

Lead Coach/Assistant Coach: Mitch Gough/Carl Rhodes

Session Development (Why and Who)	We play in a 1-3-5-2 formation and have done with some success this season so far. Recently my post match reviews have highlighted the number of free kicks around the box and penalties we have conceded. 2 in our most recent home game against Halesowen. At this stage of their development, the group needs to understand how to defend intelligently in high-pressure areas. This session aims to develop good defensive habits — recognising when to engage, when to delay, and how to support teammates to protect the penalty area safely	
Main Objective	Improve defensive cohesion and defending in and around the Penalty Box	
Player Considerations	Technical/Tactical Do they understand Press Cover Balance and the 4Ds? Defensive Co-Ordination if pushing higher to play offside. Showing a player away from Danger. Defensive Bodyshape	Psychological Composure and staying calm Decision making under stress Confidence to Delay and trust team mates to recover
	Physical Acceleration and Recovery Runs Strength to hold off attackers Quick footwork to adjust bodyshape/react	Social Clear and constant verbal communication. Constant and early Leadership within the defensive line Supporting Each other
Principles of Play	We will touch on all of the Out of Possession Principles of Play in the Function. Pressing, Cover and Balance, Control and Restraint, Compactness and Delaying.	
Primary Player. Primary Unit, Secondary Units	Primary = CB - ZT will be my Primary player in this. Primary Unit will be = GK, x3CBs. Secondary Unit = CM's	



Dynamic Warm up – 10 Mins

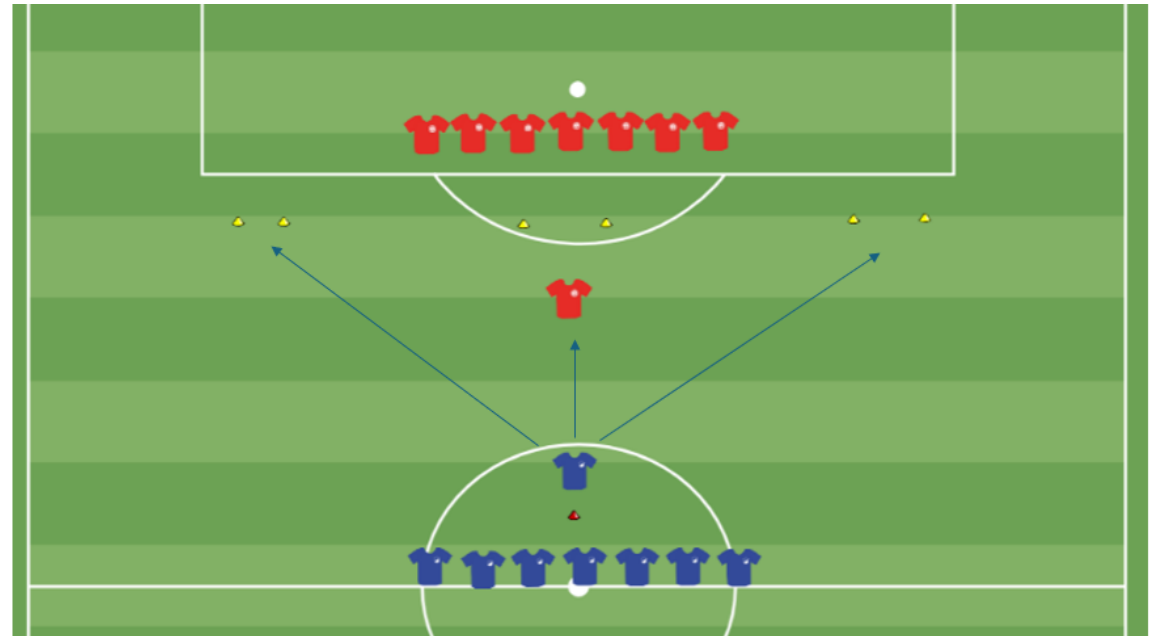
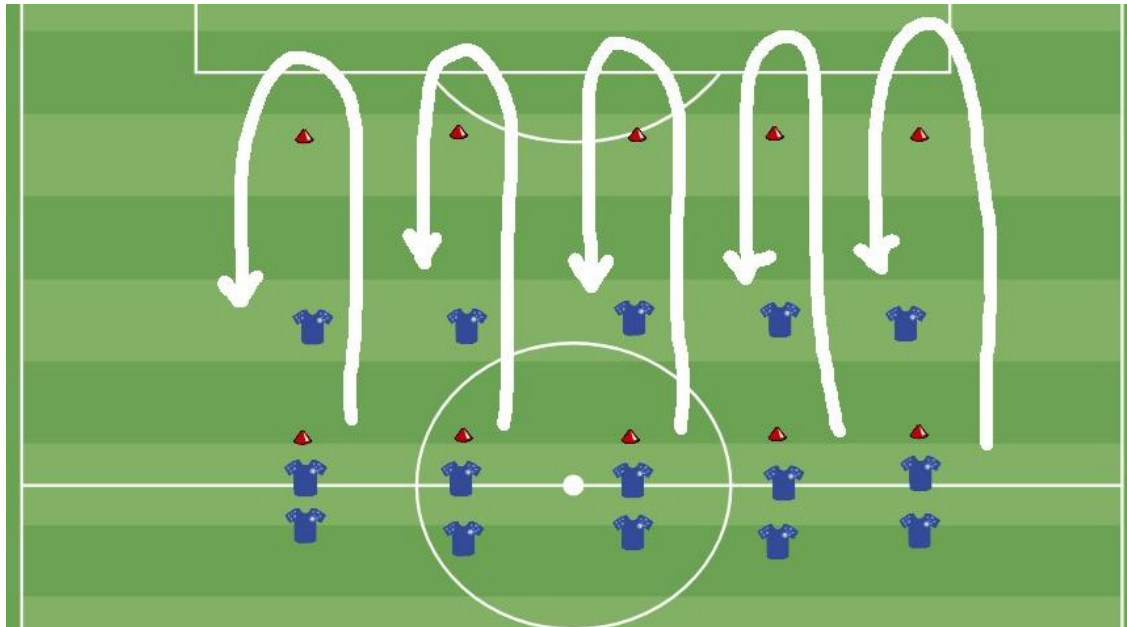
Greet players as they enter the playing area and take them to the warm up exercise set up as below.

Set up:- (below left) Set up 5 cones, then 5 cones 20 yards apart. Group works in 5s at a time jog up, jog back, open/close gate, kick backs, extensions finish with sprint bursts. (below left)

Below right transition into 2 set ups as below Blue team start behind the red cone they are attackers, red team are defenders and have to protect the yellow gates by blocking the off from the attacker who has 10 seconds to try and travel through a gate. Attackers become defenders and they change.

Why:- This warm up is physically relevant to the session practice as players will have to react and have the same dynamic movement they will when defending. Its technically relevant in terms of defensive body shape, reactions timing and control and Psychologically engaging for the players with it being competitive and reactive. The Players also take ownership of the warm up encouraging leaders within the group.

Ask the players how they think this warm up will support them as defenders? What is their bodyshape? Can they mirror the attackers movement? Accel/Deceleration.



Functional Practice: Defending in and around the 18 yard box

Set up :- Red cones to mark out area we are working in. 2 Yellow gates as a focus out for the Defending team.

Instruction:- Play firstly will start from Tyler for the attacking team who will be the feeder and remain in this location for the practice. We will set up with our back 3 and 2 central midfield players who will defend the Reds attack and look to find a player to drive through the Yellow gates. Reds score by Scoring, Blues Score by a player in possession moving through the yellow gates. Ball out results from different restart points as instructed by the coach. Phase 1 will be no keeper, the attacking team must be inside the box to score – this will force the practice inside the box, and give me repetition of my intended outcome of defending in an around the 18 yard box. Phase 2 I will introduce a keeper to make more match realistic and now the defending team has to think about distance shots too. **Coaching Points/Pre Session Thoughts**:- If we stay connected and force the other team into a backwards pass – that's success too. Reinforce that when you see it.

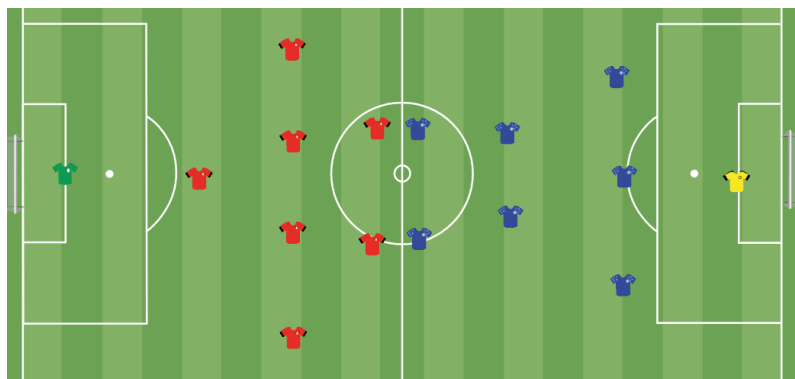
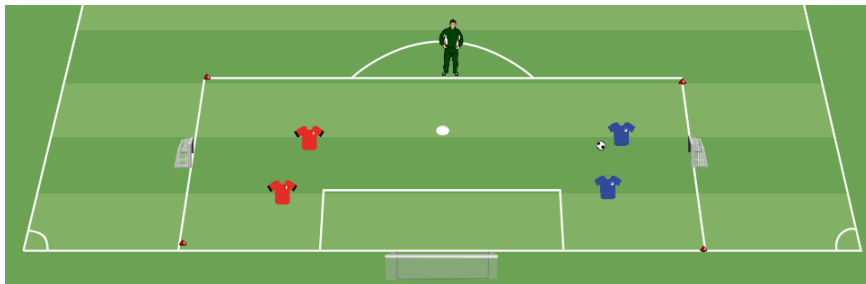
Communication – Zach is my primary player in this practice he is the central CB I want him passing information early and being the eyes in that Back 3 and leading if they are going to advance to potentially play offside. Start at different points when the ball goes out to test quick reactions and organisations, example ball goes out left, quick roll in and start right. **Other Players**: Whilst this is happening my Co Coach will lead the other players into a 2v2 to mini goal “press and Cover” game. For Variance of players I will rotate them out with other players in the Functional practice but not my Primary Player or units.

SSG: 8v8

Set up :- Full astro Pitch – Normal Game. I will work with the Blue team as with the Functional practice and coach that coherency and teamwork in defending in and around the 18 yard box. Normal rules, throw ins Penalties, Offsides.

Coaching Points/Pre Session Thoughts:- Matchday we set up in a 1352 so for this I've set my team up I've set us up in a **1-3-2-2**, mirroring our 1-3-5-2 defensive structure.

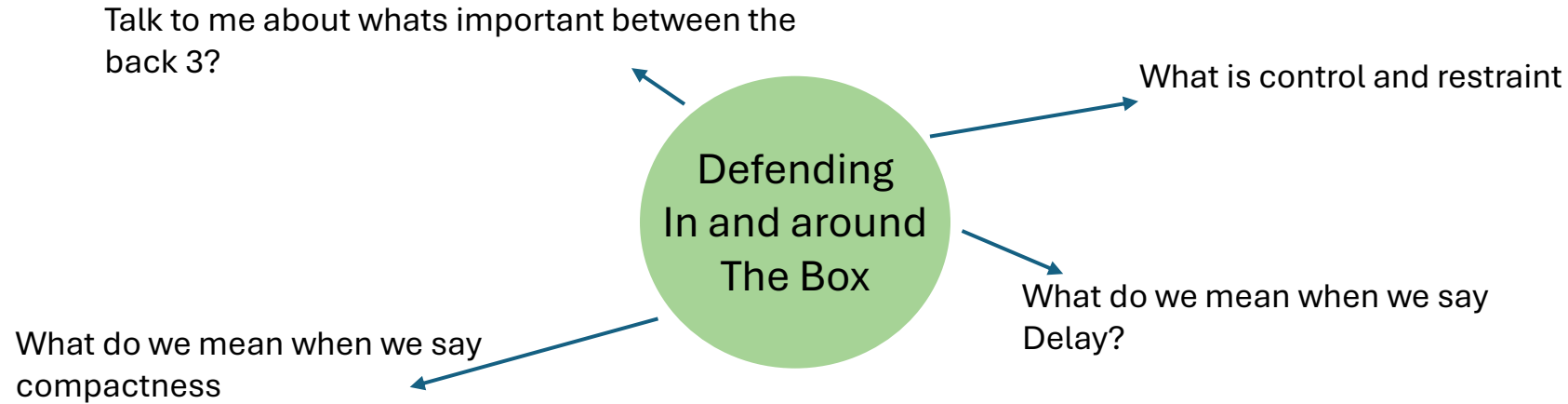
The opposition are in a **1-1-4-2** to give them central overloads — that'll force our back 3 and 2 midfielders to defend the box repeatedly, stay compact, and make good decisions about when to engage or stay and coaching opportunities for me. Highlight and indicate good moments of defending from the 3. Freeze style interventions but also drive by coaching. Try and let the players also play and ask them through guided discovery. This SSG is designed to provide realistic defending-in-the-box scenarios where players apply “delay, deny, dictate,” with emphasis on body shape, communication, and defending without fouling. Consider ball starts from the opposition attacking third as often as possible to create defending-in-the-box scenarios if there is not enough repetition of it



Debrief, Cool Down, Communication – 5 Mins

Debrief with the players. Check learning and coaching points, chat to the players – how has their week been? Any dramas? Any plans before Matchday?

KNOW YOUR PLAYERS



Reflections

When reviewing a session I like to use WWW.EBI.COM This is a method I was introduced to on course and is an acronym for:-
What Went Well Even Better If Changes Or Modifications

WWW =

EBI =

COM =