



# 20

## SOCCER DEFENSE DRILLS

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## CONTENTS

1-on-1 Defend the Gate .....	4
1v1 Defending Forward Dribble Game .....	7
1v1 Defending to Sideline Gates .....	10
1v1 Shot Block Reaction .....	14
1v2 to 2v2 .....	17
2v2 Supporting Defender .....	20
3v2 Defending .....	24
3v3 Disrupt Buildup .....	28
4-on-2 Over-Training .....	31
5v4 Prevent Forward Play .....	34
6v5 High Pressure After Long Pass .....	37
8v6 Defending + Outlet Players .....	40
Channeling the Attacker for Points .....	43

Continuous Box Defending.....	47
Cutting Forward Passing Lanes .....	52
Defensive Recovery Runs .....	55
High Speed Defending .....	58
Horizontal Defending to Goal .....	61
No Turn 1v1.....	64
Slow Down the Attack 2v1.....	67

## 1-on-1 Defend the Gate

### How the Drill Works:

One defender passes the ball across the grid to an attacker on the other side of the box and immediately closes them down. The defender attempts to prevent the attacker from dribbling through the gate in the center of the box.

### Purpose:

Competitive 1-on-1 activity that develops defensive footwork, timing, and positioning. Offensive dribbling, 1-on-1 moves, and ball control is also improved.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- Use four cones to set up 20x25-yard field.
- Use poles, or cones, to mark a six-yard wide gate in the middle of the field.
- Divide the players into two groups and have each group form a line on each end line of the field. If there are more than five players per group, set up another field.
- Assign one group as the offensive team, and the group on the opposite end line as the defensive team.
- Every player in the defensive line should have a ball at their feet.
- Play four, four-minute games with a two-minute break between games.

**Instructions:**

1. The first defender in line starts the activity by passing the ball through the gate, and across the field to the first attacker in the opposite line.



2. As the ball is traveling, the defender runs towards the attacker, quickly closing down the space.
3. The attacker receives the ball and attempts to dribble through the gate in the middle of the grid.
4. The defender attempts to prevent the attacker from dribbling through the gate while also trying to win the ball or force the ball out-of-bounds.
5. The turn is over when the attacker dribbles through the gate, the defender wins the ball, or the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason. The turn is also over if after 30 seconds the attacker is unable to dribble through the gate.
6. After each turn, players switch lines, and the next turn immediately begins.
7. The activity continues for the remainder of the round. Give tips and tricks to the players in between rounds while they rest before starting the next round. Play at least 2 rounds of 6-8 minutes.

### **Variations:**

**Vary the grid dimensions** – Depending on the players' age and skill level, increase the size of the grid to give the attackers more space making it more difficult for the defenders.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Educate the players on proper defensive positioning and footwork. Defenders should quickly close down the attackers, but as defenders get closer they should bend their knees and take smaller steps to react quickly to the attacker's movements. Defenders should turn at a 45-degree angle and attempt to push the attacker away from the gate, towards the sidelines.
- Teach the defenders to keep moving backwards as the attacker moves forward, keeping a good distance between them until an opportunity to win the ball presents itself.
- Explain that defenders need to get close enough to the attackers to force them to put their heads down.
- Remind the players to time their tackles properly so they are sure to win them. Players should not reach for the ball!
- Challenge the players to be creative on offense and attack the defender with confidence!
- Encourage players to focus on their first touch and to use quick moves and fakes to get past the defenders.

# 1v1 Defending Forward Dribble Game

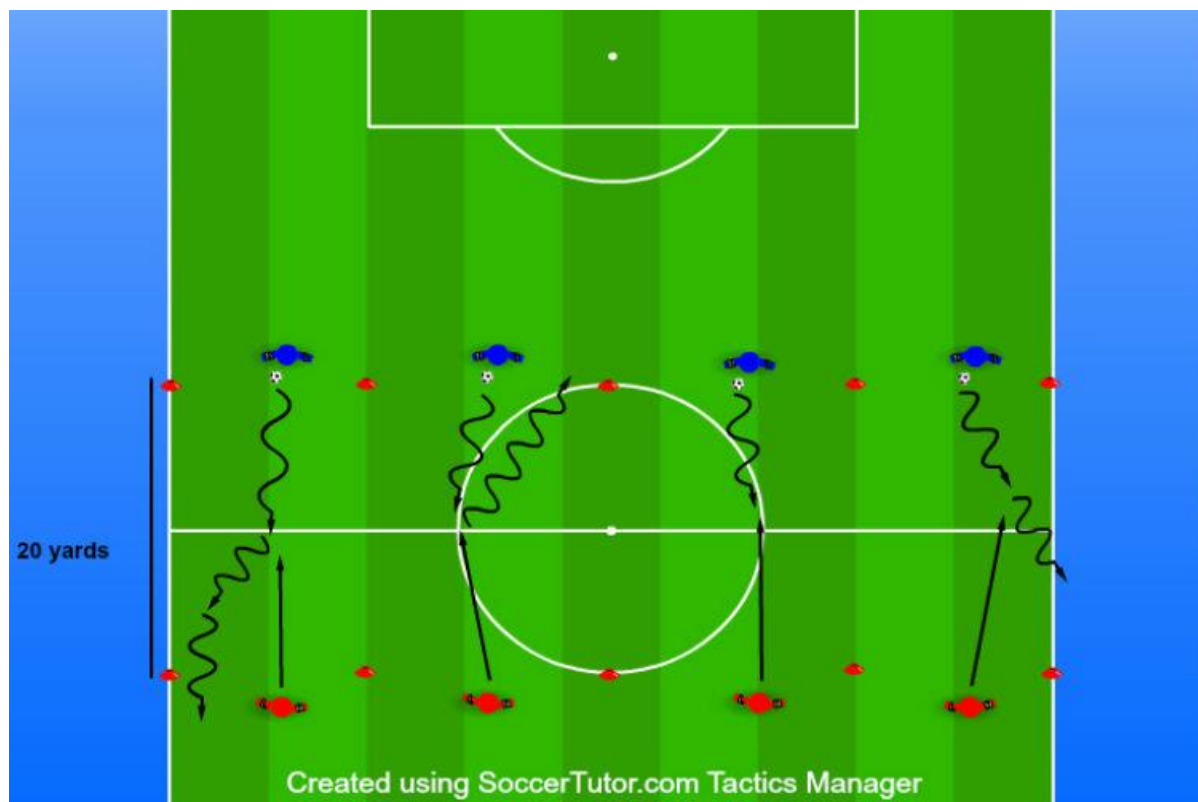
## How the Drill Works:

Players compete 1v1 to dribble across each other's end line. Defenders work on preventing and breaking up forward play.

## Purpose:

Develop players' defensive abilities to prevent forward dribbling and win the ball from their opponent.

## Diagram:



**Setup:**

- **Set up two parallel cone lines across the field with at least 20-yards of space between the two lines.**
- **Have the players pair up with one ball between the two of them.**
- **All of the partners with the ball start on one end line while their partner without the ball starts directly across from them on the opposite end line.**
- **Play four-minute games before resting and switching roles. Play for at least 15 minutes.**

**Instructions:**

1. On the coach's command, the game starts. The attackers attempt to dribble past their partner and across the opposite cone line.
2. The defenders attempt to prevent the attackers from dribbling forward, win the ball and dribble past their opponent's line.
3. Once a player dribbles past their opponent's line, a point is awarded to that player and then the players reset back to their starting positions.
4. Once all the players have reset to their starting positions, the coach will start the next repetition with the starting command.
5. Play four-minute games before switching partners and/or roles. Play for at least 15 minutes.

**Variations:**

**Competition** – Players count their individual points. Player with the most points at the end of each four-minute is declared the winner!

**Coaching Points:**

- Teach the defenders to close down the attacker's space and arrive on balance! Defenders should be patient and push the attackers to one side to keep play predictable.
- Encourage the attackers to take their first touch forward and drive at the defenders to make them uncomfortable.



- Challenge the players to compete against each other and to score the most points!

## 1v1 Defending to Sideline Gates

### How the Drill Works:

Players compete in a 1-on-1 game to gates to test their attacking and defending skills.

### Purpose:

Evaluate players' ability to defend attackers in open space. Defenders are asked to close down space quickly and keep the attackers from getting past them. Players are able to showcase their attacking and defending skills.

### Diagram:





### Setup:

- See diagram below to follow along.
- Mark a square 25x25 yards with cones. On opposite corners, make a gate with two cones. The other two corners will have just a single cone.
- Pick a corner with a gate, on each side of the gate, along the sideline, position a different colored gate, 12 yards away. These will be the scoring gates and should be four yards wide.
- Divide the players into two groups. Have one group start as the defenders behind the gate that is positioned closest to the scoring gates. The second group will start as the attackers and will start behind the corner gate opposite of the defenders.
- All of the balls start with the defenders.
- The first player in each line starts between their respective gate. The defender starts with the ball at their feet. The remaining players behind them should stand to the side of the gate.
- If there are more than 12 players in the exercise, make another setup so that players can receive more repetitions.

- Play four, five-minute games. Players should play two rounds as the attacking group and two rounds as the defending group.

**Instructions:**

1. The activity begins with the defender passing the soccer ball to the attacker on the opposite corner of the square. The pass should be on the ground and to the attacker's feet.
2. The attacker receives the pass as the defender runs forward to close down the attacker's space.
3. The attacker attempts to beat the defender and dribble through one of the three possible gates. The two gates to either side of the attacker are worth one point while the gate the defender started from is worth three points.
4. The defender attempts to prevent the attacker from scoring in any of the three gates. The defender can score their own points by winning the ball from the attacker and dribbling through the attacker's starting gate for three points.
5. If the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, the turn is over and both players return to the back of their starting lines.
6. The next turn can start as soon as the field is cleared.
7. Players keep track of their own points. The player with the most points after each round is announced the winner of the round!
8. After each round, players should switch lines/roles to work on both sides of the ball.
9. Make sure the players resting do not stand in the way of any gate as players will be attempting to dribble through them at high speeds and could cause collisions.
10. Play four, five-minute rounds with each player playing an equal number of rounds as the defender and attacker.

**Variations:**

**Size** – Change the dimensions of the activity to fit the quality and athleticism of the players. If the dimensions are too easy for the attackers or defenders, adjust accordingly.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Teach the defenders to close down the attacker's space as quickly as they can and then arrive on balance.
- Remind the attackers to be creative and decisive with their changes of direction!
- Educate the defenders to bend their knees and time their tackles so they are not caught reaching for the ball.
- Challenge the defenders to win the ball every time and score points on the attackers!
- Encourage the attackers to use fakes, change of speed, and moves to get past the defenders and score!

## 1v1 Shot Block Reaction

### How the Drill Works:

One defender attempts to block a shot from an attacker and score in either gate.

### Purpose:

Develop players' abilities to prevent goals by closing down space quickly and blocking shots.

### Diagram:





**Setup:**

- Set up two field 36x28-yard fields.
- Position one full-size goal on an end line of each field. Assign one goalkeeper to each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rotate every four to six repetitions.
- Set up two, six-yard wide gates on the end line opposite of each goal. The gates should be angled slightly inwards. Use poles, or cones, to mark the gates. See diagram for more information.
- Divide the players into two teams and assign jerseys to each team. Half of each team should be on each field.
- Decide which team will start as the attackers and which will start as the defenders on each field.
- The team that starts as the attackers should line up with one player on each of the two top corners of the penalty box. The remaining attackers start with the soccer balls between the two gates.
- The team that is defending starts with one player on the edge of the penalty box, equidistant from the two wide attackers. The remaining defenders start behind the goal.
- Play six-minute games before resting and rotating defenders. Play for at least 20 minutes.

**Instructions:**

1. The attacker starting with ball, between the two gates, passes to either of the wide attackers on the corners of the penalty box and then follows their pass.
2. The defender reacts to the pass and attempts to block the attacker receiving the ball scoring.
3. The attacker receiving the ball can take as many touches as they would like before attempting to shoot. The attacker can not pass once they receive the pass.
4. The defender scores by winning the ball and dribbling, or passing, through either of the two gates.
5. The turn is over when either player scores, or the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason.
6. A new defender steps on to the field after each repetition. Once the new defender is set the next repetition can start. Players return to their team line after their turn is complete.
7. Play six-minute games before switching players and roles. Play for at least 20 minutes.

### **Variations:**

**Competition** – Have the teams count their collective team points. See if the attackers or defenders win each game!

**Width** – Decrease the width to make it easier on the defenders if they are not getting to the attackers before they shot.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Teach the defenders to react quickly and close down the attacker as fast as they can. Defenders need to arrive on balance by taking smaller steps as they get closer to the attacker.
- Remind the passers to zip the ball into the attackers if they want their attackers to have any chance to score.
- Challenge the players to compete against each other and not to give up any goals!
- Remind the goalkeepers to talk to their defenders and constantly give them directions.

## 1v2 to 2v2

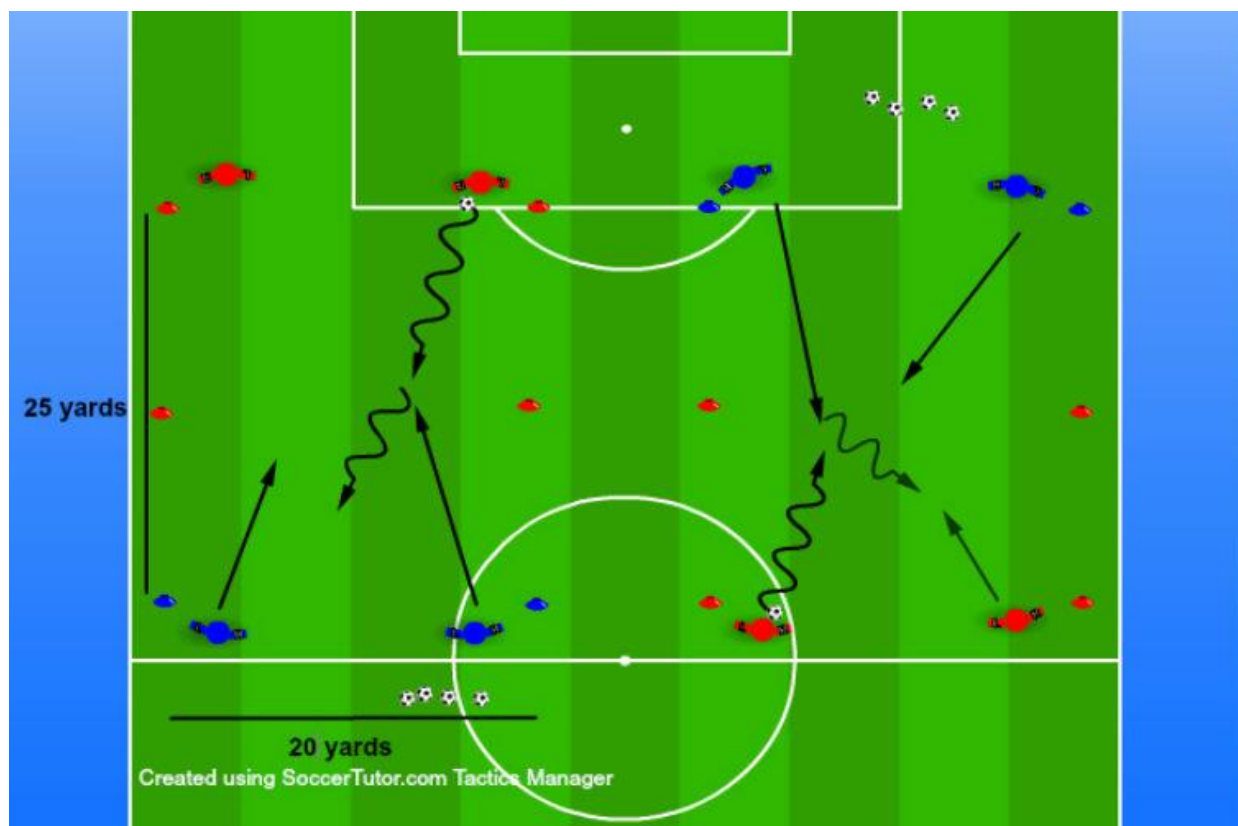
### How the Drill Works:

One attacker attempts to dribble past two defenders and across their end line. If the defenders win the ball, the second attacker joins the game to make it a 2v2 game until one team scores.

### Purpose:

Develop players' abilities to defend together in pairs.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- Set up two field 20x25-yard fields.
- Divide the players evenly amongst the two fields. Players form groups behind the end lines. Assign matching jerseys to each group.
- Decide which team on each field will be the assigned “defensive” team. This team never starts with the ball and always sends two defenders.
- The “attacking” team starts with all the soccer balls.
- Play four, five-minute rounds. Make coaching points and switch roles between each round.

**Instructions:**

1. One player from the attacking team starts the game by dribbling into the field.
2. The attacker attempts to beat the 2 defenders by dribbling around them and past their end line for a point.
3. If the defenders win the ball, the second attacker runs onto the field to make it a 2v2 game.
4. The turn is over when the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, or either team scores.
5. Players return to their group/team after each turn.
6. The next turn starts with one attacker dribbling against two defenders.
7. Play four, five-minute games with a two-minute break between games. Make coaching points and player rotations before resetting the soccer balls and repeating the process.

**Variations:**

**Competition** – Have the teams keep track of their points! Team with the most points at the end of each five-minute game is the winner!

**Width** – Decrease the width to make it more difficult on the attackers. Increase the width to make it more difficult on the defenders.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Teach the defenders to work together to prevent goals! One defender closes down the space quickly while the second defender covers the first defender. The first defender needs to get the attacker's head down.
- Encourage the attackers to use changes of direction and speed to get past the defenders.
- Challenge the players to react immediately when they lose the ball to prevent easy goals!

## 2v2 Supporting Defender

### How the Drill Works:

Two defenders pass the ball out to two attackers and attempt to prevent them from scoring on goal. One defender runs directly to the attacker receiving the pass while the second defender supports and is ready to pressure the second attacker if the ball is passed.

### Purpose:

Develop individual defending skills as well as defensive supporting positioning. Defenders improve their footwork, timing, and defensive angles. Attackers increase their 1-on-1 dribbling, decision-making, and finishing.

### Diagram:





**Setup:**

- One full-sized goal is needed.
- One goalkeeper is positioned in goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them stand to the side of the goal and rotate in every 2-3 repetitions.
- Place two cones 10-15 yards outside of the penalty area. The two cones should line up with the two goalposts. These will be the offensive cones.
- Place two cones 2-3 yards off each goalpost on the end line. These will be the defensive cones.
- Have the players divide evenly between the four cones and form lines behind each cone.
- All the soccer balls should be divided between the two defensive lines on the end line.
- The first player in each defensive line will work together. One of these defenders starts with a ball at their feet.
- The first player in each offensive line will work together.

- Decide on the number of rounds and time for each round. At least two rounds of 6-8 minutes is suggested.

### **Instructions:**

1. To start the activity, the defender with the soccer ball passes to one of the two attackers.
2. The two defenders sprint towards the attackers with the defender closest to the attacker receiving the pass applying more pressure than the other defender.
3. The two attackers attempt to dribble and pass around the defenders to create a shot on goal.
4. The defender who is not applying direct pressure to the player on the ball is considered the supporting defender and moves into a position off the main defender's shoulder. The supporting defender should be in between helping the main defender if they get beat and the second attacker in case a pass is made to them. The supporting defender becomes the main defender and applies pressure if the second attacker receives the ball. The main defender immediately switches and becomes the supporting defender when this happens.
5. The turn is over when the defenders win the ball, block the shot, or the attackers score.
6. The next four players begin their turn once the players in front of them have finished and cleared the field. Players return to the back of their original lines after their turn.
7. Continue this process for the remainder of the round. At the end of the round, gather any lost soccer balls, and switch lines. Defenders become attackers and attackers become defenders.

### **Variations:**

**2-on-3** – Add another attacker to increase the difficulty for the defenders.

**2-on-1** – Two attackers against one defender. Increases the difficulty for the defender and places them in a different situation.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Instruct the defenders to close down the attackers as quickly as possible, but to be sure to arrive on balance so the attackers do not just push the ball past them. Defenders must shorten their steps when getting closer to the attackers and constantly move their feet.

- The defender closest to the player on the ball applies more pressure than the defender further away. The defender further away supports the defender applying pressure.
- Give hints as the activity progresses. Teach the defenders to channel attackers away from the goal, or use their weaker foot.
- Remind players to defend with their body sideways on a 45-degree angle. Players should try to get close enough to the attacker to make them put their head down.
- Challenge the attackers to attack with speed and decisiveness. Attackers should dribble right the defenders and use fakes and quick cuts to get a scoring opportunity. Attackers can also use sharp passing and combination play to create chances.

## 3v2 Defending

### How the Drill Works:

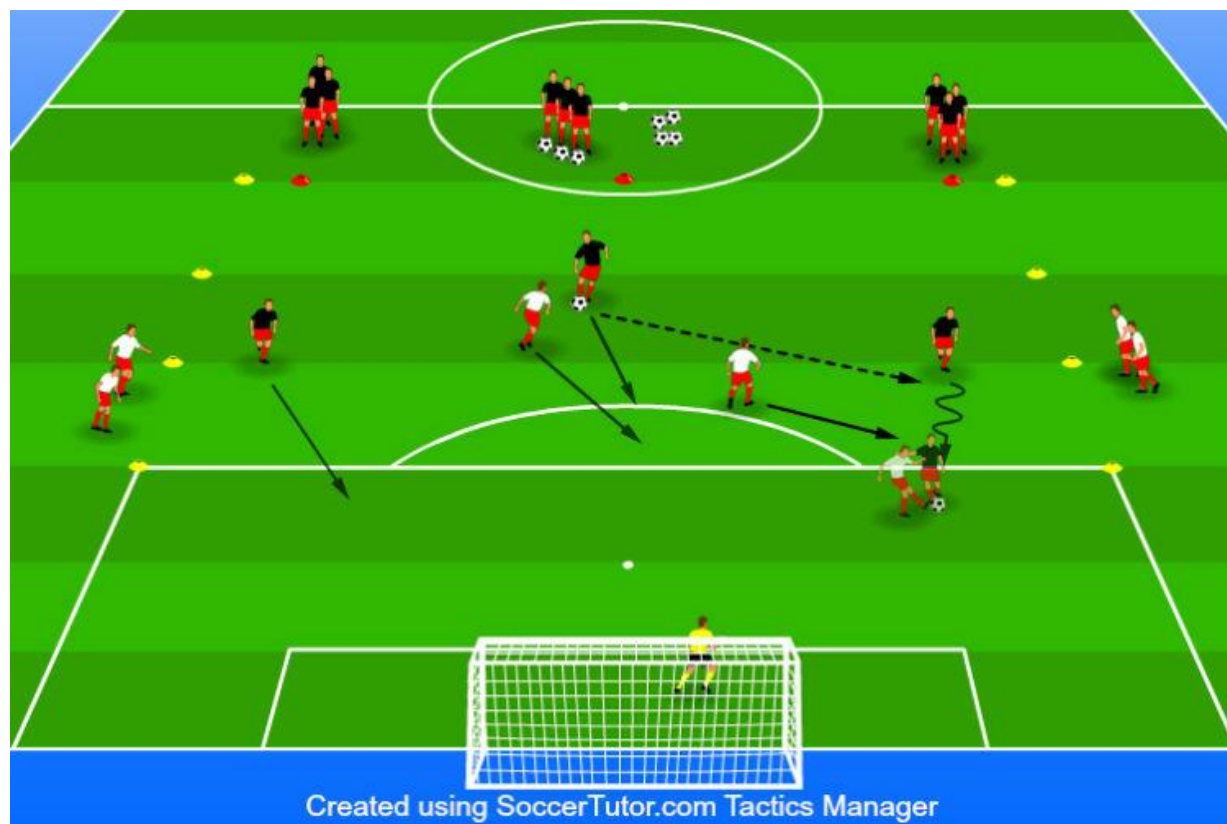
Two defenders attempt to prevent three attackers from scoring on goal.

### Purpose:

Develops defenders' abilities to work together and limit quality chances on goal when there are more attackers than defenders. This activity replicates a counter-attacking situation, or anytime there are more attackers than defenders. Defenders improve their positioning, timing, and tackling skills. Attackers increase their decision-making and finishing at high speeds.

### Diagram:





### Setup:

- One full-sized goal is needed.
- Position one goalkeeper in goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them stand to the side of the goal and rotate in every three repetitions.
- Place three cones 20 yards away from the top of the penalty box. There should be 15 yards of space between each cone and the cones should be parallel to the half-line. See diagram for more information.
- Using cones, extend the outside penalty box lines all the way to the three cones. These will be the boundary lines for the activity.
- Have the players divide evenly, and form lines behind the three cones near the half-line. These will be the attackers.
- Pick six players to start as defenders and assign them to a jersey color. Have two defenders start five yards in front of the penalty box while the other four defenders rest outside of the boundary lines. Two new defenders rotate in after each turn.
- All the soccer balls start with the center-cone attackers.

- The first player in each attacking line works together with the attacker on the center-cone starting with the ball.
- Decide on the number of rounds and the time for each round. Four, six-minute rounds are suggested.

### **Instructions:**

1. To start, the attacker in the middle, starts dribbling towards goal while the other two attackers move forward on each side. The three attackers are free to dribble, pass, and move in any way to beat the defenders and score.
2. Once the attackers start moving, the goalkeeper and defenders work together to prevent the attackers from scoring, or creating a quality chance on goal. Defenders are free to win the ball at any point.
3. The turn is over when the attackers score, the defenders win the ball, or the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason.
4. As soon as the turn is over, the two defenders and three attackers quickly run off the field while two new defenders run on. Once the two new defenders are set, the next three attackers start their attempt to score.
5. The activity continues until the round is over. After each round, collect any lost soccer balls, and select six new defenders before beginning the next round.
6. Complete four, six-minute rounds.

### **Variations:**

**Width and Length** – Depending on the players' age and skill level, increase, or decrease, the boundaries to allow for more, or less, space to attack and defend.

**4-on-3** – Change the situation by adding one more attacker and defender. Adjust the width of the boundaries to allow for the new players.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Educate the defenders to work together and eliminate the third player by using good body positioning to cut off passing angles. Forcing the player on the ball towards the other defending and cutting off passing angles to the third player allows the defenders to player 2-on-2.
- Teach the defenders to close down space when a pass is made.



- Remind the defenders to maintain balance and proper footwork to prevent the attackers from pushing the ball past them easily. Defenders should not reach for the ball, but rather time their tackles to be sure they will win the ball.
- Demand that the goalkeepers talk to their defenders and give them defensive instructions.
- Challenge the attackers to make it as difficult on the defenders as possible. Attackers should run at the defenders at pace and be decisive with their decisions and moves.

## 3v3 Disrupt Buildup

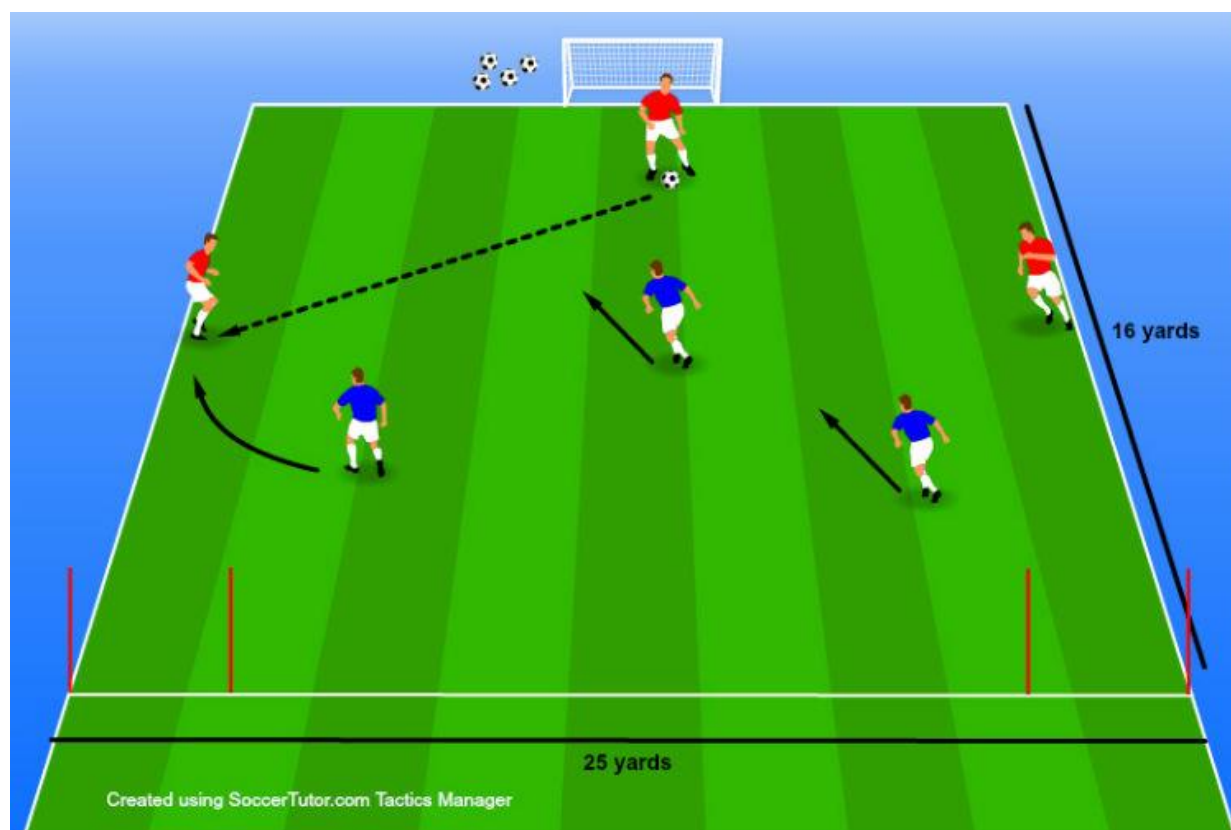
### How the Drill Works:

Two teams of three players compete against each other with one team attempting to prevent the other team from building out of the back and scoring in either of the two gates.

### Purpose:

Develop players' abilities to press together in a small group and win the ball in the opponent's half to create scoring chances.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- Set up one 16x25 yard field for every six players if space allows.
- One mini-goal should be placed on an end line. Use cones or poles if a mini-goal is not available.
- Set up two, four-yard wide gates on the opposite end line of the mini-goal. The gates should be placed just inside each sideline. See diagram.
- Divide the players into teams of three. Assign matching jerseys to each group of three.
- Position two teams on each field. One team defends the mini-goal while the other team defends the gates.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the end line of the mini-goals. The team defending the mini-goal starts with the ball.
- Play four, six-minute games. Play more games as needed. Rotate players, teams and roles between games.

**Instructions:**

1. The team defending the mini-goal starts with the ball. They attempt to pass and dribble forward and score in either of the two gates for a point.
2. The team defending the gates attempts to win the ball and score in the mini-goal.
3. Play kick-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. If the ball goes out-of-bounds on either end line for any reason, the team defending the mini-goal always starts a new ball.
4. The team with the most goals at the end of the six-minute game wins the round.
5. Rest between rounds and reset the soccer balls. Rotate teams and roles if needed. Make coaching points between games. Play four games.

**Variations:**

**Touch-limit** – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

**One-gate** – If two gates is too difficult, set up just one gate in the middle of the end line.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Let the players play for a few minutes before making any coaching points. See if the players can find success before giving them the answers!
- Encourage the team building out of the back to move the ball quickly and play forward when space allows.
- Teach the team that is pressing to cut out forward passing angles to the gates and close down the attackers' space as soon as they receive the pass. Get the attackers' heads down!
- Remind the players to react quickly when they lose the ball to prevent any easy goal scoring opportunities.

## 4-on-2 Over-Training

### How the Drill Works:

Two defenders attempt to prevent four attackers from scoring within the final third of the field. Defenders continuously defend for a given time while attackers try to score as many goals as possible.

### Purpose:

Develops defensive work rate and commitment. Defenders improve their defensive speed, footwork, communication, and their ability to close down attackers. Defenders “over-train” in this activity because the likeliness of 4-on-2 in a game is slim, but the activity will better prepare them for 3-on-2s and 2-on-2s in games. Attackers work on their finishing, dribbling, passing, and decision-making as well in this activity.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- One full-sized goal is needed.
- Use four cones to mark the playing area, about 25x25 yards.
- Choose four players to start as the attackers and two players to start as the defenders. Assign colored jerseys to each team. Extra players should rest outside of the playing area.
- Depending on the number of players present, set up another game so players will not have to sit as long in between turns. Twelve players per game is the maximum.
- All the soccer balls start with the coach at the top of the playing area.
- Six, three-minute rounds are suggested.
- Four attackers and two defenders start inside the playing area.

**Instructions:**

1. To start the activity, the coach passes a ball to one of the four attackers. The attackers pass and dribble around the two defenders attempting to shoot and score on goal.
2. The two defenders work together and attempt to block, or intercept, the soccer ball from the attackers.
3. If the defenders win the soccer ball from the attackers, they pass the ball out-of-bounds and the coach passes in the next ball to the attackers.
4. If the attackers score, or the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, the coach plays the next ball in to the attackers.
5. Each goal that is scored is a point for the attackers. Each time the defenders intercept the ball, or the attackers miss the goal, one point is deducted from the attackers score.
6. Continue the activity for the remainder of the round. At the end of the round, gather all the soccer balls and reset them at the top of the playing area. Players rest for two minutes before switching roles. Rotate roles and players so that players play both positions.
7. Repeat for as many rounds as needed.



**Variations:**

**Goalkeeper** – Add a goalkeeper to make it more difficult for the attackers to score.

**Add another defender** – If the attackers are scoring too easily, add another defender.

**Subtract an attacker** – If the defenders are struggling to prevent the attackers from scoring, subtract an attacker to make it closer.

**Offsides** – To make the activity more game-like, use the offsides rule for the attackers. This will change the game for both the attackers and defenders.

**Change the numbers** – Depending on the number of players present, switch up the number of players on each team (5-on-3, 5-on-4, 6-on-4, etc.)

**Coaching Points:**

- There is no goalkeeper in the activity for a reason. This forces the defenders to close down the attackers and not allow for easy shots on goal. Encourage the defenders to work as hard as they can during the full time.
- Teach the defenders to work together and communicate with each other. Defenders should help cover for one another while also being close enough to the next player when the ball is passed.
- Educate the defenders to time their tackles appropriately. Defenders should not be reaching or diving in for the ball when the time does not call for it. Defenders should constantly move their feet and stay on balance to react to the attackers. Sliding should be a last resort.
- Challenge the attackers to move the ball quickly and score as often as possible. The attackers should make the game difficult for the defenders and be creative on the ball.

## 5v4 Prevent Forward Play

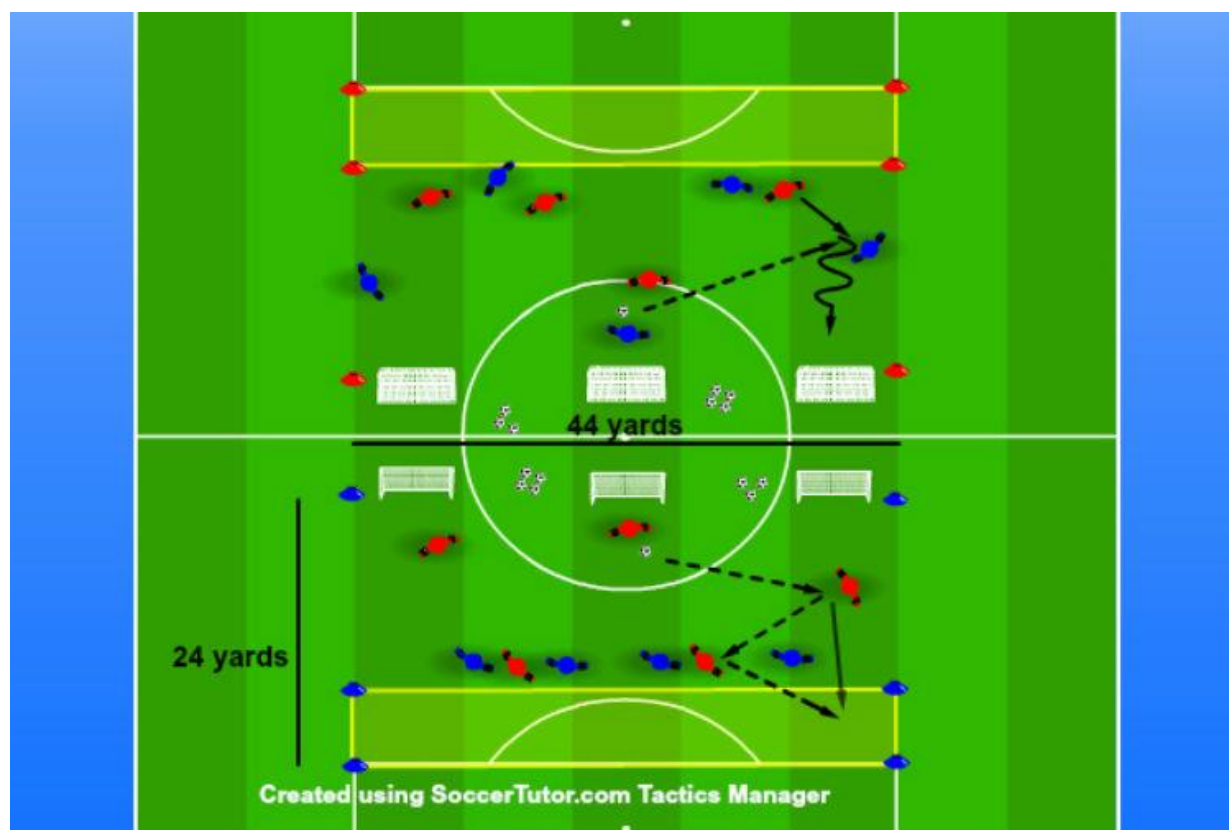
### How the Drill Works:

One team of four attempts to prevent the team of five from dribbling or passing into the end zone. The team of four works on defending in a flat line and winning the ball to counter in one of the three mini-goals.

### Purpose:

Develop a team's ability to prevent forward play in a flat four line. Players improve their defensive movement, positioning and balance as they try to win the ball and counter.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- Set up one 24x44-yard field for every nine players.
- Set up three mini-goals on one end line of each field. Use cones, or poles, to mark gates if mini-goals are unavailable.
- Mark a five-yard end zone box on the opposite end line of the mini-goals on each field.
- On each field, divide the players into one team of four and one team of five.
- The team of four will defend the end zone and position themselves as a flat line.
- The team of five will be the attackers attempting to dribble or pass the ball into the end zone.
- The soccer balls start near the mini-goals.
- Play four-minute games before resting and rotating players. Play for a total of 30 minutes.

**Instructions:**

1. The team of five will always start with a new ball from their end line and attempt to dribble in or pass to a teammate running into the end zone for a point. Players running into the box must remain onside.
2. The defenders attempt to prevent the attackers from scoring, win the ball, and score in either of the attacker's gates.
3. The defenders must defend in a line and work on their positioning and ability to cover each other.
4. If the ball goes out-of-bounds, or either team scores, a new ball is started with the attackers.
5. Play four-minute games. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
6. Make coaching points and rotate players during the break. Play for 30 minutes.

**Variations:**

**Touch-limit** – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

**Easier for the defenders** – Take off one attacker if the defenders are struggling to score 50% of the time.

**More difficult for the defenders** – Add one more attacker if the defenders are scoring more than 50% of the time.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Let the players play a game before giving coaching points. See if the defending team can figure out how to defend together as a team.
- Teach the defenders to always have one player apply pressure to the ball, while the other three defenders shift and cover for the player that stepped out of line. Make the attackers try to play around the defenders!
- Encourage attackers to play quickly and move the ball forward when openings are created.
- Challenge the defenders to constantly move with the ball and stay compact!

## 6v5 High Pressure After Long Pass

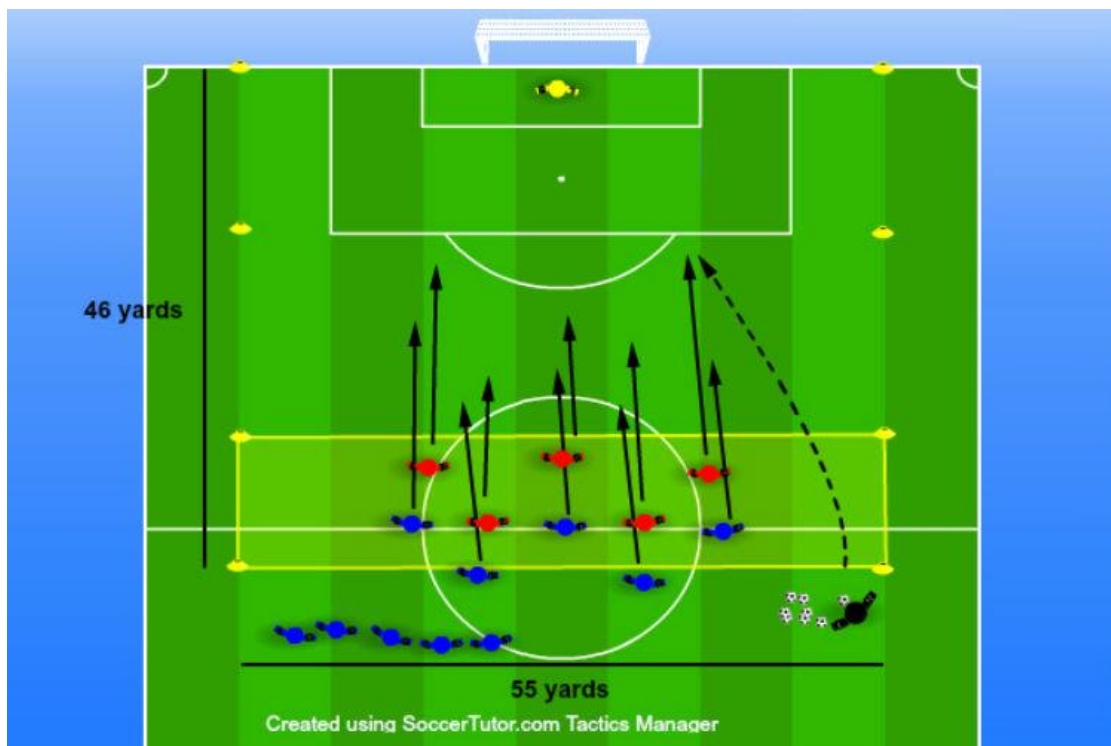
### How the Drill Works:

Five players on one team attempt to pressure and win the ball in their opponent's half after a long pass. The team pressing, attempts to win the ball and score on the full-size goal. The team defending the full-size goal attempts to move the ball past the pressing defenders and dribble into the end zone.

### Purpose:

Position players in a scenario that allows them to develop their team and individual pressuring skills. Players will improve their ability to close down space as a team and win the ball high up the field to create more chances on goal.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- Set up one 46x55-yard field.
- One full-size goal should be placed on one end line of the field. Position one goalkeeper in the goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, rotate them in every three minutes.
- On the other end line of the field, use cones to mark a 14-yard deep end zone. See diagram for more information.
- Select six players to attack the full-size goal. Select five defenders to defend the full-size goal. Assign colored jerseys to each group. If there are extra players, have them rest behind the end zone and rotate in every one to three repetitions.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed beside the coach behind the end zone.
- Play three games of five to eight minutes. Rotate teams after each round.

**Instructions:**

1. All of the players start inside the end zone. The team defending the goal starts closer to the goal than the team attacking the goal. The defending group should be five to ten yards ahead of the attackers. Adjust accordingly.
2. The coach starts with a ball and kicks the ball towards the full-size goal.
3. As soon as the ball is kicked, play is live and the players run to chase the ball down. The defending team should get to the ball first, if not adjust accordingly, and attempt to build out of the back and dribble into the end zone for a point.
4. The team attacking the full-size goal attempts to win the ball from the team in possession and score on the full-size goal. The team pressuring tries to prevent their opponents from scoring in the end zone.
5. The goalkeeper is allowed, and encouraged, to help their team build out of the back.
6. If the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, a new ball is started with the coach and players return to their starting positions inside the end zone.
7. The team with the most goals at the end of the round wins.
8. Players rest and reset the soccer balls between rounds. Switch attackers and defenders as needed between rounds. Make coaching points during the break. Play three games of five to eight minutes.

## **Variations:**

**Touch-limit** – Give players three, two or one-touch.

**More difficult for the attackers** – Add another defender if the attackers are scoring too easily.

**Less difficult for the attackers** – Take off a defender to help the attackers score more easily.

## **Coaching Points:**

- Push the players to pressure high up the field and win the ball close to goal! Players should quickly close down space, cut out passing lanes, and arrive on balance.
- Give the players building out of the back some tips to beat the press to make the pressing team work harder.
- Teach the pressing team how to cut off passing lanes and move together to win the ball.
- Encourage the pressing team to attack immediately when they win the ball to keep their opponent's from getting organized defensively.
- Challenge the players to be the first to the ball after the coach kicks it!

## 8v6 Defending + Outlet Players

### How the Drill Works:

One team of six, plus a goalkeeper, attempts to prevent the other team of eight, plus a goalkeeper, from scoring. If the defensive team wins the ball, they have two outlet players on their opponent's end line that they can use to counter and create scoring opportunities.

### Purpose:

Improve a team's ability to stay compact and prevent goal scoring opportunities. Puts a team in a numbers down defensive situation to create a difficult defensive game-like scenario.

### Diagram:





**Setup:**

- Set up a field 42x80-yards.
- Place one, full-size goal on each end line. Position one goalkeeper in each goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rotate every three to five minutes.
- Divide the field players into two teams. One team of eight and one team of six.
- The team of six will defend one goal of the goals in a 1-4-2 formation.
- The team of eight will defend the opposite goal in a 1-3-2-3 formation.
- If there are enough extra players, position two players on the end line opposite of the team of six. See diagram. If there are still extra players, have them rest to the side and rotate them in every four minutes. Game is intended to be played with outlet players but can be played without them as well.
- All of the soccer balls should be placed near the full-size goal of the team with eight players.
- Play three, eight-minute games with a three-minute break between each game. Rotate players and positions between rounds.

**Instructions:**

1. The goalkeeper on the team with eight field players always starts a new ball.
2. The team of eight attempts to pass and dribble around their opponents to create scoring opportunities.
3. The team of six tries to stay compact and limit quality chances on goal from their opponents.
4. When the team of six wins the ball, they are free to use the two outlet players to help them counter on their opponent's goal and score. Only the team of six can use the outlet players.
5. Play throw-ins if the ball goes out-of-bounds on the sidelines. If either team scores, or the ball goes over either end line, a new ball is started with the team of eight field players.
6. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.
7. Make coaching points and rotate players between rounds. Play three, eight-minute games.

## **Variations:**

**Touch-limit** – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

**Change the difficulty** – Add or subtract defenders to help the defenders prevent quality chances at least 50% of the time.

## **Coaching Points:**

- Give game instructions to the team with more players first. This will allow them to play a certain way and try specific game actions.
- Let the team defending attempt to solve the game actions their opponents are trying.
- Teach the defensive team specific solutions to the problems they are encountering. Stay compact and shift together as a team with the ball. Communicate runners in the box. Close down the space.
- Challenge the attacking team to be creative and move the ball quickly to create openings!
- Encourage the defensive team to be patient and to pick their moments to go win the ball and counter!
- Make sure the goalkeepers stay involved with communication and possession with their teams.

# Channeling the Attacker for Points

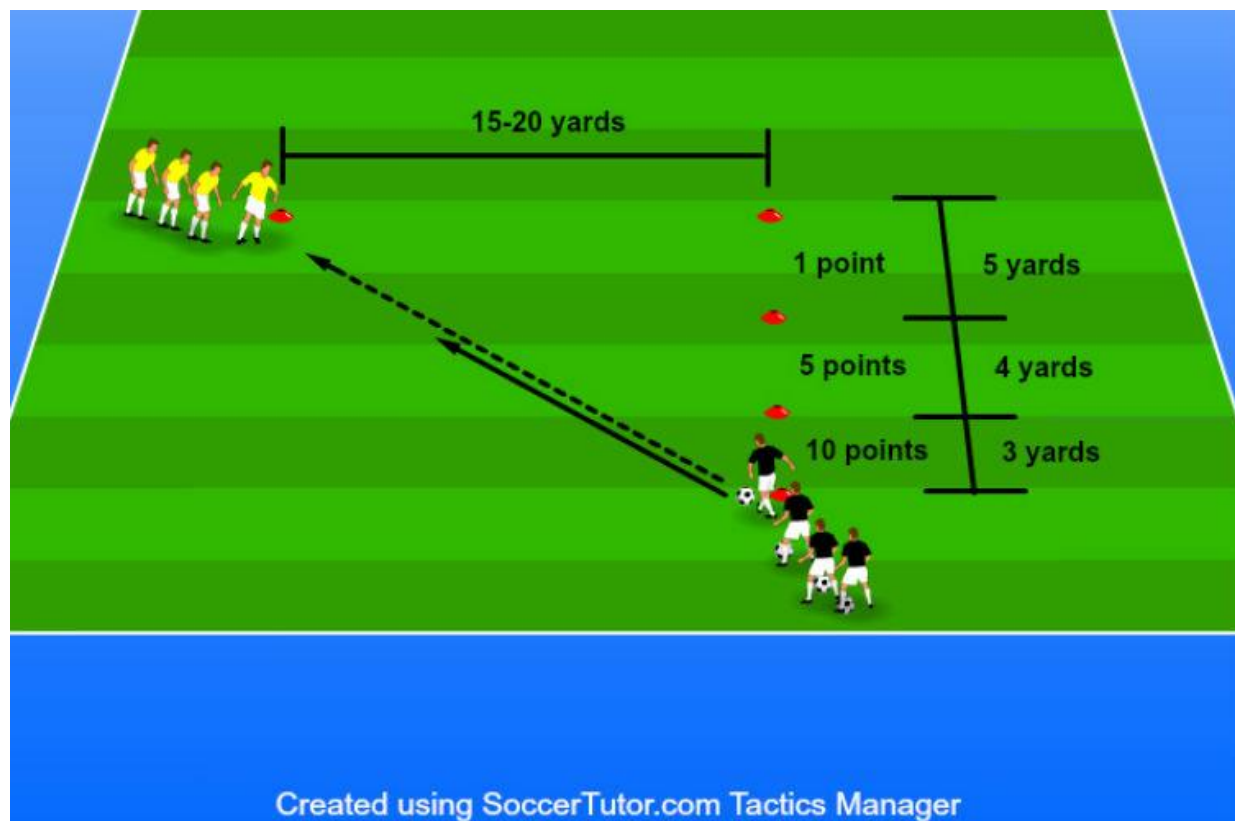
## How the Drill Works:

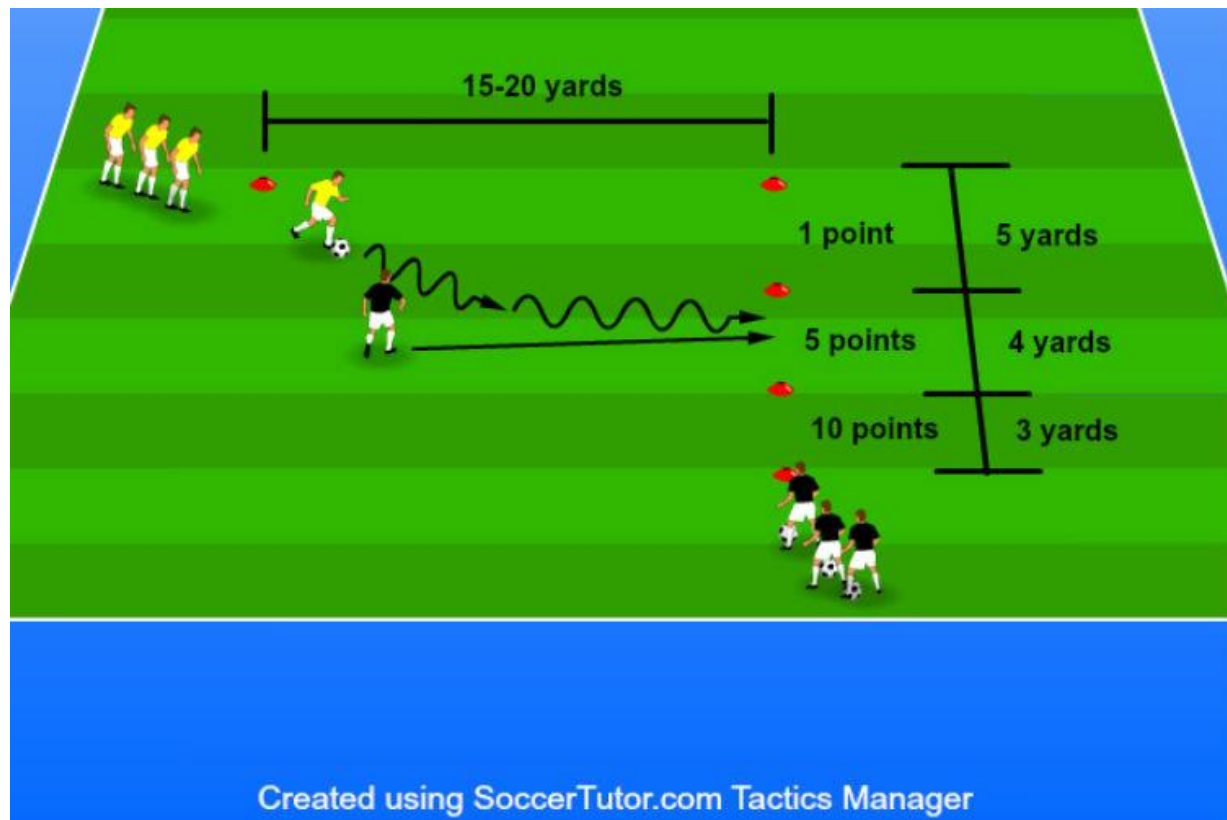
One defender attempts to prevent one attacker from dribbling through one of the three sideline gates. Each gate is worth a specific amount of points with the gate closest to the attacker being worth the least amount. Defenders attempt to win the ball or prevent the attackers from dribbling through the gates worth the most points.

## Purpose:

Competitive 1v1 activity that focuses on individual defending, closing down speed, and defensive footwork. Attacking players improve their ability to beat a defender on the dribble.

## Diagram:



**Setup:**

- Use four cones to make three gates. Each gate should be in the same line; use a line on the field for reference if needed. The first gate should be five yards wide with the second being four yards wide and the last gate being three yards wide. See diagram for information.
- Place one cone 20 yards away from the largest gate. The cone should be perpendicular to the first cone used for the largest gate. See diagram for more information.
- Divide the players into two teams and assign each team a jersey color.
- Assign one team to start as the attacking team and have them form a line behind the cone set up 20 yards away from the largest gate.
- Assign the other team to start as the defending team and have them form a line behind the smallest gate.
- Each defender should have a ball at their feet. Keep any extra soccer balls around the defending team's line.
- If there are more than 12 players in this activity, set up another game so that there are about 6-10 players per game.

- Play four, five-minute rounds. Have players switch lines after each round.

**Instructions:**

1. The first defender in line starts the activity with a pass, across the field, to the attacker first in line. As soon as the defender passes the ball, they sprint towards the attacker to close down the space.
2. The attacker receives the ball and dribbles towards the gates.
3. The attacker attempts to score the most points possible, or available. The furthest away gate is worth 10 points, the middle gate is worth five, and the closest gate is worth one point.
4. The defender attempts to channel, or direct, the defender away from the 10-point gate and towards the one-point gate. If possible, the defender attempts to win the ball and prevent the attacker from getting any points.
5. As soon as the attacker dribbles through a gate, or the defender wins the ball, the next two players immediately begin their turn.
6. The attacking team should keep track of their total team points per round.
7. At the end of each round, the teams collect any lost soccer balls, and then switch lines so that the defending team now becomes the attacking team.
8. After each team has attacked once, the coach declares the attacking team with the most points the winner.
9. The next two rounds begin back at zero points for both teams and teams repeat the process for another two rounds.
10. Play a total of four, five-minute rounds with a break between each round.

**Variations:**

**Defending team can score** – If the defender wins the ball from the offensive player, they are free to attempt score on any of the gates for points. This develops players' ability to quickly react when they lose the ball and prevent the other team from progressing.

**Coaching Points:**

- Clearly explain the scoring system and the purpose of channeling a defender away from the higher point gates. Let the players play for a round before giving solutions. Players should not be given the answers at the beginning otherwise they will not develop the problem-solving abilities players need.
- Channeling a defender is effective when forcing a player away from goal, towards team pressure, or towards the sideline. Other examples include forcing a player to use their weaker foot, or to stop a counter-attack.
- Defenders should sprint towards the attacker to close down the space the attacker has to dribble into. Defenders should shorten their steps as they get closer to the attacker to prevent getting beat. Once close enough, defenders should move backwards at the same pace the attacker is moving forwards and force the attackers towards the one-point gate. The defenders should time their tackles when they are close enough to win the ball.
- Defenders need to get close enough to the attackers to force them to put their heads down and lose vision of the field.
- When directing, or channeling, a player, defenders should position their bodies sideways at a 45-degree angle and encourage the attackers to dribble into the space defenders are leaving open.
- Challenge the attackers to be decisive, quick, and creative on the ball. Attackers should attempt to beat the defenders and score as many points as possible.

## Continuous Box Defending

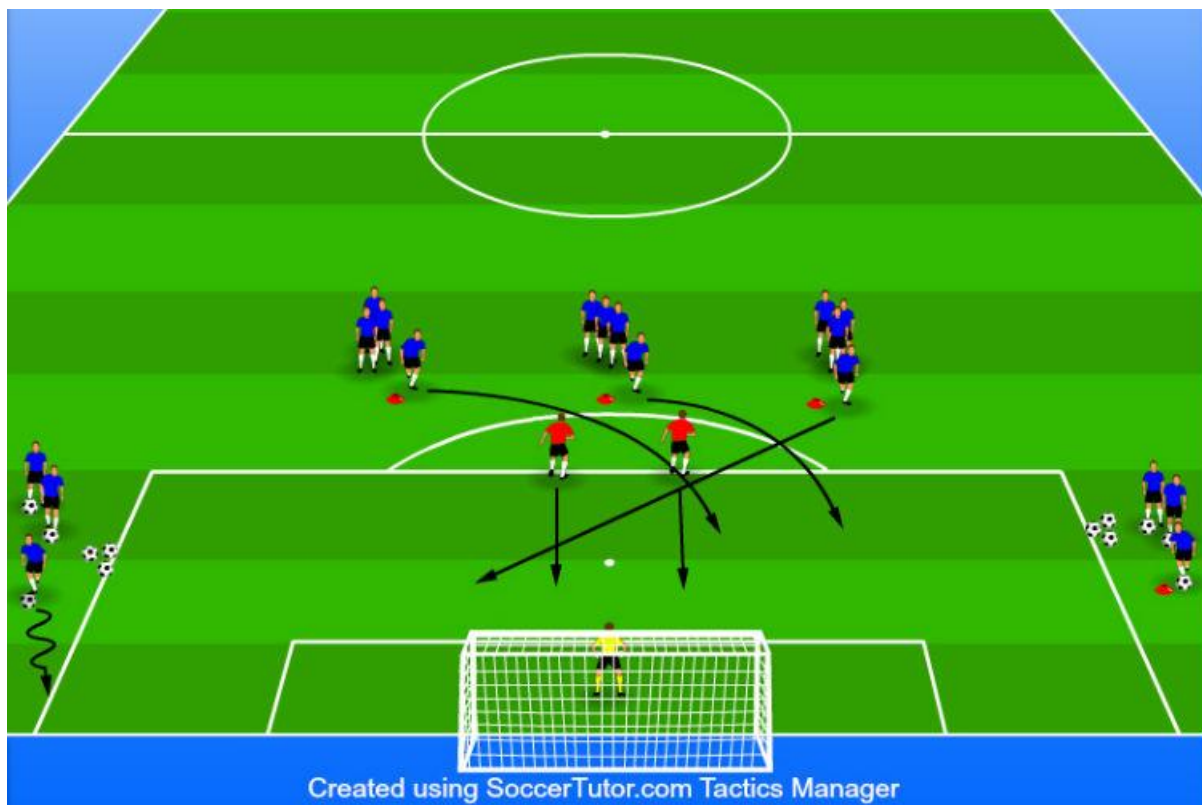
### How the Drill Works:

Two defenders attempt to clear crosses into the box away from three incoming attackers. The defenders immediately push out of the penalty box after clearing each ball before dropping back in to the box for the next cross.

### Purpose:

Develops defenders' ability to win headers in the box and clear the ball to safety. Defenders improve their marking and willingness to win the ball. Attackers work on their crossing and finishing on live defenders.

### Diagram:







**Setup:**

- One full-size goal is needed.
- The activity can be done with, or without, a goalkeeper. No goalkeeper makes it more difficult for the defenders while adding a goalkeeper makes it tougher for the attackers.
- Place three cones five yards outside the penalty area. There should be six yards of space between each cone.
- Select two players to start as the defenders and assign them a jersey color. The defenders start at the top of the penalty box.
- Have at least three players on each wing, outside the penalty box, to be the crossers.
- Have the rest of the players form a line behind each cone above the penalty box.
- Divide all the soccer balls between the two groups of crossers.
- One player from each line goes at a time.
- Each crosser starts with a ball at their feet. Crossers alternate turns.
- Each defender should complete at least two, 10 repetition rounds. Rotate defenders after each round and reset the soccer balls.

**Instructions:**

1. The defenders start at the top of the penalty box and wait for the crosser to take a touch towards the end line.
2. As soon as the crosser takes a touch, one attacker from each line begins to make their run into the box while the defenders pick them up and backpedal into the box.
3. The crosser can dribble all the way to the end line, or serve the ball into the box on their second touch. The crossers should try to serve the ball in the air, but are free to play it on the ground if they feel they can catch the defenders cheating.
4. Once the ball is served, the defenders attempt to arrive at the ball first and prevent the attackers from scoring, or getting a free shot attempt on goal.
5. Immediately after clearing the ball away from danger, the defenders run up to the penalty box line to repeat the process.
6. The crosser on the opposite side of the first server must wait until both defenders are on the penalty box line before they take their first touch towards the end line. The next three attackers in line then begin their turn once the crosser takes a touch.

7. The process continues this way for the remainder round. Crossers alternate turns and attackers return to the back of a line after each turn. Attackers are free to switch between attacking lines as long as there are players in each line.
8. At the end of each round, select two new defenders, collect any lost soccer balls, and rotate crossers as needed.
9. Repeat for as many rounds as needed.

### **Variations:**

**Competition** – Create a competition. Count the number of goals the defenders give up. The defending pair with the lowest number is the winning team.

**Number of attackers** – Increase, or decrease the number of attackers to make it more, or less, difficult on the defenders.

**Number of defenders** – Increase, or decrease, the number of defenders to make it more, or less, difficult on the defenders.

**Crosses** – Switch up the crossing angle or the number of touches before crossers service the ball to give the defenders, and attackers, more variety.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Instruct the defenders to keep their hips open to the field so that they can see incoming attackers and beat them to the ball. Defenders should be constantly aware of the ball and the attackers to give themselves the best chance of winning the ball.
- Educate the defenders to time their headers to reach the ball at the highest point they can.
- Defenders positioning should be one that they are able to take at least one step towards the approaching ball and attack it to redirect it away from the attackers.
- Remind the defenders they must immediately step up to the penalty box line after each clearance, or goal, to build good habits of quickly moving on to the next play.
- Motivate the defenders to continuously work and focus on clearing the ball each time. This is a tough activity for the defenders and requires total focus. Defenders should not take a play off and let the attackers score easily.
- Encourage the crossers to serve consistent balls into the box and give the attackers a chance on goal.

- Teach the attackers to time their runs so that they can attack the cross and redirect it into the goal. One attacker should run to the near, middle, and back post.

# Cutting Forward Passing Lanes

## How the Drill Works:

Two teams of four attempt to move the ball side-to-side and create openings in the four-player defensive line to play through. The team defending attempts to stay compact and shift with the ball to cut forward passes between them.

### Purpose:

Develop a players' defensive abilities to stay compact in their defensive lines and cut out forward passes. Players improve their ability to move with the ball and provide cover for each other.

**Diagram:**



**Setup:**

- Set up one 30x40-yard field.
- Use cones to mark three, 10-yard zones across the field. See diagram for more information.
- Divide the players into three teams of four. Assign each team a different colored jersey. If there are more than 12 players, have the extra players play as the neutral players behind the end lines of the field.
- Assign each team to one zone on the field and have them form a flat four line across the width of their zone. See diagram.
- The team in the middle zone will start as the defenders.
- A ball is started with either team in the outside zones.
- All of the soccer balls should be gathered on the side of the field with the coach.
- Play five, four-minute games with a two-minute break between each game. Reset, rest and rotate players after each game.

**Instructions:**

1. The team that starts with the ball attempts to move the ball side-to-side, in their zone, to create openings in the defenders' line of four to play through.
2. The players in the middle zone shift from side-to-side with the ball, stay compact and attempt to prevent any forward passes from going past them.
3. The defenders and attackers must move within their respective zones. No players may enter their opponent's zones.
4. If the attackers pass the ball through the defenders, on the ground, one point is awarded to that team and the defenders turn around and repeat the process with the third team.
5. The team not in possession or defending, must move in their zone to help create passing angles.
6. If the defenders win the ball in their zone, they attempt to complete a pass to any neutral standing behind the end lines for a point. If no neutrals are available, the play is over when the defenders win the ball.
7. If the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, the attacking team to last touch the ball switches places with the defensive team in the middle.
8. Team with the most points at the end of the games is the winning team.

9. Reset the soccer balls, rest and rotate players and teams as needed between games. Make coaching points while the players are resting.
10. Play five, four-minute games.

### **Variations:**

**Touch-limit** – Give players three, two or one-touch to increase the difficulty.

**Width** – Increase, or decrease, the width of the zones to make it more, or less, difficult on the defending team.

**Enter opponent's zone** – Allow one defender to enter their opponent's zone when defending. This will allow teams to work on their ability to close down the player on the ball and recover back in line when the ball moves away from them. The defender can win the ball when they enter their opponent's zone.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Teach the defenders to stay compact! Do not let any passes go between two players! Players should constantly adjust their positions and provide cover for one another. One player should step with the other three closing the space behind them.
- Challenge the attackers to move the ball quickly from side-to-side to create openings in the defense! Ball movement must be sharp to create chances to play forward!
- Encourage the defenders to constantly talk and give instructions to one another.

## Defensive Recovery Runs

### How the Drill Works:

One defender competes against one attacker to make a recovery run back towards their goal with an attacker attempting to beat them to the ball and score. Defenders must clear the ball, or prevent the attacker from scoring on goal.

### Purpose:

Defenders work on a game-like situation when a ball is kicked over their heads and they must prevent a chance on goal. Defenders improve their recovery run speed, footwork, and awareness while preventing the attacker from a clear chance on goal.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- One full-size goal is needed on the end line.
- One goalkeeper is preferred for this activity to make the situation more game-like. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rotate in every three repetitions.
- Place two cones eight yards inside the half-line that the goal is on. The cones should be parallel to the end lines and be outside the center-circle with six yards between them. See diagrams for more information.
- Divide the players into two groups.
- Have each group form a separate line behind the two cones. The group closest to the inside of the field will start as the attackers while the other group will start as the defenders.
- The coach, or extra player, is positioned inside the center-circle.
- All the soccer balls are placed inside the center-circle with the coach.
- Each player should complete at least eight repetitions at each position.

**Instructions:**

1. The coach starts the activity by kicking, or throwing, a soccer ball towards the penalty box in front of the players. The ball should be played with a slight advantage to the attackers.
2. The first players in each line take off sprinting towards the ball attempting to get their first.
3. The attacking line has a better chance of arriving first to the ball, but the defenders should be close enough to, legally, disrupt the attacker's scoring chance.
4. The defenders attempt to block shots, win the ball, and play it to the goalkeeper or coach.
5. If the attacker does not beat the defender to the ball, they should attempt to block, or intercept, the ball from the defender as they attempt to play it out of danger.
6. The turn is over when a goal is scored, the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason, or a pass is completed back to the coach.
7. After completing their turn, the players switch lines and recover until they are up again. The next two players immediately begin their turn once the field is cleared.



8. Continue the activity for eight minutes, or until soccer balls need to be collected and reset.
9. Switch sides of the field between rounds so players work on both angles.

### **Variations:**

**Player services** – Instead of a coach, or extra player, standing and kicking the ball from the center-circle, have a player hit game-like long balls from behind half. The player should attempt to drop the ball 15 yards in front of the penalty area.

**Defenders face forward** – Make it more difficult for the defenders by making them face their opponent's goal on the start. Defenders improve their footwork and turning ability before they can take off sprinting. Adjust the attackers cone as needed to give the defenders a real chance.

**Type of service** – Vary the type of ball players are running down (i.e. on the ground, in the air, bouncing, etc.)

### **Coaching Points:**

- Teach the defenders to be aware of their body positioning and use their body to move the attacker away from the ball. If defenders can, they should turn and pick out a pass back to the coach, or turn and dribble up field, keeping possession for their team. If defenders do not have time, or space, they should clear the ball out-of-bounds, or pass it back to their goalkeeper for them to clear.
- Remind the defenders to limit risk when making their decision. Of course, defenders should attempt to keep possession of the ball for their team when possible, but make sure defenders are not taking too much risk and putting their team at risk for giving up a goal. Clearing the ball out-of-bounds is a fine choice.
- Challenge the attackers to be quick and elusive when trying to beat the defender. The attackers should make it as difficult as they can for the defender to win the ball.

## High Speed Defending

### How the Drill Works:

Defenders attempt to prevent an attacker, dribbling at full speed, from scoring on goal. Players play 1v1 with the attackers dribbling at full speed towards the defenders, attempting to go past them and score.

### Purpose:

Develops defenders' abilities to defend a fast approaching attacker and force them away from goal. Defenders improve their individual defending techniques, footwork, and positioning. Attackers work on their ability to beat defenders at high speeds and score.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- Position one full-size goal on an end line.
- Assign one goalkeeper in goal. This activity can be completed without a goalkeeper but using one will make the activity more game-like. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rest to the side and rotate every four repetitions.
- Divide the players into four, evenly numbered groups. Have two groups form a line at the top corners of the penalty box with the other two groups forming lines 20 yards away from each of the first two lines. See diagram.
- The two groups on the corners of the penalty box will be the defending lines and do not need any soccer balls. The two groups starting close to the half line will be the attacking lines and will start with all of the soccer balls.
- Each player should have at least 14 repetitions as the defender. Add more repetitions as needed. Rest and reset soccer balls throughout the game.

**Instructions:**

1. One attacker from their line starts the activity by dribbling at full speed towards goal.
2. As soon as the attacker starts dribbling, the first defender in line from the same side steps out to meet the approaching attacker.
3. The defender attempts to force the attacker away from the goal, towards the sideline, making the attacker's chance to score more difficult. The defender is free to win the ball if they can.
4. The attacker attempts to beat the defender and score on goal at full speed if possible.
5. Immediately after the attacker shoots, or the defender wins the ball, the next two players from the other side of the field begin their turn. Players switch lines after each turn. Players will switch sides of the field when there is a break.
6. At the end of each round, any lost soccer balls are collected, and players switch sides of the field to ensure they attack and defend each side.
7. Each player should complete at least 14 repetitions as the defender. Add more rounds as needed.

## **Variations:**

**2-on-1** – Add another attacker to increase the difficulty for the defender. The defender and goalkeeper must communicate and work together to force a tough shot.

## **Coaching Points:**

- The defenders should approach the attackers, but be very cautious not to approach too quickly or too close otherwise the attacker will just push the ball past them.
- Defenders should be side on and almost run sideways as they try and match the attackers pace. They should direct the attack towards the sideline and be ready to step in front of the attacker if they attempt to push the ball past them.
- Teach the defenders to constantly move their feet and try not to cross their legs. Defenders should not reach for the ball, but rather time their tackles and attack them if they have the opportunity.
- Challenge the attackers to beat their defenders every time and score. Attackers should dribble right at the defender and attempt to cut inside to create a better chance on goal.
- Remind the goalkeepers they must stay active and constantly communicate with the defender in front of them. Goalkeepers should be loud and decisive.

## Horizontal Defending to Goal

### How the Drill Works:

One attacker attempts to dribble across the top of the penalty box and score with one defender between them and the goal. The defender tries to intercept the ball or block the attacker's shot attempt. The attacker is free to change pace and direction along the penalty box line.

### Purpose:

Develops defensive footwork, agility, and timing when an attacker is cutting inside to create a better scoring chance. Defenders improve their ability to stay between the attacker and the goal to prevent quality goal scoring opportunities. Offensive players increase their ability to beat a defender on their inside shoulder and score.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- One full-sized goal is needed on the end line.
- One goalkeeper is suggested for this activity to make it more game-like. If no goalkeeper is present the activity can still be completed. Extra goalkeepers should stand behind the goal and rotate every four repetitions.
- Set up two cones just outside the top of the penalty box on one side of the field. The cones should be parallel to the sidelines and should have four yards of space between them. See diagram for more information.
- Divide the players into two groups.
- Assign one group as the defensive group and have them form a line behind the cone closest to the goal.
- Assign the other group as the offensive group and have them form a line behind the cone furthest away from the goal.
- All the soccer balls should be with the offensive group.
- The first player in the offensive line starts with a ball at their feet.
- Each player should complete at least 14 repetitions as the defender. Add breaks as needed.

**Instructions:**

1. The first player in the offensive line begins the activity by dribbling along the top of the penalty box line.
2. At the same time the attacker starts dribbling, the first defender in line moves alongside of the attacker attempting to intercept, or prevent them from scoring on goal. The defender attempts to stay between the attacker and the goal at all times.
3. The offensive player attempts to get past the defender by changing speeds, direction, and positioning to score on goal. The attacker is free to use whatever moves they want but must stay close to the penalty box line and move parallel to the line.
4. The defender is free to tackle, channel, or block the attacker at any point.
5. The turn is over when the defender wins the ball, blocks the shot, or the attacker scores. The next two players immediately begin their turn once the players in front of them have cleared the area.

6. The players return switch lines after each turn and return to the back of the lines.  
Continue this process until soccer balls need to be collected or players need a break.
7. Each player should complete at least 14 repetitions as the defender.

### **Variations:**

**Change field sides** – Switch sides of the field so players work on defending and scoring from both sides.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Instruct the defenders to maintain good positioning between the goal and the attacker. The defenders should constantly move their feet and adjust their position to prevent the attacker from getting inside of them.
- Teach the defenders to be tight enough to the attackers that they can block or intercept the ball.
- Remind the defenders to bend their knees and stay on their toes to react quickly to the attackers' change of speed and direction.
- Challenge the attackers to be creative and decisive. Attackers should want to score every turn and make it difficult for the defenders.
- Encourage the goalkeepers to communicate with the defenders!

## No Turn 1v1

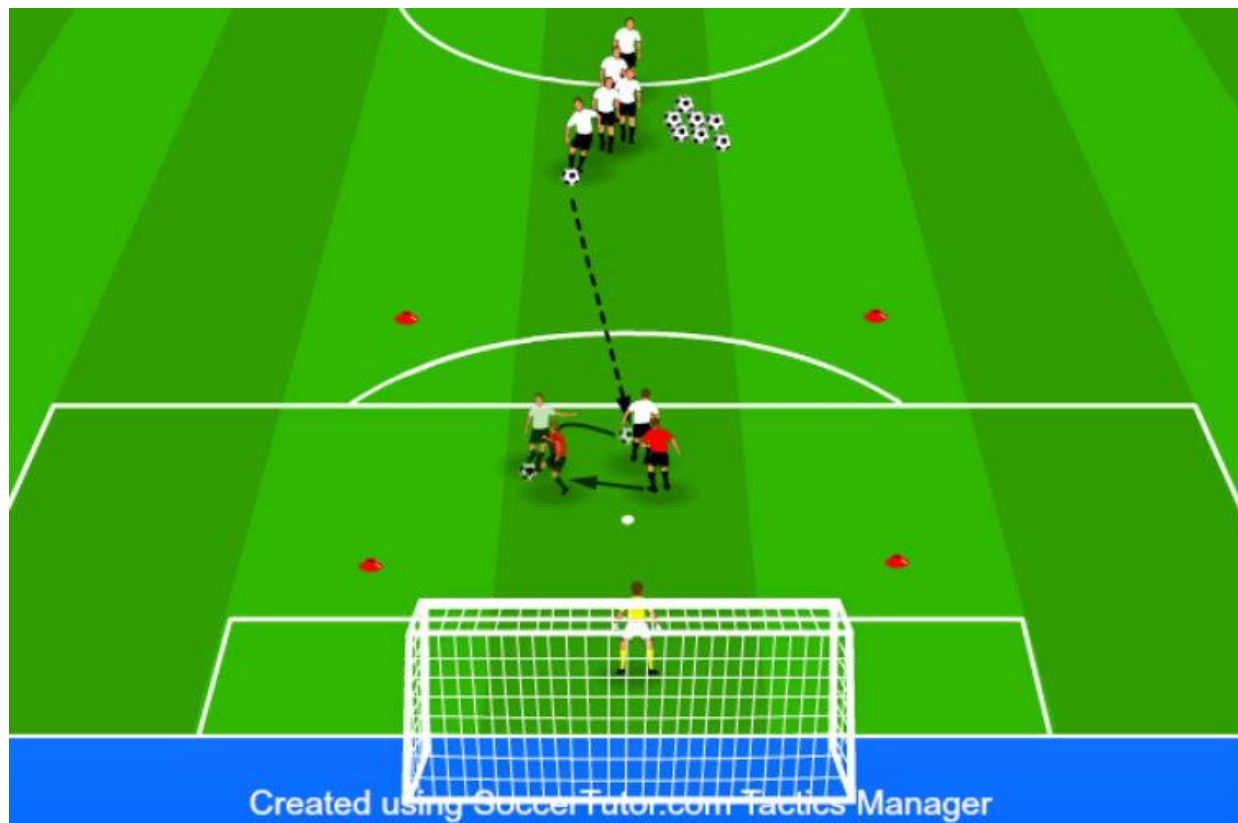
### How the Drill Works:

One defender attempts to keep one attacker from turning and scoring on goal.

### Purpose:

Develops a defender's ability to keep an attacker's back to goal. Defenders improve their positioning, footwork, and strength. Attackers become more comfortable with their back to goal and their ability to turn and shoot.

### Diagram:





**Setup:**

- On full-sized goal is needed.
- One goalkeeper is suggested to make the activity more game-like. If no goalkeepers are present, the activity can be completed without one.
- Depending on the number of players present, use multiple goals for this activity to increase the number of repetitions players get. Works best if no more than eight players are at each goal.
- Set up a 12x12 yard box in front of goal. The box should start 10 yards out from goal. See diagram for more information.
- Have two players start inside the box. One player is the defender and one player is the attacker.
- The rest of the players form a line eight yards behind the box with all the soccer balls.
- The first player in line starts with a ball at their feet.
- Each player should complete at least 14 repetitions as the defender. Add breaks as needed.

**Instructions:**

1. To start the activity, the first player in line passes the ball to the attacker inside the box.
2. The attacker receives the ball with their back to goal while the defender applies pressure on their back.
3. The attacker attempts to turn and score on the defender while staying inside the box.
4. The defender attempts to intercept the ball, block the attacker's shot, or force the attacker outside of the box.
5. The turn is finished when the attacker scores, loses the ball, or is forced out of the box.
6. After the turn, the defender becomes the attacker, the passer becomes the new defender, and the attacker retrieves their ball and returns to the back of the line. The next turn begins as soon as the new defender and attacker are set.
7. Continue the process for the remainder of the activity.

**Variations:**

**Defender outside the box** – Have an extra defender outside of the box that is free to defend the attacker if they dribble outside the box. This allows for the attacker to continue playing if they dribble outside the box but makes it more difficult if they do. The extra defender must move outside of the box until the attacker breaks the line. The attacker can try to be elusive and get both defenders on one side before exploding to outside of the box on the other side and attempting to score.

**Box placement** – Change the box placement in front of the goal. Move the box left, or right, to create a different attacking and defending angle.

**Box size** – Increase, or decrease, the box size depending on the players and how the activity is going.

**No box** – No box makes it more difficult for the defenders since there is no boundaries. No boundaries mean the turn is over only when the defender wins the ball, or the attacker shoots.

**Coaching Points:**

- Let the defenders know the box is there because in a game the defenders will most likely have help to either side of them if the attacker dribbles that far away. Anytime defenders can force the attacker towards defensive help is a success. The box also ensures that players are not dribbling all over the place and taking a long time to shoot. Change up the box as needed.
- Instruct the defenders to maintain good body positioning between the goal and the attacker. They should constantly adjust their position with light, quick feet.
- Remind the defenders to get tight enough to the attacker that they cannot turn, but not too close that the attacker rolls off their shoulder and turns. Defenders should never be square to the attacker; always sideways.
- Challenge the attackers to be strong and elusive with their decisions. Attackers should keep their bodies between the ball and the defender and use strong, quick body fakes to turn.
- If positions are already determined within the team, then have the defenders defend, and the offensive players work with their back to goal. Switching roles is not necessary.

## Slow Down the Attack 2v1

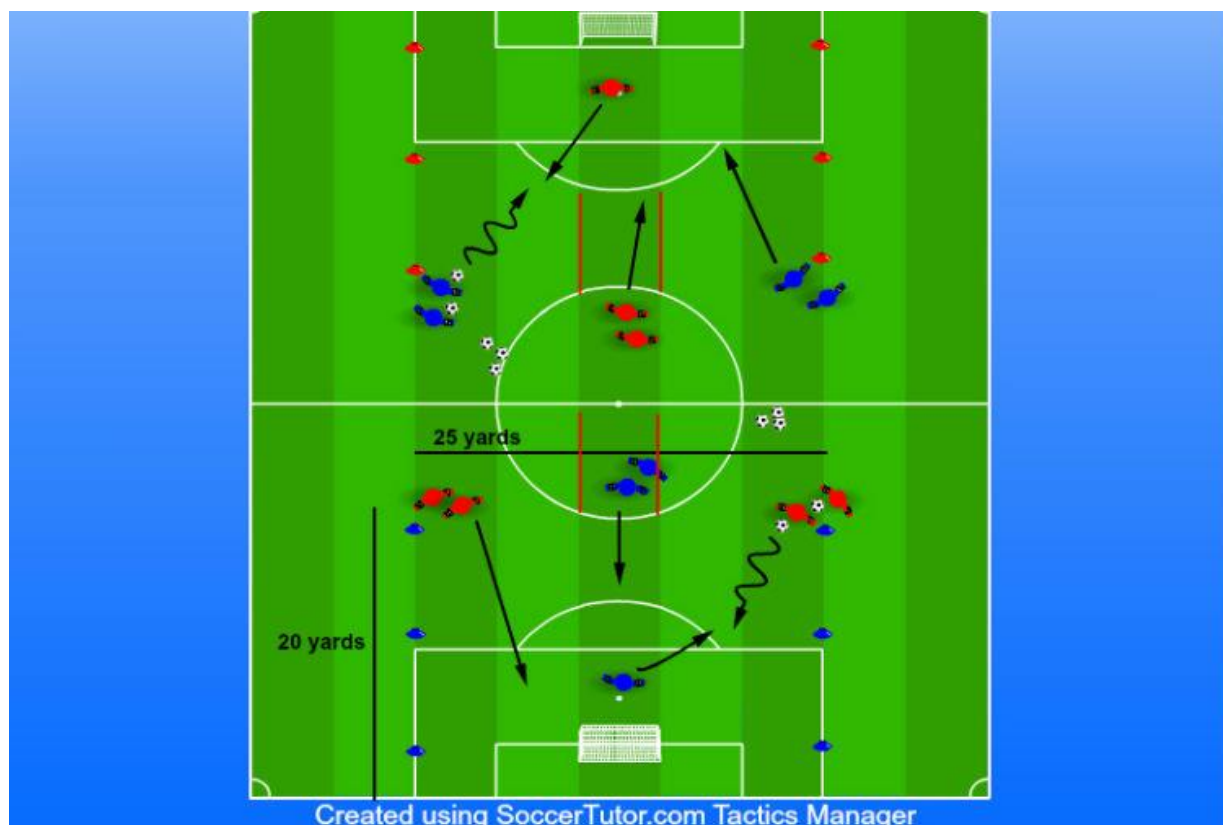
### How the Drill Works:

One defender attempts to slow down two attackers until the second defender can join the play and help win the ball.

### Purpose:

Develop players' ability to slow down on coming attackers until more defenders join the play.

### Diagram:



**Setup:**

- Set up two 20x25-yard fields.
- Position one mini-goal on one end line of each field.
- Set up one, five-yard wide gate three yards outside the end line opposite of each mini-goal. Use poles, or cones, to mark the gates. See diagram.
- Divide the players into two teams and assign jerseys. Half of each team should be on each field.
- Decide which team will attack and which team will defend.
- The attacking team forms one line on each corner furthest away from the mini-goal. All the soccer balls start with the attacking team. See diagram.
- The defending team starts with one player in front of the mini-goal and the remaining players forming a line behind the gate.
- Play three, six-minute games before resting and rotating defenders.

**Instructions:**

1. One attacker starts the activity by dribbling towards the mini-goal. The two attackers play 2v1 attempting to score on the mini-goal.
2. As soon as the attackers start their turn, the defender on the field attempts to slow down the attackers until the second defender, starting from the gate, can arrive to play 2v2. The second defender can start running back as soon as the attackers touch the ball forward.
3. Attackers are free to move, pass and dribble to create a scoring opportunity.
4. If the defenders win the ball, they attempt to dribble, or pass, the ball through the gate at the top of the field.
5. The turn is over when either team scores, or the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason.
6. Players return to their teams after each turn. New defenders and attackers step in for the next turn.
7. Play three, six-minute games before switching players and roles. Make coaching points between games.

### **Variations:**

- Competition – Have the teams count their collective team points. See if the attackers or defenders win each game!
- 2v1 – If the defenders are struggling to stop the attackers, have the trailing defender start inside the box to make it 2v2 from the beginning of each turn.
- Width – Decrease the width to make it more difficult on the attackers.
- Coaching Points:
  - Teach the first defender to slow down the attackers from playing forward too quickly. The first defender does not need to win the ball, but rather make play predictable. The first defender needs to constantly cut out the mini-goal so the attackers can not easily score.
  - Encourage the second defender to run as quickly as they can to support the first defender! Defenders should communicate where they want each other.
  - Challenge the attackers to take advantage of the 2v1 situation and to attack quickly before the second defender arrives!