

UNC Defensive Training (U12+)



The Set-up: Group of 6 divided into teams of 3. Field should be approximately 20 yards wide x 30 yards long.

The Exercise: Two white players pass the ball back and forth (must play to two touches). The three red players should shift to pressure the ball. The reds are not trying to win it.

Note: The coach should be observing the movement of the 3 defensive players.

- Is there pressure to the ball? (1st defender)
- Is there cover? (2nd defender)
- Is there balance? (3rd defender)

The third white player should be on the opposite end line.

Progress to:

When either white player opens up to play forward, the red defenders should get “side on”. This will teach the players’ to be in a good defensive position to “drop off” when the opposition is looking to play forward.

Note: White can open up and play forward or open up and play back across to his teammate. This will force the defenders to get side on and either recover or shift.

When the ball is played forward (pictured left). The red defenders MUST recover at speed.

The first red defender should pressure the ball and get “tight” and not allow the attacker to play forward. The other two red defenders should take up good “covering” positions so if the attacker tries to dribble the “1st defender” he/she will be under immediate pressure.

The exercise is now “live”! White attempts to play the ball back to either of his/her two teammates. White is **not** allowed to play one touch.

The red players should:

1. Make sure Red cannot play forward!
2. Communicate to one another. Example- Pressure the ball! Can you win it!
3. Win the ball/ gain possession

Rotation: If Red does win possession, they take up the position that the white players were in and the roles reverse.

This is a great exercise to train players to recognize when to get “side on”, when to “drop off”, how to “shift” as a group, and a commitment to “recover” at speed.

