



## **TEAM DEFENDING USING THE 4-4-2 SYSTEM**

Modern defence is organized around the concept of “ball-oriented” defence. Zonal defending is the modern concept of defending. Whether you use a Stopper/Sweeper System or a zonal defence there is something in the following exercises that will benefit your team even though they are more specific to zonal defending using a 4-4-2 formation

### **MODERN PRINCIPLES OF “BALL-ORIENTED” DEFENDING**

1. Defenders are never assigned specific players (unlike man-marking” but are responsible for any opponent entering their area of responsible.
2. Individual zones overlap and are not rigid. This makes it possible for the unit to move as a unit with the ball.
3. By moving with the ball defenders can surround the opponent with the ball and force opponents to give up the ball.

***While many of these exercises are geared to the 4-4-2 system, the basic concept of “ball-oriented” defence is really independent of any playing system or formation.***

### **CHARASTICS OF A FLEXIBLE 4-4-2**

- Defend as a team behind the ball and near your own half of the field. This will force opposing defenders to join the attack and leave themselves exposed with gaps to be exploited during a counterattack.
- A team that is losing will often push players (especially defenders) forward leaving them vulnerable to a counterattack.
- When playing with a man down such as having a player sent off you will have a tendency to hang back allowing the opposing team to often push players forward to exploit your shortage of players especially in the midfield. This will leave the opposing team vulnerable to a counterattack.
- When opponents have a set play in your half of the field they will often move players forward leaving them vulnerable to a counterattack [when you win the ball.](#)

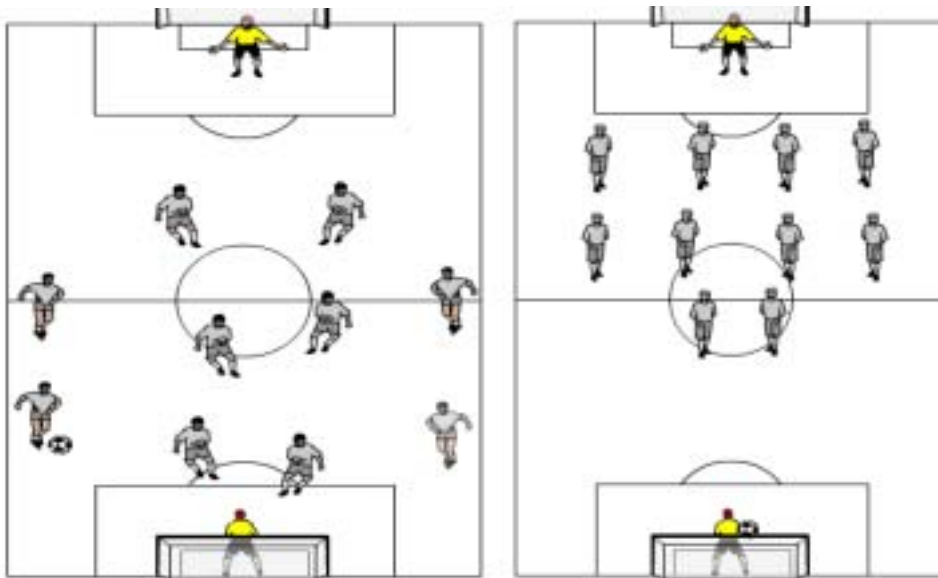
## 1 V 1 SITUATIONS - TRAINING OBJECTIVES`

1. Outside Defenders (usually in face-to-face 1 v 1 situations):
  - ♣ Stop opponents as soon as possible and retreat (jockey).
  - ♣ Use diagonal stance facing outside to force opponents in that direction.
  - ♣ Look for an opportunity to attack and win the ball while retreating.
  - ♣ Look to attack quickly after winning the ball.
2. Inside Defenders (often in 1 v 1 situations with opponents back to goal):
  - ♣ Put yourself in a position so that you are between the opponent and the goal and in a position to intercept the ball.
  - ♣ Always see the player, see the ball and see the field of play.

## TEAM DEFENDING - TRAINING OBJECTIVES

1. Be active.
2. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate.
3. Move to the ball.
4. Outnumber the opponent around the ball whenever possible.
5. Mental toughness, discipline, anticipation, aggressiveness, creativity, ability to act and work as a team.

### BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE 4-4-2



#### **Attacking Formation**

(You Have the Ball)

- Open up the field – Width & depth.
- Outside mids and outside backs move up to join the attack.

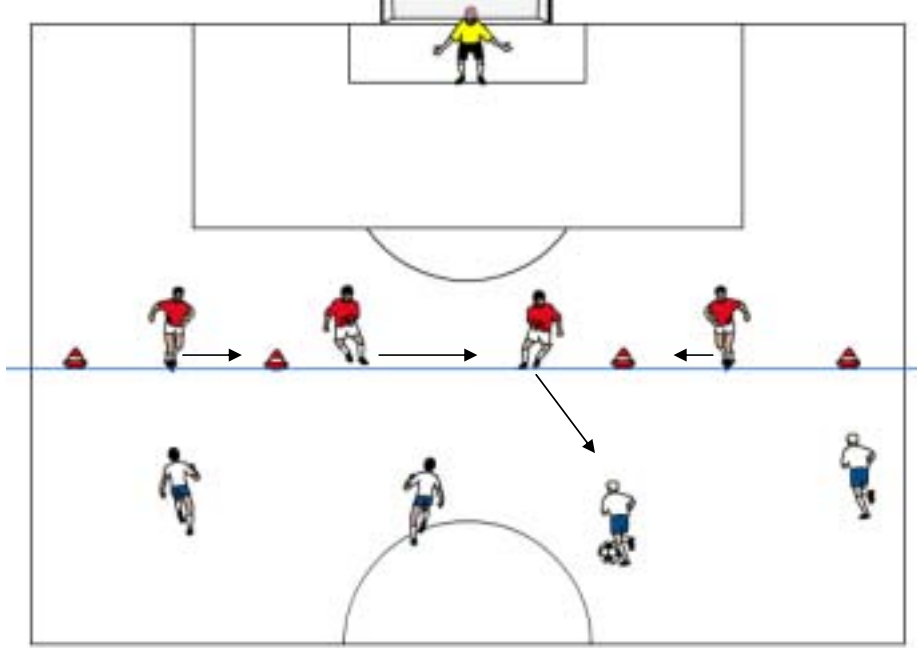
#### **Defending Formation**

(Opponents have the Ball)

- All players must be compact, behind the ball and form a defensive unit.
- Limit the space available for combination plays.

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## BASIC GROUP TACTICS # 1 (Support & Cover)



### Set-up:

- Make a line 35 yds out from the goal with 3 goals starting 5 yds from each sideline .
- A goalkeeper in goal.
- 4 defenders line up in front of the line.
- 3 attackers start at center.

### Sequence:

- The three attackers pass the ball around and attempt to dribble the ball across the 35 yd line between the cones marking the goals.
- Any attacker successfully dribbling the ball over the line can then attempt to score without opposition on a breakaway to goal.

### Coaching Focus

- Outside defenders push attackers outside.
- Inside defenders form a compact tight defensive unit.
- Closest defender supports pressuring defender.

## BASIC GROUP TACTICS #2 (2v3 Defending)

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### Coaching Focus:

- Support and balance in defence.

*Note! Create a competitive environment by having competitions between pairs of defenders and groups of attackers*

### Set-up:

- Mark out a goal 35 yds out and 35 yards across in front of the goal with a goalkeeper.
- Divide the 4 or more defenders into pairs in front of the line.
- Non-defenders divide into groups of 3s.

### Sequence:

- Each defensive pair play 2v3 in turn.
- If one of the attackers breaks through by dribbling across the line he/she may go to goal without pursuit.

## BASIC GROUP TACTICS # 3 (3v4 Defending as a Group)

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### Set-up:

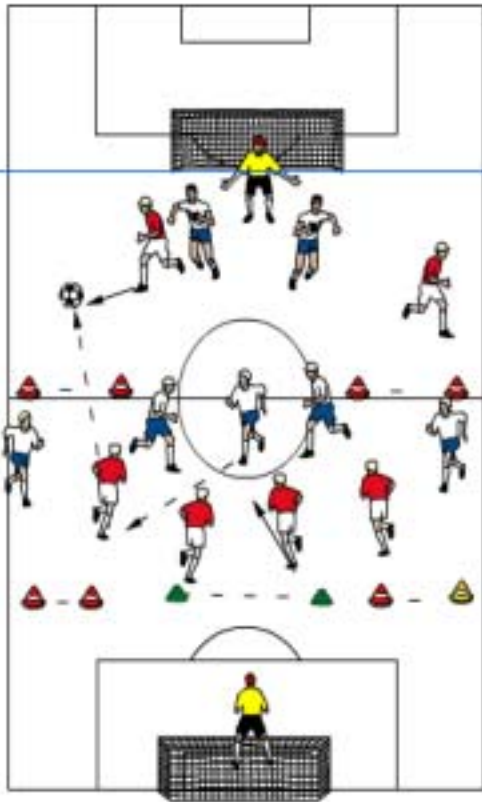
In a 30x40 grid set up 3 small goals of 2 yds each.  
2 Teams of 4 with 1 player of team B starting behind his/her own endline.

### Sequence:

The 4 attackers try to dribble through one of the small goals in a 4v3 situation.  
If the defending team wins the ball they switch roles.  
If the attacking team scores they keep the ball.  
The defending team now becomes the attackers by passing to their player on their own endline and attacks the other team creating a 4v3 situation.  
One member of the attacking team falls back to his/her endline until his/her team becomes the attackers.



**BASIC GROUP TACTICS # 4 (After Winning the Ball- 3V4 With Counterattack)**



**Set-up:**

Mark 3 goals about 30 yds out from goal.

Middle goal is larger (10 yds).

2 more goals (5 yds wide) at centre line off to the side.

2 goals (10 yds wide) off centre in attacking end.

**Sequence:**

5 attackers play against 4 defenders in the defending end.

2V2 in the 2 attacking end.

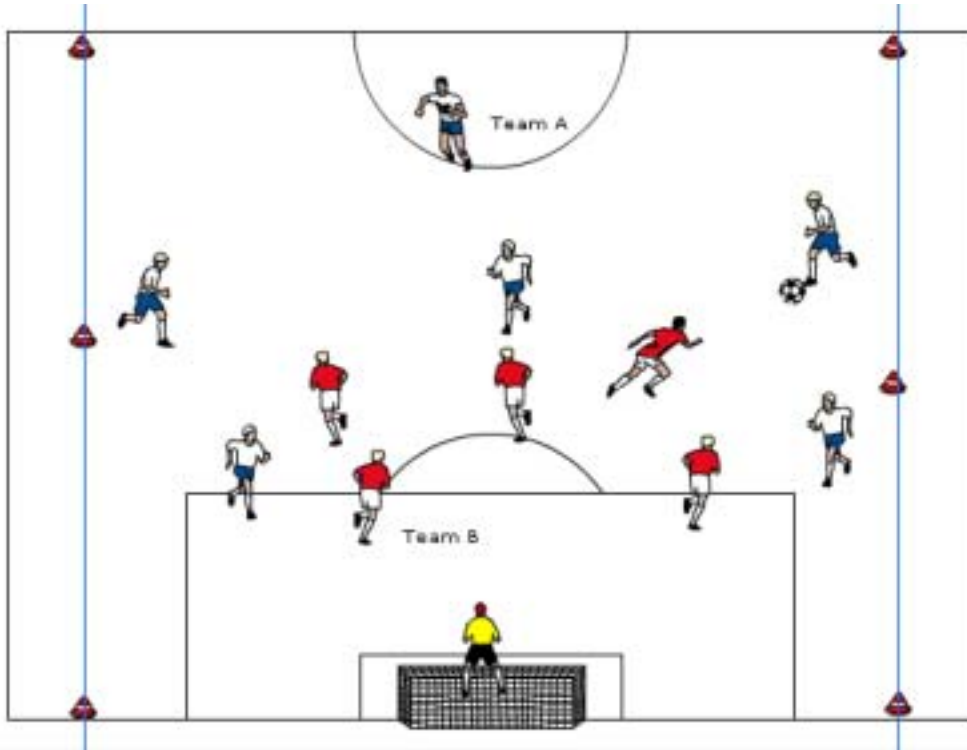
Game starts with 5V4 with attackers trying to dribble the ball through either goal.

If the 4 defenders win the ball then they attempt to pass it through one of the side goals to one of their attackers in the attacking end for a 2v2 situation.

**Coaching Focus:**

- Move as a unit to the ball (force turnovers).
- Always shut down the middle.
- Immediately attack by the flanks after winning the ball in defence.

**BASIC GROUP TACTICS # 5 (5V6 On One Large Goal)**



**Set-up:**

Half field with goalkeeper.

Team A = 6 attackers.

Team B = 5 defenders (4 backs + 1 central defender)

**Sequence:**

Team A tries to score on team B in the smaller field marked by cones.

If Team B wins the ball they can use the entire half of the ball to keep possession with a selected number of passes scoring 1 point (e.g. 5 passes = 1 point).

**Coaching Focus**

- Move as a unit to the ball.
- Force turnovers by getting numbers around the ball and denying the opponents space.
- Force play away from the middle of the field. Force play to the outside.
- Upon winning the ball open up the field and keep possession. Avoid "Turnovers" especially in the defending third.



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