



Defending the final third

Category: Tactical: Defensive principles
Skill: Mixed age

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Description

Specific Practice into a small sided game

Defending the final third

20 Minutes

Specific practice - problem 1

Structure:

- 4-3-3 vs 4-2-3-1 (Taken out the red front three and the 10, also taken out the green full backs and cdm)
- Pitch split into 4 lanes/channels
- Mini goals represent the two red wingers, so if they win the ball back their target is to pass into the goals.

First block:

- The Green CB's are locked into their areas to stop them from running forward and making it unrealistic. The balls will start from them each time.
- Begin with a walkthrough to explain how the red's will defend when the ball goes to either side



For example: (If the ball goes out to the green 7) - red 3 applies pressure (information on body shape), the two red CB's shuffle over making sure to cover the striker and potential underlapping run, opposite red full back tucks inside in line with the far post and leaves the final channel free.

- Compact

- Narrow (close spaces)- Leave furthest man- Body shape (depending on opposition players position on the field - show line or show back)

Focus on defending the box!

Challenges, Conditions or Targets:

Specific Practice - part 2

Problem 1 - The underlapping run

- Ideally, the Red CM covers the run which allows the two red CB's to protect the box and mark the striker (Protecting goal side and leaving the furthest player, red 2 tucks inside).

- If the Red 8 can't track the run then the near side red CB might have to come across and try to close down the player. If so, the red 6 has to cover inside the box while the red 4 marks the opposition striker. As always, the red 2 tucks inside and defends the box, leaving the furthest green player.

- The same principle applies if the green winger is constantly beating the red fullback and the red CB has to cover the channel.

Challenges, Conditions or Targets:



Specific Practice - Part 3

Adaptations (Progressions & Regressions):

- Time to add in a red 9, who can put pressure on the two green CB's and the red can now defend the final third in the mid zone.
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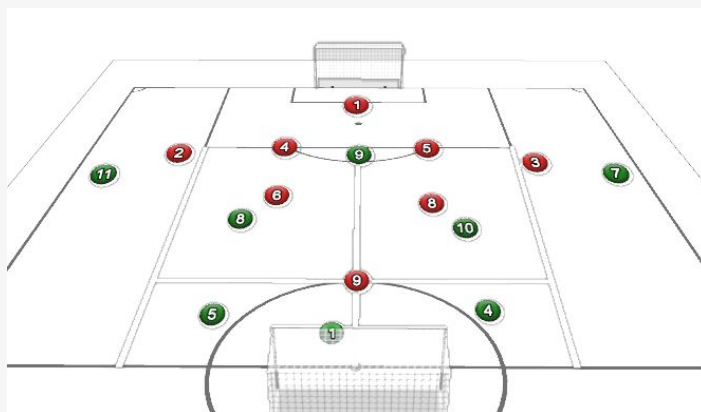
Small Sided Game - Part 1

Adaptations (Progressions & Regressions):

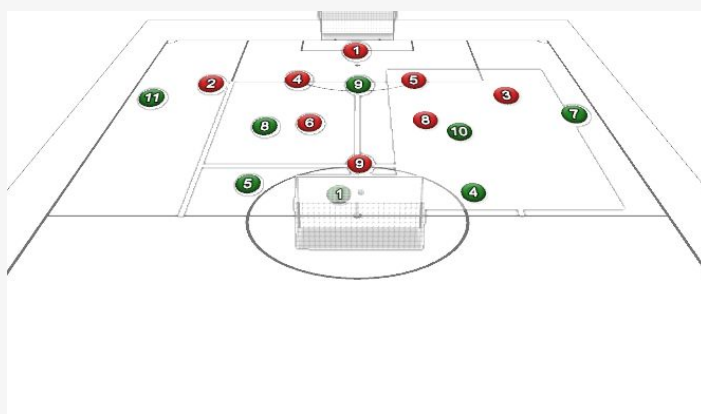
- Add in a green GK and use 2 big goals to make it a small sided game.

Challenges, Conditions or Targets:

- Challenge for the red team to find their striker as quick as possible who can try and score.
- The Green CB's are still conditioned to stay in their area.



Animation 5



Problem 2 - One Green CB can step in with the ball

Defending the final third but now higher on the pitch

- red 9 shows one way by curving the run and forcing the CB to play in one direction rather than switching the play.
- The red fullback can then release and apply pressure on the ball - either showing the line or back
- Away from the ball - The back 4 shuffles across and then opposite fullback leaves the final channel to tuck inside to the far post. Both Midfielders are ball side and goal side and ready to protect the box if the red fullback is beaten by the green winger.

Technical detail

- Red 9 curved run to prevent the switch of play
- fullbacks body shape to show the line and prevent the winger coming inside
- midfielders position to protect central split into the 9 and also ready to release onto the midfielder if its played short.

Reflection

I thought the session went well and the players clearly understood what they were required to do throughout the practice. The structure of both teams worked well in terms of producing adequate chances to defend the box, whilst allowing opportunities to win the ball back and attack the small goals. One problem that I faced during the practice was that the defending RB had never played there before and struggled to take on instructions in the beginning. As a result, the attacking team constantly attacked down that side and were getting a lot of success. During these moments, I stopped the practice and coached how the other players should support the RB, if he is beaten. For instance, the RCB closes down the ball, the LCB shuffles across in line with the front post, the LB tucks inside in between the far post and goalkeeper and the pivot players protect the box centrally. With these instructions, the defending team had more success in defending the box.

The part that I would take away from the session is how I started the first block with defending the final third by defending the box, and with each block, I progressed up the pitch. In the last block, I added a 9/10 in for the defending the team and the focus was to defend the final third by stopping the ball at the source.
