



U12 COACHING CURRICULUM



PRESSURE DEFENDING

Technical Breakdown Continued....

- Body Shape:
 - Sideways on (90 degree angle).
 - Feet shoulder width apart.
 - Bend knees.
 - Balance on the balls of your feet.
 - Arm out to feel attacker, use as leverage and distance yourself properly.
 - Eyes on the ball.
- When to Tackle? Defending players should look to tackle if the attacker has a poor first touch or loses control of the ball.
- What to do if the attacker is in control of the ball and / or dribbling?
 - If the attacker is in complete control of the ball delay them by applying pressure but not tackling, this is referred to as 'getting the attackers head down', which limits the attackers vision.
 - If the attacker is dribbling at speed and in control, retreat backwards by moving your feet with shuffling short steps in order to keep the player in front of you (avoid crossing your legs).
- How to Tackle?
 - Intercept - Defender reads the attacking pass and takes the ball from the attacker before they receive.
 - Block Tackle - Body shape is square to the direction of the ball. Heel down, toes up to lock ankle. Bend knee and strike the ball with the inside of the foot. This is done at the same time as the attacker, which is why this tackle is referred to as a block.
 - Poke Tackle - Completed with the front foot. Poke the ball off the attackers foot with the toes and step in after the ball to complete the transition.
 - Step In - This is when an attacker has taken a big touch. The bad touch allows the defender to step across the attackers with their whole body and gain possession of the ball.
 - Slide Tackle - The last resort tackle. This is when the defender leaves their feet and slide along the ground to tap the ball away from the attacker. Illegal from behind, must be done from the front or side.

Common Mistakes

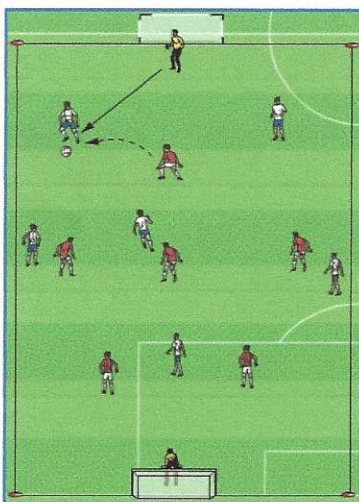
- Dive in - Speed of approach is too quick and defenders momentum is still moving forward as the attacker manipulates the ball around them.
- Missed Tackle - Defender is impatient and lunges for the ball while the attacker is still in control.
- Type of Tackle - Defender chooses the wrong tackling technique, which results in the attacker riding the challenge and remaining in control.
- Incorrect Body Shape - Defender gets caught either too square or side ways on resulting in the attacker easily beating the defender on the dribble or with a pass.

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PRESSURE DEFENDING

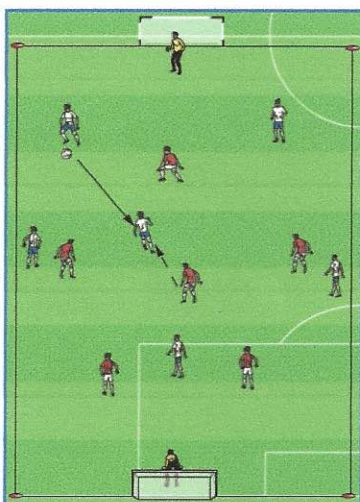
Pressure defending is sometimes referred to the First Defender. The pressuring defender should be the closest player to the ball in the game. Pressure can be applied at a variety of different angles and the pressuring player should use this angle of pressure to either stop the attacking player from penetrating (advancing the ball fwd) and / or ideally winning the ball back. Pressure can also be applied by more than one player, which is referred to as 'doubling' and is utilized when the attacker has their eyes down on the ball and they have to passing options.

Pressuring from the side



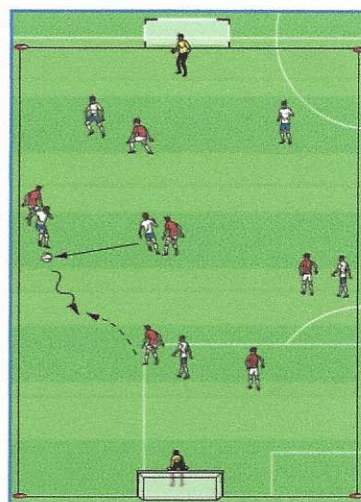
When closing down from this angle force the player to one side and do not allow the attacker to turn and switch the ball.

Pressing from behind



When closing down from behind make sure you arrive at such a speed which stops the attacker from turning.

Pressuring from the front



When closing down from the front angle the run of the approach to only provide the attacker with one option.

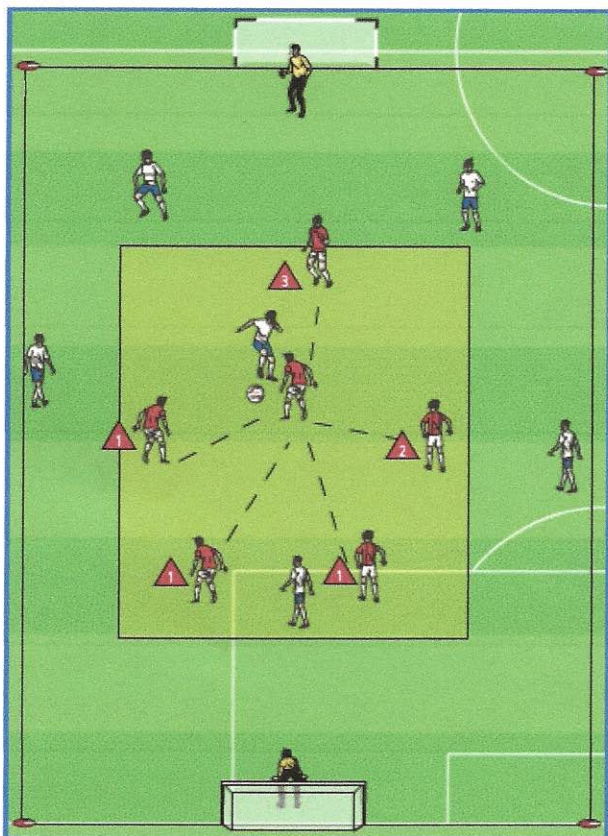
Technical Breakdowns

- Closing Down (see above differences for approaching angles), however, in general:
 - Close down the space between attacker and defender as quickly as possible.
 - Bend your run if possible to limit the options the attacker has.
 - As the defender approaches the attacker (5-yards) they should start to shorten their steps and get low, this helps with changing direction.

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COVER DEFENDING

What is Cover Defending? The Covering Defender is sometimes referred to as the second defender, however, in many situations the covering defender can be more than one player, as highlighted by the red players in the diagram below.



In the illustration you can also see that defending players can provide cover 360 degrees around the ball. We can also highlight that all the covering players around the ball are at different angles and distances.

The angle that covering defenders position themselves into is determined by the pressuring player, (which way they are forcing the attacker), any opposing players that maybe trying to provide a passing option and finally by our teammates positioning.

The distance of the cover provided is usually determined by the amount of pressure that is placed on the ball and the runs of attackers off the ball. If the attacker has their head up, there are forward runs from their teammates and the player with the ball is able to play a pass in behind us then the covering distance is greater because they need to either track a runner or protect the dangerous space in behind us. On the other hand, if there is good pressure on the ball and the attacker has their head down so they cannot see nor pass to the options behind us then the cover

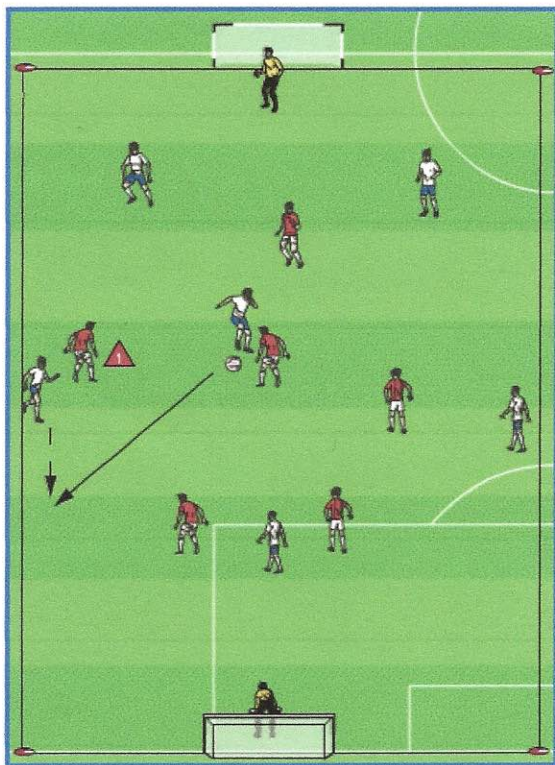
distance is usually tighter in order to force the attacker to play backwards or square.

Another caveat to the angle and distance is the covering players body shape. When the ball is being forced towards the covering player they must position themselves to be able to see the ball and the attacking player in their immediate vicinity, position 1 on the diagram. If the pressuring player is forcing the ball away from the covering player then they must be aware of players around them (checking shoulders) but position themselves in the direction the ball is being forced, position 2 on the diagram. This is called squeezing space and helps the team remain compact. Finally, if the attacker is facing forward and there is good pressure on the ball then the covering player behind (position 3) can look to 'double' and attempt to win possession back.

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COVER DEFENDING

Why do we provide cover? We have players who are not pressuring provide cover in order to stop the opposing team from advancing the ball forward as well as win the ball back. If our players are in good covering positions, as illustrated in the diagram overleaf, the attacking player cannot penetrate and it forces them to play side ways or backward. If the attacking player with the ball decides to pass the covering players have two options. The first is to read the attackers intentions and intercept the ball. The second is to apply immediate pressure to the receiving attacking player before they can play forward and hopefully forcing them to play a negative pass or make a mistake.



Common Mistakes

There are many mistakes a player can make when providing cover. These include providing an incorrect cover angle, being either too close or too far away from the ball, not being in a position to be able to see the attacker off the ball and the player in possession, and finally not tracking runners.

The diagram provides a clear picture of a player, position 1 not providing good cover:

1. Incorrect covering angle, player is caught square to the ball.
2. Incorrect distance, the player is too far away from the pressing player, which provides the attacker with a passing lane.
3. Poor body shape, the player is not able to see the ball and attacker off the ball, which allows the attacker to make a run unnoticed.
4. Poor body shape and vision to see the run results in the defender not being able to track the attackers penetrating run.



U12 COACHING CURRICULUM



AGE GROUP: U9 or U12 players

TOPIC: Small Group Defending

OBJECTIVES: Teach players the principles of pressure and cover defending. How to, who should and when should a player(s) provide cover for the pressuring player as well as the transition between roles; pressure to cover and cover to pressure.

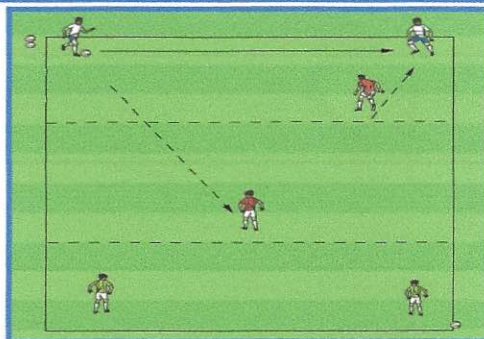
Warm Up Activity

Area: 12 x 8 yards split into three zones.

Organization: Place players into pairs and place a pair of players into each zone. Pairs in the end zones are try to pass to players in the opposite end zone to score a point, they can play passes between each other before attempting this. Players in the middle zone are trying to intercept the pass, this gets them a point. First to 5 points wins, then rotate the pairs.

Coaching Points

- Pressure defending technique - just apply pressure do not try to win the ball.
- Cover Defending: Angle, play off teammates shoulder. Distance, should be based on the pressure on the ball - closer the pressure = closer the cover. Body shape, should be able to see the attacker off the ball and the ball.



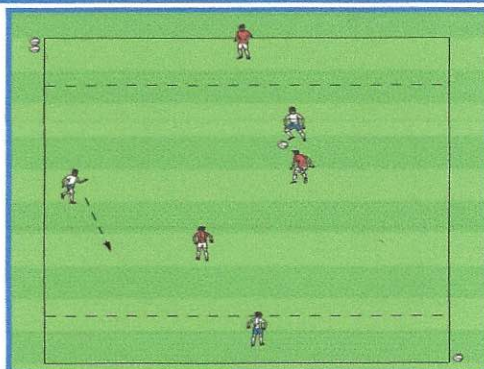
Small Sided Game

Area: 15 x 10 yards with two 3 yard end zones as shown.

Organization: Place players into two teams, place two players in the center and one player in the end zone. Teams score by passing to their teammate in the end zone.

Coaching Points

- Pressure defending technique.
- Who pressures the ball - closest player to the ball should apply pressure.
- Covering player:
 - Angle - be able to stop a split pass and be in a position to transition to pressure should your teammate get beat on the dribbling.
 - Distance - closer the pressure = closer cover.
 - Body Shape - see the player with the ball and off the ball.



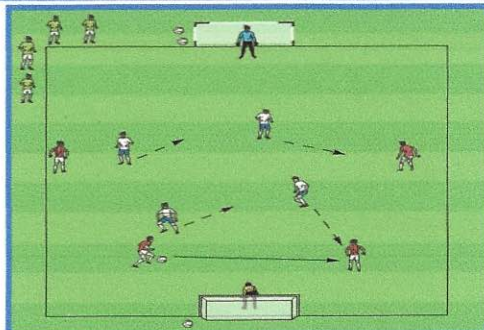
Expanded Game

Area: 30 x 25 yards with two large goals.

Organization: Play 4 v 4 with a GK. One group of four players rests. Play a two minute game then rotate one team off.

Coaching Points

- Apply principles outline above.
- Transition from covering to pressure - if a player either dribbles or receives a pass into the zone in front of the covering player that player should then apply pressure.
- Transition from pressure to cover - if you get beat by a player or the player you where pressuring passes the ball to a teammate look to drop off and provide cover.



Game

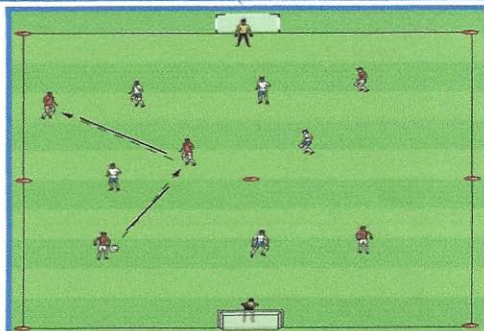
Area: 40 x 50 yards with two large goals.

Organization:

- Play 5 v 5 with GKs.
- Formation: 1 - 2 - 1 - 2 or 1 - 3 - 2.

Coaching Points

- Employ defensive techniques with the element of safety vs. risk.





U 1 2 COACHING CURRICULUM



AGE GROUP: U9 or U12 players

TOPIC: Small Group Defending

OBJECTIVES: Teach players the principles of pressure and cover defending. How to, who should and when should a player(s) provide cover for the pressuring player as well as the transition between roles; pressure to cover and cover to pressure.

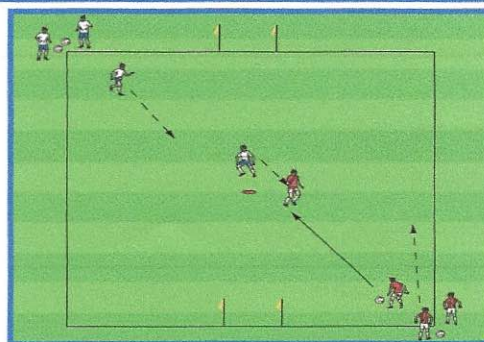
Warm Up Activity

Area: 15 x 10 yards with two small goals and a cone in the center.

Organization: Place players into two teams and place as shown. Activity starts with a player from each team on the center cone. Ball is played in to the attacker in the center, on that pass the game starts and a player from each corner joins to play 2 v 2. Rotate who attacks and defends. Game is over when a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. Restart the same way.

Coaching Points

- Pressure - apply pressure and try not to let the attacker turn.
- Cover Defending: Angle, play off teammates shoulder. Distance, should be based on the pressure on the ball - closer the pressure = closer the cover. Body shape, should be able to see the attacker off the ball and the ball.



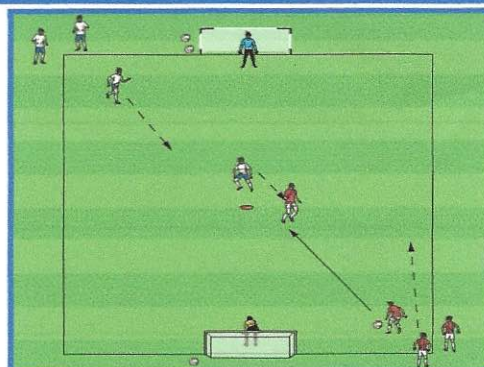
Small Sided Game

Area: 20 x 15 yards with two large goals and a cone in the center.

Organization: Same activity as above, however, now there are large goals and a GK.

Coaching Points

- Pressure defending technique.
- Who pressures the ball - closest player to the ball should apply pressure.
- Covering player:
 - Angle - be able to stop a split pass and be in a position to transition to pressure should your teammate get beat on the dribbling.
 - Distance - closer the pressure = closer cover.
 - Body Shape - see the player with the ball and off the ball.



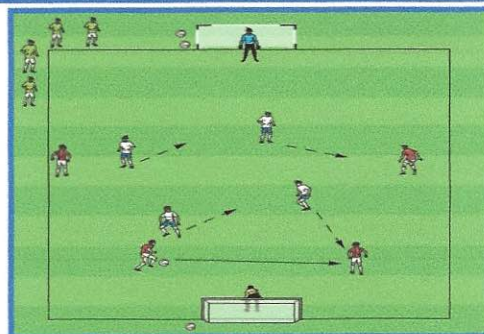
Expanded Game

Area: 30 x 25 yards with two large goals.

Organization: Play 4 v 4 with a GK. One group of four players rests. Play a two minute game then rotate one team off.

Coaching Points

- Apply principles outline above.
- Transition from covering to pressure - if a player either dribbles or receives a pass into the zone in front of the covering player that player should then apply pressure.
- Transition from pressure to cover - if you get beat by a player or the player you where pressuring passes the ball to a teammate look to drop off and provide cover.



Game

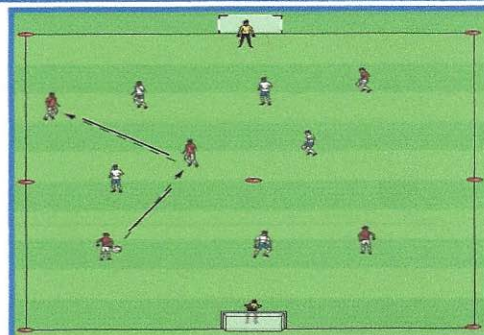
Area: 40 x 50 yards with two large goals.

Organization:

- Play 5 v 5 with GKs.
- Formation: 1 - 2 - 1 - 2 or 1 - 3 - 2.

Coaching Points

- Employ defensive techniques with the element of safety vs. risk.





U 1 2 COACHING CURRICULUM



AGE GROUP: U9 or U12 players

TOPIC: Individual Defending - Pressuring from the side

OBJECTIVES: Teach players how and when to pressure an attacking player from the side, how to channel the opposition to one side, the decision to intercept vs. delaying an opponent and correct tackling techniques.

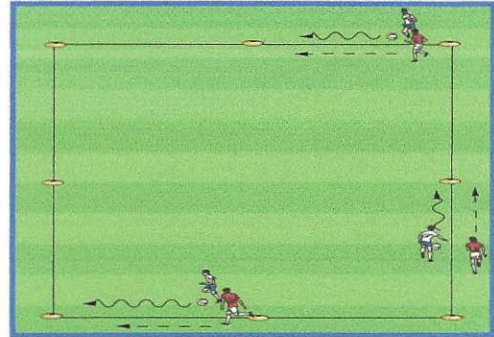
Warm Up Activity

Area: 15 x 10 yards.

Organization: Split players pairs, one ball. Each pair should position themselves on the side line. Players start on opposite sides of the cone. The player with the ball is trying to touch the cone in front or the cone behind with the soccer ball before the defender can get there. Play for 30 secs, then switch

Coaching Points

- Face the same direct as your opponent.
- Get within touching distance.
- Use the arm closest to the opponent to feel and apply pressure.
- Eyes on the ball.
- Change direction quickly when the opponent turns.



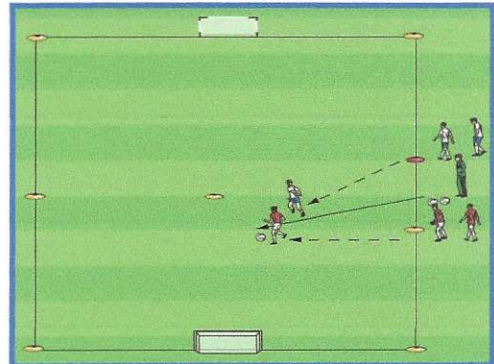
Small Sided Game

Area: 15 x 10 yards per group with two small goals.

Organization: Place players into two teams and place as shown. Teams attack and defend one goal. Coach starts the game by pass into the area. Players play 1 v 1.

Coaching Points

- Apply all the principles applied above.
- Wait for a bad touch or reading that the opponent is going to turn before using your body to step across the attacker and gain control of the ball.



Expanded Game

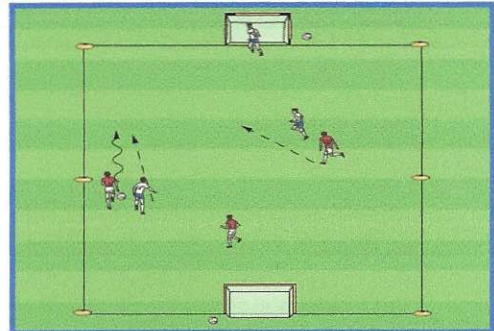
Area: 25 x 20 yards with two large goals.

Organization:

- Play 3 v 3, however, when a team does not have possession of the ball they must drop one player back into the goal and game becomes a 3 v 2.

Coaching Points

- Read situations when the opponent is on your side and apply all principles outlined in Stage 1 and 2 of the practice.
- Decision to stay on the attackers side vs. recover and get in front of them, in-between the ball and the goal you are defending.
- Safety vs. Risk - near your own goal be patient and wait for mistakes. When near opponents goal try to incorrect passes.



Game

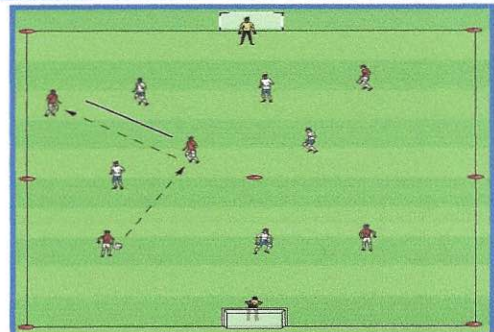
Area: 40 x 50 yards with two large goals.

Organization:

- Play 9 v 9 with GKs.
- Formation: 1 - 3 - 3 - 2 or 1 - 3 - 2 - 3

Coaching Points

- Employ defensive techniques with the element of safety vs. risk.





U12 COACHING CURRICULUM



AGE GROUP: U9 or U12 players

TOPIC: Individual Defending - Pressuring from behind

OBJECTIVES: Teach players how and when to pressure an attacking player from behind, the decision to intercept vs. delaying an opponent and correct tackling techniques.

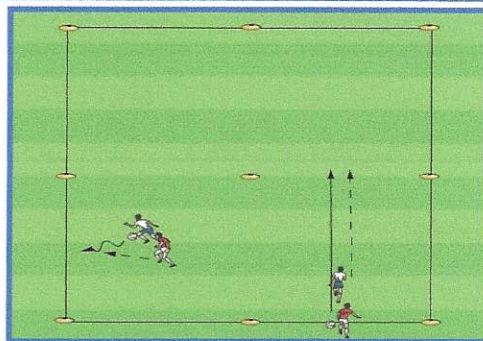
Warm Up Activity

Area: 20 x 5 yards per pair.

Organization: Split players pairs, one ball. Red player stands behind the white player. Red player pass the ball through the legs of the white player who attempts to retrieve the ball, turn and dribble across the line behind. Red attempts to stop this and counter by dribbling across the opposite end line.

Coaching Points

- Speed of approach: close down quick & shorten steps 5-yards from attacker.
- Angle of approach: straight - quickest line from A to B.
- Angle your body, with your front foot on one side of the attacker, the other in line with the ball and arm on the attackers back to feel movement.
- Wait for a mistake before stepping in with front foot to win the ball.



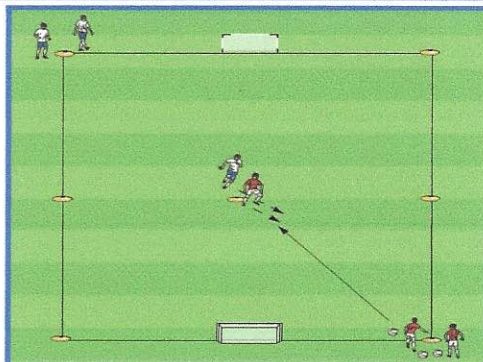
Small Sided Game

Area: 15 x 10 yards per group with two small goals.

Organization: Place players as shown with one player from each team in the center. Game starts with a ball being played into a central player. Reds score in the north goal, whites in the south.

Coaching Points

- Pressuring defending techniques as above.
- First option is to intercept the ball - try to read the pass, get in front of the attacker and nick the ball.
- Second, is not to let the attacker turn, apply pressure to attackers back and force them to play back ward.
- Third, when they do try to turn read the direction and step in to win the ball.
- Fourth, player turns and you have to delay until they make a mistake.



Expanded Game

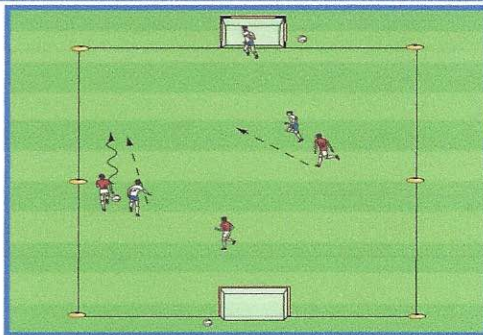
Area: 25 x 20 yards with two large goals.

Organization:

- Play 3 v 3, however, when a team does not have possession of the ball they must drop one player back into the goal and game becomes a 3 v 2.

Coaching Points

- When in a situation when you are apply pressure from behind, utilize the techniques highlighted above.
- Safety vs. Risk - near your own goal be patient and wait for mistakes. When near opponents goal try to incorrect passes.



Game

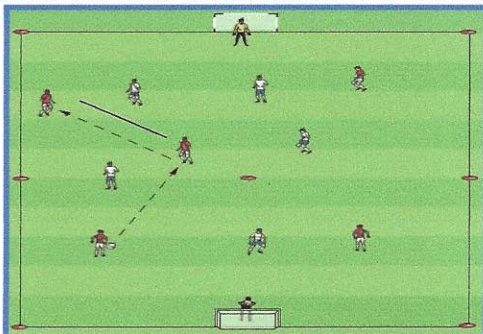
Area: 40 x 50 yards with two large goals.

Organization:

- Play 9 v 9 with GKs.
- Formation: 1 - 2 - 1 - 2 or 1 - 3 - 2.

Coaching Points

- Employ defensive techniques with the element of safety vs. risk.





U 1 2 COACHING CURRICULUM



AGE GROUP: U9 or U12 players

TOPIC: Individual Defending - Pressuring from the front

OBJECTIVES: Teach players how and when to pressure an attacking player that is directly in front, the decision to tackle vs. delaying an opponent and correct tackling techniques.

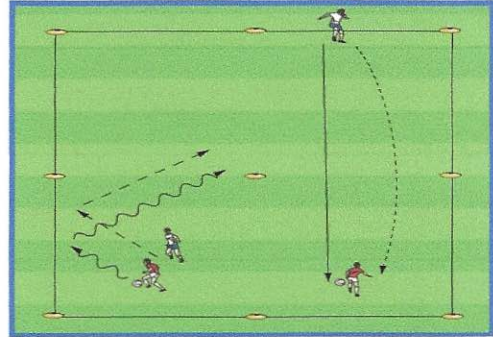
Warm Up Activity

Area: 20 x 5 yards per pair.

Organization: Split players pairs, one ball. White player passes to the red player and closes down to defend. The white player receives the ball and dribbles in zig zag towards the opposite end of the grid. The red player shadow defends back to their end line. Players should rotate roles each turn.

Coaching Points

- Speed of approach: close down quick & shorten steps 5-yards from attacker.
- Angle of approach: force the attacker in one direction by bending your run.
- Angle your body, with your front foot on one side of the ball.
- Balance on the balls of your feet, bend knees and get low.
- When changing direction, drop your front foot back and change direction.



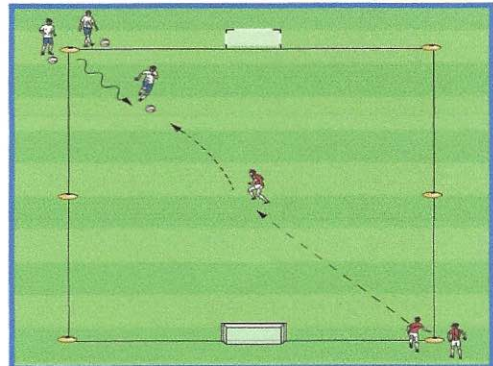
Small Sided Game

Area: 15 x 10 yards per group with two small goals.

Organization: Place players as shown. Game starts with the attacker dribbling into the grid. Play 1 v 1 to the small goals. Players should after each turn.

Coaching Points

- Pressuring defending techniques as above.
- Decision to tackle vs. delay?
 - Attacker has the ball under control (close) - delay by jockeying (warm up)
 - Attacker makes a mistake - tackle - bad touch, lose of control.
- How to tackle?
 - Block with back foot (50-50 ball)
 - Poke with front foot (attacker is losing control)
 - Step in front and use body (attacker takes a big touch)



Expanded Game

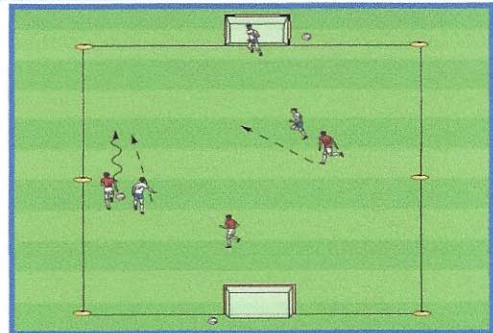
Area: 25 x 20 yards with two large goals.

Organization:

- Play 3 v 3, however, when a team does not have possession of the ball they must drop one player back into the goal and game becomes a 3 v 2.

Coaching Points

- Who should pressure the ball? Closest player should apply pressure.
- Decision to delay vs. tackle? Individual same as above, however, how many attackers vs. defenders. Numbers down look to delay and wait for teammates.
- Choice of tackling technique.



Game

Area: 40 x 50 yards with two large goals.

Organization:

- Play 5 v 5 with GKs.
- Formation: 1 - 2 - 1 - 2 or 1 - 3 - 2.

Coaching Points

- Incorporate techniques highlighted in the session.
- Safety vs. Risk - take more risks to win the ball back closer to the opponents goal. Be more safe and patient near your own goal.

