



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

## Active After-school Communities

Helping kids and communities get active

# Playing for Life – AFL 9s



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## Disclaimer

This resource been designed for use with students aged 4 to 12. It assumes that each student is healthy and has no medical condition, disability, illness, impairment or other reason that may impact, limit or restrict their involvement in sport or other physical activity. A student should not be allowed to participate in an activity if any medical, physical or other factor indicates that they are not suited to that activity. Where there are any queries or concern about such matters, the consent of the student's parent or guardian should be obtained before allowing participation.

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# Introduction to AFL 9s



## Did you know?

- AFL 9s is a non-contact game where you touch an opposition player instead of tackling them
- The ball is moved by kicking, handballing and marking, just like the real game of Australian football
- There is no contact when going for a mark — the player in the drop zone has the priority
- The game is played between two teams of nine players (with unlimited interchange players)



AFL 9s is the Australian Football League's (AFL) official alternative and modified version of the game of Australian football. It has been developed to provide an opportunity for all Australian football enthusiasts, and those new to the game, to enjoy a match-play experience that has strong parallels with the traditional game.

AFL 9s enables people of all ages and ability levels to participate in male, female or mixed teams as determined by the individual competition. Importantly, this non-contact game is easier to play, less physically demanding and provides an environment whereby participation, enjoyment and safety are a priority.

# Introduction to AFL 9s

## Playing for Life — AFL 9s



The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program has partnered with the AFL to offer primary school-aged children an AFL experience through the AFL 9s.

This **Playing for Life — AFL 9s** coaching manual consists of seven sequential, game-based lessons designed to assist teachers and coaches with any level of understanding of AFL 9s to deliver fun, inclusive games to primary school-aged children of all abilities.

As the lessons progress, the games evolve to become more complex and similar to the sport itself. However, teachers and coaches are encouraged to match the game with the ability of the players and **CHANGE IT** as necessary.

Each lesson overview highlights three AFL 9s rules and associated skills so that by week six, coaches will know how to play AFL 9s. Organisation tips for the coach and suggested changes to games can also be found on each game card.

# Introduction to AFL 9s



## Tips for delivering Playing for Life — AFL 9s

- 1** Some games may not work with one group, whereas they could work really well with another. Be confident to CHANGE IT to suit the needs of the group or even replace the game completely.
- 2** Consistent routines or protocols are important in coaching. For example, start and stop activities with a set call, whistle or hand signal.
- 3** When the signal to stop play is given, instruct players to put the equipment down to ensure they can listen without distraction.
- 4** Keep instructions as brief as possible to ensure participants are quickly engaged in the activity.
- 5** Duplicate games and circuits to provide maximum participation.
- 6** Use games and quick activities to form groups and teams. Do not nominate two players as captains to choose teams — imagine if you were the last person picked!
- 7** Different team sizes, (for example: 4 v 3) can be used to equalise the effects of different player abilities and provide a challenge to the smaller team.
- 8** Encourage players to take on the role of goal umpire during games, so they can have fun indicating a goal or a behind using the hand signals.

# Introduction to AFL 9s



## Golden rules of safety

- 1** Ensure that the playing area is free of hazards and that it is a safe distance away from walls and fixed objects.
- 2** Ensure there is a safe distance between groups of participants.
- 3** During kicking activities, ensure all balls are kicked in the same direction.
- 4** Ensure all equipment is appropriate, safe and working correctly.
- 5** Ensure players are reminded to look out for others during tagging games.
- 6** Always provide clear instructions for the game and use of equipment.

- 7** If you observe dangerous play, stop the activity and explain what is appropriate and expected.
- 8** Coaches and program coordinators have a legal responsibility to provide a duty of care to participants in the AASC program. This includes ensuring that direct supervision by a nominated staff member is provided to players at all times.

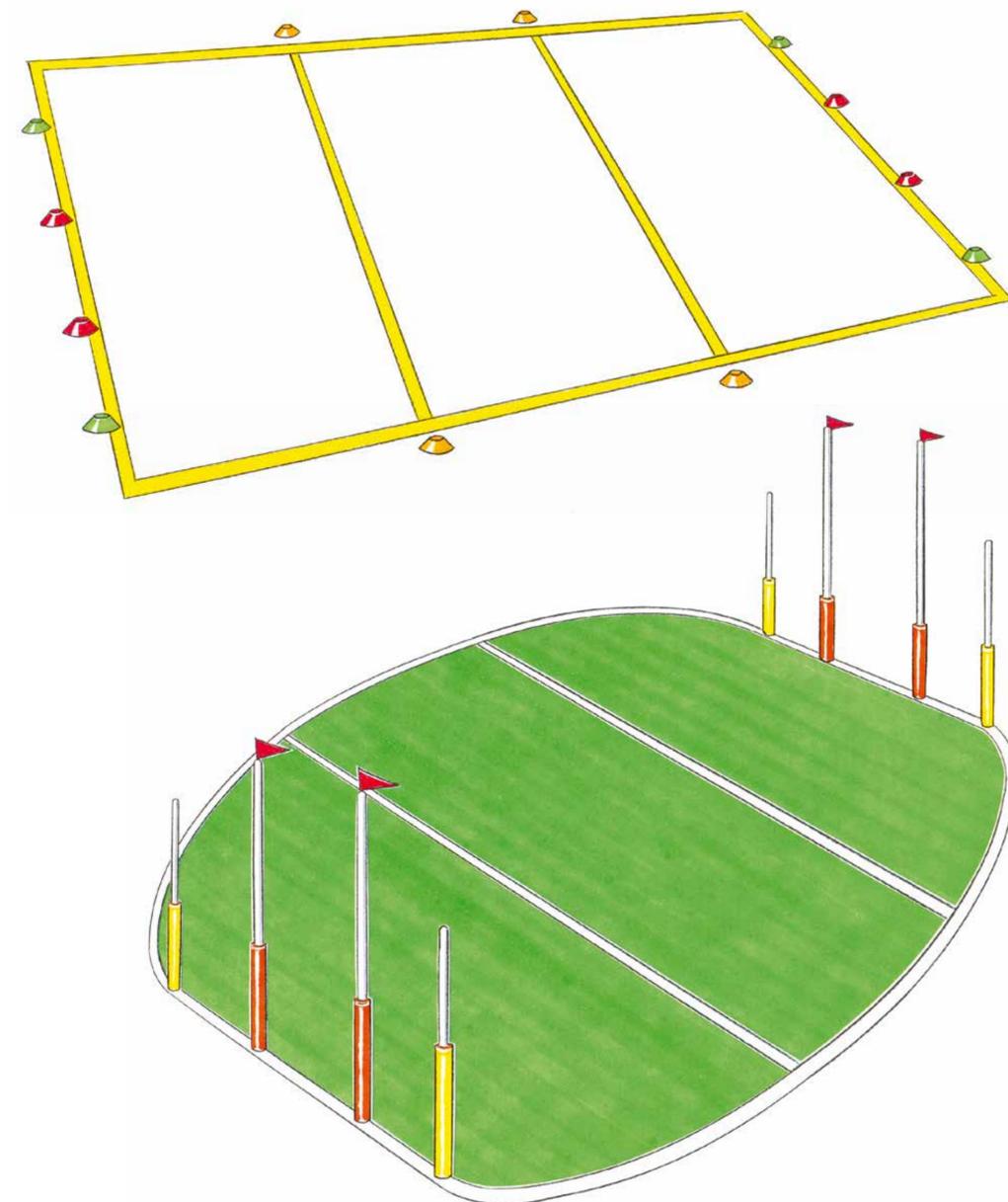


# Introduction to AFL 9s



## The playing field

- The playing field can be any size, but has maximum dimensions of 100 metres by 50 metres. Fields (indoor and outdoor) can be modified to suit player ability.
- The field is divided into three zones: a mid-zone and two scoring zones.
- Forwards are the only players permitted to score points and only from their team's scoring zone.
- Players must be in their designated zones (three players per zone) at the start of the match and when a goal has been scored, but once play starts, they can move anywhere they like.



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s



## AFL 9s game summary

### The aim of the game

The aim of the game is all about kicking goals. That means kicking the ball through the tall inner sticks (the goalposts) to score six points. If the ball goes between a goalpost and either of the smaller outer sticks, then a behind, worth one point, is scored. The team that finishes with the highest total of overall goals and behinds is the winner.

### How to keep score

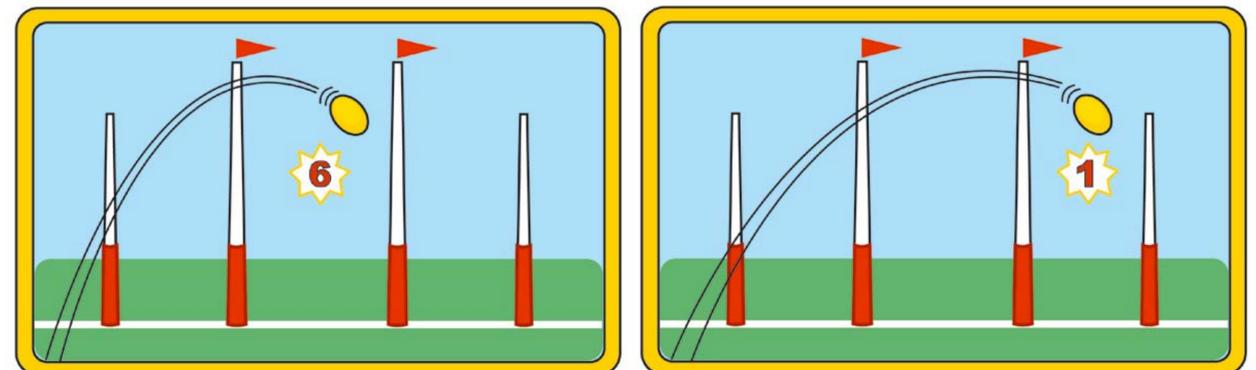
When it comes to reading or writing the scores, the goals go first, then the behinds, then the total points. For example a score of ten goals and six behinds is a total of 66 and is written: 10.6 (66).

### To start play

The game commences when a field umpire throws the ball up in the middle of the ground and two players try and tap it to a team-mate.

### Ball out of bounds

Play stops when the ball bounces over the boundary line.



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s



## Rules summary

### Start of play and zones

At the start of each half and after a goal has been scored, play is started via a ball-up between two centre players in the middle zone; players must stand toe to toe in the ball-up (no run up is allowed).

Teams consist of three backs, three centres and three forwards. Forwards can be distinguished by wristbands or arm bands.

Players must be in their zones at the start of the match and after a goal has been scored. Once the game is in progress, players can move freely across all three zones.

The ball must be touched in the middle zone. It cannot be kicked from the back zone directly into the forward zone. If this occurs, a free kick will be awarded to the opposition at the point at which the ball entered the scoring zone.



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s



## Rules summary

### Scoring

Forwards are the only players permitted to score points and only from their team's scoring zone. In mixed teams, females are awarded nine points for a goal.

### Kick-in

If a behind (one point) is scored the ball is required to be kicked back into play from between the goals by a defender.

When the ball goes out of bounds (ball completely over the line) by hand or foot, the nearest opponent shall kick the ball back into play.

### Kicking off the ground

A player is not permitted to deliberately kick the ball off the ground.

### Possession and ball transition

An opposing player is not permitted to touch a player unless the player is in possession of the ball.

'Play on' will be called if no prior opportunity has been given to the player in possession even if they have been touched by an opposing player.

If a player that is not a designated forward has a shot on goal, a free kick will be awarded to the opposition team at the point in which the shot was taken.

# Playing for Life — AFL 9s



## Rules summary

### A mark

A mark is awarded irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled.

There is to be absolutely no contact in a marking contest. The player in the front position has every opportunity to mark the ball and in many cases, the umpire can nominate which player has right of way to mark the ball.

When a player is awarded a mark or free kick, an opposing player may stand at the position on the playing surface where the mark or free kick was awarded know as 'the mark'.

### The bounce

A player in possession can only bounce the ball once before it has to be disposed of to another player or a goal attempted.



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s



## AFL 9s basic skills

### Kicking

Kicking is the most important skill in AFL 9s. The easiest and most common kick is the drop punt. Other types of kicks include: the banana kick and the torpedo kick.

### The drop punt

A correct kick spins backward and provides distance and accuracy.



### The grip

The fingers are spread evenly along each side of the ball, with thumbs extending to the lacing. The grip is the same for both left and right-foot kickers.



### The release

The ball is guided down and kicked on the bottom point, along the lower laces of the shoe. It should spin in a backward end-over-end fashion.

# Playing for Life — AFL 9s



## AFL 9s basic skills

### A handball

A handball involves holding the football in one hand and disposing of it by hitting it with the clenched fist of the other hand. In today's modern game, the handball is a major attacking weapon as players run the ball from defence into attack.

### Main teaching points

- 1** The ball must rest on the platform hand and be hit with a clenched fist.
- 2** Players should have their eyes on the ball.
- 3** The punching fist is formed by placing the thumb outside, not inside the fingers.
- 4** The stance is nearly side on to allow the punching arm to swing through freely. The knees and the punching arm should be slightly bent. For a right-handed handball, the left foot is forward and vice versa for left-handed handball.
- 5** After contact is made with the ball, the fist remains on the platform hand. 'Catch the fist' is a good cue for coaches to use when teaching handball.



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s



## AFL 9s basic skills

### A mark

A mark is taken when a player catches or takes control of the football after it has been kicked by another player. The ball must not touch the ground or be touched by another player during the period when it is in the air.

In AFL 9s, a mark is taken irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled and there is no contact between players. When a player is awarded a mark or free kick, an opposing player may stand at the position on the playing surface where the mark or free kick was awarded, known as ‘the mark’.

### Main teaching points

- 1** Eyes must be focused on the ball all the way from the player’s shoe to their hands.
- 2** The player’s body should be positioned in line with the flight of the ball. The player should move forward to meet the ball, never wait for it to come to them.



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s



## AFL 9s basic skills

### Bouncing the ball

A player in possession of the ball must bounce it or touch it on the ground after 15 metres. In AFL 9s, a player in possession of the ball can only bounce or touch it on the ground once before it has to be passed to another player or before a goal is attempted (if they are a forward).

### Main teaching points:

- 1** The ball is held slightly on top by the bouncing hand.
- 2** The ball is pushed down with one hand.
- 3** The ball strikes the ground at an angle of about 45 degrees.
- 4** The ball is bounced far enough in front of the body so that it will bounce into the player's hands as the player runs.



# Playing for Life — what is it?



## Key concepts

Playing for Life is an approach to coaching that uses games rather than drills to introduce the skills and tactics of the particular sport or structured physical activity being delivered. Each session is designed purposefully, so that the games progressively introduce and develop the particular skill that is the focus of the session.

### The game is the focus

Players develop sporting skills and tactics by playing fun games rather than traditional drills.

### Coach is a facilitator

The coach sets challenges for the players to find solutions through games rather than instructing players on how to perform a skill.

### Player role modelling

Coaches use players during the game to demonstrate good technique and skilful play.

### Discrete coaching

Allows players needing extra assistance to be discretely coached on the side in an unobtrusive way while the game is in progress.

### Ask the players

Questioning players is a valuable strategy to engage the students in changing the activity or providing feedback on whether the game is achieving desired outcomes.

# Playing for Life — what is it?



## CHANGE IT

Vary any one or more of the following game elements to maximise participation and better meet student needs and game objectives.

It is more important to remember the concept of CHANGE IT than to remember what each letter represents

If it's not working ...  
CHANGE IT!!

C	Coaching style	I	Inclusion
H	How you score/win	T	Time
A	Area		
N	Numbers		
G	Game rules		
E	Equipment		

# Overview of lessons

LESSONS	LESSON 1	LESSON 2	LESSON 3	LESSON 4	LESSON 5	LESSON 6	LESSON 7
<b>SKILL FOCUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ball handling</li> <li>• Kicking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handballing</li> <li>• Kicking</li> <li>• Evasion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kicking</li> <li>• Marking</li> <li>• Evasion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kicking</li> <li>• Marking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handballing</li> <li>• Evasion</li> <li>• AFL 9s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL 9s match play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL 9s match play</li> </ul>
<b>START OUT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach says</li> <li>• Mirror, mirror</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruckman's treasure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner tag</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharks and islands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stork tag</li> <li>• Names</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here! There! Nowhere!</li> <li>• Mirror, mirror</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fox and geese</li> <li>• Form a team</li> </ul>
<b>GET INTO IT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super boot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pairs passing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick 2 kick</li> <li>• Interceptor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around the world</li> <li>• Space kick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre square step</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round the bend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL 9s (First half)</li> <li>• Half-time huddle</li> </ul>
<b>AFL 9s — PLAY IT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick 4 and go</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round the bend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coast to coast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coast to coast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL 9s (Fixed zones)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL 9s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL 9s (Second half)</li> </ul>
<b>FINISH UP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put it away!</li> <li>• What did you learn?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Names</li> <li>• What did you learn?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's see it</li> <li>• What did you like?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you like?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's ahead?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where to from here?</li> </ul>

\*The skill of bouncing is incorporated in the CHANGE IT! sections in many games throughout the Playing for Life – AFL 9s manual

# Playing for Life — AFL 9s

# 1

## SKILL FOCUS

1. Ball handling
2. Kicking

## SAFETY

Refer to 'Golden rules of safety' section of this manual

## AREA

Suitable for indoor gym or outdoor area 30 metres by 30 metres

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per player
- 1 set of marker cones (30)
- 1 stopwatch or clock

## ACTIVITIES

- Coach says 5 minutes
- Mirror, mirror 5 minutes
- Super boot 15 minutes
- Kick 4 and go 25 minutes
- Put it away! 5 minutes
- What did you learn? 5 minutes



## AFL 9s RULES

- 1 Only forwards can kick for goal from within the scoring zone.
- 2 A free kick is awarded when the umpire believes a player has been contacted while taking a mark.
- 3 A player who is moving while in possession of the ball must bounce the ball or touch it on the ground after 15 metres. A player in possession can only do this once before the ball has to be passed to another player or a shot on goal is attempted.

[RETURN TO LESSON OVERVIEW](#)

# Coach says

Using the rules of 'Simon says ...', the coach calls out commands for players to perform various ball handling skills and fundamental AFL 9s motor skills.

## LESSON 1

- START OUT
- 5 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

- Warm-up
- Introduction to basic AFL 9s skills and terminology

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per player

## What to do:

- Each player has a football.
- When the coach calls out, 'Coach says ...' with an action, players demonstrate the action. For example, the player;
  - spins the ball backward and catches it
  - handballs to themselves
  - bounces the ball or touches it to the ground
  - kicks the ball to themselves.
- Players freeze on the spot if the coach calls an action without saying, 'Coach says ...' first.
- Players are not eliminated.



## Tips

- To form pairs required for the next activity, call 'Coach says find someone about the same size as you'.

## Change it

- Players run in a designated direction and perform the actions called.
- Play in pairs or small groups depending on the number of players available.

# Mirror, mirror

Players face their partner. The leader performs a series of movements with a football while the player who is the 'mirror' copies the skills like a reflection.

## LESSON 1

- START OUT
- 5 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

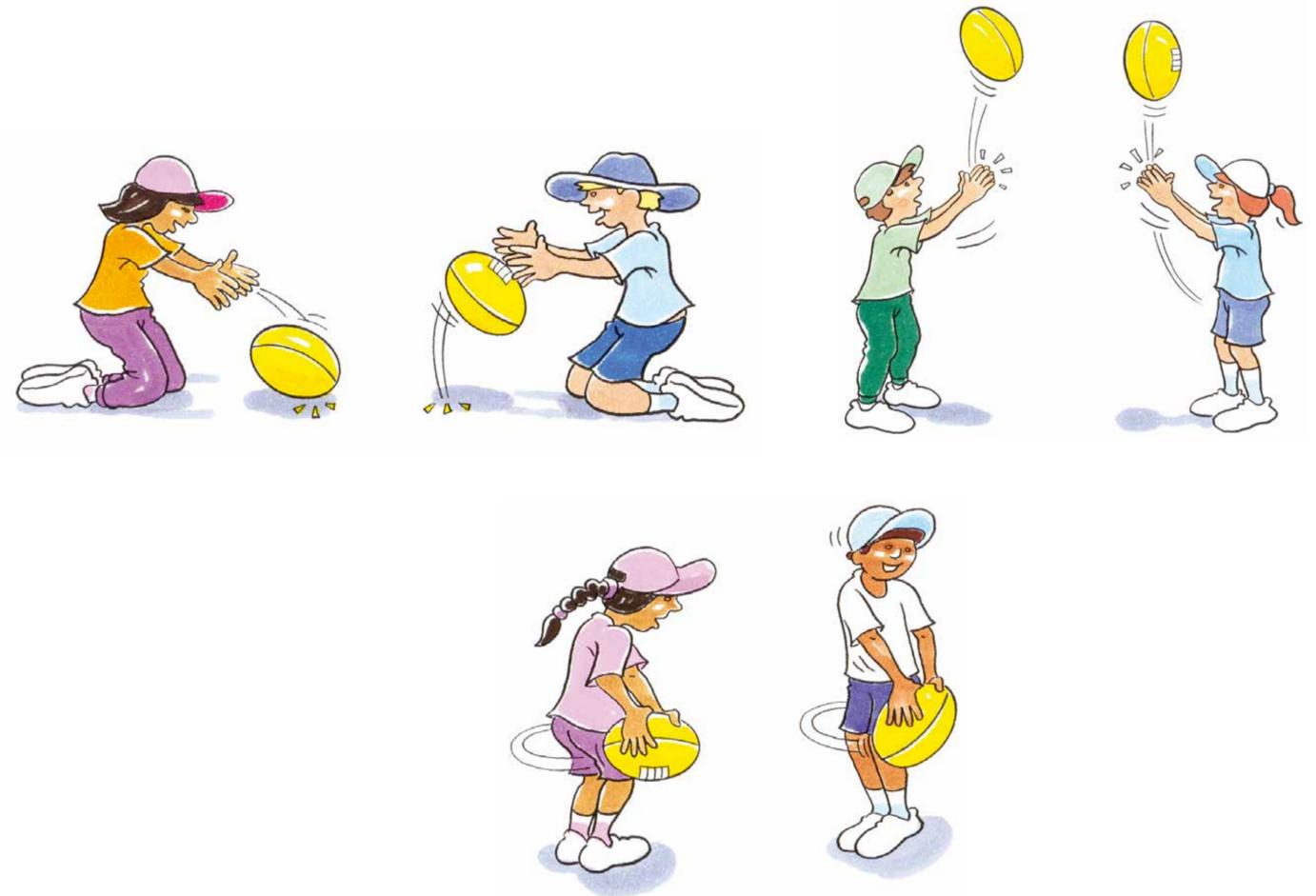
- Ball handling

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per player; 1 stopwatch or clock

## What to do:

- Form pairs with one ball per player.
- Leaders have 30 seconds to move the ball while their partner mirrors the actions.
- After 30 seconds, players reverse roles and repeat the activity.



## Tips

- Instruct players to use ball actions from the 'Coach says ...' game.

## Change it

- Play in groups of three or more with one player as the leader and all other players the mirror.

# Super boot

Players score points by kicking over lines or at targets in a defined area. In AFL 9s, a goal is worth six points and a 'behind' is worth one point. Play in groups of 4 to 6.

## LESSON 1

- GET INTO IT
- 15 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

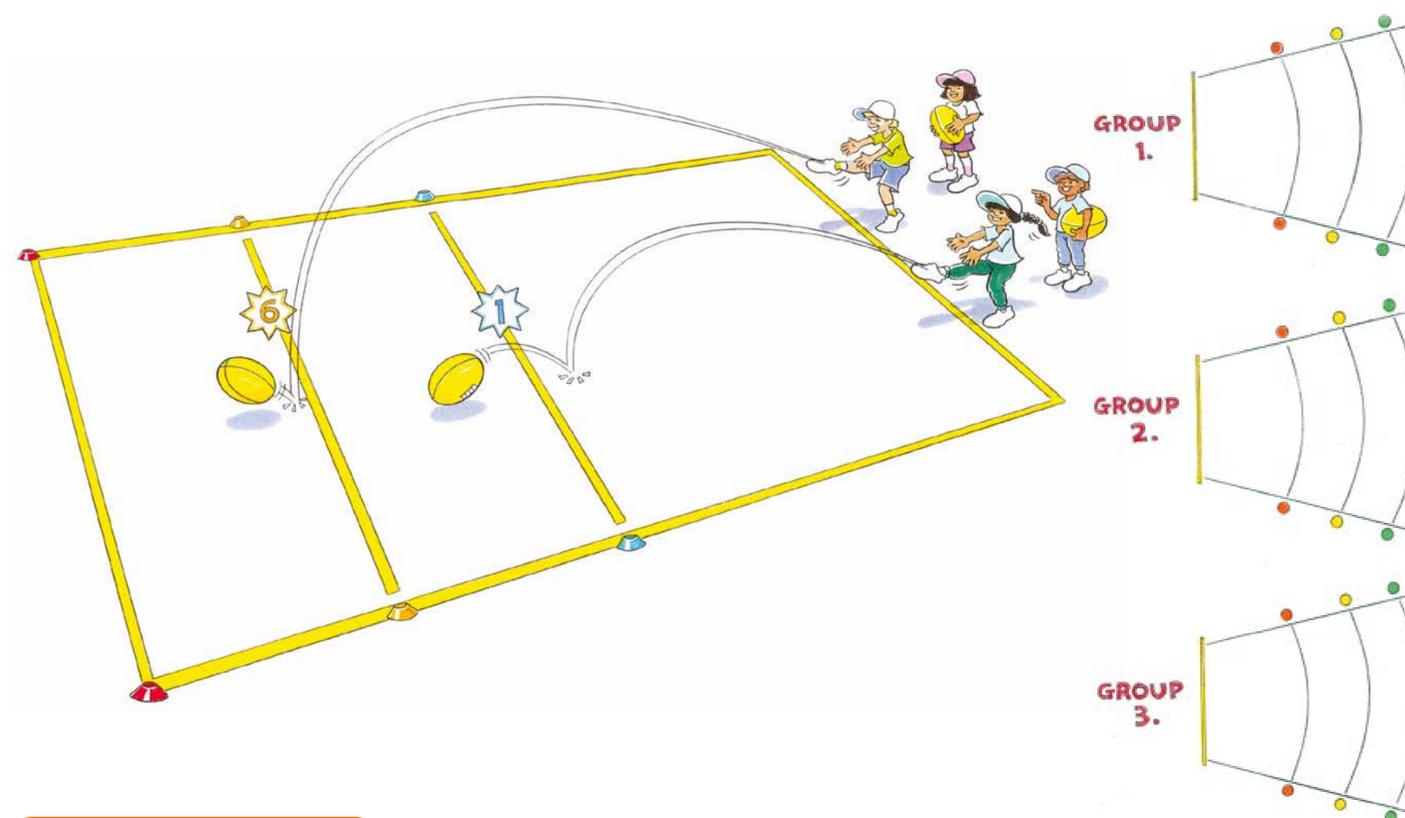
- Kicking: Drop punt

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football ball per player; marker cones

## What to do:

- On the coach's signal, one or two players in each group kick the ball into the playing area.
- Players score their kick based on which line it lands over.
- The remaining players in each group kick their balls and note their score.
- In mixed ability groups, more able players must kick further to achieve the same points as other players.
- Balls are retrieved on the coach's signal and the next round begins after all team members are behind the starting line.



## Tips

- Encourage players to hold the ball with the bottom point ready to drop onto the top of the shoe laces.
- Encourage players to extend their foot by pointing their toes at a target.
- Ensure a 'hard foot' surface for the ball to impact with.

## Change it

- Encourage players to start five metres behind the line and kick on the run.
- Groups compete against each other to achieve the highest score.

# Kick 4 and go

A 'fullback' kicks four consecutive balls into the field and then runs between cones or markers as many times as possible to score points. When fielders have returned all four balls to the goal square, they call 'STOP!' The 'fullback' totals their score then becomes a fielder and a new fullback is nominated to have a turn. Play in groups of 6 to 10.

## LESSON 1

- PLAY IT
- 25 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

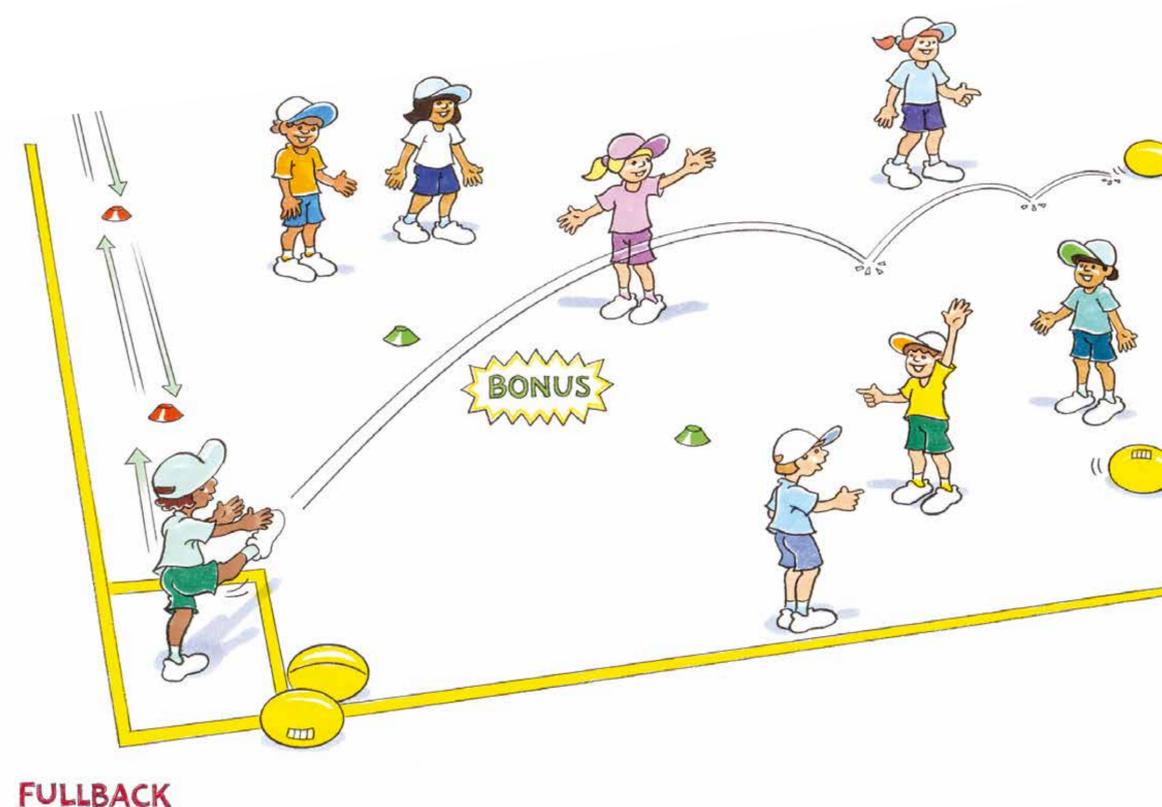
- Kicking

## EQUIPMENT

- Marker cones; 4 footballs per group

## What to do:

- Organise players into groups of 6 to 10 per game.
- Nominate a 'fullback' to kick four balls as fast as they can into the playing area.
- When the last ball is kicked, the fullback runs between the markers to score points.
- All other players are on the field and must collect the balls and return them to the goal square quickly.
- Once players have returned all balls to the goal square, they call 'STOP!'.
- The fullback totals their points for runs completed.
- Players then rotate positions until all have had a turn as the fullback.



## Tips

- Ensure fielders are a safe distance from the kicking fullback and that they remain still until all balls are kicked into the field.

## Change it

- Add bonus goals inside the field for the fullback to aim at.
- Fielders return gathered balls to the goal square using different methods. Example: Bouncing or touching the ball on the ground once. Example: Handball to another player who then returns.

# Put it away!

Players use various actions to gather up the equipment and store it properly.

## LESSON 1

- FINISH UP
- 5 MINUTES

## What to do:

On the coach's signal players can:

- place a ball between their feet and jump towards the storage bag
- handball the ball to each other to the storage bag
- walk and bounce the ball before returning it to the storage bag.



# What did you learn?

The coach asks questions to reinforce the key skills or tactical points.

## LESSON 1

- FINISH UP
- 5 MINUTES

### Coach asks:

- ‘Who can touch the part of their foot that is best to contact the ball with for a kick?’
- ‘What does it mean to kick the ball with a ‘hard foot’?’
- ‘Who can show me how to bounce the football on the ground?’
- ‘How many points is a goal worth in AFL 9s?’
- ‘Who can tell me what a ‘behind’ is and how many points it is worth in AFL 9s?’



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s

# 2

## SKILL FOCUS

1. Handballing
2. Kicking
3. Evasion

## SAFETY

Refer to 'Golden rules of safety' section of this manual

## AREA

Suitable for indoor gym or outdoor area 30 metres by 30 metres

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 set of marker cones (30)
- 1 football per player
- 3 bibs or sashes

## ACTIVITIES

- Ruckman's treasure 15 minutes
- Pairs passing 15 minutes
- Round the bend 15 minutes
- Names 10 minutes
- What did you learn? 5 minutes



## AFL 9s RULES

- 1 An opposing player is not permitted to touch another player unless they are in possession of the ball.
- 2 The ball must be disposed of by a handball or a kick. Players are not permitted to throw or hand the ball to another player or a free kick will be awarded to the opposing player.
- 3 If in the umpire's opinion, a player has not had an opportunity to dispose of the ball before being tagged, the umpire can call, 'Play on!' and the player may have two steps or two seconds to dispose of the ball to a team-mate.

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# Ruckman's treasure

Teams try to collect the most balls from the ruckman's treasure before 'Time!' is called or before they are tagged by the ruckman who is protecting the treasure.

## LESSON 2

- START OUT
- 15 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

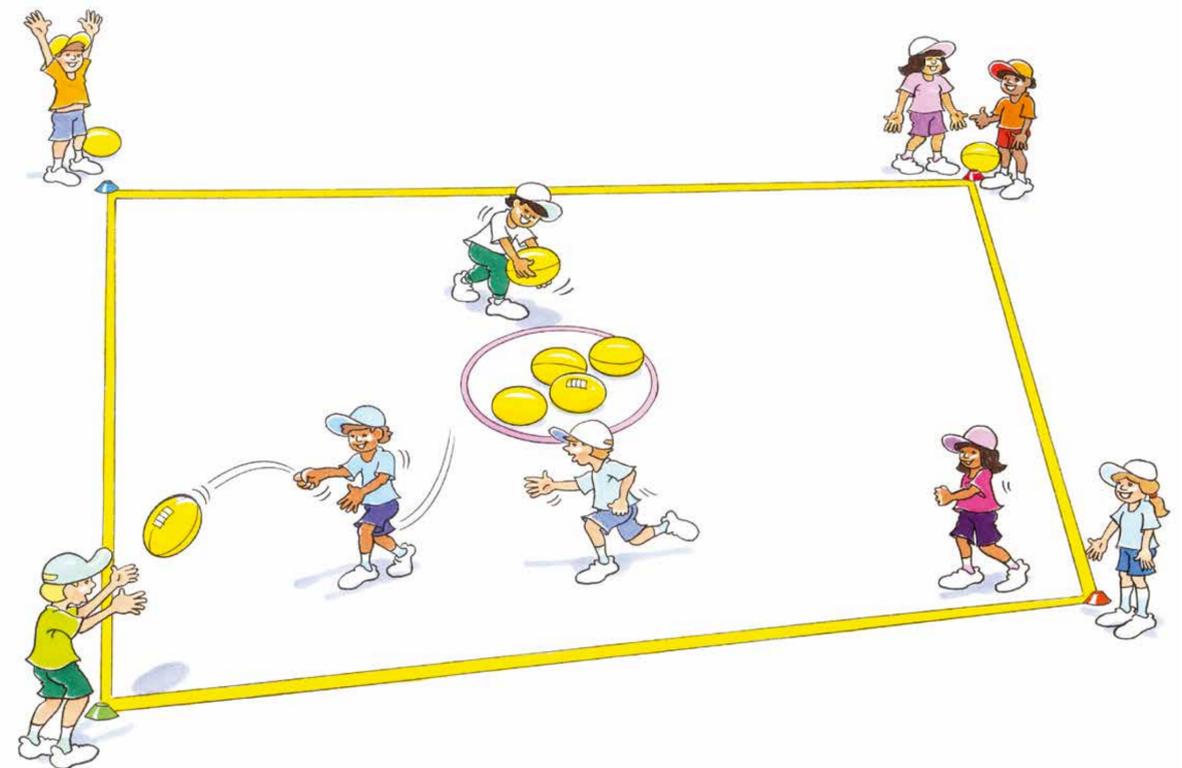
- Handball
- Evasion

## EQUIPMENT

- 20 footballs, as the ruckman's treasure; 1 bib or sash to identify the ruckman; marker cones; 1 large hoop (optional)

## What to do:

- Organise players into four groups.
- An additional player is designated as the ruckman to guard the treasure.
- The ruckman roams the space around the treasure.
- All balls are placed in the centre of the playing area.
- When the coach calls 'Go!', **one player** from each group attempts to steal **one ball** at a time and handball it back to their group.
- Players **tagged** by the ruckman must stop and return their ball to the ruckman's treasure.
- When all balls in the centre are gone, players may attempt to take a ball from other groups, but must return it to the centre if tagged by the ruckman.



## Tips

- Players should be side on when collecting a ball from the ruckman's treasure to avoid head clashes with other players.
- In AFL 9s, a ruckman is a player who contests ball-ups and boundary throw-ins around the ground.

## Change it

- Play without a ruckman first.
- The coach can be the ruckman.

# Pairs passing

Players form pairs. On the coach's signal they handball a football to each other three times between a gate then move to other gates to repeat the activity – continue for 30 seconds. Pairs score a point for each gate they handball a ball through.

## LESSON 2

- GET INTO IT
- 15 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

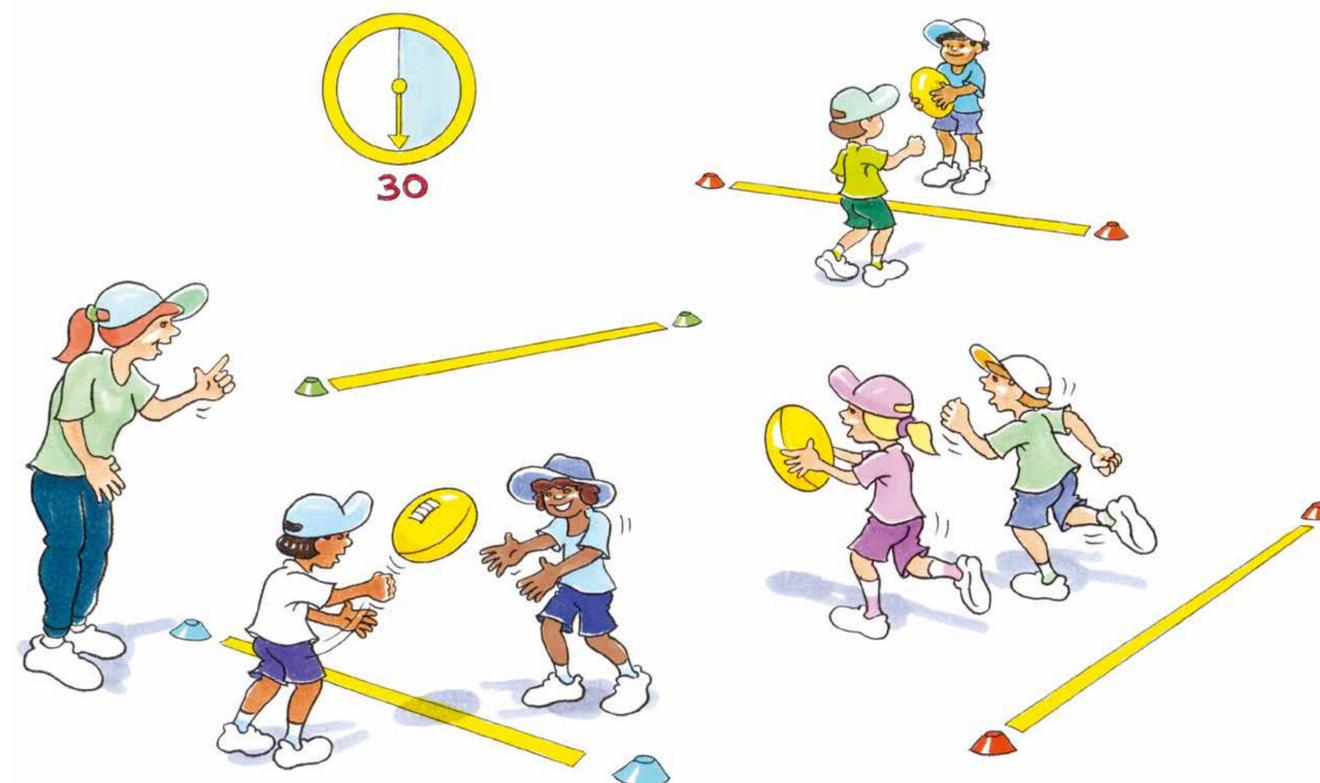
- Handball

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per pair; 2 marker cones per pair to define gates; 1 stopwatch or clock

## What to do:

- In pairs, players set up gates within the playing area.
- On the coach's signal, pairs handball three times to each other, then run with the ball to a free gate and repeat the activity.
- Continue for 30 seconds until the coach calls, 'STOP!'
- The coach asks 'How many gates can your pair handball between in 30 seconds?'
- Repeat the activity with pairs trying to beat their own score.



## Tips

- When handballing, look to make contact with a closed fist to the bottom part of the ball. Try to get the ball to spin backward.

## Change it

- After three handballs, the player without the ball moves to find another player waiting at a gate with a ball.
- The coach can nominate one or more players to intercept other pairs' balls. The interceptors must be moving for the intercept to count. No body contact.

# Round the bend

On the coach's signal, two attackers with a ball and one defender enter the playing area from opposite ends. The attacking pair attempt to score points by progressing the ball down the field without losing possession of the ball. Play in groups of 8 to 10.

## LESSON 2

- PLAY IT
- 20 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

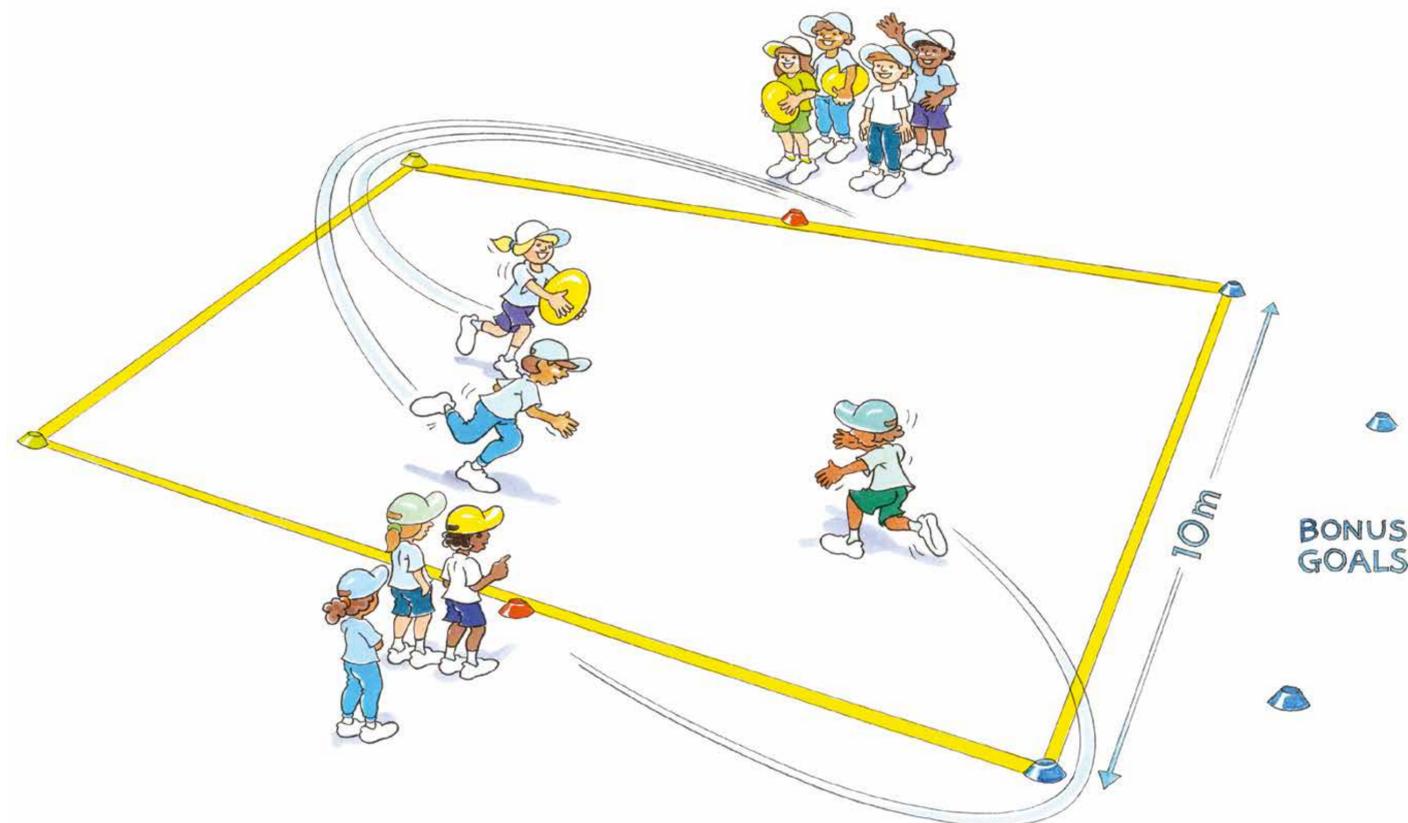
- Evasion
- Handballing

## EQUIPMENT

- 4 to 6 footballs; 1 marker cone set

## What to do:

- Organise players into attackers and defenders on opposite sides of the playing area.
- Attackers are in pairs with one football between them.
- On the coach's signal, two attackers and one defender enter from opposite ends of the playing area.
- The defender attempts to tag the player in possession of the ball or intercept the ball to end the attacking players' turn.
- The aim for the attacking players is to carry the ball over the goal line or handball it through the bonus goals.
- Points are awarded to the attacking players as follows:
  - Six points = handball the ball through the bonus goals
  - One point = carry the ball over the goal line.



## Tips

- Call 'Time out!' for attacking and defending players to huddle and create strategies.
- Players observing can assist the coach in deciding how many points were made by the attackers or whether they were tagged by the defender.

## Change it

- Play different combinations (for example, four attackers and two defenders).
- Award one point for every handball or kick made by the attackers during the playing field.

# Names

Players in a circle handball a football to one another. An interceptor inside the circle tries to intercept the ball. Play in groups of 6 to 10.

## LESSON 2

- FINISH UP
- 10 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

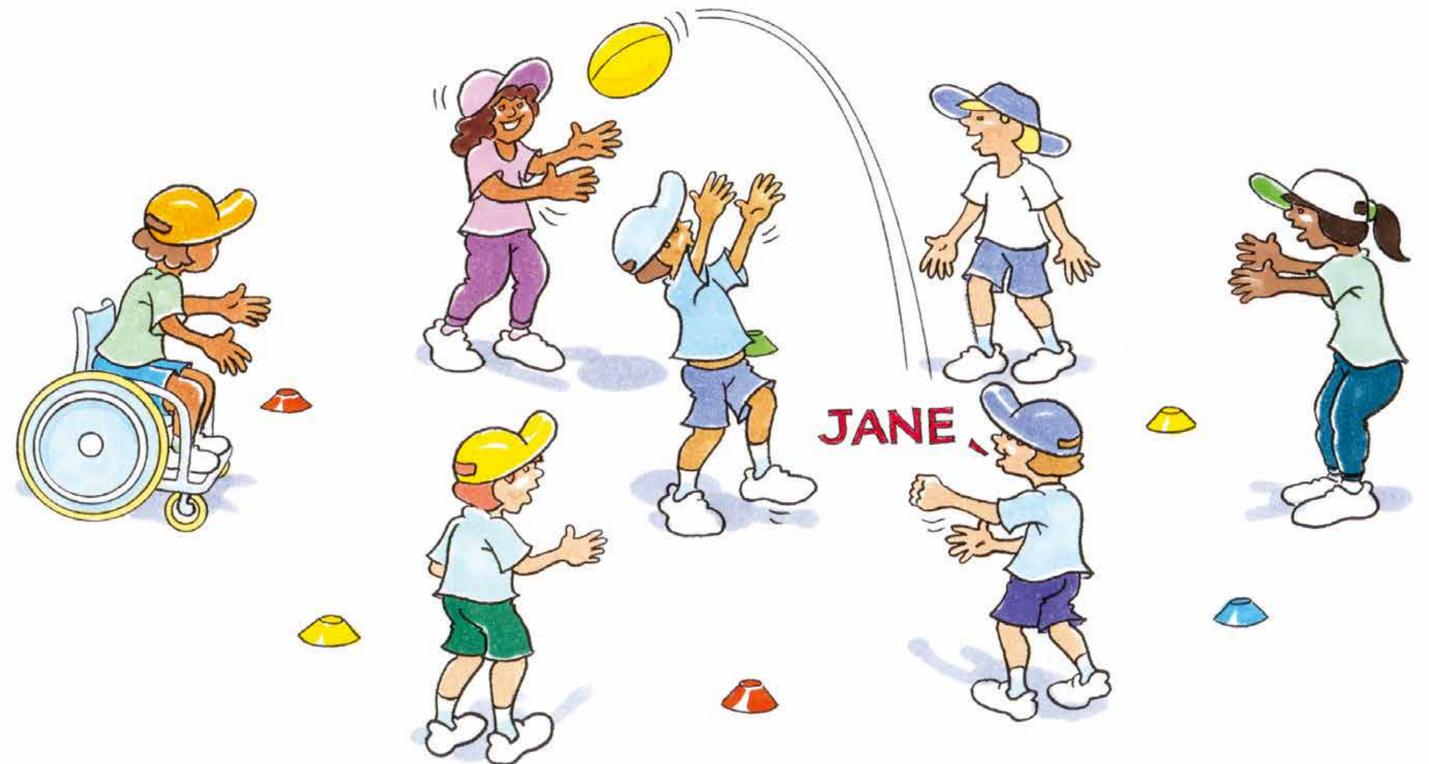
- Handballing
- Communication

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per game/circle; optional: 6 to 10 marker cones to define a circle for younger players

## What to do:

- Form circles with one ball per group.
- One player starts as the interceptor in the middle.
- Before the ball is passed everyone takes a turn to call out their own name. (Hint: Start with the person holding the ball and finish with the interceptor.)
- On the coach's call the player with the ball calls out another player's name (the receiver) and handballs the ball to that player.
- If the ball is intercepted, the player who touched the ball last changes places with the interceptor.



## Tips

- Ensure players have their hands up ready to receive the ball.
- Remind players of the importance in AFL 9s games of calling for the football and calling a player to send the ball to.

## Change it

- Add a second ball.
- Play with no interceptor.
- Make the circle larger and change the skill to a kick.

# What did you learn?

The coach asks questions to reinforce the key skills or tactical points.

## LESSON 2

- FINISH UP
- 5 MINUTES

### Coach asks:

- 'How do you hold the ball on your hand before you handball to someone?'
- 'How do you clench your fist when performing a handball?'
- 'Everyone show me how you 'catch the fist' after handballing?'



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s

# 3

## SKILL FOCUS

1. Kicking
2. Marking
3. Evasion

## ttSAFETY

Refer to 'Golden rules of safety' section of this manual

## AREA

Suitable for indoor gym or outdoor area 30 metres by 30 metres

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per player
- 1 set of marker cones (30)
- 6 to 12 bibs or sashes

## ACTIVITIES

- Partner tag 5 minutes
- Kick 2 kick 10 minutes
- Interceptor 15 minutes
- Coast to coast 20 minutes
- Let's see it 5 minutes
- What did you like? 5 minutes



## AFL 9s RULES

- 1 Nine players take the field at a time with unlimited interchange opportunities. Teams consist of three backs, three centres and three forwards.
- 2 A mark is taken if, in the opinion of the umpire, a player catches or takes control of the football after it has been kicked by another player, irrespective of the distance travelled.
- 3 The ball must be touched in the middle zone. It cannot be kicked from the back zone directly into the forward zone. If this occurs, a free kick will be awarded to the opposition at the point where the ball entered the scoring zone.

[RETURN TO LESSON OVERVIEW](#)

# Partner tag

Players work in pairs. On a signal from the coach, one player in each pair – (the taggers), count to five then try to tag their partners who are running with the ball. When tagged, players change roles and continue.

## LESSON 3

- START OUT
- 5 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

- Warm-up and running with the ball
- Evasion

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per pair

## What to do:

- Form pairs of similar ability.
- Players without the ball start as the taggers. On the coach's signal, taggers count to five to give their partners time to get away, then they try to tag them.
- Players with the footballs try to avoid being tagged.
- When tagged, partners change roles and continue play.



## Tips

- Remind players to look ahead when running with the football and to watch out for others.

## Change it

- Players being chased must bounce the ball or touch it on the ground once.

# Kick 2 kick

In pairs, players take it in turns to kick a football, trying to make it land in their partner's marked area.

## LESSON 3

- GET INTO IT
- 10 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

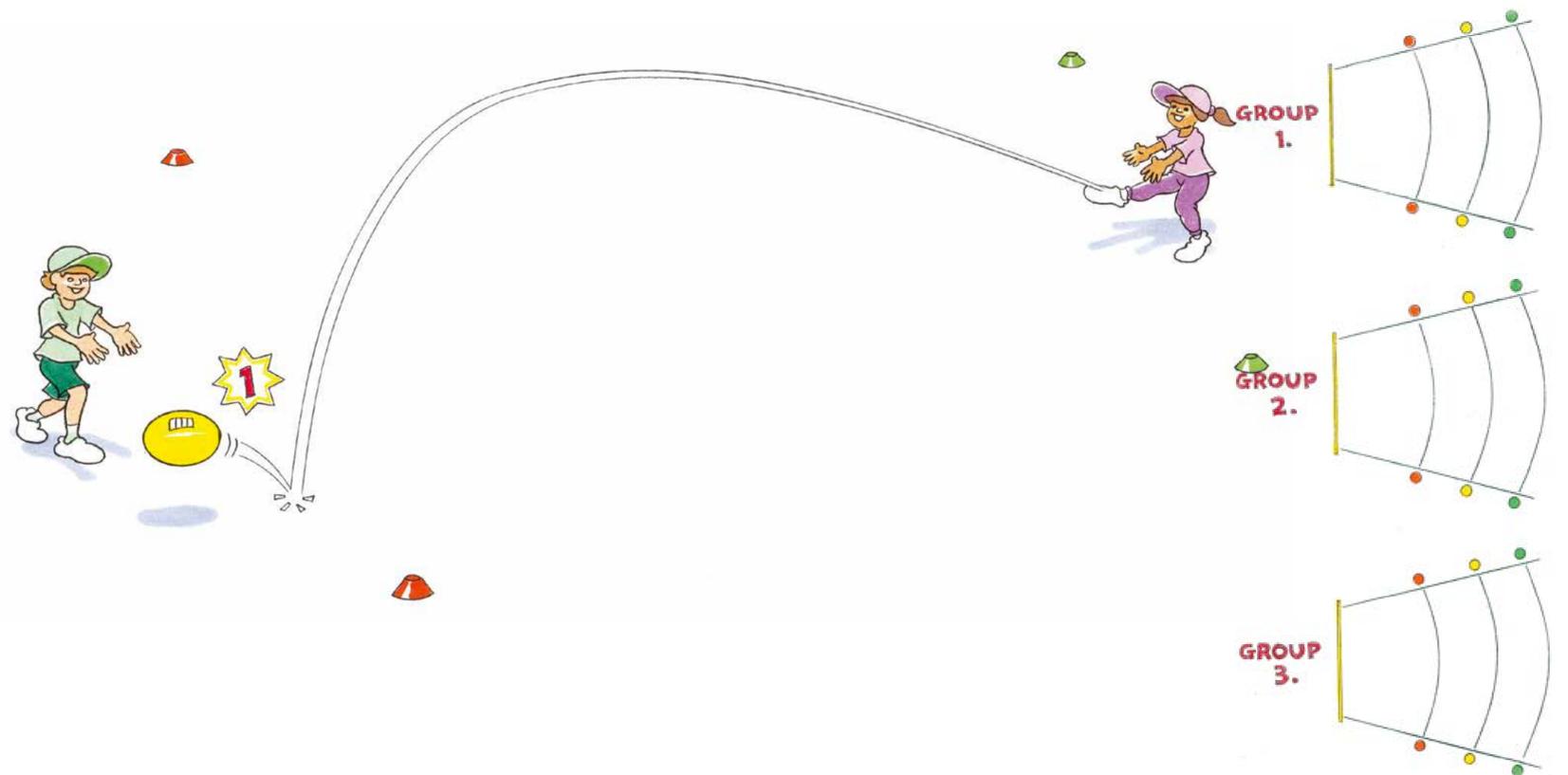
- Kicking (drop punt)
- Marking

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per pair; 4 marker cones per pair

## What to do:

- Form pairs of similar ability.
- Pairs collect marker cones and decide/test how far apart they will place them.
- Players kick the ball to land inside their partner's area. Score one point for each ball that lands inside that area.
- Player with the highest score when 'Time!' is called wins.



## Tips

- Ensure sufficient space between groups.
- Use role models to demonstrate holding the ball with the bottom point ready to drop onto the shoe laces and the ball spinning backward through the air.

## Change it

- Award a bonus point to players who mark the ball in their area.
- Challenge players to kick with both their preferred and non-preferred leg.
- Allow a short run up prior to kicking the ball.

# Interceptor

In pairs, players kick or pass a ball to one another. Opponents between the players attempt to intercept the ball. Players change roles frequently. Play in groups of four.

## LESSON 3

- GET INTO IT
- 15 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

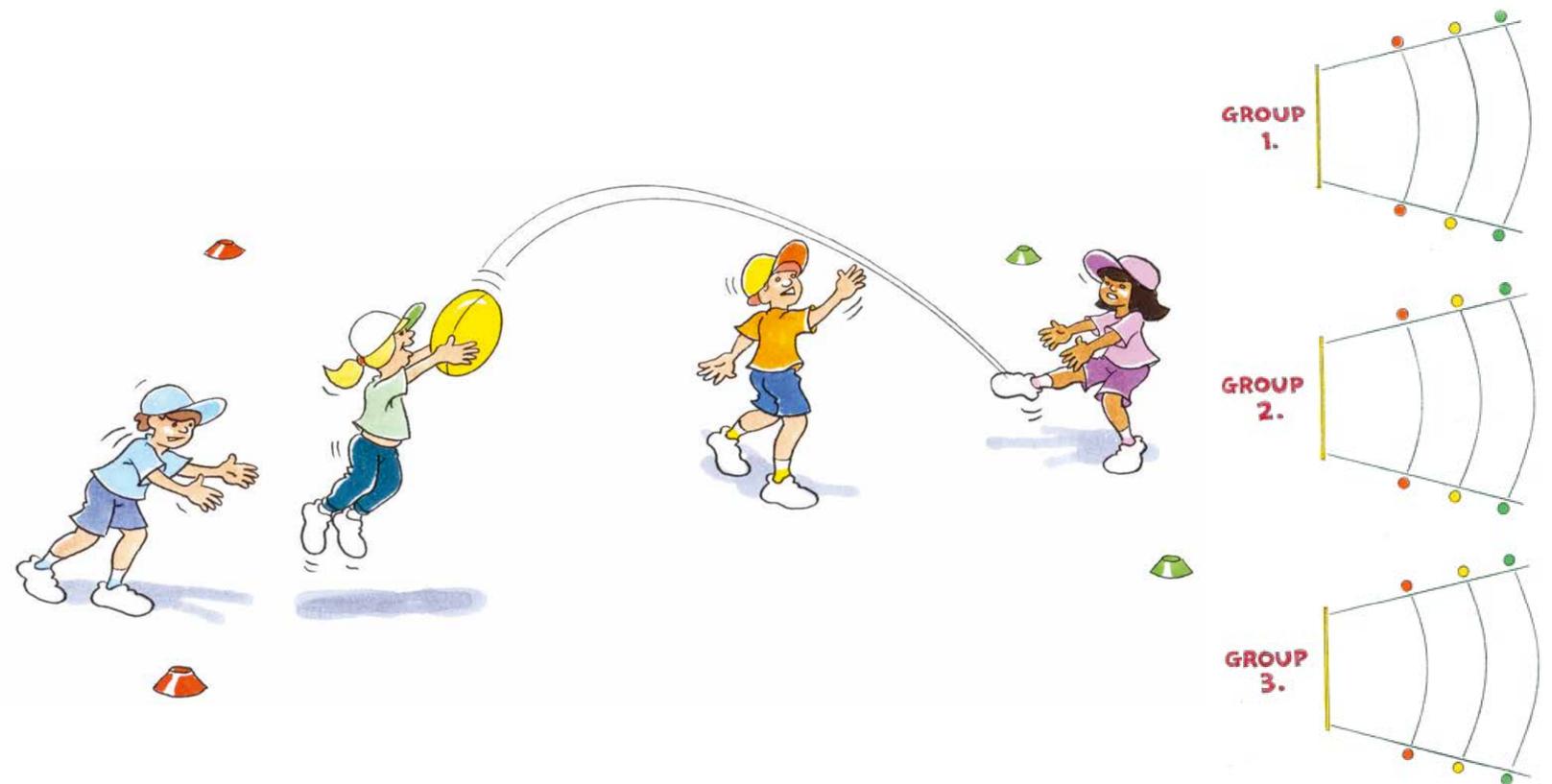
- Kicking (drop punt)
- Defending
- Marking

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per group of four; 4 marker cones per group

## What to do:

- Organise players into groups of four with two interceptors and two kickers.
- The kickers try to keep possession of the ball by kicking into their zones.
- The interceptors try to touch or mark the ball between the kicking zones.
- When the coach calls 'Time!', players rotate roles. Alternatively, every time an interceptor touches or marks the ball in the middle zone, they swap places with the kicker.



## Tips

- Allow kickers to adjust their zone distance based on their ability.

## Change it

- Vary the number of interceptors or kickers.
- Players score a point for every successful kick made without the ball being intercepted. Player with the highest in their group wins.

# Coast to coast

Attacking players try to move a football from one end of the field to the other (coast to coast) to score a point, while defenders try to intercept it. The football must be touched by an attacking player in each zone. Play in groups of 8 to 12.

## LESSON 3

- PLAY IT
- 20 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

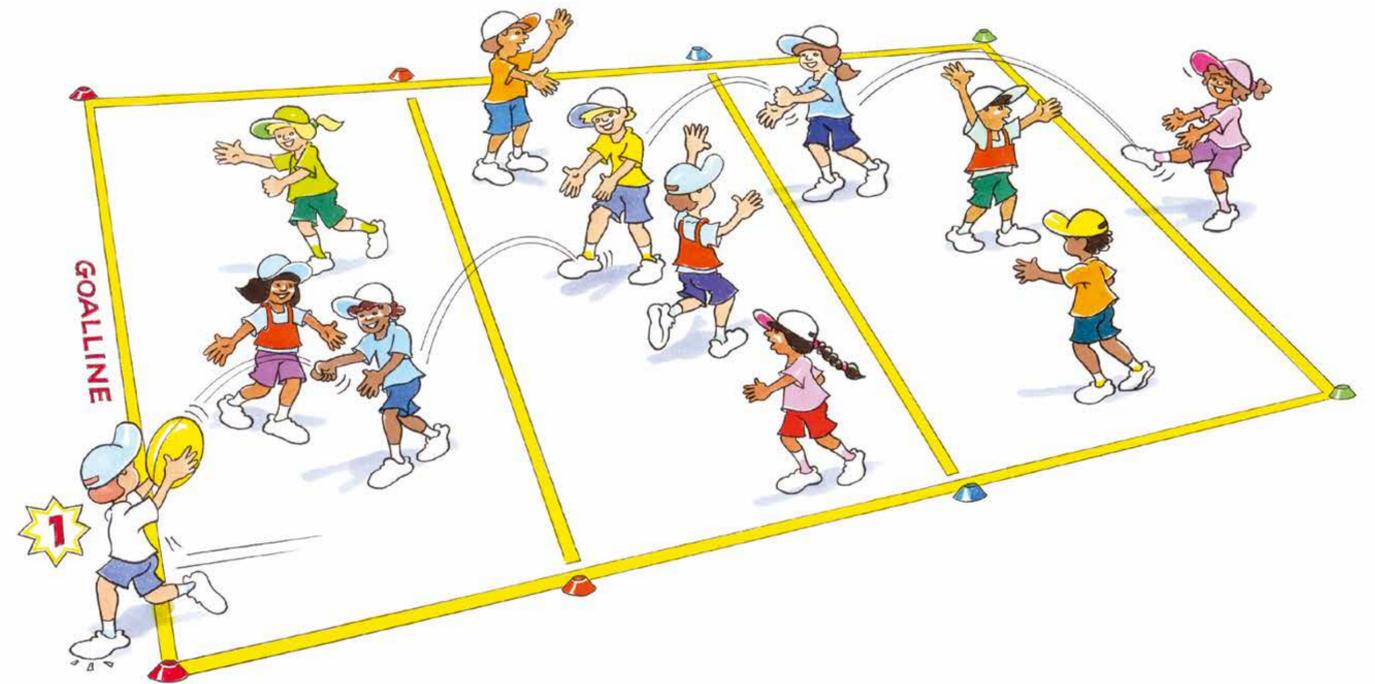
- Progressing the ball through zones
- Ball handling

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per game; 8 marker cones per game; 1 to 3 bibs or sashes for defenders

## What to do:

- The coach organises nine attacking players across three zones: three backs, three centres and three forwards.
- One to three defenders per game wear a bib and can cross zones.
- Play starts with the ball either handballed or kicked into the first zone by an attacking player, from behind a goal line.
- The ball must be touched by a player in each zone.
- A **point is scored** when an end zone player (a forward) runs over the goal line to receive the ball from another player in the same zone.
- Continue play back to the other end.
- If a defender tags a player in possession of the ball, or intercepts the ball, the ball must be passed to the nearest attacking player to continue playing the game in the same direction.



## Tips

- To maintain the flow of the game, the coach may choose to call, 'Play on!' if an inexperienced player 'throws' the football when attempting to handball.

## Change it

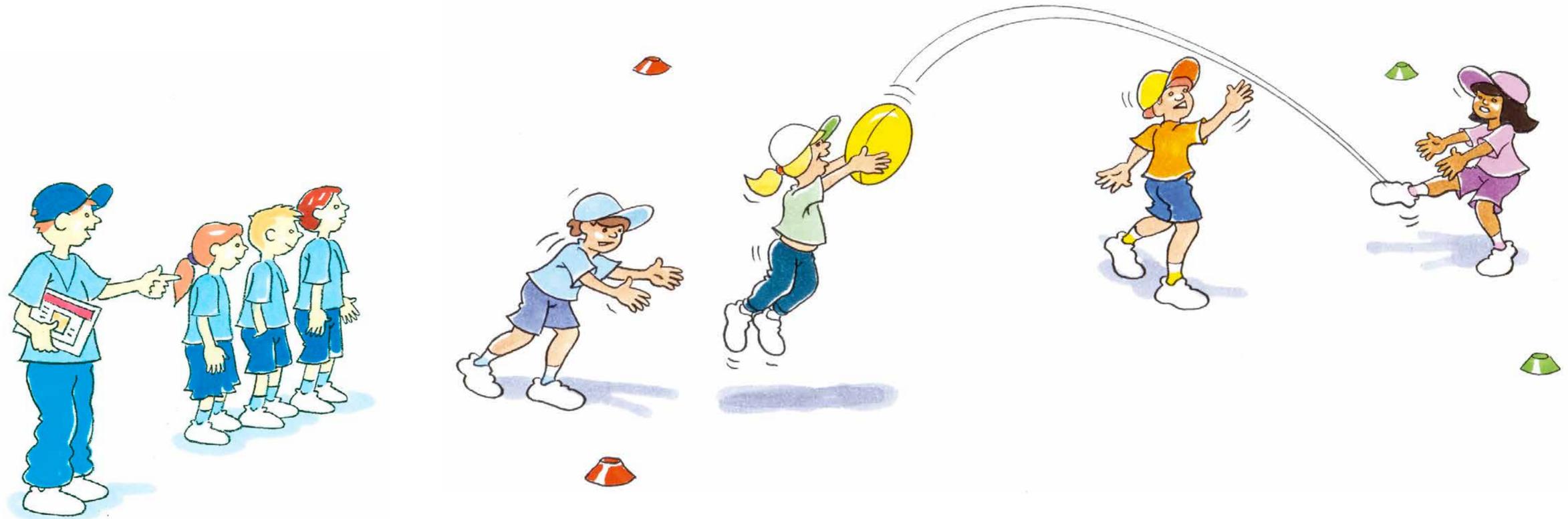
- Attacking players can only handball to each other.
- Increase or decrease the number of defenders.
- Defenders can change positions with an attacker if they intercept a ball.

# Let's see it

The coach selects role models to demonstrate kicking and marking techniques and asks questions of the group to define elements of the skills.  
Example: 'How do you hold the ball before you perform a drop punt?'  
Example: 'How are your arms placed to take a chest mark?'

## LESSON 3

- FINISH UP
- 5 MINUTES



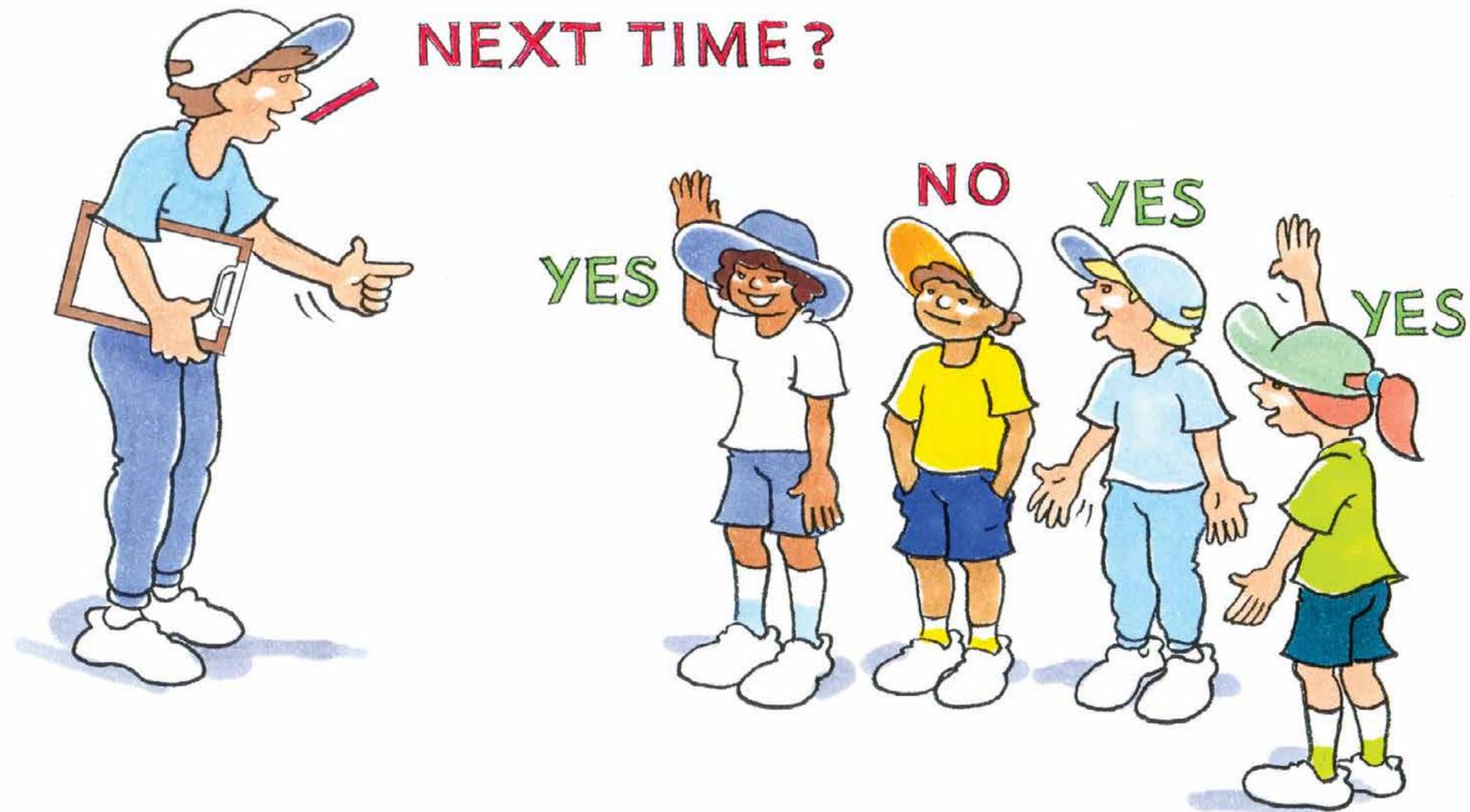
# What did you like?

The coach asks players about the games to receive feedback.

## LESSON 3

- FINISH UP
- 5 MINUTES

WHO WANTS TO  
PLAY TODAY'S GAMES  
NEXT TIME?



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s

4

## SKILL FOCUS

1. Kicking
2. Marking

## SAFETY

Refer to 'Golden rules of safety' section of this manual

## AREA

Suitable for indoor gym or outdoor area 30 metres by 30 metres

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per player
- 1 set of marker cones (30)
- 3 to 5 hoops or similar

## ACTIVITIES

- Sharks and islands 10 minutes
- Around the world 15 minutes
- Space kick 10 minutes
- Coast to coast 20 minutes
- What did you like? 5 minutes



## AFL 9s RULES

- 1 If a behind (one point) is scored, the ball is required to be kicked back into play from between the goals by a defender.
- 2 A free kick is awarded when the umpire believes a forward would have taken a mark inside their scoring zone, but was illegally infringed in the marking contest. The player may take a set shot for goal.
- 3 It is not a mark if the ball touches the ground or has been touched by another player during the period when the ball was kicked until it was caught or controlled by another player.

[RETURN TO LESSON OVERVIEW](#)

# Sharks and islands

On the coach's signal, one or two players who are 'sharks' attempt to tag players who are 'turtles', not on an island. Play in groups of 15 or more.

## LESSON 4

- START OUT
- 10 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

- Warm-up
- Evasion

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per shark; 5 'islands' — either hoops or marker cones

## What to do:

- The coach places islands randomly in the playing area.
- Two players are sharks and carry a ball to tag turtles.
- Turtles and sharks move into the playing area and on the coach's signal begin running, sharks trying to catch turtles and turtles trying to avoid sharks.
- Only one turtle at a time is allowed on an island and they can only move from the island when another turtle arrives to take their place.
- To avoid collisions, turtles approaching an occupied island must yell, 'Shark is coming!' to get the other turtle to move off the island.
- When a shark tags a turtle in the water, they exchange places (that is, the shark gives the tagged turtle the ball and play continues).



## Tips

- Ensure sharks **do not throw the ball** when tagging players. They must tag while holding the ball.

## Change it

- Increase the number of sharks.
- Increase or decrease the number of islands.
- To practice running with the ball, give every player a ball except the sharks.



# Space kicks

Players count how many kicks they can land in a designated space in a set period of time. Players can earn bonus points for running into the space to mark another player's kick. Play in groups of 6 to 8.

## LESSON 4

- GET INTO IT
- 10 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

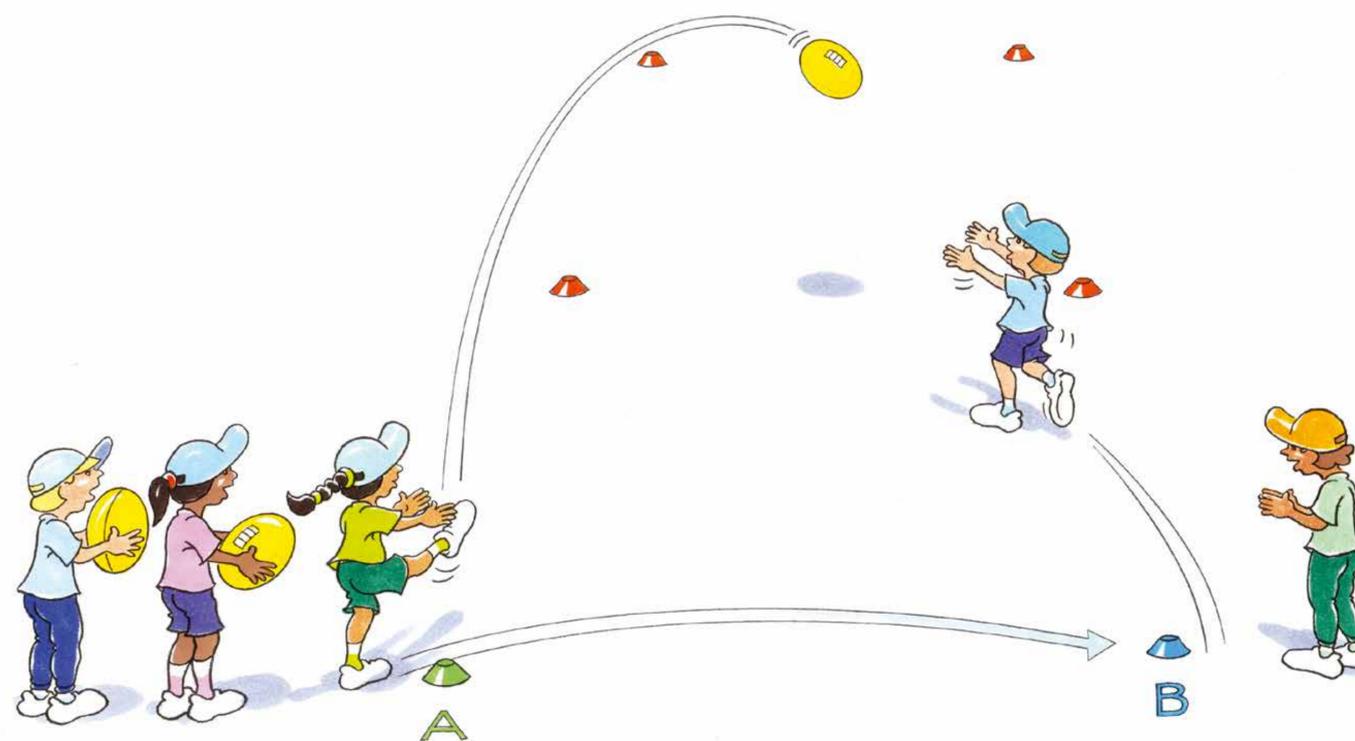
- Kicking accuracy
- Marking

## EQUIPMENT

- 3 to 4 footballs per group; 1 marker cone set

## What to do:

- Players are split into two even teams — half at position A and the other half at position B.
- On the coach's signal, the player at position A kicks a ball trying to make it land in a 5 metre by 5 metre space. After the kick they run to line up at position B.
- The player at marker B either runs and marks the kicked ball or gathers it after it bounces. They then run to the back of the line at position A with the ball.
- When the coach calls 'Stop!', individuals add up their scores for kicks and marks.
- Scoring:
  - 6 points = ball lands inside the space after a kick
  - 1 point = ball lands outside the space, then rolls into the space
  - 6 points = for a player who marks the ball.



## Tips

- Encourage players to kick the ball high in the air to create opportunities to mark the ball.

## Change it

- Players can kick from a stationary position or on the run from behind the marker cone.

# Coast to coast

Attacking players try to move a football from one end of the field to the other (coast to coast) to score a point, while defenders try to intercept it. The football must be touched by an attacking player in each zone. Play in groups of 8 to 12.

## LESSON 4

- PLAY IT
- 20 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

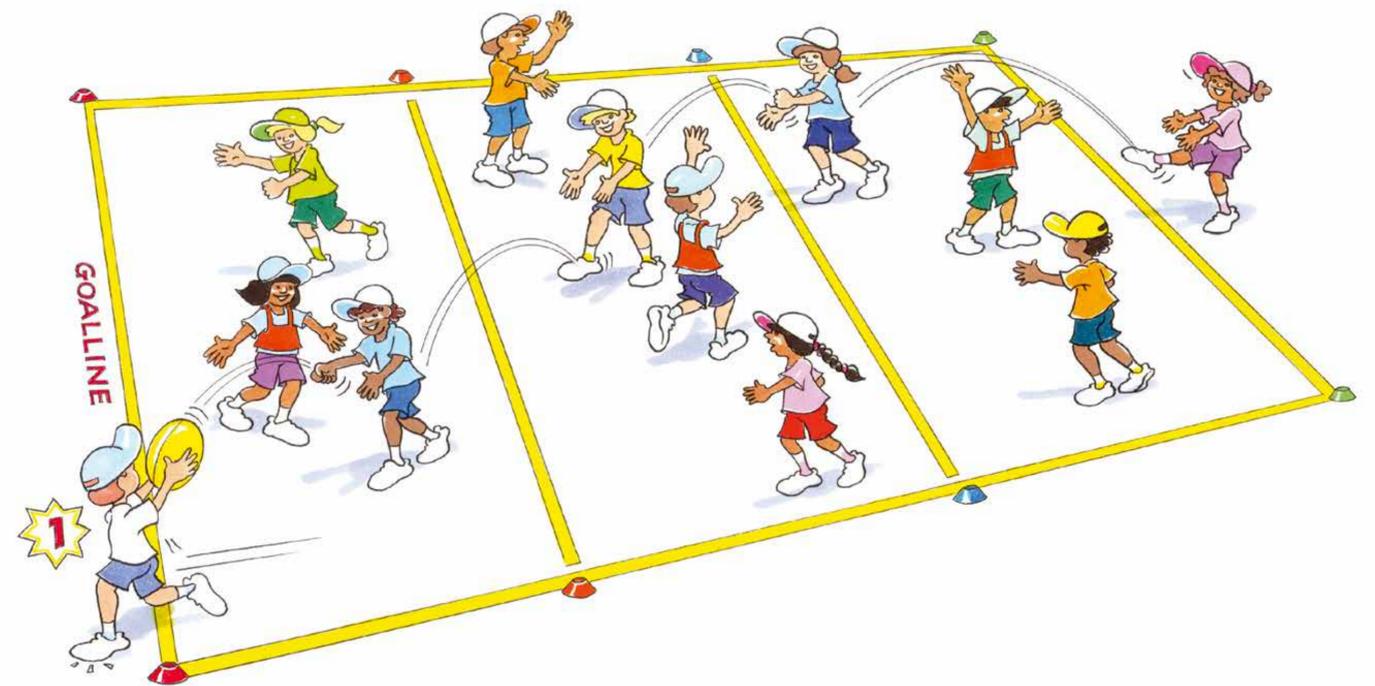
- Progressing the ball through zones
- Ball handling

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per game; 8 marker cones per game; 1 to 3 bibs or sashes for defenders

## What to do:

- The coach organises nine attacking players across three zones: three backs, three centres and three forwards.
- One to three defenders per game wear a bib and can cross zones.
- Play starts with the ball either handballed or kicked into the first zone by an attacking player, from behind a goal line.
- The ball must be touched by a player in each zone.
- A point is scored when an end zone player (a forward) runs over the goal line to receive the ball from another player in the same zone.
- Continue play back to the other end.
- If a defender tags a player in possession of the ball, or intercepts the ball, the ball must be passed to the nearest attacking player to continue playing the game in the same direction.
- Change attackers and defenders and zone positions regularly.



## Tips

- To maintain flow of the game, the coach may choose to call, 'Play on!' if an inexperienced player 'throws' the football when attempting to handball.

## Change it

- Allow defenders to move across all three zones.
- Introduce a time limit (for example, one minute) for attackers to get the ball to the other end.

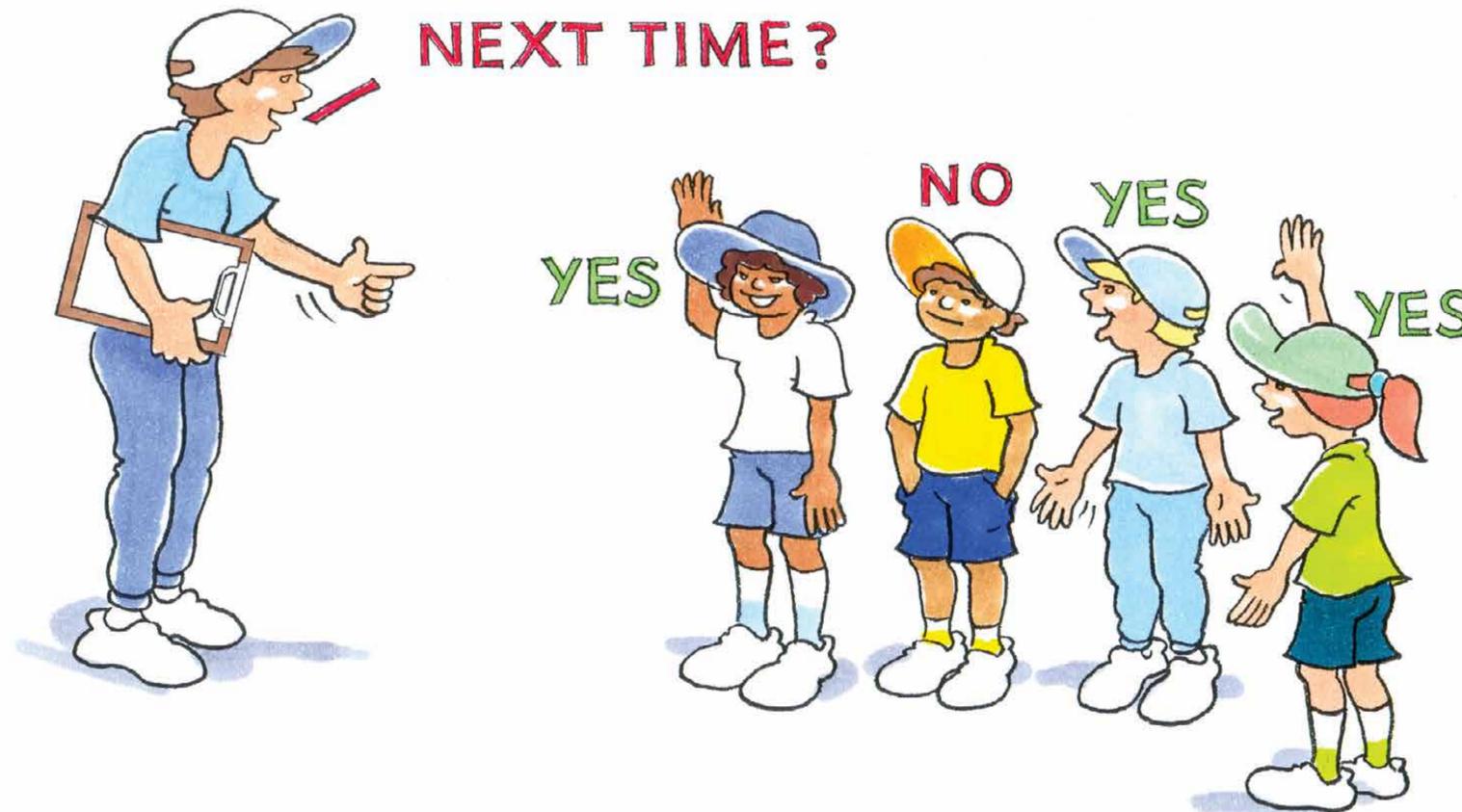
# What did you like?

The coach asks players about the games to receive feedback.

## LESSON 4

- FINISH UP
- 5 MINUTES

WHO WANTS TO  
PLAY TODAY'S GAMES  
NEXT TIME?



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s

5

## SKILL FOCUS

1. Handballing
2. Evasion
3. AFL 9s match play

## SAFETY

Refer to 'Golden rules of safety' section of this manual

## AREA

Suitable for indoor gym or outdoor area 30 metres by 30 metres

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per player
- 1 set of marker cones (30)
- 2 to 4 bibs or sashes

## ACTIVITIES

- |                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| • Stork tag            | 5 minutes  |
| • Names                | 10 minutes |
| • Centre square step   | 15 minutes |
| • AFL 9s (fixed zones) | 25 minutes |
| • What did you learn?  | 5 minutes  |



## AFL 9s RULES

- 1** There is to be absolutely no contact in a marking contest. The player in the front position has every opportunity to mark the ball, and in many cases the umpire can nominate which player has right of way.
- 2** When a player is awarded a mark or free kick, an opposing player may stand at the position on the playing surface where the mark or free kick was awarded — known as 'the mark'.
- 3** Players must stand toe-to-toe in the ball-up — (no run-up is allowed). This is similar to a basketball tip-off.

[RETURN TO LESSON OVERVIEW](#)

# Stork tag

Taggers chase players running with a football. If runners are tagged, they have to place their ball on the ground and stand on the spot in a stork stand. A tagged runner can be freed by a fellow runner by exchanging a handball. Play in groups of 15 or more.

## LESSON 5

- START OUT
- 5 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

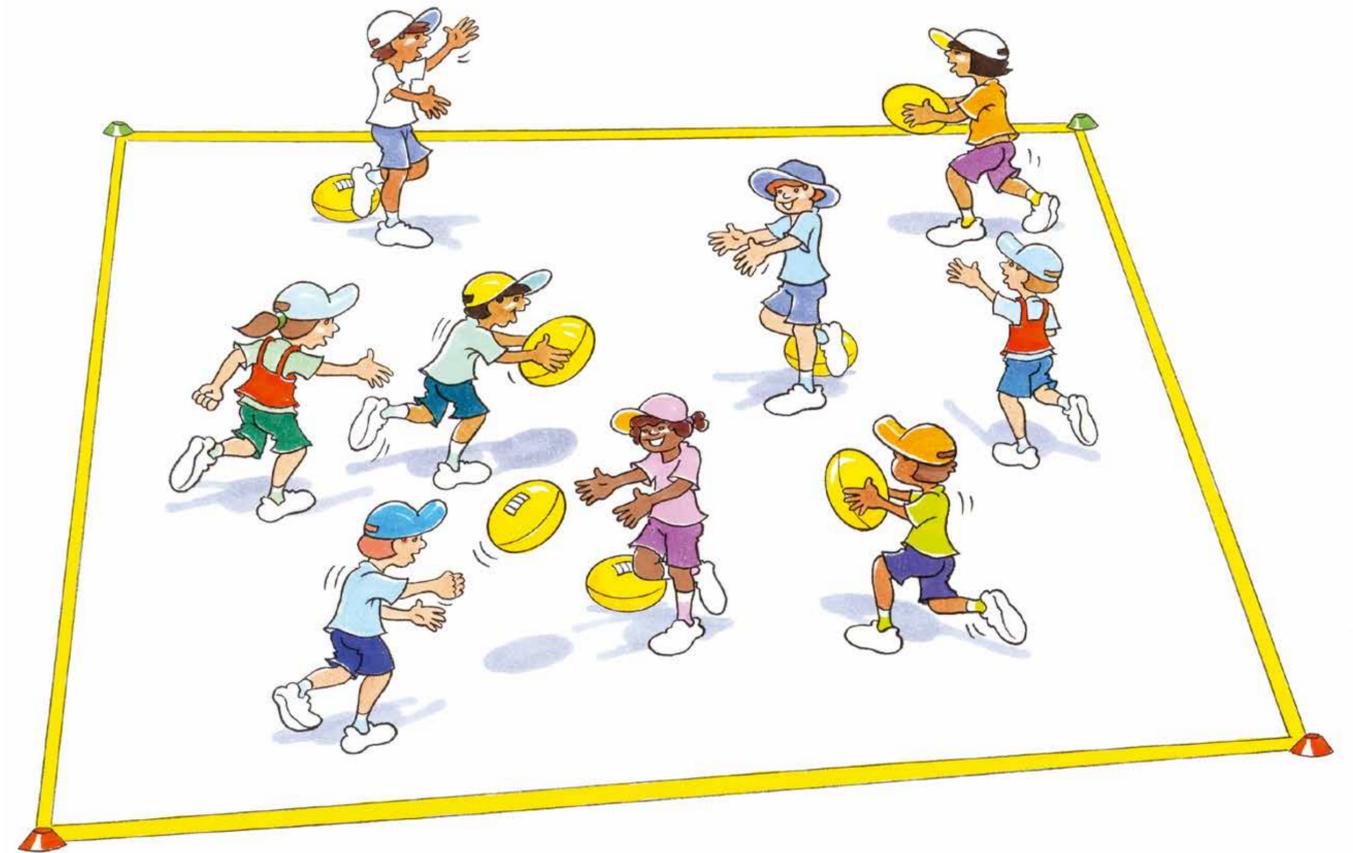
- Evasion
- Handball
- Running with the ball

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per runner; 4 marker cones; 2 to 4 bibs or sashes to identify taggers

## What to do:

- Each runner carries a football.
- Two or more players are taggers and wear a bib or sash.
- Players who have been tagged place their ball on the ground and stand like a stork on one leg.
- Other runners can release frozen players by handballing a ball to them.
- Frozen players handball the ball back to the runner and play continues.
- Change taggers regularly.



## Tips

- To handball, the football must rest on the platform hand and be hit with a clenched fist.
- The punching fist is formed by placing the thumb outside of the curled fingers.

## Change it

- Encourage runners to bounce or touch the football on the ground every set number of steps.
- Encourage advanced players to handball with their non-preferred hand.

# Names

Players in a circle handball a football to one another. An interceptor inside the circle tries to intercept the ball. Play in groups of 6 to 10.

## LESSON 5

- START OUT
- 10 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

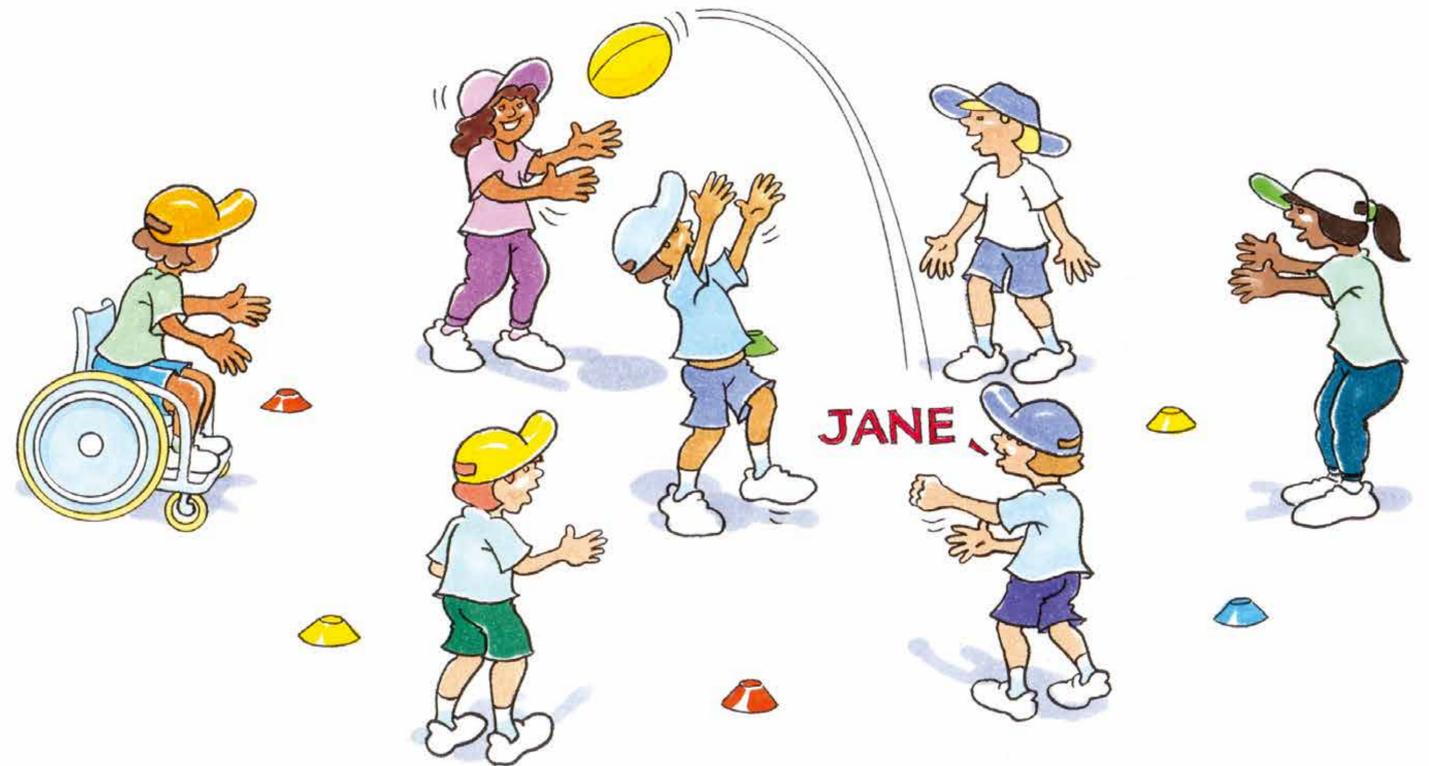
- Handballing

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per game; circle; optional: 6 to 10 marker cones to define a circle

## What to do:

- Form circles with one ball per group.
- One player starts as the interceptor in the middle.
- Before the ball is passed everyone takes a turn to call out their own name. (Hint: Start with the person holding the ball and finish with the interceptor.)
- On the coach's call the player with the ball calls out another player's name (the receiver) and handballs the ball to that player.
- If the ball is intercepted, the player who touched the ball last changes places with the interceptor.



## Tips

- Ensure players have their hands up ready to receive the ball.
- Remind players of the importance in AFL games of calling for the football and calling a player to send the ball to.

## Change it

- Add a second ball.
- Play with no interceptor.
- Make the circle larger and change the skill to a kick.



# AFL 9s (fixed zones)

Two teams compete against each other in an AFL 9s match using modified rules. All players are to remain in their zone throughout the game.

## LESSON 5

- PLAY IT
- 25 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

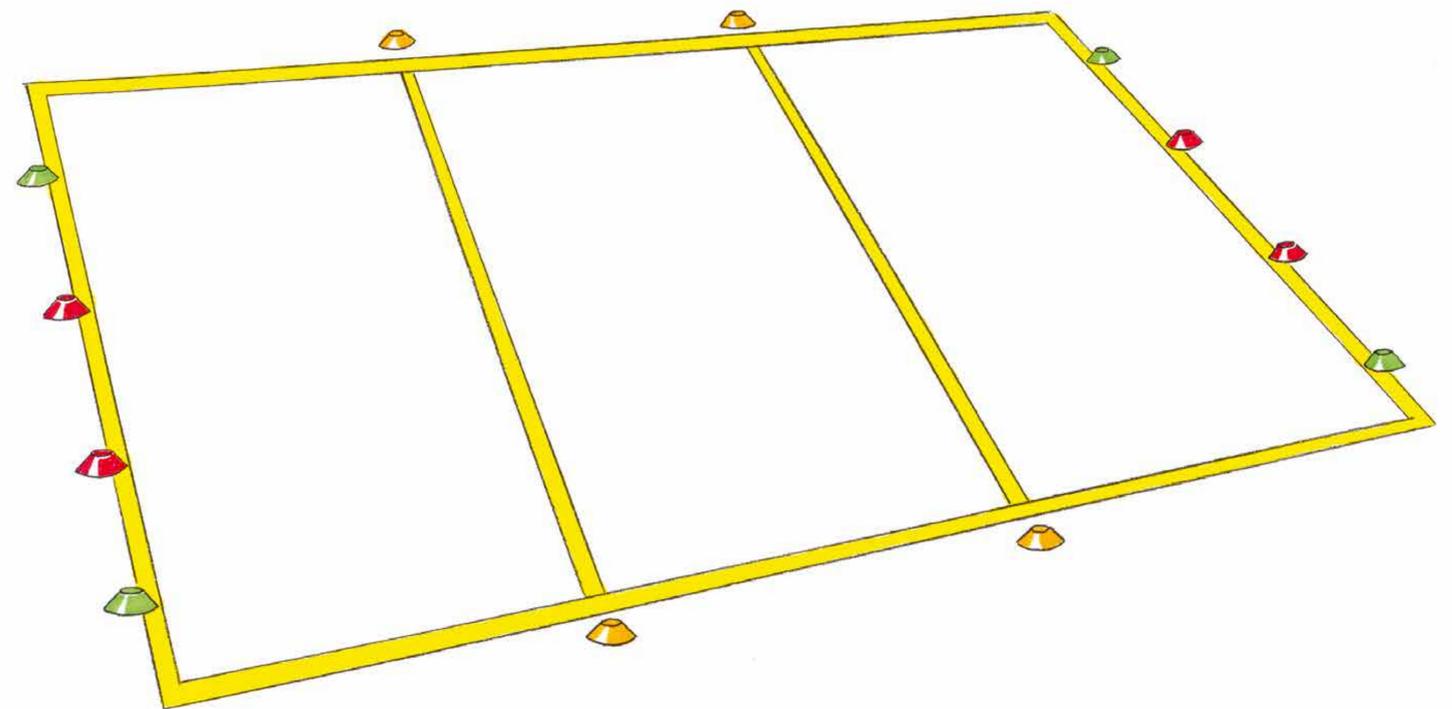
- AFL 9s match play and modified rules

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 match football (plus 1 spare ball); marker cones to define the playing area and zones; 2 goal posts or marker cones to define the goal areas; 1 whistle

## What to do:

- The coach divides the group into two even teams.
- Players in each team are given positions – three backs, three centres, three forwards and interchange players.
- Backs, centres and forwards start in their designated zones and remain in these zones during the game.
- Interchange players remain behind the boundary line and can replace players on the field on the coach's signal.



## Tips

- Encourage players to call for the ball.
- Allow simulated handball actions for those having difficulty – throwing it with an underarm action.

## Change it

- Change the pace from running to walking.
- In mixed gender and mixed-age games, award nine points when forwards who are females or younger players score a goal.

# What did you learn?

The coach asks questions to reinforce the key skills or tactical points.

## LESSON 5

- FINISH UP
- 5 MINUTES

### Coach asks:

- ‘What is the only position allowed to score a goal in AFL 9s?’  
**Answer:** A forward.
- ‘What happens if a player who is not a forward kicks for goal?’  
**Answer:** A free kick is awarded to the opposing team.
- ‘What happens if a player is tagged with the ball and they did not have a chance to dispose of it first?’  
**Answer:** The umpire will call, ‘Play on!’ and the player with the ball has two steps or two seconds to dispose of it.



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s

# 6

## SKILL FOCUS

AFL 9s match play

## SAFETY

Refer to 'Golden rules of safety' section of this manual

## AREA

Suitable for indoor gym or outdoor area 30 metres by 30 metres

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 set of marker cones (30)
- 1 football per player

## ACTIVITIES

- |                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| • Here! There! Nowhere! | 5 minutes  |
| • Mirror, mirror        | 5 minutes  |
| • Round the bend        | 15 minutes |
| • AFL 9s                | 30 minutes |
| • What's ahead?         | 5 minutes  |



## AFL 9s RULES

- 1 If a player who is not a designated forward has a shot on goal, a free kick will be awarded to the opposing team at the point where the shot was taken.
- 2 No opposing player, except for the player on the mark, may be closer than two metres away in any direction of the person taking the free kick.
- 3 A player cannot take a shot at goal from a turnover when the ball has gone out of bounds or hits the ground within the scoring zone.
- 4 After a goal, play is restarted in the centre of the field via a ball-up.

[RETURN TO LESSON OVERVIEW](#)

# Here! There! Nowhere!

On a call from the coach, players run towards the coach ('Here!'), away from the coach ('There!') or do an activity on the spot ('Nowhere!').

## LESSON 6

- START OUT
- 5 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

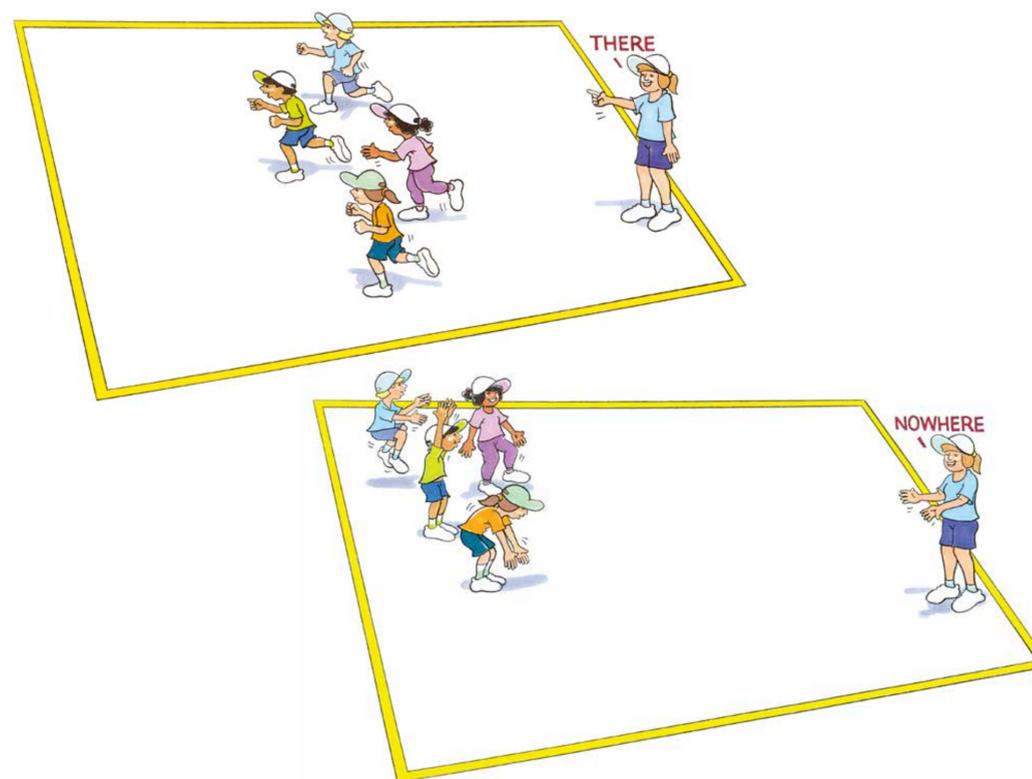
- Warm-up and skill practice

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per player

## What to do:

- Establish a large playing area to encourage running with the ball.
- Each player has a ball and performs the actions called by the coach.
- The coach explains the actions then makes random calls that the players follow:
  - **'Here!'** – all players run towards the coach bouncing the ball or touching it on the ground.
  - **'There!'** – all players run away from the coach in the direction the coach is pointing, kicking and gathering the ball or handballing and gathering the ball.
  - **'Nowhere!'** – all players run or stand on the spot, handballing and catching the ball.



## Tips

- Remind players to look up when running with the ball.

## Change it

- Change the pace of the calls.
- Players start the activity without a ball and act out the actions.
- Work in pairs with one ball per pair.

# Mirror, mirror

Players face their partner. The leader performs a series of movements with a football while the player, who is the 'mirror' copies the skills like a reflection.

## LESSON 6

- START OUT
- 5 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

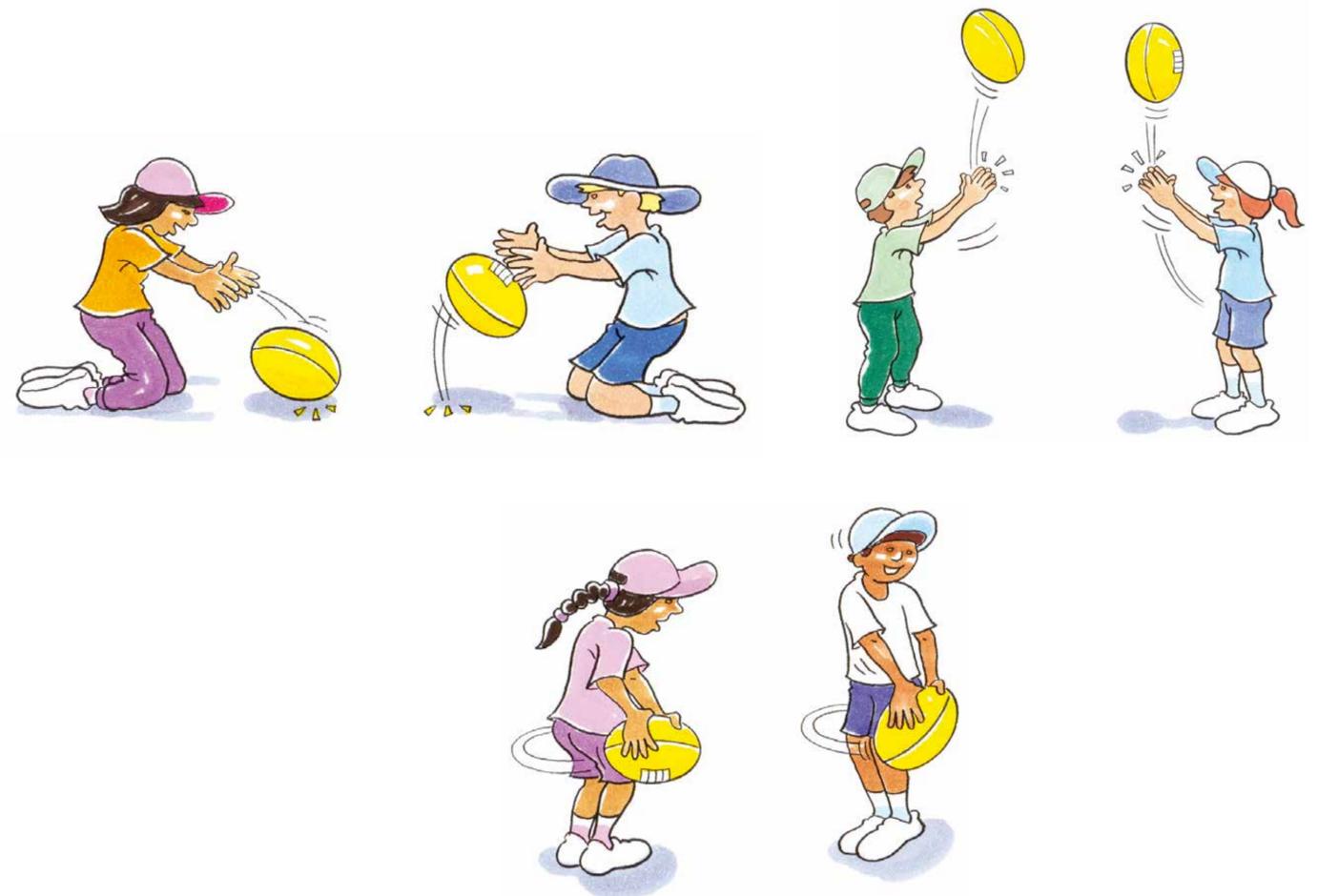
- Ball handling

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 football per player; 1 stopwatch or clock

## What to do:

- Form pairs; one ball per player.
- Players have 30 seconds to move the ball while their partner mirrors the actions.
- After 30 seconds, players reverse roles and repeat the activity.



## Tips

- The coach can prompt the whole class with ideas by being the leader first.

## Change it

- Play in groups of three or more with one player as the leader and all of the other players the mirror.

# Round the bend

On the coach's signal, two attackers with a ball and one defender enter the playing area from opposite ends. The attacking pair attempt to score points by progressing the ball down the field without losing possession. Play in groups of 8 to 10.

## LESSON 6

- GET INTO IT
- 20 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

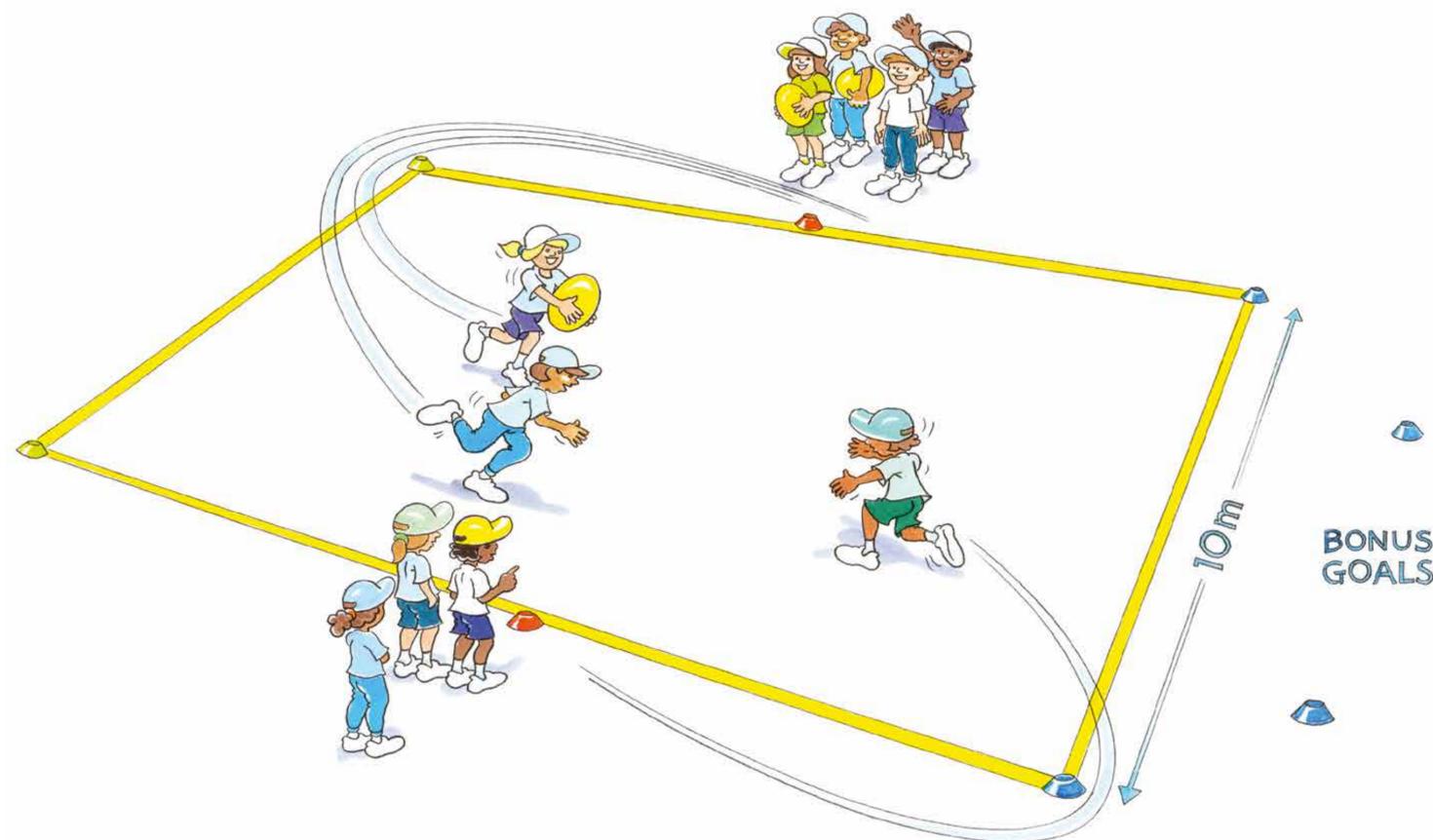
- Teamwork and communication

## EQUIPMENT

- 4 to 6 footballs; 1 marker cone set

## What to do:

- Organise players into attackers and defenders on opposite sides of the playing area.
- Attackers are in pairs with one football between them.
- On the coach's signal, two attackers and one defender enter from opposite ends of the playing area.
- The defender attempts to tag the player in possession of the ball or intercept the ball to end the attacking players' turn.
- The aim for the attacking players is to carry the ball over the goal line or handball it through the bonus goals.
- Points are awarded to the attacking players as follows:
  - Six points = handball the ball through the bonus goals
  - One point = carry the ball over the goal line.



## Tips

- Call 'time out' for attacking and defending players to huddle and create strategies.

## Change it

- Introduce a shadow defender to follow the attackers into the field to create pressure from behind.
- Play combinations, (for example, four attackers and two defenders).

# AFL 9s

Two teams compete against each other in an AFL 9s match using modified rules.

## LESSON 6

- PLAY IT
- 30 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

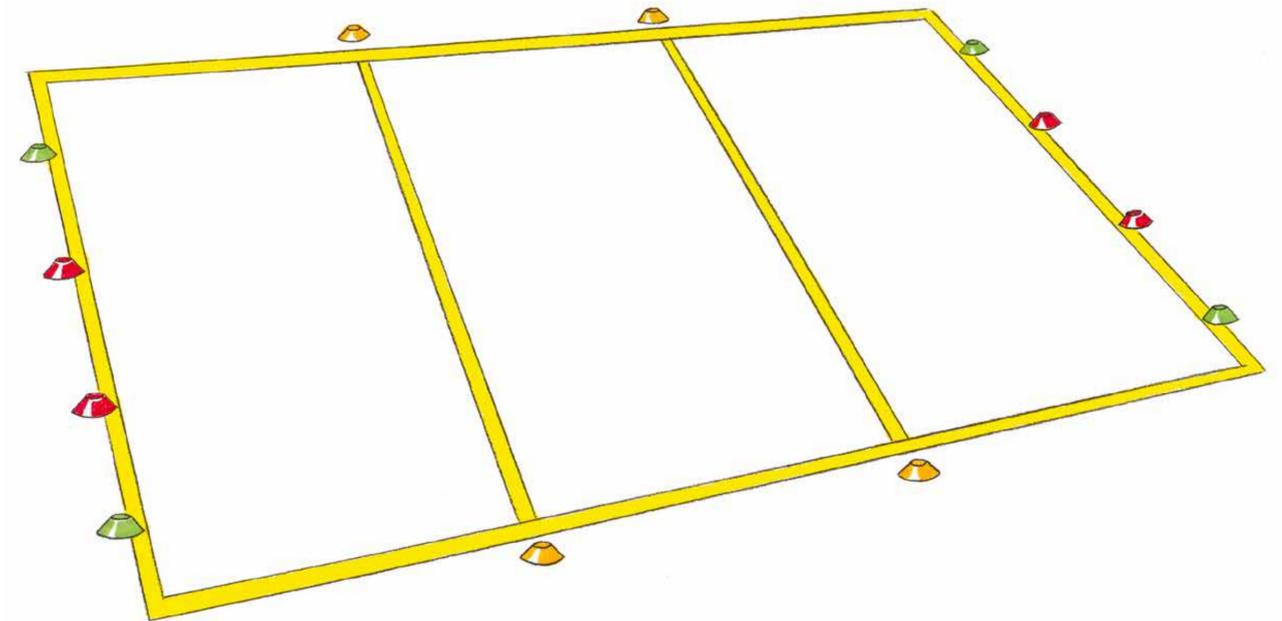
- AFL 9s match play and modified rules

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 match football (plus one spare ball); marker cones to define the playing area and zones; goal posts or marker cones to define the goal areas; 1 whistle

## What to do:

- The coach divides the group into two even teams.
- Players in each team are given positions – three backs, three centres, three forwards and interchange players.
- Players must be in their designated zones (three players per zone) at the start of the match and when a goal has been scored, but once play starts, they can move anywhere they like.
- Interchange players remain behind the boundary line and can replace players on the field on the coach's signal.
- Refer to the AFL 9s rules in the Introduction section of this manual.



## Tips

- Encourage players to call for the ball.
- Allow simulated handball actions for those having difficulty.

## Change it

- Change the pace from running to walking.
- In mixed gender and mixed age games, award nine points when forwards who are females or younger players score a goal.

# What's ahead

After discussing preparations with the supervising staff, the coach provides a brief explanation about the lesson to come.

## LESSON 6

- FINISH UP
- 5 MINUTES

### Coach asks:

- 'Next week is our last lesson. Who wants to invite someone to come along and watch the game?' OR
- 'Next week is our last lesson and we have visitors coming from the local AFL club. Who wants to join a club?' OR
- 'Next week we are going to the local AFL club to have some fun. Has everybody got a note to get signed so they have permission to attend?'



# Playing for Life — AFL 9s

7

## SKILL FOCUS

AFL 9s match play

## SAFETY

Refer to 'Golden rules of safety' section of this manual

## AREA

Suitable for indoor gym or outdoor area 30 metres by 30 metres.

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 set of marker cones (30)
- 1 football per player

## ACTIVITIES

- |                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| • Fox and geese        | 5 minutes  |
| • Form a team          | 10 minutes |
| • AFL 9s (first half)  | 15 minutes |
| • Half-time huddle     | 5 minutes  |
| • AFL 9s (second half) | 15 minutes |
| • Where to from here?  | 10 minutes |



## AFL 9s RULES

### How to keep score

- When it comes to reading or writing the scores, the goals go first, then the behinds, then the total points. For example a score of 10 goals and 6 behinds is a total of 66 and is written 10.6 (66).
- In mixed teams, girls score 9 points

### The ball

- An AFL 9s football is recommended to be used. This ball has been specially designed to make it easier to handle for recreational participants and limit the kicking length due to the ground size. If an AFL 9s ball is not available, an age appropriate synthetic ball is suitable.

### The playing ground

- The recommended playing field measures a maximum of 100 metres by 50 metres and is divided into three zones. The zones are advised to be set as 30m/40m/30m. Note: Alternative fields (indoor and outdoor) can utilise different field measurements appropriate for the skill level, availability of space and players on the field.

## RETURN TO LESSON OVERVIEW

# Fox and geese

The 'fox' faces three 'geese' that have formed a chain with the baby goose at the back. The fox attempts to tag the baby goose, while the geese attempt to protect the baby. Play in groups of four.

## LESSON 7

- START OUT
- 5 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

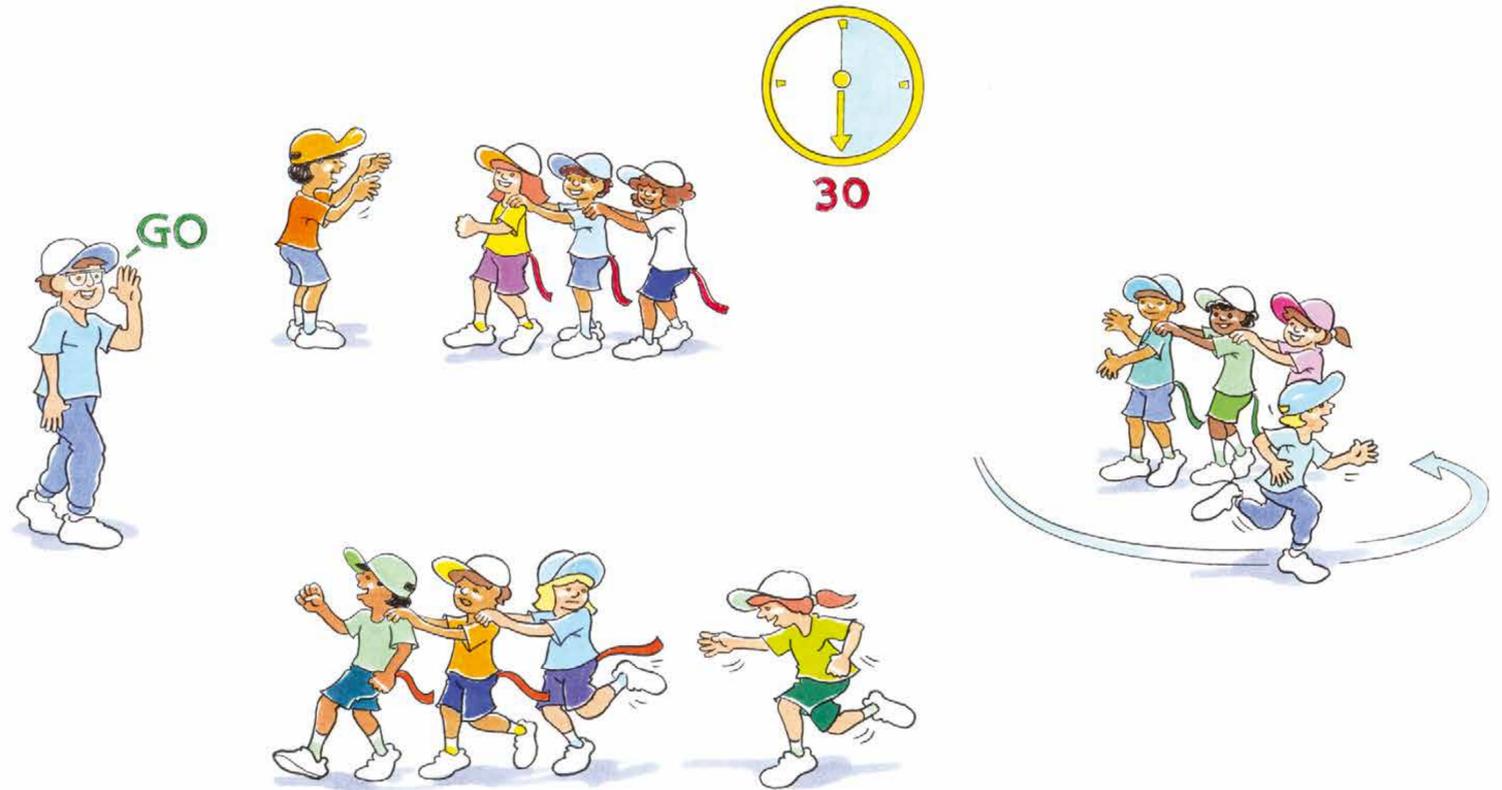
- Warm-up
- Defence

## EQUIPMENT

- No equipment necessary; bib (optional, as a tail to tag the baby goose)

## What to do:

- Form groups of four players.
- A 'fox' faces three 'geese' who have formed a chain by placing hands on the shoulders of the person in front.
- On 'Go', the fox attempts to tag the baby goose at the back of the chain by tagging or removing a tail.
- When tagged (or after 30 seconds) the baby goose becomes the fox and the fox joins the front of the chain as a goose.
- Repeat until all players have had a turn as the fox.



## Tips

- Ensure there is 6 metre by 6metre space for each group to avoid collisions.

## Change it

- Have the goose at the front of the chain holding a football in two hands.

# Form a team

Players move around in random directions avoiding body contact with other players. The coach calls a number and players form groups of that size.

## LESSON 7

- START OUT
- 10 MINUTES

## SKILL FOCUS

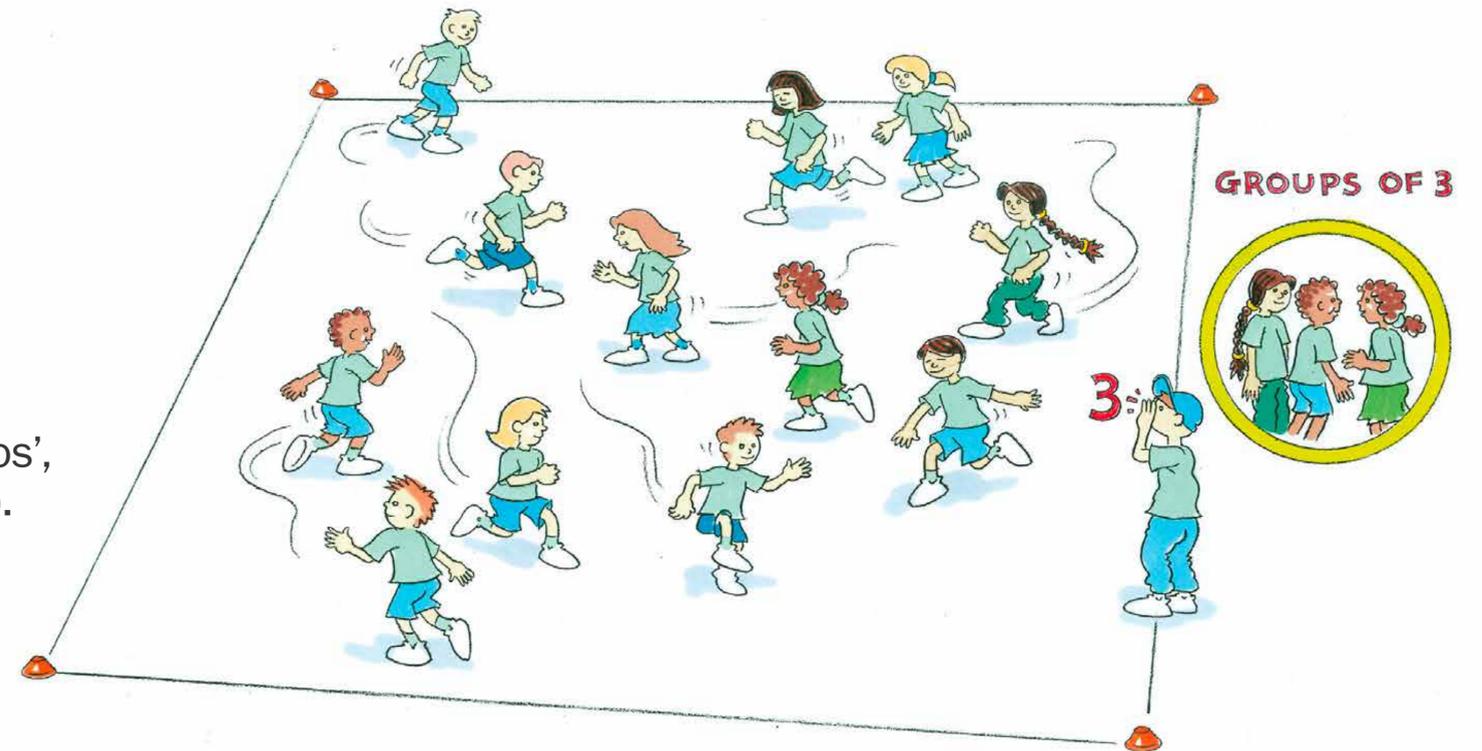
- To form teams or groups for the next activity

## EQUIPMENT

- No equipment

## What to do:

- Mark an area free of obstructions and disperse the players.
- Start with slow jogging.
- Try several group sizes before you get to the number you would like for the next activity, (for example, start by calling 'twos', then 'fives', and finally the group size you want, such as 'nines'). (**Hint:** You may wish to add 'new people' in the group to match team abilities.)



## Tips

- Give players time to name their team after an AFL team, (for example Tigers, Eagles, Crows, Lions, Swans).

## Change it

- All players have a ball each and bounce or touch it on the ground as they move around.
- Vary the locomotion, (for example short bursts of running, hopping, or fast walking) before calling a group size.

# AFL 9s game

Players in two teams attempt to score points by kicking a football through the goal posts from within their scoring zone. Defenders attempt to tag the player with the ball. No body contact is allowed. Play with two teams of nine players, plus unlimited interchange players.

## LESSON 7

- PLAY IT
- 15 MINUTES PER HALF

## SKILL FOCUS

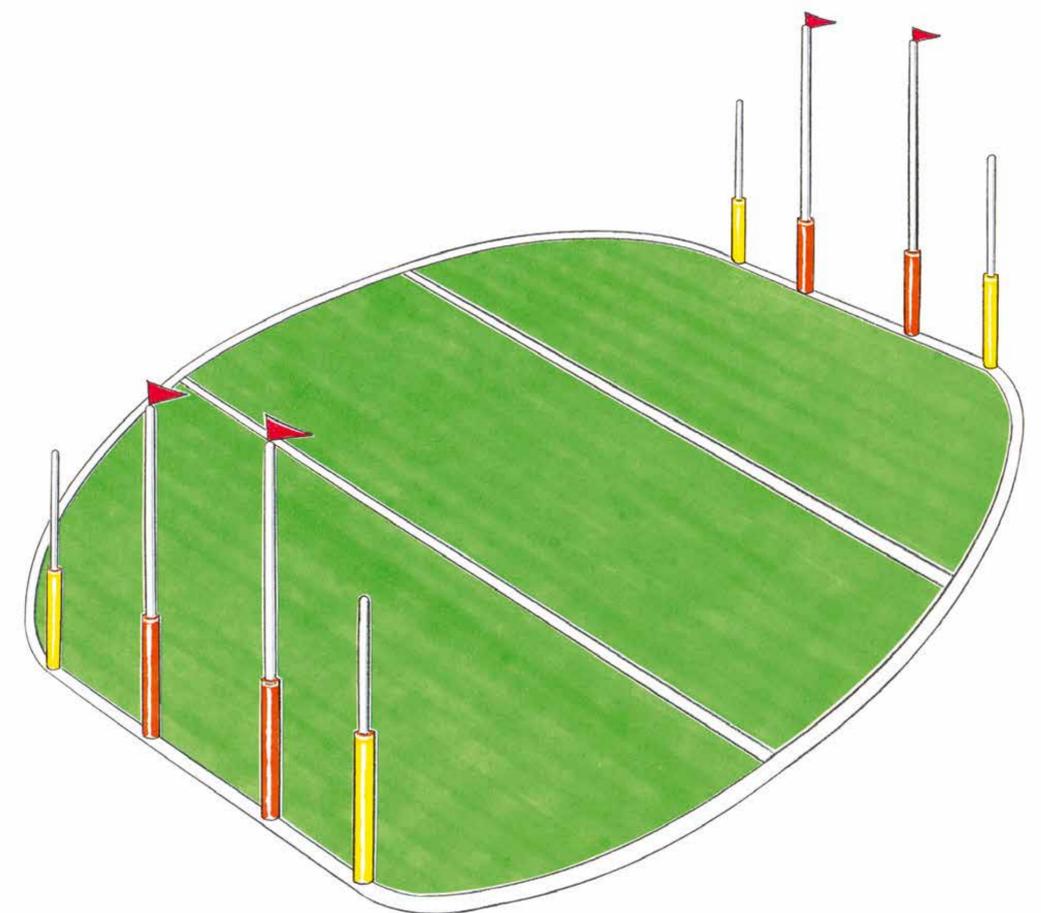
- AFL 9s match play and modified rules

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 match ball (plus one spare ball); markers cones to set field and zones; goal posts (or markers); 1 whistle

## What to do: (Playing for Life — AFL 9s modified rules)

- Divide class into two teams. Nominate three backs, three centres and three forwards per team per zone.
- Forwards must wear an arm/wrist band to identify them.
- Interchange players remain behind the boundary line and can replace players on the field on the coach's signal.
- Players must be in their designated zones (three players per zone) at the start of the match and when a goal has been scored. Once play starts, players can move anywhere they like.



## Tips

- To maintain game flow, an umpire may use discretion and call 'play on' if inexperienced players 'throw' the ball when attempting to handball it.

## Change it

- All players must remain in their zone. This will provide less-experienced players with more opportunities to receive the ball.
- Umpire awards nine points if nominated forwards score a goal (for example females or younger players).

## AFL 9s game [cont'd]

Players in two teams attempt to score points by kicking a football through the goal posts from within their scoring zone. Defenders attempt to tag the player with the ball. No body contact is allowed. Play with two teams of nine players, plus unlimited interchange players.

### LESSON 7

- PLAY IT
- 15 MINUTES PER HALF

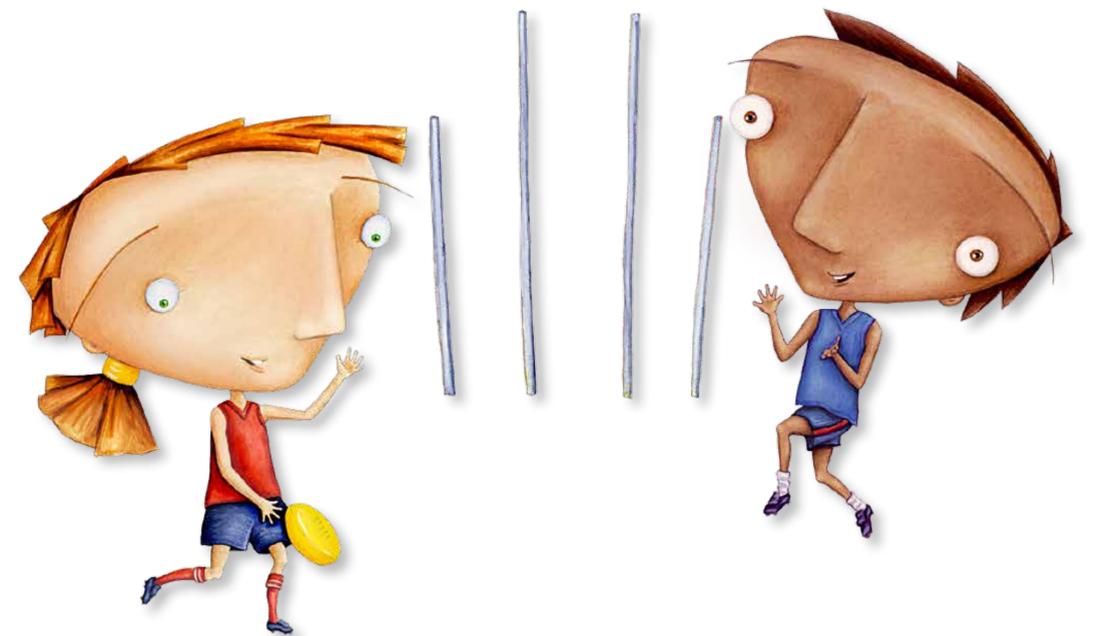
### SKILL FOCUS

- AFL 9s match play and modified rules

### EQUIPMENT

- 1 match ball (plus one spare ball); markers cones to set field and zones; goal posts (or markers); 1 whistle

- Begin play in the centre zone with a ball-up between two centres, who attempt to tap the ball to a team-mate (no run-up allowed).
- The team in possession of the ball attempts to progress the ball towards the forwards' zone by either a handball or a kick, or by running and bouncing the ball once only.
- The ball cannot be kicked from the back zone directly into the forward zone.
- If tagged in possession of the ball, the player must hand the ball over to the opposition player who made the tag.
- If, in the umpire's opinion, a player has not had an opportunity to dispose of the ball before being tagged, the umpire can call 'play on' and the player may have two steps or two seconds to dispose of the ball to a team-mate.
- If the ball touches the ground, the umpire can call 'play on' (or handover)
- A player is not permitted to deliberately kick the ball off the ground.
- After a goal, play is restarted in the centre of the field via a ball-up.

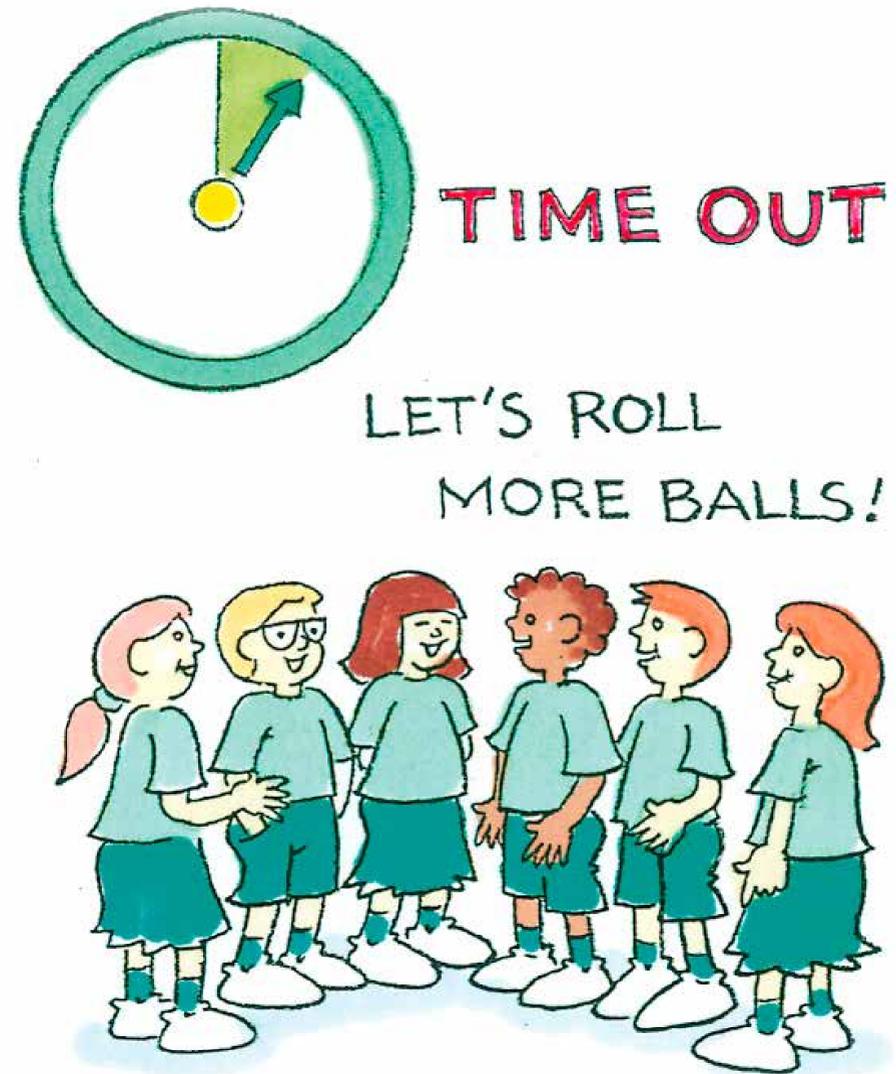


# Half-time huddle

Players huddle in their teams to discuss strategies, change positions, and receive advice from the coach.

## LESSON 7

- PLAY IT
- 5 MINUTES



## Tips

- Ensure all players having access to drinking water whenever they need it.

## Change it

- If teams are too one-sided, the coach can swap players between teams to provide a closer final score.
- The coach can ask the players for suggestions on how to get maximum enjoyment from the game being played.

# Where to from here?

The coach provides a review of the AFL 9s sessions and invites AFL club visitors or the participants to discuss the benefits of joining a club or an AFL 9s competition.

## LESSON 7

- FINISH UP
- 10 MINUTES

### Coach asks:

- ‘Who belongs to an AFL club or has played Auskick?’
- ‘Who can tell me where the nearest AFL junior club is?’
- ‘What were your favourite AFL activities played in the last few weeks?’



### Tips

- The coach or an AFL club official may wish to hand out participation certificates and AFL 9s information for children to show to their parents.



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# Behaviour Management

**Good behaviour management and strategies to deal with misbehaviour are essential to carrying out a coaching session. Strategies aimed at conducting effective and safe sessions go a long way to preventing misbehaviour.**

## Common causes of misbehaviour

Inappropriate behaviour and/or a lack of interest and attention may be caused by:

- insufficient equipment for group size
- limited supervision and lack of interest shown by the coach
- activities which are slow to start, due to too much talking by the coach
- activities that run for too long
- children waiting in long lines for their turn
- activities that are boring and not challenging enough
- unclear rules and expectations.

In other words, sometimes the coach's program, organisation or style can contribute to disruptive behaviour.

## Strategies to prevent misbehaviour

- Create a team atmosphere: be positive and encouraging and give feedback.
- Ensure children have a clear understanding of rules, routines and appropriate behaviour. Manage inappropriate behaviour as soon as it occurs.

- Understand pre-existing rules and routines, and what strategies and approaches work well with a particular group or individual.
- Learn about any children with physical, behavioural, emotional or social problems.
- Look for good behaviour and reward through praise and privileges.
- Provide fun and variety, and high levels of activity.
- Challenge more experienced children and make discrete allowances for those less skilled.
- Use inclusive coaching practices, that is, adapt and modify coaching practices to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate.
- Remember to use the CHANGE IT principle.
- Plan activities that follow on from each other, thus reducing waiting time.



## How to manage misbehaviour

The following table provides a suggested routine for dealing with misbehaviour. Ensure you are consistent and patient in following the suggestions as some misbehaviour may need time to correct.

<p><b>Misbehaviour presents</b></p>	<p><b>Quietly correct</b></p> <p>Depending on the severity of the misbehaviour, it may be appropriate to address the behaviour in front of the group, to demonstrate the standards expected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do so without delay.</li> <li>• Non-verbal cues may be appropriate.</li> <li>• Join in and partner with the misbehaving child without comment.</li> <li>• Divert the child's attention.</li> <li>• Ask a skill-related question, such as: 'How is that serve coming along?'</li> <li>• Remind the child discretely of group rules and appropriate behaviour.</li> <li>• Address the behaviour of the child, not their character.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Misbehaviour still an issue</b></p>	<p><b>The coach's next step...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relate the problem back to team rules.</li> <li>• Explain how their behaviour is impacting others.</li> <li>• Ask the child: 'What are you doing?' and: 'Is this against the rules?'. Follow on with: 'What should you be doing?'</li> </ul>
<p><b>Misbehaviour continues</b></p>	<p><b>Explain the consequences</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be polite, calm, brief and specific.</li> <li>• Do not use punishment, blame, shame, sarcasm or cause pain.</li> <li>• Do not ignore the child.</li> <li>• Forgive and forget.</li> <li>• Remove the child from the activity; use a time-out away from other children but close enough to supervise.</li> <li>• Provide an opportunity for the child to rejoin the group, if they agree to abide by the rules.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Referral</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the problem is not rectified, refer the matter to an appropriate person.</li> </ul>



# Over Competitiveness

A desire to win at all costs may promote negative behaviours and discourage the cooperation and participation of others.

## Identifying behaviours

Children may:

- Not cooperate during group activities
- Break rules to win the game
- Criticise other children and their abilities
- Disrespectfully celebrate a win

## What you can do

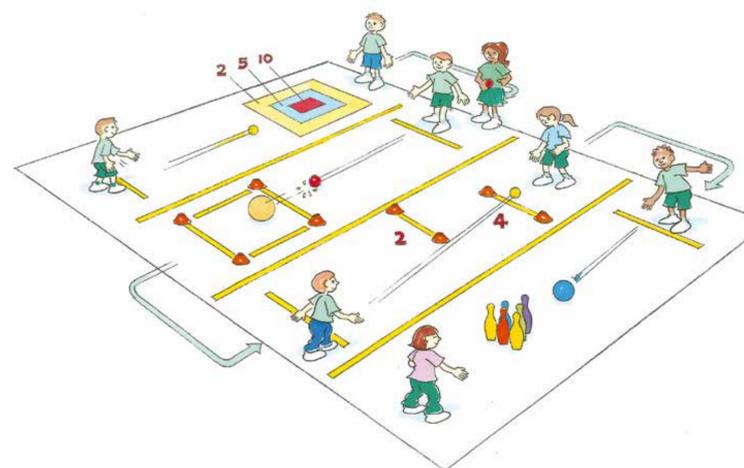
Simple changes to activities may help to address over competitive behaviours. Remember to address a child's behaviour and not their character, and be a good role model at all times.

- Highlight examples of cooperative play and good sportsmanship. Issue bonus points to reward desirable behaviour.

- Reduce emphasis on scoring and set other types of challenges, for example, individual challenges rather than team challenges.



- Use activities in which personal bests can be achieved.
- Use small group activities, or circuits, to narrow children's attention to their own performance.



- Encourage team building routines, such as handshakes and three cheers at the end of the game.
- Select a 'spotter' who rewards sportsmanship.

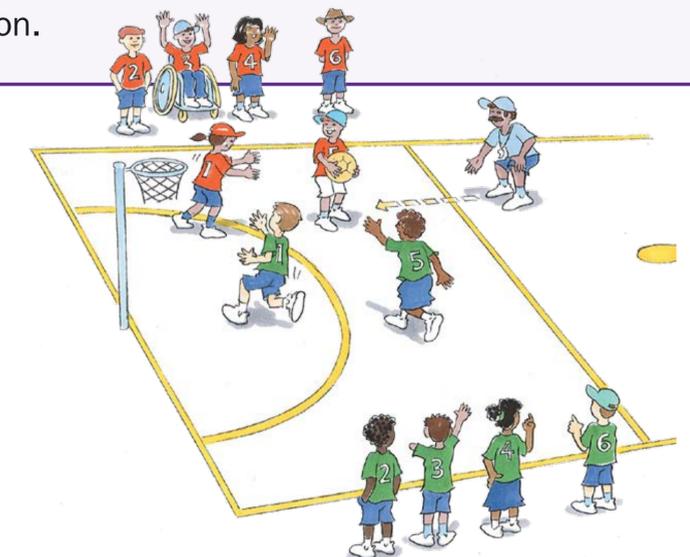


### Example:

During a netball game one of the players, Rachel, was becoming increasingly frustrated and yelling at her team-mates each time they made an error. This resulted in the team becoming discouraged and no longer enjoying the game.

This behaviour escalated until the coach, Roger, decided to stop the game, and introduce a game of Numbers netball where the focus was on team work and cooperation.

Roger observed that Rachel was not offering any encouraging comments, but, when it was her turn to shoot, the other children gave plenty of encouragement. Roger strongly encouraged the team's supportive behaviour until, eventually, Rachel started providing positive comments, even when a player missed their shot. Roger then rewarded Rachel's behaviour through praise, and felt ready to try another game of netball.



# Domineering Behaviour

**All groups will include children of varying skill levels, abilities and experience, who may intentionally or unintentionally dominate sessions. This can become disruptive to the coach and affect the involvement of others.**

## Identifying behaviours

Children may:

- Assume team leader roles and direct other children
- Dominate discussions and questions by the coach
- Continually influence the pace and direction of activities
- Intentionally or unintentionally ignore those less skilled in the group
- Dominate the games or activities

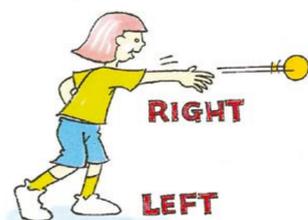
- Highlight examples of cooperative play and issue bonus points to reward desirable behaviours.



## What you can do

Simple changes to activities may help to address domineering behaviour in group activities. Remember to address a child's behaviour and not their character, and be a good role model at all times.

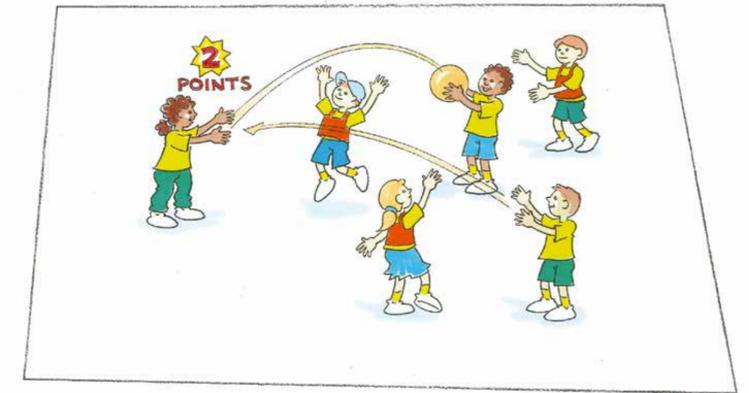
- Use smaller groups and evenly space out more experienced children between teams.
- Allow more experienced children to demonstrate a skill.



- Score in a way that allows children to individually challenge themselves to achieve success.
- When questioning children about changing an element of an activity, use responses such as: 'That was a very valuable suggestion, does anybody else have another idea that we could use?'. Recognising comments in this manner will help to increase esteem and create an environment in which others feel comfortable contributing.



- Delegate extra roles to more experienced children as part of an activity, such as keeping count of the number of passes, to provide more of a challenge.

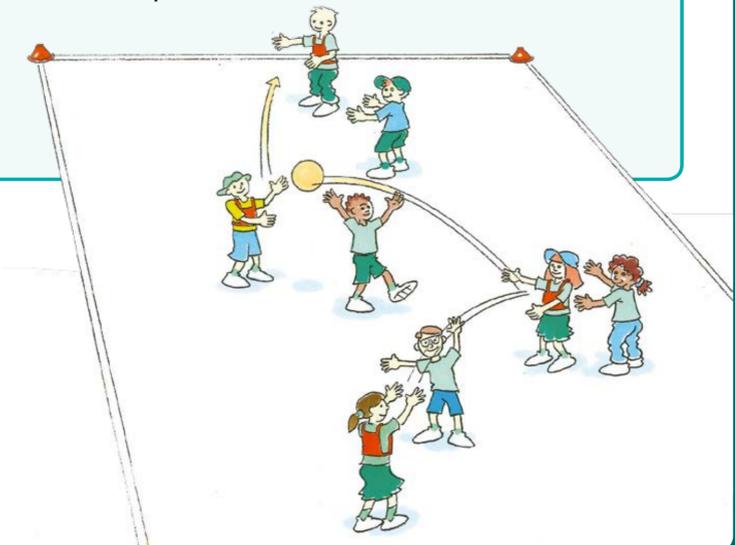


## Example:

Susie decided that the children would play a game of hockey as part of the day's session. She knew that a couple of the children, Jodie and Ryan, had played for the school team and had a greater skill level than the others. Susie broke the group into two teams, with Jodie in one and Ryan in the other. As the session progressed, Susie observed children losing interest and getting frustrated as Jodie and Ryan were dominating the game. Susie paused the game and asked the

group what changes could be made, to ensure every player got to touch the ball. They decided if the ball was passed to three different team-mates before scoring, that team should receive bonus points.

Once the game started again Susie saw a big change: Jodie and Ryan were doing their best to include their team-mates in order to get those bonus points.



# Non-participation

Children may not participate in activities for a number of reasons. As these reasons may not be obvious, understanding and patience are essential, to ensure all children feel they have an opportunity to get involved.

## Identifying behaviours

Children may:

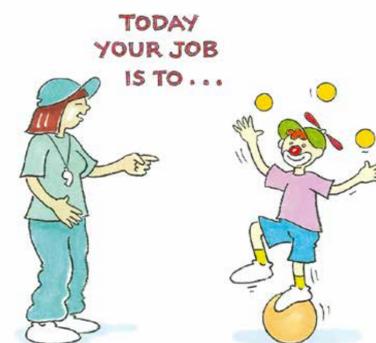
- Refuse to participate in activities
- Not agree to play certain roles as part of games
- Make no effort or attempt to engage with other children

## What you can do

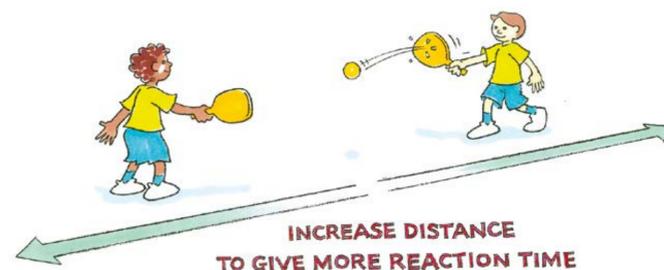
Once illness or injury or cultural considerations have been ruled out, simple changes to activities may help to encourage participation. Remember to address a child's behaviour and not their character, and be a good role model at all times.

- Partner with the child to encourage their involvement in the activities.

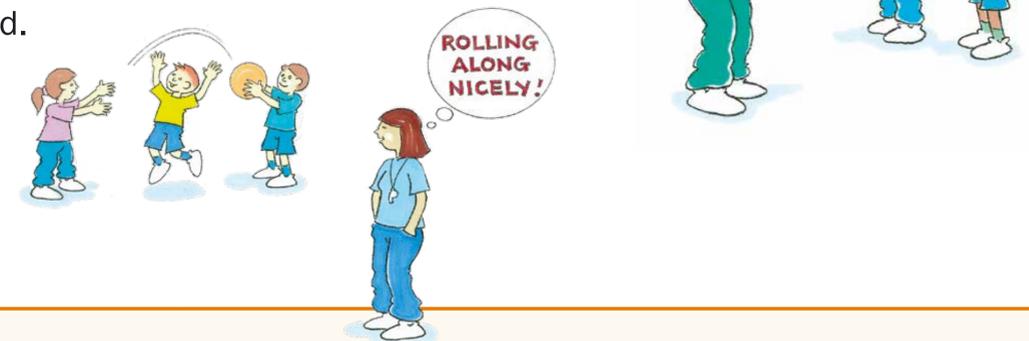
- Ask one of their friends, or a more experienced child from the group, to encourage their participation in the activities.
- Think of new and varied roles that can be played: for example, scorer or umpire.



- Look for signs of interest during the activities, to invite participation.
- Use changes that increase or decrease complexity of the activity to provide more opportunities for success.



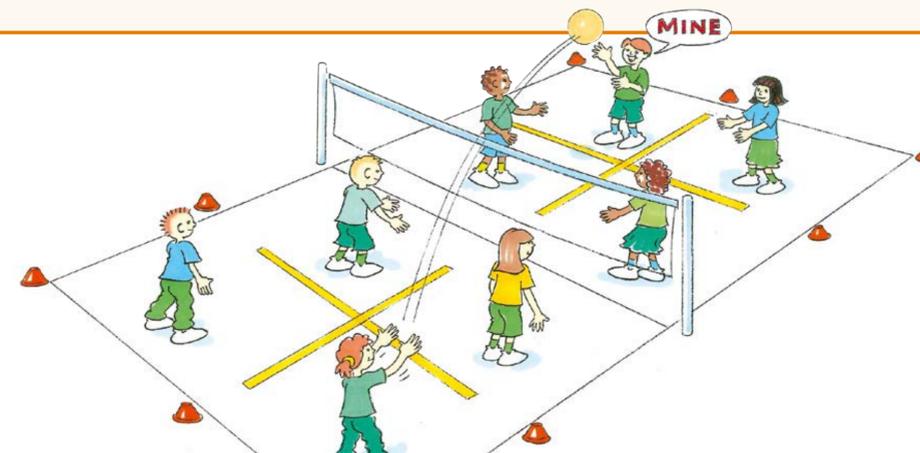
- Ensure the fun element is emphasised.
- Create ownership by asking the child for a suggestion on how to improve or change the activity.
- Provide encouragement once the child is involved.



## Example:

After a five minute warm up, Sarah brought her group of children together to introduce the next activity: volleyball. Peter immediately tensed up and said, 'I don't want to play this game, I don't like volleyball'. The last time Peter played volleyball he was unable to serve the ball over the net, but the other children could. Peter wanted to avoid further embarrassment and so sat out.

After a quick one-on-one discussion with Peter, Sarah changed one of the game rules to allow children to serve from different spots around the court. Sarah made the rule for the whole group, not just Peter, so all of the children could choose the spot they felt most comfortable with to make a serve. After watching the game with this new rule in play, Peter decided to join in, and Sarah provided encouragement throughout the session.



# Where to from here?



## Participation and talent pathways

The AFL player participation pathway has been developed to ensure it contains the following principles:

- Comprehensive (levels of participation that link)
- Inclusive and equitable (accommodates all young people)
- Coherent (prescribes links between levels)
- Developmental (meets children's needs)
- Informed (by research and practice).

This pathway provides a quality environment where young players can sequentially develop their skills through activities, games, match rules and conditions fitting their stage of learning and ability.

At the youth level, the talent pathway to becoming an AFL player begins to emerge through regional development squads that have the dual purpose of developing an individual player's abilities and preparing teams to participate in state championships at under-14 level and above.

Australian football coaches who are coaching at youth level should have a good understanding of the AFL participation and talent pathways. All players with whom they are working are part of those pathways and many will be dreaming of becoming AFL players. An understanding of the workings of the pathway and the processes used to identify and develop talented players are important tools for all youth coaches.

The AFL Rising Stars section of this policy includes elements of the evaluation process that are integral to the talent pathway, and coaches may wish to use some of them, perhaps in modified forms, in their coaching programs.

To find out more about getting involved in AFL , go to [www.playafl.com.au](http://www.playafl.com.au).

## Resources and more information

There is a range of resources available about Australian football. For more information about these resources and other AFL programs, visit the Community Football website at [www.aflcommunityclub.com.au](http://www.aflcommunityclub.com.au) or contact any of the state and territory associations listed on page 67.

# Contacts



## AFL

AFL House, 140 Harbour Esplanade  
DOCKLANDS VIC 3008  
GPO Box 1449, MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Ph: (03) 9643 1999

## AFL Northern Territory

TIO Stadium, 70 Abala Road  
MARRARA NT 0812  
PO Box 43196, CASUARINA NT 0811

Ph: (08) 8980 4823

## AFL New South Wales/ Australian Capital Territory

Level 1, Sheridan Building, Sydney Football Stadium  
MOORE PARK ROAD, MOORE PARK NSW 2021  
PO Box 333, STRAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012

Tel: (02) 8333 8000

## AFL Queensland

Qld Administration and Training Centre  
Cansdale Street, YERONGA QLD 4104  
PO Box 3132, YERONGA GPO, QLD 4104

Tel: (07) 3033 5400

## South Australian National Football League

AAMI Stadium, Turner Drive  
WEST LAKES SA 5021  
PO Box 1, WEST LAKES SA 5021

T: (08) 8268 2000

## AFL Tasmania

Aurora Stadium, Invermay Road  
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250  
PO Box 1896, LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Tel: (03) 6333 0727

## AFL Victoria

Visy Park, Gate 3, Royal Parade  
CARLTON NORTH VIC 3054  
GPO Box 4337, MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Tel: (03) 8341 6000

## West Australian Football Commission

Gate 6, Patersons Stadium, Subiaco Road  
SUBIACO WA 6008  
PO Box 275, SUBIACO WA 6904

Tel: (08) 9381 5599