

Tackling – The Art of Taking the Ball from another Player

Strength, courage and skill all play a part in the successful tackle. There are different techniques which can be used and these depend on the position of the attacking player in relation to the defending player. It is best to learn and practice the complex sequences of movement involved in tackling as a whole. The players should be taught these techniques as young as possible.

Types of tackles:

- Block (U8 to U19)
 - Inside of foot
- Poke (U8 to U19)
 - Toe
- Slide (U12 to U19)
 - Near leg
 - Outside of foot
 - Far leg
 - Inside of foot
 - Instep

Generally tackles are made from the front of the opponent and occasionally from the side. The tackler may approach the dribbler from behind but must not execute the tackle until he/she is at least sideways on. NO TACKLES FROM BEHIND!



Games of 1v1, 1v2, 2v2 to 6v6 are especially suitable for practicing tackling as it occurs during a match. Correct charging techniques practiced without a ball can also be introduced into the training program from time to time in order to improve the player's stability under pressure.

Charging: The laws permit a player to charge another player shoulder to shoulder in a direct fight for the ball. This puts the player with the ball under great pressure since, as well as having to contend with his/her opponent's attack, he/she also has to try to keep balance and this means that he/she can easily lose control over the ball. The best moment to charge an attacking player is when he/she is standing on the leg furthest away from you. The advantages are:

- The attacking player finds it very difficult to recover his/her balance.
- This leg is the playing leg; so long as it has to fight for balance, it will easily lose control over the ball. The defender must choose his/her moment and then act quickly.

Typical Mistakes in Tackling:

- Coming in too strong for a frontal attack; no possibility of reacting; difficulty in holding your ground during a front block tackle.
- Playing leg too loose; danger of injury.
- Tackler watching the opponent instead of the ball; can easily be misled by the opponent's disguises.
- Defenders not choosing the best moment to tackle; fouls and free kicks are the result.

- When pursuing the ball the tackle is made too early, instead of taking another 2-4 steps in order to be sure of getting the ball; defense is weakened; danger that opponent will escape.

There are certain moments which are especially suitable for a tackle. The defender must recognize and make use of these moments in a split second.

- When marking a player who is making and receiving short passes the defender should try to dispossess the opponent
- The tactically experienced defender will also start to move towards the ball played off a pass early. If this happens the opponent should be charged at the exact moment he/she reaches the ball.
- If the attacker already has the ball under control and is threatening a break through towards the goal, the defender must not make a hard tackle. He/she should try, by using clever delaying tactics, to induce the opponent to make one wrong move so that a tackle can be made.
- Slowly pull back to a distance of 2-3 yards. In doing this, move out to the side so that there is only one path left open to the attacker. Ideally, the defender should try to get the attacker over to a boundary line and force him/her to dribble past the defender's strongest leg.
- In front of goal the attacker's shooting leg must always be covered.
- The defender makes a disguise effort and thus induces the attacker to try a break through. The defender then makes good use of this moment by pulling back for a tackle. The attacking position out to the side has also the advantage that if the attacker makes a break the defender only has to turn through an angle of 45 degrees. If the defending is facing the attacker he/she must turn through 90 degrees.

The defender will find him-/her-self in a bad situation if all the above procedures have failed, i.e. if the attacker has already made a break and the defender has to chase to stop the opponent trying to score. In this situation, speed, nerves, tactical skill and distance to the goal are the all-important factors. If the defender is too hasty and tries to pressurize the attacker by using a sliding tackle from behind, there is always the risk that this move will end up being advantageous to the attacker, i.e. the referee will blow the whistle for a foul (or even worse an injury occurs). If the attacker is not too near the goal it is better to sprint after the attacker, overtake him/her and to take up the struggle again near to the attacker or, even better, between him/her and the goal. The tactics and techniques involved in tackling are inseparable. All activities designed to train technique will simultaneously train tactics.

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Activity Name	Description	Diagram	Purpose/Coaching Points									
1												
1v2 unrestricted space	Passing in groups of 3. On the coach's signal the player with the ball tries to beat the other 2. 20 second bouts – total of 3 bouts.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication 									
2	1v1 ▪ Blue vs. White 15 x 10 grid	Players get into pairs and set up the grids to play 1v1 for 30 second bouts. Have a 30 second rest between bouts to make coaching points. After 2 bouts have the blue players switch grids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Angle & speed of approach ▪ Block tackle - plant foot - knees bent - arm balance - shoulder charge - lock tackling foot & leg 									
3	3v3 to 1 goal with 2 small counterattack goals 25 x 20 grid	<p>Attackers to goal; defenders to 2 small goals. At 2v3 (first bout of play), third teammate acts as a support player. At 3v3, coach can provide support. All balls out of bounds are restarted from the top of the playing area. First team to 3 wins the bout. Play no more than 2 consecutive bouts per team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When to tackle ▪ Choice of type of tackle ▪ Possession or dispossess ▪ Technique of the tackle 									
4	4v4 to 2 goals 45 x 35 grid	<p>Regular game - if you tackle within the final third of the field. 4 points + 1 point for a goal – play to 12 points</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="719 1374 1144 1507"> <tr> <td>4 pts</td> <td>3 pts</td> <td>2 pts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>M</td> <td>D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>M</td> <td>A</td> </tr> </table>	4 pts	3 pts	2 pts	A	M	D	D	M	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commit fully to the tackle.
4 pts	3 pts	2 pts										
A	M	D										
D	M	A										
5	6v6 to 2 goals											
55 x 45 grid	Play a match without restrictions or conditions. First team to 5 goals wins.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observe the players' tackles and recognition of when to tackle. 									

COOL-DOWN