

Making the pitch small when defending

This session will improve the shape and positioning of the defence and midfield relative to where the ball is on the pitch.



What you tell your players the session is about

1. The shape and positioning of the defence in relation to the ball.
2. Making the pitch compact and small when defending.

Session planner

Warm up	Session	Developments	Game	Warm down
10 mins	5 mins	20 mins	20 mins	5 mins

Activity	Kit	Outcome
Warm-up	#75 – 1v1 continuous	Defending 1v1 skills
The session	Cones	The players now understand where they need to be on the pitch in relation to which zone the ball is currently in
Development	Goal, three mini goals (can be made with cones), cones, balls	The defenders now actively try to win possession in order to counter attack
Game	Goals, cones, balls	The defenders work as a group to stop the attacks
Warm-down	n/a	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



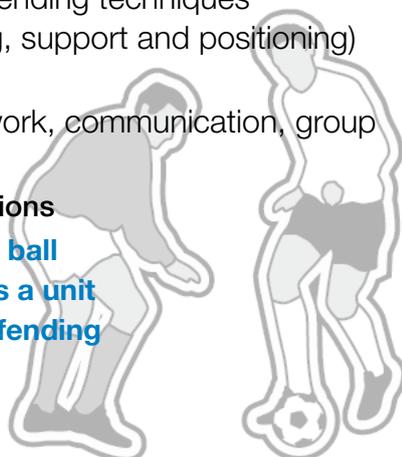
Where it fits

Individual skills: Defending techniques (pressure, jockeying, support and positioning) communication

Team skills: Team work, communication, group defending

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What to think about

This session develops the shape and positioning of your defenders in relation to the ball.

Cutting the pitch into three zones enables you to easily instruct your players on how to squeeze across and make the pitch small.

For instance if the ball is in the right zone, then your team need to squeeze across to cover the right and central zones whilst leaving the left zone free as it's the furthest from the ball.

Now the aim of the players is to keep the ball in the right zone and try to win possession



Set-up

- Half a full size pitch.



What you get your players to do

The pitch is split into three zones that help the defenders with their positioning.

Call out a zone and the players should run to take up the correct positioning:

If the ball is in zone 2 (central area) then all your defenders should be inside this zone to block the space in front of goal and force the opponent in to the wide areas.

If the ball is in zone 1 (left side) then the defenders need to be in zone 1 and zone 2 so that they have squeezed across to compact the space, leaving zone 3 as it's far away from the ball.

The opposite is true when the ball is in zone 3.



What to call out

- “Pressure quickly and at match speed”
- “React to the position of the ball”
- “Communicate with each other”



Development

Now the players are clear on the positioning, you can include four attacking midfield opponents (grey shirts in picture 2, right) who must constantly pass the ball from side to side.

The defenders are not allowed to tackle the attackers but should take up good positions and apply pressure.



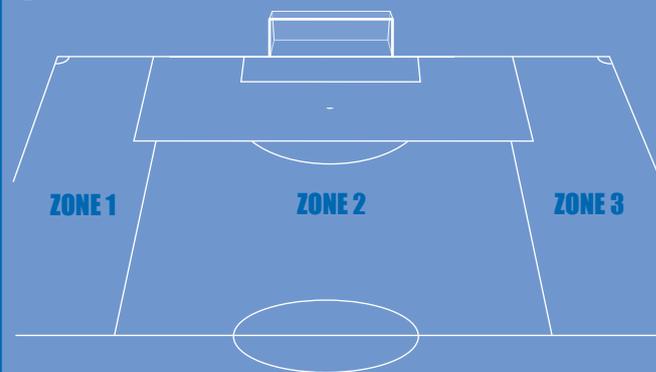
Game situation

Now add two attackers to the midfields and play an attackers v defenders small-sided game. The defenders must try to win the ball and score in the three target goals.

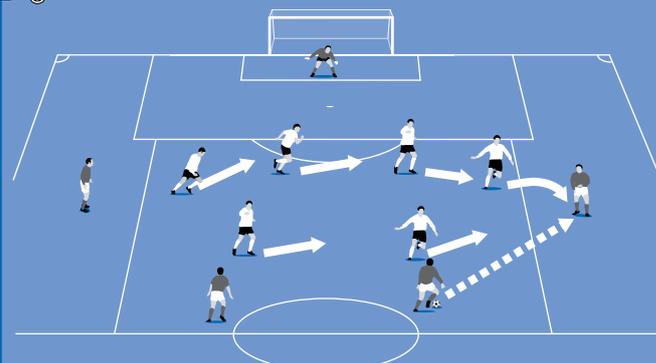
The attacking team should be encouraged to constantly switch the ball as this will force your defenders to adjust their positioning.

Making the pitch small when defending

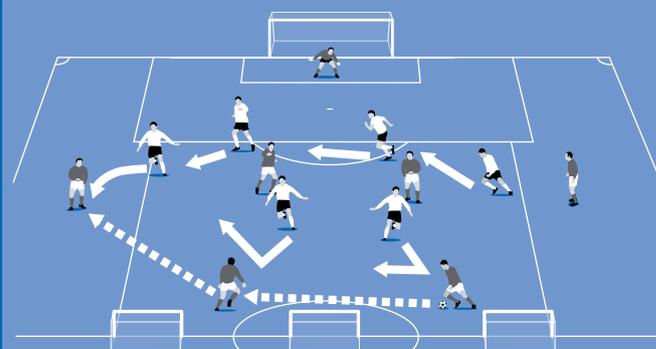
direction of run \Rightarrow pass $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$



Dividing the pitch helps players to see where they should be positioned.



The four attackers pass the ball from side to side while the defenders must move into the correct defensive position.



A small-sided game where the defenders must win the ball back from the attackers and then look to pass into the mini target goals.