



US Youth Soccer National Workshop 2007

Coaching TOPSoccer Athletes

Presented by: Brett Thompson

Ohio South Youth Soccer Association Dir. of Coaching

US Youth Soccer National Staff Coach

Coaching TOPSoccer Athletes

- Athletes Challenges
- Ideas for Coaching
- Inclusion versus Exclusion
Activities
- Matching Games to the Athlete



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Athletes Challenges

- Down Syndrome
- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Vision Impairment



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Athletes Challenges

■ Down Syndrome

- Vision and / or hearing problems are common
- Varying degrees of mental retardation
- May see attention deficit symptoms or temper
- Often become frustrated
- Often understand much better than express
- Often very social - social skills and empathy are typically strengths!



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Athletes Challenges

■ Autism

- Difficulty with communication, socialization
- Often easily distracted, have restricted interest
- Generalization and sequencing can be challenging
- Nonverbal skills are often a strength



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Athletes Challenges

■ Autism

- Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are a group of developmental disabilities defined by significant impairments in social interaction and communication and the presence of unusual behaviors and interests. Many people with ASDs also have unusual ways of learning, paying attention, or reacting to different sensations. The thinking and learning abilities of people with ASDs can vary – from gifted to severely challenged.



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Athletes Challenges

- Cerebral Palsy
 - Motor control impairment (non-progressive)
 - May have balance and coordination struggles
 - Occasionally see speech impairment
 - Socially/cognitively strong



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Athletes Challenges

■ Cerebral Palsy

- Cerebral palsy refers to a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and to maintain balance and posture. It is due to a non-progressive brain abnormality, which means that it does not get worse over time, though the exact symptoms can change over a person's lifetime.



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Athletes Challenges

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
 - Limited attention span
 - Excessive fidgeting
 - Impulsive behavior
 - Cognitively strong



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Athletes Challenges

■ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- ADHD is a neurobehavioral disorder characterized by pervasive inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity and resulting in significant functional impairment. CDC estimates 4.4 million youth ages 4-17 have been diagnosed with ADHD by a healthcare professional, and as of 2003, 2.5 million youth ages 4-17 are currently receiving medication treatment for the disorder.



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Athletes Challenges

- Vision Impairment
 - Lack of “Normal Vision”
 - Can not clearly see objects
 - May have to move head around to locate items
 - May move eyes more often



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Athletes Challenges

■ Vision Impairment

- Vision impairment means that a person's eyesight cannot be corrected to a "normal" level. Vision impairment may be caused by a loss of visual acuity, where the eye does not see objects as clearly as usual. It may also be caused by a loss of visual field, where the eye cannot see as wide an area as usual without moving the eyes or turning the head.



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Ideas for Coaching

■ With Down Syndrome Players

- Understand that comprehension is typically much better than speech
- Pay attention to muscle strength/weakness (short activities)
- Typically learn quite well through imitation
- Build small steps
- Build decision-making into games as comfortable

■ With Cerebral Palsy Players

- Teach one skill at a time
- Build sequential motor movements one at a time depending on strengths
- Repetition/review is key
- Immediate praise



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Ideas for Coaching

■ With Autistic Players

- Instead of pointing at things (goals) touch them (realize joint attention is difficult)
- Keep visual cues stable over time
- Repetition is comfort (new situations can sometimes create worry)
- Be expressive but reduce visual and verbal cues when player is upset avoid over-stimulating and activities with a lot of contact

■ With ADHD Players

- Use the energy in a positive way
- Pay attention to learning styles
- High energy activities
- Set up nonverbal cues



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Ideas for Coaching

- No waiting, players should be actively involved always
- Provide immediate positive reinforcement
- Repetition is key
- Build on success



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Ideas for Coaching

- Simple and concise directions
- Use visual cues (keep stable over time)
- One skill at a time
- Use their strengths!!!



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Ideas for Coaching

- Be flexible!
- Challenge positively and enthusiastically
- Ask for parental guidance
- Stretch your boundaries
- Watch and learn



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Ideas for Coaching

- MOST OF ALL
 - Make a Personal Connection



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Inclusion vs. Exclusion

■ Inclusion

- Every Activity should challenge each player yet always have them involved

■ Exclusion

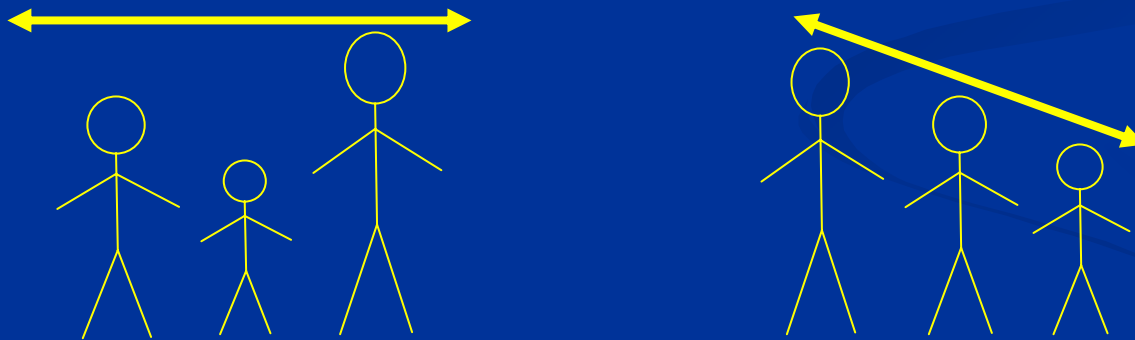
- Activities that ELIMINATE players from activities, NEVER USE THIS!!!!!!



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Inclusion vs. Exclusion

- Challenge each player to a level that is commensurate with his/her ability
 - **Molsten's Slanty line method of teaching**



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Matching Games to the Athlete

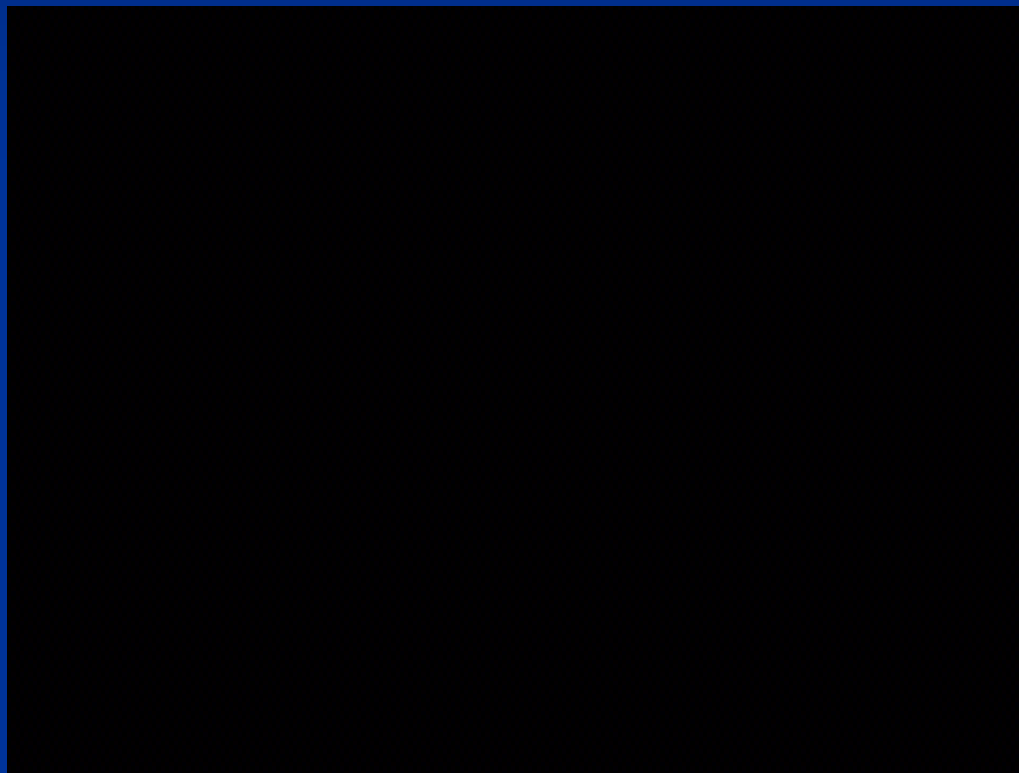
Gate Game (Which athletes can do this)



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Matching Games to the Athlete

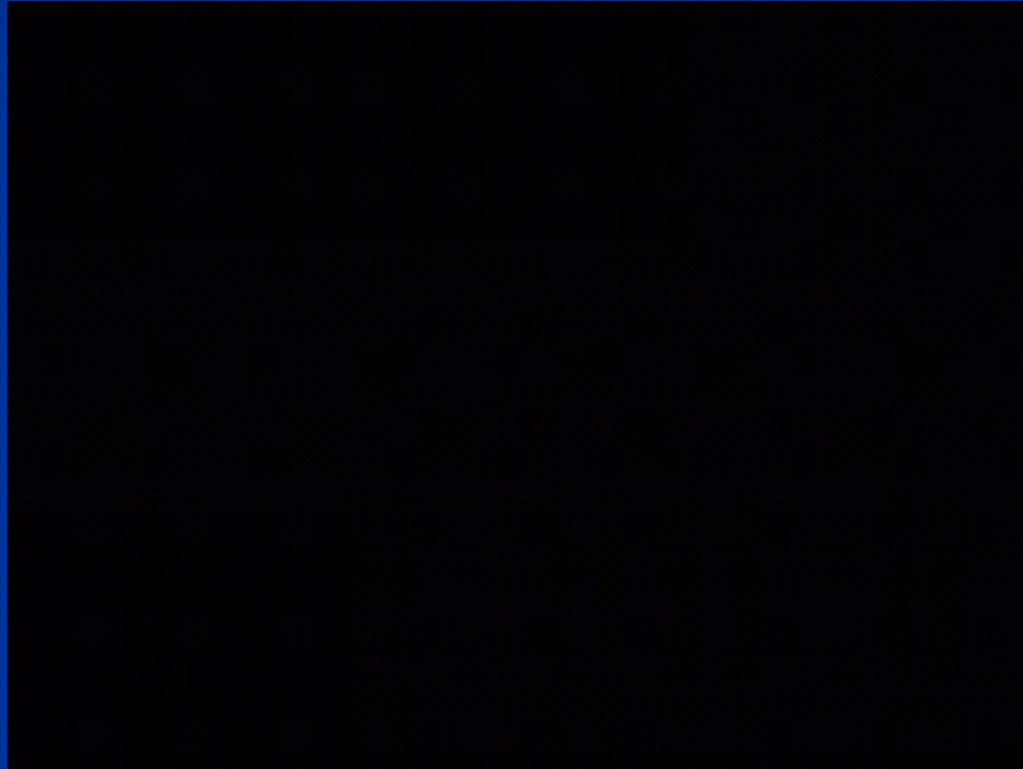
Gate Game (PAIRS) (Which athletes can do this)



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Matching Games to the Athlete

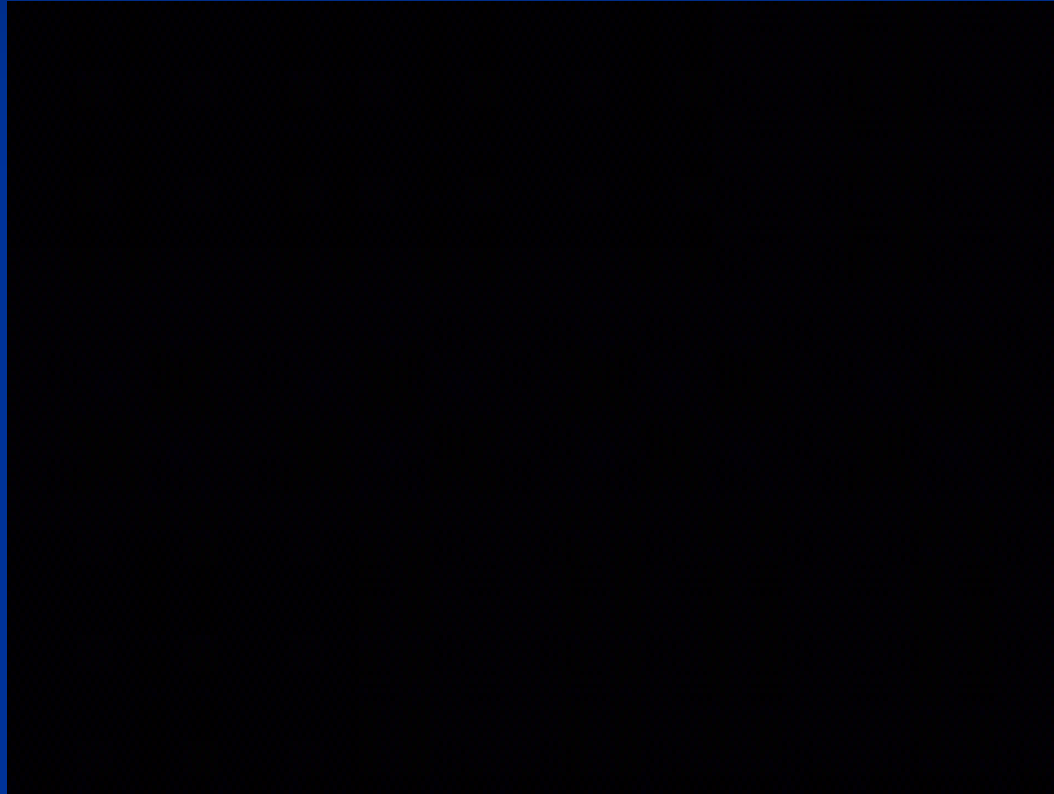
Everybody is it (Which athletes can do this)



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Matching Games to the Athlete

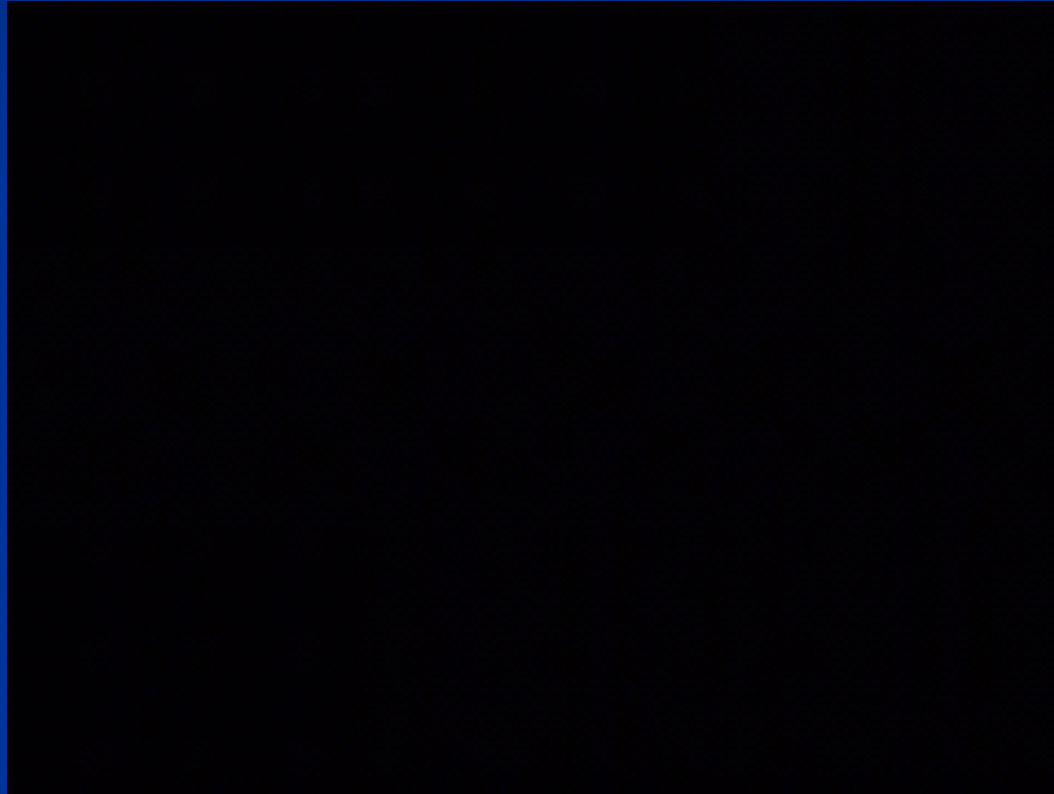
Tail Tag (Which athletes can do this)



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Matching Games to the Athlete

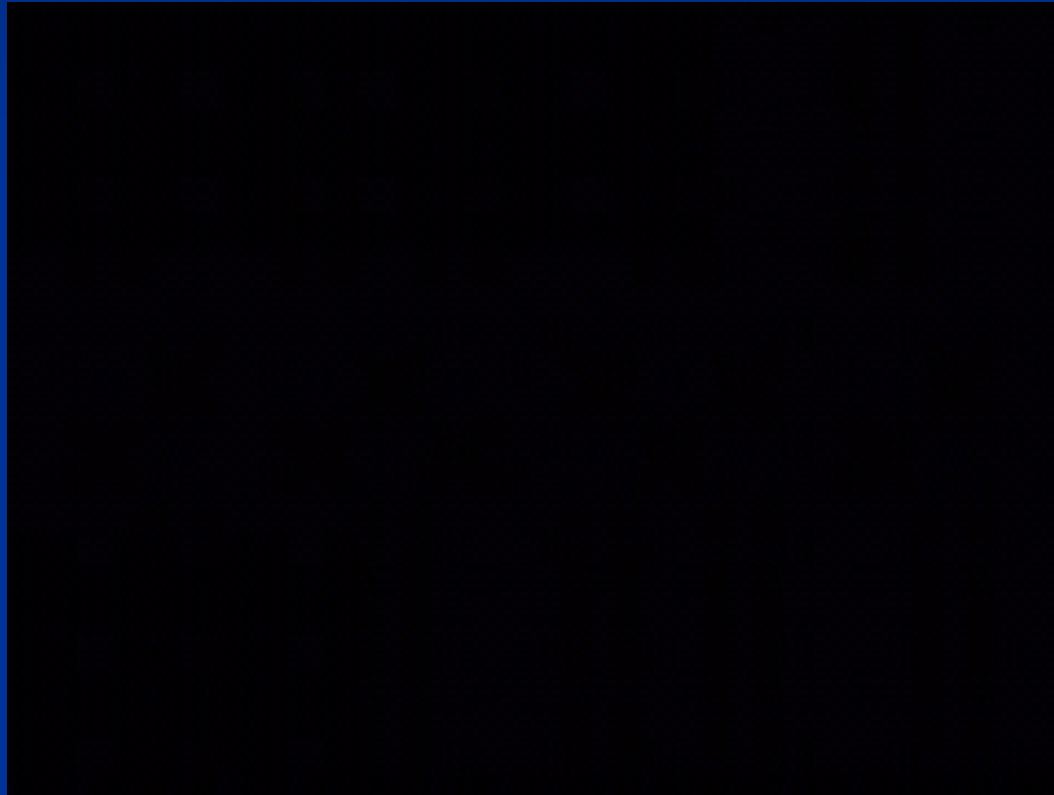
Body Part Dribble (Which athletes can do this)



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Matching Games to the Athlete

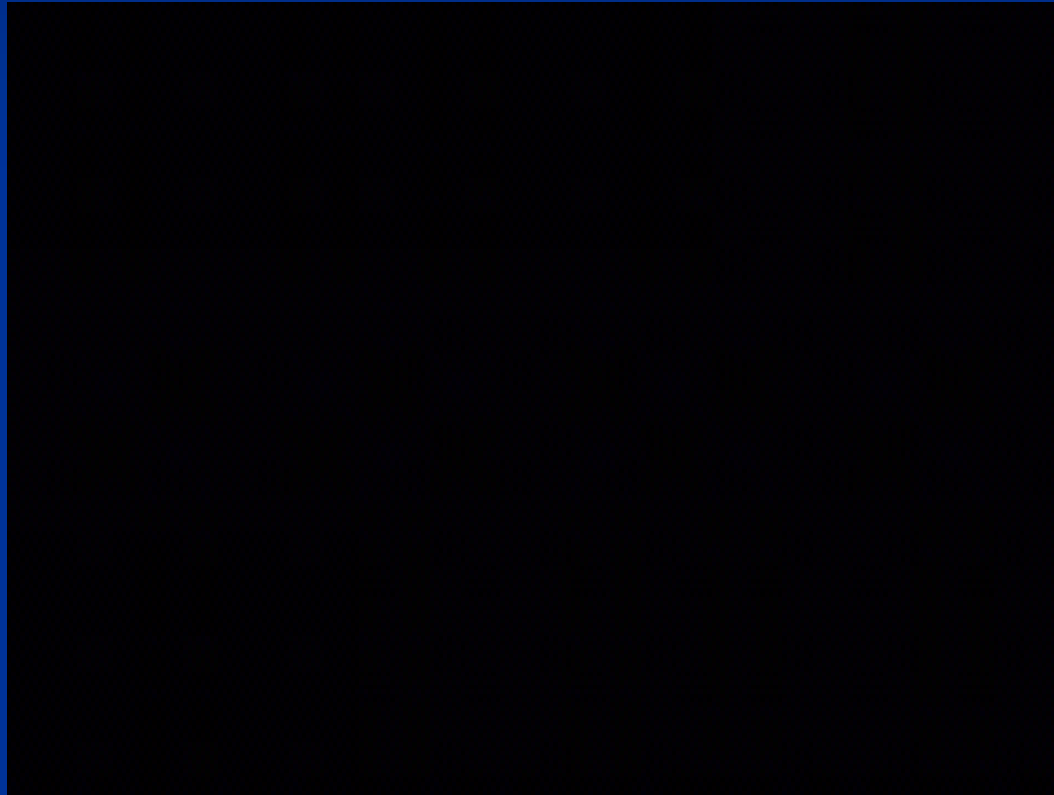
I can do this? (Which athletes can do this)



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Matching Games to the Athlete

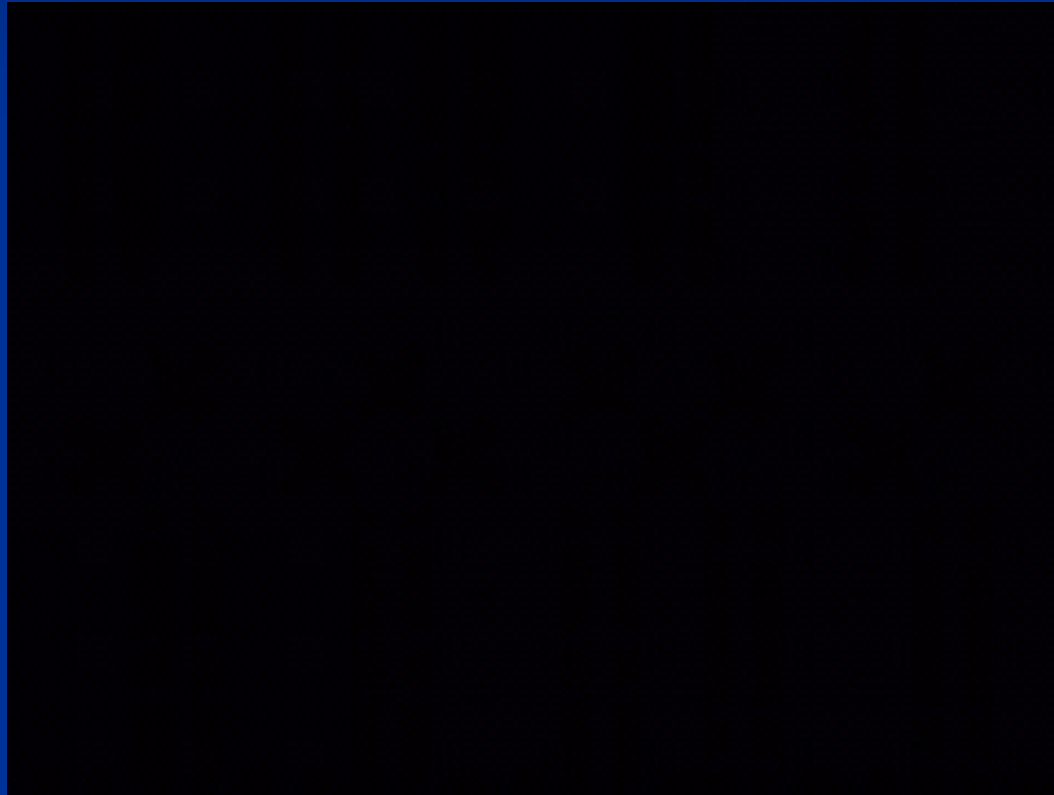
Red & Green light (Which athletes can do this)



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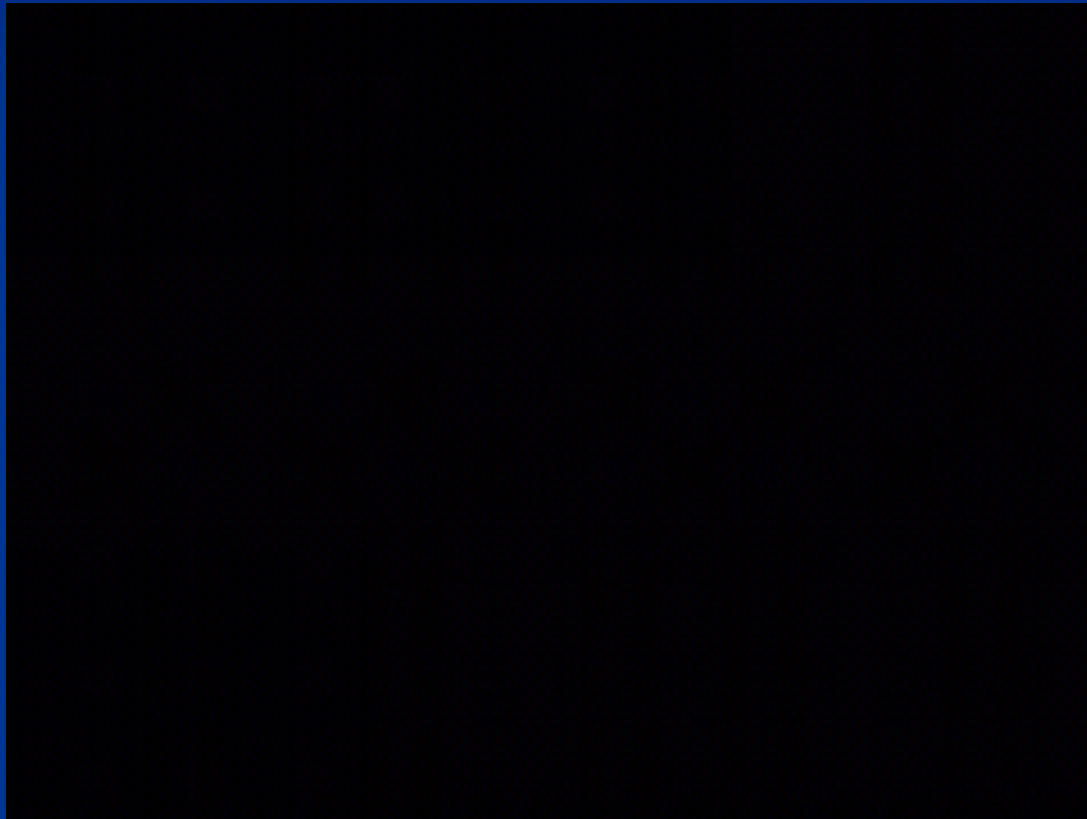
Crossover (Which athletes can do this)



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Matching Games to the Athlete

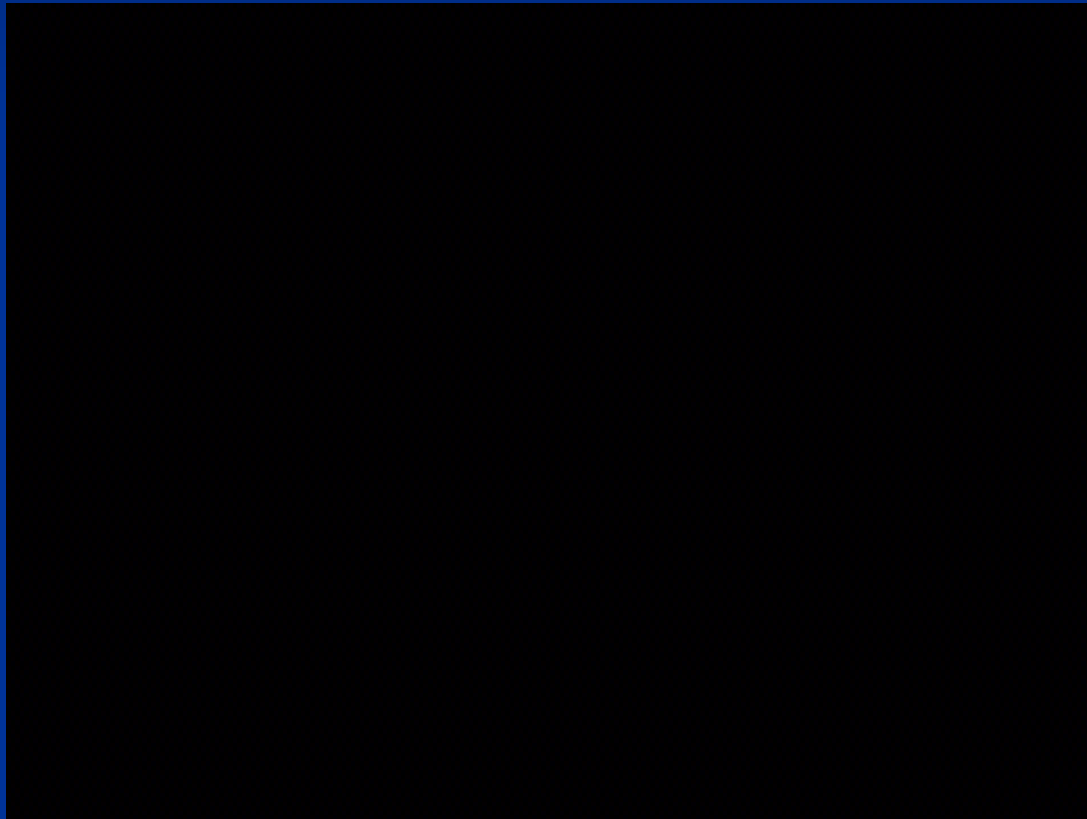
Ball Retrieve (Which athletes can do this)



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Matching Games to the Athlete

Small Sided Game (Which athletes can do this)



Finally

- Brett Thompson
Ohio South Youth Soccer Assoc.
Director of Coaching
bthompson@osysa.com
- Video Credits (Boys and Girls Soccer Can Cancoach Series)
 - Dr. Ron Quinn
 - Dr. Thomas Fleck

