

## SMALL SIDED GAMES 3 V 3 AND 4 V 4

It is said the Game is the Best Teacher and that can be so in small sided games.

Rather than just have a scrimmage though here are some ideas on how changing the field set ups you can work on certain themes within a scrimmage and without much if any formal coaching going on and just letting the players play.

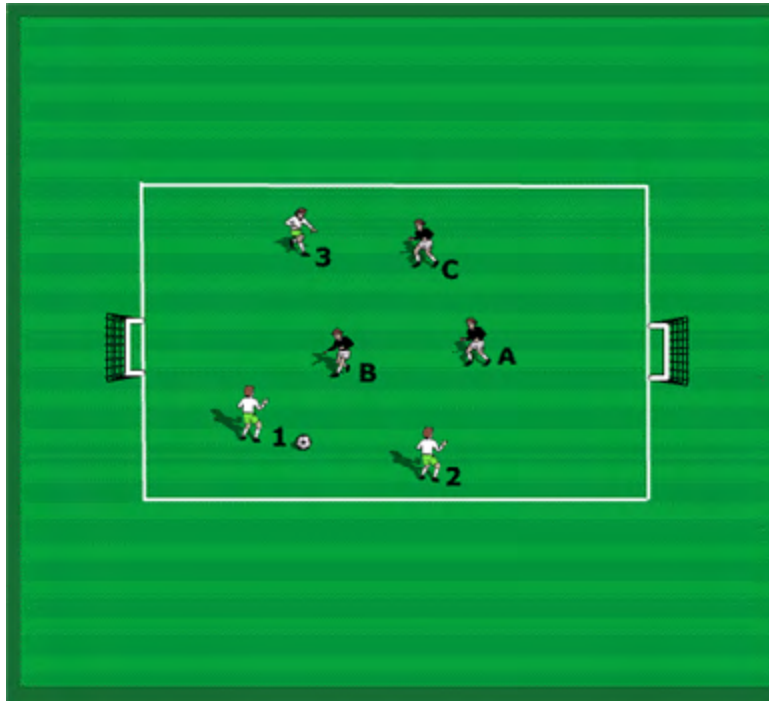
Show them the set up and ask them questions about each one and have them work out what they think the theme may be rather than telling them.

Here the game is the teacher, but also both the theme and conditions set are the teacher too.

### USE THE SMALL SIDED GAME PRINCIPLES IN ALL END OF SESSION SCRIMMAGES PLAYING A TWO v TWO PLUS ONE GAME

1. Try a 2 v 2 plus 1 to start with; maybe the coach can be the neutral player to help the players make the session work, especially with younger less experienced players. Or use a player to be the neutral player.
2. The neutral player plays for whichever team has the ball so is always attacking.
3. This can be used if it is difficult to get a game going with equal numbers on each side and is a perfect overload situation to begin with.
4. Maybe restrict the coach to one or two touches as we need the players to be touching and playing with the ball not the coach, who is there only to help get the game going successfully.
5. Once some success is gained then move on to the 3 v 3 games.

## A 3 v 3 Format For A Soccer Competition



### Street Soccer

1. It can be used for a 3 v 3 (or a 4 v 4). Players referee their own games. Each game lasts 4 minutes (you can vary this time).
2. Structure – Each player receives a number they keep for all the games.
3. Scoring System – Each player on the team receives a point for every goal their team scores in a particular game – up to a maximum of 3 points.
4. Each person on the team receives the following, for a win: 3 points, a draw: 1 point, a defeat: 0 points.
5. Example: 1, 4 ,7 score 2 goals v 10, 2, 5 who score 3 goals therefore: 1, 4, 7 receive 2 points (for two goals, nothing for the defeat so score total of 2 points each player for the game). 10, 2, 5 receive 6 points (for 3 goals, plus 3 points for the win for total of 6 points each player for the game). Therefore a player can score a maximum of 6 points in any one game.
6. Play a number of games rotating the players each game and add up all the points for each player at the end of the contest. It can be done daily and have a different player win every day and / or for the week of the camp and have one overall winner.
7. Where substitutes are needed you can just say all the subs get 2 points each time they have to be one.

## **A 3 v 3 Festival Of Fun**

### **Creating A Game – Like Playing Environment**

Encouraging competitiveness in players in a small sided game environment and developing the best features of youth soccer as it used to be played in the parks, streets and back alleyways around the world, into the more formalized structure of the modern club soccer training program. It is about the technical and skills development of the younger player. These features include:

1. Lots of individual touches on the ball.
2. Trying new skills without fear of ridicule or recrimination.
3. Taking players on and challenging defenders.
4. Little or NO pressure from significant others (parents, coaches).
5. A vibrant creative and fun environment.

Parents need to be briefed as to the aims and the underlying philosophy of the small sided game concept.

### **PROGRAM**

The format is easily adapted and can accommodate many players, including goalkeepers, at very short notice.

### **TEAMS**

No player sits out a game unless there are substitutes due to hot weather conditions for example or total numbers dictate substitutes are needed.

### **SUBSTITUTES**

If a team has more than 3 players then substitutes are brought into the game on a “strict” rotational basis.

### **GAME DURATION / REFEREES**

Each game lasts for 8 minutes and there are no referees. By referring the game themselves, player’s co-operation is fostered and the young players consistently learn to take more responsibility for their own actions.

## SCORING / GOALS

Because so many goals are scored in the conditioned 4 v 4 games, scoring itself is de-emphasized and no scores are held. Except for the Goalkeepers Game, the use of cones instead of real goals and nets redirects the emphasis of the game back onto build – up play and technical execution.

## PLAYING TIME

Each player plays a minimum of 6 games and there is a minimum 2 minute break period between games for rest, re-hydration and games organization. This exercise-to-rest ratio increases energy levels and mental awareness during competitive play.

## COACHING

There is very little overt coaching performed during competitive matches – no raised voices, no disciplining, and no “playing – the – game – for - the – players” commentary from the sidelines. Instead, consistent encouragement and praise are given to players of both teams for brave attempts and creative decision making.

Players are repeatedly encouraged to make their own decisions in the games.

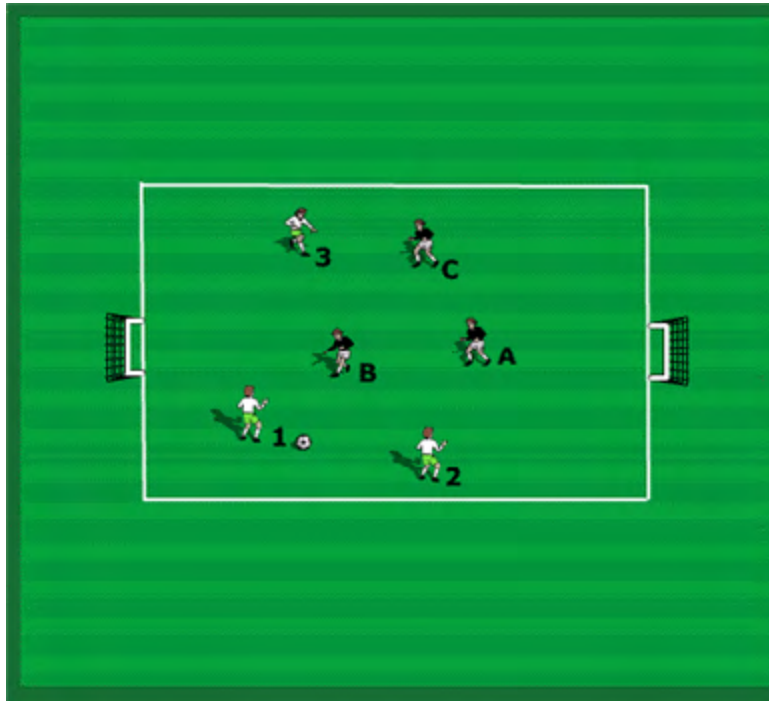
## CONCLUSION

It is our responsibility to provide the players with a secure, vibrant and challenging soccer environment for them to learn their technical skills.

Consistent practice in this small sided game format will go a long way to helping them develop these skills to their fullest potential.

As well as this type of festival, “All” regular training sessions should include at least one third of the time the session lasts, playing small sided competitive games where they “just play”!

## 3 v 3 Training Program



1. Mini soccer in three's is a great way for young players to learn how to play the game. Coaches try to teach the game where players support in triangles and in a team of three a natural triangle forms.
2. This is especially important to play this at the U8 and U9 age groups but is also important at ALL age groups.
3. It guarantees lots and lots of touches for each player and in the formative years especially it is vital for the players to work on their technical ability. Many opportunities for each player to pass, dribble, shoot, turn, tackle, only one ball between six players.
4. This is a great medium to start this development but also within a game situation.
5. When the player is on the ball they should always have two options of a pass.
6. One player can be the goalkeeper and also the last defender and can pick up the ball anywhere within the 5 yard line. You must encourage this player to move up and out of this zone to support their two team mates during the game when they gain possession. Or just play without goal keepers.

### **Progressions:**

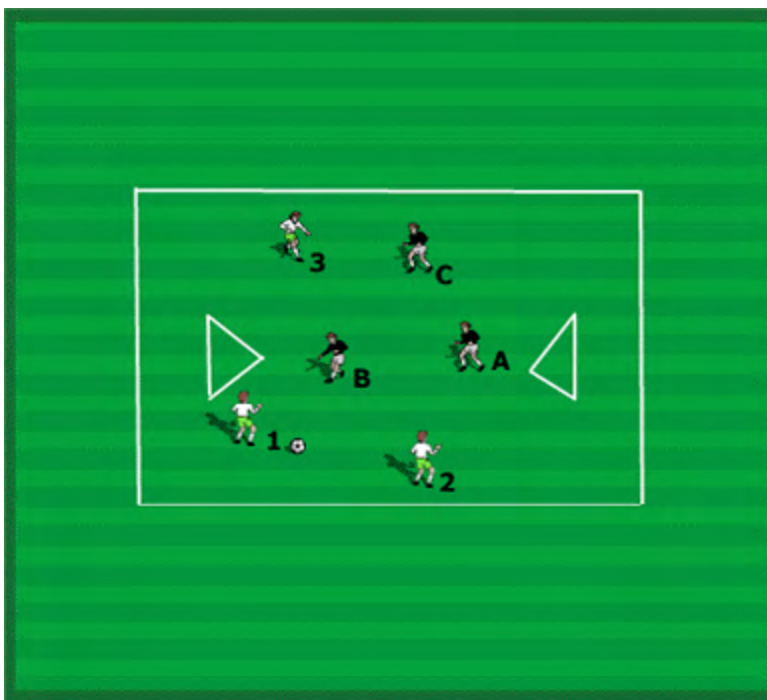
**Team Compactness:** To avoid the one player standing in front of the goal all the time and thus leaving his teammates in a 2 v 3 situation when in possession of the ball all players must be over the half way line before their team can score a goal. This also teaches team shape moving up the field in possession, when they lose the ball the last player can drop back then to protect the goal.

**Touch Conditions:** Play 3 touch maximum in your own half and as many touches as you like in the attacking half thus encouraging players to get the ball forward quickly into the danger areas for opponents.

**Awareness and Transition:** Once a ball goes out of play throw another one into the game in another location thus getting players to react and show awareness in transition.

**Man marking:** have players man mark each other so only one person can pressure a player. This makes them work hard and also gives them a chance to try to use imagination in their movements to get away from their marker. It also teaches them quick transition in mind and body when possession changes.

## Inside Field Goals



1. Bringing the goals into the field of play ensures the ball is in play all the time and ensures players move off the ball to support. To score a goal from the triangular goals one player has to receive the ball on the other side. No one is allowed inside the triangle.
2. It guarantees lots and lots of touches for each player and in the formative years especially it is vital for the players to work on their technical ability. Many opportunities for each player to pass, dribble, shoot, turn, tackle, only one ball between six players.
3. This is a great medium to start this development but also within a game situation. When the player is on the ball they should always have two options of a pass.
4. One player can be the goalkeeper and also the last defender and can pick up the ball anywhere within the 5 yard line. You must encourage this player to move up and out of

this zone to support their two team mates during the game when they gain possession. Or just play without goal keepers.

5. This game encourages players to run beyond the ball, by getting to the other side of the goal to receive a pass and score.

### **Rules:**

- A) Once they score they have to try to score in the other goal.
- B) If possession changes hands and the ball is regained then the team in possession can attack any goal until they score, then they must attack the other goal.
- C) When they get good, limit to fewer touches on the ball.

Here (1) passes through the triangular goal to (2) that has run into space to receive the pass. (3) has moved off the ball into space to receive the pass and attack the other goal. (1) Also is on the move to the other goal already.

With this being a game where each player is very physically actively involved, teams can be divided up into 4's so there is a substitute for each team to rotate into the game. Each player can take a periodic break from the action to recharge their batteries. Only do this if it is necessary, for example on a very hot day, if the players are capable of playing continuously then I think they should be encouraged to do so

### **An Introduction to Awareness Training:**

Playing 3 against 3 is a good way to introduce the players to awareness training in as much as they only have two options of support when they are on the ball. This means they need to view a small area of only two other players from their own team. By only having two options of a pass this ensures the players start to develop their awareness without too much going on around them, if they started with 6 v 6 games then there are in theory 5 options of passes and 5 other players positions that they need to be aware of so it is more complicated for them to develop the vision.

Once they get used to the idea of looking before receiving, viewing the positions of their two teammates they need to then include developing the capacity to view their opponents also.

This development of awareness can be done within the confines of your training then taking the concept into the 3 v 3 games.

Be patient with this as initially players at the U8 and younger age groups tend to chase the ball and not see the whole field or their teammates and opponents, more just focusing on the ball. This will change as you teach them the principles of Awareness.

## Game 1: 3 v 3 Small Sided Dribbling Game When Coaching A Dribbling Skills Session



No goals are used. To score, a player must dribble the ball under control over the goal line. Looking to encourage 1 v 1's, work on improving ball control with quick movement. Decision making is to improve when and where to dribble. This practice can be applied with the same principles with larger numbers of players such as a 6 v 6 etc.

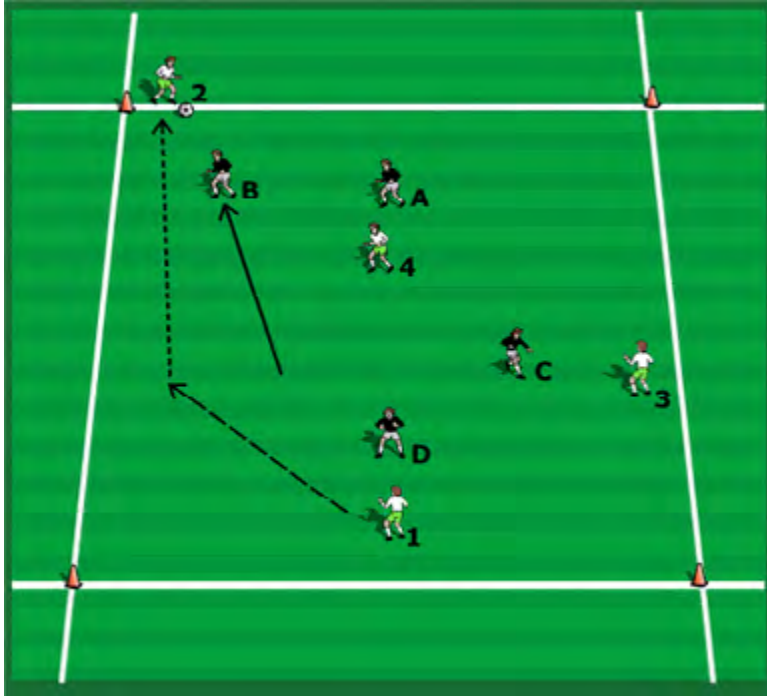
### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space – For you to receive the ball.
2. Decision – When and where to dribble (less likely in the defending third, most likely in the attacking third).
3. Technique – Tight Close Control on receiving the ball, use of body to dummy an opponent, ability to change pace and direction, established dribbling skills, a positive attitude to beat the player.
4. Runs of Teammates – To support or to take opponents away to leave a 1 v 1 situation.
5. End Product – beating an opponent in a 1 v 1 situation.

Talk about safety and risk areas and identify where it is safe to attempt to beat a player 1 v 1 and where it is not. Have the players answer the questions don't tell them, let them work it out for themselves. Losing possession close to their own defensive line and thus the opponent scoring will tell the player that is not a good area to try to beat a player 1 v 1 just by the resulting action.

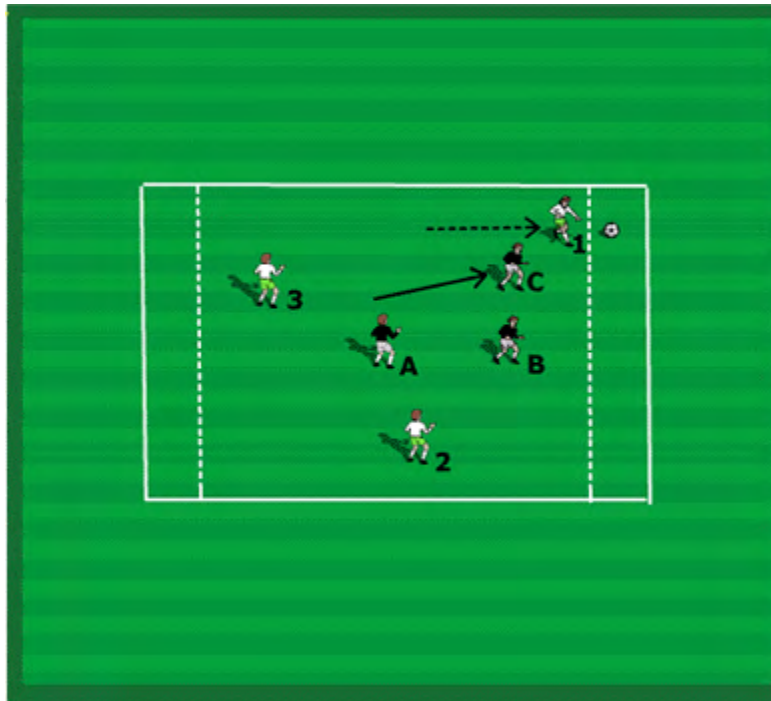


## Game 2: A 4 v 4 Dribbling Game



Whilst with the Awareness program I am encouraging players to make quick observations and quick decisions often resulting in a player passing the ball early to avoid being caught in possession it also helps players who are good at dribbling by enabling them to identify situations in advance to allow them to get in a good position to take a player on in a 1 v 1 situation. This could include opening the body up to receive and face up to an opponent, seeing the immediate opponent has no cover on so you can attack 1 v 1, seeing where the defender is early and identifying the best side to attack, seeing you have no support so have to attack 1 v 1 etc.

### Game 3: Running With The Ball In A Small Sided Game



Small sided game with the emphasis on running with the ball.

To score the player on the ball has to run the ball into the marked area. Here (1) runs the ball in chased by (C) then must look to pass to another player and attack the opposite way.

Once the team has scored they then keep possession and can attack the other end zone.

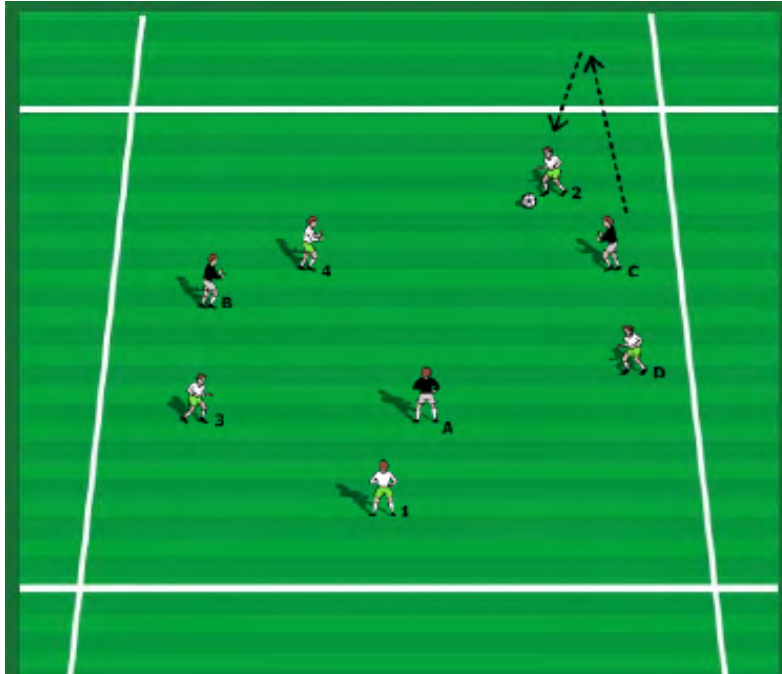
#### **Coaching Points:**

1. Run with the ball whenever possible
2. First touches to be forward.
3. Keep the ball moving
4. If you can't run with the ball look for a give and go and then run again
5. Have the positive attitude to run at them to score.

Build an overload into the game if necessary with an extra floating player if it is too difficult to get free with equal numbers making it a 4 v 3 in favor of the attacking team always.

If it is too difficult with young players to create a space where they can run with it freely then make it a 2 v 2 plus 1 game where it is always a 3 v 2 when attacking so more space may be available to make it happen.

## Game 4: Small Sided Game Encouraging Turning



Players need to dribble to the line and turn with the ball in the designated area at the end of each side of the field.

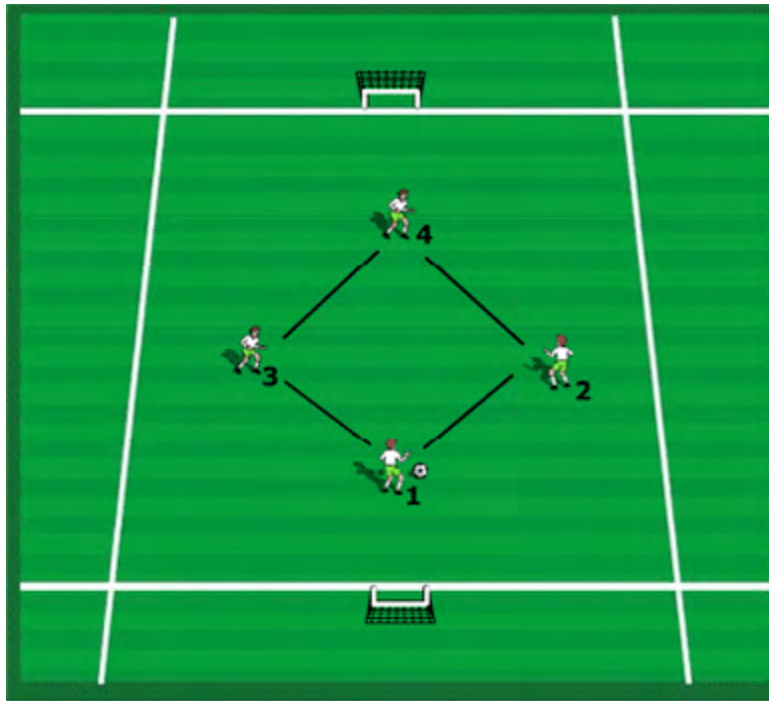
Defenders are not allowed into this area of the player on the ball has a chance to successfully turn without pressure. This is counted as a goal.

### Coaching Points:

1. Running and dribbling with the ball
2. Effecting a successful turn
3. Attacking the other goal
4. Combinations with other players

**Develop:** Coach may call change, so the player on the ball has to suddenly attack the opposite goal he or she is running to, and so effecting a turn from the player if it is on to do so.

## Game 5: 4 v 4: The Basic Diamond Shape



40 X 20 Area Approximately. There are no set positions but there is a positional theme to work from which is the diamond.

### Coaching Points:

1. Correct Positioning when attacking and Defending.
2. Maintaining Possession and dictating the direction of play by running with the ball, passing and dribbling.
3. Forward passing where possible but if not then positioning for back or sideway passing.
4. Movement as a team forward, backward, sideways left and right.
5. Communication – verbal and non-verbal (body language).

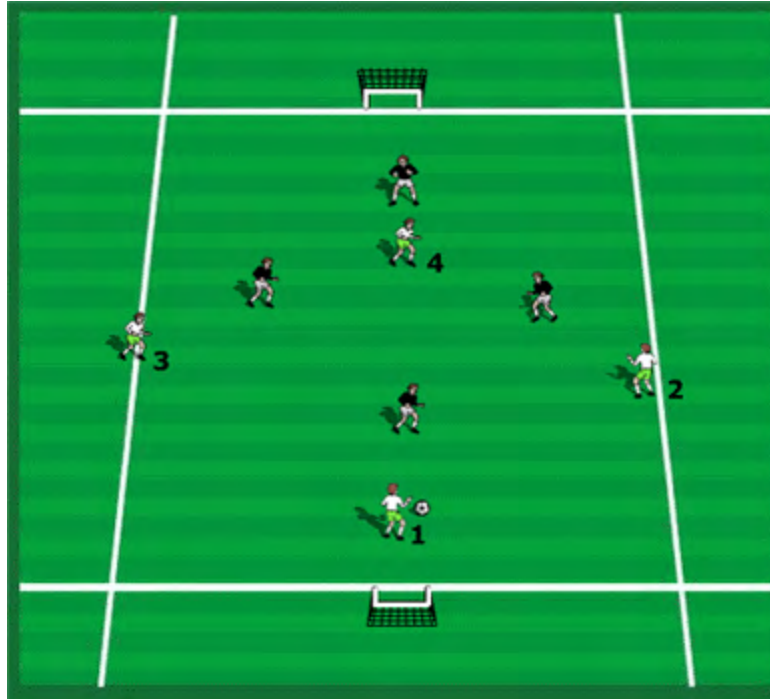
Techniques involved – Passing, receiving and turning, controlling the ball, dribbling, shielding and shooting. Defending.

All the above work requires anticipation and being able to read situations in advance (use of A.I.A. workout will help this to be achieved).

Field dimensions are generally above but can be changed according to the ages and abilities of the players involved.

## Coaching Points For 4 v 4:

1. Correct Positioning when Attacking and Defending.
2. Maintaining Possession and dictating the direction of play by running with the ball, passing and dribbling.
3. Forward passing but if not then positioning for back or sideways passing.
4. Movement as a team forward, backward, sideways left and right.
5. Communication – verbal and non-verbal (body language).
6. Techniques involved – Controlling and Passing, receiving and turning, dribbling, shielding and shooting. Defending.

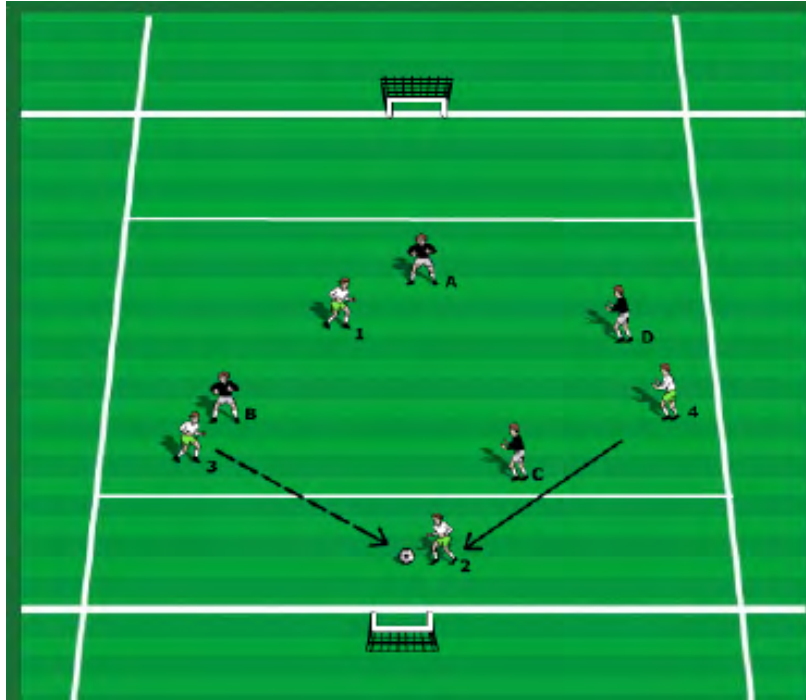


This is the set up for the eventual 4 v 4 (or 5 v 5 plus keepers) competitive game situation. The above coaching points are important to use as guidelines to what you are trying to achieve in this coaching practice.

The attacking four spread out as wide and long as they can to make it difficult for the defending team to mark them. Maintenance of a rough diamond shape ensures good angles and distances of support wherever the ball may be.

The use of the awareness principles is very important in the development of this game concept and you can ensure they are applied by conditioning the game for example making it one and two touch play to mention just one way.

## Game 6: A Comfort Zone Game

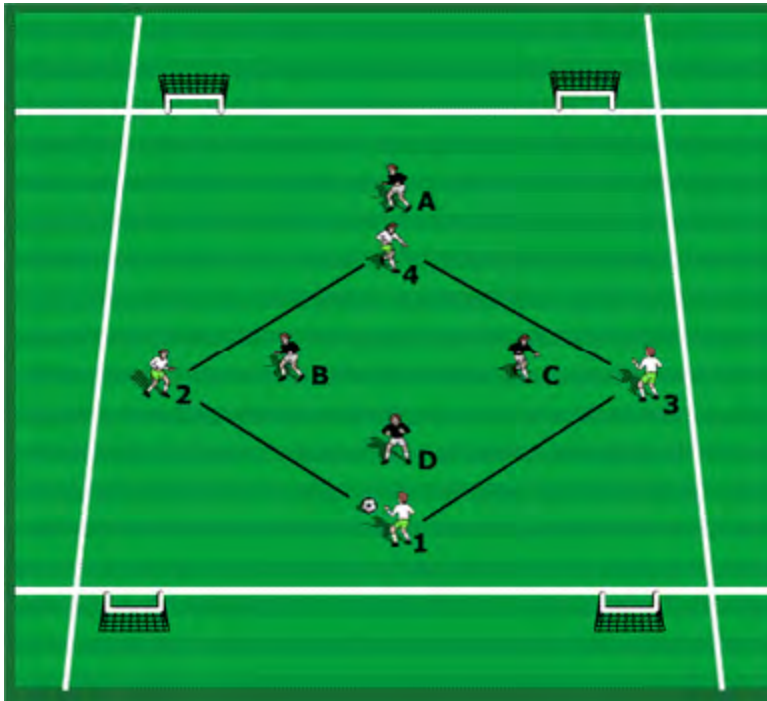


Using the same set up to allow players to be composed on the ball at the back and build up play from there, the above zones act as comfort zones where players can drop back into those zones and opponents cannot enter them to try to win the ball back. This gives that player time on the ball to develop the play.

Here player (2) drops back into the comfort zone where they can have time to compose themselves and not be pressured. Other players around this player can then work to get free to receive the next pass and so on.

You can use comfort zones on the sides of the field also.

## Game 7: Switching Play Game



The length of field is now 25 yards and the width 35 yards.

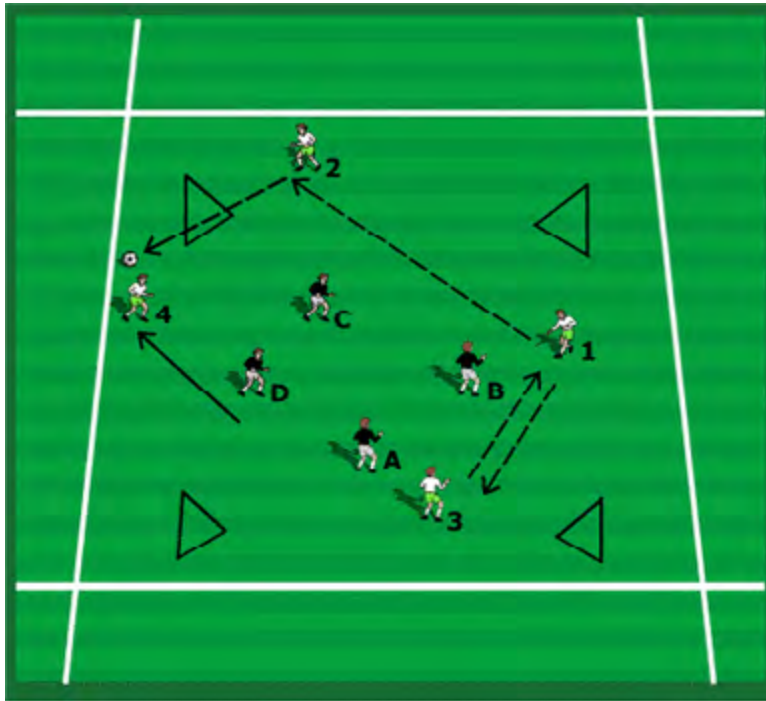
You can start as in other practices with two teams playing through each other with a ball each practicing switching play, attacking each goal in turn. Limit it to two touches to ensure quick decisions both from the player on the ball and the players off the ball who need to get in support positions early.

Using two wide positioned goals for each team to attack. This is designed to encourage players to spread out when they attack and switch play; changing direction if one route is blocked. It also encourages players on the ball to look around more, as there are two areas to attack. Looking for quick transition and movement off the ball to create space but attacking the space when it is on to do so. The first thought of the player on the ball should still be “Can I run or pass the ball forward”.

### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space – for yourself and your teammates.
2. Decision – When, Where and How to pass the ball.
3. Technique – The Quality of the pass (Accuracy, Weight, Angle).
4. Support Positions of teammates (Angle, Distance and Communication). Players are supporting in front of the ball, to the side and behind the ball.
5. Switching Play using width in attack.
6. Combination Plays incorporating over laps, take over's, give and go's.

## Game 8: Passing Support And Combination Work Game Plan



To score players can pass through the goal or dribble through it. Same idea as the last set up but now the ball stays in play and movement off the ball to support the player in it to score becomes more important.

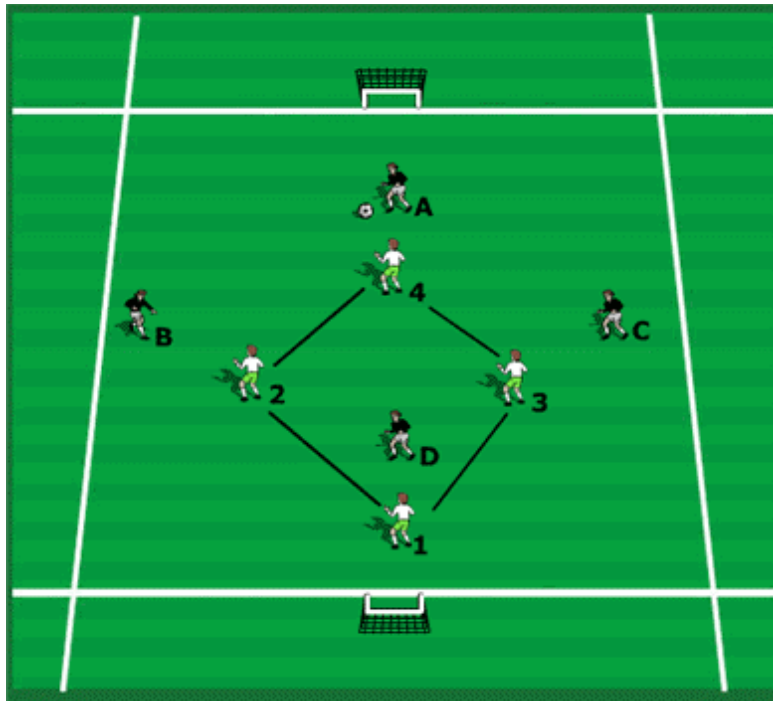
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### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space – for yourself and your teammates.
2. Decision – When, Where and How to pass the ball.
3. Technique – The Quality of the pass (Accuracy, Weight, Angle).
4. Support Positions of teammates (Angle, Distance and Communication). Supporting in front and behind
5. Switching Play using width in attack, drawing defenders to one side of the field then switching the play quickly to attack the other open side to score. Here the ball is played to (3) from (1), the defending team is drawn towards defending their right side goal. The attacking team stay spread out and this situation shows how a pass back to (1) then quickly across to (2) can open up an attack to the other left side goal.



## Game 9: Defending Game Plan (4 v 4 – A Basic Diamond Shape)



The main idea here is for the defending team to condense the area the ball can be played into the defending team become a diamond within the opponents attacking diamond. (4) Forces (A) one way and the rest of the team adjust their positions off this. (3) Protects the space inside but can close down (C) if the ball is passed, (2) and (1) is the same scenario and this results in the diamond being shorter and tighter.

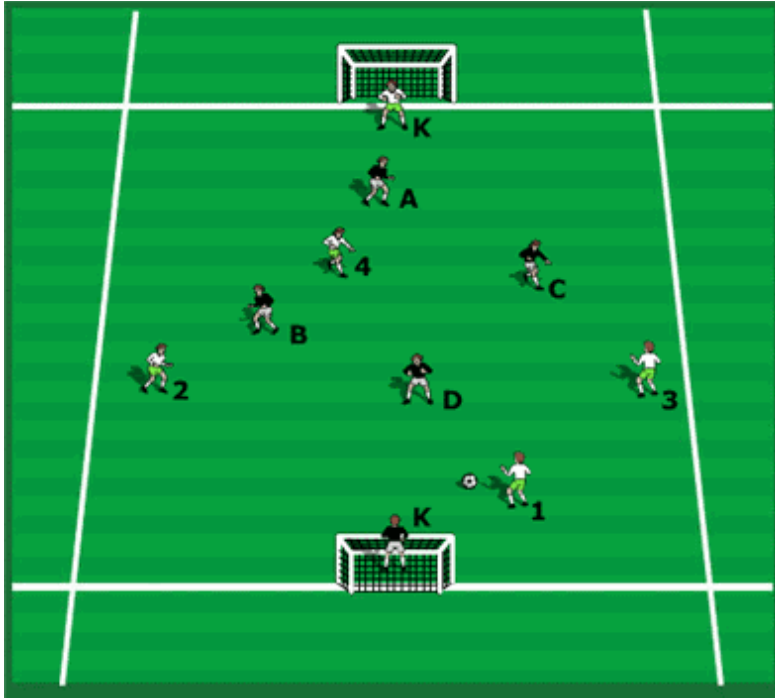
As the opponents move the defending team must move to compensate. Also if any pass is played behind (1), (2) or (3); they should be first to the ball.

### Coaching Points:

1. Pressure – 1 v 1 defending to win the ball, delay or force a bad pass.
2. Support – position of immediate teammate (angle, distance and communication).
3. Cover – positions of teammates beyond the supporting player.
4. Recovering and Tracking should the ball go past our position, recovery run to goal side of the ball and tracking the run of a player.
5. Double-Teaming – (A) passes to (C), (3) closes (C) down from in front, (4) follows along the path of the ball to close down from behind or slightly to the side. (4) Closes in such a way as to obstruct a pass back to (A).
6. Regaining Possession and creating Compactness from the back (pushing up as a unit).

The objectives of defending are to disrupt the other teams build up, make play predictable, prevent forward passes and ultimately regain possession of the ball. Techniques include – pressuring, marking, tackling and winning the ball.

## Game 10: Shooting Game Plan With Keepers



Two large goals to shoot at to encourage success by scoring goals. Shorter field so lots of shots on goal because players are nearly always in shooting positions. Initially have the two team / two balls set up so no opposition to enable players working both ways to get lots of shots in. Once a team has worked a position to shoot and has done so that team's keeper sets up another attack.

Progress it to the competitive even sided game.

### **Coaching Points:**

1. Quick shooting.
2. Rebounds.
3. Transitions.
4. Quick break counter attack.

Players must be particularly aware of where teammates are, where the opposition are, the keepers position because the space to work in is small and the time they have on the ball is short.

Hence development of the mental side of the game in terms of the Awareness program, i.e. seeing situations quickly and acting upon them is very important to the player to help him or her have success by scoring goals. The shorter and sharper the practice then the less time the players have to make the correct decisions to be successful, the more important it is to train them to be able to cope with these pressure situations.

## Game 11: Big Goal And Small Goals



Bring in a keeper to play in the big goal and have a 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 game going. One team focuses on shooting and the other focuses on developing passing and support and changing the point of attack.

Lots of opportunity to get both themes in with only three players per team. Have both teams take a turn at playing using both themes alternatively. As you can see above, natural triangles form on the field between the three players and they learn to move off each other and adjust their positions according to the needs of the game.

### Coaching Points:

1. Affect the attitude of the players to shoot (when and where)
2. Shot selection (driven with laces, swerved, chipped, passed, side footed)
3. Accuracy before power, achieving both is best (hit the target)
4. Rebounds; follow shots in for a 2nd ball of the keeper

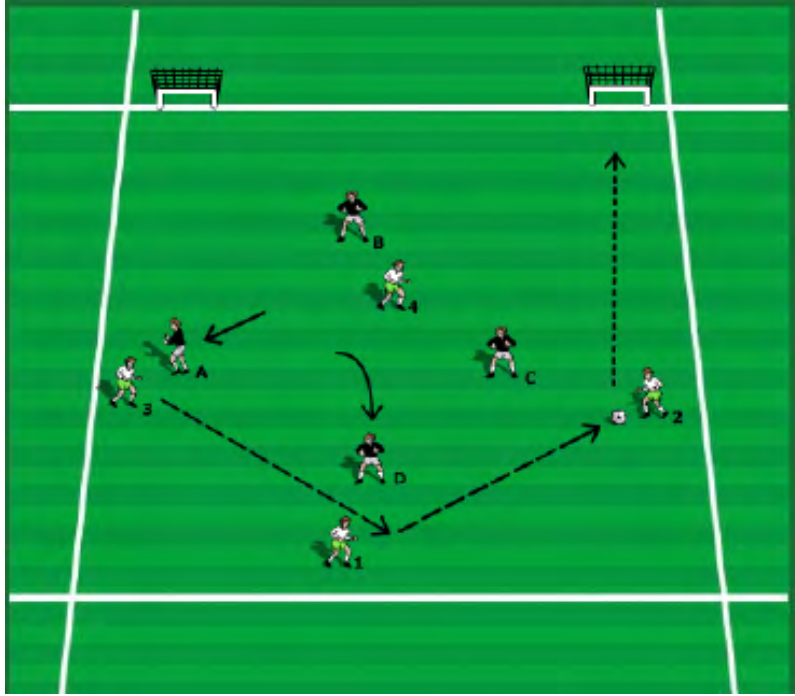
It can be a 2 v 2 plus 1 with keepers a 3 v 3 with keepers or a 4 v 4 with keepers. Focus is on shooting and wherever the ball is they have an opportunity to shoot as the fields size allows this.

## Game 12: Two Themes In One Game - Shooting Theme And Dribbling Theme



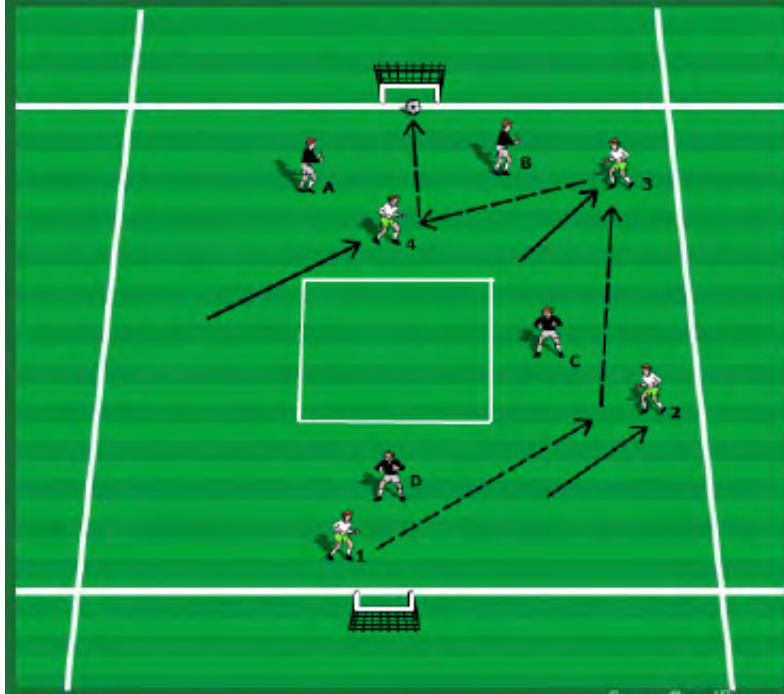
The lettered teams theme is shooting on goal; the numbered teams theme is dribbling and beating players 1 v 1. Here player (2) beats player (C) with a good dribbling move and scores a goal by stopping the ball on the line.

## Game 13: Switching The Point Of Attack And Dribbling Themes



Here the letters teams theme is dribbling the numbered teams theme is switching the point of attack and spreading the play. (3) is pressured and passes to (1) who is pressured who then passes to (2) who is free in a wide area on the opposite side of the field and can dribble to goal and score.

## Game 14: No Go Middle Zone



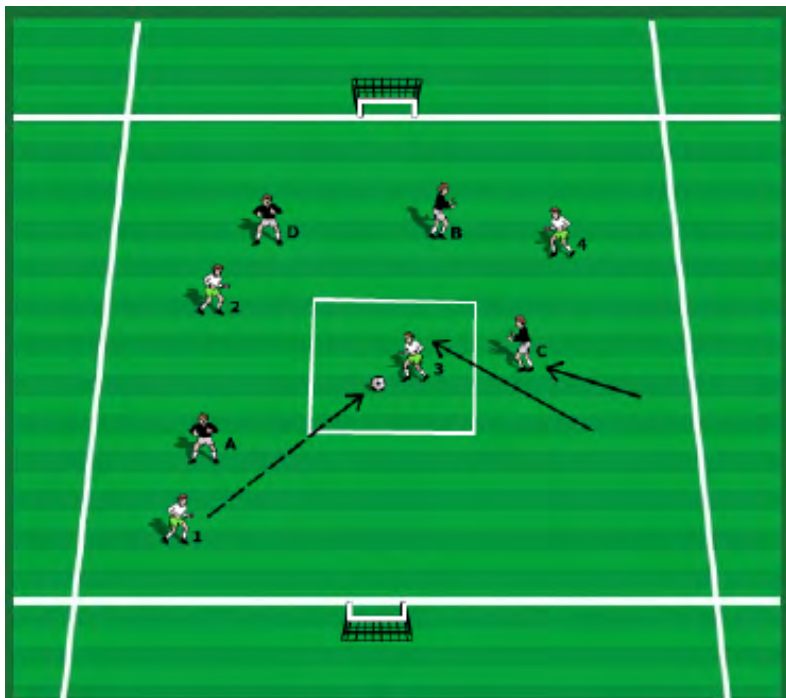
Here there is a no go zone in the middle of the field where the ball cannot be passed through and the players cannot enter. This is designed to get the players to play with width in their game and not just play straight up and down the field.

Here (2) breaks wide into space to receive a pass from (1). Beyond (2) player (3) makes a wide run into space to receive the next pass to get in position to cross the ball for (4) running towards goal to get a finish and score a goal.

Alternatively have this as a SAFE ZONE that players on the team in possession can enter and cannot be tackled as opponents can't go in there.

Can condition it to two touches in there, because you don't want players dwelling on the ball too long, or even a time limit of a couple of seconds to keep the ball moving.

## Game 15: Safe Zone Game



Here the attacking player can make a run and the zone allows them to lose their marker.

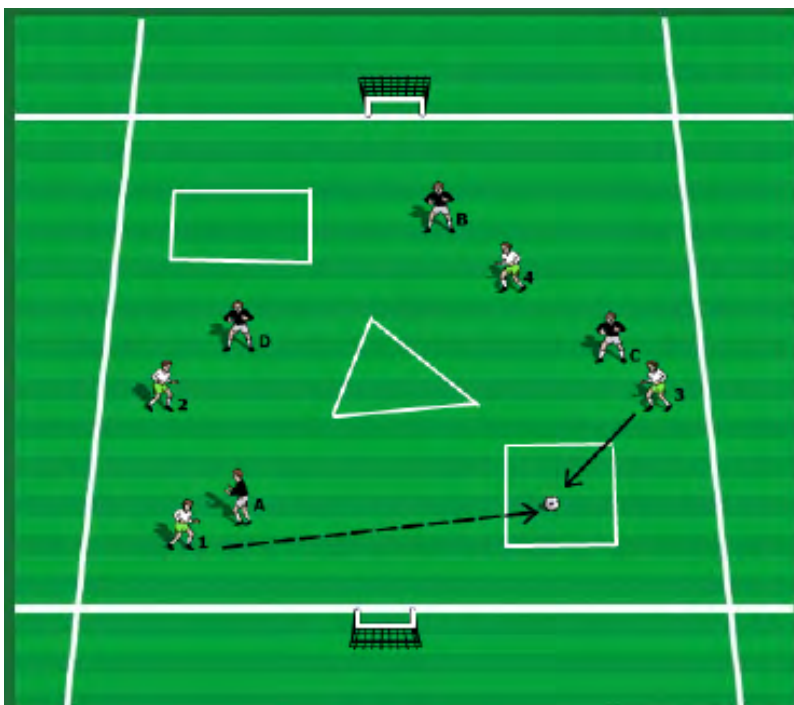
If players struggle to keep possession in a small sided game this is one way to help them and thus have them relax on the ball, knowing they cannot be tackled.

Insist on good timing of the run to coincide with the ball entering the safe zone so players do not go in there and stand still and wait, as this would not happen in a game.

It can be several safe zones and can be different shapes and sizes of zone. Vary the rules as you see fit.

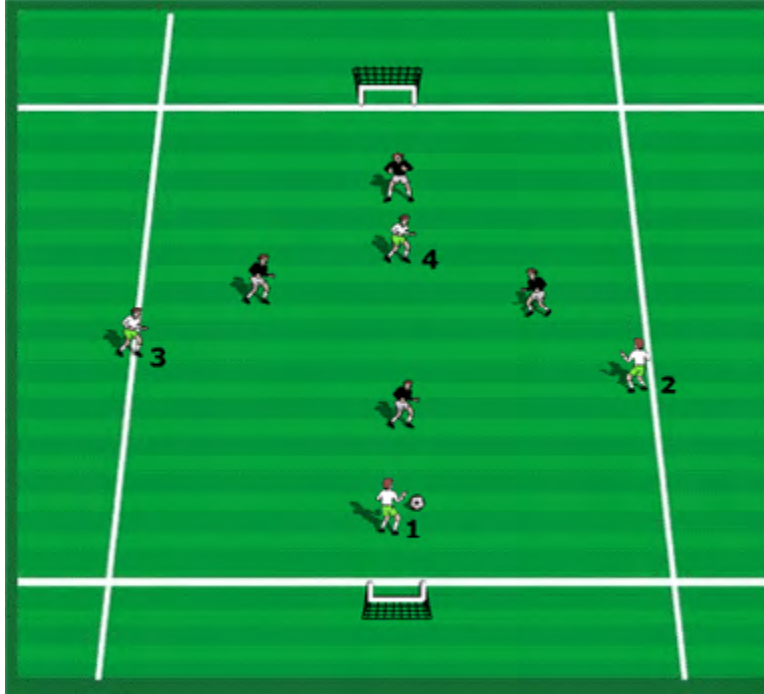
Take the goals away and just have it as a possession game.

Include an overload where there is a free player or even two free players so it is always a 3 v 2 or 4 v 2 with the team in possession of the ball. This will help maintain possession of the ball and to go with the free zones this should make it easier to be successful in keeping the ball.



**Progressions:** Only the free players can enter the free zones, only the regular team players can enter the free zones, the free players can't, or all the players on the attacking team can enter the free zones. You can play around with this idea. You can vary the number of touches of certain players so some have to play faster. Have it free play, as many touches as you like but reward them for a successful one or two touch pass. This means when they need to dribble or turn with the ball they can, but also they are rewarded for quicker thinking and decision making by playing quickly with one and two touch play.

## Game 16: Scoring And Possession Game



For defending have the free player always on the defending team so it is an overload the other way.

Here when one team scores they then cannot score again but instead must try to prevent the opponents scoring and also try to maintain possession of the ball.

So for the team 1-0 down they are trying to score, for the team winning 1-0 then need to use this as a possession game. Time it to see how long they can last even set a time for them to reach it could be one minute for example.

They attempt to defend well by keeping possession of the ball.



## Game 17: Several Goals To Score Through Game



The goals are spread out and act as a reference to help the players spread out, switch play, pass and support each other. They must make their passes through the goal. This condition forces the players to find a goal (and space) to pass and to receive through. Once they receive the ball they must then find someone else to pass to. The support players spread out to receive by moving into space (where the other goals are).

Two teams working in the same area means congestion so decisions have to be quick on where, when and how to pass and receive. Move into an overload situation so there is opposition to increase the pressure on the players. Have an 8 v 4 in the above workout still using the goals as points of reference for support positions. Count the number of passes made through the goals. Develop – score a goal by dribbling through the goal also.

Eventually have equal sides and make it competitive counting passes through the goals as a goal and perhaps have the first team to ten goals will be the winner. All your previous work trying to teach them how to play in less pressurized situations (over a long period of time) to relax them, ultimately leads to you testing them in full scale match play. The progression to this must be gradual.

### Coaching Points:

1. Look before you receive – where are team mates / other team's players.
2. Open body stance – side on to where the ball is coming from.
3. Check towards the ball – a dummy to fool the defender in a game situation.
4. If time and space available, let the ball run across the body – switching play without needing to touch the ball. If the space is covered move the ball in another direction with a good first touch.
5. Pace of the pass – must be such that the player receiving the pass can let the ball run across them and maintain possession of it.
6. Change direction – switching from one side to the other.

## Game 18: No Pinnies Game

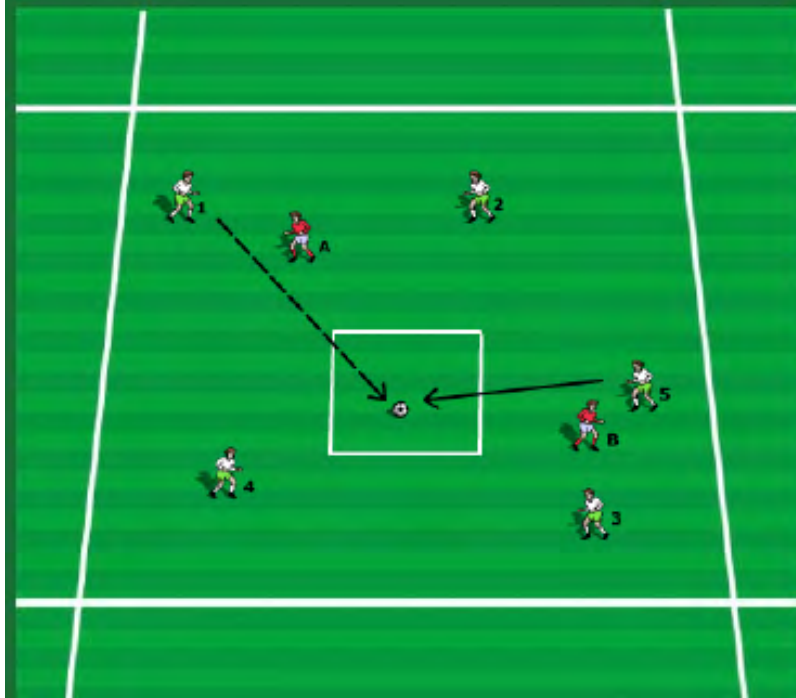


Here the players have no pinnies and so no color coordination to help them identify their teammates so must rely on good communication and observation.

Introduce no talking and communication also, in order to really test their awareness and peripheral vision.

They now must really LOOK to see their teammates and positions and those of their opponents.

## Game 19: Creating Safe Zones In Small Sided Games For Help Maintain Possession Of The Ball



Have a SAFE ZONE that players on the team in possession can enter and cannot be tackled as opponents can't go in there. Can condition it to two touches in there, because you don't want players dwelling on the ball too long, or even a time limit of a couple of seconds to keep the ball moving.

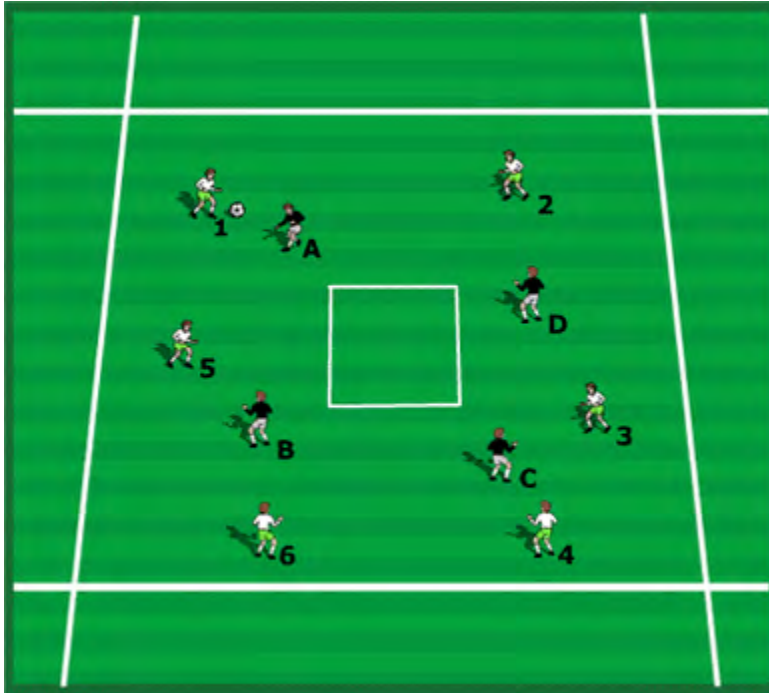
Keep away, with a 5 v 2 overload and a safe zone to run into.

Timing of the pass, pace and accuracy of the pass, timing of the run to arrive as the ball arrives; and not before or after

Any Off the ball players can arrive in the square to receive the ball (can be a circle, anything you like)

Receive the ball; play out of the safe zone, move out of the safe zone.

## Game 20: A 6 V 4 Possession, Passing And Dribbling Game

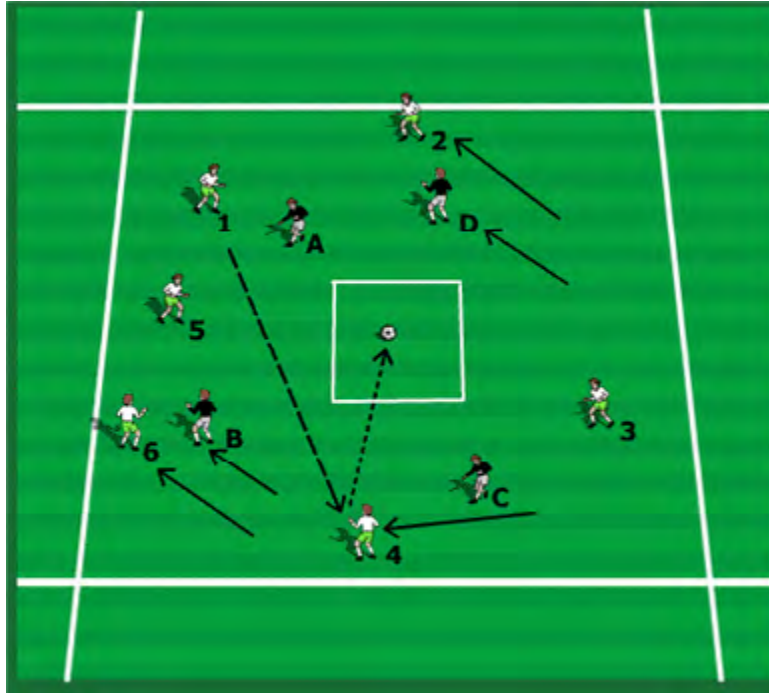


It is a 6 v 4 overload game. 6 attack and 4 defend the square. No one is allowed inside the square except an attacking player on the team of 6 dribbling the ball and in possession. Attacking team keep possession and score by a player dribbling the ball into the square. Try to get a player free to dribble.

Attacking team can also score a goal by making 5 consecutive passes. This prevents the defending team just guarding the square and not trying to make any tackles and win the ball. The defending team score by winning possession and dribbling the ball outside the big square.

### Coaching Points for Attackers:

1. Creating Space (spreading out, using all the space available)
2. Individual dribbling skills
3. Quality quick Passing
4. Support: Movement off the ball to find space to receive or create space for other team mates
5. Maintaining Possession



### Coaching Points for Defenders:

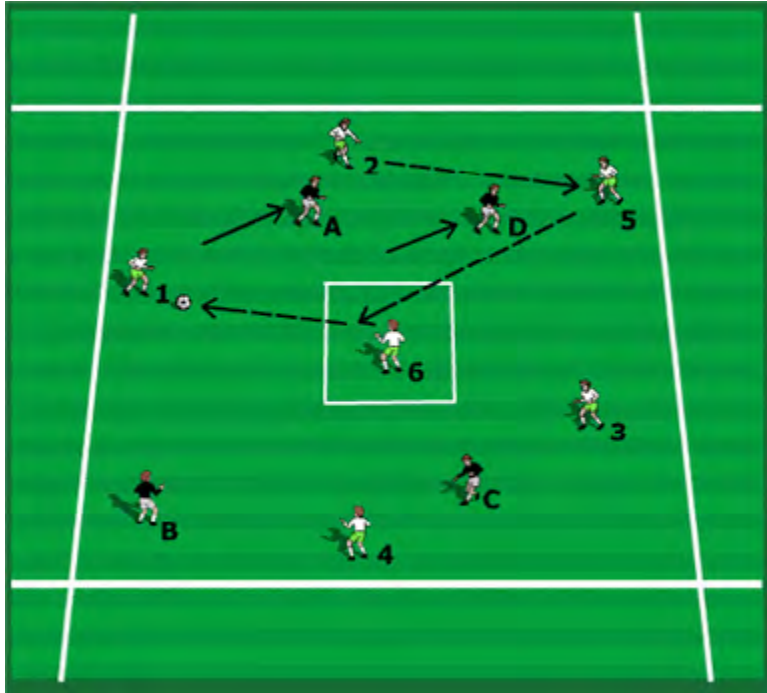
1. Quick individual player pressure
2. Working in pairs to force mistakes or win the ball quickly
3. Collective team Defending where possible (numbers around the ball) boxing players in.

(4) moves into space to open up the angle for a pass from (1). (4) Can now dribble into the scoring square in the middle.

Likewise (6) and (2) move and open up the angle for a pass but defenders (D) and (B) anticipate this and track the runs by (2) and (6).

What (6)'s movement does though is open up a passing lane for (4) to receive, so (6)'s movement was not only to receive a pass themselves if this player got free, but also to help a pass to (4).

This type of movement from an attacking point of view is so important in soccer because players need to learn how to make movements for team mates in an unselfish way.



**Develop:**

1. Have an attacking player stationed in the middle all the time and use this player as a link player, scoring a point every time a pass is made to them by the attacking team.
2. To score a player has to arrive in the square as the ball arrives. If they don't get the ball they move out again for someone else to fill the space and receive the pass the next time.
3. Change it to a keeper in the square to give the keeper some handling work. Every time the keeper catches the ball it is a goal.

Defending team still scores by running the ball outside the big square.

**Progression:** Make it an equal numbers game so both teams can attack and can use the keeper to pass to or have an outfield player in the middle to pass to for both teams.

Condition the game to one and two touch (one touch only when it is on to do so). Hence timing of the pass and timing of the run in a) and b) are especially important when the player only has one or two touches.

## Game 21: A 4 v 4 Safe Zone Game

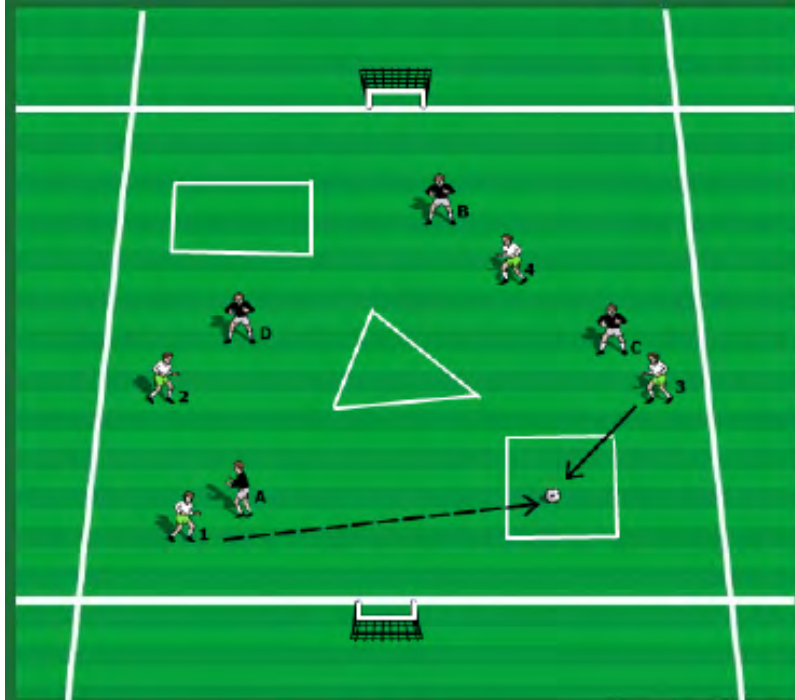


Here the attacking player can make a run and the zone allows them to lose their marker. If players struggle to keep possession in a small sided game this is one way to help them and thus have them relax on the ball, knowing they cannot be tackled.

Insist on good timing of the run to coincide with the ball entering the safe zone so players do not go in there and stand still and wait, as this would not happen in a game.

**Develop:** Man marking so the only real way to guarantee to be free if the defending is really good is to get into the free zone.

## Several Safe Zones



It can be several safe zones and can be different shapes and sizes of zone. Vary the rules as you see fit. Take the goals away and just have it as a possession game. Include an overload (as previously shown) where there is a free player or even two free players so it is always a 3 v 2 or 4 v 2 with the team in possession of the ball.

This will help maintain possession of the ball and to go with the free zones this should make it easier to be successful in keeping the ball AND THUS GIVE THE PLAYERS MORE CONFIDENCE.

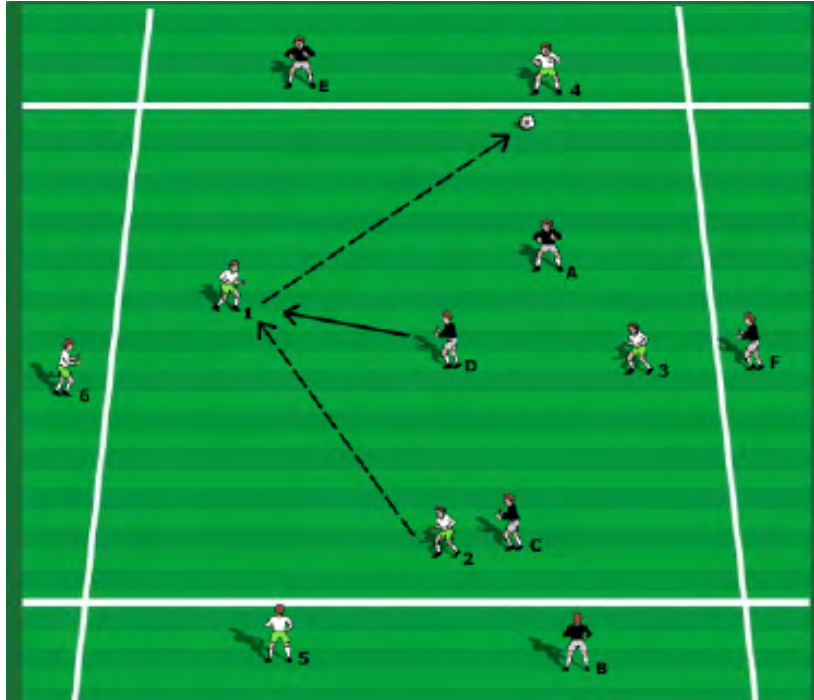
### Progressions:

Only the free players can enter the free zones, only the regular team players can enter the free zones, OR the free players can't, OR all the players on the attacking team can enter the free zones. You can play around with this idea. You can vary the number of touches of certain players so some have to play faster.

OR: Have it free play, as many touches as you like; but reward them for a successful one or two touch pass. This means when they need to dribble or turn with the ball they can, but also they are rewarded for quicker thinking and decision making by playing quickly with one and two touch play.



## Game 22: End Zone Game With Targets



A simple target game with a 3 v 3 in the middle

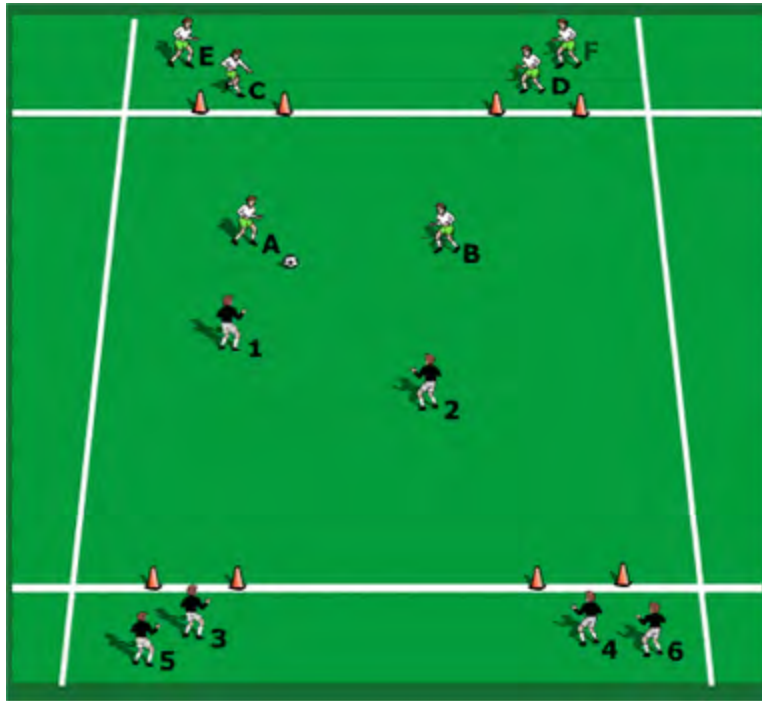
Six players on the outside with two target players at each end for each team and one support player on the outside

When a team has possession they technically have a 6 v 3 advantage.

To score each team has to get a pass into a target player then they have to attack the other way to their other target. They can use the outside player as support.

This is a good game with constant transition from attack to defense and defense to attack.

## Game 23: Quick Break Transition 2 v 2 Game

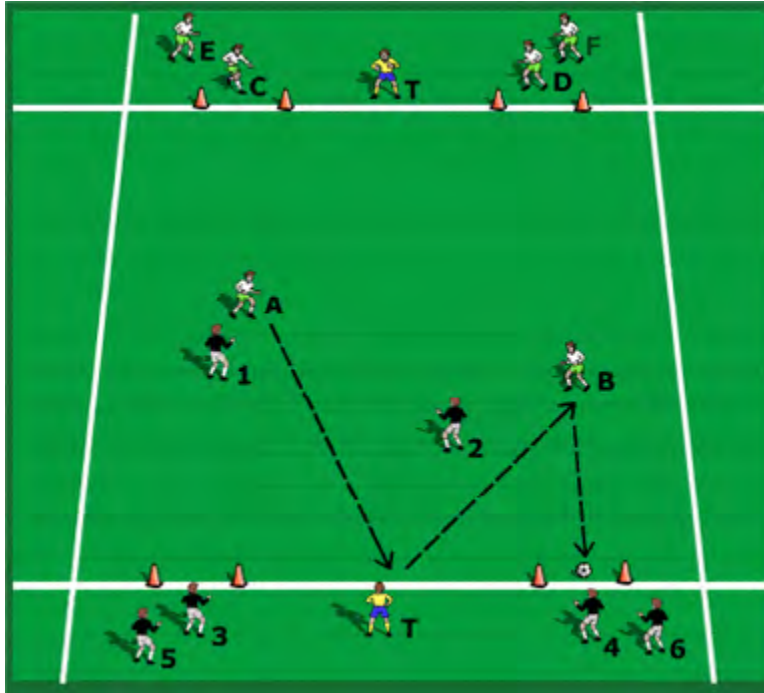


A 2 v 2 game going to 4 goals. The team who scores stays on and must quickly defend the 2 new players coming in (one from each goal that the opposition defends). Instant transition with the same ball that the opponents scored with, here (3) and (4) are positioned to immediately bring the ball the opponents' may score with out to attack. The other two players (1) and (2) must get off the field ASAP.

The 1st thought of the player on the ball has to be “Can I score?”

The 1st thought of the 1st defender is can I stop them scoring, win possession immediately, and score myself.

First team to 10 goals wins, keeping the competitive element. If the ball goes out of play the coach can provide another one to keep things going quickly.



Introduce a target player (can be coaches or players). Now it can be a 3 v 2 effectively. Players can use the target to play give and goes with each other or with their immediate teammates.

Here B scores and (4) stops the ball and brings it out to form a new attack with (3). (1) And (2) get off the field quickly. (4)'s first thought as the ball is traveling to him or her is "where are the opponents weakest, where are we strongest?" This will dictate which direction the first touch of the ball is taken. Looking to create give and go situations.

(A) and (B) stay on and defend trying to win the ball back and score again.

You can do it with a 3 v 3 depending on numbers and using three goals each side.

Liken passing into the goal as a midfielder passing into a striker so they get the ball in there as quickly as possible or a defender into a midfielder. Players must get between opponents and open up passing lanes into the goal (that represents the target).

Can work on quick break but also quick pressing defensively after scoring (liken to regaining possession in the attacking third).

Also with the wide goals we are looking to change the play and switch direction that fits in with the theme of changing direction with the first touch.

### **Coaching Points Attacking:**

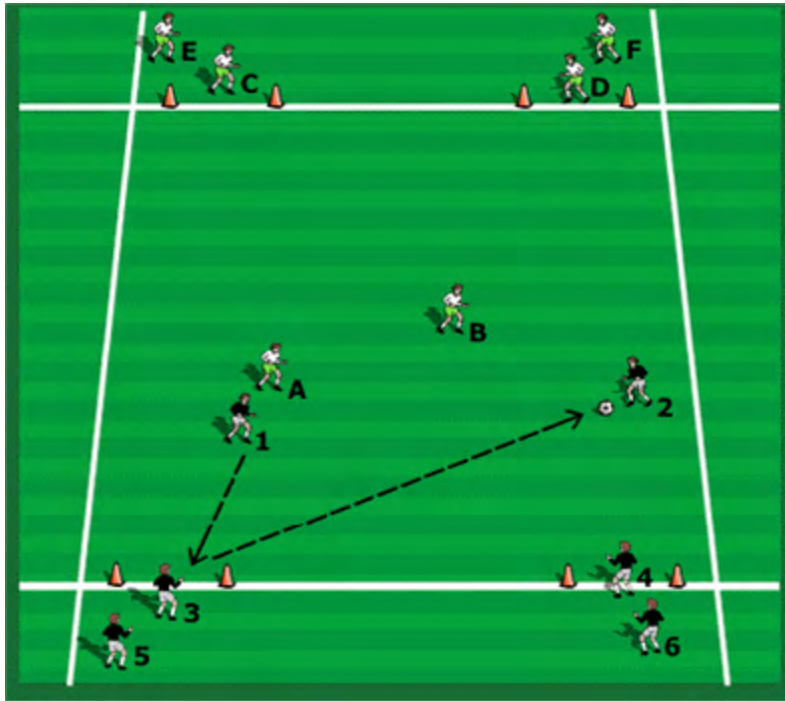
1. Quick Break and counter attack
2. Switching the point of attack if another goal is more open
3. Quick one and two touch passing
4. Positioning to open up passing lanes and getting between defenders to pass the ball in early
5. Creating 2 v 1 situations from a 2 v 2 set up and setting up a give and go.

### **Coaching Points Defending:**

1. Instant pressure as possession changes (transition after scoring going from being an attacker to being a defender)
2. Regaining possession at the front with a scoring reward
3. Getting in front of the passing lanes to prevent the quick pass into the goal.
4. Working together with pressure and support, the support player supporting the first defender, stepping across and covering the passing lane to the second goal and also keeping an eye on the 2nd attacker.

**Transition Coaching Points:** Immediately the team that has been in possession of the ball and has scored then they must switch on mentally to being defenders and high pressuring the new attacking team to try to win the ball back and score again.

**Mixed gender practice:** You have for example 4 boys and 4 girls you could have a 2 v 2 game with the girls and when 1 goal is scored both teams come off and both boys teams come on, or if you had different levels of players and did not want to mix them up in the practice you can do this too.



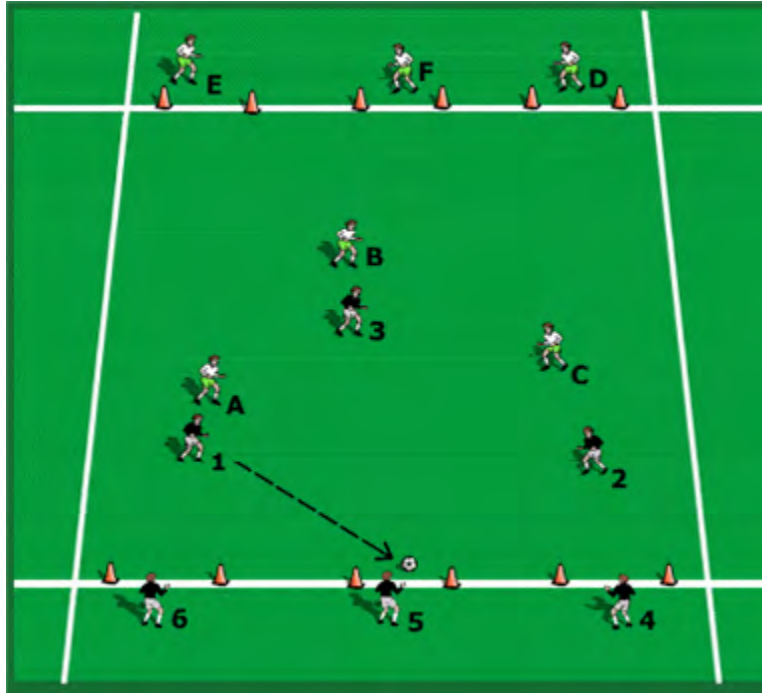
### Develop:

Allow back passes to the players in their own goal so they can support the two (or three) attacking players on the ball.

Allow them only one touch so they have to pass it quickly, make a quick decision and players receiving all need to get open to help them.

Vary the number of touches on the ball depending on the age and level of the players and their ability to perform.

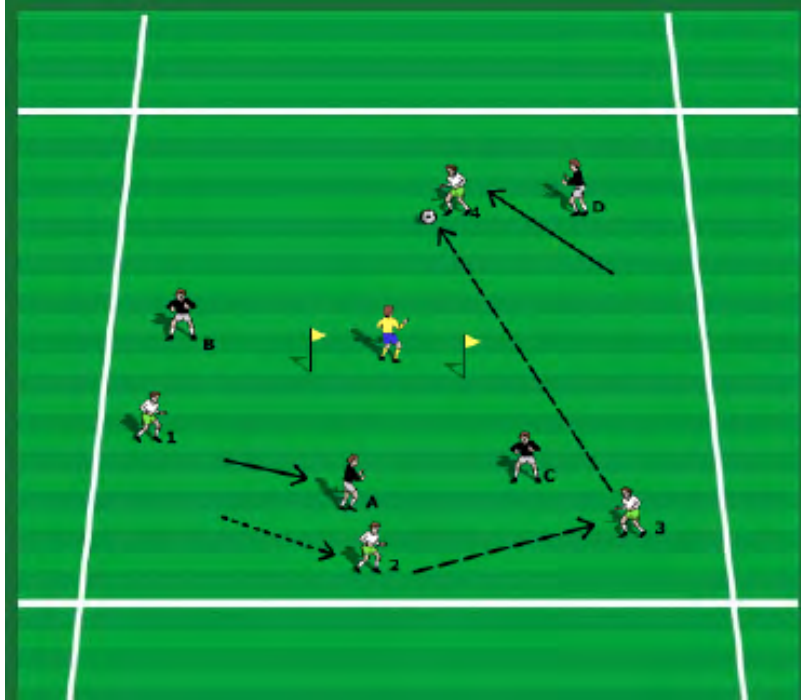
## Quick Transition 3 Against 3



Do the same set up but with three goals either side of the field and 3 v 3 games.

It offers more options of passes in the field of play and starts to get the players thinking about triangular support or diamond support if the ball is with a supporting player off the field. A diamond set up above.

## Game 24: Central Goal Game

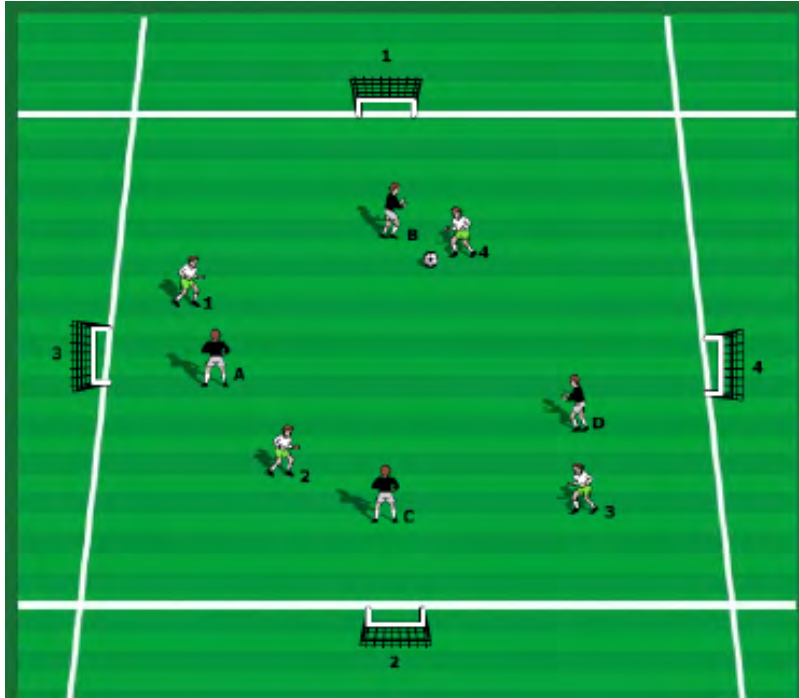


We have a goal in the middle of the field. Here (2) tries to shoot but is blocked by (A) so passes to (3) who is equally blocked by (C). (3) Passes to (4) on the other side of the goal who gets free of marker (D) and gets in a good position to shoot from the other side of the goal.

Both teams try to score in the goal against the one keeper and they can both score from either side so players spread out either side of the goal.

This encourages players to run beyond the ball.

## Game 25: Changing The Point Of Attack Through The Directional Four Goal Switching Play Game



40 x 40

Use this for small sided games also using 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 set ups.

Two teams passing and moving with a ball each team. Initially have one team attacking goal (1) and the other team goal (2). Coach calls “switch” and they attack different goals.

**Progression One:** Team (1) to (4) passes trying to score in goal (1) then (2). Team (A) to (D) passes trying to score in goal (3) then (4). Still playing through each other but going in different directions. Next each team can attack two goals (opposite goals) at once.

Looking to switch play attacking two goals, players decide when to switch the ball, and which goal to attack. Have a one or two touch shooting condition so the timing of the passing and the timing of the movement into position to shoot are correct.

### Progression Two:

1. Use two balls per team so they can attack two goals at once if necessary.
2. Introduce goalkeepers in each of the four goals to make it more competitive. Have a constant supply of soccer balls to keep the game moving.

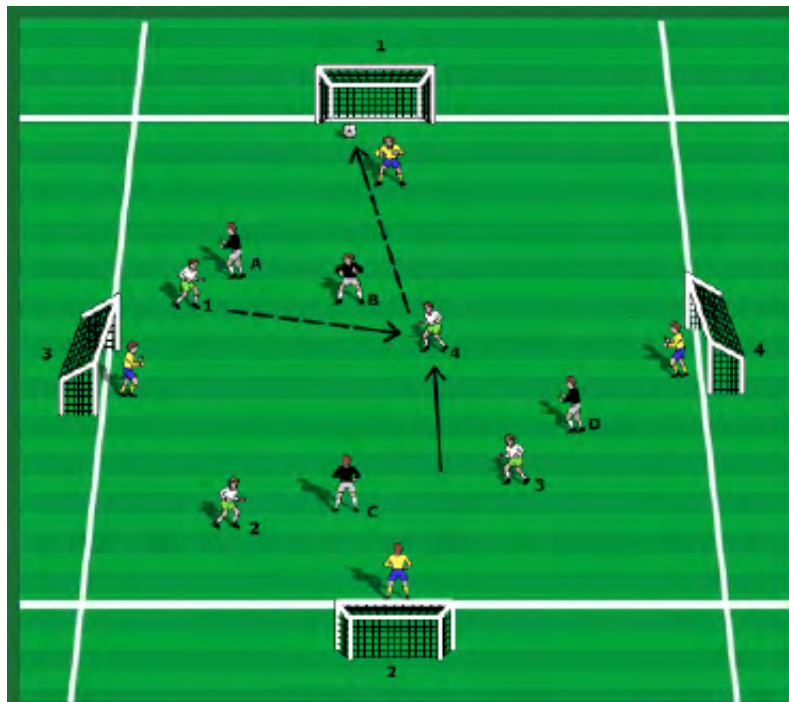
We are looking to include all the main coaching points in this awareness session. Call “switch” as they are playing so they attack the opposite two goals. We are developing



quick thinking, decision-makers. Ultimately have a competitive game between the two teams using the various rules and conditions above.

### Coaching Points:

1. Two directions to attack so quick decisions needed as to which one to go in
2. Awareness of space in front and behind (if the player needs to change the direction of attack)
3. Quick transition having scored in one goal now needing to change direction to score in the other goal
4. On gaining possession there is a choice of going to either goal so quick decisions on which one to attack.



**Progression:** Have two games going at the same time but across each other so players have to be aware of their team mate's positions, their opponent's positions and also the positions of the other two team's players, helps their peripheral vision development. It can be two 2 v 2 games here.

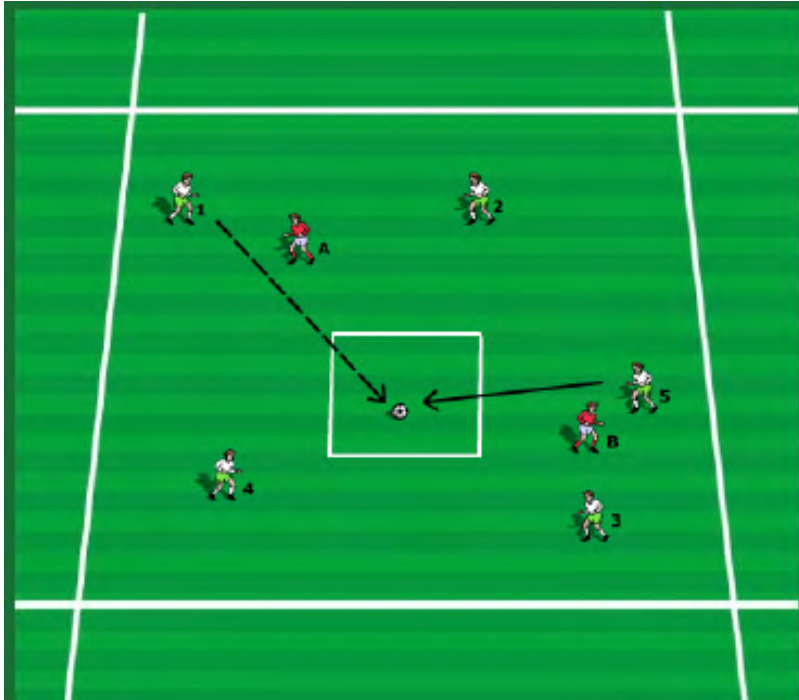


It can be two games then, where (A) and (B) are against (C) and (D) attacking both goals 1 and 2 and players (1) and (2) playing against (3) and (4), attacking goals 3 and 4.

Or have each team attack one goal only, though they have to be opposite each other.

Players need to be able to identify where their teammate is to support them, where their immediate opponents are, and also where the players on the other two teams are so they do not get in the way; this is a great way to develop peripheral vision and ensure players play with their heads up always looking to see where players and space are.

## Game 26: 5 v 2



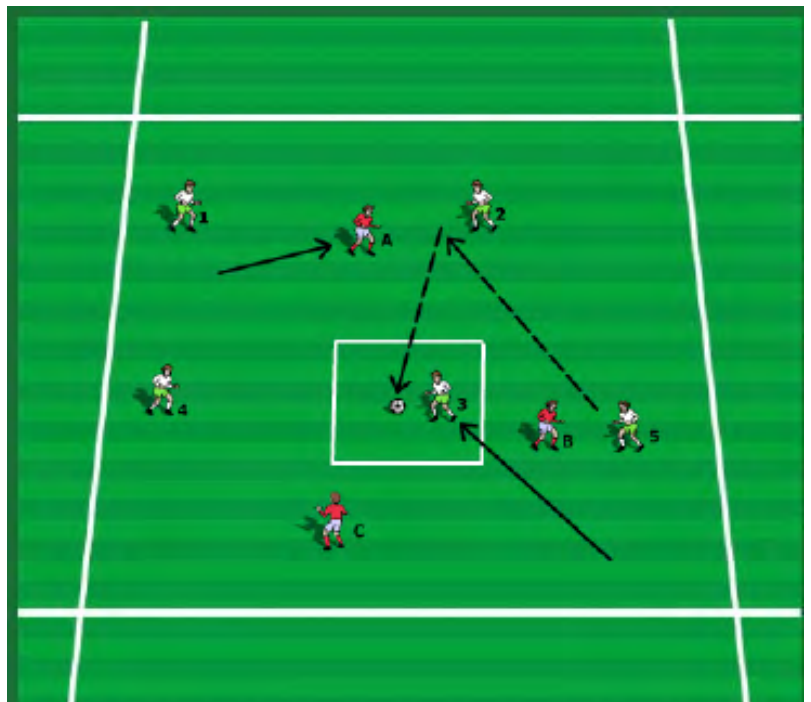
Keep away, with a 5 v 2 overload and a safe zone to run into. Timing of the pass, pace and accuracy of the pass, timing of the run to arrive as the ball arrives; and not before or after.

Any Off the ball players can arrive in the square to receive the ball (can be a circle, anything you like)

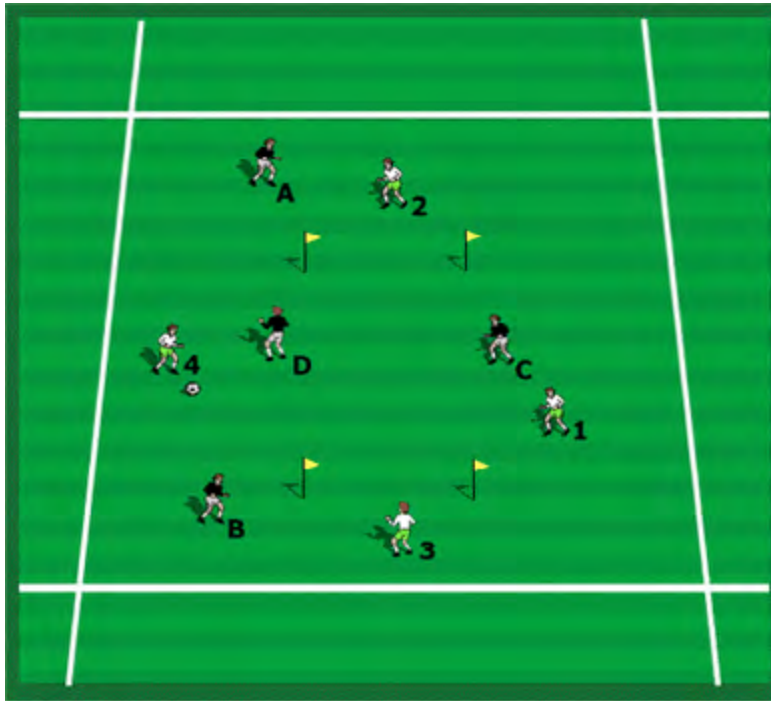
Receive the ball; play out of the safe zone, move out of the safe zone.

This is slightly more competitive with an extra defender in now.

Same principles apply.



## Game 27: A Small Sided Conditioning Game



Divide the players into 4 v 4 small sided game situations so everyone is working. The goals are inside the field of play now so players can work behind the goals and still be in the game. The area can be 40 by 30 yards in size to begin.

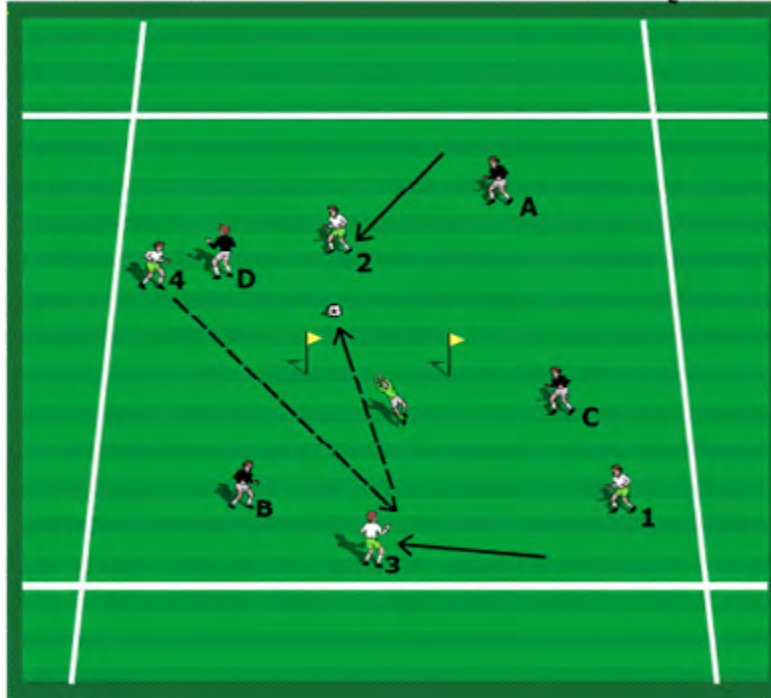
Both teams can score through both goals alternatively.

This helps the ball stay in play longer as to score normally if the game is on an open field for example, if it only cones they are scoring through the game stops after the goal has been scored, this way the game is relatively continuous.

Increase the size of the field as the numbers of players increase.

If you want real conditioning to get out of this then make the fields very big so they have a big area to play in and lots of ground to cover.

You can use keepers also.



One goal only to score through either side.

You can use a keeper for this who will get lots of practice with both teams shooting at them.

Players can pass from one side of the goal to the other side to try to catch out the other team but also the keeper.

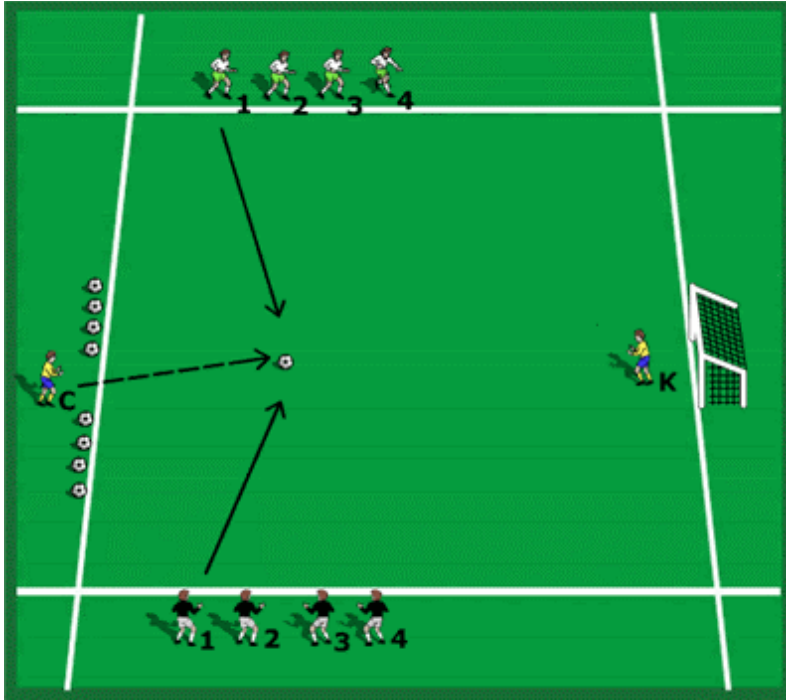
Here (3) moves and get in a position to receive a pass from (4) to get a shot in. On the other side player (2) anticipates where the shot is going to regain possession after (3) has scored.

Once the keeper catches the ball the ball then goes to the other team.

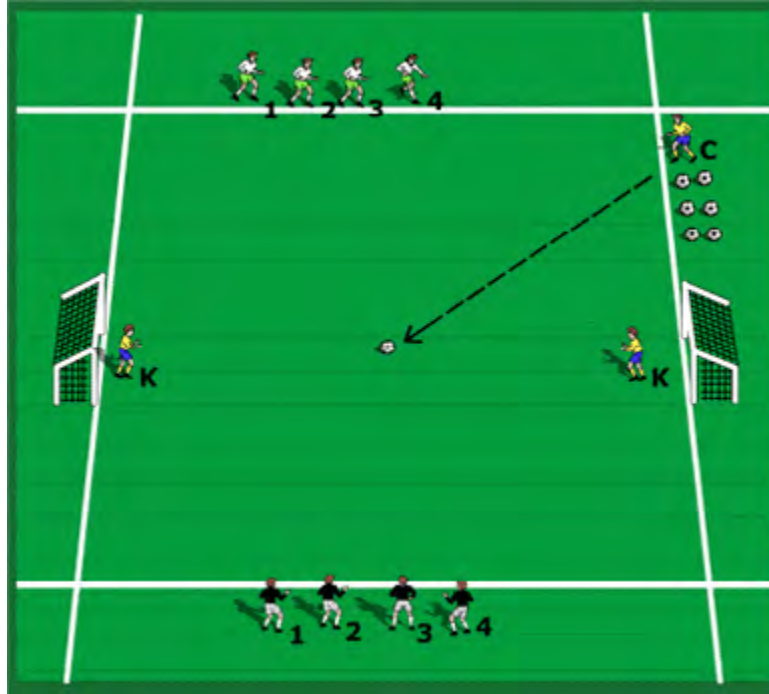
This can be very intensive conditioning work if the players “commit themselves” to doing it properly.

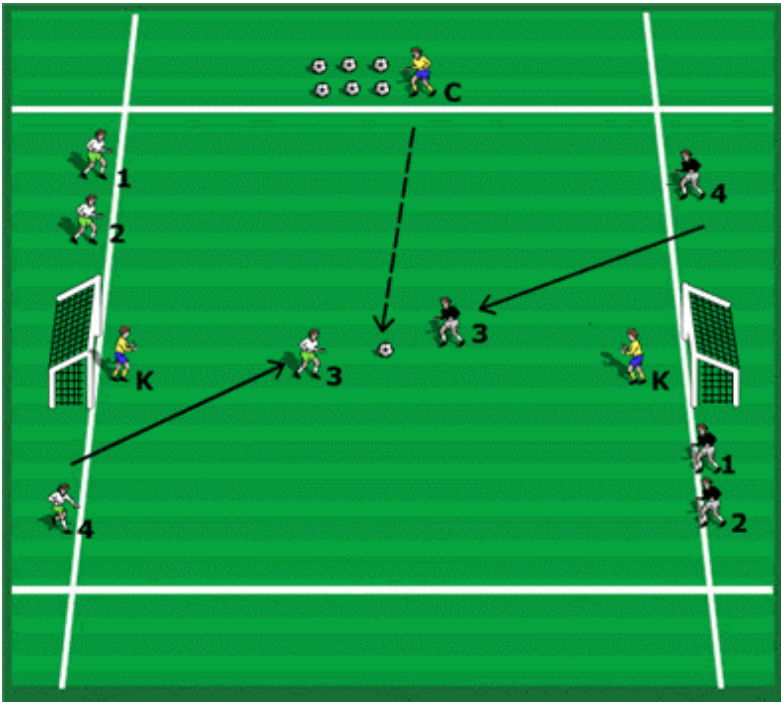
Again the size of area can vary as to the amount of work you want the players to perform.

## Game 28: Small Sided Numbers Shooting Game



Warm Up: As always with a ball each and stretching.





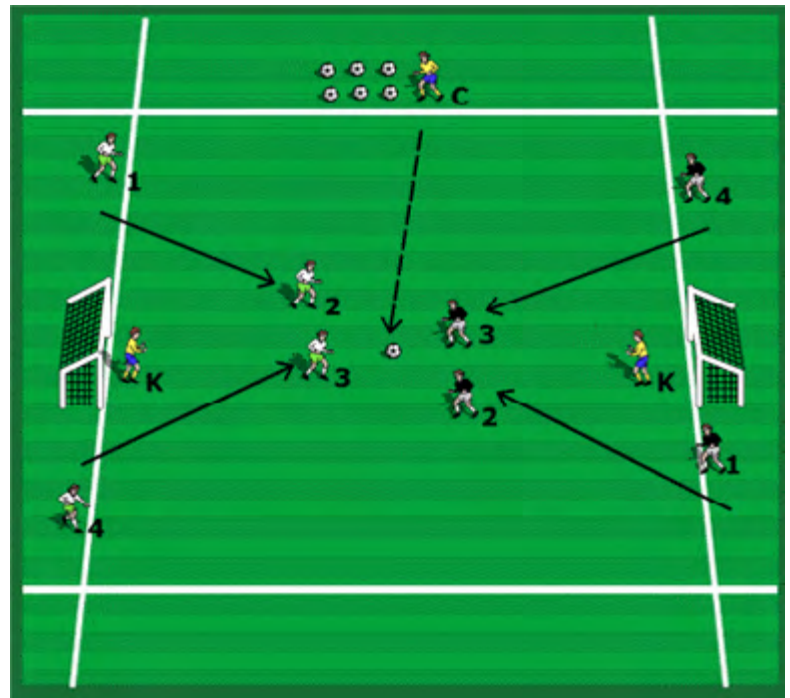
Number players off and have a competitive game with two teams. Calling numbers out to create 1 v 1's, 2 v 2's, 3 v 3's etc.

Make it competitive by keeping score, the coach can be the keeper and serve the ball calling the number (have plenty of balls handy so it's fairly continuous).

Ensure players keep behind each line to start.

If you have two coaches use both goals and have each team attacking a different goal as in a game.

You can have a couple of games such as the first team to score five goals is the winner.



Build the exercise eventually into a 4 v 4 games if that is the numbers of players you are working with.

## Touches On The Ball: A Comparison Between 11 v 11 And 4 v 4

We had an idea to compare how many touches on the ball a player has in an eleven a side game as opposed to a four a side game. We recorded touches on the ball of an average player and these are the results he came up with:

- 11 v 11 friendly games, 22 touches in 60 minutes, (0.37 touches on the ball per minute).
- 4 v 4 games (Wings), 205 touches in 48 minutes, (projected 60 minutes = 256) / (4.3 touches on the ball per minute)
- 4 v 4 games (Tonka), 217 touches in 48 minutes, (projected 60 minutes = 271) / (4.5 touches on the ball per minute)

As regards to the Tonka results the player involved touched the ball 12.31 more times in the 4 v 4 games over the same time period as in the 11 v 11 game.

The reason to implement small- sided games into the program was to increase the time and amount of touches a player had on the ball and these results clearly back this up. It would be useful if other coaches tried the same experiment and showed the results to anyone who just simply doesn't understand why we do it and why it is important.

I have heard it said by someone who falls into the above category that yes they get more touches on the ball but they aren't all quality touches? Of course they aren't all quality touches because if every touch was a quality touch then our players would all be great players now with nothing to learn and we know it doesn't work like that even the best players in the world have non – quality touches on the ball. Let's say for arguments sake 50% of touches were "Quality" touches, then in the 11 a side game that player got 11 quality touches and in the 4 a side games the same player got 135 quality touches. Players learn from doing it right but also from doing it wrong.

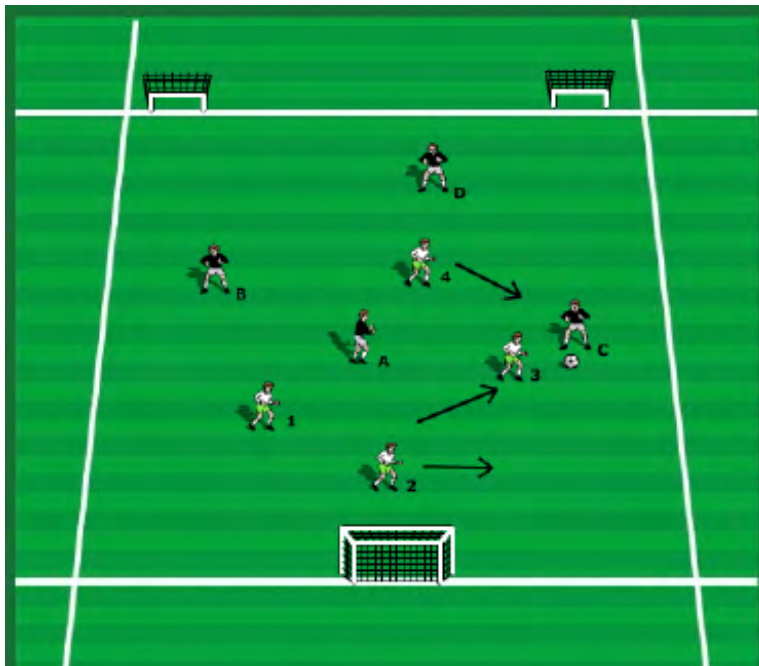
I believe players must make mistakes to help them learn how to do things correctly as well as learning from doing it correctly in the first place so from the 135 non - quality touches they will have gained valuable experience of what not to do e.g. a first touch was bad and the ball went to the opposition so next time that player concentrates on making a good first touch and so on. In comparison in the 11 a side game the same player hardly touched the ball making only 11 quality touches but also only 11 non – quality touches meaning very little opportunity to learn from quality work and non – quality work.

My experience in the game has taught me this is an important way to help players develop their technique and improve their game and Toms' results act as confirmation of this. I am sure this presentation goes some way to show how important it is to continue to use this type of developmental work as a part of our overall coaching program.



# DEFENDING SMALL SIDED GAMES

## Game 29: A Defending Game Teaching The Players To Show The Opponent One Way Or The Other



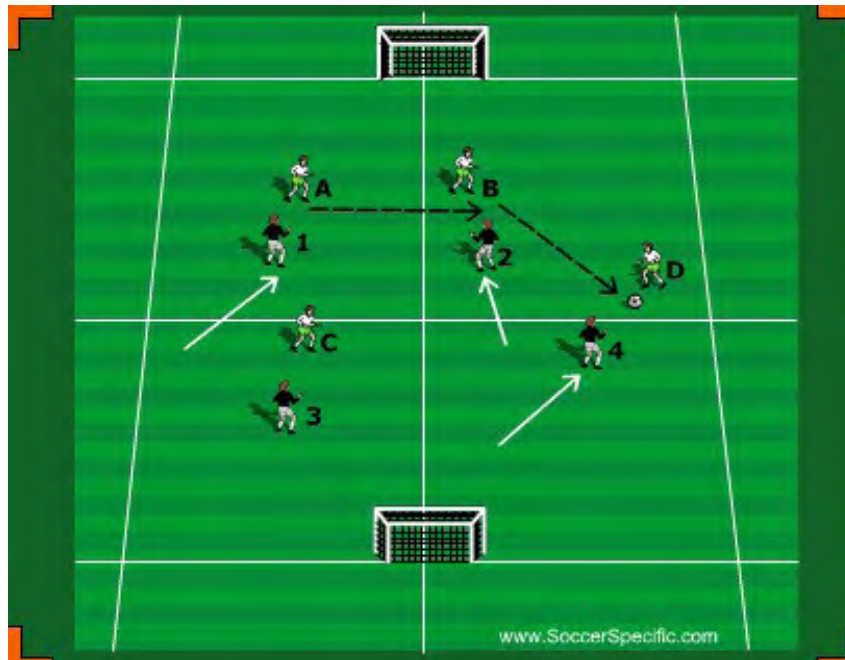
Here we have different set ups for goals, using two wide small goal on one side of the field and one bigger goal centrally on the other side. Defenders need to force players away from the goals so those defending the wide goals force the player on the ball inside, those defending the big goal force the players outside.

These conditions plant the seed in the Players' minds and make it easier for decision making. If a player behind coaches the pressing player advising them "inside" or "outside" then that is a bonus but do not expect it to happen at these young ages. Just to get the pressing player showing them one way or the other (through the set-up of the goals) is good enough for now.

Rotate the teams so both sets of players get the chance to show inside and outside. Here the team defending the big central goal forces the opponents "outside" and away from the goal; the team defending the two small wide goals forces the opponents "inside" and away from the two goals and towards the middle of the field between them.

The goals and field set up determine the condition and make it easier for the players to learn how to show a player one way or the other, from a defensive perspective. Conditioning like this can be a great help to players making sure the theme you are working on actually happens on a consistent basis due to the condition set.

## Game 30: Quick Pressing Game



This game is an excellent example of how a small change to the structure of a standard game changes the game to allow a specific skill or topic you want to work on. You don't need to say anything; the explanation is in the game.

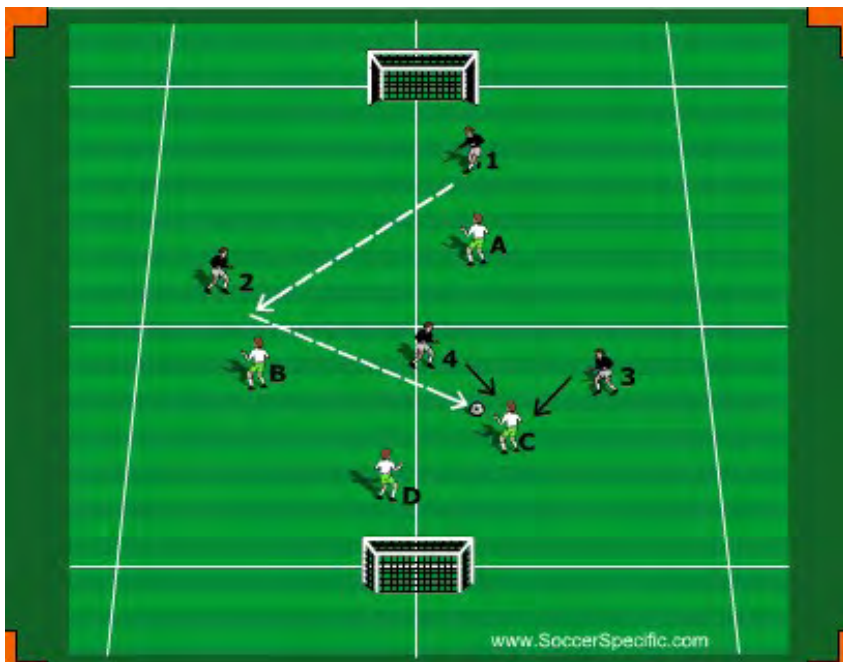
### Organization:

- Age Group U10s to adults
- Pitch sizes 30/40 x 20– or at the discretion of the coach
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes 4-6 players
- Bibs optional
- Goals – full size adult goals or made with cones

### Progression:

This is a standard small sided game but with big goals and no keepers. Players can score from anywhere on the pitch. It is very easy to score a goal in this game, so players quickly understand they have to put pressure on the ball and not allow players to shoot. They must close quickly. Players need to concentrate as a poor defensive position will ultimately lead to conceding a goal. Alternatively you can add a keeper in each goal and the players have to JUST pass the ball to the opposing keeper to score.

## Game 31: The 6 Second Transition Game



### Organization:

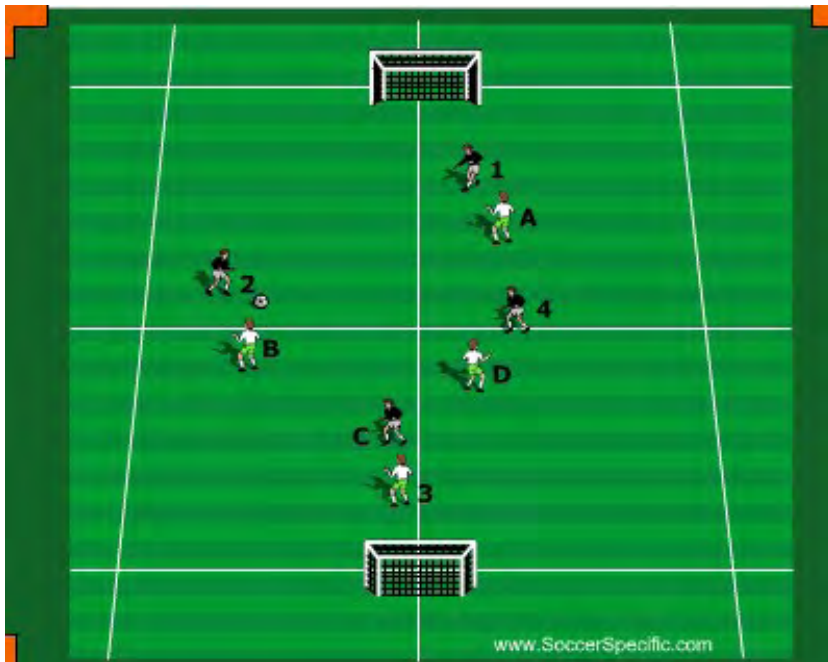
- Age Group U12s to adults
- Pitch sizes 30/40 x 20 – or at the discretion of the coach
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes – 4-6
- Bibs optional
- Goals – 5 a side or mini soccer goals

Teams are at their most vulnerable in terms of losing the ball, in the first few seconds after gaining possession. It is this transition period that we are looking at, both in terms of winning the ball back quickly and then keeping it. The key is the first six seconds after losing the ball. This period is when the opposition has not yet switched from defensive to possession mode. The other key period is those six seconds after you have won the ball back and the need to maintain possession during that critical period when your team is changing shape and finding space (going wide and deep).

**Progression:** In this game when a team loses possession they have 6 seconds to win the ball back (the coach counts this out).

If they win it back in that time they are awarded a point (a goal). The idea is to double team and work frantically to get the ball back in the allotted time frame. If they fail to achieve this they must then go to the center and make sure they close all the gaps and limit the space for the opposition. If they do win the ball back within 6 seconds, if they are high up the pitch they must look for an immediate goal scoring opportunity. If they are in a more crowded midfield area they must look for an 'outman' who can get hold of the ball and maintain possession through the crucial 6 second period. This may well be a sideways pass or a backwards pass to a player in plenty of space. In the excellent book by Patrick Barclay, 'Mourinho, Anatomy of a Winner', Jose talks about doing a lot of work on 'keep ball'. This was based on Mourinho's theory of possession for possession's sake. All teams need rest periods, and it is much better to do this when your team has possession. Other than the 6 second condition the rest of the game is a standard small sided game. Goals can also be scored in the normal way.

## Game 32: The Man-Marking Game



### Organization:

- Pitch sizes 40 x 20 –or at the discretion of the coach
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes 4-6 players (+ keepers)
- Bibs optional
- Goals – 5 a side or mini soccer goals

### Organization Progression:

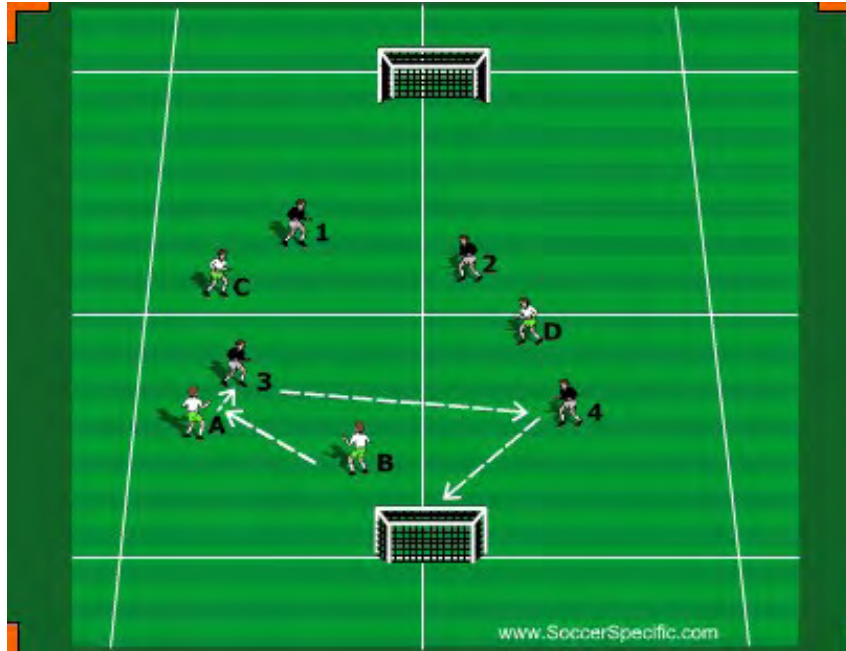
I restrict this game to the older age groups as it is exhausting, but rewarding all the same. Most teams play a zonal game these days when defending. But it is a useful exercising in keeping with your man and tracking back.

### Progression:

You will need to have equal numbers in this game. The players are all put in pairs, one half of the pair from each time. That is your marker for the game and vice versa. No one else is allowed to tackle you, other than the selected player from the other team. So if you are up the other end of the pitch to your marker and your team loses possession you need to work hard to get back. At the coach's discretion a player can hold up a player, but not tackle. For the team in possession you must use all the skills and trickery you can muster to try and lose your man marker. To make it more fun and also more competitive we have established forfeits for Players whose partner on the opposite team has been allowed to score a goal or goals. This could mean of course a number of players earning forfeits.

An easy one is if your player scores then you must do 5 pushups.

## Game 33: Pressing Game



### Organization:

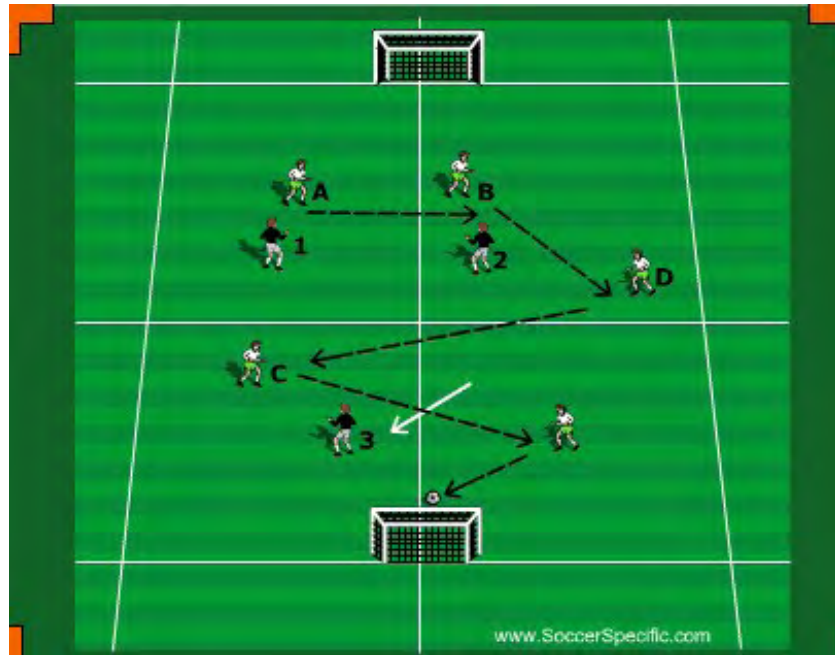
- Pitch Size 40 x 20 – or at the discretion of the coach, but basically a standard 4 v 4 pitch, with a half way line marking. (You can use two traffic cones at each side of the pitch)
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes – 4-6 players
- Bibs optional
- Goals – 5 a side or mini soccer goals

### Progression:

The game is played as a standard small sided game with one condition. If a team wins the ball in the oppositions half and then goes on to score before the ball has left that half, they are awarded two goals. A goal scored any other way counts as just one goal.

Very popular with the players and evokes good team spirit. The attacking team needs to work as a unit and both press and close down defenders.

## Game 34: One Touch Pass And Movement Game



“A good player with the ball should have the vision to spot three options.”

### Organization:

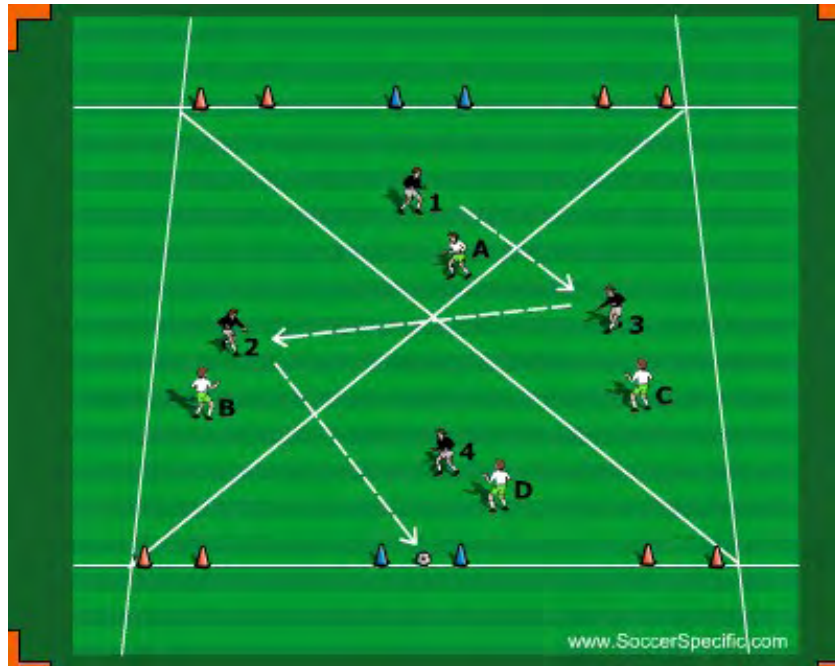
- Pitch sizes 40 x 20– or at the discretion of the coach
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes (one team of three and another team of 5)
- Bibs optional
- Goals – standard 5 a side or mini soccer goals

### Progression:

You can play around with the numbers for this game but a good ratio is 3 to 5. The three players have as many touches as they like, while the five players are restricted to one touch only. If players are struggling with this go to two touch only. The team of five has to move as soon as they have passed the ball into space.

Change the teams so everyone has a go at playing in the team restricted to one touch only.

## Game 35: Passing And Movement Game



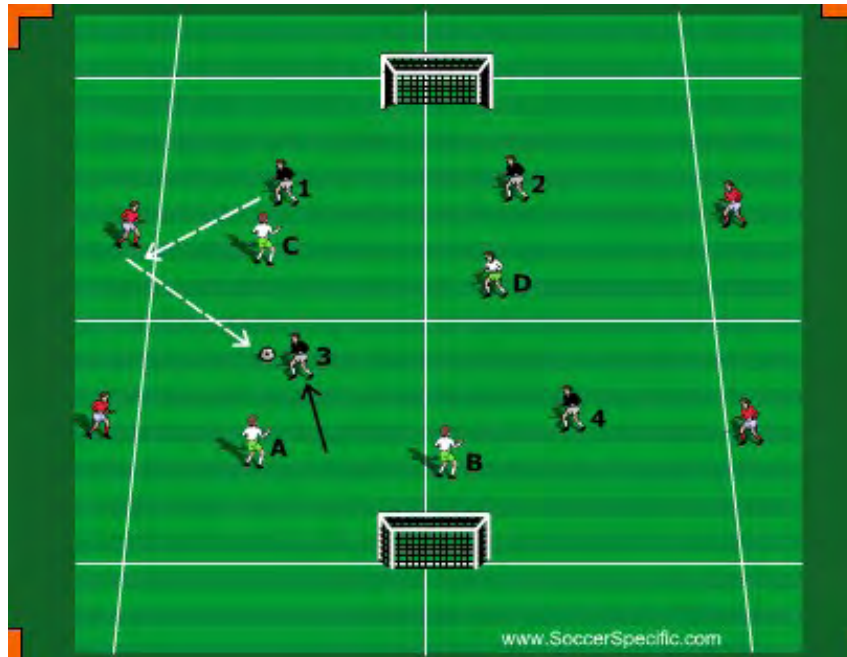
### Organization:

- Pitch sizes 40 x 20 – or at the discretion of the coach. The pitch is divided with cones to make four triangles. From above it is a giant X.
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes – 4 (no keeper)
- Bibs optional
- Goals – 3 small goals of about a meter made with traffic cones, at both ends

### Progression:

The players can only pass the ball once in a triangle; therefore they need to move to another triangle if they want to receive the ball. They score one point for a two touch finish (controlling the ball then finishing) and two points for a one touch finish. The game is similar to the Liverpool, pass and move game with the added advantage that the pitch lay out designates where a player can move too.

## Game 36: The Arsenal Game



This game was based on how you would structure a small sided game in the style that the present Arsenal side would play. Their play is made up of lots of quick short passing with plenty of movement off the ball. They use give and goes a lot (wall passes) which I have highlighted in the game.

### Organization:

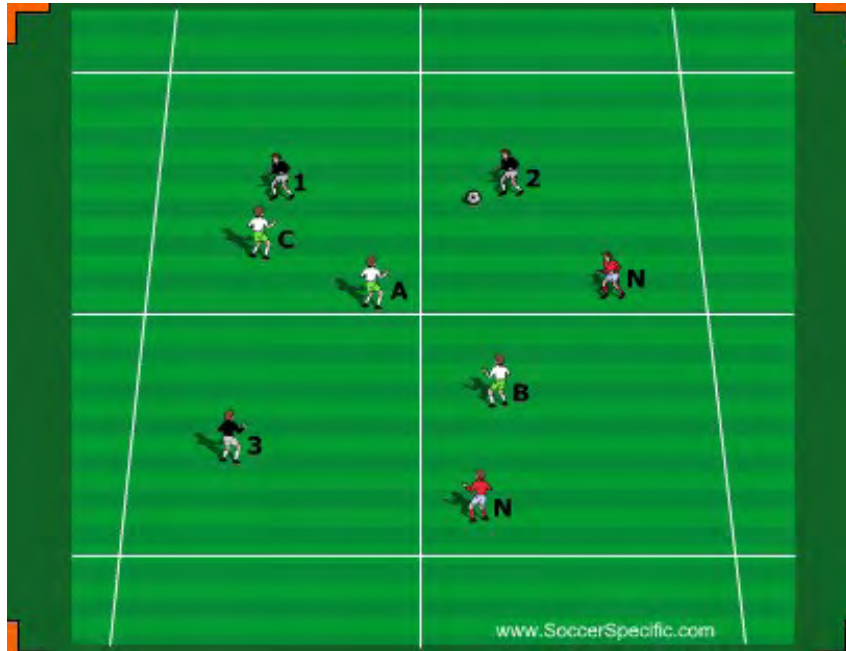
- Pitch size – 40 x 20 or at the discretion of the coach, but basically a standard 4 v 4 pitch
- Number of teams – 3
- Team sizes 4 players
- Bibs optional
- Goals – 5 a side or mini soccer goals

### Progression:

I play this game as a 4 v 4 with keepers. I also have four additional players, two on each side (who are neutral and play with the team in possession). The game is a standard 4 v 4 game, except that the neutral players on each side can be used. The neutral players have one touch only (younger players and less technical players may require two touches) and play with the team that have possession. They take any throw-ins or kick-ins from their side. Having the neutral players encourages plenty of give and goes. The players should also be encouraged to play at a fast tempo. Change the four neutral players (one team) with one of the teams on the pitch every few minutes.



## Game 37: Overload Neutral Player Possession Game



### Organization:

- Pitch size – 30 x 30 or at the discretion of the coach, but basically a standard 4 v 4 pitch
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes 3 players per team plus two neutral players
- Bibs optional
- Goals – No goals

### Progression:

3 v 3 plus 2 overload pure possession game.

Neutral players have only 2 touches / 1 touch.

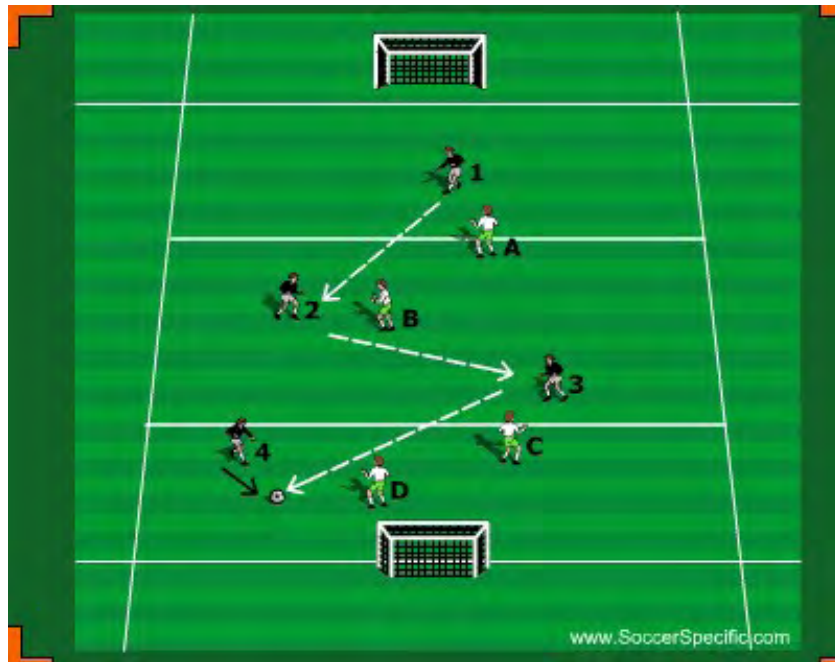
Scoring: 4 consecutive passes / a successful one touch pass (a goal)

Play:

- a) Free
- b) 3 touch
- c) 2 touch
- d) 1 touch only when it is on to do so otherwise 2 touches



## Game 40: Developing Play Through The Team Small Sided Game



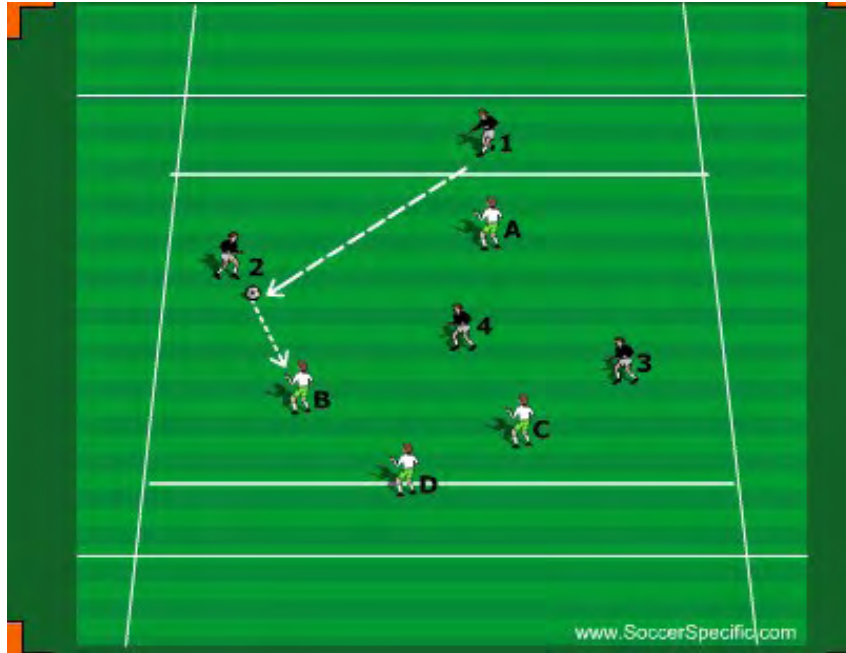
### Organization:

- Pitch sizes 40 x 20 – or at the discretion of the coach, but with a marked off midfield zone of approximately 20 yards
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes 4v4 (+ optional neutral player)
- Bibs optional
- Goals – 5 a side or mini soccer goals

### Progression:

A striker and defender from each team are in the end zones. The middle zone is 2v2 or 3v2 if you use a neutral player. When the ball enters the midfield zone all the players must touch the ball before it can be played in to the last third. The player that is the last person to touch the ball in the midfield zone can either pass it to the attacker or dribble the ball into the area and make a 2v1 situation. The opposition midfield players can't track him.

## Game 41: Dribbling Game



The art of dribbling the ball is fast becoming a dying art as teams pass the ball like robots, scared to death of making a mistake. With space at a premium in the modern game, dribbling and running with the ball can open up space and terrorize defenses. The game is conditioned so that you can only dribble the ball in two thirds of the pitch. The game is very tiring and should be kept to 5-10 minute games.

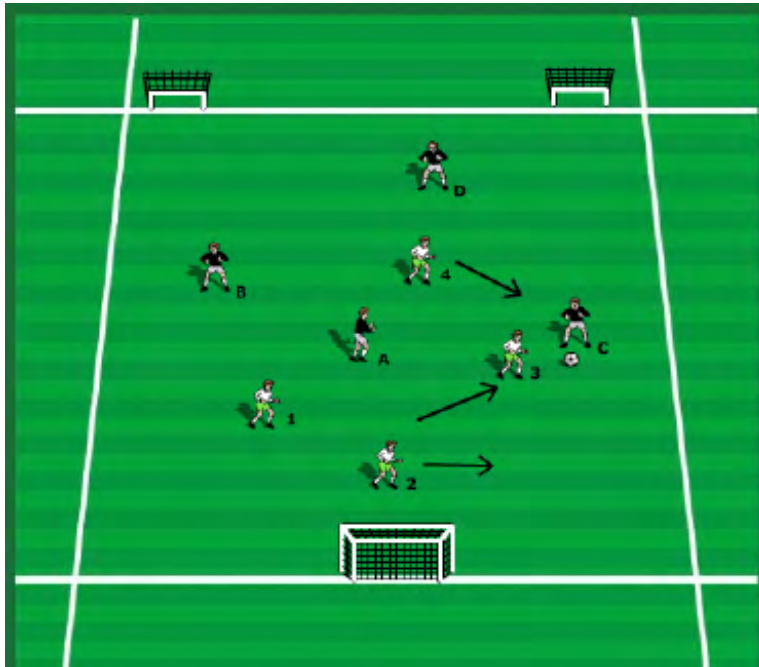
### Organization:

- Age Group – U12s to adults
- Pitch Size 40 x 20– at the discretion of the coach, but basically a standard 4 v 4 pitch, this can however be played in either portrait or landscape format.
- Markers are placed at either end of the pitch to indicate an area of about 10 yards.
- Number of teams – 2
- Team sizes – 4 players
- Bibs optional

### Progression:

Either a line across the pitch or cones at the side indicating an end line. The same as line soccer except that there is a 10 yard area in front of each goal where the defending team can pass the ball. In all other areas players can only dribble the ball. Team mates are allowed to do a 'take over'.

## SMALL SIDED GAMES: 6 V 6 DEVELOPMENT

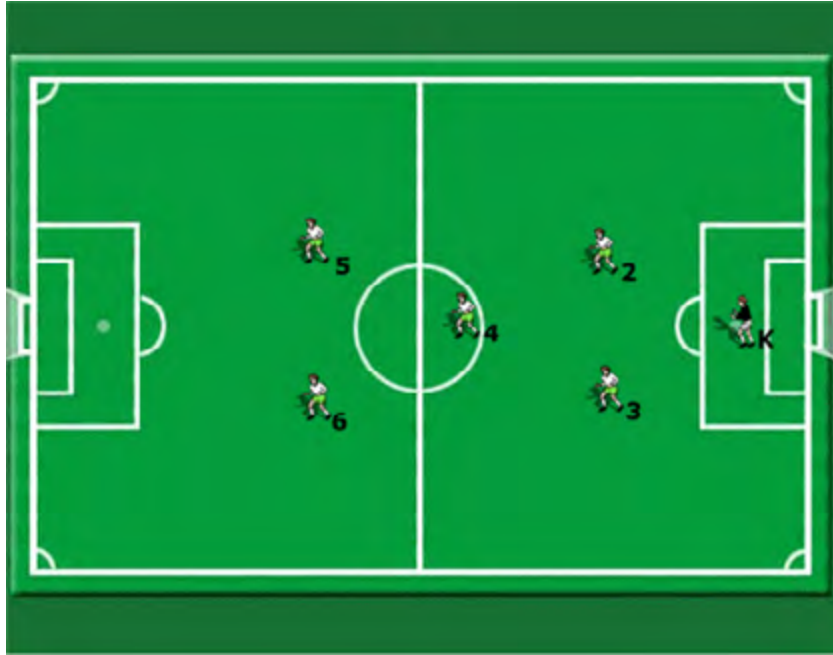


The above set up is a 6 v 6 (2-1-2) with the field divided up into thirds for easier points of reference on the field; defending, midfield and attacking thirds.

Play offside from the edge of the defending third to keep the game realistic though you could start without this condition to help the players ease into the session then use it as a progression to move onto next.

Each stage of the session can be described as a progression or development from the last one and you can clearly list this in your session plan to help you.

## Game 42: Developing 6 v 6 Team Shape With One Word Commands

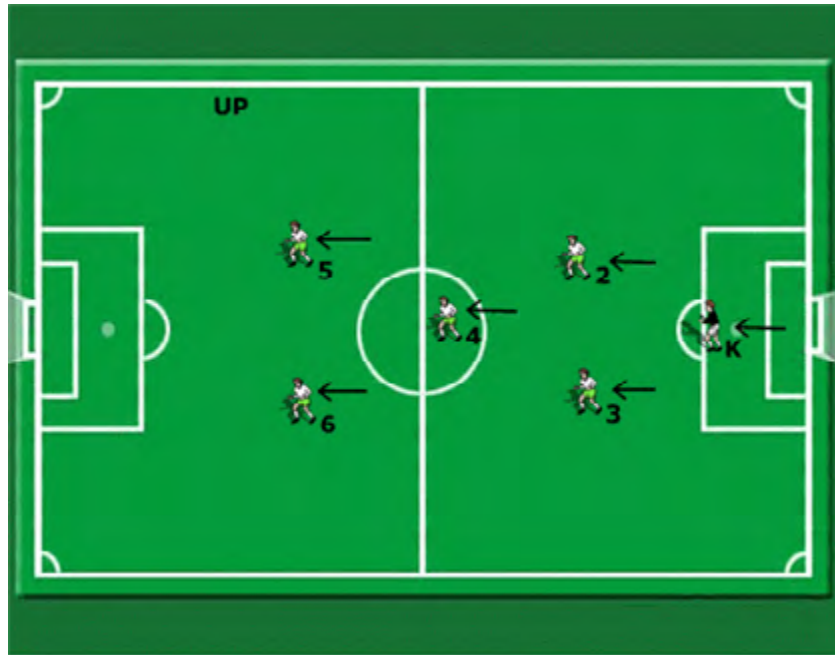


Three units of players working together as a team, moving around the field maintaining a shape. The difference between defensive and attacking shape is just the spacing between players and between units. Defensive shape is short and tight, attacking shape is wide and long. To help the players when you do this initially keep the same spacing between players and units as they move around the field to get the concept across. As they get better you can move on to increasing the spacing such as when we get possession of the ball and we need to have the players go wider and longer in their spacing between each other.

Set the players up in a shape and ask them to move around the field together maintaining the same spacing between each other. On command (sit) they sit down where they are. Check their shape. Have words to move them again. Words can be UP (up to 5 yards forward), DROP, SLIDE (moving to the side) OUT (a sprint, go at a quick pace together keeping the shape), between each word say sit and check positions again.

### **Progression:**

They have the ball and pass it back towards their own goal for example, or we have it and are moving it forward either with a pass or a player running with it.

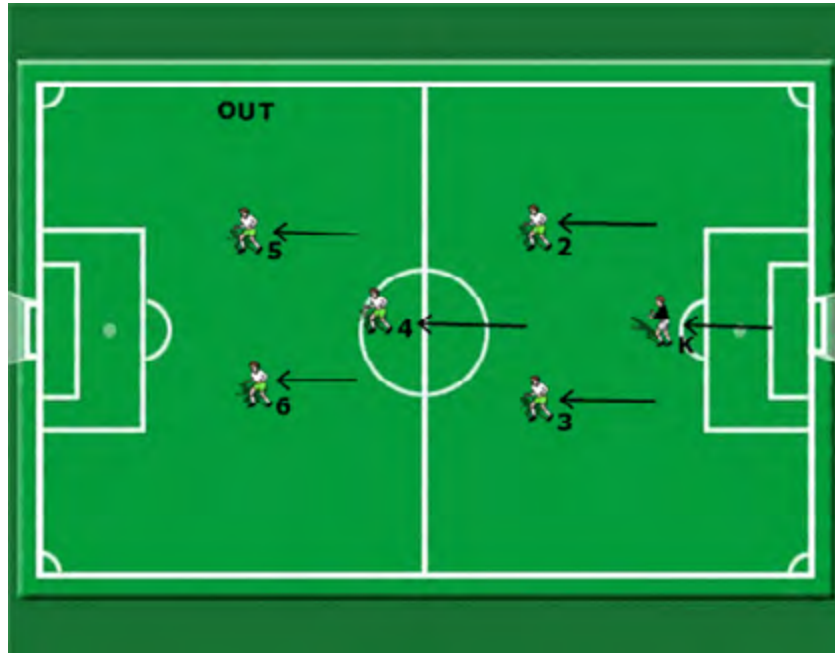


## UP

Here in the game the players move up the field only up to maybe five yards in distance, edging out, waiting to see if we win the ball then they can apply the OUT call. It can also be when we have the ball and have passed it forward or run forward with it and kept possession, we naturally move up as a team to support the player who has the ball especially if it is a very forward player it has been passed to or one who has run forward with it.

### Game Situation:

We have the ball and have played it forward into the attacking third for example and kept possession. It can be a big movement forward of the team or maybe the keeper has kicked it long and we need to push out quickly.



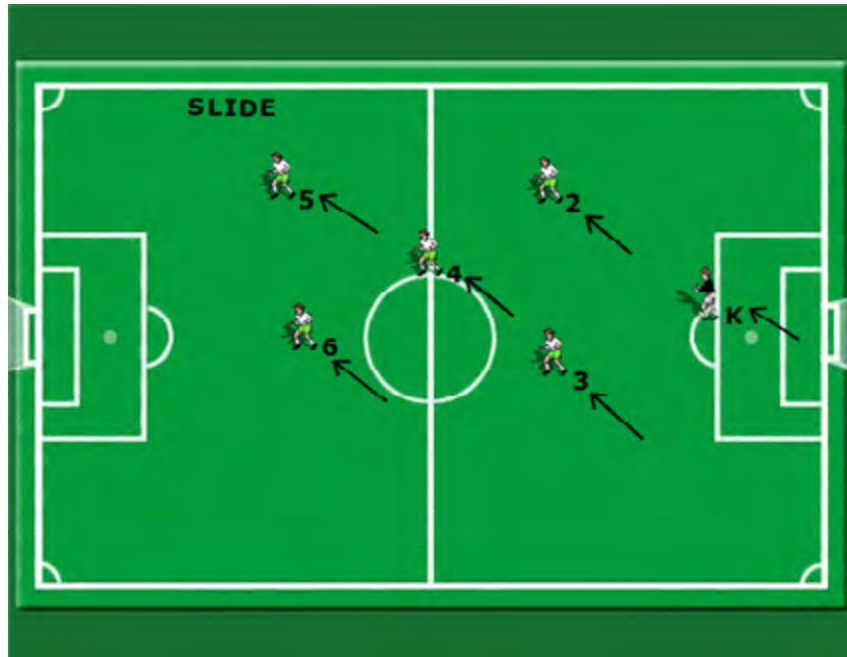
## OUT

The team sprint out together on the OUT word until you say sit or stop, they then stop moving and sit down and you assess their spacing between players and between the three units. As they get good at this, speed up the commands until they are moving around the field quickly and efficiently with correct spacing. Eventually you can say the different words and all they do is stand still not sit on the stop command so you can move them around the field at a faster pace working the transitions.

### Game Situation:

Here the opposition have passed the ball into a very wide area and we all move across the field.





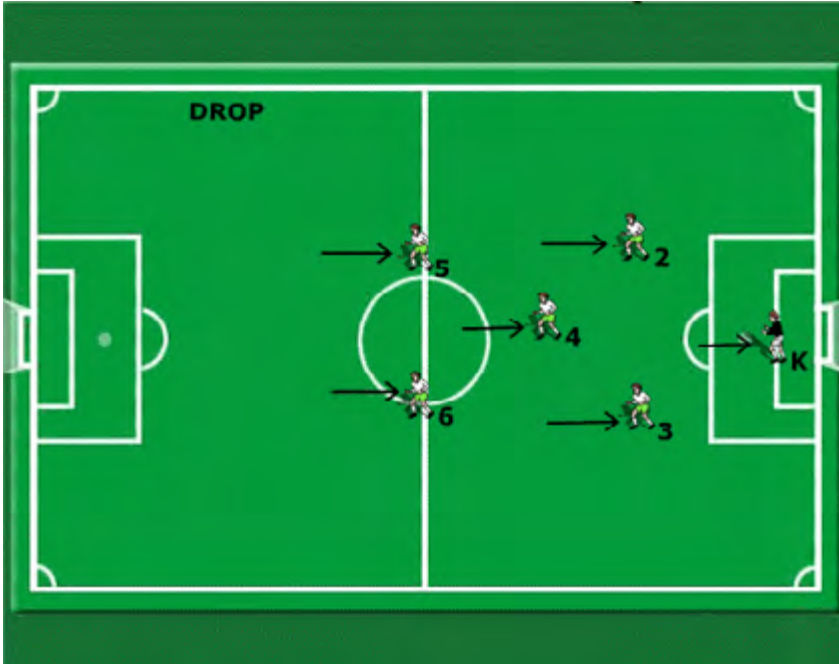
## **SLIDE**

Moving across the field, don't take it literally at 90 degrees it could be diagonally in a game but for our practice you could have them moving across the field like this just to get the idea across. In the game the ball may have been passed wide in the opponent's possession and we move across the field as a team to close down all the spaces around the ball to try to win it back.

### **Game Situation:**

They have the ball and are moving forward with it, maybe in a wide area.

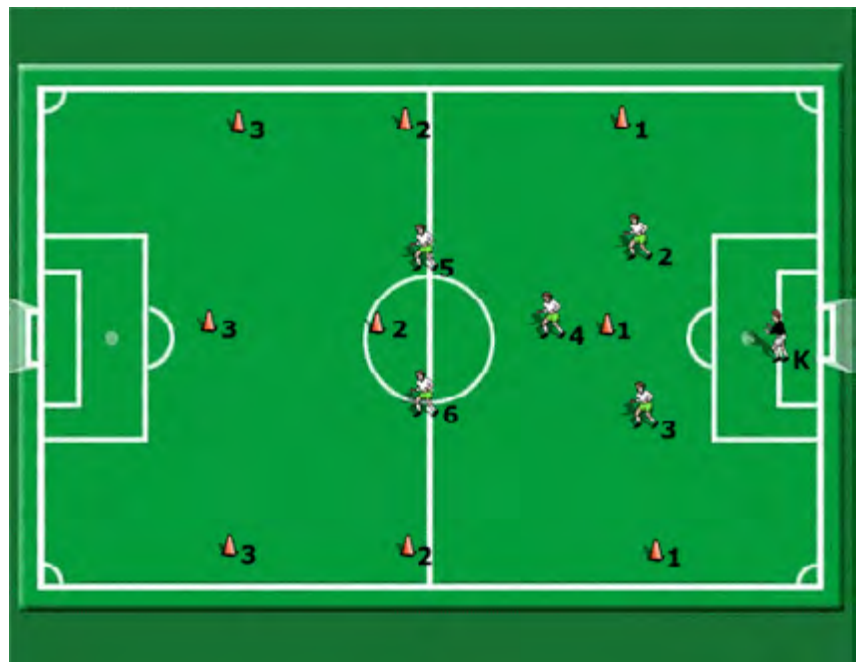
## DROP



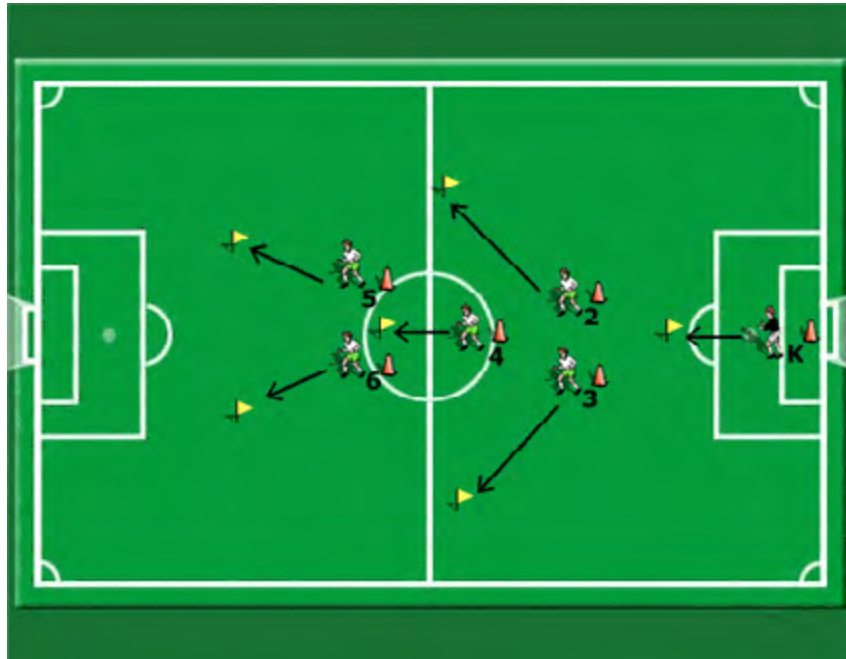
Here the team drops back together recovering back to the goal. Again it isn't all black and white here as to when this happens but a situation could be when they have the ball and are moving forward and there is no pressure on the ball so the player on it can pass it forward and maybe in behind our back players. To avoid this we drop back as a team behind the ball. Also we may drop deeper at the back to create space for ourselves to receive a pass back from a team mate when we have possession.

Coach calls the cone the team have to move towards, the cone represents a player in the opposition team with the ball, so the closest player to the cone has to be the 1st pressure player. The rest of the team work off this first player's position.

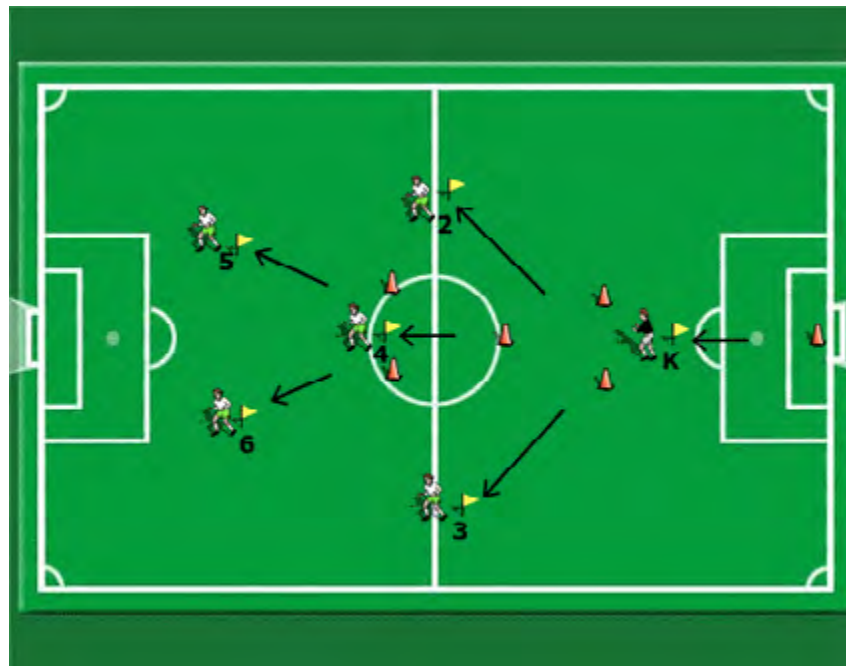
Same principles as the one word commands and here they have a target to work towards.



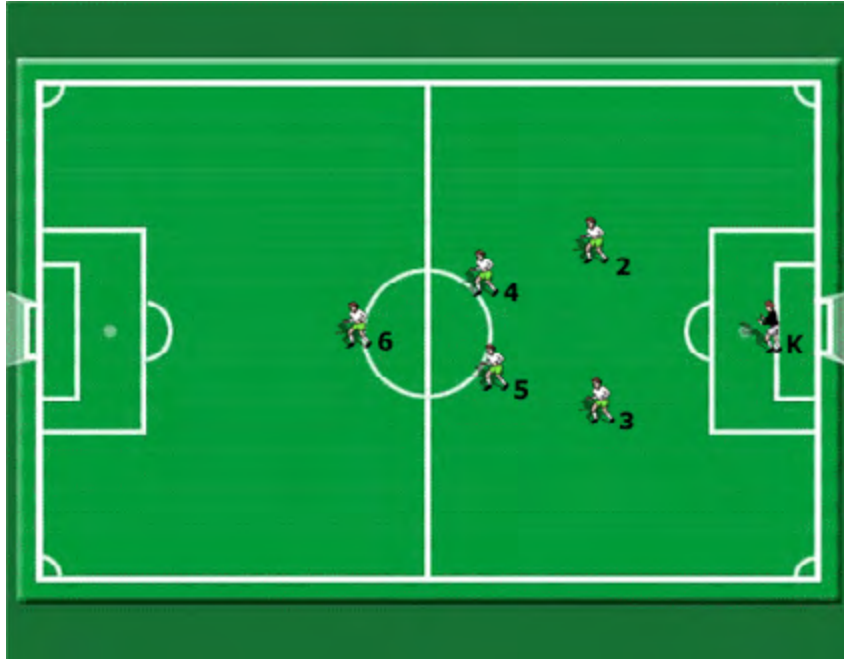
## Game 43: Developing 6 v 6 Team Shape Using Shadow Play



Defending formation - Basic set up, team moves as the ball moves.  
Attacking formation – Basic set up, team moves as the ball moves.



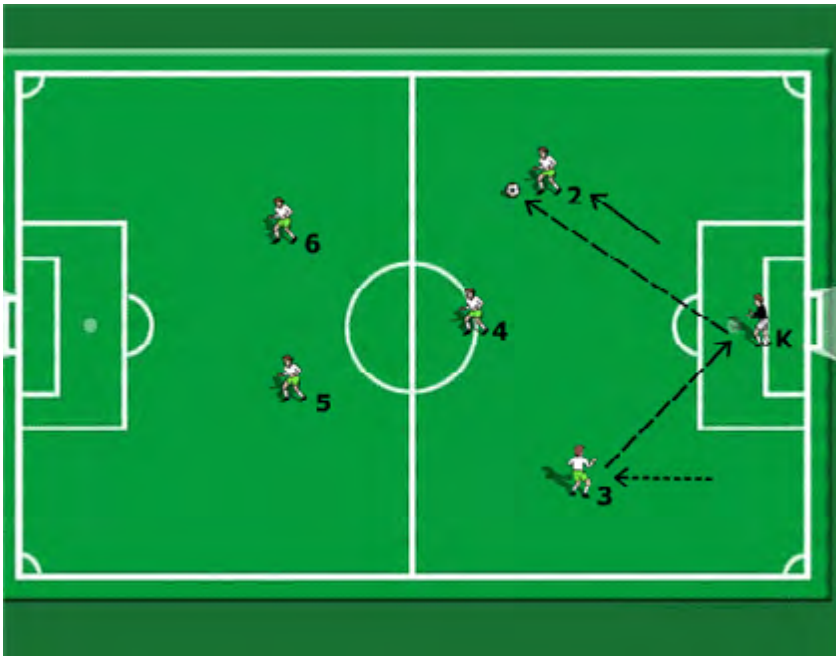
## 2-2-1



Slightly more defensive way to play but more solid in midfield. More defensive formation, for example we are a goal up and the opponents are pressing us well and we are under pressure.

Drop into a 2-2-1 formation to shore up the midfield and rely more on quick breaks when we get possession. Leave your quickest player in the attack as the lone striker or a player who can hold the ball up well (or if he or she can do both even better!).

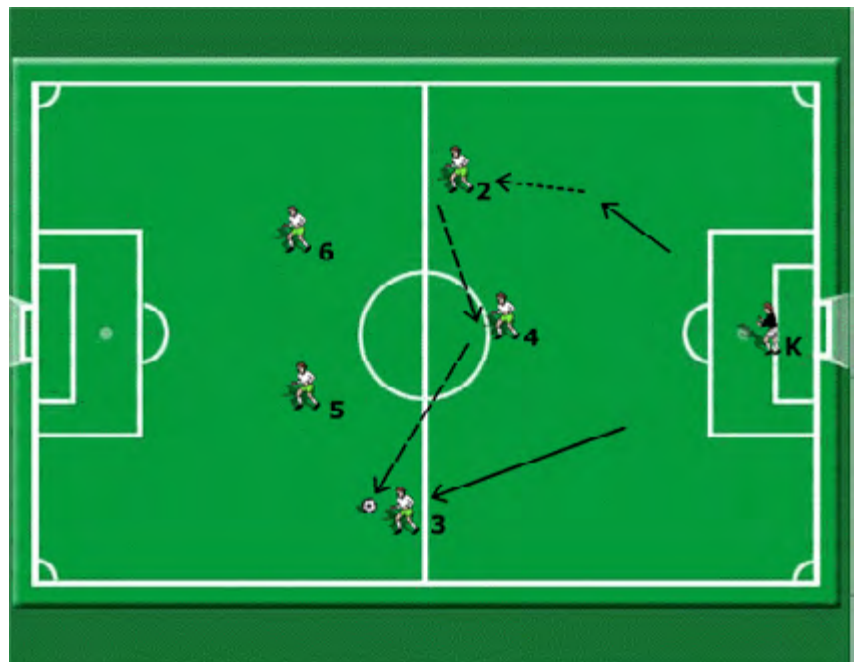
Once we get back into the game and the opponents good spell is over we can revert back to a 2-1-2 depending on how the game is going. At some stage in every game each team will have a “hot” offensive spell; it may be during this hot spell of the opponents that you decide to revert to this set up to take the sting out of their attack.

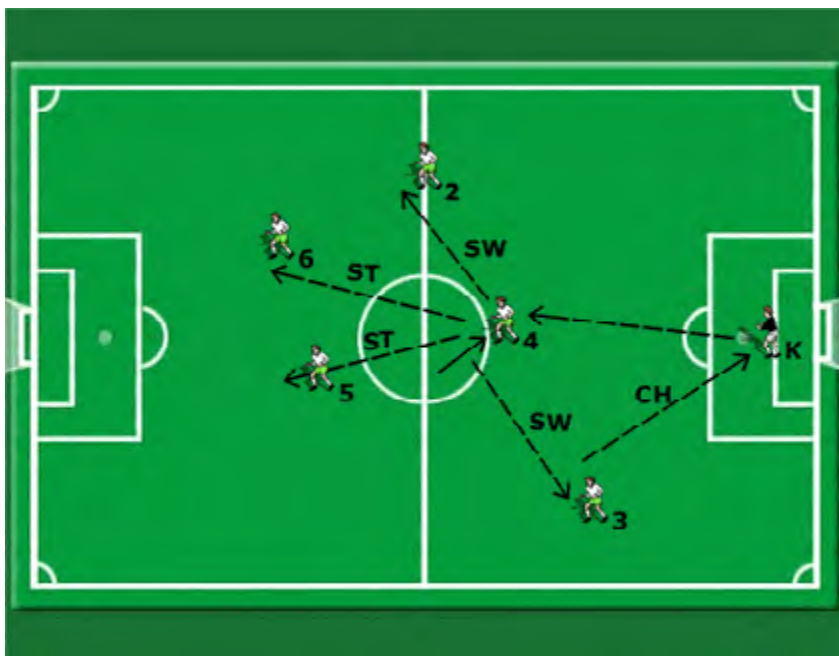


(3) Runs forward with the ball. Call can now be “Check” where the player on the ball makes the change in the direction of the play is through the keeper (or it could be straight from (3) to (2), but is across the defensive line)  
 (2) Breaks as wide as possible to receive the pass from (K) to then attack the space in front.. Keepers need to learn NOW that they are expected to be the sweeper also, so their foot skills need to be good. Perhaps the player on the ball in a game situation has no pass into the strikers or midfield on, so we work on changing the point of attack again.

Here the call is “Switch” and the ball is passed through the midfield (4) to the overlapping player on the other side. This encourages the rotation of defenders becoming attackers.

(3) may get into a crossing position from this run. (4) Will fill in for (3). “Check” for changing direction through the back line, “switch” for changing direction through the midfield line. Here (4) stays at the back to act as cover.



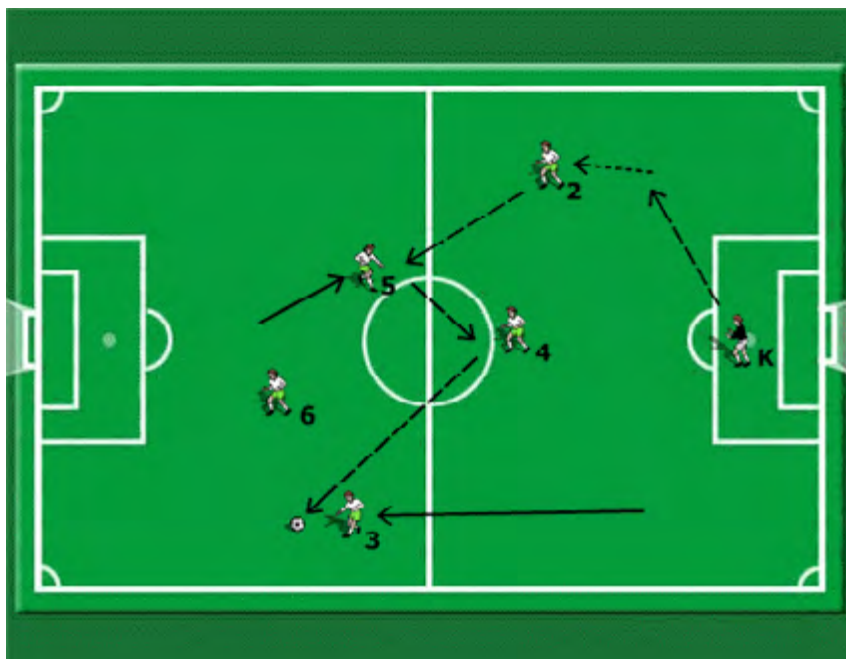


Playing into the midfield now to begin the move, and develops the play from there. A midfielder may drop off their marker in a game to receive to feet so simulate that here. Midfielder receives the ball side on so they can go forward, back or sideways off their first touch.

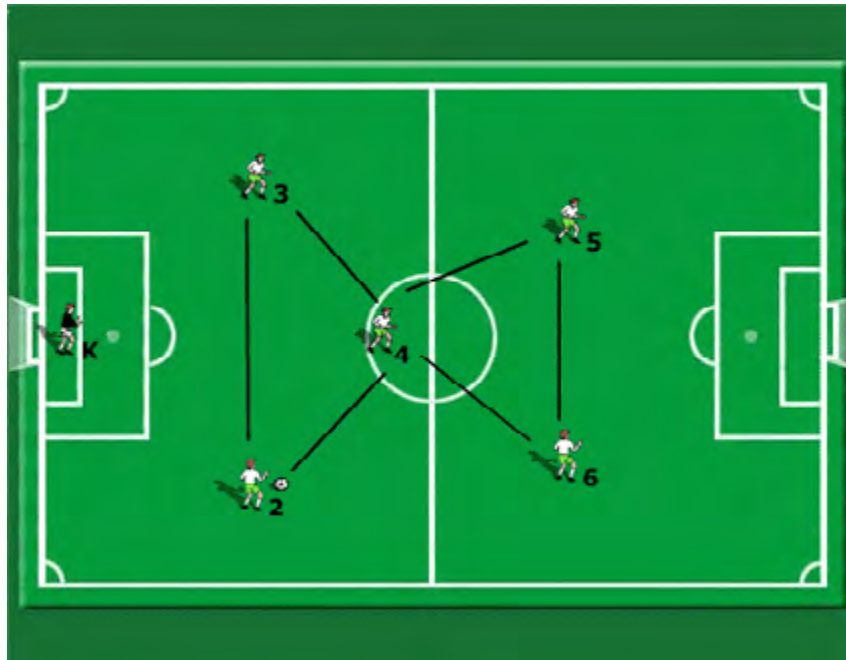
You can now use the switch or check call, or striker, as described in the next slide or just let them react.

Now we are looking to link up with the strikers into feet, the call is “striker”. It can be to the 1st striker to feet or the 2nd striker. Have them play the way they are facing then this can result in passing back into midfield where support is behind, then movement ahead of the ball to play the pass forward again.

It could be here back to (4) and forward to (6), or a forward run from behind to in front of the ball by (3) to receive. Introduce 3 opponents. It is a 6 v 4 overload but the defending team are asked to just jockey the ball not win it but do pressure the player on the ball. The only way they can win it is if there is an interception of a pass, so they are not allowed to tackle.



## Game 44: Developing Team Play And Individual “Themes” Through 6 v 6 Small Sided Games (Part One)



The basic shape is a double triangle, again a positional theme where players are encouraged to interchange then return to a basic shape when the time is right. You could use a 2 – 2 – 1 formation also to allow a 2 v 1 overload at the defensive end.

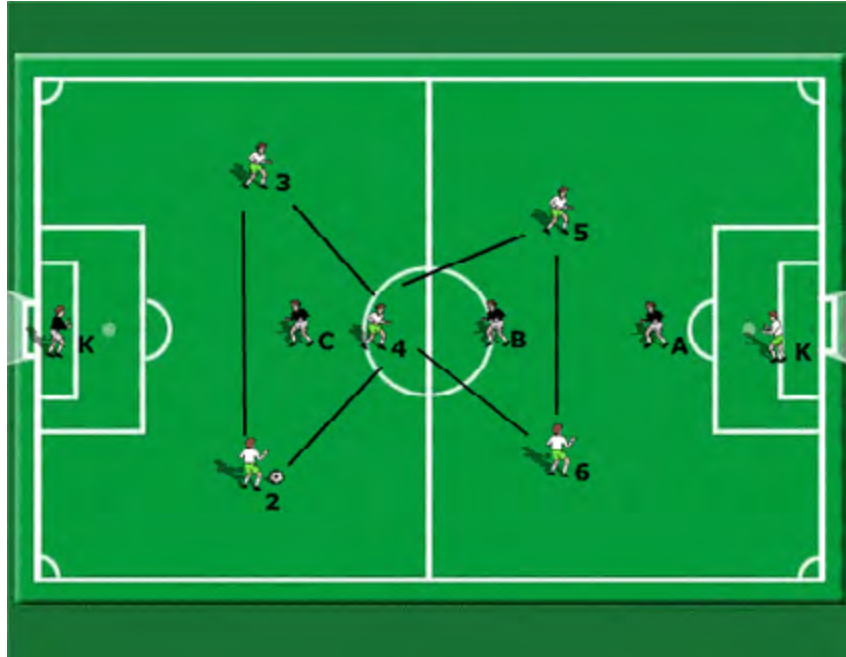
As in the previous Small Sided Games the coach needs to focus on the principles established with the Awareness program and get the players to apply them in the S.S.G. concept.

The Forward passing theme has the following:

### Coaching Points:

1. Create Space - players spread out to be in position to receive the ball.
2. Decision – when, where and how to pass.
3. Technique – Quality of the pass (Accuracy, weight and angle).
4. Support Positions – of teammates (angle, distance, and communication).
5. End Product – shots on goal. Rebounds.
6. The themes you can concentrate on one at a time include, Creating Space as a team, Forward passes to Feet and Space, Switching Play as a team, Running with the Ball, One and Two Touch Play, Passing and Support Play, Diagonal Runs without the Ball (diagonal runs, Overlaps, blindside runs, under laps), Forward diagonal Runs to Receive, Receiving and Turning, When and Where to Dribble.

## A 6 v 4 Game Overload Situation



Overload situation now with a 6 v 4 in favor of the numbers team. Ask the defending lettered team to play passively to begin to get the session going easily.

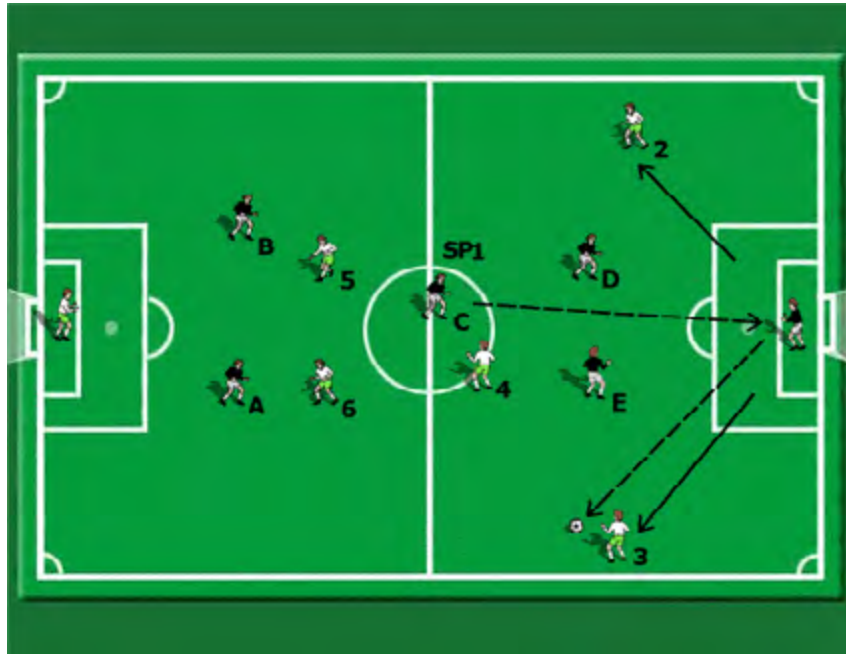
Then as we progress the defenders can't tackle but can intercept passes.

Next ask the defenders to defend correctly and at 100% but the team in possession should still be able to make it work with the overload in their favor. More game real now. If the defending team wins it they can attack.



# DEFENDING 6 V 6 SMALL SIDED GAMES

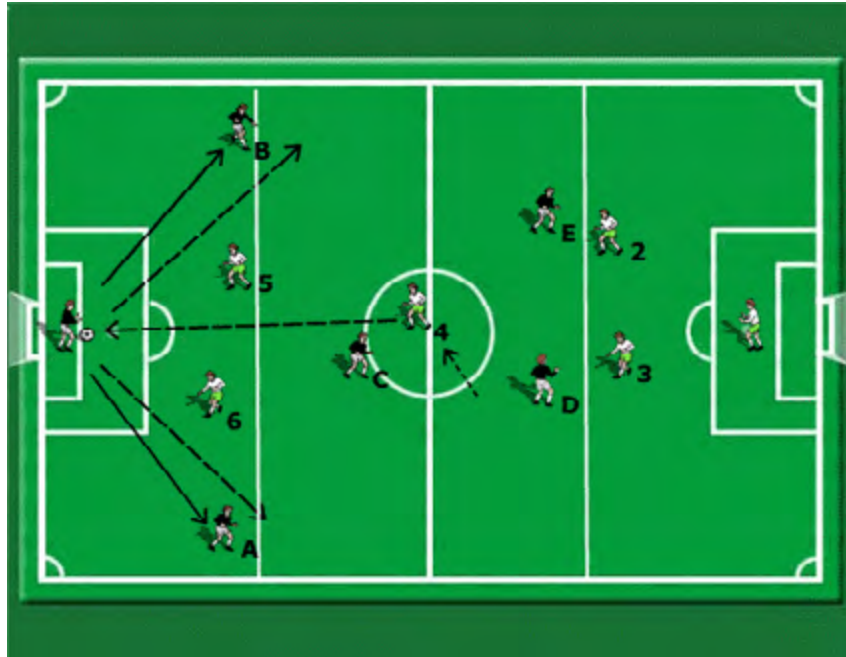
## Start Positions For Defending In A Small Sided Game 6 v 6



(C) moves the ball with a touch to signify the beginning of the practice and shoots at goal. The keeper collects the ball and the defenders break wide to receive in space.

Working on defending from the front, midfield, and then the back can be the sequence, or you can do it the other way around and work from the back, the midfield then the front. If from the front using the strikers (D) and (E) as first defenders the keeper begins the movement with a pass or throw to the defenders (2) or (3). If from the back the keeper begins the movement with a pass or throws the ball to the front players (5) or (6) and you coach players (A) and (B) to begin.

## Game 45: Defending In A Small Sided Game

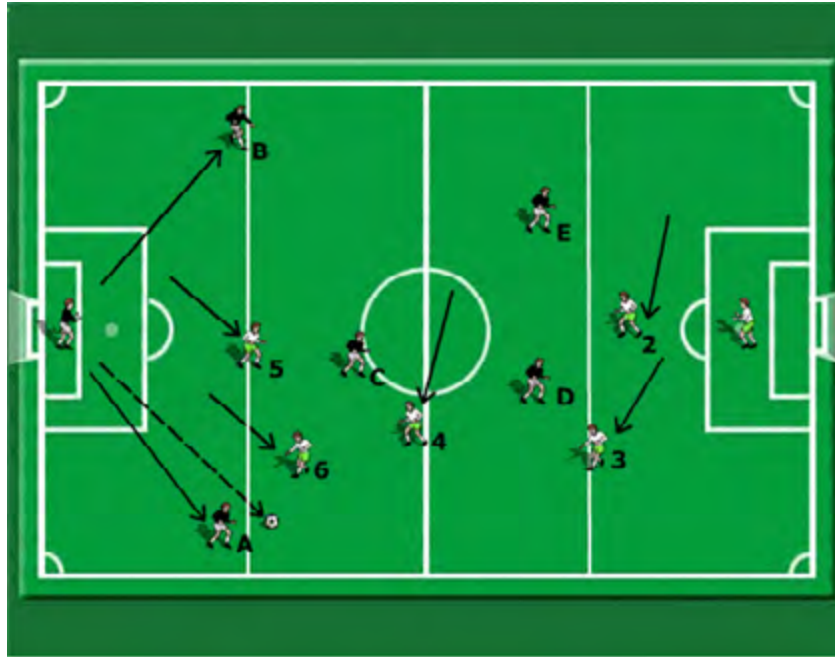


A SMALL SIDED GAME IS A GREAT WAY TO TEACH DEFENDING AS A TEAM WHEN YOU HAVE ALREADY COVERED DEFENDING IN SMALL NUMBERS.

**START POSITION:** (C) moves the ball with a touch to signify the beginning of the practice and shoots at goal. The keeper collects the ball and the defenders break wide to receive in space.

**RULES:** Attacking team have the ball and try to score. Defending team must win it back and have 5 passes or less to score (or 10 seconds), then the ball goes back to their opponents to start their attack again. Working on defending from the front, midfield, then the back can be the sequence, or you can do it the other way around and work from the back, the midfield then the front. If from the front using the strikers (D) and (E) as first defenders the keeper begins the movement with a pass or throw to the defenders (2) or (3).

## Defending In A 6 v 6 Situation - Showing Outside

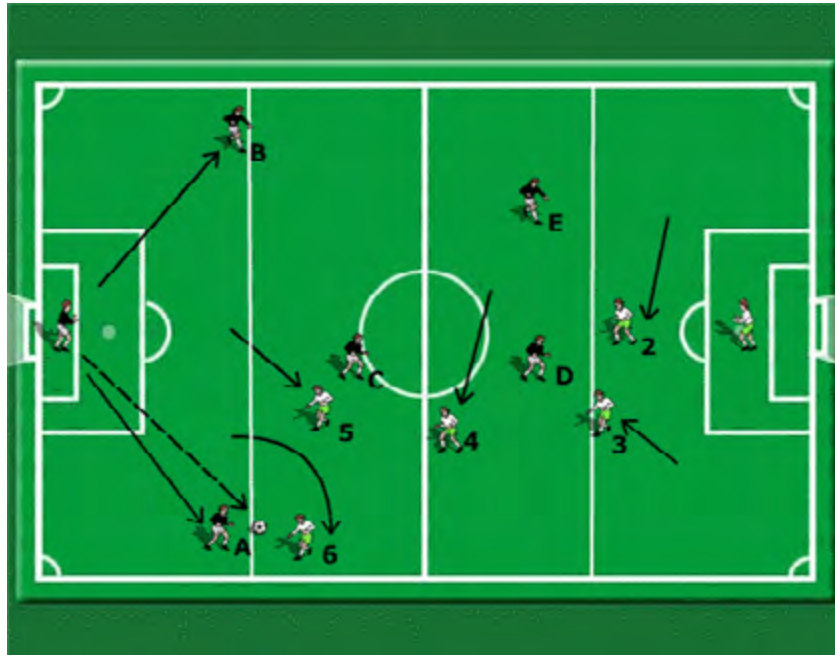


If from the back the keeper begins the movement with a pass or throw to the front players (5) or (6) and you coach players (A) and (B) to begin. Playing offside from the 20 yard line at each end (defensive third). All previous coaching points apply. Introduce getting compact from the back; playing offside from the thirds trains the player's minds to start to develop this aspect of play. Defending team make play predictable by forcing play down one route.

### Key Factors of Defending are:

1. Pressure (Keeping play in front, delaying or winning the ball)
2. Support (Angle / Distance / Communication).
3. Cover / Balance (marking zones and / or players).
4. Recover (getting goal side of the ball).
5. Tracking (opponent's runs).
6. Double teaming and treble teaming (2 or 3 players closing down the same player on the ball from different angles).
7. Compactness (On regaining possession players pushing out from the back).

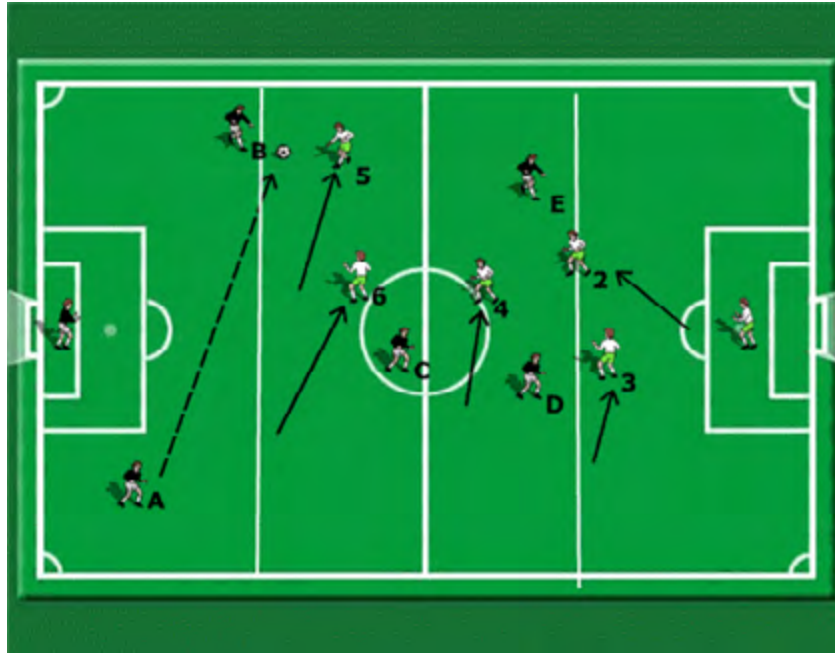
## Showing Inside



(6) shows inside to numbers, stops the pass down the line and players adjust accordingly. Try to force (A) to play across to (B) and give (5) a chance to intercept.

(4) supports (6), covers (C) and screens the pass (marks space) into the front men ready to intercept. (5) Could even double team with (6), close at an angle so the pass to (B) is screened.

## Full Team Adjustment

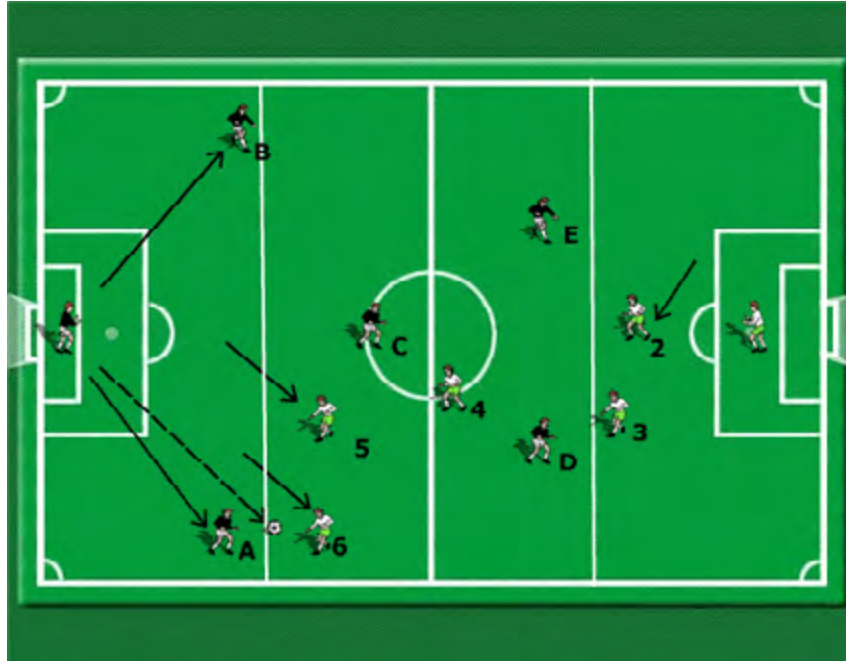


Here (A) has been forced to play the ball across the field to (B) by the positioning of the team preventing a penetrating pass forward.

The diagram above shows the team adjustment across the field to compensate for this and how they try to prevent the attacking team getting forward down the other side of the field.

(5)'s first action should be to try to intercept the pass. If this isn't successful then at least put pressure on (B). If (5) can force the player inside the above shape takes place. (4) Can still get close to pressure (C) and mark the space at the same time. (6) Can close down (A) if the ball is played back (or even intercept the pass with good anticipation) but also double up with (4) should it be played into midfield to (C).

## Cover / Balance

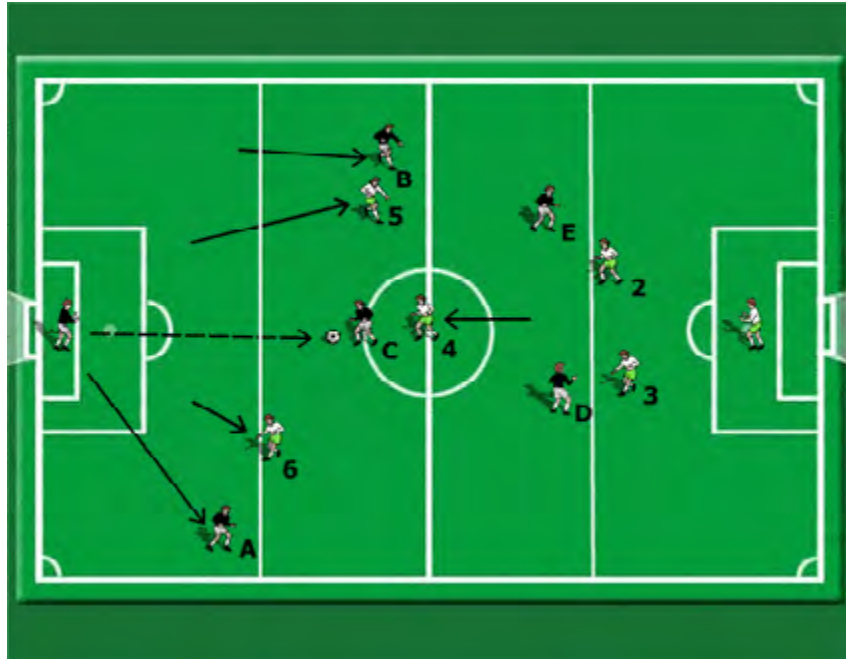


Dealing with the positioning of the players who are beyond the pressuring and supporting players of the team who provide balance and cover.

Here (6) forces the pass inside so (4) covers the likely space the ball can be played into and at the same time being aware of (C)'s position should this player receive a pass.

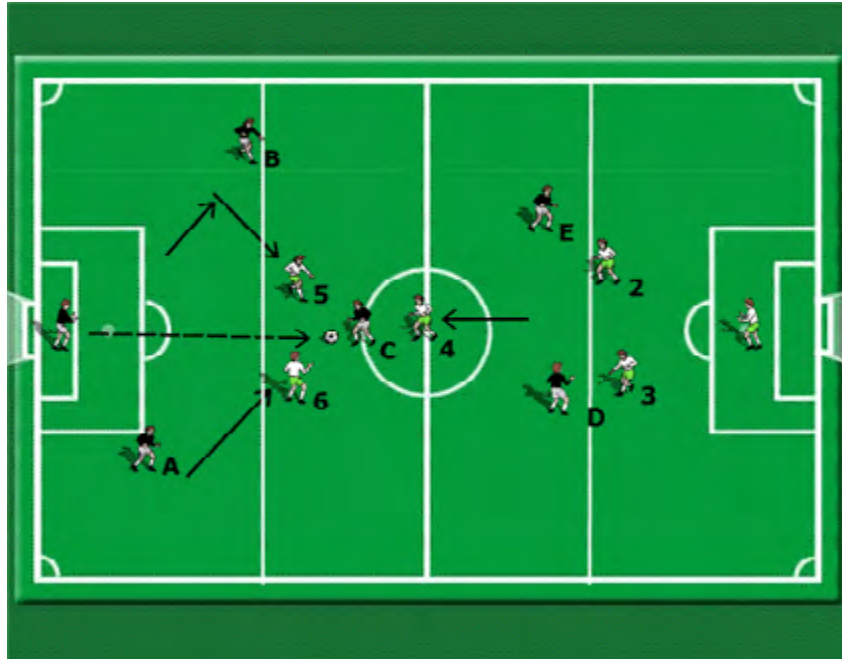
(2) and (3) come together into the positions where the ball is likely to be played from the position it is in at the moment but at the same time being aware of their defensive responsibilities regarding (D) and (E).

## Tracking Players Runs



Here (B) has taken the initiative and made a forward run to help (C). If (B) is allowed to go free then the defending team are very vulnerable down that side of the field. If (5) does not track the runner it poses a problem for (2) who is the nearest defender to the ball, does (2) mark (E) or close down (B) ? Above, (5) has tracked the run of (B) showing how important it is for strikers to realize they are the first line of defense in the team. Hence we have created a situation to show how another key coaching point has been practiced in the game. The coach has to identify this situation and coach it, it may be that (5) didn't see the run of (B) or track it and this is a chance for the coach to affect (5)'s positioning by stopping the play and coaching the fault.

## Double Teaming And Treble Teaming



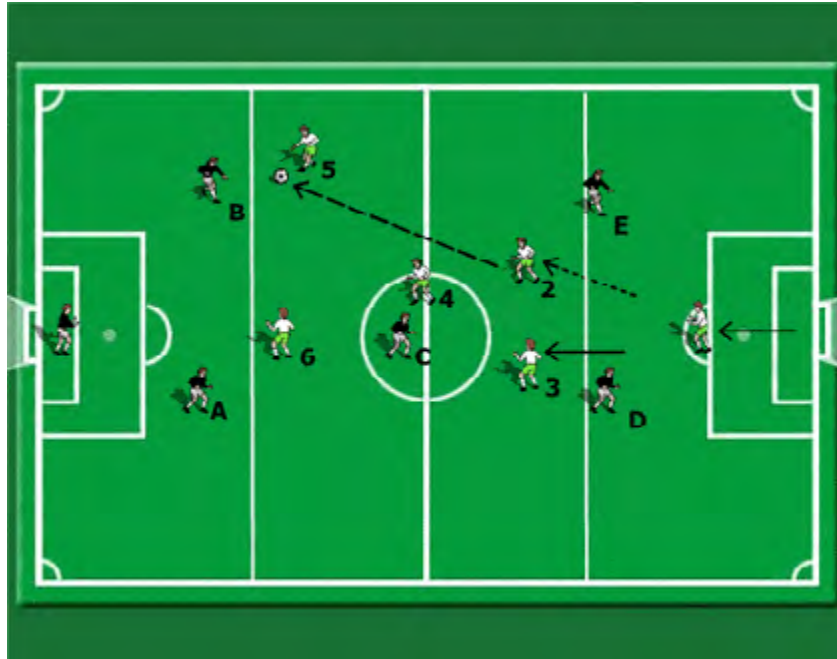
Here (5) has taken it a stage further with a recovery run into a double teaming position attacking and pressuring (C) from the other side to (4) thus creating a better chance of winning the ball.

If the players can react quickly enough you could have a treble teaming situation also with (6) closing down from another angle.

The recovery runs into double / treble team positions can be along the lines (passing lanes) of the passes back to (A) and (B) making it very difficult for (C) to escape with the ball.



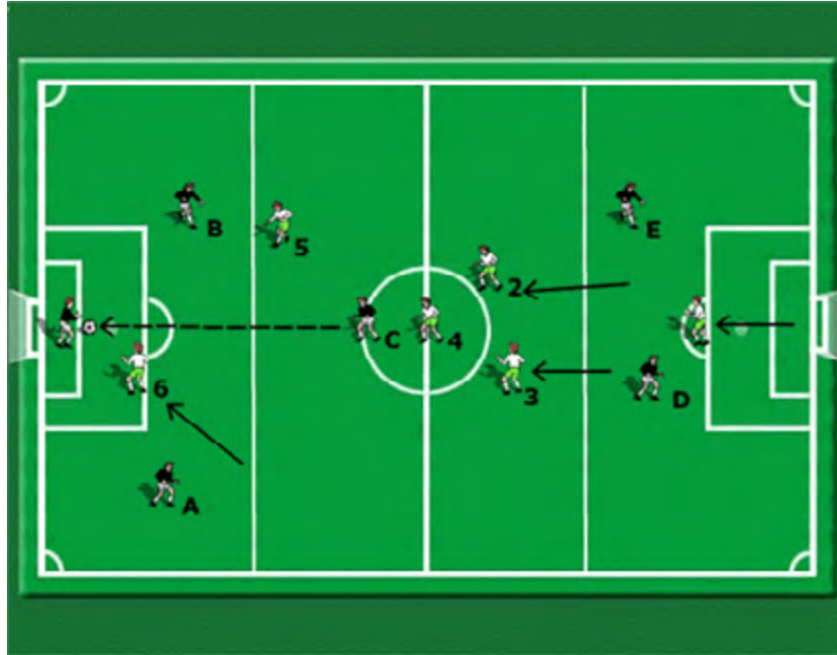
## Condensing Play Creating Compactness



Here (2) has won the ball back in the defending third and played it forward. The whole team has moved forward creating compactness from the back leaving the opponents strikers offside and making themselves available to receive a pass should the ball need to be passed backwards.

Finally let the game go free and have the keeper play the ball to any player on the team and coach the faults as they occur during the game with all the key coaching points of defending in mind. To make sure you work consistently with the defending team allow them only a restricted number of passes to work a position to shoot at goal then the ball goes back to the other team as we want to work on defending and not attacking. Maybe give them six passes maximum to score after regaining possession of the ball.

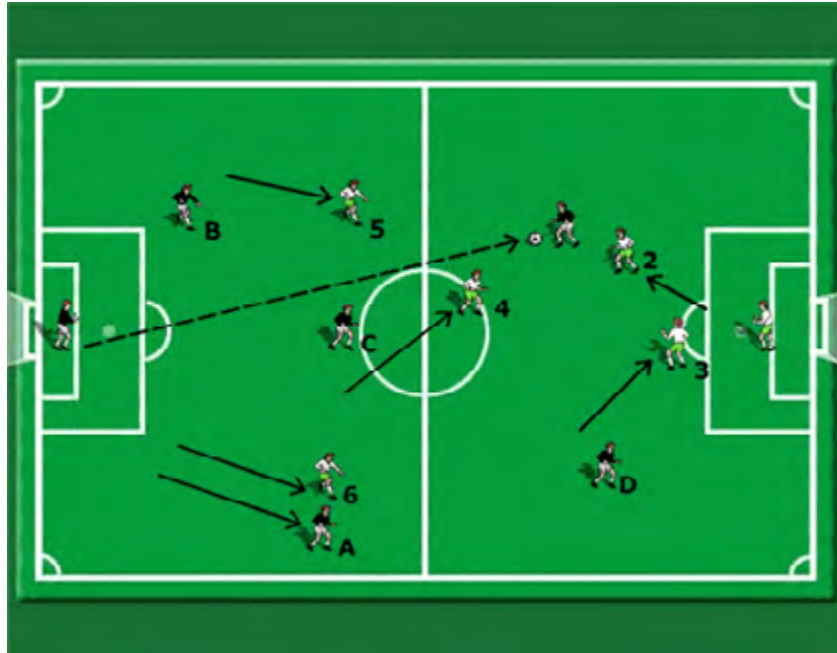
## Condensing Play Creating Compactness



This is an example to show that the defending team do not only move forward when they regain possession of the ball and can do so even when the opponents have the ball in their possession. Good pressure by (4) has stopped (C) from passing the ball forward. (5) And (6) position to prevent the pass back to (A) or (B). The only option is a pass all the way back to the keeper. This longer pass particularly, gives defenders (2) and (3) time to move forward and as a consequence leave (D) and (E) offside. The defending keeper moves up also to cover for the defenders (keeper – sweeper).

(6) anticipates the back pass and produces more good pressure, this time on the keeper, which may result in winning the ball back. Should the keeper kick and clear the ball long, the movement in the meantime of, particularly the back players, will cause the attacking teams opponents to be offside from this clearance.

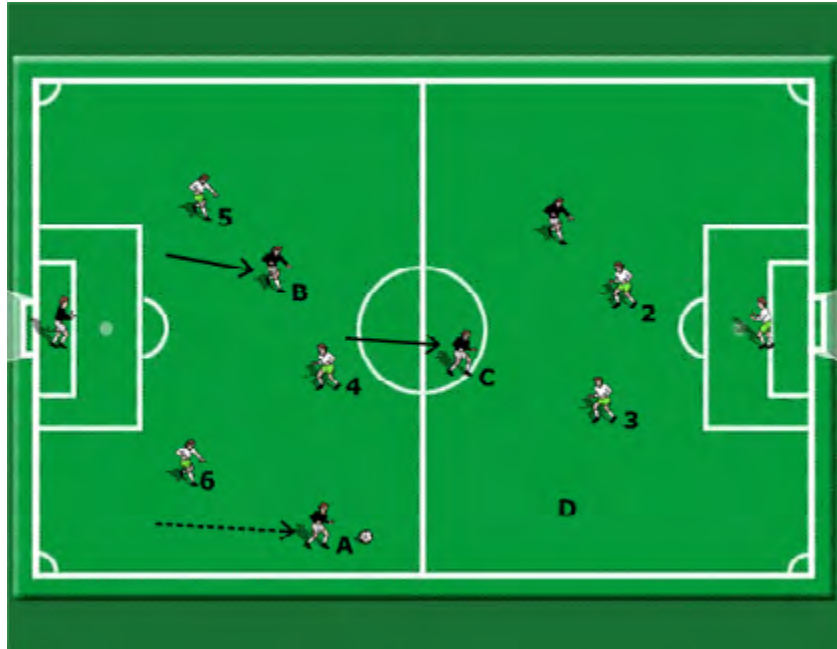
## Showing All Key Coaching Points



Now have the keeper play the ball into the strikers and work on the defenders (2) and (3) pressuring and supporting bringing in the other key coaching points as they happen. This is the same idea as that used with (5) and (6) but in front of this the other players may need to deal with tracking runners, recovering back to help the defenders, maybe doubling teaming with (2) in the above situation and so on. Above are examples of what can happen with the defending teams players; (2) presses the ball, (3) drops into a support position, (5) starts a recovery run, (6) tracks the forward run of (A), (4) doubles up on (E) to help (2) win the ball back or at least try to force (E) into making an error and lose the ball.

Finally once the defending team win the ball back they obviously will look to play the ball forward at the earliest option and this will result in the team moving up the field from the back and the defenders at least getting up to the offside line at the limit of the defending third (this is condensing play from the back creating compactness).

## Getting It Wrong

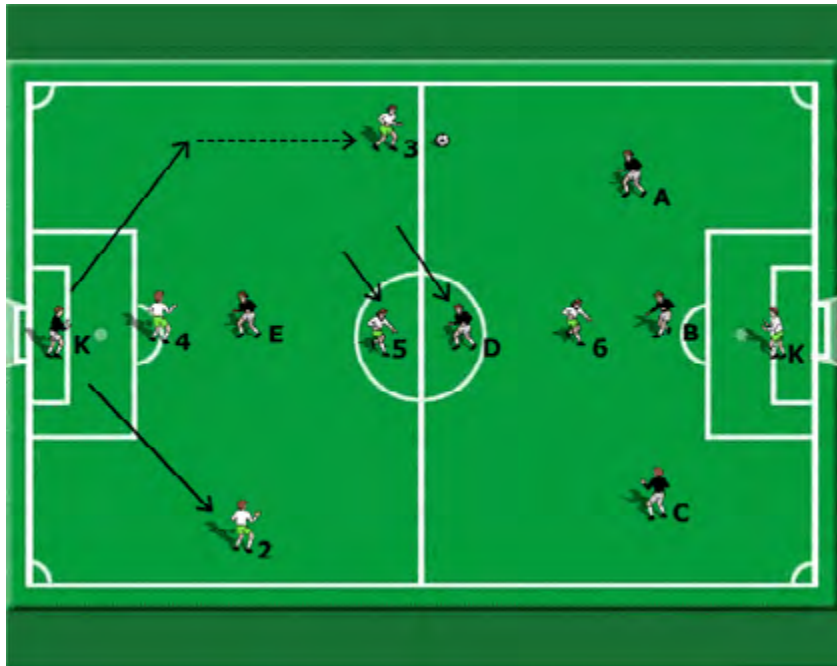


The numbers team have attacked and shot at goal and been caught going forward. The opponents catch them out with a quick break. (A) Starts the move after a pass from the keeper and (6) doesn't track the run.

Now we have a situation where (A) has no pressure and is free to play. No pressure on the ball means the strikers (D) and (E) can push (3) and (2) deeper to create more space in front for (A) and (C) to play in.

(4) doesn't recover back to get goal-side so (C) is open to receive a pass in lots of space and time. Other principles cannot now be applied; there is no pressure so there is no support. There is no cover at the back because of the overloaded situation.

## Game 46: Running With The Ball In A Small Sided 6 v 6 Game



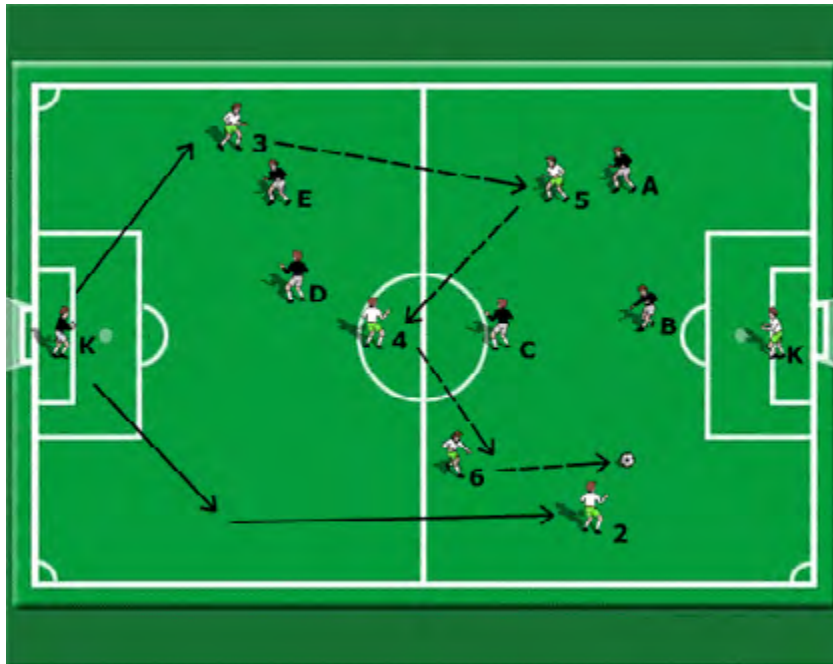
Here the theme is running with the ball particularly from the back. Use the progressions to get it going.

### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space – Players breaking wide to receive the ball from the keeper.
2. Decision – Can I run with the ball or do I pass.
3. Technique – Key factors of running with the ball, head up, good first touch out of your feet, and run in a straight line (the shortest route forward) with pace, using your front foot to control the ball.
4. Quality of Pass / Cross / Shot / Dribble at the end of the run.
5. Supporting Positions – support in front, fill in behind.

When you get to a 6 v 6 set up it may be useful to change the shape of the teams to 3 – 1 – 1 from a 2 – 1 – 2 so there is a 3 v 1 overload at the back to help players run out with the ball. The space is usually in the wide areas for this movement. This allows for a greater chance of success in the practice until players are comfortable and confident performing the theme.

## Game 47: Switching Play In A Small Sided Game Of 6 v 6



As in ALL these 6 v 6 presentations the coach should use a progression method to build up to the competitive 6 v 6 game situations eventually.

Use the 2 – 1 – 2 system of play. The coach must decide how much of an overload is needed to build up to a 6 v 6 competitive game situation (6 v 2, 6 v 3 etc).

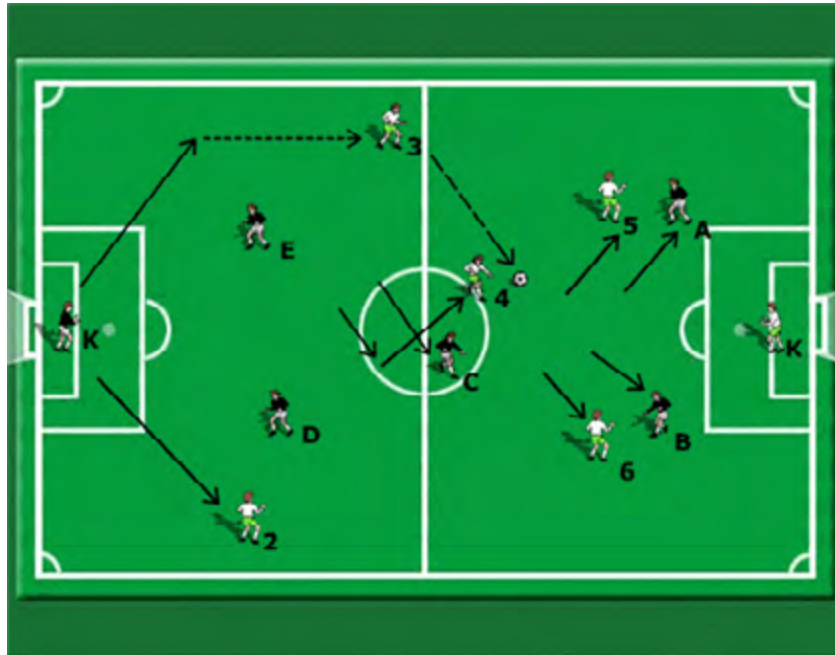
Use the 6 v 6 game with the two-team concept before going into a competitive 6 v 6.

### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space as individuals and a team.
2. Decision – When, where and how to pass the ball.
3. Technique – Quality of the pass, can I pass it forward or do I switch the play.
4. Support Positions – To switch the play (open stance to receive and pass).
5. Switching the Play – From one side of the field to the other.

In the above example the team have attacked down one side of the field but been stopped from further progress by good defending so they have come back and switched the play to the other side. A great run by (2) on the overlap compliments this move making a 2 v 1 situation on the opposite side of the field from which they started the move.

## Game 48: Creating Space In A Small Sided Game Of 6 v 6



Here the players work to get free of their markers by their movement off the ball; they create space for themselves and / or for their teammates.

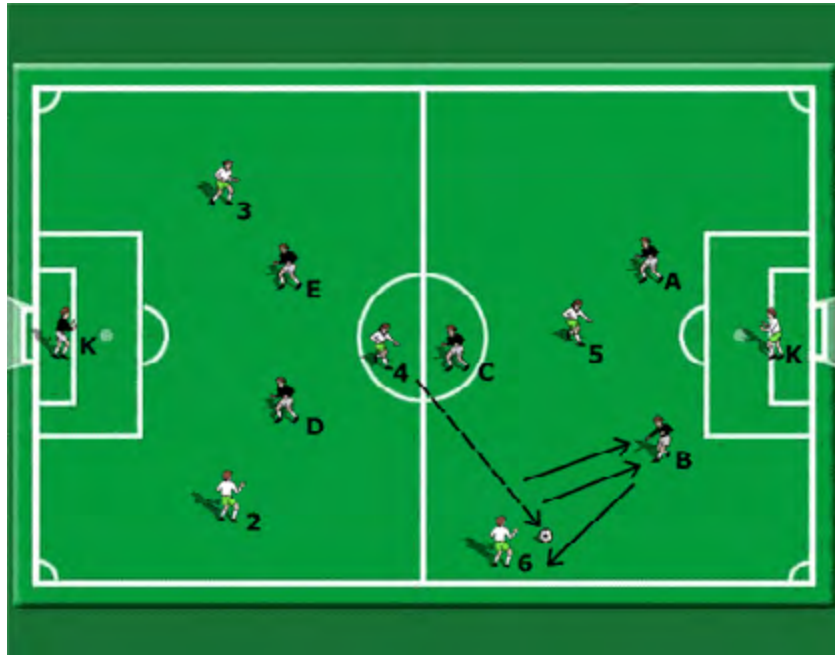
### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space – Spreading out as a team.
2. Decision – When, where and how to Create Space.
3. Technique – of passing and receiving.
4. Support Positions of players; angles and distances, movement off the ball.

In the above example (2) and (3) break wide to create space and offer two options to receive a pass from the keeper, (3) receives the pass and (4) runs off (C) to check back to receive the pass in space. (5) And (6) create space in front of the receiving player by making split runs to move (A) and (B) away from where (4) wants to attack and shoot at goal.

If either (A) or (B) do not track the two strikers and stay in the space in front to defend against (4) then (4) can pass to whichever play got free by not being tracked on their run.

## Game 49: When And Where To Dribble In A Small- Sided 6 v 6 Game



Looking to create 1 v 1 situations in the middle and especially the attacking thirds of the field focusing on players with a good dribbling technique.

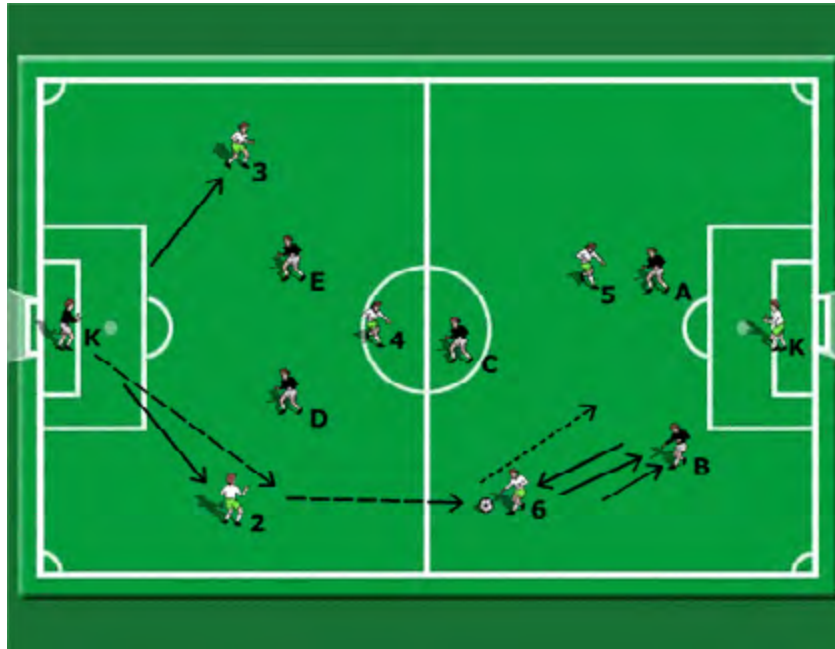
### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space – Run the player off to check back and receive to feet. Body position half turned with the back to the touchline. Where the defender marks determines whether the attacker goes inside or outside.
2. Attitude to Dribble – Aggressive / Positive.
3. Decision – Does the attacker run, pass, cross, shoot or dribble?
4. Technique of Dribbling - when it is on to dribble. How to dribble using moves.
5. Safety and Risk Areas of the Field – where it is on to dribble.
6. Runs of the players – to support or create space.

Here (6) runs off (B) to create space behind to come back and receive the ball to feet. (6) Must shape up with their back to the touchline to be able to see the entire field and options available. If (B) doesn't follow then (6) can get the pass in front to attack the goal using (5) to create a 2 v 1 position.



## Game 50: Developing Team Play And Individual “Themes” Through 6 v 6 Small Sided Games (Part Two) - Receiving And Turning In A Small Sided 6 v 6 Game



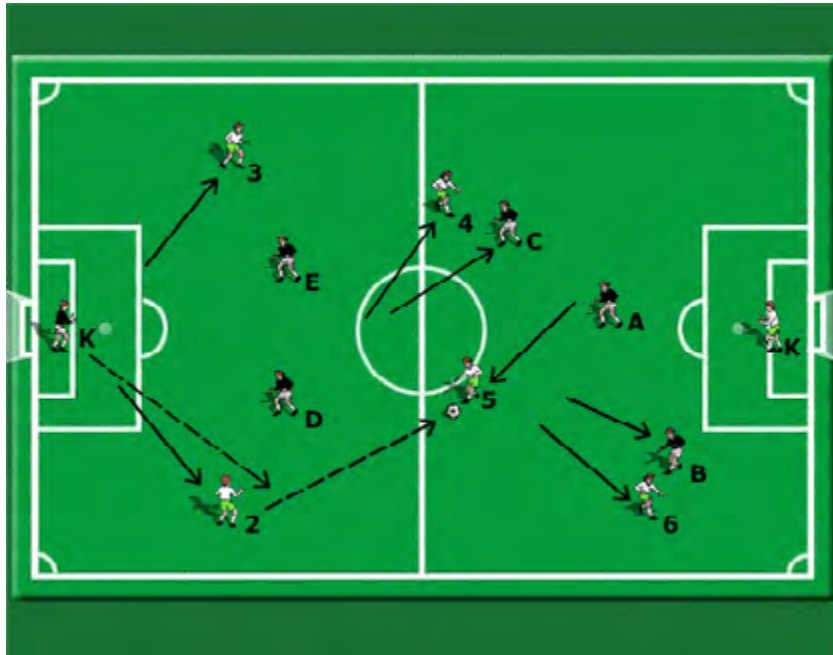
Here the theme is receiving and turning particularly in the middle and attacking thirds.

### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space by movement off the defenders.
2. Decision – When and where to receive and turn.
3. Technique – How to receive and turn, the best way, if you have time, is to run your marker off and return to the space you have created for yourself by that movement.
4. Quality of the Pass into the receiver for ease of control.
5. Positions of Support of teammates in front and behind the player on the ball.

In the above example (6) runs the defender (B) off away from the ball to check back to receive the pass. (4) Positions to support behind as can (2) also but if (6) has turned, (5) can make a run into a receiving position of support in front of the ball to take a shot or create a 2 v 1 situation with (6) by losing the marking of (A). If (6) is a very good dribbler then (5) can run off (A) away from the space in front of goal to leave (6) in a 1 v 1 situation.

## Game 51: Diagonal Runs Without The Ball In A 6 v 6 Game



The theme is making diagonal runs with or without the ball to receive or create space for a teammate. When it is a forward diagonal run the player making it must avoid running offside in a game situation.

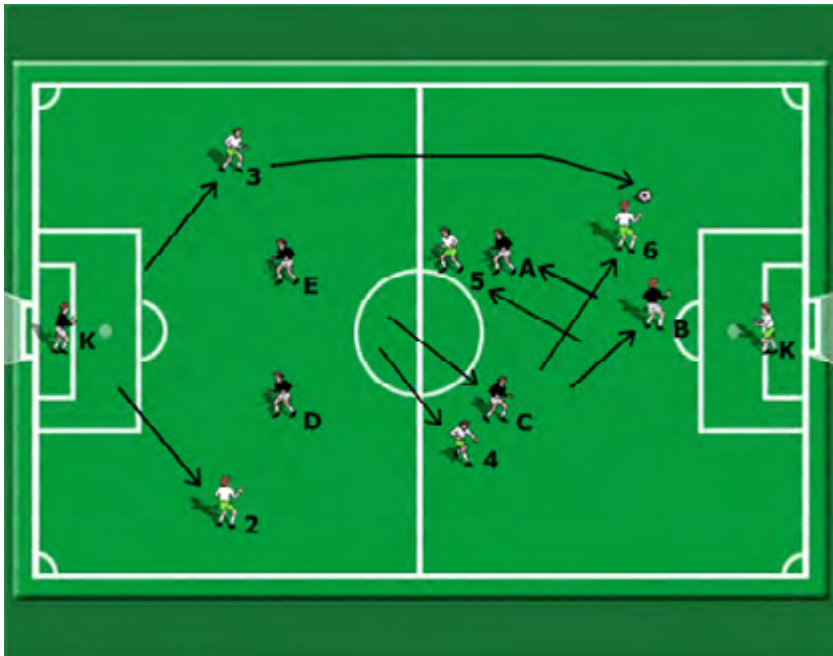
### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space.
2. Decision – when and where to pass into the receiver.
3. Technique – Quality of pass particularly the weight, accuracy and timing.
4. Angle and Timing of the Diagonal Runs both to create space and to receive the ball.
5. Support Positions of the players.

In the above example (2) is on the ball to pass it forward. (6) Makes a diagonal run away from the center taking man marking (B) with them. (4) Also makes a diagonally opposite run away from the central area taking (C) away also. This leaves space for (5) to come short with another diagonal run to receive the pass. As in receiving and turning (5) may have run (A) off to check back if time was available to do so thus creating more time and space on the ball.

Another way to create space for (5) coming short to receive would be for (6) to make a run towards (5) and cut across the path of (5)'s marker (A) to hold up their run.

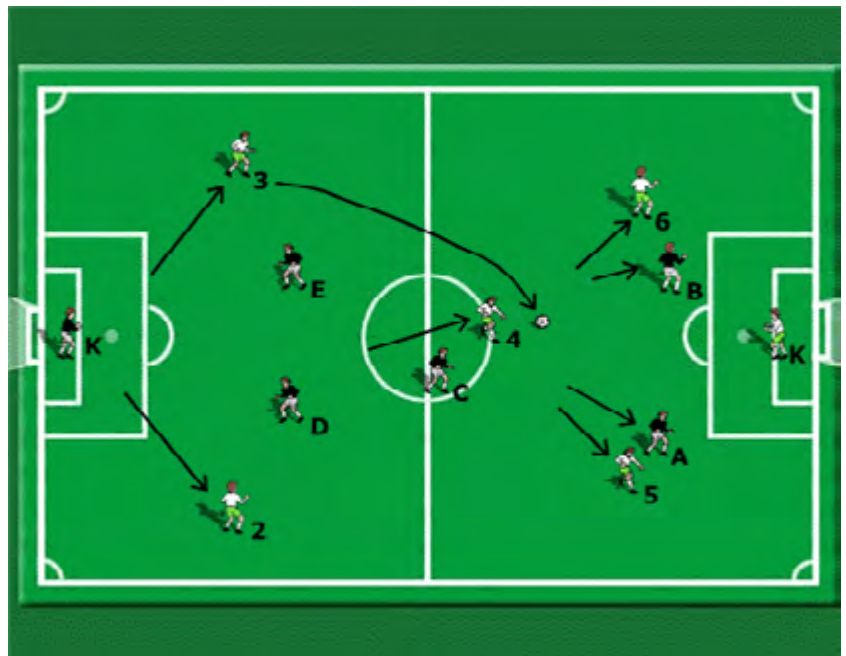
## Game 52: Forward Diagonal Runs To Receive In A 6 v 6 Game



Here (5) goes short taking (A) with them. This creates space behind (A) for (6) to run into to receive the pass. (4) Again runs off (C) to help clear the space.

Below, the strikers make opposite diagonal runs to get midfielder (4) in centrally.

Here (5) and (6) run off their markers breaking wide leaving space inside for midfielder (4) to run into.

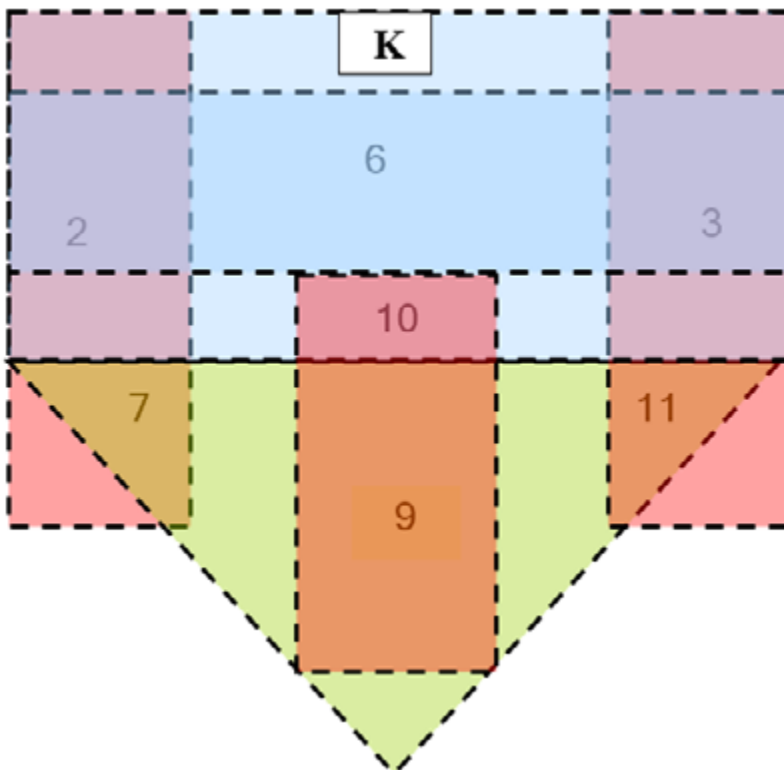


# SMALL SIDED GAMES: 8 V 8 DEVELOPMENT

## Organization:

- The team will be organised with 3 defenders who zone mark and understand marking and covering (2,3 and 6)
- All defenders will have the ability to break forward into midfield (including 6)
- There will be 1 anchor / attacking midfield player (10)
- There will be 2 players centrally who are athletic, can attack and defend and know how to rotate and give balance to the team (9 and 10)
- These 2 players have the ability to shape up in any way to account for special individuals whilst in no way affecting the teams attacking potential
- There will be 3 forwards who all have the speed, power, and 1v1 ability to win the team matches (7, 9 and 11)
- They will give the team width and have flexibility to interchange with each other and the attacking midfield player (7,9 10 and 11)

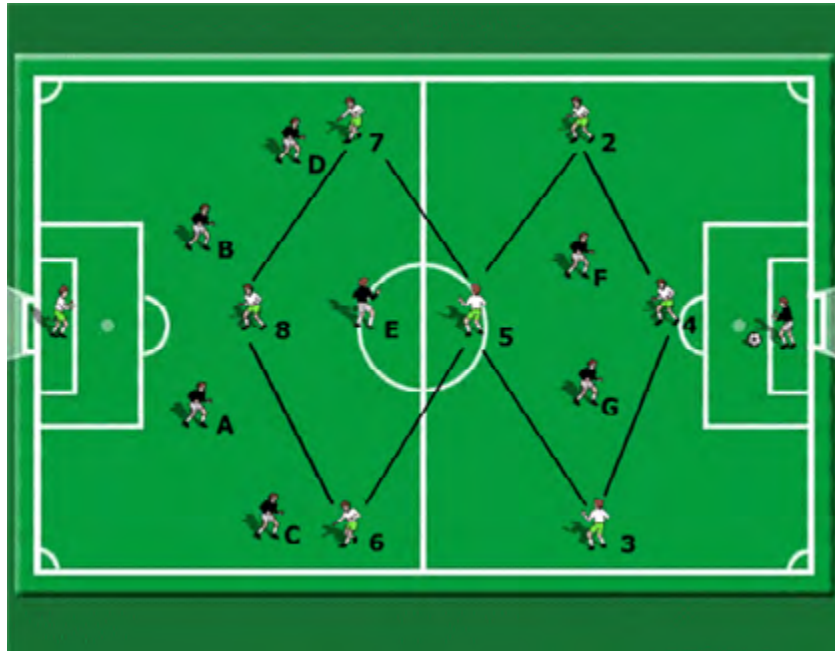
## Preferred Formation 3-3-1



### Positional Relationships within Units

- The Keeper and the back 3
- Back Three 2, 6 and 3
- 2 and 7
- 3 and 11
- 6 and 10
- 9 and 10
- 7, 9, 10 and 11
- So many relationships are important in this system of play.

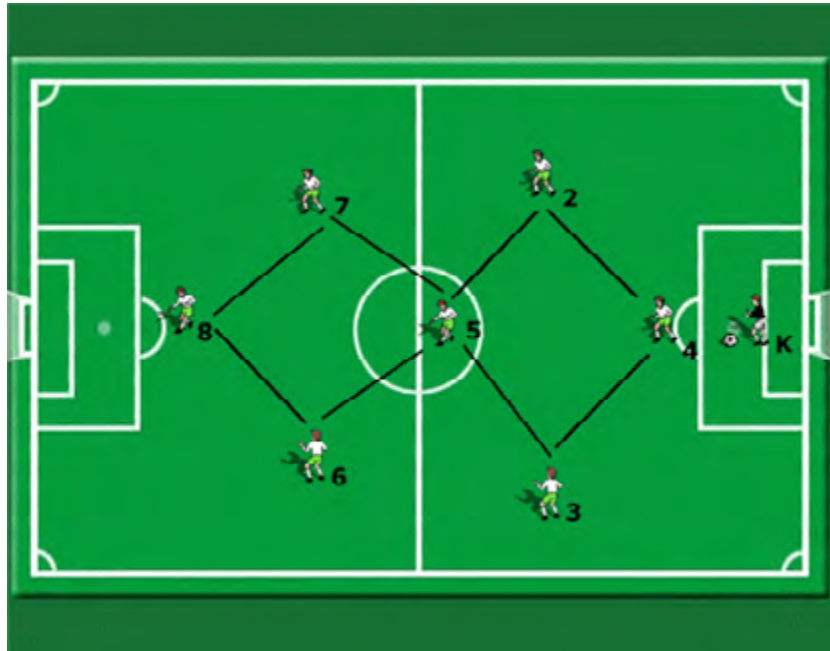
## The 8 v 8 Double Diamond System Of Play



A 1-2-1-2-1 system of play, all players are in diagonal support positions to each other. Can be seen as a 3-3-1 defensively and a 3-1-3 offensively.

Playing against a regular 2-3-2 most opponents use.

## Game 53: Developing An 8 v 8 Team Shape For U10's Going To U11

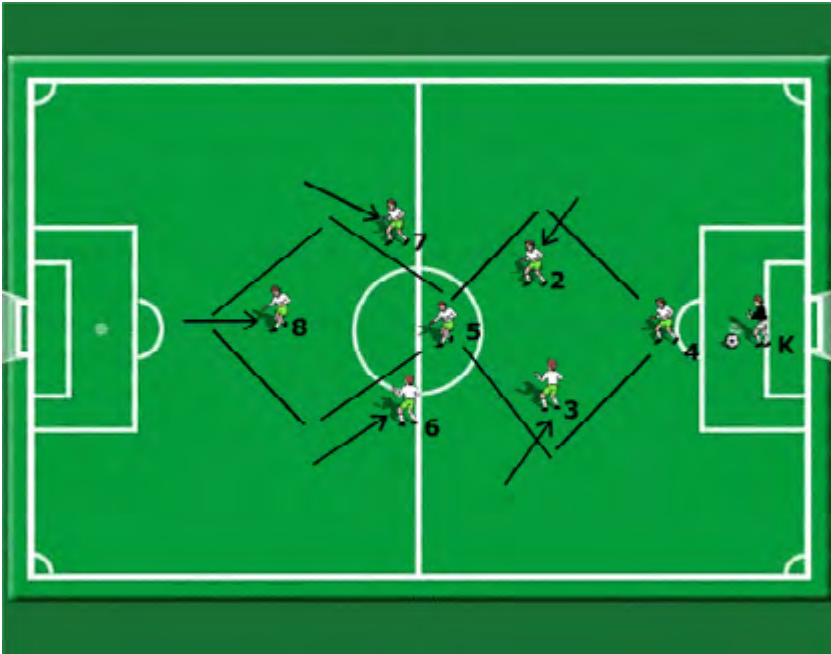


Bring another team in to work with on this if you want a full game situation.

Using two diamonds with player (5) being the central link between them both. This set up ensures we get great width at the back and at the front.

Attacking we are a 3-1-3 (or more specifically 3-1-2-1) and defending we are a 3-3-1. (6) And (7) need to transition quickly to make this work. This moves nicely into preparing for a 4-3-3 at 11 v 11 and getting the players ready to play with great width in the team both up front and at the back. (5) Has to be a good player and set it all up.

## 8 v 8 Team Shape



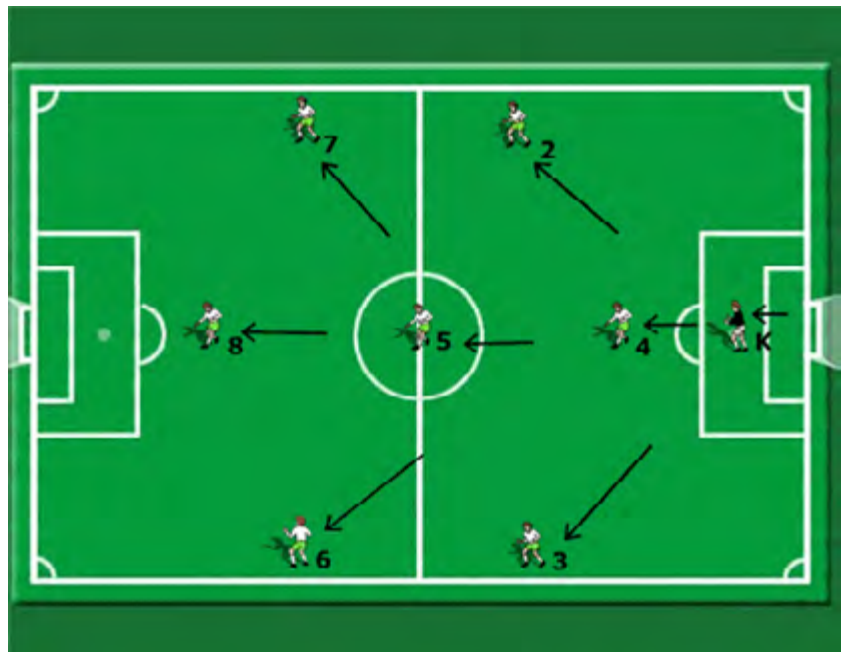
Defensive team shape dropping to a 3-3-1. (6) And (7) must transition quickly when we get possession and become attacking wingers. They must create space by going as wide as they can. To practice the attacking and defensive set ups of this system, have them play a shadow attacking play, then throw another ball in that represents an opponent with a ball. Ask the closest player (in this case 6) to the ball to pressure it and have the rest of the team take their shape around this player.

In possession the team spreads out as wide as possible.

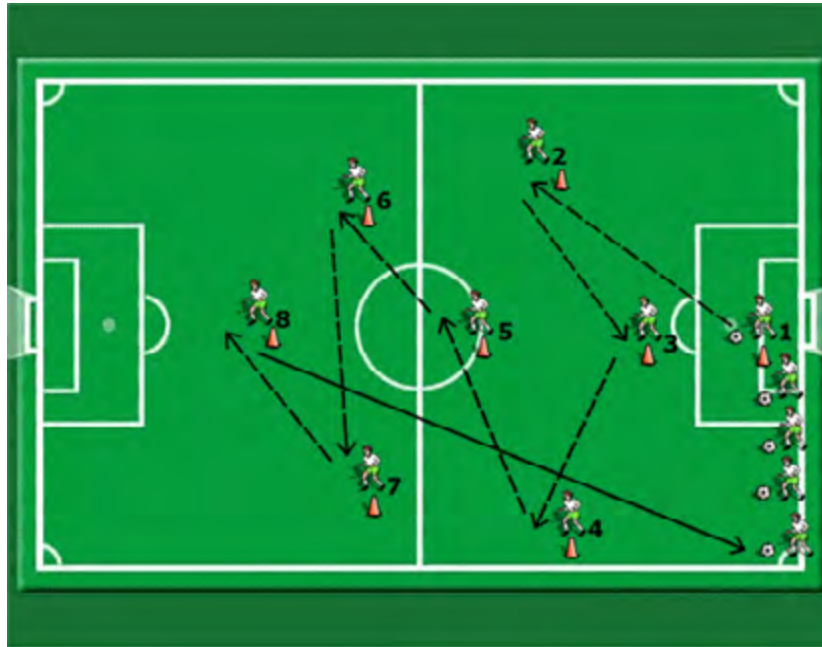
Introduce defenders to the session where appropriate when the players are ready to do this.

Use a small number to begin, 8 v 3, then 8 v 4 up to an 8 v 8 game.

Keep it passive defending to begin until they start to get success in the movement.



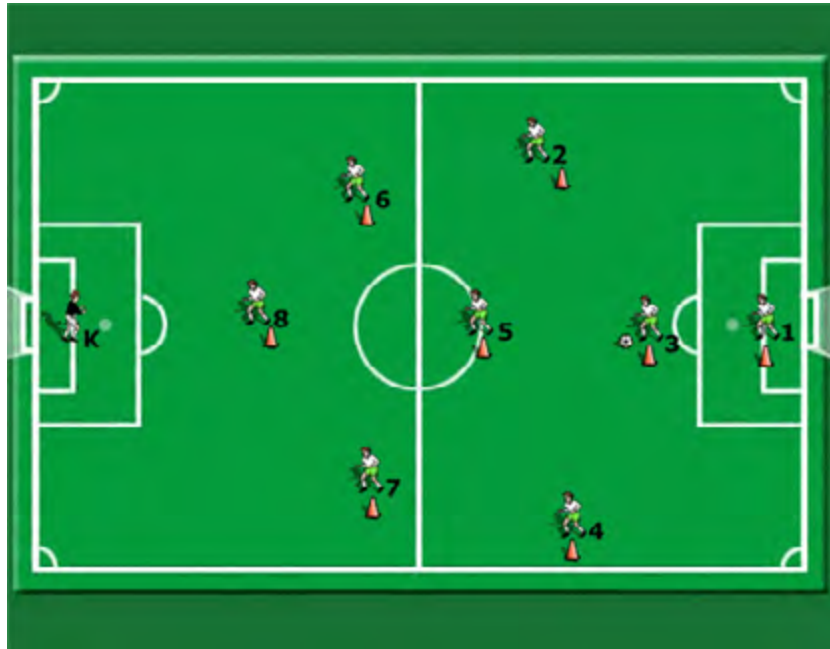
## Game 54: Rehearsal Team Shape Method



1. Each player has a ball and runs with it around the circuit to begin so we get dribbling and running with the ball into the session as a starting point. Then, Pass and follow in the team shape. You can do this for any team size, 6 v 6, 8 v 8 or 11 v 11.
2. Change the routines.
3. Several balls going at once and everyone moving.
4. **Develop:** Have players check to the ball to receive.
5. **Develop:** Have players check away to check back to the ball.
6. Play one and two touch.
7. This is getting the players to check and receive the pass. Check away to come back into the space created.
8. Follow the pass, lots of repetition. Two touch plays, receive and move the ball into space with a turn with one touch and pass with the second touch. Try to play one touch.
9. Pass to the back foot of the player or behind them to move them. Player receiving can point to where they want the pass to go.
10. **Develop:** Give and go, 1-2 with the player passing to you.
11. Pass with the outside of the front foot.
12. Now playing give and go's, to develop the play and get lots of touches for all the players.
13. So (1) passes to (2) who checks to an angle to receive, (2) passes back to (1) who has checked off at another angle to receive, who passes into the path of (2) running towards (3) to pass to (3) and the cycle continues AT EACH STATION.
14. Players pass and run to the next position.
15. Several balls should be going at once and everyone is moving.
16. Try different shapes with the players.



## Shadow Play Rehearsal

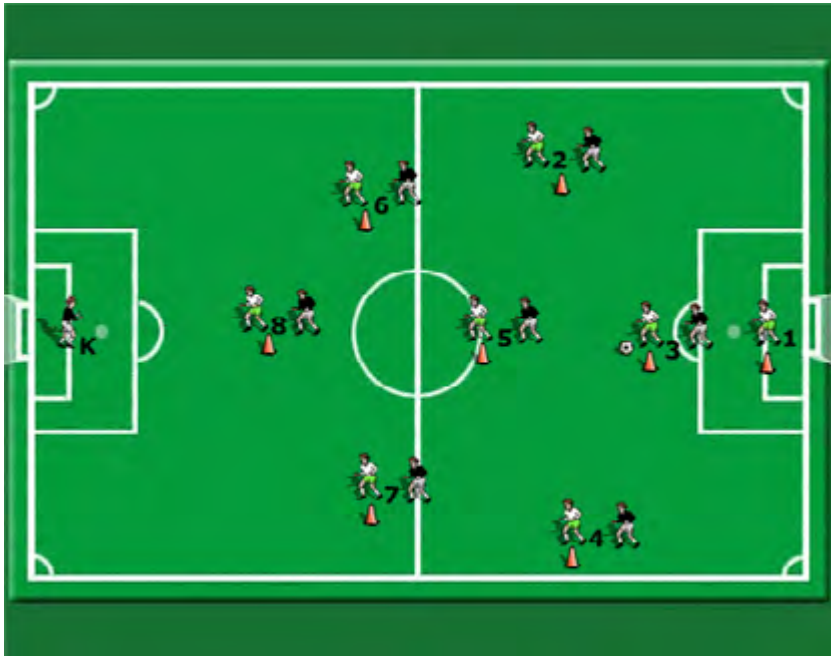


Using a numbering system to determine who passes to whom in a shadow play. This is continued REHEARSAL of movements.

Start with an angled pass from (3) to (5) who makes an angled support position sideways on and so getting their body between the ball and the imaginary defender.

Routine can be (3) to (5) to (2) to (6), who checks inside with the ball then passing to overlapping (2) and a cross to (8) and (7) in the box and a finish on goal. Vary the routine.

Looking to make angled passes all over the field but in a set routine.



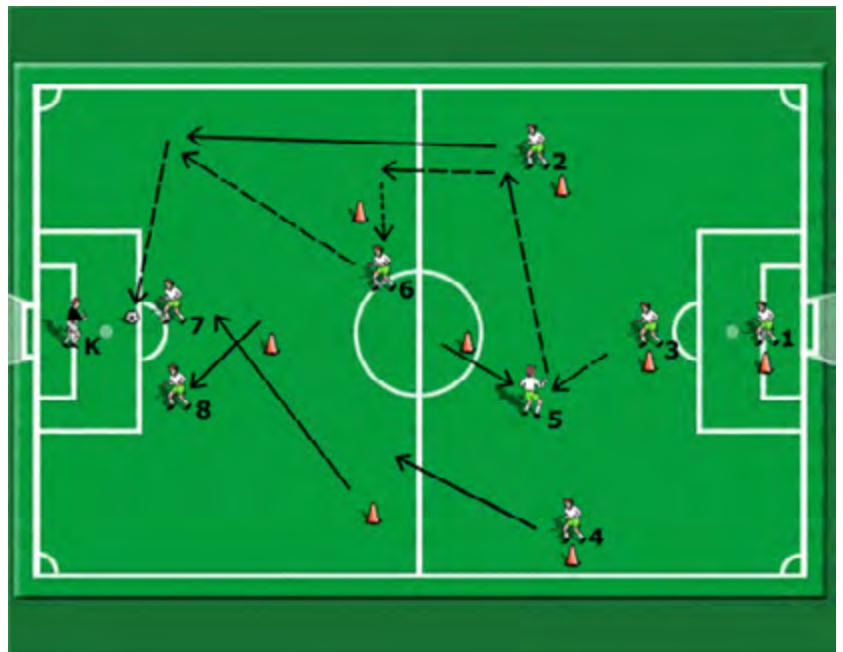
Have two players for each position then as one team has gone and finished the next team go as the first team recovers back so there is no waiting around.

Routines can be varied to include all players, to change direction, to go from one side of the field to the other and so on. (7) And (11) need to be involved a lot in the buildup as they act as both midfield players and strikers supporting (9) and are involved with overlapping play.

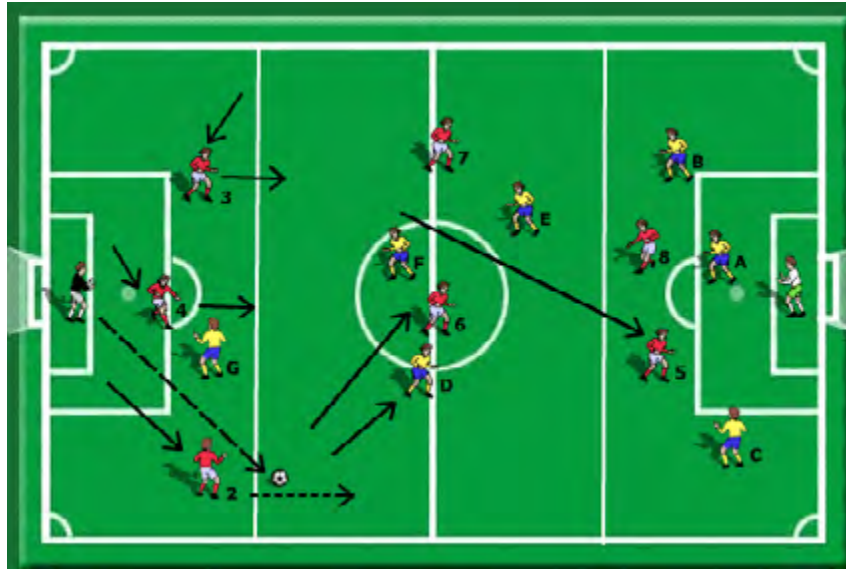
The recovering team gets in the way of the other team and so they can act as a passive opposition.

First routine and finish on goal. All the team moves forward as the attack progresses. Quick one and two touch play is advised.

Next routine can be (3) to (4), to (2) to (6), (2) overlaps and receives the pass to cross for (7) and (8) who crossover in the box to receive. The timing of the runs is important to make this work.



## Game 55: Using Transition Games To Maintain Shape And Balance Throughout The Team In 8 v 8



### Transitions Between Thirds

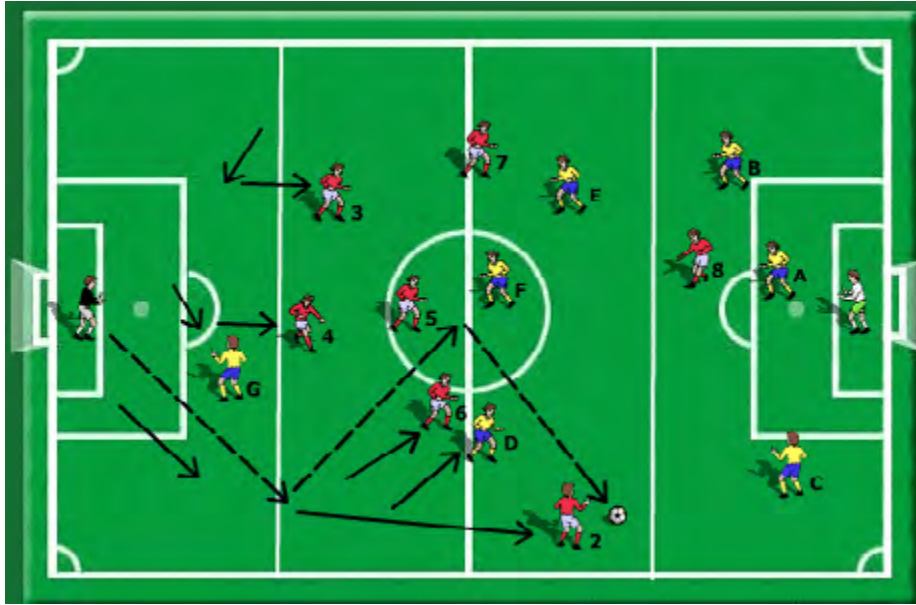
Now we are transitioning between thirds and as a defender changes the balance in midfield from a 3 v 3 into a 4 v 3, a midfielder then moves into the attacking third to change the balance from a 1 v 3 into a 2 v 3.

(6) Clears the space for (2) to bring the ball forward. (4) 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

(5) 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



Here a full back makes an overlap run to provide an option for (5) to pass to. (2) Passes to (5), (6) clears the space wide to run into for (2) by taking defender (D) inside, and (2) runs onto the return pass from (5). This is a particular movement that can be practiced and developed in this set up as the run is difficult for the opposition to identify and counter.

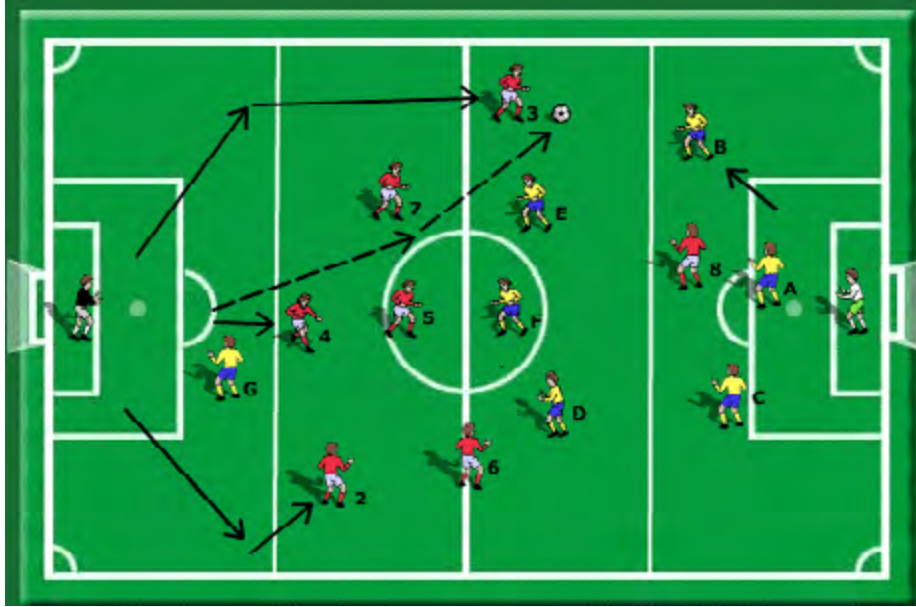
The overlap can occur also from the middle third into the attacking third.

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 (F) 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, (5) 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) and / or link with (7) and create a 2 v 1 against defender (E).

## Introducing Offside



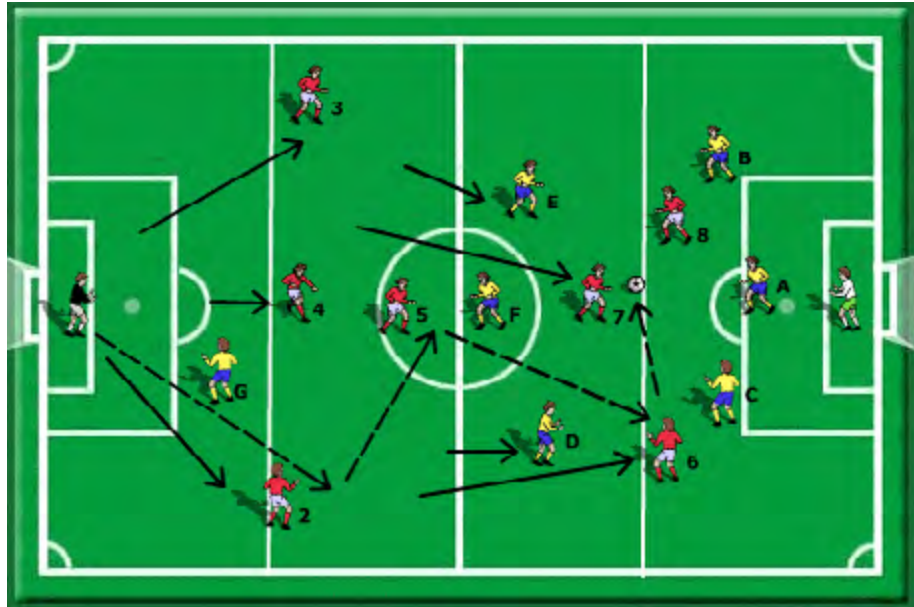
**Develop** – Have offside from the defensive third of the field. (4) Passes the ball forward and (4), (2) and the keeper push up. Striker (G) is left offside.

Player (4) passes the ball into the middle zone to (7), (3) 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

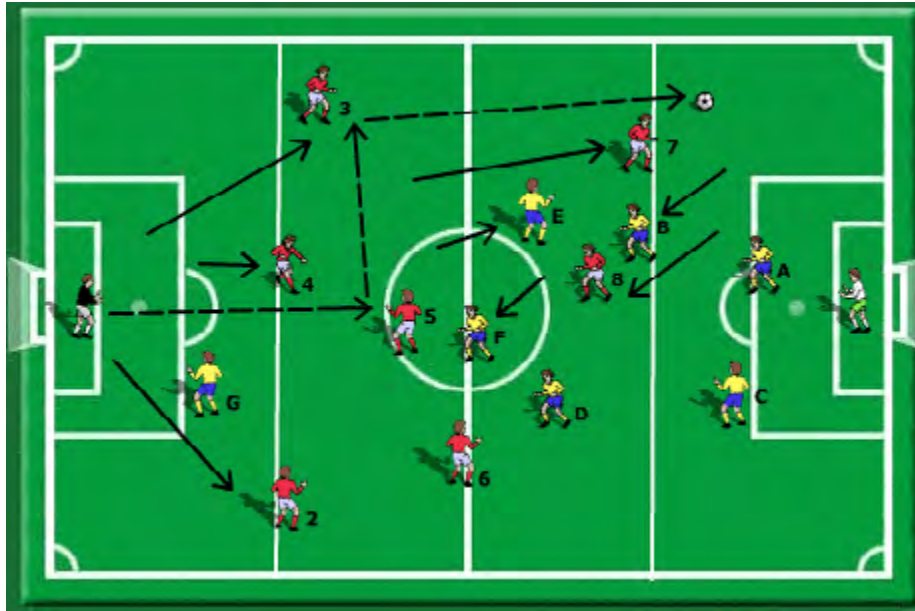


Here (2) passes to (5) who plays the ball to (6) making a forward run off the ball, and (7) makes a second run off the ball to support in the attacking third. You can practice this session with different numbers of players to get the same effect building up to an 11 v 11 game.

Transitions can depend on the stage of the game; if your team is chasing the game to score being a goal down then (6) or (7) would probably stay in the attacking third, not immediately return to help (5) 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. For example in another situation (8) and (7) may switch sides to create space for one another (see over).

## Switching Positions

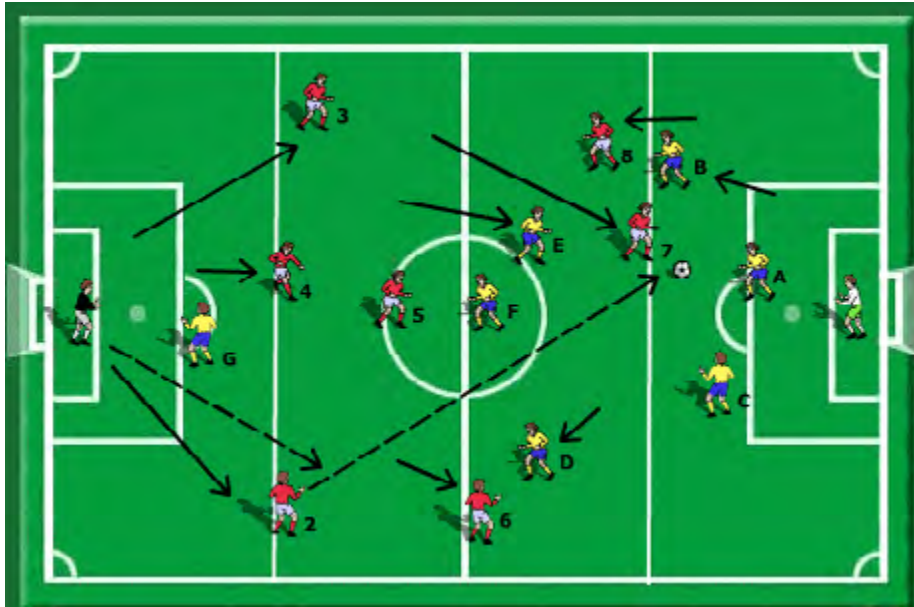


Keeper plays a pass to center midfielder (5) who plays a ball off to overlapping fullback (3). Here (8) checks inside creating space for (7) to run in to receive the channel pass from (3).

(7)'s movement should be late and fast to get away from (E) If (7) goes too early he / she closes down their own space and allows (E) to track and get there early to stop the move.

Another option could be (5) making a diagonal forward run into the space created by (8)'s movement. (5)'s run from center midfield could be harder to pick up and is from an angle not in a straight line as (7)'s run. In this situation (8) could also make a run away from where the ball is going to take (B) away from the area (3) is playing the ball into.

## 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.

A situation can be a striker moves back into the midfield third (to receive to feet or free space for someone else to move into) and a midfielder moves forward into the attacking third.

**Develop** – Allow defending players (as above) to track attacking players into the other zones. When this happens the above situation means the defender follows the striker going short creating space behind for another striker to move into or a midfielder to break forward into (in this case 7). 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.



## Game 56: Working With Four Zones



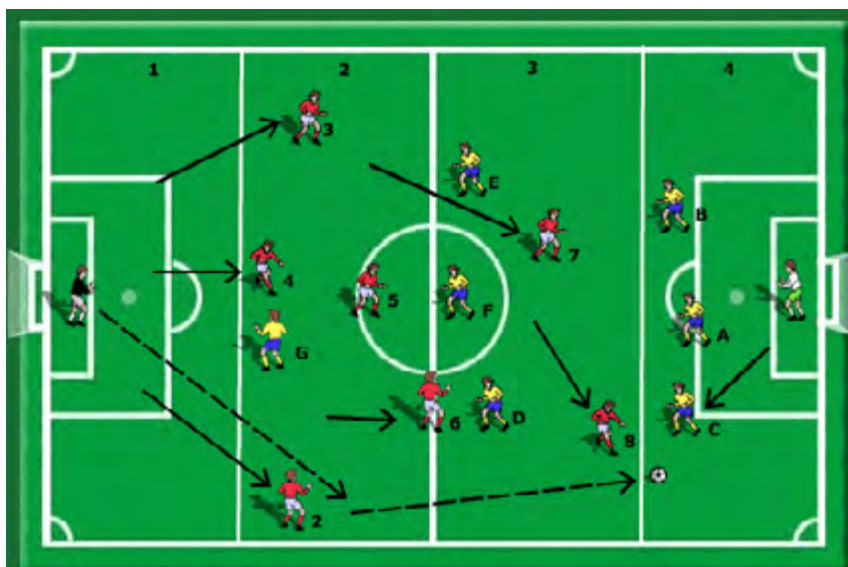
60 x 40

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.



## Progressional Development From Start To Finish

Set up is as follows; the field is arranged in thirds; defending, midfield and attacking thirds. In the setup we have here we have a 3 v 1, a 3 v 3 and a 3 v 1. If you have problems getting the movement going from the back in a 4 v 3 then have a 3 v 1 at each end to begin (to make it easier to find space) and have a 3 v 3 in the middle.

- 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 1 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. SWITCHING POSITIONS** - Work on movement of midfielders and strikers in terms of play not always being in straight lines. For example movement across the field where two midfielders may switch positions or likewise up front where strikers can switch about thus moving defenders around.
- 7. 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.

**8. 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.

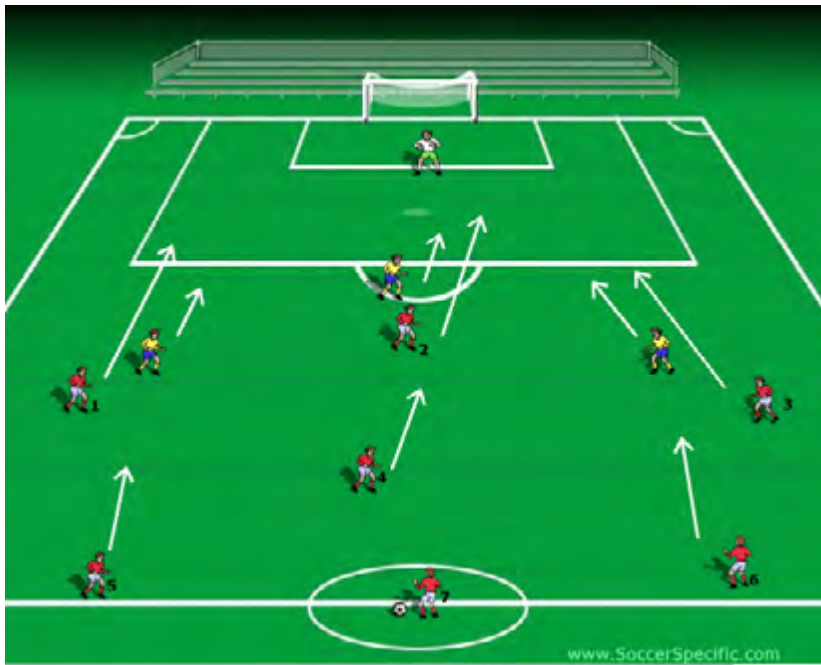
**9. FREE PLAY** - Open the game up. See if players can maintain their shape without the help of the thirds, if they can transition between units but also keep their balance.

**10. 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.

11. Develop the idea and have four zones instead of three so the team has to move up a zone and be in a maximum of three zones at any one time. This ensures positive compact movement up and down the field.

**12. CONCLUSION** - We have developed the clinic from working in thirds and 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 Very Simple Introduction To The Movement Of The Strikers And The Team Overall At 8 v 8

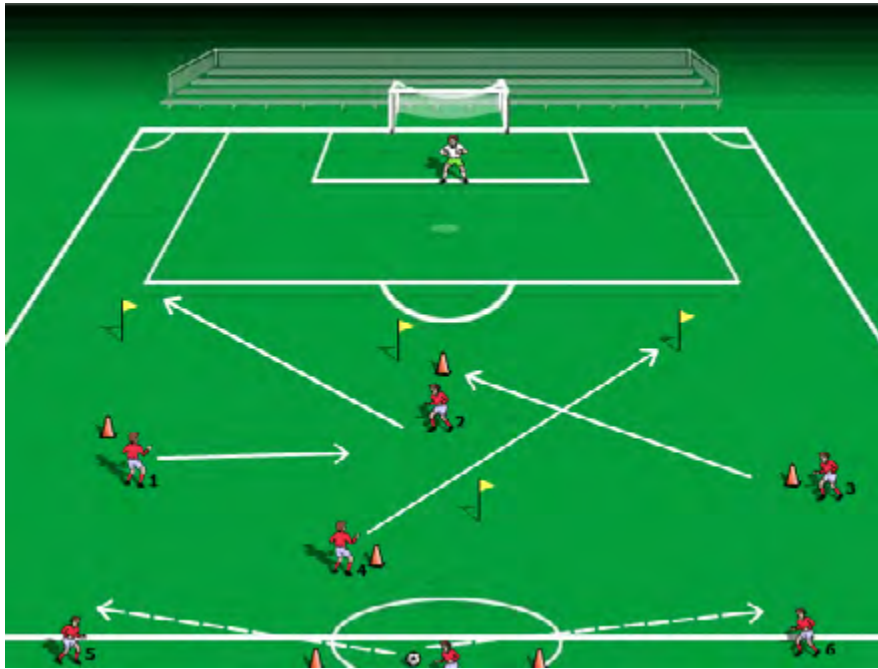


Currently we often all run in straight lines, SO IT IS EASY for opponents to mark us.

This movement takes time to teach and learn with the younger players so we may not do as well in the short term; but you need to have the vision (and Patience) to see the long term benefits.



This is a lot to digest so just do two players at a time rather than a 4 player movement (SEE BELOW).



5 or 6 on the ball have several options of a pass.

Do 1 and 2 as a rotation first.

Get that established then do 3 and 4 next.

You can also involve 6 and 3 and 5 and 1.

3 cuts inside and 6 overlaps, and 1 cuts inside and 5 overlaps.



**Develop:** Next stage would be 1 staying wide to occupy a defender and 5 cuts inside in the attacking half. Then do the same on the other side of the field with 3 and 6.

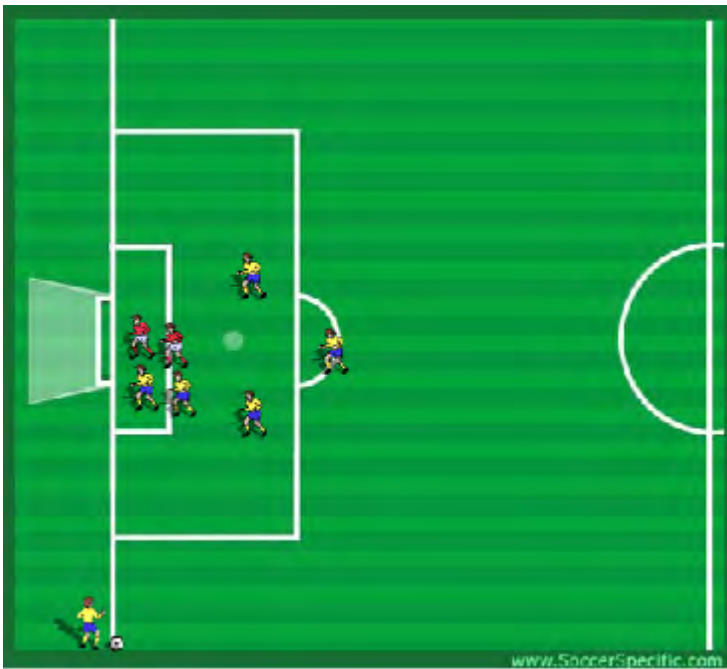
1 cuts inside to clear the space for 2.

A defender added to show how they will man mark and follow the player.

So potential rotations per the numbers above:

- A. 3 and 4 (wide right and central midfielder)
- B. 1 and 2 (wide left and central striker)
- C. 2 and 3 (central striker and wide right)
- D. 1 and 5 (wide left fullback and wide left midfielder / striker)
- E. 6 and 3 (wide right fullback and wide right midfielder / striker)
- F. 7 and 4 (bringing the ball out from the central defensive area, and 4 covers for 7)

## Very Simple Set Plays Ideas For The 8 v 8



### Our Corners

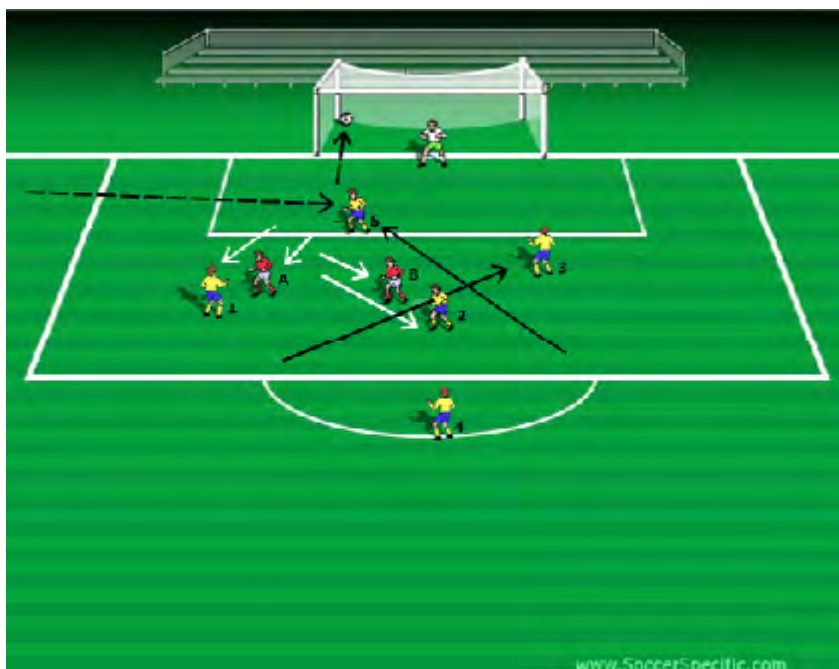
Two players fill the space in front of the goal.

Opponent's defenders mark them.

We need to clear this space with these two players moving away.

Defenders A and B will man mark so will follow the movements of attackers 1 and 2 which will clear the space at the near post.



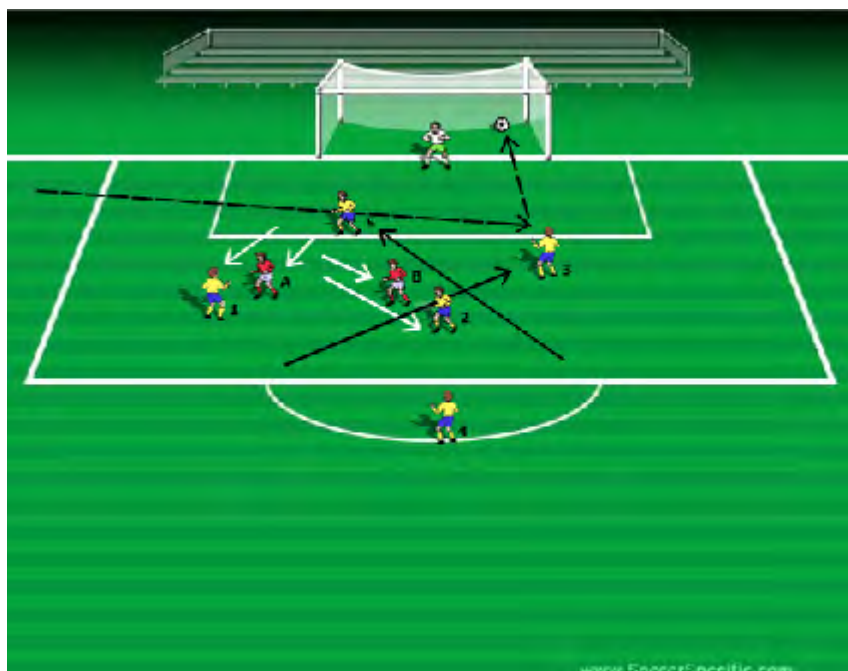


1 and 2 clear the space and 5 attacks the near post from the far post.

3 attacks the far post from the near post in case the ball travels to that position.

Due to the angles of the runs 3 and 5 will not be easy to pick up and stop.

Here the ball goes to the far post and 3 scores.





## Free Kicks Central



Free kicks in front of goal, this will apply also to free kicks wide of the goal.

The shooter should always make sure they hit the target with the shot to make the keeper work. Less power and more accuracy if necessary.

Players 2 and 3 will follow the shot in making sure they do not go offside incase it comes off back the keeper or the goal frame. 4 and 5 can follow in also.

2 and 3 follow in the keeper drops the shot and 3 scores with the rebound.

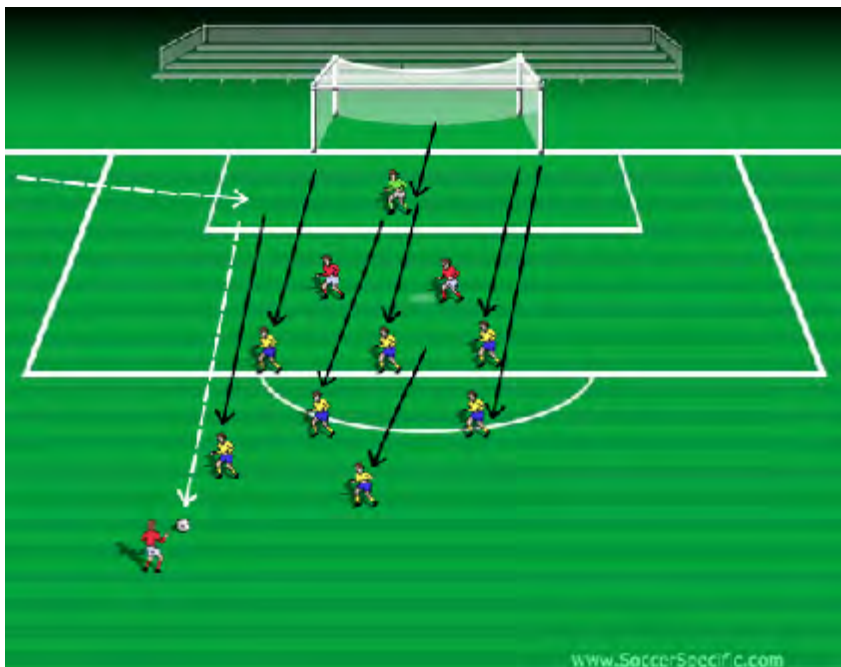


## Defending Against Corners



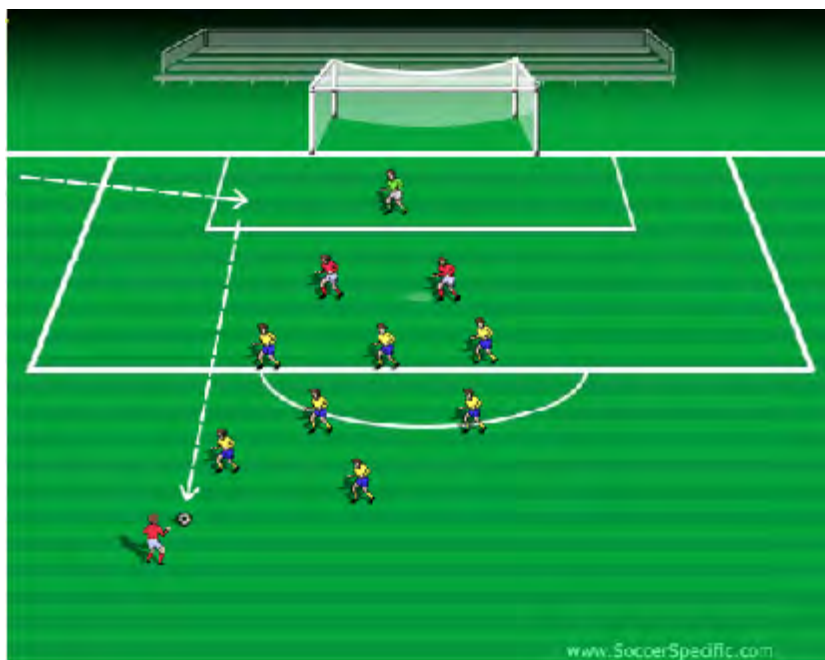
**Zonal Marking:** every player is back to defend the goal; alternatively, we can leave a player up at the half way line in case we can get a counter attack from this.

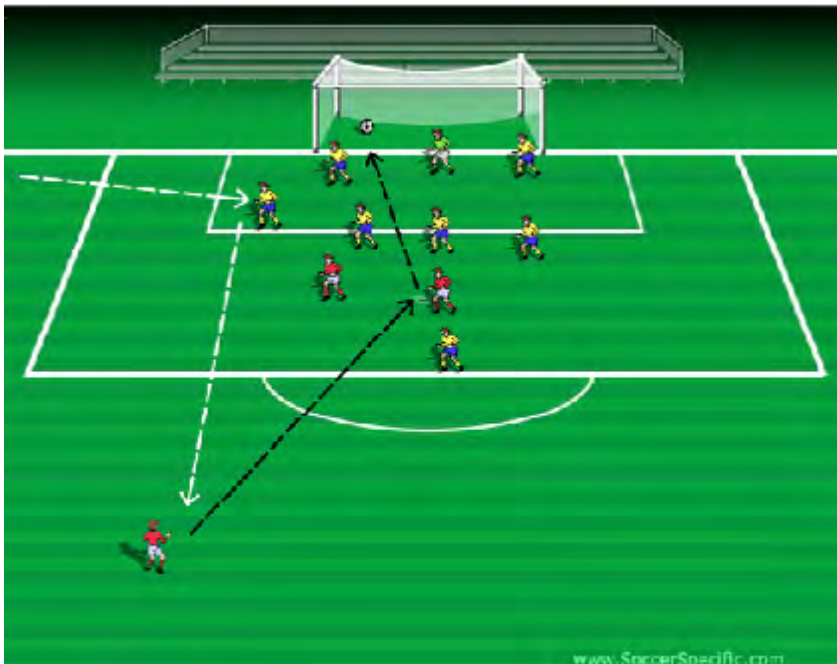
## Pushing Out Leaving Opponents Offside



We win the header and clear the ball; every player immediately pushes up quickly; first to pressure the ball; and second to leave opponents offside.

Opponents are clearly offside so if the ball is played back in we get the offside free kick.





## When We Do Not Push Up

Opponents are onside and score.

We do not push up quickly so we let opponents shoot back at goal and cause our own problems by not getting out and play opponents onside.

Hence why this pushing up is so important.

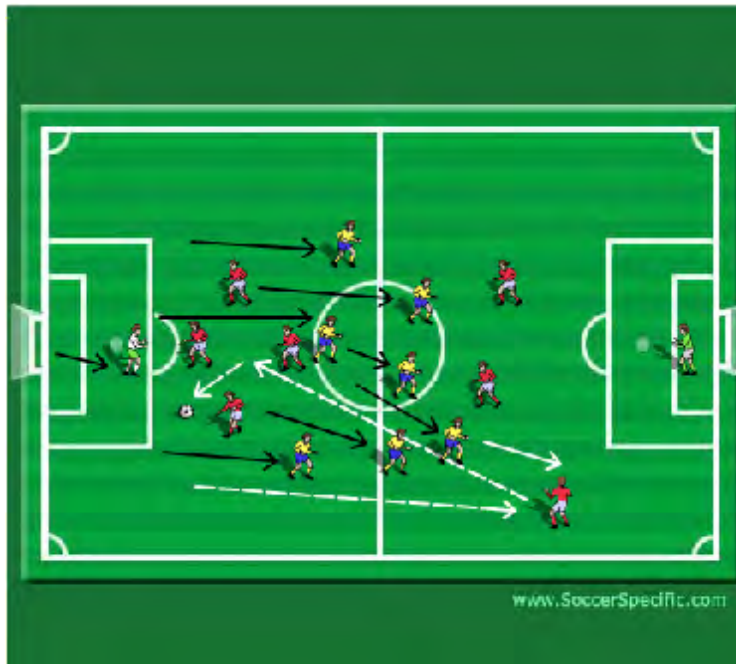
## The Importance Of Pushing Out

We clear the ball, their defender drops back to collect the ball and then plays it forward.

We do not push out so all the opponents are onside.

This causes our team a lot of problems.

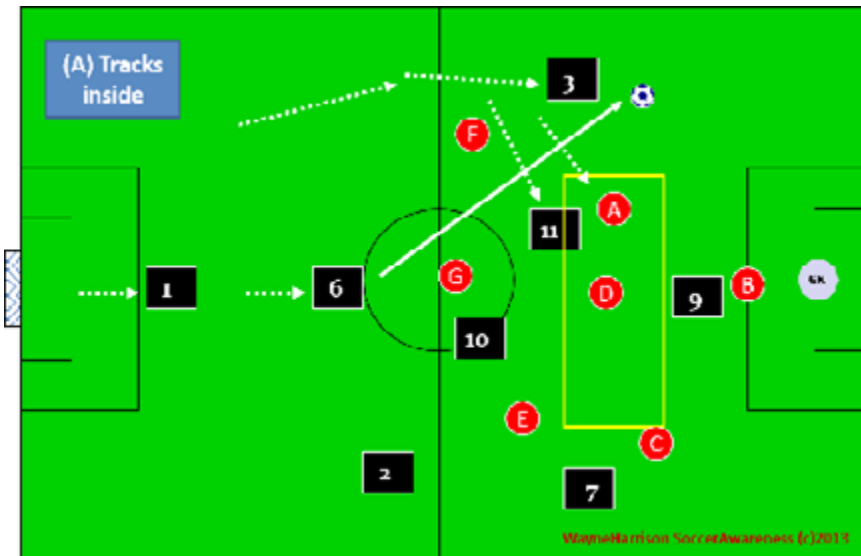




We push out “as the ball is travelling” and as the opponent drops back to collect the ball.

This gives us the time to push up and leave opponents offside when the ball is played back in.

Hence why the shout of UP must be acted upon.

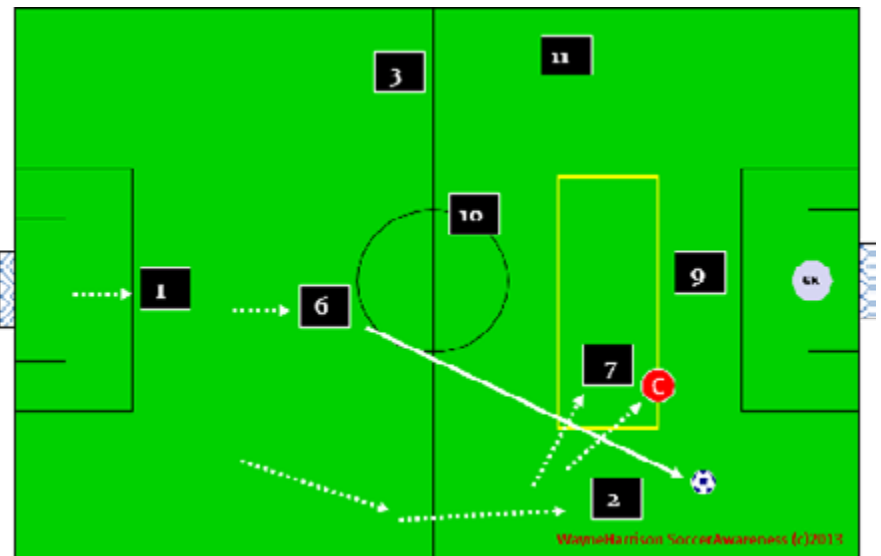


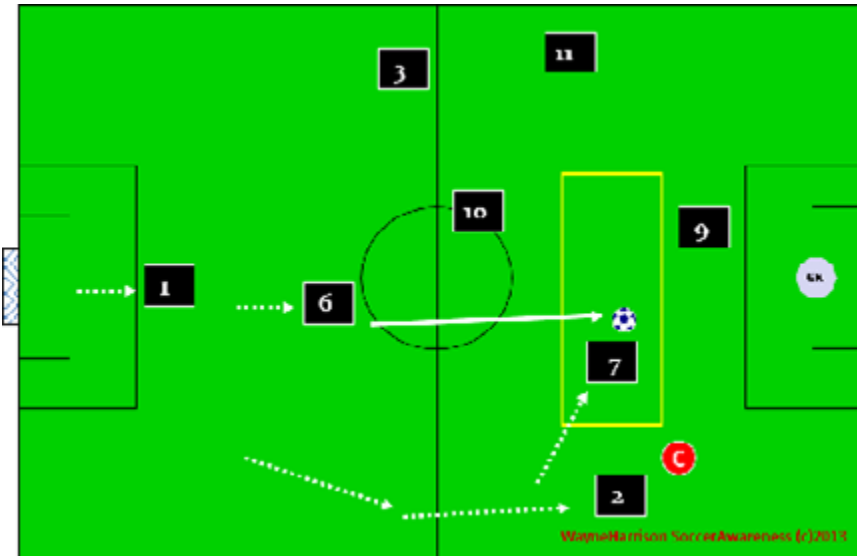
### Combinations Movements to Teach

Start simply with this two player rotation. (11) cuts inside, this is the CUE for (3) to overlap. Opponent players here lettered in Red.

### Simple Combinations Movements to Teach

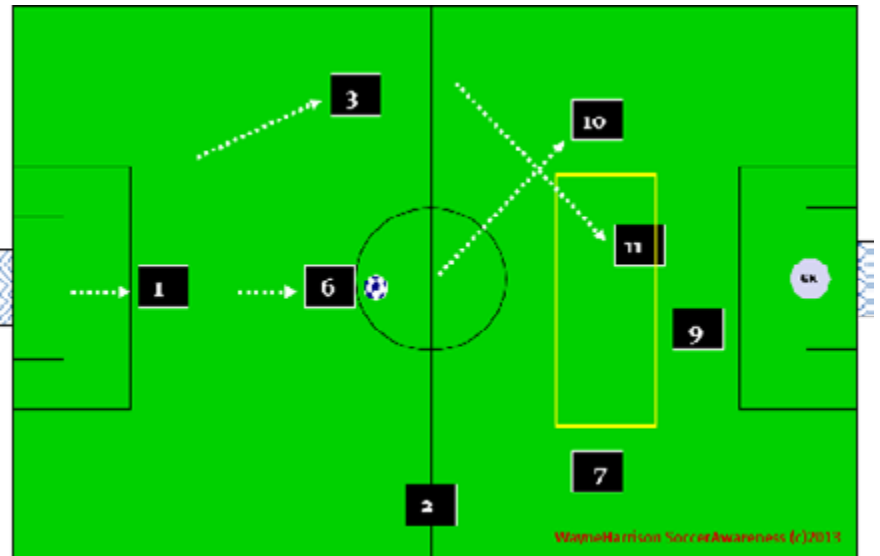
Now (7) cuts inside clearing the space for (2) to overlap. (6) plays the ball into the space (7) has created for (2).

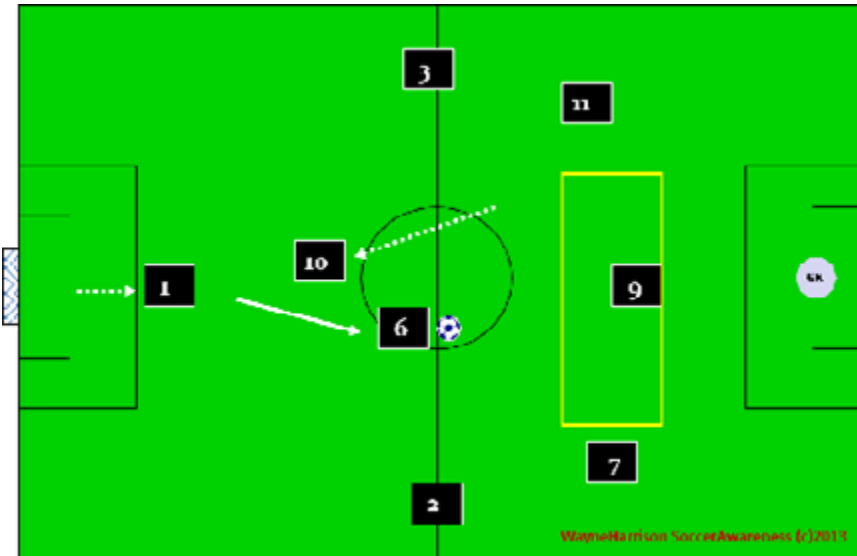




Now (7) cuts inside clearing the space for (2) to overlap. Defender (C) stays wide to mark (2) so (6) passes to (7).

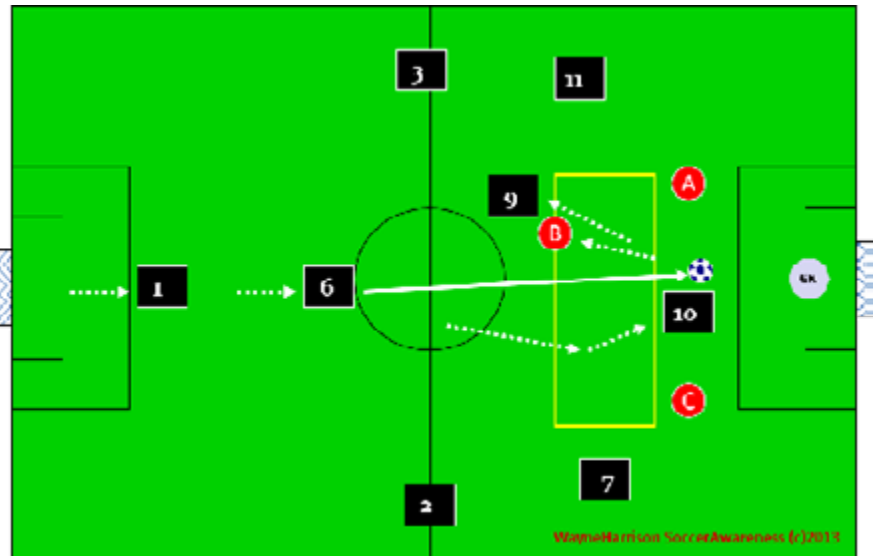
Now central midfielder (10) and wide left striker / midfielder (11) rotate.





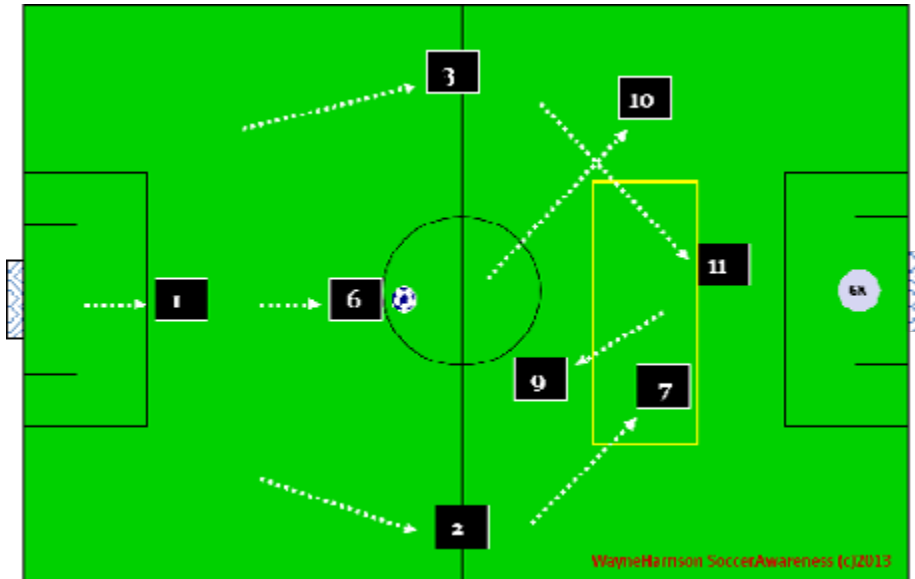
Now center back (6) brings the ball out of defense and central midfielder (10) drops in to cover. Fullbacks (2) or (3) could also drop in to cover (6).

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.





## More Complex Combinations Movements to Teach



More complex; perhaps starting at U10 for older 8 v 8 players. 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 4 players rotating.

## TACTICAL THOUGHTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW 4 V 4; 7 V 7 AND 9 V 9 GAME SIZES

These are just “Suggestions / Guides” as to how I see these different size games being taught and also showing different systems of play that might be useful to you.

Run with them as you may and of course come up with your own solutions too as that is what coaching is all about. I have introduced the use of RONDOS to initially aid the development of players for the game situation.

The idea I am trying to cultivate is to find a pattern of development that goes from 4 v 4, to 7 v 7 to 9 v 9.

Not perfect by any means but a good starting point I think that will at least get you all thinking, elaborating; and ultimately further developing the ideas.

Even for 4 v 4 we are developing ideas on angles of support and playing in triangles and diamonds that will intimately translate into larger 7 v 7 and 9 v 9 games too..

4 v 4 particularly can even imitate small areas on the field of play that occur on the ultimate 11 v 11 game.

## The Roles and responsibilities of each player in the 4 v 4

### The role of the Bottom of the diamond player:

We want the player at the bottom of the diamond, the defensive end; to be able to play like a defender and like an attacker also. This player we want to play like a number (6) (defensive midfielder) in the 11 v 11 game, and we want to start that thought process at 4 v 4. This player is the catalyst of the game itself. Examples of this are Busquets of Barcelona, Alonso of Bayern Munich.

Following are descriptions of the attributes this player requires in my opinion. Of course the 4 v 4 game is for younger players so we can only expect so much of them at these younger ages but we should have a plan for them in their development to become the type of player we want to see at 11 v 11. We will look at each player in isolation and in respect to the team.

#### In Possession / Without Possession:

1. Technical
2. Tactical
3. Psychological
4. Physical
5. Skill

The number (6) is a vital player (perhaps THE main player) in the modern game; and the team often takes its shape around him or her. I personally think even at a young age we must try to CULTIVATE certain characteristics in a player playing this role. For me I want my center backs at 11 v 11 to be able to play like a number 6, and not play as a more traditional center back would play, which would be less technical, more physical, more defensively minded.

#### Technical Attributes:

1. Excellent first touch control: A Great passer - short medium and long passing, ability to play ONE TOUCH.
2. Speed of play with the ball in all disciplines

#### Tactical Attributes: On the ball

1. Control at Speed in tight situations; so a great first touch always moving the ball quickly when able.
2. Always in a position to receive the ball and always WANTING the ball.
3. Choice – preservation of the ball - change the direction of the game
4. Direct quick passing. Create and save the space and distance
5. Able to play with SIMPLICITY.

### Tactical Attributes: Off the ball

1. Understanding of Positioning according to the positioning of opponents; the ball and teammates
2. Communication - with their peers and with respect to the opponents, particularly those immediately close to him, center backs, central midfielders and fullbacks (a position on the field of great responsibility for communication)
3. Insight in when and where to apply pressure on the ball
4. Control of the different types of defending- between the lines, zoning, man marking, covering the passing lanes

### Psychological

1. Vocal leader and organizer.
2. Control over the pressure of the ball.
3. Disciplined and responsible - always in a position to receive the ball first safe place to pass to.
4. Self-confidence
5. Authority
6. Security for all the actions
7. Composure

### Physical

1. Speed - in short and medium distances.
2. Quick off the mark
3. Strength of passing
4. Coordination with and without the ball
5. Agility
6. Strength in the defensive 1 v 1 duel

He / she must first have an excellent understanding with the other 3 players in the team.

### Skill

1. All about Decision Making and developing the mind of the player. The "Skill Factor: is perhaps THE most important component to develop in a player.
2. Everything they do relates to this in terms of assessing options and what the right course of action to take both on and off the ball.

## **The Roles of the side players in the diamond (equivalent of 2 and 3 and 7 and 11 combined)**

I see these two positions as a cross between a fullback and a winger so we could say its like a wing back. You could say its numbers 2 or 3 in the team or numbers 7 and 11. Both have similar roles in the way we play, 2 and 3 being more defensively minded of course.

### Technical Qualities:

1. Ability to play at speed with the ball
2. Control of the ball – excellent first touch control
3. Technique of the pass - short, medium and long distance
4. Crossing Technique

### Technical:

1. Speed with the ball
2. Control of the ball - first control – great first touch
3. Crossing Ability – cross with pace: on the ground, with a curve out of the reach of the goalkeeper and between the goalkeeper and defenders.
4. Also dribbling inside and outside to shoot at goal or to cross
5. Passing ability
6. Scoring - balls on the floor / in the air

### Tactical Qualities: ON the ball

1. Speed control - With the ball
2. Positioning- always in a position to receive, open stance, and facing towards the goal, and as open as possible
3. Know how to choose (when and where) - Cross, 1 to 1 dribble; when to pass, when to shoot.
4. Understanding of when and where to break outside to inside and inside to outside.

### Tactical: OFF the ball

1. Positioning / Movement off the ball determined by the ball, the opponent, teammates to attack - to defend
2. Communication - with their peers and with respect to the opponent
3. Attitude to close spaces as a team player
4. Ability to press and hold the position.
5. Retrieve balls

### Psychological

1. Disciplined and responsible - always with an attitude to receive the ball - first pass without risks – maintaining possession
2. Willingness to work for the team - in attack - defense
3. Confidence - Create actions for goals
4. Makes the field as large (and deep) as possible or short and tight as possible

### Physical

1. Speed and change of pace- In short, medium and long distance
2. Great endurance / stamina – covering the whole of the flank
3. Strong in the tackle
4. Agility and coordination

### Skill

1. Decision making – when, where and how to pass, run with the ball, cross the ball, dribble, shoot, when, where and how to defend and so on.
2. Understanding - when and where to attack; as a winger, when and where to defend as a wing back with defensive duties; he / she must have good decision making on this.

## **The Role of the Top of the Diamond Player: The Role of the Central Striker (9)**

### Technical

1. Speed with the ball
2. Control of the ball - first control – great first touch in all directions- Ability to keep the ball; dribbling ability; ability to hold the ball with their back to play
3. Ability to play Give and go's- pass to the side (left and right)
4. Passing, dribbling and Shooting ability

### Tactical: ON the ball

1. Speed - with ball - control without the ball
2. Positioning- without ball to receive it: always in position to receive 1 v 1, in depth and always in a position to receive –
3. With the ball: choose direct / indirect play, create chances for others or retain possession of the Ball

### Tactical: OFF the ball

1. Creative movement without the ball: Positional sense
2. Communication - with their peers and with respect to the opponents
3. Attitude to pressure as a team player

### Psychological

1. Strong and positive mentality.
2. With self-confidence - (to create AND SCORE goals)
3. Disciplined and responsible
4. Willingness to work for the team - in attack – defense
5. Self-belief to KEEP going back after missing chances

### Physical

1. Speed - in short (especially), distance - technical in speed (Great coordination and first touch control at pace)
2. Change of pace
3. Strength in 1 v 1 on the ground to keep the ball under control
4. Agility

### Skill

Decision Making: When, where and how to pass, run with the ball, cross the ball, dribble, shoot, when, where and how to defend and so on.

## Small Sided 4 v 4 Attacking Games

One way to teach the basic tactical game of the 4 v 4 is to offer many different ideas on actual game situation that focus on certain themes. This is what the following presentations do.

You cannot do better than put players into game situations to learn the game, we just take it one stage further by what we present here.

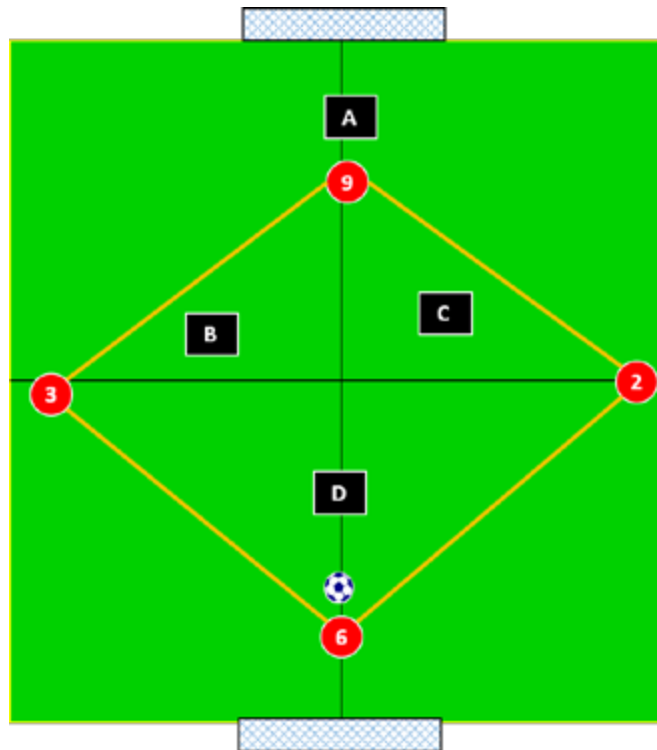
We continue by teaching Attacking principles in a 4 v 4 game situation so several thoughts on different set ups to teach it individually and collectively as team players..

The set ups of the game situation will dictate what theme we get out of it.

Here are some ideas.



## 4 v 4 a Basic Diamond Shape for Attacking



### Coaching Points for 4 v 4

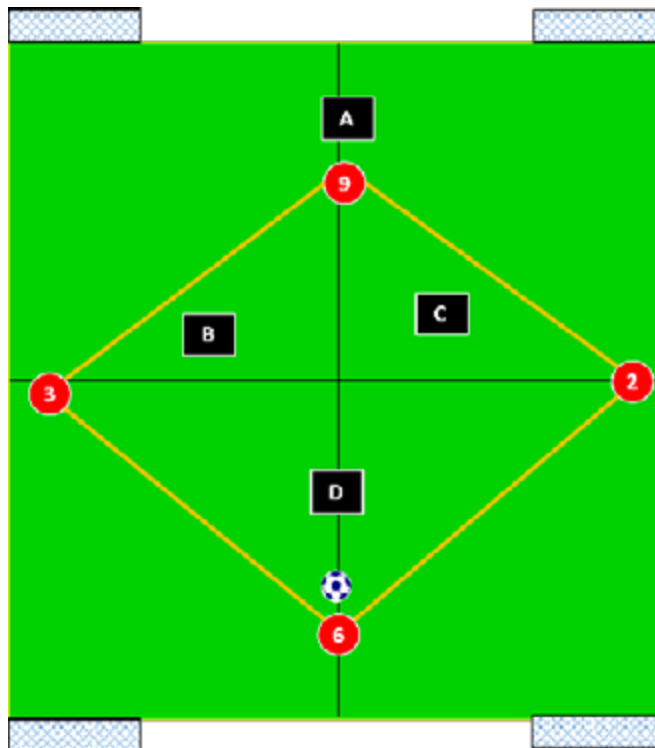
1. Correct Positioning when Attacking and Defending.
2. Maintaining Possession and dictating the direction of play by running with the ball, passing and dribbling.
3. Forward passing but if not then positioning for back or sideways passing.
4. Movement as a team forward, backward, sideways left and right.
5. Communication – verbal and non-verbal (body language).
6. Techniques involved – Controlling and Passing, receiving and turning, dribbling, shielding and shooting. Defending.

This is the set up for the eventual 4 v 4 (or 5 v 5 plus keepers) competitive game situation. The above coaching points are important to use as guidelines to what you are trying to achieve in this coaching practice.

The attacking four spread out as wide and long as they can to make it difficult for the defending team to mark them. Maintenance of a rough diamond shape ensures good angles and distances of support wherever the ball may be.

The use of the awareness principles is very important in the development of this game concept and you can ensure they are applied by conditioning the game for example making it one and two touch play to mention just one way.

## A Switching Play Game

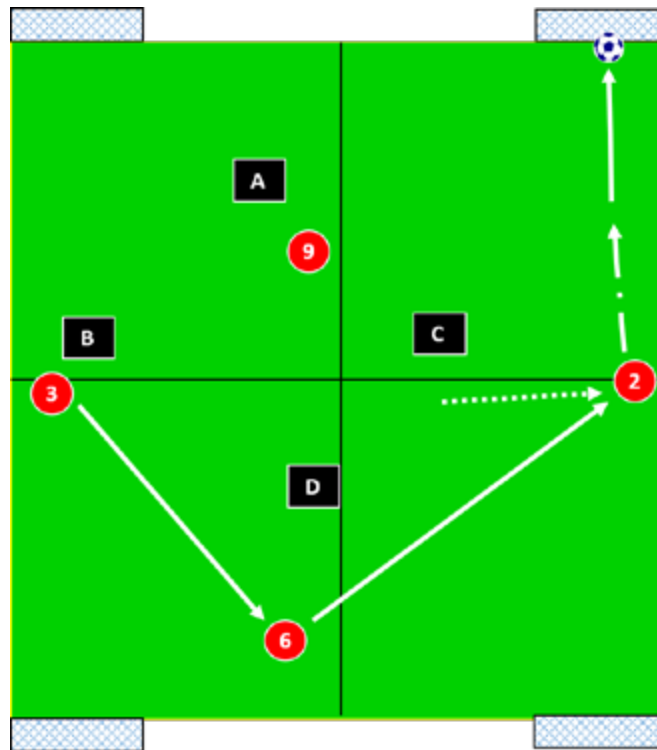


1. You can start as in other practices with two teams playing through each other with a ball each practicing switching play, attacking each goal in turn. Limit it to two touches to ensure quick decisions both from the player on the ball and the players off the ball who need to get in support positions early.
2. Using two wide positioned goals for each team to attack. This is designed to encourage players to spread out when they attack and switch play; changing direction if one route is blocked. It also encourages players on the ball to look around more, as there are two areas to attack.
3. Looking for quick transition and movement off the ball to create space but attacking the space when it is on to do so. The first thought of the player on the ball should still be “Can I run or pass the ball forward”.

### Coaching Points:

1. Creating Space – for yourself and your teammates.
2. Decision – When, Where and How to pass the ball.
3. Technique – The Quality of the pass (Accuracy, Weight, Angle).
4. Support Positions of teammates (Angle, Distance and Communication). Players are supporting in front of the ball, to the side and behind the ball.
5. Switching Play using width in attack.
6. Combination Plays incorporating over laps, take over’s, give and go’s.

## A Switching Play Game

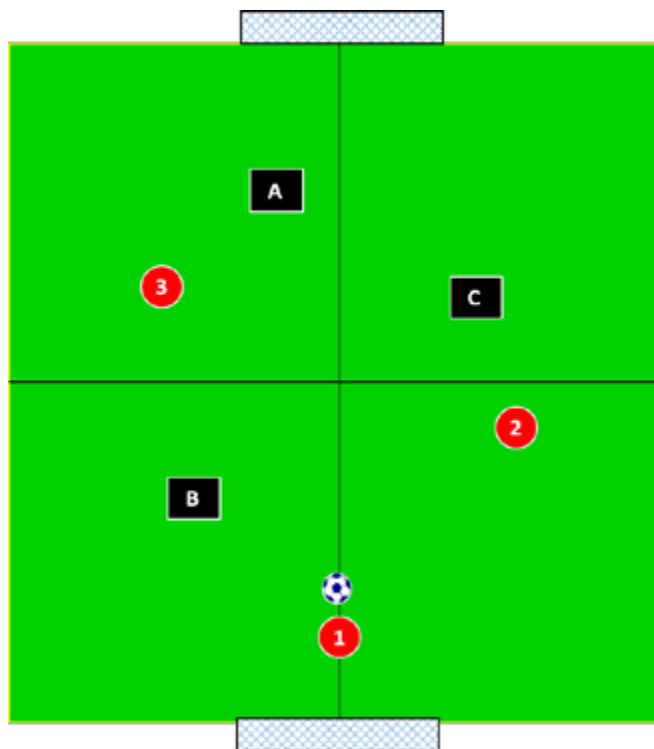


Here is the classic example of using the FULL WIDTH of the field to exploit all the space. (3) cannot attack the left goal due to good defending by the opponents so passes quickly to (2) on the other side of the field before (C) can close down and (2) then runs and scores in the right side opposite goal.

Here we see as the ball is being passed from (3) to (6), player (2) breaks wide quickly and away from defender (C).

This game is great for teaching spacing and how important it is to make the field as BIG as possible.

## A 3 v 3 Format for Street Soccer



### Street Soccer

1. It can be used for a 3 v 3 (or a 4 v 4). Players referee their own games. Each game lasts 4 minutes (you can vary this time).
2. Structure – Each player receives a number they keep for all the games.
3. Scoring System – Each player on the team receives a point for every goal their team scores in a particular game – up to a maximum of 3 points.
4. Each person on the team receives the following, for a win: 3 points, a draw: 1 point, a defeat: 0 points.
5. Example: 1, 4, 7 score 2 goals v 10, 2, 5 who score 3 goals therefore: 1, 4, 7 receive 2 points (for two goals, nothing for the defeat so score total of 2 points each player for the game). 10, 2, 5 receive 6 points (for 3 goals, plus 3 points for the win for total of 6 points each player for the game). Therefore a player can score a maximum of 6 points in any one game.
6. Play a number of games rotating the players each game and add up all the points for each player at the end of the contest. It can be done daily and have a different player win every day and / or for the week of the camp and have one overall winner.

7. Where substitutes are needed you can just say all the subs get 2 points each time they have to be one.

## **A 3 v 3 Or 4 v 4 Festival Of Fun**

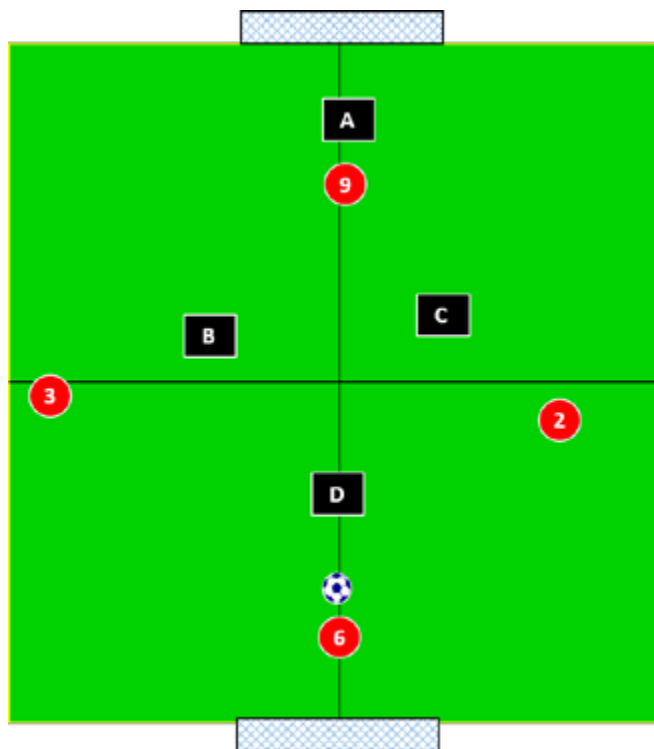
### **Creating A Game – Like Playing Environment**

Encouraging competitiveness in players in a small sided game environment and developing the best features of youth soccer as it used to be played in the parks, streets and back alleyways around the world, into the more formalized structure of the modern club soccer training program. It is about the technical and skills development of the younger player. These features include:

1. Lots of individual touches on the ball.
2. Trying new skills without fear of ridicule or recrimination.
3. Taking players on and challenging defenders.
4. Little or NO pressure from significant others (parents, coaches).
5. A vibrant creative and fun environment.

Parents need to be briefed as to the aims and the underlying philosophy of the small sided game concept.

## A 4 v 4 Format for Street Soccer



**PROGRAM** - The format is easily adapted and can accommodate many players, including goalkeepers, at very short notice.

**TEAMS** - No player sits out a game unless there are substitutes due to hot weather conditions for example or total numbers dictate substitutes are needed.

**SUBSTITUTES** - If a team has more than 3 players then substitutes are brought into the game on a “strict” rotational basis.

**GAME DURATION / REFEREES** - Each game lasts for 8 minutes and there are no referees. By referring the game themselves, players co-operation is fostered and the young players consistently learn to take more responsibility for their own actions.

**SCORING / GOALS** - Because so many goals are scored in the conditioned 4 v 4 games, scoring itself is de-emphasized and no scores are held. Except for the Goalkeepers Game, the use of cones instead of real goals and nets redirects the emphasis of the game back onto build – up play and technical execution.

**PLAYING TIME** - Each player plays a minimum of 6 games and there is a minimum 2 minute break period between games for rest, re-hydration and games organization. This exercise-to-rest ratio increases energy levels and mental awareness during competitive play.

**COACHING** - There is very little overt coaching performed during competitive matches – no raised voices, no disciplining, and no “playing – the – game – for - the – players” commentary from the sidelines. Instead, consistent encouragement and praise are given to players of both teams for brave attempts and creative decision making. Players are repeatedly encouraged to make their own decisions in the games.

**CONCLUSION** - It is our responsibility to provide the players with a secure, vibrant and challenging soccer environment for them to learn their technical skills. Consistent practice in this small sided game format will go a long way to helping them develop these skills to their fullest potential. As well as this type of festival, “All” regular training sessions should include at least one third of the time the session lasts, playing small sided competitive games where they “just play”!

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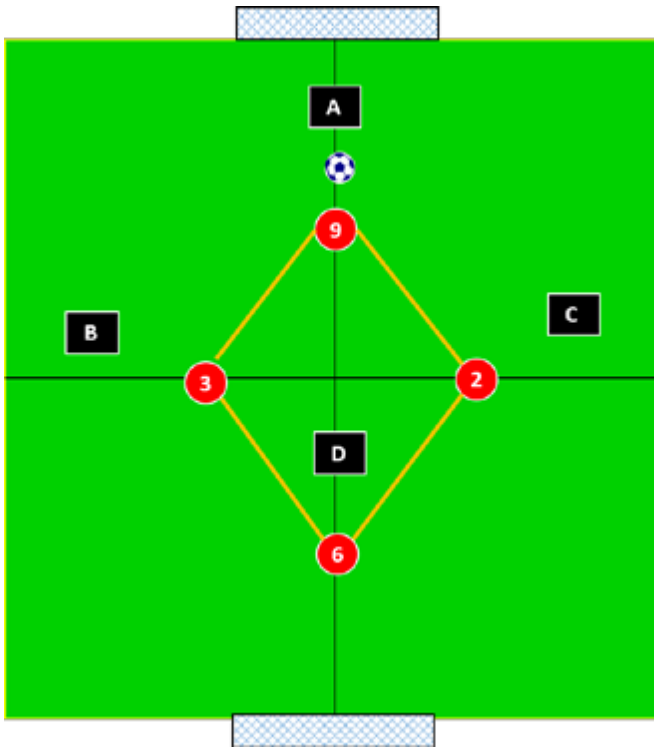
### **Small Sided 4 v 4 Defending Games**

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We begin by teaching defending principles in a 4 v 4 game situation so several thoughts on different set ups to teach it individually and collectively as team players.

## 4 v 4 a Basic Diamond Shape for Defending



The main idea here is for the defending team to condense the area the ball can be played into the defending team become a diamond within the opponents attacking diamond. (9) Forces (A) one way and the rest of the team adjust their positions off this. (3) Protects the space inside but can close down (B) if the ball is passed, (2) and (6) is the same scenario and this results in the diamond being shorter and tighter.

As the opponents move the defending team must move to compensate. Also if any pass is played behind (2), (3) or (6) they should be first to the ball.

### Coaching Points:

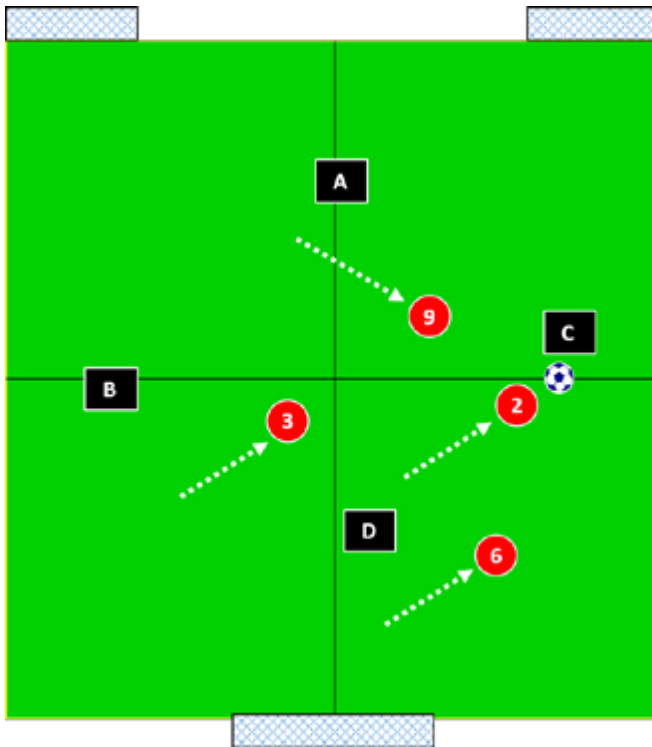
1. Pressure – 1 v 1 defending to win the ball, delay or force a bad pass.
2. Support – position of immediate teammate (angle, distance and communication).
3. Cover – positions of teammates beyond the supporting player.
4. Recovering and Tracking should the ball go past our position, recovery run to goal side of the ball and tracking the run of a player.
5. Double-Teaming – (A) passes to (C), (2) closes (C) down from in front, (9) follows along the path of the ball to close down from behind or slightly to the side. (9) Closes in such a way as to obstruct a back pass to (A).
6. Regaining Possession and creating Compactness from the back (pushing up as a unit).

The objectives of defending are to disrupt the other teams build up, make play predictable, prevent forward passes and ultimately regain possession of the ball.

Techniques include – pressuring, marking, tackling and winning the ball.



## A defending game teaching the players to show the opponent one way or the other



Here we have different set ups for goals, using two wide small goal on one side of the field and one bigger goal centrally on the other side.

Defenders need to force players away from the goals so those defending the wide goals force the player on the ball inside, those defending the big goal force the players outside.

These conditions plant the seed in the players' minds and make it easier for decision making. If a player behind coaches the pressing player advising them "inside" or "outside" then that is a bonus but do not expect it to happen at these young ages. Just to get the pressing player showing them one way or the other (through the set up of the goals) is good enough for now.

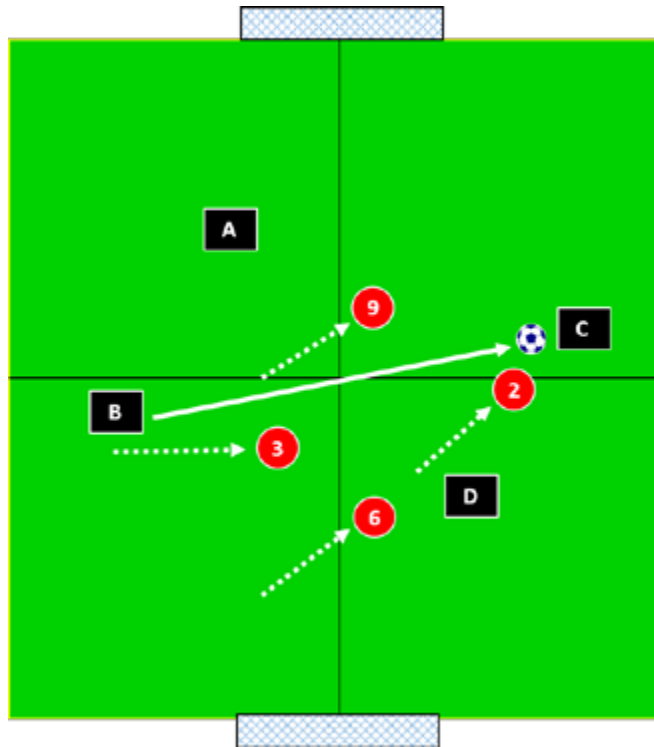
Rotate the teams so both sets of players get the chance to show inside and outside.

Here the team defending the big central goal forces the opponents "outside" and away from the goal; the team defending the two small wide goals forces the opponents "inside" and away from the two goals and towards the middle of the field between them.

The goals and field set up determine the condition and make it easier for the players to learn how to show a player one way or the other, from a defensive perspective.

Conditioning like this can be a great help to players making sure the theme you are working on actually happens on a consistent basis due to the condition set.

## A Pressing Game

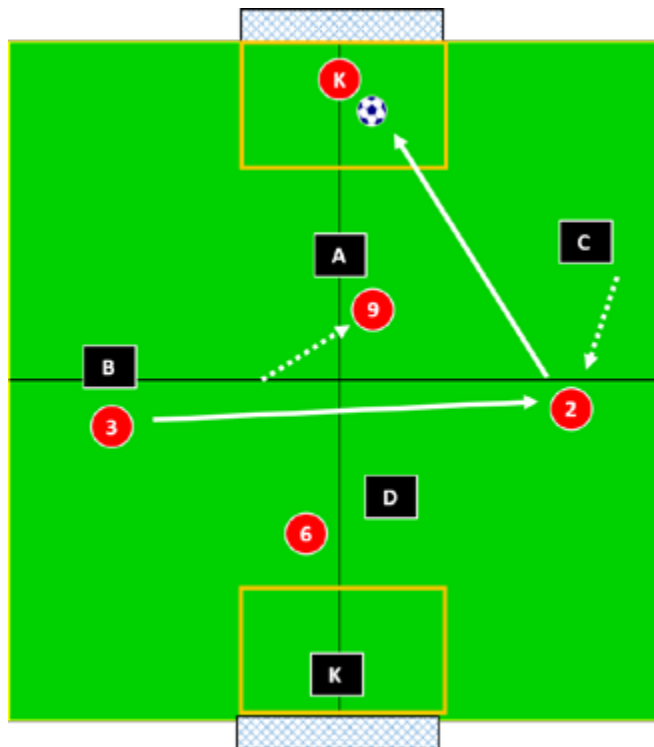


The ball is transferred from (B) to (C) and our players move as the ball moves.

Still maintaining a diamond shape, (2) presses the ball with (C), (6) covers but is close to (D) also, (9) positions to stop the pass to (A) and (3) fills the space inside but at the same time is aware of (B)'s position should the point of attack change.

Add keepers to bring in correct finishing techniques as a reward for getting free of tight marking.

## A Pressing Target Game



In this game to score a goal each team must get the ball to their keeper.

Vary the service for difficulty, it has to be a chip without touching the ground, a pass on the ground, a swerved pass, and so on.

Have an area in front of the keeper where the opponents cannot encroach to stop them standing in front of the keeper which would make it unrealistic if they did this.

They can score a goal from anywhere just by getting it to their keeper so opponents **MUST PRESS** very fast to stop this delivery.

This is a high speed and a very physically challenging game.

**Man Marking:** Make it man marking so if your immediate opponent scores you do 2 push ups.

# 1-3-2-1: PATTERNS OF PLAY: AT 7 V 7

Taking simple tactical ideas created on the training field to the game situation.

We teach certain movements in training; players take ownership of them in the game situation.

## **How to break down player movements**

The following presentation is designed to simplify the potential Patterns of Play of players at 7 v 7.

We show 3 different systems of play.

Eventually we will show several movements but we need to build up to these slowly and with patience.

## **A Team Pattern of Play**

Patterns of Play are designed to be practiced to help players identify common situations in the game itself.

When these situations occur the players involved will think about the movements within a pattern of play (that they practiced in training) and will re-enact them in the game.

Our goal is to make this an unconscious decision where the players don't even have to think about it; they just do it naturally / instinctively.

## The Roles and responsibilities of each player in the 7 v 7

Here we are looking at players 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9 and 10 of the 11 v 11 and we will look at them in this particular formation of 1-3-2-1 but will show other variable formations too.

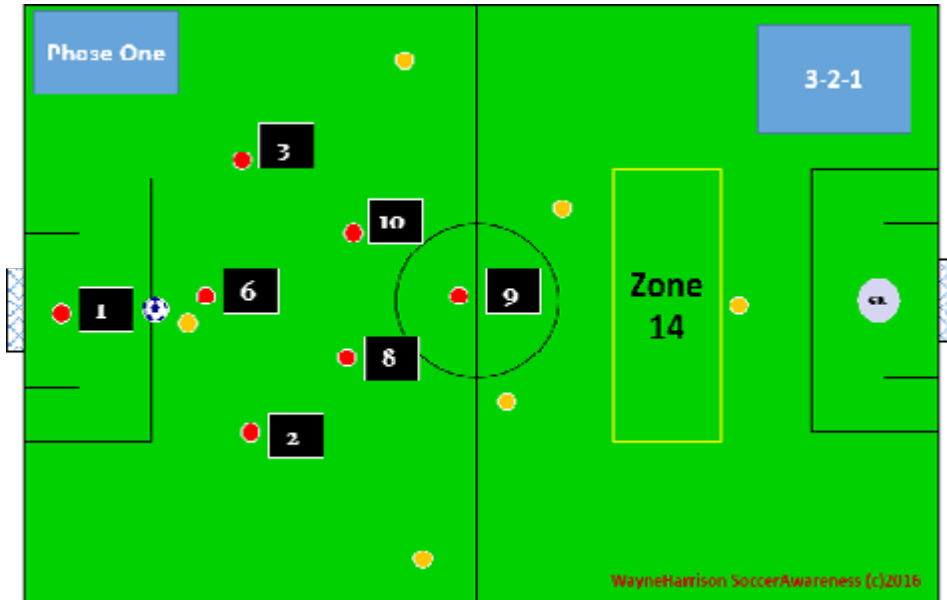
(2) And (3) can take on the characteristics of (7) and (11) in attack. We want them to get up and down the field as our wide outlets..

(6) Can be compared to center backs (4) and (5) in their roles though in a more attacking minded way in the way I believe we can play. (6) is also playing a more characteristic Number (6) role as in the 11 v 11 team.

(8) Is like a link midfield player and (10) is the shadow striker in behind (9) the central striker.

In this set up the shadow striker has perhaps slightly more defensive duties than the shadow striker in an 11 v 11 due to the lower number of players on the team.

Defensive positioning is more beside (8) than in front of (8) as it would be in the 11 v 11.  
(9) Plays the traditional striker role.

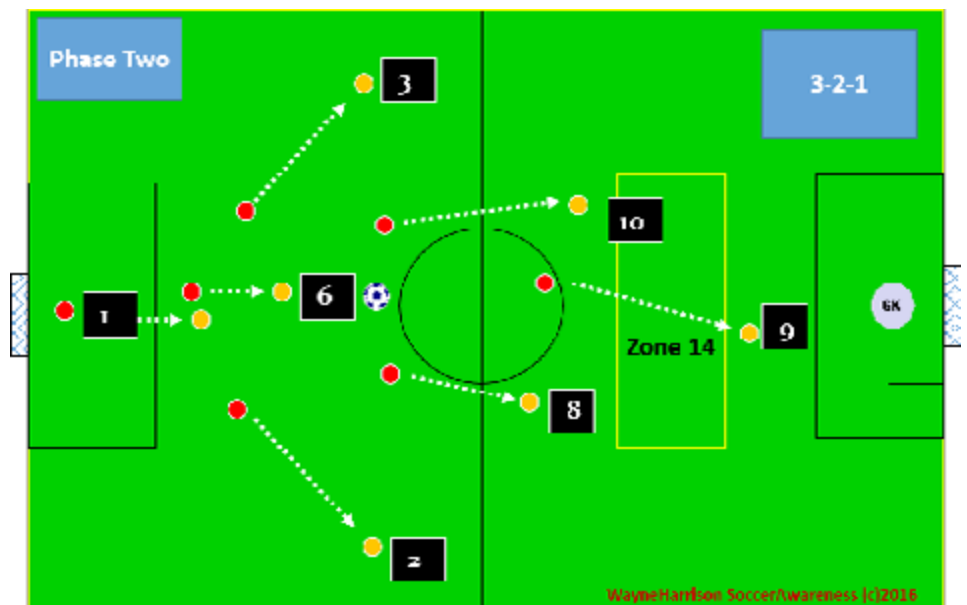


**Players in our Defensive 3-2-1 set up**

Using Cones as reference points for team shape defensively then team shape offensively. This is the team shape start position of a 3-2-1.

**Players in our Attacking 3-2-1 set up**

Zone 14 is the area between the opponents back players and their midfield.



# The Role of the Keeper:

## With the Ball / Without the Ball

1. Technical
2. Tactical
3. Psychological
4. Physical
5. Skill

## Technical Qualities: With the Ball

1. Speed and quality of distribution
2. Pass, kick, without hands and excellent on the floor technique.
3. Technique of releasing the ball with the feet and hands - distance (short, middle and long) with speed and direction

## Tactical: With the Ball

1. Speed - with ball TO START ATTACKS
2. Positioning - in a position to receive the back pass.
3. Choice - playing in depth - retaining possession of the ball

## Without the Ball:

1. Positioning: depending on where the ball is and who has it
2. Communication - with their peers and with respect to the opponents
3. Control of ways to defend - the goal - area (at the sides, in front of the back four and behind the back four)

## Psychological:

1. The "Will" to avoid goals against
2. Disciplined and responsible
3. Stable / consistent performances - avoiding risk
4. A Leader and organizer
5. Highly Vocal Communication Skills - with defenders (especially) - with the midfielders - with the forwards (Can see the WHOLE FIELD)

## Physical Attributes:

1. Speed over short and middle distances
2. QUICK Reactions (not anticipation)
3. Vertical Force - strong jumping ability - to attack the ball AT ITS HIGHEST POINT
4. Duel - in the air - power in the 1 to 1; so a strong body

### Skill:

1. All about Decision Making and developing the mind of the player. The “Skill Factor: is perhaps THE most important component to develop in a player.
2. Everything they do relates to this in terms of assessing options and what the right course of action to take both on and off the ball.

## **The Role of the Central Defender Number (6) in the 7 v 7**

The same technical, tactical, psychological, physical and skill factor attributes as shown in the 4 v 4 set up.

Percentages for attacking and defending for each player are only approximate depending on how each team employs their players.

### **DEFENDING (65%)**

Screening: He / she positions in front of the keeper to screen shots at the keeper. Must be a good reader of the other team’s intentions.

Double; Teaming: He / she can act as a double teaming player with the players in front if the ball gets past those in front. Example: tight to opponent (9) delaying for (8) to double up from the other side.

Man Marking: Working centrally most of the time so likely up against the opponents (9) in a 1 v 1. If the number (6) gets drawn away from his / her position by tracking the striker (9) going short for example, then (2) or (3) can drop in and fill the same role.

Tackling: A good tackler also who is able to win the ball and set up the attacks simply.

Pressure: Ability to press quickly and also good in the 1 v 1 defending situation.

Physical: He /she needs to be a tremendous physical presence and be a strong and determined player.

### **ATTACKING (35%)**

He / she needs to read the game well, must keep possession and pass calmly.

He / she needs to be comfortable dropping back and changing the point of attack around the back

Awareness: He / she must be able to anticipate his or her next pass or movement ahead



and in advance of the ball; as often the space to play in where he / she operates is restricted and oppressed by the opposing striker at 7 v 7.

Passing: He / she must have a high percentage success rate for maintaining possession; as losing the ball in his area of work is very dangerous, so a very skilled passer and a strong physical player to protect the ball also.

Often this player is the player with the most time on the ball and everything is in front of them so he / she HAS to be an excellent passer.

Discipline and Personality: (6) has to have an incredibly DISCIPLINED MIND as he / she must resist the urge to venture too far from their area of work; (unless he / she is interchanging with teammates). He / she is the player who must always want the ball, never hiding from the action; so he / she has to be a super confident and a player with a strong dominating character.

Game Intelligence: Ultimately; the most interesting thing about this role, however is that they really are the catalyst to all the moves on the team and the team takes its shape off the positioning of (6).

A major decision maker in the team and the team in this type of system is build around the number (6) as he / she is a part of so much defensively; breaking up the opponent's final attacks as the last line of defense for the keeper and so much offensively; and starting off the teams build up play; often with just a simple pass to maintain initial possession.

## **The Roles of Players (2) and (3) in the 7 v 7**

The same technical, tactical, psychological, physical and skill factor attributes as shown in the 4 v 4 set up.

### **DEFENDING (55%)**

1 v 1: They need to be very good in 1 v 1 confrontations knowing when to press and when to delay.

Physical: Physically strong to be able to compete against powerful players and quickness of foot as they usually come up against wide players with pace.

Game Intelligence: He / she has to build a good relationship and understanding with the keeper behind, immediate player in front and the defender beside them. So building a relationship with first the keeper, with (6), (10) and ultimately (9) when they attack.

Positional intelligence is vital, not letting players get in behind them.

Recovery: Recovery runs are vitally important for this player in this system of play. When attacking they must have the capacity to get back. But, lets say (3) has attacked and is in front of (10) then we would expect (10) to help out defensively behind them.

## **ATTACKING (45%)**

Offensively, in our 3-2-1 system of play the wingbacks have freedom to attack, and unlike many systems of play that only allow for one fullback to attack at any open time this system allows for both of them to attack at the same time. That said if you are more cautious in your approach only one will attack at any one time and the other will tuck in and defend alongside (6).

Normal wingbacks percentage between defending and attacking would be far higher on the defending side; but our system encourages them to attack more so the percentages are closer.

Crossing: A high ability to cross the ball is a must for these modern day wingbacks as they will find themselves in many crossing positions during a game. They will be crossing with a moving ball so they need to learn several techniques for crossing the ball. This will include driven crosses, lofted crosses, cut back crosses, bending whipped crosses and so on depending on the situation.

Tactical Understanding / Game Intelligence: They must be better all-round players than the traditional wide player because they are acting like a wingback AND a winger even in 7 v 7 in this 3-2-1 set up whether it be a defensive minded or attacking minded player, now it is best if they can be good at both.

If the attacking full-backs get to the byline and the defending wide midfielders track them all the way, the defending team will end up with something approaching a flat back six.

Opposites: You “could” play a right footed player who can play on the left and cut inside and have a good shot, and vice versa. They attack the opponent inside, and they have an advantage from this as they cut inside onto their strongest foot and inside against the opponents weakest foot; attacking the left side defenders right foot; and the right defenders left foot.

Shooting and Crossing: Having the ability to shoot on goal. Traditional wide players usually are good at crosses and tended to stay wide, the modern wide player has to be better at so many more skills than previous generations of players.

So; they need the ability to stay wide and cross the ball and the ability to cut inside and shoot at goal.

## The Roles of Players (8) and (10)

Player (8) Can play slightly different to (10), (8) being more the link player between (6) and (10), more the passer; and (10) being the more offensive creative player. They may interchange depending on the team methodology of play.

So you may select different types of players offensively for these two positions but both need to be able to defend well also due to it only being 7 v 7.

### Technical:

1. Speed with the ball
2. Control of the ball – excellent first touch
3. Passing Ability - short, medium and long distance
4. Dribbling Ability - to create a situation of 2 to 1 to score goals
5. Long distance shooting on goal

### Tactical: With the Ball

1. Change of pace
2. Coordination with the ball
3. Game head – when and where to move – making third man runs

### Tactical: Without the Ball

1. Ability to read movement off the ball and press, mark or track opponents.
2. Communication - with their peers and with respect to the opponent
3. Attitude to pressure as a team player
4. Control of the different types of marking - between the lines, 1 v 1 pressing

### Psychological

1. Quick thinkers
2. Disciplined and responsible - always in the position of receiving the ball. Assessing options before receiving the ball. First check - First pass –Movement off the ball recognition
3. Will work for the team - on offense / on defense
4. With confidence - to go deeper - to score goals - to return to his / her position - To defend

## Physical

1. Speed - In short (especially), medium and long distance
2. Change of pace
3. Good coordination and balance with and without the ball
4. Strength of passing
5. Shooting power
6. Endurance / stamina

## Skill:

1. All about Decision Making and developing the mind of the player. The "Skill Factor: is perhaps THE most important component to develop in a player.
2. Everything they do relates to this in terms of assessing options and what the right course of action to take both on and off the ball.
3. When; where and how to pass (very important as they will have the ball a lot).

## **The Role of Central Striker Player (9)**

The same technical, tactical, psychological, physical and skill factor attributes as shown in the 4 v 4 set up.

### **ATTACKING (80%)**

The lone striker has to have good mobility and an ability to hold up the ball until support arrives so physically very strong and difficult to knock off the ball.

Obviously the usual characteristics of being a good goal scorer, a great shooter of the ball able to link up well with supporting players in front and behind him or her. Great pace is a bonus.

High Technical ability is required as he / she will often be trying to control the ball in tight spaces especially when he / she is the only striker.

Ability to play with their back to goal and also to be able to play facing the goal and get in good side on positions to receive and attack.

So; knowing where and when to come off his / her marker and get free (not dissimilar to the number (10) in this regard).

An ability to create space for him or herself or for others through intelligent movement off the ball is important for this player.

Often the coach will choose between a tall, physically strong player; able to hold the ball up and be good in the air, and be a “great wall” to play off for supporting players, or rather a quick smaller and shorter limbed player with the ability to dribble and run at center backs and expose them 1 v 1.

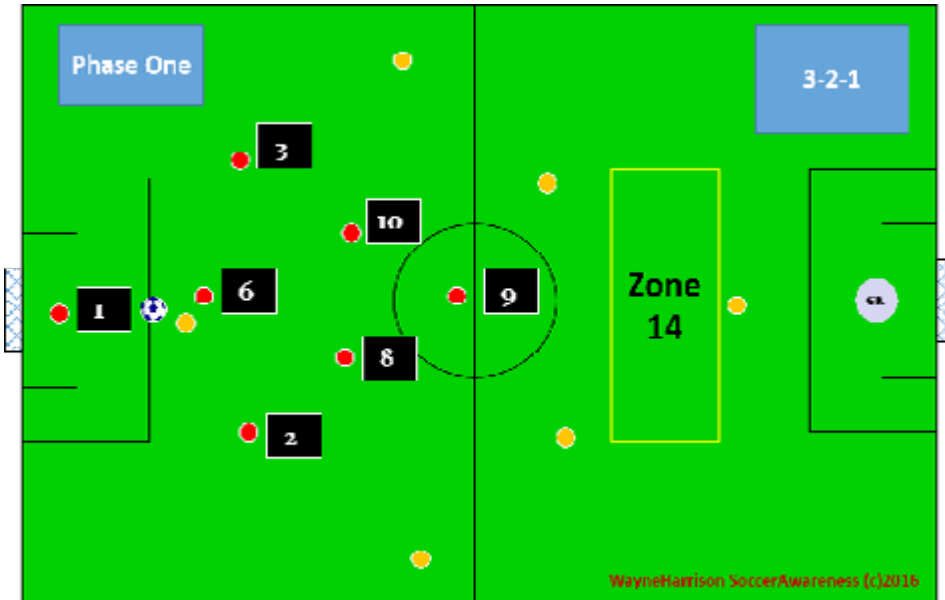
Again it depends on the coaches personnel and also the type of player he / she prefers or the type of opposition he / she is playing against..

## **DEFENDING (20%)**

The First line of defense on the team and so it is useful if he / she is good at pressing.

He / she needs to pick when and where to press to conserve energy; but if supported by teammates and not isolated alone; he / she can be very effective.

So, a willingness to close down players when the opportunity arises to help the team defensively is a good asset and of course the reward for this is often a chance of a shot on goal.

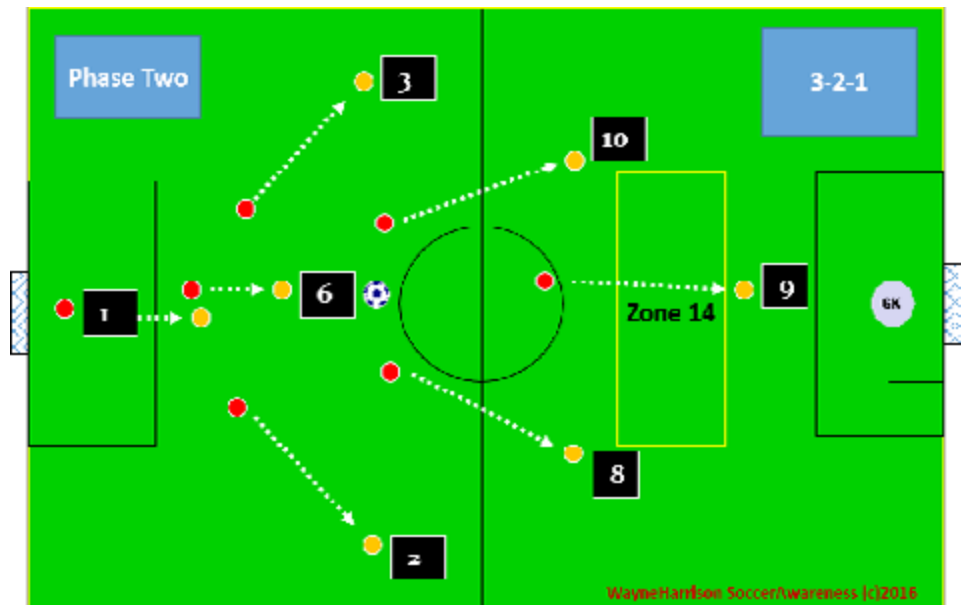


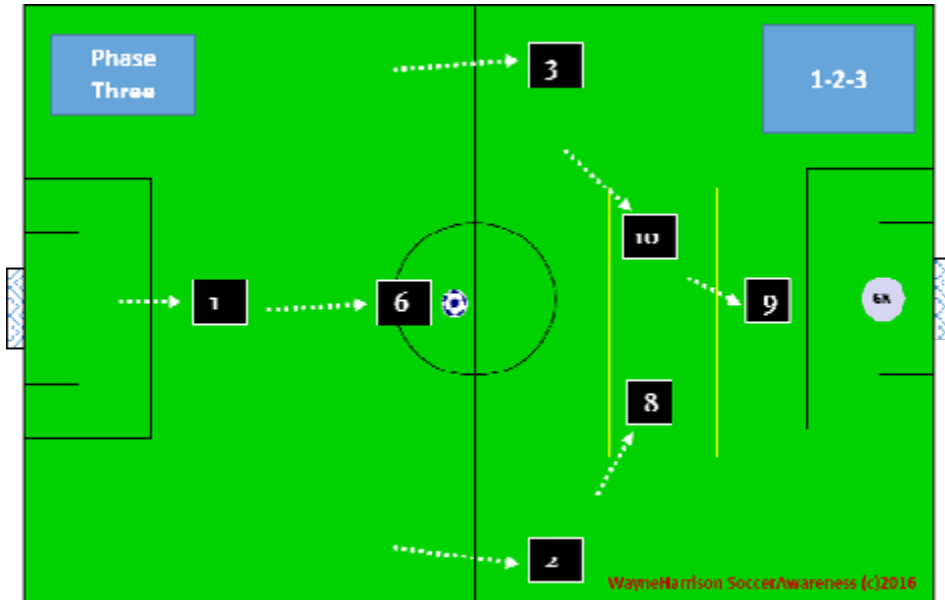
### Players in our Defensive 3-2-1 Shadow Phase of Play

Using Cones as reference points for team shape defensively then team shape offensively. This is the team shape start position of a 3-2-1.

### The Initial Attacking Shadow Phase of Play

Zone 14 is the area between the opponents back players and their midfield.



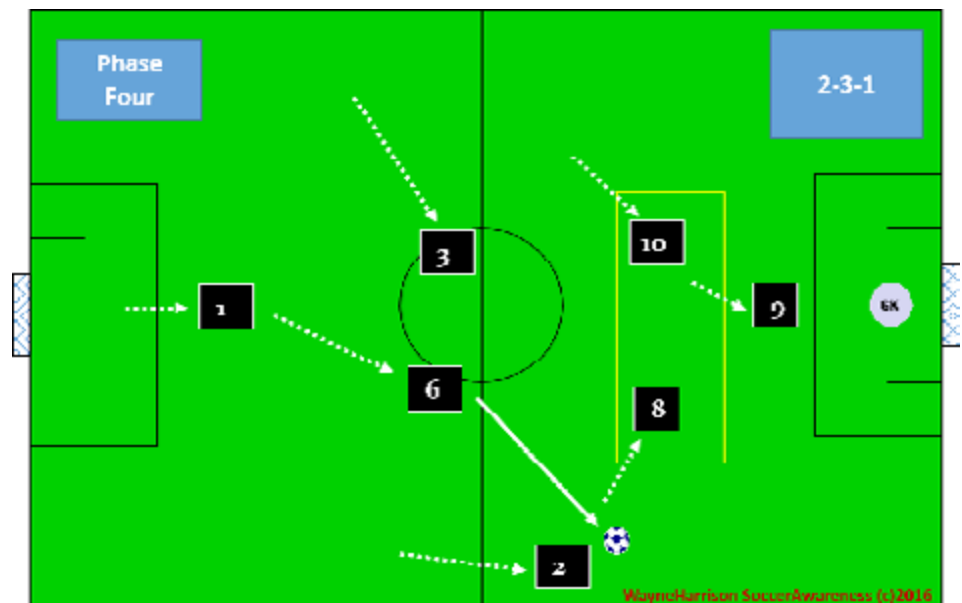


## The Full Attacking System Of Play

This is the attacking team shape now a 1-2-2-1. 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.

## Slightly Safer Way To Play

This is the attacking team shape now a 2-3-1. The attacking team shape We push one wingback / FB forward only and keep safe at the back should the opponents win the ball and counter attack.



## Team and Unit Patterns of Play

The previous slides show simple and distinctive patterns of play for the team to follow; from a basic defending shape; to a basic attacking shape.

The Third slide shows a more advanced pattern of play for the attacking phase.

### Unit Patterns of Play

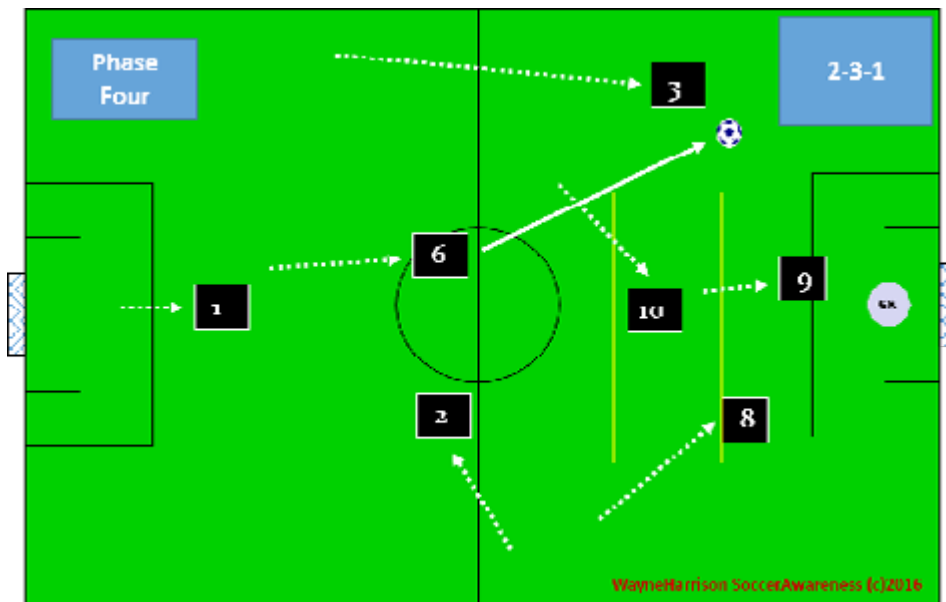
Below we have a very simple “unit” pattern of play involving our 2 wide players working together and creating space for each other on one side of the field.

(3) knows when (10) cuts inside that is the “cue” for (3) to overlap; call it a “condition” if you like.

Likewise with (2) and (8) on the other side.

This encourages / conditions our Fullbacks (2) and (3) to attack.

This is a “two player rotation”



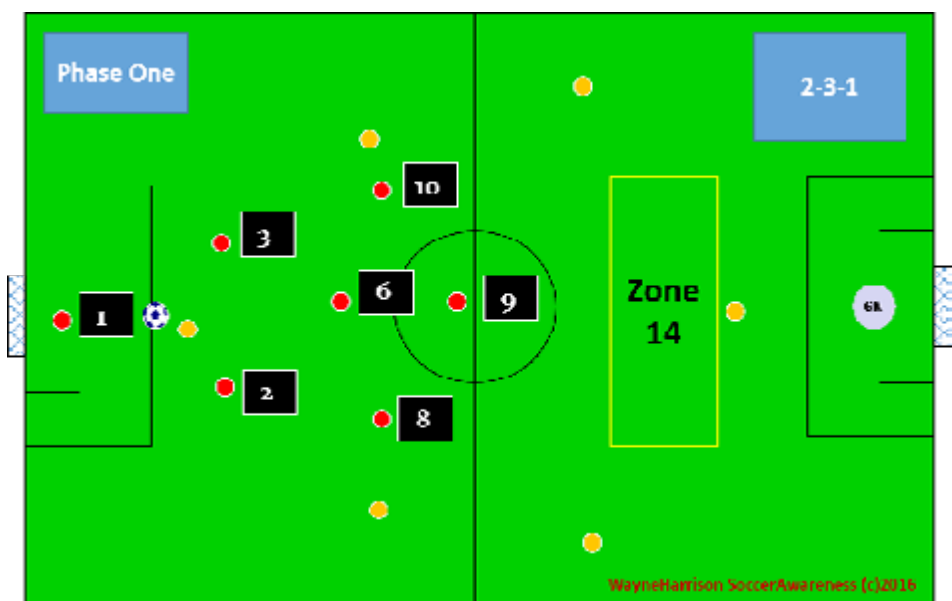
### Slightly Safer Way To Play

This is the attacking team shape now a 2-3-1. The attacking team shape We push one wingback / FB forward only and keep safe at the back should the opponents win the ball and counter attack.



# 1-2-3-1: PATTERNS OF PLAY: AT 7 V 7

Taking simple tactical ideas created on the training field to the game situation. We teach certain movements in training; players take ownership of them in the game situation. This is a starting point of developing a team to play with a back four as we are developing the two central defenders.

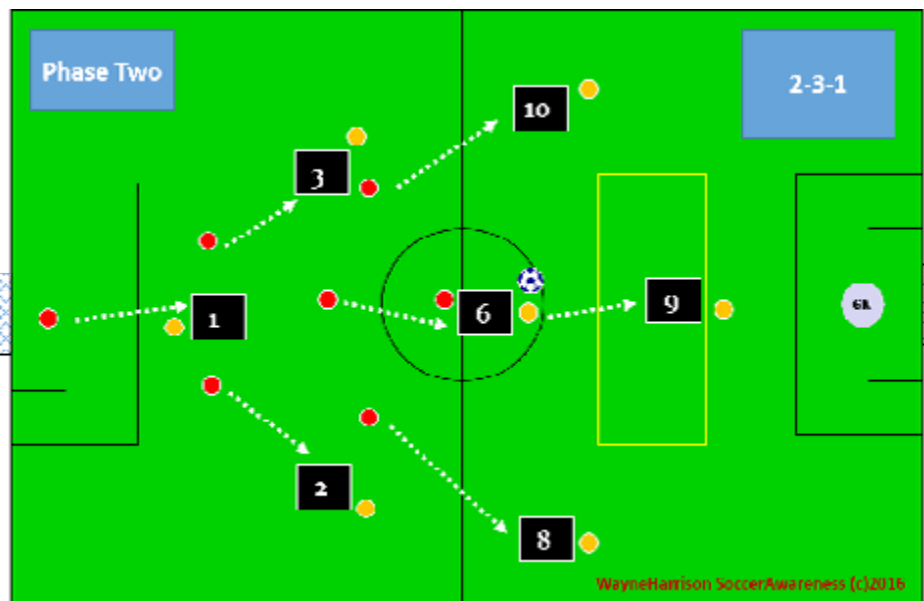


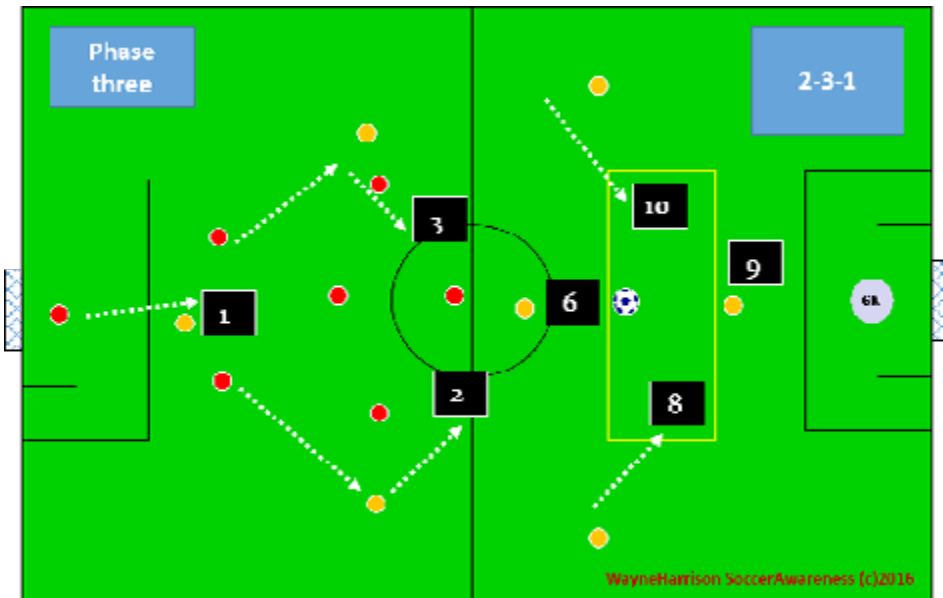
## Players in our Defensive 2-3-1 Shadow Phase of Play

Using Cones as reference points for team shape defensively then team shape offensively. This is the team shape start position of a 2-3-1.

## The Initial Attacking Shadow Phase of Play

Using Cones as reference points for team shape defensively then team shape offensively. This is the team shape start position of a 2-3-1.



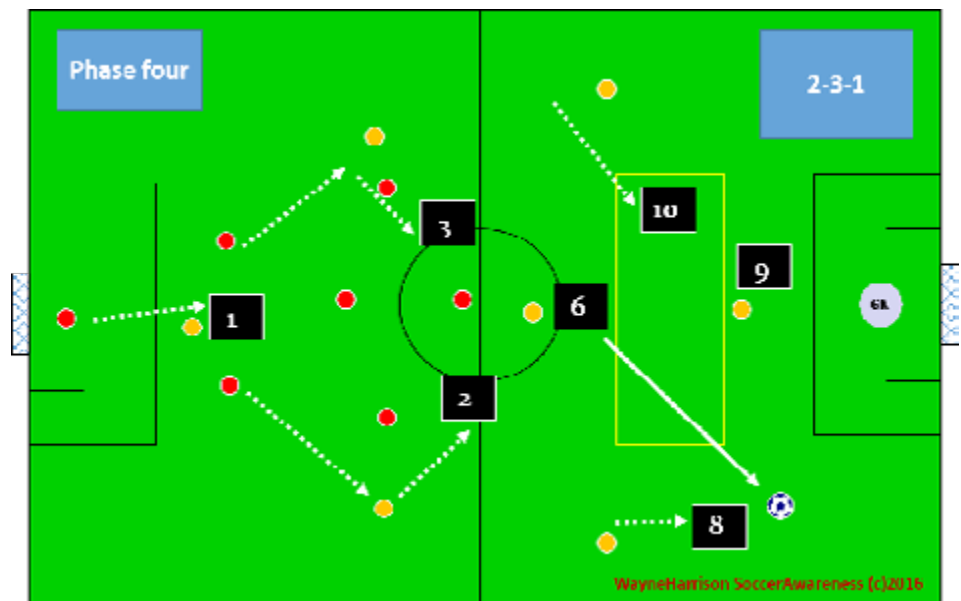


## The Full Attacking System Of Play

(2) And (3) now tuck back inside having offered themselves up initially to receive the pass. The ball is forward at (6) so they keep their defensive shape now behind.

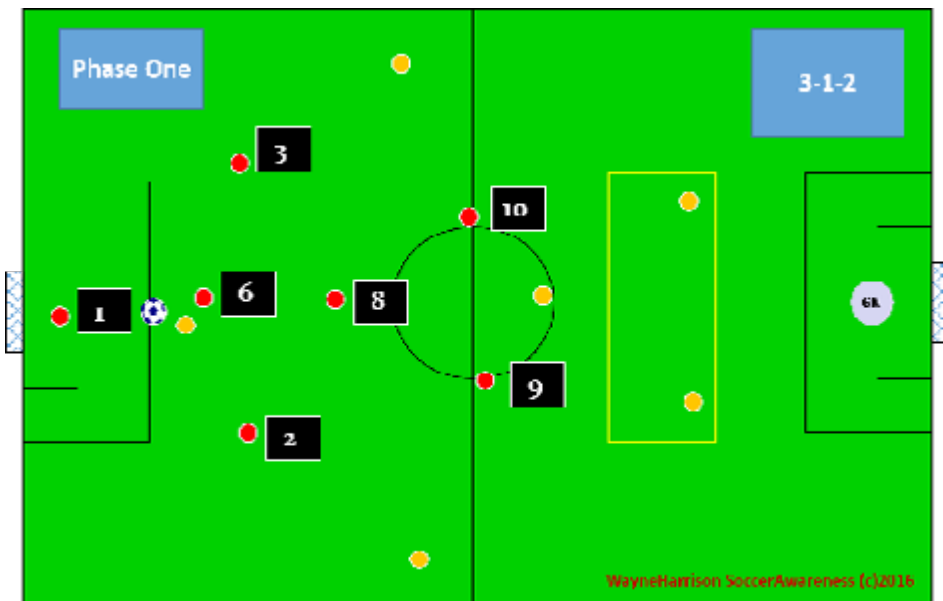
## The Full Attacking System of Play

Or (8) stays wide and gets into a crossing position.



# 1-3-1-2: PATTERNS OF PLAY: AT 7 V 7

Taking simple tactical ideas created on the training field to the game situation. We teach certain movements in training; players take ownership of them in the game situation. This can be good for developing a back three or playing with two strikers at 11 v 11.

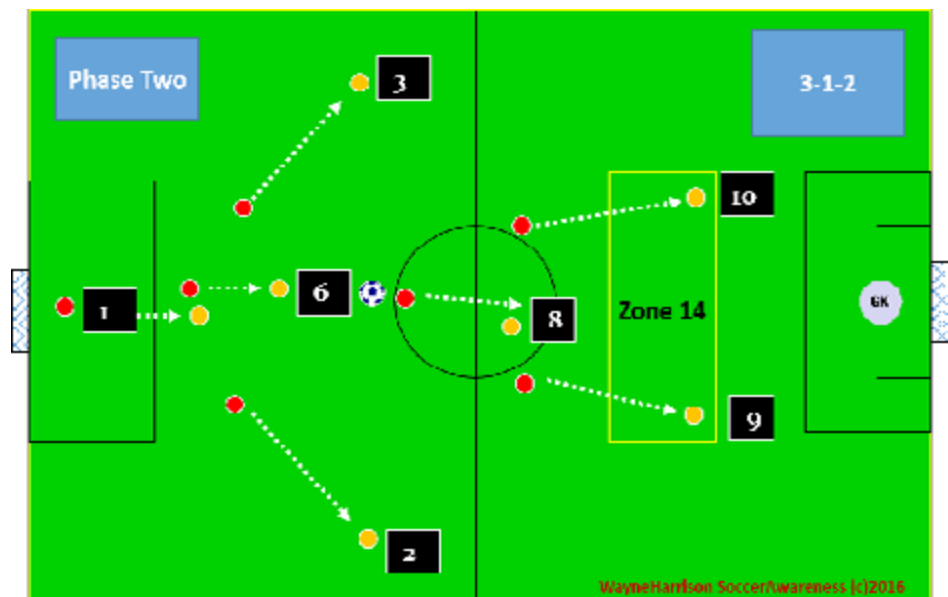


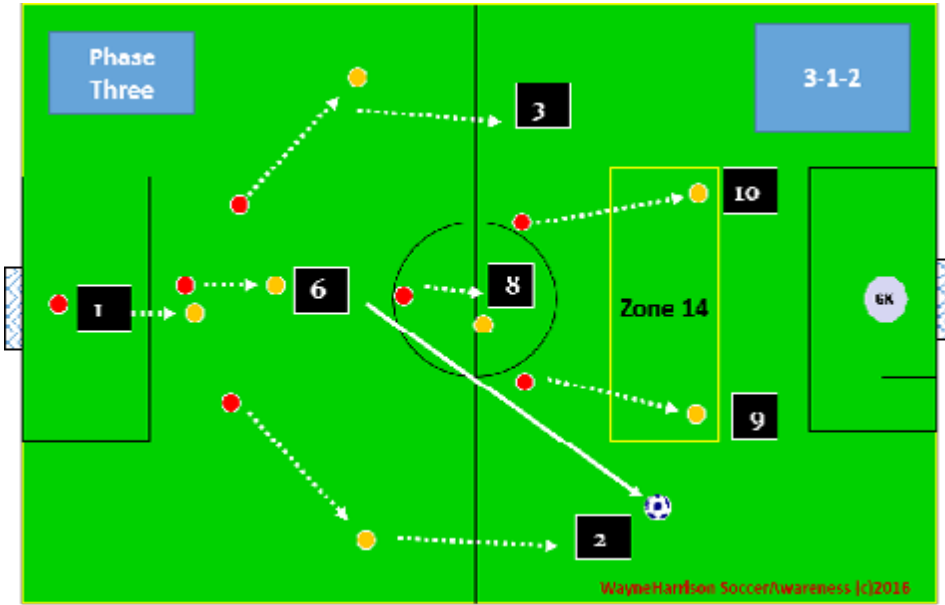
## Players in our Defensive 3-1-2 Shadow Phase of Play

Using Cones as reference points for team shape defensively then team shape offensively. This is the team shape start position of a 3-1-2.

## The Initial Attacking Shadow Phase of Play

Zone 14 is the area between the opponents back players and their midfield.



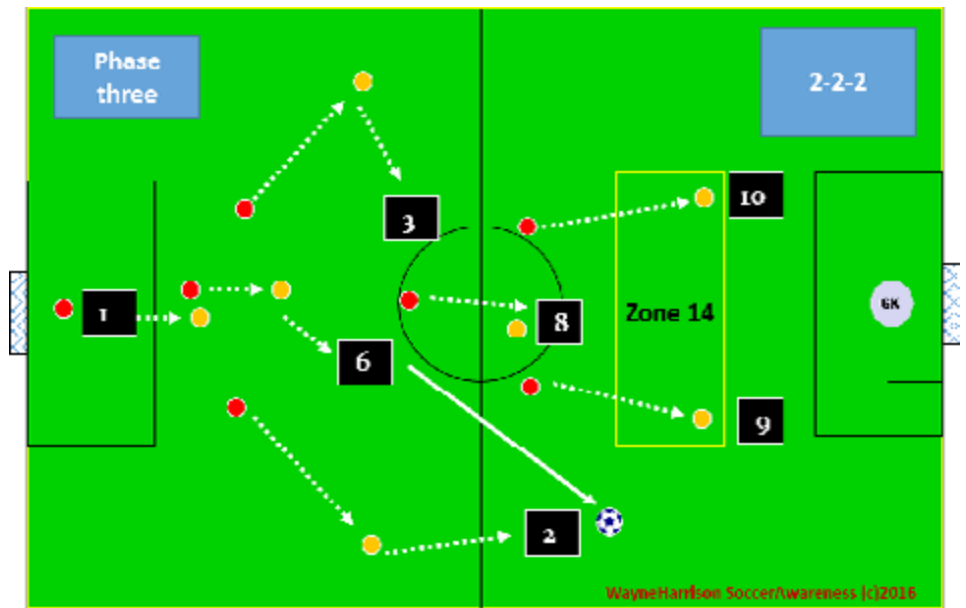


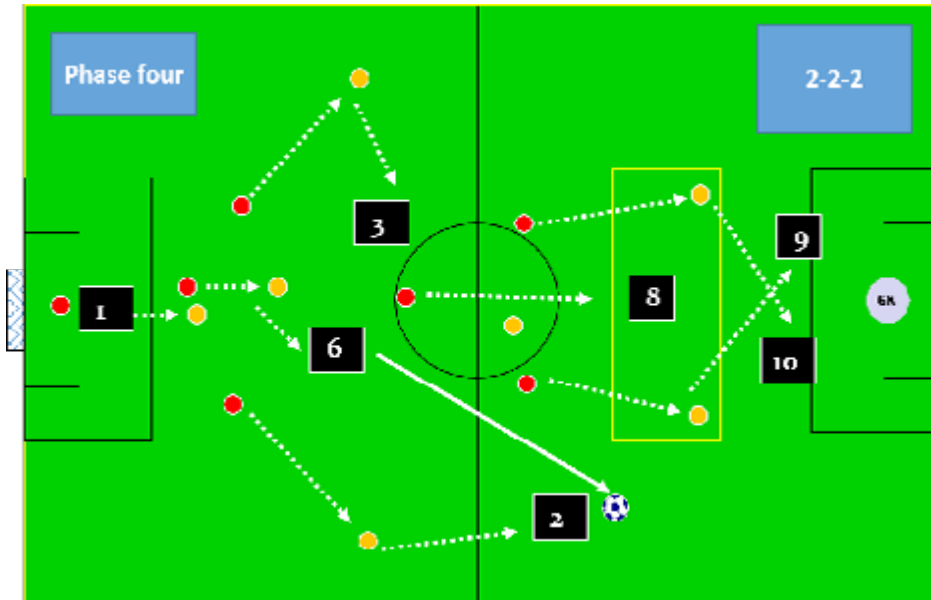
### Full on Attack

Now we have a very attacking team shape and (8) becomes the player to drop back in not (2) or (3) as we are encouraging them both to attack. If the move breaks down then (8) drops back to help (6) defensively.

### The Full Attacking System of Play

Now we push (2) on and (3) tucks in for defensive security with (6).



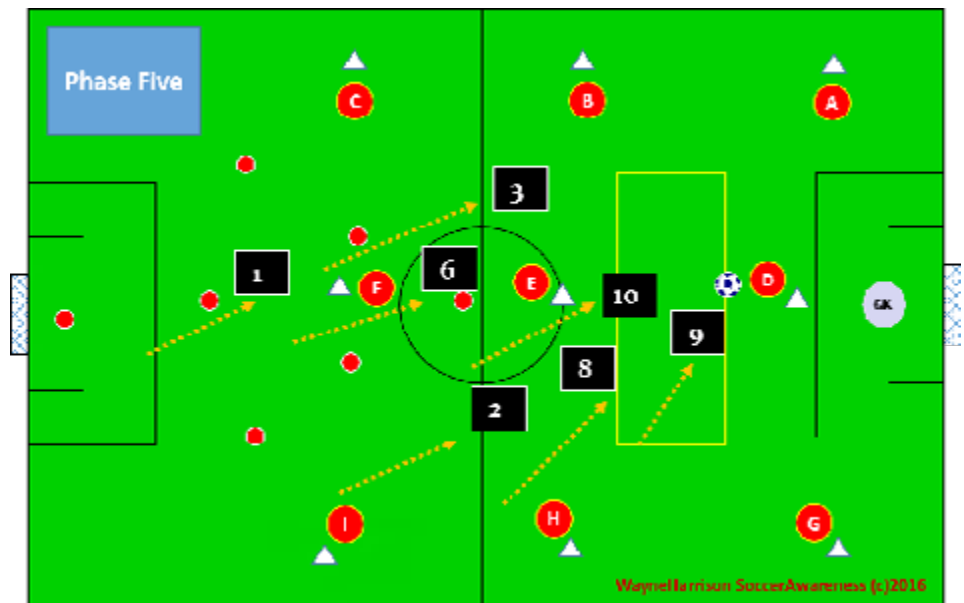


## The Full Attacking System Of Play

The two strikers cross over to create movement in front of the ball and to confuse defenders.

## Finishing Defensive Set Up Based On The Ball

Could be (3) who supports (9) if closer than (10). (9) shows left so the team set up based on that, (3) slightly wider, (1) supports to the left, (6) covering towards the left, (2) and (8) really tucked in because the ball will not go to the right if (9) does the pressing job correctly. Game Situation: (I); (F) and (C) offside.



# 1-3-2-1: ONE WORD COMMUNICATING AT 7 V 7

In the actual game it is always best if the coach has trained his or her players to think for themselves on the field so the coach doesn't have to give too much instruction from the sidelines. Better still have a player call the one word commands for the team. This depends often on the age groups as younger team generally need a little more help than older teams IF the older teams have been shown this and encouraged to think for themselves from an early age.

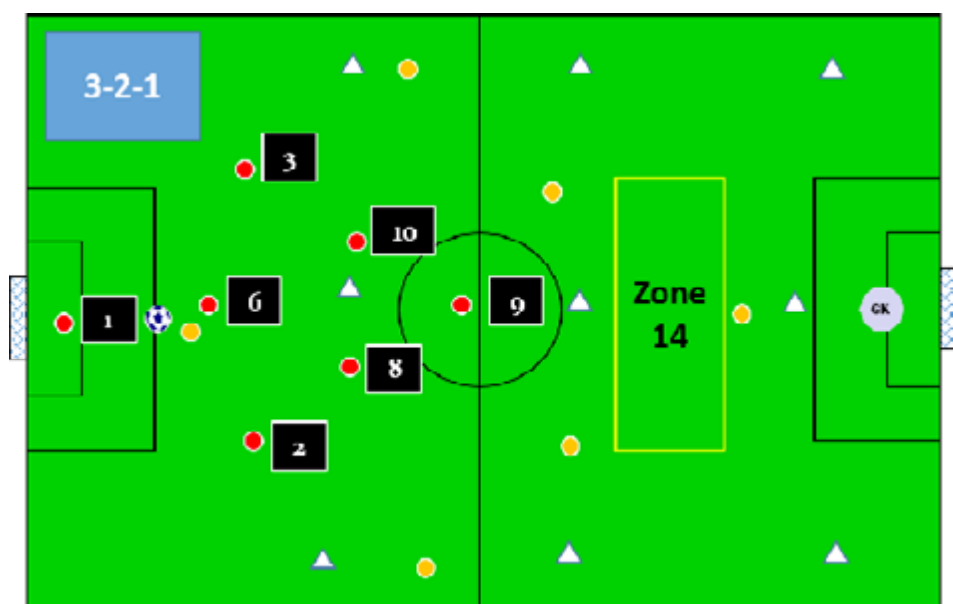
Depending how quickly the players learn will affect how much help they need off the coach. If you don't have a lot of time to get your team developed try this. If we need to help them a little more than we would like; then given the circumstances; whatever they are, that is what you can do.

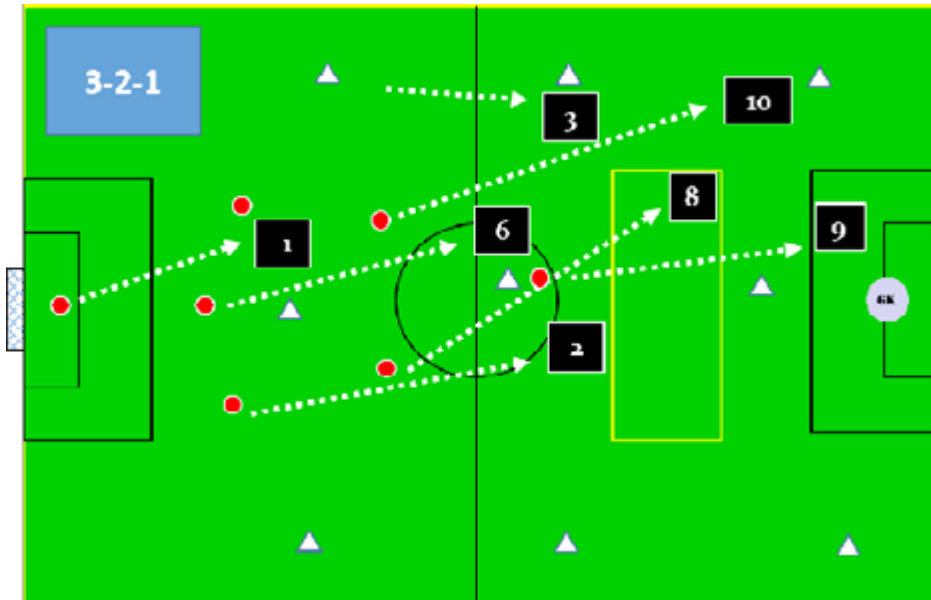
1. Therefore just a one word signal from the coach can organize a back defense line so everyone knows what to do and reacts together as a unit. Also midfield players close by and strikers can react off the call too.
2. One word calls ensure everyone will know quickly and effectively what they should do as a unit and as a team.
3. Hence the back players (and the keeper) can organize their movement as a unit (and therefore influence those in front of them) from FIVE, one word commands.
4. Momentum is triggered from the back & runs forward through the team to the striker.

This way the coach can help them as a team but with minimum impact on the learning or decision making process for the players.

## Team Shape defensive positioning based on where the ball is

White cones represent opposition players. The coach calls out a cone (right, left or central, 1, 2 or 3) which represents the ball and the team takes its defensive shape off that cone.





### Using the cones for team shape reference: Pressing the cone / ball

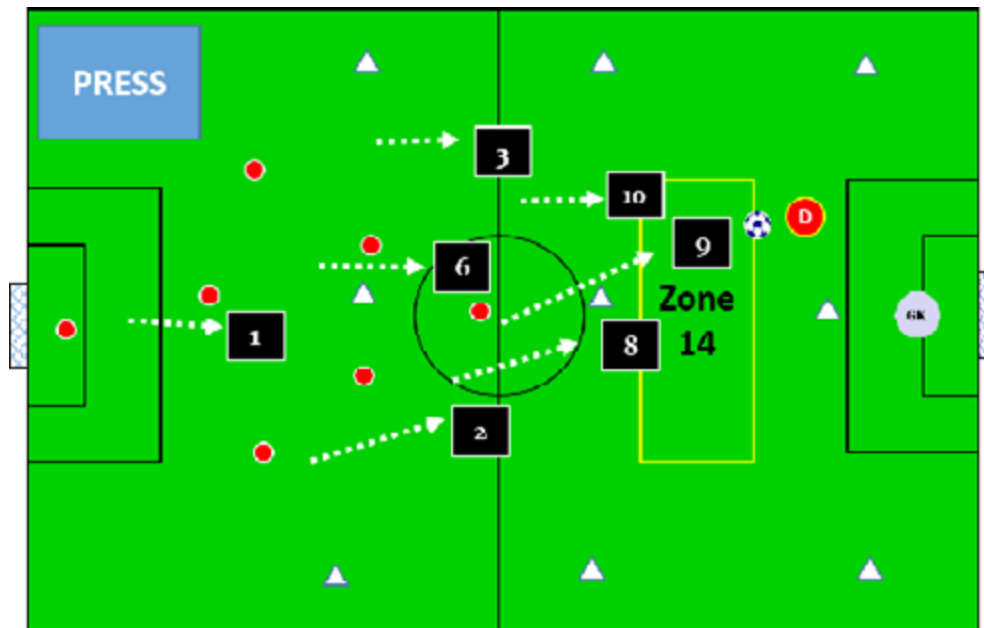
Here we show how the team presses collectively. "Short and tight", small spaces between each player. Pressing players (10) shows INSIDE to our support. If we win it there we have a shot on goal. (8) supports (10) close.

### One Word Commands at 7 v 7 to affect team shape

In the actual game it is always best if the coach has trained his or her players to think for themselves on the field so the coach doesn't have to give too much instruction from the sidelines, a player can make the calls and decide when and where to make them; not you.



## One Word Commands At 7 v 7 To Affect Team Shape



### Game Situation:

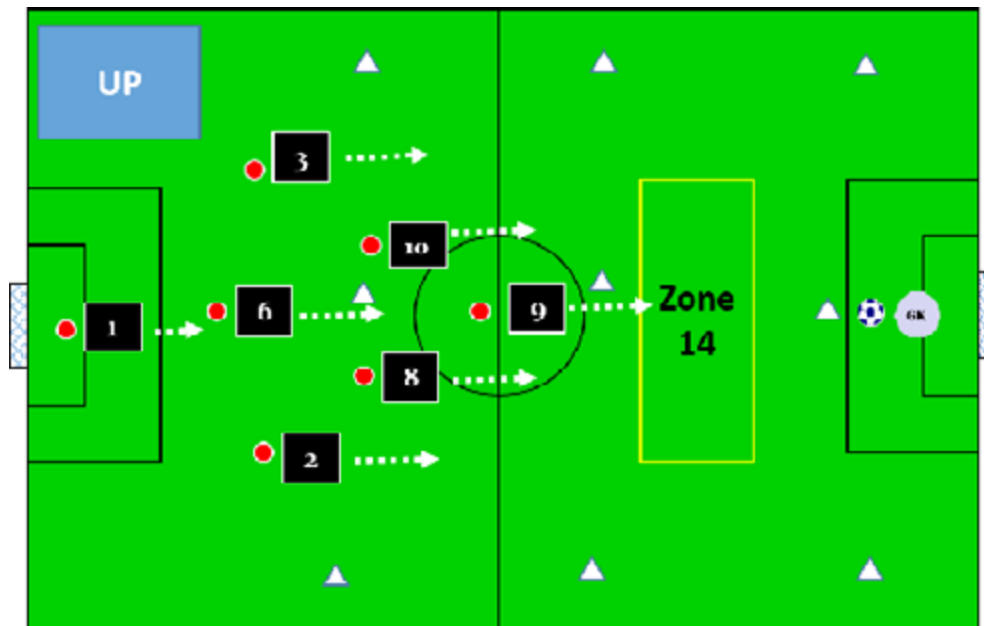
They have the ball and are moving forward with it, maybe in a wide area.

Here the team PRESSES together rather than recovering back to the goal with a DROP call. Again it isn't all black and white here as to when this happens but a situation could be when they have the ball and are moving forward we have pressure on the ball so the player on it cant pass it forward and maybe in behind our back players.

In the game the closest player would go to the opponent on the ball and PRESS HARD delaying the forward pass to allow others to get PRESSED also and win possession especially in the ATTACKING THIRD. For ease of practice to highlight the movement here we work all the players together to get the point across.



## One Word Commands At 7 v 7 To Affect Team Shape



### Game Situation:

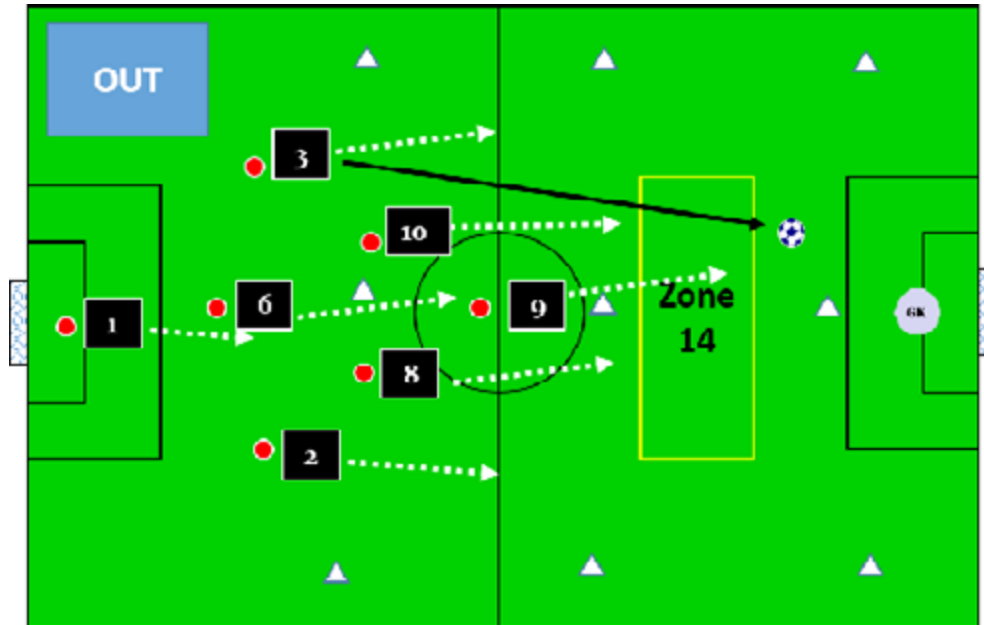
Opponents have the ball and pass it back towards their own goal for example or we pass the ball forward maintaining possession. The coach can move around the field with a ball and the team can take their shape from that also. All the movements are without a ball.

Here in the game the players move up the field only up to five yards in distance, edging out waiting to see if we win the ball then they can apply the OUT call.

Also it can be when we pass it forward and move up as a team. Units move up together maintaining the same distance between each other.

They move up a short distance then reassess the situation depending where the ball is. If it goes back again (we force them to play it back as a team) we can move a short distance up again.

## One Word Commands At 7 v 7 To Affect Team Shape

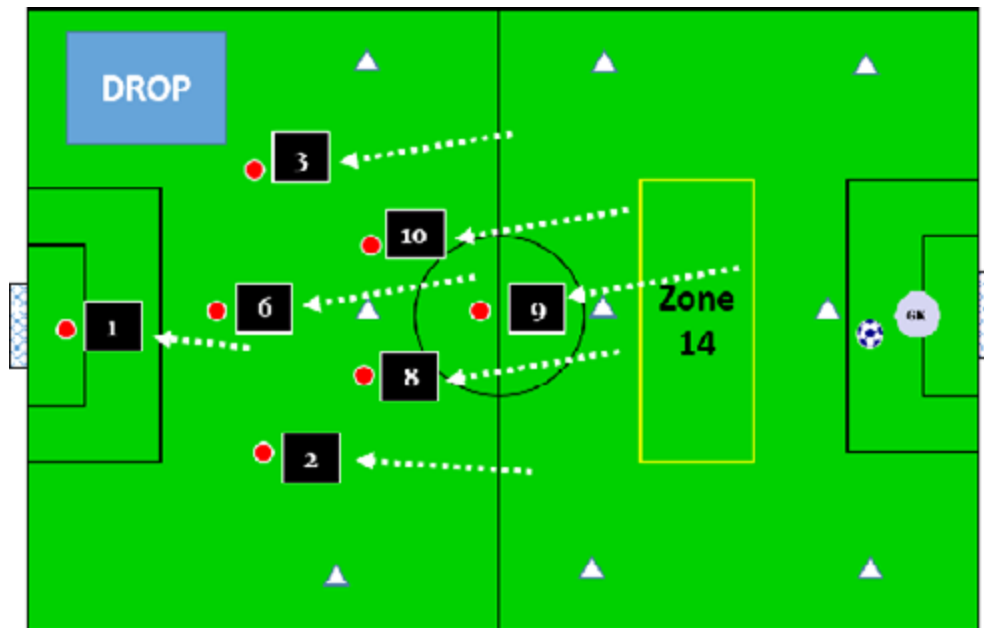


### Game Situation:

We have the ball and have played it forward into the attacking third for example and kept possession (or not, maybe just played it behind the opponents defense). It can be a big movement forward of the team. The coach can move around the field with a ball and the team can take their shape from that also.

The team sprint out together on the OUT word until you say sit or stop, they then stop moving and sit down and you assess their spacing between players and between the three units. As they get good at this, speed up the commands until they are moving around the field quickly and efficiently with correct spacing. Eventually you can say the different words and all they do is stand still not sit on the stop command so you can move them around the field at a faster pace working the transitions.

## One Word Commands At 7 v 7 To Affect Team Shape

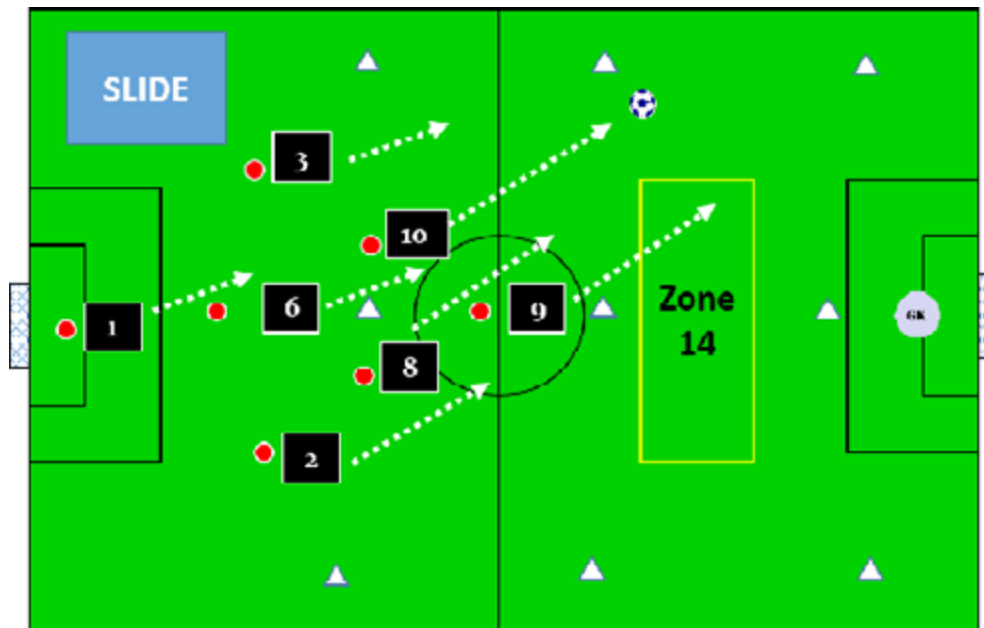


### Game Situation:

They have the ball and are moving forward with it, maybe in a wide area. Here the team drop back together recovering back to the goal. Again it isn't all black and white here as to when this happens but a situation could be when they have the ball and are moving forward and there is no pressure on the ball so the player on it can pass it forward and maybe in behind our back players.

To avoid this we drop back as a team behind the ball but in the game the closest player would go to the opponent on the ball delaying the forward pass to allow others to get back behind the ball. For ease of practice to highlight the movement here we work all the players together to get the point across.

## One Word Commands At 7 v 7 To Affect Team Shape



### Game Situation:

Here the opposition has played the ball into a very wide area and we all move across the field. Slide can be used when the opponents are taking a goal kick so there are players around the area where the ball is to be kicked.

Moving across the field, don't take it literally at 90 degrees it could be diagonally in a game (45 above) but for our practice you could have them moving across the field like this just to get the idea across.

In the game the ball may have been passed wide in the opponent's possession and we move across the field as a team to close down all the spaces around the ball to try to win it back.

# 1-3-2-1: DEFENSIVE PATTERNS OF PLAY AT 7 V 7

Taking simple tactical ideas created on the training field to the game situation.

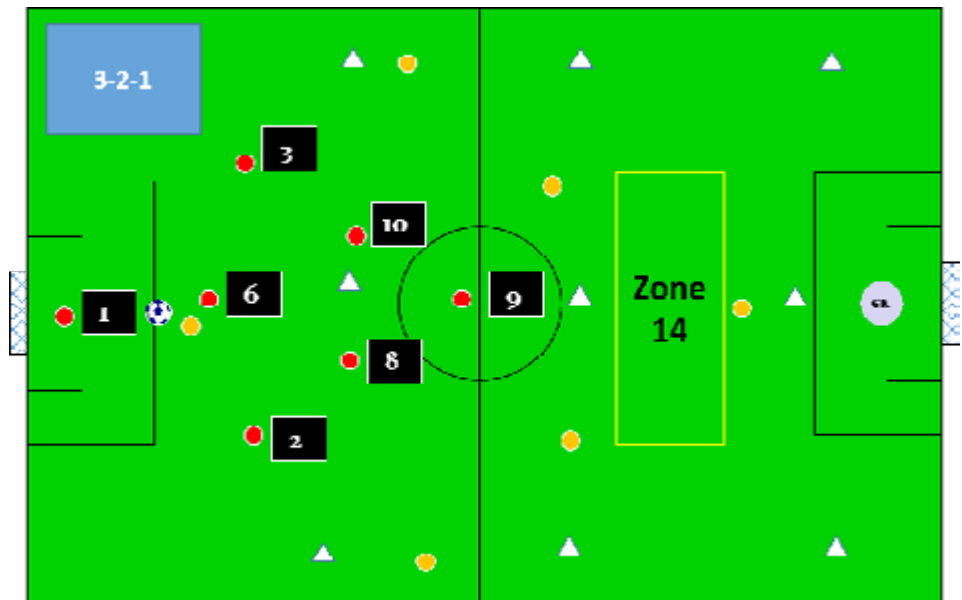
We teach certain movements in training; players take ownership of them in the game situation.

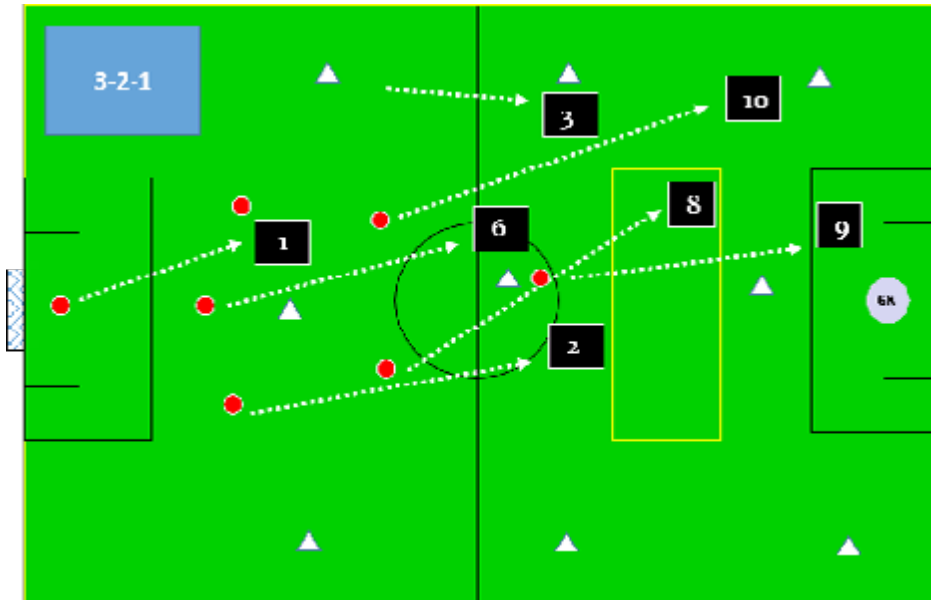
This session: Working on defensive team shape based on the ball being in certain positions on the field.

A structured educational defensive team movement session by the coach where we ultimately get to the game situation and the players make ALL the decisions based on what they have learnt.

## Team Shape defensive positioning based on where the ball is

White cones represent opposition players. The coach calls out a cone (right, left or central, 1, 2 or 3) which represents the ball and the team takes its defensive shape off that cone.



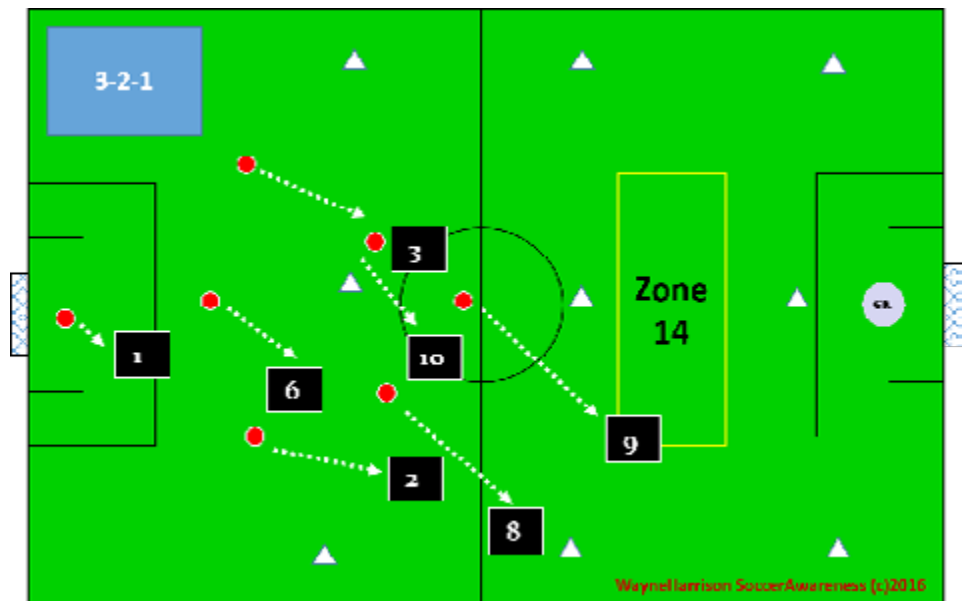


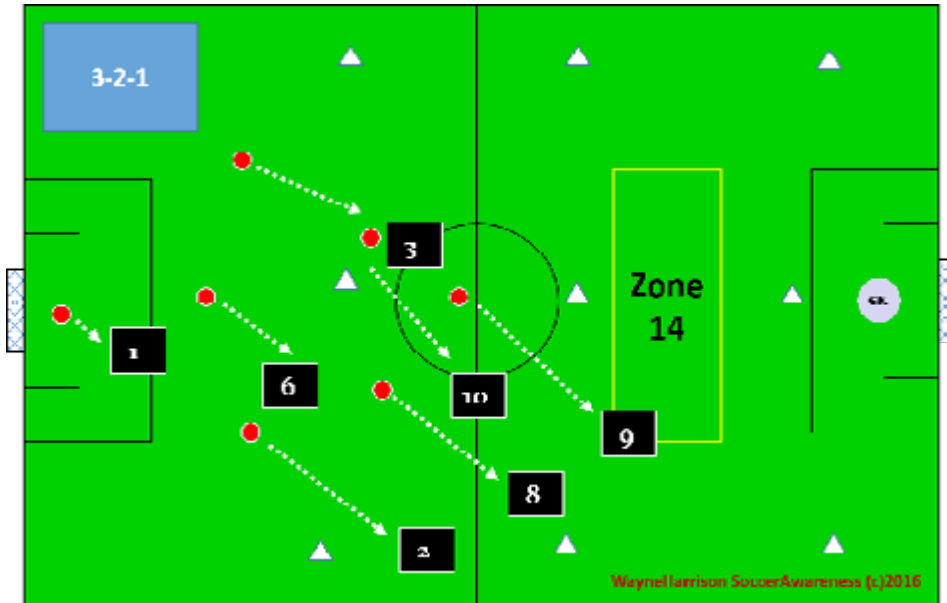
## Pressing the Cone / Ball

Here we show how the team presses collectively. "Short and tight", small spaces between each player. Pressing players (10) shows INSIDE to our support. If we win it there we have a shot on goal. (8) supports (10) close.

## Another Movement Here to the "Right and Position 2"

(9) Pushes past to be in position to stop or intercept the back pass. Closest player presses the ball in this case (8). If (2) were closer then (2) would press the ball. (8) presses inside and cuts off the outside pass and (2) supports inside.



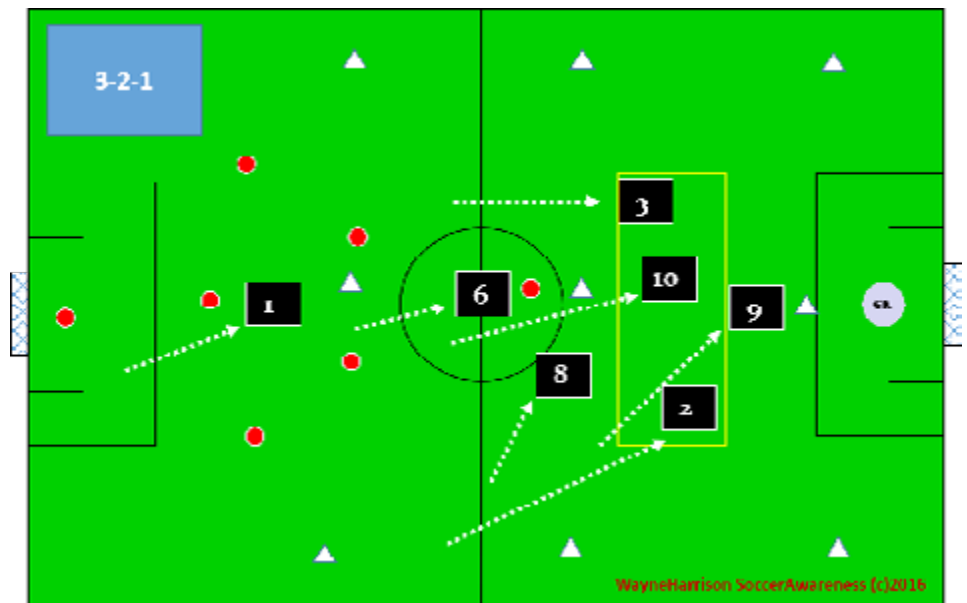


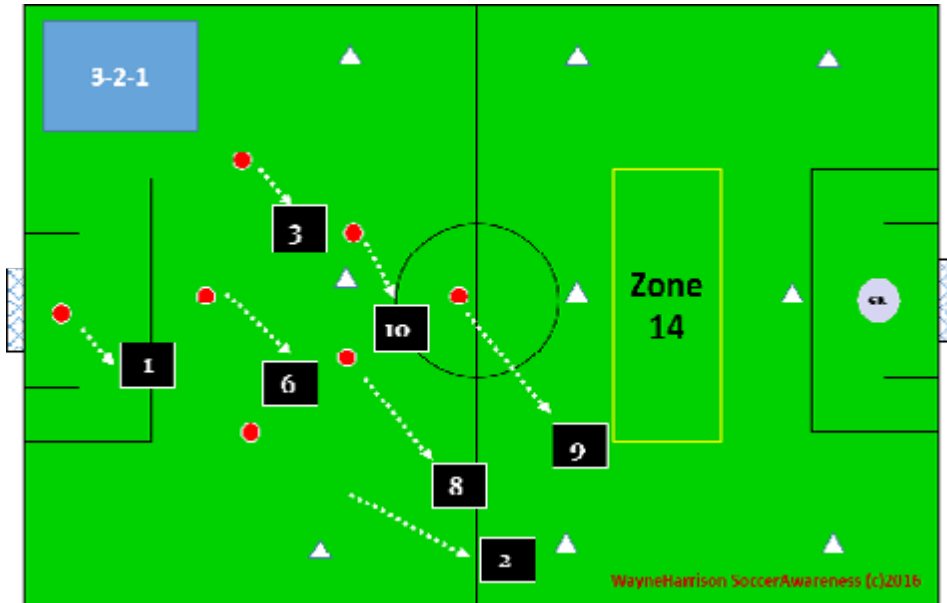
### The Angle of Press

(8) Cannot get there to cut off the outside pass and force inside so presses outside. (2) takes up a different position previously as does (10) to support this action. (8) so the bets pass for the opponent would be down the line but (2) fills that position defensively.

### Another Movement Here to the "Central and Position 3"

Movement from the last position pressing the cone at right and position 2.



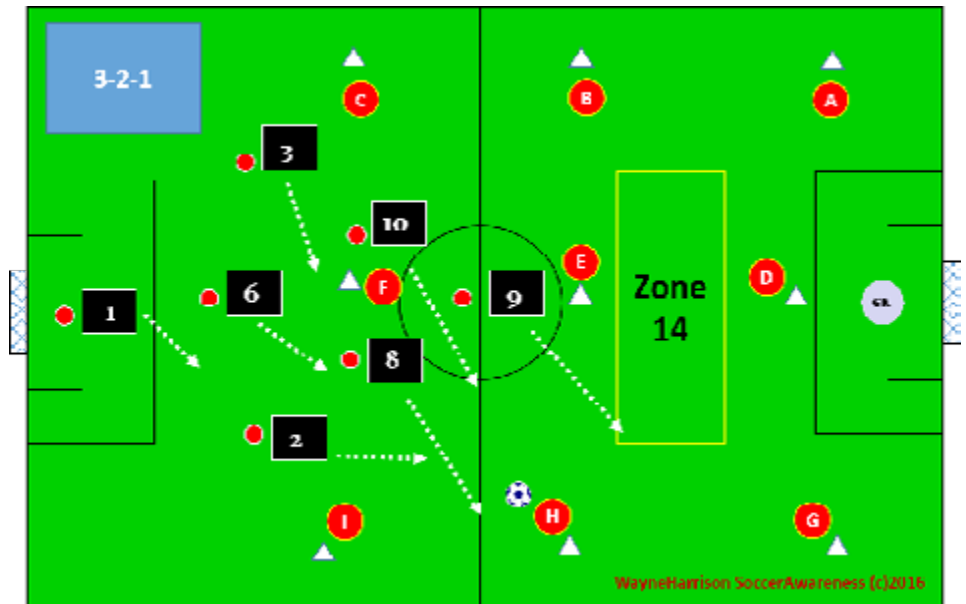


**Rotation of defenders covering for each other**

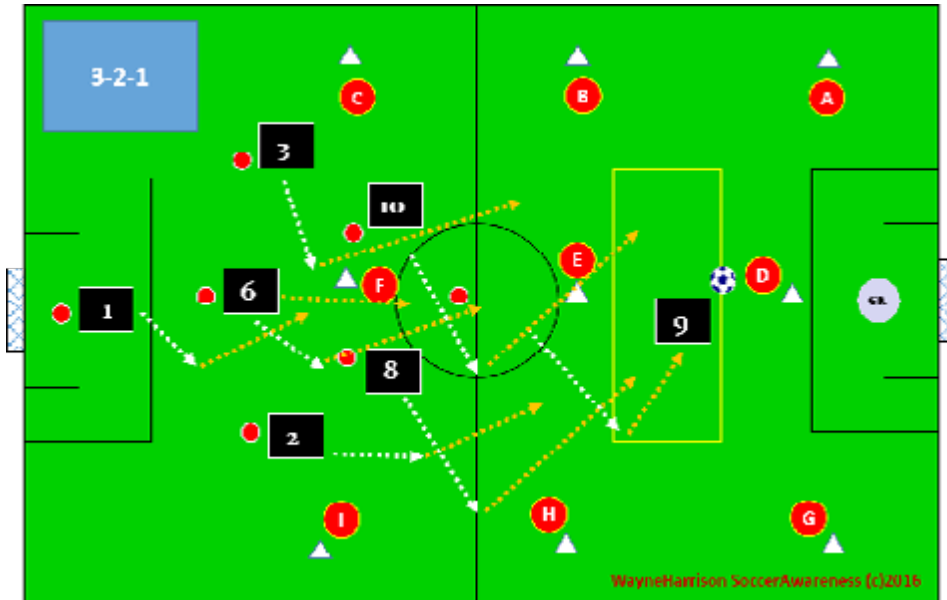
Here (2) is closer when it looks like (8) would be the obvious choice to press at right position 2. So (8) is the covering player now.

**Introduce players and a ball to pass around with**

The ball is at (H) the team presses to that position. The coach shouts "Pass" and (H) passes to another player who keeps the ball to allow the team to adjust.





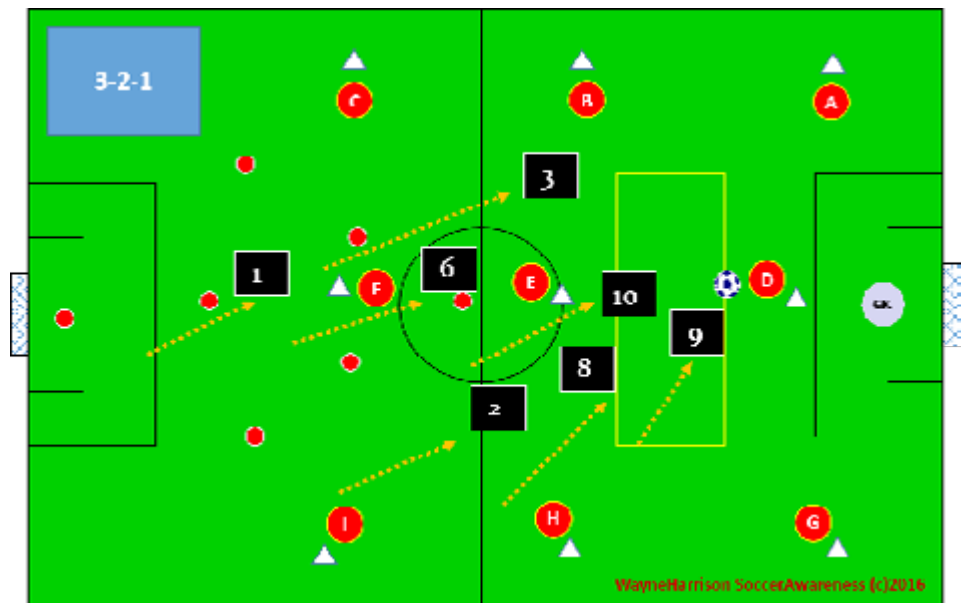


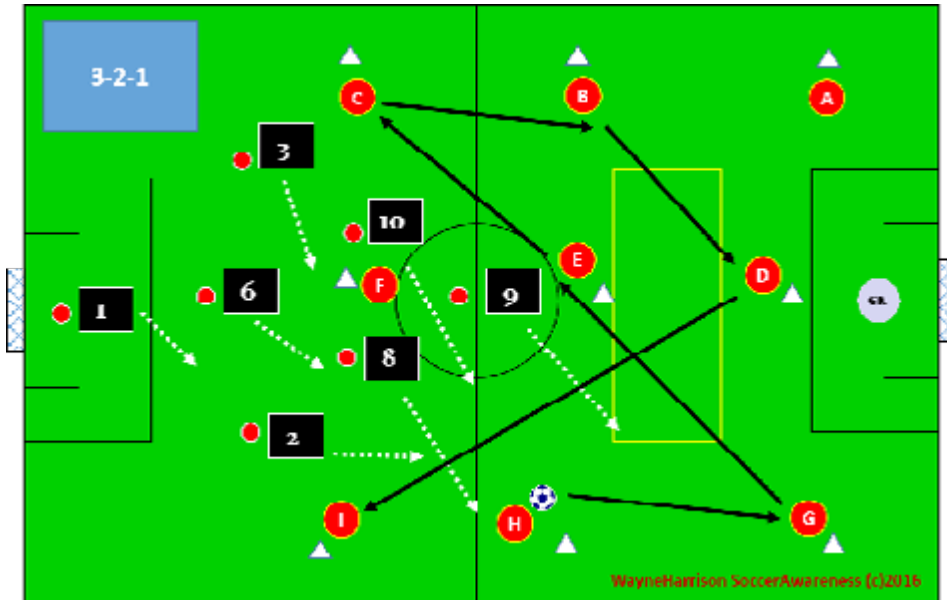
Once established have the opponents players pass the ball around

Coach shouts “Press” as the ball moves from (H) to (D). (9) is the catalyst to it all and the team position off (9). Pressing player is THE most important player as everyone takes their shape off that player.

### Finishing defensive set up based on the ball

Could be (3) who supports (9) if closer than (10). (9) shows left so the team set up based on that, (3) slightly wider, (1) supports to the left, (6) covering towards the left, (2) and (8) really tucked in because the ball will not go to the right if (9) does the pressing job correctly. Game Situation: (I); (F) and (C) offside.



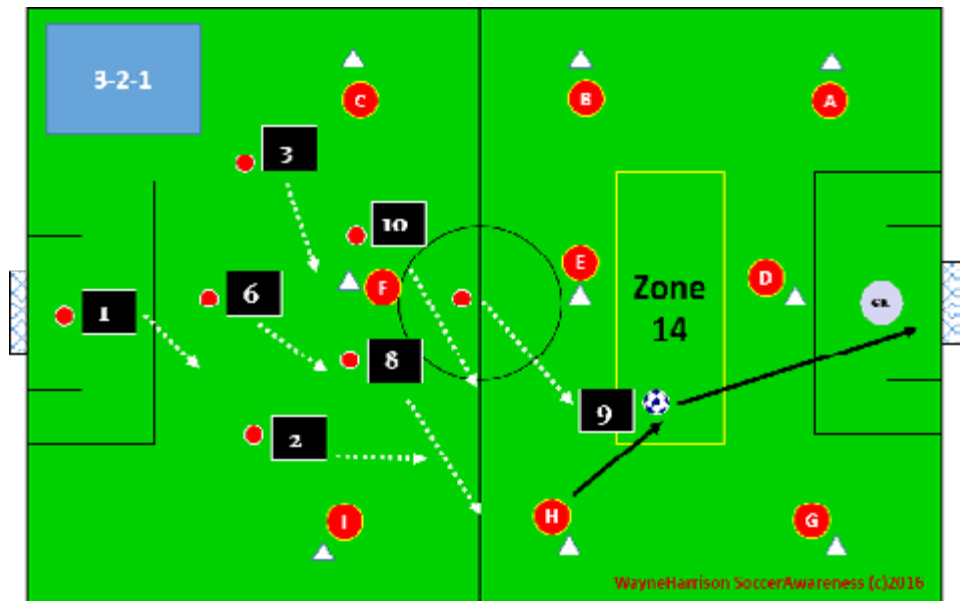


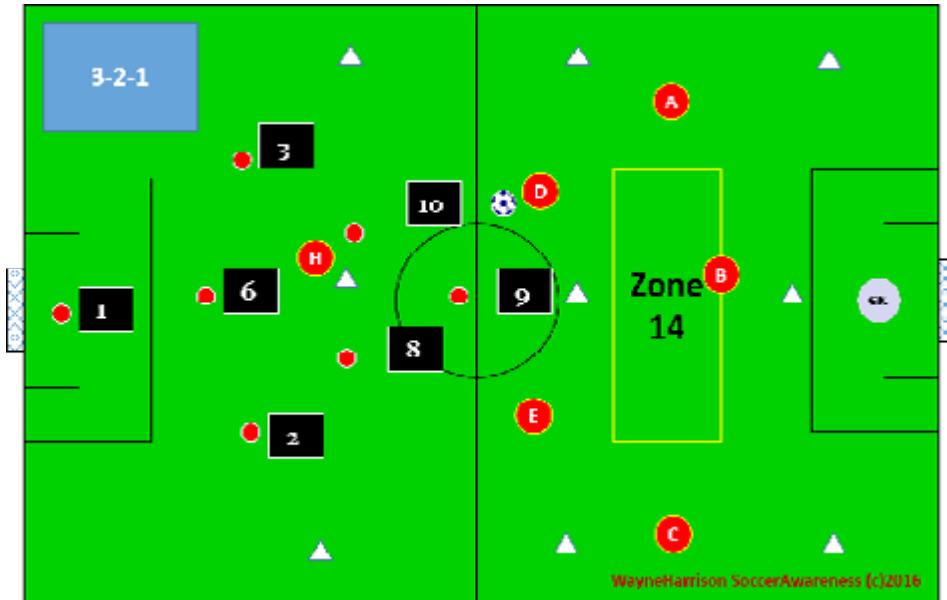
### Game Situation

Defending team can only intercept the passes, the opponents with the ball have to stay in the same areas and pass around quickly. Defending team win the ball they can score.

**Game Situation: Two themes / conditions, up to 3 touches the attacking letters team, interceptions only on the defending numbers team**

Here (9) intercepts the pass and the defending team win possession and score. Next have the attacking letters team move freely so it is 7 V 7 GAME. Set different themes for each team.



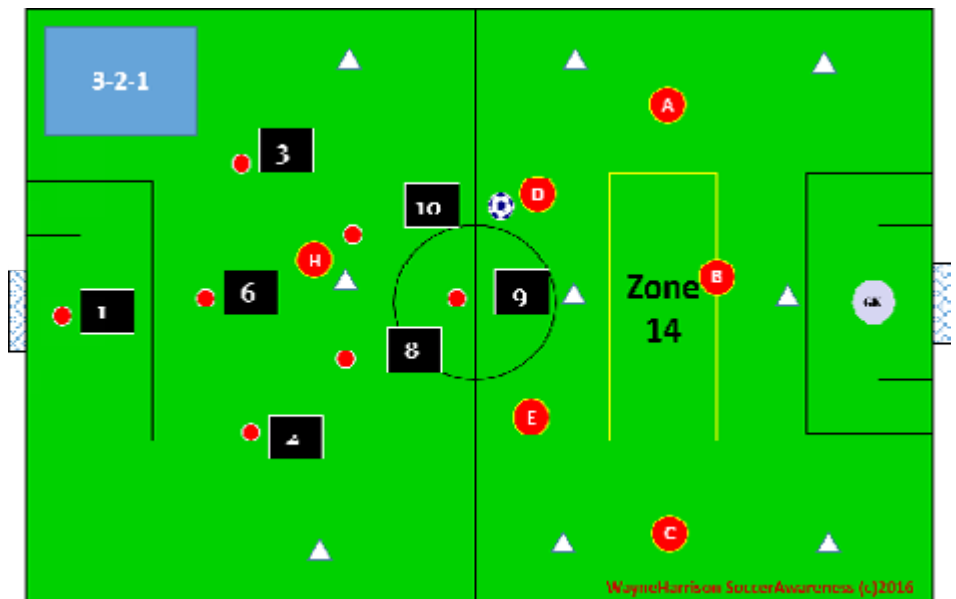


## Game Situation and free play everyone on the move

Defending numbers team can only score with an “interception” so press fast and force a mistake. Attacking numbers team can only play up to 3 touches each. Whoever has the ball can score., If the defending numbers team win it they are in “free play” to attack. Numbers team try to stop them. Rotate teams so each do it.

## Ultimate Game Situation no themes no conditions

Everyone free to just play and we see how the players can now make their own decisions offensively and defensively based on the guided advice we have offered them. Coaches must ask questions or ask players to SHOW them if anything needs improving; the players work the solution out themselves all the time unless they need absolute guidance on a particular point.



## The Roles and Responsibilities of Each Player in the 9 v 9

Here we are looking at players 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9; 10 and 11 of the 11 v 11 and we will look at them in this particular formation of 1-3-2-1 but will show other variable formations too. We add (7) and (11) to the attack. We want them to get up and down the field as our wide outlets.

(6) Can be compared to center backs (4) and (5) in their roles though in a more attacking minded way in the way I believe we can play. (6) is also playing a more characteristic Number (6) role as in the 11 v 11 team.

(8) Is like a link midfield player and (10) is the shadow striker in behind (9) the central striker.

In this set up the shadow striker has perhaps slightly more defensive duties than the shadow striker in an 11 v 11 due to the lower number of players on the team.

Defensive positioning is more beside (8) than in front of (8) as it would be in the 11 v 11.

(9) Plays the traditional striker role.

We have covered the other positions previously now we add (7) and (11) to the team set up

### THE ROLES OF WIDE ATTACKERS (7) AND (11)

#### Technical:

1. Speed with the ball
2. Control of the ball - first control – great first touch
3. Crossing Ability – cross with pace: on the ground or by air, with a curve out of the reach of the goalkeeper and between the goalkeeper and defenders. Where to Cross can depend on the position of goalkeeper, defenders and attackers (to the near post, to the far post, the pull back, beyond the far post)
4. Also dribbling inside and outside to shoot at goal or to cross
5. Passing ability
6. Scoring - balls on the floor - balls in the air

#### Tactical: In Possession

1. With ball - speed control with the ball
2. Positioning- always in a position to receive, open stance, and facing towards the goal, and as open as possible
3. Know how to choose (when and where) - Cross, 1 to 1 dribble; when to pass, when to shoot.
4. Understanding of when and where to break outside to inside.

### Tactical: Out of Possession

1. Orientation: Movement off the ball - to attack - to defend
2. Communication - with their peers and with respect to the opponent
3. Attitude to close spaces as a team player
4. Ability to press and hold the position.
5. Retrieve balls

### Psychological

1. Disciplined and responsible - make the field as large (and deep) as possible
2. Orientation. Will work for the team - on offense - on defense: close spaces and prevent deep passes
3. Confidence - Create actions for goals - Passing and crossing

### Physical

1. Speed - in short, medium and long distance - technical in speed (with great coordination)
2. Endurance
3. Change of pace - be able to play at three different speeds.
4. Ability in Passing and Crossing; Dribbling; Shooting ability; Heading Ability.
5. Agility

## **ATTACKING (55%)**

Depending on the way the coach plays the 4-2-3-1 the types of players in these roles may be quite different team to team. A more defensive minded coach may use defensive midfield players here, an attacking coach may choose wingers here which would produce totally different effects with the same system.

Or, the coach may pick certain players in these positions based on what the opponents will play like.

A big part of the switch is the role of the wide players. Rather than stay wide (which would hamper the ability of the full-backs to get forward), they narrow and become almost a conventional front three with the lone striker (9). This has the effect of narrowing the opposition defense, as their natural markers (full-backs) follow them into the center.

Tactical Understanding / Game Intelligence: So, wide players must be comfortable drifting into the center of the field and coming inside not just being skilled going outside and crossing as is the traditional role of the wide player. Therefore they must be better all round players than the traditional wide player (whether it be a defensive minded or attacking minded player, now it is best if they can be good at both).

Of course, this opens up a huge amount of space on the flanks, which the full-backs can exploit. This presents a further problem for the defending team, as their wide midfield players are suddenly charged with almost a solely defensive job. If the attacking full-backs get to the byline and the defending wide midfielders track them all the way, the defending team will end up with something approaching a flat back six.

**Opposites:** An added advantage is a right footed player who can play on the left and cut inside and have a good shot, and vice versa. They attack the fullback inside, and they have an advantage from this as they cut inside onto their strongest foot and inside against the fullback's weakest foot; attacking the left backs right foot; and the right backs left foot.

**Shooting and Crossing:** having the ability to shoot on goal. Traditional wide players usually are good at crosses and tended to stay wide, the modern wide player has to be better at so many more skills than previous generation's of players. So; they need the ability to stay wide and cross the ball and the ability to cut inside and shoot at goal.

## **DEFENDING (45%)**

**Understanding:** Must defend in front of their respective fullback and develop a defensive relationship with them. This player can defensively cover for the fullback attacking. Must have a good tactical understanding to be able to combine with his fullback and know when and where to cover for him; when the fullback breaks forward.

**Recovery:** Recovery runs are vitally important for this player in this system of play. When recovering they can become a part of a defensive four in midfield.

**1 v 1:** Must be good at 1 v 1 defending

# 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.

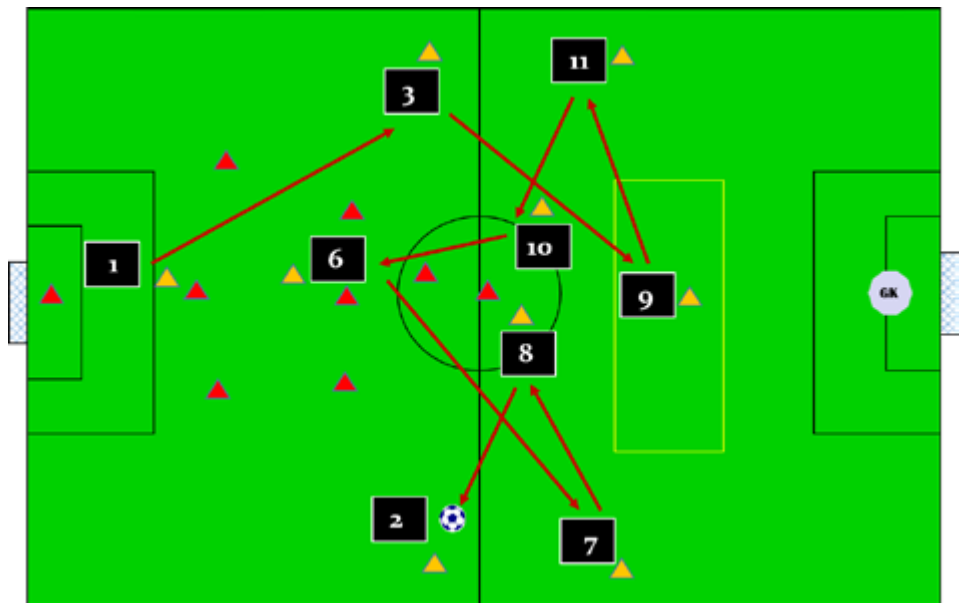
Distances between defending and attacking are bigger than most think.

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

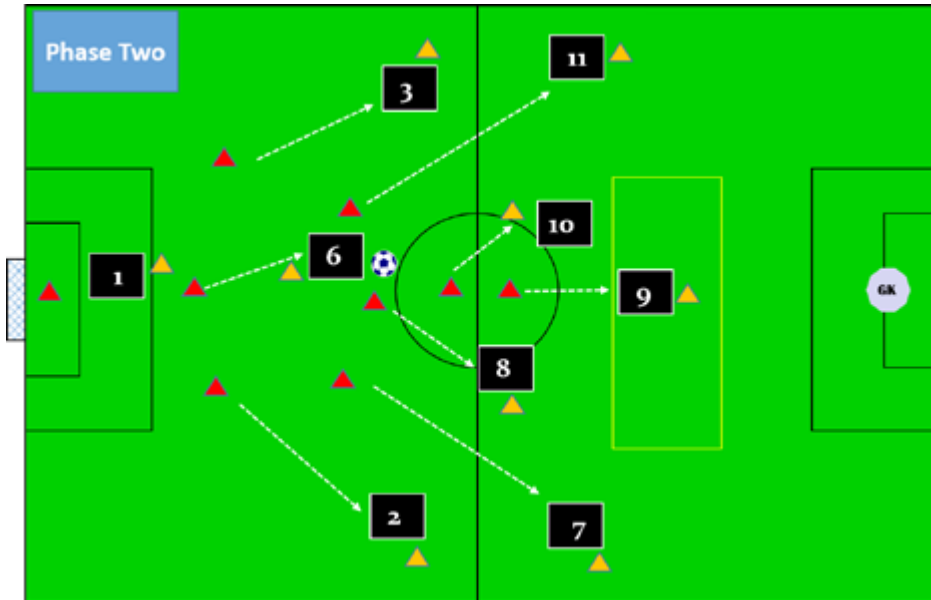
Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones. Player (6) represents center backs (4) or (5) and player (8) can also represent (6) in their roles in an 11 v 11.

### 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.





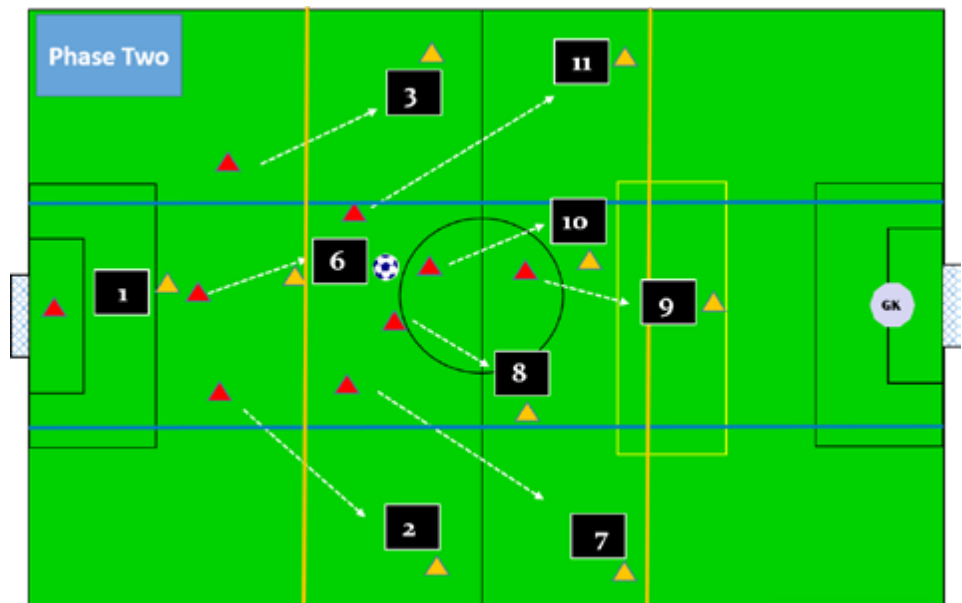


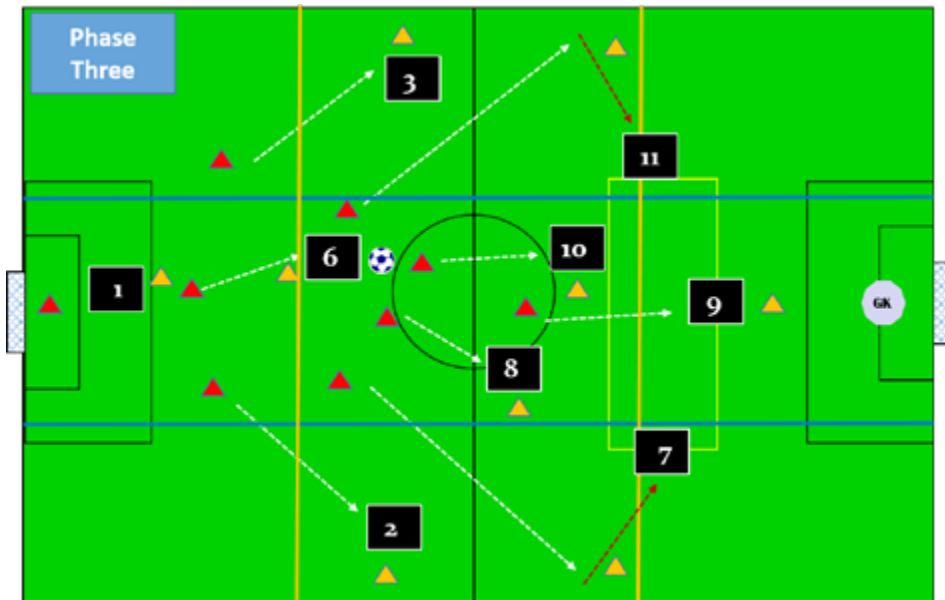
### Team shape attacking in 1-3-3-1-1

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.





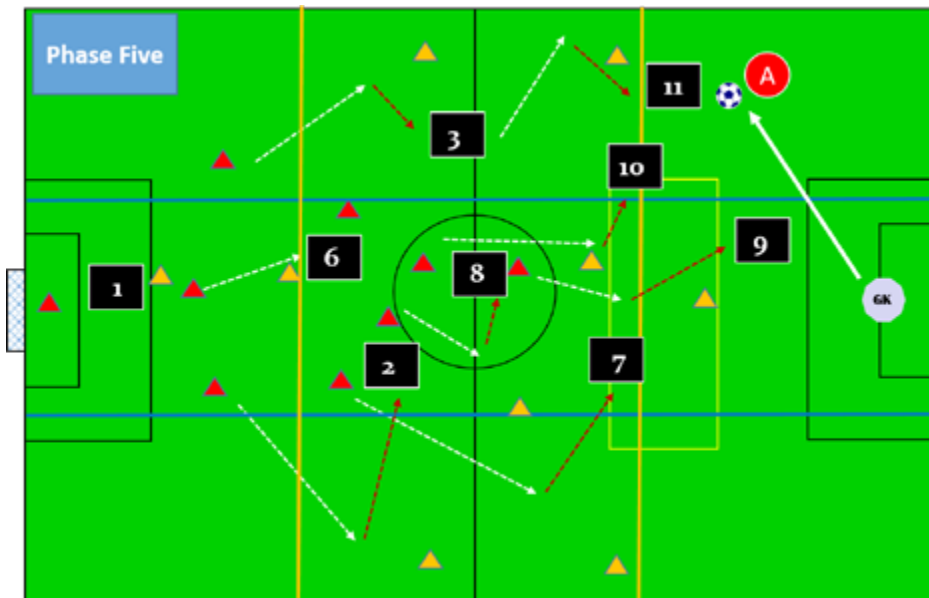
### Add corridors and zones to help team shape

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.



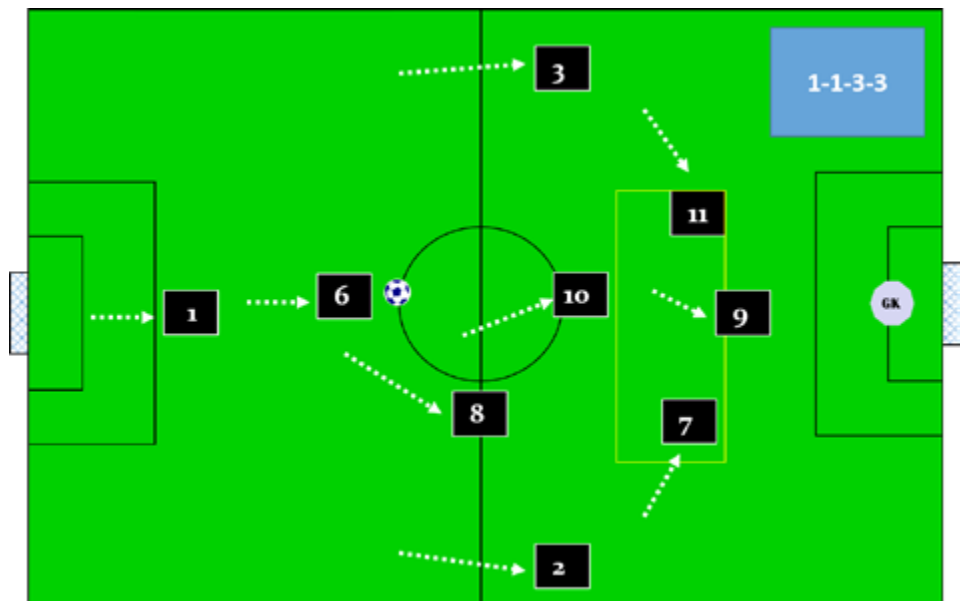


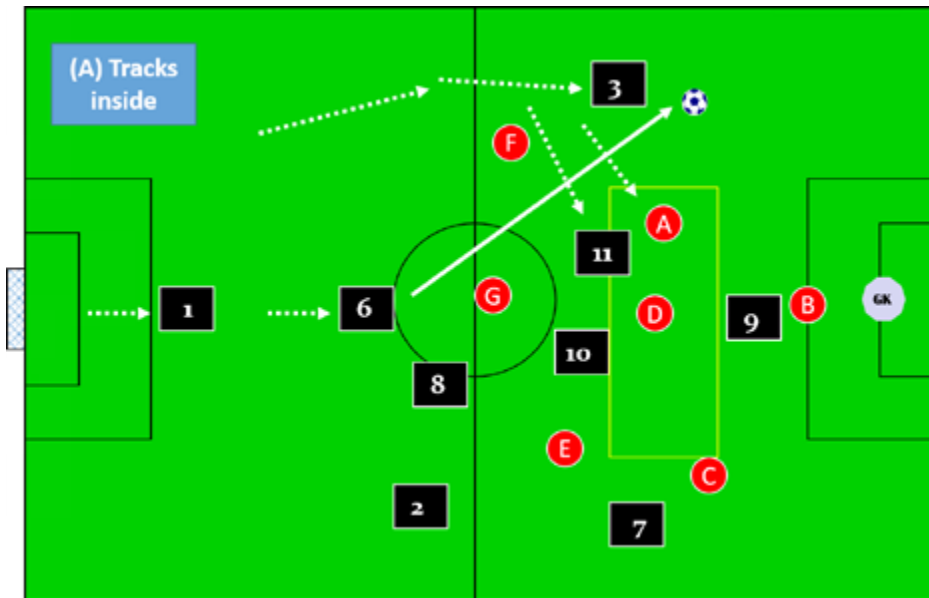
**Add corridors and zones to help team shape**

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.



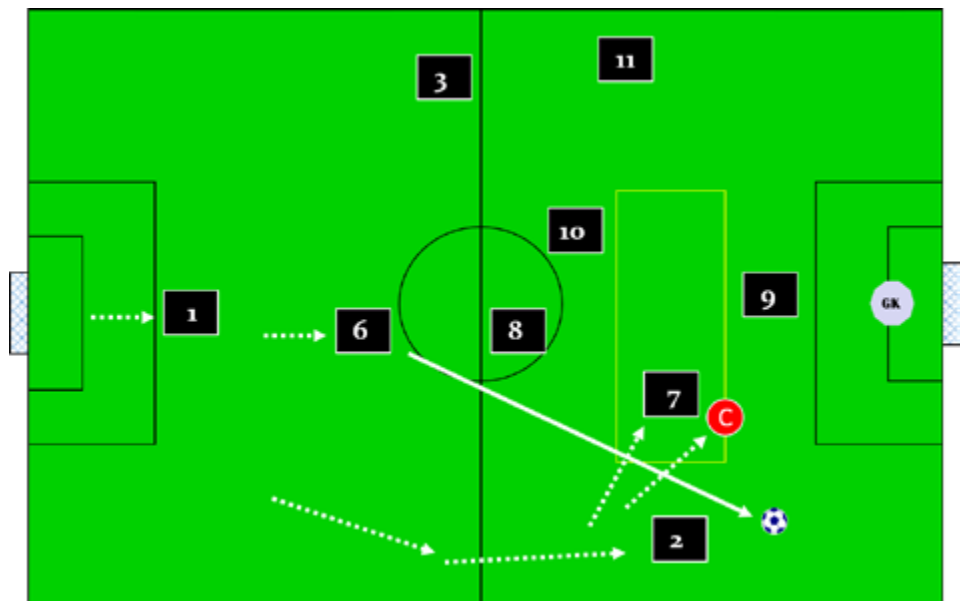


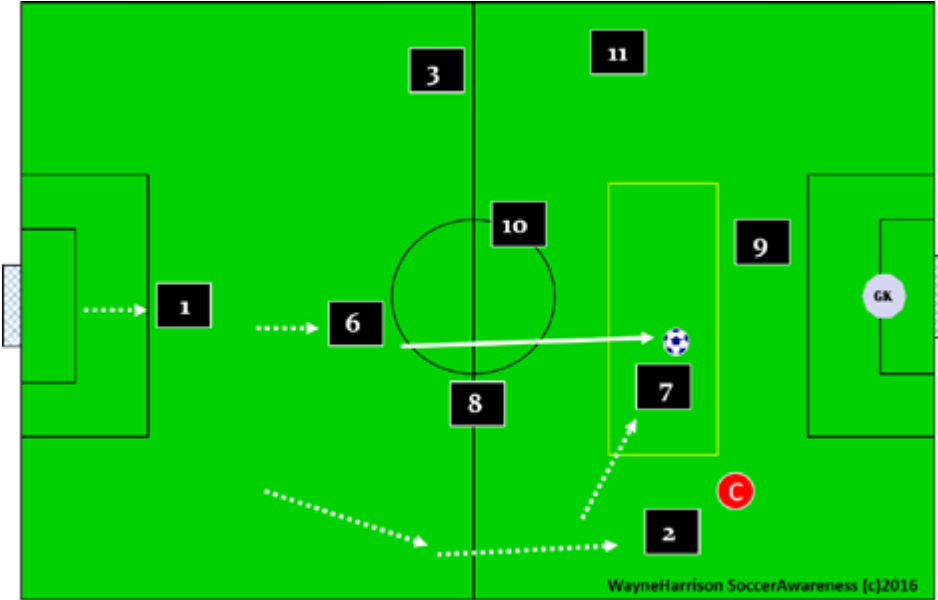
### A Cut inside and an overlap by a wing back

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).



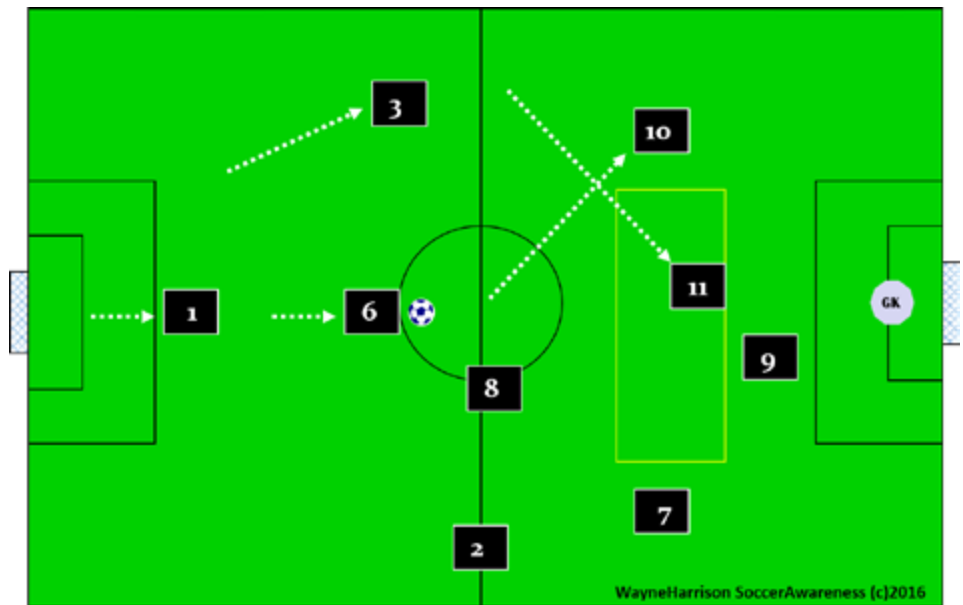


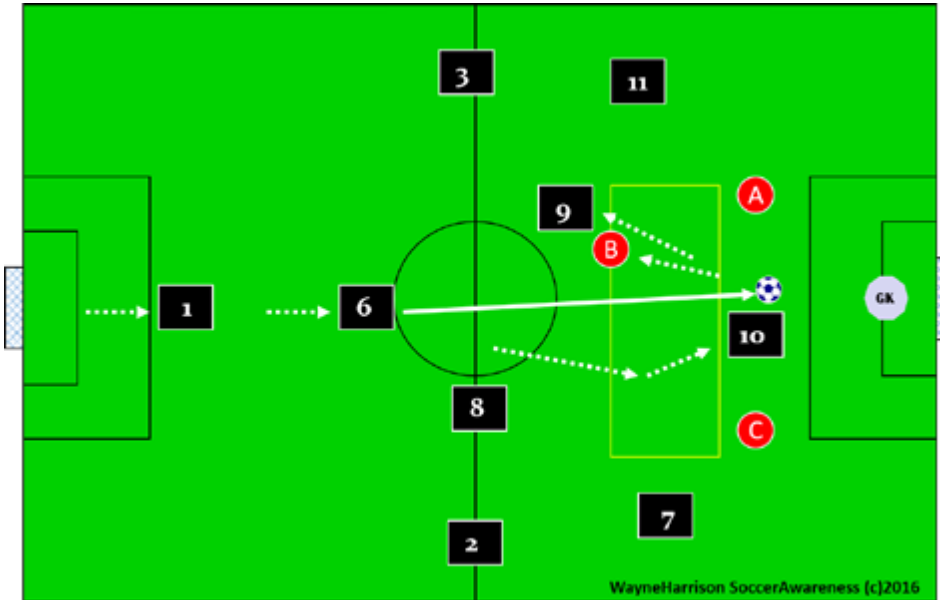
### Inverted run by a winger to receive inside

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.



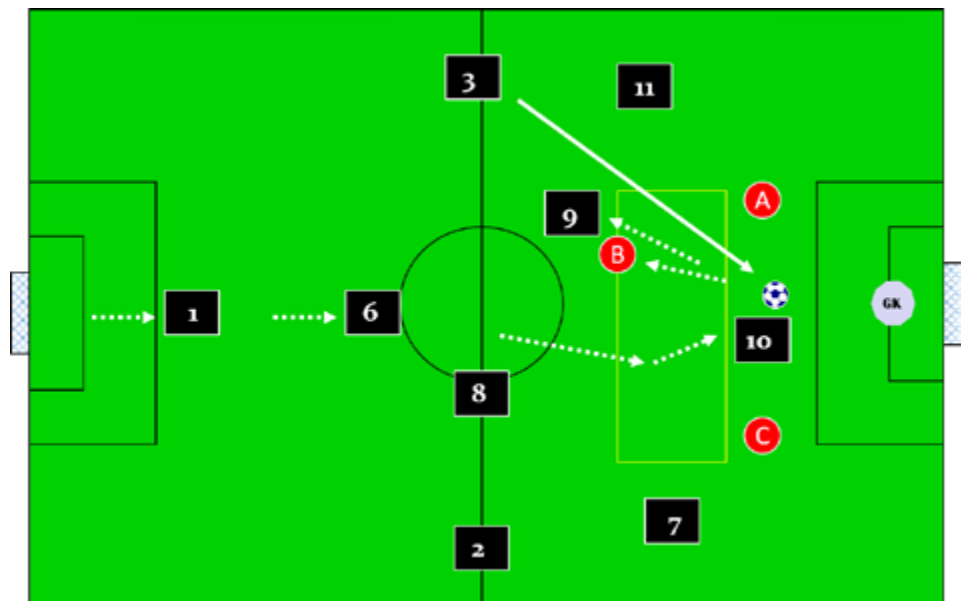


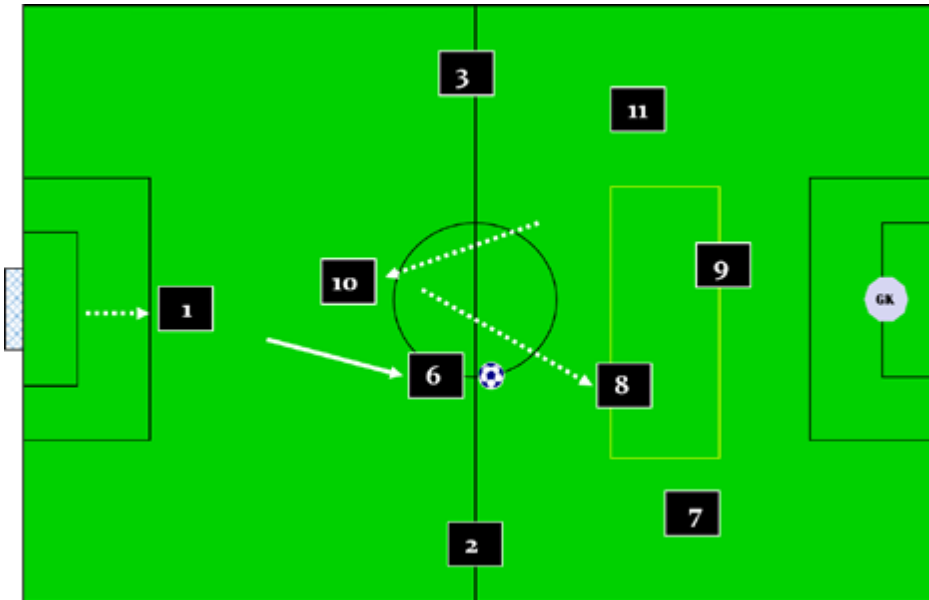
### A short and long 2 player rotation

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.





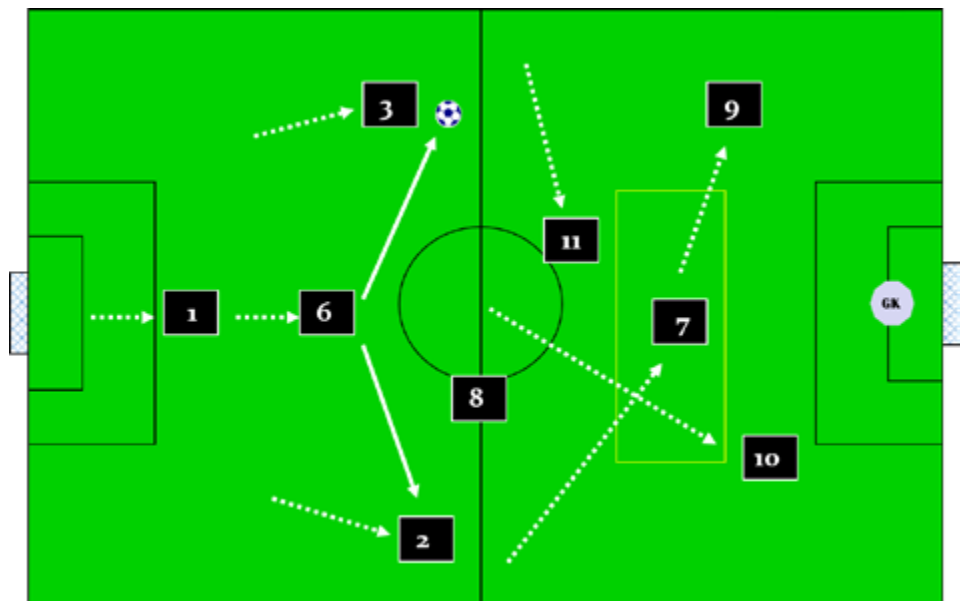
**Combinations  
Movements to Teach**

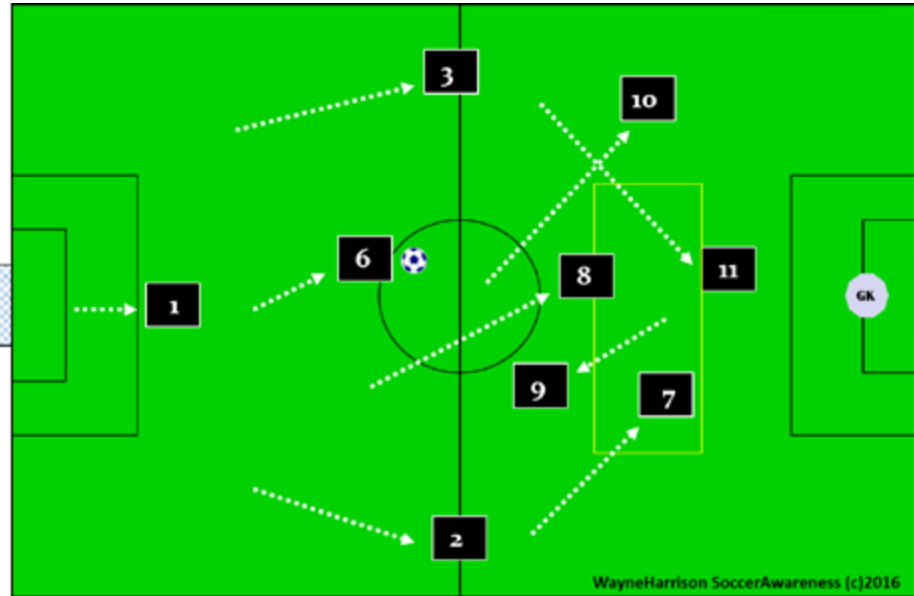
Now center back (6) brings the ball out of defense and central midfielder (10) drops in to cover.

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.



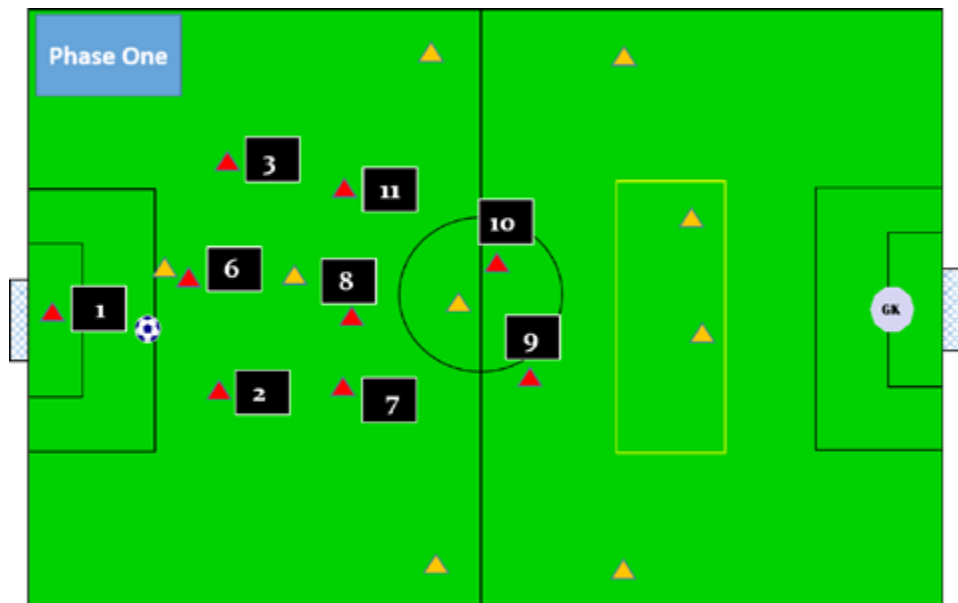


### More Complex Combinations Movements to Teach

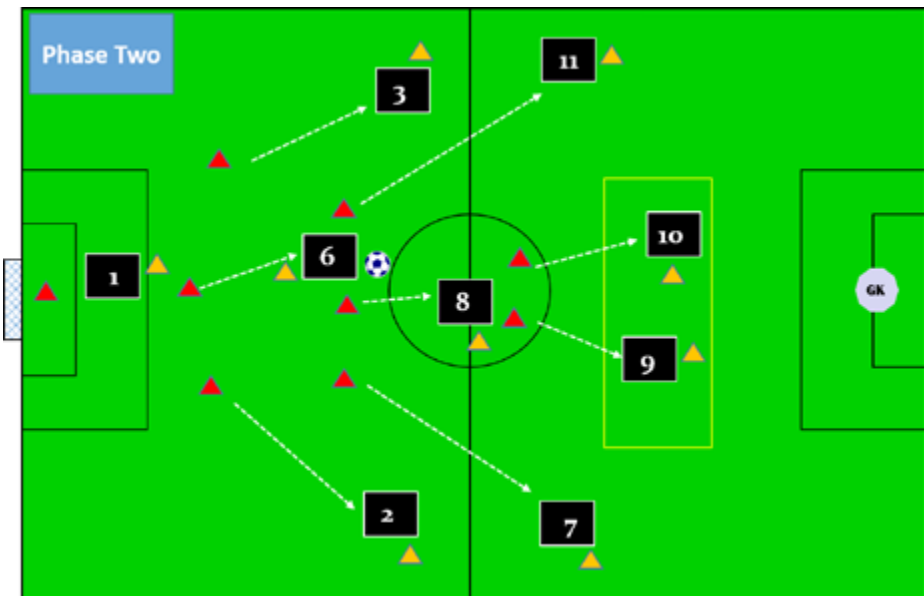
More complex. Very easy to teach in training in a **shadow play**, the secret is when players can identify it on the field “for themselves” when and where to do it in the game situation. Here we have 5 players rotating.

### 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.





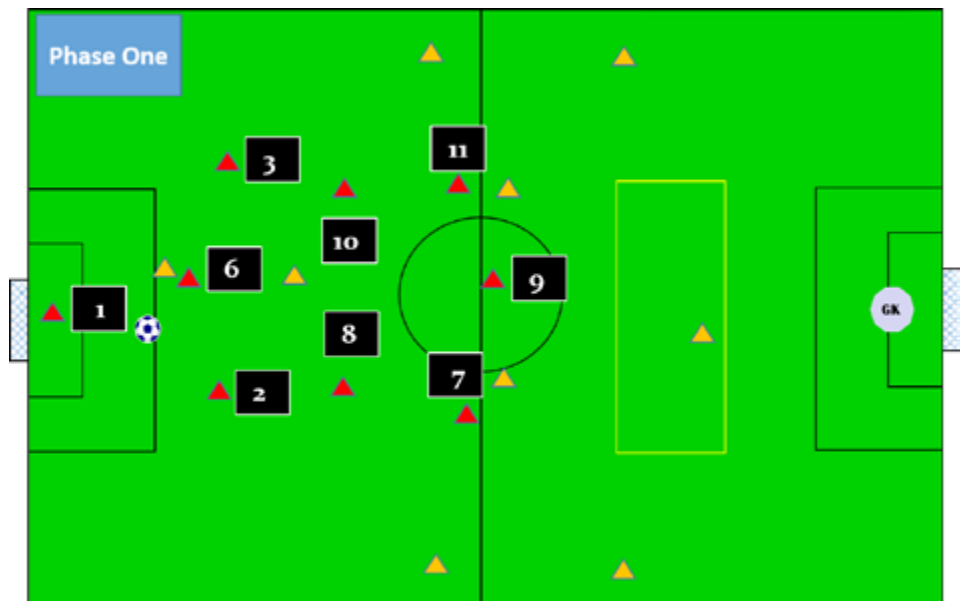


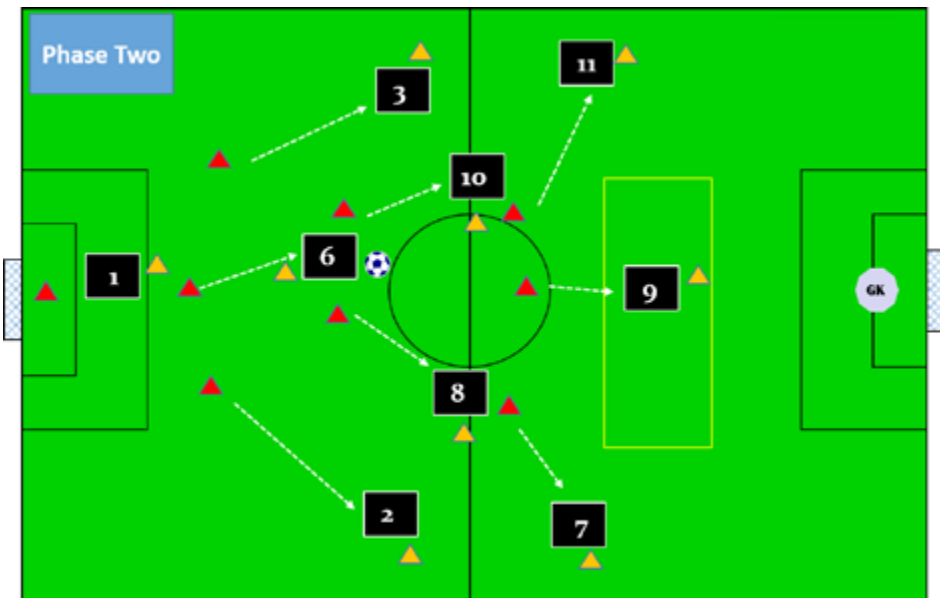
**Team shape attacking in 1-3-3-2**

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.

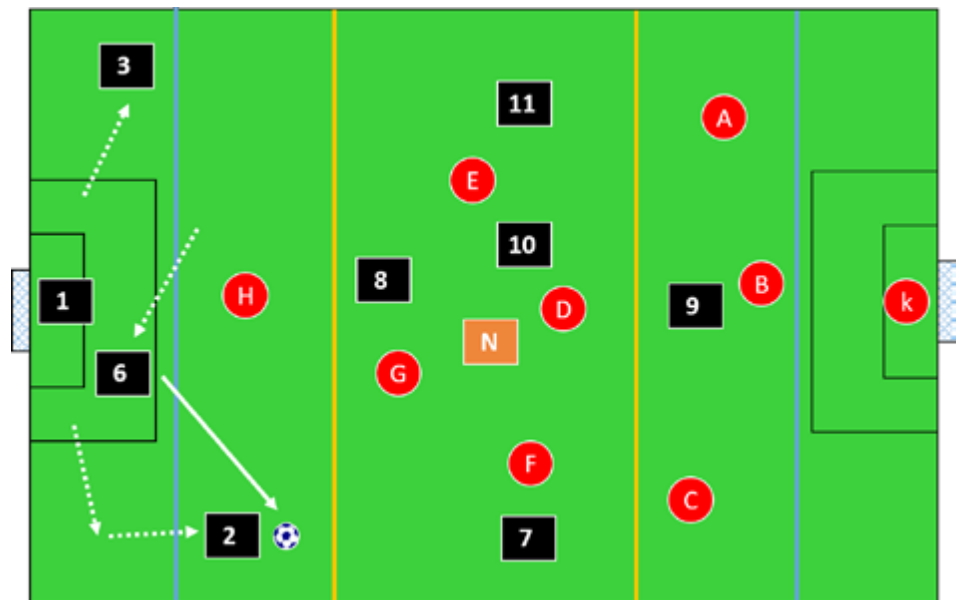
# COMPOSURE ZONES TO AID TEAM PLAY AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT IN A 9 V 9

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

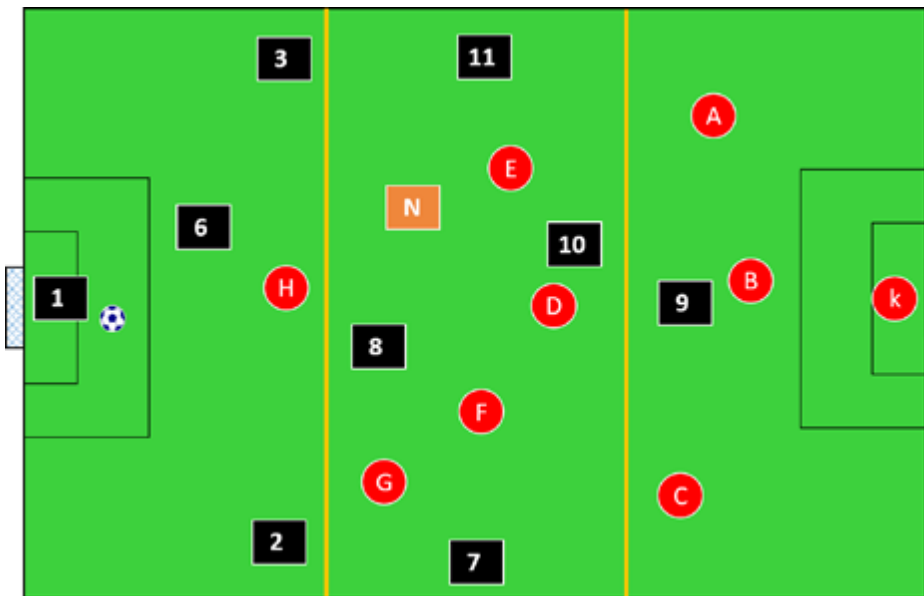
Overload at the back. Striker can't encroach into the 10-yard composure zone. Defenders pass ball across under no pressure until one is free to run it out, attackers can now try to win it back. Defenders can take the ball back into the composure zone for safety and this encourages spreading out and playing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

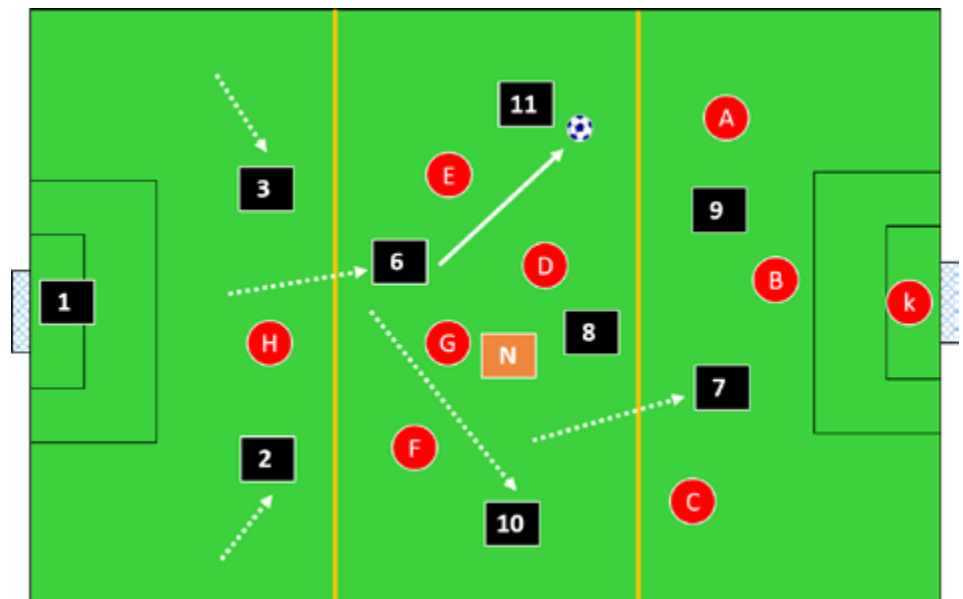


**Players stay in their own thirds to establish team shape**

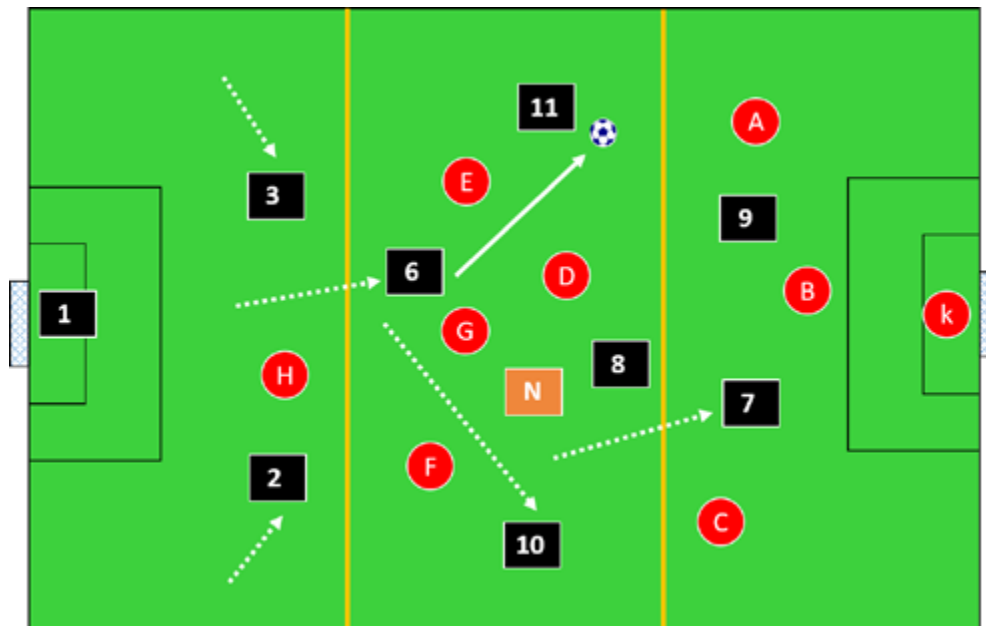
We start with 2 x 1-3-3-1-1 set ups. Players stay in their own zones initially until we get the game going.

### 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

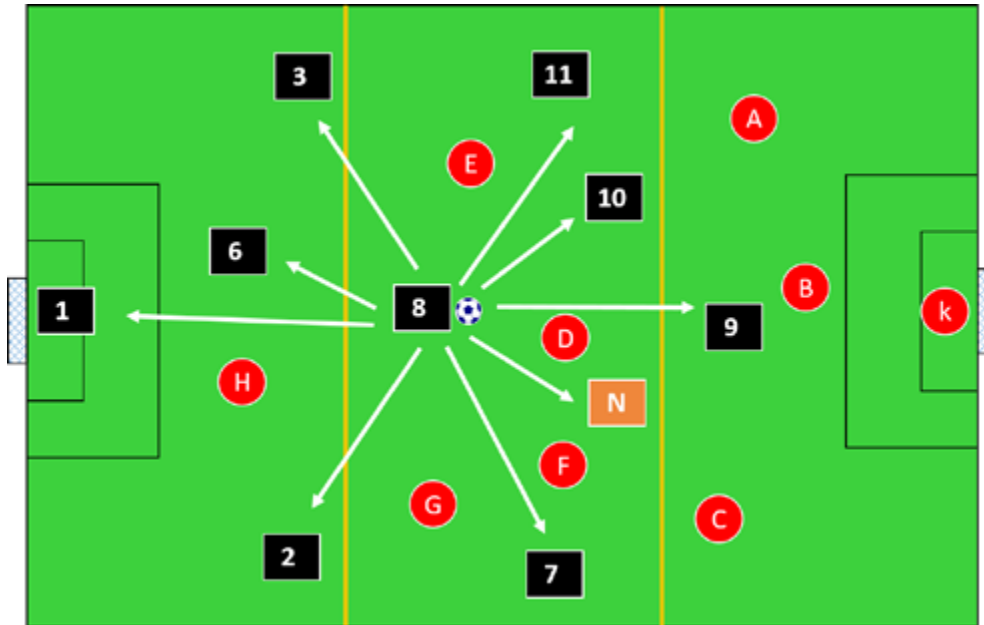


Players interchange between zones one at a time always returning to original set-up. Check the balance of the team with and without the ball. We have created a 5 v 3 in midfield zone with player (6) moving up.

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

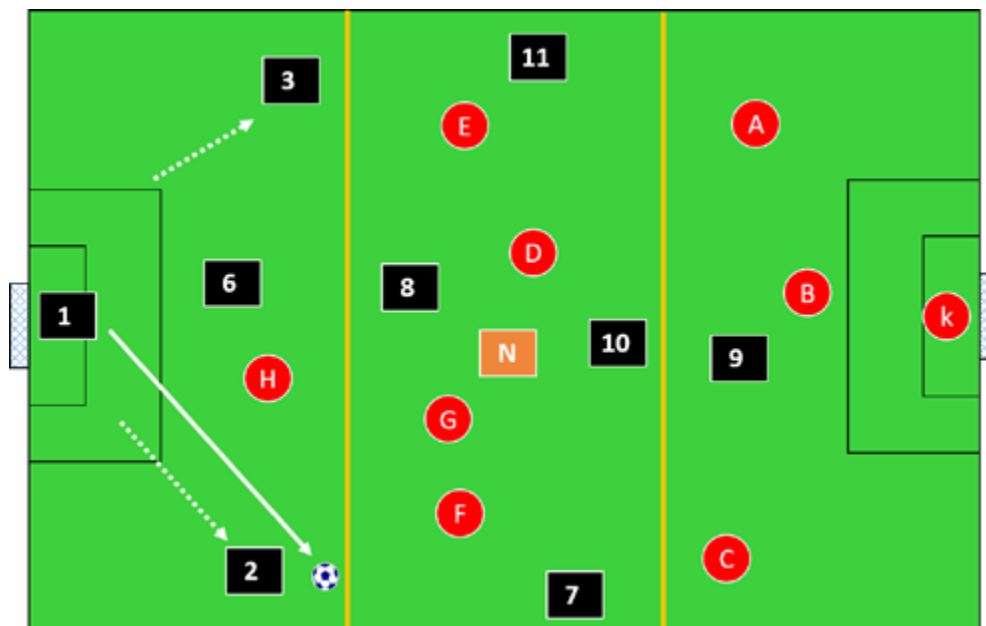


Player (8) on the ball. 4 possible options to pass forward e.g. to (7), (9), (10), (11) or (N) If can't go forward because of pressure, can go to the side to (3) or (2) or back to (6), and the keeper to keep possession until the situation allows for a forward pass again (you won't obviously get all these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



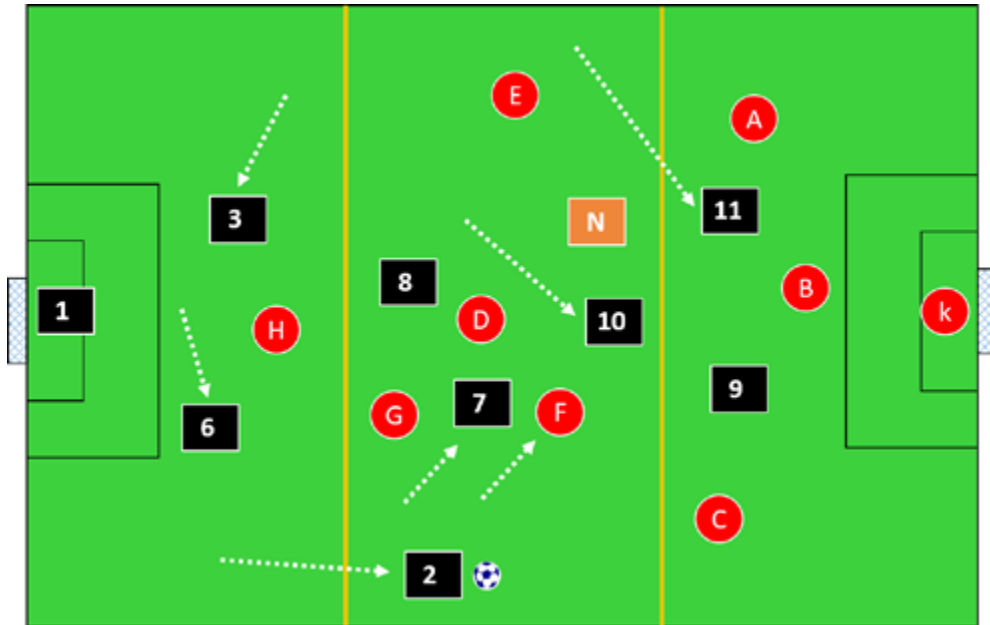
To ensure the players have a chance to build up the play from the back have a 3 v 1 overload at each defensive third to begin to session.

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.



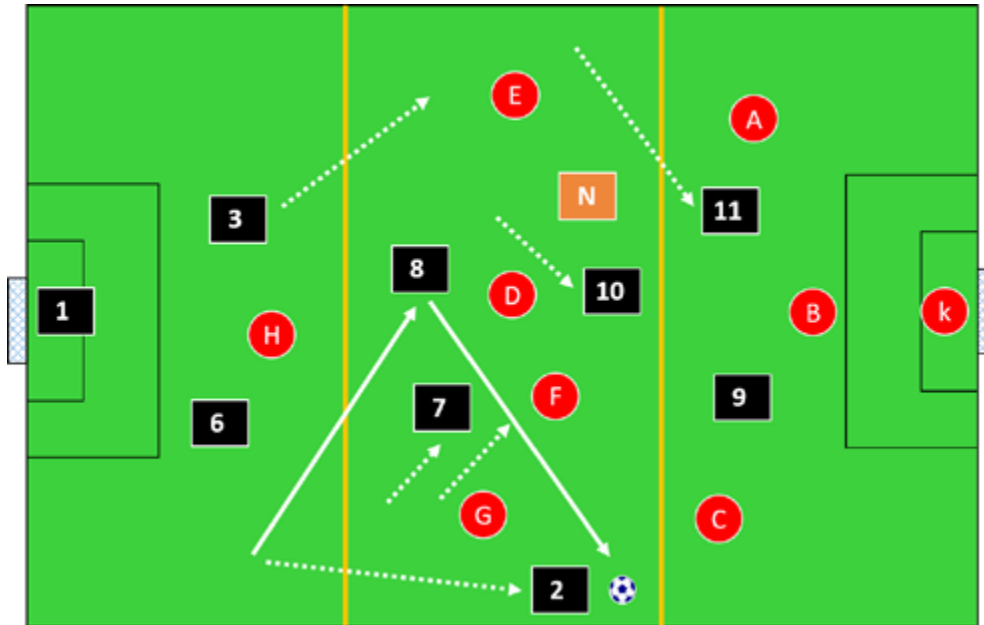
## Transitions between thirds



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



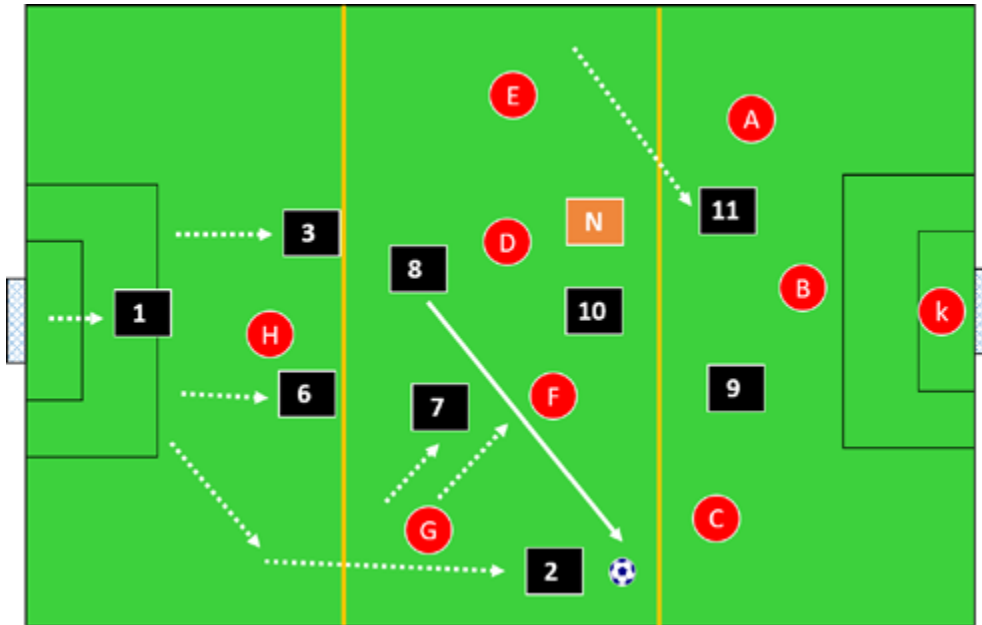
Here a full back makes an overlap run to provide an option for (8) to pass to. (2) Passes to (8), (7) clears the space wide to run into for (2) by taking defender (F) inside, and (2) runs onto the return pass from (8). The overlap can occur also from the middle third into the attacking third.

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

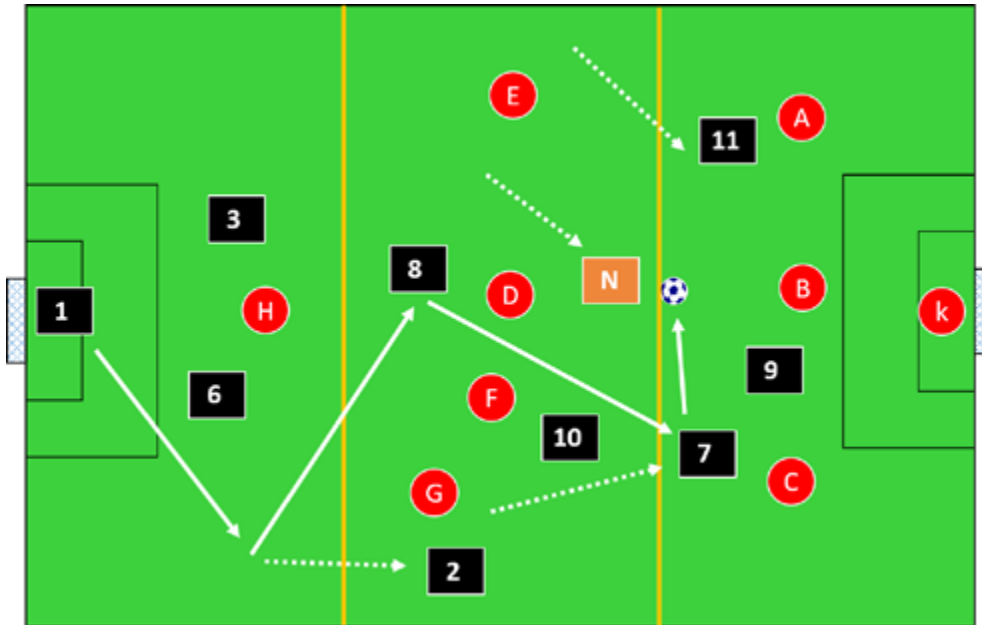


Develop – Have offside from the defensive third of the field. (8) Passes the ball forward and (3), (6) and the keeper push up. Striker (G) is left offside.

(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.

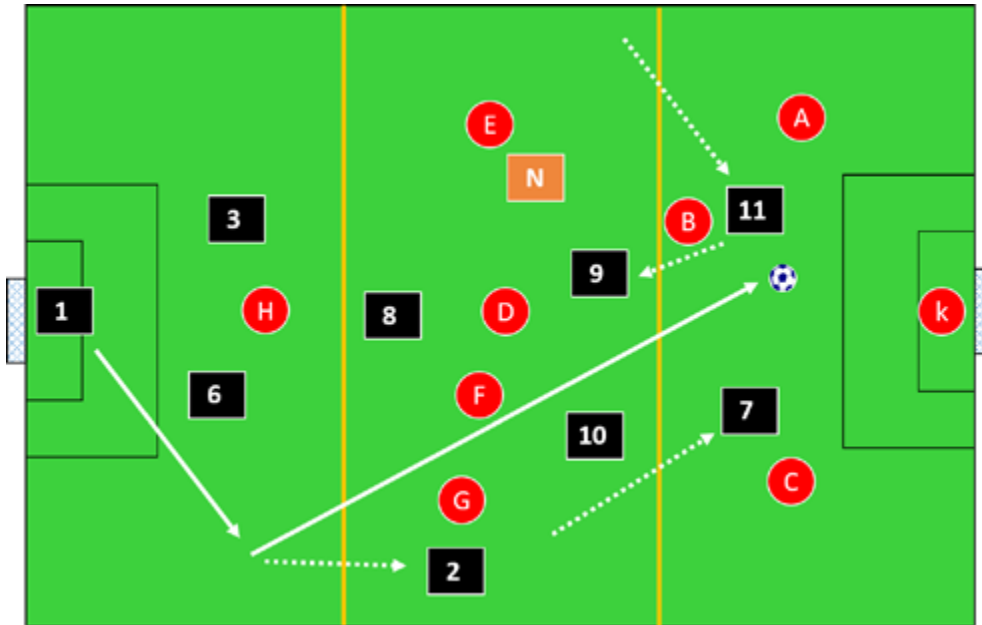
## Overload in attack to maintain possession



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

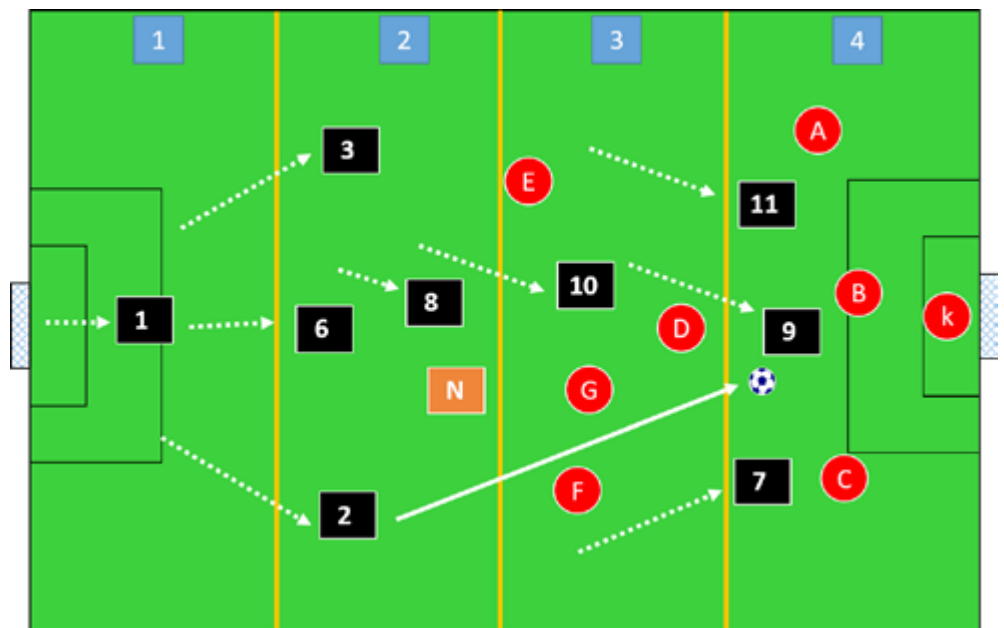


We have essentially four - thirds to play in. The players can only play in three of the four thirds at any one time.

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.



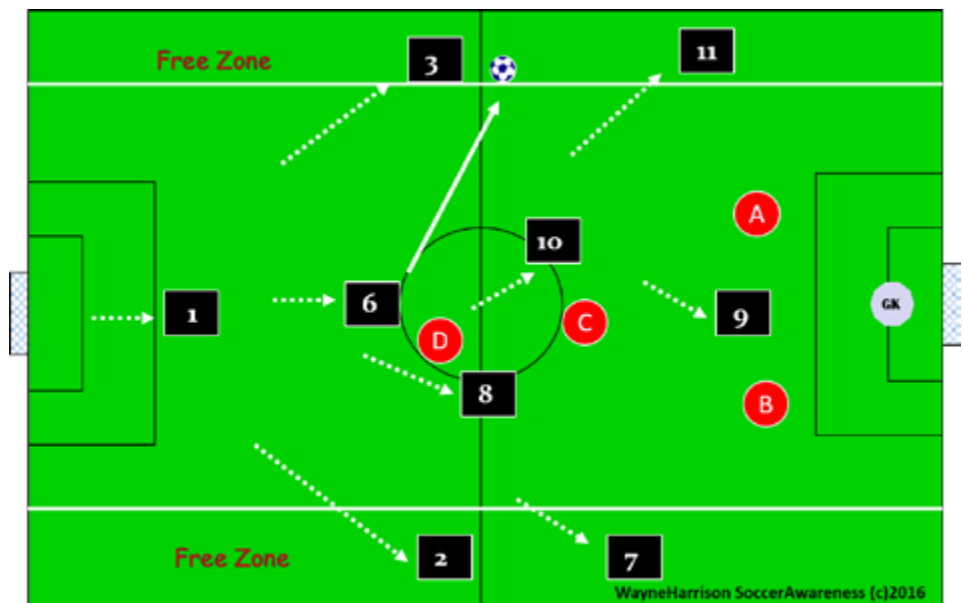
**To Encourage players to use width and play without pressure**

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.

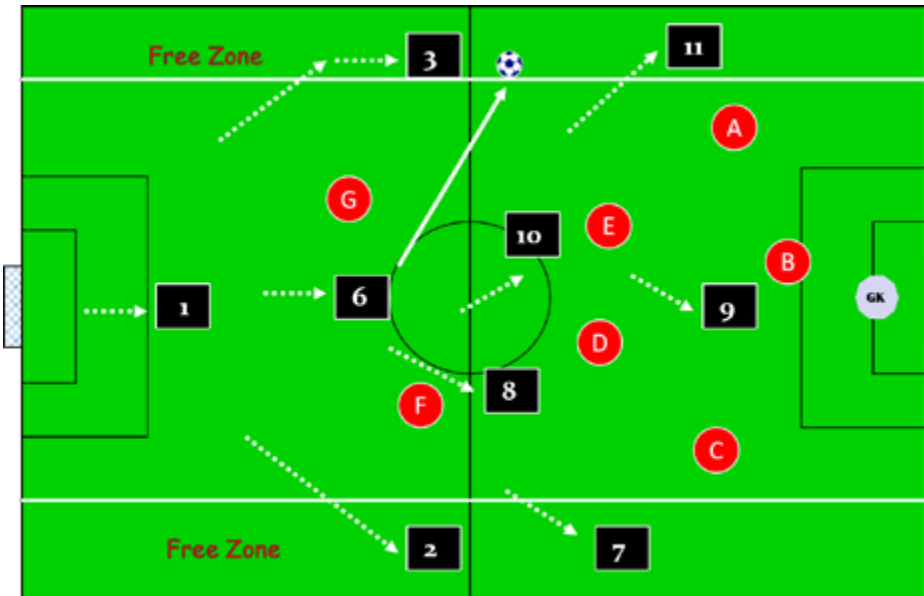
So we have here a 9 v 5 set up.



## Building the idea up

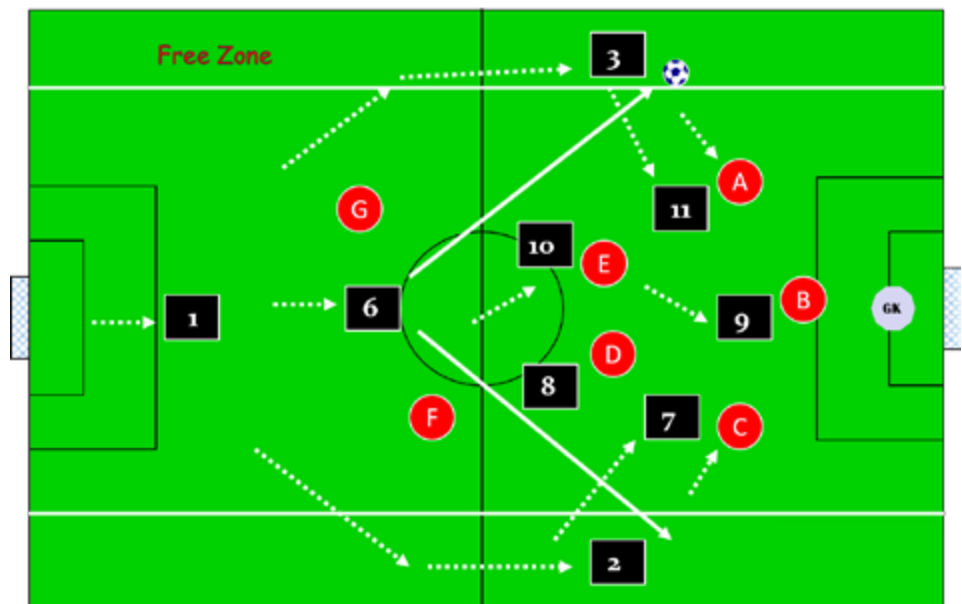
If a player breaks wide into the outside channel on either side of the field and is in possession of the ball this player cannot be tackled. Defenders are not allowed into the channel.

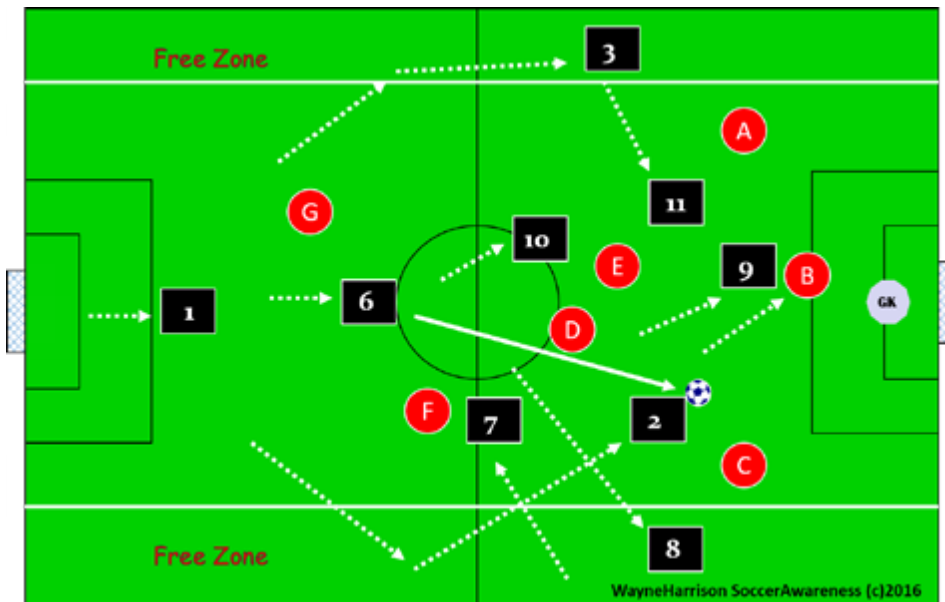
The players on the team in possession of the ball can run the ball into the channel or have it passed to them into the channel.



## 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).





### Passing centrally for the outside to inside run

Here wingback (2) cuts inside and wide player (7) drops back in to cover (2) defensively should the move break down. Striker (9) clears the space in front for (2) to run into. Much movement OFF the ball to help each other.

### A Full Game Situation for Both teams

Have it a full game where BOTH teams practice the THEME. A simple example of an attack by the other team. Striker (F) runs across the line of the defense to stay outside then times to run for the cross.



## 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.

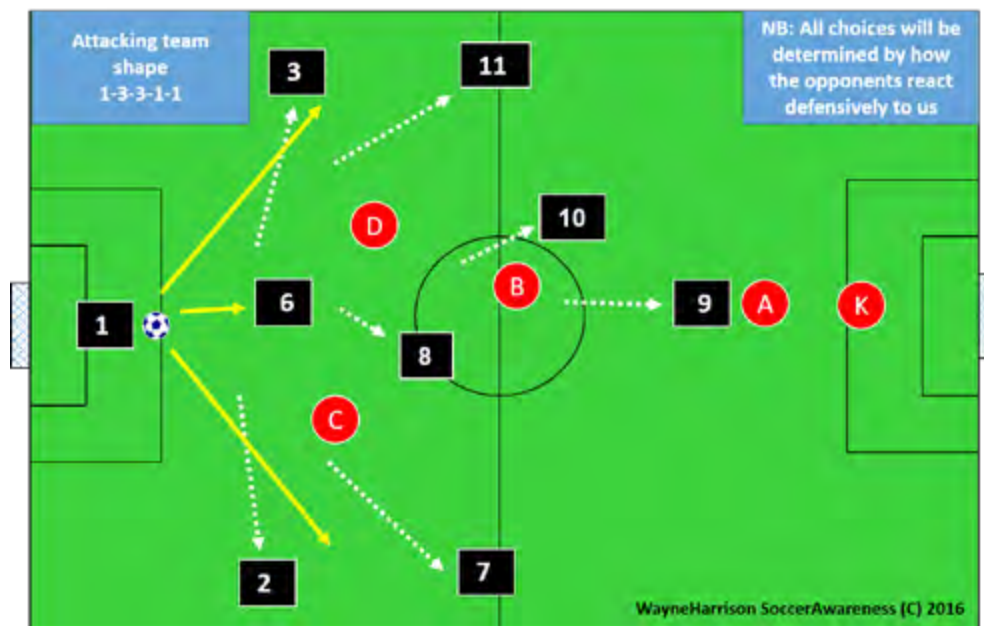
We are not saying these will work all the time and we will make mistakes. Sometimes we will get them wrong. Sometimes the opponents will work out what we are doing and stop us. And sometimes it will work great.

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



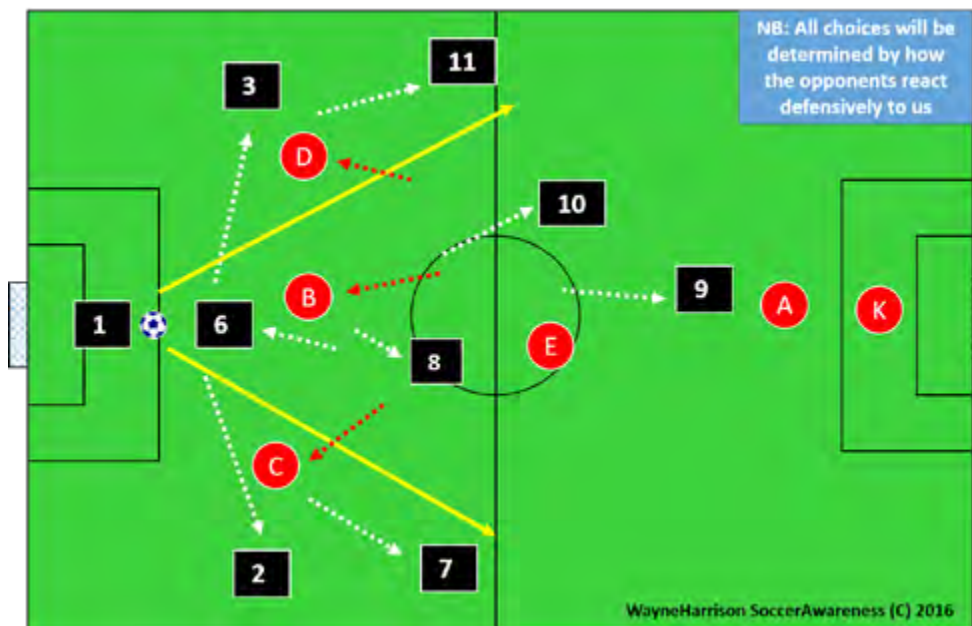
We must ALWAYS try first of all to play out from the back. The ABSOLUTE last resort is for the keeper to kick it long.

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.

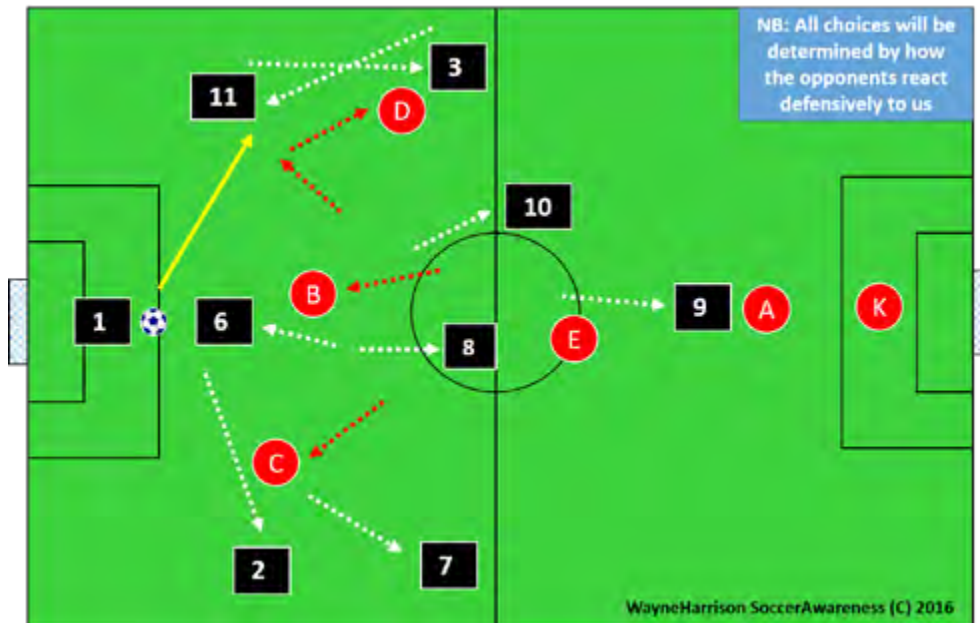
Have opponents make different choices to force the keeper to make relevant decisions in training.

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

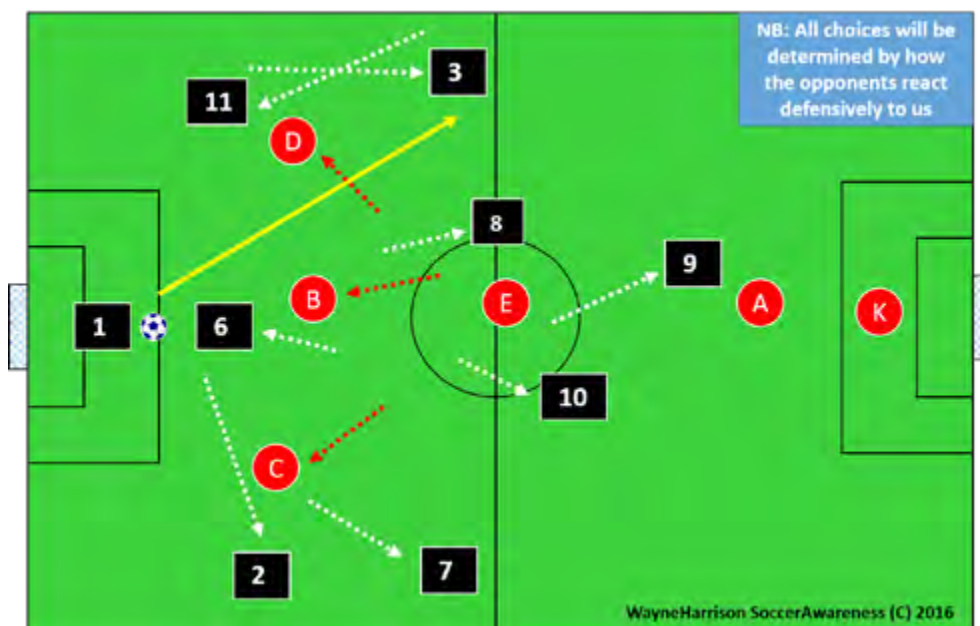


Introducing 2 player rotations like this is important as we can eventually make this happen all over the field of play.

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.

#### 4. 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 embedded in their soccer DNA.

Here a simple rotation between (11) and (3) opens up a passing lane for (3). Opponent (D) stays in the space (11) runs into so perhaps (3) can get free?

## 5. Distribution from the keeper through a central midfielder rotation



(6) Sprints forward and takes his or her marker with them, in this case (B).

This opens up space where (6) originally was for (8) to drop in unopposed to be free to start the play.

In this if we do it quickly enough (8)'s marker may not see it in time and (8) will get free.

They push 3 up we get out through a rotation with (6) and (8). Have opponents make different choices to force the keeper to make relevant decisions in training.

## 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.

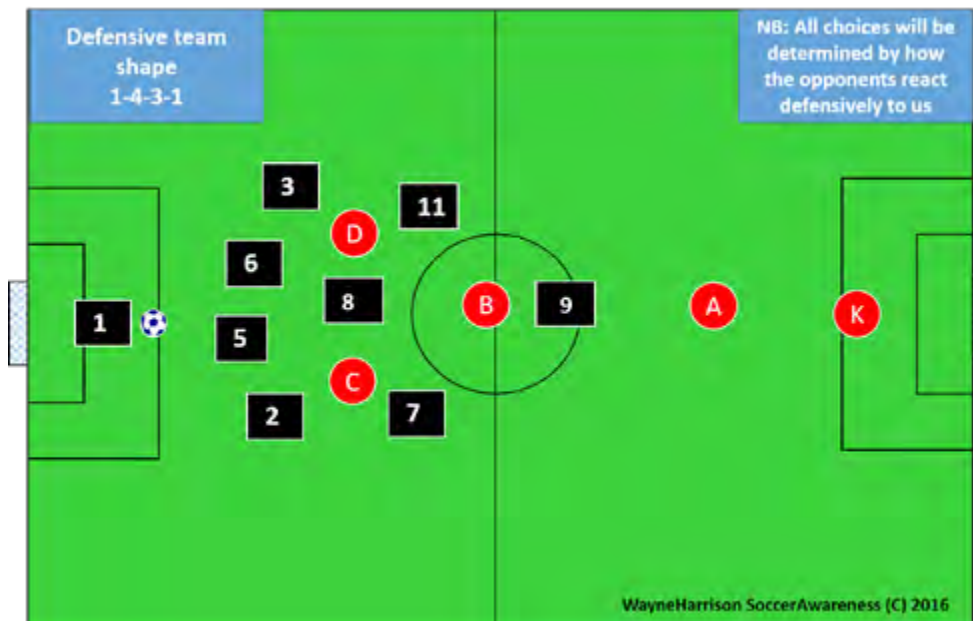
(11) Takes defender (E) wide to then cut inside with an inverted run to receive in open space and free of (E)

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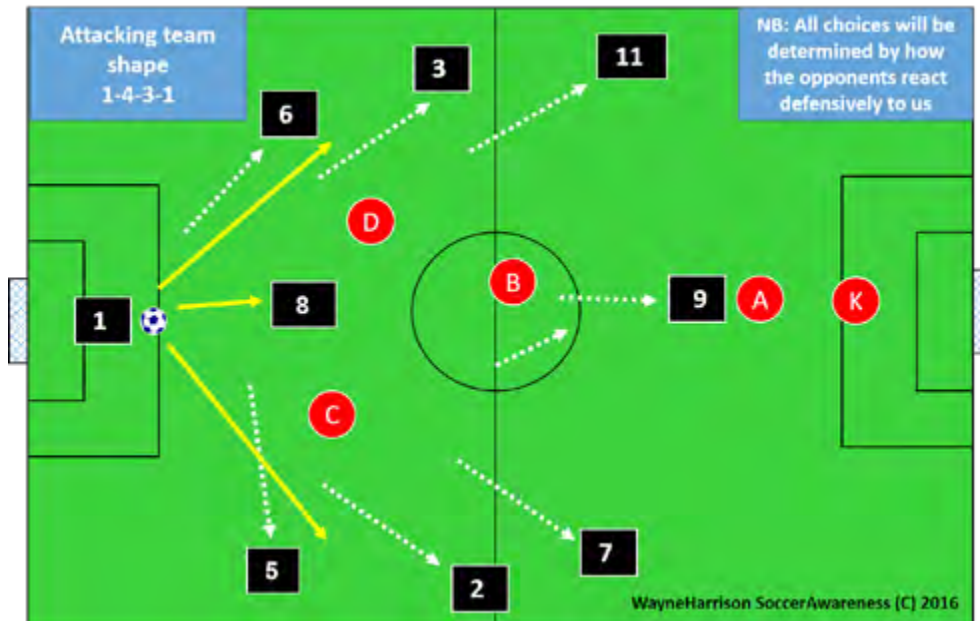
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Perhaps use cones instead of actual players to practice in a shadow play to make it work initially and to gain confidence (better still use Mannequins).

## 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.

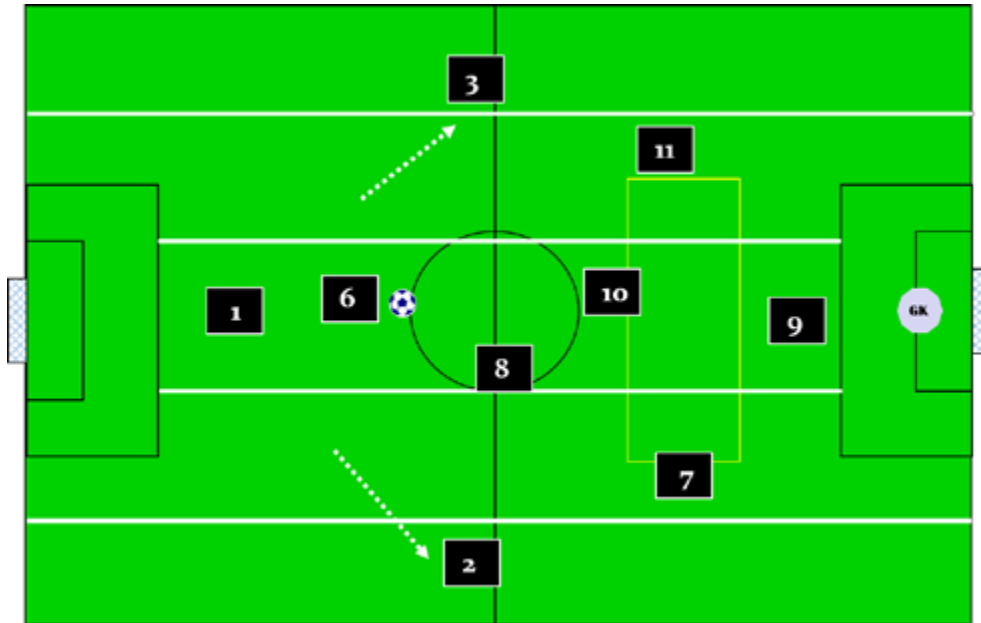
**Team Attacking Shape:** Based on the 5 corridors width-wise we want all 5 corridors to have players in them. Based length-wise we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled; with the exception of the keeper.

**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.

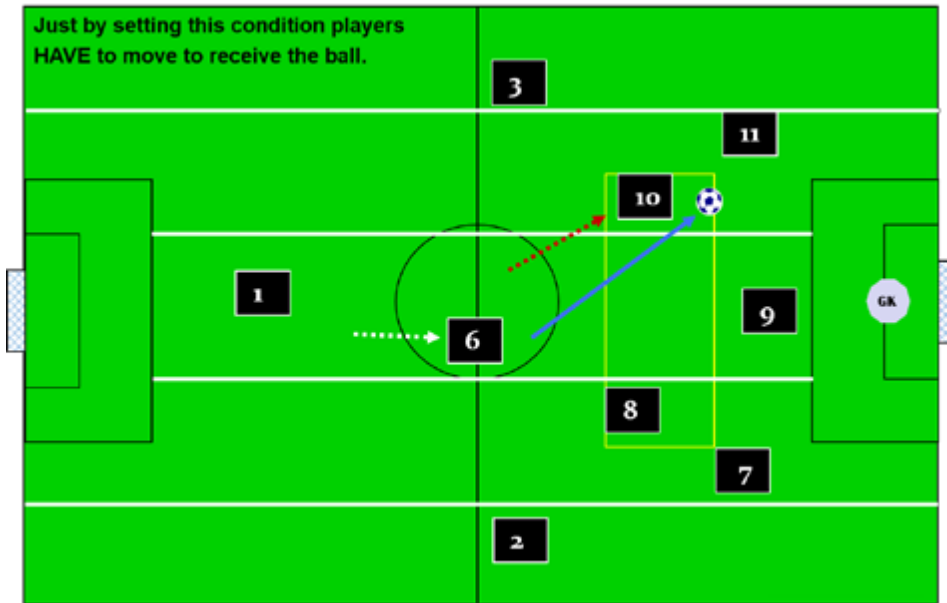
Based length-wise we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled preferably the whole team is condensed into 1.5 zones or at most half a field.

- 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).

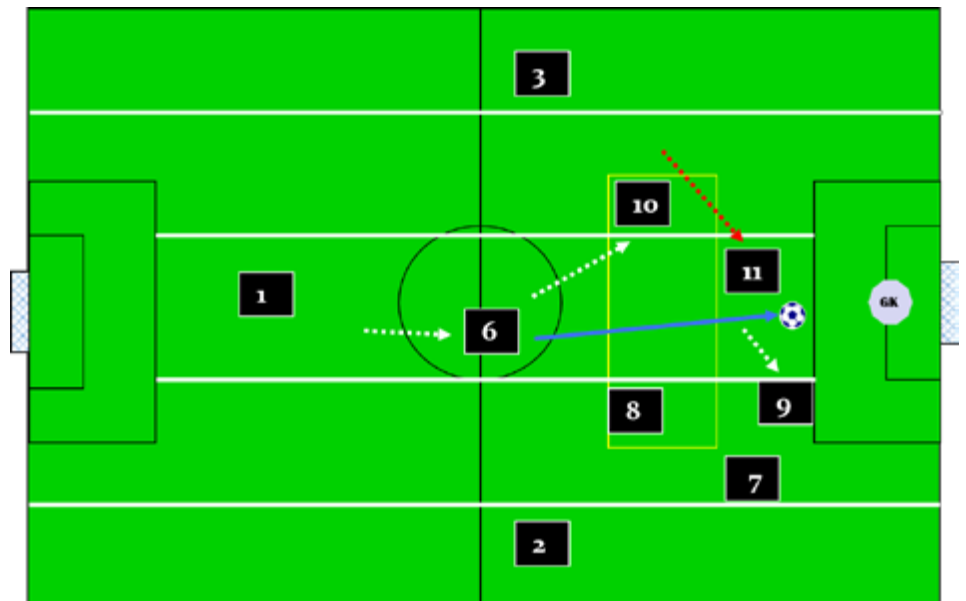


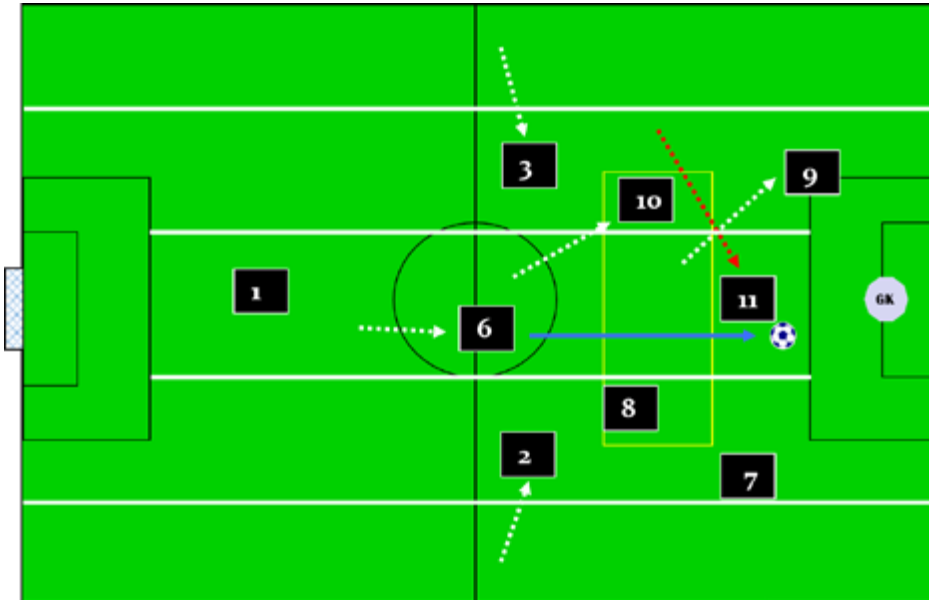
### Condition 1 to force an angled passing theme

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.





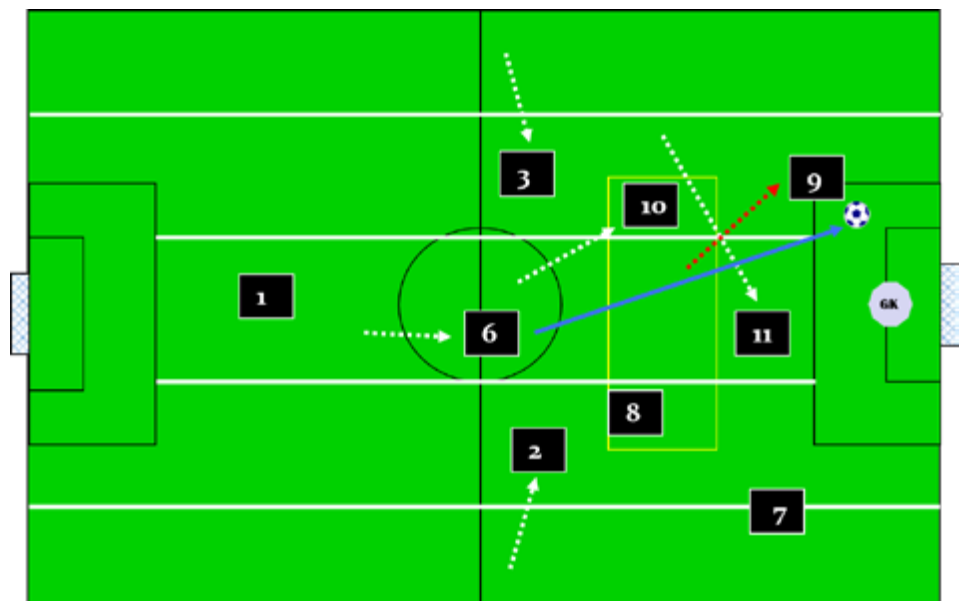
**Condition Two: Creates / almost forces players to rotate and interchange positions**

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.

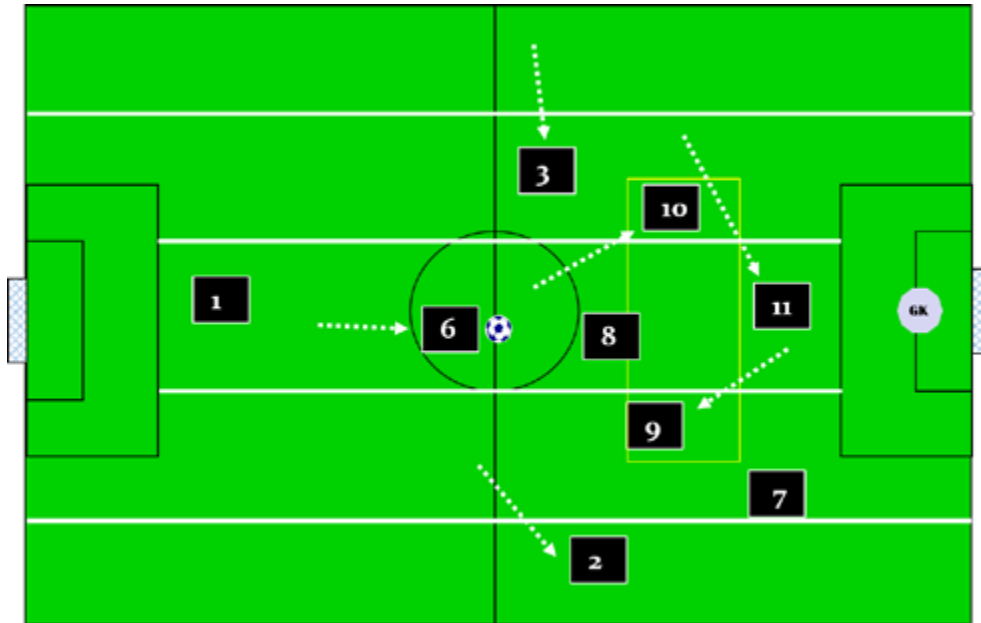
**Condition Two: Creates / almost forces players to rotate and interchange positions**

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.

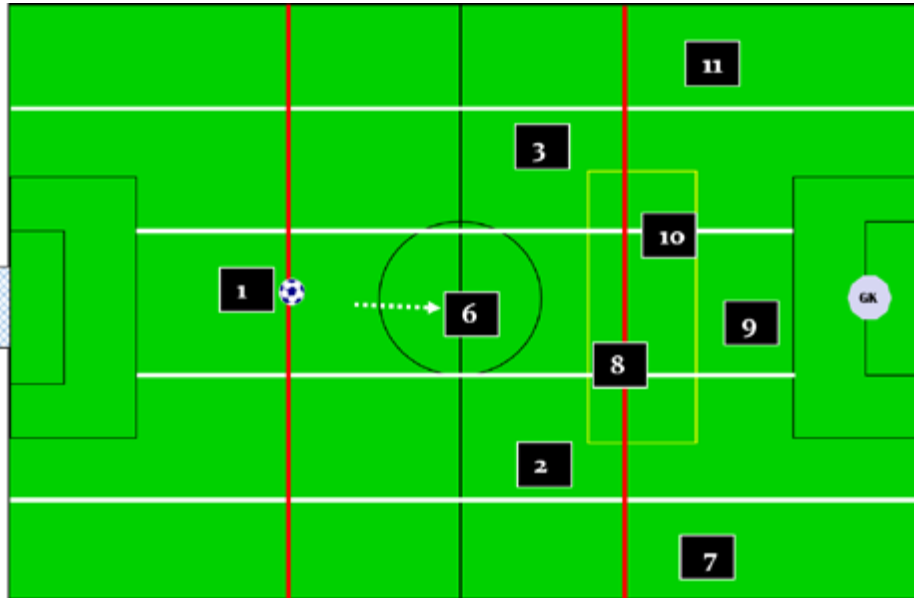
**Team Defending:** Based length-wise we want a maximum of 2 of 3 zones filled preferably the whole team is condensed into 1.5 zones; or at most half a field.

## 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

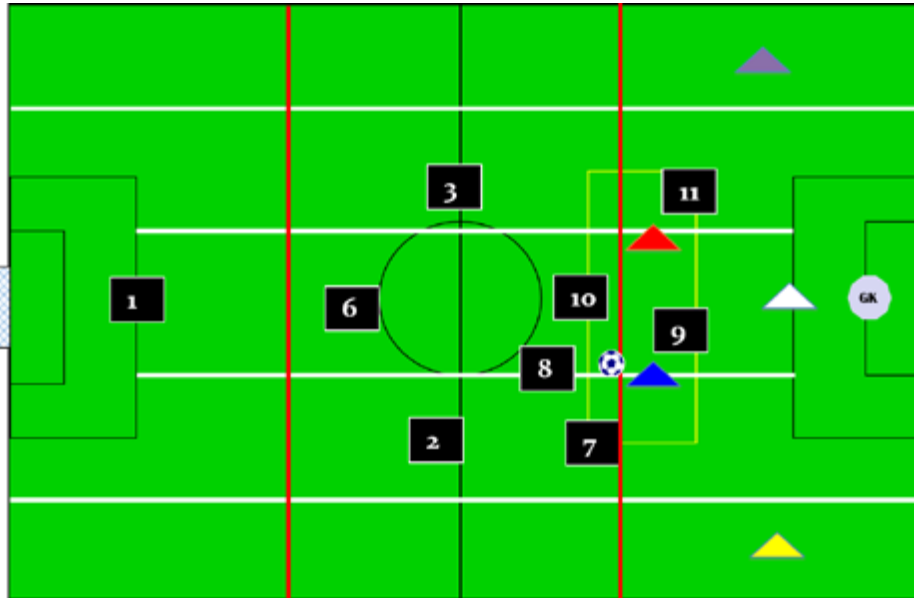
Play without opponents and show our basic attacking shape then offer alternatives for pressing as a group and have them do it as fast as possible. No ball needed but I will add it in the next diagrams for clarity as where will actually be.

## 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.





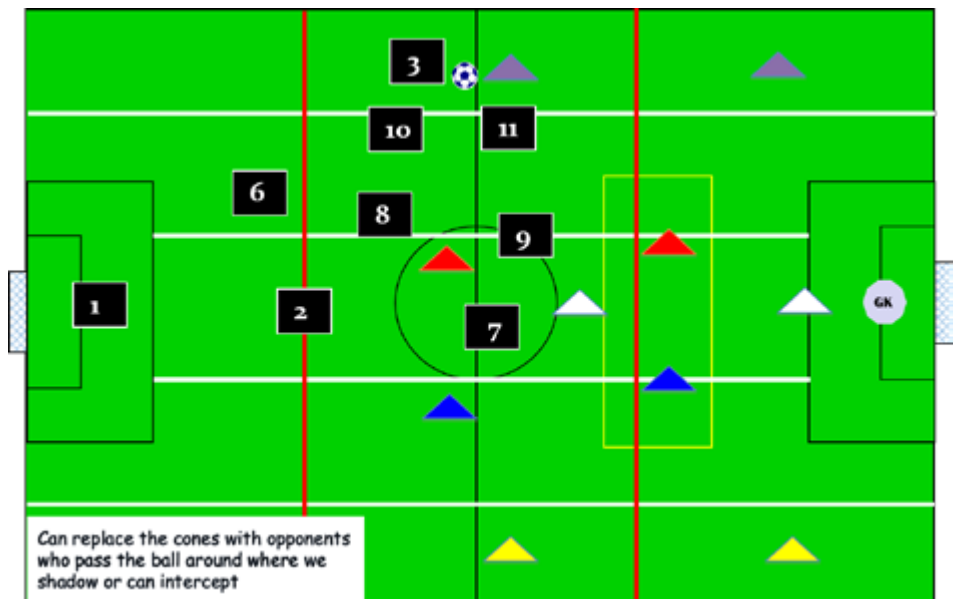


## Using Shadow play

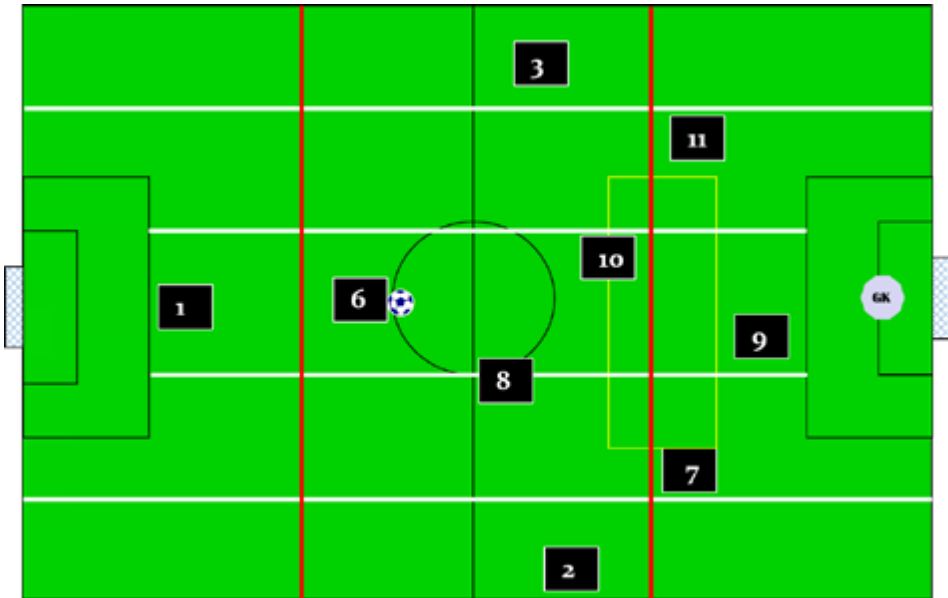
These should be common areas where we have the ball in our possession therefore its where we can lose the ball. Lose the ball at the blue cone and we adjust like so. (8) MUST slow down the player in an actual game to allow time for this to happen no spaces too play the ball into.

## 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.



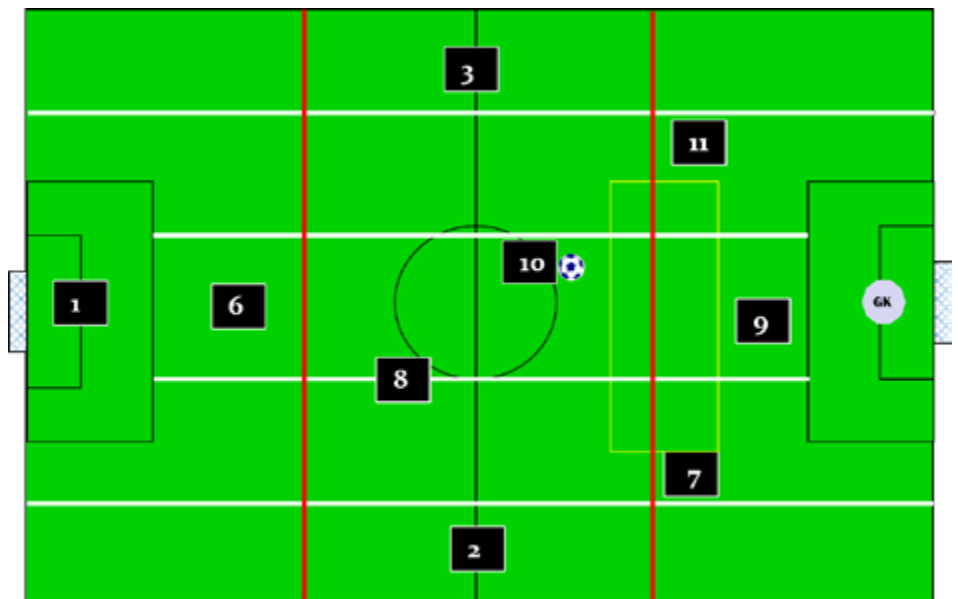
## Dividing the field into fifths widthwise and thirds lengthways

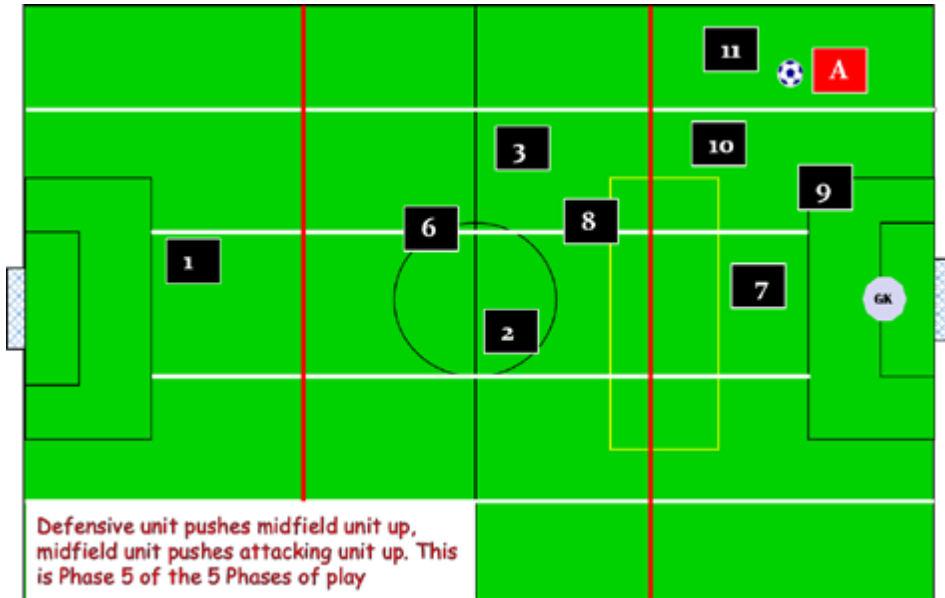


Playing in 5 Corridors widthwise to help define the positioning of players. Also playing in 3 thirds from goal to goal lengthwise (lets call these ZONES FOR CLARITY). Here we have a good balance with players positioning at angles to each other. Must get the team into 2 thirds only, except for the keeper,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



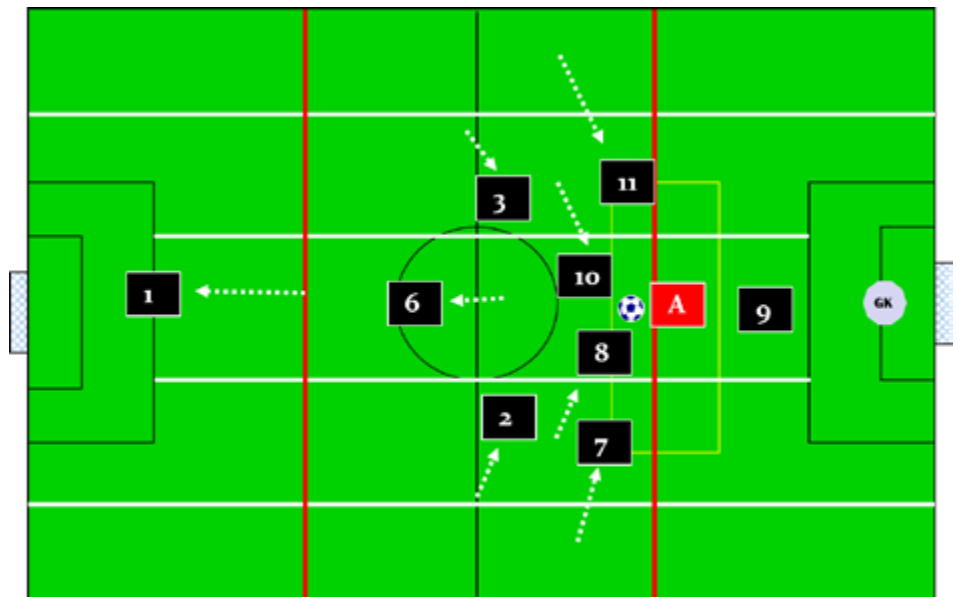


## Playing a Pressing game comes from the back

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.

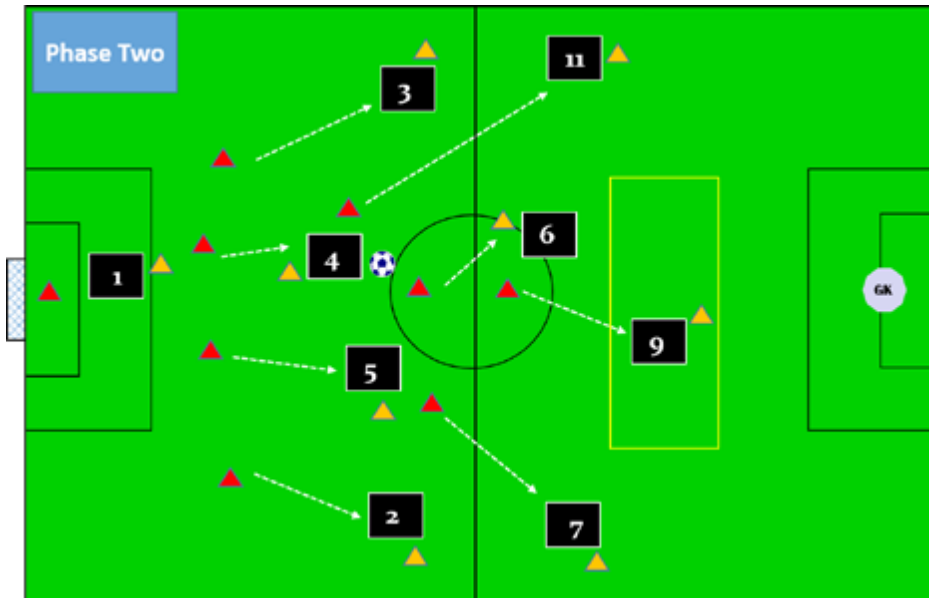
As I have stated I like to develop center backs whether you use two or three of them as you would a number 6 defensive midfielder because I want my teams to build from the back and be as comfortable on the ball as possible. Not everyone's way to do things I know but the modern game I believe will demand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

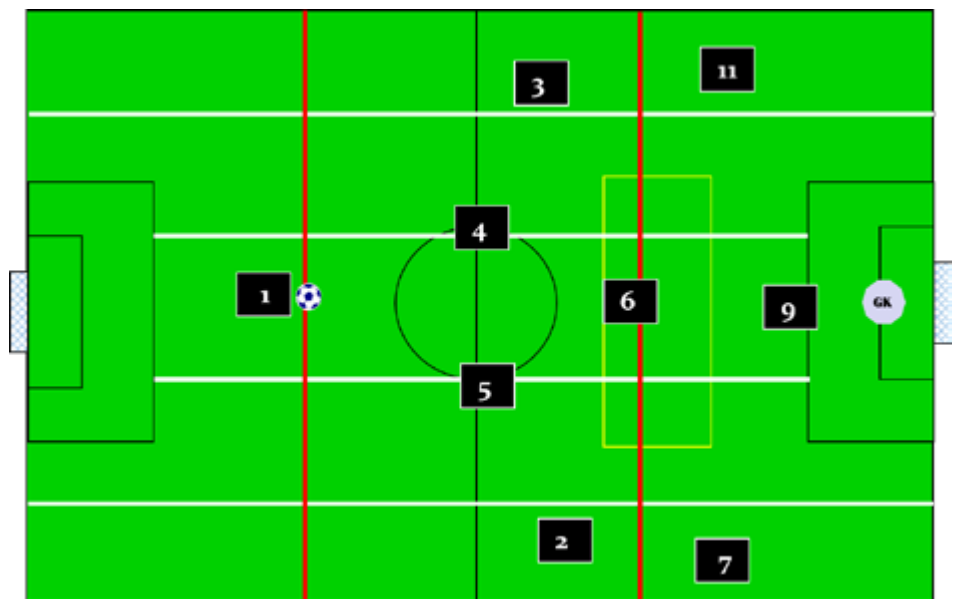


**Team shape attacking in 1-4-3-1 getting prepared for a back four at 11 v 11**

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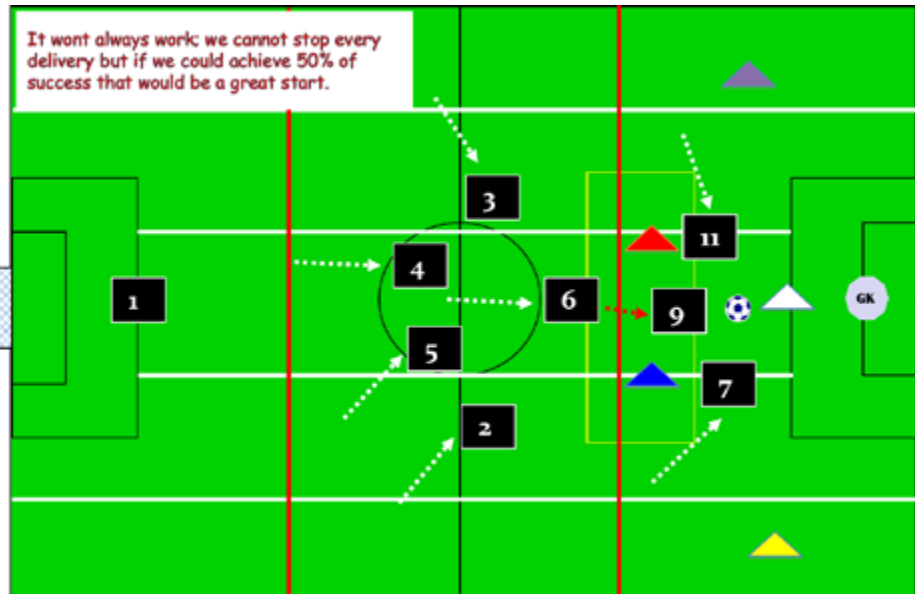
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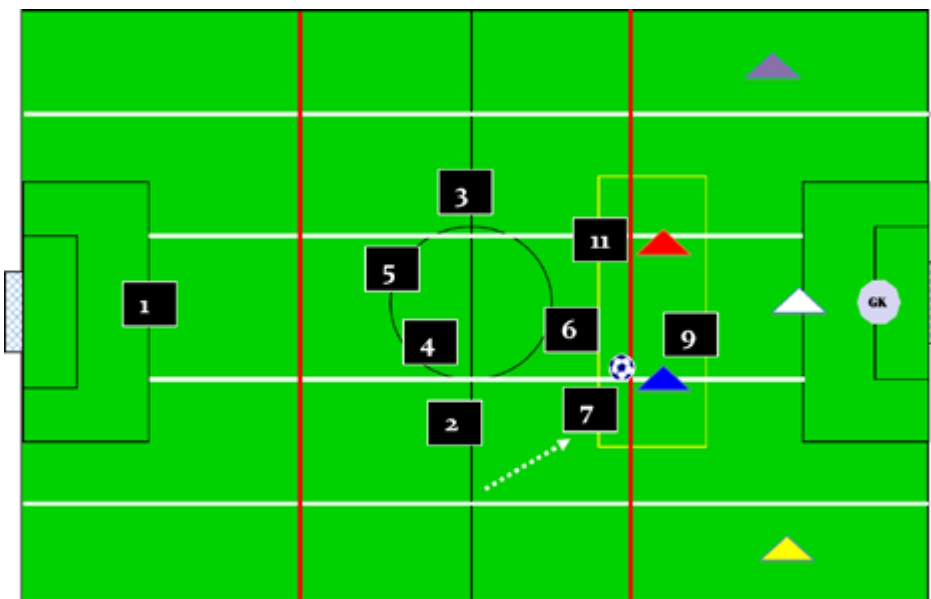
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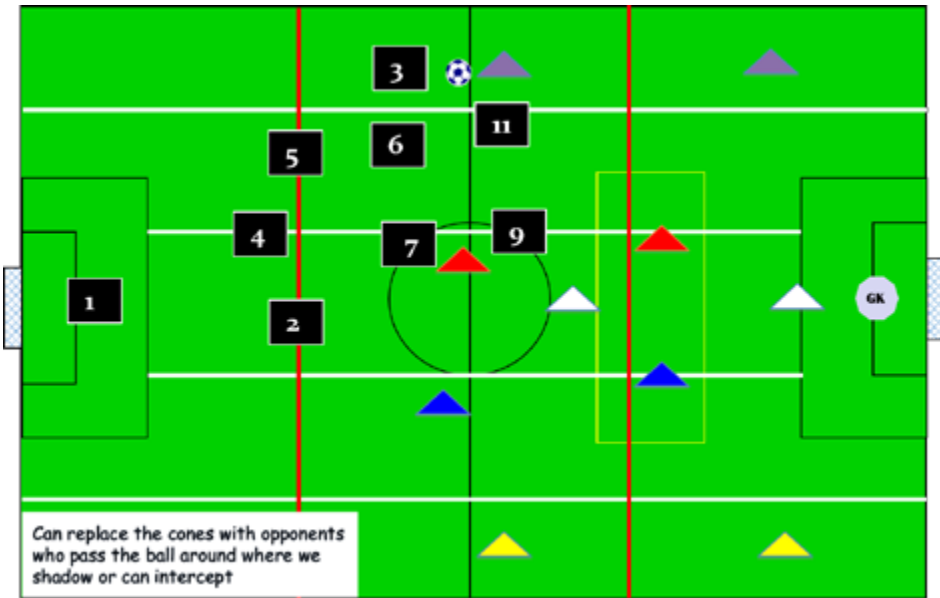
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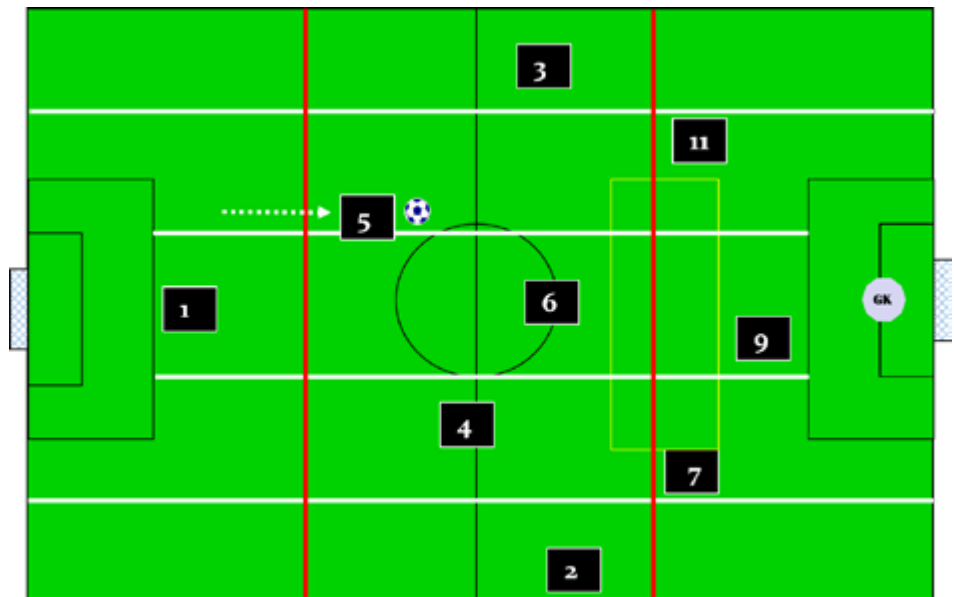
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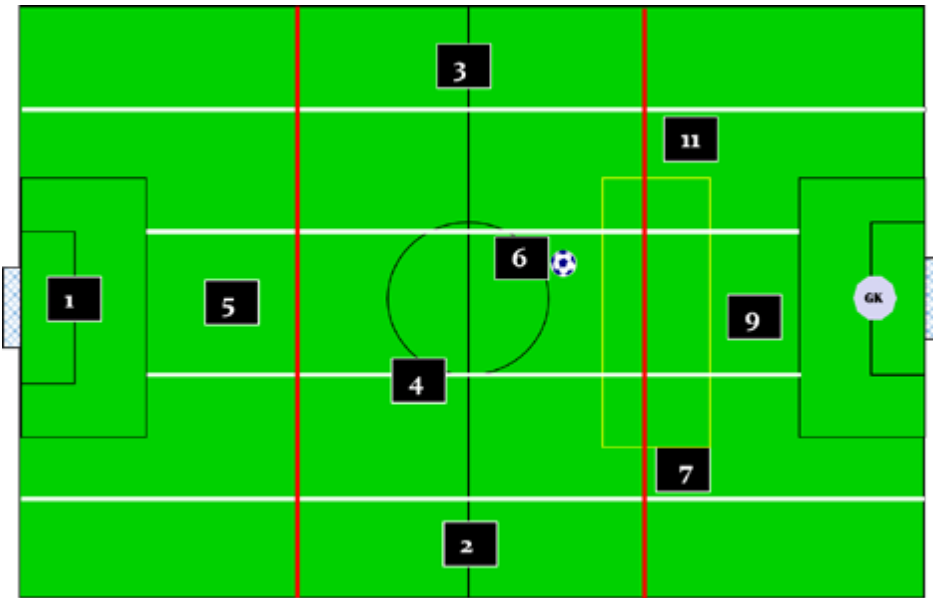
**Dividing the field into fifths widthwise and thirds lengthways**

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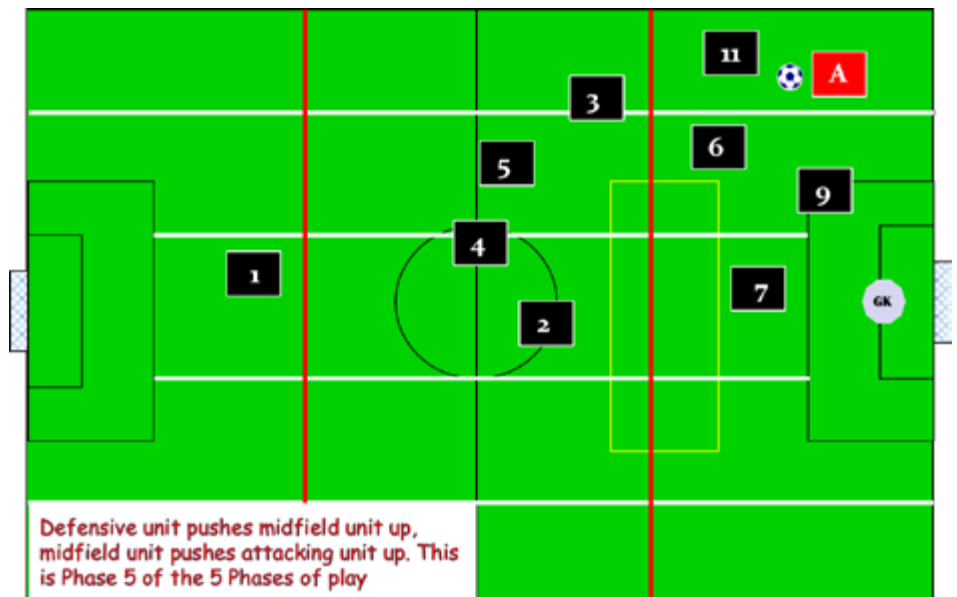
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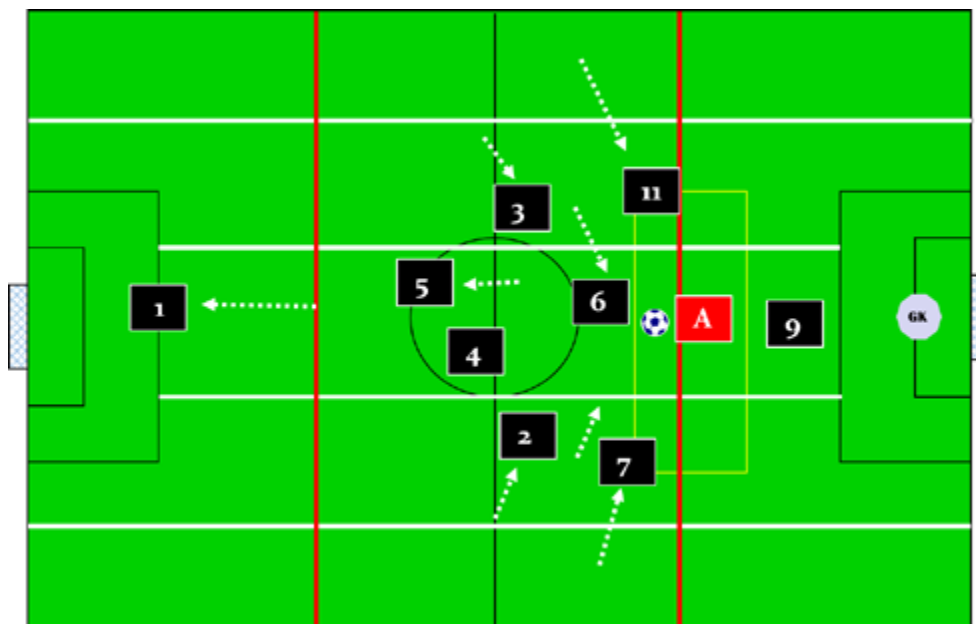
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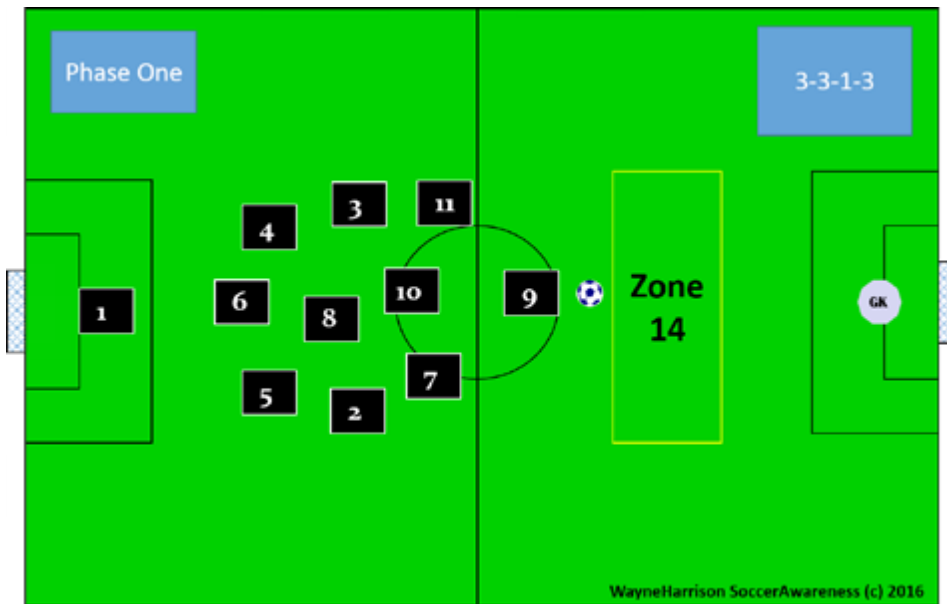
## A SIMPLE INTRODUCTION: THE 5 PHASES OF PLAY IN THE 1-3-3-1-3

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.

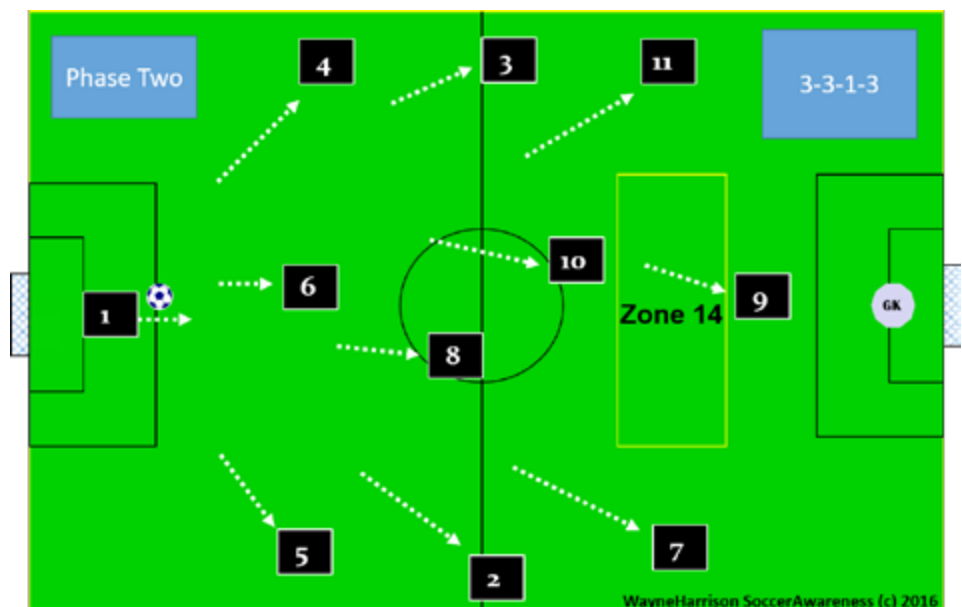


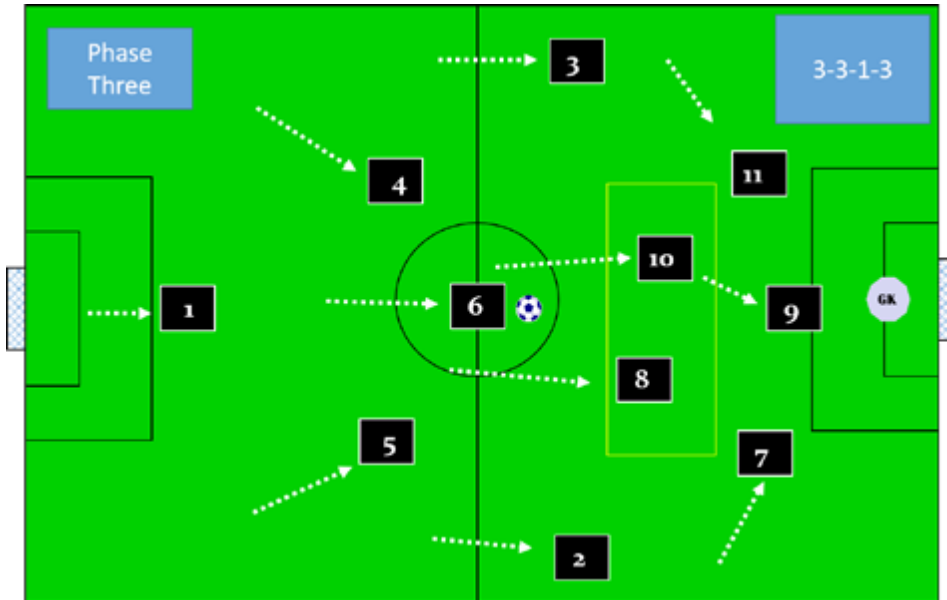
## The players in our system of play

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.



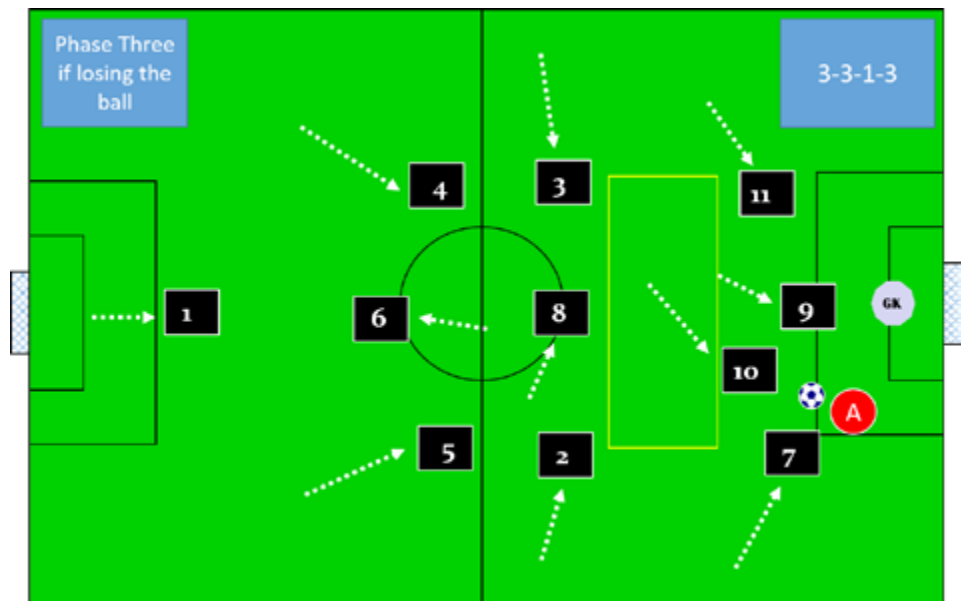


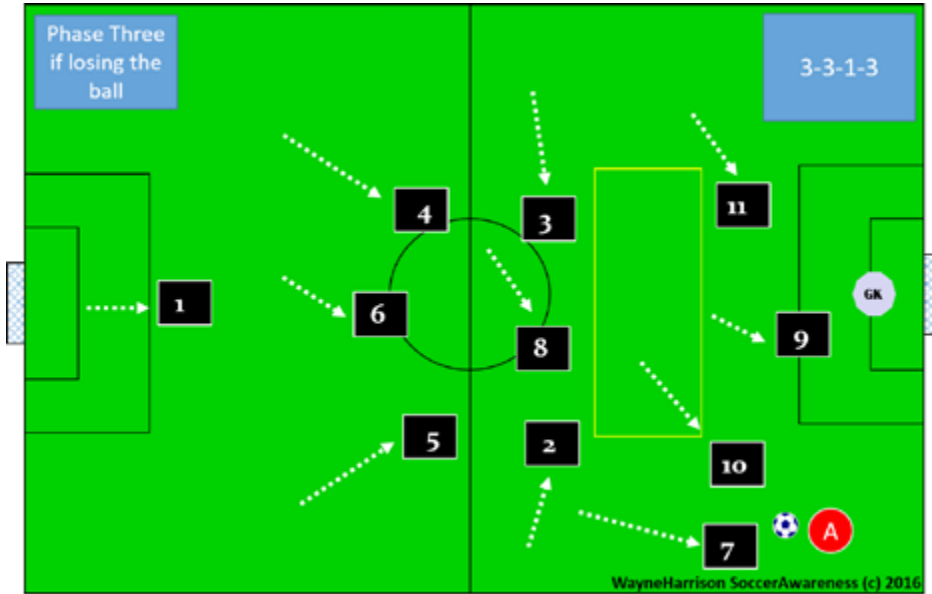
## The players in our system of play

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).



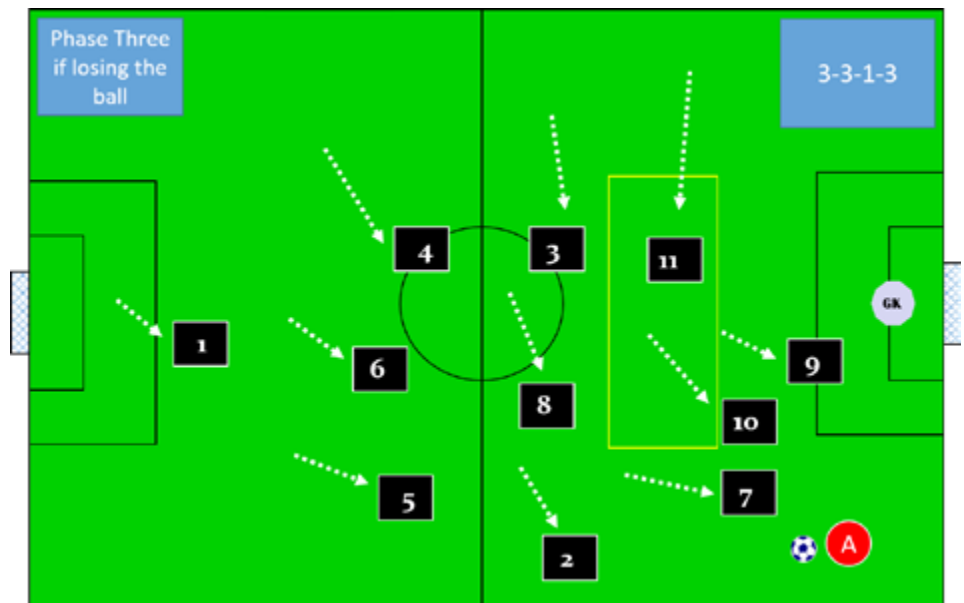


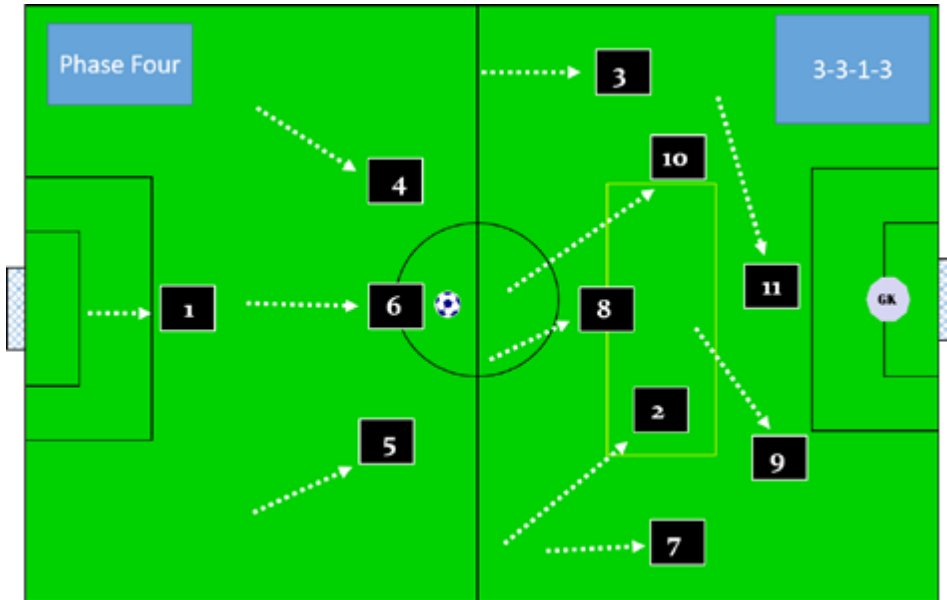
### Forcing the ball inside to our strength in numbers

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.



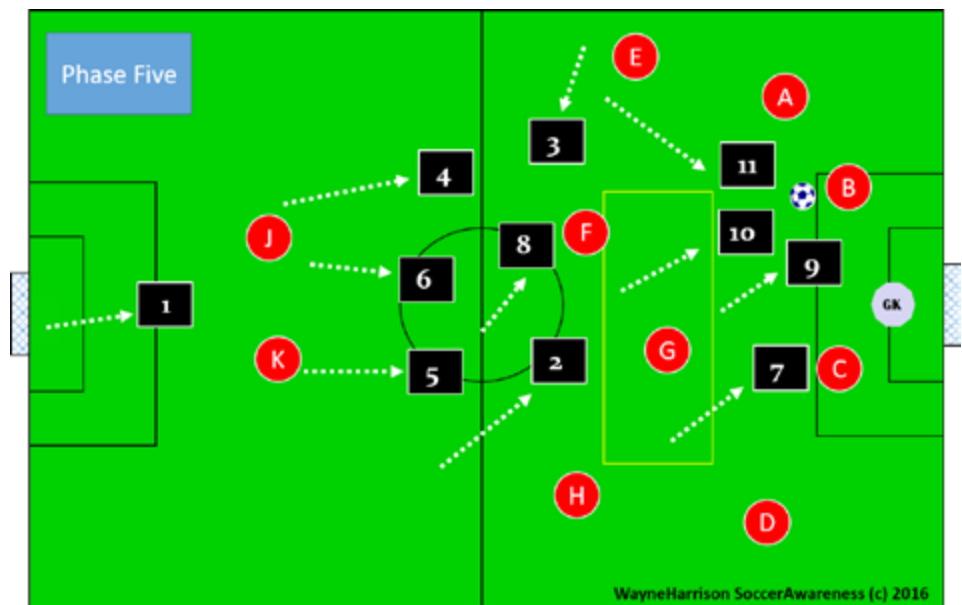


### The players in our system of play

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.



# A SIMPLE INTRODUCTION: THE 5 PHASES OF PLAY IN THE 1-4-2-3-1

Here we now look at the end product using a back four in the 1-4-2-3-1 system of play.

The way I interpret it you will see it is similar to the 1-3-3-1-3 in set up, in terms of the attacking shape of the team.

This way it is an easy transition between the two systems.

The center backs (4) and (5) in both systems I like to teach more as a Number (6) or defensive midfielder than a traditional center back.

So with a back three or a back four all center back players are taught the same way to be able to play out of the back and be comfortable on the ball which is more like a number (6).

**We have covered the other positions previously now we add (4) and (5) to the team set up**

## THE ROLES OF CENTER BACKS (4) AND (5)

### Technical Qualities:

1. Heading skills.
2. Passing Technique - distance (short, medium and long) - direction (left and right)

### Tactical Qualities: In Possession

1. Speed - with the ball
2. Always in a position to receive the ball.
3. Simple Choices- first pass - retain possession of the ball – ability to change the direction of the game

### Out of Possession:

1. Orientation: (positioning determined by the ball, the opponent, his teammates)
2. Communication - with their peers (especially as a center back pairing) and with respect to the opponents
3. Understanding of the different forms of defending; zoning and man marking; 1 against 1
4. Knowing when to press / when to cover

### Psychological:

1. Killer mentality (Take no prisoners).
2. Vocal leader and organizer
3. Disciplined and Responsible ensuring the first pass is a safe one; always in a position to receive (confident) - orientation - preserving the position – great positional sense
4. Ability to focus on man marking and stick to the task (1 to 1 and 1 more)

### Physical Attributes:

1. Speed in short and medium distances
2. Strength on and off the ball
3. Jumping ability
4. Strength in the challenge: On the ground: In the air.
5. Agility

## **ATTACKING (10%)**

Depending on the adventure of the head coach and the technical ability of the center backs they may start the build up at the back by bringing the ball out of defense themselves and running with it. This is not a big part of their game; but again, depending on the type of center back; their game may be more than just 10% offensive.

They must be VERY comfortable on the ball and be very good passers to have the confidence to always look to build play from the back.

## **DEFENDING (90%)**

Heading: Of course they must be good in the air first of all.

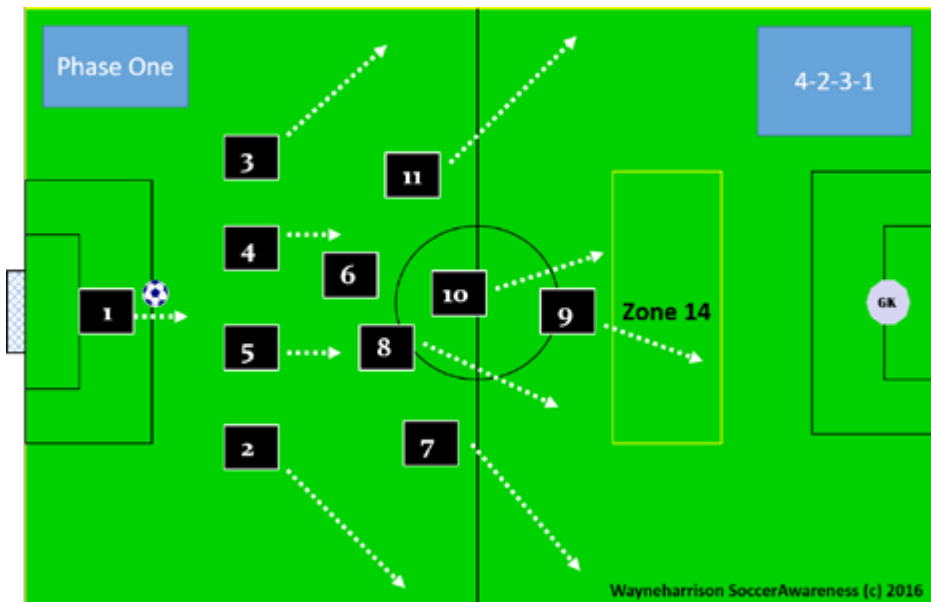
1 v 1: They must have the usual defending skills of having the ability to delay, and be patient plus anticipate situations ahead of the ball and pick the right moment to tackle with the right timing and pace to close down, and to be good 1 v 1 markers.

Pace: It always helps if they are quick but if they read the game well this is not vital

Game Understanding: They must also have a great understanding as a pair able to cover each other effectively and be good communicators. They must be very good readers of the game, especially if they are not the quickest of players.

Physical: Physically strong, this is probably the most physically strong position on the field.



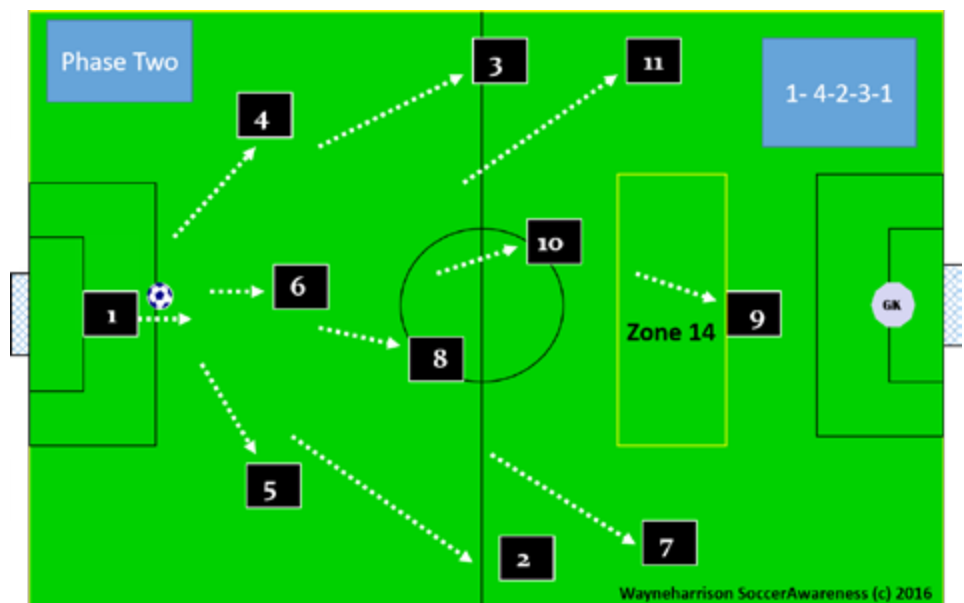


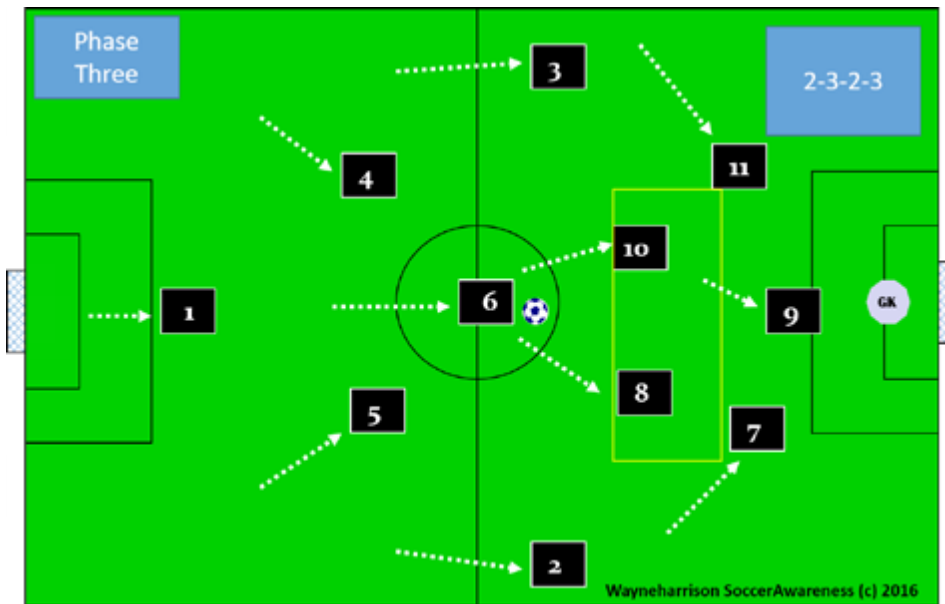
**The players in our 1-4-2-3-1 system of play**

This is the DEFENDING team shape (“start position”) for a 4-2-3-1.

**Initial Attacking Set up**

This is the attacking team shape (attacking “start position”) for the -1-4-2-3-1. Zone 14 is the area between the opponents back three or four and their midfield. For U12 and U13 to affect the minds of 7 and 11 we may call it a 4-2-1-3 so they think positive and in an attacking mode.



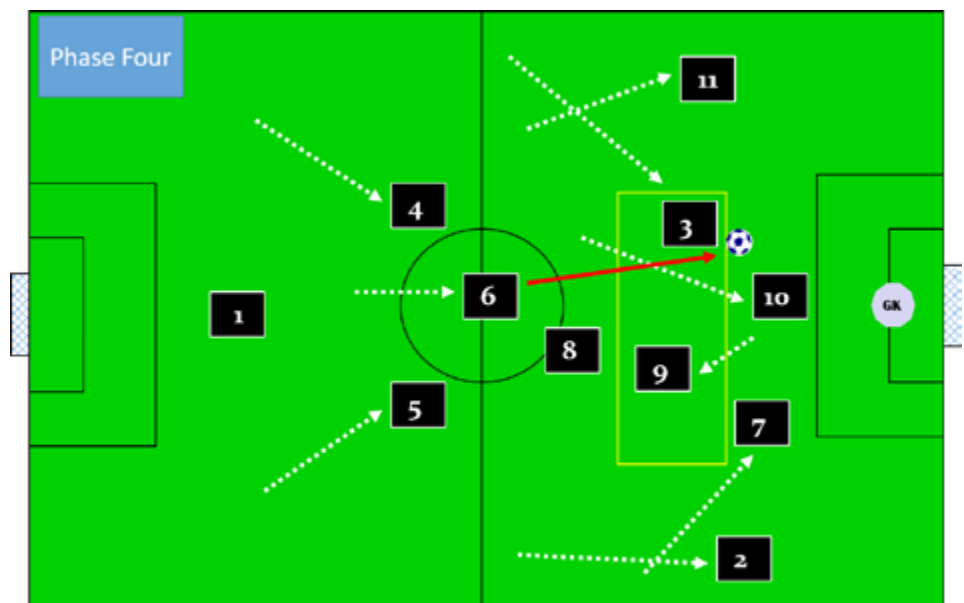


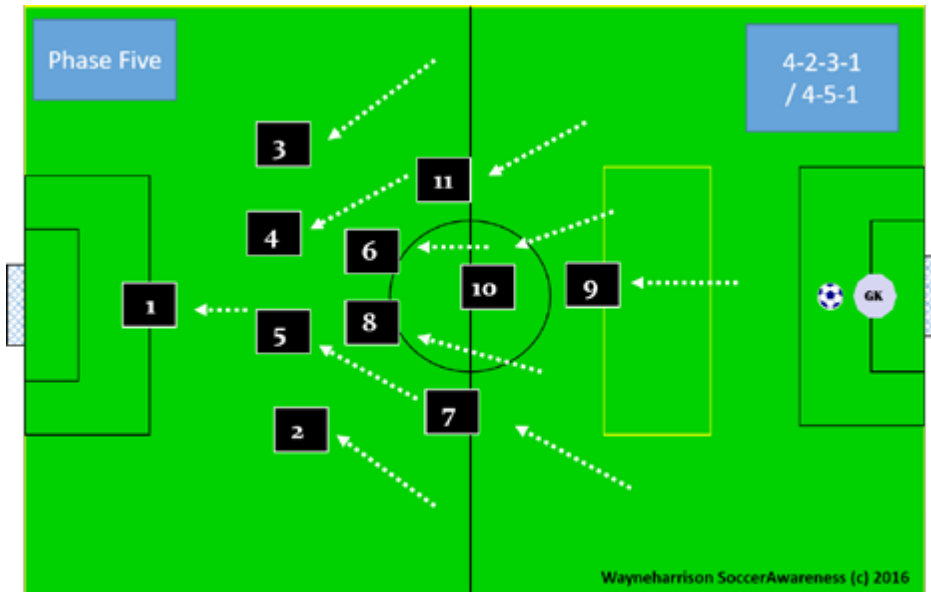
### Interchange between units of players

This is the attacking team shape now a 2-3-2-3 or 3-1-3-3 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. (4) and (5) come back together.

### The Interchange of individual players

Movements up front have been effected creating a diamond of support for striker 9 who becomes 10 and so on. Absolute freedom of movement in the attacking third.



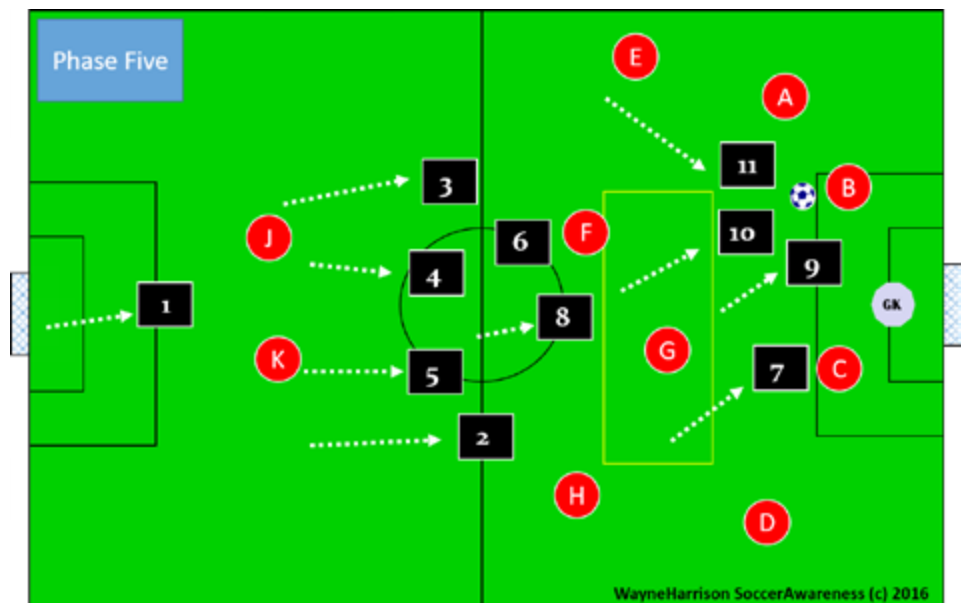


## Defensive Recovery set up

This is the RECOVERING team SHAPE for a 4-2-3-1 which you can interpret as a 4-4-1-1 or even a 4-5-1. The main thing is we get as many players behind the ball as possible and as quickly as possible if we cant win the ball immediately where we lose it.

## 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.



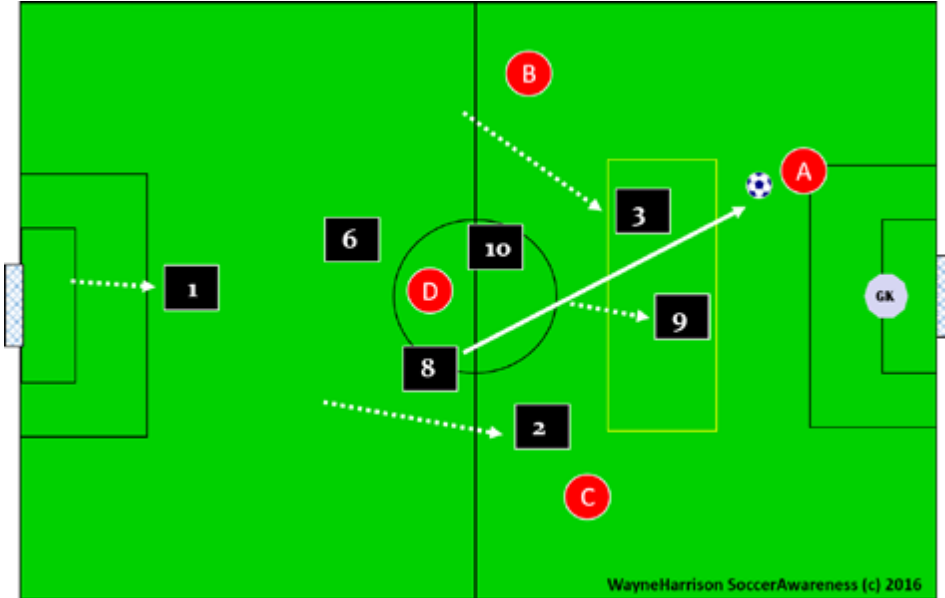
## DEFENSIVE ROTATIONAL RECOVERY POSITIONS IN 7 V 7, 9 V 9 AND 11 V 11

Due to our attacking rotations players are often out of position defensively when we lose the ball.

Here we show how players position to help each other and eventually work themselves back to their own natural positions on the team.

If they can learn this approach and understand how to cover for each other immediately this then really gives the team a wonderful means of attacking freedom and expression.

Will show you the full 11 player adjustment at the end of this piece; in this case using the 1-3-3-1-3 system of play.

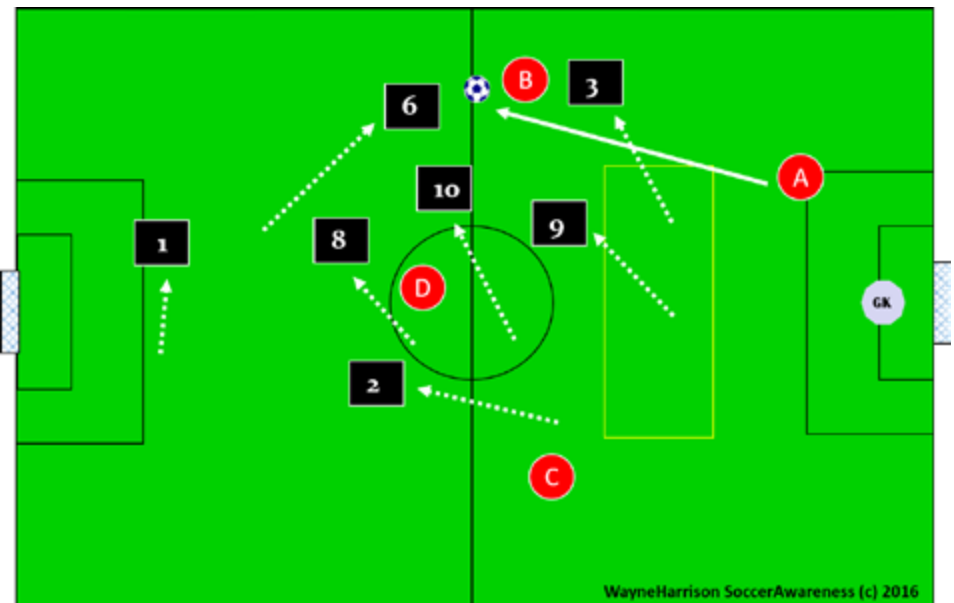


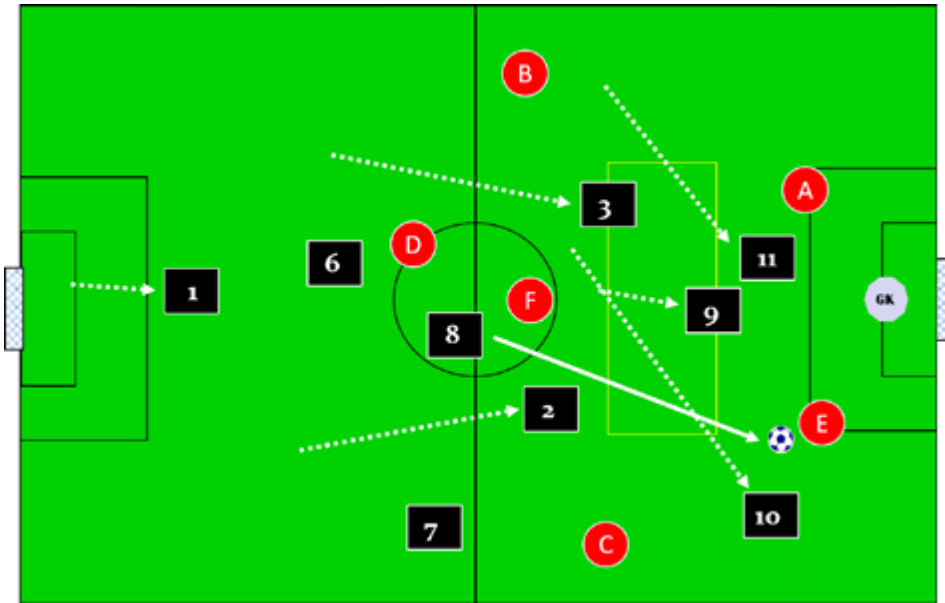
**An Example: We are in attacking mode in a 7 v 5 to begin**

This is our attacking set up we are attacking in numbers, we have players in different positions from their traditional ones because we allow freedom of rotation. But here (8) passes to (3) but it's a bad pass and goes to our opponent's player (A).

**We are in attacking mode in a 7 v 5 to begin**

(A) Passes the ball out wide to (B) and we must immediately defensively adjust. Now (3) is our recovering wide attacker, (6) is now our wide defender, (8) is our central defender.



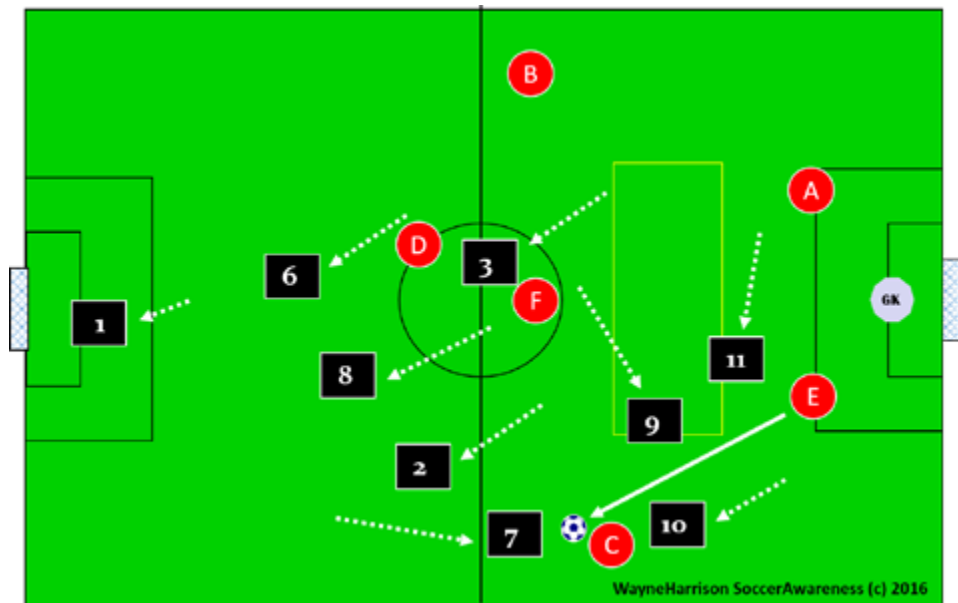


**An Example: We are in attacking mode in a 9 v 7 to begin**

This is our attacking set up we are attacking in numbers, we have players in different positions from their traditional ones because we allow freedom of rotation. But here (8) passes to (10) but the ball is a bad pass and goes to the opponent's player (E).

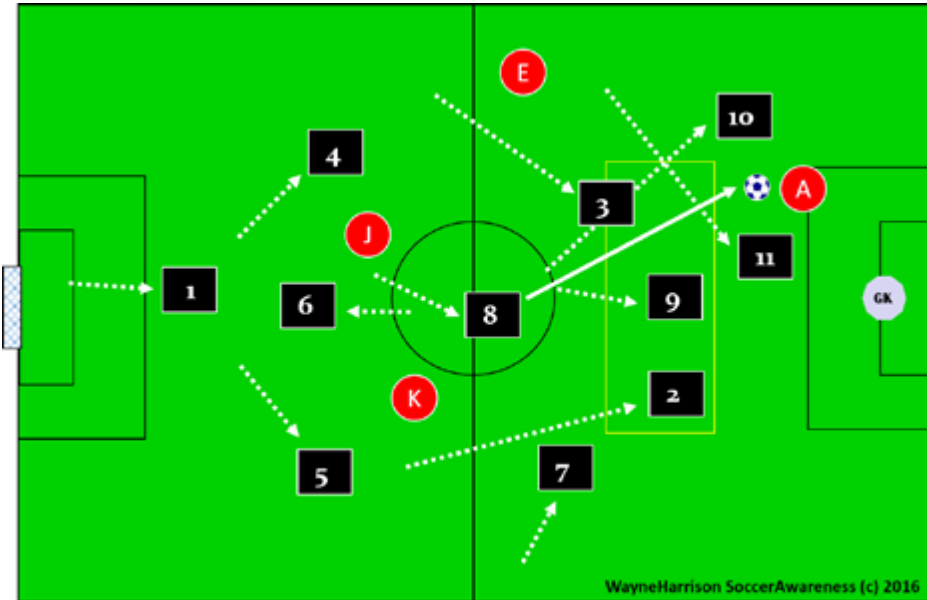
**An Example: We are in attacking mode in a 9 v 7 to begin**

This shows the defensive adjustment of players to cover for each other. Obviously after you have practiced this against smaller numbers and been successful you will work on equal numbers of 9 v 9.



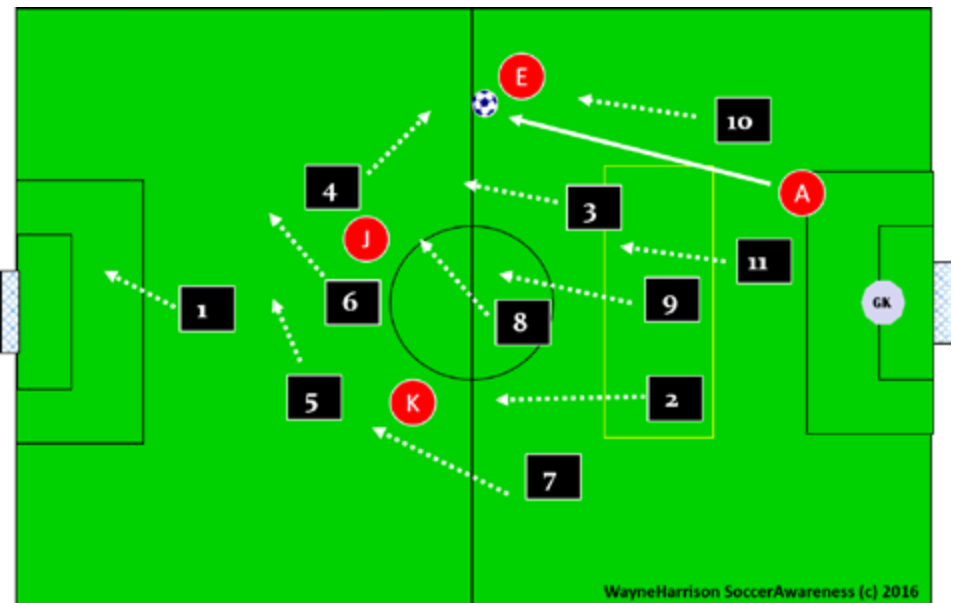
**We are in attacking mode in an 11 v 11: Both wing fullbacks attacking**

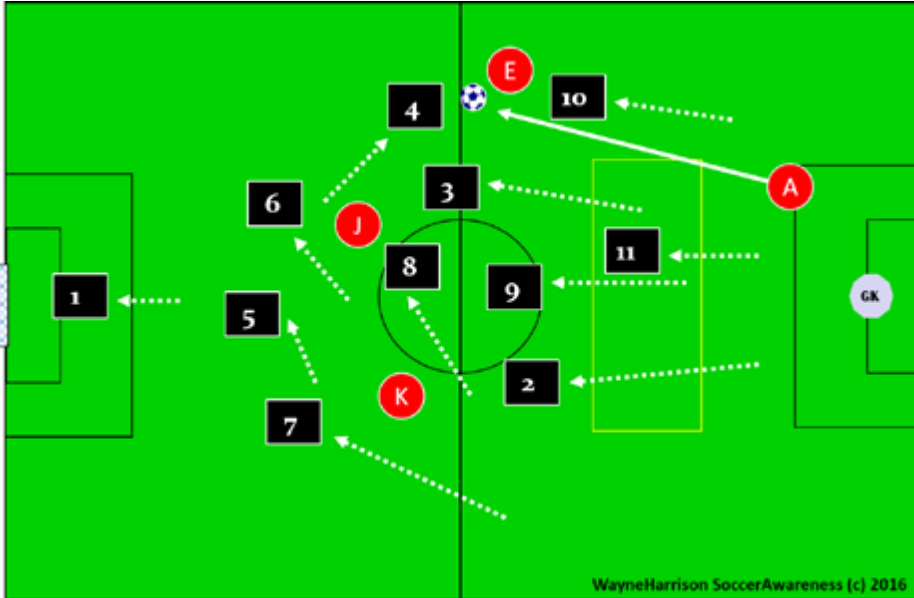
This is our attacking set up we are attacking in numbers, we have players in different positions from their traditional ones because we allow freedom of rotation. But here (8) passes to (10) but the ball is intercepted by opponent's player (A). Not enough room to put all opponent's players in but you get the idea.



**We attack and lose the ball**

We lose the ball to player (A) who plays it forward to player (E). Now showing the start positions for the recovery and changing of positions depending on where the ball is played. This shows their positions initially and where they will move to. Its imperative (4) delays (E).



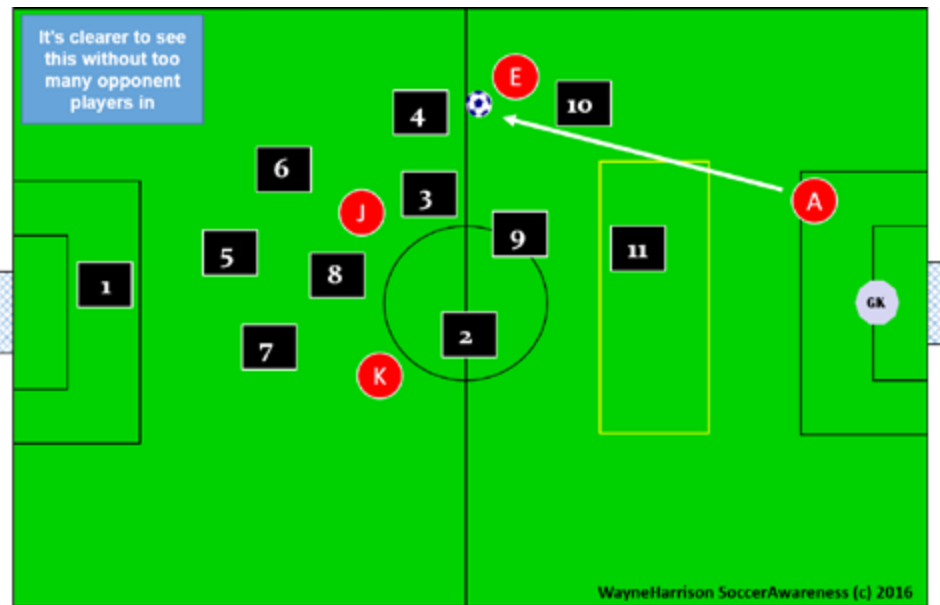


**We condense our defensive shape**

This shows them after they have moved into their new defensive positions. Player positioning is now different defensively but it doesn't matter as long as we can create our defensive shape which we have. Players recover in straight lines or the shortest route back to goal; or to the ball.

**How we press and recover and who does what, where and why?**

Changes: Our Center back (4) is now a left wing fullback (3); our central defender (6) is a left center back (5); our left defender (5) is a central defender or deep defensive midfielder (6); our left back (3) is a center midfielder (8), our central midfielder (8) is now defensive midfielder (6);



our right wing fullback (2) is a right midfielder (7); our striker (9) is a number (10); our attacking midfielder (10) is in the wide left (11) position (and double teaming) and our wide left (11) is in the (9) position.

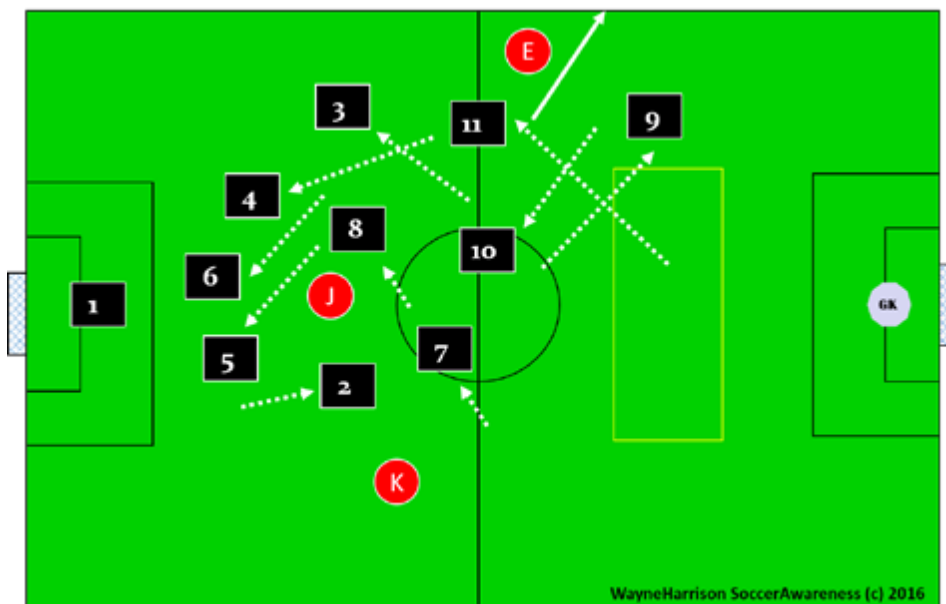


## Changes in previous diagrams:

You can start this process of rotation and recovery and helping and covering for each other in the smaller sided games so by the time players get to 11 v 11 they are very well educated in this very important team process.

To recap on the previous defensive recovery set up which was our offensive set up initially:

1. Our Center back (4) is now a left fullback 3;
2. Our defensive midfielder (6) is now a left center back 5;
3. Our right center back (5) is the same (or a deep lying number 6 position);
4. Our linking midfielder (8) is a defensive midfielder 6;
5. Our left back (3) is a center midfielder 8,
6. Our striker (9) is now a number 10;
7. Our attacking midfielder (10) is in the wide left position 11 and double teaming;
8. Our wide left striker (11) is in the (9) central striker position;
9. Our right fullback (2) is in 7s wide striker position but tucking in;
10. Our wide right striker (7) is in right fullback 2s position.



### How we press and recover and who does what, where and why?

Ball goes out of play, for example, the players then rotate back into their own positions; or any part of the game they have time to do this they must try to work back into their own positions. Here we are playing with the defensive midfielder (6) in behind the center backs but could also have him or her in front per the norm.

## The Moral of this?

In developing and actively encouraging a team to play with incredible freedom and fluidity within the team framework set by the coach; we must also address what can go wrong defensively using this method of playing.

It can leave us vulnerable to a counter attack especially.

Through the freedom of movement players are often out of their own positions and may feel a little lost if we lose the ball as to where they need to go next?

Often; for example: a wingback (2) or (3) will attack up and down the field making a 50 yard run but dreading the 50 run back to their position if we lose the ball.

If this is not addressed with the fullback; then that fullback may be less effective offensively; as the thought of all the recovery runs may put them off, plus it may also be too physically challenging for them over the course of a full game.

By showing here how players can compensate for this, how to cover for each other, how to save energy; it will therefore encourage them to continue with their offensive style knowing they know how best to defend if they lose the ball.

And then that PERCEIVED WEAKNESS in the system of play may in fact be transformed into a REAL STRENGTH of the team.

To make this work though we need a team of UNSELFISH PLAYERS PREPARED TO WORK AND HELP EACH OTHER.

Coaches should set these situations up in training to show the players who does what and when.

Attacking shape, with many interchanges, then stop the action, throw another ball into the opponents; and then have them stand still in position; giving our team time to see how they can position defensively immediately they lose the ball.

Once they can see how to do it then make it live again; and then let it go free.

## IN CONCLUSION

To close this book I am showing a following example of a curriculum in short showing the progressive development of a system of play incorporating a back three as the ultimate goal at 11 v 11.

It begins at 4 v 4, then goes through the age groups and sizes of games through 7 v 7 to 9 v 9 ultimately to 11 v 11.

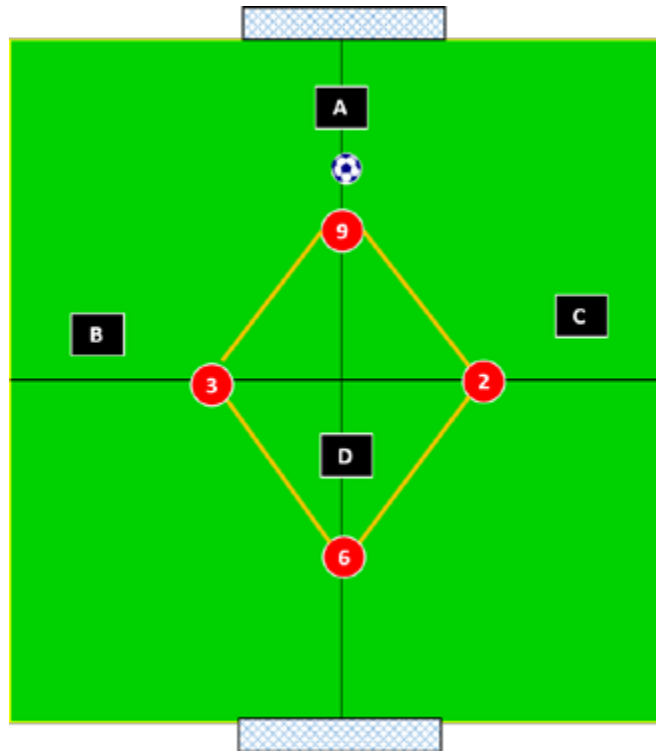
It is very difficult to show every formation and system here but I have developed a plan which coaches can work from to incorporate all the sizes of games and find some common ground between them all for simplicity of the teaching and education of players.

I hope very much this has been a useful introductory guide to all coaches to help them develop their own ideas and work on them with their players.

Kindest regards and thank you for your support of this book.

Wayne Harrison

## 4 v 4 A Basic Diamond Shape for defending



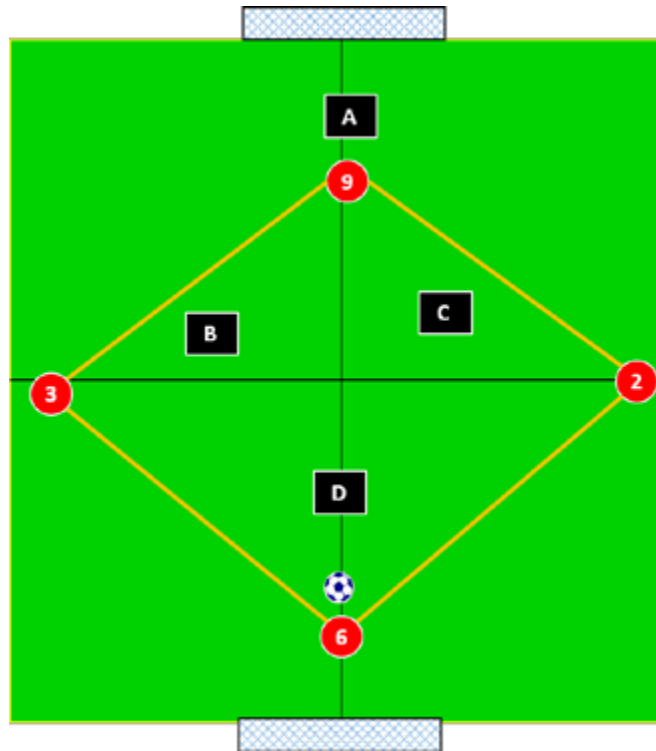
The main idea here is for the defending team to condense the area the ball can be played into the defending team become a diamond within the opponents attacking diamond. (4) Forces (A) one way and the rest of the team adjust their positions off this. (3) Protects the space inside but can close down (C) if the ball is passed, (2) and (1) is the same scenario and this results in the diamond being shorter and tighter. As the opponents move the defending team must move to compensate. Also if any pass is played behind (1), (2) or (3) they should be first to the ball.

### Coaching Points:

1. Pressure – 1 v 1 defending to win the ball, delay or force a bad pass.
2. Support – position of immediate teammate (angle, distance and communication).
3. Cover – positions of teammates beyond the supporting player.
4. Recovering and Tracking should the ball go past our position, recovery run to goal side of the ball and tracking the run of a player.
5. Double-Teaming – (A) passes to (C), (3) closes (C) down from in front, (4) follows along the path of the ball to close down from behind or slightly to the side. (4) Closes in such a way as to obstruct a pass back to (A).
6. Regaining Possession and creating Compactness from the back (pushing up as a unit).

The objectives of defending are to disrupt the other teams build up, make play predictable, prevent forward passes and ultimately regain possession of the ball. Techniques include – pressuring, marking, tackling and winning the ball.

## 4 v 4 A Basic Diamond Shape for attacking



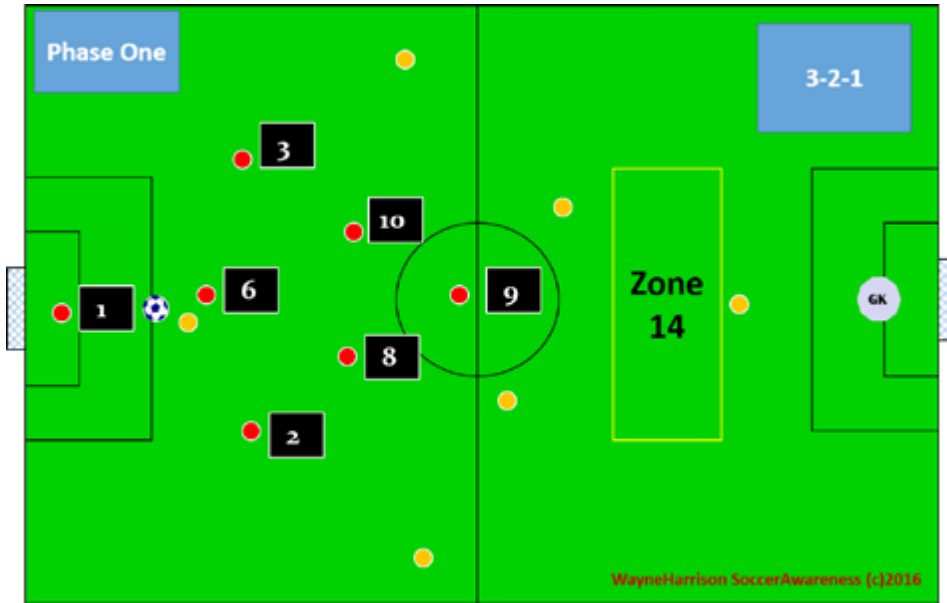
Coaching Points for 4 v 4:

1. Correct Positioning when Attacking and Defending.
2. Maintaining Possession and dictating the direction of play by running with the ball, passing and dribbling.
3. Forward passing but if not then positioning for back or sideways passing.
4. Movement as a team forward, backward, sideways left and right.
5. Communication – verbal and non-verbal (body language).
6. Techniques involved – Controlling and Passing, receiving and turning, dribbling, shielding and shooting. Defending.

This is the set up for the eventual 4 v 4 (or 5 v 5 plus keepers) competitive game situation. The above coaching points are important to use as guidelines to what you are trying to achieve in this coaching practice.

The attacking four spread out as wide and long as they can to make it difficult for the defending team to mark them. Maintenance of a rough diamond shape ensures good angles and distances of support wherever the ball may be.

The use of the awareness principles is very important in the development of this game concept and you can ensure they are applied by conditioning the game for example making it one and two touch play to mention just one way.

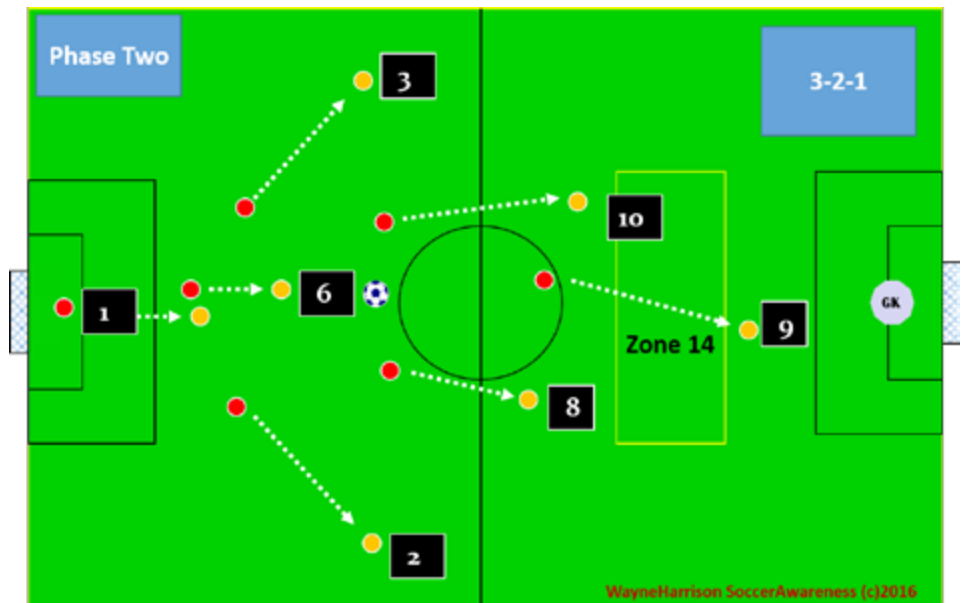


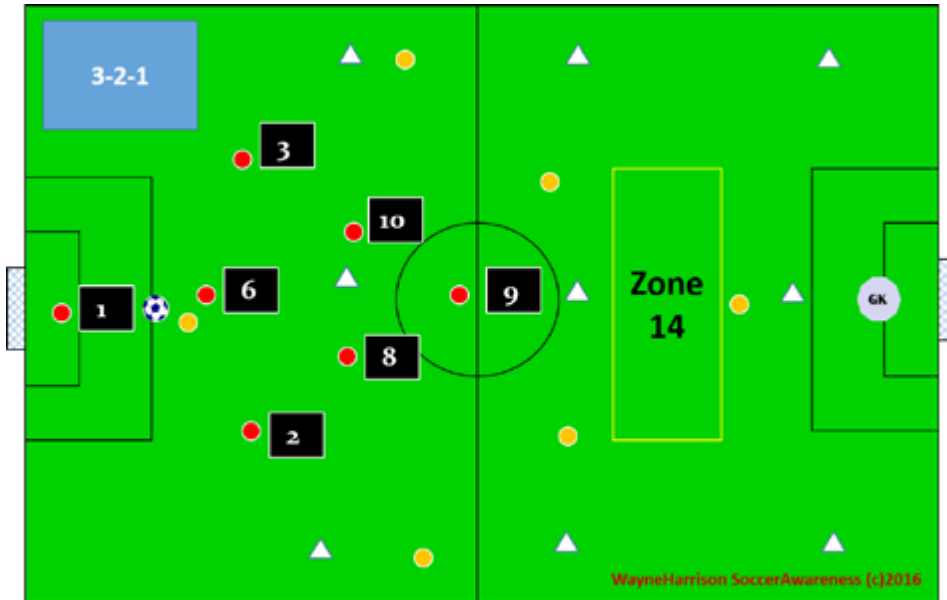
**7 v 7: Players in our Defensive 1-3-2-1 set up**

Using Cones as reference points for team shape defensively then team shape offensively. This is the team shape start position of a 3-2-1

**7 v 7: Players in our Attacking 1-3-2-1 set up**

Zone 14 is the area between the opponents back players and their midfield.



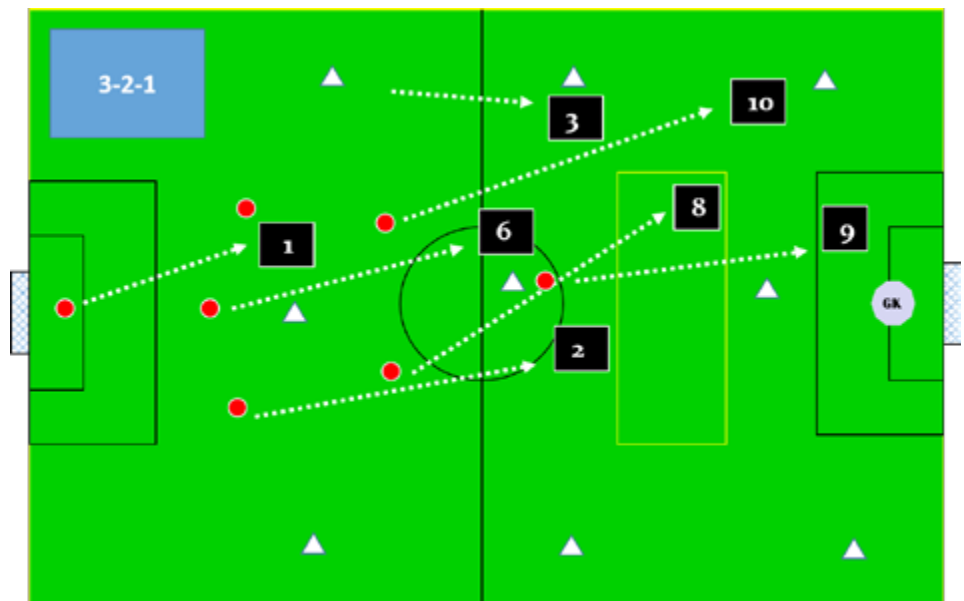


**7 v 7: 1-3-2-1: Team Shape defensive positioning based on where the ball is**

White cones represent opposition players. The coach calls out a cone (right, left or central, 1, 2 or 3) which represents the ball and the team takes its defensive shape off that cone.

**7 v 7: 1-3-2-1: Pressing the cone / ball**

Here we show how the team presses collectively. "Short and tight", small spaces between each player. Pressing players (10) shows INSIDE to our support. If we win it there we have a shot on goal. (8) supports (10) close.



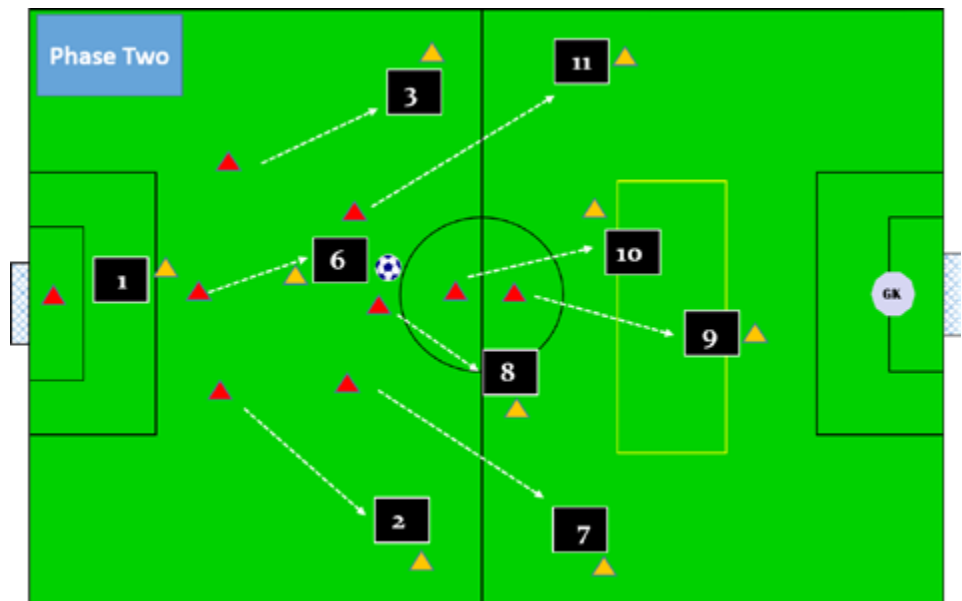


**9 v 9: Team shape from defending to attacking in 1-3-3-1-1 preparing for a back three at 11 v 11**

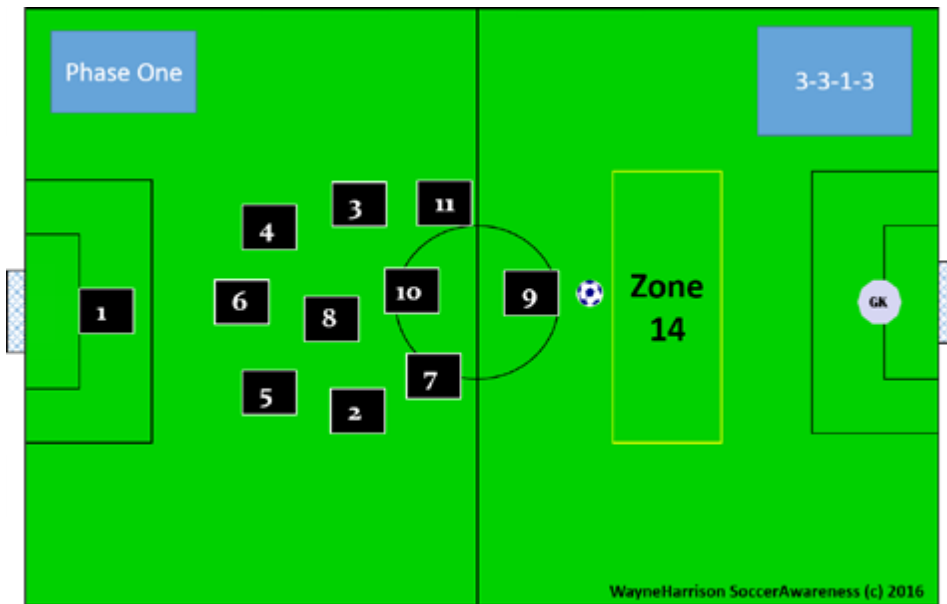
Defensive shape is at the red triangle cones. Attacking shape at yellow triangle cones.

**9 v 9: Team shape attacking in 1-3-3-1-1 preparing for a back three at 11 v 11**

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





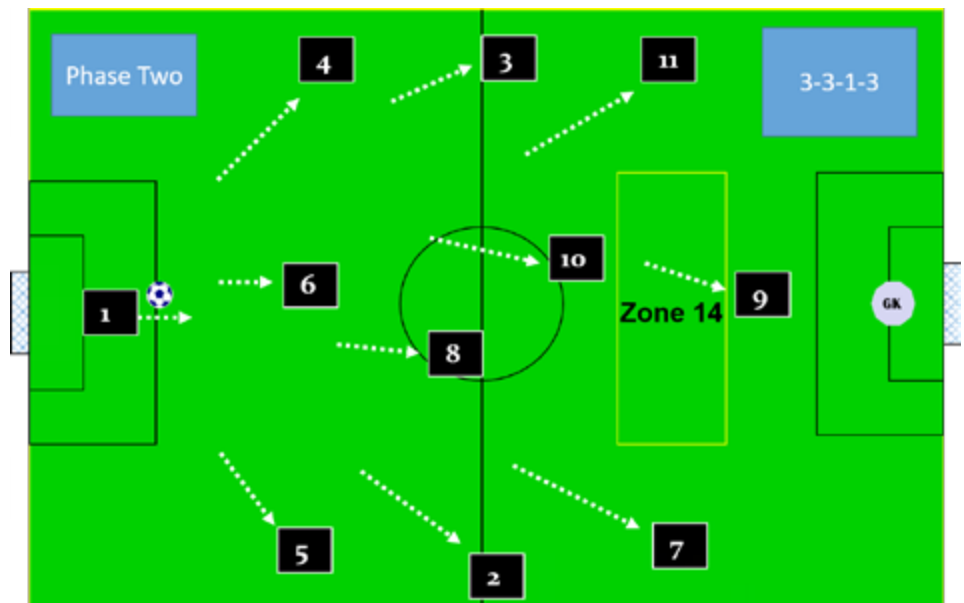


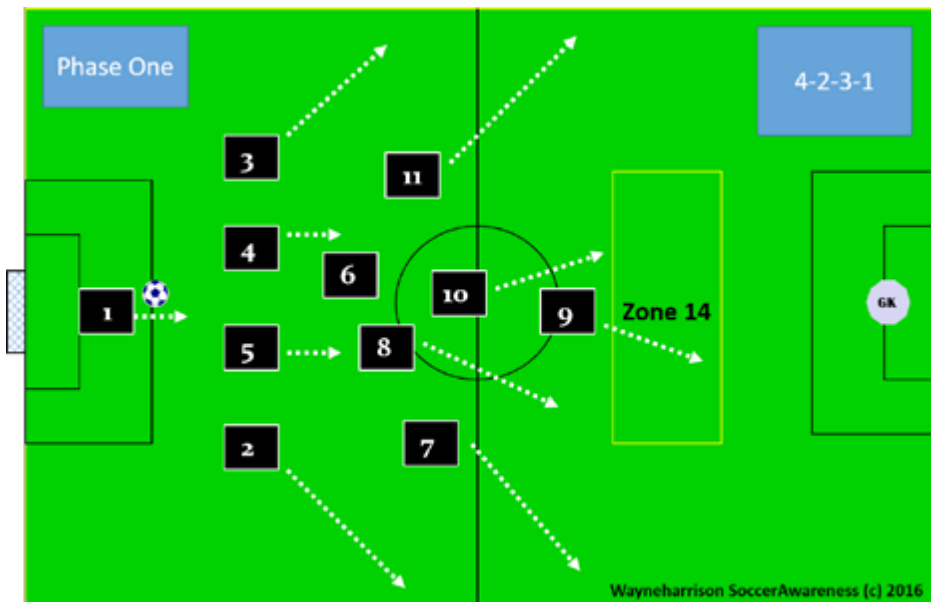
**11 v 11: The players in our 1-3-3-1-3 system of play**

This is the defending team shape (defending start position) of a 1-3-3-1-3. 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.

**11 v 11: The players in our 1-3-3-1-3 system of play**

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



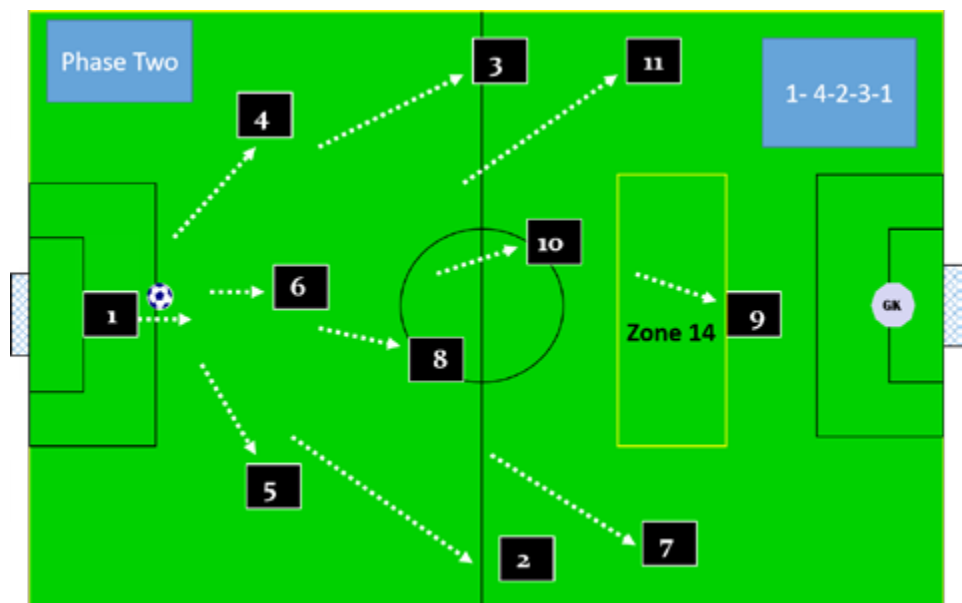


**The players in our 1-4-2-3-1 system of play**

This is the DEFENDING team shape (“start position”) for a 4-2-3-1.

### Initial Attacking Set up

This is the attacking team shape (attacking “start position”) for the 1-4-2-3-1. Zone 14 is the area between the opponents back three or four and their midfield. For U12 and U13 to affect the minds of 7 and 11 we may call it a 4-2-1-3 so they think positive and in an attacking mode.





## ABOUT WAYNE HARRISON

Married to Mary for 30 years with two daughters Sophie 26 and Johanna 23.

Wayne is available for Soccer Symposiums and Conventions wherever they are needed; and able to offer field clinics and classroom presentations of your choosing. He has vast experience in this field of work.



His specialist system of play is the 4-2-3-1. His favored type of development training is that of creating the “THINKING PLAYER” through his SOCCER AWARENESS methods of coaching.


His belief is developing the MIND of the player through ONE TOUCH training, which is purely to help the development of the SKILL FACTOR (the when, where how and why of decision making; or the thinking process). He wants all coaches to teach where it is the player who becomes the decision maker not the coach.

You can contact him on [soccerawareness@outlook.com](mailto:soccerawareness@outlook.com) and / or view his website [www.soccerawareness.com](http://www.soccerawareness.com).

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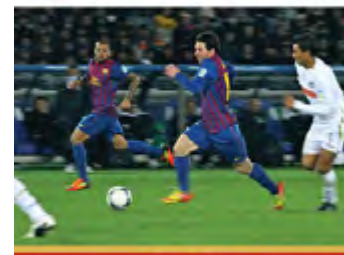
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