

Sweeper/Man-Marking & Zonal Defending Systems

PRINT

At Bloomsburg University last week, as part of the NSCAA Advanced National Course, George Perry, one of our senior instructors, and I did an on-field presentation of the Sweeper/Man-Marking system and the Zonal Defending system.

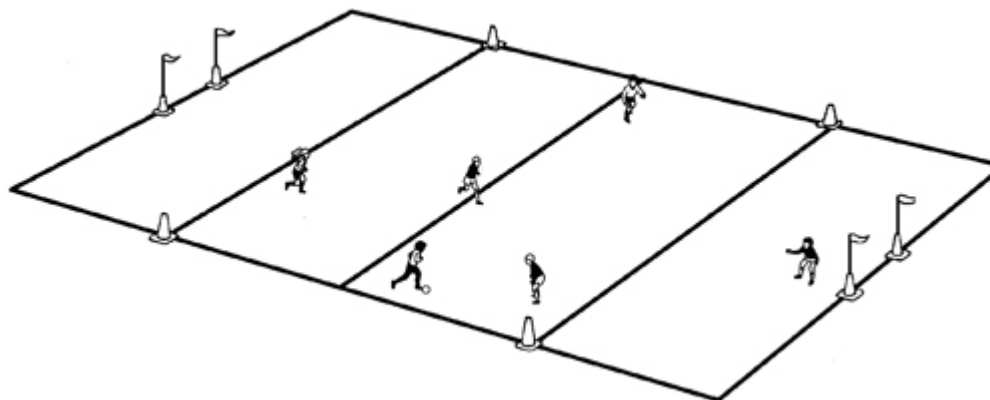
I asked the candidates how many use a Sweeper/Man-Marking system. Out of over 50 coaches only 3 hands went up. 10 years ago it would have been a majority (of American coaches).

Things really began to change after the success of Brazil in the 1994 World Cup Finals held in the United States when in winning it all, Brazil showed themselves to be not only the best attacking them in the competition, but also the best defensive team - using a zonal system.

We are not saying there is any "best" system. The only thing we would say is that every good team uses Pressure, Cover and Balance considerations when defending.

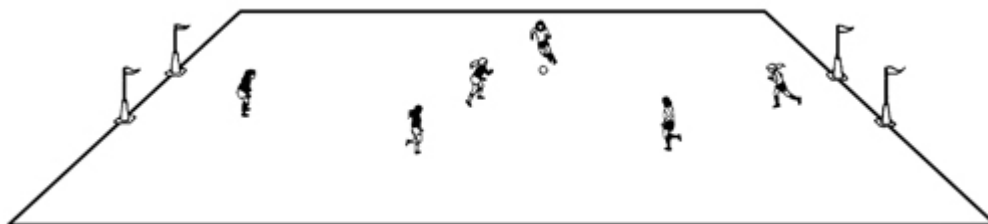
So our two practices are ones that will help young players and teenagers learn about "zonal" play - Pressure, Cover, Balance - by just playing. No need to stop them and coach.

Practices for Younger Players:



Micro Soccer®

Rotating, equal time goalkeepers give the small team "Balance" and helps the 6- and 7-year olds understand the "zonal" roles. Strict man-marking would not be an advantage here.



3 vs. 3 - no goalkeeper

Absence of a goalkeeper - permanent rear defender - in the above 3 vs. 3 game means that the triangle of attack and defence will be more difficult and confusing for 6- & 7- year olds, but good for 8-year olds and above.



Fab Fours - 4 vs. 4 including a rotating goalkeeper

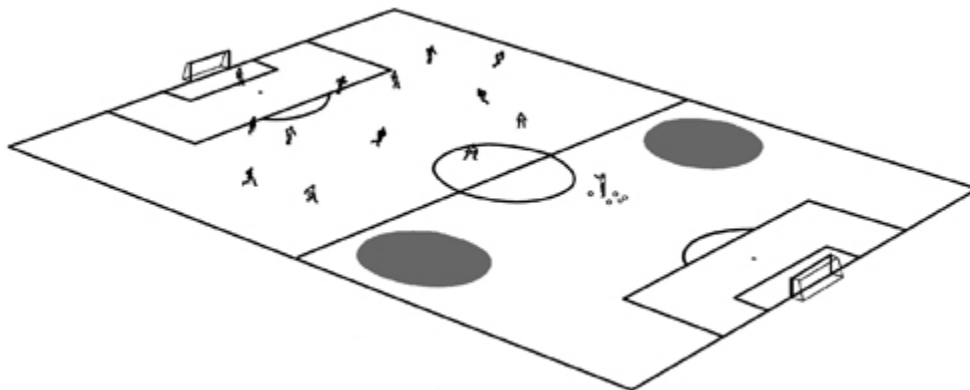


4 vs. 4 without a goalkeeper

As numbers increase so do the difficulties - particularly for the players "away from the ball," but these are the correct progressions.

Practice for Teenagers

Phase of Play (Attack vs. Defence)



In the Phase of Play-type practice with counter goals (or spaces) play the defending team with even numbers or with one player less than the attackers to force them to defend zonally, e.g., 6 attackers vs. 6 Defenders plus a goalkeeper, or 7 Attackers vs. 6 Defenders and a goalkeeper.

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