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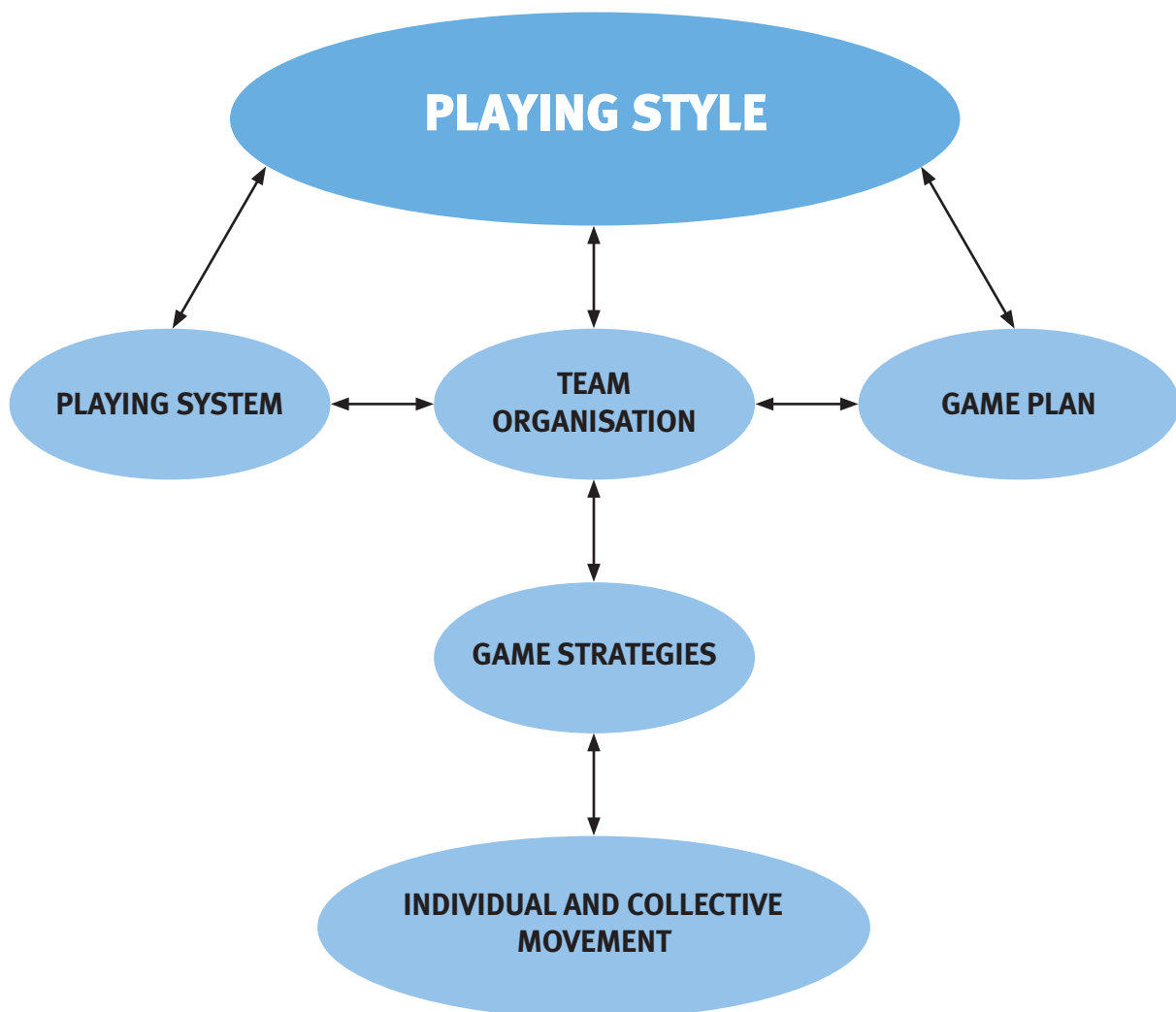
Playing style

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A team's playing style is the manner in which it plays on the field. In some ways, it can be viewed as that team's **"trademark"**. We can even speak of a certain state of mind being imposed by the coach on the basis of his own experience or his particular footballing culture (e.g. Scolari, Hiddink, Wenger, Sacchi, Cruyff, ...), and also by virtue of the players that he has available to him.

But this playing style may result as well from a policy of continuity that a club is seeking to pursue (e.g. in the case of AFC Ajax Amsterdam, AJ Auxerre, FC Nantes Atlantique or AC Milan), or it might result from the footballing culture of a given country (e.g. Brazil, Germany, England, Sweden or Cameroon).

This playing style derives from a playing system and from specific team organisation; in other words, the movements of the players depend on the playing style adopted. In top-level football, the style of play and the tactical movement may vary from one game to another, or even during the same match.



The players

The choice and implementation of a playing style largely depend on the quality of the players, their level of footballing intelligence, their technical mastery and their ability to adapt. The conviction of the coach, the diligence shown by the players in training sessions as well as their motivation to want to learn and make progress are also key factors in the tactical development of players.

Definitions

Playing system

- This is the positioning of the players on the pitch as chosen by the coach; this may vary according to the players that he has available. In other words, it is the number of players in the different lines (defensive, midfield and attack) and their position on the pitch, e.g. 4-4-2 / 4-3-3 / 4-3-1-2, 4-1-3-2, etc.

Team organisation

- This refers to the allocation of defensive and attacking duties by individual position and by line, and the relationships between these positions and lines.

Game plan

- This is the strategy adopted for a specific match (with collective and individual instructions issued).

Example: Going after the opposition deep in their own half and pressing them in that part of the field; tight-marking their midfield and especially the playmaker.

Game strategies

- These refer to tactical elements that are specific to the game. They determine the playing system and the organisation of the team in attacking and defensive phases of the game. The instructions issued are implemented both individually and collectively, depending on the position of the team unit on the pitch and, of course, the game situation.

Attacking strategies: – Playing long balls up to two attackers, who are being supported by the midfielders
– Playing up the flanks and getting in behind the defence
– Etc.

Defensive strategies: – Pressing in midfield
– Defenders go out to challenge the attacker(s) to thwart an attack
– Etc.

Movement

- This refers to the movement of the team as a whole and the co-ordinated switching of positions of the players on the pitch, based on the attacking and defensive playing strategies. This movement allows variations in the development of play and in team organisation in the match, e.g. a switch from 4-4-2 to 3-4-3 when the team is in an attacking phase.

The time and space available, as well as the player in possession of the ball, dictate the movement in the game.

And it is thanks to this collective movement of the teams that football becomes a dynamic game.

1. The playing systems

BRAZIL

5-4-1

Playing system:
A flexible 5-4-1 formation, with variations of 5-2-3 and 3-4-2-1.

FRANCE

4-4-2

Playing system:
4-4-2 formation, with variations of 4-2-1-3 or 4-3-3.

GERMANY

3-5-2 / 3-3-2-2

Playing system:
3-5-2 with a libero operating in front of or behind the covering players, depending on the situation.

KOREA REPUBLIC

3-4-2-1

Playing system:
3-4-2-1 with a clear allocation of roles.

SENEGAL

4-3-2-1 / 4-5-1

Playing system:
4-3-2-1 (4-5-1 when the opposition are in possession).

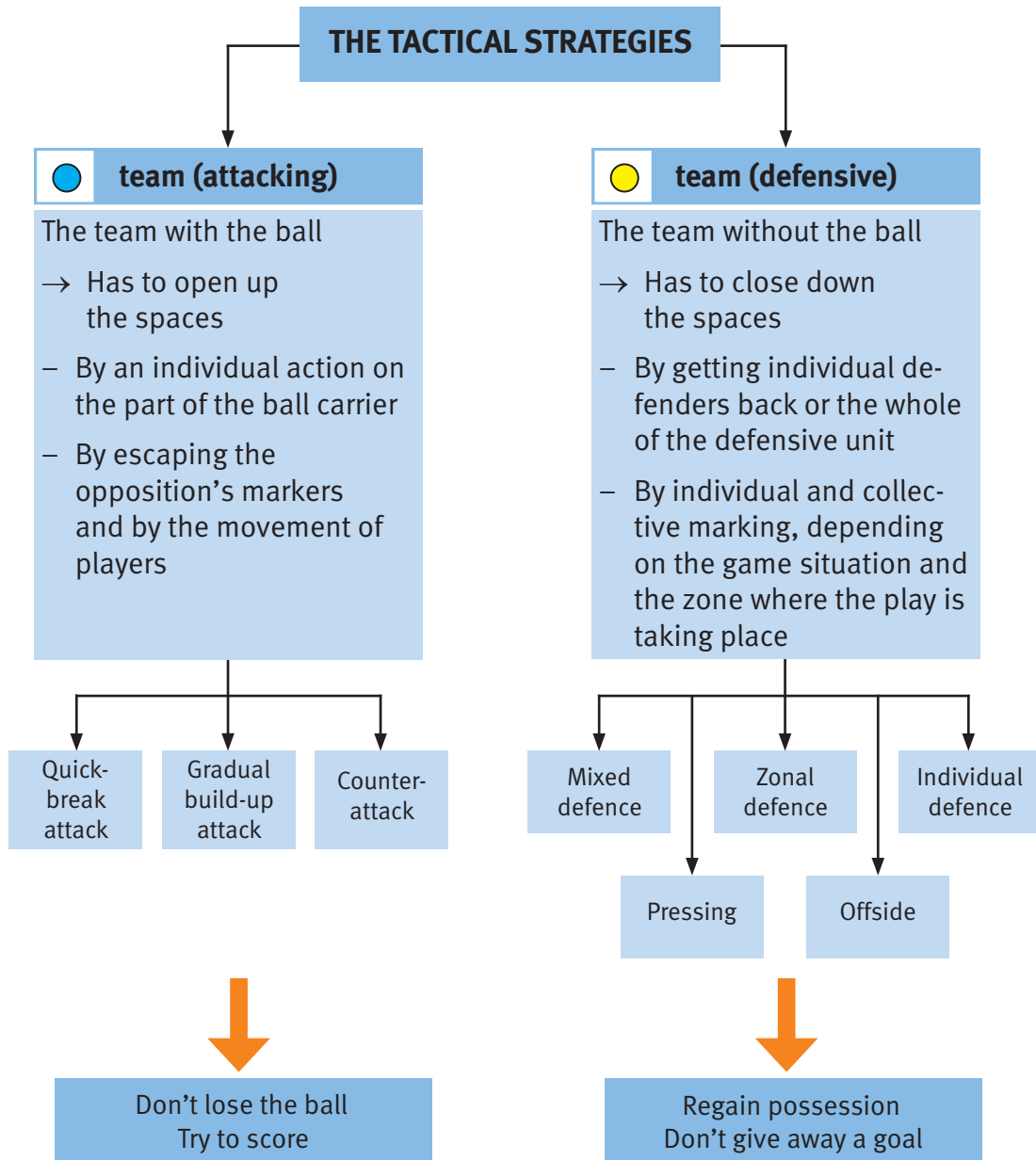
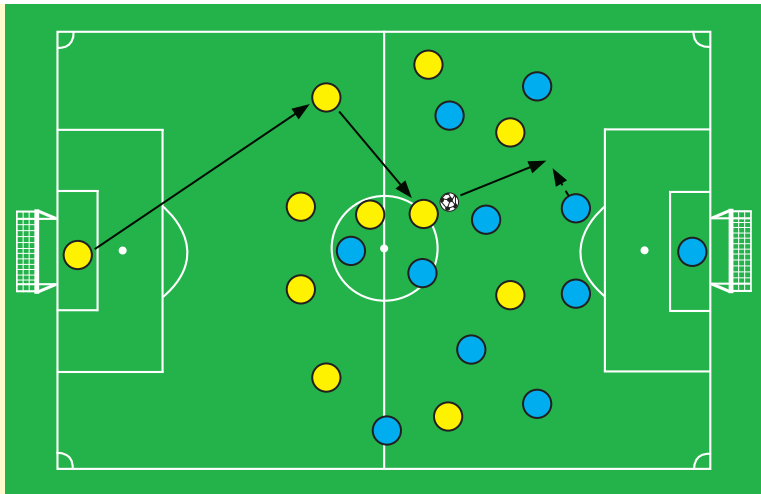
SWEDEN

4-4-2

Playing system:
Classic 4-4-2 formation.

2. The game and tactical strategies

The ● team loses the ball; the ● player intercepts the pass; his team therefore gains possession of the ball.



The application of these attacking and defensive game strategies depends on:

- **the ball carrier**
 - which player is in possession of the ball?
 - what is he doing with the ball?
 - whereabouts is he on the pitch?
- **the zone of action**
 - in which zone of the pitch is the ball carrier?
 - how many players are in that zone?
- **what the rest of the team are doing**
 - what is their position on the pitch?
 - which zones are they occupying?
 - how many of them are there?
 - what is the team's physical state?
 - is the team in position, grouped together for defensive duties and covering the pitch well for an attacking phase? If so, only collective tactical strategies can be applied.
 - if the team is in difficulty, however, (after losing the ball in the middle of the field or in the defensive zone), it will need to rely on the intelligence of the players and on their experience.
- **what the opponents are doing**
 - what is their position on the pitch?
 - how many of them are there?
 - what specific qualities do they have?
 - what is their physical and mental state?
- **the goals**
 - what are the distances, positions and angles that need to be taken into account as far as the goals are concerned?
- **the score**
 - is the score close?
 - or is the final score a foregone conclusion?

3. The tactical strategies


Defensive play	Attacking play
<p>→ Defensive play starts as soon as the ball is lost by a rapid switch from attack to defence by the whole team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opponents' half › middle of the field › defensive zone 	<p>→ Attacking play starts as soon as the ball is won by a rapid switch from defence to attack by the whole team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defensive zone › middle of the field › opponents' half
<p>1. Behaviour of the individual player</p> <p>Aided by the whole team grouping together and by the team getting players back in numbers</p> <p><i>Players have to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Win duels – Anticipate – Thwart and shepherd the ball carrier – Harass (to allow the rest of the team to regain its position) and put the opponent under pressure – Tackle 	<p>1. Action of the individual player</p> <p>Aided by teammates (at least 2 or 3 of them) escaping the attention of their markers and by executing the right technical skill</p> <p><i>Key points</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opt for dynamic tactics and technical skills – First pass, dribbling – Draw in the opponent – Feint, take the opponent out of the game – Give support – Vary the tempo
<p>2. Behaviour of the whole team</p> <p>Aided by swift repositioning of the team and compact team play</p> <p><i>Key points</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The whole team has to get back – The area in front of the goal, the angles and the flanks have to be closed down – Zone marking – Thwarting the opponent – Lateral movement – Steer the play into the pressing zone – Covering 	<p>2. Action of the whole team</p> <p>Aided by the movement of the players, movement off the ball, but without the players being tracked</p> <p><i>Key points</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Spread the play and open out across the field – Get in behind the opposing defence – Occupy the zones – Vary the tempo – Movement off the ball <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • runs into space • cross-field runs, decoy runs, exchanging of positions • freeing up the flanks
<p>→ Force the opponent into making mistakes to win back the ball</p> <p><i>Key points</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Echelon and pyramid formation – Lateral movement – Mutual covering (the defence should outnumber attack) – Surround the opposition – Pressing 	<p>→ Avoid losing the ball, especially in the opponents' defensive zone and in the centre of the field</p> <p><i>Key points</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Numerical supremacy – Variation between long and short balls – Combinations, one-twos – Change in the style of play

Definitions of the main fundamental tactical strategies

Attacking

Losing the marker	The action of getting away from an opposing player by making a run, finding space or making a dummy run to receive the ball.
“All-out attack”	A dynamic, attacking phase involving several of the team to spread play out and create space (both out wide and in the last third of the field).
Off-the ball movement	Creating space for team-mates by running into space, making decoy runs, etc.
Triangular play	Play involving 3 players, where 2 players automatically provide support for the ball carrier behind and/or in front of him.
Playing “keep-ball”	Retaining possession by playing it from the right flank to the left flank, and then back again.
Changing tempo	Accelerating or slowing down play (the movement of the ball) by using specific technical or tactical actions.
Switching play	Changing the location of play by a long pass to another part of the pitch in the opposite direction to that in which play had previously been going.
Drawing in the opponent	The player with the ball at his feet goes towards the opponent to tempt him into the tackle; he then eliminates the opponent by dribbling past him or passing.
Support play	The action of backing up the ball carrier to provide an option for him.
Position switching	Exchanging positions or zones with other players.
Dummy or decoy run	Running into a space to distract the defence, but with no intention of receiving the ball (thereby deliberately creating space for a team-mate).
Overlapping run	Creating numerical advantage on the flank by running round the team-mate in possession (to create a 2 v 1 situation).
“Pivot player” / Link man	A player who usually has his back to goal when receiving the ball and who then lays it off for the supporting striker(s).

Defensive

Marking	Defensive position adopted by players to prevent opponents receiving or challenging for the ball.
Anticipation	Defensive positioning action where the opponent's reaction is anticipated and the defence changes position accordingly to respond to this.
Repositioning	After a phase of dynamic or static attacking, the whole team or individual players resume their defensive position.
Reducing the spaces (grouping together)	Leaving as little space as possible between the defensive lines by closing down using the whole team.
Lateral movement	Movement of the whole team or the line across the width of the field, but still remaining compact.
Closing down the area in front of goal	Tightly packing players into the centre of the field to close down this area.
Pressing	Harassing or surrounding the opponent in numbers to regain possession.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacking pressing • Defensive pressing 	 The action zones where players apply pressing.
Mutual cover	The positioning of the players around the pitch to support their teammates. Each player is "covered" or protected by another.
Pyramid defensive formation	Triangular defensive formation facing up to the ball carrier in the opposing team.
Echelon formation	Echeloned or diagonal covering position in relation to where the ball is, used by the defensive unit or the midfield.
Thwarting the opponent	Going towards the ball carrier with the aim of halting his progress, making him play the ball or shepherding him to an area of the pitch that will allow the defence to organise itself.
Tackling	A duel with the aim of dispossessing the opponent of the ball.

The tactical action of a team is dependent on the quality and efficiency of the players' technical skills once the ball has been won and controlled. Receiving/controlling the ball skilfully and the quality of the first pass are both important for launching an attacking move and changing the tempo of the game.

Nevertheless, the tactical behaviour of the players ultimately relies on their cognitive skills (perception and anticipation), on concentration, on their belief in themselves and on communication during the match. The quality of the tactical action is also dictated by the experience that the players have acquired in training, in competitive situations and in their ability to read the game, which has been developed through observation and analysis (watching videos and top-level matches). To ensure that the young players of today develop an ability to read the game tactically, which might currently be lacking, they should watch the top teams (e.g. Brazil, France, Netherlands, or Real Madrid CF, Arsenal FC and AC Milan, etc.) playing more frequently, thereby enabling them to understand tactical play better, and to learn from it.

A good understanding of the game leads to inspiration, improvisation and risk-taking, all of which can make the difference in the game and help to swing a match. The great players all possess such qualities.

The application of playing strategies is not dependent on the playing system in use or on how that system is being implemented. A team playing with a 3-5-2 or a 3-4-3 formation can just as easily attack by gradual build-up, by set play or with a quick break. The choice of the type of attack depends on the game situation, on the zone where the ball is won, on the number of players available for the attacking move, or on the possible defensive instability of the opposing team – and not on the playing system.

What will make the difference in opting for the appropriate tactic, however, is the individual quality of the players, their footballing intelligence, the communication between them and their experience.

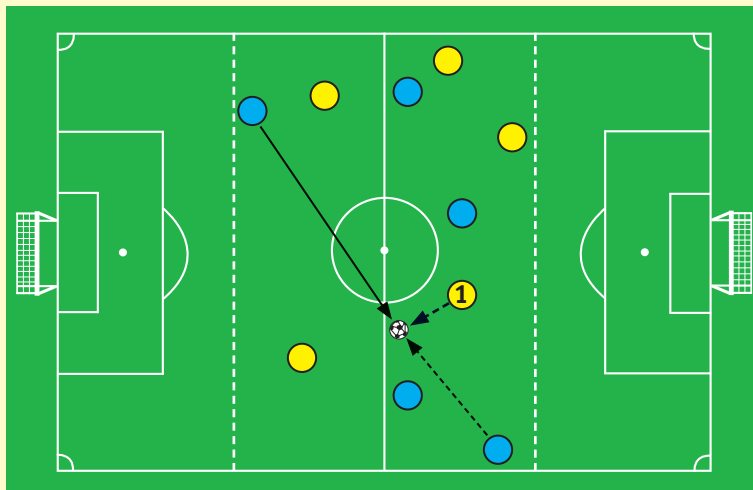
Basic requirements for tactical organisation

- Communication within the team (verbal communication, body language and gestural communication)
- Occupation and zonal covering of the pitch (zonal play)
- Tightly packed, compact formation, with the lines close together
- Spread formation, with movement around the pitch and movement off the ball
- Numerical supremacy of the team
- A calm, confident mood in the team, but also with enough aggression to allow it to win duels
- The presence in the team of talented players and players with a strong personality
- The presence of players able to show the way
- Quality of life in the team
- Quality of coaching

“In the long run, I don't think it's possible for a team to win and to last the course if there is no quality in their play. To deliver good performances, a team simply **must** play.”

Elie Baup, ex-coach of FC Girondins de Bordeaux,

Example of defensive tactical behaviour in a 5 v 5 practice match



- The ● team loses the ball in the attacking zone.
- Player 1 intercepts the pass; the ● team is now in attacking phase.

Defensive game of the ● team

This will depend on:

- the ball carrier 1, on his position, and the direction in which he is heading
- on the zone where the opponent has gained possession of the ball
- on the position of the players in the ● team and on the number of players behind the ball
- on the position of the opposing players and on how many of them there are

Tactical behaviour of the ● team

- Rapid switch from attack to defence
- The defence has to get back en masse as a compact unit to close down the area in front of the goal and to thwart the opponent's move
- The counter-attack can be prevented by:
 - defenders getting back into position
 - exerting immediate pressure on the ball carrier
 - snuffing out the move
 - closing down the central midfield
 - tightening up play and the marking of the opposition
 - steering play out to the flank and/or moving away from the zone where the ball was lost and getting players back deep in their own half to defend

Some tactical solutions:***for attacking a zonal defence***

→ Open up the defence, create spaces between the lines and the players; vary the tempo of play.

- Attack all across the pitch, on the flanks.
- Take play out to one of the flanks and then try to switch to the opposite flank.
- Take play into the middle of the field.
- Move the ball around quickly (1-2 touches), introduce tempo change into the game.
- Seek to gain numerical supremacy in attack, with the midfielders also having an impact going forward, especially on the flanks.
- Attackers should be moving constantly in the penalty area.
- Get in behind the opposition (behind the defence).
- Use individual skills:
 - decoy runs, cross-field runs
 - dribbling, feinting at speed
 - one-twos
 - runs into space

for attacking a reinforced defence

→ The attacking team should avoid playing in a funnel-shaped formation and attacking exclusively down the middle of the pitch; it should put the defence under pressure with the speed of its play and aggressiveness.

- Attackers should peel off and create spaces for the midfielders.
- Change and exchange positions.
- Use the flanks with good-quality far-post crosses or play the ball low from the by-line back across the area.
- Get the defence to come out; make them move.
- Go for the direct approach (1 touch) with players in support; shoot at goal, even from outside of the area.
- Remain calm, play the ball back into the other half, move the ball from flank to flank and speed up play when the moment is right to do so.
- Shoot from distance.
- Force the opponent into making a mistake.
- Draw the libero out.

→ To play against a reinforced defence, a team needs well-developed technical skills to allow it to operate in confined spaces, and it needs to be constantly moving.

Be careful not to lose possession!

for attacking a mixed defence (with tight marking of the attackers)

→ Draw the defender(s) into the unoccupied zones.

- Change zone, free up space, spread the play out.
- Attacking players retreat with the ball to draw out the defence.
- Attackers receive the ball with their back to the defence, lay the ball off, pivot, change position and direction.
- Attackers run towards opposing defenders with the ball and back into them.
- Try to create 2 v 1 situations.
- Win the attacking duels (by dribbling or feinting).
- Put pressure on the defender in possession of the ball.
- Play for the team and do not react to provocation!

for countering pressing by the opponent

→ Know the team that is doing the pressing (the pressing zone and the type and style of pressing), their style of play once they have won the ball and the qualities of the players (their strengths and weaknesses).

- Avoid the pressing zones.
- Outnumber the defence around the ball at the moment when possession is lost.
- Play long balls past the opposing defence and go for the second ball (goalkeeper's clearance).
- Take time to build (with short passes while moving and creating space to increase the distance between the lines).
- Play long balls (diagonal passes behind the opposition).
- Do not provoke the opponent; remain calm.
- Use counter-pressing (react to the pressing of the opposition by pressing them).

“The key factor for winning the tactical battle is to gain numerical supremacy and to have very strong players in 1 v 1 duel situations.”

4. Training of the whole team

The strategies of individual tactical play and then collective play have already been applied in the combined technical/tactical phase of training with 1 v 1, 2 v 1, 3 v 2 drills, and then in practice games.

→ We now move on to technical training with the whole team.

When we speak of the whole team, we need to look at the relationship between all of the players and the individual units that make up the team (defence, midfield, attack).

Methodology for training the whole team (tactics)

Start from the real match situation using the system and tactical organisation which the coach is aiming for. Use all possible practice games where one team has numerical supremacy, or other games.

Coaching in the practice game can focus on just one team or on both teams.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice game: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 8 v 8 / 9 v 9 / 11 v 11 with the goalkeepers – Unrestricted play, or with instructions given to the defence and/or attack
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical practice routines: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 9 v 7 / 8 v 6 / 10 v 8 or 7 v 9 / 6 v 8 / 8 v 10 with the goalkeeper in one team, or even in both teams – Numerical supremacy – Game situation of attack versus defence – Unrestricted play or with instructions, and with goals – Play always starts at a fixed point (the ball is introduced by the coach, by the goalkeeper or from a throw-in).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical tactical drills: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 11 v 1 / 11 v 4 / 11 v 6 – 5 v 6 / 6 v 7 / 8 v 6 – Work on movement and positioning. – The team moves around the pitch according to where the ball is and applies defensive strategies. – The team moves the ball around, moves around the pitch and tries to build, or it tries to counter-attack and to score. – One team attacks with 7 players against a 6-man defence (4 defenders, 2 midfielders). The action starts from the middle of the field after the attacking team has won possession. – The opposing team provides only weak opposition, then stronger opposition.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final practice game format: – Game with specific theme – Unrestricted play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Match with 8 v 8 / 9 v 9 / 11 v 11 Example: 9 v 9 match + 2 goalkeepers – Opposing systems: 3-3-3 v 4-4-1 – The 3-3-3 team plays in its own half with 2 touches of the ball and tries to score after going down one of the flanks.

→ This methodological approach can be the same for the combined technical/tactical aspect (3 v 3 / 4 v 3 / 4 v 4 / 6 v 4 / 5 v 7, etc.).

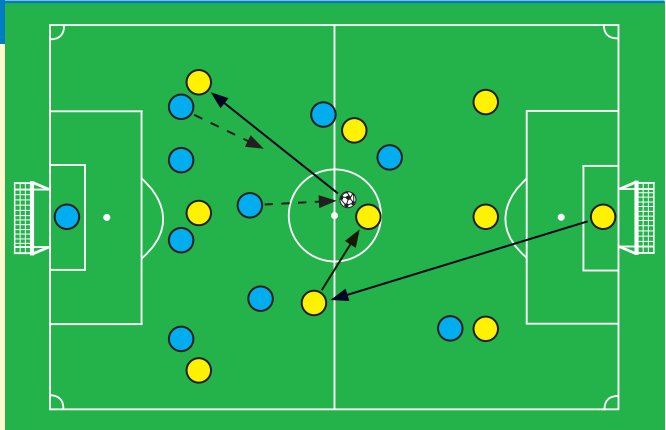
Examples of a team training session: Defence

1. Game with 9 v 9 and 2 goalkeepers

- Unrestricted play; with or without specific instructions for the ● team.
- The ● team plays with a 4-4-1 formation; the ● team plays 3-3-3.

Coaching:

- Observe the play and the individual and collective behaviour of the ● team.
- Question the defence of the ● team about any problems they have encountered.
- – Who goes out to stop the ball carrier?
- What are the other players doing?
- Who is making himself available in space after the ball has been won?

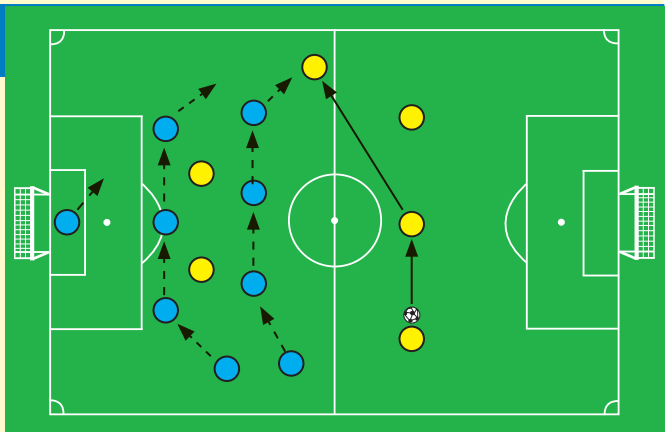


2. Drill for the defence (8 defenders + 1 goalkeeper, 6 attackers)

- The players of the ● team pass the ball to each other slowly, sideways, diagonally and upfield.
- The ● players move around according to where the ball goes.

Coaching:

- Encourage the movements of the defence.
- Get the defence to apply defensive strategies.
- Correct the position and attitude of the players and the communication between them.
- Introduce new situations; increase the tempo of the passing.
- Place the ball between the lines.

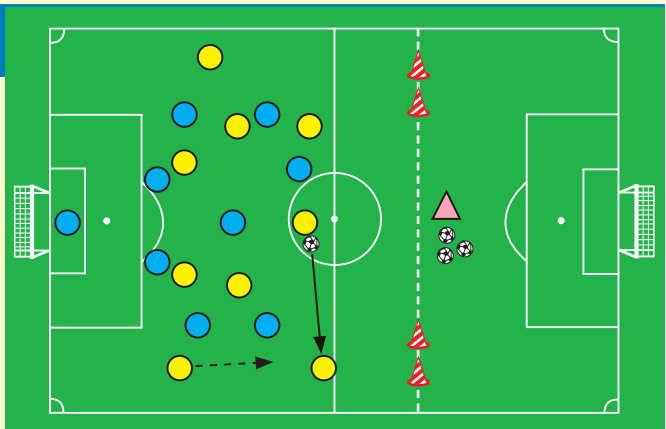


3. Practice routine (8 + 1 goalkeeper in the ● team, 9 players in the ● team)

- The ● team in a 3-3-3 formation tries to score a goal.
- The ● team in a 4-4 formation defends in two lines; if it gains possession, it can score in either of the two small goals.
- The action always starts from the middle of the pitch with a throw-in/kick-in from the coach.

Coaching:

- Direct the play and encourage the ● team, give instructions on tactical approach.
- Stop the game and correct mistakes.
- Make the players speak to each other.

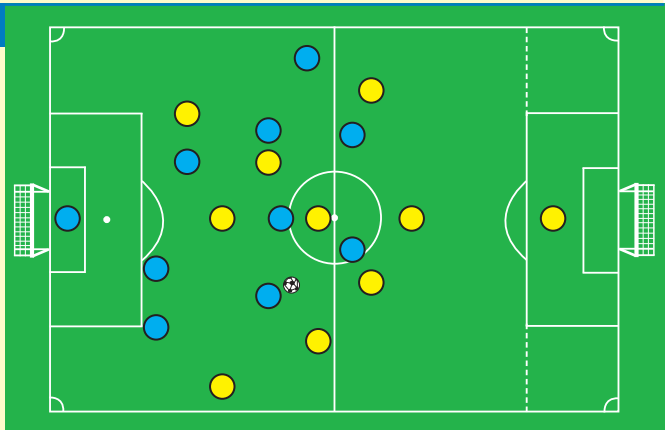


4. Final practice game: 9 v 9 and 2 goalkeepers

- Unrestricted play with no specific instructions given.
- To be played in a fully competitive spirit.

Coaching:

- Observe and evaluate the ● team.
- The ● team can be encouraged to introduce new situations into the game.
- At the end of the game, give positive feedback (reinforcement).
- The team must feel confident as a result of the training session (and of what they have been practising).



Coaching (organising – training – teaching)

The coach is responsible for his team's style of play and for ensuring that it is implemented on the pitch.

One of the key moments for the coach to become really involved is when he has to let the players know exactly what he expects from each one of them and from the team as a whole.

- What type of game do we want to play?
- How are we going to occupy the pitch?
- How is the defence going to act when it wins the ball?
- At what point and in what form are we going to launch an attack?

The behaviour of the coach and how he directs the activity are more important than a drill or practice game. The quality of the coaching, the coach's explanations, demonstrations and especially his corrections will be key factors in the players' tactical understanding and, as a result, in their support for the coaches' ideas.

If the objective of the training session is the defensive game of the team, the coaching can be concentrated on the idea of defence. However, depending on the situation of the game, the coach may also choose to deal with the attacking aspect as well.

Consequently, in a training session with attack versus defence (e.g. 7 v 6), the training objectives can be applied to both teams. The coaching can concentrate on the attackers and defenders alternately, or even both simultaneously.

At the highest level of the game, the focus of training sessions, the choice of the content covered and of the actions and situations dealt with depend on the approach and style of the team.

“Speed of movement of the troops, swift repositioning on the ground, strength in the legs, concentration, hard work, and the trust that the men have in their leader . . . these are the ingredients that make up tactical genius.”

Napoleon Bonaparte

5. Tactical training with young footballers

The aim of collective training sessions with young footballers is to integrate the players into the team set-up by getting them to master simple individual and collective tactical actions and to ensure that they can operate by working together with the different lines (defence, midfield, attack). They have to learn to operate individually as part of the game played by the whole team, both in terms of attack and defence.

Examples of methods used:

- Practice games → The match, game situations
- Training based on real game situations: 1 v 1, 2 v 1, 2 v 2 up to 4 v 4
 - Starting with individual behaviour in a 1 v 1, moving onto behaviour in pairs with 2 v 1, 2 v 2, 2 v 3, and then concentrating on the notion of lines (defence, midfield, attack)
- Training based on two lines: (3-3 v 3-3), gradually progressing to three lines, 3-2-2 / 4-3-2 / 4-3-3
- Practice games on different-sized pitches: small, medium and large

Example: 6 v 6 on 40m x 30m, then 60m x 40m

Unrestricted play, then with instructions and rules to make the tactical approaches adopted clearer (development of play)
- In the game, vary the position of the players: make them play in defence and attack as well as on the right and left flanks. The player has to be confronted with different situations and tactical approaches in the game to enrich his general footballing awareness (cognitive games).
- In order to encourage the learning and perfecting of the strategies of play, analytical routines and drills need to be introduced into the training. The coach can then return to the match situation to assess how much has been learned.
- The technical skills used in every tactical action must be executed with quality and precision.
- Visual pedagogical tools, such as a blackboard/whiteboard and magnetic board, or even video for analysis, may be used as complementary methods to optimise tactical learning with young players. Another important instructive process to help players understand what the coach is explaining on the board is for them to observe the great players and great teams. This will help to improve their understanding of the game and the tactical approaches.
 - On the pitch, the learning process starts from the **pre-training/development stage (from the age of 13 onwards)**. The concept of tactical versatility is introduced (with players varying their positions). The players then gradually start to specialise, with concentration on the team unit (e.g. attack, defence) and the individual position.
 - At the **training/development stage (from the age of 16 onwards)**, tactical development concentrates more specifically on the team unit and on the individual position, with versatility integrated.
 - With young footballers, playing the game is the main form of tactical learning:
 - **Play in order to learn; don't learn in order to play!**

 **It can take years to learn how to master certain technical moves and skills, but learning how to operate tactically within a system can take just a few weeks.**

6. Player profiles by position

Position of the player	Physical qualities required	Technical qualities required	Tactical qualities required	Mental qualities required
Goalkeeper 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size • Agility • Reaction + explosive speed • Jumping skills • Suppleness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe hands • Good technique on the line and in the air • Good skills with the feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of positioning and movement • Anticipation • Good distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality • Confidence • Calmness and a certain eccentricity • Concentration • A certain eccentricity
Left and right-hand-side defenders 2 + 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed-endurance (aerobic and anaerobic) • Explosive speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defensive technique • Tackling + sliding tackles • Skill at receiving the ball and good-quality passing • Running with the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning and repositioning • Timing • Involvement in attacking play • Versatility in attack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressiveness • Willpower • Confidence
Central defenders 4 + 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height • Muscular power and jumping skills • Speed • Mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interception • Control of the ball in a duel situation • Heading • Long and short passing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipation • Positioning • Marking • Covering and support play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership temperament • Direction • Calmness, ability to remain unruffled • Courage
Defensive midfielder 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endurance (aerobic) • Strength (in the duel) • Mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defensive technique • Passing • Receiving the ball and specific control • Dribbling the ball away for distribution upfield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning and repositioning • Anticipation • Pressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fighting qualities • Humility • Co-operation • Willpower
Left and right-side midfielders 7 + 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endurance (aerobic and anaerobic) • Speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running with the ball • Dribbling • Crossing • Shooting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving back to defend • Involvement in attacks • Pressing • Playing and winning duels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courage and generosity of spirit • Willpower • Concentration • Willingness to take risks
Attackers 9 + 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power (in the duel) • Speed • Liveliness • Agility (depending on the type of player) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing (shooting) • Control • Heading • Dribbling, feinting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant movement • Changing of positions • Runs into space and decoy runs • Feinting • Timing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Selfishness” • Opportunism • Trickery • Perseverance
The strategist (Trequartista) 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the type of player (and on the playing style) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to receive and deal with the ball skilfully • Passing • Dribbling • Finishing (shooting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good footballing brain • Anticipation • Tactical awareness • Ability to lose a marker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership temperament • Creative mind • Willingness to take risks and able to think clearly • Confidence • Calmness

7. Match observation report form

Observation: _____ **Observer:** _____

Teams (A/B): _____ **:** _____

Venue: _____ **Date:** _____ **Kick-off:** _____

Weather conditions / state of the pitch: _____

Final score: _____ **(Half-time score: _____)**

Player positions / numbers

Team A

Team B

Yellow cards / red cards

(Name of player, minute, offence)

Course of the game: Attacking phase, finishing phase, defensive phase

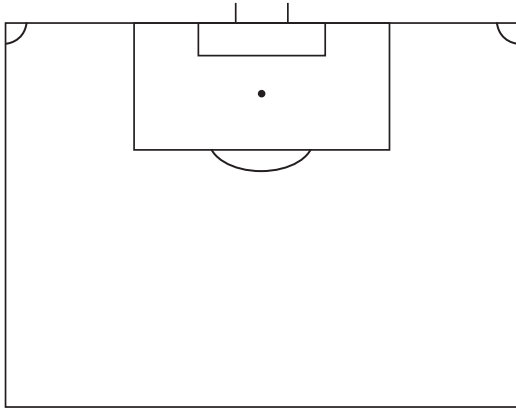
Referees

Specific features of the match

Overall assessment of the match: very good good average poor

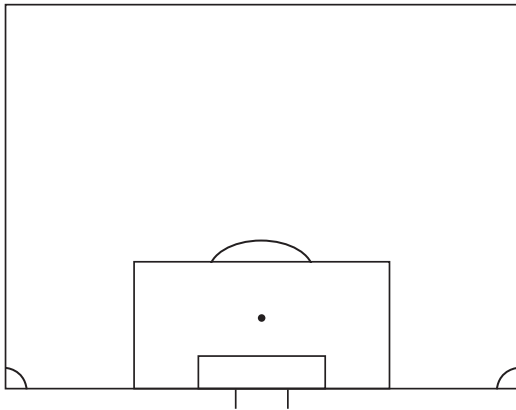
Team A

Defensive organisation



Description

Attacking organisation

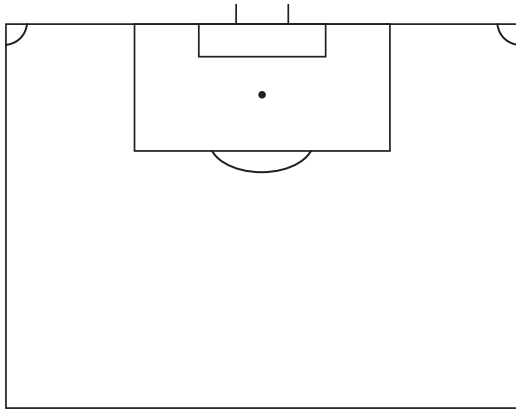


Description

Individual strengths / collective strengths (tactical)

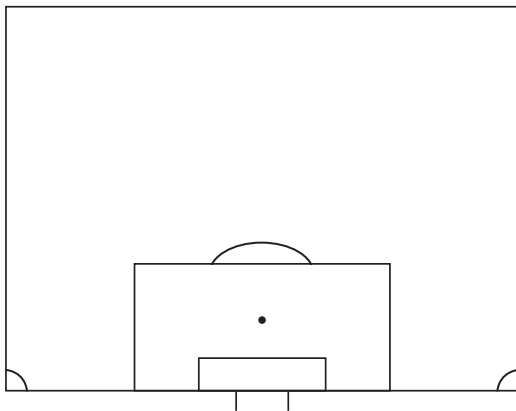
Team B

Defensive organisation



Description

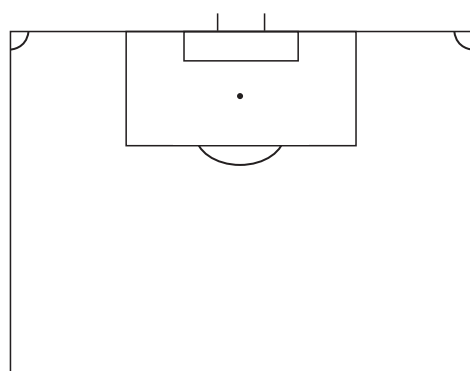
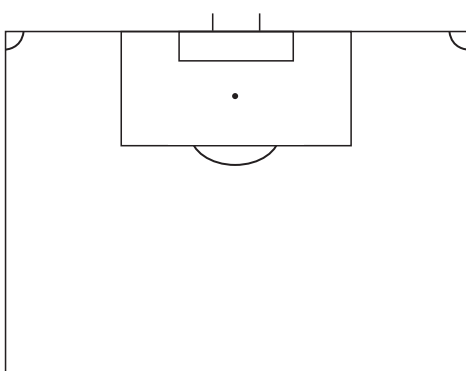
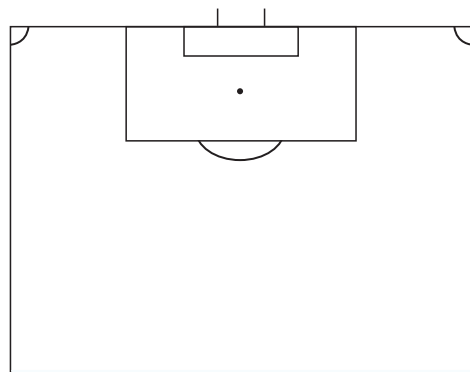
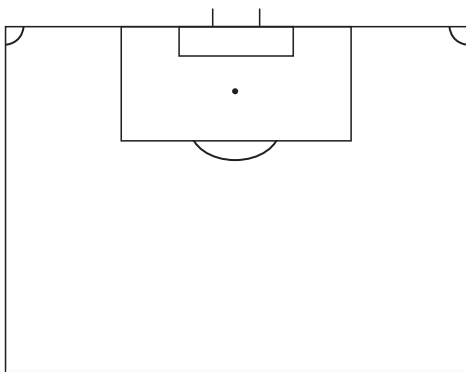
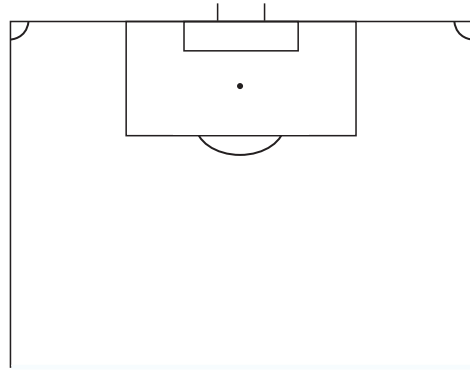
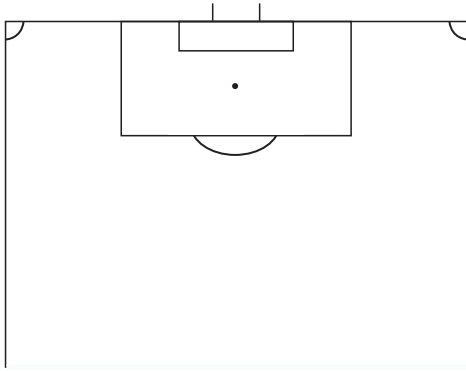
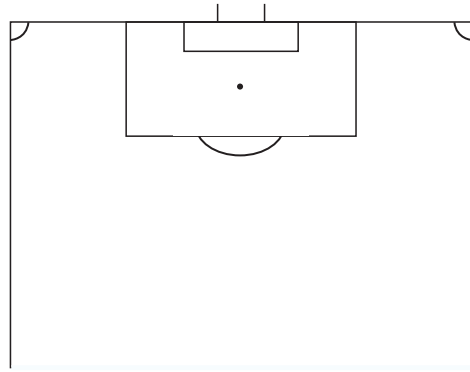
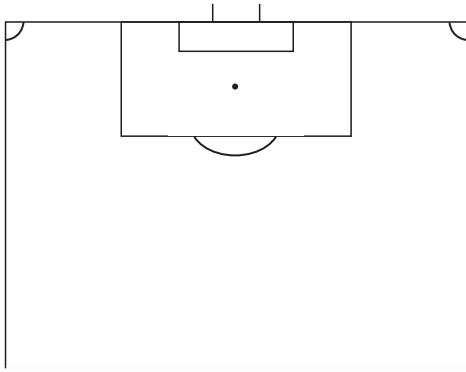
Attacking organisation



Description

Individual strengths / collective strengths (tactical)

Goals: Score, minute, scorer, where, how (F = Foot, H = Head, OG = Own goal)



Characteristics of players in Team A

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____
- 11 _____
- 12 _____
- 13 _____
- 14 _____
- 15 _____
- 16 _____
- 17 _____
- 18 _____
- 19 _____
- 20 _____

Characteristics of players in Team B

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

11 _____

12 _____

13 _____

14 _____

15 _____

16 _____

17 _____

18 _____

19 _____

20 _____

8. Standard situations – combinations for use at dead-ball situations

Dead-ball situations are unanimously recognised as being decisive moments in the modern game.

During the most recent international FIFA competitions in 2002 and 2003 (the FIFA World Cup, the FIFA World Youth Championship and the FIFA U-17 World Championship), 30% of the goals were scored from dead-ball situations as against 25% of goals in the same competitions in the years 1998-1999. This ever-increasing percentage is unquestionably due to the regular and repeated work that is being carried out on these game situations.

Instruction of this specialist area of the game should already start with young players. A specific training session or even an individual session should be included in the training cycle to help develop specialists for these phases of play. These sessions are often scheduled outside of the collective training sessions with the whole team and held once a week on the day before matches.

Some methodology tips for training dead-ball situations

- Start off by training the technical skills and routines required and then repeat these (make striking the ball and varying the strike of the ball become automatic for the player).
- Gradually bring more and more attacking players into the action (either for striking the ball or to attack crosses).
- Gradually increase the number of defenders involved (both in passive and active situations).
- And, finally, simulate match conditions and reproduce game situations (using defensive walls with players standing at the correct distance).

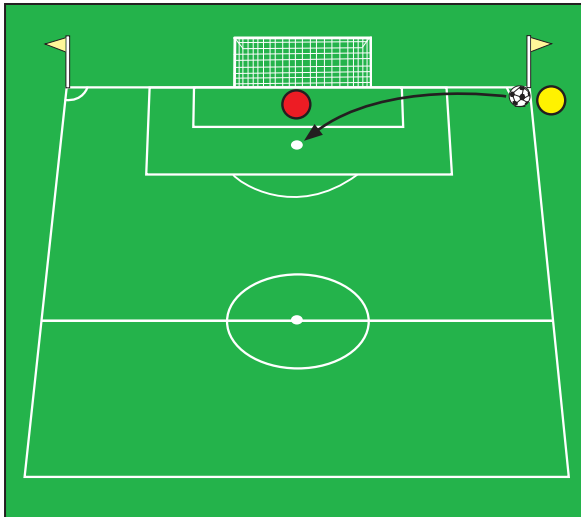
→ The confidence and concentration of the player striking the ball are key elements in the success of these strategies.

In the following pages, we have illustrated various basic attacking combinations.

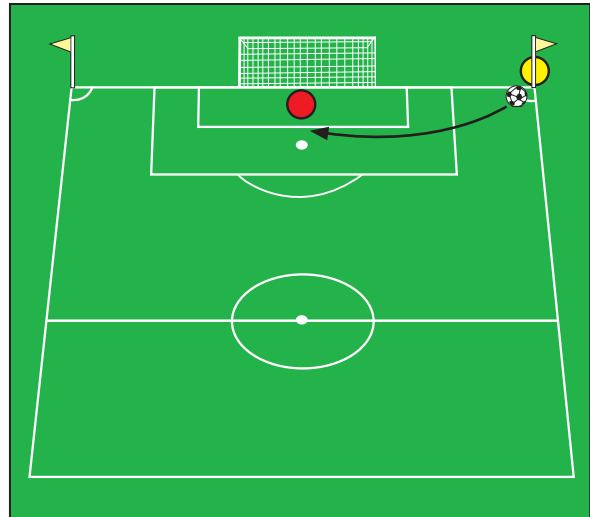
A. Corners

B. Free kicks

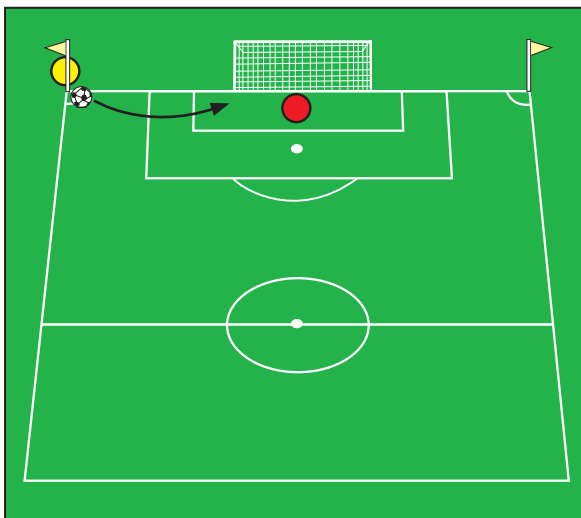
A. Corners



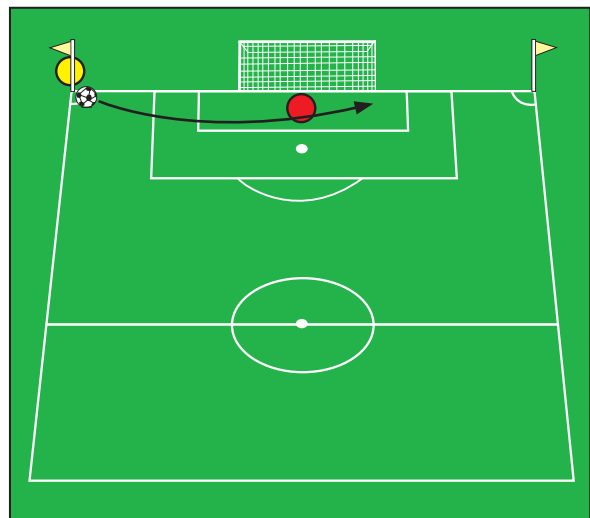
1. Outswinging corner driven directly into the box (taken from the right side with the right foot, and vice versa from the other side).



2. Inswinging corner driven directly into the box (taken from the right side with the left foot, and vice versa from the other side).

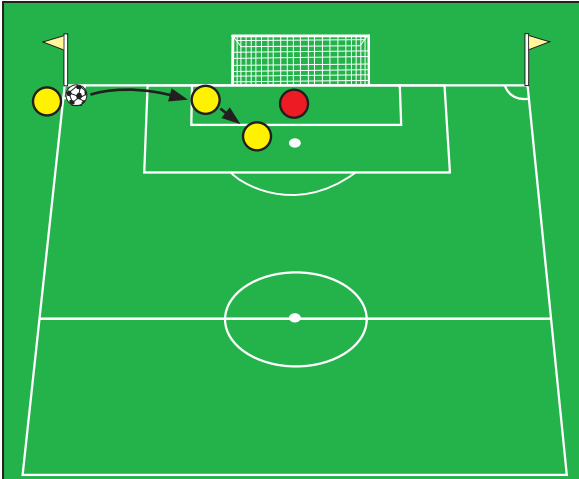


3. Direct strike aimed at the near post.

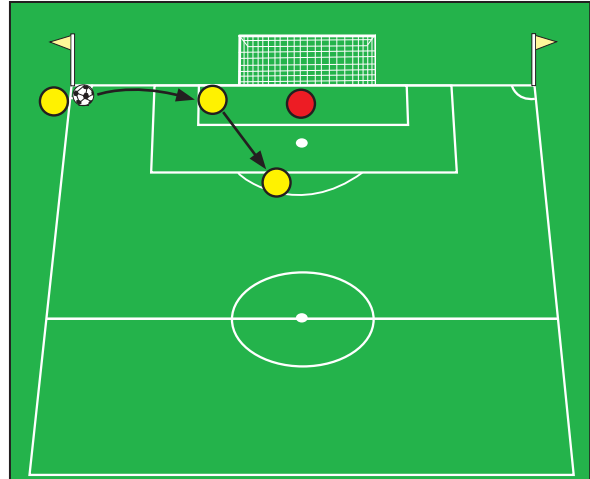


4. Direct strike aimed at the far post.

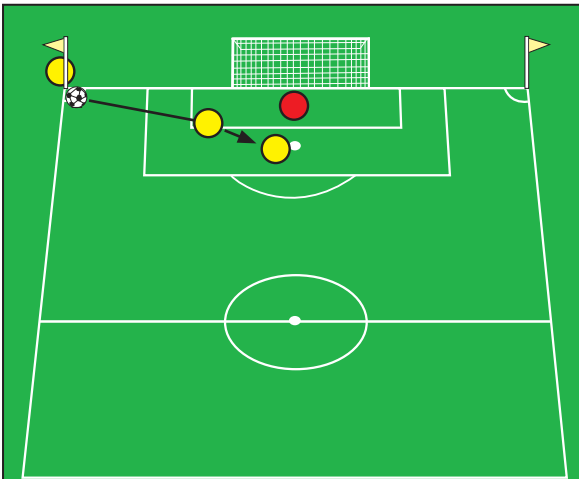
A. Corners



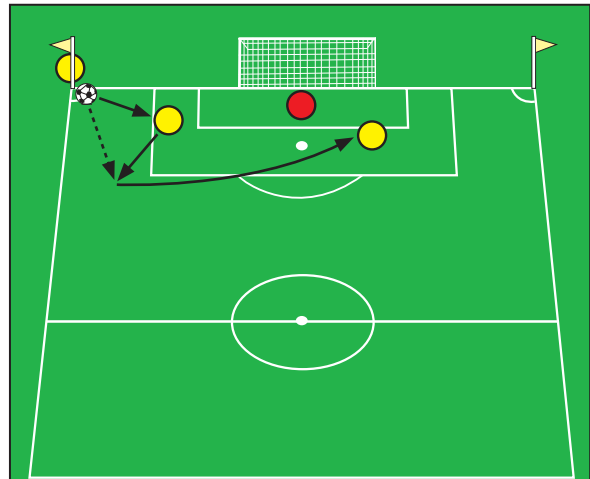
5. Ball played to the near post for a player to deflect it behind him with his head.



6. Ball played to the near post for a player to lay it off into the "D" in front of goal.

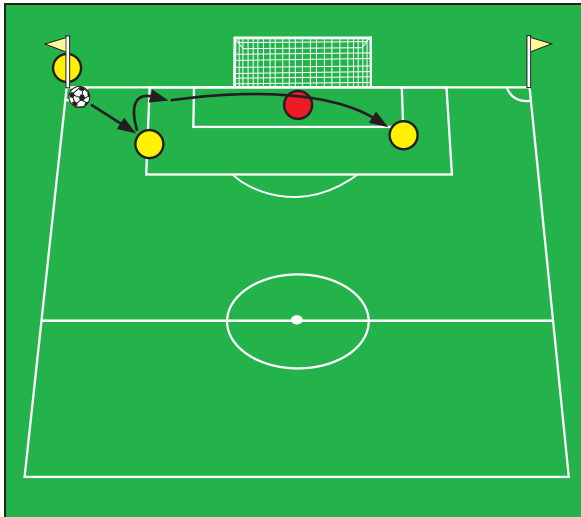


7. Ball played directly along the ground to a player who allows the ball to run between his legs and on to his team-mate behind him.

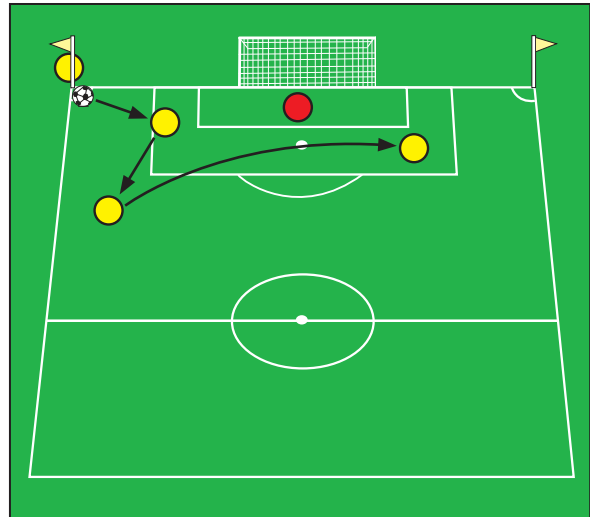


8. 2-man routine: the ball receiver lays the ball back to the deliverer, who then crosses.

A. Corners

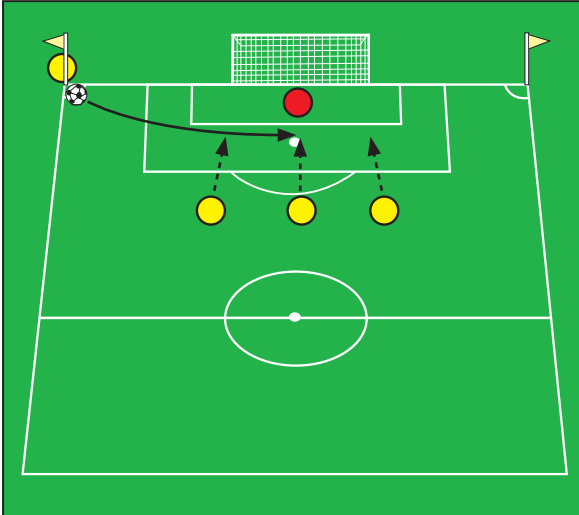


9. 2-man routine: the receiver feigns a pass, then cuts back inside and crosses.

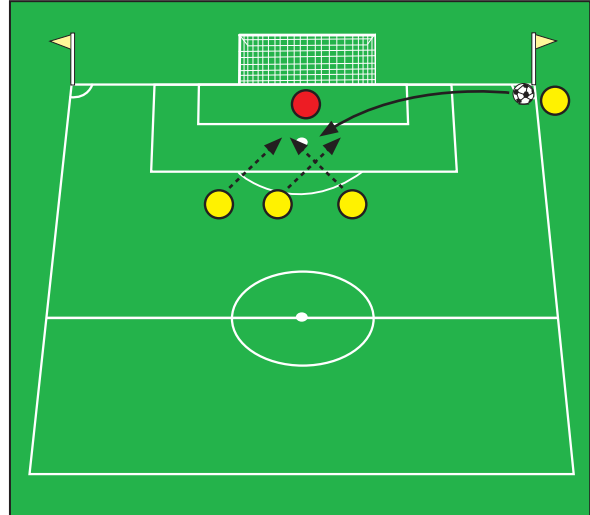


10. 3-man routine: the receiver lays the ball back to the full-back/wing-back, who then crosses it.

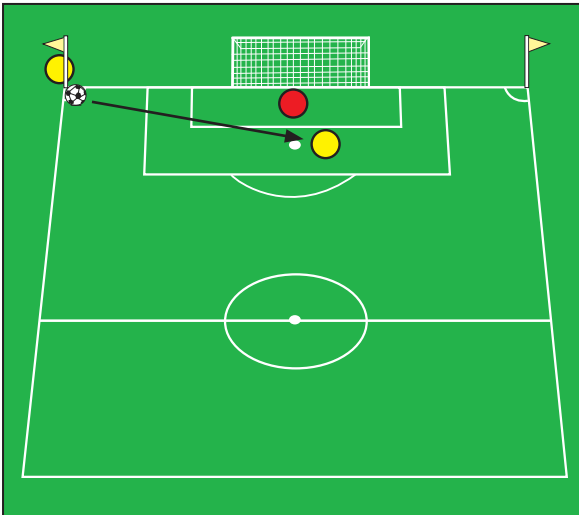
Variations



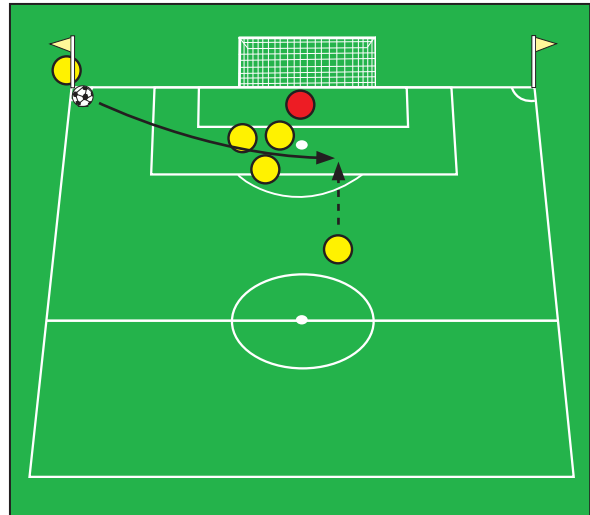
a) The attackers run on to attack the ball played ahead of them.



b) The attackers run across each other as the ball is played in.

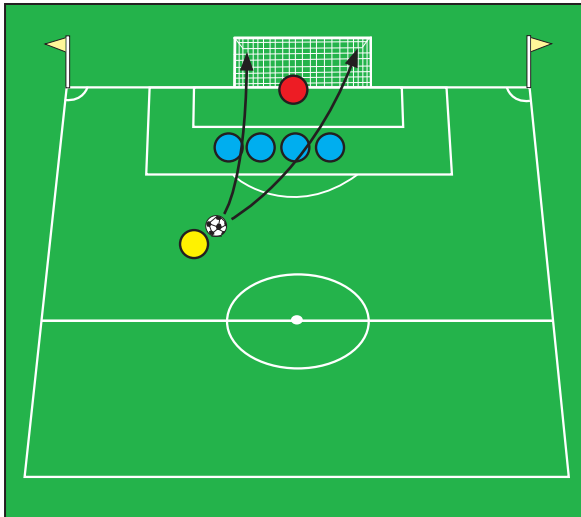


c) The crosses are played in straight, with spin, or along the ground.

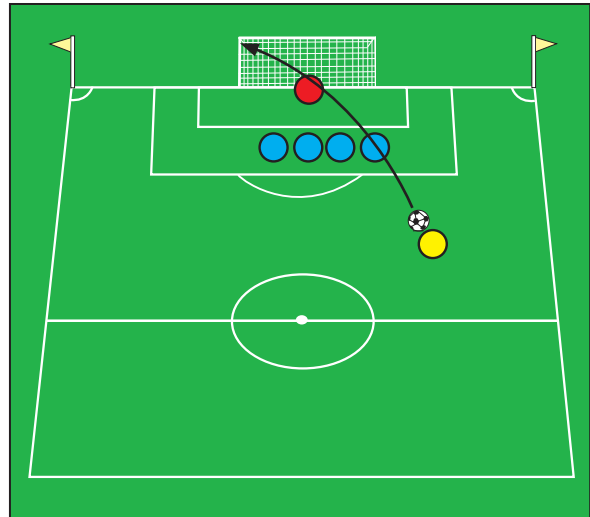


d) A block of players stands in the box to shield a player running on to the ball from outside the box.

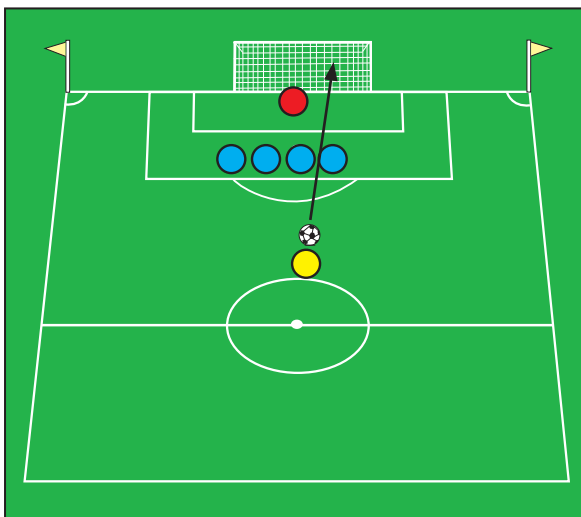
B. Free kicks



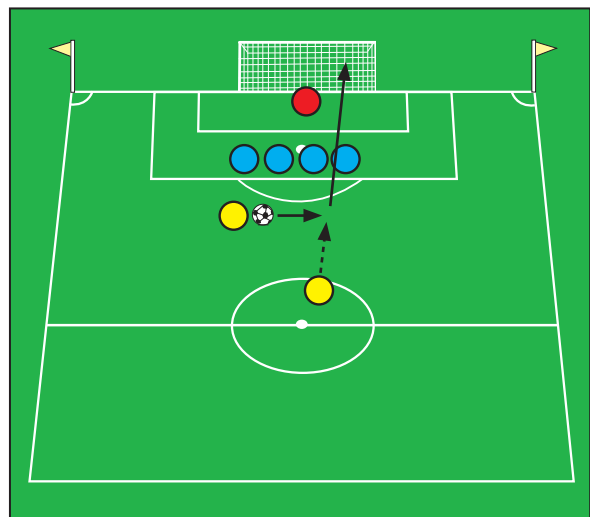
1. Curling free kick struck with the right foot from the left side and with the left foot from the right side (aiming for the near or far post).



2. Curling free kick struck with the outside of the right foot and with the inside of the left foot, aiming for the top corner on the opposite side of the goal.

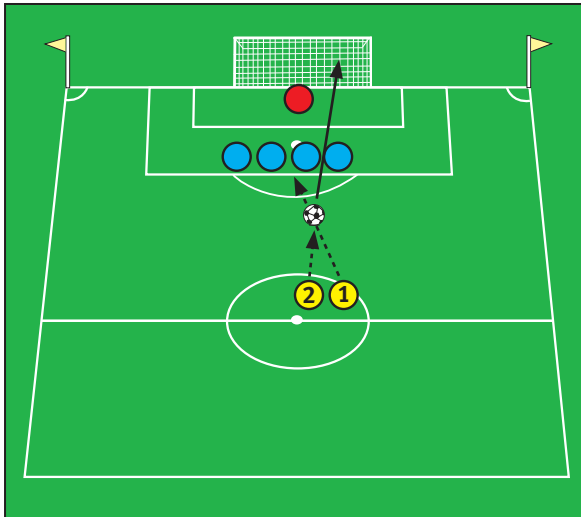


3. Direct shot on goal, struck with the instep or with the outside of the foot.

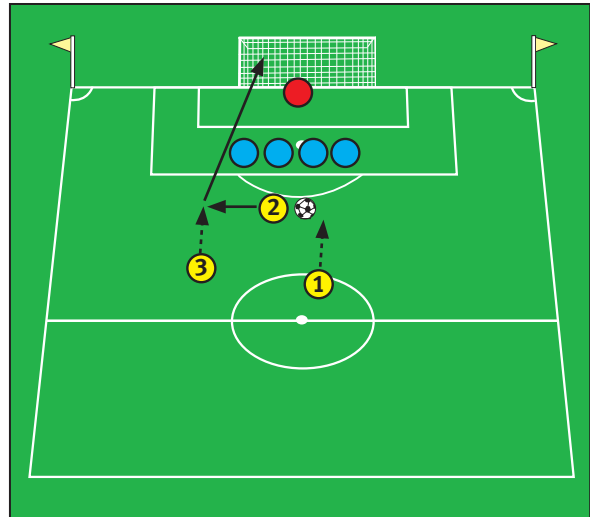


4. 2-man routine: the free kick-taker lays the ball off for another player to run on to and shoot.

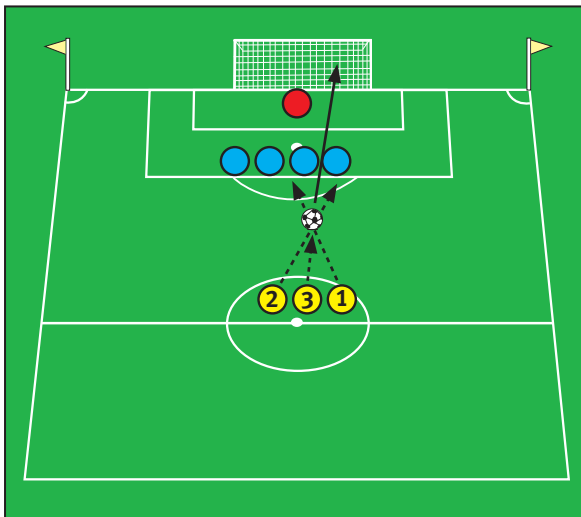
B. Free kicks



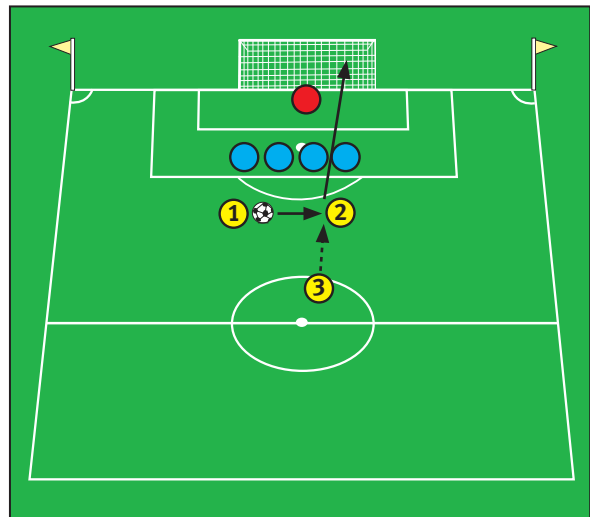
5. 2-man routine: Player 1 runs up to the ball as if to shoot, runs beyond it and player 2 shoots.



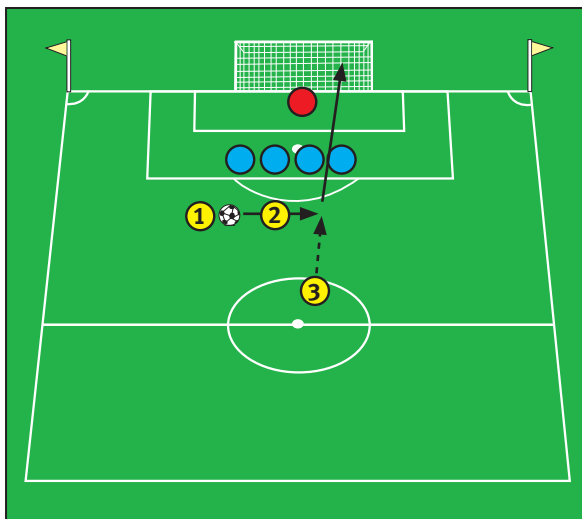
6. 3-man routine: Player 1 runs up to the ball as if to shoot in front of the passer (player 2), who then back-heels it for player 3 to shoot.



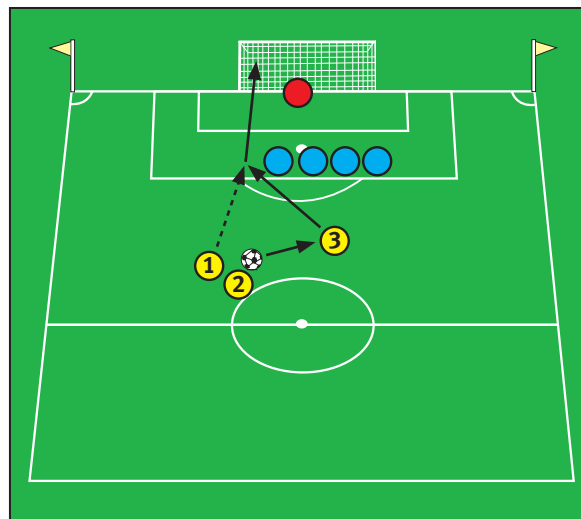
7. 3-man routine: Players 1 and 2 run past the ball (1 from the right, 2 from the left), and player 3 shoots.



8. 3-man routine: Player 1 lays the ball off to player 2, who traps it with his foot for player 3 to shoot.

B. Free kicks

9. 3-man routine: Player 1 passes to player 2, who lets the ball run through his legs, and player 3 shoots.



10. 3-man routine: Player 1 pretends to shoot and runs to the end of the wall. Player 2 then passes to player 3 who passes back to player 1, who turns and shoots.

→ When corners or attacking free kicks are being taken, the attacking team must employ diversionary tactics to force the defending team to move its wall and to distract the defenders and the goalkeeper.

