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MODERN SOCCER TACTICS

VOLUME 2



AN ANALYSIS OF THE TACTICS USED BY TOP PROFESSIONAL TEAMS AND PLAYERS
PLUS PRACTICAL METHODS TO TEACH THEM

BY STEVIE GRIEVE



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Modern Soccer Tactics

Volume 2

*An Analysis of the Tactics Used by Top Professional Teams and
Players Plus Practical Methods to Teach Them.*

by

Stevie Grieve



Published by
WORLD CLASS COACHING

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Authors - Stevie Grieve



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WORLD CLASS COACHING

Hello, and firstly, thank you for taking the time to open the cover of this book. It is a great honour for me as a young coach to be able to have the chance to write a book. Not many coaches have a fantastic opportunity like this and thanks must go to Mike Saif at World Class Coaching for allowing me to have such an opportunity.

I was asked by World Class Coaching to write this book on the back of my 1st published book: 'Sergio Busquets – Barcelona's Unsung Hero?' I gladly accepted the challenge, and my criterion for using specific parts of matches was:

- Can a goal be scored?
- How was it scored?
- How was it defended if not?
- How was space created to retain possession?
- Defensive shape to stop attacks effectively

Within this book, you will find tactical observations from some of the world's best teams, and how it affected the outcome of the match. Most of the observations and analysis come from attacking scenarios, and how the attack was developed; which runs were made, possible decisions and defensive shape against the attack, and how to dismantle the defensive shape. One of the articles includes the role of Angel Di Maria within the Real Madrid team, and the type of creativity he brings to it, with speculation of regular patterns of play that Real Madrid uses. Another article includes Decision making around the goal from Arsenal v AC Milan, players dropping off into spaces between the midfield and defensive lines to create attacks, and defending in numbers.

I wanted to give my opinion on how I saw the footage develop – runs, attacking and defensive positioning, marking schemes, decision making and possible patterns of play. I hope that when you read the different articles you will see why the play has been successful, and how you could possibly implement what you have just read into your own training sessions.

The training sessions should be viewed as a way to help develop the tactical abilities of your players, but I would also like it to help coaches develop different ideas from the practice drills – Can you change this to make it better for your own team? Can it be used to develop a different aspect of the play? If from this book it helps coaches develop their player to become tactically better, and to find different ideas from a simple exercise, then for me, that is fantastic. The sessions are mainly practices I have used with my own teams, from recreational level, to travel team and professional youth academy teams, and found success after refining the initial practise I had tried. Some of the practices are training sessions I have thought up from watching a specific piece of play, and looked to make a session which fits the article preceding it. Again, you can alter these to suit the needs of your team.

I really hope that you enjoy reading this book, and can find some tactical insight into the world's best teams, and use the training sessions to develop your players to become more intelligent, tactically aware players.

Cheers,

Stevie Grieve

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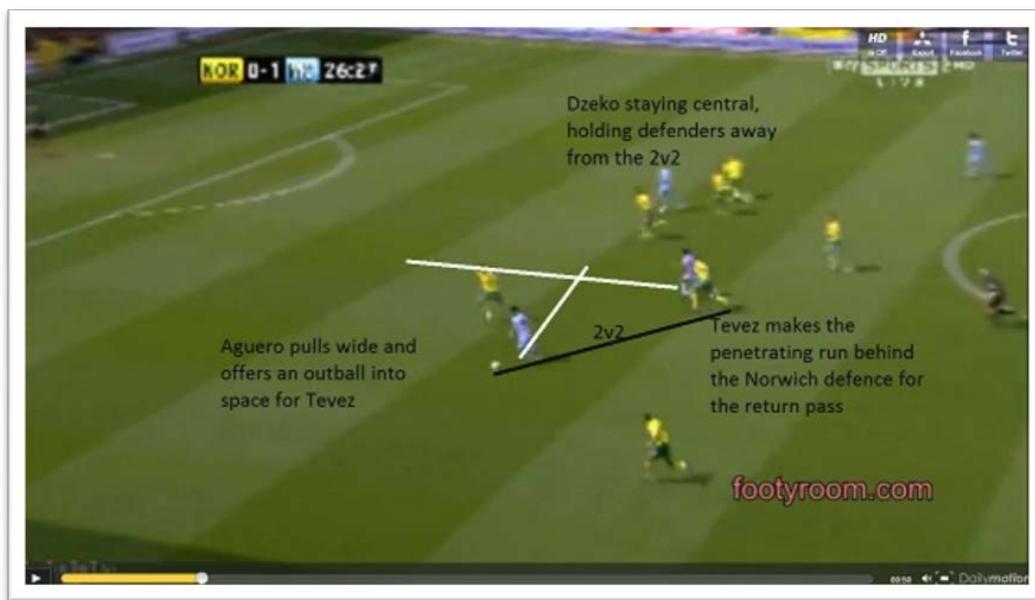
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Unpredictable Attacking

Many of the most expensive players have been attackers. Most of the attackers have either been goal scoring machines, or players who play with flair and surprise the opponent with unpredictable dribbles, passes and shots from nowhere, that often result in goals, or goal scoring chances.

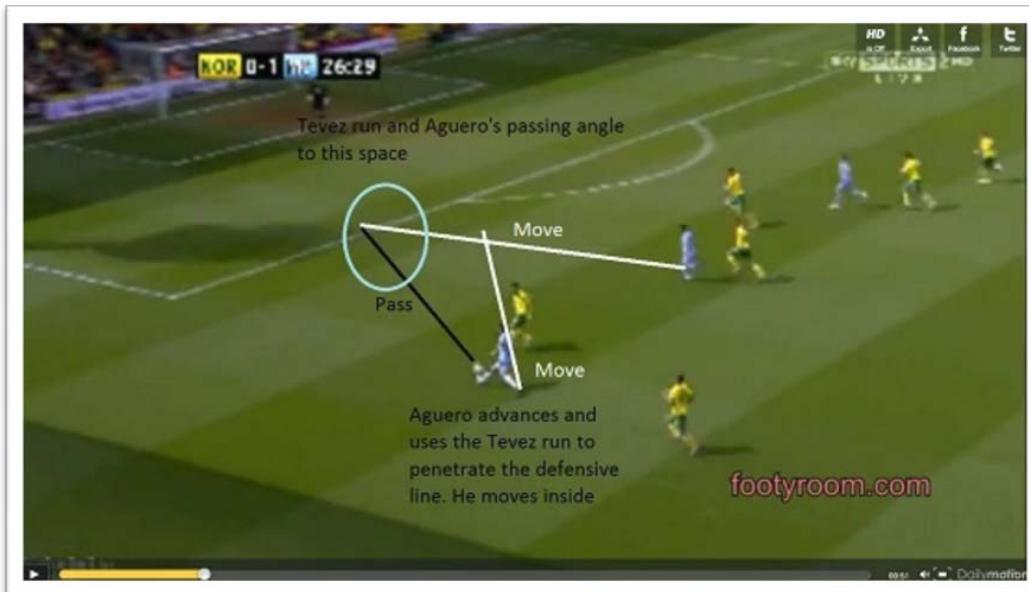
Carlos Tevez is one of these players. He is reknown for his work ethic, and his ability to harass defenders when he doesn't have the ball, but what separates him from hard working attackers is his ability on the ball. We have seen him score from long range, score tap in's, dribble between multiple defenders in tight spaces, and take shots so early that the goal keeper cannot react to it. This week, against Norwich, he scored 3 goals, including one from long range that was taken so early that Ruddy the Norwich goalkeeper couldn't get close to at his near post from 30 yards. What we also saw was his ability to play with flair and unpredictability with team mates of the same mindset, namely Sergio Aguero.

Tevez and Aguero play a 1-2



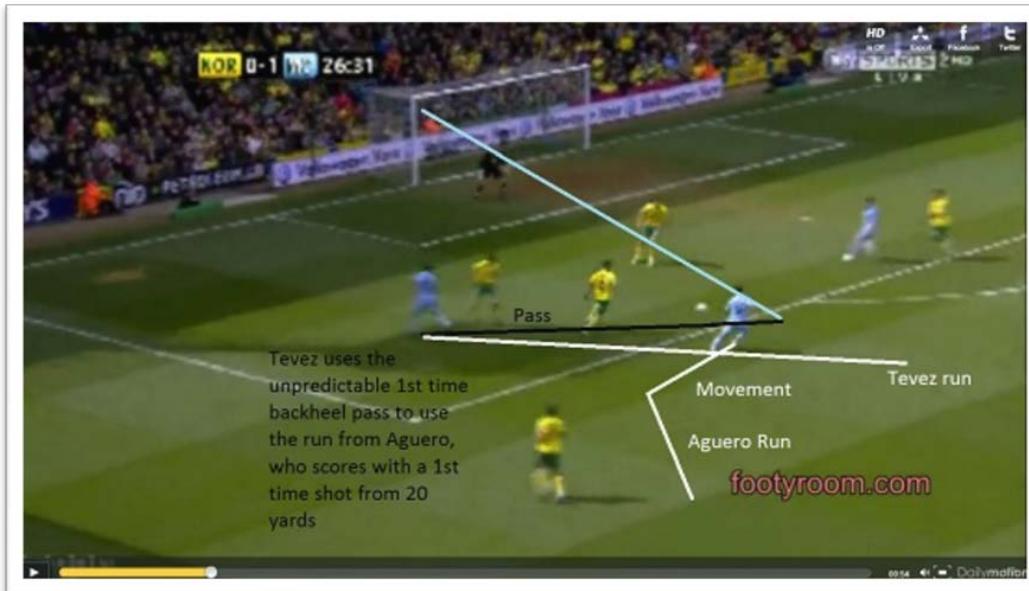
Man City have an attack with David Silva who passes left to Tevez. Tevez spots Aguero offering width and taking away a Norwich defender. Tevez releases the pass and bursts away from his marker, and into the space. There is a 2v2 situation here, so Dzeko stays wide and holds defenders central, knowing that he is a threat from aerial crosses.

Aguero turns and passes to Tevez



Tevez sprints into the passing lane Aguero has available, and Aguero penetrates the defensive line by using Tevez's run.

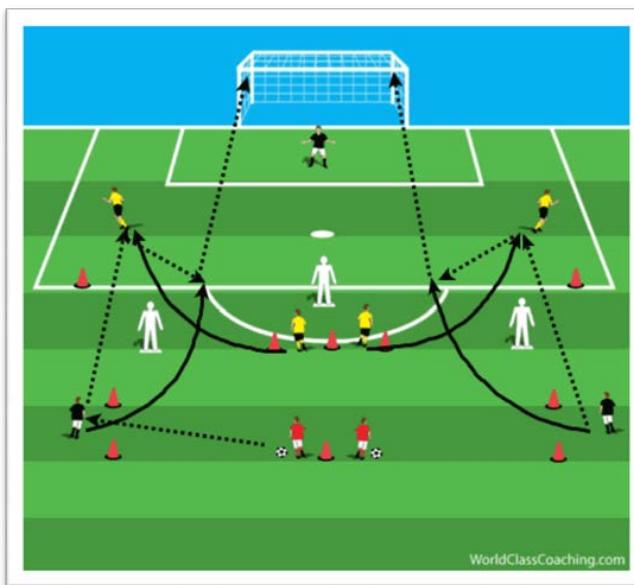
Tevez's Puzzle



When Tevez arrives at the pass from Aguero he has the option to drop the shoulder and dribble away from his opponent, turn back and look to find another pass, or play the unpredictable pass to Aguero with his heel. Tevez chooses the unpredictable option and as Aguero has lost his man, it is the best choice, but technically most challenging. As Tevez is one of those unpredictable players, he uses this type of pass often and knows he can play the pass accurately for his team mate. Aguero adjusts his run to allow himself to shoot 1st time from the pass, which he scores a brilliant goal from.

I think on the run, Tevez and Aguero both knew what the plan was, and that it is possibly a paired pattern of play that they use in training when around the box, regularly.

Training Session - Using the back heel around the box



Using the back heel – 3 player move

Red passes over to Black, who takes a touch and passes inside the guide cone, but outside the mannequin. As the ball reaches Black, Yellow will arc his run to stay onside and receive the pass. He will back heel inside towards the corner of the Edge of the Box and the 'D' – use this as an accuracy guide for the backheel. After Black passes, he will move infield for the return back heel to shoot on goal.

Coaching Points:

- Weight the pass for the striker
- Time the run to arrive with the ball in front of you
- Check the shoulder to find the runner
- Be decisive with the back heel pass
- Jab foot through the ball pushing through centre of the ball towards target area

Using the ‘man in the hole’ to advance the attack

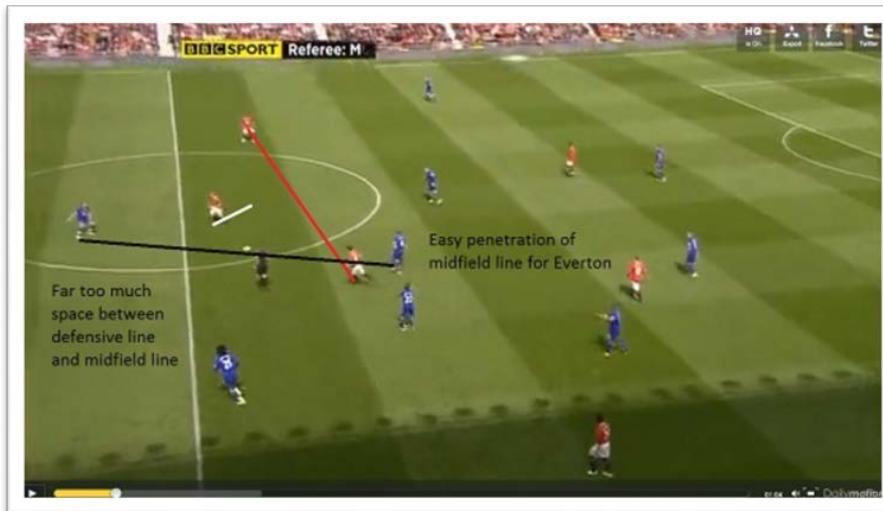
In modern day football, players interchange positions, wingers move infield and strikers drop deep. Defences must be 100% concentrated to keep up with today’s attackers, otherwise they will be punished. In the recent game between Manchester United and Everton, both teams employed a system to penetrate the midfield quickly and play against the back 4 at speed. Everton used a combination of having Osman or Pienaar move into the space behind the Man Utd midfield when play was advanced into the midfield with Jelavic looking to run behind and stretch the defence. Jelavic would drop deep and link play with midfield to spread play to the opposite side if the midfield passes were unavailable. Everton would then look to create scoring chances through crosses or early passes behind the defence.

Manchester United used a Rooney and Welbeck striker pairing – one would drop off while the other stretched the defence to create more space. Manchester United would then look to create scoring chances, like Everton, from crosses and passes behind the defence. Different systems, Manchester United’s 4-4-2 v Everton’s 4-5-1 but the same idea for both teams – penetrate the midfield and open up the defence or force them back.

Starting line ups and formation – Man Utd 4-4-2 / Everton 4-5-1

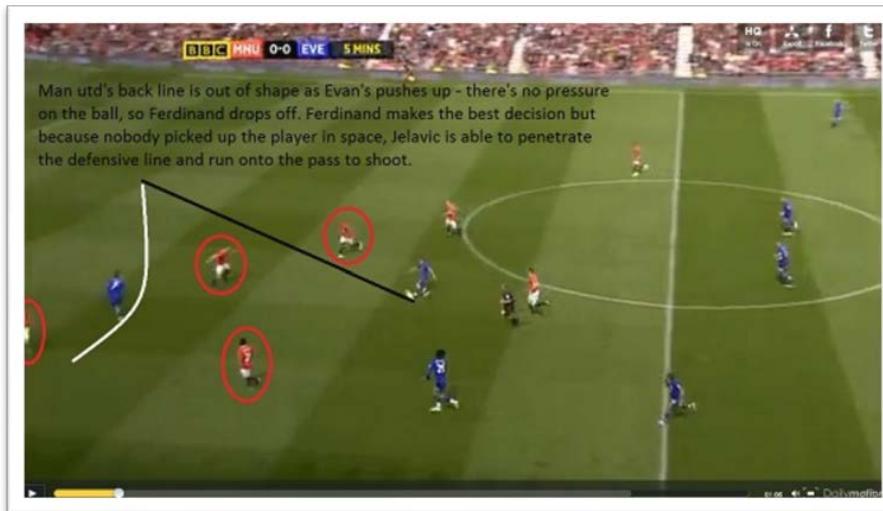


Everton's 1st chance – Jelavic behind the defence



As Pienaar and Baines exchange passes, Carrick tries to win the loose pass, but the ball breaks to Gibson, under no pressure. Carrick tries to press him but he turns, makes eye contact with Osman who is behind the midfield line. The midfield is too easily penetrated here, and with so much space between the lines, Man Utd need to react and make good decisions defensively to prevent a scoring chance.

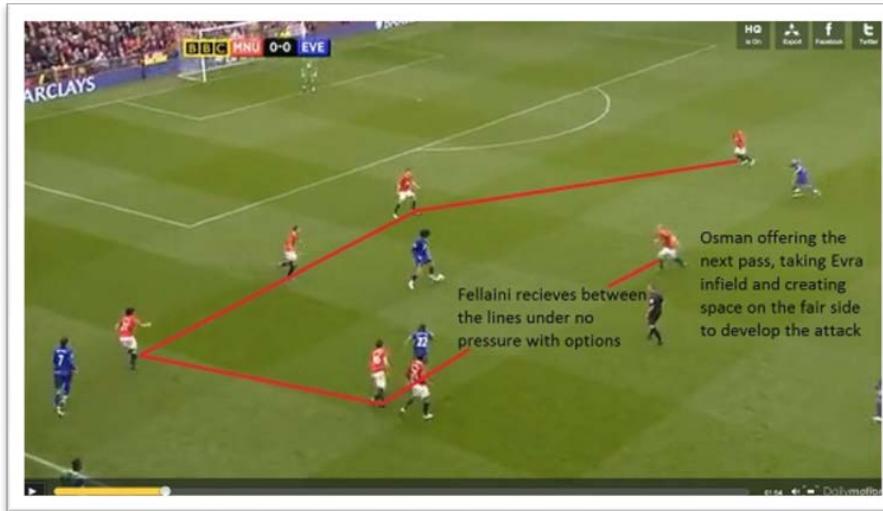
Penetrating pass and run



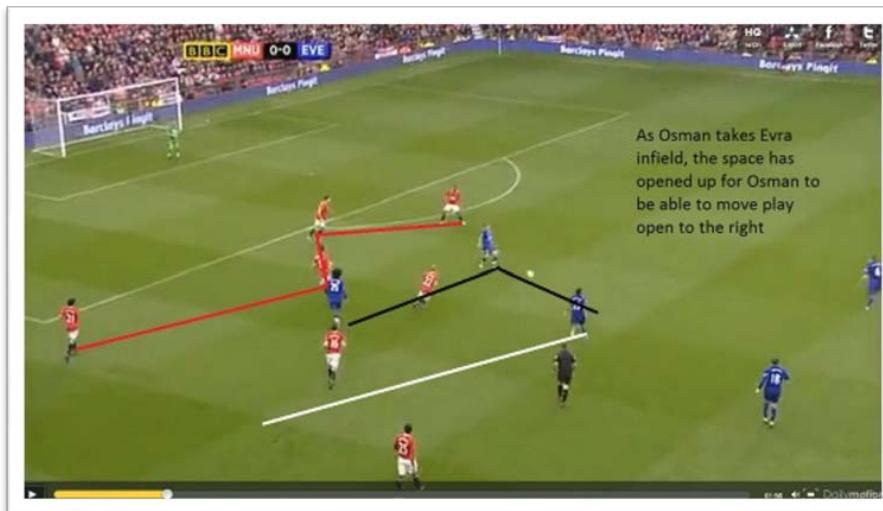
As the back line is badly out of shape – the back 4 are all circled – Osman and Jelavic know they can penetrate with a good pass into the correct space from Osman with a well-timed run by Jelavic. As Evans moves forward to confront Osman and make an offside line. Ferdinand makes the run to stay with Jelavic as he knows there is no pressure on the ball and if Jelavic is left to run through alone, there's a good chance he will score. Jelavic is chased back by Ferdinand and takes an early shot which De Gea saves.

This attack could've been a well-constructed goal combined with bad defending if Ferdinand doesn't make the decision to chase back and pressure Jelavic into shooting early.

Everton's 1st goal – Jelavic header



Jelavic wins a header and Pienaar turns away from pressure and passes into Fellaini between the lines. He is unpressured and knows Osman is in support. Osman is making 2 runs here – taking Evra inside to leave space on the right side to develop the attack further.



As the ball is passed to Osman, he can pass to Pienaar 1st time or turn. Pienaar can pass over to the right to exploit the space.



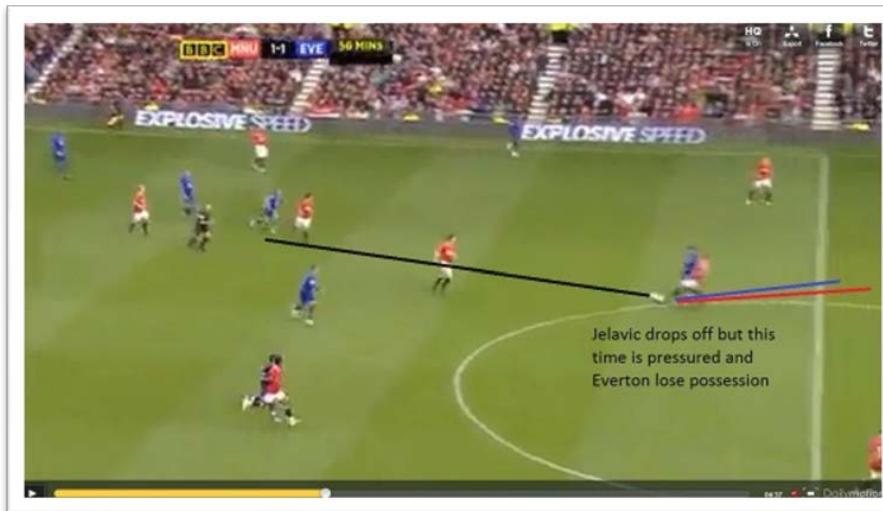
Gibson receives from Pienaar and is faced with pressure to his left from Scholes and in front from Nani. Evra runs out to press Gibson needlessly and this makes Nani drop back an extra few yards, giving Hibbert more time to be able to receive, analyse and decide what to do, under little pressure. Evra should've moved across to his usual position at left back to reshape and allow Nani to play closer to Hibbert.



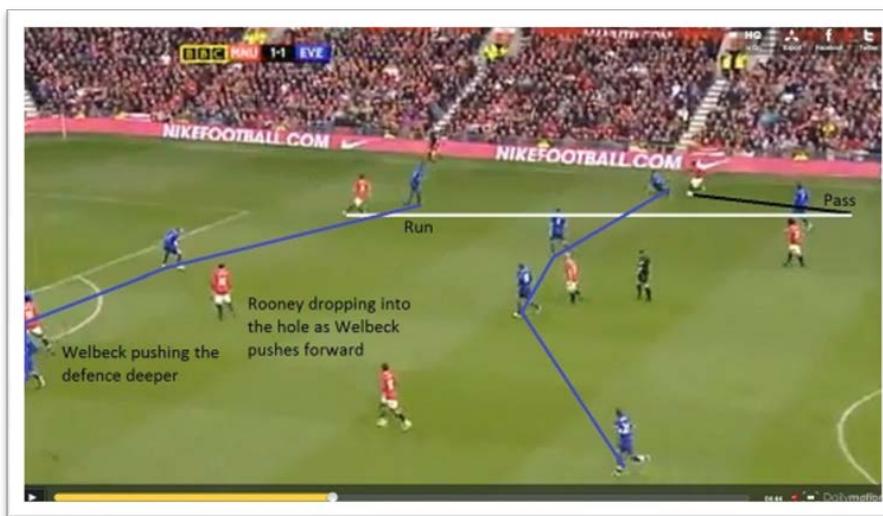
As Hibbert advances into a crossing position, he is confronted by Nani, who is in no position to stop the cross. Both MU centre backs are marking an opponent, but Rafael has bad body position when playing against Jelavic, who scores a header from the deep cross. Evra is no in Nani's defensive position but this doesn't help his team as Nani, although doing a good job covering Evra's mistake, he is not much of a defender.

Both of these chances to score have come from Everton's players being able to receive in front of the defence under no pressure. In the 2nd half, Manchester United learned from this and made sure that Pienaar and Osman were pressured every time they played between the lines, and they had less of an impact, as Jelavic started dropping short to link with the midfield.

Everton lose possession



Manchester United in the 2nd half don't allow Everton to turn or even receive without pressure, and this results in United getting into the lead. Jelavic loses possession and united attack with numbers already in the Everton half.



Everton maintain a good shape in transition and easily reshape. Valencia is offered help by a runner taking away the covering defender, who cuts inside and advances into the space, using the runner as a passing option for later. Rooney has dropped off as Welbeck pushes the defence back.



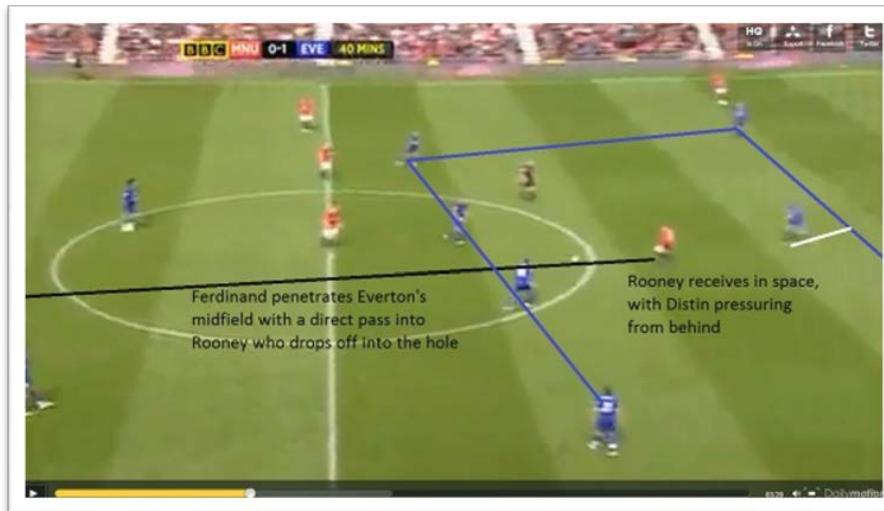
Valencia passes wide and this forces Gibson back to cover the nearest player. Valencia stays deep and offers the return pass, which is given. He is now in space to cross under no pressure. Scholes and Nani have entered the box, while Rooney and Welbeck have made crossover runs to create confusion and hopefully create space to score.

Welbeck finds space to score

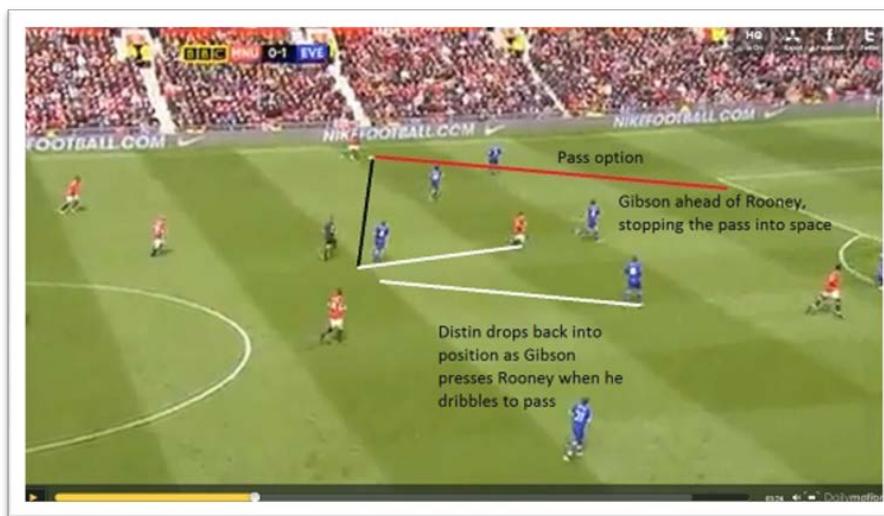


Everton have lots of players inside and around the box, but as the ball breaks loose, Welbeck is between players in space. He receives a pass and makes an intelligent decision – fake to shoot, roll away from the pressing defender, then set the ball to shoot. He curls a wonderful shot into the top corner for 2-1.

Man United using Rooney in the hole.



Manchester United have Rooney who likes to drop deep and link the play, and as Ferdinand finds this direct pass between the lines, Rooney receives. Distin reacts but is slightly too late and Rooney can turn when he receives.



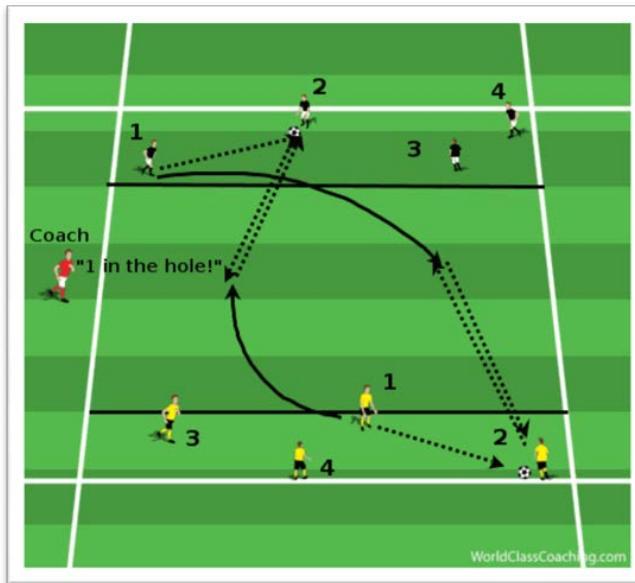
As Rooney turns, he dribbles away from Distin into Gibson, but passes wide as he is pressed. Gibson knows the space behind him can be exploited, so quickly gets goal side of Rooney to block that passing option.



Manchester United have a sequence of crosses from this attack, Nani from the left, Valencia from the right, then Carrick switches play to Nani who on the 3rd cross inside 10-15 seconds, score with a Rooney header.

This goal comes from Rooney receiving behind the Everton midfield line then Manchester United making crossing opportunities, and keeping the ball alive around the box. Had Rooney lost control in the initial phase on the attack, they may not have had this attack to score from.

Training Practise to develop movement into the hole – timing of run, pass, and communication.



Players pass and move around the box in their sequence of numbers – 1-2-3-4-1. On the coaches command, the number called, ie “1” must drop into ‘the hole’ to receive from the opposite box. He will receive and pass back within 2 touches.

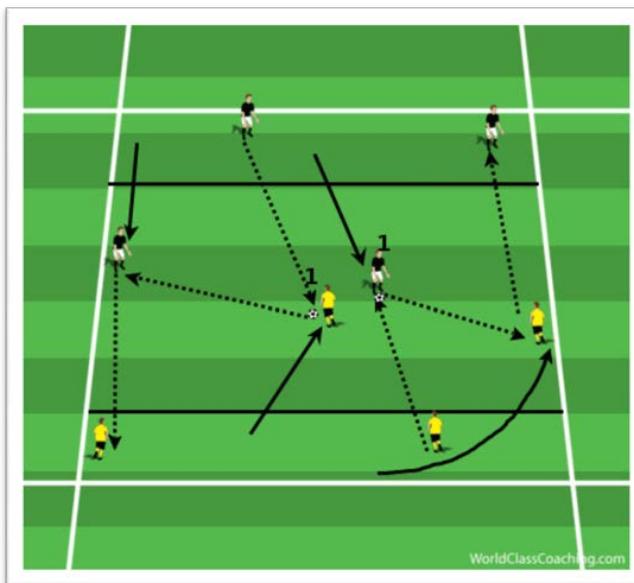
Coaching Points:

- Quick reaction to command
- Visual agreement (eye contact) with passer and point to where you want the ball
- Audio communication for when to pass
- Play passes that can be received and passed efficiently
- Orientate 1st touch to set up the next pass

Progression/Variation:

- Drop in, with a half turn receive and pass ball into your own group (switch balls)
- Play a 1-2 with opposite colour then return ball to your own group (switch balls)
- Pass to the next person of the opposite group in sequence – if 1 drops in, he passes to player 2 of the opposite group

Practice 2 – Support from deep – wide option pass



Again, on coach's command, the player will drop in and receive from the opposite box. One player will support from the box the ball leaves – this simulates a runner from a deeper line (the full back offering a pass to the central midfielder). 2 players will stay inside the box – one to pass out of the area to the dropping in player, one to receive from the opposite side.

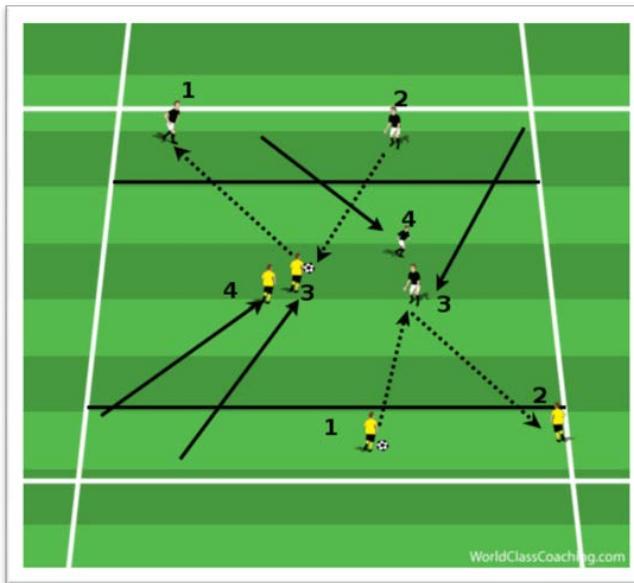
Coaching Points:

- Support player must indicate early where he will go
- Stay behind the line of the ball to allow easy lay off
- Visual agreement between players, to receive and to lay off
- Movement on far side to offer an 'exit pass' on the far side from the wide supporting player
- Make the passing smooth and to a rhythm

Progressions/Variations

- Play 1 touch
- Dropping in player plays wide of the centre and support players run across the front of him to lay off
- Pass and press from the dropping in player as the ball is passed wide

Practice 3 – Pressure from behind



As above, on coaches command, that number will drop in as the attacker. This time, the adjacent number as the defender. In the picture, 3 has dropped into the hole as the attacker, 4 has pressured from behind as the defender.

Coaching Points:

- Get ahead of opponent
- Meet the ball – don't wait on it
- Knee over the ball, contact just above central point of ball to keep it on the floor
- Stay calm under pressure

Progression/Variations:

- Try to turn away from the opponent and pass into the group you started in
- 3 touch maximum to protect, turn and pass (encourage fake pass or body feints before pass)
- If you have 5 players to a box, you can ask a player to pressure the dropping in player for a wide pass to the supporting player under pressure.

Practice 4 – Game Conditions



Players play attack v defence, with a box marked out that 3 players from the attack *must* stay inside.

In the example above, one player has dropped off, with the left centre back too tight, he lays off to the right back. The furthest ahead of the 3 attackers arcs a run behind the left centre back for a pass from the right back into the space.

Attacking rules:

- They should try to have at least 1 player looking to stretch the defence with runs in behind.
- At least 1 dropping between players to receive from midfield.
- They have 2 wide support players who play outside the box, and they can only be pressed when the ball is passed wide to them.
- Keep the ball until a space to exploit with runners opens up.

Defensive rules:

- 1 player can play outside the box to press the 2 midfielders.
- Press the wide players when the ball leaves the box.
- Go tight with players dropping deep.
- Communication between players in defence and midfield to track movement of attackers

Coaching Points:

- If you can receive on half turn to attack the back 4, do it. Look to turn and penetrate the back 4.
- When you can't turn, play safe – keep possession and the defence moving.
- Offer support at all times.
- Look to drag players out of shape to open up space for team mates.

How Real Madrid beat Barcelona at the Nou Camp

Jose Mourinho has had 2nd season success at Real Madrid and now Inter Milan. He always makes the point that his 1st season, no matter how productive it may be, is the transition season to what he wants his team to be, in the 2nd season. In Mourinho's 1st season at Real Madrid, 2011/2012, they only won against Barcelona once, after extra time in the Copa Del Rey. The previous games between the teams, they never looked like winning – a 5-0 defeat in the 1st game was the start of the transformation of Real Madrid against Barcelona.

In the 5-0 game, they played a high line with large spaces between the lines. Barcelona used a rotating diamond attack with Iniesta and Messi dropping deep and using spaces created by Villa and Pedro, who made wide-central runs forward. The Madrid defence played too high and didn't exert any pressure on the back 4 or Busquets, and because of this, the midfield dominated, allowing Barcelona to penetrate the Real Madrid defence at will on the day. Real Madrid learned from this game, and altered the way they played – they pressed high, played with 2 midfield screens to block Messi and stop him from being as effective, forcing play wide. As Barcelona no longer have an attacking left back since Maxwell left, play has been more predictable down the left – always cutting inside with no overlap - and play has been more manageable with only Dani Alves attacking the right.

Real Madrid's game plan v Barcelona

- Use Barcelona's lack of balance, especially down the left as a defensive advantage
- Screen the defence effectively to stop Messi being as effective
- Force attackers dropping deep to pass backwards, making them unable to turn
- Make play predictable and double up when it's a 1v1 in any area
- Play forward quickly on the counter attack, using Barcelona's risky attacking strategy to their advantage
- Use a high pressing game on the defence and allow no easy possession inside the Barcelona half
- Ensure that intelligent runs and passes can create scoring chances on the counter attack

Barcelona v Real Madrid line ups



As we can see from the line ups and positions these players take up, what can we decipher from them?

Barcelona: 4-3-3-0

Barcelona has no centre forward, which will work if players from the midfield line can run ahead of the Real Madrid back 4, who in theory should be drawn out to mark Messi and Iniesta.

Tello will play on the left side and will be the most advanced player. Barcelona will look to build possession and look to create an opening around the edge of the box with intricate passing, using Adriano on the overlap on the left side as Tello cuts in, with Dani Alves on the right side overlapping Messi.

Real Madrid: 4-2-3-1

As Real Madrid know the way Barcelona play, they will look to press high with the front 4 of Benzema, Di Maria, Ronaldo and Ozil, against the Barcelona back 4.

They will play high pressure but with distances of no more than 6 metres between the midfield and defensive lines.

Alonso and Khedira will look to screen the pair of Messi and Iniesta, and ensure that when they receive, they can't turn, and must pass back to start again. This will allow Pepe and Ramos to play deep and make it even more difficult for Barcelona to pass through them.

As an attack, they will use fast counter attacks, and set pieces. Barcelona have 1 player over 6 feet tall in the starting team, so corner kicks and free kicks present a massive advantage for Real Madrid to score from.

Set Roles: Real Madrid

Arbeloa – Mark Tello, play safe in possession

Pepe and Ramos – Be prepared to come out to press Messi/ Iniesta if they lose Alonso and Khedira, play safe in possession

Coentrao – Cover inside with Pepe and Ramos, pick up Alves when he comes forward.
Pass to Ronaldo when possible

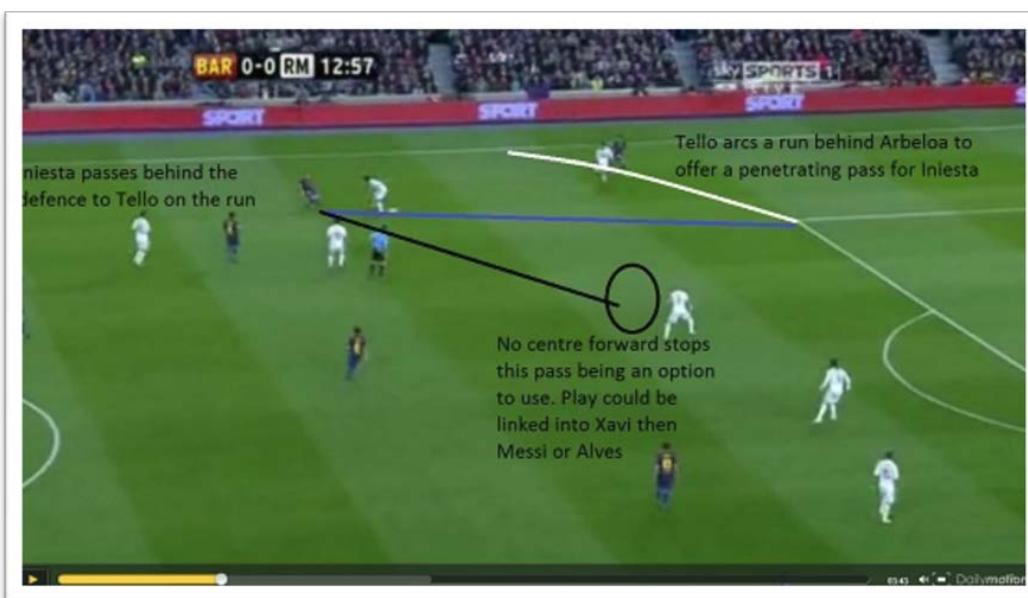
Alonso/Khedira – Screen the area in front of Messi and Iniesta and block the passes into them. Launch counter attacks – Khedira support the attack

Ronaldo/Di Maria – Block diagonal passes into Xavi/Thiago from Adriano and Alves, exploit spaces in transition and make quick decisions on counter attack

Ozil – Mark Busquets, make decisive actions on the counter attack

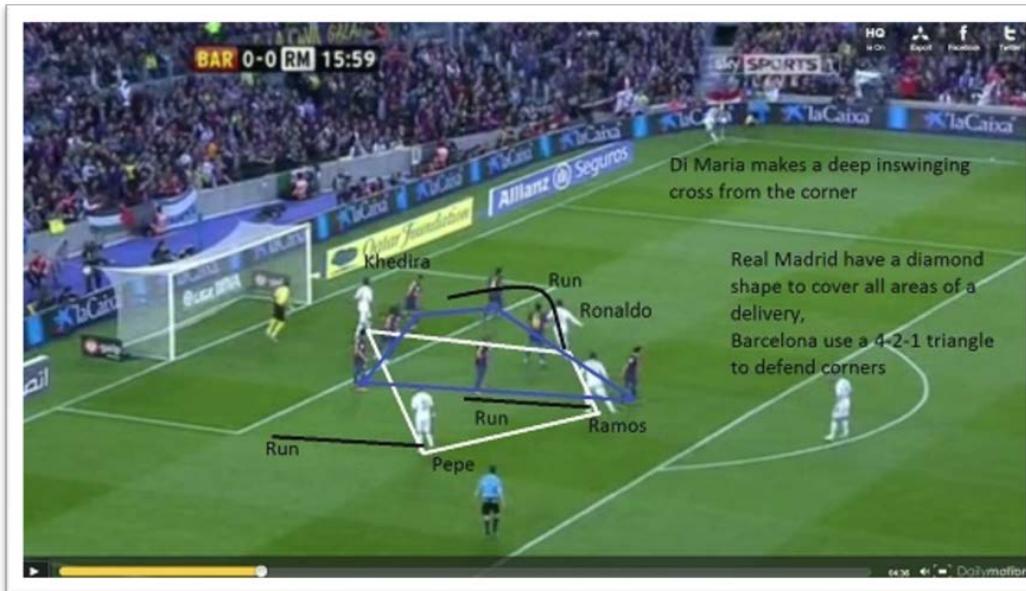
Benzema – Press the back 4 from goal kicks and lead the frontal pressing. Make penetrating runs in transition to stretch the defence on counter attack

Barcelona – No striker system

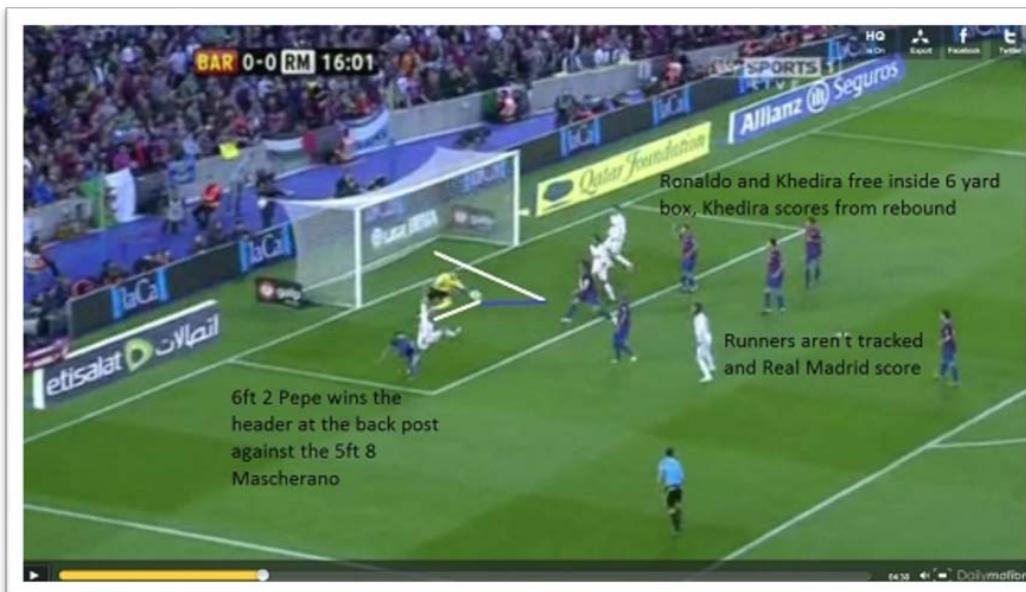


In a no striker system, you rely on wide-central runs, and runs from midfield with and without the ball. Here, Iniesta has no central striker to find with a pass, so Tello is his only option. Tello knows this and arcs a run inside. Iniesta plays the perfect pass and Tello arrives inside the box. Tello is unfortunately offside as Real Madrid are very organised defensively and this stops a chance to score for Tello, despite Iniesta's excellent pass.

Real Madrid 1st goal – Sami Khedira scores from a corner kick



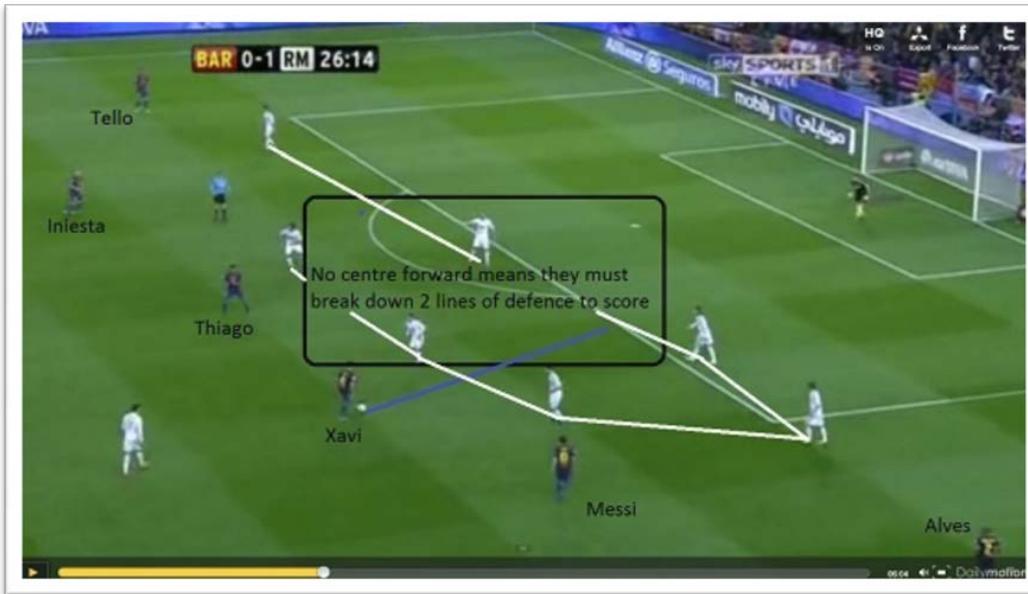
As Most of Real Madrid's team is over 6 feet tall, and Barcelona only have Busquets who is over 6 feet tall, Real Madrid will logically have an advantage here, in the preceding 2 corners, Ronaldo almost scored from a header, and Pepe had a header over the bar from 10 yards. Real Madrid knew this was an easy way to have a chance to score and it was no surprise when they did score from a corner. They had 4 forward against 8 Barcelona players.



As Pepe wins the header, Valdes makes a save, but Khedira and Ronaldo have both lost their markers, they are left inside the 6 yard box alone. Khedira reacts quickly to knock

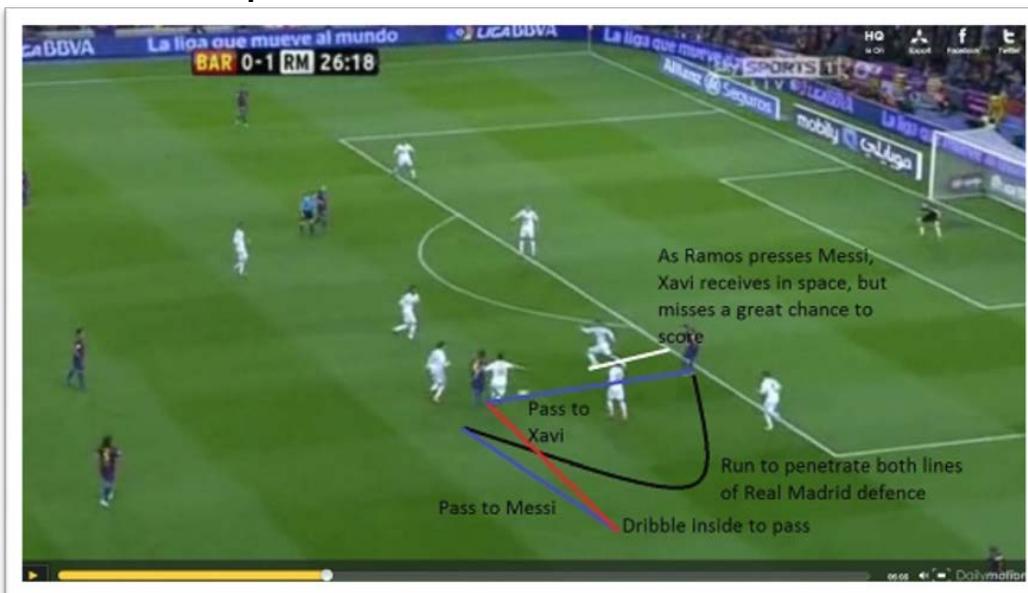
the ball over the line for an early Real Madrid lead, from a part of their game plan – exploit corners.

Barcelona – No striker system



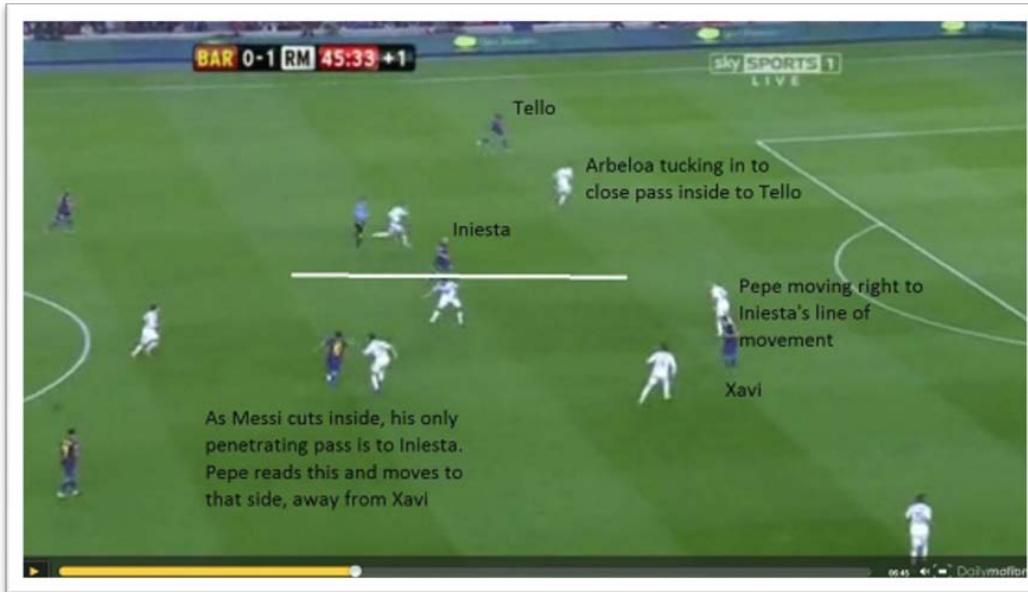
As Xavi receives here, Barcelona have 6 players arced around the box. They hope that Real Madrid will break out of formation and a space will appear. After a few passes, Xavi decides to instigate one of their pre-planned patterns for having "4 in a line" (it's a futsal formation that is very effective when a player dribbles to commit an opponent, and the runner uses the space to receive in. (See practice drill 1)

Messi finds Xavi in space



Xavi passes wide and loops round Messi, between Coentrao and Ramos. Ramos is lured out of position as Messi cuts away from Alonso, which leaves the space for Xavi to receive a pass from Messi. Xavi's movement speed and Messi's timing, weight and accuracy of the pass is crucial to creating this chance. Xavi should score, but doesn't.

Barcelona – No striker system – Real Madrid - Making play predictable – Good defending

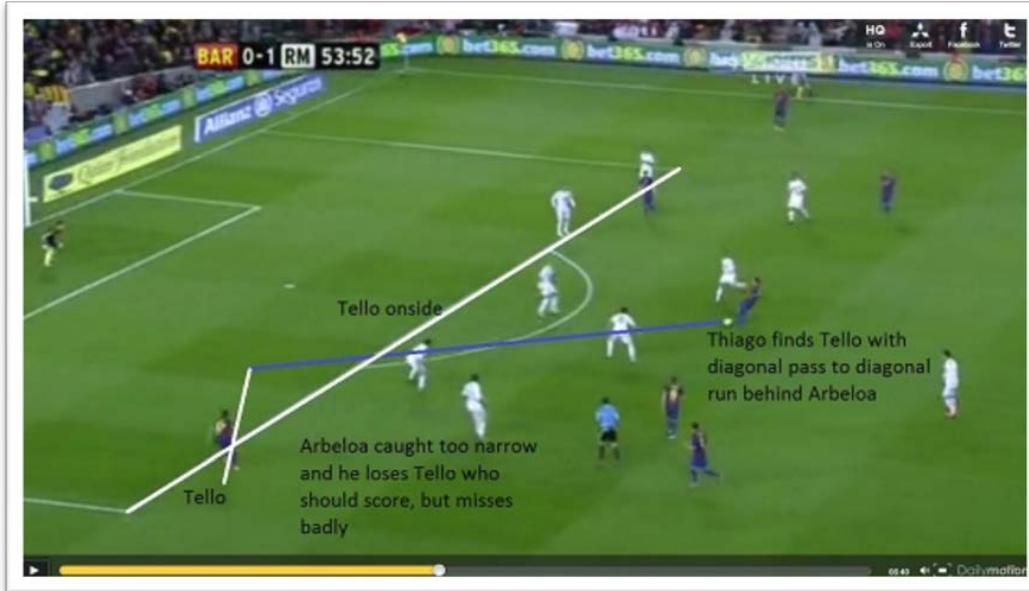


Messi receives and cuts inside with the ball, Alonso is in close proximity and forces him wide. Pepe marked Xavi after he made the burst forward again from midfield, but as he knows Messi can't find him from here, he finds another run to pick up – Iniesta's. He shifts right and discourages Messi from passing inside the space to Iniesta. Tello is on the far side making the diagonal run, but good defending from Arbeloa stops this pass behind the defence.



As the ball reaches Tello, Real Madrid know what to expect – cut inside, and a final shot or pass to shoot, with the right foot. Khedira covers inside and helps force play onto Tello's weaker left foot. Tello knocks the ball too far and it goes out for a goal kick. Real Madrid made this easy by stopping the passes they know Barcelona use, and let them pass in front of the defence to a player they know they can deal with in a 2v1.

Barcelona – Exploiting space in the defence



The good thing about playing with no set striker, is that attackers have freedom to move wherever they like, and if all factors are timed correct – the run, the pass – and all technical points are correct – the weight of pass, the angle of the run – a chance can

appear from very little. Here, Arbeloa is caught too narrow and Thiago plays a great pass between Pepe and Arbeloa, with Tello able to run onside. Unfortunately, Tello loses composure, and his technique, and the ball sails harmlessly well away from the goal after his 1st time shot.

Barcelona change formation – 4-3-3-0 to 4-2-3-1



As we can see, Barcelona has the same system as Real Madrid, 4-2-3-1. Alexis must offer length and penetration, creating space for Messi to receive from Thiago and Iniesta in midfield. This should mean that Messi can run from deep with options ahead of him to pass to, behind the back 4 of Real Madrid, and offer more scoring chances.

The reason they changed formation was that they were far too predictable, as Real Madrid knew most of their patterns of play, frequent tendencies and runs the players

would make from certain areas. Pep Guardiola doesn't use the 4-2-3-1 very often so this was a bit of a surprise for Real Madrid to contend with.

Alexis the target man



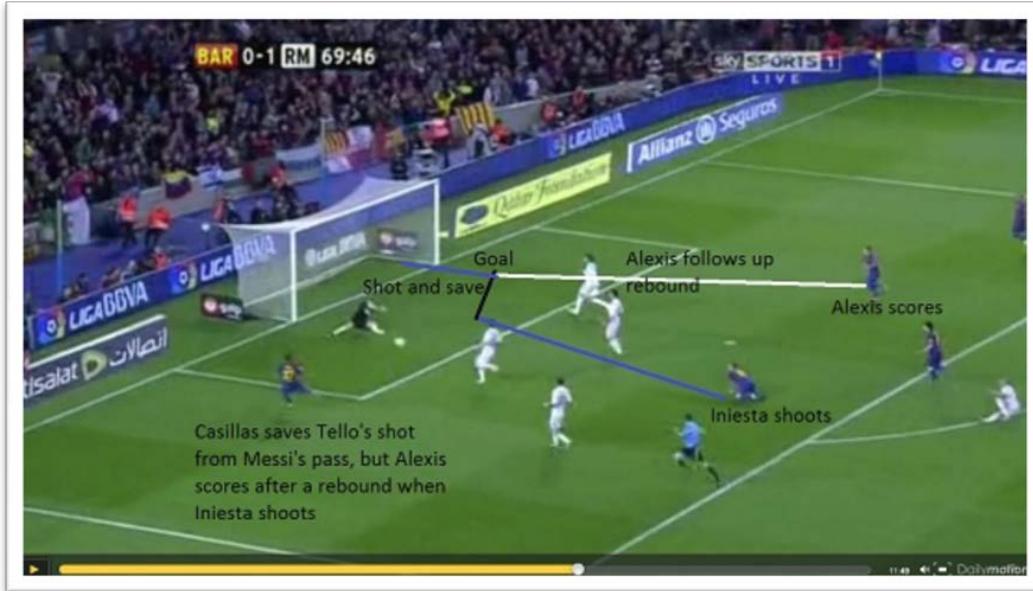
Alexis receives a long pass from Valdes from a goal kick. He plays with Ramos tight to his back and holds up play well. He releases a pass to Iniesta and this starts the attack.

Messi finds space with support all around



As Iniesta receives with time and space, he passes to Messi, as if he beats his man, there is lots of space behind Alonso. If he loses the ball, there are supporting players able to press quickly to win the ball back. Messi beats Alonso and has supporting runs left and right, with Tello on the far side who will be left alone. Alexis occupies Pepe and offers a pass behind the defence to the right with a diagonal run behind Ramos as he presses Messi.

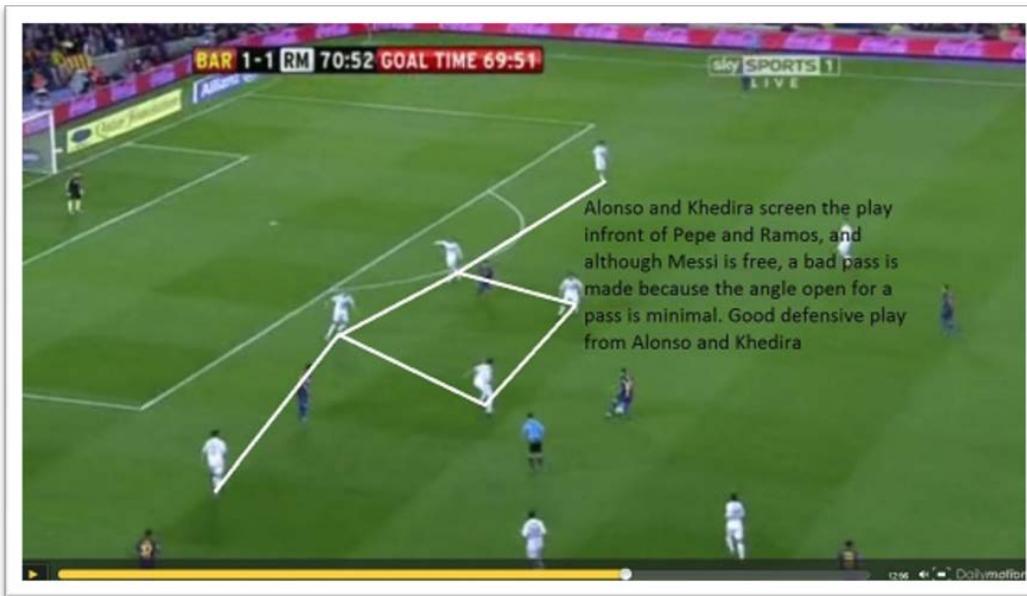
Alexis Scores 1-1



Within 90 seconds of bringing on Alexis Sanchez ad changing formation to occupy the defence and allow more length to the attack, Barcelona score, from the substitute. The goal comes from Alexis being able to hold up play and Messi having a player in front of him who occupies the defence, taking away one opponent who may press the ball, creating space elsewhere as Messi advances towards the goal.

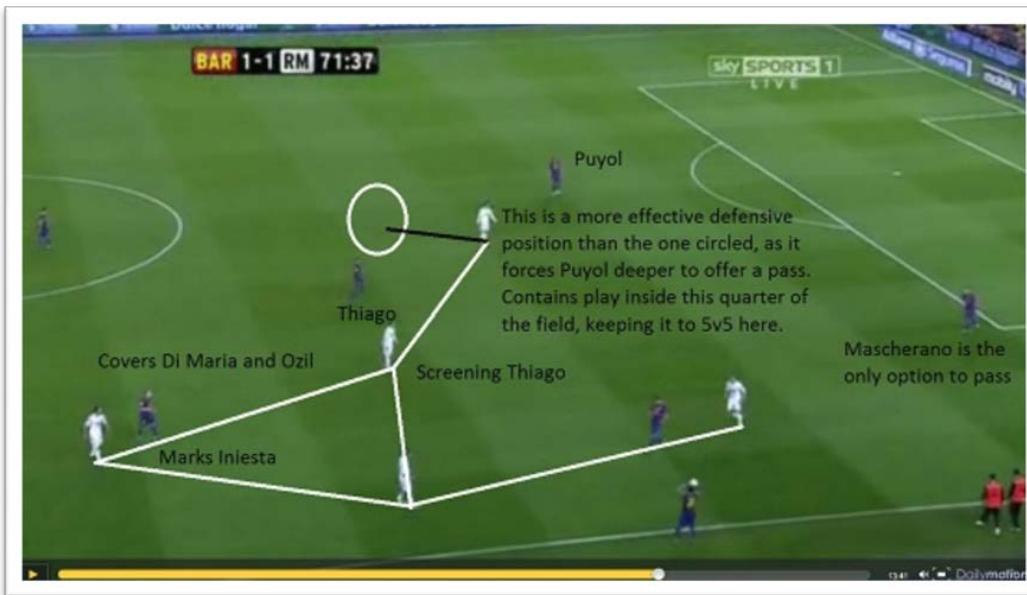
Real Madrid's great game plan – How they countered Barcelona's game plan

Frontal Screening



As Iniesta cuts inside, Messi and Alexis have both been screened by Alonso and Khedira. Although Messi is free of any opponents, the passing angle is minimal and the ball is lost. Khedira and Alonso do well here to stop the passes into feet and show the effectiveness of frontal screening to stop an attack progressing.

Real Madrid – High Pressure



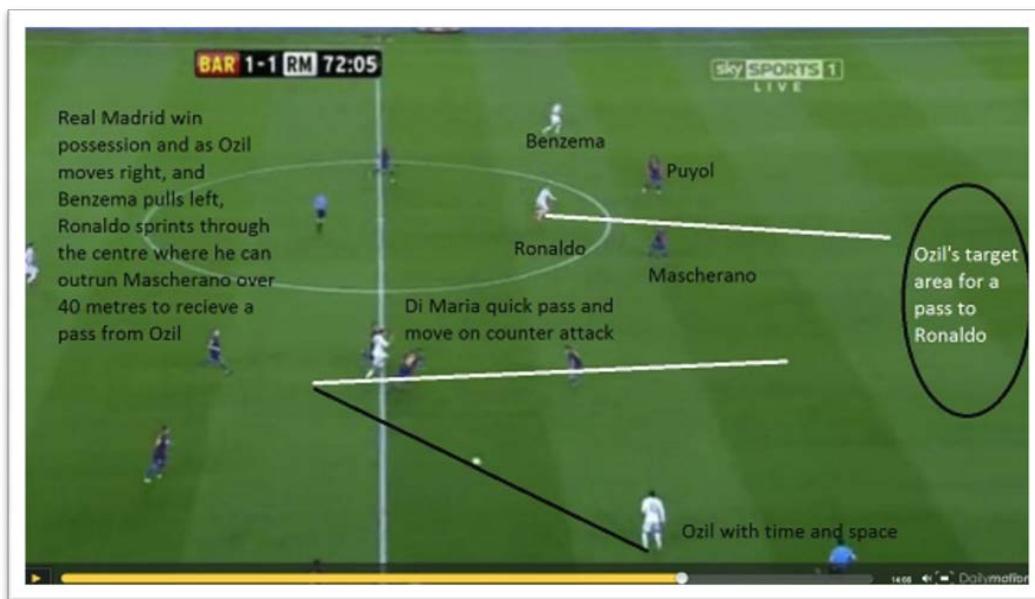
Real Madrid don't want to withdraw and allow Barcelona to have possession. They want to push high and win the ball back quickly, or if they don't, force Barcelona to earn their space in the centre of the field.

Ronaldo have moved forward ahead of his midfield line for 2 reasons: to cover the pass to Puyol – forcing him deeper to offer a pass, and also to show the play inside back toward where it came from, effectively making the game 5v5 inside 1 quarter of the field.

Thiago is screened by Ozil, Benzema marks Busquets – he stands on the back side of him as there's a good chance Busquets could receive with Benzema on the other side, and still be able to use the ball effectively to pass backwards to start building the attack. He is stopping Busquets from receiving standing on this side.

Alonso marks Iniesta and covers Di Maria, so if Iniesta does receive, he can be double pressed, front and back by Alonso and Di Maria.

Ronaldo Scores the winner – Real Madrid Counter Attack

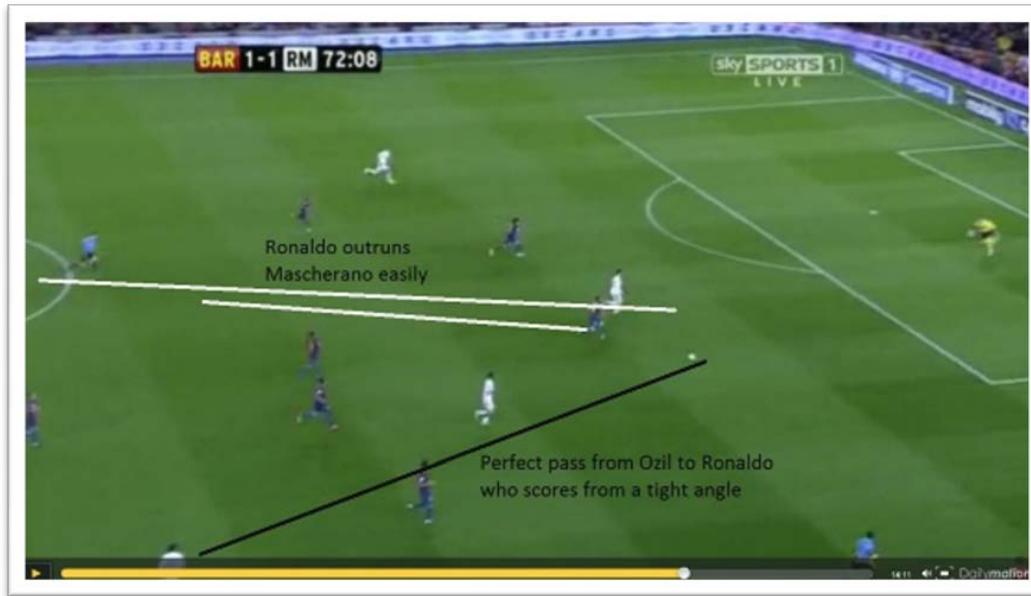


Real Madrid put good pressure on Barcelona, and as a result, they win the ball around 30 yards from goal, with Barcelona players pushing forward. As Di Maria receives, one of Real Madrid's patterns is: Di Maria cuts onto his left foot, and Ronaldo runs central for Benzema to pull wide. Benzema receives the long diagonal pass in space as the defence are occupied with Ronaldo. He will receive and look to score, or pass across goal for a tap in.

Ozil knows this is a pattern, but also knows that if he pulls wide, with the pressure on Di Maria by 2 opponents, he may use the simple pass right to Ozil.

Ozil knows the run from Ronaldo into the centre will be made and he plays a well-executed pass into the target space for Ronaldo to run onto, confident he can beat Mascherano for pace behind the line.

Ronaldo receives in space to score the winner! 2-1



Ronaldo outruns Mascherano with ease and uses the perfect pass to edge the ball away from Valdes and shoots into an empty net for 2-1 and to unofficially clinch the league title from Barcelona.

Real Madrid defensive shape – Goal Kick passed to left side of defence to start the attack



Blocking passing lanes from the front

As we can see from the diagram, as Ronaldo on the left presses Mascherano; the ball is passed across the defence. Ronaldo stays where he pressed, stopping the pass back across the defence from Puyol to Mascherano without forcing Mascherano deeper.

Benzema has blocked the passing lane to Xavi, Di Maria to Iniesta, Arbeloa to Tello and Ozil to Busquets. Alonso can break out of position to press Xavi if the pass is played into him from Adriano.

Messi and Alves are able to receive a long pass but Barcelona tend not to use this type of pass often.

In the previous game, Real Madrid pressed then dropped back into shape, and after around an hour, the front 4 were exhausted from pressing as the ball was passed, then as they reached the player in possession, Valdes in the Barcelona goal received a pass. The Real Madrid players were pressing, dropping into shape, pressing, then dropping back, doing 2 x 15 yard sprints each time the ball was passed! This game they were much more intelligent in their pressing and their energy management as a result. More energy saved for quick counter attack sprints.

Roles:

Ronaldo/ Di Maria – press the wide defender and stay in that position after the ball is played. Have a diagonal line across the field to block off as many passing lanes into the centre as possible.

Benzema – Hold position in the centre, and screen the passing lane to Busquets.

Ozil – Mark Busquets and ensure that he can't receive easy possession from the defence.

Alonso and Khedira – play tight and mark closely any players who enter this zone

Arbeloa – Screen the pass down the line into Tello and play in a diagonal line with Alonso, Khedira and himself, like the Ronaldo, Benzema and Di Maria line.

Coentrao, Ramos and Pepe – Cover the space behind the midfield and full back, and ensure that if the lines are penetrated, drop off to delay the attack. Leave minimal space between the defensive and midfield lines

Playing on the counter attack



The Yellow attack have a 3v2 advantage. The Yellows start with the ball, and attack at pace, looking to use their 1 man advantage.

The Black defence have 3 recovering defenders, while the yellow have one deep supporting attacker.

Coaching Points:

- Use the 3v2 advantage as early as possible
- Drive at the defence if they drop off and delay
- Pass into a team mate in space if the defence press
- Don't slow the attack down and allow the defence to delay and recover
- Look for penetration into an attacker with time to settle and score
- Be decisive!

Counter Attacking Scenario – wide position overload



Counter Attack Scenario.

The ball is won in midfield, and a player has moved wide to offer the pass into feet, with time and space available.

The full back (1) recognises he can overlap the player in possession to make a 2v1 on the pressing full back. This may deter him from pressing too close.

The central attacker (2) knows that a quick pass behind the defence may be available, so he makes a blindside run into the space.

The far side attacker (3) knows that if the defence tuck in as they should, a long diagonal pass can be used for him to receive on the far side, close to the goal away from pressure.

The player in possession must find the correct pass in each scenario, based on where his team mates are, pressing from opponents, recovering players and movement of the attackers, are they onside or offside? Is the passing angle open or closed? Does he have the ability to pass the correct weight and direction for 1, 2 or 3?

If no passes are on, he could run with the ball inside, or outside the nearest opponent. If they drop off, what is the new puzzle to solve?

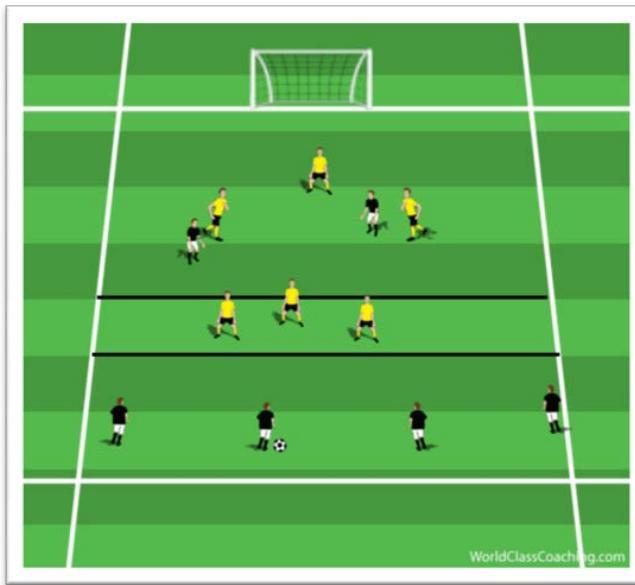
Give the defence different puzzle's to solve within the scenario after a few tries at this one –

- Will the defence drop off deep?
- Will they play offside?
- Will the central midfielder move over to press as the full back drops off?
- Will they double up

Could the attack have different scenarios?

- Full back receives and starts the attack
- Pass into nearest central player
- Long pass over the top

Frontal Screening Practice



The Yellow team defend against the blacks.

3 Yellows play in a 5 yards deep by 20 yards wide area. They move to cut off passing lanes by screening the front of the 2 attackers in the zone behind them, who play against 3 yellow defenders. The defence will normally play man-man marking with 1 spare player. If the attack receive, they should try to score.

The players must all stay inside their assigned zones.

Coaching Points:

- The 3 screening players must listen to communication from the defence on where to shift and screen the passing lanes.
- Move laterally and deep as a unit to stop gaps appearing between the screening players
- Relevant body and foot position in relation to the ball, team mates behind and passing lanes

- Force play wide by playing mainly central, if the ball is passed through the centre of the screening zone, there has been a problem with communication or the unit movement
- Be aware of 1st time passes into the attack

Frontal Screening and Covering – Game Scenario 4-2-3-1



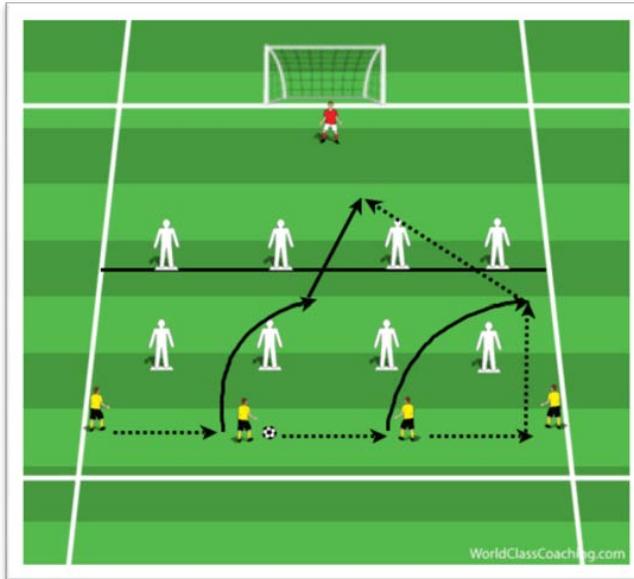
In this 11v11 match, the role of the screening players – Players A and B – is to stop numbers 9 and 10 from receiving passes to feet from any of their team mates. Players 9 and 10 can only play within the box marked out, or the area behind it closest to the goal. They, as well as A and B must not come any deeper/further out than the line marked out.

This is to simulate blocking passes into feet from a frontal position.

Coaching Points:

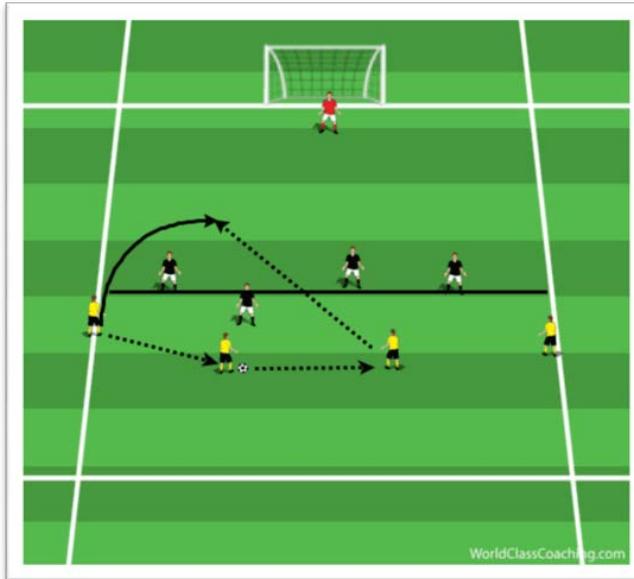
- Communication between defensive players and screening players, example, "Left shoulder dropping deep", "Drop off and shift right"
- Awareness of distances between the 2 screening players
- Body shape and position between the ball and numbers 9 or 10
- Communication between screening players who cover the line of players in front of them who press the ball.
- Players in the positions to press the back 4 and midfield should look to screen passes into the feet if the player sneaks in behind them.

Barcelona 4 in a line pattern of play – Wide wall players



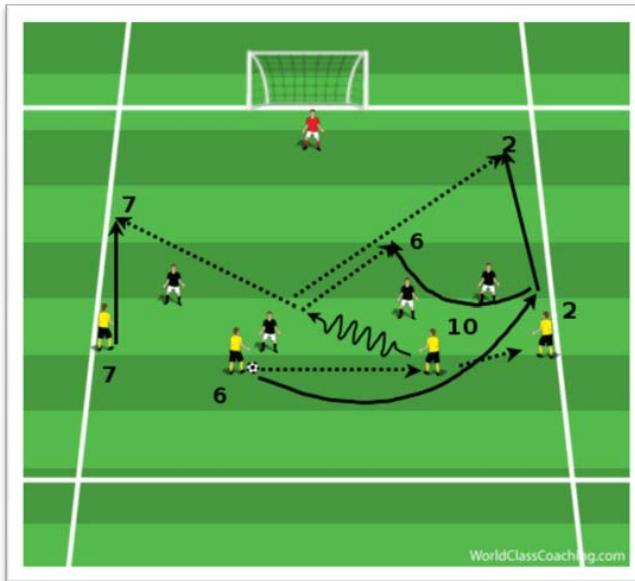
4 players start in a line in front of the defence. The idea is to pass to the side and draw out an opponent, to use this space effectively, the player will arc a run behind the defender and 'circle' him. The wide players are wall players for the central players to make runs in the initial phase of the practise.

Barcelona 4 in a line pattern of play – Wide to Centre runs



The wide players look to receive from a diagonal pass. The 2nd receiver knows what will happen and sets body shape to receive in the centre to find the diagonal pass into the wide players stride, behind the defensive line.

Barcelona 4 in a line pattern of play – Wide player cuts inside to penetrate



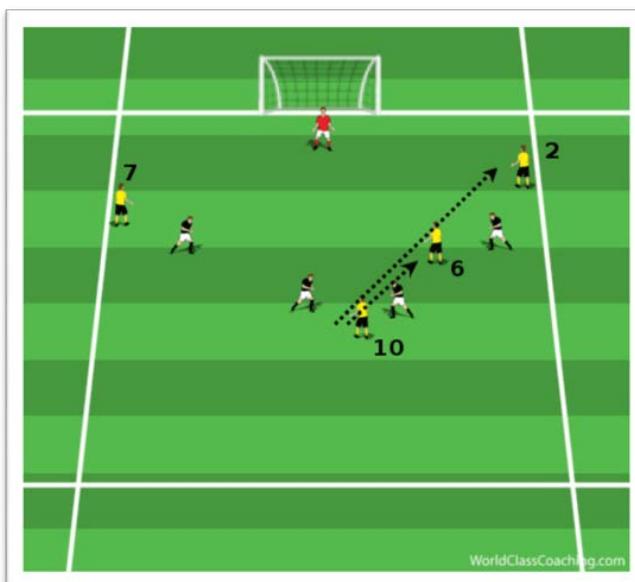
Players 7, 6, 10 and 2 make a line of 4, 8 yards in front of the defence.

The ball is passed from 7 to 6 to 10. 7 stay's until number 10 cuts inside.

As 6 overlaps, 10 cuts inside and 7 bursts into a sprint behind his closest opponent. 6 will make a 2nd run centrally as 10 cuts inside.

As 10 protects the ball when he cuts inside, he should be able to find one of the passes wide to the right or left – to 2 in the right corner or 7 in the left corner.

If the pass to 6 is available, it must be a delicate one for him to receive and shoot.



As we can see, 2 should be free to receive with the option for him to pass to the back post for 7 to score, or cut back for 6 to score, or pass to 7.

6 Can receive and score or pass away from the goalkeeper for a tap in.
In this example, 7 cannot receive as the defender to the left has pressed the ball and the passing lane becomes slightly too narrow for a left footed pass, but the space to the right for a left footed pass is available to be used.

Juventus' amazing season

On 29th April 2012, Juventus had played 34 games in the league, and were still undefeated. Top of the league with an away game against Novara, they knew that anything less than 1 point would allow AC Milan back to the top of the league. Against Novara, they showed many of the aspects as to why they were top of the league and undefeated.

In the month of April – traditionally the make or break time for clubs winning leagues – they played 6 matches, conceding 1 (a 2-1 win against Lazio), with other results at home – 3-0 against Napoli, 4-0 against Roma, away results – a 2-0 win against Palermo, 1-0 win against Cesena and a 4-0 win against Novara. Impressive results from a team looking unbeatable all season.

Reasons why they are so difficult to beat:

- No chance of letting the opposition be a real threat to Buffon in the Juventus goal
- Lots of players getting into the opposition penalty box in each attack
- Variety of attacking options
- Following up loose balls around the box to shoot
- Retaining possession well in midfield
- Winning almost every tackle, and winning the 2nd ball if it went loose
- A consistent defence and midfield selection, breeding confidence and familiarity

Over the course of the season, they have shown many facets to their game under Antonio Conte – playing various formations with various starting line ups, notably 4-2-4, 4-4-1-1, 3-5-2 and 4-3-3. Their ability to change tactics and line ups – mainly with different starting strikers – gives them a great advantage over the opponent, as the opponent may have set up for 1 Juventus line up and formation, and they either start with and change the line up or formation, or do it quickly during the match. This allows them to be able to find ways to beat the opposition, but in many cases, avoid them losing a match.

Juventus attacking threats – Set Pieces, Long Passes, Counter Attacks, Intricate Play, Patient Play, Long Shots

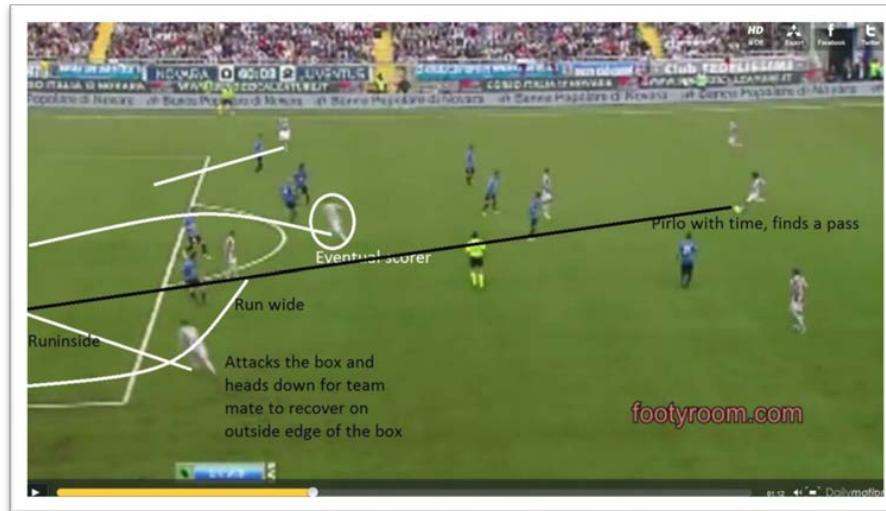
In the summer, they recruited Andrea Pirlo from AC Milan on a free transfer. Pirlo has won almost everything there is to win while at AC Milan and fancied a new challenge with Juventus. He has added a calm influence in midfield, and assurance they will keep the ball, creativity and the threat of scoring or creating from set pieces. Almost every other game Juventus has scored from a set piece this season and it has become one of their main threats with Pirlo in the team.

Set Piece - Vucinic goal against Novara

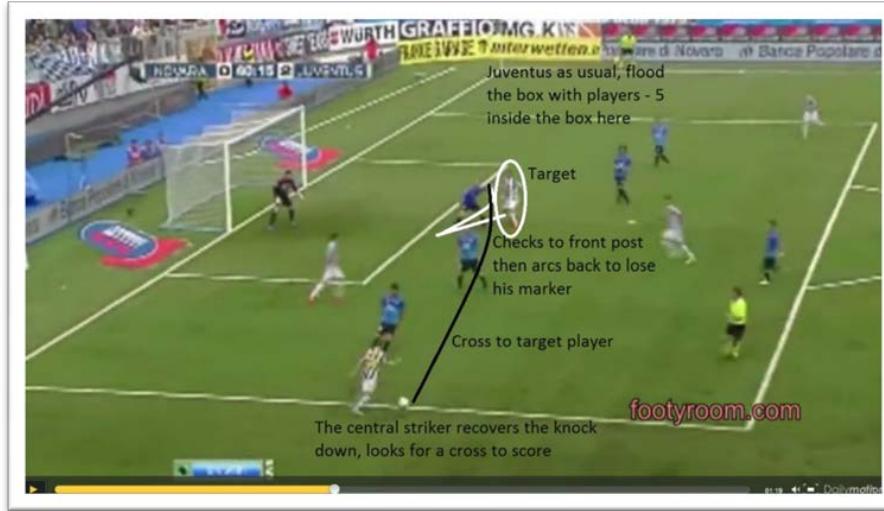


Juventus place 4 players around the centre of the box, 18 yards out. 3 will run across the defenders and attack the line of the delivery Pirlo will use, 1 will attack the same line at the back post. Most zones are covered by attacking runs – front, centre front, centre, and back post. The ball arrives at Vucinic who volleys into the near post top corner for 1-0.

Direct passes – Borriello goal against Novara



Pirlo receives with too much space in a position where he can find a pass behind the defence. There is no pressure on the ball. Juventus have a diamond attack set up. Pirlo plays a diagonal pass behind the defence which Vucinic reaches and heads back. The striker has pulled wide and receives the knock down from Vucinic.

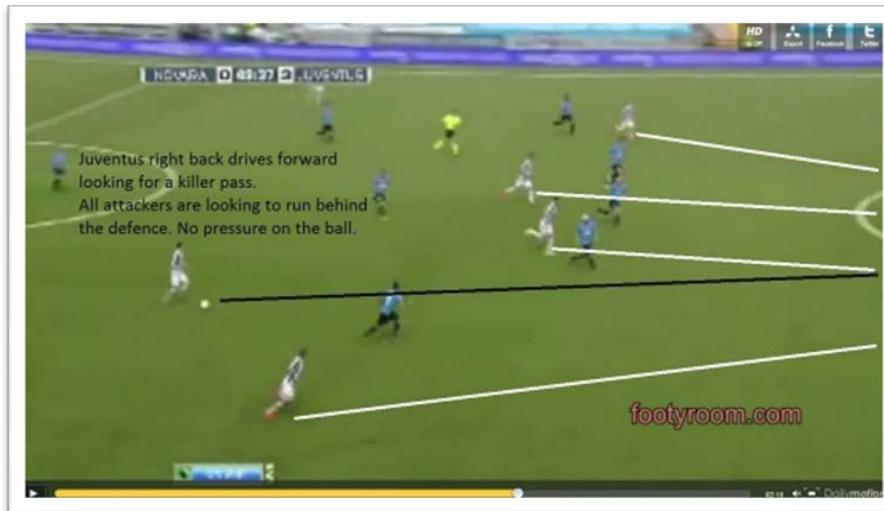


The central striker sets the ball onto his right foot and looks for a target inside the box – Borriello. Borriello checks to the front post but quickly arcs away so he can receive in space. Note Juventus now have 5 players inside the box.



Borriello has lost his marker and receives a perfect cross to score from 6 yards out in the centre of the goal.

Counter Attacking – Vidal goal against Novara

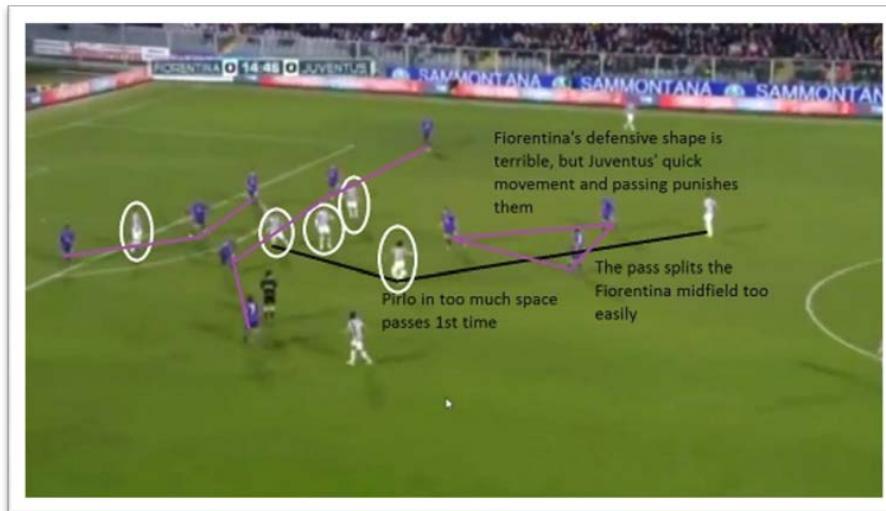


Leichsteiner drives into the space on the counter attack. Novara try to stall the attack by all retreating and trying to leave little space behind the defence, but Leichsteiner finds the pass early and this penetrates the defence. Note all Juventus players body shape – they all rush forward to get behind the defence and follow the play up.

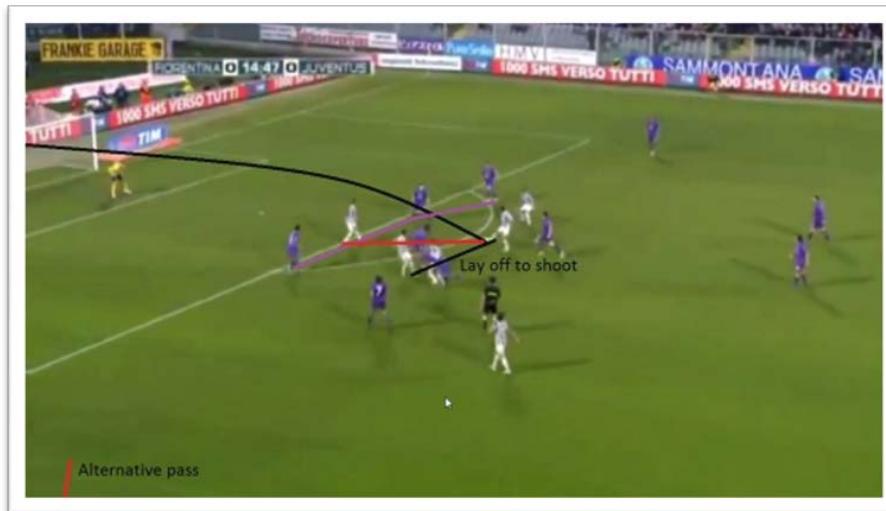


As Vucinic reaches the pass, the goalkeeper makes a good save. Vidal however, has followed up the shot and he receives the loose ball, and calmly passes it into the goal. Had Vidal's chance at shooting been obstructed, a pass to Borriello in the centre could've been available to use and Borriello could've had a tap in.

Intricate Play – Vucinic goal against Fiorentina

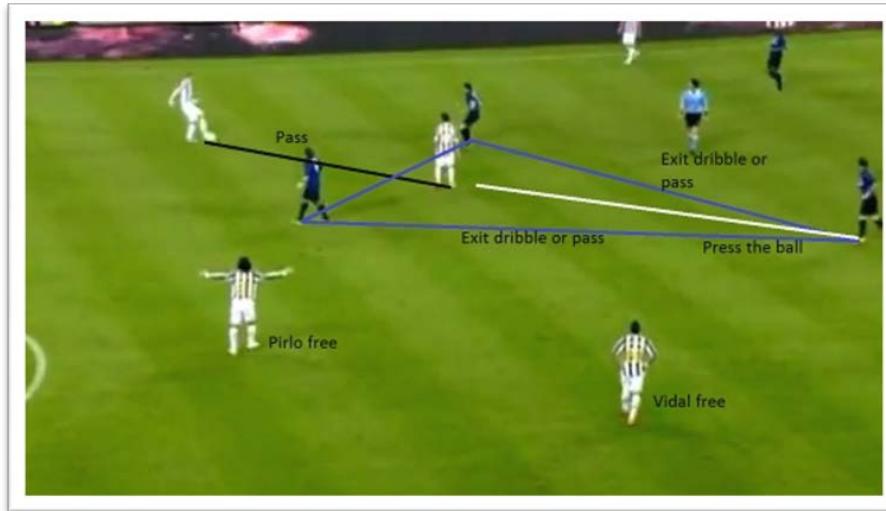


Fiorentina have a 3-5-2 formation and as the ball is passed back to Marchisio, the defence fail to reset well-enough, and this means there are spaces available to punish Fiorentina if Juventus are quick and intricate between the lines. Pirlo receives a pass between 2 Fiorentina players and although he has time, he knows he can bump a 1st time pass into a zone of 3 Juventus players, who can then decide what to do against the Fiorentina back 3.

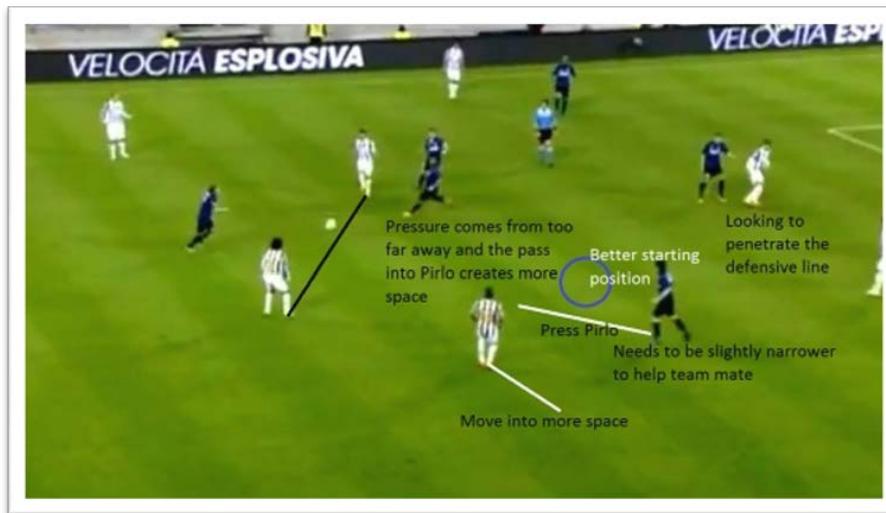


Quagliarella receives the 1st time pass and he uses a 1st time pass into Vucinic who is also in space, 3 yards in front of the defence. He takes a touch and has 2 options – shoot or use the player between 2 opponents. He elects to arc the ball into the goalkeepers right side top corner and Juventus score a well-constructed opening goal. He could've taken a touch and slipped a little pass (or played it 1st time) into the feet of his team mate on the edge of the box and this could also have resulted in a goal for Juventus. Great intricate play!

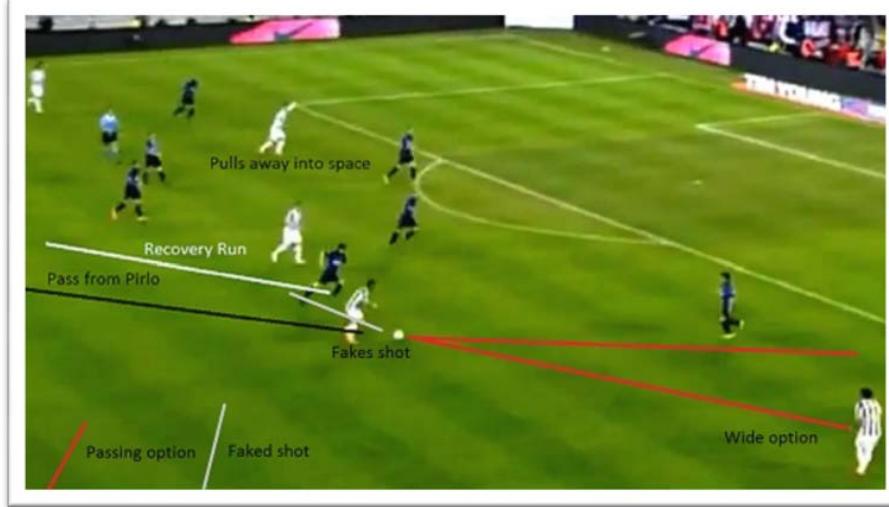
Patient Play – Del Piero goal against Inter Milan



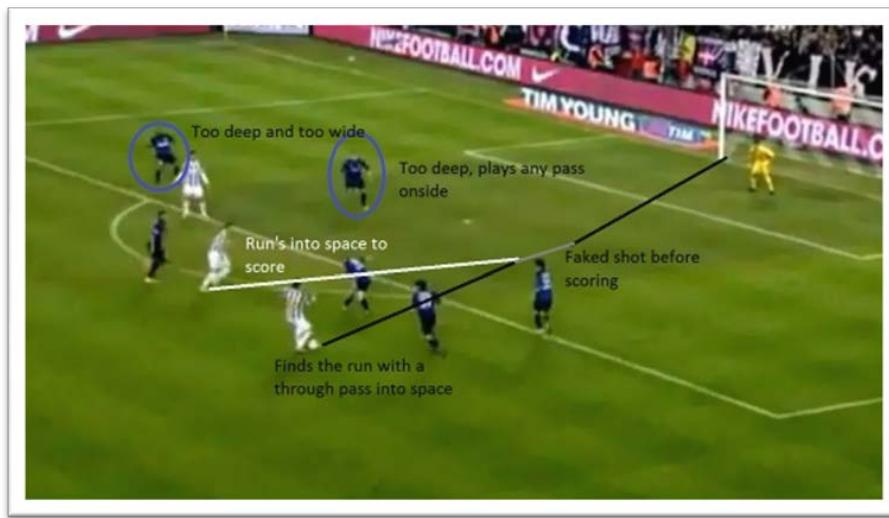
Inter Milan allow Chiellini to find an easy pass into Marchisio. As the Inter defensive triangle is too large, he has 2 exit points, to the left or to the right. He chooses the right exit as he turns as Pirlo and Vidal are in space.



As Marchisio is pressed, Alvarez is a couple of yards too wide, and this means he can't press Pirlo effectively. If he does press, Pirlo can pass to Vidal, if he doesn't, Pirlo can likely find the pass behind the defence. Alvarez decides to press the ball and Vidal starts to move wide of Alvarez, giving him more time and space when he receives.

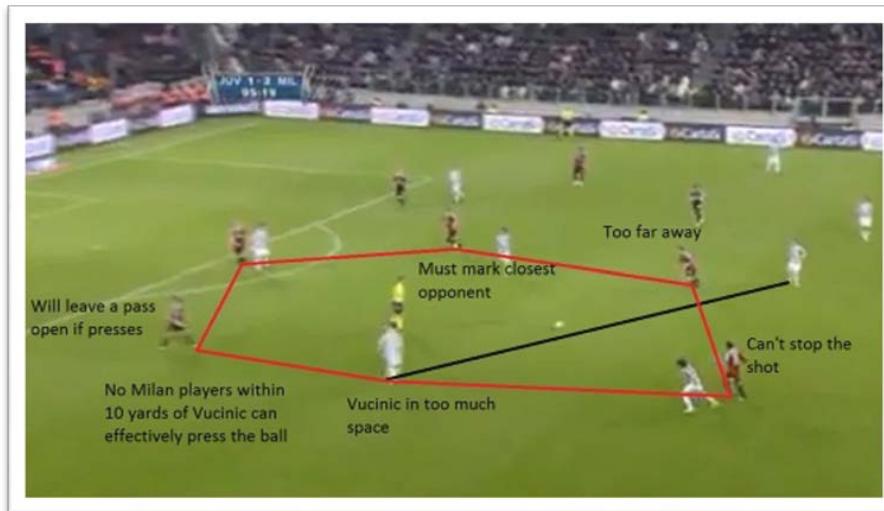


Alvarez presses Pirlo, then quickly turns and sprints over to Vidal, who is shaped for a long range shot. Alvarez is moving so quick that a faked shot may take him out of the game and give Vidal space to find a pass in a different area. Vidal has a passing option wide which seems obvious to defend against, but creates a 1v1 in a wide area.

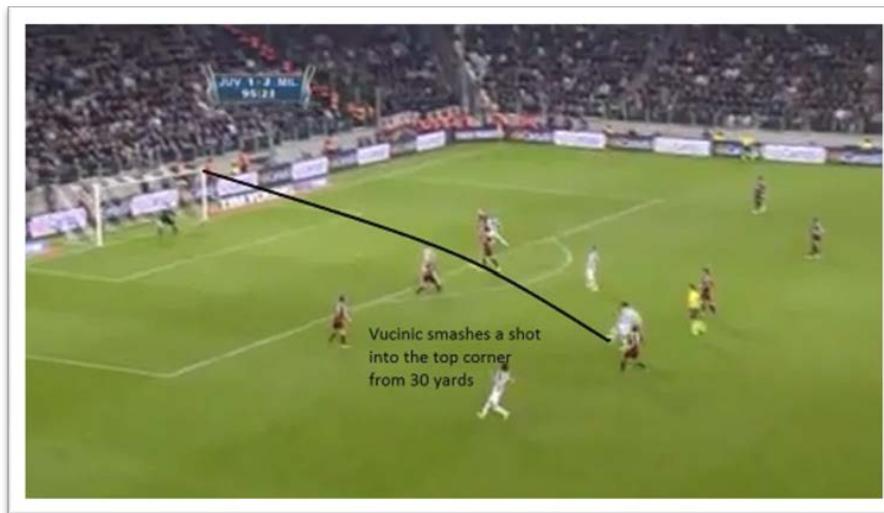


Vidal decides to fake his shot and cut inside. He dribbles a few yards forward and as Samuel moves out to the ball, Del Piero spots the space, as does Vidal. Vidal weights the pass perfectly between the defenders, Del Piero fakes a shot and then as Julio Cesar stalls, he slips the shot into the far corner. Note that Inter have 2 defenders well out of position nowhere near the ball and even if Del Piero moves too early, he would still be onside.

Long Range Shooting – Vucinic goal v AC Milan



Vucinic comes away from his wide left position and receives in space on the right of Milan's midfield diamond. As nobody is able to get close to him to press, he rolls it forward with his sole, sets his body shape and smashes a shot on goal from 30 yards

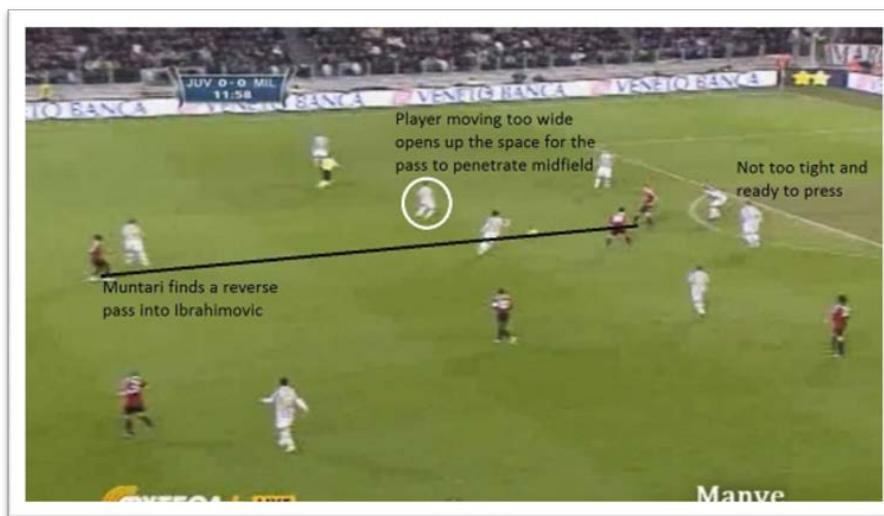


Vucinic's shot has a beautiful combination of power and accuracy, and Abbiati in the Milan goal can't get close to it. This makes it 3-2 Juventus on aggregate and they go through to the next round of the Coppa Italia.

Juventus Defensive Mentality – Shape, distance, timing and determination.



Juventus have a good shape on the side of the ball, with the closest player forcing play away from space. Juventus have a good midfield line with the passing lane into Ibrahimovic closed. The player circled would be the danger man if the ball reaches Ibrahimovic and he gains control of the ball.



As the central player of the midfield line moves too early and too wide, the pass penetrates the midfield line. Note that Chiellini has dropped off to allow him to judge the distance between him and Ibrahimovic, and time when he can make a tackle. He knows he can't go too tight with Ibrahimovic as he has such strength to hold him off and he has a touch to allow him to turn and shoot out of very little.



As we can see, Juventus have a wide variation of ways to win a match, and a great defensive mentality; they work hard all over the field to ensure that Buffon has little to do in the goal.

Juventus stats up to 29/4/12 – Source – www.Soccerway.com

Matches played – 35 - 21 wins, 14 draws, 0 losses. Points 77

Goals scored – 62,

Goals Conceded 18.

19 clean sheets.

Average goals per game: 1.77, Average Conceded 0.44

Average time of 1st goal scored – 38mins

Average time of 1st goal conceded 38mins (strange co-incidence!)

Failed to score 5 times

Biggest Victory 5-0

Manchester City v Manchester United - City use the overlap to create space to attack

Manchester United after 32 games of the season, were 8 points clear of Manchester City, but after a defeat to Wigan, and a 4-4 draw with Everton, they only took 1 point from a possible 6. Manchester City won their 2 games as United dropped points and it sets up an encounter where if United win, they go 6 points clear with 2 games left. City need to win to make sure their fate is in their own hands, a draw keeps the gap at 3 points with 2 games left, and a City win puts them top on goal difference.

In many big games, Manchester United have used a line up with a 4-5-1 formation, and rely on hard work to win the ball in midfield, allow quick support from midfield and early penetration from early passes behind the defence, or a combination with the central striker to find a runner behind the defence.

Manchester City have been playing a 4-2-3-1/4-4-2 all-out attack style this season, aided by having a good balance in midfield with Barry and Yaya Toure, and creativity and pace going forward. They also retain possession very well with the players they are able to use in tight spaces – Nasri, Silva, Aguero and Johnson.

Team Line ups for this match – City 4-2-2-2, United 4-5-1



Tactical considerations for City –

- They need to win to have the best chance of winning the league – must play to win
- They expect United to play to not lose and with a 4-5-1 shape

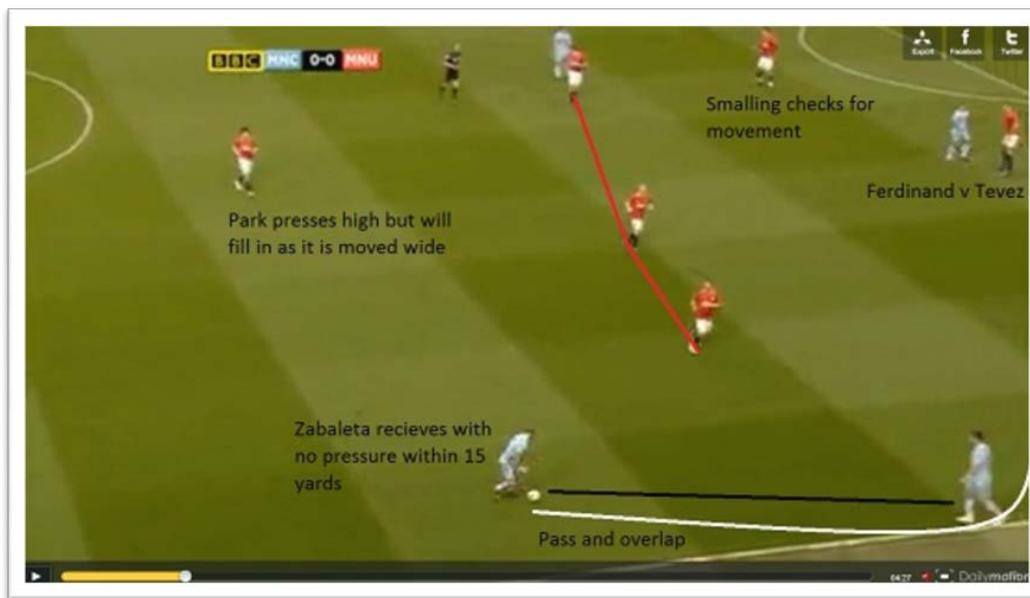
Tactical considerations for United –

- They need to not lose to stay top – make sure you don't concede early
- Use the space left by City's full backs pushing forward
- Support quickly on the counter attack

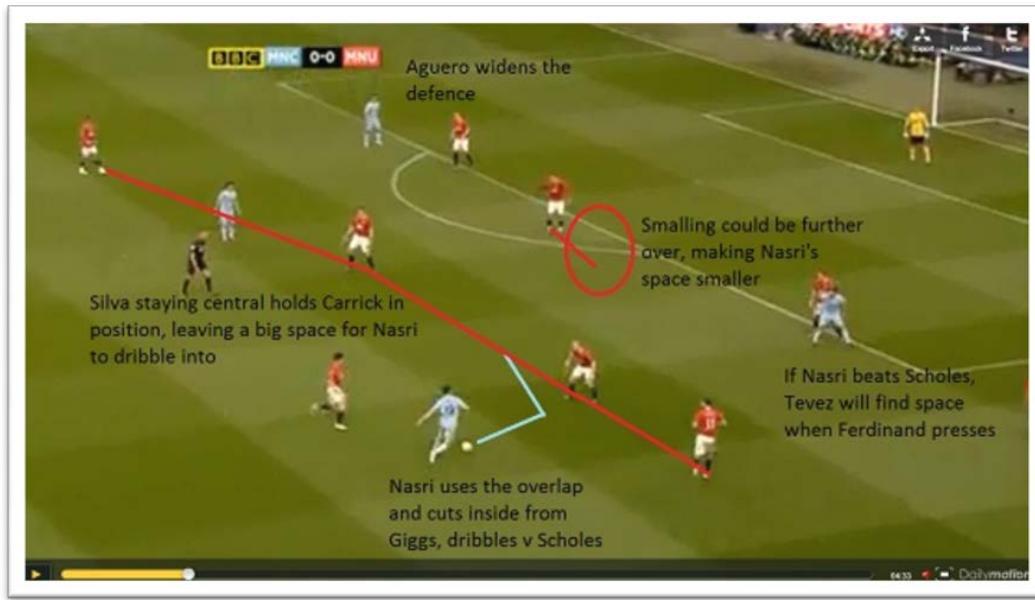
Problems for City: Playing with so many attacking players may result in having Rooney and Nani against Lescott and Kompany on a counter attack. It's a risky strategy. Also, United are playing a 3v2 in central midfield, and with no real option for crossing into the box (Aguero and Tevez v Ferdinand and Smalling), they will need to be intricate to break down the midfield centrally via dribbles and 1-2's, or play 1v1 with Nasri/Silva against Jones/Evra, where they could gain some success. If Clichy and Zabaleta overlap and make 2v1's, this could pay off very well around the box.

Problems for United: Playing very deep and on the counter attack requires pace and accuracy. Giggs and Scholes are the wrong side of 35, and lack pace to support. Carrick is not a player to race forward from midfield, and Park hasn't played from the start for 3 months. This could potentially stop any threat from the counter attack. Also, Nani and Giggs may need to support the full backs as Clichy and Zabaleta like to overlap when on the attack, leaving Rooney against both Kompany and Lescott.

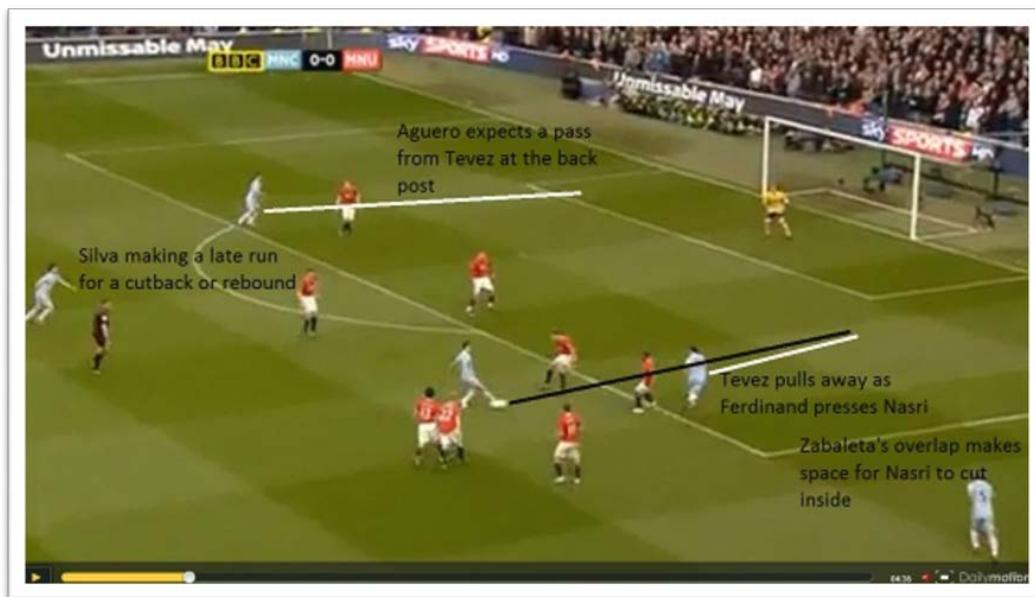
City using the overlap – Creating 2v1's



As Zabaleta receives from Kompany, he has a pass ahead of him to Nasri. Giggs is the closest United player but he is too far away to effectively press the ball. Evra the full back, is also too deep and too far away from the ball to defend effectively.

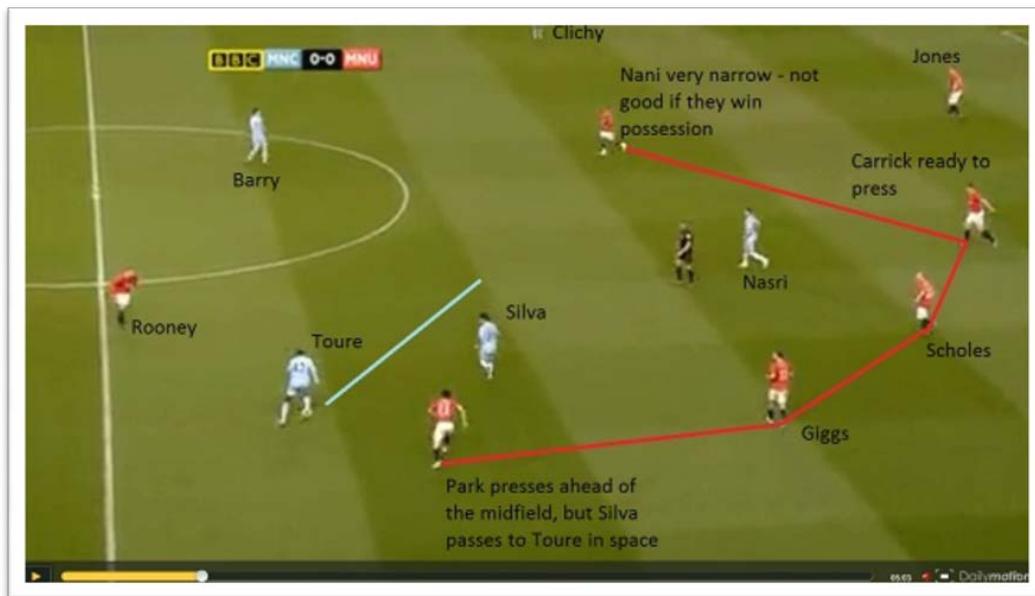


As Zabaleta overlaps Nasri, this pulls Evra wide. Nasri cuts inside away from Giggs and into Scholes. There is a large space behind Scholes if Nasri chooses to dribble (there's not really any other option). The space is available as Silva has held his position, and Carrick has decided to stay with him, leaving no cover close enough to Scholes. Smalling could also shift over a few yards and make the space for Nasri smaller to dribble into. Note Tevez and Ferdinand – if Nasri escapes Scholes, Tevez will be in space as Ferdinand will need to press the ball. Evra needs to tuck in quickly to make the space smaller for the pass to Tevez from Nasri.

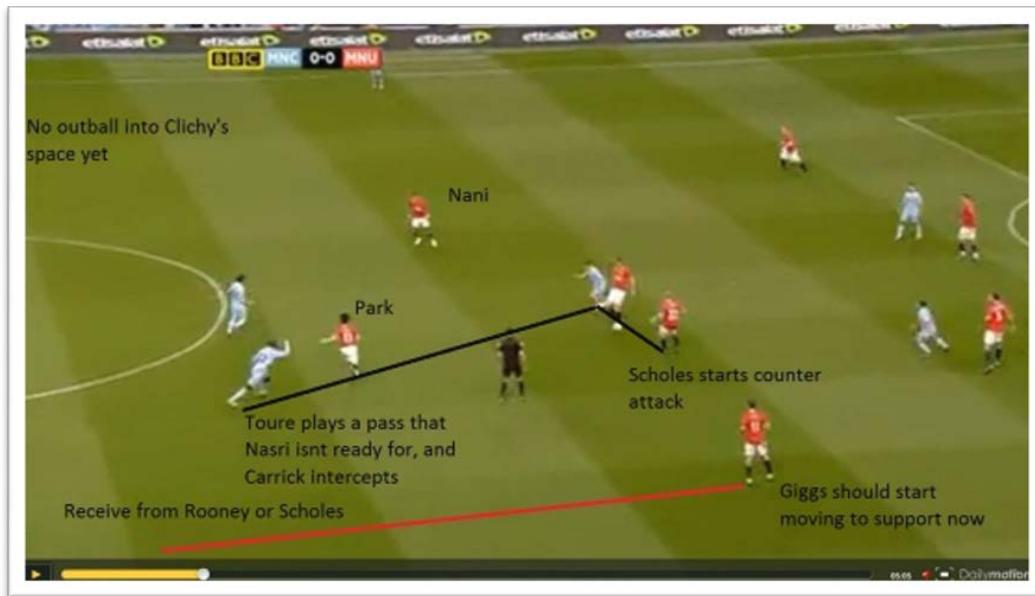


As Nasri escapes Scholes easily, he slips a pass into Tevez, who will be running onto the ball. Aguero has been keeping the defence wide in the whole phase of play and now becomes active – he expects a pass to the back post from Tevez. Unfortunately for City, as Tevez passes across goal, Jones tucks in and blocks it before it can reach Aguero for a tap in.

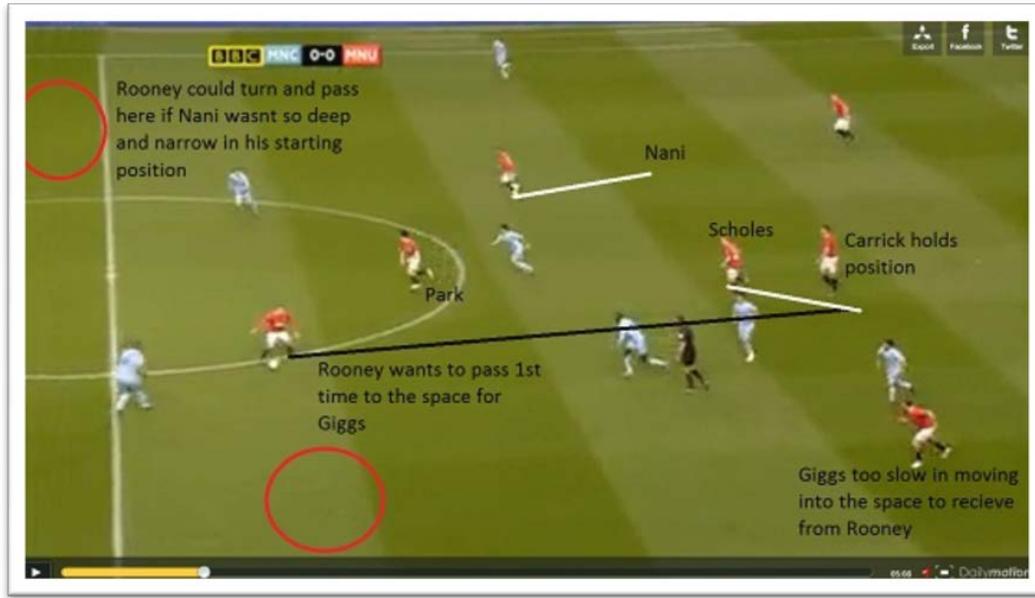
Man United on counter attack



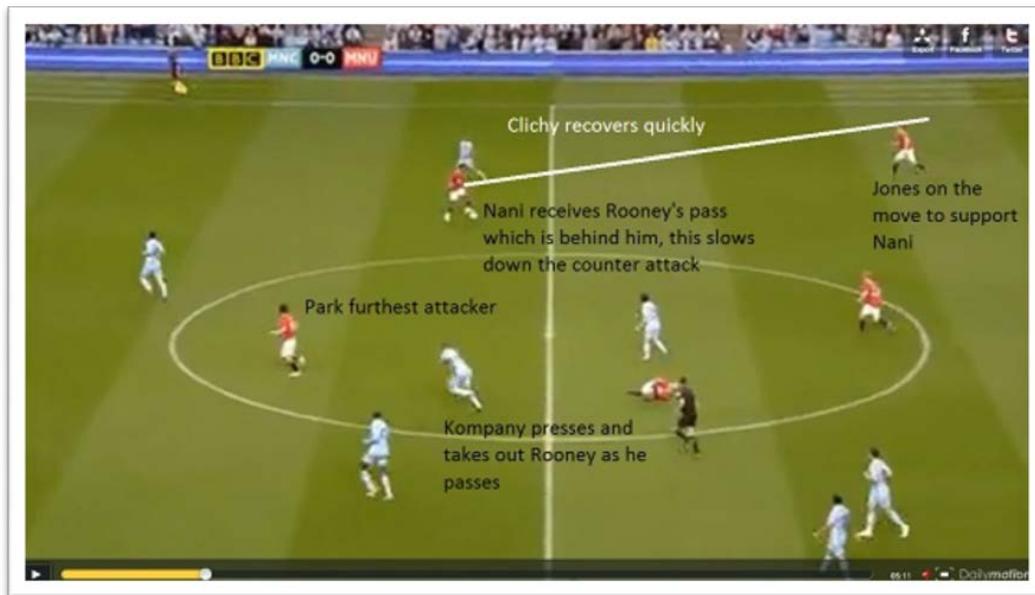
United have been playing deep, and as a consequence, it is hard to attack effectively without quick mental transitions to attack, good service forward, well-timed runs, decent starting positions to exploit space and an ability to find space and make good decisions which in possession. In this clip, Toure passes into Nasri as he is moving backwards. Carrick is ready to press.



As the ball is passed, Carrick intercepts and lays off to Scholes to start the counter attack. He scans forward and knows that only Giggs and Rooney are his options. Giggs is slow to react and moves no move to receive the ball ahead of Toure and behind the midfield line to attack the back 2.



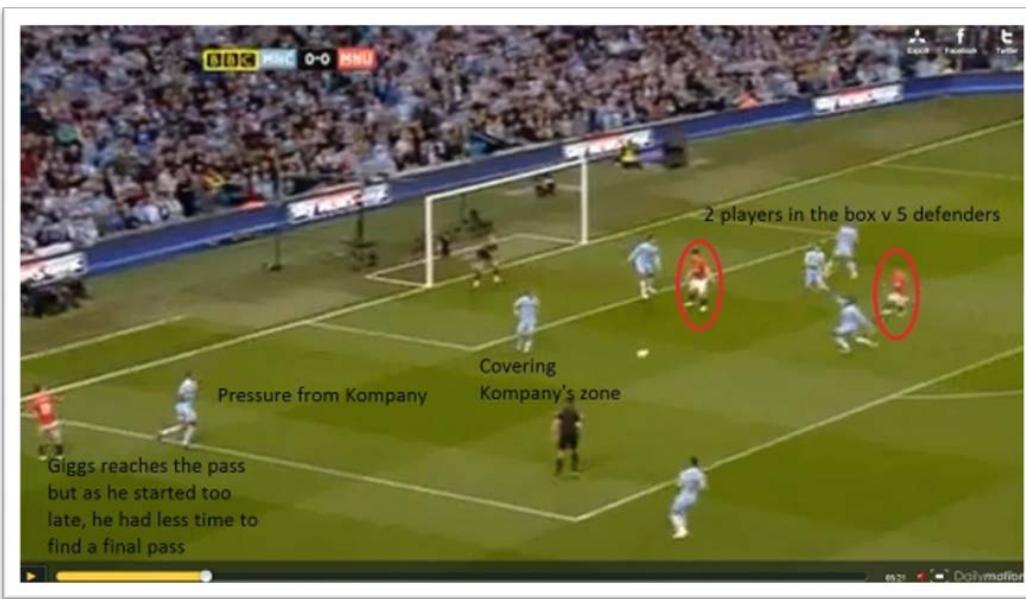
The ball is passed into Rooney, who wants to lay off 1st time to Giggs. Giggs isn't near the area Rooney needs to pass to, so he turns and looks for the pass into Clichy's vacant space for Nani to receive – Nani starts too deep and too narrow to be effective. Rooney passes wide but Clichy has started his recovery run.



As Rooney passes, Kompany takes him out and this effects the quality of pass – the pass goes behind Nani and this allows Clichy to recover. Park is now the furthest attacker with Giggs on the far side of Nani.



Nani needs to delay the pass as Giggs is too deep, and this allows Kompany and Lescott to drop deeper. Zabaleta still isn't back so the space can be exploited, if a good pass is found.



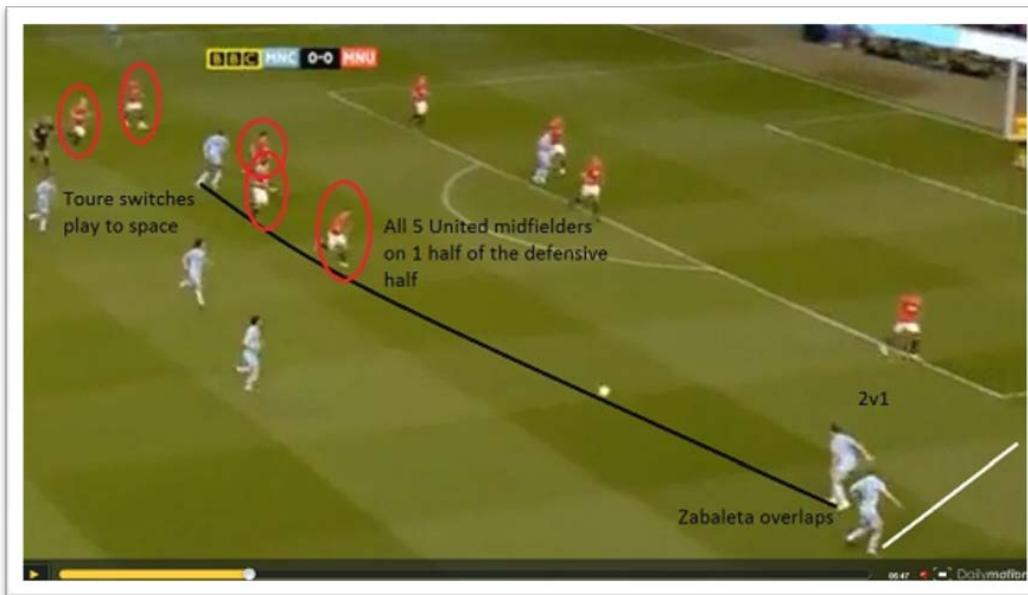
As Giggs reaches the heavy pass, he must delay to allow runners to arrive inside the box. Kompany is quick and determined, and he stops Giggs from playing a pass of any quality. He plays a cutback but Yaya Toure clears.

The counter attack was unsuccessful because of a few reasons;

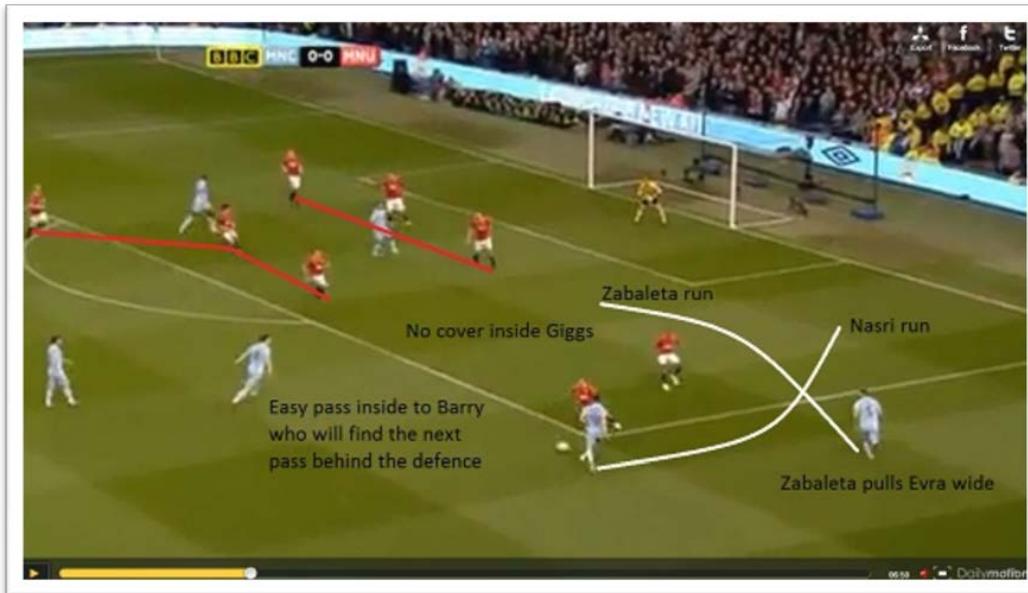
- Giggs was too slow to react
- Scholes and Carrick don't have the pace to support
- Nani was too deep and too narrow
- Rooney couldn't keep up the momentum of the attack as he had no quick out-ball

- Lack of supporting runners – 2 inside the box against 5 well placed defenders

Man City switches play and overlap for a 2v1 (again)



As Toure switches play – there's all 5 midfielders and 3 of the back 4 within a 15 yard radius of him – he knows there is space to exploit on the far side. As Nasri is the target player, Zabaleta knows that he can help Nasri by going for an overlapping run – this takes Evra back and stops him from getting too close to the ball. As we can see from the image, there is no cover inside of Nasri, so he can go left on the dribble, or pass right with no problems.



As Barry fills the space inside where there is no cover, City have a 3v2. Zabaleta expects that Nasri will pass into Barry, so he arcs round to offer a pass from Barry, but this runs also takes Evra inside – leaving space for Nasri to offer a pass wide from Barry.



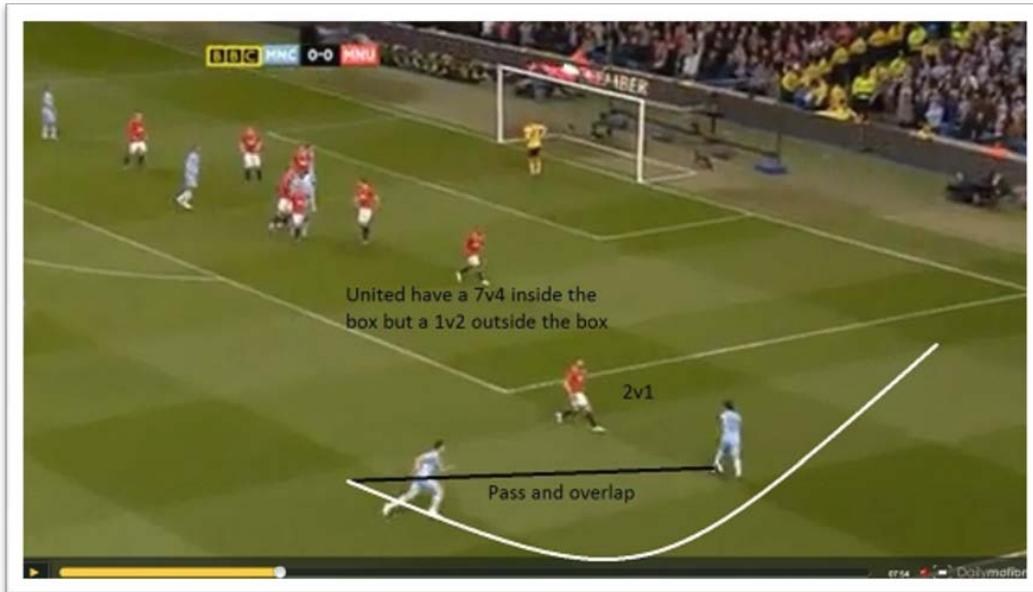
Barry receives and finds Nasri wide of Evra. Nasri knows Aguero will check his run and will have decided early what he will do.



Nasri cuts back for Aguero who has checked his run away from Smalling. Note, Smalling is at least 3 yards too far away from Aguero – he should be much tighter this close to the goal, inside the red circle. Jones is also in a bad position; Yaya Toure could receive a dummy from Aguero and score. If Jones is inside the red circle, this would make it much harder for Toure to be effective if the ball was to reach him. He could still score from a 1st time shot, but it would be under some pressure from Jones.

This attack was almost successful as the switch of play and overlapping run by Zabaleta created a space despite United playing so deep and with so many players behind the ball.

City use an overlap (again?!?) from a cleared corner



United haven't learned from the previous 45 minutes play – City are overlapping at every opportunity against Evra. Nasri finds Silva who is 1v1 against Giggs. Nasri overlaps and makes it 2v1. United have 7v4 inside the box, but City don't use crosses without Dzeko in the team.



Nani sprints over to help Giggs, but Silva is clever, he fakes to pass wide and dribbles inside, this brings Nani inside to cover Silva's stronger left foot. Silva then knows that Nasri has much more space and after a fake cross, cuts a reverse pass to Nasri. The cross is cleared at the front post for a corner.

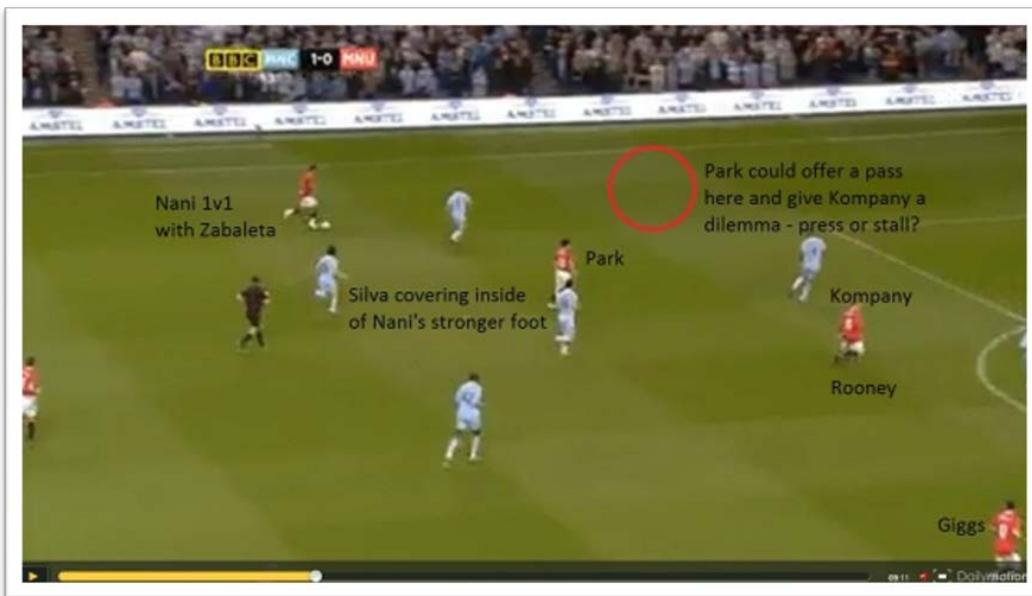


After a full 45 minutes of United sitting deep, and unable to support on the counter attack, with City dominating possession, City get the goal they deserve. Silva whips in a corner and as De Gea missed the 1st 2 corners, United get nervous and leave 8 players inside the 6 yard box, with nobody else near the penalty spot. Kompany jumps highest and bullets a header past De Gea for 1-0 City at HT.

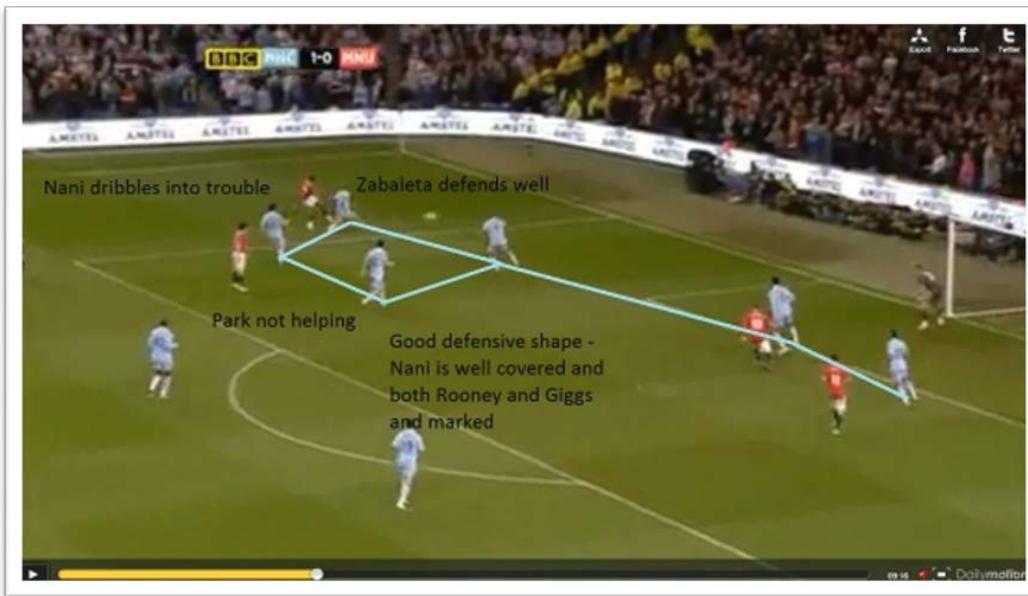
2nd half

I expected United to make at least 1 substitution - **Subs:** Amos, Berbatov, Hernandez, Young, Welbeck, Rafael Da Silva, and Valencia – after the pounding they took in the 1st half. They never looked like crossing the half way line with any threat and with no pace in midfield, the game plan was being undermined. If I was Sir Alex, I would've started with a different team, but at HT I expected him to bring on Valencia for Giggs, and offer some pace and penetration from wide areas, or 'Chicharito' Hernandez for Park, who could allow Rooney to play deeper and change to 4-4-1-1 and have Rooney play in the space between Barry and Yaya Toure. Hernandez would've offered blistering pace and a poacher's instinct for any counter attacks being launched – get on the ball, be direct and look to score or create a chance.

United on the attack



As Nani receives the ball, Zabaleta is in good position, inside Nani and showing him onto his left foot, but also within distance of a Nani speed burst. Silva is covering inside onto Nani's stronger right foot. Park could offer a pass down the line and give Kompany a problem – press Park and risk missing the ball (he's been booked), or stay inside and screen Rooney while Lescott marks him?

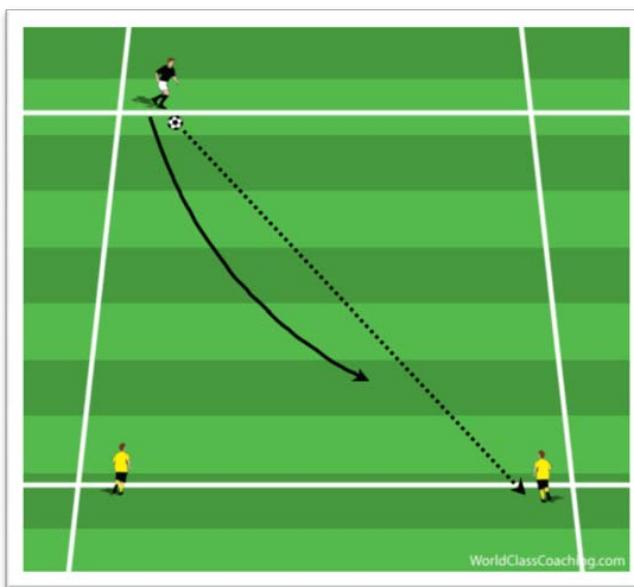


As Park offers no help – he doesn't offer a pass forward, back or even try to run into a dangerous position for a cross – Zabaleta and Silva do a good job of keeping Nani away from a crossing position and Nani crosses into the hands of Hart, who somehow drops the ball and a corner is given, which is wasted.

As we can see from United's two highlighted attacks, there was little good support offered and this effected how quickly and how effectively they could counter attack against City. What we can also see is how City found a potential 'weak' area in the United team – Evra and Giggs down the United left against Silva/Nasri and Zabaleta on City's right. We can see how City exposed Evra at least 4 occasions with 2v1's and how successful they were at exploiting these scenario's to find space to create an opportunity to score or to find a final pass inside the box.

Training Session to help improve the use of a 2v1 scenario

2 v 1 Basic



Defender (Black) passes out to a yellow attacker. He passes and presses the receiver. The 2 yellows must make good decisions and have the ball under control across the opposite line where the black defender started from.

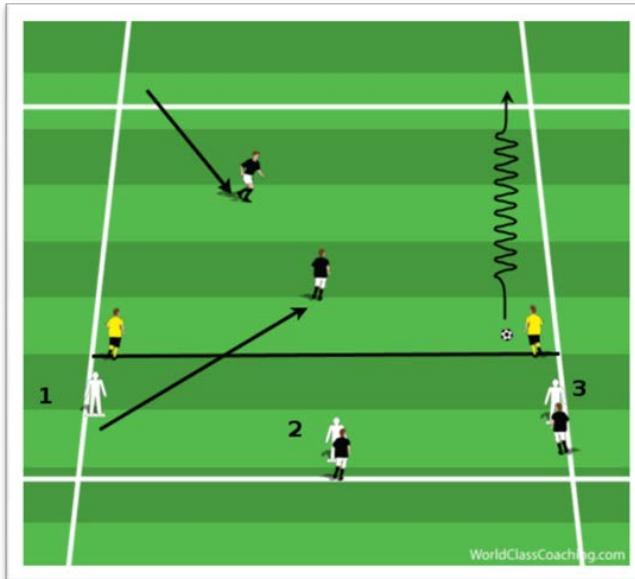
Coaching Style: Guided Discovery

Ask effective questions to allow players to think about why they make the decision before stopping the game and correcting them, then allow more practice to ensure they can understand why each decision made was a good decision or not.

Increase difficulty for advanced players

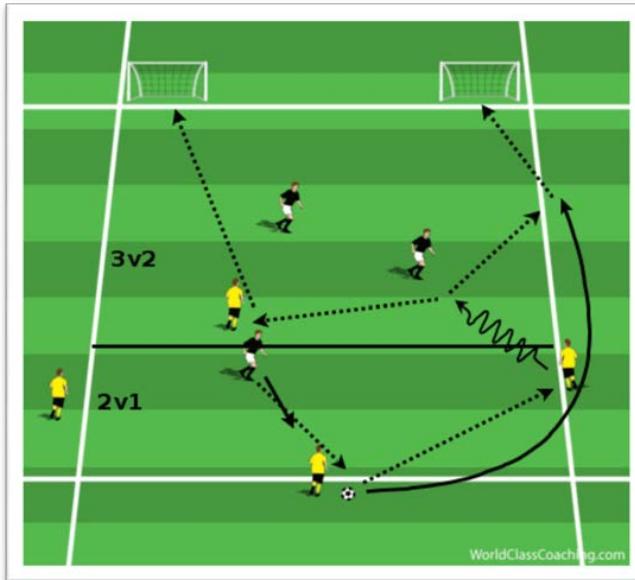
- Reduce width of the zone.
- Reduce amount of touches they can use to cross the end line (ie, 4 touches each/ 6 accumulatively)
- Enforce a time limit ie 6 seconds and reduce once success is achieved – speed of play to exploit the 2v1

Variation/Progression – 2v1 with recovering defenders



In this progression, as the player takes his 1st touch, the coach will call out number 1, 2 or 3. This player will recover quickly to make play a 2v2. The player in possession must decide if he will pass or attack the space. In this example, player 1 has recovered and closed off the passing lane so he runs at speed with the ball to cross the end line.

2v1 building into 3v2



Separate a pitch into 2 sections – 1 around 1/3 of the size for a 2v1 then 2/3's for 3v2 to score.

The individual defender passes to the starting attacker who has 2 options wide. He passes wide then overlaps immediately. The player who doesn't get used becomes the starting player next time.

Once the ball is passed, the receiver advanced into the 2nd zone – he must time his movement to attack the 2 players as he has late arriving support on the overlap. He can pass inside to his central

team mate to score into any of the 2 wide goals set out, or use the overlapping run to pass. He could also dribble if he chooses – the game is about decisions and why which decision was made, and what the outcome was.

Coaching Style: Guided discovery

Ask effective questions to allow players to think about why they make the decision before stopping the game and correcting them, then allow more practice to ensure they can understand why each decision made was a good decision or not.

Breaking down a compact midfield with a 2v1 overlap



There is a box marked out that the 5 defending midfielders play within. They cannot press outside of the zone unless the ball is passed wide outside the box. If the attacking team retreat to the halfway line with the ball, the defending midfielders stay within the confines of the defending zone. The defenders are allowed within the 5 yard space between the edge of the box and the start of the midfield zone. This is to replicate the conditions of the deep defending team.

In the example above, the player on the ball has no option to pass into the strikers feet as the passing lane is blocked, so play is switched wide where there are less players. The centre to wide pass is followed up with an overlap and this allows the player in possession to have an option wide with a free player in space. Also, as the striker is positioned between the centre back and full back, if the full back moves wide too early, a pass can be slipped behind the defence for the striker to move onto to shoot.

Coaching points

- Keep the ball moving and the defence moving
- Take minimal touches where possible
- Look for the chance to create a 2v1 and exploit it
- If the chance for a 2v1 is stopped, start play again and keep possession

- Vary play with a pass into the strikers feet for a 1 touch lay off into the wide support

Utilizing the overlap in a pattern of play



The starting player is the DCM. He passes to the full back (1), who passes forward and wide into the wide midfielder (2). He overlaps immediately.

As this happens, the near side CM offers a pass between the 2 players (3). As this happens the near side CF will drop in and offer a pass. The far side CF will pull wide and extend the distances between defenders. CM passes between the CB and FB who has pressed the wide midfielder (4).

As the pass is played for the run of the overlapping full back, both CF's will attack the cross into the box, running across the front of the defenders.

Coaching points

- Move onto the ball – don't wait on it
- Communication of when and where to pass to
- Weight of pass to allow the receiver an easy pass is crucial to building fluidity
- Body shape on the run to allow for a good cross from full back
- Angle of runs to meet the ball when crossed

FA Cup Final – Chelsea v Liverpool

Liverpool lined up in a 4-3-3 formation against Chelsea's 4-2-3-1



Liverpool's formation suggests keeping possession and using the overlapping abilities of Enrique and Johnson, and the dribbling and crossing abilities of Bellamy and Downing. Gerrard and Henderson will support from midfield but one play in this system is Luis Suarez. Suarez likes to drop deep and link play with midfield – he is the sort of player who benefits greatly from being on the shoulder of the last defender or dropping deep to find passes into the main striker. With Liverpool playing Suarez as the point of the attack, his main role is to stay around the centre of the defence and occupy the 2 central defenders, allowing the midfield to support as he receives with his back to goal, or allow the midfield to find passes behind the defence.

Chelsea have lined up in a 4-2-3-1, playing on the counter attack. Mata will be the playmaker of this, with Drogba being the target man occupying the opposition defence. Kalou and Ramires have incredible energy and can break with pace on the counter attack – Chelsea will look to exploit the spaces left by Johnson and Enrique with the pace of Kalou and Ramires. Chelsea have had a hectic schedule recently including 2 matches against Barcelona where they would've had less than 40% of possession over 2 games. If Liverpool play with no centre forward like Barcelona did, they will have an easy game, as Liverpool don't have the quality of players to pass and dribble with intricacy that Barcelona do.

The 1st half was a non-event; Liverpool had most of the possession but with very little to show for it, especially in the form of shots on target. Chelsea looked comfortable the whole half despite defending around 25 yards from goal for the whole half.

The 2nd half was a much better spectacle; Liverpool failed to make a change at HT which was desperately needed and waited until they went 2-0 down before bringing on a focal point of the attack. Had Andy Carroll started, with the way Liverpool set up with 2 good wide players, they might have been more threatening.

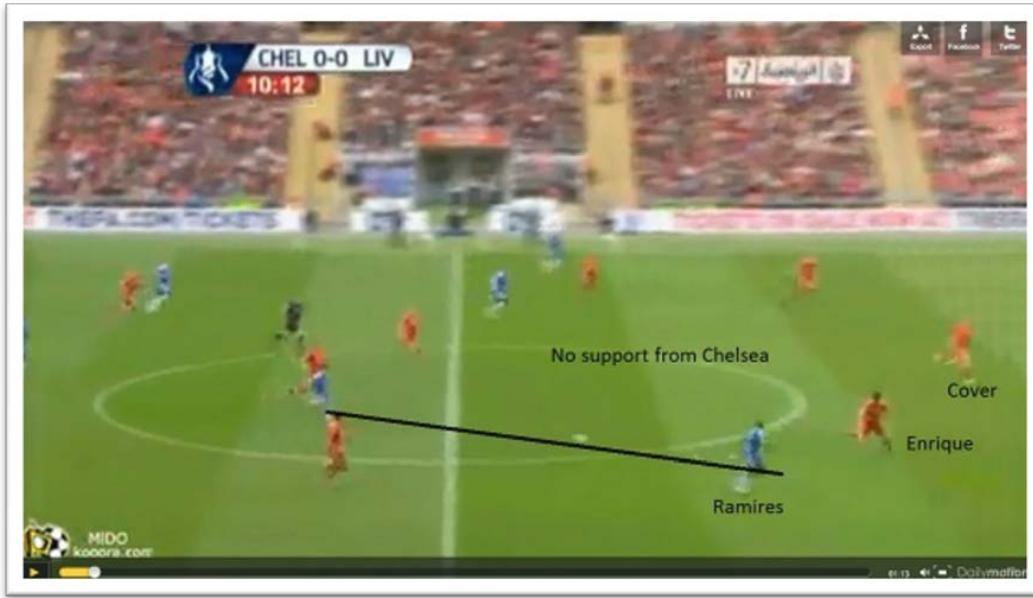
Chelsea's opening goal



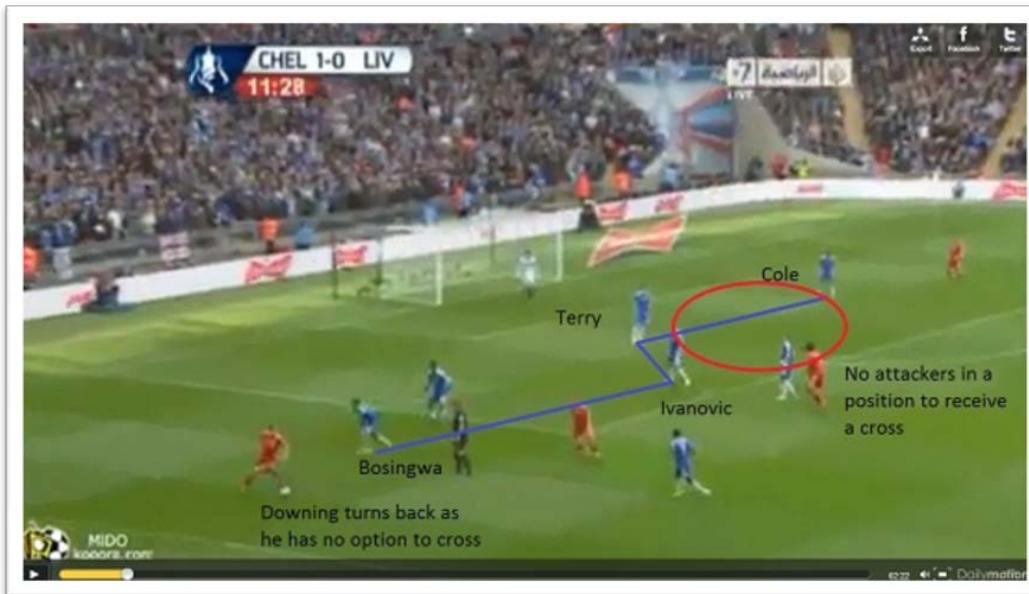
Liverpool press high and block all short passing options for Cole, so he chips a ball forward which lands at Spearing.



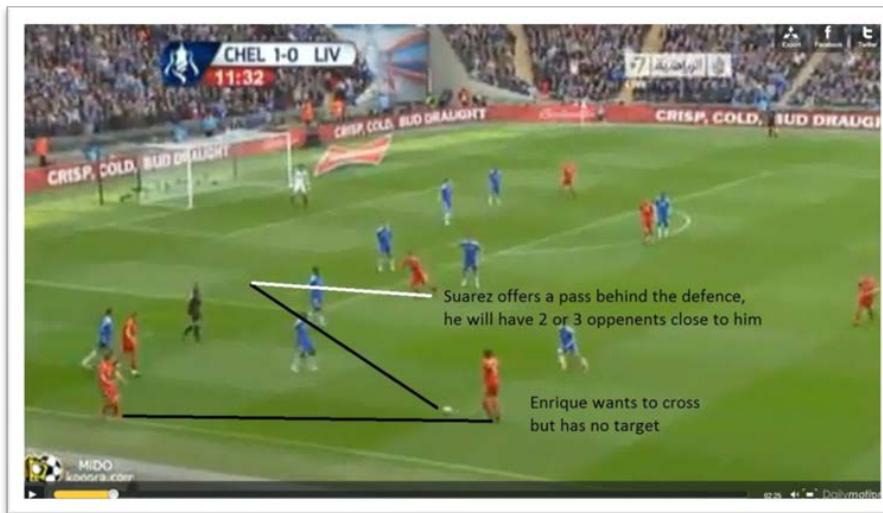
Spearing mis-controls the ball and Mata reacts quickly to start the counter. Drogba has pulled wide so Mata has the option to dribble through the centre and have options left and right, to Ramires. Ramires breaks forward at pace.



Liverpool's lack of threat in attack

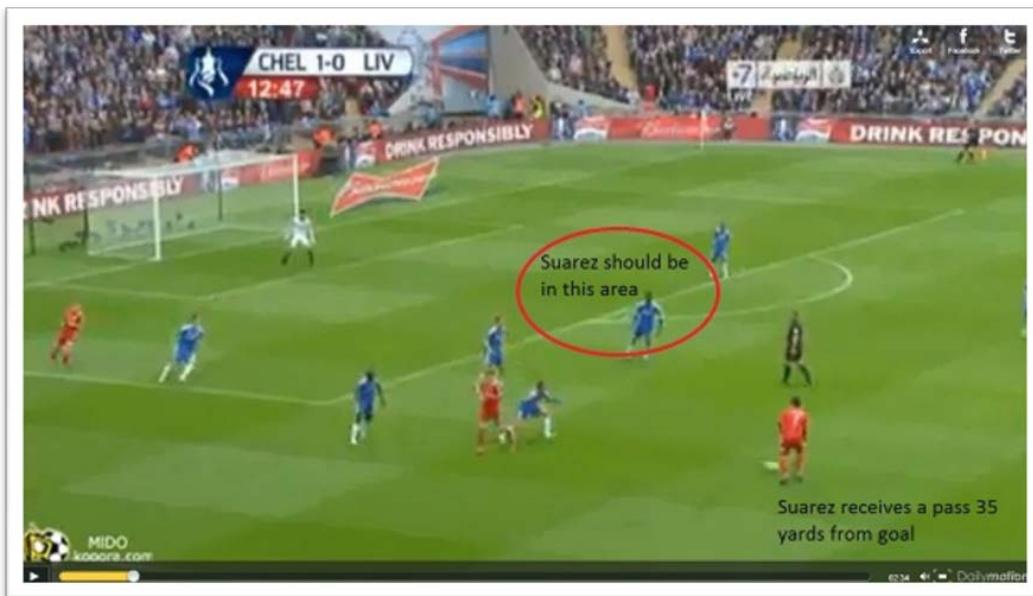


Gerrard plays a back-heal to Downing who is forced to turn back as he has no option to cross. Downing's main strength is his crossing ability and Liverpool neglect to play to his strengths. Enrique will receive his pass and look for a cross.

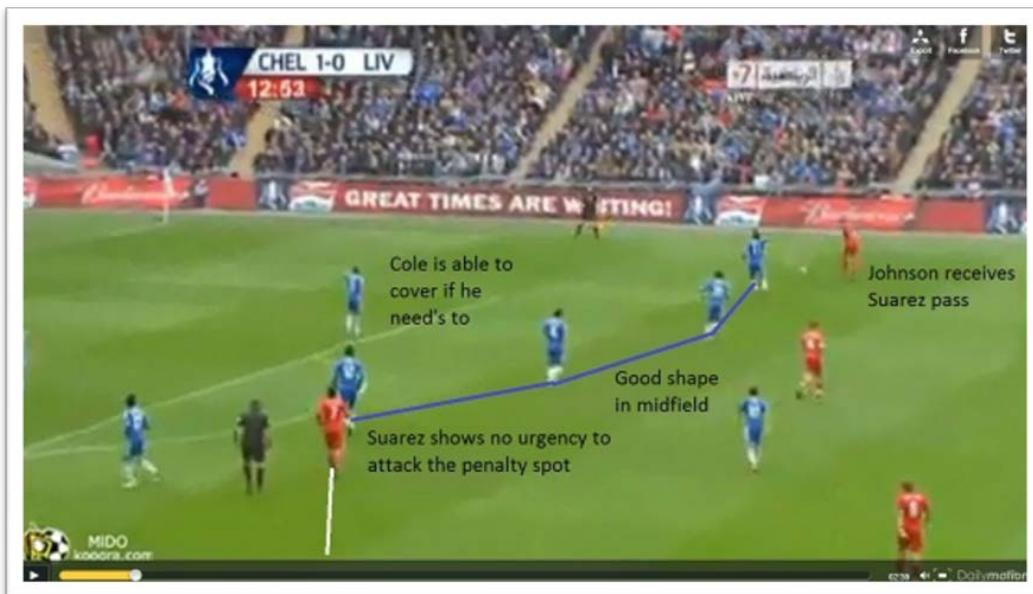


As Enrique receives, Suarez (the centre forward) is offering a pass behind the defence, which Enrique uses as he has little other options. Suarez receives the ball but is doubled up on and he loses possession in a good area.

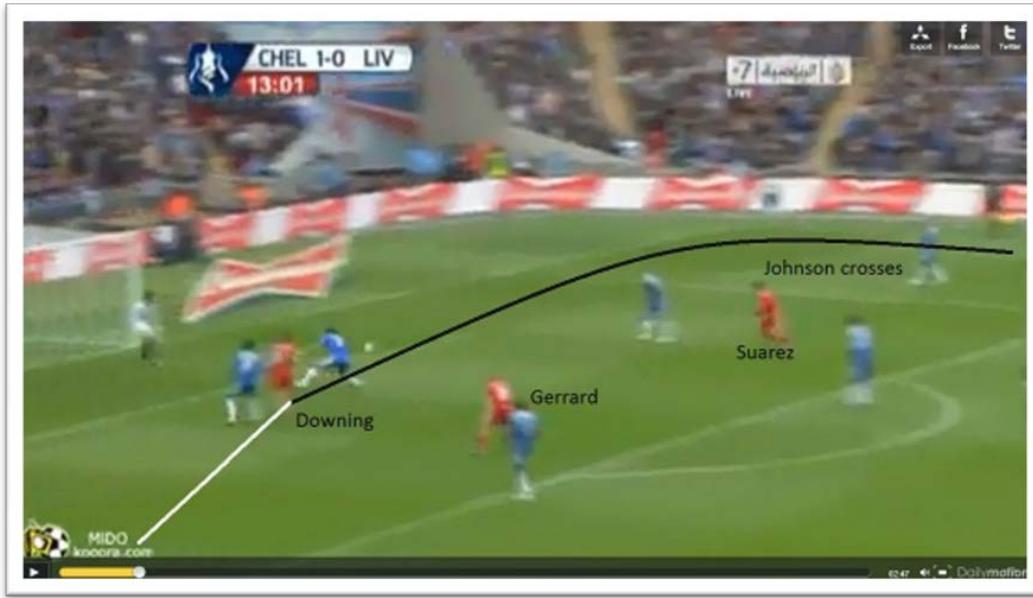
Johnson finds a cross



Suarez has drifted away from centre forward again, and he receives in a position where he has no direct forward pass. He dribbles infield and switches play to Johnson on the right side.



As Suarez switches play, he makes no effort to get inside the box for Johnson to find him with a cross. He drifts round the outside of the box and the Chelsea back 4 have nobody to mark or runners to follow. Suarez really needs to occupy the back 4 to help the Liverpool attack become dangerous.



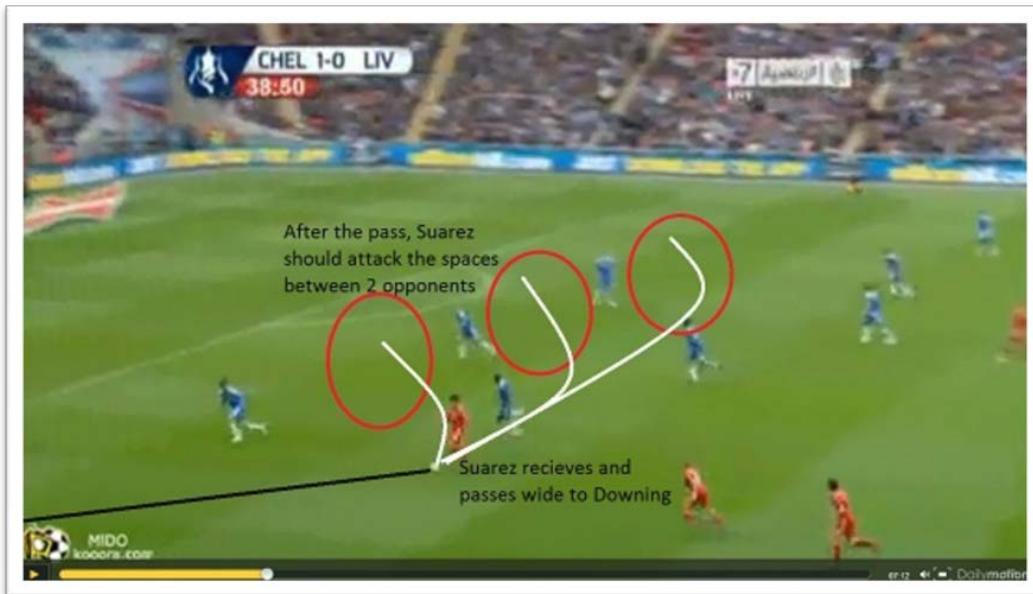
Johnson finds some space and whips in a dangerous cross, Downing attacks the back post and as Ivanovic heads away, Bellamy is in position to receive.



As the ball breaks loose, Bellamy volley's 1st time, but Ivanovic blocks a certain goal.

If Liverpool can flood the box with attackers and find good quality crosses, they might have a chance of scoring. If I was Kenny Dalglish, despite it only being 13 minutes in, I would make a change – Spearing off, Carroll on. Carroll is 6ft 7, and brilliant in the air. This would allow Suarez to keep playing the way he is, and Liverpool can have a focal point of the attack. Liverpool don't need a holding midfielder against a team playing counter attack.

Suarez's lack of penetrating runs



As Suarez passes wide to Downing, he should know that Downing will want to cross or pass behind the defence, and should attack one of the spaces between 2 defenders. This would allow Suarez the opportunity to get behind the defence to create a chance to score, or to push the defence back and create space in midfield.

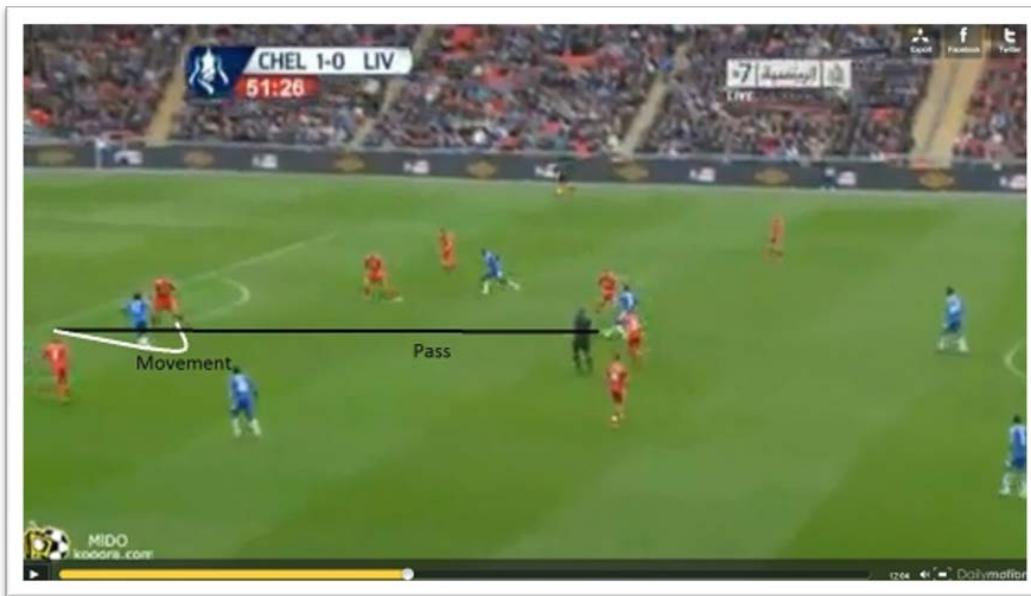


Downing either hasn't looked up or he is showing Suarez where he wants him to be by crossing into the box with no target players. Again, Suarez needs to be inside the red circle to have a chance of utilizing the good crosses from Downing.

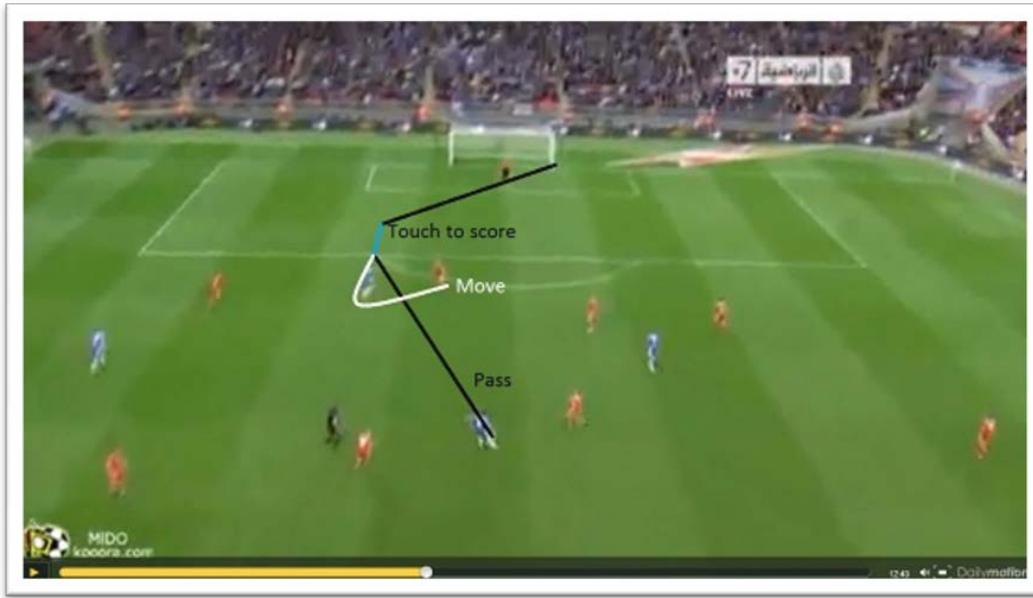
Chelsea 2nd goal – Drogba plays as a centre forward



Drogba shows Suarez how effective being a centre forward against a centre back can be – as Lampard cuts away from Spearing, he knows Drogba will be on the last line of the defence, offering a pass to feet or behind the defence. Lampard knows Drogba will NOT drop short with this amount of space in front of him.



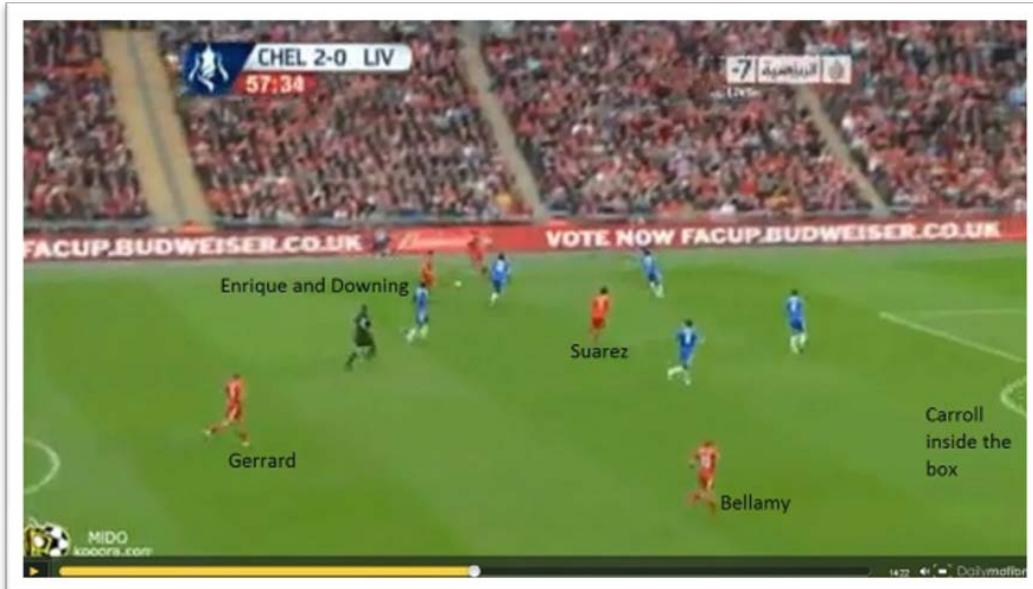
Drogba makes a lovely angled run wide – to stay onside and create space between himself and Skrtel. Lampard slides a pass into Drogba's stride.



As we can see from the high angle camera, Drogba has created plenty of space for a passing lane and is close enough to goal to receive and score.

The goal is scored because Chelsea created space in midfield from a good dribble by Lampard then clever movement by Drogba – both players knew what the other would do and this is vital to find the pass to score.

Andy Carroll joins the game – Liverpool has a target player in attack

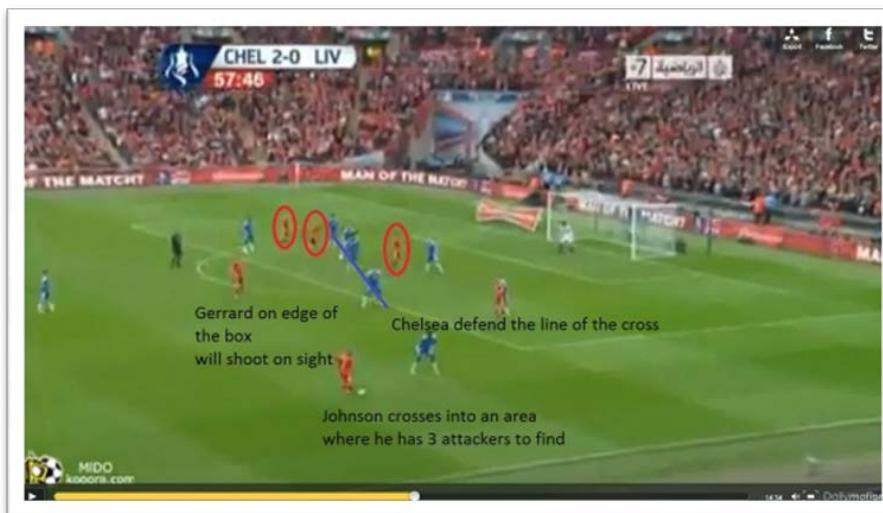


Andy Carroll takes up position on the far post, as Suarez continues to drift around the space in front of the defence as he did in the 1st half. The main difference between Suarez' movement as the centre forward in the 1st half, and the deep lying forward in the 2nd half is that Liverpool before had

no threat when Suarez went drifting around, but in the 2nd half, he can find passes with Carroll occupying the defence and giving Liverpool an alternative attacking option.

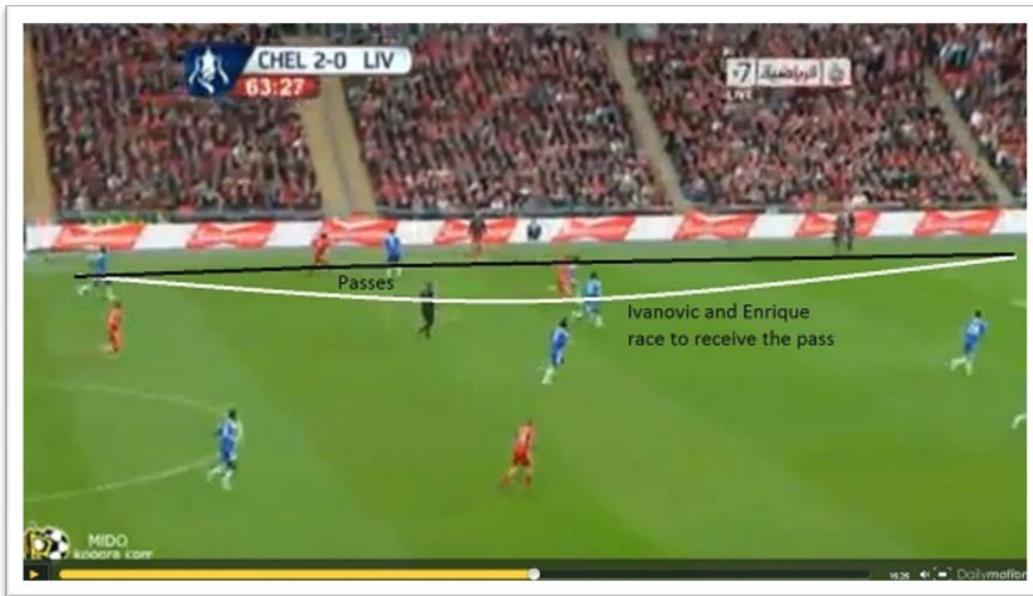


Carroll brings the cross down from Enrique and he lays off to Johnson who will look to cross. As the defence is being pinned back, more Liverpool players can enter the box and attack the cross.

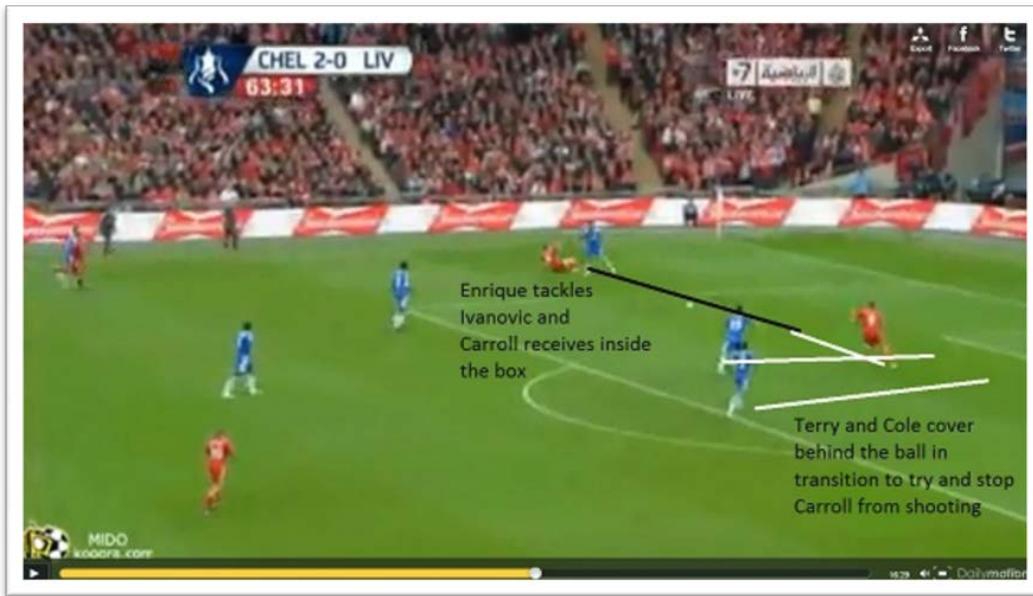


As Johnson crosses, Chelsea line up to defend the line of the cross they expect. Carroll pulls away to the back post and plays 1v1 against Bosingwa – a total mismatch. Liverpool now have 3 players inside the box – there were often zero inside the box in the 1st half. Carroll wins the header but doesn't manage to score.

Carroll playing near the Chelsea goal



Enrique passes into Downing and makes a run forward to receive a pass into the space. Ivanovic chases Enrique the whole way.

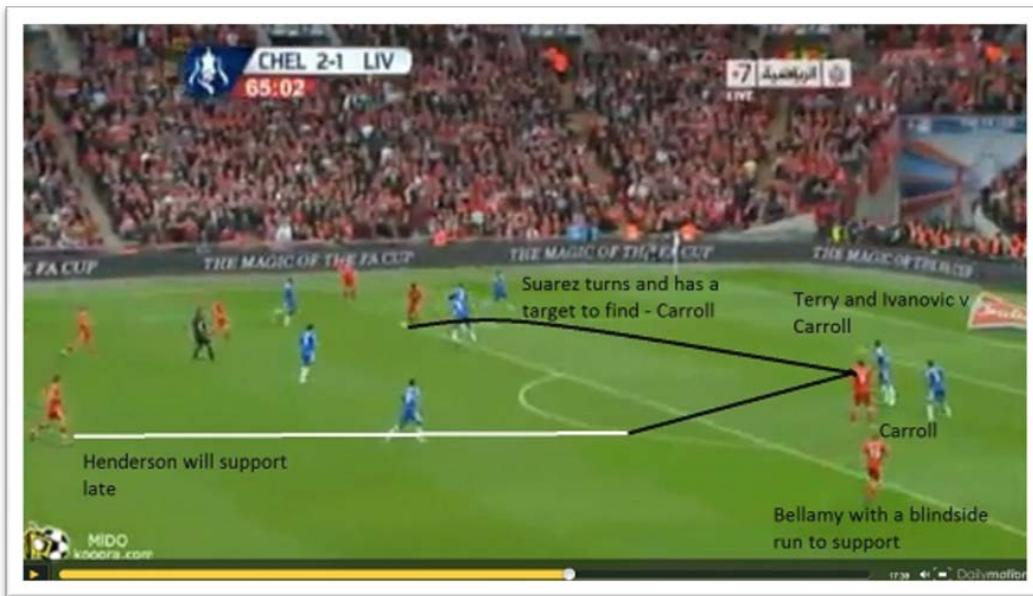


As Ivanovic (the centre back) races to right back to win the ball, Enrique wins a tackle and it rolls inside the box. Carroll reacts quickest and receives with Terry and Cole recovering in transition behind the ball, ready to pressure Carroll to stop the shot.



Carroll receives the loose ball, cuts away from Terry and smashes a shot high into the net. If Carroll isn't on, the loose ball reaches a Chelsea player and Liverpool are not back into the game on 63minutes – 5 minutes after Carroll enters the game.

Liverpool exploits their target man

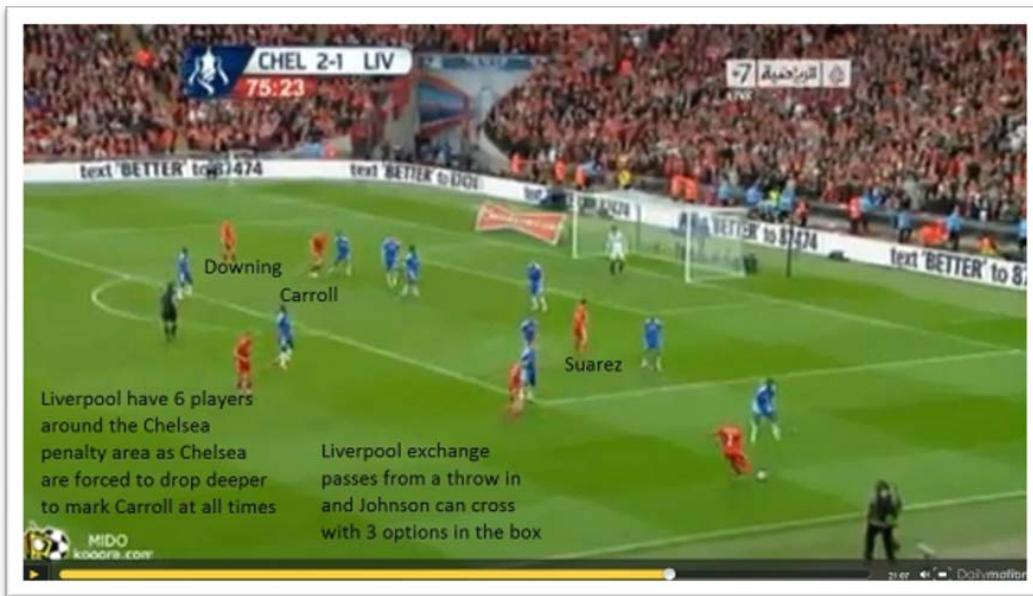


Suarez is still drifting around the defence-midfield space, but now has a target player. As he turns, he knows Carroll will be available inside the box, so he finds a chipped pass into Carroll. Chelsea are now playing much deeper and this allows Liverpool's midfield to push higher up to support the attack. Carroll lays off with his chest for Henderson who is making a late run.



Carroll lays off intelligently for Henderson who has time to make a good contact on the shot, or slip a clever pass into Bellamy on the right side. He elects to shoot and it goes close, but out for a goal kick. Another chance created from having a point to build attacks from.

Johnson finds another cross to Carroll

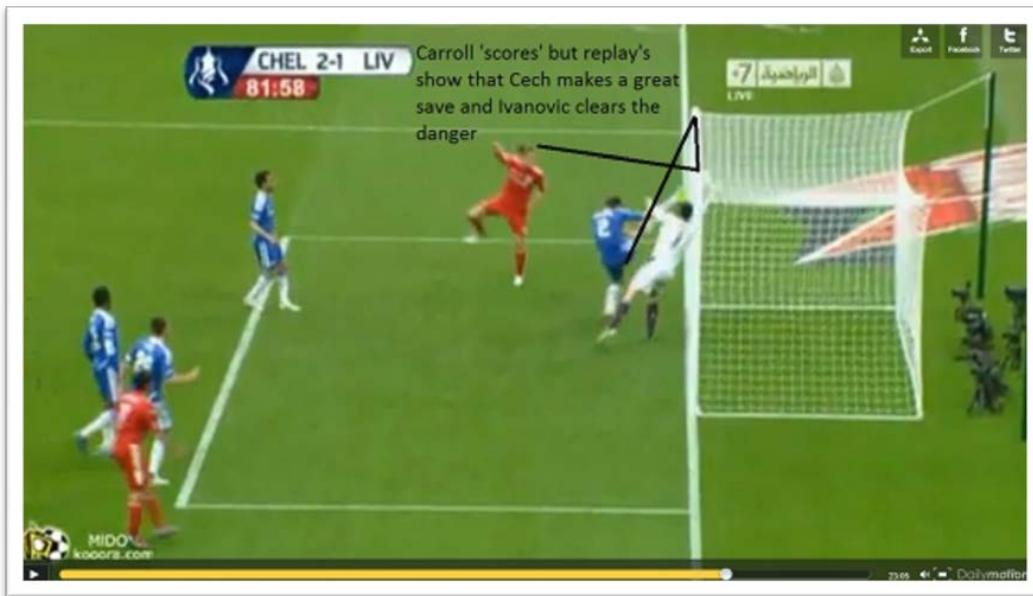


Liverpool have advanced quite high and win a throw in. Carroll looks to only get involved in the play if a cross is able to be made. He starts in line with the back post. This forces Chelsea to try and stop the ball from being able to be delivered and as a result, the defence go deeper to make sure Carroll is marked.



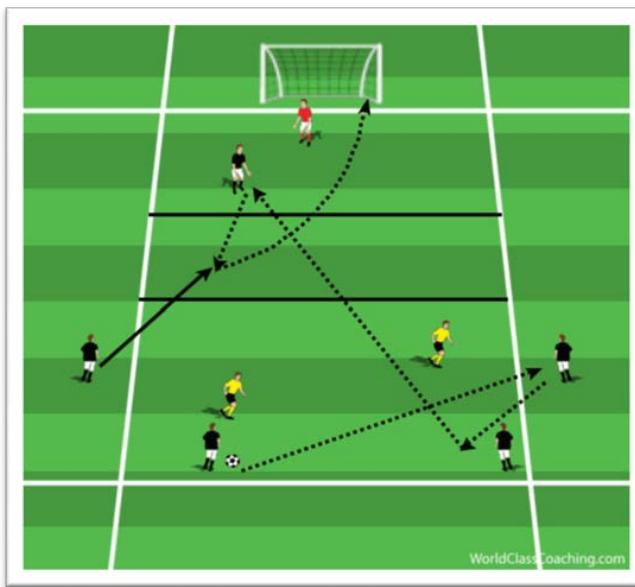
Carroll is clever and instead of playing against Terry and Ivanovic who are both strong at attacking crosses, he plays against Bosingwa who is not much of a challenge against Carroll. Carroll wins the header but it goes over the bar narrowly.

Carroll's 'goal' that never was



This chance goes to show the effect Andy Carroll had the transformation of Liverpool in the 2nd half when he came on. He has pulled away from Terry and Ivanovic, onto Bosingwa who he can win every header against. He has bulleted a header from 5 yards and think's he has scored – only a world class save from Cech denies a late equaliser for Liverpool and a 2nd goal from Carroll. Ivanovic is quick to react as if he doesn't react, Kuyt follows up and is centimetre's away from scoring from the rebound.

Training Session - Building an attack from the centre forward



Find the target man.

Play 4 v 2 inside a wide box. Mark the box around 16 yards wide and 10 yards long, with a 5 yard middle zone. The 2 defenders will press the ball and cover passing lanes until the ball is passed into the target man's feet.

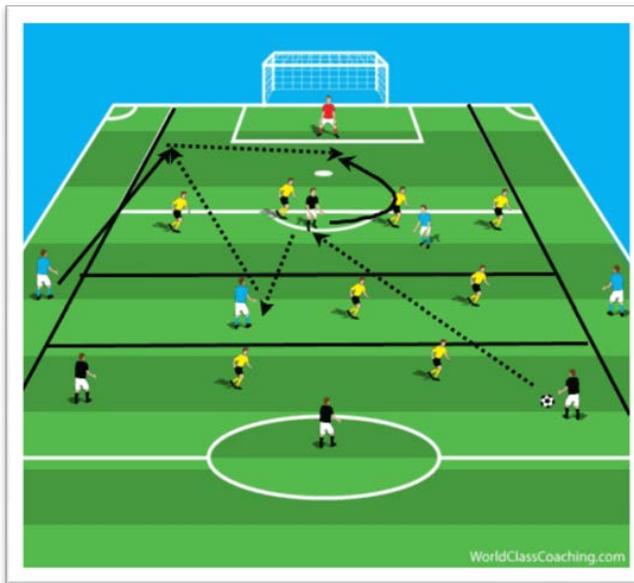
The 4 must look to penetrate the midfield and find the feet of the target man who will lay off for a supporting player to enter the middle zone to shoot.

- Target man always looks to find the space between the 2 defenders
- Midfield look up and find the best time to penetrate the defence
- Wide supporting players move quickly to receive 1 touch lay off

Progressions/Variations

- Target man has a defender on his back
- Place a covering midfielder inside the middle zone
- Add a 5th player to the edge of the initial box who can receive and turn to pass into the target man
- Add a 3rd defender into the initial box
- Add a 4th defender and play a flat midfield 4 with a covering player v a flat midfield 4 and an advanced midfielder – make box wider

Building the attack through the target man



The half pitch is split into 3 central zones and 2 wide zones.

The defence play in a 4-2-2 formation, attack in a 3-3-2 formation.

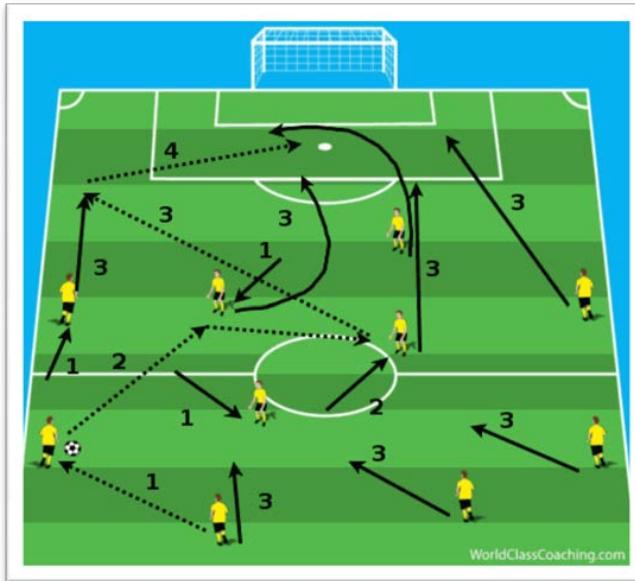
The attack must pass from a black into the black target man. The pass must split the midfield and find the target man – head or feet, preferably feet. The attack has 2 designated wingers who are only active once the target man has received a pass.

The target man can receive and pass to the wide players if the pass is available. He can pass to the blue inside his own zone who operates as a support striker in the final 3rd, or the attacking midfielder inside the middle zone, who can decide what to do next with the ball. If it is passed back to the blacks in the defensive 3rd, they must restart the attack by finding the target man again.

Coaching Points:

- Eyes up to see target man's movements
- Move the ball quickly away from pressure to open the opportunity to find the direct pass
- Attacking midfielder should help clear the space by staying out of the passing line
- Attacking midfielder should move away and open up a space in midfield by offering passes through the middle zone for 1-2s with the target man
- Wide players support with correct angles to offer the target man a pass wide to deliver a cross into the box

Pattern of play – Using a target man



Players line up in a 4-4-2. You can alter this for any formation, the general idea is to get the ball into the target man's feet from a full back, and work it through the midfield facing the opponent's goal.
NO LONG BALLS!

- Start off as a shadow play exercise then add a marker to the Target Man.
- Add pressure to full back to make a good pass under pressure
- Add a defence to deal with the cross

Pass 1 – Centre Back to Full Back.

Movements –

CM's: Near side CM moves inside to offer pass but also to take away the nearest opposition CM from the passing lane.

WM – Wide midfielder checks back then moves forward again to keep full back guessing if he plays tight.

Pass 2 – Full back to Target man

Movements –

CM's – far side CM offers lay off from Target Man so he can exploit the space left by the CB who should track the TM. He will look to find either of the wide midfielders.

Pass 3 – Centre Midfielder to Winger

Movements –

CM's – Passer attacks the edge of the box or inside it if he arrives too early for the cross

CF's – TM turns and attacks the edge of the box for a cut back

Far Side CF – Will arc a run and move across the front of the defenders

Opposite Winger – Will start to run into the far side of the box on the blind side

CB's and Far Side FB – move across to cover in transition in case play breaks down.

Pass 4 – Winger to shooting opportunity

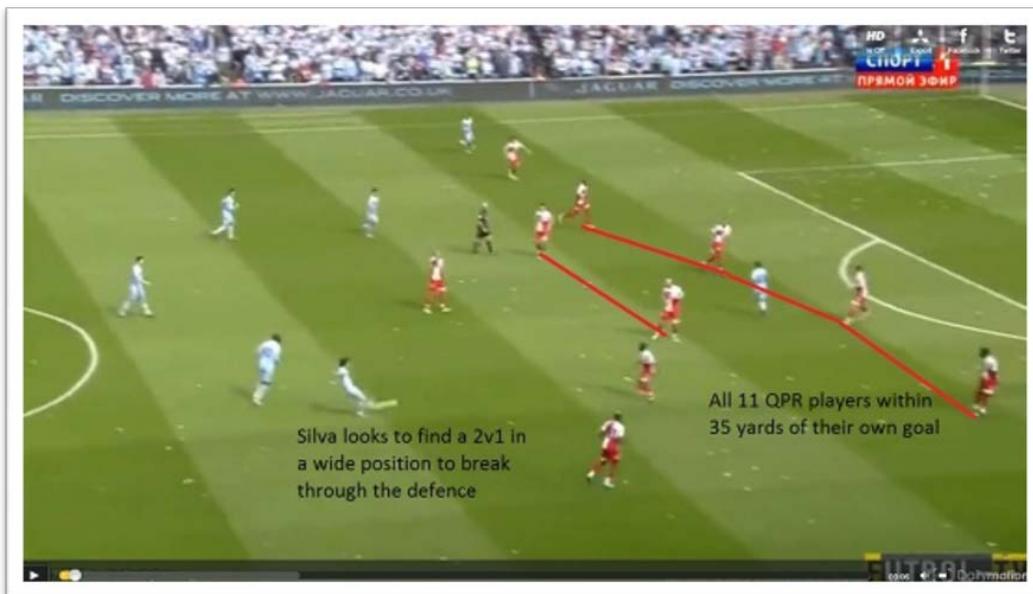
Depending on the speed of the run, pass and team mates positions, the winger must quickly decide on the run what he will do, and make an accurate pass or cross

Man City v QPR

Diagonal Runs around the box create goals.

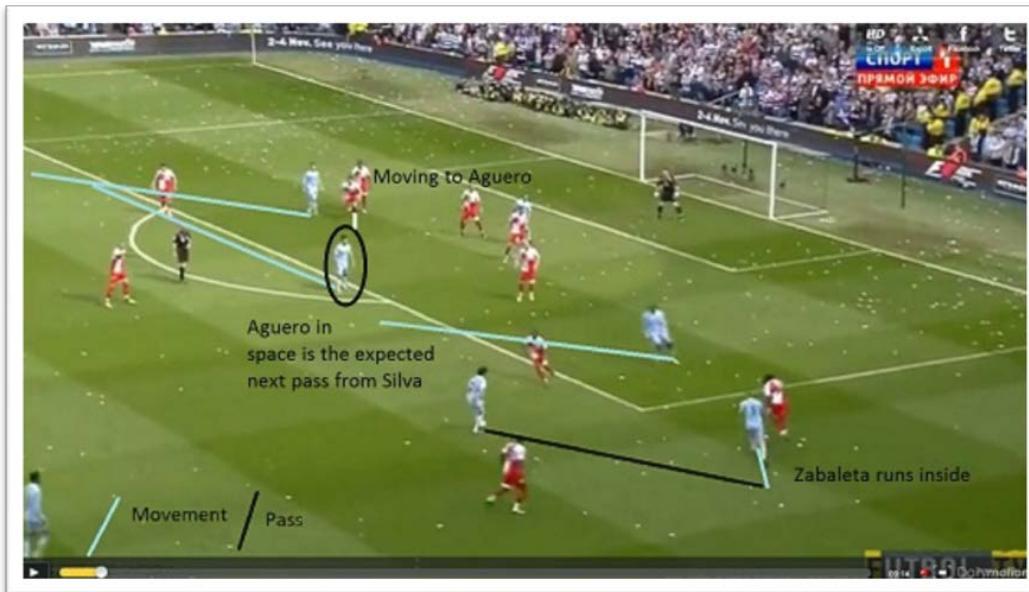
In the final game of the English Premiership season, there were lots of teams with something to play for – no less than Manchester City v QPR. Manchester City need to win to guarantee winning the league, QPR need to win to guarantee avoiding relegation. If City don't win, they need to hope Manchester United don't win at Sunderland (they win 1-0). If QPR lose, they need to hope Bolton don't win away to Stoke City to avoid relegation

Manchester City 1st goal – Zabaleta makes run diagonal run inside to receive the last pass

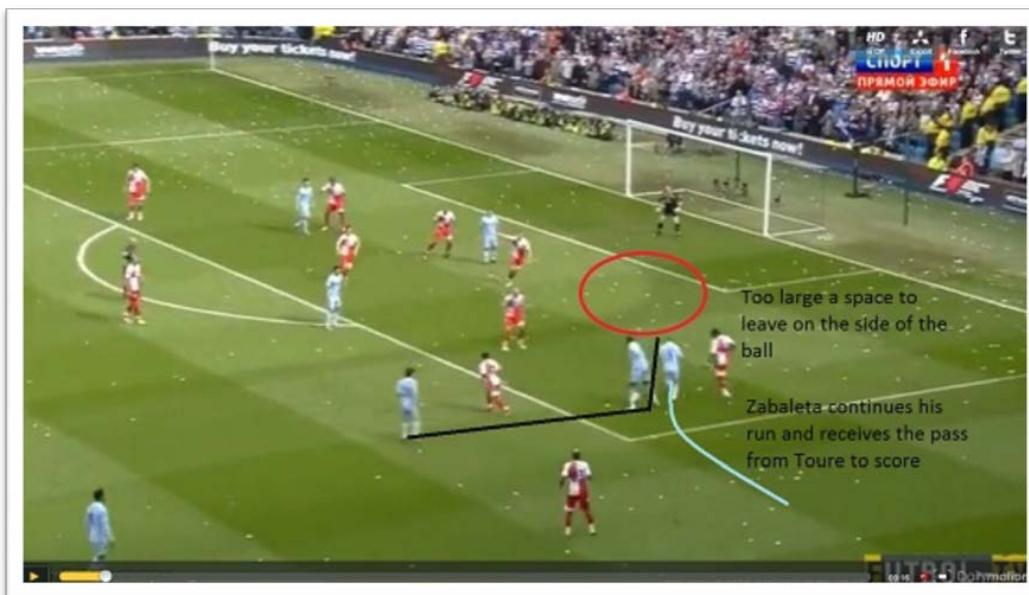


Silva spreads play wide looking for a 2v1, as Zabaleta has pushed forward and he normally arrives late on the overlap. Nasri however is on the other side and as Zabaleta receives, he crosses but it is blocked and bounces back to him to try again.

Diagonal run's around the box



Nasri makes a diagonal run on the far side, which could create space for a switch pass to Clichy. Aguero moves centrally to offer a pass inside from Silva – which QPR will assume is the next pass as he is in a great position to score. Toure makes a diagonal run behind the QPR defender for Silva to pass into space. Zabaleta begins a run inside from right back to offer a different pass where he can't be tackled as the defender will be on the wrong side.



Silva selects the pass to Toure's diagonal run. He may have made this decision as Zabaleta is blocking pressure from the QPR defender, but also offering a 2nd pass from Toure. Note QPR have left far too much space on the side of the ball; this may be due to expecting that Aguero was the next pass and

re-adjusting the defence for this pass. Toure plays the pass into the space and Zabaleta smashes a shot which the GK palms into the sky but loops into the far corner for 1-0 City.

As Bolton are now winning at Stoke, QPR start to open up and take more chances on the counter attack. The score is 1-1 here as Lescott had missed a header and Cisse lashed in a volley from 20 yards to get QPR to 1-1 and above the relegation zone. Now that Bolton are 2-1 up at Stoke, they must score again to stay up.

QPR 2nd goal – front post run creates a back post goal

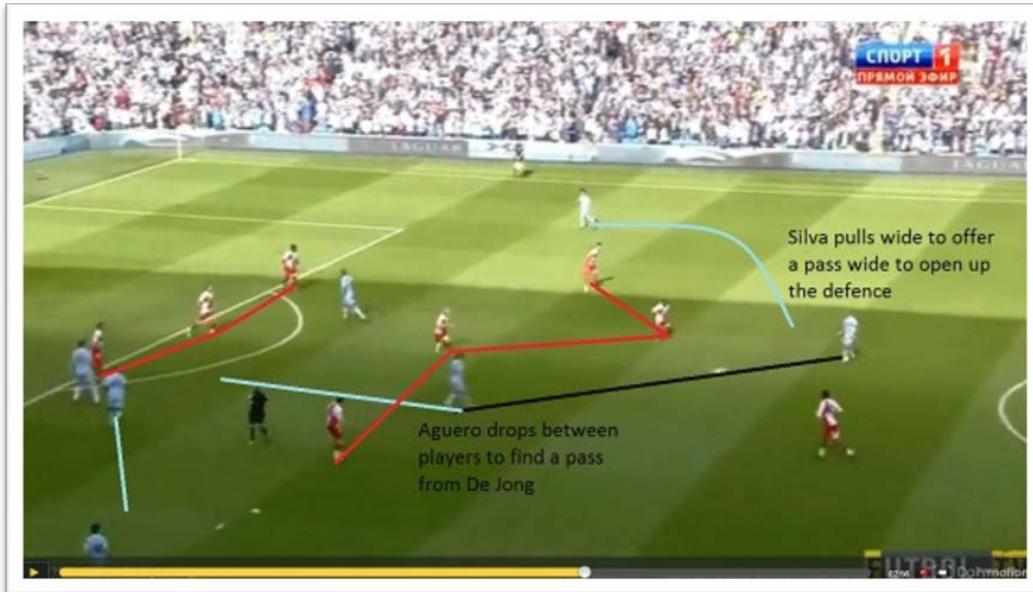


On the counter attack, the ball is passed down the left. Mackie – playing on the right of the 4-2-3-1, attacks the back post as Helguson plays centrally. Helguson knows a cross will be coming, and he knows that Mackie is behind him. Helguson makes a clever decision – attack a front post cross and allow the opportunity for Mackie to receive in space at the far post, which he does and scores to make it 2-1 QPR.

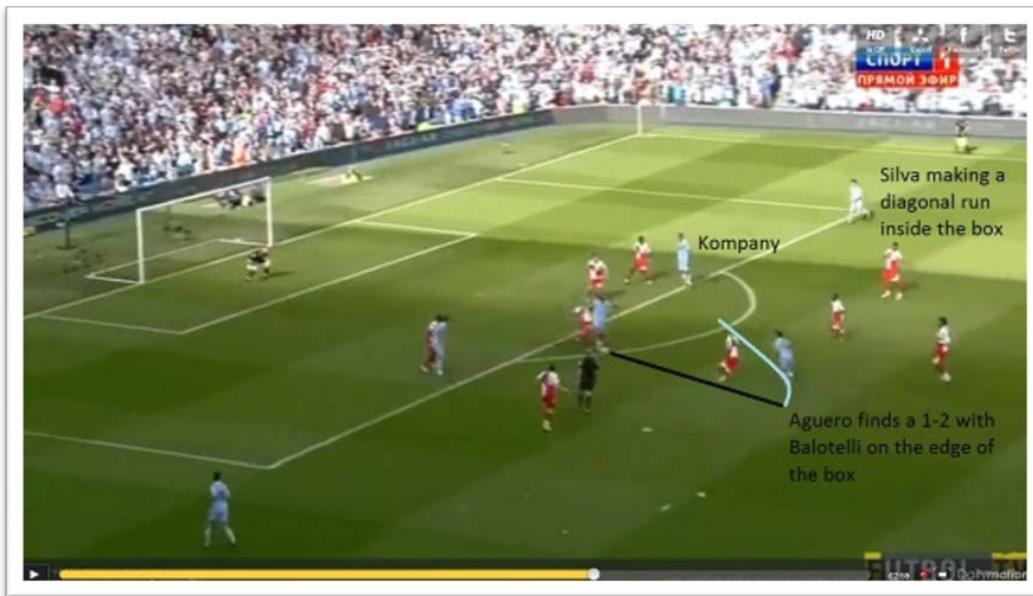
City are 2-1 down and push more and more players forward with every attack, and with QPR knowing that only 2 goals can relegate them, they are happy to sit in and defend. Joey Barton gets himself sent off for an off the ball incident with Tevez and this gives the City crowd – who have only seen their team drop 2 points at home all season – renewed hope they can find the 2 goals they need to win the league.

Dzeko scores from a corner in the 90th minute, just as the Manchester United game has finished 1-0 to United, who have players celebrating their ‘League triumph’. Nobody expects City to score again with 3 minutes of injury time left. Bolton v Stoke is now 2-2 and QPR are safe, regardless of the result.

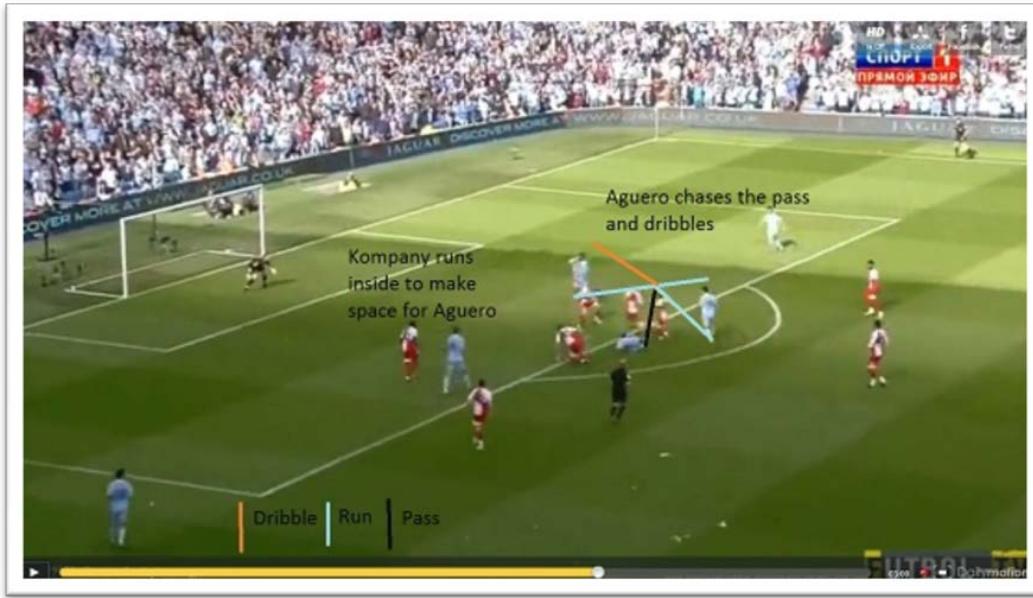
City's 3rd goal in the 94th minute – Aguero and Kompany make diagonal runs to win the league



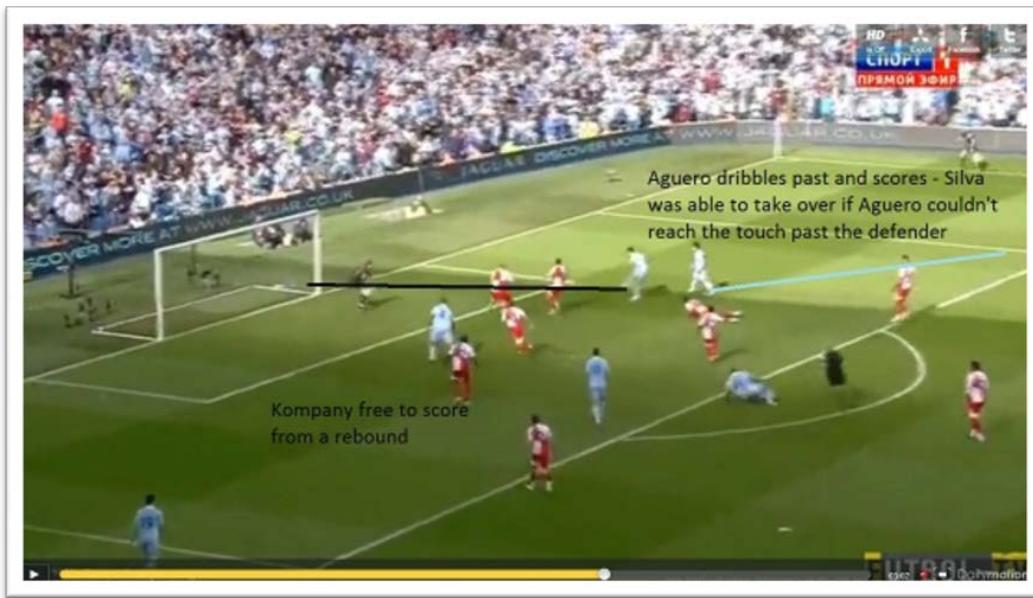
As De Jong moves forward with the ball, Silva pulls wide to offer a pass right in lots of space. Aguero drops between 2 of the midfield 4 (Joey Barton has been sent off) and De Jong selects this pass. Note City has Kompany on the edge of the box with Balotelli moving across the front of the defence.



Aguero turns and uses Balotelli's diagonal run across the defence to play a 1-2 with Balotelli and try to receive in a shooting position centrally.



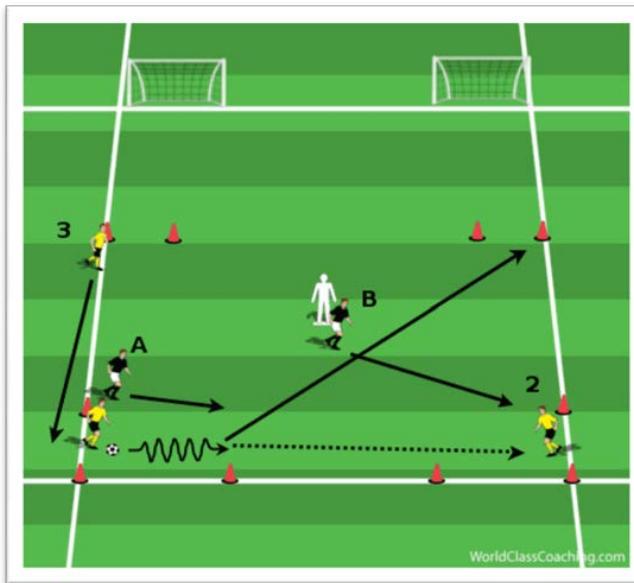
As Balotelli is so tightly marked and front pressed, he knocks a hopeful pass to Aguero between the 2 QPR defenders. Kompany knows he can't receive the ball, so he makes a very intelligent diagonal run – this means the defender will follow him - this stops Aguero from passing to him in front of the goal but creates the space Aguero needs to shoot. He fakes the shot and continues inside the box.



As Aguero makes the decision to shoot at the front post, the goalkeeper moves the wrong way and Aguero's 94th minute winner wins Manchester City the league! Note Silva's diagonal run from the right – had Aguero been unable to reach his touch, Silva was on hand to have a shot from 8 yards and potentially score the winner here himself.

3 of the 5 goals in this match came from diagonal runs inside the box, and this goes to show how effective these types of runs can be in creating space to score vital goals.

Training session to encourage diagonal runs and how they can create space



Diagonal runs – Switch and Support

Player 1 will dribble inside with player A in close attendance – he won't tackle, he will only jockey the player in possession until he passes.

Player 1 will reach the central cone and pass across to player 2 – He will make a diagonal run across the front of the mannequin to the far corner, parallel to player 2. Defender A will follow until the mannequin and stay there to prepare to press that side again.

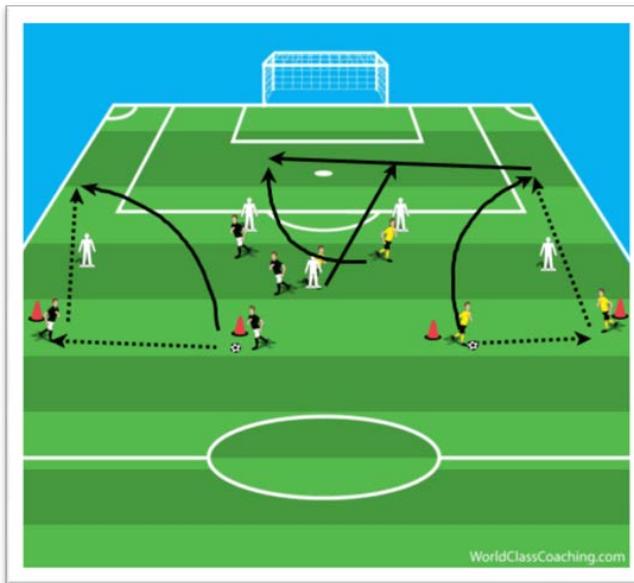
As this happens, player 3 will drop deep into player 1's space. As player 1 passes across to player 2, defender B will press player 2. Player 2 will dribble across to the centre cone, pass over to 3 and make the diagonal run across the mannequin and offer a pass down the line for 3 who has dropped into 1's space.

Repeat the rotations, ensuring that timing of switch pass, angle of the offering run and timing of pressure are all accurate before moving on.

Progressions/Variations:

- After player 3 switches and offers, he receives a pass down the line and shoots into the goal
- Fake pass down the line before central dribble
- Check run before receive from switch pass

Diagonal Runs to exploit a full back's pressure on the ball

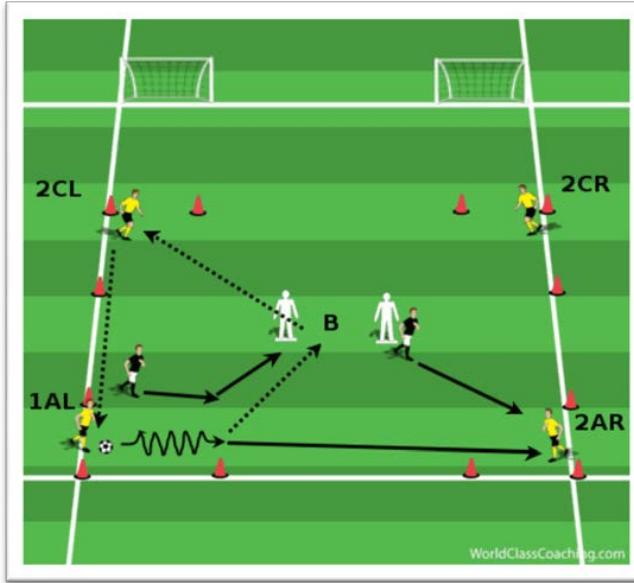


The CM passes wide to the FB, and makes a run behind the full back to offer a pass behind into the space. The CF will arc away and allow the AM to diagonally attack the space at the front post.

Coaching Points

- Early communication to pass into the stride of the runner
- Movement inside the box to acknowledge the next intention (to cross)
- Quick diagonal run across the front into the space for a low pass

Diagonal Runs – Same Side Diagonals



The player in position 1AL (Player 1, Position A, Left side) will dribble inside as before, then switch to player 2AR. He will sprint centrally into position B and offer a pass inside.

As this happens, the player 2CL will drop off into 1AL's position and offer the switch pass. Player 1AL will move diagonally into position 2CL (positional rotation) and the routine will start again from the opposite side.

The defenders will again only jockey and follow until position B, then press once play is switched across. (Press and Cover motion)

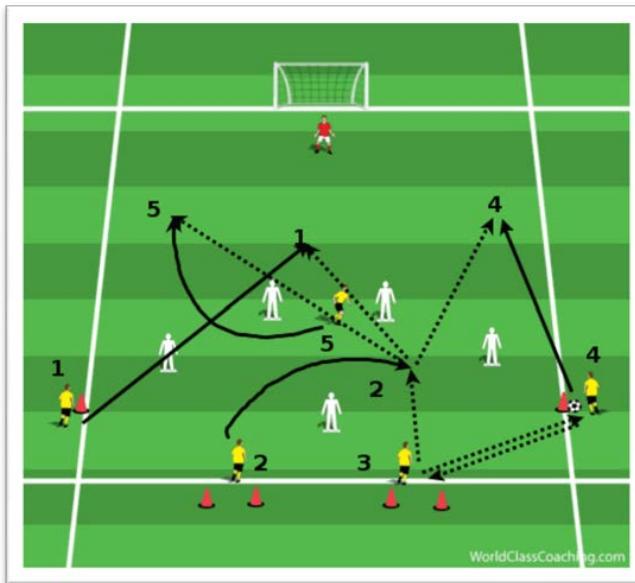
Coaching Points:

- Relevant body position to offer on the move
- Communication between players on the same side to switch roles
- Speed and accuracy of passes – into stride, to correct 1st time passing foot on the run

Progression/Variations:

- As the player in position A receives, he can pass forward to position C who will lay off for the runner to shoot
- The defender can track to run to add pressure to the shot
- As the player makes a diagonal run from Position B (Centre) to position C (Upper Corner), the pass can be played diagonally to volley into the goal
- As the player moves into position B, a pass can be played into his stride to pass 1st time into the player in position C
- Play a 1-2 with position C and score 1st time
- Add in a GK 15 yards behind position C and shoot on the 3rd rotation from a diagonal pass (2AR to 1CL)
- Add in a GK 15 yards behind position C and shoot on the 3rd rotation from a 1-2 with the player in position C (1AL to 1AR, return pass at position B, 1-2 with 2CR to shoot)
- Defender follows the runner on 3rd rotation

Diagonal Runs to penetrate the defence



All players have a set run to make from each position.

Player 1 will make a run from the wide position to between the centre backs.

Player 2 will arc round the midfielder and offer in front of player 3.

Player 3 will start with the ball.

Player 4 will make a diagonal run on the blindside of the nearest opponent.

Player 5 will arc away from the side of the ball and stretch the space between centre backs and offer a diagonal switch pass.

The drill

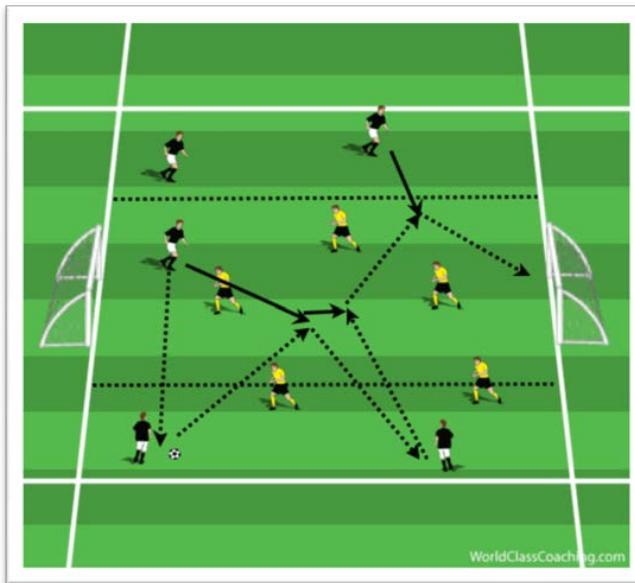
Player 3 starts with the ball. He passes wide to 4 who return's after taking a touch. Player 3 will pass into player 2 who will turn with the ball and find the next pass. He must take into account where his 1st touch has taken him, the speed of the play, angle of the runs, and how easily can the receiver use the ball.

All players should look to take 1 touch before shooting. Switch the roles of each player so that if player 2 starts with the ball, player 3 does the role of number 2, with 1 and 4 switching roles.

Progressions/Variations:

- Player 3 overlaps 4 as the ball is passed wide, 4 passes inside and makes a diagonal run inside the nearest opponent
- Add a back 4 who play with some pressure
- Add a holding midfielder who plays with some pressure
- Defence looks to drop off or play offside as it suits them

3 Zone Small Sided Game – Change the zone



Change the zone – The ball or a receiving player must change zone for each pass. IE, the pass cannot be passed to a player inside the same zone as you, unless they have moved from a different zone to receive the pass. In this 5v5 game, the central player has changed the zone that the ball is in by passing right and offering a pass inside by moving between the defensive units. He receives and passes into the player in space in the corner for a 1-2, the ball again changing zones. As he receives the return pass, his team mate on the right has moved inside to receive a pass by making a diagonal run into the central zone to score.

Coaching Points: Changing the zone

- No ‘fixed positions’, players must move in and out of zones to offer passes
- Players should change positions to offer passes, IE Centre to wide pass, centre to wide diagonal run to offer the next pass
- Look for wide – central diagonal runs to score
- Maintain width to always be able to change zones with passes
- Fill in spaces by looking to see where team mates are moving to
- Think ahead of the game

Champions League Final – Bayern Munich v Chelsea – Bayern use 1-2s to open Chelsea’s defence

The final of the Champions League, my favourite match of the season. I had predicted a Real Madrid v Barcelona final, and when the draw for the semis was made, I was delighted. Unfortunately, both Spanish sides lost and we have possibly the most contrasting final since Greece v Portugal in Euro 2004. Comparisons are the same – Chelsea, like Greece, are playing a team at home in the final of a major tournament. Chelsea, again like Greece, have avoided defeat in the semi-final against attack minded opposition by playing ultra-defensively and with the back 4 playing no higher than 20 yards from goal, with attacks coming from long passes to the target man – Drogba – and from set pieces. Bayern Munich, at home, expects to win. They know the Chelsea game plan and with the attacking players available, accompanied with Chelsea missing several main players – Terry, Ivanovic, Ramires and Meireles – they know that they have the best chance in years to win Europe’s biggest competition.

Chelsea’s game plan – Don’t concede a goal in the 1st half, defend deep, and stop Robben and Ribery from giving Gomez any good service. Attacking - look to play with Mata and Drogba on the counter attack, either floor passes for Mata between the lines, or long balls for Drogba to receive and relieve pressure from the defence.

Bayern Munich’s game plan – Retain possession, use overlapping full backs to allow Ribery and Robben to dribble at the defence often, look for lots of 1-2’s to open up little spaces in Chelsea’s tight defensive unit. Kroos and Schweinsteiger will play behind the line of the ball and dominate play.

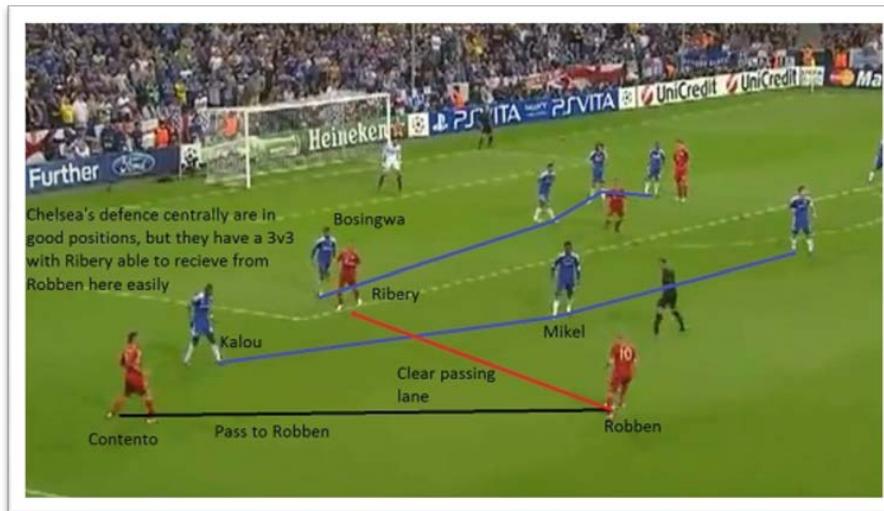
Starting line-ups



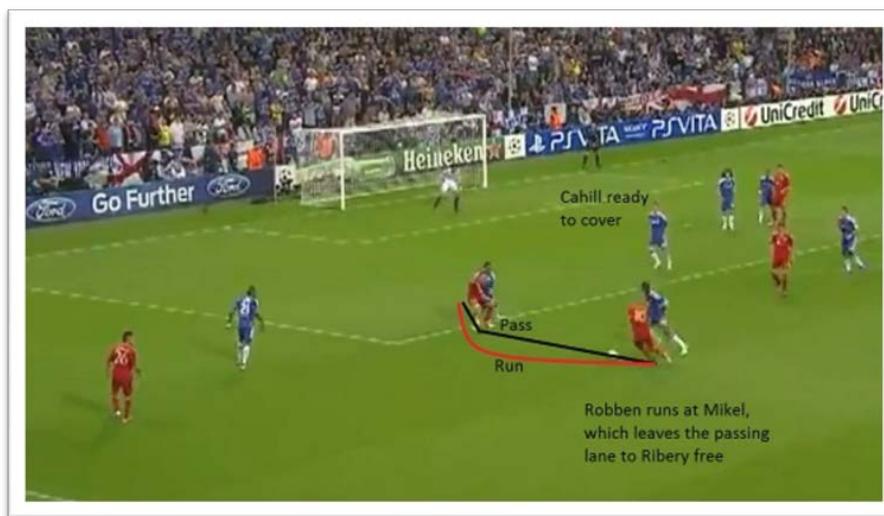
Chelsea line up in a deep 4-4-1-1 with Mata playing between the Bayern midfield and defence, supporting Drogba as the target man.

Bayern Munich line up in an attacking 4-2-1-3, with Muller supporting Robben, Ribery and Gomez in breaking down the Chelsea defence.

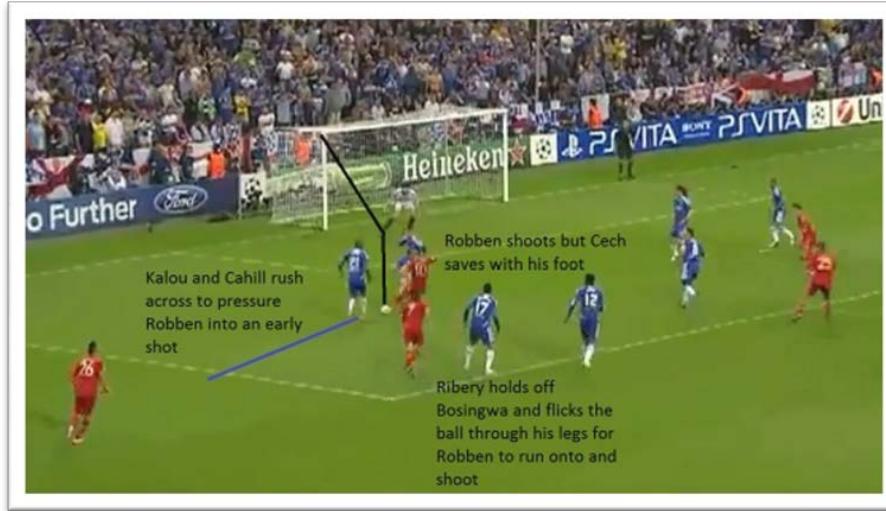
Bayern Munich – Robben 1-2 with Ribery on left side



Robben receives a pass, and with a clear passing lane to Ribery, Robben runs at Mikel to keep the lane open. Chelsea have a well-positioned back 4, with 3 players all marking Gomez, Bayern's top scorer.



As Robben cuts away from Mikel, Ribery is in position to receive the pass from Robben. Robben arcs round Ribery who blocks Bosingwa from pressing. Kalou and Cahill are ready to cover across to the ball.



As Ribery flicks the ball through Bosingwa's legs, Kalou and Cahill both press Robben who is rushed into taking on a quick shot, which Cech deflects onto the post and out for a corner.

This chance is made through Robben and Ribery knowing that a 1-2 will be played, and executing it well to penetrate the last line of defence.

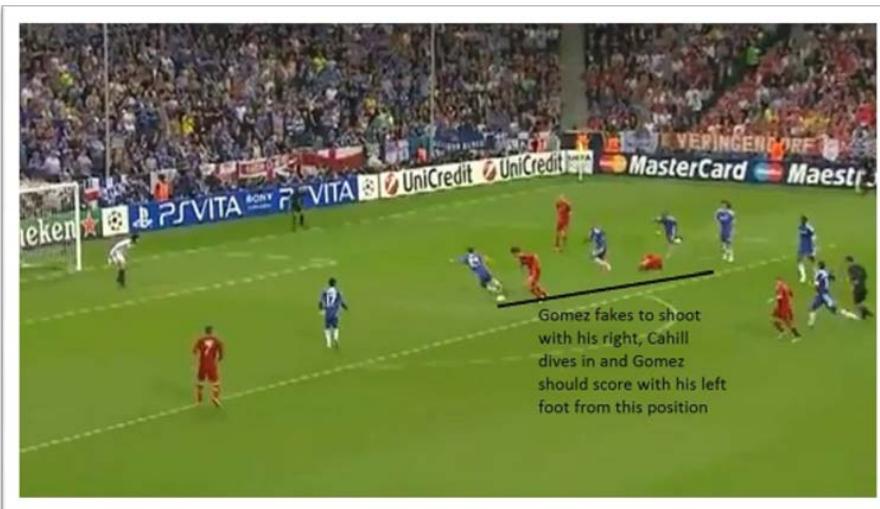
Robben 1-2 attempt with Muller on right side



Robben moves back over to the right side and runs at pace at the Chelsea defence. Muller offers a pass behind Robben's opponents and Robben when he plays the pass to find Muller, he continues his run inside to take the return pass.



Robben is blocked and forced to the right – Muller’s back heel pass runs loose – the player who reacts fastest will receive the ball – Gomez is in the best position to receive the loose pass.



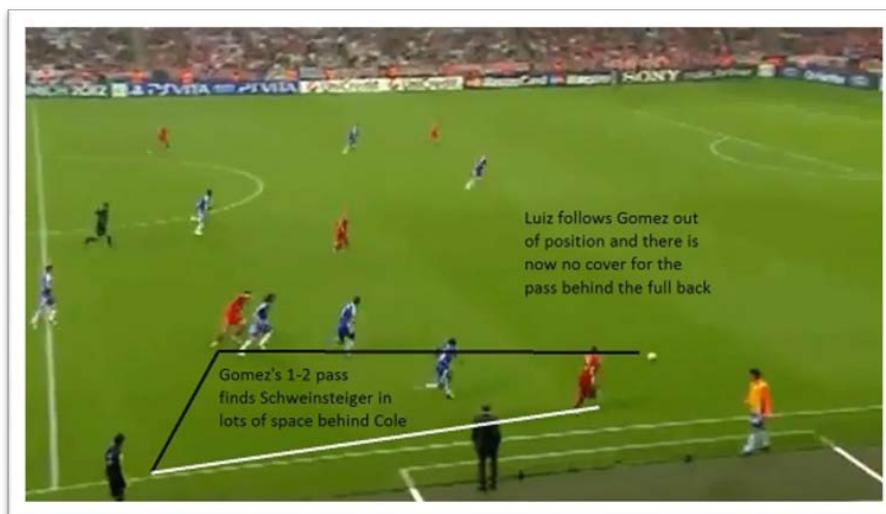
Gomez and Cahill move to the ball, Cahill dives in as Gomez fakes his shot with the right foot; this creates the space for Gomez to shoot from a great position with his left foot. Gomez blasts the shot over the ball under little pressure in a great position.

This chance is made from Chelsea being dragged to the ball and Bayern looking to cut through the defence with minimal touches around the box.

Bayern 1-2 penetrates the high line of defence



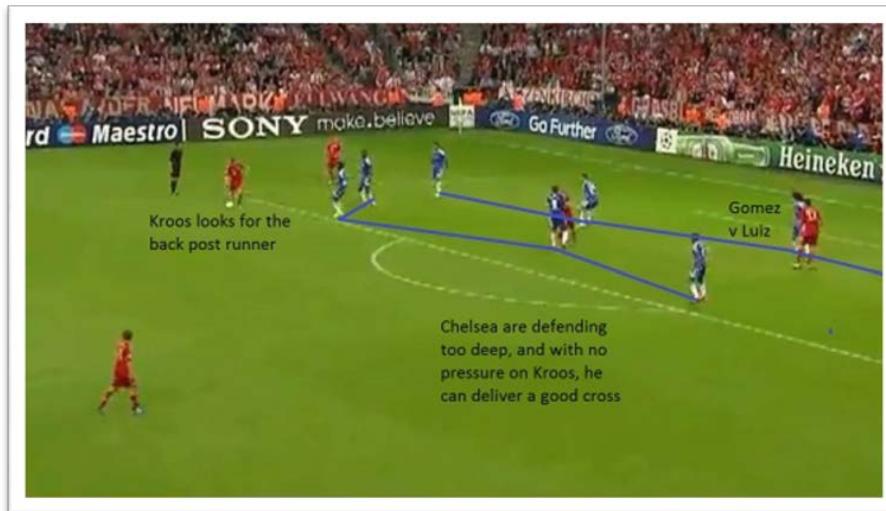
Schweinsteiger drives at the Chelsea defence and Gomez drops very deep as Luiz is playing very tight to him. Cole comes out to press and a 1-2 is passed as Cole presses.



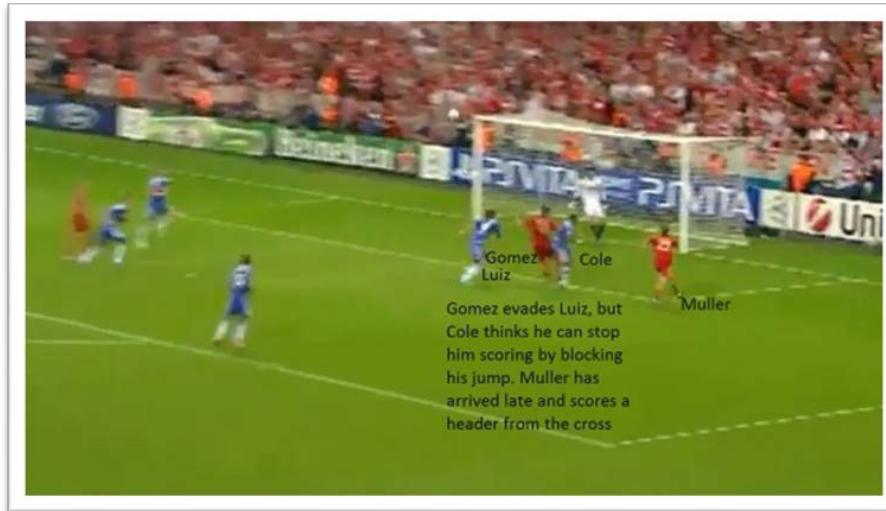
As Gomez releases the return pass, Schweinsteiger is far enough ahead of Cole to attack the goal on his own. Bosingwa and Cahill tuck in and when Schweinsteiger tries to find Ribery with the cross, Cech comes out and collects the cross.

This chance is created as Luiz is dragged out of position as he is marking Gomez, but instead of passing him on or leaving him 45 yards from goal with no passes ahead of him, he follows and this allows Schweinsteiger to play the 1-2. Cole had to press Schweinsteiger as he wouldn't have expected Luiz to be so far out of position.

Muller Goal – Kroos finds the cross

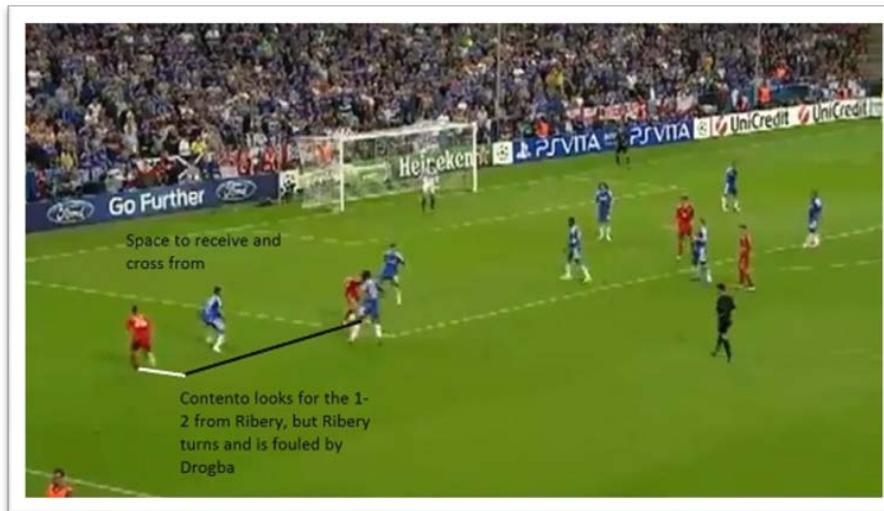


Chelsea have all 8 defenders and midfielders inside the box. Ribery passes inside to Kroos and runs ahead of his nearest opponent. Bosingwa expects the 1-2 and tucks inside to force the pass wide instead of behind him. Kroos sees he can't play the 1-2, so turns inside and under no pressure, finds a good cross into the back post with Gómez in good position, and Müller able to attack from the far side.



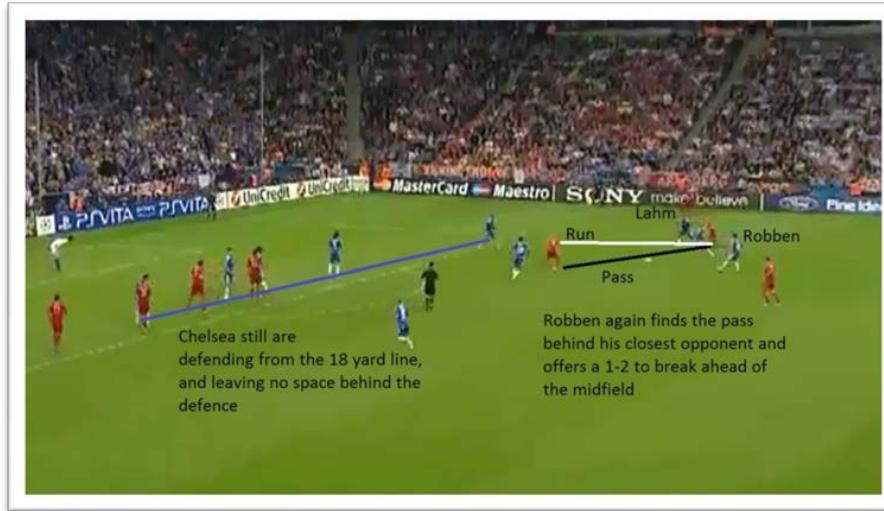
Müller scores from the cross! As the ball is delivered, Gómez loses Luiz. Cole thinks that Gómez will get a free header and blocks his jump. Müller has arrived on the blindside late at the back post and as Cole has challenged Gómez, he has a free header, which he heads into the ground and over Cech for 1-0 with 8 minutes to play.

Contento offers a 1-2 but Ribery wins a penalty

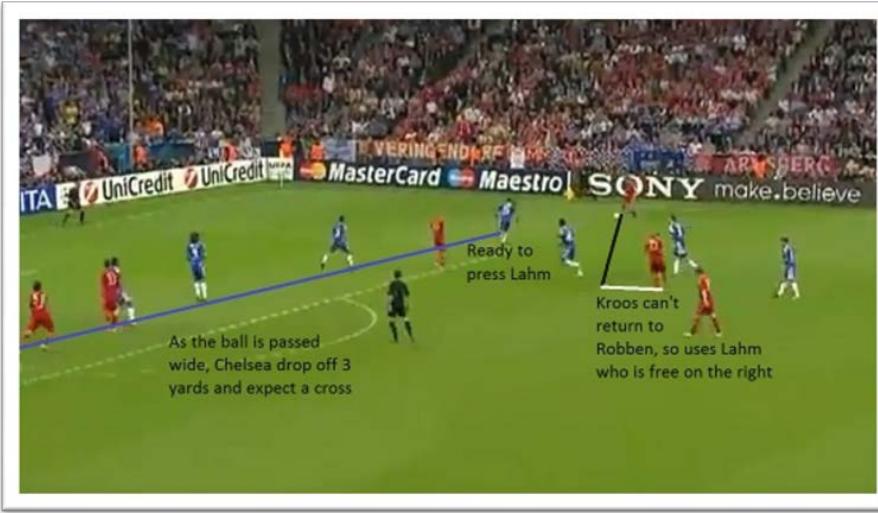


Contento again overlaps on the left side, and as Bosingwa presses, Contento passes inside to Ribery, who turns away from Drogba. Drogba fouls Ribery from behind. Robben misses the resultant penalty.

Robben 1-2 offer creates space for Lahm to cross

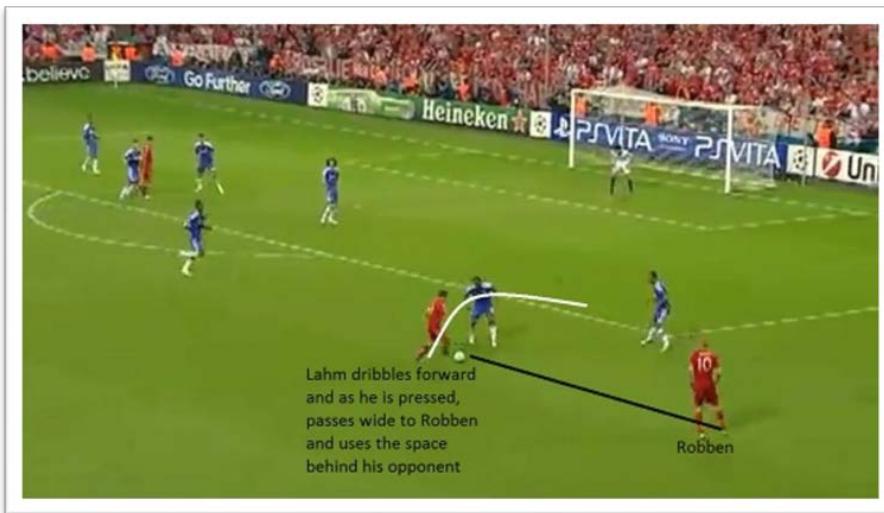


Robben again runs at the Chelsea defence, and again, finds the pass behind the midfield. He runs wide this time to receive the 1-2 and possibly run 1v1 at Cole inside the box. Lahm stays wide and offers an alternative pass wide if the 1-2 is unavailable.

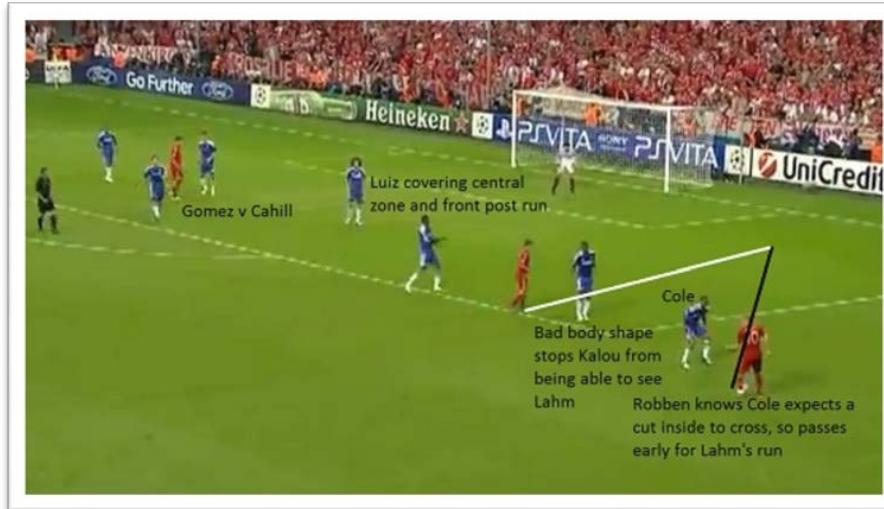


Kroos can't return the pass to Robben, and instead finds Lahm on the touchline. Robben has now entered the box and can now be able to receive a pass or cross inside the box. Chelsea have a very good defensive line and as the ball is passed wide, they drop off to allow themselves time to re-adjust and attack any crosses into the box.

Lahm 1-2 creates one last chance to win the final



Lahm drives forward into the space on the right, and play a 2v2 with Robben, against Mikel and Cole. As Robben receives, Lahm jogs forward and behind his opponent. Chelsea would expect Robben to cut inside and cross or shoot, so Cole makes sure that the dribble inside is not an option for Robben.



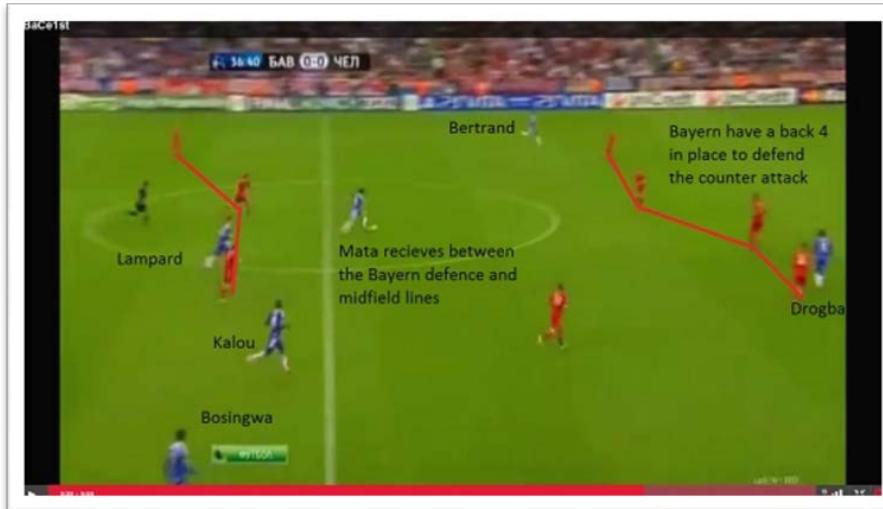
Robben slows down to give himself time to assess his options, he sees Lahm is able to receive behind the defence and he slides a pass behind Cole into the space for Lahm's run. Note Luiz is covering the central zone in case a cross is made, but also any front post runs by Gomez. Cahill is marking Gomez.



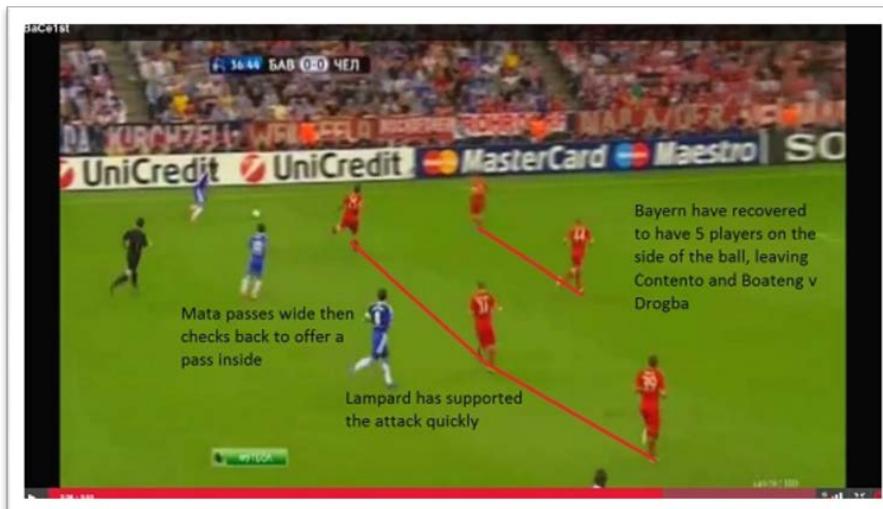
As Lahm reaches the pass from Robben, Cech rushes out to narrow the shooting angle; Luiz covers the low pass to Gomez, as Gomez and Cahill attack the cross. Cahill reaches the cross 1st and knocks it out for a corner.

Another chance for Bayern created from a 1-2 with good timing of passes and runs.

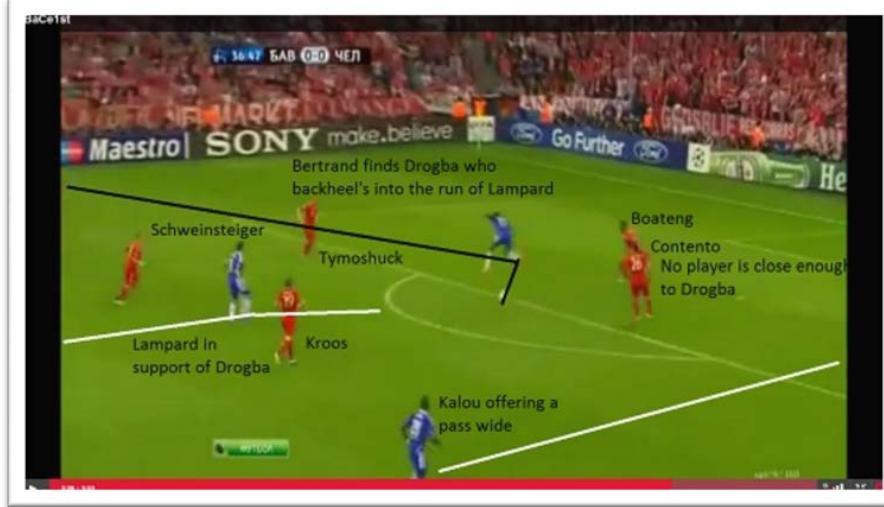
Chelsea highlights – Drogba the target man



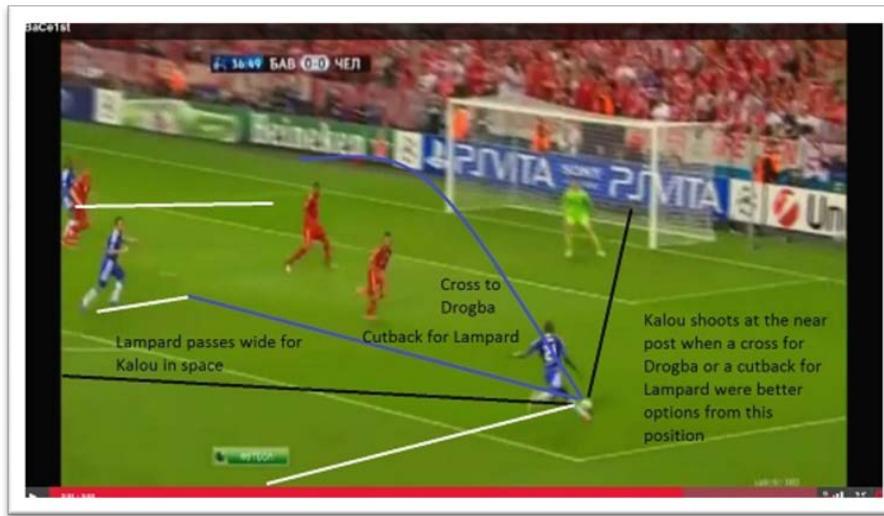
In a rare Chelsea attack that results in a good chance inside the box, Mata receives between the lines, and looks for options ahead of him.



As Bertrand receives from Mata, Mata checks off and offers a pass back to retain possession inside. Lampard continues his run forward, and as he expects Drogba to be the next pass, he keeps going between Schweinsteiger and Kroos. Note Bayern have recovered well and have 5 players in good positions on the side of the ball.

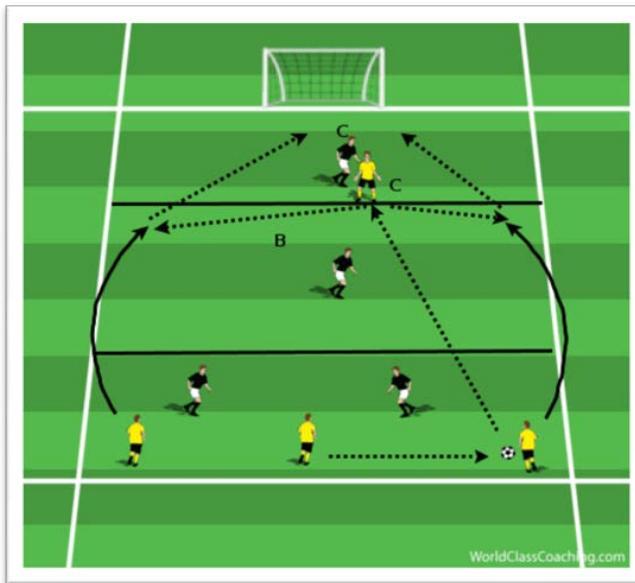


As Bertrand crosses to Drogba, Boateng and Contento are both too far away from Drogba, and Lampard has run ahead of the Bayern midfield and receives the back heel from Drogba. Kalou has stayed wide and can now offer a pass wide from Lampard if he chooses not to shoot from this position.



As Kalou receives, he has 2 good options – find Lampard with a cut back 1st time, or cross from Drogba at the back post. Kalou takes the wrong option and shoots, but to the front post where Neuer is already positioned.

Training Session to Develop use of a Target Man



Using a Target Man

Split a 40 x 20 yard pitch up into 3 zones – a 10 yard deep zone, a 20 yard central zone and a 10 yard end zone.

The aim is for the attacking team to find a clear path up to the target man, pass up to him for the TM to hold up inside the end zone. The 3 base players can all support the TM for a lay off to shoot.

Player B is the screening player who cuts off passing lanes on the floor to the TM, player C is the TM's marker.

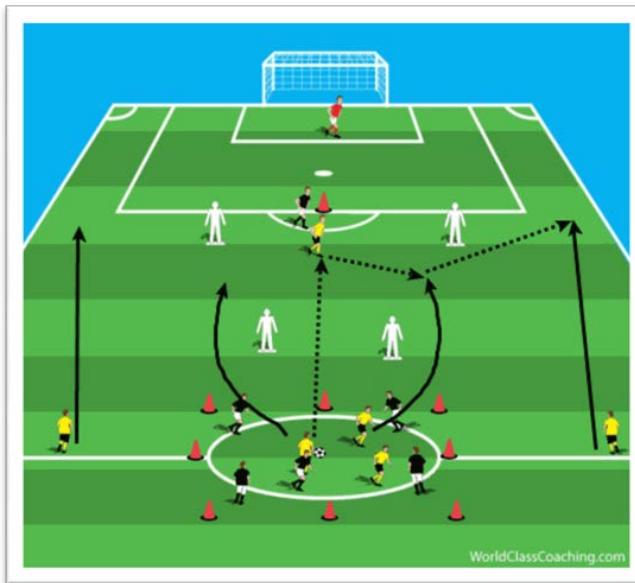
Coaching Points: Target Man Play

- Look for a clear passing lane to find the TM
- Drill the pass quickly to avoid interception
- TM must be able to hold off his marker
- Quick support to allow a shot on goal

Progressions/Variations:

- Add in 2 wide goals 10 yards behind the starting zone, if the defence win the ball, they can score
- Add in a 2nd centre back to play against the TM
- Ask for a high pass to be played into the TM

Target Man – Win possession then support



The yellows play with 3 against 5 blacks, who try to keep the ball. Once the yellow's win possession, they must play up to the target man, who holds play up against the defender. 2 midfielders support the pass forward by arcing the run around the mannequins on the left and right – this should offer a lay off angle. Both full backs will support the attack and offer wide passes behind the defence from the supporting midfielders. Once the ball is passed wide, the midfielders attack the box and look to score from a cross.

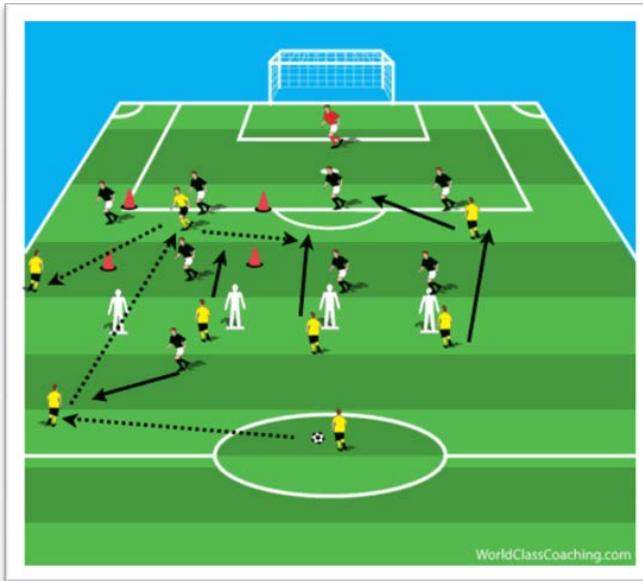
Coaching Points: Supporting the TM

- When the ball is won, be quick in transition
- Ensure you move wide of the ball to offer a new angle of attack
- Weight of pass to ensure easy delivery for the full back

Progressions/Variations:

- Add 2nd CB to mark TM
- 3 of the blacks make recovery runs to help the defence – increases speed of support
- Ask for a high ball to be played to TM
- Pass ball wide to full back once possession is won to pass into the TM

Target Man in a 4-3-3



Mark out a field with 4 mannequins, 35 yards from goal, and a target box on the corner of the box, to in line with the 6 yard box. This box should be 6 yards deep up to the edge of the 18 yard line.

The attack (yellow) set up in a 3-3 attack, with a CB who starts with the ball and passes to a FB (left back receive above). The midfield 3 plays behind the 3 central mannequins to start with. There should be a mannequin 10 yards in front of the FB to have a player to avoid with the lofted pass to the TM.

The defence play in a 4-3-1 formation – the 1 will press the full back and makes him pass forward under pressure.

The Target Man plays inside a box, 1v1 against a centre back. The CB must make it difficult for the TM to receive a lofted pass from the full back, and retain possession inside the box marked out. There can be a player screening the box who cannot enter the box until the TM takes his 1st touch.

There are 3 supporting midfielders who will all break ahead of the mannequins as the ball is passed to the TM from the full back, the TM can receive and pass inside to one of these 3 players. The nearest wide forward will drop deep to ask for a pass from the full back and this should create enough space to receive facing the goal from a pass from the TM. The far side forward should make a diagonal run inside take the full back with him; this should allow the widest of the 3 CM's to be spare on the far side for a wide pass inside the box from one of the central midfielders or a far post cross. The TM can pass to any of his supporting players, but make the best decision based possible.

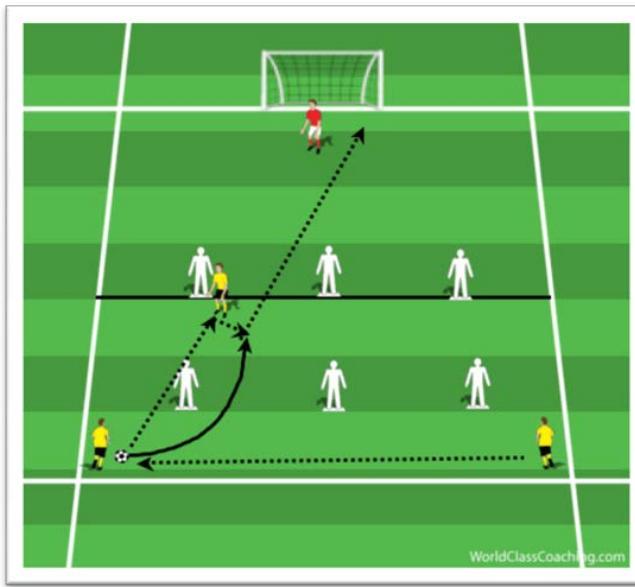
Coaching Points: Team Play

- Quality of delivery into TM must be good
- Timing of the runs in relation to when and where the ball is played
- Angle and distances of support
- Quality of 1st touch to find a team mate

- Movement into space to create a chance to score
- Quick decisions when on the ball

Training Session to develop 1-2's with a central striker

Penetration of the midfield



Set up an area of 25 yards long by 25 yards wide. 2 lines of 3 mannequins, 6 yards apart, with 7 yards between the midfield and defensive lines.

The midfield plays 1 touch and bumps a pass into the striker's feet, runs inside to shoot from the lay-off. Rotate positions after each shot on goal.

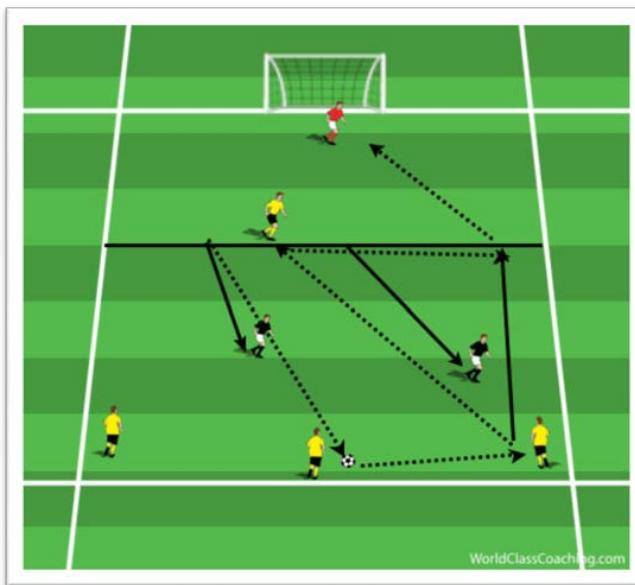
Coaching Points – Linking with the striker

- Timing of movement from striker to drop 2 yards to link play
- Pass to strikers "Safe Side" – defender on right shoulder, pass to left foot
- Pass and accelerate with no delay between actions to allow speed of support

Progressions/Variations:

- Add a defender to mark the striker and provide pressure from behind

1-2 with frontal pressure to shoot



Mark out an area 15 yards long and 20 yards wide. The goal is 15 yards behind the area marked out.

The defence pass out to one of the 3 attackers, and press quickly. The attackers have 2 touches to receive and pass to either the striker or a team mate. If the pass is played into the strikers' feet, they must support quickly and offer the return pass to shoot from inside the marked out area.

Coaching Points: Pass and Support

- Early decision to pass forward
- Movement from striker to open up passing lane
- Quick passes to open up the space for a forward pass
- Quality lay off from striker to enable shot on the run from midfielder

Progression/Variations:

- Place a defender on the strikers' back
- Add a 2nd defender to press the shot from lay off
- Add a 3rd pressing defender
- Play 1 touch
- Reduce distance between the pass from defence to attack
- Add time limit in to score a goal
- Attack has limited of number of touches between them i.e. 8 touches between the 3 players before 1-2 must be played

End Line Game – 1-2 with striker



Mark out an area with 2 zones – a midfield zone 30 yards wide and 20 yards deep, and a defensive zone 8 yards deep. The defensive zone can start as a 1v1 or 2v1 if numbers allow, 3v1 is the ideal objective as this replicates the tight spaces around the goal.

The midfield must not move into the defensive half to track midfield runners. They must get close to the ball and stop the passes, forcing the attack to move the ball quickly.

The aim – midfield must penetrate the midfield and find the central striker. Once the pass is played, the same player looks for the return pass from the striker, and then dribbles across the defensive line.

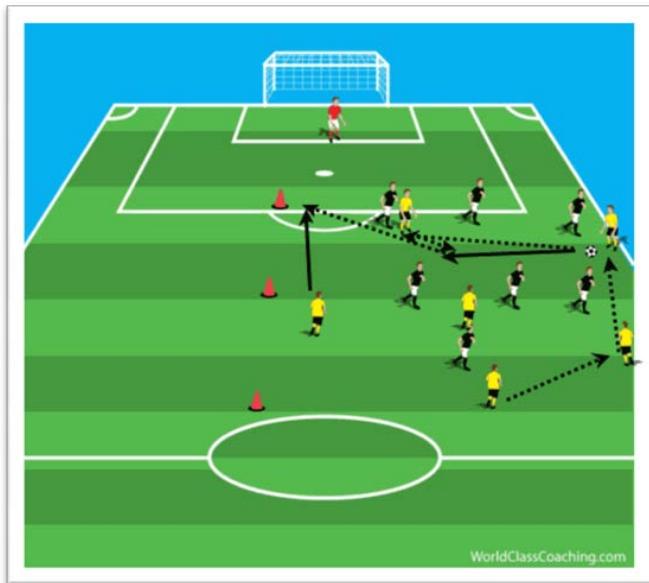
Coaching Points – Linking with the striker

- Try to suck a midfielder close before passing ahead of him and accelerating past to support
- Ensure that the striker can protect the ball when he receives
- Look to exploit space once the pass is played forward
- Communication, when can the pass be played, where can it be returned?

Progressions/Variations:

- If enough numbers for 2 groups, number all attackers – Coach calls out i.e. number 3 – number 3 will join the opposite group attack
- Reduce number of touches to increase speed of attack
- Add time limit to penetrate end line
- Make area smaller
- Add a small goal 10 yards behind the end line to shoot into from the 1-2

6v7 Game Scenario – Striker 1-2 to score/assist



The defence have an overload of 1 player, which forces the attack to pass and move quickly. To score, the attack must play a 1-2 with the striker, and from the return pass, either shoot or find an assist to a team mate running from midfield. In the example above, the wide player receives ahead of the midfield line, finds a 1-2 with the striker and then finds a pass on the far side for a deep supporting team mate.

Coaching Points – When to play the 1-2

- Is there a clear passing lane?
- Can the striker lay off into your stride?
- Can I support quick enough to receive the return pass?
- Where will pressure come from as I receive the return pass?

Variations/Progressions:

- Reduce touches
- Add time limit
- Increase number of defenders
- Decrease number of attackers

1-2's to cross – 4v4 wide position scenario



Mark out an area 20 yards wide by 25 yards deep to play 4v4 inside. A 2nd area will have a covering centre back and full back, with a covering central midfielder. The attack will have 2 attacking central midfielders and a wide midfielder not involved in the initial phase of play.

The 4 attackers will look to find a 1-2 with the central striker to release the player on the touchline to cross. In the example above, the full back is pressured, but he finds a 1-2 with the striker and exploits the space behind the full back for the return pass from the striker. He crosses into the centre for one of his 3 team mates to score.

Coaching Points

- Be patient until the right time comes to combine with the striker
- Be accurate with the pass – Safe Side
- Accelerate quickly for the return pass
- Timing of the runs to attack the cross
- Delivery – who has lost their marker? Can you find them?

Progressions/Variations:

- Allow the striker to switch positions with 1 player from the opposite box – allowing for players to find a pass from a player moving at a different angle
- Allow the full back to come inside for the return pass and play an in swinging cross or through pass
- Full back changes position with team mates to create confusion
- Play 5v5 inside the initial phase to make play tighter