

Title: **Defending for U9s and Below**

Date:	Venue: Training Ground	Duration: 75 Mins	No of Players: All	Ability / Level: All	Equipment: Balls, bibs and cones
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Session Goals: To work on defending drills to increase these young players' ability to defend with structure and knowledge while keeping things fun.	Personal Coaching Goals: Get players competent at defending and while enjoying the activities at hand. Ensure learning of the principles of defending and good application. Repeat the basics where needed to ensure that these young players get the basics right and do them well.
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Time	Task / Activity / Session Content	Coaching Points
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Warm Up

Bib Tag 5 Mins	<p>All players have a bib tucked into the back of their waistband (must be visible). On the whistle, players attempt to catch as many bibs as possible - whilst keeping their own one in the back of their waistband.</p> 	 Coaching Tips <p>You can start to tell them about the basics of defending and asking them are they using them in this activity. Examples of this are the low body stature with bent knees while protecting your bib. These are skills which we can apply when defending. Doing this keeps the players minds on the topic of the session while allowing them to have fun within the realms of the game.</p>
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Fish Tank 15 Mins	<p>Set up a 10 x 10 area fish tank (any shape you see fit - diamond, square, circle, etc) and set up small goals on the outside. Have 4 players on the outside of the fish tank with a ball each. 1 player in the middle without a ball. The players (fishes) on the outside try to go across the tank without the player in the middle (shark) taking their ball. If the player in the middle takes the ball he/she tries to play it outside the area into one of the goals.</p> 	 Coaching Tips <p>Work on the basics of defending with the player in the middle. Get him/her to choose which player to try to defend against and then work to isolate this player. Get sideways on and show away from escape routes. Keep a low centre of gravity and move on mainly the toes, keeping heels of the ground so reacting to turns and changes of pace becomes easier. On winning the ball look to play quickly into the goals by playing the way your facing, or quickly turning out to play into another goal. Do not give opportunity for the attacker to win their ball back.</p>
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Dealing with the challenges of Defending

2 vs 1's

Set up an area of 10 x 20 (can be changed depending on ability of players).
Have a gate in the middle of the pitch.
In each half 2 vs 1 is played.
Attackers try to score by passing/shooting the ball through the gate. If they achieve this the ball goes to the other side and they will play 2 vs 1, with the defender on the side becoming active.
If the active defender wins the ball he passes to the passive defender to gain a point.
The passive defender would then pass to the attackers on his/her side and then stepping into the area of play to play 2 vs 1. The other defender now steps out and becomes passive.

15 mins



Coaching Tips

If defending players show a desire to win the ball back quickly then encourage this but look for controlled defending with patience and good timing when tackling.

Advise defending player to be a screener initially, getting their body in line with the ball and the goal to initially defend the ball into the gate and then to try and pounce on one player.

Move as the ball moves and avoid moving in straight lines if not pressing the ball.

To increase the difficulty for the attackers you can introduce a 1 touch finish rule.



Notes

Instead of having 1 defender passive, you can play him/her as a goalkeeper. This will help build up a repertoire of goalkeeping skills in addition to general play skills.

Defending the zones/areas

Split up the area into 3 zones. Have 1 defender (blue) in each zone and 1 defender (yellow) who is free to roam around the 3 zones.
Have 4 attackers (red) with a ball each, these attackers use the red doors to get in and out of the zones. They get 1 point for everytime they enter a zone through one door and exit through the other.
Have 1 goal in each zone. If defenders win the ball they can score by shooting/passing into the goal nearest to them or by passing the ball to the free defender who can take the shot into any goal.
Attackers need to make sure that there is never more than 2 attackers in any 1 zone, if not then all attackers lose all their points.

15 Mins



Coaching Tips

Get defenders to be aware of the attackers movement (e.g. when and through where they entered).

This will allow them to prioritise which player to defend against 1st when they are faced with 2 attackers in their zones. This helps build up the ability to identify the danger and to have defending priorities.

The free defender should always scan around him to identify where help is needed and move accordingly (he/she does not have to use the doors but you can add this to increase the difficulty).

Look to reinforce the basics of defending if players are not doing them right.

Encourage the channeling of attackers away from exit doors.

Get them to be patient and hold up the attackers if they cannot win the ball, this will give time for the free defender to come and help (making it 2 vs 1).

Small Sided Game

7v7 Final Game

20 mins

Finish with a small sided game. Play 7 vs 7 including goalkeepers.

Examples of playing Formations:

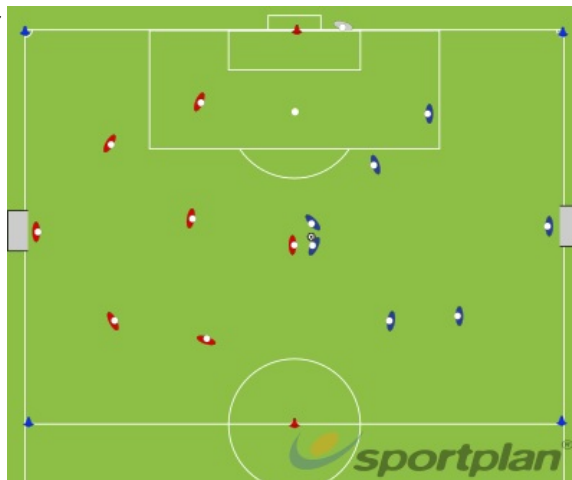
3-2-1 vs 2-3-1

3-1-2 vs 1-3-2

Concentrate on the areas covered in the session.

Can your players show good defending principles and do the basics well?

Highlight opportunities whereby players can make their body positioning or pitch positioning better.



Coaching Tips

Look to coach different aspects of defending when they arise, e.g.:

- 1) Screening passes
- 2) Channelling away from danger
- 3) Pressing
- 4) Dropping off
- 5) Blocking runs/shots

Can you get them working on overloading certain areas of the pitch or isolating certain players to ensure they win the ball back?

Warm Down

5 mins

Continue with the same game as above but now players can only walk. This will help in slowing down the levels of effort and bringing the game down to reflect a cool down.



Notes

Cool downs are generally not needed when working with these age groups, however it is good to get into the habit.

Other Comments:

Evaluation: