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NATIONAL SCHOOL

SPORTS WEEK 2026

6-12 JULY

= summer  
= of sport

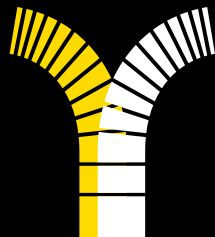
# Commonwealth *Games circuit*



Find out more:

[youthsporttrust.org/NSSW](https://youthsporttrust.org/NSSW)

#NSSW2026 | #ThisSummerOfSport





# Commonwealth Games circuit

Welcome to the **Commonwealth Games Circuit**, the second of our 'This Summer of Sport 2026' playground to podium activations. To celebrate National School Sports Week (NSSW) and the upcoming summer of sport, we have created 4 themed circuits, each made up of exciting activities for pupils to try in the lead up to and during NSSW!

Developed to support young people participating in 60 minutes a day of P.E, sport or play, these games are designed for all abilities aged 4-12 years old (20 minutes for pupils with a disability) and include progressions, regressions, alternatives and additional leadership opportunities.

## STEP

Making sure your sessions are inclusive and safe is critical to success. Use the STEP model when setting up your activities:

### Space

Where is it happening?

### Task

How it is happening?

### Equipment

What is being used?

### People

Who is doing what?





# Commonwealth *Games circuit*

## Format

Circuit of skill-themed activities on the 'Commonwealth Continents' (5 in total)

- 01 Africa:** Agility athletics (Agility Ladder)
- 02 Americas:** Goal setting gymnastics (Skipping Ropes)
- 03 Europe:** Networking netball (dodgeballs)
- 04 Oceania:** Reaction Rugby (reaction balls)
- 05 Asia:** Tennis teamwork (tennis balls)

## Equipment

- 1** Agility ladder
- 10** Tennis balls
- 10** Skipping ropes
- 3** Dodgeballs
- 3** Reaction balls
- 60** Mini-space markers

## Set up:

- > Up to 5 continent zones to fit your space
- > Place one activity card in each zone in a clear order for easy rotation
- > You can reduce the number of zones if time is limited
- > Ask sports leaders to help set up the circuit
- > Place adaptable equipment at each station for use as needed





# Commonwealth

## *Games circuit*

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### Session overview

- > **Age range:** adaptable (KS2–KS3 ideal)
- > **Time:** 60 minutes
- > **Participants:** 30 pupils
- > **Format:** 5 zones, 6 pupils per zone
- > **Rotation time:** 6 minutes per zone + 2 minutes to rotate
- > **Warm-up:** 10 minutes
- > **Total circuit time:** 40 minutes
- > **Warm-down and Reflections:** 10 minutes
- > **Teacher role:** Timekeeper, motivator, safety checker

### Think inclusion

- > Adapt group sizes as needed
- > Give more time for activity
- > Allow processing time
- > Use inclusive communication throughout
- > Complete a sensory audit, think light, sound, smell, texture and tactile environment
- > Have a regulation zone to help those who need sensory re-regulation
- > Ask participants what adaptations they would make to be included

[Click here or scan QR code  
to find more ideas](#)





# Session *structure*



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## Warm-up: Commonwealth Countdown (10 minutes)

Whole class, no equipment initially

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### Activity

Athletics, Gymnastics, Netball, Rugby, Tennis inspired movements to raise the heart rate and deliver key teaching points en masse

- > **Athletics** - high knees - running on spot
- > **Gymnastics** - dynamic stretches
- > **Netball** - pass and pivot
- > **Rugby** - run and react
- > **Tennis** - forehand, backhand, serve

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### STEP adaptations

- > **Space:** Adjust the size and distance to suit different abilities, and use zones to keep things fair
- > **Task:** Keep the goal the same, but adapt how it's done e.g. changing pace or movement suggested
- > **Equipment:** Offer a range of equipment, like different racket sizes or ball types
- > **People:** Group by similar ability, allow time to understand and ask what support is needed



# Session *structure*



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## Skills

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Athletics, gymnastics, netball, rugby, tennis  
inspired movements to raise the heart rate and  
deliver key teaching points en masse

- > High Knees
- > Dynamic Stretches
- > Pass and Pivot
- > Run and React
- > Forehand, Backhand, Serve

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## Teaching points

Use the following teaching points during the warm-up

- > **High knees:** "lift your knees high and stay light on your feet"
  - > **Dynamic stretches:** "move smoothly and keep your body under control"
  - > **Pass and pivot:** "pass the ball, then pivot 360 on one foot"
  - > **Run and react:** "move around the space, stay ready, watch closely, then move quickly when someone approaches"
  - > **Forehand:** "step forward and swing across your body"
  - > **Backhand:** "turn your shoulders and swing through the ball"
  - > **Serve:** "toss high, reach up, and hit the ball"
- 



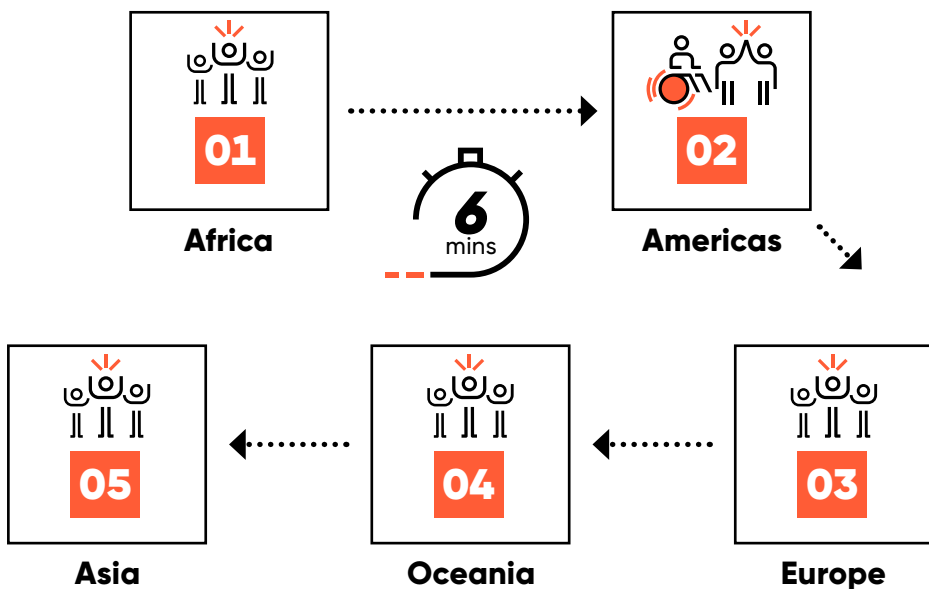
# Main circuit

## Commonwealth continents



### Organisation

- > **5** Commonwealth continent zones
- > **6** pupils per zone
- > **6** minutes per zone (2 minutes per transition)
- > Rotate clockwise
- > Use **space markers** and **activity cards** to clearly mark each zone.



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# Zone 1

## Africa

## Agility Athletics



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### Challenge overview

- > **Teams:** 2 teams, 3 pupils
- > **Equipment:** 1 Agility Ladder
- > **Duration:** 6 minutes continuous (3 evolving rounds)
- > **Focus:** Agility, creativity, teamwork, decision-making and composure under pressure

### Key points

- > Both teams compete at the same time from opposite ends of the ladder
- > No elimination
- > No long waits
- > Constant rotation

### Setup

- > Mark a 20 metre zone
  - > Ladder placed centrally
    - > **Team A** lines up at one end, 10 metres from the ladder behind a cone
    - > **Team B** lines up at the opposite end, 10 metres from the ladder behind a cone
  - > Play runs continuously for 6 minutes
- 







# Zone 1 – round 1

## *Africa: Rock, Paper Scissors Battle*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

### **How It Works**

- One player from each team works through the ladder
- When they meet in the middle, they stop immediately
- They play Rock, Paper, Scissors once
- **Winner:** Continues through the ladder and exits at the opposite end to score 1 point
- **Loser:** Steps off and returns to their team's queue
- Next players go immediately

### **Why it works**

- High repetition of agility patterns
  - Excitement at the meeting point
  - Quick thinking under fatigue
  - Continuous flow
- 





# Zone 1 – round 2

## *Africa: Dance-off duel*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Same ladder race format but when players meet, instead of Rock, Paper, Scissors**

- One player instantly performs a short dance move
- The opponent must copy it immediately, trying to be as accurate as they can
- No player can repeat a dance move, if they do they have to perform 5 star jumps or a movement of their choice
- Players are encouraged to be as creative as possible and return to their team upon completion

### **Why it works**

- Encourages creativity
  - Builds confidence
  - Promotes laughter and engagement
  - Develops body control and coordination
- 



# Zone 1 – round 3

## *Pressure play pattern battle*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

### **Now the intensity rises in the final round! Before starting:**

- Each team quickly agrees on one ladder pattern
- That pattern is shown to the opposing team
- Teams now take turns working through the ladders using the opponent's pattern

### **The Twist**

While players are on the ladder, their teammates can shout adjustments to make things trickier:

- Reverse (go backwards)
- One foot (hop pattern)
- Sideways
- Freeze
- Speed up
- Slow motion

### **Why it works**

- Problem solving mid-movement
  - Listening under pressure
  - Tactical disruption
  - Team communication
- 





# Zone 1

## Africa

Think inclusion!



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### STEP

- > **Space:** Adjust distances for different ability groups
  - > **Task:** Keep the goal the same, but change the activity if needed e.g. use a simpler course, swap activities or let pupils create their own movements
  - > **Equipment:** Use different equipment to build a suitable challenge or large mats to navigate in and out
  - > **People:** Group by ability, run activities side by side, ask for input or focus on teamwork and creativity rather than speed
- 





## Zone 2

### Americas: Goal setting gymnastics



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#### Challenge overview

- Teams: 2 teams, 3 pupils
- Equipment: 6 Skipping Ropes
- Duration: 6 minutes continuous (3 evolving rounds)
- Balance, coordination, rhythm, creativity and teamwork under pressure

#### Key points

- Both teams compete at the same time from opposite ends of the activity zone
- No elimination. No long waits. Constant rotation

#### Setup

- Mark a 20-metre zone.
  - Each team has:
    - **Round 1:** 2 skipping ropes
    - **Round 2 and 3:** 1 skipping rope (relay baton style)
  - Teams start behind the line on the same side.
  - Continuous relay format with minimal stoppage between rounds.
  - Play runs continuously for 6 minutes
- 



# Zone 2 – round 1

## *Floor is lava balance beam*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

### **The Story**

The floor is lava! Teams must cross the 20-metre zone without touching the ground

### **Rules**

- Each team has 2 skipping ropes
- All 3 players must travel together
- At all times, every player must be standing on a rope
- The spare rope is picked up and placed ahead to move forward
- No feet on the "lava" (floor)
- If a player stops touching the skipping rope entirely at any point:
  - Team returns to the start line
- Each successful crossing = 1 point
- Then they turn and go again immediately

### **Why it works**

- Team problem-solving
  - Balance and stability
  - Communication
- 





## Zone 2 – round 2

### *Rhythmic gymnastics routines*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Now speed and flair take over**

#### **How It Works**

- Player 1 skips to the far end (20 metres).
- At the line, they must perform a small gymnastic routine, for example:
  - Cartwheel
  - Forward roll
  - Balance pose
  - Jump sequence
  - (Or any safe gymnastics movement)
- They then skip back and pass rope to Player 2.
- Continuous relay for time.

#### **Why it works**

- Cardio endurance
  - Creative expression
  - Smooth transitions
  - Individual responsibility within team format
- 





## Zone 2 – round 3

### *Animal skip-off*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

#### **Now imagination meets endurance**

##### **How it works**

- Team A selects an animal for Team B and vice-versa
- Teams must complete their skipping relay impersonating that animal – dogs barking, cats meowing or cows mooing
- Once all 3 complete, Team B selects a new animal for Team A
- Activity continues back and forth with teams impersonating as many animals as possible

##### **Why it works**

- Problem solving mid-movement
  - Listening under pressure
  - Tactical disruption
  - Team communication
- 







## Zone 2

### Americas

Think inclusion!



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### STEP

- > **Space:** Make the space smaller or adjust distances to suit different abilities.
  - > **Task:** Keep the goal the same, but adapt the activity e.g. choose movements that are achievable and reduce noise if needed.
  - > **Equipment:** Use suitable equipment, like mats instead of ropes to navigate around and collaborate with the individual to adapt for different needs.
  - > **People:** Think about sensory processing difficulties, use buddies for support, give clear step-by-step instructions and check for understanding.
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## Zone 3

### Europe: Networking Netball Zone



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#### Challenge overview

- **Teams:** 2 teams, 3 pupils
- **Equipment:** 3 dodgeballs
- **Duration:** 6 minutes continuous (3 evolving rounds)
- **Focus:** Communication, confidence, networking, teamwork and speed

#### Key points

- Players develop their Netball and Networking skills at the same time

#### Setup

- Mark a 20-metre zone
  - Pupils form two facing lines
  - Each player stands opposite a partner
  - One ball per group
  - After each cycle, one line rotates clockwise
  - Continuous format, minimal stoppage
- 



# Zone 3 – round 1

## Passing



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

Complete 10 successful chest passes  
with 3 partners within 2 minutes

### How It Works

- Players introduce themselves:
  - Firm handshake (a child can wave or smile if they are uncomfortable with physical contact)
  - Eye contact
  - Smile
  - "Hi, I'm \_\_\_"
- Begin 10 chest passes
- After every successful pass, both players take one step back
- Aim: Minimise the ball to floor contacts

When 10 passes are completed:

- One player stays
  - One player rotates to the next partner
  - Process repeats
- 





# Zone 3 – round 1

## *Passing*



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### **Challenge**

How many full cycles can the group complete?

### **Why it works**

- Builds confidence
  - Encourages positive social interaction
  - Develops passing accuracy
  - Promotes teamwork pacing
- 



# Zone 3 – round 2

## Shooting



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Same networking rotation format,  
but now shooting replaces passing**

### How It Works

- One player creates a target area using cones for other players to shoot into
- Partner attempts to score by shooting through the hoop.
- When a basket is scored:
  - All Shooters rotate to the next partner
  - Hoop players stay
- Each team of 3 has 1 minute to score as many baskets as possible. After 1 minute = switch roles
- Continuous rotation

### Progression

- Step back after every 2 successful goals
  - Use alternative hand to shoot
- 





## Zone 3 – round 3

### *Intercepting*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

Based on the principles of 'piggy in the middle' outside players try to make passes whilst defenders try to intercept. Networking skills applied when swapping roles (eye contact, smile, handshake)

#### **How It Works**

- Players stay in their pairs.
- A third teammate acts as a roaming defender between the pair
- The pair must complete 5 quick passes without the defender intercepting

#### **Rules**

- Passer cannot move their feet.
- Defender can move freely to intercept
- Quick decision-making encouraged

Defender swaps if the pair completes 5 passes successfully or intercepts, remembering to use their networking skills

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## Zone 3

### Europe

Think inclusion!



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#### STEP

- > **Space:** Reduce space or adjust it so players can move more easily
  - > **Task:** Simplify actions e.g. use controlled passes, swap difficult activities for targets or cones and allow extra time if needed
  - > **Equipment:** Use softer, larger, or sound-making balls to make control and tracking easier
  - > **People:** Keep comfortable pairings, group by ability and run different versions of the game so everyone is challenged
- 





## Zone 4

### *Oceania*

### Reaction rugby



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#### Challenge overview

- Teams: 2 teams, 3 pupils
- Equipment: 2 reaction ball, mini cones (for try lines)
- Duration: 6 minutes continuous (3 evolving rounds)
- Focus: Reaction speed, anticipation, agility, teamwork and quick decision-making

#### Key points

- Reaction speed, anticipation, agility, teamwork and quick decision-making.

#### Setup

- Mark a 20-metre zone.
  - Mark a try line using cones about 3 metres from the end.
- 





# Zone 4 – round 1

## *Reaction relays*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

Complete 10 successful chest passes  
with 3 partners within 2 minutes

### **How It Works**

- First player rolls the reaction ball towards the try line.
- Because of its unpredictable bounce, the player must react quickly and chase it down, if it falls short of try line they roll it again
- Player collects the ball after it crosses the try line
- They run back and pass the ball to the next teammate
- Next player repeats the process

### **Why it works**

- Develops reaction speed, acceleration and pursuit
  - Enhances ball collection skills
  - Promotes team relay transitions
- 



## Zone 4 – round 2

### *React and run*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Now the focus shifts to instant reactions  
and sprinting to score**

#### **Setup**

- Each team stands in a small circle
- Each player will take turns dropping the reaction ball

#### **How it works**

- Reaction ball is dropped into the centre of the circle
- Players react instantly to try and catch or collect the bouncing ball
- First player to secure the ball:
  - Sprints to the try zone
  - Scores a try
  - Returns the ball to the centre
- Then the next drop begins immediately

#### **Why it works**

- Quick reaction under pressure
  - Competitive acceleration
  - Anticipation of unpredictable bounce
- 



## Zone 4 – round 3

### *Unpredict-a-ball*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Now add reaction, awareness and competition**

#### **How It Works**

- Two players are positioned back-to-back facing away from play
- The third player is positioned in front holding the reaction ball
  - Ball holder throws the reaction ball high into the air
  - The two players turn immediately when the ball is released
  - Both must react quickly to track the bounce
  - First player to catch or collect the ball before it stops moving wins the duel
  - Players rotate roles after each attempt

#### **Why It Works**

- Quick reaction under pressure
  - Fun Competition
  - Anticipation of unpredictable bounce
- 





## Zone 4

### Oceania

Think inclusion!



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### STEP

- > **Space:** Adjust the distance of the try line and change the circle size to suit different abilities
  - > **Task:** Keep the goal the same, but adapt the activity e.g. use helpers to collect balls, take turns, or simplify the game (e.g. collect from a holder instead of a duel)
  - > **Equipment:** Use a more predictable ball or place it on a tee for easier control
  - > **People:** Mix abilities so players can support each other or use a buddy system
- 





# Zone 5

## Asia

### Tennis teamwork



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#### Challenge overview

- > **Teams:** pupils working as one team
- > **Equipment:** 10 tennis balls
- > **Duration:** 6 minutes continuous (3 evolving rounds)
- > **Focus:** Communication, coordination, trust, cooperation and collective problem-solving

All activities require the entire team to succeed together. No individuals, only teamwork

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# Zone 5 – round 1

## *Forehand/ backhand train*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

Complete 10 successful chest passes  
with 3 partners within 2 minutes

### **How It Works**

- Players stand in a straight line (train formation)
  - First player starts with a tennis ball in their right hand
  - They perform an imaginary forehand swing and pass the ball to the player behind
  - That player performs an imaginary backhand and passes the ball behind them
  - The sequence continues alternating:
    - Forehand
    - Backhand
    - Forehand
    - Backhand
    - Forehand
    - Backhand
  - When the ball reaches the final player:
    - They run to the front of the line
    - The sequence continues immediately
- 





# Zone 5 – round 1

## *Forehand/ backhand train*



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### **Objective**

All 6 players must rotate through the front position and return to their original spot within 2 minutes

### **Why It Works**

- > Encourages rhythm and coordination as a group
  - > Players must maintain the correct sequence
  - > Movement rotation develops team organisation
  - > Players support each other to maintain flow
  - > Success depends on everyone keeping the chain moving smoothly
- 



## Zone 5 – round 2

**Serve it!**



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Now the focus shifts to instant reactions  
and sprinting to score**

### **How it works**

- All 6 players stand in a large circle
  - One player begins with the ball
  - They perform a tennis serve toss (throwing the ball upwards)
  - While the ball is in the air they call the name of another player
  - That player must react quickly and catch the ball before it hits the ground
  - The catcher then repeats the process by:
    - Tossing the ball
    - Calling a new name
  - The activity continues continuously for 2 minutes
- 







## Zone 5 – round 2

### *Serve it!*



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#### **Objective**

Work together to minimise how many times the ball hits the floor

#### **Why it works**

- Requires communication and awareness of teammates
  - Players must stay alert and ready to react
  - Builds trust and shared responsibility
  - Encourages inclusion as everyone must be called
  - Success depends on everyone staying engaged and supporting each other
- 



## Zone 5 – round 3

### *Footwork Frenzy*



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**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Now add reaction, awareness and competition**

#### **How It Works**

The team must move all 10 tennis balls from one side of the court to the other using only throws between teammates

#### **Rules**

- Players cannot move their feet when holding the ball
- The ball cannot hit the floor
- Every player must catch the ball at least once before it reaches the end zone
- If the ball touches the ground then the team restarts the attempt

#### **Objective**

Successfully transfer all 10 balls across the court as a team

#### **Why It Works**

- Encourages strategic positioning
  - Requires clear communication
  - Develops trust in teammates' catching ability
  - Forces players to think and plan as a team
  - Teams quickly realise success depends on organisation, encouragement and patience
-



## Zone 5

### Asia

Think inclusion!



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### STEP

- > **Space:** Use clear or tactile markers to help players understand the area and reduce distances if needed.
  - > **Task:** Let players choose movements that work for them, slow the game down and focus on quality (e.g. hit from a tee or tray instead of throwing).
  - > **Equipment:** Use larger, more tactile balls or easy-to-hold objects.
  - > **People:** Keep a clear routine, group fairly by ability and adapt rules to support different sensory and social needs.
-