



## 1st & 2nd Defenders

**Category:** Tactical: Defensive principles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

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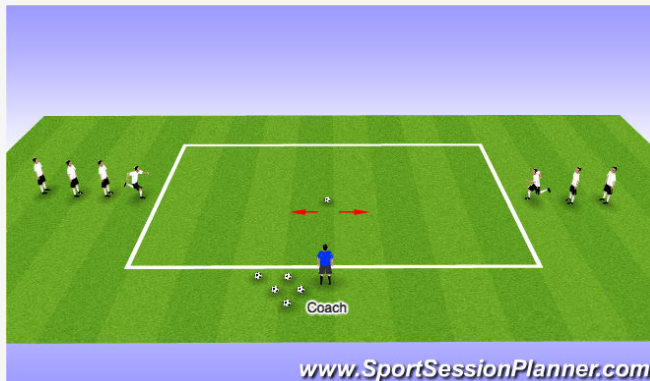
### 1st Defender Technique (15 mins)

In an 8 yd. x 10 yd. grid (larger for younger or less-skilled players), Coach places a ball in the middle of the grid and initiates a 1 v 1 contest on his command. The two players attempt to win the ball and dribble across the opponent's endline to score. Players switch lines and coach repeats process.

**Progression:** After several repetitions, Coach begins to place the ball slightly closer to one side or the other, randomly and unannounced. Hopefully, players will identify situations when the opponent will arrive to the ball sooner; therefore, breaking down their stance in preparation to defend.

**Coaching Points:**

- Players should be more concerned in not getting beat than winning the ball unless there is a clear opportunity to gain possession.
- Individual Defending techniques: break-down run with shorter stride, side-on position, keep feet moving and watch attacker's hips (not feet), patience not to tackle/dispossess until attacker "shows" the ball to defender with a poor or careless touch.
- Create the expectation for defenders to *win the ball*; don't just clear the ball out of the grid.
- 1 v 1 battles should be very competitive, so keep score as needed.



### 1st & 2nd Def. Movement (15 mins)

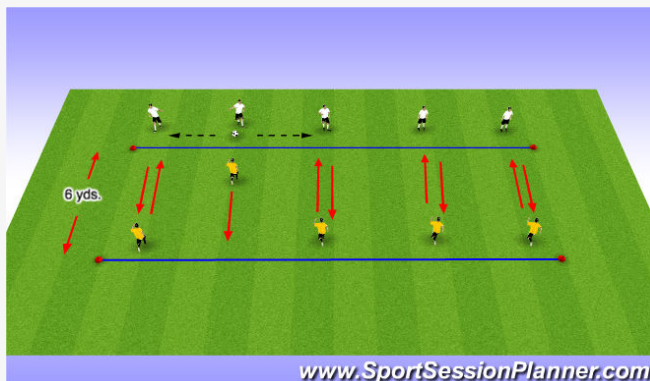
Organize players as shown with a defender opposite an attacker, 6 yds away.

Attackers (white) pass to adjacent teammates using 2 touches.

Defenders do NOT win the ball but close space quickly when the ball is received by the attacker in their zone. Then quickly retreat to cover when ball is passed on.

**Coaching Points:**

- Close space quickly with good technique
  - Retreat "side-on" quickly as well facing the direction of the ball
  - Insist that players work hard to maintain proper shape as ball moves.
  - Encourage attackers to move ball quickly
- Switch roles to allow both sides same opportunity.



### 5 v 3, Transition (20 mins)

