



Principles of Play

Attacking and Defending



Attacking Principle 1 vs Defending Principle 1

- **1. Penetration**
- In basic terms penetration is having the ability to exploit a defense by dribbling, shooting, running or passing.
- **1. Delay**
- When not in possession, the nearest player(s) try to regain the ball and or apply pressure on the ball, in order to delay or prevent the opposition from advancing.



Attacking Principle 2 vs Defending Principle 2

- 2. Support
- A player in possession of the ball receives support from team mates to maintain possession. Support comes in many forms, players provide forward, backward and sideways options. We have to be careful when we teach support as many times support causes players to bunch, ultimately we don't want them to do this. Support is more effective from distance which is many times more effective.
- 2. Cover
- The organization of players behind the pressuring defender, supplies cover. While the ball is being pressured players should be recovering into defensive positions. The positions taken should support the pressuring defender in the event that they are beaten.



Attacking Principle 3 vs Defending Principle 3

- 3. Mobility
- Attackers make runs into different areas of the field in order to draw defenders out of their positions, thus opening up passing channels and areas for the ball carrier to move in to.
- 3. Balance
- As the team concentrates their defense in the area of the ball, defenders away from the ball must position themselves to cover danger areas or spaces in order to prevent attackers from making penetrating runs into these. All players who are on the opposite side must look for positions in which to provide balance to the defense.



Attacking Principle 4 vs Defending Principle 4

- **4. Width**
- The team in possession attempts to stretch the defensive shape of the opponent. The attacking players use the width of the field to entice defenders from a compact shape covering the areas in front of goal, in so doing creating space. The attackers move the ball to change the point of attack in an effort to find a team or space between or behind the defense.
- **4. Compactness**
- As players recover towards their own goal and organize their defense, the objective is to limit the time and space for the opponent by concentrating their defense in the area of the ball. Defenders also recover centrally towards their goal in order to limit the opponents' ability to directly attack the goal.



Attacking Principle 5 vs Defending Principle 5

- **5. Improvisation, Creativity & Surprise**
- Attackers will try to break down defenses by employing the element of surprise. Skills such as back- heels, cut backs, flicks, feints and fakes are all used to this end. Comfort on the ball is critical and this training starts in the 1st stage of development.
- **5. Patience/Discipline/Restraint**
- Players must be disciplined and play “under control” when challenging for the ball. Too often players make poorly timed or off-balanced attempts to win the ball. Players should restrain from tackling until they are confident they will win the ball.