



Athanasios Terzis

BREAKING THROUGH A COMPACT DEFENSE

— Analysis and sessions from the tactics
of Marcelo Bielsa and Pep Guardiola

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- Detailed analysis
- 10 easy to adapt drills
- Easily adjustable to every possible formation

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Part 1: Breaking through a team by playing over the lines	8
Characteristics of a compact team.....	9
Creating different lines of players during the attacking phase (build up).....	11
Different lines of players create various options of playing passes directly towards the finishing area.....	13
Passes of different ranges to move the ball to the finishing area.....	14
Stages to go through when playing over the lines.....	15
Available spaces to use during the first stage	16
Positioning of the forward - Determining the areas under each player's control.....	19
Creating an effective passing angle	29
Attacking midfielder attacks the space behind the defenders.....	36
Part 1: Drills.....	40
Drill 1: Forward takes up the appropriate position to receive over the lines	41
Drill 2: The attacking midfielder adjusts his positioning according to the forward in order to receive behind the defenders.....	44
Drill 3: 5 + 1 v 6 inside the low part with the objective of moving the ball to the free player and then playing over the lines	46
Drill 4: 11 v 11 with the aim of playing over the lines	48
Part 2: Breaking through a compact defence by playing through the flanks	50
Making the appropriate decision about where to direct the pass.....	56
Ideal space for the winger to receive.....	61
The type and the characteristics of the winger's run.....	62

Part 2: Drills	66
Drill 5: Wingers play 1v1 or make early crosses	68
Drill 6: Wingers use well-timed runs to receive a through or a lofted pass.....	70
Drill 7: Wingers use well-timed runs to receive a through or a lofted pass (decision making)	72
Drill 8: Playing through the flanks against four defenders	74
Drill 9: 8 v 7 + GK game.....	75
Drill 10: 11 v 11 game.....	76
About the Author	78
Athanasios Terzis.....	79

Creating different lines of players during the attacking phase (build up)

The formation that a team is about to use during a match is usually flexible as it changes during the phases of play. For example, the 1-4-2-3-1 formation may look like a 1-4-4-2 during the defensive phase, while it may take the form of a 1-4-3-3 during the attacking phase.

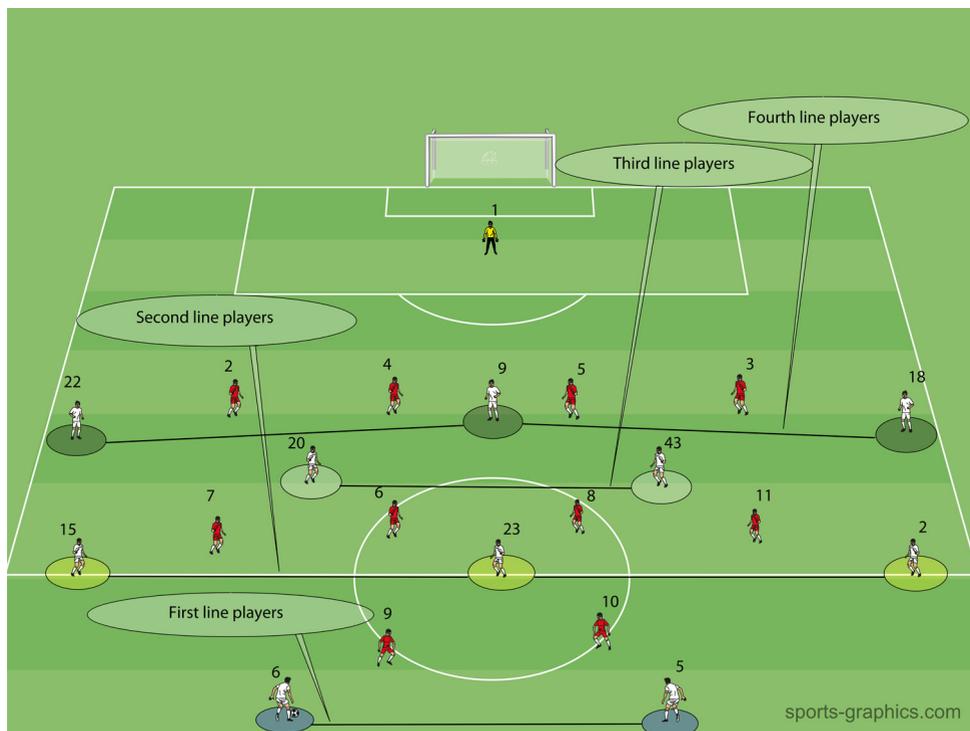


Diagram: The attacking formation of Leeds players which creates different lines of players

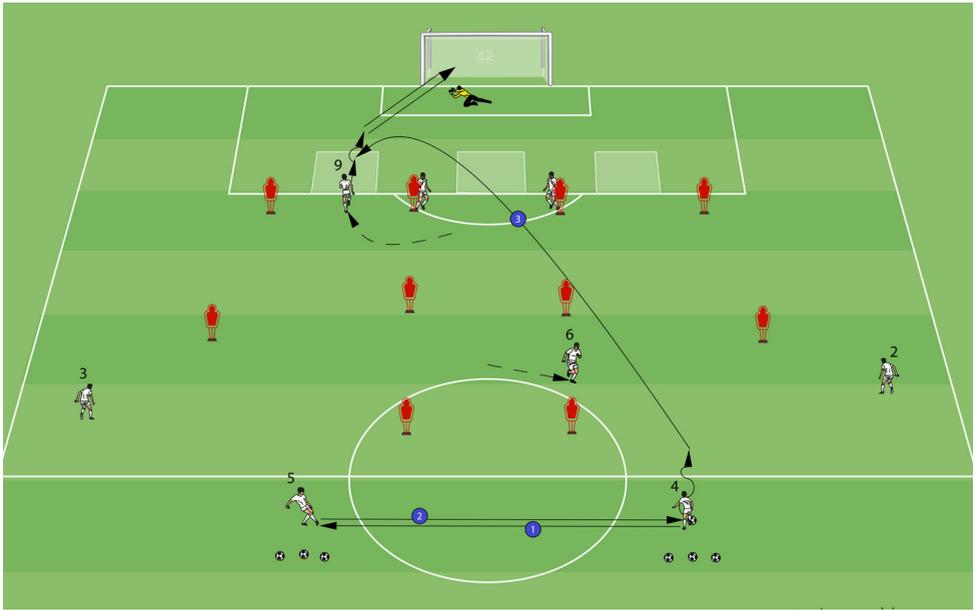
Bielsa's 1-4-3-3 with Leeds United during the attacking phase takes the form of a 1-2-3-2-3 (diagram above). The fullbacks move in more advanced positions to get almost along in the same line with the defensive midfielder, while the central defenders are deeper. The attacking midfielders are in advanced positions and create a reverse triangle with the defensive midfielder, while the wingers stay very wide and almost along in the same line with the forward who is in a central position between the opponent central defenders.

With this positioning the players are placed between the lines of the opponent team and also between the opponent players, so they can find the most available space they can. For example, Leeds No20 is between the lines of the midfielders and the defenders of the red team but he is also between red No2, No4, No7 and No6, while Leeds No23 is positioned between the lines of the forwards and the midfielders of the reds but also between red No9, No10, No6 and No8.

The positioning of Leeds players creates different lines of players. The two central defenders create the first line of players, the two fullbacks and the defensive midfielder create the second line, the two attacking midfielders the third and the three forwards the fourth line.

This kind of positioning can facilitate a progressive build-up play by using short and safe passes while moving the ball from line to line (e.g. from the first to the second, then to the third line etc) but it also provides different options of playing over the lines.





OBJECTIVE

The forward obtains an effective passing angle and uses a well-timed run when attacking the space between defenders

DESCRIPTION

The drill is executed in about half of the field. There are 10 red mannequins in 1-4-4-2 formation which represent the positions of the opponent players, while three white areas (target areas) are marked inside the box and between the mannequins (four defenders).

There are two central defenders, two fullbacks, the defensive midfielder and three players in the forward's position who rotate after each repetition for the white team. The drill starts with the central defenders passing the ball to each other and to other teammates.

As soon as one of them decides to move forward with the ball it is the trigger for the forward to move towards an effective passing angle, by taking up the appropriate position and then use a well-timed run. The moment of the pass the forward should be along in the same line with the mannequins (without being off side) and receive the pass inside the target area. Then he has to finish as soon as possible.

After each repetition the forward rotates. The long balls can be played either by the fullback or by the defensive midfielder or by the central defender. In order to be accurate, the passes should be directed inside the target areas.

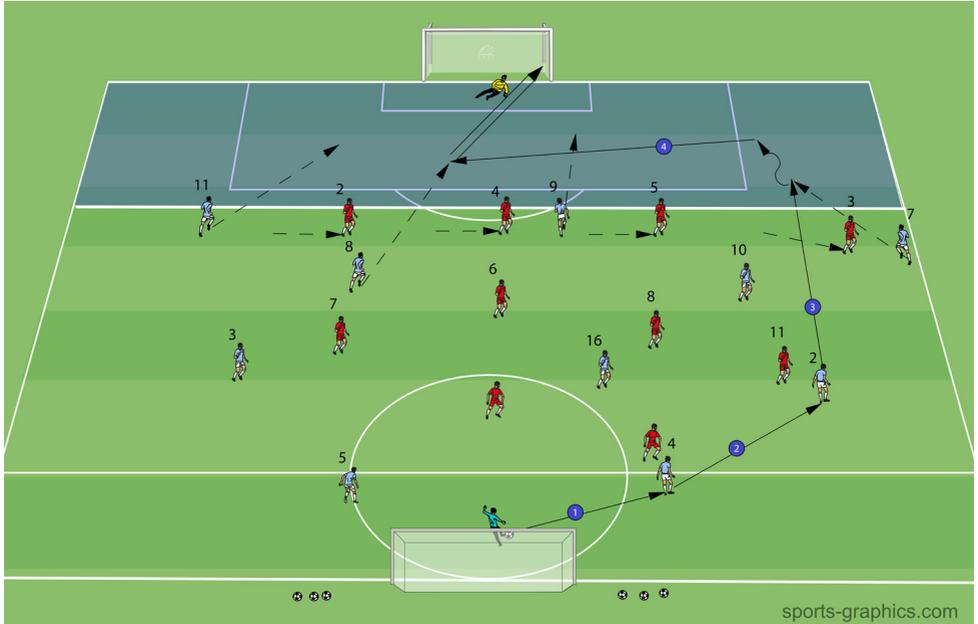
There can be a coach along in the same line with the mannequins of the defensive line to check possible off sides of the forward and provide feedback.

COACHING POINTS

- Obtaining an effective passing angle by being within a 45 degrees angle as regards the player who is ready to play the forward pass
- Using a well-timed run to get almost along in the same line with the mannequins the moment of the pass and avoid being in off side position
- Accurate passes towards the target areas
- Quick and accurate receiving and finishing



Drill 10: 11 v 11 game



OBJECTIVE

Training wingers and fullbacks in decision making, well-timed runs, effective 1v1 duels and accurate crosses in 11v11 game

DESCRIPTION

This is a game of 11v11 executed in an area which is bigger than half of the field. The blue players try to score with every possible way against the reds but if they manage to do it after playing effectively through the flanks, they get 2 or 3 points. The reds try to defend effectively, win possession and counterattack within 10-12 seconds.

RESTRICTIONS

The red players cannot enter the high blue area unless there is a pass to a blue player inside it or one of the blue players drives the ball inside it.

COACHING POINTS

- Decision making by the fullback and the winger
- Well timed-runs (appropriate type and characteristics)
- Effective 1v1
- Accurate through or lofted passes
- Accurate crosses

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Athanasios Terzis is an UEFA A coaching licence holder, instructor of the Greek FA, best-selling author and in-demand speaker on coaching conferences worldwide. The soccer tactics expert has a bachelor degree in physical education and a Master of Science in coaching and conditioning.



He is a well-known author of 20 coaching books which have been translated into many languages including English, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Greek. In 2014, his book “FC Barcelona Training Sessions” was awarded the Premio Nazionale Letteratura del Calcio, as the best coaching book of the year by the Italian FA.

- UEFA A Coaching Licence
- M.S.C. in coaching and conditioning
- Best Coaching book (FC Barcelona Training Sessions) for 2014 voted by The Italian FA

