

WALL PASS - FUNCTIONAL

Why use it?

This activity is a great way to work on combinations between attackers and midfield players and to introduce a wall pass. Teaching combination play in the final third is time well spent. Providing players options to beat an opponent 2v1 in different areas of the field allows for success and overall enjoyment. Doing this at a young age helps to create a solid base knowledge to build upon.

Set up

The area is half a 4v4 field - 15x20 yards. An appropriate size goal is at one end and the coach stands in the center with a large supply of balls. A defender starts 5 yards from goal and pairs of attackers stand either side of the coach on the halfway line.

How to play

The coach starts each sequence with a pass to either attacker. The attackers play 2v1 against the defender and attempts to score in the goal. The defender earns a point by winning possession and passing the ball to the coach. The coach can keep the same defender for 5-6 sequences, or the attacker receiving the pass from the coach becomes the next defender.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Teach midfield and attacking players to recognize when a wall pass is available and how to execute the combination. Players will learn visual and spatial cues that indicate that a wall pass is an option. For example, if the defender drops back towards the goal the receiver should dribble at pace. If the defender applies pressure to the ball carrier close to the halfway line a pass is likely the best option.

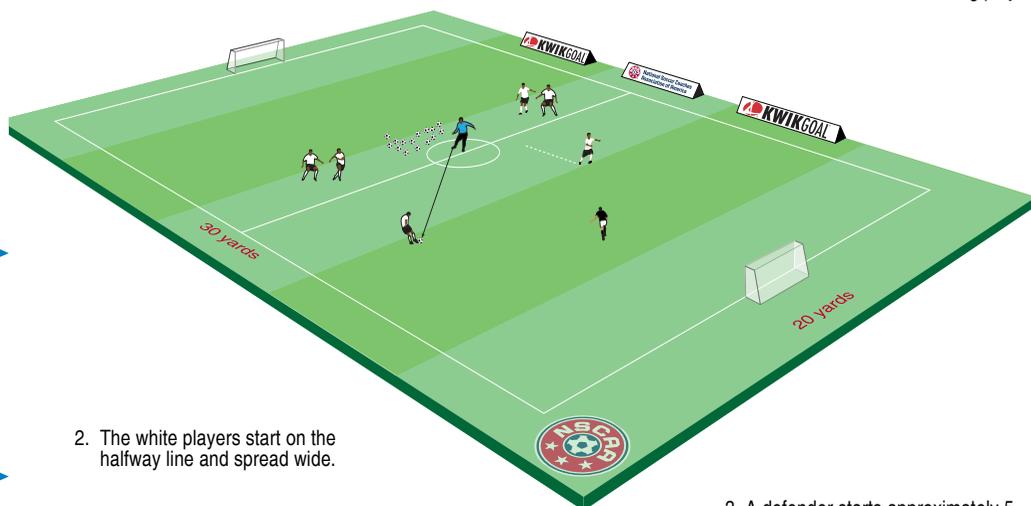
Coaching Tips: The coach can adjust the speed of attack and establish different starting points when serving the balls.

How to modify

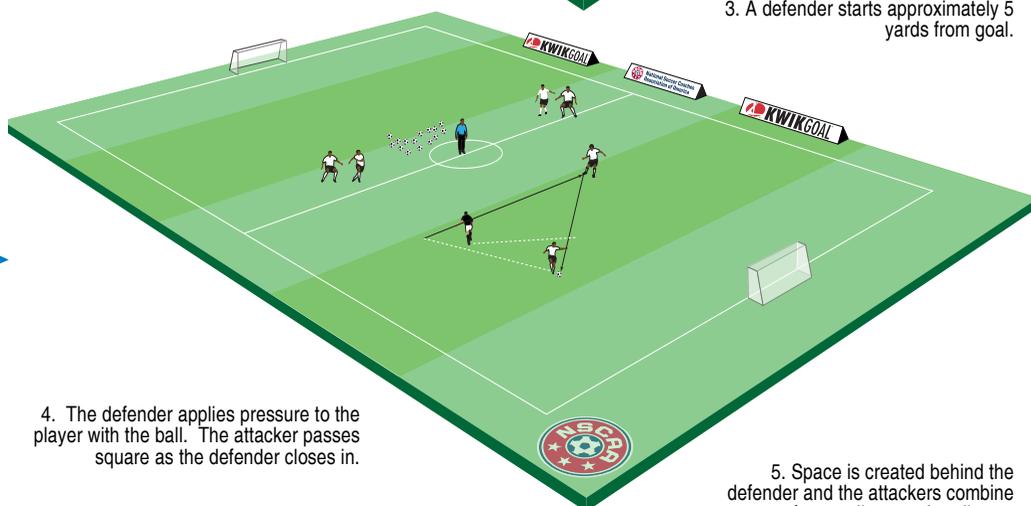
Less Challenging: Encourage your defender to be overly aggressive. An overly aggressive defender will create more space for the attackers to perform a wall pass around and behind the defender. Patient or low pressure defending will make it hard to recognize the times when a wall pass is on. The coach can also start the activity without a defender.

More Challenging: Add a second defender to make teams even 2v2. This adjustment will result in less space and time for the attackers. Dribbling at the first defender and timing the wall pass will become even more important. If the activity becomes too challenging, consider starting one of the defenders behind the goal to provide more time for the attack to build up steam.

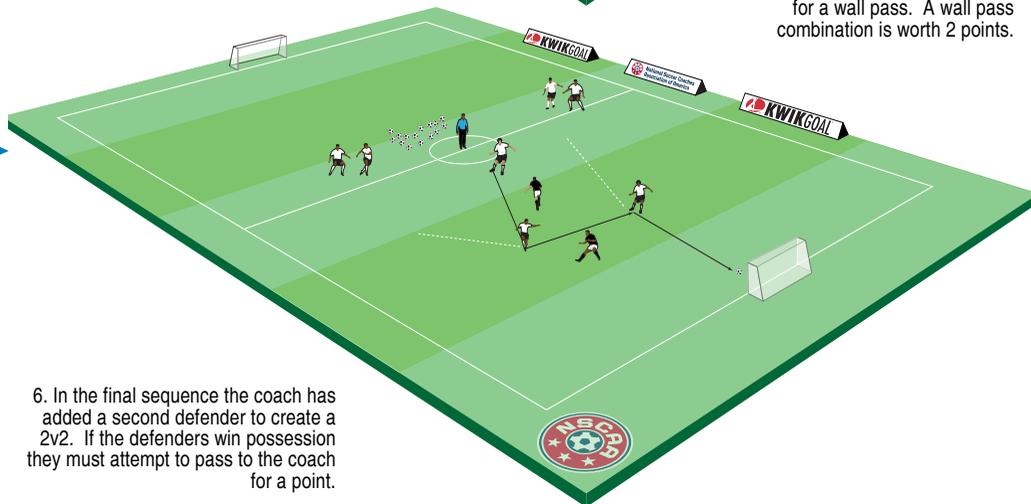
1. The coach starts play with a pass to either white attacking player.



2. The white players start on the halfway line and spread wide.



3. A defender starts approximately 5 yards from goal.



4. The defender applies pressure to the player with the ball. The attacker passes towards the goal the receiver should dribble at pace.

5. Space is created behind the defender and the attackers combine for a wall pass. A wall pass combination is worth 2 points.

6. In the final sequence the coach has added a second defender to create a 2v2. If the defenders win possession they must attempt to pass to the coach for a point.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

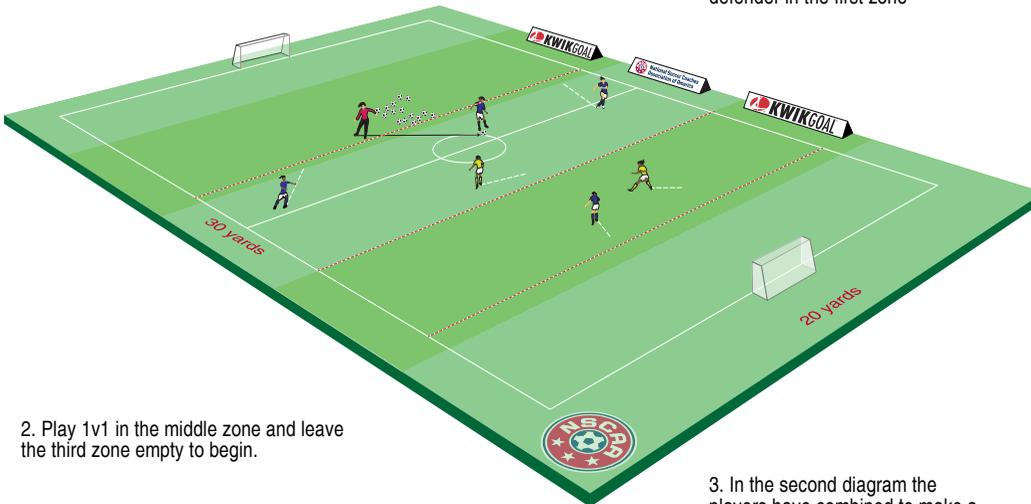
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing over short distances, passing combinations and defending as an individual.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.

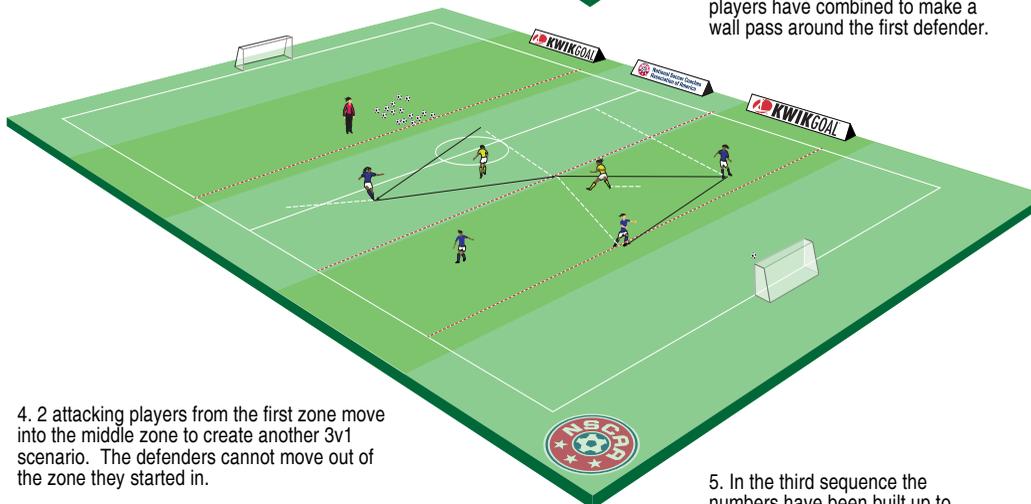
WALL PASS - PHASE OF PLAY

1. The coach passes to one of the 3 attacking players playing against 1 defender in the first zone



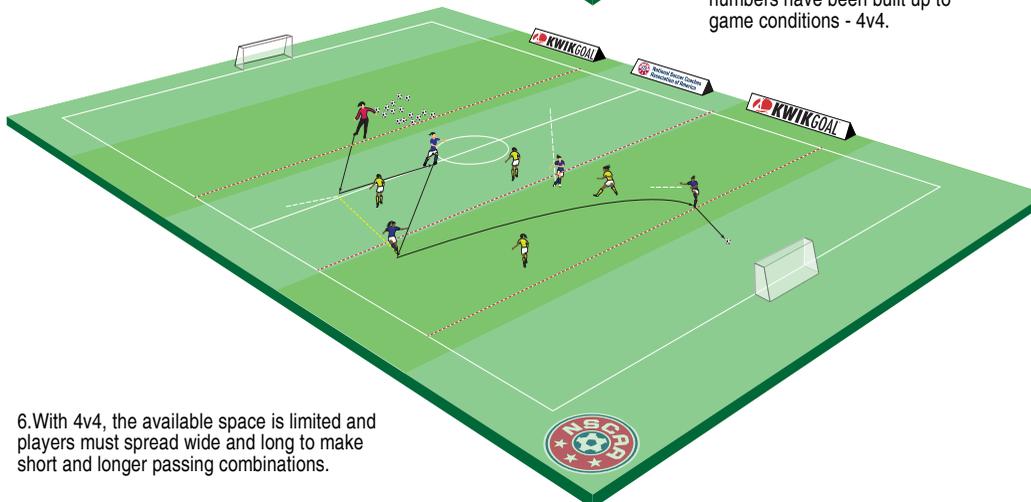
2. Play 1v1 in the middle zone and leave the third zone empty to begin.

3. In the second diagram the players have combined to make a wall pass around the first defender.



4. 2 attacking players from the first zone move into the middle zone to create another 3v1 scenario. The defenders cannot move out of the zone they started in.

5. In the third sequence the numbers have been built up to game conditions - 4v4.



6. With 4v4, the available space is limited and players must spread wide and long to make short and longer passing combinations.

Why use it?

This session progresses a simple technical wall-pass activity using all 4 attacking players. For younger age groups, staying connected as a team is important but difficult to achieve. This activity encourages midfield players to get forward to support and connect with the forward. The result should be more scoring opportunities and more players involved.

Set up

Two thirds of a 4v4 field is used and lines/cones denote 3 equal zones. An appropriate size goal is at one end of the field and the coach stands with the balls at the opposite end. Set up the attacking team in a 0-3-1 formation. In the zone furthest from goal play 3 attackers versus 1 defender and in the middle third 1v1. Initially the defenders are restricted to move in the zone in which they started.

How to play

The coach starts the game with a pass to one of the 3 attacking players in the zone closest to the coach. The attackers play 3v1 and attempt to advance the ball into the attacker standing in the middle zone. One of the defenders/midfield players can advance to the middle zone by dribbling or passing into the forward. This creates a 2v1 in the middle third. The final third remains empty until the attacking players either dribble or pass into the zone. The defending team scores a point by winning possession of the ball and passing to the coach.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Stress the importance of midfielders getting in the attack. Teaching midfielders to recognize visual and spatial cues that indicate when to go forward. Teach attacking players to recognize when a wall pass is available and to execute the combination. The support player may be the one on the opposite side of the field. It takes a lot of energy for the players to make support runs so plenty of encouragement and praise is needed.

Coaching Tips: Restricting movements of players to specific zones of the field allows the coach to create overload opportunities. In this activity the attackers have the advantage. In addition, preventing defenders from dropping into the final third provides the attackers with space behind the defense to make a wall pass.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Work on the pattern of play with passive defenders, or remove defenders entirely.

More Challenging: Add a second defender in the middle third and/or add a defender to the final third. Adding defenders minimizes space and consequently reduces time for the attackers. Less time and less space increases the importance of technical precision.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing over short distances, passing combinations and defending as an individual.
Top 3 Competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.

WALL PASS - THE GAME

Why use it?

This activity progresses the passing theme into a 4v4 game played on a full field. To assist young players, the coach takes up strategic positions on the field during the flow of the game to help players better understand their roles. This methodology is called 'coaching in the game' and can be used quite effectively if the coach can stay out of the run of play.

Set up

This activity is played on a 4v4 field measuring 30x20 yards and two appropriate size goals are at each end. 2 teams of 4 players start in the coach's preferred formations, in this example both teams are set up in a diamond 0-1-2-1. Balls can be placed next to the goals and/or the halfway line so the coach can initiate a restart from the goal line.

How to play

Commence the game with a kick-off and let the players play for a few minutes uninterrupted so they get into the flow of the game. Instruct the players what commands will be used to stop the game and how you wish them to react. The coach may wish to remain on the sideline and enter the playing field with an announcement of "FREEZE". The player should stop immediately allowing the coach to recreate the previous sequence and then instruct and correct the play. The coach should seek to rehearse one good example before restarting the activity. It is important to use the game to draw out the main themes of the session, so the coach should seek opportunities to coach the wall pass. With young players in particular, the coach must expect players to forget the themes as they get engrossed in the game. To this end, be prepared to step in and demonstrate situations where a wall pass may be possible. Play for 10 minutes, take a break and go again.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Help players to recognize when a wall pass is available, timing of the pass and movement to support a teammate. Teach visual and spatial cues that tip off the dribbler and teammate when a wall pass is appropriate.

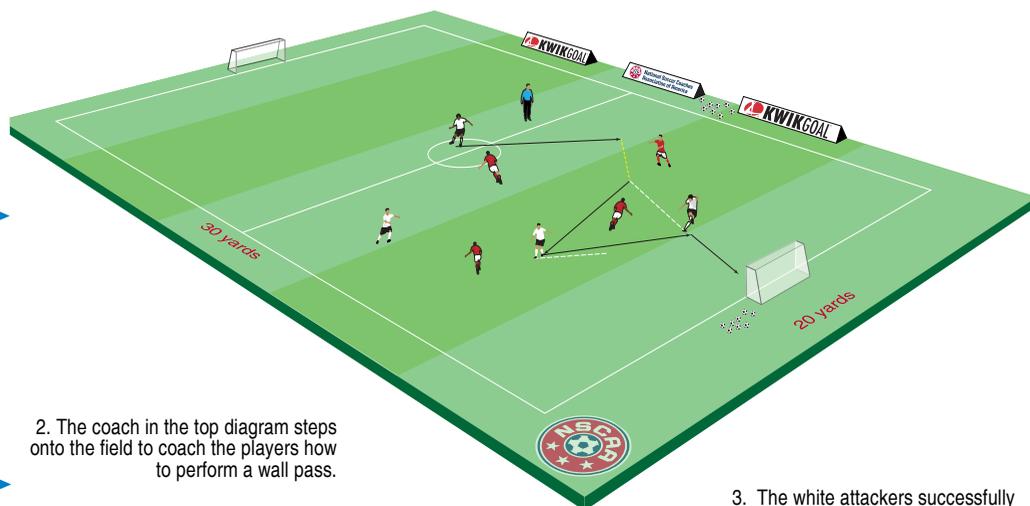
Coaching Tip: A good coaching strategy during a game-like activity is to speak with players when there is a natural stoppage in the game, such as a goal kick, throw in or free kick. Keeping the game flowing and avoiding too many interruptions will be appreciated by the players.

How to modify

Less Challenging: To increase the likelihood of the attacking team achieving a wall pass combination the coach can remove 1-2 defenders to create an attacking overload. The coach can also restrict 2 players from each team to stay in the attacking half.

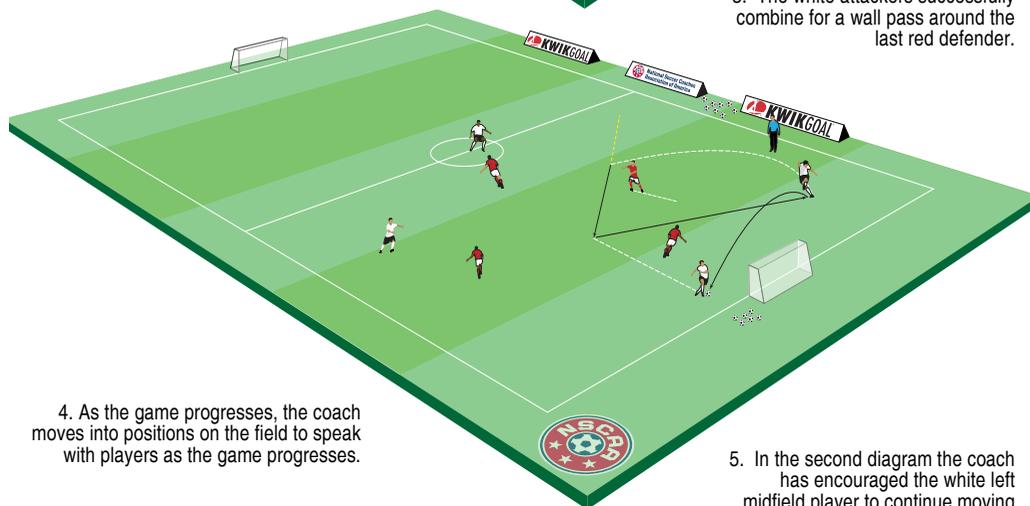
More Challenging: Place a time restriction on the attacking team to get the ball forward and/or add 2-3 touch restrictions for each player.

1. Two teams or 4 play game on a full size 4v4 field.



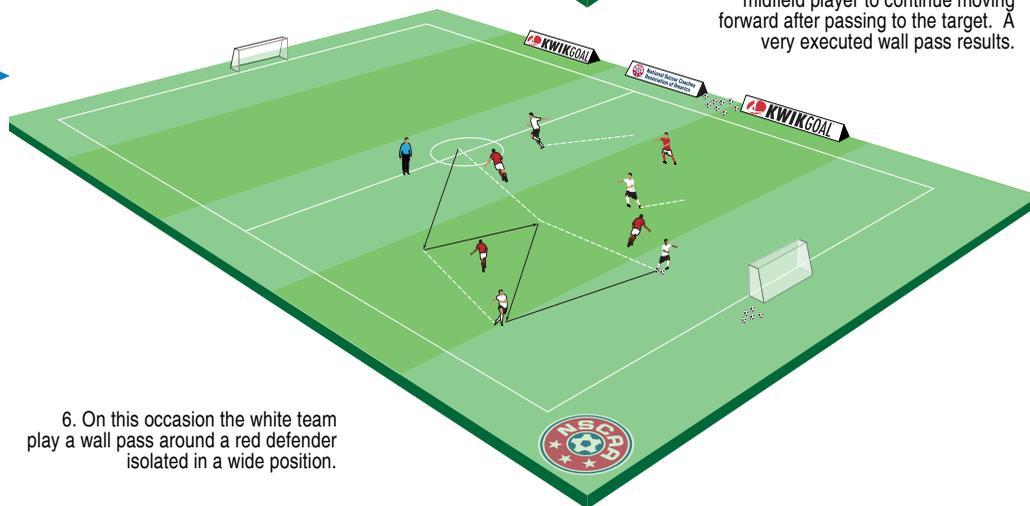
2. The coach in the top diagram steps onto the field to coach the players how to perform a wall pass.

3. The white attackers successfully combine for a wall pass around the last red defender.



4. As the game progresses, the coach moves into positions on the field to speak with players as the game progresses.

5. In the second diagram the coach has encouraged the white left midfield player to continue moving forward after passing to the target. A very executed wall pass results.



6. On this occasion the white team play a wall pass around a red defender isolated in a wide position.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 2, 3 and 4 - 6-14 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing over short distances, passing combinations and defending as unit.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.

1v1 TO 2v2 PRESSURE AND COVER DEFENDING - FUNCTIONAL

Why use it?

This is an introductory activity to teach young players the role of the first or pressure defender. As the player becomes more proficient at defending, the coach can add an additional attacker and defender. This development enables the coach to also teach the role of the second or cover defender.

Set up

The set up is a 38x30 yards area separated into two adjacent fields 38x15 yards. Each field has 3 zones with the end zones 12 yards in length and the middle zone 14 yards in length. A supply of balls is placed outside the end line of each area to allow the players to restart the game continuously. On each field there are 4 players, 2 in the middle zone and 1 at each end acting as a server. The server must remain outside the area to begin the activity. The coach is on the sideline.

How to play

The focus of this activity is individual and pairs defending, although the activity will work equally well with an attacking theme. The objective for the attacking players is to score by dribbling over the end zone lines. The game commences with a pass from one of the servers to the feet of the attacker. The attacker must attempt to turn and dribble to the opposite end. The first defender must try and prevent the attacker turning and dribbling. In the event of an interception the defender should pass to the server to score a point. If the attacker is successful in beating the first defender in the middle zone, the server at the back of the end zone should come forward and try to deny the attacker dribbling across the back line. The first defender in the middle zone is not allowed to enter the end zone. If the defending player in the end zone successfully wins the ball the team of 2 should counter attack and attempt to score at the other end. Play 10 intervals each lasting 30 seconds. Intervals 1-4 play 1v1 and switch roles each interval. Intervals 5-7 allow the attacking team to have two players in middle zone to create a 2v1. If the defender in the middle wins the ball, the teammate joins in and the attacking team sends a player back to the end zone to create a 2v1 the other way. Intervals 8-10 play 2v2.

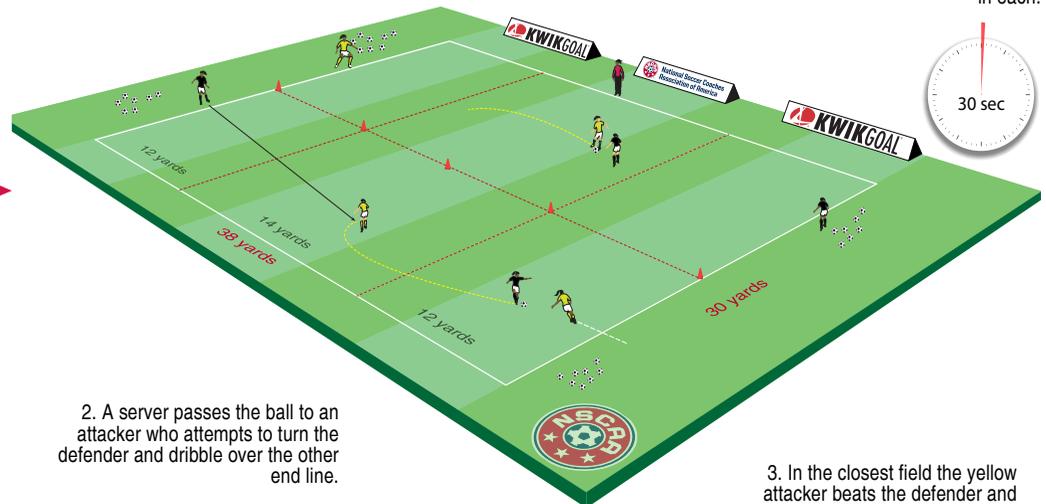
Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Teach the first defender to close space, lower body, side ways positioning and patience.
Coaching Tip: Time working on defending is well spent. Young players will often 'fly' into a challenge to win the ball and will be off balance.

How to modify

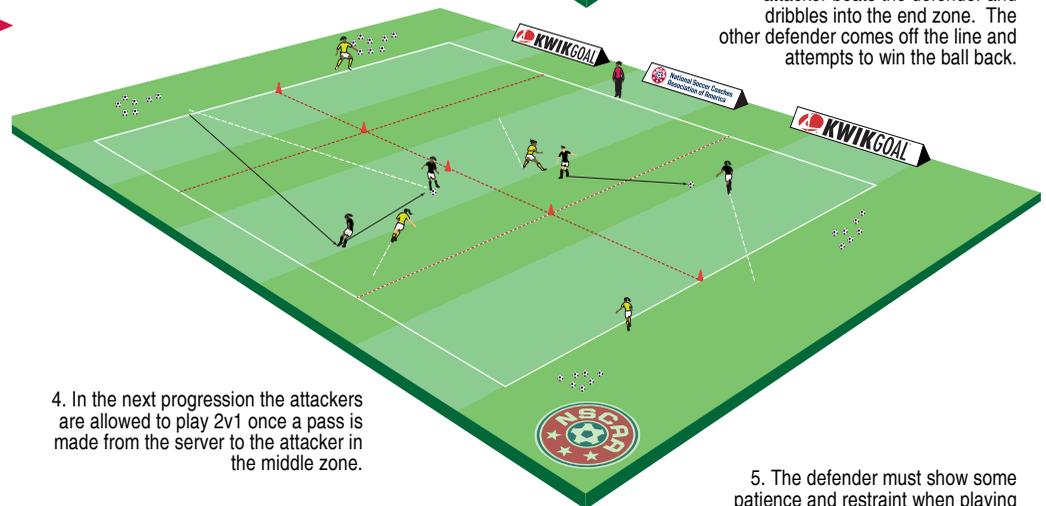
Less Challenging: Keep the activity 1v1 until the player has achieved some success.
More Challenging: Move to 2v1 in favor of the attackers and work on the defenders decision making.

1. Two similar size areas are set up adjacent to each other with 4 players in each.



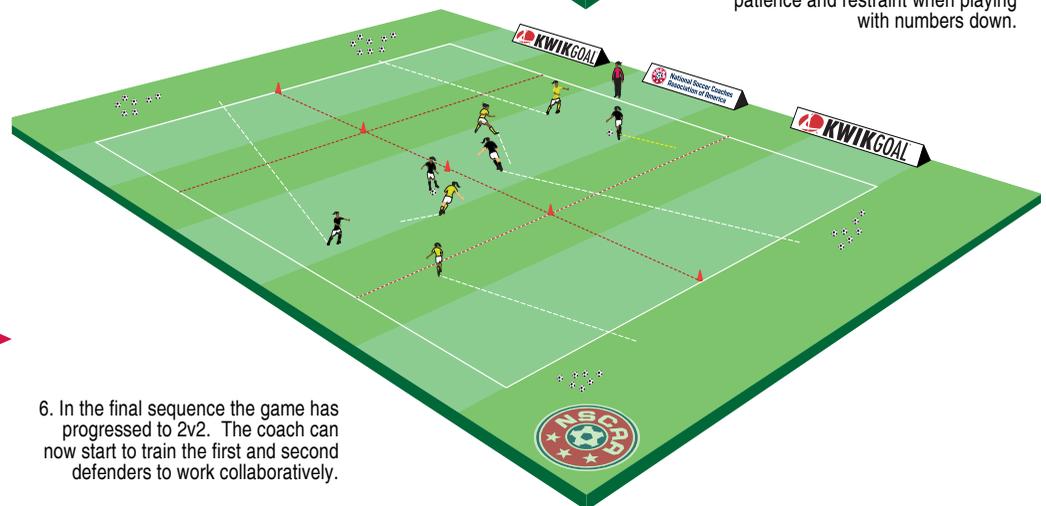
2. A server passes the ball to an attacker who attempts to turn the defender and dribble over the other end line.

3. In the closest field the yellow attacker beats the defender and dribbles into the end zone. The other defender comes off the line and attempts to win the ball back.



4. In the next progression the attackers are allowed to play 2v1 once a pass is made from the server to the attacker in the middle zone.

5. The defender must show some patience and restraint when playing with numbers down.



6. In the final sequence the game has progressed to 2v2. The coach can now start to train the first and second defenders to work collaboratively.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

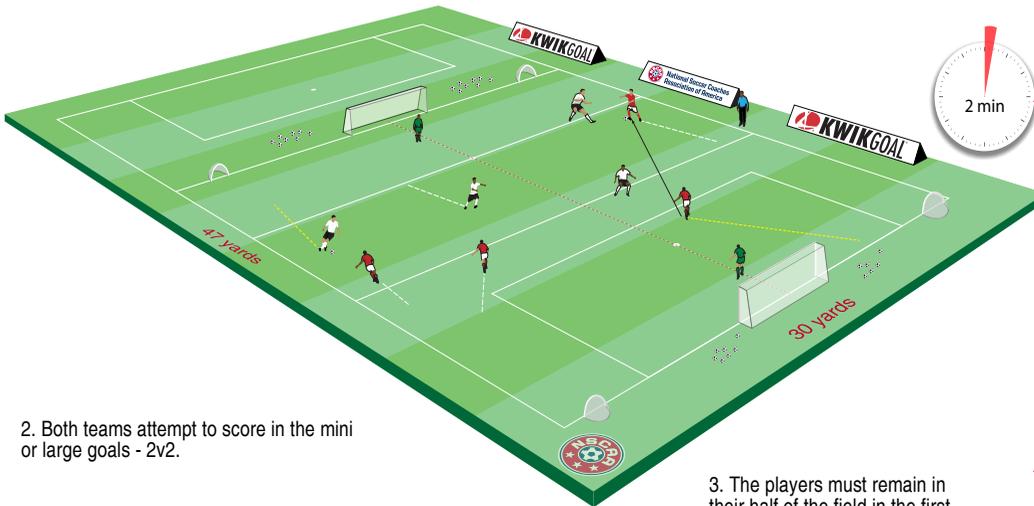
Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 - 6-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual and pairs defending, 1v1 attacking and communication.
 Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending recovery.

4v4 PRESSURE, COVER, BALANCE DEFENDING - PHASE

1. Two games are played currently on a split field.



Why use it?

This activity continues the theme of pressure and cover defending with specific focus on defending in wide areas.

Set up

The set up is a 30x30 yards area played on a 7v7 field - use the restraining line at one end as the end line. The field is also divided into two to create a 'left' and 'right' field. On each end line are 2 mini goals close to the sidelines and a full size goal with a goalkeeper. On each side of the field play 2v2. A supply of balls is placed near each goal to allow the keepers to restart the game continuously. The coach observes from the sideline.

How to play

The focus of this activity is individual and pairs defending, although the activity will work equally well with an attacking theme. The objective for the attacking players is to score in either mini goals or large goal on one side of the field. The objective for the defending team is to win possession and counter attack to the other goals. Play 6 intervals each lasting 2 minutes. Intervals 1-2 play a game of 2v2 in each half of the field. Intervals 3-4 play with one ball but players are restricted to the side of the field in which they started. Intervals 5-6 remove the zonal restrictions and play 4v4 in the full width of the field.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Coaches can teach the roles of the first and second defender with particular emphasis on preventing the opponent from penetrating the defense. As the games are merged the coach can also introduce the role of the 3rd and 4th defenders in providing cover and balance.

Coaching Tip: Encourage the young defenders to apply pressure high enough up the field to prevent the opponent from entering shooting range. When the player has an opportunity to force the attacker away from goal they should apply high pressure. This is often sufficient for a young attacker to give up possession.

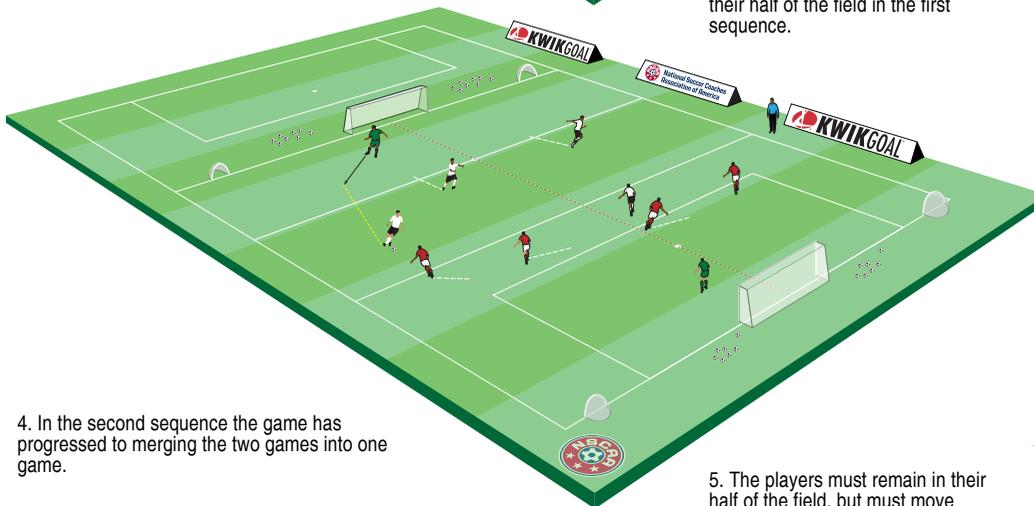
How to modify

Less Challenging: Start with 1v1 and progress to 2v2 once the defenders are experiencing success.

More Challenging: Progress by removing the zonal restrictions earlier in the session and impose a time restriction on the attack.

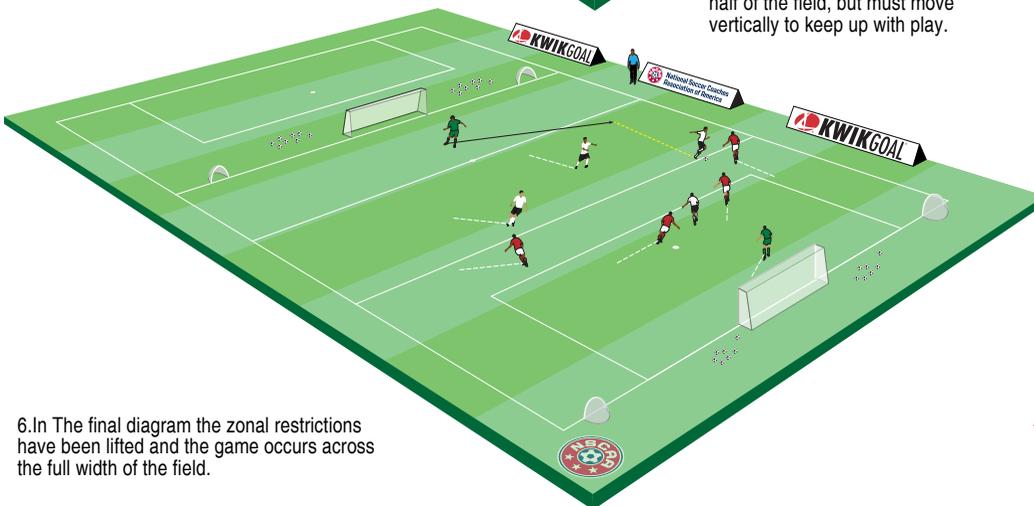
This condition will add urgency to the attack and will require on more intense effort from the defenders.

2. Both teams attempt to score in the mini or large goals - 2v2.



3. The players must remain in their half of the field in the first sequence.

4. In the second sequence the game has progressed to merging the two games into one game.



5. The players must remain in their half of the field, but must move vertically to keep up with play.

6. In the final diagram the zonal restrictions have been lifted and the game occurs across the full width of the field.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 3, 4 and 5 - 9-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual and pairs defending, transition and communication.
Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending recovery.

7v7 PRESSURE, COVER, BALANCE DEFENDING - GAME

Why use it?

A 7v7 game designed to teach the players to play high and low press defense as an individual and team. Working with the players to recognize visual cues and communication between teammates are key considerations.

Set up

The set up is full 7v7 field with an appropriate size goal at both ends. The field is separated at halfway into two zones. Around each goal is a 5 yards 'keeper only' zone. Play 7v7. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside.

How to play

Each team is allowed 2 central midfield players to move freely between the 2 zones and all others are restricted to the zone they started in. The attacking objective is to pass the ball to the other team's goalkeeper, either on the ground or in the air. Goalkeepers are restricted to the 'keeper zone'. The goalkeeper earns a point for each ball they catch or collect clean. The primary objective for the defense is to prevent the attacking team from passing to the goalkeeper. Play 6 intervals each lasting 3 minutes. To encourage the defense to press early and high up the field, award the attacking team 3 points if the ball is passed to the goal keeper from the defending half. Award 1 point if the ball is played from the attacking half (Intervals 1-2). To encourage defenders to deny space in the attacking half reverse the scoring - 1 point if the ball is passed to the goalkeeper from the defending half and 3 points if the ball is played from the attacking half (Intervals 3-4). Remove all the restrictions for intervals 5-6 to see if the players can read the cues.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: The coach should encourage defenders to press the player in possession early and for the team to remain compact. Work with players to recognize the visual cues to determine if the player on the ball will play short or long.

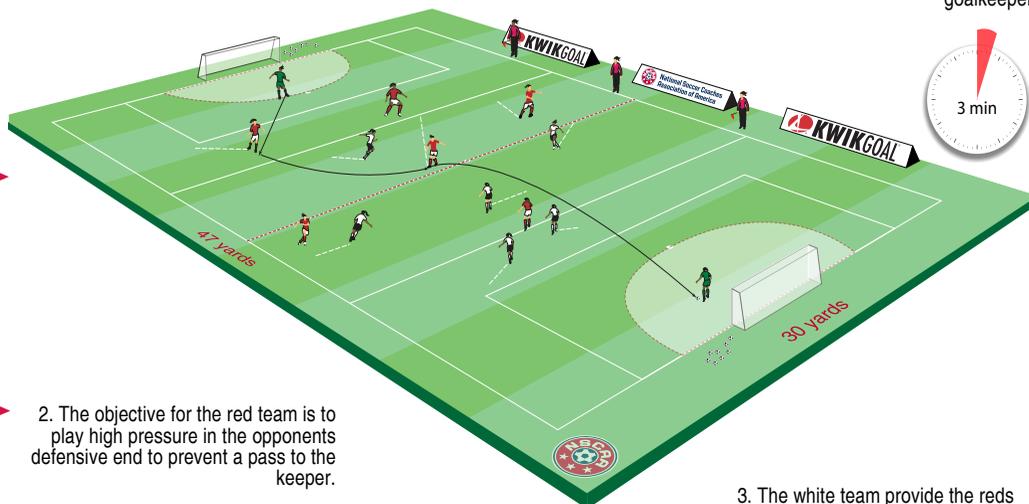
Coaching Tip: The coach can introduce a points system (as described above) to provide extra emphasis on the type of strategy the coach wants to see employed. Introduce the idea of defending early or later.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the number of attacking players and reduce the size of the field.

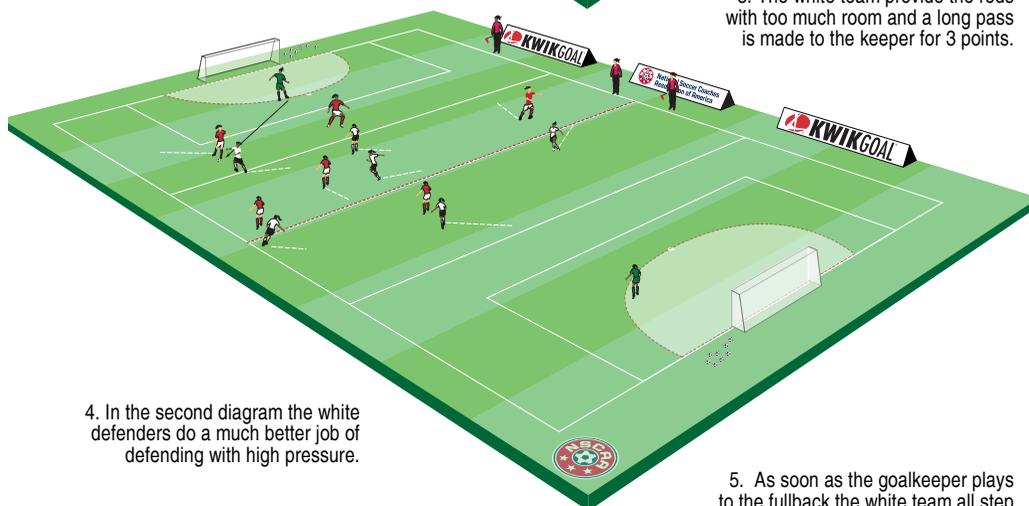
More Challenging: Use the larger penalty box as the 'keeper zone' and play with full 7v7 teams.

1. The Red team attacks the white team attempting to pass to the white team's goalkeeper.



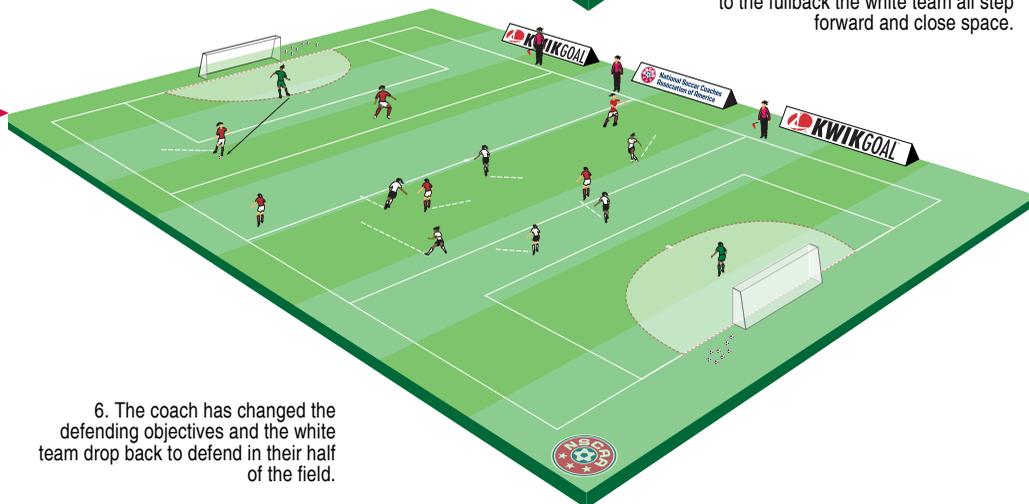
2. The objective for the red team is to play high pressure in the opponents defensive end to prevent a pass to the keeper.

3. The white team provide the reds with too much room and a long pass is made to the keeper for 3 points.



4. In the second diagram the white defenders do a much better job of defending with high pressure.

5. As soon as the goalkeeper plays to the fullback the white team all step forward and close space.



6. The coach has changed the defending objectives and the white team drop back to defend in their half of the field.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 - 6-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual and pairs defending, when to press and when to hold and communication.

Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending recovery.

9v9 CREATING SPACE IN THE FINAL THIRD 1

Why use it?

This 9v9 game related activity provides the coach with an opportunity to work on off the ball movement to create space in the final third of the field. Creating space with movement off the ball is certainly a challenging topic when working with young players and will take regular repetition and reinforcement to develop proficiency. Strikers initially move away from the ball and then make penetrating runs between and behind the defenders.

Set up

2 teams play on a full 9v9 field - 75x47 yards in size. To begin there are two games running concurrently at each end of the field. Each half is subdivided to create 2 zones. In each end the attacking team starts with 2 unopposed midfield players in the zone closest to the halfway line and in the attacking zone play 3v2 in favor of the attacking team. A server for the attacking team starts the activity on the sideline and starts the activity when all players are in a ready position. The coach stands to one side to observe both games.

How to play

The objective is to work with the front three forward players to create space in the final third. The servers initiate each attack passing to one of the midfield players. When a midfield player has the ball wide, the attacking players should make runs away from the player with the ball. This coordinated movement will either create space for the midfield player to penetrate with a dribble, or isolate a single striker 1v1 against a defender. The defenders cannot leave the end zone to begin. Progress to 3v3 in each end zone and 2v2 in the central zone using 1 ball. Play until 3 goals have been scored or in 5 minute intervals.

Coaching notes

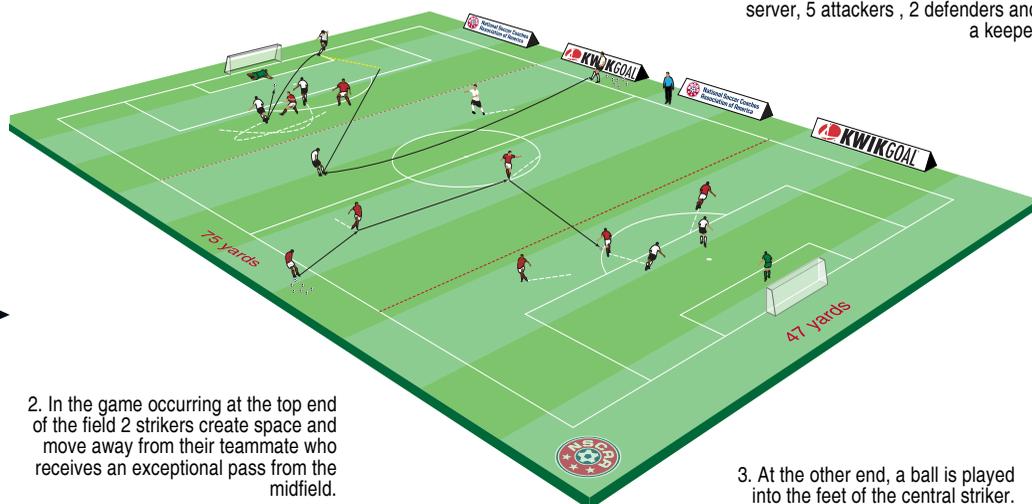
Coaching Objectives: Help players to recognize visual cues to create space.

Coaching Tips: Be prepared to choreograph some designed movements and combination plays.

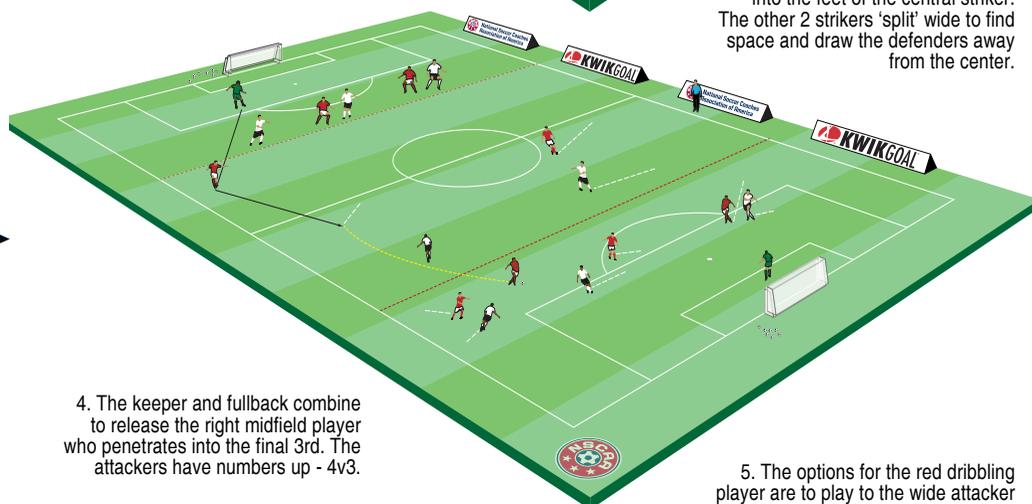
How to modify

Less Challenging: Remove defenders and work through some pattern play. Then add in 'passive' defenders.

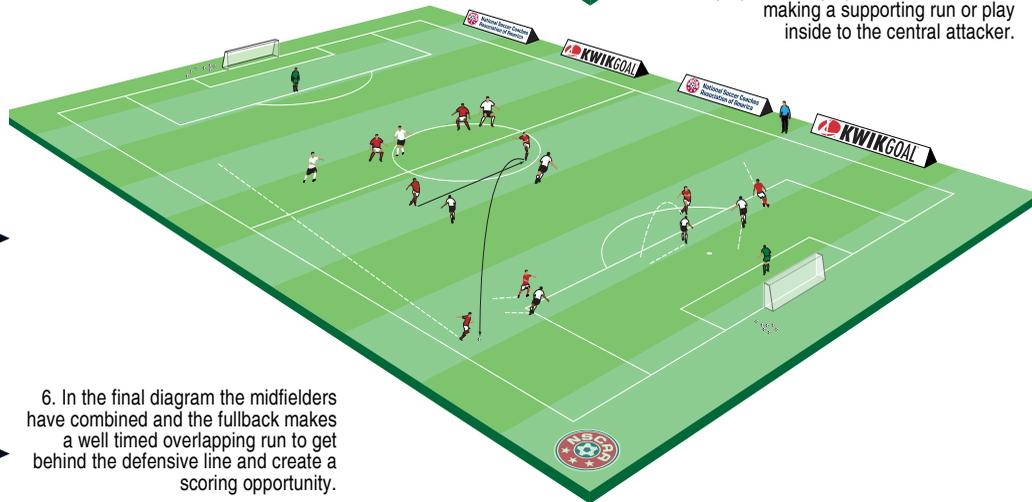
More Challenging: Add more defenders to both zones, remove the zones and play 9v9 without restrictions.



1. Two games are running concurrently at each end of the field involving 1 server, 5 attackers, 2 defenders and a keeper



2. In the game occurring at the top end of the field 2 strikers create space and move away from their teammate who receives an exceptional pass from the midfield.



3. At the other end, a ball is played into the feet of the central striker. The other 2 strikers 'split' wide to find space and draw the defenders away from the center.

4. The keeper and fullback combine to release the right midfield player who penetrates into the final 3rd. The attackers have numbers up - 4v3.

5. The options for the red dribbling player are to play to the wide attacker making a supporting run or play inside to the central attacker.

6. In the final diagram the midfielders have combined and the fullback makes a well timed overlapping run to get behind the defensive line and create a scoring opportunity.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

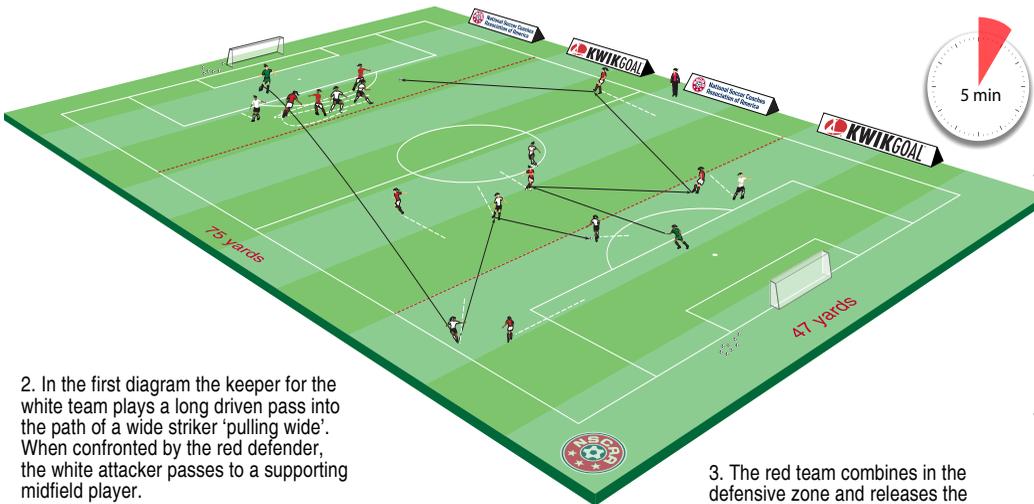
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing, creating space as an individual and team, and support.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over short to medium distances, attacking as a unit of the team and communication.

9V9 CREATING SPACE IN THE FINAL THIRD 2

1. Two games occur concurrently with goalkeepers initiating the attack.



Why use it?

Continuing the theme of creating space, this activity provides the coach with opportunities to work with the midfield and forward players. With repetition the players will learn to identify visual cues and will respond with complementary movements.

Set up

2 teams play on a full 9v9 field - 75x47 yards in size. The field is subdivided into 3 zones. To begin there are two games running concurrently each initiated by the goalkeeper. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and coach.

How to play

The objective is to work with the front three forward and midfield players to create space in the middle and final thirds of the field. In the first sequence the goalkeeper initiates the attack with a pass or throw to a teammate. The attacking players are allowed to move freely, but the defenders must remain in the zone they started or quickly recover to their zone once an attack has broken down. The team the coach will work with first should be set up in a 1-2-3-3 formation and the opponent in a 1-3-2-3. The attacking team should attempt to create a numbers up situation in each zone. When possession is lost the players return to their original starting zone. Play until 3 goals have been scored or in 5 minute intervals.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: At first encourage the attacking team to attack from wide positions so the visual cues are clear for the forwards. Movements should be away from the ball carrier to create space in dangerous positions and then cut back towards the ball.

Coaching Tips: Insist the passing is crisp and realistic to the game. Creating movement restrictions on players can sometimes result in players losing concentration and playing at half pace.

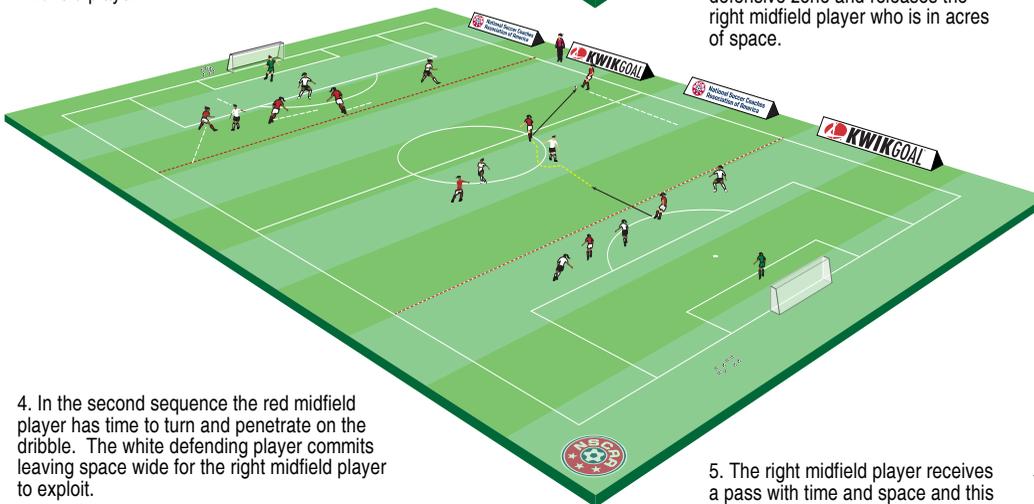
How to modify

Less Challenging: Remove defenders and work through some pattern plays. Add in 'passive' defenders and reduce the length of the field to start attacks closer to goal.

More Challenging: Remove the zones and play 9v9 without restrictions.

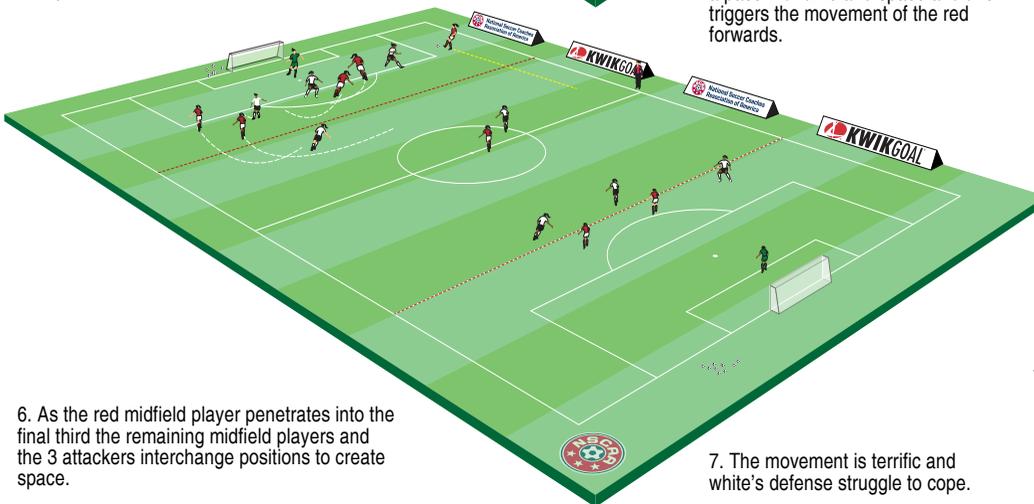
2. In the first diagram the keeper for the white team plays a long driven pass into the path of a wide striker 'pulling wide'. When confronted by the red defender, the white attacker passes to a supporting midfield player.

3. The red team combines in the defensive zone and releases the right midfield player who is in acres of space.



4. In the second sequence the red midfielder player has time to turn and penetrate on the dribble. The white defending player commits leaving space wide for the right midfielder to exploit.

5. The right midfielder player receives a pass with time and space and this triggers the movement of the red forwards.



6. As the red midfielder player penetrates into the final third the remaining midfield players and the 3 attackers interchange positions to create space.

7. The movement is terrific and white's defense struggle to cope.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing, creating space as an individual and team, and support.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over short to medium distances, attacking as a unit of the team and communication.

CREATING SPACE IN 9v9 GAME

Why use it?

The final game activity is a great way to determine how much the players have learned during the technical, functional and phase of play sessions. The emphasis and focus for the coach is movement of players in the final third of the field to create individual and team space.

Set up

The set up is a full 9v9 field with an appropriate size goal at both ends. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside. Both teams have a full complement of players - 9v9 - to start.

How to play

Begin by setting up the team you are going to coach in an attacking formation -1-2-3-3. The opponent should be set up in a 1-4-2-2 formation. Commence with a pass/throw from the goalkeeper playing for the team you are coaching. Once the ball enters the field, play normal rules. The objective for the attacking team is to attack the opponent down either flank and for the strikers and attacking midfield players to work on movement patterns to find space. Initially 3 players on the defending team are prevented from recovering into their defensive half. This condition should create a numerical overload in attack. Encourage the strikers to switch positions as the attack develops, making it difficult for the defenders to 'mark' the attackers. Use a points system to emphasize attacking with pace. A goal scored within 8 seconds is worth 5 points and a goal scored in 9 or more seconds is worth 1 point. Play until the attacking team has scored 15 points or for 8 minutes per interval. Play a total of 3 intervals.

Coaching notes

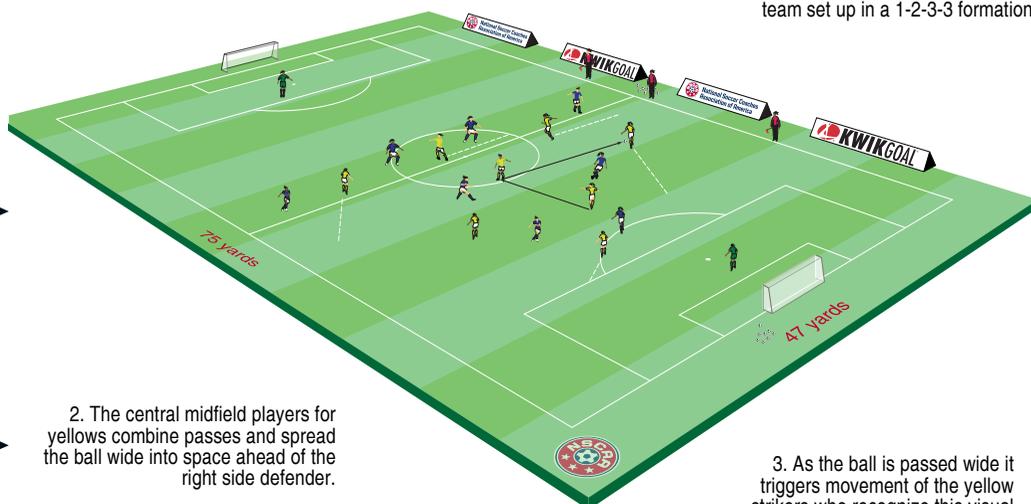
Coaching Objectives: Help players to recognize the correct timing of movements to create space for an individual and/or a teammate.

Coaching Tips: Be prepared to choreograph some designed movements and combination plays.

How to modify

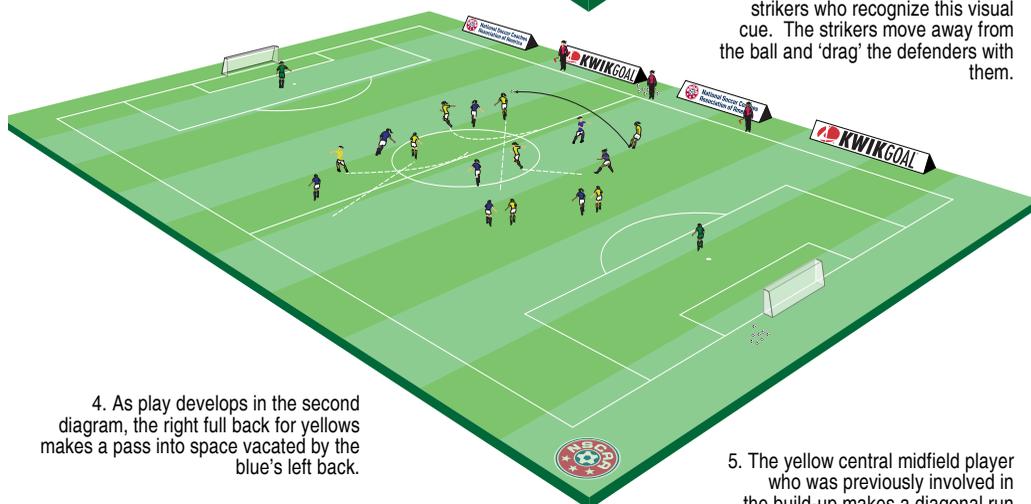
Less Challenging: Reduce the number of defenders and then add them back gradually.

More Challenging: Restrict the number of touches allowed by the attacking players. Allow all the defenders to recover over the halfway line.



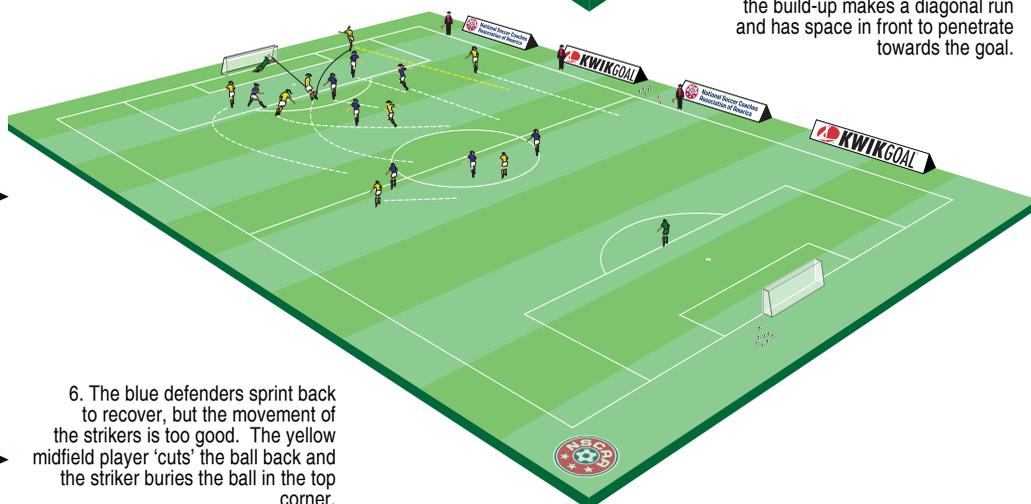
1. The coach focuses on the yellow team set up in a 1-2-3-3 formation.

2. The central midfield players for yellows combine passes and spread the ball wide into space ahead of the right side defender.



4. As play develops in the second diagram, the right full back for yellows makes a pass into space vacated by the blue's left back.

3. As the ball is passed wide it triggers movement of the yellow strikers who recognize this visual cue. The strikers move away from the ball and 'drag' the defenders with them.



6. The blue defenders sprint back to recover, but the movement of the strikers is too good. The yellow midfielder 'cuts' the ball back and the striker buries the ball in the top corner.

5. The yellow central midfielder who was previously involved in the build-up makes a diagonal run and has space in front to penetrate towards the goal.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing, creating space as an individual and team, and support.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over short to medium distances, attacking as a unit of the team and communication.

ATTACKING FULLBACKS

Why use it?

Developing patterns of play can be a good approach to help young players understand different roles on the field. More often than not, a pattern will be unopposed or semi opposed to give the players time and space. In 'Attacking Fullbacks' we focussed on combination play between goalkeeper, defender and midfielder - a good way to develop play from the backline forward.

Set up

The area is 40x30 yards with an appropriate size goal at each end of the field. There are 10 outfield players and 2 goalkeepers and in each half of the field an attacking midfielder/striker and a defender waits for play to develop. The goalkeepers have a large supply of balls and a group of 3 attacking fullbacks set up on the sideline approximately 10 yards from each end line.

How to play

Play is developed from both ends of the field simultaneously, commencing with a throw or pass from the goalkeeper to the first fullback in the line. On receipt of the ball the fullback must penetrate on the dribble to engage the defender. A midfield/forward player supports the fullback on the 'inside' of the defender, so the fullback can decide to combine with the midfield player or attempt a shot.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: The primary objective is to develop play from the goalkeeper to the fullback and then link-up play with the midfield player.

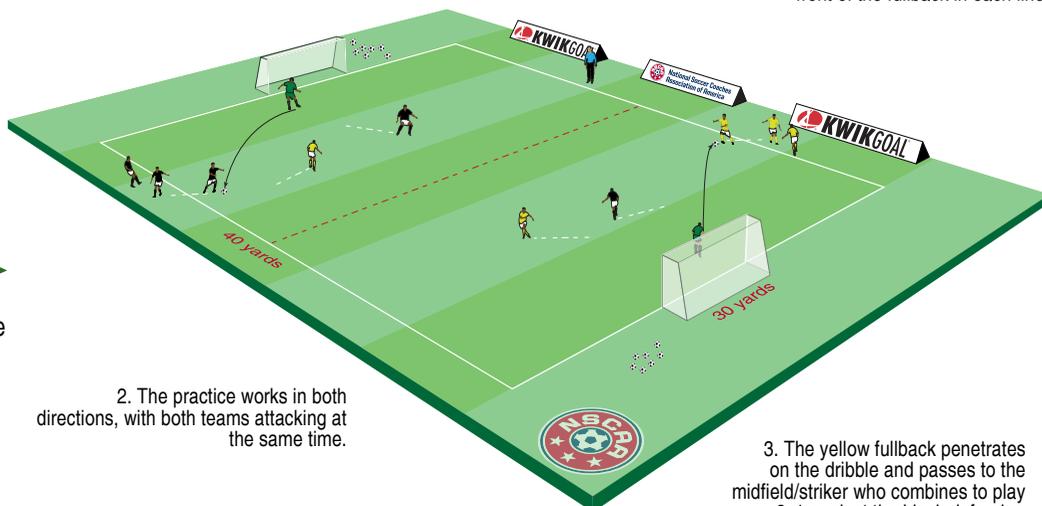
Coaching Tips: The starting position and depth of the fullback players is important. The angle from the goal should be sufficiently shallow to allow the goalkeeper to throw the ball ahead of the fullback who is facing up-field. The fullback should have an open body shape on receipt of the ball to enable the player's first touch to quickly exploit attacking space. Realistic to the game, the support midfield player should stay central and allow the fullback space wide to penetrate on the dribble.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Start the activity without the defender to develop confidence and understanding.

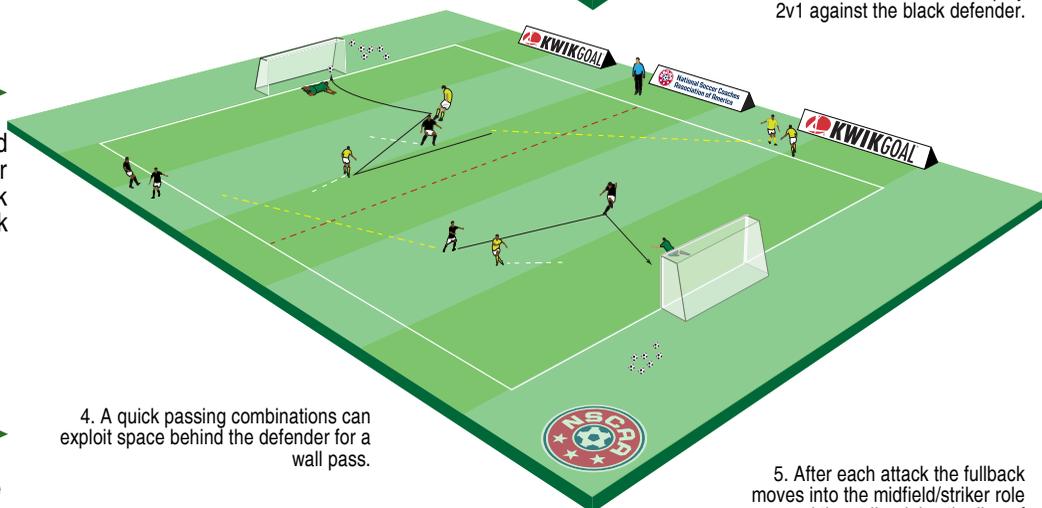
More Challenging: Dribbling is one option to build out of the back – the coach can also require a pass to the midfield player inside. Various passing combinations can be introduced, such as a wall pass, overlap or a double pass.

1. Both goalkeepers throw a ball out in front of the fullback in each line.



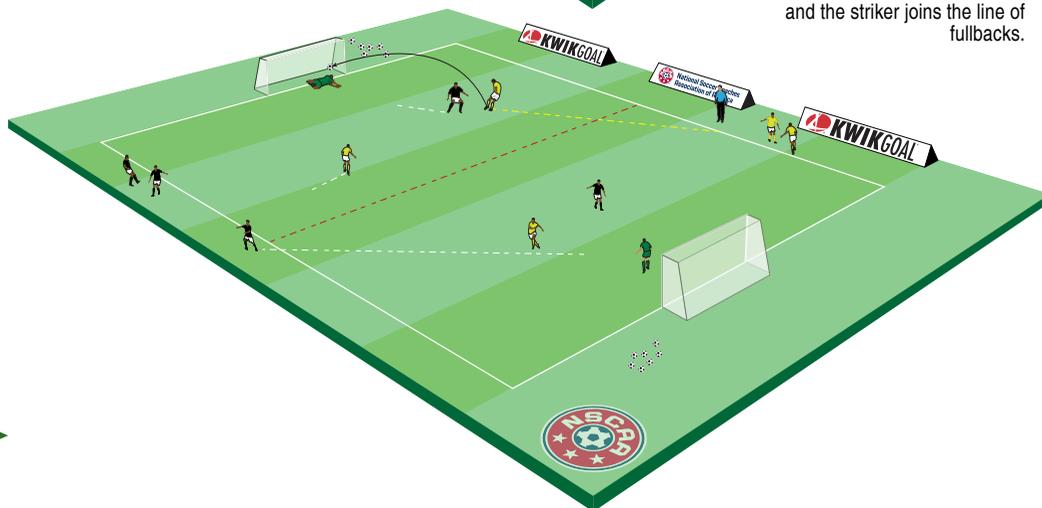
2. The practice works in both directions, with both teams attacking at the same time.

3. The yellow fullback penetrates on the dribble and passes to the midfield/striker who combines to play 2v1 against the black defender.



4. A quick passing combinations can exploit space behind the defender for a wall pass.

5. After each attack the fullback moves into the midfield/striker role and the striker joins the line of fullbacks.



Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing over short and medium distances, passing combinations and building play from the defense.
Top 3 Competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.

DEFENSIVE STOP WITH ATTACKING TRANSITION - PHASE

Why use it?

In this phase of play activity we continue the theme of creating a defensive stop and transitioning into an immediate attack. The game is played on a modified 4v4 field with a full compliment of players on both teams.

Set up

This activity is played on a 4v4 field measuring 30x20 yards. An end zone is created at both ends of the field approximately 4 yards in depth and stretching the width of the field. A line of cones are placed 3 yards from each side line to narrow the field to begin the activity. The coach starts on the side line with a large supply of balls. One player from each team starts in an end zone and in the center play 3v3.

How to play

The coach starts play with a pass to either team in the center of the area. The attacking objective is to pass to the target player to score a point. The focus of this session is defending and both teams must attempt to win possession and transition with a counter attack to the other target player. Cones placed inside the sideline reduce the available space and consequently limit the amount of space the defenders have to cover. The defensive objective is to force a turnover of the ball by working on individual pressure and in pairs as 'pressure' and 'cover' defenders. As the defenders start to experience success, lift the cones to provide the attackers with more space.

Coaching notes

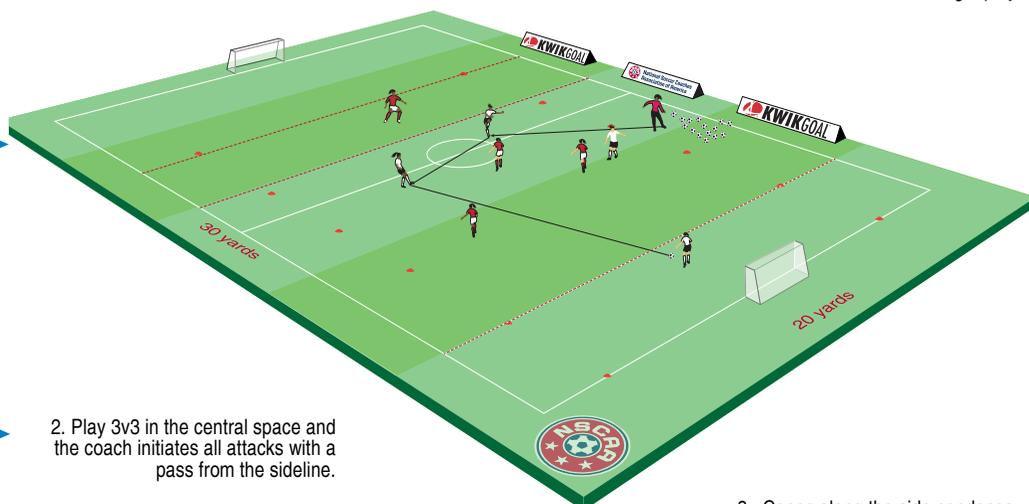
Coaching Objectives: When the defending team wins possession encourage the team losing possession to attempt to win the ball back. A pass back to the target player can alleviate pressure and provide the attacking team with controlled possession. Sometimes the players can pass directly to the target and in other situations the players can combine with another teammate before playing to the target. **Coaching Tip:** The quick transition from attack to defense necessitates clear communication between the defenders.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Do not play continuously. After an attempt to score by one team, stop the play and teams set up again, switching offensive and defensive roles. Slow down the passing by the attackers - add a minimum touch restriction. This will enable the defenders to move into position before having to move again. The coach could also make the width of activity smaller, creating compactness to benefit the defenders.

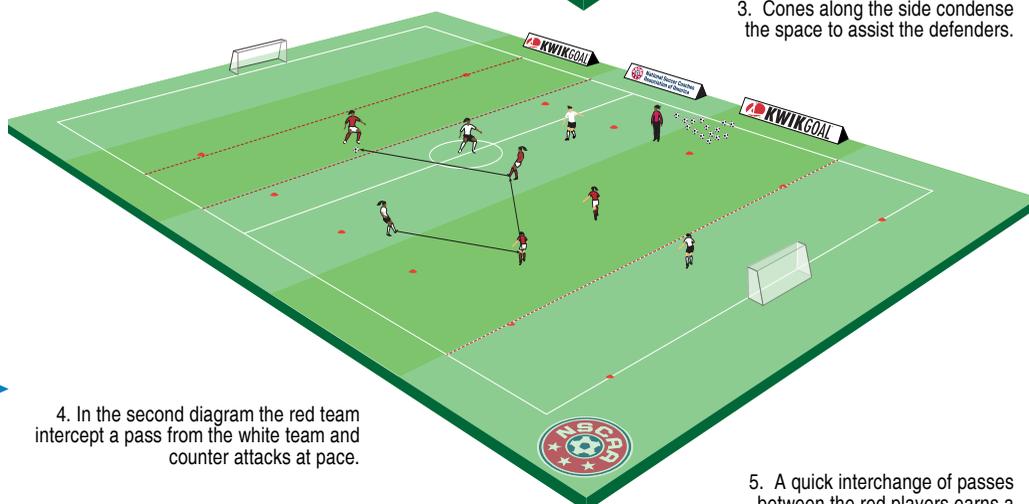
More Challenging: Limiting touches for the attackers will speed up the play, forcing defenders to think and move more quickly. The coach can also widen the field.

1. A player from each team starts in an end zone as a target player.



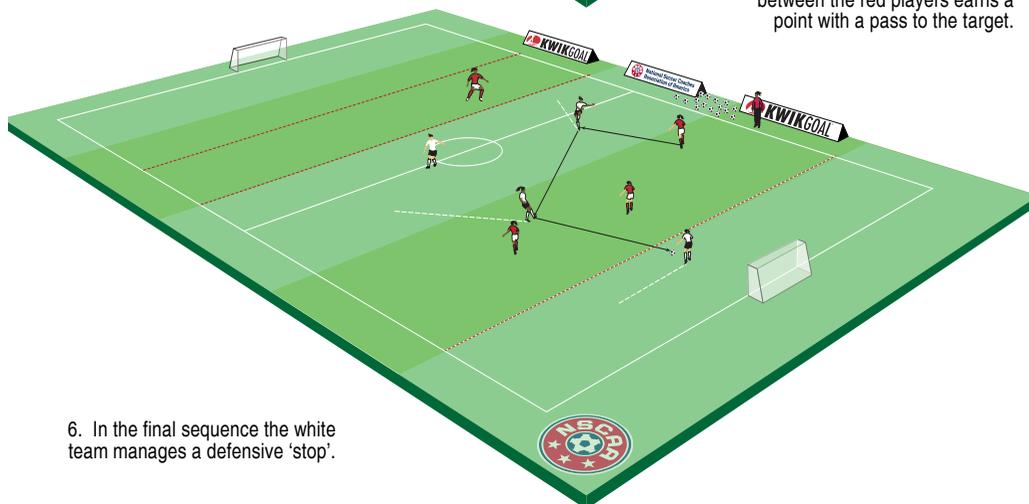
2. Play 3v3 in the central space and the coach initiates all attacks with a pass from the sideline.

3. Cones along the side condense the space to assist the defenders.



4. In the second diagram the red team intercept a pass from the white team and counter attacks at pace.

5. A quick interchange of passes between the red players earns a point with a pass to the target.



6. In the final sequence the white team manages a defensive 'stop'.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 2, 3 and 4 - 6-14 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual defending - pressure and patience, pairs defending - pressure/cover and transition.
Top 3 Competencies: 1v1 defending, support and dribbling.

4v2 TO 4v4 ATTACKING WIDTH - FUNCTIONAL

Why use it?

Creating space in attack can be achieved with a combination of player movement, dribbling penetration and intelligent passing. Attackers are encouraged in this activity to utilize the available width and create opportunities to play 'around' the defenders.

Set up

The set up is 35x30 yards with two cone goals located at both end of the field approximately 5 yards from the center. A good supply of balls are placed just outside the 4 corners of the area and the coach observes from the sideline. Commence the activity with a 4v2 and progress to 4v4.

How to play

The team with 4 players starts with one of the players collecting a ball from a pile in a corner. The player on the ball dribbles into the area and the game is live. The objective for both teams is to score through the opponent's cone goals. As a consequence of the goal location, it is likely the 2 defenders will drop deep and become compact around the goals allowing the attackers time and space. Providing the defenders with an attacking objective is important to 'draw' the defenders out to the ball carrier. Using the full width of the field the attacking team should attempt to move the ball quickly and attack around the outside of the defenders. If the defenders win possession they must counter attack and attempt to score at the other end. The activity is played in 8x2 minute intervals, with a 30-60 second break in between each interval. During intervals 1-4 the goals have different point values - 1 point for passing through the left goal and 2 points for dribbling through the right goal. For intervals 4-8, the coach imposes a rule that a player receiving a ball with back-to-goal cannot turn.

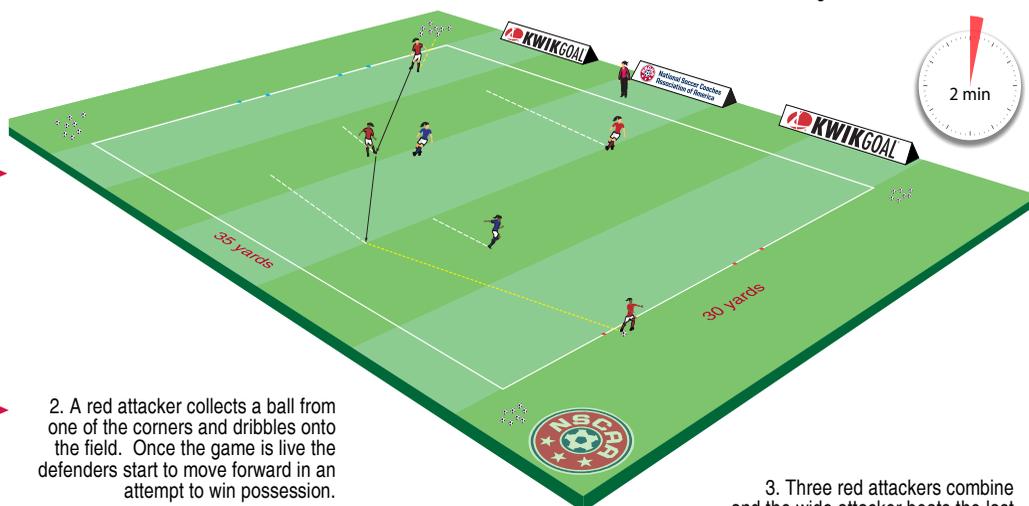
Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Creating space as an individual and team is the main theme of the activity. Wide players should move to the perimeter and open their bodies on receipt of the ball. The central attacker should move 'high' up the field to create depth and height.
Coaching Tip: Positioning balls in the corners allows the attacking team to restart the game and establish an attacking tempo. On occasions a quick restart may catch the defenders in transition.

How to modify

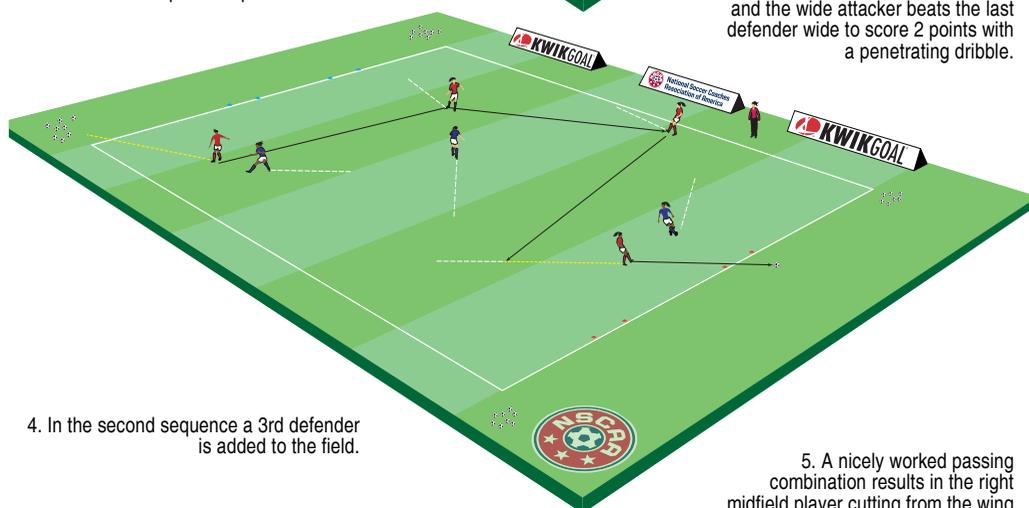
Less Challenging: Commence the activity with a numerical advantage for the attacking team. Create more space by moving the boundaries of the area wider.
More Challenging: Add minimum touch restrictions for the attackers to slow down the attack and allow the defenders to recover. Also impose the 'no turn' rule to force the striker to play 'high'.

1. The red team attack with 4 players against the 2 blue defenders.



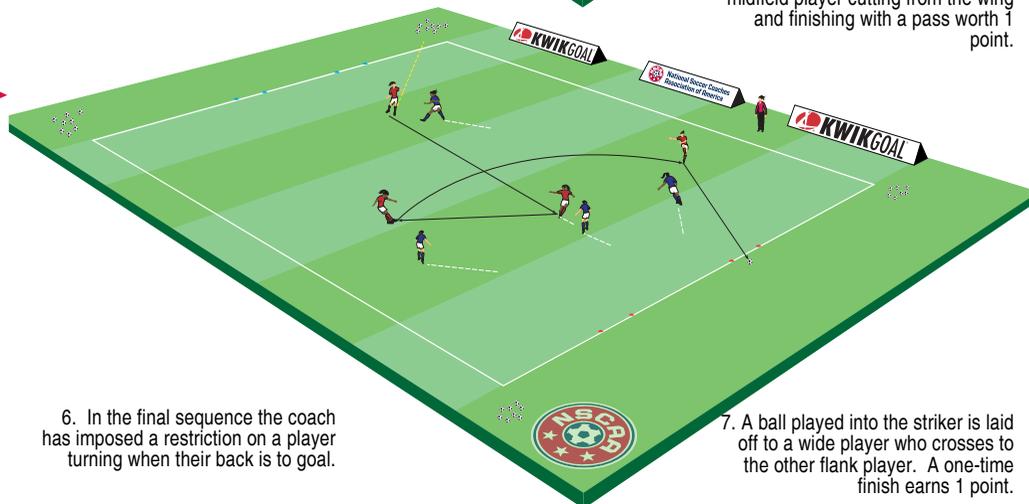
2. A red attacker collects a ball from one of the corners and dribbles onto the field. Once the game is live the defenders start to move forward in an attempt to win possession.

3. Three red attackers combine and the wide attacker beats the last defender wide to score 2 points with a penetrating dribble.



4. In the second sequence a 3rd defender is added to the field.

5. A nicely worked passing combination results in the right midfielder cutting from the wing and finishing with a pass worth 1 point.



6. In the final sequence the coach has imposed a restriction on a player turning when their back is to goal.

7. A ball played into the striker is laid off to a wide player who crosses to the other flank player. A one-time finish earns 1 point.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 3, 4 and 5 - 9-18 year old players.

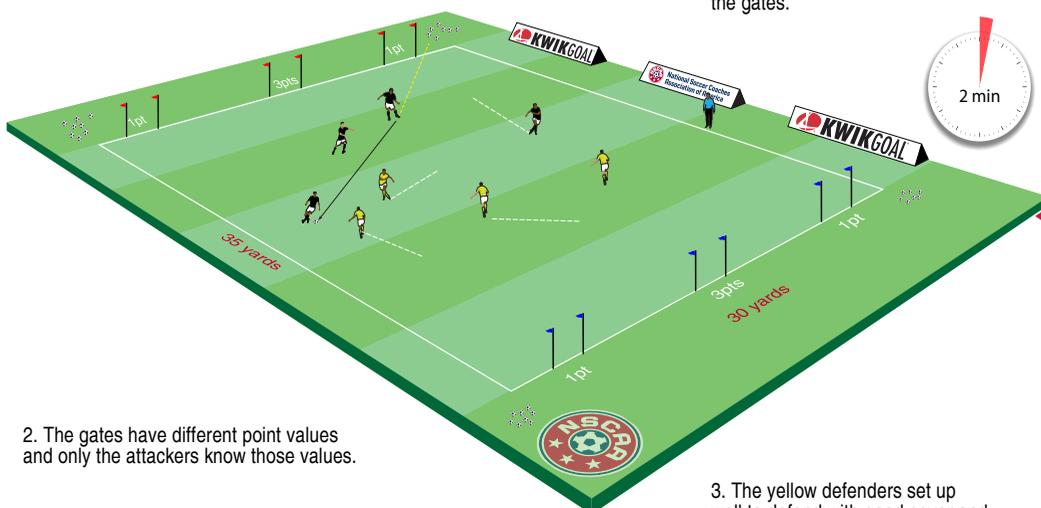
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing technique, creating space as an individual/team and defending (pressure and cover).

Top 3 Competencies: 1v1 attacking, passing over short/medium distances and movement off the ball.

4v3 TO 5v5 DEFENDING IN SMALL GROUPS - FUNCTIONAL

1. The black team attack the yellow team and attempt to score through the gates.



Why use it?

A common defensive shape for a 7v7 is to have 3 defenders - left, right and central, and a holding midfielder. This activity helps the 4 players to work together as a defensive unit, trading roles as the first (pressure), second (cover) and third/fourth (balance) defenders.

Set up

The set up is a 35x30 yards area with 3 flag goals on each end line. The goals are approximately 3 yards wide and each goal is awarded a different points value. Play 4v4 in the main area. A supply of balls are placed in each corner of the field to allow the players to restart the game continuously. The coach observes from the sideline.

How to play

The focus is on defending as a unit and adjusting the defensive shape to counter the attack. As the ball moves from one player to the next the defenders must adjust their positions and trade roles as the pressure, cover and balance defenders. If the defenders win possession of the ball they can counter attack. The coach should inform the teams the value of scoring in the opponents goals, but this should not be shared with the opponents. At the end of the game the players can reveal how many points they scored and which goals were worth 1,2 or 3 points. Play 8 intervals each lasting 2 minutes. Intervals 1-4 dribble or pass through the gates to score. Intervals 5-8 add a player/keeper behind the end line - if the player can control the ball that is played through the gates the points value is doubled.

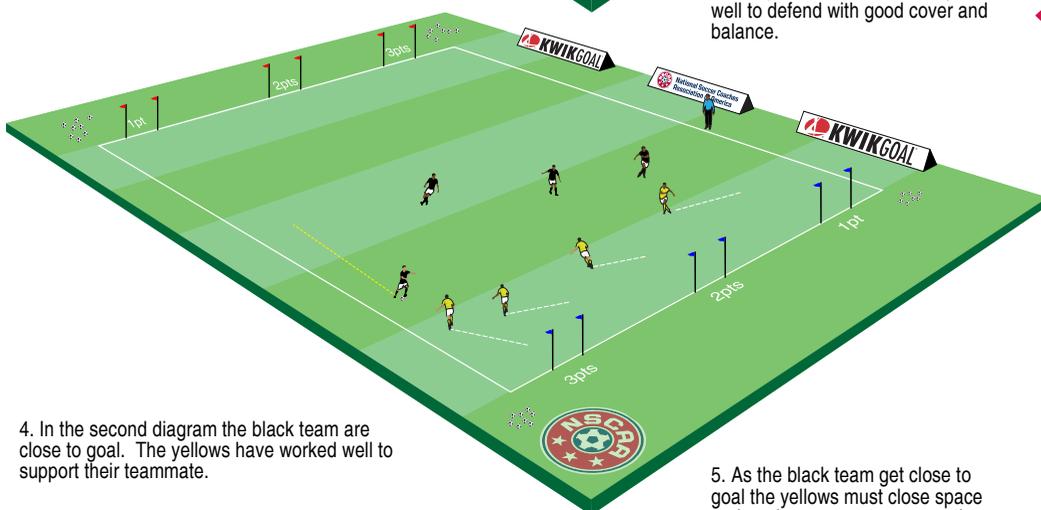
Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Work with the players to adapt the shape of the defense based on the position of the ball and the opponents.
Coaching Tip: To help players with positioning and decision-making the coach may wish to freeze play, step onto the field, move players around, rehearse and then play live.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the size of the field so the defenders have less ground to cover.
More Challenging: Impose a time and/or touch restriction on the attackers. This condition will add urgency to the attack and will require more intense effort from the defenders.

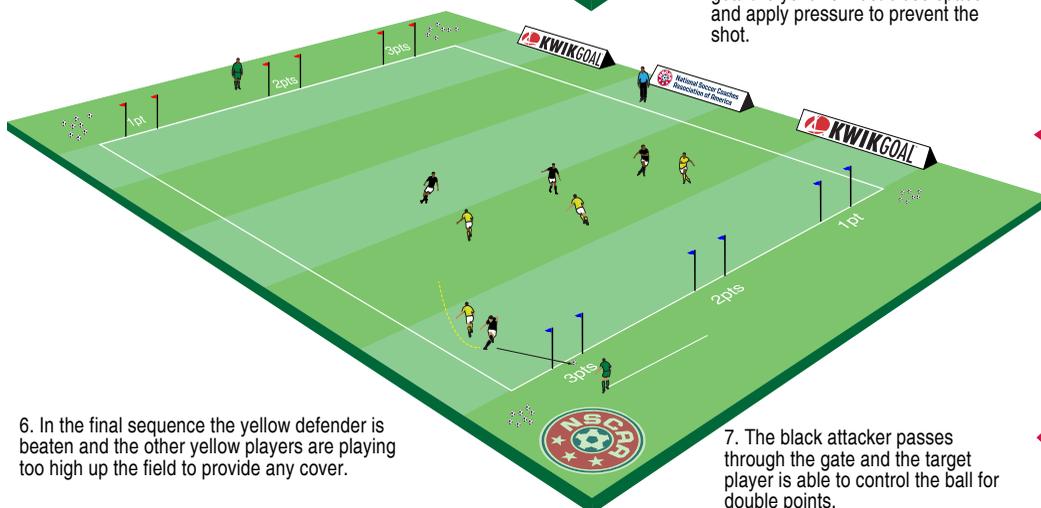
2. The gates have different point values and only the attackers know those values.



3. The yellow defenders set up well to defend with good cover and balance.

4. In the second diagram the black team are close to goal. The yellows have worked well to support their teammate.

5. As the black team get close to goal the yellows must close space and apply pressure to prevent the shot.



6. In the final sequence the yellow defender is beaten and the other yellow players are playing too high up the field to provide any cover.

7. The black attacker passes through the gate and the target player is able to control the ball for double points.

Stage/s of development covered by activity
 Stages 3, 4 and 5 - 9-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies
 Top 3 Themes: Individual, pairs and small group defending, transition and communication.
 Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending balance.

DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION MIDFIELD 3

Why use it?

This activity emphasizes the defensive responsibility of the midfield players and specifically recovery runs and organization of a midfield 3.

Set up

Played on a 9v9 field, a zone is marked from the halfway line 8 yards inside one half. At the other end place a full size goal. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside.

How to play

The focus of this session is the defensive organization of the team defending the full size goal. Play starts from the goalkeeper, and the team defending the goal has to work the ball up into the zone adjacent to the halfway line. Once the team has the ball in the zone, the players have to make 3 consecutive passes for a point. The opponent must attempt to win possession and counter attack. As soon as the team turnover possession, the midfield 3 must make recovery runs to solidify the defense in front of the defenders.

Coaching notes

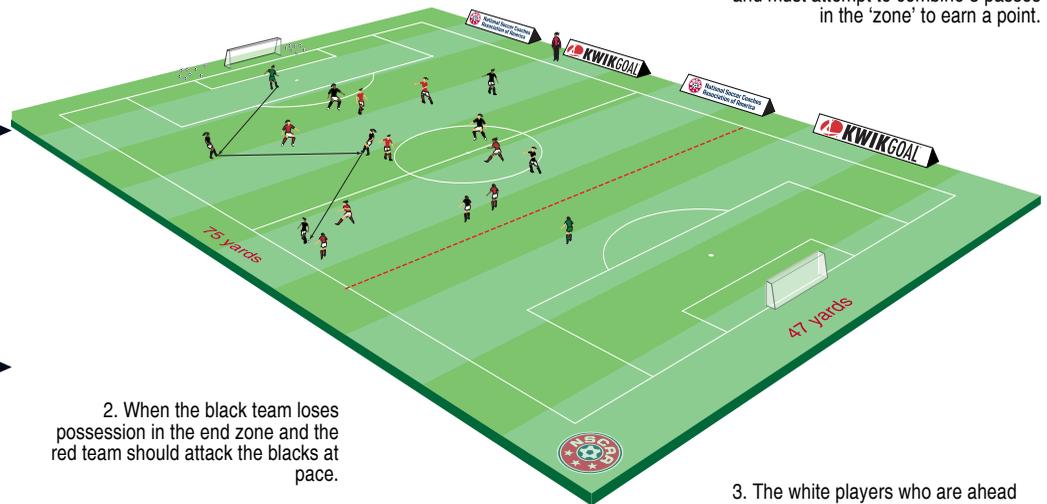
Coaching Objectives: Work with the midfield players on the recovery runs, shape of the defense, roles of pressure and cover and communication between the players.

Coaching Tips: Instead of stopping play or requiring the defenders to kick the ball out, provide both teams with an objective when the ball is won to add realism to the practice.

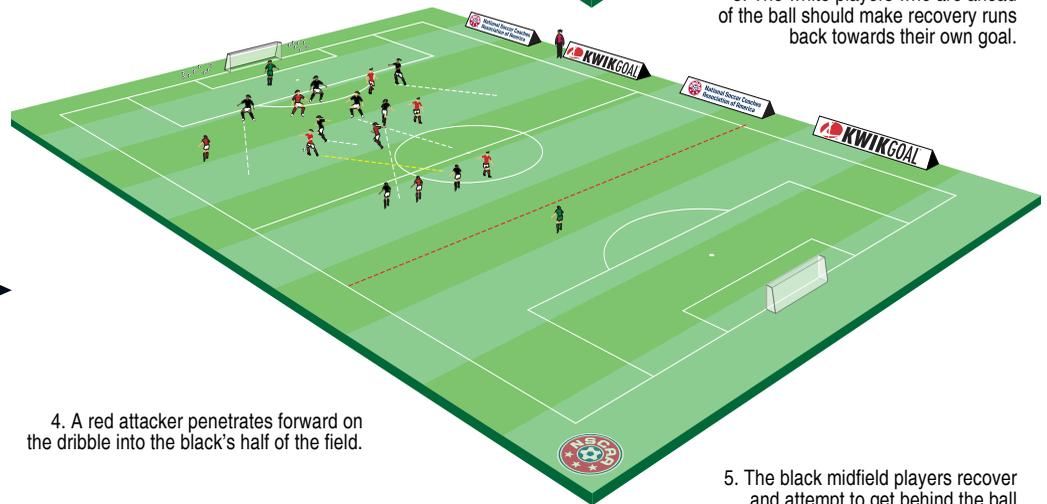
How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the number of attackers and then add them back gradually.

More Challenging: Delay the recover runs of one or more of the midfield players.

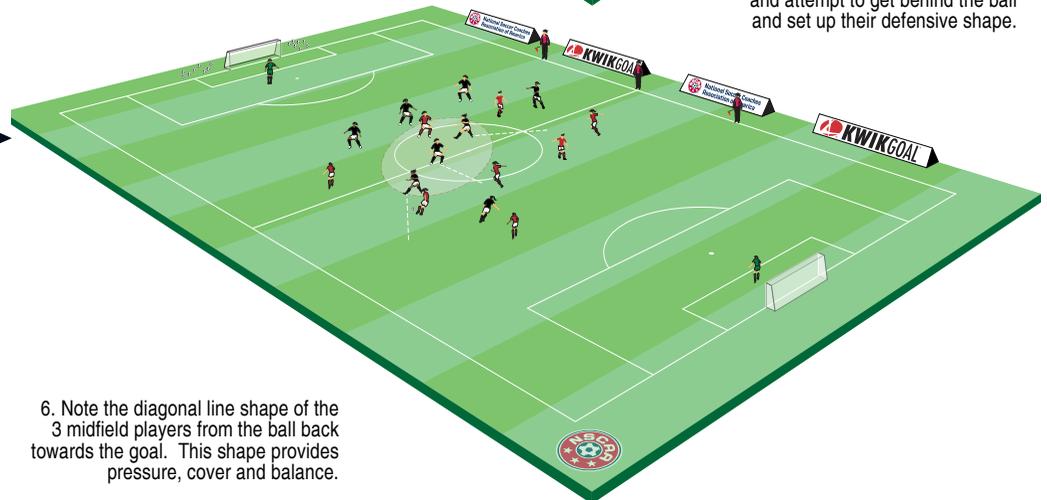


1. The black team defend the main goal and must attempt to combine 3 passes in the 'zone' to earn a point.



2. When the black team loses possession in the end zone and the red team should attack the blacks at pace.

3. The white players who are ahead of the ball should make recovery runs back towards their own goal.



4. A red attacker penetrates forward on the dribble into the black's half of the field.

5. The black midfield players recover and attempt to get behind the ball and set up their defensive shape.

6. Note the diagonal line shape of the 3 midfield players from the ball back towards the goal. This shape provides pressure, cover and balance.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

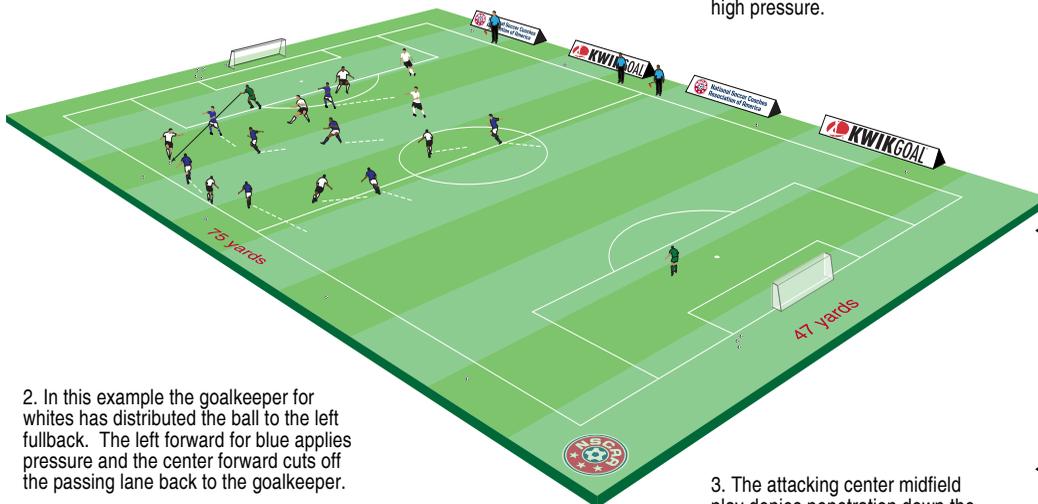
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Defensive organization, pressure, cover and balance roles, and counter attack.

Top 3 Competencies: Defending in pairs and small groups, positional play and communication.

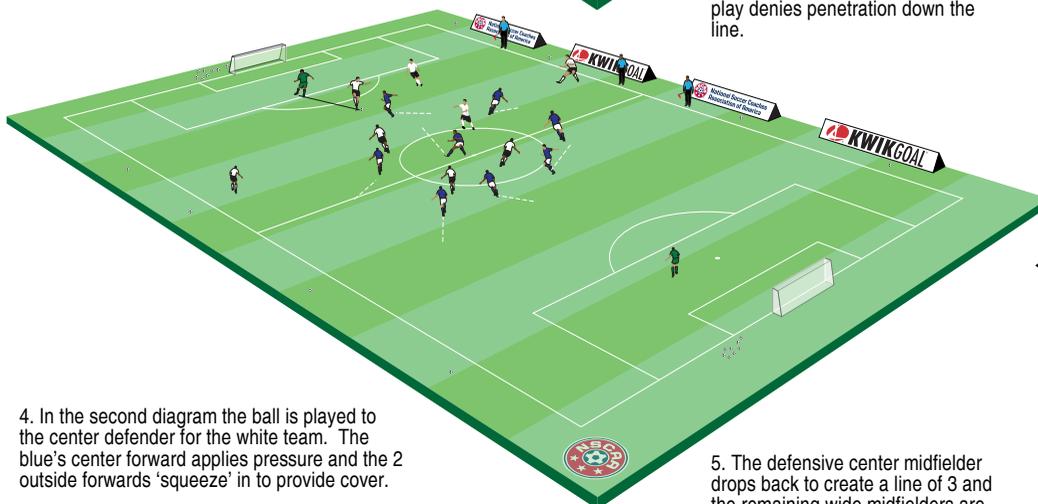
DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION HIGH PRESSURE

1. The blue team is losing 2-0 with 10 minutes left of the game. The coach has instructed the team to play with high pressure.



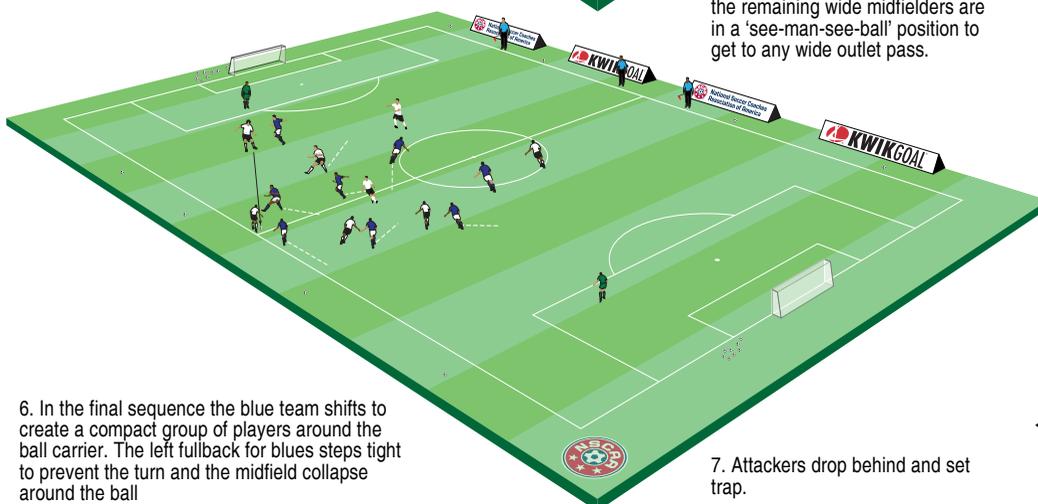
2. In this example the goalkeeper for whites has distributed the ball to the left fullback. The left forward for blue applies pressure and the center forward cuts off the passing lane back to the goalkeeper.

3. The attacking center midfield play denies penetration down the line.



4. In the second diagram the ball is played to the center defender for the white team. The blue's center forward applies pressure and the 2 outside forwards 'squeeze' in to provide cover.

5. The defensive center midfielder drops back to create a line of 3 and the remaining wide midfielders are in a 'see-man-see-ball' position to get to any wide outlet pass.



6. In the final sequence the blue team shifts to create a compact group of players around the ball carrier. The left fullback for blues steps tight to prevent the turn and the midfield collapse around the ball

7. Attackers drop behind and set trap.

Why use it?

This activity introduces a scenario occurring frequently in competitive games. Your team is trailing 2-0 with 10 minutes of regular time remaining and there is a heightened level of urgency for your team to win the ball back. Coordinated high pressure defense is required to force a turnover.

Set up

The set up is full 9v9 field with an appropriate size goal at both ends. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside. Both teams have a full complement of players - 9v9 - to start.

How to play

With very little time remaining in the game, the coach instructs the team to play high pressure with the objective to force an immediate turnover. In the event that the team you are coaching loses the ball, introduce the 'Barcelona Rule' - your team must attempt to win back possession within 6 seconds of losing it.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: When the team is 'out' of possession the defense must step into high gear and the nearest player must work tirelessly to close down the player with the ball. All other teammates are responsible to deny a pass and this is achieved with the 2-3 players nearest the ball collapsing the space around the ball carrier and getting close to their opponents.

Coaching Tips: Communication between the defenders is crucial to coordinate movement of the defensive unit. Recognizing an opportunity to play high pressure must involve the entire team and all players must know their responsibilities to provide pressure, cover and balance. Equally, the coach must restrain the young players from chasing all over the field in a disorganize manner. There is a fine balance between high intensity and thoughtless defending.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Place balls around the perimeter of the field to allow the attacking team to quickly restart. Require the attacking players to take at least 2 touches to allow the defenders a second or two extra time to close space.
More Challenging: Encourage the attacking team to play 1-2 touch.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Defensive organization, pressure, cover and balance roles, counter attack.
 Top 3 Competencies: Defending as a team, high pressure defending and communication.

1v1 TO 2v2 PRESSURE AND COVER DEFENDING - FUNCTIONAL

Why use it?

This is an introductory activity to teach young players the role of the first or pressure defender. As the player becomes more proficient at defending, the coach can add an additional attacker and defender. This development enables the coach to also teach the role of the second or cover defender.

Set up

The set up is a 38x30 yards area separated into two adjacent fields 38x15 yards. Each field has 3 zones with the end zones 12 yards in length and the middle zone 14 yards in length. A supply of balls is placed outside the end line of each area to allow the players to restart the game continuously. On each field there are 4 players, 2 in the middle zone and 1 at each end acting as a server. The server must remain outside the area to begin the activity. The coach is on the sideline.

How to play

The focus of this activity is individual and pairs defending, although the activity will work equally well with an attacking theme. The objective for the attacking players is to score by dribbling over the end zone lines. The game commences with a pass from one of the servers to the feet of the attacker. The attacker must attempt to turn and dribble to the opposite end. The first defender must try and prevent the attacker turning and dribbling. In the event of an interception the defender should pass to the server to score a point. If the attacker is successful in beating the first defender in the middle zone, the server at the back of the end zone should come forward and try to deny the attacker dribbling across the back line. The first defender in the middle zone is not allowed to enter the end zone. If the defending player in the end zone successfully wins the ball the team of 2 should counter attack and attempt to score at the other end. Play 10 intervals each lasting 30 seconds. Intervals 1-4 play 1v1 and switch roles each interval. Intervals 5-7 allow the attacking team to have two players in middle zone to create a 2v1. If the defender in the middle wins the ball, the teammate joins in and the attacking team sends a player back to the end zone to create a 2v1 the other way. Intervals 8-10 play 2v2.

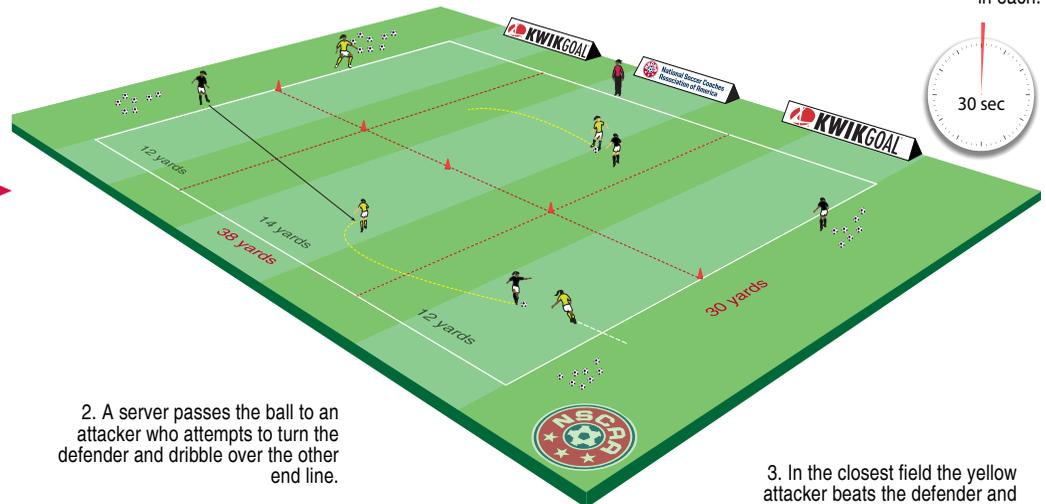
Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Teach the first defender to close space, lower body, side ways positioning and patience.
Coaching Tip: Time working on defending is well spent. Young players will often 'fly' into a challenge to win the ball and will be off balance.

How to modify

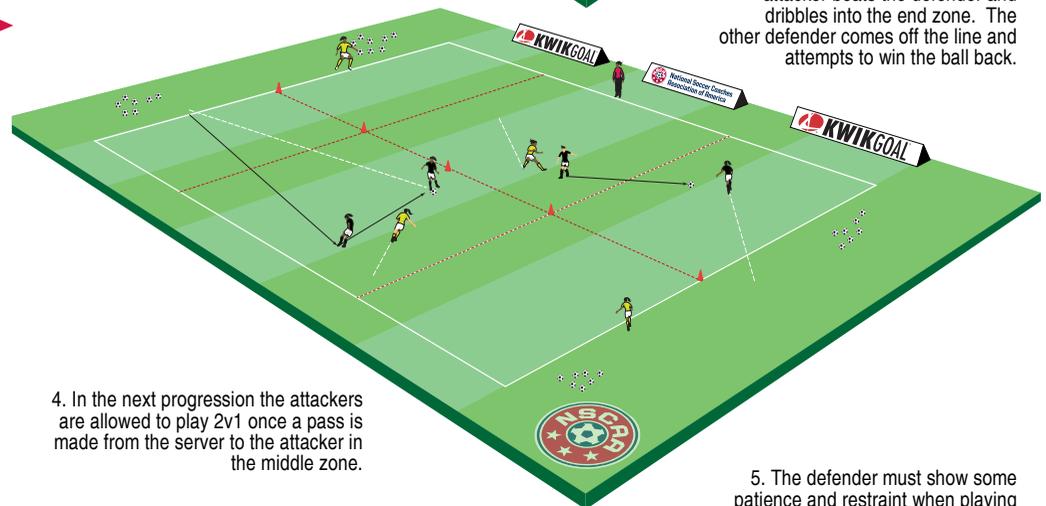
Less Challenging: Keep the activity 1v1 until the player has achieved some success.
More Challenging: Move to 2v1 in favor of the attackers and work on the defenders decision making.

1. Two similar size areas are set up adjacent to each other with 4 players in each.



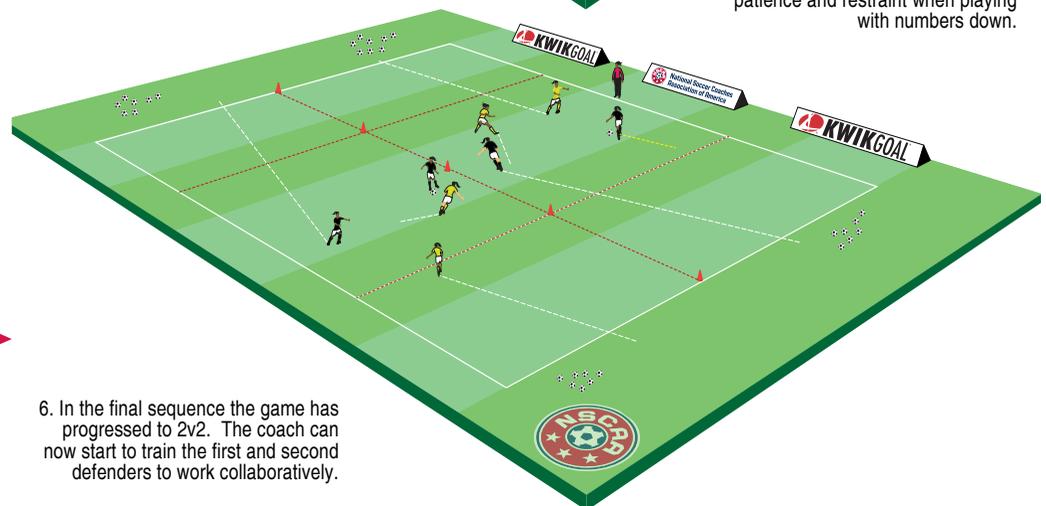
2. A server passes the ball to an attacker who attempts to turn the defender and dribble over the other end line.

3. In the closest field the yellow attacker beats the defender and dribbles into the end zone. The other defender comes off the line and attempts to win the ball back.



4. In the next progression the attackers are allowed to play 2v1 once a pass is made from the server to the attacker in the middle zone.

5. The defender must show some patience and restraint when playing with numbers down.



6. In the final sequence the game has progressed to 2v2. The coach can now start to train the first and second defenders to work collaboratively.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

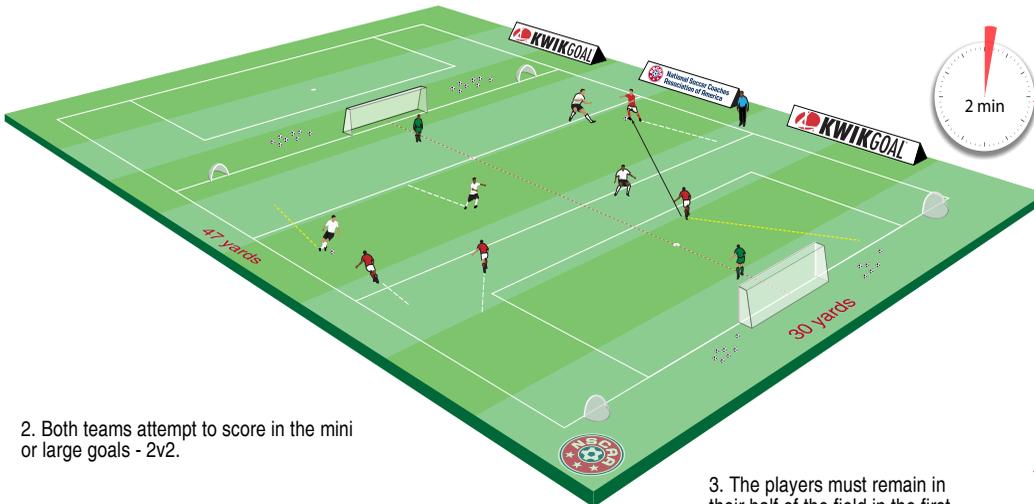
Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 - 6-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual and pairs defending, 1v1 attacking and communication.
 Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending recovery.

4v4 PRESSURE, COVER, BALANCE DEFENDING - PHASE

1. Two games are played currently on a split field.



Why use it?

This activity continues the theme of pressure and cover defending with specific focus on defending in wide areas.

Set up

The set up is a 30x30 yards area played on a 7v7 field - use the restraining line at one end as the end line. The field is also divided into two to create a 'left' and 'right' field. On each end line are 2 mini goals close to the sidelines and a full size goal with a goalkeeper. On each side of the field play 2v2. A supply of balls is placed near each goal to allow the keepers to restart the game continuously. The coach observes from the sideline.

How to play

The focus of this activity is individual and pairs defending, although the activity will work equally well with an attacking theme. The objective for the attacking players is to score in either mini goals or large goal on one side of the field. The objective for the defending team is to win possession and counter attack to the other goals. Play 6 intervals each lasting 2 minutes. Intervals 1-2 play a game of 2v2 in each half of the field. Intervals 3-4 play with one ball but players are restricted to the side of the field in which they started. Intervals 5-6 remove the zonal restrictions and play 4v4 in the full width of the field.

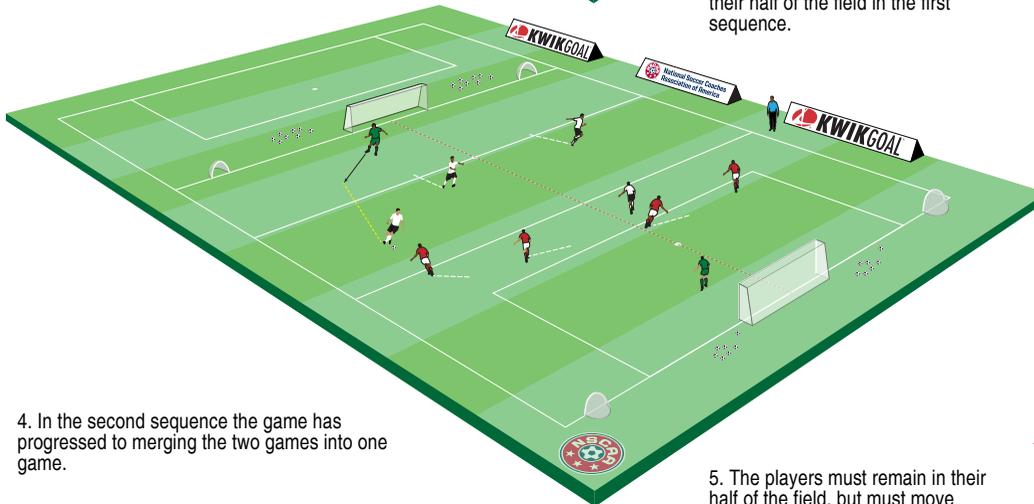
Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Coaches can teach the roles of the first and second defender with particular emphasis on preventing the opponent from penetrating the defense. As the games are merged the coach can also introduce the role of the 3rd and 4th defenders in providing cover and balance.
Coaching Tip: Encourage the young defenders to apply pressure high enough up the field to prevent the opponent from entering shooting range. When the player has an opportunity to force the attacker away from goal they should apply high pressure. This is often sufficient for a young attacker to give up possession.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Start with 1v1 and progress to 2v2 once the defenders are experiencing success.
More Challenging: Progress by removing the zonal restrictions earlier in the session and impose a time restriction on the attack. This condition will add urgency to the attack and will require on more intense effort from the defenders.

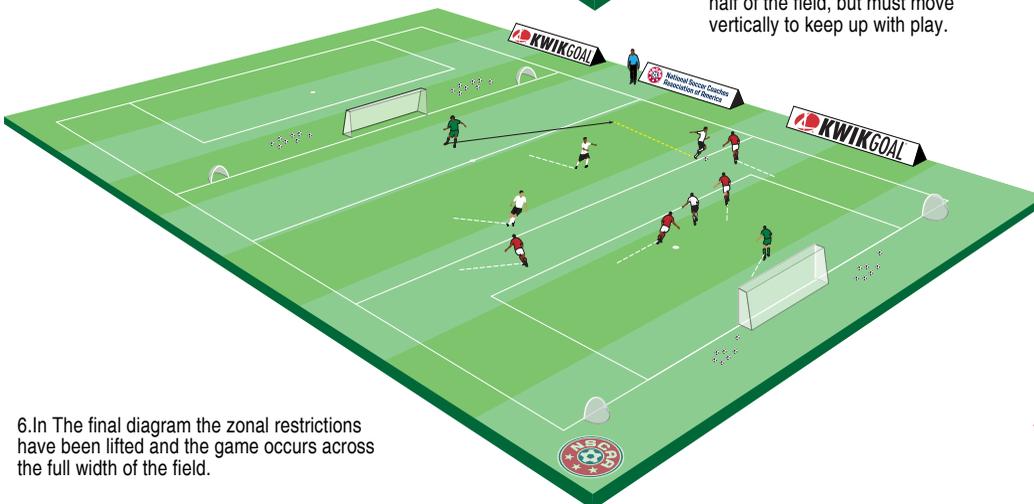
2. Both teams attempt to score in the mini or large goals - 2v2.



3. The players must remain in their half of the field in the first sequence.

4. In the second sequence the game has progressed to merging the two games into one game.

5. The players must remain in their half of the field, but must move vertically to keep up with play.



6. In the final diagram the zonal restrictions have been lifted and the game occurs across the full width of the field.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 3, 4 and 5 - 9-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual and pairs defending, transition and communication.
 Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending recovery.

7v7 PRESSURE, COVER, BALANCE DEFENDING - GAME

Why use it?

A 7v7 game designed to teach the players to play high and low press defense as an individual and team. Working with the players to recognize visual cues and communication between teammates are key considerations.

Set up

The set up is full 7v7 field with an appropriate size goal at both ends. The field is separated at halfway into two zones. Around each goal is a 5 yards 'keeper only' zone. Play 7v7. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside.

How to play

Each team is allowed 2 central midfield players to move freely between the 2 zones and all others are restricted to the zone they started in. The attacking objective is to pass the ball to the other team's goalkeeper, either on the ground or in the air. Goalkeepers are restricted to the 'keeper zone'. The goalkeeper earns a point for each ball they catch or collect clean. The primary objective for the defense is to prevent the attacking team from passing to the goalkeeper. Play 6 intervals each lasting 3 minutes. To encourage the defense to press early and high up the field, award the attacking team 3 points if the ball is passed to the goal keeper from the defending half. Award 1 point if the ball is played from the attacking half (Intervals 1-2). To encourage defenders to deny space in the attacking half reverse the scoring - 1 point if the ball is passed to the goalkeeper from the defending half and 3 points if the ball is played from the attacking half (Intervals 3-4). Remove all the restrictions for intervals 5-6 to see if the players can read the cues.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: The coach should encourage defenders to press the player in possession early and for the team to remain compact. Work with players to recognize the visual cues to determine if the player on the ball will play short or long.

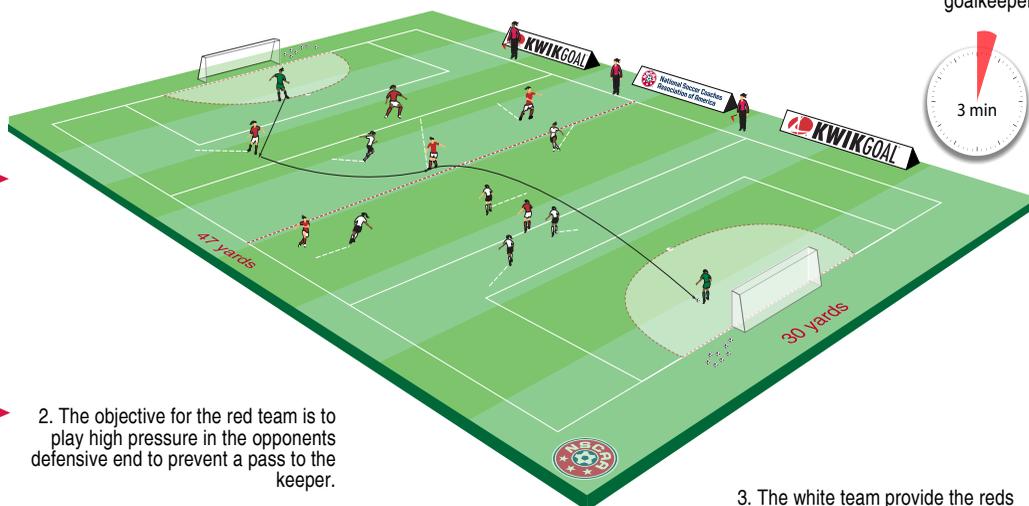
Coaching Tip: The coach can introduce a points system (as described above) to provide extra emphasis on the type of strategy the coach wants to see employed. Introduce the idea of defending early or later.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the number of attacking players and reduce the size of the field.

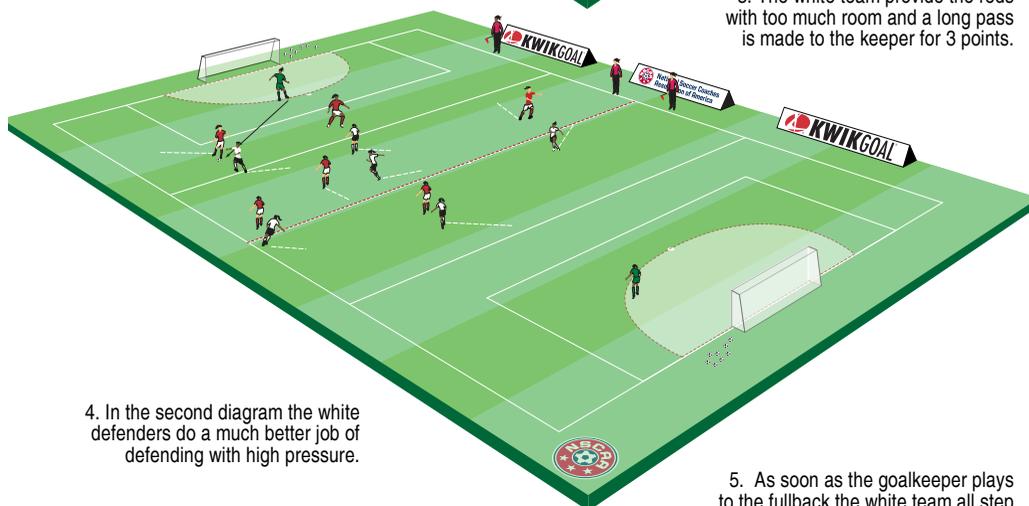
More Challenging: Use the larger penalty box as the 'keeper zone' and play with full 7v7 teams.

1. The Red team attacks the white team attempting to pass to the white team's goalkeeper.



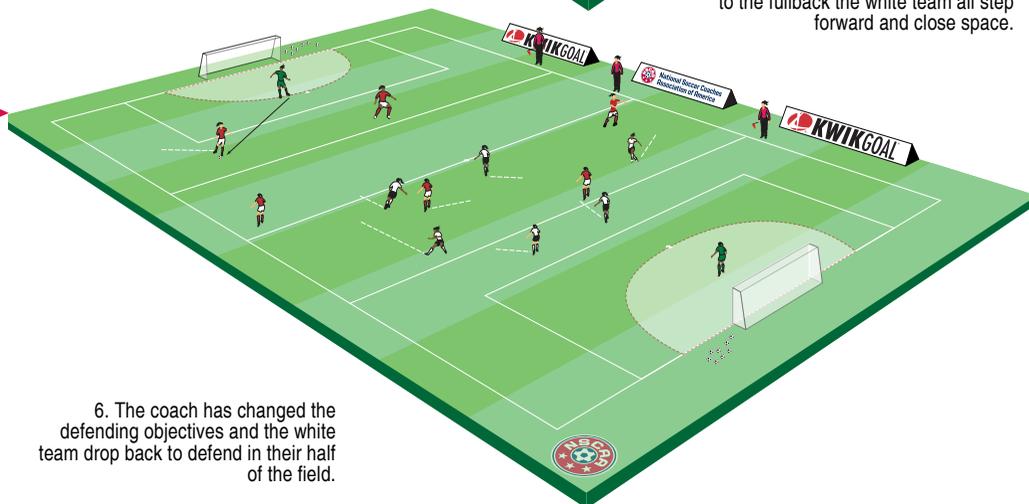
2. The objective for the red team is to play high pressure in the opponents defensive end to prevent a pass to the keeper.

3. The white team provide the reds with too much room and a long pass is made to the keeper for 3 points.



4. In the second diagram the white defenders do a much better job of defending with high pressure.

5. As soon as the goalkeeper plays to the fullback the white team all step forward and close space.



6. The coach has changed the defending objectives and the white team drop back to defend in their half of the field.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 - 6-18 year old players.

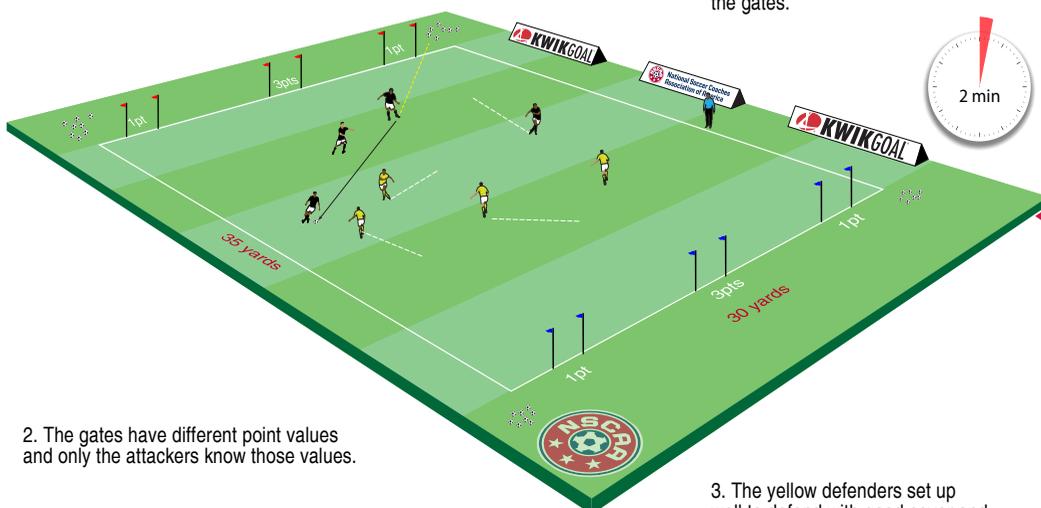
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual and pairs defending, when to press and when to hold and communication.

Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending recovery.

4v3 TO 5v5 DEFENDING IN SMALL GROUPS - FUNCTIONAL

1. The black team attack the yellow team and attempt to score through the gates.



Why use it?

A common defensive shape for a 7v7 is to have 3 defenders - left, right and central, and a holding midfielder. This activity helps the 4 players to work together as a defensive unit, trading roles as the first (pressure), second (cover) and third/fourth (balance) defenders.

Set up

The set up is a 35x30 yards area with 3 flag goals on each end line. The goals are approximately 3 yards wide and each goal is awarded a different points value. Play 4v4 in the main area. A supply of balls are placed in each corner of the field to allow the players to restart the game continuously. The coach observes from the sideline.

How to play

The focus is on defending as a unit and adjusting the defensive shape to counter the attack. As the ball moves from one player to the next the defenders must adjust their positions and trade roles as the pressure, cover and balance defenders. If the defenders win possession of the ball they can counter attack. The coach should inform the teams the value of scoring in the opponents goals, but this should not be shared with the opponents. At the end of the game the players can reveal how many points they scored and which goals were worth 1,2 or 3 points. Play 8 intervals each lasting 2 minutes. Intervals 1-4 dribble or pass through the gates to score. Intervals 5-8 add a player/keeper behind the end line - if the player can control the ball that is played through the gates the points value is doubled.

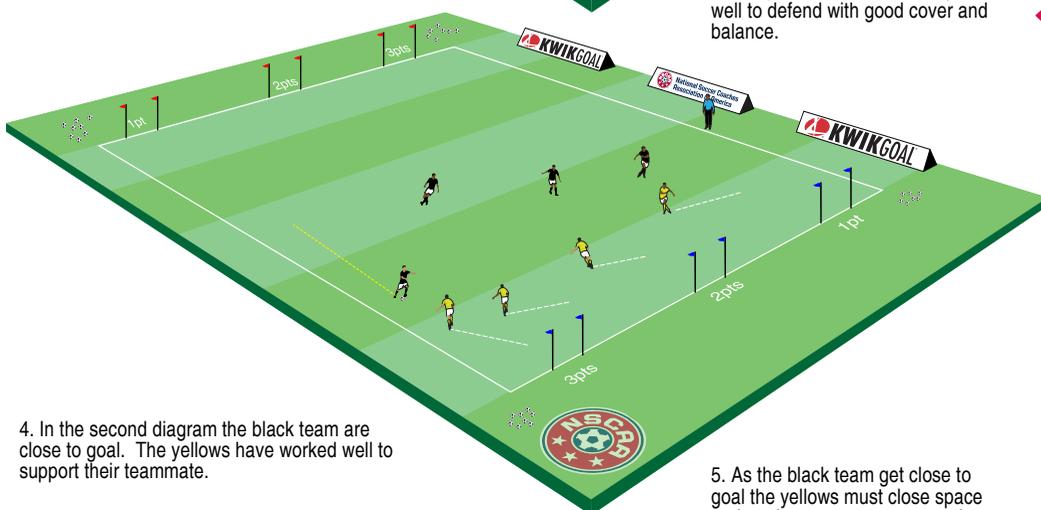
Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Work with the players to adapt the shape of the defense based on the position of the ball and the opponents.
Coaching Tip: To help players with positioning and decision-making the coach may wish to freeze play, step onto the field, move players around, rehearse and then play live.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the size of the field so the defenders have less ground to cover.
More Challenging: Impose a time and/or touch restriction on the attackers. This condition will add urgency to the attack and will require more intense effort from the defenders.

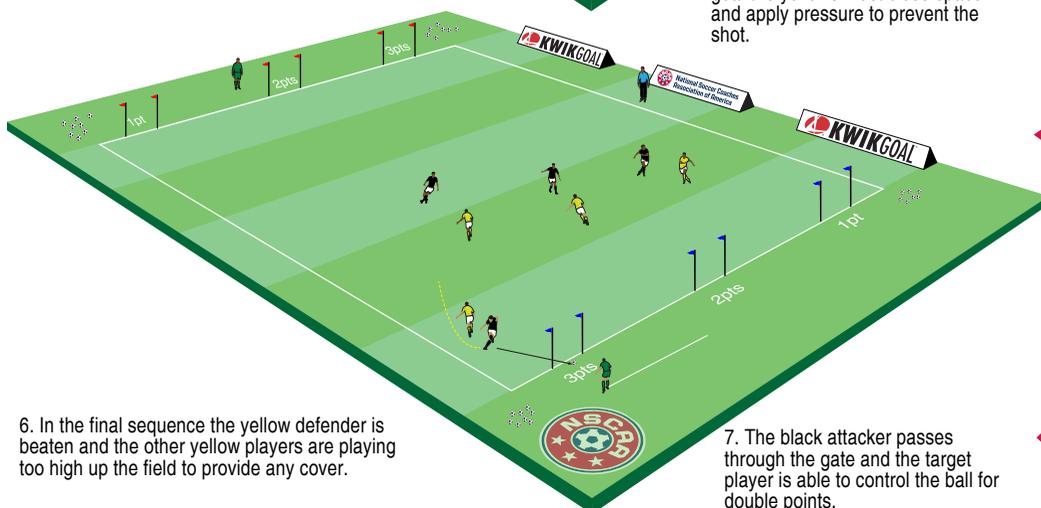
2. The gates have different point values and only the attackers know those values.



3. The yellow defenders set up well to defend with good cover and balance.

4. In the second diagram the black team are close to goal. The yellows have worked well to support their teammate.

5. As the black team get close to goal the yellows must close space and apply pressure to prevent the shot.



6. In the final sequence the yellow defender is beaten and the other yellow players are playing too high up the field to provide any cover.

7. The black attacker passes through the gate and the target player is able to control the ball for double points.

Stage/s of development covered by activity
 Stages 3, 4 and 5 - 9-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual, pairs and small group defending, transition and communication.
 Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending balance.

6v7 DEFENDING IN SMALL GROUPS - PHASE

Why use it?

This activity builds on the previous activity and the theme of defending in units - pressure, cover and balance.

Set up

The set is approximately two-thirds of a 7v7 field with an appropriate size goal at one end and 2 mini goals on the other end line. The field is separated into two zones. Play 6v7 - a goalkeeper and defender against 1 attacker in the defensive zone and 5 attackers against 5 defenders in the attacking zone. The coach observes from the sideline.

How to play

The primary objectives for the defending team is to prevent the attacking team from entering the defensive zone, to win possession and then counter attack to score in one of the mini goals. The attackers must attempt to get the ball to the striker in the defensive end and then 2 players can support to create a 3v2. To begin, the two defenders must allow the striker to receive the ball if the attacking team is able to get a pass through. Play 4 intervals each lasting 4 minutes. Intervals 1-2 allow 2 attackers to join the attack if a ball is played to the striker. Intervals 3-4 remove all the restrictions and let the defenders deny a pass played to the striker.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Communication between the defenders is key. The defensive shape should change based on the location of the ball. When the ball is central one defender applies pressure and 2 defenders cover to create a compact triangle. When the ball is wide one defender presses, the 2nd defender covers and 3rd defender offers balance - hips open, able to see both ball and far side defenders.

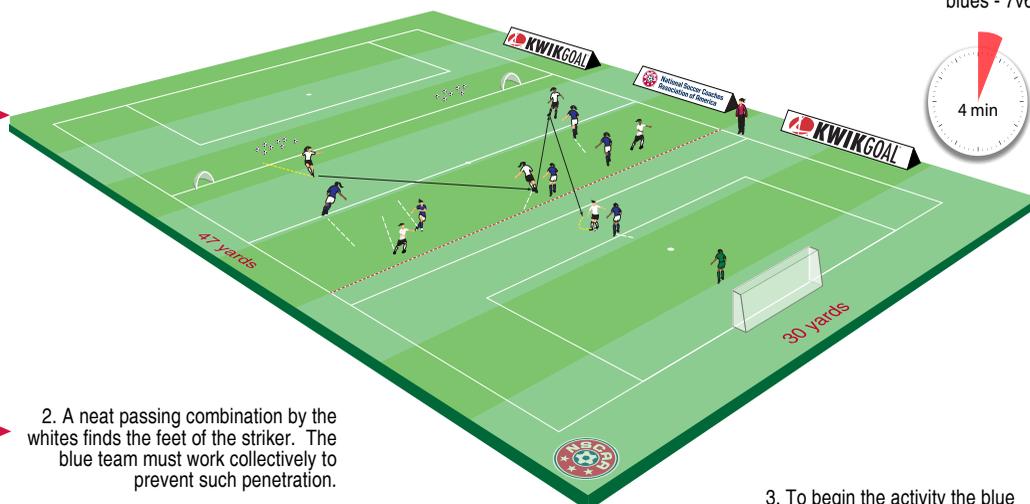
Coaching Tip: Patience must be taught to defenders in this numbers down activity. Defenders need to know that sometimes they don't have to win the ball immediately to be successful.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the size of the field. Allow the defenders to deny the pass into the striker.

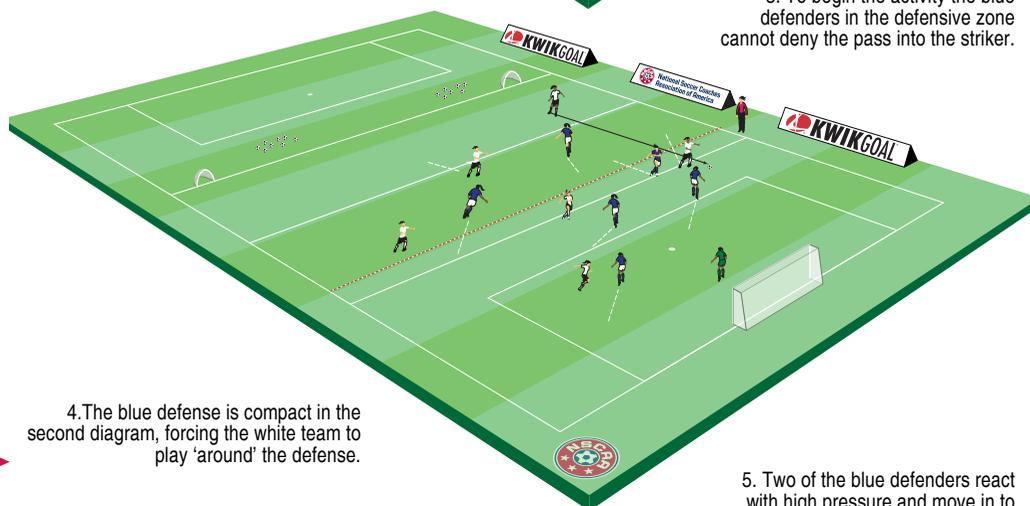
More Challenging: Reduce the number of defenders.

1. The white team starts with possession and play with numbers up against the blues - 7v6.



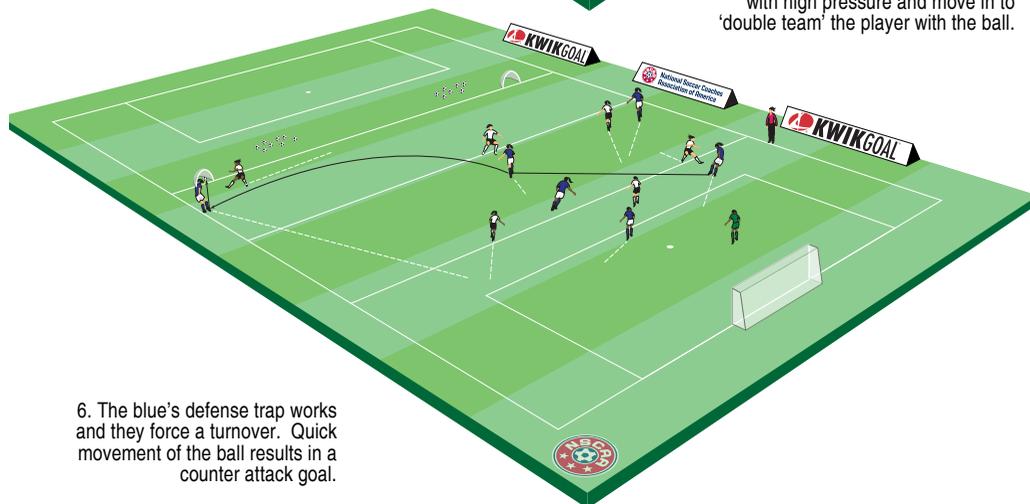
2. A neat passing combination by the whites finds the feet of the striker. The blue team must work collectively to prevent such penetration.

3. To begin the activity the blue defenders in the defensive zone cannot deny the pass into the striker.



4. The blue defense is compact in the second diagram, forcing the white team to play 'around' the defense.

5. Two of the blue defenders react with high pressure and move in to 'double team' the player with the ball.



6. The blue's defense trap works and they force a turnover. Quick movement of the ball results in a counter attack goal.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 3, 4 and 5 - 9-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Individual, pairs and small group defending, transition and communication.

Top 3 Competencies: Defending pressure, defending cover and defending balance.