



Tips on Playing Good Defense in Soccer

Overall though, good defense is all about keeping the ball in front of you and forcing them to put their head down so they can't make a pass. Again, focus on keeping the player in front of you and don't rush to win the ball right away. Don't get stuck in unless you have support from your teammates.

Here's a quick rundown of the keys to playing good defense in soccer:

1. Stand the player up and don't dive in.
2. See the player and the ball at all times.
3. Focus on the ball when defending one versus one.
4. Keep the player in front of you.
5. Bend your knees and be on your toes.
6. Be prepared to move backwards and or to the side quickly.
7. Listen to your teammates behind you. They can give you directions, such as steering the player to the touchline, inside or to make a tackle when there's an opportunity.
8. Work to make attackers make mistake - have patience and don't fall for feints.
9. Force the attacker into pressure - where there are other defenders.
10. Work to keep the ball in front of you - it is fine to let an attacker have the ball with his back turned to you away from goal. No need to foul.
11. If support is behind you, increase pressure and look to win the ball.
12. Close distance while ball is traveling to the player. Make the attacker make a mistake because they think you're going to win the ball.
13. Stay on your toes and avoid standing flat footed - that's how a defender gets beat.
14. Defenders must tighten up when getting close to goal.
15. Play hard and with intensity - don't give up even if you get beat, track back towards the goal.
16. Yes, there are times when you do have to foul the player on purpose - this is called a professional foul, when your team might be up in the attack and can't get back and you need to foul a player so you don't get scored on a counter attack.

Again though, try to pick out a defender you admire to model your defensive game after. Perhaps it's Barcelona's Gerard Pique or Chelsea's John Terry. Find a player in the Premier League, La Liga or the Italian league how you can model your defensive game after. Watch them play and copy what they do when they're playing defense.

How to Tackle in Soccer

The first objective should be to keep the offensive player in front of you. Slow him or her down until you have more cover. Push the offensive player towards one side and shuffle backwards while slowly steering the offensive player to the sideline or into another teammate's path.

When you have cover, or are confident, you can win the ball and look to make a tackle! Either going in with the inside of the foot to knock the ball away and try to win possession at the same time or poke the ball away. When making a tackle make sure you have a strong presence and are in a well-balanced position.

Just as an offensive player makes feints, you as the defender can also act like you are going to go for the ball to put the offensive player off balance and then win the ball when they least expect it.

