

Positional Numbering and Roles

AYSO Region 1472 Coaches' Corner

DR

Source:



COACHING MANUAL 2014

US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program

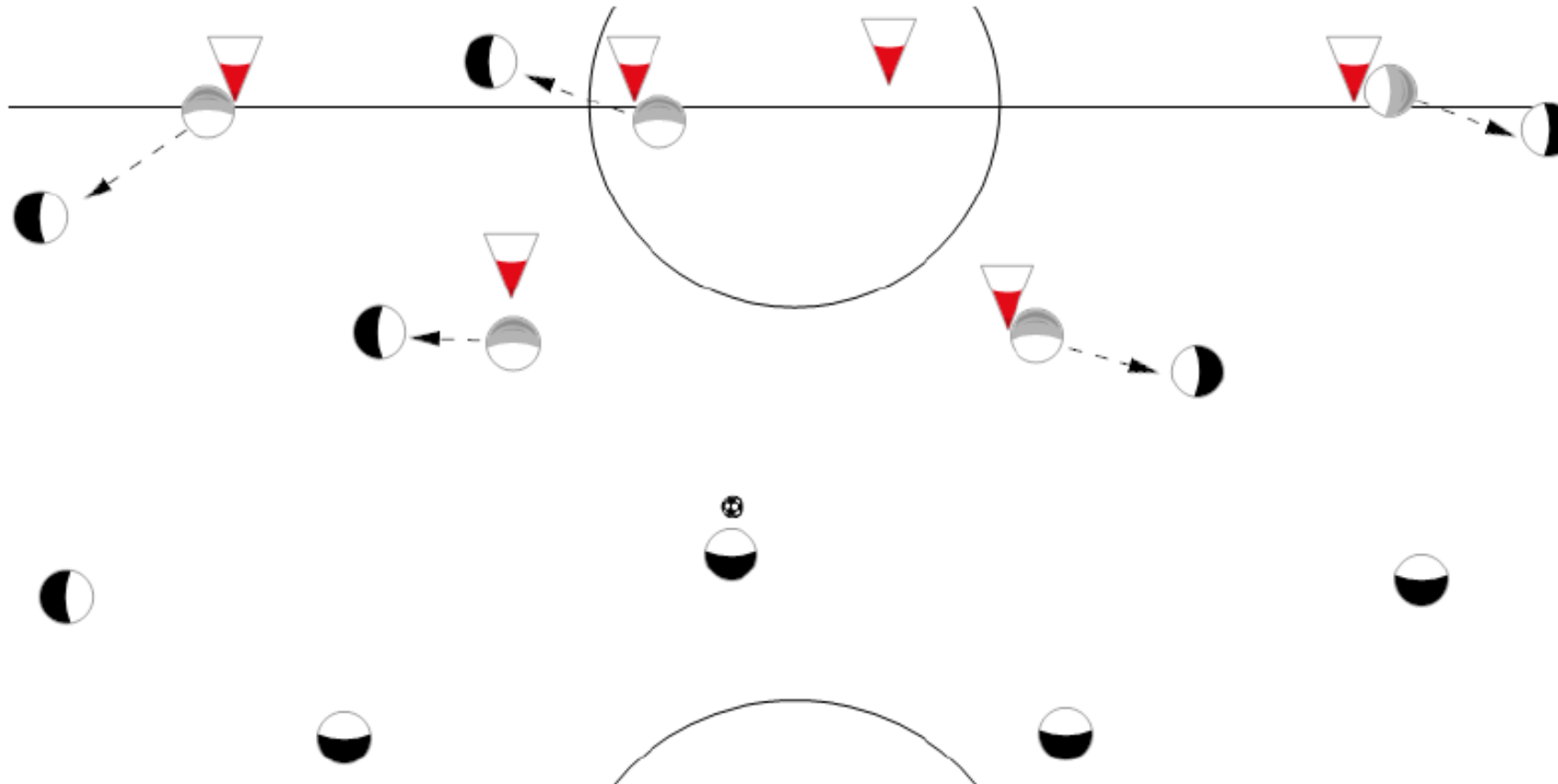
Possession Soccer

- ▶ When a team has the ball, it spreads out and makes the field as big as possible, with the players spread to create many triangles.
- ▶ Players on the back line drop off to a safe distance from opponents and offer support behind the ball.
- ▶ When a team wins the ball, they immediately play the ball into another area of the field. By 'another area', we mean either a back pass to relieve pressure, or a switch, or a counterattack.
- ▶ Every back pass is usually followed by a lateral or diagonal pass to switch the point of attack.
- ▶ The ball doesn't stay in one area for long.
- ▶ Players open their body to the field and have as much of the field as possible within their line of vision.
- ▶ By opening their body, players always try to receive the ball facing up field or at least being sideways on. Players should peel off tight marking by moving to the blind side of their opponent where he/she cannot see both the player and the ball at the same time.
- ▶ Very few passes are made to a player who is checking hard toward the ball with his/her back to goal and being tightly marked.
- ▶ Most passes are diagonal passes into players who are open to the field or with a sideways on stance.
- ▶ Goalkeepers rarely punt the ball. Goal kicks are played out of the back. Throw-ins are used to switch the point of attack rather than just thrown down the line.

Concepts

- ▶ 1. Peeling off opponents: Absolutely the first thing our players need to be taught. How to step away from a defender and create space for oneself to receive the ball facing up field.
- ▶ 2. Role of the goalkeeper: Keepers should learn how to support the back line in possession, how to distribute and be the first line of attack instead of just punting the ball long. Goalkeepers should be discouraged from kicking long aimless balls on goal kicks and should learn instead to play the ball to teammates in order to maintain possession.
- ▶ 3. Role of the back line: The back line plays a vital role in possession. The defenders need to learn how to support the midfield in possession, how to make the field big and how to help relieve pressure. The defense also plays a crucial role in switching the point of attack.
- ▶ 4. Role of the defensive midfielder: Player 6 dictates the rhythm of possession. He/she needs to learn how to support the attack from behind the ball and how to open up passing lanes.
- ▶ 5. Role of the attacking midfielders: The vital link between the back line and the forwards. Players 8 and 10 need to learn to maintain the right team shape in midfield and be available for passes from the back.
- ▶ 6. Role of the wingers: Players 7 and 11 provide width and penetration. They need to learn to stay wide and open the body to the field and provide support to the midfielders.
- ▶ 7. Role of the center forward: Player 9 provides depth and an outlet from high pressing opponents. He/she needs to learn to stretch the field and stay high and central and be available for the long pass option from the back.
- ▶ 8. Goal kicks: Start of the build-up. Hence, keepers need to learn to pass the ball on goal kicks rather than just kick it long.
- ▶ 9. Throw-ins: Players need to learn to use the throw-in to switch the point of attack rather than throw it down the line every time.

Facing Forward and/or Field



Face attacking direction or, at least, side-on

Conventions



Goalkeeper



Attacker



Attacker -
previous position



Pass



Run



Dribble



Defender



Defender -
previous position

Roles of the Different Positions

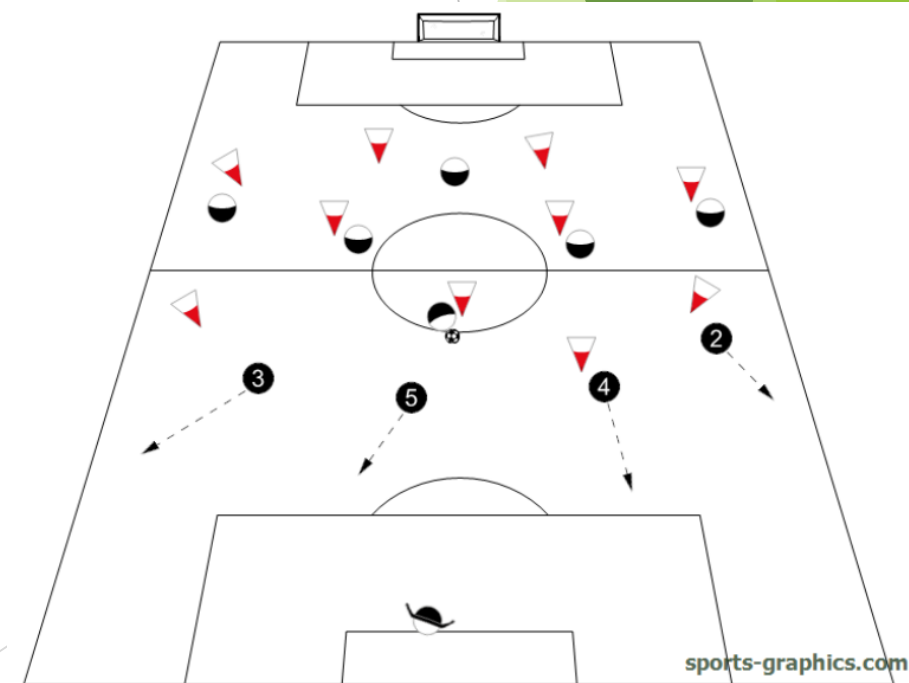


1 - The Goalkeeper

- ▶ The keeper should help the back line maintain possession and switch the point of attack when the team is under pressure.
- ▶ The goalkeeper can pass the ball to midfielders or even forwards if he/she has the passing range.
- ▶ Punting the ball is not recommended since our players need to learn to play out of the back and the goalkeeper must learn to pass the ball rather than launch it high and long.

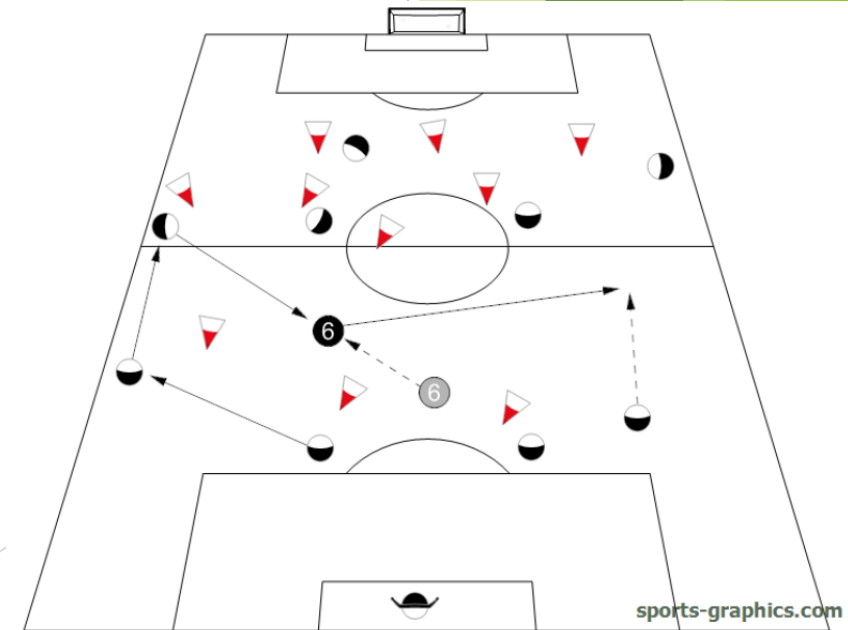
2, 4, 5, 3 - The Back Line

- ▶ The role of the back line in possession is to support the ball and always be available for a back pass.
- ▶ As a general rule, every back pass should be followed by a square or diagonal ball that initiates a switch.
- ▶ The back line's role in possession is to make the field as big as possible by dropping back and keeping the ball long enough for the rest of the team to transition to an attacking shape.



6 - The Defensive Midfielder

- ▶ The role of the defensive midfielder is to always be available for a pass no matter who has the ball.
- ▶ When the ball is played to wide players or to attacking midfielders (number 8 or 10), the number 6 is supporting from behind.
- ▶ He/she will be the focal point of the build up from the back and will dictate the tempo of the ball circulation.
- ▶ After switching the ball, he/she should quickly shift over and follow the ball and be available to receive it again if the need arises.



8 and 10 - The Attacking Midfielders

- ▶ The attacking midfielders' main role in the possession build up is to offer the back line and the defensive midfielder passing options for penetration into the middle third.
- ▶ The other important role for players 8 and 10 is to support the wingers and the center forward whenever they receive balls.
- ▶ The key point for the attacking midfielders is to spread out instead of getting sucked in toward the ball and open their body by peeling off so they can see everyone. Only then will they be able to make good decisions about where to move and what to do with their first touch when receiving the ball.

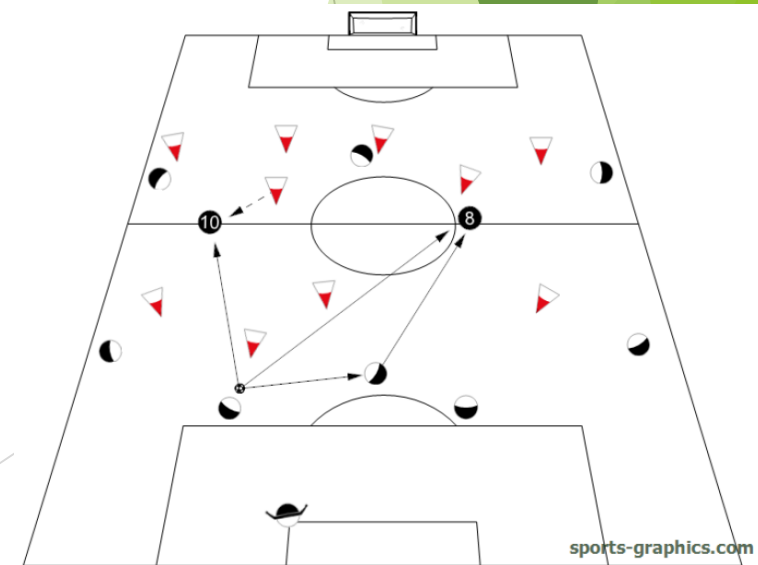


Diagram 23 Attacking Midfielders open to the field and support is high

7 and 11 - The Wingers

- ▶ The role of the wingers in building out from the back is to stretch the field and make it as big as possible by pushing as far up as possible and staying wide against the sidelines.
- ▶ This open body vantage point allows them to decide whether they should run forward or drop back. It also tells them how high they can push without running into off-side.
- ▶ They need to read the pressure on the ball to decide how to adjust their positioning.

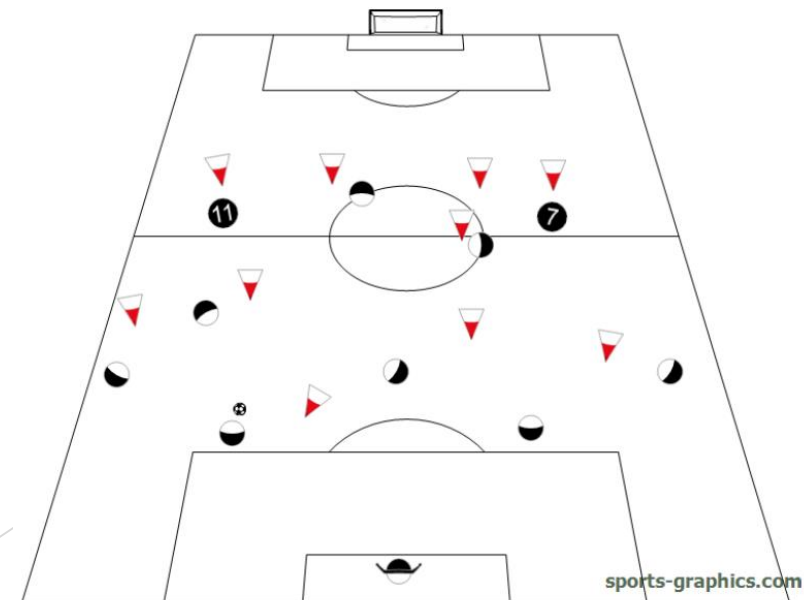


Diagram 28 Wingers Positioned Too Narrow in the Central Channel

9 - The Center Forward

- ▶ The role of the center forward when the team is building from the back is to stretch the field, give the team depth and be available as a target. The number 9 can do that by staying as high as possible, in line with the last defender, and being ready to check for a penetration pass from the back line or the midfield.
- ▶ The number 9 should resist the temptation to check toward the ball too early and too deep into midfield. This will destroy the depth and crowd the midfield. The ideal scenario is for the number 9 to get the ball behind the other team's midfield.

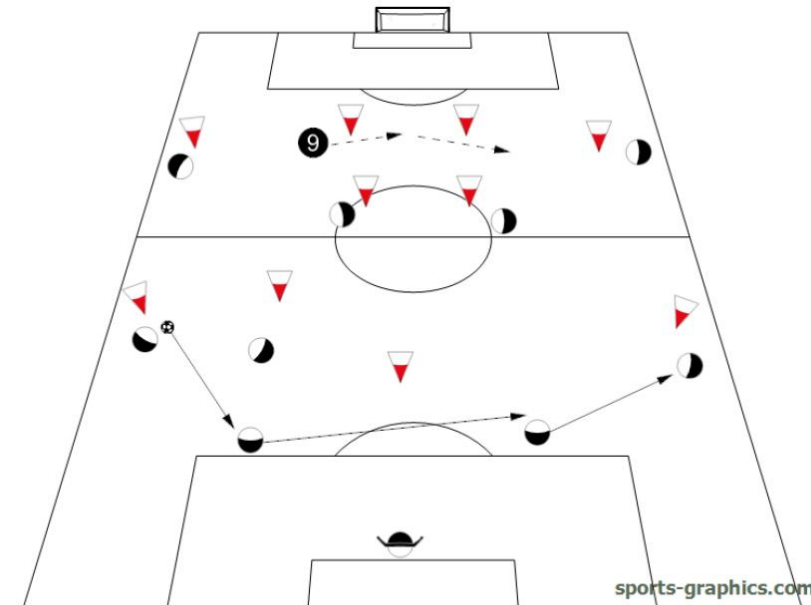


Diagram 30 Movement of # 9 as the Back Line Plays the Ball

Goal Kicks

- ▶ The goalkeeper should be discouraged from launching the ball on goal kicks.
- ▶ Peeling off movements opens up the game and opens up the possibilities. Checking runs toward the ball clogs up the game.

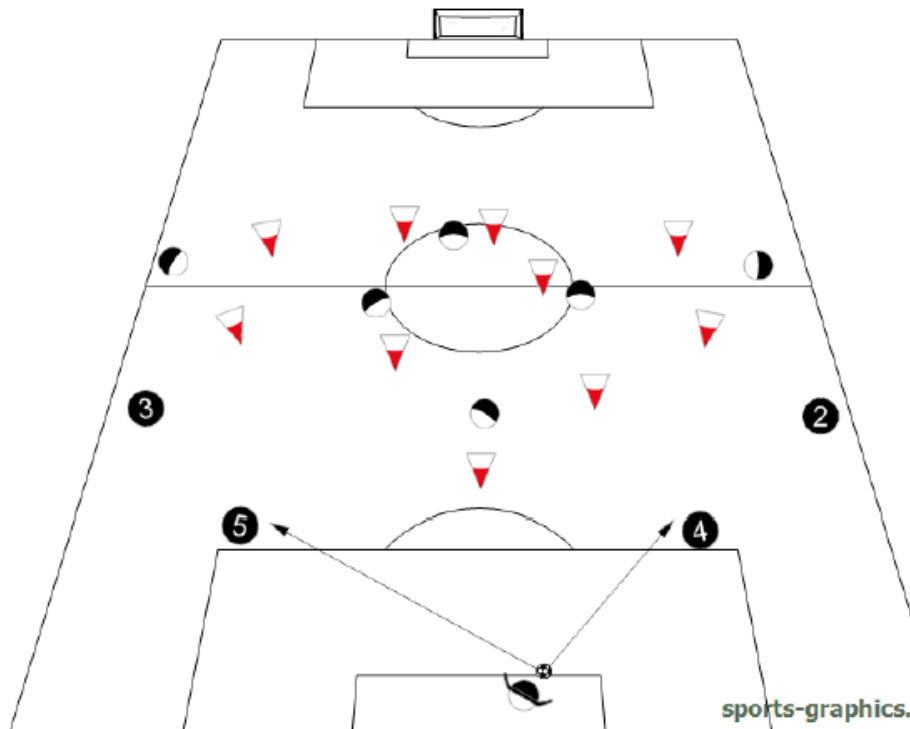


Diagram 34 Ideal Goal Kick Scenario

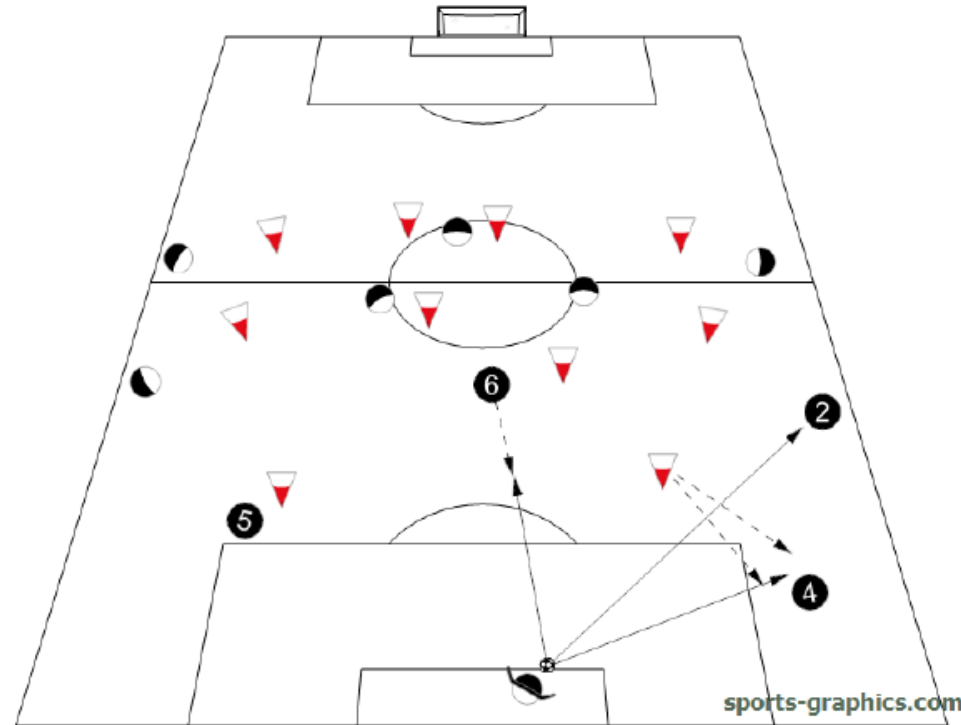


Diagram 35 Central Defender Drops Off

Throw-Ins

- ▶ Use the throw-in to switch the point of attack.

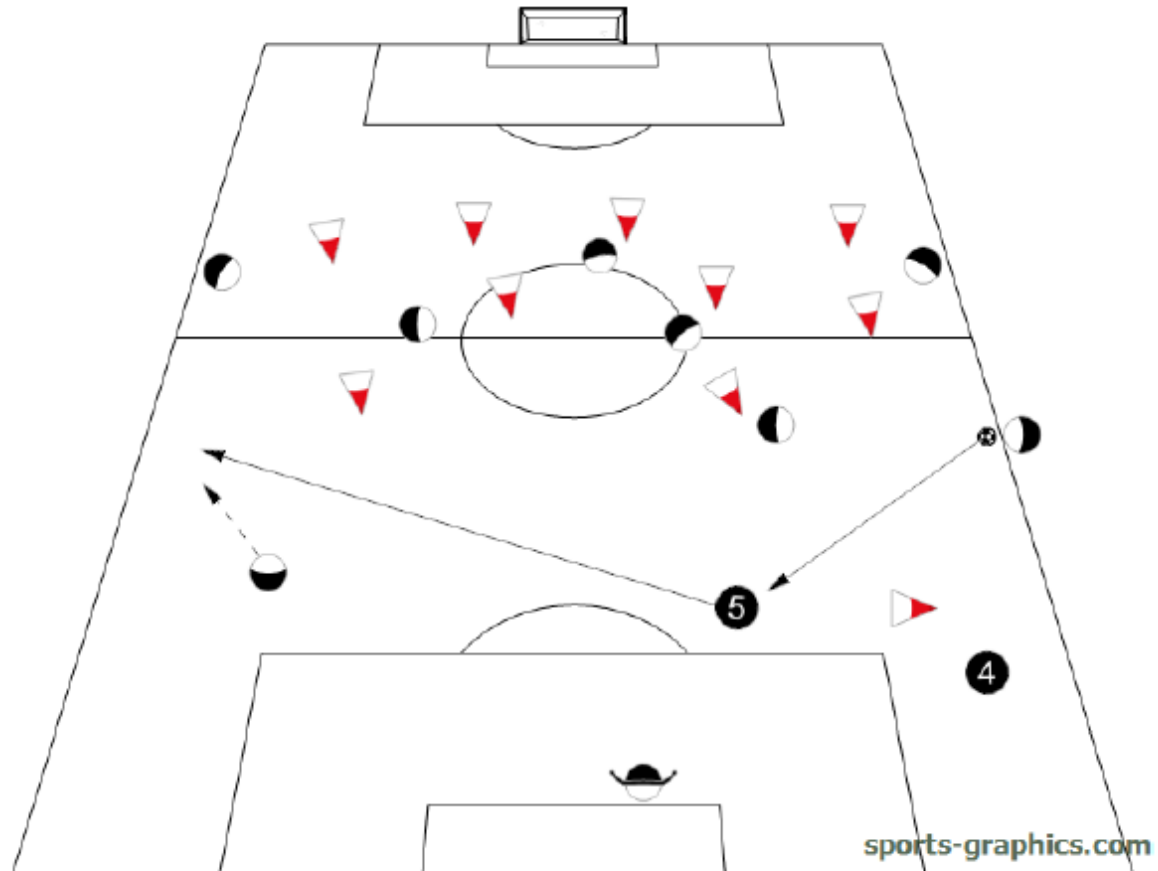


Diagram 41 Throw Back Deep to Switch the Point of Attack

Teaching It

1. FIX TEAM SHAPE

- ▶ The team shape when in possession in the middle third should make the field big, with width and depth. The wingers are wide on the sidelines and the forward is as high as possible. The three midfielders are spread apart and not bunched up.

2. FIX OFF-THE-BALL MOVEMENTS

- ▶ Who is making space for himself/herself? Who is moving toward the ball? Who is checking away? Who is running into the spaces created by teammates' runs? Runs trigger other runs! Are the movements correct for the situation?

3. FIX DECISIONS ON THE BALL

- ▶ Was the correct pass chosen? Did the passer just pass the ball to the first player who went on a run or did he/she look at all options and choose the best one?