



PLAYING THE

GK-4-3-2-1

CHRISTMAS TREE

COACHING THE GK-4-3-2-1

“THE CHRISTMAS TREE”

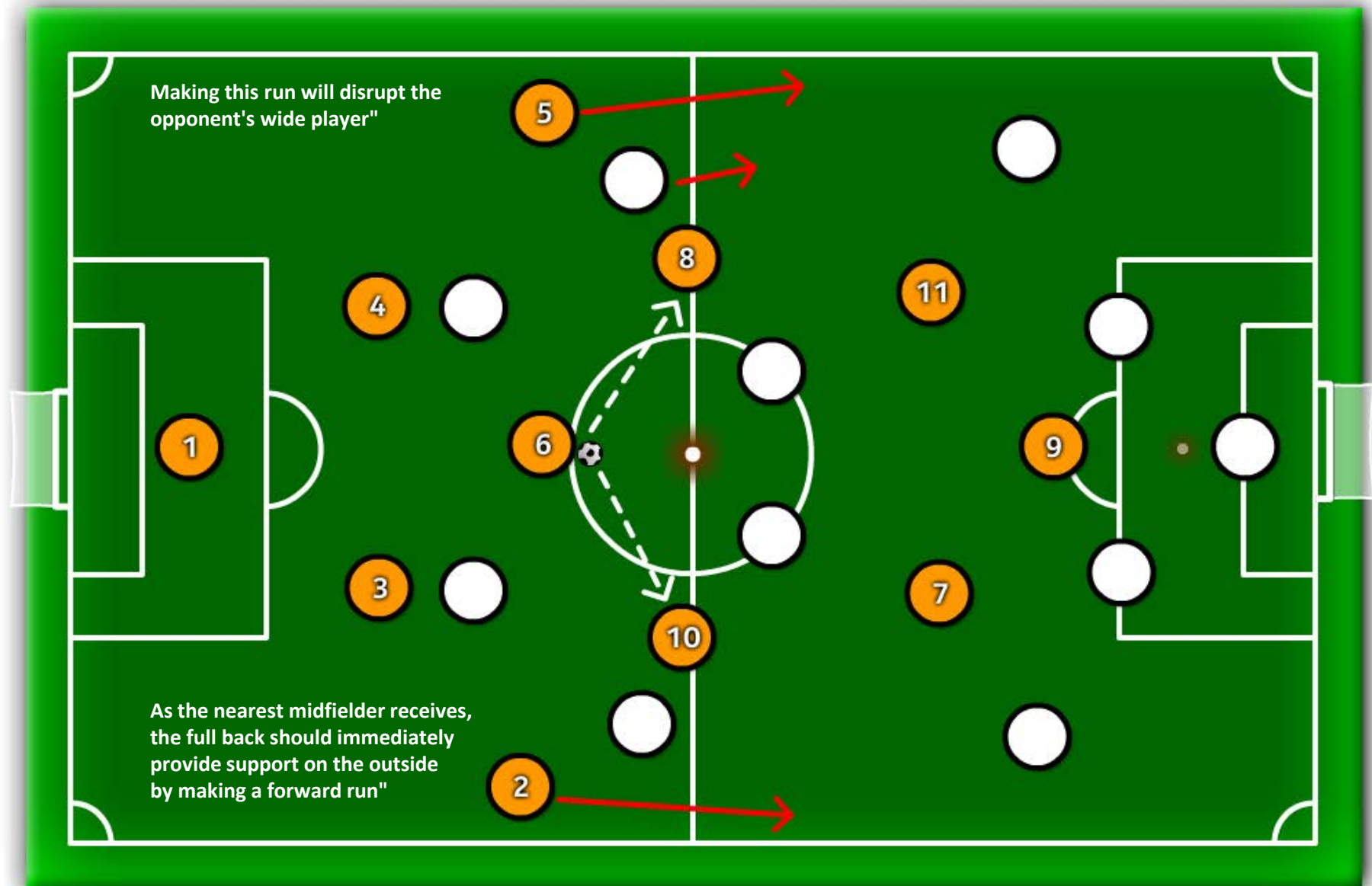
The 4–3–2–1, commonly described as the "Christmas Tree" formation, has another forward brought on for a midfielder to play "in the hole", so leaving two forwards slightly behind the most forward striker.

In this approach, the middle of the three central midfielders act as a playmaker while one of the attacking midfielders plays in a free role. The "Christmas Tree" formation is considered a relatively narrow formation and depends on full-backs to provide presence in wide areas. The formation is also relatively fluid. During open play, one of the side central midfielders may drift to the flank to add additional presence.

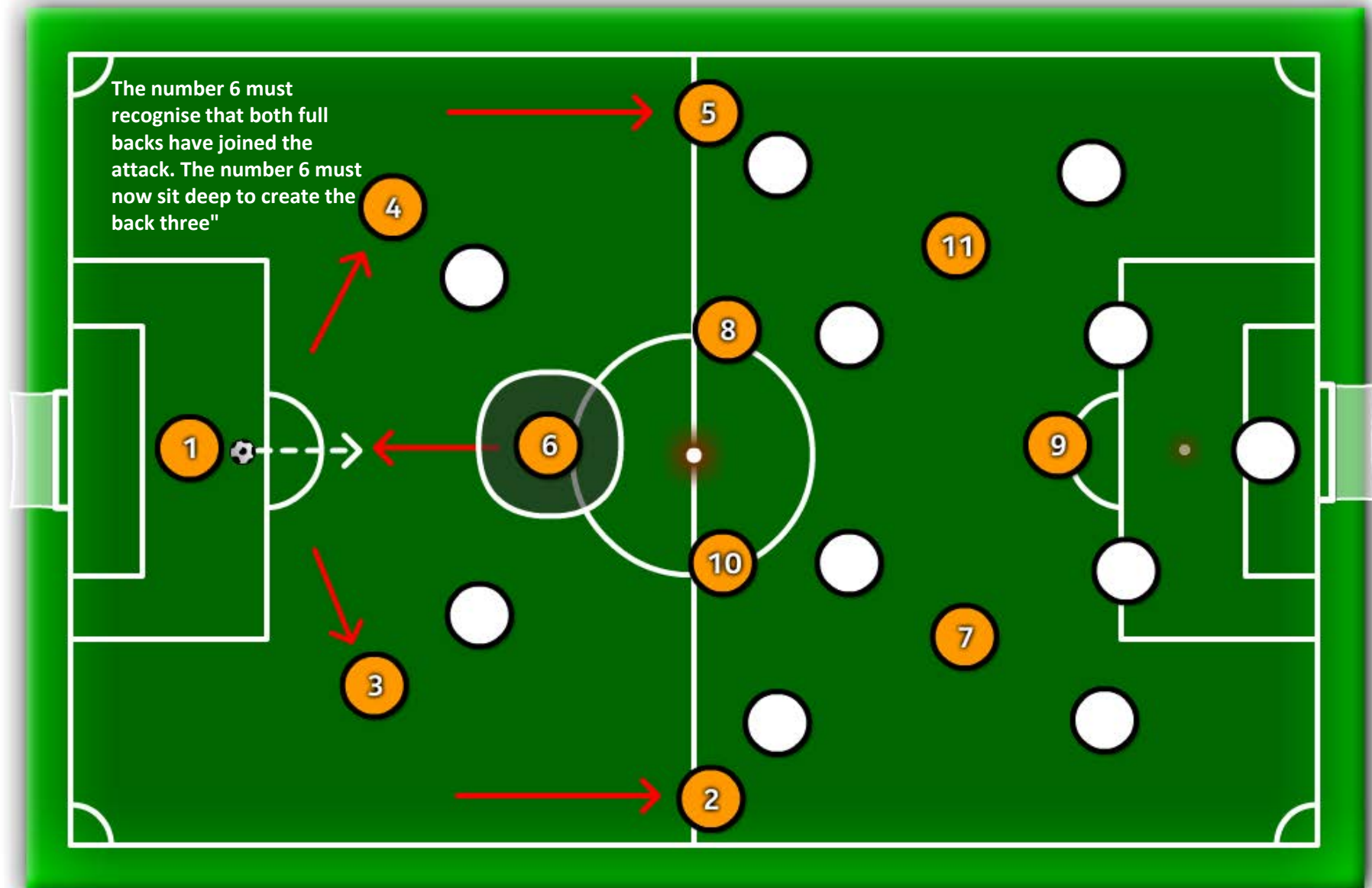
Below are some coaching tips which will be useful when discussing with your players.

1. The full backs should give width in the defensive and midfield third"
2. If both full backs join the attack, the number 6 must make a defensive three"
3. The number 6 must always want the ball in the role of a “playmaker”"
4. When the centre backs have the ball, the full backs must go very high"
5. Now the 8 and 10 pull wide to expand the midfield and open space for the 7 and 11"
6. The 7 and 11 play between the spaces of the opposing centre back and full backs"
7. The number 9 must run on the blindside of the centre backs"
8. When in wide areas, a minimum of three players must be inside the box"
9. The two wide players must come narrow when defending"
10. The team must now force the opponents outside and down the line"
11. The 8 and 10 go to apply pressure whilst the 6 screens in front of the defence

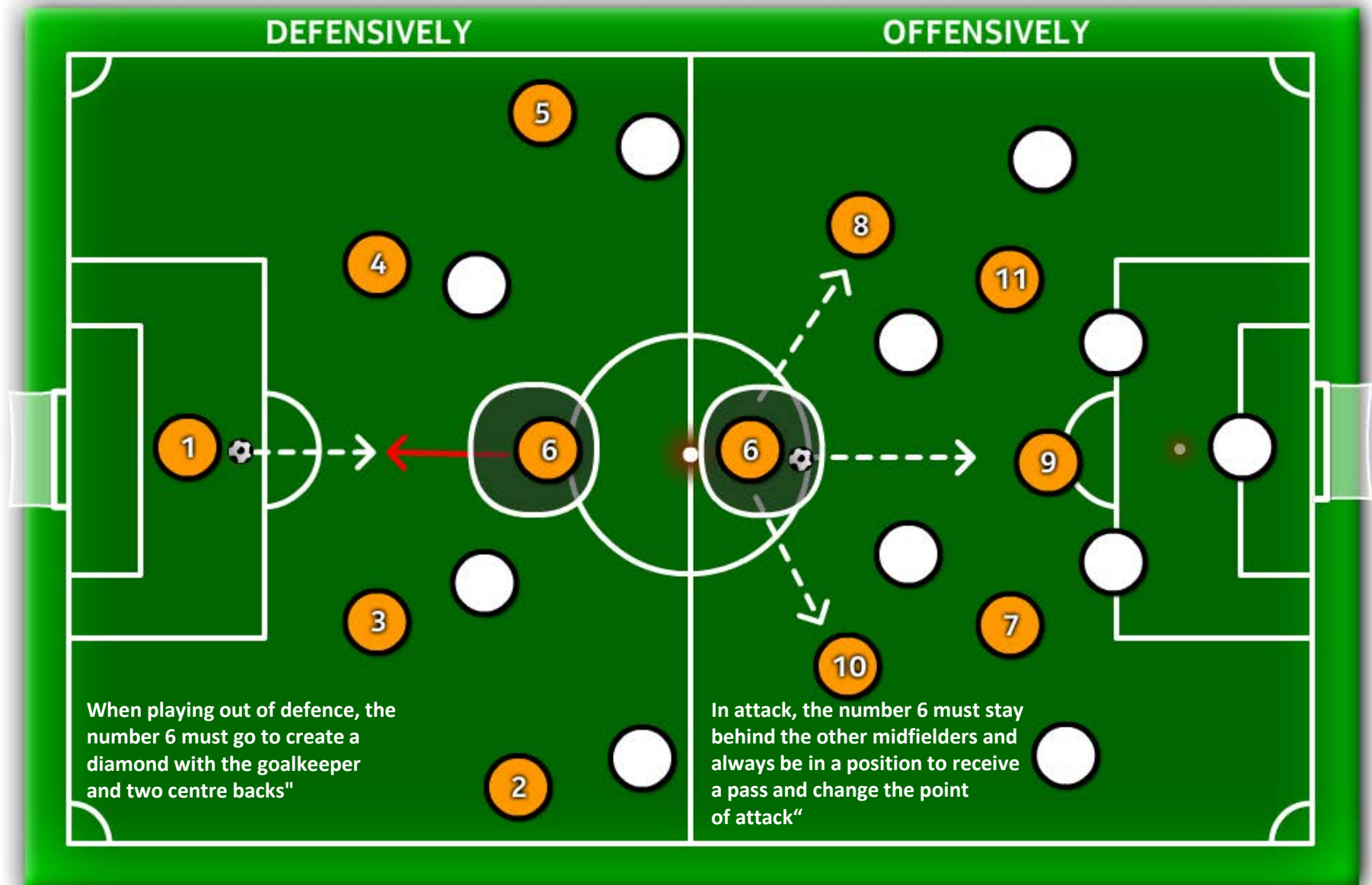
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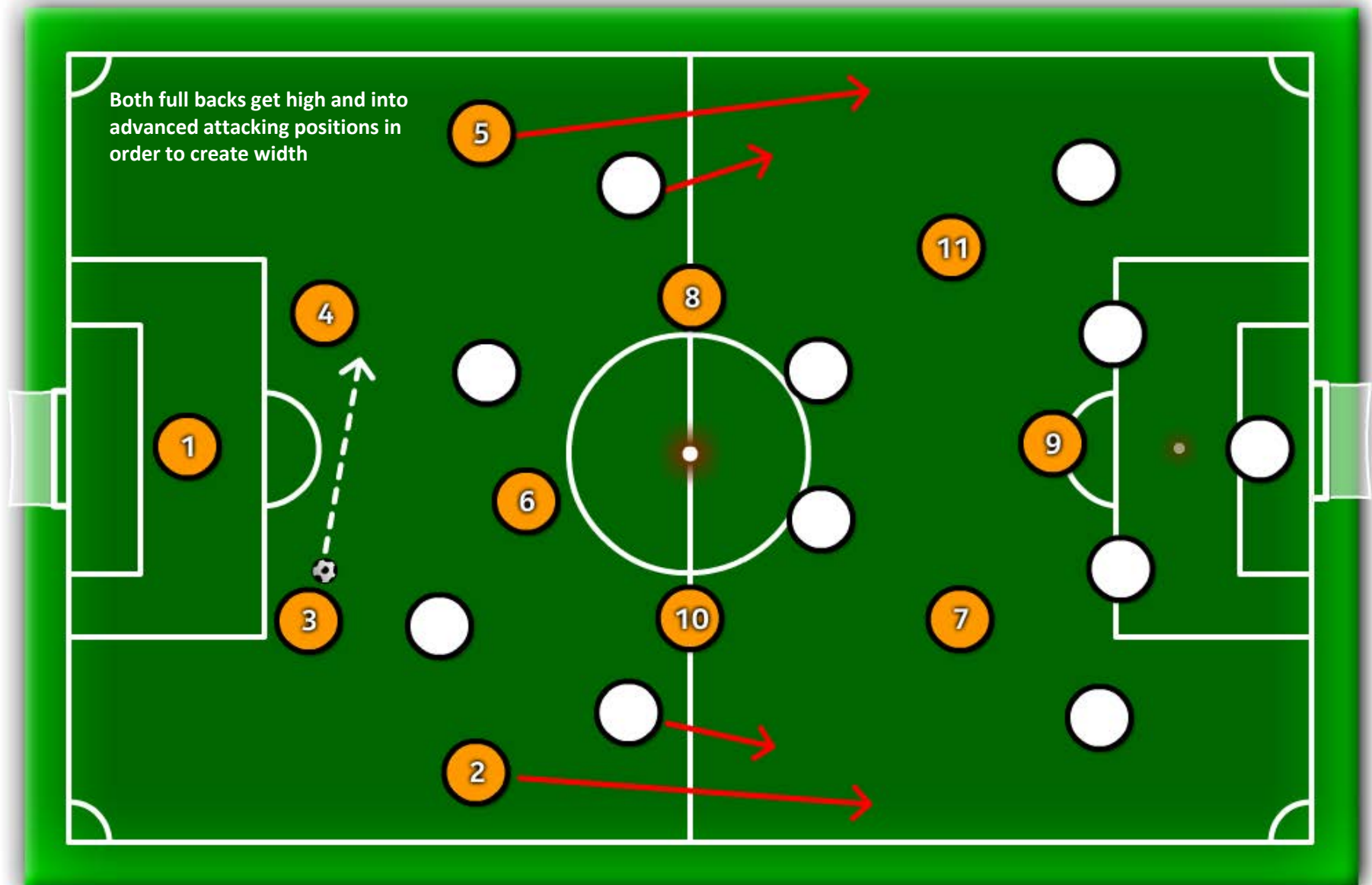
If both full backs join the attack, the number 6 must make a defensive three“



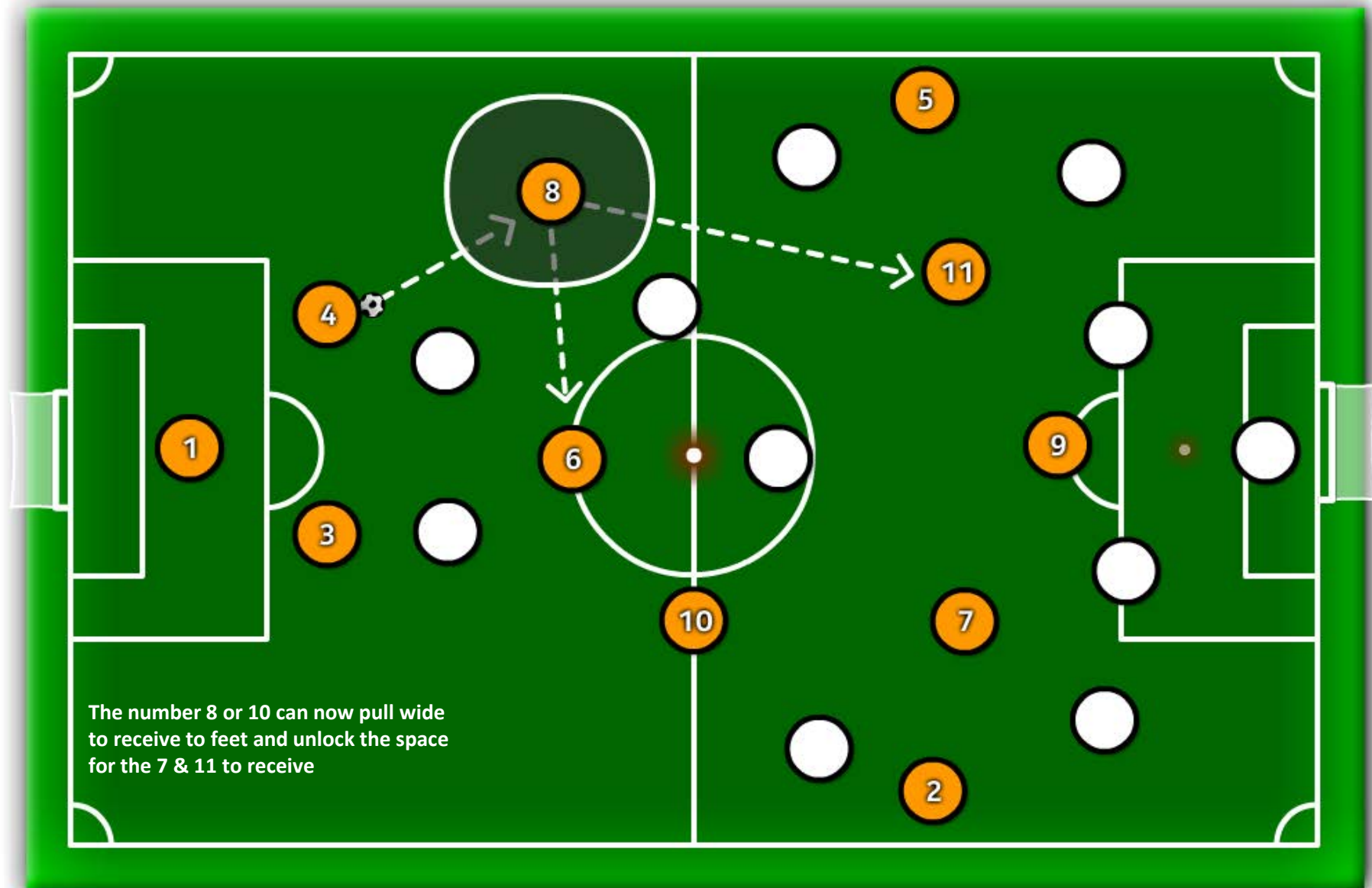
The number 6 must always want the ball in the role of a “playmaker”



When the centre backs have the ball, the full backs must go very high



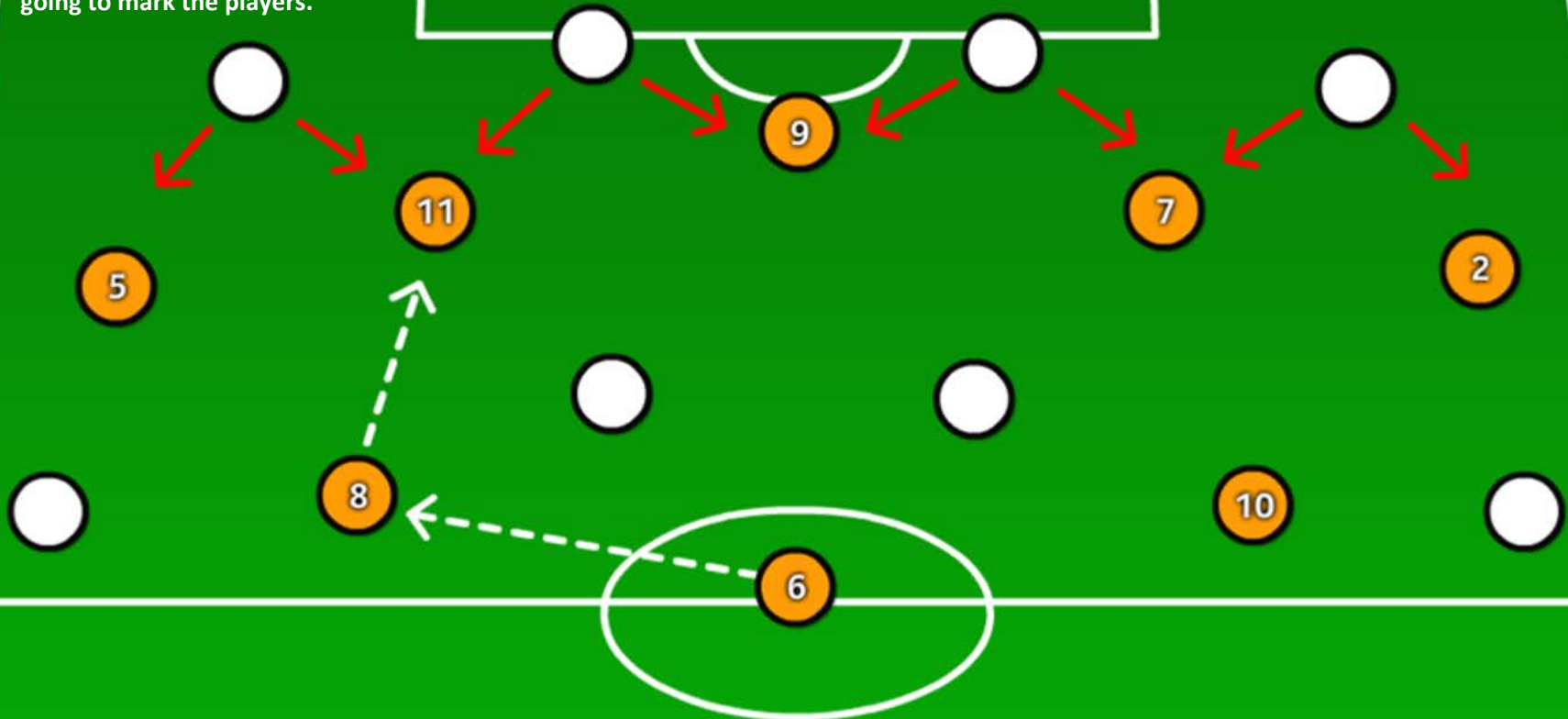
Now the 8 & 10 pull wide to expand the midfield & open space for the 7 & 11"



The 7 and 11 play between the spaces of the opposing centre back and full backs"

The 7 and 11 take up positions in the spaces between the opponents centre back and full backs. This creates lots of uncertainty in the opponents defence as to who is going to mark the players."

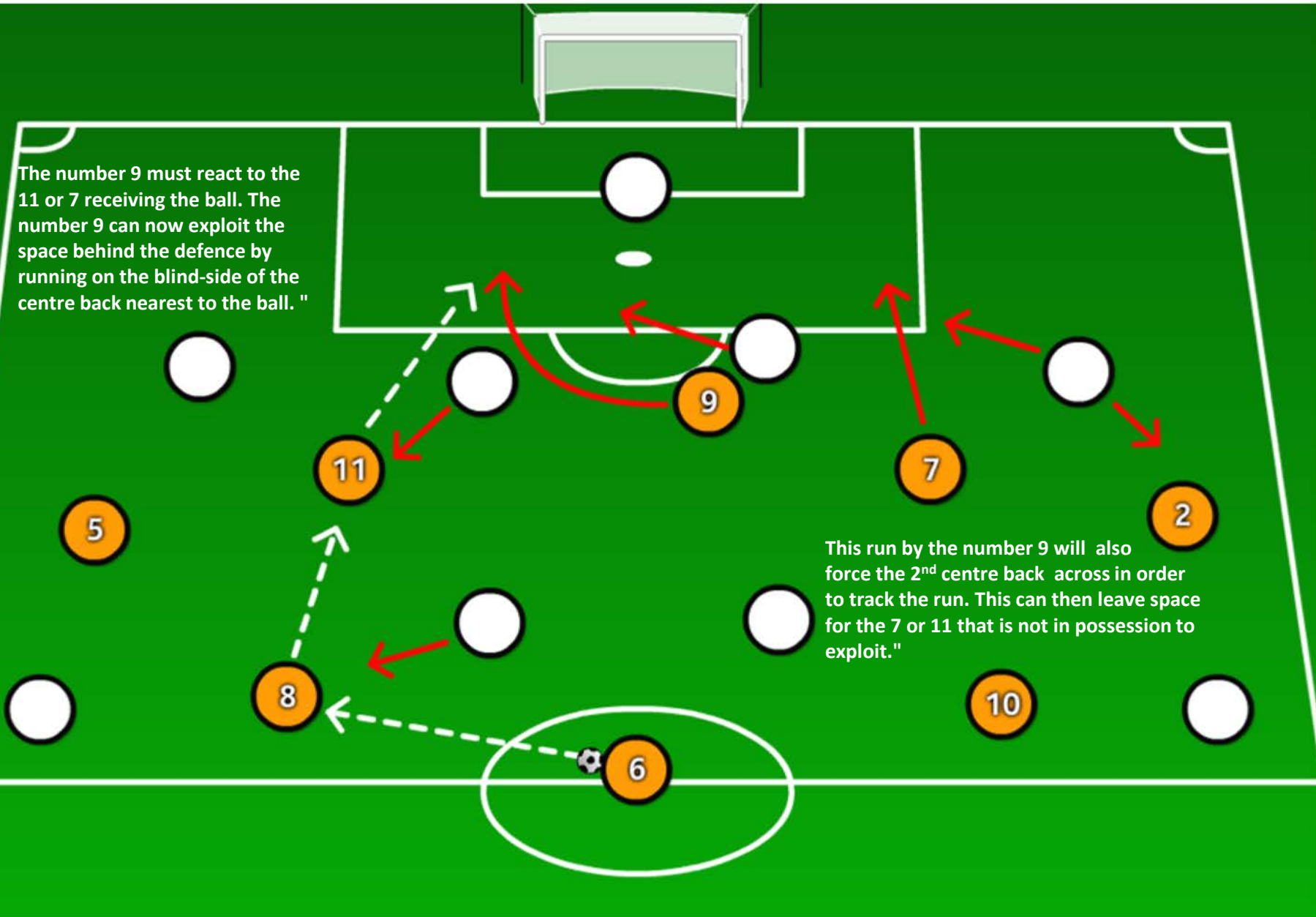
This uncertainty is what you are trying to create as it will confuse the defenders and pull the opposing players out of their defensive positions."



The 7 and 11 play between the spaces of the opposing centre back & full backs

The number 9 must react to the 11 or 7 receiving the ball. The number 9 can now exploit the space behind the defence by running on the blind-side of the centre back nearest to the ball. "

This run by the number 9 will also force the 2nd centre back across in order to track the run. This can then leave space for the 7 or 11 that is not in possession to exploit."

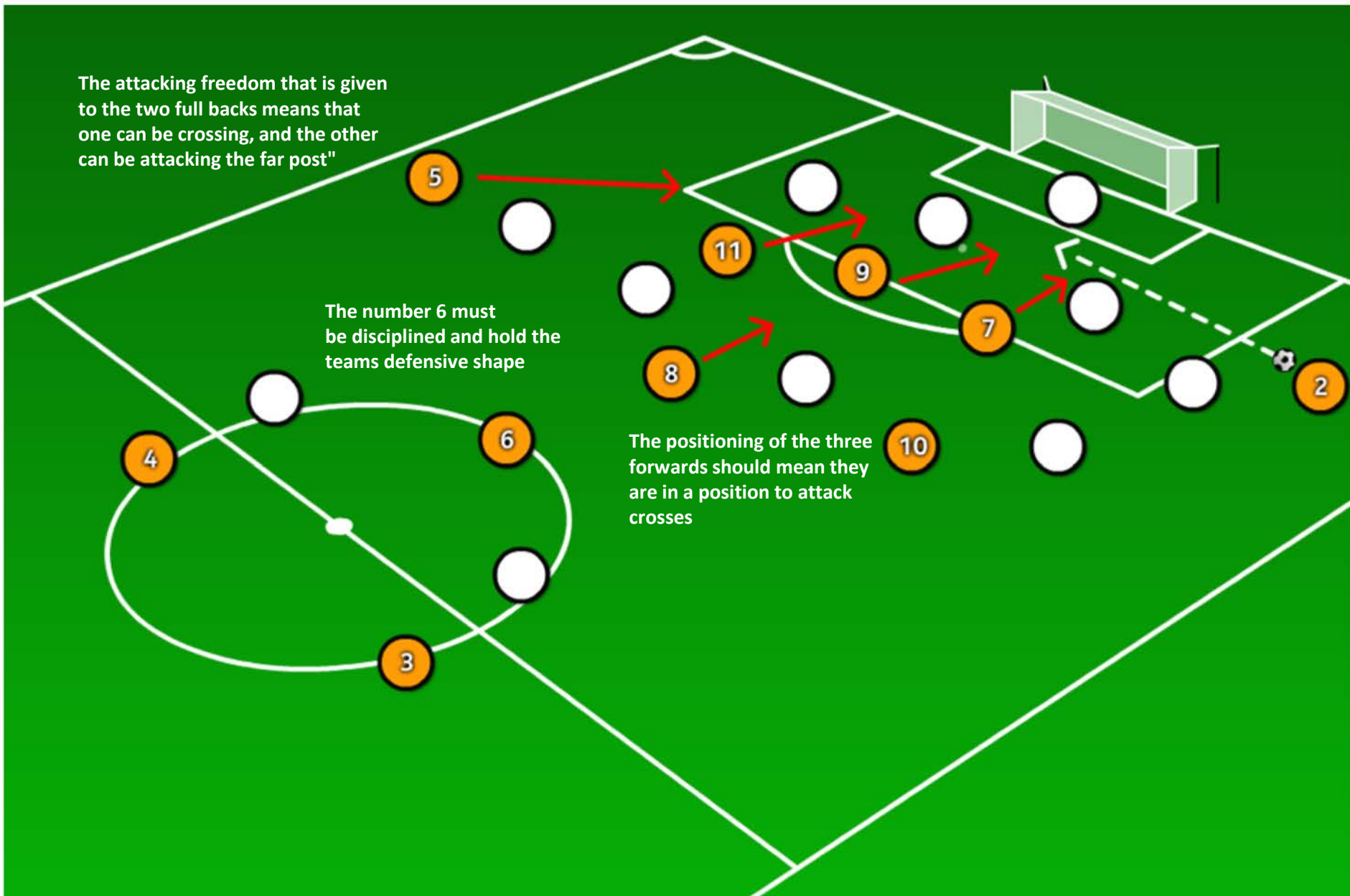


When in wide areas, a minimum of three players must be inside the box

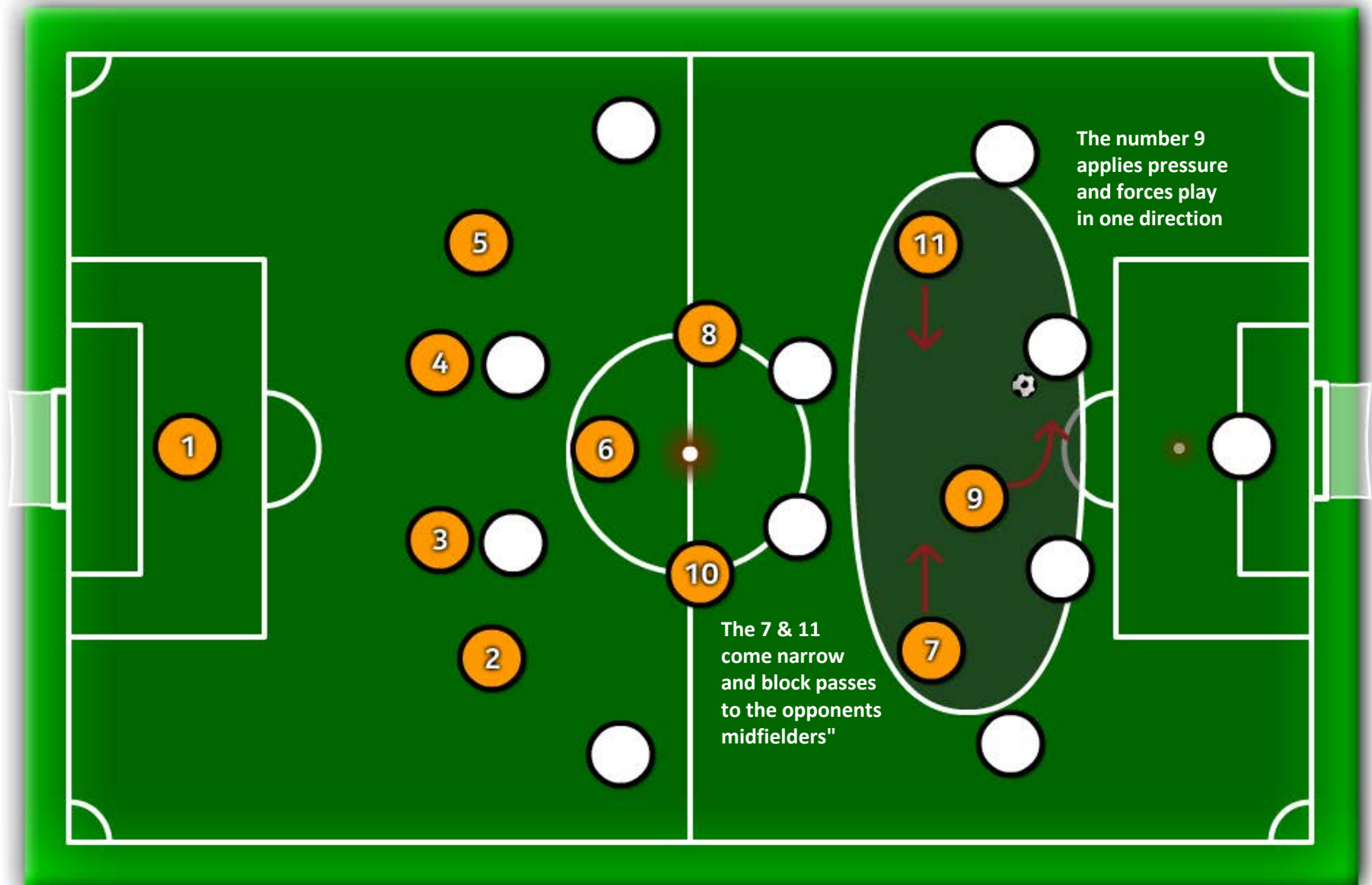
The attacking freedom that is given to the two full backs means that one can be crossing, and the other can be attacking the far post"

The number 6 must be disciplined and hold the teams defensive shape

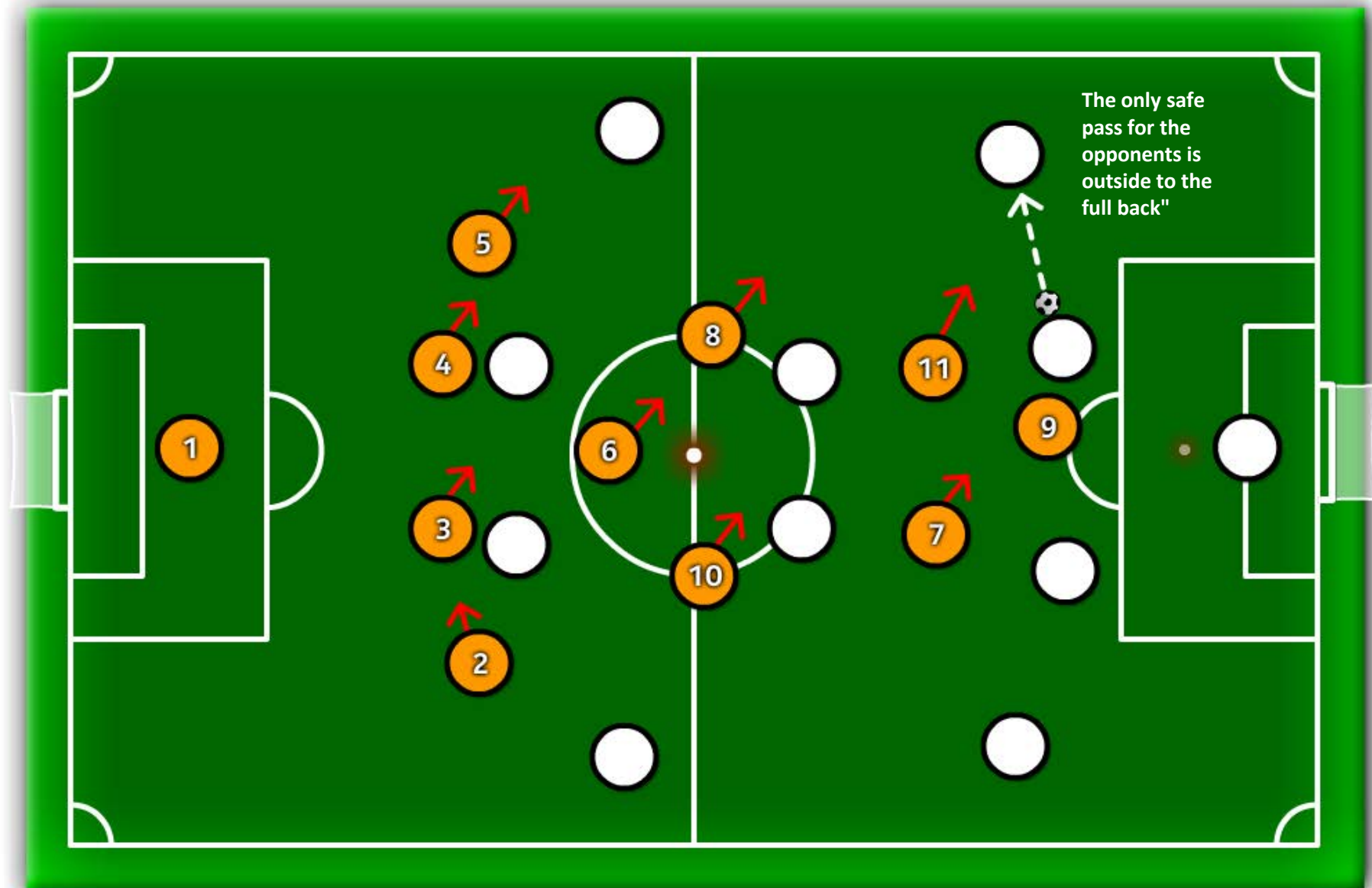
The positioning of the three forwards should mean they are in a position to attack crosses



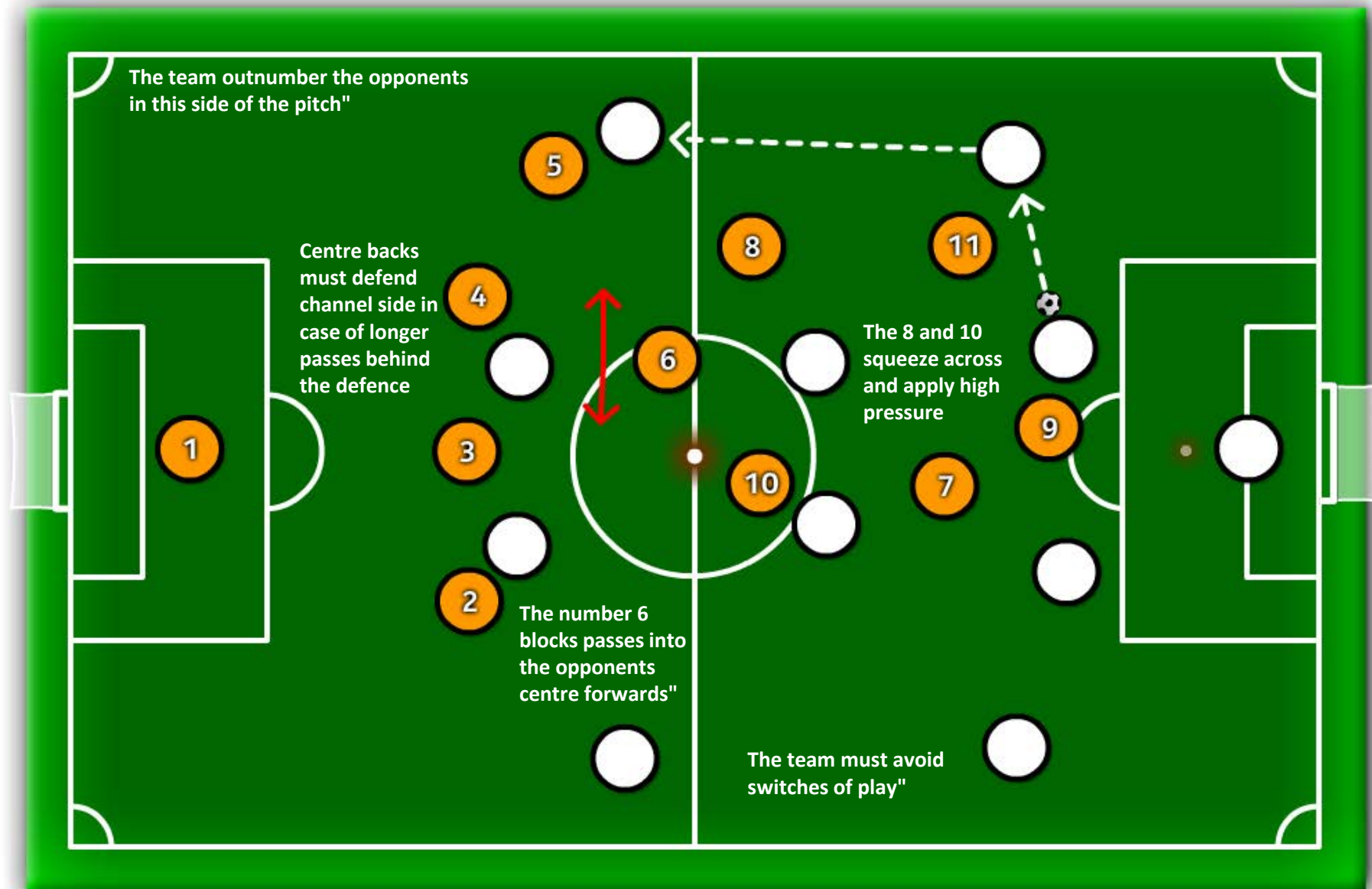
The two wide players must come narrow when the team is defending



The team must now force the opponents outside and down the line



The 8 and 10 go to apply pressure whilst the no.6 screens in front of the defence



FORMATION OVERVIEW

GK-4-3-2-1 CHRISTMAS TREE



STRENGTHS

- Lots of players in central areas"
- The movement & rotation of the full backs going high and 7/11 coming inside will disrupt the defence

CONCERNS

- Can lack width when attacking"
- Vulnerable to quick counter attacks"
- Vulnerable to quick switches of play"

ROTATING THE FORMATION

GK-4-3-3 – Number 6

- The 7 and 11 push out wide to make a GK-4-3-3 number 6 formation"

GK-3-4-2-1

- The number 6 can drop deep to make a third centre back. Now both the number 2 and 5 can push into wide midfield positions to make a GK-3-4-2-1 formation "

GK-4-4-2 Diamond

- The number 9 can go deep and rotate with the 7 & 11 going high to make a GK-4-4-2 "diamond formation."
- The above rotations should happen naturally in the game due to player movement.



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