



Cumberland United Coaching Clinic Session #4
Fundamentals of Defending
January 05, 2009



'1 on 1' games are a very common way for our coaches to develop the technical abilities and confidence of their players. By teaching proper defending techniques and forcing attackers to deal with more difficult scenarios to succeed, this practice method can be even more effective and can be used to introduce, instill, and sharpen the fundamental tactics of defending as well.

Review of Defending:

Defensive stance:

- Side-ways on (45 degrees)
- Lead foot is just wide of attacker (forcing him/her one way or the other)
- On toes with knees bent – ready to make a sudden burst
- Arms length away from defender to begin
 - Close enough to take away passing options and potentially win ball, but far enough so as to not be dribbled easily. Players with different physical tools will feel comfortable at different distances.
- Always moving – controlling the speed of the attacker

3 basic tackles:

Poke Tackle:

- Done with the lead foot
- Ankle locked, toe pointed down
- Do not commit to the tackle (do not lunge)
- Remain responsive

Block Tackle:

- Eye on the ball
- Lead foot planted firmly beside the ball
- Toe pointed up (ankle locked)
- Body weight and balance behind the ball
- Commit and step through the tackle
- Remain responsive
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Body Tackle:

- Initiated by lead foot
- Arms out to make upper body big
- Plant firmly before trying to touch the ball



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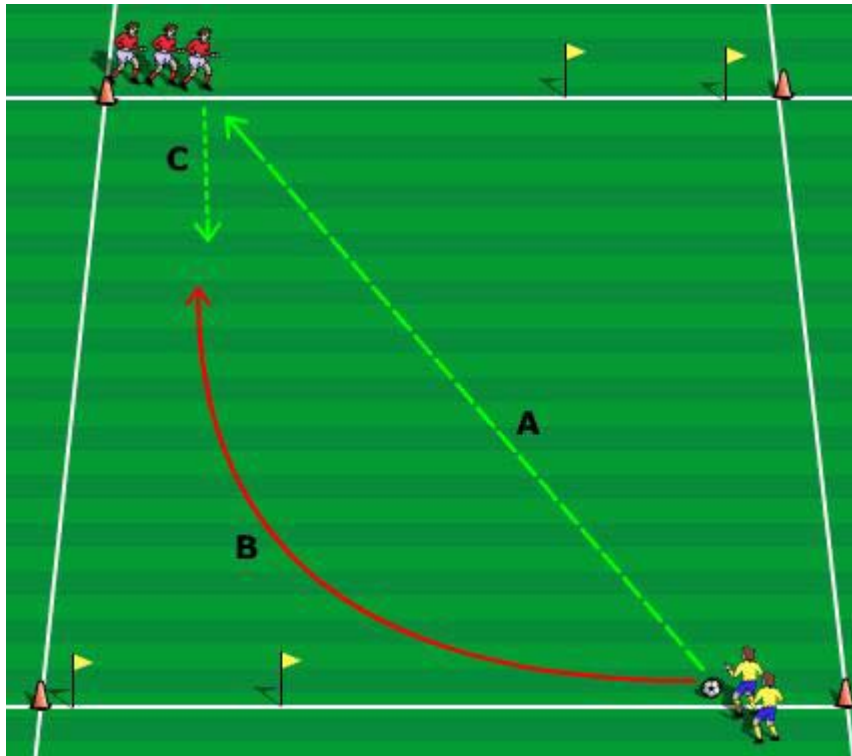
Extended Warm up Drill:



Variations:

- **Channeling:** Attacker dribbles slowly at the defender who channels him/her to alternating sides by assuming a sideways on defensive stance. Switch roles once you reach the opposite side.
- **Poke Tackle:** Attacker dribbles more quickly at the defender who performs a poke tackle and brings the ball back to the starting cone, where the roles are reversed.
- **Block Tackle:** Attacker performs a simple move and the defender performs a properly timed block tackle. The move is done to alternating sides. Reverse roles at the end line.
- **Body Tackle:** Attacker dribbles and makes a move to one side, defender steps between attacker and ball to perform a "body tackle". Players reverse rolls and keep working towards the far end line.

Defending Drill #1: Defending One on One, Face to Face.



Setup:

2-3 players on each team with a goal about 3 m in width in opposite corners of the grid. Opposing teams line up on their own goal line on the opposite side from their own goal.

Instructions:

A -The ball is played across the grid to the attacking player.

B - Defender makes a curved run to shut down the attacker who controls the pass and tries to dribble past the player and score either 3 points by putting the ball in the goal or 1 point by dribbling past the end-line. This encourages the defender to channel the attacker away from the goal, while still not allowing him/her to dribble across the end line with no opposition. When a goal is scored or the ball goes out, the ball is played from the opposite side and the players switch roles.

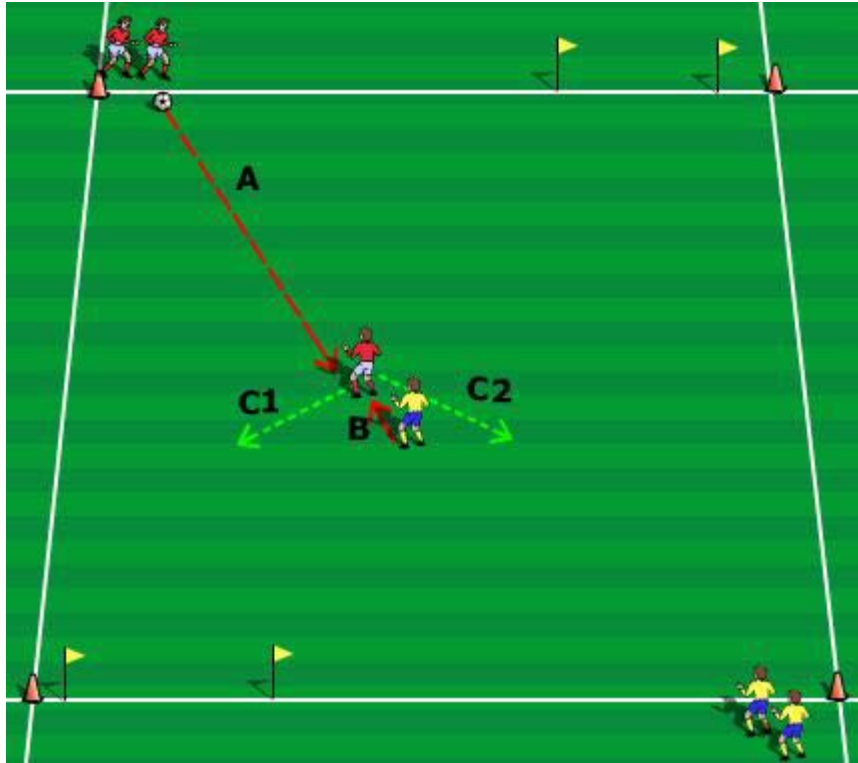
Coaching Points:

Remind players to:

- curve their approach run to take away the most dangerous option as soon as possible.
- shut down the space as quickly as possible but slow down in time to stay in control and not allow the attacker to use their momentum against them.
- Have a proper defensive stance, and proper distance away from the attacker.
- Watch for proper tackling techniques:

- Block Tackles: Weight is balanced and behind the ball to gain a physical advantage
- Poke tackles: Don't over commit. Poke the ball first and then win it.
- Body Tackle: is there an opportunity to perform this tackle?

Defending Drill #2: Defending When Attacker is Back to Goal



Setup: Same as drill one however the attacker and defender start in the middle of the grid now.

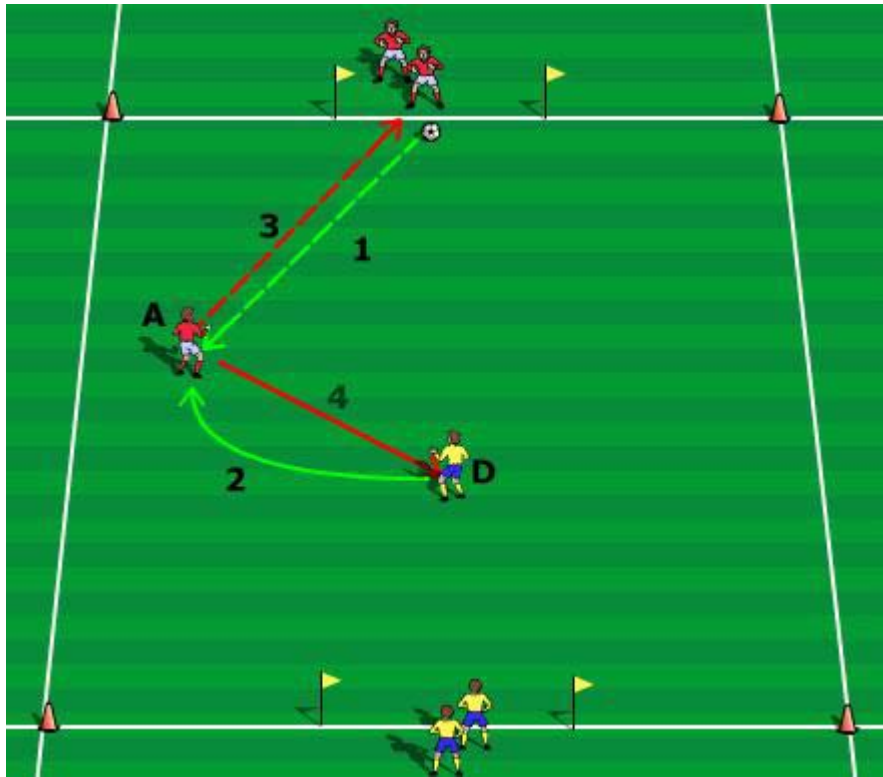
Instructions:

- A – Ball is played into the attacker
- B – Defender steps behind attacker as the ball is played to deny him/her the ability to turn.
- C – Attacker tries to turn and beat the player to score (3 points for a goal in the net, 1 point for dribbling over the end line).

Coaching Points:

- When the attacker is back to goal, the defender can be closer to him than in drill one where the attacker was facing the player.
- Stance is still sideways on, and is pushing the player away from goal
- “head on one side, feet on the other”... lead foot is on one side of the attacker, pushing him/her away from that foot, while the head is on the other side of the attacker allowing you to see the ball.
- Patience and timing are key. The ball does not have to be won immediately and an impatient commitment from the defender can allow the attacker a chance to turn him/her and score.
- Encourage players to keep the attacker facing back to goal.

Defending Drill #3: 1 v 1 +1 – Introducing Pressure and Cover



Setup: Same as Drill one but the goals are moved to the center of each end line as opposed to being in the corners.

Instructions:

- One attacker starts with the ball in his/her own goal (top of grid). This attacker cannot leave the goal.
- This player must work with attacker A to score a goal. Either player can score, but the first attacker must remain in the goal while the second attacker can move around the grid as before.
- If Defender D wins the ball he/she becomes the attacker and can combine with his/her partner in the same way.
- When a goal is scored or the ball goes over the end line, the central players are switched.

Coaching Points:

- In this drill, the idea of pressure and cover is introduced.
- When the first attacker has the ball, the defender must be central and denying an easy pass into his/her own goal.



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- Once the ball is passed into the second attacker, the defender must quickly close that player down and apply pressure to try and win the ball. The same principles now apply as in the first two 1v1 drills above.
- If the attacker is pressured into playing the ball back into his supporting team mate (attacker #1) the defender must quickly resume a central position denying the easy goal.
- While this is a drill focused on defending, ensure that the attacking player is creating width and some depth so that the defender is forced to pressure out wide and then recover to a central position.