

**SPECIAL  
OLYMPICS UAE**

**UNIFIED  
TRAINING  
GUIDE**





# FOREWORD

Physical Education (PE) and sports have an important role in the development of young people both physically and mentally. This training guide is a demonstration of Special Olympics UAE's ongoing commitment not only to maximizing opportunity and access to meaningful sporting experiences, but also to enhancing the quality of PE and sports in schools by investing in teachers and coaches through the Unified Champion Schools program.

It's important to acknowledge that the provision of unified sports in schools is not only limited to the PE department. As such, Special Olympics UAE continues to strongly encourage a whole school approach to inclusion in sport, by inviting other faculty members, support staff as well as parents to be more involved in schools' sports programs.

In this instance, the 'Coach the Coach' training offered here works more specifically to support and encourage schools' participation in sports festivals, and offer a range of other coach education opportunities that extend beyond football.

We hope you enjoy this training and look forward to working with you in supporting the development of all children at all the levels during their sporting journey. Your support is always welcomed and appreciated, and your hard work is always valued.

Seth Amofo  
Director, PASS Abu Dhabi

# MEET THE TUTOR



## VIVIENNE HOLT

Vivienne has over 25 years of experience in the education and sport for development sectors as well as international consultancy in support of Ministries of Education, PE and school sports policy development and workforce capacity building. Her areas of specialism include:

- **Policy and strategy development**
- **Stakeholder and government relations**
- **International program authoring and training delivery.**

These range from early years development to enhancing life skills in young people through sport. Her training areas of expertise include early years, primary and secondary physical education, and special education.

Most recently, she has undertaken youth sport development projects and pedagogical training in Bahrain, China, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Vivienne has an MSc in Education Management from Manchester Metropolitan University and was a registered OFSTED Inspector and NCSL Accredited National Consultant Trainer.

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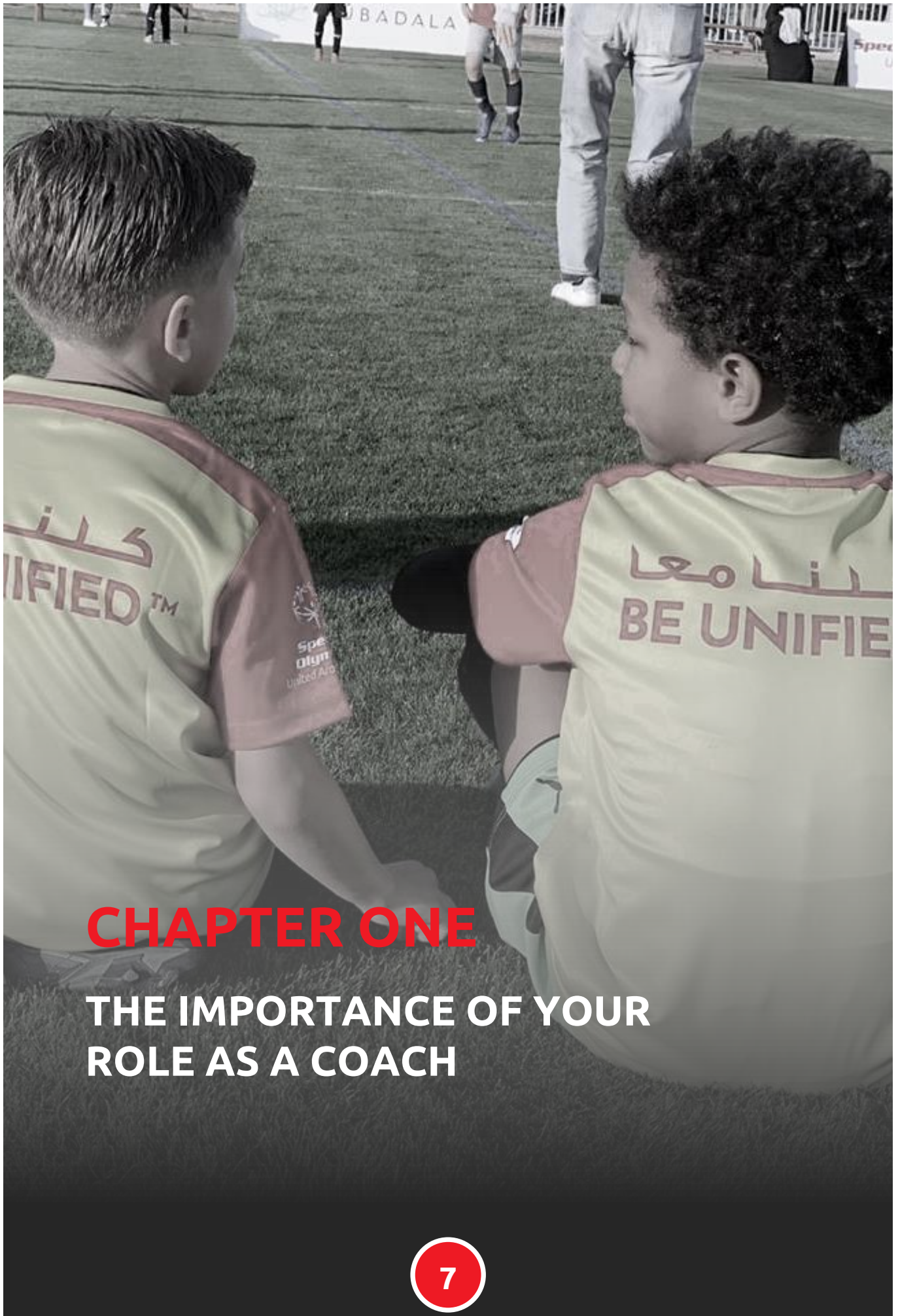
# BOOK ONE THEORY

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

The Special Olympics UAE Unified Champion Schools program promotes social inclusion through intentionally planned and implemented activities affecting systems-wide change. With sports as the foundation, the three-component model offers a unique combination of effective activities that equip young people with tools and training to create sports, classroom, and school climates of acceptance. These are school climates where students with disabilities feel welcome and are routinely included in, and feel a part of, all activities, opportunities, and functions.

This is accomplished by implementing inclusive sports, inclusive youth leadership opportunities, and whole school engagement. The program is designed to be woven into the fabric of the school, enhancing current efforts, and providing rich opportunities that lead to meaningful change in creating a socially inclusive school that supports and engages all learners. What a Unified Champion School looks like can vary greatly from school to school, based on the needs, goals, schedules, and other factors unique to each school; but the basic building blocks remain the same.



# CHAPTER ONE

## THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR ROLE AS A COACH

When approaching a unified coaching session, different elements need to be considered. The role of the coach and/or teacher within the context of this natural tendency for play is critical to help students develop crucial life skills that they will need far beyond just a game of football. These skills can be witnessed at all levels of the sporting experience and include:

- **Communication skills**
- **Leadership**
- **Decision making**
- **Work ethic**
- **Resilience**
- **Discipline**
- **Focus**
- **Emotional regulation**
- **Planning and organization**
- **Teamwork and collaboration**
- **Ethics and fair play**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Problem solving**

Most schools have a set of values and a philosophy that underpin their ways of working. However, these may be rarely discussed during the provision of physical education and especially the development of unified sessions.

Sport therefore offers a great opportunity to practise these values in real life settings, further contributing to the development of students, not only as prospective athletes, but also as individuals. Their ongoing participation in sport (at all levels) provides them with the opportunity to live out these values, not as words, but as an embodiment of a way of being.

As a coach, you have a critical role in providing an inclusive environment to facilitate a lifelong love of sport among Athletes and Unified Partners alike. This will deepen these values and help create responsible human beings that remain a credit to themselves and their communities.





# DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE

Teachers and coaches have the responsibility of equipping young people with the knowledge and skills they need for life. Unified Sports is an opportunity to foster opportunities to generate this knowledge and develop these skills and put them into practice.

With some creative thinking and changing our view of the world from 'leading' to 'empowering', a school's sport or football program can offer far more opportunities to students, both personally and professionally.

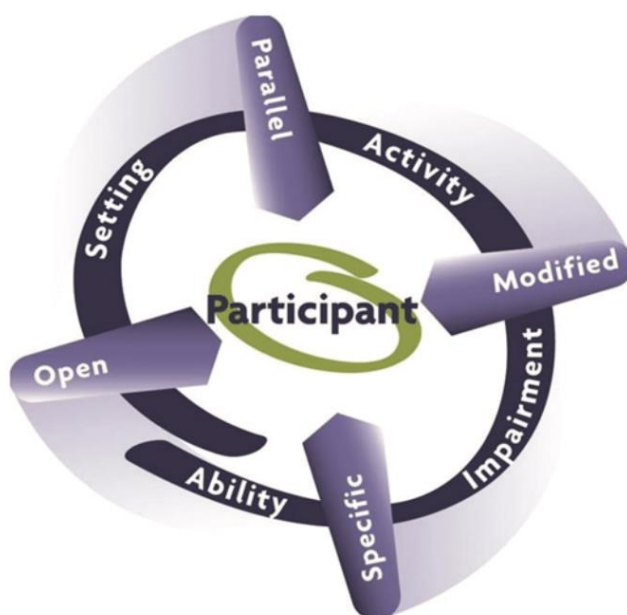
Teachers and coaches should always seek opportunities to extend a student's experiences through their involvement in sport. Unified sport is not only about playing, there's much more to it.



# DEVELOPING A UNIFIED SESSION

The need for differentiation (providing different activities for different levels of ability) is especially important when conducting unified sessions. In a typical session, you are possibly faced with a wide range of abilities, so it is important to ensure your activities are pitched at the right level for each participant. This could mean preparing for more than one ability level in the same session. The Activity Inclusion Model (AIM) and STEPS Model are proven methods of differentiation.

## The Activity Inclusion Model (AIM)



There are four main sections within this model that all coaches could refer to in their planning to ensure a quality and worthwhile coaching experience for all.

The AIM model supports a participant-centred approach in the delivery of sport, physical activity, or PE. This ensures the focus is on everyone having a quality experience and the teacher or coach being inclusive within his or her delivery. There are four main sections within this model that all coaches could refer to in their planning to ensure a quality and worthwhile coaching experience for all. By using open, modified, parallel and specific as well as considering the four factors that influence inclusion above, coaches will be able to create the most appropriate provision for individuals.

# DEVELOPING A UNIFIED SESSION

Coaches and teachers can see the AIM model as allowing for flexibility in an ever-changing delivery environment whether it's a specific program of work, changing learner needs or a focus towards an event or competition.

## **Open activities - everyone can play**

Everyone does the same activities with minimal or no adaptations, e.g. the warmup or cool down

## **Modified activities - Change to include**

Everyone does the same activities, but the rules, equipment or areas are changed to include all abilities.

## **Parallel activities - Ability groups**

Participants follow a common theme but at their own pace in similar ability groups. For example, two groups can perform the same activity, but one group may do it with a different sized ball.

## **Specific activities - Cater for the individual**

Sometimes it may be better for a participant to practice sports individually or with a small group instead of with the rest of the group. For example, if you have a player who finds it difficult to move, it may be better for them to practice individual shooting, rather than to participate in a match.

# DEVELOPING A UNIFIED SESSION

## The STEPS Model

STEPS is an acronym for the five activity parameters that can help to make changes and modifications to an activity. These changes are often referred to as 'progressions' or 'regressions' to support individual needs.

The STEPS concept can be used in the planning, delivering or reviewing stage of a session. It supports to make changes to sport, PE or physical education sessions so that everyone can be included and participate in the same session all together. It can be used in conjunction with the AIM model as discussed above or in isolation as a stand-alone coach's tool.

**Space** - Is the space provided adequate? For example, more space provides more reaction time, less space means your players are more mobile and skilled. Could you zone out your areas to cater for different abilities? Do your targets need to be close or further away? You may need to consider allowing some participants to play from different areas of the pitch.

**Task** - Is the task too easy or too challenging? Do you introduce more rules or simplify the activity? What roles do the participants have? Can you change these roles? Are there different ways to play the game?

**Equipment** - Would it be better for certain individuals if you changed the equipment? Small balls instead of bigger balls to make it easier to see? Balloons instead of footballs to make it easier to catch? Human beings as markers instead of cones so participants keep their heads up?

**People** - How do you group the participants? By ability? By height? By age? Do you give everyone different roles in a team? Do participants or independently or in groups? What about even or odd numbers?

**Speed** - How can we affect the tempo of our coaching session? Add in competition to increase tempo etc.

# PILLARS OF SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT

Following extensive research with experts in coaching and talent development from around the world, several core elements have been identified as underpinning great coaching.

For teachers on any coaching program, having a good understanding of these themes will help you be more effective, especially if you have less experience within the specific sport involved.

UK Coaching spent nine months conducting focus groups to identify the following constructs that are vital for teachers and coaches to consider. It conveys how the 'art of coaching' is so much broader than just considering the technical and tactical elements to a single game.

<https://www.ukcoaching.org/coach-learning-framework>.

## Four core areas:

### Understanding Self

Understanding yourself is essential to maximizing your capabilities and knowing how your internal states and impulses can help you realize your true potential.

Having a clear coaching philosophy will enable you to guide your decision-making. Being reflective on your own practice will help develop not only your approach to unified football or sports coaching, but also teaching and coaching in general. What is your motivation to coach? Do you reflect on your sessions to consider how you could have positively affected the participants?

### Understanding the Individual

Understanding the person in front of you is at the heart of great teaching and coaching. Finding the individual and unique elements that motivate young people can help you accelerate the impact of your coaching or teaching, especially in a unified environment.

Learning about the whole person, what motivates and drives them, understanding individual stages of development, connecting with different people, and developing in a holistic manner are all essential.

## Understanding your Environment

The uniqueness of your setting and how this is situated will play a crucial role in structuring the experience for participants.

Developing independent learners whilst considering how you can balance the personal, emotional, social, psychological, physical, and cognitive needs is a fine balance to manage. Learning how to create an environment to enable participants to maximise their potential, whilst paying attention to how this may ebb and flow as they transition through different periods of their sporting and personal life.

## Understanding Coaching Practice

At the core of the process is ensuring there is a strong knowledge base to our work as teachers and coaches when delivering unified sport sessions. This needs to build on how learning happens.

Using practices that are representative of the demands of the game are vital to help learning 'stick' for players. This all needs to be considered within the cultural and social environment, alongside our values.

These four core areas, along with the following five specialist themes, are at the heart of the research findings for great coaching:

- **Sport psychology**
- **Skill acquisition**
- **Athlete development and physical preparation**
- **Lifestyle, health and wellbeing**
- **Relationships**

Having a strong understanding of the underlying principles of these nine themes and putting them into practice will make the environment one in which a young person is more likely to thrive.





# BOOK TWO PRACTICAL

## INTRODUCTION

The following sections in the handbook outline a series of different coaching practices that can help you organise inclusive activities for your students.

It is important that these practices are taken into consideration along with the previous information presented in this handbook to underpin your thinking and approach.

Development of young people needs to be put above winning, however challenging that may feel for the adults involved. It is also important to recognize that, at times, some young people will also put the value of winning above that of development and the trade-off is that of short-term vs long term success, of not just sport, but life.

Drawing out these lessons is what is more important, whilst still equipping you with the practical tools and skills that might help you provide a positive sport experience to your student athletes.

Fun and enjoyment should be at the heart of the coaching experience. Many young people find these elements grounded within practices that more closely represent the 'real game', this is an important concept for developing skill – ensure that practices represent the game itself.

### Key considerations



Do the games and activities used in training represent and resemble elements of the proper 11v11 game? What is the purpose of the competition for the school?

### Key considerations



Are you aligning your behaviours around the development of young people with how you behave on match day and during training?

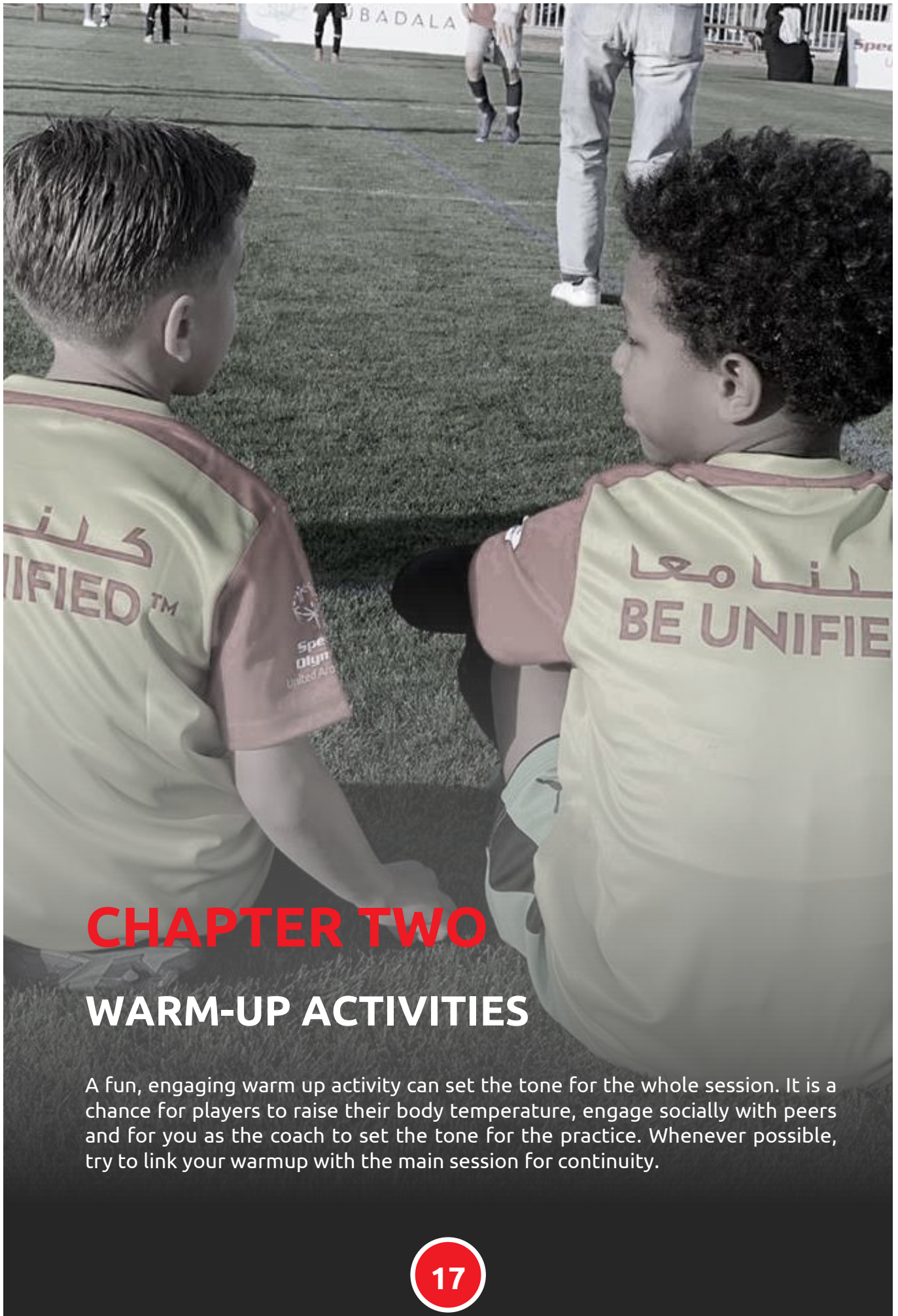
### Key considerations



Are you allowing the players to have lots of repetition of different technical and tactical elements that have a direct link to what they may experience in the match?







## CHAPTER TWO

### WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

A fun, engaging warm up activity can set the tone for the whole session. It is a chance for players to raise their body temperature, engage socially with peers and for you as the coach to set the tone for the practice. Whenever possible, try to link your warmup with the main session for continuity.

## WARM UP ACTIVITY- CHANGE

### Organization

Each player has a ball. When the coach shouts “change”, players leave their ball and collect another. Variations/progressions: Run and touch another ball and return to their own. On the command, “leave the ball”, find another and move the ball around a circle.

## WARM UP ACTIVITY- TRAFFIC LIGHTS

### Organization

Each player has a ball. The players move around with the ball at their feet and when the coach holds up a red cone they must all stop with the ball under control. When the coach holds up a yellow cone the players must change direction with a turn and when the coach holds up a green cone, the players must increase their speed. (Wheelchair users may carry the ball and to assist any players with visual impairments, the coach may call out the colour of the cone).

## WARM UP ACTIVITY- BIB SNATCH

### Organization

The group is divided into two teams and each player tucks a bib behind them. Each team has 15 spare bibs in their hoop. The players then move around dribbling a football and opposing team members attempt to steal the bib. If the players’ bib is snatched, they must immediately return to their hoop to put on another one.

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## CHAPTER THREE

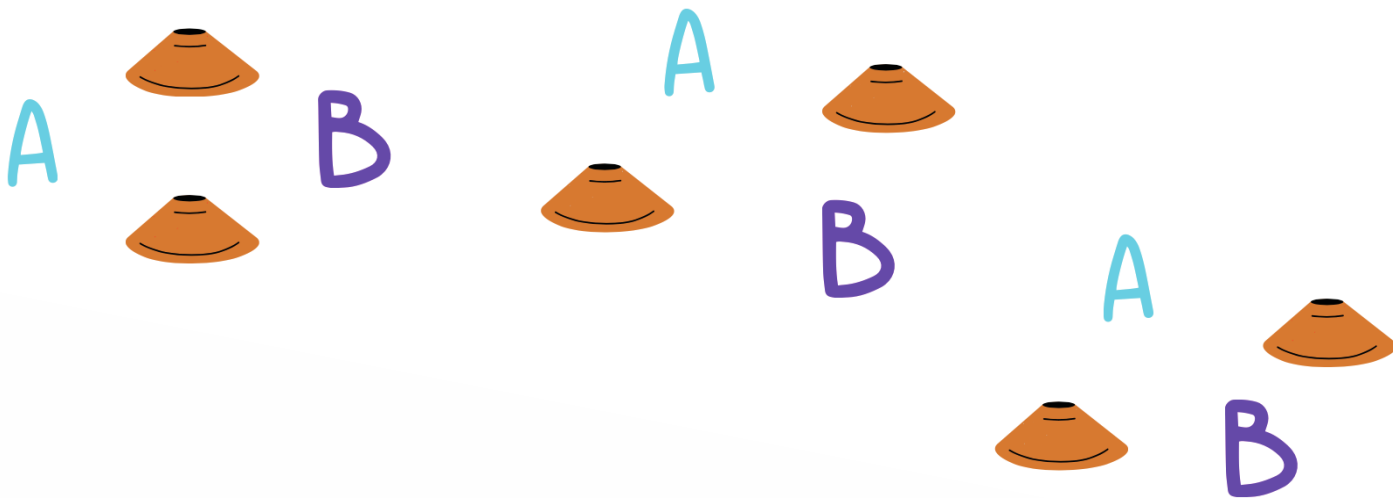
# TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

Young footballers need to be comfortable on the ball to allow them to enjoy the game. The technical practices below will assist in developing the technical abilities of your players. These ideas include guidance on how they can be modified and how you could set up parallel activities to support the abilities of your players.

# TECHINICAL DEVELOPMENT - MOVES IN TWOS

## Organization

Split the group into pairs (x and o) with one ball between two. Ask the players to number themselves A and B. Player A to have a football. Players to stand two metres on either side of cones. Player A to pass the ball to player B. Player A to then move to a new area to receive the ball from another player with the ball. Play for a minute. How many passes can each player make?



## Modified Activities

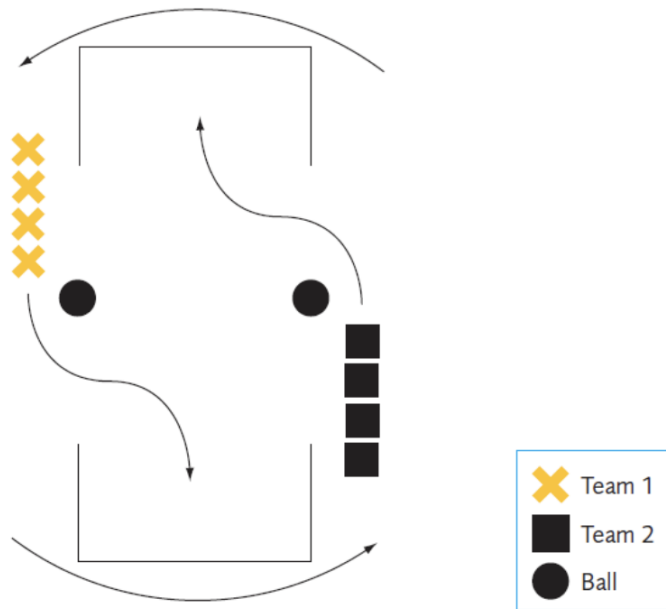
- Reduce the distance between cones
- Use different types of ball as appropriate e.g., tennis ball or larger ball

## Parallel Activities

- Groupings according to ability NOT disability
- Players remaining stationary
- Use hands to pass and receive

## Organization

Set up as in the diagram. Two teams in small lines. The two teams continue until each has had a shot into both goals and return to their starting position.



## Modified Activities

- Reduce the distance between goals or starting positions for some players
- Increase size of goals

## Parallel Activities

- Players shoot for goal using their hands
- Players shoot for goal using their feet from a stationary position
- Players travel at walking/slow speed

## Organisation

Create four stations with a group of players at each station and place all the balls in the centre. On the word 'go' the players must go one at a time and retrieve a ball and bring it back to their group. The game ends when there are no more balls left in the middle. When there are no more balls left in the middle, everyone can go and take balls from any station for a set number of seconds. The winning team is the group with the most balls at the end of the time.



## Modified Activities

- Players collect balls by whatever means possible
- Players walk to get balls

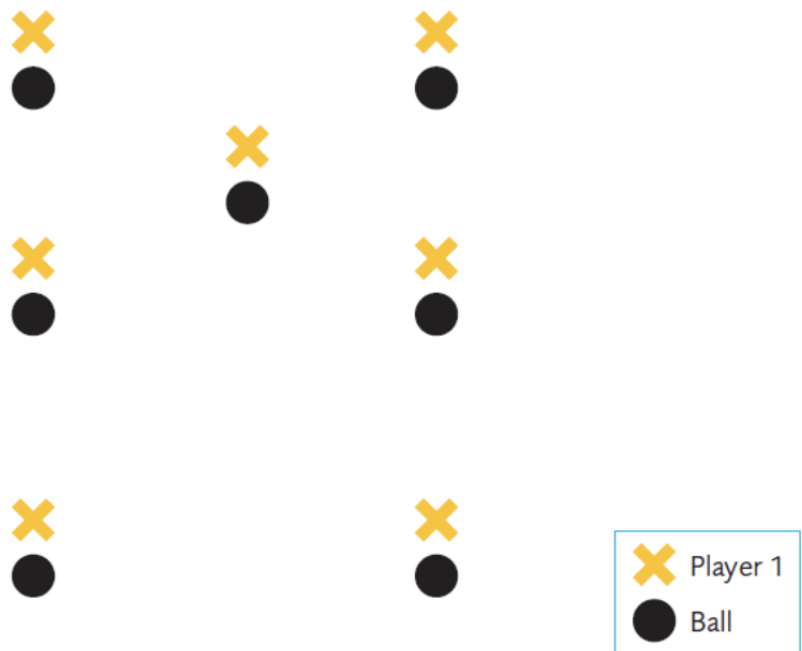
## Parallel Activities

- One group - walking and picking up balls
- One group - with 'defender' guarding the balls

# TECHINICAL DEVELOPMENT - TRAFFIC LIGHTS

## Organisation

Each player has a ball, the players run around with the ball at their feet, and when the coach holds up the red cone, they must all stop with their foot on the ball. When the players see a yellow cone, they must change direction with a turn. When the players see the green cone, they must increase their speed.



## Modified Activities

- Use bigger cones as targets

## Parallel Activities

- Use hands to stop the ball
- 1 group only working at red light command
- 1 group only working at red light and yellow light command
- Players walk with football

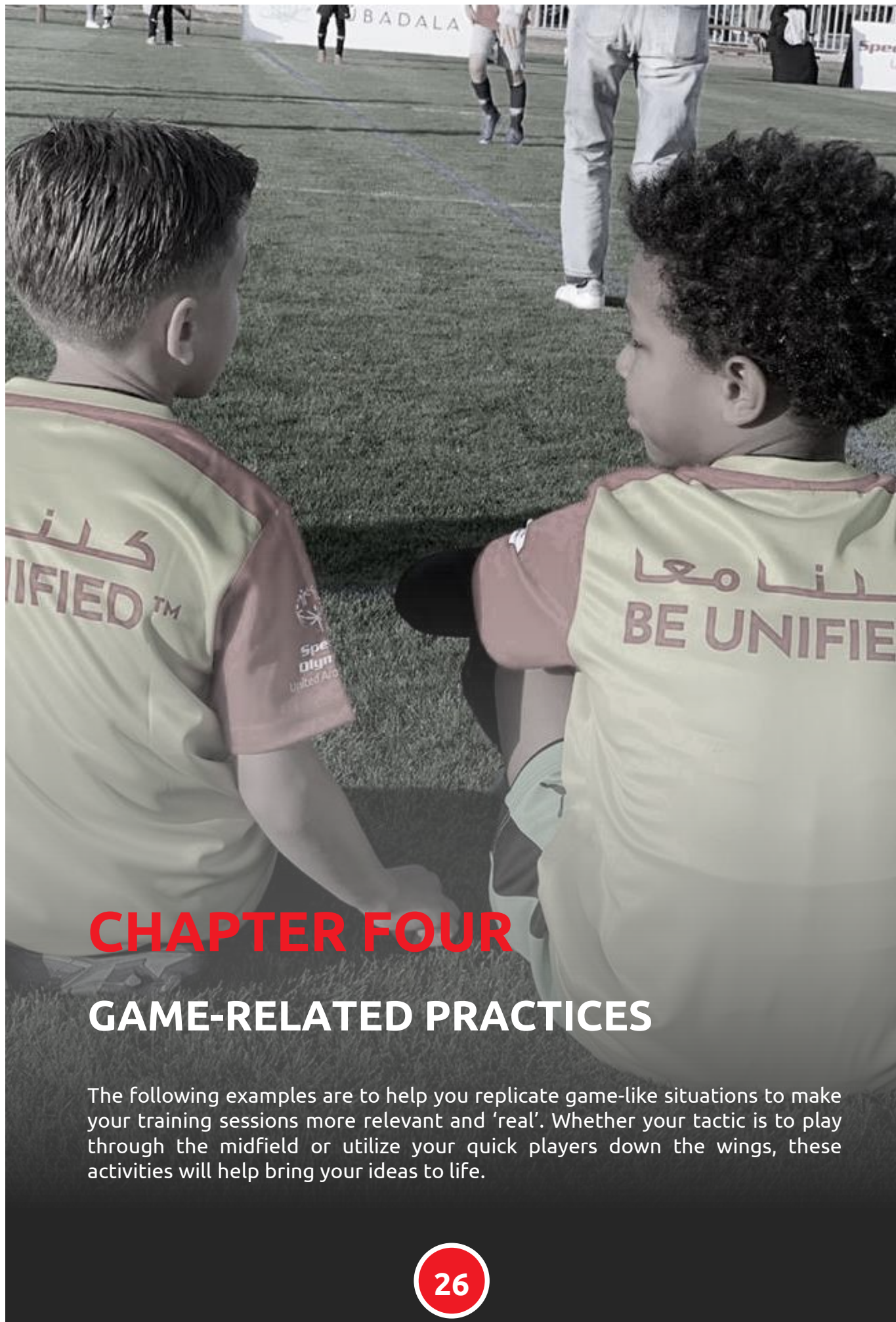


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## CHAPTER FOUR

### GAME-RELATED PRACTICES

The following examples are to help you replicate game-like situations to make your training sessions more relevant and 'real'. Whether your tactic is to play through the midfield or utilize your quick players down the wings, these activities will help bring your ideas to life.

# GAME – RELATED PRACTICE – FIND THE TARGET

## Organization

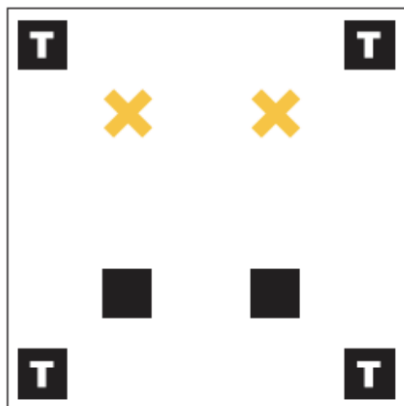
This is a 2v2 game in which the players attempt to pass to the targets to score. The targets then play to the opposition. Remember to keep swapping those who are the targets and those playing the game at regular intervals, so that everyone gets a chance to be involved in the middle.

## Modified Activities

- Reduce the space to assist those with limited mobility
- Put 2/3 people in target areas

## Parallel Activities

- Using hands to pass with passive defenders
- Using feet to pass with passive defenders
- Pass and score with active defenders



# GAME – RELATED PRACTICE – THREE POTS

## Organization

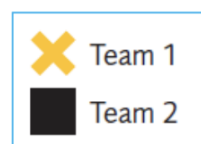
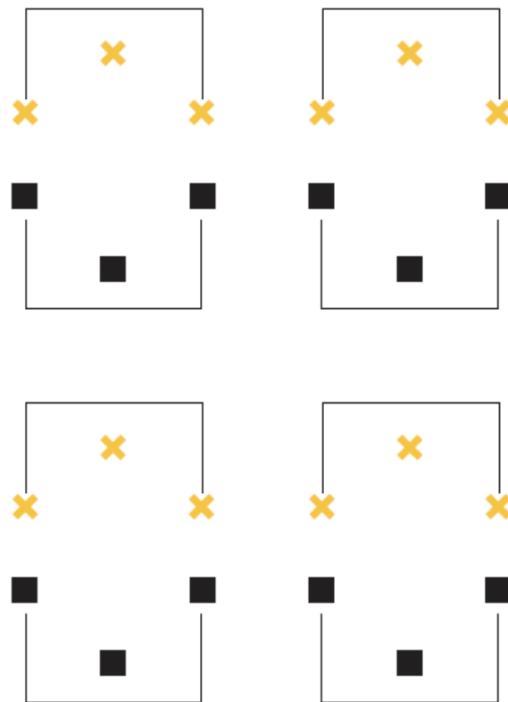
- Set up one goal and in groups of three, the players play 1v1 with a goalkeeper. The first person to score three goals goes into goal and the game starts from the goalkeeper.
- Progression can be to 3v3 mini games.

## Modified Activities

- Passing and shooting, no tackling

## Parallel Activities

- Passive defending - move but no tackling
- Change goalkeeper after three attempts not goals



# GAME – RELATED PRACTICE – THROUGH THE GATES

## Organization

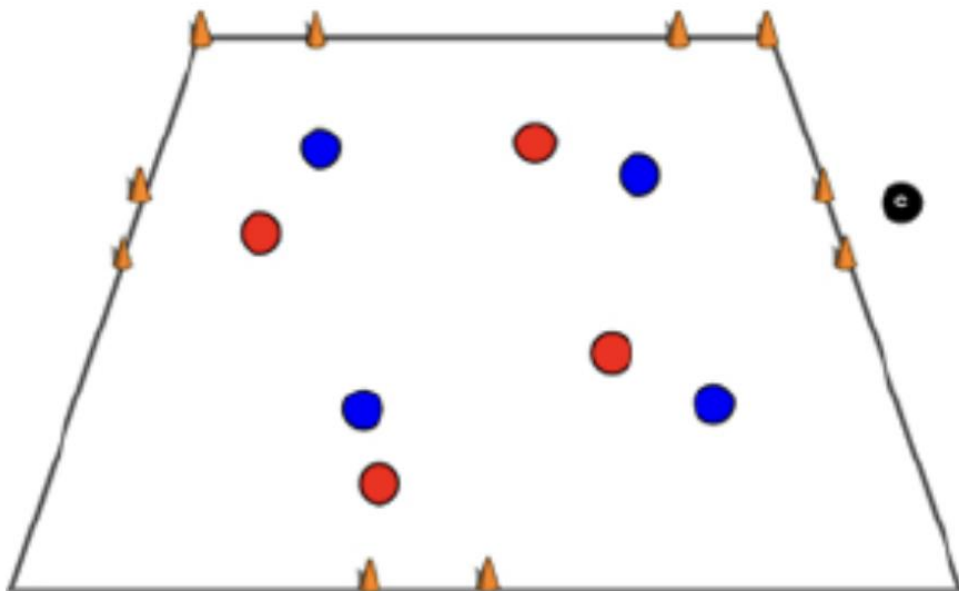
Play 3v3 or 4v4. To score a goal, the ball must be passed through the gates (cones) for a teammate to receive on the other side without the opposition touching it first. Can pass from either side of the gate. The scoring team cannot score in the same goal directly until they score through a different goal

## Modified Activities

- No tackling
- Increase size of the gates

## Parallel Activities

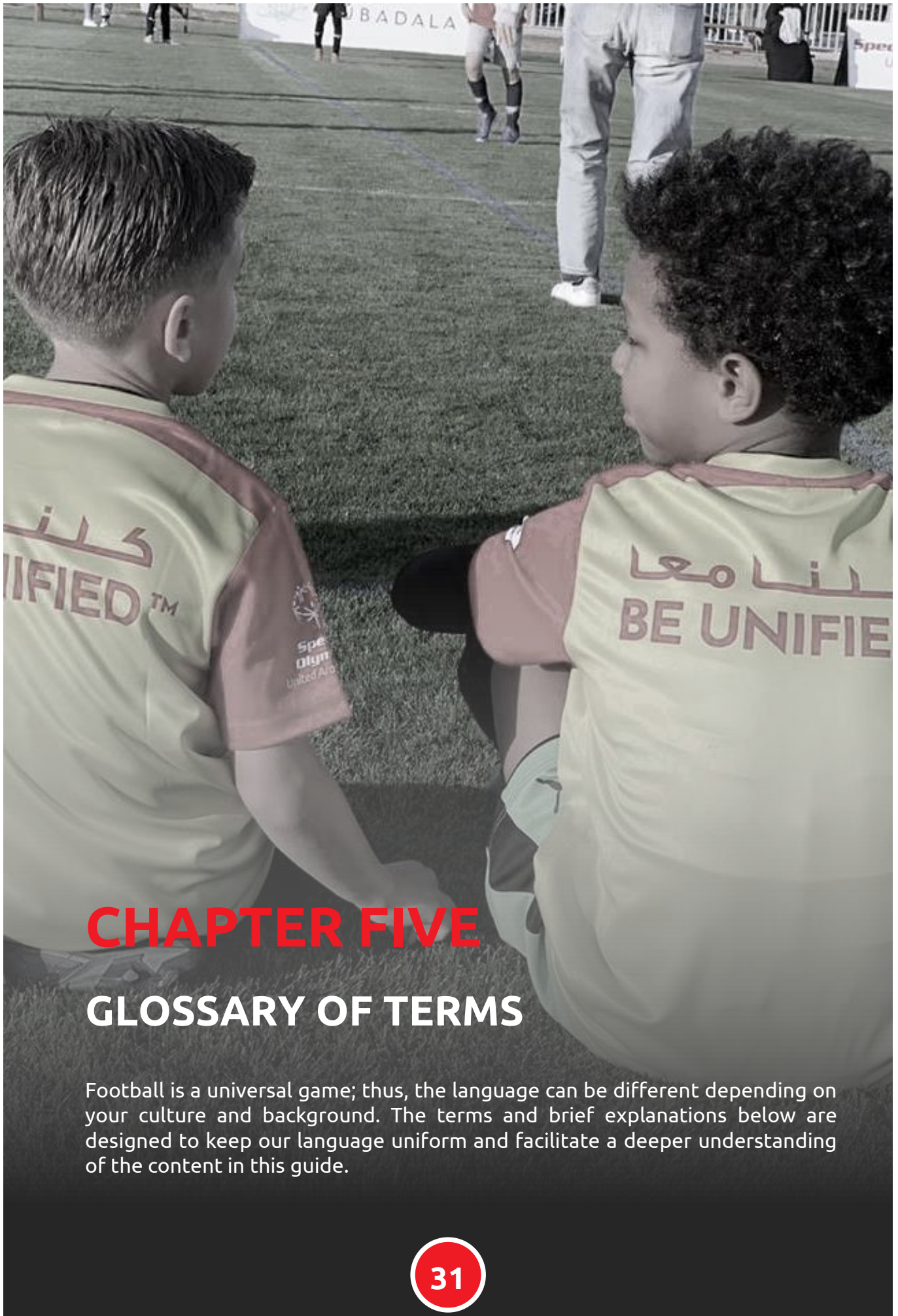
- Passive defending - move but no tackling
- Change players after one team scores three goals



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## CHAPTER FIVE

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Football is a universal game; thus, the language can be different depending on your culture and background. The terms and brief explanations below are designed to keep our language uniform and facilitate a deeper understanding of the content in this guide.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**A 'third'** – imagine the football pitch is split vertically into three.

**Arrival activity** – a fun and engaging activity to greet players as they arrive for training/matches.

**Athlete** - a participant who is a Person of Determination

**Distance of support** – the distance between teammates to provide a passing option when they have the ball.

**Dribbling** – to keep the football under close control to avoid defenders.

**Gate** – the space between two cones.

**In possession** – to have the ball.

**Intercept** – to stop the ball before it reaches its desired destination.

**Keep possession** – When a team keeps the ball away from the opponents.

**Partner** - a participant who is not a person of determination

**Person of Determination** - a participant with intellectual disabilities

**Press** – to aggressively attempt to win the ball.

**Regain possession/the ball** – to win the ball back after losing it.

**Running with the ball** – to move the ball into space whilst under control.

**Support** – to provide a passing option for a teammate with the ball.

**Unified** – When an athlete and a partner work together.







We hope you have enough material to embark on a valuable journey with your Athletes. We also realize that learning never stops, so the useful resources and links below will help you stay updated and informed to provide your students with a worthwhile and valuable unified football experience every time.

## Coaching resources & links

### Websites:

UK Coaching

<https://www.ukcoaching.org/>

Special Olympics -

<https://www.specialolympics.org/our-work/sports/football>

The FA England Football Learning

<https://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/disability/coach-educationxv>

Boing Kids

<https://www.boingkids.co.uk/>