

Year 4 - Development of Invasion Games

Basketball & Football - Lesson Plan

COMPETING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective To develop the technique of dribbling the ball whilst under pressure from a defender in Basketball. **Lesson 1/6**

Equipment Needed Basketballs, – enough for 1 each (minimum 1 between 2), cones, flat markers, bibs.

Success Criteria Children can:

- understand the terms of 'travelling' and 'double dribble'
- use their body / other arm to protect the ball whilst dribbling.

EDSTART KNOW

- I can explain what 'travelling' and 'double dribble' mean.
- I can describe how to protect the ball with my body/arm.
- I can understand how to dribble safely when pressured.

EDSTART GO

- I can dribble using fingertips at waist height.
- I can change speed and direction while keeping control.
- I can receive & dribble, in small games.

EDSTART SHOW

- I can respect defenders by following the rules.
- I can encourage my teammates during dribbling games.
- I can celebrate effort whether I win or lose.

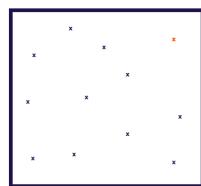
Key Question

What helps you keep control of the basketball when moving? Soft fingertips, bent knees, and keeping my eyes up.

Warm Up

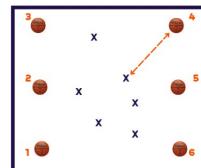
BOUNCE BOSS: Children each have a basketball and find a space. Start by bouncing the ball on the spot with their preferred hand, then switch to their opposite hand. Progress to dribbling at the side of the body and alternating hands every few bounces. Once confident, they move around the area, keeping control while walking forward, backward, and side to side. Encourage soft fingertips, bent knees, and eyes up to spot space. **PROGRESSION:** Add fun challenges, "Bounce Freeze!" (hold the ball still), "Bounce Switch!" (change hands), or "Bounce Spin!" (turn in a circle while dribbling).

Main Activity



TRAFFIC JAM: Children dribble around the basketball court, responding to the coach's commands. On "Green," children move freely around the space, changing direction and using both hands. On "Amber," they dribble slowly on the spot, keeping control. On "Red," they must stop completely with one hand on top of the ball. To make it more fun, add sound effects or silly penalties — for example, if anyone moves on "Red," they must do five toe taps before rejoining. **PROGRESSION:** Instead of calling out, the coach silently holds up coloured cones, children must keep their heads up to watch for the signals.

GATES & GO: Set up lots of small cone gates around the playing area. Children dribble their basketball freely and aim to dribble through as many different gates as possible in a set time without crashing into others. They must use both hands, keep the ball under control, and change direction after every gate. Encourage pupils to keep their head up to spot free gates, use light fingertip touches, and stay low with bent knees for balance. Count how many gates each child successfully travels through in 60 seconds. **PROGRESSION:** Add a defender who moves slowly and tries to block gates, or require pupils to perform a change of hand at every gate.



PASS & DASH: Split the class into two groups, one group lines the outside of the court with a ball each, and the other moves freely in the middle. Inside players call for a pass, receive it with control, dribble to a new outside player, and pass again. Players must keep moving to find new partners. After two minutes, switch roles so everyone practises both passing and receiving. Encourage good communication, calling names, showing hands for the pass, and keeping eyes up to avoid collisions. **PROGRESSION:** Add time challenges: how many passes and dribbles can each player complete in 30 seconds without losing control?

CHAMPION OF THE COURT: All players begin dribbling inside the basketball court, keeping their ball under control. The aim is to knock other players' balls out of the area while protecting your own. If your ball goes out, you become a "defender" and try to knock out others. The final player left with a ball in the court is crowned "Champion of the Court." This fun, high-energy activity encourages agility, awareness, and dribbling control under pressure. **PROGRESSION:** Add mini "safe zones" where players can rest for three seconds before rejoining, or play team versions where half the group defends and the others attack.

Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)

SPACE

Use larger spaces for beginners, reduce space to increase pressure.

TASK

Dribble on the spot for support or while moving for challenge.

EQUIPMENT

Use size 3 balls for control or size 5 for progression.

PEOPLE

Pair similar ability for confidence or mixed ability for challenge.

Key Technical Point

Push the ball with fingertips, keep it below waist height, and stay balanced.

Cooldown

BOUNCE & BREATHE: Children dribble slowly around the space, taking big, calm breaths each time they bounce. After a minute, they stop, hold the ball in front, and stretch their arms high, low, and side to side. Finish sitting in a circle, balancing the ball gently on one hand while sharing one skill they improved today. **PROGRESSION:** Add a "quiet bounce" challenge — who can dribble the softest and most controlled to show calm focus? **"What helped you keep control of your ball when the game got fast or busy?"**

Year 4 - Development of Invasion Games

Basketball & Football - Lesson Plan

COMPETING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective To develop the technique of shooting in Basketball. **Lesson 2/6**

Equipment Needed Basketballs, Basketball Nets, cones, bibs.

Success Criteria Children can:

- know how to stand and hold the ball before shooting.
- understand what a set shot is.
- understand the Acronym of BEEF (Balance, Elbow under the ball, Eyes on the target, Follow through).

EDSTART KNOW

- I can explain what a set shot is.
- I can describe the acronym BEEF (Balance, Elbow, Eyes, Follow-through).
- I can understand when and why to shoot.

EDSTART GO

- I can use correct stance and follow through when shooting.
- I can shoot from different distances in races and challenges.
- I can combine passing, dribbling, and shooting in games.

EDSTART SHOW

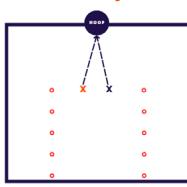
- I can respect others when they are shooting.
- I can encourage my group.
- I can support my team by working together.

Key Question What helps you move faster and change direction more quickly? Quick feet, strong arms, good posture, and fast reactions.

Warm Up

SPACE INVADERS: Begin with half the class holding a basketball and half without. The players with the ball must keep it moving at all times using controlled dribbles, switching hands, changing direction, and protecting the ball. The players without the ball move constantly to find open spaces, demonstrating good awareness and teamwork. Every 30 seconds, swap roles so everyone practises both dribbling and off-the-ball movement. This warm-up reinforces key techniques: eyes up, soft fingertips, knees bent, and controlled bounces. **PROGRESSION:** Add a tag rule where ball carriers try to tag players without a ball using only their dribble to promote sharper reactions and quicker changes of direction.

Main Activity



HOOP HEROES: Split the class into small groups, each with a hoop. Demonstrate correct shooting technique – knees bent, ball at chest height, eyes on the target, and follow-through with fingertips. Pupils form single-file lines behind each hoop and take three attempts per turn to practise and correct errors immediately. Encourage them to observe their hand position, power, and accuracy after each shot to build consistency. **PROGRESSION:** Vary shot distances for more challenge or introduce bounce passes into the shooting rotation for teamwork and coordination.

SHOOT & SLIDE: Using the same groups, pupils pass the ball sideways along a line before the final player shoots. After passing, each pupil slides left to fill the next space, keeping the ball moving quickly and safely. This promotes passing accuracy, quick movement off the ball, and smooth transitions into shooting under light pressure. Emphasise calling for the ball, showing hands, and quick set position before shooting. **PROGRESSION:** Add a defender who applies light pressure to the shooter or require the shot to be taken within three seconds.

RACE TO THE FINISH – "HOOP HURDLE CHALLENGE": Keeping the same groups, mark out cone lines that move progressively further from the hoop. Players take turns shooting from their starting cone. When they score, they move one cone back. The first player to score from the final cone wins the challenge. This competitive activity helps pupils apply their technique under light pressure and encourages control over power. **PROGRESSION:** Add a twist where players must complete a bounce pass or short dribble obstacle before shooting to reinforce combination skills.



KEEP BALL – "PASS MASTERS": Organise pupils into small teams of three. Two teams play against each other for possession. The objective is to make as many consecutive passes as possible without dropping the ball, moving out of bounds, or travelling. If the ball is lost, the other team gains possession. Encourage pupils to spread out, communicate, and move into space to support teammates. **PROGRESSION:** After three successful passes, teams can attempt a shot into a hoop for bonus points to reward teamwork and passing accuracy.

Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)

SPACE

Increase space for confidence or reduce space to increase pressure.

TASK

Use stationary skills for support or add movement and defenders for challenge.

EQUIPMENT

Use size 3 balls for control or size 5 for progression.

PEOPLE

Pair similar ability for assurance or mixed ability for challenge and support.

Key Technical Point

Keep knees bent and body low for balance, push the ball with soft fingertips rather than slapping it, keep the ball at waist height or lower for protection, and keep eyes up at all times to scan for space, teammates, and defenders. When passing or shooting, step towards the target, set hands early, and follow through with fingers pointing towards the hoop for accuracy and control.

Cooldown

SLOW DRIBBLE STRETCH: Pupils dribble slowly around the court, keeping the ball low and controlled while taking calm breaths. On the whistle, they stop, hold the ball out in front, and stretch arms, legs, and shoulders. After a few deep breaths, pupils gather in a circle, balancing their ball on one hand while reflecting on what helped them shoot or pass accurately today. **PROGRESSION:** End with a partner stretch using gentle side reaches while holding the ball between backs to support coordination and teamwork. **"Which skill helped your team keep possession the longest — accurate passing, communication, or movement into space?"**

Year 4 - Development of Invasion Games

Basketball & Football - Lesson Plan

COMPETING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective To play small games and follow the rules of the game in Basketball. **Lesson 3/6**

Equipment Needed Basketballs, Basketball Nets, cones, bibs.

Success Criteria Children can:

- understand the rules and know how to start and restart the game.
- pass, dribble and shoot with control in a variety of games.

EDSTART KNOW

- I can explain the basic rules of basketball.
- I can describe how to start and restart play
- I can understand when to dribble, pass, or shoot.

EDSTART GO

- I can dribble, pass, and shoot in small games.
- I can move into space to support my team.
- I can mark opponents to stop them receiving.

EDSTART SHOW

- I can respect referees and opponents in games.
- I can encourage my teammates during small matches.
- I can play fairly whether I win or lose.

Key Question

What helps your team keep possession of the ball? Accurate passing, moving into space, and good communication.

Warm Up

PASS TAG: Mark out a square activity area and select two taggers who each hold a basketball. The taggers move around the space and can only tag others by gently touching them with the ball (no throwing). If a player is tagged, they freeze with arms stretched out wide. To be freed, a teammate must successfully pass them a ball to catch, then return it cleanly to the passer. This starter encourages quick reactions, passing accuracy, teamwork, and constant movement into space. Encourage children to use both chest and bounce passes when rescuing teammates, to call for the ball clearly, and to keep their heads up to scan for frozen players and taggers. **PROGRESSION:** Add a rule where taggers can only move by dribbling, developing ball control, balance, and awareness while chasing.

Main Activity

PASS AND MOVE: Children work in groups of four, passing the ball around their group and following their pass to the next available space. Begin with simple chest passes, focusing on stepping towards the target, pushing the ball from the chest with two hands, and finishing with fingers pointing toward the receiver. Emphasise strong communication by calling the receiver's name and showing clear target hands. Once consistent, introduce bounce passes, demonstrating how to bend the knees slightly and aim the ball at the floor around two-thirds of the distance between passer and receiver. Encourage players to stay light on their feet, move quickly after each pass, and always be ready to receive again. Reinforce spacing so players do not crowd each other and passes remain clear and accurate. **PROGRESSION:** Add a 60-second timed challenge where groups count how many accurate bounce passes they can complete in one minute without dropping the ball, aiming to beat their previous score with control.

HOOP ZONE SHOWDOWN: Split the class into small teams of three and set up multiple mini courts or zones, each with a clearly marked end zone at either end. Teams must pass the ball and move it towards their attacking end zone, where one teammate must catch the ball inside the zone to score a point. After a successful catch, that player then takes a controlled shot at a hoop or target if available. Remind players that they should dribble only when needed, focusing instead on quick, accurate passing and constant movement off the ball. Attackers should spread out to create width and depth, show their hands clearly as a target, and change speed or direction after passing to lose their defender. Defenders practise staying low, using side-on body positions, tracking both player and ball, anticipating passes, and using quick footwork to block space rather than reaching in. Encourage positive communication, quick decision-making, and teamwork under light competitive pressure. **PROGRESSION:** Add a rule that teams must make a set number of passes before scoring, or that all teammates must touch the ball before a shot, increasing tactical awareness and teamwork.



Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)

SPACE

Increase space for easier passing or reduce to increase pressure.

TASK

Use stationary passing for support or add movement and defenders.

EQUIPMENT

Use softer/larger balls for control or standard balls for challenge.

PEOPLE

Pair similar ability for confidence or mix for peer support.

Key Technical Point

Step towards your target when passing, push the ball from the chest with both hands, and finish with fingers pointing towards the receiver. Show clear target hands when receiving, cushion the ball into your body with soft hands, and move immediately after passing to create a new option for your team. Keep your head up at all times to scan for teammates and defenders.

Cooldown

PASSING CIRCLE CALM: Children form a large circle and pass the ball slowly around using gentle, controlled chest passes. After each pass, they take one slow, deep breath in through the nose and out through the mouth to calm the body. Encourage pupils to reflect quietly on what helped them work well as a team during the lesson. Finish with slow, controlled stretches for the arms, shoulders, and upper back, arms forward, overhead reach, and gentle twisting motions side to side. **PROGRESSION:** Add a short partner stretch in a back-to-back seated position, gently pressing against each other while breathing slowly to support relaxation and recovery.

Year 4 - Development of Invasion Games

Basketball & Football - Lesson Plan

COMPETING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective	To develop the role of the defender in football.			
Equipment Needed	Footballs (size 4 plus small / lighter for differentiation) cones, marker, bibs			
Success Criteria	<p>Children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">know how to stand when defending.close down the attacker and try to win the ball.show the opponent in the direction you want them to go.			
EDSTART KNOW	EDSTART GO		EDSTART SHOW	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can explain how to stand when defending.I can describe how to close down attackers safely.I can understand how to show attackers into safe areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can defend 1v1 and deny space to attackers.I can practise small movements to stay goal side.I can apply defending in gauntlet and conditioned games.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can respect attackers when defending.I can encourage my teammates during defensive drills.I can celebrate team effort even if we don't win.	
Key Question	What helps you defend successfully without fouling? Staying low, watching the ball, and timing the tackle.			
Warm Up	<p>SHADOW STEALER: Children work in pairs, with one attacker holding a ball and one defender without. The attacker dribbles freely around the area, using changes of direction, speed, and body feints to evade the defender. The defender shadows closely, aiming to time a clean interception by taking controlled possession of the ball to score one point. Once the defender wins the ball, roles immediately switch so both pupils practise both attacking and defending. Emphasis small, controlled touches from the attacker and constant scanning for space. Defenders should stay low with bent knees, maintain balance, and anticipate movements rather than chasing blindly. Encourage quick reactions and controlled footwork from both roles. PROGRESSION: Add a 30-second timer to see how many clean interceptions the defender can make within the time limit.</p>			
Main Activity	<p>GUARD THE LINE: Mark out 10m x 10m grids for each pair. One pupil starts as the attacker and one as the defender. The attacker begins with the ball and attempts to dribble past the defender to cross the end line. The defender's role is to stay goal side, close down space gradually, and block the attacker's route without fouling or over-committing. After each attempt, pupils immediately switch roles. Focus on defender body shape, side-on stance, knees bent, weight on the balls of the feet, and arms slightly out for balance. Defenders should "delay" first, then "deny" space, before attempting to "dispossess" at the right moment. PROGRESSION: Defenders earn two points for clean dispossessions or forcing the ball out; attackers earn one point for successfully crossing the line.</p> <p>THE GAUNTLET: Divide the hall or field into three long columns using cones. Two teams act as attackers and one team as defenders. Attackers start from one end and attempt to dribble their ball through all three zones without losing control or being tackled. Defenders may only move side to side within their column, focusing on positioning, timing, and blocking routes rather than chasing. Attackers must use close control, disguise, and sharp changes of pace to progress through each zone. Once attackers reach the end, roles rotate so all pupils experience both attacking and defending. PROGRESSION: Reduce the width of each column to increase pressure or add extra defenders for greater challenge.</p> <p>DEFENCE DUEL: Set up multiple small 1v1 areas, each with a marked end line or mini goal for attackers to score in. The attacker aims to beat the defender and score using dribbling skill and deception. The defender works to delay the attacker, regain possession, or shepherd the attacker away from goal. Rotate roles every few rounds so all pupils practise defending and attacking equally. Reinforce the key defending cues: "Delay – Deny – Dispossess." Emphasise patience in defence, staying on your feet, and waiting for the right moment to tackle. PROGRESSION: Add a scoring goal for attackers or give defenders bonus points for a successful tackle followed by a controlled pass to a target player.</p>			
Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)	SPACE Increase grid size for confidence or reduce space to increase pressure.	TASK Use shadowing only for support or add tackling for challenge.	EQUIPMENT Use softer balls for control or standard balls for higher difficulty.	PEOPLE Pair similar ability for confidence or mixed ability for challenge.
Key Technical Point	Adopt a low, balanced side-on stance with knees bent and weight on the balls of the feet. Keep your eyes on the ball rather than the attacker's feet, shuffle sideways to stay goal side, use small quick recovery steps, and delay the attacker before choosing the right moment to dispossess. Stay patient, avoid diving in, and use controlled footwork to force mistakes.			
Cooldown	<p>DEFENDER'S RESET: Children dribble slowly around the area, alternating between walking and light jogging while taking slow, deep breaths to lower heart rate. On the whistle, they freeze, place one foot gently on top of the ball, and perform calm stretches for shoulders, hamstrings, and calves. Encourage pupils to reflect quietly on what helped them win the ball or stay composed under pressure in defence. PROGRESSION: Add a slow seated partner pass, focusing on relaxed breathing, soft hands, and steady communication. "What worked best when defending watching the ball, staying low, or anticipating the attacker's move?"</p>			

Year 4 - Development of Invasion Games

Basketball & Football - Lesson Plan

COMPETING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective To develop the shooting technique in football. **Lesson 5/6**

Equipment Needed Footballs (size 3 plus small / lighter for differentiation) cones, marker, bibs

Success Criteria Children can:

- know how to stand and approach the ball to shoot correctly.
- understand the ABCs of shooting (Angle Balance Contact)
- understand how to hit the ball, and where to aim.

EDSTART KNOW

- I can explain the ABC of shooting (Angle, Balance, Contact).
- I can describe how to place my standing foot.
- I can understand where to aim when shooting.

EDSTART GO

- I can shoot using correct contact with my laces.
- I can aim at targets in Battleships and small games.
- I can apply shooting in 3v3 matches.

EDSTART SHOW

- I can respect my partner during shooting practice.
- I can encourage others to try with both feet.
- I can support my team in shooting games.

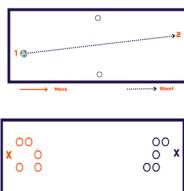
Key Question What helps you keep running for longer without stopping? Steady breathing, good posture, and controlled pacing.

Warm Up

TRAFFIC COMMAND: Mark out a large square with cones, creating enough space for all children to dribble safely. Give each colour cone a clear command — Green means dribble freely in the area using small touches and keeping the ball close; Amber means stand still while moving the ball side to side between both feet; Red means stop and place one foot firmly on top of the ball. Encourage players to keep their heads up and look for space while dribbling to avoid collisions. **PROGRESSION:** Add new commands such as "Blue!" for a turn (e.g., drag back) or "White!" for a change of direction to challenge awareness and control.

Main Activity

TARGET TIME: Children work in pairs with a ball and a target area marked by cones or small goals. The teacher demonstrates the ABC of shooting: **Approach** the ball at a slight angle with controlled steps, **Balance** by planting the non-kicking foot firmly beside the ball with the knee slightly bent and toes pointing towards the target, and **Contact** the ball with the laces for power and accuracy. Emphasise keeping the head steady, eyes on the ball at contact, and following through with the kicking foot towards the target. Pupils take turns to strike the ball at a stationary target, focusing on accuracy before power. After each shot, encourage self-assessment: Was the strike clean? Was my balance strong? Did I follow through? Rotate partners every few minutes so children can give and receive simple feedback on posture, foot position, and accuracy to improve consistency. **PROGRESSION:** Move targets further away or make them smaller to challenge accuracy and power.



"SINK THE SHIPS: Working in pairs, children create four small "ship" targets using cones spaced a few metres apart. Each player takes turns striking the ball from a clearly marked shooting line using a controlled approach. Before shooting, they must call out the colour of the target they are aiming for, encouraging visual focus and decision-making. Emphasise planting the non-kicking foot beside the ball, keeping eyes on the target and then back to the ball at contact, and following through towards the chosen "ship." If a target is struck, the "ship" is sunk and removed from play. Players score one point for each successful hit and attempt to sink all ships in as few shots as possible. This activity promotes accuracy, concentration, and controlled contact rather than power. **PROGRESSION:** Add a distance line for more challenge or introduce a weaker-foot round to develop coordination and confidence on both sides.

MINI MATCH MADNESS: Organise groups of six and set up small 20x20m pitches with one goal per area. Teams play 3v3 matches, focusing on teamwork and finishing opportunities. Each team scores by dribbling and shooting into the goal. Emphasise passing, communication, and movement off the ball. Encourage defenders to recover quickly and attackers to find space for a clear shot. **PROGRESSION:** Teams must make three successful passes before taking a shot to encourage teamwork and controlled play under pressure.

Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)

SPACE

Shorten shooting distance for support or increase space for challenge.

TASK

Use stationary shots for confidence or add movement before shooting.

EQUIPMENT

Use larger goals for success or smaller targets for precision.

PEOPLE

Pair similar ability for confidence or mixed ability for peer support.

Key Technical Point

Approach the ball at a slight angle, plant the non-kicking foot beside the ball pointing at the target, keep the head steady and eyes on the ball, strike through the centre with the laces, and follow through towards the target. Keep the body balanced and avoid leaning back to maintain accuracy and control.

Cooldown

PRECISION PASS CALM: Children slowly pass the ball back and forth with a partner, keeping the ball along the ground. After each pass, they take one deep breath in and out. Gradually slow the movement until the passes stop. Then sit with legs outstretched, reaching forward to stretch the hamstrings. **PROGRESSION:** Add a final reflection where each child shares one shooting technique they improved during the session. **"What helped your shot accuracy the most, aiming carefully, balance, or using the right part of your foot?"**

Year 4 - Development of Invasion Games

Basketball & Football - Lesson Plan

COMPETING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective To play small-sided games using the techniques shown throughout in football. **Lesson 6/6**

Equipment Needed Footballs (size 3 plus small / lighter for differentiation) cones, markers, bibs

Success Criteria Children can:

- play small games following the rules provided.
- put into practice the techniques shown.
- understand when and where certain techniques need to be used. Dribble, Pass or Shoot?

EDSTART KNOW

- I can explain the rules of small-sided football.
- I can describe when to dribble, pass, or shoot.
- I can understand how teamwork helps success.

EDSTART GO

- I can combine dribbling, passing, defending, and shooting in games.
- I can play conditioned football with correct rules.
- I can work in a team to score and defend.

EDSTART SHOW

- I can respect referees, opponents, and teammates.
- I can encourage others during World Cup and matches.
- I can show fairness whether I win or lose.

Key Question

What helps you keep the ball when defenders are trying to stop you? Keeping the ball close, changing direction, and keeping my head up.

Warm Up

CROSS THE AREA: All pupils begin on one side of the area, each with a ball. On the coach's call, they must dribble to the opposite side, keeping close control and using both feet. Several children are chosen as defenders whose job is to stop dribblers by placing their foot on top of the ball. When a defender successfully stops a dribbler, that player joins the defending team for the next round. Encourage quick decision-making, changes of direction, and awareness of space. Defenders should move side-on, staying balanced and ready to react. **PROGRESSION:** Reduce the width of the area or add a time limit to increase pressure on attackers to move quickly and protect the ball.

Main Activity

STEAL AND SCORE: Set up small 10x10m grids with one ball in each. In groups of four, one player starts as the defender and the other three as attackers. On the whistle, the defender must try to win the ball from any attacker and dribble it outside the grid to score. Attackers work together to keep possession by spreading out, using quick, accurate passes, changing direction, and dribbling into space when needed. Emphasise shielding the ball with the body, using small controlled touches, and keeping heads up to spot teammates and pressure. Defenders should stay low, stay balanced on the balls of their feet, delay first, and time their challenge carefully rather than diving in. Rotate defenders every 30 seconds so all children experience both attacking and defending roles. This activity develops competitive movement, spatial awareness, teamwork, and defensive reactions while keeping everyone active and engaged. **PROGRESSION:** Add a small target goal outside the grid so defenders must dribble through it to score once they win the ball.

EDSTART WORLD CUP: Set up multiple mini pitches across your playing area depending on the number of teams. Divide the class evenly and number players within each team. Place a ball in the centre of every pitch. When the coach calls a number, that number from each team runs on, tries to gain possession, and score against the opposing number. Players of similar ability should compete against each other to ensure balanced games. Encourage quick reactions, dribbling into space, and accurate finishing. Players waiting should observe and analyse tactics. **PROGRESSION:** Call out two or three numbers at once to create 2v2 or 3v3 scenarios, adding teamwork and communication challenges.

"CONDITIONED GAMES: Split the class into teams of four matched by ability. Set up small pitches and have teams play short-sided games against similar-level opponents to maximise engagement and confidence. Emphasise passing, dribbling, movement off the ball, and teamwork to progress toward scoring opportunities. Apply simple conditions based on ability level, for example: higher-ability teams must complete four passes before shooting, middle-ability teams two passes, and developing teams may shoot freely. This encourages control, decision-making, and positional play. **PROGRESSION:** Introduce zones for defenders and attackers to support positioning and improve tactical awareness.

Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)

SPACE

Widen area for confidence or narrow to increase pressure.

TASK

Allow walking dribbles for support or add time limits for challenge.

EQUIPMENT

Use softer/larger balls for control.

PEOPLE

Pair similar ability for confidence or mix for challenge and support.

Key Technical Point

Stay low with bent knees and use small, controlled touches with both feet to keep the ball close to your body. Keep your head up to scan for space and defenders, change direction quickly using the inside and outside of the foot, and use your body to shield the ball when under pressure. Defenders should stay side-on, move on the balls of their feet, delay the attacker first, and time their challenge rather than diving in.

Cooldown

CHAMPION'S CIRCLE: Children dribble slowly around the area, gradually reducing speed until walking. On the whistle, they stop, place one foot on the ball, and take deep breaths. Transition into a light partner passing circle where they gently pass and trap the ball. Finish with static stretches for calves, hamstrings, and arms while discussing what helped them succeed as both attackers and defenders. **PROGRESSION:** Add a fun challenge where players dribble to a cone when their number is called to reinforce alertness even during the cool down. **"What skill helped you the most today — finding space, teamwork, or reacting quickly to the call?"**