

PERFECT DEFENDING

*67 Easy to Coach Drills
for Marking, Tackling & Blocking*



Michael Beale

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Introduction

For most coaches, improving defending both individually and as a group is one of the hardest tasks faced.

Young players often find the subject boring and difficult which leads to a lack of energy and enthusiasm from players and inadequate coaching time devoted to defending by coaches.

Ask anyone about football and what makes a great team and the answers you will regularly receive will include the ability to score goals, quick passing and skillful dribbling. A good defence will rarely be in the top 3 answers.

However, when you look at how often your team doesn't have the ball in a game it shows that it is vitally important to develop your team's understanding and effectiveness when defending.

In this book we aim to change players' attitudes towards defending by making the practices fun and showing the rewards of good defensive play. We then build this up to develop individual, small group and team defensive play.

The practices aim to cover all aspects of defending such as pressuring the opponent; making play predictable; blocking crosses; dealing with crosses; close marking; defending in 1s, 2s, and 3s; dealing with high balls; forcing the direction of play; holding a line; tackling; clearances and more.

Yours in coaching

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beale". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'B'.

Michael Beale

Contents

SECTION 1 - Individual defending

- 1 - 1v1 defending technique
- 2 - Dribble with danger
- 3 - 1v1 defending skill
- 4 - Race to challenge
- 5 - Light on your feet
- 6 - Random defend
- 7 - Stay with your opponent
- 8 - End zone alleys
- 9 - Stop the turn – 2 goals
- 10 - Front and back
- 11 - Delay the attacker
- 12 - Keep the attacker wide
- 13 - Get goal-side
- 14 - Block the shot
- 15 - Penalty area battle
- 16 - None shall pass
- 17 - Defenders circuit
- 18 - Pressure the opponent and react to defend
- 19 - Continuous - 4 goals

SECTION 4 - Team defending

- 53 - Shape walk through
- 54 - Make play predictable
- 55 - Full team pressure
- 56 - Block the passing options
- 57 - Balls into the forwards feet
- 58 - Dealing with long balls
- 59 - Long ball game

SECTION 2 - Defending in twos

- 20 - 2v2 defending technique
- 21 - 2v2 technique into opposed
- 22 - 2v1 communication support
- 23 - 2v1 random defend
- 24 - Front and back
- 25 - Front, right, back, left
- 26 - 2v1/1v2 continuous
- 27 - 2v1 defend well and receive the reward
- 28 - Recovery run
- 29 - Support from deep
- 30 - 2v2v2 continuous
- 31 - 2v2 continuous defend from crosses
- 32 - Defend the dribble, defend the cross
- 33 - Crossways
- 34 - Defend the dribble, defend the cross – crossways
- 35 - Around the world
- 36 - Around the world crossing game
- 37 - 5v2 three goal defend

SECTION 5 - Fun defending games

- 60 - Race to block
- 61 - Defend the area
- 62 - Fox and hound
- 63 - The shield
- 64 - King of the ring
- 65 - Coconut shy
- 66 - Rugby football
- 67 - Multi-ball game

SECTION 3 - Defending in small groups

- 38 - Group defending technique
- 39 - Group defending skill
- 40 - Group defending game
- 41 - 2v3 – attack
- 42 - 2v3 with wide players
- 43 - Conductor
- 44 - Sweeper game
- 45 - 3v3v3 defend the line
- 46 - 3v3v3 defend from the front
- 47 - Nearest defender to pressure
- 48 - Defending overload
- 49 - Multi-ball overload
- 50 - 3v3 in the box
- 51 - 3 goal 3v3
- 52 - 4v4 dribble or pass

How to use this book

The setup

Area

You may not be able to exactly recreate the suggested area for any number of reasons. The size is by no means an absolute but should not be deviated from too excessively. As a general rule 10 yards is equal to 7 strides. You can use this simple equivalent to mark out the area you need; 20 yards = 14 strides, 30 yards = 21 strides etc.

Equipment

One of the beauties of the game is that it can be played almost anywhere with a reasonably flat surface. If you do not have some of the equipment listed in the Set up section, you can, of course, substitute equipment you do have. Training tops become cones, corner flags become goalposts, parents and coaches become mannequins.

The steps

For the most part the steps required to run each drill have been broken down into 3 sections, each relating to a numbered illustration showing what movements should be made within each step.

What to call out

Never be lost for words with these concise and constructive phrases. Remember, this is “what to call out” not “what to shout”, you should deliver these plans in a way that your players respond to. Always focus on the positives.

The block tackle and slide tackle are fundamental to defending.

Distribute this page to your players so that they can learn the key steps to successfully execute them.

The block tackle

1. Head down over the ball.
2. Knees bent.
3. Planting the non-tackling foot firmly to provide an anchor
4. Tackling foot making contact with the middle of the ball – like a side-foot pass – and in an L-shape.
5. The knee and ankle locked solid.
6. A committed attitude.
7. If the ball becomes stuck then putting a foot under the ball to lift it away.



The grey player stays on his feet and locks his right knee and ankle.

The slide tackle

1. Get in range.
2. Slide on the ground to win the ball, approaching from the side and tackling across the path of the opponent.
3. Tackle using the leg furthest from the ball.
4. Tuck the leg nearest the ball underneath the backside and slide on the outer thigh/hip area.
5. Trap the ball on the shoelaces and swing the leg around in a wide sweep to “hook” the ball with the foot, pulling it towards the direction the tackler came from.
6. Get on your feet quickly whether the tackle is successful or not.



The defender follows the correct technique with the nearest leg tucked under his body.

SECTION 1

Individual defending

In the modern game it is crucial that players can defend 1v1 against a range of opponents. Matches at all levels are made up of a series of 1v1 situations so it is important that adequate time is spent working on individual technique in training.

The experience of playing against different types of players is also important as each player has their own playing characteristics (big, small, fast, strong, skilful etc).

The beauty for coaches is that their own team will have these different types of players and therefore as coaches we already start in a position of power.

Key factors:

- Pressure the opponent quickly and then edge in to defend
- Be patient
- Keep your eyes on the ball
- Stay on your feet and jockey the attacker as this will delay the attack!
- Can you show the attacker towards a team mate or away from danger?
- Can you force the attacker to pass the ball sideways or backwards?
- Use your arms and body to compete physically to win possession
- Can you win the ball?

1v1 defending technique

This practice develops the understanding and technique of pressuring your opponent. Players must listen to the coach's call of: 1 – jockey, 2 – show right, 3 – show left, 4 – stop turn, and quickly run to take up the correct position.

The set up

Area: 15x15 yards

Equipment: 4 cones, 1 mannequin

The steps

1. In fast, slow down and edge in. Keep eyes on ball and jockey backwards.
2. Arc your approach by running slightly to the left and then force your opponent to the right.
3. Arc your approach by running slightly to the right and then force your opponent to the left.
4. In fast and get touch tight to the mannequin.

What to call out

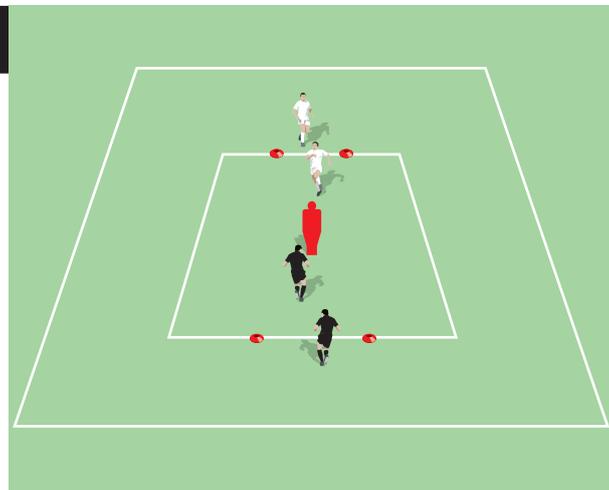
- "Pressure"
- "Be patient and jockey"
- "Show right/left"

KEY

.....
Player Movement

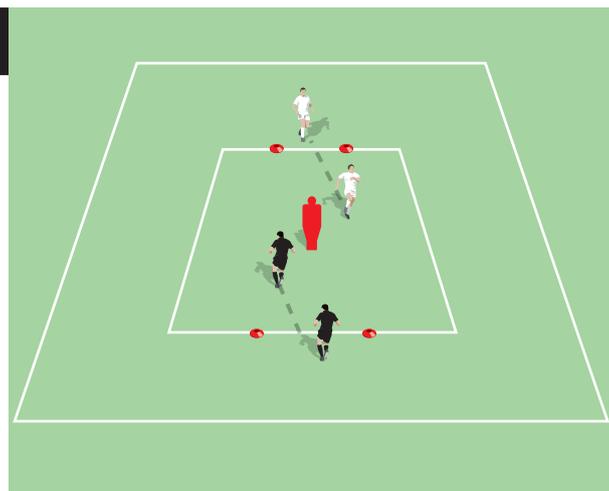
—————>
Ball Movement

1



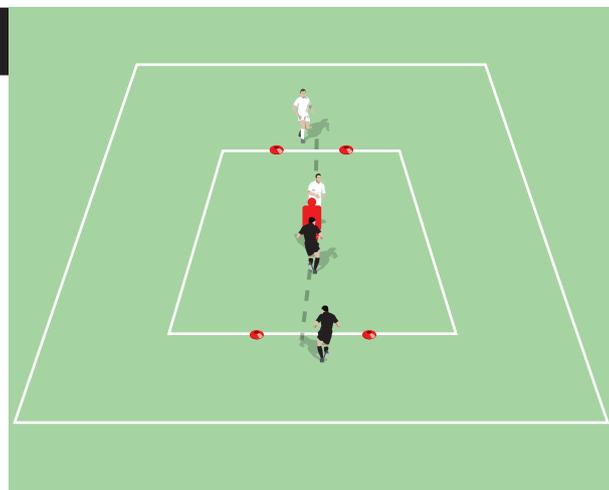
The players start by taking up a position to jockey the mannequin.

2



The players practice forcing the direction of play to their right.

3



Now the defenders get touch-tight in order to stop the turn.

Dribble with danger

The defender in this practice must work hard to force the attacker out of the area or into a mistake in order to win the ball.

The set up

Area: 10x10 yards

Equipment: 6 cones, 6 balls

The steps

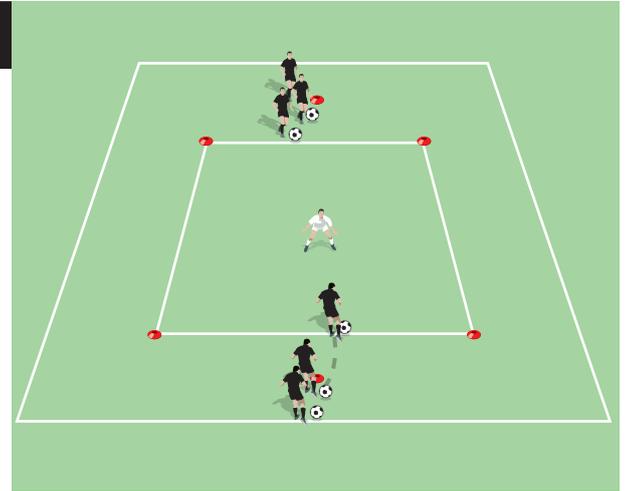
1. The attackers take it in turns to dribble across the area.
2. The defender must try to win the ball or force the attacker out of the sideline of the square.
3. The defender must remain in the square until they have won possession from the attacker or forced them wide.

The game is played for a set time period.

What to call out

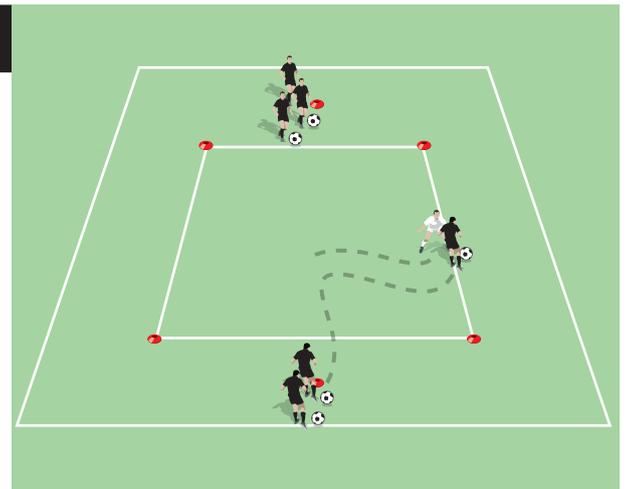
- "Pressure"
- "Force to one side"
- "Can you win the ball?"

1



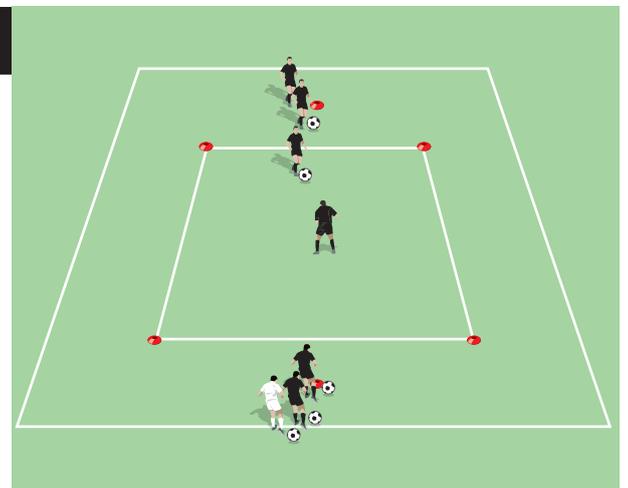
The attacker tries to dribble across the square.

2



The defender is able to force him out of the playing area.

3



The defender is rewarded by joining the attackers. The unsuccessful attacker becomes the new defender.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

→
Ball Movement

1v1 defending skill

This drill gives players a chance to work on technique before an opposed situation in the sequence passive, passive, live.

The set up

Area: Two grids 20x15 yards

Equipment: 4 balls, 2 goals, 4 mannequins

The steps

The players work on the coach's whistle.

Whistle 1 – the defender must sprint and jockey the 1st mannequin.

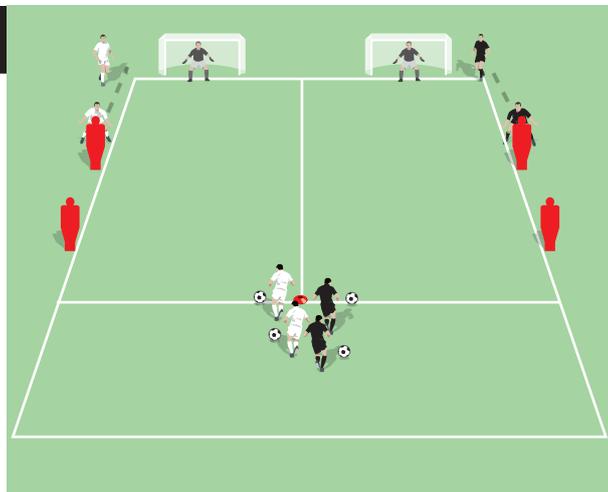
Whistle 2 – the defender must sprint and show the 2nd mannequin inside.

Whistle 3 – the attacker dribbles onto the pitch and the defender must defend a 1v1 situation.

What to call out

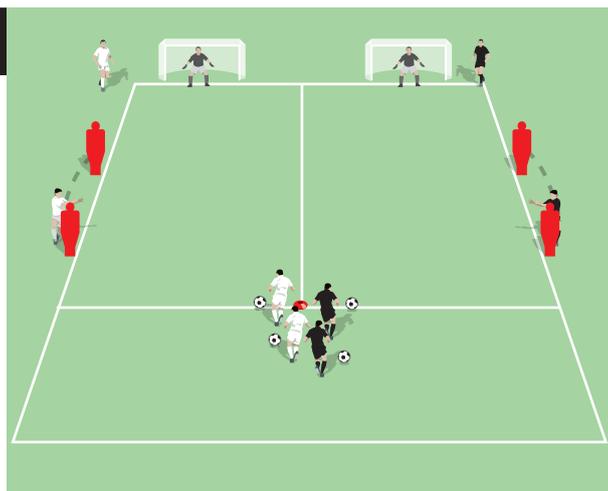
- "Pressure"
- "Show towards your mate"
- "React and defend 1v1"

1



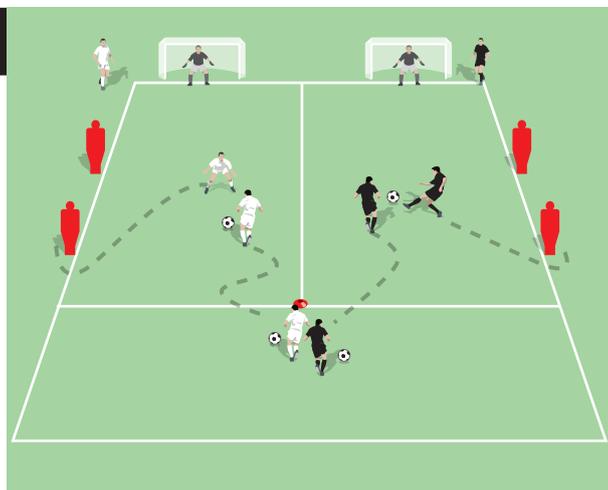
The players must jockey the first mannequin.

2



Then show second mannequin inside.

3



Before entering a 1v1 where they use the positional skills learnt.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

→
Ball Movement

Race to challenge

This drill develops speedy reactions and forces players to engage in physical confrontation to win the ball, building a competitive edge.

The set up

Area: 20 yards from goal

Equipment: 1 ball, 1 goal

The steps

1. The players stand to the side of the coach and face away from the goal.
2. The players must react to the coach's throw and race to the ball.
3. The first player to get to the ball becomes the attacker, the second player is the defender and must use their strength to compete physically to win the ball.

What to call out

- "React quickly to the ball"
- "Fight for the ball"
- "Can you make the challenge?"



The players start with their backs to goal.



The players race to get to the ball.



The defender must be strong to stop the attacker getting a shot away.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

→
Ball Movement

Light on your feet

The term “light on your feet” is used for defenders who are always on their toes, ready to react and move to cut out an attack.

The set up

Area: 20x10 yards

Equipment: 2 cones, 2 balls, 2 target goals

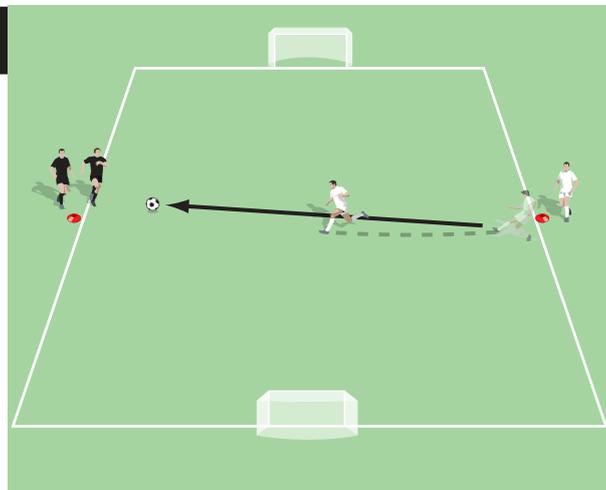
The steps

1. The defender passes across to the attacker and races to defend.
2. The attacker must use disguise and then try to dribble and score a goal.
3. The defender must try to anticipate the attacker’s movement and challenge to win the ball.

What to call out

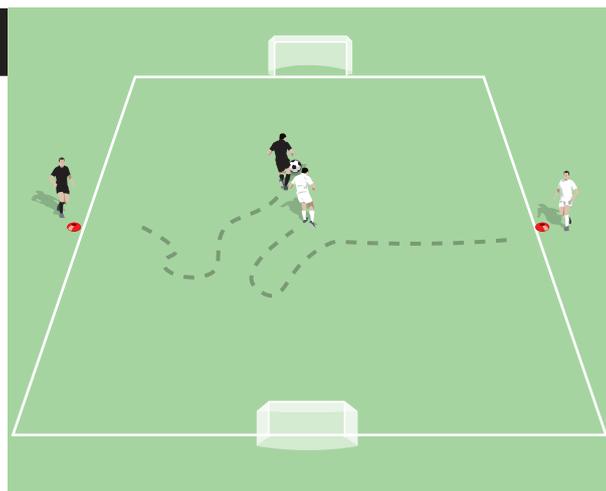
- “Pass and pressure”
- “React quickly”
- “Win the ball”

1



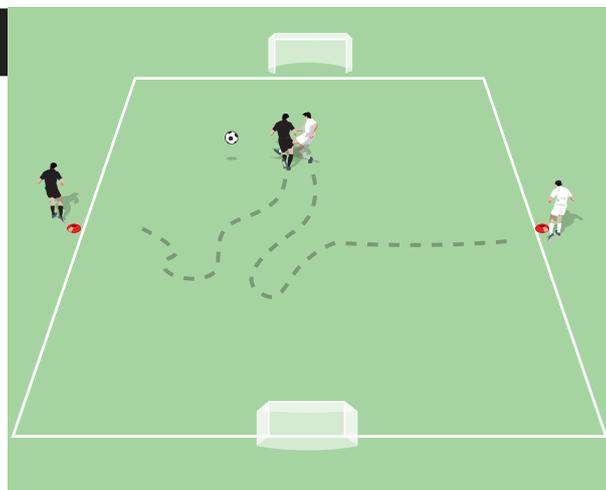
The defender follows their pass to begin.

2



The defender must track the attacker and not fall for their feints.

3



By staying in touch with the attacker the defender can successfully make a tackle.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

—————>
Ball Movement

Random defend

The defender must react to the opponent's starting position, think quickly and defend accordingly.

The set up

Area: Half pitch

Equipment: 4 cones, 4 balls, 1 goal

The steps

1. One player works as the defender and starts in the middle of the pitch. The other players stand by a numbered cone and get ready to react to dribble into the area.
2. To start the practice, the coach calls out a number and immediately the attacker attempts to score whilst the defender must react and try to defend.
3. For the next attack, the attacker replaces the defender and the defender becomes a new attacker.

What to call out

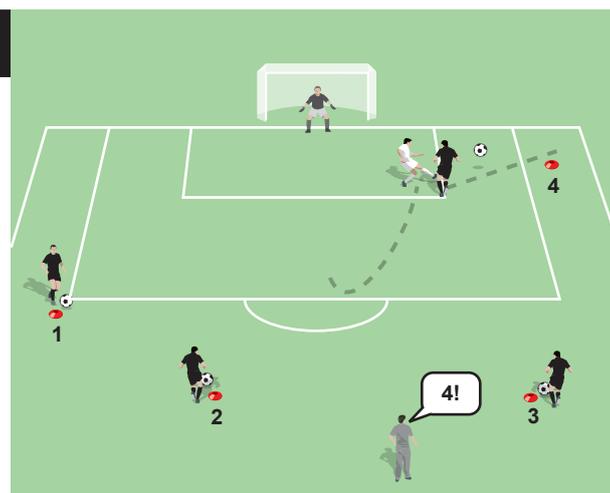
- "React quickly"
- "Pressure the opponent"
- "Force away from danger"

1



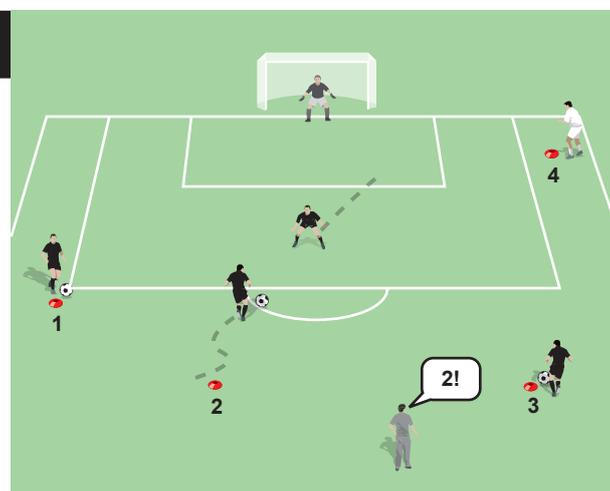
The layout allows for four different angles of attack.

2



The defender reacts to defend an attack from player 4.

3



Having been tackled player 4 now moves to defend against player 2.

KEY

..... Player Movement

→ Ball Movement

Stay with your opponent

The defender must react quickly to the attacker's movements. Use of arms and body are essential to stopping the attacker.

The set up

Area: Penalty area

Equipment: 4 cones, ball between 2, 1 goal

The steps

Players get into pairs and rotate between attackers and defenders.

1. The attacking player must attempt to lose the defender and receive a pass.
2. The attacker must then attempt to score using a maximum of two touches.
3. The defender must legally use their arms and body to hold off the attacker and make a tackle to cancel out the goal scoring opportunity.

What to call out

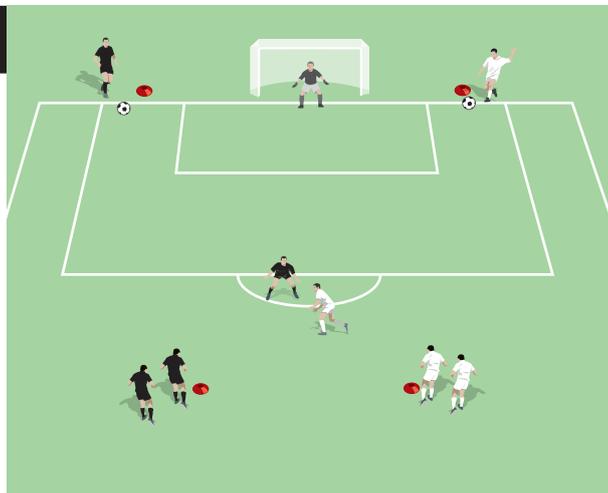
- "Use your arms and body to get across the attacker's path"
- "Block the pass into the attacker"
- "Block the shot"

KEY

.....
Player Movement

→
Ball Movement

1



The defender takes a position marking the attacker.

2



The defender must track the attacker's run as he moves to receive a pass.

3



If the defender has stayed with his opponent he will have a chance to make a tackle.

End zone alleys

The defenders in this drill must have a “no one will pass” mentality in order to stop the attacker and have a chance to attack themselves.

The set up

Area: Two 30x10 yard alleys with end zones

Equipment: 6 balls

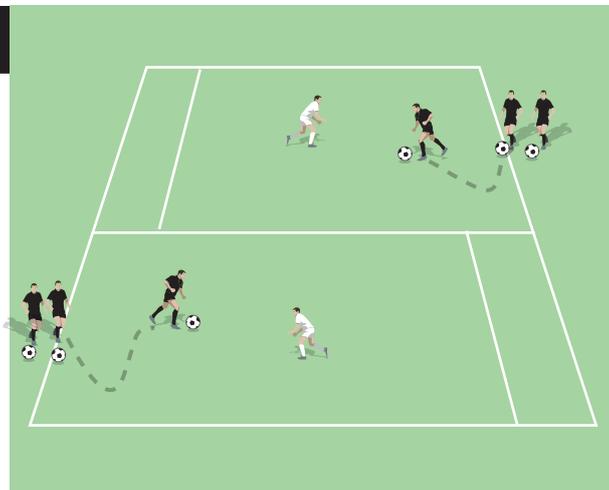
The steps

1. The attackers attempt to dribble past the defender to the opposite end of the alley.
2. If successful they wait and join the line coming in the opposite direction.
3. However, if they are tackled then the roles are reversed with the defender joining the line and attacker becoming the new defender.

What to call out

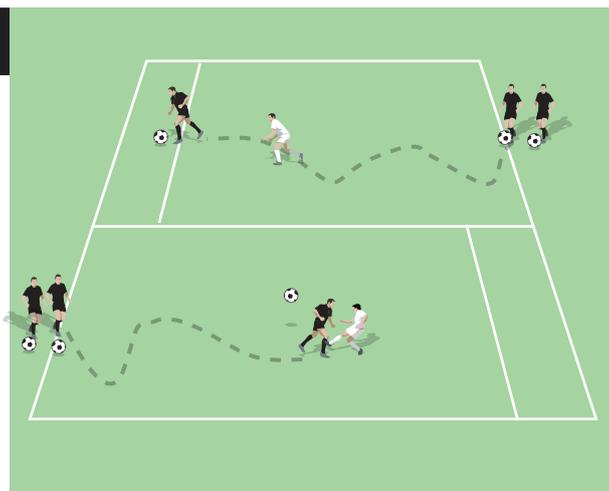
- “Pressure away from end zone”
- “Force the play to one side”
- “Be patient, don’t over commit”

1



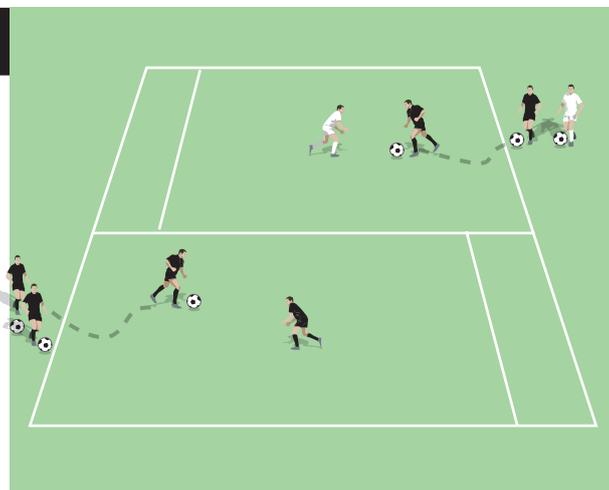
The defenders must keep their eyes on the ball.

2



The defender in the lower box makes a successful challenge.

3



The defeated attacker now takes the place of the defender.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

→
Ball Movement

Stop the turn – 2 goals

The defender must pressure quickly as the ball is played and stop the opponent from turning to face the goals.

The set up

Area: 20x20 yards

Equipment: 1 cone, 1 ball, 2 target goals

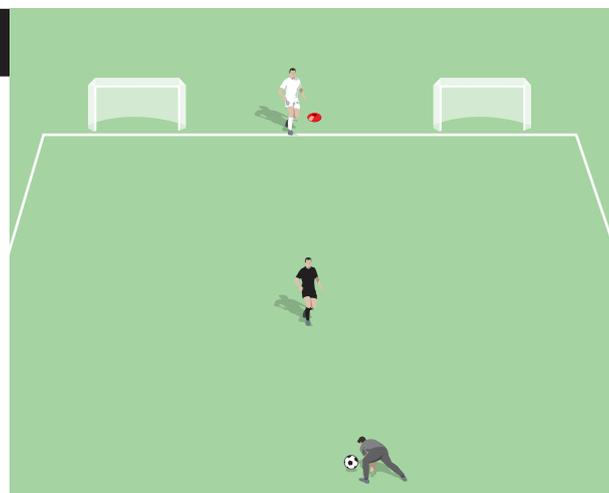
The steps

1. The coach passes into the attacker. As the ball is travelling the defender quickly runs out to defend.
2. The attacker has to try and lose the defender and score in one of the target goals.
3. The defender should take up a position goalside of the attacker and deny him the space to turn easily.

What to call out

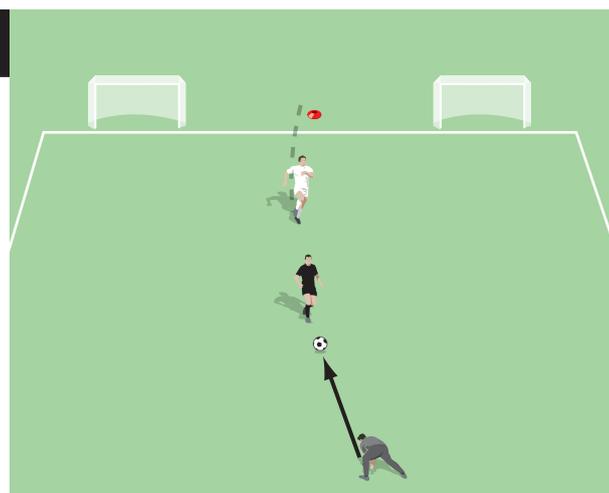
- "Pressure, get touch tight"
- "Stop the turn"
- "Delay play and force a mistake"

1



The attacker sets to receive the ball with his back to goal.

2



The defender must close down quickly.

3



Close marking stops the attacker from turning.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

—————>
Ball Movement

Front and back

This drill forces the players to react to the two most frequent defending and attacking situations.

The set up

Area: 30x30 yards

Equipment: 3 cones, 2 balls, 1 goal

The steps

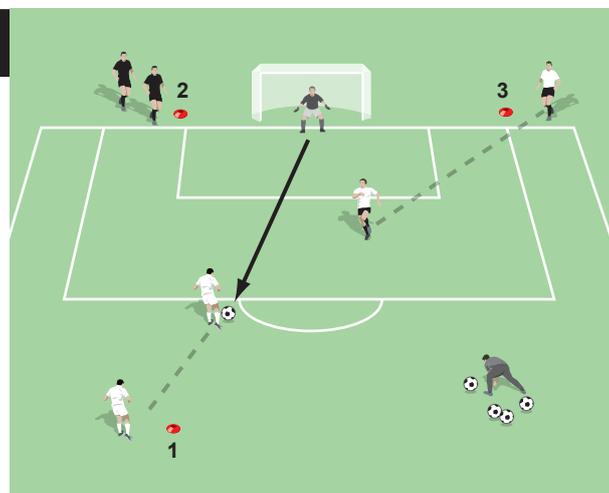
1. The goalkeeper passes to player 1 who attacks 1v1 against player 3.
2. Immediately after this attack, the coach passes to player 3.
3. Player 2 must now run out and stop player 3 from turning to shoot.

For the next attack, player 1 becomes player 2 and player 2 becomes player 3.

What to call out

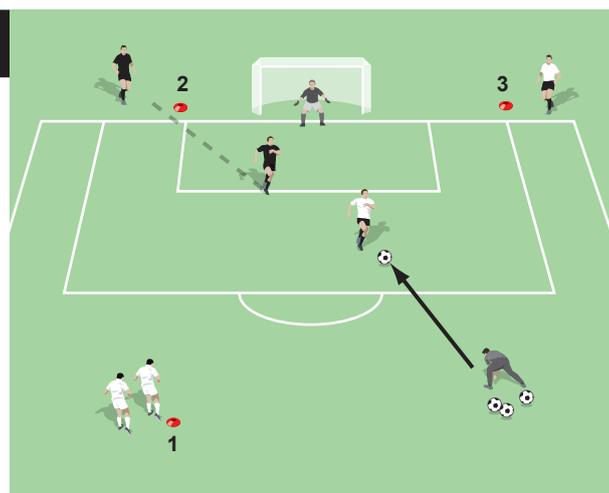
- "Pressure"
- "Force away from goal"
- "Stop the turn"

1



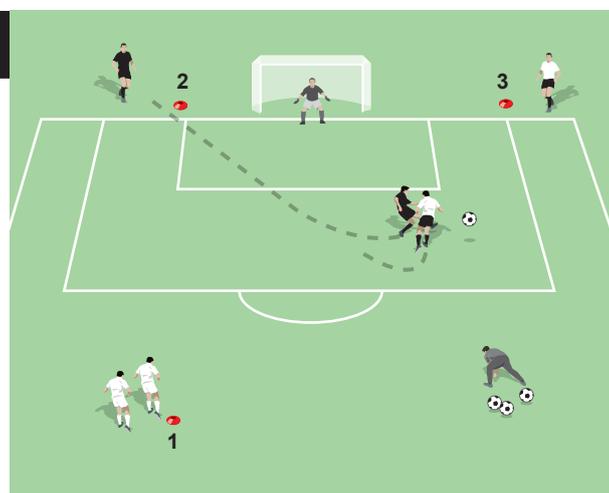
Player 3 races out to defend against player 1.

2



Player 3 now turns to attack against player 2.

3



Player 2 is out quickly and makes a tackle to stop the attack.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

→
Ball Movement

Delay the attacker

Give your players the comforting thought that by delaying an attack, their team mates will be back to support.

The set up

Area: 30x30 yards

Equipment: 2 goals, 4 cones, ball between 2

The steps

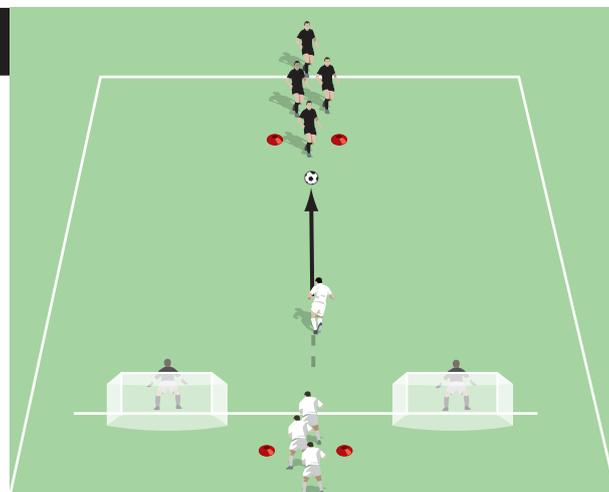
1. The defender passes the ball to the attacker and races out to defend.
2. The attacker must show a disguise and try to score in one of the two goals within 5 seconds of receiving the ball.
3. The defender must be light on his feet and stand up. Without committing himself he should try to force the attacker into a mistake and delay play.

For the next attack, the players rotate positions.

What to call out

- "Pressure quickly"
- "Stay on your feet and force wide"
- "Delay the play"

1



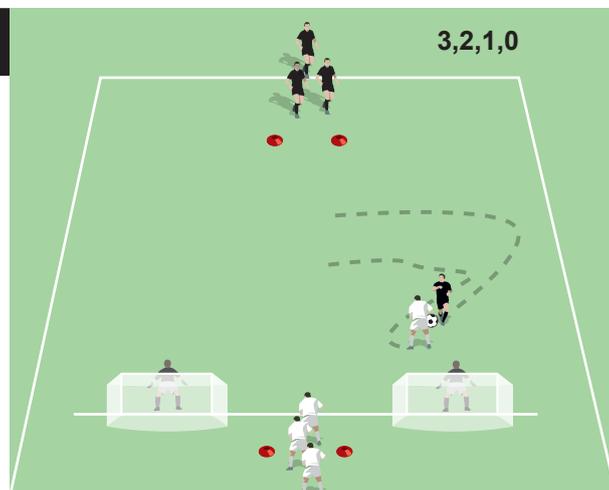
The defender follows their pass.

2



The attacker tries to lose the defender.

3



But the defender delays the attacker and runs down the timer.

KEY

..... Player Movement

→ Ball Movement

Keep the attacker wide

This drill teaches defenders how to keep play away from goal and in wide areas. This minimises goalscoring opportunities and allows team mates to recover and take up supporting positions.

The set up

Area: Half pitch

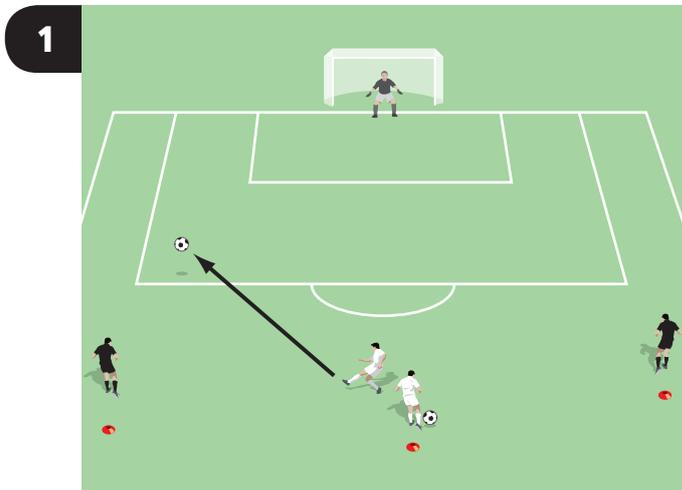
Equipment: 3 cones, 2 balls, 1 goal

The steps

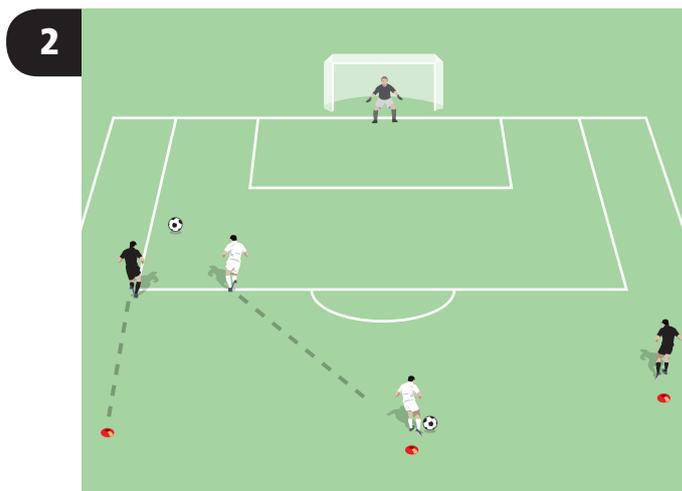
1. The defender starts the practice by passing a ball into a wide area of the pitch (diagonal pass in a match situation). Immediately the defender must race back whilst the attacker chases the ball.
2. The defender must pressure the opponent quickly and take up a position goalside of the attacker.
3. The defender must now keep the attacker out wide by showing him up and down the touchline.

What to call out

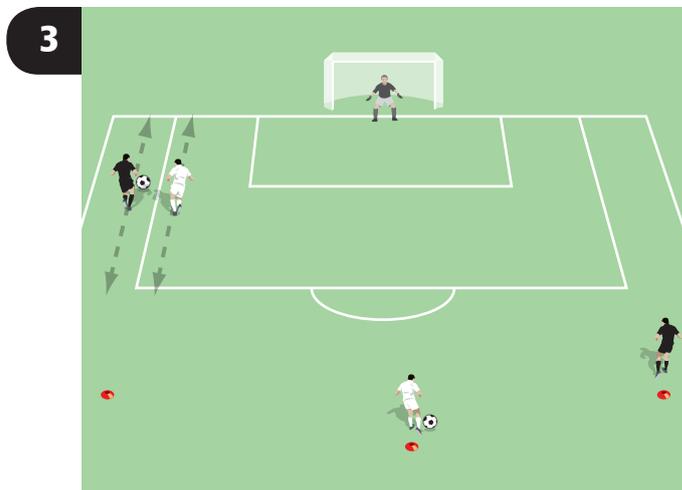
- "Keep play in wide areas"
- "Stay on your feet"
- "Block the cross or shot"



The defender plays the ball into a wide area.



The defender and winger race to the ball.



The defender keeps the attacker wide and denies a shooting opportunity.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

→
Ball Movement

Get goal-side

This drill shows defenders that they don't need to go chasing in wide areas. The attacker has to come back inside to present a goalscoring threat. Therefore, getting goal-side quickly is more important than chasing the ball.

The set up

Area: 30x30 yards

Equipment: 3 cones, 3 balls, 1 goal

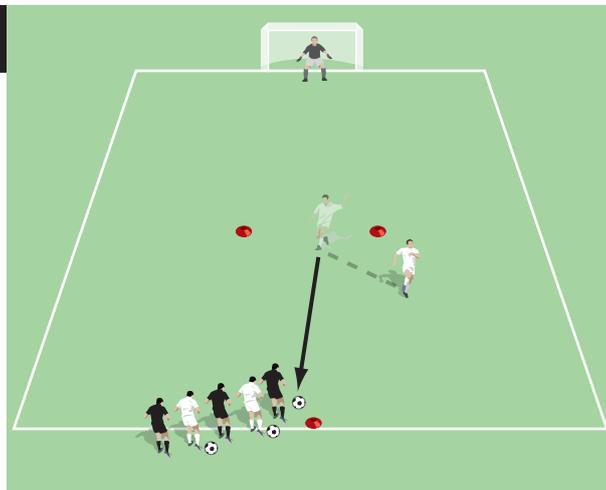
The steps

1. The attacker passes back to the defender who plays the ball into space on the right or left.
2. Immediately the attacker runs to collect the ball and then attempts to score.
3. The defender must run through the gate and then attempt to stop the attacker from scoring.

What to call out

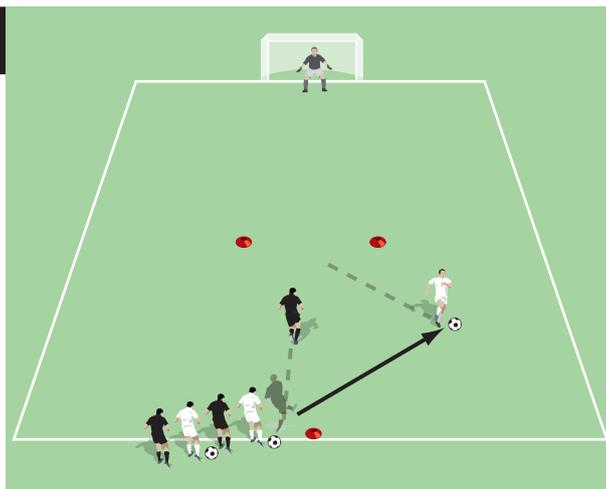
- "React quickly"
- "Get goal side"
- "Force the attacker wide of goal"

1



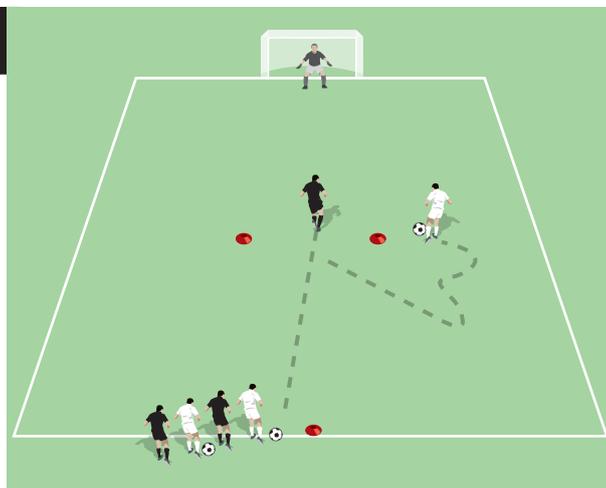
The attacker plays the ball back to the defender.

2



The defender plays the ball wide and heads for the gate.

3



The defender must get into a position goal-side of the attacker.

KEY

..... Player Movement

—————> Ball Movement

Block the shot

The defenders in this drill must work at match speed in order to get back a position to block the shot.

The set up

Area: 30x10 yards

Equipment: 2 cones, 3 balls, 1 target goal,
1 mannequin

The steps

1. On the coaches call, the attacker dribbles towards the mannequin and completes a skill such as a feint or a stepover.
2. The defender runs as quickly as possible to get in front of the goal.
3. The attacker shoots once he has passed the mannequin and the defender must attempt to block the shot.

What to call out

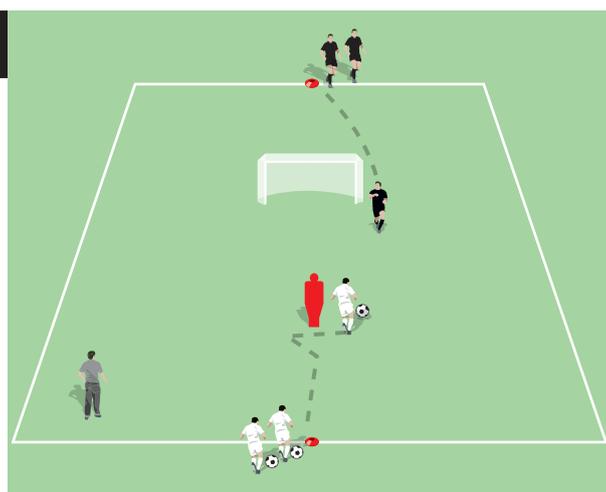
- "React"
- "Get in line with the ball"
- "Stop the shot"

1



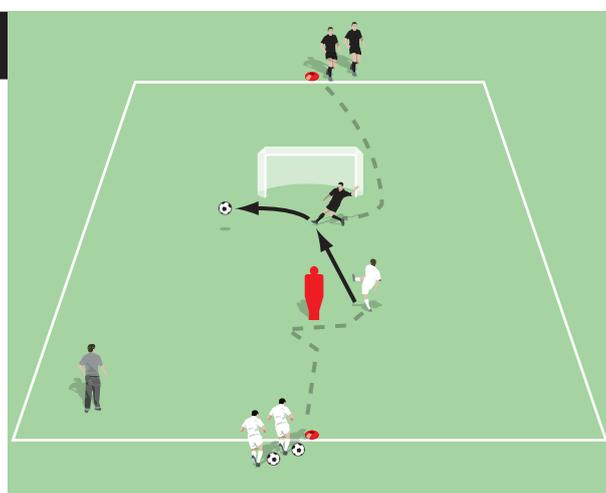
The players set off on the coach's call.

2



The attacker beats the mannequin and prepares to shoot.

3



The defender must get in front of goal and block the shot.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

—————>
Ball Movement

Penalty area battle

This 1v1 drill is both physically and mentally demanding for the players as they compete to win the game. They must show strength and patience in order to win the battle.

The set up

Area: 18 yard box

Equipment: 6 cones, 6 balls, 1 goal

The steps

1. One player from each team goes into the penalty area. The other players surround the outside of the area with a ball each.
2. The black player starts by receiving a ball from one of his team-mates and attempting to score. The white player must try to defend.
3. The players then switch roles for the next ball. The game continues until all the balls have been played into the area.

What to call out

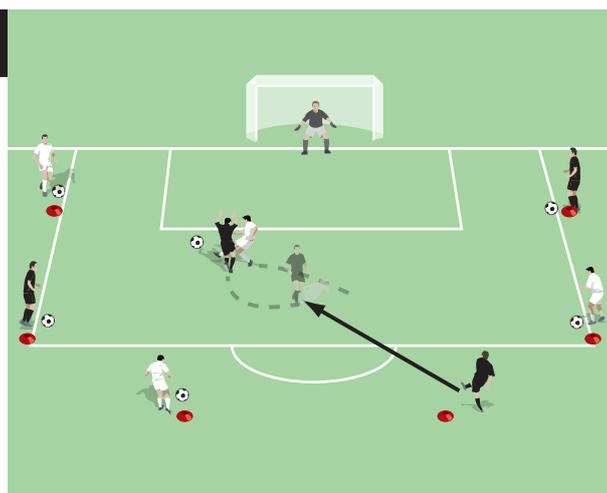
- "Get tight"
- "Stop the turn"
- "Can you block the shot/win the ball"

1



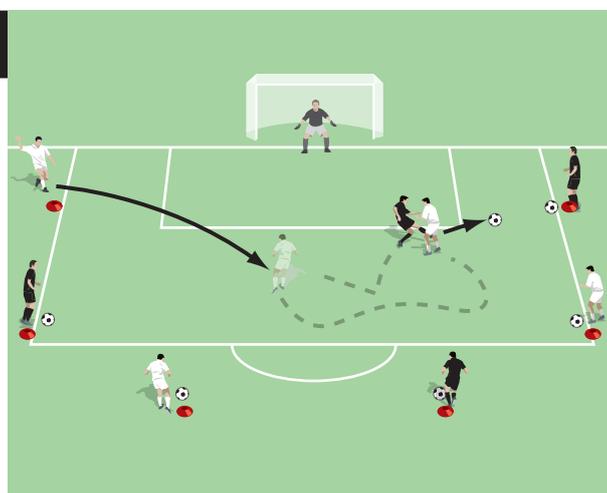
Two players will do battle inside the penalty area.

2



The defender makes a tackle to stop the attacker scoring.

3



The roles are reversed for the next ball in. Again the defender is successful.

KEY

.....
Player Movement

—————>
Ball Movement

None shall pass

The defender must defend each line and stop the attackers one by one using different defending skills.

The set up

Area: 10x10 yards

Equipment: 4 cones, 4 balls

The steps

1. Player 3 serves player 1 for a header. The defender must stop the ball from going past the line. Immediately, player 2 passes a ball towards the opposite line, the defender must react and run to slide and stop the ball crossing the line.
2. Now player 3 dribbles onto the pitch and attempts to get to the line opposite and the defender must stop him.
3. Finally, player 4 throws the ball over the defenders head and attempts to get it the other side, the defender must shield the ball.

The defender gets 1 point for each ball successfully defended.

What to call out

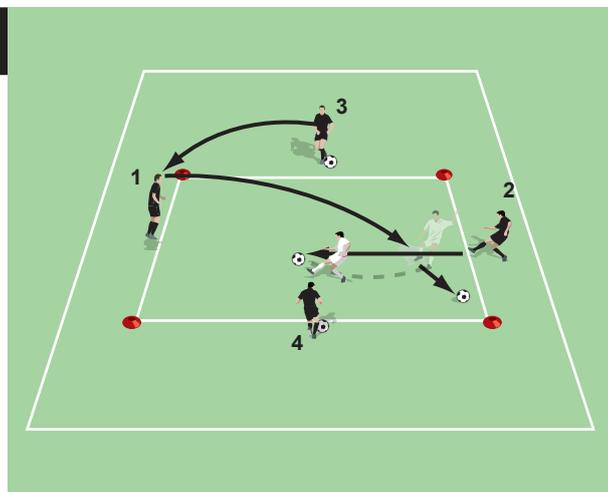
- "React to each ball"
- "Defend strongly"
- "Win each ball"

KEY

.....
Player Movement

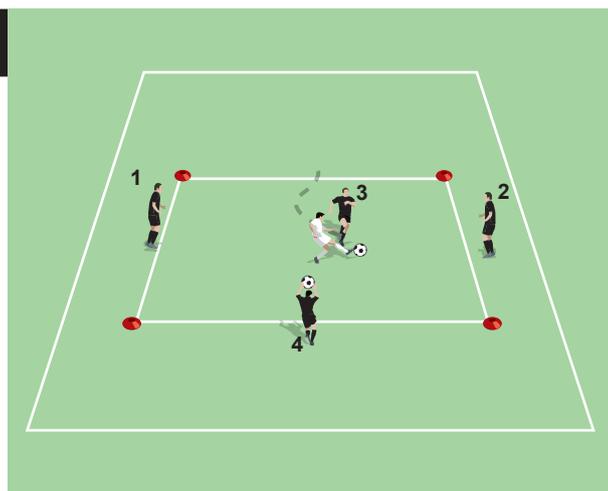
—————>
Ball Movement

1



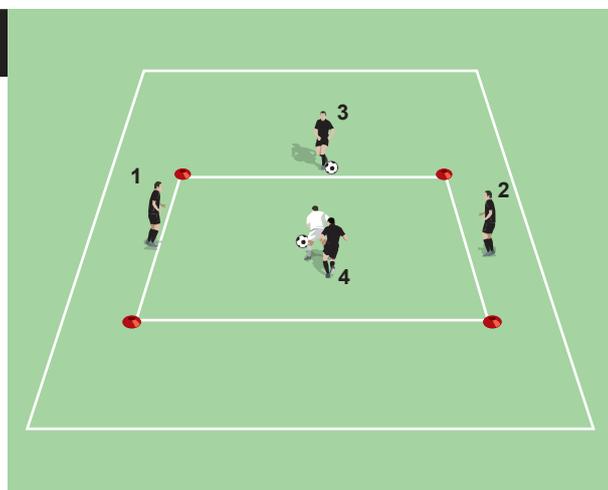
The defender stops the header then chases down player 2's pass.

2



The defender stops player 3 in a 1v1.

3



Finally he shields the ball from player 4.

Defenders circuit

This defending circuit demands concentration, quick reactions and multiple game-related defending skills to come out on top.

The set up

Area: 30x50 yards

Equipment: 4 cones, 1 ball, 1 goal

The steps

Four stations A, B, C, D.

Station A is the defender.

1. To start, the player at station B throws a ball for the defender to make a headed clearance.
2. Immediately, player D dribbles and crosses for player B, the defender must recover and attempt to stop him from scoring.
3. Once this ball has been played, player C dribbles into the box and attempts to score, now the defender must react and defend 1v1.

What to call out

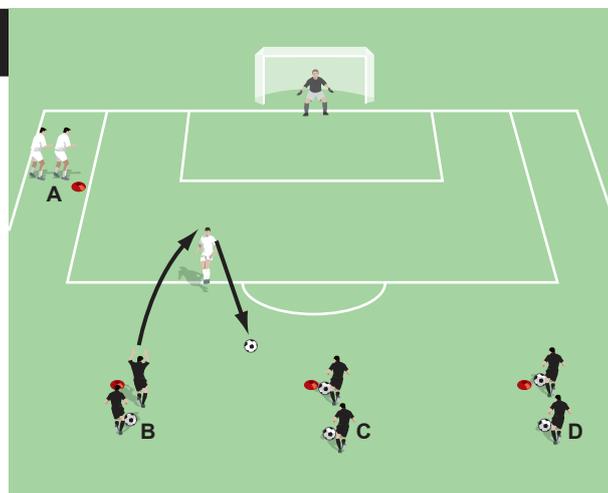
- "Height and distance on the clearance"
- "React to defend the cross"
- "Pressure to defend the 1v1"

KEY

.....
Player Movement

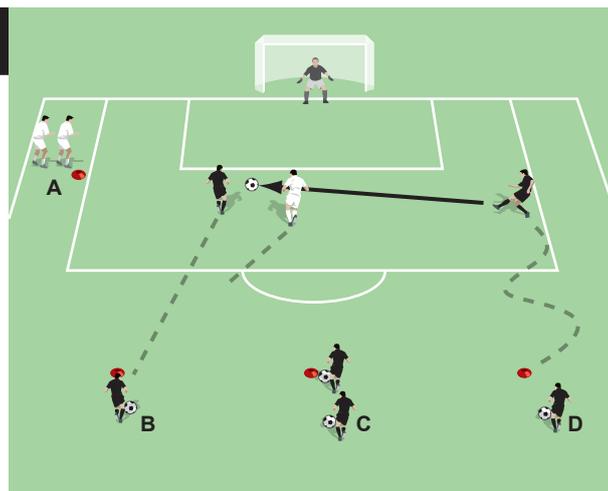
→
Ball Movement

1



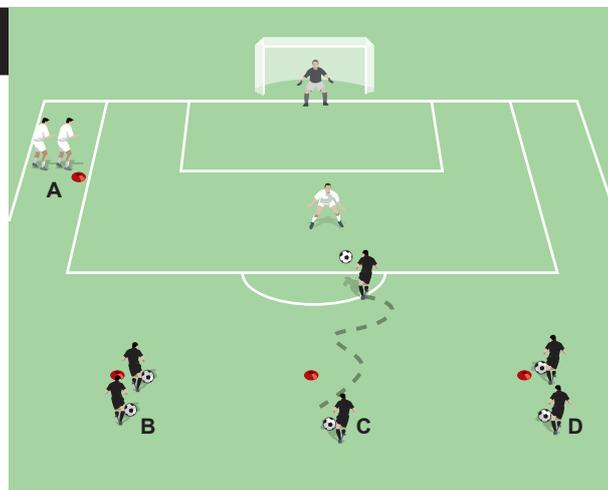
The defender must get height on the ball with their headed clearance.

2



Can the defender get back in position to defend the cross?

3



The circuit ends defending 1v1 against player c.

Pressure the opponent and react to defend

This is a chance to work on strength in a passive challenge. This drill is all about the speed of recovery and reaction to the middle player's pass.

The set up

Area: Two grids of 20x10 yards

Equipment: 1 cone, 3 balls, 2 target goals

The steps

1. The defender passes into the middle player and goes to pressure. The middle player shields the ball from the defender.
2. The middle player then listens for the call of their team mate and passes to the player on the pitch they run to.
3. Now one of two rules can come into place: either the team mate must shoot first time into the target goal and the defender must try to block; or the team mate must play a 1v1 against the defender.

What to call out

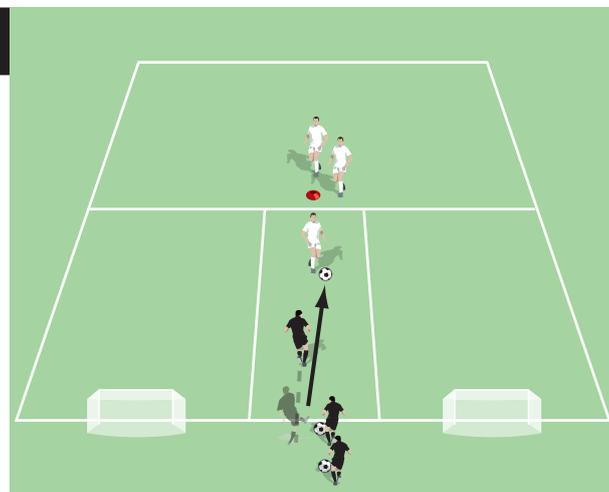
- "Pressure quickly"
- "React to the pass"
- "Block the shot"

KEY

.....
Player Movement

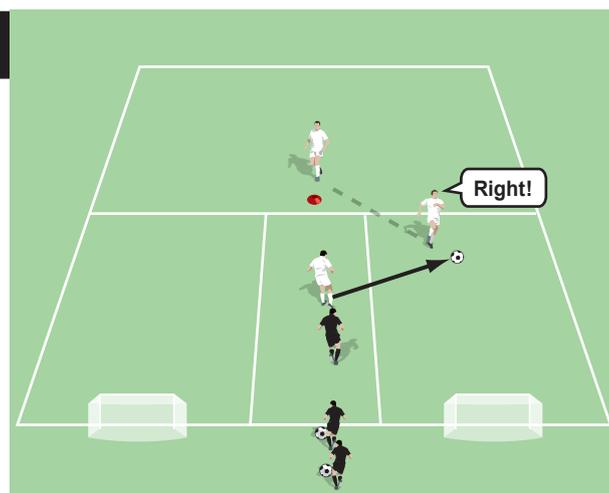
→
Ball Movement

1



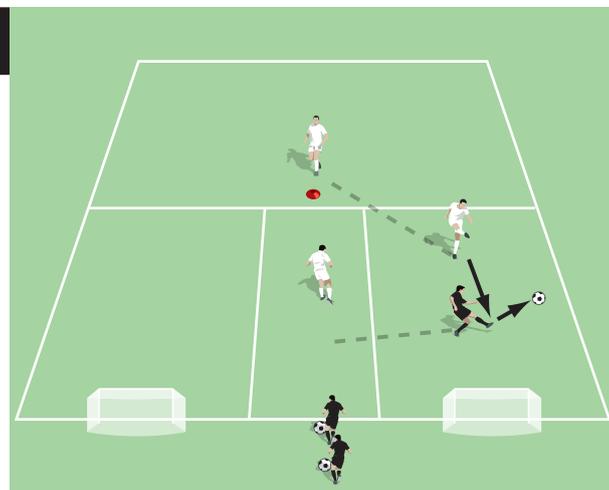
The defender passes to the middle player and goes to pressure.

2



The middle player sets up the attacker on their choice of pitch.

3



The defender reacts to the call and is able to block the shot.

Continuous - 4 goals

This drill is fantastic as it enables the players to defend against a number of different players with different playing characteristics in a short period of time.

The set up

Area: 40x40 yards with 5x5 yards central square

Equipment: 4 cones, 4 target goals, lots of balls

The steps

1. One player starts in the middle, the other four players start in front of the goals. The player that starts in the middle collects a ball and attacks a goal of his choice.
2. If the player scores, they race to retrieve a new ball in order to attack a second goal.
3. However, if the defender stops the attacker scoring, the roles are reversed and the defender runs out to receive a ball and attack. Without defending well you do not get the chance to attack and score.

What to call out

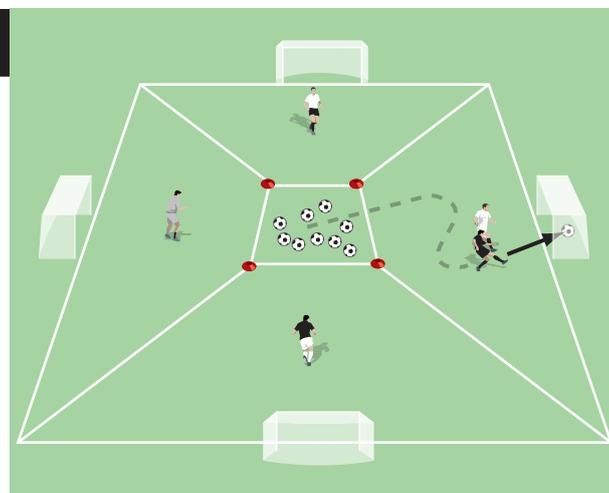
- "Pressure the opponent"
- "Stay on your feet to win the ball"
- "Defend well and you get the chance to attack"

KEY

.....
Player Movement

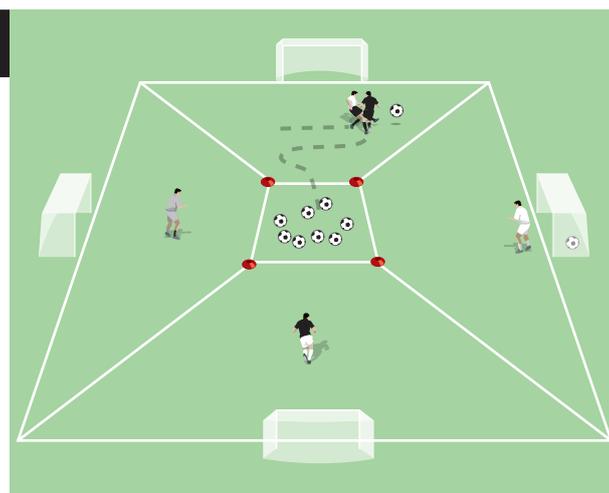
→
Ball Movement

1



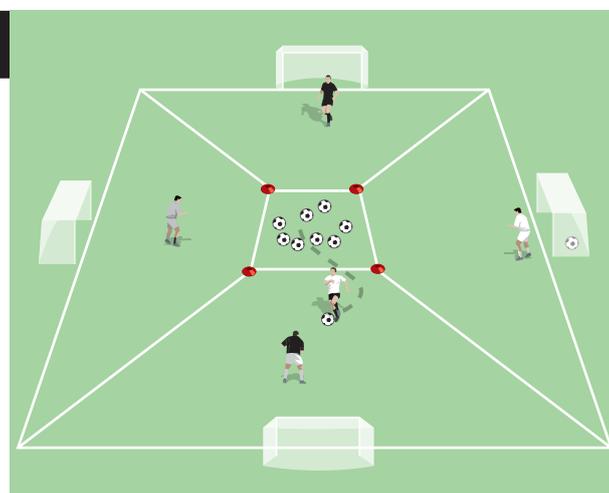
The attacker scores against the first defender.

2



But is tackled on his second chance in the top goal.

3



The successful defender collects a ball and starts an attack on the bottom goal.

SECTION 2

Defending in twos

When working in pairs players need to supplement the individual defending skills learnt with the addition of support and communication that is crucial to successful defending.

In 2v1 situations the pressuring defender can afford to be more aggressive in winning the ball as they have the supporting defender. However, it is important that they do not over commit, delaying the attack is the main priority. The supporting defender can offer vital information to the pressuring defender that will make the attacker much easier to defend against.

Key factors:

- Nearest player must pressure the ball
- The next player must take up a supporting position
- The pressing player must be patient and stay on their feet
- Can the supporting player communicate to the pressing player?
- Can the pressing player listen to the supporting player's advice and show the opponent towards the team mate or away from danger?

2v2 defending technique

This passive drill gives players valuable experience working together in order to pressure an opponent. It also gives you time to coach positioning and communication between your players.

The set up

Area: 20x20 yards

Equipment: Balls

The steps

1. Two players are nominated as defenders and the remaining players dribble around the area with a ball each.
2. The two defenders take it in turns to put passive pressure on the ball. The player not pressuring must take up a supporting position and communicate to their team mate.
3. The defenders should not complete a tackle, the drill is intended as a means to practice the technique only.

What to call out

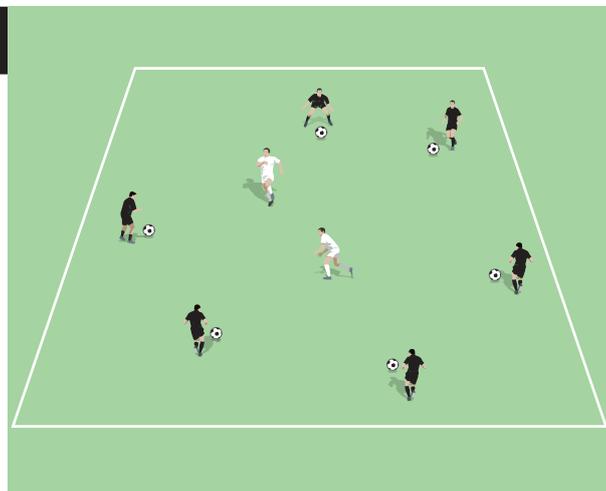
- "Who is going to press?"
- "Where is the support?"
- "Talk to each other"

KEY

.....
Player Movement

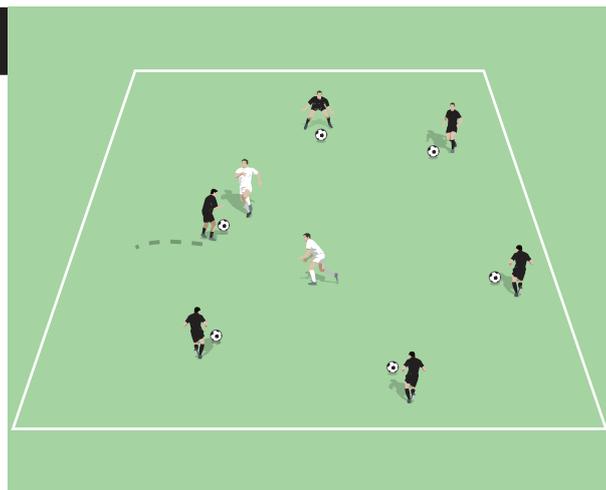
→
Ball Movement

1



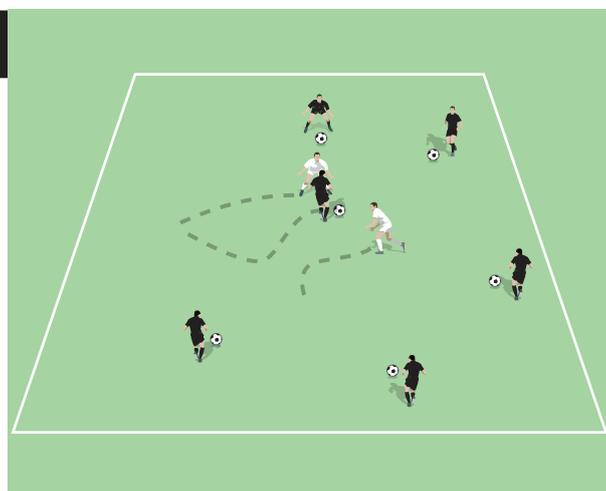
The defenders must rely on each other to perfect their technique.

2



They start by isolating the player they want to tackle.

3



One defender applies pressure while the other takes up supporting position.

2v2 technique into opposed

This drill allows the defenders to work on the techniques of 2v2 defending and then react to a "live" opportunity to use the skills learnt.

The set up

Area: 30x30 yards

Equipment: 3 cones, 2 balls, 1 goal, 4 mannequins

The steps

The practice works on the coach's whistle.

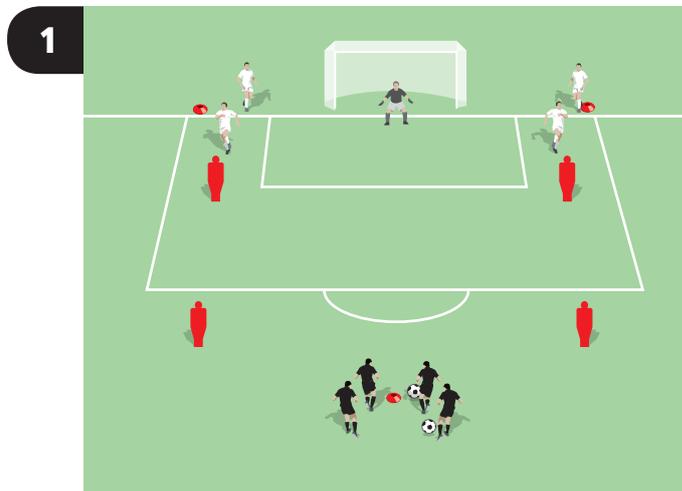
Whistle 1 – both defenders race out to pressure their mannequin.

Whistle 2 – both defenders show their mannequin towards their team mate.

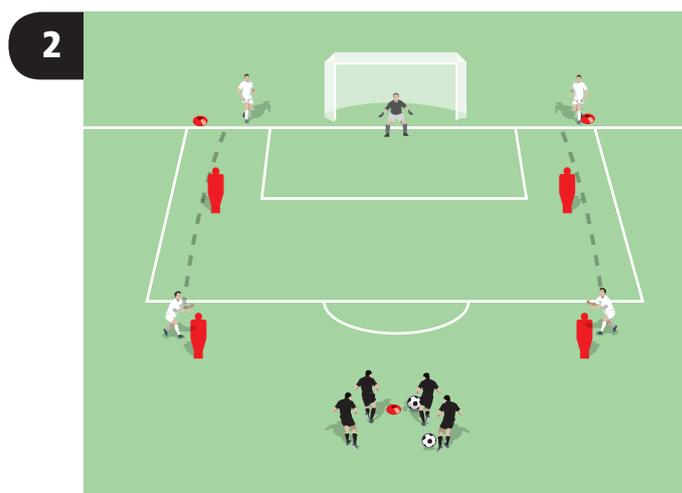
Whistle 3 – the attackers dribble into the pitch and the defenders react. The nearest defender should pressure and show towards their team mate while the second defender takes up a support position.

What to call out

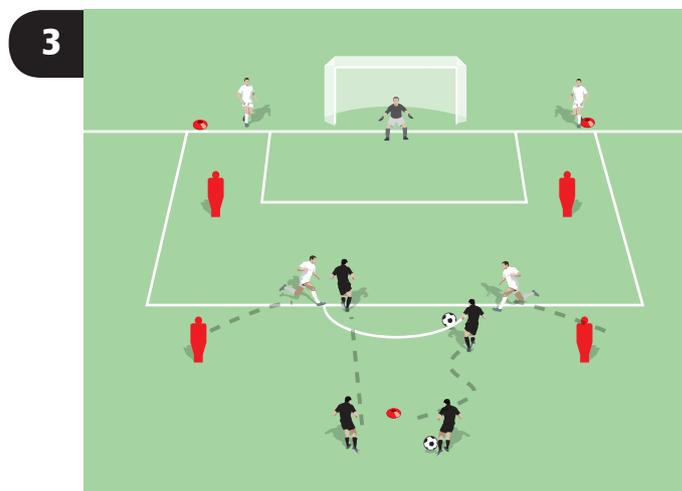
- "Pressure"
- "Show towards your mate"
- "React quickly to defend"



The defenders apply pressure to the first mannequin.



The second mannequin is shown inside.



The defenders take the techniques into a 2v2 attack.

KEY

..... Player Movement

→ Ball Movement

2v1 communication support

This drill is 1v1 on the pitch but the defender receives verbal support from his team mate which is crucial to developing a 2v1 defensive understanding. Without communication you have to assume you are defending alone and cannot pressure the attacker.

The set up

Area: 30x30 yards

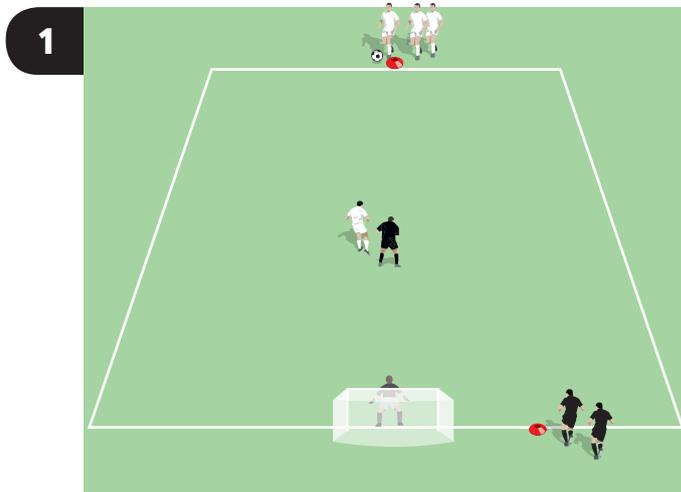
Equipment: 2 cones, 1 ball, 1 goal

The steps

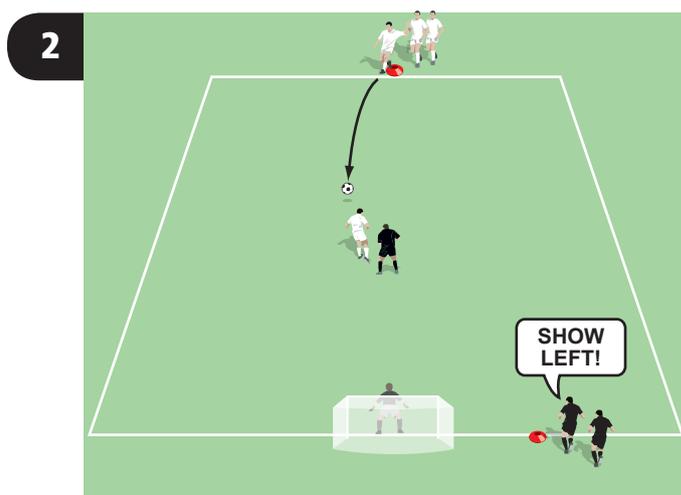
1. The midfielder passes the ball into the attacker, and a 1v1 commences with the supporting defender giving advice to his team mate.
2. The coach should give examples for the players to call such as "get tight", "stop the turn", "show left", "win the ball".
3. Once the ball has been played the attacker and defender are replaced and a new supporting defender gives advice.

What to call out

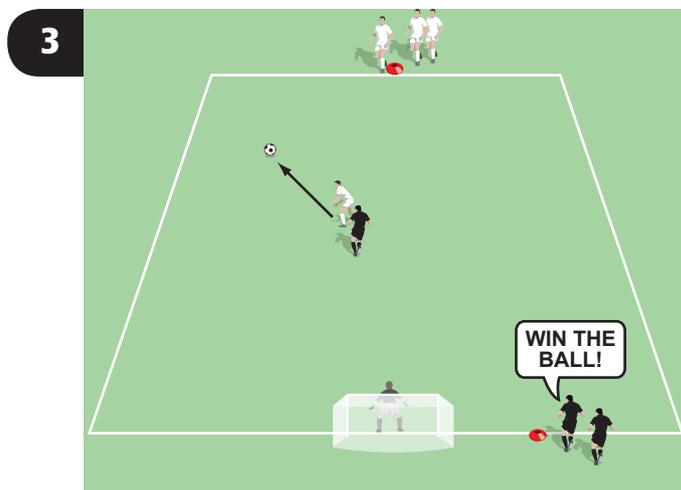
- "Stop the turn"
- "Listen to your team mate"
- "Give your mate some advice"



The attackers and defenders line up on opposite sides of the area.



The defender's team mates must give directions to help the active defender.



The drill is only 2v1 because of the verbal support.

KEY

..... Player Movement

→ Ball Movement

2v1 random defend

The defenders must react to where the attackers arrive into the game. The nearest defender must pressure whilst his team mate reacts to take up a supporting position. Communication is vital to working together and stopping the attack.

The set up

Area: 30x30 yards

Equipment: 3 cones, 3 balls, 1 goal

The steps

1. The goalkeeper controls this drill by calling out the name of the attacker to dribble and try to score.
2. The defenders must react to where this player dribbles from with the nearest defender pressuring the ball whilst the 2nd defender gives advice from a supporting position.
3. As soon as the ball is dead the goalkeeper calls for a new attacker and the defenders must quickly adjust their positions to defend the next attack.

What to call out

- "React to the attack"
- "Nearest to pressure"
- "Can you get into a support position?"

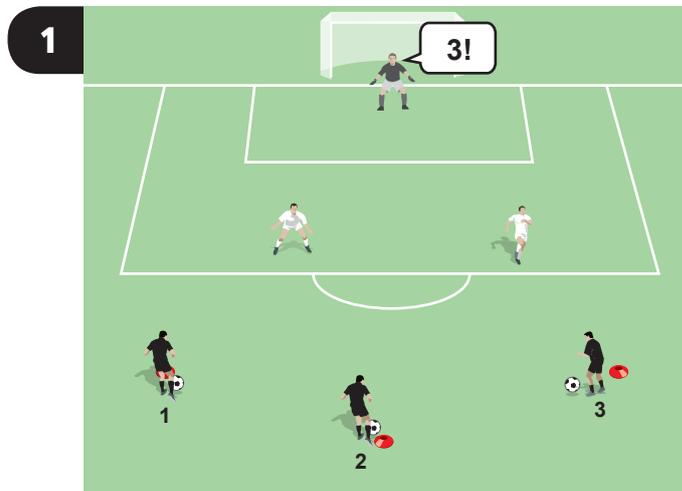
KEY

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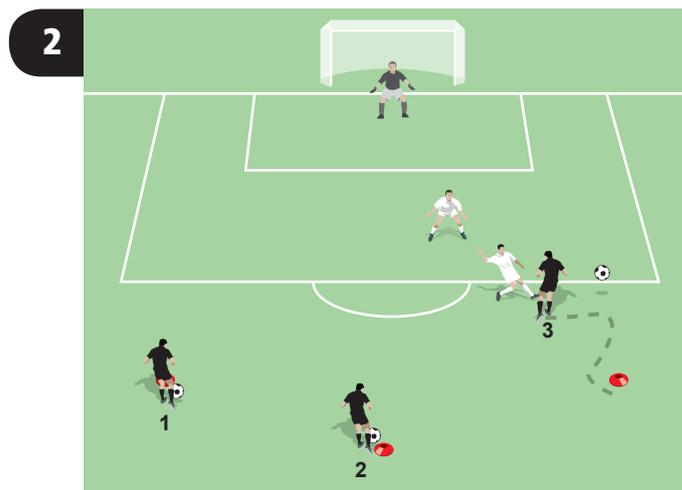
→

Player Movement

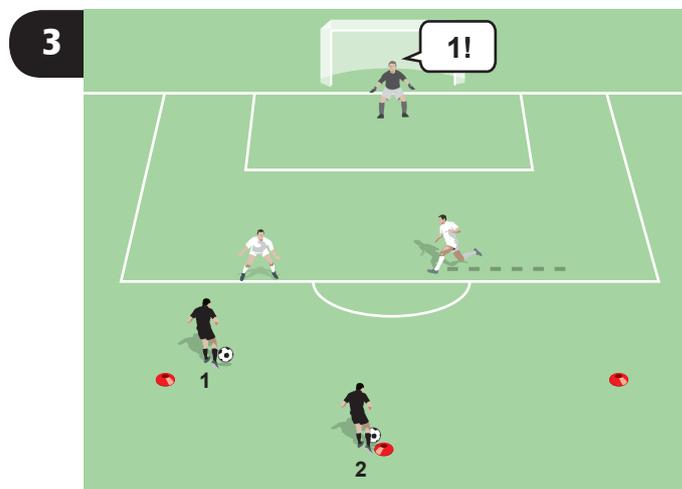
Ball Movement



The goalkeeper controls the practice by calling for an attacker.



One defender pressures to make a challenge and the other provides cover.



With a new attacker called the defenders must adjust their position quickly.

Front and back

This drill looks at two of the principle defending situations in a short time. The players must adapt the skills they have learnt to defend both situations.

The set up

Area: 30x30 yards

Equipment: 4 cones, 2 balls, 1 goal

The steps

Groups of two players take it in turns to defend and then attack. Each turn works for two balls.

1. The goalkeeper starts the practice by throwing a ball out to the attackers. Whilst the ball is traveling the two defenders must run out to defend.
2. After the initial ball is played (either a goal scored or defenders win possession) the players must quickly react to the second ball that is played onto the pitch by the coach.
3. This ball comes from behind and therefore the attackers receive possession with their backs to goal. The defenders now have to keep them facing away and stop them scoring for a 2nd time.

What to call out

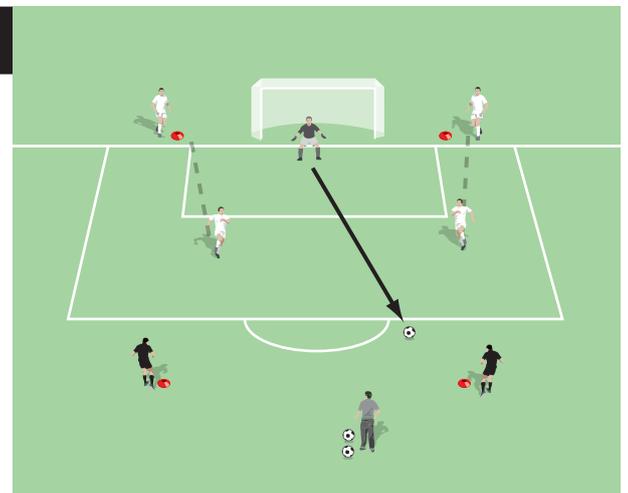
- "React to both balls"
- "Pressure the opponent"
- "Force play wide and stop any turns"

KEY

..... Player Movement

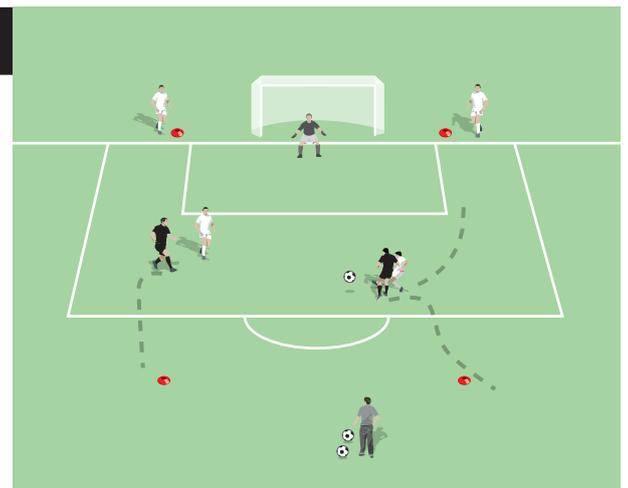
—————> Ball Movement

1



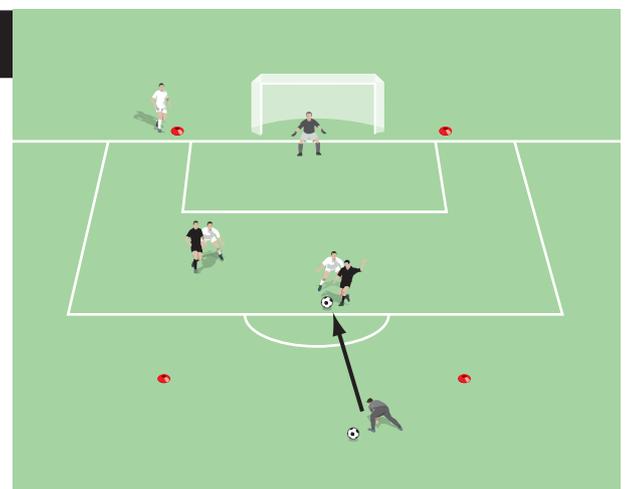
The attackers receive the ball facing the defenders goal.

2



The defenders must close down the space quickly to deny a goal scoring chance.

3



The next ball is played to the attackers with their backs to goal. The defenders must mark closely.