`<https://www.active.com/soccer/articles/the-role-of-the-defender>

# The Role of the Defender

The defender's primary job is to deny penetration. The defender does this by preventing the attacker from either passing forward, dribbling toward the goal or shooting.

This is achieved through pressure and positioning. It's not enough to know what to do, if you aren't in position to do it.

#### Priorities for a pressuring defender

1. **Intercept balls passed to the attacker.** If the defender can cut off a pass before the individual duel occurs, they've significantly decreased the offensive threat. The defender must be positioned goal-side of the attacker so they can see the ball and their attacker. This way, they're able to see where and how high the ball is being passed.
3. **Tackle the ball as the attacker makes their turn.** If interception failed or wasn't possible, a good option is to tackle the ball before a confrontation with the offensive player.
5. **Force the attacker to screen the ball with their first touch.** Don't allow the attacker an opportunity to turn with the ball and face the goal. A negative first touch means they are moving away from the defender and the goal while screening the ball from the defender.
7. **Tackle the attacker halfway through their turn as they attempt to face the defender.**A good defender senses when the attacker has committed to turning and is prepared to win the ball when the attacker exposes it.
8. This is impossible to do unless the defender is within tackling range. As the attacker is shielding the ball and attempting to turn, the defender must keep two things in mind:
   * Never lean on the attacker. Good attackers use this over-commitment to their advantage by spinning and playing the ball into the space left open by the defender.
   * Never lose sight of the ball.



1. **Steer the attacker into the least dangerous space.** Once the offensive player has turned, channel them into an area where they will do the least damage or into a supporting defender. Often, this will be the sideline.
2. The defender now attempts to set a trap. Here, the speed of the approach is crucial. If the defender tries to close down an attacker's space too quickly, the offensive player can play the ball quickly behind the defender, using the defender's speed and aggressiveness to their advantage. If done too slowly, the attacker is given ample time to gain the advantage.
3. **Recovery runs.** If the defender is beaten, a recovery run toward the near post is the fastest way to get goal-side of the attacker. The object is to get in good defending position, between the goal and the ball, as quickly as possible.

#### Summary

The individual defender is concerned with two things: whether or not to make contact with the ball, and how and where to position oneself.

The first priority of the defender should be to prohibit the ball from reaching the attacker or stopping the attacker from turning goal-side with the ball. If that fails, the defender should contain the offensive player and force them to give up the ball away from the goal or risk being tackled as they turn. Final strategies include maneuvering the attacker into a less dangerous space or getting into position to deflect the attacker's shot or pass.

The defender's role in stopping forward movement by the offense is not limited to overpowering the attacker. They must work to rush, pressure and confuse the attacker, thus causing them to make mistakes. Taking advantage of your opponent's errors makes it easier for you to win the ball and deny penetration toward your goal. A solid defense is a crucial part of a successful soccer team.

# The job of a midfielder

<http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/soccer-drills/tactics/the-job-of-a-midfielder/>

In youth soccer, midfielders are usually just that, a player who plays in the middle of the field. But as their ball skills improve (and especially as they move into eleven-a-side soccer) they can fall into one of three different types:

**Outside midfielder**

When his team is defending, the left or right midfielder marks the opposition winger on his side of the field. If he has no-one to mark when his team is defending, he should concentrate on keeping the team shape compact by moving in towards the middle of the field.

In attack, the outside midfielder stays wide and makes supporting runs up the line. Even if he doesn’t have the ball, his presence on the flank will stretch the opposition defence and thus provide space in the centre for his team’s attackers to exploit.

So the outside midfielder has to be fit, have excellent ball skills and be confident in taking on the opposition 1v1.

**Defensive midfielder**

The defensive midfielder holds the team together. He operates between the attackers and the central defender or sweeper. His job is to put pressure on the opposition ball carrier and provide cover for any of his team mates who lose the ball in his ‘patch’ – the midfield.

When your team is attacking, the defensive midfielder stays behind the attackers, ready to pressurise the opposition and grab any loose balls. He should be in position to provide the attackers with the option to pass back.

**Offensive midfielder**

Offensive midfielders are the playmakers of the team and are often the fittest as they are involved in every attack.

Their job is to move the ball quickly from defence and join the attackers to create a numbers up position.

All midfielders need to have sufficient ball skills so they don’t have to think about the mechanics of controlling the ball but can concentrate on how best to distribute it instead. They also need to be able to anticipate what is about to happen next. All these skills require experience, so don’t try to introduce specialist midfield positions until your players are ready.

<http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/soccer-drills/tactics/player-responsibilities-in-7-a-side-soccer/>#

# Player responsibilities in 7 a side soccer

Youth soccer coaches need to explain to their players exactly what they are expected to do when their team is either attacking or defending.

The article below tells you what players in a 7 a side formation need to know.

**When you have possession (when you are attacking)**

The game plan during own possession is to move the ball downfield so that chances can be created (the build-up) and to score goals.

*General Principles*

* Create as much space as possible, both width and depth;
* Aim to get forward; keep possession, this is vital to the objectives of the game. So if you can’t pass the ball forwards easily, play square or back – don’t force a pass that isn’t really on. If you do, you’ll lose possession. It’s better to pass square or back and start again;
* Try to maintain good team shape (formation).

**Individual responsibilities**

1. Keeper. Positions himself in relation to the defender. Restarts play (roll, throw kick). Act as central build-up player (an extra field player).

2. Full-backs. Position well apart, make the playing area as wide as possible. Play the ball to the attackers. If there is room move forward with the ball. Participate in the attack.

3. Central Defender. Position between attackers and full backs. Play the ball to the attackers or defenders who are participating in the attack. If there is space go forward with the ball. Take part in the attack. Try to score if the opportunity arises.

4. Wing (Outside) forwards. Position in relation to defenders to make the playing area as long as possible. Take the ball towards the opposition goal as quickly as possible, individual run, or pass to a teammate who has a clear run on goal. Take up position in front of goal to be available to receive a pass and score. Try to score.

5. Centre Forward. Position as far forward as possible (make playing area long), while still being in a position to receive a pass. Try to score, individual run or exchanging passes with a teammate. Go to goal.

**When the opposition has possession (when you are defending)**

The game plan is to disrupt the opposition build-up – win the ball back – stop the opposition from scoring.

How? Teach the principles of defending. Make the field of play as small as possible, depending on the strength of the opposition; move towards the ball (pressing), move towards own goal (fall back), Push towards the sideling (squeezing). Pressure the ball carrier. Mark closely when in the vicinity of the ball. Positional/zonal marking further from the ball. Stay useful as long as possible.

Note. The game plan will not be achieved if you foul, so avoid giving away free kicks.

**Individual responsibilities**

1. Keeper. Prevent opposition scoring. Position in relation to the ball, opposition players and teammates.

2. 2 and 4 Full backs. Prime task – DO NOT LET YOURSELF BE BEATEN; prevent opposition from scoring. Cover the opposing attackers. Help teammates, cover their backs. Win the ball.

3. Central defender. Prime task – DO NOT LET YOURSELF BE BEATEN; prevent opposition from scoring. Cover the opposition centre forward. Help teammates, cover their backs. Make the playing area as small as possible. Win the ball.

4. Outside forwards. Disrupt opposition build-up. Win the ball. Help teammates, cover their backs. Make the playing area as small as possible. Don’t let the player with ball pass you.

5. Centre forward. Cover the opposing central defender (he is expected to come forward). Win the ball. Help teammates, cover their backs. Make the playing area as small as possible. Don’t let the player with ball pass you.

Player Responsibilities When you call a young soccer player a defender, for example, they think that is their only job - to defend. That's because players up to the age of about eleven find it hard to grasp that they can have more than one job to do at the same time. And labeling players 'defender', 'attacker' etc. is one reason you see youngsters playing statues on the pitch instead of running around, learning how to play the game. The other reason that children play statues instead of soccer is poor quality coaching and/or coaches who are trying to win games rather than encourage their players to learn in the most effective way - by making mistakes. So over they years I've found it useful to move away from labeling players as 'defenders' or 'attackers' and give them jobs to do instead. The only fixed position in my teams is goalkeeper (and even she has been known to dribble the ball to the half way line!). To begin with, we discuss the jobs that the team as a whole has to do: • Create as much space as possible, both width and depth; • Keep possession! So if you can't pass the ball forwards easily, play square or back - don't force a pass that isn't really on. If you do, you'll lose possession. It's better to pass square or back and start again; • Try to maintain good team shape. We then move onto individual responsibilities. These guidelines are designed for teams who play 7-a-side but should still be useful for 8/9 or 11-aside teams. 1. Goalkeeper. Positions himself in relation to the defender. Restarts play (roll, throw, kick). Also acts as an extra outfield player whenever possible - don't be afraid to take risks! 2. Full-backs. Position well apart, make the playing area as wide as possible. Play the ball to the midfield or the attackers. If there is room in front of you move forward with the ball and participate in the attack. If you're playing left back, play to the left of the rest of the team. This might mean you're in the middle of the pitch when the rest of the team is playing on the right but you're always playing on their left. The same goes for the right back. Don't let the opposition score. Be brave. 3. Central Defender. When the opposition has the ball you should be the last player back. You should be able to see every other player on the pitch apart from your own goalkeeper. When you have the ball and there is space, go forward and attack. Try to score if the opportunity arises but you will need to get back quickly if we lose the ball. Don't let the opposition score. Be brave. 4. Midfield players. Take the ball towards the opposition goal as quickly as you can or pass to a teammate who is in a better position than you. If you're playing left mid or right mid play to the left or right of the rest of the team (as described above). Try to score. 5. Attackers. Position as far forward as possible (make playing area long), while still being in a position to receive a pass. Try to score but don't forget you are the first line of our defense if we lose the ball in the opposition third. Don't let their ball carrier get past you. Tell your players that when we have the ball EVERYONE is attacking. When the opposition has the ball EVERYONE is defending.

# A players’ code of conduct

*the U9 version – by Chris White*

<http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/how-to-coach-youth-soccer/player-management/a-players-code-of-conduct/>

Players should:

* Play according to the rules and never argue with the referee or your coach. They are there to help and they can make mistakes, just like you.
* Always train and play to the best of your ability, and encourage others to do the same.
* Don’t lose your temper or get upset. Rudeness, bad temper and sulking spoils everyone’s fun. If you have a problem, tell your coach.
* Respect the opposition. Treat other teams as new friends, you’ll be playing them again one day!
* Look and act like a footballer. That means turning up for training and games on time, looking smart and in the right gear.
* Don’t forget your water bottle!
* Wear the right sort of shoes – trainers on hard surfaces, studded boots on grass.
* Always wear your shinguards.
* Clean your own boots and trainers!
* Enjoy every game whether you win or lose!

<http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/soccer-drills/tactics/how-to-teach-basic-marking/>

<http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/>