



# Developing today's soccer player for the road ahead...

## The Retreat Line

Revised May 2017



Ontario Soccer Grassroots Development



## Aim:

This presentation supports the introduction of the retreat line, helping coaches, players, parents, game leaders and officials understand its use and ways to help develop players.



## Back ground:

Soccer should be played with an efficient, economical, measured, possession based approach, where pass quality combined with intelligent and timely support and movement lead to progress and penetration through the thirds of the field to provide goal scoring opportunities, If counter attacking possibilities are denied. All players on the field should be comfortable in possession of the soccer ball in a game situation.



## Rational:

The world of soccer is evolving and Canadian youth must also evolve with the game. The modern game now evolves around maintaining possession of the ball, with controlled, precise build up play starting with the goalkeeper. Players must understand the right time to play forward and/or backwards.

To enable youth players to play this style of soccer they must learn to play through the thirds of the field and have the ability to maintain possession throughout the whole field, while under pressure. Every player on the field must become comfortable in possession of the ball. Possession based soccer should become their default style of play .



Following the holistic approach we aim to create the following outcomes:

### Physical

- Improved A-B-C's
- Improved speed of play
- Improved hip flexor rotation

### Technical

- Improved short passing
- Improved receiving the ball on half turn
- Improved penetration passes

### Psychological/Mental

- Improved decision making skills
- Improved self confidence
- Improved risk assessment skills
- Improved awareness skills

### Social/Emotional

- Improved team play
- Improved communication
- Improved co-operation
- Players can learn different roles



## Retreat Line Procedure

The retreat line will come into play when the ball has gone out for a goal kick or when the goalkeeper has the ball in his/her arms.

All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:

- Is touched by a player of the team taking the goal kick **OR**,
- Leaves the field of play **OR**,
- Goes over the retreat line. (If the goalkeeper chooses to play the ball across the retreat line prior to the opposition crossing the retreat line 7v7/9v9)



## Making the right decision:

Sometimes the correct pass is a longer one, for example, if the goalkeeper spots a 1v1 between their team's centre forward and an opposition defender; this is still seen as good play. It is permissible for the goalkeeper to play quickly without having to wait for all the players to retreat, to counter attack effectively, and this is the choice of the goalkeeper. This supports the development of decision making skills in young players - whether to play shorter or longer and the speed of their distribution.





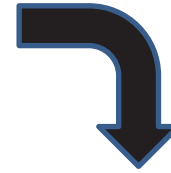
# 5 v 5 - Half way line. Retreat Line Location – 5 v 5





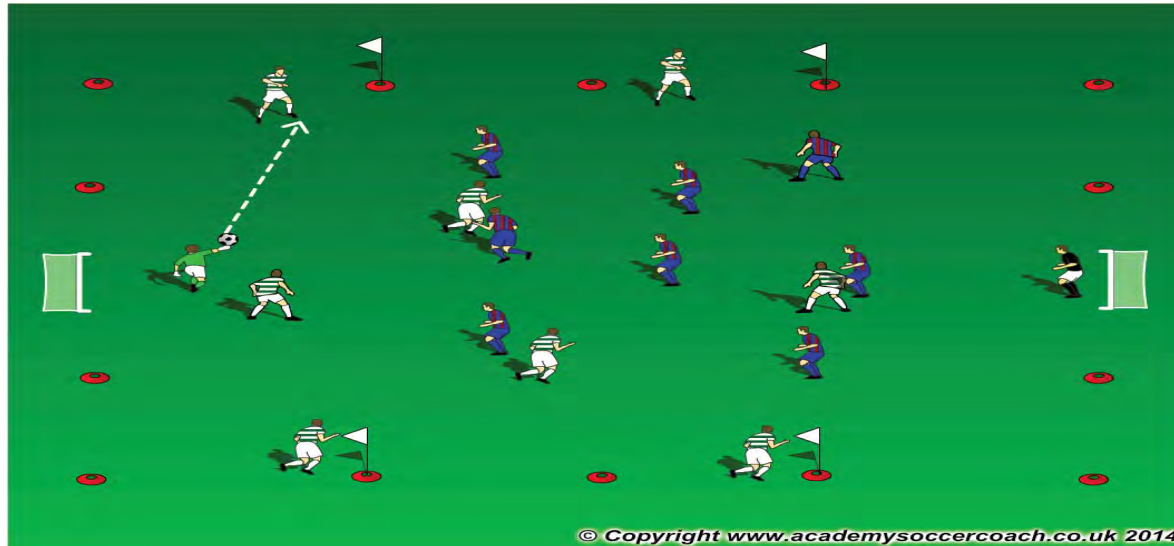


# 7 v 7 - 3rd of the field. (1/3 rds line). Retreat Line Location – 7 v 7





# 9 v 9 - 3rd of the field. (1/3 rds line). Retreat Line Location – 9 v 9





## Developing the players. 3 v 2 to target players

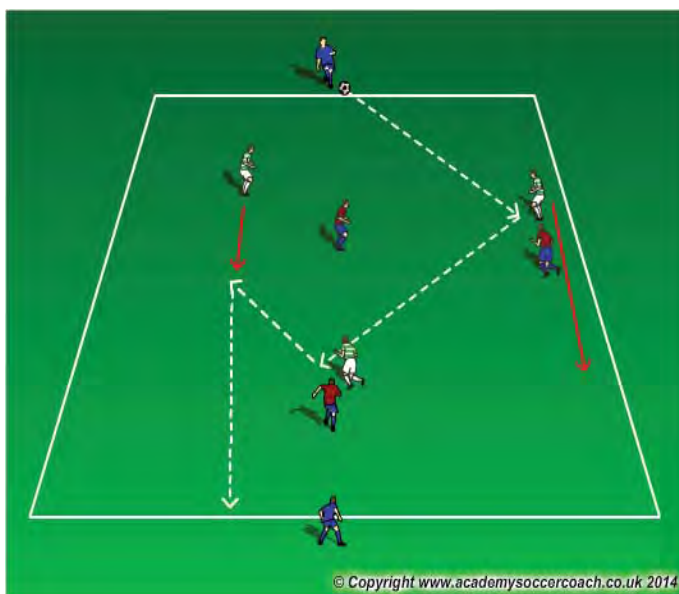


To help players learn and understand how to play out of the back a practice like the one on the left could be set up. The GK starts with the ball and has 2 team mates available. The GK plays to a full back and as he/she receives the ball the 2 attackers can close down. Now the players are faced with a 3v2 situation where they have to get the ball to a target player to score. The player receiving the ball from the GK has 2 options shown. If the opponents get the ball they can attempt to score. Players can rotate through all positions.



## Developing the players. 3 v 3 to target players

By using practices such as the 'Target' game on the left and the 3 v 2 on the previous slide, We can help players develop outcomes such as:

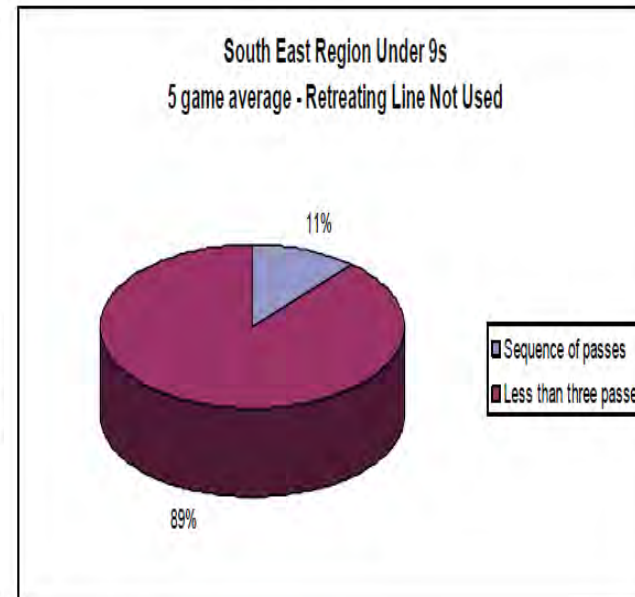
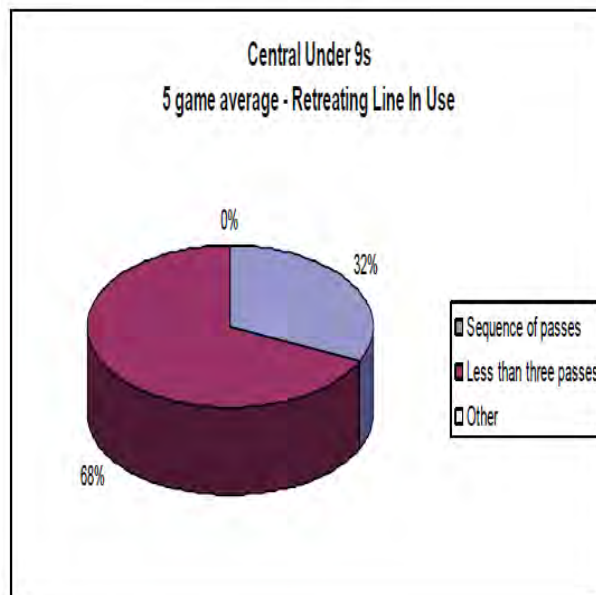


- receiving on the half turn **(Physical)**
- angled passing between players **(Technique) Penetration**
- innovative movement off the ball to create space **(Physical) Mobility**
- communication with team mates **(Social)**
- making effective decisions **(Psychological)**
- working together as a team **(Social)**
- problem solving of authentic game-like situations **(Social)**

**While developing the above outcomes in a game realistic environment we have touched upon all 4 corners of our holistic approach.**

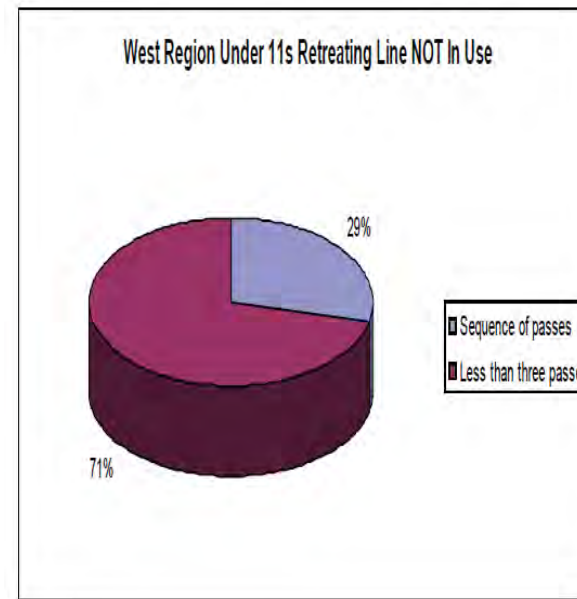
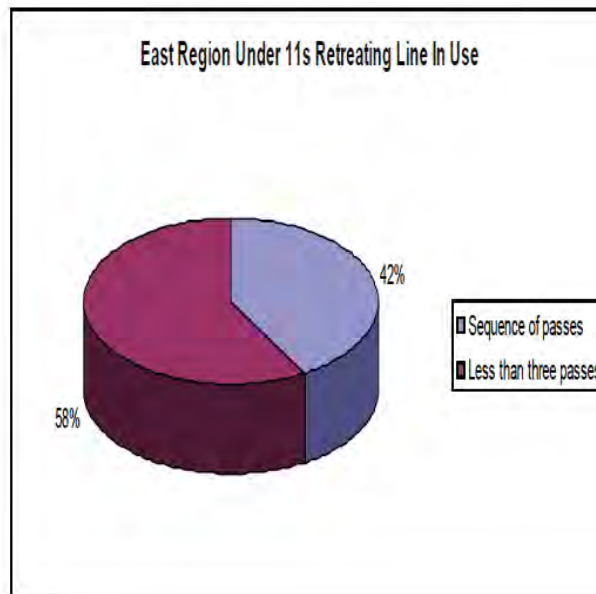


## Research from The Scottish FA. National Player Pathway Creag Robertson, University of Stirling



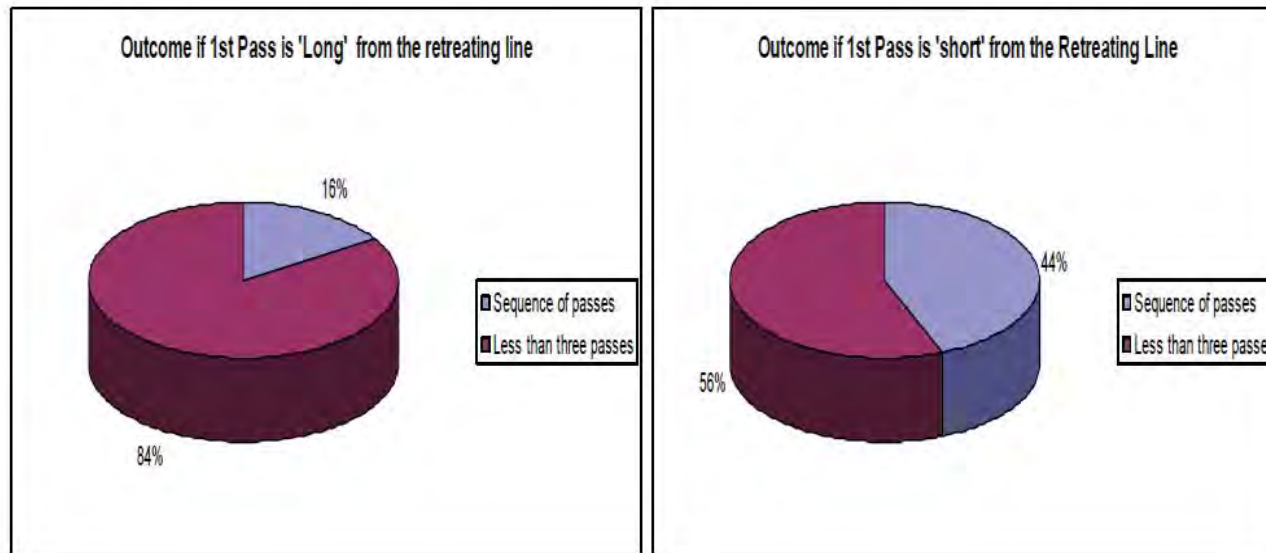


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**Research from The Scottish FA.  
National Player Pathway  
Creag Robertson**



**Retreat Line Summary from the Scottish FA National Player Pathway:**

- Its evident that the retreat line generates a higher success rate for passing sequences when being used.
- The u9 success rate was over 21% higher when the retreat line was used
- In the u11s games there was a difference of 13% when the retreat line was in use
- The type of pass made once in the retreating area is also significant. The finding established conclusively that if a player plays a long pass (over 15 meters) it will reduce the chance of generating a passing sequence.





## Playing out from the back example

The following video shows the Canadian woman's National Team gaining possession with the goalkeeper. You will see both central defenders spread to the width of the penalty box and both fullbacks hitting the touch lines. Once in possession of the ball the central defender has options to play forward or wide to the full back. She chooses to play to the fullback and then drops to support from behind. The fullback has space to progress forward and plays the ball into the midfield. After several passes the Canadian team has progressed up the field with the ball finally being put into the back of the net.

This goal was created from the goalkeeper as the starting point.

To view the video please click here. <http://youtu.be/WY08zxvombc>



## Playing out from the back example

The following video shows the Canadian women's National Team gaining possession in the midfield. As they are unable to progress forward they keep possession by playing the ball back to the goalkeeper. As the ball travels both central defenders and fullbacks split to create width and provide options. By creating width and depth the Canadian National team are able to create time and space when in possession of the ball. Through patient, precise possession they are able to move the Mexican team around the field, enabling them to gain entry into the final 3<sup>rd</sup> of the field.

To view the video please click here. <http://youtu.be/vGdwQWKB-tQ>



## U8 team playing out of the back Brantford festival, July 5<sup>th</sup> 2014

The following video shows a u8 group using the retreat line the correct way. The ball has gone out for a goal kick which has led to the defending team retreating to the half way line. This now allows the goalkeeper to play a pass to a team mate. Once pressure is applied the player then plays a pass, past the pressure into the midfield player who beats two players and then plays a pass to the striker making a great run. The striker is able to hit the ball first time past the goalkeeper.

To view this example please visit the following link. <http://youtu.be/pEN4xXcD664>

*Thanks go out to the Brantford City soccer club for hosting the event and the Brantford City and Mount Hamilton u8 group for allowing the Grassroots department to video parts of the game*



## U8 team's playing out of the back Brantford festival, July 5<sup>th</sup> 2014

The following video shows two u8 teams playing at the u8 Festival in Brantford. The game goes end to end with both teams using the retreat line, allowing both teams to build from the back. The video ends with the goalkeeper making a save. As soon as the save is made the opposition team retreats allowing the team to play out. The ball is then played to the full back who dribbles past the first line of pressure. The midfield player then makes a great run to support the ball, he receives the ball. After the full back has played he overlaps the midfield player and then receives the ball back. He then plays the ball forward to the striker who finishes with an excellent strike on goal

To view this example please visit the following link. <http://youtu.be/eB-iuQmpw7A>

*Thanks to the Brantford City soccer club for hosting the event and the Saltfleet and Mount Hamilton u8 team for allowing the OSA Grassroots department to video parts of the game*



## Summary

We are in the early stages of introducing the retreat line and understand it will take a while for children, coaches, Game Leaders/officials and parents to adapt to something new. We will let this embed and settle down as the coaches and players get up to speed before we start to assess the impact this has made on player development.

It's about an appreciation of possession; educating players on its value, enjoying the ball, rather than fearing it. Please help each other along as we get comfortable with a changing time for helping young players become better soccer players in Canada.



## Retreat Line information – Revised November 2014.

### Options for Goalkeepers - 5 v 5, 7 v 7 & 9 v 9.

How the retreat line is implemented.

When the goalkeeper has the ball in their possession at a goal kick or after making a save the opposing team members would "retreat" to the predetermined area of the field. The predetermined areas are as follows:

5 v 5 - Half way line. (***It is recommended the goalkeeper does not drop kick the ball***)

7 v 7 – 3rd of the field. (1/3 rd line).

9 v 9 - 3rd of the field. (1/3 rd line).

With the opposition retreating to the correct part of the field the goalkeeper can now successfully throw or pass the ball to a team mate.

**Once the player receiving the ball from the goalkeeper touches the ball, the ball is in play and the opposition players can pressure and attempt to win the ball.**

If the goalkeeper chooses not to wait for the opposing players to "retreat" and throws or passes the ball down the field, the ball is instantly in play and does not require a player from the goalkeeper's team to touch the ball first.

- Opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:  
Is touched by a player of the team receiving the GK's distribution
- Leaves the field of play
- Crosses the retreat line. (If the goalkeeper chooses to play the ball across the retreat line prior to the opposition crossing the retreat line)

For more information on the retreat line complete with diagrams please take a look at Ontario Soccer's publication, Field Organization Guide. It's available to view/ download at:

<http://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0112/8119/1901-Field-Organization-Guide.pdf>

For questions relating to the Retreat Line, please contact **Ontario Soccer's Player Development Team**

**Billy Wilson,**

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# Thank You

If you have any questions in regards to the retreat line please contact

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