

SCORING GOALS FROM SET PLAYS

Creative Set Plays of English Premier League Teams



VOLUME 3

by Luca Bertolini



Scoring Goals From Set Plays Volume 3

By

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Corner kicks: definition and factors

Corner Kick is determined by the Rule 17 of the IFAB Laws of the Game (2019-20).

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the defending team, and a goal is not scored.

Procedure:

- The ball must be placed in the corner area
- The ball must be stationary and is kicked by a player of the attacking team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not need to leave the corner area
- The corner flag post must not be moved
- Opponents must remain at least 10 yds. from the corner arc until the ball is in play

Offences and sanctions:

- If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded;
- If the kicker commits a handball offence: a direct free kick is awarded
- A penalty kick is awarded if the offence occurred inside the kicker's penalty area unless the kicker was the goalkeeper in which case an indirect free kick is awarded
- If a player, while correctly taking a corner kick, deliberately kicks the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball again but not in a careless or reckless manner or using excessive force, the referee allows play to continue.
- For any other offence the kick is retaken.

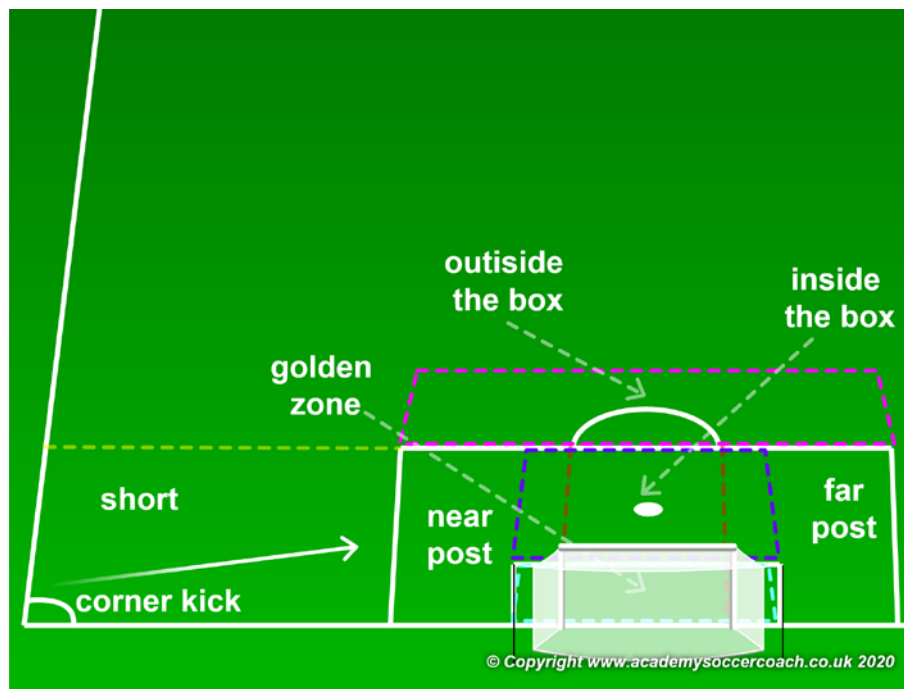
(A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal a corner kick is awarded to the opponents)

Which are the factors that create a corner kick action and which are the possible developments?

- **Kick modality:** 1) instep (the shot is performed using the leg placed next to the side of the field where the corner kick is going to be taken); 2) outstep (the shot is performed using the opposite leg to the side of the field where the corner kick is going to be taken); 3) short corner (a short kick toward a player near the corner).
- **Style of corner kick:** 1) aerial kicks = 1a) in-swinging corner (shot with an inwards swing, approaching the goal); 1b) out-swinging corner (shot with an outwards swing, going away from the goal); 1c) clipped corner (shot with an arched and straight ball's trajectory toward the middle of the penalty area – it can be kick with the foot next to the side of the field where the corner is going to be taken or with the opposite one) – 2) ground kicks = 2a) short corner (shot without any kind of swing).
- **Delivery of ball:** 1) Direct: the ball is sent to the shot zone with just one touch; 2) Indirect: the ball is sent to the shot zone after two or more touches.
- **Defense system for corner kicks:** 1) man marking (defender play 1 v 1 against the attacker where ever they are inside the box; 2) zonal marking (defenders cover a specific space and they

are responsible for clearing the ball in the space next to them); 3) mixed marking (combination of zonal and individual or man-to-man marking - usually with 2 lines of defenders; the first one near the goal has a zonal marking tactics and the further players are tasked with opponents' marking).

- **Number of players defending the goalposts:** 1) the defending team places a player at the first goalpost; 2) the defending team places a player at the second goalpost; 3) the defending team places two players on the goal line, one of them at the first goalpost and the other at the second; 4) the defending team does not place any player on the goal line.
- **Attacking organization to finish from corner kicks:** 1) Static: the players of the attacking team stay in their set positions during the corner kick and they attack the goal's space in front of them to meet the ball; 2) Dynamic: the players vary their positions toward coded shooting zones throughout the course of the corner kick action.
- **Interaction context:** 1) Numerical inferiority: the attacking team has fewer players than the defending team in the shot zone; 2) Numerical equality: the attacking team has the same number of players as the defending team in the finishing zone; 3) Numerical superiority: the attacking team has more players than the defending team in the shot finish zone (usually after dynamic strategical organization that mislead the defensive organization).
- **Scoring areas:** 1) near goal's post (the shot headed toward the nearer goalpost to the place where the corner kick is taken); 2) far goal's post (the shot heads toward the farther goalpost from the place where the corner kick is taken); 3) penalty cycle; 4) inside the 18 yds. box (the shot heads toward the space between the penalty point and the semicircle placed by the penalty area); 5) outside the box;



6) center of the goal (**6 yds. box and critical/golden areas**).

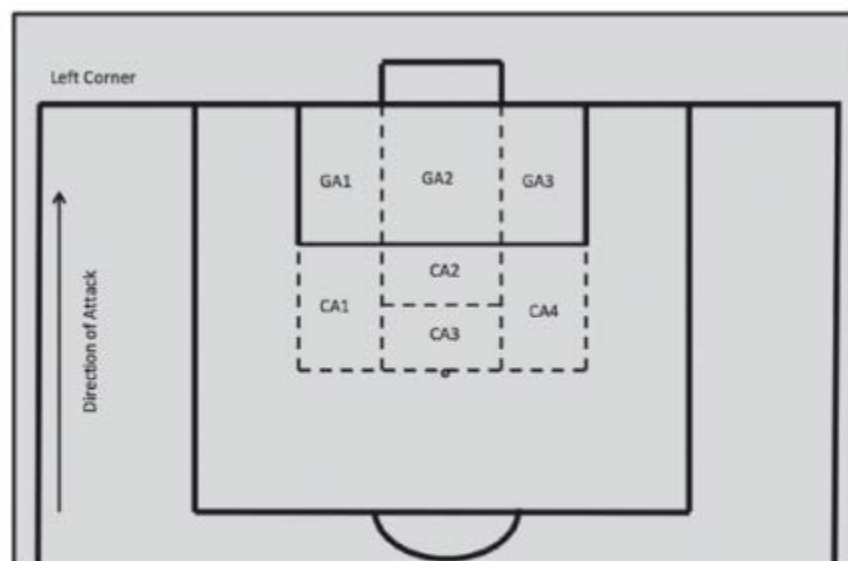


Figure 2. The divided areas of the goal area and the critical area (adapted from Taylor et al., 2005, and Page & Robins, 2012).

(**Source** - Long corner kicks in the English premier league: deliveries into the goal area and critical area. By Craig Pulling, Department of Adventure Education and Physical Education, University of Chichester, England, United Kingdom)

Page and Robins (2012) reported that by few attacking actions characterized the corner kicks resulting in an attempt at goal. Poon et al. (2012) state that the greatest frequency of delivered corners (48% of

all corners) is inside the center of the penalty area, it is as wide as the goal area and it is 9 y into the field of play. An attempt at goal was achieved from 22% of the corners that are delivered into this area.

This next sequence is an example of an out-swinging corner kick that is delivered in the critical area, against a mix defensive organization (zonal marking in front of the goal and man-marking in the center of the penalty box and in front of the goalkeeper).



The attacking player meets the ball along the edge line of the 6 yds. box and he beats the defender who is tracking him from the penalty kick imaginary line.



This type of attacking team seems to be a mix of static organization (all the players run straight on to meet the ball) and dynamic organization (one attacker runs backward from the goal line while the teammate on the ball is performing the corner kick, after preventing the goalkeeper from moving out of the goal line to try an aerial ball interception).

The essential factor is anyway that the run off the ball of the attacker who headers the ball allow him to jump higher than the marker inside the crucial zone in front of the goal.



The following image is the result of a research about long corner kicks (from 65 Premier League soccer matches during 2011/2012 and 2013/2014 seasons); 540 observed long corner kicks and 328 of these corner kicks toward the goal and critical areas had a defining outcome following the first ball touch.

allegati.			
GA1 Frequency: 55 Goals: 0 (0%) Attempt on target (excluding goals): 3 (5.5%) Off target: 5 (9.1%) GK action: 0 (0%) Attacking outcome: 7 (12.7%) Defending outcome: 40 (72.7%)		GA2 Frequency: 63 Goals: 2 (3.2%) Attempt on target (excluding goals): 0 (0%) Off target: 4 (6.3%) GK action: 30 (47.6%) Attacking outcome: 2 (3.2%) Defending outcome: 25 (39.7%)	
		GA3 Frequency: 12 Goals: 1 (8.3%) Attempt on target (excluding goals): 1 (8.3%) Off target: 5 (41.7%) GK action: 1 (8.3%) Attacking outcome: 1 (8.3%) Defending outcome: 3 (25.0%)	
CA1 Frequency: 49 Goals: 2 (4.1%) Attempt on target (excluding goals): 3 (6.1%) Off target: 4 (8.2%) GK action: 0 (0%) Attacking outcome: 1 (2.0%) Defending outcome: 39 (79.6%)		CA2 Frequency: 90 Goals: 4 (4.4%) Attempt on target (excluding goals): 0 (0%)	Off target: 20 (22.2%) GK action: 7 (7.8%) Attacking outcome: 4 (4.4%) Defending outcome: 55 (61.1%)
		CA3 Frequency: 36 Goals: 0 (0%) Attempt on target (excluding goals): 1 (2.8%)	Off target: 11 (30.6%) GK action: 1 (2.8%) Attacking outcome: 1 (2.8%) Defending outcome: 22 (61.1%)
		CA4 Frequency: 23 Goals: 0 (0%) Attempt on target (excluding goals): 2 (8.7%) Off target: 5 (21.7%) GK action: 1 (4.3%) Attacking outcome: 4 (17.4%) Defending outcome: 11 (47.8%)	

Figure 3. Area of delivery and corner kick outcomes.

(Source - Long corner kicks in the English premier league: deliveries into the goal area and critical area. By Craig Pulling, Department of Adventure Education and Physical Education, University of Chichester, England, United Kingdom)

As 6 yds. box and the crucial areas are also the nearest zones to the goal and those where the goalkeeper can win the ball easier than everywhere else, the attacking organization must allow the

player on the ball to meet it with the right timing and it must prevent the goalkeeper from moving out of the goal line; this has to be done despite the attacking organization is static or dynamic.

- **Missing shooting chances:** 1) out of the box after direct kick, passing combinations or defenders' rebounds and clearances (second times of the ball); 2) the shot does not reach the intended area (the shot goes straight out of the pitch or it is not centered); 3) corner kick aimed straight at the goal (the shot heads straight toward the goal in an attempt to score).
- **Body's parts to shoot:** 1) head, 2) foot, 3) others such as thigh, chest, knee, etc., but hands.
- **Goal zones** (Sainz de Baranda et al., 2008):

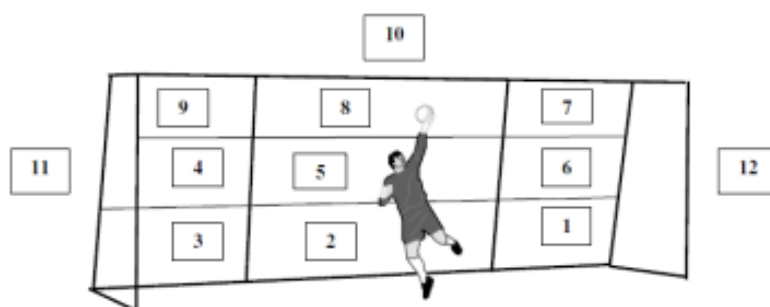


Figure 1. Microspaces where the shots end.

- **Subsequent situations of play after the corner kick:** 1) possession by the team taking the corner kick; 2) second attacking play; 3) beginning of a positional attack; 4) new corner kick; 5) possession by the team defending the corner kick; 6) counter-attack; 7) goal kick.
- **Effectiveness:** 1) direct scored goal (one touch after the corner kick); 2) indirect scored goal (two touches of more after the corner kick – for example: flank play inside the box or scrum goal); 3) new possession for the attacking team after a defensive attempt (2nd time of the ball); 4) awarded penalty after a foul.
- **Ineffectiveness:** 1) the ball hits the goalpost or it is cleared by a player defending the goal; 2) shot is deflected or play carries on with a switch of possession (transitions to attack and to defend); 3) shot goes out; 4) shot saved by the goalkeeper; 6) defensive clearances (by the goalkeeper or defenders - transitions to attack and to defend); 7) the goalkeeper makes a save or the defending team takes control of the ball without touches of the attacking team (transitions to attack and to defend); 9) the kick goes out of the pitch, beyond the intended area or it does not reach the aimed spot.

Castelo (2009) stated that “corner kicks are relatively uncommon and largely ineffective, but they are frequently a determining factor in the outcome of a match between two teams of a similar level.” Many studies and the average of their results report that near 10 corner kicks are taken per match: Taylor, James & Mellalieu (2005) found an average of 10.8 corner kicks during 2001/2002 EPL and Pulling, Robins & Rixon (2013) newer research resulted in an average of 8.78 corner kicks per match, analyzing 50 English Premier League matches. Taylor, James, & Mellalieu (2005) also indicated us that only 2.76% of all 2001/2002 EPL corner kicks resulted in goal.

These data are confirmed by another research (Maneiro, 2014) about free kicks with a specific overview on corner kicks. Analyzing 1139 kicks taken in 124 matches (2010 FIFA World Cup - 64 matches, UEFA Euro 2012 - 31 matches, and the UEFA Champions League 2010-2011 - 29 matches), just 2.2% of the corners ended in goal; but these goals were responsible for the team winning or drawing the match on 76% of matches.

Analyzing 2,303 corner kicks (2015/2016 English Premier League season), top 6 teams favored out swinging deliveries with dynamic attacking organization during ball deliveries, whilst the bottom 6 teams favored in swinging deliveries and mixed static and dynamic attacking strategies in equal measure. Top 6 teams took corner kicks frequently when winning or drawing, whereas bottom 6 teams took most corner kicks when losing or drawing. Goals were usually scored from corner kicks when attacking organization was dynamic and 2 defenders were on the posts.

(**Source** - Comparative analysis of the top six and bottom six teams' corner kick strategies in the 2015/2016 English Premier League by Ben William Strafford, Adam Smith, Jamie Stephen North & Joseph Antony Stone.)

In the 2016-2017 English Premier League season, 16% of all goals scored came from set-pieces (corners and free kicks). However, there is a great disparity in those numbers; during that season West Bromwich Albion scored 16 out of their 43 goals from set-pieces (>35% of their goals), but others obtained less than 7% of their goals from set-pieces (Sunderland scored 2 out of their 29 goals from set-pieces).

In general, the corner kicks that end in a scored goal are delivered through the air to the near post, with 1 or 2 intervening attackers, the attack is organized statically and the defense shape is a combination of zonal and man-marking organization. The likelihood of a shot on goal or shot could be increased with the intervention of 3 or 4 attackers, a dynamic attack, and indirect delivery of the ball to the far post (Source - Analysis of Corner Kick Success in Elite Football by Claudio A Casal, Rubén Maneiro, Toni Ardá, José L Losada & Antonio Rial.). In this example, Arsenal takes an out-swinging corner kick toward the first post and the first player headers the ball as flank play to the far post.



The teammate on the far post makes a blind run at the back of the defender and he takes advantage of the zonal marking defensive shape of the opposition, as 2 players have moved out of the line looking at the ball and they have created a gap to exploit.



The second header results in a scored goal to the near post in relation to the corner kick, despite the crucial action has been created from the near to the far post of the opposition goal.



During last 2018 Fifa World Cup, 600 corner kicks from all 64 matches in the tournament were obtained; 22 goals (3.7% of all corners kicks) were conceded from corner kicks and teams conceded more goals using a zonal marking strategy (6.0%) compared to a mixed marking strategy (3.7%). Most goals were conceded from inswing corner kicks (4.6%) compared to short (3.3%) and outswing (3.1%) corner kicks. 17 goal (3.9%) were conceded from corners when there were no players on the goal line and most goals came from the center (7.0%) and the first goalpost (3.5%). Like Sainz de Baranda, López-Riquelme, & Ortega (2011), Taylor et al. (2005), Saraiva (2007), Silva (2011) and Sánchez-Flores et al. (2012) report that corner kicks are more likely to lead to a shot when they are taken with the same foot as the side of the pitch from which they are taken or when the ball is delivered to the far post, as reported. In the first case, the receiver may be able to inject more power into the shot because of the greater speed with which the ball is delivered, and in the second case, players who receive the ball further away from the goalkeeper have more time and space to act and therefore the chances of the ball being intercepted are reduced. Nevertheless, data on these aspects are limited, and even conflicting, with Carling et al. (2005), for example, reporting that corner kicks taken with the opposite foot to the side of the pitch lead to more goals. (**Source** - Analysis of Corner Kick Success in Elite Football (Article in International Journal of Performance Analysis in Sport · August 2015, by Claudio A. Casal, Toni Ardá and José Luis Losada).

This means that, on the other side, as numerous studies have estimated, between 30% and 40/42% of goals come from set plays; corner kicks have many variations that may affect the effectiveness of the ineffectiveness of this kind of set play. Even if scored goals are not direct touches after corner kicks, they can indirect scored goal or the end of a new attacking move after a set play (and of a corner kick). The players' skills are still one of the main factors that affect soccer; and corner kicks are not an exception.

This sequence is the fourth goal that Liverpool scored against Barcelona last 7th May 2019 to complete the 2nd leg return after conceding 3 goals in the first leg at Camp Nou.



But this is an essential fact to understand what set plays means for players: attention, awareness, reaction speed (the ball is momentarily out of play, but it will be sooner or later.)



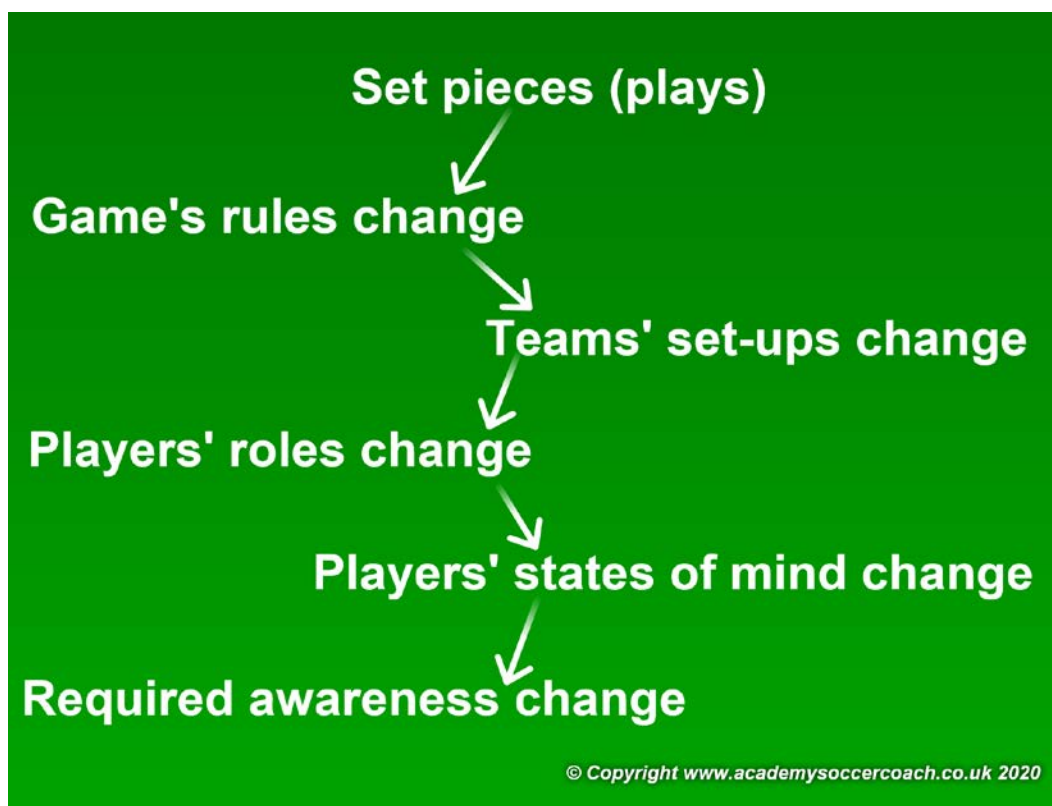


That is all what Trent-Alexander Arnold, the fullback who kicked the corner, and Divok Origi, the scorer showed and that 8 Barcelona's player and its goalkeeper didn't in that situation.



Origi scored free from markers due to a lack of attention, awareness, reaction speed of Barcelona's players, who were not organized defensively, as both they were still waiting for Liverpool opponents to enter inside the penalty area and they even didn't shaped any zonal marking shape inside the 18 yds. box.

Why set-pieces are so decisive and crucial in a soccer match and the players' skills are so essential and decisive factors? This flow chart aims to clarify how set plays (and corner kicks) are different games, time to time, within the same match:



Game's rules change:

- The opponents must stay 10 y away from the ball (corner kicks and free kicks).
- The offside rule is not applied (corners, throw-ins and goal kicks).

Teams' set-ups change:

- The system of play and the tactical principles of attacking, defending and transitions' phases don't work anymore, as the ball is standing still and the play resumes only after the kick.
- Players' formation is different and it is related to the ball position, the type of set-piece, and the intentions of the team that can take advantage of the set-piece.

Players' roles change:

- Defenders, midfielders and attackers turn into kickers or throwers, headers or shooters and defenders. The players take on the roles in relation to specific skills: the best kicker or thrower, the best jumpers or shooters and the many players of the defending teams become markers (man-marking or zonal marking).

Players' states of mind change > Required awareness change:

- Set-pieces are usually highly schematized.
- Analysis and planning are usually very precise and peculiar.
- Players have different roles.

- Carrying out a set-piece requires a high level of synchronization.
- Awareness to opponents' and ball's positions.
- Awareness and understand where the opponent are moving to and how the set-piece is kicked.
- Feelings of danger and risk (defenders).
- Feelings of a crucial chance to score.

The consequence is that the **Game Changes** from **Dynamic State** to a starting **Static State** before being again a dynamic situational game:

Soccer Dynamic State	Soccer Static State
Ball's speed requires players' specific roles in the field and crucial runs off the ball.	Players' mobility is not connected to their roles during play by play moments.
Runs off the ball are related to the opponents and the teammate with the ball.	To escape the markers and the runs off the ball are connected to the direct marker.
The players with the ball can't focus on the technical gestures because of the opponents.	The player with ball, who must kick or throw-ins it can focus on the technical gesture to perform thanks to the distance the opponents must respect.
The system and the tactical ideas influence the time of play and the space to occupy as well as the type of defensive actions.	There is no recognizable system of play.

Set-pieces and corner kicks are developed through three specific phases:

- **Strategy:** from the break of the phase of play to the moment when the player is going to kick or throw the ball in.
- **Tactics:** it is the moment before the ball is played.
- **Technical / Tactical Sequence:** as the ball is in play and the attacking team should take advantage of the two previous phases.

When set-pieces are played with aerial passes or kicks, headers often lead to ball losses (especially after goal kicks and throw-ins); a substantial amount of headers are performed to prevent spatial progress of opponents when employing direct attacks with long passes.

From this point of view, second times of the ball (offensive and defensive) become crucial and they lead to score a goal or to face counter-attacks because of opposition's unbalanced shapes.

The development of the game is influenced to various degrees by the sequences that follow the set plays regardless a goal is directly scored or not:

- Header purpose <> players' positions \geq **Large effect size.**
- Movement <> jump type \geq **Medium effect size.**
- Game state <> players' movement, game state <> jump type, position in the space <> opponents, header type + header purpose <> jump type, header purpose <> opponents, passes <> jump type, passes <> opponents, and pass <> players' position \geq **Small effect size.**

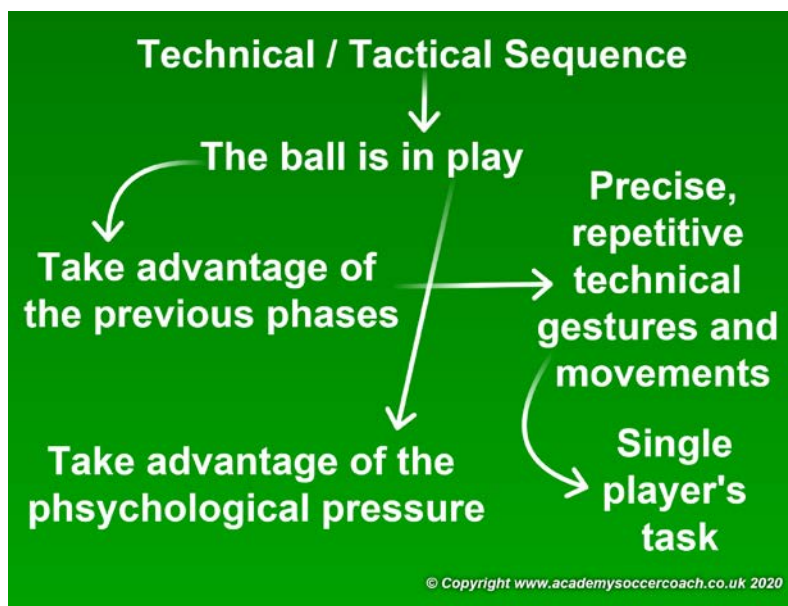
Then set plays strategic stage is anyway crucial. There are 3 types of defensive organization to counter a corner kick: zonal marking to defend the space, man-marking against the opponents or a mixed organization. On the other side, from attacking point of view, the strategic dimension is crucial to create tactical and psychological issues to the opponents.



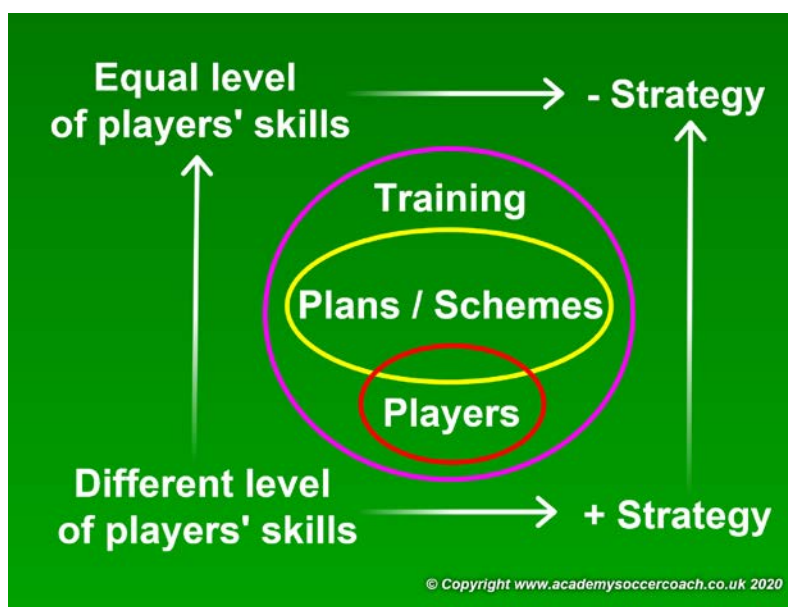
Attacking through a corner kick is more difficult than defending; this is the reason why a low percentage of corner kicks lead to a direct scored goals, but it is also the reason why new attacking moves against unbalanced defenses through second times of the ball after corner kicks lead to score many goals.



Technical and tactical plans are than easier from defensive points of view and more difficult to realize from attacking point of view; anyway, both have to be essential part of the training sessions; to coach the attacking phase means to be use to take advantage of the strategical dimension, and to coach the defensive phase means to use to act defensively under tactical and psychological pressures.



Which is the most crucial factor between the strategical and the players' dimensions of a set-play (or corner kick)?



Assuming that specific training session to coach the player on attacking and defensive plans and scheme, when the level of players (attackers and defenders) is the same, they become the essential factors of a corner kick; on the other side, if the level of players is different, the strategical dimension becomes crucial for the lower level team (from attacking and defensive points of view).

English Premier League last seasons' corner kicks stats

2016/2017	Home				Away				Overall			
Team	Corners		Average Corners pg.		Corners		Average Corners pg.		Corners		Average Corners pg.	
	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.
Man City	151.0	64.0	7.95	3.37	129.0	66.0	6.79	3.47	280.0	130.0	7.37	3.42
Tottenham	148.0	56.0	7.79	2.95	125.0	80.0	6.58	4.21	273.0	136.0	7.18	3.58
Liverpool	116.0	61.0	6.11	3.21	133.0	72.0	7.00	3.79	249.0	133.0	6.55	3.50
Arsenal	132.0	87.0	6.95	4.58	95.0	101.0	5.00	5.32	227.0	188.0	5.97	4.95
Chelsea	129.0	86.0	6.79	4.53	89.0	74.0	4.68	3.89	218.0	160.0	5.74	4.21
Man Utd	139.0	64.0	7.32	3.37	78.0	84.0	4.11	4.42	217.0	148.0	5.71	3.89
Crystal Palace	103.0	103.0	5.42	5.42	100.0	119.0	5.26	6.26	203.0	222.0	5.34	5.84
Everton	121.0	110.0	6.37	5.79	76.0	105.0	4.00	5.53	197.0	215.0	5.18	5.66
Southampton	105.0	90.0	5.53	4.74	92.0	100.0	4.84	5.26	197.0	190.0	5.18	5.00
Swansea	119.0	84.0	6.26	4.42	77.0	102.0	4.05	5.37	196.0	186.0	5.16	4.89
Leicester	109.0	99.0	5.74	5.21	87.0	120.0	4.58	6.32	196.0	219.0	5.16	5.76
Bournemouth	98.0	90.0	5.16	4.74	95.0	115.0	5.00	6.05	193.0	205.0	5.08	5.39
Stoke	103.0	121.0	5.42	6.37	85.0	132.0	4.47	6.95	188.0	253.0	4.95	6.66
Hull	73.0	115.0	3.84	6.05	106.0	128.0	5.58	6.74	179.0	243.0	4.71	6.39
West Ham	90.0	73.0	4.74	3.84	82.0	111.0	4.32	5.84	172.0	184.0	4.53	4.84
Watford	82.0	85.0	4.32	4.47	82.0	118.0	4.32	6.21	164.0	203.0	4.32	5.34
Sunderland	86.0	96.0	4.53	5.05	74.0	153.0	3.89	8.05	160.0	249.0	4.21	6.55
W.B.A.	80.0	106.0	4.21	5.58	78.0	105.0	4.11	5.53	158.0	211.0	4.16	5.55
Burnley	79.0	114.0	4.16	6.00	70.0	149.0	3.68	7.84	149.0	263.0	3.92	6.92
Middlesbrough	93.0	97.0	4.89	5.11	48.0	122.0	2.53	6.42	141.0	219.0	3.71	5.76

Table position	Team	Total scored goals	From corners	% from corners	Corners > Scoring conversion %
10	W.B.A.	43	17	39,53	10,75
18	Hull	37	9	24,32	5,02
11	West Ham	47	10	21,28	5,81
19	Middlesbrough	27	5	18,52	3,54
14	Crystal Palace	50	8	16,00	3,94
16	Burnley	39	6	15,38	4,02
1	Chelsea	85	13	15,29	5,96
7	Everton	62	9	14,52	4,56
15	Swansea City	45	6	13,33	3,06
17	Watford	40	5	12,50	3,04
8	Southampton	41	5	12,20	2,53
12	Leicester City	48	5	10,42	2,55
13	Stoke City	41	4	9,76	2,12
5	Arsenal	77	7	9,09	3
2	Tottenham	86	7	8,14	2,56
4	Liverpool	78	6	7,69	2,4

Table position	Team	Total scored goals	From corners	% from corners	Corners > Scoring conversion %
6	Man Utd	54	4	7,41	1,84
9	Bournemouth	55	4	7,27	2,07
3	Man City	80	5	6,25	1,78
20	Sunderland	29	1	3,45	0,6

Team	Table pos.	GP	PTS	W	D	L	G+	G-	GD
Chelsea	1	38	93	30	3	5	85	33	52
Tottenham	2	38	86	26	8	4	86	26	60
Man City	3	38	78	23	9	6	80	39	41
Liverpool	4	38	76	22	10	6	78	42	36
Arsenal	5	38	75	23	6	9	77	44	33
Man Utd	6	38	69	18	15	5	54	29	25
Everton	7	38	61	17	10	11	62	44	18
Southampton	8	38	46	12	10	16	41	48	-7
Bournemouth	9	38	46	12	10	16	55	67	-12
W.B.A.	10	38	45	12	9	17	43	51	-8
West Ham	11	38	45	12	9	17	47	64	-17
Stoke	12	38	44	11	11	16	41	56	-15
Leicester	13	38	44	12	8	18	48	63	-15
Crystal Palace	14	38	41	12	5	21	50	63	-13
Swansea	15	38	41	12	5	21	45	70	-25
Burnley	16	38	40	11	7	20	39	55	-16
Watford	17	38	40	11	7	20	40	68	-28
Hull	18	38	34	9	7	22	37	80	-43
Middlesbrough	19	38	28	5	13	20	27	53	-26
Sunderland	20	38	24	6	6	26	29	69	-40

In 2016/2017 season, corner kick were crucial to decide the title race, as Chelsea scored 15.29% of goals from corners with 5.96% of conversion average, and Tottenham scored one more goal than the champions, but with the 8.14% of goal scored from corners (2.56% of conversion average). Furthermore, Tottenham kicked 55 corners more than Chelsea (1.44 more per game); we could say that Chelsea won the title thanks to corner kicks efficiency.

Corner kicks were considerable weapons for the mid table battle; W.B.A. scored 39.53% of their 43 goals from corner kicks (10.75% of conversion average) and they helped the team to 10th at the end of the season. West Ham (11th in the rank) scored 10 of the 47 goals from corners (21.28%); Crystal Palace, Swansea and Burnley were able to be positioned few points away from relegation thanks to the high percentages of scored goals and good conversion rate of corner kicks.

Despite having some of the highest percentages of scored goals from corners (Hull – 24.32% and Middlesbrough – 18.52%), these data were not good enough to prevent these clubs from relegation.

2017/2018	Home				Away				Overall			
Team	Corners		Average Corners pg.		Corners		Average Corners pg.		Corners		Average Corners pg.	
	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.
Man City	138.0	47.0	7.26	2.47	146.0	56.0	7.68	2.95	284.0	103.0	7.47	2.71
Tottenham	143.0	71.0	7.53	3.74	103.0	90.0	5.42	4.74	246.0	161.0	6.47	4.24
Chelsea	148.0	70.0	7.79	3.68	82.0	89.0	4.32	4.68	230.0	159.0	6.05	4.18
Liverpool	134.0	61.0	7.05	3.21	96.0	64.0	5.05	3.37	230.0	125.0	6.05	3.29
Southampton	125.0	89.0	6.58	4.68	100.0	109.0	5.26	5.74	225.0	198.0	5.92	5.21
Arsenal	132.0	94.0	6.95	4.95	93.0	86.0	4.89	4.53	225.0	180.0	5.92	4.74
Man Utd	117.0	75.0	6.16	3.95	103.0	100.0	5.42	5.26	220.0	175.0	5.79	4.61
Bournemouth	115.0	84.0	6.05	4.42	103.0	128.0	5.42	6.74	218.0	212.0	5.74	5.58
Crystal Palace	105.0	96.0	5.53	5.05	105.0	113.0	5.53	5.95	210.0	209.0	5.53	5.50
Leicester	112.0	89.0	5.89	4.68	91.0	127.0	4.79	6.68	203.0	216.0	5.34	5.68
Watford	96.0	92.0	5.05	4.84	87.0	106.0	4.58	5.58	183.0	198.0	4.82	5.21
W.B.A	101.0	87.0	5.32	4.58	75.0	89.0	3.95	4.68	176.0	176.0	4.63	4.63
Newcastle Utd	83.0	95.0	4.37	5.00	84.0	128.0	4.42	6.74	167.0	223.0	4.39	5.87
Burnley	94.0	110.0	4.95	5.79	73.0	130.0	3.84	6.84	167.0	240.0	4.39	6.32
Huddersfield	102.0	83.0	5.37	4.37	63.0	126.0	3.32	6.63	165.0	209.0	4.34	5.50
Brighton	90.0	98.0	4.74	5.16	73.0	130.0	3.84	6.84	163.0	228.0	4.29	6.00
West Ham	90.0	76.0	4.74	4.00	68.0	130.0	3.58	6.84	158.0	206.0	4.16	5.42
Everton	81.0	99.0	4.26	5.21	69.0	113.0	3.63	5.95	150.0	212.0	3.95	5.58
Swansea	95.0	81.0	5.00	4.26	55.0	114.0	2.89	6.00	150.0	195.0	3.95	5.13
Stoke	80.0	128.0	4.21	6.74	56.0	153.0	2.95	8.05	136.0	281.0	3.58	7.39

Table position	Team	Total scored goals	From corners	% from corners	Corners > Scoring conversion %
20	W.B.A.	31	11	35,48	6,25
18	Swansea City	28	8	28,57	5,33
19	Stoke City	35	7	20,00	5,14
4	Liverpool	84	11	13,10	4,78
12	Bournemouth	45	10	22,22	4,58
13	West Ham	48	7	14,58	4,43
10	Newcastle Utd	39	7	17,95	4,19
6	Arsenal	74	8	10,81	3,55
1	Man City	106	10	9,43	3,52
9	Leicester	56	7	12,50	3,44
14	Watford	44	6	13,64	3,27
17	Southampton	37	7	18,92	3,11
11	Crystal Palace	45	6	13,33	2,85
2	Man Utd	68	5	7,35	2,27
5	Chelsea	62	5	8,06	2,17
8	Everton	44	3	6,82	2
15	Brighton & H.A.	34	3	8,82	1,84

Table position	Team	Total scored goals	From corners	% from corners	Corners > Scoring conversion %
16	Huddersfield	28	3	10,71	1,81
7	Burnley	36	3	8,33	1,79
3	Tottenham	74	4	5,41	1,62

Team	Table pos.	GP	PTS	W	D	L	G+	G-	GD
Man City	1	38	100	32	4	2	106	27	79
Man Utd	2	38	81	25	6	7	68	28	40
Tottenham	3	38	77	23	8	7	74	36	38
Liverpool	4	38	75	21	12	5	84	38	46
Chelsea	5	38	70	21	7	10	62	38	24
Arsenal	6	38	63	19	6	13	74	51	23
Burnley	7	38	54	14	12	12	36	39	-3
Everton	8	38	49	13	10	15	44	58	-14
Leicester	9	38	47	12	11	15	56	60	-4
Newcastle Utd	10	38	44	12	8	18	39	47	-8
Crystal Palace	11	38	44	11	11	16	45	55	-10
Bournemouth	12	38	44	11	11	16	45	61	-16
West Ham	13	38	42	10	12	16	48	68	-20
Watford	14	38	41	11	8	19	44	64	-20
Brighton	15	38	40	9	13	16	34	54	-20
Huddersfield	16	38	37	9	10	19	28	58	-30
Southampton	17	38	36	7	15	16	37	56	-19
Swansea	18	38	33	8	9	21	28	56	-28
Stoke	19	38	33	7	12	19	35	68	-33
W.B.A.	20	38	31	6	13	19	31	56	-25

This season was very peculiar; 3 of the 4 best teams for scored goals from corner kicks were relegated (Swansea, Stoke and W.B.A.). These data confirm how much crucial the corners were for W.B.A.; they scored 12 goals less than the previous season and 6 less from corner kicks (35,48% against the 39,53 of the 2016/2017 season).

Southampton and Huddersfield could take seat 3 and 4 points away from the relegation, even thanks to scored goals from corner kicks; Southampton scored the 18,92% of 37 goals from corner kicks, and Huddersfield scored the 10,71% of their only 28 goals from this set piece.

Corner kicks were also essential weapons for the low middle table battle, as 5 teams gained their +40 points through some of the higher percentages of scored goals from corners of the whole league, as well as, the highest conversion averages.

This was the first Man City's winning season and Guardiola's possession style was decisive to win the title; none of the other 3 top teams among the first, but Liverpool (13,10% of scored goals from corner kicks and 4,78% of conversion average) needed corner kicks to seat in the Champions League seats.

2018/2019	Home				Away				Overall			
Team	Corners		Average Corners pg.		Corners		Average Corners pg.		Corners		Average Corners pg.	
	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.
Man City	154.0	39.0	8.11	2.05	144.0	43.0	7.58	2.26	298.0	82.0	7.84	2.16
Liverpool	133.0	56.0	7.00	2.95	116.0	70.0	6.11	3.68	249.0	126.0	6.55	3.32
Everton	119.0	73.0	6.26	3.84	96.0	106.0	5.05	5.58	215.0	179.0	5.66	4.71
Chelsea	120.0	72.0	6.32	3.79	95.0	69.0	5.00	3.63	215.0	141.0	5.66	3.71
Leicester	108.0	85.0	5.68	4.47	102.0	117.0	5.37	6.16	210.0	202.0	5.53	5.32
Arsenal	125.0	83.0	6.58	4.37	84.0	101.0	4.42	5.32	209.0	184.0	5.50	4.84
Crystal Palace	130.0	86.0	6.84	4.53	75.0	130.0	3.95	6.84	205.0	216.0	5.39	5.68
Man Utd	116.0	86.0	6.11	4.53	84.0	100.0	4.42	5.26	200.0	186.0	5.26	4.89
Wolverhampton	109.0	90.0	5.74	4.74	86.0	100.0	4.53	5.26	195.0	190.0	5.13	5.00
Tottenham	102.0	81.0	5.37	4.26	92.0	106.0	4.84	5.58	194.0	187.0	5.11	4.92
Southampton	101.0	106.0	5.32	5.58	92.0	108.0	4.84	5.68	193.0	214.0	5.08	5.63
Bournemouth	96.0	110.0	5.05	5.79	95.0	115.0	5.00	6.05	191.0	225.0	5.03	5.92
West Ham	108.0	98.0	5.68	5.16	80.0	109.0	4.21	5.74	188.0	207.0	4.95	5.45
Newcastle Utd	112.0	100.0	5.89	5.26	69.0	131.0	3.63	6.89	181.0	231.0	4.76	6.08
Watford	91.0	92.0	4.79	4.84	86.0	118.0	4.53	6.21	177.0	210.0	4.66	5.53
Cardiff	95.0	116.0	5.00	6.11	73.0	154.0	3.84	8.11	168.0	270.0	4.42	7.11
Huddersfield	85.0	72.0	4.47	3.79	77.0	98.0	4.05	5.16	162.0	170.0	4.26	4.47
Fulham	102.0	95.0	5.37	5.00	59.0	131.0	3.11	6.89	161.0	226.0	4.24	5.95
Brighton	90.0	87.0	4.74	4.58	66.0	129.0	3.47	6.79	156.0	216.0	4.11	5.68
Burnley	80.0	104.0	4.21	5.47	60.0	141.0	3.16	7.42	140.0	245.0	3.68	6.45

Table position	Team	Total scored goals	From corners	% from corners	Corners > Scoring conversion %
17	Brighton & H.A.	35	10	28,57	6,41
15	Burnley	45	9	20,00	6,42
13	Newcastle Utd	42	7	16,67	3,86
10	West Ham	52	8	15,38	4,25
7	Wolverhampton	47	7	14,89	3,58
8	Everton	54	8	14,81	3,72
2	Liverpool	89	13	14,61	5,22
14	Bournemouth	56	8	14,29	4,18
20	Huddersfield	22	3	13,64	1,85
4	Tottenham	67	9	13,43	4,63
3	Chelsea	63	8	12,70	3,72
18	Cardiff	34	4	11,76	2,38
11	Watford	52	6	11,54	3,38
16	Southampton	45	5	11,11	2,59
5	Arsenal	73	8	10,96	3,82
6	Man Utd	65	7	10,77	3,50
9	Leicester	51	5	9,80	2,38

Table position	Team	Total scored goals	From corners	% from corners	Corners > Scoring conversion %
19	Fulham	34	3	8,82	1,86
12	Crystal Palace	51	3	5,88	1,46
1	Manchester City	95	5	5,26	1,67

Team	Table pos.	GP	PTS	W	D	L	G+	G-	GD
Man City	1	38	98	32	2	4	95	23	72
Liverpool	2	38	97	30	7	1	89	22	67
Chelsea	3	38	72	21	9	8	63	39	24
Tottenham	4	38	71	23	2	13	67	39	28
Arsenal	5	38	70	21	7	10	73	51	22
Man Utd	6	38	66	19	9	10	65	54	11
Wolverhampton	7	38	57	16	9	13	47	46	1
Everton	8	38	54	15	9	14	54	46	8
Leicester	9	38	52	15	7	16	51	48	3
West Ham	10	38	52	15	7	16	52	55	-3
Watford	11	38	50	14	8	16	52	59	-7
Crystal Palace	12	38	49	14	7	17	51	53	-2
Newcastle Utd	13	38	45	12	9	17	42	48	-6
Bournemouth	14	38	45	13	6	19	56	70	-14
Burnley	15	38	40	11	7	20	45	68	-23
Southampton	16	38	39	9	12	17	45	65	-20
Brighton	17	38	36	9	9	20	35	60	-25
Cardiff	18	38	34	10	4	24	34	69	-35
Fulham	19	38	26	7	5	26	34	81	-47
Huddersfield	20	38	16	3	7	28	22	76	-54

In 2018/2019 season corner kicks were crucial for Liverpool to fight and contest the title to Man City, seating second in the table for just 1 point (14,61% of scored goals from corners and 5,22% of conversion rate, one of the highest in the league); on the other side, Man City confirmed to be best the team in England scoring 95 goals with poor contribution of corner kicks (only 5 goals).

Like in the previous season, corner kicks were an essential weapon for the low middle part teams to stay enough points away from the relegation seats. Brighton and Burnely, despite kicking the lowest number of corner kicks in the league (156 and 140 respectively), they had the most important contribution from corner kicks among all the other 18 teams; Brighton scored 10 of their 35 goals from corner kick (28,57%) and Burnley 9 out of 45 goals (20%). These were also the best teams for conversion average (6,41 for Brighton and 6,42 for Burnley).

Corner kicks contribution were important also for other “right part of the table” teams, as Bournemouth (14,29% of scored goals from corner kicks) and Newcastle United (16,67%); other middle seats teams had intakes from corner kicks as West Ham, Everton and Wolverhampton, but they hadn’t any impact on the relegated teams that were too poor in terms of scoring skill and defensive strength.

2019/2020	Home				Away				Overall			
Team	Corners		Average Corners pg.		Corners		Average Corners pg.		Corners		Average Corners pg.	
	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.	For	Ag.
Man City	126.0	34.0	9.69	2.62	106.0	42.0	7.07	2.80	232.0	76.0	8.29	2.71
Chelsea	116.0	50.0	7.73	3.33	82.0	48.0	5.86	3.43	198.0	98.0	6.83	3.38
Liverpool	113.0	81.0	7.53	5.40	78.0	54.0	5.57	3.86	191.0	135.0	6.59	4.66
Arsenal	105.0	81.0	7.00	5.40	69.0	85.0	5.31	6.54	174.0	166.0	6.21	5.93
Everton	94.0	62.0	6.71	4.43	82.0	70.0	5.47	4.67	176.0	132.0	6.07	4.55
Sheffield Utd	115.0	71.0	7.67	4.73	51.0	88.0	3.92	6.77	166.0	159.0	5.93	5.68
Leicester	97.0	61.0	6.47	4.07	71.0	71.0	5.07	5.07	168.0	132.0	5.79	4.55
Southampton	75.0	86.0	5.00	5.73	85.0	82.0	6.07	5.86	160.0	168.0	5.52	5.79
Man Utd	72.0	68.0	4.80	4.53	82.0	82.0	5.86	5.86	154.0	150.0	5.31	5.17
Wolverhampton	69.0	42.0	4.60	2.80	84.0	74.0	6.00	5.29	153.0	116.0	5.28	4.00
Aston Villa	79.0	71.0	6.08	5.46	63.0	122.0	4.20	8.13	142.0	193.0	5.07	6.89
West Ham	70.0	64.0	5.00	4.57	77.0	114.0	5.13	7.60	147.0	178.0	5.07	6.14
Tottenham	79.0	54.0	5.64	3.86	66.0	98.0	4.40	6.53	145.0	152.0	5.00	5.24
Bournemouth	63.0	94.0	4.50	6.71	75.0	107.0	5.00	7.13	138.0	201.0	4.76	6.93
Crystal Palace	86.0	90.0	5.73	6.00	52.0	96.0	3.71	6.86	138.0	186.0	4.76	6.41
Burnley	81.0	77.0	5.40	5.13	54.0	91.0	3.86	6.50	135.0	168.0	4.66	5.79
Norwich	69.0	103.0	4.93	7.36	65.0	108.0	4.33	7.20	134.0	211.0	4.62	7.28
Watford	69.0	67.0	4.93	4.79	64.0	90.0	4.27	6.00	133.0	157.0	4.59	5.41
Brighton	72.0	61.0	5.14	4.36	57.0	87.0	3.80	5.80	129.0	148.0	4.45	5.10
Newcastle Utd	65.0	96.0	4.64	6.86	50.0	106.0	3.33	7.07	115.0	202.0	3.97	6.97

Table position	Team	Total scored goals	From corners	% from corners	Corners > Scoring conversion %
18	Bournemouth	29	7	24,14	5,07
9	Arsenal	40	9	22,50	2,29
13	Newcastle Utd	25	5	20,00	4,34
12	Everton	37	7	18,92	3,97
10	Burnley	34	6	17,65	4,44
19	Aston Villa	34	6	17,65	4,22
16	West Ham	35	6	17,14	4,08
7	Wolverhampton	41	5	12,20	3,26
1	Liverpool	66	8	12,12	4,18
20	Norwich City	25	3	12,00	2,23
4	Chelsea	51	6	11,76	3,03
6	Sheffield United	30	3	10,00	1,8
15	Brighton & H.A.	32	3	9,38	2,32
5	Man Utd	44	4	9,09	2,59
14	Southampton	35	3	8,57	1,87
8	Tottenham	47	4	8,51	2,77
2	Man City	71	5	7,04	2,15

Table position	Team	Total scored goals	From corners	% from corners	Corners > Scoring conversion %
3	Leicester	58	4	6,90	2,38
11	Crystal Palace	26	1	3,85	0,72
17	Watford	27	-	0,00	0

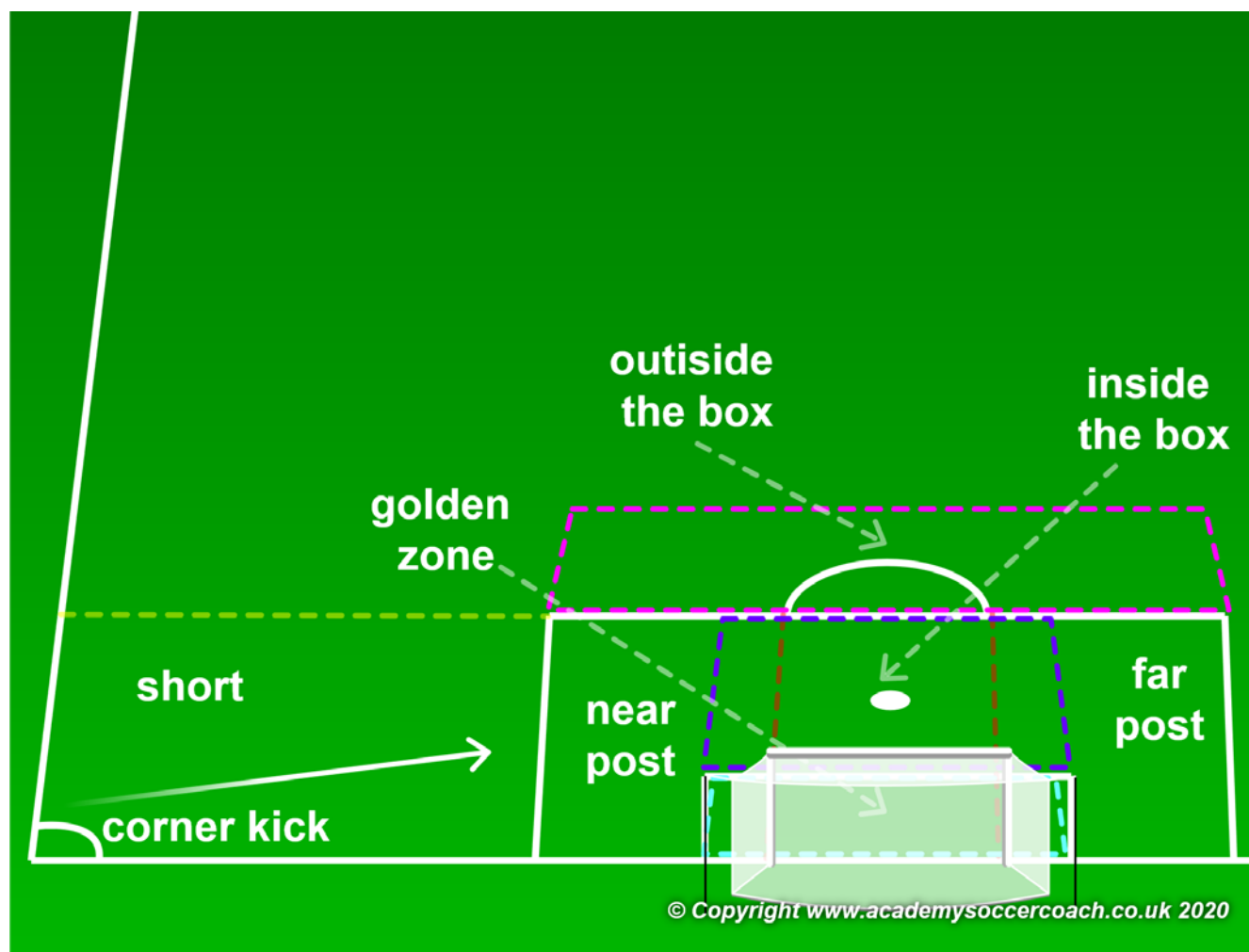
Team	Table pos.	GP	PTS	W	D	L	G+	G-	GD
Liverpool	1	29	82	27	1	1	66	21	45
Man City	2	28	57	18	3	7	67	31	36
Leicester	3	29	53	16	5	8	58	28	30
Chelsea	4	29	48	14	6	9	51	39	12
Man Utd	5	29	45	12	9	8	44	30	14
Wolverhampton	6	29	43	10	13	6	41	34	7
Sheffield Utd	7	28	43	11	10	7	30	25	5
Tottenham	8	29	41	11	8	10	47	40	7
Arsenal	9	28	40	9	13	6	40	36	4
Burnley	10	29	39	11	6	12	34	39	-5
Crystal Palace	11	29	39	10	9	10	26	32	-6
Everton	12	29	37	10	7	12	37	46	-9
Newcastle Utd	13	29	35	9	8	12	25	41	-16
Southampton	14	29	34	10	4	15	35	52	-17
Brighton	15	29	29	6	11	12	32	40	-8
West Ham	16	29	27	7	6	16	35	50	-15
Watford	17	29	27	6	9	14	27	44	-17
Bournemouth	18	29	27	7	6	16	29	47	-18
Aston Villa	19	28	25	7	4	17	34	56	-22
Norwich	20	29	21	5	6	18	25	52	-27

Looking at the current season so far, all the teams that would be relegated at the moment are having a decisive intake from corner kicks and they are still alive and few points behind the safe table's seats. Bournemouth is the first team for scored goals from corners and for conversion rate (24,14% and 5,07%); Aston Villa and Norwich are having important numbers despite not being in the first position of this specific table.

Corner kicks are also helping West Ham to seat in a safe position thanks to a better goal difference from Bournemouth (17,14% of scored goals from corner kicks and second best conversion average of the league). In the middle of the table, where 8 teams are standing among 8 points among each other, all them are having crucial contribution from corner kicks; Arsenal more than all the other with the 22,50% of scored goals from corners (9 out of 40). Newcastle case is interesting, as they have just kicked 115 corners in 28 games (4 per game as average), but they are seating second for conversion average (4,34%) and third for scored goals from corners (5 out of 25) in the specific table.

At the top of the table, the tactical, technical and motivational superiority of Liverpool so far has made their percentages for corners kicks yet useful but not as really crucial as their style of play is.

How corner kicks are divided and analyzed in this book (book 3)



- **Short corner kicks:** more than one touch to drive the ball toward the opposition's box.
- **Corner kicks to the near post:** one ball's touch to drive the ball to the near goal's post in relation to the corner kick's side.
- **Corner kicks to the far post:** one ball's touches to drive the ball to the near goal's post in relation to the corner kick's side.
- **Corner kicks inside the 18 yds. box:** one touch to drive the ball toward the opposition box (between the penalty kick point and the edge line of the 18 yds. box).
- **Corner kicks inside the 6 yds. box:** one touch to drive the ball toward the opposition box (critical area).
- **Corner kicks outside the box:** combination play to shot outside the 18 yds. box from corner.
- **Goals after winning the second times of the ball:** combination play to finish after at least one defender's touch of the ball
- **Throw-ins as corner kicks:** long passes toward the opposition's box from the side line with similar attacking and defending teams' shape to a corner kick.

- **Short corner kicks**

Passing combination to open a gap between the opposition's defensive line and the goalkeeper inside the 6 yds. box

Chelsea takes a left side corner and the player on the ball (Willian) feints an in-swinging kick, as his teammates overload the opposition 6 yds. box with 4 players. The opponents shape a line of 3 in front of the goal (2 Chelsea's players are man-marked) and a zonal marking line of four in front of them to cover the other 2 opponents. 2 more defenders are standing inside the so called "critical area".



Willian passes backward to a teammate near the 18 yds. upper corner and the receiver invites the pressure of an opponent; this first pass invite all the opposition's defensive shape out of the 6 yds. box.



As the first player on the ball receives the back pass standing along the same opposition's defensive line (in play), his teammates move slightly backward again inside the critical area, creating a gap between the defensive line and the goalkeeper. Furthermore, 2 defenders on the goal's far post don't mark the attackers on the goal side and 2 defenders in the center are placed behind the defensive line and let all the attackers in play.



This way, one of Chelsea's attackers on the far post can meet the ball inside the 6 yds. box in front of the goal and without a real defensive pressure.



The defenders can't anticipate the opponents and they can't clear the box due to their positions behind the attackers; the goalkeeper doesn't move out of the goal line despite the ball's trajectory is an in-swinging pass and it's very close to the goal line.

Chelsea's player can score with one volley touch to the far post in relation to the ball's meeting point.



The first 1-2 combination invited the opponents' defensive lines out of the 6 yds. box, creating a gap between them and the goalkeeper; the following defensive mistake that allowed Chelsea's scorer to receive in front of the goal was the wrong defensive alignment with 2 defenders who were marking on the goal's side and 2 more along the defensive line but behind the opponents; these players on the far post could take advantage of being in play very close.

Overloading the center zone of the opposition's penalty area to exploit the created wider space inside the 18 yds. box through a 1 v 1 duel against an isolated defender

This is a similar situation to the previous one, as Chelsea takes a left side corner, Willian is on the ball and he feints an in-swinging kick; the main difference is the overload of the center channel of the opposition's box with 6 players from the 6 yds. box till the edge line. All they are man-marked; one defender is standing on the near post, another one is looking at Chelsea's midfielder out of the box and the last one is moving to counter the direct opponent at his left, trying to prevent a 1-2 combination. This shape create a space along the attacking left side of the penalty area.



Willian plays a short corner kick and the receiver is able to anticipate the defender, passing the ball back to the teammates who has time and space to receive the back pass.



The ball carrier is now isolate in a 1 v 1 duel along the left side of the opposition's 18 yds. box and he has the space to dribble the ball inside the penalty area. Meanwhile, all Chelsea's attackers move toward the 6 yds. and throughout the critical area; all of them seem to be man-marked in a proper way.



Willian beats the opponents and he gains a pocket of space inside the 18 yds. box. All Chelsea's players overload the area in front of the opposition's near post goal; 2 of them are ready to attack the far post, but a gap among the opponent is now opened and the ball carrier can also look at the goal's net.



The opposition's goalkeeper hides his position behind the overload area on the near post and he leaves a big space along the goal and the far post.

Willian, Chelsea's player on the ball can score with a shot toward the second post and the goalkeeper is too far from the ball's trajectory to try a save.



The first defender who couldn't tackle Chelsea's receiver of the short corner kick did a mistake due to a late reaction movement; the second defender stayed too far from Willian and he didn't try to force him sideward, allowing him to dribble the ball toward the center. The defensive block was divided into 2 groups inside the and the goalkeeper didn't cover the goal properly, as he allowed the opponent on the ball to look at the goal's net on the far post. These are the main defensive mistakes that allowed Chelsea to score in this situation.

Quick short corner kick to play an in-swinging cross toward the opposition's 6 yds. box (to the near goal's post)

This next sequence is third short corner kick situation that Chelsea can exploit due to a defensive wrong alignment after a first backward pass. The same left short corner is taken with a back pass; 2 Chelsea's player attack the center space of the penalty area, 2 are standing along the opposition last defensive line and the fifth one starts behind the defenders along the side line of the 6 yds. box.



The receiver can turn toward the box, as the direct defender is too far away from him to try a pressure action; the ball carrier can touch ball to prepare an in-swinging cross pass.



The opposition organizes a zonal marking defense with a line of 5 in front of the goal and 2 other defenders more to the front; 3 Chelsea's players would be now off-side in case of a cross pass.

While the ball carrier is moving the ball to play the cross pass, one of the attacker on the first post runs back in play, exploiting the wrong alignment of the defenders; one Arsenal's player is standing behind the defensive line and he creates the "in play" situation to the opponent.



This way a pocket of space is created on the goal's first post inside the 6 yds. box.



Chelsea's player who went back in play before can receive the in-swinging cross pass along the edge line of the 6 yds. box and beat his direct marker in timing.

The opposition's goalkeeper doesn't move off the goal line to try a last time ball's catch before Chelsea's player can meet the ball.

He score with a one touch shot to the near post and the goalkeeper can't save due to the near action of the opponent.



The main defensive mistake was the slow reaction speed of the defender who could had counter the first receiver, who can on the other side turn and prepare the cross pass inside the 6 yds. box. Other decisive mistakes are made by the center defender who wasn't aligned along the defensive line, by the defenders on the near post, who didn't move backward to try to cover the deep pocket of space, and by the goalkeeper, who didn't move out to try to anticipate the opponent while meeting the ball, despite looking at its in-swinging trajectory toward the goal's space in front of him,

Overloading the area around the opposition's goal to free the center of the penalty area and to give a teammate the time to shot through a short corner kick and quick passing combination

The next sequence is a short passing combination pattern of play to shot inside the penalty area by Bournemouth that took the away team to the momentary lead of this match. Bournemouth takes a left side corner; the attacking shape is made of a line of four players in the center (1 near the opposition's goalkeeper, 1 on the far post and 2 in the center) and 2 more players standing in the so called "critical area. The last attacker is standing out of the penalty area semi-cycle. All they are man-marked by the opposition (Newcastle); 2 more defenders are placed inside the near post's space.



The player on the ball feints an in-swinging kick, but he passes along the field's end line toward the teammate who was standing near the goalkeeper before, who is now moving toward him, inviting 2 defenders to track him out of the goal's space.



The incoming player receives under backward pressure of 2 defenders; meanwhile the further attackers in the center of the opposition's box move to attack the space in front of them inside the critical area; as they are man-marked, Newcastle's defenders are forced to track them backward, opening a gap behind them.; all the other Bournemouth's attackers are man mark on the goal's side.



After the back pass, the third Newcastle's defender out of the box is late and he can't cover the passing path toward the space inside the 18 yds. box.



Bournemouth's center player outside the box can exploit the space in front of him and the wrong defensive action of the direct opponent, who is only looking at the ball and who doesn't track his blind run.

Bournemouth's player is free to meet the ball inside the critical area with time and space to shot, as all Newcastle's defender must move away from the opponent they were marking before.



The player on the ball score with a one touch shot to the goal's first post.



The main defensive mistakes were to leave a passing path toward the center of the penalty area after the first 1-2 combination and not to track the opponent inside the 18 y box, giving him time and space on the ball to shot. All the other Bournemouth's players and even the first receiver, who could only pass the ball back to corner's kicker, were properly marked at the beginning of this sequence. Due to man-marking defensive action, the last receiver could shot without pressure, as the defenders had to leave their opponent before attempting a late tackle or interception.

- **Corner kicks to the near post**

Prevent the opposition's goalkeeper from moving out to catch the ball from an in-swinging corner kick standing in front of him and exploiting the absence of the off-side rule

This next sequence is interesting to understand how a lack of awareness and communication among the defender can take a team to concede an avoidable goal.



Burnley takes an in-swinging left side corner; the opposition shape a zonal defensive organization with 2 players on the near post, 5 defenders along the edge line of the 6 yds. box, and another one in the center of the goal



2 Burnley's attackers prevent the opposition's goalkeeper from moving out of the goal line, standing in front of him; Southampton defenders may clear the ball easily as they are already standing along its trajectory.

The defender on the ball moves away from him and the goalkeeper doesn't move out of the goal line, but he is placed inside the goal, due to the pressure action of the attackers.



The ball crosses the goal's line and Burnley scores directly from a corner kick



This conceded goal is an example of an avoidable goal that Southampton conceded after just 1' after the kick off, due to a lack of concentration and awareness; the defensive line was too high in relation to the opponents' positions and Burnley's attacker could take advantage of the off-side's rule unenforceability for 1 touch corner kicks, as they could stand in front of the goalkeeper without pressure. The last and decisive mistake if the missed interception of the defender along the ball's trajectory.



This last footage, who highlights the following rebounds of a Burnley's attacker, even if the goal was already conceded, shows also how Southampton zonal defensive line didn't cover the space in front of the goal, as none of the five players' line countered the opponents in front of the goal, just standing in their starting positions while the ball was travelling in the air. Anyone weren't marking on the goal's side.

Move out of the opposition's 6 yds. box to attack an in-swinging corner kick beating in timing the direct marker

Southampton takes a left side corner and the player on the ball is right footed and he has two choices: a short corner kick and a 1-2 combination with the teammate in front of him or an in-swinging kick toward the opposition box. The attacking team shapes a 3 line offensive organization, with 2 players inside the 6 yds. box, 2 just out of it and a fifth one, who starts back position in relation to the teammates. All they are man-marked and the opposition (Aston Villa) create numerical advantage inside the 6 yds. box with 2 more players.



When the player on the ball is going to kick, the teammates inside the 6 yds. box move out and the others run toward the same area.



The second and further player who moved out of the 6 yds. box beats the direct opponent in timing on the ball and he jumps higher than him, heading the ball on goal along the edge line of the smaller area.



The goalkeeper can't move out of the goal line due to the high number of player along the 6 yds. box line and Southampton player can score to the far post.



Moving out with the right timing, the players who started inside the 6 yds. box created a late timing on the ball to the direct markers and the in-swinging trajectory of the ball made easier for the header to meet the ball in the air. The defensive shape was well organized as well as the marking actions (except those on the far post), but the marker of the scorer was too late to try to anticipate the attacker due to his backward prior run.

Attack the near post in relation to an out-swinging corner kick from the middle of the penalty area beating in time the opposition deeper zonal defensive shape





- **Corner kicks to the far post**

Overload the opposition near post in relation to an in-swinging corner kick to isolate the opposition defenders in 1 v 1 duels in the middle and on the far post

Everton takes a left side corner against Watford; the player on the ball is right footed and the direct kick can't be anything but an in-swinging cross; the attacking team occupy the opposition's 6 yds. box with 3 players and 2 more start from the crucial area. The opposition shape a zonal defensive line of 5 in front of the goal to control the attackers and man-mark the other 2.



3 Everton's players move toward the near post and a fourth one stands in front of the opposition's goalkeeper to prevent him from running out of the goal's line. The fifth Everton's attacker have space to meet the ball against the isolated defender, who is also late against him.



Everton' attacking shape seems to wait for an in-swinging corner kick to the near post, but ball's trajectory is travelling toward the far post where the player on the ball can header it on goal to the near post in relation to his position; the goalkeeper can't even try a save as he is out of time on the ball due to the previous pressure.



The decisive attacking strategy was to overload the opposition near post in relation to the in-swinging corner kick, isolating the opposition defenders in 1 v 1 duels in the middle and on the far post. On the other side, the crucial defensive mistake was made by the defender on the far post, who was late while countering the attacker and out of timing to anticipate the opponent's header.

Exploit the opposition deep defensive shape inside the 6 yds. box to counter an in-swinging corner kick, playing the ball to the far post and meeting the ball at the back of the defensive line after a blind run

Everton takes a left side corner kick and the player on the ball is right footed; expecting an in-swinging corner, the defending team (Everton) organizes a zonal marking shape inside the 6 yds. box with 5 players and 2 more on the near post. 2 Burnley's players are standing in front of the opposition's goalkeeper, the third one starts from the crucial area of the box and the fourth one is standing on the far post.



A fifth's player of the attacking team exploits the overload situation inside the 6 yds. box that prevent the goalkeeper from moving out of the goal line and the too deep defensive line, attacking the far post of the opposition's goal.



Burnley's player on the far post can meet the ball without pressure...



...and he score with a high level technical 1 touch gesture under the cross bar.



As Everton preventively shaped a very deep defensive shape inside the 6 yds. box to counter an in-swinging corner kick, the kicker was very good at playing the ball to the far post and where a free teammate met the ball at the back of the defensive line after a blind run. The defensive mistake, in this situation was a team lack of attention to the far post of the goal, as all the defender along the zonal marking line were looking at the ball trajectory, expecting to clear on the first post or in the middle of the smaller area. This defensive tactics allowed a blind run on the far post of a free attacker.

- Corner kicks inside the 18 yds. box

Out-swinging corner kick

Create a gap between the opposition's defensive shape near the goal (1 outnumbered attacker) and the second defensive shape along the imaginary line of the penalty kick to create 1 v 1 duel and to beat the defender in time and in the created space

Everton takes a left side corner and the player on the (the left fullback Digne) is left footed; the ball trajectory is clearly an out-swinging one; the attacking shape is very interesting, as Everton creates a gap inside the “critical area” thank to one forward who stand in front of the goalkeeper, who invites one defender to mark. One defender is on the near post and a third one stands inside the 6 yds. box ready to clear a potential aerial kick on the near post but toward the crucial area.



This defensive shape and the starting positions of 3 Everton's forwards create a gap inside the box that allows 3 Everton's attacker to meet the ball with the right timing while moving toward the opposition's goal. This gap between the defensive shapes of the opposition (Crystal Palace) is exploited by the center player of three inside the crucial area...



...who can header the ball to the far post, beating on timing and jumping higher than the opponent.

The gap between the opposition's defensive shapes near the goal against only 1 outnumbered Everton's attacker and the second defensive shape along the imaginary line of the penalty kick created 1 v 1 duels inside the crucial area. The center attacker of the 3 beat the defender in timing while moving to the created space and prevented the 3 deeper defenders from double teaming the opponent on the ball due to the distance between these defensive lines.



Even if the ball hit the cross bar after a touch of the goalkeeper...



...as the opposition hasn't placed any player on the far post, looking only at the near post, the space can be attacked by the farther of the three attacker, who touches the ball and he scores.

Furthermore, none of Crystal Palace's defenders follow the man who scores after the rebounds; this way, the scorer is free from marking in front of the opposition goal.



This second gap is crucial as the first one for defenders, who conceded a goal due to a lack of attention, thinking only to the near post in relation to the corner kick and not to cover the space on the further one.

Condense the center of the penalty area, feint to attack the near post to header the ball from an out-swinging corner kick to free a teammate inside the box along the same line of the far post

Chelsea takes a right side corner kick and the player on the ball is right footed; there aren't any other teammates near him, so the only possible solution the defenders (Wolverhampton) have to read is the trajectory of an out-swinging cross pass. Chelsea condenses the center channel of the opposition's 18 yds. box; 5 players stand inside the "crucial area" and they are ready to move to meet the ball inside the near post space of the goal. A sixth one stands behind and backward the overload area, free from markers. Wolves' defensive organization is built up with a line of 4 players along the edge line of the 6 yds. box and a fifth one who is looking at the near post space; 3 other defenders are man marking the opponents around the penalty kick cycle and the last two are standing along the paths to the goal of 2 Chelsea's players.



As the out-swinging corner kick is played, 4 Chelsea's players move toward the first post space, inviting the opposition to overload the same area; a fifth one moves toward the far post



The last Chelsea's player inside the box, who started behind the teammates can header the ball against a late defender, who loses the timing of action inside the critical area, as he has to turn toward the opponent before trying the interception. This way, 4 players of the defending team who shapes the zonal marking line are out of action, as they don't time enough to move forward and counter the heading opponent.



The headers score to the near post in relation to ball's meeting point and the far one in relation to corner kick's side.



The main defensive mistake come from the condensed center path of the penalty area throughout the “critical area”; Wolves’ defenders followed the feint to attack the near post to header the ball after an out-swinging corner kick and they left time and space for a free opponent along the same line of the far post to header on goal under the pressure of the only late defender near him.

Flank play combination inside the opposition box from the far post to the near one in relation to the corner kick side, concentrating the opposition's focus on the first header's area

Crystal Palace takes a right side corner and the player on the ball kicks an out-swinging cross pass; the attacking team seems to be focused on second times of the ball, as 3 players are standing just outside the 18 yds. opposition's box. 5 attackers are inside the area far away from each other but 2 along the far goal's post line. The opposition (Manchester City) shapes a zonal defensive line of 5 players along the edge of the 6 yds. box and 3 man-marking defenders inside the crucial area. 1 Crystal Palace attacker stand in front of the goalkeeper without any goal side opponent.



The last Crystal Palace's attacker, who was standing at the back of the overload zone of the penalty area, is free from markers and he can header the ball that is coming from the out-swinging corner kick, running toward it; he meets the ball in the air jumping higher than the opponent, who does it from a standing still position along the zonal marking defensive line. The fifth Man City's defender doesn't move forward as the other 4 teammate do to try to clear the crucial area, and the line is now broken.



The right Crystal Palace attacker of the 3 inside the crucial area arches his blind run to escape the marker at his back and toward the near post in relation to the corner kick side (far post in relation to the first flank play header); he can jump free from markers as his direct opponent doesn't track his movement, only looking to the ball's trajectory.



He scores to the far post of the opposition's goal.



The defensive mistake didn't concern the players' positions, at the beginning, but the focus on the opposition's flank play combination inside on the far post; the first header drove the ball to the near post in relation to the corner kick side. The first attacker who headed the ball was free from markers while running toward the ball (second defensive mistake) and the second attacker, who scored, was also free from markers and in play due to a deeper position of one defender along the zonal marking line (third defensive mistake).

In-swinging corner kicks

Invite the opposition to defend the 6 yds. box expecting an in-swinging corner kick toward the near post and create a gap in the middle of the 18 yds. to meet the ball near the penalty kick zone with the right timing

The next sequence is similar to the one we analyzed at page 49, but the ball's trajectory is different as well as the players' positions at the beginning; 2 Man Utd's attackers are properly man marked inside the 6 yds. box, 2 more defenders (Chelsea) are saving the near post area and a third one is standing along the 6 yds. box edge line. A third attacker is also man marked inside the critical area, as well as the other 2 along the edge line of the penalty area.



The in-swinging ball's trajectory seems to be driven toward the 6 yds. box, as the outer attacker in relation to this zone runs toward the opposition's goal; this movement creates a gap inside the critical area that none of the Chelsea's player move to cover



The farther of the attackers along the edge line of the penalty area can run toward the ball, as the in-swinging ball's trajectory is driven toward the crucial area around the penalty kick cycle and not toward the 6 yds. box; he can header the ball jumping higher than the direct marker, who wasn't positioned properly at the beginning, as he was facing the opponent frontally and his body's shape was positioned goal's side but not turned toward the corner kick angle.



The attacker can score heading the ball to near post in relation to his positions (far post in relation to the corner kick's side, despite the in-swinging ball's trajectory).



2 defenders made the first defensive mistake, as none of them covered the crucial area even if the ball wasn't driven toward the 6 yds. box and a gap to exploit for the further attackers was created inside the critical area. The direct marker of the scorer made the second defensive mistake due to his position and body shape before the corner kick, as he was facing the opponent frontally and not half turned toward the ball.

Invite the opposition to defend the near goal's post and meet the ball inside the crucial area along the 6 yds. box edge line at the back of the defensive overload area. Exploit the timing to anticipate the opponents along the zonal defensive line

The attacking team (Man City) takes a right side corner kick, and the player on the ball is left footed; the ball's trajectory can nothing but in-swinging. Despite the expected type of corner kick, only one attacker is paced inside the opposition's 6 yds. box and 2 more (they are man-marked) along the edge line (on the near and far post in relation to the corner kick side); 2 other attackers are standing inside the crucial area, one behind the other and only the nearer one to the goal is man-marked (the second defender is looking to the opponent in relation this his movements). The last attacker along the edge line of the 18 yds. box is also man-marked but the defender is looking at the box rather than to him.



2 defenders (Man Utd) are free marking tasks on the near post and 2 more are saving the center of the goal.



When the player on the ball kicks the corner the farther teammates to the goal move to attack the opposition's 6 yds. box; only 2 defenders are really active and all the other along the deeper defensive line are still passive, like the marker along the edge line of the 18 yds. box, who doesn't track the direct opponent. The second defender out the overload area move to track the opponent's run toward the goal,

trying to counter him diagonally in relation to the ball trajectory. The deeper attackers invite the opponents to overload the near post, isolating 3 teammates in the center, who remain passive.



The ball is driven to the edge line of the 6 yds. box and the standing still defenders in the center of the goal's space act as block for the defender and create the chance for the incoming attacker to jump, beating in timing all the defenders. The goalkeeper doesn't even try to move out of the goal line to catch the ball in the air. The player on the ball can score to the near post from the center space of the goal.



Invite the opposition to defend the near goal's post and meet the ball inside the crucial area along the 6 yds. box edge line at the back of the defensive overload area. Exploit the timing to anticipate the opponents along the zonal defensive line

Clipped corner kick

Overload the crucial area center channel in the opposition's 18 yds. box and invite the defenders to condense the near post in relation to the corner kick side freeing a teammate on the far post

Leicester take a corner on the right attacking side and the player on the ball seems to ready to kick an in-swinging ball, despite only 2 attackers are standing close to the opposition's goal (one in front of the goalkeeper to prevent him from moving out of the goal and the other one just out of the 6 yds. box). 3 more Leicester's attacker start from the crucial area in the center of the penalty box and close the edge line; a fourth one is standing close to them along the goal's near post imaginary line. All the defenders (Aston Villa) are man marking the opponents, but 3 on the first post and in the center of the smaller area; the third one is standing in front of the corner kick angle along the side line of the box trying to cover the view of the penalty to the kicker (another 1 v 1 duel on the corner of the penalty box seems to be irrelevant).



The Leicester's corner kick taker play a clipped ball toward the far post of the penalty area inside the crucial zone and the 3 Aston Villa's defenders lose the opponents, as they spread out in the center and on the far post.



Aston Villa's defender who is coming from the center and along the line of the 6 yds. box try to reduce time and space to the opponents who is jumping to header the ball on the far post, but he is late in relation to the opponent/ball meeting point. The goalkeeper can't move of the goal due to the 1 v 1 duel in front of him; this duel also prevents him from looking properly at the ball's direction after the header and delays his action.



Leicester's player can score, heading the ball to the far post in relation to his position (near post in relation to the corner kick's side).



The 3 Aston Villa's defender made the crucial defensive mistake in the overload center space of the penalty area, as they lost the marking goal side positions against the opponents. The movement of one Leicester's attacker at the beginning invited the defenders to look at the near post, expecting an in-swinging ball's trajectory and isolate the further teammate on the far post who could beat in timing the opponent who tried to counter him while heading the ball.

- **Corner kicks inside the 6 yds. box**

Anticipate the opponent near the upper corner of the 6 yds. box exploiting the zonal marking shape of the opposition's deeper defensive line

The next sequence is an explicative example of positional and technical superiority of one player against another one. Man City takes a left side corner kick with a right footed player; a 1-2-2 attacking formation is shaped inside the penalty area (1 player behind the penalty kick cycle, 2 between the penalty cycle and the edge line of the 6 yds. box and 2 inside the smaller area in front of the opposition's (Tottenham) goalkeeper. 3 defenders are aligned in a zonal marking shape inside the 6 yds. box in front of the goal (the first one is saving the space in front of the first post) and 2 more are saving the far post space. 2 more defenders are man marking the opponents inside the crucial area and the third one is placed in the center to intercept the last opponent along his running path to the goal.



Just before the kick of the corner, Man City attacker moves toward the corner of the smaller area to gain positional advantage against the first outer defender with a blind run and to anticipate the defender beating him in timing.



The defender along the defensive line who becomes his direct marker is late and he can't counter Man City attacker header's attempt. All the other attacking player are properly man marked; the defender inside the far post stands still and he doesn't move backward toward the goal to try to save the far post, as the goalkeeper is placed very closed to the near post in relation to the corner kick side.



City attacker on the ball performs a high level technical gesture, as he can header the ball toward the far post of the goal from a wide position in relation to the opposition's goal; the defender near this post is late in covering the goal and he can't prevent the conceded goal.



Rather than talking about a real defensive mistake, in this move, the blind anticipated run of the attacker who scored, the positional advantage he was able to gain and his technical skills while heading the ball made the difference. The first defender was late, as well as the teammate on the far post, but the scorer had the most of the merits in this situation.

Free the opposition's 6 yds. box playing a short corner kick with a backward pass combination far away and out of the 18 yds. penalty area and play a diagonal out-swinging cross toward the opposition goal's far post

Man Utd is taking a corner on the attacking right side and the opposition (Aston Villa) overloads the 6 yds. box and the crucial area with 4 players each; 2 more defenders are standing in front of the player on the ball and the near teammate. Only 4 Man Utd stand inside the opposition's box. The nearest players on the ball take a short corner kick, as a driven ball toward the box could be an easy clearance chance for the opposition.



The receiver of the first pass plays backward again to a third teammate, who is standing free from markers and far away from the penalty box. This passing sequence invites the opposition out of the 6 yds. box and inside the crucial area; the defensive line is not aligned, as two players are standing behind the 6 further teammates and leave 2 Man Utd attackers in play.



The ball carrier plays a long diagonal cross pass toward the opposition's goal far post and the 6 yds. box; one of Man Utd' player who was previously in play can meet the ball in front of the goalkeeper taking advantage of the wrong side marking position of the direct opponent. Furthermore, Aston Villa's goalkeeper doesn't move out of the goal's line despite the cross pass I coming from a long distance at ball's speed could help him in trying a volley catch.



This way Man Utd attacker scores heading the ball to the near post (far post in relation to the corner kick side).



The main defensive mistake occurred as the third United's player received the ball, and Aston Villa shaped the defensive line inside the crucial zone of the penalty area: two defenders placed themselves behind the aligned line toward the goal and they left 2 Man Utd attackers in play and one of them could header the without goal side defenders. The second mistake was the goalkeeper who didn't move out of the goal line despite the speed of the ball and the trajectory could have allowed a saving attempt.

Flank play combination inside the opposition's 6 yds. box on the first post to pass the ball backward toward the far post, exploiting the opposition's deep zonal marking defensive shape and the weaker zone in front of the goal

Everton takes a right side corner, the player on the ball is left footed and he is ready to kick an in-swinging cross. The attacking team places 2 players inside the opposition's 6 yds. box (one of them is placed goal side without man marking opponent), 2 more just out of the same zone and a fifth one around the penalty kick cycle. Another player is standing the edge line of the 18 yds. box. The defending team (West Ham) shape a zonal line inside the smaller box, another line of 3 just out of the same area (two of them are marking the opponents); the fourth player along the same line is looking for any incoming opponents. The last defender is man marking the opponent around the penalty kick cycle.



As the player on the ball kicks the corner, the goal side attacker move toward the goal's first post and he tries to anticipate the defenders to lengthen the ball toward the far post; all the other Everton's players seem to be properly marked at this stage.



He anticipates 2 defenders, heading the ball to the far post, between two opponents; 2 more man marked attackers overload the near post, inviting the zonal defensive line toward the same direction; this way a gap appears on the far post that the last defender of the line doesn't cover.



Everton's attacker runs toward this gap and his direct marker is late, as he doesn't track him to be goal side positioned when the ball arrives.



Furthermore, the last defender of the deeper line doesn't move forward to close the space and the goalkeeper is still close to the first post of the goal and he doesn't move out to try a volley save or rebound to clear the area.

Everton's player can score to the near post in relation to his position (far one in relation to the corner kick position).



The 3 defenders on the first post made the first mistakes, as they weren't able to counter the only attacker who was moving toward the ball and he could anticipate them. The marker of the scorer, who didn't track the opponent, being goal side to meet the ball before the attacker, and the last defender of the zonal marking line on the far post, who didn't close the gap in front of him made a the 2 decisive mistakes that took West Ham to concede a goal.

Invite the opposition to overload the near post to face an in-swinging corner kick, to free a teammate on the second post and exploit a too deep opposition's defensive shape to play a backward flank pass to a free teammate in front of the goal

West Ham takes a right side corner and the player on the is left footed; the ball's trajectory is then in-swinging; expecting a kick toward the near post, the defending team (Burnley) overload that post zone inside the 6 yds. area with 4 players. 3 more defenders are man marking the opponents in the center of the critical area, in front of the goalkeeper and on the far post zone. West Ham, in addition, places 2 attackers along the edge line of the smaller area along the line of the near post.



The attacker on the far post move around and behind the direct marker to receive and header the ball in a wider position in relation to the post in front of him; meanwhile, all West Ham players move toward the 6 yds. box very close to the goal, inviting the defenders to stand even deeper than before.



West Ham's player, who was previously countering the goalkeeper to prevent him from moving out of the goal line, moves backward to receive the flank play pass from the teammate; he is free from markers as all the Burnley players are standing along a close line to the goal.



He can score with a one touch shot on goal.



The main defensive mistake was to previously overload the near post before the corner kick and following too deep positioning of the defenders after the flank play on the far post. As the direct marker of the heading attacker lost the marking path, the receive could pass the ball back to the a free teammate, who moved away and backward form his prior deep position; he could score free from markers due to the deep positions of all Burnely's defenders, who looked at the ball only rather than marking the easiest passing option of the flank play header.

- **Corner kicks outside the box**

Quick passing combination to focus the opposition's defense toward the near post in relation to the corner side and to free a teammate inside zone 14 who can shot on goal with time and space on the ball

Wolverhampton takes a right side corner and the player on the ball is right footed; the opposition (Man Utd) shapes a double 4 players' line along the line of the 6 yds. box. The attacking team places 3 players along the opposition deeper defensive line and 2 more along the upper one; 2 more attackers are standing along the edge line of the 18 yds. box.



The nearest teammate of the player on the ball moves out of the line and run toward the corner kick point to receive a ground pass, inviting 3 defenders out of their position (2 defenders from the shaped lines and one from the edge line of the 18 yds. box).



The player who kicked the corner, runs toward the teammate and he receives the back pass; United's defenders are close to them but they don't put a real pressure; moreover they leave a free passing path toward the center of the box, while the other attacker invite the defender even deeper toward the goal.



One of Wolves' players out of the box inside zone 14 receives the back pass and he has time and space on the ball to receive and shot on goal.



United defensive line try to run forward to counter him as quickly as possible from the 6 yds. box's area, but all the line of 9 (6 in front of the goal) is too deep and far from the receiver to act a real and effective pressure against the opponent.

He can shoot to the goalkeeper's left side of the goal before any opposition's tackling attempt...



...And he scores, exploiting the late save's attempt of Utd's goalkeeper.



The main defensive mistakes were the missing pressure against the first 2 players while performing the quick passing combination to kick the corner, leaving a clear passing back pass out of the box. Meanwhile the focus of the other defender was only on the near post in relation to the corner side and the receiver of the third pass inside zone 14 was free from markers and he could exploit the time and the space on the ball due to the deep Utd's defensive line.

- **Goals after winning the second times of the ball**

Exploit a missed interception of an opponent along the edge line of the box, after a clearance inside the 6 yds. box, shooting on goal with 1 touch

West Ham takes a left side corner; the player on the ball is left footed and he is going to take an out-swinging kick. The attacking team shape a proper formation to meet the ball inside the critical area, with 4 players who start near the edge line of the 18 yds. box and 2 who stands inside the opposition 6 yds. box (in front of the goalkeeper and in the middle of the smaller area. The opposition (Brighton) overloads the near post area inside the 6 yds. box, one defender is standing along the edge line and 2 more defenders man mark the attackers inside the critical area.



The ball isn't driven toward the critical area of the opposition 's box and the defender along the line of the 6 yds. area anticipates the attacker, who previously moved from the middle of the same smaller area to try to header the ball to the first post. The defender clears the area, but with a header toward the center of the area.



The 6 yds. box and the critical area are now condensed and the only Brighton defender who could win the defensive second time of the ball misses to control the center cleared ball and the West Ham attacker is free from markers just out of the 18 yds. box.



West Ham player's on the ball, despite having time and space on the ball due to the far away position of the nearest opponent, he tries a direct one touch shot toward the goal.

By my side, he does it for 2 reasons: the first one is to prevent the defender from countering him and a potential counter-attack in case of loss of possession, and, obviously, the second one, to try to score.



All the opposition formation shape moves forward out of the area, and the goalkeeper can't look at the ball in the best way possible; the distance from the shooting position could allow him to read the direction and to have time to save the ball.

The overload area prevent the goalkeeper from looking at the ball and, moreover, one defender hits the ball while travelling toward the goal and the deflection wrong-foots the goalkeeper at his right, as he was moving to the left side to save the ball.



The defensive mistakes were basically 2; the first one is the penalty area's clearance, as the defender's header was made toward the center of the box instead of playing the out wide with a frontal header. The defender along the edge of the 18 yds. box tried to control and stop a rebounded ball instead of kicking it away after tracking its bouncing's direction; if the opponent would had won the possession, he could have face him in a 1 v 1 duel far away from the goal. The goal was only a result of a deflection, but the defensive mistake were clear.

Exploit the players' positions along the edge line of the opposition's penalty box to win an offensive 2nd time of the ball with enough time and space to shot on goal after a wrong defensive clearance

Aston Villa takes a right side corner with an out-swinging ball's trajectory; the tactical idea to try to header the ball to goal is very clear, as all the attackers start from the critical area to meet the ball along the 6 yds. box covering with 1 + 5 players the whole width of the opposition's goal. 2 more attackers are standing on the corner of the out semi-cycle to try to win the second times of the ball. The opposition (Southampton) organizes a zonal defensive shape with 1 defender on the first post, 4 players along the edge line of the 6 yds. box and 3 more defenders in front of them. Only 1 player stands along the edge line of the 18 yds. box against 2 attackers; another one takes a wrong position out of the action's area.



Southampton's defenders along the line of the goal's far post can anticipate the opponents, heading the ball away from the critical area, but toward the center space just out of the 18 yds. box.



Aston Villa can take advantage of positions out of the penalty area, and of the player on the attacking left side of the penalty area in particular. As Southampton's 8 players are standing inside a deeper part of the penalty area, only one of them is in the center of the edge line and the last is out of position, Aston Villa's player can win the second time of the, he can receive the rebound with the chest...



...And he has time and space on the ball to shot on goal without immediate pressure.



The defensive shape creates a wall in front of the goalkeeper along the whole goal's width and he can't look at the ball's trajectory, at the beginning. Looking at the picture, it's very clear as the goalkeeper move his body at his right, with a step on the ground to try to look at the ball on the near post.

As the shoot is driven toward the far post, the prior step toward the opposite post is decisive to concede the goal.



Despite Aston Villa was very good at forcing the opposition to create a condensed area inside box, attacking with 6 players in this situation, the defensive mistake of Southampton is very clear, as 2 attackers were free to win the second time of the ball just out of the penalty area and only 1 defender was standing between the in the center of the outer semi-cycle. Despite the first defensive action was effective, the lack of pressure against the attacker who won the second time of the ball caused the conceded goal; a second factor was the side step of the goalkeeper toward the near post to try to look at the ball, before moving to try a save toward the far post.

Force the opposition toward the 6 yds. box through a short passing combination's corner kick and to concentrate the defensive shape along the goal's width and exploit the 2nd time of the ball in a wider zone of the 18 yds. box after a clearance toward the far post in relation to corner kick side

Sheffield United takes a right side corner kick and the left footed player on the ball feints an in-swinging pass before combining 1-2 together with an incoming teammate from the upper corner of the penalty area. The opposition (Brighton) organizes a zonal defensive shape inside the 6 yds. box with 4 players against the only attacker and 5 players man mark all Sheffield's attackers along the edge line of the box.



2 Sheffield wide players are standing near the 18 yds. box corner; the first one takes part to the first short passing combination, and the second one is standing on the opposite side.



Even if the first pass is backward, all attackers move toward the goal, inviting all the defenders toward deeper positions close to the 6 yds. box line; this way the player who kicked the corner can receive the back pass deep along the flank. All the forwards are goal side man marked and 2 more defenders could attack the ball to clear the area. The only free Sheffield' player is standing along the opposite side.



When the cross pass is going to be kicked, the numerical advantage in front of the goal is very clear (5 v 3), as well as the one in front of the near the post (3 v 1); even one of the back players could be easily countered. Again the only free Sheffield player is the one on the opposite side



Sheffield No.3 could try a shot, receiving a cross pass toward the far post or to win the 2nd time of the ball after a wide clearance.

Brighton's defensive numerical advantage is effective to clear the crucial area as the second-to-last player of the line of 5 can header the ball away, clearing the zone in front of the goal; he does it in a proper way, sending the ball wide and not toward the center.



Due to the freedom that Brighton left to the opponent on the far post, he can control the ball without pressure, taking advantage of the defensive positions of the opponent (deep toward the goal and along the goal's width).



4 Brighton's defenders start to move to try to put pressure or to rebound the shot that Sheffield's wingback is going to take...

...but all they are too late to really press the opponent while shooting.



The technical gesture is a high level left foot shot under the cross bar, and Sheffield United scores a goal.



If Sheffield United was very good at inviting the opposition toward deeper positions in front of the goal, on the other side the defensive organization was good enough to clear the 6 yds. box; the only defensive mistake Brighton did, it was to leave an opponent free from markers along the opposite side in relation to the corner kick side. The 9 v 6 numerical advantage in front of the goal prevented Sheffield from scoring with a header after the cross pass, but it allowed the opposite free wingback to win the 2nd time of the ball easily and to shot on goal without a real pressure. Apart from all, the technical shooting gesture was at the highest level possible, in this situation.

Exploit a 3 men preventive defensive shape out of the opposition's box to recover the ball quickly and play a diagonal cross pass toward the 6 yds. box

In this next sequence Newcastle takes a left side corner kick with a left footed player, who is going to kick an out-swinging cross pass toward the opposition's crucial area. The opposition (Chelsea) places the whole team as defensive organization inside the crucial area and in the near post area; a 5 v 5 duel is created around the penalty kick cycle, a sixth defender is standing in the center close to the 6 yds. box and 3 more along the imaginary line of the near post. The 11th Chelsea's defender is standing along the edge line of the 18 yds. box.



Newcastle's aims seems to be to win a second time of the ball and play a cross pass against a more unbalanced defensive shape, rather trying a direct header, thinking about the numerical disadvantage inside the opposition 18 yds. box (5 v 10 + gk) and the 3 players out of the box.



The defender who is screening the crucial area can header the ball and clear the box, playing the ball away and wide along the defensive right flank; all Chelsea's players move forward, meanwhile Newcastle recovers the ball, inviting the attackers away from the goal nearest zones.



The ball carrier has enough time and space to turn toward the goal and to play a cross pass, as all Chelsea's players started from deep positions and thanks to the missing pressure of 2 opponents in front of him.



Newcastle attackers are now standing along the defensive line of opposition and all they start in play (from this side of the line)

The in-swinging cross pass is driven toward the center space of the 6 yds. box, where 4 Newcastle's players are left free in a goal side positions and only one Chelsea's defender track them. Moreover, the goalkeeper doesn't move out of the goal, even if he could have time to try a catch because of the trajectory and the speed of the ball.



Newcastle attacker can score with one touch toward the far post in relation to the cross pass.



The defensive mistake was made by Chelsea when Newcastle played the cross pass after winning the 2nd time of the ball; as the 10 defenders aimed to save the 18 yds., as they did, the chances for Newcastle to win the out of the penalty area were very high. The defenders in front of the opponent who crossed the ball were not strong enough and only 1 defender among 5 tracked the ball trajectory toward the goal; furthermore, he jumped with a wrong timing trying to header the ball away and the opponent found the ball in front of the goal to score.

- **Throw-ins as corner kicks**

Long throw-in toward the box as corner kick concentrating the opposition's defense on the near post and backward flank play to free a teammate on the second post of the goal

Wolverhampton takes a long throw-in from the attacking left flank. The player with the ball in his hands throws it toward the opposition 18 yds. box; 2 attackers against 3 defenders (of Everton) are standing on the goal's near post, a third one stands along the near post line and the fourth one on the far post (the fifth attacker comes from the edge line of the 18 yds. box). The attacking strategy of this throw-in sequence could be the same of a corner kick.



The players on the first post invite the defenders out of the 6 yds. The defensive line of 5 along the edge line is not properly aligned, as the defender on the near post man marked the opponent rather than moving forward and the defender on the far post is aligned but he doesn't look at the opponent behind him; furthermore the distance from the next teammate is too large.



The flank play pass is driven toward that space, and Wolves' attacker on the far post can meet the ball after a blind run behind the defender.



He scores to the far post, exploiting the wrong position of the goalkeeper, who nor doesn't move out of the goal's line, neither cover the goal's space.



The main defensive mistakes in this situation were to leave the first receiver jumping between 2 defenders, the deeper goal side marking of the player on the near post and the distance between the last and the second-to-last defenders on the far post, who left space for a flank play pass from the near to the far post and who allowed the scorer to meet the ball after a blind run. Nevertheless, despite the speed of the ball and its clear trajectory toward the goal, Everton goalkeeper didn't move out of the goal line to try a volley catch after the flank play.

Summary

The aim of this book, the third volume of a set about set plays in the English Premier League, aims to be a brief overview of the most recurrent patterns of movement and of play during corner kicks that are used both by teams at the top and at the bottom of the 2019/2020 table; brief but taking as full account of them as possible.

Before analyzing some of the most interesting scored goal from corner kicks that follow the delivery of the ball and the type of shot used to kick the corners, the first part of this volume provide an introduction to the Rule 17 of the game, dividing this set play in different factors that have been than used to find the most crucial footages possible:

- Kick modality
- Style of corner kick.
- Delivery of ball.
- Defense system for corner kicks.
- Number of players defending the goalposts.
- Attacking organization to finish from corner kicks.
- Interaction context.
- Scoring areas.
- (Missing shooting chances = not included in the footages).
- Body's parts to shoot.
- Goal zones.
- Subsequent situations of play after the corner kick.
- Effectiveness.
- (Ineffectiveness = only for second times of the ball and consequent new finishing phase).

This book analyzes the main situations of play from corner kicks, after having provided data about the last EPL seasons (2016/2017 – 2019/2020):

- Short corner kicks.
- Corner kicks to the near post.
- Corner kicks to the far post.
- Corner kicks inside the 18 yds. box.
- Corner kicks inside the 6 yds. box.
- Corner kicks outside the box.
- Goals after winning the second times of the ball.
- Throw-ins as corner kicks.

All the sequences ends with a scored goal, as another aim of the book is to discover the reasons behind a proper attacking scheme and defensive mistakes at the same time to allow the coaches to take advantage of the offensive solutions of the EPL teams and to understand how to improve their teams looking at the wrong positioning (individual or team) or timing of action of the defending teams.