



U14 Defending Session

Category: Tactical: Defensive principles
Difficulty: Moderate

Wakefield Soccer, Wakefield, United States of America
Individual-Adult Member

Description

Guiding Questions:

- 1) What is the job of the covering defender? (deny space behind, protect the goal, take away split passing lanes, aware of other attacking players)
- 2) How do you know where to be? (behind the pressure, cutting off a through ball, ball side of the other attacker)
- 3) What should you do after the attacker beats you or they pass the ball?
- 4) Is pressure/cover only a topic for players on the back line?

Common Language:

Pressure/Step To - Closing down the space between a defender and an attacker. Stepping towards an attacker to engage them defensively.

Cover - The defender behind the pressure. Covering the Pressure's back, covering the goal, covering other attackers and covering the through ball.

Through Pass/Split - A penetrating pass between two defenders.

Ball side - Being on the side of the attacker that is closest to the ball. Being between the extra attacker and the ball.

Slide - To move in a lateral direction as the ball has been passed. Sliding over to keep a good small group defending shape.

Drop in - Dropping back and into the middle to provide good covering depth.

Recover - After being beat, a high intensity run to get back into a covering position.

Delay - To slow the attacker, waiting for cover, waiting for the attacker to make a mistake to then attack.

Take away... - Defender positions their body to take away one side versus the other/passing lane.

Dynamic Warm Up

For Warm Up use the pre-game dynamic warm up or a similar warm up to get players ready for the session.

Dynamic Warm Up:

Jog out and back 2x

High Knees 2x

Heel Kicks 2x

Side Shuffle 2x

Karaoke 2x

Skip 2x

Backpedal 2x

Sprint 2x



1v1 (20 mins)

Set up

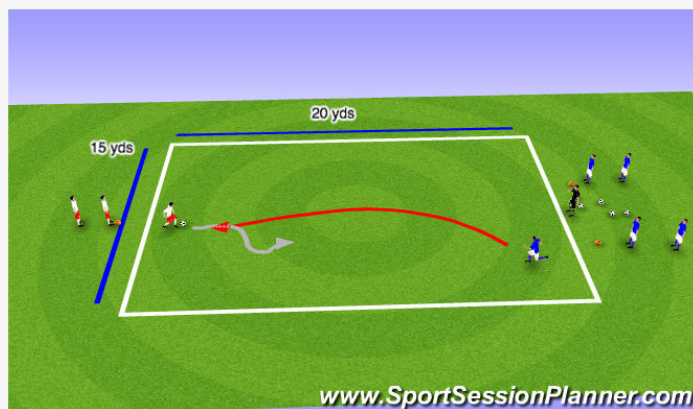
15x10

Instructions

1v1 to endlines

Emphasize our 1v1 principles of how to get pressure the ball.

- 1) Curled run to take away forward option
- 2) Not getting closer than an arms length from the attacker
- 3) Being side meaning not square to the attacker. Force them to one side with your body positioning.
- 4) MOVE YOUR FEET
- 5) Wait for them to make a mistake



2 Man Defending

Set Up

15x10

One endzone at each end 3 yards deep

Instructions

Two players are in each endzone. The two defenders in the middle cannot steal the ball from inside the endzone.

Players in the endzone are passing inside the endzone and trying to play to teammates in the opposite endzone. This is to focus on two man defending so walk through it at first so defenders get their defensive movements down.

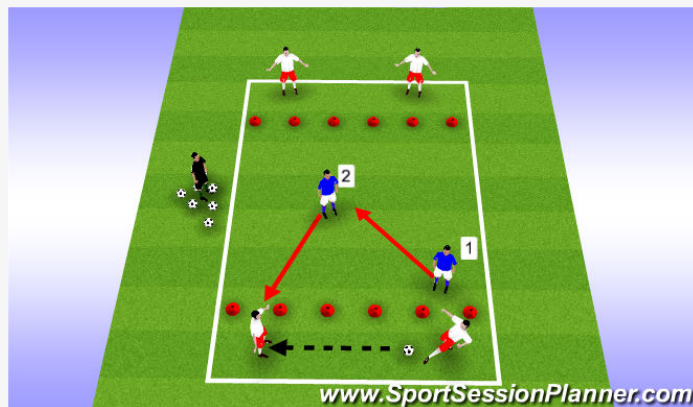
The defensive movements are:

1) Pressure defender puts pressure on the ball- same principles as 1v1 defending

2) Cover defender is off of the pressure defender's shoulder at about 45 degrees and same distance from pressure defender as the distance between the attackers.

3) When the ball is passed player 2 becomes the pressure defender and player 1 becomes the covering defender.

Again start slow and have players hold the ball so players can adjust their movement. Once they get the hang of it let attackers play to try and find their teammates on the other side. Keep defenders in for a short time until they understand the movement then put two new defenders in.



3 Man Defending

Set up

20x15 with 3 yard endzone on each end

Instructions

Now we introduce the third man defender. The goal here is to get all three defenders working together to prevent the pass to the opposite endzone just like we did for the 2 man defending earlier. With three defenders we now have:

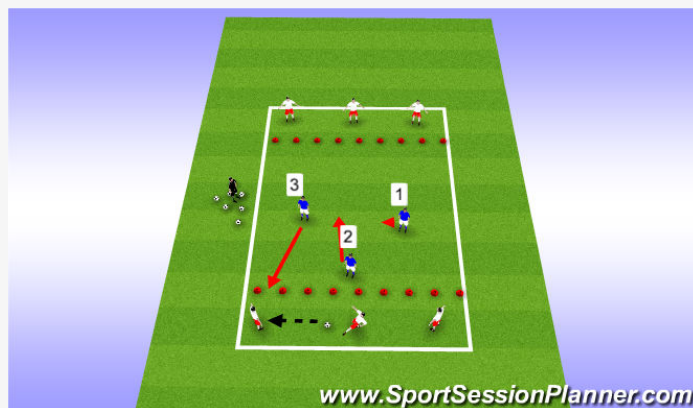
1) Pressure- Applies pressure to the player with the ball

2) Cover- the person or persons off the shoulder of the pressuring defender. (One pass away)

3) Balance- Is two passes away, but in position to become the covering defender or the pressuring defender.

** In the example pictured with the attacking player in the middle with the ball we have our central player pressuring while the other two defenders are each cover defenders off the shoulder of the pressure defender. As the ball goes to the wide attacker you see the movement of player 3 to become the pressure defender and the movement of player 2 to become the cover defender. As this point player 1 is now our balance defender and doesn't need to move too much other than maybe a little towards the inside to cover the gap between player 1 and player 2.

To start make the attacking players hold the ball until you tell them to make another pass. I want you to focus on the movement of the defenders. Once they have their position correct the attacking team can pass to a teammate in the same endzone. Once the defending team starts to move correctly you may let the attacking players play with 2 or 3 touches and try to play to their teammates in the opposite endzone, NO 1 TOUCH. Keep the defending team in until they see to understand the roles in 3 man defending then switch in a new group. Have each group get in the middle 4-5 times before moving on.



4 Man Defending

Set Up

20x30 with 3 yard end zones

Instructions

Same concept as our 2 and 3 man defending activity. Adding the 4th defender now makes it look more like a back 4 defenders or 4 midfielders in the game. It is still extremely important that we get pressure on the ball as fast as possible and cover shortly thereafter.

Coaching Points:

1) Pressure on the ball

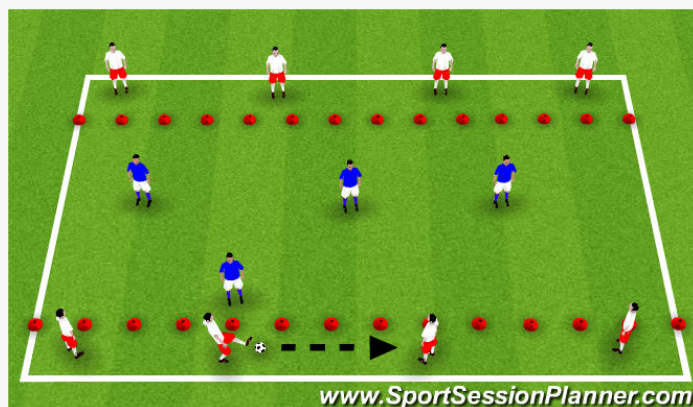
2) Cover off one or both shoulders of the pressuring defender depending on where the ball is

3) Balance from our third defender and ready to become the covering or pressuring defender when the ball is passed.

4) Body positioning to force the ball either to the sideline or towards your cover defender

5) Never crossing in front of each other while defending

6) DON'T GET SPLIT- getting split is when the ball is played between two defenders, which means two defenders get beat with one pass.

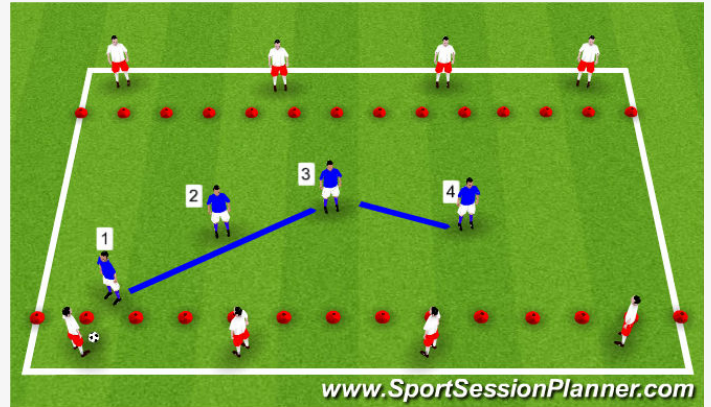


Shape

Defending Shape when the ball is wide

When the ball is wide the shape should almost look like a check mark (blue lines). Player 1 has pressure, player 2 is cover, player 3 is balance, and player 4 is another balance player but slightly higher so if the ball is played all the way across the field we can get pressure on the ball quickly.

What about a long diagonal ball over player 4? Well if a player can manage to find that pass that means our pressuring defender did not do their job because if we have pressure on the ball a player should not be able to pick their head up and find that type of pass.



7v7 3 Goal Game (20 mins)

Set Up

40x30

3, 3 yard goals across each endline

7v7 or 8v8

Coaching Points:

1. Individual principles for the pressuring defender.
2. Cover will deny space behind pressure (don't get split)
3. Cover is ready to become pressuring if teammate is beat
4. If beat, Pressuring defender recovers into space to become coverind defender
5. Stay compact (don't become too stretched)

