


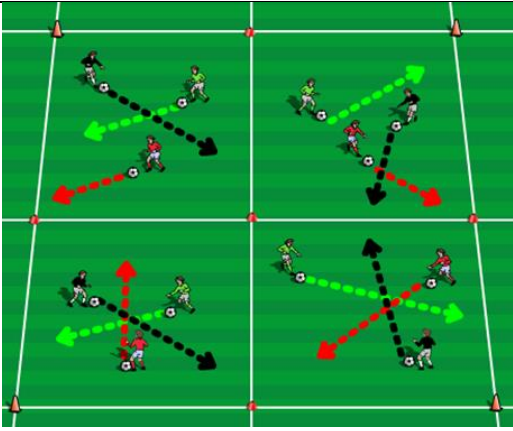
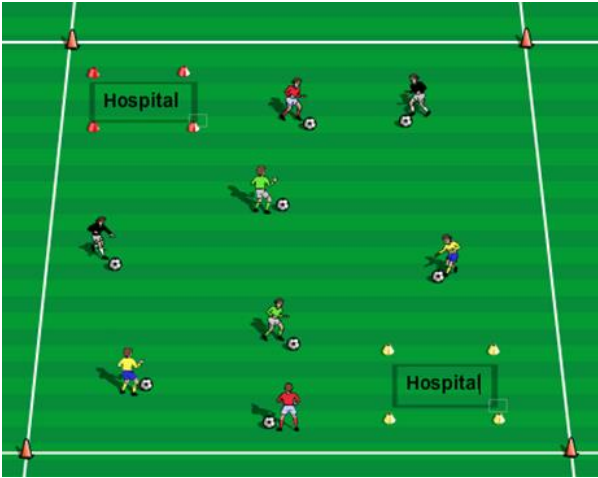


## U7 Academy Session 5

### Main Topic: Intro to Defending

In this session we introduce some of the basic concepts of individual defending to include providing pressure, containing an attacking player, making angled recovery runs, and immediately becoming a defender once you lose the ball.

Activity Name/Description	Diagram/Instructions	Coaching Points/Questions
<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Activity – Warm up game</b></p> <p>Set up two cone goals (gates) at each end of the grid. Players must dribble through the gate goal to score.</p> <p>Prior to when practice is scheduled to start &amp; as soon as 2 players arrive, start playing a game. The game will start as 1v1. When the next player arrives, the game is 2v1 then 2v2 up to 4v4.</p> <p>After all your players arrive or 5 minutes after the start time, you can move on to the other activities.</p>	<p>20 X 20 yard grid</p>  <p>Start 1 v 1 and add players as they arrive.</p>	<p>Limit the coaching, This should be only a warmup activity as you wait for your players to arrive and to get them focused on soccer. Coach should carry a couple soccer balls and if a ball goes out of bounds the coach can call out “new ball” and provide one to play. This will save time instead of waiting for your players to chase down a ball that went out of bounds.</p>

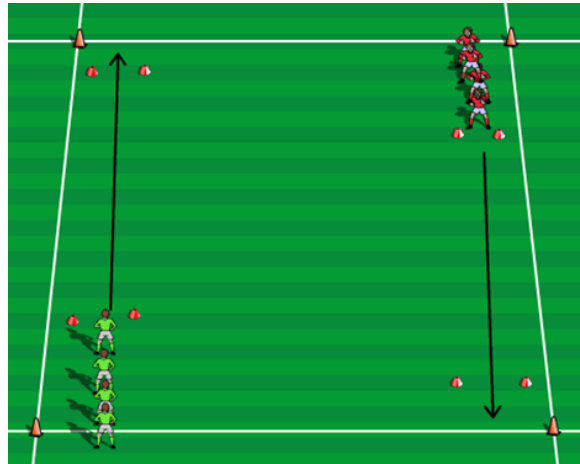
<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Activity – Paint the Field</b></p> <p>In this activity, the training grid will be divided into 4 sections with an equal number of players in each section. Explain that the ball is a paintbrush and players need to paint their section by dribbling their paintbrush around the grid. Have them paint using the 4 primary surfaces of the foot to use when dribbling. Outside (pinky toe), inside (big toe), laces and bottom (sole).</p>		<p>Have the players utilize the 4 different surfaces of the foot. Make sure to have them use both feet.</p>
<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Activity – Large Group Activity</b></p> <p>The site/field coordinator will gather all players around one of the team grids to demo one of the activities.</p>	<p>OPTIONAL ACTIVITY DETERMINED BY THE FIELD/SITE COORDINATOR</p>	
<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Activity – Hospital Tag</b></p> <p>Set up two small squares with four cones inside your training grid. These squares will be the “Hospital” for the players to go to once they have been tagged two times.</p> <p>Each player must keep their ball within playing distance (generally no further away than it would be if they were dribbling it like a basketball).</p> <p><b>Introduce this activity without a ball, then introduce dribbling once they understand it.</b></p>		<p>Players dribble their ball around the grid trying to tag the other players with their hand while at the same time trying not to be tagged.</p> <p>If a player is tagged they must place their hand (“Band-Aid”) over the tagged area and continue to dribble.</p> <p>Once they have been tagged two times they must go to the “hospital.” At the hospital they perform 5 toe taps (or another move assigned by the coach) to get well.</p>

### 5<sup>th</sup> Activity – Speed Dribbling

This activity is a review of speed dribbling and a precursor to Activity 6. In this activity, the coach will yell “go” and the first player in each line will dribble as fast as they can to the opposite gate.

Encourage the players to go as fast as they can and not slow down until after they are through their end gate.

**INTRODUCE THIS ACTIVITY WITHOUT A BALL BY HAVING THE PLAYERS SPRINT TO THE END GATE WHEN THE COACH SAYS “GO.”**



ONCE THEY HAVE CROSSED THE END GATE THEY GET IN LINE TO RUN/DRIBBLE BACK THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

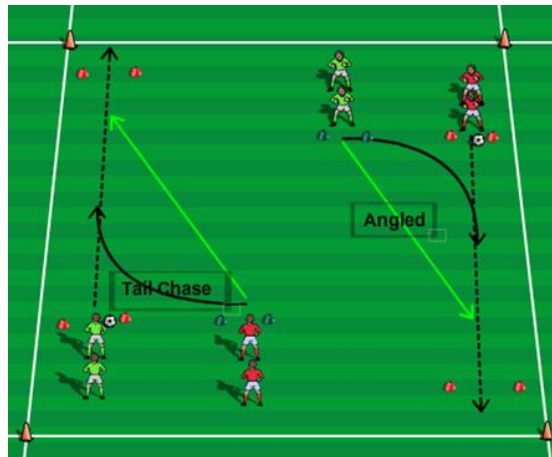
Once the ball is introduced, remind the players to make a big first touch to help them get to speed quickly and to try to dribble with their laces.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Activity – Angled Recoveries

**INTRODUCE THIS ACTIVITY WITHOUT A BALL**

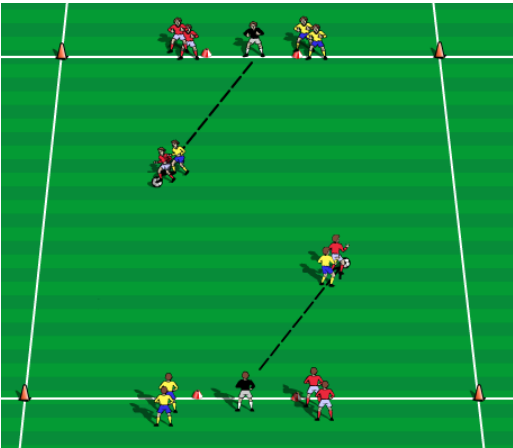
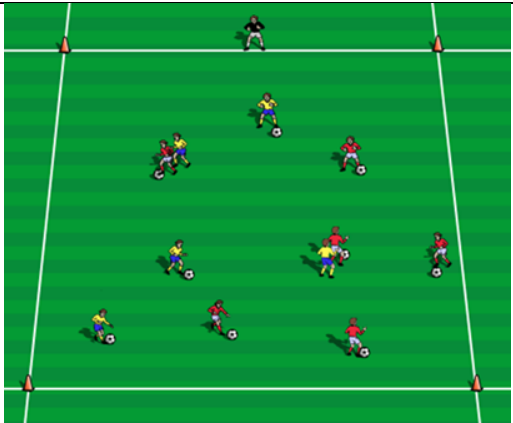
Same activity as before with a 2<sup>nd</sup> line start gate added approximately 10 feet to the side of the initial start gate.

Once the coach says go the attacking player goes as fast as they can to the end gate. The defending player attempts to tag the attacking player before the attacking player reaches the end gate. The players switch roles and join the lines going in the opposite direction.



The primary coaching point in this activity is to start working with the player on making an angled recovery run instead of getting in a tail chase with the attacking player.

The defending player wants to make as straight a run as possible to get ahead of the attacking player.

<p><b>7<sup>th</sup> Activity – 1 v 1</b></p> <p>In this activity, player from both teams are on either side of the goal/coach. This activity can be run simultaneously with another goal/coach on the opposite end of the grid. The coach will serve the ball out to either side of the goal.</p> <p>The player that gets to the ball first will be the attacking player and will attempt to pass the ball back to the coach.</p> <p>The defending player will close down the attacking player to provide pressure and attempt to win the ball back. If they win the ball they become the attacking player. The other player must immediately transition to defending.</p>		<p><b><i>SAFETY NOTE: For young players avoid 50/50 balls to prevent the players from colliding into each other. Make sure you are passing the ball directly to one side or the other.</i></b></p> <p>Stress to the defender the importance of moving quickly after the ball has been played, but slow down as he or she gets closer to the attacking player. Young players especially have the tendency to overrun the attacking player.</p> <p>The object is for the defender to position themselves between the attacker and goal (coach) and win the ball back when they have the opportunity.</p>
<p><b>8<sup>th</sup> Activity – Bandit</b></p> <p>To start all but 2 players dribble their ball around the grid.</p> <p>The 2 players without soccer balls are the bandits.</p> <p>When the coach say, “Watch Out for Bandits”, the bandits try to steal the other player’s soccer ball.</p> <p>Once they steal a soccer ball, they try to keep it and are no longer a bandit.</p>		<p>If a player loses their soccer ball, they become the bandit and attempt to steal any soccer ball.</p> <p>If a soccer ball is kicked out of the grid, it cannot be brought back in until the next round.</p> <p>At the end of each round (~30-40 seconds) each player with a ball gets 1 point. Switch the starting bandits for the next round.</p>
<p><b>Cool Down - Juggling</b></p> <p>The purpose of this activity is to develop Hand-Eye and Foot-Eye Coordination.</p> <p>Players drop the ball and juggle once and then catch it. If a player cannot use their foot then have them juggle the ball once using their thigh.</p>		<p>Players pick up their ball and gently drop it to juggle it once using their foot or thigh. We don’t want them to toss the ball in the air but to just drop it gently, juggle once and then catch the ball. Repeat alternating feet/thigh.</p>