

Why 4v4:

Study from Cologne FC (Germany) for 6-12 year olds

11v11:

- Ball contacts - 38 average in midfield, only 20 on defense
- Tactics and rules too complicated for this age group
- **Conclusion: Totally inappropriate for this age group, high danger of “burnout”!**

7v7:

- Field is still too big for this age
- Hard to distribute players evenly
- **No build up in midfield, goals are scored from long uncontrolled passes causing breakaways, or mistakes by opponents.**
- No attacking imagination used or learned
- Conclusion: Better than 11v11 but still not the best format

4v4:

- **Teaches all the building blocks** - dribbling, shooting, passing, ball control followed by dribbling and shooting
- Frequent 1v1 situations
- **Attack oriented game** -frequency of shots much higher than any other game
- Conclusion: Provides the best vehicle for enjoyment and activity. **A must for players who do not have a high level of technical development.**

Training Objective:

- Provide maximum fun and enjoyment for the players
- Challenge Players
- Develop playing ability incrementally
- Create opportunities for success, regardless of ability

Developmental Considerations:

- Children like to compete with each other
- Skills need to be developed in playful environment
- Players can't learn when game demands skills or tactics they haven't yet learned
- If they encounter the same situation many times over, they learn to deal with it
- Complicated rules, such as offside detract from the ability to learn fundamentals
- Commonly accepted now that ages 8 to 12 are ideal for developing technique and coordination
- In spite of this many coaches continue to implement adult rules and strategies, which hinder this development

Coaching Considerations:

- It's not enough to merely substitute smaller games for 11v11
- Basic concepts such as passing, control, dribbling and ball possession must be taught
- Players should not be forced into rigid positional responsibilities until they have mastered the basics
- Development is a long term process, and the **player's enjoyment should take precedence over that of the parents** - games that teach soccer fundamentals may not be the most exciting to watch
- By changing conditions and variations of the training games, the coach can alter the playing style of the children

Conclusion:

- **4v4 MUST be used regularly in training and tournaments**
- 7v7 in half field and 11v11 are totally inappropriate for players under 12 years of age as they encourage Kick and Chase Soccer
- **Kick and Chase games do not develop the building blocks** - close control, passing, dribbling and ball possession

Manchester United 4v4 Program

On Average 4v4 versus 8v8 had:

1. 135% more passes
2. 260% more Scoring Attempts
3. 500% more Goals Scored
4. 225% more 1v1 Encounters
5. 280% more Dribbling Skills (tricks)

Club Directors/Coaches/Administrators:

- 80% positive comments

Other Observers:

- 97% positive comments

Parents:

- 68% positive comments

Players:

- 75% positive comments