

10 Soccer Drills for Defending

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1. Defender vs Attacker 1v1 defending drill

Set up:

- 10 yards by 15 yards area
- 3 goals

Instructions:

This is going to be 1v1 phase of play with the focus on defending.

The Defender will start in one corner and the attacker will start in the opposite corner diagonally across from the attacker.

The objective for the defender is to defend the goal place in the centre and if the ball is won they must score in the 2 goals place in the corners of the opposite side.

The defending drill starts by the defender passing the ball to the attacker. If the defender wins the ball they get 1 point, if they manage to win the ball back and score they get 3, If the attacker scores they 2 points.

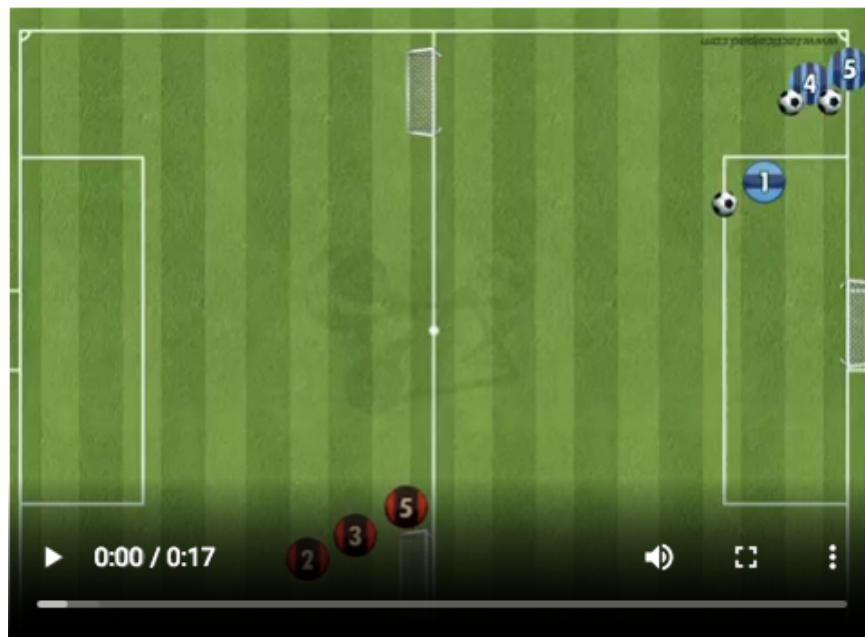
Coaching points:

- Pressure the attacker quickly but slow down and stand them, give yourself 2 yards of space
- Side on body position
- Show them away from goal, Don't give them a chance to cut inside

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- How quick should we apply pressure?
- What should we do as we approach the attacker? How much space should we give them?
- Where do you want to show the attacker?

[Click here the full defending 1v1 session plan](#)



2. Defend the cone 1v1 defending soccer drill

Set up:

- Set up an area 15 yards apart
- at one side create a 1 yard circle with a cone in the middle
- 1 ball per pair

Instructions:

The 2 players will be split into an attacker and a defender.

The aim for the defender is to try and stop the attacker passing the ball and knocking the cone over, if the defender wins the ball back they can dribble back to the line where the attacker started.

The defender will start with the ball and pass it to the attacker.

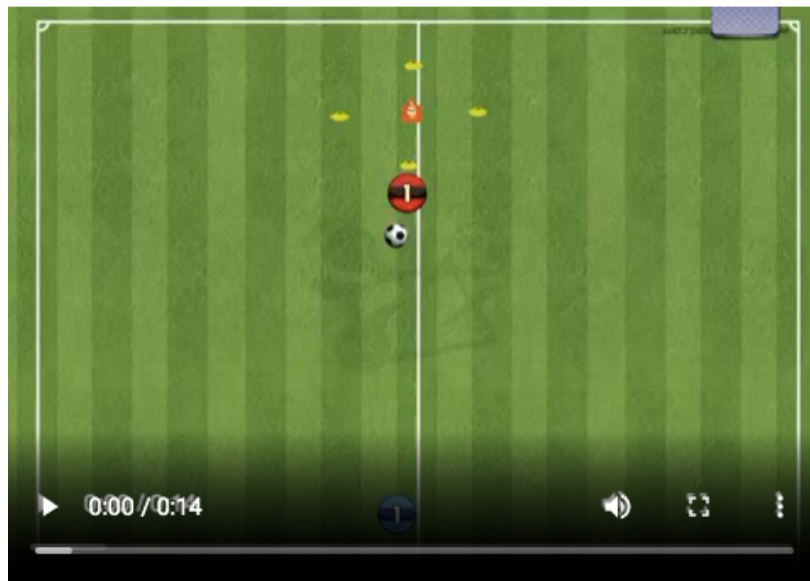
As soon as the pass is made the defender can begin to pressure the attacker.

Coaching points:

- Stand side on with knees slightly bent
- Body position should be showing the attacker away from goal
- Pressure the attacker quick but slow down 2 yards away.

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- How should we be standing when we are defending?
- Where should we be showing the defending to go?
- How should I pressure the defender?



3. Force the attacker back 1v1 soccer defending drill

Set up:

- Set up a 15 yards apart
- Put a cone down half way between the area to mark the middle
- 1 ball per pair

Instructions:

The defender and the attacker will start on the middle cone both facing the same way with the defender positioning themselves behind the attacker.

The defender must force the attacker back to the line they are facing and the attacker must try and get to the opposite line behind the defender.

If the defender forces the attacker back behind the line they are facing or steals the ball and dribbles past the line they will get 3 points. If the ball goes out of bounds the defender gets 1 point.

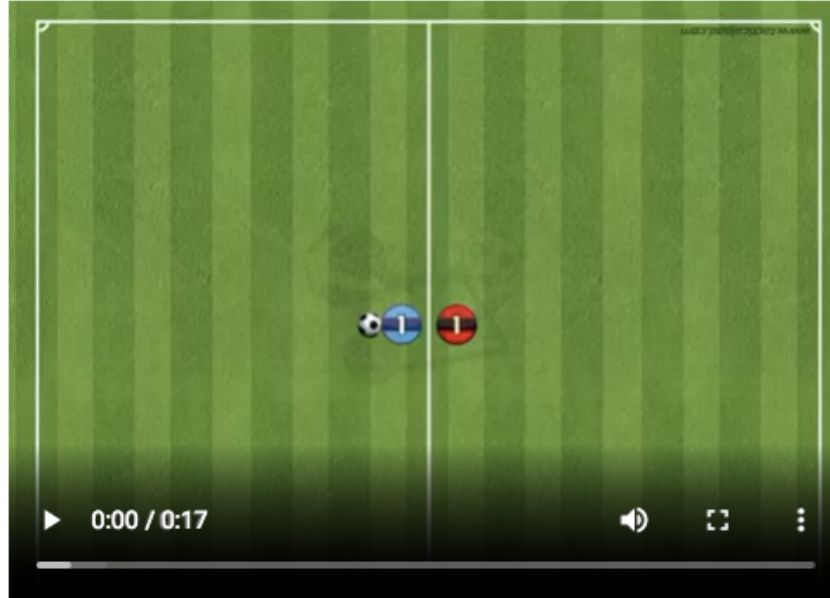
Also if the attacker manages to dribble past the line the defender is defending the will get 1 point

Coaching points:

- Side on body position with attacker
- Always stay arms length away
- Maintain pressure

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- What should our body position be like?
- How far away should be from the defender at all times?
- What could happen if I am too far away?



4. Protect the soccer ball 1v1 defending drill

Set up:

- Create a circle with a radius of 4 yards
- 1 ball per pair.

There will be 2 players in the circle; Player 1 who will be protecting the ball will stand in the middle with the soccer at their feet. Player 2 will position themselves behind player 1.

Once in their position player 1 will say “Go”. Player 2 will then start counting from 1 to 10, in that time period player 2 must knock the ball outside of the area while player 1 is trying to protect it.

If player 1 managed to keep control of the ball for 10 seconds they will get 3 points however if player 2 manages to kick the ball or steal it they get 1 point.

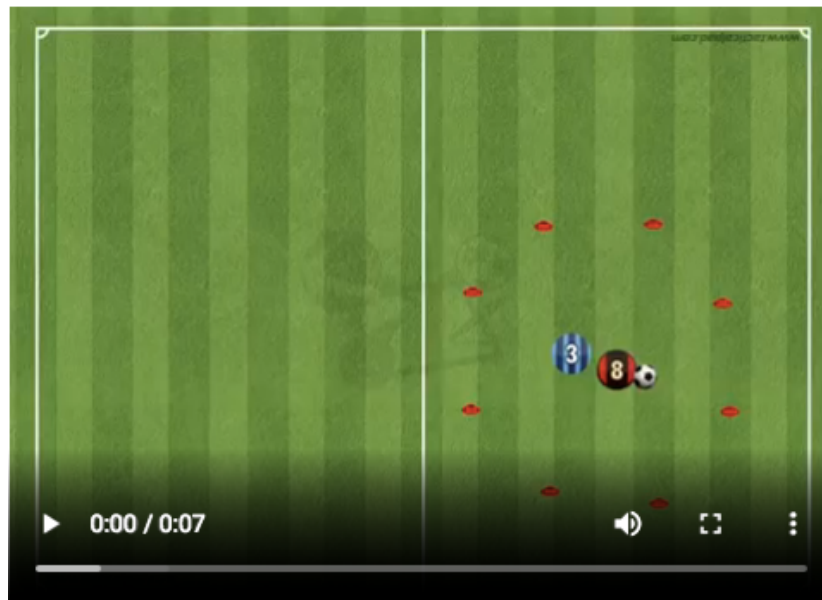
Players swap every time.

Coaching Points:

- Stand side on with your front foot controlling the ball
- Bend your knees to get low, with weight on back foot and stick you butt out
- Use your arm to help sense where the defender is

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- Which foot should we use if we want to keep the ball as far away from the defender as possible?
- How should we stand to make it as hard as possible for the defender to win the ball?
- What else can we do to help us keep the ball away from the defender?



5. Soccer 2v2 defending drill to force attackers wide

Set up:

- Set up a 15x20 yard area
- Place 2 cones 2.5 yards in from the 20 yard sideline in with the base line to create 3 gates
- 2 small goals place in the corner of the opposite baseline
- 2 defenders and 2 attackers

Instructions:

The defenders will start at the end where the gates are and attackers will start at the end where the goals are.

The defenders will start with the ball and they pass it to the attackers, the attackers must try and dribble the soccer ball through the middle gate if they do this they will get 2 points and the defender will get 0 points.

If the attacker dribbles through the smaller gate they will get 1 point however the defender will get 2 points

If the defender is able to get the ball out of bounds they will get 1 point however if they steal the ball and score a goal they will get 3 points.

Coaching points:

- Player closest to the attacker with the ball pressures
- The other player provides cover
- Chest should facing the area you want to force the attacker.

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- Which player should pressure the ball?
- What should the other player be doing if their team mate is pressuring the ball.
- How can you control where the attacker goes?



6. Defenders vs attackers 2v2

Set up:

- 10 yards by 15 yards area
- 3 goals
- 1 ball per 4 players

Instructions:

This is going to be a 2v2 phase of play with the focus on defending.

The Defenders will start in both corners corner and the attacker will start on the opposite corners diagonally

The objective for the defenders is to defend the goal place in the centre and if the ball is won they must score in the 2 goals place in the corners of the opposite side.

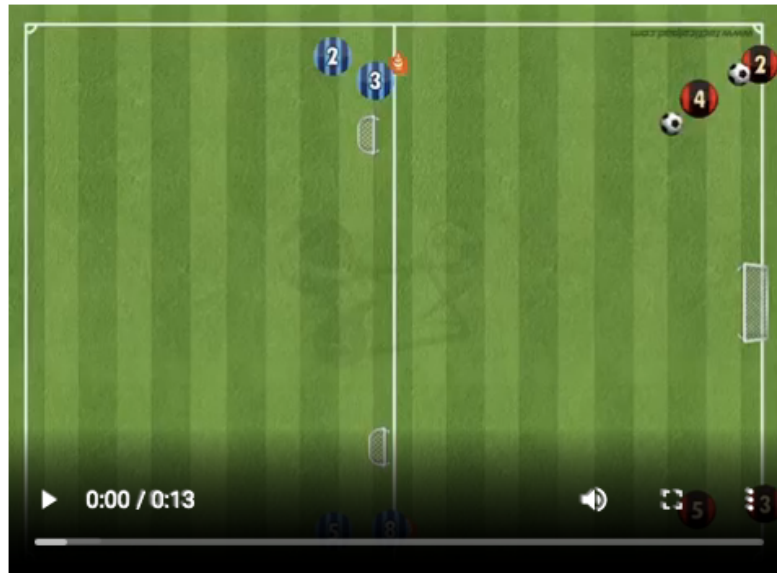
The defending drill starts by the defender passing the ball to the attacker. If the defender wins the ball they get 1 point, if they manage to win the ball back and score they get 3, If the attacker scores they 2 points.

Coaching points:

- Player closest to the ball pressures the attacker
- Partner stands at diagonally behind their team mate to cover
- Pressure the attacker quickly but slow down and stand them, give yourself 2 yards of space
- Show them away from goal, Don't give them a chance to cut inside

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- How quick should be apply pressure? (As quick as we can)
- Who should be applying pressure? (The person closest to the ball)
- What should the other Defender do then? (Cover)
- Where do we want to show the attackers? (Away from goal)



7. Close the gap rondo soccer drill with 2 defenders

Set up:

- Create a 6x6 yard box with 1 yard circle in the middle
- 1 ball per 6 players

Instructions:

There will be 4 players around the outside of the square with each player having their own line. These players can move freely up and down their line and must work together to keep ball away from the defenders.

There will be 2 defenders in the middle.

When a defender wins the ball they will swap with the attacker who lost it.

However if the attackers are able to make a complete pass and the ball travels through the circle that acts as an extra life for the attacker if they lose the ball.

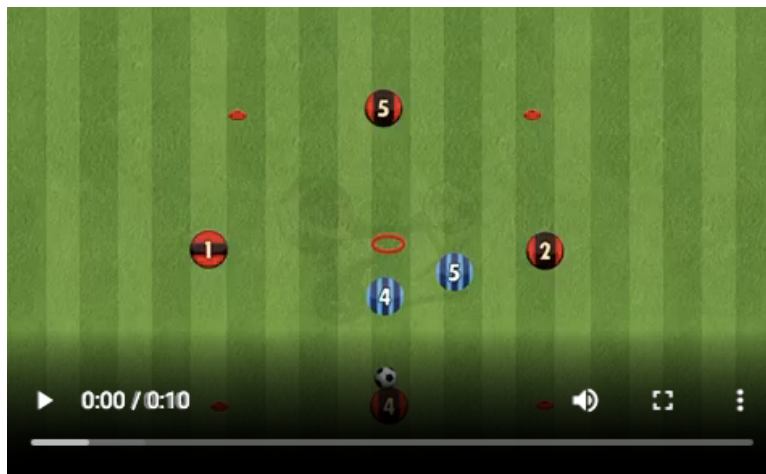
For every pass that is completed that is a life.

Coaching points:

- The player closest to the ball pressures the attacker
- The other player stands diagonally behind their partner to cover
- Communicate with each other

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- Do both players want to pressure the ball?
- If one player pressures the ball where should the other stand?
- What can you do that can make this easier that has nothing to do with your soccer playing ability?



8. Soccer drill for defending against a counter attacker

Set up:

- 1 big goal 3 smaller goals
- 4 defenders, 4 attackers and 1 goal keeper
- 2 soccer balls.

Instructions:

The goal keeper will be in the big goal and 3 the goals will be set up on the halfway line, one in the middle and 2 either side where the sideline meets the halfway line.

This will be a defending drill that has 2 phases of play, the first phase will be a 2v2. both attackers will start at the halfway line and they will try and score a goal, if the defenders win the ball back they can score in either of the 3 smaller goals.

When the phase of play ends either through a goal being scored or the ball going out of play and a new phase of play will begin with a new soccer ball with 2 more attackers coming into play. 2 defenders will start 5 yards back behind the new attackers and can pressure as soon as the first phase of play ends.

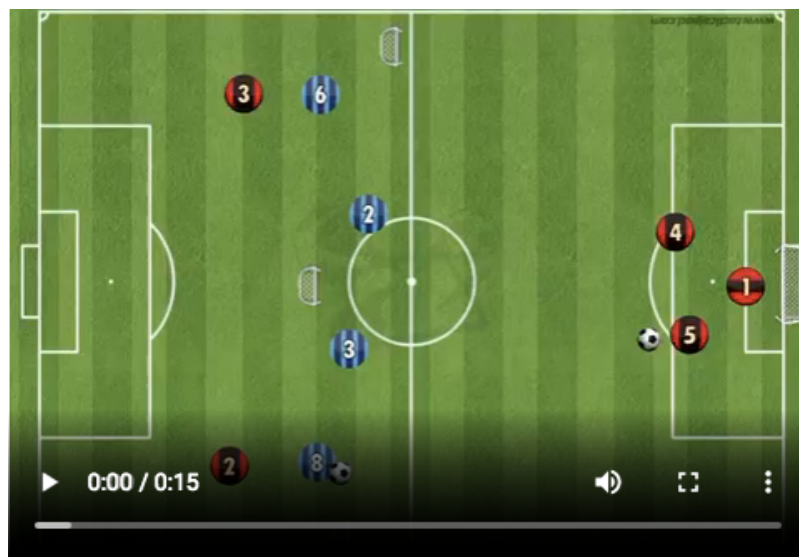
This will now create a 4v4 that represents a counter attack with the same goals.

Coaching points:

- Slow down the attack to allow players to get back in position
- Organize as quick as possible

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- How do you prevent a team from counter attacking?
- What can we do to slow down the attack?



9. Soccer drill for defenders staying compact

Set up:

- Create a 30x20 yard area
- Divide the area into 3 vertical sections
- Split your team in 3 teams of 5
- 1 soccer ball

Instructions:

There will be 3 teams of 5 players in each section with the team in the middle section being the defenders.

The two possession teams will be in the outside sections and they have to try and pass the ball to each other through the middle section after completing 5 passes in their own section.

When a possession team is trying to make 5 passes in their section the defending team will send 2 players in to try and win the ball back with the remaining 3 staying in the middle section.

If the defending team wins the ball back they will become the possession team and the team that lost the ball will become the defending team.

Coaching points:

- Stay compact when defending
- Player closest to the ball pressures, other players cut off passing lines
- Pressure quick and contain opposing team together
- Control opposing teams passing with defensive positioning

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- When we are defending do we want to be spread out or close together?
- Who should be pressure the ball? what should the other defenders be doing?
- How can we force the opponents into a mistake?



10. Game realistic attackers vs defenders soccer drill

Set up:

- 30 yards by 20 yards area
- 1 ball per 11 players.

Instructions:

This is going to be soccer game scenario using all the previous soccer defending drills can be utilized in this drill.

The drill can be adapted for how many players you play in your back line and how many centre defensive midfielders you play with too.

For this drill I am going to play with 4 defenders and 1 centre defensive midfielder.

A goalkeeper can be included in this for drill, the attackers will be trying to score in the goal the keeper is in.

The defenders must prevent the attackers from scoring and must try and score in 3 goals placed on the opposite side.

Normal rules of soccer applies including throw ins and corner kicks.

If the ball goes out for a goal kick the attackers will start with the ball at the goals they are defending.

Coaching points:

- Player closest to the ball pressures the attacker
- If the left back is pressuring the ball, the right back should be the furthest player back and vice versa
- Pressure the attacker quickly but slow down and stand them, give yourself 2 yards of space
- Show them away from goal, Don't give them a chance to cut inside
- Communication

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

- Who should be pressuring the ball?
- If my left back/right back is pressuring the ball who should be my last player back?
- How can we defend more effectively as a back line?
- Where do we want to show the players?

