



Spare Defender Game

Category: Tactical: Defensive (Numerical Advantage)

Difficulty: Transition Phase

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Individual-Adult Member



Screen 1

Objective: This game creates a free, extra player for the defensive team. The objective is to dispossess the attacking team using good defensive structure, pressure, and communication.

Set up:

- Make two sidelines starting at where the circle meets the endline and ending at the 50-yard line
- Add a second goal on the 50-yard line
- Use flat cones or tall cones on the sideline to indicate a circle

Rules:

- Standard field hockey rules apply
- When on attack, a team must leave one player below the halfway line

Points of Emphasis:

- Extra defender in line to goal
- Utilize double teams
- Force the ball wide, to a less dangerous zone
- Other non-free players marking or covering a zone
- Communication — identify the free player and direct each other to mark and pressure the ball
- Quick transition — as soon as the attack is dispossessed, transitioning quickly to attack
- Stretch the field on attack
- Good attacking structure — covering positions like the far post and being available to the ball carrier for a pass

Recommendation: Depending on your team's size or your objective, change the numbers (3v3, 4v4, 5v5) and adjust the field size accordingly. Plan on a set number of timed halves (for example: two, five-minute periods OR three, four-minute periods) — give your team time to discuss strategy in between periods. Have lots of balls scattered around the field for quick free hits.

This NFCA Drill of the Week was provided by Mark Egner of Dartmouth College.

