

GAME SENSE ACTIVITIES

"Practice and improve the skills of Australian Football in a game-like environment"

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GAME SENSE TRAINING FOR AFL FOOTBALL

WHAT DOES GAME SENSE MEAN?

When a 'realistic environment' is provided where players are able to practice and improve their skills under game-like conditions. Game sense is NOT match practice; it is about practising parts of the game in isolation.

Players will have a far better chance of making good decisions and displaying good skills in a game if they have previously practised them in a similar environment.

HOW DOES GAME SENSE WORK?

Game sense activities can be played in either a confined space with 'mini' teams or in larger spaces to incorporate 'game like scenarios' – in all activities, regardless of the space used, there should always be an 'attacking' team/player and a 'defensive' team/player.

The recommendation is to initially work in confined spaces until all players have grasped the concept; then move into larger activities that more reflect 'game like scenarios'.

- ✓ It is suggested that the teams be no greater than 6. This is to ensure that all players are given the chance to participate and therefore improve.
- ✓ The activities should go for no more than 7-10mins (remember it is practicing components of the game).
- ✓ Initially, it is best to begin with basic activities. Challenge the players once they grasp the concept.
- ✓ The role of the coach is to set the rules and facilitate the activity.
- ✓ The role of the players is to solve the problems and make the decisions.
- ✓ The coach is also there to provide further instruction and/or freezing the play to demonstrate a point.

THE KEY TO GAME SENSE IS....."THE QUESTION"

Game sense is all about 'asking questions' as the activities offer an excellent opportunity to provide immediate, meaningful feedback. It is very important the coach 'assists' the players in solving tactical problems, rather than solving the problems for them.

Using questions will help guide players and your questions should revolve around 4 concepts:

1. TIME - When should you.....?
2. SPACE - Where should you.....?
3. RISK - Which option was best? Why?
4. EXECUTION - How should you.....?

Additionally, the coach should also ensure they are inclusive in their questions by asking both individuals and teams for feedback. Open-ended questions should be used as this will promote thinking amongst the players and this will also result in learning. Below are some examples:

1. How can you make it more difficult for your opponent to score?
2. Is it better to run and carry the ball in that situation or deliver the ball immediately?
3. Where can you position yourself to be of benefit to the team?
4. Where can you run to assist your team in scoring a goal?

COACHING THE MODERN PLAYER

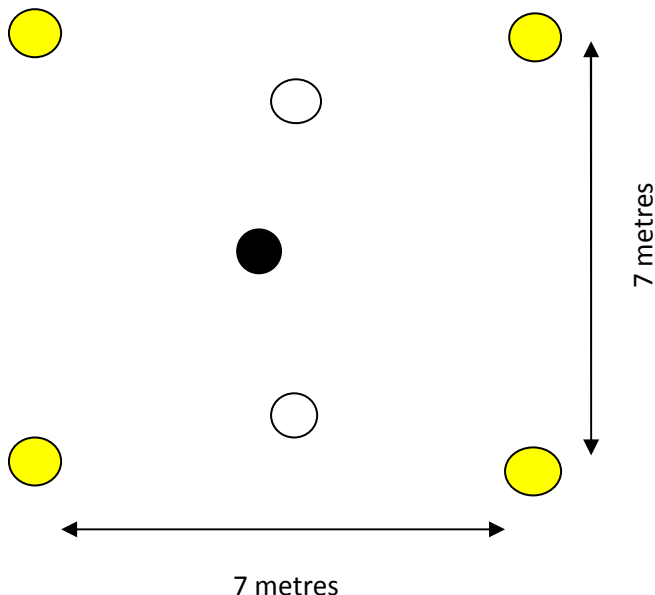
It is worth remembering that the young footballers of today have had a completely different educational experience than that of many coaches. Young people have been educated in an environment where many things are negotiated, discussed and left to them to make choices. They are encouraged to explore, experiment and it is explained to them that mistakes will certainly occur and that is fine provided you learn something from them.

'Game Sense' is a training technique that embraces the modern society that we currently live in. Some young people find it difficult to adapt to sporting environments where everything is given to them, someone else sets all the rules and they have had no input. **Game sense empowers players and helps them take more responsibility for their own football development.**

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/GAMES

Warm-Up Activity (Handball/Kick)

"PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE"



● = Cones

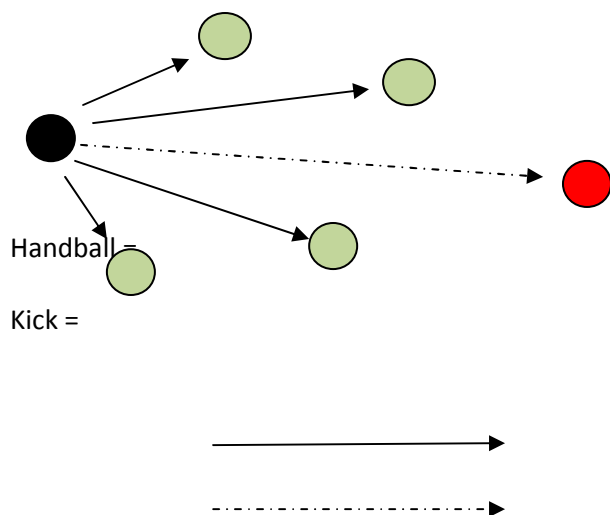
○ Handball between each other and avoid the ball being intercepted by ●

- Look to see if players with the ball move to sides to receive the ball once the activity has commenced.
- Excellent introduction for players that find it difficult to identify space.
- **More 'defenders' and 'receivers' can be added to vary the difficulty of the activity.**

NOTE: Watch for handballs over the top.

Warm-Up Activity (Handball/Kick)

“QUICK & CLEAN”



● = the player in the middle.

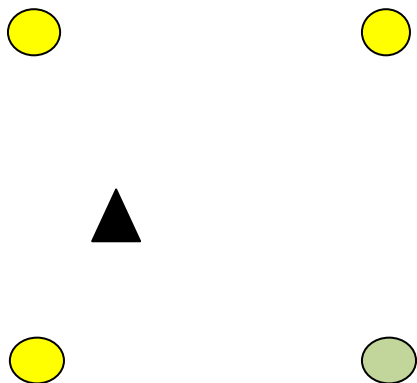
● = 'handball' target.

● = 'kicking' target.

- Two balls are used in this activity/game.
- Yellow and Red circles represent players who dispose of the ball back to player ●
- ● Starts with a ball whilst any other player starts with the second ball.
- ● Handballs or kicks back to a player surrounding him, as soon as this has occurred the other ball is passed to ● who then has to return it to any other player surrounding him except the player who initially passed the ball or the player who has the second ball ready to return to ●
- All players rotate through ●

Warm-Up Activity (Handball/Kick)

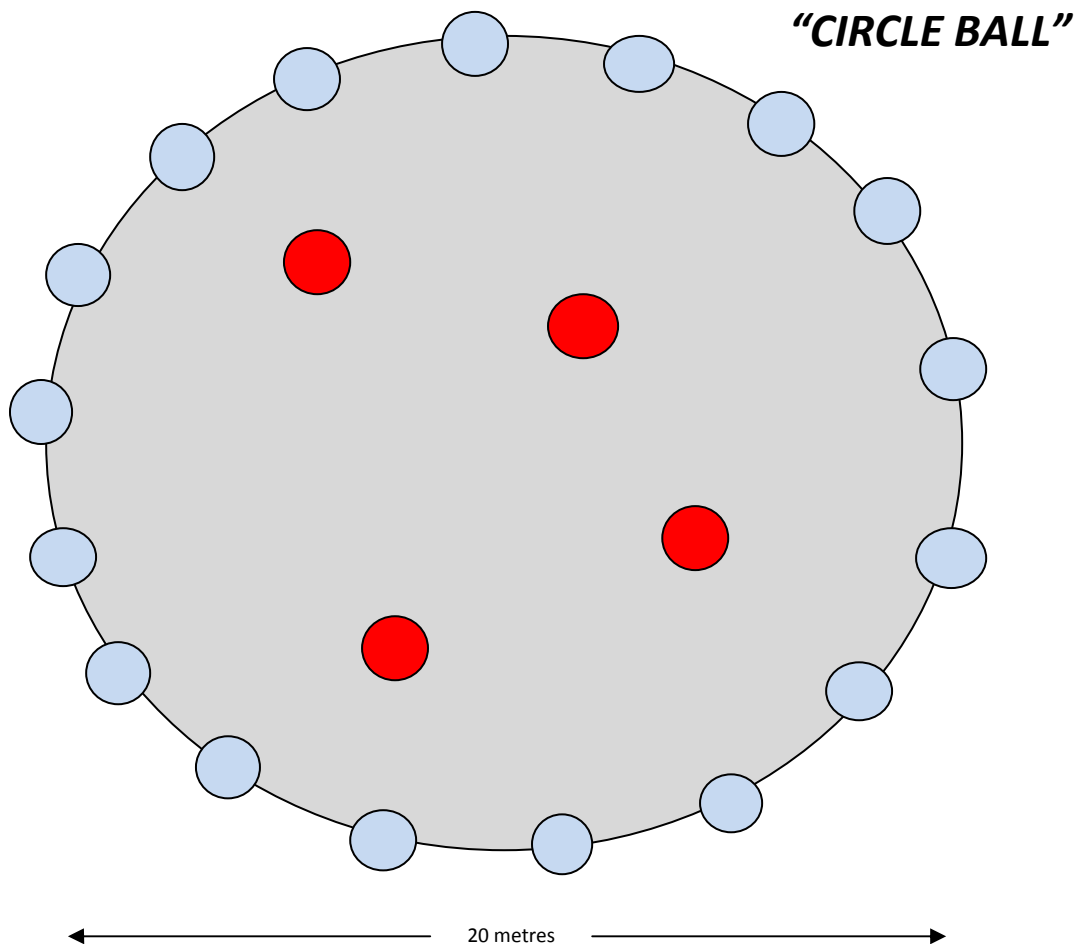
“3 POINT SQUARE”



● = Cones ▲ = Defender ● = Spare cone

- Four (4) players required. Three (3) players take position on a cone and the other player acts as the defender.
- The three (3) cone players need to maintain possession of the ball by handballing/kicking to each other. The one spare cone is used to run to receive a handball/kick – therefore always leaving one cone vacant to run too.
- Must handball/kick down the lines (not diagonal).
- The defender tries to intercept the ball, cause a fumble or miss a target – when this happens the player making the mistake replaces the defender.
- ***To vary the difficulty of the activity, increase or decrease the size of the square, increase the number of defenders, include a timing rule (ie. Hold on to the ball for 3 seconds).***

Extended Activity (Handball/Kick)



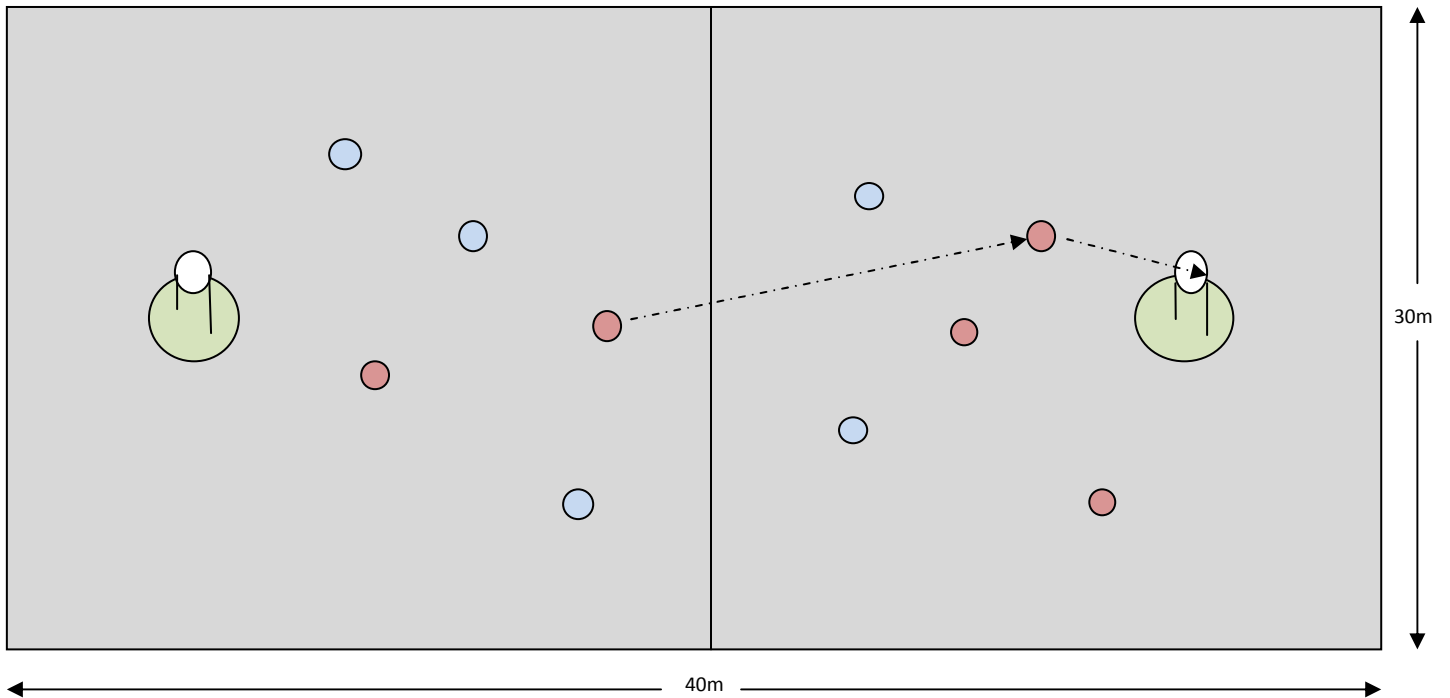
● = Team Member

● = Defenders

- Two (2) or three (3) ball required.
- The team in possession of the ball form a circle of about 20-25 metres in diameter (vary for kids).
- The objective is to handball the balls randomly about the circle, ensuring that you do not handball to a player already in possession of another ball or who is about to receive another ball.
- Three (3) to four (4) defenders (inside the circle) try to create turnovers whilst all balls move simultaneously.
- ***Coaches should be looking for long handballs and quick ball movement from “the team”. The “defenders” should be looking to increase the pressure by zoning off or attack the ball carrier (either or).***
- ***To vary the difficulty of the activity, use a bump bag inside the circle or place a team member in the circle and have them shadowed.***

Extended Activity (Handball/Kick)

“POD BALL”



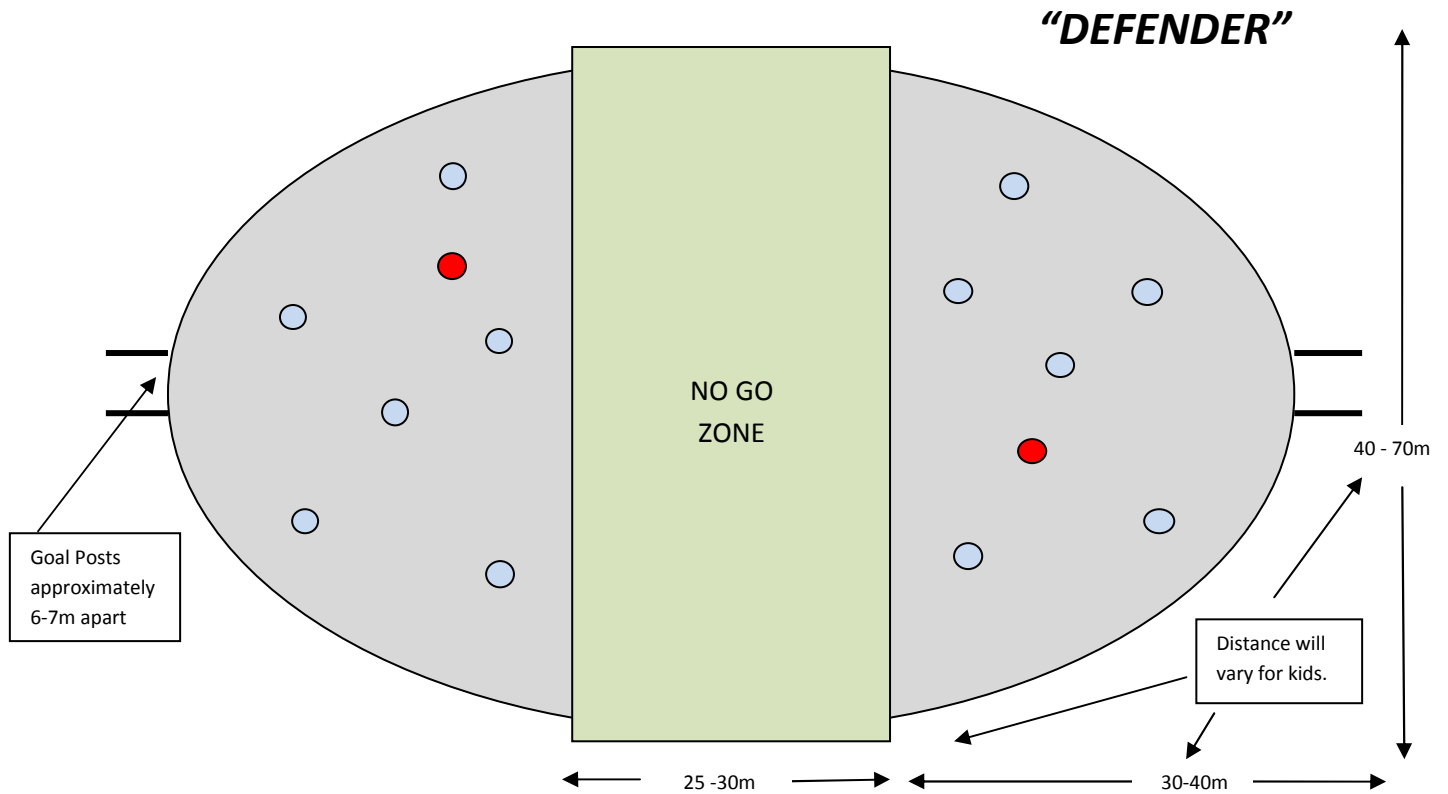
● = Team A

● = Team B

● = 5 metre circle surrounding goals

- Two teams of 5 or 6 players
- Handball or kick (if bigger area) – the aim is to pass the ball and score by handballing (or kicking) the ball through “the pod” (or hoops if you do not have a pod).
- No players are allowed within the 5 metre circle surrounding the goals.
- A Turnover results when the ball hits the ground in transition.
- ***To vary the difficulty of the activity, include tackling and/or stoppages if the ball hits the ground. Additional players can also be included to reduce the space and reaction time.***

Extended Activity (Kick)



Objective of Activity/Game

- Hit targets by foot and practice defending.
- ○ = Kicking Team
- ● = Defenders

Rules

- 3 footballs required.
- No tackling, bumping, shepherding, blocking, shadowing allowed.
- Can't run for more than 10 metres with the ball.
- A ball cannot be in any one half for longer than 10 seconds.
- If the ball enters the "no go zone", the disposer of the ball is eliminated.

Directions

- Kicking team simultaneously kicks 3 balls across the 'no go zone' in an attempt to hit targets on other side.
- The defender attempts to spoil or intercept or pressure kickers in their half to force a poor kick or turnover on the other side.
- If a kicker misses a target, kicks out of the area or has his kick intercepted, he is eliminated from the game and runs around the playing area until he is brought back into the game.
- A kicker can be brought back into the game when his team does not make a mistake for a specified time (eg. 30 seconds) and then a designated player is successful in kicking a goal at his end.
- Game continues for a specified playing time or a prescribed number of kickers are eliminated at any one time.
- ***To vary the difficulty of the activity, add more defenders, make players use their opposite foot and or introduce tackling and bumping.***