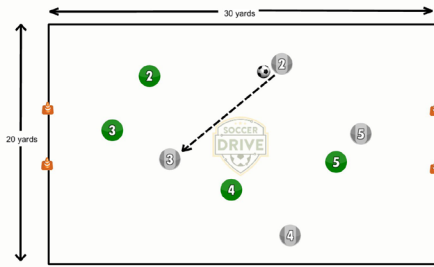




PRINCIPLES OF DEFENDING

AGE LEVEL: U14 TIME: 60 MINUTES

PRACTICE PLAN



4 VS. 4 PLAY

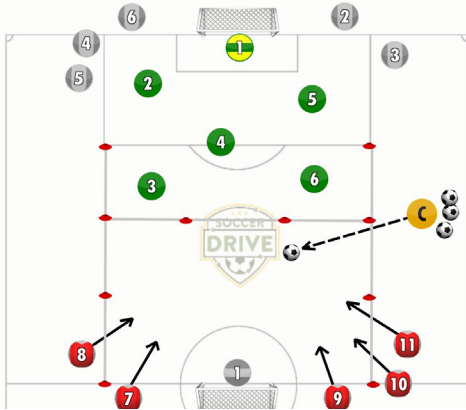
TIME 10 minutes

SETUP

- » Create two 30x20yd fields with a 2yd goal on each endline.
- » Divide players into four teams and play 4v4.
- » Play two-minute games, and rotate teams after every game to play a new one.
- » Encourage the teams to keep score, and try to beat each team they play.

COACHING POINTS

None. Let the players play and make mistakes. Only intervene if it is taking too long to get ball back in play.



RAPID DEFENDING

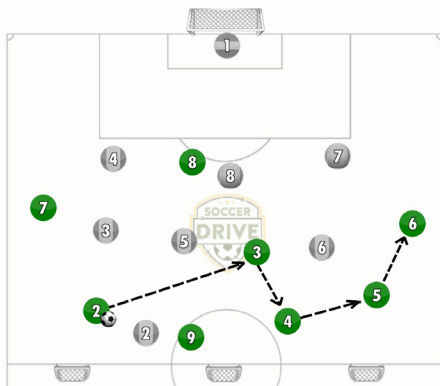
TIME 15 minutes

SETUP

- » Play on a half field, with sidelines being the width of the 18yd box.
- » Split teams into three teams of 5.
- » Goalkeeper in each goal.
- » One team in the center of field, while other two teams are split on opposite halves of field.
- » Coach play a ball into one of the teams that is off the field, and they attack the team on the field.
- » If defending team wins the ball, they try and score on opposite goal.
- » If a ball goes out of bounds, or a goal is scored, coach plays to the other team that is off, and now the defending team has to turn and defend them against the opposite goal.
- » Play for 3 minutes, and then rotate the team in the center.

COACHING POINTS

- » Pressure (must be immediate to delay the opponent).
- » Cover/Balance by teammates not pressuring.
- » Safety vs. Risk.
- » Employing offside when appropriate.
- » Role of Goalkeeper in helping organize the defense.



3 GOAL COUNTER

TIME 15 minutes

SETUP

- » On a half field, place three counter-goals (2yd wide) across halfway line.
- » Place a line of cones to act as a halfway line on field.
- » Play 8v8, with one team defending the three counter goals, and the other team defending the large goal.
- » Team defending the large goal should be placed in a formation that is similar to the formation your team plays in games.
- » Normal rules. If a goal is scored, play restarts with coach.
- » Offside rule in effect.

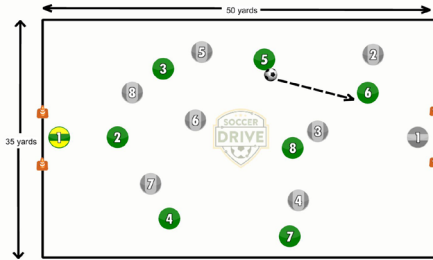
COACHING POINTS

- » Only coach the players defending the big goal.
- » Pressuring defender needs to get to attacker quickly in order to limit space for the shot. Their goal is to not get beat 1v1, get their body in the way of any shot that might happen.
- » Covering defender needs to remain tight enough to pressuring defender to help limit space to shoot, while also remaining close enough to 2nd attacker to immediately pressure them if they get the ball before they shoot.
- » Both pressure and cover should get tighter together the closer they are to their own goal.
- » Communication to organize defenders.
- » Effective use of offside when appropriate.
- » Line on confrontation (when is our team going to start pressuring the ball so we can remain compact)?



PRINCIPLES OF DEFENDING

PRACTICE PLAN



8 VS. 8 SCRIMMAGE

TIME 15 minutes

SETUP

- » Play 8v8. If your numbers are short, decrease size of field to 40x25 and play 7v7.
- » Cones for goals are 6yds wide and use goalkeepers. Both teams play a 1-2-3-1.

COACHING POINTS

- » None! Just sit back and let them play. Play full rules for your age group: offside, thrown-ins, goalkicks and corners etc.
- » Praise, in the flow of the game, appropriate movements of your players to create or take space!

END OF PRACTICE QUESTIONS:

- » What is the role of the pressuring defender when close to our own goal? (Don't dive in, but keep body between ball and goal)
- » When should the pressuring defender try to win the ball? (when the attack makes a mistake)
- » What is the role of the covering defender? (to keep the field compact, but remain close enough to the 2nd attacker to provide immediate pressure)
- » What is the line of confrontation? (a point on the field where the team knows to begin pressuring the ball. If we pressure to high, and are not on the same page, it allows too much space behind us for the opposing team to attack)