

Defending off the Front Foot

Warm-up:

Players are positioned in a 20x30 yard grid as shown in Diagram (a) below. Players pass and move continuously. No one-touch passing is allowed. Players must take a positive touch before passing the ball to a teammate.



Diagram (a)

The following restrictions are applied as the warm-up progresses;

- Players must get their studs on the ball (ie: roll the ball with the sole) before passing.
- Players perform a Cruyff turn before passing.
- Perform a move and attack the space before passing.
- Perform ANY move before passing.
- Players receiving the pass are encouraged to point where they want to receive the ball.

Activity #1:

Set Up:

Players are positioned in a 20x30 yard grid as shown in Diagram (b) below. A 4v4 plus two “floaters” is organized inside the playing area.

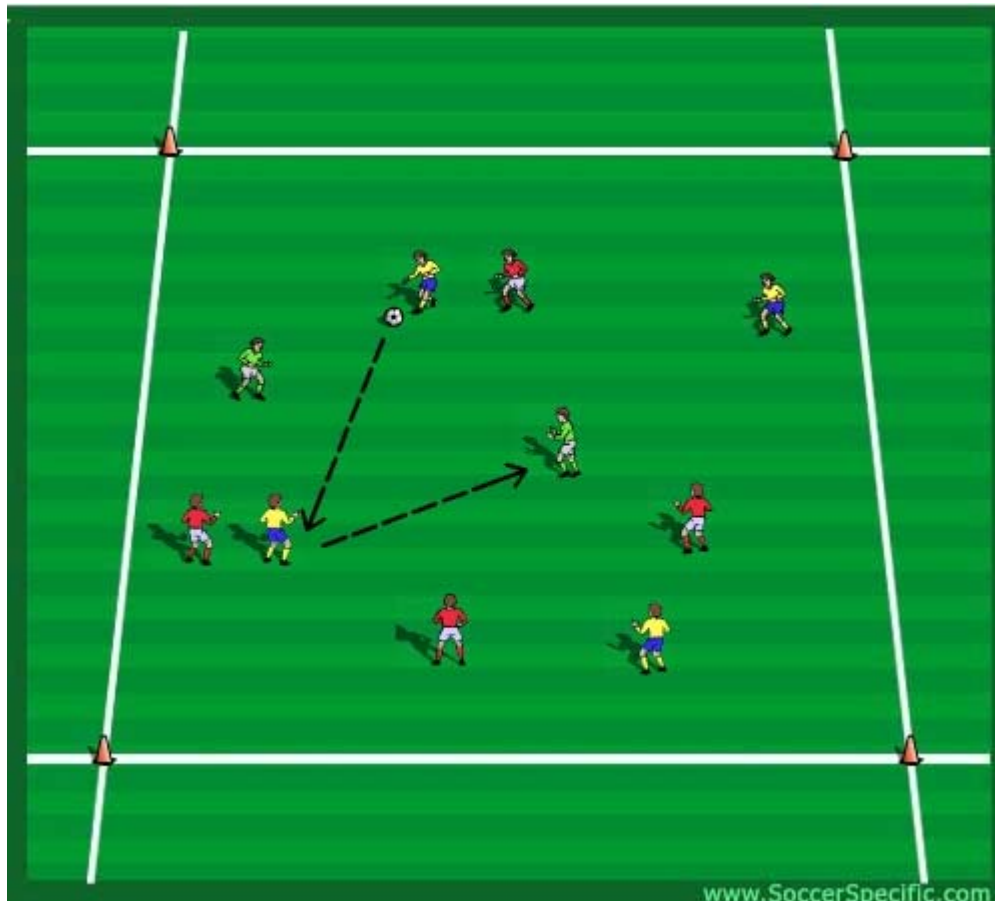


Diagram (b)

Objective:

Both teams compete for possession of the ball. Emphasis is placed on the floaters determining the tempo of the game. Floaters are encouraged to either:

- Calm it down.
- Increase the tempo – play quick.
- Play slow.

Activity #2: Defending in Small Groups

Set Up:

Three players are organized as shown in Diagram (c) below. Two yellow players (A) are positioned 15 yards from the red defender (B). A mannequin is placed in front of the red defender. Players (A) are approximately 5 yards apart with one ball.

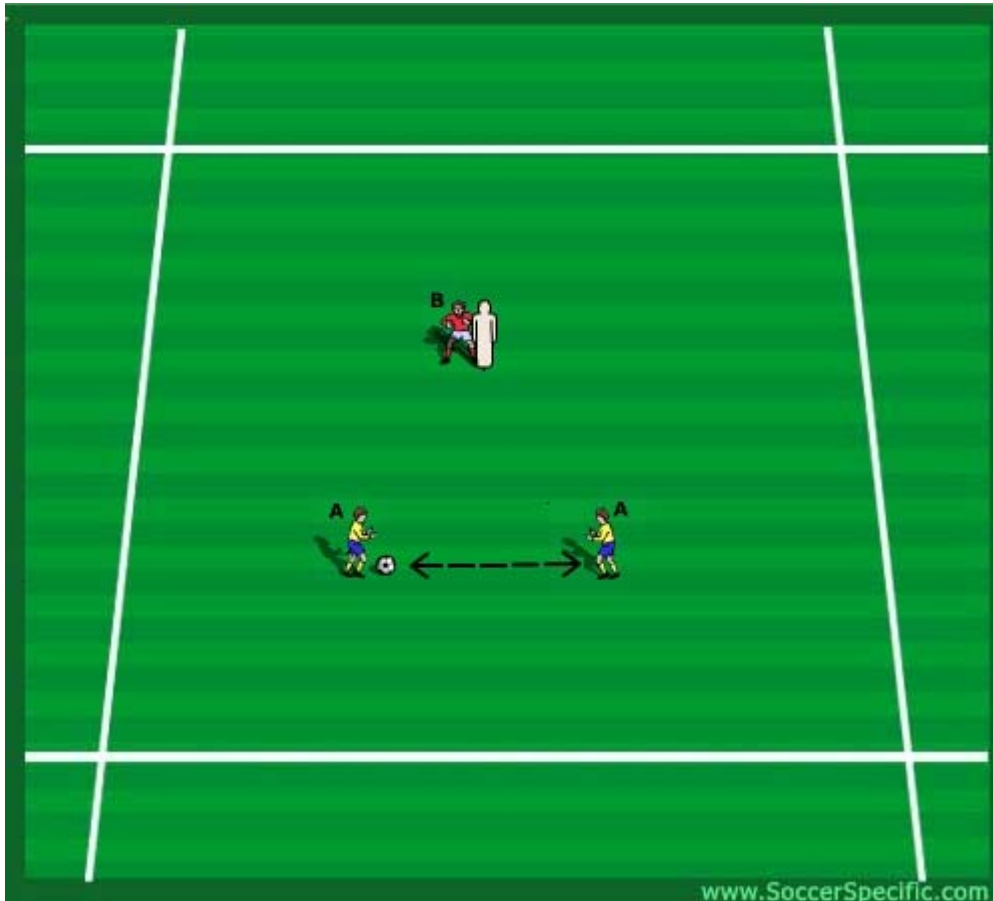


Diagram (c)

Objective:

Both (A) players act as attackers and pass the ball back and forth. The red defender must continually adjust his position as the ball travels. The mannequin acts as a stationary opponent for the defender. The attackers must attempt to hit the mannequin with a pass to score a point. The defender must mark the mannequin on the near-side shoulder to attempt to intercept the pass before it strikes the mannequin. In Diagram (d) below the defender has adjusted his position in relation to the ball to mark on the near-side shoulder of the mannequin. The defender has successfully intercepted the pass because of his good positioning.

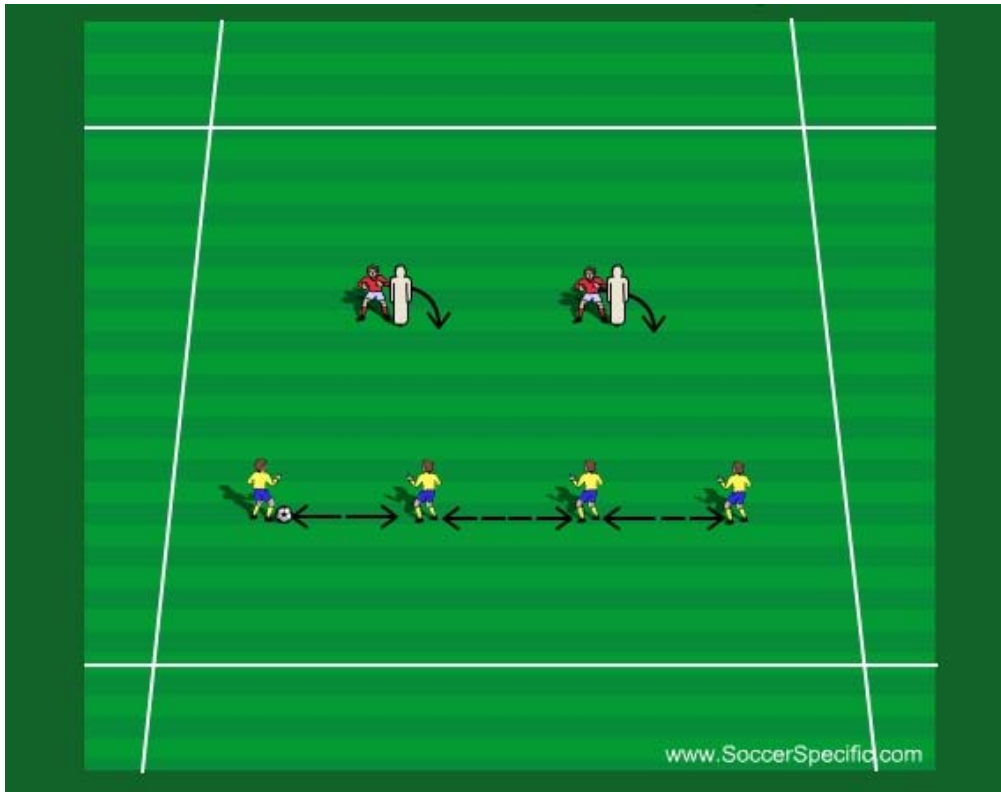


Diagram (d)

Coaching Points:

- Mark on the near-side shoulder.
- Keep mannequin in touching distance.
- How far the ball is away will determine how tight you can get to the mannequin.
- Make sure that defenders are not standing in front of the mannequin.

Progression #1:

Two mannequins are placed, with a defender behind each one as shown in Diagram (e) below. Four attackers (yellow) are positioned in line approximately 15 yards away with one ball. The attackers must pass the ball back and forth and occasionally attempt to strike a mannequin with a pass. The two defenders must constantly adjust their positions as the ball travels. Defenders must intercept the ball before it strikes the mannequin.

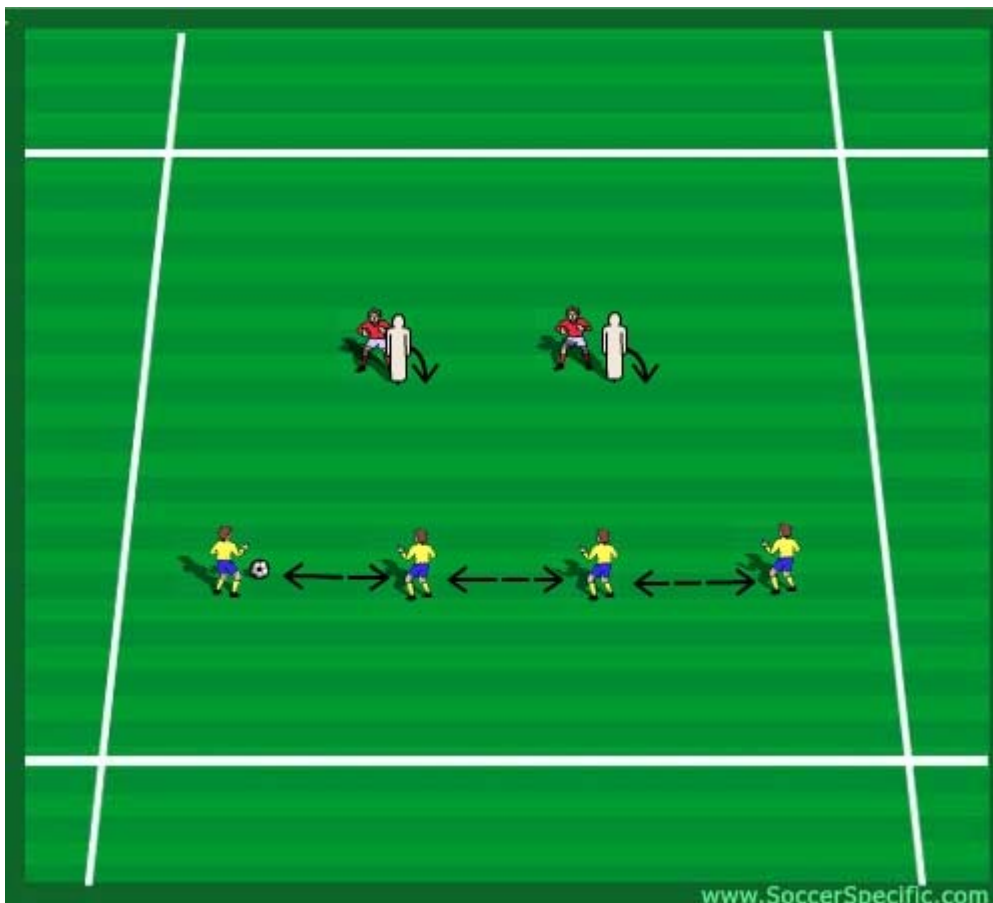


Diagram (e)

Coaching Points:

- Defenders must react and adjust their position as the ball travels.
- Mark on the near-side shoulder.
- Read the game - Intercept the pass before it strikes the mannequin.
- Do not mark from in front of the mannequin.

Progression #2:

Four mannequins are placed with a defender behind each one as shown in Diagram (f) below. Three attackers (yellow) pass the ball back and forth and attempt to strike a mannequin with a pass. The defenders must constantly adjust their positions in relation to the ball. The defenders must attempt to intercept the pass before it strikes the mannequin. If a defender intercepts a pass he can play a one-two with one of the yellow players before running the ball out of the grid. In diagram (f) below the defenders are all marking on the near-side shoulder. Defender (B) can afford to be a little further away from the mannequin because of the position and distance of the ball.

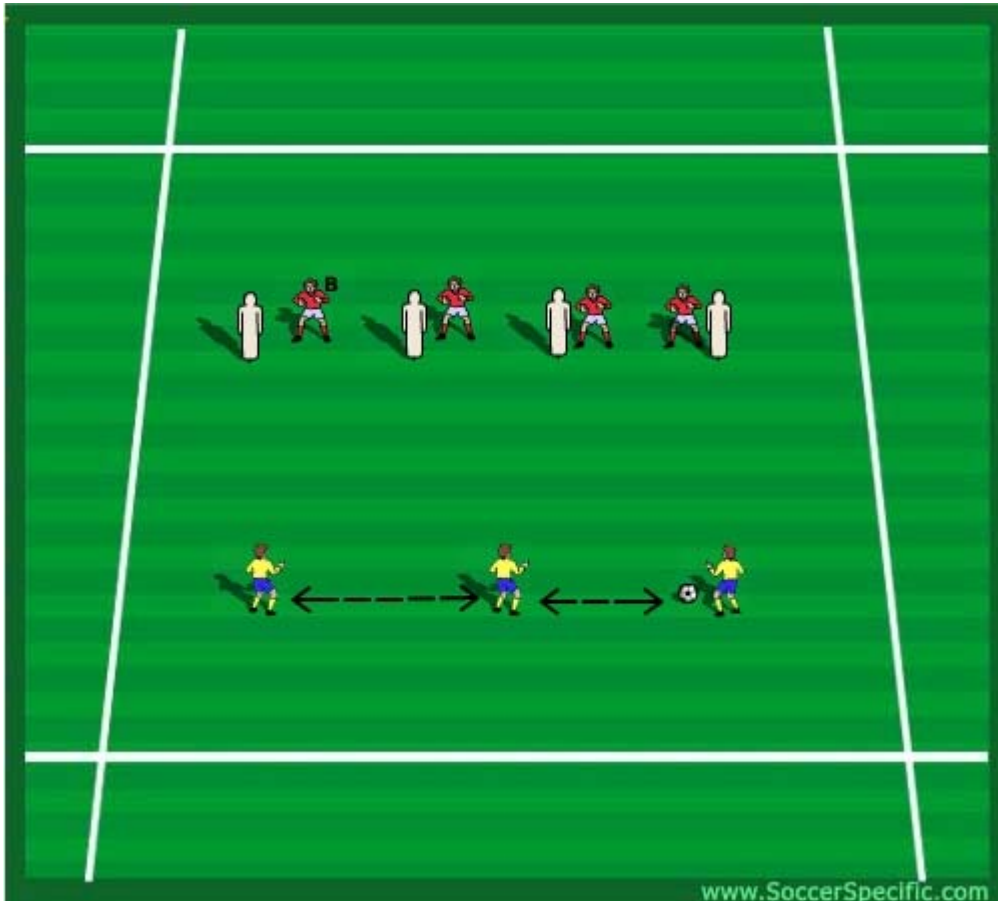


Diagram (f)

Coaching Points:

- Constantly adjust as the ball travels.
- Mark on the near-side shoulder.
- How far the ball is away will determine how tight you can get to the mannequin.
- Read the game - Intercept the pass before it strikes the mannequin.