

ADVANCED SKILLS

Hold the line

It is the last minute of a cup final and your team is 1-0 up. The opposition is firing long balls and crosses into your penalty area. Can your team remain calm and clear the danger?



What you tell your players the session is about

- 1. Defending under pressure.
- 2. Clearing the ball from danger.
- 3. Remaining composed.

Session planner	Warm-up	Session	Development	Game situation	Warm-down
	5 mins	15 mins	15 mins	20 mins	5 mins

Activity	Kit	Outcome	
Warm-up	One bib	"Huddle movement", in which the team works together to defend the driver, from <i>The Ultimate Football Warm-Ups Manual</i> , exercise 4	
Session	Cones, balls	The players take turns to serve the ball and make defensive clearances	
Development	One goal, balls, bibs cones	The defence must try to clear the crosses	
Game situation	Two goals, balls, bibs, cones	The defence and midfield must defend the high ball and then look to counter attack	
Warm-down	n/a	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises	



Where it fits

Individual skills: Defending skills, heading the ball, volleying to clear, man marking, communication Team skills: Communication, listening too and acting to instructions, defending as a team

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What to think about

- The defence must not drop too deep and place the goalkeeper under intense pressure, so a high defensive line needs to be held.
- As the ball is played, one defender should go to challenge for the ball, the other defenders drop behind and take up covering positions.
- Defenders try to hold the line as far up the pitch as possible so attackers will be caught offside.
- If a defender wins the ball they do not want to give possession away so look for movement from team mates to receive a pass.





Use two cones to mark out a 20-yard distance for the session. Use half a pitch with a goal and mark out two five yard wide channels for the development.

For the game, use an area 50 yards long by 40 yards wide with a goal at end end.



Session - 15 mins

Players work in groups of three. The first player holds the ball in their hands, runs toward the second player and throws the ball into the air. The second player heads the bottom of the ball to send the ball high into the air (past the first player) and into the third player's arms.

As a variation, throwers can bounce the ball and defenders can kick rather than head it away.



Development - 15 mins

Place four defenders on the edge of the penalty area.

The attackers are made up of servers, two forwards and two wide players – one in each channel.

To start, the midfielders pass the ball wide and the player in the channel takes a touch and hits a cross into the penalty area. The two attackers and the wide player not in possession of the ball try to score from the cross. The defenders try to defend the cross.

The next attack is started with a pass to the opposite wide player. This enables the defence to defend from balls played from the right and left.



Game situation - 20 mins

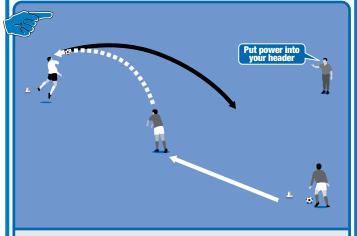
Two neutral servers are placed either side of one team's goal. The game is started by one of the servers who plays a long ball towards the opposite goal.

The team at the opposite end tries to hold the line and ensure their opponents do not win the ball and create a goal-scoring chance. If the defence wins the ball it tries to counter attack to score themselves.

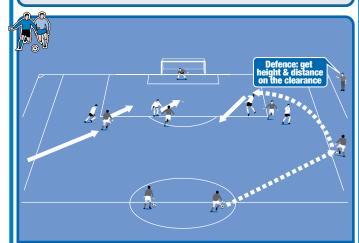
Whenever the ball leaves play the game is restarted by the servers with a long pass.

Hold the line

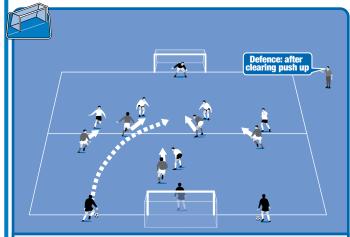
player movement ⇒ pass/serve □□□⇒ header →



Players take turns to serve the ball and then complete defensive clearance headers.



Four defenders try to defend against three attackers (including a winger who has come in) and clear the high ball from wide.



A server begins the game by playing a long ball to the opposite end of the pitch where that defence begins its attack.

