

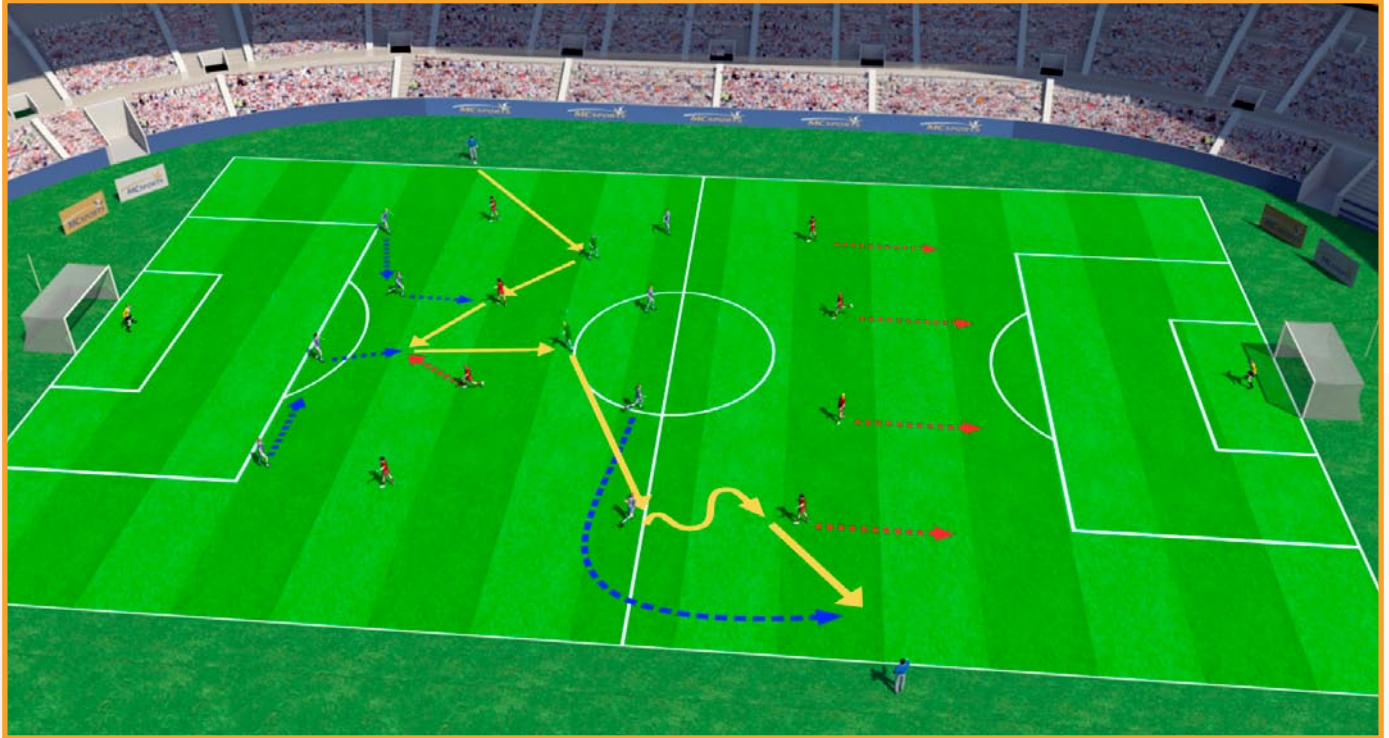
Practical Applications

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OBJECTIVE

Team's defensive / offensive collective organization and transition defense / attack-defense in the midfield sector



TEAM PLAYING ON DEFENSE

Coordination in zone defense

Principles and main individual fundamentals (defuse any possibility of 1 on 1 challenge, body positioning, choose the right moment to tackle...) and collective ones (neutralize the opponents' manoeuvres by reducing open spaces, defensive line alignment, collective moves, defensive supportive moves...)

Recovery / Transition:

Speedy run towards a team mate positioned in the same line or towards a "jack-of-all-trades" type of player (preferably towards the latter, although this will be determined by the game itself)

TEAM PLAYING ON OFFENSE

Usage of the principles and main individual fundamentals

Loss of the ball / recovery:

Influence and in some way delay the ball carrier's first and second manoeuvres:

- Trap
- First pass (to a team mate positioned in the same line or a "jack-of-all-trades" player)

JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES PLAYERS

- Good reading of the different situations generated during the game.
- Discern the right moment to launch a counter-attack (the opposing team stationed in the midfield line) or attack (when the opposing team line's remain low)

DESCRIPTION

Situation: (goalkeeper+4 defenders + midfielders) x (goalkeeper + 4 defenders + 4 midfielders) + 2 “jack-of-all-trades” players.

The drill will begin when the coach sends the ball to one of the attacking “jack-of-all-trades” players, giving place to a numerical inferiority –not positional- (4x6), or to a numerical superiority (6x4), leading the offensive play against the opponents’ goal. When the defending team regains control over the ball, (the team which loses the ball must try to disturb in an organized way the other team’s straightforward handling of the ball. In case the defending team manages to retrieve the ball, they will go on playing on offence), they will forward the ball towards a team mate or towards one of the “jack-of-all-trades” players (the ball must compulsory be touched by one of the aforementioned players) to carry on the play in a similar way on the other side of the pitch this time.

If the ball is out of bounds, (it has completely crossed a sideline or goal line), the game will be restarted by the coach sending the ball to one of the two “jack-of-all-trades” players.

(1) The concept speed necessarily implies the concept of accuracy in the team’s manoeuvres. Precision becomes indispensable when it comes to a combinative speed. From an analytical point of view a player can be regarded as fast (from an analytical viewpoint, I believe this is the less developed quality) but not so on mere football terms. Speed will be authentic speed as long as it is effective. Speed and precision belong together; neither term could be understood without the other. It is as if we asked someone what they prefer best, attacking or defending, who they love more dad or mum, or what they prefer to play well or play badly and eventually win the game...I’m really pleased to see that Jose Mourinho shares my stand when he advises:

“When we refer to speed, players’ speed should be players,

two total different aspects such as the speed in the circulation of the ball and the taken into account. The former has to do with a convenient positioning of the an adequate reading of the game, a great capacity to use both legs, being able to play the ball in one touch, and last but not least, a high developed trap and passing capacity. The aforementioned becomes indispensable to our philosophy of the game.

The speed at which the ball is moved is even more important than the players’ speed of movements. Being able to run a 60 metres distance in seven or eight seconds is not important to me. What really matters is the capacity to move the ball at high speed in the same stretch of the pitch.”

The way in which this speed in the circulation of the ball is put into practice has nothing to do with analytical situations. I’m much in favour of a good positioning on the pitch, as this is translated into a security for all the players who know that there will be a team mate in any zone of the pitch ready to come in their support if necessary, and at the same time, this will make possible for the team to foresee what is going to take place.

The key to everything lies on finding a collective speed, where every player will have to find out which his own speed is. Training is aimed at precisely that, so that players can discover the highest speed at which they are capable of performing in an efficient way.

Those who do not manage to achieve this through training, will lose the ball very easily and this is exactly the opposite of being fast!”

