

Soccer Defending Drills



Soccer Graphics



I created these graphics using the Tactics Manager from SoccerTutor. It is a fantastic resource to create, share and organize your soccer sessions and team tactics

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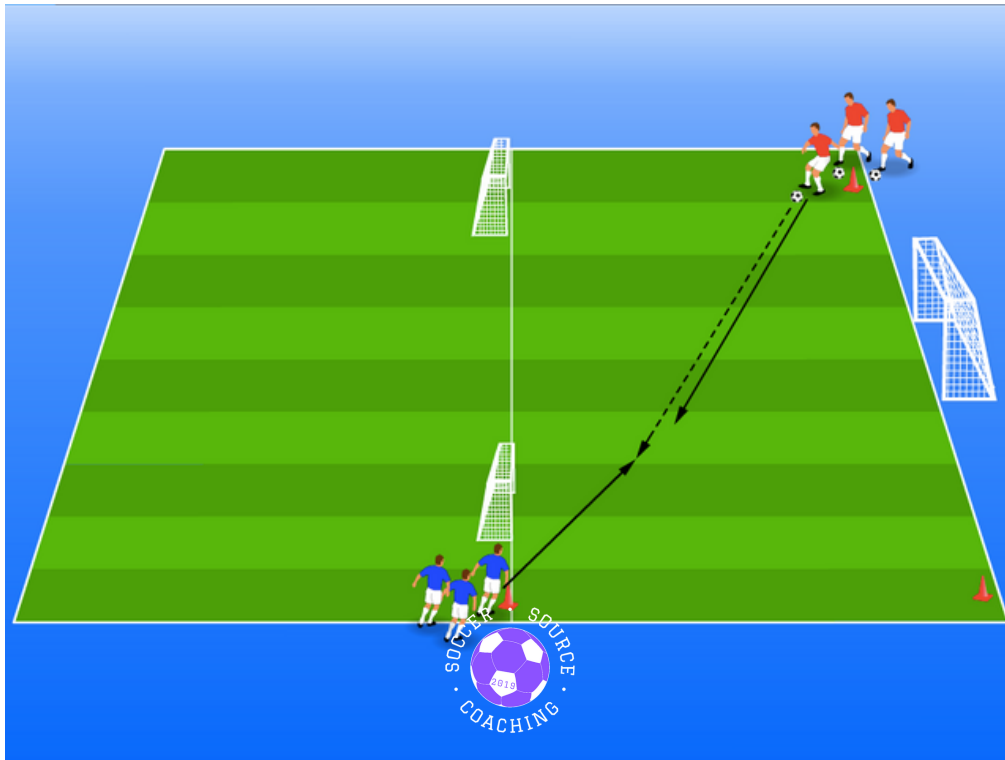
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The 7v7 Soccer Coaching Manual



This is every coach's guide to developing a 7v7 soccer team. It includes 20 structured session plans with diagrams, coaching points, and progressions. Game day tactics and management are also included

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Defender vs Attacker 1v1 defending drill

Purpose: The purpose of this soccer defending drill is to improve a player's 1v1 defending ability

Set up:

10 yards by 15 yards area

3 goals

How the drill works:

This is going to be a 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 center and if the ball is won they must score in the 2 goals placed in the corners of the opposite side.

The defending drill starts with 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

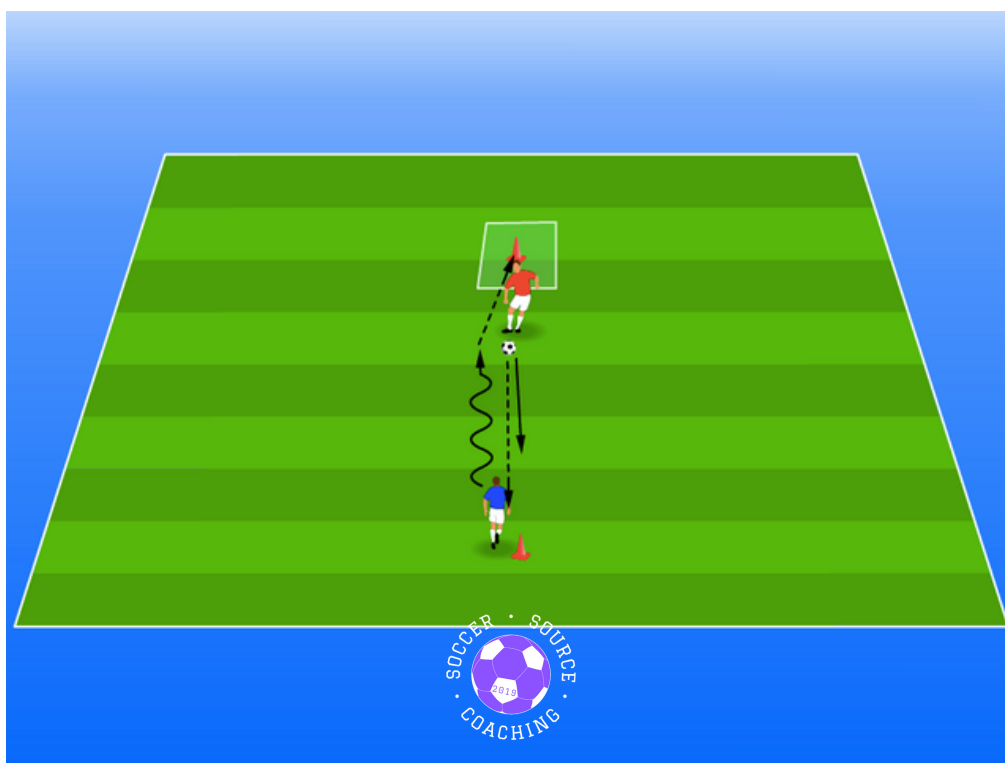
Show them away from goal, Don't give them a chance to cut inside

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

How quickly 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?



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Defend the cone 1v1 defending soccer drill

Purpose: The purpose of this defending soccer drill is to help players block shots, crosses, and passes in a 1v1 scenario.

Set up:

Set up an area 15 yards apart

On one side create a 1-yard circle with a cone in the middle

1 ball per pair

How the drill works:

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

The aim for the defender is to try and stop the attacker from 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.

If the attacker hits the cone they will get 1 point.

If the defender successfully blocks the attacker from hitting the cone and it goes out of bounds they will get 1 point.

However, if the defender is able to gain control of the soccer ball and dribble past the cone the attacker started on they will get 3 points.

Coaching points:

Stand side on with knees slightly bent

Body position should be showing the attacker away from the goal

Pressure the attacker quickly but slow down 2 yards away.

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

How should be standing when we are defending?

Where should we be showing the defending to go?

How should I pressure the defender?



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Force the attacker back 1v1 soccer defending drill

Purpose: The purpose of this soccer defending drill is to encourage the defender to force the opposition back towards their own goal.

Set up:

Set up 15 yards apart

Put a cone down halfway between the area to mark the middle

1 ball per pair

How the drill works:

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 the attacker

always stay arm's length away

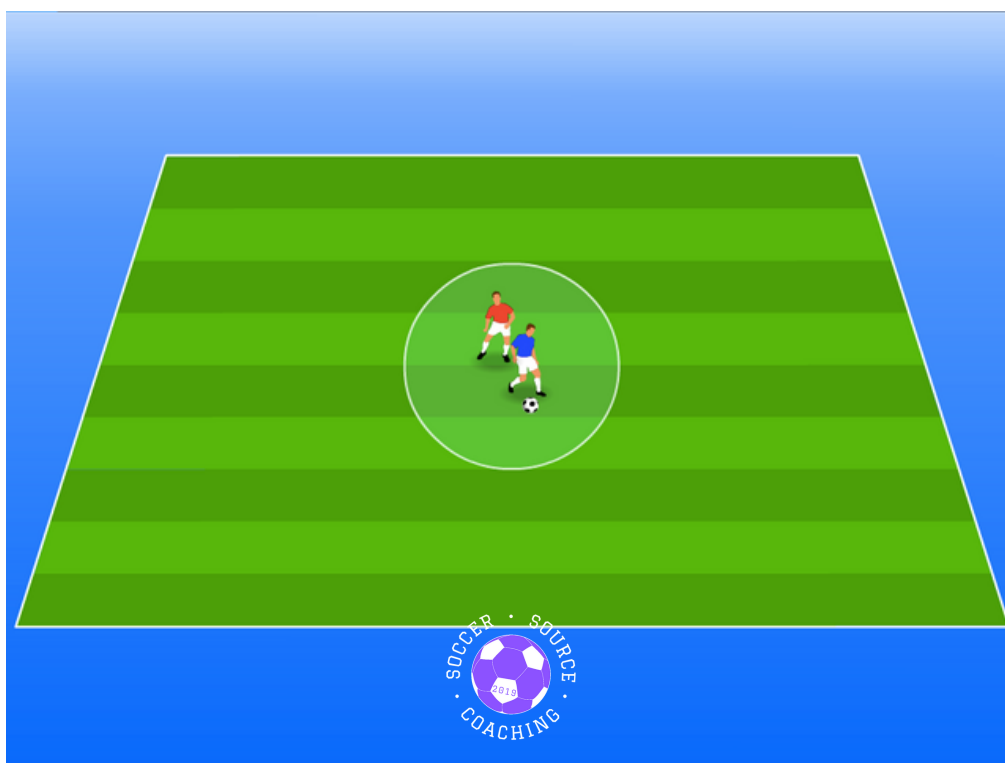
Maintain pressure

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?



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Protect the soccer ball 1v1 defending drill

Purpose: The purpose of the soccer drill is to try and learn how to force an attacker into a mistake with their back to the goal

Set up:

Create a circle with a radius of 4 yards

1 ball per pair.

How the drill works:

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 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 1 point.

However, if player 2 manages to kick the ball out they will get 1 point and if they can gain control of the soccer ball they will get 3 points

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 your back foot, and stick your butt out

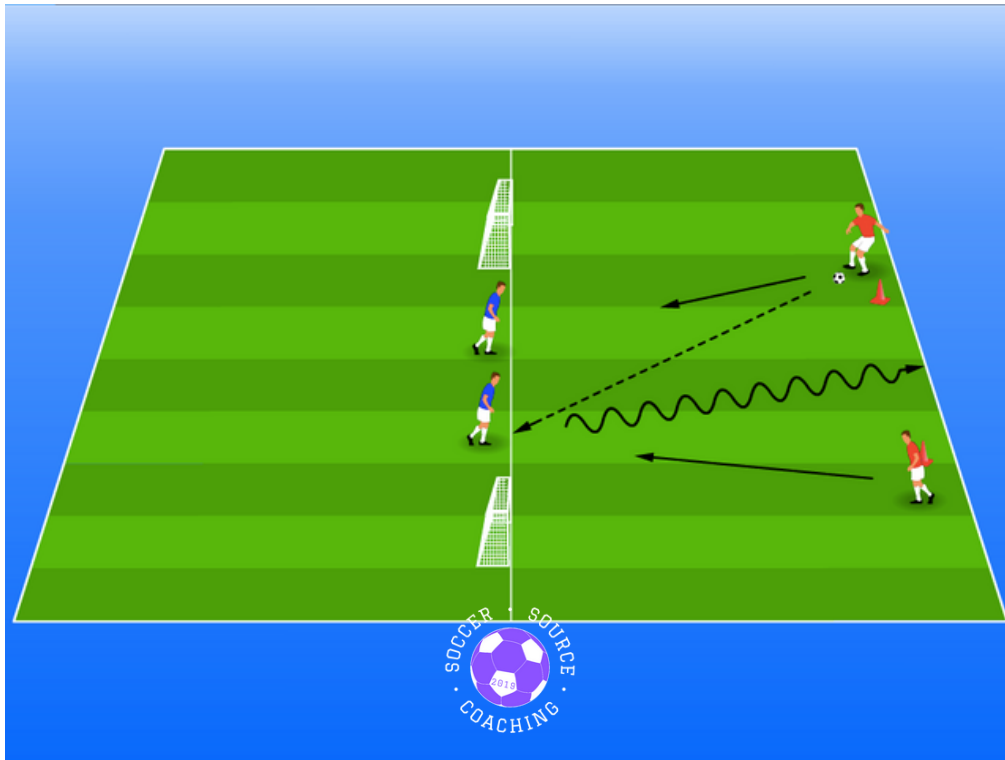
Use your arm to help sense where the defender is

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?



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Soccer 2v2 defending drill to force attackers wide

Purpose: The purpose of this drill is to force the attackers wide working in a pair
Set up:

Set up a 15x20 yard area

Place 2 cones 2.5 yards in from the 20-yard sideline in with the baseline to create 3 gates

2 small goals were placed in the corner of the opposite baseline

2 defenders and 2 attackers

How the drill works:

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 can 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

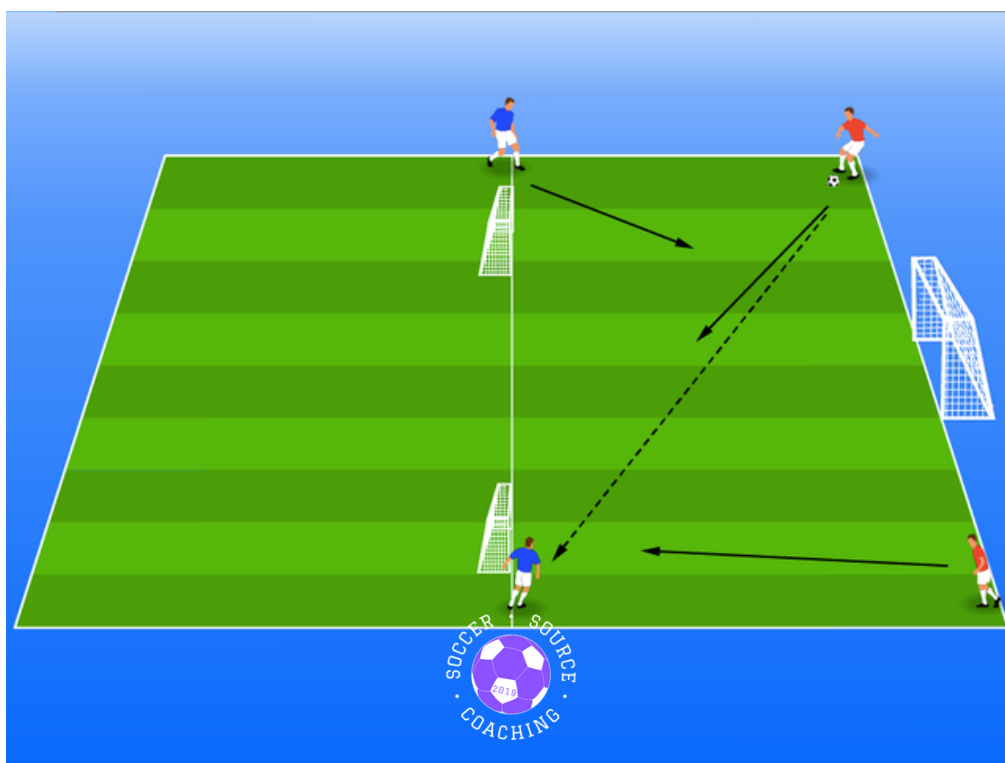
The chest should be facing the area you want to force the attacker.

Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

Which player should pressure the ball?

What should the other player be doing if their teammate is pressuring the ball?

How can you control where the attacker goes?



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Defenders vs attackers 2v2

Purpose: The purpose of this soccer drill is to help players defend in pairs

Set up:

10 yards by 15 yards area

3 goals

1 ball per 4 players

How the drill works:

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

It is similar to the other 2v2 soccer defending drills but slightly different.

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

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

The defending drill starts with 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 attacking team scores they get 1 point

Coaching points:

Player closest to the ball pressures the attacker

Partner stands diagonally behind their teammate 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

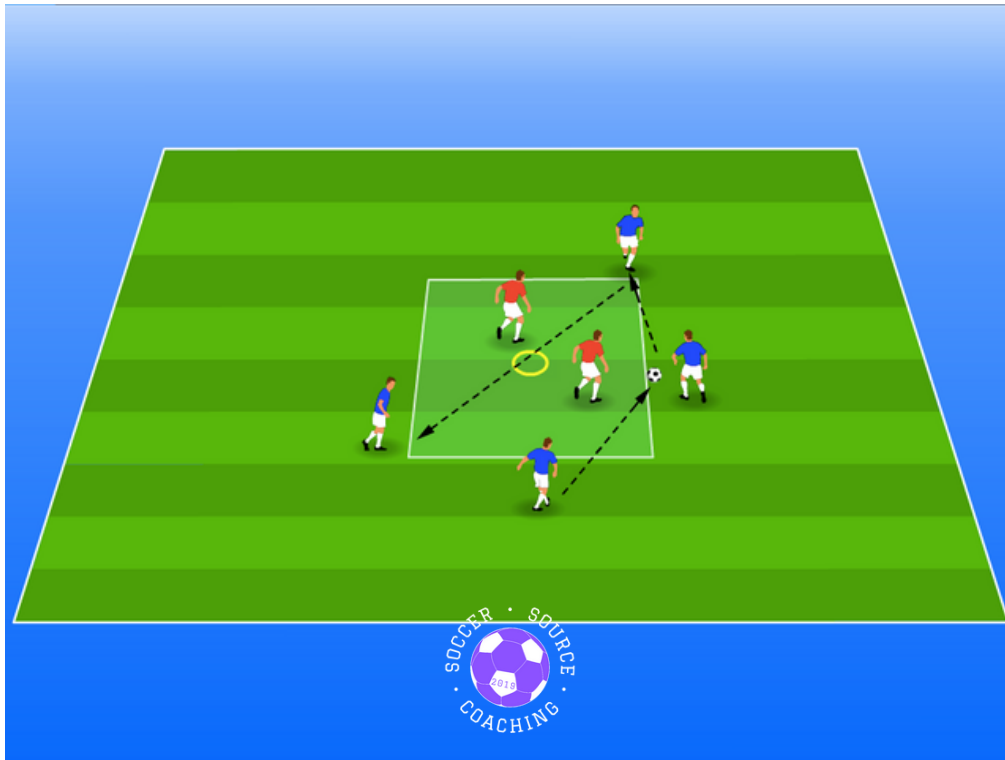
Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

How quickly should be applying 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)



[Click here for the video](#)

Close the gap rondo soccer drill with 2 defenders

Purpose: The purpose of the soccer drill is to press players without getting split down the middle

How the drill works:

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

1 ball per 6 players

How the drill works:

There will be 4 players around the outside of the square with each player having their line.

These players can move freely up and down their line and must work together to keep the 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 can 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.

Coaching points:

The player closest to the ball pressures the attacker

The other player stands diagonally behind their partner to cover

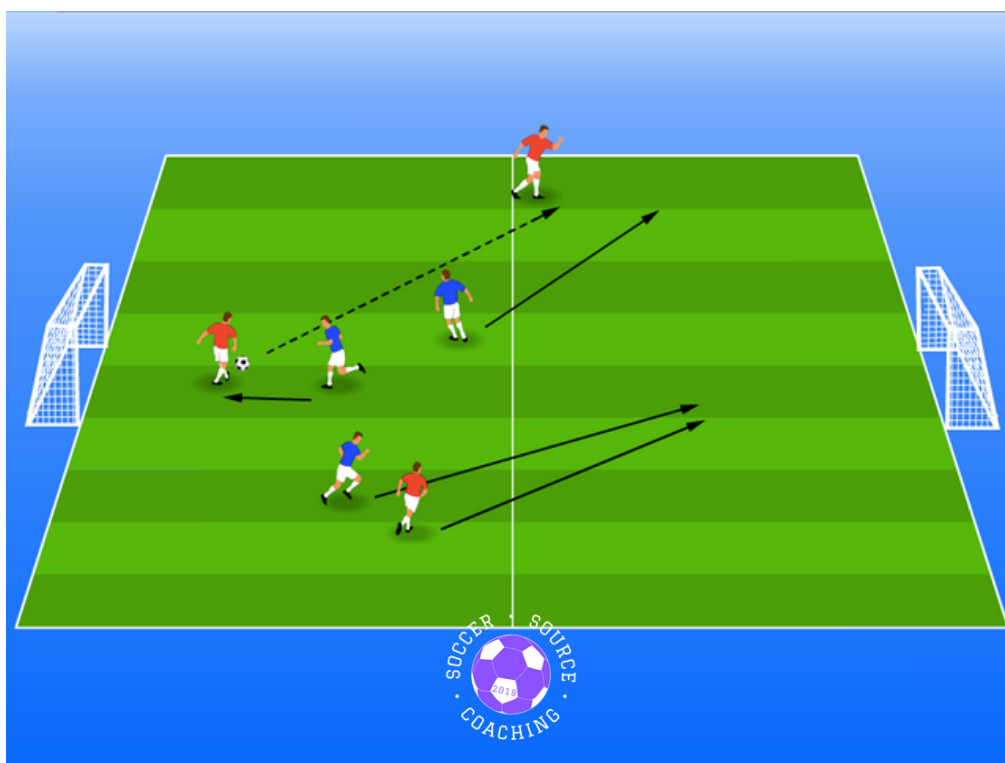
Communicate with each other

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?



[Click here for the video](#)

3v3 defending soccer drill to defend against a counterattack

Purpose: The purpose of this soccer defending drill is to get your players to quickly transition from attack to defense.

Set up:

2 teams of 3
 2 goals
 15 x 20-yard area
 1 soccer ball
Instructions:

This will be a regular game of soccer.

However, if a team is able to score a goal it will be worth 3 points but if a team is able to win the ball back in 5 seconds or less are losing possession of the ball that will be worth 1 point.

The player or team must be in complete control of the ball.

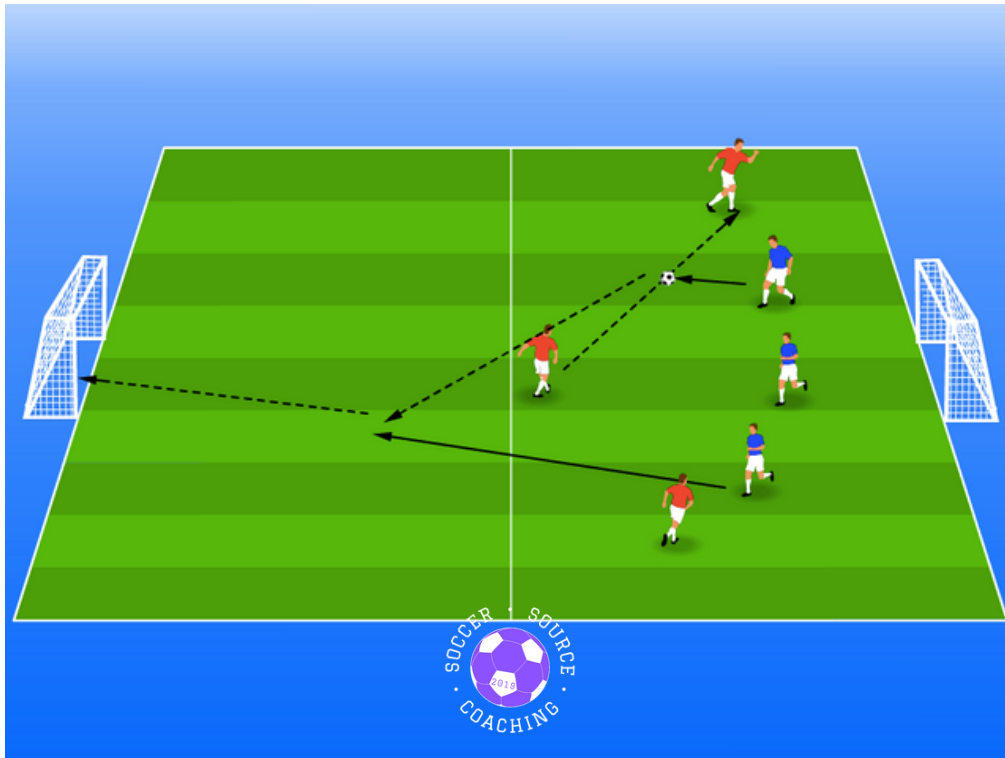
This will encourage players to regain possession back of the ball in a timely manner.

Even if they do not win the ball back in under 5 seconds they should be able to get back in a good position to defend the counterattack.

Coaching points:

The player closest to the ball should pressure
 If you are not pressuring the player on the ball try to get back to a goal-side position as quick as possible
 Quickly close passing lanes and force the opposition player into a mistake
Questions that can lead to coaching points:

Which player should pressure the ball after you have lost possession?
 If you do not have the ball what should you try to do as quickly as possible?
 How can you force the opposition player into mistakes?



[Click here for the video](#)

3v3 soccer drill to stay compact

Purpose: The purpose of this defending drill is to encourage a team to stay defensively organized and compact

Set up:

2 teams of 3
2 goals
15 x 20-yard area
1 soccer ball
How the drill works:

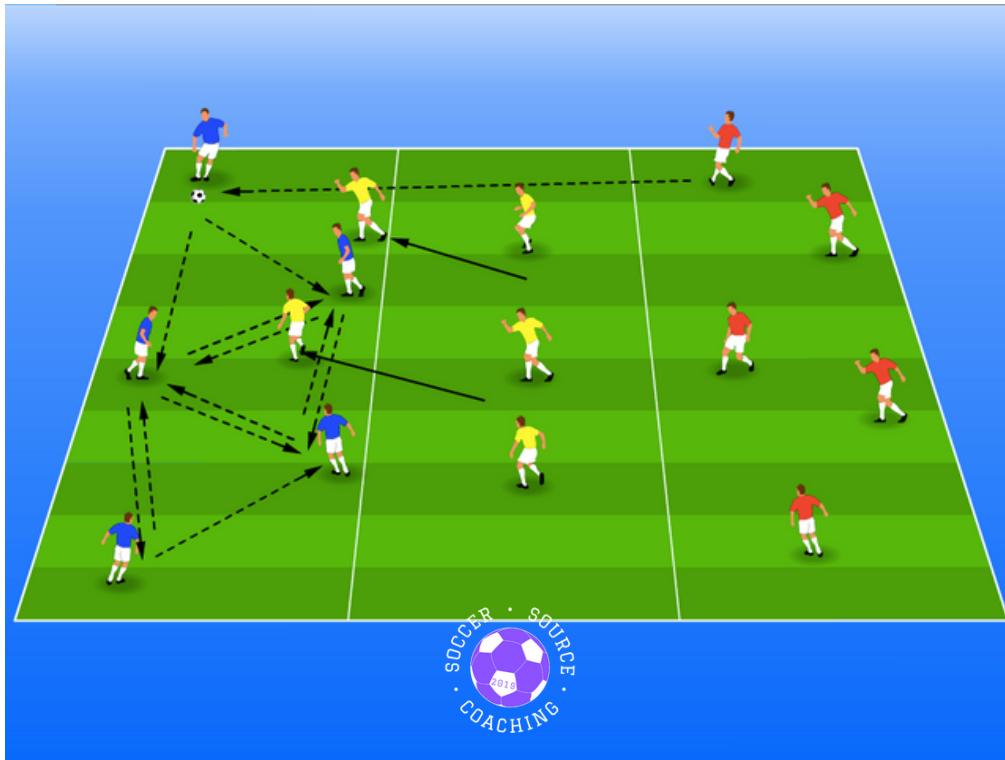
Set up your 3v3-sided pitch with a clear halfway line down the middle.

This will be a regular game of soccer however if the team out of possession of the ball is able to win the ball in their own half and score in the same phase of play the goal will be worth 3 goals instead of 1.

Coaching points:

One player should pressure the player on the ball while the other 2 should cover
Communicate with each other so you know when to press, who to press and where to press
Force the opposition team around the outside, and avoid getting split.
Questions that can lead to coaching points:

Who should pressure the ball and who should cover?
How can you effectively pressure together as a team?
Where should you try to show the attackers?



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Soccer drill for defenders to stay compact

Purpose: The purpose of this soccer drill is to help the defending team to stay compact as a defensive and not get split.

Set up:

Create a 30x20 yard area
 Divide the area into 3 vertical sections
 Split your team into 3 teams of 5
 1 soccer ball
How the drill works:

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 section.

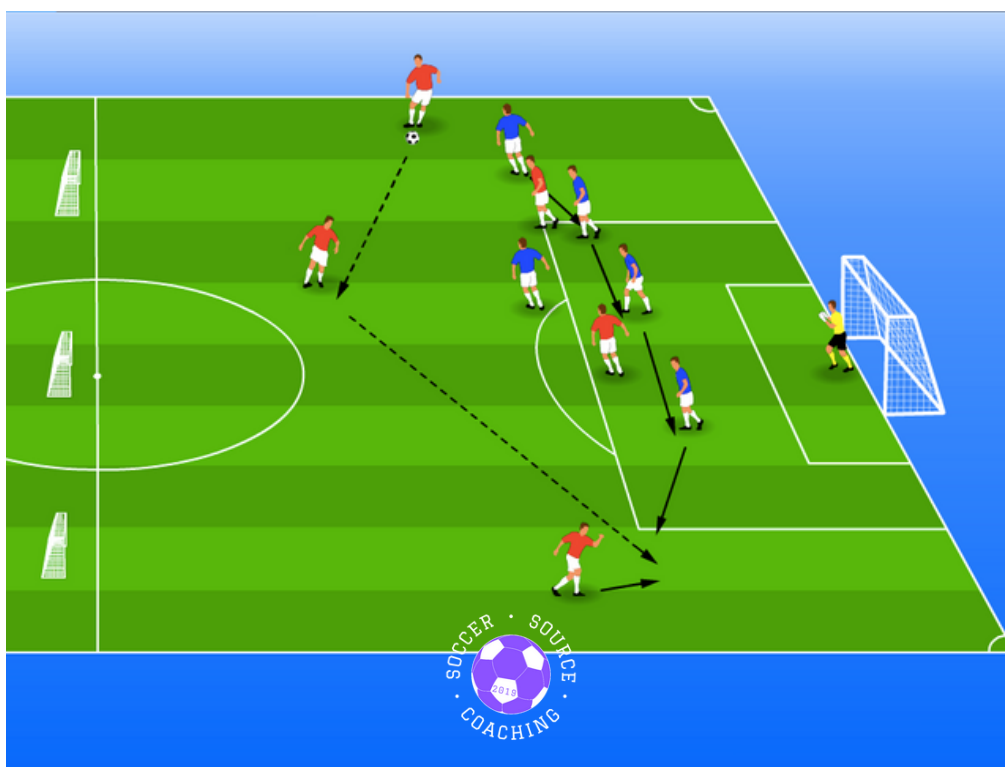
When a possession team is trying to make 5 passes in their section the defending team will send 2 players in to try and win the ball back with the remaining 3 staying in the middle section.

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 lanes
 Pressure quick and contain the 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 pressure the ball? what should the other defenders be doing?
 How can we force the opponents into a mistake?



[Click here for the video](#)

Game realistic attackers vs defenders soccer drill

Purpose: The purpose of this drill is to get players used to defending in a game realistic situation

Set up:

30 yards by 20 yards area

1 ball per 11 players.

How the drill works:

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

The drill can be adapted for how many players you play in your backline and how many center defensive midfielders you play with too.

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

A goalkeeper can be included in this 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 3 goals placed on the opposite side.

Normal rules of soccer apply 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

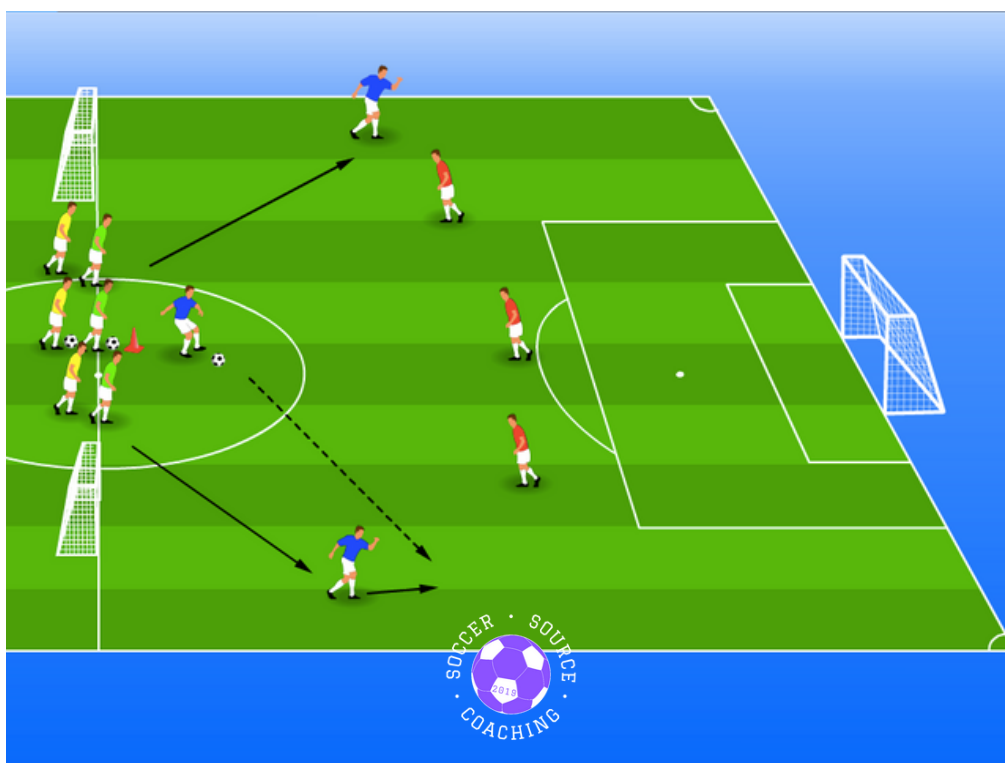
Questions to ask that can lead to coaching points:

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 backline?

Where do we want to show the players?



[Click here for the video](#)

Waves soccer defending drill

Purpose: The purpose of this drill is to get players to quickly transition and remain organized while doing so.
Set up:

4 teams of 3
 1 soccer ball per team of 3
 1 goal 3 pug goals
 15 x 20-yard area
How the drill works:

There will be 1 defending team in the middle with the other 3 teams starting behind the 3 pug goals.

The attacking teams will take turns trying to score on the big goal for 1 point.

If the defending team is able to prevent them from scoring a goal they will get 1 point.

However, if the defending team is able to score in either of the 3 pug goals they will get 3 points.

At the end of a phase of play (when a goal has been scored or gone out of bounds), the next attacking team will come into play.

At the end of the round count how many points the defenders got and how many points the attackers got.

Then minus the attacker's score away from the defender's score.

The winning team will be the defending team that has the highest score.

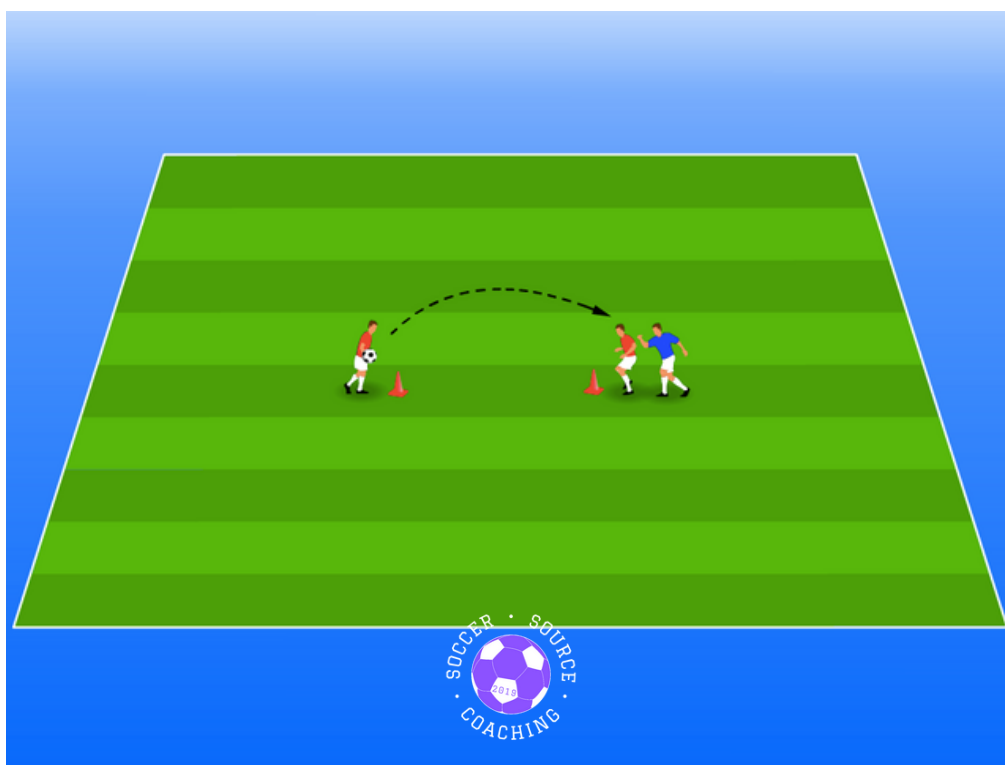
Rounds will last 4 minutes and there will be 4 rounds

The first team of 3 will combine passes to score a goal.

Coaching points:

The player closest to the ball will pressure the other players covering behind
 Stay compact, do not allow opposition players to play a penetrative pass
 Focus on forcing the opposition into a mistake and then step to win the ball
Questions that can lead to coaching points:

Which player should close down the ball?
 How do you prevent the opposition from playing through you?
 When should you step in to win the ball?



[Click here for the video](#)

Soccer defensive heading drill

Purpose: The purpose of this defensive soccer drill is to improve a player's defensive heading ability

Set up:

3 players per group (1 feeder, 1 attacker, 1 defender)

1 soccer ball per group

2 cones

Instructions:

The feeder starts with the ball on their cone and will throw the ball into the air to the defender and attacker on a cone 7 yards away.

This will simulate an aerial ball that is played toward the attacker

The attacker will be in front of the defender and have to try to control the ball and play the ball back to the feeder.

If the attacker does this they will get 1 point, however, if the defender is able to win the ball and get it back to the feeder player they will get 3 points.

If the defender commits a foul then the attacker will get the point

After 10 throws of the feeder, the players will rotate roles with the play at the end of the round scoring the most points being the winner.

Coaching points:

Defend in a side-on-body position, this allows you to easily adjust your feet to react to where the ball is going

Give yourself space to run and jump to meet the ball

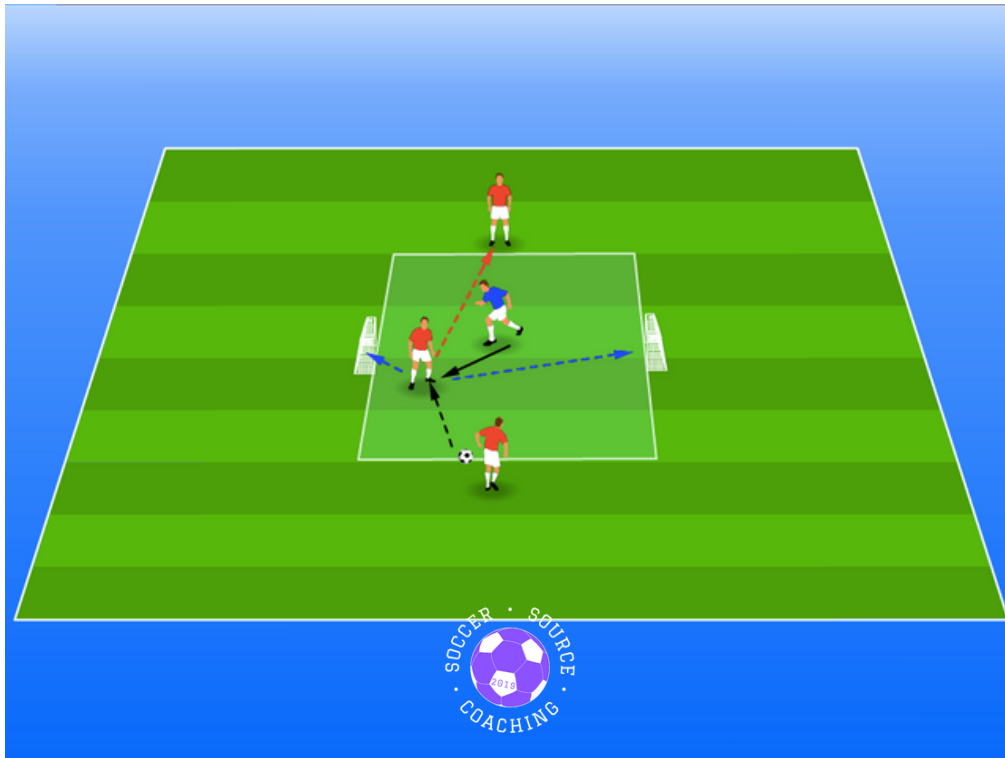
Avoid jumping with your arms raised as this will be a foul

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

What body position should you be in to win the header?

How can you jump higher, and give yourself a greater chance of winning the header?

Where should your arms be when going up for a header?



[Click here for the video](#)

1v1 soccer square defending drill

Purpose: The purpose of this soccer defending drill is to learn how to force the attacker to hold up the ball and play back the way they are facing.

Set up:

4 players (2 target players, 1 defender, 1 attacker,)

7x7 yard area

2 pug goals

1 soccer ball

How the drill works:

After setting up your square place the 2 target players on the outside opposite each other, with the two pug goals opposite each other on different sides.

In the middle of the square, there will be the attacker and defender

If the attacker is able to get the ball from 1 target player to the target player on the opposite side they will get 1 point.

However, if the defender is able to win the ball and is able to score in either of the pug goals they will get 3 points.

Every round will last 3 minutes with a total of 4 rounds being played to ensure every player has an opportunity to be the attacker and defender

Coaching points:

Defend in a side-on-body position with the attacker in front of you

Stay close to the attacker so you allow them no room to turn

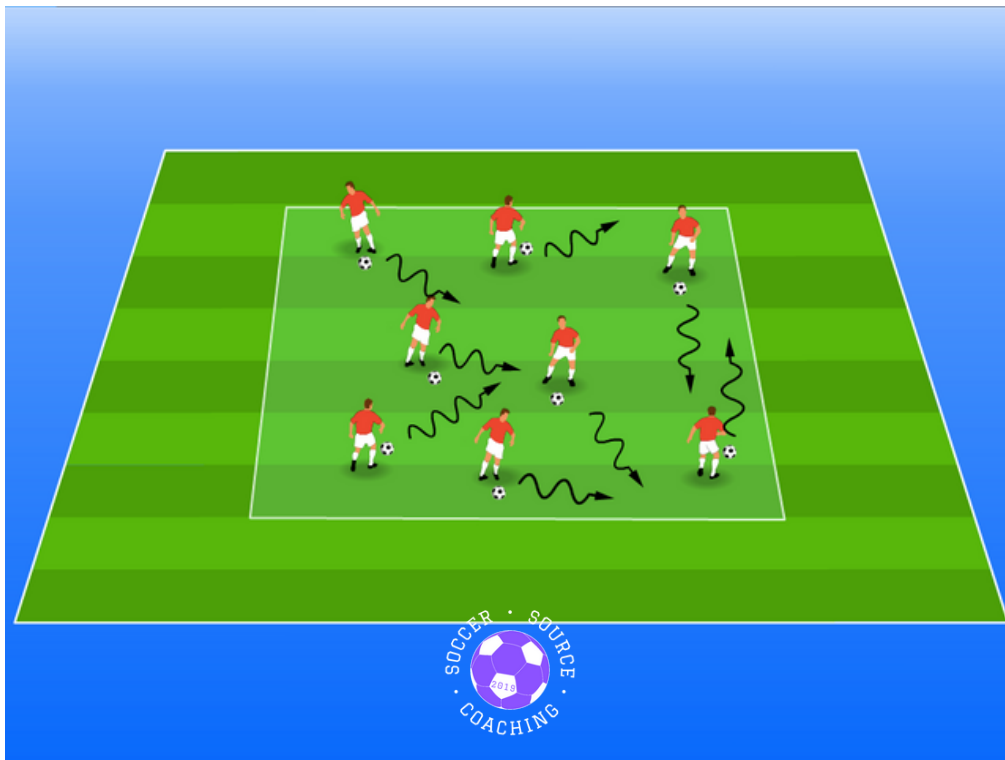
Wait for the attacker to make a mistake to step in and win the ball

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

How should you defend when the attacker is in front of you?

How can you prevent an attacker from turning?

When should you step in to win the ball?



[Click here for the video](#)

Knockout defending soccer game

Purpose: The purpose of this soccer defending drill is to help players identify when an opportunity opens up for a defender to step in and make a challenge on the attacker.

Set up:

10 x 10-yard area
 1 soccer ball per player
 8 players in the area
How the drill works:

Set up your area and give every player a ball in the area. The goal is to try and kick the other player's soccer ball out of the area while remaining in control of yours.

There are a few different variations you can play:

Variation 1:

Ask the players to keep track of each soccer ball they kick out of the area.

For each soccer ball they kick out they will get 1 point.

Players can come back into the area after they have completed a fairly simple soccer challenge (eg. Juggles)

Variation 2:

If a player's soccer ball gets kicked out of the area then they can come back into the area without a soccer ball and just focus on being a defender.

The winner of the round will be the last player in the area with a soccer ball

Variation 3:

Once the players' soccer ball gets kicked out they will stay out until the end of the round.

The winner of the round will be the last player in the area with a soccer ball

Coaching points:

Look for mistakes made by other players to try and kick their ball out

Keep your head up and scan the area to keep your ball safe but also to look for opportunities to kick someone else's ball out

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

When should you try to kick someone else's ball out of the area?

How can you know what is going on around you?