

DEFENDING SKILLS

Body control is essential for good defensive play. The key to developing quick strong movements is effective footwork and positioning.

In defence the player is constantly making decisions regarding the choice of defending positions and how this relates to the anticipated attack play. It is important for the defender to maintain a broad view of the ball, their opponent and other players in the defending area.

STARTING POSITION – FRONT OR SIDE

In one on one defence the aim is to dictate the opponents play to force the attacker to a poor position to force a turnover of the ball. One on one defending techniques include defending in front, 'Shadowing' (Teaching points included in the Foundation Coaching Manual), from the side or from behind.

| TEACHING POINTS | COMMON ERRORS |
|---|---|
| <p>Positioning side Position on the ball side of the attacker forcing them away from the ball.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand side-on to attacker with one foot in front and one behind – forming a 'T' • Arms close to sides of body • Feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent, weight slightly forward over toes • Back upright, turn head slightly using peripheral vision to maintain sight of opponent and thrower • If in a side-on position when the ball is passed, the defender should attempt to intercept the ball leading with the hand closest to the ball (front arm) • Driving forward towards the ball and away from opponent for the intercept (to avoid contact and shortening the distance to the ball) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms positioned out from the body causing obstruction • Watching either the ball or the attacker exclusively • Stance too wide to allow a quick take-off and to re-position as needed • Watching the flight of the ball rather than using quick footwork to reposition and attempt an interception • In a side on position and attempting to intercept leading with the back arm (therefore contacting with the shoulder) • Attempting the intercept too close to opponent and causing contact |

SIDE POSITION

1. Explanation and Demonstration

2. Basic Movement / No Equipment

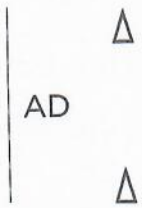
Players to side-step and change direction on command.

3. Basic movement with equipment

Using side-on defence the defender works to keep their opponent on the side of the court.

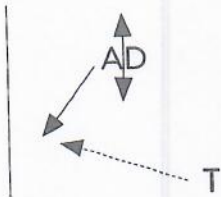
Use cones as targets for the attacker to try to lead towards and to also indicate the area to work within.

NB. The defender should only work this position for a total of ~3sec each effort



4. Add a ball

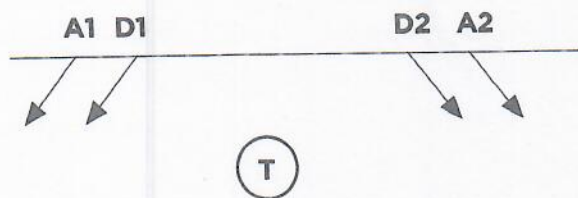
Defender adjusts footwork to force the attacker to lead away from the ball. Attacker to make a couple of moves and then angle lead forward or back to receive a pass, defender to attempt an intercept.



5. Add an opponent

Attacker becomes more active, uses preliminary moves to lose the defender and lead ball side.

Set up one thrower (T), 2 attackers and 2 defenders, as you might for centre passes, to practise the side on position for defence and contest for an intercept. Defenders to set up side positions to force attackers away from the ball.



RE-POSITIONING

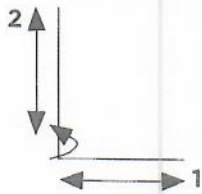
Defending players will need to reposition based on changes in the game. Repositioning may include adjusting and changing position around an opponent, or integrating a number of defending approaches, such as applying one-on-one pressure, then recovering to double defence on the next attacking opponent.

| TEACHING POINTS | COMMON ERRORS |
|---|--|
| <p>When re-positioning between the side and in front positions the defender must keep vision of both the ball and opponent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick footwork keeping the feet shoulder width apart is used to re-position between in front and side defending or from one side to another • The defender should not contact on transition between movements. • Whenever possible the defender should move to the front to attempt an interception with two hands rather than remaining side-on to an opponent. • If in a side-on position, the defender should attempt to tip or intercept the ball leading with the hand closest to the ball (front arm) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms positioned out from the body causing obstruction • Watching the ball or attacker exclusively • Stance too wide to allow a quick take-off and to reposition as needed • Watching flight of ball rather than using quick footwork to reposition and attempt an interception • Contacting opponent while repositioning • In a side on position, attempting to intercept leading with the back arm (contacting) • Not re-positioning from side to front for an intercept • When in a front-on position and not attempting to intercept the ball with two hands |

1. Explanation and Demonstration

2. Basic Movement / No Equipment

Use the corner of a court. Side step a couple of steps along the line (1), side step back to the corner, keep the front foot on the corner and forwards pivot and side step a couple of steps along the line (2). Face into corner on first move, and out of corner for next move.



3. Basic movement with equipment



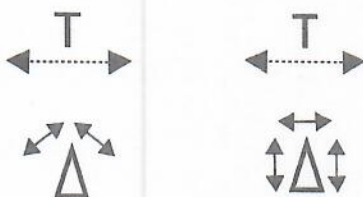
i. Maintain in front position as ball is swung across the court. Slide around player.



ii. Reposition around a chair – side to front to side defence (if you do not have a chair use a cone or stationary player).

4. Add a ball

Add two T's who pass the ball between them. Defender to adjust ball side as the ball is swung. Tip or intercept the ball when it is passed towards the chair. As the ball is passed practise maintaining front position and switching from side to front to side.



5. Add an opponent

Attacker replaces the chair. Attacker to be passive initially and then become more active.

FIRST BALL PRESSURE TO A CONTEST

Defenders maintain first ball pressure to a contest to intercept the ball or prevent attacking players from receiving a pass.

| TEACHING POINTS | COMMON ERRORS |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good start position, close to attacker • Push off strongly off back foot to drive forward • Drive towards the ball, between opponent and thrower to intercept the flight of the ball • Arms extend out in front of body to reach for the ball • Land on outside foot, i.e. when driving left, land left, when driving right, land right | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start position too far away or too close to attacker • Not responding to attacker's first move • Moving head rather than feet to shadow player's movements • Weight on back foot or moving back before the forward move • Following opponents lead rather than driving towards the ball between the opponent and the thrower • Not completing drive to attempt intercept • Running too far past the attacker • Not attempting intercept with two hands in front of body • Leading with the arm closest to opponent and contacting • Landing on the inside foot |

1. Explanation and Demonstration

2. Basic Movement / No Equipment

Players work individually

Work through variations in starting stance (side on, front with angled body or one foot back).

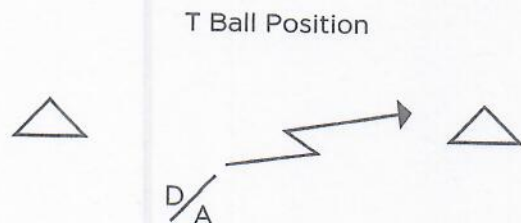
3. Basic movement with equipment (passive opponent)

Groups of two: defender (D), attacker (A)

Work through variations in starting stance outlined in step 1 against a stationary opponent or around a chair (side on, front with angled body or one foot back).

Progress from a stationary to passive opponent working between two markers placed 4-5m apart. On the call of LEFT the defender works to keep the attacker away from the left cone; forcing attacker right side. On the coach's signal switch to work the opposite side, keeping the attacker away from the right cone and forcing them to the left.

Repeat trying a different defending starting position to dictate the movement of the attacker.

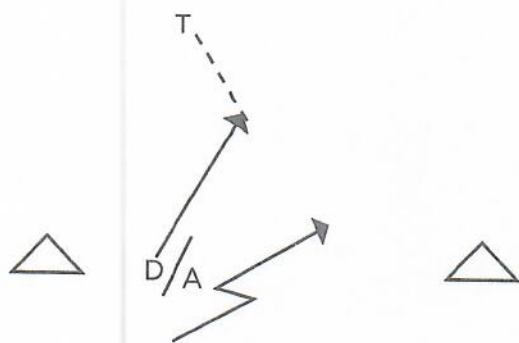


4. Add a ball

Groups of three: thrower (T), defender (D), attacker (A)

Thrower (T) is off-set slightly to the left cone. Defender uses a strong starting stance to actively dictate the movement of the attacker away from the ball side. T initially faces away (can throw or catch ball or simply turn) and after turning throws to A. On release of the ball the defender drives strongly towards the ball, between opponent and thrower and uses two hands to take an intercept. T aims to give a flat, direct pass to the area just outside the right cone (this can be varied to provide increased challenges for different abilities).

Repeat X2-3 times and to each side. NB T will need to be also off set more to the right when they swap sides.



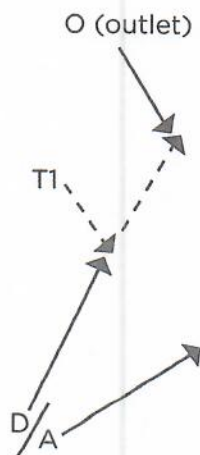
5. Add an opponent (active opponent)

Groups of four: thrower (T1), defender (D), attacker (A), outlet option (O)

Set up an outlet player (O) 5-7 meters behind initial thrower (T1) to enable a pass-off from an interception by the defender. The outlet option (O) begins with the ball and passes to T1 on the drive. This will also create variety in the receiving position of the thrower and enable the defender to restrict and dictate the attacker as the ball moves down court.

If the defender intercepts the ball the Outlet Option (O) leads to receive a well-balanced and powerful pass from the defender.

Extension option; if the pass is taken by the attacker the thrower then leads down court for another pass ('double play'). This creates an opportunity for the defender to quickly recover to hands over or to drive strongly in another challenge for the ball.



HANDS OVER BALL

(RECOVERY TO DICTATE PASS TYPE OR DIRECTION)

Positioning of the body and hands when defending can restrict an opponent's space for their next drive, or close off a lane option for a pass, which often forces a high ball that is more easily intercepted.

| TEACHING POINTS | COMMON ERRORS |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push off strongly to 0.9m distance • Strong stride/jump back – can be one large stride or few quick steps • Use arms for power to jump back • Head up with eyes on ball and opponent • Feet shoulder-width apart, knees, hips and ankles slightly bent • Weight forward with knees over toes • Back straight and upright • Arms up and in position • Entire foot on ground • Position arms restricting passing options • Re-position quickly to defend attackers next move • Hand Positions <p>TRACK THE BALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The defender should follow the path of the ball as it is moved around above the shoulders of the attacker <p>WIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands start wide to encourage the thrower to pass the ball over the throwers head • On release the defender brings their arms together in an attempt to intercept the pass <p>ONE ARM UP AND ONE TO THE SIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One arm up covers the high pass possibility and one arm to the side covers the other passing option <p>HIDDEN ARM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One arm is kept close to the side of the defender's body which encourages the thrower to pass the ball closer to the defender's body • On release the defender moves their arm up in an attempt to intercept the pass | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push off not quickly enough to get back to distance • Feet too wide or too close together – difficult to change direction • Eyes on ground – attempting to judge distance • Incorrect distance • Hands coming up before correct distance is taken • Weight not balanced or too much on toes • Feet narrow, knees, hips and ankles straight – lose balance • Bending forward too much at waist with hands over a low ball • Arms waving aimlessly and not defending the pass |

1. Explanation and Demonstration

2. Basic Movement / No Equipment

- i. Players to stand behind a line (feet shoulder-width apart, body upright and knees slightly flexed and out over the toes). On command step back to 0.9m.



- ii. Once player is back at 0.9m put up hands to defend pass. Allow the players to repeat several times whilst giving feedback of correct technique.

3. Basic movement with equipment

Work up to cone, deflect an imaginary ball with the outside hand then recover to 0.9m with hands down (no obstruction) then put hands up. Move along a line of cones to continue practise. Repeat in the other direction using the other arm to deflect an imaginary ball.

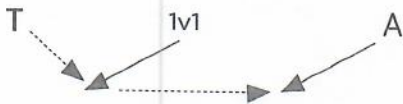


4. Add a ball

- i. Side by side in pairs with a ball facing the same direction. Player with the ball throws ball into the air to self and passes to a wall (could use a third player) other player takes the role of the defender and recovers to hands over. Defender to practise varying types of hands over defence. E.g.
 - a) One hand high and one to side (cover high ball and side attacker is leading to and encourage ball to be passed to other side.
 - b) Both hands wide (encourage high ball, hands close as ball passed)
 - c) Tracking (hands to cover balls path when it is above the shoulders)
 - d) Hidden arm. Move arm up from side of body in an attempt to intercept the pass
- ii. In pairs with a ball. Throw ball up between themselves and contest for a catch, the person who does not get the ball takes the role of defender and recovers to 0.9m with hands up. Need to designate the direction of play.

5. Add an opponent

T passes to 1 v 1 contest, attacker to pivot and pass to a leading player. Defender attempts to intercept first ball, if unsuccessful, recovers to hands over and practises strategies listed in 4 to influence the type of pass given by the attacker.



DICTATING OR DENYING THE SPACE

Defending players use dictating, or denying space to restrict their opponent's choice of where to lead on court. This may be applied after the attacker has passed the ball to restrict their next attacking lead, or applied to keep an attacker away from the ball.

| TEACHING POINTS | COMMON ERRORS |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When dictating or denying space the body weight is kept low with knees bent and arms by side, eyes up. • The aim for the defender is to affect the timing and positioning of the attackers next lead, e.g. force a player away from the ball • The defender does not need to stop the attacker from making a lead, rather change the speed and affect the timing and lead option available on court. The defender is aiming to dictate the attacker's next lead option. • The defender must step back at a 45-degree angle and side step backwards (keeping this angle) dictating the space the attacker can move into | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base too wide with players unable to reposition and adjust quickly • Slow recovery backwards to position (1 metre or more) and body angle not dictating opponents lead after the ball has been passed • Jumping as ball is released so the attacker can drive past the defender before they land • Moving forward into path of attacking player (causing contact) • Uncontrolled body position resulting in contact or obstruction |

1. Explanation and Demonstration

2. Basic Movement / No Equipment

Players line up along the side line with their backs facing the middle of the court. Individually, players practise the defensive back step across the court ensuring they alternate the foot they drop back to a 45° angle from time to time and keep the few side-steps wide and low.

3. Basic movement with equipment

Pairs line up at a sideline facing each other, 1 to 2 metres apart. As one partner walks forward (attacker) their partners (defender) steps backward at a 45° angle and side-steps to dictate their opponent's direction of travel. As the attacker changes direction so the defender reacts by stepping back at a 45° angle with the other foot and side-stepping.

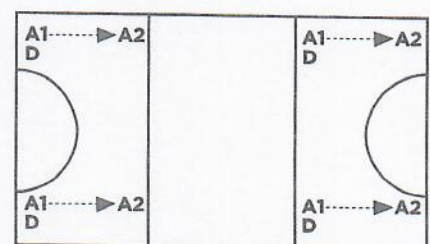
Swap roles when players reach the other side-line.

Repeat several times, slowly increasing the speed of the attacker to a jog then a run.

4. Add a ball

Using the transverse lines of each third, pairs stand together facing the same direction down court. The player with the ball (A1) positions to pass and the defending player jumps back 0.9m to a hands over the ball position. The ball is passed to a stationary player (A2) and A1 starts to move down the court whilst the defender dictates the direction they will travel and denies a strong drive by slowing A1's move down court. A1 should initially use a slow drive and increase speed as the defender improves.

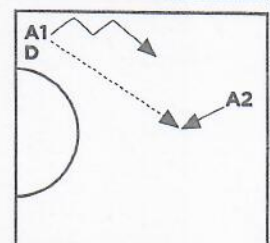
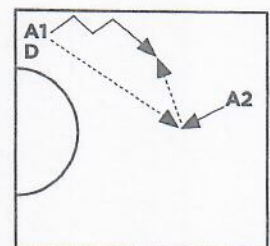
Alternate roles.



5. Add an opponent

i. Repeat as in step 4 but this time the players toss a ball into the air between them and contest the catch to start. The pass off is now to a leading player (A2) which will affect the defender's positioning as they should attempt to deny their opponent access to a drive for the next ball. The defender practises the defensive back-step and positioning to dictate and deny the space.

ii. Add another pass back to A1 from A2. The defender needs to maintain this defensive back step, dictating and denying space position as long as possible. To attempt an intercept on the third second the defender must 'open out' towards the ball.



DEFENCE OF THE SHOT (LEAN, TWO HANDS, JUMP) AND DENYING SPACE TO A REBOUND

(LEAN, TWO HANDS, JUMP, INSIDE HANG, DOUBLE JUMP)

| TEACHING POINTS | COMMON ERRORS |
|--|--|
| <p>LEAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position at 0.9m in front of goaler • Stretch and lean arm/s forward towards the point of release, maintaining balance • Lift back foot (can balance on two feet) • Can use same leg and same arm or opposite leg to arm <p>TWO HANDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position at 0.9m in front of goaler • Stretch and lean arms forward towards point of release, maintaining balance on two feet <p>JUMP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crouch with a slight knee bend in front of the goaler at correct distance (0.9m) • Keep eyes on the ball and the movement of the goaler's arm • Jump and stretch arm to the ball at point of release <p>INSIDE HANG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand in a front-on position with feet parallel to goaler • Feet should be 0.9m away from the goaler • Lift either foot towards the goaler to hang in space between goaler and defender, then lift arm • Stretch and lean arm towards the point of release, maintaining balance <p>DOUBLE JUMP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position at 0.9m from goaler • Crouch with a slight knee bend in front of the goaler • Keep eye on the ball and the movement of the goaler's arm • Perform a small jump followed by a larger jump and stretch arm to ball at point of release • Denying space effectively after shot is taken to contest a rebound <p>DENYING SPACE TO CONTEST A REBOUND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swing leg across the body of the goaler and bring other foot back so the body is turned to face the post. • Feet should be wide but not so wide that the defender cannot jump for the rebound • Defender should be close to the goaler and adjust position to keep goaler away from the rebound | <p>LEAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too high on balls of feet and lose balance • Arms up before 0.9m (3ft) • Defender unbalanced and falls into space of the goaler before release of the ball <p>TWO HANDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base too narrow • Too high on balls of feet and lose balance • Arms up before 0.9m (3ft) • Hands over goalers eyes and not the ball • Defender unbalanced and falls into space of the goaler before release of the ball <p>JUMP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumping too soon so the goaler shoots over defender as they are coming down <p>INSIDE HANG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arm up before foot is lifted so not 0.9m • Defender unbalanced and falls into space of goaler before release of the ball • Not turning and denying space effectively after shot is taken to contest a rebound <p>DOUBLE JUMP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not positioning 0.9m from goaler • Jump in on small jump and shorten distance • Jump too soon so the goaler shoots over the defender as they are coming down • Hit the ball while it is still in the goaler's hands • Slow recovery to turn and deny space to contest a rebound after leaping for the ball <p>DENYING SPACE TO CONTEST A REBOUND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defender only turns sideways and therefore denying the space is not effective • Defender backs into the goaler and contact is made • Feet too wide on turn and the defender cannot jump for the rebound or reposition quickly when the goaler moves |

1. Explanation and Demonstration

2. Basic Movement / No Equipment

Players to move back 0.9m from the line (keep eyes up) and practise all defence of shot techniques finishing each by turning to deny space to contest a rebound

3. Basic movement with equipment

Add a cone. Defender attempts to deflect an imaginary ball with outside hand then recovers to 0.9m, defends the shot (using a variety of techniques) and turns to deny space to contest a rebound.

REBOUNDING

| TEACHING POINTS | COMMON ERRORS |
|--|--|
| <p>Shooters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the flight of the shot and judge its likely rebound direction • Follow through shot and move quickly around defender to drive strongly to post • Strong movement towards ball and good position to gather tips from aerial contests • Other shooter tries to position on goal post side of defender (but not directly under post), so they are ready for a pass or catch the rebound <p>Defenders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The defender on the shot should recover quickly, turn and deny the space of the shooter to contest a rebound with a wide balanced base. • Defender of non-shooter tries to position on the side of the shooter facing the baseline (not directly under the post) so that they can use either hand to prevent an easy shooter to shooter pass or contest a rebound. • If shot hits the ring and bounces back towards the shooter it is normally rebounded by the defender over the shot, if shot bounces over the ring it is normally rebounded by other defender. • Take the ball early in front of the head with extended arms to prevent a contest from the shooter behind. Pull ball in. • If rebound is going out of court, defender should protect space and let ball bounce out. If there is a possibility that the attacker may be able to rebound, it is better to tip the ball out of court. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not completing the follow through on the shot before moving for the rebound • Slow movement into rebounding position after the shot • Contacting the defender by not moving around the opponent • Non-shooter positioning too close to goal post <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not turning and denying space effectively after the shot is taken to contest a rebound therefore letting the shooter move around the defender easily • Slow movement into rebounding position • Contacting the shooter on the turn to deny space when contesting for a rebound • Not covering the shooter to shooter pass • Rebounder on the non-shooter positioning too close to goal post • Not snatching the ball into the body • Not communicating with the other defender and spoiling each other • Thinking the ball is going to bounce out of court |

1. Explanation and Demonstration

2. Basic Movement / No Equipment

Stand facing partner, jump as high as possible, "high five" with both hands with partner.

Wall jumps; standing side on to a wall, swing arms and jump as high as possible to touch wall. Repeat 10x each side, try to beat previous height.

3. Basic movement with equipment

Work with a partner. Defender to recover from defence of shot, step across body and turn to deny space to contest a rebound, work to keep partner behind. Shooter pretends to shoot then try to move around defender.

4. Add a ball.

Thrower (T) out-side the circle to pass the ball to the goaler on the move within the circle, defender to contest the first ball; if unsuccessful they defend the shot (using a variety of techniques) and turn to deny space to contest a rebound. If they are successful at the first intercept or if they rebound the ball, pass an outlet pass to T leading in transition.

5. Add an opponent

Goler 1, from outside the circle, passes the ball in to goaler 2 (who takes a shot).

Goler 1 works to enter the circle to get a quick pass or a good rebound position.

Defender 2 defends the shot and turns to deny space to contest a rebound.

Defender 1 defends to deny a goaler to goaler pass and works to set a good rebound position.

Once the ball is rebounded by a:

- goaler; a second shot is taken
- defender; an outlet pass is given to the other defender who is leading out of the ring in transition.