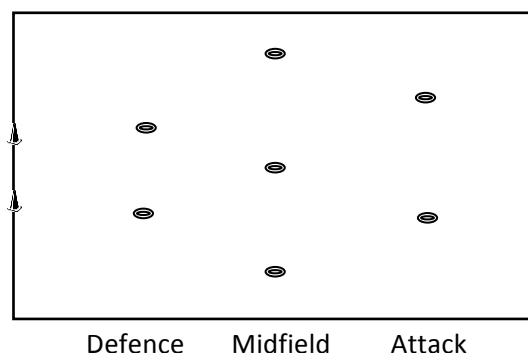


Soccer Positions and Responsibilities

This week is going to be a little bit different from others. For the sake of this drill I will be working as though teams are playing 8 a side when context is required. (If you have more than 8 players during game time, add to the defenders or attackers first)

First of all I want you to set out your whole half of the field in the 232 formation (2 defenders, 3 attackers, 2 attackers) using cones like so (the circles in the diagram below, use tall cones if possible):



Your team will stay with you for the entire session, there will be no rotation. When your team arrives, you can do a quick exercise while you wait for late players. You will then spend around 15 minutes on each position of the field, defence, midfield and attack as outlined in the drills that follow. Please try and get started at 18:05 as it is hard to tell how long each position will last.

Tell players that they will be looking at positions on a soccer field, where they need to stand when they are in these positions, and what their responsibility will be in that position. When you take them from section to section, make sure they leave the soccer balls in the goal so that they are not distracted, they can get the soccer ball when required and put it back afterwards.

Stage 1: Defence

Take all of your players and sit them just behind the defence cones facing up the field, towards the centre, not towards their own goal. When playing 8v8, explain that there will be 2 defenders, one is responsible for covering one half of the defensive area, and the other for the other half (right and left side of the field, if for example two defenders).

Ask players if anyone can tell you what the job of the defence is:

- Try and stop the other team from scoring.
- A defender should rarely go into the opposition half of the field and rarely join in with attacks.
- The position has great responsibility and their main aim is to protect their goal.
- First priority is to clear the ball from this zone.
- The defender needs to move up with the field when the ball is at the other end, but do not go too far. (Should normally not cross the half way/centre line)

During your games, start telling defenders not to go too far up the field, stay back.

When the opposition are attacking, how many people from our team should be trying to make a tackle and win the ball?

One. We do not need everybody chasing after the ball. Other players should be in their positions, marking a player from the other team or open for a pass.

Ask players if they know what a good defender will be good at:

- Tackling – They are the last line of defence. If a player from the other team gets past the defence, they are likely to get a chance to shoot on goal.
- Passing/ Clearing – When a defender has won the ball, they should try and pass the ball to a team mate or clear the ball up the field. A defender should rarely try and dribble the ball out of defence. Ask players why they should not try and dribble the ball out: Because if they lose it, then there will be no one in defence to try and stop the opposition from scoring. Defenders always try and pass the ball to a team mate or clear the ball up the field.
- Communication – Call for the ball when they go to make a tackle. When they are marking 2 players, they should also call for help from their team mates. For example, if 'John' is going for the ball, he should be shouting 'John's Ball!' to let team mates know that they do not also need to go for it.

Defence Drill:

How to Tackle - The Front Block Tackle

This drill will take around 5 minutes. If you finish this drill and there is still time left, go over the key points with defending. Do not go into another drill or let kids start taking shots at goal.

Players stand opposite a partner with a ball between them. Each player puts their left foot to the side of the ball and places their right foot 1 step back away from the ball on the ground. On the coaches command, they both bring the inside of their right foot to make contact with the ball at the same time. Begin by having the players work together to make contact with the ball at the same time. Begin very timid and progress that plays are increasing the force slightly until they are eventually trying to win the ball. Players MUST be using the inside of their foot when connecting with the ball. This is how we tackle correctly. Hold arms out for balance. Encourage players to keep pushing with their foot once they have made contact with the ball.

ASK FOR DEMO OF FRONT BLOCK TACKLE WHEN YOU GET TO THE FIELDS!

Stage 2: Midfield

Take all of your players and move to the midfield area of your field. Sit them down, again all facing towards the opposition goal. When playing 8v8, there will be a left sided midfielder, a right sided midfielder and a central midfielder. Each is responsible for their part of the field; left side, centre and right side.

Ask players if anyone can tell you what the job of the midfield is:

- Midfielders are responsible for trying to gain possession of the football and create opportunities for the attackers.
- They must be responsible for supporting attacking plays when they have the ball.
- They must work to support the defence and win the ball back when they don't have the ball.
- Midfielders should always be between the defender and attackers.
- A midfielders job is to try and create opportunities for attackers to score.
- Midfielders should not get too drawn to the ball, stay spread out and in space.

What makes a good midfielder?

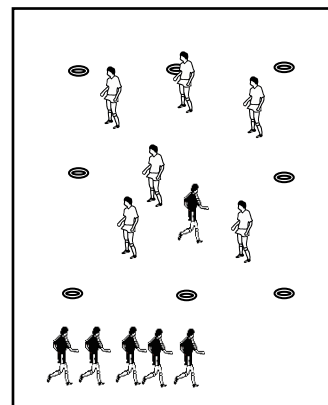
- Explain that midfield is one of the most demanding positions on a soccer field. Midfielders do the most running in the team. Ask players why they think this is? Because they need to help the defence and also support the attackers.
- Midfielders need to be good at defence and attack.
- They must be good passers of the soccer ball and also good tacklers.
- Must be disciplined to stay in their position.
- Must be unselfish and be willing to create chances for others.

Midfield Drill:

Passing: Six v One Keep-away (adapt numbers as required)

Make a quick grid of roughly 20x20 steps. Players are divided into two groups, with one half inside the grid, and the other half around the outside. The inside players pass and move around the grid. Each player in the outside goes in, one at a time, and attempts to get the ball from the team in the centre who must try and keep the ball for 15 seconds. Award a point if a team manages to keep the ball for 15 seconds, and a point to the other team if they do not last 15 seconds. See how 15 seconds is also, if this is too tough, can do 10 seconds or a set number of passes.

Players can move around in the square, encourage passing and moving, calling for the ball and moving the ball quickly.



Stage 3: Attack

Finally move over to the attacking cones.

Ask players the responsibilities of the attackers are:

- To score the goals!
- To always be open in space, ready to receive the ball from midfielders.
- Stay disciplined to stay in position at the top of the field and not move all the way back into their own half.
- They only need to try and win the ball when it is in the oppositions half. Rarely do they need to cross the half way line into their own half to win the ball.
- As soon as they get the opportunity to shoot on goal, they should take the shot.
- They must communicate well with midfielders to call for the ball.
- They are always the furthest player up the field. It is important that they do not just stand in front of the goal.

Ask players what makes a good attacker:

- They must be loud and call for the ball lots.
- They must always be moving even when they don't have the ball to try and get into space to receive it.
- They should rarely go into their own half.

Attacking Drill

Shooting – Lightning

Most players will know how to play this, so ask them first:

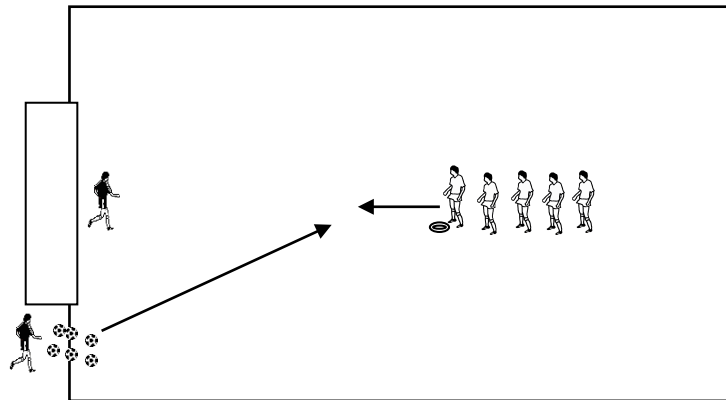
All the balls are placed just to the side of the goal. Players form a line about 12 steps from the centre of the goal, with 1 player starting in goal. Coach rolls/passes 1 ball at a time in to players who run on and shoot at the goal from around 10 steps away.

If they miss, that player is then in goal. They must get there quickly as the game keeps flowing.

If they score, they go to the back of the line. The goal keeper who was scored on goes behind the goal (in jail), and the next person in line goes in goal. And this continues.

Keep playing until you have a winner. You can play if the ball hits the cross-bar then it's a jail break and everyone can come from behind the goal and back into play.

Encourage stronger players to use both their weak and strong foot and strike the ball first time.
Allow weaker players to take a touch first.



Arrows indicate areas players are responsible for:

