



PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Principles of play are the underpinning concepts of the game and can be coached from the first stage of development (3-5 year old players) onwards. The principles relate to attacking and defending and should not be confused with systems of play – the formation of the team on the field. The principles of play are the same in any system of play.

PRINCIPLES OF ATTACK AND DEFENSE

ATTACK

DEFENSE

<p>Penetration: In simplistic terms penetration is the act of breaking through the defense by dribbling, shooting, running or passing. We can start to coach penetration at the first stage of development.</p>	<p>Pressure: The moment possession is lost the nearest player(s) try to regain possession or apply pressure on the ball, if possible. Players giving immediate chase can also help to delay the attack by making recovery runs that deny the opponent the opportunity to play the ball quickly forward. If a defender cannot put “immediate” pressure on the ball, he or she must drop back and delay the attacker’s advance.</p>
<p>Support: A player in possession of the ball receives help to maintain possession. Support attackers provide forward, backward and sideways options to the attacker in possession. We can start to coach support at the second stage of development with an introduction to passing and receiving.</p>	<p>Cover: The immediate organization of players behind the pressuring defender. While the ball is being pressured all other players should be recovering into defensive positions. The positions taken should support the pressuring defender in the event they are beaten.</p>
<p>Mobility: Attackers make runs into different areas of the field in order to draw defenders out of their positions. A coach can commence teaching this principle late second stage for advanced learners and Stage 3 for others.</p>	<p>Balance: As the team concentrates their defense in the area of the ball, defenders away from the ball (opposite side of field) must position themselves to cover vital spaces (central areas) in order to prevent attackers from making penetrating runs into these spaces in which to receive the ball for an attempt on goal. All players who are on the opposite side must seek positions in which to provide balance to the defense.</p>
<p>Width: The attacking team attempts to stretch the opponent’s defensive shape. The attacking players use the width of the field to tempt defenders from a compact shape covering the dangerous areas in front of goal and in so doing create space. The attackers move the ball to change the point of attack in an effort to find a seam or space between or behind the defense. We can start coaching width in late stage 2 and early stage 3.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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 first stage of development.</p>	<p>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.</p>