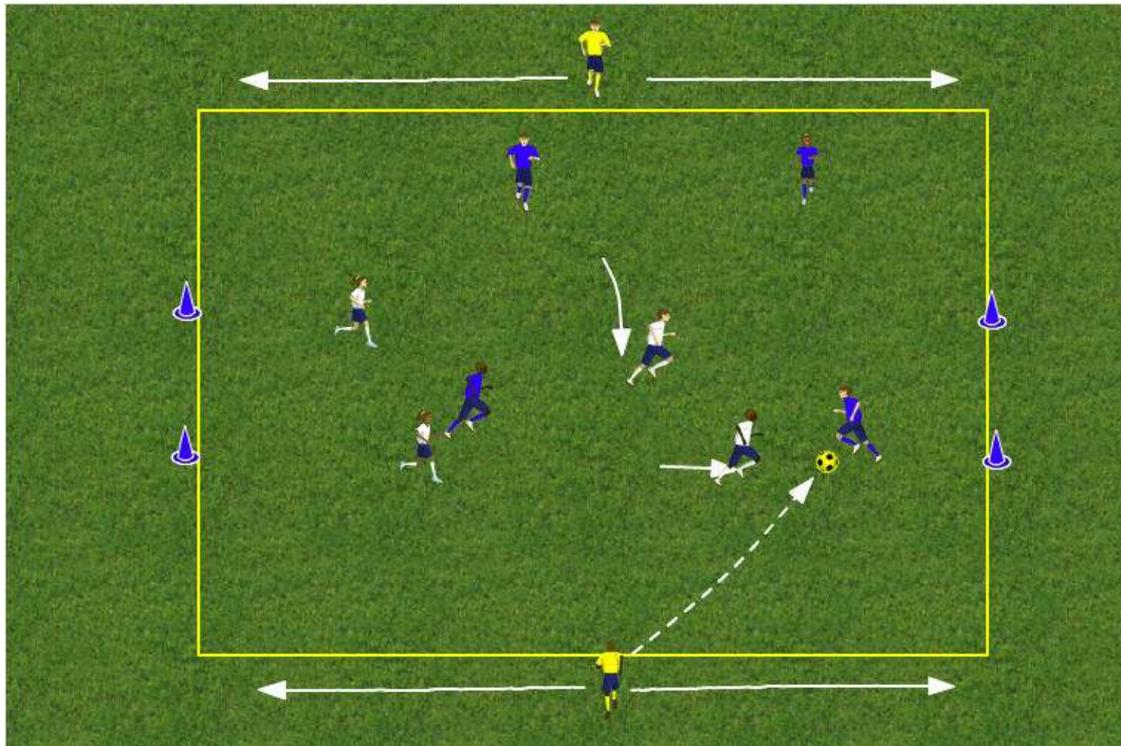


## A GAME TO IMPROVE DEFENDING WHEN MATCHED UP

The following game has been designed using [www.grassrootscoaching.com](http://www.grassrootscoaching.com) Coaches Chalkboard.



### ORGANISATION

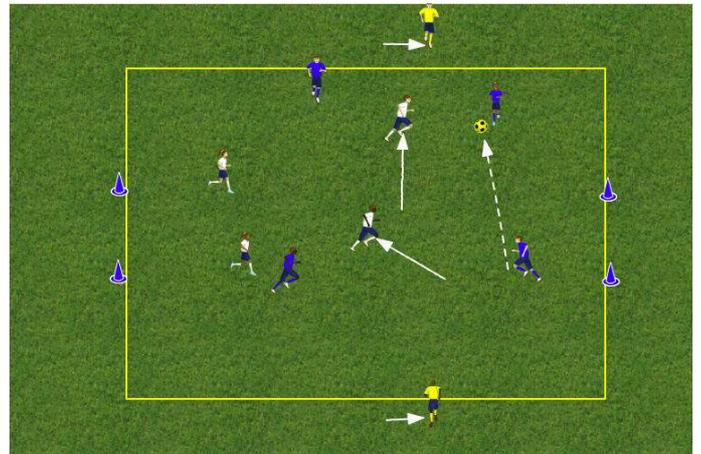
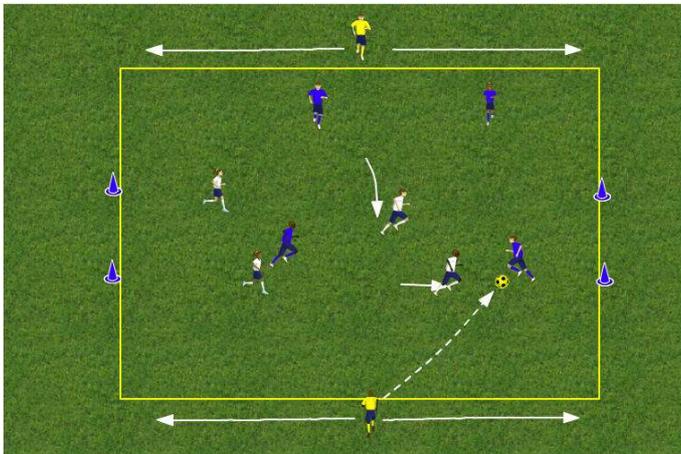
Mark out a pitch of 35 x 25 yards, the size of the pitch can be adjusted to suit the age and ability of the players. At either end place 2 small goals. Play 4 v 4 with two floating players who can move up and down the touchline and play with the team in possession. To start the game, one of the floaters passes to one of the teams. Whatever team is in possession of the ball tries to score.

### KEY TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Adopt defensive positions that defends the goal from a shot or a forward pass into the danger area \*Decision on how tight to pressure the player on the ball – if they are a long way from the goal, the defender doesn't have to be too tight, the closer to the goal, the pressure needs to be tighter \*Pressure as the ball travels \*Cover from the pressure player – consider the angle and distance of cover \*Pivot roles if the ball is switched – pressure becomes cover, cover becomes pressure \*Decision on whether the pressure player shows inside to the cover player or outside and away from the goal \*Decision on intercepting or tackling opportunities \*Recovery runs \*Squeeze up and compact play if possible when the ball is played backwards or sideways \*Work together as a unit \*Communication between the defenders

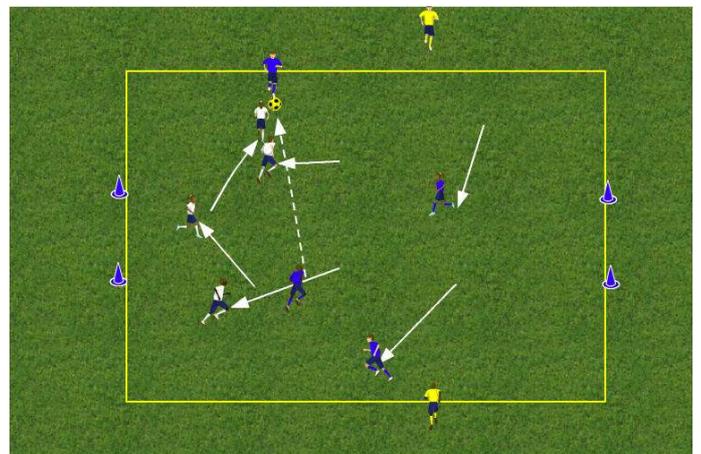
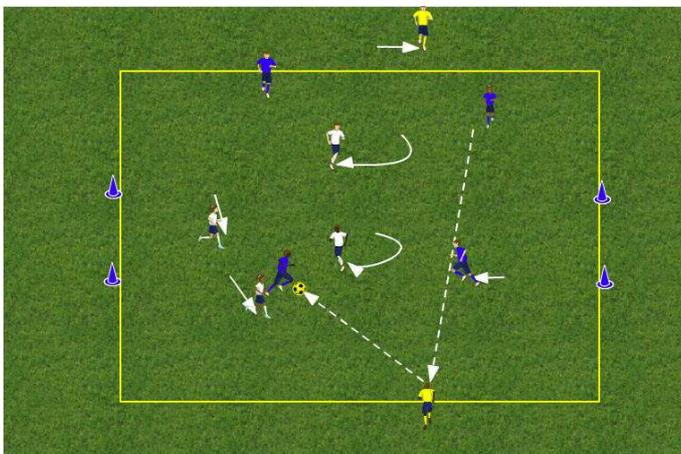
**Progression # 1** – If the ball is a long way from the goal, there is no need to try and get too tight and the pressure players main objective is to make it difficult for the player on the ball to pass it forward to their attacking team mates. The second defender should adopt a covering position making it difficult for the ball to be passed forward or to an attacking wide player. The first of the deeper defenders should be space side of the ball and in a position to close the attacker down if the ball is passed to feet, but also far enough off the attacker to be first to the ball if it is played down the side or behind them. The second deeper defender should be in a good covering position to cover the first defender.

**Progression # 2** – As the ball is switched across the pitch, the two forward defenders pivot roles, with the cover player now applying loose pressure making it difficult for the ball to be passed forward and the pressure player recovers to provide cover.



**Progression # 3** – As the ball is passed into a more advanced position to an attacker, the defender closest to the attacker should apply tighter pressure, with the second defender supplying cover. The further forward defenders should recover and look to apply pressure from the front and to make the defence compact and try and force play backwards or sideways

**Progression # 4** – As the ball is passed to a wider attacker who is well forward, the first defender should apply tight pressure and ideally try and force the attacker down the line and away from the goal. The other defenders should adopt covering positions, to cover the pressure player and to allow them to defend the danger area around the goal. If the ball is forced backwards, then the defence should look to squeeze up and compact play





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