

DEFENSIVE TRANSITION PRINCIPLES

AGE PHASE: U12-U16

LEVEL

- U12 - U16

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Develop the understanding and desire to defend effectively.
- React quickly on transition to win the ball back as early as possible.

PART 1: DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLE PRACTICE

- Three-team game with different roles for each team: bouncers, in possession and out of possession.
- This practice has an emphasis on the importance of transitions to be successful, with the main focus being the players' reaction on losing the ball.

PART 2: TRANSITION GAME

- 6v6 + goalkeepers, with one team in possession, looking to retain the ball and react quickly if possession is lost to prevent the defending team from scoring quickly on transition.

PART 3: CONDITIONED SMALL-SIDED GAME

- Small-sided game with emphasis on the players that are likely to be responsible in reacting on transition to win the ball back quickly in the opposition half.
- The game also allows the players to consider the next stage of the defensive transition process: if unable to win the ball back quickly, then opposition must at least be delayed while defenders make recovery runs.

KEY

.....→
Ball movement

---→
Player movement
without the ball

→
Player movement
with the ball



Players



Cones



Flat marker



Cones with
flat marker



Goal



Mini-goal



Mannequin



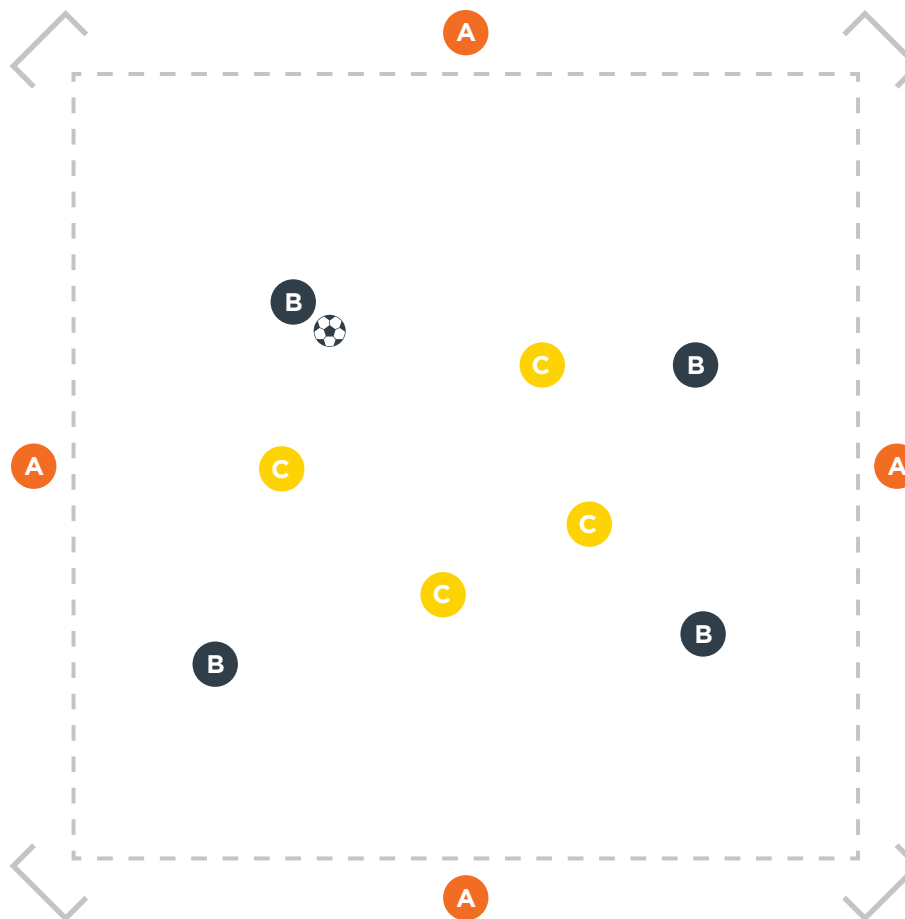
Pole



Football

THREE TEAMS

- **Team A:** Bounce players on outside. Two touches max, can only play into the grid, and not around the outside.
- **Team B:** Team in possession. Aim to make four successive passes for one point. If possession is lost, Team B must react quickly to prevent opposition from scoring in the goals.
- **Team C:** Team out of possession. Aim to win the ball from Team B. After stealing the ball, aim to score in any of the four goals for two points.
- Teams rotate roles after set amount of time.



COACHING DETAIL: IN-POSSESSION

- Effective movement and body shape to play forward on quarter- or half-turns.
- Consideration must be given to back foot/safe side passes to build forward effectively and quickly.

COACHING DETAIL: OUT OF POSSESSION

- Press in numbers and with intensity. When pressing get the opponent's head down.
- Remaining players should make the area around the ball compact, ready to engage the next player should a pass be made. Consider how players should be positioned ball side of the player.

COACHING DETAIL: DEFENSIVE TRANSITIONS

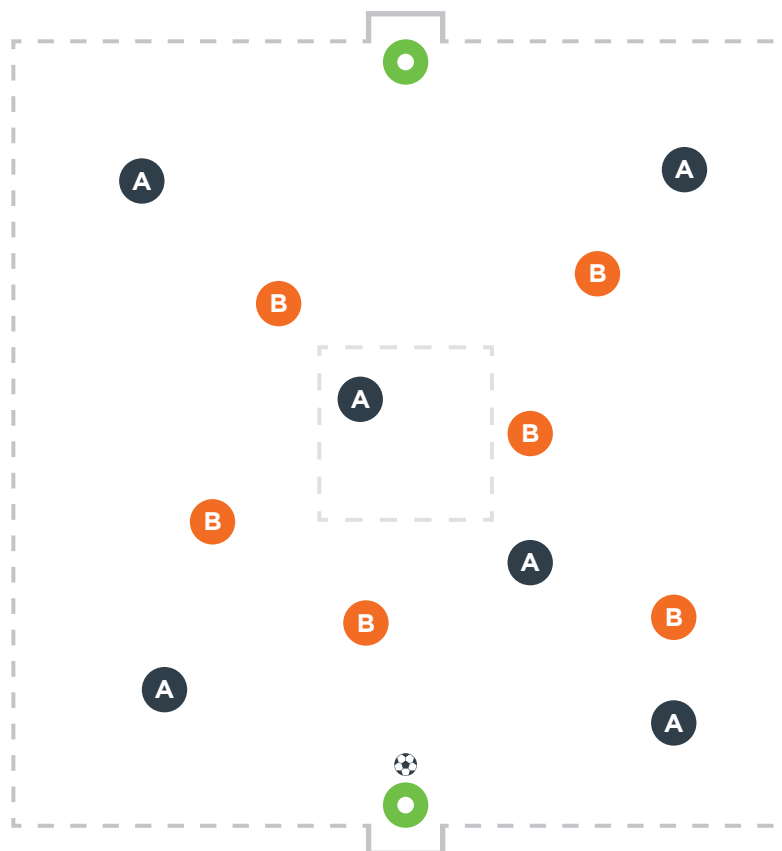
- Players should react immediately to put pressure on the ball quickly with high intensity.
- Other players to swarm the space around the ball to make the area compact and difficult for the opponents to play out.
- Players should be ready to engage with the next pass through being ball side of the opponent and anticipating their next move.
- Effectively communicate, providing information from behind on where to 'show' play.

FUNCTION

- Two teams of six + goalkeepers.
- One team, in this example **Team A**, are in possession and look to retain the ball. Completing six successive passes will earn them one point. If they are able to play through the middle zone as one of their six passes, then they earn two points.
- The team out of possession (**Team B**) aim to win the ball. They have a decision to make as to when to press intensely and hunt, and when to sit off and block and intercept. When Team B wins possession, their aim is to score in either goal within six seconds, earning two points if they do so.
- On losing possession, Team A aim to win the ball back as quickly as possible to prevent Team B from scoring inside six seconds. If they win it back, they should look to secure the ball with a simple pass and retain possession.

DEVELOPING THE PRACTICE

- Teams should swap roles regularly.
- If the defending team are successful in scoring a goal on transition, they immediately become the team in possession.
- When the team in possession misplace a pass and it goes out of play, they lose possession and are now the defending team.



COACHING DETAIL: MANAGING THE OPPOSITION - OUT OF POSSESSION

- Hunt for the ball when the opportunity to steal it is there, and do so in numbers.
- Consider where players should position themselves even when far away from the ball to make the area compact and therefore difficult for the opposition to play out.
- Aim to block forward passing lanes.
- Set traps to encourage the press and force mistakes.

COACHING DETAIL: IN-POSSESSION

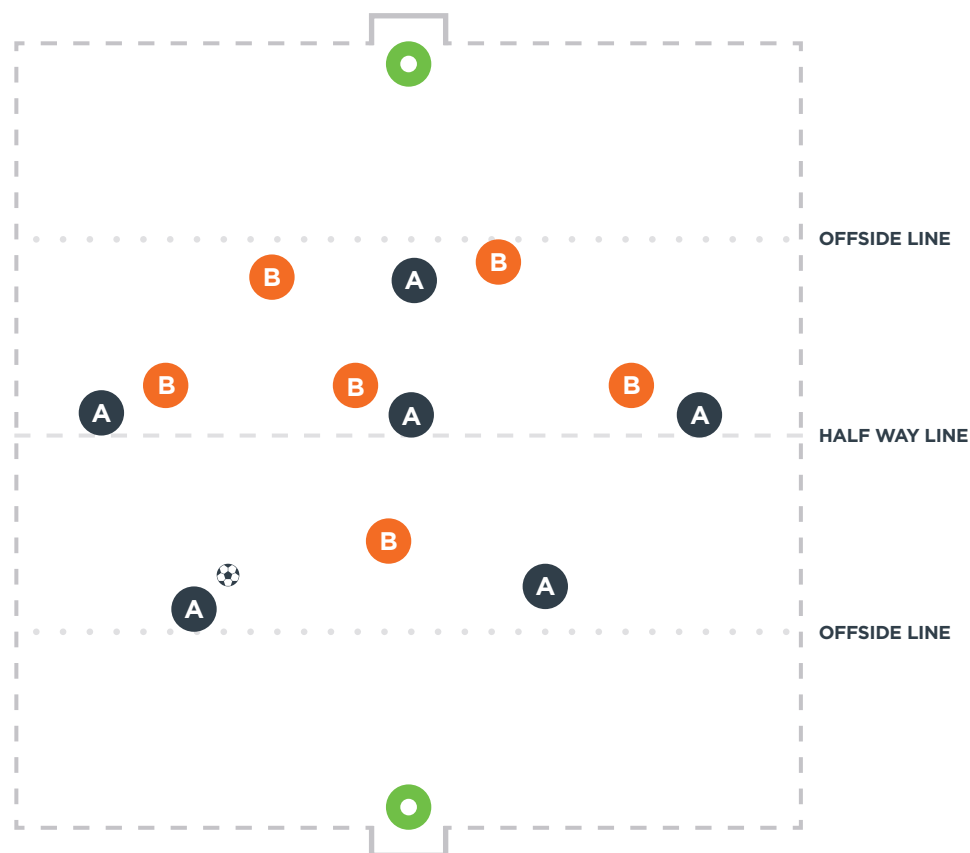
- Look/play/run forward at all times.
- Effective movement and effective body shape to play forward wherever possible.
- Consideration must be given to where passes are aimed: back foot/safe side passes can help build play forwards effectively and quickly.

COACHING DETAIL: DEFENSIVE TRANSITIONS

- Players should react immediately to put pressure on the ball quickly with high intensity.
- Other players to swarm the space around the ball to make the area compact and difficult for the opponents to play out.
- Anticipate the next pass through being ball side of the opponent.
- Effectively communicate, providing information from behind on where to 'show' play.

FUNCTION

- 6v6 + 2 goalkeepers, with teams set up in a 2-3-1 replicating the midfield and attack in a 4-2-3-1 formation, as shown in the diagram.
- Focus is on the midfield and attacking players' ability to build and attack, with opportunities to react quickly on transition and win the ball in the opposition's half.
- If a team is successful in scoring through building and breaking the block, three points are awarded and they retain possession starting with the GK. If they lose possession while building but win the ball back quickly in the opposition half and score within six seconds they earn two points.
- The defending team should defend in a mid-low block and aim to counter quickly if they win the ball. If they score within six seconds they earn themselves one point and then start with possession from their goalkeeper.
- If Team B launch a counter-attack, Team A's two deep-lying midfielders must try to delay the attack so their team's attackers can retreat.
- Goalkeepers will begin all restarts for the team in possession.



COACHING DETAIL: MANAGING THE OPPOSITION - OUT OF POSSESSION

- Defend in a mid-low block, with only the striker pressing in the opposition half.
- If an opponent drops into the half to receive, be mindful of when to go with and press as doing so may leave too much space.

COACHING DETAIL: MANAGING THE OPPOSITION - IN POSSESSION

- Attack quickly and in numbers.
- The first action should be a forward pass or a dribble.
- Attack in straight lines, as direct as possible.

COACHING DETAIL: IN-POSSESSION

- Look/play/run forward at all times.
- Effective movement and effective body shape to play forward wherever possible.
- Consideration must be given to where passes are aimed: back foot/safe side passes can help build play forwards effectively and quickly.

COACHING DETAIL: DEFENSIVE TRANSITIONS

- Players should react immediately to put pressure on the ball quickly with high intensity.
- Other players to swarm the space around the ball to make the area compact and difficult for the opponents to play out.
- Players should be ready to engage with the next pass through being ball side of the opponent and anticipating their next move.
- Effectively communicate, providing information from behind on where to 'show' play.
- If opponents break, defender should aim to delay the counter-attack, allowing attacking players to recover, while they should also aim to force play out wide and away from goal.