

How to Shield the Ball in Soccer and 4 Essential Drills



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7 Coaching Points for Success

1. Protect the ball by placing your body between the defender

This is the first and arguably the most important when shielding the soccer ball.

When shielding the ball, your body is what you are going to use to protect the ball from the defender trying to win it back.

When Shielding the ball you always want to make sure that your body is between the ball and the defender, making sure your back is facing the defender.

This will make it significantly harder for the defender to win the ball because now they have to think about how they are going to win the ball back without committing a foul.

2. Shield the ball using a side on body position

Once you have placed your body between the defender you can still make it even harder for the defender to steal the ball off you.

By placing yourself in a side on position you are creating a further distance away from the defender and the soccer ball.

If you were to stand in a square on position with the defender the defender could still poke the ball away from between your legs, standing side on takes the opportunity for the defender to do this.

3. Brace yourself for contact

When you are in your side on stance there are a few things you can do to brace yourself to make yourself a lot harder to push off the ball:

- Feet shoulder width apart

By keeping your feet shoulder width apart you are giving yourself a strong base to balance yourself and 'dig in' when pressure is being applied to you.

- Knees bent

You want to make sure that your knees are bent, this will give you a lower centre of gravity to help you maintain your strength and stand your ground while under pressure.

- Stick your butt out

By sticking your butt out you are able to keep the defender further away from the soccer ball and make it as awkward for you to get round as possible.

It is not always about being the strongest to shield the ball, its about how you are best able to use your body to protect the ball.

4. Use your arm to shield the ball

When in your side on position shielding the soccer ball you cannot see the defender as your back is turned to them.

To help give you a better understanding of where the player is extend your arm so you are making contact with the defender.

This will give you a better idea as to where the defender is so you can adjust your body position to their movements. It will also act as another buffer to help prevent

Make sure that you have a slight bend in your arm when making contact with the defender and remember you are not trying to push the defender just try to keep them an arms length away

5. Keep the ball on your front foot

When you are shielding the soccer ball in a side on position one foot will be closer to the defender and further from the soccer ball, this will be the back foot.

The other foot will be further away from the defender and closer to the soccer ball, this will be the front foot.

When shielding the soccer ball you want to keep the ball on your front foot as much as possible this constantly keep the ball as far away from the defender as possible

6. Take small touches to keep moving with the ball close to you

While keeping the ball on your front foot you want to make sure you are keeping the ball moving with small touches, using the inside, outside or sole of the foot.

If you stay stationary you become a lot more predictable making it easier for an opposing player to steal the ball off you.

Sometimes the defender will try to come round either from your left or right, by taking small touches you readily to prepared to move the ball to the opposite side while still protecting it.

7. Invite contact to get yourself a free kick

Once you start getting more experienced at shielding the ball in soccer you will have a better understanding when you might be able to win a free-kick.

This tactic will be especially useful if you do not have many options on the ball and surrounded by opposition players.

If you know an opposing player is charging towards you and for you to brace for the contact while you are shielding the ball you can turn you back at the last minute so they knock you over.

This would be classed as an illegal piece of contact in soccer and will be awarded a free kick.

4 Soccer drills for shielding the Ball in Soccer

Here are some of my 4 favorite soccer drills that I use to help teach my players how to correctly shield the ball in soccer.

The ball is mine

Purpose of the soccer drill:

The purpose of this soccer drill is to encourage players to compete and win the ball, in a game realistic scenario.

It will also teach them how to adjust their body and how they can move the ball to ensure it stays as far away from the defender as possible.

Set up:

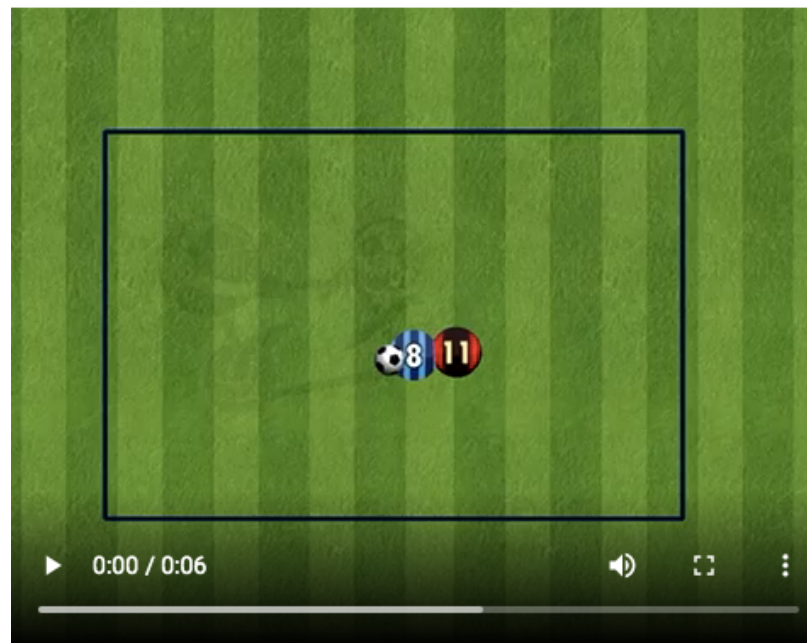
- 15 x 25 yard area
- 1 soccer ball per pair

Instructions:

Set up your area and ensure that all players are in pairs or groups of three with one soccer ball in the group of players.

The players in the pair or group will compete for the soccer ball with the player having possession of the soccer.

You can then rotate players round so they get a good variety of coming up against different team members.



Hold off the defender

Purpose of the drill:

The purpose of this soccer drill is to replicate a scenario where a player is in a corner or has limited options to play the ball so they are trying to bide time and wait for support.

This is also to encourage players to be competitive to try and win the ball back.

Set up:

- 5 x 5 yard area per pair
- 1 soccer ball pair

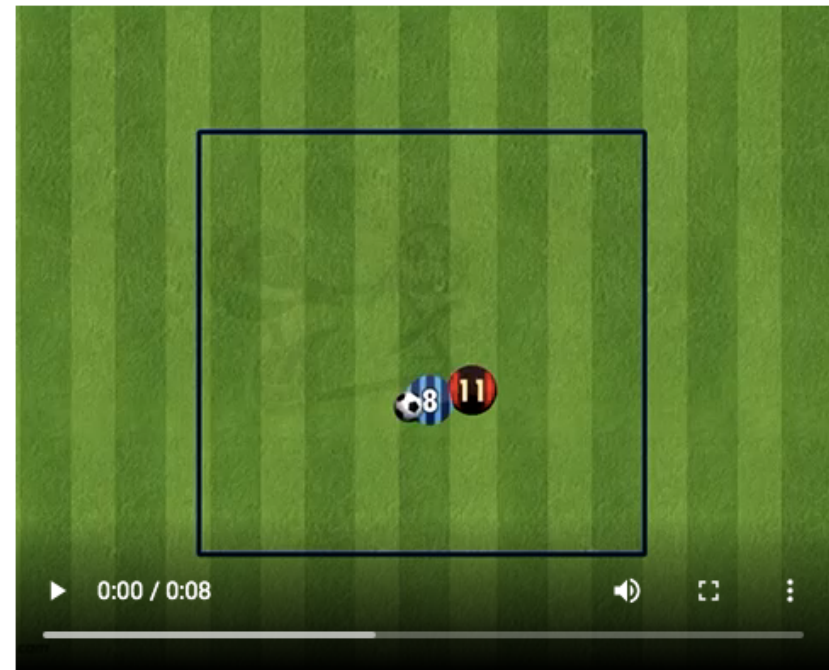
Instructions:

Each pair will have their own area and their own soccer ball. One player in the pair will have the soccer ball and the other player will be trying to win the soccer ball back.

If the player with the ball is able to successfully shield the soccer ball for 30 seconds they will get 3 points, however if the player without the ball is able to get control of the ball or force the player outside of the area then they will 1 point.

Rotate round the player starting with the ball so both players get equal opportunity to shield the ball.

If you have more than one square you can introduce a ladder format where if players win the will move up a square and of they lose they will move down a square.



Shield the ball, turn and score

Purpose of the drill:

The purpose of this drill is to represent a striker [holding the ball up](#) against a defender in a game realistic scenario.

It will help the players become comfortable with the ball under pressure and encourage them to try skills to turn the defender with the aim of getting a shot off on goal.

Set up:

- 10 x 15 yard area with a clear halfway line
- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 2 goals

Instructions:

Create your area and set up goals like a regular game of soccer.

The pairs will start on the halfway line with 1 soccer ball in the pair.

1 player will have the ball and they will be the attacker, the other player who does not have the ball will be the defender.

The attacker will start the ball at their feet with their back to the defender with the defender an arms length away.

On the attackers call they will say 'go', this will signal for the defender to become live and try to steal the ball.

The attacker is trying to score in the goal behind them (from their starting position) if they are able to score they will get 3 points.

If the defender is able to steal the ball and score in the goal the are facing (front their starting position) they will get 1 point.

At the end of each phase of play, swap the player roles round in the pair so they are both able to be the attacker and defender



Royal Rumble

Purpose of this drill:

The purpose of this drill to help players learn the basics of how to shield a soccer ball in a fun and competitive game setting.

The game involves keeping close control of your own soccer ball, knowing how to protect your soccer ball as well as trying to steal and kick other soccer balls out of bounds.

This would be an ideal warm up game if you where how to plan a soccer session on how to shield the ball in soccer.

Set up:

- 7 x 7 yard area
- 1 soccer ball per player

Instructions:

This game is really easy to explain and set up, once you have created your area make sure all you players have a soccer ball.

The main aim of this game is to knock other peoples soccer ball outside the area while maintaining control of your own.

There a different variations you can use for this game.

The first variation is where players try to get the highest score, with the player getting highest score being the winner.

Every time a player is able to knock someone else's soccer ball outside the area then they get 1 point.

If a player gets knocked out they can perform 10 scissors (or a skill of your choice) and then they come back in.

The game will end after 2 minutes.

The next variation will be like sudden death, where is a players soccer ball gets knocked out then they can cannot come back in with the last player remaining becoming the winner.

