



DEFENDING

Sample Training Session

5Ws – Game Situation: Current vs. Desired Behavior(s)

5 Ws: Current Behavior

What is currently happening?

The Opposition Team is able to build-up from the back and penetrate into our final third as well as create scoring chances.

Where on the field is this happening?

Their half of the field into our half of the field.

Who are the players involved?

Attacking (Opposition Team) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11

Defending (Focus Team) 9, 10, 8, 6, 7, 11

When is this happening?

During the opposition's build up from defensive to the middle third we are not able to stop them from playing forward.

Why is this happening?

We are not able to ...

1. Press in identified situations
2. Outnumber our opponent
3. Eliminate passing lines
4. Get compact and stay compact
5. Provide cover, balance, and delay when outnumbered

5 Ws: Desired Behavior

What should happen?

- Prevent the opponent from passing or dribbling forward into our half of the field
- Force an inaccurate pass and/or a ball that's hard to control
- Funnel play centrally, set traps, and regain the ball to quickly counter
- Establish a line of confrontation and check for understanding

Where on the field is this happening?

Middle third to the attacking third

Who are the players involved?

Focus players: #9, #10, #8, #6, #7, #11

Primary: #6, #8, #10 | Secondary: #7, #11, #9

When is this happening?

During the opposition's build-up, intersectional units are able to communicate and stay connected in order to know when to press and when to drop off.

Why should it happen this way?

Focus team/players recognize the behaviors and tendencies of the opposition in order to find solutions to exploit them. Incorporating counterattacking should also be introduced as a result of regaining possession early on the opposition's half.

Key TTPs: Get compact • Pressure/cover/balance • Press situations

Players actions (Focus players): Read and understand the game and make autonomous decisions | Take initiative, be pro-active | Focus and Execution

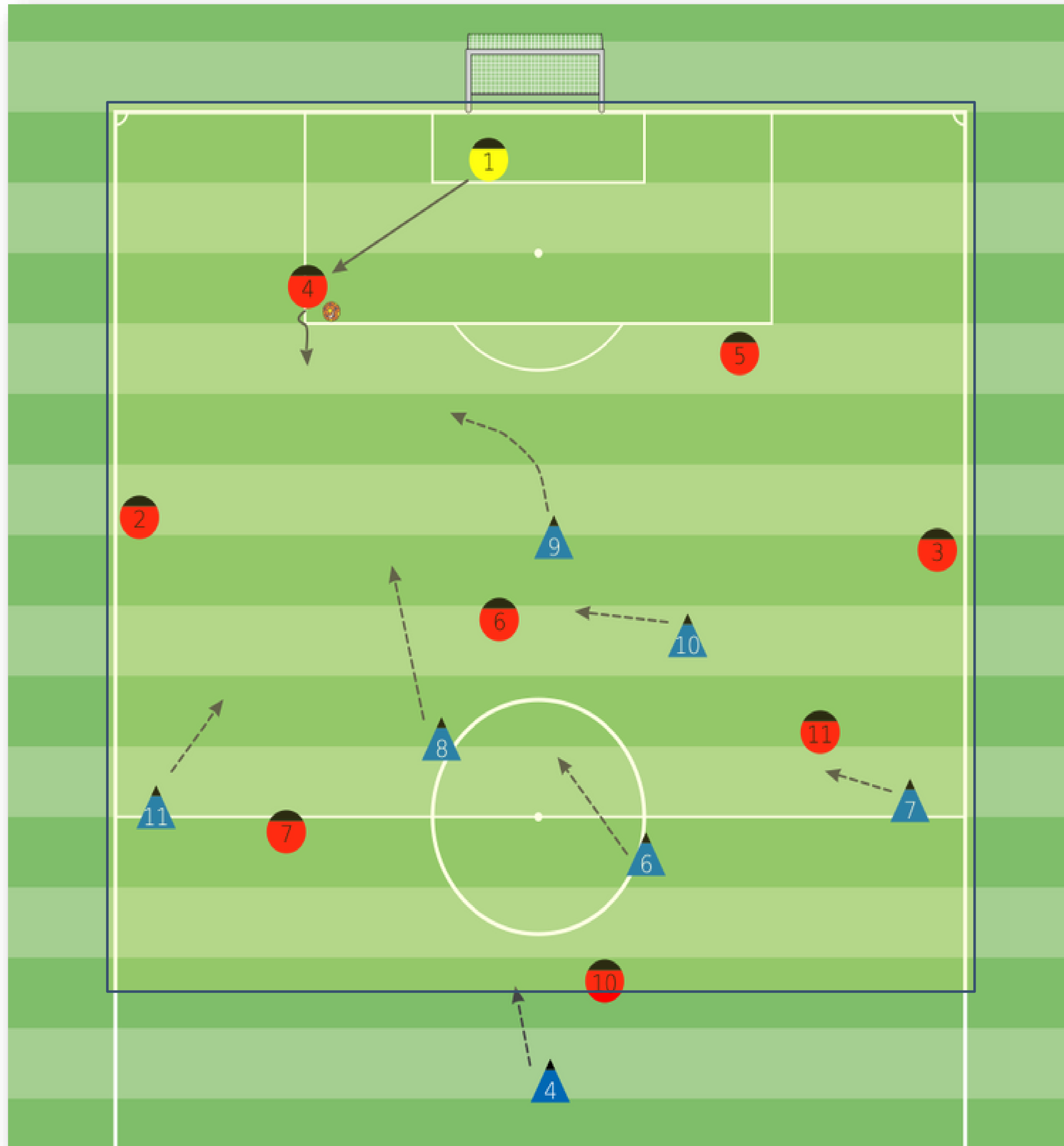
Training Session Structure

Methodology: WPW (Whole | Part | Whole)





Description of the desired behavior



What should happen?

Improve team's ability to know when to press or drop when opposition is building from the back; to quickly transition and create scoring chances once regaining possession.

Where on the field? Middle third to the attacking third

Who are the players involved? Focus players: #9, #10, #8, #6, #7, #11

Primary: #6, #8, #10

- Check for understanding? What should central midfielders be doing based on our game model and style of play?

Secondary: #7, #11, #9

- Check for understanding? Based on our game model and style of play, how are our wingers staying interconnected with our #9 (and the central midfielders) to prevent the opposition from playing forward, force an inaccurate pass, and/or regain possession?

When is this exactly happening?

The opposition is in possession and looking to build-up and break unit lines to create scoring chances to our offensive third.

Why should it happen this way?

Prevent opponent from playing forward, force an inaccurate pass, and/or regain possession.

The Session

Training session goal (Desired Outcome):
Improve team's ability to disrupt the opposition from passing or dribbling forward in middle to offensive third. This is an Organizational Session based on the team's periodization plan for the season.

How do you structure your training session from warmup to cool down?
Whole-part-whole is an approach that is effective for older learners when they are presented with an overall picture of a skill or task to learn, then focus on the individual aspects or "parts" of that skill or task, and then return to the "whole" task with an attempt to integrate both with an overall understanding. **Why?** This allows me and the coaching staff to test competencies and problem-solving of the players while providing targeted feedback in our focus area(s) where the team might be struggling.

Give an overview of the structure of the training session (number and format of exercises/ activities): Organizational (40% demand | 75 min.)

Modified FIFA 11+ Dynamic Warmup

- Player-driven exercises.
- Designate time for individual player conversations.

Play I: (8v10 to Goal w/ Two Counter Goals)

- Players are introduced to the day's session topic
- Get Opposition Team organized to present a realistic problem for the Focus Team to solve.
- 2.5 min. work / 1:30 min. rest x 4 bouts | Intensity Level 6

Core: (5v7 Functional Group Pressing)

- Discuss observed breakdowns from Play I in a reduced space. Monitor for more or less challenging aspects of the activity as required.
- 2 min. work / 1:30 min. rest x 5 bouts | Intensity Level 6

Play II: 11v11 Game

- If numbers allow for full-field game or resume 8v10 activity.
- Coaching in flow and individual coaching.
- Identify one or two key moments for player correction/redirection

GAME SCENARIO FOR THE TRAINING SESSION

FOCUS TEAM

Objective (application of a principle):

Key things we're looking for with this session is the ability for the team's unit lines stay interconnected (pressure/cover/balance); recognize the cues and triggers to know when to press or drop off; prevent the opponent from playing forward, force an inaccurate pass and/or regain possession; counter and transition quickly once getting the ball back.

Team structure (organization):

Team will be organized base on our game model using a 1-4-2-3-1 formation.

Principles:

- Outnumber opponent
- Get Compact, Stay Compact
- Pressure / Cover / Balance
- Eliminate Passing Lines
- Provide cover and delay when outnumbered
- Switch to zonal marking when necessary
- Defensive line moves as a collective unit
- Take anticipated attacking action

OPPOSITION

Objective (expectations on what they need to do):

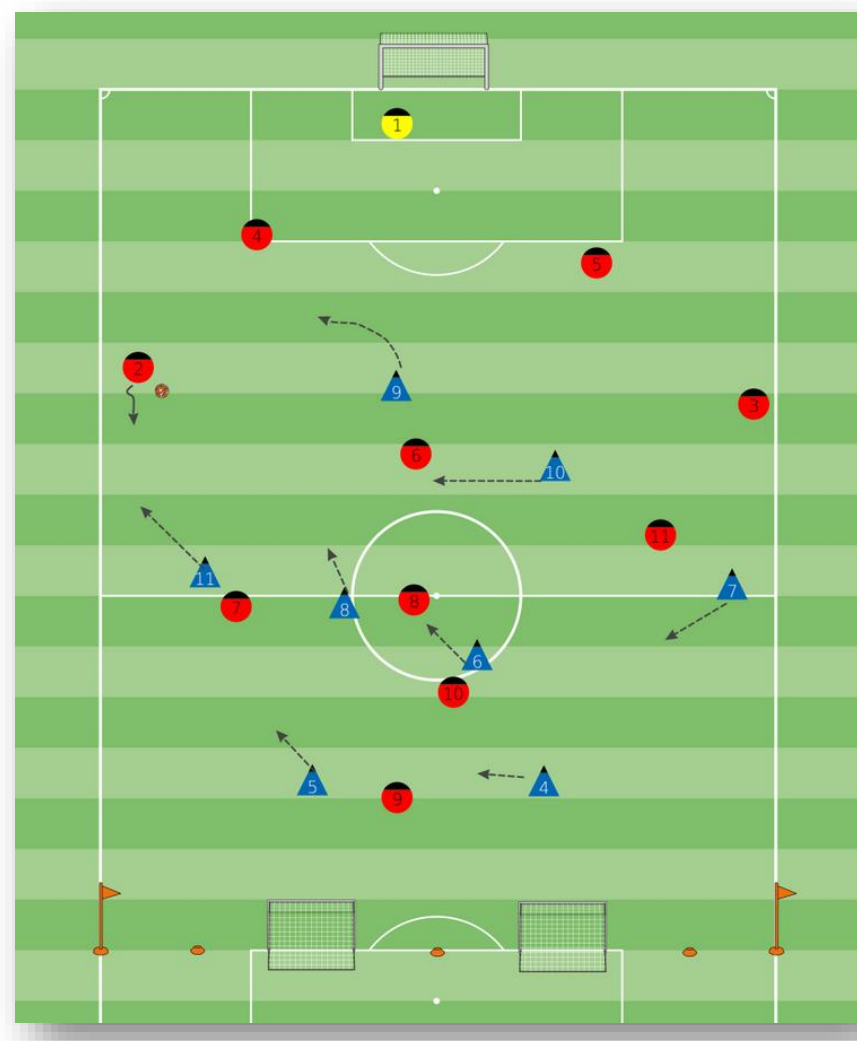
Key things we're looking for is good possession with purpose that disorganizes and unbalances the opponent in order to move the ball forward and fast; good positioning (individual and team shape) and movement to effectively move the ball from our half of the field into the attacking third; and, if we do those two things effectively, that should be able to break the pressure of the Focus Team and provide a realistic problem to solve.

Team structure (organization):

Team will be organized base on our game model using a 1-4-2-3-1 formation.

Principles:

- Pass or Dribble forward when possible or hold ball
- Create 2v1 or 1v1 situations
- Create diagonal passing lines
- Vary runs to try and get in behind / between
- Early cross and getting numbers in the box
- Push defensive line up
- Take preventative defensive action



Whole I (Play I) : 8v10 to Goal & 2 Counter Goals

Number of players: 10

Field size: 70x70 yards (approximately 3/4 field size)

Duration: 20 minutes | 2.5 min. X 4 bouts x 1:30 min. rest) **Intensity:** 6 / hard

Rules of the exercise:

Activity on 70x70 field with big goal and two counter goals. Blue Team (2-5-1 formation) scores in the big goal. --- Organize Blue to get compact, stay compact, try to funnel play centrally to win the ball back, quickly shift/tuck if ball is switched, pressure/cover. communicate. Red team (1-4-4-1 formation or optional at full strength) should try to score as quickly as possible by passing in either small goals. --- Organize Red to take advantage of numerical advantage, look go forward by using width to stretch blue out of shape, or depth to get in behind between two center backs.

FOCUS TEAM: Objective (expected behavior):

- Guide / allow players to recognize the behaviors and tempo of this activity. Observe behavior of #4 and #5 and how they work with the #6, #7 and #11 since there are no outside backs currently. Active observation of central midfielders and their relationships. Keep making sure Red's team shape is realistic and game-like. **FOCUS TTPs** - Get Compact, Stay Compact - Pressure / Cover / Balance - Press in identified situations - Outnumber Opponent - Eliminate Passing Lines - Provide cover and delay when outnumbered
- Player Actions:** Read and understand the game | Take Initiative / Be proactive | Aggressive to get the ball back | Get organized and execute tasks | Close off passing lines | Pressure/Cover/Balance | Responsibility | Optimal technical abilities

OPPOSITION TEAM: Objective (expected behavior):

- Work on the main concepts of our game model in a reduced space; reinforce importance of player positioning to effectively and quickly move the ball; movement and speed of play; possession with purpose to disorganize and unbalance the opponent; transition; quick counter pressure. (Highlight key TTPs - Create passing options • Support • Spread out)
- **Player Actions:** Decision Making, Concentration/Focus | Body Shape and Positioning | Angles / Triangles | Spacing (keep distance between each other; central neutral stay center/ find gaps) | Movement to make yourself available | Optimal technical abilities

Planned interactions with players (when):

Q1: How can we make play predictable?

A1: Get compact, stay compact. Reduce space for opposition team (opposite side midfielders should pinch in).

Q2: How can we create pockets and set traps?

A2: Encourage opposition team to pass or dribble into the middle - create numerical advantages by funneling play to win the ball and counter.

Q3: What cues tell us the opposition is going to play a long ball?

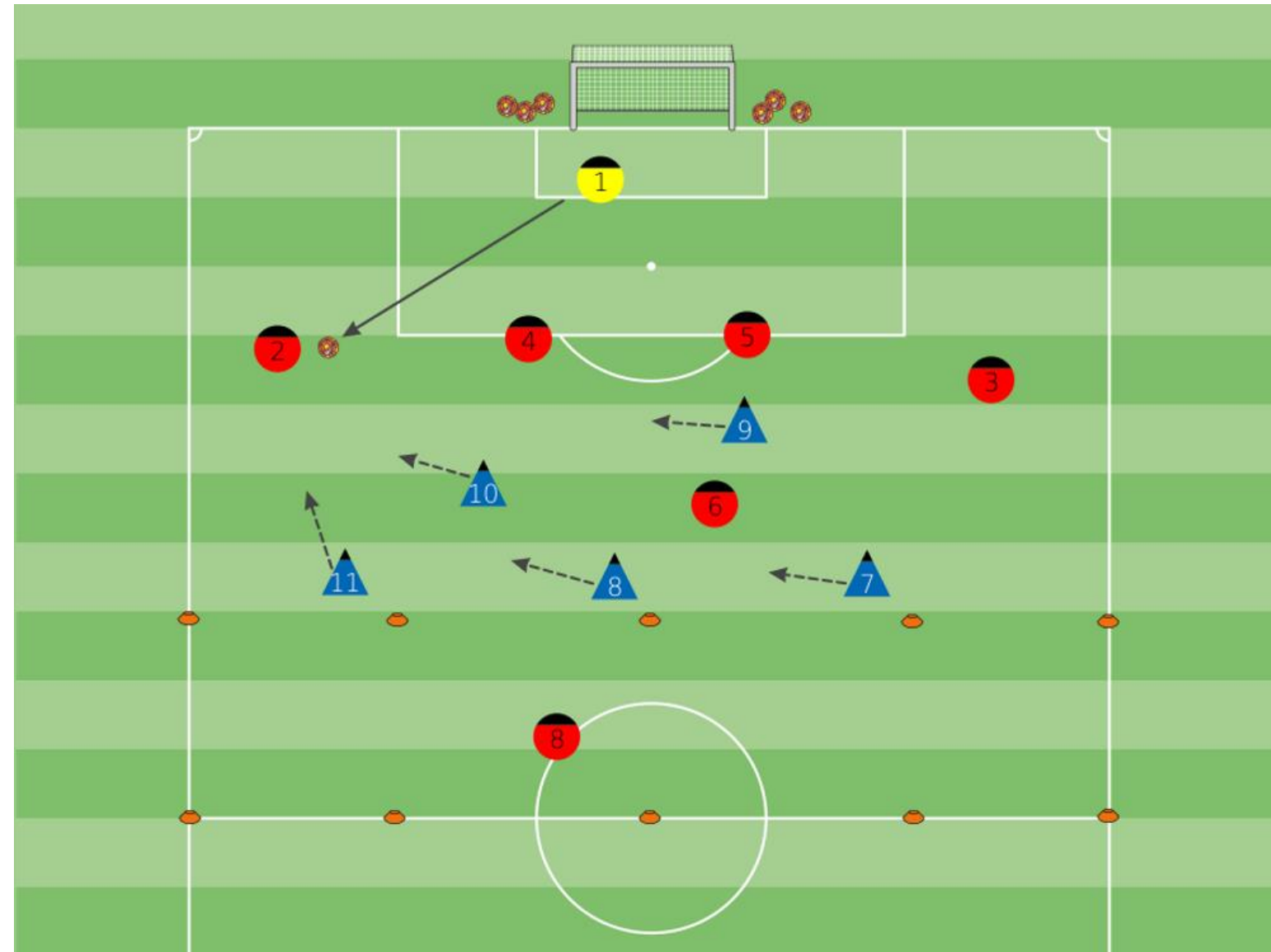
A3: The details - watch the opponents' eyes, body shape and tendencies; or, understand the current moment in the game (score, injuries, other).

Q4: How can we work together to keep the ball in front of us?

A4: Communication and cues - if our player presses, we stay connected (no gaps).

Roles and responsibilities:

HC active observation and singular voice during activity. AS1: Ensure player rotation. AS2: goalkeeper(s) warmup separately before Exercise #1. Trainer: Player health and injury



Practice (Core): 5v7 Functional Group Pressing

Number of players: 12

Field size: 70x50 yards (can vary on ability)

Duration: 12:00 min. 5 x 1:00 min. (1:20 min. rest) **Intensity:** 7 / Very Hard

Rules of the exercise:

Blue Team (focus team) attacks big goal with GK. Opposition looks for target player near midfield - target player must stay in the zone. Rotate players as needed to get appropriate repetitions.

FOCUS TEAM: Objective (*expected behavior*):

- Work on the main concepts of our game model and defensive style of play in a reduced space; disrupt the opposition's build-up by forcing an inaccurate pass; reinforce importance of player positioning to get the ball back through quick counter pressure. Monitor for more challenging/less challenging components of the activity. (TTPs: Pressure/cover/balance • Get compact • Anticipate attack). Key player roles are #9, #10, #6, #8, #7, #11.

- **Player Actions:** Read and understand the game | Take Initiative / Be proactive | Aggressive to get the ball back | Get organized and execute tasks | Close off passing lines | Pressure/Cover/Balance | Responsibility | Optimal technical abilities

OPPOSITION TEAM: Objective (*Expected application of a principle*):

- Work on the main concepts of our game model and attacking style of play in a reduced space; reinforce importance of player positioning to effectively and quickly move the ball; movement and speed of play; possession with purpose to disorganize and unbalance the opponent; transition; quick counter pressure. (Highlight key TTPs - Create passing options • Support • Spread out)

- **Player Actions:** Decision Making, Concentration/Focus | Body Shape and Positioning | Angles / Triangles | Spacing (keep distance between each other; central neutral stay center/ find gaps) | Movement to make yourself available | Optimal technical abilities

Planned interactions with players (when):

Q1: What are cues or triggers to press?

A1: Opposition is not organized. Misplayed ball, player(s) show poor technical skills, have no support (isolated), or are near line of confrontation.

Q2: What are cues or triggers to drop and keep play in front of us?

A2: Opposition is organized and is unable to penetrate. Focus team is slow to transition and/or if possession hasn't been won back immediately.

Q3: What should we do when one of our teammate's presses?

A3: Press as a unit and stay connected - verbal/visual communication required.

Roles and responsibilities:

HC active observation and singular voice during activity. AS1: Ensure player rotation. AS2: goalkeeper(s) warmup separately before Exercise #1. Trainer: Player health and injury

Whole II (Play II) : 11v11 Game (*depending on available numbers*)

Number of players: 22

Field size: Full Field

Duration: 20:00 min 2 x 7:00 min (3:00 min rest)

Intensity: 5 / Moderate

Rules of the exercise: On a full field play 11v11 Game. Check and monitor for understanding. Reinforce all previous coaching points. LOTG in force.

FOCUS TEAM

Team structure (organization): 1-4-2-3-1 Formation

Description of what you want them to experience):

Allow players to put knowledge into use under match conditions

Principles:

Vary Runs | Get in behind | Early cross | Numbers in the box

Sub-Principles: Positioning / Patience / Decision making

OPPONENT

Team structure (organization): 1-4-3-3 Formation

Description of what you want them to experience):

Allow players to put knowledge into use under match conditions

Principles: Get compact, Stay Compact | Pressure/Cover/Balance

Sub-Principles: Positioning / Transition / Foucs / Decision making

Possible Questions (Script)

Q1: What was the focus again for this session? A1: Press / No Press (recognize moments to press and moments to drop) to prevent scoring chances starting from opponent's half of the field.

Q2: What factors affect pressing? A2: The score. How much time left in the game? Size/condition of the field. Technical abilities of the opposition and their style of play.

Q3: What are some risks? A3: If one player doesn't do their role, all team efforts can be wasted. Technically-strong sides could exploit us. Over-committing players leaves team exposed to counter attacks.

Q4: Why is it important to keep the ball in front of us? A4: Disrupt other team's attacking rhythm - prevent them playing forward and breaking the lines of our midfield.

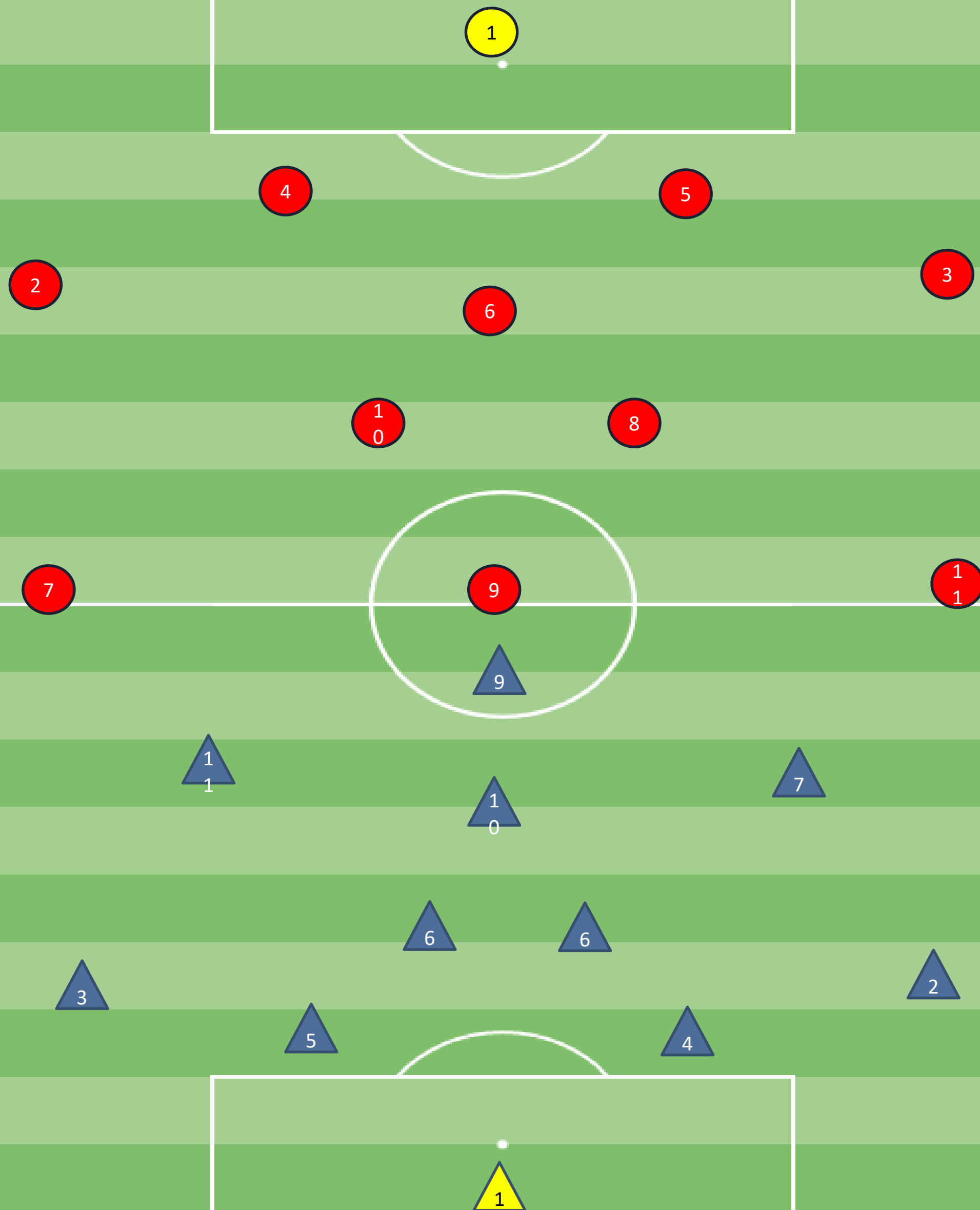
Q5: How can we be successful in our defending tactics in this area of the field? A5: Get compact, stay compact. Communicate. Stay connected.

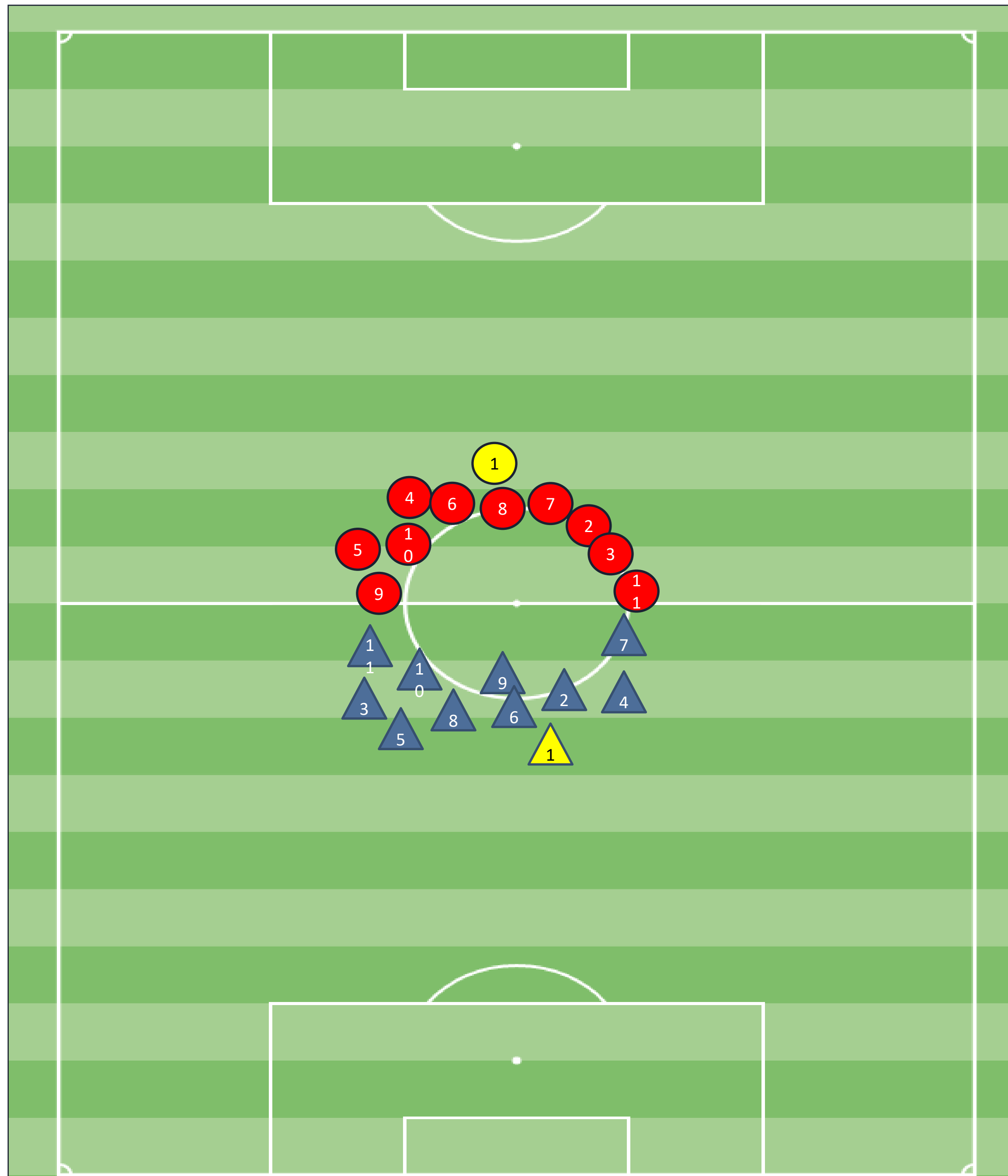
What are you going to do (say / demonstrate ?) to help key players to make the appropriate decision. When? Limit any freeze moments unless a key moment arises. Coach in flow or use a natural stoppage. Find one key moment (positive or negative) to demonstrate the effectiveness of the day's overall session.

How would you adjust the demand during the sessions (cognitive & physical)? Are the players on both teams being challenged equally (are both teams having the right balance of being successful or unsuccessful?)

Roles and responsibilities:

HC running Focus Team. AS1 (if available): running Opposition Team. Trainer: Player health and injury.





Cool Down & Debrief

Duration: 3 Minutes

Activities

Cool-down activities will focus on slow movements and stretching, allowing the heart rate to return to normal after vigorous activity. Use full body stretches to work on improved flexibility / increase oxygen to the working muscles.

Planned Interactions w/ Players

- Check for understanding on the day's session topic
- Address any other player questions
- Team housecleaning and reminders
- Provide a period of hydration, relaxation, and decompression
- The Joke of the Day & Dismissal