Module 1. Definition, Evolution and Comprehension of the General Evaluation Parameters

In this module, we will initially try to gain a basic understanding of the regulatory changes that have most affected the build-up phase of the game throughout history. These changes have also forced coaching staffs and players to develop themselves tactically and constantly, changing the way of seeing and analysing football.
I believe that the comprehension of the past and the process that has led us to this day will allow us to anticipate and forecast part of the future that we are coming to live.

As a consequence of this constant development in football, different analysis tools and parameters for evaluating highly complex behavioural aspects of teams during games. have been proposed over time. Consequently, we will try to explain and know about these references which will serve as an evaluative "filter", specifically for the build-up phase, and will guide us in a more orderly and secure way in the context of high complexity that this sport entails within it.

Definition and evolution of the build-up phase

The **build-up phase of the game** is actually a **sub-phase** within the ball possession phase, whose main objective is to pass through the pressure lines to go along the rival playing field in the best possible conditions.
So, it is composed of the interactions that the ball possession team has, especially on the rival playing field, although with different dynamics, times, and structures, in front of all or most of the players of the opposing team behind the ball line.

Also, we can find other secondary purposes of them:

- to secure possession after recovery;
- to allow the team to reorganise after a recovery;
- not to risk eventual losses if there is no option to progress and to go back in order to progress in better situations; and
- to produce and enjoy benefits.

Castelo (1999) talks about game systems:

> game systems have undergone constant modifications over time. Free kicks are awarded in favour of the defending team in their own area, and evolutions are installed in the different currents that influenced the analysis of the game over time, as well as the technical-tactical conceptions resulting from there. (Castelo, 1999, p.73)

The tactical development in football has always been accompanied by modifications and changes in regulations, particularly in the aspect of the game that we will deal with here, which has undergone many changes and developments, especially in recent decades.

The most important change took place in 1992, when a rule was established. Such rule radically changed the organisation of all the global teams as well as the role that the goalkeeper had until then: the IFAB established that the goalkeeper was prohibited from touching and blocking the ball with their hands after a voluntary pass from a teammate.

It happened because, at that time, too many teams took advantage of passing the ball to their goalkeepers in order to waste time during the match, without allowing the rival to do anything to recover it. This compromised performance because, for example, goal kicks or high pressure on the rival playing field at the build-up play became practically non-existent, and it was actually impossible to recover the ball in play.

The last back pass in which a goalkeeper could touch the ball with their hands occurred at the Ullevi Stadium, in Gothenburg, on 26 June 1992, in the 88th minute of the European Cup final between Denmark and Germany. During a free kick to a couple of metres beyond the centre of the field in favour of the Danes, who were winning 2 to 0, Povlsen, their number nine, threw the ball again to the goalkeeper of his team, Peter Schmeichel, who blocked it with his hands and then threw it long. Today, he would be forced to play it "normally" only with his teammates.
A fifty-metre back pass symbolically ends an era of football that no longer exists: from that day on, no goalkeeper of any place, level or category in the world could ever again catch the ball that a teammate passes to them with his hands, which radically changed the tactic of the game.

The creation of this rule had repercussions on group factors and individual game behaviours such as the following:

- the **role** that the **goalkeeper** had, since they were now forced to improve their play with the feet and their position on the pitch to adapt to the new situation;
- the **way** the teams had to **build up and start the game on the rival playing field**;
- the **way** the teams had to **put pressure on the rival playing field**;

- the different **play times**, since this option could no longer be used to waste time and gain an advantage over the opponent down on the scoreboard; and
- the **number of long shots by goalkeepers**: these shots increased, especially as soon as the change was implemented, since goalkeepers wanted to get the ball off of them to avoid risking too much to play short with their feet, something that most did not used to do until then.

Of course, this change also influenced the structure and content of the **training sessions**. The players had to learn to play the ball well in their own playing field, to position themselves in a certain way and in a certain place to avoid the slightest mistake and to work on completely different ways of pressing.

Like all big changes, important adaptations were needed: football players and coaches had to adapt and develop creative thoughts in order to play a sport that was becoming more dynamic, faster, and hence, more attractive, and where the chances of making fatal mistakes that could mean even an own goal were always more likely to happen.

Due to this aspect, as we have already said, teams generally used to resort to direct shots towards the rival playing field and long goal kicks since moving the ball away from areas close to the goal was a way to “get rid of” possible problems and directly pass through the rival pressure lines, which allowed them to gain the next possession of the ball by disputes or second plays.

At the end of the first decade of 2000, another “revolution” took place, and this time was exclusively tactical. One team took the concept of “start from behind playing” to the extreme and thus emphasised even more the change that years ago had changed football forever: Pep Guardiola's Barcelona revolutionised all the world with its innovative way of using the build-up play as a very important tool for moving the opponent's structure and hence generating spaces that allowed the team to enter the rival playing field with space-time advantages and find the “best path” to the goal. The "attack on the opponent’s goal" began there.

Now, the objective was to move the rival and not the ball, with the clear intention, according to each game, to cause imbalance and thus generate advantages that would be used later to get close to the opponent’s goal in the best possible conditions to finish.

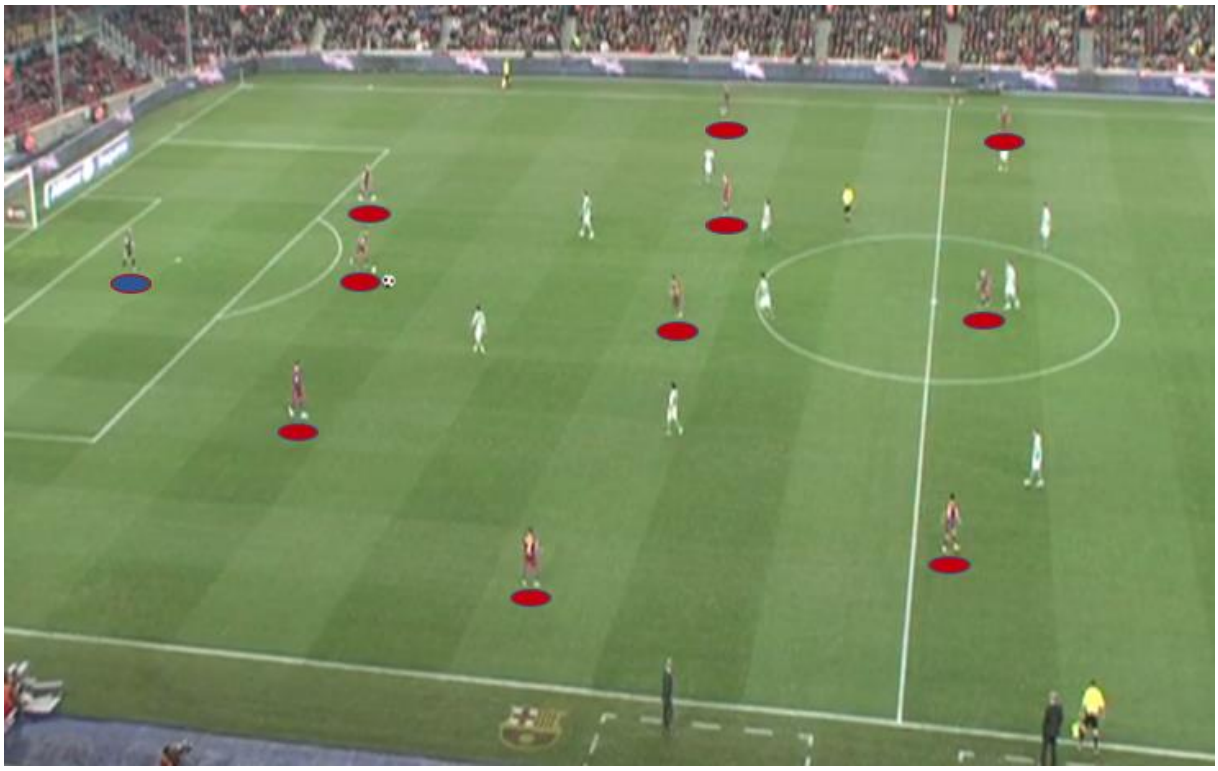
It is true that, during the course of history, many teams have also proposed to start from behind in a combined way (Sacchi's Milan and Cruyff's Barça, above all), but Barça reached almost unachievable levels of excellence and interpretation of the game instead.

Among many ideas proposed, the most important ones that this team knew how to innovatively apply in this phase of the game were the ones we name below:

- **Making the pitch large taking advantage of the maximum possible width**: they placed the two centre backs at quite a distance from each other to achieve the maximum width with the fullbacks, which forced them to position themselves higher and possibly close to the side-lines. In this way, they could separate the players from the rival and generate spaces on the inside. They could even provide a safe option to pass on the outside in case it was difficult to progress through the centre corridors.
- **Filling the centre corridors***:* in this way, they always had a numerical or positional superiority and, therefore, control of the field.
- **Using the centre backs as first playmakers:**
  - They circulated the ball between the centre backs in order to pass through the rivals and the offensive players' line while running with the ball.
  - They had the ability to take the first pass (especially from the inside) to take advantage of their own playing field or the rival playing field and thus progress in the game and pass through one or two rival pressure lines.
- **Using the pivot that goes down between centre backs**: in this way, they could have a numerical and positional superiority or advantage, depending on the rival's pressure (this is what is known as "Lavolpiana build-up").
- **Making use of the goalkeeper as a "free man":** in other words, as a player who always gave them superiority and they could always use as a resource to ensure possession in an emergency or generate space and attract rivals in their area.
- **Occupying intermediate positions**: thus, they could get advantages (they found free men directly or indirectly) and make the rival's recovery difficult.
- **Positioning themselves at different heights***:* with this tactic, they constantly created and generated passing lines to give the possessor many options.
- **Always being in balance**: by moving together, the team players were more likely to recover the ball in case of loss; however, with short passes, the team remained compact.
- **Moving in a constant and organised manner**: in this way, they could generate confusion and move the opponent's offensive organisation.

At the base of it all, there was the conviction that **a good build-up play allowed everything else to flow much more naturally**.
In the following figure, we can see many of the principles of the game explained above.

Figure 1: Distribution on the pitch of 2010-2011 FC Barcelona in build-up play



Source: own elaboration.

This cultural evolution has profoundly changed the way of practising football as teams were forced to find ways of pressing that were totally different from those they used before. As a direct consequence, this also forced teams to find alternative resources to pass through this pressure.
They began to search in some positions for technical characteristics never required before. For example, the centre backs or the goalkeepers themselves were asked for more skills and technical resources for handling the ball.

Today, the latest amendments to the IFAB regulations have forced teams to make further changes to readopt to the changes of the regulations, especially rules 13 and 16.
These rules explain that, when free throws are awarded to the defending team in their own area and in the event of a goal kick, the ball will be in play when it has been kicked and is in motion, which actually eliminated the requirement that the ball has to leave the area before it can be touched by a player from both teams.

In the detail of the regulation, the procedure to comply with rule 16 is explained as follows:

Procedure:

1. The ball must be stationary, and a team player will hit it from anywhere in the goal area.
2. The ball is in play the moment it has been kicked and is clearly in motion.
3. The opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.

> If there is a player from the opposing team in the penalty area who has not had time to leave it by the time of taking the goal kick, the referee will allow the game to continue. If a rival is inside the penalty area by the time of taking the goal kick, enters it before the ball is in play, touches or disputes the ball before it is in play, the goal kick will be retaken. (IFAB, 2019, https://bit.ly/2EG3Z32)

This modification implies not only structural but also dynamic change in terms of the way in which teams start and press the goal kick. It allows more speed in the game and favours the building up from back by teams and thus prevents excessive waste of time.

Many teams are used to building up from back and have had a much easier time adapting to that change. In fact, they propose the same situation a few metres back.

Tactically speaking, the main repercussions are as follows:

- Since it can start in the penalty area, the team taking the goal kick will have more space to take advantage of, compared to the rival's first pressure line.
- In contrast, the pressing team has more space to cover and defend, which affects the distances that each player must travel and the movements they must perform.
- The risk of committing fatal errors increases: a team that builds up, for example, short in the area will have a position of the ball very close to the goal, which increases the risk of generating scoring chances if the opponent recovers the ball in this area.

On the one hand, if the new rule generally helps teams play from back, it also "forces" opponents to try to recover very high.

We can see how rules can establish the structures and dynamics of the game spaces and, consequently, the modalities that determine the way in which a team or a player can develop a specific game action within the same shared space.

From here, as always, it will be coaches' and player's interpretation according to each situation and moment, which will make them take risks or focus on the advantages that this alternative game can give the team. Of course, until new changes come.

Classifications of the build-up phase

As noted earlier, in build-up play situations, the general objective is to get the ball to certain places on the rival playing field and position the team in the best way so as to travel "routes" giving access to the finishing zone and with the greatest possible advantage.

> *"This game consists of establishing superiorities behind the line pressing you" (Juanma Lillo, cited in Soriano, 2014, https://bit.ly/34NZyxP).*

So, the build-up phase is the **first moment** that allows us to fulfil that purpose.

We can divide the build-up play into two situations:

Table 1: Build-up play situations

BUILD-UP PLAY (situations)	
GOAL KICK	BUILD-UP PLAY

- **Goal kick (set piece situation):**
  - There are static build-up positions.
  - It does not have a previous phase, but it is a restart of the play.
  - There is no offside.
- **Build-up play (play situation):**
  - There are dynamic positions.
  - It has an earlier phase that can be any of the following:
    - after recovery;
    - after possession of the ball on the rival playing field; or
    - after a set piece situation (foul, throw-in, etc.).
  - There is offside.

Also, three execution modalities can be identified:

Table 2: Build-up of play modalities

BUILD-UP PLAY (modalities)		
DIRECT PLAY WITH LONG BALL	MIXED PLAY	COMBINED GAME SHORT BALL

- **Direct play or long ball:** here, we do not find close relationships in zone A. This play has the objective of getting the ball directly to the rival playing field by means of a long shot by, for example, the goalkeeper or the centre backs.
- **Mixed play:** in this case, we find few relationships in zone A initially intending to play short balls to attract rivals and then throw long or look directly for advantages with few passes.
- **Combined play or short ball:** here, there are many relationships between players in their own playing field (zone A-zone B) in order to move the rival structure and advance towards the rival playing field, progressively passing through the pressure lines.

In a correct analysis, the original intentions of the team in possession of the ball must always be taken into account. However, strategic modifications in behaviour should also be considered. These modifications are due to factors such as the pressure of the rival or the moments of the game, which are not initially planned.

Each of these modalities has aspects for and against depending, to a great extent, on the coach's game idea, their characteristics and their players' and rivals' availability.

In addition, and in my opinion, it is one of the phases of the game that undergoes the most changes during a match as it is related to different factors such as the score, the time, or the confidence that the players have according to the rival they are facing and the emotional situation that they are going through.

As analysts or coaches, I believe that, when analysing and evaluating one's own behaviour and that of the opponents, it is important to take these factors into account since they add qualitative information that is very important when decisions on the preparation of training sessions and games must be made.

Comprehension of the general evaluation parameters

In order for players to understand the game, they need to orient themselves through references with which to constantly relate during the game. The same references may also be useful for us, analysts, to create filters for evaluating general or individual performance, whether that of our team or our rival. The references are general, that is to say, they are not totally specific to the build-up phase of the game but necessary and useful, so we must analyse and understand them.

The parameters refer to the two concepts present in football, which are inseparably related: **space** and **time**. Both **affect** the **organisation** that the team forms on the pitch.

We can divide these parameters into three categories:

- *Spatial parameters*: they are related to the field and its use.
    - Static: they refer to the dimensions and the division of the field.
    - Dynamic: they are modified based on the situation and relationship of the two teams.

- *Temporal parameters*: they are related to the dynamics of the specific game situations for each situation of the build-up phase (goal kick and game kick-off).
    - Before
    - During
    - After

Each team or coach uses their own references, but instead of simply naming them, I think it is essential to clearly establish these references and, above all, not change them every time analysis is performed during the season. This is because they allow us to open a communication channel and determine the direction of the work between the coaching staff and the players in such a way that organisational and understanding problems are avoided.

Spatial parameters (static)

Static space is the stable, standardised, and fixed space in which the teams that share it coexist, compete, and have to interact. It depends on the measurements and the size of the playing field.

We can define it as one of the main **constraints**, i.e., a characteristic of the environment that forces, allows or prevents certain collective and individual behaviours of the systems that are related to it.

In a complex context such as football, a minimal alteration or modification of the environment can considerably influence the players' individual and collective behaviour.

For instance, a short ball build-up play will be totally different if the width of the field is 65 metres or 75 metres, even though our intention is the same. This is because the length will directly affect the distances between our players and the opponents, and it will radically change the way they will have to relate and share space.

For this reason, having clear references on which to base ourselves when understanding these behaviours is very important.

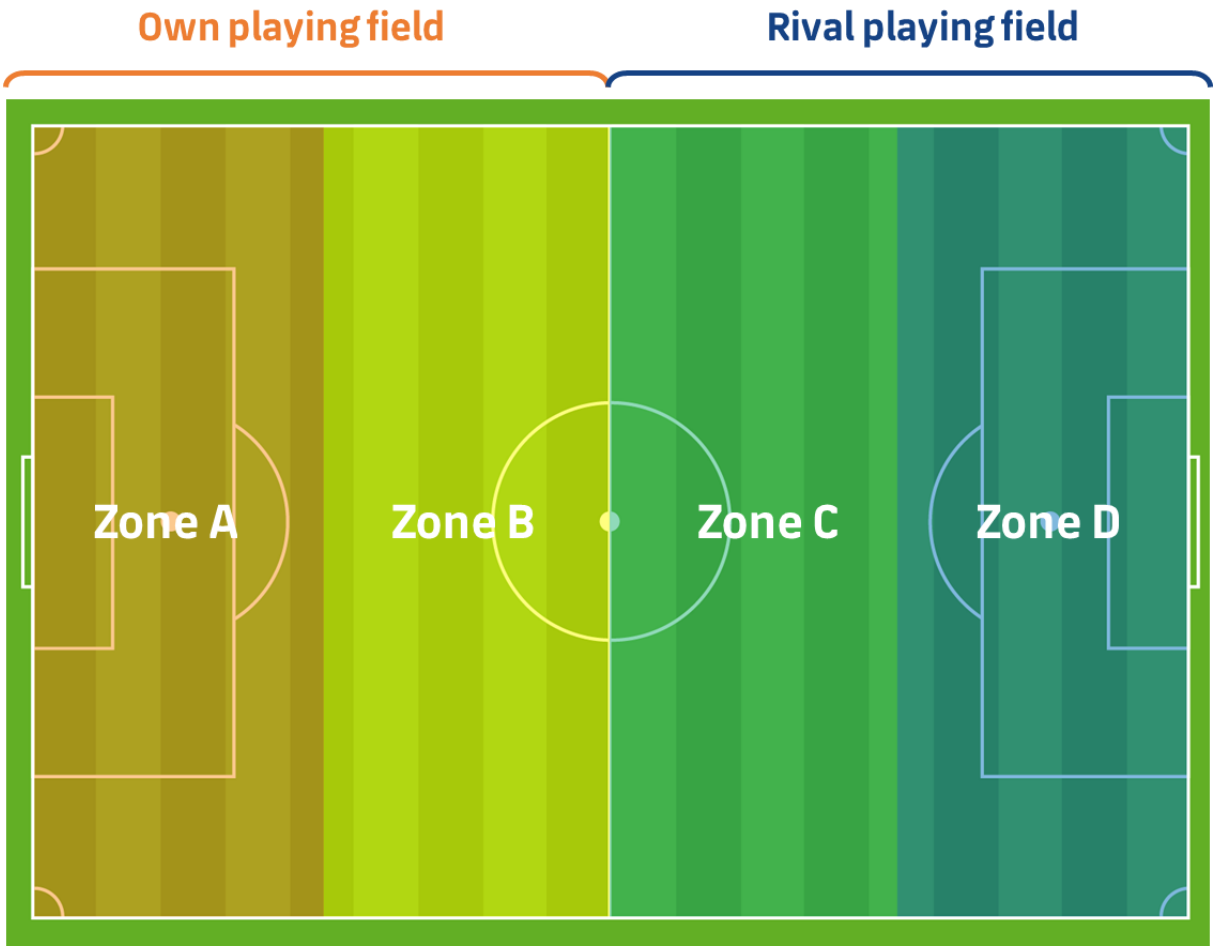
We can divide the playing field into zones and corridors or corridors, based on the vertical and horizontal axes of the playing field, which help players understand what location and what behaviours they should have in general. This is in relation to different factors such as the position of the ball, the height of the rival's block, among other aspects which make each situation unique and unrepeatable.

Then, we divide the field into **4 transversal zones**:

TWO ZONES ON OWN PLAYING FIELD
It is the half of the field where the build-up phase of the game mainly occurs.
A. Alarm zone (ZA) → preferential location of goalkeeper, centre backs, pivot
B. Welfare zone (ZB) → preferential location of centre backs, full backs, inside forwards, pivot

TWO ZONES ON RIVAL PLAYING FIELD
It is the half of the field that we take after the build-up phase of the game.
C. Control/Creation Zone (ZC) → preferential location of full backs, inside forwards, attacking midfielder, wingers and striker
D. Definition Zone (ZD) → preferential location of striker and wingers

Figure 2: Division of the pitch in four zones



Source: own elaboration.

Many coaches usually divide the field into **3 zones**:

- Build-up zone
- Progression zone (own playing field/rival playing field)
- Finishing zone

They are called like that because they usually have a specific objective in each area (build-up, progress and finish the game action).

Everyone can choose their division based on their criteria and ideas, but as I would like to be organised, I will use the first division as a basis to explain and evaluate the build-up phase.

Regarding the vertical axis, we also divide the field into **4 corridors/flanks**:

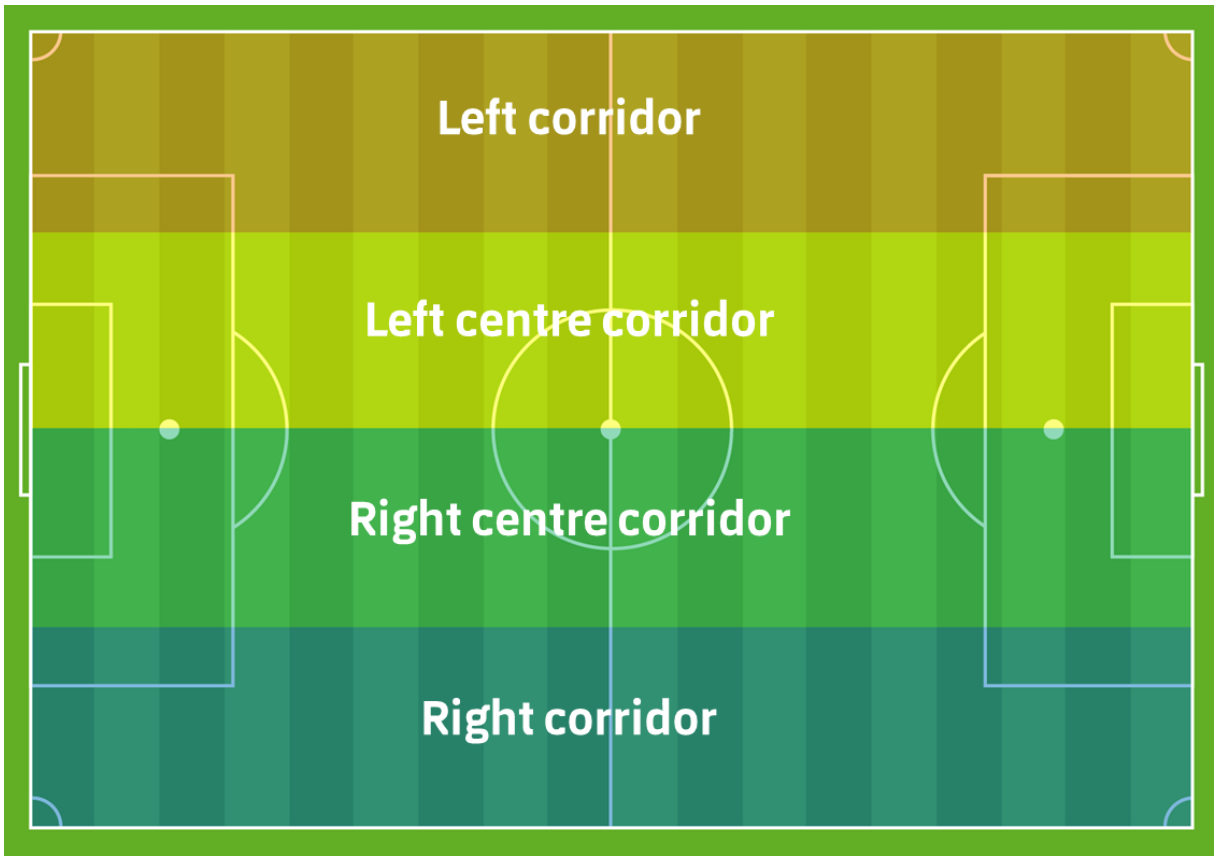
A. Left wing corridor (LWC) preferential location of full backs, wingers, striker

B. Left centre corridor (LCC) → preferential location of goalkeeper, centre backs, pivot, inside forwards, striker

C. Right centre corridor (RCC) → preferential location of goalkeeper, centre backs, pivot, inside forwards, striker

D. Right wing corridor (RWC) → preferential location of full backs, wingers, striker

Figure 3: Division of the pitch in four corridors/flanks

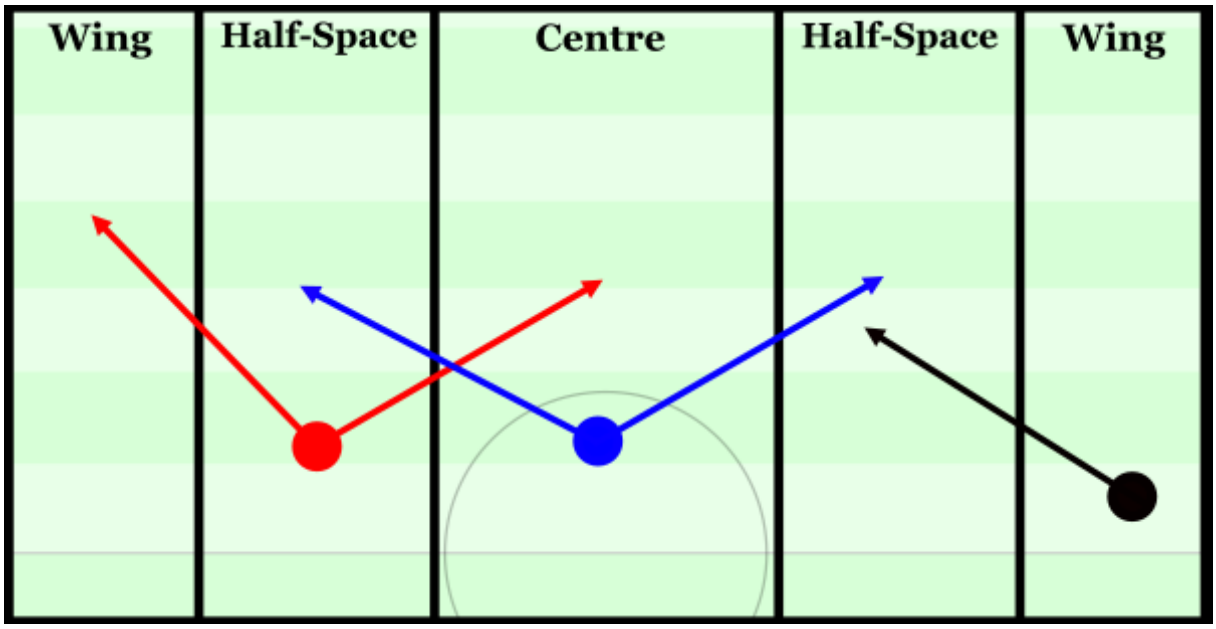


Source: own elaboration.

Likewise, in this division, and according to work methodologies, each coaching staff will decide to add or remove corridors and evaluate, on the basis of these, the corridors where the players will preferentially act.

For example, in recent years, different studies such as those of the German Federation have proposed a division of the playing field into 5 corridors to develop the concept of **half-space.** This is to indicate the two corridors between the centre corridor and the wings, which allow to establish superiorities between lines and have better passing angles.

Figure 4: Division of the pitch into five corridors (*half-spaces*)

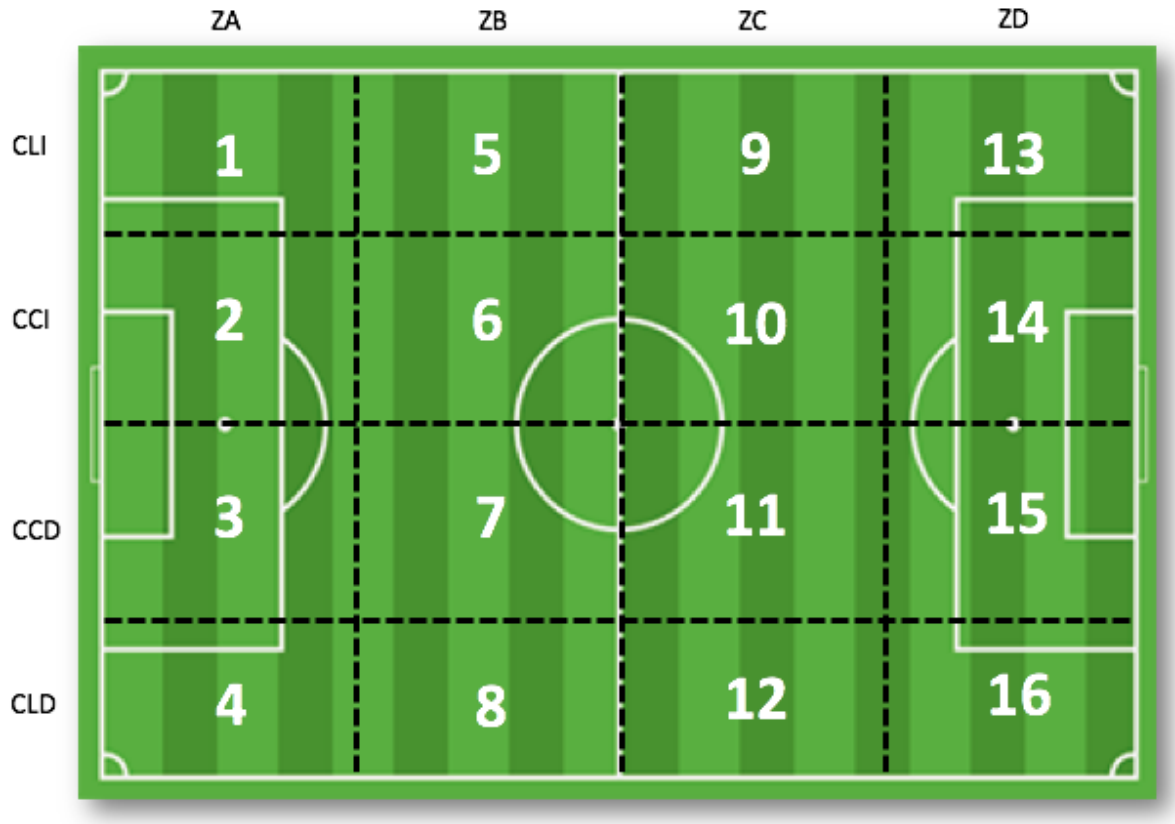


Source: Spielverlagerung cited in Battazzi, 2016, https://bit.ly/31JyKwQ

Always for organisational reasons, I will refer to the first subdivision in the 4 corridors because I also believe that, in order to achieve many of the desired objectives as regards *half-spaces*, it is needed both a correct position and a player's profile on the pitch despite the corridors drawn. This is also in relation to the conformation assumed by teams around the ball and their rival's disposition, accompanied with their intention of taking advantage of its location.

The sum of the 4 zones with the 4 corridors allows us to divide the field into **16 spaces**, which will serve as a reference when filtering the behaviour of the teams and interacting with the players and the coaching staff at the moment of communicating relevant information.

Figure 5: Division of the pitch in the 16 spaces



Source: own elaboration.

We are going to see how the division of the playing field into zones and corridors allows us to know the **preferential locations** by position, that is, those acting the most in each zone during the build-up phase based on each team's **playing system** (of course, such actions vary according to the dynamics of the game and the model used, as well as the functions that the players will have in each situation). These locations can serve as a general reference for understanding the structure and dynamics during this phase.

For instance, the goalkeeper may prefer to act in zone A and probably in zone B, but they may not want to on the rival playing field. On the other hand, and despite the team's or rival's block, a centre back will preferentially play on their own playing field zones and also, probably, on the rival playing field zones but taking less time. The same applies to the corridors.

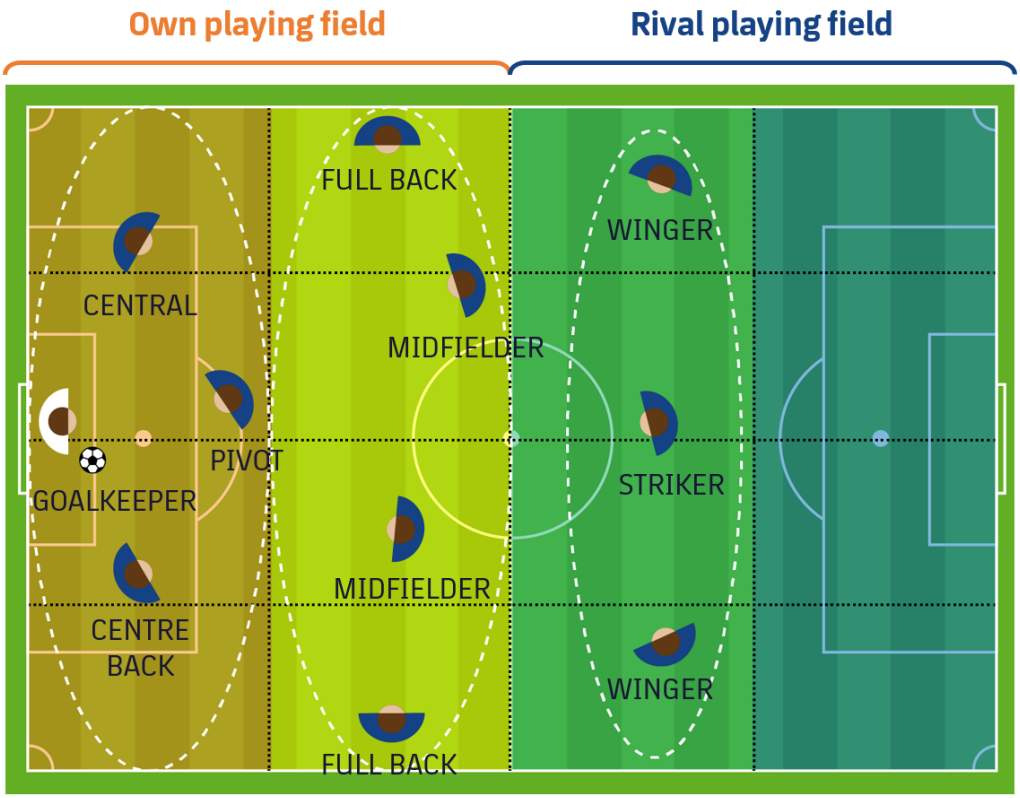
In addition, a 1-4-3-3 system will have a different preferential position compared to a playing system such as a 1-3-5-2, and this factor can be important when starting to understand the structure of a team.

Moreover, if we restrict this "filter" only to the build-up phase, then, we will be already understanding in which zones our players and our rivals will preferably act.

As we will see during the course, technology will help us with tools—such as **individual and collective heat maps—**to better understand the players' dynamic locations throughout the game.

If we also consider the team or rival structure when dividing the playing field, we obtain a frame that will be initially useful for knowing he static organisation of the team and then its conformation and dynamic organisation in relation to the playing space, an aspect that we will deepen soon.

Figure 6: Preferential Zones/Corridors (Static Positions of A classic 1-4-3-3)



Source: own elaboration.

This parameter has to be only the basis of our analysis as we cannot understand team behaviour by strictly focusing on their structure since it is the **dynamics of the game** that adds the qualitative factor to such analysis.
From my point of view, we have to understand that the division into zones and corridors should help us and the players to have orientation references on the field. However, it

cannot replace and, consequently, fully influence decision-making and **behaviour** since there are other parameters to consider and that will be essential when analysing any team.

Spatial (dynamic) parameters

Football is a constant struggle when it comes to designing space, addressing, or reducing imbalances that occur or are transferred during the dynamics of the game.

Dynamic spaces are those spaces which are constantly emerging and disappearing by the players' interaction on the pitch, which can prevent them from taking their positions and making the most of them depending on the purpose in each situation.
They are related to the relationship and the use that the 22 players will make of the playing field, as well as the objectives set.

We can note three basic parameters that allow us to generate dynamic spaces:

- **Width and depth**
- **Directionality**
- **Ball location and situation**

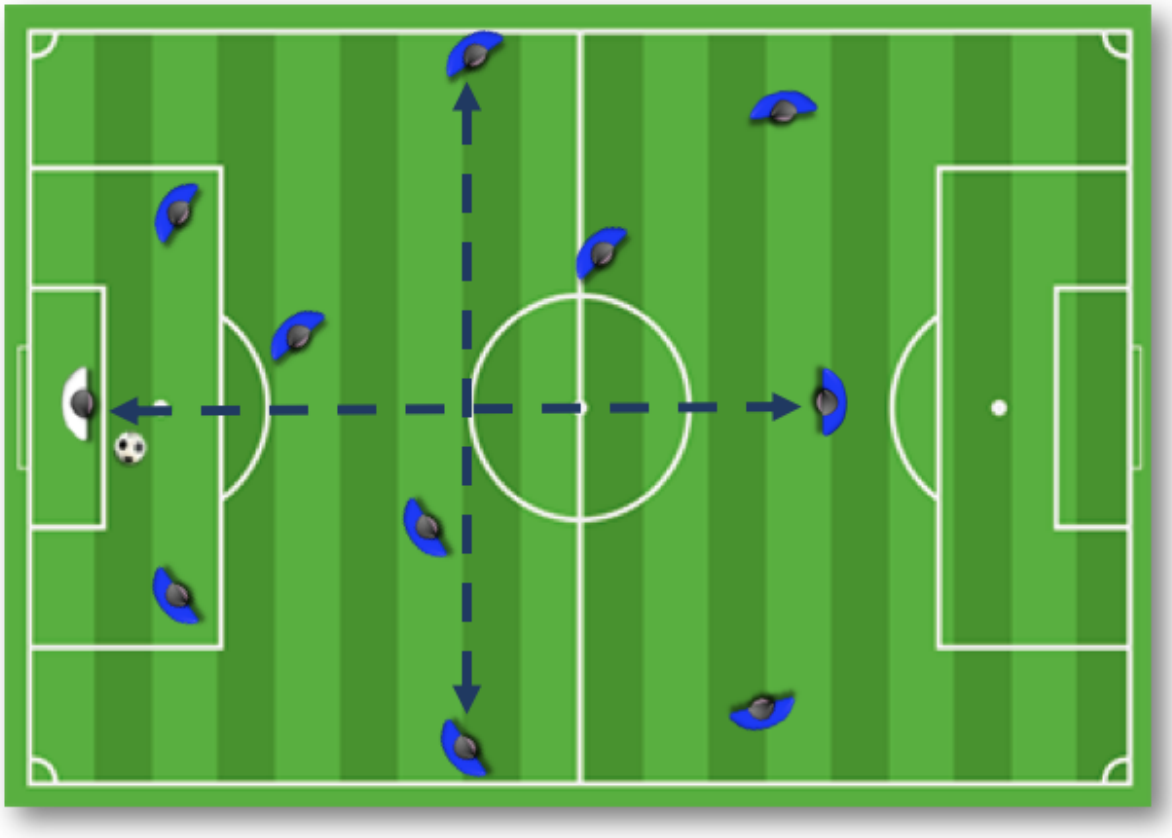
Width and depth

The most important parameters that generally define the structure of a team in relation to the playing field are **width** and **depth**. These parameters constantly change during the game, either in terms of size or reference players (e.g., we can achieve the maximum width of the pitch with the full backs or the wingers).

The division of the field into zones and corridors will allow us to understand, together with these two parameters, the overall position of the two teams on the playing field and identify zones or corridors with a **higher density** of players or zones, and corridors with a **lower density** of players.

Both parameters play an important role when evaluating the initial structure of the team and its conformation during the build-up phase. From these two parameters, all the subspaces that we will see later are created.

Figure 7: Width and depth in the position of a team



Source: own elaboration.

Directionality

"Progress", "reach", "advance", "pass through", "attack" are just some of the words we use when narrating and explaining football. These terms help us understand how much the concept of **directionality** is rooted in our head, which means to go in just one direction towards the goal as quickly and vertically as possible.

Of course that, in a context as complex as a game, we cannot use one of its elements (whatever it may be), regardless of the situation, because everything needs constant dynamic adaptation to be effective since it is contextual.

Therefore, we must try to understand football from another perspective, from **multi-directionality**, which is always related to space-time and will allow us to know the intentions and real dynamics in a game situation.

For example, in order to go from point A to point B, we cannot always take a linear path. Imagine that the ball is in the possession of the goalkeeper and that the direct pass line with their left centre back is closed by the striker, who hurries to press. If it is still intended to play with that particular centre back, you will be able to indirectly reach them, for instance, by playing with the pivot that approaches to give them a way out and that will

pass it to the centre back since, with their location, they mark another pass line that the striker will not be able to close (concept of 3rd man). This is an example of a micro-situation of game, that is to say, an analysis of a solution for a low complexity problem.
Another example, in a more global and complex dimension, it could be the use of play changes, that is, the horizontal carrying of the ball to move rival players and attract them towards the side of the ball and then find the weak side and progress vertically.

These very simple examples show us how to get to a certain space on the playing field (in ZD) and with certain space-time/relational conditions to accomplish the main objective: to score a goal. There are many alternative routes that we can follow, and it will be these ones that will allow us to know the **topological organisation** of a team towards a place on the playing field, i.e., the conformation and dynamics that a team usually assumes (its tactical habits) and separate it from random events unfolding from the chaotic interaction of game elements.

This parameter will allow us to understand which teams prefer a more direct game at their own build-up and which ones propose a more elaborate game. Thus, understanding the preferential routes of both strategies will be crucial.

Providing alternatives depends on two fundamental elements (which we will see in the next modules): **supports** and **trajectories**.

In football, the presence of rivals in shared spaces and with contrary intentions is just one of the factors that sometimes force us to find alternative routes and different times to reach the goal.
As we have seen, game concepts such as "the 3rd man", "repeat pass", among others, help us manage space and time to cheat and find alternative solutions to what is proposed during a game.

What spaces can be created?

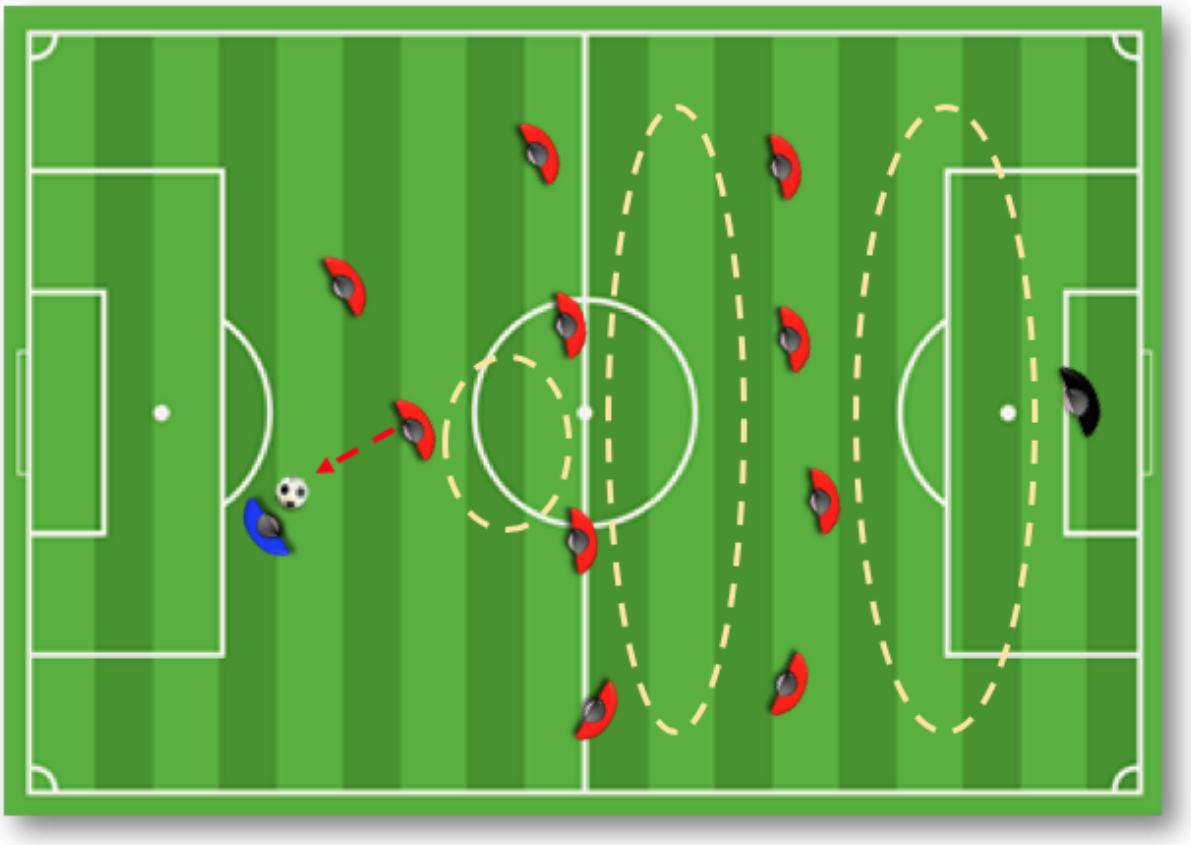
From the interaction of all these factors, **dynamic subspaces** will be created in the rival structure in relation to the playing field, which should be possibly occupied and used for the progress of the team.

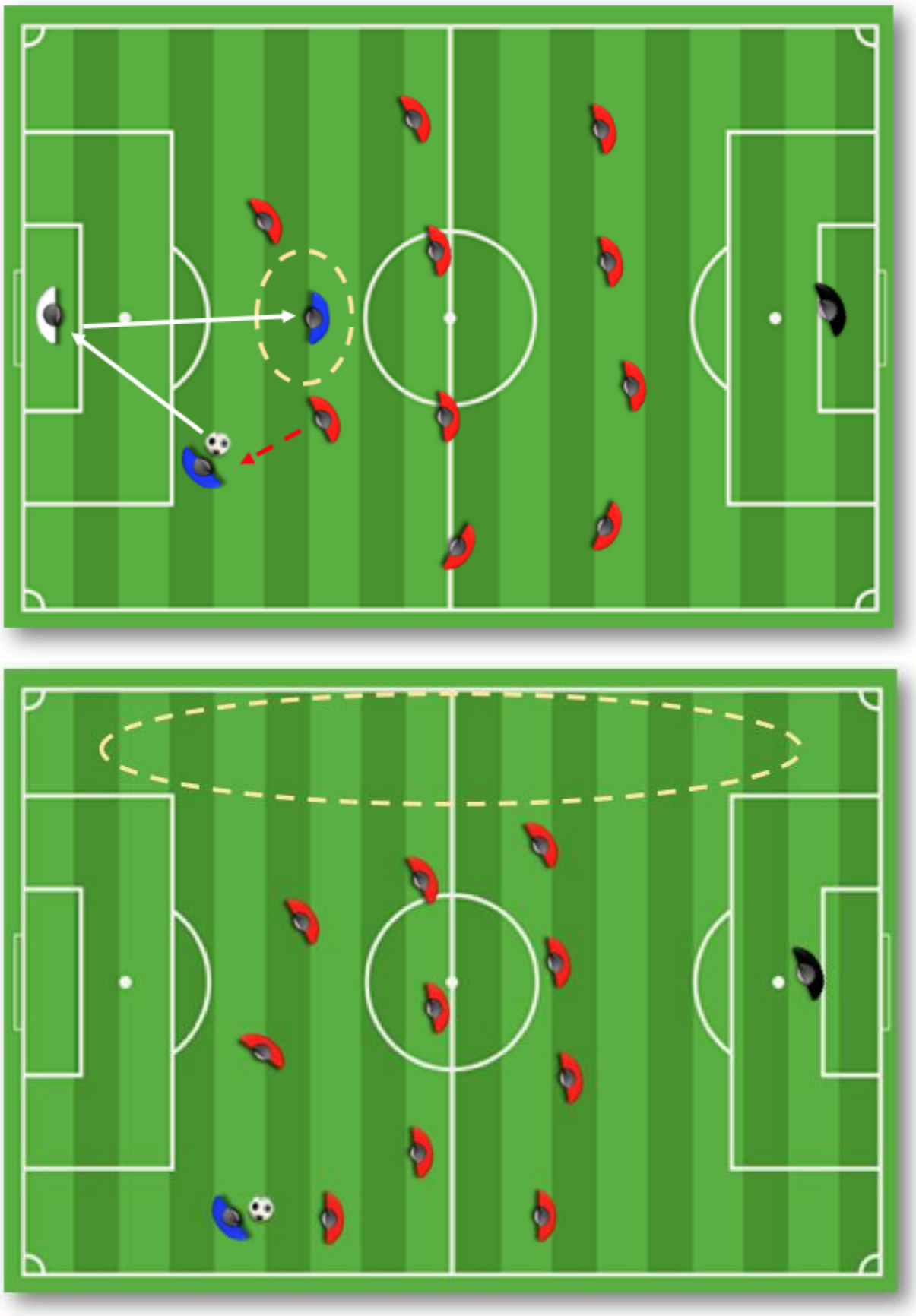
We can create spaces in the following places:
- *between lines* of rival pressure;
- *between rivals* of the same line;
- *behind* the team block, or
- *to the sides* of the team block.

For example, if opponents are pressing high, gaps that must be exploited will appear between the lines. If there are no spaces inside, we will probably find them on the side farthest from the ball, depending on the opponent's tilt.

We have to be aware that these spaces exist due to the size of the field, and that we have the capacity both to create them and to fill them through our movements. It is about training players to recognise them.

Figure 8: Created dynamic subspaces





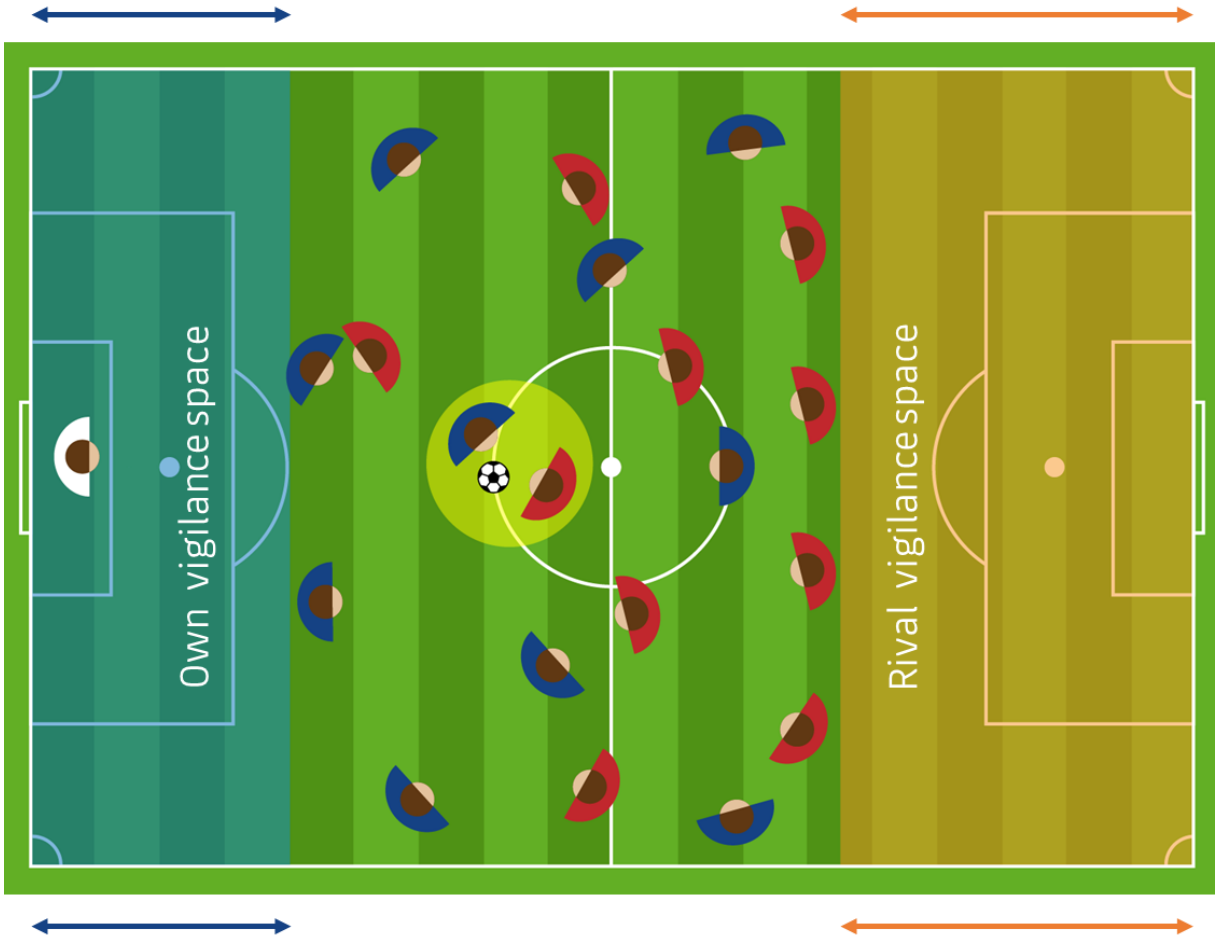
Source: own elaboration.

One of the most important dynamic spaces throughout the game, and in relation to rule 11 (offside), is the **space behind the defensive** (or **vigilance**) **lines**. This space depends on the height of the defensive line and the block of each team in relation to the location or situation of the ball.

I will analyse in more detail this particular space of the rival team since its generation will depend, in the build-up phase, on three main factors:

- The fact of being in a goal kick situation (there is no offside) or a build-up play (there is offside).
- The intention to play a short or *long* ball: the height of the rival line will generally be lower (less space behind) if it is directly played with a long ball and higher (more space behind) if played with a short ball.
- The situation of the ball (covered or uncovered).

Figure 9: Space behind the defensive line



Source: own elaboration.

Each space that may exist will internally comprise indicators that define it at each moment of the game, which consists of a constant dynamic change:

- Distances: between players, with the ball, with the goal, etc.
- Location: of the players and the ball.
- Close or personal space.
- Collective space: the one occupied by the entire team.
- Free spaces.
- Occupied space.
- Shared space.
- Desired space.

Ball location and situation

The main reference, around which teams are formed and organised in different ways, is the **ball**.

The ball location on the playing field, that is, its **positioning**. It influences the height of the block and the organisation of the teams, so it works almost like an attractor.

"Depending on the ball position, each player has to know how to place themselves and in which space to play" (Mendoza, 2015, p. 48).

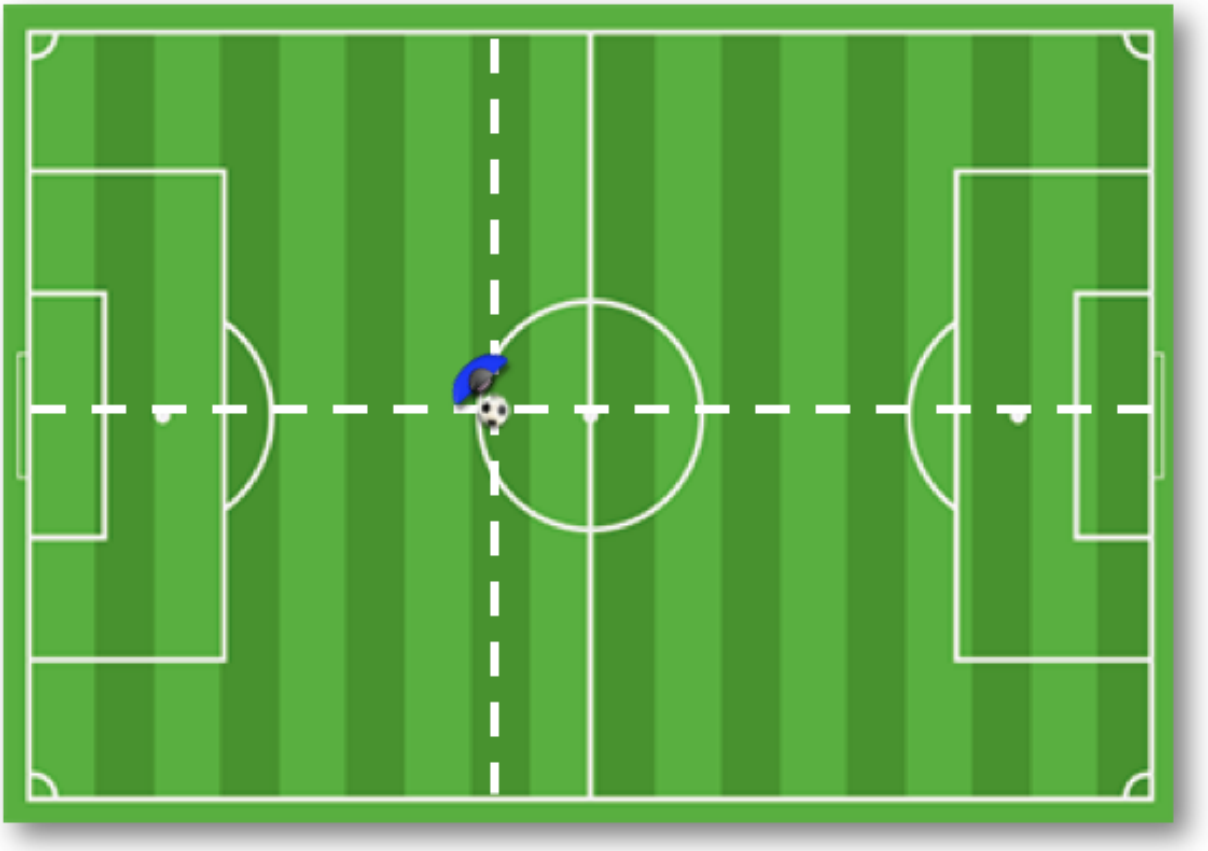
Besides, the ball **situation** can also affect the general or individual behaviour of the team.

We can consider two situations:

- *Covered ball situation*: it is in a situation in which the team in possession of the ball cannot play it directly forward (due to rival pressure, poor control, a 50/50 ball, or even due to the fact that the possessor has their back to the rival goal, etc).
- *Uncovered ball situation*: situation in which the possessor has the conditions to play directly forward.

In the build-up phase, for example, this factor can influence the pressure of the opposing team or the very dynamics of the build-up (intention to play a short or long ball in the zones where to play and for which player, etc.).

Figure 10: Ball location



Source: own elaboration.

Football is a communicative/interactive game. Therefore, if we use the ball as our main reference, our entire organisation will be based on a constant relationship between the **closest players and those furthest** from it. In other words, all of our players must be located in such a way that they can communicate and interact constantly in order to intervene, favour, or help at all times depending on where the ball is and according to its situation.

The way in which this organisation will take place will clearly depend on the game model proposed by the coach's idea and the characteristics of the players that they have at their disposal.

We can choose to organise ourselves **by lines** and in a more rigid way or by **dynamic phase spaces** proposed by Paco Seirul-lo (2004) (internal club formation). In the first case, the space and the goal are used as references, while in the second case, the ball and the other players' location are used as references.

Despite the modalities, in order to understand the self-organisation of the team (in our case, in the build-up phase), we must constantly ask ourselves the following questions:

- Where is the ball? In what situation is the ball?
- Where are the opponents?
- What distances are there between the ball, the rival, and the teammates?
- How are we located?
- What trajectories do we follow?
- Where do we want to go?
- (Among others)

For this, we must bear in mind that a game situation lasts for a split second and that a minimum change (a pass of 5 metres, for example) will change the next situation forever (the after), and a possibility will have to be considered out of many.

Figure 11: Organisation of the team around the ball (phase spaces)

Source: own elaboration.

Temporal parameters

In football, it is the **time** to manage everything, to create and close spaces, and to understand the dynamics of the game situation in which we find ourselves, which gives us one more filter that allows us to know the organisation of the team and the individual behaviours in a specific situation.

In the flow of the game, we can constantly identify the three moments of time, the **before,** the **during** and the **after**, which are constantly related in a cyclical alternation between them (*continuum*).
Each action and phase of the game is related to these moments, which can serve as a later filter to understand the individual or collective behavioural dynamics that we want to analyse.

We can think of these parameters from two points of view, which will be complementary and inseparable, but which we divide here due to matters concerning the explanation. We will help ourselves with an example because, as we know, when analysing a situation, we have to consider a specific scenario within which to understand the dynamics:

Situation analysed: build-up play after recovery

- *Micro-context (individual)*

Before After the rival's direct play towards the ball, it reaches our centre back, who, under pressure, decides to pass the ball to the goalkeeper to ensure possession.
During With the ball in the goalkeeper's possession, the entire team relocates to provide the goalkeeper with passing lines. The latter decides to play with the same centre back, now freer, who leads to set the rival striker.
After The centre back passes the ball to the full back of their close wing, and who enters the rival playing field to progress. After the pass, the centre back will watch the striker and rebalance the team.

- *Macro-context (collective-game phase)*

Before After direct play by the rival, the ball is recovered on own playing field and the pass is secured to keep possession.
During The whole team is relocated (build-up with a short ball with two centre backs) and plays with centre back to build up with a short ball.
After They engage and play with the full back, who has gained height, and the team remains compact.

The two explanations simply and basically summarise the same situation from a micro and macro point of view in order to understand how, within a global dynamic, there are many temporal factors that we have to take into account to understand the players' behaviour. Taking the previous situation as an example, it takes, for instance, poor control by the centre back, a pass with a different trajectory and strength, or simply another position in space to change all the following dynamics completely.

Focusing on these aspects will raise the possibility to offer the necessary information to correct some situations and optimise the most effective ones.

As we explained previously, to differentiate the two situations in the build-up phase (the goal kick and the build-up play), we can distinguish in each of them the three temporal moments in different ways:

Table 3: Goal kick

GOAL KICK		
BEFORE	**DURING**	**AFTER**
Static (resumption of the play) Fixed build-up positions	Transition from ZA to ZB (with a short ball) Direct transition from ZA on the rival playing field (mixed or with a long ball)	Transition from ZB on the rival playing field (with a short ball) Loss of ball possession

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4: Build-up play

BUILD-UP PLAY		
BEFORE	**DURING**	**AFTER**
Dynamic a. We return from the rival playing field b. We recover and secure **c.** SP (foul, goal kick, etc.)	New reorganisation Transition from ZA to ZB (with a short ball) Direct transition from ZA on the rival playing field (mixed or with a long ball)	Transition from ZB on the rival playing field (with a short ball) Loss of ball possession

Source: own elaboration.

The most relevant difference is the lack of a previous situation or action in the goal kick, where the game is restarted after the ball has been sent out by the rival.

Therefore, we cannot analyse the **before**, but we will focus on this situation as regards the players' initial static disposition before the ball moves.

In this sense, the exit of the ball in play has one more moment to analyse because it is before is dynamic and can happen for different reasons, as we can see in the table.

This aspect offers us the possibility to understand more how and why a team is made up, and why it acts in a certain way in a specific situation, thus including this qualitative factor when selecting information.

Within these “macro moments”, we will have to analyse in more detail the micro components that allow the dynamics to continue in one direction (or, better said, time) than in another to establish, according to the game model and the previous intention if the specific objective of the situation has been completed.

We can "manage time" using it to our favour, depending on our intention of the game. In other words, we can decide to waste time in certain places on the field to attract rivals (in the following modules, we will see how) and recover it in other places, where the dynamic spaces that we have created will allow us to be faster.

These are essential factors when it comes to obtaining qualitative information that can help us correct or optimise details of the game that, in the end, will establish the organisation of the team.

In our sport, space and time are constituted as the main members of the objective that must be achieved: **to make the mobile reach a space or avoid it at a certain time and under certain conditions.**

The different game systems implemented by the coaches and the specific strategies of each game will be based on the playing space, the game times, the characteristics of their own players and the opponents. In this way, it is intended to favour one's own tactical intentions and counteract those of the opponent, in relation to the players’ movements in the face of the opponent's actions, which must also be performed considering the characteristics and structures of the different static and dynamic space-time parameters, previously analysed in this section.

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