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Technical preparation and combined technical/tactical preparation

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1. Technical preparation

The co-ordination mechanisms are crucial for players who are learning technique.

Co-ordination is a psychomotor function. All psychomotor functions reach full maturity between the ages of 12 and 14 at the same time as the onset of puberty, whereas functional performance skills reach full maturity between 16 and 18: speed, explosive speed and endurance.

Psychomotility comes before execution. Psychomotility relates to *invisible* motoric activity. A coach who acts solely on *visible* motoric activity will not achieve much. The mental mechanisms that are behind the execution of an action therefore need to be motivated and activated from the early stage of children's football and especially at pre-training/pre-development level in youngsters. Improvement in individual technical skills in today's game cannot be improved unless a player has first optimised his co-ordination skills.

Co-ordination skills are covered in Chapter 8 – **Training and physical preparation**.

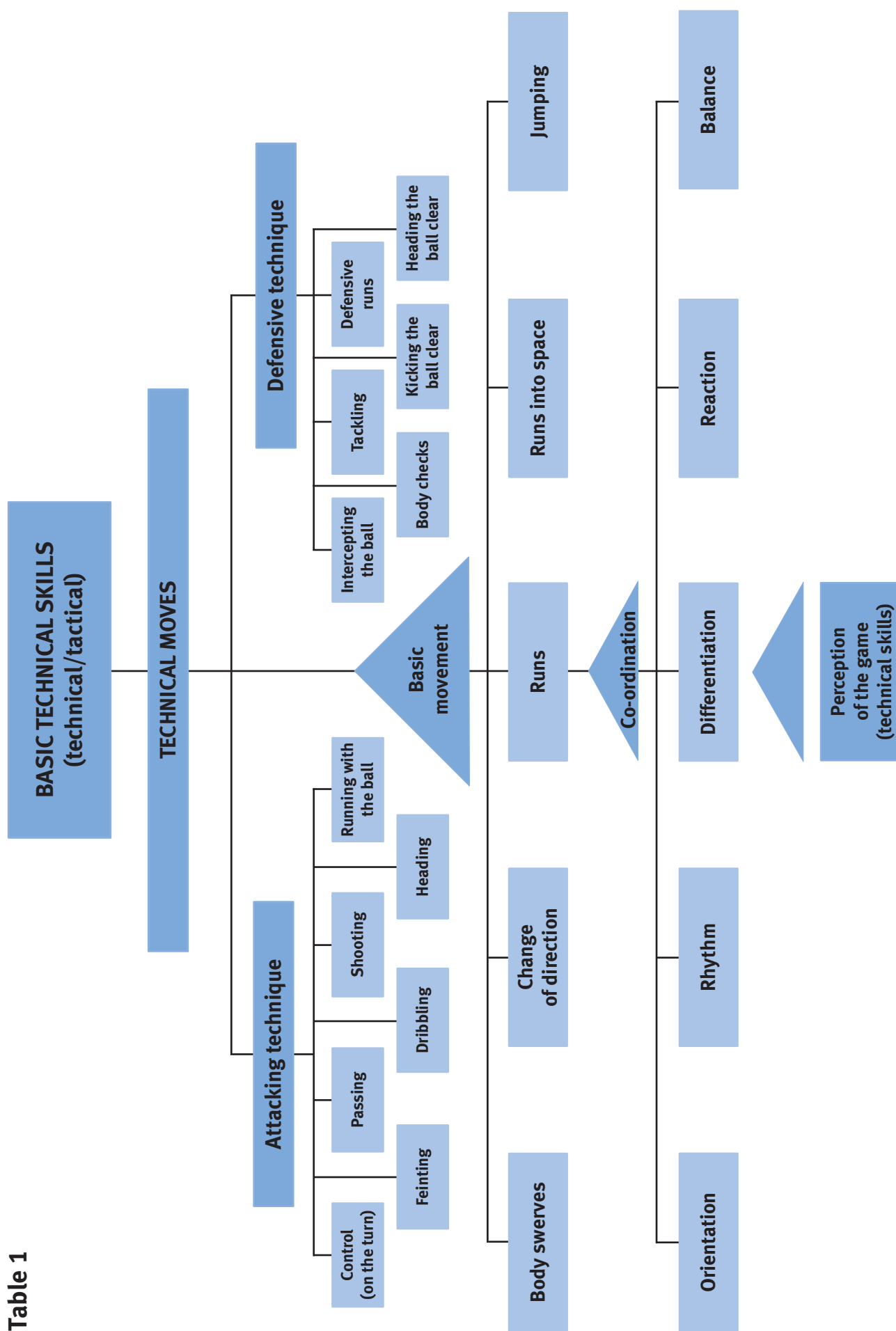
Technique (contact with the ball)

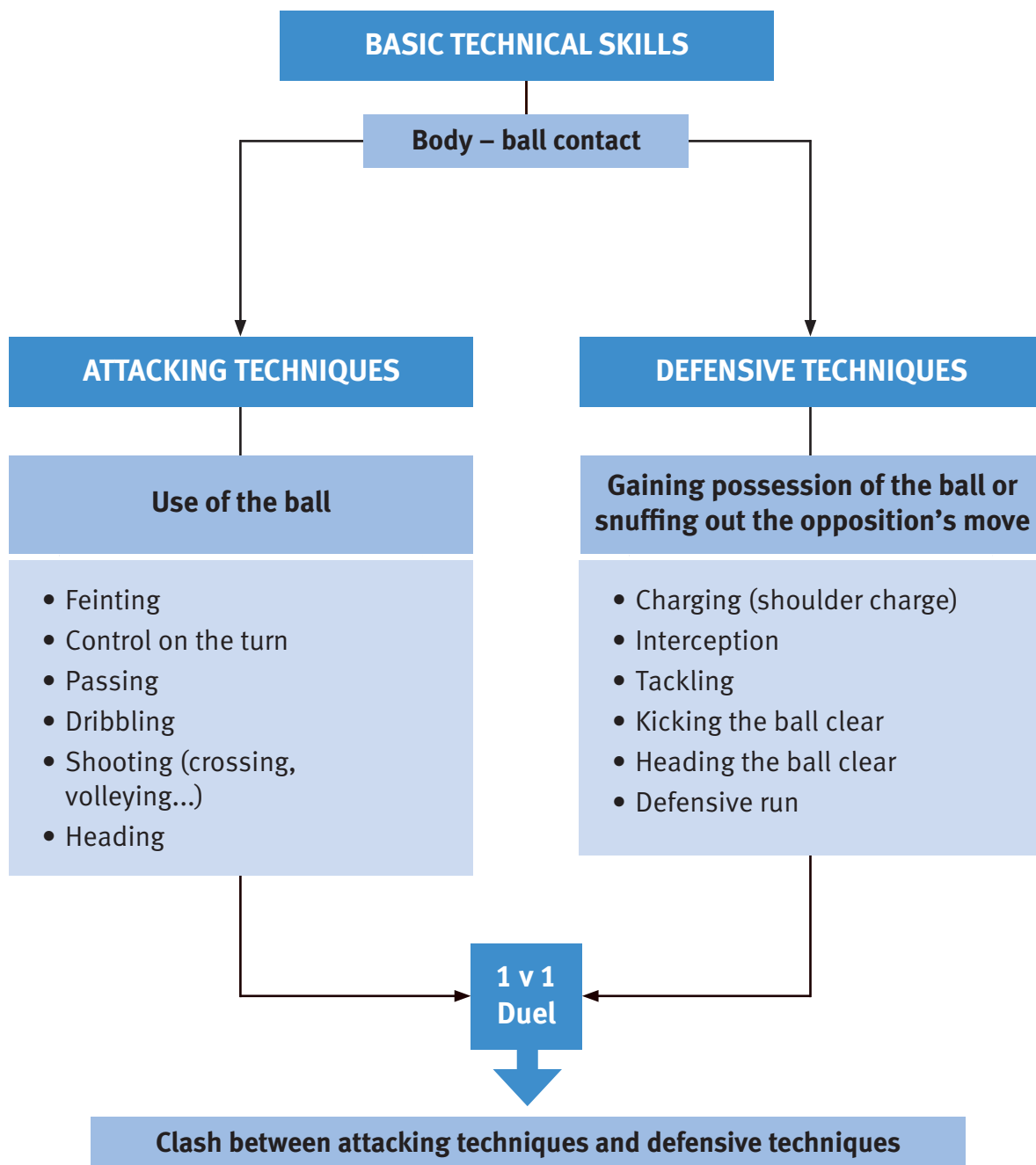
The basis of technique revolves above all around having good contact between the body and ball. The ball is there to serve the player, not vice versa.

In this chapter dedicated to learning technique, we shall be looking at

- The fundamental elements
 - └─→ body contact with the ball
- Technical moves in football
 - └─→ defensive techniques – attacking techniques
- The duel
 - └─→ the purpose of technique/
the clash between defensive techniques and attacking techniques

Table 1





NB After the 1 v 1 duel, we move onto practice match routines:

- Going from the simplest form
 ↳ with few players on reduced-size pitches (2 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 2 ...)
- to the more complex
 ↳ with several players in large areas (4 v 4, 7 v 5, 8 v 8 ...)
- and conclude with a clash between two whole teams (11 v 11), the aim being a real match situation

These practice matches provide the opportunity to work on either attacking or defensive moves where tactics can be neatly slotted in. We now move away from purely technical aspects to concentrate on combined technique and tactics.

1.1 Basic technical skills

As is the case with a novice or even a seasoned musician, a footballer has to do the equivalent of going through his “scales” at the start of every practice session.

The pianist uses his fingers as the prime contact surfaces with his instrument; the footballer, on the other hand, uses his feet when the ball is on the ground, and his thighs, head and chest when the ball is in the air.

We shall see below how all the contact surfaces can be worked on:

- running with the ball on the ground
- controlling the ball in the air
- dealing with the ball coming from a team-mate along the ground
- dealing with the ball coming from a team-mate in the air

Always start with the simplest form (just one contact surface) and finish with the most complicated (combining two contact surfaces – starting with just one foot and then using both feet).

• *Controlling the ball on the ground*

→ 1 contact surface

– surfaces used:

- Inside of the foot
- Outside of the foot
- Instep
- Sole
- Toes
- Heel

Example: The player should jog along with the ball using only one contact surface at a time, and keep the ball close to his foot.

→ 2 contact surfaces (using the same foot)

Example: inside – inside
inside – outside
sole – outside

The player must not forget to change direction and vary the tempo. It is these changes in tempo and direction that unsettle the opponent.

→ 2 contact surfaces (using both feet)

Example: inside – inside
outside – outside
sole – outside

This work with the outsides of the foot calls for the player to feint when dribbling.

- ***Controlling the ball in the air***

Example: 100 times with just the right foot
 100 times with just the left foot
 200 times alternating between the right and left foot
 50 times on the head

The degrees of difficulty can be increased by mixing the contact surfaces.

Example: Left foot → Left thigh → Head → Right thigh → Right foot, etc.,
 but without forgetting to use the chest as well.

- ***Controlling the ball in the air → then controlling it on the ground***

Control on the turn (working with both feet)

Example: – insides of the foot (in front of the standing foot)
 – outsides of the foot
 – insides of the foot (behind the standing foot)

- ***Controlling a ball arriving along the ground (coming from a team-mate)***

The aim here is to protect the ball or to neutralise the opponent
 (use all possible contact surfaces on the feet, but also the upper body, with the arms as a shield)

NB The player can also feint before receiving the ball.

- ***Controlling a ball arriving in the air (coming from a team-mate)***

The same as above, but taking the ball on the head, chest, thighs, etc.

NB The player can also feint before receiving the ball.

In conclusion

Mastering control with all contact surfaces is essential to ensure good use of the ball, i.e. not merely ball control on its own, but also being able to shield the ball so that the player can then go on to use attacking techniques (passing, shooting, crossing, volleying, dribbling, etc...)

What playing in a match involves: being aware of the situation (according to Michel Platini)

During the match itself, other parameters come into play:

- ***the athletic/physical factors***

- └─→ Controlling and using the ball in a match situation results in high energy consumption (high pulse rate)
 - The average pulse rate per minute in a match is 170-175

- ***the mental factor***

- └─→ Being faced with an opponent

We are well aware that certain players can be extremely effective in training, but much less so during a real match. What the coach has to do, therefore, is to introduce the constraints of the match into training as early as possible:

- athletic/physical work (to improve speed of execution)
- work on the psychological aspect (pressure from an opponent, team-mates, the match setting, or even from the crowd)

In so doing, however, he must still respect the individual development of each player during training.

Getting the player accustomed to training under pressure while working on the basic technical skills will make it easier for him to move onto practice match routines that include tactical analysis.

Some training exercises

Example: – Juggling while moving.

- Juggling while moving and with a static opponent; then with a moving opponent who tries to gain possession of the ball.
- A player throws the ball in the air towards another player who is seated. The latter stands up as soon as the ball is thrown and attempts to control it (without letting the ball touch the ground).
- The same exercise as above, but with the ball receiver lying on his back.
- The same exercise as above, but with the ball recipient lying on his stomach.
- 2 players (A and B) kick or head the ball to each other in the air. Each player is allowed 1 touch, then 2, 3, . . . up to 10. Then they go back to 1 touch each.
- Goal: to get the player accustomed to working under constraints.

The players must remain in full control of their technique despite the constraints imposed by the match (both as far as physical aspects are concerned and also regardless of their opponent).

1.2 Attacking skills

Definition of the attacking move

An attacking move or attacking movement consists of moving the ball towards the opponents' goal. Good attacking play depends on the technical quality of the individual players.

The player in possession of the ball attempts

- to go forward with the ball (by running or dribbling with it)
- to take out the opponent
- to get the ball to another player (by passing or crossing it)
- to finish the move (by shooting or heading on goal)

Its role

The move is dependent on the following:

- the array of technical skills that a player has at his disposal
- the situation of the match at the time

→ Exactly the right move should be used to suit the situation of play at the time.

Attacking moves or individual attacking skills

• **Running with the ball and dribbling**

As is the case with other technical skills, running with the ball and dribbling, i.e. changing direction with the ball, have to be worked on; they are not innate skills.

There are different forms of dribbling:

- dribbling to take an opponent out of the game
- dribbling to shield the ball
- dribbling away from trouble

NB A player should remember that the ball always travels more quickly than the man.

• **Feinting** (*the ball does not change direction here; the ball is not even touched*)

Feinting causes uncertainty in the defender and gives the attacker a time and space advantage over his opponent. There are numerous possibilities with feinting (using the head, chest, legs, feet, etc.)

• **Passing**

Passing is a basic element of the team game. It implies a relationship between the players that goes well beyond a mere technical move. Players should know how to use all the contact surfaces of both feet to enable them to vary the flight of the ball.

• **The first pass**

The first pass is what sets off an attack – either a gradual build-up or a quick break. It determines the manner in which the attack is launched and the attacking move itself. Indeed, the success of this move is dependent on the quality of the first pass.

- ***The final pass***

The final pass is inextricably linked with the finishing of the move. It allows a team-mate to unleash that decisive piece of technical skill in the “finishing zone”.

- ***Control on the turn***

This covers receiving and dealing with ball in a single phase. Sometimes it can be likened to a dribble, but with just a single touch of the ball by the player (either with his back to the opponent, or facing him). It is often preceded by a feint to unsettle the defender. It ups the tempo of the game.

- ***Shooting***

This is the ultimate aim of team play. The player going for goal needs to be able to master all of the contact surfaces (feet, head and body) to allow him to vary the trajectory.

NB He also needs courage, confidence, a touch of selfishness and a slightly unpredictable nature.

- ***Heading, playing the ball with the body***

These have been essential skills since football was first created. They provide the perfect complement to playing the ball with the foot.

Tips for coaching attacking techniques

- ***Shooting***

- Use all training circuits with the aim of working on every contact surface
- Emphasise use of a short “swing” (as in golf): i.e. from the knee downwards
- Toe-pokes: no “swing” required (a technique to gain speed)
- Don’t always work on direct runs towards the opponents’ goal (practise runs away from goal as well)
- Practise runs parallel to the goal
- Practise runs with the player’s back to goal – turning and then shooting

- ***Dribbling***

Running with the ball at pace, dribbling with the outside and the inside of the foot, dribbling with the other foot behind the standing foot, drag-back, dummying, dribbling with the ball in the air, dribbling with the player facing with his back to goal, etc.

- ***Passes***

Short, long, deflected, diagonal, sideways, backwards, forwards, with the inside of the foot, with the in-step, with the outside of the foot, etc.

- ***Heading and using the body***

Heading towards goal, deflecting with the head, heading back, passing with the head, etc.

1.3 Defensive skills

Definition of a defensive move

Impeding or stopping the ball from moving forward using either an action (technical) or an approach (tactical). In some cases, the defence wins back the ball, in others not. The aim is to regain possession of the ball and set another attack in motion on the opposing goal.

NB Regaining possession of the ball demands courage, energy and intelligence.

The coach must always place emphasis on defensive moves. The real game starts with winning the ball (and with the quality of the first pass).

Important factors

a) *The opponent is in possession of the ball*

- opposite the defender
- next to the defender
- behind the defender

if he is a long way from goal: the defender must stop him from gaining speed (e.g. he mustn't allow him to get past him)

if he is close to the goal: the defender must prevent him from shooting

The opponent is trying:

- to move forwards with the ball (by running or dribbling with it)
- to feed it to another player (by passing or crossing it)
- to finish (by shooting)

b) *The opponent is not in possession of the ball, but calls for it*

- at his feet
- behind the defender
- between two defender
- between two lines

The opponent asks for the ball

- going towards goal
- to one side
- by peeling off to one side of the defender

c) *The defender's zones of activity*

- the penalty area (in the centre and at the edges)
- outside the penalty area (in the centre and on the wings)
- away from the goal (in the centre of the field and on the wings)

How a defender operates will depend on his zone of activity.

Defensive moves or individual defensive techniques

- ***The tackle***

- with the opponent facing the defender
- with the opponent trying to get past on one side (dribbling or overlapping)
- never tackle from behind and never go in with both feet off the ground

NB The best moment for a tackle is as the opponent is receiving the ball, as he will be concentrating on watching the ball at that point. But defenders should beware of opponents controlling the ball on the turn.

NB Only tackle if there is cover, or else ...

- ***The defensive clearance***

- to launch an attack (precision required)
- to clear danger

- ***The defensive header***

- to launch an attack (precision required)
- to clear danger

- ***The block***

This is when a defender gets his body in the way of the ball to cut out a pass, a cross or a shot. Defenders should be wary of “dummy” shots on goal.

- ***The charge*** (*body charge*)

This must always be done with the shoulder (as stipulated in the Laws of the Game)

- ***Interception of the ball***

This can be done with any part of the body allowed by the Laws of the Game when the opponent passes, crosses or throws the ball in.

- ***The defensive run***

This has an important tactical implication:

- the defender should not always run towards the opposing attacker
- he should sometimes run into the space that the attacker is aiming to occupy to prevent him from running into it and crossing ...

NB Defenders should not commit themselves fully so that they can react to an opponent feinting/selling a dummy.

Tips for coaching defensive techniques

These technical skills are regularly included in coaching programmes for young players learning general technique, particularly those at the pre-development/training stage. They are then worked on more specifically according to individual team position and team unit (e.g. all of the defenders together).

1.4 The duel

The duel is the basic action that recurs most frequently in the course of a match. It regularly proves to be decisive, especially in last quarter of the field.

There is a clash here between:

- attacking techniques
- defensive techniques

A football match is a series of confrontations:

- between two teams: 11 v 11
- between a defence and an attack
- between the two midfields to win superiority in that area
- man to man: the DUEL

The duel can be won:

- physically (by overcoming the opponent)
- morally (by displaying tenacity, courage and confidence)
- TECHNICALLY (by beating the opponent on the one hand or regaining possession on the other)

Emerging victorious from a duel implies numerical superiority.

NB As soon as other players intervene in a 1 v 1 duel, the action takes on the form of a technical/technical move (with defensive or attacking moves involved).

In this chapter we shall be looking at the simple duel, i.e. the 1-on-1 challenge, albeit by gradually changing the aim of the exercise so that both the attacker (who has the ball) and the defender are unsettled in some way, thereby forcing them to seek appropriate responses according to the different objectives of the exercises.

Training for duels (see contents of the attached training routines)

1.5 Some methodological suggestions to aid technical progress

At each training session, emphasis should be placed on increasing the number of touches of the ball – with both feet, the head and other parts of the body.

The technical session

- At least twice a week: a session with mainly technical emphasis should be held in the weekly cycle of collective training sessions.
- Once per week: specific individual sessions should be held in small groups (2 to 6 players)
 - At the pre-training/development stage, emphasis on basic technique (the technical basics)
 - At the training/development stage, emphasis on the technique of the team unit and individual positions
- Special individual session (1 or 2 players) depending on requirements and the performance level

Example: Work on technical weaknesses and/or highlighting of strong points (skills that have already been learned or natural skills, such as the left foot)
- Forms of training
 - Technical workshops, technical circuits and different practice match routines
 - Game combinations, practice games
 - Games on different-sized playing areas

Correcting after a technical drill

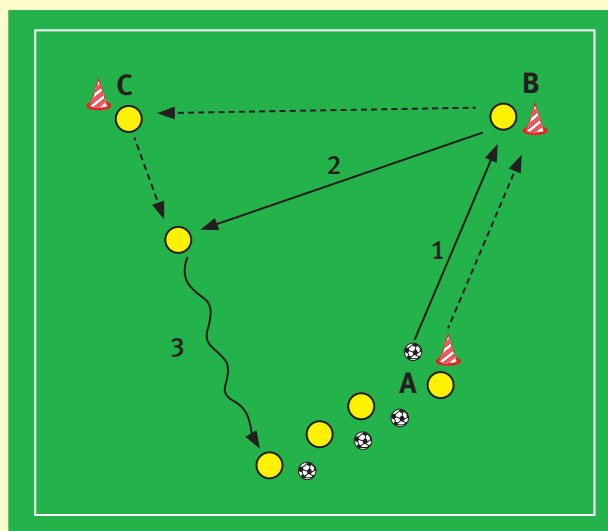
Example: Pass

- along the ground, long, diagonal
- powerfully driven or measured
- at the player's feet or taking it on the run
- with both feet
- players should aim to achieve the correct timing

Exercise : Pass and chase – triangle drill

- A gives the ball to B and then takes up B's position.
- B passes to C on the run and then adopts C's position.
- C calls for the ball on the run and then runs with it back to the starting point.

This drill should be executed in both directions.



Points to be corrected:

- the quality of the weighting on the pass, the rhythm of the pass, receiving the ball
 - feinting (dummy runs into space)
 - controlling the ball while running
 - maintaining a high tempo and fluidity in the triangular passing routine
 - suppleness of movement
- The content of the training should be varied between drills and practice games (with different-sized pitches)
 - The objectives of the drills should be incorporated in match situations and in matches (i.e. applied in competitive matches)
 - There should be gradual inclusion of techniques in pressure situations
 - The training pitch must be properly organised, with plenty of balls available and small groups

—————→ Let the really talented player express himself and perform his own moves if they are effective.

Coaching technique (how to run the session)

- Fix and clarify the objective.
- Demonstrate and explain the drills (this depends on the coach's know-how)
When giving a demonstration, make use of the technical skills of the players.
- Let the players perform, observe them and then correct them (trial and error).
- Correct them precisely.
- Give positive feedback to reinforce and encourage.
- Increase the motivation level by increasing interest in the drill, in its progression, its success and in the attitude shown by the coach (this should be dynamic and passionate, but not aggressive).
- Work on concentration, perseverance and risk-taking.
- Encourage the players to show independence in their moves, and also to be innovative.

NB In Chapter 10 – **The player of tomorrow**, we shall be presenting various principles to help make the training of young footballers more efficient

—————→ The attachments in this manual contain examples of technical training.

2. Combined technical and tactical preparation

A team that has good tactical awareness is able to resolve either individually (the single player) or collectively (the whole team) the problems that arise in a game more efficiently and more swiftly than the opposition.

A team must be capable of adjusting its game according to the technical/tactical constraints that arise in a match.

This really becomes **A TECHNICAL/TACTICAL BATTLE**.

There are many and varied attacking and defensive responses, both at individual and collective level, to all the playing situations that can arise in a match, with the basic game plan remaining the same. The players or team not only have to find the solution that is best suited to the situation; they also have to do so more rapidly than the opposition.

Work in training should therefore involve confronting the players with relatively simple game situations at the start (with just a few players on a reduced-size playing area), then more complex ones (a lot of players in a larger area and with technical restrictions), and concluding with a clash between two whole teams, the nearest possible to a real match situation. This will then allow the players to prepare for competitive matches under optimum conditions.

In using this type of training, you will boost the technical/tactical level of your players, thereby enabling them to recognise a specific situation in a match and, of course, to deal with this situation both individually and collectively.

In the first part of this section, to ensure completeness, we shall be looking at the two principal types of attack, both in terms of theory (the problems to be resolved) and also on a practical level (the work to be done during training).

- **Fast-break attacks**
- **Gradual build up attacks**

The counter attack is one form of the fast-break attack.

In the second part, we shall be dealing with the defensive game, and in particular

- **Zonal defence**
- **Pressing**

NB In this chapter (Combined technical and tactical preparation), we shall be dealing only very superficially with:

- Game organisation, playing systems, playing style
- The game plan (for a single match).

These will be dealt with in Chapter 6 – **Playing style**.

2.1 Combined technical and tactical training

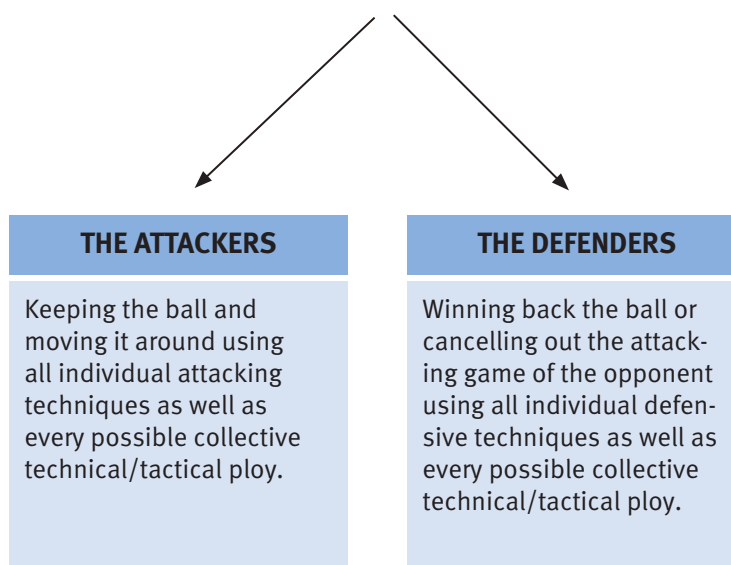
It is obvious that the attacking and defensive moves of a team will depend on:

- the qualities and specific characteristics of that team
- the choices and playing style favoured by the coach
- the qualities of the opponents (game plan)

In this section we shall deal solely with technical/tactical problems by using practice games (attacking moves – defensive moves).

In a practice game it is difficult, and even not advisable, to separate the attacking aspect and the defensive aspect. During training sessions, the coach may choose to practise one of these more than the other, depending on the needs of the team. It is wise to separate practice games into two parts:

a) the first part, where the sole emphasis is on the **BALL**.



b) the second part, where there is a **PRECISE TARGET (the direction of play)**

- “stop ball” (stopping the ball behind the lines)
- finding a player in space (e.g. the goalkeeper)
- reduced-size goals
- normal goals

2.2 *The principal types of attack*

The fast-break attack

- few passes (3-4 maximum)
- few players involved (3-4 maximum)
- duration: less than 10 seconds

The defensive unit of the opposing team is temporarily caught out of position.

This may be due to:

- a technical mistake
- a bad choice of game ploy
- a misunderstanding between two team-mates
- an interception
- etc. . . .

Generally – although this is not necessarily the case – the first pass by the breaking team after it has regained possession is a long one (towards the opponents' goal).

The difference between a fast-break attack and a counter-attack

- With a fast-break attack, the team does not push back into the opposing half when it loses the ball; it tries to win it back immediately and as high up the field as possible.

Example: When an attacker loses the ball, he must immediately continue his tussle to try to win it back (demonstrating qualities of aggressiveness)

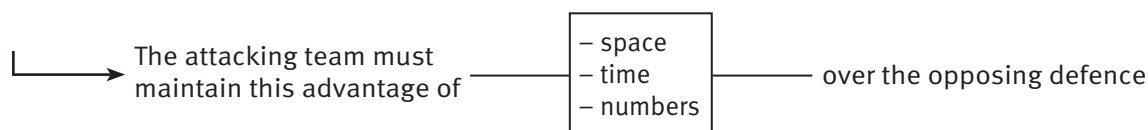
- With a counter-attack, a team loses possession in the opponents' half; the team unit then pushes back into its own half to defend. It then tries to suck in the opponents in its half of the field to enable it to exploit the spaces left open at the back by the opponents. The ball is therefore won back much further down the field in a less threatening position, but does nevertheless allow other defensive possibilities and the switch from defence to attack.

Example: Senegal v Denmark, 2002 FIFA World Cup™

Two problems that have to be resolved

a) *The direct forward movement of the ball/resistance to this movement*

Once the ball has been won, there is a lack of defensive security on the part of the opponents. The balance of power has therefore momentarily swung in favour of an attack.



The attack has to take advantage of this instability and move forward quickly.

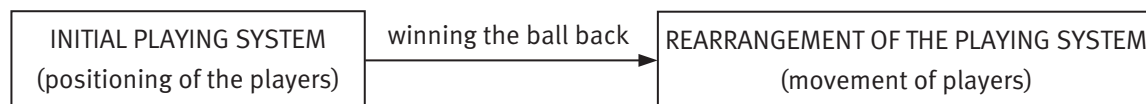
→ DIRECT PLAY (with players being careful not to stray offside)

Key points

- the run upfield off the ball (the player needs to look quickly and a long way ahead)
- first pass upfield (the quality of the ball is crucial)
- change in tempo: one-two, wall pass
- few touches of the ball
- attackers need to make long runs (40m), but also win duels
- penetrating dribbles
- swift movement of the ball

NB It is obvious that an attacking move will also depend on:

- the playing system in use
- the place where the team wants to win the ball and the manner in which it wants to win it
 - the pressing zone (immediate pressure)
 - pushing back and then pressurising the ball holder



b) *Finishing/protection of the ball*

Key points

- Anticipating the flight of the ball
- Getting in the right position to receive crosses
- The importance of timing
- Co-ordinating runs
- Importance of crossfield runs
- Importance of heading and use of the body to control the ball
- Importance of toe-poking (as a speed technique)
- Freshness
- Speed techniques
 - - speed of movement
 - - speed of support
 - - very few touches of the ball

The gradual build-up attack

The opposing team's defensive unit is in position. Usually, the first pass made after the ball has been won is a safety pass. The main objective is not to lose the ball and not to attack the opposing goal directly. Progress is, therefore, relatively slow.



INDIRECT STYLE OF PLAY

- a lot of safety passes
- a lot of players involved
- the duration of the attack build-up is greater than 10 seconds

Three main problems to be resolved

a) *Keeping possession of the ball and ensuring its progress/resistance to this progress*

Key points

- occupation of space (both deep and out wide)
- movement and playing the ball in the gaps (between two opponents or between two lines)
- overall movement of the team

NB The team should move upfield as a unit and provide defensive stability.

b) *Collective defensive instability/trying to regain possession*

(once the first defensive barrier has been breached)

Key points

- co-ordination, support, backing up, calling for the ball and running into space
- the value of short and accurate passing
- creating uncertainty (changing tempo, dribbling, feints, screening)
- the importance of the attacking “pivot player”

c) *Finishing/protection*

(see fast-break attack)

The methodological side of tactical training and technical/tactical training for young footballers will be dealt with in Chapter 6 – **The playing style.**

2.3 Defensive play

Zonal marking

The 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan 2002™ confirmed that zonal marking is the most frequently used defensive system, especially among the top teams, irrespective of whether the playing system is 4-4-2, 3-4-3, or any other one.

Learning to play with a zonal defence system helps a player to develop, especially as far as game awareness (i.e. perception and anticipation), responsibility and co-operation and communication between players are concerned. It is an essential and fundamental stage for players to improve their reading of the game. In this section, we shall be dealing only with this type of defence.

Definition

Each player is responsible for a defensive zone. His duty is to watch and mark an opponent who comes into his zone. If the opponent moves to another zone, the defender responsible for covering that zone assumes responsibility for marking. Depending on the situation of the game, the defender either polices his zone (by closing down the spaces or covering back), or he concentrates on one particular opponent (by tight-marking him).

The goal of zonal marking

- To reduce the space available to the opposition.
- To limit their attacking possibilities (passes, dribbling, shooting).
- To slow down the opponents' game and force them into making mistakes.
- To encourage defensive duels by getting increased numbers around the ball.
- To win the ball and be able to use it better as a springboard for attacks.

Zonal marking is the basis of pressing.

Its efficiency can be boosted still further by very tight marking of the opponent in the zone.

The problems to be resolved

- Getting players to push back to defend (to ensure that more players are behind the ball).
- Managing the factors of space (monitoring, opening up and closing down zones, etc.) and time (slowing down and speeding up play).
- How players should position themselves and play according to the position of the ball, their opponents, their team-mates, where they are on the pitch and the team's goal.

Application of basic tactical principles

- Close down the spaces between the lines and units both out wide and high up the pitch (30-35 metres) and between the players (8-10 metres).
- Defend with as much mobility as possible.
- Outnumber the opposition and provide cover.
- Press the opponent in his zone.
- Play by anticipation (game awareness) and get the ball clear to regain possession.

————→ Communication (speak to each other!)

5 Technical and technical/tactical preparation

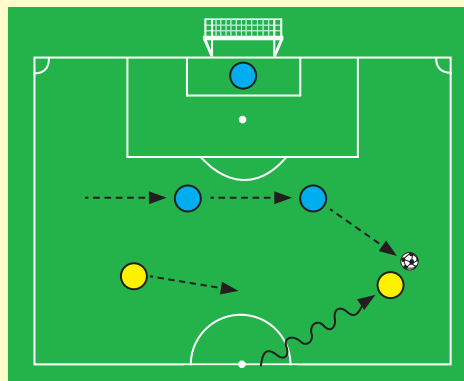
In today's game, there are essentially two types of behaviour with zonal defence.

The anticipation zone	The pressing zone
The teams are composed of players with a high level of technical and cognitive skills.	The teams are composed of players with a high level of athletic, physical, technical and mental skills.

Exercise

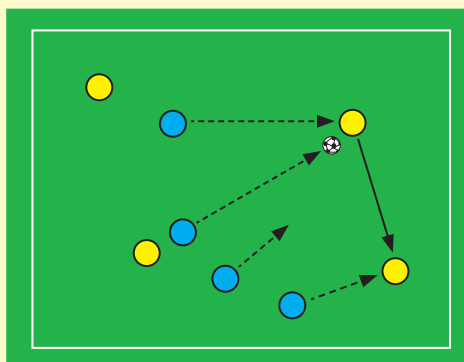
Marking without the ball

- Go out to the ball holder
- Close down the centre
- Come across to cover



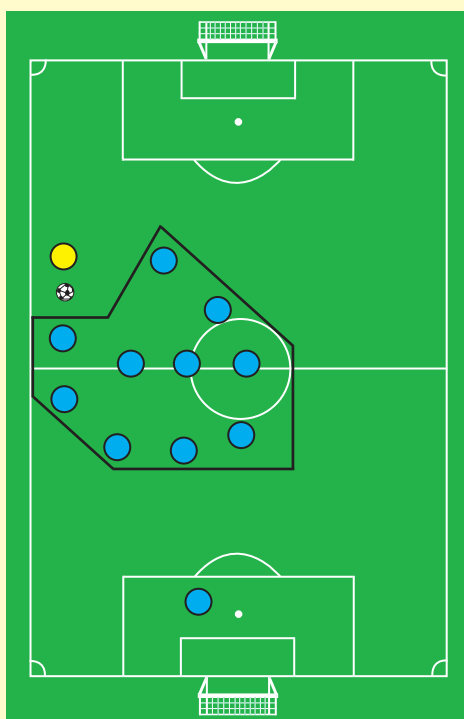
Anticipation marking

- Attack the ball holder
- Double the number of markers (to create numerical advantage)
- Provide cover
- Defence geared to attack



Collective marking on the flank

- Compact unit with reduced spaces
- Sideways movement
- Mutual cover
- Spreading out (fan-shape)
- Stop the progress of the ball carrier



Methodological progression in training

- a) In the first work phase, after the players have learned the individual defensive patterns of 1v1, we move very swiftly on to situations where the defenders again do not have numerical advantage (2v2/3v3/4v4) to assist them with the 1v1 situations.

Reminder:

With a four-player zonal marking system with no sweeper, the two central defenders have to act and react according to the situations that arise and:

- always watch the ball, the opponent and their team-mates, but also look out for long, high balls played behind the defence;
- speak to each other to ensure better organisation;
- mark the space or the zone;
- be patient, move out and cover at the right time;
- be willing to go in for the man-to-man duel
- not simply launch themselves into a sliding tackle, and only tackle if they can be sure of winning the ball.

Practice games are the perfect way to learn defensive play. Once the players have real situations under their belt, the coach can highlight and correct the mistakes. Collective defensive movements with no opponent, either with or without a ball (where the players have to move according to a game situation arranged by the coach), help players to acquire basic individual and collective tactics.

- b) In the second phase, work is done on the whole defence unit (a three or four-man defence + goalkeeper), and then in conjunction with the other lines: the midfield and the attack.

- c) And finally, defensive work is done with the whole team.

—————→ See attached training routines.

2.4 Pressing

Definition

Pressing is a defensive weapon to put the opposing team with the ball under pressure and to force it into committing mistakes; it demands players with great athletic qualities, qualities of determination (controlled aggressiveness) in duels, and tactical discipline. It is also a psychological weapon that gives confidence to the team and sows the seeds of doubt among the opponents.

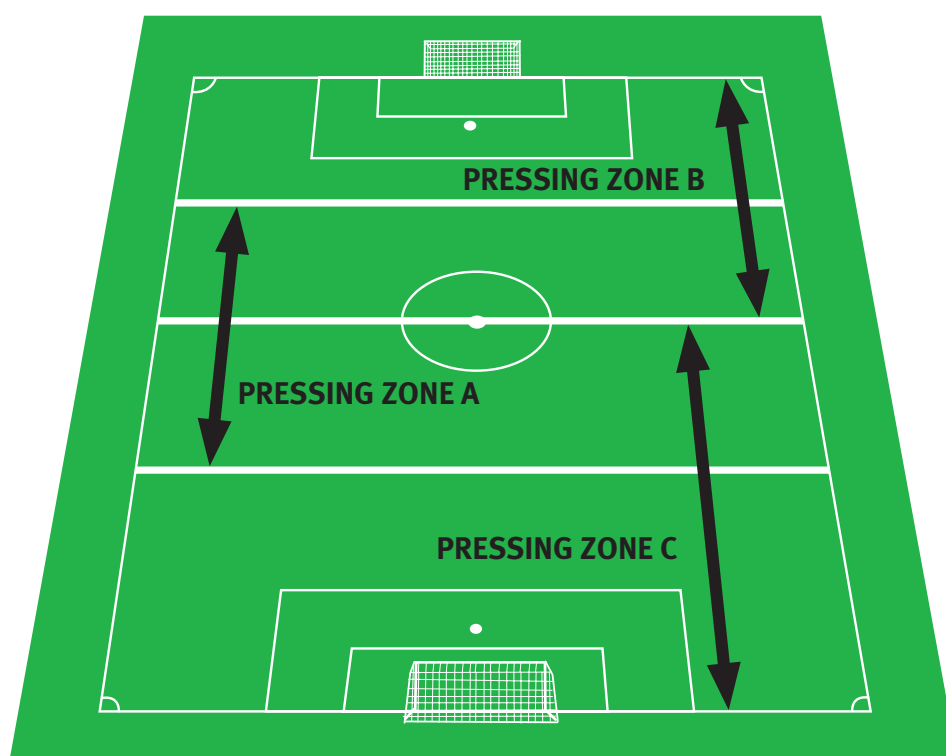
- Press, close down, surround the opponent, put him under pressure to win back the ball or to cancel out an attack. Pressing is not linked to any particular playing style. In view of the risks and the considerable physical exertion that it demands, it is not used in every match. It imposes the tempo of the game on the opponents and therefore unsettles them. Pressing is at the root of the counter-attacks that are launched from the middle of the field from a team's own defensive area.

Some basic principles for applying pressing

- The whole team is in the defensive zone outnumbering the opposition at the place chosen to start the pressing.
- The team remains compact and tight and outnumbers the opposition in the zone where the ball is.
- The idea is to contain the opposing team, slow down their play and marshal them to a more favourable zone for pressing (e.g. out on one of the flanks).
- Restrain the individual opponent, put him under pressure, get him to make mistakes (force him to turn, force him into playing the ball on his wrong foot, into miscontrolling the ball, unsettle him), go in for the duel.
- Once the team has started pressing (putting the ball carrier under pressure), it should try to win the ball by active, committed and aggressive anticipatory marking.
- Prevent or restrict backpasses to the libero or goalkeeper that would allow the opponent to escape from the pressing zone.

The three types of pressing

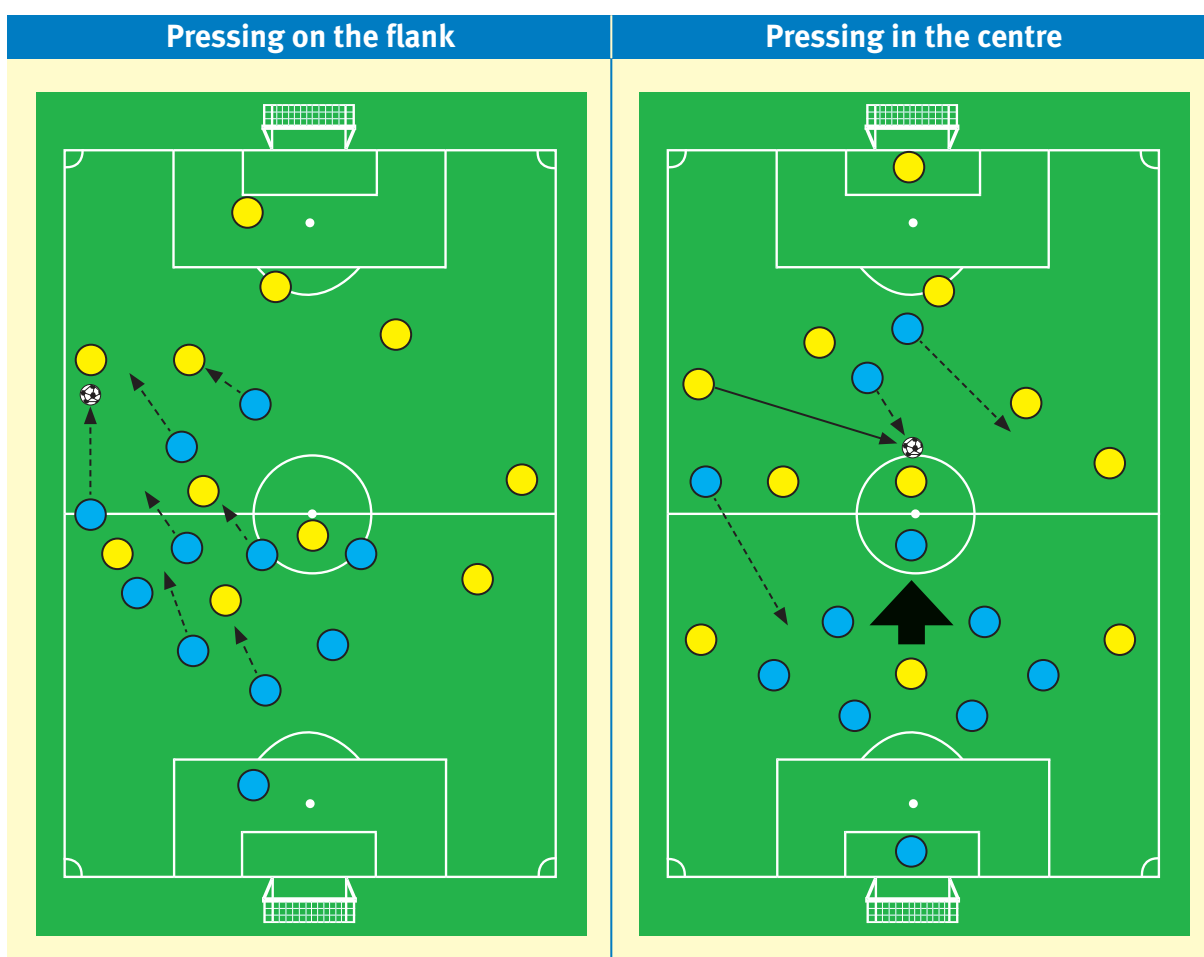
- Pressing in the middle of the field in zone A
- Pressing in attack in zone B
- Defensive pressing in zone C



a) Pressing in the middle of the field

The pressing team should attack the opponent in the middle of the field, push him out to one of the flanks or force him to come back into the centre of the field to allow them to win back the ball.

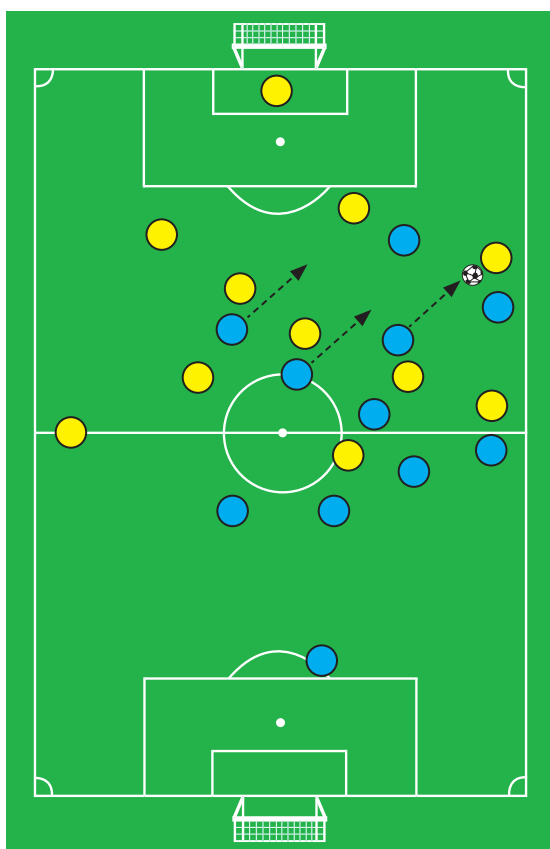
→ Depending on the quality of the ball won, the pressing team then either has the choice of launching a gradual build-up attack or a fast-break attack.



b) Pressing in attack

The attacking team should put the opposing team under strong pressure in the latter's own defensive area; the attacking team has to harass the opposition, thereby preventing them from developing their play and causing them to lose confidence and allowing the attacking team to gain possession.

- As soon as the ball has been lost by the attacking team in the opponents' half, the attackers immediately have to become defenders (switch from attack to defence); the ball carrier is challenged and put under pressure. Once the ball has been won by the attacking side, it can then launch a swift attack.

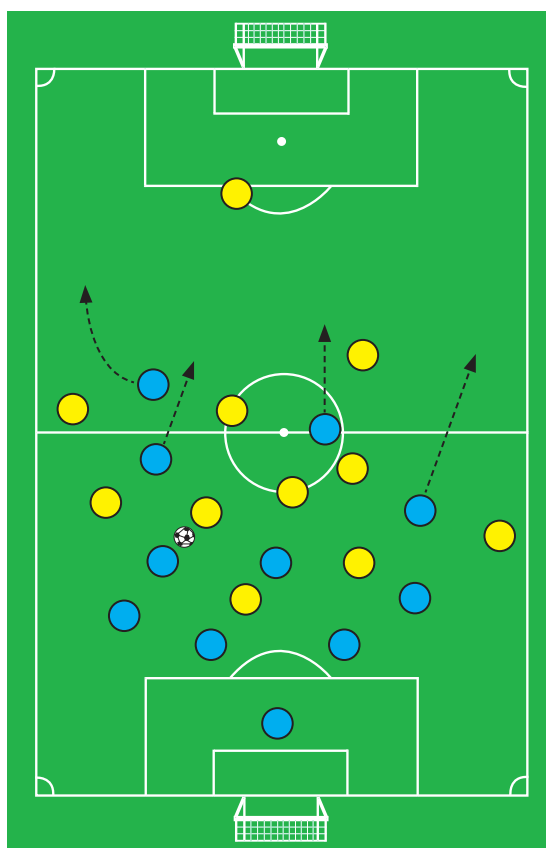


- If the pressing fails, the defence might find itself outnumbered; in such a case they can then
- slow down the game, gain time, force the opposition into their own half;
 - reorganise the team as quickly as possible;
 - possibly even try to put the opposition under pressure again.

c) Defensive pressing

- The defending team has to get its players back and wait for the opposition to come into its defensive zone. The team must remain compact, outnumber the attacking team, and it closes down the spaces, especially in the centre. The players have to be extremely concentrated.
- To ensure that they can intervene at the right moment, the defending team has to slow down the opposition's game, constantly harass the ball carrier and force the opponent into making a mistake (e.g. by making the opponent receive the ball with his back to goal).

→ If the defending team manages to regain possession, they can then immediately launch a counter-attack (with a rapid switch from defence to attack).



→ If the defending team succeeds in regaining possession, but it is not possible for them to launch a counter-attack, the following options might be open, albeit without taking any risks:

- getting the ball out of defence either by clearing it or by delivering a top-quality first ball;
- passing the ball out to one of the flanks, upfield or back to the goalkeeper to ease the situation.

This defensive ploy is an attacking weapon: by closing down the midfield, the defending team frees up the flanks to create space for counter-attacking (e.g. the Brazilian team at the 2002 FIFA World Cup™).

Examples of technical/tactical training are presented in the attached training content section.

Differences between individual defence and zonal defence

INDIVIDUAL DEFENCE	ZONAL DEFENCE
• the player's position and positioning depend on where his direct opponent is • the initiative for play is left up to the opponent • there is difficulty maintaining contact between the lines • a less compact, more spread out and less cohesive team concedes more space and encourages the team to play more openly and deeper • the space created is conducive to counter-attacks, individual play and provides greater possibilities for opposing attackers • the player's behaviour is more low-key, more individual • this type of game calls for contact, aggressiveness, duels and individual responsibility • it also implies considerable risk-taking • it restricts the use of offside traps and pressing • it calls for strength on the part of the individual player	• the player's position and positioning depend on where the ball is • the defending team has more players around the ball, which makes it easier for them to press and to find solutions • after the defending team has gained possession, it is easier for them to keep the ball when the team is tightly grouped together and well distributed in the different zones • it is easier for the defending team to cancel out the opponents' play and slow their game down • making the switch to marking the opposition calls for reflection and a period of adjustment • zonal defence demands more collective responsibility, greater self-sacrifice and the need to pay more attention • this type of play allows for greater creativity, more safety and greater ease in moving from one action to another • it provides more safety among the team as a whole • it allows the team to play more easily with a line formation, and also to use offside traps and pressing • it calls for strength on the part of the team as a whole

3. Training games

Training games (i.e. specific practice games with reduced-sized teams on smaller playing areas) are the core element training.

Such games allow real match situations, either attacking or defensive ones, to be simulated or adapted where necessary. They also exert a positive influence on the emotional behaviour of the players; this not only makes the training activity attractive for them, but also more dynamic and intense (usually resulting in total commitment on the part of the players).

As the majority of players do not touch the ball particularly often during a match or a game played on a large pitch (9 v 9 / 10 v 10), the pitch size needs to be reduced during a training session, thereby allowing the number of individual ball touches to be increased.

Organisation

- There is no point in organising a training game without reference to the objectives of the training session. Consequently, emphasis can be placed on one or several elements (e.g. technical, combined technical and tactical, and mental) that have proved to be weak points during recent matches.
- The coach should prepare the game, taking the following factors into account:
 - The dimension of the pitch (small or medium-sized)
 - Goals or no goals (full-sized goals, small goals)
 - The number of players (emphasis on the individual or the whole team)
 - The rules of the game (how the game will be played, the number of passes and ball touches allowed)
 - Particular instructions (on technical and tactical aspects)
 - Equipment required (balls, discs, cones, bibs)
- Playing on a reduced-size pitch increases the possibility for rehearsing moves (dribbling, feints, receiving the ball, short passing and shooting), simple technical/tactical actions and putting players under pressure.

Example: 3 v 3 with goals in the penalty area of the normal-sized pitch

- Playing on a pitch that can be adjusted in dimension (i.e. from half-size to larger) aids the practice of technical/tactical activities that involve the whole team (ball control, long passing, crossing, positioning of the players on the pitch), but at a less intensive tempo. This allows a better quality of technical moves and tactical choices.

Playing a training game on such a pitch with just two ball touches allowed demands a high level of technical control (receiving the ball, passing, work with both feet) and increases the pace of the game.

- A 6 v 4 / 8 v 5 game reinforces the confidence of the team that has the numerical advantage as far as technical and tactical control of the game is concerned.

In contrast, however, it poses an increased difficulty for the team with fewer players, especially in respect of their physical condition, mental attitude and the technical/tactical work that they have to do. If this set of players is asked not to play with too much commitment, it can help to increase the quality of play of the team that has more players.

Example: Handicaps can be introduced in the game

- Playing with goals (either large or small goals) increases the players' motivation, as it is similar to a real competitive match. However, games where no goals are used (to work on gradual build-up attacks or retaining of possession) can be given a competitive element as well if points are awarded for a series of passes (10 consecutive passes, for example) or for a sequence of one-twos.

Example: A game without the use of goals where points are won by stopping the ball behind the opponents' defensive line.

- There are several types of game for use in training:
 - Unregimented games (allowing full freedom of expression, spontaneity and creativity)
 - Controlled games (where play is stopped to highlight and correct mistakes)
 - Games with a theme (with the introduction of a specific theme that is linked to weaknesses that have been noted in recent games)

Example: Emphasis on wing play to work on crosses and direct finishing from crosses

It is important to stress that these training games must be accompanied by relevant training exercises.