Coaching the 3-4-2-1 Defying xG





Contents Introduction 3-4-2-1 Numbers that will be reference throughout_ 5 Lane Model Basic Principles for all 4 phases_ Build Up Zones_ 11 Build the Attack (Phase 1 basic structure) 12 Full Session Example - Technical SSG - Phase of Play 14 I.P Drills_ 20 OOP Drills_ 49 End 69



Firstly allow me just to say a huge thank you to all of you for the immense response and feedback towards this project both in terms of the two-part analysis and now the session plans.

The aim of this document is not to provide you with all the answers, nor is it a comprehensive document with drills for every scenario imaginable ...the intent is to be more simplistic and offer a guide on how you <u>might</u> implement a 3-4-2-1 and to adapt the content so you can take ownership.

My end goal as with all my online work is to try and produce content that I hope people will enjoy, that adds value to their coaching and that maybe allows coaches to view the game through a different lens, so with this in mind please feel free to offer me any feedback that might help me improve future content...and if you want to see more then the best way in which you can support is by liking, sharing and engaging! Like you I'm just on a journey to see how far I can go but none of us can get too far without support.

Finally can I just say thank you to Stuart Amos @Stu_amos for his contribution towards 1-2 drill designs, Stuart is a brilliant guy/coach and well worth a follow.

Thank you!

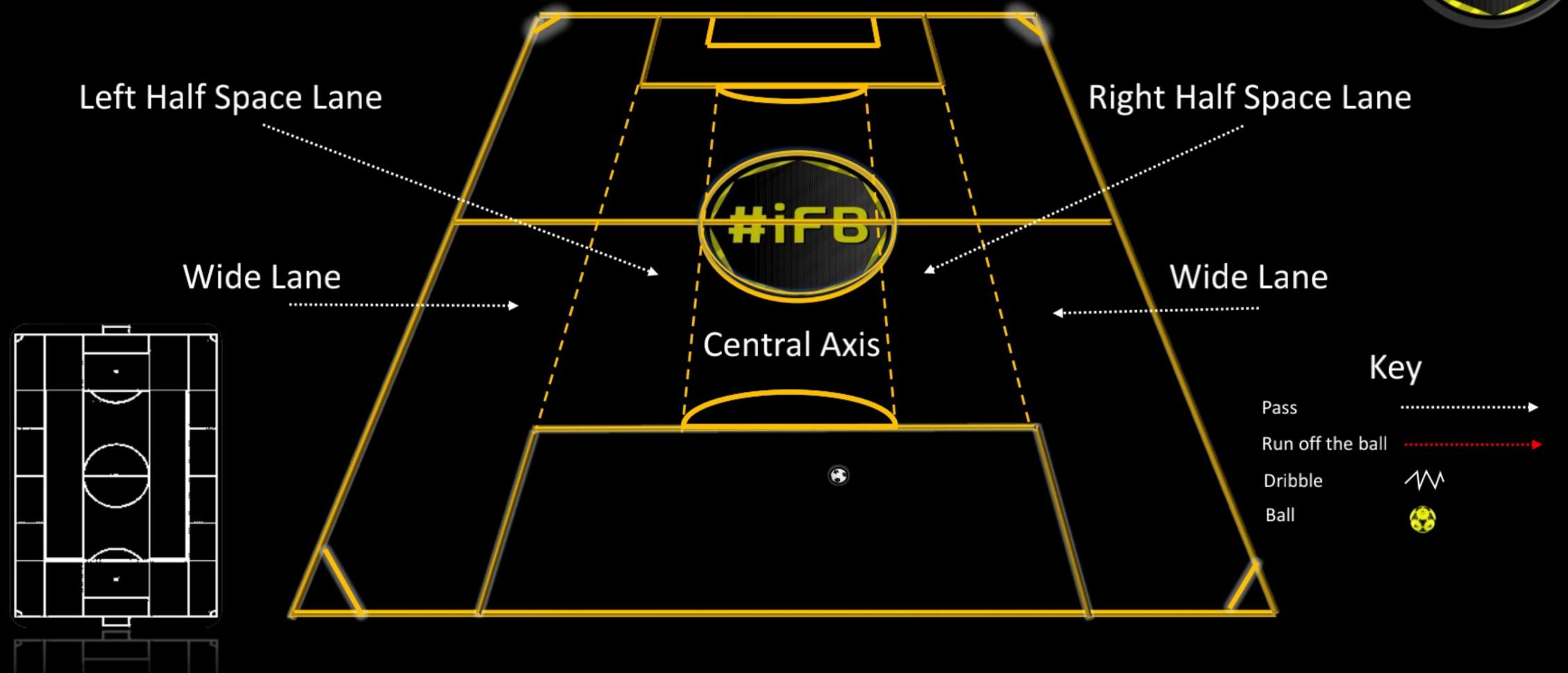


3-4-2-1



5 lane model





1-3-4-2-1 IN POSSESSION KEY PRINCIPLES

Watch part 1 for a comprehensive break down

https://youtu.be/BDutAIARf2M

Building the attack

- Build up in an A-symmetric back 5 to overload one side
- Circulating the ball through central areas of the pitch (in our half)
- · Seek to build up via diagonality
- Take 2 touches in own half to reduce chance of a poor pass and being countered
- · Looking to play through overloaded half space lanes
- · The link up connections between 10s, 9, CMs and wide players to pull players out of the back line
- Quick combinations to exploit space and get in behind
- Progressive runs, 1v1 take-ons, drive into the box over crossing

Counter attacking

- Implement a flexible structure ahead of the ball in anticipation of a transition
- Play on the shoulder of the "Counter-Pressing line"
- 4-6 players explode into action
- Prioritize depth over width for speed and directness
- Encourage progressive runs, 1v1 take-ons, through balls into the box
- Get in behind, or find space in the box to allow for high quality chances with low numbers between the ball and goal (and from no further than 20 yards out)



1-3-4-2-1 OUT OF POSSESSION KEY PRINCIPLES

Part 2 https://youtu.be/JwQFHFcO8i0

Pressing High

- · Split the pitch and keep the opposition in one half to control the space
- · Press passing lanes that are diagonal to the ball to try and ensure only vertical and lateral passes are on offer
- Prevent access into Half-Space Lanes and force out-wide into the FB and begin to create ball side supremacy
- · Create a 2v1 on the oppositions FB or create a 'Horizontal Passing Lane' trap
- · Transition from the blind side of CM and CBs

Central Block

- Reference point is the center circle (2 yards in front for engagement, 2 yards south for defensive line)
- 22m vertically (8-10m between 4 defensive line)
- · Protect the central axis
- No more than 2 positive actions between the lines can take place
- Protect key space in and around the edge of the box
- · Force into wide areas and gain numerical supremacy
- · Counter through the 9 either to feet vs deep line or in behind FBs when it's a high line
- Drop deeper into own half towards the latter stages of the first half or if the opposition start to overcommit
 players going forward

Counter-Pressing

- Vertical compactness in attack is key (players must be no more than 10m apart with exception to the far side WB who might be holding max width
- · Counter attacking starts before the ball is lost via the structure, we implement behind the line of the ball
- We need to have numerical equality (as a minimum) around the ball so when play breaks down, we can
 collectively press
- · 1 player must stay behind the line of play to prevent verticality in transition and to slow the opposition down
- If we can't get pressure on the ball in under 3 seconds counter-pressing is generally ineffective

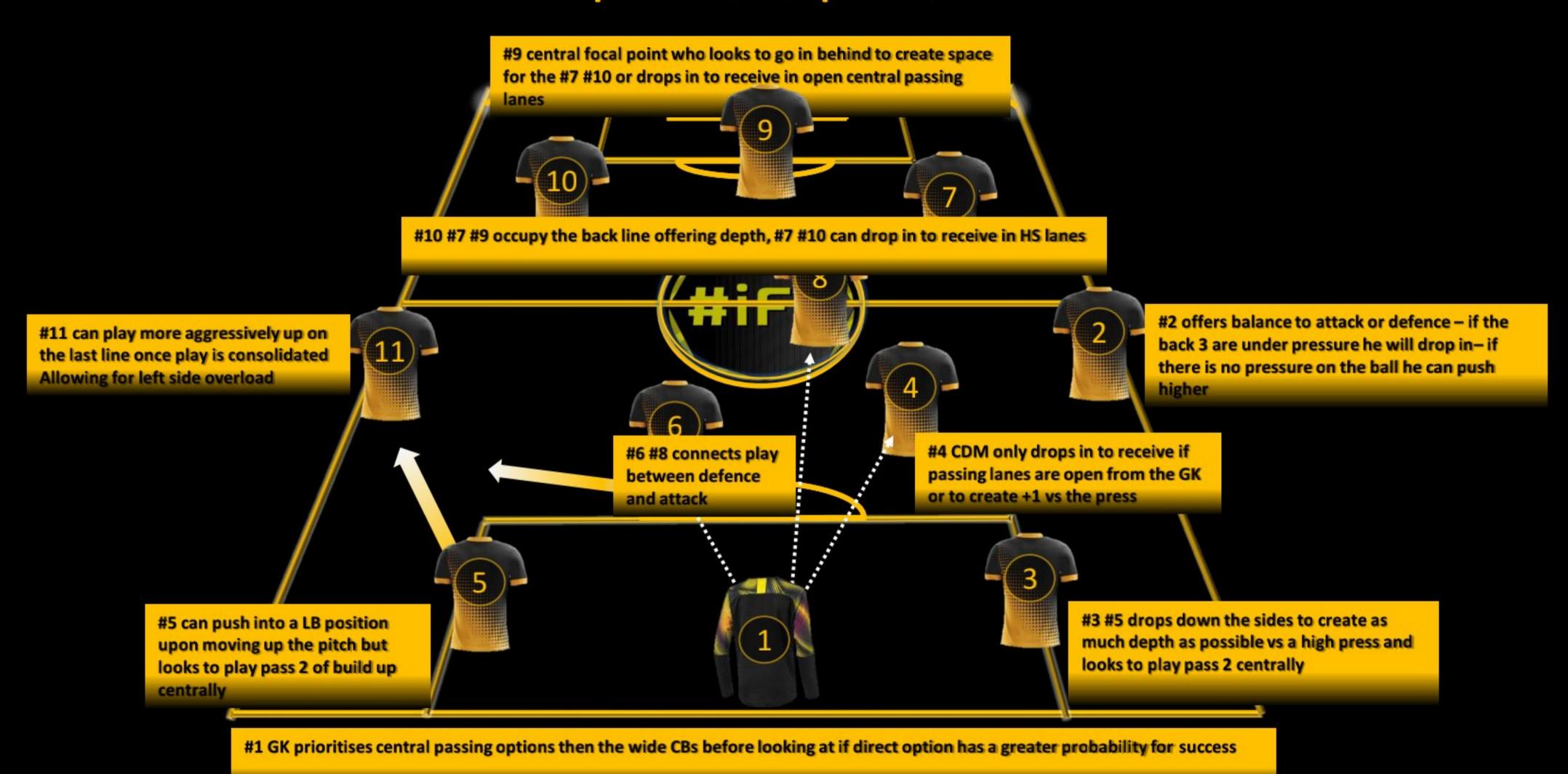


Building the attack from the back 1st Phase Possession

Build Up Play Possession Zones



Basic Shape & Responsibilities

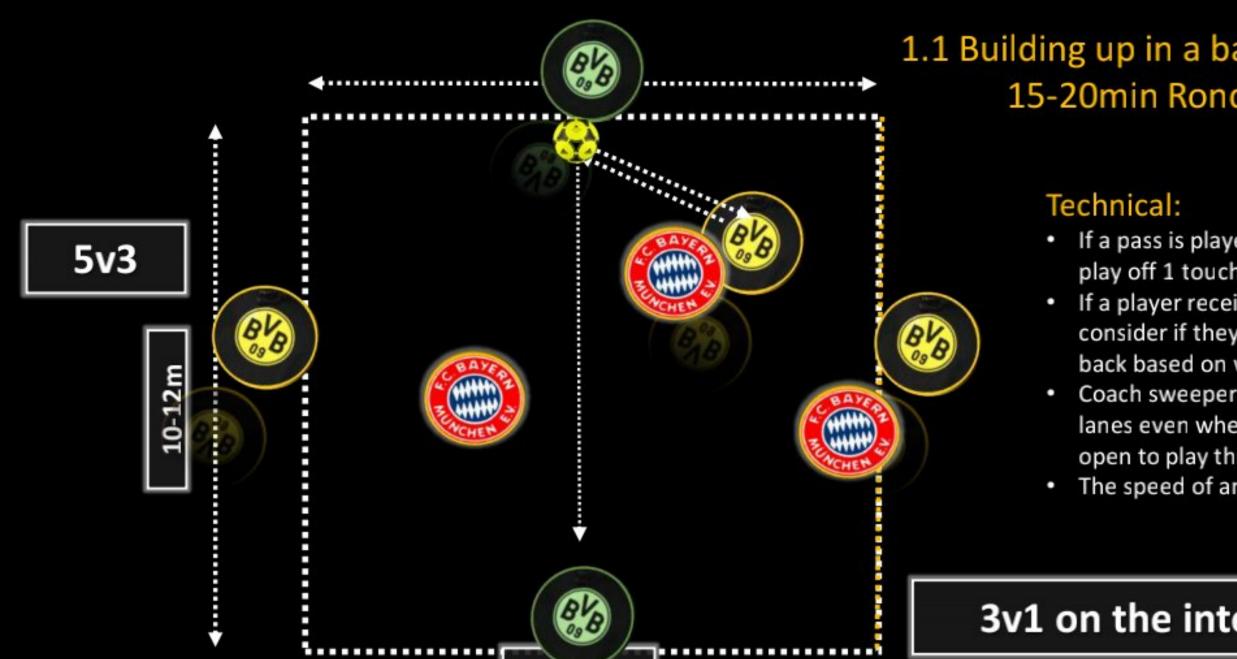


Session Plan Example Technical – SSG- Large game

1.0 Build the Attack from the #6 - Un-opposed Combination Practice – Technical Warm Up (5 player drill but you can run multiple stations simultaneously)

Player detail





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1.1 Building up in a back 3 transitional game (3v3+2) 15-20min Rondo Primary players #6 #4

- If a pass is played to your back foot, encourage players to play off 1 touch.
- · If a player receives a pass to their near foot, get them to consider if they need to take a touch or bounce the ball back based on where the pressure is coming from.
- Coach sweepers to be constantly analysing the passing lanes even when they are off the ball to see if they are open to play through.
- · The speed of any up-back-through needs to be crisp.



3v1 on the interior

The Session

The two players in green represent the sweeper or CM/CAM/STR and they remain against the end zone lines with the freedom to move anywhere across it.

The team of 3 in possession (yellow): take up positions on the sides of the grid that are free to make a diamond shape for build up with the 1 remaining player in the interior as a CDM

This game can be used to bring out build up, pressing and counter pressing principles

The objective is to keep the ball for as long as possible and play from green to green when passing lanes open to score a point, the best strategy is for the team in possession to use the side players and particularly the CDM in the middle as a way of breaking the 3 man defensive line in order to aid with opening passing lanes in order to penetrate

If play is won back by the reds they must transition as fast as possible in order to 'Escape the Press' by releasing the ball as early as possible to either of the green players and then get into the same shape - during this transition the Yellow team will be counter pressing trying to stop the ball reaching the greens, whilst fighting to win the ball back in 4-6 seconds

Progression: (technical) Player must play either off 1 touch and then change to a minimum of 3 touches (the former encourages quick combination play, the latter encourages staying on the ball whilst giving greater incentive to the pressing team)

Key Points

- This is a good drill to get the players to transition in and out of possession very quickly (good habits on getting into shape quick and then reacting and getting compact once play has broken down)
- · The use of the CDM to invite pressure and dislodge players is key
- Encourage SW #6 to play through the ball sized passing lanes when open and to control the tempo when in maintenance
- Counter Pressing might not be your primary focus but this is a good drill for coaching wide players to anticipate play breaking down early and as such tucking infield to cut out central passing lanes
- Its also good for coaching players to understand what direction the opposition wants to counter through as they have 2 points of reference in the greens to close off
- Coach body shape in possession, analysis, tempo control

1.2 Build the Attack Opposed Progression 3v2 vs 3v2 + Coaches

Player detail

#5 #3 when to drive and break lines, when they hit a brick wall and need to retain and circulate centrally

#4 the angle with which to receive from wide CBs and the 3 movements they can offer 1: between the 2 mannequins (vertically between the lines) 2: in front of the first line and 3: move away from ball down the sides of the far side mannequin for when play is played around and switched



Set Up:

Two grids approx. 25x15 each (flexible)

3v2 in each grid (A back 3 vs 2 pressing strikers)

In the middle we have gateways that the #3 #5 can dribble through positioned in HS Lanes and between both gateways there is a goal area where the far side sweeper #6 from the other end zone will move into to simulate the CDM #4

The objective is to work the ball from one coach to the other at the back of each end zone. Yellows build 3 vs 2 and must pick the right moments to drive through the gates to progress play or to entice a pressing player out where we then look for opportunities to penetrate through the #4 in the middle

If we work the ball into the opposite end zone then it starts again from that side

If the red team wins the ball they have 4 goals to score in, the yellows must determine which goal is the one they are most likely to attack and try to shut it down

Tactical Principles:

- · Understand the different possession zones
- Circulate the ball centrally until an opening occurs to pass or drive through
- Pass to attract the opposition look to stretch and split the oppositions #9 #10
- Play through ball side passing lanes
- Coach #4 CM position to receive

Mental

- Composure
- Tempo control
- Bravery
- Reactive



Progression:

Have 2 CDMs #4 #8 on plays to occupy two pressing strikers, the other plays between 1 set of mannequins to receive in half spaces, if the main pivot moves out of central lane, the other CM must replace in the pivot space

1.3 Build the Attack Progression 6v6+GK (2v2-2v2-2v2) 14 players



- · 3 grids all approx. 15m by depth x 40m by width with goals in the end zone
- option to name the zones so the players can develop understanding (i.e.
 Central circulation zone, progression zone, up/back through etc)
- 2v2 in each grid (defending players are locked)
- the yellow team can seek to create numerical supremacy at the right moments i.e.
 CDM #4 #8 can drop in when the angle is on to do so to make a 3v2 (if a CDM clears the pivot space at any point the other CDM must replace them)

Tactical Principles:

- · Understand the different possession zones
- Circulate the ball centrally until an opening occurs
- · Combine with two touches safely to avoid counter
- CDMs play narrower than the 10s to open passing lanes
- · Build through 10s when its on to do so
- Recognise when to change tempo for penetration
- Transfer principles from combination session across

Technical

- CBs stay on the ball or seek to drive beyond pressure line 1 at the right times
- Take 2 touches where possible to reduce risk of loss and counter (in our half) - flexible
- Weight, speed, accuracy of the pass
- Triggers/timing of movements (set pass/eyes up)
- (change of tempo)

Mental

- Composure
- Tempo
- Bravery





Rather than put all the drills into session plans I have instead split each section into technical/Lead In/SSG drills and then clustered larger SSGs and Phases of Play after

Many of these drills can easily double up ...so if the primary focus of some of these drills are working on attacking play, then in many instances the same practice could be used for counter attacking or counter pressing outcomes



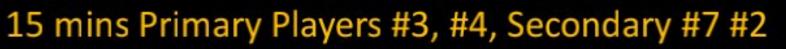
Player detail

2.0 Build the Attack – 1st Phase of play 4v3+GK (Technical Warm Up)

#7 starting high and only coming in if the passing lane is open and on the eyes up trigger #4 can he receive on pass 2 from #3...if he received on pass 3 from #7 he needs to consider where is he avb to receive for the set pass

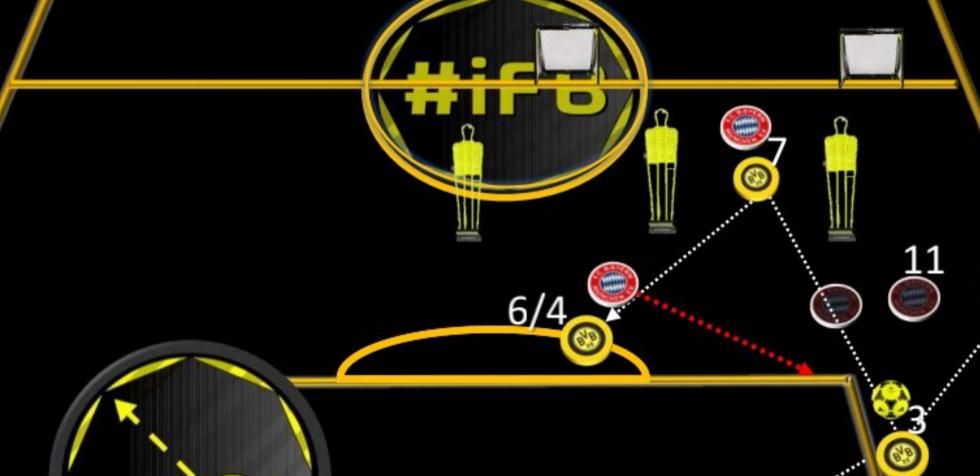
#2 playing in behind the WFL – if no pressure is on the ball can he move higher, if the opposition get pressure on #3 early can he come into meet it

#2 First touch if receiving on pass 2 needs to be into space to run onto and gain momentum where we can get them to pass into the far goal to simulate passing into a #9









Set Up:

Quarter of a pitch spacing

This drill can be mirrored on the left side and run at the same time 4 players position themselves in build-up shape around the box with a principle of +1 rule - below the opposition are simulating a 4-3-3 press and so we position 4 players around the box in a W-Shape using the #4 to make an overload like BVB

The objective is to get beyond our third and to score in the open goals

Initial passing combinations - This can be flexible and progressed

#3 - #7 - #4 (goal)

#3 - #2 - #9 (goal)

Decision Making - #3 to make the right passing choice based on which passing lanes are most open e.g. in the example below the red WFL #11 might press from a wider position and leave the half space passing lane more open and as such we might look to play into #7 who sets to #4

Alternatively red WFL #11 could press from a more narrow line leaving our RWB #2 open and as we can by-pass 2 lines of pressure in 1 pass we take the option and seek to get into the middle third as quickly as possible (add transition for pressing team as incentive)

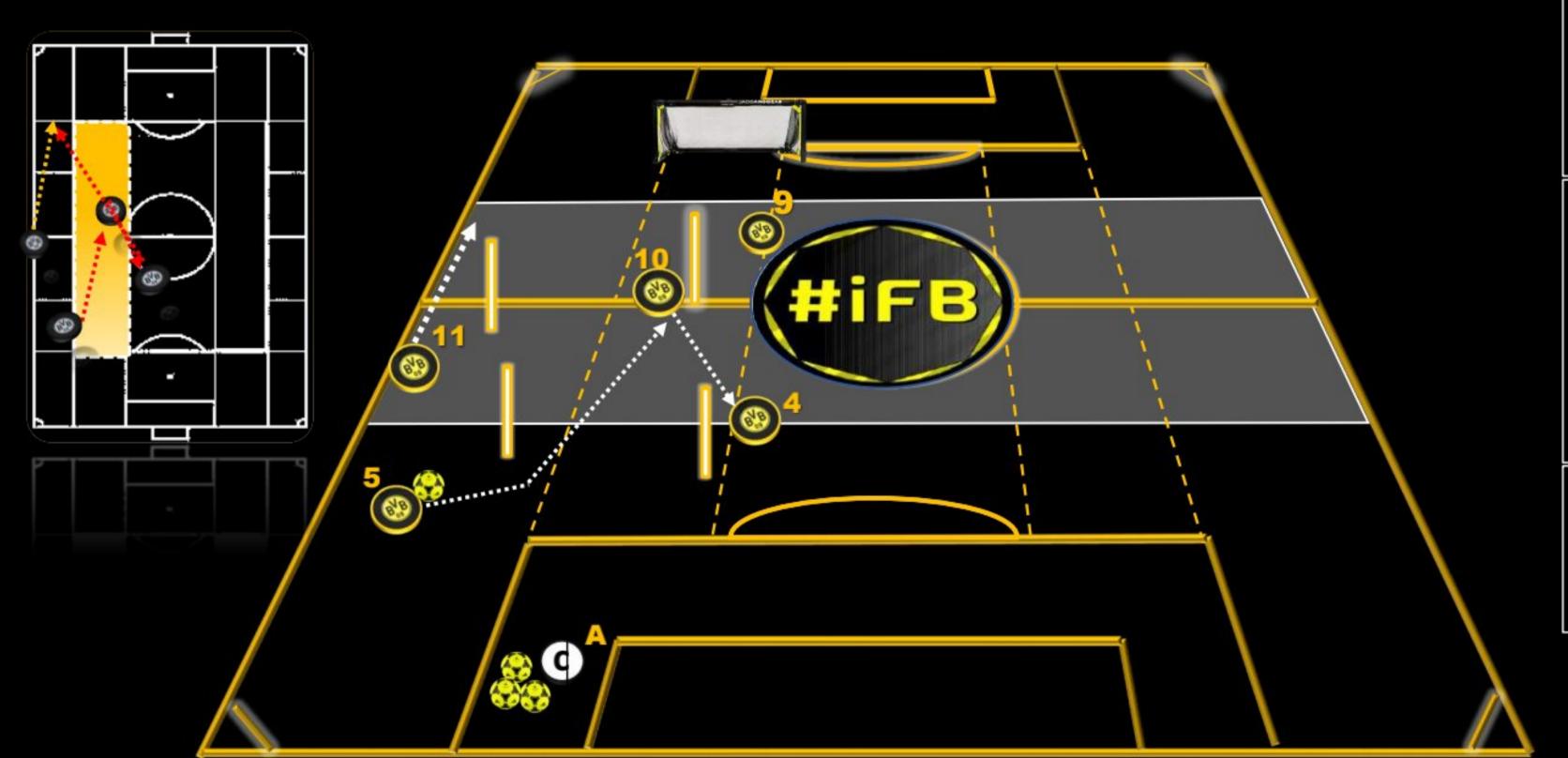
Technical

- Players playing with head up not looking at the ball so they can constantly scan
- Weight, speed, accuracy of the pass
- Triggers/timing of movements (set pass/eyes up)
- Quality of first touch in ensuring its either locked in tight when needed or its pushed far enough in front so as to gain momentum to move onto the ball at speed

2.1 Combination Practice (Technical Warm Up Practice 10-15mins 5-10 players)

Unopposed- Left Half Space Overload to penetrate drill (Primary players #5 #10, #9)

- Ball starts at A Coach passes to LCB #5 who drives inside and play through HS lane
- Eyes up trigger for movement from CAM #10
- #10-#4-#11-#9 then combine to finish in small goals, alternative passing patterns #5-#4-#5-#9 (as the #10 goes around the back of the #9) #9 sets to #11 and #10 finishes (very flexible)





Tactical Principles:

- · Shape realism
- Circulate the ball centrally & through Half Space Lanes
- Quick clever combinations
- Get in behind Make the box (direct/fast)
- Synchronised movement needs to be fluent/flow

Technical

- Movement of players e.g. the blind side of markers ensuring they are accessible
- Single and double movements from CAM #10
- Take 2 touches where possible to reduce risk of loss and a counter (in our half) - flexible
- First touch towards the centre where possible
- Weight, speed, accuracy of the pass
- Triggers/timing of movements (eyes up)

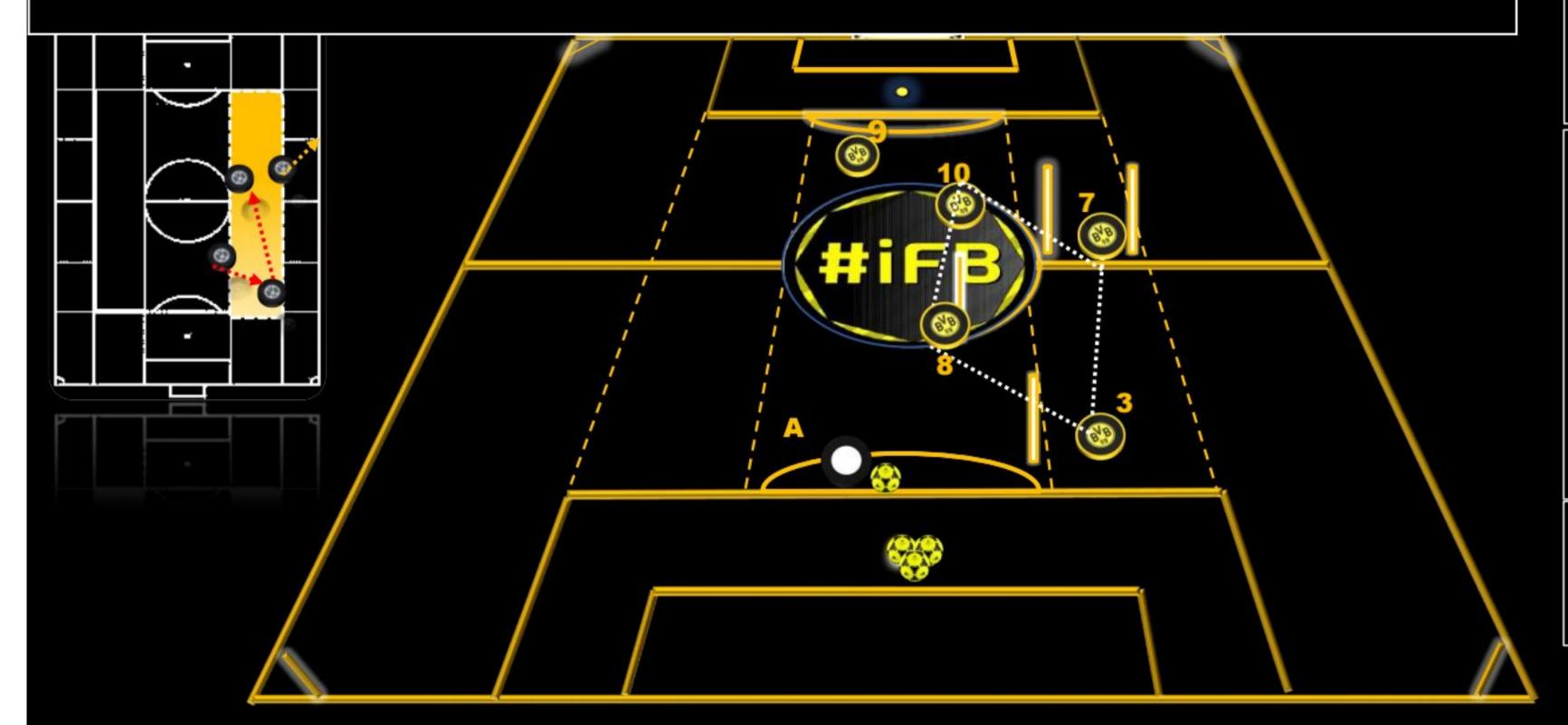
Mental

- Desire to play forwards/diagonally
- composure
- Bravery to play through ball size passing lanes
- · Desire to get into the box/get beyond your marker

2.2 Combination Practice -Technical Warm Up 10-15 mins (A-B can run simultaneously)

Unopposed:- Right Half-Space overload to penetrate (Primary players #7, #10, #9)

- Ball starts at A Coach passes to #3 who drives inside into middle third beyond pole/mannequin
- Combination #3 plays into #8 who invites pressure and plays set pass back to CB (trigger for CAM 1 #7 movement)
- CAM 1 #7 moves out of HS to open up space & to make run in behind the receive. CAM 2 #10 now moves into the open space to
 receive and play in behind
- Drive into the box at speed and finish 1 touch finish
- Crosses should be low and hard to 2nd 6-yard-box)





- Tactical Principles:
- · Shape realism
- Circulate the ball diagonally & through Half Space Lane
- Get in behind Make the box (direct/fast)

Technical:

- CBs when in the drive/progression zones can go beyond the line of pressure with the ball
- Take 2 touches where possible when #8
 receives to reduce risk of loss and a counter
 (in our half) flexible
- Weight, speed, accuracy of the pass
- Triggers/timing of movements (set pass/eyes up)
- Recognise when we need a change of tempo
- · Penetrate in behind

Mental:

- Desire/intensity
- composure
- Bravery

2.3 Build Up to Transition Game(15-20 mins) 3-2-1 vs 3-2-1 +2 (14 players)

Lay Out:

Pitch is divided into thirds but not everyone is locked in

Back 3 (yellow) are locked in and the 3 pressing reds can press to make it 3v3 in that third or sit in the central zone depending on need

The 2 yellow CMs and the 3 remaining red CMs are locked into the middle third leaving a 1v0 in the final third (yellow)

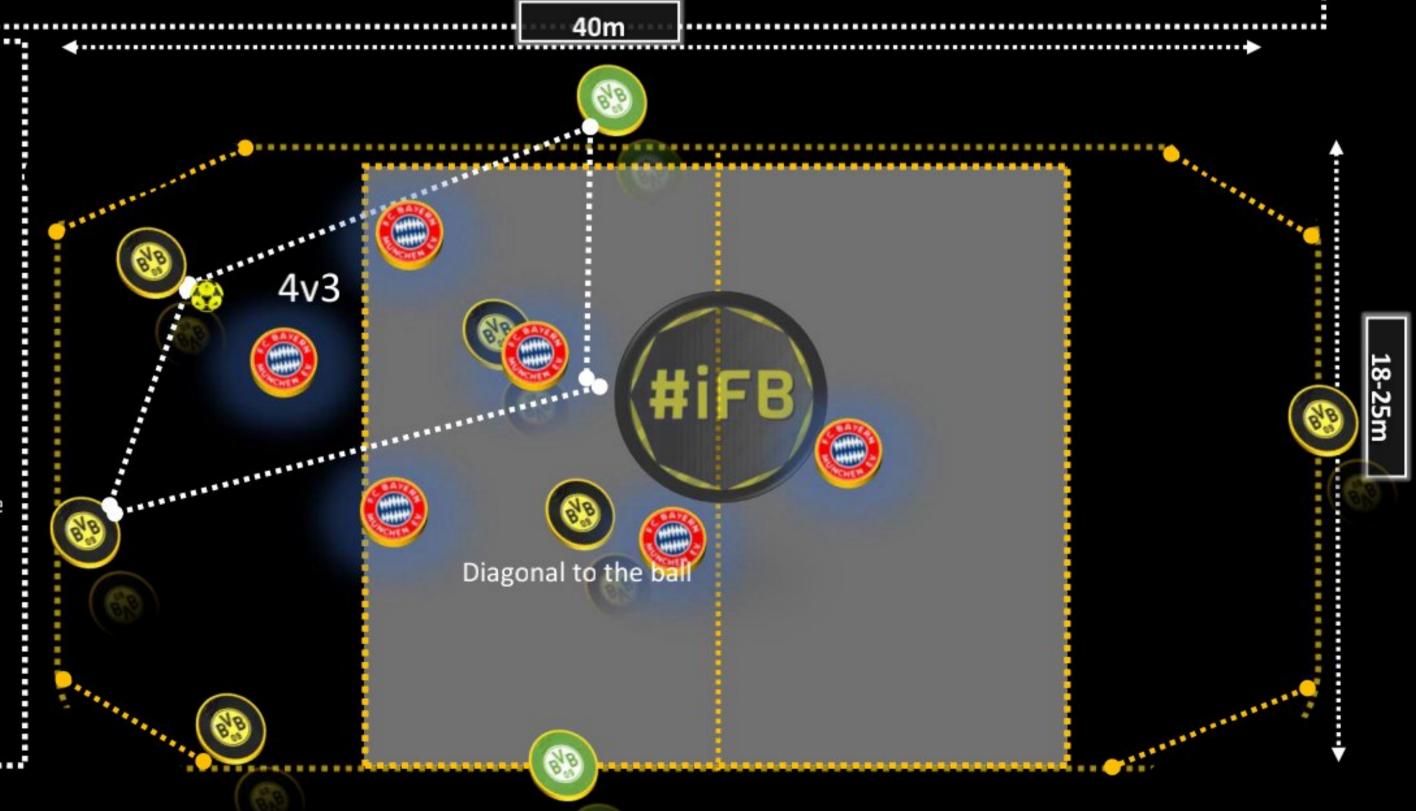
The two greens are wing backs and work with which ever side has the ball

Session:

This is a Build Up Play SSG where there is a central underload in possession, the team with the ball must work the ball through the thirds keeping the ball for a set number of passes. If possession is lost at any point the two teams trade places with transition outcome for both, i.e. a restraint can be put on to try and win the ball back in under 5 seconds

Key Points

- Central Circulation
- Positional play to out play 2-3 pressing players when in the wider areas
- CMs fighting to find a yard of space
- Playing in 1v1s with back to play play two touch unless they have no alternative
- Only play horizontal passes to the far side if its 100% safe to do so and it enables a final third entry
- Wing backs play off 1-2 touch and have to look to play centrally as the corners of the pitch are cut off to try and stop straight line passes, down the touchline



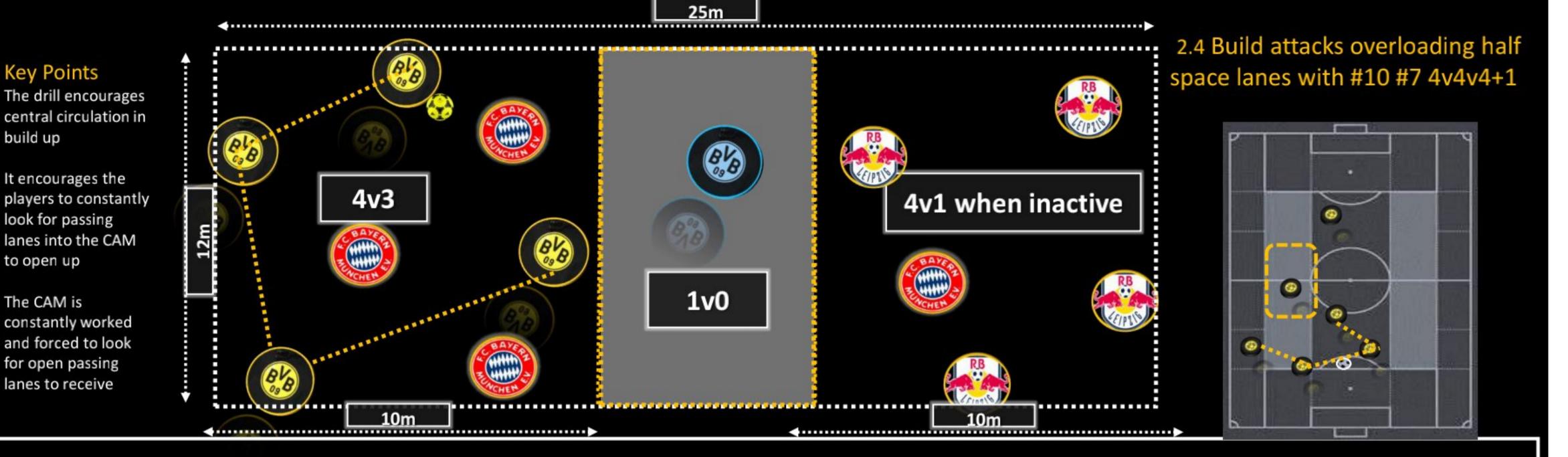


Progression

CBs can only play to WBs if the WBs are positioned in the oppositions half so it's evading 1-2 lines of pressure whilst preventing the team getting trapped in wide areas

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Add goals behind end zones to allow up, back, through goals if the team in possession play through a CM



Lay out:

gu bliud

- 3 grids 2 are 12x10m, middle zone is 12x5m (flexible)
- The two end grids have 4 players (back 3+1 CM) they are positioned in the build up shape as shown in the top right (in the above example I have biased them to the left flank just as BVB did in the analysis video to overload the left flank)
- The team of 4 out of possession keep 1 player in the non-active end zone whilst 3 must go and press the zone where the ball is (making it 4v3)

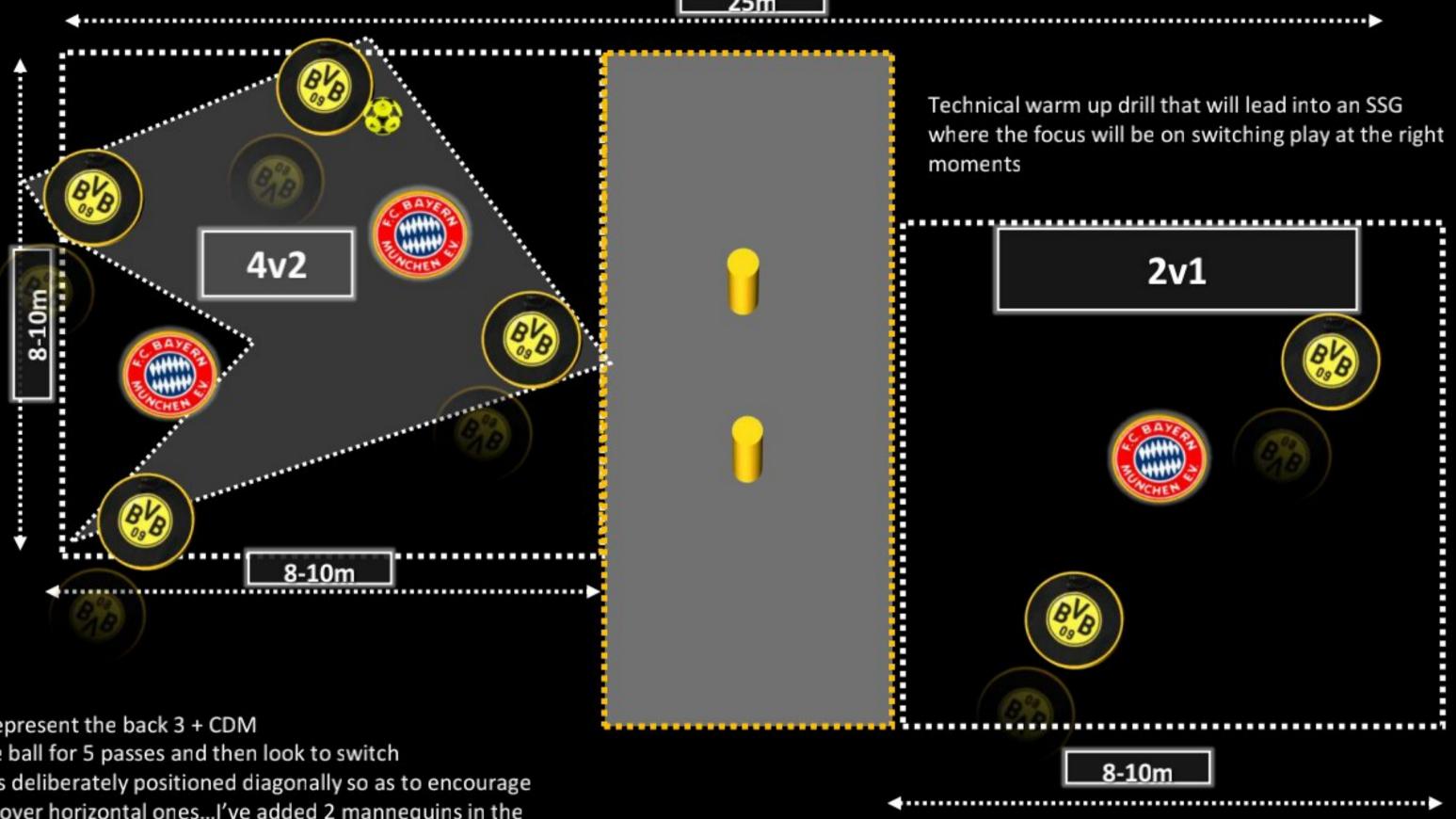
Session: (Primary Player CAM #10 secondary CM #7 Secondary #5 #3)

Conditions are flexible: The main objective is to play in tight spaces and work the ball into the middle zone after inviting pressure. The team in possession must work the ball into the CAM so they can play through to the other end zone which represents the CAM playing into the final third or in behind the back line - once play is transferred to the other team of 4 they must keep the ball in that zone until pressure is invited (i.e. its 4v3 again) only then can they transfer the ball back via the CAM - The play cannot go straight from end zone to end zone. (The CAM in the middle zone is initially in a 1v0 to help achieve success of playing between the lines and playing through balls into the final third – but you can adapt)

Progression: You can allow an Up, Back, Through progression to end zone via the CAM

Allow for the middle 1v0 CAM to rotate into the attacking end zone (based on specific triggers) but he must be replaced by a team mate so the numbers are always balanced or make it 1v1 in the middle grid

2.5 Switch the attack and support





The Session

The 4 man diamond represent the back 3 + CDM
Yellows must keep the ball for 5 passes and then look to switch
The other grid which is deliberately positioned diagonally so as to encourage more diagonal passes over horizontal ones...I've added 2 mannequins in the central space so the players cannot pass with autonomy – they must look and assess the passing options – this is flexible – the far side grid has 1 defender who can instantly apply pressure to get the non active players thinking about receiving/space/triggers

Once the play is transferred we must get support over as fast as possible to make the grid a 4v2

Key Points

- · The drill encourages central circulation in build up
- · It encourages the players to constantly look for passing lanes into the CAM to open up

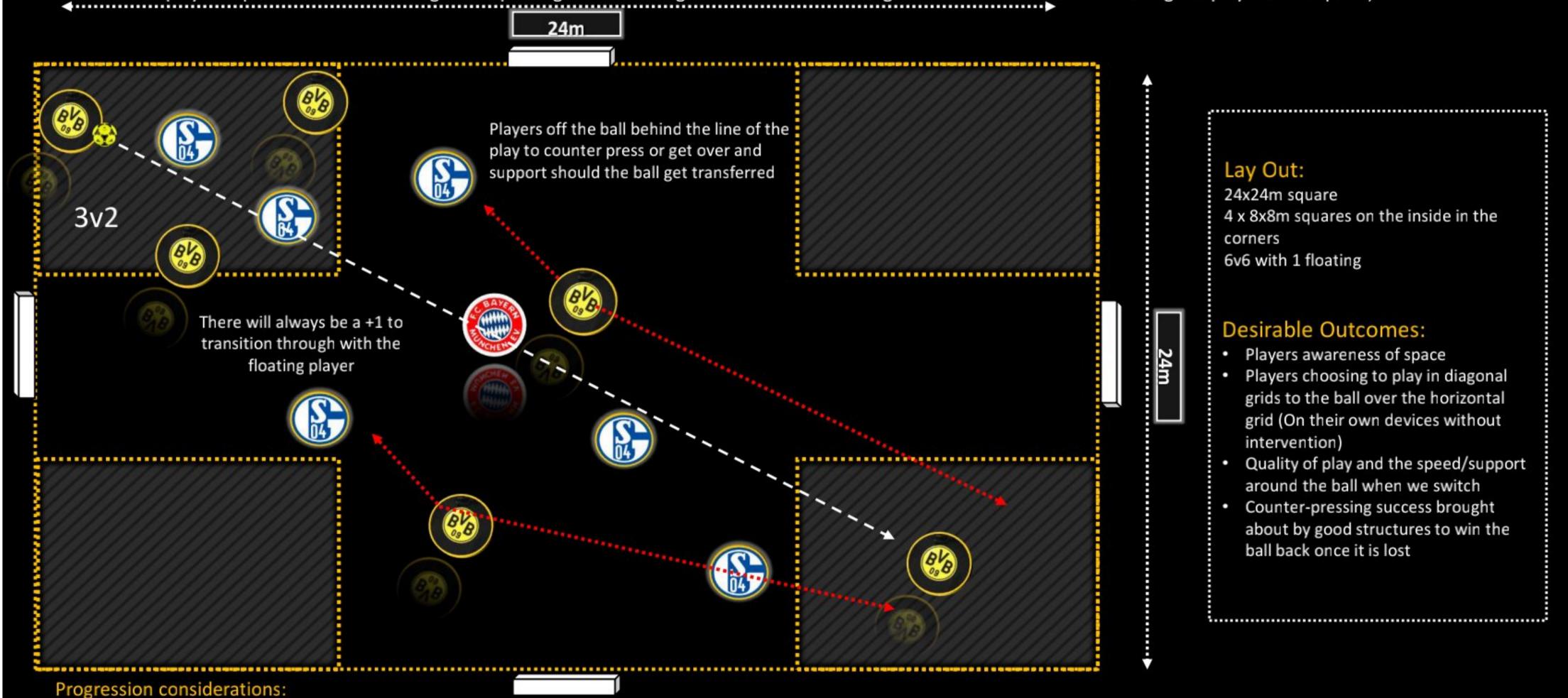


3.0 Build the Attack Progression (wide areas) 7v7 +GKs Set Up: 7v7 game starts in the maintenance grid in a 5v2 rondo, as soon as 5 passes are Links well with Player detail made they transfer to the LWB/LCB simulating that we have been forced towards #11 Analyse the pictures before the ball is the touchline and the play is then live for all played to him in order to assess any 1 touch In the wide grid we have a temporary 2v1 between #11 #10. passing options The grid is dissected into 4 quarters where the oppositions FB must start in the opposite half until a pass is made into that grid as must our own #10 The use of two touches or more if #11 Our #11 and #10 cannot operate on the same side or same half except during any receives an unfavourable pass transition e.g. if #10 makes a forward run in behind the oppositions FB/WF our #11 must seek to pass and or to move/drive centrally with the ball Encourage his first touch to be towards the centre and weighted within the square for The objective is to work the ball into the end zone and then to score, if possession is greater control lost the opposition have 8 seconds to score and the yellow must transition to counterpress Decision making on if it's safe to play Desirable Outcomes: horizontal passes into the CDM, if not can he find solutions through other defenders or GK · Positional superiority to be able to outplay in wide areas Good quick combination play in wide areas to help evade #10 the right movements to match the pressing traps and or to penetrate into the final third moment to help the team combine and · Recognition of when we are unable to progress the play at speed and we need to return back to the maintenance progress up the pitch - includes timing & Coach the opposition to decoy runs to clear space/move the phase to recirculate · The environment encouraging us to attack down 1 side in opposition look to counter pressure and not look for switches where we have less from horizontal counter-pressing control passes from WB Winning it back in less than 6 seconds – no through to CDM passes into the oppositions strikers (S) 40-50m

3.1 Switch the attack and support (progression) SSG 6V6+1 (Flexible)

Attacking overload game designed to get players switching out into space and supporting at speed

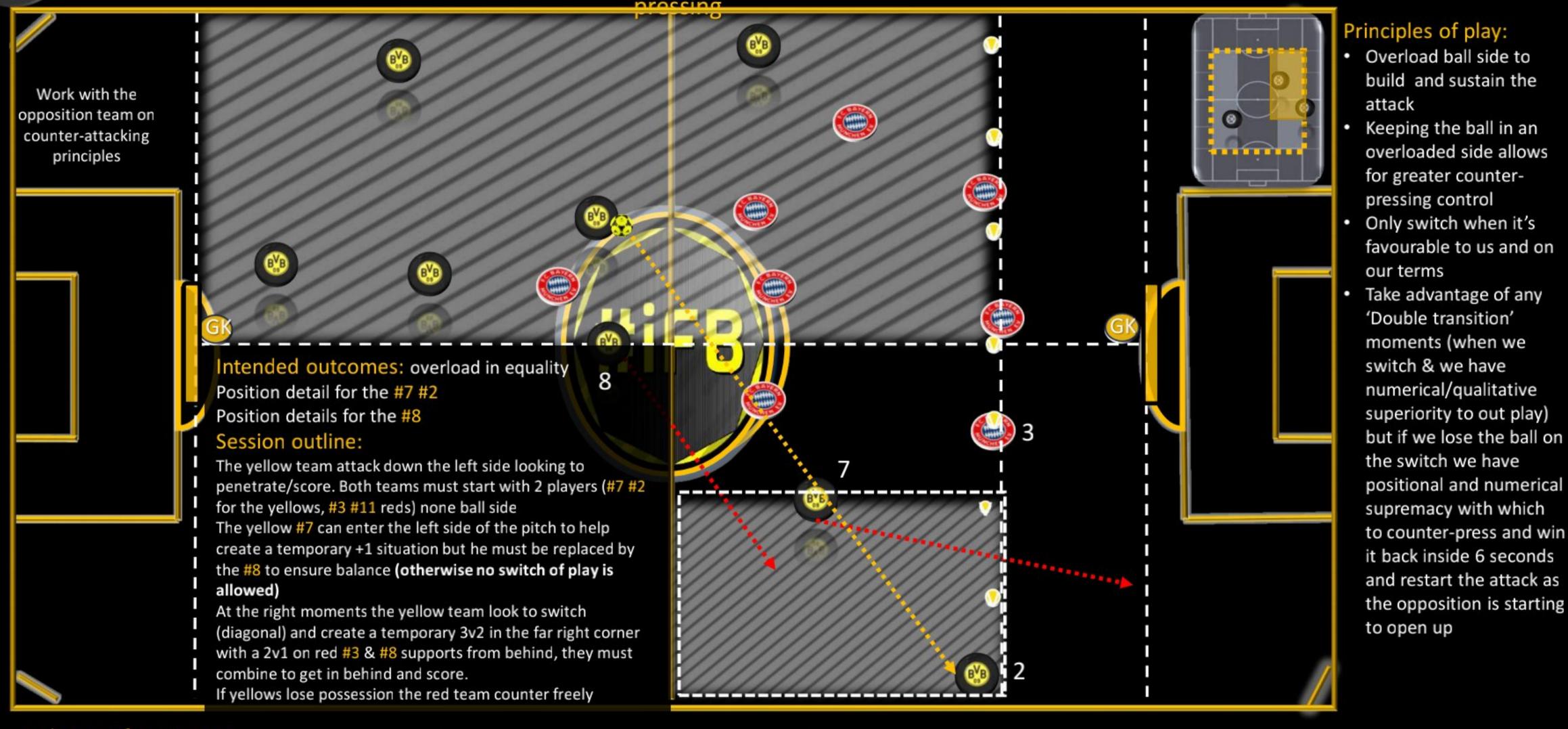
Every time a team in possession switched out into a grid they can play up to a 3v2 game (flexible) where they score if they retain the ball for 5 passes (as soon as a second player in possession enters the grid the passing count can begin to force the defending side to have to close down and get 2 players in at speed)



Teams are not allowed to play to a horizontal square only one that is diagonal to the ball to prevent a team being countered, or add goals on the outside that teams can intercept on transfer from one grid to another and score in – this simulates a horizontal pass getting cut out and countered on



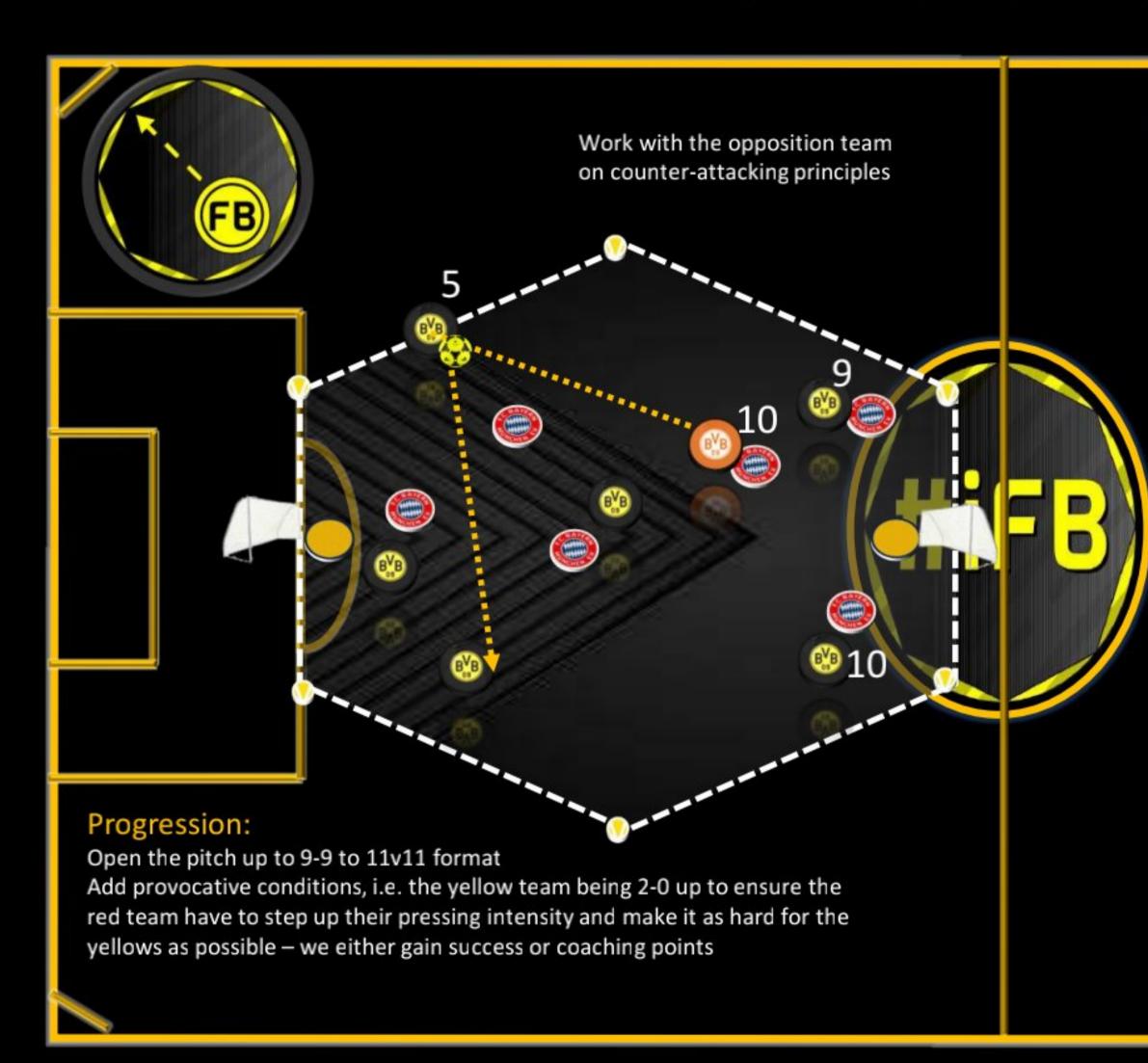
3.2 Session 8v8+GK 20 mins (Flexible) overload to isolate attacking/switching/counter



Indicators for success: choosing the right times to switch the point of attack and not doing it if we don't have the right balance and structures on the far side, getting the desired numbers, getting in behind/scoring and having the right 3v2 or 3v3 structure with a player in behind the line of the ball for the counter-pressing transition

3.3 Central Circulation with Attacking Overload (hexagon pitch) 6v6+1 + GK 20 mins (Flexible)

1-3-2-2 vs 2-1-3



Session:

Normal football rules but any conditions can be applied to suit your team's needs

The pitch is designed to prevent players in wide positions from playing straight line passes down the touchline and thus look more for the 9's and 10s centrally as well as to play more diagonal passes over straight vertical ones

+1 overload in possession the joker plays on whichever team has the ball and helps create central overloads

Coaching Points

- Players first touch into space so they can gravitate to the centre where possible
- Guide players towards finding solutions to play more diagonal passes
- Only switch the play when it's clear we have a strong possibility to progress play as horizontal passes are the most high risk for a counter against
- Ensure two attacking players are always in the opposite half to the ball
- Coach sharp single and double movements too and away from the ball with the 9s and 10s
- Main triggers for movement, set pass back from CB-CM sweeper to wide
 CB with no pressure on the ball for an away movement

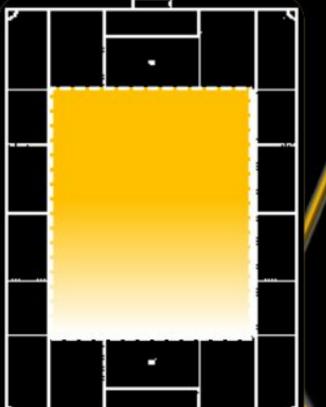
Player tactical detail #5 #9 #10

3.4 - Build the Attack though a box midfield 2-4-2-1 v 1-4-2-1

Player detail

#10 #7 playing on the blind side in between the lines (on the outside shoulder of the CMs to receive) #4 #8 positioned narrow in a box to overload opp, to open up passing lanes through to the 10s & for transitional purpose

10-15m 8-10m



30-35m

Set Up:

The pitch dimensions are specific towards encouraging play more centrally and to simulate realistic space between the line (narrower still to encourage play in and around the box and through balls)

Yellow team seek to keep the ball and work it into the #10 #7 where it becomes 3v2 (or 4v2 if you want to allow 1 WB to join in the attack) (flexible)

If possession is lost then the red team get 8 seconds to counter and score through the 2 goals (which are there to give counter pressing focus esp for the WBs who can tuck in to protect them)

Tactical Principles:

- Circulate the ball centrally/diagonally
- retain different vertical and horizonal lines within HS lanes
- Overload centrally
- Get 10s on the ball between the lines to link the final third
- · FBs play asymmetrically

Technical

- CBs stay on the ball or seek to drive beyond pressure line
- Take 2 touches where possible to reduce risk of loss and a counter (in our half) - flexible
- Weight, speed, accuracy of the pass
- Triggers/timing of movements (set pass/eyes up)
- (change of tempo)

Mental

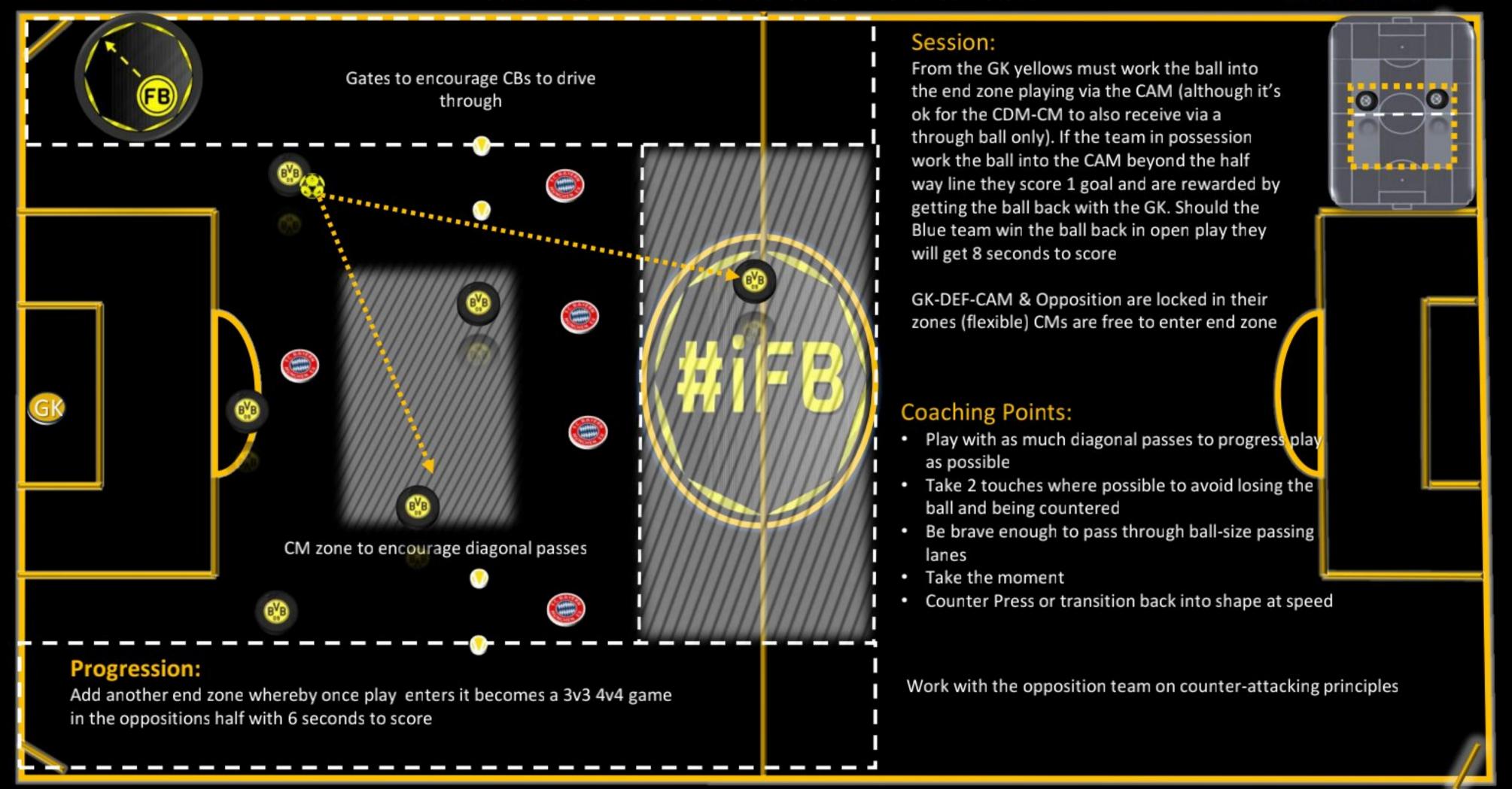
- Desire/intensity
- composure
- Bravery
- Desire beat your man

Work with the opposition team on counter-attacking principles

3.5 Progressing the attack through Half Spaces 6v5+GK 20 mins (Flexible) Primary player #10 #7 Secondary #4 #8

You can use 1 -2 CAMs or use Goals in HS lanes instead

1-3-2-1 vs 1-4



3.6 Progressing Play to the final Third through Half Spaces 20-30 mins Primary #7, #8, secondary #9 #10 8v8+GKs 1-3-2-3 vs 1-3-2-3

Session 40mx70m flexible. 8v8+GK where we have spaces marked out in each Half Space – this is designed so that the ball side CMs/9's and 10s must operate in different lines within the Half Space so that overloads in those areas can effectively take place

This drill is about overloading the HS with precision positioning and then higher up for the #9 to drop in and for the #10 to go beyond as we have intentionally limited the

space to get in behind



Tactical Principles:

- Circulate the ball diagonally & through Half Space Lanes
- 2 CAMs #7 #10 have flexibility to move from one HS to the other
- Retain different vertical and horizonal lines within HS lanes
- None ball side CAMs (or CM) work off the 9 to penetrate in behind
- Pull players out of the back 3 to create openings for others to get in behind

Technical

- CBs stay on the ball or seek to drive beyond pressure line 1 when in the right zones
- Take 2 touches where possible to reduce risk of loss and a counter (in our half) - flexible
- Triggers/timing of movements (set pass/eyes up)
- (change of tempo)

Mental

- Desire/intensity
- Composure
- High levels of concentration as this has high cognitive overload

Work with the opposition team on counter-attacking principles

under heavy pressure it's a free kick to the opposition

and we regain possession - or if we make a poor decision to shoot

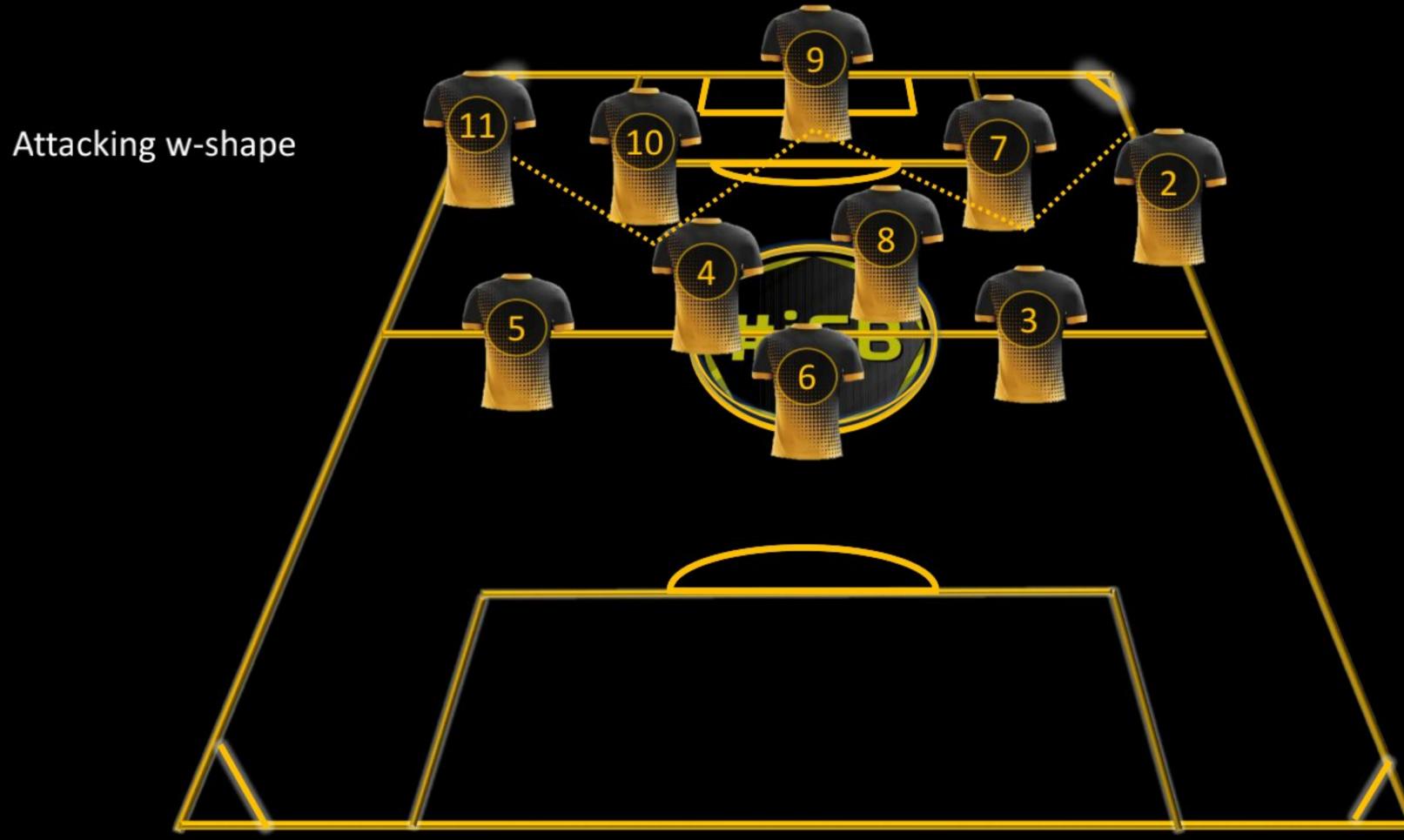
1-3-4-2-1 IN POSSESSION

I like to mix between overloaded attacking drills and underloaded sessions with more attention applied to the latter as the overwhelming majority of goals are scored underloaded

1v1 practices for example I like to make 1v2, not only does it make it harder but when players win 1v1 duels, they are not faced with an immediate decision on what the next element of play will be? I.e. another defender has come across? — so underloaded attacking drills in my experiences help forward players re-think before they attempt to beat a player and will challenge the off the ball players to consider solutions for how to occupy the other defenders

Don't be afraid to design weird shaped pitches – This also will help keep players thinking and prevents them from becoming autonomous with their surrounding space

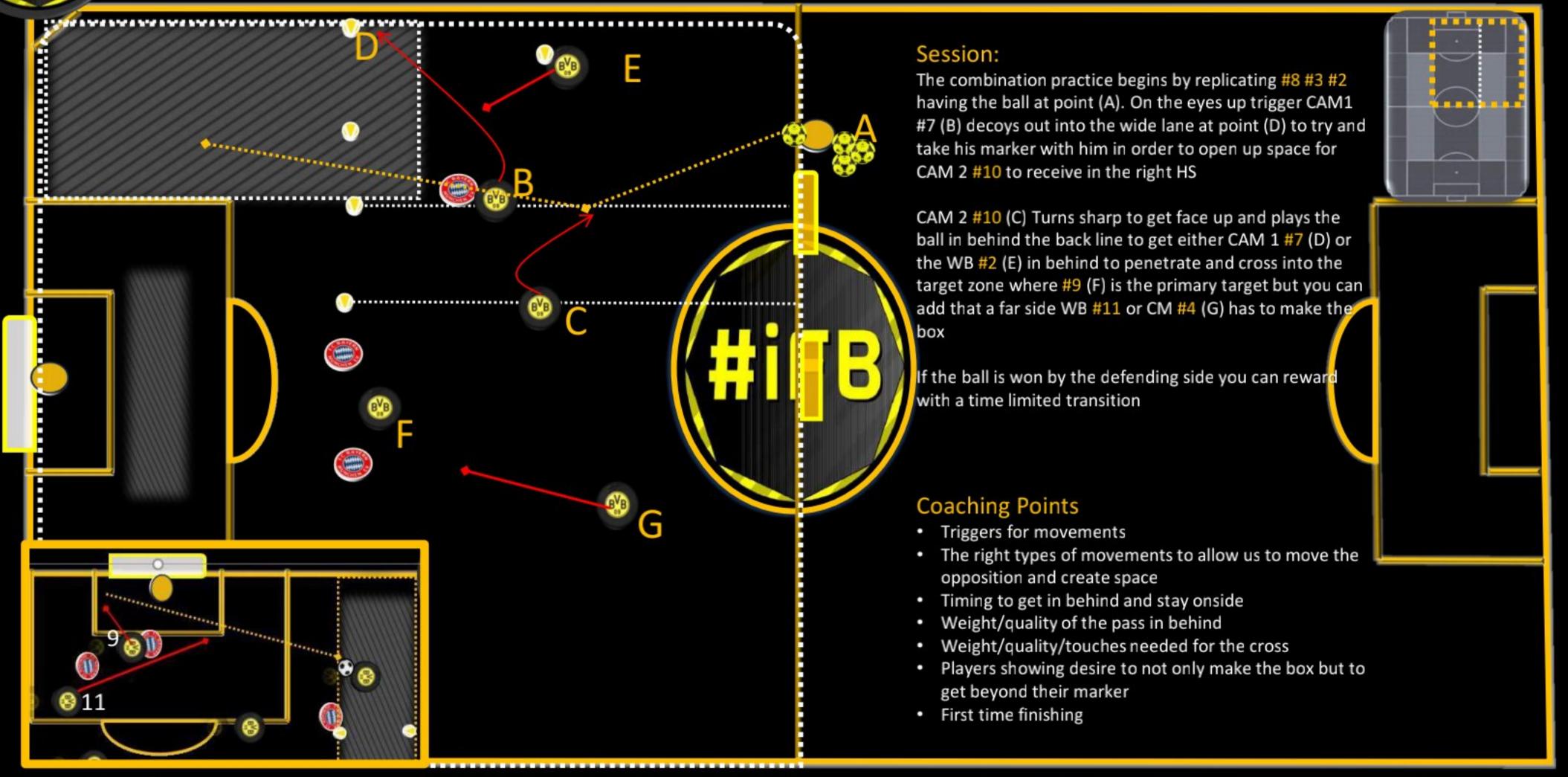
1-3-2-5-1-2-3-5



In the final third the formation morphs into a 3-2-5 – the 5 against the back line is especially important s teams who play with a back 4 as it means you either have numerical supremacy or the opposition is forced to adjust (usually in a way they wouldn't want I,e wingers having to play FB) the 3 at the back element is subject to how many attackers are left upfield – if the opposition only leave 1 up we don't need 3v1 so an extra player pushes into the midfield line



4.0 Building Through the Right Half-Space Lane – Progressing to Penetrate 8-16+GK 15-20 mins (Opposed or Unopposed)



Progressions: Consider the movements in the penalty area in order to try and create a 1v0 – in the example above (bottom left corner) I am showing the LWB #11 attacking the front post taking his marker with him exposing the back post area for the #9 to peel off at the back post for a 1v0 uncontested finish

4.1 Building the Attack through Half Spaces - Progressing to penetration in behind (9-18 +GK) 15-20 mins



Coaching Points

- Triggers for movements (eyes up/set passes) Consider when designing your patterns all the different types of movements attackers can offer in order to create space/penetrate
- 1-2 touches for the cross based on what's best for the scenario
- · Accuracy of the cross into the target zone
- Desire/speed for attacking players to get in behind into the target zones first

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Session:

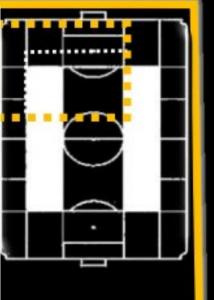
- There are endless variations of attacking patterns
- This is partial pressure with some opposition but can be done unopposed
- This design can be simplified as well to start at point D with the WB #11 in order to refine the crossing detail

The combination starts with a pass into the #10 (B) who set back to a CM #4 (C) before playing to a WB #11 (D) (who is locked in to the wide lane)

The objective is to cross in behind the back line into the target area where the #9 and #7 (F) have to work off each others movement to get in behind to score ideally with no defenders between them and the ball (equally I have added a second CAM #7 ball side at Point (G) which could represent the double 10 overload that BVB like to implement ...this player seeks to get in down the sides on the trigger of the pass between #10 & #4 at stations B-C

I have implemented a defensive line here for the defence/mannequins which can be adjusted, you can also decide if the near ball side defender can engage in the wide lane 1v1 to stop the cross

If the defenders win the ball – they can attack the 2 goals – add transitional/counter-press for the attackers



Progression Ideas: Strict offside rules, if you win your 1v1 into the target zone your opponent has a fun consequence, +/- defenders to make easier/harder, adjust defensive line -adjust the crossing position to the by-line and pull back low and hard into target zone, allow WB #11 to drive into the penalty box and pass into target zone, allow #4 CM at station C to attack box for 2nd phase after playing pass



4.2 Final Third Play 4v2 Half Space Possession Leading to 1v2 underload finish in behind (flexible) 10-14 players +GK 10-15 mins

Session design

4v2 rondo takes place in 1 grid and if possession is lost play is switched to the other half space grid (the mannequins are there to ensure players don't pass with autonomy and develop bad habits of playing horizontal passes – they encourage diagonal passes)

If a team makes 5 passes they can attack to score (under partial/full pressure) with the #9 receiving in behind in a 1v1 or 1v2 against

Intended Outcomes:

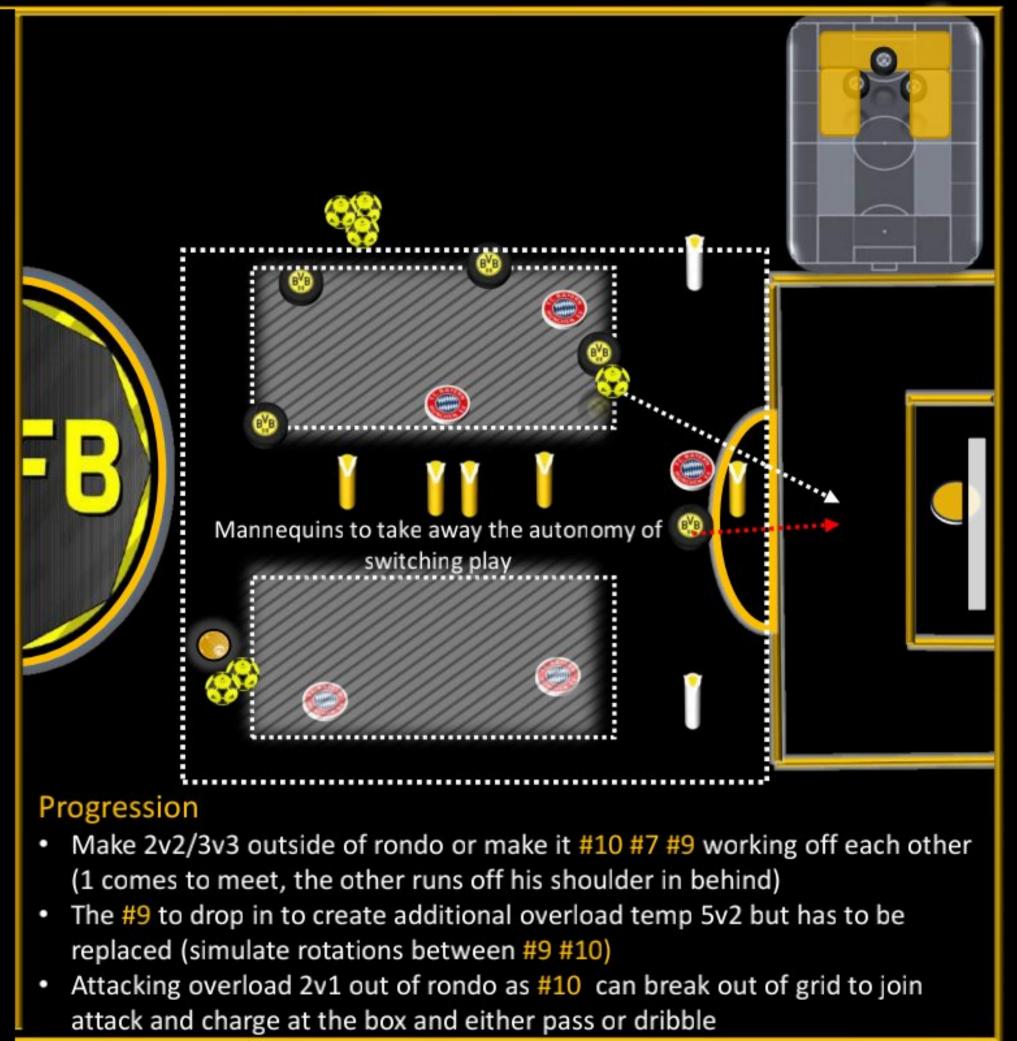
- Runs in behind the back line
- 1v1 take-ons
- · Finish with pressure from behind
- Ball retention/composure in the final third with recognition of when to penetrate
- #10 through balls into the box

Player detail: #9

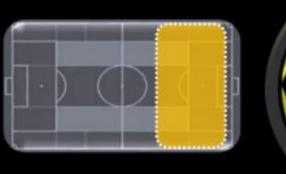
 Movement/timing/finishing/carrying the ball at speed under pressure/uncontested chances from/ high xG hot spots

Player Detail #10s #8 #4

 Through passes in behind the back line and into the box-weight of pass, angle, accuracy/progressive runs, 1v1 take-ons



4.3 Attacking vs Defence 3v3+ 1v1 Attacking Duels x2 (full squad) 15-20 mins





Session: 3v3 (flexible)

Plays out in the middle grid, which can transition if there is a turnover (flexible) on both sides of the 3v3 our attacking players work on 1v1 (or 1v2 underload) take-ons in smaller channels

Intended Outcomes defenders/GK

Defending as a back 3, distances, covering, 1v1 defending/shot block % protect key space in the penalty area

GK shot stopping/communication

Player detail: #6

Communication on defensive line, distances, which foot for others to show attacker on Tight to 9 to prevent turning, interceptions, recovery to cover in behind wide CBs

Player Detail #3 #5

Covering, distances, 1v1 control, block shots/stop cross

Player Detail #9

1v1 back to play, link and combine, can the 9 turn and get face up, movement in the box to be in space or create space for others

Player Detail #10

1v1 take-ons, passes into the box, movement across the line of play to manipulate man marking and create space at the back post areas for 1v0

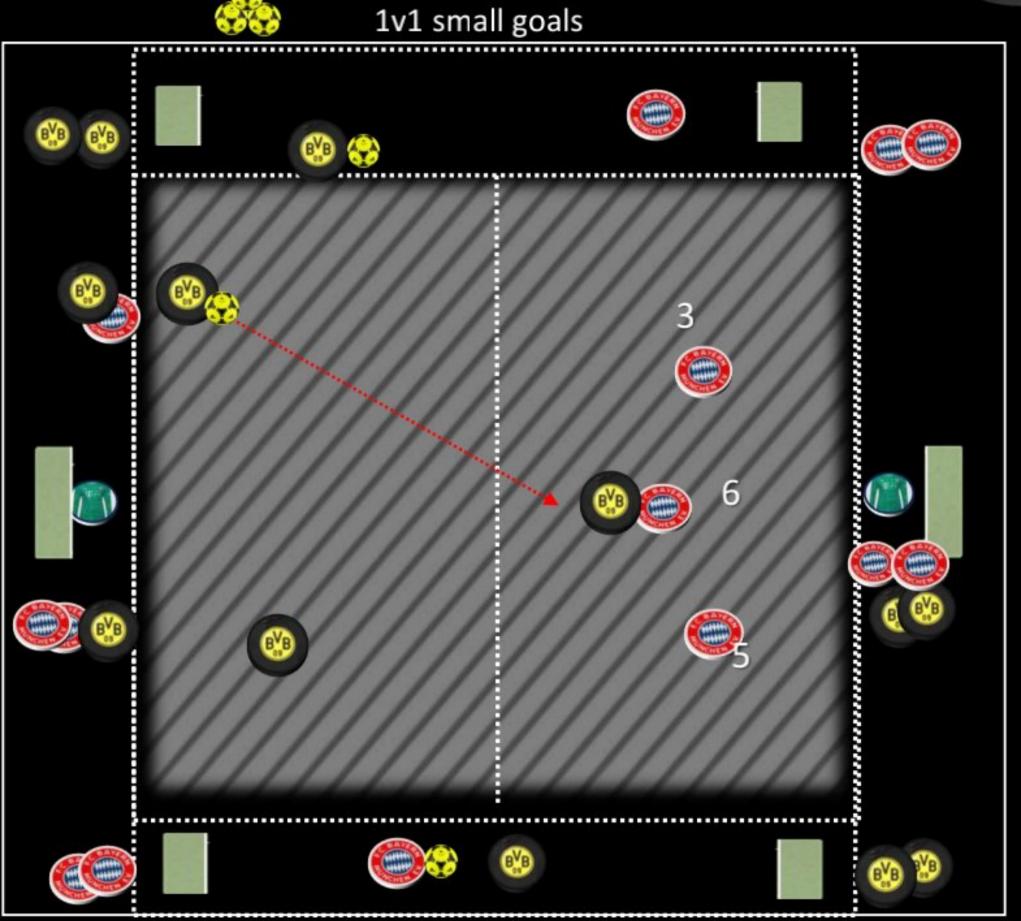
Attacking Outcomes:

#9 #10s link/combine to get in behind, work an uncontested opening in 1v1s, drive into box, get into good areas to score, create 1v0 at the back post via movement Lots of progressive runs and take-ons

Considerations:

Put additional flat markers down in the 1v1 grids scattered around that the players in possession must also avoid

Turn 1v1 into a fun game at the end by having squad player stand on the outside, roll/throw footballs at the player as they try to dribble from one end to the other keeping the ball under control



1v1 small goals

Session 4.4: 2v3+GK Underloaded Attack to Finish

Outcomes: #1 #2 #3 #5 #6 #11

- Defending cohesion as a back 3+ GK
- · Recovery from the sides from either a WB or Wide CB
- 1v1 defending/2v1 defending
- · Distances between defenders
- · Covering round the back
- Occupying key space in the box (High xG zones as shown by the shaded zone below)

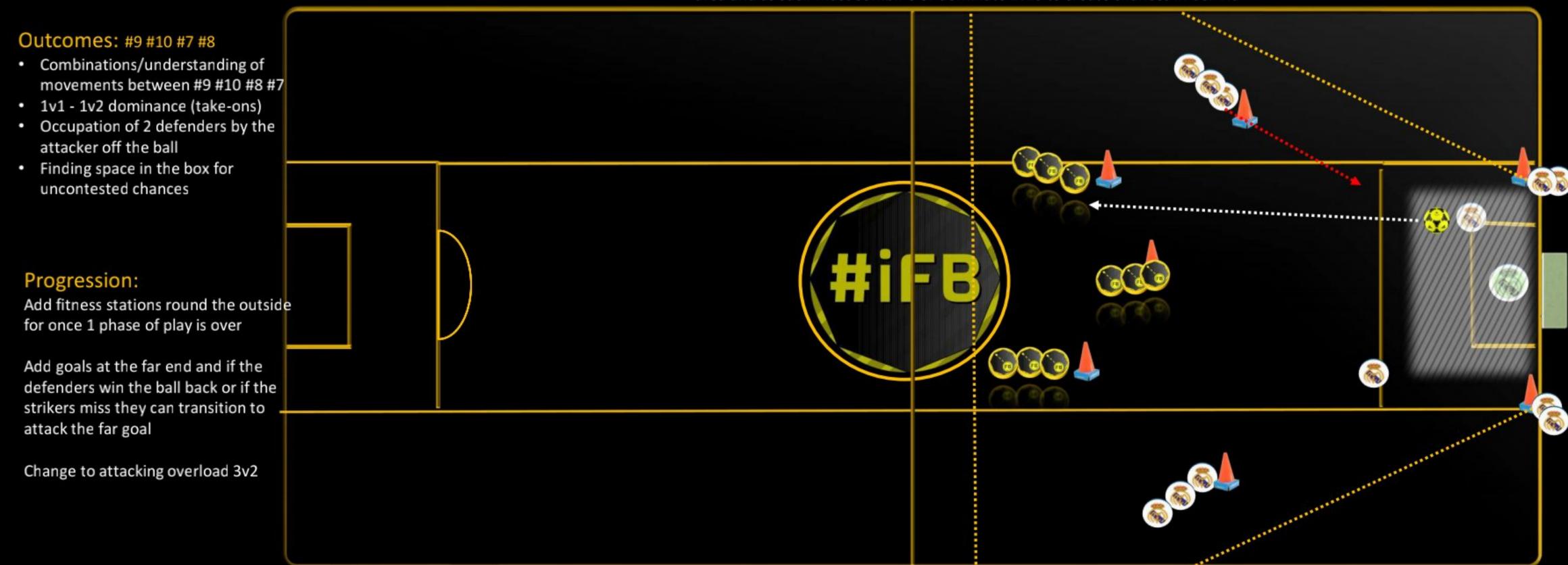
Lay out:

16-22 players + GKs Funnelled half a pitch

Session:

CB (white) starts with the ball and plays a direct ball into 1 of the wider attackers – As soon as that pass is received the #7/#10 attack with the #9 in a 2v3 situation to try and score (add time restriction if it suits)

If a CB wins the ball back they must try and dribble beyond the cones before the others can recover and intercept The final third is funnelled to create an environment where players are forced to gravitate more towards the penalty area and as such must combine or dominate 1v1s to create chances in behind



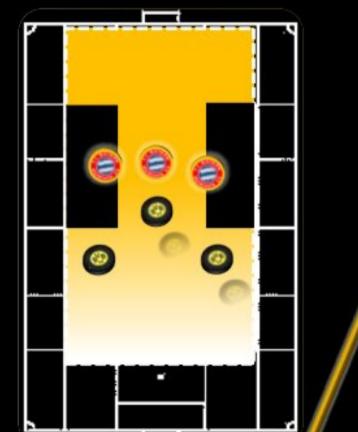


5.0 5v3 Counter Attacking from the Middle Third – 3v3 +GK 15-25 mins Primary Players #7 #9 #10

Player detail

#7 #10 If none ball side they can stay a little higher and central for connectivity with the 9 and so they can transition in space between the lines. If ball side they may be required to defend so the priority in transition becomes beating your marker and desire to make the box

#9 is a focal point for all counter attacks, to receive to feet or get in down the sides/in behind FBs . #9 needs to adjust his position to either find space between the lines to receive in a 1v0 to get face up or vs a higher line transition in behind



Cones - Defensive line reference point

Mannequins = Opp counter pressing structures behind the ball



Progression:

Change the rondo grid for a different angle +/- players in all areas Allow recovery defenders from rondo or additional counter attacking players from rondo Add time frame to score

Set Up:

2/3 of a pitch

3 zones 15x15 approx. (adjust based on numbers in the rondo) Mannequins/poles all 8m apart going across the pitch 8-10m back from play

Reds keep the ball 5v3 (yellows pressing as a front 3) until possession is either won or the coach shouts "Counter"

At this point the yellows/coach play a through ball between the mannequins and back line so that our counter attacking players #7 #9 #10 (who are all positioned on the blind side of the mannequins) can receive and get on the turn to be face up with the defence

A 3v3 (flexible) game now takes place in the central zones

Tactical Principles:

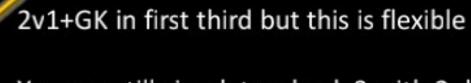
- Counter Attacking structure ahead of the ball #7 #9 #10 where realistic position themselves to receive between the lines and often on the blind side of the oppositions "Counter-Pressing Line" to either receive between or draw defenders into a bad press
- · Adjust to the oppositions structure behind the ball e.g. if the opp want all there defenders to squeeze as high as possible #9 can play on the shoulder of the last defender
- · Player Profile players who can carry the ball at speed, high progressive runs, 1v1 takeon, receiving & through pass ratio's
- Prioritise depth not width Counter Attack through central areas.
- 4-6 players must explode into actions
- · The most desirable outcome would be to get in behind and score

Counter attacking is as much mental/tactical as it is technical - a positive "can do" mindset - desire to get in in behind or get on the wrong side any marker



5.1 - 2v1 – 3v2 Progressing Counter Attacking Waves (Flexible) Attacking Overload Through the #9 #10 #7 18-25 players 20-30 mins

2v1 - 1v2 - 3v2



You can still simulate a back 3 with 2 defenders whereby the none ball side CB moves into a sweeper position like below



Additional conditions

- · Time frame to score in
- · Counter pressing whilst we have numerical supremacy
- Progress drill with 10s in middle third

Session:

40x60m space(flexible) the numbers in each thirds are also flexible

2v1+GK outplay the 1 pressing striker and on the eyes up trigger the #9 or #10 (as it works for both) drop in to receive to feet – as soon as the pass goes beyond the middle third line two additional players from the sides (who could be 10s, wide players or wingbacks) join to link/combine to create a 3v2 in the final third

Coaching Points

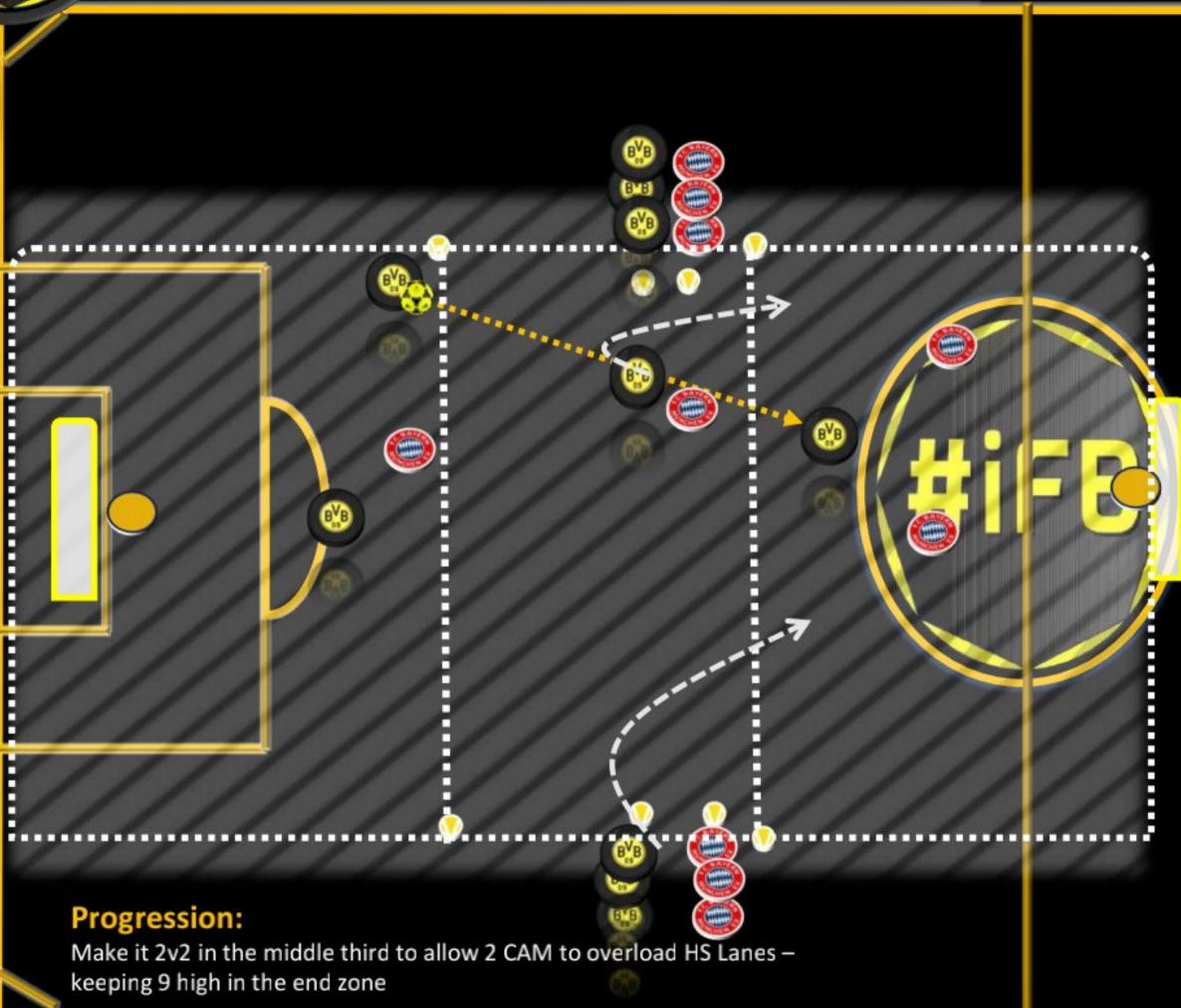
Be direct, carry the ball at speed, seek to get in behind, out play defenders, take shots in the moments where low pressure is on the ball, wide players in waiting anticipate the turn-over early

If play is won by the defending side the game is still live and they have 3v5 underload until they pass beyond the middle third where two more of their team mates can now join the attack making the game 5v5+GKs (this can be repeated again until play goes dead)



5.2 Progression 2v1 –1v1 - 3v2 (Flexible) 18-25 players

2v1 - 1v1 - 4v3



Session:

The session runs as previous with the exception being that now we have a 1v1 in the middle third which can be passive defending or aggressive

The middle zone #10 can seek to outplay via a variety of ways: 1v1 ability, up back through combinations, or decoy movements to open passing lanes direct into the #9

As soon as the pass goes beyond the middle third, two more players from the sides support the attack (could be wide players or wingbacks) to make it 4v3 in the final third – transitions keep the game alive where every pass that goes beyond the middle third allows 2 team mates to join in just as before

Coaching Points

- Triggers for movements #10 i.e. eyes up or use of horizontal pass from #6 to #5 to move away from the ball if there is no pressure on the carrier
- Single and double movements to create space for himself when there is pressure on the ball carrier
- #9 #10 operating in different vertical and horizontal lines to each other when overloading the HS lane
- · Break the back line get in behind
- · Take the moment if low pressure is on the ball
- Wide players in waiting reaction to transition

Session 5.3: 7v7 +1 +GKs (3-2-2-1 vs 4-3) Breaking the back line through central overloads

Lay out:

60x50m pitch

7v7 + 1 + GKs (17 players)

Reference lines are placed on the pitch for where the midfield line and defensive line should be no deeper than when defending in the offensive or middle third

They are 8m apart to help ensure lines are kept vertically compact

Session:

The session design favours the side in possession both laterally and through the interior channels of the pitch

We are still seeking to out play the opposition 4v3 in central areas but our desired outcomes are also to draw the oppositions RB/LB into central areas where the back line will be broken leaving space for other players to exploit

We have not included the WBs #2 #11 in this design to create the environment where central players have to find solutions for exploiting space through #9 #8 #4 #10 #7

Player Detail: Defending

#1 #6 controlling the defensive line #4 #8 decision making on pressing triggers, distances and when to track runners into the box or when to pass on to another defender

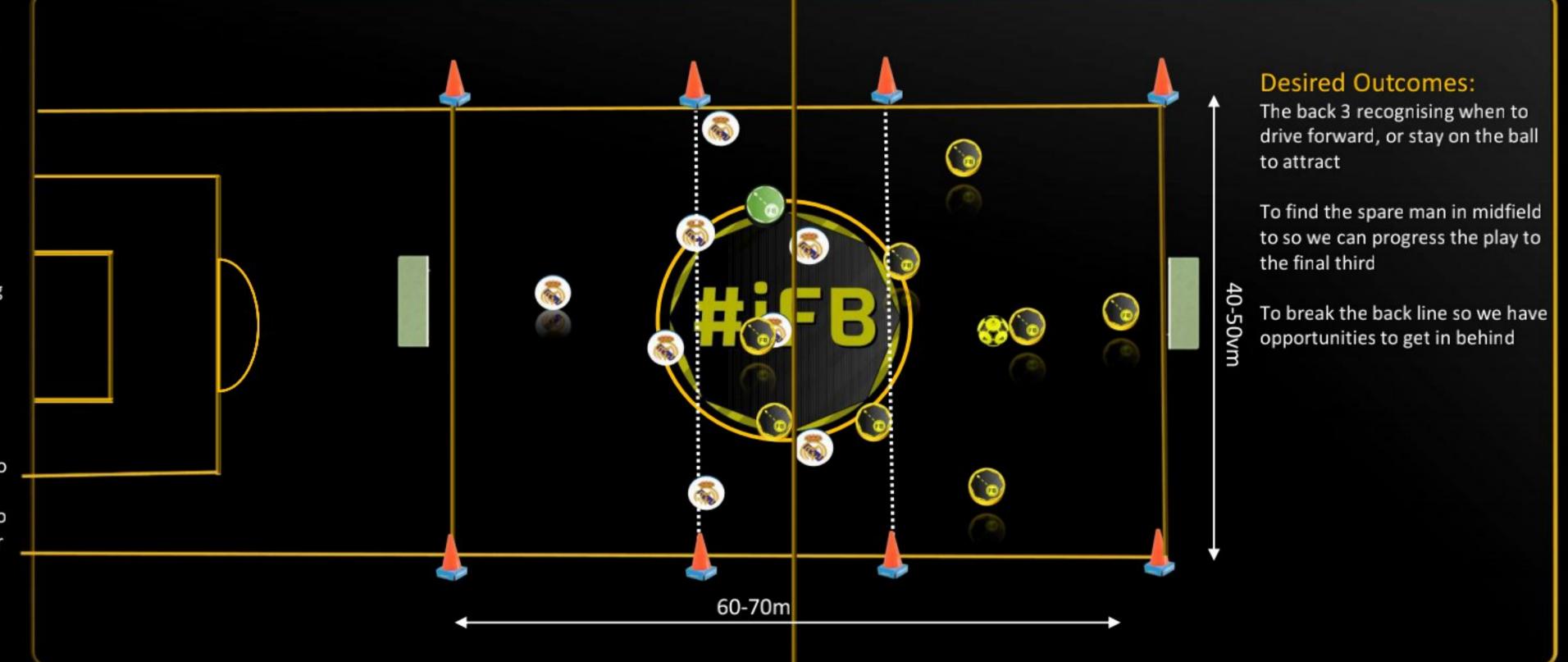
Player Detail: Offensive]

#4 #8 #10 #7

#4 #8 play narrow to draw pressing players in and open passing lanes into #7 #10

#7 #10 play on the blind side shoulders of the opp CMs

#9 must be constantly looking to go in behind to try and occupy as much of the back line as possible to push them back to create space for the #10 #7



Player Detail:

#2 #11 - Max width to open up interior channels,
Play off 1 touch where possible
#4 #8 #7 #10 - Operate in different horizonal lines
#7 #10 play on the blind side shoulder of CDMs –
Seek to draw opp FBs out of back line

Session 5.4: 9 v 7 + GKs Attacking Overload (Positional Play to get in down the sides)

Session:

Constant waves of attack where the yellow team seek to utilise positional superiority as well numerical 4v3 (centrally) to get in down the sides. The 3 goals offer a directional incentive whereby if they can work the ball into the Half Space goals and score it's worth 2 goals and only 1 for a normal goal This can then progress so that if they score in the main goal via an assist from the half space lanes it become worth 2 goals (Optional) Add a defensive line that the back 4 can not drop beyond into to encourage space for the attacking team to play passes in behind

Coaching points:

#4 #8 seek to attract midfielder out of line 2 to create more space centrally

Allow #7 #10 to overload a Half Space Lane

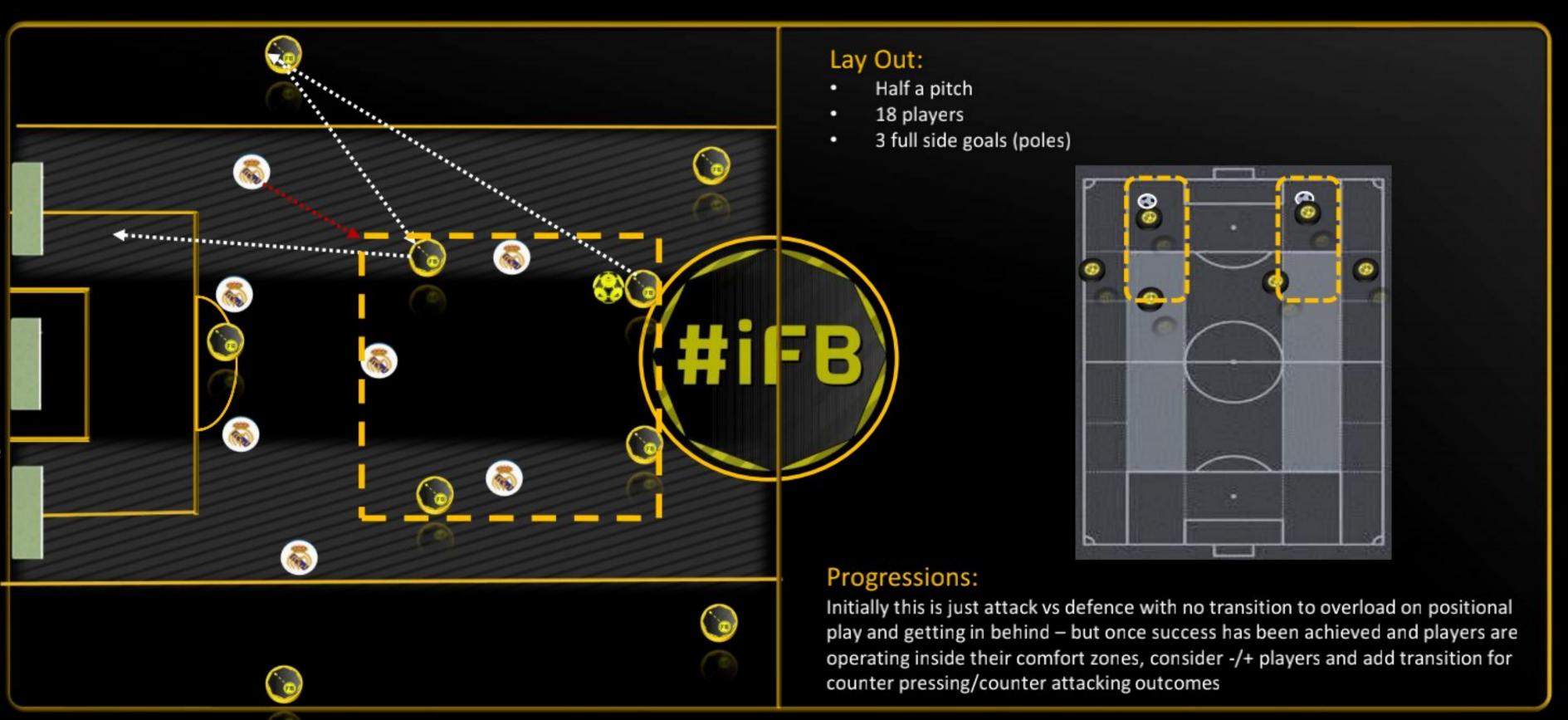
#9 can also be used to overload the Half Space lane with both the #7 #10 looking to go beyond

Only switch the play when we have positional superiority on the other side to exploit – otherwise keep the play down one side for Counter-Pressing control

Success – drawing defenders from the back line into a bad press and exploiting

No interceptions from poor switches of play

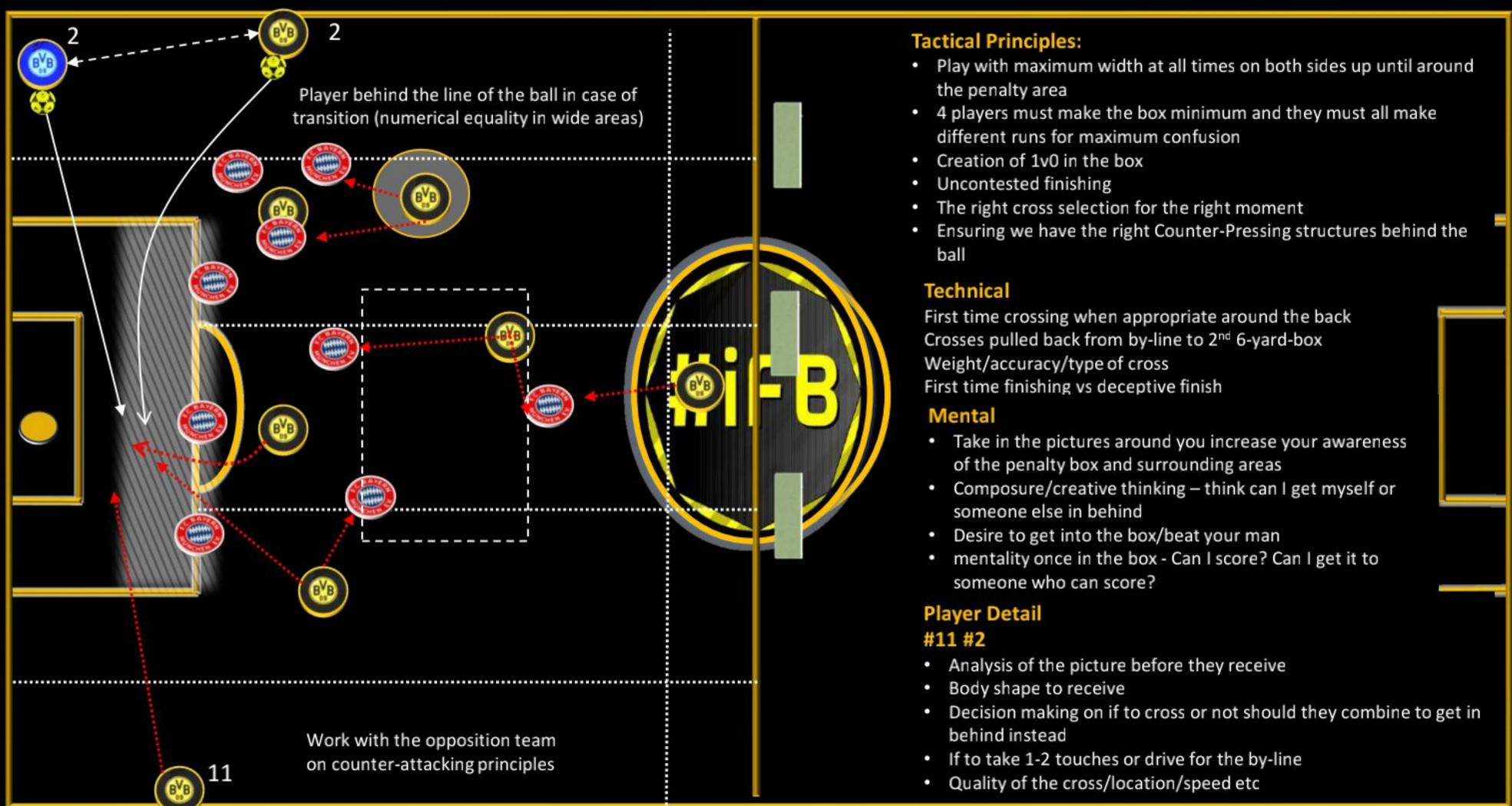
Utilisation of the 4v3 centrally and CAMs in HS pockets to get in behind



Session 5.5 attacking underload – Attack from wide areas to progress the combination play 8v9+GK



Session Outline: Create high quality chances from wide areas with a view of scoring uncontested opportunities -The ball starts in the oppositions half where it's worked out wide & from here the players must try and manufacture chances in the box – if play breaks down the opposition has 3 goals to score and the yellows must counter-press



Session 5.6: 11v11 with set conditions/restrictions

Outcomes:

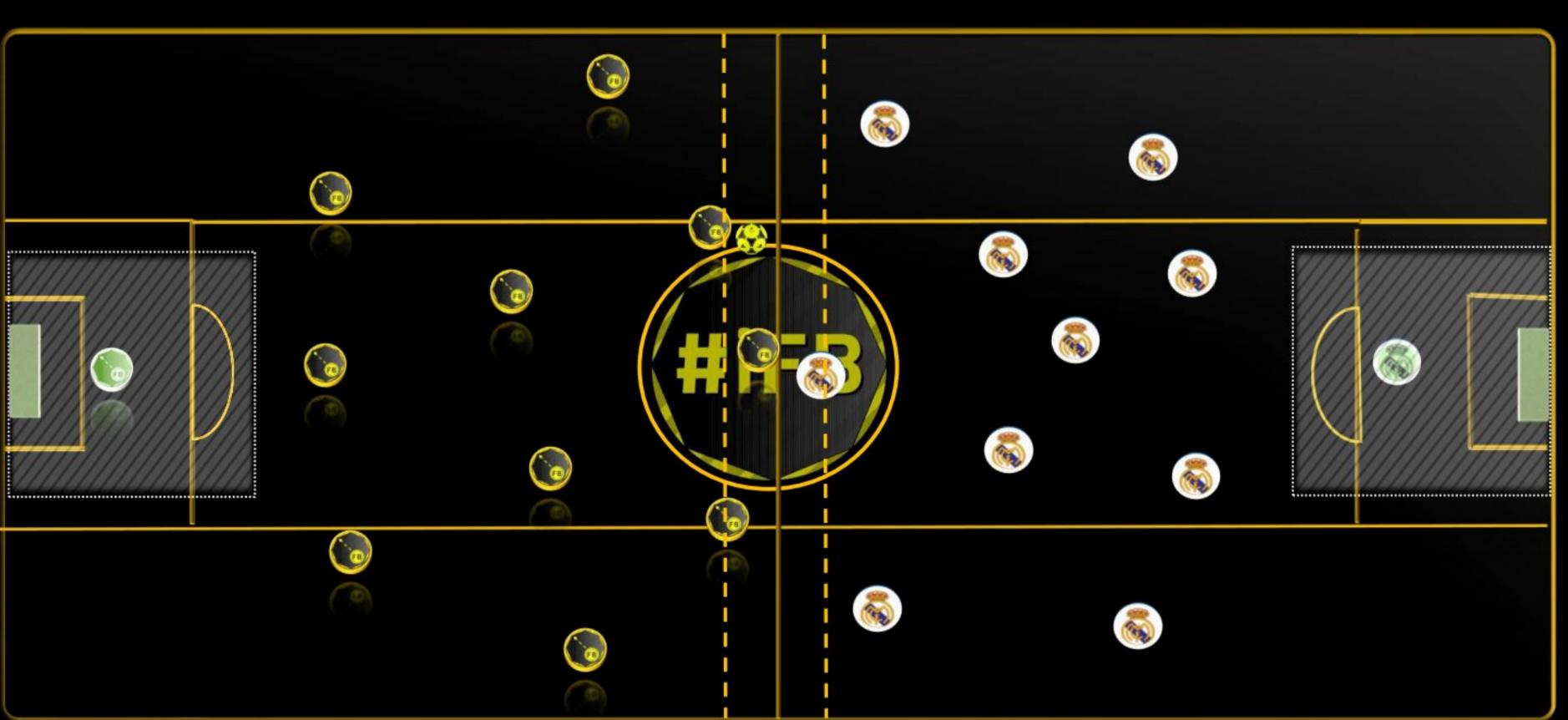
• To see all principles across all phases transfer into the game but with particular focus for attacking patterns and the proceeding counter-pressing phase of play

Conditions:

- No team can score outside of the shaded zone low xG areas they are forced by the conditions to try and work the ball into areas closer to the goal
- No side can score if all of their players are not beyond their target line in the opposition's half (the two yellow dotted lines) this creates scenarios where the team have to move up together and quickly in order to be compact whilst in possession to ensure they can always achieve numerical equality around the ball if possession is lost
- · Also important is to keep one player behind the line of play whose role is to slow down and prevent vertical passes if there is a transition

Collective detail

- Add free kicks to the opposition for shots taken when contested (heavy pressure or lots of bodies between players and the ball) to challenge players' decision making, and to make them work to find space or show better deception to lose their marker
- Add scenario or provocative rule (1 team is 2-0 up) so it creates a game-like state but forces the hand of one team to step up the pressing intensity or to drop back and play in a central block









6.0 Fun Pressing/Counter Pressing game (get pressure on the ball in under 5 passes)

Session design

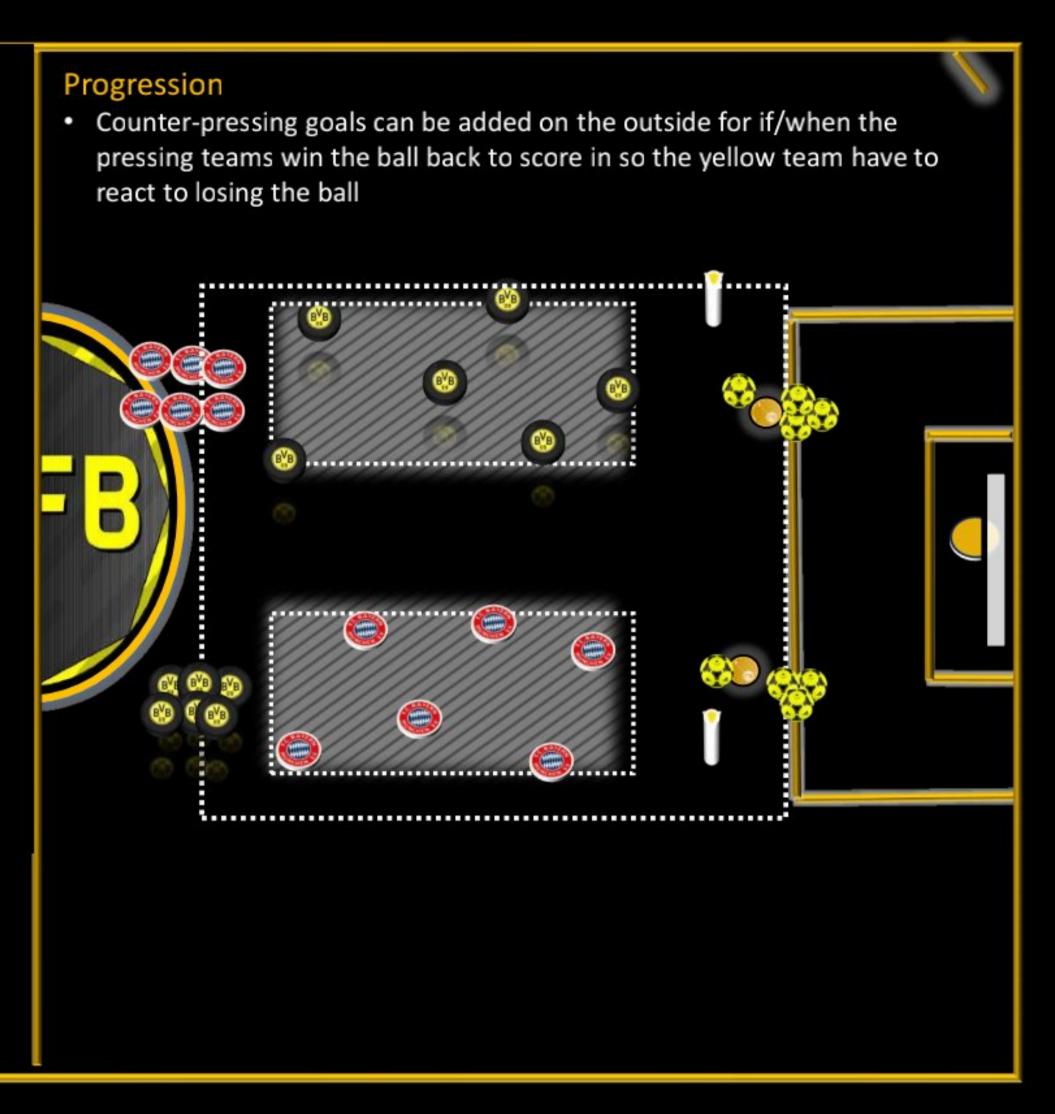
2 grids approx. 10x15m (can be done with just 1 grid)
Grid 1 have 6 yellows in the square whilst the 6 reds are on the exterior in rows of 2 as they will be working in pairs

On the trigger of the coach playing the ball into the grid the red teams must close down whilst the yellows must attempt to keep the ball for 5 passes. If the yellows keep it they earn their team 1 point and if the pressing team win the ball before 5 passes they earn their team 1 point

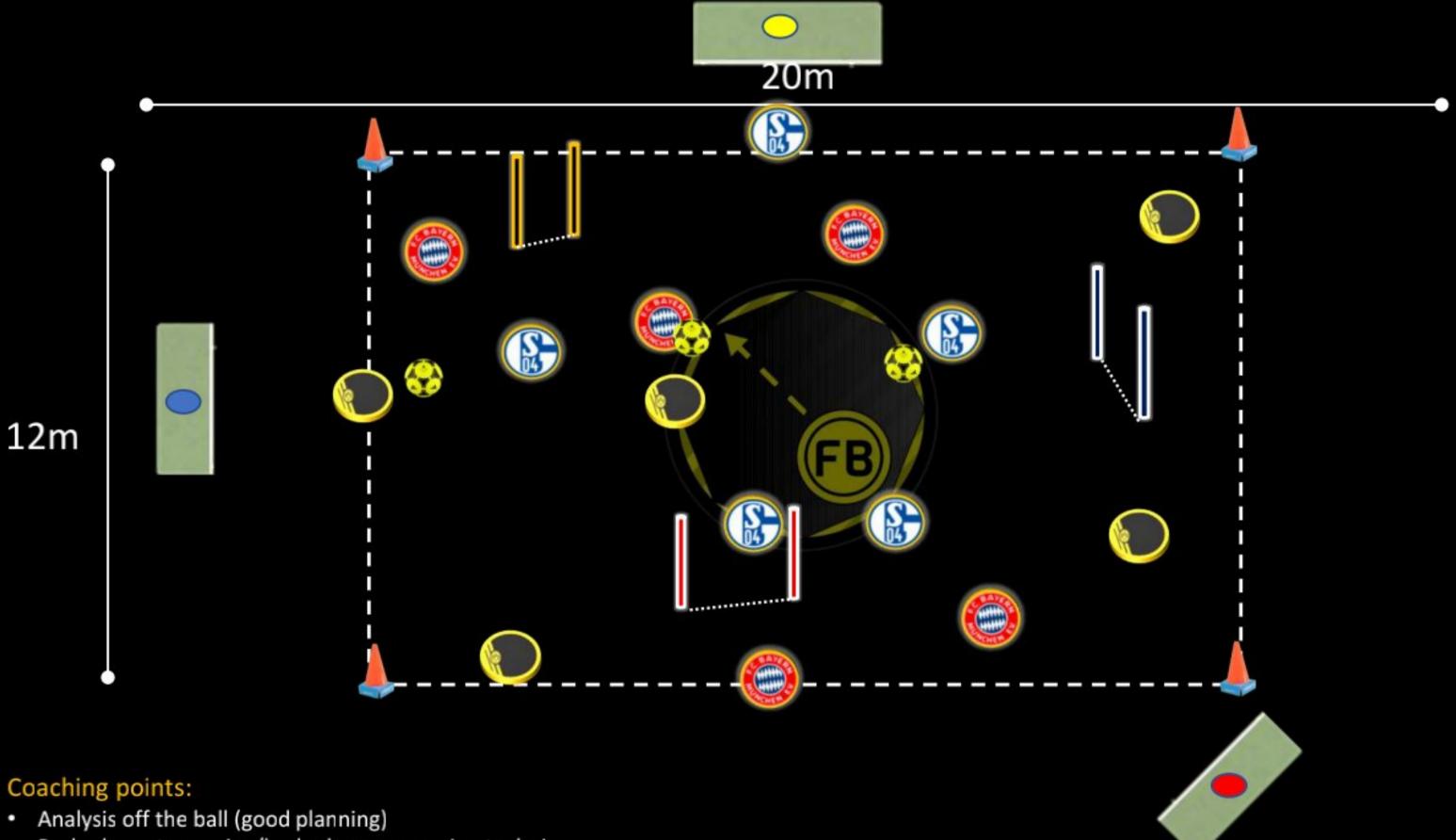
In grid two the same game is being played but the teams are reversed...the first team to 10 points wins

Intended Outcomes:

- The environment pushes players to try and win/get pressure on the ball before 5
 positive actions have taken play
- Intensity in the press but with control so they don't dive in
- The players to get extremely competitive



6.1- 5v5v5 Counter-Pressing Technical



- · Body shape to receive/body shape + pressing technique
- · Decision making to play off 1 touch or take an extra touch to evade being countered via poor control/pass
- · Decision making on when to stay on the ball and attract vs playing with more tempo to speed up the combinations

Session:

12 players (flexible) 3 teams of 4 all with 1 ball each 20x20m square

Each team keep the ball among their own players until the coach at some point shouts a colour "red"

The red ball is the only active ball now and they must seek to score in the red goal or dribble through the red poles whilst all the other players must react to stop them

Coaching point:

Players will often congregate in one corner or one space when doing this drill which is counter productive for the transition – if this occurs it gives you a chance to step in with coaching points around spacing, awareness of opposition players and goals around them

Progression considerations:

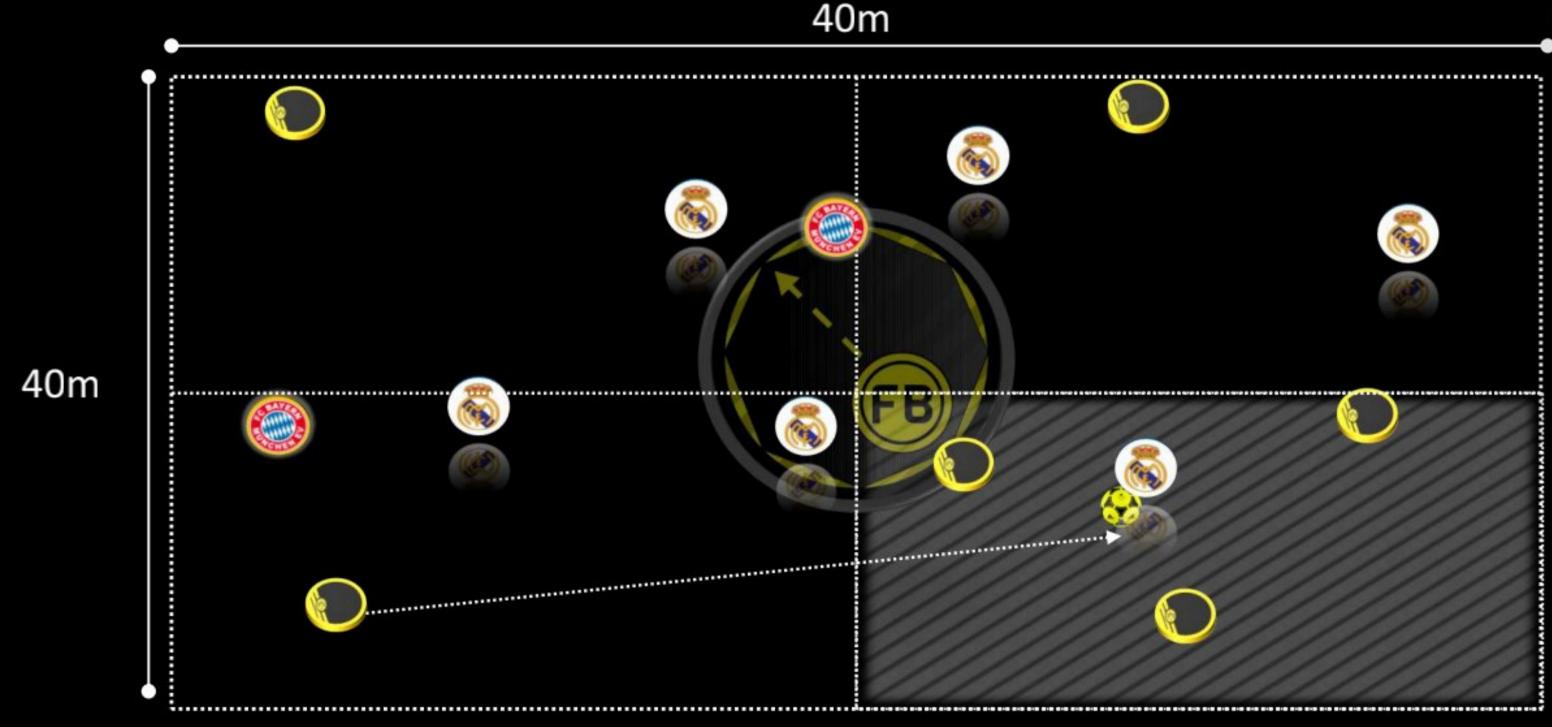
Change the direction with which the pressing players enter so the players inside the grid have to increase their overall awareness and check which side the pressure is coming from

For every 5 passes the possession side keep the ball 1 extra defender can be allowed to enter – challenge the possession side to retain for 20+ passes...or add reward for pressing side if they win the ball back before xx passes are complete

6.2 Counter-Pressing Rondo - 6v6+2

Player detail

- Scanning off the ball
- · Body shape to press to cut out passing lanes and force the play
- Anticipate the next pass based on your team mates press
- Keep the 3 pressing players close to each other so they have equality in each half of the pitch (or close to as possible)
- · Intensity get pressure on the ball and if they spot a weakness or mistake capitalise



Lay Out:

40x40m (each square is 20x20)
6v6 plus 2 floating players who support the side in possession

Session:

8v8 game where the objective is to keep the ball and a point is
 awarded for 10 passes

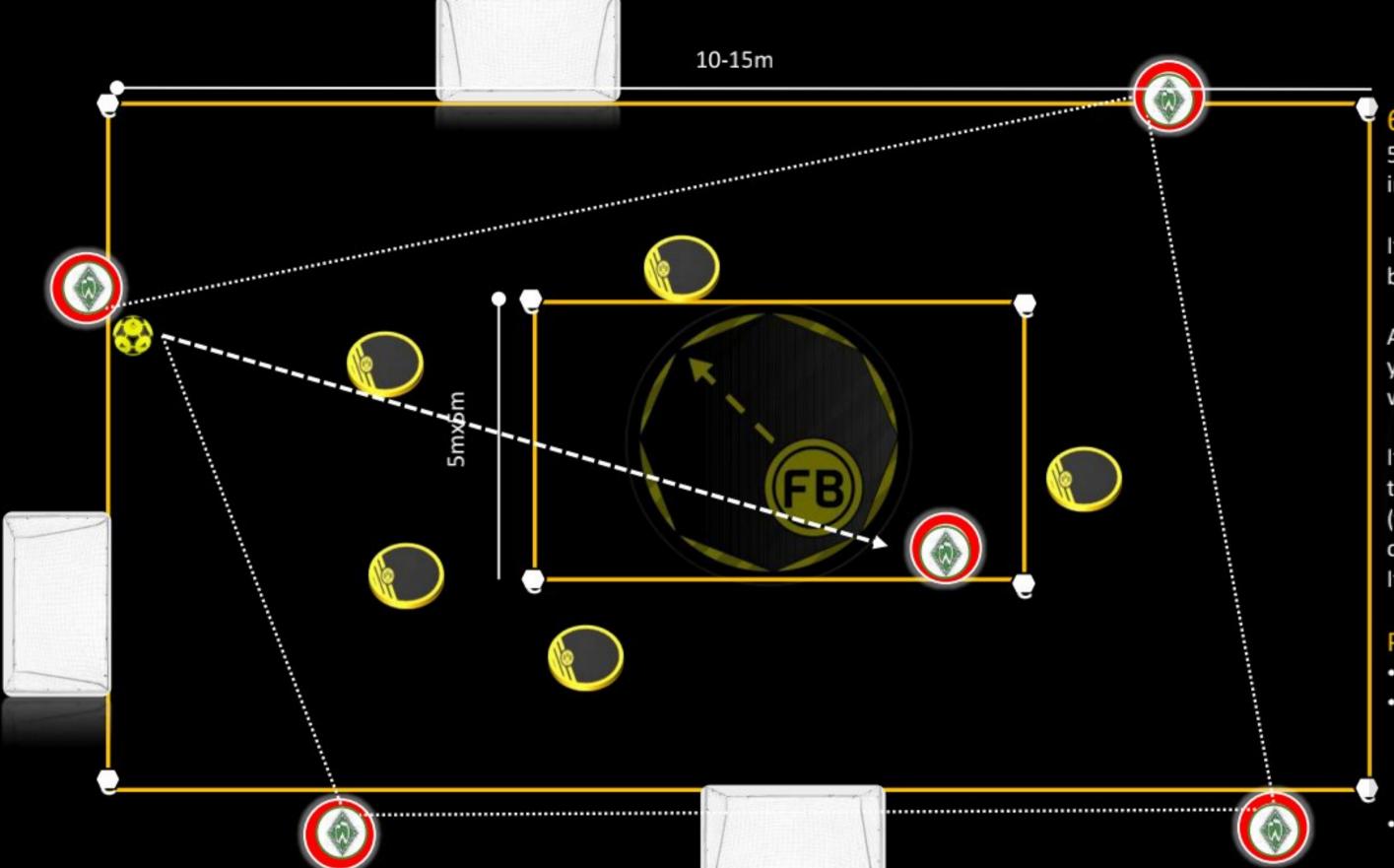
The floating players remain on the side who has the ball until the ball is lost

In the diagram below yellow team (Dortmund) have lost the ball in the bottom right square and Real Madrid now have the ball...for as long as Real Madrid stay in that square the 2 floating players must counter press with the yellows (numerical supremacy of +2 for counter pressing) But if Madrid work the ball out of that square and escape the press, then the two floating players now join their team



Progression:

Only allow 1 pressing player at first but for every 5 passes the possession side made 1 additional player can enter to help press



6.3 Overload on Awareness Counter Pressing

5v5 with the team in possession on the outside looking to play into the player in the middle square

If they succeed the player in the middle must try and keep the ball for as long as possible (aim to keep a club World Record)

All 5 yellow players have just 3 seconds to all be inside the yellow box to also try and win the ball back. If the yellow team wins the ball back inside 6 seconds the teams trade places

If the yellow team intercept the ball in open play – they have to try and score in the goals which are randomly placed all around (you can keep moving the goals to overload the players on checking shoulder and being aware of what's around them) If they score the two teams trade places

Progression ideas:

- Add more/less goals/change the positions of them.
- Add floating players within the outer box to encourage them to move the protecting players when they receive in order to open up passing lanes through to the middle (enhances 1v1 back to play and 'Move the Opposition' Principles)
- Adapt the game so the player in the middle doesn't need to keep it but can instead pass it back out and then rotate with a player on the outside

Coaching points:

- · Encourage the team to look to play through central zones at the right time to strike
- The team in possession can't just pass around the block as it's predictable and slow....they must move the ball in a way that will open the opposition (up back through) encourage smarter passing combinations
- The player in the middle is heavily worked on making themselves available in passing lanes
- Counter-Pressing, which goal does the player (when he wins it) want to attack towards and does the defensive side have the awareness/speed to cut it off
 allowing us to get 2-3 players surrounding him

6.4 Counter-Pressing From Wide Areas 7v6 +GK

Layout: 3 small goals &1 large, quarter of a pitch (teams in relative 11v11 structure)

The drill starts by having the wing back/coach throw to the opposition GK who has 3 seconds to distribute (hands or feet), the white team then have 8 seconds to score and the yellow team must try and prevent them scoring in the external goals, win it back and score themselves

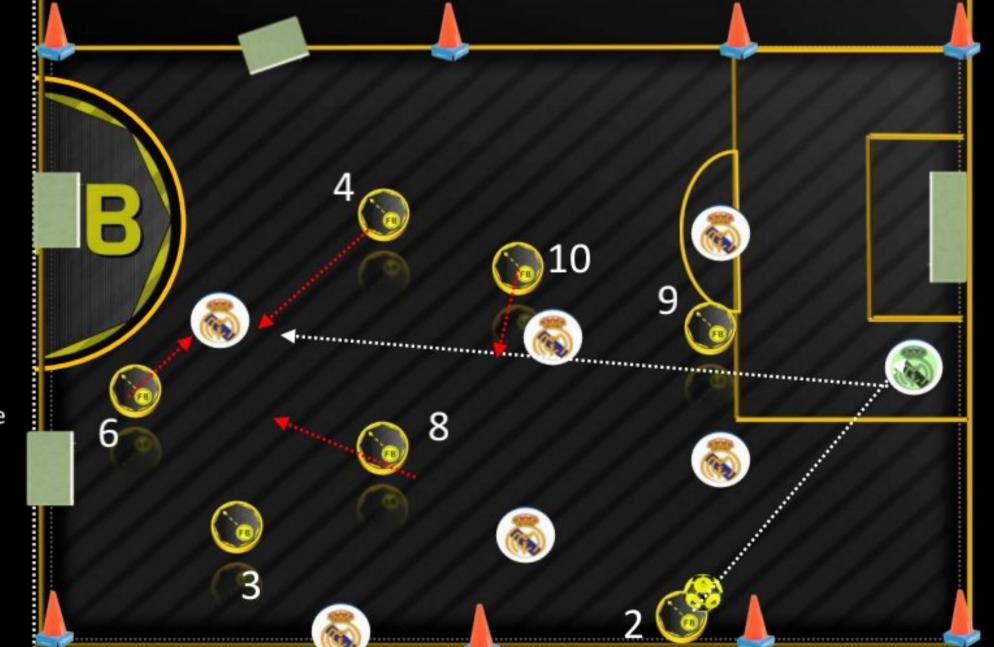
The goals around the outside can be amended to suit your counter-pressing objectives, for example if you want to force your opposition towards an overloaded centre to win it back in central areas for a better quality of counter (but at a risk to yourself) then place the goals away from the middle so the opposition do not try to attack through the middle, likewise if you want to force the opposition out wide then consider putting the goals in the middle—in the example below I have placed 3 goals in passing lanes I do NOT want my opposition on match day to attack through, if the yellow team wins the ball they too can transition to score (you can now work with the white team on counter-pressing as well)

Coaching points/Principles:

- Without the right structure behind the line of the ball counter pressing will break down in the example below I'm
 showing the GK distribution to the #9-#10 and we have correct positional structurewhereby 3 players #8 #4 #6 can all
 collapse on the ball and surrounding players can then block off passing lanes out
- We MUST have equality in numbers as a minimum around the ball during any transition but allow the players to make
 mistakes here as it will give opportunities for the coach to step in and facilitate discussion on what the right solutions
 might be when we can't achieve equality or good pressure around the ball.
- Key principle No more than 10m distance between any yellow shirts
- We must apply pressure on the ball in under 3 seconds this requires a reaction and a change in mentality
- Key Principle when we attack we must have 1 player behind the line of the ball who can press/slow down and/or
 prevent the vertical pass during a transition
- · Wide players must tuck in from wide lanes to protect central passing lanes
- In each scenario our players have to work out the direction the opposition would like to attack and where they might have a free player to attack through and then press those passing lanes
- Key Principle If the opposition escape our initial press and find passes through to attacking players (#9 #10# #7) then
 we have to stop them from turning and STOP the play (this may require a tactical foul)

Individual detail:

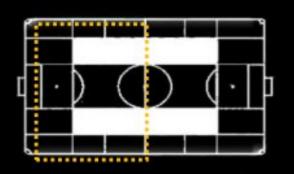
Pressing technique – Below we have lost the ball and we want to keep the opposition wide- #2 might not be able to win the ball back instantly but he might be able to stop the vertical pass, and he might also be able to press across the line of the ball and turn so he can apply pressure with good body shape against the white's right shoulder forcing them towards the touch line

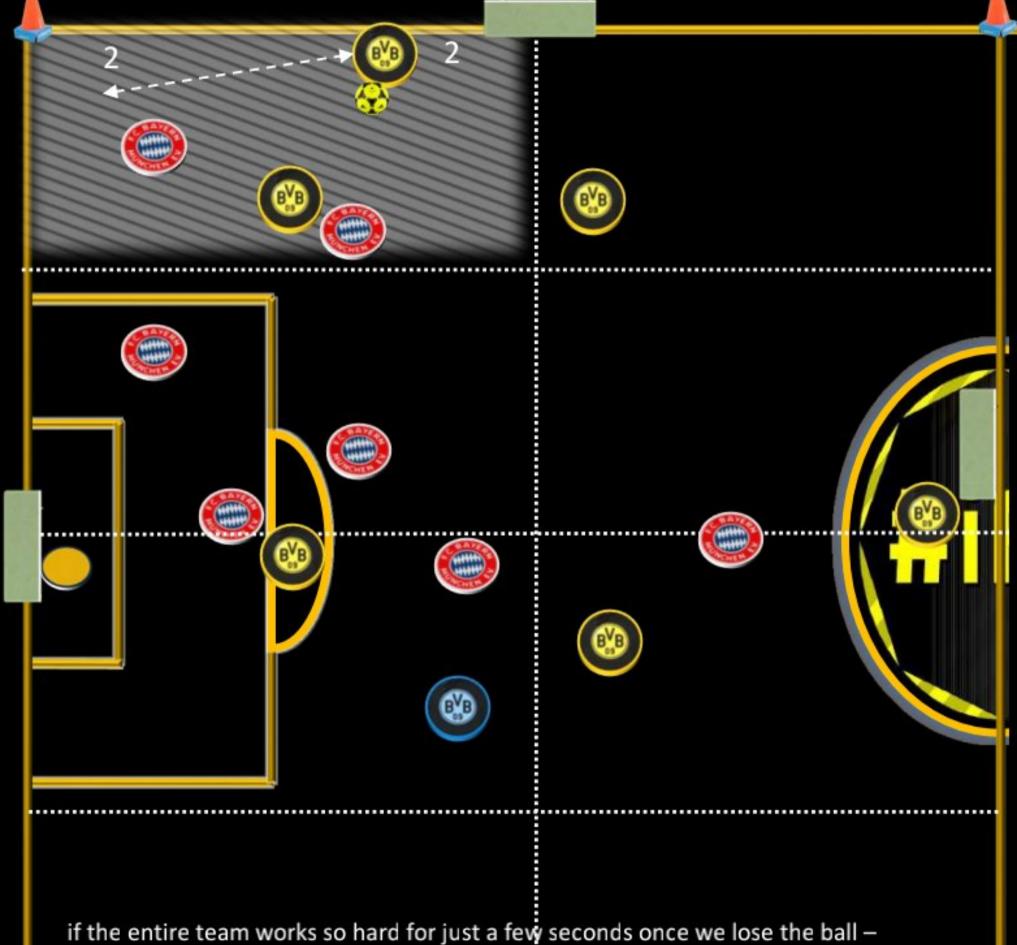


Lay Out:

6.5 Counter-Pressing in the final third 7v7 +1 +GK (3-3-1 vs 1-3-3-1)

- Half a pitch
- Pitch divided into either 4 or 8 even zones if your inexperienced at coaching counter-pressing drills I would stick to quarters
- 3 small goals around the outside positioned where you feel they add value)





it will save us having to make 40-80 yard recovery runs back to our goal

Session:

- · The yellow team attack as normal towards the big goal
- · If possession is lost the opposition seek to score in any of the 3 smaller goals around the outside as soon as possible
- · You can work across all zones or work in very specific zones according to need or the opposition but the coaching outcomes centre around ensuring we have numerical equality (as a minimum) in that zone and always a player I behind the line of the ball
- in the diagram I am showing its 2v2 in the shaded zone but we have 1 player in behind line of play for is possession breaks down to create a 3v2 or to prevent vertical passes and counter press
- The joker is on which ever side is on the ball and can assist with counter pressing whilst the ball is still in the zone where play was lost, if play is transferred out of pressure then he supports the red team

Technical

- Wide players #2 #11 tuck in to protect central passing lanes and force the play out wide – when they are the none ball side player they need to look for opportunities to press from the sides (or blind side of players) if good pressure is on the ball
- #4 #8 can make attacking runs as the element of surprise but not if it compromised counter pressing structures behind the line of the ball (if they go they must be replaced)
- You can opt to have the #4 become a passive pressor if needs be so he can prioritise screening the opp #9 and ensuring he can make a 2v1 on them in any transition

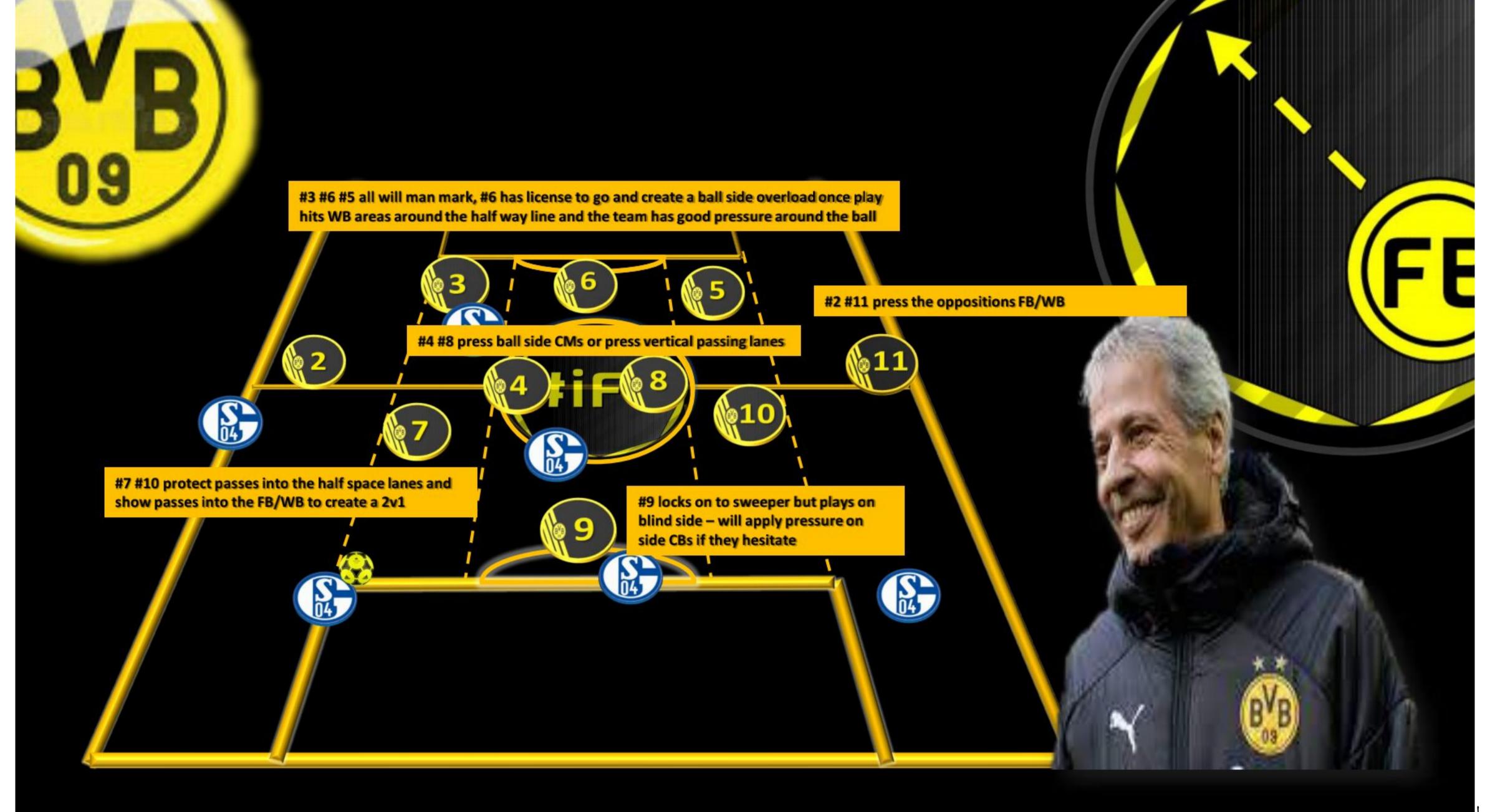
Mental

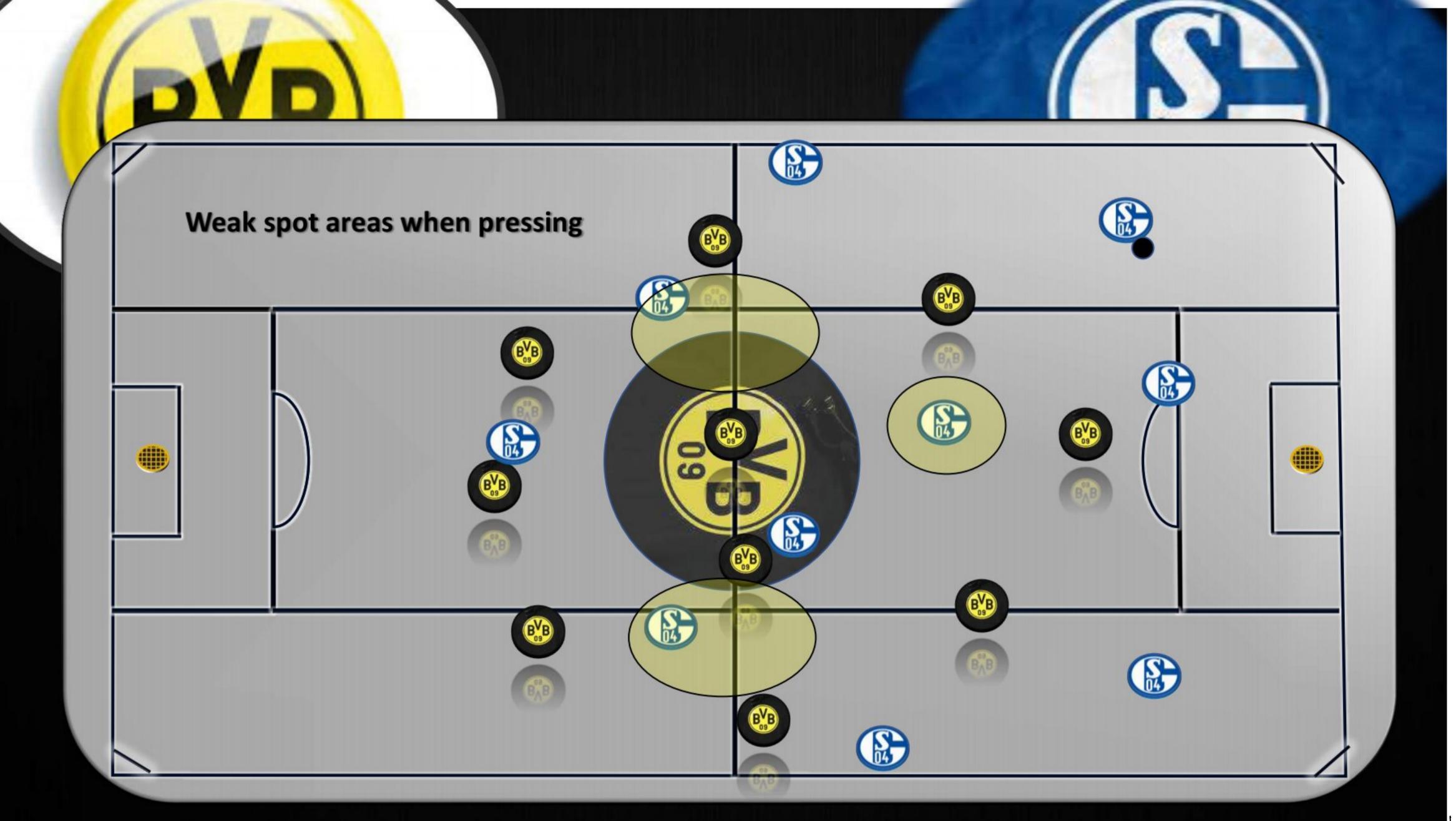
- Anticipate the loss of possession before it occurs
- Change of mentality once we lose the ball (desire to win the ball back)
- · Work hard in short bursts so we don't have to work hard in long burst

Progression:

To emphasise the point that 'we work hard in short bursts so we don't have to in long burst'. Add a condition whereby if the red team score the entire Yellow team has to make a 40 yard recovery run to opposite penalty box and back









7.0 Pressing from behind and the sides – Technical 10-15 mins

Lay Out:

10x10 (the grid is divided into 4 5x5m)

2 servers operate in the end zone (red) with a ball each

2 yellows in the opposite end zone and in opposite grids and are ready to press

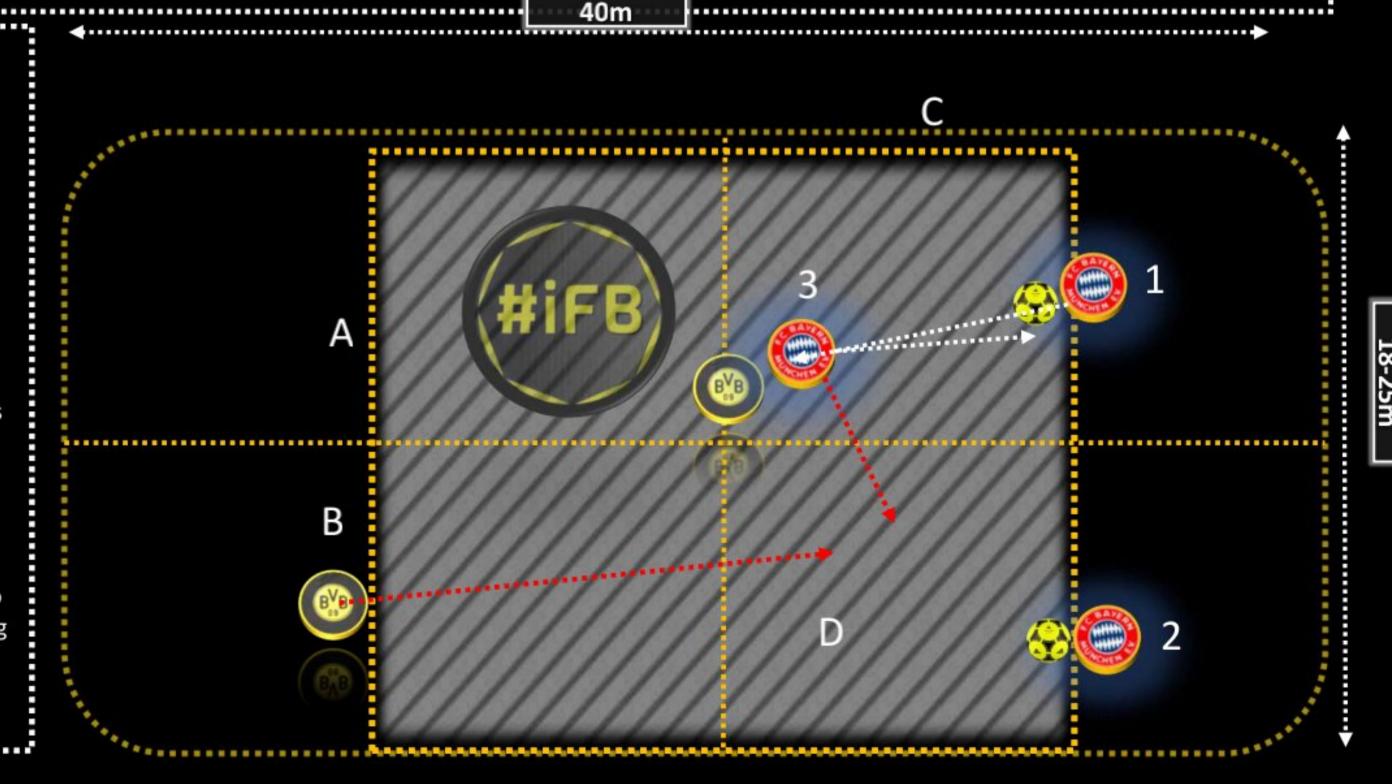
Session:

The Red player (3) drops in to meet the ball off server 1 and plays a 1-2 whilst yellow (A) presses from behind, as soon as the red sets the ball back to server 1 yellow (A) must recover back into his line/zone

Red 3 now moves over into the next horizontal grid to receive from server 2 and this triggers yellow (B) to close down and press from behind (it starts as passive pressing but can move into full contact) and the sequence repeats so as to give enough repetitions to work on basic pressing from behind technique. After 1 min change players around, as a minor progression add that Red 3 once setting a pass back has the option to decoy run in behind to try and get on the wrong side of his marker (here we will work with yellows on reaction and body shape to block the run so as to ensure they can't get on the wrong side of us)

Technical detail

- Press with intensity and speed but decelerate
- Distances and timing is crucial (don't arrive late)
- Body shape for better balance and change of direction
- Arms set to apply pressure to unbalance and to prepare for any blocks we may need to do to ensure red 3 can't get on the wrong side of us
- Press the correct shoulder for where you want your opponent to turn towards
- · Recover back into shape at speed
- When pressing from the sides curve the pressing players run fractionally to maximise cover shadow when pressing passing lanes





Progression

Keep the 3 red players in half the pitch in a triangle as shown left already

Change the yellows entry points to (C) & (D)

Red server 1 passes to red server 2 which triggers Yellow C to press from the sides – he must cut out the pass back to server 1 (server 2 has to now play into player 3)

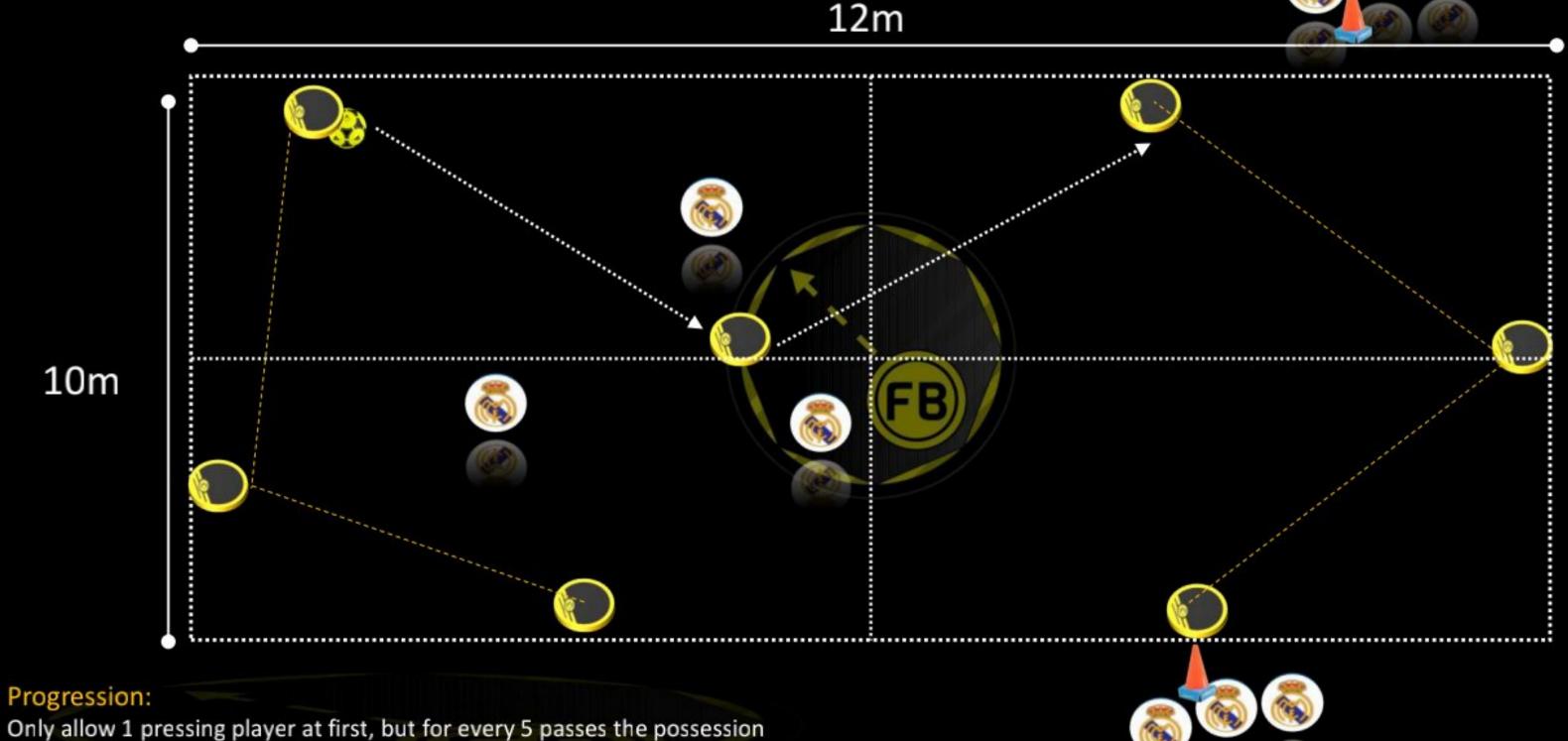
On that pass (to server 3) it triggers our pressing yellow player to retreat back to his line (C) and yellow (D) to take over the press where his job is to press the passing lane to stop 3 going back to 2 (and it repeats)

going back to 2 (and it repeats)

7.1- 7v3 Rondo - Pressing game with relentless pressure

Player detail

- Scanning off the ball
- · Body shape to press to cut out passing lanes and force the play
- Anticipate the next pass based on your team mates' press
- · Keep the 3 pressing players close to each other so they have equality in each half of the pitch (or as close to as possible)
- Intensity get pressure on the ball and if they spot a weakness or mistake capitalise



7v3 (flexible)

4 grids 6x5m

The team in possession take up positions that simulate 3-4-2-1 structures and have limited movement within their own grid (greater freedom can be given to the player in the centre of the grid)

The team on the exterior press in waves of 2-3 and are given 15-20 seconds to press relentlessly even if they win the ball back

Once that time frame has elapsed another wave of 2-3 take over

This is a great drill for getting intensity and players playing with constant pressure on the ball

Keep changing the entry positions of the pressing players so the team in possession have to constantly check shoulders and have a greater awareness of what's going on around them

Progression:

side complete, 1 additional player can enter to help press



7.2 Protect and Press (no mercy) – 7v2 Rondo 10-15 mins

Lay Out:

12x12 a little bit bigger to make the two players in the middle have to work harder

3-4 poles in the middle

6-7 players around the outside of the grid - 2 players in the middle

Session:

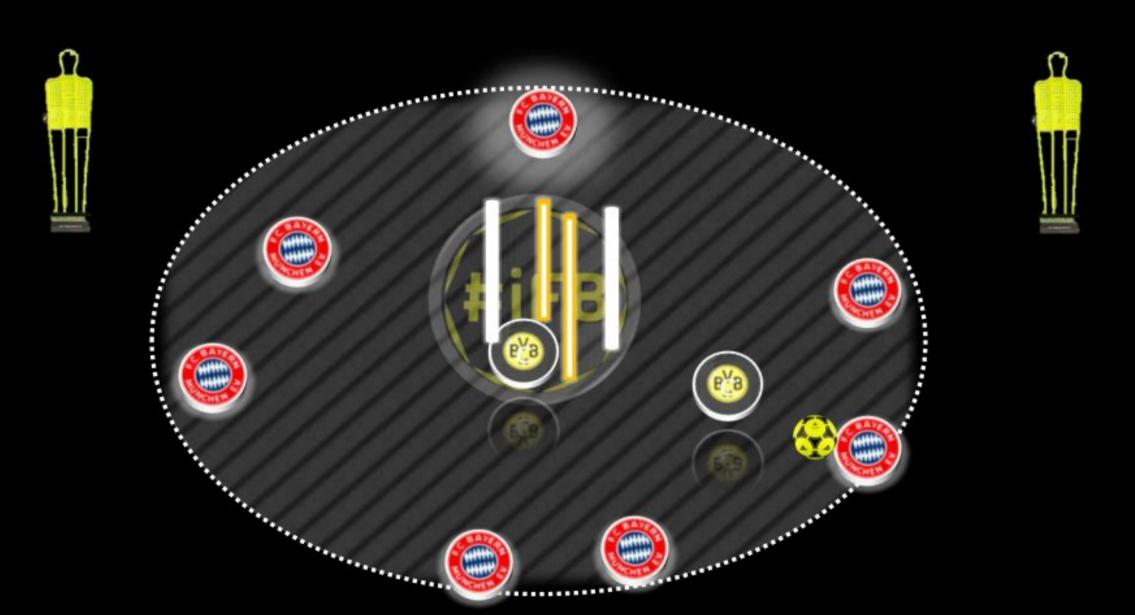
The reds keep possession and look for opportunities to pass through the pole gates in the middle to score if they score 2 in 1 sequence before the ball is won back the two players in the middle have to stay in the middle (environment forces the yellows to have to find solutions to protect central passing lanes) however to avoid the two yellows simply defending the poles they have only 20 seconds to win the ball back or they have to sprint to close down the mannequins and back 3 times and come back in the middle - the only way to get out is to win the ball back

This is as tough and as intense a session as they come and the players hate it and love it at the same time, but it gets the job done

You can add a condition where if they win the ball back inside 5 passes they both get to go out of the middle and nominate the next two in, but if it's won after 5 passes only the player who won the duel is freed

Technical detail

- Press and cover principles of defending
- Players have to take ownership of when to take over the press because they are better placed to put pressure on the ball/recover back into shape at speed
- When you press try and put the poles in your "cover shadow"
- Pounce on any opportunities the side in possession give you i.e. a bad touch
- Die to win get that ball out of the circle





Progression:

- Change the poles to 3-4 gates (flat-markers) bigger than ball width relatively central to the grid
- Add an extra defender in the middle to represent the front 3 (5-2-3)
- Consider opening up the space a little to compensate the extra defender
- The 3 defenders must press to win the ball and block passing lanes but as there are more passing lanes than defenders they have to prioritise which might be the most important to protect

7.3 Press the Passing Lanes - Technical 6v6 (flexible) 10-20 mins

Lay Out:

20x40m grid

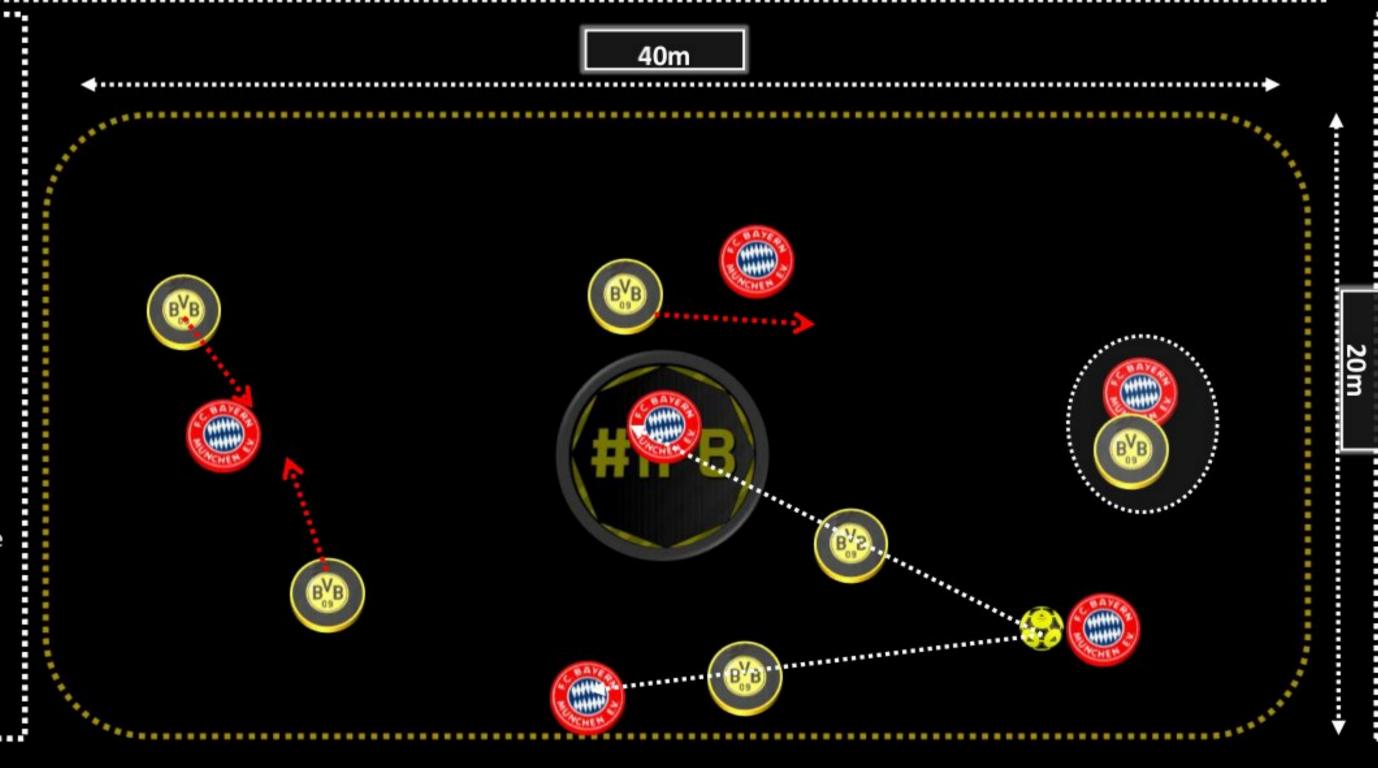
Session:

A very simple but effective lead in drill where a 6v6 (flexible) plays out with the side that's in possession's only goal is to keep possession. The yellow team must work on pressing the passing lanes over pressing the player.

In the diagram below the yellow team have pressed the passing lane down the line and into a hypothetical CDM. The player circled is standing in front of his player to ensure they are locking up all options to switch (which is a great technique to try and bring out of the session especially for #9s...the picture below (assuming the reds never move leaves the red on the ball options to play high risk horizontal passes, or into a 2v1 against and its these types of pictures that we are trying to bring out

Technical detail

- Press with intensity and speed but decelerate
- Distances and timing are crucial (don't arrive late)
- Press the correct shoulder to control players with back to play to where you want
- When a team mate is applying pressure can the 2nd and 3rd defender in relation to the ball anticipate the next pass and work of his press
- Recognise the moments to step in front of your marker
- Spot situations when we have strong pressure on the ball as well as numerical supremacy and seek to close in whilst closing of exit routes as you move in for the kill
- Use pressing triggers for a collective press i.e. a poor touch



Progression:

- Add 8x8m "Pressure Zones" that we have to try and control the team into and win the ball back for 1 goal. Or add central zones that we want to force the team away from ad we lose a point if the team has positive actions through these areas
- This can progress nicely into a high pressing phase of play like a 1-4-2-1+GK vs 4-3-1 and then into an 11v11

7.4 Defensive Principles 6v6 + GKs (1-3-2-1 vs 1-2-3-1)

Lay Out:

40x30m (5 –Aside football pitch)
Pitch dissected into quarters

Session:

This drill can be used to work across a number of principles not just defensive but this session the primary focus is pressing high and in a central block-low. The game starts with 1 team pressing high the other will defend in a central-low block.

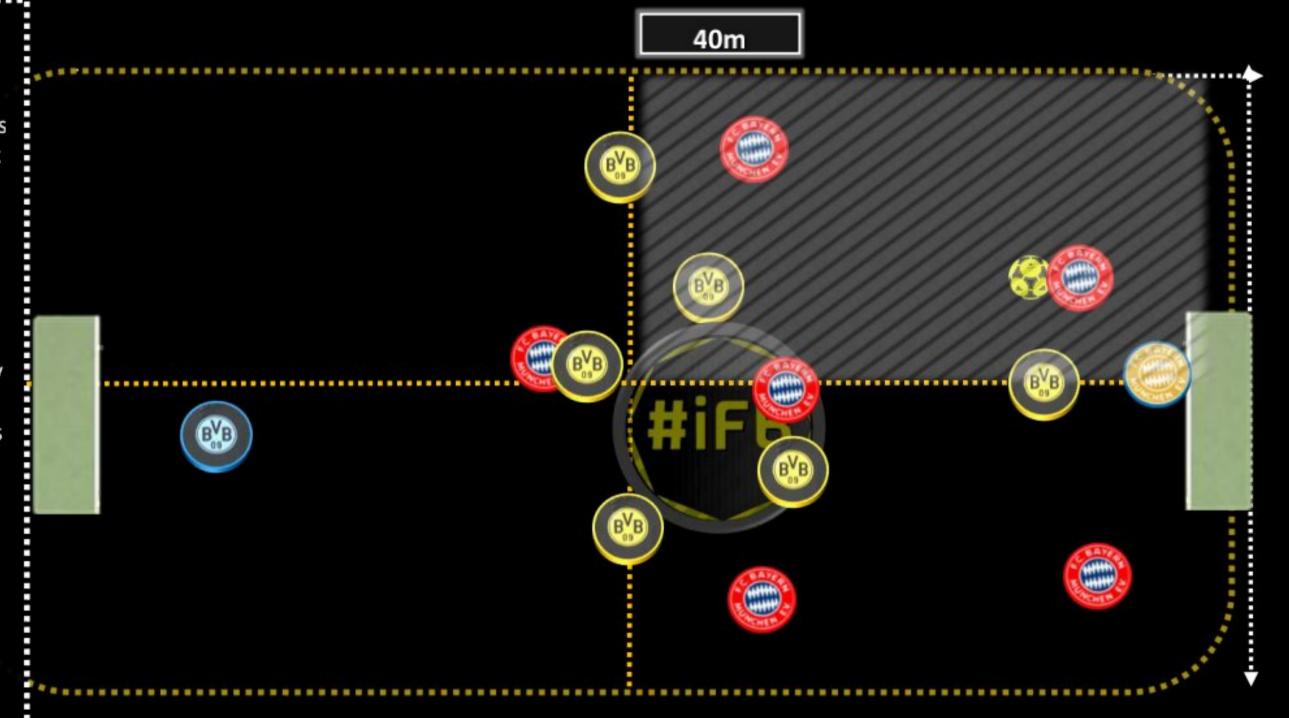
The high pressing team must control the opp into a quarter of the pitch and then seek to press all passing lanes that would allow the opposition to switch the play A desirable outcome would see all 6 outfield players move into that quarter as pressure is being applied – giving us ball side supremacy

If the yellows win the ball back and they score inside 6 seconds they get two goals, just 1 goal is awarded if they score outside of that time frame

The red team OOP retreat back so that every player is in there own half and they can either encourage the team to show towards or away from central areas based on tactical need (as I want them to work on counter attacking I've chosen to show into central pressure zones where I will coach the side to overload) they too will have the same time frame for 2 goals

Tactical detail High Press

- This drill is great for coaching principles of both high pressing and central block pressing
- The yellow team implement the following principles
- #9 splits the pitch (optional on if you want #9 to apply pressure from the side or hold position and play off the blind side of any CDM or CB during any transition)
- #10 blocks of vertical passes and offers a pass into the FB
- If the opposition take this pass the wide CB now takes up the role of our WB #11 to create a 2v1 on the ball
- #9 #7 press passing lanes or screen in front of players as needed to try and keep the opposition in half a pitch





Tactical Detail – Central-Low Block

All players must be in there own half

#9 #10 engage a few meters before the half way line and screen access into the CDMs

#11 #7 show inside and cut off the line

#4 #8 cut off passing lanes into the forwards getting their body between ball and the goal but try to set a horizontal passing traps on the inside support pass

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8.0 Pressing High 7v7+GK vs A Back 3 – 2-4-1 vs 1-3-4

Player detail

#9 vs a back 3 locks on to the sweeper #6, if he seeks to create a +1 situation in CM then press him from the blind side where you are in a fantastic position to counter in behind him if we win it back

If play is forced into the WB then start to lock on to either the ball side CB #5 or the CDM based on priority (#9 should always prioritise preventing access into a CDM should they be open and #9 is in a position to affect play

#7 J-shape press to prevent vertical passes into HS Lane

show #5 towards the touch line when he close enough to engage –if play is played into the WB instantly close down in a 2v1 with the WB whilst screening access into a CM

#2 arrive on time in the press to ensure the red WB cannot get on the half turn

#4 #8 ensure you are touch tight and press the shoulder that turns your marker towards the touch line – don't overcommit on the press and get turned (vital!) if play is with the red WB then then #4 #8 can both overload the wide lane to help press passing lanes into any 9/10

#10

If none ball side he should slide into half a pitch and play off the shoulder of any CM so that in transition he is the primary or secondary player with the #9 to counter and penetrate the box



8.1 Pressing High 7v7+GK vs A Back 3 Horizontal Passing Lane Trap to Counter

Player detail

#9 vs a back 3 locks on to the sweeper #6, if he seeks to create a +1 situation in CM then press him from the blind side where you are in a fantastic position to counter in behind him if we win it back

#7 J-shape press to prevent vertical passes into HS Lane, show #5 towards the touch line when he is close enough to engage –if play is played into the WB instantly close down the passing lane into #9 #10 leaving the inside support marginally open that he will seeks to intercept

#2 arrive on time in the press to ensure the red WB cannot get on the half turn

#8 prevents vertical passes from the WB

#4 anticipates pass into CM to either interce if close enough or to press and stop him from turning out

#6 create ball side overload by stepping out of line and either adding balance to numbers in CM for when #4 commits to the press or by squeezing any #9 #10 if the WB plays the line



- Intercept over duels
- Interceptions allow for a higher quality of counter attack as players can move onto the ball at speed and take lines of players out in just a moment
- Prevent diagonal to the ball passes

Scenario:

Seek to create a horizontal passing lane trap – the difference here from the last slide is that our ball side CM #8 and CAM #7 are closing off the passing lanes into the opp #9 #10 and as such inviting the pass into the inside supporting CM

It is this pass we will try to either intercept or turn into a 2v1 as our #4 can press to intercept if close enough or press to prevent the CM turning out to keep him ball side

It might not seem ideal to allow passes into central areas as CMs can play through the heart and/or switch the play making us lose control, but this is low risk with high return strategy, in poker terms this has implied odds potential ...you might not win it back that often but when you do the reward makes it +EV (+ Expected Value) in other words it's a profitable move if executed with precision



5-4-1 Central Block



5-4-1 is the standard Central Block Shape with 4 defensive lines – The great advantage to this is the 4 central players can almost play as CMs to protect the central axis of the pitch, whilst the WBs can be responsible (if needed) to press in the wide areas. The weakness to this is that with 1 only 1 upfront it can be tough to stop the opposition from keeping the ball in their third/half or from switching the play

Thank You

Please offer feedback good or bad, if you experiment with these sessions or implement the 3-4-2-1 this season, then let me know about it (engage with me) and if you liked this then feel free to offer me a really well-paid job!! © failing that just give us a good review

Take care everyone!

Glen Preston



