



**KU-RING-GAI NETBALL ASSOCIATION  
CLUB CLINIC PROGRAM**

# DEFENDING SKILLS 1

## The ‘Change It’ Approach

As a coach, it is important that you cater for individual skills and abilities - which in a team sport can be quite difficult. Every player in your team should have the opportunity to take part in every activity. One way to do this is to follow the major concept behind the ‘change it’ approach. Each time you plan an activity or drill, keep in mind how you can make that drill a bit easier and how you can make it a bit harder. In that way the same drill can meet the needs of all players.

Ways that you can change a drill to vary the difficulty include;

- 🎱 make the playing area larger or smaller
- 🎱 alter distances between players or targets
- 🎱 vary the number of players involved in teams
- 🎱 change the rules - make it easier or harder to score points
- 🎱 use different equipment - softer balls, shorter goals, smaller balls
- 🎱 introduce time limits

## Five Phases of Defence

There are five phases of defence. To place maximum pressure on an opponent, all 7 players on a team need to consistently apply these 5 phases;

<b>1. Shadowing</b>	Adopt the defensive stance and shadow the attacker’s every move.
<b>2. First attempt</b>	Contest for the ball. Try to get an intercept or tip or just put pressure on the attacker to cleanly take the ball.
<b>3. Recovery</b>	Get your balance very quickly and get back the required 3 feet.
<b>4. Arms Up</b>	Put your arms up over the ball. Follow the ball with your arms and hands or try to block vision for the thrower in the most obvious path.
<b>5. Delay</b>	If the attacker gets rid of the ball cleanly, you need to block their next move down the court so that it delays them getting back into the game. Block off their drive down the court.

## Defensive Stance

### Coaching Points:

- Feet shoulder width apart and pointing straight ahead. If feet are too close together they will trip over them and have poor balance. If they are too far apart it becomes difficult to push off and change direction quickly.
- Stand on the balls of your feet, not flat footed.
- Knees bent. With knees bent properly players should not be able to see their toes when they look down.
- Upper body upright and bottoms tucked in.
- Arms by side and relaxed.
- Head up and eyes up. Keeping head up also helps keep your upper body straight.

## Shadowing in Defence

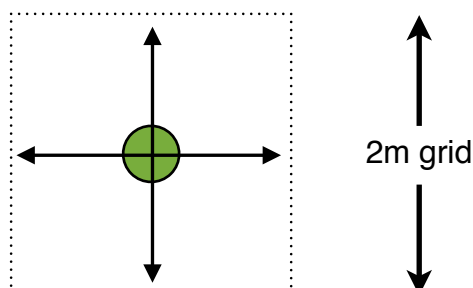
### Coaching Points:

- Stand in front of opponent with back to them, your body half way across their body.
- Keep arms close to your sides.
- Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, back upright.
- Keep good vision of both the ball in front and the player behind you.
- Shadow the player's moves using fast feet to keep up with them.
- Do not turn your head - move your feet faster instead.

## Shadowing Drills

1. **Defensive Shuffle.** Players work individually in a space of about 2m x 2m. They all face the same direction, towards the coach. On 'go' the workers begin fast pitter patter in the defensive stance with weight over their toes, arms by their side and eyes up. The coach can then call any of the five following commands - front, back, left, right or up (an explosive jump in the air). The workers take quick defensive steps in the direction called, fake an intercept, then shuffle back to the centre again and recommence pitter patter. Repeat several times over.

**Coaching Points:** Players should sit low and move their feet quickly. Ensure that they can see the coach at all times - keep head and eyes up.



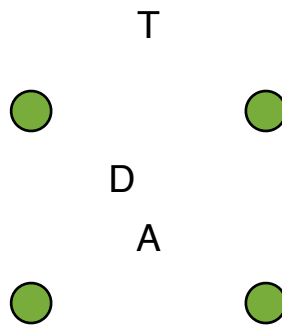
2. Shadowing between 2 cones. Place 2 cones about 2m apart. The defender starts in the shadowing position. They slide between the 2 cones, keeping in the defensive position with their head still. Practise with the head facing in both directions.

**Extension 1:** Add a passive attack player who moves slowly side to side between the cones. A thrower stands out in front of them both, moving a ball in their hand around. The defence has to call whether the ball is 'high', 'low', 'left or 'right'. This tests that the defence has eyes on the ball out in front of them at the same time as shadowing the attack player.

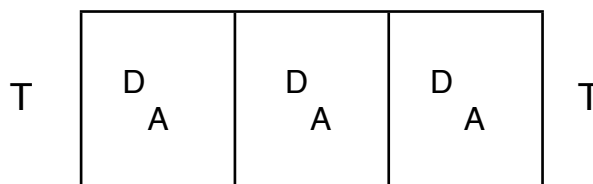
**Extension 2:** The thrower with the ball does a count of 5. At any time within that 5 seconds, they can pass the ball into the attack player. The defence attacks the ball to take an intercept. The attack can start off relatively passive, and then increase their contest for the ball as the defence becomes more confident.

**Extension 3:** The attacking player can now make a break in front of the cones for the pass.

3. Shake the Shadow. Work in groups of 3 within a grid approximately 3m x 3m. Defender tries to shadow the attacker within the grid. The attacker can offer up a variety of moves, rather than just going side to side. Thrower can pass the ball into the attack at any time with defence trying to intercept.



4. Shadow Down the Line. Split into two teams, one team wearing bibs. Set them up in grids down a line (as in diagram below). Have one thrower at either end of grids. T at one end passes the ball to first attack, whilst defender tries to shadow. The attacking team tries to pass the ball all the way down the grid to each of their players, without defenders getting an intercept. If the defending team does take an intercept, then they become the attacking team and the game starts again. Do not allow lob passes, so that the defenders get more practice. You can vary it by allowing one team to stay defenders for a set period of time and counting the intercepts they achieve in that time. Ensure you swap Ts regularly so everyone gets a turn.



## First Attempt

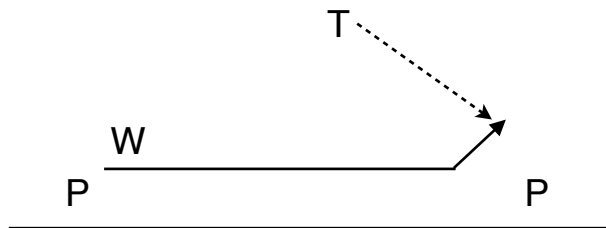
First Attempts are important in defence. Shadowing is only effective if you then follow it up by actually trying to intercept a pass sent to your attacking player. The pressure applied when shadowing needs to be continued right through to the player attempting to catch the pass. The ultimate goal is to try to take an intercept with two hands cleanly. However, a tip or deflection gathered up by yourself or a team-mate is also good.

### Coaching Points for First Attempt Drills:

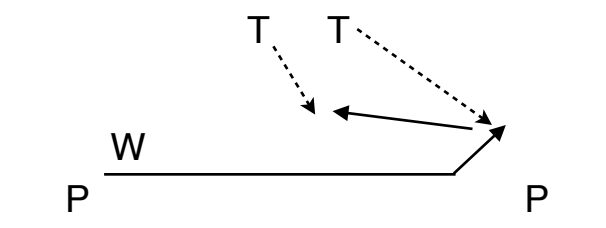
- Defender should start with a wide, solid defensive stance before extending fully to the ball
- Have the passes go to the attacker at chest height to begin with. As the defender gets better, vary the height of the pass from hip height to above the head.
- The defender should take the intercept with their upper body at full stretch. They should snatch the ball aggressively to their chest.
- Look for balance on landing. A wide stance on landing will enable them to get better balance after taking an intercept.
- Ensure that you keep good body control as you sprint past the attacker to take an intercept so that you do not contact them on the way through.

## First Attempt Drills

1. Shadows and Intercepts. Work in groups of 4 - 1 worker, 1 thrower and 2 stationary posts. The worker starts sliding along line in defensive position, imagining they are shadowing an attacking player. The thrower then passes the ball towards the post at one end. The worker runs forward to intercept the ball in front of the post with two hands preferable. Start back level with the line and move towards the other side.

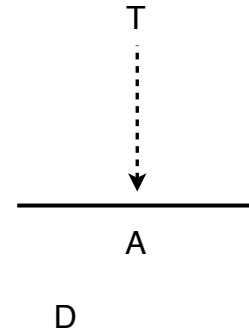


**Extension 1:** Have 2 Throwers out the front. The defence intercepts the first ball but then takes another ball straight away.



2. Two Hand Take. Work in groups of 3. One thrower stands about 5m in front of an attack and defence who start behind a line. The attack stands with her hands out in front of her face, presenting a clear target for the thrower. For the first part of this drill, the defence starts beside the attack, behind the line in the defensive position. The thrower passes the ball to the attack at the target. The defender has to stretch across to take an intercept with two hands, without touching the attacking player. Ensure the defence starts on both the left and right hand sides of the attacking player. Swap over roles when had sufficient turns.

**Extension 1:** Have defender start approximately 3m behind the line (see right). They now have to sprint to take the intercept. Adjust the length of the pass to the attacker to make it easier or harder. Longer pass is easier to intercept.

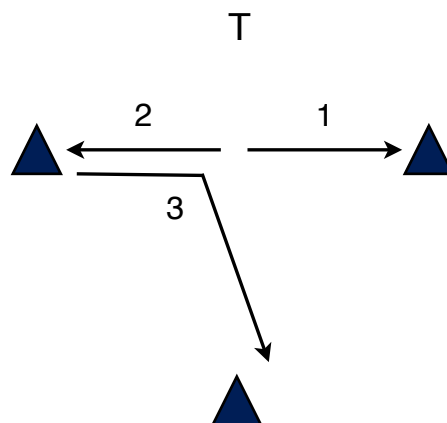


**Extension 2:** Allow the attacking player to lunge for the ball.

3. One Hand Tip. Set up as in above drill. This time defenders come around the body and tip the ball with their outside arm, then chase it down. Ensure the players practise from both sides of the attacker's body.

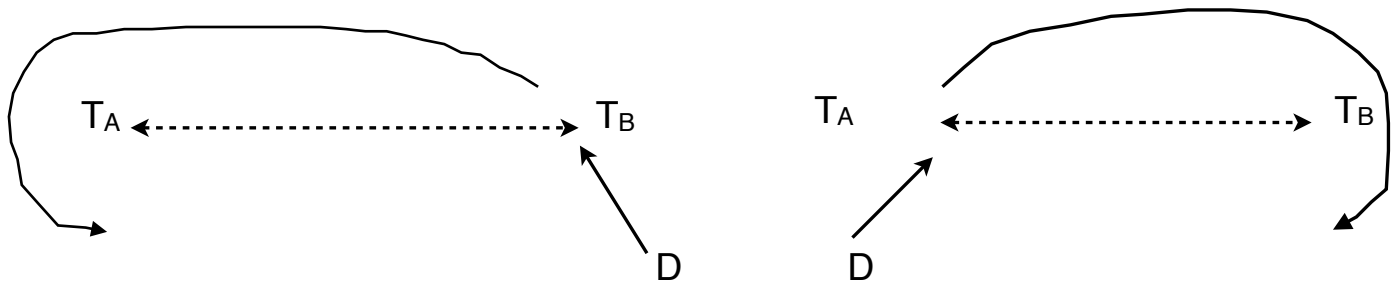
4. Defence Triangle. Use 3 cones to mark out a triangle with sides approximately 5m. The defender starts in the middle of the triangle baseline and defensive shuffles to the right to take a pass from the thrower. They then shuffle to take a pass to the left, and then head back towards the middle before dropping back to take a lob at the tip of the triangle.

**Coaching Points:** Players should sit low and move their feet quickly. Dance on the balls of your feet. Take an intercept with your upper body at full extension. Make sure you have a wide, balanced landing before passing the ball back to the thrower.



**Extension 1:** Add an attacking player into the mix. Have them start out quite slowly, but as the defence gets better they can increase the contest for the ball.

5. Figure 8 Intercepts. Work in 3s. Two throwers, one defender. Throwers stand approximately 8m apart passing the ball to one another. The defence starts about 4m away from the thrower. They time their move to take an intercept as it heads from Thrower A to Thrower B. They try to take the intercept with 2 hands, then throw it back to Thrower A. They then move in a figure 8 around Thrower A, ready to time an intercept again, this time for the pass from Thrower B to Thrower A. The two throwers just continue to pass backwards and forwards to one another the whole time.



**Extension 1:** If the defence does not make the intercept, they recover instead to 3 feet and put their arms up to defend the next pass from the Thrower.

**Extension 2:** Adjust the length of the pass. Having a shorter pass means the defence has to have quicker reflexes and footwork.

## Recovery and Arms Over

### Coaching Points:

- Push off strongly using long stride or a few steps to get back 4 feet.
- Use arms to help power you backwards.
- Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, weight forward on ball of foot but with whole foot on ground.
- Stretch arms upright. Arms follow the movement of the ball.

## Recovery and Arms Over Drills

1. Recovery to 3 feet, arms over. Have players all start up on the transverse line. On 'Go', they all step back 4 feet, get balance and put arms up. Check that their feet get back before they put their arms up.

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**Extension 1:** Add arms over the ball movement. Coach stands out in front of the line with the ball and moves it slowly around. Players move their arms to mirror those movements.

**Extension 2:** Set up cones about 2m apart along a transverse line. Players work to the cone, deflect an imaginary pass with their outside hand, then recover to 3 feet and hands up.



**Extension 3:** As above, but add a ball thrown in randomly to check that players have their eyes up.

2. Dictating the Pass. Work in groups of 3. The Thrower tosses the ball to self and catches it. The Defender fakes an attempt at the intercept. The Thrower turns to pass the ball to the Attacker, the Defence must get back 3 feet quickly and defend with arms over. Have the Defence vary their arm positioning to dictate the next pass;

- One arm high and the other out to the side (9 o'clock or 3 o'clock)
- Both hands wide in a V
- Tracking the pass - mirroring the ball movement

The Thrower then tries to make a successful pass to the Attacking player

T                  D                                  A

**Coaching Points:**

- Arms straight up vertically block the pass straight down the court and open up passes to both sides.
- Arms at 3 o'clock position block passes to the defender's right hand side and encourage the player to pass down the left hand side of the defender.
- Arms at 9 o'clock position encourage the player to pass down the right hand side of the defender.
- Arms in a lateral V hinder passes down both sides and encourage a high ball.

3. Defensive Strike. Work in groups of 4. Two Throwers stand approximately 8m apart, with a Defence and an Attack between them. Thrower 1 passes to the Attack, with the Defence trying to shadow and intercept. If unsuccessful, they must get 3 feet and arms up to defend the pass from the Attacker to Thrower 2. Continue working backwards and forwards down the line for a set time. Swap over roles.

T<sub>1</sub>                                  D A                                  T<sub>2</sub>

**Extension 1:** Allow the Throwers to move when receiving a pass from A. See if the defender's arm position can dictate the pass.

## COACH HANDOUT

4. Defence Circle. Form a circle with around 6 players, about 8m in diameter. Have one Defence and one stationary Attack in the middle. Players pass the ball around the circle to other players. The Defence has to continually readjust their position to ensure that they remain in a front position to the attack. The players can also throw into the Attack at any time. The Defence must try to go for intercepts when available, as well as using fast feet to maintain a good defensive position. Have circle players use slow passing until the defence gains confidence. The defence should move to get between the ball and the attack as soon as they see the ball in flight. They need to keep their head and eyes up, sit low in defensive position and move feet quickly so they do not contact the attack.