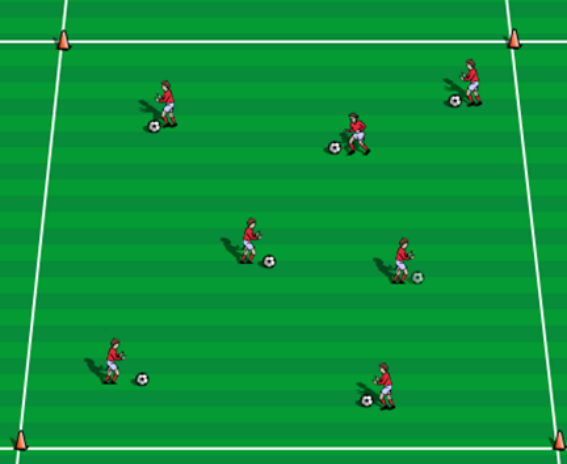


# St. Mary's SOCCER

## U8/U9 Academy Session 5

### Main Topic: Intro to Defending

In this session we introduce some of the basic concepts of individual defending to include providing pressure, containing an attacking player, making angled recovery runs, and immediately becoming a defender once you lose the ball.

Activity Name/Description	Diagram/Instructions	Coaching Points/Questions
<b>Warmup Activity</b>		
<p><b>1st Activity –4 Surface Dribbling</b> This is a review of the 4 primary surfaces of the foot to use when dribbling. Outside (pinky toe), inside (big toe), laces and bottom (sole).</p> <p><b>REVIEW: The step over move is an attacking move that has the player fake a pass using the inside of their foot and then take the ball away using the outside of the same foot.</b></p>		<p>Have your players work on dribbling with the different parts of the foot they have previously worked with. Make sure to have them practice with each foot. Remind them to dribble with their head up. ONCE YOU HAVE REVIEWED DRIBBLING WITH THE 4 PARTS OF THE FOOT, REVIEW THE STEP OVER MOVE INTRODUCED LAST SESSION.</p>
<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Activity – Large group activity</b> The site/field coordinator will gather all players around one of the team grids</p>	<p>Optional activity for the SITE/FIELD COORDINATOR to demo an activity from this session.</p>	

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Activity – Hospital Tag

Set up two small squares with four cones inside your training grid. These squares will be the “Hospital” for the players to go to once they have been tagged three times.

Each player must keep their ball within playing distance (generally no further away than it would be if they were dribbling it like a basketball).

**Introduce this activity without a ball, then introduce dribbling once they understand it.**



Players dribble their ball around the grid trying to tag the other players with their hand while at the same time trying not to be tagged.

If a player is tagged they must place their hand (“Band-Aid”) over the tagged area and continue to dribble.

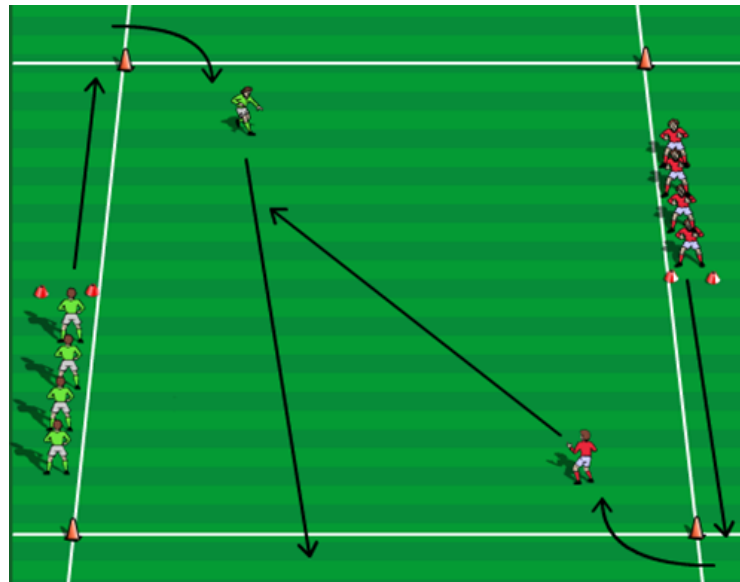
Once they have been tagged two times they must go to the “hospital.” At the hospital they perform 5 toe taps (or another move assigned by the coach) to get well.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Activity – Tag Game

Divide the players into two equal teams with teams placed on opposite sides of the grid. The start for each team will be two cones placed at the midway point. One team is designated as the taggers.

When the coach calls “go” the first player from each team will race down to the grid corner cone. The “tagger” will attempt to tag the other player before he/she crosses the opposite end line.

Once the players have gone through a couple times, switch so the other team is now the “taggers,”



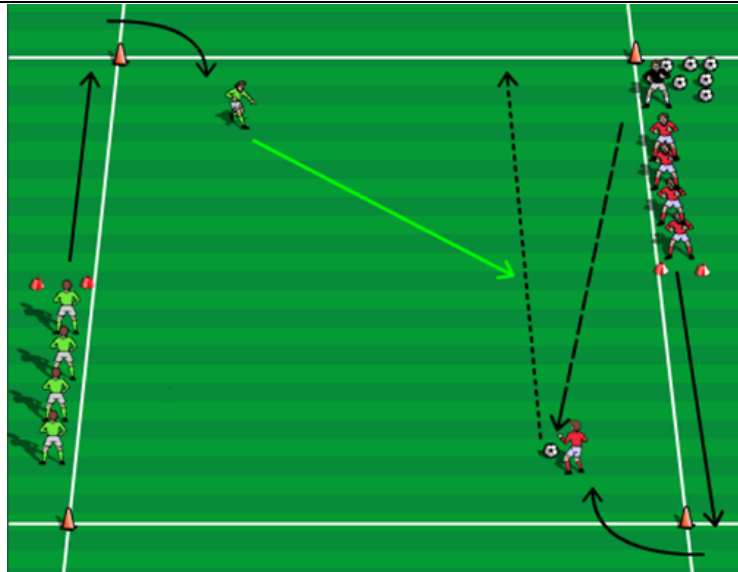
The tagger should close the other player down quickly, but start to slow as he/she gets near the opposite player. The tagger should begin with long strides to cover the distance, employing smaller steps as he/she nears the other player to slow down and become ready to tag.

Another key coaching point is for the tagger to move quickly up the field and not stop to wait by the end line “goal”. This not only keeps the attacker away from the “goal” but gives the tagger some distance to recover should they initially get beaten by the attacking player.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Activity – Tag Game with Ball

Same activity as before but now the coach passes a ball to one of the players as they run around the grid corner cone. Start with the defender just needing to tag the attacking player to win.

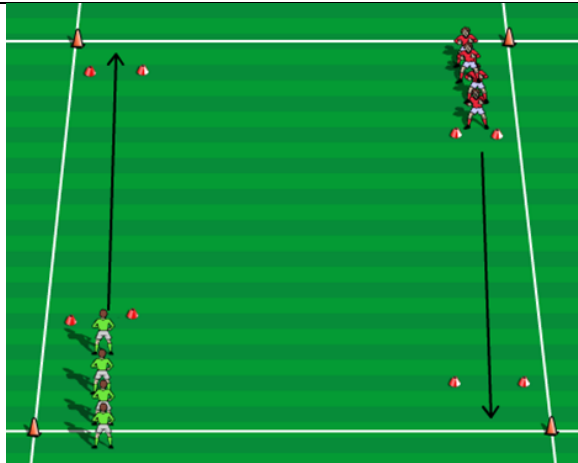
**SAFETY NOTE: For younger players, the coach should avoid 50/50 balls to prevent the players from colliding into each other. Make sure you are passing the ball directly to one player.**



Same coaching points as before but make sure the defending player is containing the attacker before tagging them. We want them avoid making a “lazy” tackle where they rush in and blow by the attacker. Once the players get the hang of it, progress to the players having to “win” the ball from the attacker. When they win the ball they become the attacker and try to score by dribbling to their end line. Encourage the player to try to win the ball instead of just kicking the ball away.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Activity – Speed Dribbling

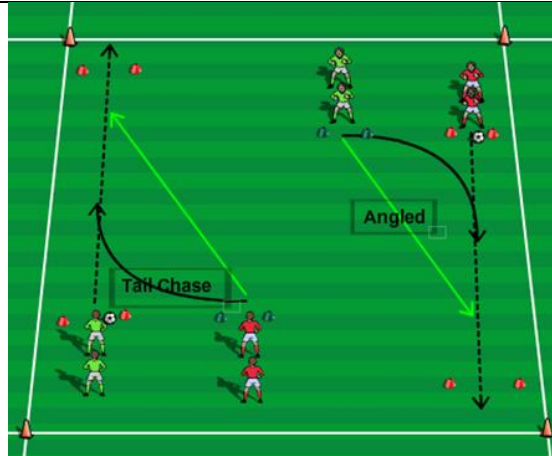
This activity is a review of speed dribbling and a precursor to Activity 7. In this activity, the coach will yell “go” and the first player in each line will dribble as fast as they can to the opposite gate. Encourage the players to go as fast as they can and not slow down until after they are through their end gate.



THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE INTRODUCED WITHOUT A BALL BY HAVING THE PLAYERS SPRINT TO THE END GATE WHEN THE COACH SAYS “GO.” ONCE THEY HAVE CROSSED THE END GATE THEY GET IN LINE TO RUN BACK THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. Once the ball is introduced, remind the players to make a big first touch to help them get to speed quickly and to try to dribble with their laces.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Activity – Angled Recoveries

Same activity as before with a 2<sup>nd</sup> line start gate added approximately 10 feet to the side of the initial start gate. Once the coach says go the attacking player goes as fast as they can to the end gate. The defending player attempts to tag the attacking player before the attacking player reaches the end gate. The players switch roles and join the lines going in the opposite direction.

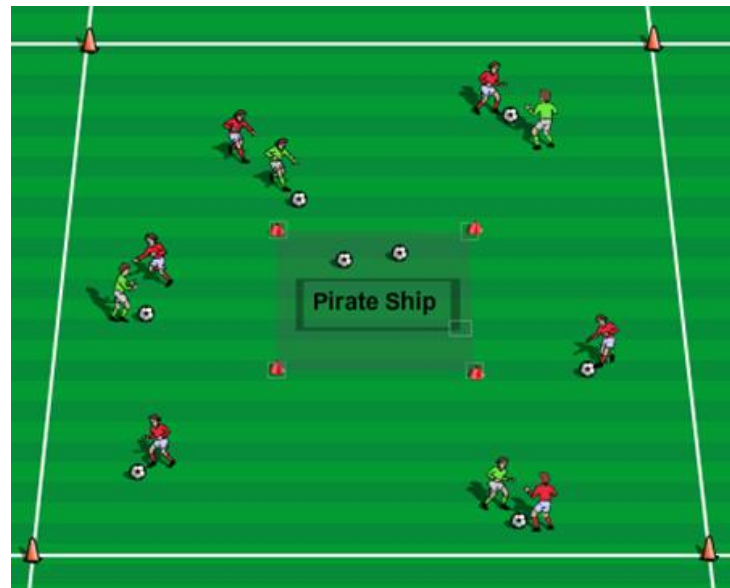


THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE INTRODUCED WITHOUT A BALL.

The primary coaching point in this activity is to start working with the player on making an angled recovery run instead of getting in a tail chase with the attacking player. The defending player wants to make as straight a run as possible to get ahead of the attacking player.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Activity – Pirate Game

Set up a 10 ft by 10 ft square “pirate ship” in the middle of the grid. Designate two players as the pirates with every player except the pirates having a soccer ball. Once the coach says go, the player dribble around the grid (but outside the pirate ship) trying to avoid the pirates. The pirates attempt to steal the soccer balls and dribble them to the pirate ship. Once a player’s ball is inside the ship, that player joins the pirates trying to steal the remaining soccer balls. Play until there are two players with soccer balls remaining who become the pirates in the next game.



Key coaching points

1. Pirates want to win the ball and not just kick it away from the attacking players.
2. Once an attacking player loses their ball they immediately become a defender and try to win their ball back from the pirate before it gets inside the pirate ship.
3. Encourage pirates to work together to team up on one attacking player.
4. Once the pirates win a ball, have them work together to get it back to the pirate ship.

### Cool Down

#### Cool Down - Juggling

Players pick up their ball and gently drop it to juggle it once using their foot or thigh. Repeat alternating feet/thigh. Juggling is a great activity to end every session. Work towards players being able to juggle a ball a few times using either foot, without it touching the ground. See if players can beat their # of juggles each week.