

## **WEEK 1 DEFENSE**

An important part of preparing for the season is organizing the defense.

Teams defend depending on how the opposition is attacking. Players and coaches have many systems and tactics to choose from;

Such as zonal defending, man marking defense and combinational defense.

**Defensive Tactics:** Besides dealing with oppositions attack, include variations like low pressure defending (mostly defensive tactic aiming to protect the score and to counter attack) and high pressure defending (focusing on stilling the ball from opponents far away from teams goal, even on opponents territory).

**Defensive Formations:** Teams using 3 man defensive formation, defending with 4 players (flat four, 3 defenders and the sweeper, diamond formation), some teams defending with 5 defenders (4 with a sweeper, or 4 with a stopper). If we add midfielder's to the defensive formations things will become more complex. Defensive formations will vary depending on how many midfielder's the team has 3, 4 or 5.

**Defensive Principals:** provide pressure-cover-balance, position goal side, always take care of greatest danger, see the ball and the nearest opponent at a same time, play as a unit, have defense compact (horizontally and vertically) to limit the space for opponents and to create a pocket of pressure, get numbers (of players) behind the ball.

**Defensive Duties:** Defenders need to communicate, to be able to put immediate pressure on players with the ball, to be good in 1 on 1 defending (the better we are in individual defending then less time we have to spend defending as a team), make recovering runs, cover, mark, move up and down the field as a unit, know how to double team, know how to defend when opponents take free kicks, corners kicks and have throw ins, also know how to use the off side rule, how to create off side trap.

Defenders have to understand areas of low and high risk.

Defenders play a big role in the teams transition to offense. It's helpful if defenders have good distribution skills. One of the important roles of a defender is to support attacking players. Defenders have to know how to participate in so called "building from the back", changing point of attack or to initiate fast counter attacks. Defenders have to be able to "scan the game" to determent to join the attack or to remain back.

**Defensive Skills:** Some of the individual skills defenders have to possess are: ability to stop a dribbling opponent, heading, ability to kick soccer ball hard and far if necessary, slide tackling when it's permitted, blocking the shot, good passing (distribution) skills. As with every player on the field, defenders have to be fast, strong, good jumpers, and be brave and smart.

I don't claim this to be a complete description of defense in soccer. I may recall something later or you may note that something is missing. I just wanted to show you that a wonderful world of soccer is out there waiting to be discovered and explored.

Join us as we start our journey, making one step at a time.

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