



U.S. SOCCER PLAY ON: OVERVIEW FOR COACHES



[USSOCCER.COM/PLAYON](https://ussoccer.com/playon)

U.S. Soccer has produced a comprehensive guide for planning a return to play. We strongly recommend that everyone involved with youth soccer familiarize themselves with [the guide](#) when planning return to play activities.

Here, we will take a brief look at how the document is built and look at some of the key areas which are addressed.

FIVE PHASES OF PLAY ON



WHAT PHASE IS YOUR STATE, REGION CURRENTLY IN?

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR RETURN TO PLAY?

KEY CONSIDERATIONS: IMPACT OF ISOLATION ON CHILDREN



Kids of all ages have been impacted by social distancing and self-isolation in different ways. It is important to think about how the kids we coach may have been affected as we return to play.



- Loss of connection to peers, friends, classmates, and teammates
- Decreased levels of movement, physical activity, and fitness
- Loss of 'normal' discovery and social development that come from 'playing' with others and being part of a group
- Learning has been individual, remote, and impersonal; some have faced challenges adapting or staying motivated
- Different ages have experienced different challenges as a result of being isolated (boredom, fear, loneliness, depression, emotional swings, confusion, abuse, even anger, and suicide)

KEY CONSIDERATIONS: NEEDS OF THE PLAYERS



- They need to feel **SAFE** and **BE SAFE**
- They need to have **FUN**
- They need a **GRADUAL RETURN** to physical activity and physical development
- They need to **RECONNECT** (even with social distancing)
- They need to be treated with **DIGNITY** and **RESPECT** more than ever
- They need to **PLAY** again!
- They need to **SMILE** again!

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IN THE INITIAL RETURN TO PLAY, KIDS NEED ABOVE ALL TO BE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY. **THIS MEANS:**

- Participation should be based on the individual player and their parent's/guardian's level of comfort and safety
- Appropriate social distancing measures and hygiene practices in place
- Clearly defined guidelines and procedures for how to adhere to social distancing for players, coaches, parents, and administrators
- Training and playing activities should be well-planned to adhere to local, state, federal, and member guidelines for social distancing
- Coaches and club leaders should consider using the U.S. Soccer Play On document as a guide for planning and an ongoing resource

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HYGIENE



GENERAL HEALTH

If you are sick or feel ill, stay home
Contact your physician

PHYSICAL INTERACTION

Maintain social distancing six feet apart

GENERAL HYGIENE

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, face
Cover your cough

COMMUNAL AREAS

Clean and sanitize high trafficked
areas frequently
Keep doors and gates open as much as possible
to limit contact

EQUIPMENT & TRAINING GEAR

Use individual equipment as much as possible
Clean / sanitize equipment after use

PREPARING TO TRAIN



- These recommendations outline considerations and protocols you should follow as you prepare to “Play On”
- Note that the foundational requirement for the following protocols is that state or local health regulations permit groups of a specific number to gather
- The following applies for all players, coaches, referees, administrators, volunteers, staff and household members

MEDICAL CLEARANCE	DAILY TRAINING MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals who have tested positive should provide medical clearance from a physician• Individuals who have experienced known exposure in the past 14 days should self-quarantine for 14 days• After quarantine, individuals should seek written medical clearance from their physician before returning to activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants should self-check before attending any training sessions• Check for any of the following symptoms:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever >100.4• Shortness of breath• Rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sore throat• Chills• Headache• Sinus Congestion• Cough• Joint pain• Diarrhea/Vomiting

PREPARING TO TRAIN



PREPARING TO HOST TRAINING	GETTING READY FOR TRAINING (PLAYERS)	TRAVEL TO TRAINING (PLAYERS & COACHES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host outdoors• Limit number of total participants to ensure social distancing• Create a training/organizational plan• Provide adequate signage• Communicate the plan and protocol• Develop a schedule to disinfect all surface areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pack your own water (extra bottles) recommended• Do not share water• Prepare / dress at home• Bring personal sanitizing products to training• Follow PPE (face mask) protocol• Wash hands before training• Self check temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel with as few people as possible• Rideshare with individuals who have practiced social distancing• Travel with the same individuals• Keep distance and wear PPE• Avoid stops along the way• Follow Safe Sport guidelines: A minor should not travel alone with an adult who is not the parent or guardian of the minor

PREPARING TO TRAIN



ARRIVAL AT TRAINING (PLAYERS & COACHES)	CHECKING IN (COACHES)	PREPARATION AREAS (COACHES)	MASKS/FACE COVERS/PPE (PLAYERS & COACHES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host outdoors• Limit number of total participants to ensure social distancing• Create a training/organizational plan• Provide adequate signage• Communicate the plan and protocol• Develop a schedule to disinfect all surface areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain an accurate attendance list• Create a check-in station to ask self-check screening questions• One participant at a time, social distancing if there is a line• Sanitizing products should be provided at check-in station	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan ahead to prepare the area to accommodate social distancing• Line up cones 6 ft apart• One cone per participant• Cone is the designated 'personal prep station' for each participant to store bags and water bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All participants are recommended to wear new or clean PPE upon arrival, departure and when not physically active during activities.• PPE should cover the nose and mouth, be breathable, consist of cotton or wick-type material and follow CDC guidelines

PREPARING TO TRAIN



FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

BE AWARE OF GUIDELINES

- Follow/adhere to all guidelines
- Support the coach/club in adhering to guidelines

PARENTS SHOULD **NOT** ATTEND TRAINING

- Stay away from the field unless in designated area
- Follow Safe Sport guidelines regarding a coach being alone with a child

PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Do not congregate
- Practice social distancing

EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT



TEAM EQUIPMENT

- Minimal equipment: Players should not handle
- Clubs should provide balls; if not parents should sanitize prior
- Balls can be shared in foot drills, but players should not pick up balls with hands in Phase I
- GK's: one ball per GK
- Avoid using bibs, have a plan to designate which colors to wear in advance
- If using bibs, designate one per player at assigned personal preparation station

INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT

- Individual equipment should be sanitized before and after training
- Players should not bring their own ball, but if needed, player should ensure it is sanitized before and after training
- All participants should arrive in training gear
- All personal equipment should be cleaned and sanitized and properly stored after every session, including shin guards
- Upon arrival at home, players should wash hands, shower, and launder, clean items used in training

TRAINING SESSION MANAGEMENT



TRAINING SESSION CONSIDERATIONS	PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS	COMMUNICATION [L] [SEP] DURING TRAINING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate number per Phase (ex: 9 players and one coach max in Phase I)• Players should be in individual spaces 6 ft apart from each other• Coach should not be within 6 ft of any player• Progressions should be asset up in advance to limit amount of equipment used• No Throw-ins (Phase I)• No Heading (Phase I)• No touching (hugs, high fives, etc.,)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to restrictions, players may have been less active, therefore they may not be prepared to return to full intensity and could be at greater risk for injury if asked to do so• Training= 60 min max (Phase I)• Avoid too much too soon• Plan to increase load gradually over time and phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid team communication in confined spaces• Team talks in open spaces with social distancing• Coaches should ALWAYS wear PPE when communicating• Tactical discussions should be digital if possible• Avoid team meetings in closed environments at all costs

WELLNESS:

NUTRITION, HYDRATION, MENTAL WELLBEING



Parents, guardians, coaches and players are encouraged to refer to U.S. Soccer's **'Recognize to Recover Nutrition and Hydration Guidelines'** for a full overview on nutritional and hydration practices. Learn more about the 3 R's of recovery from play (rehydrate, refuel and rebuild)

<http://www.recognizetorecover.org/nutrition-hydration#supplements>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Reference R2R Mental Wellness](#)

[Project Play- Calls for Coaches](#)

MENTAL WELLBEING:

ASPEN INSTITUTE PROJECT PLAY 'CALLS FOR COACHES'



Project Play has updated their 'Calls for Coaches' document to help coaches build relationships with players through social distancing, and includes a checklist for virtual connection.

1. Know Every Athlete's Story
2. Establish A Supportive Team Culture
3. Celebrate Effort
4. Focus on the Skills That Matter
5. Be a Role Model
6. Be Coachable

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO RESUME SPORTS WHEN CURRENT RESTRICTIONS REMOVED (Strongly Agree or Agree)

■ May 2020 ■ June 2020

Fear of Illness (Child)



Child Not Interested



Fear of Illness (Parent)



Transportation Difficulties



Schedule Conflicts



Source: Aspen Institute/Utah State University National Youth Sports Parent Survey

CHILDREN'S NEEDS: PLANNING A TRAINING SESSION



While we believe that players of all ages at the grassroots level grow and develop best in environments that promote individual growth through enjoyable, game-like experiences, the COVID-19 crisis has asked us to temporarily adapt to a new reality

We believe that in planning a return to play, the HEALTH and SAFETY of all players is the highest priority. It is important that all coaches take a comprehensive look at some of the key factors that can help plan a safe and healthy return to play

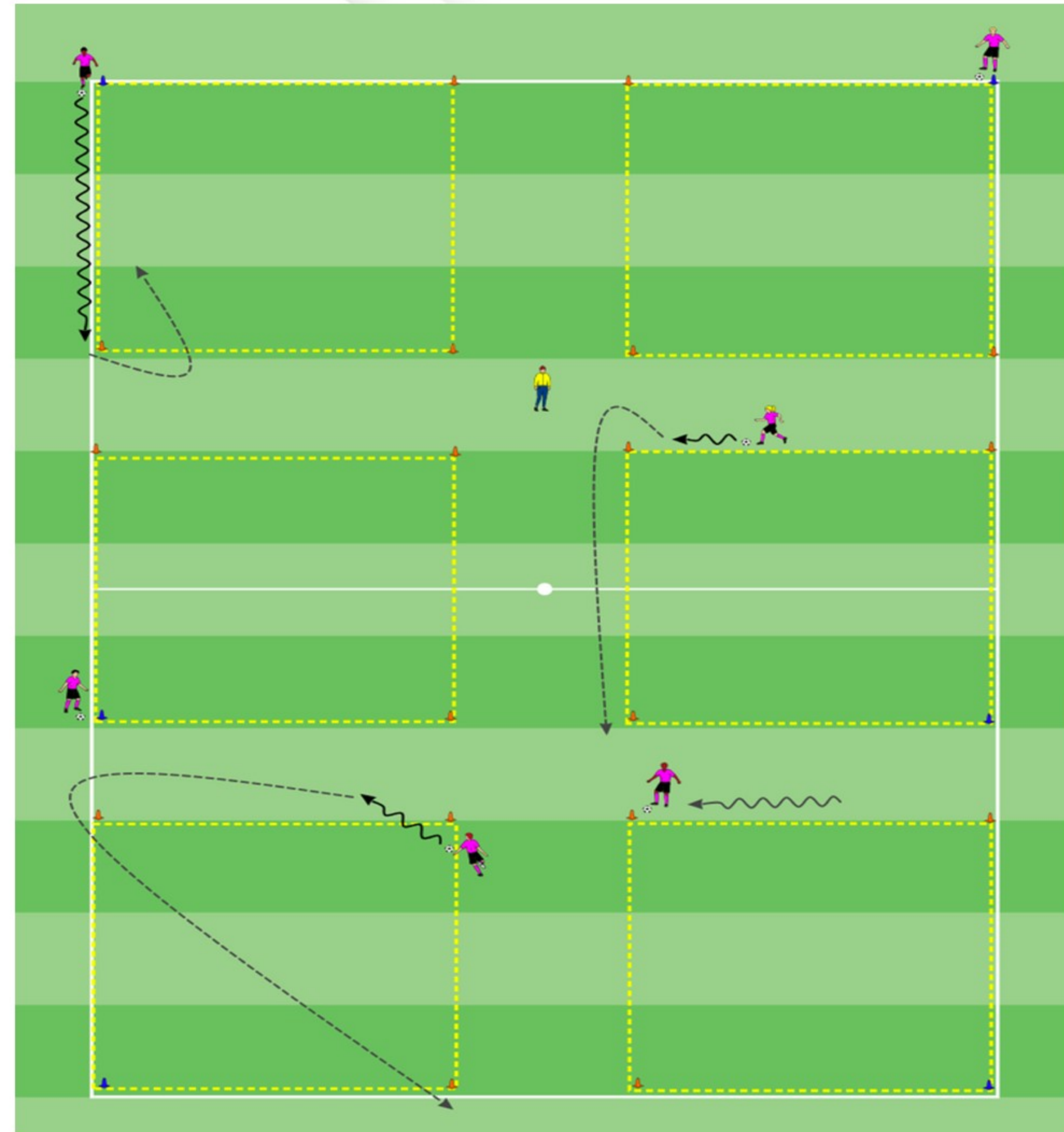
IDEAS FOR PHASE I TRAINING ACTIVITIES:

4 V 4 PLAYERS



INDIVIDUAL RUNNING WITH THE BALL/DRIBBLING TECHNIQUE

- Coaches can tailor the tasks to the needs of their players
- With or without the ball
- Players can compete against themselves or each other (races)
- Social distancing is clearly defined and implemented



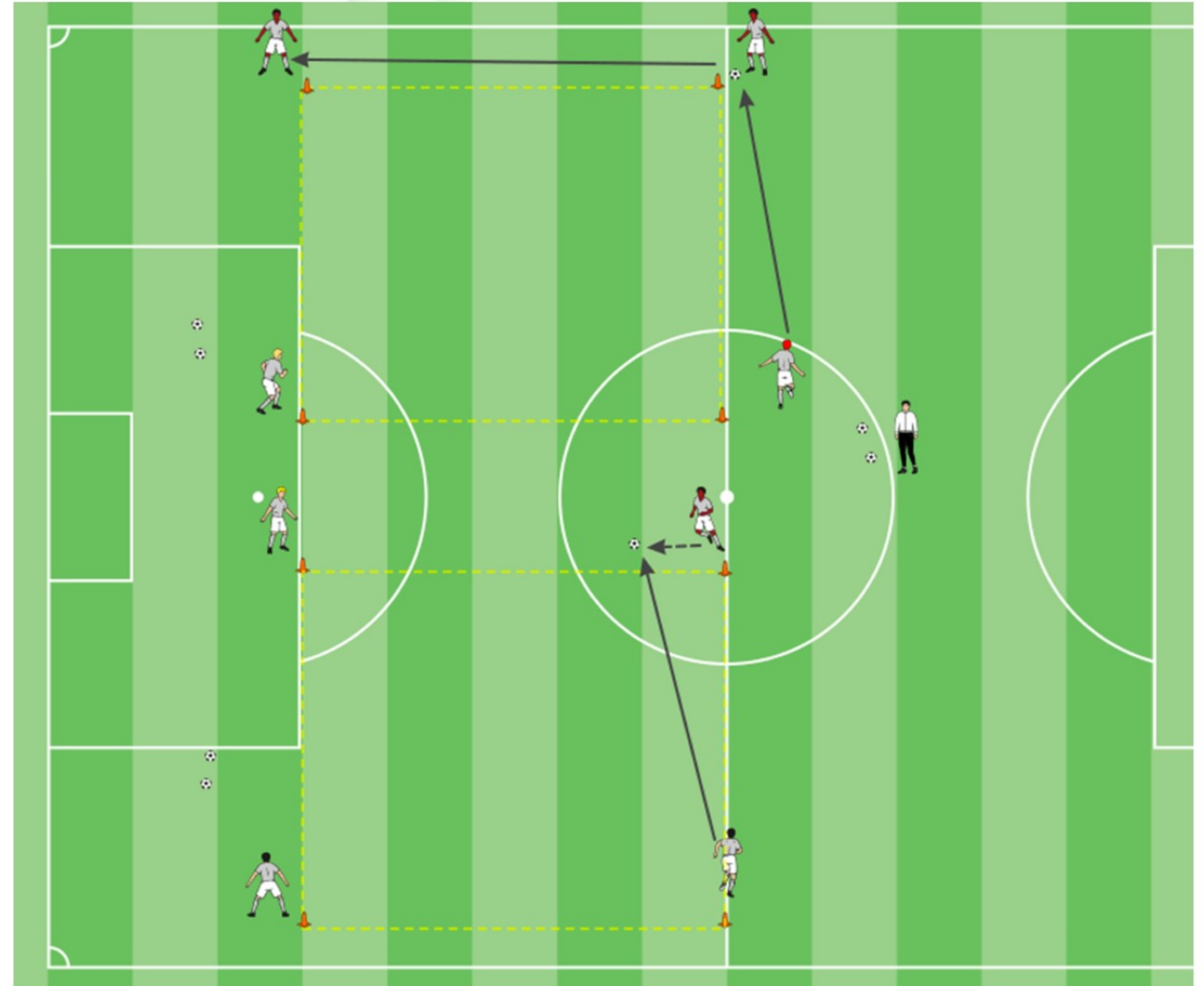
IDEAS FOR PHASE I TRAINING ACTIVITIES:

7 V 7 PLAYERS



PASSING PATTERNS IN DESIGNATED AREAS

- Older players can adhere to social distancing more effectively than younger
- Variations of passing and receiving can be tailored by the coach to meet the needs of the players
- Each players' cone becomes a designated personal preparation area



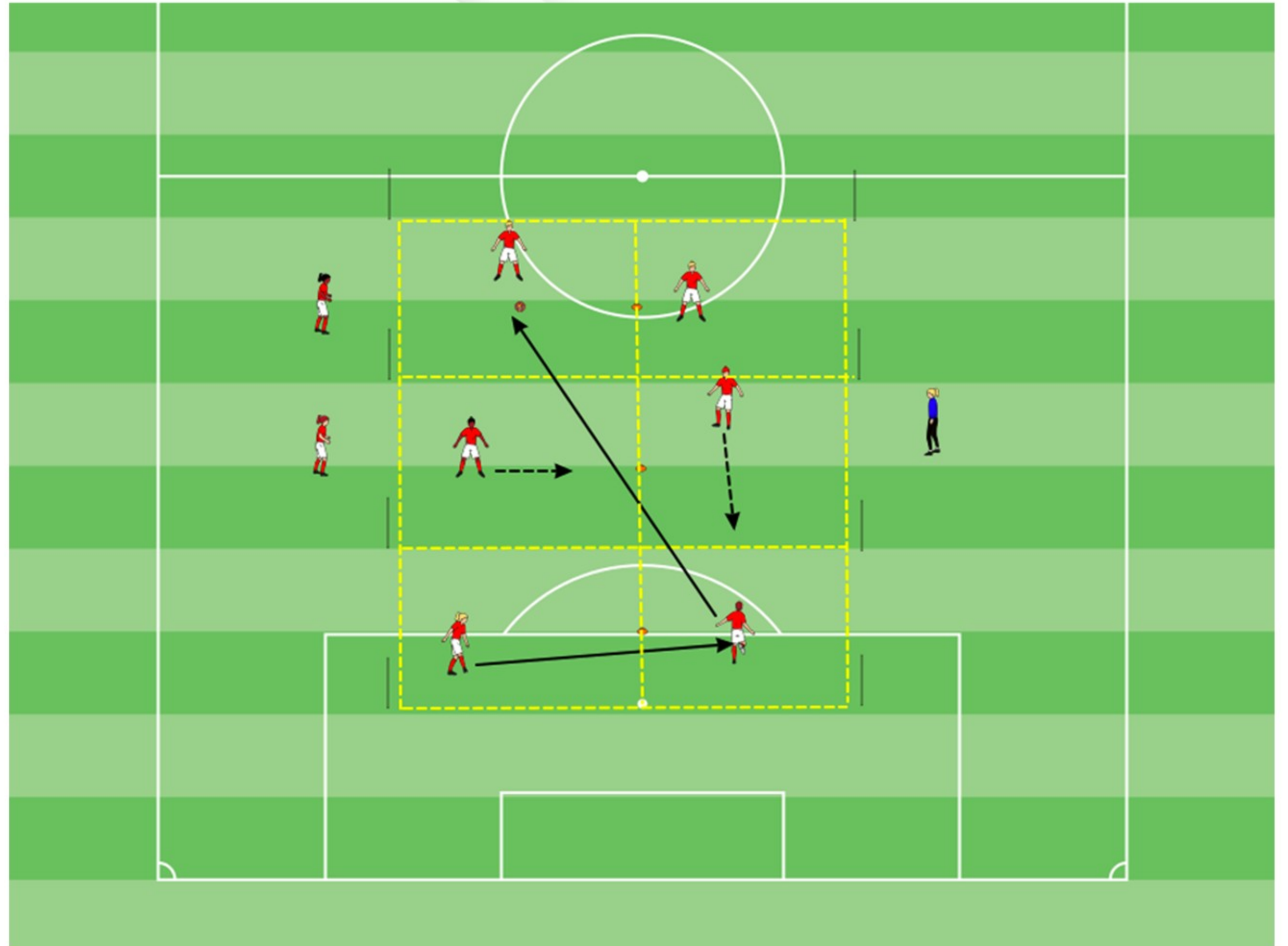
IDEAS FOR PHASE I TRAINING ACTIVITIES:

9 V 9 PLAYERS



4v2 PENETRATING PASSES

- Older players once again can maintain social distancing better than younger players
- Players play in their designated box
- Outside players try to play through the middle box to each other
- Players in the middle try to intercept, block penetrating passes from traveling through their area
- No need for bibs or colors to change



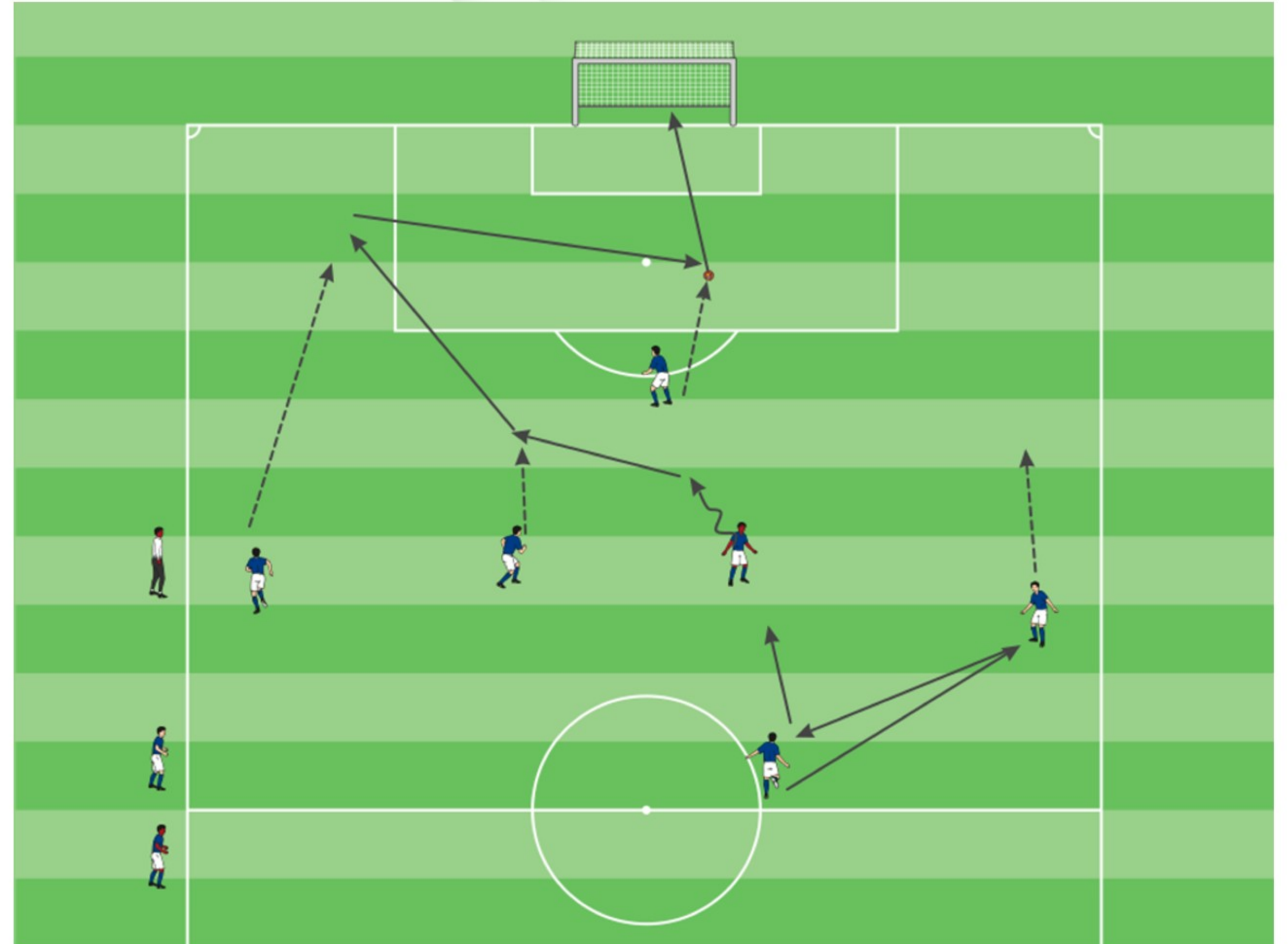
IDEAS FOR PHASE I TRAINING ACTIVITIES:

11 V 11 PLAYERS



SHADOW BUILD UP PATTERNS IN OPPONENTS' HALF

- Older players once again can maintain social distancing better than younger
- Players play in their position
- Players execute various passing patterns while maintaining social distancing
- Patterns can be tailored by the coach based on the needs of the players
- No need for bibs or colors to change



TAKE THE PLEDGE!

VISIT [USSOCCER.COM/PLAYON](https://ussoccer.com/playon)

PLAY ON PLEDGE

I pledge to **STAY INFORMED** and follow instructions from medical professionals.

I pledge to be **HONEST** about my health and tell others if I am experiencing any symptoms.

I pledge to do my best to **ADHERE** to the recommendations for good hygiene and social distancing.

I pledge to be **RESPONSIBLE** to myself, my family, my team and my community.

I pledge to **PLAY ON** safely when I feel comfortable and ready to return,
and encourage others to do the same.

LET'S PLAY ON.





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