

Small sided games

Small-sided games are a mini version of the “real game”: 2 teams, 2 goals, a ball. They start with 2 against 2 and after that with more players (2-3, 3-3, 3-4, 4-4 etc.). In small-sided games there are no designated tasks (defender, attacker, mid, left or right). The capacity of each player to understand and apply attacking possibilities and defensive responsibilities, depends on each player’s “reading of the game”: the constant scanning of the ongoing changing tactical situations and the continuous adapting to and solving of soccer problems. Exactly: continuous ... It never stops. That’s the great thing about team sports. This tactical capacity and savvy can develop quickly in a natural way due to the direct feedback that small-sided games provide on technical and tactical level because of the direct engagement with offense and defense, all the time. Continuous ...

Total Street Soccer considers small-sided games as the best form to practice for the “real game”. There is already a long list of technical and tactical competencies that players will develop in a natural way in a 2 v 2 game. With every added number of players, the offensive possibilities and defensive responsibilities will expand. Through playing small-sided games on a regular basis (in structured and/or unstructured settings) young players will develop naturally to competent, confident, and passionate players.

In the mid 80s several international conferences took place, with top coaches from many countries, who strategized how to stop the decline of the overall technical and tactical competencies. The diminishing number of players with good technique and tactical capacity seemed predominantly the result of the lowering of the age for young players to enter in official leagues and the rise of soccer clinics and academies with increasingly younger participants. One of the discussions focused on was: Can soccer be taught?

And even though the natural development through street soccer may be superior, now, in the 21st century, it seems important to indeed organize the youngest players in our soccer clubs. Depending on where we live, currently, streets are often not safe or “gone”. More and more children, from a young age, are too busy with the digital world. Many only play outside occasionally, some not at all. You can even play soccer as “Messi” or “Ronaldo” in video games...!

It is important that the players, even the youngest, as often as possible appear at our clubs where we can create street soccer scenes in the way we organize them and let them develop a passion for playing with the ball themselves, playing of the ball with others and the passion for playing the game. In short: to really have them fall in love with the beautiful game.

Adapted from Hans Bongers of “Total Street Soccer” (Totaal Straat Voetbal).