

Module 3. Study of the Dynamic Elements of the Goal kick and Build-up of Play

Unit 3.1

In the previous module, we analysed how intentions, possibilities and advantages can be identified through the structures in the goal kick and build-up play phase before the ball rolls. Once it moves, such structures will modify their shapes and organisations to adapt to the new situation in which the ball (our primary reference) is.

Football is a constant succession of complex and dynamic situations since these movements will surely make momentary spaces (they appear and disappear continuously) that we have to take advantage of in order to effectively build up play.

It will often be the simple solutions that will offer us an interpretation to understand the behaviours of the teams facing large and complex problems. Sometimes, it is a question of metres or a pass that is too slow or too fast, which will cause a suddenly change in the entire organisation of a team. That is also valid during the build-up play phase, that is the moment of the game where the possibilities of progression towards the rival playing field are prepared and opened up.

How can we relate to each other in such a complex and changing environment?

In every complex system, there is always a balance between *chaos* and *order*, randomness, and structure. Identifying the game factors that give us order and that allow us to relate to the environment in order to constantly adapt to it will be a fundamental aspect when analysing our teams since this will be crucial information.

Having said that, we will try to provide some of the general tools, which affect the dynamics of the game, and which players will be able to use to interact with each other. Therefore, we will analyse their impacts on the structural changes of the two teams, identifying how they gain the advantages that allow progress towards the rival playing field in the best conditions. We can see them as *means* that allow circulation not to be a



simple succession of passes but a movement that has a specific purpose of *organising* the team in possession of the ball and *disorganising* the rival team in order to progress.

*"It is a whole producing feature that do not exist in separate parts.
The whole is never just the sum of the parts. It is something more." (Morin, 1998)*

The dynamic elements

"The ability of a team to self-organise determines its possibility of dominating the game or not" (F. Seirul-lo Vargas, 2017, personal communication).

By *dynamic elements*, we mean all those patterns of interrelations between two or more players (also called *conforming criteria*) that continuously influence the dynamics of the game and contribute to the creation of advantages or superiorities which will be the situations that will allow progress on the rival playing field in order to make scoring chances in the best possible space-time conditions.

They can be used as game observation elements that allow us to evaluate how a team is achieving a certain game objective.

When teams are in possession of the ball, collective and individual movements and actions will take place, generating width and depth. Their clear objective will be the use and creation of spaces that will be attacked and exploited to overcome the rival and accomplish the objective of reaching to the opponent's goal and score. (Sánchez, 2015, p. 94).

The interrelation of all these "tools" will make up the DNA of our game model, the proxemic or non-verbal language, which will allow players from the same team to communicate with each other and, at the same time, deceive rivals. They fill the "backpack" with experiences and capacities of the player that they will use to relate to the environment in which they play.

The set of elements that benefit these interactions can be defined as part of a *specific football technique*. Francisco Seirul-lo Vargas understands it as

the domain of motor actions that help us create, execute, and control the movements as well as continuously interact with the environment by means of correct and effective responses over time for the different needs arising in it. (2017)



These elements take part in the development of the player's ability to personally interpret each game situation, to communicate with each other efficiently and effectively through known and predictable interactions (intercommunication) and also to interact with the rivals' opposite behaviours due to the same interactions that will be unexpected and unknown by the rivals (intercommunication). Such elements, as mentioned above, are always related to the general parameters of space-time and are:

- The location.
- The supports.
- The distances.
- The trajectories (with and without the ball).
- The moment (individual and collective, with and without the ball).

Therefore, identifying them will be important when extracting information on individual and collective performance during a team's build-up play phase. Next, we will delve into how to use these resources one by one, especially during the build-up play phase.

The location

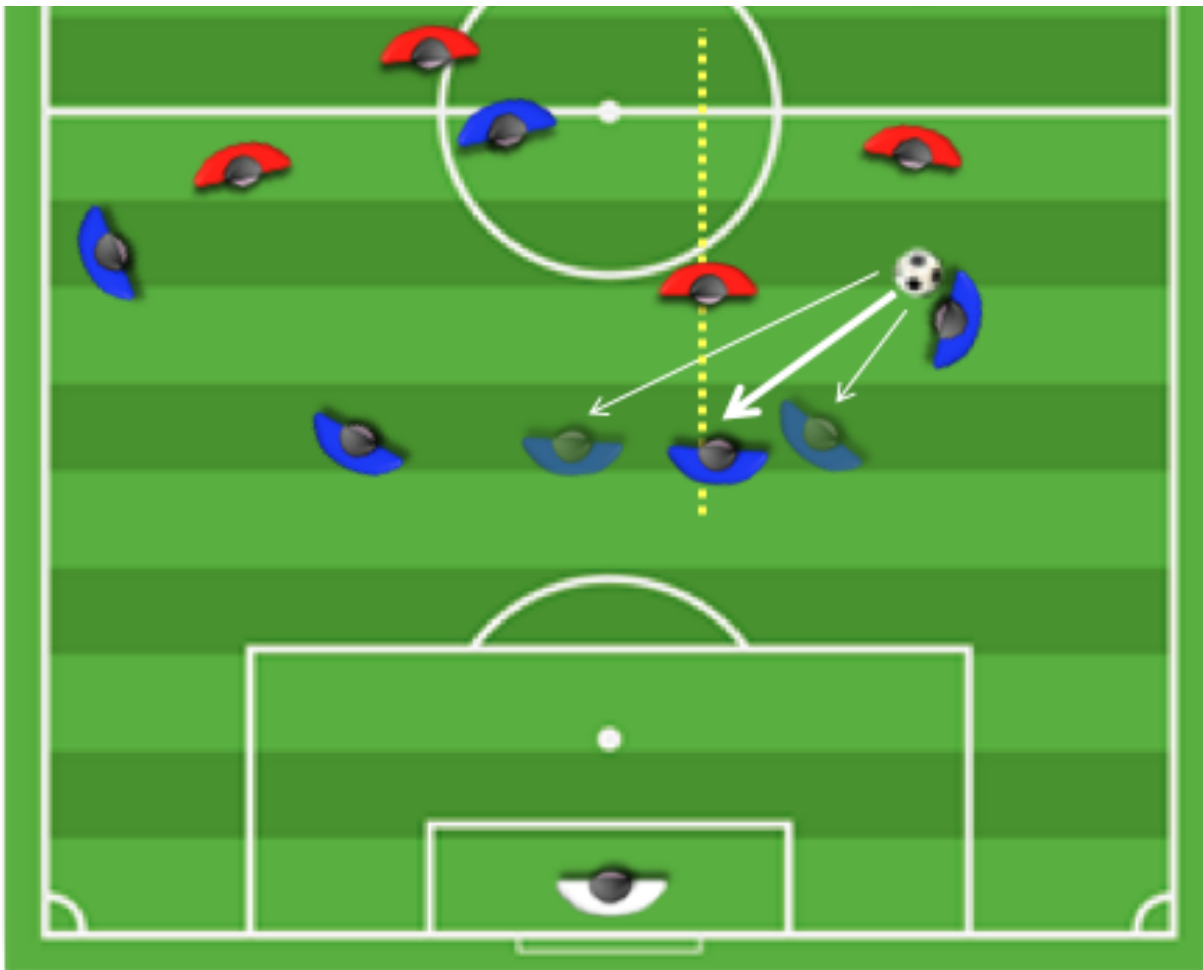
"A player can be well positioned but poorly located" (J. Lillo, personal communication, 2016).

By *location*, we mean the union of two individual factors:

- The *position*, understood as the occupation of a certain place on the pitch. *Where* a player is located:
 - On the rival playing field or their own playing field.
 - In zone A-B-C-D.
 - On outside or centre corridors.
- The *body shape*, that is, the body orientation that is given to the position in relation to space, the ball, and the other players (*how* a player is). It allows to see and perceive more or less spaces, which directly influences the decision-making of the player and their performance in the context.



Figure 1: Influence of the location on the following game dynamics



Source: own elaboration.

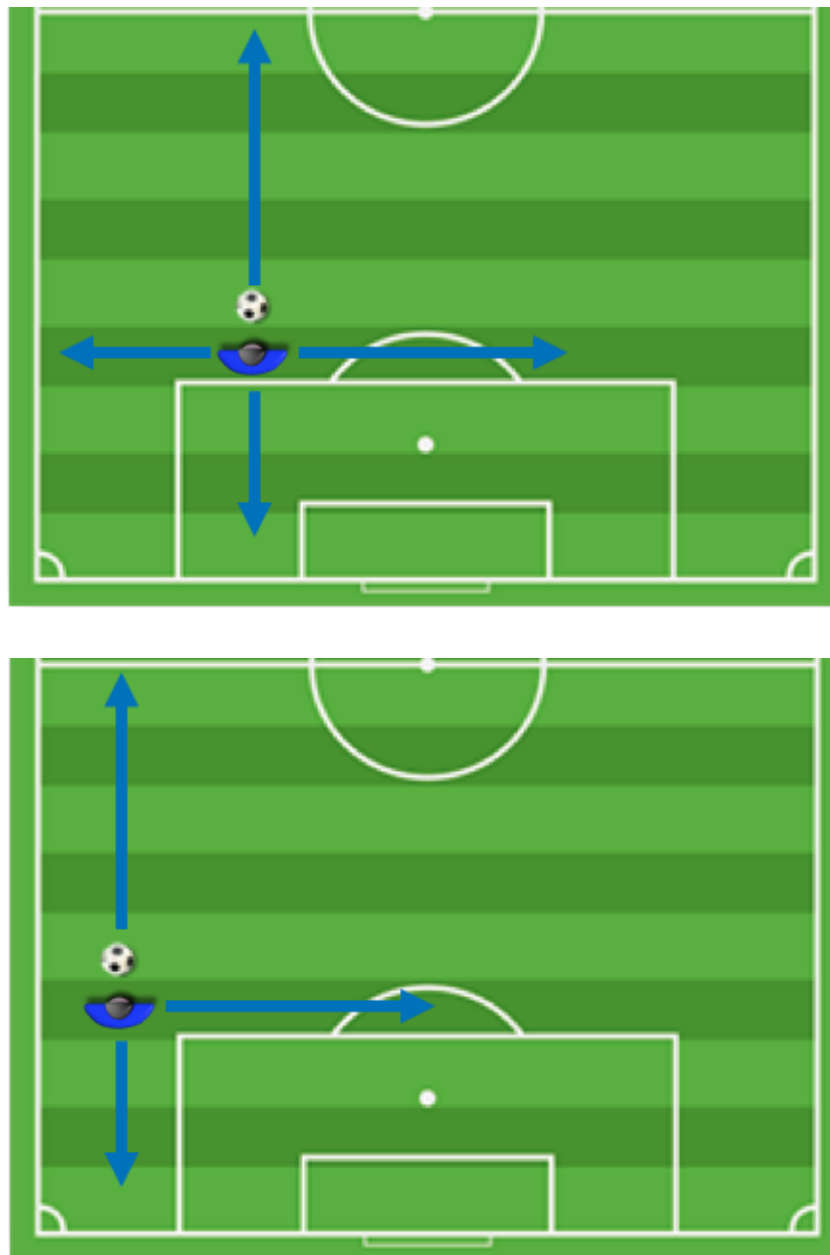
The union of these two factors can inform about the *intentions* that each player has to influence over the game and their chances of achieving them since this is related to the visual possibility of getting information.

For example, as can be seen in the previous picture, the position of the centre back or their body shape will not only influence their next performance, but also the successive performances of their teammates and their rivals. There are many possibilities that, depending on their previous location, they may appear or disappear inevitably. Meanwhile, the continuous dynamics of the game is always changing, unfolding different scenarios of possibilities of action.

Each player will always have different possibilities of connection with their teammates that will be related to their location on the playing field. For instance, as can be seen in the following image, the location of a player in the centre corridors (such as a centre back who receives the ball from the goalkeeper) will favour the possibilities of interacting with their teammates in the 4 spatial directions of the field, while a player next to the touchline (a full back who receives the ball at maximum width) will have at

least one direction blocked and then 3 out of 4 chances of interacting with their teammates.

Figure 2: Possible directions of relationship based on position



Source: own elaboration.

For this reason, many teams defending in build-up play start their pressure when it reaches one of the full backs of the team in possession of the ball. This is because they want to take advantage of the fewer relationship options that the new possessor will have, using the touchline as one more player who recovers the ball.

Besides, identifying the trajectories that rivals use to obstruct these connection paths will be another fundamental aspect when finding alternative solutions to progress or

continue to retain possession during the build-up play phase. The same body shape will be a very important factor when it comes to obtaining information directly and, consequently, acting in a certain way.

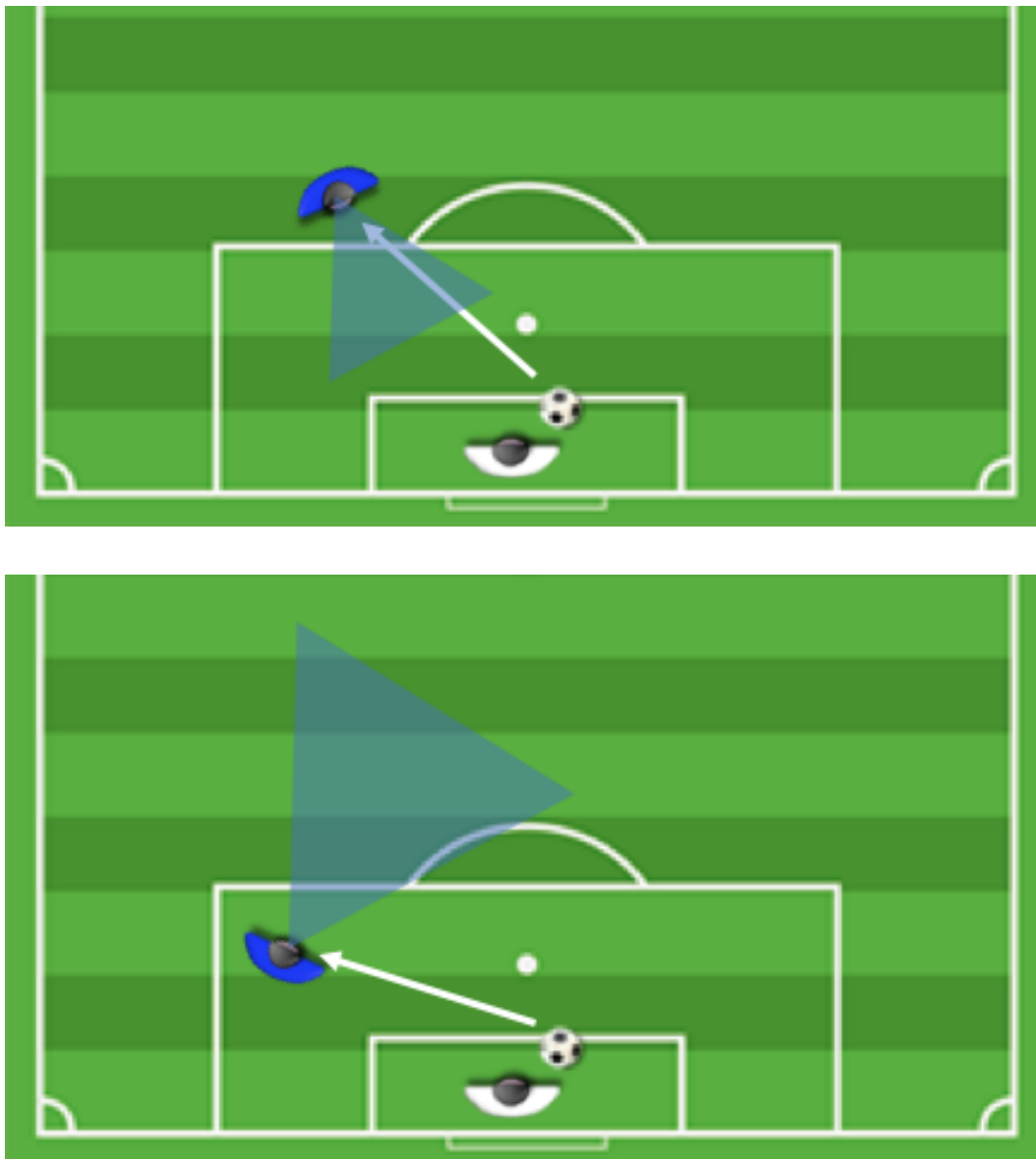
A correct location (according to the objectives) will allow obtaining a lot of information and executing the next action at the exact moment and in the best way, always according to the previous intentions. It is a matter of *vision of the game* applied in the 3 temporal moments, or in other words, seeing what happened before receiving the ball to get ready (before), act in the most correct way in relation to the information that has been obtained from the environment (during), and then keep on looking to understand how you can participate in the next play (after).

As shown in the following picture, receiving a ball with the back to the rival goal will hardly allow a player to continue the next action of the game more quickly than if they receive it facing the rival playing field: the information changes, as well as the time needed to turn or the behaviours that can be adopted, and the way in which the rivals will be able to act, which will affect the very performance of the player.

Seeing all or most of the pitch is a fundamental advantage as it will allow the player to easily choose the best option from the ones they have at their disposal.

Many teams tend to identify the beginning of their pressure when an opponent receives with the back to the rival goal (concept of covered ball) since the situation in which the possessor finds themselves will not allow them to play forward, but at least quickly.

Figure 3: The same body shape affects a player's visual

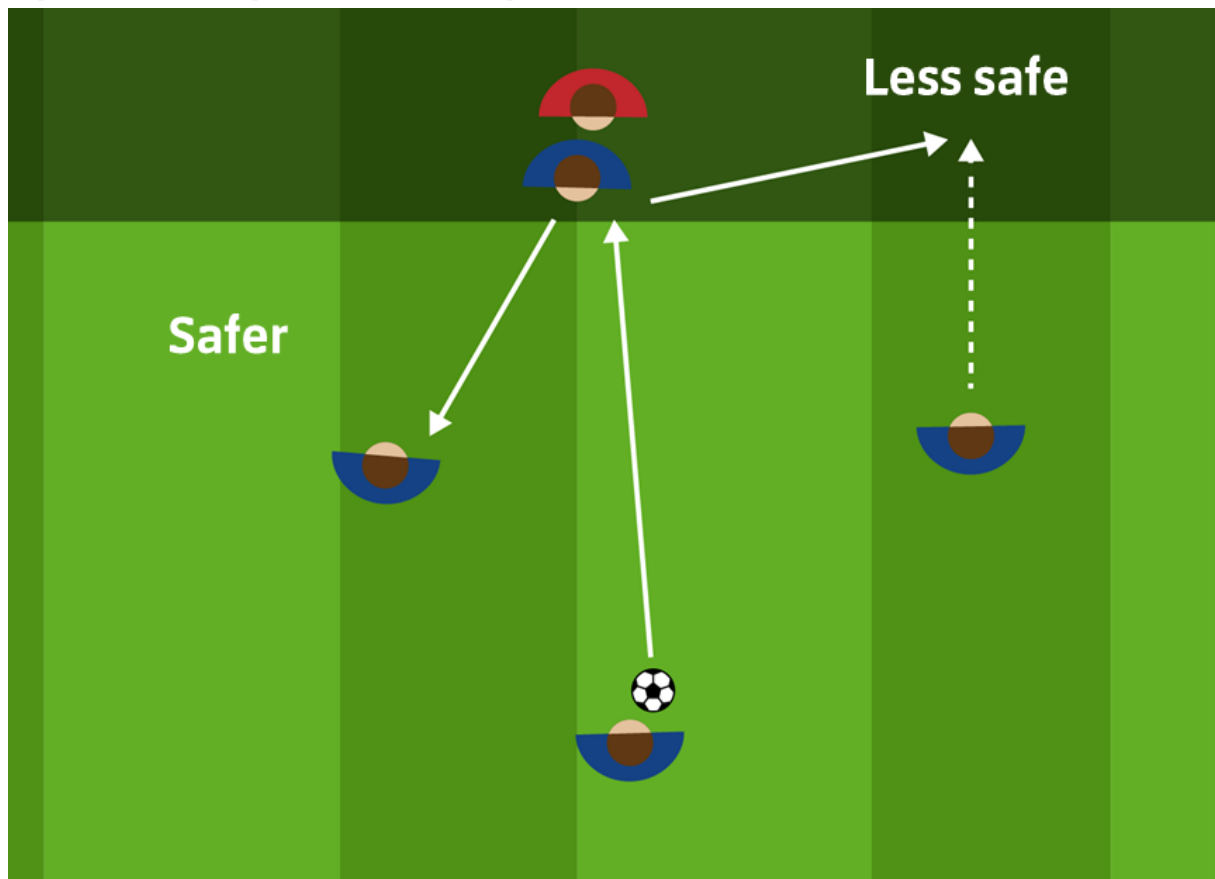


Source: own elaboration.

Obviously, it will always be easier for the possessor to play where they are oriented and can look since they are obtaining information about their environment. In case they receive with the back to the rival goal, it would be safer to interact with a teammate who is in better conditions than them to see what is happening on the rival playing field (concept of playing facing), so they will probably be able to make better decisions.

Attempting a pass in depth or in parallel while turning will increase, depending on the situation in which the player finds themselves, the chances of losing the ball, which will favour the rival's recovery.

Figure 4: Choosing the safest playing options in relation to the location



Source: own elaboration.

Consequently, understanding how a player can influence the game through their location will be important when it comes to obtaining relevant information during the analysis of the build-up play phase.

We do not forget that we can apply the same principle during the recovery phase: locating in relation to the rival possessor and their close or distant relationship possibilities will be very important when it comes to achieving recovery.

The supports

"The supports allow helping the teammate who has the ball" (J. Vilá, personal communication, 2017).

Moving and locating yourself in relation to the ball, teammates and rivals allows generating *relationship paths* that we can use (or not) based on the specific objective we have.

"Support creates something that does not exist" (Seirul-lo Vargas, personal communication, 2017).

Players' mobility allows developing game alternatives that half a second before did not exist, which creates relationship spaces (*phase spaces*) that provide the possessor with different solutions, among which they will choose the most correct one in that moment. The more relationship options the possessor will have, the easier it will be to choose the best one to progress. They allow the possessor to connect directly with the player offering the support or take advantage of the space that the teammate creates with their performance.

In general, the supports have the following functions:

1. To favour the occasional catch of the ball in the best possible conditions.
2. To facilitate the possessor's decision-making.
3. To facilitate the achievement of the team's objectives by favouring joint actions (in the two phases of the game).
4. To complicate the individual and collective behaviours of the rival.

Then, different types of support will appear. Each of which will have different effects on the dynamics of the game. We will analyse the ones that appear the most in relation to the build-up play phase of the game:

- **Progression support:** it allows directly overcoming one or more opponents or pressure lines with a pass (e.g., a pivot receiving behind the line of the two rival strikers).

Figure 5: Progression support of the pivot



Source: own elaboration.

- **Continuity support:** it allows maintaining the position of the ball and alter the opponent's structure, causing imbalances in order to progress (e.g., a pass from a centre back to another centre back so as to overcome the rival striker).

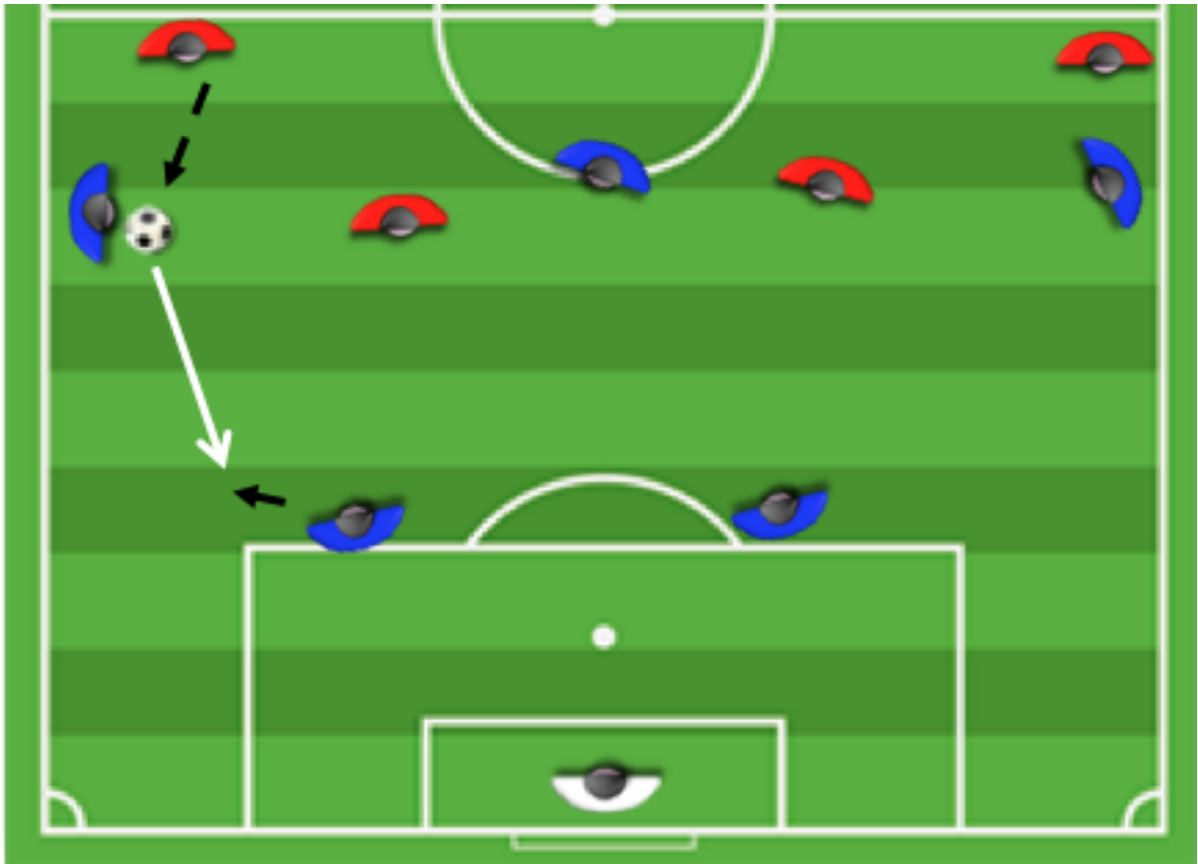
Figure 6: Continuity support of the centre back



Source: own elaboration.

- **Emergency support:** an easy way out is offered to the teammate under pressure or with difficulty in order to keep the possession of the ball (e.g., a centre back offers a passing line approaching a full back under pressure from a rival winger).

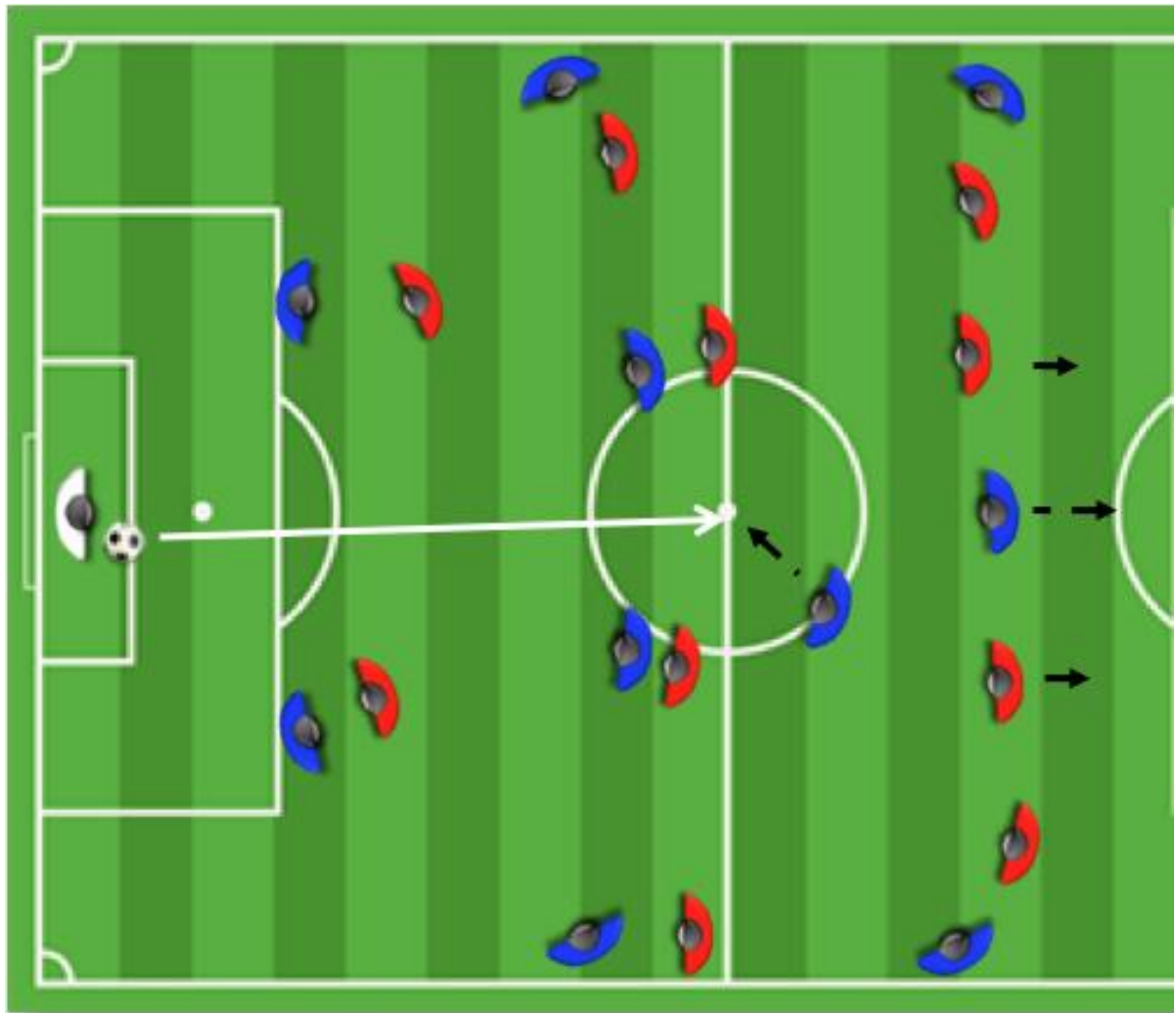
Figure 7: Emergency support of the centre back to full back



Source: own elaboration.

- **Attraction support:** it happens when a teammate moves to attract an opponent's mark to the ball and generate other passing lines for the possessor (e.g., inside forwards approaching the goalkeeper to create reception spaces for the attacking midfielder).

Figure 9: Attract the attention support of the striker to favour inside forward's or attacking midfielder's reception



Source: own elaboration.

- **Blocking support:** when a player, due to their position or their attempt to fulfil a previous trajectory, obstructs or prevents the rival from intervening on the possessor or the receiver (e.g., a pivot blocking the trajectory of the striker that jumps to centre back).

Figure 10: Blocking support of the pivot on rival striker



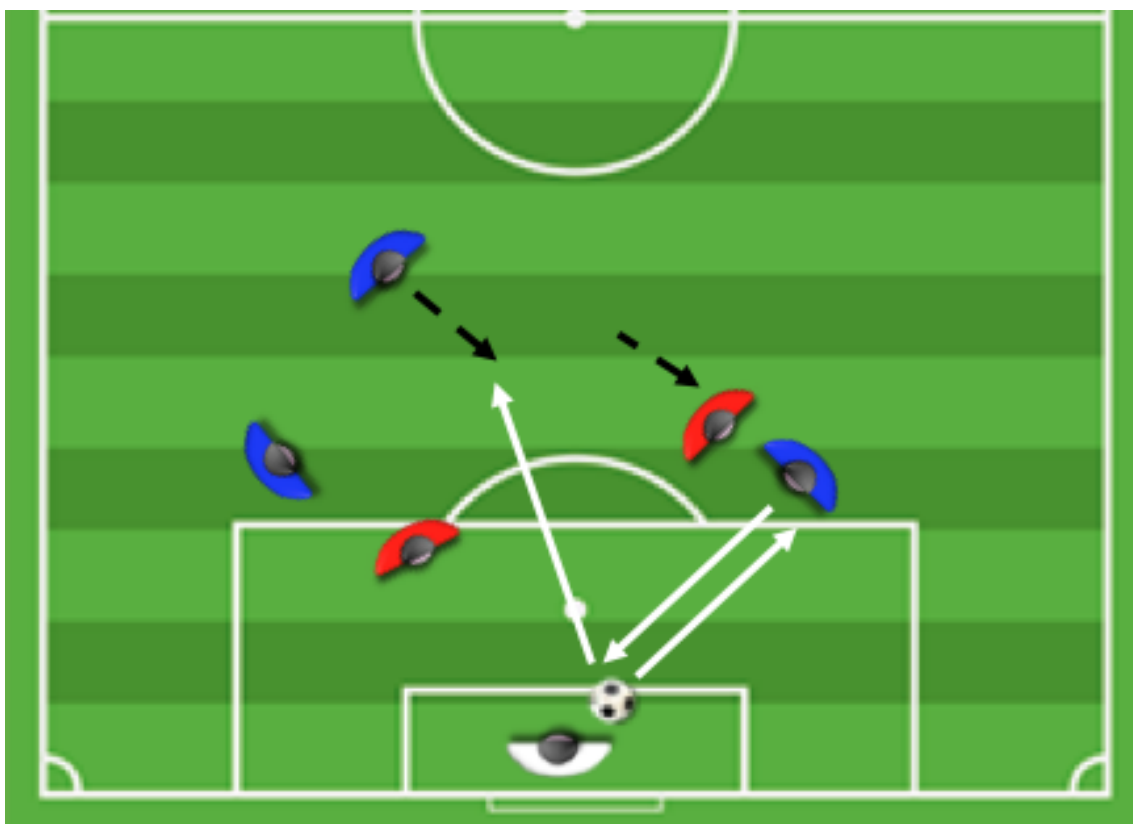
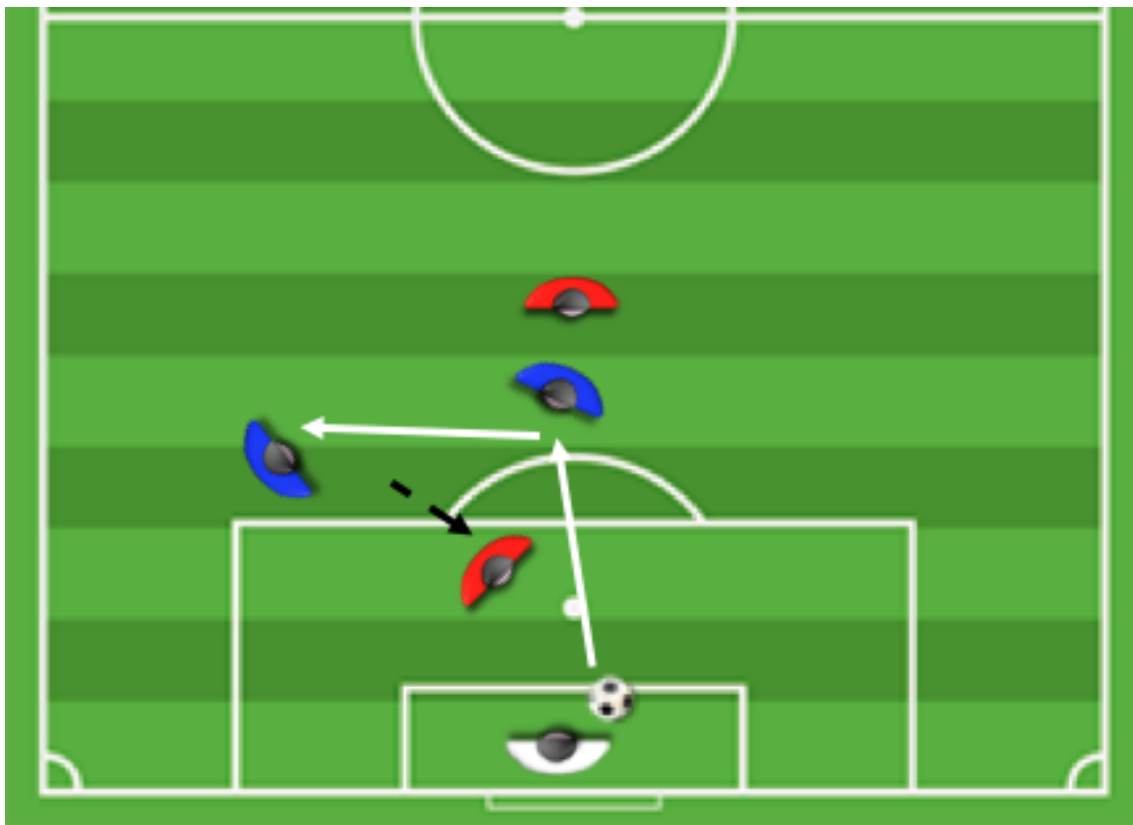
Source: own elaboration.

- **Third-man support:** it happens when the possessor (first man) is indirectly related to a teammate (third man) who has the passing line covered by an opponent, previously passing the ball to another player (second man).

It can be:

- Direct (1st-2nd-3rd): for example, a goalkeeper passes the ball to the pivot, who passes it to a centre back.
- Indirect (1st-2nd-1st-3rd): for example, the goalkeeper repeats the pass with the centre back to give the pivot time to position themselves behind the two strikers.

Figure 11: Third-man support (direct and indirect)



Source: own elaboration.

The distances

All the spatial parameters taught in the previous modules make it possible to identify the distance between the players of the same team and the rival team (pairings-intermediate) in relation to the ball at a given moment.

The movement or the simple position will constantly change the events of each situation. Consequently, these *relationship distances* will make new spaces emerge that will modify the situation of each player on the pitch and will offer them different functions and responsibilities according to each moment.

The distances allow us to identify:

- whether a team tends to maintain its structure or not;
- the possibilities of connection between the players of the same team;
- the possibilities of intervention that each player has in a certain rival player;
- the ability of each player to act in conditions of proximity to an opponent.

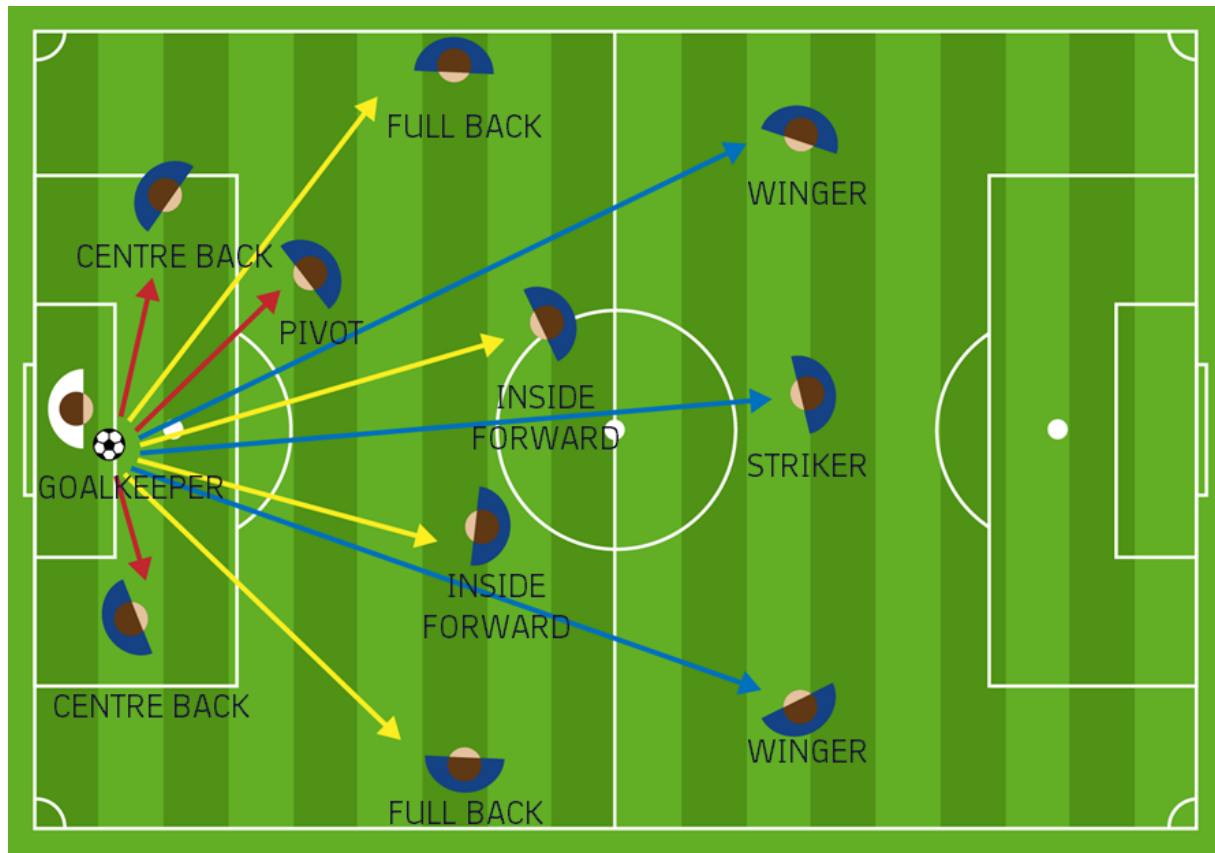
In the previous module, each team was divided in relation to the substructures based on the zones (lines) and the corridors (axes). Now, the organisation of the teams will be differentiated on the basis of the dynamic distances in relation to the ball.

We can differentiate the players into two general groups:

- 1) Players close to the ball.
- 2) Players far from the ball.



Figure 12: Possibilities of connection of the goalkeeper at a certain moment of the game based on the distances



Source: own elaboration.

These distances will directly affect the modalities of connection between the possessor and a possible receiver because factors such as the length of the pass, its trajectory, or the time necessary for the connection will change; therefore, they will also affect the rival's possibilities of intervening to recover the ball.

Taking into account the negative and positive aspects of each situation (playing long or short balls, for instance) will be an argument to be discussed in the last module.

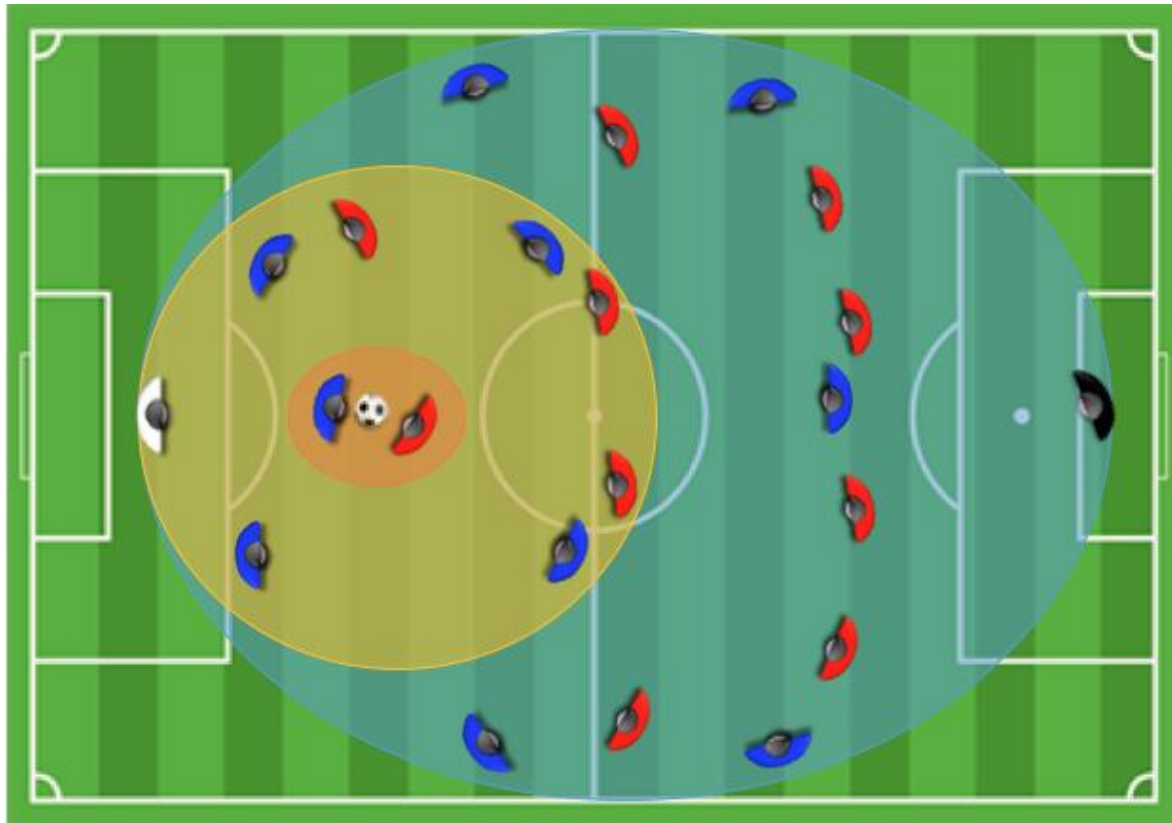
Francisco Seirul-lo Vargas (2017, personal communication) proposes the concept of *space of phase*, which will change its name according to the main functions that it performs in both phases of the game:

- 1) **Space of Intervention:** space where the *ball*, the *possessor*, and the *direct rival* are located.
 - **Direct intervention in the ball:** it influences and directly affects the organisation of the other spaces (the ball as the most important reference).

- 2) **Space of mutual help:** spaces *close* to the ball. It will be the players who are closest to the ball in each direction and are related to the possessor or the first player that recovers the ball.
- **In possession of the ball:** they offer the possessor pass options through supports and movements and can also create spaces for the progression of the latter.
 - **Without possession of the ball:** they cause density around the ball by covering and blocking these possibilities of connection between the rival possessor and the receiver with the main intention of recovering the ball without leaving this space.
- 3) **Space of cooperation:** far away players are positioned so that, when they take part in the game, they play in an effective and productive way. Direct participations in the play will only depend on the actual needs of the team, and they ensure that there are 11 proactive players in the game at any moment.
- **In possession of the ball:** they cooperate to allow the possessor and close teammates to act more easily, creating spaces in the zone close to the ball through their own locations. They can be references for longer connections that will make it possible to make the most of the imbalances in the rival structure.
 - **Without possession of the ball:** they monitor the furthest supports, compensating for the spaces made by teammates who jump to press and are the last possible players that recover the ball.



Figure 13: Space of phase with ball to the pivot during build-up play



Source: own elaboration.

Each of these spaces of relationship has these different functions that must always be recognised by each of the players in the two phases of the game, so that the team can establish an effective organisation.

As general organisational criteria, each teammate will have to interact with the teammate closest to the ball zone.

Locating oneself at different heights to offer passing lines, conveniently separating oneself to separate opponents or getting closer to attract them and give support. These are the parameters that we will have to take into account during the evaluation of how players relate within these relationship distances. They will be an important filter that will allow us to understand the map of the structure of the two teams at any moment and know their possibilities of action to favour and improve the temporal and spatial conditions of those who intervene. Moreover, this organisation will be responsible for the effectiveness and efficiency that the team will achieve during the two phases of the game, that is, the chances of recovery will depend directly on the order obtained through the circulation of the ball, before the loss, and vice versa.

Trajectories

Each player must execute their motor action in a certain direction and with certain trajectories that will state their playing intentions. We can divide the trajectories into two general categories:

1) Trajectories with the ball.

- **Passes:** players associate with each other through passes and, consequently, communicate. Each pass is an intention, an opportunity, and a message that a player offers to their teammate in order to collectively accomplish an objective. "The trajectory of the pass will then be conditioned by the technical possibilities of the players and the correct tactical opportunity" (Casáis Martínez and Lago Peñas, 2006, p. 123). We can distinguish different types of pass that imply a change in the opponent's structure:
 - **Passes that overcome lines:** they allow us to progress by taking advantage of a possible positional advantage.
 - **Passes that do not overcome lines:** they allow moving the rival to cause imbalances in their structure and gain advantages of some kind.

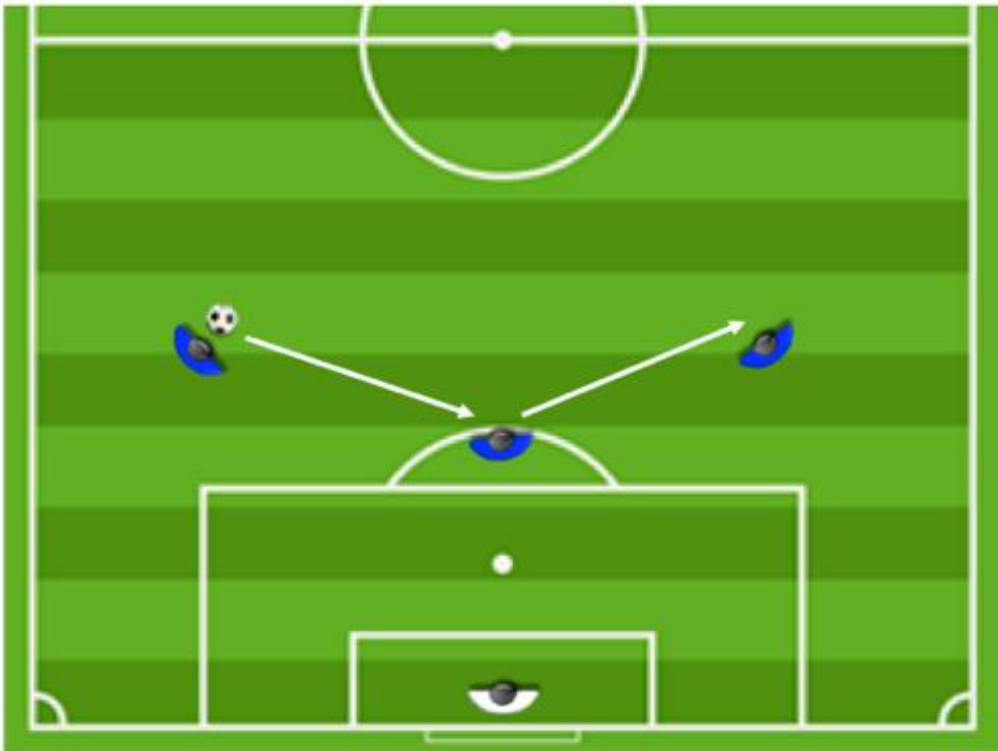
In this dynamic, we can:

- **Play with the near teammate: to attract rivals or make them move.**

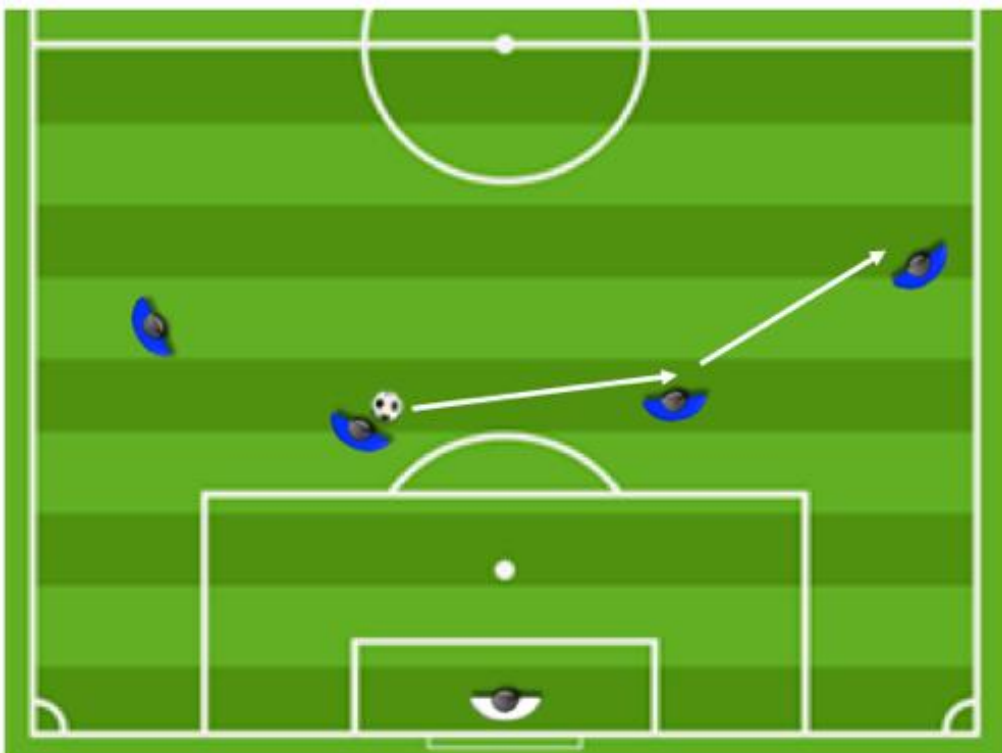


Figure 14: Play with near teammates

Centre back 1 – Centre back 2 – Centre back 3



Centre back/Centre back – Full back



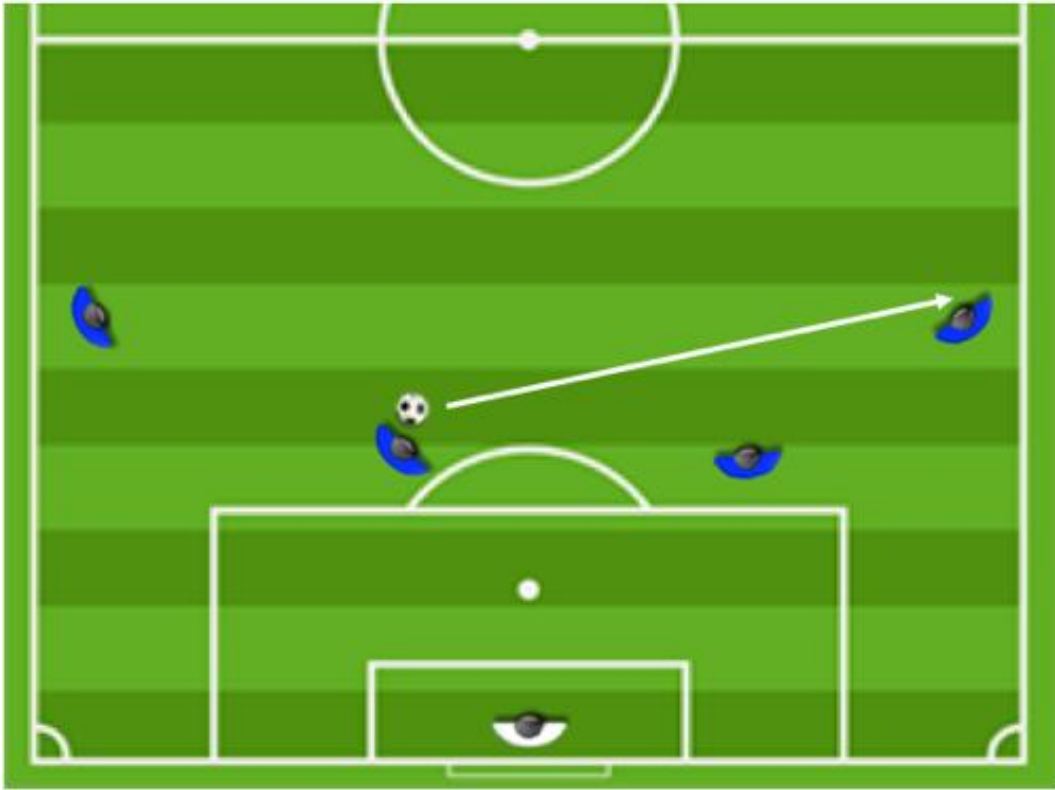
Source: own elaboration.



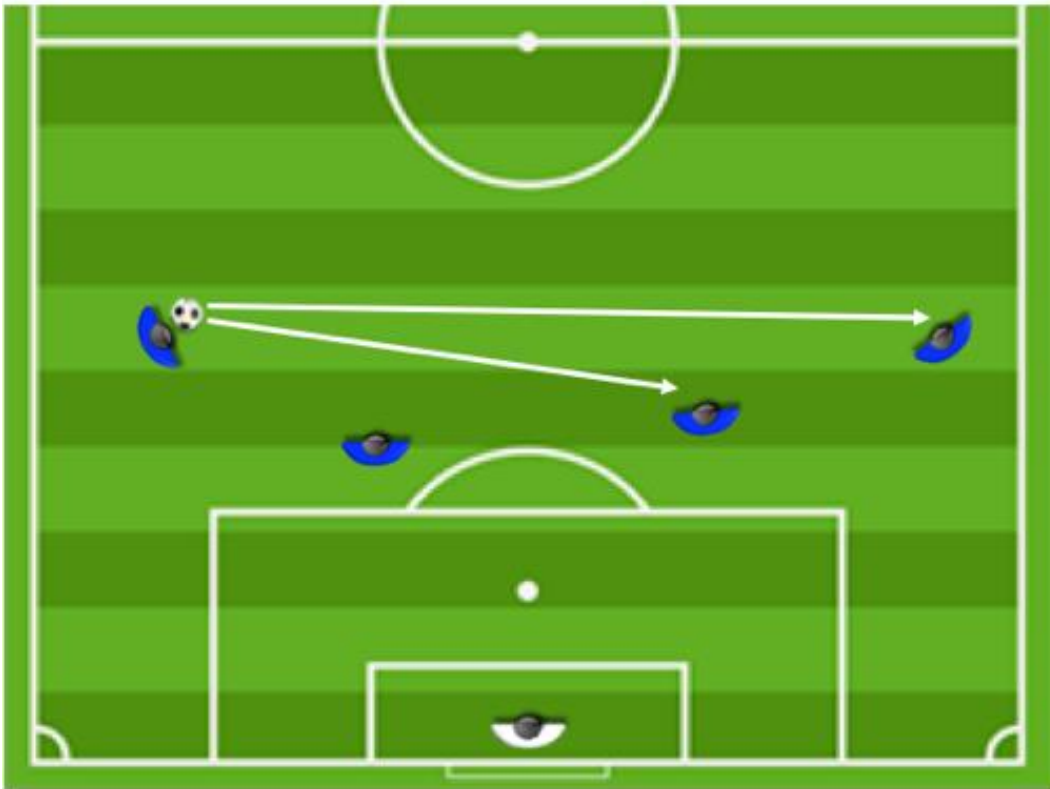
- **Skipping the nearest teammate and playing with a further one:** to force the rival to shuffle over or take advantage of the free spaces they make.

Figure 15: Playing with far teammates

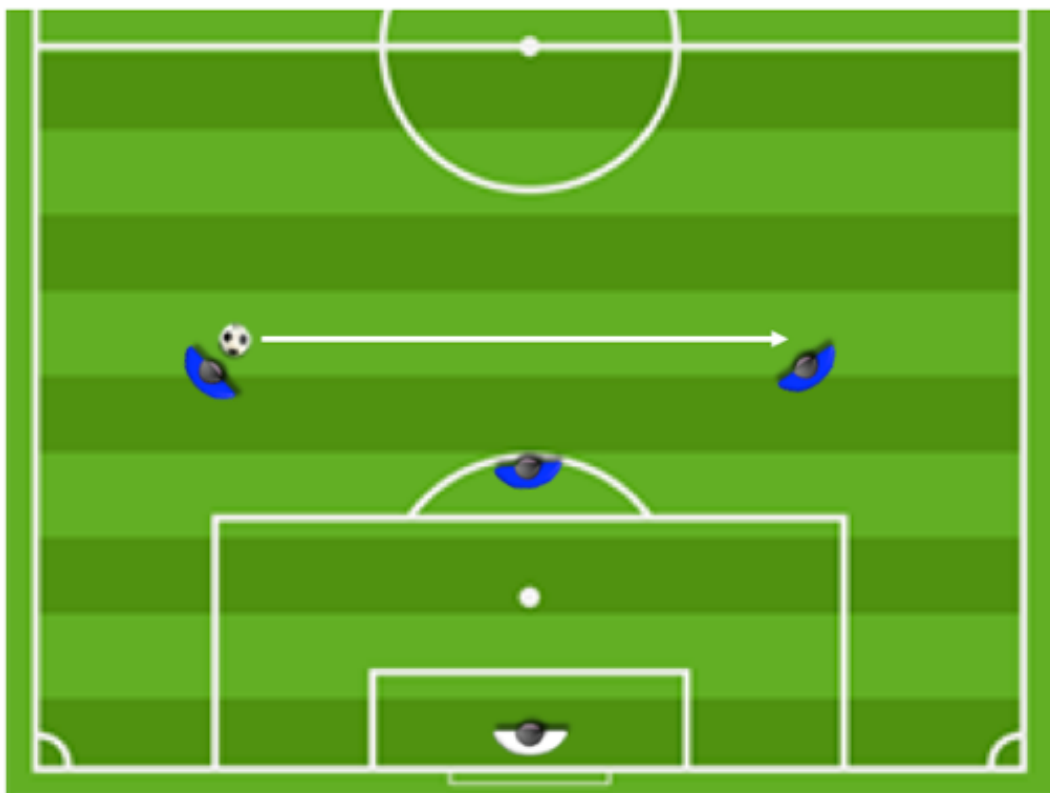
Centre back – Full back



Full back – Centre back/Full back



Centre back 1 – Centre back 3



Source: own elaboration.



- **Repeating passes:** it allows us to attract rivals, create spaces, and give teammates time to better position themselves.

However, if it is simplified, there will always be three possibilities when playing with a ball, each with its specific effects on the game:

- **Diagonal:** it allows to overcome lines and facilitate the next play, and the receiver will be located facing the game.
- **Vertical:** it allows to overcome lines or move them.
- **Horizontal:** it allows to move lines in order to attract rivals and make space.

Obviously, more specific factors such as the force generated to the ball, the height of the pass, its distance, or its direction, will directly affect the effectiveness of the pass. Therefore, each player will have to manage each characteristic in the best possible way. It is not the same to make a pass in the space as it is to the foot or to one leg instead of the other. We need to understand how a team manages to disorganise its rivals through passes.

A very obvious example of how these specific aspects of a single element of the game, such as the pass, can affect the game in much larger (or macro) scales is taught by women's football. Due to physical and anthropometric reasons, the force produced on the ball by a female player will be different and reduced compared to that of a male player. Therefore, it is difficult to find female players who can manage to move the ball for 40 m or 50 m with the same force like a male player. For this reason, women's teams tend to shuffle over much more towards the side of the ball than men's teams since the times and dynamics of long passes are different.

Another example is that of goal kicks or ball kicks, where it will be common to find female goalkeepers unable to shoot long and reach 3/4 of the rival playing field. For this reason, in these situations, women's teams may find themselves in higher blocks in the recovery phase than those of the men, which will affect the behaviour—among many other aspects—of the defensive line.

These are examples of how elements called *micro* can have *macro* repercussions on the game. As analysts, knowledge of detail will be one more tool to be used so as to favour qualitative information in the reports.



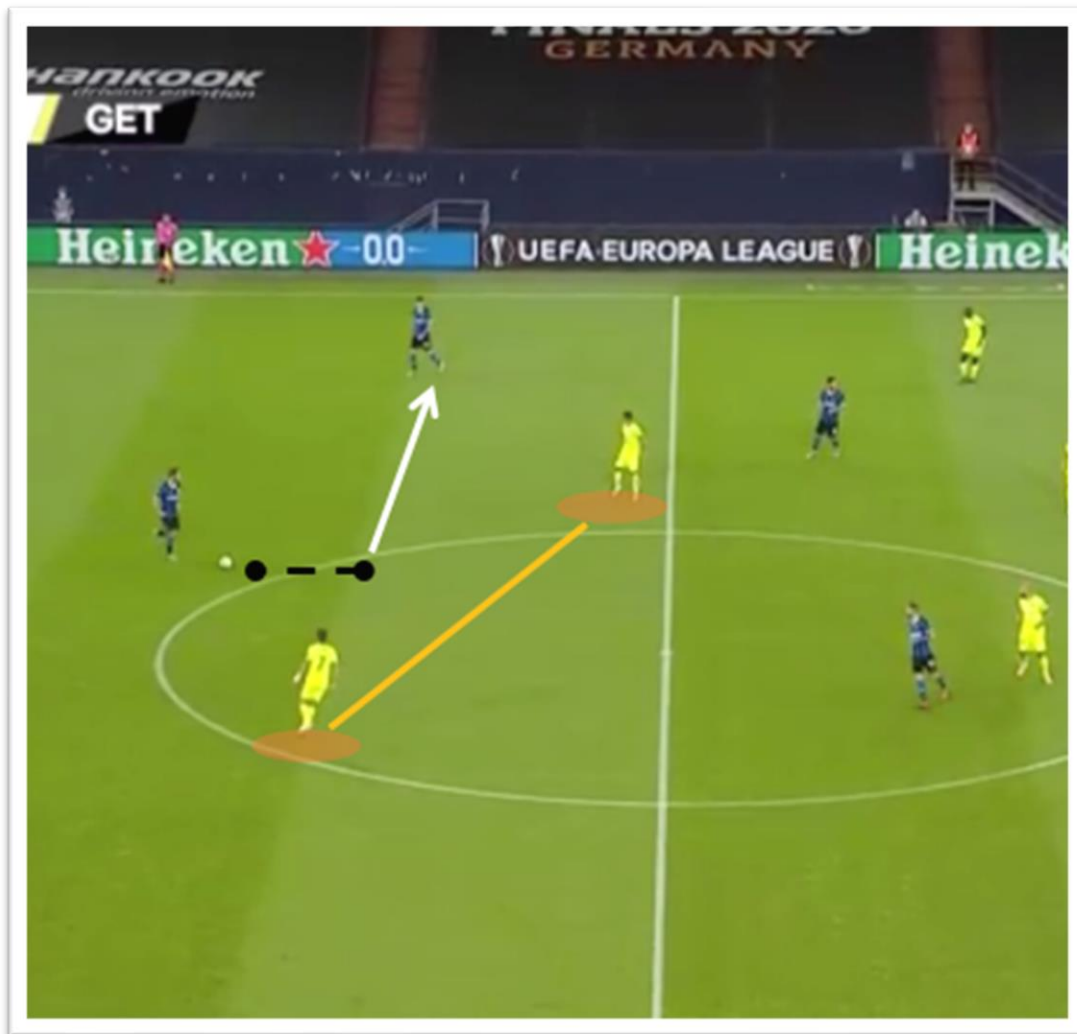
- **Dribbles:** they are very important tools that make it possible to attract rivals, attract the attention of them and drag them or take advantage of free spaces to establish superiorities as well as time the action to allow teammates to locate themselves and create favourable conditions for the action to continue.

A modification of the rival structure can be forced by dribbling:

- towards *specific openings* (between two rival players or lines);
- towards *specific players* to attract them and occasionally free some companions;
- towards certain zones of the pitch to attract rivals.

Figure 16: Dribbles with the ball from the centre back towards rival/openings





Source: own elaboration.

It is in the perception of the situation and in the player's ability to understand the risks that they can take while dribbling in initial zones. If they are the last player, they have to minimise possible losses of the ball that could compromise the result, detecting the minimum distance in which to attract the direct rival who jumps to press (safety distance of 3-4 m).

2) Trajectories without the ball.

- **Team players in possession:** identify movements that allow the appearance of passing lines or supports.
 - Frontal, lateral, diagonal, curved (detachments).
 - Towards the ball, getting away from the ball.

- In front of the rival, behind the rival.
 - Inward, outward.
 - With previous fake.
 - Do not occupy the same space of your teammate simultaneously.
 - Adapt pace and speed.
 - Move in order to always orient yourself towards the play.
- **Team players in recovery:** they have the objective of obstructing passing lines or preventing the clean circulation of the rival in possession, forcing them to go to the places on the field that will allow to recover the ball. Different factors must be taken into account according to the relationship space in which a player is:
 - Do not jump in.
 - Value distance when harassing.
 - Identify the good leg of the player in possession and cover it with own trajectory (identify their laterality).
 - Use defensive fakes.
 - Guide the possessor to play inward or outward.
 - Jump in an odd or even way.
 - Press the rival possessor who does not see them.
 - Avoid deep relationships.
 - Identify nearby supports and position to cover passing lines or personal marking.
 - Trajectories to compensate teammates who jump to the pressure.
 - Position yourself between the ball and your own goal or towards the space where you want to recover.



- Prevent orientation changes in the rival circulation.

Figure 17: A curved trajectory from striker to goalkeeper to obstruct pass lines with centre back (concept of *non-assigned man pressure* when the possessor has no possibility of playing with our assigned man)



Source: own elaboration.

We will delve into the concept of *attract the attention*, as it is a very important element of the game, especially during the build-up play phase; even though it is perhaps underestimated. In the study of the dynamic elements that has been performed, the concept of *attract the attention* appears as a consequence of the use of some of these elements, but it is worthwhile to entirely cover this subject.

Attract the attention allows studying the performance of the rival with the behaviour, cancelling, or delaying their intervention, enabling us to cause important imbalances in the rival structure. Consequently, it facilitates the appearance of favourable contexts so as to reach the objectives in the game.

Attract the attention or attraction forces the opponent to close towards the centre corridors and make space outside to connect with the full backs or wingers. Playing outside, attracting the rivals by shuffle over concept creates imbalances to play again inside.

The players who attract the attention those who are far away as regards their position allow the creation of spaces near the ball since they split the rival block in two, and vice versa: the players who attract rivals to the ball allow the creation of spaces in distant areas.

It can be considered that there are different ways of attract the attention one or more rivals, and that would depend on the situation in which they are. All of them have the same intention of facilitating spaces that a player or their teammates will take advantage of so as to make a build-up play more easily:

- **Possessor:**

- **Stop:** to invite rivals to jump and create space, attracting the attention of the rival that arrives.
- **Dribble:** towards players (assigned man or non-assigned man) or openings that are possibly not in line so as to make opponents move further and create more spaces.
- **Pass:** by repeating a pass, one or more rivals can be attracted. On the other hand, passing the ball to a certain place before going to another (third man) will attract rivals to a place on the pitch different from the one you actually want to go to, which will alter the structure and disorganise the rival team.

- **Non-possessor:**

- Locate between two rivals.
- Move to take zone marks away from the ball.
- Move to attract rivals and create spaces for oneself or for teammates.
- Move to delay the intervention of an opponent in the zone of the ball.
- Appear within the rival visual field to be individualised and to attract the attention.

The moment

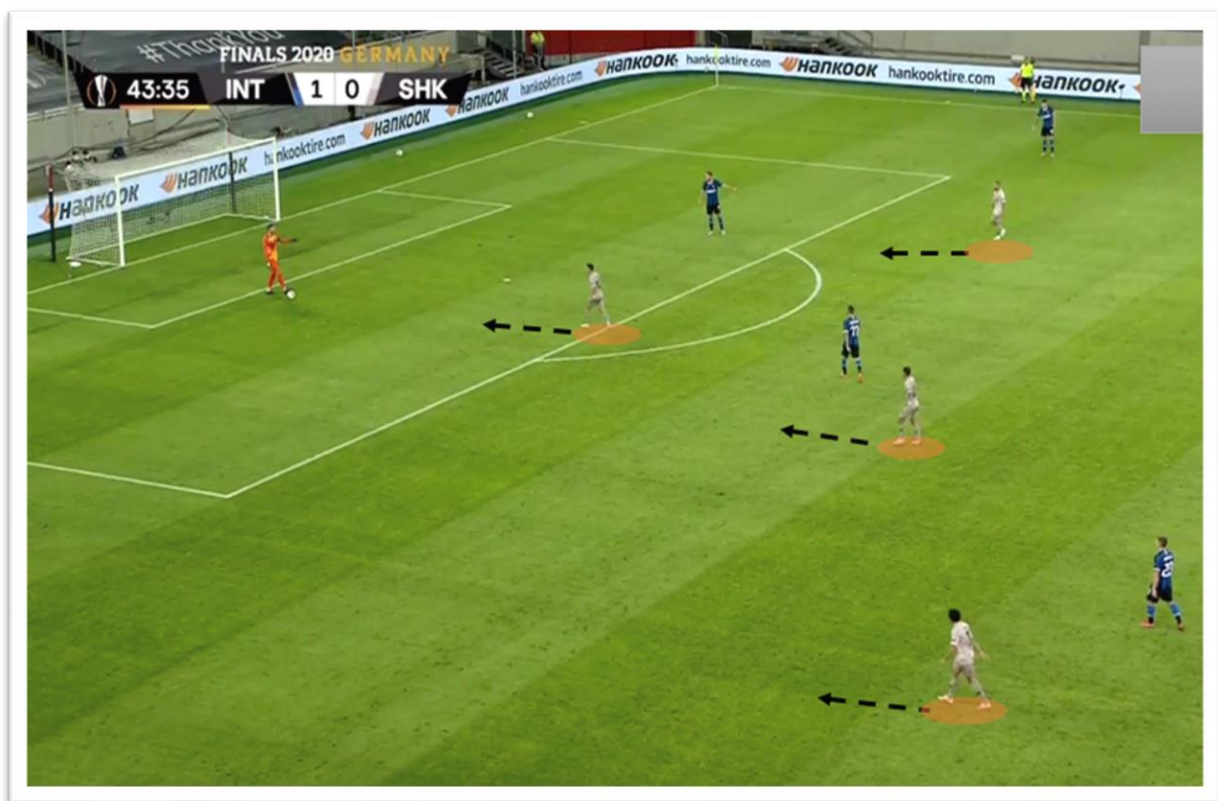
"Time manages everything" (Seirul-lo Vargas, personal communication, 2017).

The number and speed of the actions of each of the players and the movement of the ball will give the team a certain *pace of play* at a specific moment of the game. It is related to space and time.

Knowing how to manage the correct moments (*timing*) to carry out a certain action (individual or collective) will be fundamental for game effectiveness, i.e., to fulfil the purposes prior to their execution.

The movements of the ball are those that build up speed in the game. We must be aware that "slowing down the game" in certain parts of the field, pausing the pace (for example, centre back and full back repeating passes between them) will allow us to "speed up" in other parts (for instance, by repeating the pass, the rival winger and the striker have been attracted so that the inside forward can receive between the lines and place us more quickly on the rival playing field).

Figure 18: A goalkeeper steps on the ball to attract rivals and create spaces



Source: own elaboration.

We can classify two types of pace of play:

- **Pace of the circulation:** individual and collective ability to manage time and possession to influence the rival organisation. As this pace can vary—that is, moments of circulation can be slower or faster—it must always be taken into

account how each of these two variables will affect the organisation of the defending team.

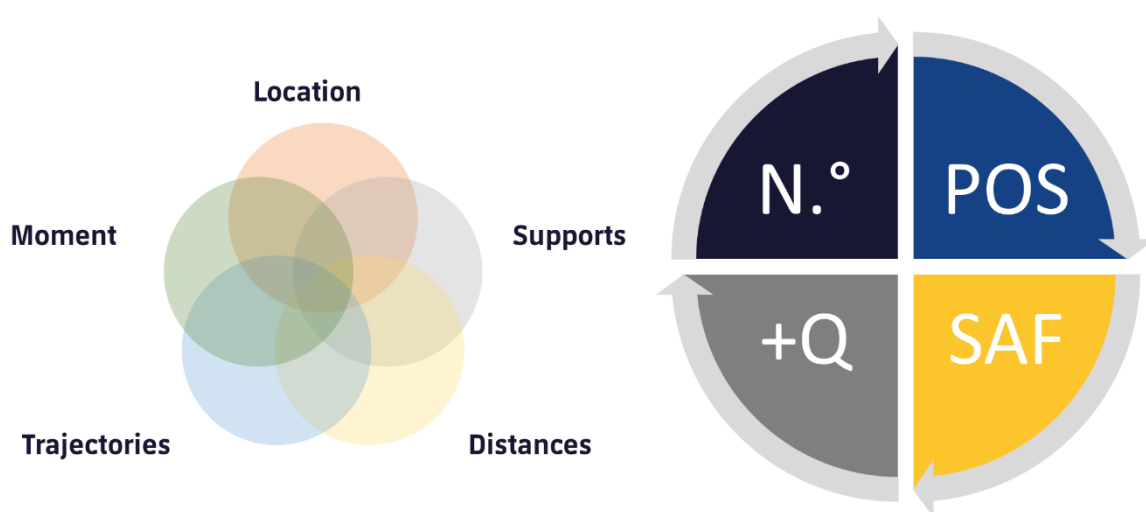
- **Pace of the pressure:** sum of individual movement speeds to hinder rival possession. Theoretically, pressure can also modify these two moments since it is possible to choose to increase the pressure if the opponent is in difficulties or with a ball very close to the goal, or slow it down if there are no options to recover the ball soon. The choice of pressure times will depend on the characteristics of the rivals, the physical demands, and the moments of the game.

Alternating between moments of low paces and moments of higher paces will be a factor that will have to be taken into account in the analysis and in both phases of the game since it will allow us to understand when and how a team changes these situations during a game and how a team reacts based on this. For instance, there are many teams that start the game trying to build-up play from behind in a more combined way, but that dynamic can change during the game, modifying the style of build-up play or its pace. Therefore, it must be understood if it is something that depends on a specific strategy or if it is a reaction to changes in behaviour in the rival.

Another example in the other phase of the game is to observe how many teams change the type of pressure in the build-up play of the rival and the pace of this during the game (depending on factors such as physical condition, result, etc.).

The advantages (superiorities) in the game

Figure 19: Elements (criteria) and advantages (superiorities)



Source: own elaboration.

Why do we organise ourselves? What are the goals of such an organisation?

The connection of all the elements taught above allows a dynamism in the game that causes the emergence and creation of certain **space-time advantages** on the field, due to the constant interaction of all the players. Finding them will allow developing favourable situations according to the objectives or bringing about others, increasing the chances of success in each game situation. These advantages are not stable, but they must be taken advantage of at the moment in which they occur since, due to the very dynamism of the game, a second later they can disappear.

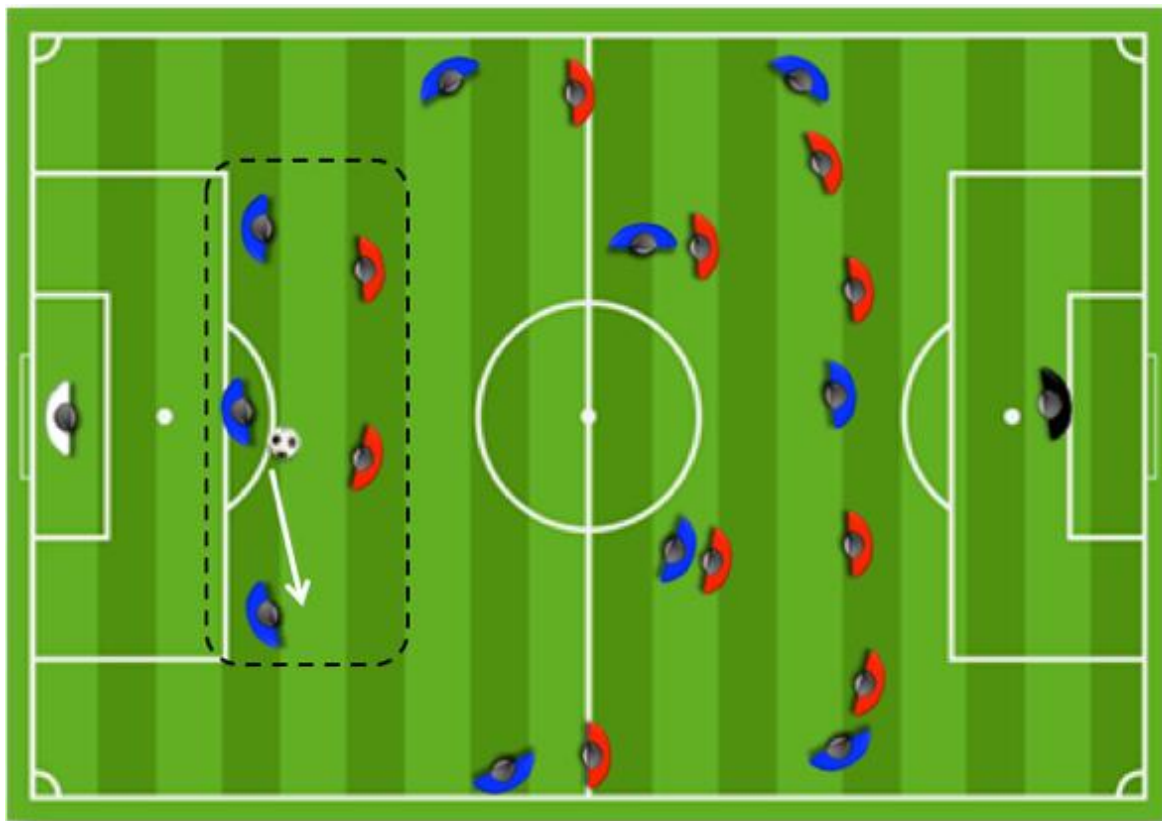
Knowing what advantages can be created will help to analyse how a team in the build-up play phase alters its behaviour to condition that of the rival and allow the creation of some of these advantages in order to reach the rival playing field in the best possible conditions.

We can classify 4 types of advantages:

- **Numerical:** it is the presence of more players from one team than from another in a specific place on the field (for example, a pivot going down between centre backs to create a 3 versus 2 in zone A, against the two rival strikers that jump to the pressure of the build-up play).



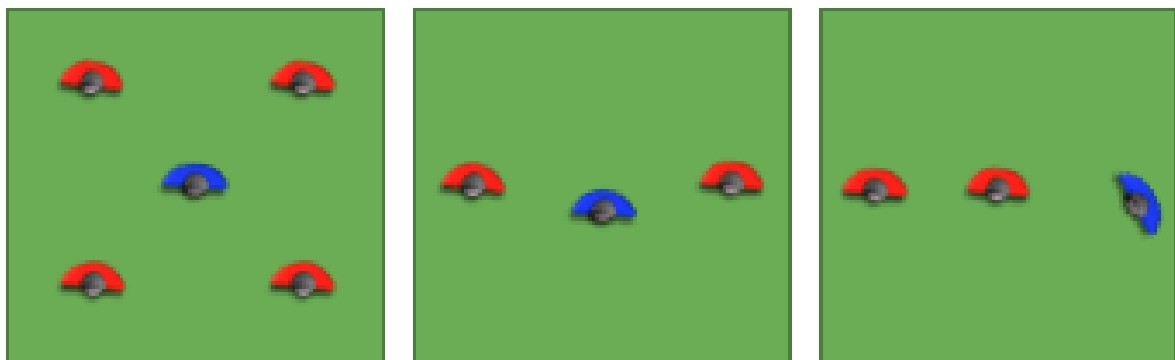
Figure 20: Numerical advantage (3 versus 2)



Source: own elaboration.

- **Positional:** when the player is located in specific spaces (between lines or rivals) to force opponents to close spaces and disorganise (for example, a pivot who is located behind the two rival strikers that jump). There are 3 types:
 - Between lines.
 - Inter lines.
 - Out of lines.

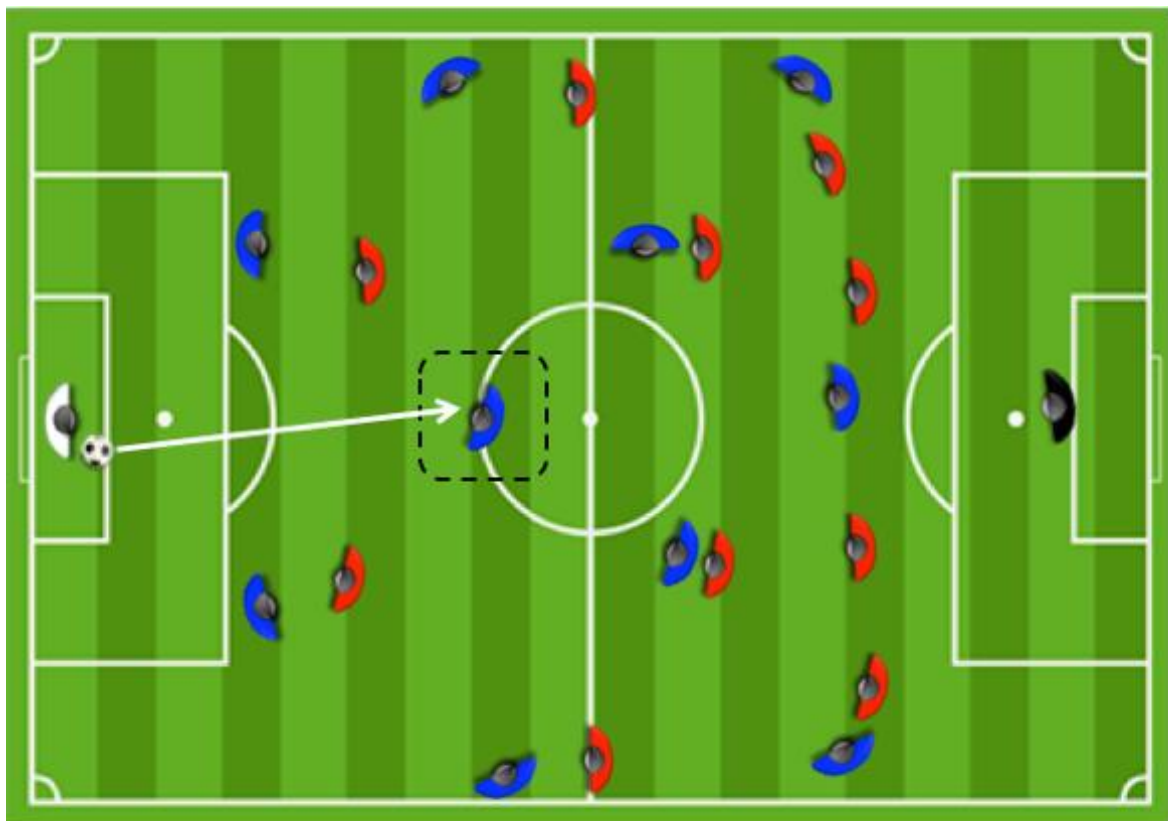
Figure 21: Different types of positional advantage



Source: own elaboration.

Each team will place differently (according to their strategies and the qualities of the team members) players behind the different pressure lines or on the sides of the rival block to take advantage of those opportunities that the previous circulation has given during the build-up play. The objective of this will be to progress towards the rival playing field and establish favourable contexts for the most destabilising players.

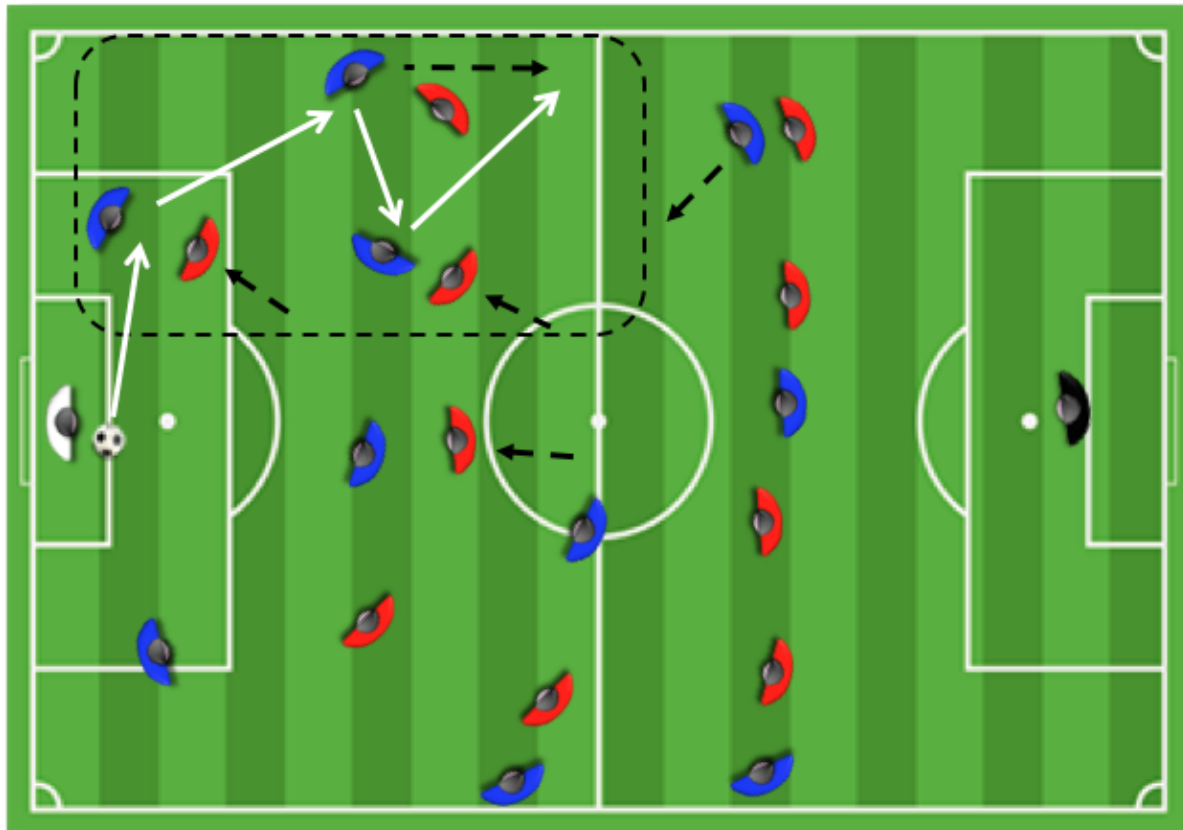
Figure 22: Positional advantage (pivot between lines)



Source: own elaboration.

- **Dynamic (or socio-affective):** when the relationship between certain players is better than that of their rivals (for example, ability to build-up play in short, although under high pressure from the opponent in a reduced space).

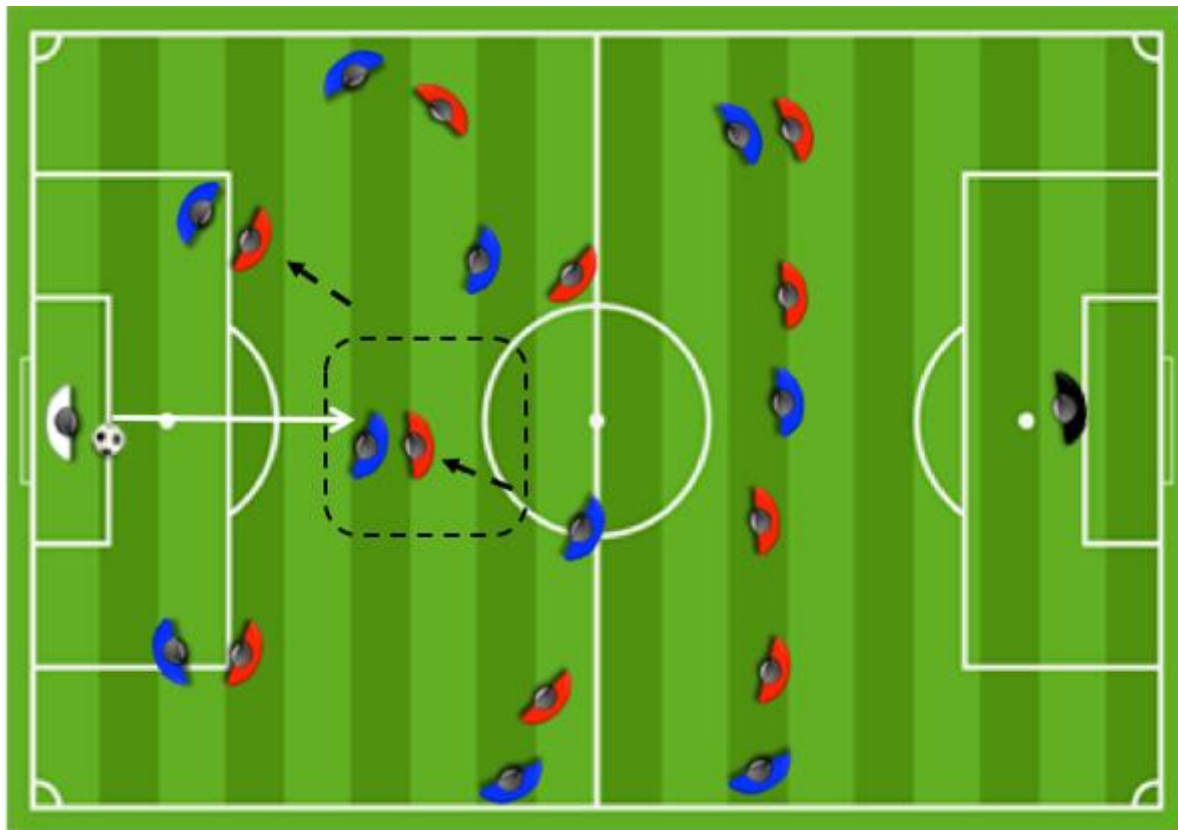
Figure 23: Dynamic advantage (effective relationship among centre back, pivot and full back)



Source: own elaboration.

- **Qualitative:** when a player has technical, physical, and decision-making capacities that allow them to effectively cope with a certain situation in the two phases of the game (for example, the pivot's capacity not to lose the ball under pressure).

Figure 24: Qualitative advantage (pivot managing to act under pressure)



Source: own elaboration.

Each advantage is momentary and temporary, i.e., it appears and disappears continuously according to the very many interactions occurring between the two teams.

It is necessary to understand that everyone participates constantly in the game and that the team acts as a functional unit in order to create and have superiorities or advantages at each moment of the game through its self-organisation.

The team in possession of the ball will have two ways of gaining these advantages:

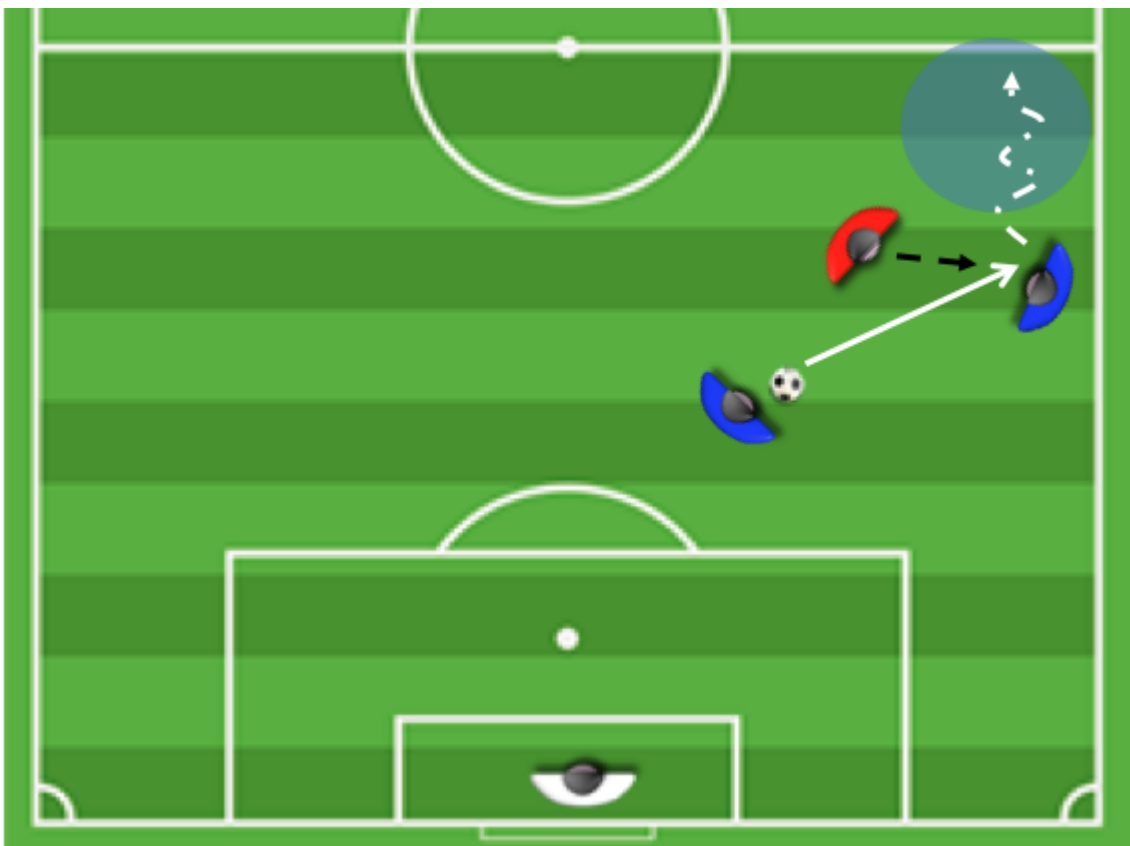
- 1) By directly taking advantage of those that the rival leaves with their pressure.
- 2) By getting them circulating the ball, in which case it will be necessary to attract/keep the opponents busy and then find a free player from your own team.

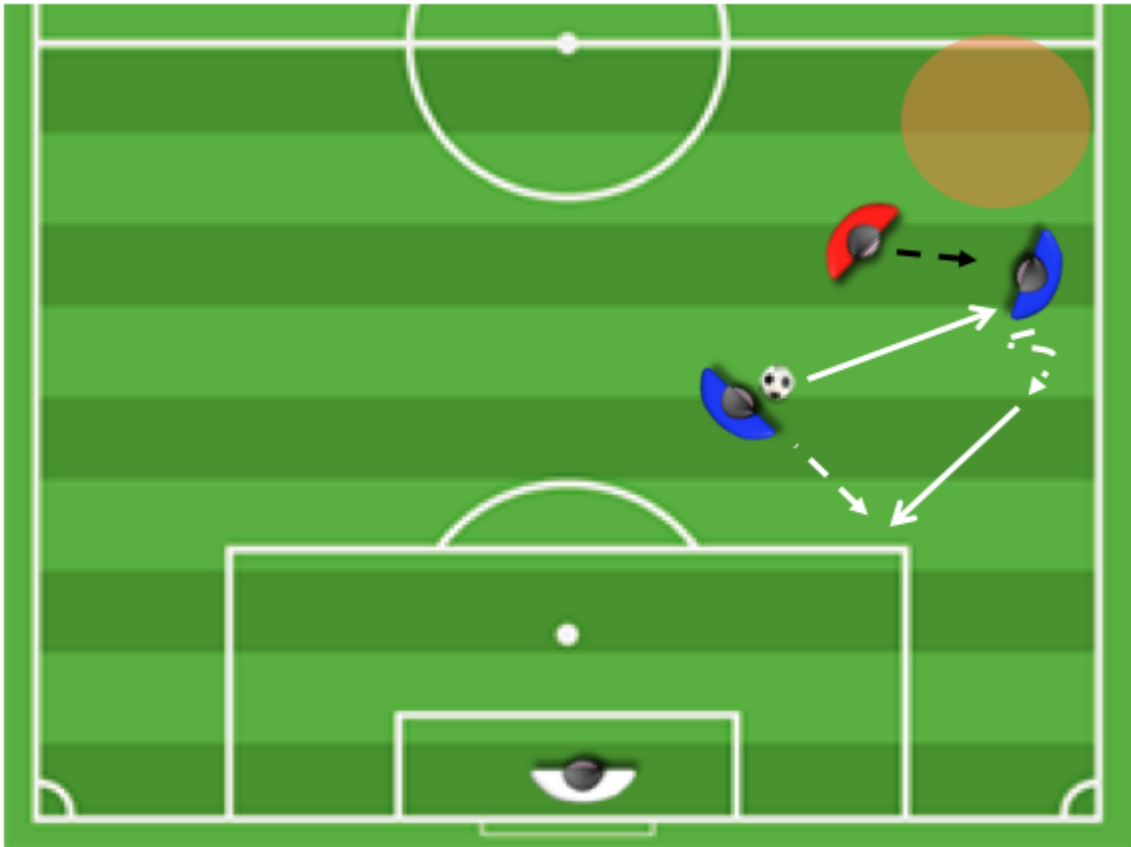
In general, if the opponent is not moving, you have to make them do so by moving the ball. For this reason, especially during the build-up play phase, it will be necessary to be patient, that is, to be aware that it will be difficult to make a build-up play in the first circulation, and that it will be necessary not to take risks to force the play.

Once the advantage is gained—whatever it may be—its use will inevitably depend on very small details that will encompass all the elements that we have previously studied. For instance, if the intention of the team in possession of the ball is to progress down the corridor with the full back that is in line with their direct assigned man, the possible progression will depend on their orientation and the pass that their teammate will give them:

- 1) If the pass is towards their far leg, that is to say, with an advantage so that they can evade the pressure from the rival overcoming them directly with a control, they will be able to progress in the game and use the advantage they had.
- 2) On the contrary, if it is necessary in the same game situation that the body orientation is not correct or that the same pass is, instead of passing towards the far leg or the near leg of the full back, the next action will be different because more touches will be needed and, consequently, more time. This will radically alter the space-time context and perhaps force the player to go back to play with the centre back and thus avoid the pressure from the rival (therefore, they will not use the advantage that was being gained).

Figure 25: Pass to far foot or near foot (centre back with full back)





Source: own elaboration.

The above are examples of how small *micro* details can inevitably influence the entire dynamics of the game (positively or negatively). For this reason, when it comes to understanding the functioning of the two teams during the build-up play phase, it will be important to detect how these advantages can be used, how they are readapted in case players miss the chance to use them and identify the causes.

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