

Game: Avoid the Middle

Teams: 13 to 15 players

Slotars: 6

Pitch: Full

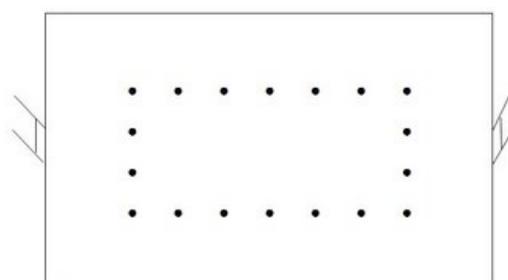
Cones: Lots

Rules: Normal rules apply with one exception

Set-up:

Use lots of flexible dome markers to line out a large rectangle in the middle of the field. The ends should be about 40m from the goals and the sides about 25m from the sidelines.

Two teams line out with a players in every position except a centre back and centre forward. For example teams of 13 a side would line out as: goalkeeper, 3 in the full back line, 2 half backs, 2 mid-fielders, 2 half forward and 3 in the full forward line.



The two teams play a full length game that is started with a puck out. The game follows normal rules but the central area is an exclusion zone that the ball cannot land in. The ball must be played either straight down the wing or diagonally from one side of the field to the other. It cannot land in the central area.

If the ball is played into the exclusion zone by a team one of their opponents retrieves it to restart play.

Players are not prevented from entering the exclusion zone and can cross it to move from one side of the pitch to the other or to take up another position. They cannot receive the ball while they are in the zone.

Rationale:

For defenders the aim is to encourage them to clear the ball to the wings and not out the middle. If they are going across the field they must strike a lengthy clearance. Puck out will also be to the wings.

When attacking the aim of the game is to encourage long and direct striking into the full forward line and to avoid having the ball drop in "no man's land" on the 45m line for a centre back to simply mop up by dropping off the centre forward. Players are encouraged to strike the ball straight down the line into the corner.

If they are going to strike the ball diagonally they are forced to make sure they clear the centre back (the exclusion zone) and ensure that the ball reaches the full forward line.

The lack of space in the middle also limits the effectiveness of soloing the ball.

