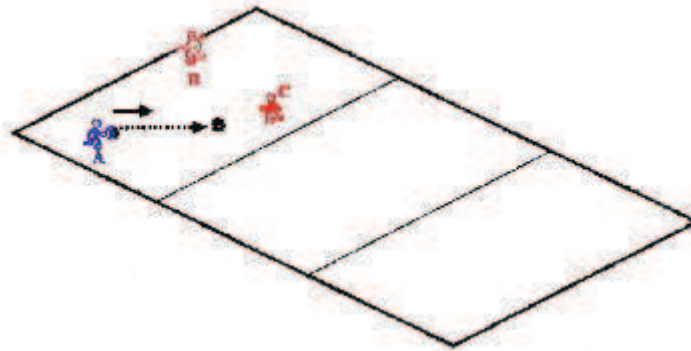


# Practice - Small Group Defending

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**Warm Up** 5 - 10 minutes. Activity level - Mild ramping up. Space: General. 1 - 2 Players per group.



## Pressure

### The Game

Groups of three, one ball per group. Player **A** rolls the ball (receiving ground balls) or tosses the ball (receiving air balls) to either player **B** or player **C**. In this example, player **C** must control the ball and get a completed pass to player **B**. While this is occurring, player **A** immediately challenges player **C** and tries to win the ball back. After successful pass, player **C** would then pick up the ball and repeat the activity as the defender. The defender is awarded a point for winning the ball back and gets to throw again.

### Coaching Points

- Encourage defender to pressure quickly after the toss. Defender needs to work hard at closing down the space while the ball is in flight.
  - Receiving player's first touch should be away from the pressuring defender.
  - Player receiving the pass should move to create a clear passing lane.
  - Do not allow the receiving player to one touch the incoming toss. This is a receiving drill, as well as a drill that serves as a good warm-up for practices dealing with defenders.
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**Small Game** 20 - 25 Minutes. Activity level: Medium progression to high. Space: Defined space "smaller". 3 - 5 players per group.



## Pressure / Cover Defending

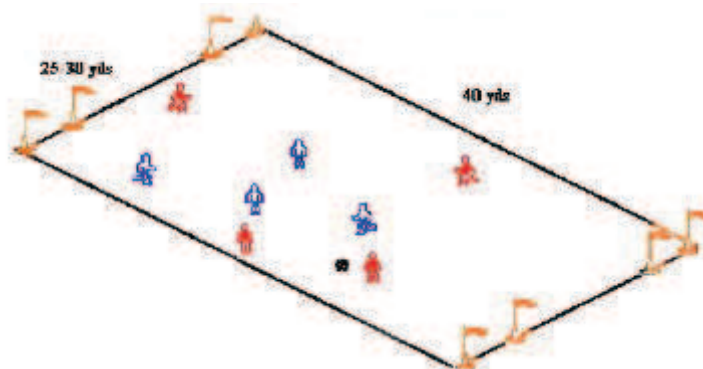
### The Game

- 2 v. 2, with goals marked out in the corner of the grid.
- Have a regular game with periods of about 2 - 3 minutes in duration.
- Have plenty of extra balls ready to keep the game flowing

### Coaching Points

#### Defending principles of play

- Pressure on the ball, do not let the **first attacker's** head to come up
- **Second defender** must cover the goal as well as be aware of the **second attacker**
- **First defender** tries to channel the attacker into the sideline and away from the **second attacker**. (This is easier to do since the goals are in the corners of the grid, the sidelines come up quicker.)
- When **first defender** has made the play predictable, **second defender** tries to double team.
- Make sure the defenders stay balanced, that they do not become too spread out, enabling the attacking team to make "splitting passes".
- As soon as the ball is won, can they shoot? This is the best time to do so because the attacking team is not in a good defending posture.



## Four Goals - End Line

### The Game

4 v. 4. Each team defends two goals and attacks two goals. Having the goals on the end lines makes this game more realistic as it forces the attacking team to have more of a direction to their attack.

### Coaching Points

Defending principles

- Defending become particularly challenging since the defending team has two goals to defend, essentially turning this into a 6 v. 4 game.
- It is a good idea to allow each team to decide by themselves, at first, where they are going to try to win the ball. In other words, are they going to challenge the ball all over the field, or will they hang back and try to only defend the space close to their own goals?
- Can they "**channel**" the ball into certain areas of the field to gain possession.
- Can they apply enough pressure on the ball to limit the **first attacker's** options, and make the play predictable.

A good session for U-12 players and above.

**Team Game** 30 Minutes plus. Activity level: High. Space: Defined for the game = larger space. 7 - 11 players per team.



## Four Zones Game

### The Game

A regular 11 v. 11 or 8 v. 8 scrimmage. Break the field into 4 horizontal zones. Award the defending team points when they win the ball back in a chosen zone. For example, the **Blue** team

might be given 3 points for winning the ball back in the first zone, two points for the second zone, one point for the third zone and no points for the fourth zone. This can change depending on where the coach wants the team to try to force the play

### Coaching Points

- Try to get the players to work together, collectively, as a unit, with all 11 players aware of the defensive plan.
  - Can the defending team control the attacking team, making them play the ball in a certain area of the field, and then winning the ball there.
  - Make sure you give defending agendas to both teams.
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**Warm Down** 5 - 10 Minutes. Activity level: Low ramping down. Space: General, No specific boundaries. 1 - 2 players per group.



## Two Sided Goal Game

### The Game

A 2 v. 2 game played to a two sided goal. Goals can be scored from either side. The game is a continuous flow game that is best played for 2 - 3 minutes.

### Coaching Points

- A good warm-up or cool-down game to teach defending and attacking skills.
  - Defenders must make sure they cover the goal as well as the attacking players.
  - Defenders must work at channeling the first attacker away from their support.
  - Attacking team must be good at combination play to unbalance the defense.
  - As soon as the ball is lost, defending team must get goal side.
  - Try to attack immediately when the ball is won.
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