



BASED ON RSC ANDERLECHT FILOSOPHY

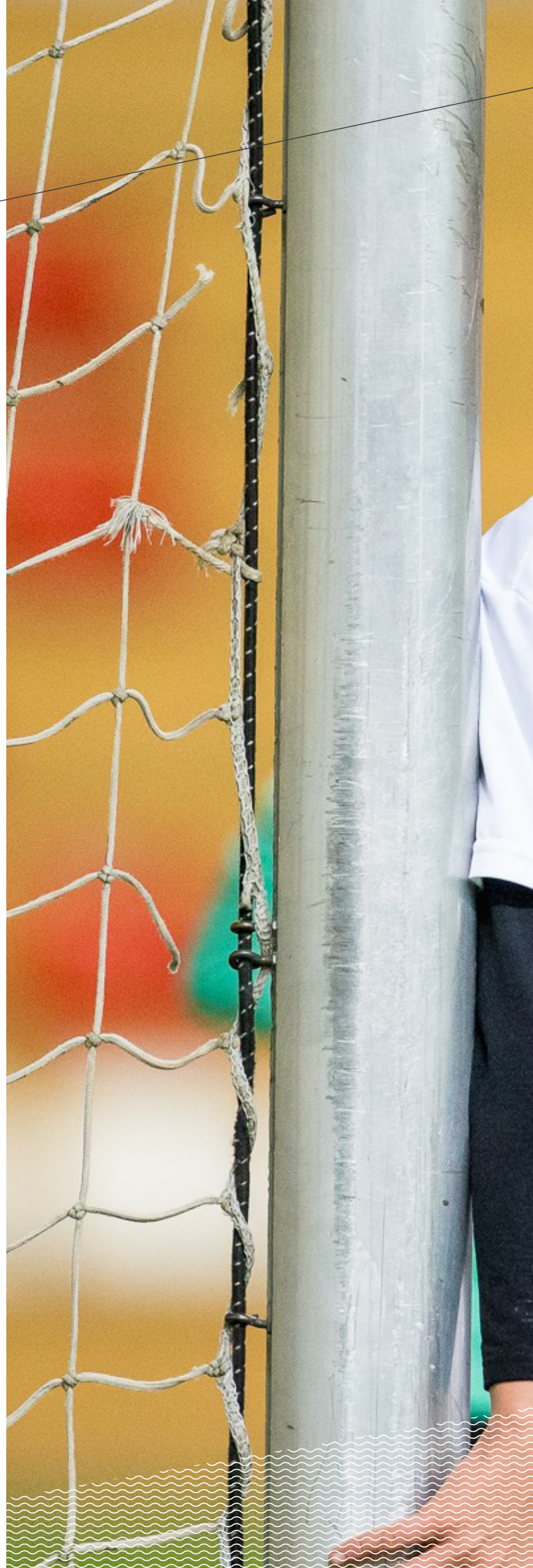
# PLAYING FOOTBALL IN AN EIGHT A SIDE FORMATION

## DEFENDING



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## A. THE GAME INTENT “DEFENDING”

### 1. DEFENDING IN ZONE

During the training process of a young footballer, according to the LFF's football philosophy, most of the football stimuli during the total training are given around ball possession. However, the opponent's possession of the ball also plays an important role. The incentives that youth players receive should be geared to the content of a match. After all, in a football match, youth players are not only confronted with possession of the ball. After all, the ball is always "free"; the boundary between ball possession and loss is very narrow in football. We would like to refer to our own basic principles in case of ball loss: HIGH FIVE and BASIC ELEVEN.

With LFF, however, the rule applies: "Defending is a means and not an end in itself":

- A way of playing aimed at conquering the ball as quickly as possible, has a lot of developments in store.
- Opting for a defensive approach may result in winning more matches, but it doesn't benefit the individual development of the players.
- The opponent is locked up as high as possible. The small space, the high resistance and the mental resilience are an ideal learning experience for our footballers. Note: Disturbing and defending must be geared to the individual development of the players and NEVER to achieving a result. If our aggressive way of defending and interfering does not allow our opponent to achieve normal football, it is advisable to leave a little more space. After all, we want to play football. It shouldn't just be a 'fighting' match and we want to give everyone in our team the opportunity to develop.

### 2. THE DETERMINING PHASES IN PRESSURE / DEFENDING

#### 2.1 Press on the ball

- The player closest to the ball puts pressure
- The ball in depth must be avoided (take the deep ball out!)
- Full pressure around the ball
- Don't let your opponent pass you by
- Go with the conviction to win the duel!

#### 2.2 Keeping the space small

- Space around the ball small
- On the side of the ball there is full pressure. Squeezing, putting pressure and if necessary cover the space

#### 2.3 Collective

- Each player must participate in the play
- Collective pressing
- To form a defensive cohesion (cohesion)
- We Defend Forward: The players don't run backwards

#### 2.4 Conquering the ball



- Wait for the right moment
- No fouls
- Defending is a chain reaction: Maybe only the third "hunter" has the ball.

### 3. GAME INTENTIONS < ZONES

Disturbing and defending in ball possession of the opponent can be divided into 3 goals and in 3 different zones on the field:

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| - On the opponent's half: disrupt/defend to score           | HIGH PRESSION ZONE   |
| - On and around the centre circle: disrupt/defend to attack | MEDIUM PRESSION ZONE |
| - On own half: score/defend to build                        | LOW PRESSION ZONE    |

Within our game model 8 A SIDE | defending we never consciously choose to defend on our own half (LOW PRESSION ZONE). We only play in this zone when the opponent is playing forward in a compelling and dominant way and we "have to endure the game". This way of taking position and defending is forced by a stronger opponent. So this is not a choice, but a necessity. In this module we only talk about HIGH and MEDIUM pressure zone.

#### 3.1 High pressure zone

In this case we immediately put pressure on the opponent's build-up. So we block the opponent during the most vulnerable moment in possession of the ball: the build-up. Attention: too much attention to "high interference" can jeopardize the development in ball possession. Recovering the ball at the moment when there is space in possession, is much more effective for individual progression. Recovering the ball when there is no space can result in a result on the scoresheet, but is not the right method for individual development. The most interesting place to put pressure on the opponent is the flank. The build-up possibilities are more limited here, given the proximity of the sideline. All other players slide to the side of the ball and close the playing corners. The strikers are always attentive to a possible replay ball. In the central axis the opponent has more possibilities: the free flanks give the opponent more choices.

#### 3.2 Medium pression zone

The team has a more waiting attitude and chooses position around the centre circle. This creates more space in the back of the defenders when conquering the ball. The principles and points of attention of the interference are identical to those of putting pressure on the half of the opponent (High pressure zone).



## C. GAME SITUATIONS

### 1. OUR OPPONENT FREQUENTLY CHOOSES FOR THE LONG KICK OUT

In this phase, we choose to conquer the ball: we then talk about recovering the “second” ball:

- The opposing goalkeeper kicks the ball out
- The player of our team - closest to the ball - goes into a duel:
  - o Even if you know that it is a lost duel (e.g. the opponent is 2 heads taller), we go into duel. This prevents an easy acceptance of the ball by the opponent.
  - o We try to intercept the ball before the bounce of the ball
- All other players make the space around the ball as small as possible
  - o All players of our team squeeze to the side of the ball (also the attackers sink back), we make the space around the ball as small as possible.
  - o If a player of ours is "free", he positions himself behind the duel.
- After the duel, we put pressure on the ball and try to get hold of it:
  - o This must be a chain reaction of chase!

### 2. THE OPPONENT ALWAYS CHOOSES FOR THE DEEP BALL IN THE BACK OF OUR DEFENDERS

Choosing a high pressure zone means giving away space in the back. Note that this situation is relatively limited during matches 8 < 8 for U10 and U11, because the solution is often sought at a limited distance. Skipping lines does not happen very often at this age. With the older ages this situation occurs more often.

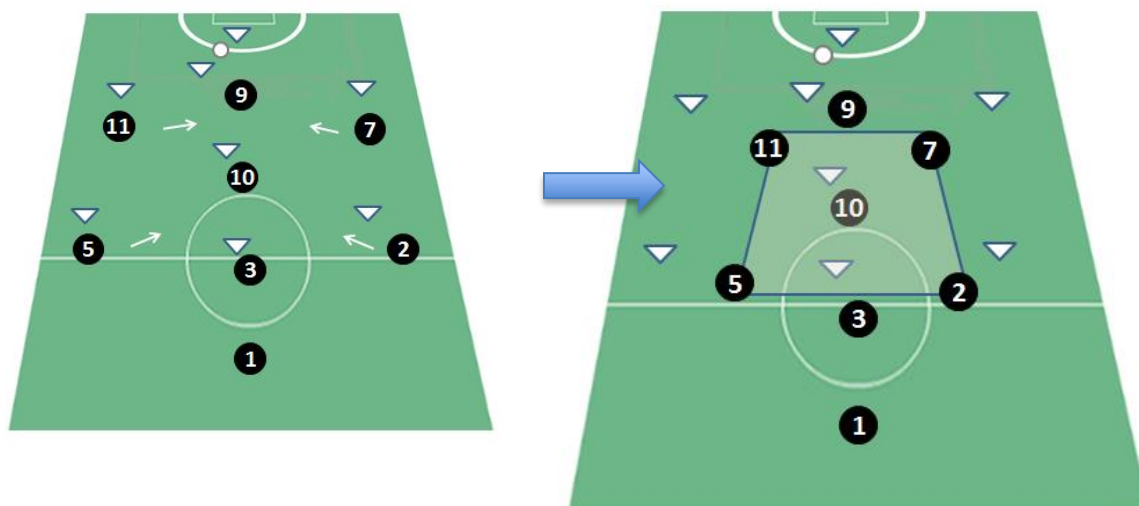
A good positional play by the central defender, a good cooperation in the last line and a good positional play by the goalkeeper can prevent scoring chances for the opponent:

- The central defender should read the opponent's build-up carefully. When an opponent is playing a long ball, it is important that the central defender lets go of his direct opponent for a moment and covers the space. In this way, he creates a direct lead over the opponent, which makes handling the deep ball a lot easier
- The goalkeeper (1) preferably does not choose a position in his goal! It is best for the goalkeeper to move up along with the ball and play about 20 metres out of goal. The "danger" that an opponent can score from 30 metres is very low in these age groups. However, the goalkeeper must be in the correct starting position: alert, on his forefeet and in sprint position.



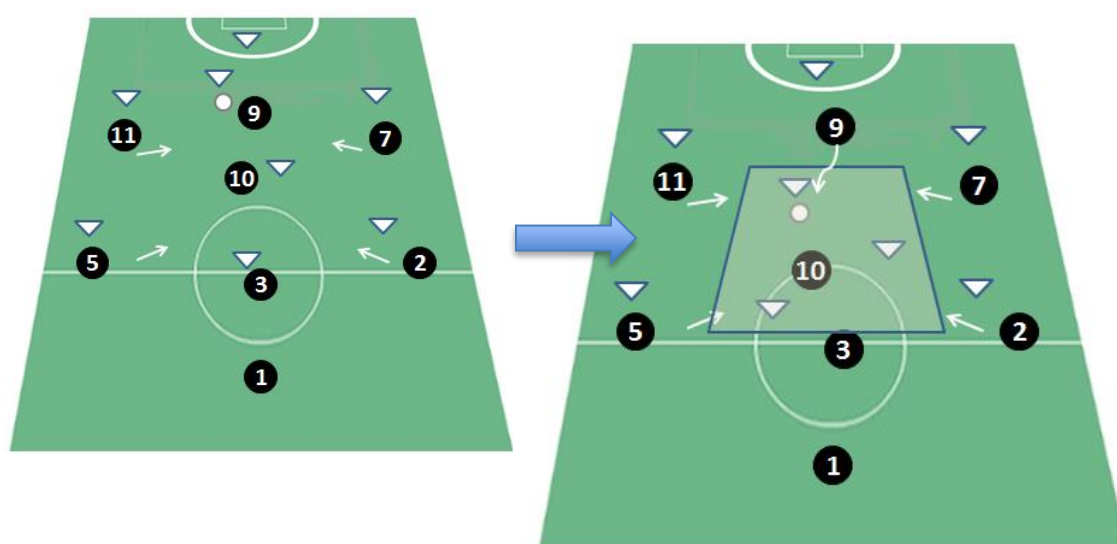
### 3. WE PUT PRESSURE ON THE CENTRAL AXIS OF OUR OPPONENT

#### 3.1 Ball is with the goalkeeper (1) of our opponent



When the ball reaches the goalkeeper, a central block is formed. The left and right wingback of the opponent are deliberately released to provoke the pass onto them. Also note the high position of our own goalkeeper! Our (10) and our (3) keep in contact with their direct opponent and enter the duel if the goalkeeper chooses the long build-up. Our wingbacks (2) and (5) let their direct man free and make sure they see the ball and the man (split vision of pistols) and give cover to the central axis (3). Starting from a central block is ideal to quickly play ball oriented (!) because the distances are quite small then.

#### 3.2 Ball is with the central defender (3) of our opponent



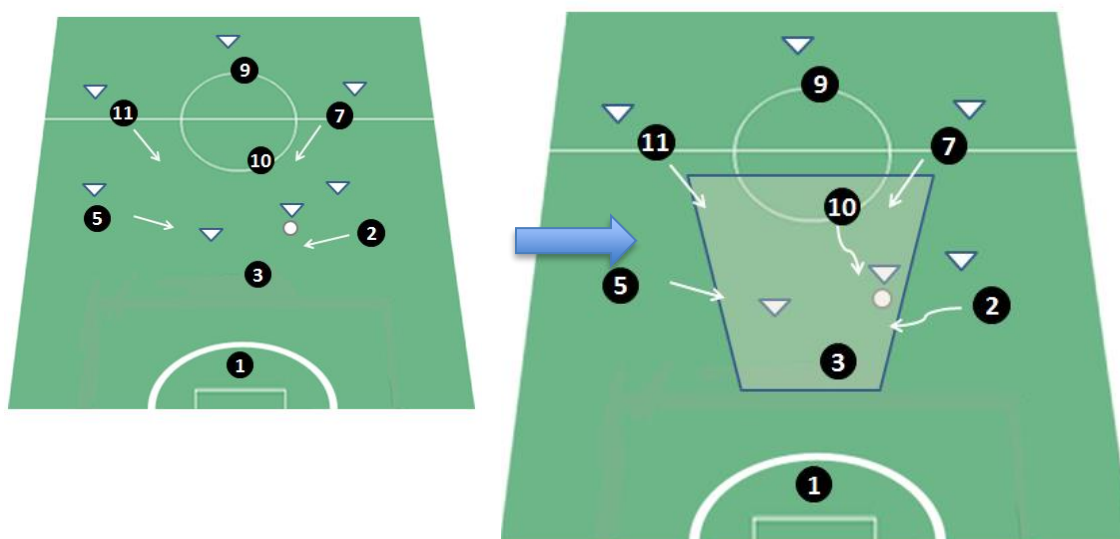
A central block is formed again where the player closest to the ball puts pressure onto the central defender and prevents that player from playing deep or infiltrating with the ball at the foot. Unless the central defender has a poor control or receives a poorly played ball (e.g. weak pass by a goalkeeper), we don't go into duel for the ball.

Our wingbacks (2) and (5) squeeze in to form the block behind the ball and free their direct opponent (again: split vision, always eye on ball and opponent).

If our central striker (9) is played out by the central defender:

- our central striker (9) tries to keep pressure from the back (negative pressure)
- our central midfielder (10) tries to stay in the axis (in order to close the centre with a central defender) and to slow down.

### 3.3 Ball is with the central player (10) of our opponent



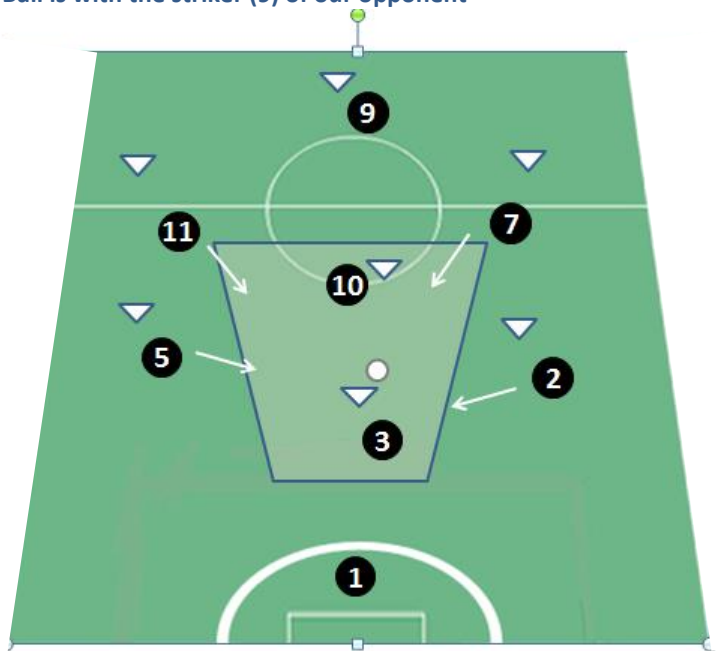
At the moment the ball is in the central part of the pitch, the team closes in completely in ball loss and a block is formed with short distances between them. Our goalkeeper (1) again has to make contact with his goal, but remains alert for a ball that is too deep from the opponent. The defensive goal in this game situation is therefore to prevent the ball owner from playing deep or infiltrating himself with the ball at his foot.

So the player closest to the ball puts pressure on the player who has the ball. If our player chooses to enter the duel, this player must do so in consultation. In other words, he must recognise the right moment.

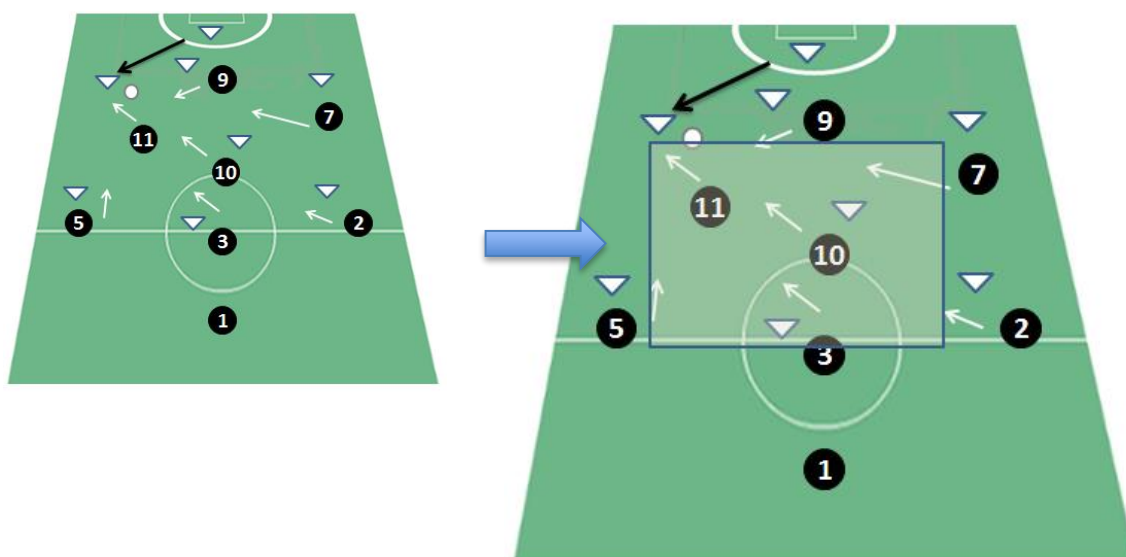
At the moment our player does “bite” and is eliminated, the opponent ends up in a majority situation ( $K+3 < 4$ ) and we have to try to slow them down in order to eliminate our numerical inequality. The switched-off teammate gives negative pressure as soon as possible.

Important: at the moment  $K+3 < 4$  is played, our central defender (3) stays in position and does not step out. If possible, it is our (2) or (5) who tries to stop the infiltrating opponent from a split vision formation. The importance of a compact and closing block has been demonstrated once again. The role of our central midfielder (10) in ball loss is also very important in this formation. He should never leave the central axis and has a controlling function in ball loss where he must always keep his direct opponent in front of him and allow himself to be eliminated 1 on 1 as little as possible.

As LFF we choose to let our central striker (9) choose a rather high position and to not let him drop too much. In case of possession of the ball, we would like to play football again and get depth in our game. Our central striker (9) acts as the starting point.

**3.4 Ball is with the striker (9) of our opponent**

At the moment that the center striker of the opponent comes into possession of the ball, our central defender (3) moves close to the player who has the ball. He tries not to let the striker turn and tries to avoid a frontal 1v1. In this game situation, it is again important that our wingbacks (2) and (5) go in and provide (back) cover. Our other players (7), (11) and (10) allow themselves to slightly drop and squeeze ball oriented inward. The center striker (9) remains high and is a possible receiver of the ball in a transition play.

**4. WE PUT PRESSURE ON THE PLAYER ON THE WINGS OF OUR OPPONENTS****4.1 Ball is with the right (2) or left wingback (5) of our opponent**

At the moment a wingback of the opponent receives the ball, we put pressure and the block tilts. Our player closest to the ball puts pressure. Usually these are our wingers (7) or (11).

This player also duels for the ball. The timing of this duel and the order of the previous actions are very important:

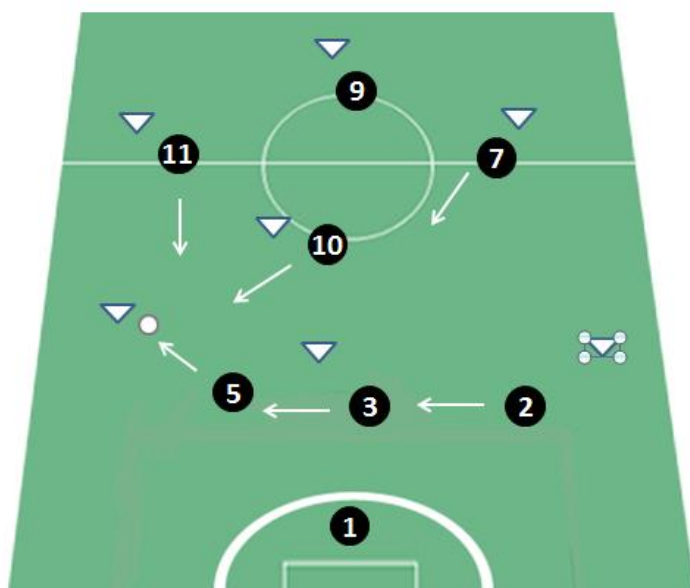
1. Keep your calm
2. Apply pressure and take the depth intention out of the ball
3. Then enter the duel

Next, it is important that our wingback (2) or (5) who is on the same flank closes very tightly and closes in on the involved winger of the opponent, because usually the wingback of the opponent tries to come out under pressure by playing the ball along the line. Due to the strict and short position of our supporting wingback (2) or (5) the attack in this second phase should certainly be able to be stopped. The supporting wingback (2) or (5) can choose (with 100% certainty) to come in front of the man and intercept the ball.

Our (9) and (10) block the pass line to the center when our wingers (7) or (11) put pressure. If the ball possessing wing-back of the opponent still manages to play the ball back on the central defender, the block slides and tilts back to the central axis.

Suppose that our pressure-setting winger (7) or (11) is played out by an individual action by the opposing wing-back, then there will be immediate negative pressing by the played out winger (7) or (11) on the player who has possession of the ball. Our central midfielder (10) will break away inhibitably with his direct opponent in sight if possible.

#### 4.2 Ball is with the attacking winger (7) or (11) of our opponent



In this game situation, the player closest to the ball slides to the player in ball possession with the intention of putting pressure on the ball and preventing the ball holder's "depth action" (an individual action in depth, pass in depth or cross for goal). The wingback (2) or (5) must defend again with consultation and can decide to duel for the ball.

The teammates all choose a position oriented towards the ball:

- The teammates from the line of defence (3, (2) or (5) slide towards the ball and provide back and mutual cover.
- The wingers (7) and (11) slide in a little bit and try to block the passing lines again
- Our central midfielder (10) slides back a little towards the ball but he still holds his central axis
- Our deep striker (9) stays deep to quickly become a possible receiver of the ball during the transition.



## D. THE EVALUATION OF THE GAME INTENT

During and after the game, trainers and players check whether the game intention that was practiced during training was translated into the game in a convincing way. We ask ourselves the following 4 questions:

1. Do we manage to win the ball higher on the field?
2. Does everyone help to defend?
3. After recovering the ball, can we find sufficient depth in our build up?
4. Is there enough attention to winning the "second ball"?





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