

Module 4. Methodological Trends in SP Training

Having highlighted the relevance of set pieces in current football and after delving into its defensive and offensive analysis, we focus on the training process of these actions. We will try to address this issue from a broad perspective regarding the past and current situation of SP training. In this way, we will begin by deepening the analytical methodology traditionally used until we enter a new integrated proposal for the optimisation of SPs. Apart from relating them at a theoretical level, we will try to provide the student with practical examples of the commented methodological trends.

Unit 4.1 Introduction to SP training

Like any relevant aspect of the game, SPs require a training process in agreement with their importance, considering its characteristics and adapting it at all times to the reality of the players and the team.

It is obvious that one of the most determining factors of performance in football, and even more in SPs, are the conditions of the players. Because of this, we can find coaches who consider it appropriate to hold their players almost fully responsible for the SPs, depending entirely on their inspiration and individual performance on the game day. In this way, they choose to give an almost non-existent role to set pieces in their sports planning.

Nothing is further from reality. We consider that the SP training process must respect and adapt to the individual characteristics of our players, not for comfort, but because generating simulating situations that favour the appearance of certain behaviours such as strengths will increase the chances of success in the action in question. Furthermore, we must be very aware that the characteristics of our players will guide and sometimes define our intervention in the process. Therefore, considering these characteristics and training, accordingly, even knowing that the final performance of the action will be totally multi factorial, we will be closer to achieving the desired objective in a given SP.

In this line, Antic, R. (2017. p 276) cited in Silva Puig, D. (2011) comments the following:

We had a player like Kiko who a point of reference for distribution plays at the offensive game level was and that the rivals committed fouls on him.



We knew in advance that every 45 minutes we would have between 7 and 10 free kicks near the rival area. Knowing this, you have to look within the squad for ways to get the most out of this type of plays. For this we had Pantic, who was an extraordinary specialist in set pieces.

How much time is spent on SP training?

Certainly, there is not much scientific evidence that determines how long a team trains set pieces throughout the season. And certainly, there is no evidence relating this training time to the performance of the team in competition in terms of SPs.

Even so, today everyone is aware that the training of these actions takes little time—generally, no longer than 20 minutes at the end of the weekly micro cycle—in many cases, being optimistic. This makes us, at least, wonder if the low volume of training normally attributed to these actions is coherent in relation to their relevance in the game.

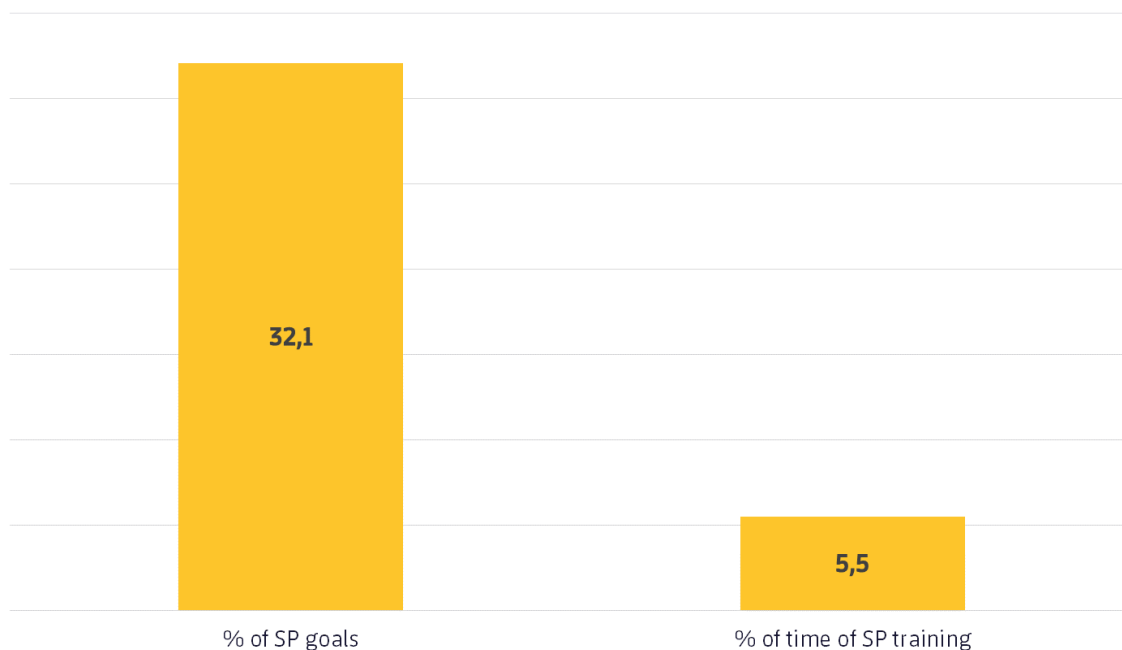
Along these lines, we believe it is appropriate to delve into the study conducted by Silva Puig (2011) where one of its objectives was to determine the training time that a professional team from the Spanish First Division devoted to training set pieces.

One of the key conclusions drawn was that this professional team dedicated 5.5% of the total training time to optimising set pieces during the season (including pre-season). This data is even more significant if we compare it with the demonstrated considerable effectiveness ratio in terms of the SPs goal. In the case of the study, Silva Puig contrasted that 5.5% of the time dedicated to SP training with the percentage of goals scored by SP by the team analysed that season (32.1%), noting a large difference between both values.



Figure 1

Comparison between goals scored by SP and total time of its training



Source. Own elaboration based on *Praxis de las acciones a balón parado en fútbol. Revisión conceptual bajo las teorías de la praxiología motriz*, by Silva Puig, D., 2011.

Due to the complexity of football itself and the very multi factorial path to success of this sport, we cannot state that if a team spends more time training in SPs, their performance in competition will be greater. However, we can state that studies like the one previously mentioned make us at least question how important these actions are in the training process since they are often overlooked.

How have SPs been trained?

In most contexts, the SP training process has historically been approached—and in fact is approached—through a methodology that we could call analytical. Thus, for many years these actions have been practised through totally closed situations in which the coach explained the move to be made and the players basically limited themselves to reproducing said pattern, over and over again, seeking to internalise said action and, consequently, its optimisation.

Normally, this process took place unopposed or with passive opposition. In addition, it should be noted that, most of the times this method is used, the objective is based solely and exclusively on improving the action for the weekend game, sometimes completely ignoring the improvement of the player.

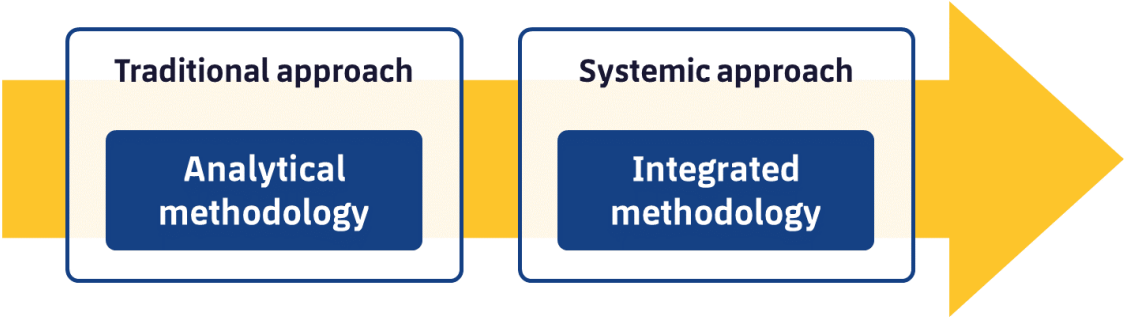


Over the years, the SP training process has evolved, and proposals have arisen that, even if performed in more closed environments than the context of the game, already gave a small place to the autonomy of the player. In this way, key factors such as decision-making, communication (collaboration) and counter-communication (opposition) were already beginning to be considered and given some importance. Although now they may seem obvious to us and that we understand to be implicit in all the actions of the game continuum, these aspects were largely forgotten by the analytical methodology.

Originating from the evolution of team sports training theories in recent years and starting from the complexity paradigm, a new approach to SP training emerges. This so-called integrated methodology should be implicit in the football training methodology itself because, even in the case of unique situations and probably with less uncertainty than dynamic situations, set pieces are still part of the sport itself and, thus, we understand that we cannot isolate their practice conditions from the reality of the game and from the player's needs.

Next, we will focus on the most used methodological trends for training set pieces. Thus, we will try to provide both a theoretical conceptualisation and some application guidelines as an example of this training process. We will start this review from the traditional perspective, based on the analytical methodology, and we will move towards a systemic perspective, thus approaching the reality of football itself, with the integrated methodology.

Figure 2
Major methodological trends in SP training



Source. Own elaboration. FC Barcelona Analysis Department.



Unit 4.2 SP training through analytical methodology

If we reflect and try to look back at the beginning of our sports career—whether as a player, coach, or analyst—and try to visualise what the SP training was like, we will surely have difficulty remembering any situation in which we have focused on SP training.

In other words, on many occasions—and even in most cases today—the method of training a certain set piece was to isolate said action from the game itself and repeat it by introducing certain modifications. Therefore, we could affirm that the SP training has been based for many years on the reproduction of models, that is, on the actual rehearsal of these actions, directed at all times by the coach for a correct staging in competition.

Thus, from the classical approach, this analytical methodology was chosen, which would have as its main basis the assignment of roles by the coach and the reproduction of the desired behaviours by the players. Consequently, this type of training will have the clear purpose of making certain behaviours desired by the coach habitual for the benefit of performance in competition.

Bonfanti and Pereni (2002), Prieto (2008), Fraile and Agudo (2010), cited by Fernández Hermógenes, Camerino and García de Alcaraz (2017), state that SP training should be done:

- During the last days of the micro-cycle, generally a day or two before the competition.
- Progressively.
- Without opposition or with passive opposition.

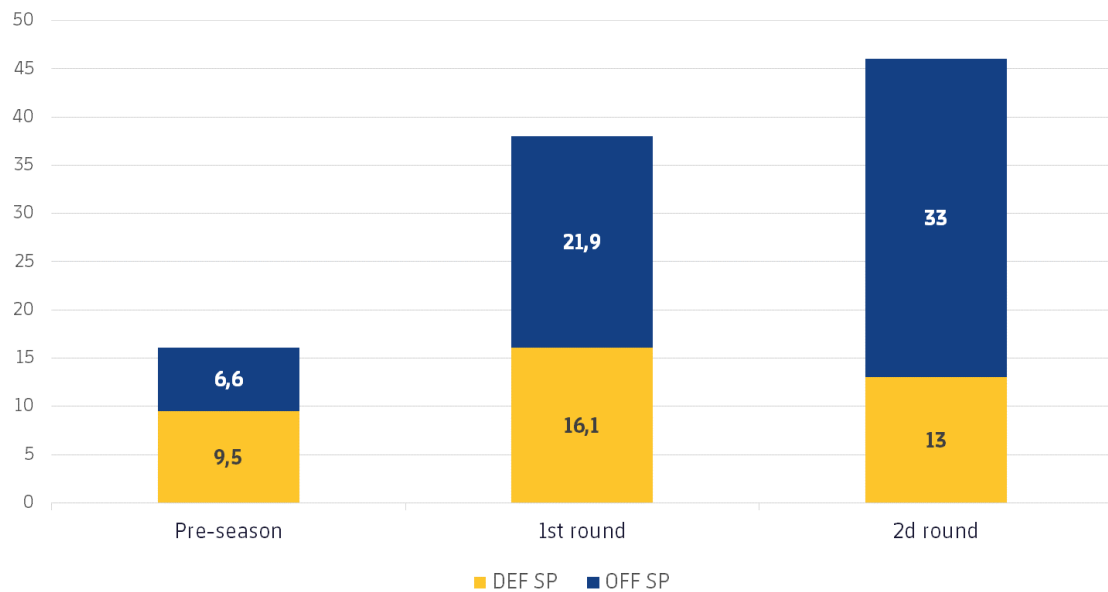
All this in order to provide the football player with a context that ensures increasing their attention and concentration capacity, which will be highly demanded by the practice of the set piece in question.

Regarding the planning that SP training may occupy throughout a season, Silva Puig (2011) ratified in his thesis that in the analysed professional team there was an almost linear progression in terms of the increase in SP training, gaining more prominence in the 2nd round of the championship (Figure 3). In addition, he specified that in the pre-season period the defensive SPs tend to train to a greater extent, while as the league that progresses the training of the offensive SPs exceeds that of the defensive ones, this difference becomes very visible in the 2nd round of the competition.



Figure 3

Percentage of SP training according to the phases of the season comparing DEF SP and OFF SP

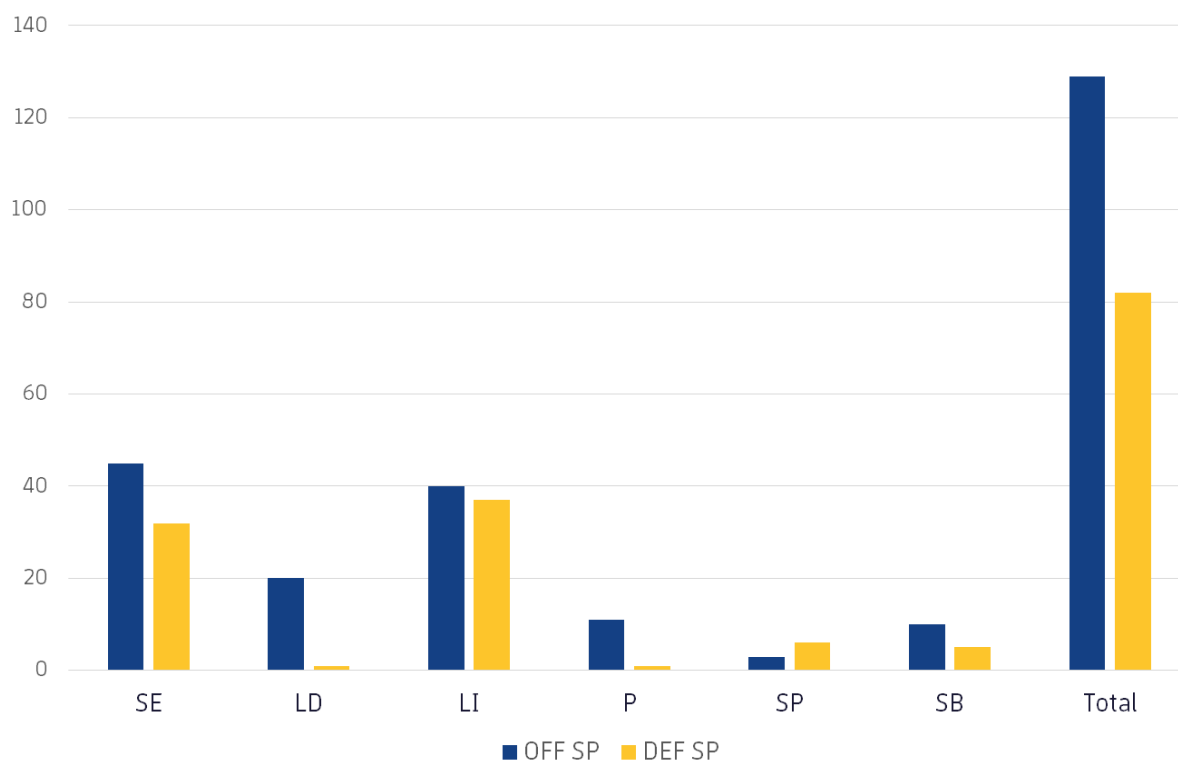


Source. Own elaboration based on *Praxis de las acciones a balón parado en fútbol. Revisión conceptual bajo las teorías de la praxiología motriz*, by Silva Puig, D., 2011.

It is obvious that not all SPs are trained equally. The truth is that there is a great tendency to prioritise the training of some SPs to the detriment of others. The SPs in which the training process is usually deepened are corner kicks and indirect free kicks, understanding those as kicks that do not seek a direct attempt on goal. Silva Puig, D. (2011) ratified this argument in his study where he determined that, both in the offensive and defensive aspects, the most trained SPs by the analysed team were, by far, the two commented actions followed by the offensive facet of penalty kicks and direct free kicks (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Number of training times of each SP



Source. Adapted from *Praxis de las acciones a balón parado en fútbol. Revisión conceptual bajo las teorías de la praxiología motriz*, by Silva Puig, D., 2011.

As we have commented, through this method, the SPs are usually trained in the last days of the micro-cycle, seeking to offer the player a context that, besides favouring their ability to concentrate due to the theoretical less fatigue of the session, also allows them to remember more easily the proposed play or organisation for the game.

One of the reasons why this analytical methodology has been so widely used over the years is because of the simplicity of its application, and because, without a doubt, it allows the coach to direct those behaviours that they wish to occur in the game in that same SP; in short, it allows rehearsing.

Practical proposal for SP training through analytical methodology

Next, we propose some examples of SP training situations using the commented methodology. In the first place, the focus should be on inculcating the defensive organisation that the coach deems most convenient and then proposing offensive plays, previously designed, in order to automate them. In this way, you will go from the general to the specific, from the defensive to the offensive facet, starting from the principle of progression as one of the bases of this training process.



We will focus this practical proposal on the training of corner kicks.

Thus, the exposed situations maintain the keys to this methodology: Locate the training session in the last days of the micro-cycle, base the introduction of content through the principle of progression and the non-introduction of opposition, or in any case, the introduction of passive opposition—except for the defensive corner kick. Throughout the proposed practice situations, the coach will make short explanations to either introduce a variant in the situation itself, offering possible solutions, or communicate interesting aspects of different behaviours in the practised corner kicks.

- Defensive organisation in corner kicks through an analytical methodology.

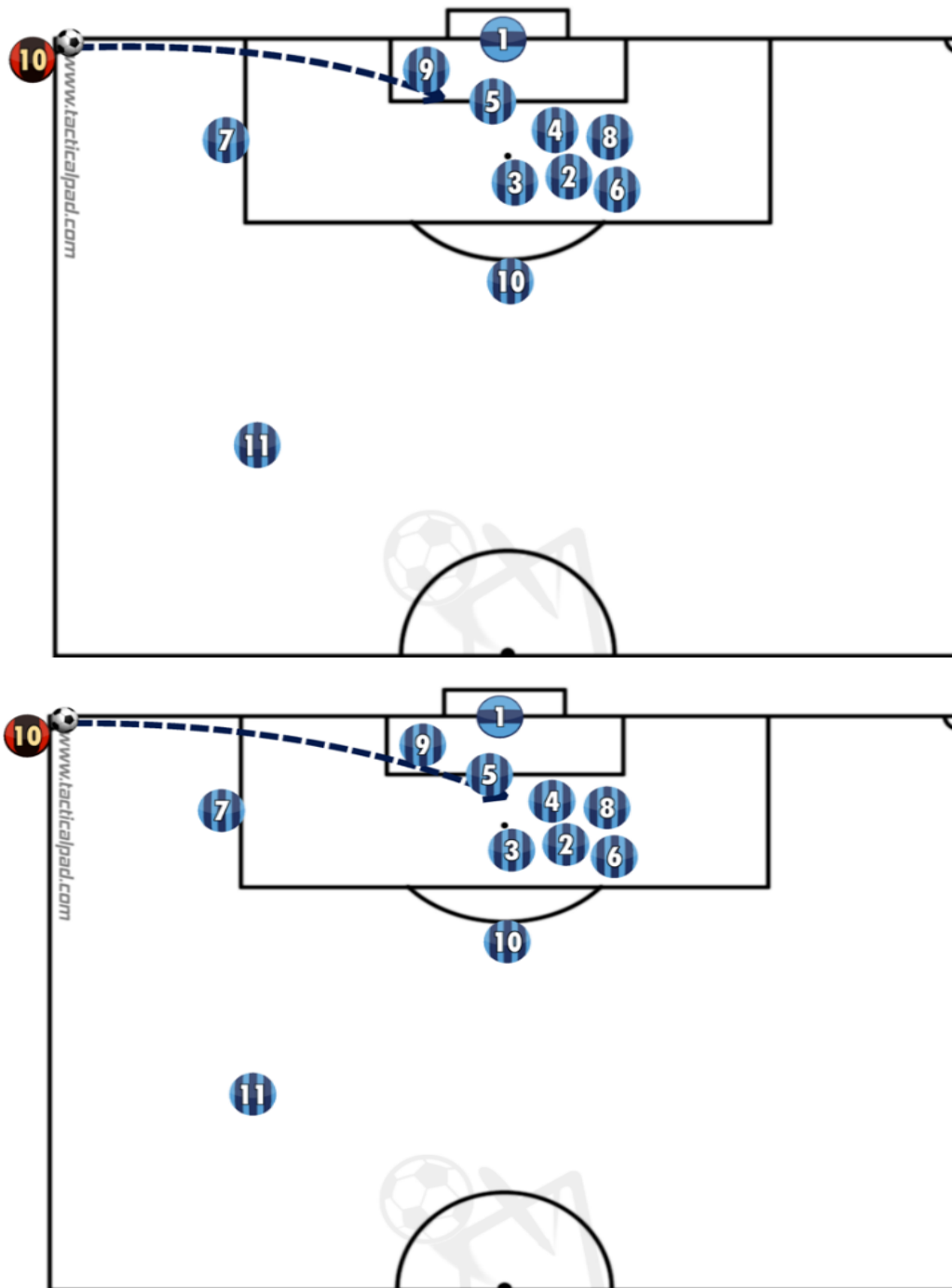
The coach explains the defensive organisation to be developed during practice to the 11 players, while the second coach keeps the remaining part of the team, who will act as the rival team (offensive role). This organisation will consist of a **combined defence with 2 players in the near post zone and small front centre area, 5 man-to-man markers, 1 player at short distance, 1 player for clearing and 1 player in offensive position.**

In this way, the team that is rehearsing said action will be arranged in the indicated way and the offensive team will try to alternate different kick zones. In the first phase of the exercise, no player will enter to attempt, but simply the shooter will deliver the kicks where the coach indicates. In this case, the coach specifies the shooter to alternate shots at the near post and the penalty spot, thus testing the distribution of space for the players in the zone (Figure 5).



Figure 5

Shots without entry by finishers to near post zones and penalty spot



Note. Players 9 and 5 are in charge of performing a zone defence. The remaining 5 players that are within the box have the role of markers.

Source. Own elaboration.

The progression in the exercise would consist of including the finishers. They will enter freely without any prior indication. At this time the coach, through a brief

explanation, clarifies how the collective behaviour should be in the following situations:

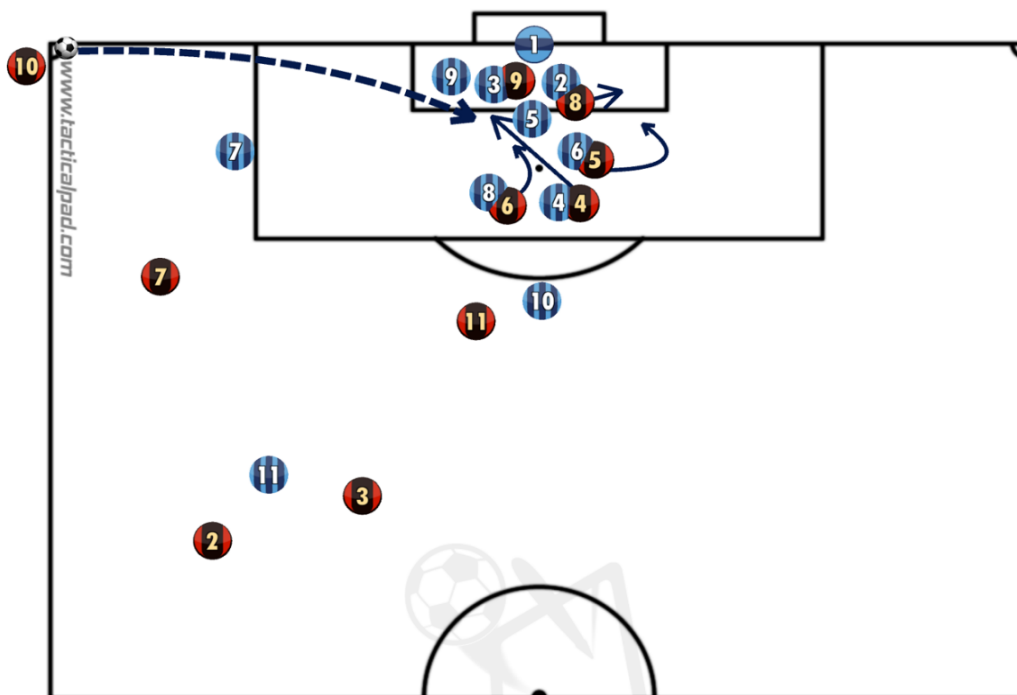
- **If a rival player approaches the kick and is a threat of short kick**, the player in offensive position, which is always located in the middle of the field where the corner is produced, must be attentive to come to the aid of the player at short distance. The intention will be to quickly convert inferiority (2x1) to equality (2x2).
- **If the opposing team enters with 6 finishers**, the clearing player will be in charge of marking this sixth finisher while the player in an offensive position must lower their position and occupy the clearance zone.

In this way, the coach offers 3 possible scenarios—the standard plus these two variations—in which it is specified how the behaviours of the players involved in said actions should be.

As we have said, in this variable, the finishers will decide how they will enter to attempt and also will alternate entries of 6 finishers and short kicks.

Figure 6

Shots with free entry made by finishers



Source. Own elaboration.

In the following modification, the 2nd coach will have specified to the offensive team two standard movements to perform, such as 1 player trying to anticipate the

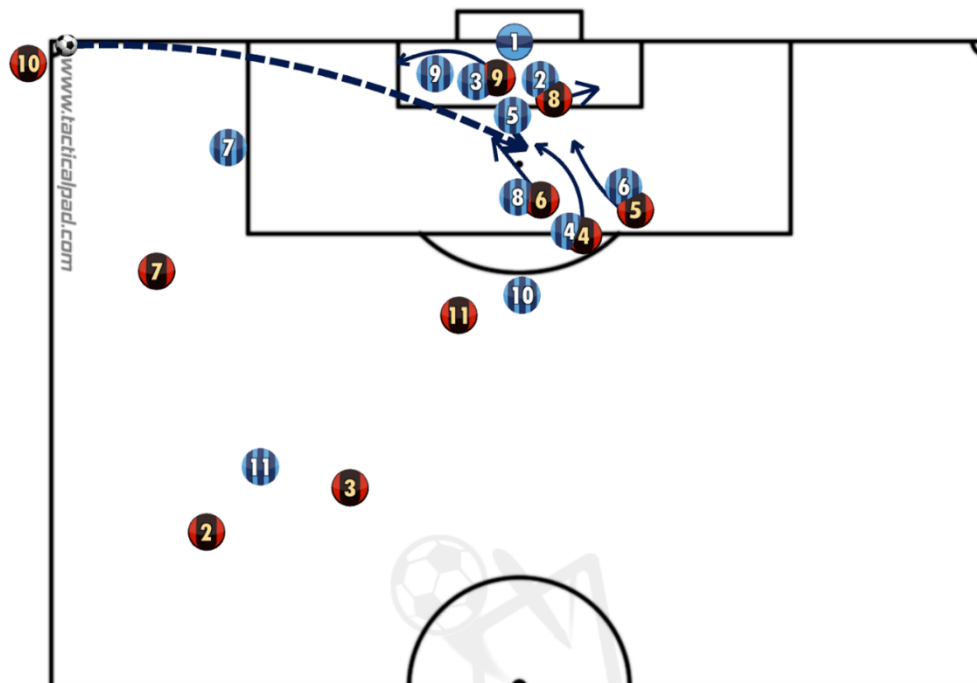
player at short distance, another moving away towards the far post and 3 players entering staggered in the sprint to the penalty spot zone, all based on a 2-3 formation.

In case of knowing a regularity of the rival, the 2nd coach will try to simulate this behaviour. For example, player entry referring to penalty spot, after blocking.

The objective of the defensive team will be the same as during any proposed situation, to avoid the rival attempt, this time facing deliberate movements from the opponent. In addition, the coach can take advantage of this moment to assign some man-to-man marking, generally focused on the reference player or players of the next rival.

Figure 7

Shots with entry made by finishers with pre-established movements



Source. Own elaboration.

- Offensive organisation in corner kicks through an analytical methodology.

Following the same line as in the previous situation, the coach explains the offensive organisation to be developed to the 11 players, both the static, understanding their initial position, and the dynamic, thus considering the movements that will take place to try to attempt the action. Meanwhile, the players who do not participate also remain attentive to the explanations. The functional roles will be the following: **1 shooter, 5 finishers, 2 players for clearing (one can approach to play a short ball) and 2 players in defence.**

The situation will be based on practising two possible plays, without opposition, that the shooter will mark when they approach the flag.

- *Play A:*

3 finishers start from the centre of the area together and run to the near post when shooter lowers their arm (start signal). One of them—the one with the least aerial capacity—changes their trajectory “disengaging” and heads towards the clearance zone to block or cross in front of the defensive clearing player. Meanwhile, a distant clearing player—finisher—enters sprinting towards the penalty spot where they will kick an inswinging trajectory shot. The two remaining finishers will position one close to the theoretical rival zone player, making it difficult for them to attack the ball and the other in the far post zone, waiting for a possible 2nd ball (Figure 8).

- *Play B:*

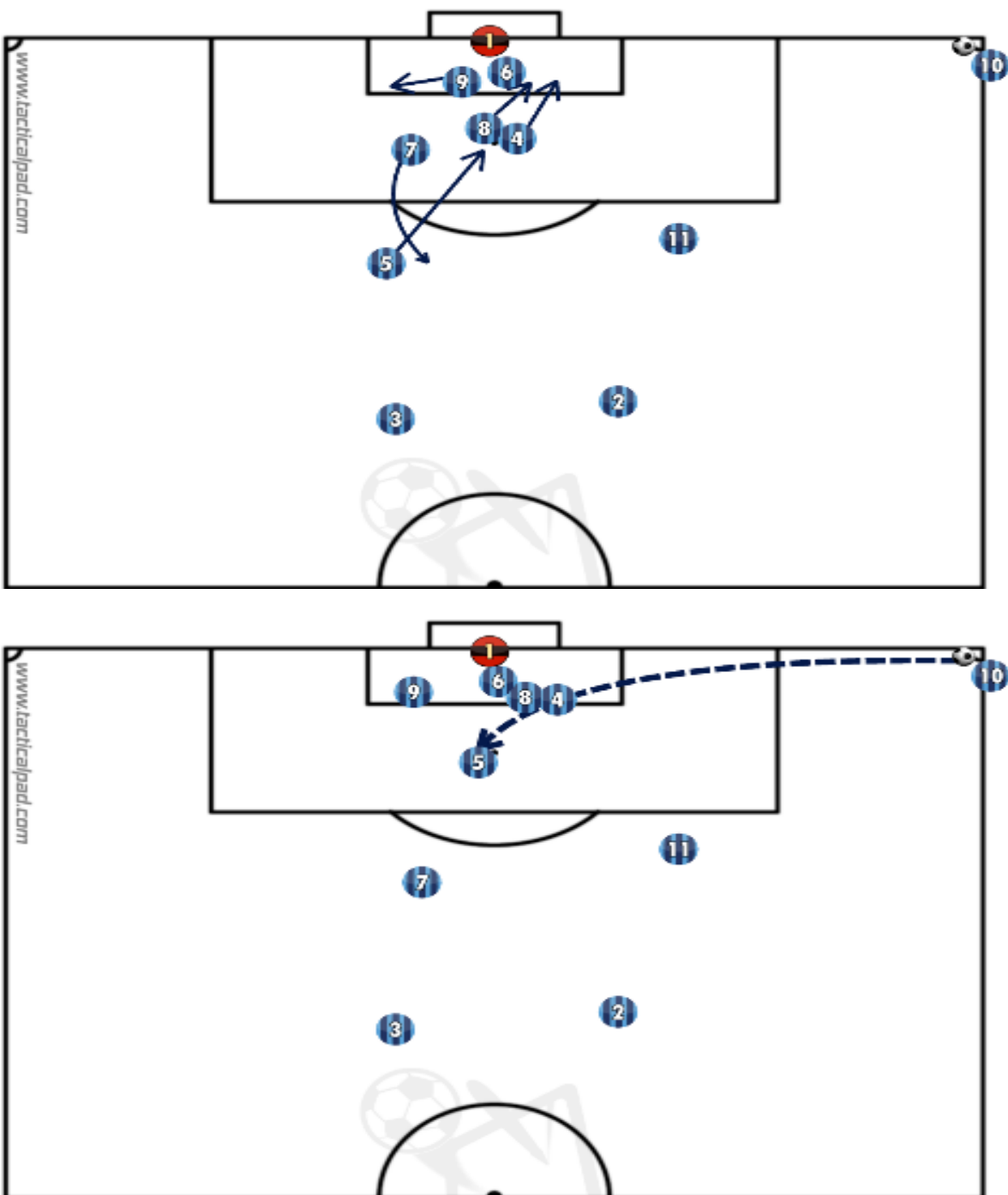
The 5 finishers again start from a 2-3 formation. The near clearing player approaches the shooter and is an option to receive a short kick. When they receive, the other clearing player, who will also have approximated their position, cuts into the area, thus dragging the theoretical player who marked him. Meanwhile, a player who was located in defence will approach offering a pass line behind the player in possession of the ball. When this pass backwards occurs, two of the 3 finishers on the 2nd line make an enveloping movement to the far post where the ball will be directed through an inswinging trajectory. The other finisher of the 2nd line will occupy the clearance zone together with the player who received the short kick (Figure 9).

The situation will progress with the introduction of passive opposition. Thus, the second coach, based on the defensive organisation of the next opponent, will place the remaining part of the team who will act from the defensive role. It is important that within this opposition there is a certain collaboration in the sense of trying to act as the rival would and not for the benefit of the moment itself since the defenders are aware of the general intention of the offensive team. Finally, the shooter will be given freedom to choose the play that they want and may even include actions practiced in other training sessions.



Figure 8

Play A

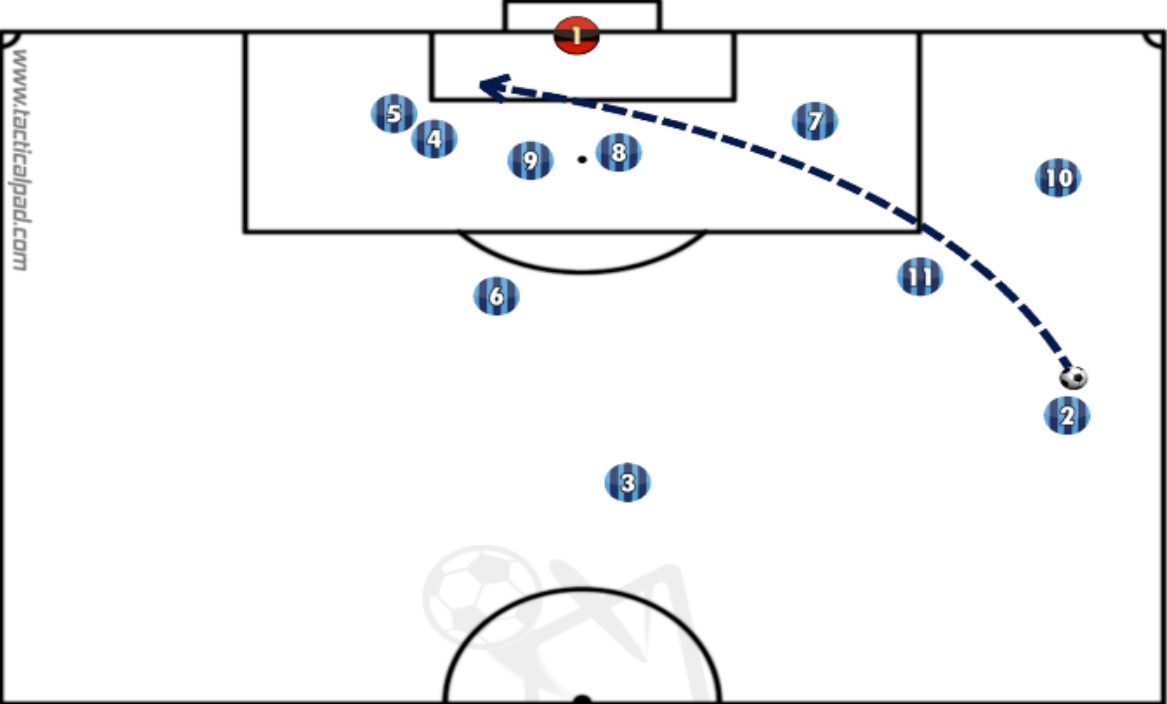
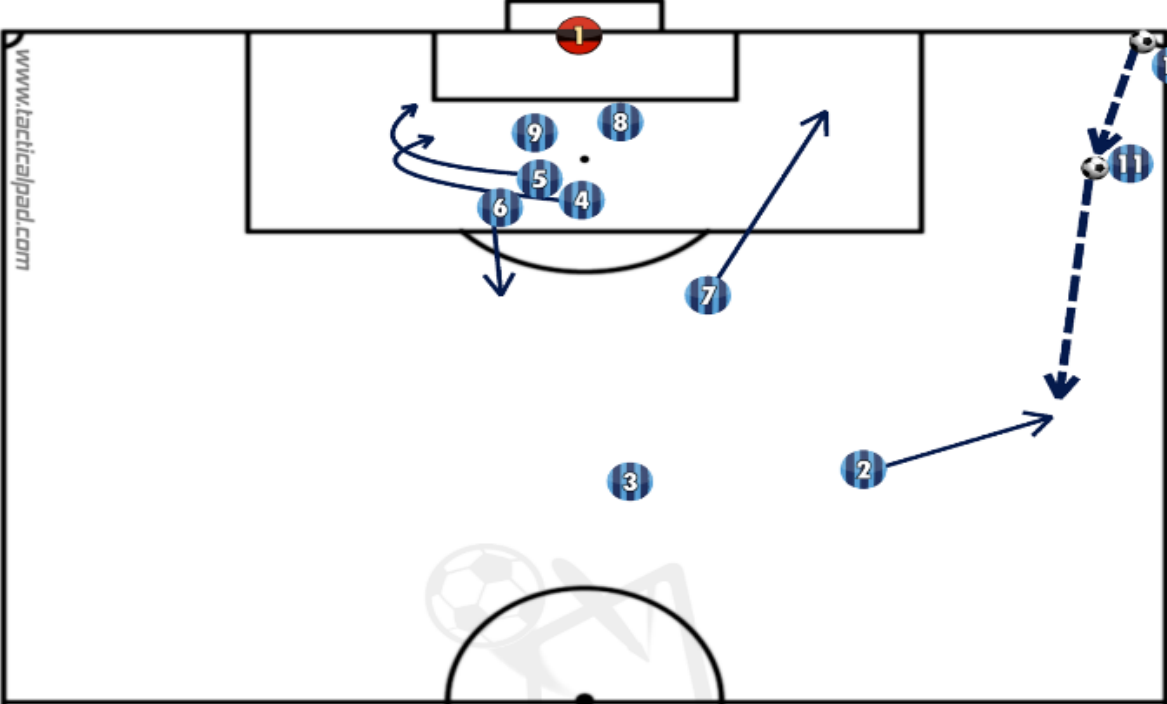


Source. Own elaboration.



Figure 9

Play B



Source. Own elaboration.



Unit 4.3 A new approach to SP training. Path to an integrated methodology

The need for a change

Surely the understanding over the years of the SPs under this traditional paradigm, based on a totally analytical approach, has contributed to popularly conceptualising these actions as mechanised situations that limit the player's performance.

All this has contributed to the generalisation of a certain demotivation on the part of the players when it comes to training this type of situation, as well as the fact that many coaches have come to consider the SP training as a totally taboo aspect for formative football.

Along these lines, Herráez (2003), in his article called *"Aspectos teórico-prácticos del entrenamiento de las acciones a balón parado en el fútbol"*, states that:

We must all banish the false image of mechanised actions that the SPs have, which restrict the creativity of the player—especially that of the smallest ones—when what is intended is precisely the opposite. We must also increase the number of game possibilities, as well as the discriminative capacity of the subject and improve their attention and concentration.

The training of set pieces should in no way be excluded from the training practice since we would be avoiding a set of totally relevant situations of the game, both by frequency in it and by influence on the result. And, therefore, we would avoid an aspect of the game in which, surely, the player must develop throughout their sports career.

We understand that a deep reflection is necessary about how we can include the training of basic content of the SP in formative stages, guaranteeing, at the same time, the high level of motor commitment required for the player to develop in a massive and continuous practice.

Hence, we consider that, both at a pedagogical level and in professional football, a new approach to training this type of actions may be optimal, through which we can present the player with interaction contexts similar to those found in competition without isolating the SPs or restrict their creativity in them.

From an analytical methodology to the integrated methodology

We are all aware of the profound evolution that the training process in team sports has undergone in recent years where, by the hand of Professor Seirul-lo Vargas, among others,



the classical paradigm—from the behaviourist and mechanistic theories—has been left behind and the training process of these sports has increased relevance for the athlete, from the perspective of complexity.

Starting from the conception of the player as a hyper complex and dissipative structure, Seirul-lo Vargas (2017) highlights that:

We must prepare trainings in which the player is immersed into situational events compatible with them, where individual self-modelling will necessarily have to appear that will optimise their functionality, allowing them to solve the problems that make up the sport in which they participate (p. 28).

While it is true that set pieces in their own nature carry distinctive features that allow us to consider them as contexts of less uncertainty than a dynamic situation, we cannot always train them as if they were a totally isolated part of the game.

Along these lines, López and Fernández (2013) highlight that it is important to provide a perceptual-decisional component to SP training, thus promoting situations in which the player adapts to an environment that they must control.

Now, we must reflect on issues such as the following: Does it make sense to try to train unopposed SPs to reproduce more efficiently the model proposed by the coach when such a component will always exist in competition? Should we always train SPs in moments of very low fatigue, taking into account the optimisation of the capacity for concentration and attention, when surely the feeling of fatigue from the game will not correspond to that of the training at the time of performing in a certain SP?

In addition, López and Fernández (2013) highlight the importance of relating a certain SP with its continuity in the game, a situation to which it is also important that the player and the team adapt. Based on these ideas, López and Fernández (2013) made a compilation of the SP training means in which they specified, according to their point of view, the advantages, and disadvantages of each one of them (Figure 10).



Figure 10

SP training means. Advantages and disadvantages.

SP TRAINING MEANS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Audio-visual	Clear and descriptive	It makes it impossible to implement the action
Without opposition	Many repetitions, action training	There is no control over the rivals
With opposition	Numerical superiority or inferiority actions according to objective	You cannot focus on specific aspects Much uncertainty
With transition	It connects principles of the game model and relates phases	More physical and mental wear
Combined actions	Automation of movements and gestures	Context far from reality
Games	Approach to reality Introduction of all the elements of the game	Great physical and mental wear
Circuits	Multilateral training and individualisation of training	Loss of control over the actions of the players
Competitive tasks	They complete learning and automate actions	High emotional wear

Source. Adapted from “Orientaciones metodológicas del entrenamiento de las acciones a balón parado” (p.7), by López, A. and Fernández, D., 2013, *Futbolpf: Revista de Preparación Física en el Fútbol*, (9).

Following this methodological trend, Fernández Hermógenes, Camerino and García de Alcaraz (2017) propose to bring the training of set pieces closer to the reality of a football game with the physical and psychological demands that this entails.

Along the same lines and from the players’ perspective, Sergi Gómez, centre back of Sevilla FC, highlighted that: “When SP is trained at the end of the session and in isolation, the player tends to get disconnected.” In addition, he ended up qualifying: “From my point of view, SP training must be included as much as possible in the situations of the session” (2020).

Going one step further, Fernández Hermógenes (2019), from the FC Barcelona Analysis Department, not only focuses on training these actions during demanding sessions of the weekly micro-cycle, but also proposes including SP training during some tiring simulating situations or tasks.

We therefore understand that it is not the same to kick a corner winning in the 20th minute in a game that we play at home on day 2 of the league than to do it in extra time of a tied play-off away from home. In this sense, it is key to bring about different kinds of SP



situations with different levels of physical and mental demand that commit the player to interact and adapt to changing environments; this is understood as a hyper complex structure.

This proposal not only suggests working the SPs as such, but also focuses on the training of technical-tactical content that will be totally transcendental for the optimisation of the performance of a player in a certain SP. These can be included in various tasks and some of the most important could be the following (Figure 11).

Figure 11

Technical-tactical individual contents of the SPs. Focused on corner kicks and indirect free kicks

Individual contents at defensive level	Individual contents at offensive level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Man-to-man marking in direct corner kick.</i> • <i>Man-to-man marking in indirect corner kick (Sprint outwards and keep body shape)</i> • <i>Man-to-man marking in free kicks (determining of offside)</i> • <i>Control of a specific space assigned.</i> • <i>Approach to the clearance (Defender's sprint).</i> • <i>Execution of clearance.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kicking from set piece (direct corner). Inswinging and outswinging aerial ball • Kicking in motion (short corner) Inswinging and outswinging aerial ball. • Kicking with other kinds of trajectories (low and flat). • Overcome a man-to-man marking (Mark detachment) • Approach to the kick (Finisher's sprint). • Execution of the kick

Source. Own elaboration based on *Propuesta de integración de los saques de esquina dentro del microciclo estructurado del FCB*, by Fernández Hermógenes, D., 2019, FC Barcelona Analysis Department. Unpublished.

Fernández Hermógenes (2019) points out that, by introducing these or others specified contents by the coach, in situations or training tasks, we are involving the player in contexts in which they will very frequently find themselves in competition throughout their entire sporting career. Besides, he clarifies that the fact that the player interacts in these contexts enhances the learning of problem solving, promoting the player's creativity to solve a certain situation.

For example, surely a player who has trained throughout their training and professional stage how to get rid of a marking in a certain task will find it much easier to adapt to a similar situation in an attacking corner kick in competition. Therefore, in these tasks the player's performance will not be directed, but it will be the player themselves who, as they



experience their possibilities of action, will understand that the best way to solve that particular situation may be to make a feint to the side to exit the opposite side.

Besides starting from a conception of the player totally different from that of the analytical methodology, we can hence consider that—through the integrated methodology—we can boost the team's and players' SP performance by leaving room for the player's own creativity which will interact at all times with the environment in which they are playing. We must add to the previously mentioned two components that may be key to the application of the integrated methodology: Active opposition and scoring systems.

Everything related to practising or SP training in contexts without opposition does not adjust to the realities of the competition and, in addition, does not disturb or pose any problems for the player who is developing in that SP. At certain point, we may be interested in highlighting some aspect of a practised play and training without opposition taking that aspect into account, but we believe that they must be considered in very exceptional situations and cannot be a problem in the process of training and optimising the SPs of the player's sports career.

On the other hand, referring to the inclusion of scoring systems, Herráez (2003) already presented a proposal where he intended to include the SP training in small games or in other less specific situations such as circuits or finishes, introducing competition as a key factor to this process.

The fact of introducing competition in the presented situation stimulates the players' motivation and we generate their adherence to the training of these actions. Furthermore, through the "competition" created, we try to keep reflected the relevance the SPs have in the result.

At this point, we believe that it may be interesting to clarify the key aspects of the two commented methodological trends (Figure 12). It is therefore clear that there has been an evolution in terms of the use of an analytical methodology for the SP training, but we believe that this still has to increase and we must continue working and reflecting in order to try to include the training of these actions in real contexts and that really engage the player, who—based on their interactions with all the elements present in those situations—will be self-modelling and weaving their way towards optimising performance in said actions.

Even so, we cannot make the mistake of considering the analytical methodology as an error because it can be very useful in specific situations to perform a certain behaviour for the weekend competition or to establish organisational bases in a certain SP.

Of course, within this combination of both methodological trends, we consider that the analytical methodology cannot in any case be the basis of the SP training throughout a season, much less throughout a player's sports career.



Figure 12

Comparison of key aspects of analytical methodology and integrated methodology in SP training

ANALYTICAL METHODOLOGY OF SP TRAINING	INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY OF SP TRAINING
Conception of the player as a part of a mechanised process.	Conception of the player as a complex and dissipative structure that forms itself for own optimisation.
Situations isolated from the continuum of the game.	Situations that can promote their continuity in the game (reality competition).
Situations focused on the immediate performance of the next game.	Situations focused on optimising the player's behaviour in certain SPs.
It is based on the reproduction of a model, being able to limit the player's performance (closed contexts).	Applicability in more open contexts increasing the player's ability to act .
It seeks to guarantee low fatigue scenarios in order to obtain maximum attention span and concentration.	It does not ensure that low fatigue due to the reality of the competition itself (Different contexts).
It is done at any moment of the micro-cycle.	It is done at any moment of the micro-cycle.
It does not always consider active opposition.	The introduction of the opposition is important in its applicability.
Its application is based on the principle of progression.	As in the game, non-linear situations .
It can generate demotivation in the player.	It tries to generate adherence to the player through aspects such as the scoring system.
Difficult continuous application in formative stages.	It meets the required characteristics to be implemented in a continuous way in training .
It can be of great short-term benefit in competition as it allows rehearsing.	It may have a benefit in the short term, but especially in the long term .
It can be very useful for establishing organisational bases for collective behaviour.	It can be very useful for training key individual technical-tactical content in SP in various tasks.

Source. Own elaboration.

Practical proposal for SP training through the integrated methodology



Next, we will try to exemplify some SP training situations through the integrated methodology. For this, we consider it very relevant that these tasks maintain the main aspects discussed so far. Consequently, in situations in which we train SPs in an integrated way, we must be able to present a variety of scenarios in which these SPs occur—at the level of fatigue—as well as focus on some specific individual content to optimise, all this trying not to isolate the situation from the game itself and leaving space for the possibilities of the players to intervene.

- Situation A. **Rondo 5x2 + corner kick** (Figure 13)

Two 5x2 rondo are carried out, organising the players in such a way that those that interest us and have a higher load are located in the rondo far from the goal; for example, because they played fewer minutes on game day. Each time the physical trainer signals, the players will go at a high pace towards the box where two corner kicks in a row will be executed. It should be noted that after each corner the defensive team has the opportunity to score a point if they manage to get the ball up to the 2nd rondo. To do this, they have 10 seconds after the first clearance, otherwise the sequence will be terminated, and the next corner will be kicked, or the players will return to rondo situations. One team will organise offensively and the other defensively, so that they will alternate roles at each signal. The only indication given by the coach is that the team in a defensive role must organise itself in combined marking.

The following scoring system is established: Attempt = 1 point. Goal = 3 points. Take the ball to the 2nd rondo = 1 point for the defensive team.

Possible variant: Use of the same exercise executing lateral free kick.

- Situation B. **Reduced game + lateral free kick** (Figure 14)

A reduced game situation of 5x5 + 2 outside jokers for each team is played. At the signal of the physical trainer, one of the jokers (previously mentioned) will prepare to shoot a lateral free kick. As in the previous task, each signal from the physical trainer is a role change, therefore, both teams will alternate attacking a lateral free kick with defending it. In this case, the coach indicates that the defensive team must organise in a zone while the offensive team must execute through an inswinging trajectory.

The same scoring system is established as in the previous exercise, but in this case the point (attempt) or the 3 points (goal) will be added to the result of the game.

Possible variant: Limit the number of defenders participating in the SP.

In both proposed situations, they will train and try to optimise basic individual content for the SP, such as getting rid of man-to-man marking and hitting both at a lateral free kick and a corner kick, or at the defensive level such as the speed of the collective organisation

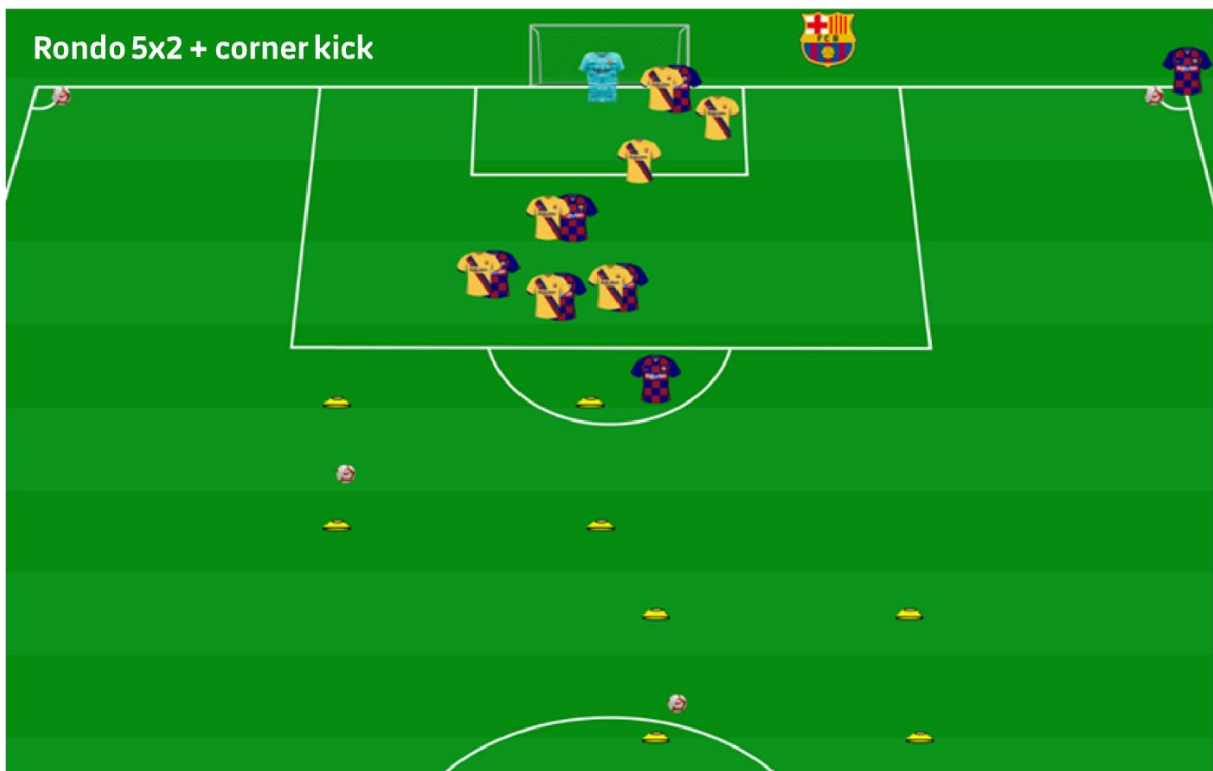
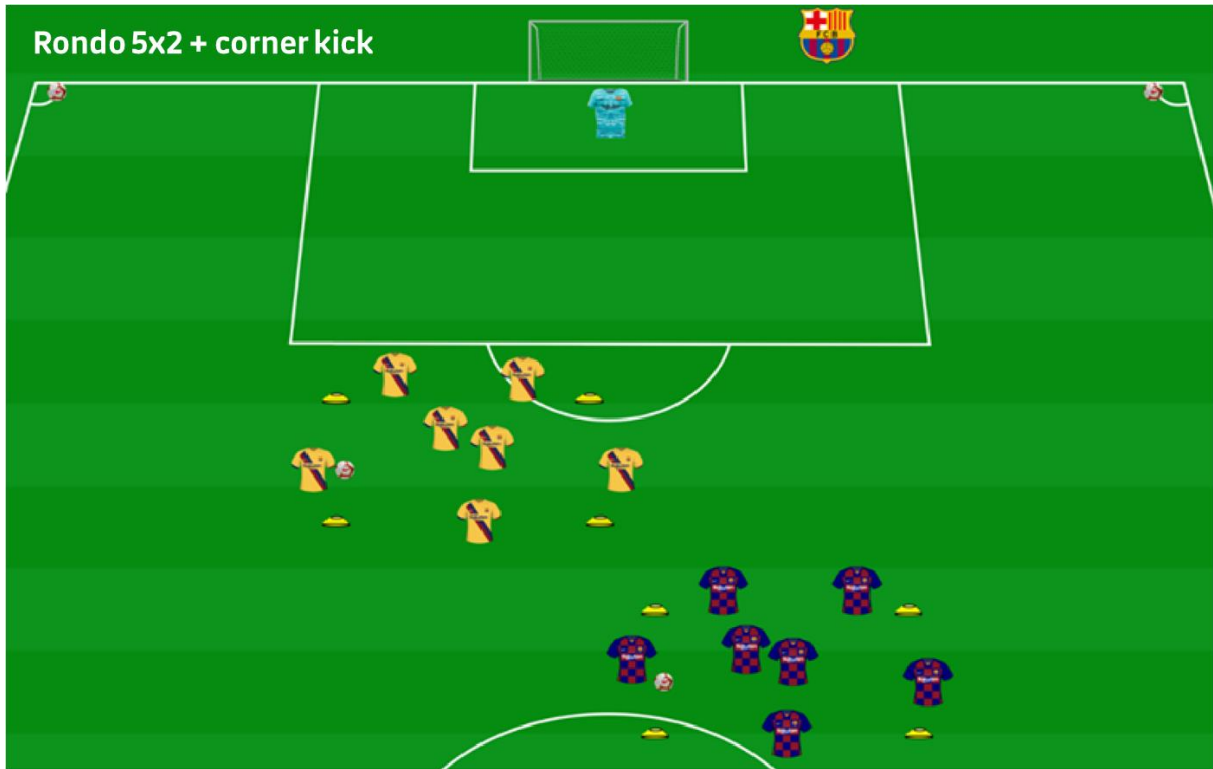


(attention), the man-to-man marking or the positioning and management of the space in zone defence.



Figure 13

Situation A. Rondo 5x2 + corner kick



Source. Own elaboration based on *Propuesta de integración de los saques de esquina dentro del microciclo estructurado del FCB*, by Fernández Hermógenes, D., 2019, FC Barcelona Analysis Department. Unpublished.

Figure 14

Situation B. Reduced game + lateral free kick



Source. Own elaboration based on *Propuesta de integración de los saques de esquina dentro del microciclo estructurado del FCB*, by Fernández Hermógenes, D., 2019, FC Barcelona Analysis Department. Unpublished.

Finally, the inclusion of corner kick training in a weekly micro-cycle is presented as an example (Figure 15). This, adapted from Fernández Hermógenes (2019), has a criterion that divides the application of this SP training methodology into two aspects: A playful one and a competitive one.

In the playful aspect, it is sought through situations of low physical and mental demand to include key aspects of corner kicks through other exercises such as finishes, passing wheels, situation games, etc. On the other hand, in the competitive aspect, the main situation will be the SP itself; however, being able to include it in certain exercises or working it separately, with opposition and scoring systems.

Figure 15

Example of inclusion of corner kick training in a weekly micro-cycle

Day of the week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Post-pregame	+1 o +2		-4	-3	-2	-1	Partido
Integrated methodology	Playful		No SP training	Competitive	No SP training	Competitive/ Playful (depending on the week)	
Scenario simulation with corner kick	Low physical and psychological load			Very high physical and psychological load		Low physical and psychological load	
Specific offensive content	Kicking inswinging trajectory, offensive blocking and attempting			Management of the short kick, crosses, and shots		Alternative hitting trajectory and attempt to the near post	
Specific defensive content	Front clearance mechanics			Man-to-man marking and blocking defence		Simulate rival defence and "transition" preparation	
Superiority/equality/inferiority context	Offensive equality or superiority			Offensive equality or inferiority		Offensive equality or superiority	

Source. Own elaboration based on *Propuesta de integración de los saques de esquina dentro del microciclo estructurado del FCB*, by Fernández Hermógenes, D., 2019, FC Barcelona Analysis Department. Unpublished.



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