

## Team Principles of Defense

The basic principles of team defense are as follows

- Collapse - Entire team collapses into less space in front of opponent's point of attack.
- 1st defender guides ball carrier into thickest part of defense or away from middle.
- Covering defenders cut off "through" spaces.
- Together, First and second defenders squeeze attack into tight, difficult space.
- Concentrate - Gather forces in middle of the field and near the ball before attempting to dispossess the ball.

## Individual Principles of Defense

The principles of individual defense are as follows:

- **Delay Then Pressure-**
  - Player nearest the ball is "the 1st Defender":
  - Get ball carrier's head down by putting him under *close enough* pressure to make him worry about controlling the ball and so he cannot look for passing options, **but not close enough to be beaten**; (delay)
- Player(s) not nearest to the ball, get into position to intercept all short or desired passing options; (Provide **Cover**)
  - Leave open most difficult and longest passing options as long as there is good pressure and cover on the ball carrier and his nearest passing options.
  - The first defender should not run straight at ball carrier, but should come in at an angle that would force the ball carrier to pass back or to attack toward our covering defenders or toward a touchline. This makes the opponent's attack predictable and easy to read by covering defenders.
- When the attacker has been contained, but still maintains possession of the ball, the defender would do well to force the attacker to move to the side or even backwards. By forcing laterally, the supporting defenders can gain time to recover. Once recovered, the supporting defenders can enhance their positions as they have more time to adjust. An attacker that is allowed to go forward, causes the whole team to adjust their vertical defensive positions.
- If the defender can force the attacker to go backwards, the defender must try to maintain close pressure to keep the attacker from opening up space. The supporting defense should use this opportunity to push forward as well, compressing the attack away from its own goal. If the on ball

pressure is not there, then the supporting defense would do well not to compress as the attacker will have time and space to find and take advantage of the defensive weak spots.

The 1st defender, in applying pressure to the attacking ball-handler, should:

➤ **Delay**

- Staggered stance, alternating front and back foot, feet shoulder width apart, legs bent, body bent, on your toes (don't get flat-footed).
- Feints and stabs but do not commit until ball-carrier makes a mistake.
- Concentrate on player, not the ball, look at ball carrier's hips, not his feet or upper body.
- With peripheral vision, see the space between the ball and ball carrier. If the ball gets away from feet

➤ **Deny**

- Deny the shot;
- Deny penetration by denying "through" spaces which ball carrier desires to penetrate.
- Close distance between self and ball carrier. Get close enough to force ball carrier to alter course of attack and to force his head down to concentrate on not losing possession of the ball.
- Choose angle of approach to guide ball carrier away from dangerous space.
- Block any attempted shot.

➤ **Destroy**

- Win possession by tackling **if** ball carrier achieves even position.
- Win possession by stepping between ball carrier and ball **if** ball gets away from his feet.
- Tackle also if ball carrier allows ball to be between his own feet. Tackles should be fully committed through center of ball carrier's position.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> defender(s), those next nearest to the ball, are those who are marking up to close passing options. They must cover " the space behind teammate who is pressuring the ball; and if numbers are up than extra defender might decide whether to risk double teaming the ball carrier to win the ball.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> defender provides **Balance** .- The 3rd and other defenders cover deep and attacking spaces which may be used by the opponent to switch their point of attack, for example, by playing to the opposite wing.