

COACHING

THE BACK 3

How Conte guided Chelsea to the English Premier League Championship



by Stefano Santona

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Authors – Stefano Santona
Editor - Tom Mura
Cover Art By - Barrie Smith



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INTRODUCTION

Tactical evolution is not a linear process. It is a path made of breakages, revolutions, and restorations. And, again, of stasis, thoughts and reminiscences. We are seeing the rediscovery of the three-man defense, or, even better, its reworking, not only in Italy but also in the major European leagues. It is the authentic tactical adaptation of the old three-player defense.

The situation in Europe we see today concerning the use of the three-player defense is explained in the picture below: 5 teams in the Bundesliga (Borussia Moenchengladbach, Hoffenheim, Ingolstadt, Schalke 04, and Werder Bremen); 5 in La Liga (Betis, Osasuna, Granada, Madrid, Seville); 10 in Ligue 1 (with Nice, Caen and Lille to lord); in Italy even 50% of the top teams decided to adopt this defensive line. And the last country to adopt the three-player defense was England. When you can change the way to play the defense in the country that invented the game then you are right!



The Standard 3 Player Defense

To analyze the three-player defense we have to start from the phenomenon that has turned on the light bulbs all over Europe--Conte's Chelsea. Not all the three-player defenses are equal and not all the modules are interpreted in the same way. Among the development of Conte's 3-5-2 and Mazzarri's 3-5-2 (Watford manager), we can see certain differences.

In regard to the design of the defending three, it may be noted that the basis of the formation arises from the necessity to give the team stability, allowing it to adapt to the opponent's game and to game situations (a change to a 5-3-2 is almost natural).

The defending three, in this case, is an antidote to the opponent's pressure and a support to your own pressing, because the two managers prefer defenders with complementary characteristics: a new generation's center back that is able to make choices and decision (like Leonardo Bonucci and David Luiz), a classic stopper (like Andrea Barzagli and Gary Cahill) and a mixed center back with a great strength expression and a huge ability of space coverage (like Giorgio Chiellini and Azpilicueta).



They asked Conte how he had come to 3-4-3 and he answered: "In my mind I planned a 4-2-4, then we changed to 4-3-3 and we also used the last module of the year: the 4-2-3-1.

What I did notice in some situations was that we did not have the right balance; because when you grant goals and occasion to the opponent is never a good thing. For this reason we changed to a 3-4-3 which I think is a good system for our team, partly because we have strikers suitable for this module."

Despite the fact that we are analyzing the Italian Defense, the Manager concludes his answer saying: "We have strikers suitable for this module." In fact, Conte's defense is expensive if we talk about energy expenditure, but very efficient.

If we talk about the fact that in football we have to score, in addition to the three-player defense (that allows you to have a good concentration of players on the offensive side) we must have players able to counterattack and overturn the action; these kinds of players in Conte's Chelsea are Marcos Alonso and Moses.

"I think that a manager must support his players to improve, with a great work focused on the individual player's growth, especially on the weak points; I also think that there is an important work on the team as collective unit."



Both players represent a revelation: the Spanish player, coming from a team like Fiorentina that is certainly not as big of a European club as Chelsea, and the ex-Liverpool Moses who has been reinvented as a defensive player despite being born as a pure striker.

Let's try to understand better where the idea of the Antonio Conte's three-player defense was born, as the idea causing his luck developed from a need.

29/11/2011: the birth of 3-5-2

It's a Tuesday and Juventus is playing in Naples for the postponed match from 20 days before.

Marchisio is unavailable, and from the lineup, which sees the Uruguayan player Estigarribia covering the role of F.C. Juventus #8, it seems that Pepe is going to play CDM.

After 2 or 3 minutes of the match, we cannot precisely see the 4-3-3 of Juventus. In fact, Conte drew the team with an unexpected 3-5-2: Barzagli, Bonucci and Chiellini behind, Lichtsteiner and Estigarribia as wings, Vucinić and Matri as strikers.

The surprise is even greater than the 4-3-3 move, considering that Conte abandoned the 4 player defense.

The first 3-5-2 experiment arises from the willingness to adapt his own lineup to the opponent's characteristics.

Mazzarri's Napoli plays a 3-4-3 that in the offensive phase exploits the full range of the field, raising the wings Maggio and Zuniga to the level of the strikers. Precisely thanks to this feature, one of the strong points of Napoli's offensive side is the exploitation of the weak side, always optimally guarded by one of the two wings.

Conte believes that against the trident composed by Hamšík, Pandev and Lavezzi, his left and right back have to stay close to the center backs.

The manager therefore increases the defensive density in the central zone of the field by deploying three-players in the middle and controlling the right and left sides with the two wings.

It seems like a temporary solution dictated by contingent needs; a solution that once again shows an extremely surprising Antonio Conte, who changes his tactical deployment to counter an opponent as best as possible.



Conte's 3-5-2, Season 2011-2012.

After the draw 3-3 in Naples he returns to 4-3-3.

But on January 24th 2012, playing the Italy Cup, Juventus is facing Luis Enrique's AS Roma; he is back with 3-5-2.

Although the interpretation of Spanish football is very different from the Mazzarri one, the tactical challenges proposed to Juve by AS Roma are similar to those offered by Naples.

In AS Roma's 4-3-3 the first principle was to consolidate ball possession and organize the team for an offensive maneuver, and it foresees the advancement of the two wings and the retreat of the central defensive midfielder on the line of the two central defenders, creating space to form a three-player line behind and a 3-4-3 ball possession.

To counter 3 strikers is a problem, and to solve that, Conte's lineup is composed of 3 defenders and 2 wings.

But in the next league match the 3-5-2 is also redeployed against the Udinese's 3-5-1-1.

From that point on, Antonio Conte alternates 3-5-2 and 4-3-3 (with an incursion of an unpublished 4-4-2 against Chievo, with Padoin and Giaccherini as wings) until the 2nd leg match against Naples, played again with the new lineup.

From that match onwards to the end of the championship he plays 3-5-2 with the exception of the game against Lazio.

In the last 8 league games played with the 3 man defense, Juventus won 7 times. The only loss came at home in the incredible match with Lecce when we see Buffon's error giving the ball to Bertolacci for the tie. Juve scored 20 goals and gave only 2: the one already mentioned, by Bertolacci, and another one during the Championship win and Del Piero's farewell, the last game day against Atalanta.

So the 3-5-2 lineup became a decisive bunker useful to achieve the Serie A's final victory.

Season 2012-2013: 3-5-2 consolidation

The next season they played a 3-5-2, with Asamoah moved to left midfielder on the side.

Juventus dominated the championship and left the Champions League in the quarter-finals leg, losing to Bayern Munich.

What is Antonio Conte's 3-5-2? At first glance, many of the solutions adopted showed a synthesis between 4-2-4 and 4-3-3.

From 4-2-4, he borrowed the movements of the wings and the philosophy of starting an offensive game.

The two strikers play close to each other and the real offensive maneuver is triggered, after the preparatory stages, by a vertical passage to the wing.

Following this first step, quick and close combinations can come from the two strikers.

The general principles of the game remain unchanged: defensive transitions allowed for rapid ball recapture and offensive maneuvering solutions with creation and exploitation of spaces.

From the point of view of the players in the field the 3-5-2 looks drawn to the characteristics of Juventus defenders.

Barzagli and Chiellini are exalted in their advance and marking skills, protected by Bonucci, who plays a role in covering their tactical skills.

Also, in possession of the ball, playing from the back, the excellent ability to read the game and good individual technique make Bonucci fundamental in preparing the offensive stage of Juventus.

On the wings Lichtsteiner and Asamoah's aerobic fitness allows them to cover their full lane as the system requires.

April 2013: the limits in Europe

In April of 2013, Juventus played the Champion's League quarter-finals against Bayern Munich.

The score of the matches was 2-0 in Germany with two Buffon errors and 2-0 in Turin, with the game still open until 64 minutes when Mandžukić scored the 1-0 goal for the Bavarians.

In Monaco, Juve, except for the first quarter, undercut Heynckes' team play. The four Bayern 4-3-2-1 offensive players pressed very high against Bonucci-Barzagli-Chiellini-Pirlo.

The classic 3-5-2 Juventus defensive line generally offers three options involving passes to Pirlo.

Bayern's offensive pressing excluded Pirlo from possible solutions, so the remaining options were the wings.

In the end, the Bavarians forced Juventus to move the ball forward toward one of the four less exceptional midfielders and strikers: one of the two wings, excluding from the game the tremendously more skilled Juventus midfielders.

Both Lichtsteiner-Peluso and Matri-Quagliarella had the opportunity to play one v one with their opponents.

It was impossible to organize the offensive phase and the defensive transition was ineffective.

In Torino, Antonio Conte attempted to correct this picture: he played the "aggressive" version of 3-5-2 by raising the position of the outside (this time Padoin and Asamoah) who were going out on the Bayern sides.

Shaped like that, the two midfielders (Pogba and Marchisio) were more involved and were more available to counter the German midfielders. On the sides, Ribéry and Robben often left in a rather open position Barzagli and Chiellini. The strategy paid enough, even though Juve lost the game and was out.

What emerges from the clash with Bayern, even knowing that the Bavarians were objectively stronger than Juve?

At home, the 3-5-2 worked well with the involuntary complicity of most championship coaches. But against Champion's League teams, the 3-5-2 seemed to show some limits when the level of competition was raised and without the reverential fear that carries Juventus in Italy.

The problem, essentially, was the effectiveness of the defensive transition, the key to all Conte's teams. To make this defensive transition effective, it is generally necessary that:

1. The team, when losing the ball, is "ordered" and possibly superior in the ball area or, in any case, behind the line of the ball;
2. The ball is lost as far forward as possible from the goal;
3. When the ball is lost, the team has to react and overcome quickly (aggressive defensive transition).

It is evident that the success of the defensive transition depends largely on how the offensive phase is conducted.

Specifically, the ball has to be recaptured; Juve "consolidates" its ball possession and the early stages of the maneuver to "rearrange" the team in the field and blocking the entire team. Resisting sometimes with the temptation to swiftly overcome the front of the game, Juventus must make a ball round with the primary goal of gaining field.

The goal is to force the opposing team to get lower and get squeeze in his half. Juve does very well with 4-3-3 and 3-5-2 for the rest of the season 2011-2012.

They did it less well in the following season and against teams that, pressing high, made ball possession more difficult.

The 3-5-2 edition of 2012-2013 radicalizes the search, even in the early stages of the maneuvering, of the vertically play towards one of the two points.

Such a game, carried out in the moments after the rebound of the ball, exposes Juventus, in the event of a loss of ball possession, to the problems related to the effective management of the defensive transition: the team does not have time to sort; the team gets stretched and is far from the ball; there is a loss of the ball in the backward zone, with the opposing team still having so many players above the line of the ball.

Also, after the consolidation of ball possession, the vertical solution to the strikers that combine with each other is a combination that does not generally involve dynamically a "third" or even a "fourth" player, it does not allow you to lose the ball "well," with numerical superiority in the ball area.

It is also clear how the performance of the strikers at this particular stage of play is decisive for the overall effectiveness of the maneuver.

Except for Vucinić, who is virtually irreplaceable, Juventus 2012-2013 does not have "securities" in ball management and in the vertical game for the strikers. For various reasons, Giovinco, Matri and Quagliarella have a too high percentage of lost balls.

How to Play Against Juventus?

In Italy, it became common practice to face Juventus in a mirror, opting for a 3-5-1-1, which marked Pirlo man to man and guaranteed numerical superiority in the center of defense against the two strikers.

The systematic renunciation of Juventus' opponents in playing different and more aggressive solutions allowed them to satisfy the 2nd and 3rd above-mentioned defensive passages, which automatically become tremendously effective.



Juventus found some difficulties with opponents that played high pressure, which forced them to play the ball quickly towards the strikers and therefore did not allow them to achieve the space.

In this way, the defensive transition lost much of its ability to retrieve the ball early and forced Juventus to play purely defensively.

In these phases, generally Juventus played with a deep line of 5 defenders and a line of 3 midfielders with the support (not always) of a striker who put pressure on the opponent's central defensive midfielder.

The most advanced line (composed by three midfielders) essentially covered all the

length of the playing field, but given the high portion of field to be covered, it was difficult for the three midfielders to be aggressive and recover the ball.

The ball recovery was more primitive than the thickest and retracted 5 player line. And although this line is extremely efficient and the shots on target received are few, the average ball recovery position is inevitably lower; in addition, territorial domination and ball possession were lower.

Furthermore, teams with an offensive philosophy were faced with difficulties during defensive phases, always because of the low density of the mid-line players related to the defensive line.

In addition to the Munich game, an example of the difficulties of Juventus 3-5-2 was the Champions League home match against Shakhtar Donetsk; Shakhtar controlled ball possession and led the rhythm of the game.



We concluded the analysis of three-player Conte Defense, with Juventus (3 seasons)

2. HOW TO WORK ON DEFENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

To organize an efficient defensive department with good interpreters coordinated with each other, it is important to work constantly every single session.

Furthermore, we need to work following several steps.

This kind of work involves the single player and the team as a collective group. The construction of defensive abilities starts from the single defender and step by step involves every single department and the full team.

It is obviously cyclical work: during the season the manager has to work on the single player, on the collaboration between two players, and on the collaboration between different departments.

The manager needs to set up a didactic progression, starting with simple skills and ending with difficult skills; from simple single player's game situations, to difficult collective game situations.

Starting from a standard situation, with a lot of details, we have to give them a lot of advice and solutions for different game situations.

Then, we have to work on induction, on stimulating player thinking; this is the right way to work on functional decision making, because you are training them on game "reading."

Situational work is making the team coordinated and organized related to time and space.

If we work with active opponent players, we help our team in problem solving and in finding solutions during the game, using tactical abilities developed during practice.

Time is the most important factor if we talk about organized and complex work.

Starting from this concept, I will be proposing a didactic progression for situational defensive line opposition training. Working on 3v2, you should work on cut-run, overlaps and combos; working on 6v4 the main work is on defensive squeeze movement, ball pressure, space cover, and cross or lofted ball defending.

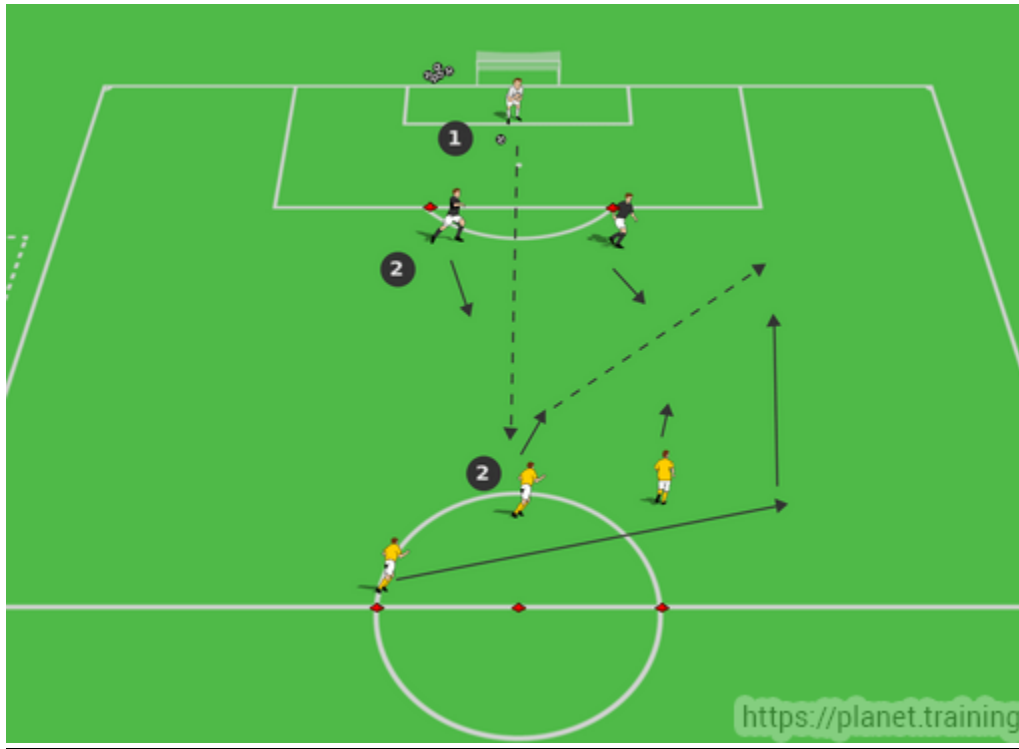
The goal of this exercise is to give the players a common code to make them able

to communicate in different situations, where in an instant everything is happening and they cannot communicate.

Even though 2v2 is the point of beginning to start coaching the defensive collective tactic, I prefer a 2v3 to make the job simpler for the strikers and more difficult for the defenders.

3.3 V 2 DEVELOPMENT

1° exercise: 3 v 2, covering an overlap



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players;

Number of players: 6 (2 defenders, 3 offensive players, 1 gk)

Objective: defense on cut-run, overlap, combination

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Objectives: manage the space and understand when to stop the player or control the space

Description:

- 3 strikers play from the mid-line, while 2 defenders start from the box
- we are working with side defender and central defender, because in this situation they are working together during the game

- Gk is playing a goalkick (n°.1 in the picture)
- One defender is pressing the player in possession of the ball, while the other one is covering the space or pressing the player without ball (n°.2 in the picture)
- The 3rd offensive player has to run an overlap

The choice between help or cover depends on how the other defender is pressed. As the attacker controls the ball, the 3v2 develops.

I would place this exercise right after the warm up because it is a tactical work that requires high concentration (especially for the defenders).

In this outnumbered situation, the defenders are timed by running backwards and shaking themselves to defend the goal.

It is important, depending on defender's ability, to isolate one offensive player; if we can do that now we have a 2v2 situation that is simpler.

2° exercise: 3 v 2, covering a pass through



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 6 (2 defenders, 3 offensive players, 1 gk)

Objective: defense on run through, pass through, combination

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Objectives: manage the space and understand when to stop the player or control the space

Description:

- 3 strikers play from the mid-line, while 2 defenders start from the box
- we are working with side defender and central defender, because in this situation they are working together during the game

- Gk is playing a goalkick (n°.1 in the picture);
- One defender is pressing the player in possession of the ball, while the other one is covering the space or pressing the player without ball (n°.2 in the picture)
- The 2nd offensive player has to run through the defenders
- The 3rd offensive can choose where to go, as shown in the picture

This exercise is just a variation of the previous one.

It is important to experience both exercises and try to put these in every single week's plan; the more the defenders play these exercises, the more they will be able to read the situation and understand what to do.

4.6 V 4 DEVELOPMENT

1° exercise: 6 v 4 passive didactic – situation



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 10 (4 defenders, 6 offensive players)

Objective: defensive movement, understand the distances between players, be aware of the spaces, start playing with the central defensive midfielder

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Description:

The offensive players are moving the ball.

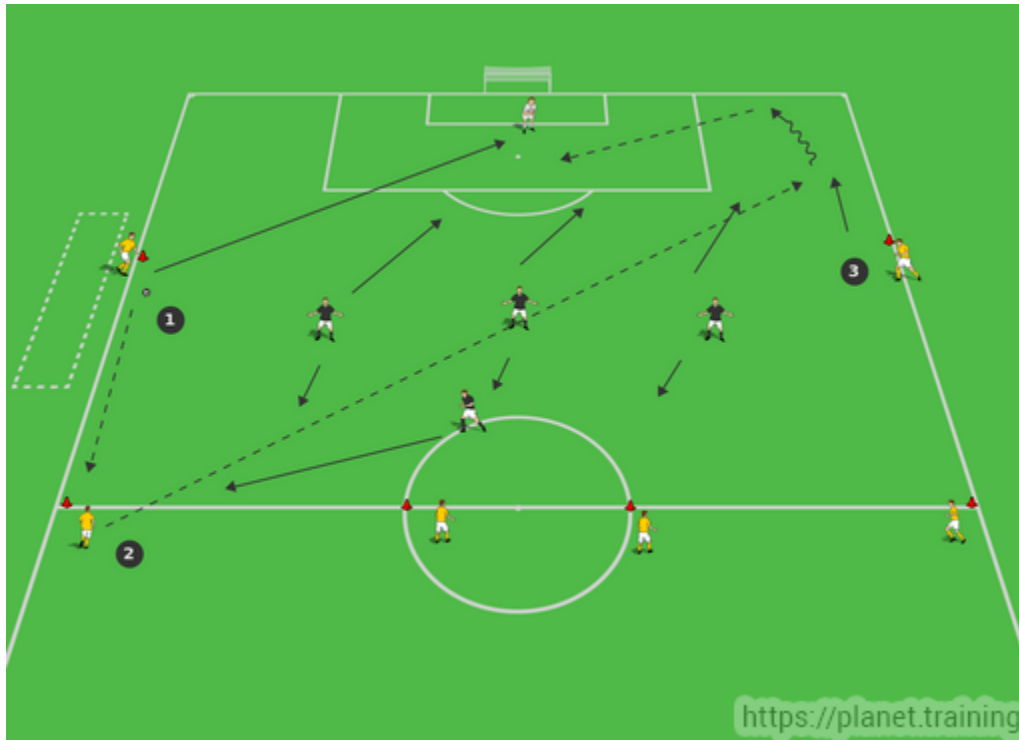
While the ball is moving, the defensive players have to move toward the ball, creating density in that space.

This is just a passive tactical exercise, useful during warm up or tactical sessions. You can also use this as a conditioning exercises: the offensive team is moving the

ball very fast, while the defenders have to move very fast. For example, you can keep going with the exercise for 2-3 minutes.

If you want to propose this as a conditioning exercise, you have to be sure that your defensive department is aware of the movement and the principles of the three-player defense.

2° exercise: 6 v 4 Active Defending – Offensive Situation 1



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 10 (4 defenders, 6 offensive players)

Objective: defensive movement, understand the distances between players, be aware of the spaces, start playing with the CDM, start playing active defense

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Description:

The offensive players are moving the ball. While the ball is moving, the defensive players have to move toward the ball, creating density and pressure in that space.

This is an active tactical exercise. The offensive team is moving the ball very fast, while the defenders have to follow their game (point 1 and 2 in the pictures).

At the coach's signal the offensive team has to move the ball on the opposite site and the game starts to be active.

Then, the offensive team has to score and the defensive team as to take possession of the ball.

If you want to propose this as a conditioning exercise, you have to be sure that your defensive department is aware of the movement and the principles of the three-player defense.

2° exercise: 6 v 4 Active Defending – Offensive Situation 2



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 10 (4 defenders, 6 offensive players)

Objective: defensive movement, understand the distances between players, be aware of the spaces, start playing with the CDM, start playing active defense

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Description:

The offensive players are moving the ball. While the ball is moving, the defensive players have to move toward the ball, creating density and pressure in that space.

This is an active tactical exercise. The offensive team is moving the ball very fast, while the defenders have to follow their game (point 1 and 2 in the pictures).

At the coach's signal: the offensive team has to move the ball to the opposite site and the game starts to be active.

Then, the offensive team has to score and the defensive team as to take possession of the ball.

If you want to propose this as a conditioning exercise, you have to be sure that your defensive department is aware of the movement and the principles of the three-player defense.

At the coach's signal: the offensive team has to move the ball to the opposite side and the game starts to be active (point 3 in the picture).

Then, as shown in the picture the wing has to pass the ball back and the midfielder can make a decision: play a short pass on the same side or play a long pass on the opposite side.

The offensive team has to score and the defensive team as to take the possession of the ball.

If you want to propose this as a conditioning exercise, you have to be sure that your defensive department is aware of the movement and the principles of the three-player defense.

The exercises begin with a didactic development in which we practice on the attack of the ball, the space covering and the defensive elastic squeeze.

The exercise becomes situational when one of the offenders plays a switch.

The exercise develops as a competition: the strikers get a point whenever they score a goal, the defenders get one point if they get the ball and two points if they drive the ball through the midfield line.

In this way the positive transition of the defenders and the negative of the offensive team is trained, but especially when a defender loses the ball, we train the defensive line to defend in an emergency situation.

There are several offensive development options to go over the last defensive line (one-two, cut run, overlap, 1v1, shoot, cross, pass through, etc...) through this progressive exercise I feel that all these situations are stimulated by playing both with defensive lineup and defense in "emergency."

With these exercises, it is also possible to communicate to the players the tactical choices of the coach.

This is important because, as mentioned above, the coach must transfer a player's code to the defensive stage.

The aim of these proposals is therefore to give a common code to the defenders: this aspect becomes fundamental in order to speak the same language to each other in the game. Through a common and easily recognizable code, defenders are able to recognize the various game situations and to choose in a fraction of a second how to behave. Communication in the field, therefore, is not important in choosing what to do--it is not the means to resolve the situations. At the same time, in my opinion, it must play a key role in reinforcing concepts and in transmitting security.

5. Defensive Exercises

3 v 5; Control the Central Lane



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 9 (3 defenders, 5 offensive players, 1 gk)

Objective: defensive movement, keep up the offside line, be aware of the spaces, start playing outnumbered

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Description:

The offensive players have to play into the box and score. While the ball is moving, the defensive players have to move covering the spaces; they also have to stop the offensive team. This is an active tactical exercise in which we put the defense in a difficult situation.

5 v 7 - Control the Central Lane



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 9 (5 defenders, 7 offensive players, 1 gk)

Objective: defensive movement, keep up the offside line, be aware of the spaces, start playing outnumbered

Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Description:

The offensive players have to achieve the box and score. When they pass the ball on the wing, the defense has to shuffle to that side.

The central lane will be covered by 2 center backs and the opposite wing.

While the ball is moving, the defensive players have to move covering the spaces; they also have to stop the offensive team.

This is just a progression of the previous exercise; we are now moving the ball on the wings asking the offensive team to play a high intensity game.

6. Offensive Exercises

Attack the Middle Player



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 7 (4 defenders, 3 offensive players)

Objective: find the forward pass, work on through pass

Time: 10 minutes

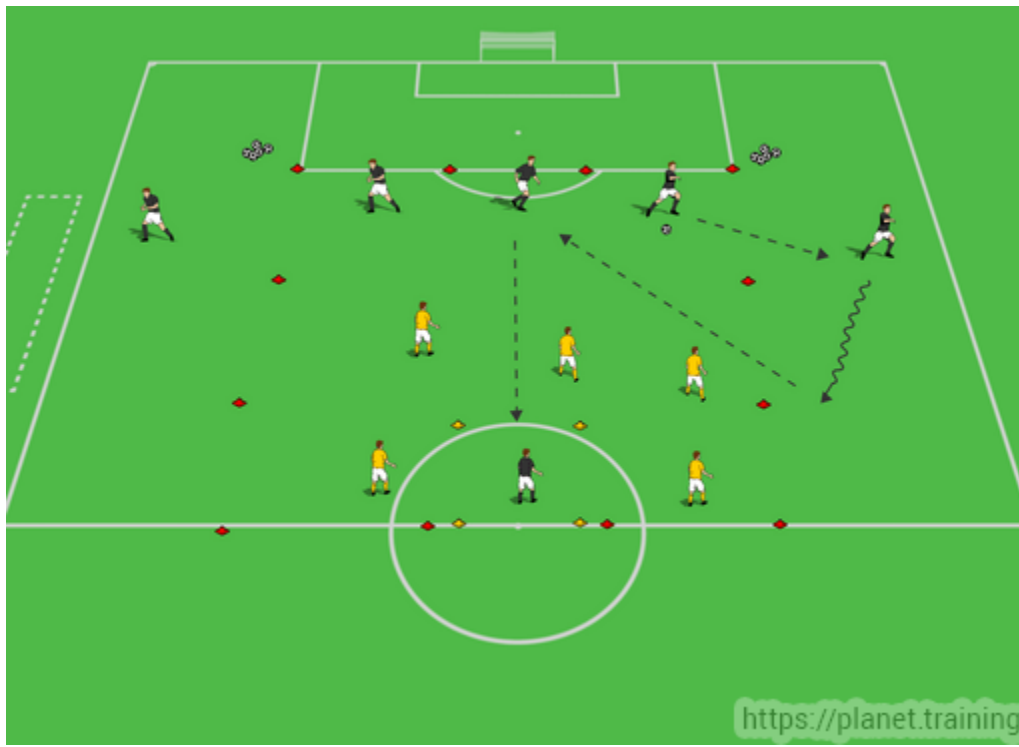
Description:

The defense has to pass the ball to the player placed inside the box; the offensive players have to stop them.

Every time that the game ends, the defense has to get the ball back from one of the corners as shown in the picture.

This is an important exercise because we work on intensity and ideal concept of the passes between defenders and midfielders.

Attack the Middle Player Using the Wings



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 11 (6 defenders, 5 offensive players)

Objective: find of the forward pass after a lateral pass, work on pass through, work on player movement

Time: 10- 15 minutes

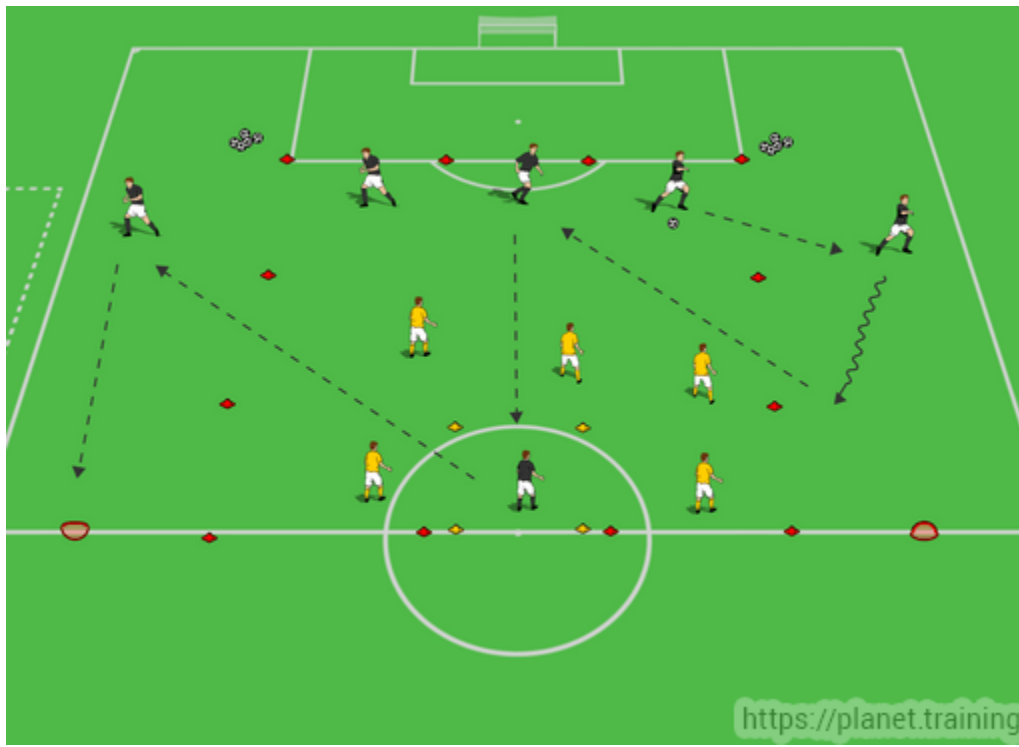
Description:

The defense has to keep passing the ball, trying to find one side; then, they have to find the player in the yellow box, by a pass coming from one central defender. Every time that the game ends, the defense has to get the ball back from one of the corners as shown in the picture.

Offensive team has to make pressure and try to win the ball.

This is an important exercise because we work on intensity and ideal concept of opening and resetting the game.

Attack the Opposite Side Using the Defense and Midfielder



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 11 (6 defenders, 5 offensive players)

Objective: find the forward pass after a lateral pass, work on pass through, work on player movement; find an opening pass after a forward pass

Time: 10- 15 minutes

Description:

The defense has to keep passing the ball, trying to find one of the side; then, they have to find the player in the yellow box, by a pass coming from one central defender.

The player in the yellow box will open the game to the opposite wing, who has to score in the little goal placed in front.

Every time that the game ends, the defense has to get the ball back from one of the corners as shown in the picture.

Offensive team has to make pressure and try to win the ball.

This is an important exercise because we work on intensity and ideal concept of reopening the game.

Attack the Half Line



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 11 (6 defenders, 5 offensive players)

Objective: find the forward pass after a lateral pass, work on pass through, work on player movement; research of an opening pass after a forward pass.

Time: 10- 15 minutes

Description:

The defense has to keep passing the ball, trying to find one of the side; then, they have to find the player in the yellow box, by a pass coming from one central defender.

The player in the yellow box will open the game to the opposite wing, who has to dribble the ball through the little goal placed in front, before the opposite team stops him.

Meanwhile the defense has to push up and get the half line.

Every time that the game ends, the defense has to get the ball back from one of the corners as shown in the picture.

Offensive team has to make pressure and try to win the ball.

This is an important exercise because we work on intensity and ideal concept of reopening the game and attack the space achieving the half line.

7. Conditioned Games

6 V 6 - Score on the Sides



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 12 (6 defenders, 6 offensive players)

Objective: find the space on the sides, lock and close the spaces on the sides

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Description:

Game 6v6, goal valid in the little goals placed on the sides.

Defense V Attack



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 15 (6 defenders, 8 offensive players, 1 gk)

Objective: find the space on the sides, lock and close the spaces on the sides, find the pass behind the defense

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Description:

Play the game. The Black team has to score in the little goals. Yellow team has to score in the big goal.

Defense has to move back and be ready for the cross; it is important to keep the offside line.

The wing has to run back to the box if the central defender is going to stop the striker (point n. 1 in the picture).

8. Defending by the Finishing

Don't Let Them Shoot 3 v 1 – Dribbling



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 7 (3 defenders, 3 offensive players, 1 gk)

Objective: stop the player that is coming, lock and close the spaces between the defenders

Time: 10 minutes

Description:

Each striker has to dribble the ball and score (first one is number 1, then number 2, then number 3). The strikers can choose the way they want.

Defenders have to stop the strikers and to move quickly united; it is important to keep the offside line.

After one striker's shot the second one starts.

Don't Let them Shoot 1 v 1 – Through Passes



Area size: depending on age and quality of the players

Number of players: 10 (3 defenders, 6 offensive players, 1 gk)

Objective: stop the player that is going to score after the through pass, lock and close the spaces between the defenders

Time: 10 minutes

Description:

Each striker has to receive the through ball and score (first one is number 1, then number 2, then number 3).

Each defender has to stop the strikers, so we are playing 1v1 chasing the striker. After one striker's shot the second one starts.

9. Conclusion

The most important steps to remember are:

1. Build the player (before to educate him as interpreter of a philosophy, he must have high rated technical abilities)
2. Educate the interpreters (single player)
3. Organize an efficient defensive department (link several players together)
4. Create the links between defensive and offensive department
5. Work on positive and negative transition
6. Work over-numbered or out-numbered

Related to the exercises, we have to:

1. Start from a standard situation;
2. Work on difficult situation, giving players opportunities to learn by induction (“reading” skills).

We must also remember that the time is the most important factor if we talk about an organized and complex work; so we have to use that as a parameter to work with.

With the exercises, we must transfer to the players our tactical choice (the coach must transfer a player's code to the defensive stage).