

# BLIND FOOTBALL

## *Training Manual*



GIRLS • WOMEN • NON-BINARY



**Wolf Schmidt**  
Translation and Foreword  
Joe Steinlechner

# Index

Page 3	Introduction .....	<b>Equality</b>	
Page 4	Introduction .....	<b>Foreword</b>	
Page 5	Introduction .....	<b>Portraits I</b>	
Page 6	Introduction .....	<b>Portraits II</b>	
Page 7	Introduction .....	<b>Portraits III</b>	
Page 8	Introduction .....	<b>Author's Core Statements</b>	
Page 9	Introduction .....	<b>Conditions and Challenges</b>	
Page 10	Legend .....	<b>Symbols and Systematics</b>	
Page 11	Legend .....	<b>Roles and Personnel</b>	
Page 12	Running .....	<b>Tandem with Guide</b>	
Page 13	Running .....	<b>Sprinting</b>	Video
Page 14	Running .....	<b>Sprint 20m + 20m</b>	Video
Page 15	Running .....	<b>Sprint 4 plus 1</b>	
Page 16	Running .....	<b>Sprint Rondo 6 plus 1</b>	
Page 17	Running .....	<b>Double Pendulum Relay</b>	
Page 18	Running .....	<b>Changing Direction</b>	
Page 19	Running .....	<b>Changing Direction II</b>	
Page 20	Home .....	<b>Ball Training</b>	
Page 21	Home .....	<b>Sole Roll</b>	
Page 22	Home .....	<b>Self-pass</b>	
Page 23	Dribbling .....	<b>Preliminary Considerations</b>	
Page 24	Dribbling .....	<b>Basics</b>	
Page 25	Dribbling .....	<b>20m + 20m Dribbling and »Ball Handicap«</b>	Video
Page 26	Dribbling .....	<b>»Eights«</b>	Video
Page 27	Opposing Pressure .....	<b>Duels</b>	
Page 28	Opposing Pressure .....	<b>1 on 1</b>	
Page 29	Dribbling and Finishing .....	<b>Free One-Two Infinite</b>	
Page 30	Dribbling and Finishing .....	<b>Free</b>	
Page 31	Dribbling and Finishing .....	<b>Finishing from Distance</b>	
Page 32	Dribbling and Finishing .....	<b>Throw-out</b>	
Page 33	Dribbling and Finishing .....	<b>Orbiting the Ball</b>	
Page 34	Dribbling and Finishing .....	<b>Ball Hunter</b>	Video
Page 35	Dribbling and Finishing .....	<b>The Pass Wall</b>	Video
Page 36	Outlook .....	<b>Looking back (and forward)</b>	
Page 37	Competition .....	<b>Mini Games: Keeper Pressure</b>	Video
Page 38	Competition .....	<b>Mini Games Indoors</b>	
Page 39	Competition .....	<b>3 on 3 Outside</b>	
Page 40	Material .....	<b>Notes</b>	





World Grand Prix Strasbourg, September 2022 FC St. Pauli [GER] - SC Schiltigheim [FRA] Image: Wolf Schmidt

This manual is meant for everyone that is interested in blind football.

It doesn't matter if you have already been able to gather experience within the sport or just want to start out now.

11-a-side football, which is played by sighted players, is the most popular team sport on this planet.

Blind football or five-a-side football, which is played by blind outfield players, has been a paralympic sport since 2004.

Gender equality is an important topic around the world, even in sports, and especially in football. 'Equal play and equal pay' are important buzzwords in this regard.

Gender equality is always achieved later for women than for men.

Regardless if it's equal treatment in terms of societal rights, such as voting rights or equal treatment in sport, the story remains the same.

Let's have a look at the mother country of football.

60 years after the foundation of the first men's football teams, the first women's teams were founded.

71 years after the first English football champions were crowned, the first female team won their championship.

32 years after the Bundesliga was founded in Germany, the women's Bundesliga was started in Germany.

25 years after the first European Championships in blind football, the first IBSA European Women's Championships took place in Pescara, Italy.

Even 20 years after the first paralympic medals were awarded in blind football, women still won't be able to compete for paralympic medals in 2024.

Training, developing players, founding teams, and supporting each other are important cornerstones to achieve competition, fairness, and access to sporting variety for all people.



IBSA European Championships Pescara [ITA], June 5th 2022 Germany - England Image: Michael Hain

Blind football has captivated my mind, heart, and soul since I first encountered the sport several years ago. Since then, it has been my great pleasure to share my enthusiasm for the sport with numerous people;

After starting a national blind football program from scratch in Austria, we even founded the first women's blind football team in Europe. Although women have been competing in mixed teams for numerous years -

***Dorien Cornelis of Belgium even competed at the IBSA European Championships in 2017***

- a safe space for women to share their passion, exchange their experiences, and compete for a trophy at the same time has been missing.

same nationality, to compete for honours at an international level, yet most athletes aspire to compete with others and learn from them.

This is precisely why a manual is urgently needed: Even one person is enough to start a women's blind football team or host an international event. This manual can serve as a guideline for that one person or group that is making their first steps in the sport, while also serving as a source of inspiration for experienced coaches through its focus on practicality and useability.

I have known Wolf Schmidt for several years and am convinced that there could be no better person to share his experience and knowledge with the world. Besides his success as head coach of the Club St. Pauli, who won back-to-back German Championships in 2022, Wolf led the German Women's National Team to gold at the first IBSA European Championships 2022.

As one of the best coaches in the game, his invaluable insights will serve as a source of inspiration for any reader, regardless of experience within the sport. I am convinced that after reading this manual, you will be well-equipped for a lifelong journey within this uniquely amazing sport.

While I wish you the best of luck for your journey, I know you are in the very capable hands of Wolf Schmidt - ***so lean back and enjoy the ride!***

Joe Steinlechner



To address this, the No Look Cup was created, the first women's tournament for club teams.

One of the main ideas was to break down borders and barriers of exclusion, by enabling women from all countries to compete together. As the sport is still in its early stages, motivated players may struggle to find enough players of the



- 1:** Why did you start playing blind football?
- 2:** What do you especially like about blind football?
- 3:** Which competitive experiences did you have before starting blind football?
- 4:** Which advice would you give to someone that is still unsure whether they should give blind football a shot?



### ***Gracia Sosa Barreneche – Argentina***

- 1:** What I like the most is the sound of the ball haha.
- 2:** What I like the most is the nice atmosphere, the friendships and the values. Take that as my No.1. from me
- 3:** I did athletics and rowing.
- 4:** I would tell them to play! You feel free on the pitch. I would tell them to go for it, it's a very, very nice experience!



### ***Łucja Wyrwantowicz – England***

- 1:** I started playing blind football because I found that this was a sport that was made inclusive to me, giving me the ability to play against and with people of the same vision.
- 2:** The thing I like most about blind football, as I have mentioned is the inclusivity. We now live in a time where people of all differences can do what they love and I think that is incredible.
- 3:** As I am visually impaired, before starting to play blind football I would play sighted football. However that got increasingly harder as my sight deteriorated.
- 4:** My only advice to give someone who is unsure about trying blind football is "go for it!" There is nothing wrong in trying something new. As scary and unfamiliar it might be you might realise that it brings you great joy!



### ***Jana Marquart – Germany***

- 1:** I started with blind football because I had always wanted to play in a football club since I was a child but didn't have the opportunity to play with any teams where I lived, since I was at a huge disadvantage in sighted football. When I found out that blind football exists, I just had to try it out.
- 2:** It's great to finally be able to play a team sport without having any disadvantage through my visual impediment. On the pitch we are all the same. I also like the different challenges, both physical and mental. In addition, I really like that the sport is inclusive and that a team can only work if outfield players, keepers, and guides, work together and are in sync.
- 3:** None, if you don't count school games.
- 4:** 'Get on to the pitch and start playing. Gather your courage, go to a training and try it out!' You will find a lot of like-minded athletes that will welcome you with open arms.

- 1:** Why did you start playing blind football?
- 2:** What do you especially like about blind football?
- 3:** Which competitive experiences did you have before starting blind football?
- 4:** Which advice would you give to someone that is still unsure whether they should give blind football a shot?



***Carina Edlinger – Austria***

- 1:** Mark Blake from Sweden came to me, because he read an article about me in a newspaper when I was living in Östersund. He invited me to a training camp and I was immediately enthused by the sport.
- 2:** I think it is a very cool sport because it is highly demanding as a team sport in terms of coordination. Aside from my individual sports, it's very nice to be with a team and filter out all the noises, plus of course the coordination, team spirit and the rugby component.
- 3:** With cross-country skiing and biathlon at a paralympic level and all my achievements, I have a broad level of experiences that I can bring to the pitch and which in turn also made starting a bit easier. However, blind football has shown me that you are not automatically head of the pack, just because you are fairly good at other sports.
- 4:** Just give it a go, welcome it with open arms and try to see, if it is something for you – even if the speed and physicality might be a bit scary in the beginning.



***Alisa Rudi – Germany***

- 1:** I started playing blind football because my teacher recommended it to me. I tried it, enjoyed it from the start, and wanted to continue playing.
- 2:** Blind football is a team sport. It's fun to operate as a team and move freely on the pitch, to leave the everyday life behind you and to live out the sport.
- 3:** Before I started blind football, I didn't have any competitive experience. I am in a judo club and have been riding since I was 8 years old, but I never took part in competitions.
- 4:** Just don't think too much about it, give it a go, and have fun.



***Alice Hopkins – England***

- 1:** Following Covid my college put on Give-It-A-Go sessions and I went along and really enjoyed playing.
- 2:** The aspect I enjoy the most is that players are required to play as a team. Being a single unit and working together, meaning that we all build such a strong bond through playing and training together.
- 3:** My only previous experience within competitive sport was playing blind Boccia. Unfortunately, it is no longer a competitively played sport however it is something that I do enjoy playing.
- 4:** To anyone who is unsure about playing I would tell them to try playing as you will never know if you are going to enjoy playing if you don't try. In my own experience from doubting myself it is worth trying as you never know what you can do without trying first.

- 1:** Why did you start playing blind football?
- 2:** What do you especially like about blind football?
- 3:** Which competitive experiences did you have before starting blind football?
- 4:** Which advice would you give to someone that is still unsure whether they should give blind football a shot?



**Alla Sahakyan – Armenia**

**1:** I have loved football since I was a child, despite the prohibitions of doctors, I always played football with my friends. Years ago, I didn't know about blind football and my friends and I were trying to adapt the game so that we could all play. Since 2019, the miracle called blind football appeared in my life, when I learned about the sport, I went to meet the coach, excitedly we started to develop blind football in Armenia with some friends and we are moving forward with small, small steps.

**2-4:** blind football gave me the opportunity to live football, enjoy the sport and do what you love. Train like everyone else, an athlete who represents his country. There are many people with vision problems who think that they can't do anything, let alone sports, and we break those stereotypes with our experience.

I admire and take pride in women who play football. The way of thinking of people has changed with time and now they realize that a sport can be played regardless of gender.

I have overcome many problems psychologically for the sake of sports and I continue to overcome them so that my dream does not fade away.

As a professional working with visually impaired people and an athlete, I know what kind of problems have to be overcome, it's complicated, but for the sake of sports, you can turn your seemingly impossible dreams into reality and achieve full success.

I remember that during school years we adapted many games so that we could organize competitions. Apart from physical and mental abilities, sports teach us formulas to be a strong and good person, the formulas should be applied in the right place.



**Katie Christopher – England**

**1:** years ago, I was volunteering with a charity who supports blind and visually impaired young people and saw the England boys training, I was asked if I wanted to have a go in goal and it grew from there.

**2:** The thing I love the most about blind football is how no game is the same, it's never boring!

**3:** I have always played football at a high level, being involved with regional squads and playing tier 4 football, but grew out of love with the game when I was 18, finding blind football made me fall back in love with the game.

**4:** I have had the pleasure of witnessing a number of females who have a visual impairment first try out the sport, and the biggest bit of advice I can give, is just to try it, you don't know you don't like something unless you try it first!





Wolf Schmidt · Foto: Stefan Groenveld

## Wolf Schmidt

## INTRODUCTION

Passionate about football since early childhood. [At least since the FIFA World Cup 1974]  
 Late starter as competitive football player [1991], coach [since 2006] and instructor [since 2012].  
 UEFA B Coaching License [2018].  
 First-time German champion aged 50 with the blind football team of FC St. Pauli [2017].  
 European Champion with Germany Women's Team [2022]  
 Reporting for blind and visually impaired [2004] and audio description on TV [2015].  
 Original career plan: experimental film artist [1988].

## Core messages relating to blind football training

- Blind football training should be held regularly and dependably at the same place.
- Even if 'only' one player has time, it is worth holding a training session.
- Cancellation of training sessions because of too few players are only admissible, if absolutely no one can come.
- Training sessions twice a week are the minimum requirement if you want to improve in competitive sports.
- All players train wearing their eyeshades from the start.
- Individual training, in addition to team training, makes a lot of sense in technically demanding sports.
- In training you should try to generate as many ball contacts as possible.
- Training should be as close to match situations as possible.
- There is a final game at the end of every training session.
- Even a 1-on-1 can be a rewarding final game.
- Performing and improving are fun and can be measured.
- The ideal relationship of personnel in blind football training is one to one, meaning that there are as many sighted people as visually impaired players.
- Still, you need to be able to design and conduct a meaningful training session for six or more players as the only sighted person.
- Participating in competitions and competitive games are highlights and the goals of your training.
- There is no minimum required age to start with blind football.
- Limits must be recognized in order to push boundaries and grow.
- Blind football is the most demanding form of football, however it is still just one of many forms of football.
- Players can also have fun with competitive matches after a short time and don't need to train for years to compete with others.
- Sighted people build trust by enabling blind players to orientate themselves.
- Orientation leads to safety. Being safe from unnecessary injuries and other dangers is necessary for players to enjoy themselves.
- Every person has the right to push themselves to their limits.
- Especially in sports the pushing of boundaries and expansion of limits goes hand in hand with personal growth

If some of the core messages here seem to hold true for sighted football, then I find that very logical, because first and foremost blind football is simply football. Of course, it is much more difficult to design exercises or training sessions for players that can't see well or not at all.

My start in coaching at my daughters' team FC Sternschanze and my introduction to the coaching pathway of the DFB helped me a lot in learning how to design blind football training meaningfully. Especially the children's trainer module, that was offered by the Hamburg footballing association at the time, opened my eyes on how to offer football training that is tailored to the players' individual needs. Communicating about who needs what is elementary.

The plethora of available books and magazines on coaching children's sighted football, which are freely accessibly

in almost all languages, are worth studying and analyzing in terms of their translatability, and to see in what way the 'sighted training conditions' can be adapted to meet the needs of blind football training. For this reason, I am very happy to be able to go into more depth regarding some design elements of blind football training that I find useful in this coaching manual. This is only my personal perspective, even if my linguistic style might seem to be claiming general validity, I kindly ask you:

***'Try it out! Make your own experiences!  
 See what works for you!'***



There are a lot of different reasons to start playing blind football. The underlying core-facts are always the same: The eyesight of a player is impaired, and the ball is played with the foot. The more a player's vision is impaired, the more important the auditory sense becomes as a means of orientation. Therefore, you can conclude, that the ball needs to be audible in order to be locatable and playable. Playing ball is a coordinative motor challenge.

Of the 100% of coordinative skills and abilities that a person normally learns and acquires, less than 15% relate to the coordination of the feet. The majority of acquired coordinative skills and abilities are required by the hands. This average distribution was determined by analyzing sighted people.

If we consider that blind people, for example through reading with their fingers, develop even more coordinative skills and abilities with their hands - caused by the 'sensual redistribution' from visual to tactile - then the remaining coordinative development space for their feet is even less than the 15% on average attributed to the unimpaired population.

In the blind team sports Goalball and Torball the ball is played with the hands when in possession (and not with the feet) and there is also no physical contact with opposing players. This could explain why blind football is commonly considered to be an extreme sport. Football is the most popular team sport worldwide.

Colloquial condensation: "Football has to be fun, otherwise there wouldn't be so many people playing it." Active participation in football is currently 75% less common among peo-

ple with visual impairment when compared to the number of active players in sighted football.

These figures are drawn from Hamburg in 2022, a city where blind football is currently highly popular. Learning to play football is quite probably more difficult for people with visual impairment than for fully sighted people. The different distributions of coordinative demands and challenges for sighted and visually impaired athletes offer a possible explanation for this.

The reasons for the difficulties in accessing the sport of blind football are certainly manifold.

However, accessibility as a goal and inclusion as a process means dealing with hurdles and obstacles, in order to be able to first recognize them and then dismantle or at least reduce them.

***If football brings joy to so many people around the world, why should some people be excluded from it due to their characteristics?***

# Symbols and Systematics

## LEGEND

To represent blind football training sessions, a consistent system of symbols is needed. In this booklet, all roles and functions have a corresponding letter [Roles and Personnel].

In addition, different roles are depicted recurringly using the same icons and colors.

It has become generally accepted in depicting football sessions that a running route is shown with a dashed line, a dribbling route is shown by a wavy line, and a shooting, pass-


ing, or throwing path is shown by a solid line. The thicker the drawn line, the more intense the action.

For each exercise, the number of people, the used space and the required materials are shown. Yellow marker discs are actively used in the exercise and blue markers limit the play area. In addition to the play area, keep in mind that some exercises require a surrounding safety area for running players to decelerate.

**P** [player]  
**C** [coach]  
**G** [Guide]  
**K** [Keeper]  
**A** [Assistant]

**20m x 10m** [play area]

**blind football B** [type of ball]  
**miniature goals** [type of goal]  
**M** [marker discs]

 60 sec [duration]  
 or stopwatch symbol

QR Codes link to Videos  
 [currently without audio description!]



EXAMPLE: After the Soundcheck [1.,2.] and dribbling along the designated path (1), the shaded player passes to their coach (2) and runs to the right (3) while saying "VOY!"...

Here the sequence of an exercise is described. Participants, space, material [goals, balls, ...] time, repetitions, actions, communications, and sequence.

Spoken words are written in red. "VOY!"

The black number [1.] before spoken words indicates the order of speech.

Green is used to describe deviations from the ideal procedure, because the drawing board and reality don't always align.

Blue is used to describe variations.

*Italics is used for coaching advice or questions to ask yourself.*

**Bold is used for important statements and key messages.**



**P [Player]**

The visually impaired and shaded player is symbolically depicted with a halo instead of eyeshades. All players should wear eyeshades from the beginning and for the entire duration of a training session.



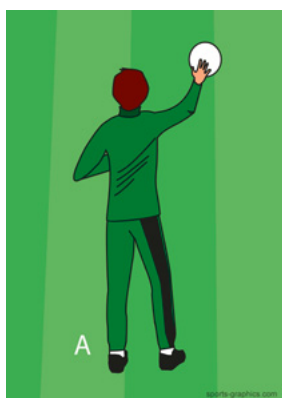
**K [Keeper]**

In training sessions, the sighted keeper should be active from the beginning. They guide defending players through verbal cues. Keepers are often neglected in training because guides and assistants take care of all the players. Goalkeepers can train among themselves as a separate group at times.



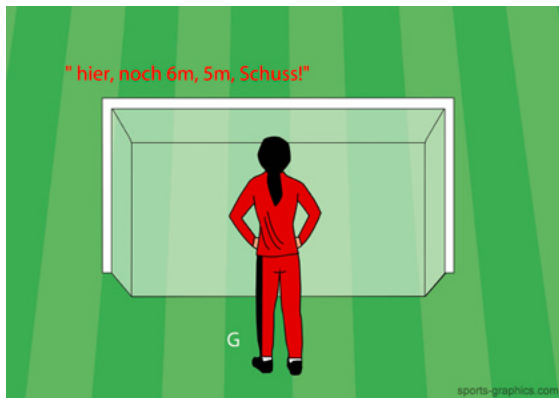
**C [Coach]**

The coach, who is usually sighted, often fills a variety of roles during training. They can be active as a sighted teammate. In the final game, they can be referee, coach the players in breaks, or act as a guide.



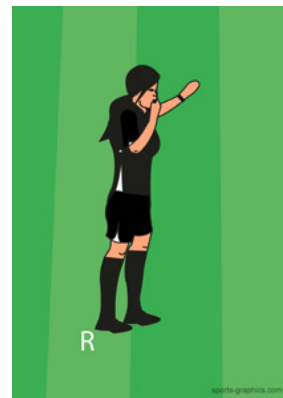
**A [Assistant]**

The sighted assistant is responsible for keeping the training running smoothly and without interruptions. The assistant ensures that there are always enough balls where they should be and that no silent balls are left in the playing area. Two assistants are well utilized in a regular training session.



**G [Guide] M [Mid-Guide]**

The sighted guide ensures that players can perceive, locate and aim at the opposing goal or exercise target. They call out to attacking players to indicate their position and possibly indicate desired actions. „Here, 6 metres, 5 metres, shoot!“ [verbal cues are written in red.] The guide should only leave their position when they aren't currently needed. Under no circumstances should a goal guide leave their position during a shooting exercise, for example, to collect balls. The guide at the halfway line can be depicted as M [Mid].



**R [Referee]**

The sighted referee officiates the game. There should be a final game at the end of every training session. If a referee is available for the final game, that is ideal. Usually, the coach officiates the final game, while performing in a hybrid role as coach and referee.



Running is the most popular sporting activity in the world. Running with a sighted guide, as a tandem that is connected via a running tether, is also a very common form of sporting activity for blind and visually impaired people. The guide needs to constantly scan an area that is roughly as wide as a car, to recognize and avoid obstacles and hazards (e.g. for twisting an ankle) for the blind runner. This is difficult because a sighted runner only needs to look ahead for the smallest possible area for their own foot to touch down to move forward safely. They only have to see and act on a step-by-step basis. Even the smallest suitable areas to touch down can be enough, to continue running without interference.

If a sighted runner acts as a guide for a blind runner, they can't anticipate where the blind runner might touch down their feet. Even less can they assume that the blind runner will find the small, and potentially few, suitable areas themselves by chance.

Therefore, the running guide needs to find and choose a completely safe and harmless running path that is twice as wide as the aforementioned 'car-width'. The guide needs to constantly scan the running path for even the smallest of obstacles. [Fig. 1]

A traffic-free, car-wide, and level asphalt runway with safe borders, is safe and easy for a tandem to run on. [Image 1]

An ascending forest path with varying tree trunks that are spaced evenly, is more like a hurdle race. It is very tricky to guide and thus very difficult for a tandem to run on safely. [Image 2]

On the hundreds of square concrete blocks with a milled groove that are piled up at the harbor quay for bank stabilization, a sighted runner might be able to run by jumping from block to block, but they will never be able to guide a blind runner to jump synchronously in a gazelle-like manner, while avoiding injuries. [Image 3]

Running as a tandem with a short running tether is well-suited for long-distance endurance runs.



Sprinting is also fun for blind people but requires a certain setting.

Why does it require a certain setting?

***Because the blind runner doesn't want to injure themselves.***

Why is the risk of injury higher?

***Because the blind runner can't see tripping hazards on the running path and therefore can't evade them. In addition, they are running at high speed.***



Terezinha Guilhermina Guilherme Soares. 100m T11 Paralympics London 2012

Sprinting, i.e. covering a short distance at maximum speed, demands a high degree of synchronized movements from the running tandem.

### VIDEO LINK

The world-class 100m sprinting tandem Dawid Brown and Jerome Avery

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xACYoPAicHE>

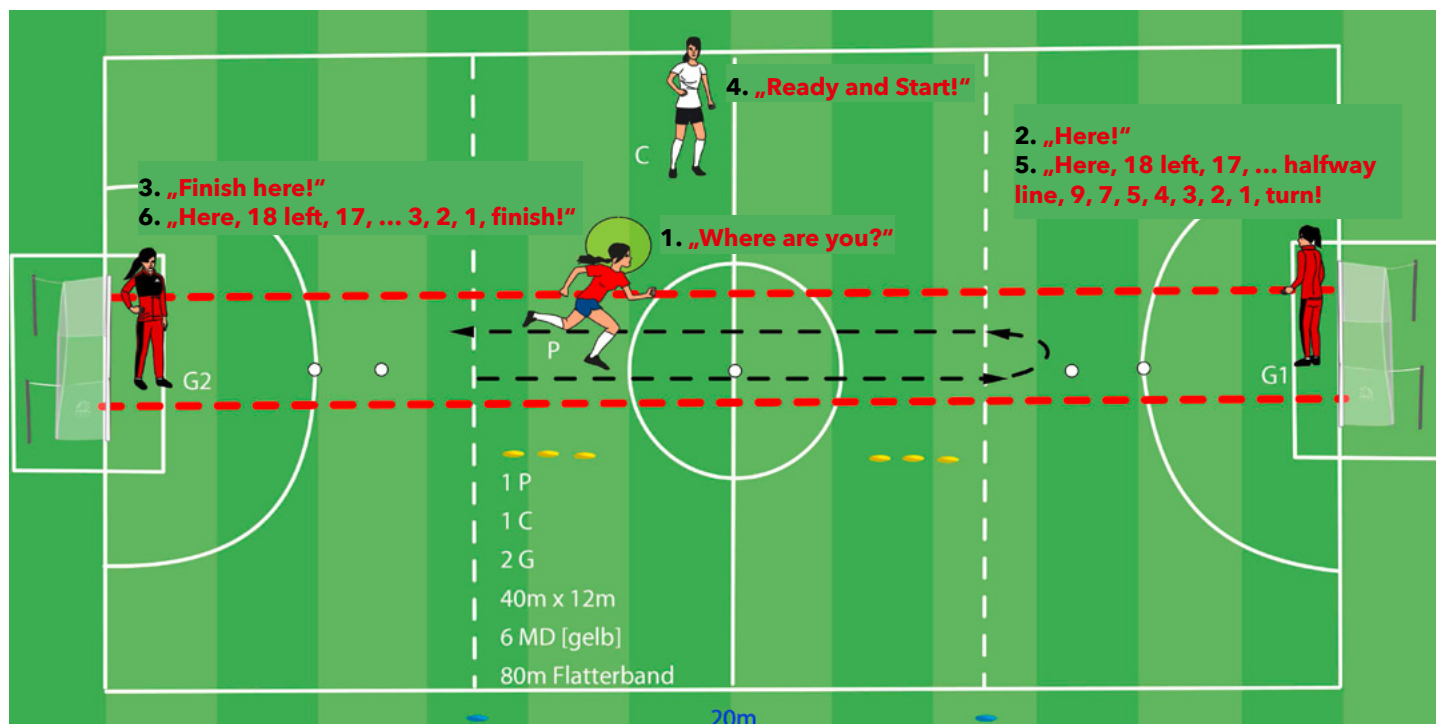
Sprinting blindly is a lot more difficult than running slower.

It's the task of the sighted person, the guide, to recognize possible sources of danger, remove or run around obstacles, and when necessary, interrupt the running activity by giving the command „**STOP!**“ to avoid injuries. This has to be done in a foresighted manner, meaning appropriately related to their own running speed and correspondingly short remaining reaction time.

However, the guide can also create a safe sprinting environment for blind athletes, where they don't have to sprint alongside the athlete.

This way, the athlete can explore their own performance limits as a runner and improve them through repetition [training]. This reduces the level of dependency the blind athlete has towards their guide in a tandem. The guide "only" needs to function verbally, by giving quick and precise cues from the runners' perspective, to ensure that the athlete can safely explore their performance limits without risking injury.

***In football short sprints and sudden changes of direction are common movement sequences.***



One shaded player [P]  
 One sighted coach [C] with stopwatch  
 Two sighted guides [G1, G2]  
 Six marker discs [MD yellow]  
 Two barrier tapes of 40m each  
 40m x 20m safe area

In contrast to the tandem sprint, you need a totals safe setting for a solo sprint track. The more experienced a player is, the less security setting is needed. No sprint corridor might be necessary.



VIDEO LINK

Sprint 20m + 20m



VIDEO LINK

Running along the tape, beginner with tactile turning point.

A sprinting corridor is created. It is created by using 2 lengths of 40m barrier tape that are attached firmly to the opposing goalposts at belly button height. (Wind mustn't be able to affect the lanes too strongly) The lanes made from barrier tape can offer players a tactile orientation aid and a feeling of safety - just like the dividing lines of a swimming pool lane.

**Caution: Don't attach tape at head or neck level!**

The player positions themselves centrally between the two tapes on the dashed guides' line and acoustically checks the situation. The player calls out to the guides [G1, G2] that are positioned centrally 2m in front of their respective goals.

The guides need to keep a safe distance to the players' turning area, so that the player has enough safety distance when running at full speed, in case the guiding comes too late. Upon the coaches' [C] starting command, the player starts sprinting at full speed.

Once the player has started running, only the guide in the running direction [first G1, then G2] gives acoustic distance

cues - **"here, 18 left, halfway line, 9, 7, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, turn!"** - the guide tells the player how far they need to run to the turning point. [If required, the yellow marker discs can be used to offer the guide some aid in determining the distance]

The player breaks abruptly after reaching the turning point, (i.e. when she crosses the dashed guides' line) does a 180-degree-turn, and accelerates in the opposing direction at full speed.

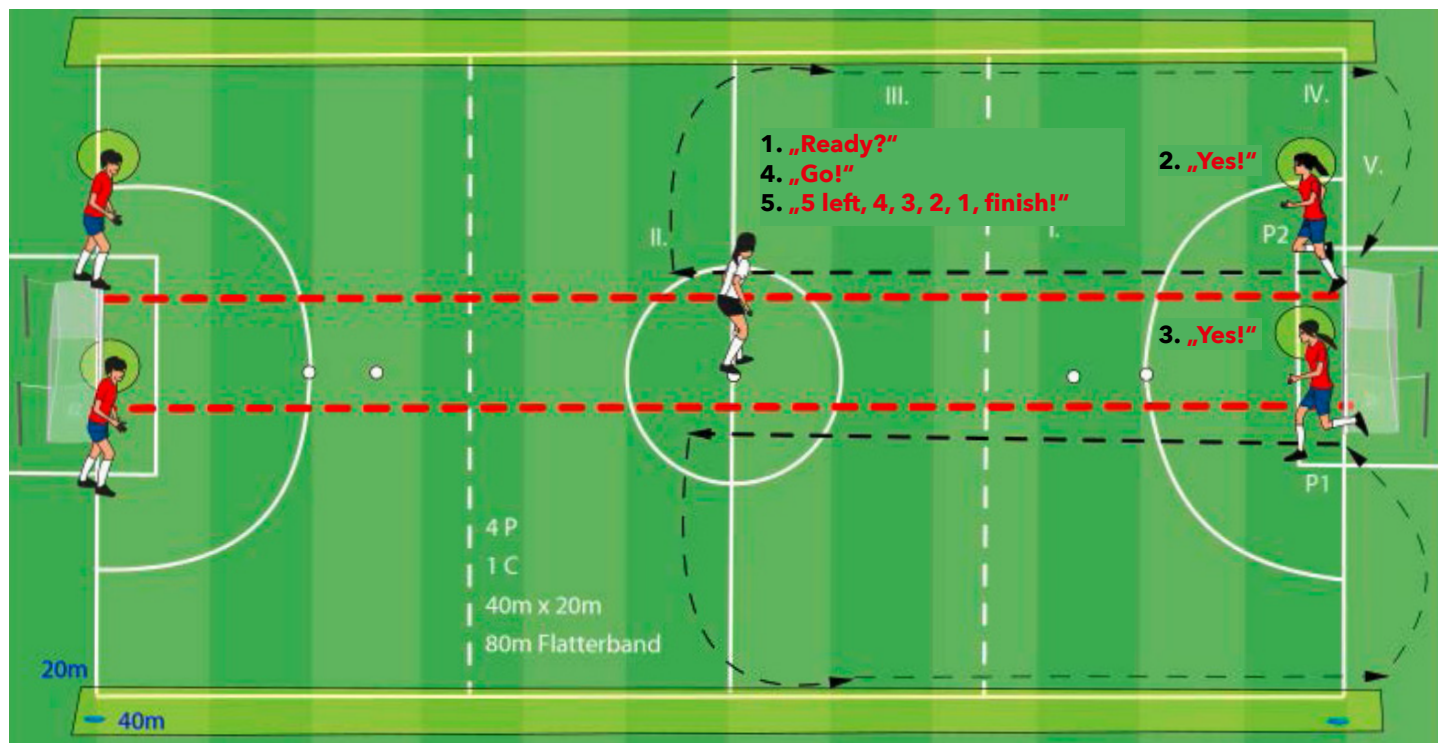
The second guide [G2] starts guiding as soon as the player has changed their direction and und continues doing so until the player [P] has reached the finishing line (i.e. has returned to the starting point).

The coach [C] records the time for the entire 20m plus 20m sprinting distance using the stopwatch. Die Trainerin stoppt die Zeit bei Überschreiten der Ziellinie. für die 20m plus 20m Sprintstrecke.



## Sprinting: 4 Players plus 1 Sighted Person

## RUNNING



Four shaded players [P]  
One sighted coach [C]  
2 x 40m barrier tape  
40m x 20m safe area

Rondos and overlapping exercise phases are a good way of ensuring adequate training intensity, even with lots of players and few sighted people.

A sprinting corridor is created, just as previously explained in the 20m + 20m sprint.

The four players position themselves outside of the corridor and next to the goal posts of both goals on a 40m x 20m-pitch with sideboards. Before starting, the coach checks if players P1 and P2 are ready „Ready?“ and if the response is positive „Yes!“ she gives the start command „Start!“. The players [P1, P2] start at full sprint [I.] in the direction of the coach and stick to their side. Crossing the running paths should be avoided at all costs.

Experienced players can also stick to their side without a barrier tape. Beginners can use the barrier tape as a handrail to help with orientation.

The coach announces the finishing line - in this case the half-way line: „5 left, 4, 3, 2, 1, finish!“

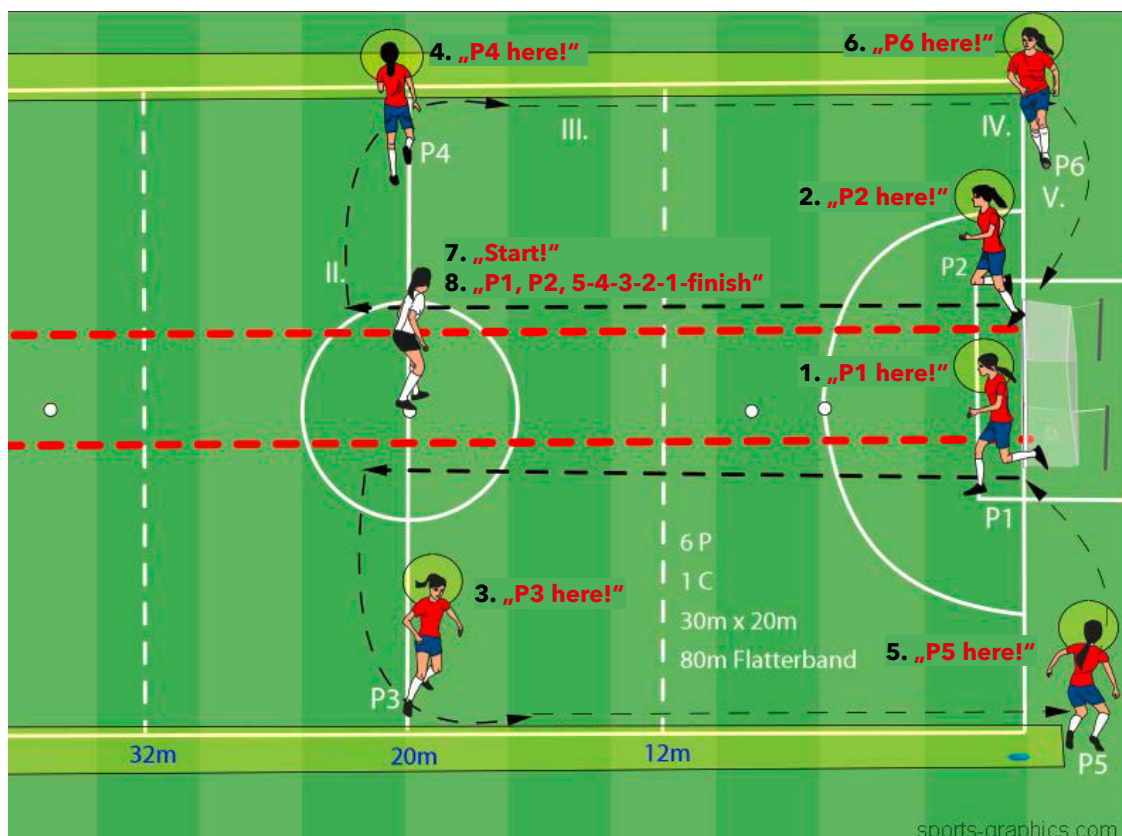
As soon as the players have reached the finishing line, they slow down and head towards the nearest sideboard [II.]. Once they have reached the sideboard, they follow it [III.] until the end [IV.]. From there they return to their starting position [V.] next to the goal post. While players approach the goalpost, they communicate with their teammate on the opposite side, to assure a safety. Careful, independent explorations of space without a guide are also valuable training experiences.

***In training sessions, it is important to avoid unnecessary waiting times!***

Necessary recovery times are granted. Losses of intensity through needless standing time are avoided.

The coach [C] can check if the second pair [P3, P4] is ready, as soon as P1 and P2 are headed back along the sideboard [III.]. The phases of activity of both pairs of players can and should overlap in this exercise to ensure an adequate load intensity.

***The coach should be able to design exercise settings that enable high intensity without danger of collision.***



In case of 6 active players during the sprinting session, the coach can position each player at a different transitional point in the circuit of the "double sprint rondo" to ensure a high level of physical intensity. Both players from the left goal line of the exercise "Sprinting 4+1" [see previous page] would then need to position themselves within the "double sprinting rondo" at the right side of the pitch. This means that there are 3 players in each sprinting circuit, who are positioned at the different transitions of the exercise sequence.

All players start from a running position after having acoustically checked in.

**Sound check sequence:** P1, P2, then P3, P4, then P5, P6 - i.e. in the circular flow of the exercise.

All players start simultaneously in their respective rondo phases, once the coach gives the starting command **"Start!"**. P3 and P4 look for contact with the sideboard for their return route [III.] and run back. P5 and P6 leave the end of the sideboard [IV], carefully look for the goalpost [V] together through communicating and head towards it. P1 and P2 sprint towards the coach that aids them by counting down the distance to the finish line. The players let their teammates know when

they have completed the transition from one position to the next. This benefits their orientation ability as a team.

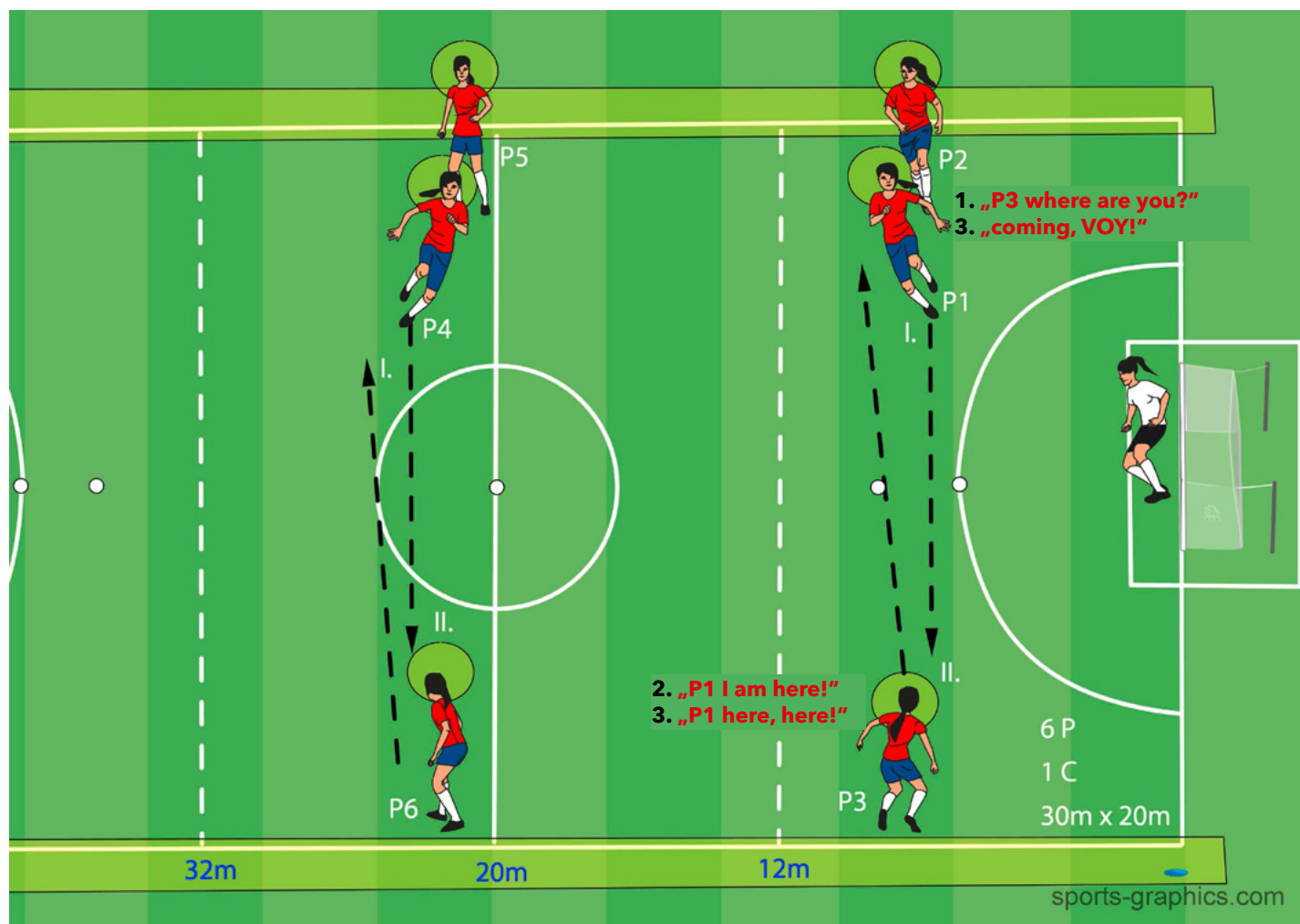
Especially the positioning at the starting position for the sprint (next to the goalposts), up until the synchronized start, demands good coordination between teammates. The players find each other through verbal cues. Once the players have confirmed that they are ready to start, they contact the coach.

Before giving the starting command, the coach confirms that the sprinting track is clear **or lets them know, if the path isn't clear yet.**

***Demand and encourage communication between the players!***

Searching for the sideboard and goalpost is a useful orientation training, but it should be done at a safe pace. *Cool down players who are too wild, fire up players who are too calm!*

***With larger groups of players, addressing players by name, for example before the countdown, is even more important than it normally is.***



The 'pendulum relay' is a very effective and simple exercise setup. A group of three players is arranged in a way that two players share a position, in this case at the sideboard. [P1, P2] The third player in the group is opposite of them at the other sideboard. [P3] This marks is all it needs to mark the sprinting route.

The coach has positioned themselves in a manner to secure the nearest source of danger - in the case the right goal. The second group with P4, P5, P6 position themselves in exactly the same way and at a safe distance from the first group.

The **sound check** is done on a group-by-group basis, according to the starting order within the group. P1, P2, P2, then P4, P6, P5. Every player should make sure they know beforehand who their counterpart is. Upon the coach's command, the first player of each group starts running to the opposite side, where their counterpart is giving verbal cues and waiting for a high-five. After the high-five (or gentle poke), the second player starts running towards the third player, who like the second player previously, gives verbal cues and waits for the player to reach them.

After high fiving, the player stays at the position of their counterpart. This way both sideboard positions - or end points of the sprinting track - are always occupied and the player can sprint towards an acoustic signal at full speed, namely their counterpart that is waiting and giving verbal cues. [Communicative ping-pong between players]

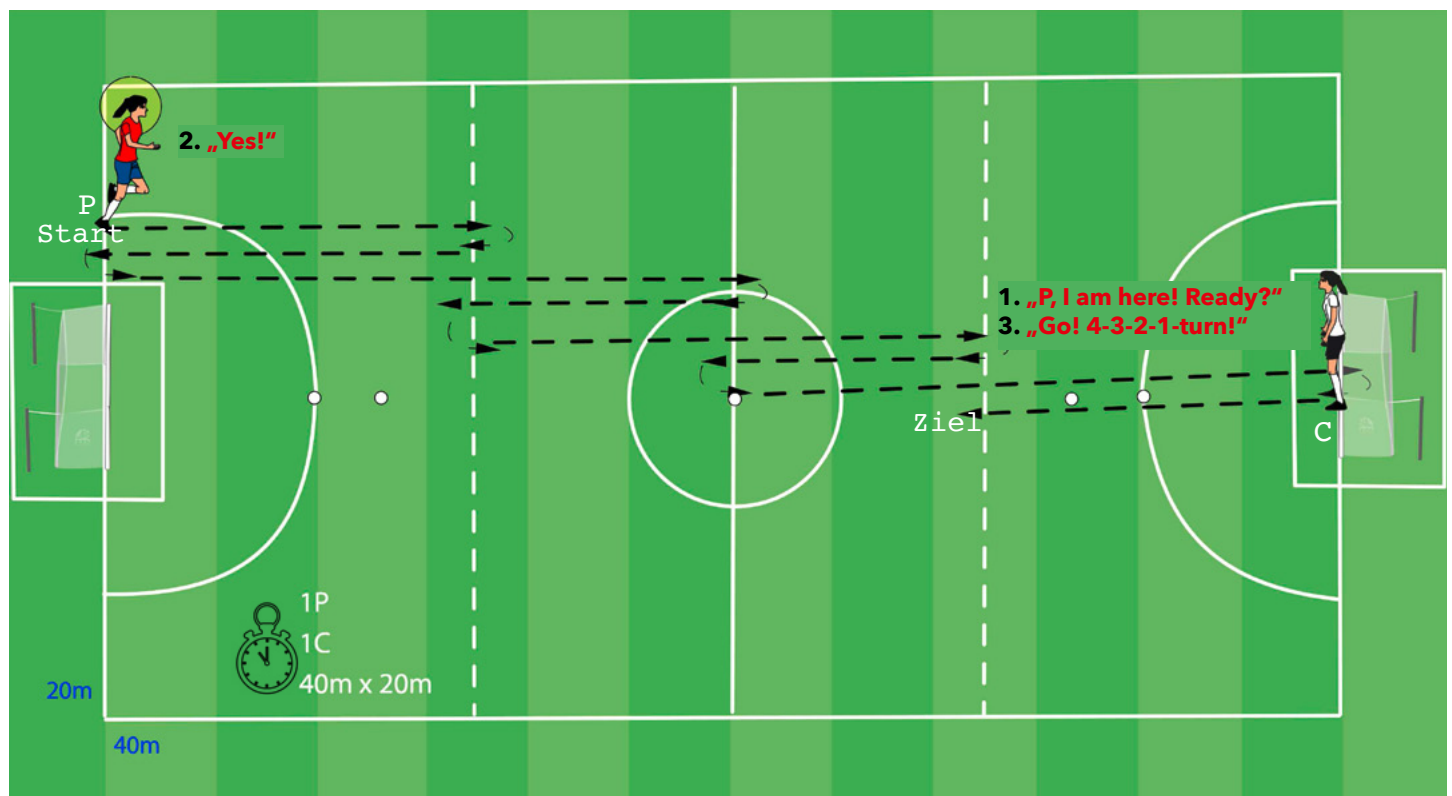
The active players also check their target (their counterpart) verbally while active and say **"VOY!"** while running. The waiting player, towards whom the other player is sprinting, gives verbal cues. **"P6, I am here, here!"** They do this until the other player has reached them and given them the go-signal through high fiving. The group should always communicate actively and frequently.

## ***Small competitions increase the level of fun!***

*[Which group can complete 3 rounds first?]*

All running exercises can also be done while dribbling. These examples should help the reader get an idea of how exercises can be designed to promote activity, intensity, and communication.





In all previous running exercises, players only actively ran (i.e. sprinted) in the same direction. In football matches, changes of direction at maximum speed happen all the time. Changes of direction while running place high demands on the blind player and the guide as a cooperatively functioning unit in several aspects: movement, communication, coordination, reaction and orientation.

The player starts at the goal line.  
The coach is in the opposite goal.

Sound check [1., 2.], the coach can start the stopwatch.  
Coaches command: **"Start!"** and guiding [3.]  
As soon as the player reaches a horizontal marking, they turn 180° and run towards the next but one pitch marking. This way, a running pattern emerges: Short turn, short turn, long turn, short turn, long turn, short turn, long turn, short turn. Using the entire pitch, this equates to a sprinting distance of 118m in total, with seven changes of direction until the finishing line.

Maneuverability and agility are abilities that promises success in blind football, just like in sighted soccer, and therefore should be trained. When it comes to designing exercises, there are no limits to a coaches' imagination. Anything that is sensible makes sense.

Line running can also be done with several players simultaneously. Players and coaches need to pay attention to the goals as a source of danger! All players need to say **"VOY!"**

The more players partake, the more demanding the task becomes for the guides. It becomes especially demanding, since players mostly arrive at the turning lines in a slight off-set and the guides need to provide all players with the count-down in the right moment.

The guide needs to be extremely flexible mentally to provide players with crucial information in a timely manner.

The abilities of a guide can be promoting or limiting factors.

Running lines is also a suitable exercise to practice transporting the ball (i.e. dribbling), because changes of direction while dribbling demand ball control.

*Give the player a ball! Record the total time!*



Players orientate themselves acoustically and need to stay on their running track.

Two coaches [C1, C2] position themselves at the 8m penalty spot facing each other. A player that is ready to start sprinting is standing to their right [P1, P2]. Behind every coach there is an additional player waiting [P3, P4]. **Sound check** and sprint P2 past the right side of C2. P1 is headed in the opposite direction and passes C1 at the right side. The coach gives a **distance count-down** to the guides' line. Once the player has passed it, they **make contact** with the waiting player - P1 with P3, P2 with P4. The now activated (and previously waiting) player goes to the starting position to the right of the coach, **sound check** and start. After sprinting, the player moves to the waiting position - sprinting once and recovering once.



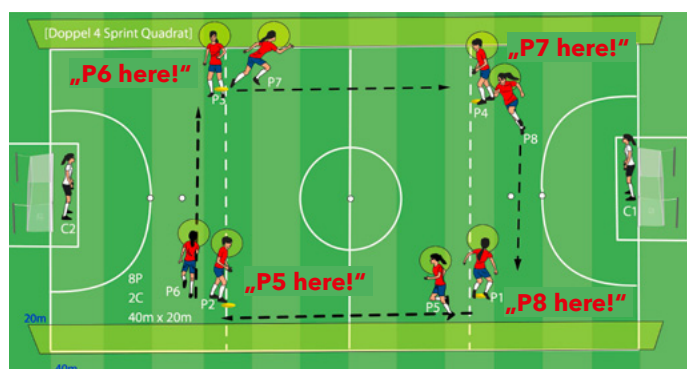
Blind players can also serve as guides

Two coaches [C1, C2] and a player [P4] position themselves in a triangle facing each other. The longest side of the triangle is 15m long. The standing people leave enough room to the sideboards behind themselves. Players that are ready to start [P1, P2, P3] position themselves to the right of each standing person respectively. After a **sound check**, the players start their sprint in a triangle around the standing guides [C1, C2, P4] while saying **"VOY!"**, and try to catch the player in front of them by touching them. Auditory orientation is important to be able to run along the outside of the triangle behind the guides.



Create a zone of activity for higher intensity

Two Coaches [C1, C2] position themselves on the guideline, slightly offset towards the left sideboard and facing each other. An imagined rectangle that goes from the left sideboard to the coaches marks the action area 'zigzag zone'. It is 20m x 8m in size. Player P1 starts a fast-paced diagonal run from behind the coach to the sideboard and upon touching the sideboard, runs diagonally forward to the right until she reaches the edge of the 'zigzag zone', which is created by the coaches' line of sight. The coaches and guides give **audible support**. The player running zigzag should run quickly and actively through the zigzag zone. Once behind coach C2, the player starts the return trip by heading towards the opposite sideboard and towards the starting position along the sides of a large rectangle.



Communicative self-securing

Two coaches [C1, C2] position themselves at the keeper's position and acoustically secure both goals. Four players position themselves at the corners of a rectangle along the guides' lines [P1 - P4] or slightly wider, offset by 2m or 3m towards the inside of the pitch from the nearest sideboard, as guides. The players [P5 - P8] start in front of their corresponding guide, sprint towards the next guide, and take their place. The guide is replaced by the sprinter. Alternating post exchange in a square concentricity. Always perform a **sound check** first, followed by collective activity. In secure training environments the **players' communication** is all that is needed. Coaches only intervene in dangerous situations.

***Playing football means being able to play the ball with your foot. Moving the ball in a controlled manner without seeing it, is a very specific challenge. More precisely, it is the key motoric challenge and movement competency in blind football.***

In times of the COVID pandemic, training as a team wasn't possible - sometimes for long periods of time. A lot of different individual training methods were tried out.

Physical training at home, using nothing but the own body weight, can be very effective. If you search for "Mark Lauren" on YouTube, you will find dozens of useful exercises. "You are your own Gym" by Mark Lauren is a highly recommendable book. As the title implies, meaningful training can start at home.

***Individual ball training, which can also be done at home, is very possible and highly useful in blind football.***

For home training the same rule applies as for training on the pitch - you should always train with your eyeshades on! In addition, using a silent ball in home training, as well as on the pitch in specific situations, can yield learning benefits. When using a silent ball, kinesthetic learning is activated and promoted. As soon as residual vision is used in support, kinesthetic learning moves to the background. This happens, because it is no longer exclusively the experienced movement that controls the motion, and the visual sense takes over instead.

For home training with the ball, we only need a very small space - an area of 1m x 1m is enough. A carpet is an ideal surface. The playing area should be safe at all times and can be enclosed through a soft border of rolled blankets or something similar. Watch out for high and sharp edges, this is a hazard for rolling an ankle.

Ping-pong balls, tennis balls or "normal" size 5 footballs: all balls are suitable for training at home. If you want to relax while training ball control at home, you can also use a spikey massage ball and train bare footed.

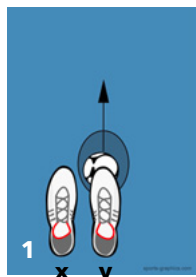
To learn ball control, a feel for the ball is crucial. Therefore, using nothing but the sense of touch in your foot is a valuable training method.



To be able to play the ball with a foot, a certain degree of stability in the supporting leg is required. Besides the inner ear, the sense of vision is also used for balance. Sighted people often unconsciously look at the so-called horizon line and vertical lines, such as door or window frames, to stabilize their body.

In order to depict something as "banal" as a sole role with the foot [next page], it should be clear how graphical representations are used in this manual.





In a comfortable stepping position, with both feet parallel and next to each other, the sole of the right foot fixates / stops the ball. The left supporting leg is planted firmly on the ground.

Being able to play with a ball is crucial.

We distinguish between supporting leg [x] and free leg [y].

The leg that moves and steers the ball is called free leg, although it's actually the foot doing the work. The leg that is in contact with the ground, and therefore stabilizes the body, is called supporting leg - even though it is the foot that is on the ground. Being able to stably stand on one leg is a basic requirement to be able to move the ball purposely.

***Pay attention to a clear and controlled execution, especially with seemingly small exercises.***

A short dragging or pushing impulse with the sole and detaching from the ball clearly and rapidly are necessities.

Even, and especially with the smallest exercises, movement phases shouldn't become blurred. They should be clearly separated from each other to learn ball control techniques cleanly in a controlled environment.

Only those who can execute techniques while undisturbed [HOME], will be able to apply them successfully in more dynamic situations on the pitch.

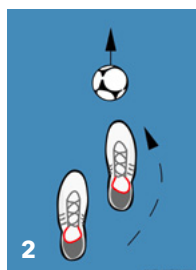
**If you have problems moving and controlling the ball, simplifications within the exercise are necessary to ensure a relaxed and clean execution of the task. Problems might include the supporting leg needing to change position to keep balance (by hopping for example) or the ball slipping away under the free leg.**

**Variations:**

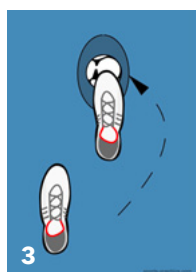
- Reduce the rolling distance of the ball.
- Practice tapping and releasing without moving the ball.
- Once you feel secure, you can alternate between the left and right leg.
- You can create your own variations and combine them!

*How many successive sole rolls can you do without having your free leg touch the ground?*

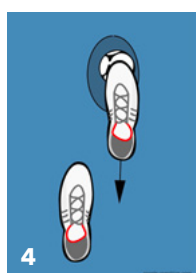
- with the right leg?
- with the left leg?



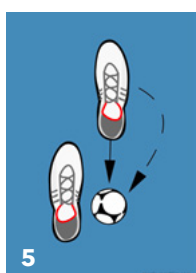
The front of the right sole releases the ball while giving it enough momentum to slowly roll forward.



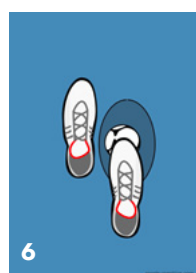
The right foot, which has detached from the ball, catches up with the rolling ball again while hovering above it and stops the motion of the ball by tapping the front of the right sole on top of the ball, before the ball would roll out of reach.



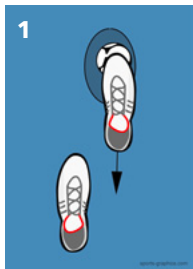
The ball is controlled with the right sole resting on it. After a short moment, the ball is returned to the starting position by giving it enough momentum with the right sole to slowly roll backwards.



Using the momentum of the backwards motion, the right foot moves backwards, hovering above the ball, and overtakes it again ...



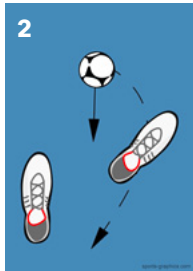
... to then catch and control it safely in the starting position (position 1) or slightly behind the supporting leg (position 6), by placing the right sole on top of it again. Now the exercise starts from step 1 again. The goal of this task is to be able to roll the ball back and forth and control it confidently.



1 In a slight lunging step position, the right leg fixates the ball

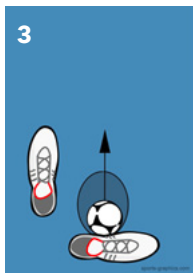
The self-pass is a good exercise to practice a straight pass at a smaller scale.

What makes this exercise particularly difficult, is the foot position of the passing leg. It is positioned at an open 90° angle in relation to the supporting leg, which has the toe pointing straight forward. The toes of the passing foot are slightly lifted and higher than the heel. The heel hovers just above the ground when giving the passing impulse.

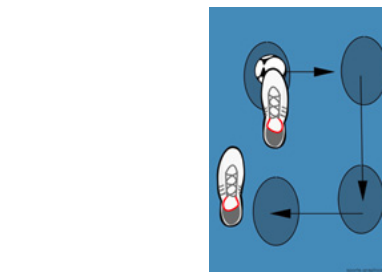


2 The front of the right sole releases the ball, while giving it enough momentum to slowly roll backwards. The toes of the right foot are rotated outwards while it quickly hovers backwards.

The outside rotation of the passing foot during the backwards motion, and the short and precise "passing impulse" with the instep, are characteristic for this exercise.



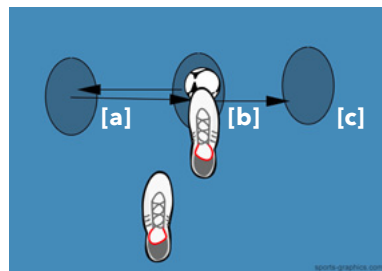
3 The right foot, which was initially on the ball, overtakes the ball and passes it forward again through a short and direct contact. When giving the short pass, the foot should be positioned at a right angle to the starting leg.



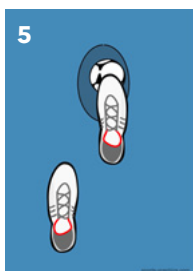
SELF-PASS  
and sole roll in a square



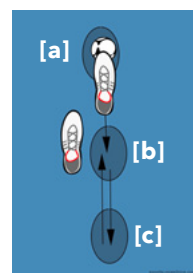
4 The passing leg moves forward while rotating back into a parallel position in reference to the standing leg...



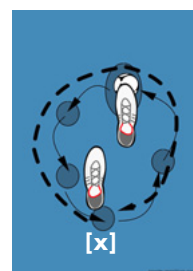
SOLE ROLL  
in front of the standing leg,  
crossover [a], centre [b], wide [c]



5 ... and fixates the ball with the front of the right sole to stop it from rolling away. The ball and foot are once again in the starting position and the exercise can be started over again.



SOLE ROLL  
front [a], centre [b], back [c].  
Imagine a compass rose:  
North, East, South, West



CIRCUMVENTING THE STANDING LEG  
The right playing leg leads the ball around the left supporting leg. When the ball is behind the left heel [x], the playing leg releases the ball and picks it up again, after passing in front of the supporting leg, to complete the remainder of the circle.

How many successive passes can you manage, without losing the ball?

- without having your free leg touch down on the ground?
- with your right leg?
- with your left leg?

In home training, we looked at ball control techniques at a small-scale format. Some movement techniques can be learned without needing to move across the pitch while doing so. The free leg moves the ball and fixates it afterwards. This can also be done while alternating the supporting leg and free leg. Ball control training at home is possible in all imaginable forms and sequences. From the easiest technique to artful, almost impossible, ball handling techniques - everything is possible without needing to be in motion.

However, the distance that the ball is transported, regardless of alternating feet or difficulty of the skill, is always very short when training at home. When playing blind football on a pitch, the ball typically travels longer distances. Distance travelled by the ball can mean different things: a shot, a pass, a throw-out by the keeper - several actions can cause the ball to travel across the pitch.

***In blind football nothing can be perceived with the eyes: neither the ball, nor the teammates, nor the opposition or the goal, and even less the empty space.***

The perception of all these different factors, which constantly change during the game, needs to be done in a tactile or acoustic manner. Due to the specific circumstances, the orientational range in a blind football match is a lot shorter than in 11-a-side football, where players can visually orientate themselves. In blind football, opponents need to announce themselves by shouting "Voy!" when they are in the vicinity of the ball.

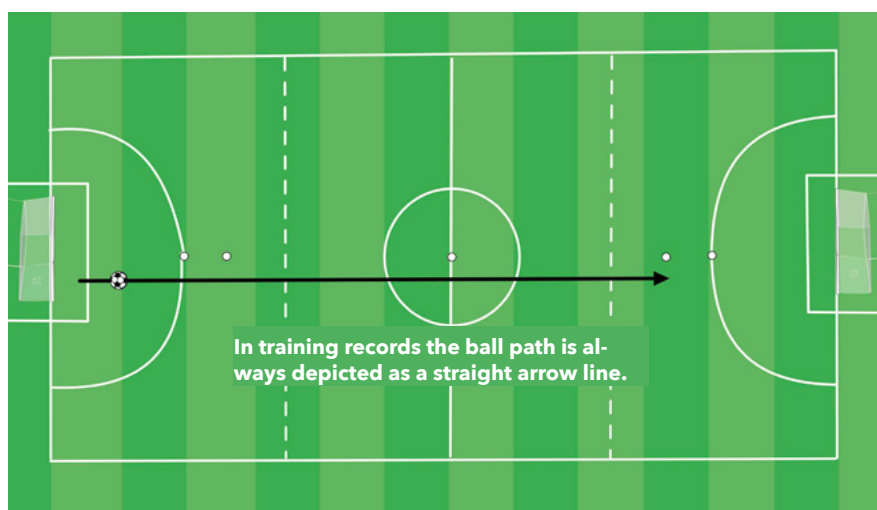
Therefore, grasping the game with all key details and anticipation actions, is a lot more difficult in blind football. In addition, the high number of simultaneous noises complicate selective perception, which in turn affects the quality and accuracy of orientation. The quality and length of passes that are played in "sighted" football is, simply put, impossible in blind football.

When a commentator celebrates a "no-look pass" on television, the ball usually travels 8m to 15m, which is comparably short. In relation to the respective pitch sizes, [105m/68m compared to 40m/20m] this would equate a passing distance of roughly 4m in blind football.

This distance isn't suitable to keep possession when playing a pass within the team, because it is too short. This is due to the fact, that opposing pressure on the ball cannot be relieved effectively through such a short pass.

***Playing a ball actively is always more difficult, than challenging for a ball. Offense demands ball control. Defense only demands ball control once the ball has been recovered.***

Running without a ball is always faster than running with the ball, both in "sighted" and blind football. The opposing player that isn't in control of the ball can therefore cover ground



a lot quicker. Running towards a ball-playing opponent is faster than dribbling away from a challenge with the ball.

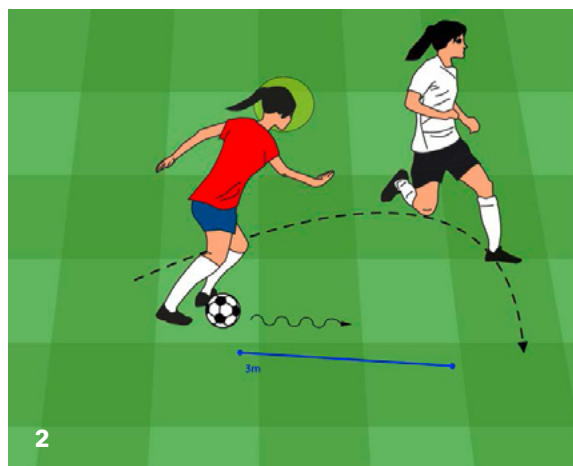
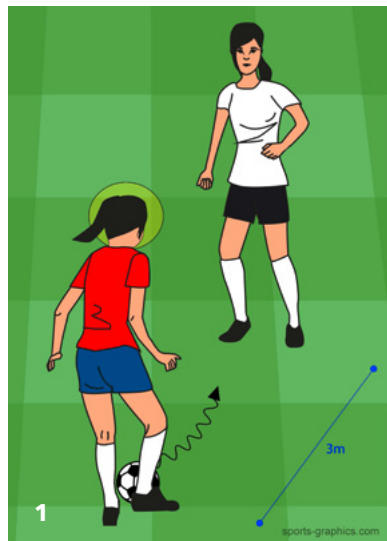
For almost all players in blind football, dribbling is the safest technique of transporting the ball - much safer than passing and receiving the ball. Getting the ball under control requires more time (and therefore also more space) in blind football, than in sighted football.

***Dribbling is therefore logically the technique of choice when transporting the ball. In sighted football, every player has a playing area of 357m<sup>2</sup> at their disposal on average.***

***In blind football every player only has an area of roughly 100m<sup>2</sup> at their disposal. [Area of the playing pitch divided by the number of players]***



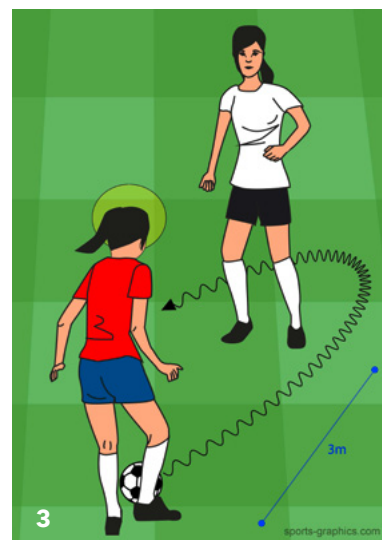
A player dribbles towards the coach with the ball. The coach positions themselves to create an ideal dribbling distance, shouts **"Here, here!"** and provides the player with additional information on demand: **"3m left, 2m, 1m!"**



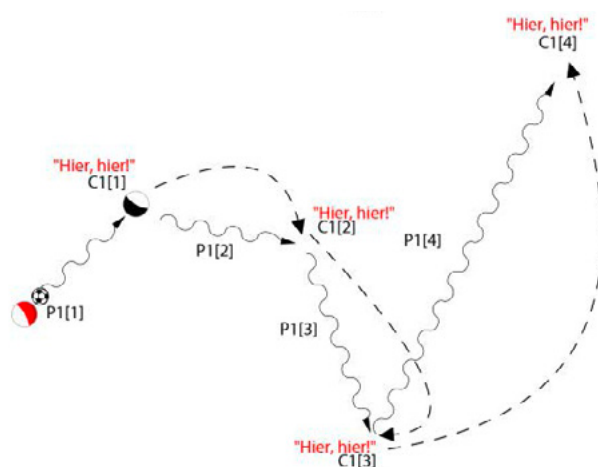
Once the player has reached the coach, the coach runs to a new position, thus creating a new dribbling direction for the player. The player should be able to always dribble towards the coach fluidly.

The player and coach can also arrange that when performing the distance countdown **"... 3m left, 2m, 1m!"**, **"1m"** is the key word to start reorientating. To increase difficulty, the player can dribble around the coach [3]. Afterwards, the coach changes position again.

Variationen:



*"Always dribble around the coach!" This exercise can be done infinitely, as described in the top right corner. The coach should pay attention that the player doesn't always dribble in the same direction when circumventing, but is able to safely dribble around the coach in both directions.*

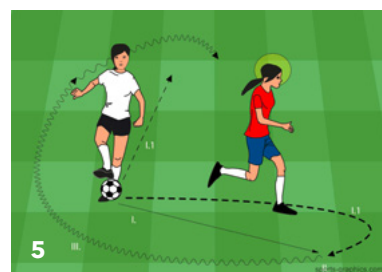
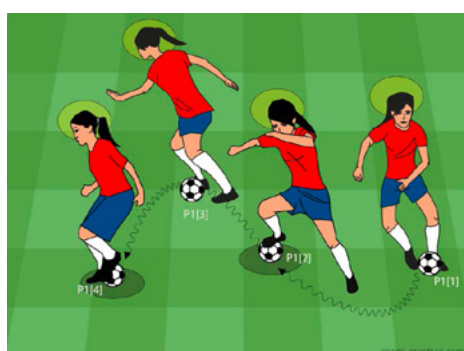


The coach pays attention that the player is confronted with distances that they can manage [3m]. In the beginning, the coach can stay put until the player is 1m in front of them, before relocating to a new position. Later, the coach can increase the distance [5m] and even later on, the coach can stay in motion perpetually. If the player can keep possession of the ball safely and keep up with the coach, then the coach as a target is no longer required and the player can dribble independently.

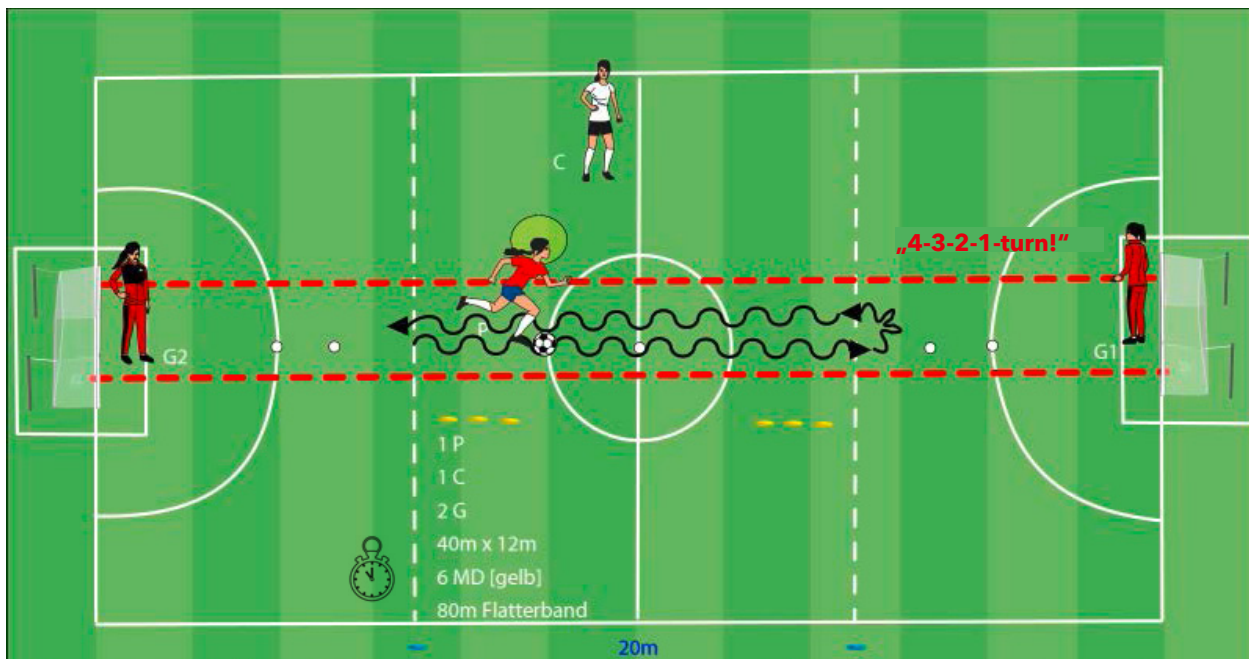
Dribbling means being able to transport the ball safely across a distance. With every step (of either foot), the rounded instep of the hovering foot touches the ball, giving it a well-dosed diagonal pushing impulse that moves the ball forwards in the playing direction. The pushing impulse with the playing foot should softly steer the ball, which requires sufficient contact length. Catching the ball and seamlessly transitioning into the pushing impulse needs to be timed right, thus creating a soft pendulum-like step sequence with sustained ball control.

**A player in possession of the ball should be able to steer the ball in any desired direction of play at any time.**

**The player should be able to stop the ball cleanly with both feet, without having the ball slip away**



The player can stop the ball 1m in front of coach. [4] The coach takes control of the ball and plays a short, easily audible, lobbed pass, which the player reaches and orbits [5]. Upon controlling it, the player dribbles towards the coach who has repositioned themselves in the meantime, and so on ...



A dribbling corridor is created out of 2 lengths of 40m barrier tape, which are firmly attached to the opposing goal posts respectively.

The tape shouldn't be higher than belly button height and wind shouldn't affect the tape too strongly. The player is positioned centrally with the ball at their feet in the dribbling corridor, at the height of the guide's line. The player checks the situation acoustically, by calling the guides that are positioned 2m in front of each goal. [G1, G2] After receiving the go signal from the coach [C], the player starts dribbling. Once the player has started, only the guide in front of her gives distance cues. **"4, 3, 2, 1, turn!"** The guide lets the player know her distance to the turning point (or finishing line). If necessary, the yellow marker discs [MD] can be used as distance indicators for the guides. After the first 20m, the player stops abruptly, changes the running direction by 180° and accelerates. Once the player has reached the finishing line (i.e., the initial starting position), the player safely controls the ball behind the finishing line. The coach only stops the watch, once the player has full control of the ball behind the finishing line.

## ***"Foot on the ball!"***

For consideration, compare this time with the player's recorded time in the 20m+20m sprint. [page 14]

## ***Controlling the ball can also be seen as a speed handicap.***

ALWAYS record the time for the same distance. The time without ball will be faster than the time with ball. For excellently trained blind football players, the "slow-down factor" of transporting the ball will be significantly smaller, when compared to beginners. By comparing individual times for covering identical running and dribbling distances, we can measure training progress effectively and objectively. Through comparison, it is even possible to create standardized, benchmark-like values to identify different levels of playing ability regarding ball transporting techniques.

When training with players that have residual vision, it is even possible to make a meaningful 4-way comparison.

In such a 4-way comparison, the player would try to cover the distance as fast as possible under the following conditions:

- 1.) Sighted without ball
- 2.) With eyeshades, without ball
- 3.) Sighted with ball
- 4.) With eyeshades, with ball

The "slow-down factor" for the different conditions (1. through 4.) can yield valuable information in terms of how confidently the player can move with eyeshades and how well the player can control the ball, both with and without eyeshades.

**VIDEO LINK**



In a directed dribble, for example tightly around a guide, and at high speeds, centrifugal forces arise that pull the ball outwards, so to speak. While performing a curved dribble, the player needs to keep control of the ball with the outer foot (in relation to the dribbling curve). The player needs to prevent the ball from rolling away to the outside of the playing direction. The faster the dribbling speed, the harder it gets for the player to keep the ball in the curve. The player can cover the longest (and almost straight) path between the two guides at maximum speed. The player needs to slow their dribbling pace before orbiting the guide, to ensure a secure and speedy transport of the ball around the guide.

The exercise "Eights" is highly valuable, because it trains the ability to steer the ball with both feet, and the controlled increase and decrease of dribbling pace, like no other. Due to

the precisely measurable values in this exercise, a player's ability in transporting the ball can be determined with high accuracy.

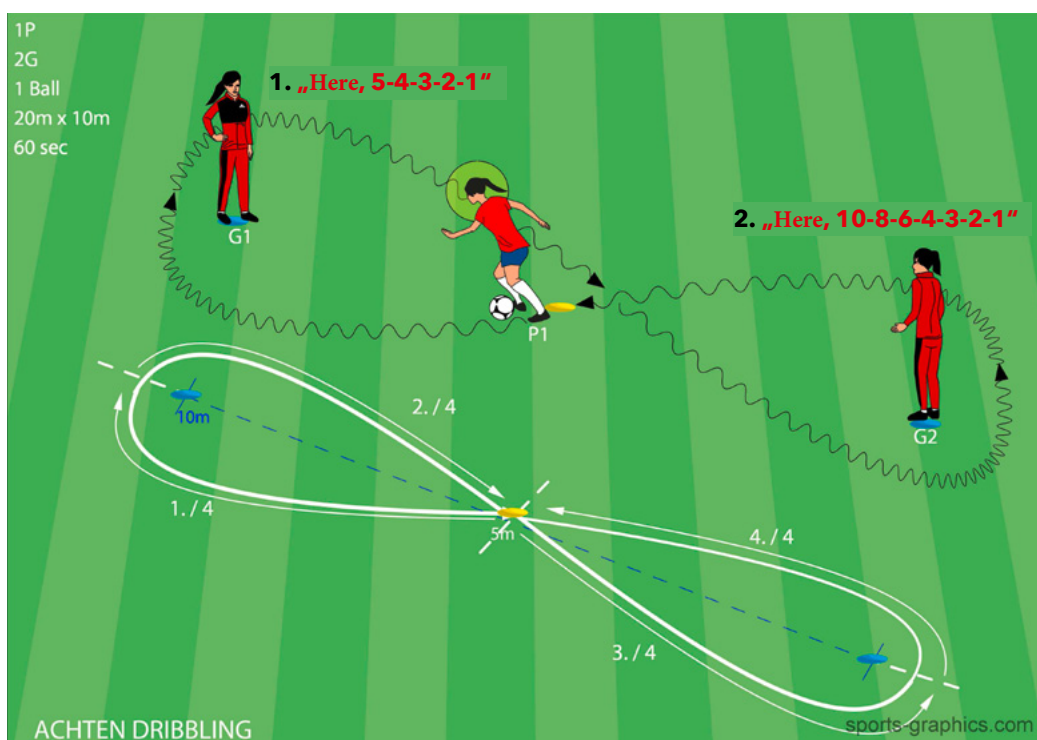
**A player that manages 6 complete "eights" in 60 seconds can be considered as world class.**

**A player that manages 5 complete "eights" in 60 seconds, possesses outstanding skills at an international level.**

If a player loses the ball, guides only help through vocal cues. The guide never touches the ball.

Losing possession of the ball is part of the active learning process. A player has to go through this process to reach their potential in terms of dribbling speed.

VIDEO LINK



The guides are positioned facing each other and 10m apart. The player starts from a central position, halfway between both guides. For the player to be able to safely reach their maximum speed, a 5m safety zone behind each guide needs to be factored in. The player dribbles around the guides in the shape of an eight.

**How many "eights" can the player complete in 60 seconds?**

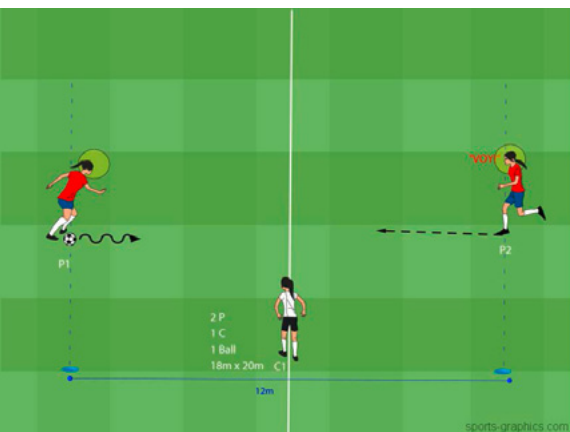
Before recording the time, the player can go through the exercise at walking pace to familiarize themselves it. As always, this exercise also starts with an acoustic orientation ["**sound check**"] of everyone involved. As soon as the player has gone around the first guide, the second guide calls out. [2.]

It helps the player if the elapsed time is announced. "**30 seconds**", "**45 seconds**" For better diagnostic values, the fractions (in this case quarters of the total distance) of the final "eight" are also counted when the time runs out. The white dashed line in the diagram above indicates the respective quarter lines. Using recorded values of this exercise, the training progress of a player can be tracked in a motivating manner. Looking at a player's values in a series of eights (with equal breaks in between), can yield valuable insights into how strongly fatigue affects a player's ball controlling ability. This exercise can also be done with only one guide and one player.

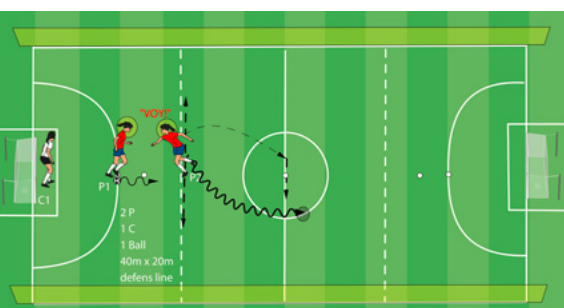


## Duels up to 1on1

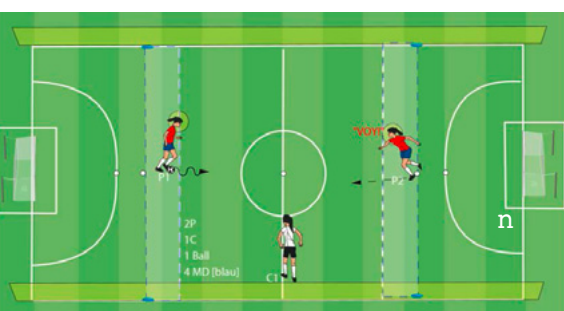
## OPPOSING PRESSURE



1on1 over the line



1on1 over the defensive line



1on1 touchdown zones

Target zones, where the ball needs to be carried, are a great way to train skills and techniques from open play. Both offensive techniques, like transporting the ball under pressure [past an opponent], and defensive techniques and tactics, like covering an attacker and winning possession, can be trained meaningfully in this way.

Target zones are the biggest available targets in football training and can be used as a substitute for goals.

The player in possession P1 starts with the ball at their feet. The player tries to cross the line 6m in front of them and briefly stop the ball behind the line. At the same time P2, who is 12m from P1, starts running towards P1 and challenges for the ball saying "VOY!". A successful attempt of P1 is counted like a goal. It is important that the player doesn't just get through the opponent's challenge, they need to retain controlled possession of the ball behind the target line.

**If P1's success rate is too low, then P2's starting position can be changed to one behind P1 [Outrunning an opponent.] The coach needs to find the ideal distance between P2 and P1, where P1 is under pressure, but still has a success rate of at least 51%.**

***Attackers and defenders should never train with the handbrake on to let other players win. The coach needs to adapt the task to ensure an open outcome in a competitive training exercise.***

The player in possession starts dribbling with the ball at their feet from the 6m penalty spot. The player's goal is to cross the guide's line and briefly stop the ball in a controlled manner. Until challenging for the ball, P2 is only allowed to move horizontally along the guide's line (i.e. move left or right). If P1 successfully gets past P2 on the guide's line, P2 runs towards the halfway line, where once again only horizontal movement is permitted. P1 then tries to cross the halfway line. Every line that is successfully crossed is worth one point.

The player in possession starts dribbling from a central position on the guide's line. The opposing player P2 starts advancing towards P1 from the opposite side of the guide's line. The coach is positioned at the sideboards on the halfway line and guides both players. Behind every guide's line there is a 3m long touchdown zone that goes across the entire width of the pitch. The players try to get the ball into the opponent's touchdown zone, where they need to bring it under full control to score a point. After winning the ball, an open 1on1 match towards both zones is possible.

**When playing a 1on1 touchdown zone-game, you can ban challenging for the ball within the touchdown zone. This makes scoring a touchdown easier for the player in possession.**

With players of different levels of ability, you can artificially create equality and an open outcome in competitive exercises by applying different rules to individual players.

For example: Player P1 is allowed to challenge for the ball in the touchdown zone, while the opposing player P2 isn't allowed to do so.

## Mini Match "1on1" and only 1 Sighted Person

### OPPOSING PRESSURE

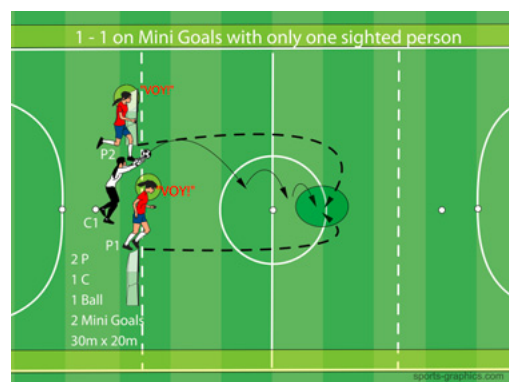


This is the smallest form of blind football. It makes a lot of sense to play it repeatedly, no matter how skilled the players are.

On a 20m x 20m playing area with sideboards, two mini goals are positioned centrally on the respective guide's lines. Behind each goal there is a coach or sighted guide. P1 starts dribbling in front of their goal, while P2 starts challenging for the ball from their own goal. The goals need to be wide enough that passively standing in front of the goal isn't worthwhile for the defender. [180cm+]

***As a simplification, the distance between the miniature goals can be reduced. As another form of simplification, bigger goals can be used.***

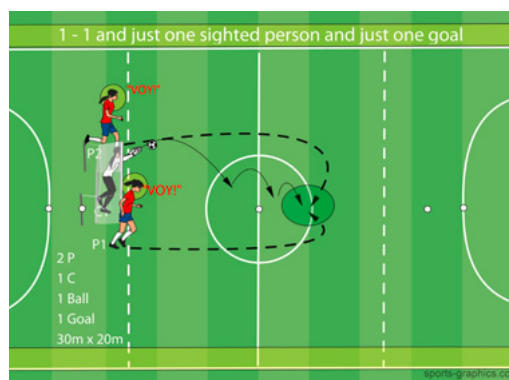
It is important to keep the game balanced and exciting, so that both players have a realistic chance of winning. In a lot of situations where blind football can be trained, it is highly likely that only few sighted people are present.



However, playing a miniature match in the form of 1on1 using two goals, requires at least two sighted guides (or coaches) and two players. If only one sighted person is available and two players still want to train finishing successfully under pressure, you can position goals in a distance of 5m to 10m, parallel to the guide's line. The goals are set up with the open side facing the halfway line.

Both players are assigned a goal. P1 gets the goal that is nearer to the right sideboard and P2 gets the left goal. Both players start to the inside on the guide's line, next to the goalpost of their miniature goal. They can also touch their respective goals with their hands if desired.

The coach checks if both players are ready and, after announcing it verbally, throws the ball toward the halfway line. Both players try to reach the ball as fast as possible and run towards where the ball touches down for the first time, while saying "VOY!". If P1 recovers the ball, the coach runs behind the right goal to verbally mark the target [Goal]. If P2 recovers or wins the ball back, the coach runs behind P2's assigned goal. This way, the coach can facilitate the game as a single sighted person, acting as a "guide on demand". Even when possession changes, the short running distance between the goals make it possible to lead this exercise as a single sighted person.



If the coach is overwhelmed by the quick changes in possession in the previously described task, both in terms of running and reactions, a regular sized goal with wheels can prove to be a stroke of luck. By replacing the two miniature goals with one regular sized goal, a real 1on1 on a big goal becomes possible. When the defender wins the ball, they become the attacker. To underline the change in direction of play, you can make the player who just gained possession dribble back across the halfway line before starting an attack. In this exercise, the coach covers the roles of C, G, K, and R - coach, guide, keeper, and referee.

***Blind football routinely demands creativity and adaptability from the coach.***



Depiction of the different phases. Only one coach [C1] and one player [P1] with one ball are on the pitch.

On the previous pages a varying number of players and sighted personnel were involved in the exercises. However, the most likely group consists of one player and one sighted person.

Even this smallest of possible groups can train effectively. This doesn't require a pitch with sideboards. You also don't need regulation size goals. A player, a sighted friend, a sound ball and a medium sized playing area are enough to play one-two passes. This playful task is highly suited to train a lot of different details, which you probably wouldn't expect from such a simple exercise.

#### Variants

- The coach can spontaneously change from a teammate to a player challenging for the ball with **"VOY!"**
- The coach can also spontaneously turn into a wide-legged passing target with the player having to play a pass through their legs as quickly as possible.
- The coach can pass the ball away from the player
- Additionally, the coach can exert pressure on the player while saying **"VOY!"**.
- The coach can imitate an opponent in possession that the player needs to win the ball off while saying **"VOY!"**

In a secured area of 20m x 20m, the coach starts dribbling with the sound ball at their feet. While continuously saying **"VOY!"**, the player runs alongside the coach (1) and calls for the ball verbally. **"Here!" "I'm free" "Pass it" "Give it!" "Yes!"**

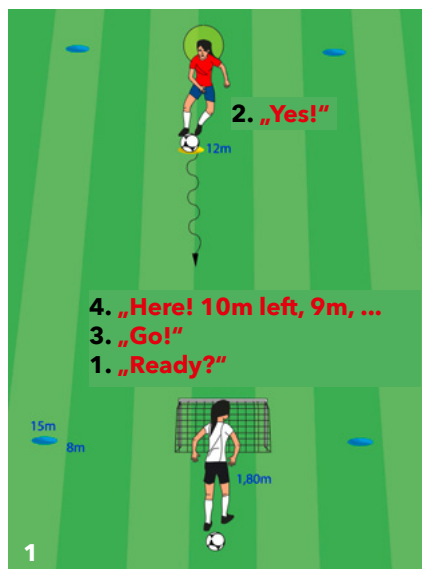
The coach in possession announces the pass. **"Pass coming (now)!"** and plays an audible pass to the player (2). The player integrates the ball into their dribbling motion. The player can choose the direction of the first touch and subsequent dribbling freely (3).

If the player can't get the ball under control, they inform the coach: **"(I'm) searching!", "lost it" or something similar.** The coach can then support the player verbally by taking the role of a guide. If the guiding process takes too long, the coach can make the ball audible by tapping on it with their foot to continue the one-two passing game.

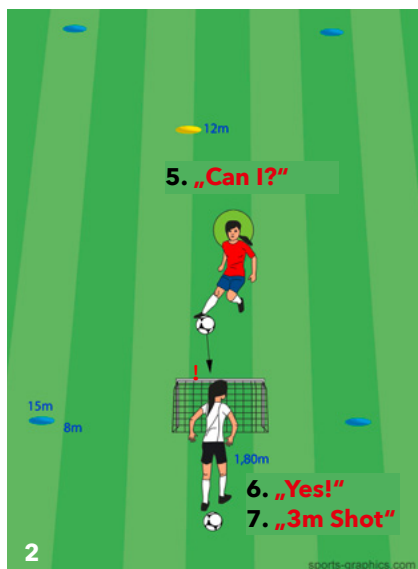
If the shaded player was able to perform a short dribble and the coach has run into space (and called for the ball), the player announces a pass **"Pass coming (now)!"** and plays the ball to the coach (4). Now the sequence starts over again.



One Player, one sighted person, one miniature goal and a small playing area. Dribbling is not an end in itself; it always sets up a follow-up action or even an attempt at goal. Dribbling is preceded by receiving the ball and a first touch. It is followed by a concluding action. In a match everything happens in flowing transitions. The coach should always design training to achieve the best possible effect for the player. Which phases are included in a training sequence? Which aspects does the coach want to focus on? Which effects can be achieved through minor adjustments or aggravating rules? What does the coach need to pay special attention to?

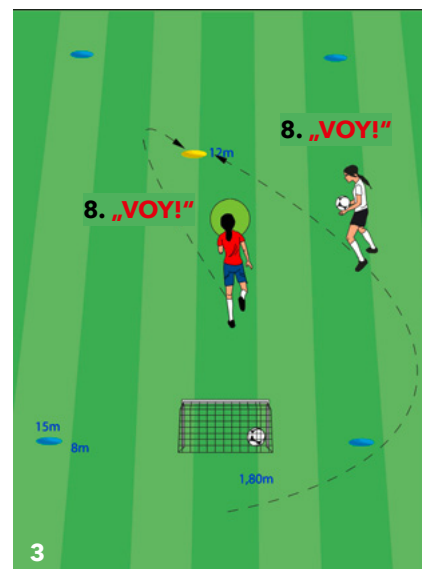


The player waits at the starting point 12m from the goal with the ball at their feet. [At the yellow marker disc] The coach is standing behind the miniature goal. With communication and ball control, the player starts dribbling. The coach keeps the player updated on the distance to goal.



The player dribbles towards the miniature goal and possibly checks [“Can I?”] before shooting at goal. The coach calls for the shot. The Coach gives feedback after the shot “Goal!”, or “1m to the left (of the goal)” if the ball ended up there.

*Always give feedback from the player's point of view!*



The coach grabs the spare ball behind the goal and puts it down at the starting position, while the player also runs back to the starting position.



The coach runs behind the center of the goal again. The player checks “Ready?” and the coach responds as soon as they are in position behind the goal. The sequence starts over again. (1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, ...)

*How many goals can the player score in 60 seconds?*

Emphasize goals. Count every goal. What is the ratio of goals to missed shots? Missed shots count as -1.

- Which foot does the player mostly use to shoot?
- What distance does the player normally shoot from?
- Can the player dribble confidently?
- Can the player finish confidently?

#### Variations:

Set the finishing distance and change it again.

Instead of placing the ball at the yellow disc, start the sequence by throwing the ball to the player.

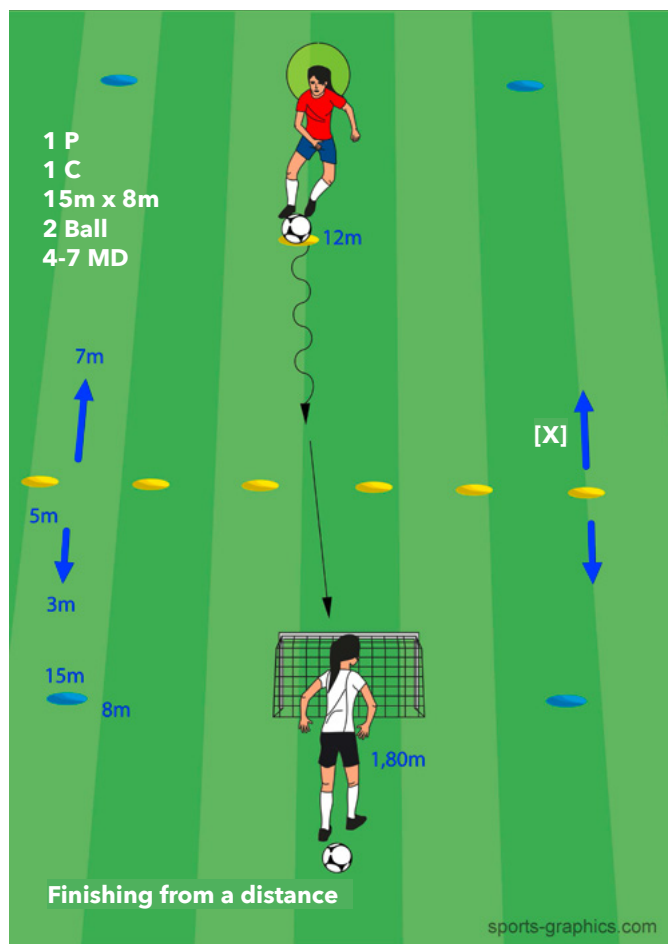
Have the player alternate between the left and right foot when finishing.

Place the ball away from the players starting position.

If the success rate is below 50%, demand that the player stops the ball, before finishing from a standing position.

*Foot on top of the ball before shooting.*

## Finishing from a distance



Place a shooting line with marker discs. [Yellow discs]

The dribbling player starts with the ball at their feet 12m from the miniature goal and needs to shoot at goal before reaching the finishing line.

The player checks and dribbles.

Coach: **"8m, 7m, 6m, Shot!"**

The Coach gives feedback to where the shot went after each shot [V]\*.

Place the finishing line so that the success rate is over 50%.

**Success is necessary to invoke  
a desire for repetition.**

If the player repeatedly misses the goal, the coach should recognize why and in which phase of the exercise the problem lies. This enables the coach to instruct in a supportive manner or adapt the exercise to ensure an adequate success rate.

\* The different phases of this exercise, [I.], [II.], [III.], [IV.], [V.] are described on pages 33 and 34.

## DRIBBLING AND FINISHING

The variation of exercises always aims at an ideal fit, which in turn means a higher control of the training effect for the players.

**The challenge and fun of an exercise should always be kept in balance. The success rate needs to be above 50%. At least 50+1.**

When designing training exercises, leaving room for adjustments is important. Adjustments are changeable parameters, that can be used to adapt the difficulty of the task to the ability of the player.

In this exercise, the finishing line (yellow marker discs) is such an adjustable parameter. It can be adjusted to control the phase\* finishing [V]: to focus on it, to facilitate it, or to train it.

The further away from the goal the finishing line is placed, the more difficult the shot becomes, which in turn means that finishing is more heavily emphasized during the exercise.

**Variations:**

If the player is already confident in dribbling and finishing, the coach could motivate them to alternate between left-footed and right-footed shots at goal.

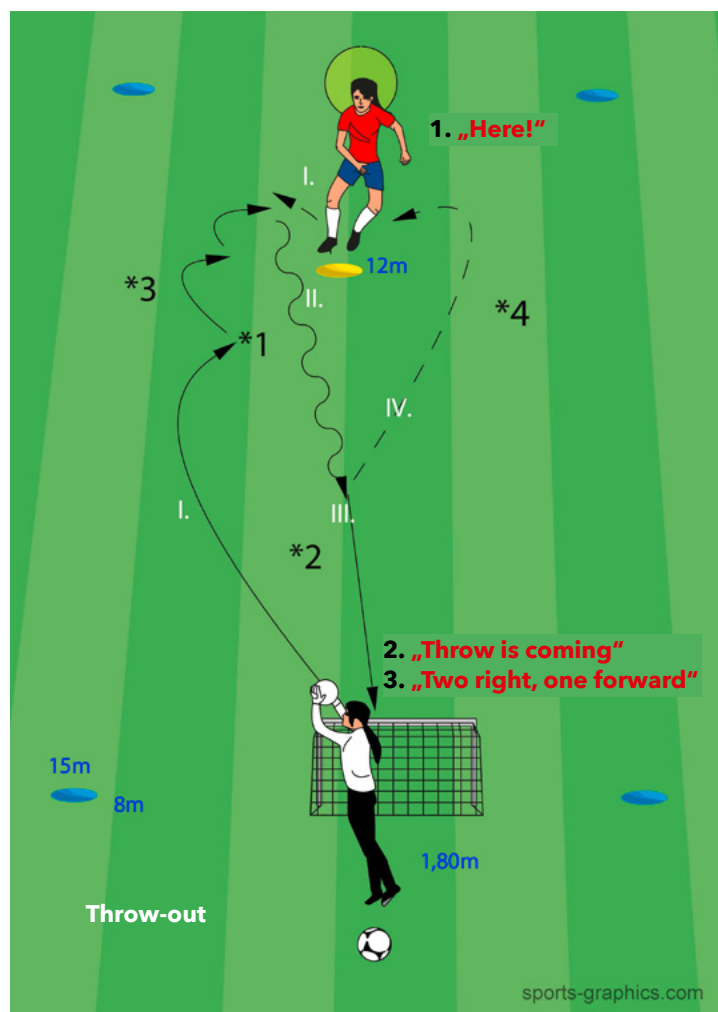
**Extension [more staff, goals, balls ...]**

If the player is already so confident in their dribbling that they need to wait for the coach, then a training assistant can help by placing the ball at the starting position. This way there is no waiting time for the player and the coach can remain behind goal.

**Waiting times should be avoided at all costs.**

**Players that are waiting for their turn to finish, should stay active - even in small spaces.**

# Throw-out



The player waits for the throw-out of the coach at the starting position [yellow disc]. The coach throws the ball so that it touches the ground [\*1] in front of the starting position [MD yellow].

The player orientates themselves and moves towards the rattling ball. They try get the ball under control as quickly as possible, to dribble towards the miniature goal and shoot at goal.

The coach guides the player if necessary. [I.] Locating the ball, approaching the ball, receiving the ball, first touch, dribbling, attempt at goal.

Dribbling [II.] and attempt on goal [III.]

In case the player waits a long time after the throw of the ball and only starts moving towards it once they have fully located the ball, the coach should try to motivate the player to start moving towards the suspected direction, as soon as they perceive any ball movement.

## DRIBBLING AND FINISHING

In "Throw-out" and "Orbiting the Ball" the final position of the coach's throw [\*1, \*2, \*3, \*4] is an adjustable element that can be used to emphasise the orientation towards the ball and the subsequent first touch.

### Variation I:

The Coach varies the throwing distance: long [\*1], short [\*2], to the right [\*3], and to the left[\*4] to cause different localizations for the player with every throw.

### Variation II:

The finishing line from the previous page ("Finishing from a Distance") can also be integrated into this exercise. Adjustable elements can be combined with additional handicaps.

### Extension I:

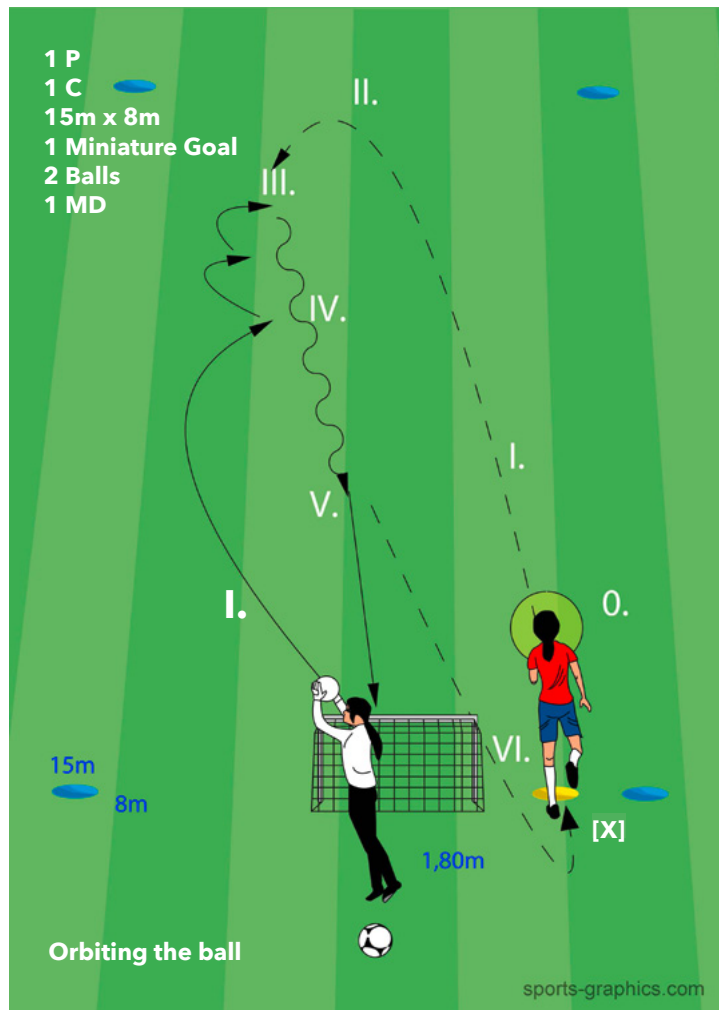
Should an additional miniature goal and guide or coach be available, giving a spontaneous acoustic signal to the player from behind one of the goals (indicating that they should perform the task using this goal), can emphasise a first touch in direction of play, while also training the orientational reaction.

The player initially doesn't know which goal to aim for. This emphasises reaction speed and rapidly controlling the ball in a desired direction.

***A huge challenge in five-a-side is simultaneously focusing on a moving ball and having to move towards it faster than an opposing player to secure it.***

***Practicing simultaneous orientation and movement is highly valuable training content.***





Player's starting position next to the miniature goal.  
Orbiting the coaches' throw-out.  
Coach: **"Throw(-out) coming now!"**

The player starts at full speed and tries to catch up with the ball as quickly as possible. Localization [0.], approach [I.] and orbiting [II.] are the phases of the movement sequence that are emphasized in this exercise.

After the first touch, the player dribbles towards the miniature goal [IV.] and goes for the finish [V.].

Besides dribbling, the first touch is a fundamental and decisive ball control technique, that beginners should learn as soon as possible.

**Ball control is QUEEN!**

### Phases of the movement sequence

1. Perception, Orientation and Reaction

**I. Running, Sprint, initial approach**  
**[Throw-out by coach]**

**II. Orientation and final approach,**  
**positioning towards ball**

**III. Ball contact, first touch**

**IV. Dribbling, transporting the ball**

**V. Finishing (Pass, shot or similar)**

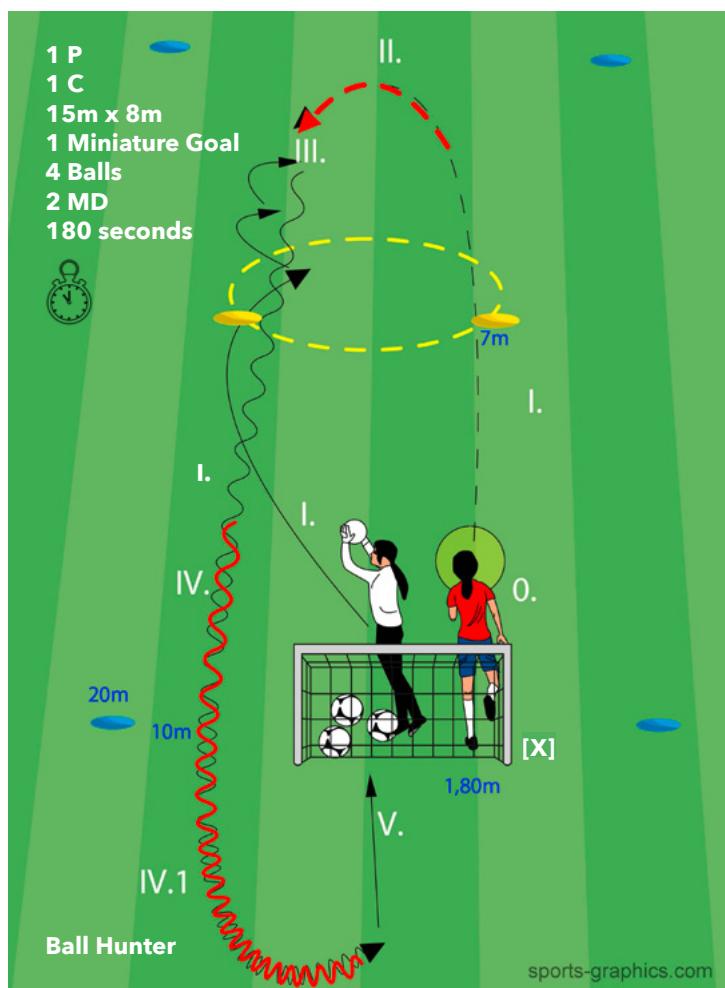
**VI. Return to starting position**

Knowing about the distinctive phases in a movement sequence is essential if you want to be able to hold effective blind football training sessions as a coach. This precise knowledge enables you to adapt, vary or extend training exercises to achieve the intended effect.

If training exercises don't seem to work from the beginning, think about changing the setup or adapting the task. Try to optimize and adjust, until you achieve the intended effect for the distinctive movement phases.

Well-adjusted details in training design in general, and within the single exercises [Finishing, Throw-out, Orbiting, ...], help emphasize the desired distinctive phases of the movement sequence.

The player's starting position (at the yellow disc next to the goal [X]) can be adjusted to either emphasize the reaction speed, orientation, a quick start or the initial approach - phases [0.], [I.], or [II.].



The player starts at the back side of the miniature goal, with the open side facing the other direction. The coach stands next to the player, behind the goal which is facing backwards (and is turned away from the throwing direction).

The coach throws the ball so that it touches down in marked target zone [yellow MD] 7m from the goal. The player tries to reach the ball as quickly as possible and score in the reversed goal.

**Competition:**

The goal is to complete as many ball-hunting dribbles with successful finish as possible within 180 seconds.

**Coach:**

**"Throw(-out) coming now!"** [I.], if necessary

Guiding towards the ball [II.].

Target Marking: [III.] **"Goal is here, 10m left!"**

Distance Countdown: **"4m - 3m - 2m - 1m"**

Before turning while dribbling [IV. And IV.1.]

Before shooting [V.]

**Ball control and speed are TURBO QUEEN!**

## Phases of the movement sequence

1. Perception, Orientation and Reaction

**I. Running, Sprint, initial approach**  
**[Throw-out by coach]**

**II. Orientation and final approach,**  
**positioning towards ball**

**III. Ball contact, first touch**

**IV. Dribbling, transporting the ball**

**V. Finishing (Pass, shot or similar)**

**VI. Return to starting position**

The position of the miniature goal, turned away from the throw and the direction of play, emphasizes a targeted and controlled turn while dribbling to set up the finish. [IV.1]

The added time pressure, that is created by challenging the player to score as many goals as possible in 180 seconds, provokes an acceleration for running and dribbling, which in turn emphasizes the desired training content more heavily.

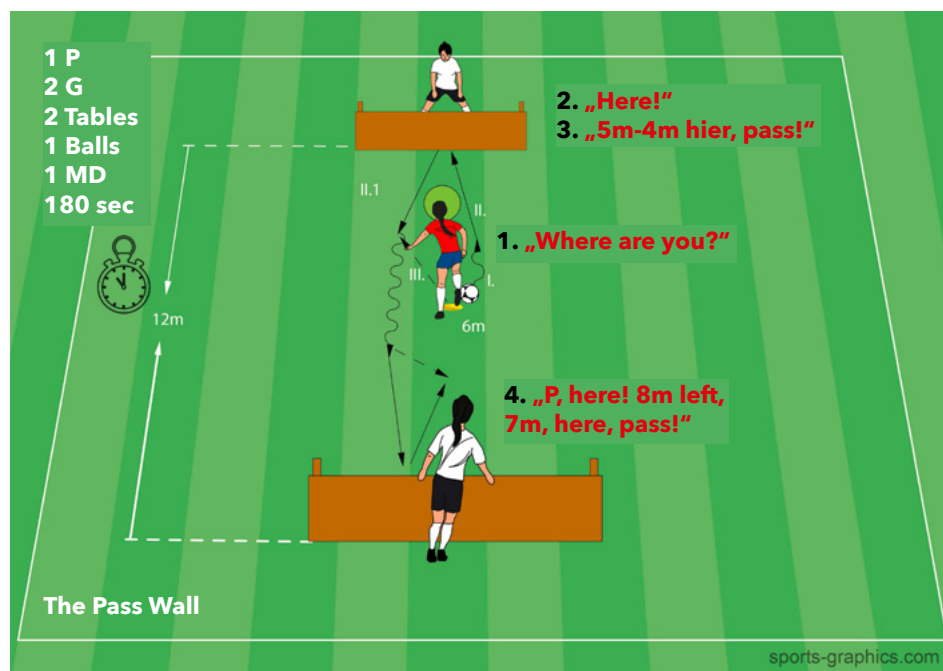
*Competitions under time-pressure (and without opponents) can be used to create match-like intensity while training technical movement sequences.*

*In competitive matches, quick changes of direction before shooting at goal can dramatically increase the chance of scoring!*

**VIDEO LINK**



# The Pass Wall



At a distance of 12 meters, two beer tables (220cm x 50cm) are placed on their side and weighted so they can't slip away. The table top is used as a [rebound] pass wall.

The guides position themselves centrally behind their respective tables. After performing the soundcheck [1.], the player starts the exercise 6m from the wall [yellow disc] with the ball at their feet.

The player passes against the table, runs towards the rebounding ball [rebound, III.], recovers the ball and dribbles towards the opposite table. There they play a pass, collect the rebound and dribble towards the opposite table again. This is done repeatedly.

As soon as the player has the ball at their feet again, the guide behind the new target/table starts guiding the player, for example by giving a motivating distance countdown: **“Anna\*, 8m left - 7m - 6m - 5m here, pass!”**

\* Always cheer and motivate players by using their names!

How many successful passes can a player complete in 60 seconds?  
Every pass against the table counts.

If the player loses the ball, the guides help, but only by giving vocal cues from their position behind the table. The player loses time if they misplace a pass, because they need to find the ball again with the guide's verbal help.

Despite the time pressure, the goal is to play as many accurate and clean (long) passes as possible, as well as integrating the ball into the dribble in the opposite direction as quickly as possible.

## DRIBBLING AND FINISHING

Variations:

If you want to emphasize the movement phases pass [II.] and controlling the pass [III.], the coach can request that the player plays two consecutive passes (or even a double one-two) at each wall before moving in the opposite direction.

If you want to emphasize pass quality, you can use marker discs to create an additional minimum distance line, which forces the player to pass from distances outside their comfort zone.

If it's the passing power you want to emphasize, you can declare the zone behind the minimum distance line as a no-go zone. This means that the player needs to pass with enough power to cause the ball to roll back over the distance line and into the playing area. The player isn't allowed to touch the ball before it's over the line.

If you want to overemphasize passing power, the coach can demand that the player receives their own pass behind an imaginary halfway line [MD at 6m].

To emphasize the use of both feet, the coach can encourage the player alternates between the left and right foot when playing passes.

The coach should also check whether the player has a preferred foot for their first touch. In that case, the coach can ask the player to alternate between left and right foot for the first touch.

VIDEO LINK





In this manual, my main concern was to draw attention to the particularities that are often encountered when organising and designing blind football training sessions. The interplay between a sighted person and a blind person is the “nucleus”, the tandem, that forms a sporting unit – just like in skiing, running, or cycling.



Image: Björn Kaas

In blind football, just like in many other sports, this smallest of possible units can offer the simplest of starting steps into team sports. If there aren't enough people to form an entire team where a player lives, exchanging ideas about training and team orientation with a football team – even if it is too far away for the player to participate in trainings regularly – can offer an opportunity to have goal-oriented individual (or small group) training sessions.

With well-developed basic skills that revolve around ball handling (even if they were trained individually), even a player that lives far away can be integrated into a team successfully and help the team develop further. This is even possible for teams that can only train in full strength once every couple of months. I know of blind football teams that have given up training, because “only” three players showed up regularly. This is very unfortunate. However, it doesn't have to be like this because blind football is just as much fun as sighted football. For some people it's even more fun. Because people with visual impairment are much less common, the smallest possible unit – the tandem – should already be recognised as a fully-fledged training group.

As coach of the girls' team SC Sternschanze I had a formative experience: Normally no football trainings were offered during the summer holidays. This seemed illogical to me, as in summer students normally have a lot more time because they don't have to go to school, and hardly any girls are away for the entire summer holidays. During the holidays a player asked me whether there will be a training that day. I said that she was the only player that would come, but I would like to train with her, even if it's only us two. This individual training was extremely valuable. Dribbling, first touch, short passes, controlling with the outside of the boot, even doing all exercises with both feet – since it was only us two, we could train at high intensity. This small training was a huge pleasure! My football team from back then – you can see a picture taken at the Schanzenplatz Tournament at the left side of the page – had something in common with the blind football teams of today. They trained twice a week, but didn't play in every free

moment of their spare time in the park, the schoolyard, or somewhere else.

This means, that all ball handling techniques could only be practised during regular team trainings. Like all other ball sports, football is most fun when you have mastered the basic techniques and can successfully use them to reach a goal as a team. My daughter Teresa (Second from the right in the bottom row) wanted to play football as part of a team, but only with other girls. The truth is on the pitch! Concerning trainings, but also concerning competitive games. With the girls' youth team of SC Sternschanze we almost exclusively played 7-a-side. Translated into blind football that would be a competitive 2on2 since there are only half as many players as in a full-pitch game.



Image: Olaf Tamm

The first kids' blind football training at FC St.Pauli wasn't born out of sporting motivation. A friend and colleague, who worked as a professional photographer, needed a subject that could be printed in a youth magazine for the upcoming women's world cup in Germany. The young players Paul Ruge and Jonathan Tönsing enjoyed the photo shoot so much, that a regular training group was formed. Meanwhile Jonathan and Paul have won the German Championship three times and Jonathan will play for Germany at the IBSA World Championships in August 2023.

Training in small groups and competitive games on smaller pitches are both the breeding grounds of high-level team performances, and the lived implementation of the philosophy “football for all!”.

So far, I haven't addressed goalkeeping in this manual. For beginners, first steps into the joy of blind football games are usually only successful without keepers. The pressure that a sighted goalkeeper exerts can pose an insurmountable obstacle for beginners to overcome – even though the keeper is almost stuck to the goal line, as they are only allowed to touch the ball within the 2m keeper's area. In sighted football small games like "Funinjo", a 3on3 with 2 miniature goals, can be highly valuable even without a goalkeeper. It is important that the goals have the right size and aren't too small. Goals that are too small can be guarded easily through passive defensive play. Exercise settings and game settings shouldn't invite passive play.



In our training routine, 180cm x 90cm miniature goals have proven very useful. These goals are too big for a defender to guard through passive defensive positioning. But the goals are also small enough, that an attacker needs to aim and shoot accurately to score. The goal's folding mechanism keeps the injury risk at a minimum.

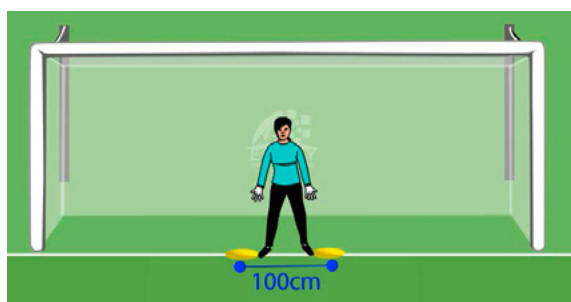
For absolute blind football novices, youth football goals (500cm x 200cm) without a keeper can also be suitable.



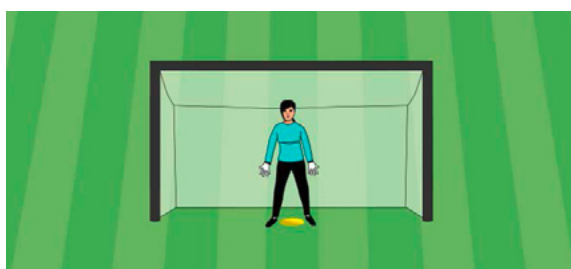
***It's important that you always pay attention to avoid collisions between players and goals! Always position guides at the goals!***

When playing on big goals without a keeper, you need both an offensive guide and a defensive guide for each goal. The offensive guide gives information through verbal cues and pays attention to the player's safety, while the defensive guide acts as a keeper that isn't allowed to save shots on target. In addition to the guides, the referee is responsible for player's safety on the pitch.

You should use defensive guides from the start. If you start training by using oversized goals, a keeper with restricted movement [MD yellow 100cm] can be used. This way you can gradually add pressure and match task difficulty to the player's ability. The movement area of the keeper can be limited to 100cm for example. The keeper only has a 1m section of the goal line in the centre of the goal, that they are allowed to move along. An attacker that gets past a defensive player is then faced by a goalkeeper that is only allowed to save shots in certain parts of the goal. This way the pressure exerted by the keeper is still high in the centre of goal but falls off dramatically closer to the goal posts.

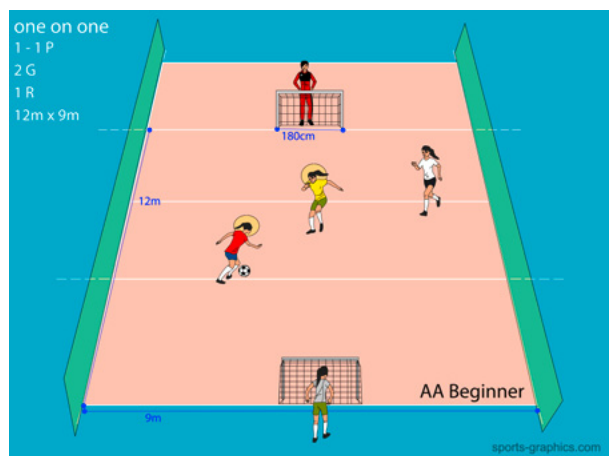


If you have regular blind football goals [366cm x 214cm], a 100cm section could offer the keeper too much "freedom". The keeper would exert too much pressure and this in turn would lead to the player not scoring anymore. Fixating the keeper's position with a marker disc can help. Restricting movement also adds a challenging training impulse for the goalkeeper.

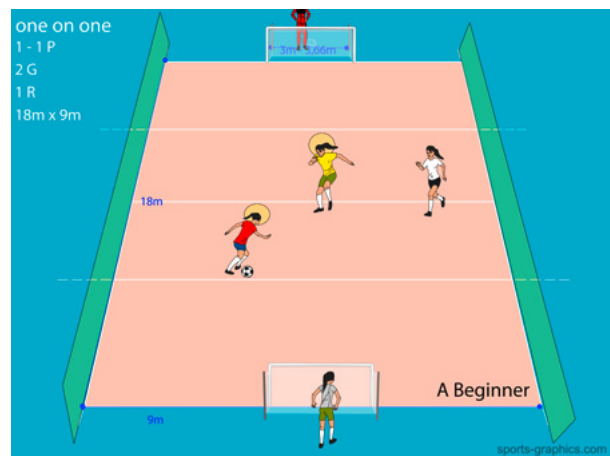


Even the smallest of competitive games, 1on1s, can offer players valuable sporting experiences and increase motivation. In the beginning keepers aren't necessary for games like this. In the images below, the guides handle throw-outs for games 1 to 4. For the first two games, the pitch's width of 9m is very narrow. When officiating a game, the referee is also responsible for player's safety. The sideboards pose a collision hazard for players wearing eyeshades. The referee should anticipate player's movement and warn players by knocking on the sideboard to prevent collisions with this obstacle that might come unexpected. Goalkeepers guide until the halfway line.

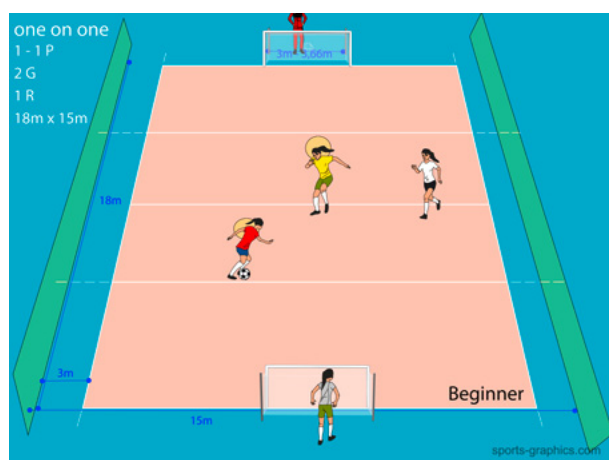
1 on 1 on miniature goals 12m x 9m



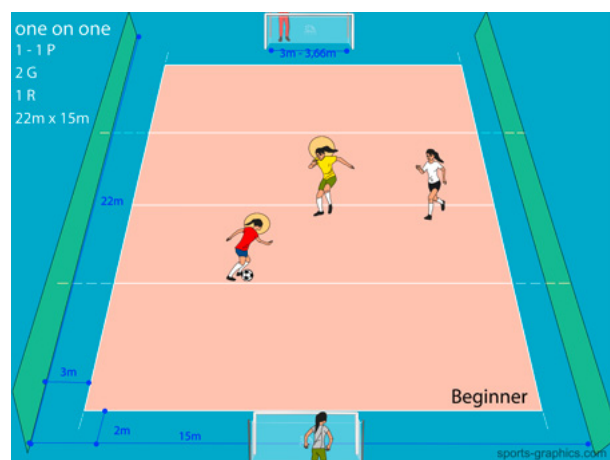
1 on 1 on regular goals 18m x 9m



1 on 1 on regular goals 18m x 15m



1 on 1 on regular goals 22m x 15m



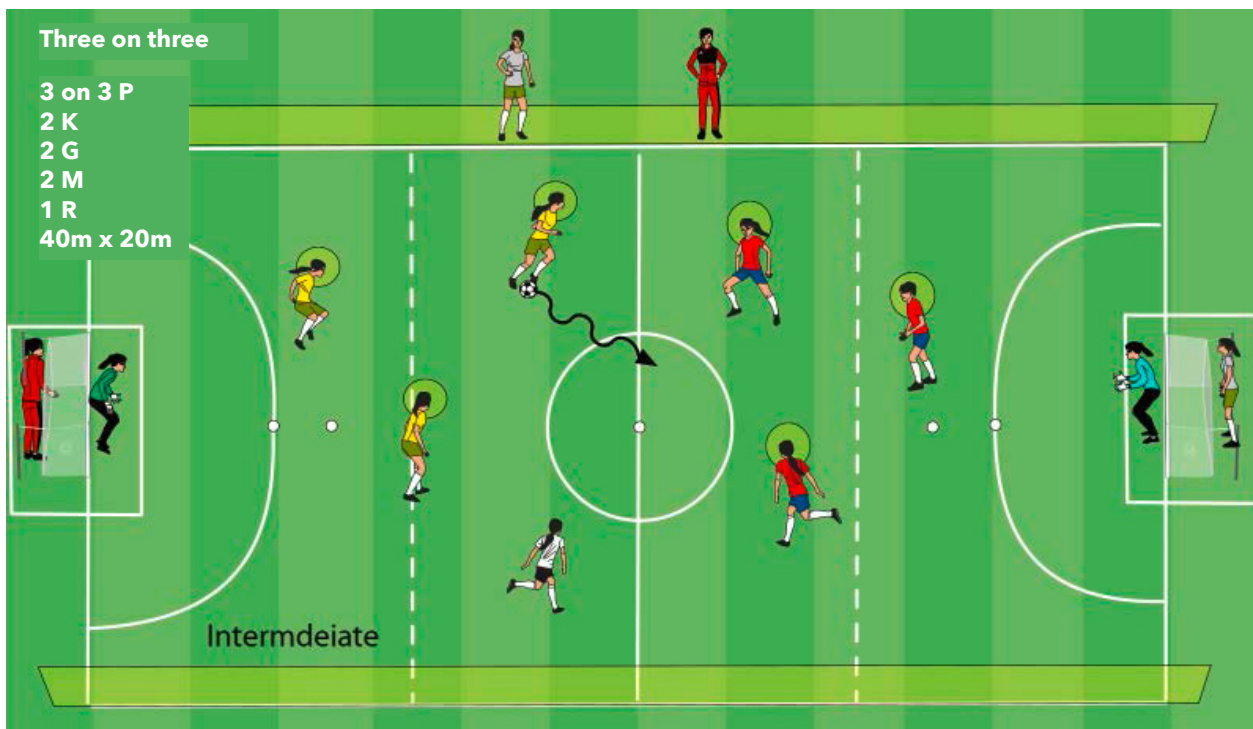
1 on 1 on regular goals 22m x 15m



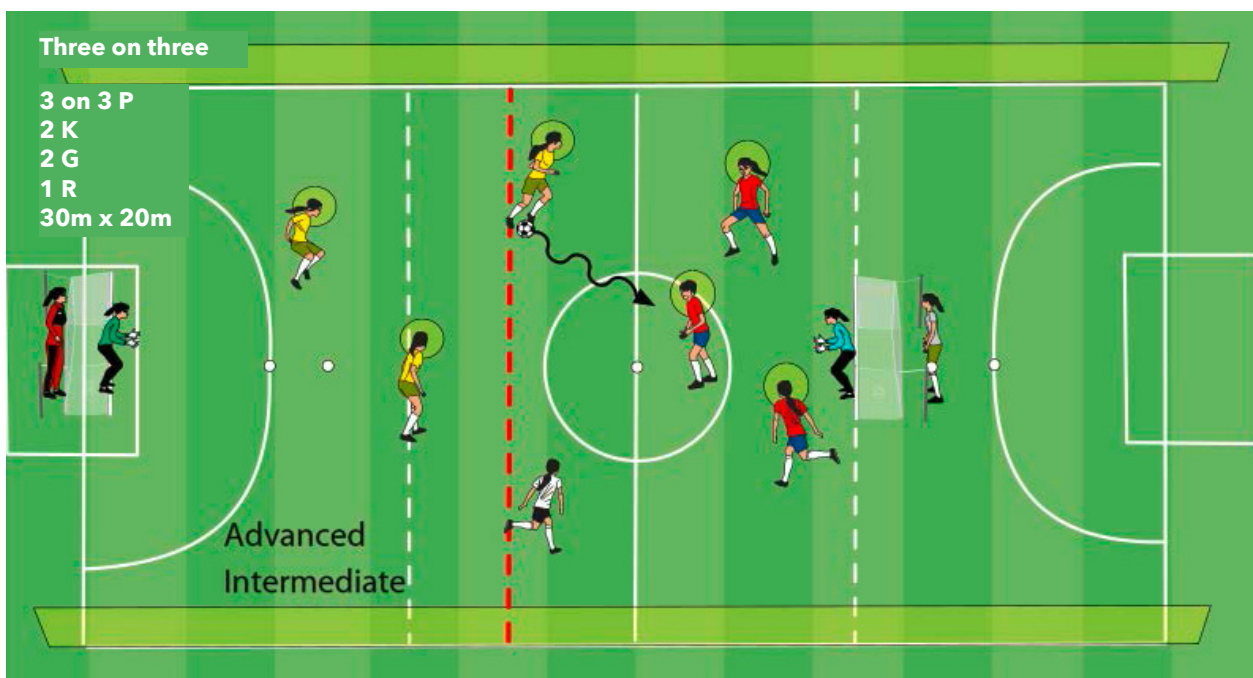
2 on 2 on regular goals 22m x 15m





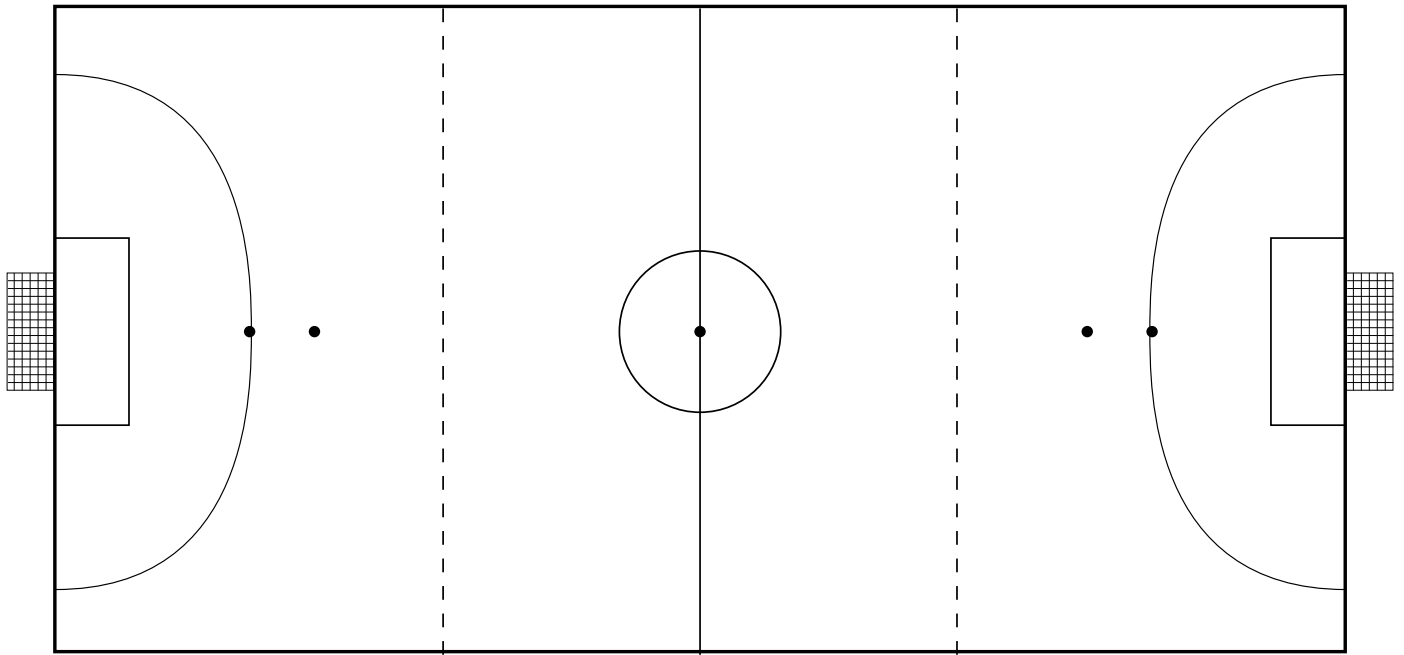


First competitive games for beginners can be played on a regular pitch of 40m by 20m. 3 on 3s are less stressful in the final third due to reduced opposition pressure, as there is one player less on the pitch per team. This creates less zonal pressure.



With more advanced players, the 3 on 3 can also be played on a 30m by 20m pitch. The reduced playing area corresponds exactly to the zonal pressure that players would find themselves confronted with in a regular game of 4 on 4 on a 40m by 20m pitch.



Player  
[P]

"Sighted"

[C]  
[G]  
[A]  
[R]  
[M]

Keeper  
[K]

Running path



Markerdiscs



---

Ball path



Ball



Dribble path

