



Futsal Defending

(by Otto Orf, 1-31-2013)

As a TEAM:

Communication. The goalkeeper is a key part of the team defensive strategy as he/she views everything from the back and can see passing lanes, unmarked players and usually identifies the more skilled forwards/shooters more quickly than teammates.

Defending as a team in futsal is often dictated by the formation of the attacking team. However I suggest dropping back a few yards behind the midfield line to start. Get into a 'box' or a 2-2 with about 12-15 feet between each of the players. All players should keep their shoulders 'square' to the ball and their heads on a swivel so that they are constantly seeing their mark and the ball. They can use their hands to 'find' their mark if the player tries to hide or move behind them.

When the ball is at one of the 'points'*** the player closest to the ball should 'press' or close the distance between himself and the attacker without 'diving in'. This distance is about 3-7 feet depending on how close to the goal you are.

As the primary defender 'presses' the defenders directly adjacent (to the left or right) should 'tuck' moving NOT toward the ball but toward the center of the defensive court thus quickly closing the passing lanes. This gives a clear passing opportunity to other offensive players on the 'perimeter' but does not allow your core defense to be 'split'. When the ball is passed the defender nearest the player who receives the ball now 'presses', the two adjacent defenders 'tuck' and this is repeated over and over.

The goalkeeper and defender farthest from the ball must always be aware of the 'far post' attacker.

If this style is perfected it becomes very difficult for teams to break down the defense and the scoring of goals will have to take place on long distance shots or counter attacks.

As an INDIVIDUAL:

As in outdoor soccer getting 'goal side'* or 'behind** the ball' is key.

Behind the ball can be better explained to youngsters by showing them a line between the ball and the goal they are defending. If they are marking the player with the ball they should be directly in this line. Their body position should be such that they are turning the player with the ball toward the OUTSIDE of the field where the angle to score gets more difficult.

If the player is not marking the ball they should imagine a line between the player they are marking and the goal and get in that line to be sure that they can prevent their 'mark' from beating them by getting behind** them.

When a player is defending an opponent who has the ball he/she should be 'on the knife' or in an athletic, sprinters position on the balls of their feet, center of gravity lowered and the shoulders and hips turned square to the ball and player facing the direction they wish to 'shepherd' the opponent. This direction should almost always be away from the center of the field and toward the nearest sideline.

When to attack, when to hold? A player should follow these general rules most of the time but there are exceptions. The biggest mistake a defender can make is to 'dive in' after the ball. This action, lunging or reaching for the ball, when the offensive opponent has controlled possession will usually end up in disaster for your team. Think of it this way, even if you win the ball as a defender there is little advantage BUT if you get beat the opponent has a sure chance at attacking your goal.

There is a line where a defender should/must make a stand. Usually this is determined and communicated by the goalkeeper but as a general guideline the coach should give a reference point as to where this line should be. This really only applies to the last line of defense because the forward defenders have support and can therefore recover. The last line of defense however must decide at some point to challenge for the ball. The point of challenge should be determined by the goalkeeper and his ability to see the ball and react to a shot. If the defender retreats too far, the goalkeeper will be unable to see the ball properly or react in time to make a save. Because the goalkeeper is always responsible for the near post it severely inhibits his ability to play a proper angle and cut off any pass to the back post or to move into position to stop a shot off the pass to the back post before the ball is actually in the back of the net.

The GOALKEEPERS role:

Goalkeeper should talk all of the time! Not yell, although sometimes this is necessary, but talk in clear, concise commands and help his teammates. If the goalkeeper is constantly talking it will give confidence to his players, let them know if they have time, where their help is, where the pressure is coming from and also when they can use him for assistance by passing the ball backward.

Goalkeepers that have good communication skills and use proper positioning rarely have to make spectacular saves and usually their teams have a lower goals against average per game because they play defense as a 'unit' and not as a group of individuals.