

Basic Defending for U10 Players and Teams

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1. Set up:

Players' pair up – one ball between two
Space approximately 35x25
Pinnies
Pool Noodles or tall cones

2. Warm – Up Activity:

“The Surfer” – (face to face defending) Player 1 Dribbles while Player 2 Shadows from the front and is moving backwards. On Coaches command “surf” Players 1 stops ball & Player 2 assumes a “Surfer’s” stance toward Player1 (stance is side on, knees bent, center of gravity is lowered – like that of a surfer!). Continue and switch roles after a minute.
Same, but now Player 2 is asked to find his surfing moment(s).

3. Small Group Activity

“Save the Whales” - Set up – Grid 35x25, two teams, center box (pool) 5x5 with “whales” = noodles. Surfers' protect the whales' from the poachers (players with a ball) One or two Poacher Ships on the edge of the grid (safe area for poachers)
Poachers must dribble their ball into the “whale pool” & steal a whale (noodle). Poachers are “safe” while in the pool, but must return the noodle to their “Ship”. If a surfer steals the ball s(he) should dribble to the edge of the grid & then return to help protect the whales. If a whale has been captured, it can then be freed by this surfer’s effort and the whale (noodle) is returned un - contested to the pool. After 3 minutes, players switch roles

4. Expanded Activity

“Save the Whales”, part 2 – Now play is directional. Each team has a ball and they are protecting two wide “whale pools”. The teams’ “Ship” is located between the “pools” on respective ends of the field. Each team must try to dribble or pass to a teammate, their own ball into the opposing teams whale pool to steal a whale. Once they have grabbed a whale, they must carry the whale back to their own ship. Their own ball must be worked back & possessed in their own half by the time the whale makes it to their ship. Poachers can only take one whale at a time. Defending surfers protect their whales. When they steal the opponents’ ball, they can make an attempt for two whales. They must also work both balls back into their own half to receive credit for two captured whales.

5. The Game

Final activity. Coach controls the balls from midfield. The coach plays the ball in after a prior ball goes out of bounds. The ball should be played in at different field locations to place the defending team under different situations.

Coaching Points: Defensive, First Defender – the player pressuring the ball

Body Stance – surfer shape – side on – toward opponent
Angle toward the dribbler
Speed toward the dribbler
Space between defender & player in possession
Physical control of approach
Recognize moment to steal the ball