

Principles of Defending

- **Pressure** – The moment possession is lost the nearest player tries to regain possession or apply pressure on the ball. Players giving immediate chase can also help to delay the attack by stopping the other team from playing the ball forward quickly.
- **Delay** – While applying pressure, the defender must be careful to not over-commit. If they are beaten easily, the attacking team may get a scoring chance quickly. A pressuring defender should also be looking to slow down or “delay” the attacking player.
- **Depth (Cover)** – While the ball is being pressured all other players should be getting into defensive positions. The positions taken should support the pressuring defender in case they are beaten. This is called providing defensive cover.
- **Balance** – As your team concentrates their defense in the area of the ball, defenders not near the ball must position themselves to cover important spaces (normally central areas) in order to prevent attackers from making penetrating runs into these spaces.
- **Compactness** – As you organize your defense, limit the time and space for the opponent by concentrating your defense in the general area of the ball. Defenders should also attempt to stay “goal side” in order to limit the other team’s ability to directly attack the goal.
- **Control and Restraint (balanced)** – Players often make poorly timed or off-balanced attempts to win the ball. You must play “under control” when challenging for the ball. In addition, you should refrain from tackling unless you are confident you will win the ball.

Principles of Attack

- **Penetration** – When you are dribbling forward, passing forward, or shooting, you are attempting penetration.
- **Depth (Support)** – Good width and depth provides the player on the ball with all around support so that there are options to play the ball forward, square or back. The more options a player has, the less likely they will lose the ball. Creating depth means spacing out up and down the field.
- **Mobility** – Mobility means movement. Movement is important in the game so that players can create space for themselves or for their teammates. Players without the ball need to keep moving to unbalance the opponent’s defense, and by making “runs” into positions that will create scoring opportunities or create space for the teammates near the ball.
- **Width** – Creating width means spacing out side to side on the field. Good width provides opportunities to attack on either side of the field and up the middle of the field.
- **Improvisation (creativity)** – When players use their own individual flair to create passing or shooting opportunities to themselves or for teammates. Clever dribbling or passing eliminates defenders and creates openings for attackers.
- **Finishing** – Simply put, finishing is successfully scoring a goal on scoring opportunities. This means shooting when you should shoot, making sure your shots are on goal and not wide nor over the goal, getting the ball past the goal keeper, etc.