

BAHRAIN UNDER-23S

Anthony Hudson Defending shape

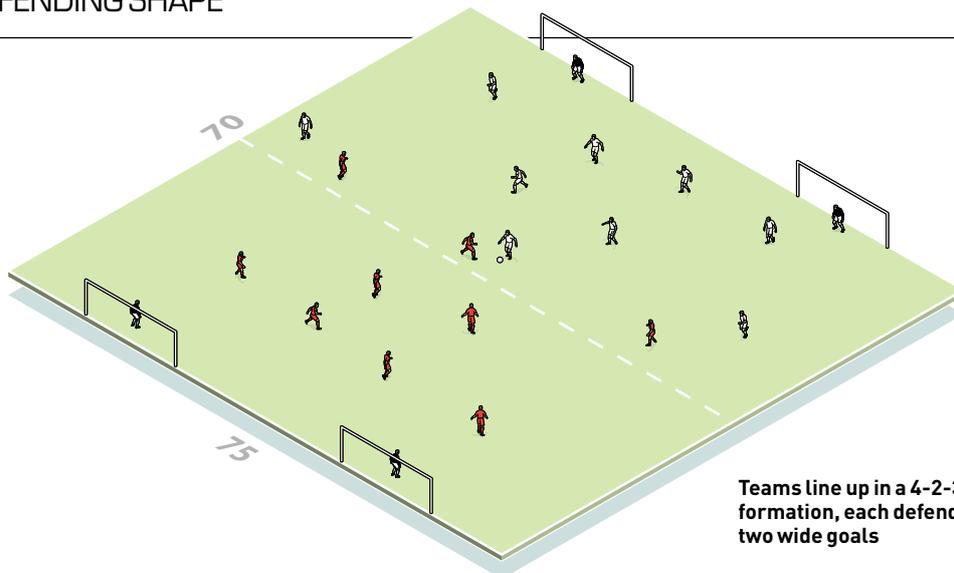
Overview:

This is a 10v10 practice that rehearses defensive shape, both in terms of zonal marking, pressing and defending deep. It's used to help players master the idea of getting into good shape quickly, dropping off where necessary and working as a unit to defend the goal.

This is ideal for teams looking to practise defensive shape. They learn to understand when to press opposition, and from that, become hard to break down.

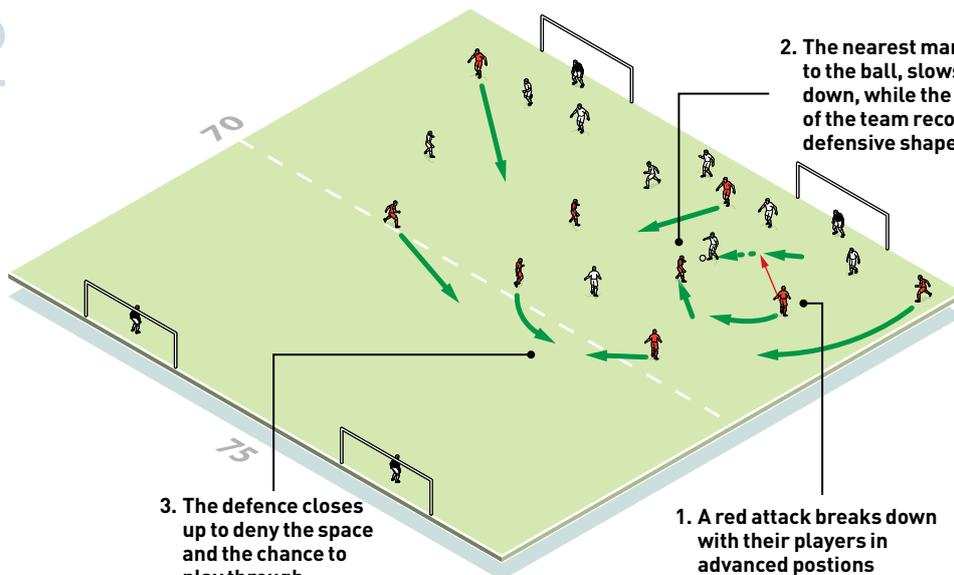
DEFENDING SHAPE

1



Teams line up in a 4-2-3 formation, each defending two wide goals

2



2. The nearest man goes to the ball, slows play down, while the rest of the team recovers defensive shape

3. The defence closes up to deny the space and the chance to play through

1. A red attack breaks down with their players in advanced positions

KEY
Ball movement →
Player movement →
Dribble - - - →

What do I get the players to do?

4-2-3 practice

Both teams, protecting two goals each, set up in a 4-2-3 formation in the area shown. This is free play to start – the challenge simply to score in either of the opposition goals.

We move the practice on by introducing an initial start position scenario. The idea of this is to pinpoint exactly what we want to coach

in the most critical of scenarios.

So we'll instruct for the ball to be given away in a specific area, when our team is now 'out of balance' and in poor defensive shape. If defenders cannot win the ball back immediately, they must respond as follows:

- The nearest man slows play down by going to the ball and/or screening a forward pass

- Defenders delay the play

- Team mates drop into defensive shape as quickly as possible

- Team mates stay compact and keep the ball in front of them

- Once in good defensive shape the team now looks for the right moment to press – they must look for the trigger (most often being the first person who decides to go and press the ball)

We extend the task by giving the ball away in different areas of the pitch, with different players out of position.

The intention for defenders is to always keep the play in front of them, to prevent the opposition from playing through them and to keep attackers in areas of the pitch determined by our players, not the opposition.

SET-UP

AREA	75x70 yards
EQUIPMENT	Balls, cones, goals
NUMBER OF PLAYERS	22
SESSION TIME	3x6min games



Anthony Hudson

BAHRAIN UNDER-23S

Anthony Hudson is manager of the Bahrain Under-23 international and Olympic team. He accepted the post after gaining considerable managerial experience in the English league with Newport County, and Real Maryland Monarchs in the US.

The 31-year-old has also coached at Barclays Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur, and Wilmington Hammerheads.

In a short playing career, he came through the West Ham United youth system and also played for Luton Town, NEC Nijmegen and Wilmington.

DEFENDING SHAPE

3 The reds agree a point to start defending from - halfway. When losing possession, they recover to this line. It is important to keep the defensive 'shape' and not be tempted forward if there's no chance of getting good pressure on the ball

The forwards still have defensive duties, but must position themselves and be ready to press

Communication between the two lines is vital. Midfielders and defenders must stay zonal and 'pass-on' opposing players as they move position

Defenders must have the correct body shape in staying aware of opposition players trying to overlap or penetrate defensive lines

4 Playing a higher defensive line allows more pressure to be put on the ball

The danger of playing a high line is that defenders are open to runs and passes in behind. The keeper must concentrate, anticipate and play on the front foot, being ready to come forward and sweep up if necessary

KEY
Ball movement →
Player movement →
Dribble - - - →

What are the key things to look out for?

The principles of this practice include preventing the opposition players from getting in behind either from a run or a pass by denying that space. Similarly, they must prevent playing through by keeping compact. Defenders should have discipline and not be pulled out of their

shape when there is no pressure on the ball. Players must communicate with each other and recognise the 'trigger'. When that comes, everyone must go to support and press the opposition. When the ball is central, the back four should be ready on the half-turn to react to runners in behind. When wide, players should have an open body to see both

the man and the ball. And as in any normal practice, players need to shift across the pitch quickly when play is switched, to prevent gaps opening up.

How do I progress the session?

Progressing this session is about moving to the next stage of defending - namely recognising when to go and press higher up the pitch. This may be when

an opposition player makes a poor pass or touch, or when he turns to face his own goal under pressure. It might also be relevant if we're behind late in a game, or the other team is a man down.

We then want players to know how to play the moment they win the ball back, creating space, playing quickly out, and counter-attacking. ■

"The intention is always to keep the opposition in areas of the pitch determined by you, not them."