

# THE 7V7 SOCCER COACHING MANUAL

**A comprehensive guide to coaching a 7v7 soccer team**

- ★ **20 ready-to-go session plans**
- ★ **Gameday management (formations, tactics, positions)**
- ★ **Specifically designed to enhance decision making**
- ★ **Includes shared vocabulary to quickly link words to ideas**



**Written and developed by Toby Chambers**



# Introduction

Hi there! My name is Toby and I am the creator behind [SoccerSourceCoaching.com](https://SoccerSourceCoaching.com).

I created SoccerSourceCoaching as a platform to share my 11 years' worth of ideas, plans, and mistakes with the goal of providing everyday coaches, parents, and players with soccer resources that will better themselves and those around them.

I have been fortunate enough to make a career out of coaching soccer but many grassroots teams rely on the incredible work of volunteers, who juggle careers, families, and other commitments to create amazing experiences for young soccer players.

For some coaches, this can be overwhelming, not knowing where to start or how to start as well as the time commitments on and off the pitch.

This is why I developed the 7v7 Soccer Coaching Manual.

I wanted to provide everyday coaches with the tools they need to deliver high-quality, engaging, competitive efficient coaching sessions that will build a strong foundation for their players going forward.

The resources that make up the 7v7 Soccer Coaching Manual are:

- Fun, competitive and engaging activities
- Autonomous (Doesn't need a coaches intervention for the session to work, which means the coach can solely focus on the development of their players during the session)
- Require minimal setup
- Easy for players to understand and coaches to explain
- Comes prepared with coaching points and questions
- Soccer specific terms and phrases
- Matchday prep (formation, game day management, warm-up)



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# 10-week training program outline

## What is included in the program?

In the 7v7 soccer coaching program, you will have 20 planned sessions, with each session being 1 hour and 30 minutes in length. Included in the session plans are the activities, equipment needed for the setup, timings, coaching points, questions that can check for understanding, and coaches' notes (informal notes that I feel would be beneficial to you as the coach for the activity).

## How will the training program develop my players?

The best soccer players make the best decisions. As well as the need to develop technical skills, young players must also master the art of quickly processing information in competitive scenarios.

The quicker a player can process information and link ideas together, the better and more efficient their decision-making becomes.

This program is specifically designed to develop players' decision-making skills alongside their technical skills.

This is achieved through training the players to look to see so that they take in specific information, competitive activities that will present similar scenarios in 7v7 matches, consistent coaching points that will build a strong base for the development of their technical skills, and the use of shared vocabulary to help players link words to ideas and concepts quicker.

## How is the program structured?

The program has a different structure from your other coaching programs.

Other training programs will use a block method which is where you learn about a specific skill over a set period of time and not revisit the topic again.

This can be beneficial in the short term however over the long term players will struggle to recall those same skills, concepts, and ideas.

The structure of this program is designed for players to forget what they worked on in the previous session in order for them to remember and recall information effectively. The players will be consistently working on and building on those previous skills, concepts and ideas throughout the whole 10 weeks of the training program.

By structuring the program this way you are helping the players build stronger ties to remembering and therefore increasing the speed at which they can process information. Below are the focuses of the sessions along with the time frame.

	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Session 2</b>
Week 1	To build players confidence in 1v1 scenarios	To start receiving the ball in an open body position with the back foot
Week 2	Identifying space to attack while dribbling with the ball	Playing passes to the back foot of our teammates
Week 3	To continue to identify space while dribbling with the ball	To create angles to help support your teammate on the ball
Week 4	Identifying space to attack with the option to pass	To create angles to help support your teammate on the ball with increased pressure
Week 5	Introduction of how players can create space for themselves off the ball	Creating angles and receiving the ball to pay forward
Week 6	Using movement to create space for yourself and explore different ways to exploit space	Creating angles and receiving the ball to play forward with increased options
Week 7	Using movement to create space for yourself and exploit space through dribbling or passing	Creating angles and receiving the ball to play forward in pairs
Week 8	Combining passes with teammates to exploit space	Trying to split defensive lines with penetrative passing
Week 9	Exploring how to get the ball to the striker	splitting defensive lines with penetrative passing
Week 10	Combining passes with teammates to get the ball to the striker	Keeping possession to create space to play a penetrative pass

# Do you need to follow the program exactly?

No, of course not!

I have tried to create a program that would benefit most 7v7 teams but it may not suit all teams. Some teams and players may grasp concepts and ideas quicker than other teams, some teams may need a bit more time.

What's great about this program's structure is that the previous week will always build a foundation that flows in the following session.

If you feel that your team looked like they got the hang of the concept in an activity, but, struggled to transfer the concept over to a 3v3 then in the following session use the previous activity as a warm-up that builds into the 3v3.

The timings of the activity are also rough guidelines too! If you feel that you want to spend more time on an activity or a 3v3 then by all means do it. The idea of this program is to empower coaches by giving them guidelines to follow that can easily be adjusted to meet the needs of their team.

## How many players is program designed for?

The program was planned with 12 players in mind, however, all the activities can be adapted for the players that you have.

## What coaching equipment do I need for the program?

Here is a list of the equipment you will need for the coaching program. I have linked the equipment so you are able to check prices and availability:

- [Heavy-duty extra-large sports bag](#)
- [10 size 4 soccer balls \(bag and pump included\)](#)
- [4 pug goals](#)
- [Tall cones](#)
- [Disc cones](#)
- [2 portable soccer goals](#)
- [Soccer tactics whiteboard](#)

## What coaching software did you use to create this program?

To create my sessions I used the SoccerTutor session planning software. **[Click here](#)** if you would like to find out more information on how the software can help you plan, organize and share your soccer sessions.

# Shared vocabulary

## What is shared vocabulary?

Shared vocabulary is words and phrases that are consistently used over an extended period of time. This will help players process words and phrases quicker and link them faster to ideas, concepts, and skills.

It is the streamlining of communication.

These are the words and phrases that are not set in stone, feel free to change and adapt these words to whichever works best for your team!

## Shared vocabulary used in the program

This is all the vocabulary that is used in the program, where necessary diagrams will be used to assist the explanation of the words and phrases used.

## Open body position

This is where a player receives the ball with their body facing the majority of the pitch. This allows players to see where the ball is coming from and also see the space they want to exploit. On the left, you can see an example of a player in an open body position, and on the right, you can see a player in a closed body position.

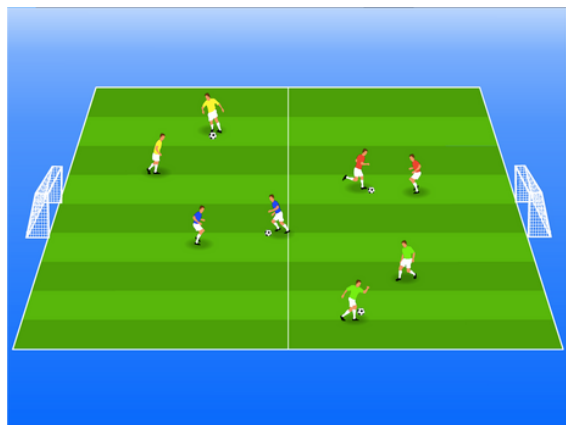


# Week 1 Session 1

## The focus of the session:

To build players confidence in 1v1 scenarios and looking to see with the ball at their feet

## Warm-up activity

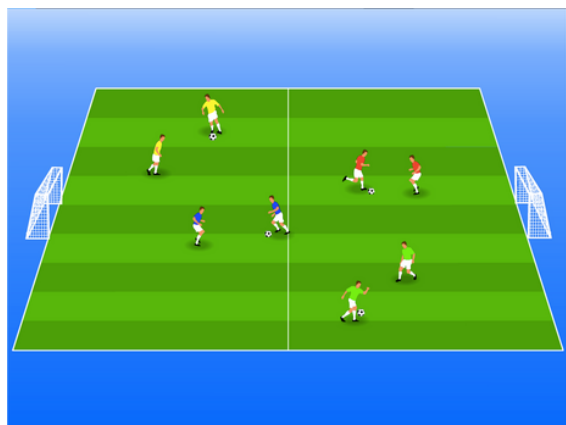


**Time:** 15 Minutes

**Set up:** Create a 20 yard by 30-yard area with 2 goals opposite each other

**How the drill works:** As your players arrive get them into pairs with a ball between them. They will immediately begin playing a 1v1 against each other. Make sure the players know which goal they are attacking and defending. All pairs will be playing on the same pitch.

## Activity 1



**Time:** 25 Minutes

**Set up:** Create a 20 yard by 30-yard area with 2 goals opposite each other

**How the drill works:** Players will be performing the exact same drill as the warm-up. Every 5 minutes the players will swap partners. The individual players will keep track of their own goals scored throughout the length of the activity with the player scoring the most goals winning overall.

### Coaching points:

- Use a skill, with a quick change of direction and pace to get past the defender
- Use a skill/move to take the defender away from the space you want to attack, with your change of direction taking you towards the space you want to attack
- Play with your eyes up, look as far forward as possible; to see the space you want to attack, the position of the defender, and the body position of the defender

### Questions that can lead to coaching points/ check for understanding:

- How can you beat a defender?
- Where should your eyes be looking? What should your eyes be looking at?
- How can you take the defender away from the space you want to attack?

## Activity 2



**Time:** 20 Minutes

**Set up:** Create two 20 yards by 30-yard areas with 2 goals opposite each other on each pitch. 3 tall cones to mark the half-life on the pitches. The opposing team must stand behind these cones while the team in possession takes their goal kick.

**How the drill works:** 3v3 small-sided games. Delegate a team captain to each team to put players into positions (Lm, RM, CM). At half time select a new team captain to put players into different positions

**Rule:** If a player successfully dribbles past an opposing player in a phase of play that leads to a goal the goal will be with points instead of 1.

### Coaching points:

- Reinforce the previous coaching points earlier in the session
- Make players aware that they now have an option to pass to a teammate (eyes up to see)
- Players off the ball must find a space to the support their teammates on the ball (eyes up to see)

### Questions that can lead to coaching points/ check for understanding:

- Use the previous questions to support understanding
- As well as being able to dribble with the ball at our feet, what other options do we now have? How will we know?
- If you do not have the ball what are you trying to see and find to help the player on the ball?



## Activity 3



**Time:** 30 minutes

**Set up:** Create a full-size 7v7 soccer field (40 yards by 60 yards) If you are unable to create a full-size field make a smaller field but try to keep the width as realistic as possible (40 yards) and play from the 40-yard line to 40-yard line.

**How the drill works:** This will be a 6v6 without goalkeepers and the regular rules of soccer (including throw-ins). Select team captains to choose the line-up and put players in positions (LD, RD, CM, LM, RM, ST). Choose a new captain for the second half who will put the team in different positions the second half.

**Rule:** For the first half of the game apply the same rule from the 3v3 small-sided game

**Coaching points:**

- Reinforce previous coaching points from throughout the session

**Questions that can lead to coaching points/ check for understanding:**

- Use prior questions to help check for understanding
- At half time ask teams to go away and discuss 1 thing they are doing well, 1 thing they need to improve on as a team, and how they can improve on it.

## Coaches Notes

### Warm-up:

During the warm-up, especially during the 1v1s, allow players to try new things and have fun.

### Activity 1:

Encourage players to try new skills but most importantly get them in the habit of playing with their heads up, focusing on looking and seeing spaces that they can attack.

Players should

### Activity 2:

There is a high chance that some of these players may not understand the positions and where they play so you may want to split the pitch into vertical thirds as a rough guide. Encourage your players to take risks during the games and be confident in 1v1s.

Players will also likely get drawn to the ball, so make sure you are consistent with reminding players what position they are playing and where the space is.

Sometimes I will tell the players to freeze and ask "Is this good or bad? Why? Can you now find a space where your teammate could pass to you?" I will then resume the game only allowing players to move after the player on the ball has decided to either pass to a teammate who is now in space or dribble with the ball.

Try not to do this too frequently as this can ruin the flow of the game.

Make sure to praise players who are moving into space but are not receiving the ball because shows they are aware of where spaces are to receive the ball but players are passing to them (not unintentionally but poor decision making).

An example sentence I would use would be " Player 1 you were in a fantastic position to receive the ball there, player 2 next make sure to lift your eyes to see players in space we can pass to."

### Activity 3:

Before you set players off you may want to show your group of players the positions on a whiteboard to help give them a reference as to where they should be playing.

Encourage them to ask their teammates first if they do know where they should be playing (a good way to check to understand) if not they ask the coach.

This may be painful to start off with but the more consistent you are with the 6v6 games the better it will become throughout the training program. again you may want to split the pitch into vertical thirds (If there is no width) or horizontal thirds (if there is no depth) as rough guidelines for the players to follow.

### Shared vocabulary:

- Eyes up
- Back yourself/ Be confident

# Week 1 Session 2

## The focus of the session:

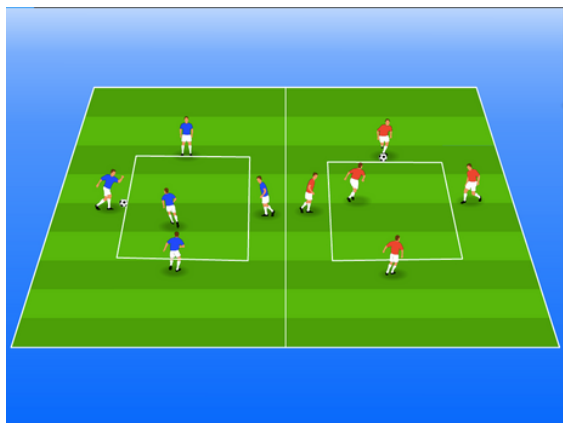
To start receiving the ball in an open body position with the back foot

## Warm-up activity

**Time:** 15 Minutes

**Set up:** Create two 5-yard by 5-yard areas

**How the drill works:** As your players arrive get them into rondo groups using the 5-yard by 5-yard areas. There will be one player in the middle who will start off as the defender with 4 to 5 players on the outside of the area. The player that loses the ball on the outside will take the place of the defender



## Activity 1

**Time:** 25 Minutes

**Set up:** Create two 5-yard by 5-yard areas and 2 teams of 6

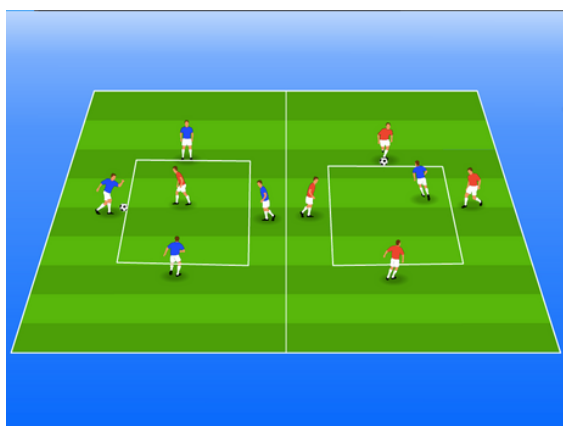
**How the drill works:** Divide your players into 2 teams of 6, with one player from each team becoming a defender in the opposing team's rondo. The defender will win the round for the team if they are able to make the most interceptions. The winning team overall will be the team that wins the most rounds. Each round will last 3-4 minutes to ensure all players have an opportunity to be the defender

### Coaching points:

- Ensure that your body is in an open position to receive the ball
- Pass and receive the ball using the inside of your foot
- Use your eyes to see where your teammates are and where the defender is to help make the best passing decision. Make sure you take your first touch away from the pressure and towards the space.

### Questions that can lead to coaching points/ check for understanding:

- What body position should you be in to receive the ball?
- What part of the foot should you use?
- What specific things should you be looking at when passing and receiving to help make you make the best decision?



## Activity 2

**Time:** 20 Minutes

**Set up:** Create two 20 yards by 30-yard areas with 2 goals opposite each other on each pitch. 3 tall cones to mark the half-life on the pitches. The opposing team must stand behind these cones while the team in possession takes their goal kick.

**How the drill works:** 3v3 small-sided games. Delegate a team captain to each team to put players into positions (LM, RM, CM). At half time select a new team captain to put players into different positions

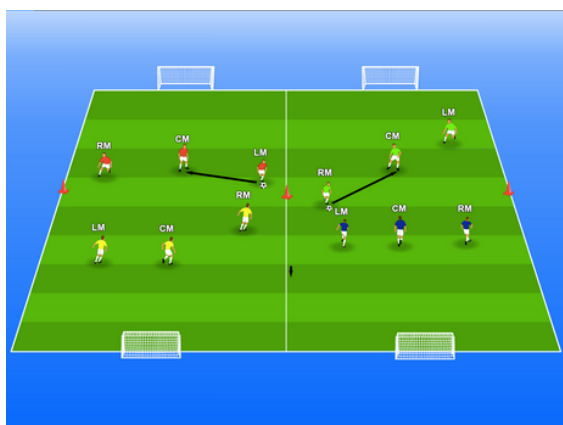
**Rule:** Using a whiteboard keep tally of which teams receive the ball in an open body position the most in the 3v3 game. The team that receives the ball the most during the game will get a bonus of 3 goals in their game. (if you have an assistant watch one game each, however, if you are on your own watch half of each game)

### Coaching points:

- Reinforce the previous coaching points earlier in the session
- Scan the area before you receive the ball so you know what you are going to do when you receive the ball. Your eyes should be looking, for space, teammates in space, and opposite defenders.
- If you do not have the ball, scan the area and find spaces where you can help support your teammate on the ball

### Questions that can lead to coaching points/ check for understanding:

- Use the previous questions to support understanding
- What should you be doing before you receive the ball? What should you specifically look at to help you?
- If you do not have the ball what should be trying to do? What should you be looking for to help you?



## Activity 3



**Time:** 30 minutes

**Set up:** Create a full-size 7v7 soccer field (40 yards by 60 yards) If you are unable to create a full-size field make a smaller field but try to keep the width as realistic as possible (40 yards) and play from the 40-yard line to 40-yard line.

**How the drill works:** This will be a 6v6 without goalkeepers and the regular rules of soccer (including throw-ins). Select team captains to choose the line-up and put players in positions (LD, RD, CM, LM, RM, ST). Choose a new captain for the second half who will put the team in different positions the second half.

**Rule:** For the first half of the game apply the same rule from the 3v3 small-sided game

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- Use prior questions to help check for understanding
- At half time ask teams to go away and discuss 1 thing they are doing well, 1 thing they need to improve on as a team, and how they can improve on it.

## Coaches Notes

### Warm-up:

Allow players to try and figure out the best way to control the ball and body position, however, encourage players to control the ball and pass the ball with the inside of the foot.

### Activity 1:

As it is a square you can say to your players to make sure that you are always facing the player opposite you to make sure they are staying in an open body position. The back foot is the foot furthest away from the ball. This can be a hard concept to get the hang of, alternatively you describe it as letting the ball roll across your body.

By allowing only the defender to gain points from intercepting the ball instead of stealing the ball from the opposition, you are allowing the possessing time to get their eyes up to make a decision as well as letting them focus more on their body position and the quality of passes.

### Activity 2:

Again, you may need to split the pitch into vertical thirds are rough guidelines for the players.

Really focus on the body position of the players.

If a player receives the ball in a closed body position highlight it to them. Here is a phrase you can use.

"You lost the ball because you received the pass in a closed body position and took your touch towards the pressure (where the defenders are), if you left the ball roll across your body you could have taken a touch away from the pressure and towards the space"

Equally the player may not have had their eyes up before they received the pass, so didn't know the space was there. (was it down to not scanning the area or not knowing how to receive the ball in an open body position).

You could even get the player to give you the answer through questioning or get another player to explain what happened.

### Activity 3:

Focus on the spacing and position of the players. Explain how if they stay in their positions they are more likely to receive the ball by moving away from the player in possession of the ball. When players are in space encourage them to shout and let their team know they are in space.

By giving the goals to the team with the players who receive the ball in the open body position the most at halftime, during the free play the teams may adjust their tactics consciously/ unconsciously to either hold on for the win or go for the win. This is something you can bring up to them before they have their own team talk.

### Shared vocabulary:

- Eyes up
- Receive the ball on the back foot
- Let the ball roll across your body
- Open body position

# 7v7 Game Management

## What is included in the 7v7 game management?

The idea of this game management section is to ensure that game days will run as smoothly as possible, allowing you to give all your attention to the players instead of worrying about the logistics and minor details of matchday!

Here are the all components included:

- The recommended formation with detailed explanations of the roles and responsibilities of each position
- A warm-up routine to get your players match ready
- Tips and tricks to help manage players while the game is going on
- Fun ways to empower your players
- Goal-keeper selection
- Playing time

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Coaching Manual](#)**



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