6-TEAM SOCCER

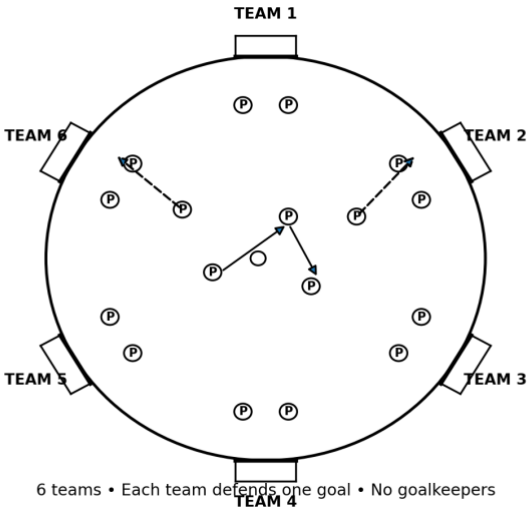
Protect your goal, react to the turnover, and recover together.

AGE GROUP: 4th–7th Grade

LEAD-UP / GAME ACTIVITY: A great activity for teaching communication, transition moments, recovery defending, and protecting the goal after possession is lost.

SETUP	EQUIPMENT	DEVELOPS
6 teams • 1 goal each	6 goals + balls + cones	Recovery • Communication • Pressure • Cover

SETUP AT A GLANCE



Set Up: Create a circular playing area with six small goals spaced evenly around the outside. Divide players into six teams and give each team one goal to defend. There are no goalkeepers. If players begin standing directly in front of the goal, create a small no-entry box in front of each goal.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Each team protects its own goal while trying to score on any of the other five goals.
2. Players may pass and combine with players from other teams to create opportunities to score.
3. The moment possession changes, players must recognize the danger and recover to protect their own goal.
4. No goalkeepers. Players defend by recovering, communicating, applying pressure, and providing cover.

PLAYER ACTIONS

- Recognize immediately when possession is lost
- Recover quickly toward your own goal
- Communicate where the danger is
- Pressure the ball or provide cover when appropriate

WHAT PLAYERS ARE LEARNING

The attacking part of the game creates the problem; the learning objective is how players respond when possession is lost. Players repeatedly experience the transition from attack to defense and must recognize the turnover, recover toward their own goal, communicate, identify the most immediate danger, and decide whether to pressure the ball or provide cover.

TRY THESE PROGRESSIONS

1 PLAY & DISCOVER

Start with one ball. Let players experience the game and begin recognizing how quickly they must react when possession changes.

2 PROTECT THE GOAL

Add a small no-entry box if players begin standing in front of the goal. Defenders must recover, pressure, cover, and communicate.

3 INCREASE THE CHAOS

Add a second ball once players understand the game. This creates more threats and increases scanning, communication, recovery runs, and defensive decisions.

COACH TIP & GUIDED QUESTIONS

Focus your coaching on the moment possession is lost. Allow players to solve the defensive problem rather than telling them exactly where to go. Look for immediate reactions, communication, recovery runs, pressure, and cover.
Ask between rounds: “What should we do as soon as we lose the ball?” • “Where should you recover to first?” • “How do we protect our goal without standing in front of it?” • “What information can you give your teammates as you recover?” • “When should you pressure the ball, and when should you protect the goal?” • “How can we work together to stop the other team from scoring?”

Illinois PE Alignment: State Goal 19 — sport skills and game strategies • State Goal 21 — teamwork • State Goal 24 — communication and decision-making