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Junior Soccer Defending – Directing the Play

By Neil Stafford

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Do your players know whether to show an opponent inside or outside when they are defending?

You may want to consider this tactic when coaching your players. There are two schools of thought on this; One says that your defenders should show the opponents outside towards the touchline.

The reason for this is that if your player does get beat then the opponent will still have to get a cross in. Also, they should be at a more acute angle to get a shot on target if they have been successfully pushed outside.

The alternative to this is showing the opponents inside, towards goal. If this is to be your style of play then the players need to be organised so that there is strength inside. This can be a risky tactic if players are not switched on or don't know where to best position themselves.

Showing them inside would be a good tactic if you were playing with five in defence with a good sweeper.

If your team lacks some direction on this tactic, then it will be very difficult for them to get an organised shape

and take a position which is best suited to holding up or breaking down an attack.

Both young and older players can be coached on this.

As players get older, and become more tactically aware & proficient in defending techniques, they will be able to influence the build up play and therefore your defensive line can react, and adjust, by taking the lead off the first defender.

Build this simple tactic into some small sided games in

training and watch the beneficial results on match day!

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Junior Soccer Coach – Mini Soccer Formations 2–3–1

By Neil Stafford

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Junior Soccer Coach – Mini Soccer Formations 2–3–1

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We are often asked what is the best formation to play mini soccer. There are plenty of different variations on how you

can structure your 6 outfield players. In this series of articles we will explore different formations that we have used and seen and outline the respective roles that need to be fulfilled in these set ups.

These are not sure fire winning formations! You should know what strengths you have in your team and hopefully, these examples will give you some food for thought on how you may best structure your team. Starting formation two players in defense, three midfielders and one attacker. Organisation

The defense starts with two players in a line who cover the left and right sides of the field.

The midfield players can be organised in a line or with the central midfielder playing ahead of the two wingers (more attacking) or slightly behind (more defensive). The lone attacker should take up a position deep into the opponents half.

Rules may change from state to state but the offside rule does not apply in mini soccer here in the UK, therefore the lone attacker can take this position without any worries.
Defense

Left and Right Backs, mark the opponent's forward(s) and are the only real defenders. They have to be dependable and will only play a supporting role in offensive play if your opponents retreat all players.

The left, centre and right midfielders should also be available to assist in defending dependant on where the attack originates, they should try to stop or slow down opposing plays before they get to the defensive line.

With only one attacker they can chase the ball and harry their opponents, possibly forcing errors in passing.

This then allows the midfielders to take charge. Attack

Left, Centre and Right Midfielders main consideration should be to distribute the ball among themselves and to the striker. Possession is key and steady, patient build up play is required.



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