

# How To Teach Unbeatable Soccer Defensive And Offensive Strategies



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# Soccer Defensive Strategies

Winning any sport without using good strategies is impossible! Soccer is a sport full of action. Playing well is important; however, you need to blend your skills and efforts with appropriate strategies too.

Apart from numerous positions and formations, you need to plan out appropriate defensive and offensive strategies. In fact, a good coach will always ensure that there is a proper balance between both the strategies.

As far as the defensive strategies are concerned, they mainly equip the team to win the ball as close to the opponents' goal as possible.

Some useful defensive strategies for you!

## Compact Configuration

It is very important for the coach to provide proper training in compact formation strategy to help the team maintain a compact shape. A team with compact shape has several advantages.

- The player on the ball can be challenged really fast.
- The challenging player has instant defensive support.
- There is availability of players to opponents making forward runs.

As a coach, it is your responsibility to teach the team about the way to cover a teammate challenging the player with the ball. Besides, you must teach the players the method to mark an opponent in the area of the ball. Further, they must also learn to occupy the significant space goal-side of the ball.

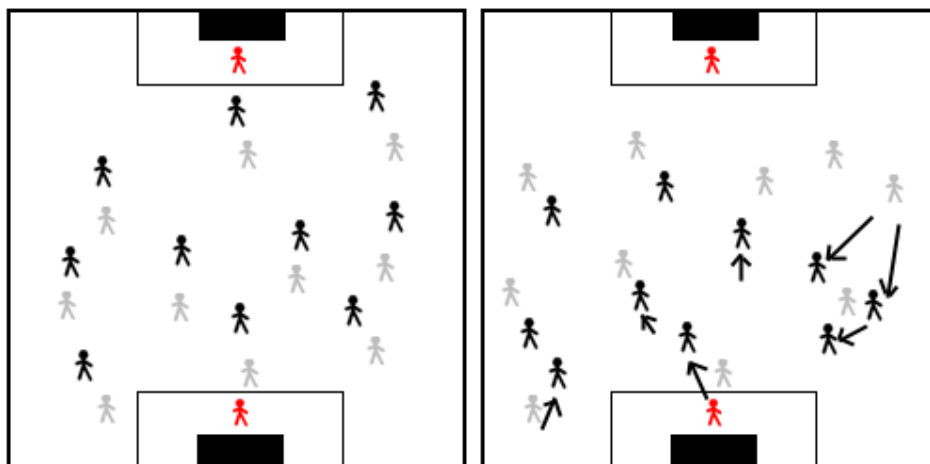
If you are wondering how to deny your opponent, follow the given techniques.

## Marking

Marking and covering are two techniques that can prevent your opponents from attacking. In fact, they can help you block their direct course to your goal and persuade them to move away from the goal. Remember, the closer your opponent is to the ball, the tighter you must mark him.

Compactness is a very important way of playing good defense. Compactness prevents the opposition from scoring goals. You must teach your team to remain closely packed, thereby blocking their opponents' direct course to goal.

Subsequently, your attackers won't be able to develop direct plays. In fact, it will force them to the flank.



In the left diagram given above, the black team is marking their opponent man-to-man across the whole pitch. In general, man-to-man marking is not very effective in obstructing the opposition.

On the other hand, we have the diagram on our right-hand side where the black team is pitching in a tight and close formation.

Here, the midfielders are marking tighter and the fullbacks are pushing forward, thereby leaving their opponent forwards offside. Further, the players on the opposite flank are also pitching in.

However, the right fullback and the right midfielder are required to communicate properly. They should be fully prepared to pick up any free opponent on their side in the event of his running down the wing.

### **Reduce The Probability Of Conceding A Goal**

You must give proper training on the method of diminishing the chances of conceding a goal further. In particular, the players defending in and around their own penalty area should focus on the following points:

- Be the first to ball.
- Move in the direction of the ball clearing with height, distance, and width.
- Defend the area of the far post.
- Don't get caught in possession in the defending third of the field.

### **Stay In Triangle**

Staying within a triangle is also a good technique that you must tell your players to follow. The triangle is created by the ball's position, the position of their immediate opponent, and the center of the goal. The defenders must stay inside this triangle.

## Shield The Corners

Another effective defensive strategy you must teach your players is their positions at corners. The diagram given below shows the positions for basic marking.

Now, just imagine that a right footed player swinging the ball in the direction of the goal has taken the corner on the left. The setup will look like the following diagram.



Your top four headers (numbers 3, 5, 6, and 10) of the ball must man to man mark. Their focus should be on marking the opponent's major heading risk.

They should mark a little to the front. Remember, they should be the first to ball. Next, it is the task of player number 11 to mark in front of any opponent standing on the near post or mark the space (zone) in the case of them not being present.

Now, player number 4 will mark the zone in front of the main markers. However, he must remain alert and check if there is any opposition standing in front of the goalkeeper. He must adjust his position and stand in front of the attacker, if he sees an opposition standing in front of the goalkeeper. Player number 2 will mark the far post.

Then, player number 7 and 8 must mark any opponent who is on the edge of the box. Finally, player number will stay up field. His purpose should be to occupy the two defenders and help spring a counter attack. Apart from these, there are other techniques as well.

### **The Method Of Closing Down Passing Lanes**

Using this method, your defenders can close down their opponent's passing line, thus limiting their option. For this, first approach the ball carrier and block his (nearest) support.

In the diagram, Attacker 1 is confronted from the right, thereby blocking his passing lane to the second. Attacker 1 now has just two options: (a) pass back or (b) move away from his support.

### **The Method Of Double-Teaming Attackers**

Another method is to pressurize an opponent by using two defenders. The defenders must move toward him in such a way the he is not able to go around them. One defender will deliberately challenge Attacker 1 from the left.

This way, his only option will be to move right, straight into the second fullback. When two defenders are collectively pressuring an enemy, they must approach him in such a way so that he cannot go around them.

However, make sure the defenders should not be too close to each other or else he might dribble in between them.

## **Soccer Offensive Strategies**

Soccer coaching involves a perfect blend of defensive and offensive strategies. In fact, as a coach it is your duty to make your players realize that both are equally important. Having said this, we now move on to the defensive strategies.

First and foremost, soccer defensive strategies must be learned by offensive-oriented as well as defensive-oriented players. If a team has the ball, then it must get into offensive action. Now, playing offensive in soccer involves some strategies. But, it also requires creativity.

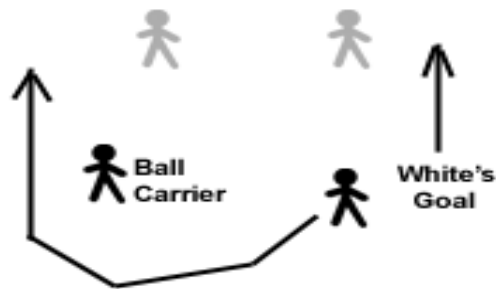
Some offensive strategies have been listed for you. Use them as a guide line and customize them in keeping with your team and the changing circumstances.

### **Short Passing**

In the short passing strategy, the trick is to pass the ball effectively. If you are passing the ball to a marked player, then pass it in such a way that it directly goes at the foot of your teammate standing on the opposite side of his marker.



In case you are marking a supporting run, then make sure that you maintain eye contact with the ball carrier as this will help you grab the ball. Further, while receiving the ball, ensure that it doesn't roll toward you.

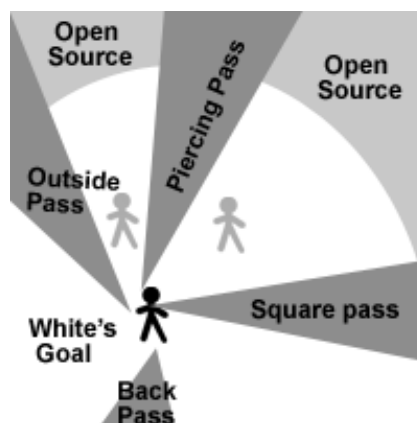


## The Overlap

This offensive strategy can be used in case there is open room on the flank to the side of the ball carrier. If you use it down the wing, your opponent defenders won't be able to cover the overlap.

However, the problem with overlap is that it leaves open space behind you.

## Distributing The Ball



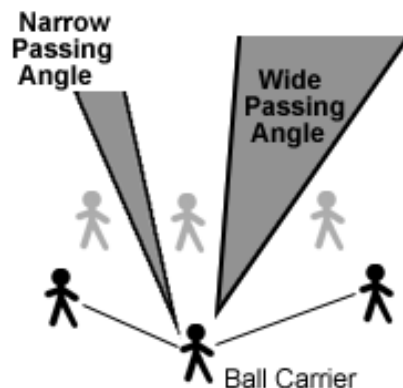
The type of ball passing should be in keeping with the direction of where the ball is headed. It is always better for the ball carrier to pass the ball in the open angles.

Playing the ball in the open safe, the space at the rear of the opposite defenders, is a safe way; your defenders won't be able to recover. Just exploit the open space to the fullest either with a chip or with a few short passes.

Further, you can use the outside angle to your advantage by making an overlap run in it. Now, if you want to change the point of attack and open new passing angles, simply go for square passes.

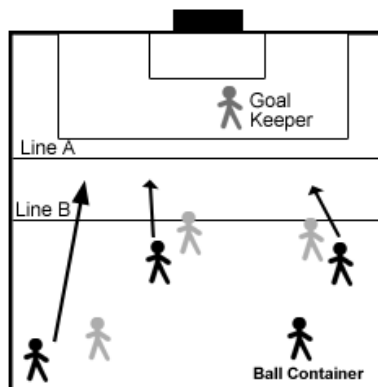
Finally, there is piercing angle, which is quite risky. However, as most defenders position themselves between the ball carrier and their own goal, it is seldom available.

### Forming Passing Angles



Remember, while on offense, if your team players maintain certain distance from you while supporting you, there will be room for open angles. This will cause hindrance for the opposite defense, as they will have to cover more space.

## Breaking The Defense

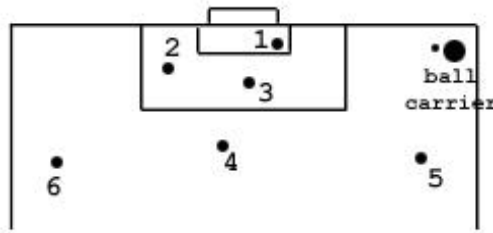


What if the last line of your opponent defenders marks your attackers? Well, they can check back to the ball. They can go for the direct approach and head forward. The offside hinders them from moving forward.

Thus, first the ball needs to be played. Now, the ball should be targeted in keeping with the attackers' speed. It should be 3-10 meters behind the last line of enemy defense (Line B) and 6-10 meters in front the goalkeeper (Line A).

Now, the attacking players must run toward the area between line A and B, a little before the ball leaves the foot of the passer. This gives advantage to the attackers as the opponent fullbacks would have to take 180 degrees turn for regaining their ground.

## Crossing



In a situation when the ball is far out on the flanks, the ball should be crossed to a spot from where a better shot can be taken successfully. Now, a perfect spot is the area between the penalty spot and the 6 yard line, as it is quite far to force the enemy keeper in coming out.

Moreover, it is in close proximity to the goal, thereby making way for a header or shot. Now, for receiving a cross, your attackers should move toward all the 6 points (as depicted in the diagram).

However, make sure that the players while moving toward the target spot stay outside of the penalty box. This must be done till the ball carrier delivers the ball.

The opposite defenders will have to follow the moving ball as well as the player they are marking. A difficult task indeed!

That's what I wanted to share with you about soccer defensive and offensive strategies.

Hope you enjoyed it!

Yours in soccer,



Andre Botelho, President

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