

TEAM SHAPE DEVELOPMENT IN 9 V 9

Here we show how team shape changes from defending to attacking to then how we start to interchange and rotate players.

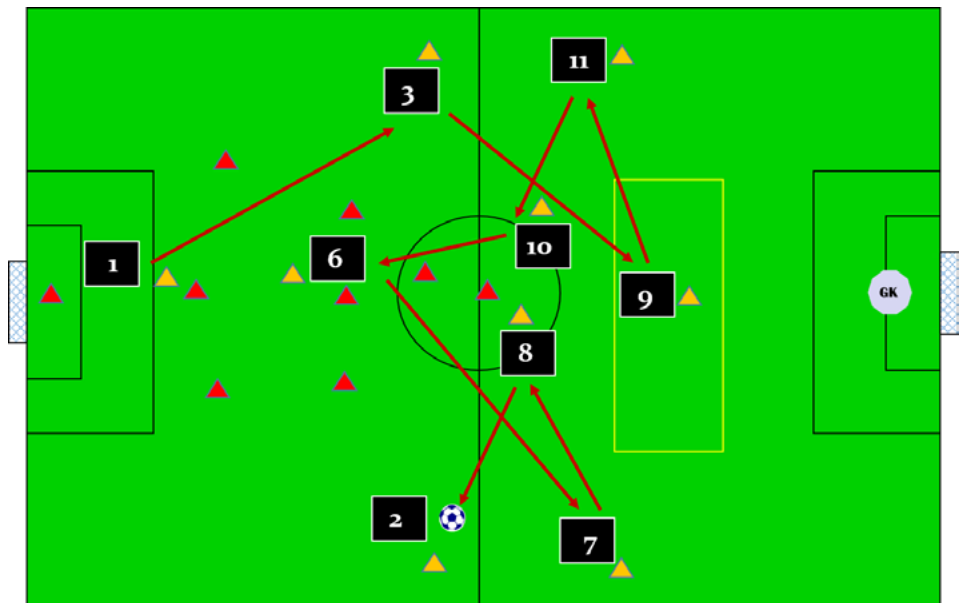
Distances between defending and attacking are bigger than most think.

Players learn how to add fluidity and freedom to team play in terms of their offensive movements and how to compact themselves when defending.

Using the 1-3-3-1-1 is a progressive move to playing the 1-3-3-1-3 in the 11 v 11 hence I am starting with this formation at 9 v 9.

Team Shape Attacking in 1-3-3-1-1

The coach determines where the ball is passed, calling out different numbers for players 1 to 11 in advance of the ball. Players can move a couple of yards but stay in the same framework. Ensure players except the keeper are SIDE ON not facing forward or backwards to help their peripheral vision.



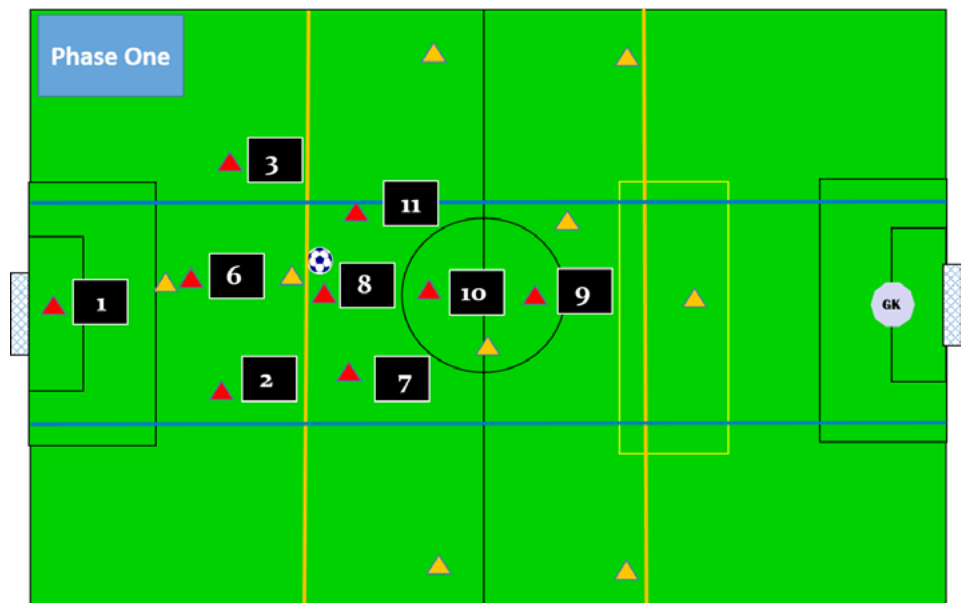


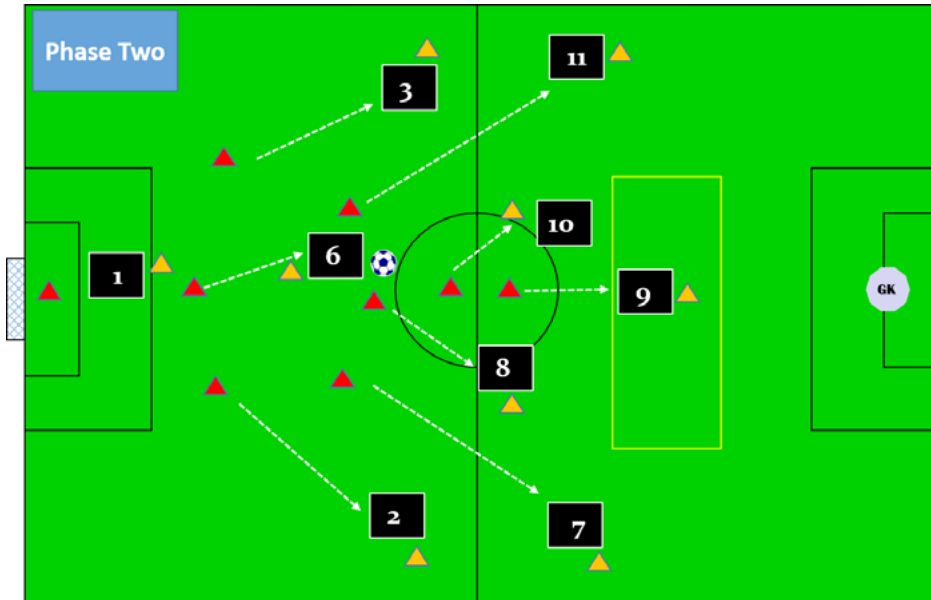
Team shape from defending to attacking in 1-3-3-1-1

Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones. Player (6) represents center backs (4) or (5) and player (8) can also represent (6) in their roles in an 11 v 11.

Add corridors and zones to help team shape

3 Corridors widthwise; 3 zones lengthwise. Helps judgement with distances. Defending zones should be 1 to 1.5 long and defending corridors 1 to 2 wide.



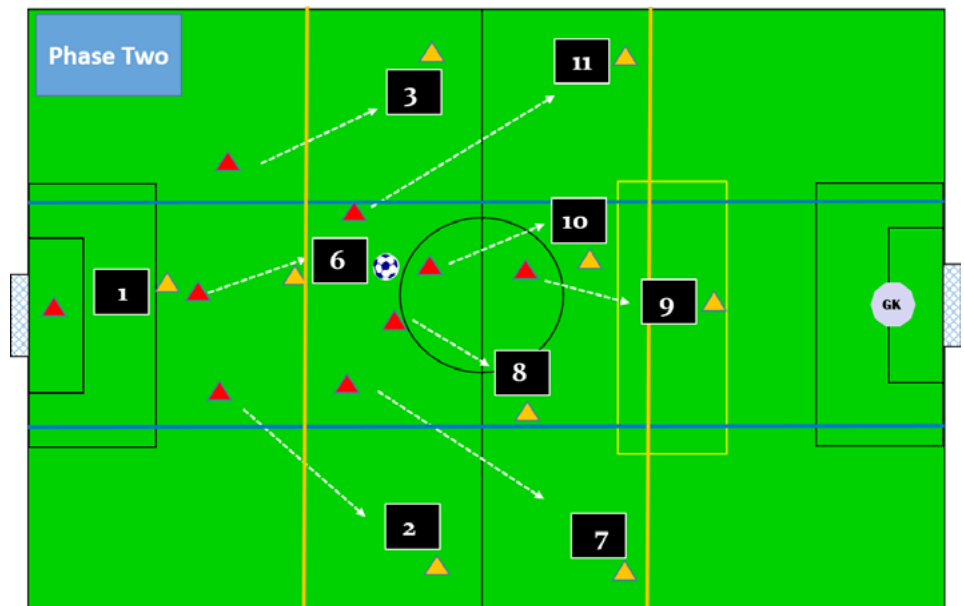


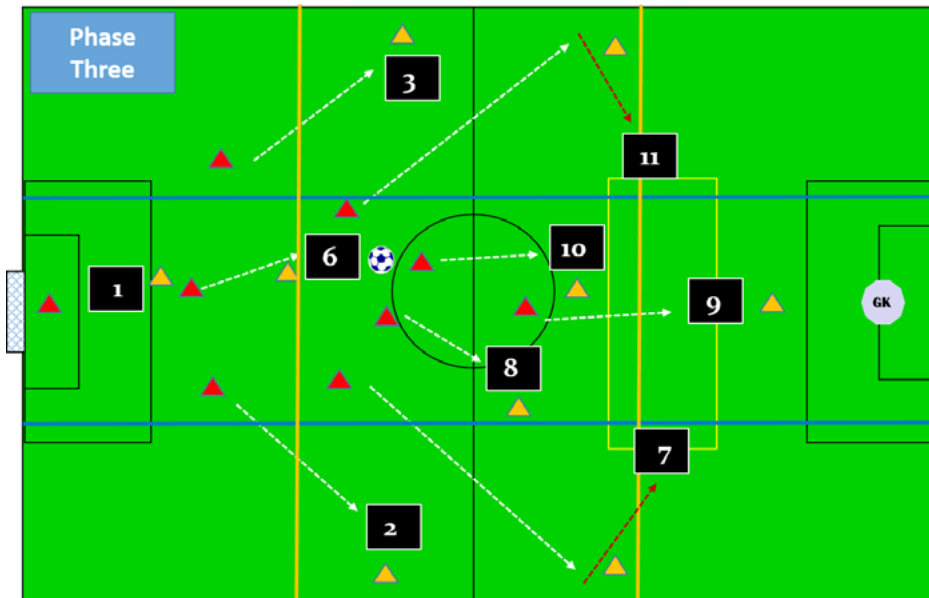
Team shape attacking in 1-3-3-1-1

Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones.

Add corridors and zones to help team shape

3 Corridors widthwise; 3 zones lengthwise. Helps judgement with distances. Attacking zones should be approximately 2 long and attacking corridors 3 wide.



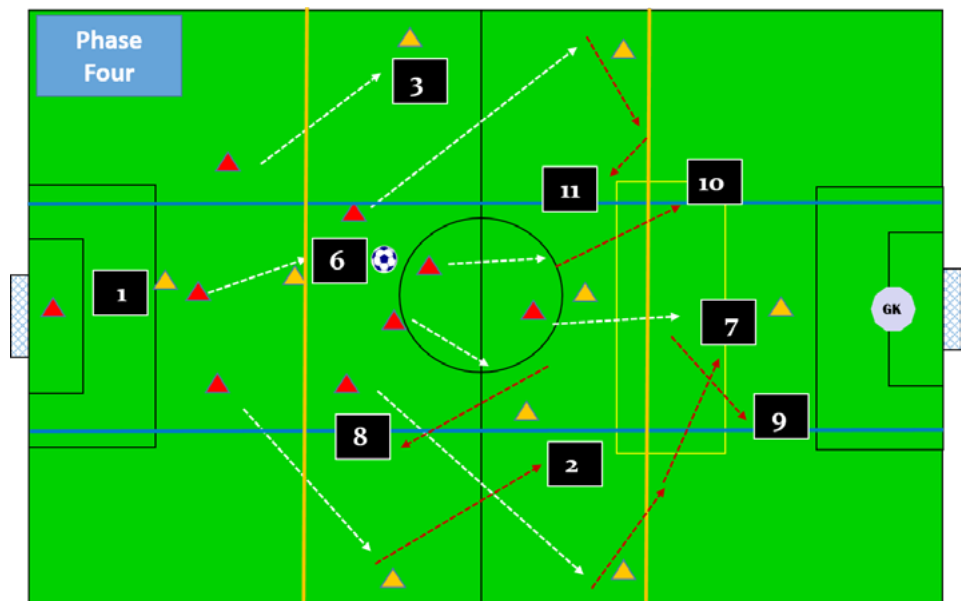


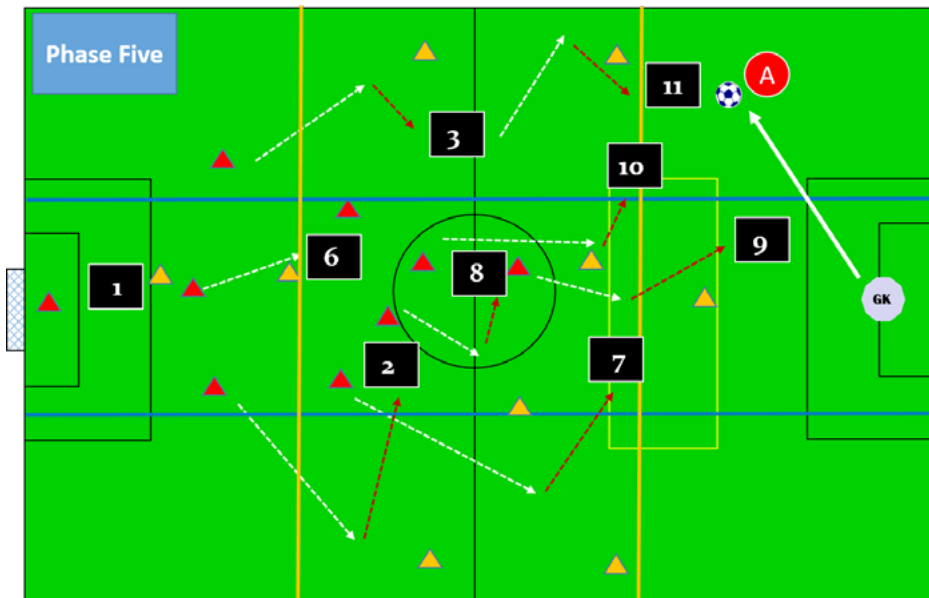
Add corridors and zones to help team shape

3 Corridors widthwise; 3 zones lengthwise. Helps judgement with distances. Attacking zones should be approximately 2 long and attacking corridors 3 wide. Rd arrows donate the inverted runs by wingers to form a diamond in the attacking third.

Add corridors and zones to help team shape

Now interchanges of players, it can be anything that effectively confuses the opponents. (2) attacks, (8) fills in, Striker (9) runs wide winger (7) cuts inside, (11) comes to receive to feet off (6) and (10) makes a forward run into a wide attacking area.



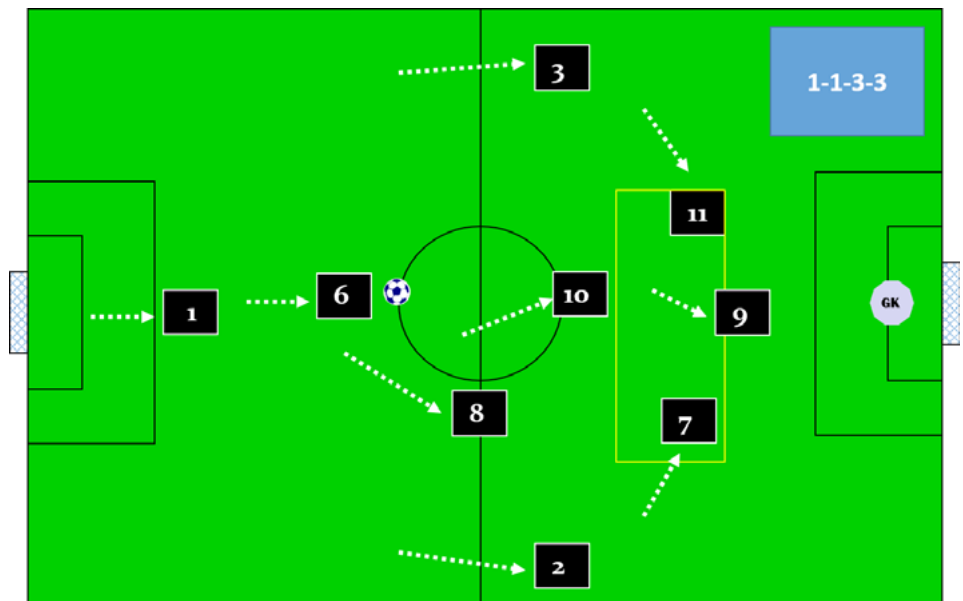


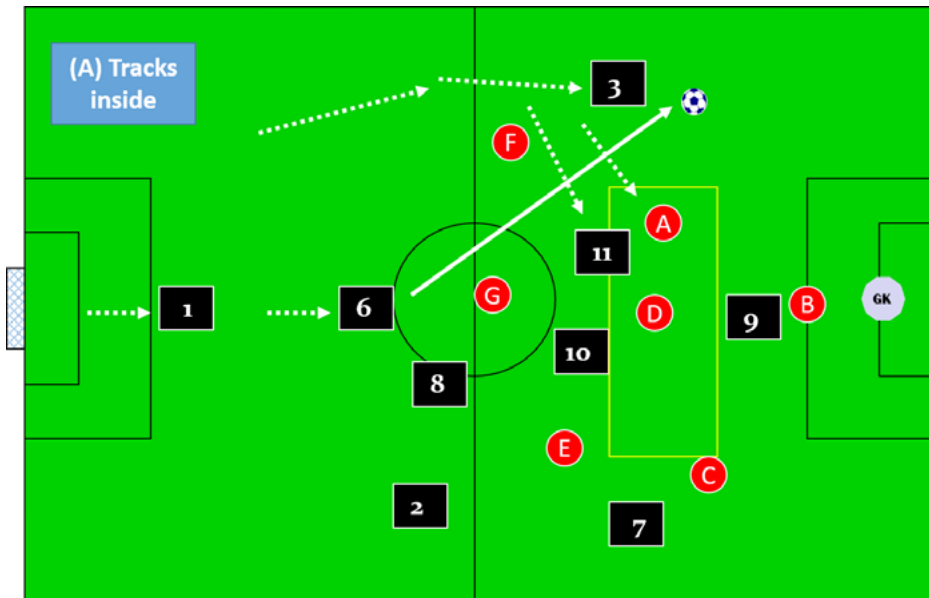
Add corridors and zones to help team shape

Defending team shape in the attacking third winning the ball back as high as possible. (A) has the ball and (11) presses showing inside to (10).

Simplified moves to practice

This is the attacking team shape now a 1-3-3. The attacking team shape we change to when we are chasing a game; perhaps losing 1-0 and wanting to be more positive in attack. So this now would be the start position.



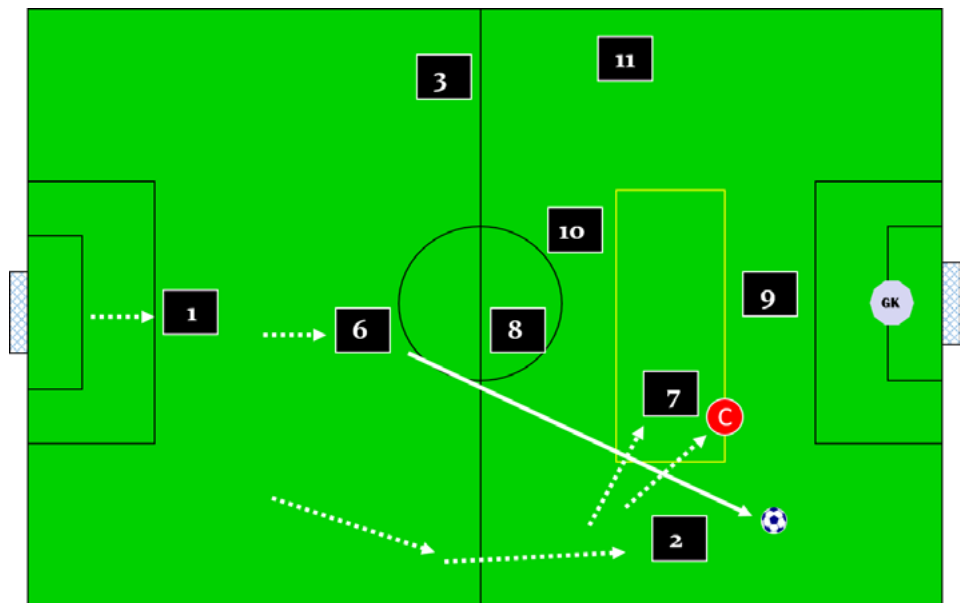


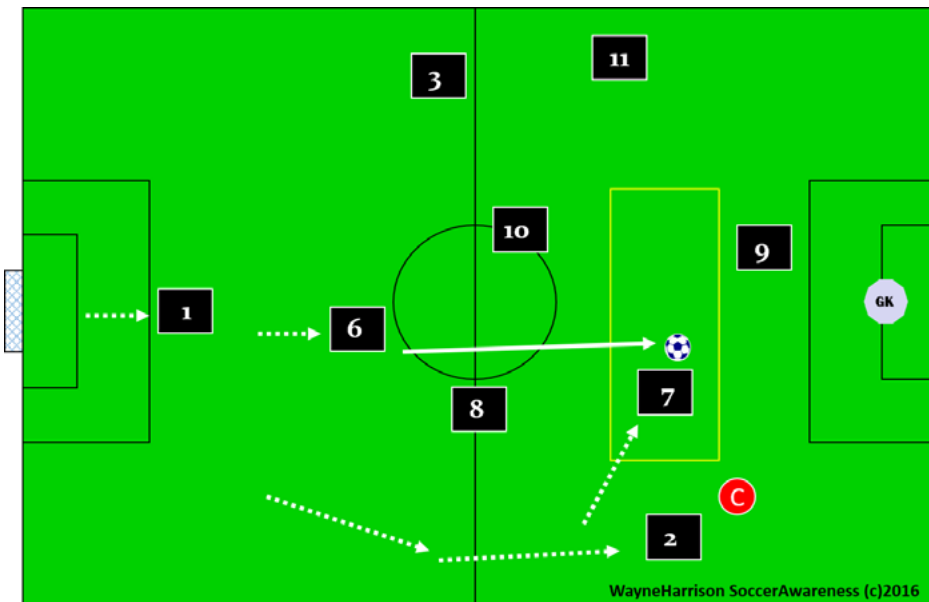
A Cut inside and an overlap by a wing back

Start simply with this two player rotation. (11) cuts inside, this is the CUE for (3) to overlap. Red discs can represent opponent players here. (6) moves over to (3)s position and (8) drops into (6)s position so we are still solid at the back.

A Cut inside and an overlap by a wing back

Now (7) cuts inside clearing the space for (2) to overlap. (6) plays the ball into the space (7) has created for (2).



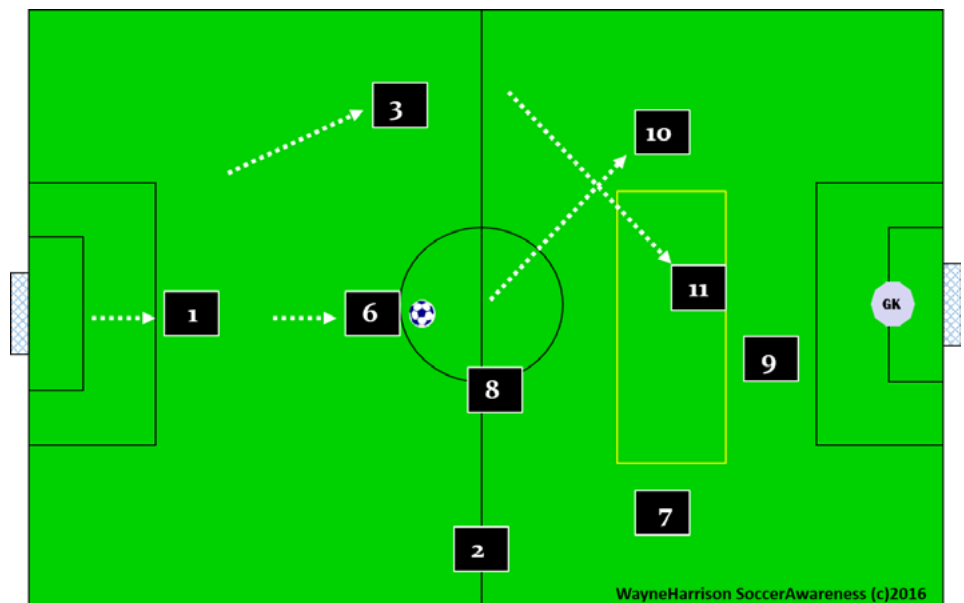


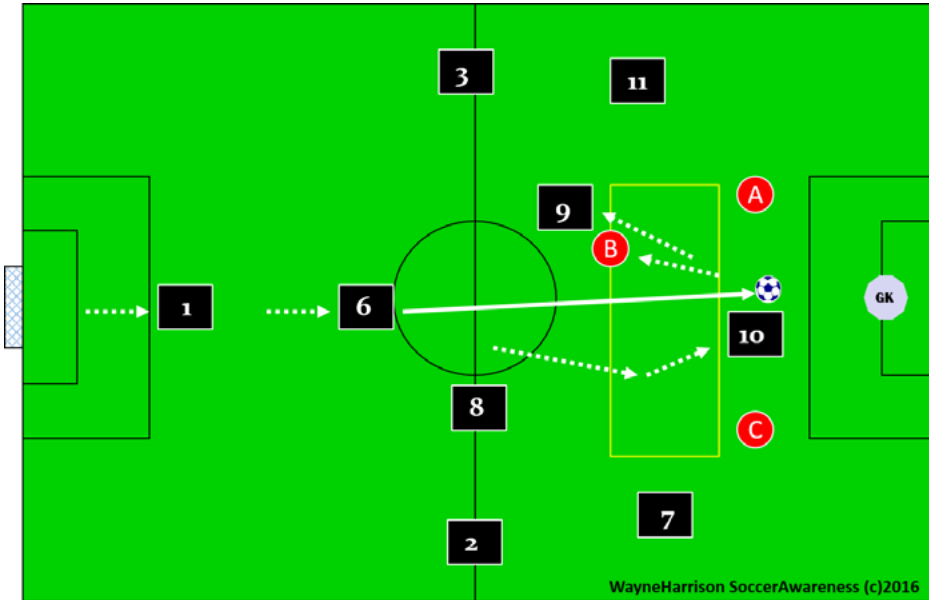
Inverted run by a winger to receive inside

Now (7) cuts inside clearing the space for (2) to overlap. Defender (C) stays wide to mark (2) so (6) passes to (7).

A 2 player rotation

Now central midfielder (10) and wide left striker / midfielder (11) rotate.



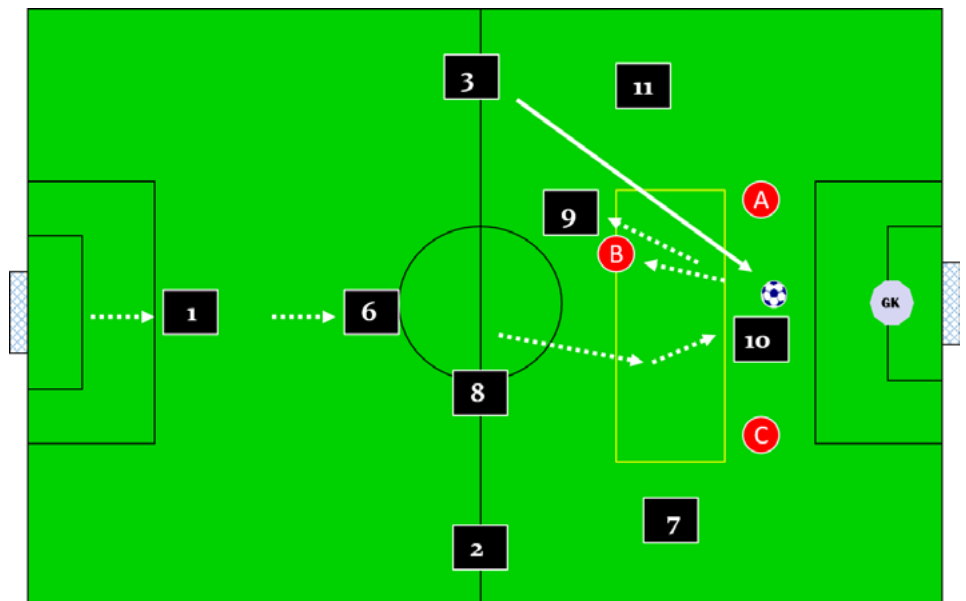


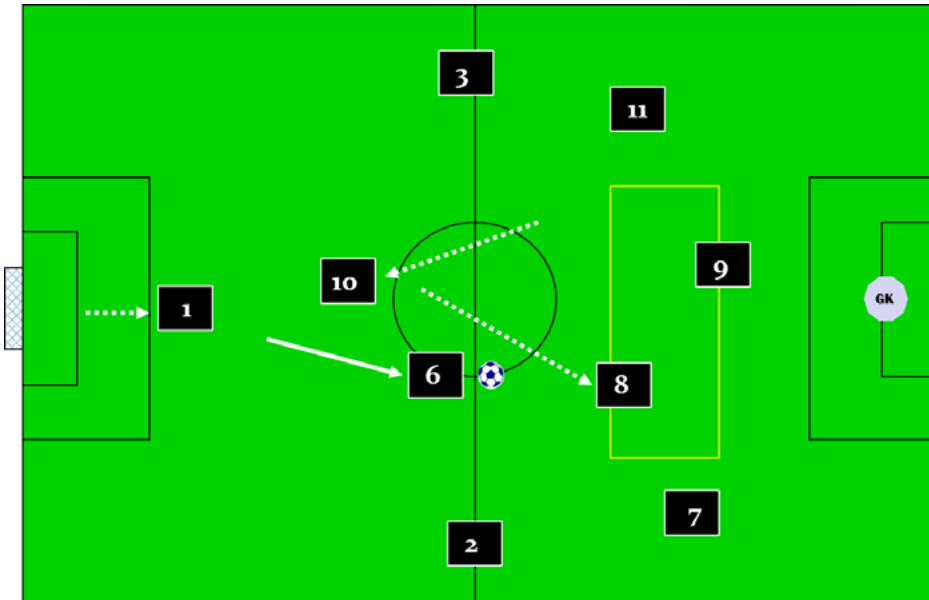
A short and long 2 player rotation

Now central striker (9) comes short and central midfielder (10) goes long and (6) plays the ball to (10) into the space created by (9) bringing defender (B) out of it.

A short and long 2 player rotation

Same idea different angle of pass. This REALLY is a simple rotation.





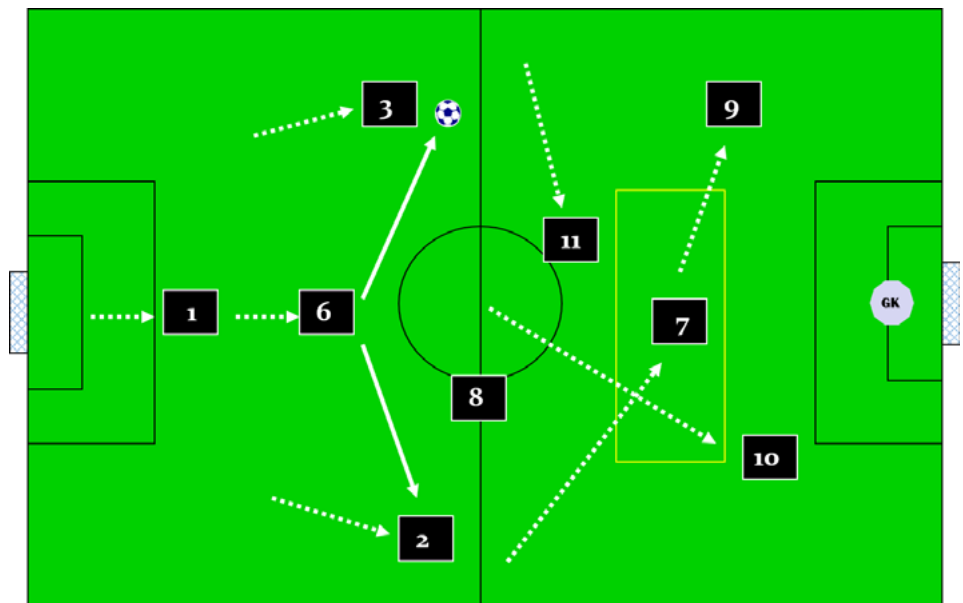
**Combinations
Movements to Teach**

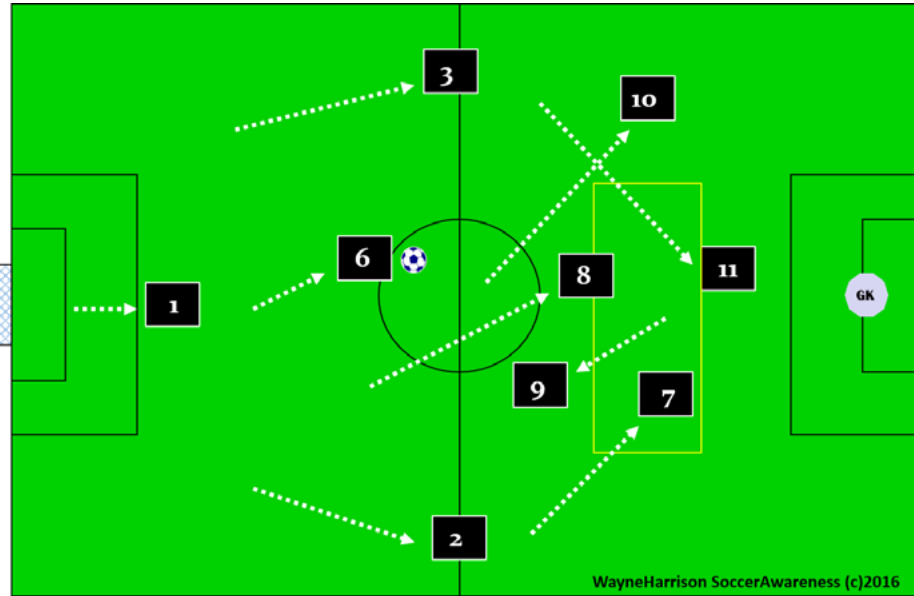
Now center back (6) brings the ball out of defense and central midfielder (10) drops in to cover.

Wingbacks (2) or (3) could also drop in to cover (6).

**More Complex
Combinations
Movements to Teach**

(3) Has several options of a pass in-front of the ball. These are now very advanced movements that the players can practice with or without the ball.



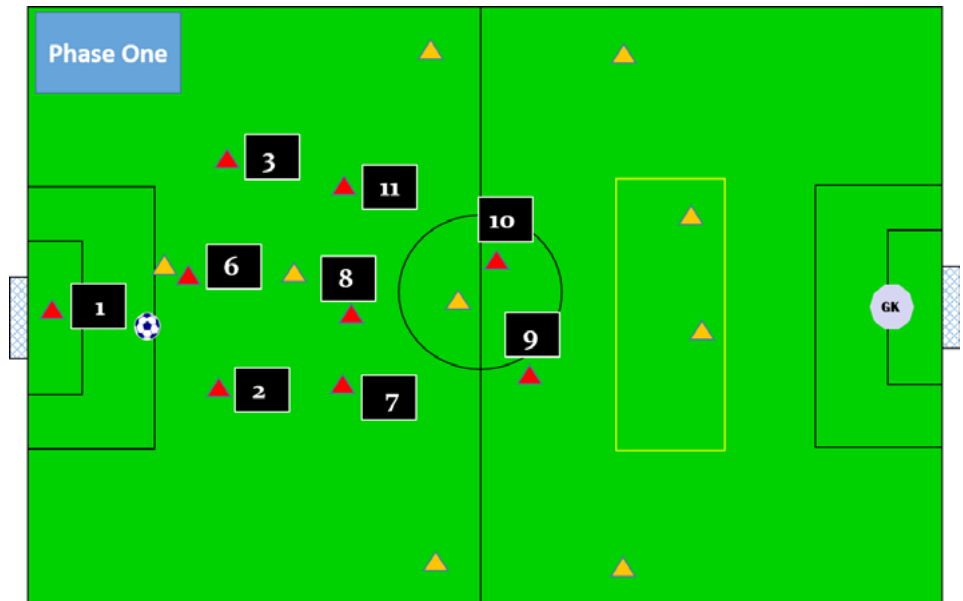


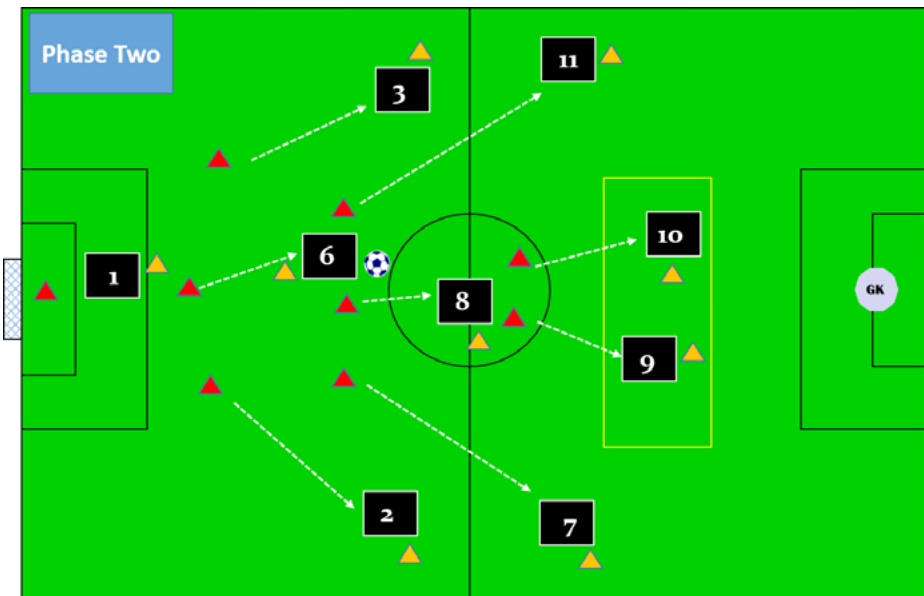
More Complex Combinations Movements to Teach

More complex. Very easy to teach in training in a **shadow play**, the secret is when players can identify it on the field “for themselves” when and where to do it in the game situation. Here we have 5 players rotating.

Team shape from defending to attacking in 1-3-3-2

Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones. Player (6) represents center backs (4) or (5) and player (8) can also represent (6) in their roles in an 11 v 11.



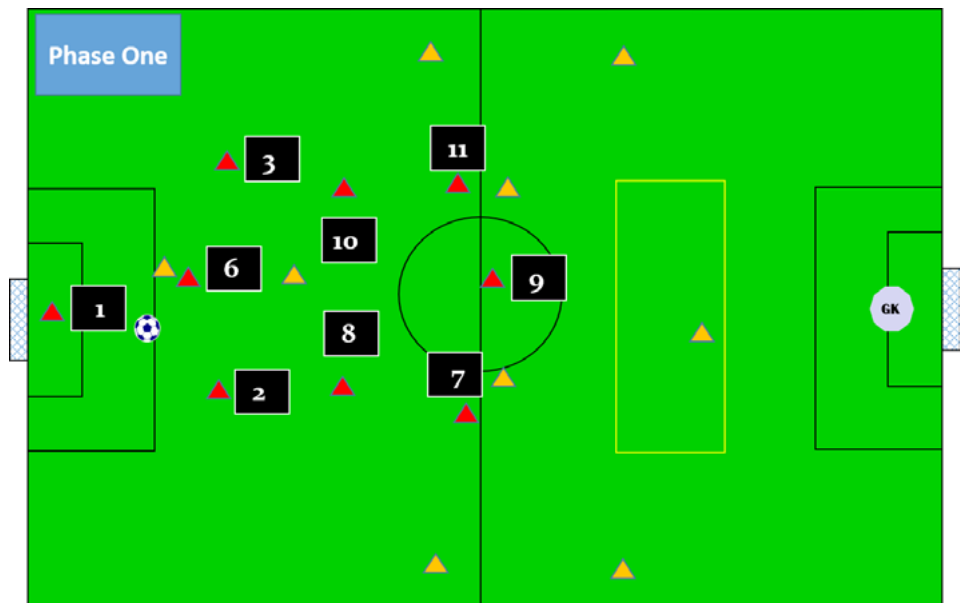


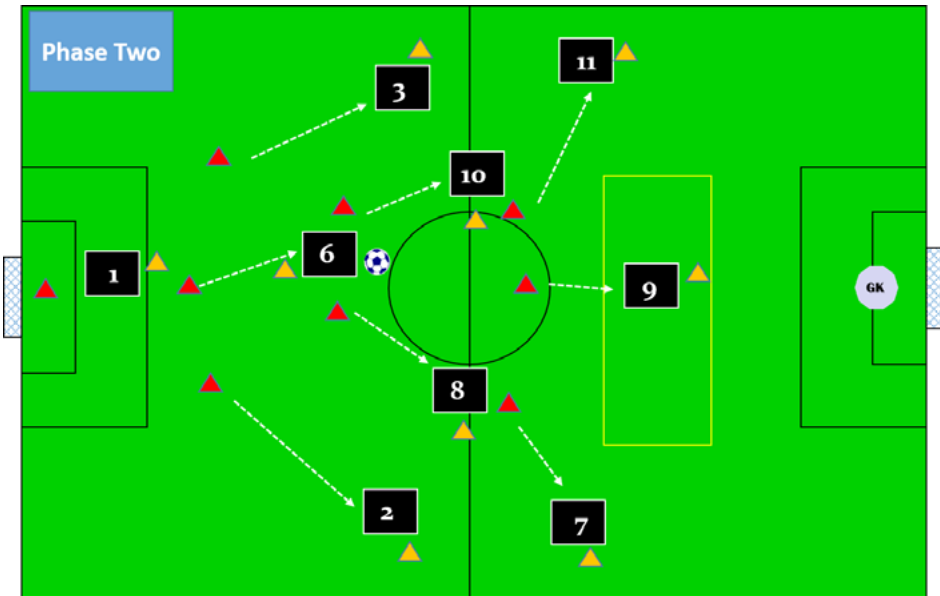
Team shape attacking in 1-3-3-2

Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones.

Team shape from defending to attacking in 1-3-2-3

Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones. Player (6) represents center backs (4) or (5) and player (8) can also represent (6) in their roles in an 11 v 11.





**Team shape from
defending to attacking in
1-3-2-3**

Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones. Player (6) represents center backs (4) or (5) and player (8) can also represent (6) in their roles in an 11 v 11.

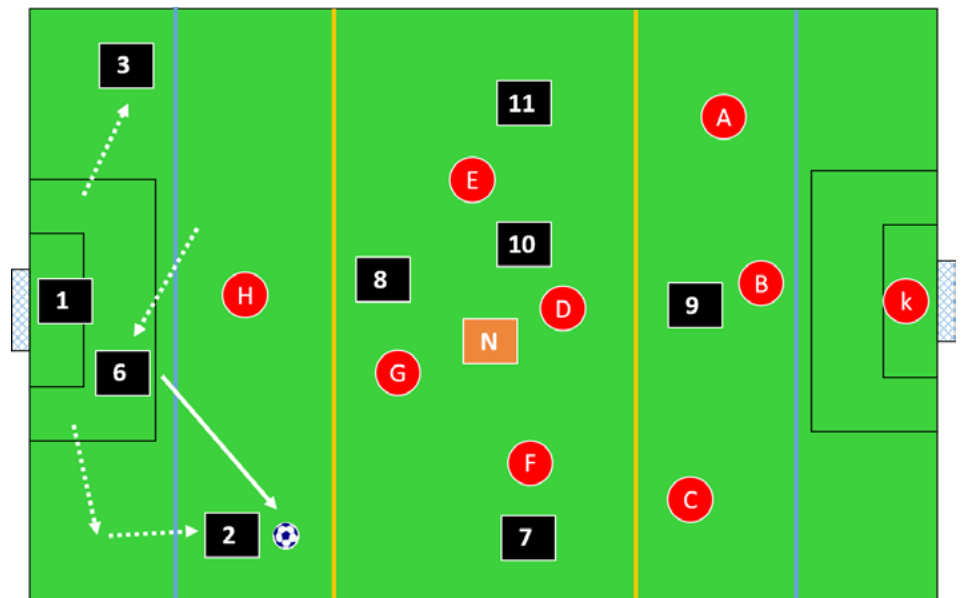
COMPOSURE ZONES TO AID TEAM PLAY AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT IN A 9 V 9

As an easy introduction to teaching players to develop play from the back without the pressure they would get in a game situation.

Builds confidence and composure in the players and you can increase the pressure as they improve.

Composure Zones to aid team play and individual player development

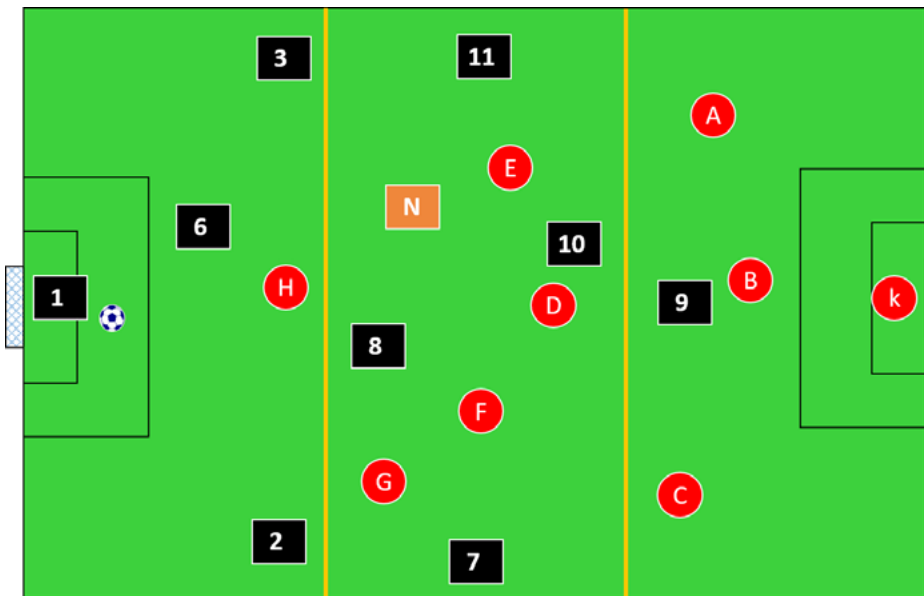
Overload at the back. Striker can't encroach into the 10-yard composure zone. Defenders pass ball across under no pressure until one is free to run it out, attackers can now try to win it back. Defenders can take the ball back into the composure zone for safety and this encourages spreading out and playing from the back. Be patient, keep possession; go forward at the correct moment.



A TRANSITION GAME MAINTAINING SHAPE AND BALANCE THROUGHOUT THE TEAM IN A 9 V 9

Building 9 v 9 team play up through various conditions of play

- Players stay in their own thirds to establish team shape
- Transition between thirds
- 9 v 9 rotation of players
- Possible passing options
- Overlap play from wide defenders
- Introducing offside
- Overload in attack to maintain possession
- Transitions between thirds for defending team also
- Working with four zones

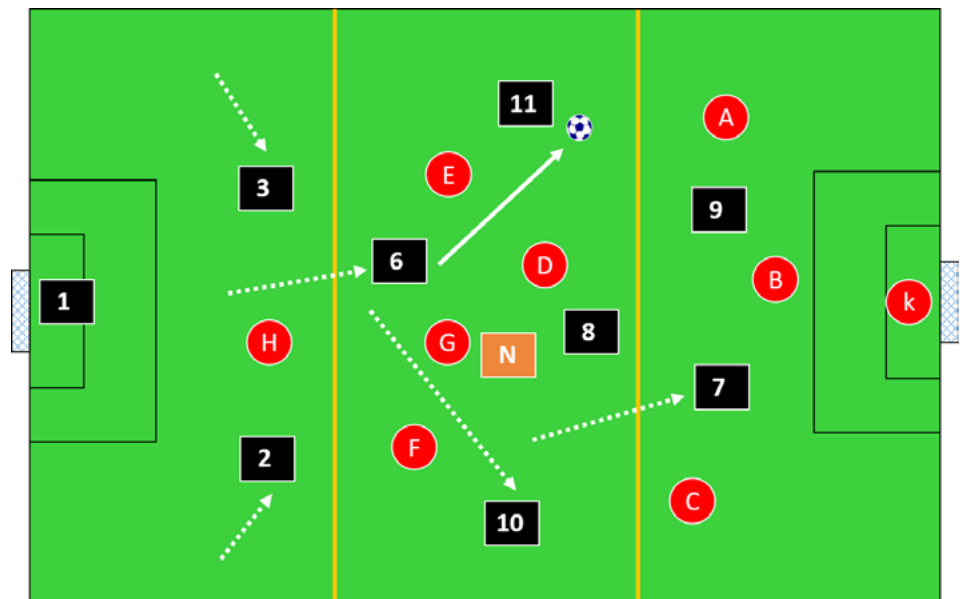


Players stay in their own thirds to establish team shape

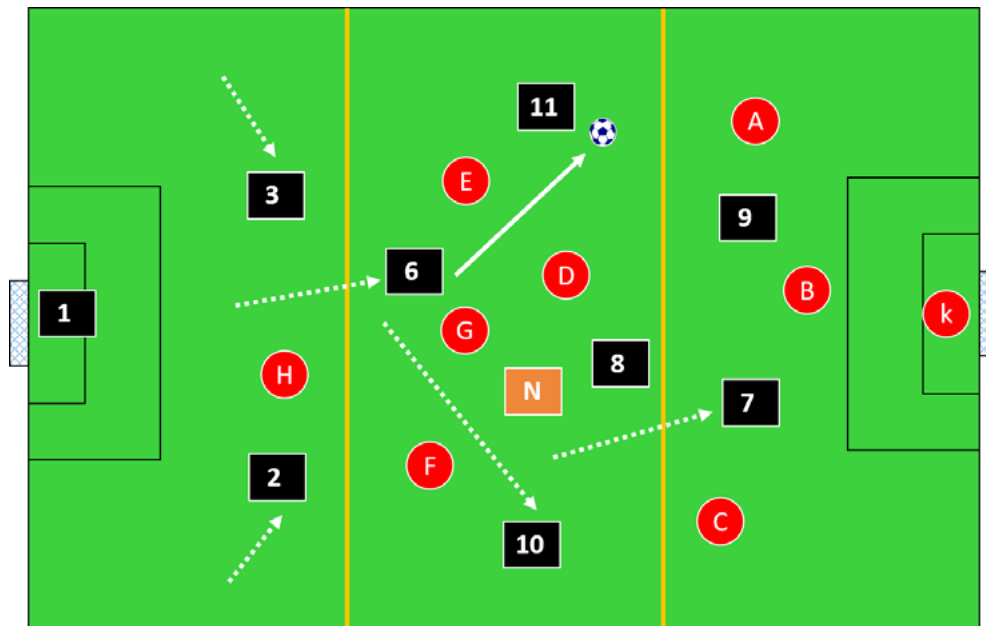
We start with 2 x 1-3-3-1-1 set ups. Players stay in their own zones initially until we get the game going.

Transition between thirds

An example: (6) bring the ball out and creates a 6 v 3 with the neutral player added also. Then a midfielder joins in the attacking third to create a 2 v 3 in there. Defending team players stay in their own zones.



9 v 9 Rotation of Players

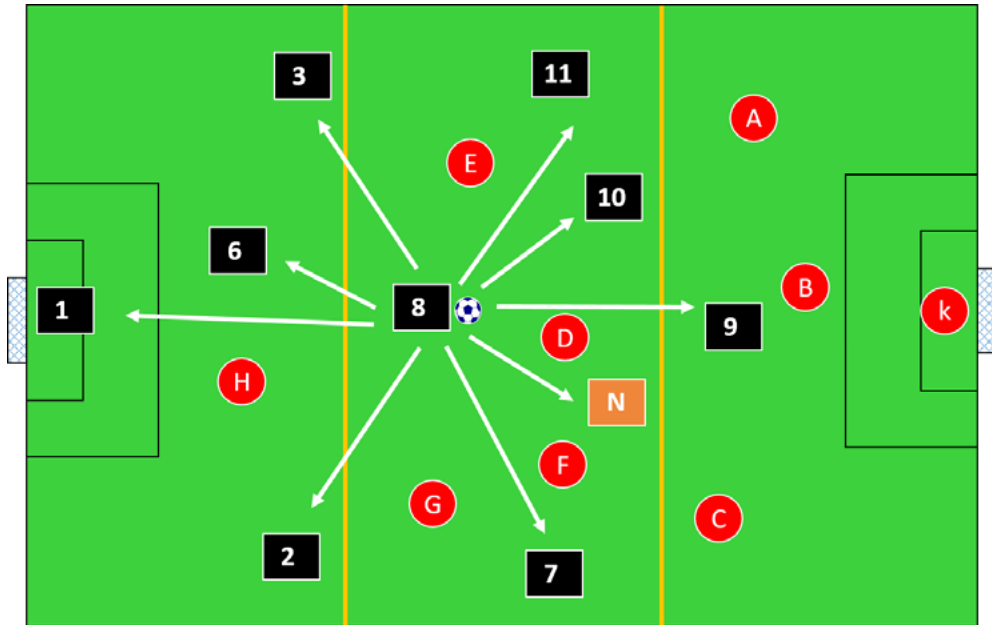


Players interchange between zones one at a time always returning to original set-up. Check the balance of the team with and without the ball. We have created a 5 v 3 in midfield zone with player (6) moving up.

If they lose possession players either drop back in or you can develop the clinic to include pressing to regain the ball. E.g. If you are losing the game go full high-pressure and PUSH three players into the attacking third, three PLUS A NEUTRAL PLAYER in the midfield third and two in the defensive third.

1. Condition – Can only score if all players are over the defensive third line so reinforcing keeping compact vertically.
2. Restrict number of touches on the ball if they are able to do so to encourage quick passing and movement and to improve the speed of decision-making.
3. Vary play by encouraging defenders to pass directly to the forwards; midfield players can then support them facing the opponent's goal (easier to support rather than receiving and having to turn with the ball).
4. If you have problems making the session work with equal numbers then reduce the game to a 9 v 5 situation using one forward, one midfielder, two defenders and a keeper on the opponents team until the players are comfortable then go into the full workout.

Possible Passing Options

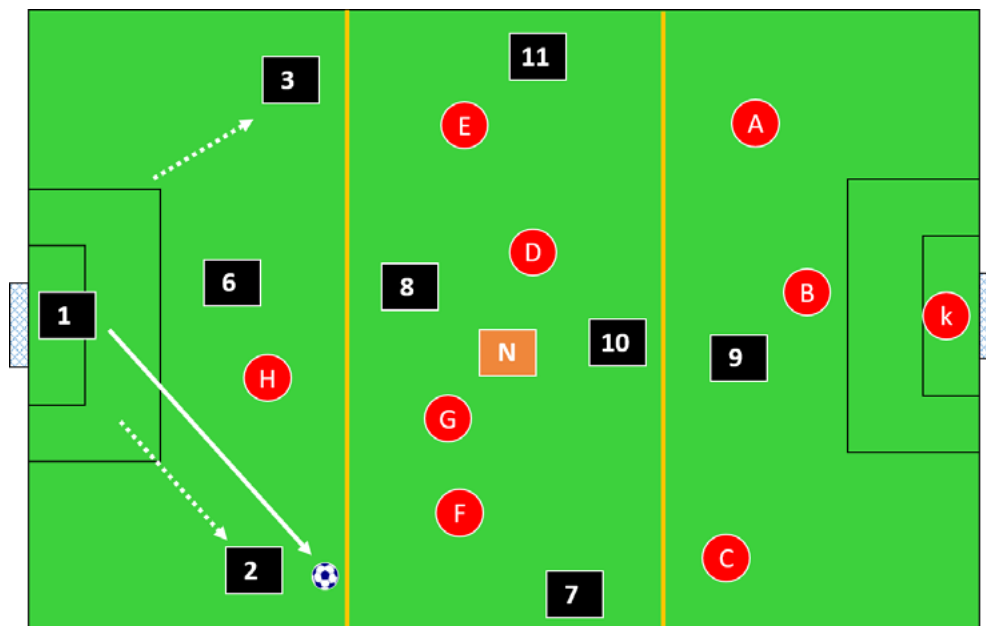


Player (8) on the ball. 4 possible options to pass forward e.g. to (7), (9), (10), (11) or (N) If can't go forward because of pressure, can go to the side to (3) or (2) or back to (6), and the keeper to keep possession until the situation allows for a forward pass again (you won't obviously get all these options to pass but it shows how it can work).

Caution – In attack, be aware of quick counter if opponents win the ball i.e. we have a 2 v 2 at the back.

Discussion – You can get so much work into this session, every time you look there may be a new situation to effect. Choose a theme and stick with it and when you have established it with the players, only then move onto another theme (you can again use the same set-up, as it is so flexible).

A Transition game maintaining shape and balance throughout the team

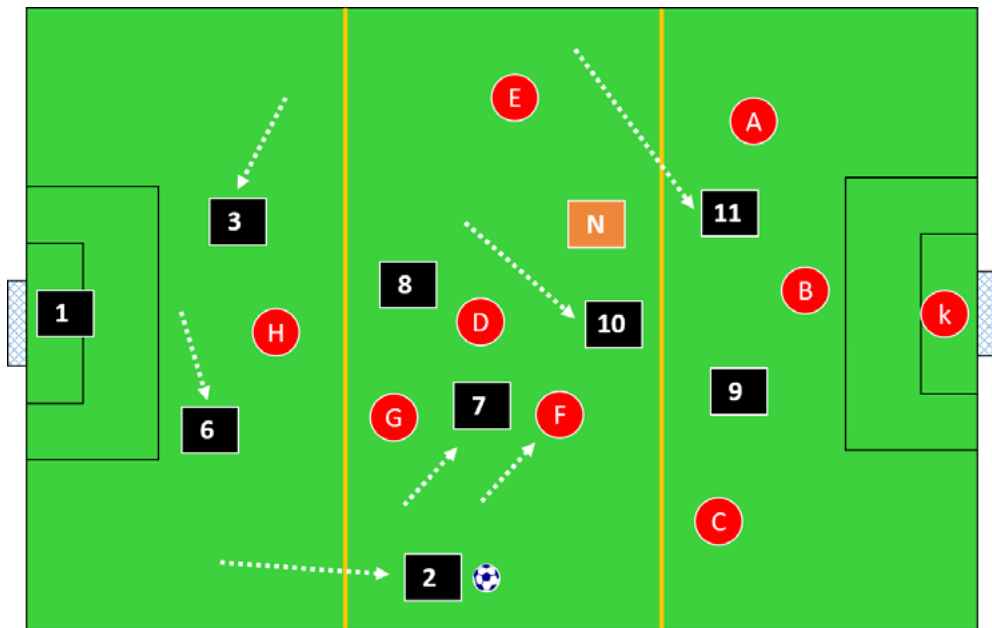


To ensure the players have a chance to build up the play from the back have a 3 v 1 overload at each defensive third to begin to session.

We are looking to be successful with offensive play building up from the back and this gives it a greater chance of success and thus the positive reinforcement of the players.

As they get better at this and gain success you can change it to a 3 v 2 situation so it is more difficult to achieve. A 3 v 2 means a 9 v 9 situation with the players developing play but staying in their own third to emphasize team shape through the units.

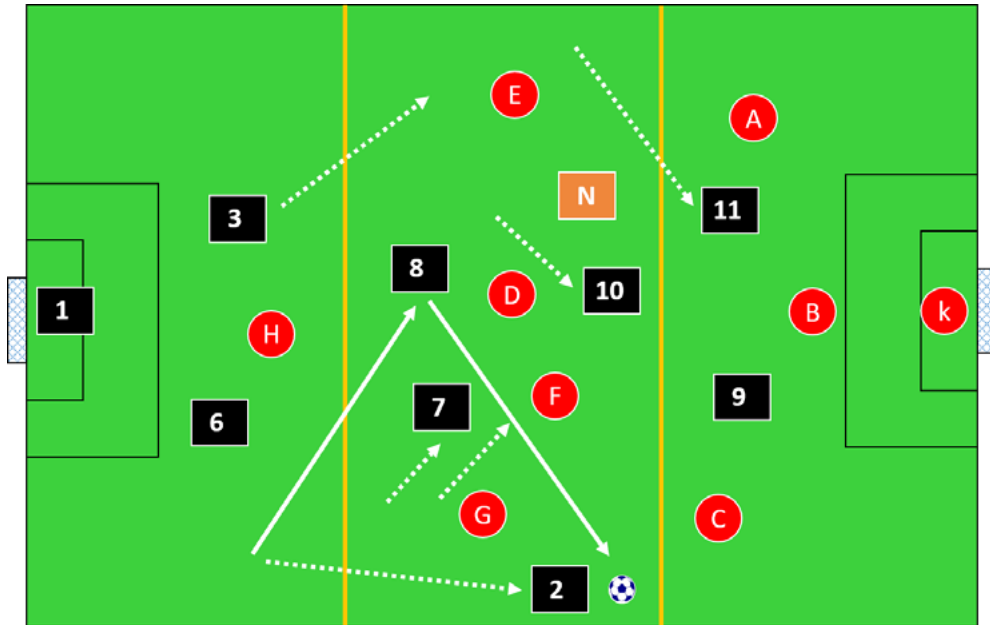
Transitions between thirds



Now we are transitioning between thirds and as a defender changes the balance in midfield from a 3 v 3 into a 4 v 3, a midfielder then moves into the attacking third to change the balance from a 1 v 3 into a 2 v 3. (7) Clears the space for (2) to bring the ball forward. (6) And (3) cover across behind the field to support and be in a good position to cover should the move break down. This is clearing the space in front of the ball and filling in behind the ball.

(11) Makes a run into the attacking third to be another target for (2) to pass to. If the player can't go forward and has to play it back ensure the players behind the ball get in positions where they are free to receive it and able to support the player on the ball.

Overlap play from wide defenders



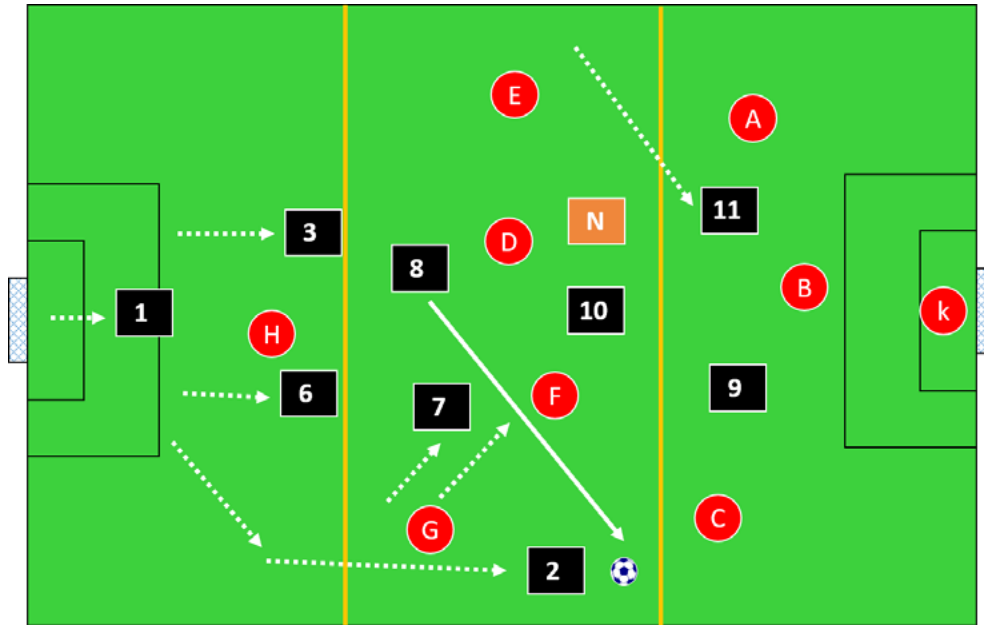
Here a full back makes an overlap run to provide an option for (8) to pass to. (2) Passes to (8), (7) clears the space wide to run into for (2) by taking defender (F) inside, and (2) runs onto the return pass from (8). The overlap can occur also from the middle third into the attacking third.

Wide defenders need to be constantly encouraged to get into good wide receiving positions to take the ball forward into attacking areas of the field.

The fact that (G) can't track the runner into the middle third yet during this progression helps highlight the importance of this kind of attacking run from a wide area.

Likewise, (8) may change the point of attack and (3) can make the overlap run from the other side and on the blind side of striker (G). (8) covers for (3).

Introducing offside

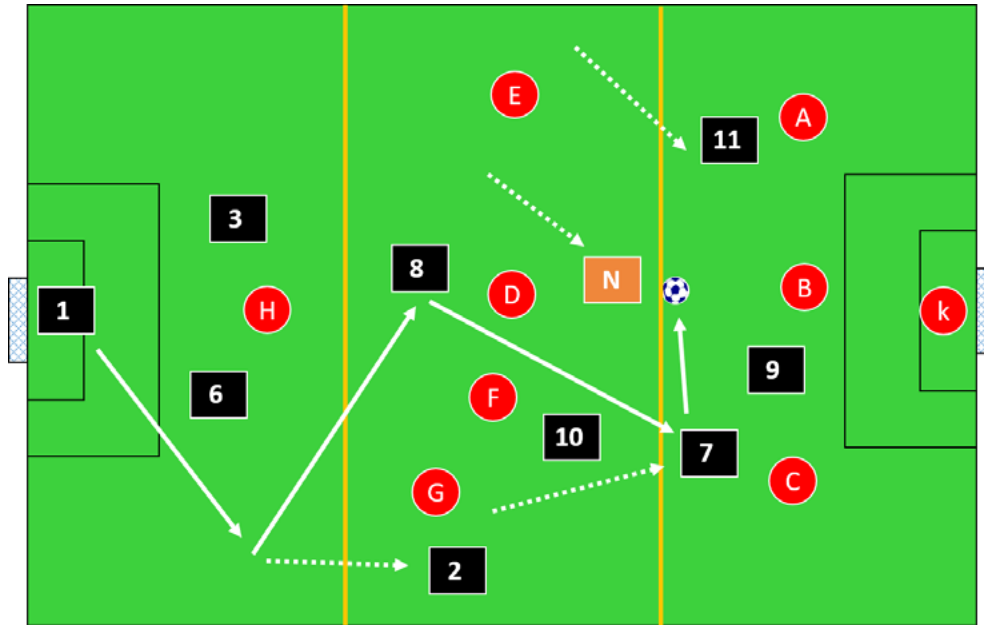


Develop – Have offside from the defensive third of the field. (8) Passes the ball forward and (3), (6) and the keeper push up. Striker (G) is left offside.

(8) Passes to,(2) who moves up from the defensive zone to the middle zone to support. This type of transition movement is important because it allows players to move freely between the zones knowing they will have a team mate covering for them. In terms of the opposition this rapid movement and transition makes it difficult for them to pick players up, to read what your team is doing.

This means defenders aren't just defenders, midfielders aren't just midfielders and attackers aren't just attackers they work to help each other through the three units of the team and are free to mix the game up. This is total soccer played to encourage the free movement of players throughout the teams.

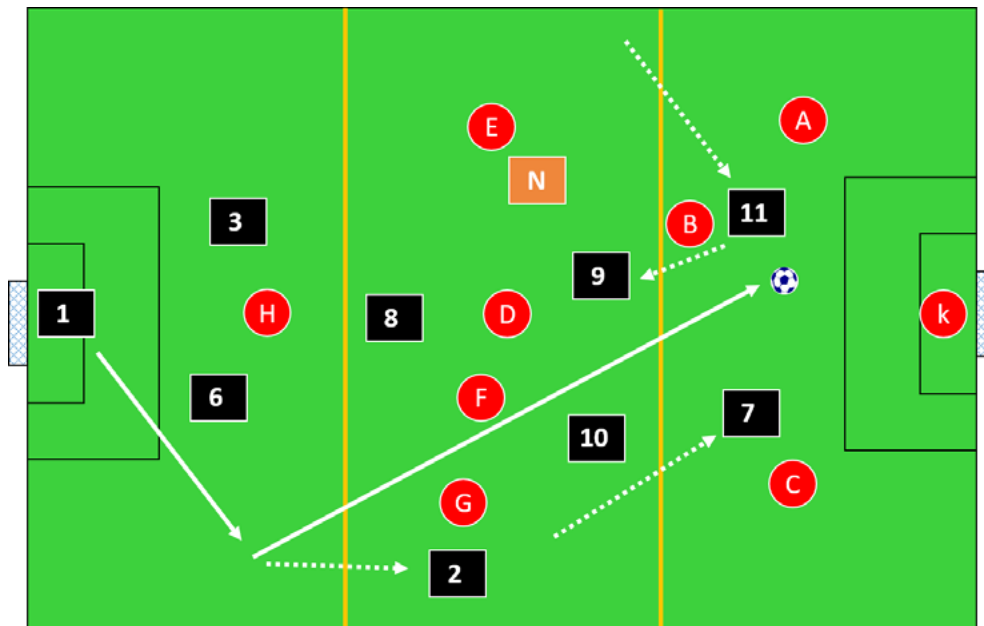
Overload in attack to maintain possession



Here (2) plays the ball to (8) and (7) makes a run off the ball to support in the attacking third. Transitions can depend on the stage of the game; if your team is chasing the game to score being a goal down then (7) would probably stay in the attacking third, not immediately return to help (8) in the middle third but keep an overload in the attacking third situation there but the basis of the session is to show how to maintain a balanced shape in your team.

Practice movement (switching) of strikers and midfield players to move defenders around (especially if they man mark), so play isn't in straight lines all the time.

Transitions between thirds for defending team also



Progression – Have players able to transition back into zones from the attacking third to the midfield third, the midfield third to the defensive third. Defenders still cannot move between zones.

Develop – Now Allow defending players (as above) to track attacking players into the other zones. When this happens the above situation means the defender (B) follows the striker (9) going short creating space behind for another striker to move into or a midfielder to break forward into (in this case 7 and 11). Ultimately open the game up so the players have no boundaries to use for focus and see if they can work out how to keep that balance and shape on an open field of play.

Working with Four Zones

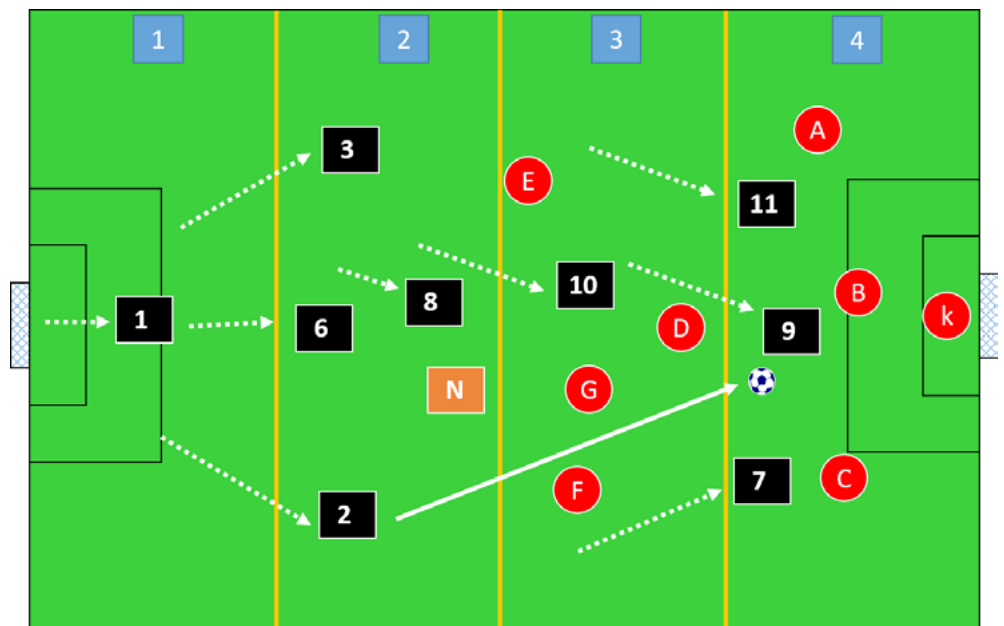


We have essentially four - thirds to play in. The players can only play in three of the four thirds at any one time.

This ensures movement up and down the field maintaining distances between units.

Players cannot enter zone 4 until the ball goes into zone 4.

The ball has been played into zone 4. Here the numbers team has moved forward out of zone 1 and into zone 2 and the whole team has moved forward one zone. This helps them maintain distances between the units and does not allow the team to get too spread out either attacking wise or defensively.



Progression Development From Start To Finish

Set up is as follows; the field is arranged in thirds; defending, midfield and attacking thirds. In the set up we have here we have a 3 v 1, a 4 v 4 + neutral player and a 1 v 3.

Warm up: Objective: 9 v 9 with composure zones to aid team play and individual player development

1. STAY IN OWN THIRD.

Players stay in their own thirds to get a feel for how to maintain shape and how to use width in attack. Spread out in possession in a 3 v 2 overload at the back in the defending third to create a situation where the players are available to receive the ball in space and pass it forward.

2. TRANSITION BETWEEN THIRDS

Players are allowed to transition between thirds but only one at a time. The defending team cannot move between thirds to track the attacking players. When the attacking team loses possession they then become defenders and must immediately drop back into the third they started in. The reason for dropping back and not trying to win it back there and then is because we are working on offensive play and want both teams to have the opportunity to build up play. Can run the ball in, pass it in, or pass it in to a runner from your own third.

3. OVERLAP PLAY FROM WIDE DEFENDERS

This particular type of movement is a very important one to develop in this session and the opportunities presented to do so will be numerous.

4. OFFSIDE FROM THE DEFENDING THIRD

Introduce offside in the final thirds at both ends of the field. This encourages teams to move up as the ball is played forward.

5. OVERLOAD IN ATTACK MAINTAINING POSSESSION

Here we have worked the ball into the attacking third and we leave an overload in this third to regain possession should it be lost. This may depend on the game situation where we are chasing the game being a goal down and have to take chances.

6. TRANSITION BACKWARDS BETWEEN THIRDS

Allow players to transition between thirds coming back as the initial movement, for example a striker may drop back into the middle third to receive. A midfielder may push on into the space the striker created by the movement.

7. TRANSITIONS OF DEFENDING PLAYERS

Allow defenders to track players into the other thirds they venture into. Now all players can move between thirds but still have it only one at a time. This helps highlight how to create space for someone else by the movement of players; a striker comes short, pulls a defender with them and space is created in the area they came from for another striker or a midfielder to move into to receive the pass.

8. FREE PLAY

Open the game up. See if players can maintain their shape without the help of the thirds, if they can transition between units but also keep their balance. Try a game in quarters to establish movement up and down as a team.

9. NUMBER OF TOUCHES RESTRICTION

Introduce a three, two then one touch restriction to see if the players can work more quickly and still gain success. This speeds up their decision making in the game. When it is one touch, condition it so they can take more than one touch (a pass may be so heavy they need two touches) but emphasize they use one touch if it is on to do so. This keeps it realistic.

10. CONCLUSION

We have developed the clinic from working in thirds (or quarters), introduced many progressions to work up to letting the game go free and observing if the players can incorporate into the free game situation, all they have learnt.

I would recommend using this clinic on a regular basis and set it up for the scrimmage that is usually done at the end of a coaching clinic session.

A "COMFORT ZONE" DEVELOPING WIDTH IN PLAY IN A 9 V 9

OBJECTIVE: TO ENCOURAGE PLAYERS TO USE WIDTH AND OFFER AN AREA TO PLAY WITHOUT PRESSURE

Theme: Developing Width in Attack

This is a perfect Introduction to this idea so players are free to receive in wide areas. If a player breaks wide into the outside channel on either side of the field and is in possession of the ball this player cannot be tackled. Defenders are not allowed into the channel. The players on the team in possession of the ball can run the ball into the channel or have it passed to them into the channel. Allow only 4 seconds in the free wide area.

This condition plants the seed in the mind of the players to immediately play with width when in possession. Numbers for this game can be 4 v 4 and upwards. Our offensive team shape to begin. Four players give us width in attack.

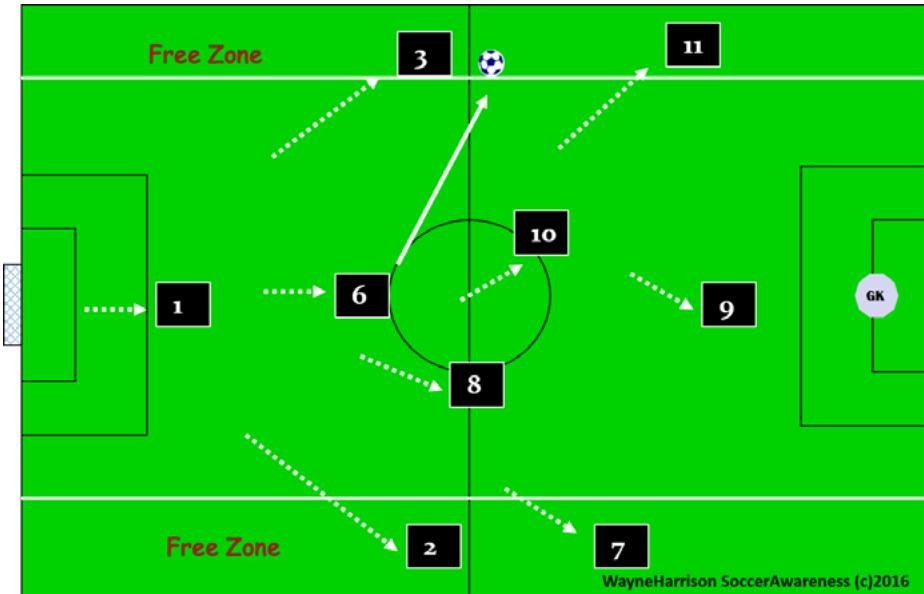
Develop: The wide areas can be used to practice certain moves the players have been taught, especially at the younger ages where they need to be able to practice them without pressure. This allows for them playing in a game but also doing the move without pressure.

Coaching Points:

1. Create space wide when in possession of the ball
2. Building play from the back
3. Using width to attack
4. Developing Overlap runs

Development of the Theme: Build the theme up very simply to ensure immediate understanding and success.

1. No opposition at first so 9 v 0.
2. Small numbers (e.g. 9 v 3): Passive opposition (jockey the player only)
3. Small numbers (e.g. 9 v 5): Passive opposition (Can only Intercept passes not tackle)
4. 9 v 9 but again passive opposition
5. 9 v 9 full game with wide FREE ZONES for the team you are training.
6. When you feel the players are ready have a full blown 9 v 9 game and have it for both teams at the same time going both ways.
7. Ensure all players on your roster are involved in the attacking team theme development initially so everyone benefits and understands what you are teaching and why you are teaching it.



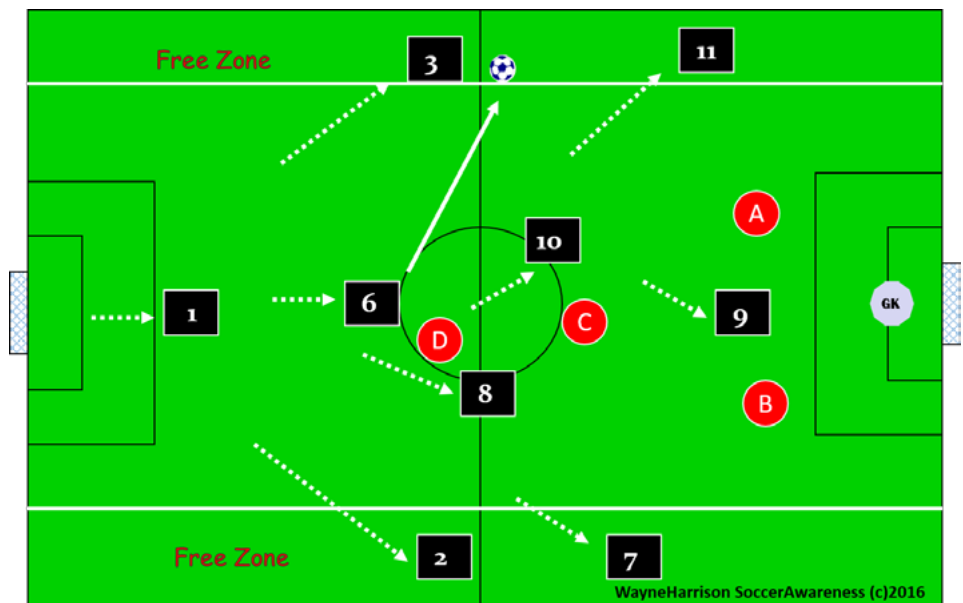
To Encourage players to use width and play without pressure

This is the basic set up of the attacking shape of a 9 v 89 in the 3-3-1-1 formation. Emphasis is on the theme of exploiting the wide areas of the field by setting the free zone "Condition".

A Small number of defenders added

Bring a small number of defenders in as passive opposition who can only Intercept not tackle.

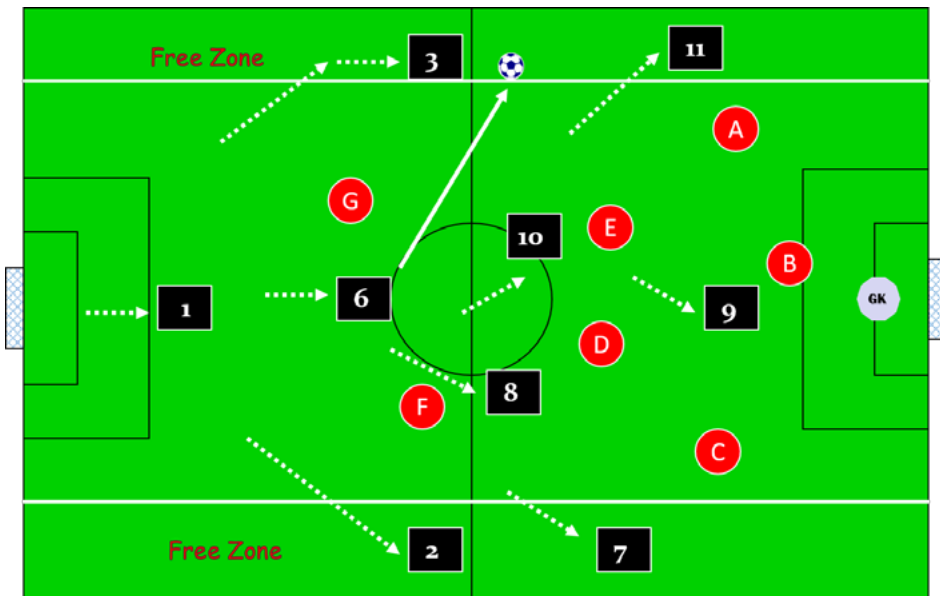
So we have here a 9 v 5 set up.



Building the idea up

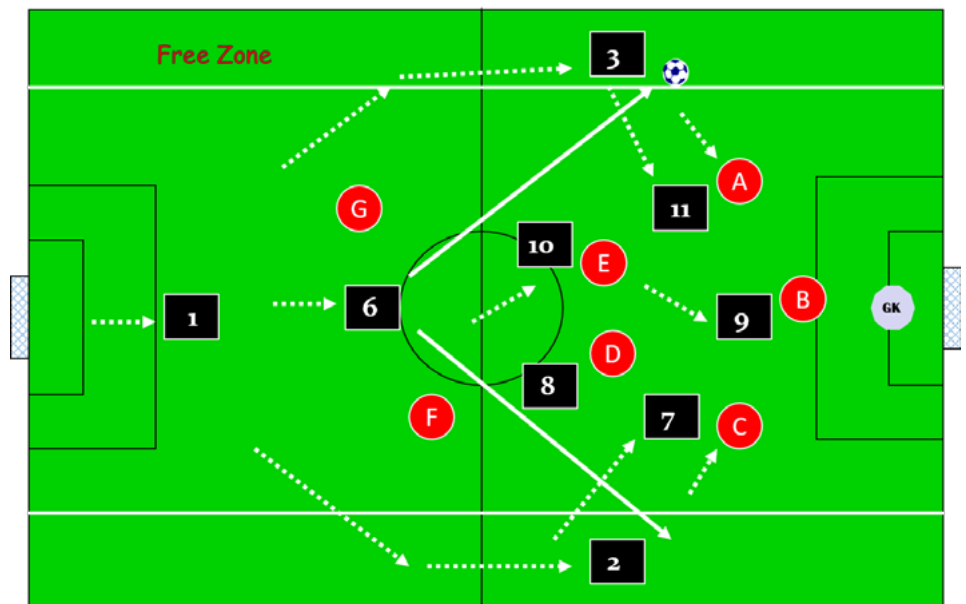
If a player breaks wide into the outside channel on either side of the field and is in possession of the ball this player cannot be tackled. Defenders are not allowed into the channel.

The players on the team in possession of the ball can run the ball into the channel or have it passed to them into the channel.



Interchanges / Combinations of Players

Now the two wide players cut inside and leave the space for (2) and (3) to overlap. OR, if (A) doesn't track (11) inside; then (11) can receive creating a 2 v 1 against (B).



PRE-MEDITATED PATTERNS OF PLAY: BUILDING FROM THE BACK IN A 9 V 9

Please watch your games and ask yourself:

1. How many times does your team try to build out of the back?
2. How many times do they play BOOT-BALL from back to front?

9 v 9 is at the younger ages; and not wanting to baffle them with science too early; we will choose far fewer ways to build out from the back than we do at 11 v 11.

But we will establish patterns of play they can learn to do that are very simple; but also very effective when done correctly; and we will change the boot ball mentality many clubs follow; and teach the game correctly without fear of failure.

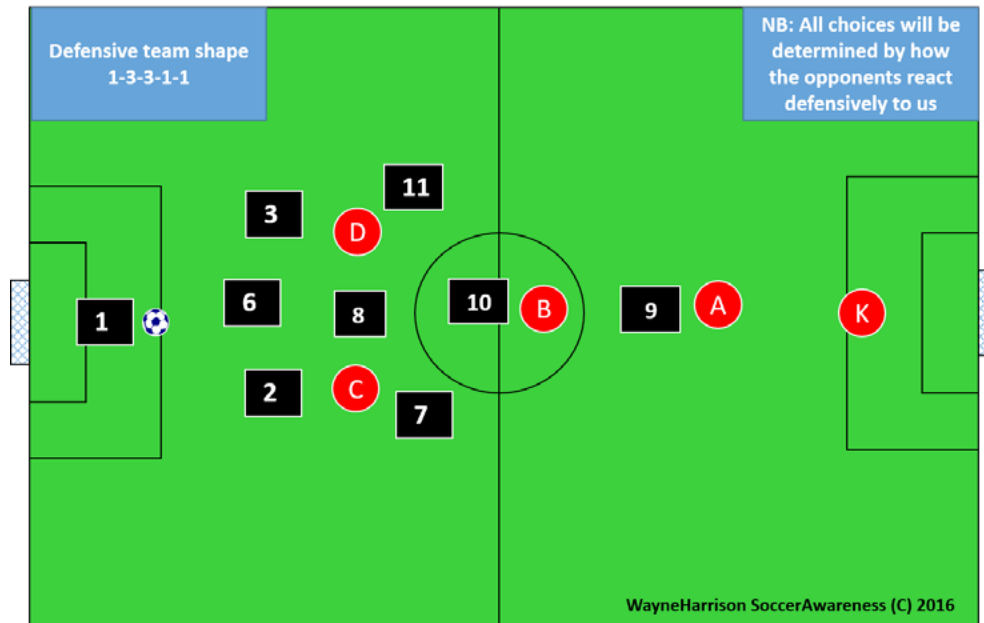
Mistakes will occur when we build from the back because we are taking risks, but that's ok, players will learn from them.

Yes its much safer to boot it long to the fast striker to run and score but that teaches Exactly NOTHING for the long term development of our players; plus all the midfielders and defenders get out of it are stiff necks watching the ball go over their heads from back to front.

The striker gets all the glory but it means nothing; and as they get older; long term the one who suffers the most is ultimately the striker who has learnt absolutely nothing but "running fast or dribbling in a straight line".

As the players get older defenders are faster, stronger and cleverer and the fast dynamic striker is no more. So lets teach the game CORRECTLY now; for everyone to succeed. I want EVERY player to learn, improve; and succeed and that includes the striker as much as anyone; as good strikers are worth their weight in gold but they have to be trained correctly like everyone else.

Distribution from the keeper and Playing from the back



We use the numbers we would use in an 11 v 11: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

If we are beyond needing to do shadow plays we can start with an overload for us to train to pass out from the back so we have initial success.

As we improve we can make it a 9 v 9 and an actual game situation. Here we start with a 9 v 5.

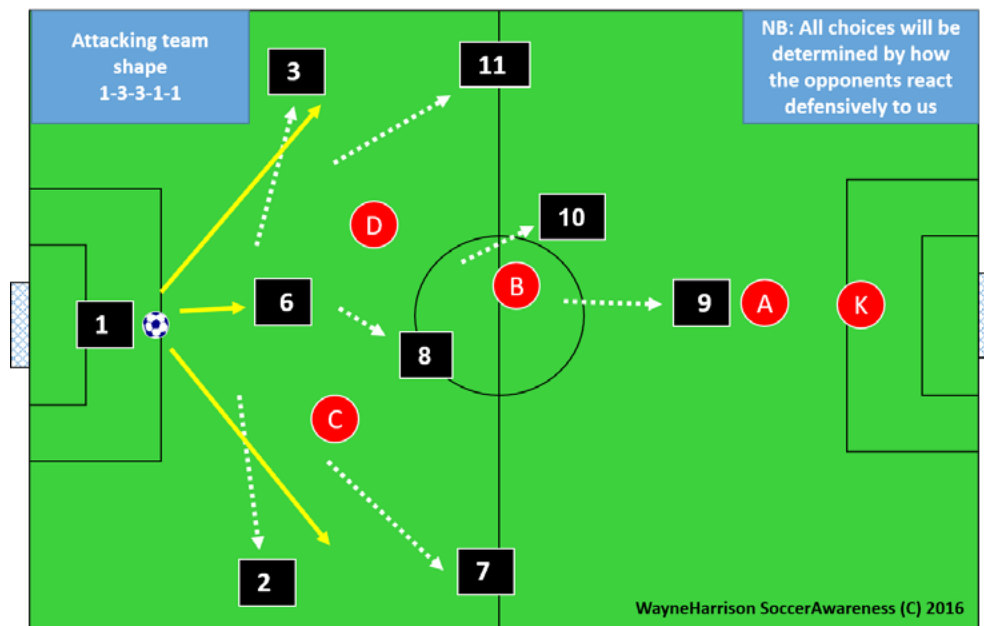
We are not saying these will work all the time and we will make mistakes. Sometimes we will get them wrong. Sometimes the opponents will work out what we are doing and stop us. And sometimes it will work great.

But they WONT work if we dont try them and just boot it long and play safe.

Player (8) can be a hybrid of (6) or (8) in the 11 v 11. Player (6) represents the center backs of (4) and (5) in the 11 v 11 and I like to develop (4) and (5) at center back in 11 v 11 to play like a (6).

Perhaps use cones instead of actual players to practice in a shadow play to make it work initially and to gain confidence (better still use Mannequins).

1. Developing play from the back in a 9 v 9 through the Center backs / Wingbacks



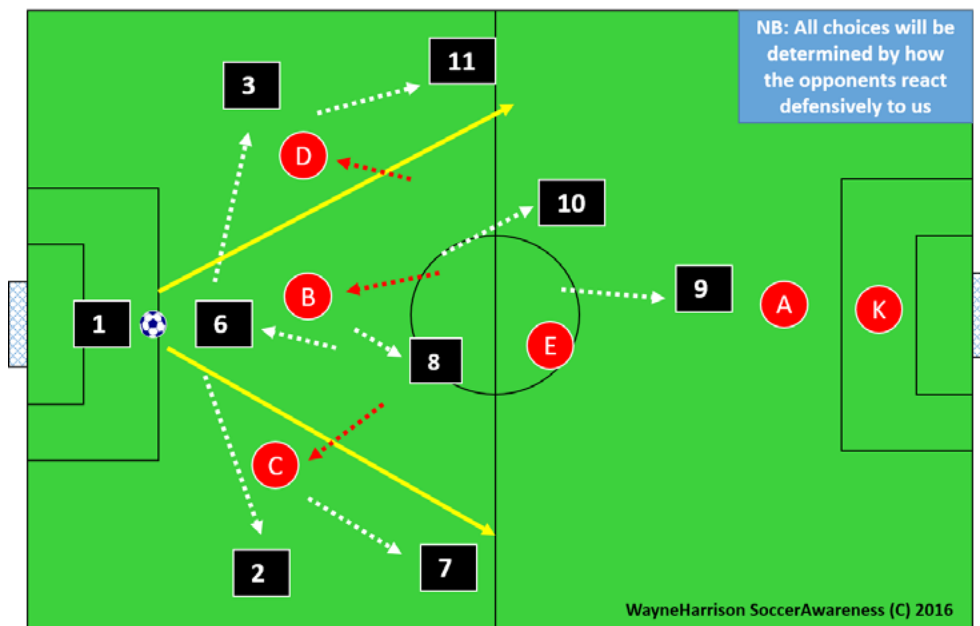
We must ALWAYS try first of all to play out from the back. The ABSOLUTE last resort is for the keeper to kick it long.

This is Great preparation for playing the 11 v 11 and developing the game from the back. Players must spread touchline wide both sides to offer up the largest spaces to play in as they can.

Keeper has 3 choices here and the ball must be passed on the ground for ease of reception.

Now (3) breaks wide to receive the ball and escape being marked in the middle. The same can happen with (2) breaking out to the right also with (6) who stays central.

2. Distribution from the keeper thru Wide Midfielders / Strikers



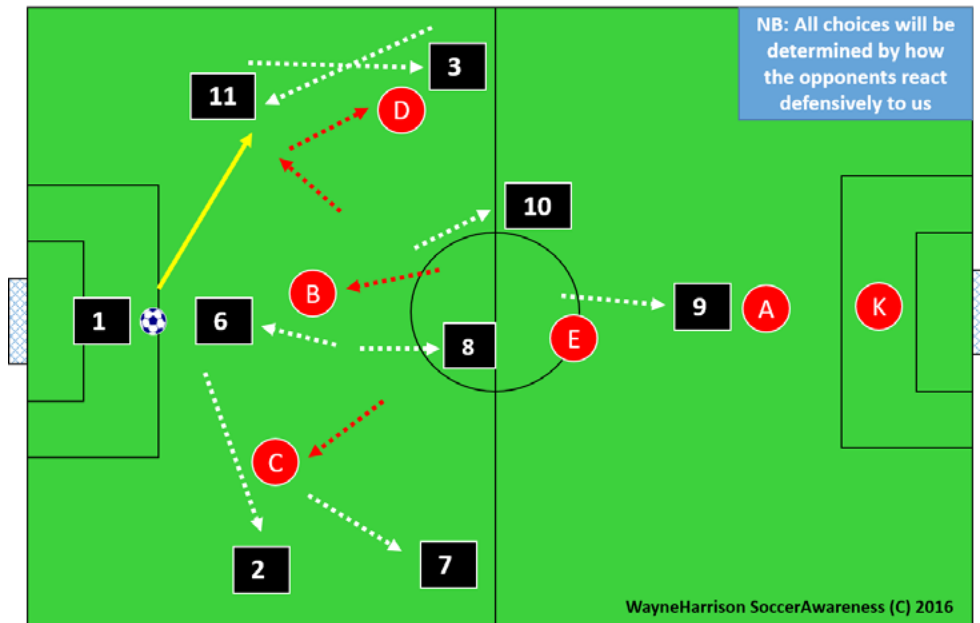
They push 3 up we get out through our wide strikers.

Have opponents make different choices to force the keeper to make relevant decisions in training.

Here we would NOT try to develop play through the back three players as each one is marked.

Therefore we go to the next line of attack to get out.

3. Rotation of wide players to get free

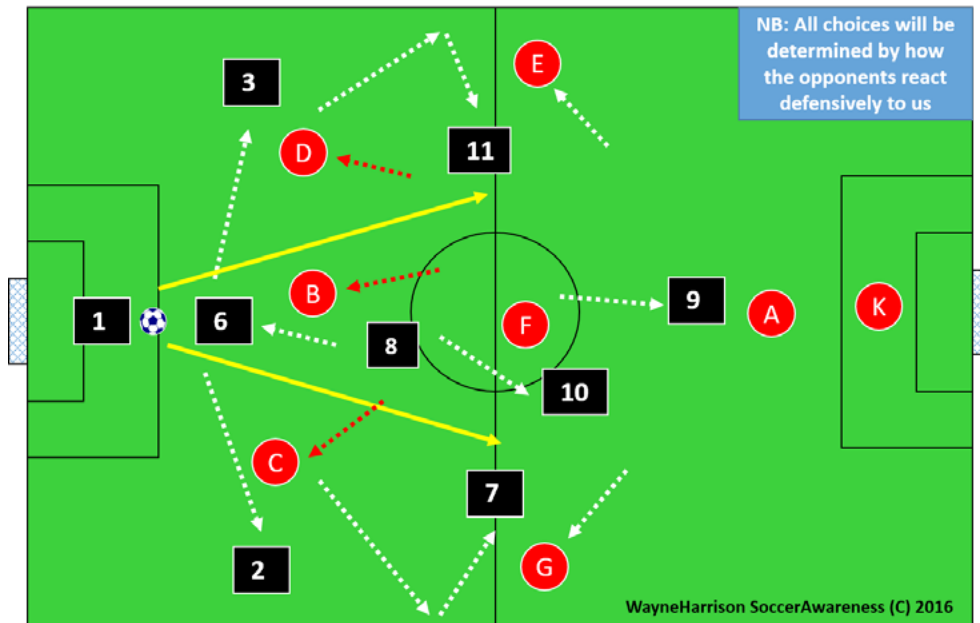


Introducing 2 player rotations like this is important as we can eventually make this happen all over the field of play.

The sooner they learn this the sooner it is embeded in their soccer DNA.

Here a simple rotation between (3) and (11) opens up a passing lane for (11). Opponent (D) follows our (3). If (D) stays then we dont pass to (11) but rather try something else.

6. Inverted runs inside by Wide Midfielders / Strikers



They push 3 up we get out through our wide strikers.

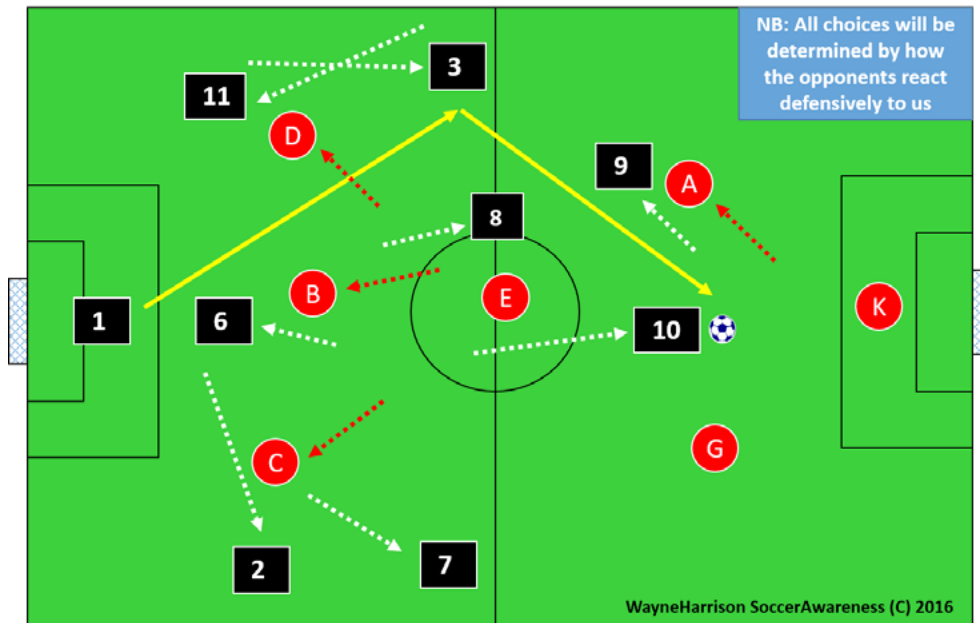
Have opponents make different choices to force the keeper to make relevant decisions in training.

Here we would NOT try to develop play through the back three players as each one is marked.

Therefore we go to the next line of attack to get out.

Build up to 9 v 9.

7. Rotation of front players

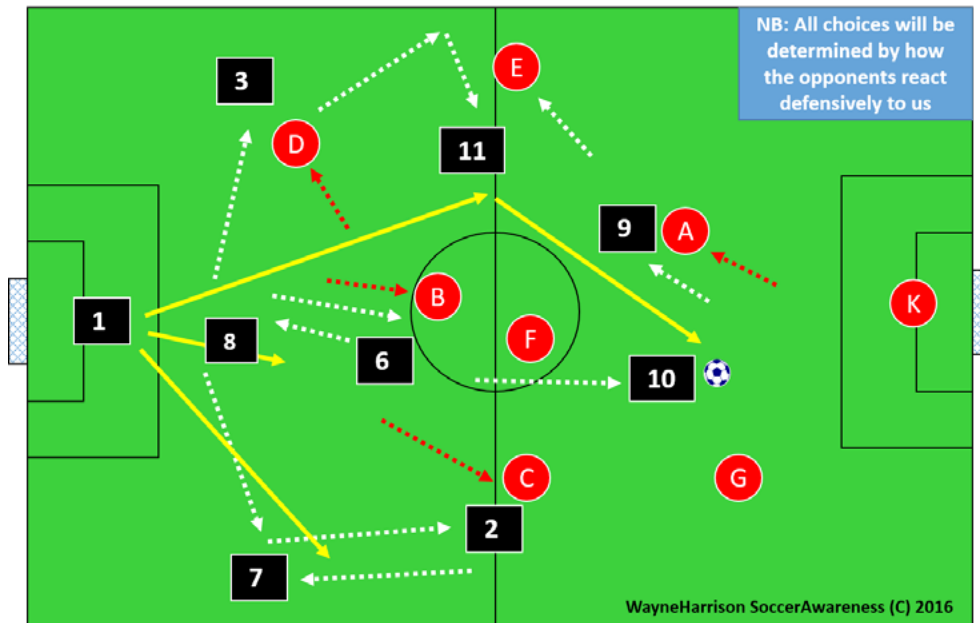


Introducing 2 player rotations like this is important as we can eventually make this happen all over the field of play.

The sooner they learn this the sooner it is embeded in their soccer DNA.

Here a simple rotation between (9) and (10). (9) goes towards the ball and brings defender (A) with him or her. (10) pushes on into the central space created. If (A) lets (9) go and stays centrally then we can pass into (9)'s feet to receive and turn.

Various rotations practiced at the same time



Potential Off the ball movements.

(6) And (8) interchange so (8) gets free to receive. (B) tracks (6).

(2) And (7) rotate and (C) tracks (2) leaving (7) free to receive.

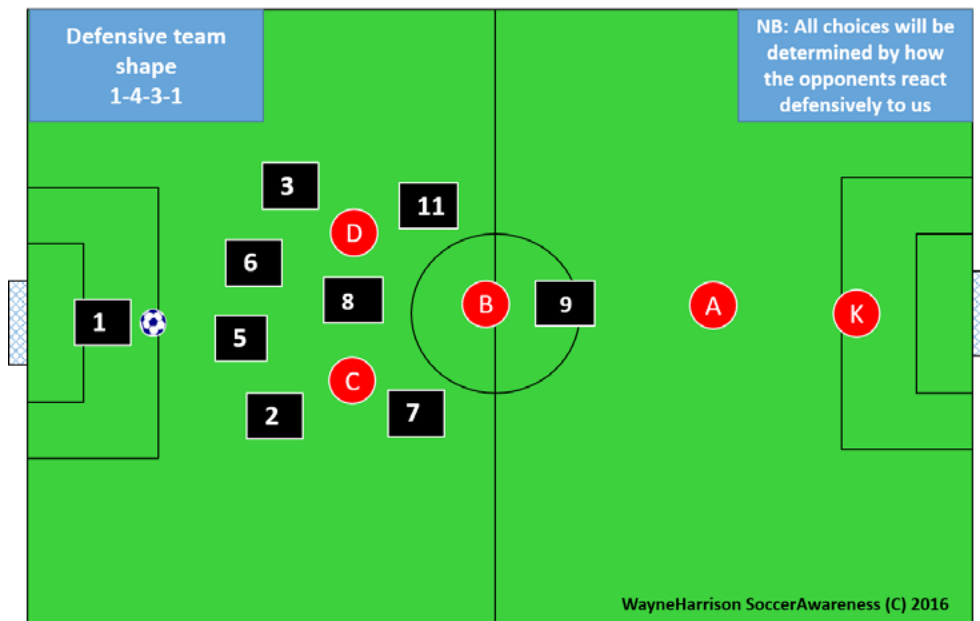
(11) Takes defender (E) wide to then cut inside with an inverted run to receive in open space and free of (E)

(3) Runs wide to the touchline and defender (D) runs to mark him or her, this opens up a passing lane inside for the keeper to pass to (11) as shown.

(9) Goes short to receive and takes defender (A) with them leaving (10) filling the space left free to receive as shown.

Have we make opponents make different choices by our movements OFF the ball to force the keeper to make relevant decisions in training.

Distribution from the keeper and Playing from the back in a 1-4-3-1



We use the numbers we would use in an 11 v 11: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11.

If we are beyond needing to do shadow plays we can start with an overload for us to train to pass out from the back so we have initial success.

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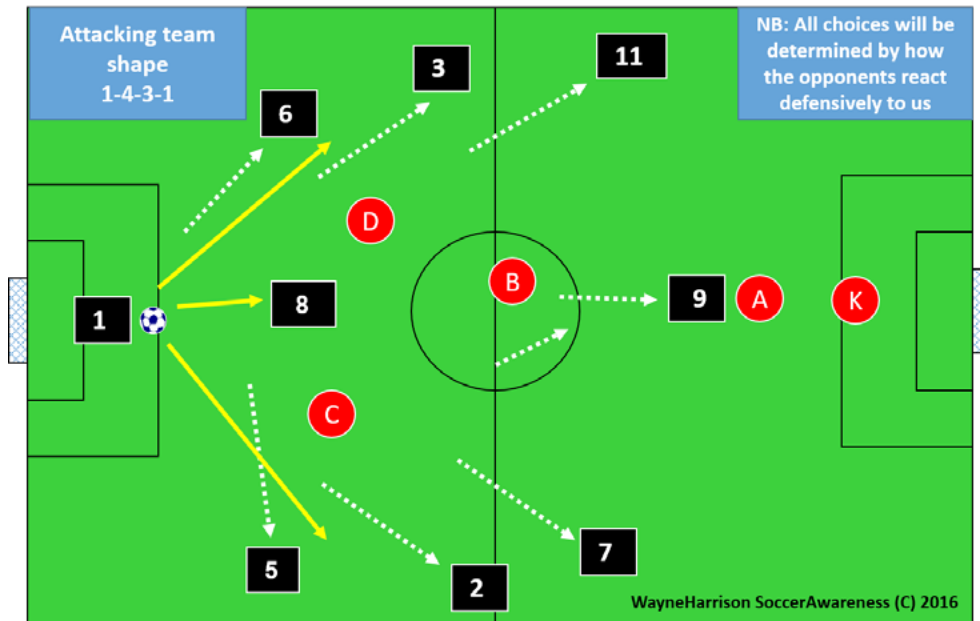
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Developing play from the back in a 9 v 9 through the Center backs / Wingbacks in a 1-4-3-1



We must ALWAYS try first of all to play out from the back. The ABSOLUTE last resort is for the keeper to kick it long.

This is Great preparation for playing the 11 v 11 and developing the game from the back.

Players must spread touchline wide both sides to offer up the largest spaces to play in as they can.

Keeper has 3 choices here and the ball must be passed on the ground for ease of reception.

Now (6) breaks wide to receive the ball and escape being marked in the middle. The same can happen with (5) breaking out to the right also with (8) who stays central.

SETTING CONDITIONS TO ESTABLISH THEMES OF PLAY USING CORRIDORS AND ZONES AS A GUIDE FOR 9 V 9

This doesn't not mean at all in the game it is wrong to play a forward pass in a straight line to a player; as this happens often in the game; but it does get the players to "think" about supporting each other at angles OFF the ball to be in a better position to potentially receive it offering a greater peripheral vision to see the field.

Condition One:

1. Players CANNOT pass the ball forward in the same corridors so no one receives the ball facing backwards
2. All forward passes have to be at angles.
3. All support in front of the ball has to be at angles to the ball.
4. This encourages players to get side-on or facing forward when receiving the ball
5. Players CAN pass to the side or backwards in a straight line.

Condition Two: Timing of the pass and the run are vital in this.

1. Players CAN pass forward in the same corridor but ONLY if a player runs into it from a DIFFERENT corridor as the ball arrives so they are facing forward as they receive it and running onto it.
2. Now players can interchange to create space for each other which should pose problems for marking opponents.
3. Just by setting this condition players HAVE to move to receive the ball if the pass is in a straight line going forward.

PLAYING IN 5 CORRIDORS AND 3 ZONES USING THE 1-3-3-1-1 FOR ATTACKING AND DEFENDING TEAM SHAPE

You can use this method of teaching with any system you like. We divide the field up into Corridors and Zones to help players understand the major differences in spacing between attacking and defending team shape. We call them Corridors Widthwise and Zones Lengthwise. Below are some parameters to work off in my opinion. We first discuss the use of the Corridors.

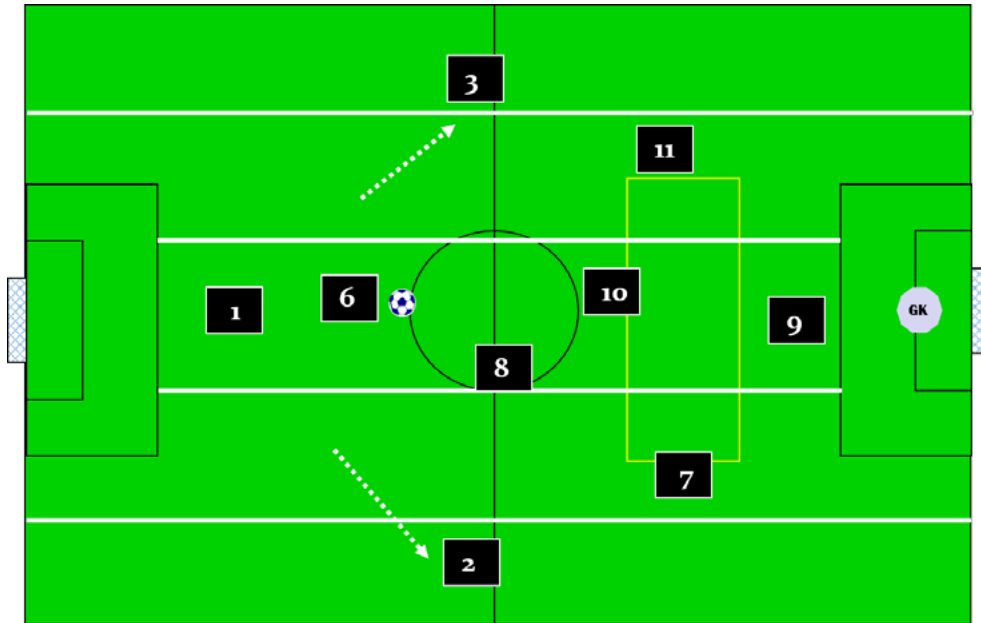
Team Attacking Shape: Based on the 5 corridors width-wise we want all 5 corridors to have players in them. Based length-wise we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled; with the exception of the keeper.

Team Defending Shape: Based on the 5 corridors width-wise we want a maximum of 3 corridors filled with players preferably 2.5 if possible.

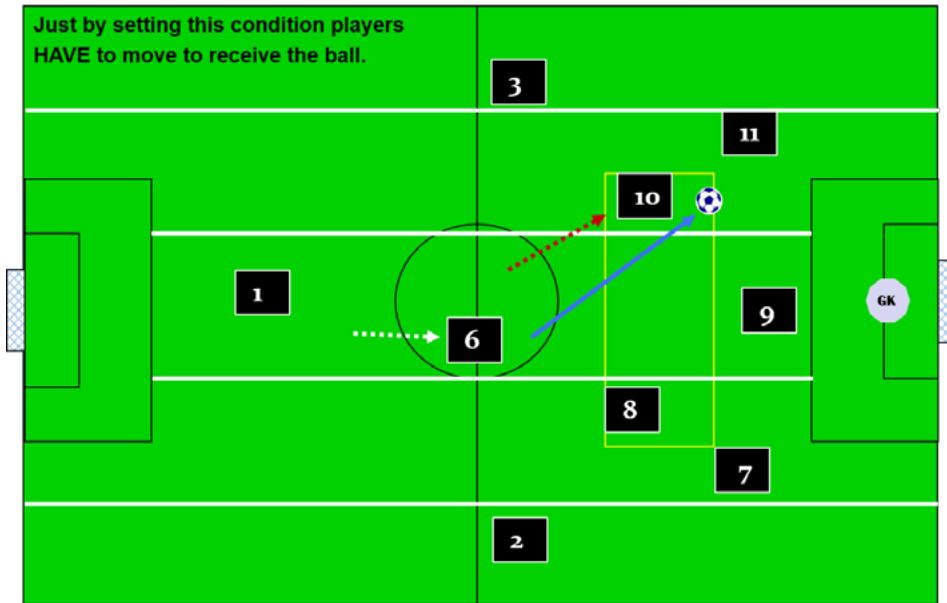
Based length-wise we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled preferably the whole team is condensed into 1.5 zones or at most half a field.

- The beauty of the corridor and zones idea is it can be used for ANY system of play you want to develop so one or two systems shown here can show you how to use it effectively.
- Using Corridors is a great way to work out individual and collective field positioning as a team both offensively and defensively and it also gives players real a “focal point” to work off.
- We use “Corridors” width wise and then introduce “Zones” lengthwise later.
- These “focal points of reference” I believe are a great way to really teach players to understand the differences between attacking and defending team shapes both widthwise and lengthwise.
- Particularly in defensive set ups (in my opinion); it shows players how to mark in zones and how much tighter it should be than they will likely imagine and especially shows those players furthest from the ball defensively how important zonal marking is.
- Example, the balls is on our left with the other team and our right back is marking the opponents opposite side winger far too wide, by having designated lines this becomes much clearer to understand.

Set a Condition to Establish a Theme



Playing in 5 Corridors to help define the positioning of players. Now the players CANNOT pass the ball forward in the same corridors so no one receives the ball facing backwards. Every pass forward is at an angle. But players can pass to the side or backwards in a straight line. Here (6) cannot pass the ball directly to (10).

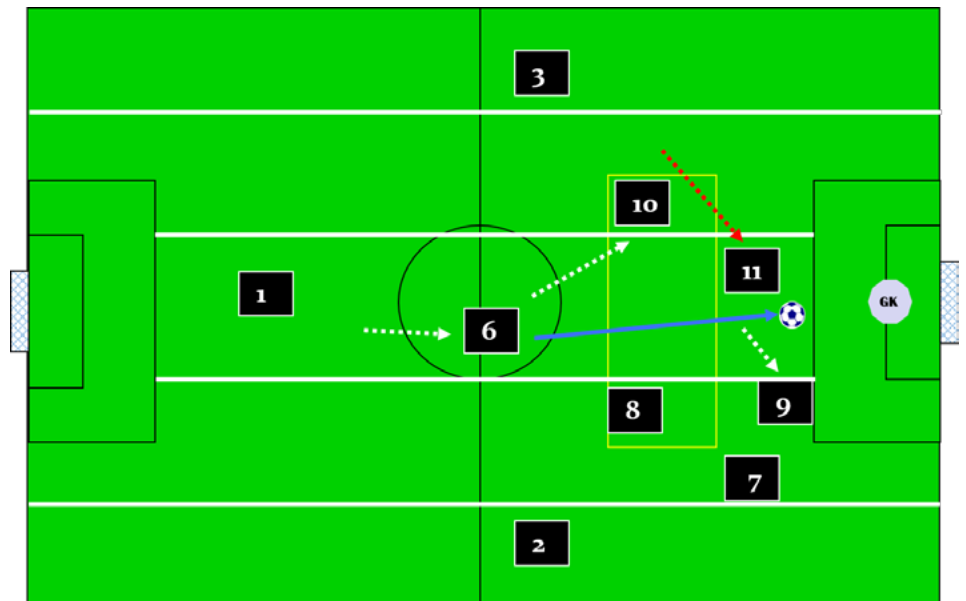


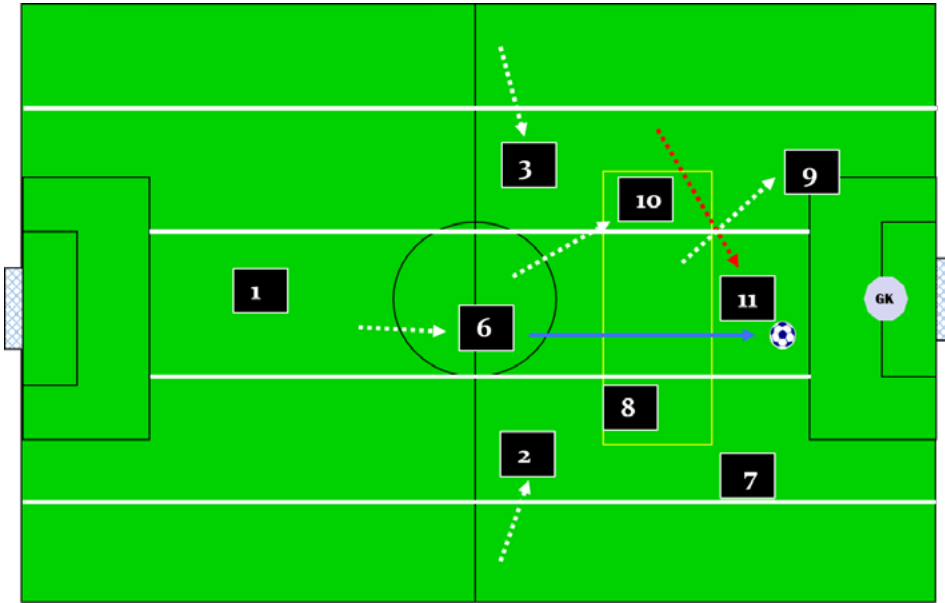
Condition 1 to force an angled passing theme

Now the players CANNOT pass the ball forward in the same corridor so no one receives the ball facing backwards. So players begin to position at angles to each other to receive the ball and try to get at least side on to have a greater peripheral vision of the field. Here (10) moves to be able to receive the ball.

Condition 2 to allow a straight pass

New Condition: you can pass forward in the same corridor if a player runs into it as the ball arrives so they are facing forward as they receive it and running.





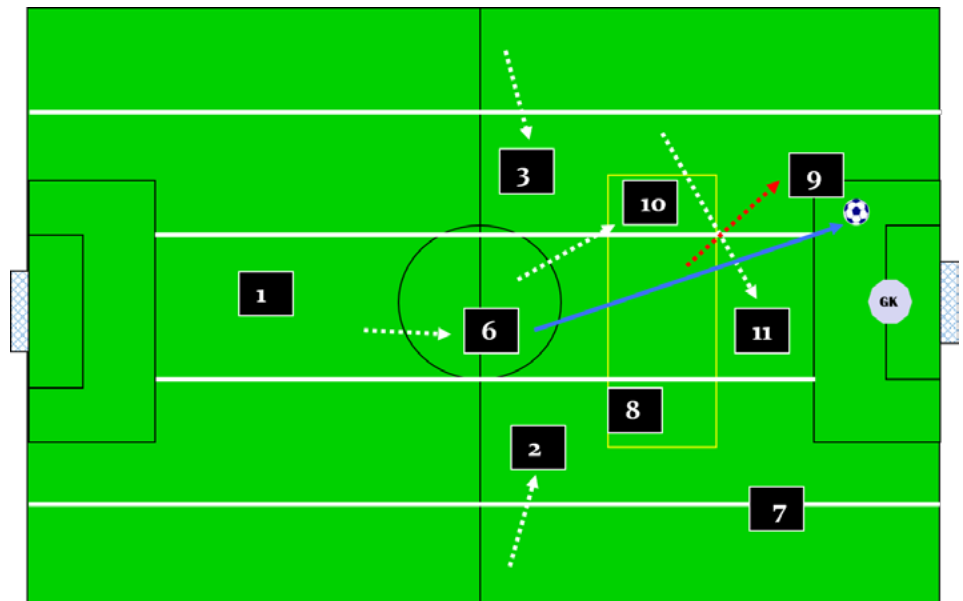
Condition Two: Creates / almost forces players to rotate and interchange positions

Now players can interchange to create space for each other which should pose problems for marking opponents. Just by setting this condition players HAVE to move to receive the ball. (2) and (3) tuck in to be solid defensively.

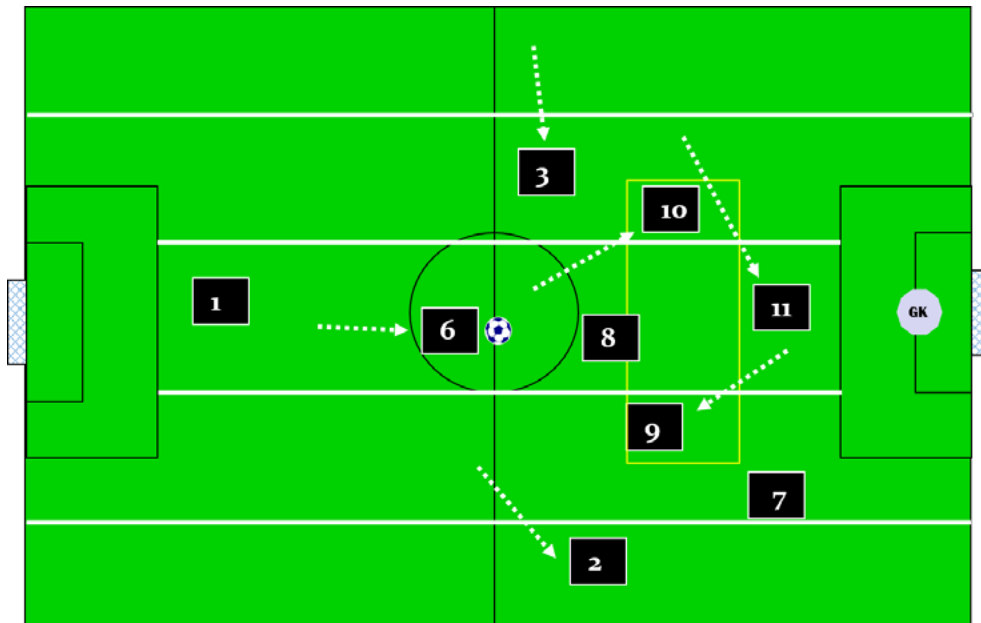
Condition Two: Creates / almost forces players to rotate and interchange positions

Could also pass to (9) if he or she have gotten free.

Can develop 2, 3 and 4 player rotations from this one idea / condition.



Another idea using the condition set



Could also pass at an angle to (9) if he or she have gotten free. Can develop 2, 3 and 4 player rotations from this one idea / condition, example; (6) on the ball can play to three potential players on the move. Straight to (11) as (11) has moved from a different Corridor or to (9) or (10) as they have moved away from the straight pass into a different Corridor.

Adding ZONES lengthwise to the field

Up to now we have used “Corridors” to divide the field up widthwise and now we look at the “length” of the field so add 3 “Zones” to divide the field up (you can use 4 zones if you like)

Team Attacking: Based length-wise now we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled; with the exception of the keeper.

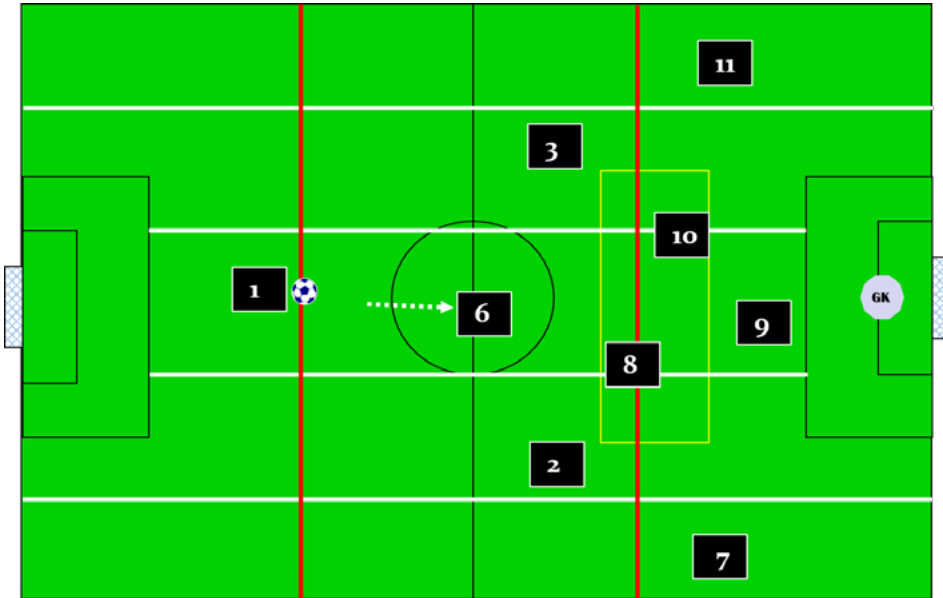
Team Defending: Based length-wise we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled preferably the whole team is condensed into 1.5 zones; or at most half a field.

Attacking to Defensive team shape

Attacking: Based on the 5 corridors width-wise we want all 5 corridors to have players in them. Based length-wise we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled; with the exception of the keeper.

Defending: Based on the 5 corridors width-wise we want a maximum of 3 corridors filled with players preferably 2.5 if possible.

Based length-wise we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled preferably the whole team is condensed into 1.5 zones or at most half a field.

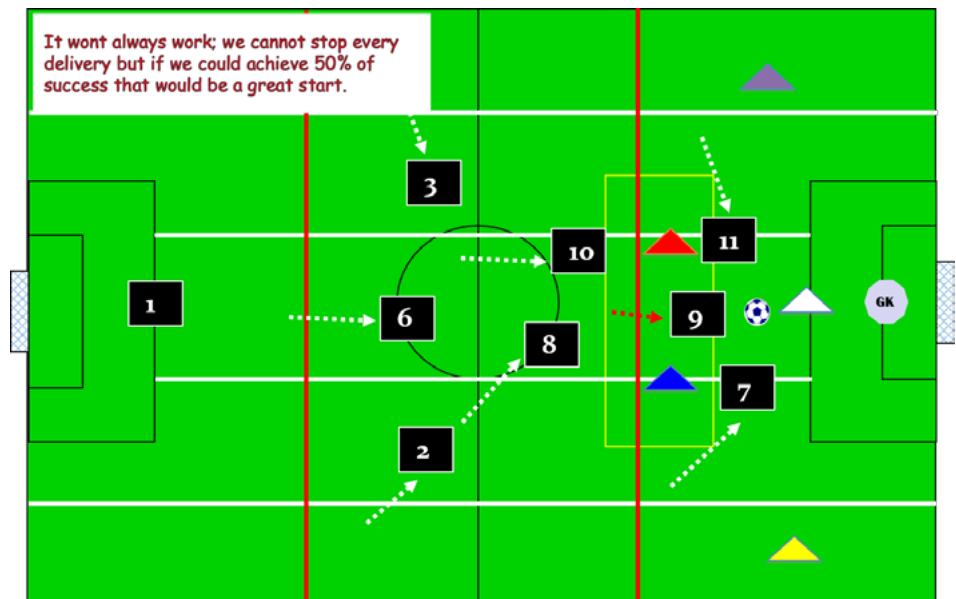


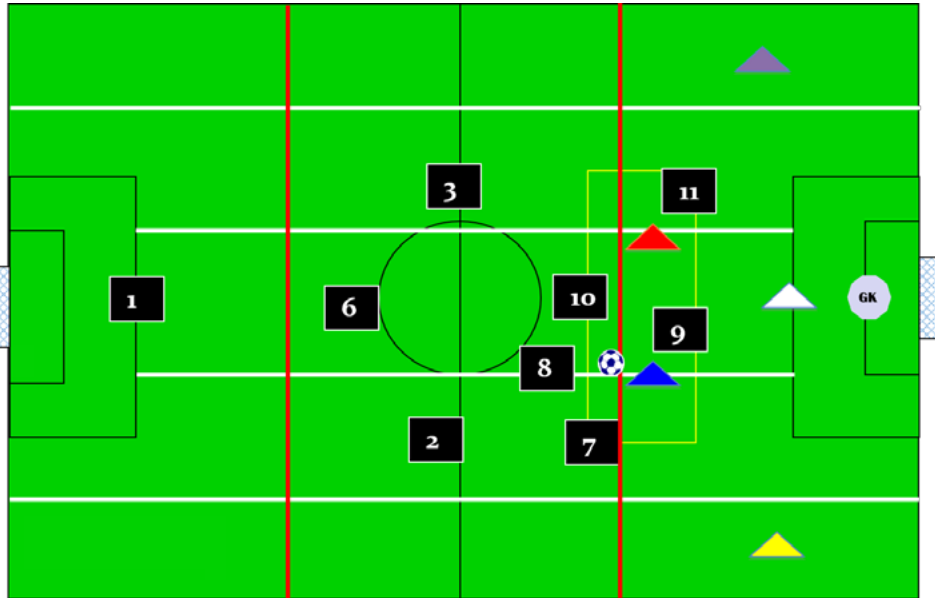
Using Shadow play for initial understanding

Play without opponents and show our basic attacking shape then offer alternatives for pressing as a group and have them do it as fast as possible. No ball needed but I will add it in the next diagrams for clarity as where will actually be.

Using Shadow play

Play without opponents and show our basic attacking shape then offer alternatives for pressing as a group and have them do it as fast as possible. Use different color cones to represent where we lost the ball then organize the team around this defensive starting point having the players decide where they think they should be and why.



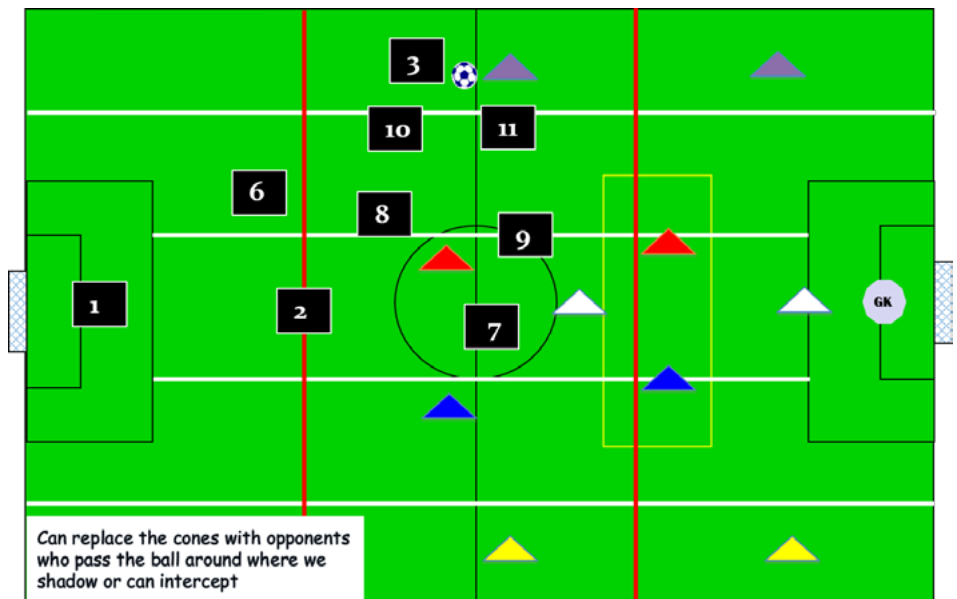


Using Shadow play

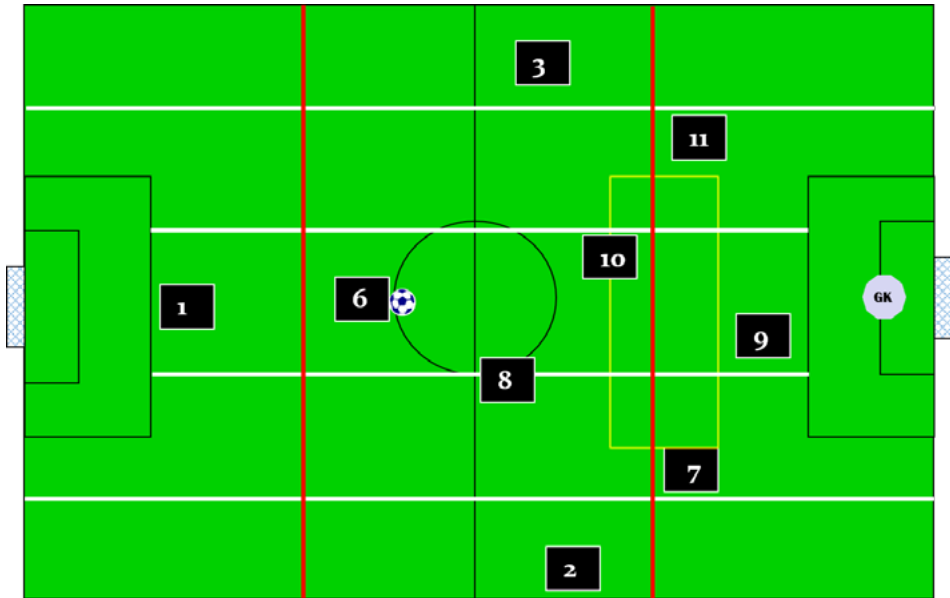
These should be common areas where we have the ball in our possession therefore its where we can lose the ball. Lose the ball at the blue cone and we adjust like so. (8) MUST slow down the player in an actual game to allow time for this to happen no spaces too play the ball into.

Can extend this back to the middle third also

We lose it wide in the middle third; purple cone; try to press them inside still to where our strength is with numbers. Wing full backs have to be brave and stay in midfield but condense in. (3) delays, shows inside to (10), the rest condense. (10) cuts off passing lane forward as does (11) inside or back.. It will NEVER be this picture perfect but all the same it shows what we should strive for. Pivot (6) is the key for cover.



Can replace the cones with opponents who pass the ball around where we shadow or can intercept

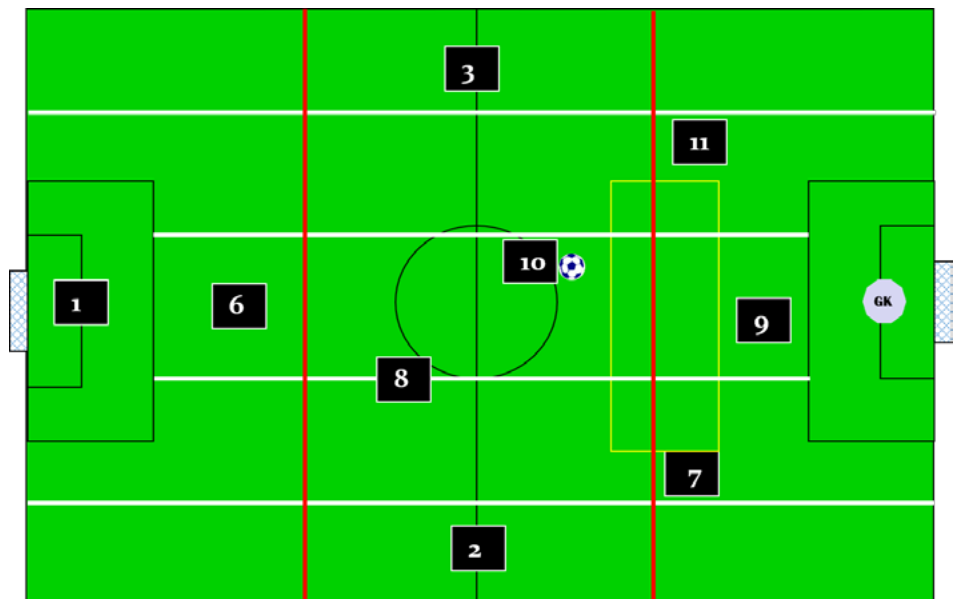


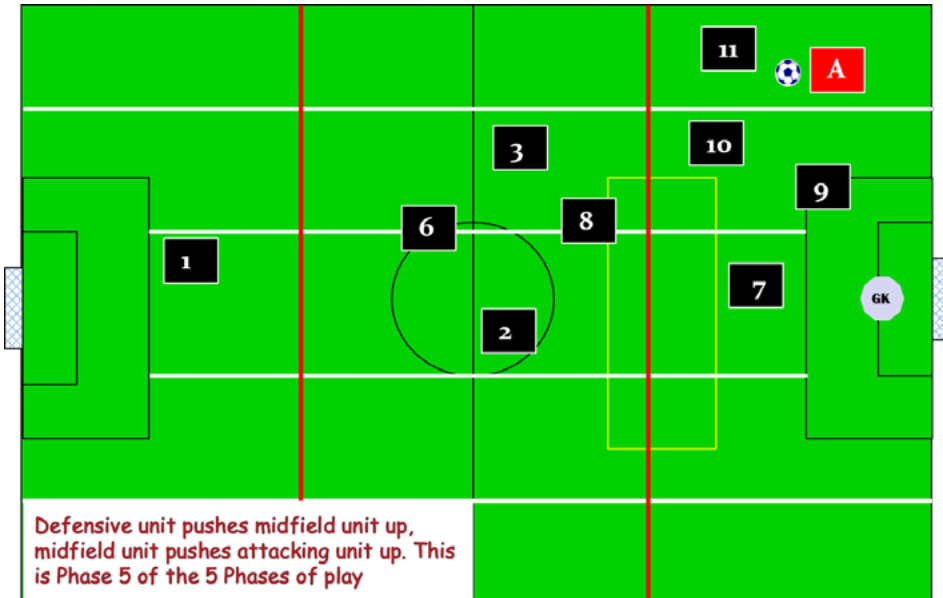
Dividing the field into fifths widthwise and thirds lengthways

Playing in 5 Corridors widthwise to help define the positioning of players. Also playing in 3 thirds from goal to goal lengthwise (lets call these ZONES FOR CLARITY). Here we have a good balance with players positioning at angles to each other. Must get the team into 2 thirds only, except for the keeper, both offensively and defensively.

Too spread out from goal to goal

Team is too big with too much space to allow for a counter attack. So even when attacking we have to think about if we lose it what do we do. Players are spread out in 3 Zones. On the other hand if you don't want to risk being caught high defensively with a ball in behind then you may set up deeper like this. But it isn't my way to play.



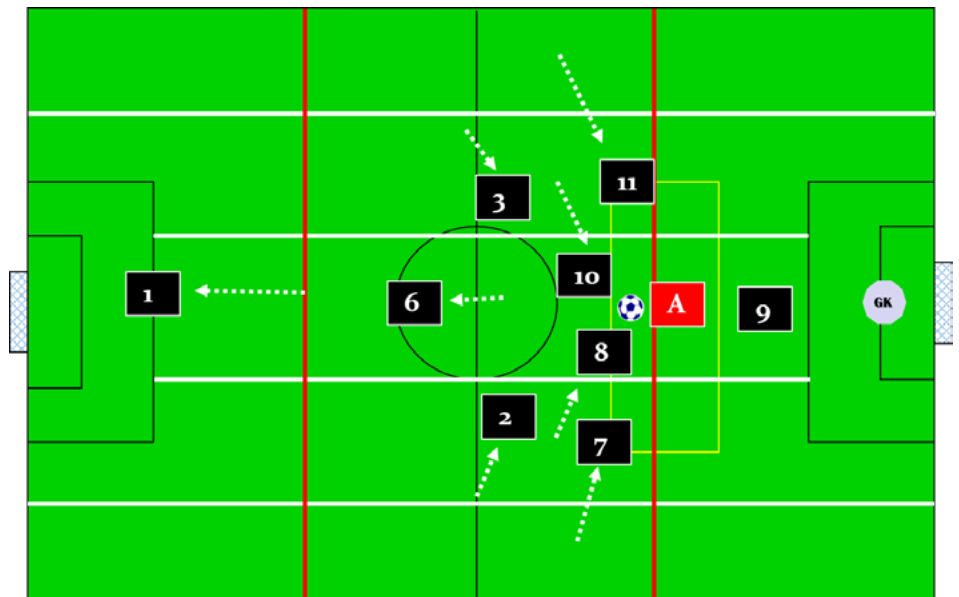


Playing a Pressing game comes from the back

If we want to play a pressing game then we must have the back three as high as possible and then the responsibility of the front players is to press asap when we lose it to stop a counter attack.

Fast Defensive alteration overloading central midfield

We lose the ball in the attacking third. This is what our defending team shape will look like with center backs now tucked inside in midfield as do the other players except (6) and the keeper who guard against the long ball. If opponents play wide we immediately slide wide as a team.



We can do the same training with a 1-4-3-1 team shape also in the 9 v 9

To develop into using a zonal back four rather than a back three as before we can do this at 9 v 9 also to suit the development from 9 v 9 to 11 v 11.

We can see a development using a back four starting at 1-2-3-1, at 7 v 7 to 1-4-3-1 at 9 v 9 to 1-4-2-3-1 or 1-4-3-3 at 11 v 11.

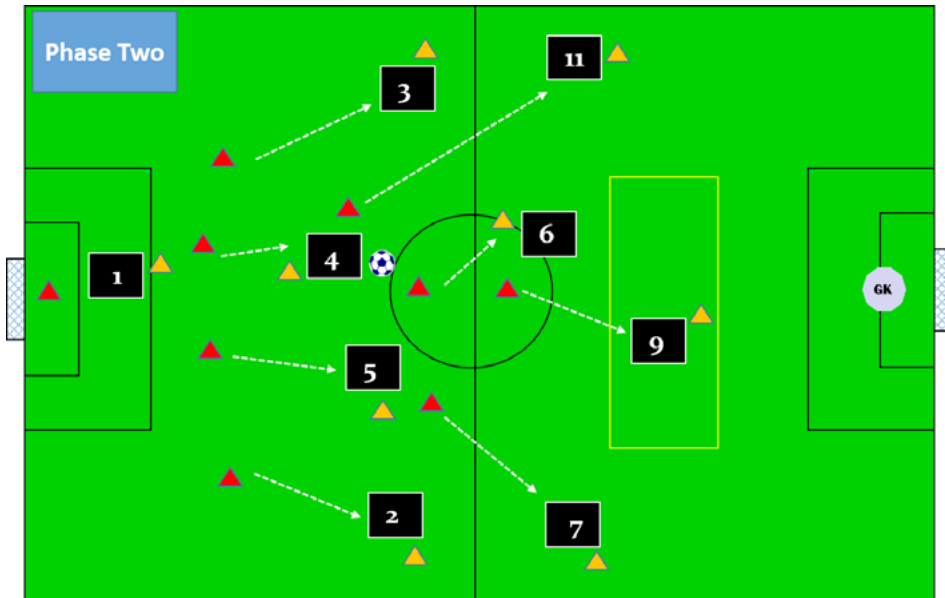
As I have stated I like to develop center backs whether you use two or three of them as you would a number 6 defensive midfielder because I want my teams to build from the back and be as comfortable on the ball as possible. Not everyone's way to do things I know but the modern game I believe will demand this in the future as the game develops further and the importance of possession keeps evolving.

Player (6) in this system can be a hybrid of (6) and (8) even (10) at times; please bear that in mind when you are teaching this particular player. Coaches can decide to use a more attacking minded or defensively minded player here or vary them.



Team shape from defending to attacking in 1-4-3-1 getting prepared for a back four at 11 v 11

Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones.

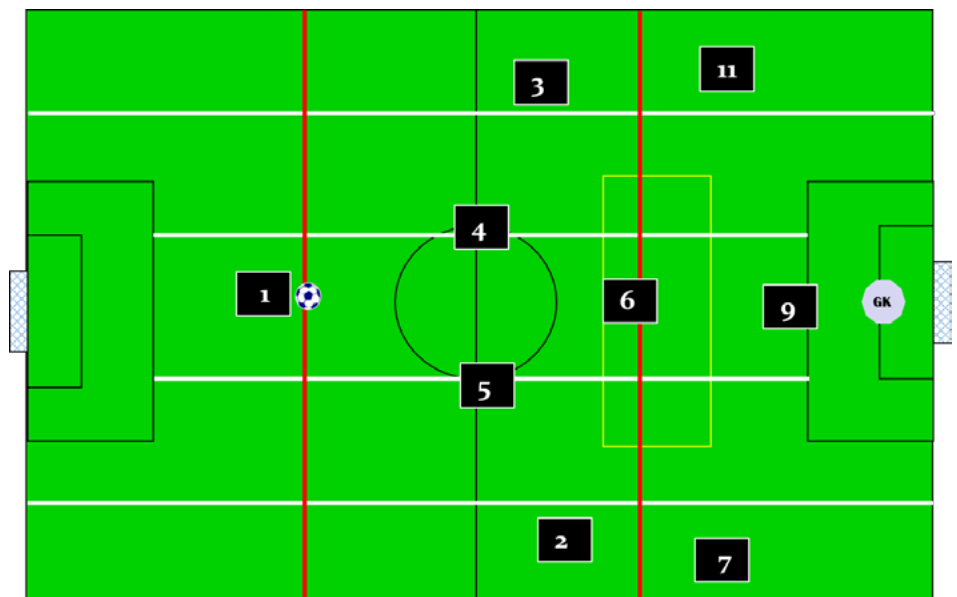


Team shape attacking in 1-4-3-1 getting prepared for a back four at 11 v 11

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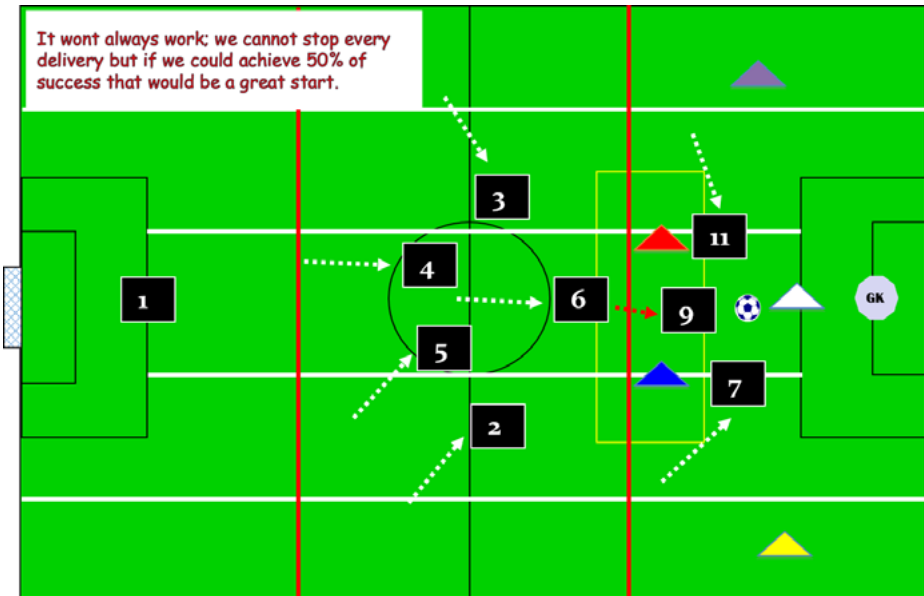
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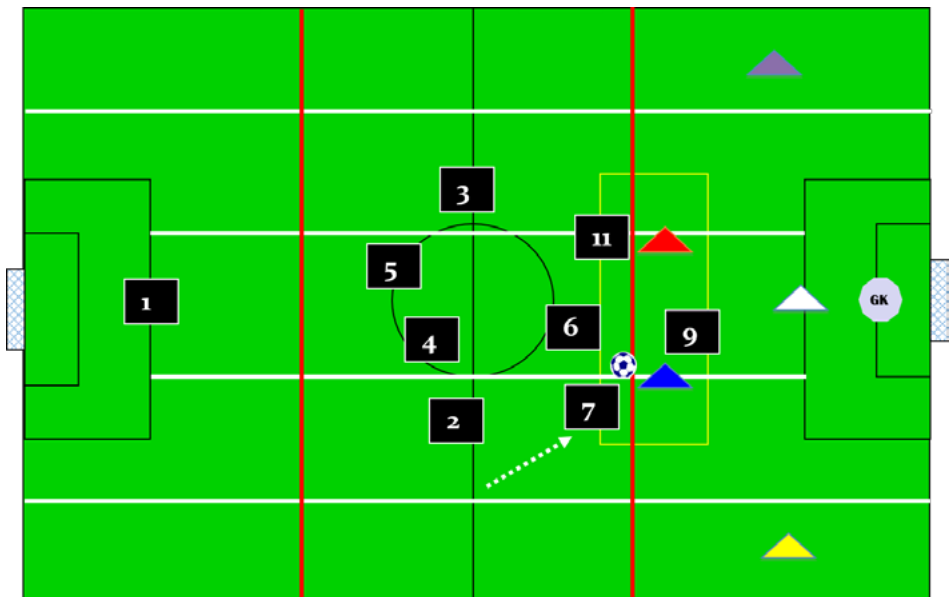
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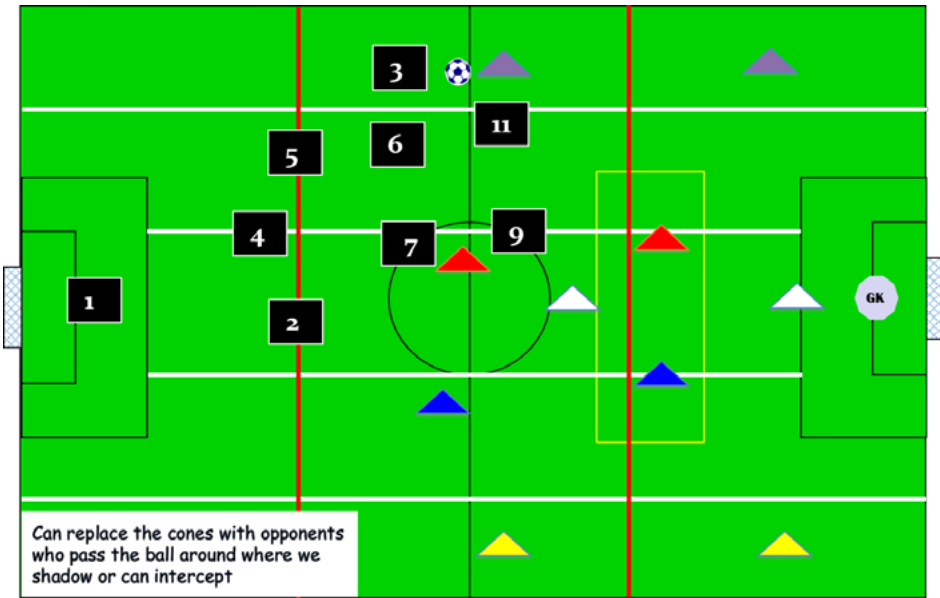
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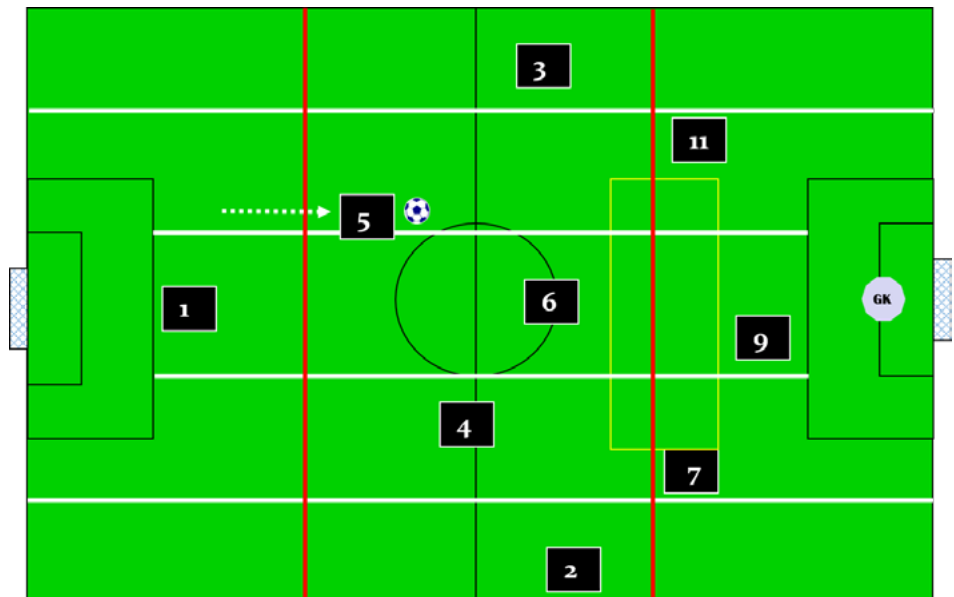
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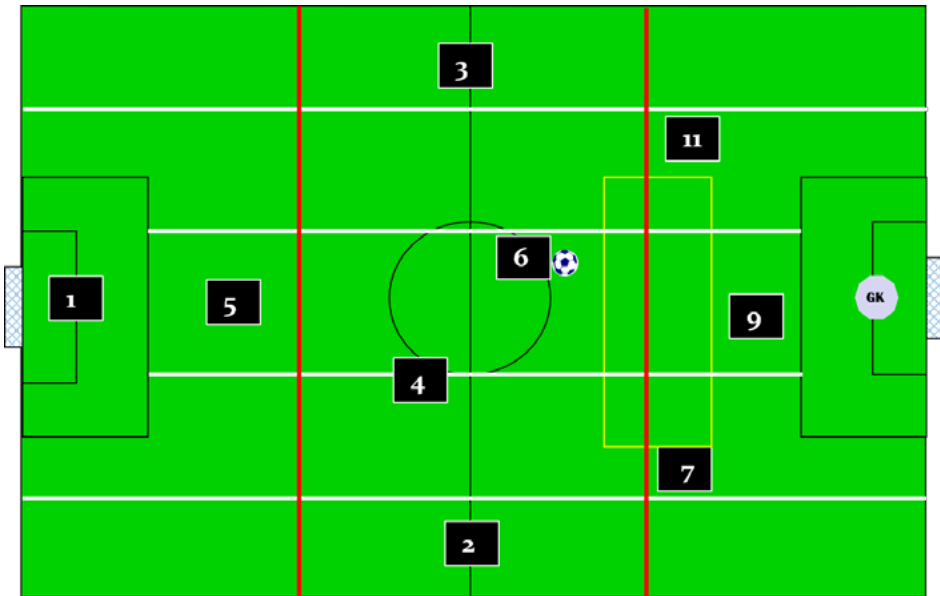
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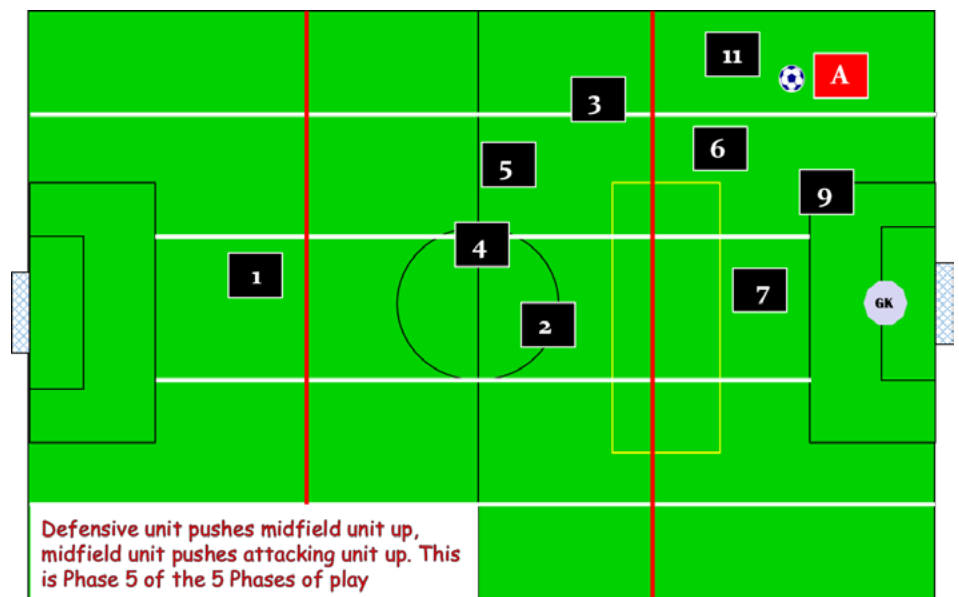
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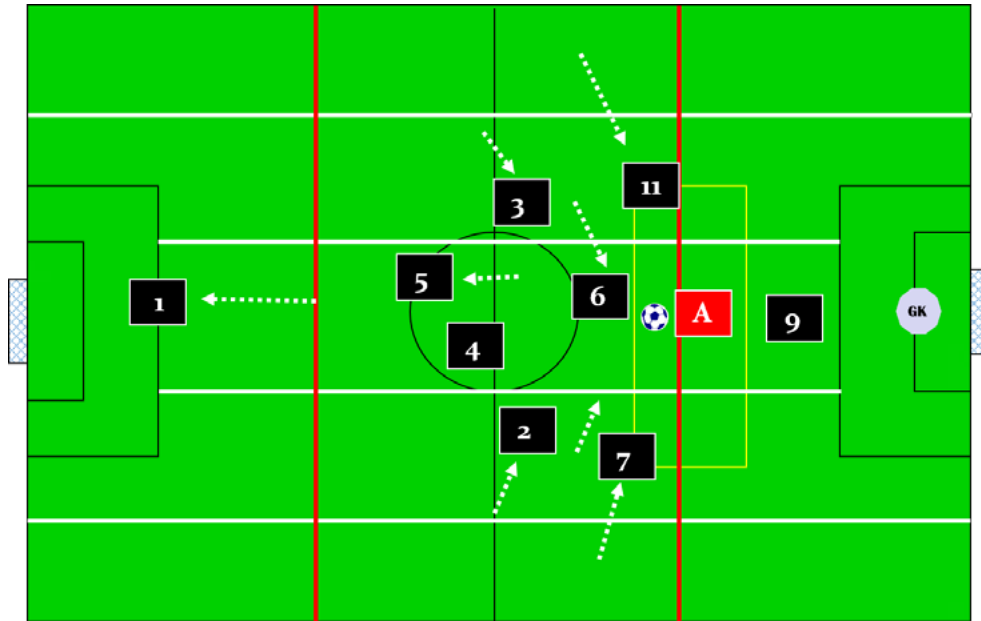


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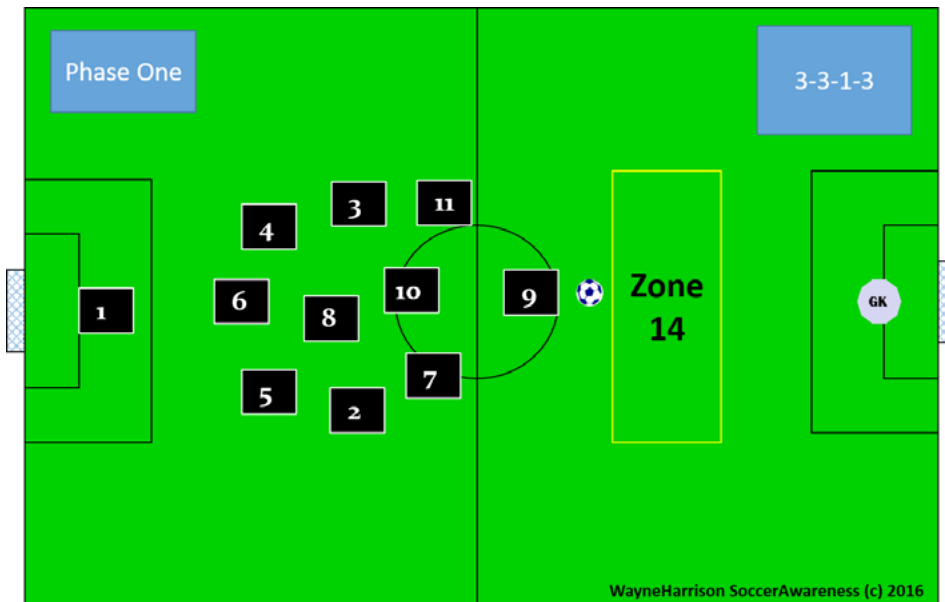
A SIMPLE INTRODUCTION: THE 5 PHASES OF PLAY IN THE 1-3-3-1-3

Lets look at where the 4 v 4, 7 v 7 and 9 v 9 ends up based on the final game size 11 v 11. With 3 at the back at 7 v 7 and 9 v 9 it particularly grows into this system.

That said this system is quite a different one from the norm and many coaches, likely most coaches; will use a back four.

But the following will show how these roles and responsibilities of players translate as the size of the game grows to the 1-3-3-1-3.

Beyond that we can look at how it translates into a system with a zonal back four also using 1-4-2-3-1 as our 11 v 11 example.

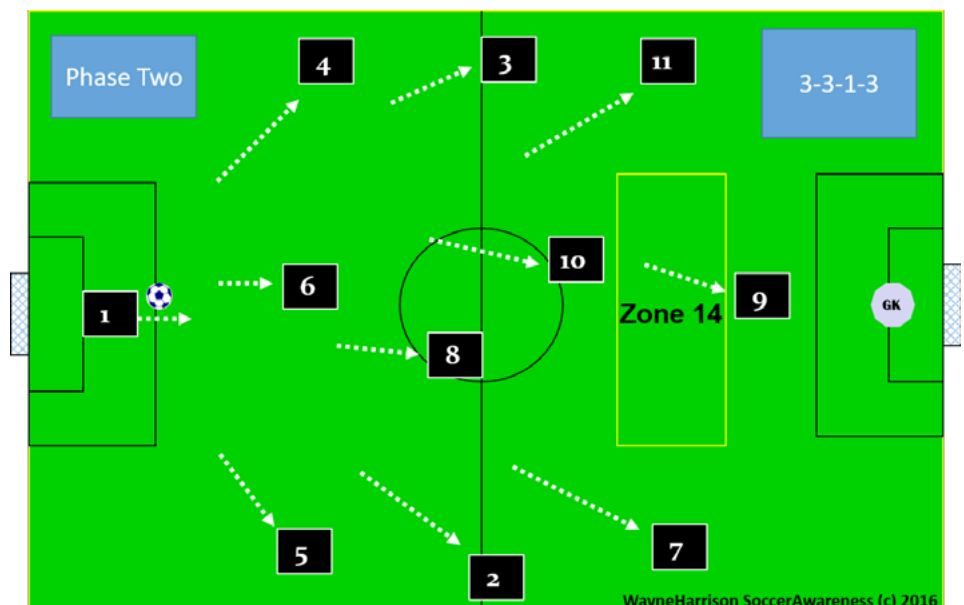


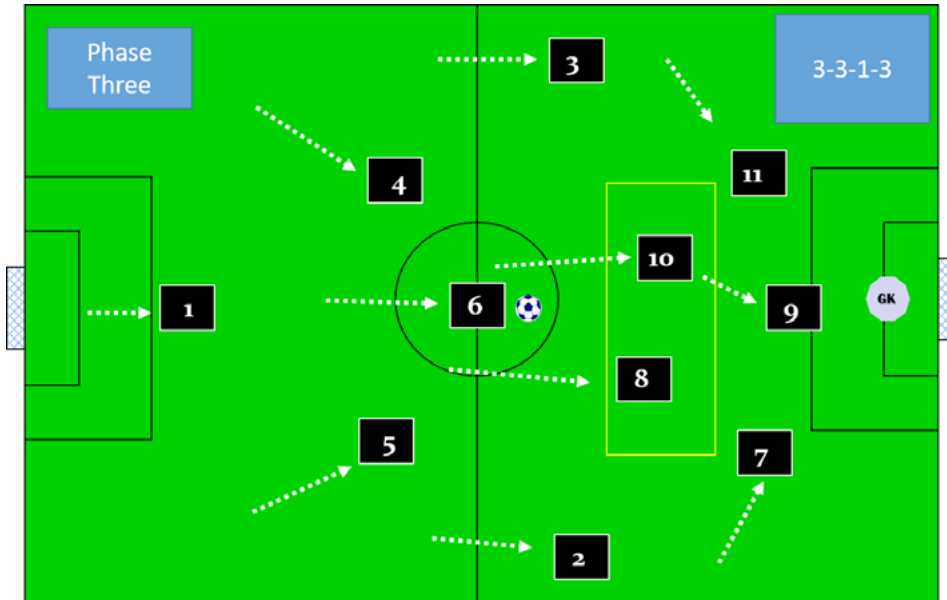
The players in our system of play

This is the defending team shape (defending start position) of a 3-3-1-3. The positioning of the wing fullbacks defensively is somewhat alien to most set ups in other formations and you have to explain and show in detail to your players how this works and why.

The players in our system of play

This is the attacking team shape (attacking “start position”) for a 3-3-1-3. Zone 14 is the area between the opponents back three or four and their midfield.



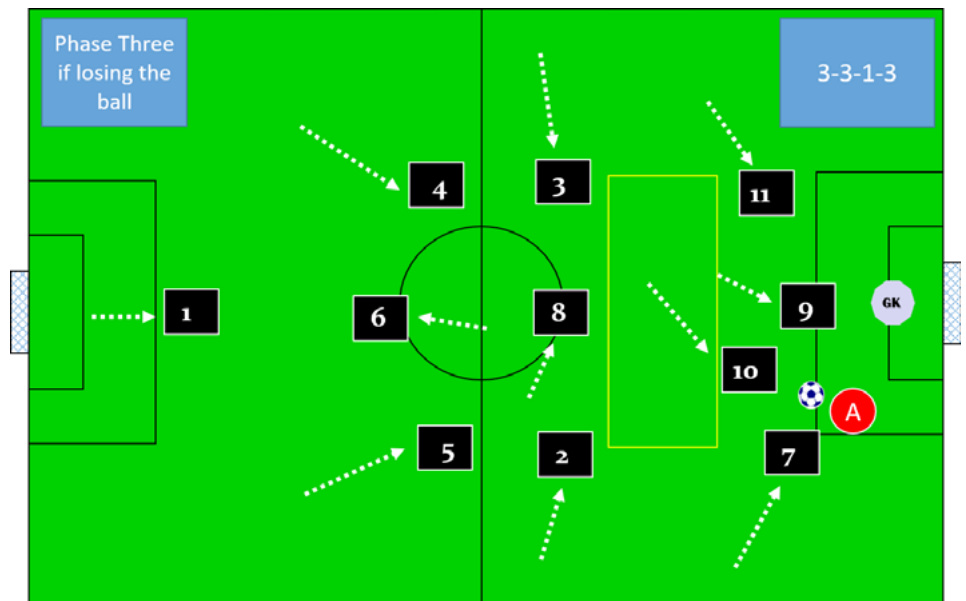


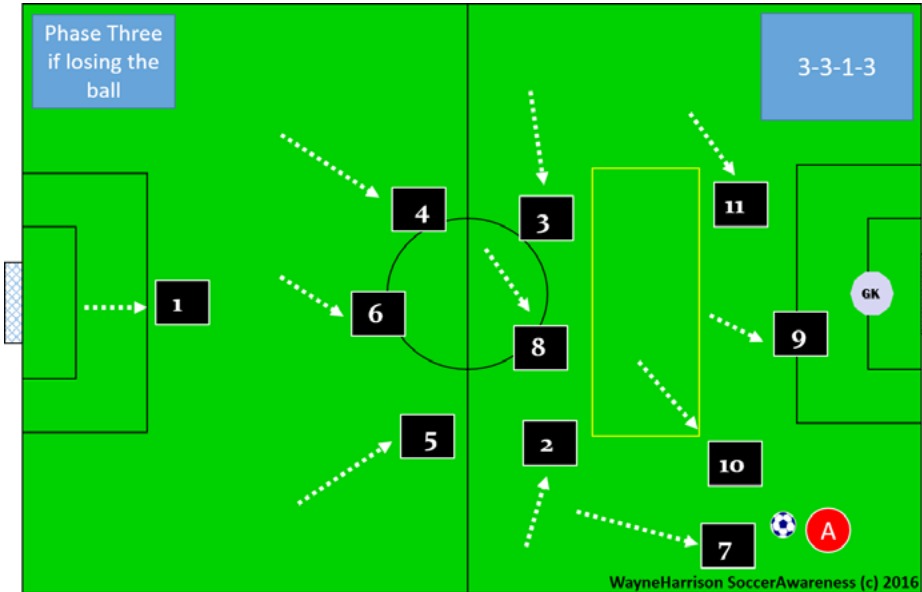
The players in our system of play

This is the attacking team shape now possibly a 2-3-2-3 depending on the moment. This can also be the attacking team shape we change to when we are chasing a game perhaps losing 1-0 and wanting to be more positive in attack. So this now would be the start position.

Changing of team shape if we lose the ball from this attacking set up

Lets say we passed the ball forward and lost it on the edge of the opponents penalty area. Immediately both fullbacks tuck inside to offer to fill central spaces and overload the area. (7) presses INSIDE towards (9) and (10).



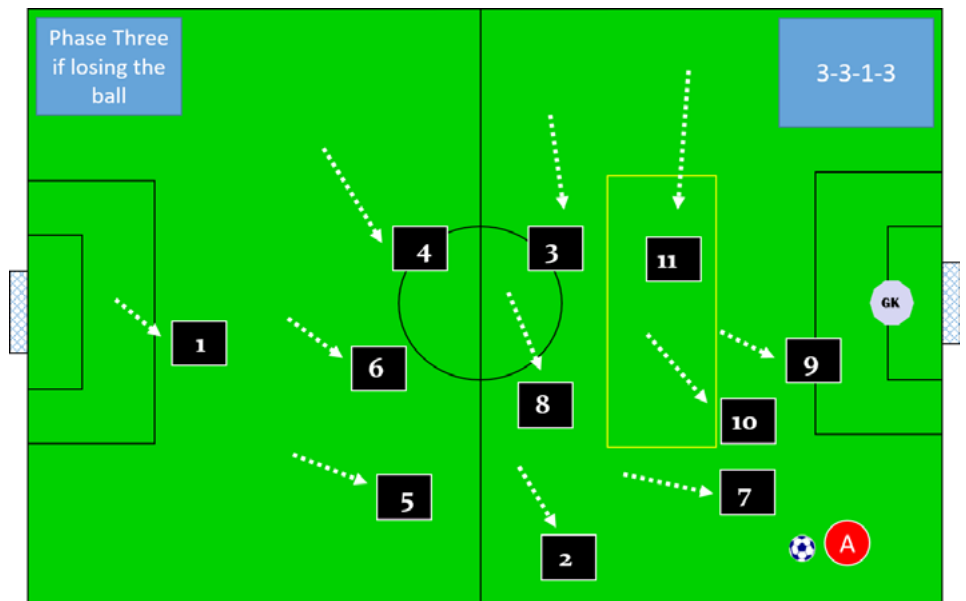


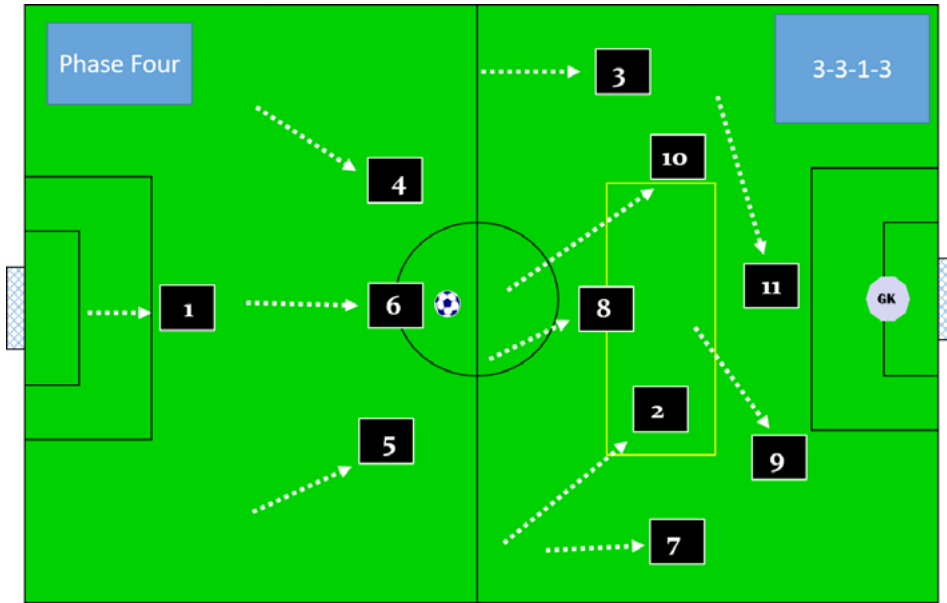
Forcing the ball inside to our strength in numbers

Even in a wide position, based on the pressing player (7) showing the ball inside both wing fullbacks tuck inside because the ball is being forced into the central areas.

Forcing the ball wide and adjustment of defenders

(7) Cannot get positioned quickly enough to force the ball inside so forces wide and this means some adjustment behind him or her for the right wing fullback and the right centre back especially.





The players in our system of play

Now we are looking at rotations of players within the team framework to confuse opponents. (11) becomes (9), (9) becomes (7), (8) becomes (10) and so on.

A preferred Phase Five when losing the ball: A Full Team Press

We may press up from the back too leaving opponents offside; should they get a chance of a counter attack. Defenders must decide in a split second which course of action they take.

