

Back to Hockey – Small Sided Games



Small sided games are great for Back to Hockey sessions as there are many benefits for players, coaches and clubs.

Small sided games allow players;

- To have lots of touches of the ball
- To be constantly involved in the game
- With rotating subs players can have a quick rest without disrupting the game
- To slowly build their knowledge of the rules

Small sided games allow clubs and coaches;

- To balance teams more easily so players with similar ability and fitness are playing with and against each other.
- To cater for small groups where there aren't enough players for 11 v 11
- To cater for large groups where they are too many for 11v11. Splitting the pitch into thirds allows 50% more players to be on the pitch.
- Improve the players experience at a session as they get more touches of the ball and feel more involved in a game.

Setting Up Small sided Games

On a full size astro you can accommodate three small sided games if you have pitches 55m long and 29m wide. With many pitch with 4 floodlights, the middle two tend to be in line with where you small sided pitches meet.

You can place throw down lines across the width of the pitch to replicate D's

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The Rules of Small Sided Hockey

The Rules are as follows:

“The rules are the appropriate rules of 11-a-side field hockey except for the following...”

Player numbers and pitch dimensions

1. This is a six-a-side game, with substitutes
 - a. The format played can be played with or without a kitted goal keeper. There is no option to play with a kicking back
 - b. The format can be single-gender or mixed
 - i. If mixed, at least 2 players of each gender must be on the pitch at all times
2. The playing area will measure 29m wide by 55m long

Scoring

3. At each end, there will be a 'Danger Zone' 15m from the baseline of the pitch and running across the full width of the pitch. Goals may only be scored from within this zone. The normal rules affecting play in an 11-a-side pitch 'D' apply in this zone unless otherwise stated
 - a. If playing without a kitted goalkeeper, shots cannot be lifted and only count if they hit the backboard of the goal

Restarts, corners and free-hits

4. In the case of any free-hit or restart being awarded, all players should be at least 5 meters away from the ball carrier
 - a. Defenders caught within 5 meters are not allowed to interfere with play until the ball has travelled 5 meters
 - b. The ball must be moved 5 meters before a shot is taken. These 5 meters can be taken directly in to the Danger Zone
5. Clearance – (equivalent of a '16' hit) – If the ball has travelled over the baseline and was last hit by the attacking team, play restarts with the defending team in possession on the Danger Zone line, in-line with where the ball went out of play
6. PowerPlay – (equivalent of a long corner) – If the ball has been unintentionally hit over the baseline by the defending team, play restarts with the attacking team in possession on the Danger Zone line in-line with where the ball went out of play
 - a. The ball must travel 5 meters before a shot can be taken. These 5 meters can be directly in to the danger zone

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7. Penalty corners will be replaced by a 'Challenge'

Challenges

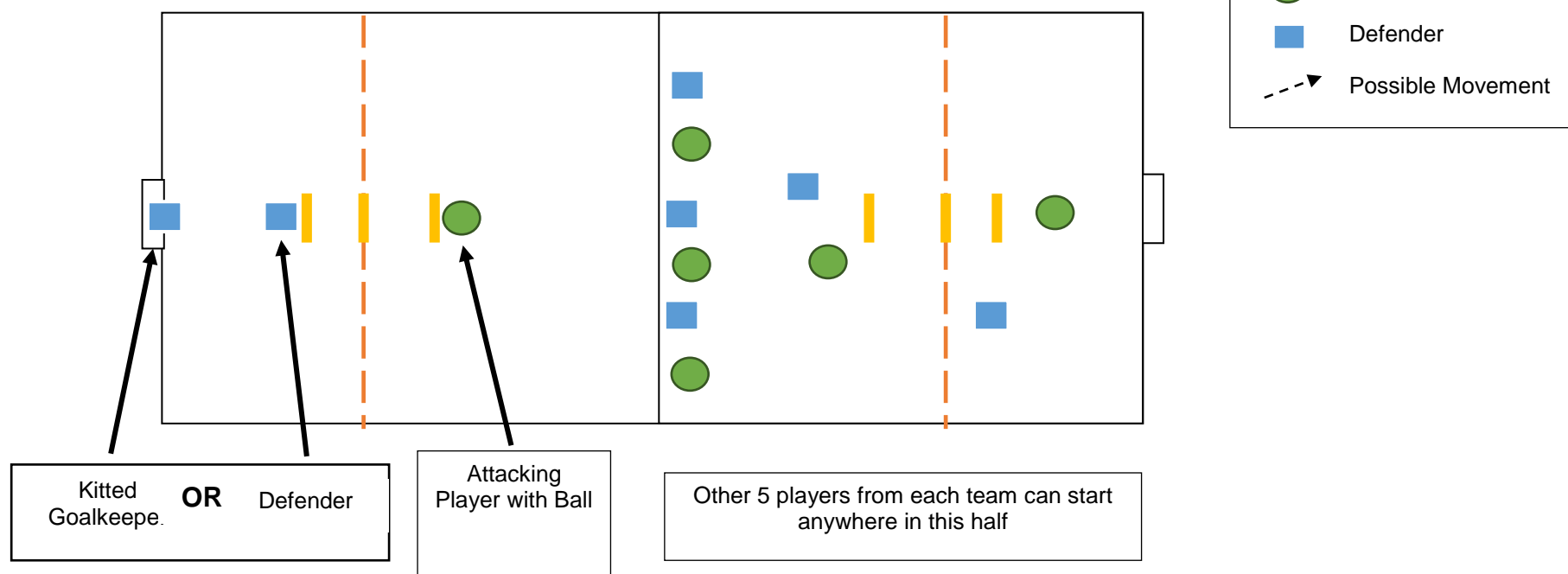
8. The procedure for a Challenge is as follows:
 - a) Time and play is stopped
 - b) One attacking ball carrier starts with the ball 5 meters outside the Danger Zone line, on the challenge marker
 - c) One defending player is permitted. **EITHER:**
 - a. If a kitted goalkeeper is in play, they are the defending player. The goalkeeper must start with both feet on the goal-line. As soon as the ball has been played by the attacking player, the goalkeeper is permitted to move.

OR

- b. If there is no kitted goalkeeper, one player acts as the defender. The defender starts 3 meters inside the Danger Zone line, on the challenge marker. As soon as the ball has been played by the attacking player, the defending player is permitted to move. The defender still plays as an outfield player and can only use their stick to play the ball
- d) All other players must position themselves behind the half way line
- e) When the attacker and defender are in place, the whistle is blown
- f) As soon as the attacker plays the ball, all players are permitted to re-engage, attempt to play the ball, and open play resumes as normal
- g) If an intentional foul is committed:
 - a. By a kitted goalkeeper, then a penalty flick will be awarded
 - b. By the appointed defender, then the Challenge will be re-set

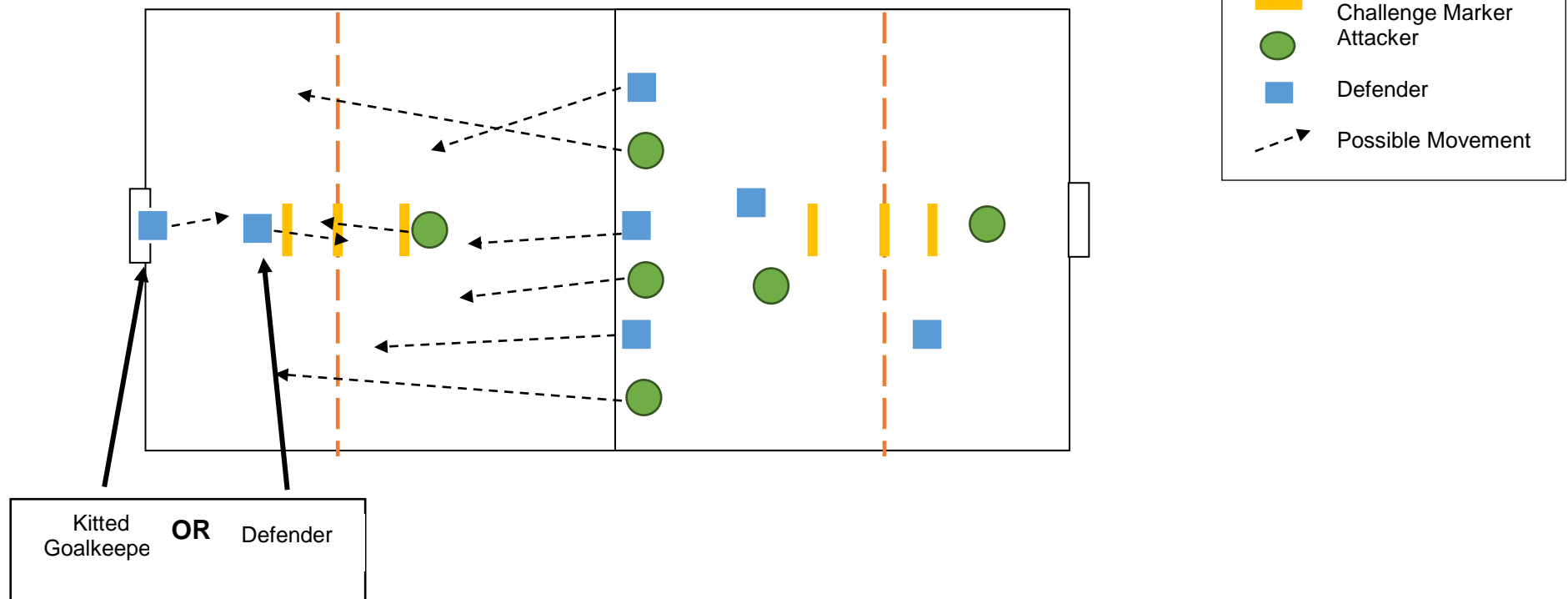
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Fig. 1.1 – Possible player starting positions for a Challenge



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Fig. 1.2 – Possible player movement as attacker plays the ball



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Duration

Match duration can be flexible to the pressures of facility availability and team numbers. However, the format is designed to be high-paced and high-intensity. Therefore:

9. The standard recommendation for game time is 24 minutes. This can be split as either:
 - a. Two halves of 12 minutes, with a 4 minute half time break (Total = 28 minutes)
 - b. Four quarters of six minutes, with a 1 minute tactical quarter break and a 4 minute half time break (Total = 30 minutes)

For tournament structures, to fit in more games, the following can be used:

- c. Two halves of 6 minutes, with a 3 minute half time break (Total = 15 minutes)

Officiating

10. All mid- to high- level competitions are expected to have at least one umpire per game.

There are also the following recommendations:

- a. High level competitions are strongly recommended to have two umpires per game
- b. All other competition levels are recommended to have at least one umpire per game, and two if available
- c. Low-level/recreational competitions and social sessions can be self-umpired

Pitch Markings

The diagram below (*Fig. 2*) shows how the three Small Sided pitches overlay on to a normal 11-a-side pitch. Key things to note are:

- Danger Zone lines should be marked using throw-down rectangular markers. Each line is recommended to consist of 4 orange markers each side of a single yellow marker, which denotes the middle of the pitch. The Challenge markers should be in line with the central yellow marker and the appropriate distance either side of the Danger Zone line
- Danger Zone lines can use the 11-a-side penalty corner injection mark to denote the start and end of the line across the three pitches
 - If playing without a kitted goalkeeper, the Danger Zone can be shortened to 10m high. This can be achieved by using the starting point of the 11-a-side 'D' to denote the start and end of the line across the pitch
- There is a 2 metre run-off zone between each pitch
- Side lines can be marked in two ways:
 - First preference is to have a piping barrier (or other low barrier), attached to the fence at each end. The barrier is part of the field of play, and play does not stop if it hits the barrier. 6 barriers would be needed to mark out all three pitches
 - Second preference, if limited barriers are available, is to use normal sports cones to mark the side lines and put a single barrier in the 2 meter run-off between each pitch. This is not part of the field of play, and is there to stop balls moving between pitches. 2 barriers would be needed in total
 - Final preference, if barriers are not available, is just to use normal sports cones

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If your pitch has four floodlight towers along the side of the pitch, these will be at approximately the right distance for each 2 metre run-off, and the side lines can be marked either side of these

Fig. 2 – Three Small Sided Pitches marked on an 11-a-side pitch

