Runners start in the middle, move to one end and try to hit a target. After 4 steps they must either bounce the ball or pass it. Interceptors must prevent the ball from hitting the target. (Teams of 3 or more.)

What to do
The game starts in the middle of the court – 4 v 4.

Runners (attack)
- Players are not permitted to enter the ‘no-go’ zone.
- Players must pass if tagged.

Interceptors (defence)
- Must prevent the ball from hitting the target.
- If the interceptors gain possession of the ball, they become runners and pass towards their cone.

What you need
- Target – large cone or cricket wicket or alternative
- One ball per pair (volleyball size)
- Markers or tape to mark ‘no go’ zones
- Suitable indoor or outdoor playing area (basketball court size)

Scoring
- Runners – One point for reaching and hitting their target.
- Interceptors – one point if they intercept a ball.

LEARNING INTENTION
Defend the zone combines passing, catching, running and bouncing with the need to evade defenders ‘interceptors’ and hit a target. Interceptors have to ‘read the play’ and anticipate the runners’ throws.
Defend the zone

Coaching

> ‘Freeze-frame’ games (i.e. stop the play at key moments) to highlight good examples of attack and defence. But use the ‘freeze-frame’ sparingly and let the kids play!

Rules and roles

> Vary the number of steps allowed by the runner.
> Change the method of travelling with the ball, e.g. hop or jump.
> Try uneven teams, e.g. 4 v 3 or 4 v 2.
> **Easier for runners** – interceptors must stay 1m or more from runners.

Equipment

> **Use different balls:** vary size, shape and hardness depending on the ability of the players.

Playing area

> Separate cones – use 2 cones, 2 metres apart.
> Change the dimensions of the playing area to make it easier or harder.

Safety

> Ensure a smooth playing area with adequate space between groups.
> No contact between players.
> The ball cannot be taken from another player’s possession.

ASK THE PLAYERS

Runners with the ball (attackers)

> ‘If you don’t have the ball, how can you help your partner?’
> ‘Is it better to pass to your team-mate when you are close to the defender or further away?’

Interceptors (players without the ball)

> ‘Where will you move to defend the cone?’
> ‘How can you put pressure on the person with the ball?’