

Back Four Zonal Defending

Activity #1:

Set Up:

Players are organised in 10x12 yard grids as shown in Diagram (a) below. Two players work while two recover.



Diagram (a)

Explanation:

Players compete 1v1 and attempt to dribble over their opponents endline. Emphasis is placed on defensive technique/tactics.

Coaching Points:

- Do not cross your feet.
- Shift your feet to maintain balance
- Don't dive in - be patient!
- Keep a low center of gravity.

Progression 1:

Same setup as above but now the numbers have increased - 2 attackers vs. 1 defender as shown below in Diagram (b)



Diagram (b)

Explanation:

The defender passes the ball to the two players at the opposite end of the grid and then immediately runs to defend. The 2 attackers must attempt to dribble over the opposite end line. The defender must attempt to stop/delay the attack for as long as possible. In the above Diagram, defender (A) is attempting to steer the attacker (B) away from his/her supporting teammate.

Coaching Points:

- DELAY for as long as possible!
- Shift your feet to maintain balance
- Don't dive in - be patient!
- Keep a low center of gravity.

Progression 2:

Same setup as above except numbers have been increased to 2v2 - defenders are now encouraged to work together to prevent the attack.

Note: Diagram for this activity not shown.

Activity#3:

Set Up:

A 10v4 with target players is organised as shown in Diagram (c) below. Players (A) and (B) are target players on the halfway line.



Diagram (c)

Explanation:

The 10 (yellow) attacking players must attempt to create goalscoring opportunities through quick ball movement. The "back four" defenders must attempt to prevent any chances on goal - they must stay compact and work as a unit to absorb the pressure from the attacking team. Offside is in effect to keep the activity realistic. Target players (A) and (B) are positioned on the halfway line - these players are used for outlet passes if the defensive team gains possession of the ball. Game is continuous.

Coaching Points:

- Shift AS A GROUP as the ball travels.
- DELAY the attack for as long as possible!
- Don't dive in - be patient!
- Communication between players and goalkeeper is vital.

Diagram (d) below illustrates the defensive team "sliding" as a unit as the ball has traveled to a wide position of the pitch. Notice that the defensive team has maintained their line. They must slide to fill up gaps as well as keep an eye on the movement of the opposition players.



Diagram (d)

Diagram (e) below illustrates the movement of the back-four as one of the central defenders steps to put pressure on one of the center forwards. Central defender (A) has stepped out to apply pressure to the forward. Players (B), (C), (D) have all adjusted their positions to fill gaps as well as offer immediate support to (A).



Diagram (e)

Progression:

See Diagram (f) below. The activity is developed by adding players to the defensive team. The players continue to be added until an 11v11 game can be played.

Diagram (f) below illustrates the adding of 3 midfield players for the defensive team. This creates a 10v7 in favor of the attacking team.

Game is continuous.



Diagram (f)

Coaching Points:

- Shift AS A GROUP as the ball travels.
- Cut off passing lanes by filling gaps - stay connected to each other.
- Midfielders are outnumbered - they must work as a unit also to prevent penetrating passes.
- DELAY the attack for as long as possible!
- Don't dive in - be patient!

- If defenders win ball play quickly to targets.
- Communication between all players and goalkeeper is vital.