



## **Skills - Vision, Awareness and Positioning**

Vision and movement is harder to “practise” than almost any other skill but players with vision/awareness are some of the most desirable to scouts and clubs.

### **Defenders / defensive midfielders**

For defenders or defensive midfielders, good awareness enables you to track runners, spot danger and take up good positions. John Terry is not the fastest but watch him in games – how many times does he seem to be in the right place to intercept the ball, particularly at the near post when wingers send over crosses. He has world class awareness and when you couple this to outstanding tackling, communication and leadership skills it’s easy to see why he has been one of the world’s best defenders.

### **Midfielders / playmakers**

Good technique coupled with vision and awareness in attackers means that often they will be able to find space to play in (often in “the hole” between the midfield and the defence) execute killer through balls, play one touch passes to players in space and spot weaknesses in defence to make runs into. Players who can play like this will always be in demand at clubs – people like David Silva, Paul Scholes or Iniesta were players with tremendous vision and incredibly valuable to their teams.

The key thing to improve your defensive positioning or attacking vision is to work on your awareness. Here we outline what we mean by this:

- When you are practising or in a game it’s no good wondering around not thinking and waiting for the ball to come near you.
- You need to have your head up and be scanning the field asking yourself where are your teammates and where are your opponents?
- Defenders need to then communicate between each other to close gaps and track runners. Gary Neville brilliant describes how defenders need to work together to close gaps with a demonstration of Manchester City’s awareness.

<http://www.garynevillefc.com/project/good-back-four-play-defensive-positioning-manchester-city/>

- Attackers need to be looking to move and make runs into spaces where opponents are not. This can be in behind the defenders or simply playing a pass and moving to an area in space so you can receive it back.
- When the ball gets to you should have an idea of where your other players are – Wayne Rooney says he has a mental picture of where his team mates are when the ball gets to him so he can play the ball instantly to a player in space or making a run.
- So next time you are in training or a game, play with your head up when you don’t have the ball, don’t allow your concentration to drift, practise making mental pictures of where the defenders and team mates are.



- To do this truly effectively, you have to have confidence that when the ball is played to you, your ball mastery will be good enough – if it isn't you can have amazing vision but won't have the skill to exploit the opportunities.

Here again is Gary Neville analysing David Silva – the video is slightly old now but just watch his vision and awareness!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yThL9bKIWil>