

# Defend your zone

“Zonal” defending refers to players keeping their position in a formation and not moving into another defender’s zone.

It is vital a defender is able to prevent an attacker beating him in a 1v1 situation in his zone.



### What you tell your players the session is about

1. Individual defending.
2. Zonal defending.
3. Working together to stop the opponents’ attacks.

### Session planner

Warm up 10 mins	Session 15 mins	Developments 15 mins	Game 20 mins	Warm down 5 mins
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Activity	Kit	Outcome
Warm up	One bib	Huddle movement game develops communication from <i>The Ultimate Football Warm-ups Manual</i> , exercise 4
The session	Balls, cones, small goal	Improved individual defending techniques and attitude
Development	Balls, cones, small goals	Players are defending their zones and communicating to each other
Game	Balls cones	The team is defending together in relation to the ball
Warm down	n/a	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



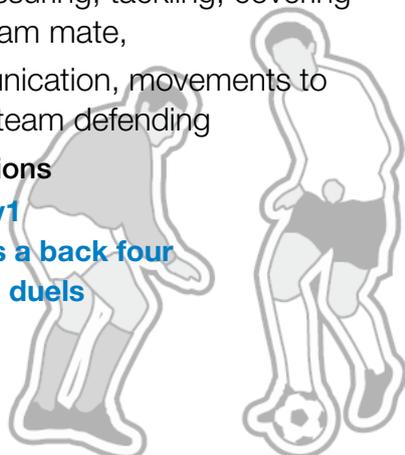
### Where it fits

Individual skills: Pressuring, tackling, covering and supporting a team mate,

Team skills: Communication, movements to support and cover, team defending

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### What to think about

- The defender has to be ready to react to an attack.
- Aggressive defending is key to winning the ball back.
- Being constantly be on the move will help defenders turn quickly.
- The defenders need to retain their formation and not be pulled apart. It is vital to play close together to stop forward passes.





## Set-up

Mark out a 30 yards by 10 yards area as in the top picture. Then create a 30 yards by 40 yards area, split into four channels with four goals as in the middle picture. Finally use a mini or full-sized pitch depending on the ages of players.



## What you get your players to do

Using three players – one is the defender, one is the attacker and the other is the server. The server is in control of three balls which the defender has to try to stop being scored.

Ball 1 – the server passes towards the goal for the defender to run and slide and stop the attacker scoring.

Ball 2 – the server passes to the attacker who dribbles 1v1 against the defender.

Ball 3 – the server passes to the attacker who is facing away from the goal, the defender must stop the attacker from turning to shoot at goal.



## What to call out

- “React to each ball”
- “Don’t let them score”
- “Stay on your feet and force them away from goal”



## Development

Use four attackers against four defenders in individual channels. Each attacker can try to take on his defender in a 1v1 and no one can leave their zone. However, the attacker can choose to pass so other defenders have to be in the correct position. Attackers can score in any goal. If the defence stops the attack or the ball goes out of play, the attack starts again. Develop into 4v4 and all players can move into all zones.

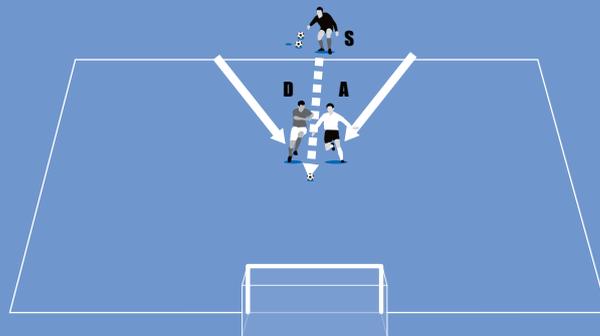


## Game situation

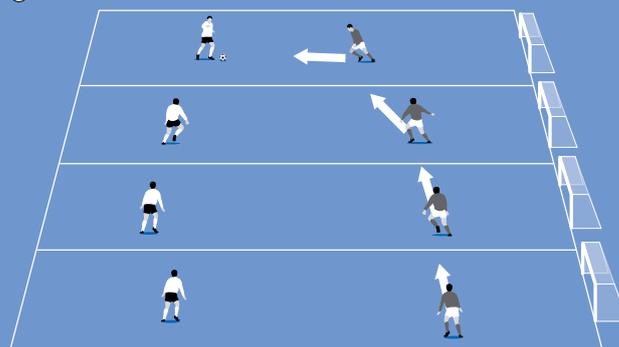
Play a normal game. The pitch is split into three zones (attacking, midfield, defending). The defending team is not allowed to tackle in zone 1 and will drop back to make the pitch smaller. In the midfield zone (2), defenders have to pressure attackers quickly and try to intercept passes. In the defending zone (3), they must be aggressive to tackle. The same rules apply to both teams so whichever has possession begins an attack.

# Defend your zone

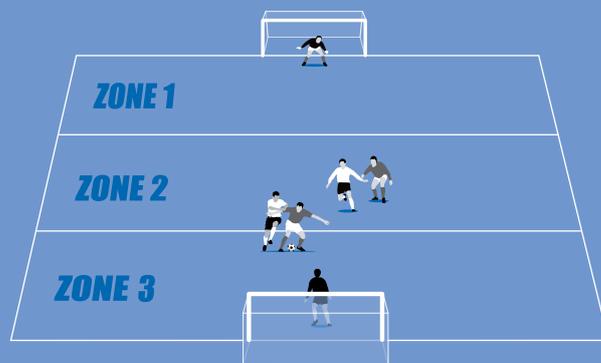
direction of run  $\Rightarrow$  pass  $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$



The server (S) passes the ball into a 1v1 situation between a defender (D) and attacker (A) in three different zonal scenarios.



Begin with individual 1v1 battles in channels to improve defenders' skills before moving on to 4v4.



Defenders cannot challenge in zone 1 but pressure in zone 2 and be aggressive in zone 3. Reverse roles for continuous play.

