

The Role of the 1st Defender: Technique

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This is a fairly involved but critical training session. Please pay attention to the details and coaching points so your players can learn the *technique* of proper 1 on 1 defending. This should be a challenge for any coach at any level, because the devil is in the details, and it requires tremendous skills of observation and direction to help the players learn the discipline of this vital skill. This means changing a behavior that they've likely been doing wrong a long time. Patience. Persistence.

The primary role of the first defender – the player with the responsibility to defend the player with the ball – is to DELAY / HOLD -- to slow the play down and prevent the opponent from advancing the ball up the field into attack. IT IS NOT TO WIN THE BALL. Making this point with players is the first step toward teaching good defending. DELAY. Hold. Hold. Hold. DON'T "STAB" / stick your foot in. Holding is the first step toward regaining possession. They *will* give us the ball back.

After your 11+ warm-up, go straight to:

ACTIVITY 1 *Continue until everyone is successful. 10:00 +/-*

- Shadow** > Players in pairs. Open space. NO BALLS. Coach points out the shadow of every player on the field.
- > Walk in and WATCH THE SHADOW of partner. Reverse roles. Walk slowly enough for success.
 - > Pick up the pace, but only to the point of continued success. Reverse roles.

ACTIVITY 2 *5:00 at most.*

"Protect the ball". This is just to teach players how to play shoulder to shoulder, safely and effectively. Same pairs. Put a ball on a cone. The object is to protect the ball -- keep the attacking player from knocking it off the cone by defending shoulder to shoulder. How long can D keep the attacker from touching the ball and knocking it off the cone? :05 is common. :10 is great. Anything longer than :15 is exceptional or someone has a significant advantage.

- > Get them into the correct body shape: 3/4 stance / one foot forward, low with bent knees.

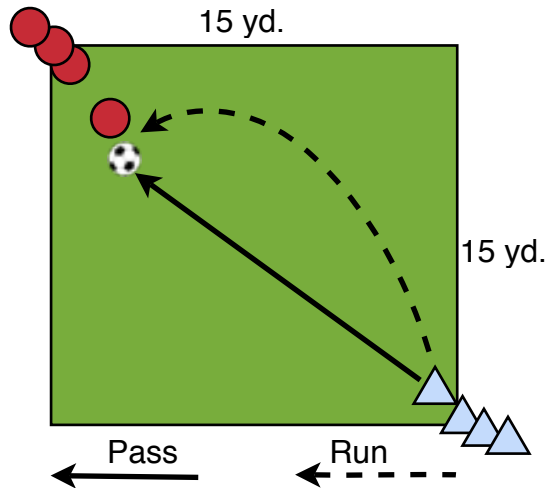
ACTIVITY 3 *Continue until everyone is successful. 10:00 +/-*

Jockey the ball -- WATCH THE BALL. Have the pairs start 20 - 30 yards away from the goal with one ball between them. The 1st D must now stay goal side. If there is no real goal available, set up a couple of cones and have everyone stay between the player they're defending and that goal. Defenders MUST NOT TOUCH THE BALL. Object is DELAY / HOLD.

- > Ask "WHAT'S YOUR NAME?" several times during this. Players shout out their name. Reverse roles.
- > Pick up the pace, but only to the point of continued success. Reverse roles. *Embed this. Take your time.*

KYRL

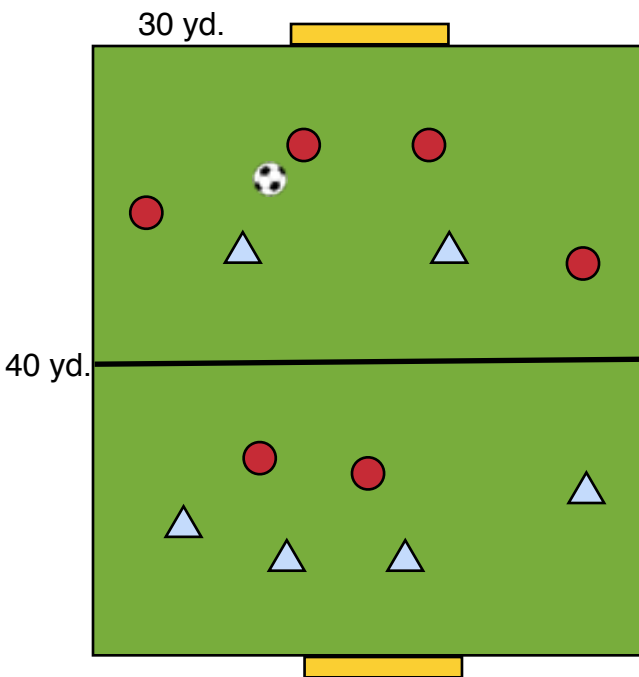
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ACTIVITY 4: Technical 20:00 +

1 v 1 corner to corner in 15 X 15 square. Defender (\triangle) serves to attacker (\circ) in the other corner who then attempts to dribble back to the opposite corner.

- * Call out your name or "ball" / "my ball" ideal is "(name)'s ball".
- * Arced approach
- * Start high, finish low / start fast, finish slow (so as not to overcommit)
- * JOCKEY. Body shape: 3/4 stance. (hand over the ball if possible) at appropriate distance. The quicker they are, the more space we give them.
- * Watch the ball
- * **HOLD. Don't stick your foot in. DELAY**



ACTIVITY 5: Game related 20:00+

This game can be adjusted for numbers. Shows 12 players, but can go down to 8 (3 v. 1 + 3 v. 1) or up to 14. At 16 total players, go to 2 games of 3 v. 1 + 3 v. 1. Odd numbers? Add one "all time offense" player that plays anywhere.

4D v 2A + 4D v 2A in two 40 X 30 spaces. Players must stay in their half of the field. Offside IS in effect. Score by keeping the ball out of the attacking half for :15 (you set duration) or by the attackers (1st Defs.) scoring on goal.

- * reinforce coaching points from 1 v 1 activity
- * verbal cue and assuming responsibility is key. Players must recognize when it's their responsibility to go to the ball and become the first defender.
- * HOLD. Don't stick your foot in. Eventually they will give you the ball.

PROGRESSION:

- * Change 1st Defenders frequently. Rotate through at least twice.
- * Defender who passes into attacking half can join in the attack.

ACTIVITY 6: Open play. (remove the half way line). Remainder.

Continue to focus on coaching the defensive side of the ball: 1st D, body shape, communication. Say less and less until nothing is said for last 5:00+.

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