the Go-to on their team
- **Sweeper:** the player who stays at the defensive side of the stoppage to cover any opposition players who win the ball and want to move it forward

All these roles work closely with the ruck. When teaching ruck taps, it is helpful to imagine a clock face, so that everyone is on the same page. For instance, the ruck may try to hit the ball to 10 o'clock. The Go-to then moves towards this spot to try and win the ball



10 o'clock is common as it is the most natural position for a right-hander to hit. For left-handers, it would be 2 o'clock

VIDEO LIBRARY

Follow the QR code to go to the playlist which contains the below video examples

Drills

5v2 Kicking
Handball Square
Handball Sprinkler
Handball Channel
4 Cone Marking
Pairs Marking on the Lead
Letter Run Marking
1v1 Contested Marking
Tackle Square
Ground Ball Circuit
Front & Centre GBs
2v1 Ground Balls
Chaos Ground Balls
Handball Gates

Skills

Drop punt (standard)
Banana
Checkside
Dribble kick
Torpedo
Ground Ball technique
Ground Ball types

View the videos on
YouTube



GLOSSARY

Common football words and their meanings

Contest	When the ball is in dispute and both teams are trying to win possession
Stoppage	Centre bounce, ball up or throw in. Anytime the game pauses for the umpire to bring it back into play
Corral	A defensive tactic where you remain in front of and “herd” the opposition player with the ball to stop them getting into space. This will stop them stepping around you before you can tackle them
Front & centre	A type of ground ball where the player reads the fall of the ball from a marking contest - they start in front of and central to the contest
Tread water	Remain in position on your toes, ready to move quickly. Important to avoid overrunning the ball
Transition	To move from offence (we have the ball) to defence (they have the ball) and vice versa
Down the Line	Kicking straight along the boundary line. This is usually a safe option for a kick, as numbers often congregate on the boundary. This provides a contest, reducing the chance of a turnover

Switch	Kick the ball laterally across the ground, rather than straight, where there is generally more space
Change lanes	Similar to switch - moving the ball on different angles, rather than going straight, to shift the opposition defence
Fat/skinny side	Fat side = where there is more space, so it is easier to move the ball. Skinny side = where there are more numbers, so it is harder to move the ball quickly
Corridor	The centre (vertical) portion of the ground. Having control of the ball here is advantageous as it is the most direct route to goal and opens up more of the ground, given it is furthest away from the boundary lines
Locate	Also known as “find a player”. When defending, players cover opposition players to stop them moving the ball easily
D1 & D2	“Defender 1” & “Defender 2”. D1 goes to the opposition ball carrier, with D2 covering the next closest opposition player who may be an outlet (note: there can be multiple D2's). A shorthand way to communicate who performs which defensive role in the moment
A1 & A2	“Attacker 1” & “Attacker 2”. Similar concept to D1 & D2, with A1 being the player to win the ball and A2 being an option for that player. Stops multiple players both going for the ball when it's not necessary



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