



Defending - Pressure/Cover

by Mass Youth Staff Coach

OBJECTIVE: This session is designed to teach the defenders closest to the ball when, where and how to win the ball back for their team. In particular, we will discuss the roles and responsibilities of the pressuring defender (1st defender) and the covering defender (2nd defender).

1) Pressure-Cover Warm-up (5-7 minutes): 3 Players per ball in open space. Player A and Player B, about 8-10 yards apart, pass the ball back and forth. Player C is located about 10-15 yards away from Players A & B. After 3-4 passes between Players A & B, Player A passes the ball to Player C. While the ball is traveling, Player B approaches Player C to apply pressure to the ball; at the same time, Player A provides appropriate cover to Player B (positions herself behind and at an angle to Player B). Player C attempts to split Players A & B with a 1 touch pass. Repeat many times, changing the roles of the 3 players.

Coaching Points (1st Defender):

- Angle of approach – We want to direct the player one way on the field, take away option of advancing forward.
- Speed of approach – Approach fast...arrive slow
- Body Shape- knees bent, on the balls of their feet, one foot slightly angled in front of the other foot
- Decision to delay opponent or to tackle the opponent to win possession of the ball; if 1st defender does not have good cover, delaying the opponent is a good decision; if the 1st defender has good cover, then the decision to tackle with the toe-poke or block tackle is appropriate just as the ball comes off the foot of the dribbler

Coaching Points (2nd Defender):

- Angle and distance of cover; speed to cover – Stay connected to first defender
- Cover dangerous space between 1st defender and you; cannot allow a penetrating pass to split you and the 1st defender!
- Be positioned so that, if the 1st defender gets beat with the dribble, you can become the 1st defender immediately.
- Be ready...see the ball, keep feet moving

Mistakes to watch for (1st defender): *(these are common mistakes that we want to watch for and correct.)*

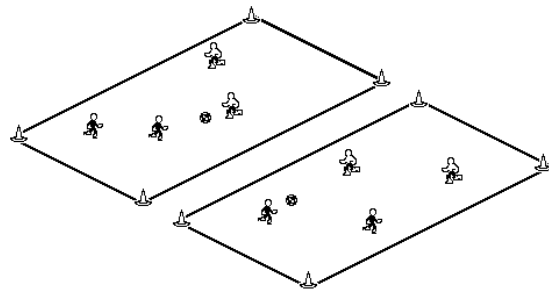
- Planting their feet once they get to the defender
- Sprinting straight at the attacker (diving in)
- Standing straight up

Mistakes to watch for (2nd defender):

- Running right behind the 1st defender
- Running next to the 1st defender and creating a flat shape

2) 2v2 to lines (20 minutes):

Create multiple fields that are 20yds x 15yds with 4 cones outlining the field (enough so all players are playing); organize all of the players into teams of 2. Each team will attack the end line opposite them and defend the end line behind them. Players must dribble over the opposite end line to score. Play a tournament format where teams play 2 minute games and then rotate to another field. Scoring goes as follows: 3 pts for the win, 1 pt for the tie, 0 for a loss and, if they have a shut-out, they get 2 bonus pts.





Coaching Points:

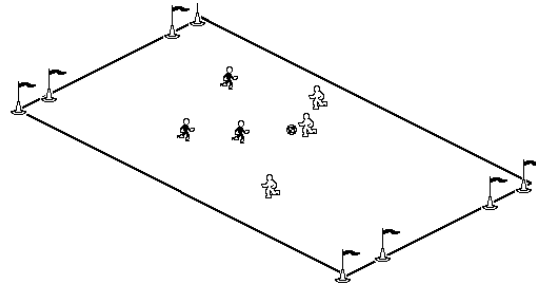
- Same as above

Mistakes to watch for:

Players hanging back and not pressuring the ball as a team when they become defenders

3) 3v3 Four Goal game (20 minutes):

In a grid 20x30 yards with four goals measuring 3 feet across in each corner, play 3v3. Each team attacks the 2 goals opposite them and defends the 2 goals behind them. Some questions to ask the players: “can you channel the ball into certain areas of the field to gain possession?” “Can you apply enough pressure on the ball to limit the first attacker's options and make the play predictable?” *Version 2:* If the players are scoring very quickly, change the game so that the attacking team has to score by dribbling through one of the goals; this will allow the defending team more time to get organized.



Coaching Points:

- 2nd defender must recognize their responsibility to cover the 1st defender as the ball is traveling to the opponent (1st attacker).

4) 6v6 Game (15minutes):

Unrestricted play. While the game is going on, praise successful defending and connection by the 1st and 2nd defenders.

COOL- DOWN (10 minutes): Juggling in 2's and 3's only using their feet or head. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.