



SESSION PLAN PACK



ENGLAND DNA
FOUNDATION PHASE

GETTING READY FOR THE NEW SEASON UNDER 5-8

The England DNA

Every coach, parent and volunteer involved with the development of young players wants to do the best that they can. As each new season approaches thoughts will turn to preparing the players for the season OR even working with the young players for the very first time if they are a new team.

The pre-season period is NOT the same as the preparation an adult player might be involved in so as you read the guidelines and advice that follows you should always remember:

- You are coaching children. Allow it to be enjoyable, exciting and very active (this is perfect preparation for any stage of the season).
- Get the children running, chasing, dodging, jumping, twisting and turning (the activities that follow will help you with this).
- Play lots of small-sided games of different numbers and on pitches of different sizes.
- Create something so special that the players cannot wait for the next session.



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DNA Focus: Getting Our Youngest Players Ready to Play

When thinking about how we might prepare our young players for the coming season after returning from the summer break there are a number of things to think about.

- During the “getting ready” period involve all the players as one big group (or two smaller groups) working in larger areas in the early stages. Playing matches is great.
- Each week, think about how you can make it slightly harder for the players by increasing the time spent on the task. (These are the building blocks). Smaller groups in smaller areas can begin to be introduced over the coming weeks.
- If you train more than once a week try to vary the kind of the sessions i.e. (Try to change the theme so that the players are not always undertaking the same repetitive actions).
- Look to include activities that are fun to be involved in. Include throwing and catching (tag rugby or dodge ball is a great warm up). Get them laughing and out of breath.
- Warm-ups for our young players have to be engaging, enjoyable and active.
- Ensure they are introduced to a wide range of movements.
- All sessions should be FUN so include a ball where possible.
- Play lots of matches of different numbers on different sizes of area (as a rule of thumb remember: early on, large numbers, large area – later on, smaller numbers, smaller areas).
- Respect each child as an individual and adapt the session or challenge for them.
Try to pair or group players together for different outcomes so that their individual needs are met more often.



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WEEK 1

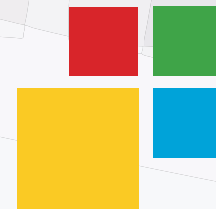
ENJOYMENT // ACTIVITY // FOOTBALL

Children need the freedom and time to play. Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity.



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DNA Focus: Fundamental Movement Patterns



Organisation

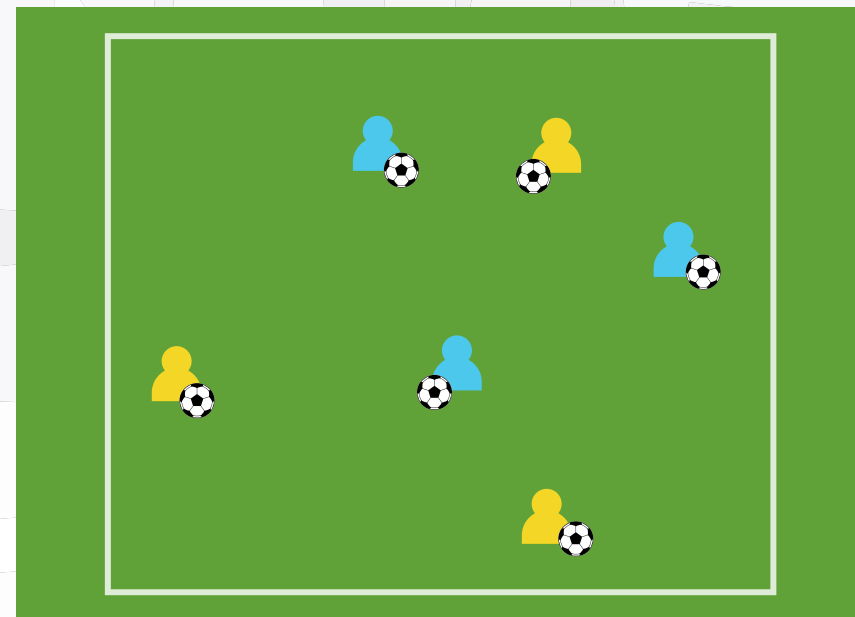
Players are in pairs, one dribbling their football (yellow) whilst his opponent is allowed to bounce it like a basketball (blue). They play 1v1 but there are three pairs in each area. (The diagram shows one area.) This is so that players have to dribble around other players making the chase and the tag more difficult.

How to Play

The player bouncing the ball must try to tag the player dribbling the ball (but only his opponent). If successful, they change over and repeat.

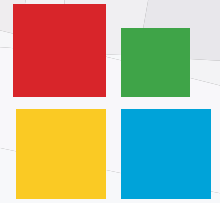
You must be in contact with your bouncing ball when you tag (no leaving it and running after your opponent)

Play for a set time and add up the number of tags for each group of three players so that although you only have one opponent, you are contributing to a team total.



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DNA Focus: Master the Ball in Different Ways to Keep Possession and Be Positive

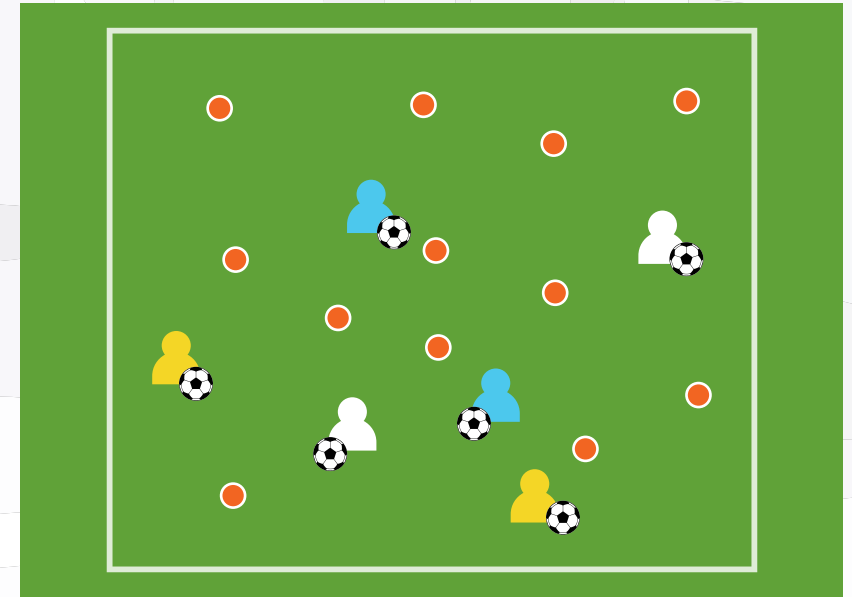


Organisation

This activity can be used with different numbers of players so is great if you are not sure how many players you might have. An area is set out to allow players time to dribble and experiment with the ball. Flat discs are placed randomly around the area different distances apart. (this will allow for different changes of speed and direction).

How to Play

Players travel around the area touching the ball using different parts of the foot, each time they travel to a flat disc players stop the ball on it and change direction. (the maximum time you can spend on a disc is 3 seconds). Try to get as many points by stopping the ball on the flat discs, (you cannot roll the ball on and off the same disc).



To progress the session split the group into 3 or 4 teams. A team is selected to guard the flat discs (blue in the diagram), this is done by dribbling the ball to a flat disc and stopping there for 5 seconds (blocking any player from rolling their ball onto it) then you dribble to block at another disc. The other teams (white/yellow) dribble around with the ball and still attempt to collect points by stopping their ball on a flat disc that is not blocked by a (blue) guard. Count up the points each team scores in a set amount of time and then change the guards.

Think of other ways to adapt the session to increase the level of difficulty and outcome.



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DNA Focus: Excite with the Ball and Seek Creative Solutions



Organisation

This game is played on a 3v3 mini pitch but it should be large enough for players to have enough room to stay on the ball.

How to Play

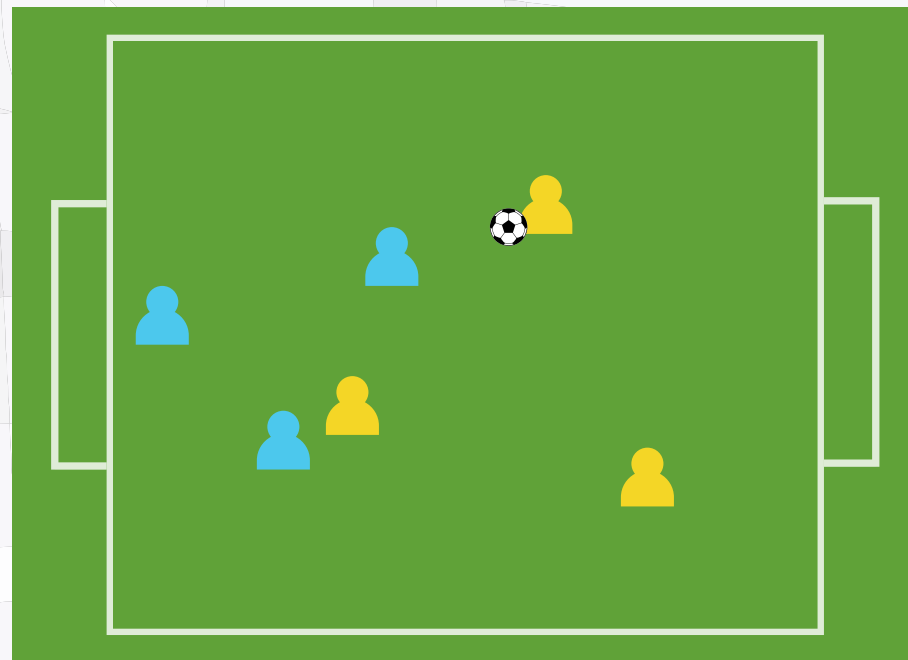
The game starts with one team having the ball and a normal game is played at the start. If the ball goes out of play, players can dribble or pass into team mates to restart the game. Play is continuous.

The coach now adds these challenges as appropriate in order to try and increase creativity on the ball. This may be messy to begin with but with players so young it is important that the coach is patient and positive.

Challenge 1 - Try to stay on the ball until you can shoot or pass forward.

Challenge 2 - Try to have as many touches as you can whilst keeping the ball for your team.

The game can be played with or without GK's. If you play without you might consider putting a scoring zone in to avoid aimless shots into an empty goal.



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After a movement warm up and some individual fun with the ball get the players into matches.

Remember: At this stage in week one, larger number games, larger areas (but not bigger than they would normally play on)

Think of other ways to adapt the session to increase the level of difficulty and outcome.



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WEEK 2

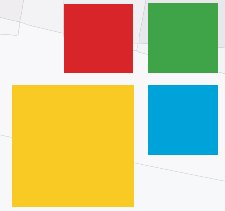
MORE ENJOYMENT // MORE ACTIVITY //
MORE FOOTBALL

Play is our brains favourite way of learning.



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DNA Focus: Physical Literacy. Tag and Chase Games



Organisation

The game is set up as shown and the area can be adjusted to suit the age and ability of the players.

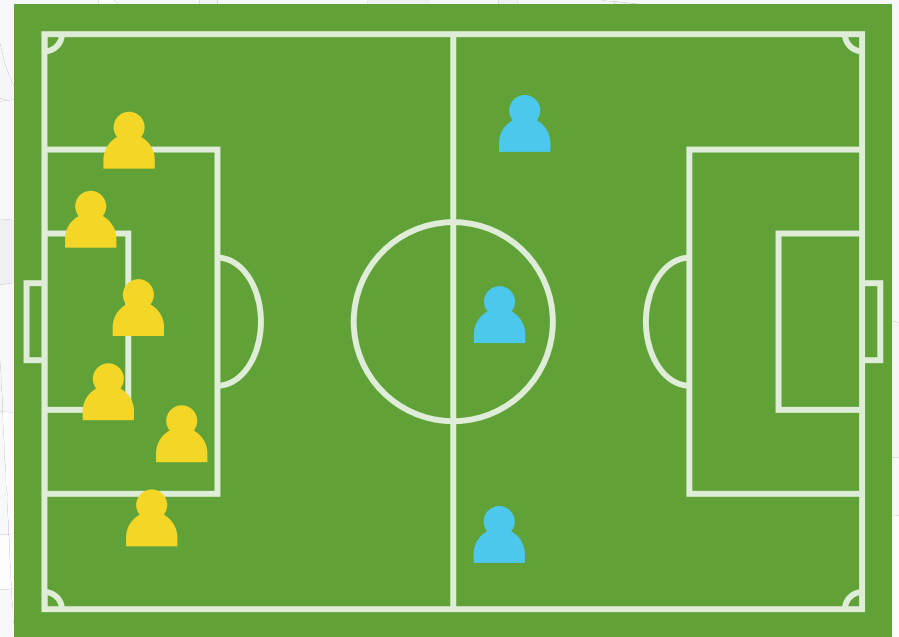
Each of the Yellow players has a bib in their hand and one in the side of their shorts.

How to Play

On “GO” the Yellow players attempt to run, dodge and evade the Blue “taggers” and throw the bib in their hand into the goal at the far end. If successful they pick the bib out of the goal and run the other way. (The coach can wait for all Yellow players to be ready at one end before saying go or let players go individually).

If a Blue player can grab the bib in the side of the shorts they run and throw it in the goal for a point to them.

The game is classic “British Bulldog” and is great to get the young players dodging, changing direction and running at different speeds.



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DNA Focus: Develop Ways to Change Speed, Direction, Dodge, Twist and Turn

Organisation

The game is set up as shown but this can be adapted depending upon numbers. The game shows 6 Yellow v 3 Blue but because the yellow team get two goes this means that the second group of 3 resting blues can come on.

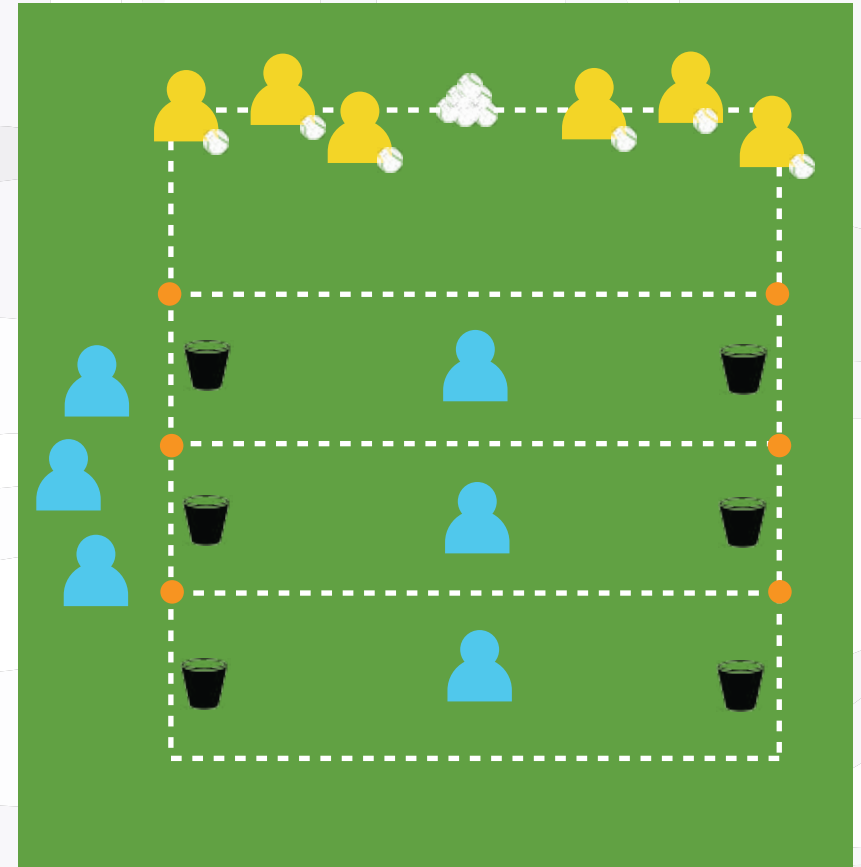
How to Play

The yellow team have a huge supply of tennis balls (or bean bags) and they pick them up one at a time. They run to put the ball into any of the buckets but obviously there is a blue guard for every two buckets. The blue guards are locked into the area marked by the cones.

The buckets at the far end are worth more points but obviously involve more risk.

Place the ball in the bucket to score then go and get another. If you are tagged just go back to the start and have another go.

Play for a short time then change the players over and total up the scores.



DNA Focus: Stay on the Ball

Organisation

The game is set up as shown but this can be adapted depending on the set up. The set up uses mini pitches with the goals turned around. Ensure the pitch is big enough for players to have time to spend on the ball. Each team tries to score in the opponents goal.

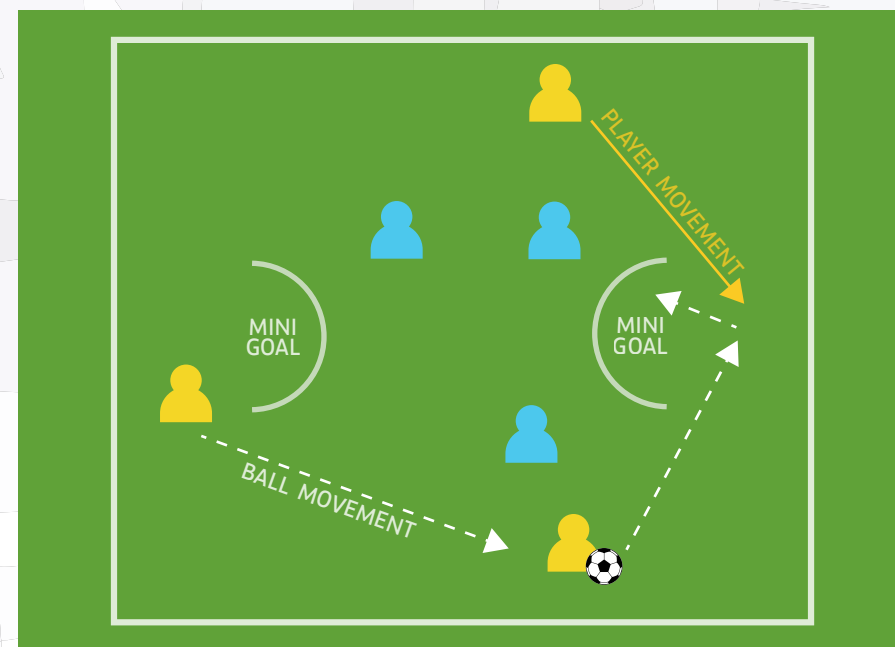
How to Play

The game starts in the normal way and players can dribble or pass into team mates when the ball goes out of play.

This is another game to encourage creativity and an individual connection with the ball. Be patient as players are developing their ability on the ball. Encourage them to try things and to be brave enough to stay on the ball for a little while longer.

Challenge 1 - Try to stay on the ball until you can shoot or pass forward.

Challenge 2 - Try to have more touches on the ball but still keep the ball for your team.



After a different movement warm up and some other individual fun with the ball get the players into matches. Remember: This is only week two so still larger number games, larger areas (but not bigger than they would normally play on)

Help them find out what the game is all about and the part they might play in it. For some players it could be the first time they have ever played football or been part of a team.

**Children learn as they play.
Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.**



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WEEK 3

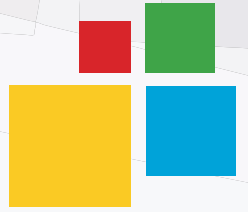
MORE ENJOYMENT // MORE ACTIVITY //
MORE FOOTBALL

Almost all creativity involves purposeful play.



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DNA Focus: Develop Ways of Combining Changing Speed and Direction to Lose and Evade Defenders

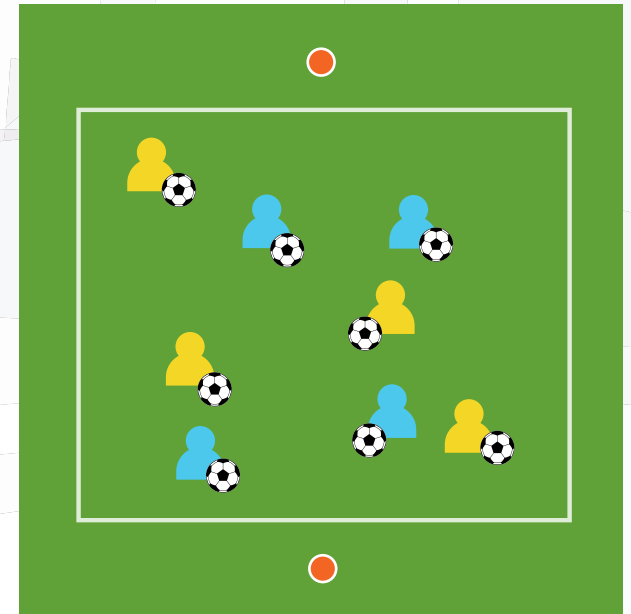


Organisation

There are two even teams. (the game shows 4v4 but it could be any other number) and the area should reflect the numbers used but be big enough for players to run and dodge. Two cones are placed on either side and this distance can vary depending on how far you want players to run.

How to Play

One team is dribbling the other holds the ball in hands. On “go” the dribblers have to avoid having their ball touched by the team holding the ball. If it is touched then you have to pick up your ball and run around the cone and come back into the area. If the team holding the ball in hands gets every dribbler out of the area and running around the cones they have won.



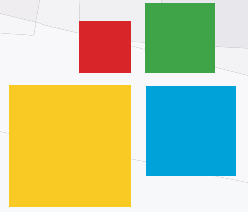
Try to set the cones players run around at a distance that makes the game competitive.

To develop the game consider one team having a ball held under their arm (yellow). Blue defenders attempt to tag the ball with their hand, if this happens the yellow player places (not drops) the ball on the floor for the defender to pick up while the yellow player runs out around the cone to re-enter the playing area and now has to tag a blue player with a ball. After a set time see how many balls are held by each team, the team with the most balls wins. (Ensure the ball is placed under the arm and held, it can be under the right or left arm).



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DNA Focus: Develop Ways of Combining Changing Speed and Direction to Lose and Evade Defenders



Organisation

Set out a rectangle made up of two halves and with a defender in each half. 6 Yellow attackers are placed around the outside of the area. (More players can be used if required)

How to Play

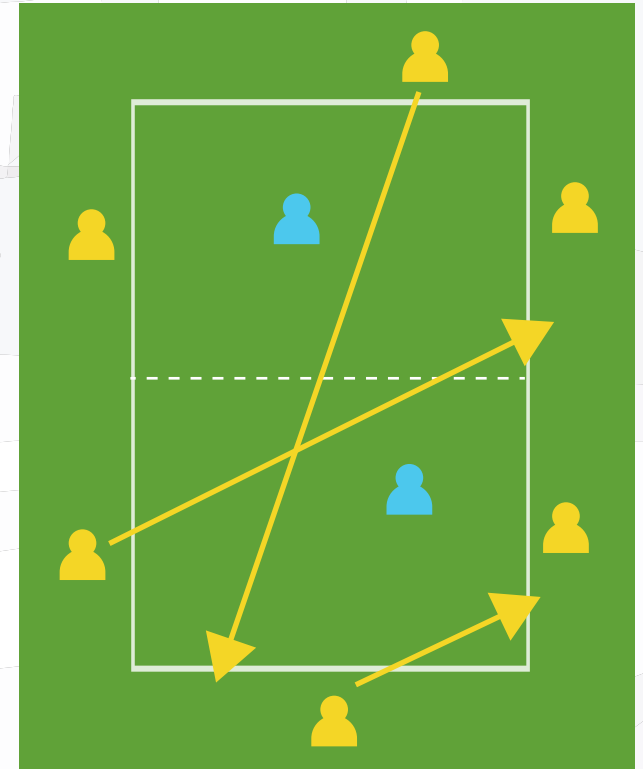
Yellow attackers place a bib in the SIDE of their shorts and attempt to travel the longest distance across the area without a Blue defender stealing their bib. If this happens the 2 players change roles.

Because the area is a rectangle there will be a long run and a shorter one.

CHALLENGE: Try to make the longest run you can (don't forget this does not have to be in a straight line, you could keep dodging the taggers and run for much longer before deciding on a side to go to where you can rest).

Progression: Add a ball for the players on the outside (taggers are "live") Taggers **MUST** take the ball off one of the players on the outside. If they kick the ball out they stay as a tagger.

If a tagger gains possession of a ball **AND** can dribble out of the area with the ball under control then s/he can change places with the player on the outside.



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Well done for using a different movement warm up and some other fun with the ball activities. Now get the players into matches again.

Remember: At week three you can look at slightly smaller sided games. 4v4 would be perfect at this stage (particularly if for the previous two weeks you have played 6v6 or even 7v7).

Give small amounts of clear and simple help and advice followed by lots of practice and encouragement.

Necessity may be the mother of invention, but play is certainly the father.



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WEEK 4

MORE ENJOYMENT // MORE ACTIVITY //
MORE FOOTBALL

This is the real secret of life - to be completely engaged with what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realise it is play.



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DNA Focus: Stay on the Ball and Master the Ball

Organisation

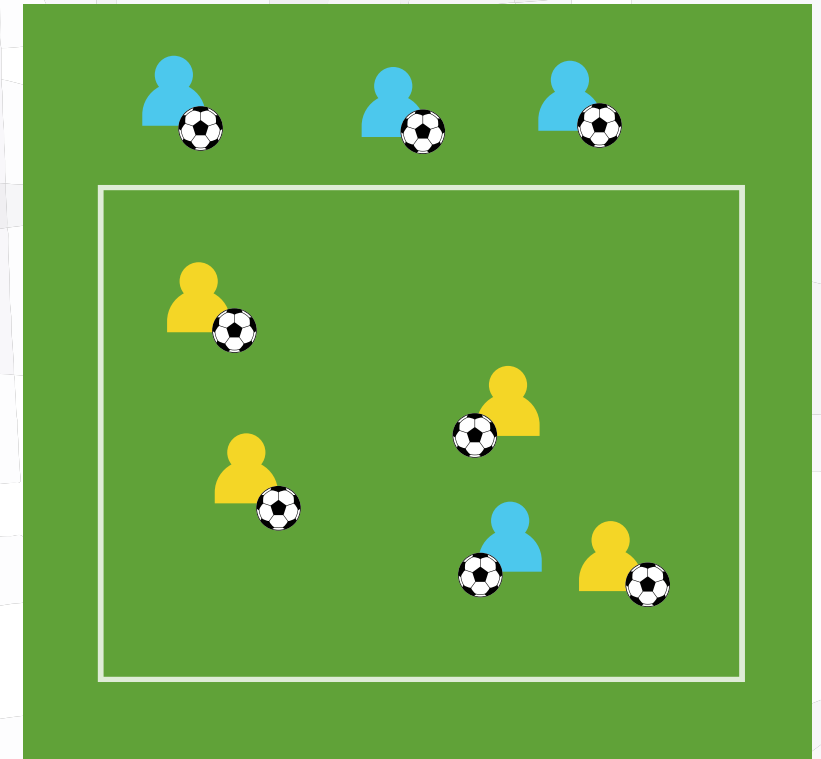
There are two even teams (the game shows 4v4 but it could be any other number). Four players are inside the area with a ball at their feet (yellow), four players are on the outside with a ball in their hands waiting to go in one at a time (the diagram shows the first blue player having gone in). The idea is to empty the area of players as fast as possible.

How to Play

On “go” the first player with the ball in hands goes in to try and touch his/her ball against any of the balls being dribbled. When s/he has done this, s/he runs out to tag the next player and the one who was caught goes out too. Repeat until all players have been caught and coach records the time taken. Swap over and try to beat this time.

Keep the area quite small to speed up the chasers and the tagging or use a larger area for different types of movements.

Having cones placed at different distances outside the area for players who have been tagged to run around before coming back into the area is a great way to introduce sprinting and running at different speeds.



DNA Focus: Stay on the Ball and Master the Ball

Organisation

A rectangle area with a 1 v 1 in the middle and a team mate on the outside of the area. This player can support in many different ways.

How to Play

Yellow 1 tries to stay on the ball for as long as possible against Blue 1. If Yellow 1 thinks he is in danger of losing the ball, he can choose to pass out to his teammate Yellow 2 in order to keep possession.

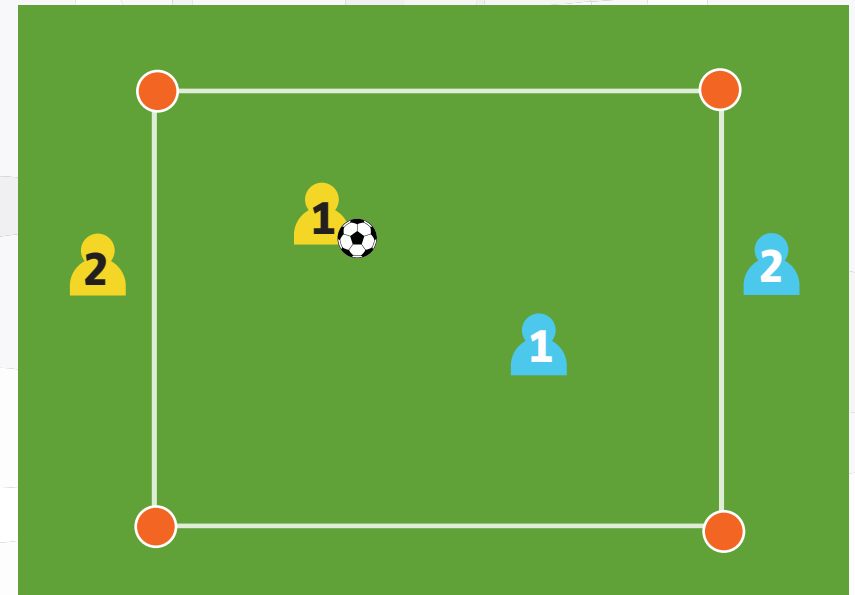
The Blue 1 player MUST gain possession and pass it out to his waiting teammate in order for them to gain control of the game as the team in possession.

If the ball is passed out, two things can happen to the game (coach decides depending on the focus of the session):

The pass out brings his teammate in to continue 1v1 with Blue 1.

OR

The pass out brings Yellow 2 into the area with the ball and the two Yellow players have to keep the ball for a set number of passes or time against the one Blue player.



DNA Focus: Exciting and Positive in Possession

Organisation

3v3, 4v4 or 5v5 mini pitches. The diagram shows 3v3 without GK's.

How to Play

The game starts in the normal way (centre kick off).

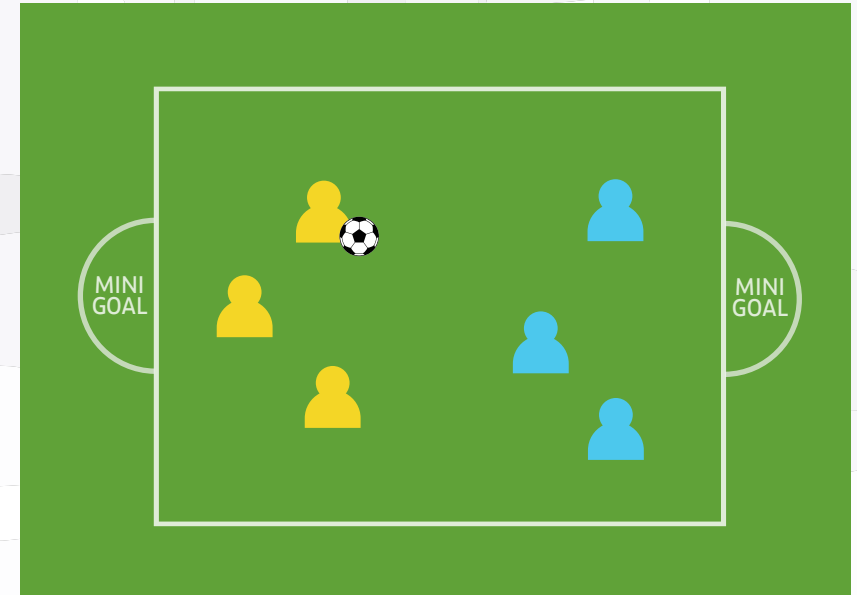
If the ball goes out of play the game can be restarted by dribbling in yourself or passing into a teammate.

Encourage players to experiment and try different ways to be creative.

Challenges 1 - Try to stay on the ball until you can pass forward.

Challenges 2 - Try to have as many touches as you can whilst keeping the ball for your team.

The game can be played with or without GK's. If they are not used consider putting in a scoring zone to avoid aimless shots.



We hope you are beginning to get your own warm up ideas by now but if not its great that you are using the different movement games and activities that involve lots of ball contacts.

Now its time to play but we are reducing the numbers again. We are now at week four so once again, look at slightly smaller sided games. 3v3 would be great to follow on from your previous activities so play more of this. You can play with or without GK's.

Again, give small amounts of clear and simple help and advice followed by lots of practice and encouragement.

Life is more fun if you play games.



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WEEK 5

PLAYERS NOW READY FOR MORE GAMES

*Do not keep children to their studies by
compulsion but by play.*



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DNA Focus: Develop Fundamental Movements When Reacting to a Stimulus

Organisation

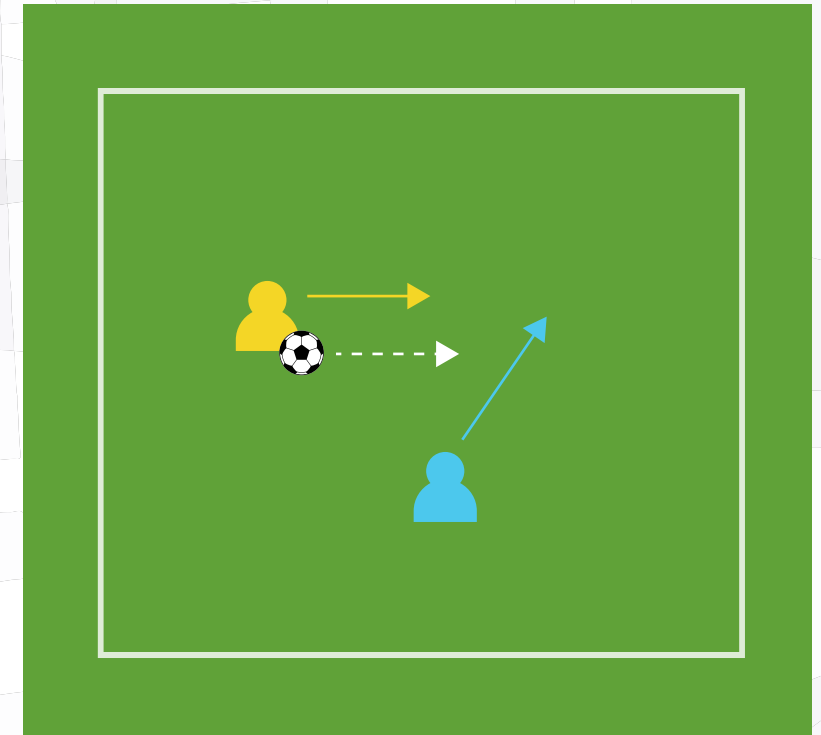
Mark out a square big enough for the number of players who will play in it. The diagram shows the 1v1 game.

How to Play

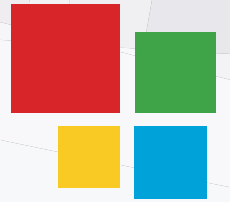
Yellow player starts with the ball in hands and can move around the square freely carrying the ball.

The ball is then thrown over head height at anytime and **MUST** bounce before the blue player can catch it. Once the blue player catches the ball after 1 bounce s/he can move around the square with the ball and throw it above head height trying to catch out the yellow player. (Each player is trying to catch the other out) if the ball bounces more than once a point is awarded to the thrower.

For a different challenge play 2v2 3v3 or even 3v2 or 2v1.



DNA Focus: Excite with the Ball and Seek Creative Solutions



Organisation

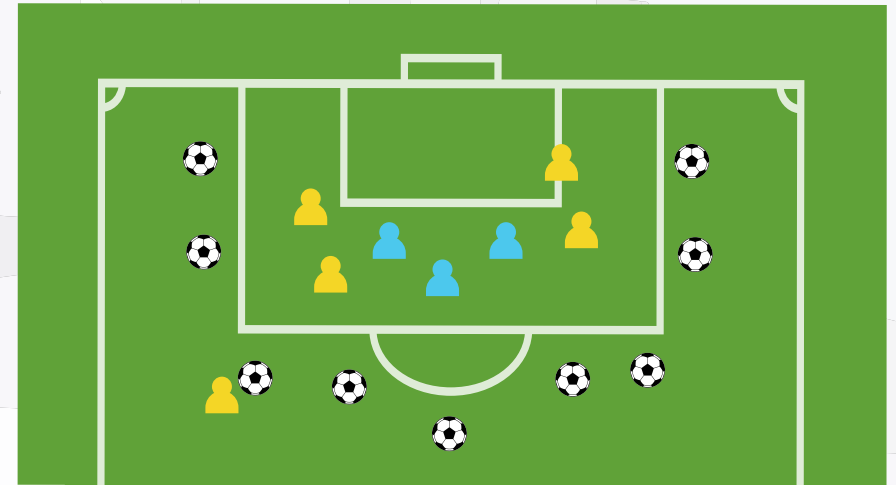
The game is set up around the penalty area of the pitch. Balls are placed around the area so that the game can restart quickly.

How to Play

5 yellow players play against a GK and 3 Blue players. Yellows get the first ball, attack, and try to score a goal. If successful any Yellow player can run to collect the next ball from around the outside and the game continues. If the Yellows shoot and miss they get the next ball.

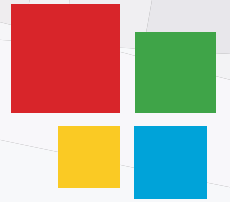
If they shoot and the ball is saved by the GK then a goal is awarded to the Blue team. If the Blue team gain possession of the ball at any point they can try to score in any of the two goals on the sides.

Once all the balls have been used, add up the score to see if three can really beat five!!!



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DNA Focus: Excite with the Ball and Seek Creative Solutions



Organisation

The game is set up as shown. Decide how big to make the pitch because the size will affect the returns you get and the movements and decisions the players will have to make.

How to Play

The game is 4v4 plus GK's. Look to consolidate some of the key DNA messages about staying on the ball, making things happen and being willing to share when it is best for the team.

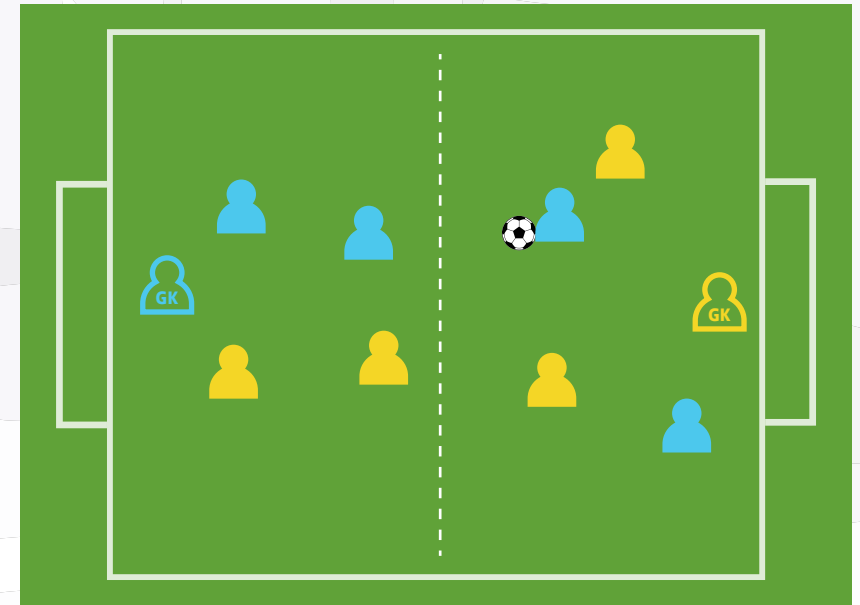
The game restarts from the side with a dribble or pass in to teammates.

Challenges:

Try to score by yourself as a priority

Try to do something that surprises your opponent

Try to score by combining with your team mates



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The weeks are flying by and we hope that you and your young players are having a great time getting ready to play for the new season.

Week 5 gives you some more warm up and small number ideas but at this point there needs to be a real focus on helping the players understand what happens during a match.

This week can be dedicated to playing lots of different formats and is a great way to revisit and consolidate your key messages to the players. Play 6v6, 3v3, 1v1 and 4v4. Mix it up and help the players cope with the demands of each game.

Whoever wants to understand much, must play much.



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WEEK 6

PLAYERS NEED EVEN MORE GAMES

Deep meaning lies often in childish play.



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DNA Focus: Refine and Develop Fundamental Movements

Organisation

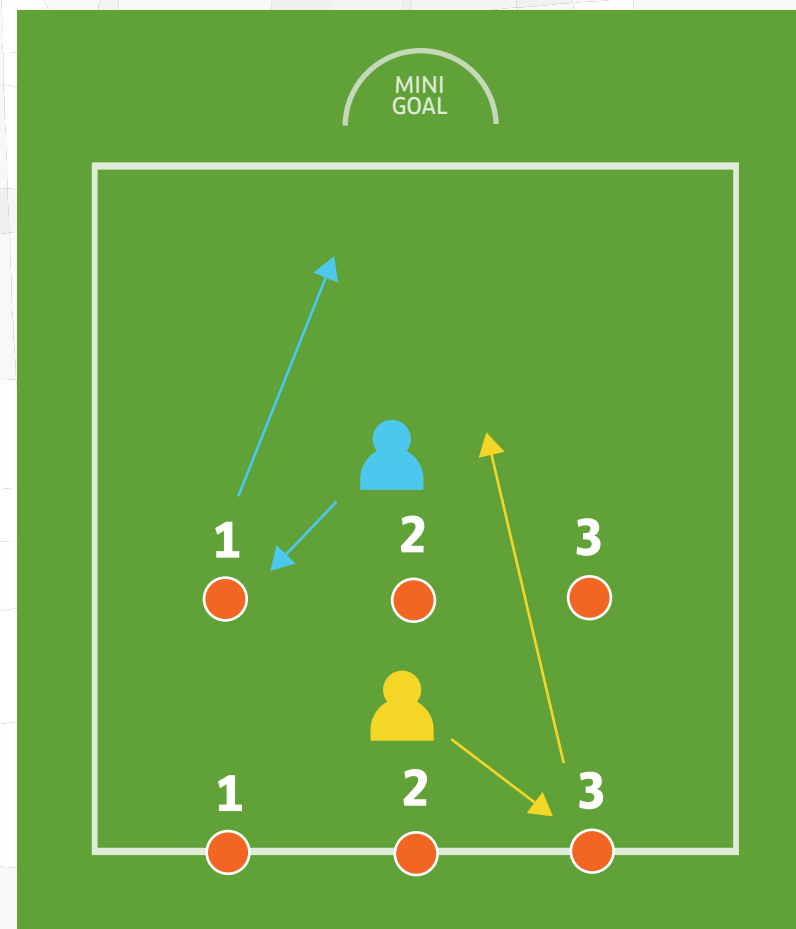
The game is set up as shown with two rows of flat cones, each given a number. (for young players put 1, 2 or 3 spot cones in each position to help them remember).

How to Play

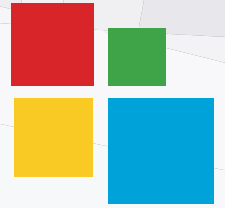
Yellow player holds a bib in their hand and places another bib in the side of their shorts. The game begins with the coach telling each player which cone to run to on the command Go (1, 2 or 3).

On “GO”, Yellow and Blue players must run quickly to the designated cone before the Yellow player tries to travel past the Blue player and throw the bib into the goal to score. If the Blue player steals the bib in the side of Yellow’s shorts, roles are changed and the game restarts with the coach giving the next two players the number of the cone they must visit before the chase begins again.

The numbered cones can be placed in different positions to offer different challenges. Try to make the games between each player competitive by adjust the position of the cones.



DNA Focus: Dealing with Being Matched Up, Under or Overloaded in a Game



Organisation

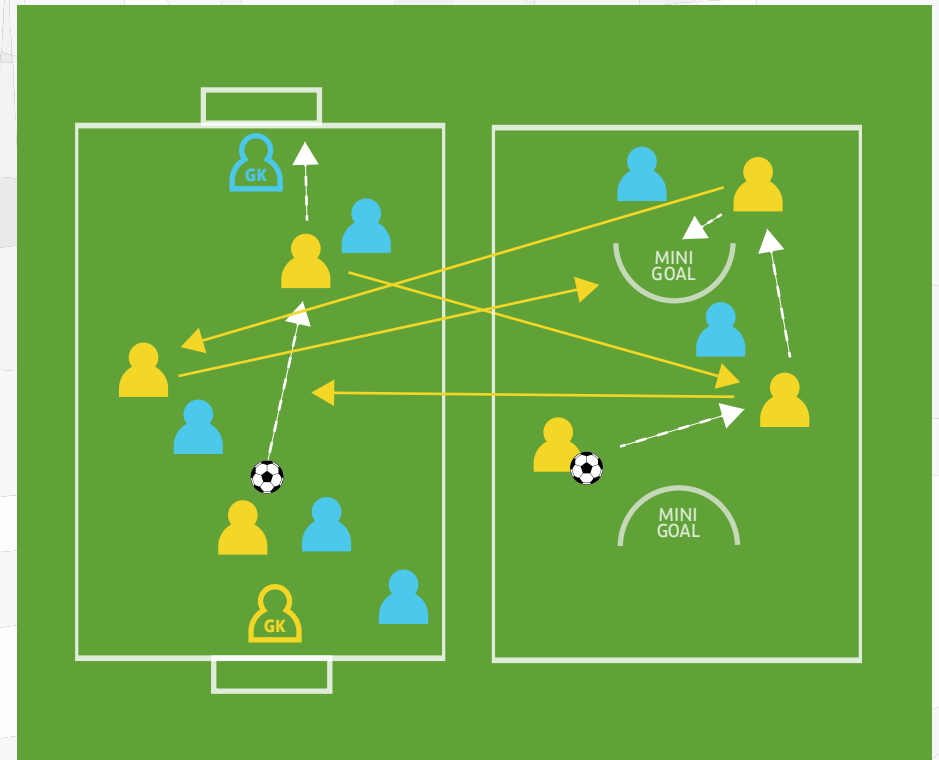
2 Mini pitches set up side by side. On one pitch the goals face forward (as normal) and on the other pitch the goals face back to back with a playing area between them.

How to Play

Both teams are trying to score in their opponents goal. If a player scores they run over to the other pitch, high 5 a friend and join the same colour team on the other pitch. This will create an overload until another goal is scored.

If the ball goes out of play, players can dribble in or pass to a team mate.

The diagram shows 6v6 plus GK's (split over the two pitches) but different number teams can be used. The important point is that overloads are constantly created as goals are scored.



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The “getting ready to play” phase is into week 6 already and we hope that you and your young players are still having a great time as the new season approaches.

This last week continues to offer more suggested movement and small number activities for you to try but once again to help these young players prepare fully we have to continue the very important themes of play, enjoyment and football. Playing games in training is vital so once again, get them into more small-sided games.

If you have followed the advice and guidance that has been suggested we believe that you and your players will have had a great time and the players love of football will have been enhanced even more. Well done.

Play provides a continuation desire. We desire to keep doing it, and the pleasure of the experience drives that desire. We find ways to keep it going. Whoever wants to understand much, must play much.



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