

U12 - Week 5 - Defending (Pressure and Cover)

OBJECTIVE: This session is designed to teach the defenders closest to the ball when, where and how to win the ball back for their team. In particular, we will discuss the roles and responsibilities of the pressuring defender (1st defender) and the covering defender (2nd defender).

Coaching Points (1st Defender):

- Angle of approach – We want to direct the player one way on the field, take away option of advancing forward.
- Should begin to notice where their ‘help’ is behind them in order to know which direction to force them
- Speed of approach – Approach fast...arrive slow
- Body Shape- knees bent, on the balls of their feet, one foot slightly angled in front of the other foot
- Decision to delay opponent or to tackle the opponent to win possession of the ball; if 1st defender does not have good cover, delaying the opponent is a good decision; if the 1st defender has good cover, then the decision to tackle with the toe-poke or block tackle is appropriate just as the ball comes off the foot of the dribbler
- Front foot tackle vs. back foot tackle if the ball gets away from 1st attacker
- PRESSURE/DELAY

Coaching Points (2nd Defender):

- Angle and distance of cover; speed to cover – Stay connected to first defender
- Cover dangerous space between 1st defender and you; cannot allow a penetrating pass to split you and the 1st defender!
- 2nd defender must recognize their responsibility to cover the 1st defender as the ball is traveling to the opponent (1st attacker).
- Be positioned so that, if the 1st defender gets beat with the dribble, you can become the 1st defender immediately.
- Be ready...see the ball, keep feet moving
- Position themselves ‘off’ the 1st defender in a position to cut off penetrating passing, dribbling and shooting options for the 1st attacker (30 to 45 degrees)
- Can compress the space between them if the 1st defender has ‘tight’ pressure on the 1st attacker
- Cannot compress the space as tightly if the 1st defender does not have ‘tight’ pressure on the 1st attacker
- Can track players immediately off the ball
- Can be more than one 2nd defender
- COVER

Mistakes to watch for

1st defender: *(these are common mistakes that we want to watch for and correct.)*

- Planting their feet once they get to the defender
- Sprinting straight at the attacker (diving in)
- Standing straight up

2nd defender:

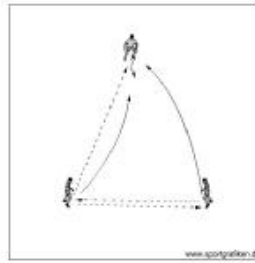
- Running right behind the 1st defender
- Running next to the 1st defender and creating a flat shape

The team:

- Players hanging back and not pressuring the ball as a team when they become defenders

1) Pressure-Cover Warm-up - - (10 minutes)

3 Players per ball in open space. Player A interpass with Player B, about 8-10 yards apart. Player C is located about 10-15 yards away from Players A & B. After 3-4 passes, Player A passes the ball to Player C. While the ball is traveling, Player B approaches Player C to apply pressure to the ball; at the same time, Player A provides appropriate cover to Player B (positions herself behind and at an angle to Player B. Player C attempts to split Players A & B with a dribble or a 1 touch pass. Repeat many times, changing the roles of the 3 players.



2) 2v2 to lines - - (20 minutes)

Create multiple fields that are 20yds x 15yds with 6 cones outlining the field (enough so all players are playing); organize all of the players into teams of 2. Each team will attack the end line opposite them and defend the end line behind them. Players must dribble over the opposite end line to score. Play a tournament format where teams play 2 minute games and then rotate to another field. Scoring goes as follows: 3 pts for the win, 1 pt for the tie, 0 for a loss and, if they have a shut-out, they get 2 bonus pts.

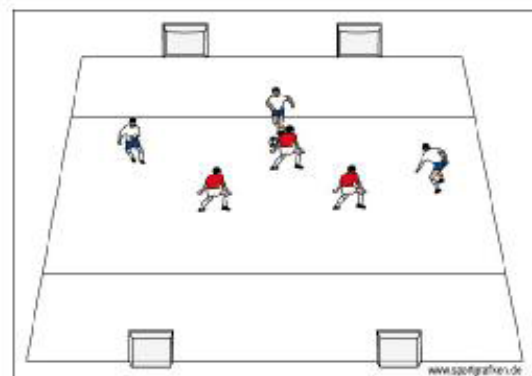
Note: Play with offside.



3) 3v3 Four Goal game - - (25 minutes)

In a grid 20x30 yards with four goals measuring 3 feet across in each corner, play 3v3. Each team attacks the 2 goals opposite them and defends the 2 goals behind them. Some questions to ask the players: "can you channel the ball into certain areas of the field to gain possession?" "Can you apply enough pressure on the ball to limit the first attacker's options and make the play predictable?"

Version 2: If the players are scoring very quickly, change the game so that the attacking team has to score by dribbling through one of the goals; this will allow the defending team more time to get organized.



Defending (Pressure, Cover and Balance)

OBJECTIVE: To teach the roles of the players who pressure, cover and balance defensively in relation to the ball and the 1st attacker and other attackers around and off the ball. Approach, angle, timing, steering of 1st attacker and the ball will be looked at in regards to the 1st defender. Aligning themselves in a covering position off the 1st defender will be looked at in regards to the 2nd defender(s). Lastly, ensuring balance and proper positioning from the 3rd defender(s) will be looked at.

Coaching Points (3rd defender):

- Track attackers making runs away from the ball
- Provide balance away from the ball, so that a weak side pass will not become a huge advantage to the offensive team
- Tighten up the space in the center of the field to cut off passing, dribbling, shooting lanes for attackers
- Can compress the space if there is tight pressure and cover around the ball
- BALANCE
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (recognizing when and how to pressure the ball, communication of 1st, 2nd and 3rd defenders, etc.).

3v3 to lines - - (20 minutes)

Create multiple fields that are 30yds x 20yds with 6 cones outlining the field (enough so all players are playing), break all of the players in to teams of 3. Each team will defend the end line behind them. Players have to dribble across the end line to score.

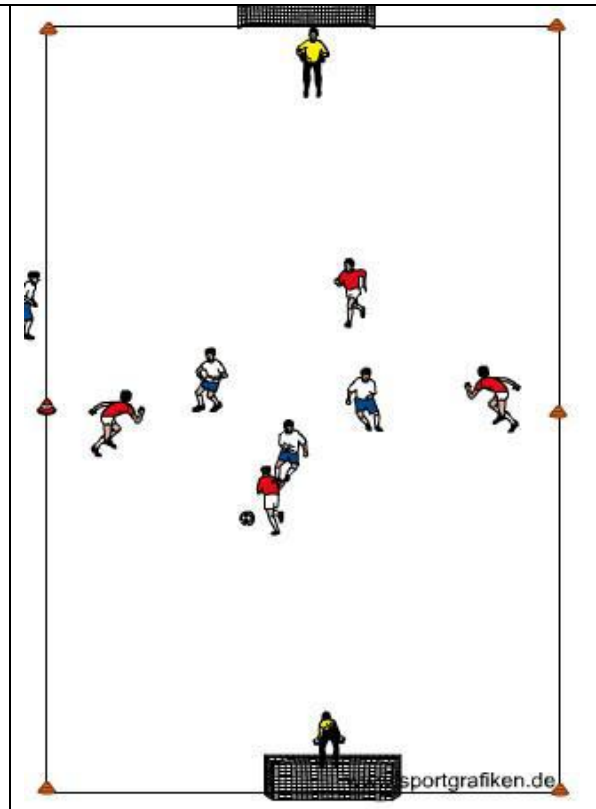
Note: Play with offside



4 v 4 (-1) + Goalkeepers - - (20 minutes)

Two teams are playing 4 v 4 to two goals on each end line and a goalkeeper in each goal. The attacking team is playing with four players, but the defending team must drop one player back behind their own end line while under attack. This prevents the defending team from playing man to man and must solve the problem with zonal play. When the defense wins the ball they must first play the ball back to their teammate on the end line while the other team removes a player from the field.

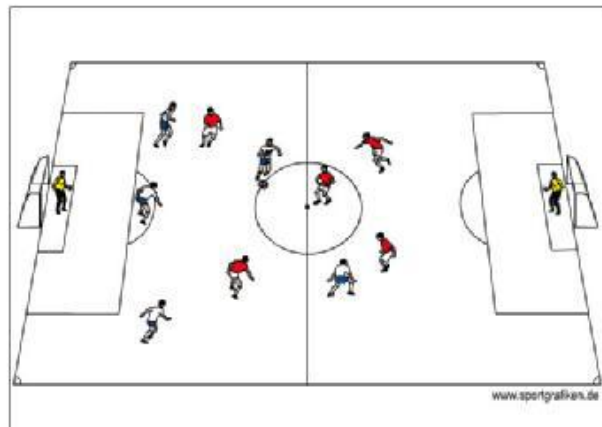
Note: Play with offside



6v6 to two big goals - - (20 minutes)

On a field 40 yards wide by 60 yards long with a goal at each end, create two teams of 6 (5 players and a GK). Play a regular game highlighting pressure, cover and balance.

Version 2: If the players are scoring quickly, adjust so teams can only score if all of their team is in the attacking ½ of their field. This will allow the defending team time to get more organized and adjustments of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd defenders.



Additional Drills to reinforce lessons above and Cool Down

6v6 Game - - (30minutes)

Unrestricted play. As the game is going on, praise successful defending and connection by the 1st and 2nd defenders.

8v8 Game - - (25 minutes)

Depending upon numbers, space will change and numbers will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Cool down (5 minutes)

Juggling in 2's and 3's only using their feet or head. Players will do static stretching of the major muscle groups.

Version 2 - - Juggling in 2's and 3's, using all body parts. Player will do static stretching of the major muscle groups.