



# PRACTICE PLAN



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**Date: Week of Oct 27, 2025**

**Theme: Defending in the Final Third**

**Duration: 90 minutes**

**Load Level: Medium**

## Session Overview

This session develops key defensive habits and collective coordination in the final third, with a focus on structure, pressing cues, and controlled aggression. The practice builds from individual defensive technique to layered small-sided games that emphasize defensive shape, communication, and recovery under pressure. Although the activities can be coached in the attacking phase, this session is intentionally shaped to reinforce deep defending roles, emphasizing compactness, delay, and triggers to regain or force play wide.

## Learning Objectives

- Technical: Defensive stance, recovery footwork, timing of tackle, delayed pressure technique
- Tactical: Compact shape management, pressing cues, delay and trap zones, covering teammates
- Physical: Agility and lateral movement, explosive closing speed, short recovery efforts
- Psychosocial: Communication under pressure, discipline to maintain role, collective responsibility

## Activities & Progression

### 1. Warm-Up / Activation – Mobility + Short Pass Chain

- Structure: Functional movement patterns (open/close hips, trunk mobility) into short passing circuits
- Details: 3-player passing chain with 1-touch variations, dynamic stretch between rounds
- Focus: Activation of defensive movement chains, posture under passing pressure
- Progression: Add time challenge or defensive shadow pressure

### 2. 1v1 Back to Goal – Press Delay Duel

- Structure: Attacker receives back to goal in tight grid; defender presses from edge
- Objective: Defender delays or forces error; attacker attempts controlled turn or outlet
- Focus: Close space with control, manage body shape, anticipate turn
- Progression: Add timing constraint, limit attacker to 1-touch outlet unless they beat defender

### 3. 3v3+2 Wide Channel Press Game

- Structure: 3v3 inside grid with 2 wide neutrals; play through lines to score
- Objective: Defenders restrict access to wide channels and delay central progress
- Focus: Lateral coordination, forcing wide, pressing moment decision-making
- Progression: Require immediate pressure on wide neutral touch

### 4. 4v4v4 Zone Game – Mid Block with Press Trigger

- Structure: Three teams rotate as defenders in central zone; 1 defender allowed to press into outer zones
- Objective: Defending team regains or forces mistake under positional constraint
- Focus: Compactness in central third, timing of pressure on wide entry
- Progression: Add constraint: defending team must regain within 6 passes or rotate

### 5. 3v3 Flying Change – Cone Goal Transition

- Structure: 3v3 in middle third with target goals; rotation triggered on goal or target pass
- Objective: Defenders react to fast transition and organize immediately
- Focus: Defensive recovery, spacing on switch, communication during transition
- Progression: Add trailing runner as recovery support

### 6. 6v6 Thirds Game – Final Third Defense with Offside Line

- Structure: Field split into thirds; defenders hold line and delay entry
- Objective: Defenders manage shape and trigger offside trap or deny through ball
- Focus: Back line coordination, delay timing, offside awareness
- Progression: Add flank overloads or limit support runners in final third

## Session Flow Notes

This session reinforces a clear defensive identity in the final third, beginning with isolated duels and expanding toward complex game-like situations. Early activities reinforce timing, body shape, and control during press or delay moments. Mid-session games stress compactness and directional control, preventing central progression. The final game challenges defenders to hold shape under pressure and make real-time decisions – offside trap, contain, or commit – all within high-repetition defending contexts. While adaptable to attacking moments, this session is shaped for defensive development at the collective level.