

Hold the line

It is the last minute of a cup final and your team is 1-0 up. The opposition is firing long balls and crosses into your penalty area. Can your team remain calm and clear the danger?



What you tell your players the session is about

1. Defending under pressure.
2. Clearing the ball from danger.
3. Remaining composed.

Session planner

Warm-up	Session	Development	Game situation	Warm-down
5 mins	15 mins	15 mins	20 mins	5 mins

Activity	Kit	Outcome
Warm-up	One bib	“Huddle movement”, in which the team works together to defend the driver, from <i>The Ultimate Football Warm-Ups Manual</i> , exercise 4
Session	Cones, balls	The players take turns to serve the ball and make defensive clearances
Development	One goal, balls, bibs cones	The defence must try to clear the crosses
Game situation	Two goals, balls, bibs, cones	The defence and midfield must defend the high ball and then look to counter attack
Warm-down	n/a	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



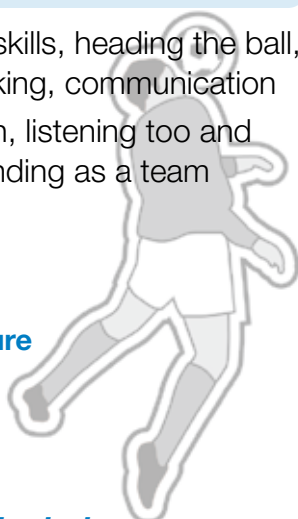
Where it fits

Individual skills: Defending skills, heading the ball, volleying to clear, man marking, communication

Team skills: Communication, listening too and acting to instructions, defending as a team

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What to think about

- The defence must not drop too deep and place the goalkeeper under intense pressure, so a high defensive line needs to be held.
- As the ball is played, one defender should go to challenge for the ball, the other defenders drop behind and take up covering positions.
- Defenders try to hold the line as far up the pitch as possible so attackers will be caught offside.
- If a defender wins the ball they do not want to give possession away so look for movement from team mates to receive a pass.



