	Skill Level	Date	Age Groups
	Beginner	**Title:** Basic Defending	U10 U12 U13+

Skill Focus:
Defending Team Play Positioning

Equipment:
Cones

Session Description:
This session is to teach the basics of defending as a team.

The ABCs of defending (aka, Pressure, Cover, Balance)

A) Attack the ball handler (aka, put Pressure on the ball handler)
B) Backup the player giving pressure (aka, provide Cover for the pressure)
C) Cover space (aka, Balance around the space)

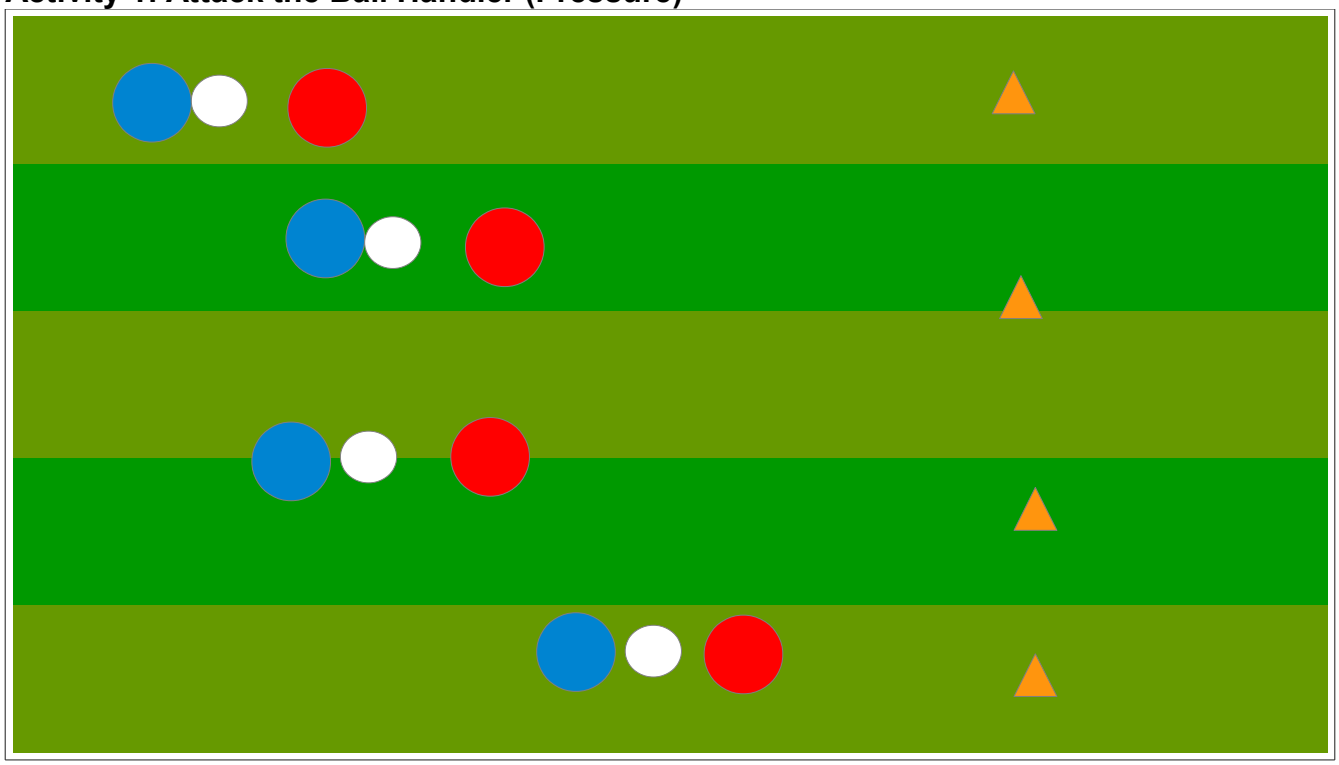
Warm up:
Light jog around the area with the ball
3 Base touches or Juggling

Scrimmage:
Scrimmaging should be a part of this session, 3V3 type rules with no goalies. Focus your attention on defending as a team. Stop play to help position the players for team defending.

Notes:
Activities 1 and 3 have shorter time periods so you can have some extra time to scrimmage.

During Activity 3, Cover the Open Space: this might be a good time to tryout some players that are interested in being a goal keeper.

Activity 1: Attack the Ball Handler (Pressure)



Setup: Half of the field. Set up an “end zone” with cones at one end.
Equipment:
Cones to set up an end zone. Each player group has 1 ball.
Time:
10 minutes total

Description:
The players start on opposite ends of the field. The player in the end zone starts with the ball and when the coach gives a signal they pass to the opposite player. The player that receives the ball is now on offense the player that passed the ball is on defense. The offensive player tries to dribble past the defensive player and make it to the end zone. The defensive player closes down the offensive player and works to stay in front of the offensive player and stop them from getting into the end zone. Offensive player has 30-60 seconds to get to the end zone

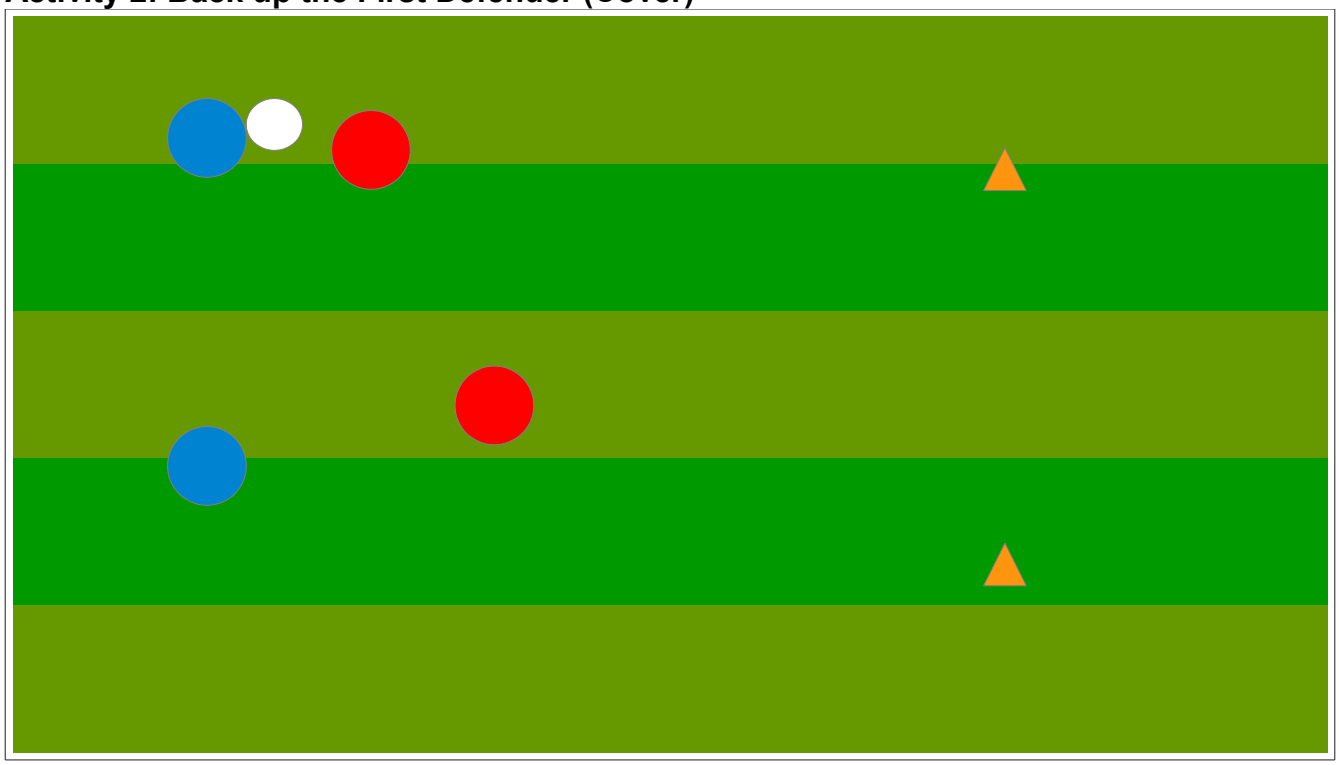
Coaching Points:

- Close the ball handler down quickly but slow down when you get close to them and get in a good defensive stance.
- Stay light on your feet so you can adjust quickly to the offensive players change of direction. Keep you balance, knees slightly bent and feet not too far apart.
- Be patient, the defender on the ball is not trying to steal the ball, you want the ball handler to make a mistake.

Progressions:

1. First time the offensive player should go easy but get progressively harder each time
2. Add a scoring system. If the offensive player makes it to the end zone in time they get 1 point. If the defensive player keeps them out they get 3 points.

Activity 2: Back up the First Defender (Cover)



Setup: Half of the field. Set up an “end zone” with cones at one end.
Equipment:
Cones to set up an end zone. Players work in pairs, 2 on offense and 2 on defense. Each group has 1 ball.
Time:
15 minutes total

Description:
Same concept as the first activity expect now players will work in pairs. The defensive player that is not on the ball will backup first defender and provide cover. If the ball gets past to the other offensive player, the defensive players have to switch roles. Offensive players have 30-60 seconds to get to the end zone.

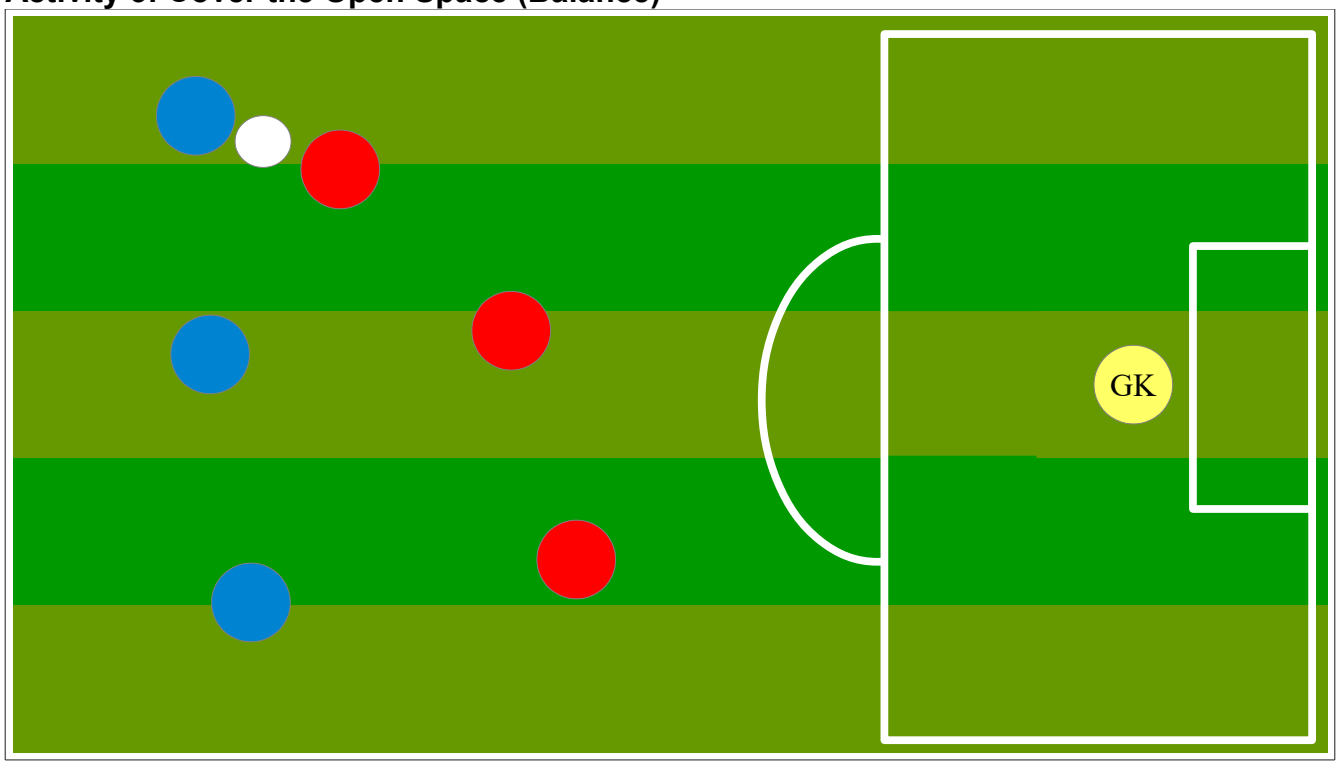
Coaching Points:

- Remember the first defenders job.
- Second defender should position themselves below the first defender and in a position to quickly close down the other attacker if the ball is passed to them.

Progressions:

1. First time the offensive players should go easy but get progressively harder each time
2. Add a point system for offense and defense
3. *Intermediate/U12+:* allow defensive teams to score in the opposite direction if the the backup defender intercepts a pass. Allow the opposite team to transition to defense by requiring both offensive players touch the ball. The first defender should not be allowed to steal the ball.

Activity 3: Cover the Open Space (Balance)



Setup: Set up a goal on one end of the field. Split the player up 3 to a team, if you have a fourth player try someone as a goal keeper. If you can set up two goals to get more players working the better.

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: Goal and 1 ball

Description:
Three players start on offense and 3 on defense. Each offensive player must touch the ball before a shot can be taken. As the ball goes between players the defensive players must shift their positioning. The closest defender to the ball attacks the ball handler and becomes the first, other players provide backup and cover. Offense has 60 seconds to score, switch team around offense becomes defense, defense becomes offense.

Coaching Points:
- Remember the first defenders job
- Remember the second defenders positioning
- Third defender covers space behind the but stays within close distance to offensive player.
- What happens if the first defender gets beat?
    - Second defender slides over to attack the ball handler while the first defender hustles to back them up.

Progressions:
1. First time the offensive players should go easy and get progressively harder.
2. Add a point system