

“Serve and Protect (Defend)”

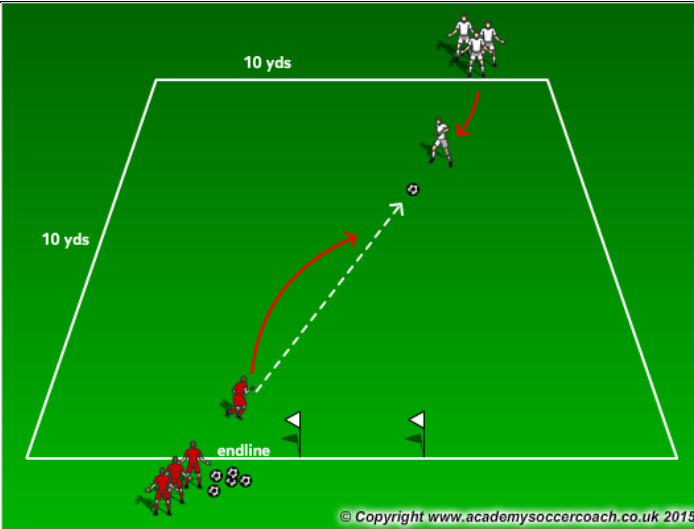
East Central Soccer District Academy Curriculum

Curriculum Topic: Defending

Primary Objective: To build skill in patient, effective defense

Duration: 10 minutes

The Basics



Organization

10yd x 10yd grid (or 15yds x 15 yds for older age groups), 1 cone or flag goal at one endline.

Group divided into 2 teams

Team at goal endline with a supply of balls

Activity

- First player from red team serves a ball to the first white team player, hite player attacks, red player defends.
- If attacker loses possession or ball goes out of grid, defensive team earns a point, and another pair immediately begins.
- Switch attacking/defending teams after 3 minutes or after 5 points are scored.

Coach Pts

- Good defensive posture; knees slightly bent, body turned to one side.
- Encourage patient defense; quick rush up to attacking player but stopping 3-5' from the ball, then jockeying backwards, keeping body between goal and attacker, waiting for the right moment* to close and challenge for the ball.
- **The “right moment” is when the attacker pushes the ball a bit too far from their feet or commits to an action the defender can read and counter.*
- Encourage shepherding attacker to the sideline; play/jockey toward the middle, inviting the attacker to the open space closer to the sideline, then close on attacker as they get closer to sideline.
- Introduce concept of 1st Defender & 2nd Defender.

Mod

- For advanced players, encourage a curved run-up as pictured above, to help shepherd the attacker in the direction you want him to go.

Progression

- 1v1 defending when in attacking third of field; less pressure on attacker.
- 1v1 defending when in defending third; more urgent pressure on attacker to prevent a shot on goal.
- 2A v 1D – defender first splits attackers to take away pass, then jockeys/closes on dribbler.
- 2A v 2D – introduce concept of Second Defender; defender who positions self to support primary defender by staying behind and on the goal side of 1st defender, preparing to intercept any passes or step in and challenge if 1st defender is beaten.