

Block and intercept

Teaching your players how to block or intercept an opposition forward pass will help your team regain possession of the ball. Remember – you can't concede a goal if you have the ball.

WHAT YOU TELL YOUR PLAYERS THE SESSION IS ABOUT

1. Blocking attacks.
2. Intercepting the ball.
3. Breaking up opposition attacks.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

In modern day football, very few players go to ground to slide challenge for the ball. This is due to very protective refereeing and the fact that timing a tackle incorrectly can often lead to a yellow, or even red, card.

So players tend to stay on their feet and look to intercept passes by reading the opponent's next move and quickly moving to steal possession.

However, it is not always possible to intercept a pass and then retain possession. At times, you must simply be happy to block the opponent's pass and deflect the ball away from your team's goal.

The technique of blocking and intercepting is often termed as "breaking up the attack".

SESSION PLANNER

Warm up	Session	Developments	Game	Warm down
10 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	5 mins

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up	Players improve their speed reactions using this game, from The Ultimate Football Warm-Ups Manual, exercise 12
The Session	Players learn to react quickly to block an opponent's shot at goal
Development	Midfielders can intercept passes and defenders can also block them
Game Situation	Players use the skills learned in a small-sided game
Warm-down	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises warms players down

NOTES

SESSION - 15 MINUTES

Mark out an area that includes two target goals and some cones, as shown in the top picture. Players take turns to be the attacker and defender.

The first attacker starts by dribbling towards the cones and taking a touch to the left or right and tries to pass the ball into one of the target goals.

The defender must be on his toes and block the pass from reaching the goal.

The only rule in this game is that the attacker must always pass in the same side as their touch past the cones – so he can delay his shot if he wants.

DEVELOPMENT - 15 MINUTES

Mark out an area with four target goals, as shown in the middle picture. Use two teams. Each team has four midfielders on the pitch and one defender in the end zone.

The four midfielders compete by keeping possession and trying to make a pass from the centre zone into one of the opponent's goals.

When defending, midfielders must work hard to try and intercept the opponent's passes, win back possession and quickly counter attack.

The defender must stay inside the end zone and take up a position in relation to the ball. The defender's job is to be the last line of defence and block the opponent's shots at goal.

After two minutes, each team must change its defender so each player has a turn at this role.

GAME SITUATION - 15 MINUTES

Play a small-sided game in which each team has three defenders in one half and three attackers in the opposite half.

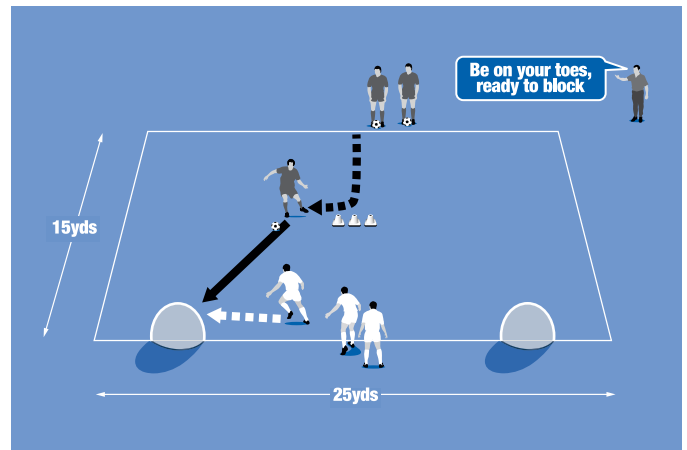
The aim for each team is to play the ball to the forwards for them to score a goal.

The defending team must prevent this from happening. This team's forwards need to apply early pressure to block forward passes or intercept the pass to score past the opposition goalkeeper.

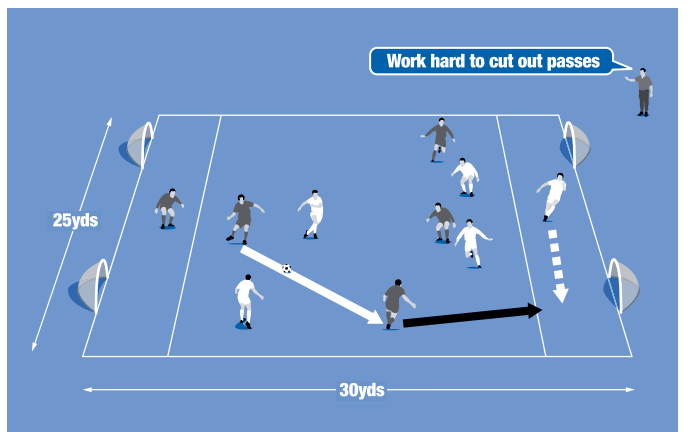
Defenders must be ready to defend against any forward passes by the opponent. They can do this by marking forwards closely and looking to steal the ball.

If the defender is successful, he is free to step into the middle "free zone" in order to shoot at the opponent's goal or play a pass to the team's forwards. The team that scores most goals wins.

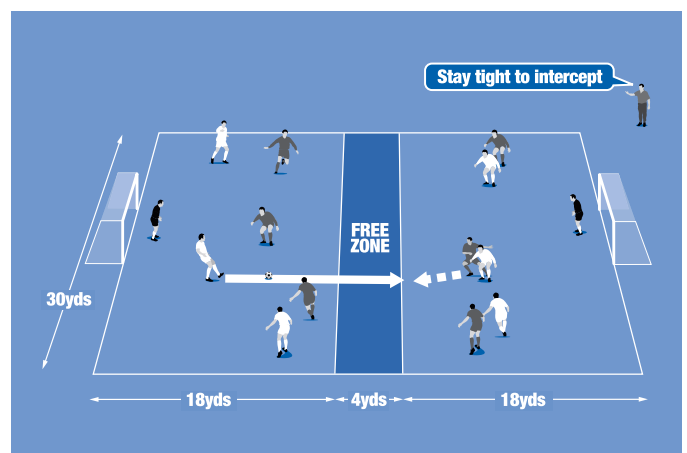
Player movement  Pass 
Run with ball  Shot 



Attackers dribble the ball towards the cones, go left or right then try to score. Defenders try to intercept.



Players try to score in one of the two goals. Players in the middle try to block opposition shots as does the defender in the end zone.



Defenders mark attackers tightly in a small-sided game.