Small Sided Games: Maximize Play & MVPA!

If you want to increase student success & participation, provide more repetitions, and increase skill development and strategy application in game play then Small Sided Games (SSGs) are for you. SSGs are great as a warm-up, lead up activity or can be a stand alone lesson and allow you to use progressions, quickly assess all skill levels and check for understanding/application of concepts. This session takes the simple concept of ultimate-handball style games (with a variety of modifications, progressions, & equipment adaptations) and shows you how SSGs are an important best practice to use. This is stuff you can begin applying immediately!

Perceived Competence Sustains Participation! Set Students Up for Success

Small Sided Games Help:
- Increase Content Knowledge
- Promote Greater Inclusion
- Increase Success Rate
- Maximize Participation
- Use Assessment Efficiently
- Increase Teacher Feedback

PURPOSEFUL PROGRESSION:

1. **Warm-up and Qwik Fire Activities**
   - Use as a) lead-up game, b) warm-up activity, c) small-sided work up tournament (if you win you work up one court, if you lose you stay or rotate down a court), or play through a bracket. I use all three methods as a way to introduce rules a few at a time and build into a new game. It also allows for quality practice of the tactical strategies.

2. **3 on 3 Small Sided Games (SSGs):** After small-sided games, move into 2 team Coneball (or other game of choice with two teams) to allow students more skill building and add in the positions so students are now challenged to work together in a different fashion and develop new strategies for success. This helps prepare them for the ‘craziness’ of 4-corner Coneball.

3. **4 Corner Coneball (or other Game):** A crazy, fun challenge once class has progressed through steps 1 & 2 above and understands basic tactical strategies. Allows all to be active all the time, and can work well with larger class sizes.
**Activity: *Coneball Progression (Ultimate Series)*

*Use foam ball or disc for these Ultimate style games.*

**Focus/Concepts:**
Fitness: Health & Skill Related fitness to improve overall health.
Tactics/Strategy: How can I get open? How can I play defense?

**How it works:** Teams work together to knock over opponents cone as well as defend own cone.

**Standards:**
S1: motor skills & movement patterns (M24)
S3: knowledge/skills for health & fitness (M1, M7, M13, M17)
S4: responsible personal and social behavior (M1, M3, M4, M5, M7)
S5: values physical activity (M1, M2, M5, M6)

**Objectives:** Students will be able
Motor: to attempt to perform the correct pass for a given situation.
Cognitive: to perform select offense & defensive tactical strategy in game play.
Affective: to work cooperatively to achieve team success.

**Equipment:**
- 10 (+/-) cones - 2 per team.
- 1 foam ball or disc per team
- Wristbands or pinnies for teams.

**Set-up:**
- Set cones apart a certain distance (dependent upon age/skill/lesson).

**Safety:**
- Allow enough space in between these “mini-courts” or alleys for safe spacing (2-3+ yards/side).
- Can be done inside or outdoors, and on any surface.

**Player Code of Conduct:**
- Throw at cone NOT people/goalie.
- Maintain a safe playing space.
- Use proper defense & guarding (arms up and out, no swiping in).

**Resources:**
- Gopher Achieve Curriculum
- www.pechamps.weebly.com (for Jessica’s website resources).

*Note:* If using frisbee style game play, throw through hoop holder or into bucket, disco golf catcher for game play. Same ultimate style rules apply and use small teams.

**Team Play:**
- Use Passing ONLY to move ball and knock over the opponent’s cone (2 pts) or hit the cone (1 pt.).
- Positions: 1 Goalie around cone, 2 Attackers.
- Modifications: Allow 1-2 steps after catch. Or allow 1+/- bounce on the pass. (see others below)
- Options: continuous play, teams rotate out goalie after each score, scoring person becomes goalie

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**Small-Sided Games Set-up with Fitness Center Rotation:**

Teams of 3. 10 stations broken into 3 games & 4 fitness centers. Create rotation from game to fitness.

**Fitness Center 1**
Jump Ropes and Body Weight Exercises

**Fitness Center 2**
Strategy Session OR Rubrics

**Fitness Center 3**
Jump Ropes and Body Weight Exercises

**Fitness Center 4**
Strategy Session OR Rubrics

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**Fitness Center 5**
Jump Ropes and Body Weight Exercises
Warm-up:
*Pass - Catch - Tag - Find Open Space*
- Groups of 3. Each takes turn being “it” (the runner) to where they are trying NOT to be tagged. The other two are “Taggers” trying to tag runner with the ball.
- Taggers may not run with the ball. They may only pass the ball. They can move without the ball.
- This fun, fast-paced warm-up allows students to find open space, work on anticipation, communication, as well as quick, short passes.

Idea From Andrew Wymer, Virginia Teacher
2015 SHAPE Presentation

Warm-up or Full Activity:
*“Box” or Inside Out Ultimate Frisbee*
- Teams of 3. Two teams per playing Box. The inner box is the end zone. The outer box is the “Clearing Point.”
- Teams work through passing only (with frisbee or ball) to catch the disc inside of the inner square.
- Ultimate Frisbee rules apply: if disc is dropped, intercepted, etc. it is a turnover.
- Scoring is “Give & Go”: if you score, you keep possession of disc but must work it outside the learning zone before attempting to score again.
- This fast-paced game helps students improve their Ultimate game in a smaller space than traditional Ultimate game play. Same skills, smaller area. Lots of fun!

Idea Developed with University of Idaho
Student PETE Partnership

6-WAY FRISBEE (or use foam ball)
A new favorite from Ntl. TOY Charla Parker!

Challenge: Get your team’s set of frisbees into your goal (hoop).

Rules:
- **ONE AT A TIME:** A frisbee MUST be out of play or in the goal before starting another.
- **START AGAIN IF INCOMPLETE:** Dropped OR Intercepted frisbee MUST return to starting point and begin again.
- **ULTIMATE RULES:** No running with frisbee. No contact.

**TAKE TURNS:**
(Round 1) No defense. Everyone MUST touch each frisbee one time before going in goal.
The same person may not start a frisbee, nor finish the frisbee twice in a row.
(Round 2) Add defense. No longer necessary for all to touch disc or take turns.
2-Team Coneball

1. **Equipment:**
   - Jerseys/pinnies to designate teams of 6 – 8 players.
   - One foam, indoor soccer balls or 6 ½” to 8” SuperSkin ball or handball, or other ball of choice per game. Keep safety in mind as there are goalie’s guarding.
   - Goal/Target of Choice: 2 Oversized Orange Cones (approx. 18” tall parking cones).

2. **Setup:**
   - Choose the court setup of your choice (see the 3 options below).
   - Use teams of 6-8 players (7 is optimal).
   - Always have a goalie box designated by floor lines or cones for a safety area to keep players out of goalie’s space. We use the basketball key area.
   - To keep goalie from guarding cone too closely (standing right by it) put down floor tape in a large square around cone to designate a “cone box” that goalie must stay out of while guarding. Use a square of about 6 to 12-inches around the cone (depending on age level).

3. **How to play Basic “Coneball”:**
   - Start game with a “jump ball” at mid-court, or do a paper-rock-scissors challenge, or ask a health-related fitness trivia question or other creative avenue. Always have a new jumper for each jump ball.
   - Ball can move by throwing (and/or bounce passes depending on level of play).
   - If ball bounces more than what is allowed then it is a change of possession.
   - Scoring: Ball knocks cone over (2 points) or hits cone (1 point).
   - Keep one pivot foot while in possession of ball.
   - Shots must be taken from outside goalie box (whether that is the “key” or “3-point arch”). Any type of throw allowed unless using specific modifications.
   - Once a shot is taken, ball goes to other team unless in continuous play mode.
   - Goalie must stay outside of “cone box” to allow space between self and cone.
   - Positions: 1 Goalie, 2 Defenders (stay behind half court), 2 Forwards (stay past half court), 1-2 Rovers (can go anywhere). Can have more or less of any position depending on team sizes.
   - The rules are similar to Ultimate Frisbee in that if the pass is deflected or knocked down by the opposing team, then it is a turnover and any other team can pick up the ball and go.
   - Allow students access to all four sides of the goalie box to provide the opportunity to develop tactics in how to “work” the goalie and find an opportunity to score.

2-Team Coneball Floor Setup Options:

**Standard Gym Floor Setup:**  Large Cone in basketball key. Put down floor tape in a square around cone to designate a “box” that goalie stays out of so they are not directly against the cone while guarding. Or imaginary box can be used.

**Option #2 Setup:** Play two games simultaneously. Divide gym down middle with poly spots. The new goalie box here uses the side of the key, the baseline of the volleyball court lines and the three point arch (same as 4-corner coneball).

**Option #3 Setup:** Play two games simultaneously. Divide at half court. Create own goalie boxes with poly spots, cones, etc. Great setup for 8 teams: 4 play and 4 in Fitness Center.
What if I have more than 2 teams, a larger class, or a smaller facility?

*Activate the sidelines!*

1. **Live Sideline (original):** Put inactive team(s) on sideline. They must actively side-shuffle with play along sideline, not to interfere with play. Option: Teams in play can pass to sideline to help move ball down court. Sideline may not score unless you allow.

2. **Fitness Center Sideline:** Sideline teams can be in another area working on fitness activities. Utilize fitness stations or Exercise Spots as easy options. They do “x-amount” of reps and rotate to next spot. **Extensions:** if they reach the ped goal they get to re-enter.

3. **Strategy Sideline:** Sideline teams analyze play of other teams. Prompt with: “What’s working well?” or “What’s one thing they could do to improve their play?” etc.

**Health Center Sideline:** Students work on health-related content tasks, answering Skillastics/Gopher Nutrition Card questions, nutrition quiz-related games, journal, etc.

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**ASSESSMENTS & PEDOMETER POWER:**

1. **Pedometers** (Use them DAILY!). Quantifies participation. Give them Goal and watch participation levels increase. It will help them be a better teammate as well.
   
   a. **Daily Goals:** Students active 50% of class time. Actime & MVPA goal (at least one).
   
   b. **Self-assessments:** Students set a goal and try to reach it. Ask them to show thumbs up or down if they did. Can record in pedometer log, weekly sheet on wall, or log.
   
   c. **Teacher assessment:** Check some student’s steps during/at end of activity. Or have all line up at end of lesson and hold up pedometer. Go down line & do a quick check (+/-).
   
   d. **Meet or Beat Challenge:** Stop half-way through activity and check pedometers. Make it a goal to “meet or beat” that step count (essentially double that number-math concept).
   
   e. **Inter-activity Challenges:** For fun, determine winner by MVPA not just goals, thus putting all on an even playing field to move. OR for every “x” amount of MVPA an extra point is awarded. Gets a kid moving! Those goalies won’t stand around

2. **Use Downloadable Reports:** FitStep Pro has printouts you can give to your students and have them reflect upon their participation and compare to other activities.

3. **Quick checks** using “thumbs up, down, or middle” when asking some questions. “Who has at least 10 min. of Activity Time?...Who has 15? Gives a quick read for class participation.

4. **Strategy Sessions:** Teams identify and try a new strategy during a certain point in play, then reflect and share its success/weakness at end of lesson. Reinforces concepts, teamwork, etc.
Target & Goal Variations:

Note: Game can be cone ball or Ultimate “anything”…frisbee, Omnikin ball through hula hoop, etc.

Environment: Can be played in open field or gym floor.

Goals: Can implement goalie box (basketball key, or lay down floor sports, floor tape, etc.

Floor spots all around like LACROSSE style goal. And you can score from any side.

Use an Omnikin-Six Ball on a Tri-pod of cones.

Or physio-ball on upside down frisbee
UNLEASH THE CREATIVITY!
Modifications-Differentiation-Wacky Rules-Challenges!

**Differentiate Level of Play:**

**Beginner:**
- Start with a new jump ball after each score.
- After attempt to score a goal, regardless of outcome, the other team gets possession.
- Allow 1 to 2 bounces on the pass.

**Advanced:**
- Allow continuous play. Anyone can rebound a shot and continue play.
- After a score the goalie throws it in after setting back up the cone.
- Do not allow a bounce on the pass.

**Modifications:**
- Allow more or less bounces on the pass.
- Allow steps (1 or 2) while in possession of ball after the catch.
- Add or remove players or positions.
- No ‘out of bounds’. Play off the walls.
- You cannot score twice in a row.
- Require a sequence of passes:
  - Boy-girl-boy-girl to involve all genders
  - Everyone must touch ball before scoring.
  - Require a certain number of passes

**For any level:**
- If you score a goal, you go exchange places with your goalie. This allows for all to play and doesn’t hide a player or make someone be there that doesn’t want to be goalie. It mixes it up.
- During 3-on-3 SSGs: if you have teams of 4 but a small facility, then try playing 3-on-3 and whoever takes the shot rotates out with player waiting. Continuous rotation.
- Change type of target (size, height, etc.)

**Defense:**
- Use “jumping jack” guarding and/or stay 2 arms length away and cue to “keep arms up & out.”

**Other variations adapted to other sports that can be SSG or full court:**
- Frisbee OR Football: For the goal use a hulaloop standing up using two foam hoop holders, a disc-golf catcher, or tape up a target or outline a square on the wall. No goalie needed, just increase goalie box to force a good throw. Just put two cones out to make a line players can’t be past when attempting to score. *Good SSG for Ultimate Frisbee, Flickerball (see rules below) or PE Rugby.
- Soccer: Make the goal 2 cones, poly spots or pop-up nets. Goalie optional.
- Flickerball: Movement with ball can only be sideways or backwards (as many steps as you want or you can restrict number). Can only pass forward or to side. Scoring: Hit backboard (1 pt.), hit square on backboard (2 pts.), make a basket (3 pts.). Full court game starts with jump ball and you can use positions similar to 2-team coneball if you like. The SSG version would be scaled down to simple movement rules only.

**HoopBall:** One player from each team has a hulahoop in a triangle-shaped goalie box at the end of each court. Team score by getting the ball (Omnikin 6 preferred) through their hulahoop. Game becomes a cooperative effort. Goalie may move within the small triangle box and may move to allow the ball to go through hoop.

**5-in-a-Row:** No goalies. Teams must work cooperatively to complete five passes in a row. Players may not pass back to the person who just passed to them. Teams must count out loud or it is a turnover. Same rules for incomplete passes/ball movement as Ultimate.
Four-Corner Coneball
A game hybrid using Ultimate Frisbee, Basketball, Handball, and Soccer.
The 4-corner style promotes participation in all class sizes with minimal equipment!

**Equipment:**
- 4 colors of jerseys/pinnies to designate 4 teams of 6-8 players each.
- 2 to 4 foam, indoor soccer balls/handballs, or ball of choice.
- “Goal” Choice: 4 Oversized Orange Cones, or 4 Stability/Physio-balls (each placed on an upside down Frisbee for stability).
- IF keeping score (progress to this once students grasp the game) then see the scorekeeping suggestions at the end at the equipment for this.

**Set-up:**
- Each team sets up their own goal in a “corner section” of the basketball court (see diagram at end of this) and sets up their Goal.
- Show students the determined “goalie box” area to ensure safety of goalie. You could use floor dots or cones to designate the area. We use the court lines available: from the side of the key to the bottom of the volleyball court line to the 3 point arch and then baseline (forming a semi-circle/box). It was just easier than extra equipment on the floor.

**How to Play:**
- There are no “out of bounds”, the balls remain in play at all times.
- Begin play with a “jump ball” (depending on number of balls you want in play at one time you can modify how you want to start the game. Multiple “jump balls” or bounce in.
- No contact. Defense remains one-two arms distance away from offensive player; keeping hands up and out. No reaching/slapping in at ball. Or can do “jumping jack guarding”.
- Move the ball by passing only to try and score on any other of the three goals. Students may take two steps after a catch. There can be up to one bounce allowed on the pass if needed (or modify according to your levels—no bounce, two bounces).
- The rules are similar to Ultimate Frisbee in that if the pass is deflected or knocked down by the opposing team, then it is a turnover and any other team can pick up the ball and go. Or if a team has more than one bounce on a pass then it is an automatic turnover, etc.
- Students work together to score by hitting the cone (1 point) or knocking over the cone (2 points), or knocking the stability ball off the Frisbee.
- We allow students access to all four sides of the goalie box to provide the opportunity to develop tactics in how to “work” the goalie and find an opportunity to score.
- Once a goal is scored, the goalie takes the ball and passes it in to their team and play resumes. It is a continuous cycle; keeping the game very active.
- Position options: no positions (go anywhere) or split court (half of the team must remain on a half court at all times and can only score on that side.
- Start with two balls in play simultaneously, add a third once students get the game down.
4 Corner Coneball Continued…

**How to Keep Score:**
At first, we did not worry about keeping score because the game was continuous enough that students did not worry about this and enjoyed its fast-paced nature.

- Option #1: WRISTBANDS! Each goalie has wristbands. Gives one to whomever scores. Team try to collect one of each color or as many as possible within a certain time to win.

- Option #2: Any team who can score on all of the other three goals wins that round.

- Option #3: Keep a small crate, hoop or bucket against the side wall behind each goal area. In this bucket, each team begins with 5+ bean bags or floor dots (can use a different color for each team if you prefer). The scoring player goes behind that same goalie and takes a bean bag out of the bucket and runs it to their own team’s goalie bucket. Whoever has the most bean bags at a certain time wins (“steal the bacon style”).
  - *IF a team runs out of beanbags, shut down goal (lay cone down) and all players go try to score to bring beanbags back in to their box to re-open their goal.

**Game set up image**

![Game set up image](image)

**Small Sided Games Summary:**
If you want to increase student success & participation in game play, provide more repetitions, increase skill development and strategy application then Small Sided Games (SSGs) are for you. SSGs are great as a warm-up, lead up activity or can be a stand alone lesson and allow you to quickly assess all skill levels and check for understanding/application of concepts. This session takes the simple concept of ultimate-handball style games (with a variety of modifications, progressions, & equipment adaptations) and shows you how SSGs are an important best practice to use. This is stuff you can begin applying immediately!