

# ► why a Curriculum?

*From “sessions” to a clear player-development pathway.*

If someone watched your training and matches without knowing the club... **would they recognize your identity?**

Can you clearly describe **the player you want to develop** – and **the steps to build that player over time**?



# what Is a Football Curriculum?

A curriculum turns identity into a progressive player-development pathway.

- ❖ A curriculum is a **decision-making system** for player development.
- ❖ It helps us decide **what to train, when, and why** – and how to progress.
- ❖ Its purpose is to consistently develop a clear player profile that reflects the club's identity.
- ❖ Without a **clear player profile**, we don't have a curriculum – we have activities.

**Identity isn't a slogan – it's a consistent way to train and compete.**

# what Is a Football Curriculum?

A curriculum turns identity into a progressive player-development pathway.

Example box:

## Club DNA (Values → visible behaviors)

- › **Vertical:** progress forward when advantage exists (space/time/ball).
- › **Aggressive:** proactive attack and proactive defending (not reactive).
- › **Dynamic:** create advantage through movement, timing, and rhythm changes.
- › **Competitive:** win transitions, duels, and second balls.

values → Game Principles → Training Design → Match Behavior

*We translate these values into Game Principles.*

# From Identity to Training: The Curriculum “Equation”

## Identity (Club DNA)

- › **Game Principles** (what we want to see consistently)
- › **Curriculum Design** = Interactions × Roles × Contexts (by age stage)
- › **Match Behaviors**

**Interactions:** what relationship of the game are we developing?

**Roles:** who are we developing within that interaction?

**Contexts:** under what type of opposition/game environment?

*We translate these values into Game Principles.*

# The 6 Game Interactions

## Our Curriculum Map



The curriculum is simply the progression of these interactions, with the right roles and contexts, by age.

# The Roles in the Game

who are we developing?



## Attackers:

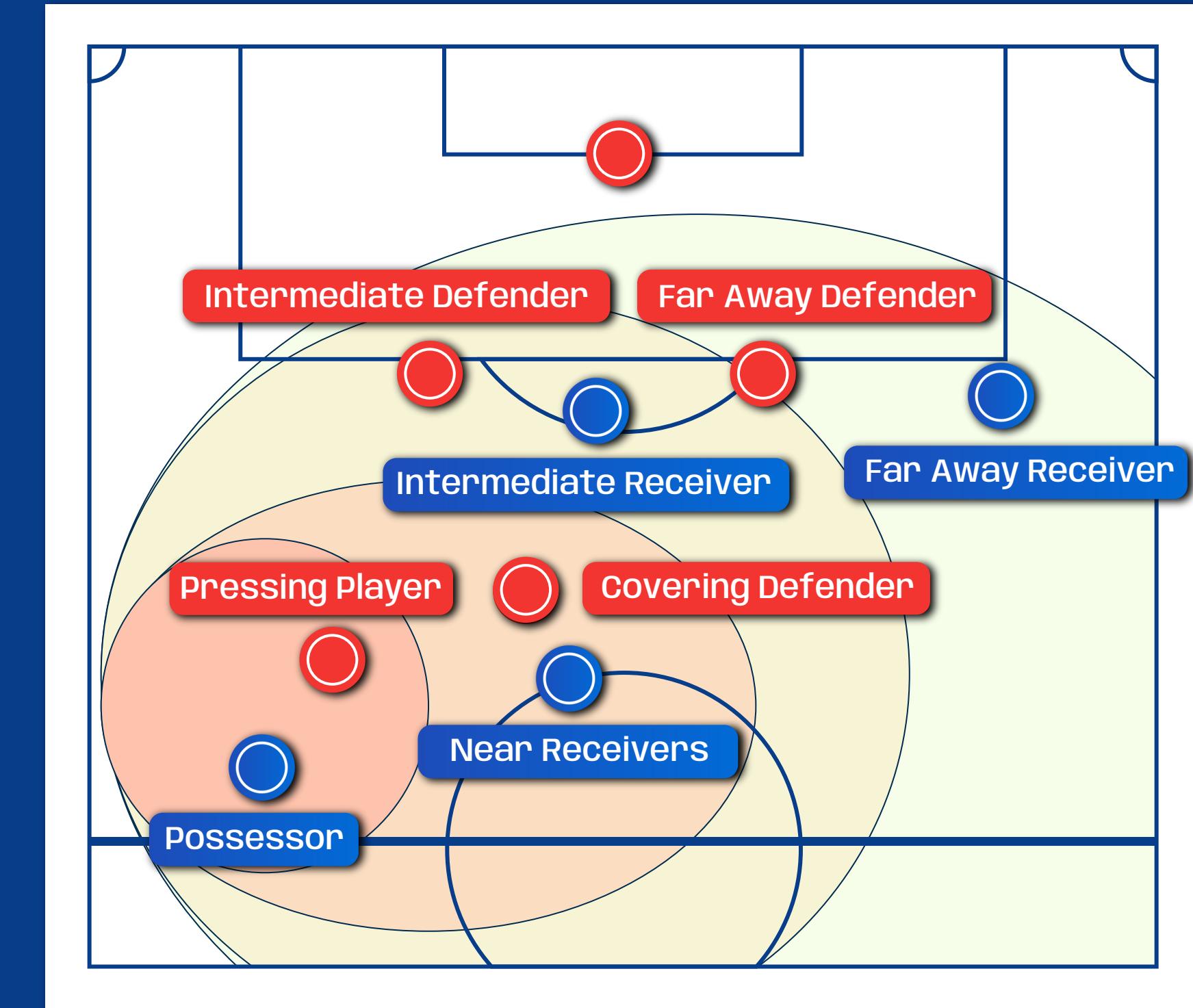
- Possessor
- Near Receiver
- Intermediate Receiver
- Far Away Receiver



## Defenders:

- Pressing Player
- Covering Defender
- Intermediate Defender
- Far Away Defender

*Roles are defined by distance to the ball and availability/responsibility.*



# Game Contexts: Organized vs Dynamic

The game has two realities

- » Organized moments (structured, positional)
- » Dynamic moments (pressure, man-marking, transitions)

**Identity - which reality we want to dominate most often**

- » **More organized identity:** we control games through *structure, control possession, and positioning.*
- » **More dynamic identity:** we control games through *pressure, movements, transitions, and rhythm.*

**Train both. Emphasize one.**

# Same Role, Two Contexts

## Practical Example

Example: Possessor

### Organized moment - Defense Zonal Marking

- » More time → scan, fix opponent, choose the best option
- » Use structure: play to the free player, connect, progress

### Dynamic moment - High Pressing Man-to-Man Marking

- » Less time → duels, play fast (1-2 touch if possible)
- » Exploit chaos: attack space quickly or bounce to escape pressure

**Role stays the same. Context changes the decisions.**

# How Our DNA Shows Up (Role + Context)

## Practical Example

Pressing Player (aggressive, dynamic, competitive)

### Organized moment (structured)

- » Press to guide play into a predictable area
- » Press with cover behind (lock + control)

### Dynamic moment (pressure/transitions)

- » Press to win now (duel / tackle / force mistake)
- » React to second balls immediately

**Same role. Same DNA. Different behaviors depending on the context.**

# Curriculum Stages

Same DNA, Increasing Complexity



**6–8**

**Exploration + Ball Mastery**



**9–12**

**Learn the Game (Small Groups)**



**13–16**

**Identity + Competition Context**



**+18**

**Exploration + Ball Mastery**

➊ **Focus:** Body + Ball + Opponent (1v1)

➋ **Goal:** love the game + basic coordination + confidence on the ball

➊ **Focus:** Possessor + Near Receiver + Pressing/Cover

➋ **Goal:** understand basic game situations (1v1 → 3v3)

➊ **Focus:** Principles become more detailed + more collective roles

➋ **Goal:** apply our identity against common league scenarios (constraints)

➊ **Focus:** Principles + model (players/profiles) + match prep

➋ **Goal:** consistency, specialization, winning within our identity

**We don't change the game; we add layers.**



# stage 1 (6-8): Exploration + Ball Mastery

Coaching focus: environment > instruction

## Coach approach

- ➊ Less talking, more playing (show -> play -> repeat)
- ➋ Create exploration: players try, fail, try again
- ➌ Max reps: small numbers, multiple balls, minimal waiting
- ➍ Fun + confidence: every player experiences success

## Technical foundations (with the ball)

- ➊ Dribbling / carrying
- ➋ Passing & receiving
- ➌ Shooting / finishing + turning, stopping, starting, protecting the ball

## Session design rules

- ➊ 1 objective per game
- ➋ Lots of 1v1 moments + lots of free ball contact
- ➌ Simple constraints (space, time, targets) – not complex instructions

## Weekly example 3 sessions

- ➊ Day 1: ball mastery games
- ➋ Day 2: 1v1 + finishing
- ➌ Day 3: small-sided play (free play with light constraints)

*At 6-8, the “curriculum” is the environment we create.*



# stage 2 (9-12): Learn the Game (Small Groups)

Coaching focus: Core Learning formats 1v1 → 3v3

## Coach approach

- ➊ Still high reps + high ball contact
- ➋ More guided coaching (simple cues, short interventions)
- ➌ Teach players to play with teammates (sharing, support, simple cooperation)

## Main focus: Game learning

- ➊ 1v1 → 3v3 (core learning formats)
- ➋ Basic decisions: when to dribble, when to pass
- ➌ Defensively: press + cover as the first unit of team defending

## Key roles

- ➊ **Attackers:** Possessor Near Receiver
- ➋ **Defenders:** Pressing Player Covering Defender

*At 9-12, we teach players to solve basic game situations together.*



# stage 2 (9-12): Practical Weekly Planning

9-12 Weekly Template (Recommended): Individual → Collective → Final Third

Day 1 Individual (1 role)	Day 2 Collective (Role Connection)	Day 3 Final Third (Day 1 role, closer to goal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> Possessor (or Near Receiver / Pressing Player / Covering Defender)</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply the Individual Game Principles for the selected role.</li><li>❸ 1v1 → 3v3</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> Possessor + Near Receiver (attacking connection)</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply the subprinciples of both roles.</li><li>❸ 4v4-6v6</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> same as Day 1</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply the Day 1 role principles in final-third situations: finishing, final pass, and final movement.</li></ul>

*Progression: role principles → role connection → final-third application.*



# stage 2 (9-12): Practical weekly planning

9-12 Weekly Template Alternative: Individual → Individual → Final Third

Day 1 Individual (1 role)	Day 2 Individual (1 role)	Day 3 Final Third (connect both days)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> Role A (e.g., Possessor)</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply the Individual Game Principles for Role A</li><li>❸ 1v1 → 3v3</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> Role B (e.g., Near Receiver)</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply the Individual Game Principles for Role B</li><li>❸ 1v1 → 3v3</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> Role A/B (choose one main focus)</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply the week's role principles in final-third situations: finishing, final pass, final movement</li></ul>

*Best when the priority is individual understanding across two roles.*



# stage 2 (9-12): Practical Weekly Planning

9-12 Weekly Template: Defensive Individual → Opposite Role → Final Third

Day 1 Individual (Defensive role)	Day 2 Individual (Opposite attacking role)	Day 3 Final Third (same relationship, closer to goal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> Pressing Player (or Covering Defender)</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply the Individual Game Principles for the defensive role</li><li>❸ 1v1 → 3v3</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> Possessor vs Press (or Near Receiver vs Cover)</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply the Individual Game Principles for the attacking role against that defensive behavior</li><li>❸ 1v1 → 3v3</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❶ <b>Role focus:</b> attacking or defending role</li><li>❷ <b>Goal:</b> apply those principles in final-third situations: final pass, final movement, finishing</li></ul>

*Day 1 - defensive role principles → Day 2 - opposite role response*