

# Opposition scout report

## FC SCHALKE 04



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## ❖ Stable formation

- Use 4-2-3-1 formation practically in all the games
- Wide midfielders rarely swap flanks
- Pivotal system in pair of holding midfielder (one advances, another keep the position)
- Only in defensive phase the team is transformed to 4-4-2

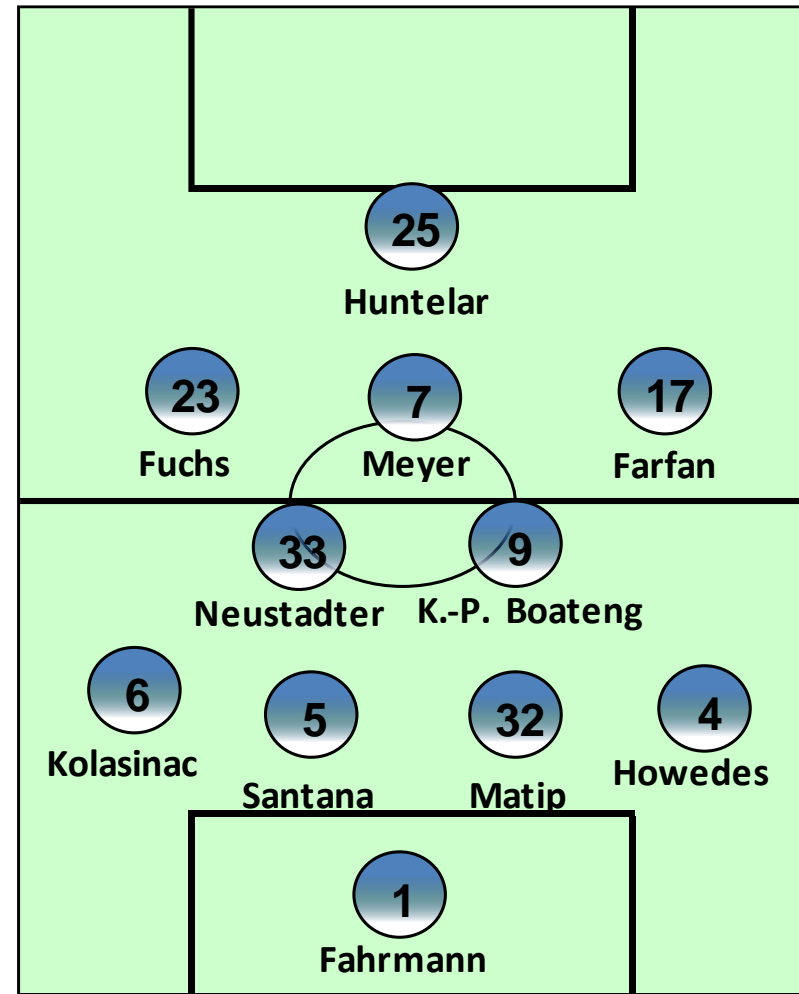
## ❖ Stable first XI

- Rotation of the XI is not used – changes in XI are reasoned by the injuries only
- Substitutions don't implicate a change of the formation

The coach (Jens Keller) usually changes left midfielder and the forward for the last 10-15 minutes

## ❖ Major losses in squad

- left attacking midfielder Draxler (he started training in general basis a week ago and there is a chance to be included in the squad for the game vs Real Madrid; he is a pacey dribbler)
- 2 main right fullbacks are injured – Aogo, Uchida



*Proposed first XI*

## ❖ **Build-up of attacks starts with central defenders**

Most of attacks starts from the central defenders. Both central defenders are good at long ball. Matip has good vision. Santana more often starts the attacks. The holding midfielders in 1<sup>st</sup> phase of attacks looks for space in the middle – don't drop deep to the line of central defender.

If the goalkeeper plays long ball it is sent more often to the left flank.

## ❖ **Most attacks are builded-up through central axis and developed with pass to the right flank**

Most of attacks are started with pass to the central zone with following delivering ball to the right flank (39% of attacks\*)

## ❖ **Gradual development of attacks in medium tempo**

Mainly the team uses short-medium passes in offensive actions with high accuracy (80%\*)

## ❖ **Passes from the flank (crosses, cut back passes) are the main means of creating threats for the opponent's goal**

In average 11 passes for a game in last 4 matches

## ❖ **The team has high shots accuracy – 50%**

Huntelar (excellent heading skills), Boateng, Meyer are the main threat in the penalty box.

❖ The long build-up in attacks through the middle is based on the pass to Huntelar

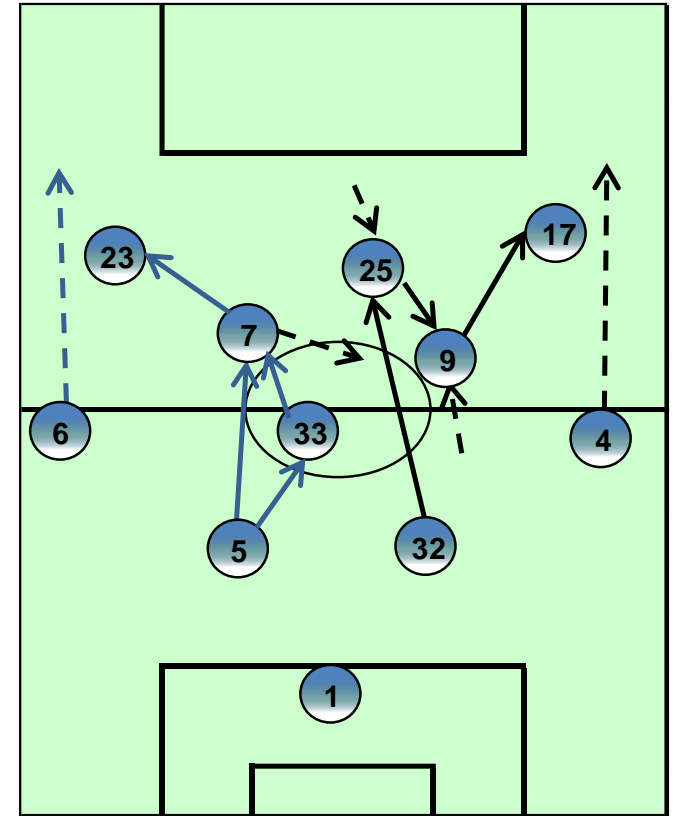
Huntelar has excellent heading skills and he is good at getting free bounced from the defender. The build-up starts mainly from the pass of Matip. The ball is played on the ground in most cases. Huntelar receives the ball facing own goal and play short pass on the nearest partner. Meyer and Boateng move for support at once.

There is the pattern in development of attacks through the middle - pass to the flank on wide midfielders. Also Fuchs can make run behind the defense.

❖ **The short build-up in attacks through the middle has the pattern as well – looking for Meyer**

The attack can be developed via central midfielder or central defender advances up to central line and give pass.

Meyer is good at finding space between the lines. He prefers to find position close to flanks, often to the left flank. Receiving the ball he pass to the flank as well.



### *Patterns in long and short build-up in attacks through middle*



# Passes from the flanks in final stage of attacks

**In final third the ball is delivered to the flank – mainly to wide midfielder.**

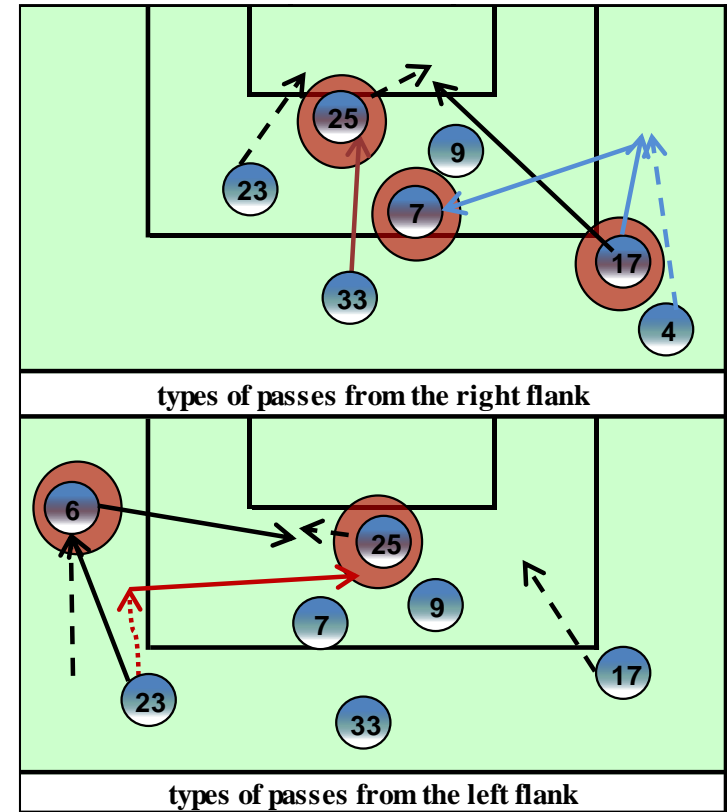
The respective fullback advances at once as the ball is delivered to the flank, often overlapping. Kolasinac is more active; may run into the penalty box using dribbling. Farfan plays the ball to the fullback rarely.

## ❖ **Crosses are the main means for delivering the ball to the penalty box**

73 % of crosses were done from the right flank in last 4 games\*. Farfan make more 90% of them. Often he is in a hurry with making cross and do it as coming closer to the penalty box. Most of him crosses are diagonals (outswinged balls).

3-4 players in the penalty box: Huntelar, Boateng, Meyer and wide midfielder of the opposite flank.

Neustadter collects most of rebounds. Taking the ball he is predisposed to play through ball into the penalty box.



❖ **Cut-back pass to Meyer is another threat for the opponent's goal (mostly from right flank)**

❖ **Boateng always focus on shooting – may shot at goal from any distance**

❖ **Only 38% shots at goal which is done out of box in current season\***

\* according to the statistics of Squawka ([www.squawka.com](http://www.squawka.com) – OPTA's project)

# Offensive transition – when winning the ball

## ❖ Medium change of attitude

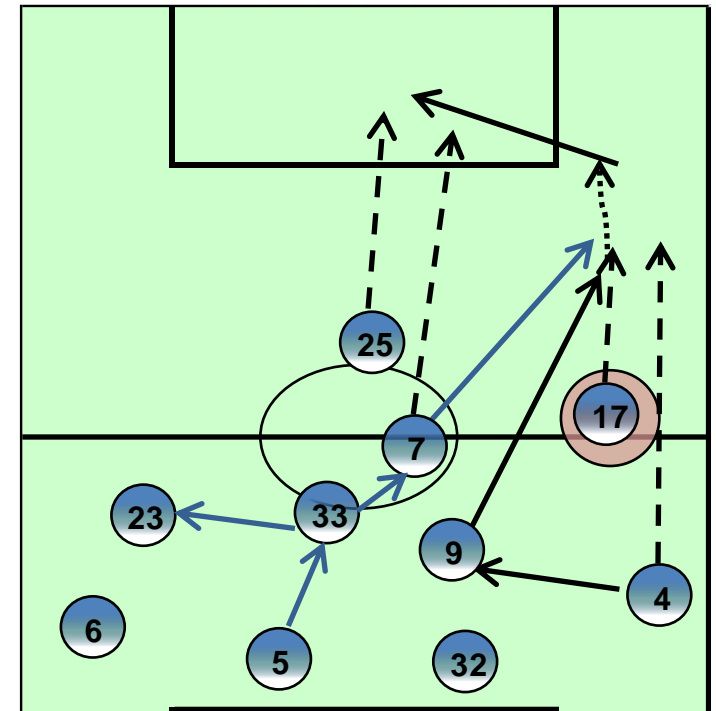
- In most cases the team tries to change the angle of attack, but using short passes or initiates possession – the player who get the ball playing back pass.
- The team is slow in getting support of fast transition if the pass to Farfan is used. Usually lack of the width in fast attacks.

## ❖ Main threat - fast attacks with pass to right flank

- Main threat in fast attacks - Farfan's movement in depth. He is dangerous if he gets the ball on running. Usually Boateng pass to him if the ball is won closer to the middle of the field.
- Right fullback moves up quickly in support.
- Farfan rarely run into the penalty box – prefers pass from the flank into the penalty box.

## Others:

- Meyer or Boateng may take individual run if the team win the ball on the opponent's half (middle zone)
- Goalkeeper is delayed in starting fast attacks getting the ball.



*Patterns of dangerous fast attacks*

# Key points of tactics in defensive phase

The defense starts in medium block using 4-4-2 formation

## Key points of the tactics in defensive phase:

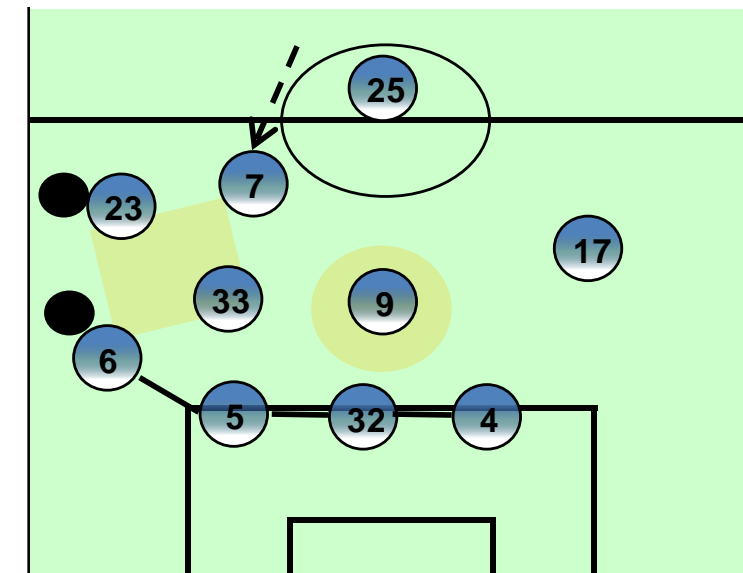
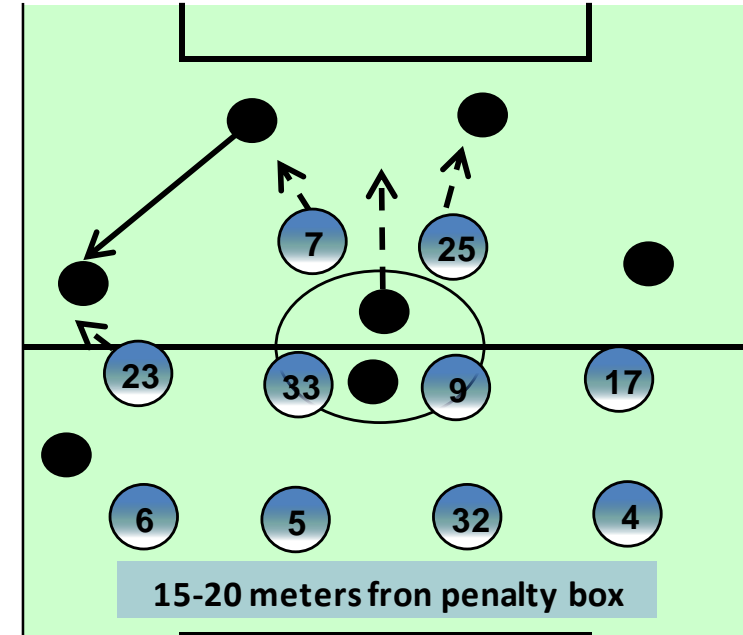
### **1. Meets the attacks of the opponent in medium block and turns the attack of the opponent to the flank**

Meyer and Huntelar close central channels, apply pressing on central defenders and try to turn the opponent's attack to flank. The team is rather passiveness in applying pressing against top-tier opponents.

Central midfielders don't chase central midfielders of opponent who drops deep in order to help in 1<sup>st</sup> phase of attack. The opponents used it in order to overcome pressing.

### **2. Shifting in getting advantage on flanks and focus on winning the ball in local pressing on own half**

Usually team has 3-4 players in in the area of the ball due to timely moves of respective holding midfielder and Meyer or Huntelar on the flank. Another holding midfielder closes central zone.





- ❖ **Defensive approach: zonal marking**
- ❖ **High numbers behind the line of the ball**

Practically the whole team except one player (Huntelar or Meyer) are behind the line of the ball. Wide midfielders are disciplined and timely in getting positions in defensive formation.

- ❖ **High defensive line**

Line of defenders is positioned about 15 meters above penalty box in 1<sup>st</sup> phase of defense. It keeps high positions when the opponent on Schalke's half. When the ball is on flanks - 1 covering line in defensive diagonal. There is a chance for balls behind the defense.

- ❖ **Solid central defenders**

- the central defenders are good at covering in case of long balls behind the defenders' back
- the central defenders are good at heading challenges, but the team usually lose 2<sup>nd</sup> balls

- ❖ **Focus on interceptions**

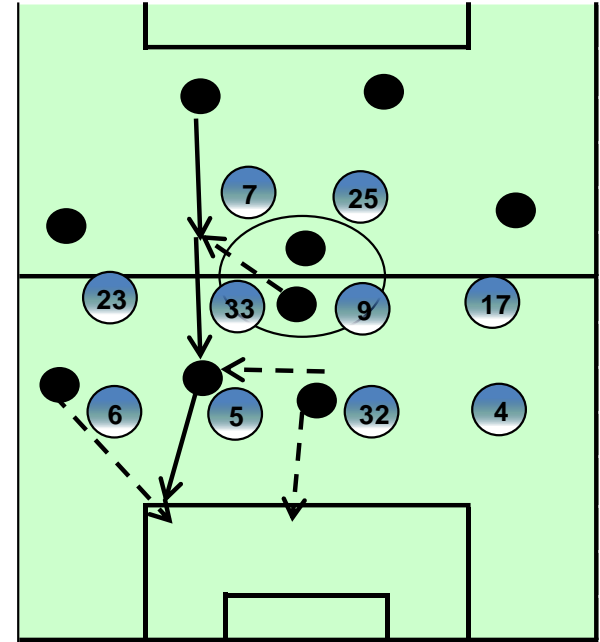
Technically - players are not aggressive and non-active in tackling; prefer interceptions (most of interceptions in the middle of the field)

- ❖ **Goalkeeper Fahrmann is strong at shots stopping, but less confident in catching crosses**

## Ways for breaking up the defense of FC Schalke 04

### ❖ Playing the ball into the zone between the lines

- Unstable compactness - gap between the lines of defense and midfield. Opponents feed forwards via gaps in midfielders line – between wide and central midfielder. The central defenders is not always marks the opponents who are getting free between the lines
- The best way for forward for getting free was lateral movement. The defenders is not good at transferring opponents from one to another zone.

❖ **Fast change the angle of attacks**

- The team is delay in shifting from one flank to another and quick change the flank of the attack with advancing fullback on the flank -> high chance to get 2 vs 2 on the flank
- More favorable way – from right to left flank of attack. Boateng is not good at closing reference point in the middle for changing the angle of attacks. And the right flank of defense is weaker due to not good defensive skills of Farfan.

### ❖ Kolasinac positional errors in line of defense

- ❖ **In final stage of attacks crosses aimed on far post is dangerous.** The fullback is positioned closer to center and no one close far post.

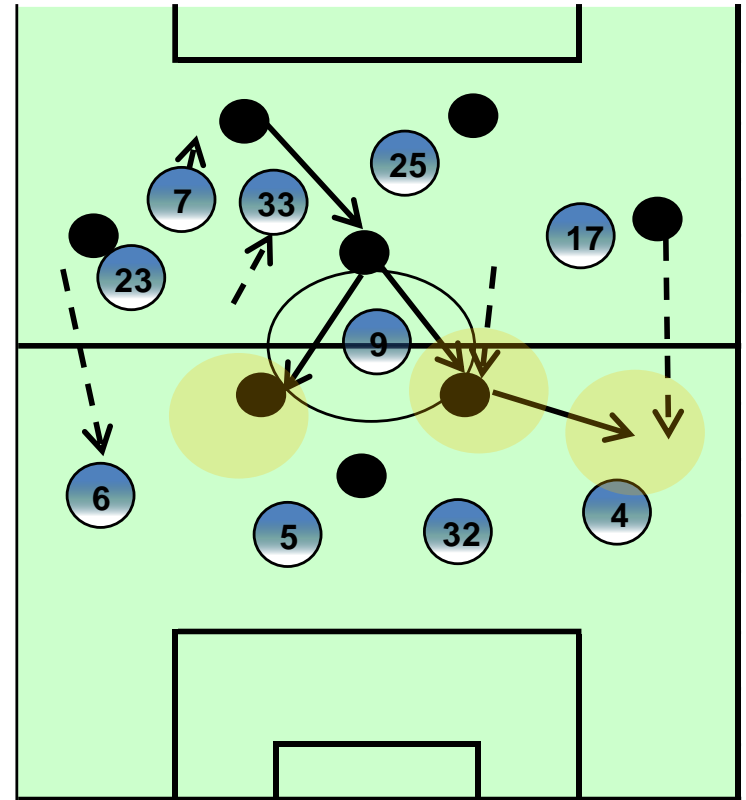
# Defensive transition – after losing possession of the ball

## ❖ The team aims on «freeze» fast attacks of the opponent rather immediate regaining possession:

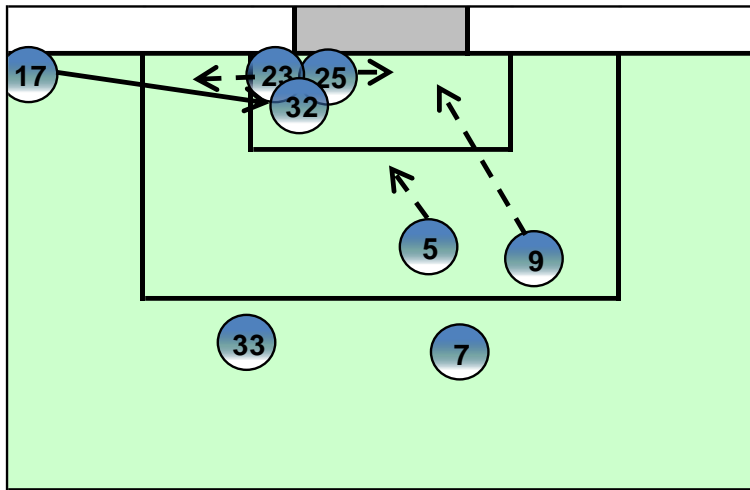
- Fullback runs to recover position in line of defenders
- Only 2 nearest players apply pressing on the opponent with the ball (mostly one of them is stepping up holding midfielder)

## ❖ The favorable way for opponent to start the fast transition to attack – pass through the centre

- K.-P. Boateng is the only possible block of opponents' transition through the central channel (Neustadter more often go to pressing) and often he takes erroneous position in covering zone
  - The central defenders are positioned rather far from midfield line and not always timely on interceptions
- ## ❖ Left flank of attack is more dangerous in fast offensive transitions
- Farfan sometimes lose concentration and don't recover his position quickly. Moreover he is not good at defensive actions.
  - Right fullback is proposed to be Howedes who is nominal central defender



## Corner kick from the left flank

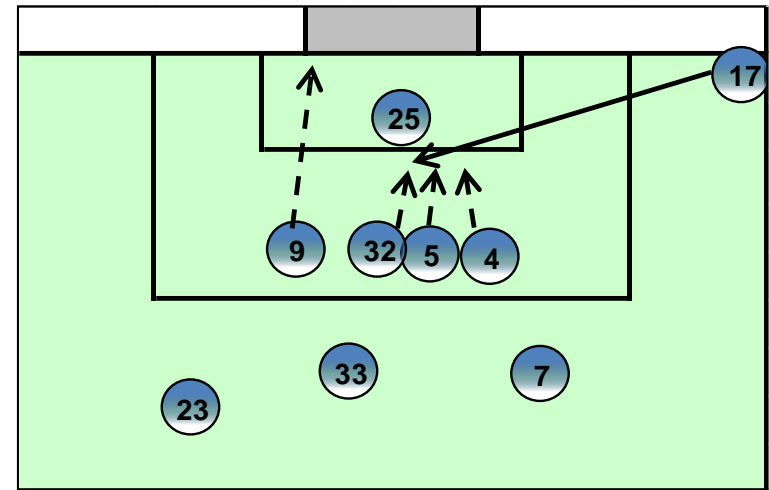


Corner kick is taken by Farfan. The ball is inswinged to the near post.

3 players on the near post. Aim of the movements - to draw attention away from the near post. Fuchs or Santana makes false movement in direction to Farfan. Another – usually Huntelar moves to the center of the goalkeeper box. One –usually Matip attacks the ball. Boateng makes run towards far post, Santana attacks the ball in the centre of the penalty box.

2 players are responsible for second ball.

## Corner kick from the right flank



If the corner kick is taken by Fuchs. The system is the same when the corner kick from the left flank.

If the corner kick is taken by Farfan - the ball is inswinged to the center of the penalty box.

Huntelar blocks the goalkeeper of the opponent.

4 players attack the ball from the centre. Boateng and Howedes – run towards far post and near post respectively and try to open central zones for Santana and Matip. Santana is the most dangerous threat.

# Set-pieces: lateral free kicks (attacks)

Lateral free kicks are taken by Farfan or Fuchs (from right flank).

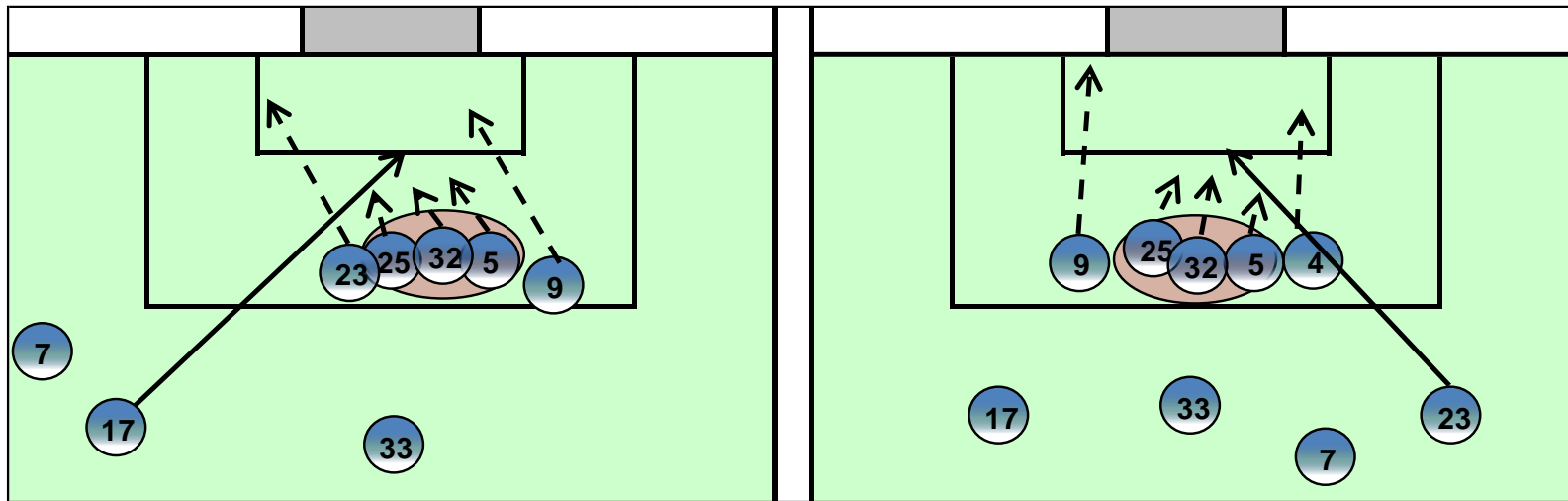
**The ball is inswinged to the center of the penalty box or towards the far post**

Usually 5 players are in the penalty box of the opponent.

Boateng and Howedes or Fuchs run towards different post (far post and near post).

The main threat are Santana, Huntelar and Matip.

They make diagonal runs in the penalty box and attack the ball in the central zones.



## Corner kick

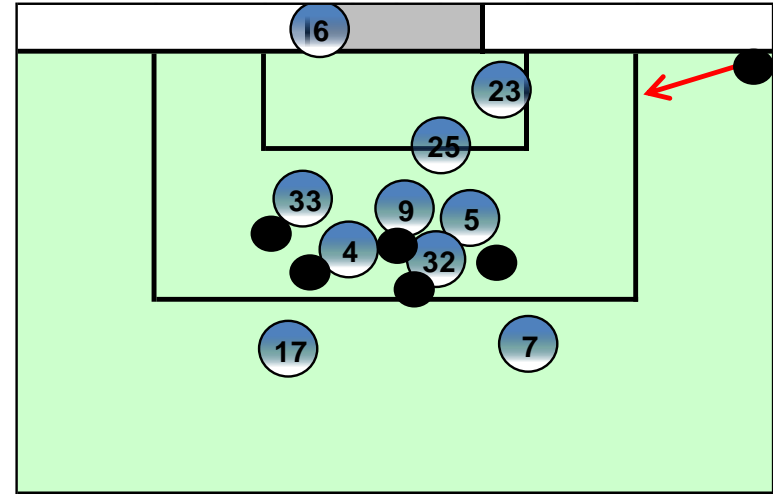
Use mixed zonal and man-marking approach.

Left midfielder closes the zone between 6 yard box and the near post. One fullback (Kolasić) is always on the far post. Huntelaar closes zone on the centre in front of penalty box or marks the opponent's player who are in that zone.

5 players use man-marking. Santana marks the most dangerous player of the opponent.

Farfan and Meyer – outside the box (ready for fast transition to attack)

The players are easily dragged by the opponents' runs.



## Lateral free-kick

Usually 2 players are in the wall. The fullback closes the zone of direct pass to the box.

Huntelaar is positioned in the centre and no marks anybody.

Other players use man-marking.

