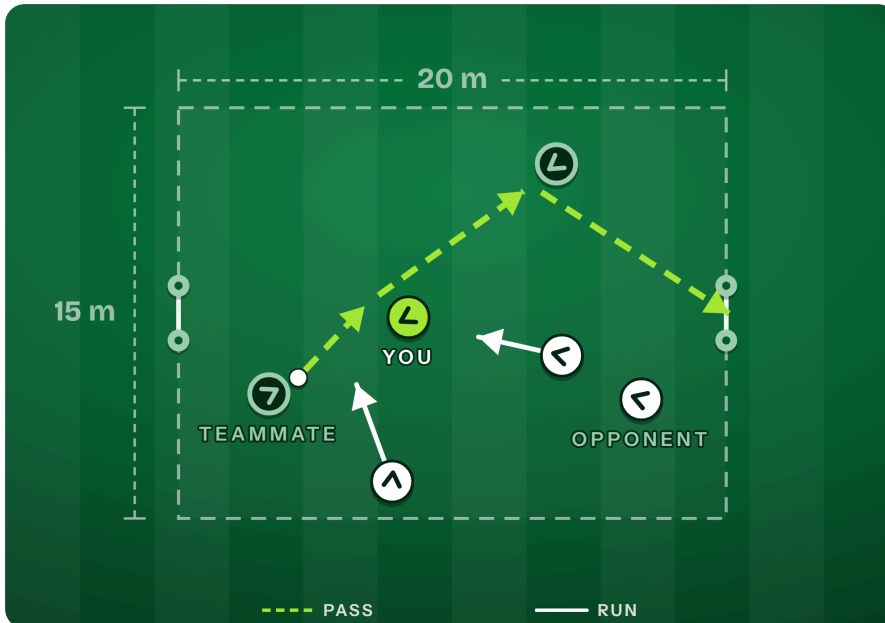




The small-sided pressure game

PSYCHOLOGICAL · COMPOSURE · 6 PLAYERS (3 v 3 SHOWN), OR 8 FOR 4 v 4 · AGE 8+



Set up

6 players, 3 v 3

2 small goals

20 x 15 m pitch

Last minute: goals x2

Dose

4 games of 4 min

2-3 min rest between

4 games of 4 minutes with 2-3 minutes of rest between (the Football Reach target, not an FA rule).

What it trains

Composure in a real game: 3 v 3 with a scoring twist that adds pressure. In experiments, practising under pressure helped performance under pressure (a meta-analysis). In players about 10, 4 v 4 gave twice the actions per player per minute of 7 v 7.

How it works

- 1 Warm up first. Mark a pitch about 20 x 15 m with a small goal at each end (two cones make a goal) and play 3 v 3, or 4 v 4.
- 2 Add the pressure twist: in the last minute of every game, goals count double.
- 3 As the ball comes to you, glance over your shoulder first, so you know where the pressure is and which teammate is free.
- 4 Under pressure, play the simple pass. If you lose the ball or miss, breathe out once and get straight back into the game.
- 5 Play 4 games of 4 minutes, with 2-3 minutes of easy rest between.

Coaching points

- 1 **Scan before it arrives**
Before the ball reaches you, check over your shoulder to see the defenders closing in and the teammate in space. Then your decision is made before the ball arrives.
- 2 **Play the simple pass**
Under pressure, pick the pass you know you can make: firm and along the ground to the free teammate. Keeping the ball beats a risky pass through a crowd.

× **Not this:** Forcing a pass through the middle while two defenders close you down. It usually gives the ball away; the simple pass keeps it.

MY NOTES

➤ HARDER

Add one more pressure at a time: a two-touch limit, 10 seconds to score each attack, or an extra defender (our suggestions). Keep scanning and keep it simple.

➤ EASIER

Drop the twist, or add a spare player who always attacks (4 v 3), so there is always a free teammate. U8 to U11: 4 x 2-minute games, same rest (our suggestion).

🛡️ Safety

- If in doubt, sit them out: anyone with a suspected concussion stops straight away, does no training for at least 24 hours and plays no matches for at least 21 days (UK concussion guidelines).
- Defenders stay on their feet: no slide tackles, and keep the ball on the ground.
- Flat grass with space all round, never a road or driveway. Use flat cones, or small goals that are pegged or weighted down.
- Under 16: if your knees or heels hurt when you run, stop and tell an adult; a GP or physio can help.
- Warm up first. Stop if anything hurts and tell an adult.

📅 Track 12 weeks (tick each session)

W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Watch Archie show it

footballreach.com/drills/the-small-sided-pressure-game

Then take the free test at footballreach.com