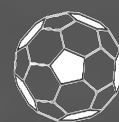




PEP
GUARDIOLA
COACHING
SESSION
EBOOK



THE
FOOTBALL
COACH

Passing Practices



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GUARDIOLA

COACHING

EBOOK



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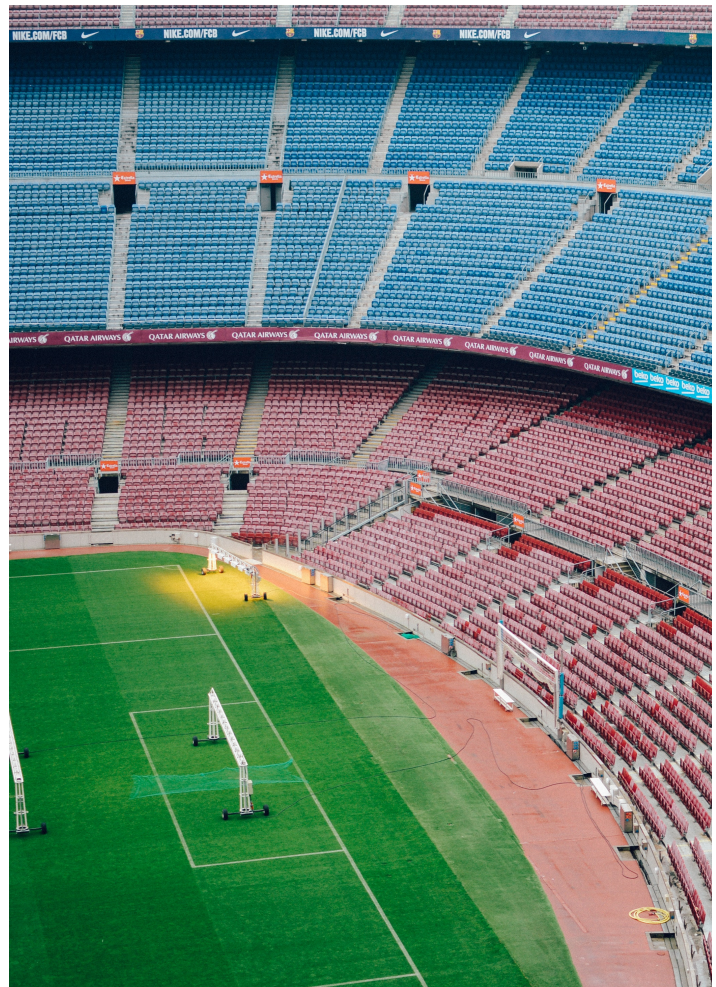


Understanding Guardiola

Guardiola

Josep Guardiola Sala, known as 'Pep' was born in Santpedor, Spain a small town near the Catalan capital Barcelona. Pep's early life revolved around the playing of football, including working as a ball boy at local games, to provide him with the opportunity to watch more football. Pep made the move to Barcelona aged 13, to stay and train at La masia.

Following his signing to Barcelona aged 13, Pep spent the next six years competing and training for Barcelona, developing his skills before making his debut for Barcelona C in 1988, and then his debut for the B team in 1990, before eventually his debut for Barcelona's senior team later that season. Guardiola would eventually break in to the first team on a permanent basis making 263 appearances as well as 47 appearances for Spain between 1992-2001. Pep eventually departed Barcelona in the summer of 2001.



Pep benefited as a player from some of the advice of players such as Johan Cruyff, who advised coaches to play him centrally. Players such as Laudrup also had an influence over Guardiola. English influences were also prevalent with coaches such as Bobby Robson. These cultural influences





“I have learned a lot from Pep. He’s a genius. I can learn more from him in an hour than from others in one year. He not only lifts you to the next level on the pitch, but also in your mind. He has revealed totally new options to me. I did not know that was possible when I got to Munich. He found a new position for me.”

- Douglas Costa

“Space in the key to playing passes. Playing passes is the key success”

Player Centered Decisions or Player Involved Decisions?

Guardiola has spoken extensively on the need to include players in the sharing of information, which leads to the player being more engaged in the decision making process, but also makes the player more aware of differences in the opponents technical and tactical strengths.

His belief that player who are more involved in the decision making process from a emotional and psychological view are more likely to engaged in the task they have been set, this belief of Guardiola is further supported



By research in the academic world. We have seen evidence of this with quotes from players such as Muller Guardiola has basically told us exactly what Roma's weaknesses were and how to exploit them".

The Result has also played little importance in Guardiola's coaching philosophy, he has often referred to the result as the 'imposter'. This has been supported by successful individuals such as Gary Kasparov. Pep has spoken extensively around the focus needed around the 'process' and the result is a byproduct of the correct process. Guardiola is so focused on the process, he has even suggested that success and satisfaction can be a negative influence long-term if it is found quickly, as it may support negative behaviors, that do not fit within Pep's game model.

Adaptability is also mentioned as a significantly important skill, Guardiola believes his game plan and coaching strategy has to be adaptable to the players, as much as the player must try to adapt to the system.



“He gives you so many solutions for when you are then in the middle of a game, and nearly all of them turn out to be the right solutions when you apply them.”

- Andres Iniesta



Coaching Philosophy



“Space in the key to playing passes. Playing passes is the key success” -
Pep Guardiola

Gerard Pique was a player who played many years under Guardiola, and he said “ He doesn’t just give you orders, he explains why” and this is one of the key areas to his success, his unique ability to combines a holistic approach to player relationships, with a ruthless approach to gaining results.

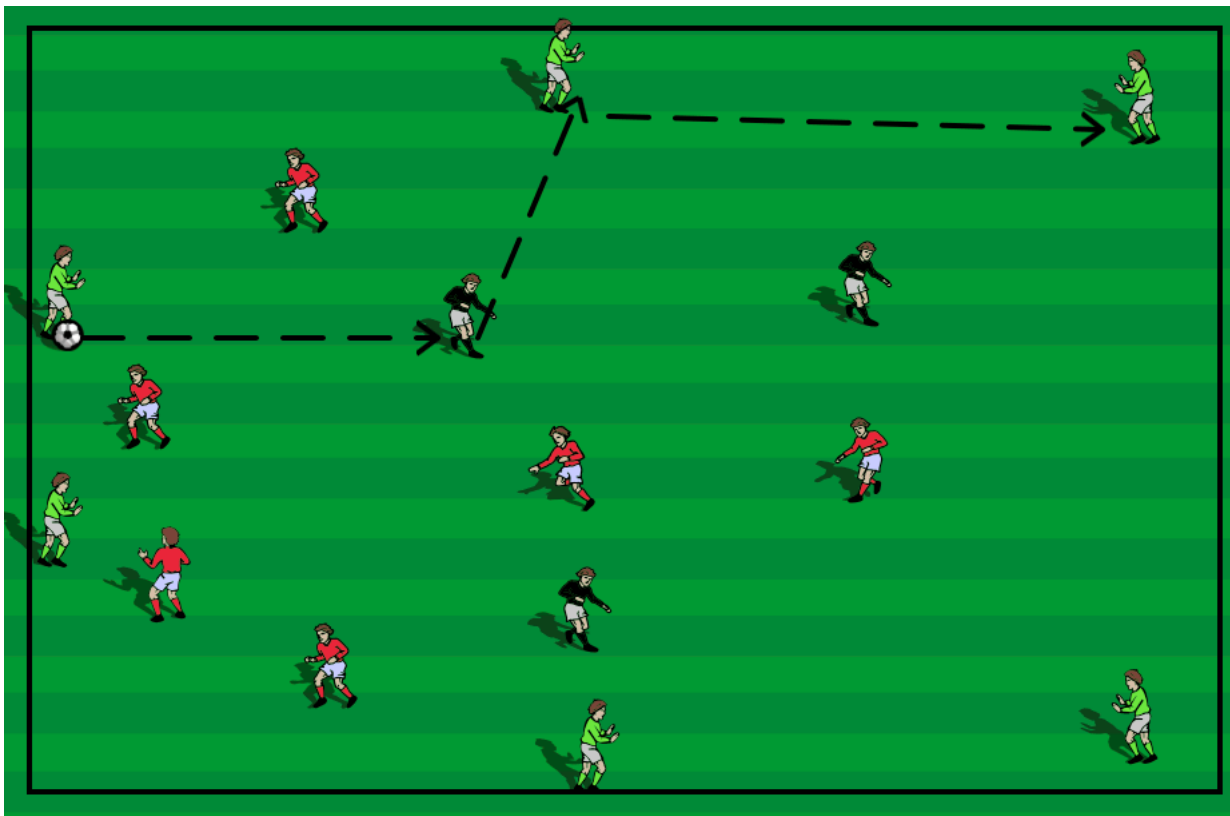
These are two traits often considered to be

polar opposites, that coaches are unable to do in combination. Pep’s intrinsic need to improve players can probably be put down to two reasons, one his belief that the most important trait you need when building a successful team is ‘Good Players’, in an interview with Gary Liniker, Guardiola spoke of the need for good players, and the difficulty in being successful when the players you have are not good enough to compete. The second reason is Guardiola’s incredible attention to detail, and his belief in developing and progressing the process, this trait leads him to become a very player development centered coach, this has been mentioned regularly



Coaching Philosophy

In the media, his drive to develop players, has even stretched past the usual seen limits, this was observable when Guardiola confronted Nathan Redmond of Southampton, this intrinsic drive to want to help develop players is a key ingredient in pep Guardiola. His belief in training is also very simple, he speaks about training resembling the game you play, the opponent you are going to play and the need to be enjoyable, the use of practices like the 'rondo' have been very popular with Guardiola because it helps create the situations, Guardiola looks to create in his playing system. He has also admitted that he has had to change training, to adapt for the cultural changes when he has changed job, for example when moving to Manchester City Guardiola spoke of the need to practice second contacts and dealing with long direct balls, something he did not regularly practice at FC Barcelona or Bayern Munich.

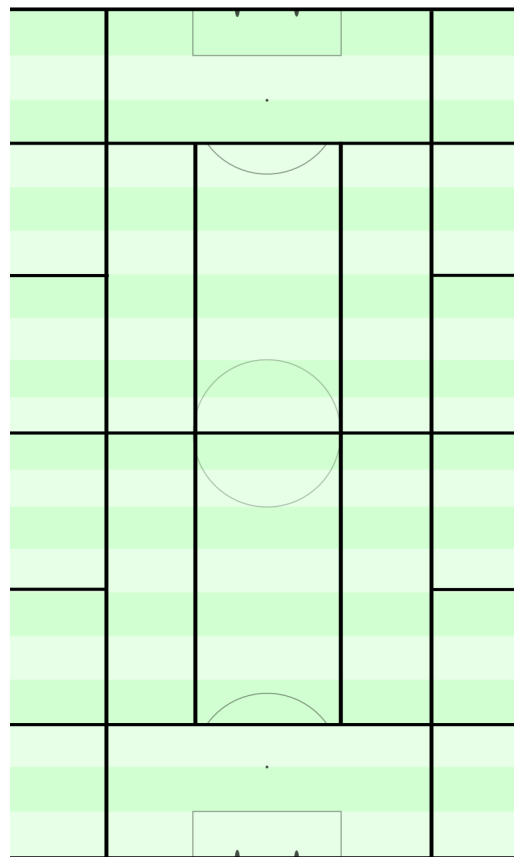


Playing Style

Playing Style

Pep's system could be defined as a positional based philosophy that controls areas of the pitch, that have received less attention traditionally. However it is important to recognize Guardiola's ability to utilize and extract the best from his technical and creative players. Creating a highly creative, yet somehow highly structured playing system.

At the heart of pep's system in possession is the need to be in possession of the ball, this is quite simply the first principle and principle that can be easily transferred in to any coaches philosophy. However the second principle is even more important to Guardiola, the need to have the ball as a tool and this means when you have the ball you are looking to attack at all times. Pep also believes that possession of the ball is the most effective means of defensive protection.



Guardiola has a system built on principles, and not formation, however a fluid 4-3-3 is the most common formation he uses. Guardiola most famously plays with 5 lanes shown in the image to the right hand side, however these lanes are used to dominate space and create overloads to



Playing Style

Playing Style

Unbalance the opposition to allow switches of play to find space. In possession Guardiola's teams will generally look to control the lanes by using a back 4 that occupy 4 out of 5 of the lanes, and then wide players who play inside the 'half' space the 2nd and 4th lanes showed on the previous diagram this allows for each wide player to occupy the space between the full-back and centre back meaning Guardiola can occupy 4 players with 2 of his own allowing for the creation of overloads

Once in their positional system, Guardiola's players are extremely rigid at staying in these positions whilst Guardiola's team look to play through the opponents wide space using the occupation of the half-space. If this is not successful, switching play provides a dangerous option as the opponent would have overloaded one side of the pitch to prevent Guardiola's team playing through that side.

Guardiola's players only tend to break out of their positional system, if they are moving away from an opponent to receive the ball, to receive a horizontal pass between lines or use a one touch pass (Mig-Toc as known by Guardiola) to combine centrally, as Guardiola's midfield will often play close together with wide players inside, the 9 inside and the 10, 8 and 6 all inside as well, this allows for quick combination play and counter-pressing opportunities. In the final third, Guardiola provides tactical flexibility for the attacking players to be creative, this is where his mix of rigid positional play, and individual creativity is mixed. However Guardiola must still have players occupying the 5 passing lanes, to allow for positional superiority in and out of possession, which leads us to Guardiola's beliefs out of possession



Out of Possession

Pressing Style

Pep out of possession is renowned for making the oppositions life difficult under extensive pressure. When looking to transfer key principles from Guardiola's system to your own it is important to recognize the first and main principle of Guardiola's defensive system, which is to apply immediate pressure the the opponent while team mates seek a covering position.

Sub clear sub-principles apply to Guardiola out of possession, two players must press the opponent immediately on the defensive transition. The first player, closest to the ball is tasked with stopping forward passes allowing the regaining of structure behind the ball. The next play, the setup behind this is a zonal defense, protecting specific spacial areas.

The next principle is that the pressure continues until the

Team has provided defensive structure, that consists of a defensive line out side the box, this sounds minute but is actually vital to the principles out of possession, if the offensive players aren't able to win possession, they must have given the team the opportunity to sit in a defensive shape outside of the penalty area.



GUARDIOLA

IN POSSESSION

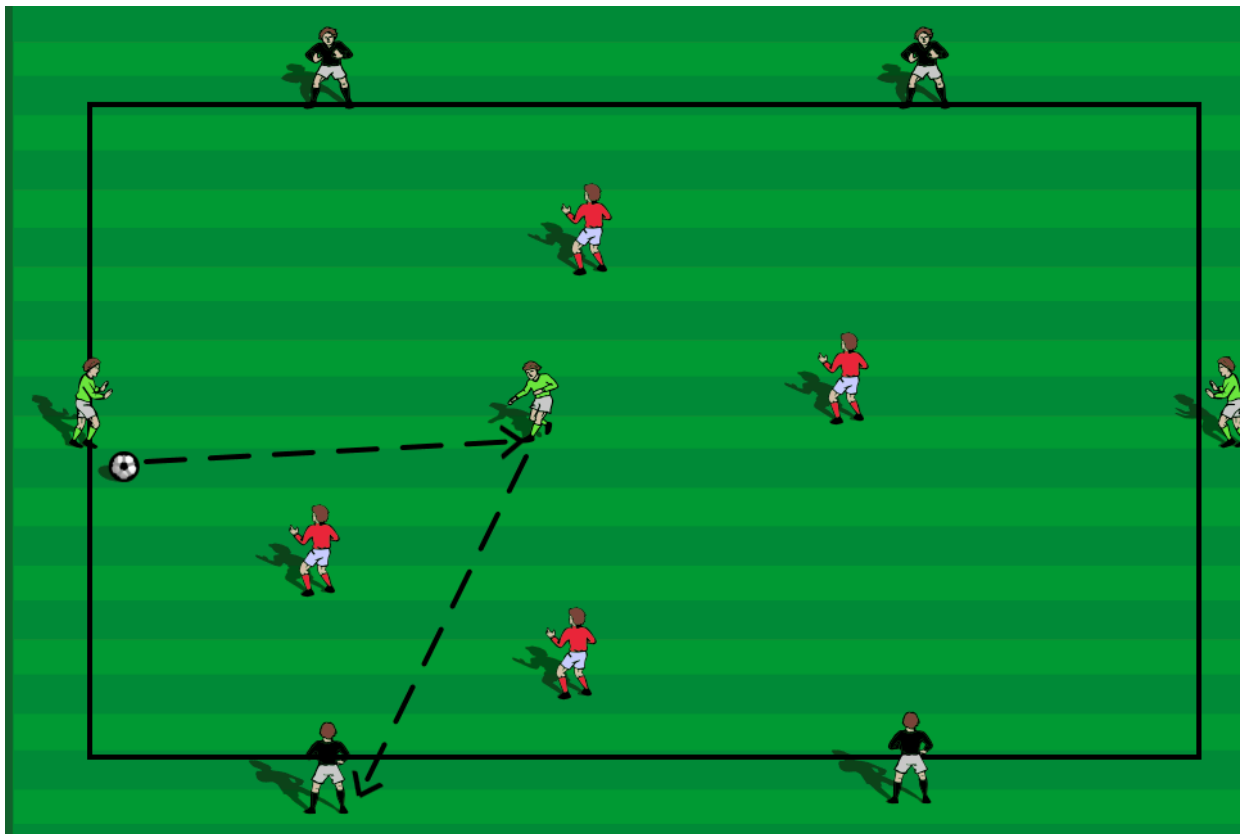
Pivot Rondo



Guardiola has spoken consistently about the use of the 'Rondo' to develop tactical behaviors as well as technical behaviors. This rondo has commonly been used by Guardiola at Bayern and Manchester City to develop the need to use the half space, and the central space. The player in possession the green looks to receive between the lines of the two wide players, in this practice it is important that the angle received is different to the wide players. This allows the player receiving the ball to play and angled pass in to a player situated in the inside channel (outside Player), this angle then allows the player on the outside to receive the ball and play forward with his or her's first touch.

The wide player would then look to play down the channel cutting out the opposition press, however by only having one central player, the team in possession may find it difficult to play forward from the first phase, this is by design as it will force the team in possession to move the ball quickly, a principle of play, as well as develop patience in possession a trait that is so important to playing in a Guardiola team.

Out of possession the red team are challenged to press aggressively forcing the team in possession to play in to the wide area where the reds will look to press and win the ball, keeping the central player away from the ball is an important trait, as turning in central areas will cause damage to Guardiola aggressive press and put the team at risk



GUARDIOLA

IN POSSESSION

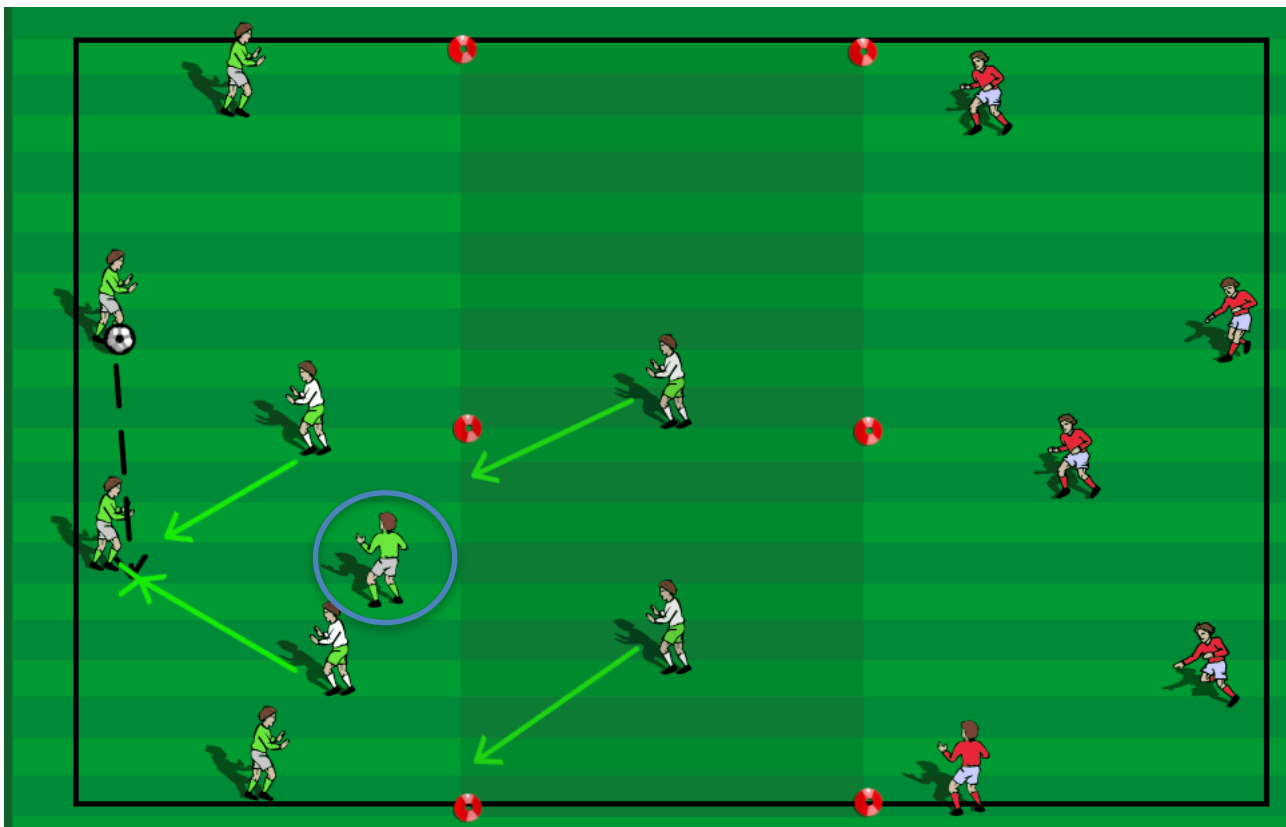
10 v 4 Practice



As previously mentioned Rondo like practices have played a significant role in Guardiola's training session design, the Rondo's vary in size and style, but train very bespoke principles of his coaching and playing philosophy.

In this rondo the attacking team look to switch play from one end zone to the other, this is a simple and easily transferable practice, within the session the detail applied by Guardiola was significant, the 5 in each zone allowed for a back and a midfield 1 to take shape, it was then the responsibility of the 1 midfield player circled in blue to get between the opponent press and try to play in to the end zone, this replicated the principle of playing between the lines, and helped develop the principle further.

Out of possession the white team looked to press high and force play wide, the first player pressing looked to show the ball carrier wide, and tried to cut the green area in half making it difficult to keep the ball, the second player then pressed the ball whilst the two central defenders looked to get tight to the line and stop the green receiving between the lines, as possession switched side, the role of the defensive team changed, and the two deeper white players stepped out and pressed the red players whilst the other two white players offered cover behind stopping a simple switch of play. Guardiola was very clear on the expectations on the central players to ensure the practice remained high of quality and intensity. The defensive effort is also pivotal to ensuring the session is of a challenging quality for all players involved.



GUARDIOLA

IN POSSESSION

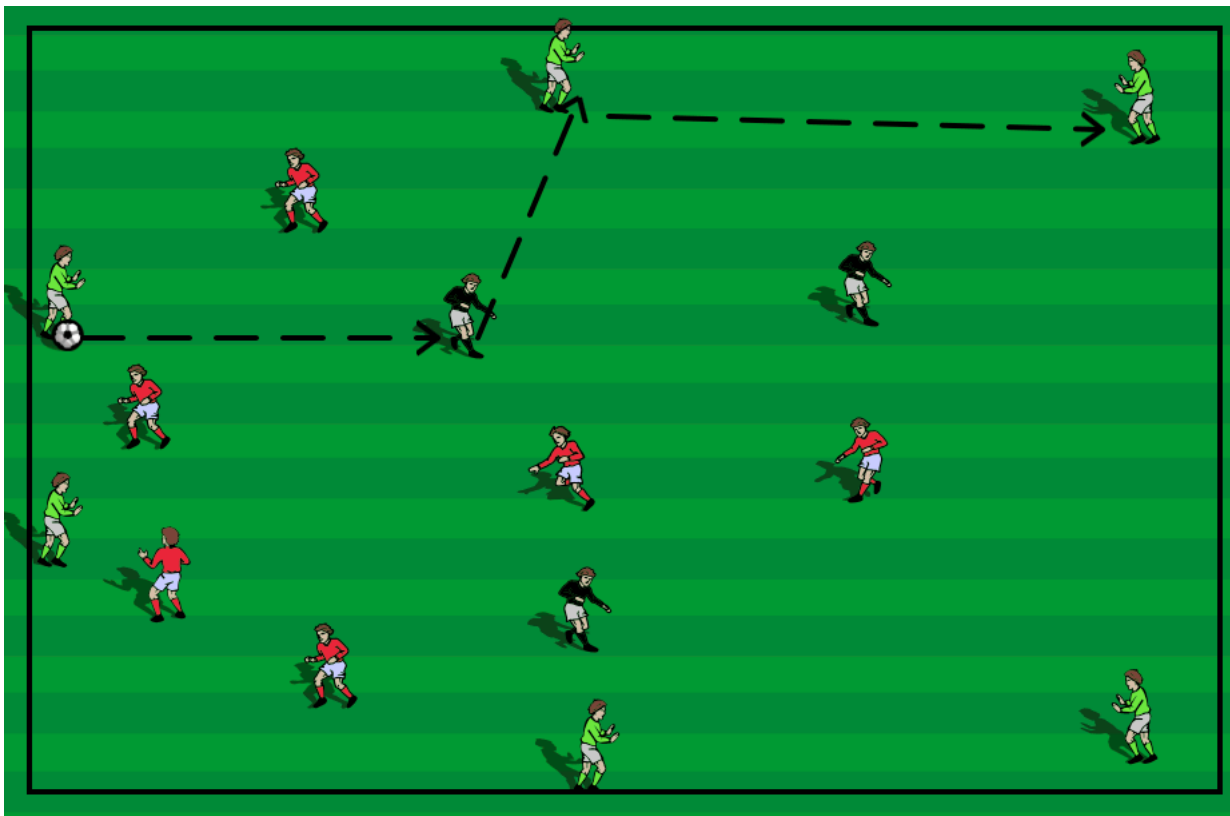
6v6+3 Practice



This in possession session involves very specific principles, that may differ from the standard coaching information given out to coaches and players. Guardiola's team actually remain fairly compact in possession at times but use the overloads they create in tight spaces to remain in possession, whilst occupying the key inside channel to commit the opponent, the use of numbers in a tight space also ensure that his teams are able to counter-press very quickly and prevent the opponent counter-attacking which is seen by Guardiola as a must.

The session sees 6 play 6 with 3 floating players, these 3 players are challenged to stay central and act as the midfield 3, that often play in the middle three channels of the pitch, by doing this it creates a central overload for the team in possession, Up back and through patterns should start to be established and short movements off the ball will allow the team in possession to remain successful and stay in possession.

Out of possession the team who lose the ball should look to instantly counter-press and look to win the ball back as early as possible, however they should find this difficult as the closest three players will be floaters that are always in possession, so the team in possession should be able to use a tight combination to play through the opposition and keep possession of the ball because of that 9v6 situation that is naturally developing because of the practice design, Guardiola delivered this session twice, in two different sizes dependent on the physical needs of the group.



GUARDIOLA

OUT OF POSSESSION

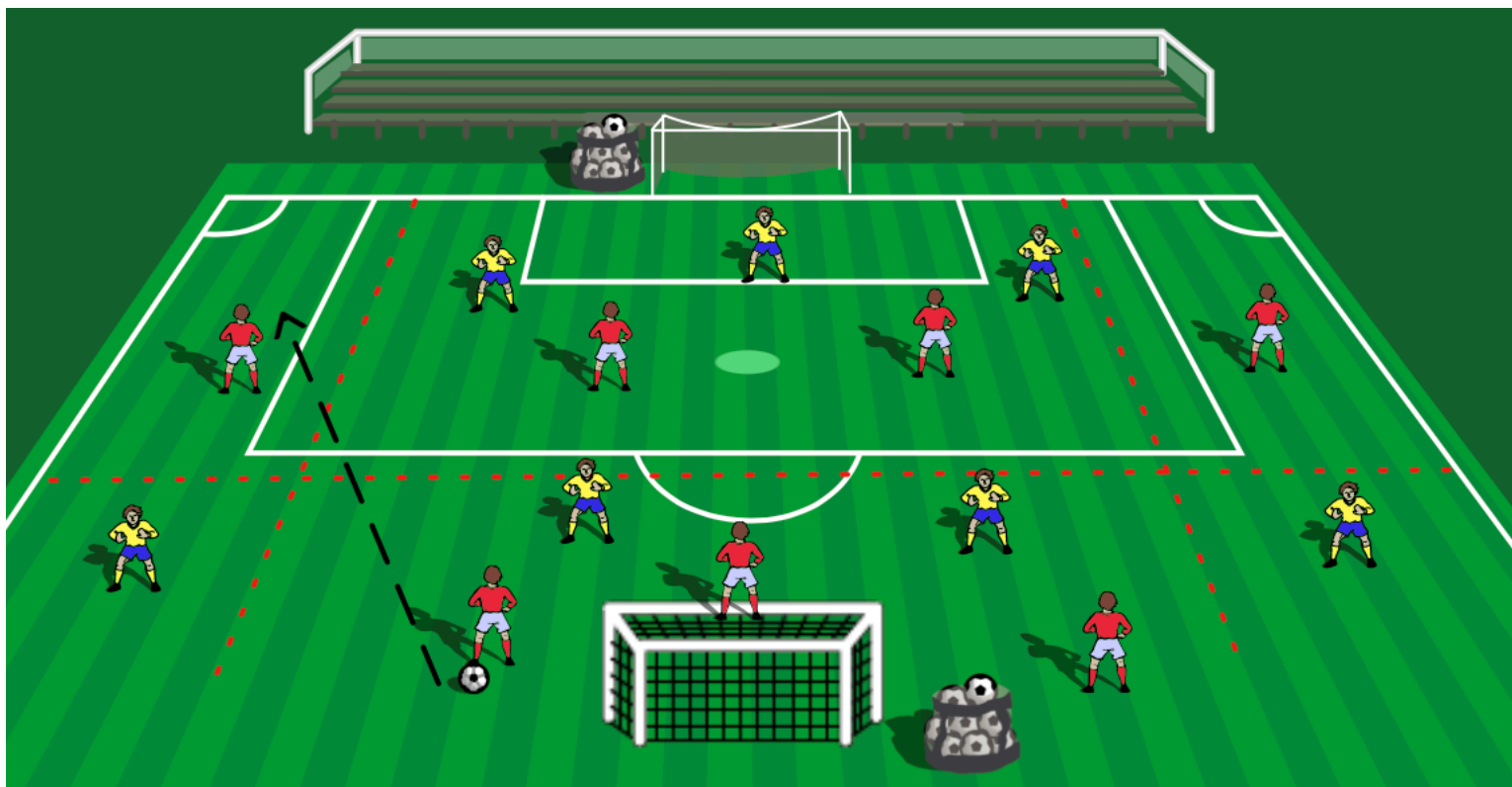
7v7 Boxed Practice



What looked like a simple crossing and finishing session, actually turned out to be a great opportunity to coach the principles of playing out from the back and the defensive transition. The practice involves a 3v3 in the favor of the attacking team in each half as well as 1v-0 in favor of the attacking team in both wide areas, the team would look to get the ball wide and with two touched the wide player would cross, the ball, the challenge for the yellows was simple, defend the cross but transition as soon as possible once the ball was secured, this would involve the defenders playing in to the attacking yellow players who would then pass the ball wide and deliver a cross against the reds.

The session very quickly became high intensity and involved heavy decision making, Guardiola consistently reinforced the need to remain calm in possession and still be scanning to break opponents lines even when the team had not secured possession, this was a consistent theme through out all the sessions, that players must be thinking about and looking for space to play even when possession was not secured, but must also be considering the opponents threats when in possession

The team in possession were challenged to provide high towering crosses, this was not a part of the Guardiola philosophy, but to replicate the challenge the team may expect to experience in game situations.



GUARDIOLA

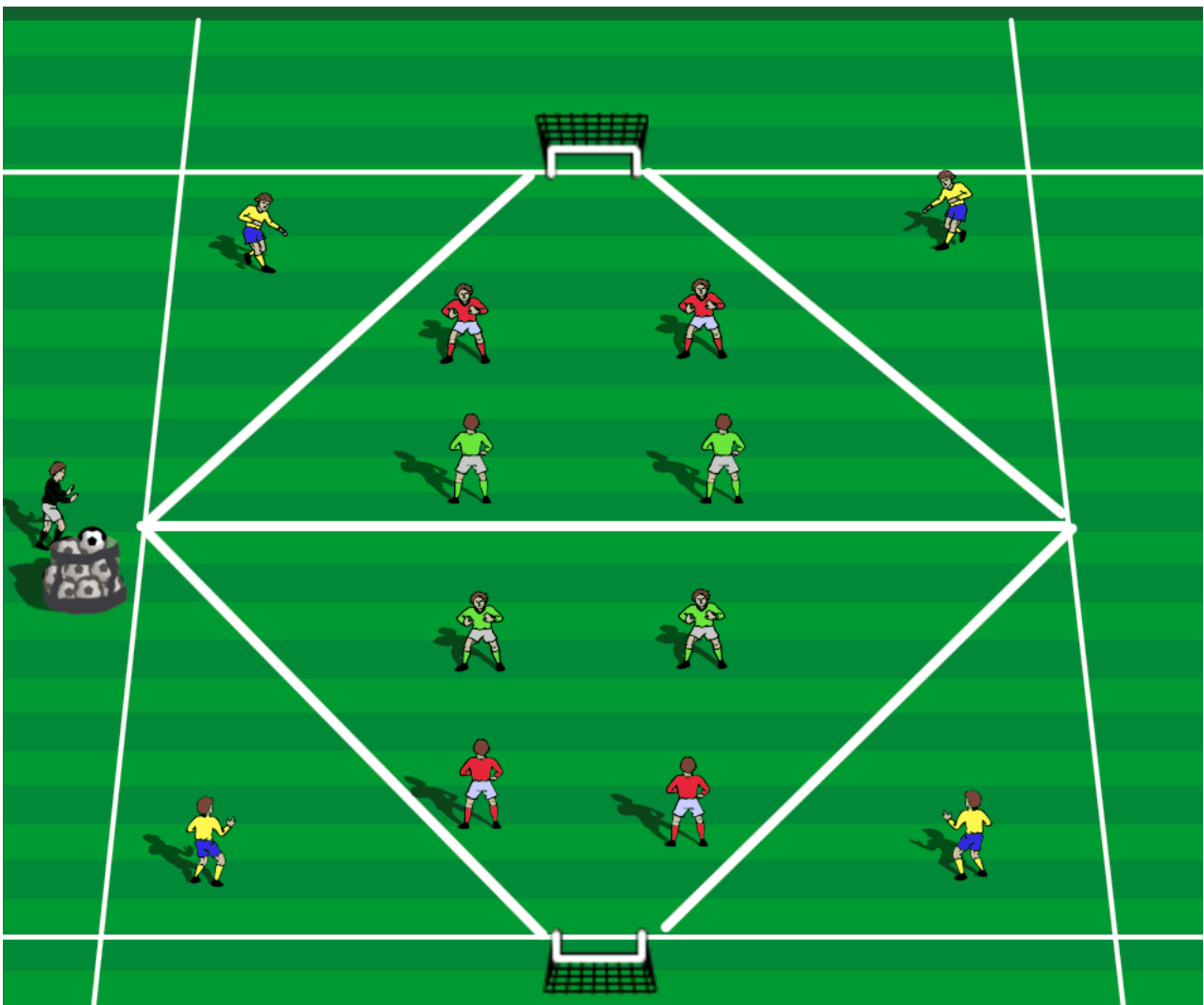
OUT OF POSSESSION

4v4+4 Diamond Game



Pep used a very simple practice to work on first time finishing from crosses, the session was set up in a diamond with a small 7v7 goal at each end, the team in possession, red team, looked to play in to the yellows who then provided a cut back to the strikers of that team, the session was high intensity but short in terms of distance and was used before a game, the players were not allowed to swap half to limit the distance they covered, but the crosses were mainly below head height and finished with first time finishes or disguised crosses behind the opponent back 2.

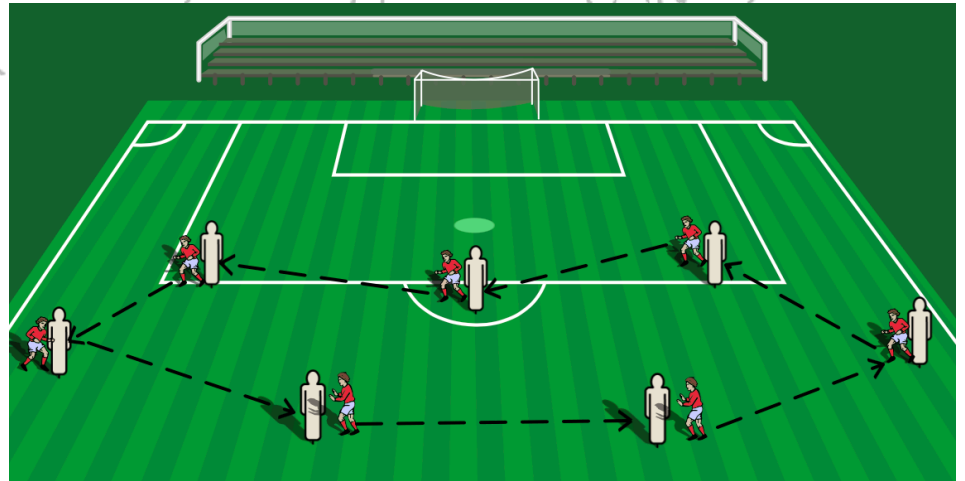
Out of possession principles involved playing out with the first touch to provide counter attacking moments that play a very important role in the playing system of Pep Guardiola. The counter attacks were played in to the attacking 2v2 then a cross was produced very quickly.



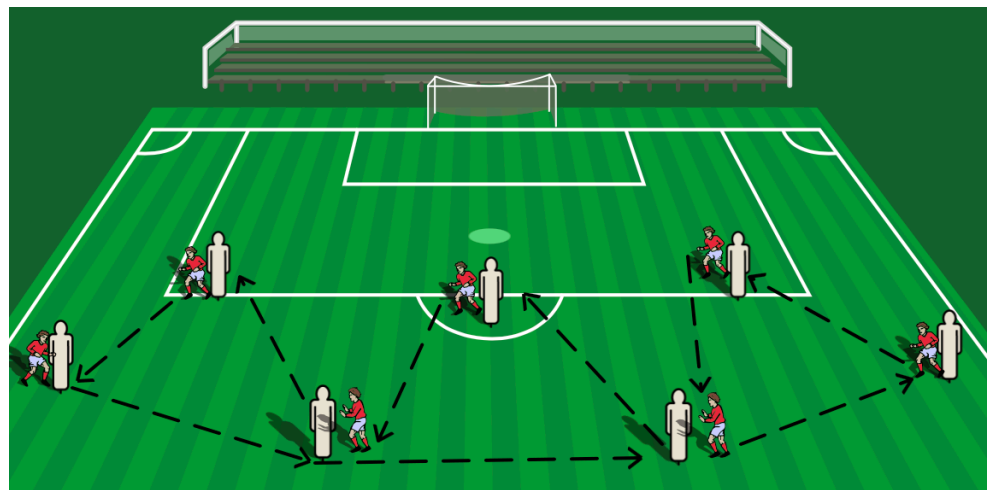
Passing Practices

The passing practice used was a simple passing practice involving 6 mannequins, the first sequence was a simple . Pass from left back to right back via the back four before going across the midfield screen.

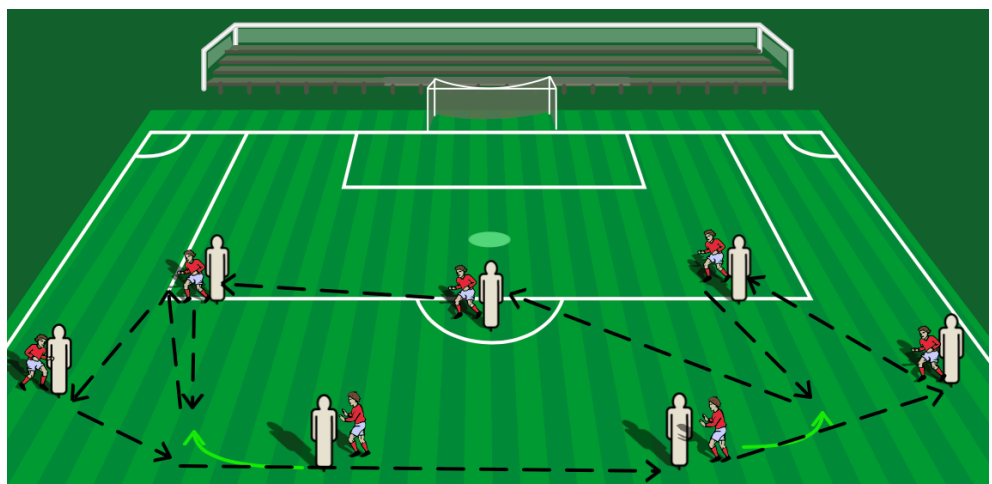
Players made movements away from the mannequin and received across the body to receive before making the pass



The second sequence involved pinning the midfield player inside the half space . This went from full back to centre back and then in to the screen before going back to the deepest midfield player, and the same on the next side, Guardiola focused on the positioning of the higher midfield player coming towards the player to keep the spaces tight.



The third and final passing practice involved a similar movement towards, the full back to pull the midfield player away from central areas, this then allowed a quicker movement of the ball to the opposite side. The last passing practice differentiated by going from central area to wide player before being bounced back in to the centre back and then back in to the midfield screen



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