

Attacking in the Defensive Third

Objective: Improve the team's ability to play out of the back (defensive third).

1. **Colors-Warm Up (15 minutes):** Divide group into two teams. At first use one ball, then after 5 minutes, use two balls per group. Each group passes and moves and plays through each other. Players may only pass to teammates while trying to avoid the other team as they look for each other. Field space will vary based on size of groups – set up no larger than half field.

Coaching Points:

- Work on passing and receiving techniques; proper pace and accuracy of the pass; proper 1st touch.
- Work on technical speed.
- Work on combination play: wall-pass, take-over, overlap and double-pass
- Perfect communication.
- Talk about visual cues.

2. **5v4+1GK to 1 Target In the defensive third of the field (15 minutes):**

A team of 5 + 1GK defends the large goal and tries to score by passing to one a target player located in an end zone just inside the midfield line. The opposing team tries to score in the large goal. The defending team can only find the target player with a pass that is made past the 18 yard box, thus encouraging combination play, and movement off the ball. This also discourages defenders from just looking for a long ball out off the back.



Coaching Points:

- Constantly survey the playing area
- Develop & keep individual and group shape under the pressure of the opponents.
- Develop rhythm of play based on what the game presents...increase speed of play at the right time.

3. **6v5 +1GK to two small goals on half a field (15 minutes):** On ½ of a soccer field place 2 small counter-attack goals on the mid line. The red team defends the large goal and tries to score on the 2 counter-attack goals. The white team defends the 2 counter-attack goals and tries to score on the large goal. The defending team must be past the top of the 18 yard box before attempting a shot on one of the two goals.



Coaching Points:

- Encourage defenders to use central players to change point of attack when it is safe to do so. Safety first!
 - As soon as the red team recovers the ball, the first attacker must recognize options away from the ball; he/she must look to play the ball wide or, simply, away from pressure. The positions of supporting players are very important at this point.
 - 3rd attackers positioning is now crucial to success. The 3rd attackers must provide appropriate width and depth.
 - Changing roles quickly, as the ball moves, is vital to the success of the counter-attack out of the back 1/3. It takes discipline, fitness and tactical speed.
 - The coaching points made in these more realistic game-like environments will be more beneficial to the players.
4. **Game to two goals with GKs (40 minutes):** Play – 8V8 or 11v11 with GKPR’s. We always try to finish with a scrimmage, with playing numbers as close to the numbers that we play with in our league games.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.
5. **Cool-down (5-10 minutes):** Individual juggling; challenge players to see who can juggle the most in a 2 minute period. Conclude with static stretching of large muscle groups.