

Breaking Down Boring Defensive Sides.

Certain hockey sides are always going to be that much more organized and indeed have better players at their disposal and this often leads to their opponents playing a very Defence minded game and trying to score on the counter attack or with a break away.

One side to do this very effectively was the Spanish Ladies Team at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Their coach decided that if they were going to do well and compete they would first of all make sure they defended with 11 players behind the ball and rely on counter attack hockey.

1. They succeeded in that they only conceded 7 goals and finished 4th in the tournament.
2. It is also of interest that they also scored the fewest number of goals, 5.

It is very difficult to break down sides that are well organized in Defence but I will come up with some ideas that can be used to break this down.

1. For all the possession that you have against these sides you often get frustrated at not be able to score or penetrate the circle as there are too many defenders in the way.
2. Keep to the basics of moving the ball around, as this doesn't allow the defenders to isolate the attacker and out number them.
3. It also keeps them moving and doesn't allow them to set-up and get into a good position to defend from.
4. You must continue to play the way you want to play and not try and force a play that you would not normally try. Often these will lead to errors and you will allow the other team a chance to counter attack.

If there are more defenders in the circle this means that it will be more difficult to get a clean shot away at goal.

1. It also means that there will be more defenders feet to put the ball onto to get a penalty corner.
2. It doesn't matter how bad your corner routine is, you should be able to scramble at least 1 goal out of 10 corners. For those sides with a better routine, you should be scoring a minimum of 2 out of 10 or higher.
3. These are the 1 or 2 goals that should force the other team to come out and play some hockey if they want to win or at least draw the game.

It is often very easy to lose the discipline and try as individuals to change the game or make that decisive break. Sometimes this will work but we

must all realize what the team is trying to achieve.

Another option would be to drop the ball out pull the Defence forward.

- 1. This would create more space in behind them and allow your forwards to open the game up.**

Again, it's all about space with defenders trying to play in small areas and the attackers trying to play in larger areas.

Maybe the rules need to be looked at and only allow a certain number of players into this defensive area of the field but as it stand coaches and teams must work out their own strategies to come to terms with this tactic.

Further tips tactics and coaching articles can be found in Hockey Sport magazine which you can subscribe to by going through to [Hockey Heaven](#).