



Mass Youth Soccer Skills Academy

U11 Week 6 – Individual Defending

Main Coaching Points:

- 1st defender needs to bend their run (banana shape run) to “take away” (block the path to) the goal, or force the ball in the direction they want it to go
- defender needs to “approach fast, arrive slow”
- defender needs to have the defensive stance – be on their toes, knees bent, one foot forward, one back, trying to anticipate when to close down their opponent
- eyes must be focused on ball
- important to delay progress of opponent by jockeying the player with the ball, and try to force them out of play and in the direction of their cover (second defender/sideline)
- once opponent goes where the defender wants them to go, they should tackle with front or back foot, whichever is appropriate
- defender can try to win ball off first touch of opponent if they have a bad touch

1) **Defend the Cone Warm-up**---Player A has the ball and is positioned in front of a cone. Player B is positioned 10 yards away. Player A passes the ball to player B, then Player A follows their pass in an effort to defend Player B and prevent player B from hitting the cone. Play 15 second bouts and change the players’ roles. **Variation 2:** Player B lets the ball go through his legs. Player A (the defender) approaches and attempts to prevent Player B (the attacker) from turning toward the cone. **(10 minutes)**

2) **1v1 to Line**---In a 12x12 yd grid, play 1v1 matches for 30 second intervals. Players score by dribbling their ball over the opposite end line. If a player scores before time is up, the other player takes the ball and attempts to attack the opposite end line. **(10 minutes)**



3) **1v1 to Two Small Goals**---Same grids as above except now there are small goals on each end line. Play 30 second matches. **(10 minutes)**

4) **2v2 or 3v3 Small Sided Scrimmage**---Create fields based on playing numbers and size of area. Reinforce individual defending technique and the decisions of the first defender (angle and speed of approach, defensive stance, concentration is essential). **(25 minutes)**

5) **Cool Down and Review**---Ask players to teach you the technical and tactical coaching points to insure complete understanding in the group. **(5 minutes)**

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Optional Activities:

1) Combat 1v1, 2v2---Coach has one ball. 4 players line up on each side of the coach single file. When the Coach knocks the ball out into free space, the first person in each line play against each other trying to get possession of the ball (1v1). The player who gets the ball back to the coach earns the point. Each team keeps total points.

Options: - Coach moves after he knocks the ball away.
 - 2 players from each line try to get possession (2v2)

This is a great activity to work on defending when your opponent is facing a negative direction.

2) 3v3 or 4v4 To Lines---In a 20x25 yard grid, teams score by getting the ball over the opposite end line under control. When the ball goes out of bounds it can be passed or dribbled in to play.