

Defenders of the realm

By David Clarke

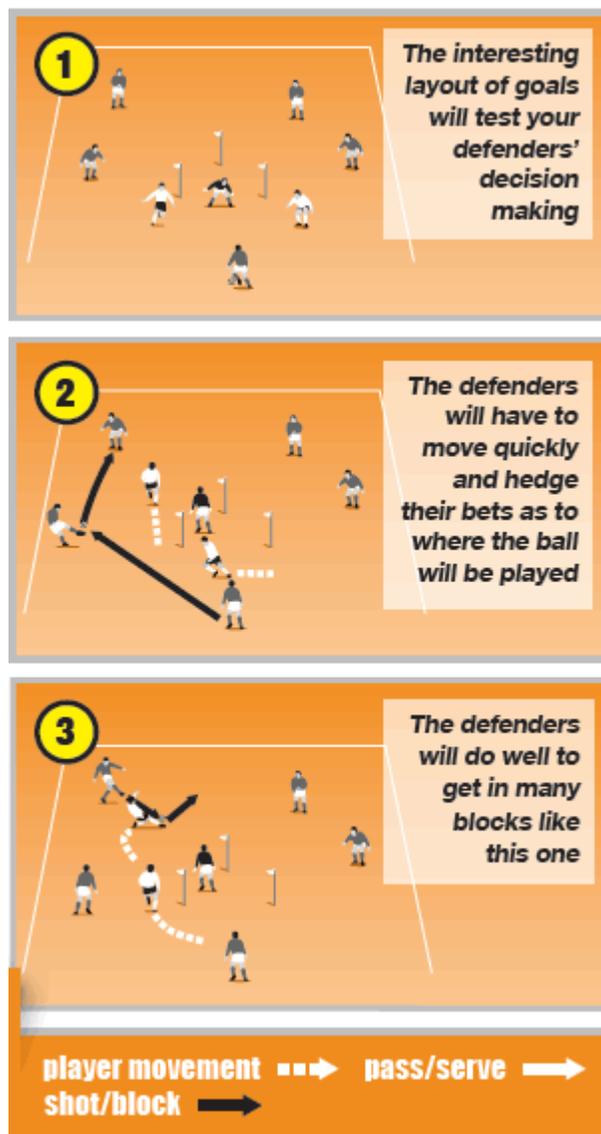
Is your team giving away silly goals because the second wave of attack catches your players resting on their laurels? Or are your attackers giving up when their first attack breaks down?

Use this game to stop both defenders and attackers giving up at the first hurdle.

This game is based on space: Attackers want to find it, while defenders the need to close it down as quickly as possible.

Speed of thought is essential, as is the awareness of team members, either in creating room to fashion chances or covering areas where attacks might develop.

Teams must work together well, and for the defending team, a vocal goalkeeper is essential for communicating the developing attacking threats to his overworked defenders.



How to set it up:

- Create a 30-yard square playing area.
- To play this competitive game, you only need three poles (or cones) and one ball.
- It requires 10 players (an attacking team of five, a defending team of three, including a keeper, plus two players ready to come on).
- Mark out three goals in the centre using the poles in the shape of a triangle.

The rules:

- The attacking team starts with the ball and can score in any of the three goals.
- The defending team must organise itself to prevent attackers having a clear sight of goal.
- Attackers will fashion most chances by passing the ball quickly and switching play from one area to another.
- Defenders can prevent goals by pressing the ball and constantly repositioning in order to halt the attackers' progress.
- Defenders can "tag team" with team mates off the pitch in order to stay fresh.
- If defenders intercept, they score a point and the ball is returned to the coach.
- When a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, the ball is also returned to the coach.
- Play for five minutes, then swap team roles.
- The team with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.