

## Quality 1 vs. 1 Defending

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The most important aspect of team defending is to get good, quick pressure on the ball by the nearest defender. In fact, the first rule of team defending is that without pressure on the ball, team defending is impossible. Only after pressure has been established can a team begin to defend together. This makes the quality of 1 vs. 1 defending very important.

The keys to good 1 vs. 1 defending are simple:

**1. BE QUICK TO PRESSURE:** You must move to pressure as soon as the ball is played towards your opponent. Close ground as the ball is traveling to her—do not wait until she receives it to move to pressure. While closing, you have three priorities—in this order:

1. *Attempt to intercept the pass*—But do not take foolish risks that allow you to be beaten.
2. *Challenge the first touch*—You must be able to win the ball, or at least knock it away, if your opponent's 1<sup>st</sup> touch is poor.
3. *Contain*—At a minimum, you must always keep the attacker in front of you.

**2. GET TOUCH TIGHT:** Assuming you cannot intercept the pass, at about 6 yards from your opponent, slow down and approach to 4-5 feet away. You must be balanced and under control as you close the last few feet between you and your opponent. At this distance you should be almost close enough to reach forward and touch your opponent. This causes several things:

1. *The attacker gets nervous*—You are close enough to win the ball if she makes a mistake.
2. *The attacker's vision is limited*—Since they are concerned with protecting the ball, the opponent usually cannot look over the field to make dangerous passes.
3. *Play becomes more predictable*—When you are touch tight to the attacker, you prevent the possibility of long passes or serves, and your body cuts off certain passing lanes. Your teammates can then close space to fill the existing passing lanes.

**3. BE PATIENT:** This is the most important part of individual defending. A good defender recognizes that she does not need to win the ball immediately. The initiative is on the attacker to make something happen. Keeping this in mind:

1. *Do not dive in*—The most foolish thing to do is to fly recklessly at a ball that is under good control of your opponent.
2. *Be cool and alert*—Keep your feet moving, wait for the attacker to make her move, and then attack when the ball is most exposed.
3. *Tackle with authority*—When you tackle, tackle hard and “send a message”. Be 99% sure of success when you commit to tackle.

## A Game of Opposites:

In 1 vs. 1 situations, attackers and defenders have completely opposite goals in mind. Whichever player is successful in accomplishing their goals will prevent their opponent from being successful:

Attacker's Goals	Defender's Goals
Wants to get <i>VISION "UP"</i> early to see the field and to make decisions to either shoot, pass forward, or dribble.	Wants to force <i>VISION "DOWN"</i> . No vision means attackers cannot see options, which means they cannot make many decisions. Fewer attacking options make it easier to defend.
Wants to <i>CREATE SPACE</i> .	Wants to <i>CLOSE DOWN AND ELIMINATE SPACE</i> . Less space means less time. Less time will make mistakes and bad decisions more likely.
Wants to <i>ATTACK QUICKLY</i> .	Wants to <i>SLOW ATTACKER DOWN</i> . This makes it easier to defend and react, and also buys time for teammates to recover.
Wants to <i>DRIBBLE "POSITIVELY"</i> . This means attacking space or defenders.	Wants to <i>MAKE ATTACKER "FIDDLE"</i> . This means slowing down, playing with the ball, or basically not going anywhere productive.
Wants to <i>GO FORWARD TO GOAL</i> .	Wants to <i>FORCE PLAY BACK OR SQUARE</i> .
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Attacker wins if they can:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shoot.</li> <li>2. Pass forward.</li> <li>3. Dribble past you.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Defender wins if they can:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Win Possession.</li> <li>2. Destroy possession—tackle the ball away.</li> <li>3. Force a bad pass.</li> </ol>