

The background of the book cover is a photograph of a dirt road winding through a forest. The ground is covered in fallen autumn leaves in shades of brown and orange. Tall, thin trees line the road, and the scene is lit with a warm, golden light. On the left side of the road, there are two yellow diamond-shaped road signs with black text that reads 'ay?'.

# Golden Ticket Challenges

50 Games for Communication,  
Decision-making and Action

Philip Kerr

## Golden Ticket Challenges

No.	The Challenge	Bonus Points
1	Attack down the middle and score	3
2	Score from a run in behind the defence	4
3	Block two opposition kicks	4
4	Kickout – clean first touches only - score	5
5	Prevent the opposition scoring from a full-forward assist	3
6	Score two fisted points	4
7	Score twice from opposition kickouts	4
8	Score two points with left-footed shots	4
9	Ensure opponents get no scores from turnovers in their own half	3
10	Score a point from long range	3
11	Score from a back-to-goal assist	3
12	Score with left and right hook kicks	3
13	Make two successful near hand tackles	3
14	Catch and kick a score (no extra touches)	3
15	Score after a no contact move in the opposition half	5
16	Ensure opponents get no blocks on shots	3
17	Score from a long kick pass assist	3
18	Score twice from play after intercepting opposition passes	4
19	Name two players who then link to score	4
20	Score a spectacular goal	4
21	Ensure an opponent does not score twice from play	4
22	Score two points from advanced marks	4
23	Score from play after using only one pass in the opposition half	3/4/5
24	Get a score from a ghost runner	4
25	Stretch the defence really wide to score	3
26	Have a left-footed player score with the right foot	3
27	Own kickout....ball must only move forward....score!	5
28	Limit the opposition to one fisted point	3
29	Receive with back to goal.....tight turn 180° - then score	3
30	Win three of your own kickouts in a row	3
31	Score a goal low into the corner	4
32	Score a point after a looped run	4
33	Score from two set areas	5
34	Score a goal from a penalty	3
35	Solo run through a gap in the defence to score	3
36	Score from a diagonal kick pass assist	4



37	Stop opponents from winning three consecutive kickouts	3
38	Score a goal from a secret link	3
39	Win three breaking balls from kickouts	3
40	Scorer makes an out-to-in run to get the assist pass	4
41	A named player gets a score and an assist, both from play	3
42	Scorer plays a 1-2 then takes a point	3
43	Make one successful diving block	5
44	Prevent any opposition scores from advanced marks	4
45	Name two opposition forwards and keep them scoreless from play	4
46	Keep a clean sheet (no goals)	5
47	Dispossess an opponent, using a shoulder tackle	3
48	Three Lives	5
49	Two scores within X seconds of the ball crossing the halfway line	3
50	Score three times without the opposition scoring	5

## Golden Ticket Challenges

### How to use this book

- Each challenge is outlined and detailed over a double-page spread. The focus is set out in large type on the left page, as are two indicators of what to observe.
- To win a **Golden Ticket** means to earn the number of bonus points shown on the same page. These range between 3 and 5 points, depending on the toughness of the challenge.
- A challenge is presented to only **ONE** team per game. That team, known from then on as the '**Challenge**' team, will play to achieve what has been set before them. For example, Golden Ticket No. 11 demands that the team *scores from a back-to-goal assist* to earn 3 bonus points.
- The bonus points are added to a team's final scoring total, for **goals and points may also be scored in the usual fashion**, without having to come from several *back-to-goal assists*. So....Team A has been set the challenge. By the end of the game, Team A has scored 1-4. One of those scores came from a *back-to-goal assist*. The challenge has been met and Team A can now add 3 bonus points to bring its final tally to 1-7.
- The bonus points may only be earned once in a game. It doesn't matter if the '**Challenge**' team scores another point from the same type of assist....only one bonus of 3 points is available.
- The same bonus points may, of course, be earned by the opposition. **This team hasn't been set the challenge, but it must be told what it is and be allowed to plan for and execute some counter measures.** Hence, this team will be known as the '**Counter**' team.
- A '**Counter**' team may earn the bonus points by preventing the '**Challenge**' team from reaching its target. Again, this could prove very worthwhile. For example...Team A scores 1-6 and Team B scores 1-4. The latter team (ie the '**Counter**' team) stopped the '**Challenge**' team from getting any of its scores from a *back-to-goal assist*, so it now takes the bonus points and the win....1-6 to 1-7.
- ***To increase intensity, focus minds and add to the craic, it's best to set these challenges in training games that last approximately 10 minutes. Short and sharp!***
- On the right side of each double-page spread is the detail that will help coaches introduce any challenge to players from both teams.
- The page finishes with two set of **hints** on how to approach the game; one set is for players on the '**Challenge**' team and the other for players on the '**Counter**' team. ***It might be an idea to assign a different coach to each team and have those coaches discuss the hints with players before a game begins.***



# Golden Ticket 1

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Attack down the  
middle and score**

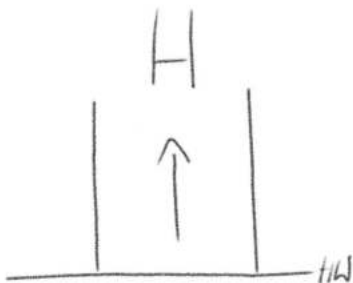
Coaches watch for:

- Players ahead of the ball who run wide to leave space in the middle
- Players who combine to move the ball at pace through the middle

### The Detail:

To add 3 points to its final score, the team being challenged must score a point or a goal by moving the ball down the middle of the pitch.

There's no obligation to move it from goal to goal in this way; just when inside the opposition half of the field.



If you are using the full width of the pitch, set out some markers to identify a middle section about 40m wide. If your pitch is narrower, just step out the width, calculate half and use that measurement for the middle section (eg. 60m wide = 15/30/15m).

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- It's vital that your players create room for the ball to be moved through the middle. Attacks can break down because too many attacking players block the way. Often they don't know they are in the way.
- Try to move the ball quickly through the middle section before defenders get a chance to regroup and force your attack out wide. Remember, you can kick pass. You don't have to move the ball with short hand passes only.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' team will try to force your defenders to move away from the middle section to give its players space to attack. You might think about putting an extra player in defence, who always stays in the middle...like a sweeper.
- Work hard to force the ball wide as early as possible once the opposition crosses the halfway line with it. That way, you will greatly reduce their scoring chances.



# Golden Ticket 2

## A 4-Point Challenge

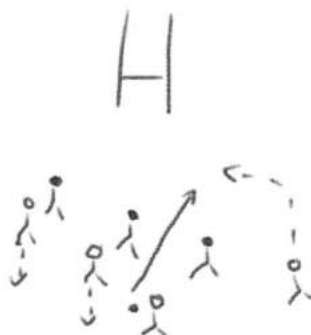
**Score from a run in  
behind the defence**

Watch for:

- Players ahead of the ball who draw defenders out the field.
- Players on the ball who scan to look for possible passing opportunities

### The Detail:

To add 4 points to its final score, the team being challenged must get one of its players to make a run in behind the defence and score a point or a goal. The assist pass to the player making this run behind may be with the fist or the foot.



Opponents earn the 4 points if they prevent this from happening during the game.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Your team has to help create the space behind the defence for this run. Players can devise ways to draw defenders out the pitch. One way is for them to make convincing runs for passes, calling for the ball as they do.
- A player intending to make this run behind may have to distract his/her marker briefly and use a quick burst of pace to get behind and available for the pass. A double run often helps get the separation needed.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' team will try to draw your players away from your goals to create space for one of their players to get behind your defence and score. Think about how you might counter this move. Will you keep one player deep? Will you mark man-to-man and make sure no player gets a free run?
- Your goalkeeper has a big role to play here. He/she is in the ideal position to spot opposition players who might try to make these runs and warn defenders. The goalkeeper will also be able to see if the defence is drifting outfield and alert players.



# Golden Ticket 3

## A 4-Point Challenge

### **Block two opposition kicks**

Watch for:

- Players who anticipate the kick and get quickly into position to block
- Players who execute a block with good technique

### The Detail:

To add 4 bonus points to its final score, the 'Challenge' team has to make two successful blocks on opposition kicks. These must be clear blocks from the front or from the side. They can be standing or diving blocks. Tackles do not count. Here is a checklist of actions:

Anticipate the kick  
Watch opponent's actions  
Step near leg close to opponent  
Bring arms, hands and fingers together  
Eyes on the ball  
Push down firmly on the ball  
Chase loose ball and take possession

Opponents will earn the 4 points if they prevent this from happening during the game. You should consider allowing players to practise blocking before setting the challenge.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- The best chances to make blocks come when opponents are shooting. Most players, once they decide to take a shot, don't change their minds. When you see a player getting ready to shoot, that's when you need to get close enough to block.
- Your coach has a list of reminders (see above) to help players make strong blocks. Make sure you are open to being coached if some part of your blocking action needs changed.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Players on the 'Challenge' team will know that their best chance of blocking you will be when you are shooting. It's important that you make room to shoot, so that an opponent has less chance of making a block.
- There are different ways to make room for a shot. Some players use their four steps to get away from contact; some use an evasion skill (eg a roll) and some can even pretend to shoot and fool the blocker. You decide which is best for you.



# Golden Ticket 4

## A 5-Point Challenge

**Kickout – clean first touches only - score**

Watch for:

- Players who regularly win clean possession with a good first touch
- Players who pass the ball accurately and with good weight

The De

A huge  
points  
the sco  
have to

carryin  
encou  
still co

Hints

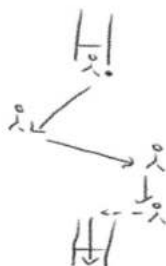


Hints



### The Detail:

A huge 5 points up for grabs here. Any attempt by the 'Challenge' players to earn the points must begin with their own kickout. Each part of the move between the kickout and the score has to be with clean first touches. Players don't have to avoid contact; they have to focus on accurate passing, clean catching and good control of the ball when



carrying. Coaches shouldn't direct this from the pitch or sideline and players must be encouraged to continue with moves, undeterred, if they make mistakes....other scores still count as normal. The 'Counter' team will earn the 5 bonus points if all attempts fail.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Clean first touches are much more likely to happen when players focus only on the action and not on what they intend to do afterwards. For example...if a player is about to catch a pass and has made up his mind to shoot once he gets hold of the ball, he should concentrate on making a good catch to give himself time and space to make the shot possible.
- Players off the ball can help a 'clean first touch' move by getting away from markers or congested areas of the pitch.
- If you are fouled after making a clean first touch, your move still counts. Opponents can't simply foul to stop you (eg Kickout...receiver catches cleanly...receiver is fouled.....player takes free...next receiver catches cleanly and scores = 5 extra points earned)

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' team has to move the ball the full length of the pitch without a handling or passing mistake. Your job is to spoil that. Tight marking, good tackling, blocking and contesting every ball will make it very difficult for opposition players to complete the move. Even getting a hand in without fouling can help.

# Golden Ticket 5

## A 3-Point Challenge

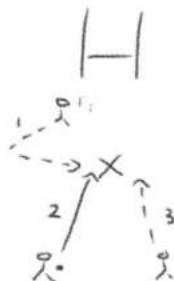
**Prevent the  
opposition scoring  
from a FF assist**

Watch for:

- How defenders deny the FF possession
- Players track runners to reduce the chances of a return pass

### he Detail:

3-point challenge to prevent something happening may appear negative, but it isn't. Topping the opposition from using a dangerous scoring tactic is worth practising. This demands good communication among players and means they have to focus at all



times on where the full forward is moving, who is seeking to pass to that player and who is making runs to take the ball from the full forward to score.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Identify the opposition full forward. Decide who would be the best player to take on the marking duties and not allow the FF to be an assist for a score. Your marker should always be alert to the FF making double runs to win the ball.
- It might be an idea to play an extra defender (a +1) in front of the FF to help cut out passes.
- It is just as important to track runners who are hoping to get a pass from the FF to score and earn the 3 bonus points.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- For this game, choose a FF who will keep the defence on their toes. If you use a player who has a burst of pace over 10m and has good awareness of when to move, the 3 bonus points could be yours.
- Something else to consider....think about kicking a few long passes into your FF. If he/she can break the ball down deliberately to a teammate, that will count as an assist.
- If you find that your FF is being well marked by an opponent, consider using him/her as a decoy to leave space for other attackers.



# Golden Ticket 6

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score two fisted points**

Watch for:

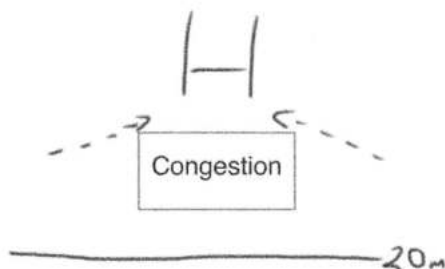
- Players who score while running at pace towards the goals
- Players who spot the opportunity for a fisted score and take it

### The Detail:

Four points on offer here for scoring twice with the fist. There's no halfway house in this challenge, so a team doesn't get 2 points if it only manages one fisted score in the game. Getting close enough to goal is key, as is the need for good technique. To get proper purchase and distance on the ball, a player should hit it with the heel of the hand. Having said that, if the player is moving towards goal and gets close enough, he/she may score with nothing more than a flick off the fingers.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Players sometimes think of fisted points as easy scores. They happen close to goal so there is less chance of missing. That may be true, but players can forget that the closer you get to goal, the more congested the pitch may become. It pays to keep your own players away from the goalmouth. They can then make runs from 'out to in' for passes. (see sketch)



- Quick hands can help a team work a fisted point. If players can pass the ball between them at speed and with one touch when close to goal, the chance of scoring gets better.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Opponents need to get close to goal to get these two fisted points and one of your tasks is to ensure that you keep players from getting in behind your defence.
- The 'Challenge' team will want to move the ball quickly and hope that your players get caught ball-watching while the passer runs, unnoticed, for the return pass. Keep tracking runners.
- If a player gets into position to try and fist a point, get close and get your hands high and in front of you, rather than straight up into the air. You'll have a better chance of blocking the ball.

# Golden Ticket 7

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score twice from  
opposition kickouts**

Watch for:

- Players who anticipate where the kickout is going and intercept it
- Players who move quickly to become options for passes

he Detail

his is all a  
he actual  
ickout. Yo  
eing chal

tints for t

➤ Th  
kie  
kie  
co

➤ Yo  
on  
fro  
ta  
(S

Hints for

➤ T  
n  
n  
tl

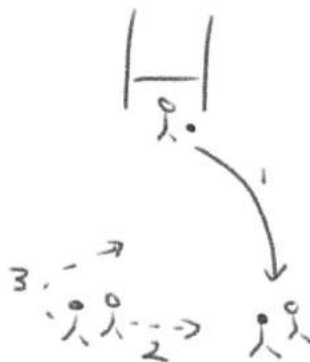
➤ E  
d  
e

### he Detail:

his is all about scoring after winning the ball from opposition kickouts. To be clear about the actual winning of the ball.....the 'Challenge' team must win the ball directly from the kickout. Yes, it may be contested, but the first clean possession must come from the team being challenged.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- There is limited time in a 10-min or 15-min training game to win opposition kickouts, therefore they can't be conceded (ie opposition gets to take a short kickout while your players drop back to defend). So...all kickouts have to be contested. You need to press man-to-man each time.
- Your forwards who are not directly involved in trying to win the kickout, should be on the move the very second it is won (if not before). Get them to move AWAY from where the kickout was won, rather than towards that spot. Let opponents take that step towards the ball and when they do, get clear and be open for a pass (See actions 1, 2 and 3 in the sketch).



### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- This can be a real test for any of you who are outfield players. How well will you move to give the goalkeeper realistic options for a kickout? Expect to be man-marked. Have you anything worked out between you? Take time to discuss before the game.
- Even if your opponents win a kickout, they still have to score. Be ready to close down the ball winner immediately and to track runners who want that pass. It's easy to be distracted by the ball. Fight against this.



# Golden Ticket 8

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score two points with  
left-footed shots**

Watch for:

- The team that moves a naturally left-footed player into a scoring position.
- Players who know how to create opportunities for a left-footed shot

### ie Detail:

Because this challenge identifies a left foot, some players may assume that it is all about bringing with a weaker foot (or non-preferred as it is now known). It doesn't have to be. If a team has one or two naturally left-footed players, they may be used.

### ints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Let's look at two scenarios for you here. The first is that you have naturally left-footed players on the team. Should you be thinking about playing them in forward positions to increase the chances of getting two scores? Can you target them or even use them as support runners for assist passes?
- The second scenario is that you do not have any natural left-footed players. The key may be find whoever is closest to being competent with both feet and play that person close to goal. Failing that, focus on getting the ball well into the scoring area before any of your players thinks about the shot.

### ints for the 'Counter' Team:

- One of your first tasks is to identify any naturally left-footed players on the 'Challenge' team and send one/two of your best defenders to mark him/her/them. Natural lefties will be the main targets for opposition passes. Track their runners too as the left-footed shot taker may look for a last-minute assist pass to score.
- If your opponents have to rely on players who are not naturally left-footed, your task should be easier. That doesn't mean you can afford to drop your guard. What it does mean is that opposition right-footed players will find it more awkward to step left to make room for the shot. Their shooting actions won't be as slick. If you are well positioned, you should have more time to tackle and rob the ball.



Defender well-positioned to deny the attacker room to step left and make space for a shot



# Golden Ticket 9

## A 3-Point Challenge

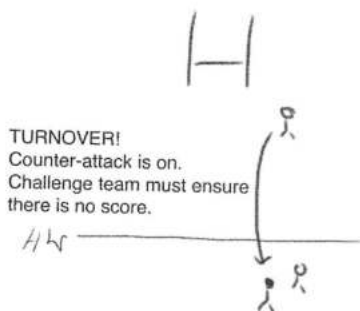
**Ensure opponents get  
no scores from  
turnovers in their half**

Watch for:

- Players who work hard to win the ball back as quickly as possible
- Players who communicate well to counter attacking threats

### The Detail:

All about denial in this challenge, which is still a positive. Teams must always practise stopping as well as creating. So...here we have a team able to score 3 bonus points by preventing opponents from turning the ball over in their own half and working it up the field to score. For example...the 'Challenge' team has the ball. A pass into the opposition half is turned over by the 'Counter' team. The opposition has to be stopped from scoring.



If the training game lasts 10 or 15 minutes, it's a tall order to deny opponents every chance they will get in that time.

Better to choose a 5-minute section in the game, announce the start and end of it to both teams and watch the intensity heighten.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- This can be the ideal situation for you to frustrate the opposition by keeping possession of the ball. I'm not advocating that you don't attack and you only move the ball back and forth in your own half of the field. Yes, if the 'Counter' team wins it back and scores, it won't earn that team the bonus....but you could lose the game by 4 or 5 points and only earn 3 in return. I'm urging you to be clinical when attacking.....avoid carrying into tackles, play advantage passes rather than 50/50 balls and focus on good first touch. These are the actions that will get you scores and cause panic in opposition ranks.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- You can press your opponents in their own half or you can drop back and allow them some room to get into your half of the pitch, which is where you want them if you intend stealing the 3 bonus points.
- My advice would be to focus on turning the ball over wherever you can. Rack up as many scores as possible and don't rely on any bonus. All you need is one chance to present itself. The 'Challenge' team has all the work to do.



# Golden Ticket 10

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Score a point from  
long range**

Watch for:

- Players who recognise the potential for taking a long range shot
- Players who can confidently strike the ball from distance.

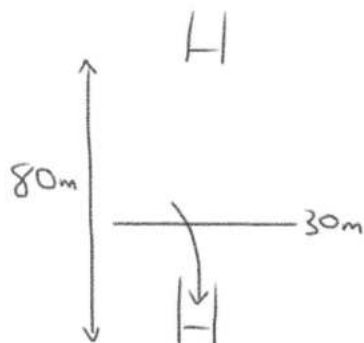
### The Detail:

A fairly straightforward task for the 'Challenge' team, it seems. A single point from long range will earn those 3 bonus points. But what exactly is considered **long range** for different age groups and genders? Preparation for this may demand even more thought than the actual attempt itself.

The easiest distance to identify is the 45m line on a full pitch. Unfortunately this is way past comfortable or possible for most. That's why **negotiation** is key.

Just agree on a minimum range that players and coaches would consider appropriate.

Now set a line of markers to match that distance from goal. Even on a smaller pitch it will work....eg 7v7 U14 game on a pitch that is 80m long. Agree on a distance of 30m and set out a line of fleximarkers for the 'challenge' team. If you intend to play two halves, switch the line before the second half starts. Ready to go!



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- You may be fortunate to have quite a few players who can shoot accurately from long range. For most teams this is not the case. Some players can kick long, some can kick accurately. Fewer can do both!  
So...decide who would be better taking those shots and try to get that player (those players) on the ball, in space and beyond the line. Remember...it's very easy to be consumed by the need to score a long range point and forget about working other types of score. After all, a goal from anywhere will match the long range bonus.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Chances are that the 'Challenge' team will only have one or two players who are adept at scoring from distance. Discuss who they might be, watch for them moving beyond the line and stop them from getting room to shoot.

# Golden Ticket 11

## A 3-Point Challenge

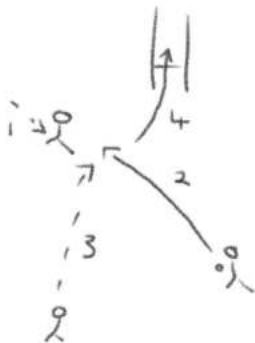
### **Score from a back-to-goal assist**

Watch for:

- Players who move quickly to get into those back-to-goal positions
- Players who anticipate and make runs for the pass from an assist

### The Detail:

The idea is to seek opportunities to play the ball forward to a receiver who is facing the ball player and for that receiver to lay it off to the scorer, still with back to goal. The player who takes the shot may be the one who passed the ball in the first part of the move or another player who joins as the third one.



If the 'Challenge' team leaves one player upfield to be the potential assist, it may not be enough. Better to have two who can provide more passing and receiving options for ball players and support runners.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- The player or players you choose to receive and lay the ball off are key to this challenge. That might seem to be an obvious thing, but I'm talking about quality. A player who makes a run out for the pass will usually need pace, timing and a good first touch.
- There is another way to earn the three bonus points. The opposition will be alert to a longer kick pass being played in to a receiver, with potential scorers making runs to get the return pass. If your team opts to play a running game rather than kick the ball inside, the player with back to goal can catch a short fist pass with back to goal and lay it off immediately to a scorer. As long as the assist is with back to goal, it counts.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Watch to see who the 'Challenge' team decides to use as the assist player(s) with back to goal. Think about selecting a defender who is comfortable marking an opponent **from the front**.
- You may, instead, decide to use a +1 or sweeper to help cut out passes aimed at the receiver(s).



# Golden Ticket 12

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Score with left and right hook kicks**

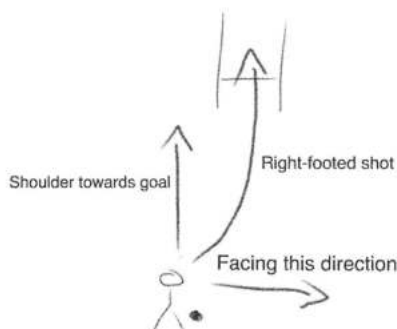
Watch for:

- Players who make room for the kick in the correct part of the pitch
- Players who execute the kick with good technique

### The Detail:

Accept only scores that definitely come from hook kicks. The player will be facing across the pitch, with a shoulder (not chest) pointing towards the goal. He/she may well finish the action facing the goal, but not as the ball is struck.

The reason for demanding two hook kick scores is that these are fairly common in the game. The two scores may be taken by different players, so you're not relying on someone who has strong bilateral skills.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- You shouldn't really have to make specific preparations for these shots as opportunities tend to present themselves quite regularly. Having said that, finding a left-footed player to score a hook kick may be more difficult than finding a right-footed one.
- This type of shot is perfect for a player who is **running a loop**.....coming out from the forward line and looping his/her run around to take a short pass from a teammate....and then taking the shot.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Your players need to be alert to this challenge; not because a hook kick is difficult to stop, but because your opponents may get more opportunities to score with this type of kick than with others.
- The ball has to be struck by a player who is side on to the goal. This stance leaves the player exposed to being blocked. Get close and take your opportunity to block the shot. One successful block will sow seeds of doubt among the opposition and players may be more reluctant to shoot.

# Golden Ticket 13

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Make two successful  
near hand tackles**

Watch for:

- Players who see the opportunity and quickly get into position to tackle
- Players who execute a near hand tackle with good technique

### **The Detail:**

For the purposes of the challenge, a successful near hand tackle will dispossess the ball carrier but not necessarily result in the ball being won back by the tackler or his/her teammate. All the better if it does turn out that way, but not needed to earn the bonus points.

Again, the four points on offer come as a single package, not two for one tackle and two for another.

It may be worth checking your players' understanding of how to execute a near hand tackle. Be sure that they know to get level with an opponent (preferably hip to hip) and lead the actual tackle with a long stride rather than leaning from the waist.

Instead of drawing a rough sketch to illustrate, I'd like you to watch this video clip.

<https://youtu.be/NaOj9tRDmno>

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- So...the best opportunities to make a near hand tackle come when your opponent is solo running. A solo run can give you time to run alongside, time your moment to strike and dispossess the player.
- But what if the game you are playing has a two-touch rule? Does that mean you've no chance of making a near hand tackle? No it doesn't. It simply means you will have less time to get ready. Most players taking part in a two-touch game want to use a toe-tap or a bounce, even when either is not needed. Look for your chance to step across and flick the ball away when an opponent is toe-tapping or bouncing the ball.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- The 'Challenge' team will take every chance to try and make a near hand tackle. If you move the ball quickly and without running into contact, your opponents will get very few opportunities.
- If the rules allow you to solo run, only use this skill in wide open spaces and when you can outrun potential tacklers.
- When your team is on the attack and you are not the player on the ball, be sure to get good separation from your marker before you call for a pass.

# Golden Ticket 14

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Catch and kick a score  
(no extra touches)**

Watch for:

- Players who use their four steps to make room for a shot
- Players who recognise when the right opportunity arises



### The Detail:

What you want to see here is one fluid movement from receiving to scoring. A player may throw in an evasion skill to wrongfoot an opponent, but there can be no toe-tap or bounce involved.....ie an extra touch between catching and kicking. The score can be a point or a goal.

Encourage players who are being marked tightly to use their four steps to make room for the shot. Opponents tend to expect an extra touch because that's what they experience more often than not...a ball player who takes a pass and then jinks one way and the other, bouncing or toe-tapping out of habit.

Take a look at the three scores in this clip.

<https://youtu.be/Ke7FQAaYSvo>

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Even though the players on the 'Counter' team will know what your challenge is, they will find a catch-kick-score difficult to deal with if you can do all in one smooth movement. An early shot can take opponents by surprise. Try it.
- Throwing in an evasion skill to create room is also something that can increase your scoring chances. One move is enough. A second move may mean you have to bounce or toe-tap between.
- For those of you who want to try something extra, have a go at receiving the ball on the half turn; that will often earn you the little bit of extra time and space to get clear for a shot.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- One of the best pieces of advice to help you counter this move is to *always assume the next player who receives the ball wants to shoot*. It doesn't matter if that player ends up passing the ball on, keep your focus on the potential shot.
- A poor tackling stance can help an opposition player get room to shoot, even if you think you have that player covered. For example...a wide stance (both arms and legs wide) is easily sidestepped. Stay on your toes, keep your feet moving quickly to track your opponent's movement and force him/her to bounce or toe-tap or overcarry.

# Golden Ticket 15

## A 5-Point Challenge

**Score after a no  
contact move in the  
opposition half**

Watch for:

- Players who get good separation to receive a pass
- Players who make good decisions to keep the move going

### **The Detail:**

Coaches may wonder why this particular challenge can earn a full 5 points, given that it only has to be met in the opposition half of the pitch and not the full length of it. This is especially significant if the game is a small-sided one and half a pitch is perhaps only 40 metres long.

Awarding 5 points is all about urging players to quickly spot and act on opportunities to keep the ball out of contact and for the 'Counter' team to realise how important it is to mark tightly and even get a hand in to make contact with ball or player.

Many players would like to receive the ball with minimal movement and then take a few seconds to hold it before making the next move. We want to challenge them to increase the former and cut the latter to see how it works.

There is no minimum number of passes in this game.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- Think fast, move fast and move the ball fast. Those are the things that will give your team the best chance of grabbing those 5 bonus points to be added to your final score.
- The score you need could come from a wonderful seven-pass move where no opposition player gets near. It could also come from a direct solo run where your teammates have opened up a path to goal and you drive into that space before scoring.
- The seven-pass move is the least likely, as it gives too many opportunities for the 'Counter' team to get in even one tackle. A one-pass move would be a great way to win the 5 bonus points.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- The 'Challenge' team needs space to work a no contact move. You can block that space by working together and keeping the scoring zone a difficult place for opposition players to get free.
- The best chance the opposition has to catch you out, is by keeping the ball moving. Remember that a solo run without contact can lead to a score, so don't assume they will pass every ball.
- The player you are marking is hoping that you will get distracted enough for him/her to get separation and be open for a pass. Be ready for that.

# Golden Ticket 16

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Ensure opponents get  
no blocks on shots**

Watch for:

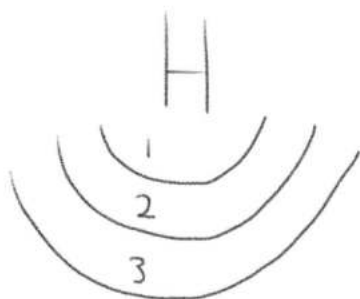
- How well players make room to shoot
- Players who anticipate a block and delay the shot

### The Detail:

Another challenge with what seems like a negative slant on it, but for the team trying to win the 3 bonus points, it's all about the positive reaction to it.....ie. make room for your shots.

Often, a player will receive a pass in the scoring zone, only to hurry the shot and get blocked or even to delay the shot too long and be blocked by an opponent.

Each case is different, so the idea of making room isn't always about using the four steps to get into space. It may be a single step or it may be that the best space is exactly where the player caught the ball.



The size of the scoring zone  
will vary for different reasons

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Awareness is one of the most important skills for this challenge. In simple words....knowing what's going on around you before you get the ball and when you are ready to shoot. Do you have room to shoot exactly where you are? Do you need to use any steps to get away from an opponent who might block your shot? Would a sidestep or a roll get you free?

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' players will always get opportunities to shoot during this game. They will want to score. If they take 6 shots, they have to make sure they have enough space each time. You only have to make ONE block to steal the bonus points.
- In the scoring zone, get close enough to be able to make a block and always assume the player with the ball wants to take the shot. Your teammates can help by marking players tightly and leaving the ball player with only one option.



# Golden Ticket 17

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Score from a long kick  
pass assist**

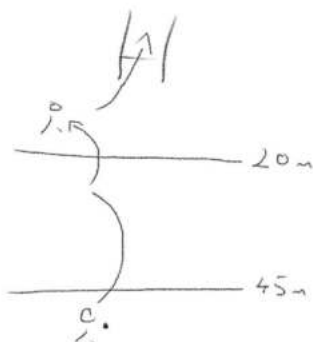
Watch for:

- Players who see the opportunity to kick long to a potential scorer
- Players who move well to receive that long kick pass

### The Detail:

There are a few things to be clarified here. How long must the pass be? Is the receiver able to call a 'mark' from a long pass and score from it to earn the bonus points?

With regard to distance, you decide what suits the age group. Some coaches set out two lines of fleximarkers...one across the 45m line and the other along the 20m line. The ball has to be kicked from beyond the 45 and received inside the 20. It can bounce between the lines. The receiver shoots and scores.



Players are free to call properly for a 'mark', but it cannot be used to earn the 3-point bonus. Better to keep those extra points for a score from play.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- If you wait for the perfect pass, catch and shot to happen, you may run out of time. Keep scanning for opportunities but be prepared to take a risk and kick a long ball in for an inside player to win, even under pressure.
- The challenge doesn't need the scorer to avoid contact or to score immediately. It can be good for a receiver to have to fight for the ball and work a score. Let those inside players know not to expect the perfect pass unless they make the perfect run.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' team may try and kick a few long passes in, even if you have their target players well marked. Be ready to fight for the ball.
- If an opponent wins the ball from a longer pass, assume that he/she will want to finish the move by taking a shot for those bonus points. Steal the ball in the tackle or with a block or force the player to pass.

# Golden Ticket 18

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score twice from play  
after intercepting  
opposition passes**

Watch for:

- Players who take risks to intercept opposition passes
- Players who are good at developing moves after interceptions

### **The Detail:**

I had toyed with the idea of making this a single challenge...to score once after intercepting an opposition pass, but I feel that such a target may be too easy to reach and not worthy of a golden ticket.

The interception can happen anywhere on the field. It could be from an opposition attempt to pass inside to a forward or it could come about when their goalkeeper has the ball in hand and is passing to a defender.

For the purposes of this exercise, we won't count interceptions from kickouts. Let's keep it to times when the ball is already in play.

Interceptions can be out of contact and also in contact (when a player stops an opponent from getting clean possession).

Make sure to let all players know these rules before you start the game.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- You will get a number of opportunities to intercept the ball and set up attacks. Sometimes it will be better to move the ball quickly and sometimes a bit more patience will be required. Avoid hurrying just for the sake of it.
- This challenge gives you the chance to anticipate opposition passes and practise reading what ball players intend. Kick passes will give you the best chances to intercept and if you force opponents to give looping first passes, you'll get more.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- One of the pitfalls to avoid is complacency. When you hear that the opposition has to manage two scores from interceptions in a training game that will only last 10-12 minutes, it's easy to assume that the 'Challenge' team will find that difficult. Not so, if you present your opponents with too many chances.
- The key for you is to make passes clean, accurate and only played to teammates who are in space. Use plenty of width to make the 'Challenge' players think if they should mark those wide players. If they do, gaps should appear in the defence for you to attack and shoot.
- Be careful not to make this a possession game, where your players try to keep hold of the ball rather than attack. The greater the number of passes often gives opponents the greater chance of intercepting.

# Golden Ticket 17

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Score from a long kick  
pass assist**

Watch for:

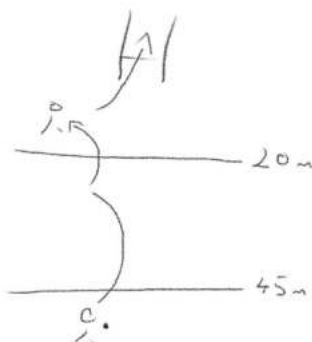
- Players who see the opportunity to kick long to a potential scorer
- Players who move well to receive that long kick pass



### The Detail:

There are a few things to be clarified here. How long must the pass be? Is the receiver able to call a 'mark' from a long pass and score from it to earn the bonus points?

With regard to distance, you decide what suits the age group. Some coaches set out two lines of fleximarkers...one across the 45m line and the other along the 20m line. The ball has to be kicked from beyond the 45 and received inside the 20. It can bounce between the lines. The receiver shoots and scores.



Players are free to call properly for a 'mark', but it cannot be used to earn the 3-point bonus. Better to keep those extra points for a score from play.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- If you wait for the perfect pass, catch and shot to happen, you may run out of time. Keep scanning for opportunities but be prepared to take a risk and kick a long ball in for an inside player to win, even under pressure.
- The challenge doesn't need the scorer to avoid contact or to score immediately. It can be good for a receiver to have to fight for the ball and work a score. Let those inside players know not to expect the perfect pass unless they make the perfect run.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' team may try and kick a few long passes in, even if you have their target players well marked. Be ready to fight for the ball.
- If an opponent wins the ball from a longer pass, assume that he/she will want to finish the move by taking a shot for those bonus points. Steal the ball in the tackle or with a block or force the player to pass.

# Golden Ticket 18

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score twice from play  
after intercepting  
opposition passes**

Watch for:

- Players who take risks to intercept opposition passes
- Players who are good at developing moves after interceptions

### **The Detail:**

I had toyed with the idea of making this a single challenge...to score once after intercepting an opposition pass, but I feel that such a target may be too easy to reach and not worthy of a golden ticket.

The interception can happen anywhere on the field. It could be from an opposition attempt to pass inside to a forward or it could come about when their goalkeeper has the ball in hand and is passing to a defender.

For the purposes of this exercise, we won't count interceptions from kickouts. Let's keep it to times when the ball is already in play.

Interceptions can be out of contact and also in contact (when a player stops an opponent from getting clean possession).

Make sure to let all players know these rules before you start the game.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- You will get a number of opportunities to intercept the ball and set up attacks. Sometimes it will be better to move the ball quickly and sometimes a bit more patience will be required. Avoid hurrying just for the sake of it.
- This challenge gives you the chance to anticipate opposition passes and practise reading what ball players intend. Kick passes will give you the best chances to intercept and if you force opponents to give looping first passes, you'll get more.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- One of the pitfalls to avoid is complacency. When you hear that the opposition has to manage two scores from interceptions in a training game that will only last 10-12 minutes, it's easy to assume that the 'Challenge' team will find that difficult. Not so, if you present your opponents with too many chances.
- The key for you is to make passes clean, accurate and only played to teammates who are in space. Use plenty of width to make the 'Challenge' players think if they should mark those wide players. If they do, gaps should appear in the defence for you to attack and shoot.
- Be careful not to make this a possession game, where your players try to keep hold of the ball rather than attack. The greater the number of passes often gives opponents the greater chance of intercepting.

# Golden Ticket 19

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Name two players  
who then link to score**

Watch:

- How the two players move when either has the ball
- How well other players make room for the link to happen

### **The Detail:**

Firstly, to be clear.....any link passing between the two named players has to end with one of them scoring. It can be one pass or more than one between them.

It may seem a bit strange that the 'Challenge' team names two players and the 'Counter' team gets to know those names as well. Surely that cancels the element of surprise in the game! Well, there are 4 bonus points at stake here and this reflects just how tough the challenge should be.

Allowing both teams to be aware of the named players lets coaches see how teammates execute the link and how opponents set up to prevent the link from happening.

It's worth noting if the 'Challenge' team tries to work the link too often it may miss opportunities to put other players in for scores.

Equally fascinating will be to see if the 'Counter' players can get the balance right between stopping the link and making sure they don't concede goals where the named players are not used.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- You will have to decide the best type of link to set up for this game. Will your named players be a good passer who usually plays in the middle part of the pitch and a sharp inside forward? Will they be two inside forwards, so that anyone can pass to either and quick support play between the two can get the score you need? You decide.
- This is a tough challenge, particularly for the link player who is off the ball, wanting a pass. His/her direction and timing of movement has to be good enough to catch opponents out as often as possible.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- Once you know the named link players, it's time to decide who will mark them. Perhaps you want to add a +1 to help intercept any potential passes between the two.
- If the 'Challenge' team names two inside players (eg two full forwards) be ready for a second pass that may happen between them. So..Player A passes to Player B. The assumption is that B will try to shoot. It's easy to assume that A has no further part to play. What if B plays a return ball to A? As I said, be ready for that.
- The 'Challenge' team may be happy to use the named players as decoys. They may want to draw your defenders away from the scoring zone and then use the space to get others in for goals. After all, 2 goals are better than 4 bonus points.



# Golden Ticket 20

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score a spectacular goal**

Watch for:

- Players who can spot a real opportunity for a shot on goal
- Players who can strike the ball with power and accuracy

### The Detail:

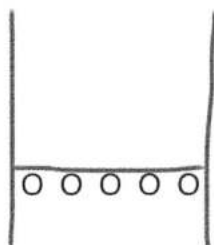
What a fabulous challenge to have!

This demands a certain amount of throwing caution to the wind and having a go with power (and hopefully precision).

Well..maybe not power exclusively. Most spectacular goals are associated with powerful shots that sail into the top corner of the net. For the purposes of this exercise we will include what some might call 'cheeky' goals as well.

A deliberate chip or lob over the goalkeeper is spectacular in its own way, so let players know that these count as well.

As for power and precision, the spectacular goal that earns 4 bonus points has to fly into the top of the net, as shown in the diagram.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- You never know which shot you hit will be out of the goalkeeper's reach and fly into the roof of the net. Still, you can improve your chances by focussing on good technique. Make solid contact with the ball. The most powerful shots feel as if the ball has squashed against your foot for a fraction of a second, before exploding into the air. This is the feeling you want to create.
- Ideally, the last thing you look at before focussing on the shot, should be where you want to direct it. Some people have come to believe that your last look should be at the goalkeeper, to check his/her position. That's not the case. So many players look at the goalkeeper and then kick the ball straight at him/her.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Your goalkeeper has a big role to play if you want to deny the opposition 4 points. In fact, a spectacular goal is worth 7 points, if you count both. Well before any player gets in position to take a shot, the goalkeeper has to spot the danger, keep teammates on their toes and make sure any threat is lessened. This is arguably more important than trying to make the save.

# Golden Ticket 21

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Ensure an opponent  
does not score twice  
from play**

Watch for:

- Players who spot danger and act on it to deny scoring chances
- Players who communicate with teammates to identify threats

### The Detail:

When you are outlining the task to the 'Challenge' team, ensure they understand that:

- A. An opposition player who scores once must be stopped from getting a second score (goal or point).
- B. **More than one opposition player may fall into this category**

I've deliberately highlighted B because it's easy to focus on the first opponent who gets a score and be misled into thinking he/she will be your only target player. Within a few minutes, two more from the opposition team may have grabbed points or goals and suddenly they are on the radar as well. That's three players who must be stopped from scoring.

Remind the 'Challenge' team that clear communication is vital, particularly if there are multiple opponents to monitor.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Once again, your goalkeeper will have a big role to play. He/she must deliver short, sharp messages about who is looking for that second, all-important score which will earn the 'Counter' team a golden ticket.
- By setting a challenge that is all about denying, I'm forcing your team to work all the way to the end of the game to earn your bonus points.
- Of course, the best way to meet the challenge during a 10-minute game is to keep possession as much as possible and deny your opponents the chance to add to any scores.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Your task should be much easier than the one given to the 'Challenge' team. If one of your players scores an opening point or goal, look for others on the team to add more, rather than deliberately seek to pass every ball to the first scorer.
- Ok...if that player is in a good position to claim a second score, get the ball to him/her....but don't deliberately target the player. Get others on the scoreboard as well and make life tough for the 'Challenge' team. A variety of targets has more chance than one.

# Golden Ticket 22

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score two points from advanced marks**

Watch for:

- Players who can deliver the ideal kick pass for an advanced mark
- Players who can catch cleanly while under pressure



### **The Detail:**

For this challenge, make sure your players are aware of how the advanced mark works. The 20m distance is a subjective call, particularly if the pass is on or about that length rather than from a long kick.

If you are working to develop player use of the advanced mark and how to counter it, then it might be better to clearly identify your 45m line with fleximarkers and set out another line, 20m ahead of that. I know that players won't face that template in a competition game, but it may help with training.

One issue that comes from putting lines of markers on a pitch is the tendency to play tight to them. Some players will literally stand on that line rather than position themselves well back from it and leave room to run towards it.

Should you be playing a small-sided game on a tighter pitch, you will have to decide on the distance to goal from the passing line. In fact you may decide it's not worth taking on this challenge unless you have bigger numbers playing on a full length or nearly full length pitch.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- Accurate passing, sharp movement and good fielding are all needed for this challenge. Think about putting a player inside who has a solid first touch when fielding a ball.
- You may decide to use a target player with a height advantage, but just as important can be a pace advantage. That will take the player into free space.
- The actual pass may be a bit tougher than many players believe. It appears to be just a kick pass that doesn't hit the ground before being caught...but most players are used to hitting passes that bounce first. Practise it.
- Remember to signal that you want to claim a mark, otherwise the referee will play on and you may get caught in a tackle.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- If you are a defender who has been given a specific marking job, assume that your opponent wants to claim a mark. Think about defending from the front or the side. If you defend from behind, you may be giving your opponent more opportunity.
- The 'Challenge' team may choose to kick the ball high into the scoring zone, particularly if there's a player with a height advantage in the forward line. Work hard to spoil the chance by breaking the ball, rather than trying to compete for the catch.

# Golden Ticket 23

## A 3/4/5-Point Challenge

**Score from play after only using one pass in the opposition half**

Watch for:

- Players who scan for the chance to play that longer pass
- Players who use a solo run to good effect

### The Detail:

Unusual scoring for this challenge; you, as coach, may decide whether it should be worth 3, 4 or 5 points. It very much depends on how you gauge the difficulty of the task. Let's say you are playing 5v5 with U11s on a pitch that is 70m long. Not only is it only 35m to goal from the halfway line, there will be space galore, with only 4 outfield players per team. I think I'd be offering three points for this level (maybe even 2).

Now consider a 15v15 adult training game. More bodies, less space despite the pitch being bigger and a full 70m from halfway to endline. Any possession by the 'Challenge' team will probably see the opposition withdraw in numbers, so 5 points will heighten the tension and make it worthwhile to seek that special score or defend against it.

Give players time on each team to discuss their approach to attacking and to defending before starting the game. Don't be tempted to add your own ideas to theirs...just listen in, share what you've heard with fellow coaches and observe. If either team does want help, let them use the hints below.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Trying too hard to get this score might cause a problem for your team. Once you take possession in the attacking half of the pitch, you will have to decide quickly on an action:  
Is that special pass on?  
Is a solo run an option?  
If 'no' is the answer to both, it may be best to forget about the golden ticket score for that attack.
- Ideally, you want the player taking the shot to be close to goal. Think about drawing the defence out (either wide or towards the halfway line).
- If you have a player who is generally accurate from long range, surprise the opposition by playing a short pass and let that player take the shot.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Once you see that first pass made in your half of the field, think '**this player wants to shoot**'. Remember, it isn't the pass that crosses the halfway line....it's after the ball has crossed.
- If you focus on the thought '**this player wants to shoot**', be ready for him/her to solo run to a better shooting position. Track and tackle.

# Golden Ticket 24

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Get a score from a  
ghost runner**

Watch for:

- Players in possession who scan across the pitch for that run
- Players who know how and when to make telling ghost runs

### The Detail:

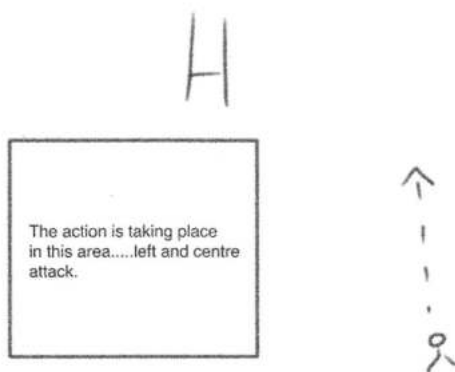
This is a challenge where it's vital to check for understanding before playing. Everyone on the pitch needs to be clear about what you mean by 'Ghost Runner'.

Let them all know that he/she is a player who gets into the scoring zone, unnoticed by the opposition, and free for an assist pass.

More often than not, the ghost runner will make ground up the pitch, well away from the action. He/she will remain unmarked as others focus on the ball.

Even more impressive is the ghost runner who doesn't stay wide but steals through the massed ranks of the opposition defence without being marked, tracked or even seen (rather like the gorilla in the Monkey Business Illusion – view on YouTube).

Make players on both teams aware of the challenge and remind them that the ghost runner must score to earn the 4 points.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- You may think that because the opposition knows to watch for the ghost runner, this challenge is almost impossible. That's not the case. Players are prone to distraction and there will still be chances for you to sneak someone into a shooting position.
- Any of your players may become the ghost runner...even an inside forward who drifts out the pitch and waits for a chance to dart back in again for the assist pass.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- You can earn these 4 bonus points with plenty of talking as a team. Stay alert to runs and let teammates know you have an opponent covered. Don't just tell others what to do. Your goalkeeper can do that job best of all.



# Golden Ticket 25

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Stretch the defence  
really wide to score**

Watch for:

- Players who make unselfish runs to stretch the opposition defence
- Players in possession who see the gaps created and exploit them

### The Detail:

For you (the coach/referee) this is a challenge which is not as clear cut as many of the others and may require you to adjudicate. Make it very clear to players what you will accept as a score which comes from deliberately stretching the defence wide. In the end, it's up to you....but I would want to see players ahead of the ball making quick, unselfish runs from 'in to out'. These runs would have to appear convincing and well-timed. Of course, they would also have to do their job....ie. draw defenders wide with them. Most of all, I'd want to see room created in or near the scoring zone for the actual shot to appear easy. Still, that's only my thinking....you will know your players and what might suit best.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- How do you draw defenders wide when they know you're trying to do that? Surely they will let you run and simply protect what they see as the scoring zone! One way to catch them out might be to go for shots from outside the area they are protecting.
- It only takes one or two to go over the bar and defenders will feel the need to stop the shots from coming. That means leaving the middle and being stretched wider. Now you have the room you need inside to score for the bonus points.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Of course, the players on the 'Challenge' team will try and draw some of you out wide to get that golden ticket score.....and, of course, you will be reluctant to get caught doing that. If a sharpshooter goes wide and scores from wider positions, send a good marker with him/her. But don't be drawn out wide by players who are unlikely to score from distance. Stay compact, keep the goals out and earn those bonus points.

# Golden Ticket 26

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Have a left-footed  
player score with the  
right foot**

Watch for:

- Players who can create room for a shot off their less favoured foot
- Players who exhibit good technique when shooting off this foot

### **The Detail:**

How tough this challenge turns out to be may depend on how many left-footed players are available. If you have a couple, then it's probably best to play both on the 'Challenge' team rather than just one of them. That way you can double the options and make things more difficult for the 'Counter' team.

The defenders must be careful not to underestimate the ability of any left-footed players to shoot accurately with the right. Very often, lefties can be quite good with the right foot.

As with all of the challenges, remind your players to focus on other aspects of the game that will bring them scores. An overemphasis on earning the bonus points may lead to the 'Challenge' team foregoing other chances to score goals and points. Missing out on the bonus points and handing them to the 'Counter' team instead, may not be as damaging as players imagine.

A golden ticket score must come from play. It cannot be from a placed ball.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- If you have one left-footed player on your team, chances are that the opposition will mark him/her out of the game, especially if it lasts only for 10 minutes. You can still look for those bonus points by having the player run to get into good shooting positions.
- Maybe he/she can play an even bigger role as a decoy runner, drawing defenders away from the scoring zone and leaving room for teammates to get in for goals. After all, one goal will equal the bonus points total.
- If you have more than one left footer, they can work together....one making decoy runs while the other tries to get that score to earn the 3 bonus points.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- First of all, identify the left footers on the 'Challenge' team and put good markers on them.
- If the opposition has only one naturally left-footed player, good defending should earn your team the points. However, your opponents will be aware of how difficult it is to get a score from that one player, so they will be trying to work other scores rather than depend on the bonus. You must be alert to that.
- The old saying 'the best form of defence is attack' still fits. Your team should still set out to win the game, without needing the bonus points. That way, you can exert even more pressure on the opposition.

# Golden Ticket 27

## A 5-Point Challenge

**Own kickout....ball  
must only move  
forward....score!**

Watch for:

- Players who see opportunities for forward passes and take them
- Players who receive and turn to keep moving the ball forward

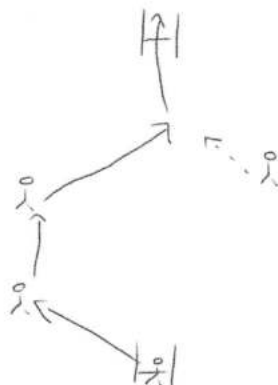


### The Detail:

Just to clarify.....to earn all 5 bonus points in this golden ticket challenge, a team must start with a kickout and move the ball no other way except **forward**, finishing with a goal or a point.

Moving the ball forward applies to passing and solo running. If a player happens to step backwards to make room for a shot or a pass, ignore this.

Should you be thinking of applying this rule when playing with small numbers on a reduced pitch, consider how easy or difficult it may be for the players and think about amending the number of bonus points.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- This challenge is worth 5 points because passing, carrying, movement off the ball, decision-making and shooting all have to be spot on. It's the dream move.
- Players who have attempted this challenge say that it's tough for support players to remember not to call for a back pass and for the receiver to avoid giving that pass.
- If you win the ball with your back to the opposition goal, get turned quickly to face the goal and then make your next decision about carrying, passing or shooting.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' team will probably try to move the ball forward from every kickout, especially if the game time only lasts 10 minutes. Think about pressing the opposition kickouts. If you force a back pass or a dispossession, that's the bonus point move over.

# Golden Ticket 28

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Limit the opposition  
to one fisted point**

Watch for:

- Players who mark opponents tightly when close to goal
- Players who combine to stop an opponent scoring a fisted point

### The Detail:

Once again, a challenge which appears to promote the negative but doesn't really. It's because some may view actions that involve words such as 'limit' or 'stop' or 'prevent' as unwelcome in coaching parlance.

These tasks are part and parcel of the work to be done by teams when not in possession. It's much better to ask a team to limit the opposition rather than to say "*Don't let them....*"

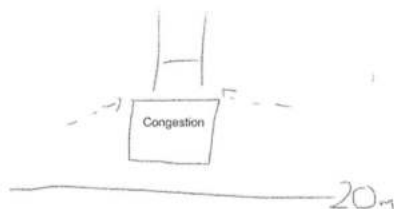
Many of the challenges are designed to promote attacking and scoring; here's an opportunity to emphasise the need for good defending against a specific type of score. As with all other challenges, teams must remain focussed on play that will bring them other scores.....goals and kicked points.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Your opponents may need to get close to goal to score a fisted point. Good communication among you should keep players alert to any dangers.
- The opposition team will often rely on your players getting caught ball-watching while the passer runs, unnoticed, for the return pass. Keep tracking runners.
- If a player gets into position to try and fist a point, get close and get your hands high and in front of you, rather than straight up into the air. You'll have a better chance of blocking the ball.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The opposition may think you need to be really close to goal to be able to score a fisted point, but if you use a well-timed swing of the arm and strike the ball off the ideal part of your hand (the heel) you can score from further away from goal. Try it.



- If you do need to get close to goal, attack from the sides, even near the endline. There will be less congestion there and fewer chances of being blocked.

# Golden Ticket 29

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Receive with back to goal – tight turn 180°- then score**

Watch for:

- Passers who give receivers the chance to make this happen
- Players who can keep control of the ball while turning tightly

### The Detail:

When explaining this challenge to players, ensure they know that you will only accept those turns that are really sharp and tight....the type that, if you saw it happen in a competition game, you might very well applaud.

We are not talking about the turn that eventually brings a player round to face goal and takes the same time as a ship would.

The scorer must receive with back to goal and the turn must quickly leave him/her facing the target. Receiving the ball on the half-turn or using a hook kick to shoot may both bring scores...*but no bonus points.*

When you are chatting with players about the action, (be they from the 'Challenge' team or from the 'Counter' team) remind them of how effective an evasion skill can be in this situation. The player who feints to turn one way and pivots sharply to turn the other can often create that bit of room needed to get the shot away.

Players may also ask if they may turn and then solo run towards goal before shooting. *Not for the golden ticket score.*

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- If you have a player who has perfected this type of turn and has been using it regularly, try to get him/her closer to goal and look for opportunities to play the ball in.
- Using an evasion skill can be very effective, though **one is enough**. Players who try two of these with back to goal, often find themselves back where they started...with a defender ready to pounce.
- Getting lower to the ground, planting one foot and driving off it can help you accelerate the turn and break a tackle.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Your first form of defence is to deny the player possession. Mark in front or to the side and stop the receiver getting the ball.
- An attacker who does win the ball ahead of you, will be hoping that you are marking tightly enough to allow him/her to spin around you and get clear for a shot. In this scenario, take a step back so that you can't be rounded in one move by the attacker.
- Playing a +1 in defence may also help. This player can focus on being the second tackler when an attacker is a shooting threat.



# Golden Ticket 30

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Win three of your own kickouts in a row**

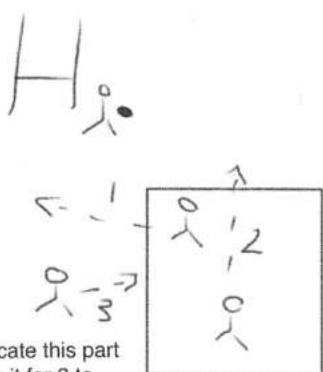
Watch for:

- Players who move well to give the goalkeeper options
- A goalkeeper who can kick accurately to moving targets

### The Detail:

Whether your players must kick the ball from the ground or can do so from the hands, the task is made easier with good movement by potential receivers and kicking accuracy to running targets.

Springing this challenge on a team is as likely to expose inabilities as it is to identify strengths. That can be a huge positive in that you get a heads up on the need to devote time and effort to rehearsal of kickouts and ploys you will use.



Players 1 and 2 vacate this part of the pitch, leaving it for 3 to receive the ball from the kickout

Remind players that the ball does not have to be caught cleanly, directly from the kickout. If possession is won from a breaking ball or after a tussle, it still counts.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- It doesn't matter if you are making a run to win the kickout ball or if your run is for decoy purposes.....make the run sharp and deliberate.
- A reminder for the goalkeeper; even if your team has some well-rehearsed moves, the decision about whether to take the kick or not is still yours. If the planned move doesn't appear to be working....ignore it and wait for a spontaneous run to give you a target.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Clearly, you need to press the kickouts to intercept or break the ball away.
- Be alert to runs made by 'Challenge' team players. Some will be decoy and others to give the goalkeeper options. Good tracking will cut the options for the keeper and may unnerve him/her. That will help your chances.

# Golden Ticket 31

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score a goal low into the corner**

Watch for:

- The player who places the shot rather than hit with power
- The player who spots the opportunity to score low

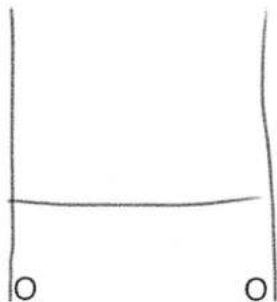
### The Detail:

Another wonderful shooting challenge for players!

Maybe not quite as captivating as the challenge to score a spectacular goal (Golden Ticket 20) but one that demands precision.

Some players may still go for power and get it right; the majority, I think, will seek to place the ball wide of the goalkeeper in a 1v1 scenario.

Any goal that earns 4 bonus points has to nestle neatly in the bottom corner of the goal, as shown in the diagram.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- It is possible to score this type of goal with a shot that is rifled through a packed defence, but the reality is....it's a one in five chance. Most times, you are better off working the ball into a 1v1 with the goalkeeper or a 1v2 where the keeper and a defender stand between you and the goal.
- As with the spectacular attempt, the last thing you look at before focussing on the shot, should be where you want to direct it. Some people have come to believe that your last look should be at the goalkeeper, to check his/her position. That's not the case. So many players look at the goalkeeper and then kick the ball straight at him/her.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- A shot to the bottom corner of the goal is more likely to come from an opponent who has broken through or got behind your defence and, as the saying goes.... "has the goal at his mercy".
- So...always have your players actively trying to win the ball back, rather than just hoping to get in the way. Put the opponent under pressure before he/she even gets a chance to shape at taking a shot.

# Golden Ticket 32

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Score a point after a looped run**

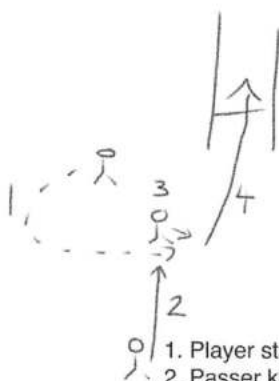
Watch for:

- Inside players who run wide to make looped runs
- Players who are good at offloading a short pass to a runner on the loop



### The Detail:

It may be a good idea to lead into this challenge with some practice of taking shots at the end of looped runs. Such familiarisation will help with player understanding of the timing needed, the shape of run required and the type of shot that usually comes after it. If you have to do some unopposed work, so be it. The rough sketch shows how three players might work together. Rotating their roles is simple.



1. Player starts to run a loop.
2. Passer kicks to receiver.
3. Receiver gives short pass to loop runner.
4. Loop runner shoots

Scoring at the end of a looped run is a much more challenging task with an opposition team in place. The difficulty is reflected in the 4 point weighting.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- If you play one or two inside forwards who are good ball winners and are prepared to offload the ball with back to goal, you'll definitely increase your chances of a loop runner being on hand to take the ball and shoot.
- If you are a player who will try some of these looped runs in the game, accept that you may have to make a number of these runs and still not get the ball. See it as learning how to time runs rather than get frustrated at not being able to complete the move.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- A looped run is a very definite move that is easy to spot. If you are marking a player who looks as if he/she may intend to make a looped run, track that player closely to spoil any chance of getting on the ball.

# Golden Ticket 33

## A 5-Point Challenge

**Score from two set areas**

Watch for:

- Players who make well-timed runs into the set areas
- Players who can spot passing opportunities to those set areas

### The Detail:

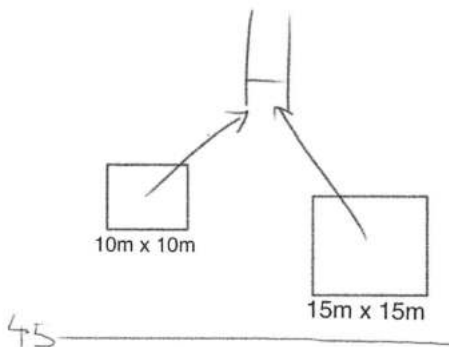
This challenge will inform you in lots of ways. If I were to put an umbrella question over them all it might be... *"How will players react to having two areas marked on the pitch?"* You may decide to find the answers by throwing them into the game straightaway with no instruction to guide them, other than the title of the challenge.

I'm not sure I would choose that option. I think players deserve a chance to be given time to discuss their ideas beforehand. Whether they are on the 'Challenge' team or part of the 'Counter' team, they will have ideas.

Have a coach listen in to their chat (but not contribute) so that he/she can give others on the management team a 'heads up' on what they might expect to see in the game.

Set your areas out with fleximarkers (**not domes**) and decide on size and positions, appropriate for the pitch you're playing on; no area smaller than 10m x 10m and none bigger than 25m x 25m. **Make them two different sizes.**

To earn the five points, the 'Challenge' team must score a point or a goal from inside each of the set areas.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Here's a tip with a difference. It might be an idea to get your players to rush towards one of the set areas, bringing defenders with them. That could leave room for a solo runner to get the ball into the other area and shoot. Remember, the ball doesn't necessarily have to be passed into an area. It can be carried in.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The two set areas are different sizes. Think about deliberately protecting the smaller one more than the bigger one. If the 'Challenge' team manages to get a score from the bigger one, it will be much harder to get the second score from the smaller one.

# Golden Ticket 34

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Score a goal from a penalty**

Watch for:

- Players who can win a free inside the penalty area
- Players who tackle well to prevent a penalty being awarded

### The Detail:

This may seem like the perfect invitation for players to take a dive at the slightest bit of contact inside the penalty area. No doubt there may be some of those antics, complete with exaggerated cries. You will, of course, ignore such attempts.

The onus here is not really on the 'Challenge' team at all. The players on this team don't have to come up with any specific plans to win a penalty...other than to get the ball into that area and have clean possession of it.

That's enough to heap the pressure onto the 'Counter' team to **not concede a penalty**. So...most of the good practice you expect to see should come from players on the 'Counter' team.

Defenders must be focussed on providing cover, on tracking opponents, on tackling without fouling and on communicating throughout.....no opportunities for the referee/coach to award a penalty.

Having a penalty focus is good in another way. You can remind players that penalties are awarded for:

- A Technical or Aggressive Foul inside the small rectangle.
- An Aggressive Foul inside the large rectangle.

Most will need more information about these...especially the technical fouls that are punished by a penalty kick. They will be surprised by some.

*(eg When a player is inside his/her own small rectangle and is less than 13m from the ball for opponents' free kick.)*

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Play the game as normal and take points if the shots are on. If you work the ball into the penalty area and the space opens up, go for goal. If you are fouled, you'll get a penalty kick.
- If you happen to be the player taking a penalty kick, make a decision about where you want to direct the ball and stick to it. Many Gaelic football goalkeepers do not get much practice saving low shots; either bottom corner may be your ideal spot. Again, when you choose the spot, focus on it rather than on the goalkeeper.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' team may not deliberately look to win a penalty but will probably rely on you making rash tackles to try and stop goals being scored. Covering, talking, tackling, tracking and footwork all need to be sharp.



# Golden Ticket 35

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Solo run through a gap in the defence to score**

Watch for:

- Players ahead of the ball who help create gaps in the defence
- Players on the ball who make good decisions

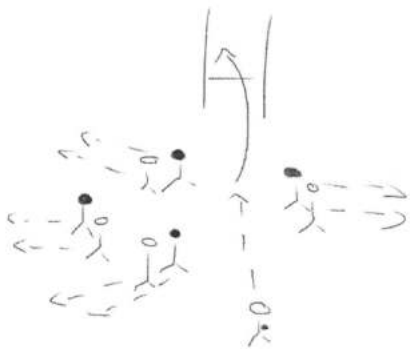
### The Detail:

Here's a challenge where you may have to urge players to focus on simplicity. Once a coach mentions soloing, there's always the risk that some interpret this as the green light to head off on mazy runs through the opposition defence.

For the purposes of this exercise, steer the players away from doing that and move them towards using the **short, direct solo run** through a gap that opens up for a moment or two. Even go as far as telling them you won't count anything other than the latter.

Remind players that these opportunities may come when they already have the ball and have to accelerate quickly through the gap to shoot.....or that they may be running at full pace, collect a pass and blitz through the gap before taking the shot.

The gap, of course, will rarely appear of its own accord. Attackers ahead of the ball often need to create that space with runs that convince opponents to track them.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- There are a few different scenarios here. You might see the gap when you are off the ball and call for a pass on the run. The gap doesn't have to be a certain width or length...as long you get through with minimum contact.
- You might even receive the ball with your back to goal, spin to evade your marker and spot a gap. Go for it.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The simple response to this challenge is not to allow any gaps to form. That's easier said than done, because it's difficult for the defending players to always move in sync with each other as the ball moves from one part of the pitch to the other. In your discussion before the game, talk about which players are more likely to try these solo runs. Work hard to deny them possession and close them down quickly if they get their hands on the ball.

# Golden Ticket 36

## A 4-Point Challenge

### **Score from a diagonal kick pass assist**

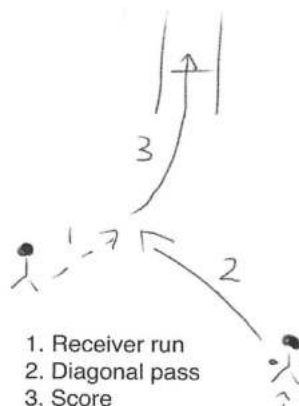
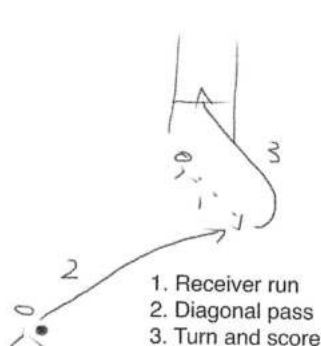
Watch for:

- Players ahead of the ball who move to create opportunities for diagonal passes
- Players on the ball who can deliver an accurate diagonal pass

### The Detail:

Most players will know what is meant by a diagonal kick pass. What they may not be sure about is how far that kick will carry, so it might be an idea to give players an opportunity to practise these for a few minutes before starting the game. It may be an even better idea to let them test their accuracy kicking to a moving target (ie the receiver in a game). So...in the game, the way to earn the 4 bonus points is for a player to receive a diagonal pass and score, without passing the ball on to another player and without losing possession and managing to regain it.

In order to get receivers to focus on quick actions, let players know that they must not go on a solo run after taking the pass. **Set the limit at two touches before shooting.**



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- If you take possession of the ball in the attacking half, have a quick scan ahead and at an angle. In fact, start scanning before you even get the ball. It's all about learning to quickly spot the player who is available and close enough to goal to go for a score.
- The best receivers in this game are the inside players who make short, sharp runs to get separation and players further out the field who make longer runs to get ahead of the passer. Coaches sometimes say "*the run makes the pass*" and in the case of a diagonal pass, that is so true. The runner creates the angle for the passer.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Passers on the 'Challenge' team often need inside forwards to lose their markers before they take a chance on kicking a diagonal ball to a moving target. Stay tight to runners and cut down the options for the passer.

# Golden Ticket 37

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Stop opponents from  
winning three  
consecutive kickouts**

Watch for:

- Players who step up to contest every opposition kickout
- A goalkeeper who makes good decisions



### The Detail:

On first glance, you may interpret this task as something the 'Challenge' team must do to spoil opposition kickouts. That's only one part of the story. One or more of the consecutive kickouts could come from the team being challenged.

Eg      Yellows are the 'Challenge' team.  
         Blues are the 'Counter' team.  
         In the 10-minute game, yellows must not let the blues win three kickouts in a row.  
         Blues win two of their own kickouts in a row. Blues' tally is now 2.  
         The next kickout happens to be a yellow one.  
         If the blues win it, that will count as their third consecutive one.  
         Yellows win it.  
         Blues' tally goes back to zero.  
         Yellows hold out for the remainder of the game.  
         Yellows win the challenge and earn the 3 bonus points.

Including both kickout sources will cause both teams to employ spoiling tactics on opposition kickouts and apply some invention and planning to their own.

If you want to see what players come up with, give them time to discuss ideas before the game, rather than throw them straight into action.

Remind players that kickouts can still be won or lost from breaking ball. A scrap for the ball will still end with one team winning it in play or by getting a free/sideline. Both count.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- The go-to tactic for opposition kickouts will be to press them and have tight 1-to-1 marking or players spaced between their target receivers.
- Increase the pressure on the goalkeeper by directing your players loudly. *"Watch for the short kick"..... "he's going left"..... "cover the long kick over the top".*
- Remind your players that it may not be enough to just break the ball away from an opponent. Your team must get the ball in hand for it to count.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- So....your team is trying to win three kickouts in a row. For your own kickouts, look to your strengths. That may be a particularly tall player who has good fielding ability; it may be a player who can make fast breaks away from any marker. Use all advantages.

# Golden Ticket 38

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Score a goal from a  
secret link**

Watch for:

- Passers who scan for an inside player
- A player who responds quickly when a particular teammate has the ball

### **The Detail:**

Golden Ticket 19 was somewhat similar to this, with two notable differences. The players forging the link were named beforehand so that both teams knew their identities. The type of score was not prescribed. A point or a goal would earn the bonus.

This new challenge demands that the names of the two link players are not disclosed to the 'Counter' team and only a goal will do.

You, as coach, should gather the 'Challenge' team together and let the players choose who will play the roles. They must inform you. Your opponents can use the same time to discuss who might be the potentials.

As with No. 19, the link between the two players has to end with one of them scoring. It can be one pass or more than one between them.

The onus is very much on the 'Counter' team to identify the link players as the game unfolds. Spotting clues and communicating these to each other is very important.

Does the ball carrier appear to be scanning for a particular player?

Who is making sharp runs close to goal?

The fact that the 'Challenge' team must score a goal will narrow the focus for opposition defenders.

Equally fascinating will be to see if the 'Counter' players can get the balance right between stopping the link and making sure they don't concede goals where the link players are not used.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- You will have to decide the best type of link to set up for this game. Will your named players be a good passer who usually plays in the middle part of the pitch and a sharp inside forward? Will they be two inside forwards? You decide.
- This is a tough challenge, particularly for the link player who is off the ball and seeking a pass. His/her direction and timing of movement has to be good enough to catch opponents out as often as possible.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- Not knowing the link players appears to put you at a disadvantage, but it's something that will sharpen your focus. Very often, the 'Challenge' team will go with tried and tested players who can pass accurately and have a history of scoring goals. It's unlikely that there will be any surprises, so go with your instincts and have these two well marshalled.
- Remember... the link pair may try to work something with a twist eg Player 2 is the receiver but Player 1 isn't the passer.....he/she is the support runner who takes a short pass from Player 2 to shoot. Watch for this type of combination too.

# Golden Ticket 39

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Win three breaking balls from kickouts**

Watch for:

- Players who compete well with opponents on kickouts
- Players who anticipate breaking ball and move quickly to win it



### The Detail:

For a challenge such as this to be meaningful, the game should be short (perhaps 10 minutes).

That should be enough time for the 'Challenge' team to have plenty of opportunities and for the 'Counter' team to battle against them.

As there is no mention of kickout source, this means all kickouts...own and opposition...count. That will bring an intensity to each.

You (the coach) must decide if it's worth practising how to win breaking ball before running this particular game. Should players already be familiar with useful actions or might you prefer to throw them into the deep end and see what happens?

Teams are **not permitted to hit short and/or directed kickouts to runners**. This game demands that all must be kicked long and high to the midfield area or beyond. Doing so will lead to them being properly contested. Breaking ball will happen on a regular basis. Remind players that they may still go for clean catches or they may prefer to deliberately direct the ball down into the path of a teammate.

If a team wins three breaking balls with some minutes left in the game, there's no longer a need to keep kicking long from restarts. Teams are free to choose whatever kickout strategies they wish. The 'Challenge' team will have earned three bonus points, but they'll be of no use if the 'Counter' team goes on to win the game by 4 points.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Ideally, you want your fielders to break balls down in a controlled and directed way for teammates to gather. Just because it's ideal, doesn't mean it's impossible. If you have a confident jumper and fielder who can literally '**flick**' the ball left or right (or even ahead or behind), then target that player for some of your own kickouts.
- Whether the ball is broken down deliberately or by accident, you still need players on the ground to win it. One of those players could be you, if you land quickly enough to win your own breaking ball. More often than not it will be a teammate. Some breaking ball can be won by a player who is well-positioned, close to the jumpers. More breaking ball is usually won by a player who is already running towards the spot where the ball will be contested.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- What applies to the 'Challenge' team also applies to your players. If you are breaking the ball, try to direct it; if you are trying to win breaking ball, take the risk and run in.



# Golden Ticket 40

## A 4-Point Challenge

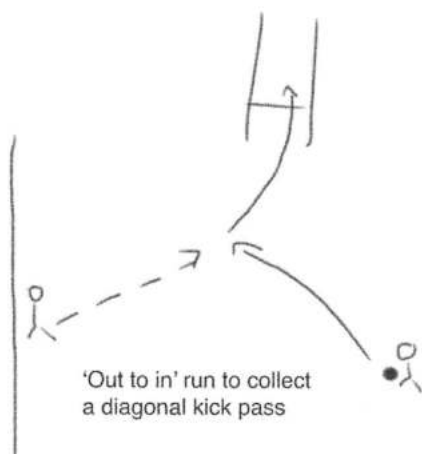
**Scorer makes an out-to-in run to get the assist pass**

Watch for:

- Players who get wide and watch for opportunities to run from out to in
- Players who see the run being made and give a good pass

### The Detail:

Perhaps not one of the more appealing challenges, but definitely one that is very helpful if a coach wishes to emphasise the need for width when off the ball (team in possession) and the value of being able to gauge when to run from that wide position into the shooting zone for a pass.....ie. the '**out to in**' run and assist. There are so many variations to this combination of position, run, pass and shoot that it would be impossible to cover every possibility in a few paragraphs. Here are a couple of basic illustrations; copy them onto a whiteboard for players to interpret and discuss.



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- You may decide to allow freedom of movement and let any player choose if and when to go wide and look for opportunities to run from 'out to in'. Alternatively, you may wish to identify a couple of players to act out these roles.
- Whichever method you choose, remind players that they may have to make a number of runs to even get on the ball once. Sometimes the expectation gets in the way of proper practice and players give up too soon.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Opponents intent on making these runs may be quite easy to spot as they set up and keep an eye on the play. Your job is to track these runners, so that the passer has limited options.

# Golden Ticket 41

## A 4-Point Challenge

**A named player gets a score and an assist, both from play**

Watch for:

- How well the player moves to get on the ball
- How aware the player is in possession (shot or assist?)

### **The Detail:**

This is a tough assignment for the 'Challenge' team. Not only does one player have to score and assist, but he/she has to be named beforehand, thus identifying that player to the opposition.

The score and the assist may come in any order and at different times during the game, but it seems as if this is something that the 'Counter' team would address by putting a tight marker on the player and possibly a +1 as well.

There are 4 points on offer, so I can't see the 'Challenge' team naming an inexperienced player. As the team will want to have every chance of earning the bonus points, the named player will be a definite danger to the opposition....probably one who is strong and has really good ball skills.

He/she may even have a proven signature move that helps create room for shots. Couple these attributes with game awareness and the scales begin to tip back in favour of the 'Challenge' team.

If you think of it, the challenge is similar to a match in competition, where a team is down by a point or two and only has a few minutes to claw back the deficit and turn it into a victory. The current team set-up hasn't been delivering enough scores, so a midfielder is moved into full-forward to win ball and get the necessary scores.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- The obvious starting point is to choose the appropriate player. Your choice must present a real threat to the opposition.
- Remind the named player that he/she can also play a role in clearing out the scoring area to make room for teammates. The opposition will always want the player marked tightly.
- You may be able to take advantage of the fact that opponents often expect the named player to be a target in the full forward line. Having your player along the half-forward line gives him/her more room to join attacks in different ways.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- By all means put your best marker/tackler on the named player and consider using a +1 (sweeper) to help.
- Remind your players that the 'Challenge' team may decide to use the named player as a decoy runner to move your best defenders away from in front of goal, leaving space for others to score. Be aware of this.

# Golden Ticket 42

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Scorer plays a 1-2  
then takes a point**

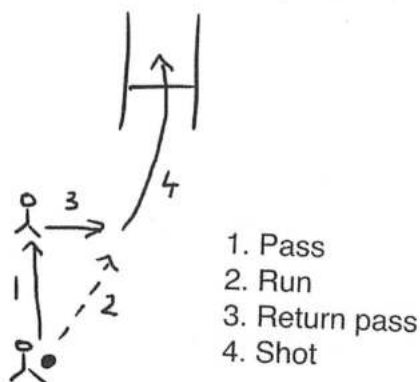
Watch for:

- Players who follow their passes to look for a return ball
- Receivers who play the return pass quickly and accurately



### The Detail:

Here's a challenge that may not make much sense until we sort out the meaning of the two figures....1-2. Some may know it as a 'wall pass', though it's perhaps better understood when written as two other words....**'one two'**. Effectively, this is when a player in possession passes the ball to a teammate and gets a return pass immediately. Add in scoring a point after the return pass and there's the challenge in its entirety. For the purpose of this exercise, we want the return pass to come fairly quickly....so it must be played with a maximum of one toe tap **or** one bounce in between receiving and passing (not both).



### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Look for opportunities that may be played over short distances. These may be easier to take advantage of and bring a score. For example....both passes may be first passes between two players who are already in the scoring zone.
- The most common form of 1-2 link is when the passer and receiver are facing each other. Remember, the same link can happen between two teammates who are running alongside each other, travelling in the same direction.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The toughest task for your players will be to remain focussed on the passer after he/she offloads the ball. The move is dependent on that player getting a return within a few seconds of passing the ball. If 'Counter' players can concentrate on immediate tracking and spoiling, the bonus points could be yours.

# Golden Ticket 43

## A 5-Point Challenge

**Make one successful  
diving block**

Watch for:

- Players who read the chance to make the diving block
- Players who execute the diving block perfectly

### **The Detail:**

If you are thinking about setting this challenge, an absolute must beforehand is to give players **plenty of practice on diving blocks.**

Proper technique is vital, given that a player won't have his/her feet for support. Once begun, it's like diving into a swimming pool....you can't undo it....you have to commit. The challenge has been awarded 5 bonus points for a couple of reasons; the difficulty of performing a diving block and the infrequency of opportunities in a short game. It's the type of challenge I wasn't sure about when I was choosing my list; but it's such a wonderful sight to see when it happens, that I had to include it.

As I write this, I'm thinking....could it be the type of challenge that you combine with another?

I'm usually loathe to present a team with two separate challenges, but this might just fit with another and dovetail nicely.

For example...you might wish to combine it with Golden Ticket 5 or 21. You decide.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- The first hint is not really one for the game itself...it's about practising before you play the game. This is an ideal situation for peer coaching. Pairs of players can work together along a fence or a ball catch to practise diving blocks and getting used to the distances and technique. Each player can coach his/her partner.
- When you get to play the game, just play rather than deliberately seek out the opportunities to make a diving block. If you focus on that particular skill, even though it can earn your team 5 bonus points, you may hesitate to try and win the ball back any other way...and that won't work.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- The offer of 5 bonus points if you give the opposition no opportunities to execute a diving block might tempt you to be economical with your shots and play laterally. Rather than do that, it may be better to simply focus on making plenty of room to get your shots away and continue to build on your total score.

# Golden Ticket 44

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Prevent any  
opposition scores  
from advanced marks**

Watch for:

- Players who mark opponents tightly when inside the 45
- Players who fiercely contest every potential advanced mark

### **The Detail:**

For this challenge, make sure your players are aware of how the advanced mark works. The 20m distance is a subjective call, particularly if the pass is on or about that length rather than from a long kick.

If you are working to develop players' abilities to stop opponents winning the advanced mark, then it might be better to clearly identify your 45m line with fleximarkers and set out another line, 20m ahead of that. I know that players won't face that template in a competition game, but it may help with training.

One issue that comes from putting lines of markers on a pitch is the tendency to play tight to them. Some players will literally stand on that line rather than position themselves well back from it and leave room to run towards it.

Should you be playing a small-sided game on a tighter pitch, you will have to decide on the distance to goal from the passing line. In fact you may decide it's not worth taking on this challenge unless you have bigger numbers playing on a full length or nearly full length pitch.

So..the challenge is to prevent any opposition scores from advanced marks. In effect, it means prevent opponents from even claiming an advanced mark....because the 'Challenge' team will have little impact on what happens with the actual shot thereafter.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- If you are a defender who has been given a specific marking job, assume that your opponent wants to claim a mark. Think about defending from the front or the side. If you defend from behind, you may be giving your opponent more opportunity.
- The opposition may choose to kick the ball high into the scoring zone, particularly if there's a player with a height advantage in the forward line. Work hard to spoil the chance by breaking the ball, rather than trying to compete for the catch.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- Accurate passing, sharp movement and good fielding are all needed for this challenge. Think about putting a player inside who has a solid first touch when fielding a ball.
- You may decide to use a target player with a height advantage, but just as important can be a pace advantage. That will take the player into free space.
- The actual pass may be a bit tougher than many players believe. It appears to be just a kick pass that doesn't hit the ground before being caught...but most players are used to hitting passes that bounce first. Practise it.



# Golden Ticket 45

## A 4-Point Challenge

**Name two opposition forwards and keep them scoreless from play**

Watch for:

- Players who mark tightly to deny named players room to receive
- Players who see a shot threat and move quickly to help a tackler

### **The Detail:**

The temptation for any 'Challenge' team will be to name two opposition forwards who are not known for their scoring prowess and, by doing so, hope to make the task easier. It's up to you to decide if you would be happy for this to be the case. You may feel it's defeating the purpose of the exercise.

Then again, you may leave it to see if the 'Challenge' team does indeed take this option and assign its better defenders to mark these named players. That may lead to the more renowned forwards being more dangerous than usual.

Let's say it's not what you intend; you may get more from the game by naming at least one forward with a history of scoring regularly.

After all, that's what is likely to happen in competition games; opponents will try to keep your best forwards scoreless.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- If the coach gives you the opportunity to name the two forwards, you may decide to name opponents who are not renowned for scoring. That's fine, as long as you have plans to deal with the more prolific forwards on the 'Counter' team.
- If you decide to name two regular scorers from the opposing team, discuss who will mark each of them and if you think you need a +1 to help.
- Remember, another way to keep these players scoreless is to make it very difficult for their teammates to pass to them. There will be players on the opposition who are accurate passers. Target these players too.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- The 'Challenge' team has full control over which two of your players it will name. Opposition players may decide to name two of your top scorers or two of your more inexperienced players or one of each.
- It doesn't really matter who they name, your players can take control of what happens in the game. They can run decoy, make space for others, sneak in behind the defence and generally distract the opposition. You can focus on getting scores from other players....including midfielders and defenders.
- All the pressure is on the 'Challenge' team because only one of your named players has to score once during the game. That's enough to secure the bonus points for your team.

# Golden Ticket 46

## A 5-Point Challenge

**Keep a clean sheet  
(no goals)**

Watch for:

- Players who spot danger and act on it to deny scoring chances
- Players who communicate well with teammates to identify threats

### The Detail:

As straightforward a challenge as you're going to get. When describing it, make sure to keep it positive. Declare it as it's written.....**keep a clean sheet**.....rather than....*don't let any goals in*.

You may believe that there's not much difference between the two or that I'm nitpicking; the evidence suggests that beginning an instruction with a negative can lead to nervousness edging out confidence.

So, the 'Challenge' team goalkeeper may feel that the onus is on him/her as the final line of defence. There's no getting away from the fact that clean sheets are things that are attributed to goalkeepers, even though there's more to it.

The clean sheet may even be achieved without a single accurate shot on goal as a result of excellent defending. The 'Counter' team will take every single opportunity to shoot for goal, so watch for those who recognise real chances and those who just hit speculative shots from poor positions.

Is this a challenge where you give the goalkeeper plenty of time to outline what he/she needs from the defence before starting the game? Is there a danger that there will be too many instructions given from player to player? It might be worth listening in to find out.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Firstly, take the pressure off your goalkeeper by agreeing that it's everyone's job to try and keep a clean sheet. Your keeper may be left with a tough task if poor marking from outfield players leads to opponents getting behind the defence and in possession.
- There will be opposition players who are dangerous and some who do not carry as much threat when it comes to goalscoring potential. Have you discussed how your team will set up to deal with both?

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Rather than focus on trying to create the opportunity, let's look at how your technique may improve your chances of scoring. The last thing you look at before focussing on the shot, should be where you want to direct it. Forget about concentrating on the goalkeeper.
- Make solid contact with the ball. The most powerful shots feel as if the ball has squashed against your foot for a fraction of a second, before exploding into the air. This is the feeling you want to recreate.

# Golden Ticket 47

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Dispossess an  
opponent, using a  
shoulder tackle**

Watch for:

- Players who get into position to execute the shoulder tackle
- Players who execute the shoulder tackle well



### **The Detail:**

To dispossess an opponent, using a shoulder tackle is not an easy thing to do. In a game, it often needs an element of surprise. If the player in possession sees the tackle coming, he will usually protect the ball and he gets ready for the contact. As well as the surprise that leaves the ball carrier with no time to ready himself, the shoulder tackle definitely demands good timing, positioning and an awareness of when it's likely to work.

It's worth taking time to practise in twos or threes in the lead up to any game where this tackle is the focus of the golden ticket. Another useful approach may be to take time to discuss with both teams, all sorts of things to do with the shoulder tackle.

Do the players agree about surprise?

How difficult do they think it is to get right?

When is it pointless to attempt a shoulder tackle?

Is there anywhere on the pitch where it is more likely to happen?

Players may come away from that discussion wondering if it's possible at all to engineer one of these tackles or if it's just pot luck....a case of being in the right place at the right time.

Due to the difficulty of perfecting a shoulder tackle that is legal and dispossesses an opponent, I considered awarding 5 bonus points for the challenge. In the end, for the very same reason, I gave it only 3 points.

### **Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:**

- If you go searching for opportunities to make a shoulder tackle, you may end up quite frustrated and other parts of your game could suffer. That's not to say you should **take** an opportunity when it presents itself.
- Try working as a pair...not deliberately patrolling the pitch to seek out chances....just being aware that if one of your teammates delays the ball carrier and denies him space, you may get the chance to shoulder when he bounces the ball or toe taps.

### **Hints for the 'Counter' Team:**

- Quite simply....keep the ball moving and players moving too. The 'Challenge' team will find it very difficult to make a shoulder tackle if you pass and move and avoid contact.
- If you cannot avoid contact, protect the ball by holding it tightly and close.

# Golden Ticket 48

## A 5-Point Challenge

### **Three Lives**

Watch for:

- Players who know to take shots from high percentage positions
- Players who create space for teammates to take these shots

### The Detail:

A game where the 'Challenge' team starts with three lives.

To keep that number of lives, the team must score from an attack. An attack means being in possession in the opposition half of the pitch.

Should the 'Challenge' team fail to finish an attack with a score (eg. end the move with a wide or a turnover), it loses one life.

Each time an attack does end with a score, **all three lives are restored**.

Three consecutive attacks without a score will mean that all three lives have gone and the bonus points are awarded to the 'Counter' team.

Eg.

First attack:	Wide..	2 lives left
Second attack:	Turnover..	1 life left
Third attack:	Score..	3 lives restored

First attack:	Score..	3 lives left
Second attack:	Turnover..	2 lives left
Third attack:	Wide..	1 life left
Fourth attack:	Wide..	All lives gone

Scores may come from play or from placed balls (eg frees or 45s). An attack that ends with a '45' still counts as the same attack until that play from the 45 is over.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Encourage your players to use width and depth in attack in order to open up high % scoring areas
- Be patient. Time is on your side. The 'Counter' team will want you to rush your attacks and force you into taking rash shots. You already have three lives. Try not to be hurried into losing any.
- Help your teammates identify good scoring chances eg let a player know....*"shot is on"*

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- The 'Challenge' team will be cautious about shooting. The players may try to keep ball alive rather than take the shot, so that they can let the clock run down. Force them into mistakes. Give them no time to settle on the ball.

# Golden Ticket 49

## A 3-Point Challenge

**Two scores within X seconds of the ball crossing the HW line**

Watch for:

- Players who look for a telling pass to buy time nearer the goals
- Players who are not panicked by the coach counting aloud

### The Detail:

Another game with an attacking target for the 'Challenge' team; twice in the game, score within X seconds of the ball crossing the halfway line into the opposition half of the pitch.

The X is included to allow coaches to decide which time allowance would make demands of the 'Challenge' team without being too easy or too difficult.

For example, you might be running a 7v7 U11 game on a 70m long pitch. The halfway line is only 35m from either goal. Maybe set the time at 6 seconds? On a full pitch with 15v15 adults playing, perhaps 10 seconds would be more suitable?

Before you decide to introduce this game, you might want to observe some training games and find out average attack times for your players. You may even decide to ask players to suggest the X time (though the 'Challenge' team would be tempted to offer 30 seconds or a minute as answers).

The idea is to have players accelerate the play with sharp passing and running without unwittingly encouraging a '**hit and hope**' approach. One incisive pass could be the difference.....as could one well-timed run.

### Hints for the 'Challenge' Team:

- Once you know how many seconds have been allocated, take time to chat about how you could work a score in that space of time. Long kick pass? Fast solo runner? No contact football? Only pass forward?
- If your coach is calling out a countdown eg: 10...9...8...7... you may feel hurried. All the more reason to look for opportunities even before you've crossed the halfway line with the ball.
- If the chance isn't on after the first couple of seconds, leave it for another attack and focus on getting a score without the timer.

### Hints for the 'Counter' Team:

- Such a great game for the 'Counter' team; you simply have to stall the opposition progress and cause some panic.
- Even if the coach reminds their players to refocus when time runs out, they will be frustrated by missed opportunities. You should push hard to win the ball back when they are at their weakest.



# Golden Ticket 50

## A 5-Point Challenge

**Score three times  
without the  
opposition scoring**

Watch for:

- Players who get the ball into good scoring positions before shooting
- Players who reset quickly from attack to defence after scoring

## The Detail:

Finally...Golden Ticket No. 50

Here is a challenge which links directly to one of my favourite training games.

Both teams must look for the scores needed to earn the 5 bonus points.

Inform players on the 'Challenge' team that, to earn the bonus points, they must score three times, without the other team scoring in between.

Example:

Challenge team attacks and scores a point.

Counter team attacks and kicks a wide.

Challenge team scores a goal. One more point or goal before the opposition manages a score will earn the bonus.

Counter team attacks and is turned over.

Challenge team takes a point to reach 3 unanswered scores and earn the bonus!

Game continues to a finish.

However, if the 'Counter' team scores before the 'Challenge' team reaches the three needed.....

Example:

Challenge team scores a point

Counter team misses

Challenge team scores a goal and now only needs one more score to secure the bonus.

Counter team gets a point and forces the 'Challenge' team to begin the quest for 3 unanswered scores all over again.

*\*Take note....scores are not wiped out. They still count towards the overall game total.*

This challenge will help increase the intensity of play and give players opportunities to practise protecting leads and chasing counter scores.

## Hints for both the 'Challenge' Team and the 'Counter' Team

- Encourage your players to work relentlessly when the opposition has the ball to make scoring as tough as possible
- Get your attackers to use width and depth to create as much space as possible for teammates to find scoring opportunities
- Watch for times when your team loses the ball and be quick to switch roles and mark an opponent or cover an area
- Shoot from high % positions

This is a collection of 50 Gaelic Football challenges, played through training games and accessible to coaches of underage, youth and adult teams.

For each of the games, one team is set a challenge and the other attempts to counter it. Success depends on good communication, tactical planning and decisive actions!

How will the 'Challenge' team approach the game?

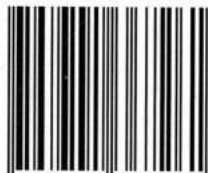
Who will spot the opportunities?

How will the 'Counter' team set up?

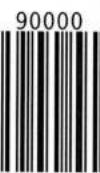
Which team will earn the bonus points?

Run a Golden Ticket Challenge and get your answers!

ISBN 9798741367261



9 798741 367261



90000