

Coaching Clinic

Individual & Team Skills - Defending

One of the most important technical/tactical soccer skills for the older player is the art of defending. A team cannot lose a game if the other team does not score! Defending combines both technical (body position and tackling) as well as tactical application (knowing when to tackle and which side to force your opponent).

1. Rhythm of play/Tackling

- ✍ When to approach the ball to tackle
- ✍ How to block tackle – start with hand on shoulder

2. Defending

- ✍ Put pressure on the ball as quickly as possible, but come under control
- ✍ Stay in line between goal and ball, and do not dive in
- ✍ Be aware of where sidelines are – know which way you want to jockey

3. Defending 1v1 Tactics

- ✍ Know which foot your opponent favors, curve run in and force to opposite side
- ✍ Do not commit yourself – keep eyes on the ball
- ✍ Play for points 10x20, then 10x30
- ✍ Deny the turn if facing away

4. Small Group Tactics

- ✍ First defender denies opponent (with ball) time and space
- ✍ The second defender, provides close cover in case first defender gets beaten
- ✍ The third defender (in triangle) provides balance, preventing shot or forward pass

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The Tactics of Defending

Individual Tactics (1 v 1)

- Deny opponent time and space
- Prevent shot or forward pass
- Force opponent to make a mistake

Small Group Tactics (2 v 1), (2 v 2), (3 v 3)

- Immediate pressure by nearest defender
- Support of covering players (begin with 2 v 1. Coach for success!)
 - Angles and distances
- Coach the 1st, 2nd & 3rd defenders (keep players in a triangular shape)
 - 1st Pressure & deny
 - 2nd Cover & support
 - 3rd Depth & balance
- Communication

Team Tactics (5 v 5), (8 v 8)

- Specific role responsibilities by thirds of the field
- Restarts - priorities change in different areas of the field
- Coach locally (player on ball)
- Coach globally (team shape/movement off ball)

Some fun games to help teach players to defend

Death on the Nile!

10x30 grid. 3 teams of 4 players, and 3 balls. Each team gets one minute in the middle (river). Count # of interceptions. Other 2 teams (one on either side of the river) have to play the balls across the 'river' back and forth. Introduce calling for the ball, then passing to a teammate on same side to open passing 'channels'.

Techniques being used include; passing & receiving, chipping, defending etc. We have to challenge our players cognitively.

Other changes can include; points for passes, keep ball moving, time limit to play ball.

Jurassic Park

30x20 or 30x30 yard grid, with 6 mini goals around border. Start with 5 Orange inside grid with balls, Blues are outside. On command they have to come in and steal the balls to score. When scored the ball is dead. Time how long it takes to kill all 5 balls. Swap roles.

Other interesting alternatives for this game include, making each defender responsible for one attacker (so they cannot tackle anybody else). They get absorbed by the even sided game and often lose the player they are responsible for, thus providing the opportunity to penetrate with the ball.

Numbers Up

Going to one goal. Add pressure - (i.e. 2v1, 3v2). Provide target for defenders if they win the ball. Looking to prevent the attackers shooting, by having body in correct position, showing good 1st touch when receiving ball. 1st touch should be away from pressure.

Model practice to encourage Defensive Play

Warm Up

Give all players a ball. Get players to dribble in a 10x15 yard grid. The grid can also be made larger depending on the ability of the players. On command 'CHANGE' have to leave their own ball and find another to continue dribbling. Gets kids to be aware of what is going on around them.

Various stretches: Stretch hamstring and calf muscles. Dribble again. Stretch calf and achilles tendon. Get a partner to put pressure on the ball with the ball of the foot, with their heel on the ground. Dribble again. Lift inside of foot to groin to stretch the gluteus maximus (butt!)

Play 6v1 with 6 balls. Player without a ball has to try and steal one. Players stay within the grid. After 1 minute or so, the player without the ball gets a quick exercise.

Then take one more ball out so it is 5v2 with 5 balls. At end of a minute, 2 players will be without a ball and get an exercise.

Then take one more ball out so it is 4v3 with 4 balls. At end of a minute, 3 players will be without a ball and get an exercise. This helps players to dribble keeping their the ball within the frame of their body, and to hold off an opponent.

In this period there has been no official instruction on how to defend the ball!

Fundamental

Coach may want to introduce the block tackle at this point, for timing, rhythm etc. Coaching points include: Low center of balance, knee bent. May want to start with players with a hand on their partners shoulder. Develop rhythm, 3, 2, 1 go. Then develop to take a step in.

Match Related

“Get out of here!”

Play “Get out of here” (works for 10-14 year olds) - Two teams in a line stand either side of the coach (standing on the half way line with all the balls). Name them team USA and team Brazil! Play 1v1 in a 10 x 15 area grid to 2 yard goals, with the first player from each side coming out as soon as the coach puts a ball on the field. The coach is boss of the balls! Introduce penalty for encroaching! When a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, the coach shouts ‘Get out of here!’ and the players have to go to the back of their line. As soon as the coach yells, he can put another ball on the field for the next player from each team to play. The game is continuous ‘til the coach has no balls left. He can then ask the players what they can do to rectify the situation...They will soon collect all the balls back!

Let players go through once each without any instruction.

Then introduce the Coaching points:

- Pressure quickly, but then coming under control
- Do not over commit

Curve defensive run

Do not have to win ball, just keep between the attacker, ball and goal – block shot on goal
If defender manages to turn the attacker, get in tight

Award goals if not quick enough pressure on the ball.

Then demonstrate how easy it is for the attacker to turn the defender if too tight. Get distances correct with regard to the speed of the opponent.

First of all passive defending. Then let the defender tackle. If they win the ball, go for opponents goal. Teams keep scores. Play for five minutes or so. Coach defender in the game.

Once concepts have been determined, introduce 2v1, and then 2v2. Coach the defensive shape and concept of keeping 2 players at angle goalside to support. Coach will still find that he/she has to coach the first defender also!

There is no offside! If attackers run goalside of the last defender award a goal. The supporting defender must have both opponents in front of him at all times.

Match Conditions (no restrictions)

Chip and Dale Game

Then develop to play 4v4 to targets in a 20x30 yard grid. Have to score by chipping the ball into a semi-circular end-zone for resting teammates to catch.

Then play 4v4 on field with both teams also having a goalkeeper. In this stage it is best to let the game flow and not stop it every time a mistake occurs. A coach can call out what to do next time as the game continues!

Summary

The US National Coaching Staff for U14 players recommend working on defending once every 3-4 practices at the age groups U10-U14.

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Please view our website at www.oregonyouthsoccer.org for other good coaching information!
Or call Mike Smith, OYSA Head Coach on (503) 626-4625