

Teaching Game Skills Using Grids
(These activities progress from grades 1/2 to grades high school)

Grid games and activities

Use small grids set up with cones to provide group or personal spaces for students to use while practicing skills

- Two or three to a square for practicing individual skills – run, slide, cut, jump stop, accelerate, etc.
- One group per square to practice passing or feeding activities
- Defensive Posture – two to a square. Play knee tag – try to tag your opponent outside of the knee – teaches defensive posture.
- Passing/shooting. Put a pin in the middle of the grid. Players from their lines must try to knock it down. If they do they get a point ONLY if they put the pin up within 5 seconds.
- Movement – one partner stays in place, the other moves while passing; both players move
- Movement away from the ball: 2 Player Magnet Drill - have partners in grids. Each pair has a soccer ball or basketball, which they pass to each other. The person with the ball can move anywhere in the square within 5 dribbles or bounces then makes an accurate pass to their partner. While they are on the move, their partner has to move around the square such that they are as "opposite" in the square as possible – practices creating space and staying open and off the ball
- Try this activity with a nerf football (tuck ball in), basketball (use dribble), a soccer ball (use soccer dribble), etc. Can also use for hockey, lacrosse
- Have partners face each other on opposite sides in the square and pass back and forward. On a signal, the person with the object has to move to a different square, partner has to move with them and set up on the opposite line on the new square – can use for several sports
- Try the same activity but use corners instead of lines. This is a longer distance, so have them use the appropriate pass (e.g., push pass, overhead for basketball)
- Try the same activity but partners cannot move to a contiguous square. Ask them if they know what contiguous means just for fun
- 3-4 to a grid: Open Corner Drill I. 3 players, one ball, one open corner. Player with the ball signals the player opposite open corner and passes to that space for player to move onto. Practices communication, timing run, timing/pacing pass, and passing/lead passing into space
- Open Corner Drill II. Same as above but **pass** to any player then **move** to space - practices moving after the pass
- 3 Player Magnet Drill – same as 2 player but players must keep a triangular shape. Tell students to make their triangular movements unpredictable so as to be hard to defend. Good activity for keeping offensive/defensive shape/depth, having two passing options/lanes at all times.
- Play any of the previous 3 with a shadow defender – not allowed to tackle or intercept. Works on pressure without the fear of losing the ball
- Play 3 vs. 1 – team of 3 have to try to get 5 consecutive passes; defender has to prevent them doing so. Rotate the defender every 45 seconds so **everybody** plays defense for the same amount of time.

Mini Games

1 and 1, 1 on 1 (one grid square each). Practice individual offense and defense (block/poke/steal tackles, defensive delay and position, offensive changes of speed, direction and fakes, pivots, shielding, etc). In 1 and 1, offense practices and defense helps/provides a distraction (no steals/tackles), and vice versa. For 1 on 1, play mini games. End lines are goal lines. Ball should be trapped/controlled on goal line for a score. Ball out of bounds is no play/no point scored. Alternate who starts on offense. KEY POINT: Offense = team/player with ball; Defense = team/player without

ball. If defense steals they become offense. Mini game is over when goal is scored or ball is out of play.

2 and 2, 3 and 3 (2 to 6 grid squares each). Practice game strategies (give and go, back door, pick and roll, through pass, etc). Defense helps as in above.

2 on 2 and 3 on 3. Play games. Give bonus points for making a strategic play. Encourage teams to disguise and/or vary their offensive strategies.

3 on 3 with post players. Play 3 on 3 games with a central “post” player – the post player cannot be guarded and is an outlet player – they play for whichever team has the ball. This player could be wheelchair bound. 2 post players can be used – one for each team. Post players can be rotated out or can switch with the player who passed them the ball in the 2- post player set up.

Many of these activities can be found in John Hichwa’s book:

Hichwa, John (1998). Right Fielders Are People Too: An inclusive approach to teaching Middle school Physical Education. Champaign: Human Kinetics

Other Sports Skills in Grids: Do not forget the all important lifetime activities! Partners can practice tennis, pickleball, badminton etc. skills in grids – a feeder feeds the game object and partner practices skills – forehand, backhand, volley, pivot step, slide, dynamic ready position, etc. Without the net and with multiple practice spaces plentiful reps are possible.

Ultimate Games or Zone Games

Grids and squares can be used to divide various playing fields/courts. For Ultimate/zone games that use these ideas go to:

<http://users.rowan.edu/~rattigan/LessonIdeas/UltimateGames.html>