

# BEAT THE PRESS WITH SINGLE & DOUBLE PIVOTS

**Build Up Play  
and Sessions  
from Flick, Klopp  
and Emery's  
Tactics**

*Terzis Athanasios*



# BEAT THE PRESS WITH SINGLE & DOUBLE PIVOTS

**Build Up Play and Sessions from  
Flick, Klopp and Emery's Tactics**

**Written by  
Athanasios Terzis**



**Published by**



# CONTENTS

Meet the Author: Athanasios Terzis .....	8
Introduction .....	9
Coaches Studied to Produce the Tactical Analysis for this Book .....	10
Diagram Key & Coaching Format .....	12

## **Build Up Play Factors: Essential Skills and Opposition Pressing Tactics with Different Formations** .....13

Build Up Play Factors .....	14
1. Essential Goalkeeper Skills During Build Up Play .....	14
2. Essential Defender and Defensive Midfielder Skills During Build Up Play .....	15
3. Different Types of High Pressing by Opposition (High or Ultra-Aggressive) .....	16
4. Numerical Situation in the Low Area when Opposition Press High .....	18
5. Different Types of Defending Used by Opposition During High Pressing .....	27

## **Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press - Break Lines vs High Press Zonal Defending with a Single Pivot** ..... 32

Build Up Play from the Back Principles and Objectives .....	33
Build Up Play vs High Pressing and Zonal Defending with a Single Pivot (4-3-3) .....	34
Options for Breaking the First and Second Pressing Lines with a Single Pivot (4-3-3) ...	36
Drawing Press with a Pass and Exploit Gaps to Play in Between the Lines .....	39
Goalkeeper Draws Press to Create Space for Centre Backs (4-3-3) .....	40
Playing Against a Compact Central Block Leaves Space Out Wide (4-3-3) .....	44

## **Training Session 1: Build Up to Beat the Press - Break Lines vs High Press Zonal Defending with a Single Pivot** ..... 46

1. Passing Decisions to Break Lines Depending on Opposition Pressing .....	47
2. Breaking Lines Based on Opponent Reactions 6 (+GK) v 2 Functional Practice. ....	48
3. Draw the Press and Break Lines Against a High Press 8v6 (+GKs) Positional Game ...	50
4. Break Lines Through Turning, Recycling the Ball, or Dribbling Forward 3 Zone Conditioned Game .....	52



<b>Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press - Break Lines vs High Press Zonal Defending with a Double Pivot</b> .....	53
Build Up Play from the Back Principles and Objectives with a Double Pivot (4-2-3-1) ....	54
Build Up Play Against High Pressing and Zonal Defending with a Double Pivot (4-2-3-1). ..	55
Drawing Press from Midfielder to Exploit Space Created Between the Lines Behind. ....	59
Goalkeeper Draws Press to Create Space Wide .....	60

<b>Training Session 2: Build Up to Beat the Press - Break Lines vs High Press Zonal Defending with a Double Pivot</b> .....	61
1. Passing Decisions to Break Lines Depending on Opposition Pressing .....	62
2. Breaking Lines Based on Opponent Reactions 6 (+GK) v 2 Functional Practice. ....	63
3. Draw the Press and Break Lines Against a High Press 10v6 (+GKs) Positional Game ..	65
4. Break Lines Through Turning, Recycling the Ball, or Dribbling Forward 3 Zone Conditioned Game .....	67

<b>Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press - Goalkeeper's Passing Over Pressing Lines</b> .....	68
Goalkeeper's Passing Over Second Pressing Line .....	69
Goalkeeper's Passing Directly to Players Positioned Between the Lines .....	70

<b>Training Session 3: Build Up to Beat the Press - Goalkeeper's Passing Over Pressing Lines</b> .....	74
1. Goalkeeper's Passing Over Pressing Lines and Decisions to Play in Behind .....	75
2. Goalkeeper's Passing Over Second Pressing Line Functional Practice with Target Zones. ....	77
3. Goalkeeper's Passing Over Second Pressing Line 10v8 (+GKs) Functional Practice with Target Zones .....	79
4. Goalkeeper's Passing Over Second Pressing Line Conditioned Tactical Game .....	81

<b>Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press - Strong Side Advantage vs High Press Zonal Defending</b> .....	82
Numerical Situations Against High Pressing with Zonal Defending (Single Pivot) .....	83
Numerical Situations Against High Pressing with Zonal Defending (Double Pivot) .....	86

<b>Training Session 4: Build Up to Beat the Press - Strong Side Advantage vs High Press Zonal Defending</b> .....	88
1. Exploiting Numerical Advantage to Find Free Player Continuous Possession Game. . .	89



2. Exploiting 4v3 Numerical Advantage 3-Team Small Sided Game .....	91
3. Build Up with Numerical Advantage on Strong Side Dynamic Split-Pitch Game (Single Pivot) .....	92
4. Build Up with Numerical Advantage on Strong Side Dynamic Split-Pitch Game (Double Pivot) .....	93
5. Build Up with Numerical Advantage on Strong Side 11v11 Conditioned Game .....	94

## **Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press - Strong Side Equality vs High Press Zonal Defending** .....

Switching Play from Strong to Weak Side with Single Pivot Midfield (4-3-3) .....	96
--	----

## **Training Session 5: Build Up to Beat the Press - Strong Side Equality vs High Press Zonal Defending** .....

1. Build Up Combinations and Switching Play with Target Areas .....	103
2. Build Up Play with Equal Numbers and Switch Play in a Dynamic 3-Team Game .....	105
3. Split-Pitch Build Up Tactical Game to Beat the Press with Equal Numbers (4-3-3) .....	107
4. Reading the Game Situation (Advantage or Equal Numbers) 11v11 Conditioned 3 Zone Game .....	108

## **Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press Against High Press with Zonal Defending and Man Marking** .....

Build Up Against High Press with Zonal Defending and Man Marking (Single Pivot) .....	111
Build Up Against High Press with Zonal Defending and Man Marking (Double Pivot) .....	114

## **Training Session 6: Build Up to Beat the Press Against High Press with Zonal Defending and Man Marking** .....

1. Exploit 3v2 Numerical Advantage with Single Pivot Midfield Positional Small Sided Game .....	119
2. Exploit 3v2 Numerical Advantage with Double Pivot Midfield Positional Small Sided Game .....	121
3. Exploit 3v2 Midfield Advantage Against High Press with Zonal and Man Marking Conditioned Game .....	123

## **Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking** ..

Build Up Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking ..	125
Build Up Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking (Single Pivot) .....	126



Build Up Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking (Double Pivot) .....	134
--	-----

## **Training Session 7: Build Up to Beat the Press Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking** .. 138

1. Functional Build Up Patterns vs Ultra-Aggressive Pressing to Play Through or Over ..	139
2. Build Up Patterns with Link Player Principles vs Ultra- Aggressive Pressing and Man Marking.....	140
3. Using the Link Player to Move the Ball to the Free Player 8v8 (+GKs) Conditioned Game.....	141
4. Finding Free Player Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing Half Pitch Game .....	144
5. Finding the Free Player Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing 11v11 Game .....	146

## **Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press - Exploit Space Out Wide to Bypass Midfield Marking**..... 147

Build Up to Exploit Space Out Wide and Bypass Midfield Marking (Single Pivot).....	148
Build Up to Exploit Space Out Wide and Bypass Midfield Marking (Double Pivot).....	155

## **Training Session 8: Build Up to Beat the Press - Exploit Space Out Wide to Bypass Midfield Marking**..... 158

1. Decision Making to Break Lines in Wide Areas Depending on Opposition Pressing ..	159
2. Decision Making to Break Lines in Wide Areas Depending on Opposition Pressing Small Sided Game .....	160
3. Split-Pitch Read the Game Situation Build Up Play Tactical Game to Beat the Press (4-3-3).....	161
4. Split-Pitch Read the Game Situation Build Up Play Tactical Game to Beat the Press (4-2-3-1) .....	162

## **Tactical Analysis: Build Up to Beat the Press Against Full Pitch Man Marking**..... 163

Build Up Solutions Against Full Pitch Man Marking (Single Pivot) .....	164
Build Up Solutions Against Full Pitch Man Marking (Double Pivot) .....	172

## **Training Session 9: Build Up to Beat the Press Against Full Pitch Man Marking**..... 175

1. Beating a Full Pitch Man Marking Press by Finding Free Player Support Play Zones ..	176
2. Beating a Full Pitch Man Marking Press with a Long Pass and Support Runs Functional Combinations .....	177



3. Beating a Full Pitch Man Marking Press with a Single Pivot Build Up Shape in a Half Pitch Game ..... 178

4. Beating a Full Pitch Man Marking Press with the Goalkeeper’s Long Pass 6v6 (+GKs) Game ..... 180

5. Reading Tactical Triggers to Beat the Press Against Full Pitch Man Marking Game .. 182

Final Message for Coaches ..... 183





# MEET THE AUTHOR: ATHANASIOS TERZIS



- **Football Tactics Expert**
- **Award Winning Author**
- **Coach Instructor for German Coaches Association (BDFL) and Scottish FA - UEFA A + Pro**
- **UEFA Pro Coaching Licence**
- **Greek Football Federation Instructor**
- **PAOK U23 Assistant Coach**
- **Analyst (Pundit) for Cosmote TV**
- **Former Coach of Professional Teams in Greece**
- **M.S.C. - Coaching and Conditioning**
- **Former Technical Director of DOXA Dramas Academy (Greek 2nd division)**
- **Former Professional Football Player**

Athanasios Terzis is a football tactics expert and instructor for many coaching seminars and workshops around the world. Athanasios has written many best selling football coaching books published by **SoccerTutor.com** in multiple languages (English, Spanish, German, Italian, Greek, Japanese, Korean and Chinese) including:

- **Beat the Press with a Box Midfield - Build Up Play and Sessions from Guardiola, Alonso and Arteta's Tactics**
- **Pep Guardiola - Coaching High Pressing Tactics & Sessions Against Different Formations**
- **Marcelo Bielsa Attacking Tactics and Sessions**
- **Diego Simeone Attacking and Defending Tactics from Atlético Madrid's 4-4-2**
- **Pep Guardiola's Attacking Tactics - Tactical Analysis and Sessions from Manchester City's 4-3-3**
- **Creative Attacking Play - From the Tactics of Conte, Allegri, Simeone, Mourinho, Wenger & Klopp**
- **Marcelo Bielsa - Coaching Build Up Play Against High Pressing Teams**
- **Coaching the Juventus 3-5-2 - Tactical Analysis and Sessions: Attacking and Defending**
- **Jürgen Klopp's Attacking and Defending Tactics from Borussia Dortmund's 4-2-3-1**
- **FC Barcelona Training Sessions: 160 Practices from 34 Tactical Situations**
- **Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid - A Tactical Analysis**
- **FC Barcelona - A Tactical Analysis**





# INTRODUCTION: BEAT THE PRESS WITH SINGLE & DOUBLE PIVOTS

As football evolves, the **importance of structured build up play from the goalkeeper continues to grow**. More teams are using positional play principles to progress the ball under pressure with single and double midfield pivots, with formations such as the **4-3-3 (single pivot)** and **4-2-3-1 (double pivot)** offering a balance between control, width, and attacking versatility.

This book provides a detailed tactical breakdown of build up play in these formations, with insights drawn from:

- **Hansi Flick** (FC Barcelona)
- **Jürgen Klopp** (Liverpool)
- **Unai Emery** (Aston Villa)

The focus is on how these teams:

- **Create positional advantages**
- **Maintain passing options under pressure**
- **Progress the ball effectively against different pressing structures**

The first sections examine the key factors influencing build up play, starting with an analysis of pressing strategies:

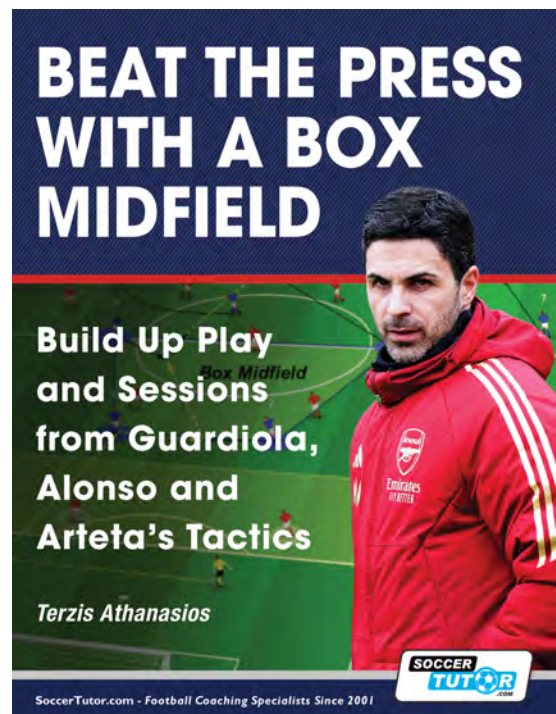
- **High Pressing (on first receiver)**
- **Ultra-Aggressive Pressing (up to GK)**

Following this, we explore the defensive principles used in pressing, including:

- **Zonal Defending**
- **Pressing with Man Marking**
- **Hybrid of Zonal and Man Marking**

We then **outline tactical solutions** to bypass these defensive structures, helping teams effectively build up play from the back under pressure.

For a deeper understanding of build up variations, the **first volume of this series (previous book) focuses on build up play using the box midfield**, featuring tactical insights from **Pep Guardiola** (Manchester City), **Mikel Arteta** (Arsenal) and **Xabi Alonso** (Bayer Leverkusen).



Together, these two volumes provide a comprehensive analysis of how top teams navigate the challenges of build up play across different systems.



# COACHES STUDIED TO PRODUCE THE TACTICAL ANALYSIS FOR THIS BOOK



## Hansi Flick

### FC Barcelona (2024–25 Season):

- Hansi Flick implemented a 4-2-3-1 formation to structure Barcelona's build up and attacking play.
- The double pivot (F. de Jong and Pedri) provided stability and vertical ball progression. The full backs (Balde and Koundé) provided width and supported wide progression. Olmo operated as the N°10, dropping into deeper areas to create central overloads.
- Flick's balanced and fluid approach improved transitions and positional dominance.
- Barcelona won La Liga, the Copa del Rey, and reached the UEFA Champions League semi-finals.

### Bayern Munich (2019–21):

- Flick consistently used a 4-2-3-1, combining structure with attacking intent.
- In 2019–20, Kimmich and Thiago formed a strong double pivot in a standout season. The full backs (Davies and Pavard) stretched play and supported transitions. Müller dropped into midfield to link play and create overloads. Bayern pressed aggressively and dominated through fluid possession.
- Flick's Bayern team won the Bundesliga, DFB-Pokal, Champions League, Super Cup, and Club World Cup.

### Impact of 4-2-3-1 Build Up Play:

- 4-2-3-1 offers Flick control, clarity, and fluidity across all phases. It blends stability in the build up phase with dynamic attacking rotations.
- Central overloads and vertical play defined both Bayern Munich and FC Barcelona's success.
- The system remains key to Flick's structured and flexible philosophy.



## Jürgen Klopp

### Liverpool (2015–24):

- Jürgen Klopp introduced a high pressing, vertical 4-3-3 system with structured build up play.
- The defensive midfielder dropped into the back line to support the build up. The full backs (Alexander-Arnold and Robertson) advanced high and delivered from wide areas. The narrow front 3 created central threats and opened space for overlapping runs.
- Liverpool won the Premier League, Champions League, FA Cup, League Cup, and Club World Cup.

### Impact of 4-3-3 Build Up Play:

- The 4-3-3 gave Liverpool structure, control, and attacking width. It became one of Europe's most recognisable and effective tactical systems. Liverpool consistently competed for major trophies with a clear, defined identity.



## Unai Emery

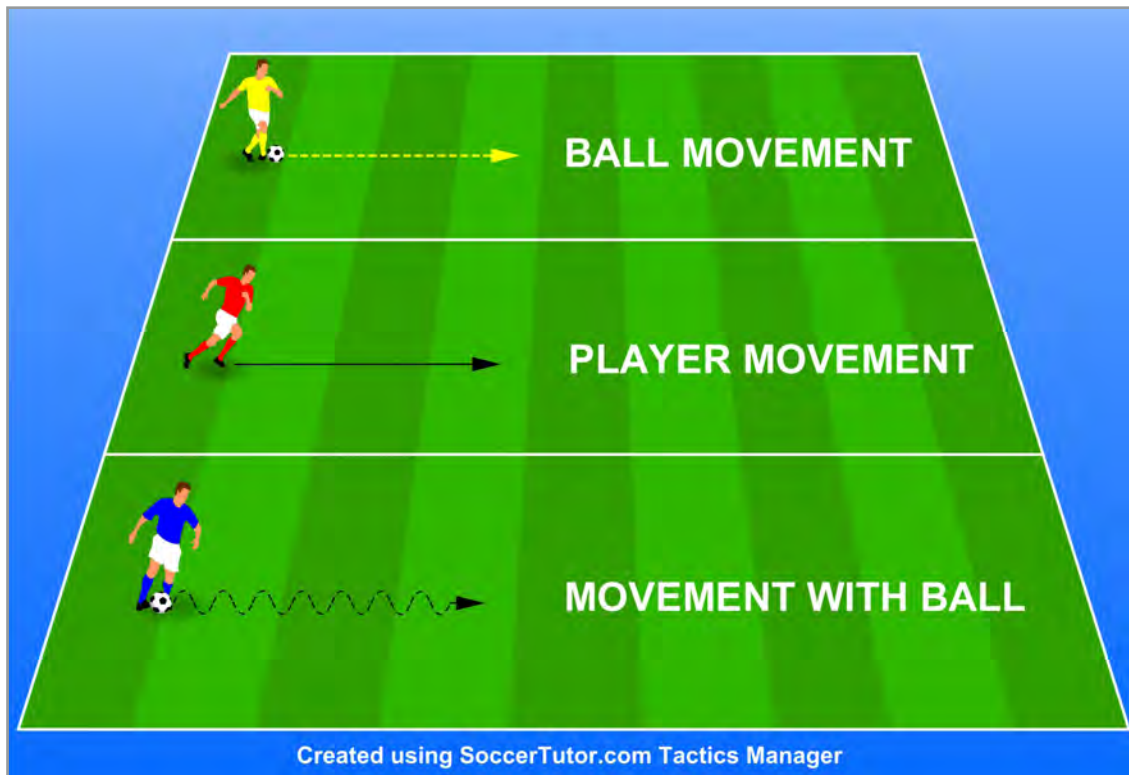
### Aston Villa (2022–24):

- Unai Emery uses a 4-2-3-1 system centred on structured build up and positional control.
- The double pivot circulates the ball and helps progress play through the key central areas.
- The N°10 and wingers drop into pockets to create overloads between the lines.
- Emery's build up play approach prioritises control, compactness, and vertical ball progression.

### Impact of 4-2-3-1 Build Up Play:

- The 4-2-3-1 gives Emery structure, control, and attacking fluidity. His tactics have brought consistency and high-level performances from his team.
- Aston Villa qualified for the UEFA Champions League and narrowly lost the quarter-finals to winners PSG.

# DIAGRAM KEY & COACHING FORMAT



## TACTICAL ANALYSIS

- All of the analysis in this book is based on recurring patterns of play observed within **Hansi Flick's Barcelona**, **Jürgen Klopp's Liverpool**, and **Unai Emery's Aston Villa** teams. Once the same phase of play is observed multiple times across many matches, the tactics are seen as a pattern.
- Each action, pass, movement (on or off the ball), and positioning of each player on the pitch, including body shape, is presented with a full description.

## TRAINING SESSIONS BASED ON THE TACTICS

- Technical, Functional and Tactical Practices
- Functional Games / Conditioned Games
- Name/Objective, Full Description, Rules/Conditions, Restrictions, Variations, Progressions, and Coaching Points (if applicable)

# **BUILD UP TO BEAT THE PRESS**

**Tactical Analysis**

## **Against Ultra- Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking**

Build up play  
patterns from  
Flick, Klopp, and  
Emery's teams



# Build Up Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking

We have already mentioned that when high pressing is applied (see page 83), there is a 7v6 situation in favour of the possession team.

**When this pressing extends up to the goalkeeper (ultra-aggressive pressing), the defending team must also account for the goalkeeper, who becomes actively involved in the build up play.**

The possession team, therefore, has a **+2 numerical advantage (7 outfield players + GK vs 6 defenders)** in this specific part of the pitch.

When the objective of the defending team is to apply ultra-aggressive pressing, some principles must be applied.

1. **First Principle:** When pressing is applied to the goalkeeper, it is to **block the passing lane towards one of the centre backs, who stays free.**

This eliminates the first numerical advantage problem for the pressing team.

*If the first principle is not applied properly, a pass to the centre back would at least neutralise the player who presses the goalkeeper.*

2. **Second Principle:** Set up to **control all the receivers of a potential short pass** from the goalkeeper.

*If the second principle is not applied properly, an easy short pass can be played to a free player.*

*This pass will again at least neutralise the player who presses the goalkeeper, and potentially more players.*

To achieve the second principle, the defending team must apply close marking to all opponents near the ball. One way to carry this out is by using a **hybrid of zonal defending and man marking in midfield**, which we will fully analyse in this section.

This means that the **midfielders should mark the opponents within their zone of responsibility** and especially the defensive midfielders, who are potential receivers of a short first pass. If they do receive, the aim is to use close marking to prevent them from turning.

**Note:** Although we set out the opposition's pressing structure and aims, the focus of this section is on how to build up play with a single pivot (4-3-3) and double pivot (4-2-3-1) against this type of defending/pressing, with tactical solutions provided.



# Build Up Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking (Single Pivot)

## 1. Opposition Positioning Adjustments to Apply Marking Against a 4-3-3 Build Up Shape



This first diagram reflects the second principle outlined on the previous page: **The opposition set up to control all the receivers of a potential short pass from the goalkeeper (GK).**

The red central midfielder N°6 marks the **left attacking midfielder (N°8)**, while red N°8 is positioned between the **defensive midfielder (N°6)** and the **right attacking midfielder (N°10)** to control both players.

This is because a **3v2 disadvantage exists for the reds in the key central midfield area** for the reds, so a midfielder must cover 2 opponents.

**Note:** Red N°8 must be close enough to press N°6 if he receives, while limiting potential passing lanes towards N°10.

## 2. Opposition Press the Goalkeeper and Ensure All Nearby Passing Options are Marked (4-3-3)



When playing against ultra-aggressive pressing with zonal defending and man marking, **as soon as the opposing forward (Nº9 in diagram) decides to press the goalkeeper (GK), a red central midfielder (Nº8) must move forward to mark the defensive midfielder (Nº6).**

**The other red forward (Nº10) reduces his distance to the blue centre back (Nº5), so that he is able to put him under pressure immediately if he receives.**

**Red Nº9 presses in a way that blocks a direct pass to his direct opponent (blue centre back Nº4).**

All potential receivers of a short pass are either marked or passing lanes towards them are blocked.

However, in this situation there are **2 free players**:

1. **Centre back (Nº5)** who is in the shadow of red Nº9's pressing.
2. **Attacking midfielder (Nº10)**, who stays completely free of marking after the forward movement of red Nº8.

### 3. Using the Link Player Closest to the Ball to Move the Ball to the Free Player (4-3-3)



Principles to apply or actions to take in order to build up effectively are:

1. Use the link players near the ball carrier to move the ball to the free defender.
2. Move the ball to the free midfielder (directly or indirectly via a link player).

In the diagram example, the blue team manage to apply the first principle successfully.

**The goalkeeper (GK) passes to the closest available link player - the defensive midfielder (Nº6)** who is in a good position to direct the ball to the closest free player - the **centre back (Nº4)**.

From there, the aim is to move the ball to the **advanced free player in between the lines - the attacking midfielder (Nº10)**.

If **Nº4** carries the ball forward, a numerical advantage on that side can be quickly exploited to make this a fairly easy option.

#### 4. Potential Link Player Positioning and Scanning to Support the Free Defender Before Pressure is Applied (4-3-3)



Key principles link players follow to be effective:

1. Stay high enough to form an effective passing angle.
2. Constantly scan for teammates and opposing players' positions, especially in the area likely to be used after the goalkeeper (GK) is pressed.

Once a red player presses **GK**, it becomes clear which defender is free and will act as the target player (**Nº4** in diagram example).

**Nº6's focus then shifts to the red winger Nº11, who is the opponent most likely to intervene and intercept a pass**, making it essential for **Nº6** to be aware of this while being ready to offer support to **GK**.

**Before pressure is applied to the goalkeeper (GK), the defensive midfielder (Nº6) must scan the space around him and the positioning of players in the highlighted yellow area.**



## 5a. Timing of Link Player's Movement Creates a Narrow Passing Angle to Prevent Interceptions (4-3-3)



Following on from the 2 principles outlined on the previous page, the link player must also apply a third principle:

3. Offer support at the right moment (not too early), otherwise the passing angle becomes ineffective.

To do this, the **potential link player should start from a relatively high position**. As the red N°9 moves to press the goalkeeper, the **defensive midfielder (N°6) should drop back to support**.

Both of these actions must be perfectly synchronised. The correct timing is key to creating an effective passing angle.

In the diagram example, **N°6 moves in sync with the red forward N°9 pressing the goalkeeper (GK)**. This allows N°6 to stay high and then drop to receive with enough space, resulting in a **narrow diagonal passing angle**.

### Importance of Narrow Passing Angle:

The nearest opponent (red N°11), arriving from the blind side, is kept far enough from the passing line to the target player (centre back - N°4), lowering the risk of interception. Red N°11 may be seen during N°6's scanning, but by the time the pass is made, he is usually out of the link player's view.

## 6. Free Defender Must Act Quickly to Exploit Available Space or 3v1 Situation Near the Ball (4-3-3)



**Note:** As soon as the pass is directed to the free player via the link player, the receiver will find available space, a numerical advantage, or both - if he acts quickly.

In the diagram example, the blue **centre back (No.4)** receives from the **defensive midfielder (No.6)** and has space in front of him, while a **3v1 situation forms near the ball area**.

The next action depends on how red No.11 reacts. For example, if red No.10 presses No.4 in a way that blocks the passing lane to the **attacking midfielder (No.10)**, then the pass to the **full back (No.2)** - yellow arrow becomes available.

If red No.11 blocks the pass to blue No.2, then No.10 becomes the clear passing option (blue arrow).

If red No.11 drops deeper to try and avoid being bypassed, No.4 will have more room to drive forward with the ball.

**The key to exploiting this situation is the speed of action by No.4.** If there is a delay, the red central midfielder No.8 will have time to shift across and narrow the passing lane to blue No.10, allowing red No.11 to focus solely on controlling blue No.2, and reducing the original numerical advantage.



# BUILD UP TO BEAT THE PRESS

Training Session 7 (5 Practices)

## Against Ultra- Aggressive Pressing with Zonal Defending and Man Marking

Based on Flick,  
Klopp, and  
Emery build up  
patterns



## TRAINING SESSION (5 PRACTICES)

### 1. Functional Build Up Patterns vs Ultra-Aggressive Pressing to Play Through or Over



#### Practice Description

- Play on both sides simultaneously. The **centre back (CB)** passes to the **GK**, who is immediately pressed by the coach.
- The GK has 2 options to be effective.
- **Option 1 (Left Side):** Use the **defensive midfielder (DM)** as a link player to move the ball to the free **CB**.
- **CB** must quickly pass to the **attacking midfielder (AM)** before the red player can move across to block the passing lane. **AM** receives and scores.

- **Option 2 (Right Side):** Long aerial pass to the **forward (F)**, who lays the ball off to the **AM**, who has moved inside to receive and score.
- **Note:** There can be 2 players in each position who switch after each repetition to speed up the practice.

#### Coaching Points

1. Synchronised, well-timed runs.
2. Offer support at the right moment.
3. Quick combination play.

## PROGRESSION

### 2. Build Up Patterns with Link Player Principles vs Ultra-Aggressive Pressing and Man Marking



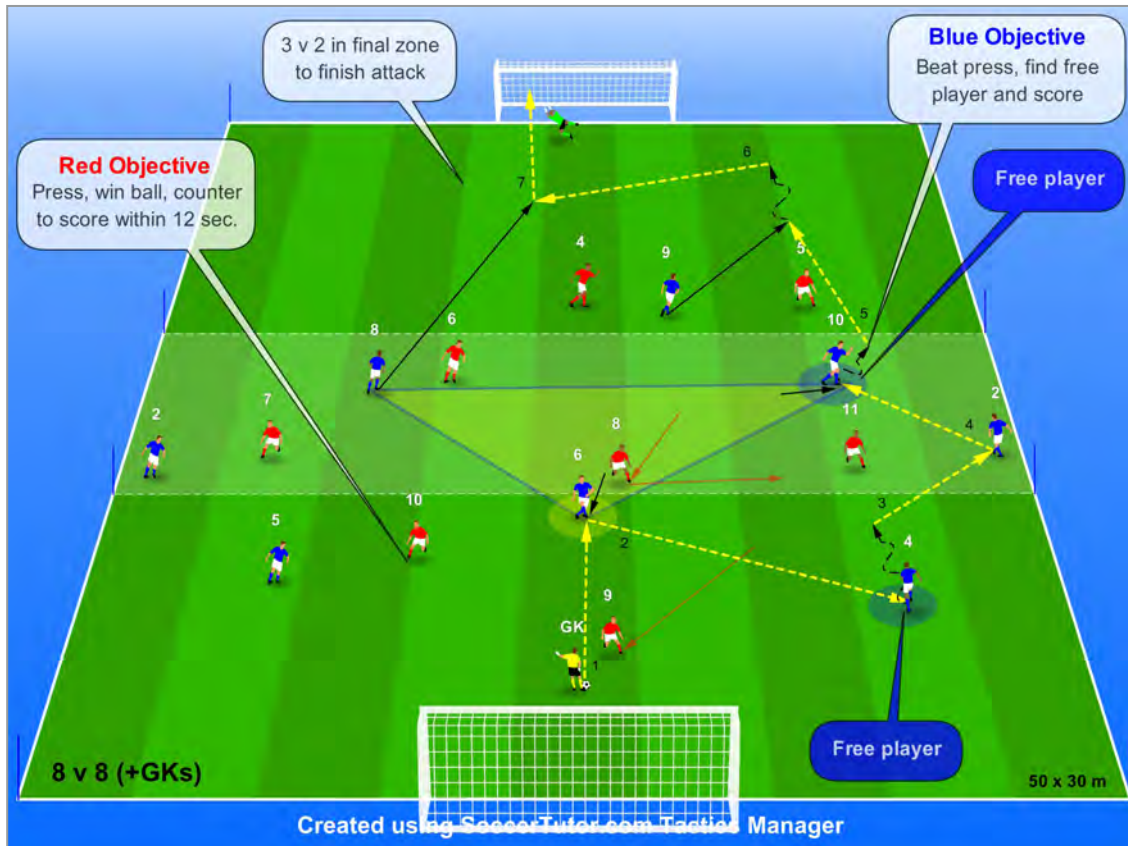
#### Practice Description

- Progressing from the previous practice, 2 blue full backs (in place of 2 forwards) and 2 red wide players are added. The focus is on link player principles - **see analysis pages in this section for full details and explanation.**
- The link player should be aware of their positioning to make the right decisions and direct the ball to the correct player.
- Option 1 (Left Side):** The red wide player is advanced, so **DM** passes to the **full back (LB)**, who is in space to receive.
- The next pass is to the **AM**, who receives, turns, and scores.
- Option 2 (Right Side):** The red wide player is deeper, so **DM** passes back to the free centre back (**CB**).
- CB** passes directly to **AM** (yellow arrow) or via the **link player (RB)** - blue arrows) depending on the positioning of the red wide player and the width of the available passing lane.

## PROGRESSION

### 3. Using the Link Player to Move the Ball to the Free Player 8 v 8 (+GKs) Conditioned Game

#### Variation 1: Find the Free Player through Deep Link Player (DM)



#### Practice Description (Variation 1)

- The blue attacking team have 2 centre backs, 2 full backs, 3 central midfielders, and 1 forward (**4-3-1 from 4-3-3**).
- The red defending team have 2 centre backs, their midfield 4, and 2 forwards from the 4-4-2.
- The pitch is split into 3 zones. The low zone starts with an initial 2 (+GK) v 2 situation. The middle zone starts with 5v4 and the high zone is 1v2.
- **Red Objective:** Apply ultra-aggressive pressing to win the ball and counter to score within 8-12 seconds.
- **Blue Objective:** Build up through thirds and score (find free player with direct pass or via link player using *link player principles* - see page 129).
- **The Variation 1 diagram shows the DM (N°6) as the link player.** Once N°10 (free player) receives, it can be 3v2 or 3v3 to finish the attack. Restart from blue GK.



## PROGRESSION

### 4. Finding Free Player Against Ultra-Aggressive Pressing Half Pitch Game

#### Variation 1: Find the Free Player through Deep Link Player (DM)



#### Practice Description (Variation 1)

- **Blue Objective:** Progress ball from the GK and score. *See previous practices + analysis pages for solutions.* The diagram shows an example with the **defensive midfielder (Nº6)** is the link player. They have a **numerical advantage of 9v6 including the goalkeeper (GK) and outside forward (Nº9).**
- **Red Objective:** Apply ultra-aggressive pressing and force blues to find the free

player with a direct pass or via a link player. Win the ball and counter to score within 8-10 seconds.

#### Restrictions

1. A red player must press **GK** immediately.
2. The blue **forward (Nº9)** can help provide support but is limited to playing 1 touch passes back into the area.
3. If the ball goes out of play, the coach restarts with a pass to the red team.