

3.1 The identifying elements of FCB

Introduction

The criteria that are considered indispensable for the player's training are related to the playing style that FCB designed over the years. We will begin to study this idea in depth with the aim of understanding each variable that makes it up.

In this module we will study the concepts that formed FCB's game model and managed to mark their own identity. This was generated not only by its correct application but also by a different working methodology, which has been developed thanks to looking at the training dynamics for collective sports in a different way.

Game ideas

The positional organization of the players on the playing field seeks a clear objective, linked to the constant idea of possession of the ball and the need for immediate recovery, the result of constant pressure, in case it's lost. These concepts are trained with a methodological approach that is not only summarized in its implementation but is understood as a philosophical issue within the club.

During training stages, it is understood that the correct use of concepts generates patterns of understanding of the game, which are connected to the identity of the club.

As mentioned, the elements that identify FCB are related to its training approach and the fundamentals of its playing style. After establishing these purposes, in so far as training continues, we will be able to generate a playing style in line with the objectives pursued by the Club.

Over the last number of years, a unique identity has been built which is considered FCB's **own style**. No such purpose is achieved without an approach that is carried out in all aspects of each player's training. You can see similarities in playing styles of a reserve team and the first team.

Team sports (TS) are characterized by being too complex to be analyzed, observed and understood from the point of view of simplicity. If there is one thing that has characterized soccer throughout its history, it is the fact that it may be the only sport about which everyone has an opinion, whether or not they are coaches or experts on the subject. FCB has encouraged people to think about this phenomenon from a new paradigm, which is characterized by encompassing an infinite number of variables that characterize this sport.

The field of knowledge oriented to team sports is in constant development. As mentioned in the first modules, the human athlete (HA) is no longer conceived of as a conventional machine. He/she competes in a framework of dynamic interactions, sometimes unexpected, partly unknown and always unrepeatably, and which should not be trained based on traditional models. Sports situations are plagued by uncertainty, variability, turbulence, self-organization, and emergencies. From this point of view, monocausal events are not taken into account, since causality is equivalent to reductionism.

The concept of *emergency* adds value to the analysis of team sports, which consists of interpreting why *a lot* comes from *a little* and can't be reduced to the elements that appear to be its cause.

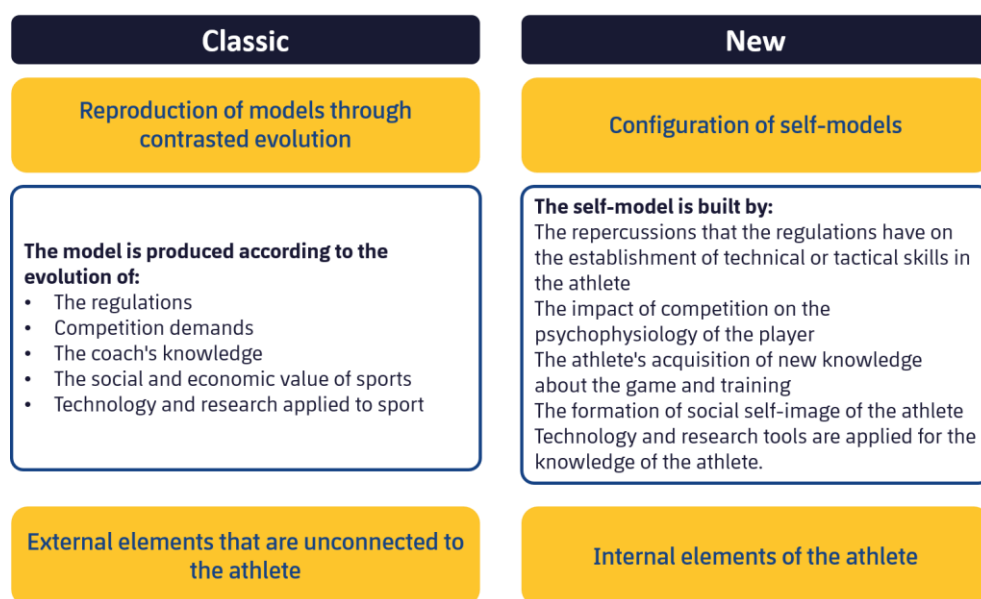
You need the hypotheses of quantum physics, the theory of general relativity, the principle of uncertainty, the theory of dynamic systems and all the theories of complexity to have the tools so that all team sports coaches can identify game situations and better analyze them.

The different theories that study complexity can be re-interpreted to design training approaches for team sports. The new paradigm of complexity becomes part of the team sports training world as a result of the congruence between these two fields. The games are carried out in a context where the intervention spaces are managed with other athletes and the relationships between them are variable and dynamic.

The application of these new branches of knowledge in the field of team sports has led to optimization in the performance of human athletes, and has also increased knowledge about the variables that influence the optimization of performance.

"The athlete as a dissipative structure is self-structured according to dialogic processes that provides the continuous dynamic interaction between operational forms considered incompatible by the classic training paradigm" (Seirullo, 2017).

Figure 1: Training models according to different paradigms



Source: Seirul-lo, 2017, p 29.

The methodological approach of FCB, based in part on what the Theories of Dynamic Systems propose, supports its practical application in its variability. This variability expresses flexibility in the systems to adjust, select or change to new patterns and thus adapt to changes.

How coaches adapt to new approaches

As mentioned in the previous module, the instructions and *feedback* that athletes receive are part of the changes that have begun to be applied in training sessions based on the methodological approach. Claramunt and Balague (2010, 2011) argue that permanent *feedback* can have negative effects on both trained and untrained athletes. Using parameters of an ideal technique, that probably come from training methodologies of individual sports, can interfere with the coordination structures of some players. The instructions are frequently used when athletes do not adjust to the desired movement patterns. Claramunt and Balague (2010) maintain that this does not generate the possibility of self-organization in the athlete that he/she needs for his own analysis and decision making.

As there are pre-established models of movement patterns in each sport, over the years, coaches have tried to gradually bring athletes towards these parameters as an objective in the training approach. In this case, the concept of the athlete's individuality is lost or misinterpreted, among other things, while varied and creative solutions are rejected.

In the creation of efficient teams, the variability of individual resources increases the possibility of efficiency. This is not so when the teams respond to the same ideal patterns. This variability means that the same

movements never occur (neither individually nor on a team level). Although this may seem complex to analyze, it generates survival in contexts with changing characteristics, typical of collective sports, and increases possible solutions.

The following are some of the identifying characteristics of Fútbol Club Barcelona based on its training approach.

The identifying elements of FCB

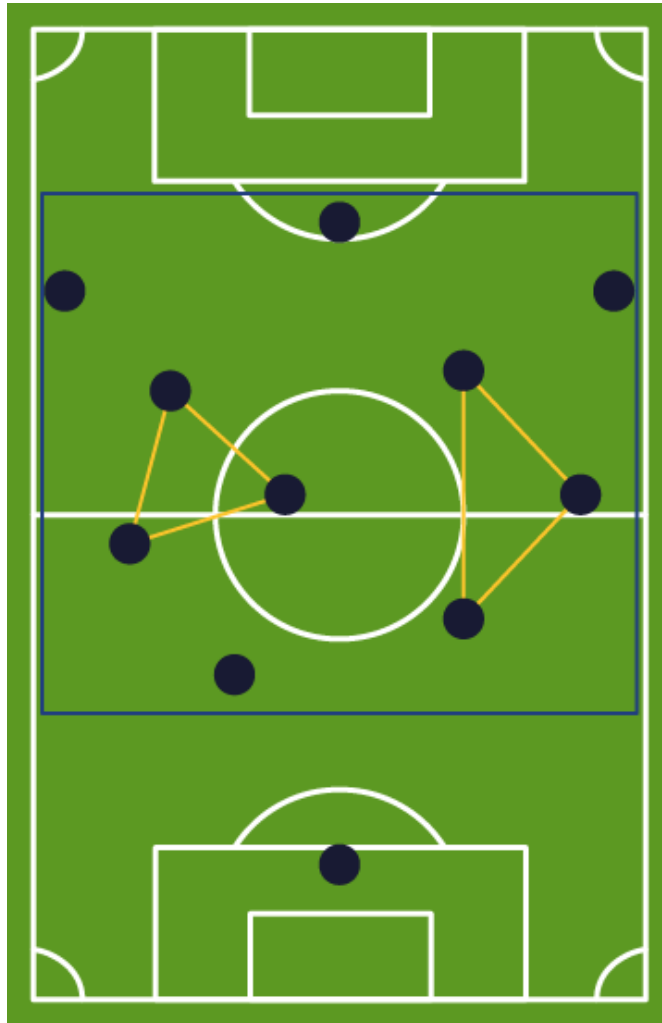
High individual and collective technical quality:

- Permanent contact with the ball from the initiation stage.
- Work on coordination variables (with and without the ball).
- Work on technical content (What?) during the different stages of the training process (When?).
- Permanent clarity in concepts and instructions (How?) for the optimization of all technical content.
- Why? Because historically, FCB's playing style is associated with technical excellence, plasticity and putting on a show.

Rational occupation of spaces on the playing field:

- We talk about the **situation** of players in different lanes.
- During the possession stage, the field always gets big. With the ball, always one step back.
- During the **recovery** stage, spaces are always reduced. Without the ball, always a step forward.
- Permanent formation of triangles to:
In the possession stage: optimize the support system and progress in the game.
In the recovery stage: optimize the effectiveness of recovery.
- Always maintain short distances between players and between them in relation to the ball (spaces for intervention, mutual assistance and cooperation).

Figure 2: Positional organization 1



Source: Prepared by the authors.

The 3 Ps: Barcelona Fútbol Club's playing style is based on three fundamental concepts.

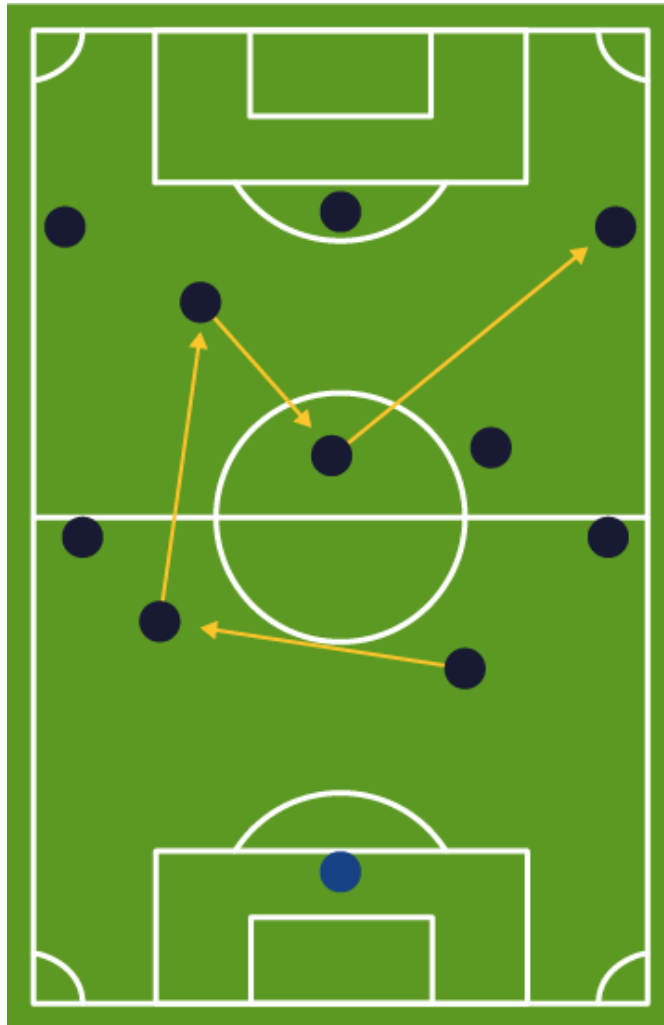
- Position: situation and location of the players on the field.
- Possession: related to protecting the ball.
- Pressure: immediate recovery of the ball when it's lost.

The relationship that exists between these 3 concepts is significant in that: The position of the players on the playing field makes it possible to optimize efficiency in the possession and recovery of the ball. This enables and generates the possibility of having the ball to enjoy and play. FCB's ultimate premise.

Protecting the ball:

The team that has the ball owns the game.

Figure 3: Positional organization 2



Source: Prepared by the authors.

FCB's playing style is based on two premises:

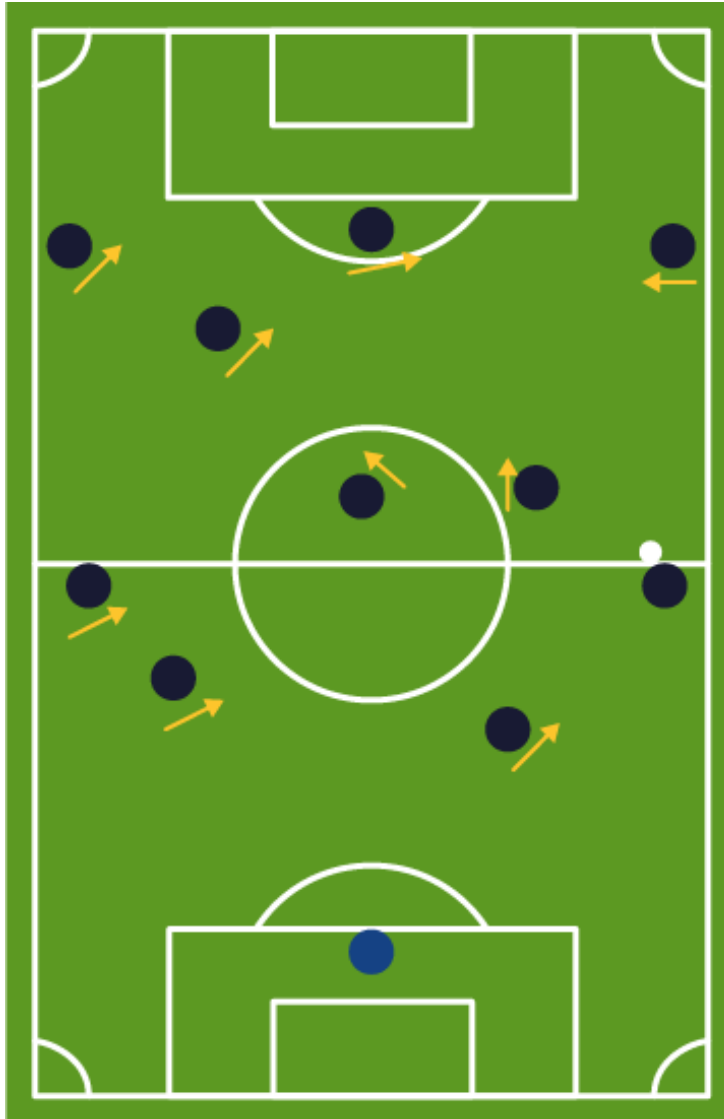
- Don't lose the ball.
- Don't fall out of position.

To this, we add the alternation of short-distance plays with long-distance plays (looking near and looking far).

- A greater number of short passes generates pressure from the opposing team and losses of the ball.
- A greater number of long passes leads to constant ball loss (decreases accuracy).

Mobility of players without the ball:

Figure 4: Positional organization 3, mobilization without the ball



Source: Prepared by the authors.

We talk about the players' trajectory (supports and getting open) to:

- Create, occupy and take advantage of free spaces.
- Help the player who has the ball and progress in the game.

Objectives:

- The ball must be received in optimum conditions in order to be played.
- To provide the best choice to the teammate who has the ball.
- Facilitate joint team actions during the possession stage.
- Hinder the offensive actions of the opposing team.

Mobility is not the same as running a lot. It's important to know how to run and not just run for the sake of it. The objective is to optimize the player's movements and trajectories.

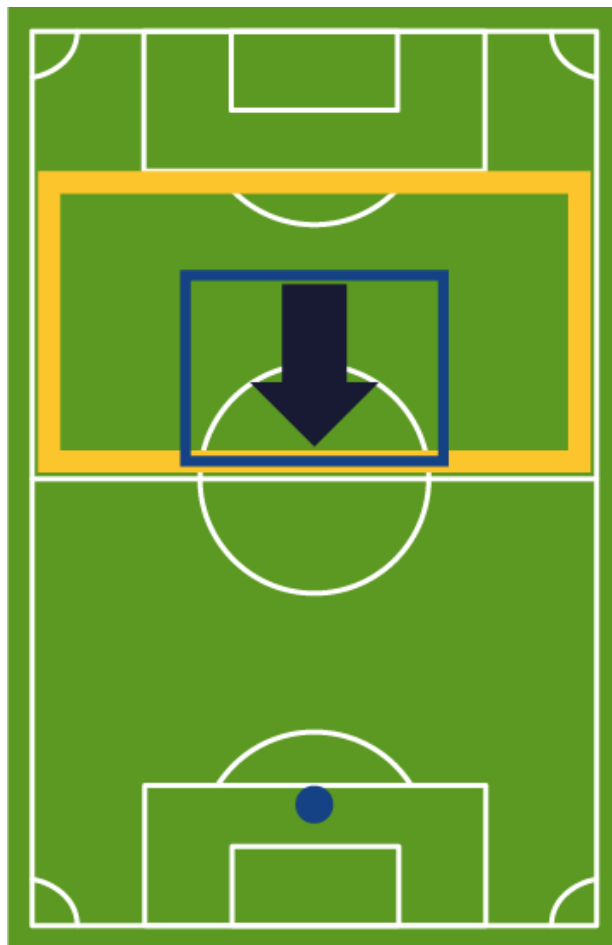
Functional unity of all players as a team

In this sense we are referring to:

- When you have the ball, the whole team plays and enjoys themselves.
- When you don't have the ball, the whole team runs.

The team must be understood as a sum of the work between each of the players. Therefore, the game is understood as a continuous process rather than divided (complexity *continuum*).

Figure 5: Directionality



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Interpretation and comprehension of the game

Learning to look, perceive and decide (cognition).

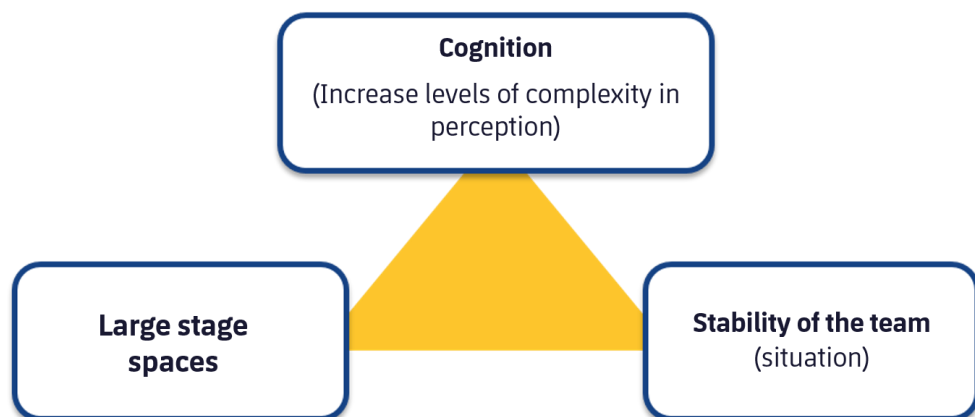
- Perception and management of spaces (E).
- Time management (T) and game pace control.
- Identify and interpret the game situation (teammates, opponents, the ball and intentions).

Effective and efficient actions or executions

- Monitoring and evaluating actions.
- Clarity in the concepts before, during and after.

According to what has been discussed so far, FCB's playing style is based on:

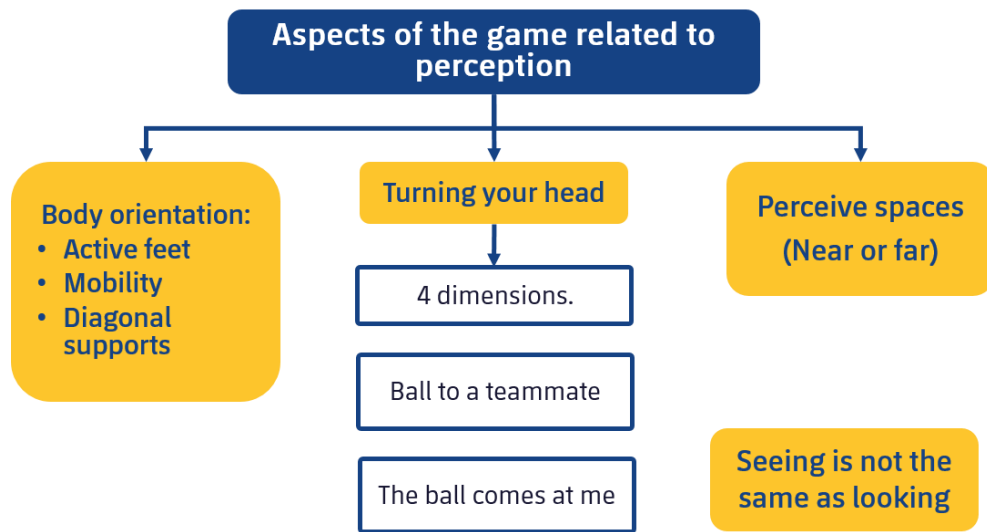
Figure 6: Aspects of FCB's playing style



Source: Prepared by the authors.

As mentioned in the previous table, **cognition** is related to increasing levels of complexity for perception.

Figure 7: Perception

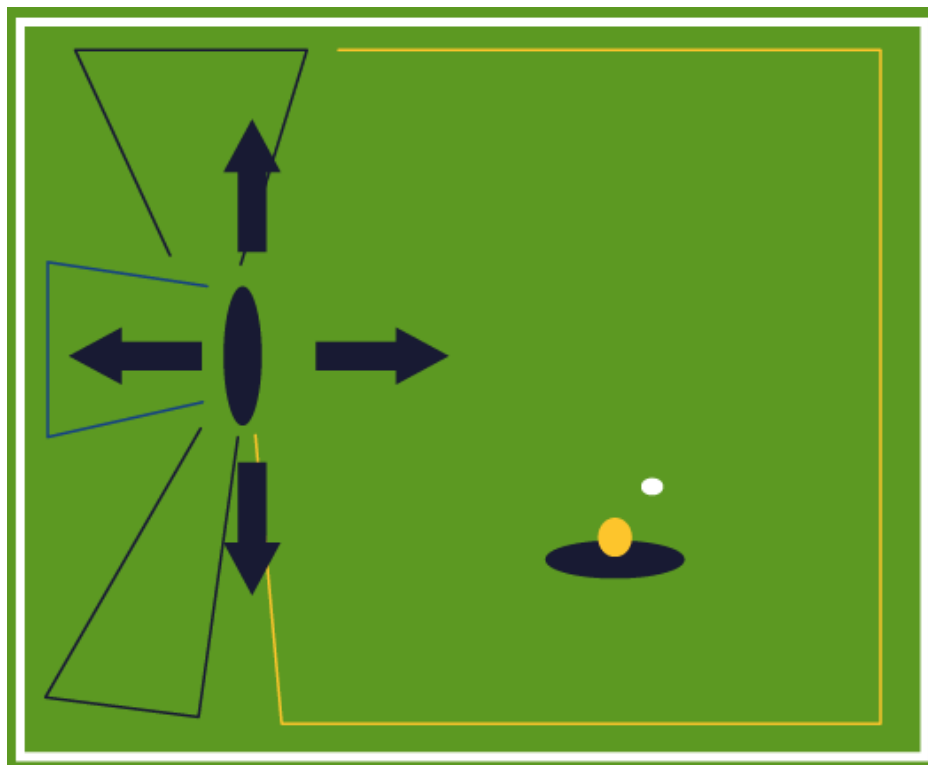


Source: Prepared by the authors.

1. Cognition.

Turning your head: this allows the player to gather information about spaces, teammates and opponents that do not enter in his/her forward-facing field of vision. The periphery enters in 4 dimensions.

Figure 8: Perception dimensions



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Look: profile, body orientation, head and eyes with the intention of widening the field of vision.

Perceive: in this case situations must be detected; nearby spaces (spaces of mutual assistance); distant spaces (spaces of cooperation).

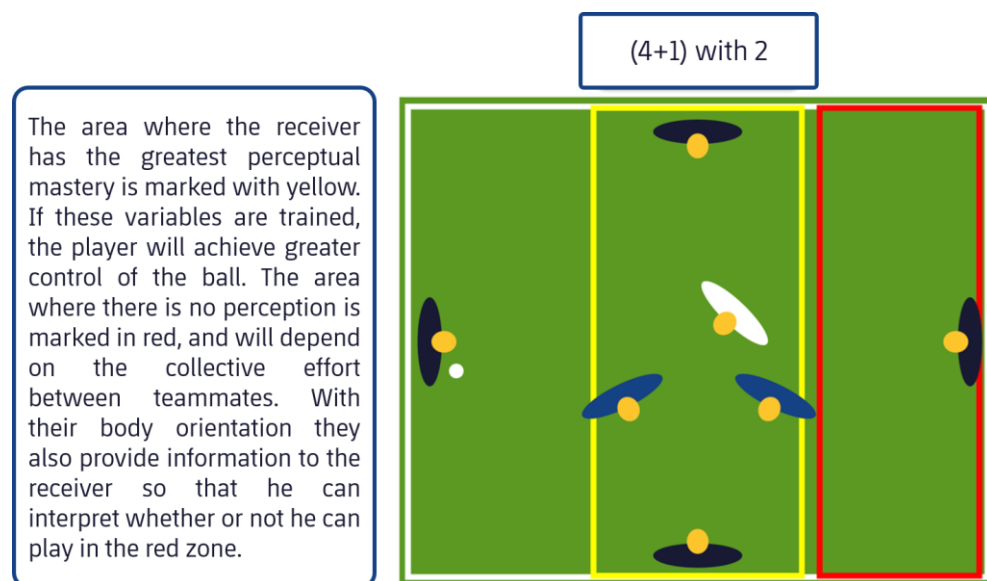
Analyzing and understanding situations: fixing your gaze, peripheral vision. Detect spaces that open and close. Anticipate the next move.

Decide: the best recognized option for our team.

Before the ball is put into play, the player in possession must have already processed all this information. It's where the complexity *continuum* begins.

Action: after processing the relevant information, the action is effective and efficient. The communication between the player who has possession and the receiver is optimized by means of the ball.

Figure 9: Perception and distribution on the field



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Permanent concentration on the game

Although the concept of possession will be discussed in greater detail in later modules, it is one of the variables that FCB has developed the most over the years and continues to study for subsequent methodological approaches.

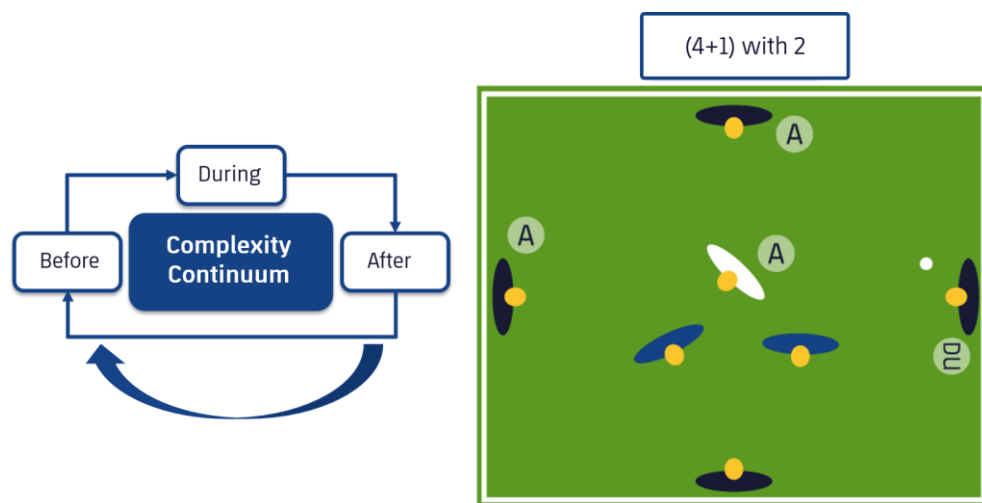
During the possession stage there are three moments that players must consider:

Before possessing the ball: the steps during this process form what is known as **complex cognition** (looking, perceiving, analyzing, anticipating and deciding what to do).

During (moment of contact with the ball): at this stage, execution must be effective and efficient. It is the transition from receiver to possessor and the relationship of the technical action performed by the player with the ball.

After contact with the ball: mobility is the possessor's transition to being a potential new receiver. Passing the ball.

Figure 10: Distribution on the playing field



Source: Prepared by the authors.

2. Large stage spaces.

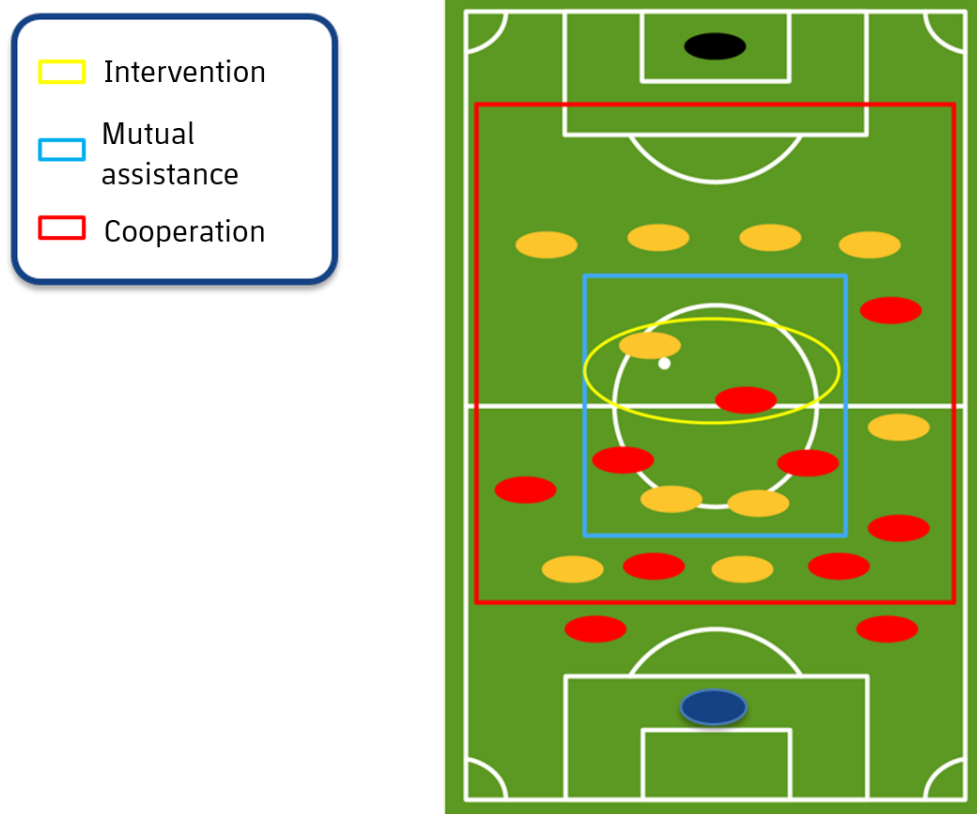
Spaces: area of the field to be occupied, length and width

- Intervention.
- Mutual assistance.
- Cooperation.

Stage: possession (with ball) - recovery (without ball).

Size: the dimensions given to each of these spaces.

Figure 11: Intervention, mutual assistance and cooperation



Source: Prepared by the authors.

3. Stability of the team (situation).

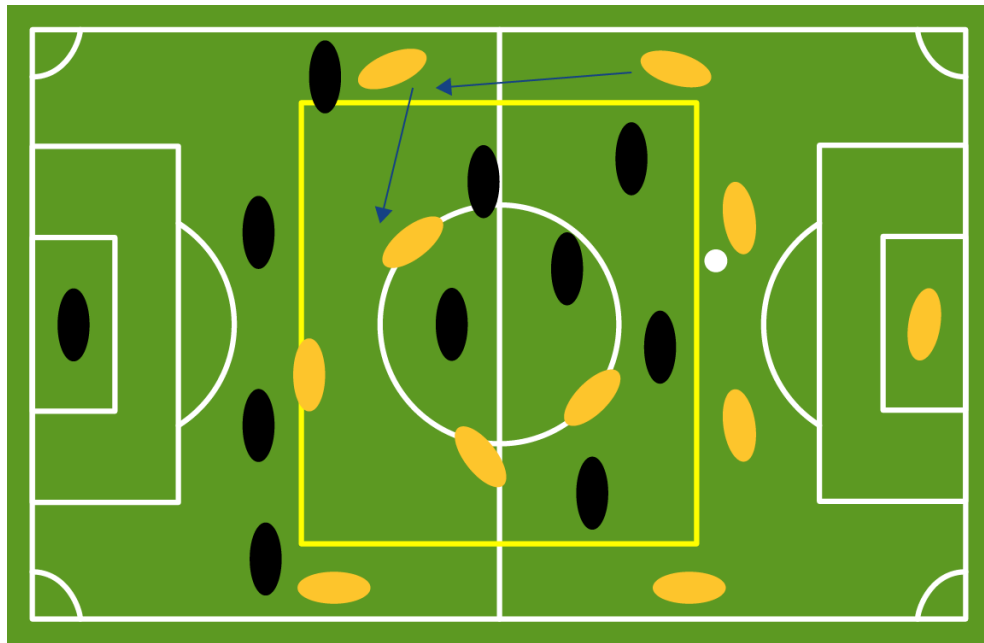
Stability:

- The location and situation of the players and the ball on the field.
- The distance between the players and their distance from the ball.
- The trajectories of the players and the ball.
- The orientation of the players and the game.
- The organization of all parts of the team to achieve superiority at every moment of the game with respect to the opposing team.

Reorganization of the team:

- The organization of the team must be built with the coach's information and the specific criteria decided on by some players when a particular inconvenience is generated, in order to return to the required organization.

Figure 12: Positional reorganization



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Individual and collective participation:

The ball always moves faster than the player

We mention:

- The trajectories and circulation of the ball: through the air or on the ground. The pass, control, run, *dribbling*, *kicks*. All instructions are considered important.
- Communication between teammates: When? How? Where? Which way? Why and for what? With what intention? Teammates must detect these intentions, based on organizations established by the coach and the team itself.

Objective: To dominate the game by carrying out superior actions to the opposing team.

Individual qualities are always at the service of the team:

- There must be no selfishness among the team.
- The sense of team and collectivity must be paramount.
- The personal contribution is to the team.
- The talent of each player is integrated into the collective.

References

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Seirullo, F. (2017). El Entrenamiento en los deportes de equipo. Barcelona: Mastercede.