

SOCCER COACH WEEKLY

Support Play

by Dave Clarke in [Defending](#), [Tips and advice](#)

It is vital in team play that players can cover each other so if any of them are beaten, there is always another player for an attacker to get past. Use this session to teach your players defensive covering.

Why use it

This is a great session for coaching cover individually and working as a unit and to get the player nearest the ball to hold up and force play away before it gets to a danger zone.

Set up

Place three rows of cones five yards apart in an area of 15×15 yards, with three different coloured cones in each row, but vary the order of the colours. We've used nine players.

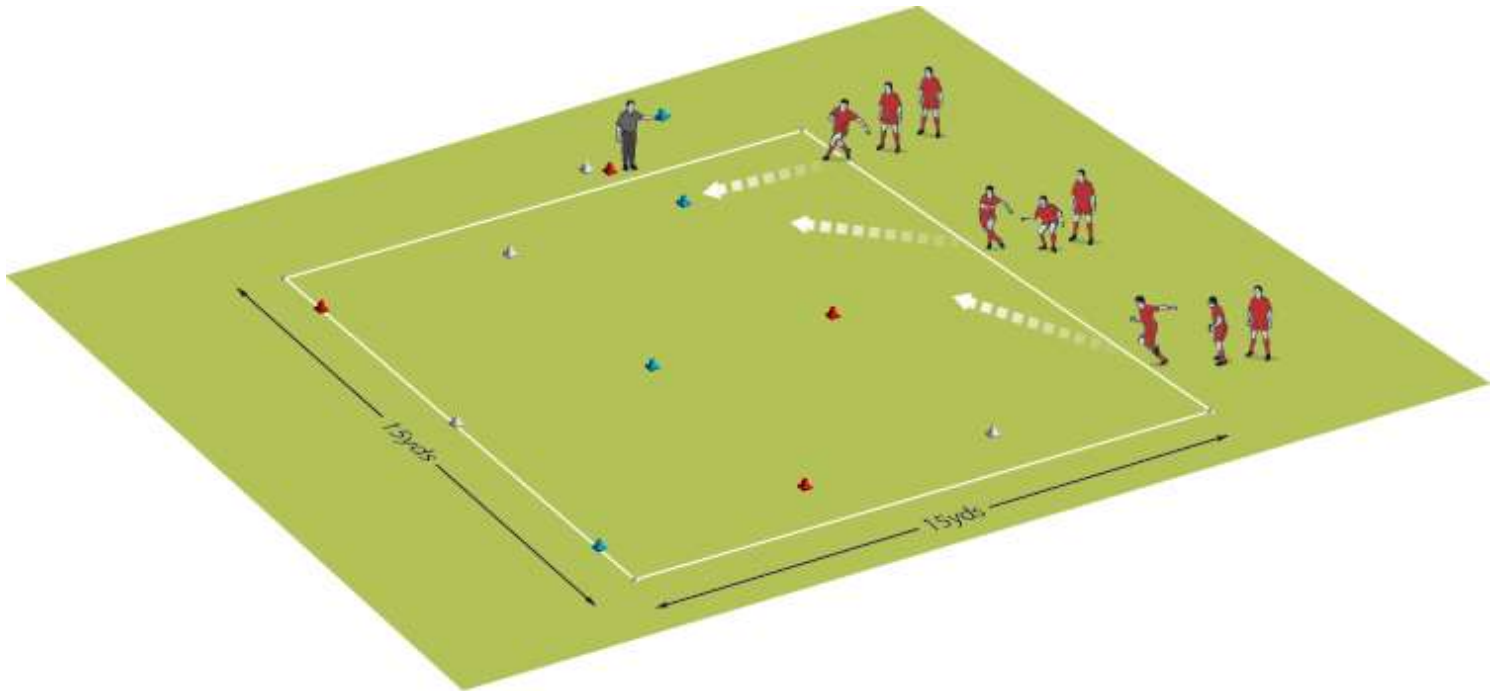
How to do it

Players work in threes. The coach holds up a coloured cone and the three have to defend that cone in the right press/cover/support combination, moving through the three sets of cones quickly with the nearest player to the cone pressing the cone in the right combination each time.

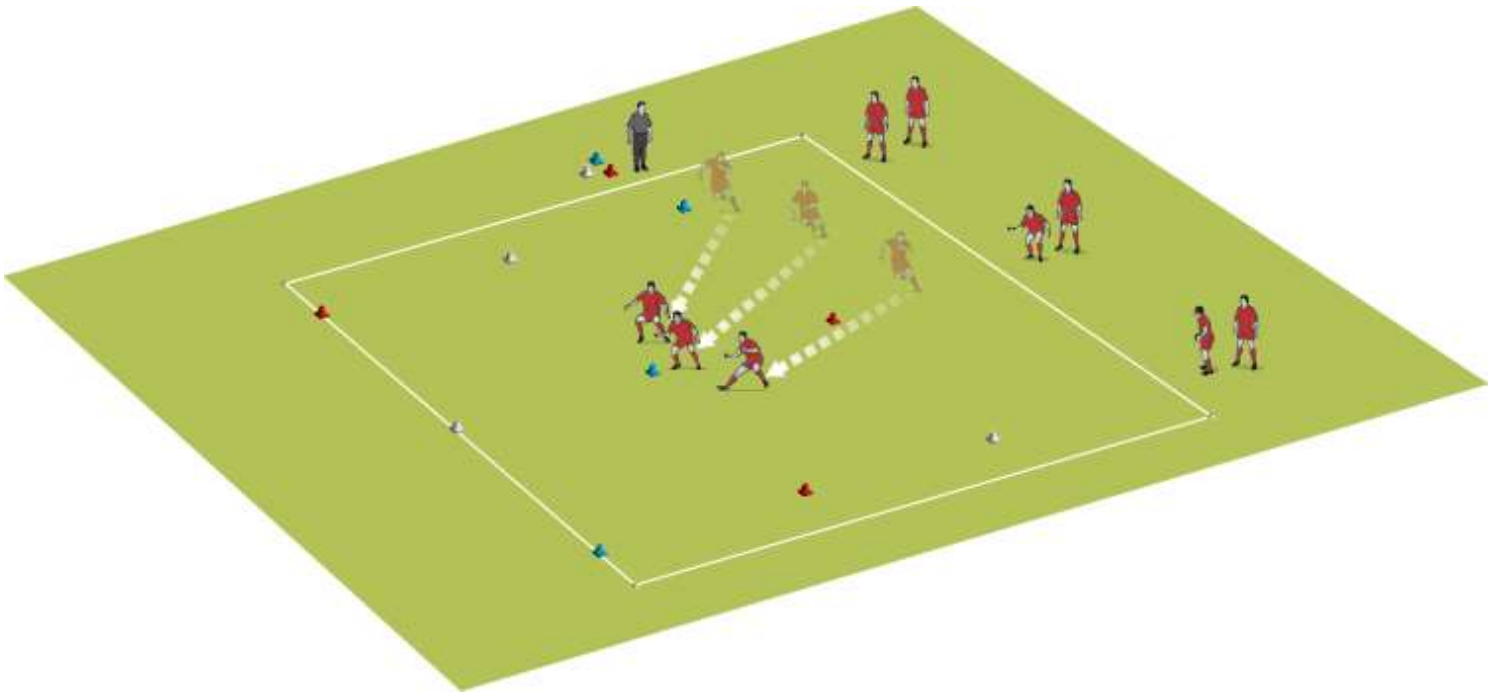
The players defend the same colour through the sets of cones. The next three go once the first three have cleared the first set of cones.

Technique

Look for speed of movement and how the players keep the defensive unit – the closest player presses, body angle is side-on and players can work out whether they are forcing play inside or outside. Communication between players is also important so they know when and where to move.

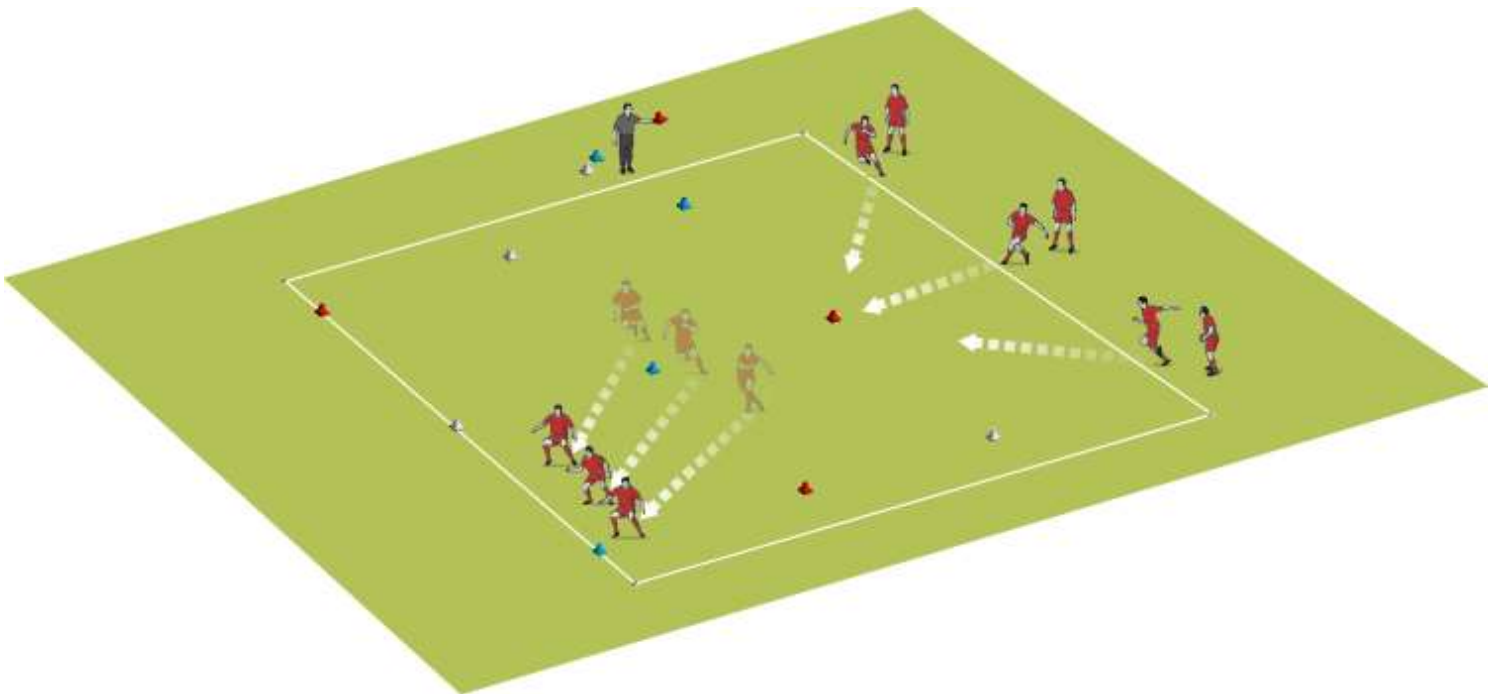


1. The session starts with the coach holding up a coloured cone so the first team knows the colour they are working with. Here he holds up a blue cone
2. The three players must 'defend' the blue cone by getting into the right positions – the nearest player presses, the second covers and the third supports



3. Once they have stood in the right positions for the first cone they quickly move on to the next set of cones and 'defend' the blue cone in the centre.

4. In the final row of cones they defend the blue at the nearside, with the three players hitting the right positions



5. As the first team moves out of the central row of cones, the next team goes – here the coach holds up a red cone

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