

Defending as a unit

Practice organisation

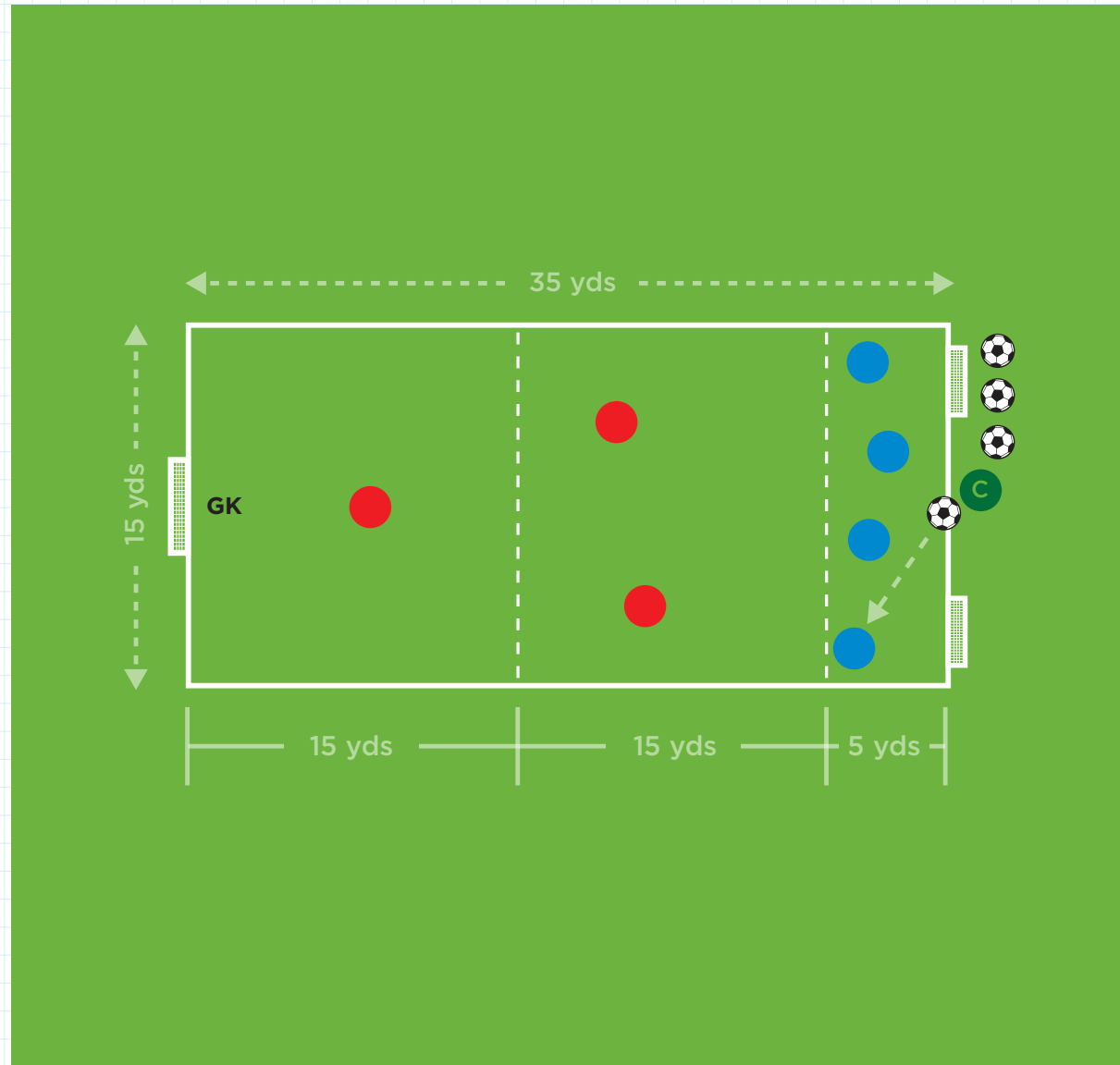
- Area 35x15yds, divided into 3 zones (15x15, 15x15 & 5x15yds), as illustrated
- 1 appropriate size goal at one end & 2 small goals to serve as targets in corners, at the other.
- Supply of balls with coach.
- 8 players arranged 4 Attackers v 2 Defenders plus a sweeper & GK, as shown in the diagram.
- Practice starts with: coach feeds pass into A's, who attack the far goal.
- 2D's are confined to middle zone & sweeper covers behind, remaining in end zone.
- 4A's are able to operate in first 2 zones, but only 2 are allowed to move into end zone (versus sweeper & GK) to attack goal.
- If D's gain possession: they play ball through either of 2 small goals/ pairs of cones in opposite corner.
- Practice restarts with original set-up arrangements & ball fed-in by coach.

Detail

- Could be replaced by cones.
- Coordination & team balance amongst A's who need to work as a unit.
- Support play & communication amongst D's, working as a unit.
- Effective individual defending.
- Simple progressions for this practice are:
 - A's make pre-determined number of consecutive passes before entering end zone.
 - D allowed to drop/recover to assist sweeper & GK defend end zone.
 - A's push 3rd. player into end zone to support attack.
 - D's drop into end zone, to challenge A's ability to break down a compact defence (4A's allowed in end zone).
 - Introduce off-side line to enable D's to defend high.

Key coaching points

- A's combining & working as a team to evade D's initial defending line.



- Passing, movement & combination play to create space & release free receivers.
- Quality of passing & pass selection.
- Individual dribbling & shielding skills to evade D's & create time & space to pass.
- Looking for penetrating pass to enter end zone without being intercepted by sweeper.
- Passing angles & distances.
- Composure in tight-marked situation & awareness of need for patient build-up/possession play.
- Seeking opportunities & selecting appropriate methods to shoot & score.
- D's looking to play as a unit.
- Remaining compact & channelling play across the area.
- Trapping players on side line.