

Objectives:**1. 4-2-3-1: DEFENSIVE ASPECTS**

- Session 1: In the Defensive 1/3

- Session 2: In the Middle 1/3

Deny penetration and disrupt the opponent's build up by pressing properly. Establish the covering roles among the players when pressure was not enough and either the long ball in behind or thru balls to feet has happened. Deal with the switch the point of the attack by sliding on time and denying penetration by the weak side.

- Session 3: In the Attacking 1/3

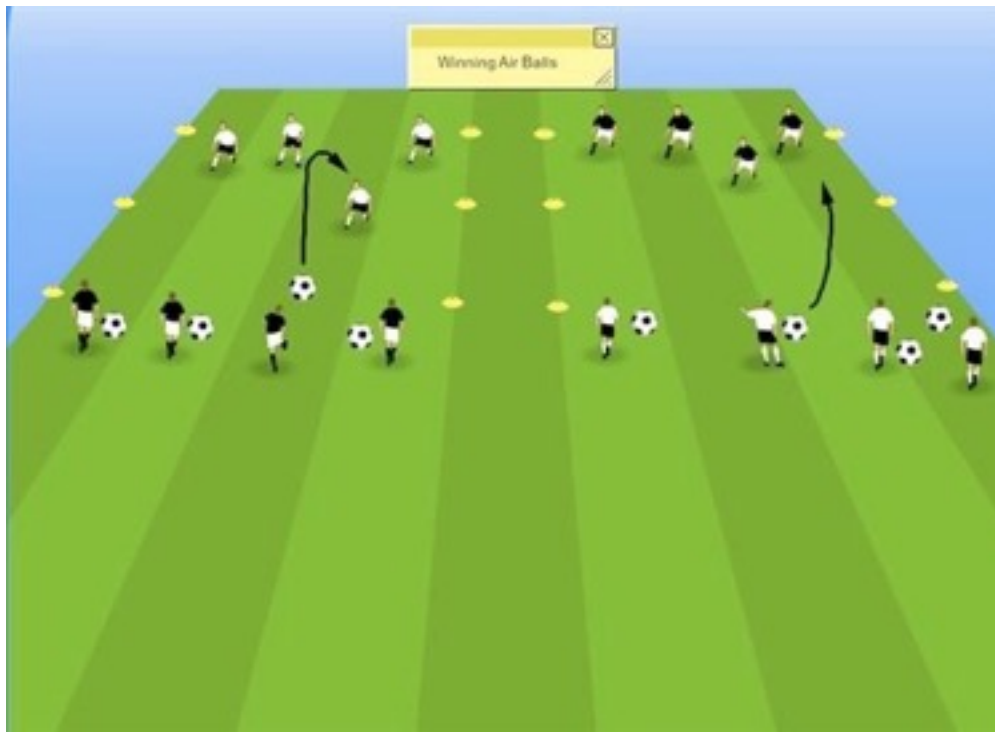
Focus: 4-2-3-1 Defending in the Middle Third

Players: 16 players

Field: Middle Third

Warm Up

Winning air balls. Divide the team in 2 groups. Each group has a serving group and the execution group. The servers play random high balls and random balls on the ground for the execution group to clear. The execution group has to be acquainted to anticipation and covering teammates. No pressure against them. Rotate the groups.

**Coaching Points**

- Opponent may be added if desired.
- Make sure players are active and expecting danger. Players must be alert.

Progression 2

The team is divided into 2 groups, the right side players and the left side ones. 4 players are servers and

the others execute the drill (center back, fullback, holding midfielder and attacking midfielder). The goal is to train anticipation and covering by the sides in the middle third. At first the servers send the ball to a specific player, which will anticipate the poll and play it back to the server. After a while the servers can play the ball randomly. Rotate groups.

The ball should be served according to the following sequence:

- Ball on the ground (short and long)
- Ball medium height
- High ball
- Ball in behind



Coaching Points

- Conform the kind of ball that a player receives the whole group should move accordingly to cover him.
- The player on the ball acts quickly to be first to the ball.
- The other players are set to win second balls if it is on.
- The covering roles are established by the closest player to play in condition to reach the area. This player will need cover himself and it is expected recovery runs from the others to either cover or double team.

Progression 3

In the next phase, the 4 players play against 2 opponents. Servers try to reach the attackers in the air on the ground and, the defenders have to execute anticipation and covering against them. Forwards are trying to reach behind the defense with ball under control thru either a pass in the space or dribbling thru. At first, when the defenders win the ball the drill is over (no counter). Next introduce counter attack by allowing defenders to play the back to the server. Rotate the attacking players and then the groups.



Coaching Points

- Players must claim responsibility for each ball that is played and act accordingly. They are also responsible to pick up and marking the forwards.
- Make sure to communicate when players are floating around. Make sure to pass them on. Advise teammates.
- Win 1st and 2nd ball.
- If ball is played to feet and the forward has a lot of time and space to turn and face the defenders, then guard space and do not dive in.
- Deny combination play.



Progression 4

Add another forward. Play 4v3. Rotate the forwards and then the groups.



Coaching Points

- Attention to withdrawing opponents that show for ball to feet.
Chose right when passing him on or sticking with the marking.
- When pressing very close to a forward who has possession of the ball, it is better to stay

with the pressure as long as possible and not pass him on. This will avoid the opponent's possibility of escaping the pressure and/or leaving somebody else open.

Progression 5

Guided 8v8. The defending team on a 4:2:2 formation. The ball starts with the attacking team whom is going to pass to a determined forward (A,B or C) and then the game starts. Once the ball is passed then the defending team has to read the chance to anticipate and covering, based on what has been trained previously. Next, the attacking team starts the game by passing the ball from the side to the middle (switch the point of the attack) to player D - which will activate the "weak side" players to also anticipate and cover. Both teams are aiming to get in behind each other either thru ball, long ball or switch.



Coaching Points

- Make sure there is pressure on the ball, avoiding all the other possibilities.
- If pressure on the ball is poor, then mark up tight and do not allow the ball to continue to go forward.
- If marking and pressure are well done then the opponent is forced to switch. When that happens the team must slide at or faster than the speed of the play.

Cool Down

- Jog and Stretch