

Quarantine Tips

- find a sleep schedule and stick to it.
- plan your days before you do them.
- do as much exercise as you can, and structure your food around your exercise - think about how / what you'd eat before playing football, and try to replicate that where you can.
- stretch every day, or at least every other day.
- drink loads of water.
- try and have periods of the day where your phone is on silent, and you're away from it.

About this presentation...

- this presentation is an adaptation of my coaching project, in which you have to demonstrate that you're working with a team who train and play matches over an eight week period. It isn't designed to be a presentation, so apologies if the sections don't totally map on to each other - it's very much a work in progress.
- in the diagrams, GDFC are always in yellow, and the opposition are red.
- these are my personal interpretations of coaching at goal diggers. i imagine that the other coaches would agree with a lot of this, but they have their own philosophies, delivery style, planning methods etc.
- the title came from thinking about my own experience, as both a player and a coach, plus the fact that football is on pause for a while.
- as someone who coaches for close to 30 hours a week, it's been a really weird adjustment to thinking about how to be an effective coach remotely, and i'm finding it both useful and comforting to remember that this isn't going to be forever, and we have big big plans for club when football returns.
- if we think about all football coaching as falling into one of three categories (planning, doing, reviewing), to have the most enjoyable and rewarding part of that removed is pretty surreal.
- it has also led to me, and i'm sure many other people in a load of other fields, thinking about improving systems and processes and maximising efficiency etc.
- while i think there is real value in having those things in place, i think it's important to remember that as a club, we were in a really good rhythm before football shut down.
- from a coaching point of view, there are a few things that i've now got some time to plan > particular sessions, and a plan for pre season, but mostly the priority for all of us should be maintaining the GDFC community.
- for me as a coach, that looks like checking in with individuals who i normally don't have the capacity to contact, and making it clear to everyone that their development is very much at the forefront of my mind.
- a lot of what i'm going to present has been in the works for a couple of years, and has been put into practice, in a GDFC context, over the last six months > most notably 11 a side match day prep, and a more structured training block.
- the majority of this should be familiar to you. if it isn't then i have not been communicating my ideas well at all.

Why we play

How we play

How we WILL play

How we coach

- club's principles
- personal philosophy
- coaching environment
- time and opportunity with players
- structuring the training block
- reviewing training and matches
- coaching behaviour



Club's principles

Everything that we do as coaches at the club ultimately comes down to one of three things:

- 1. make it fun**
- 2. make sure the players learn something**
- 3. make sure they want to come back**

We have players who are new to football, some who played a lot when they were younger and are now getting back to regularly playing, and some who have played consistently since their childhood at a high level.

Our role is to communicate effectively with all of those players, making sure that we keep everyone engaged during sessions, and looking forward to match days.

Personal philosophy

The more I coach, and the more I learn about coaching, the more confidently I feel able to describe what I believe my role as a coach to be:

To help create technically capable, adaptive leaders, who enjoy competitive footballing environments.

I appreciate that this philosophy is likely to change the more coaching I do, and will also change depending on the groups of players I work with at any time.

Coaching environment

GDFC is a great environment to coach in. There's a balance between players giving me time and space to develop ideas, but they also put pressure on me to make sure the things we're doing in training, and decisions I make on a match day, are going to help us win games.

I work closely with the three other coaches, as well as a number of players who regularly captain our teams to make sure that we're creating a positive, encouraging environment for our members to play in. I also review training sessions with the players who have played in them, and ask players to send me reports of any matches that I am unable to attend.

There's a huge social element to the club, too. Over the last couple of years, thanks to some fantastic work from other members of the committee, we have become a real community for football fans and players alike. As we've grown our membership, my role has been to make sure that we offer fun, structured training sessions that allow players to develop.

Time and opportunity with players

As a coach, I'm with the players three times a week:

1. Tuesday: 7 a side match

We take a squad of eight mixed ability players, and meet 30 minutes before kick off. The captain and I decide on a line up, and share that with the squad ahead of kick off. Matches are 50 minutes long, and everyone gets equal playing time with rolling subs.

2. Wednesday: Training

We have two groups of players: our *Academy* (development players) and *Experienced* (players with higher playing ages). There are 25 players in each group, with two coaches. Each coach runs a 25 minute session for each group, then we play matches. We have our pitch for 90 minutes.

3. Saturday: 11 a side match / session

We play 11 a side twice a month. We take a squad of 14 players, and everyone plays for at least an hour with rolling subs. The starting XI goes out the day before the game, along with roles at set pieces. We meet an hour before kick off to go through our shape, roles and responsibilities, and get warmed up.

—

I also coach a weekly drop in session for anyone who wants a more casual relationship with football. These sessions are an hour long, and normally have around 18-24 players in. We have a theme that we work on for the first half, then either go into a big game, or small sided games to finish.

Structuring the training block

During the 2019 winter break, I put together a six week training block for the coaches to run at training. It aimed to cover the different principles of play, whilst incorporating technical and tactical focuses as broader themes for the sessions.

It also meant that the players would know what we were going to work on before they arrived, and would have an understanding of the session's structure.

Coaches would decide who would run each element of the session between them, ideally coaching all the different sessions over the course of the block to encourage creativity within our session planning.

As coaches, we review our sessions differently. I introduced a RED / AMBER / GREEN system as a quick reference for how we felt sessions went. RED means multiple things about the session would have to be changed for it to be successful. AMBER means that a couple of changes would make it a success. GREEN means it could run again successfully as it is. For us, success looks like players having fun, learning something, and wanting to come back.

Block 1	Coach A	Tactical Focus	Technical Focus	Coach A R/A/G	Coach B	Tactical Focus	Technical Focus	Coach B R/A/G
8th January	Amy	Creating Space	Passing + receiving	Orange	Ciara	Compactness + intercepting	Pressing + marking	Orange
15th January	Amy		Turning	White	Josh		Delay + recover	Orange
22nd January	Josh	Attacking	Finishing	Green	Ciara	Penetration	Forward passing, breaking lines	Green
29th January	Josh	Attacking / Defending overloads	2v1 / 3v2 / 4v3	Green	Amy		Dribbling	White
5th February	Josh	Pressing	Pressing / delaying	Orange	Kitty	Creating overloads	Switching the play	White
12th February	Amy	Game variations:	goals back to back	White	Josh	Game variations:	netball w/ headers	Orange
Block 2								
19th February	Ciara	Creating Space	Passing + receiving	White	Amy	Compactness + intercepting	Pressing + marking	White
26th February	Ciara		Turning	White	Amy		Delay + recover	White
4th March	Kitty	Attacking	Finishing	White	Josh	Penetration	Forward passing, breaking lines	Orange
11th March	Josh	Marking	2v2	Green	Ciara		Dribbling	White
18th March	Ciara	Compactness + intercepting	Pressing	White	Josh	Creating overloads	Switching the play	White
25th March	Josh	Game variations		White	Kitty	Game variations		White
Block 3								
1st April	Ciara	Creating Space	Passing + receiving	White	Amy	Compactness + intercepting	Pressing + marking	White
8th April	Ciara		Turning	White	Amy		Delay + recover	White
15th April	Ciara	Attacking	Finishing	White	Josh	Penetration	Forward passing, breaking lines	White
22nd April	Josh	Defending	1v1, 2v2, 3v3	White	Kitty		Dribbling	White
29th April	Josh	Compactness + intercepting	Pressing	White	Ciara	Creating overloads	Switching the play	White
6th May	Amy	Game variations		White	Ciara	Game variations		White

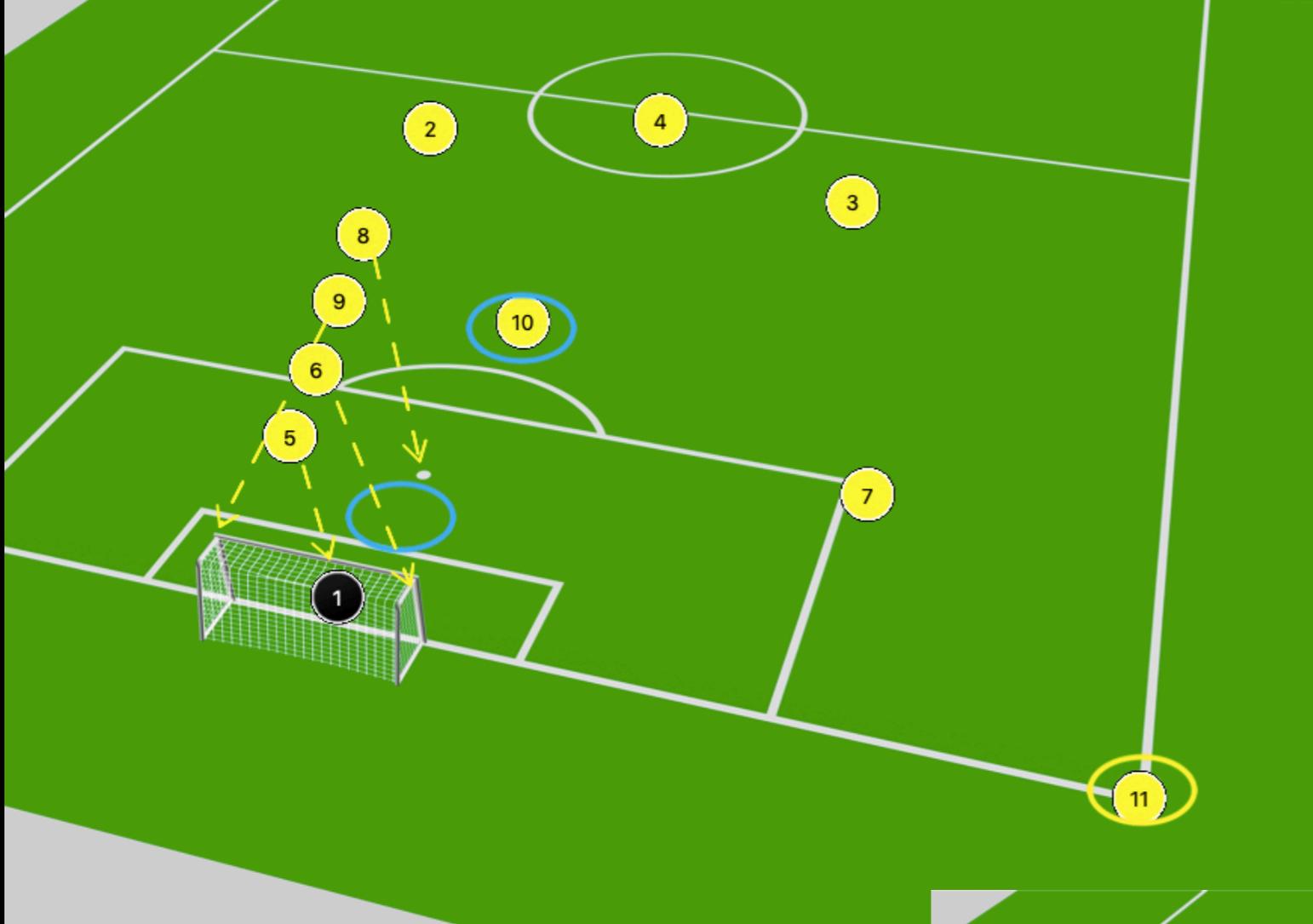
Reviewing training and matches

Over the winter break, I also changed the way that I plan and review the sessions that I deliver. I created a template that I fill in before every session, with the plan and diagram. I review all sessions with some of the players afterwards, which allows me to identify what they want and need from a session on a particular theme, as well as general points about how they like sessions to run.

For the 7 and 11 a side matches I coach, I keep a record of line ups, and key information: goal scorers, notes on opposition, things we need to work on etc. This allows me to give specific feedback to the players who need it, as well as be prepared for the next time we play against those teams.

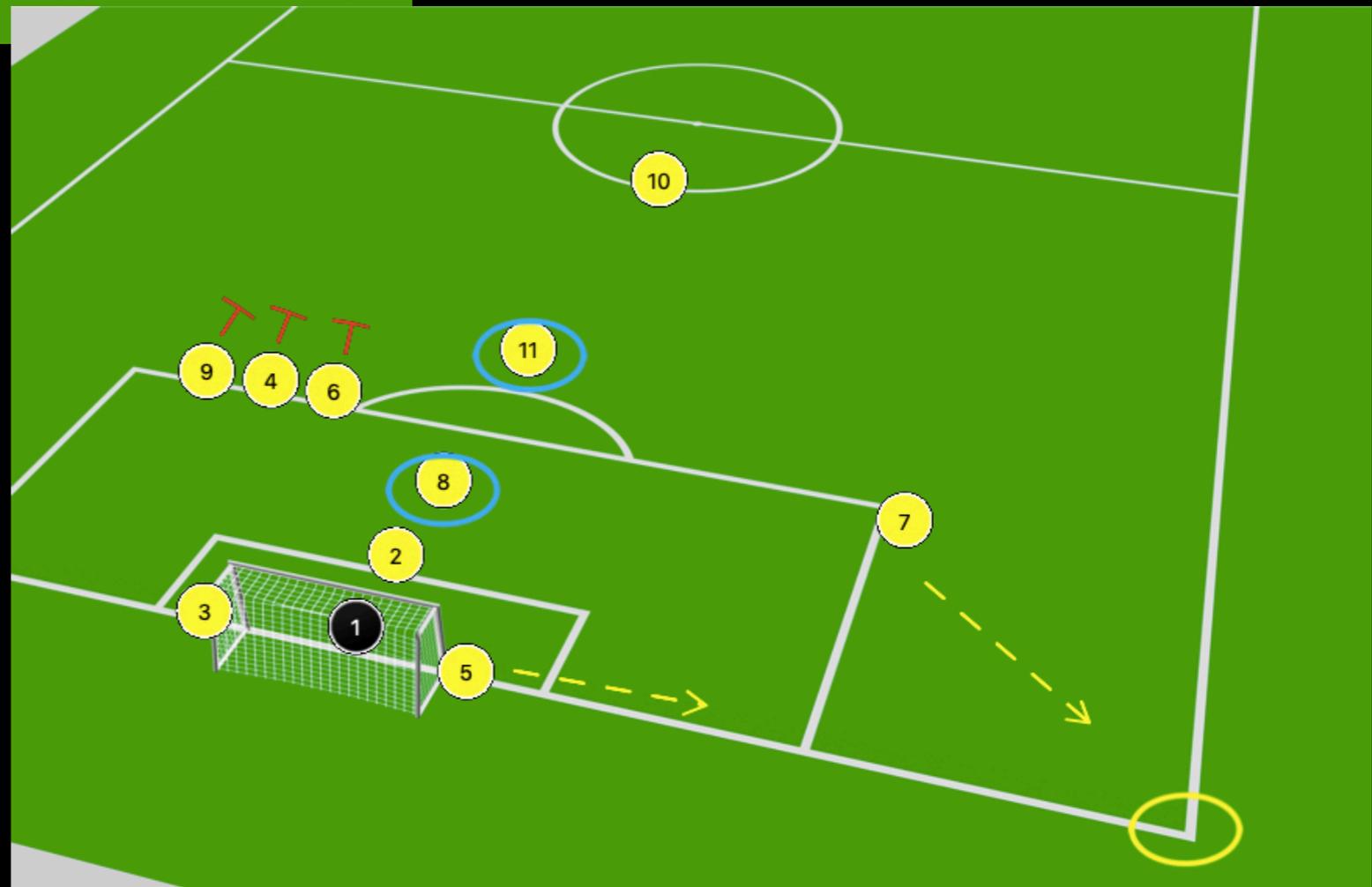
Whilst we have a calendar of themes that we work through at training, I make sure I have examples of things that happen in games in my coaching notes so I can make those points in a training setting. This is important, as a lot of the players who will have played in these matches will be at training, but I balance this with information that everyone can understand, and take on board.

For games that I'm not able to coach, for example if I'm on a coaching course, I make sure to get updates from multiple players who played in the game, and incorporate their thoughts into my own planning for future reference.

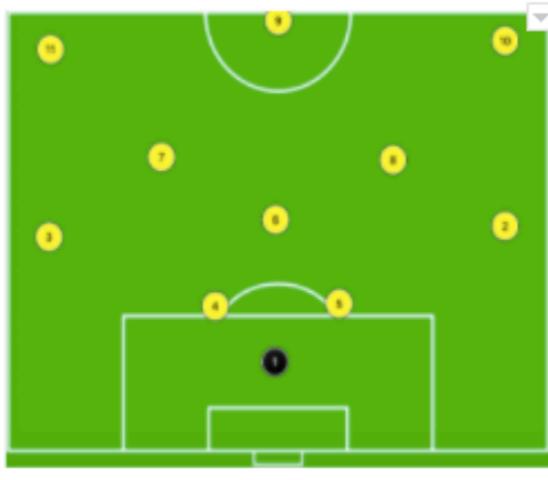


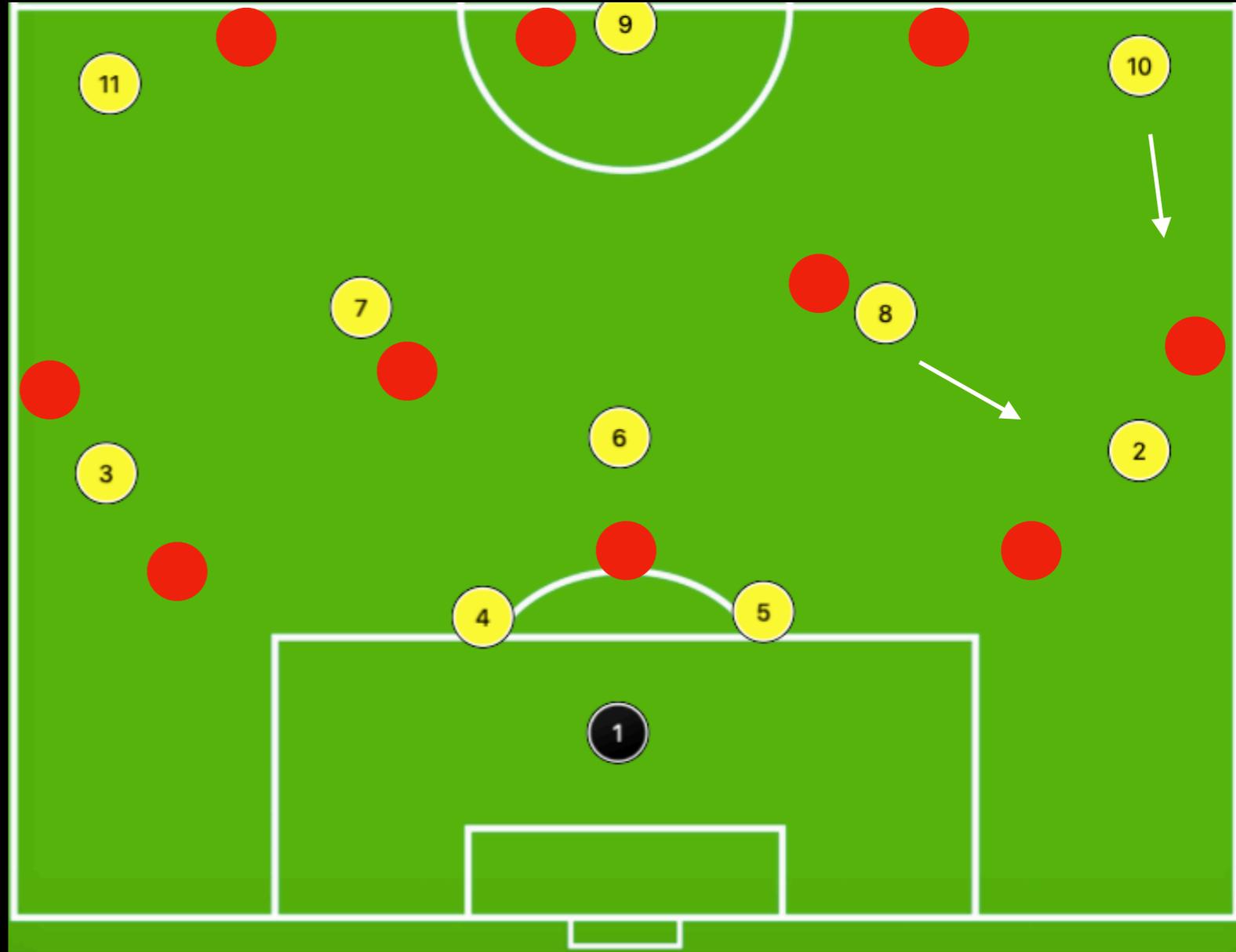
I have found that having the same responsibilities on set pieces, corners especially, really helps us for our 11 a side matches. This goes out with the starting XI the day before a game.

It is particularly helpful for when we're defending corners. In most cases when making subs, the player coming on takes the responsibility of the player they're coming on for.



Date and Time of game	11/01/2020, 11am			
Opposition / Score	GDFC 1-3 Rising Ballers			
GDFC Goalscorers	Pollock (p)			
GDFC Player of the Match	Pimental			
Notes	General Late kick off (ref) Pitch 4 - 6/10 First goal split LB-CB, second goal could have cleared the ball sooner, third goal wind blew in a corner.	In possession Focus was on setting, then through balls Tried to play through full backs. Work on wingers timing runs, cutbacks for #9 and opposite winger. Need to work on better short passing.	Out of possession Focus on showing inside Full backs sitting between two players, recognising when to step #8s predominantly a defensive role	Opposition Played a 3-4-3, with really high wing backs > pretty much a front 5 in possession #14 - middle cb - excellent player

Squad (4-3-3)	Minutes played	
1. Estrella Ortiz	90	
2. Emma Magnus	70	
3. Katy Castle	70	
4. Gaby Pimental	90	
5. Gaia Laidler	60	
6. Flo Pollock	85	
7. Kate Allinson	70	
8. Annie Gallagher	65	
9. Lauren Fitzgerald	70	
10. Kitty Burne ©	60	
11. Rachel Mary	75	
Subs		
12. Leah Kahn	60	
13. Ana Kuchta	60	
14. Gabi Rowe	65	



This was a game against one of the better sides in our league. We were 1-0 up at HT, but their fitness and their individual quality on the ball really showed in the second half.

This was the first time our full backs experienced having two players to defend against in wide areas, as their wing back and forward both took up similar positions to form a front five in possession. They had to communicate well with our wingers and midfielders to call them back to help.

Gaby ended up playing the whole game as I felt she was too important to bring off. She won lots of aerial duels, and made multiple key interceptions and blocks. I spoke to the group afterwards about how important it is for them to communicate all their experience playing with the coaches, as Gaby had previously been playing as a striker for us. When she was younger, she'd always been a defender.

14th Jan

GDFC 2-0 Islington

Goal Diggers

MANAGER

Josh

SUBSTITUTION

Luciani



This game was against Islington Reds, one of the weaker sides in our league. We won the game 2-0, with goals from Ciara Robinson and Rachel Nickolds. We were able to control the game from the back, with our two defenders having lots of the ball. Rachel likes to come short to show for the ball, so Ciara and Emma Levin ran in behind when they saw Rachel moving towards the ball. Having Louise Cochrane, an excellent goalkeeper, made a huge difference, too. When we don't have a goalkeeper in the squad, players rotate who plays in goal.

Kate Allinson came to the club as a right back about 18 months ago, but we realised that we could use her energy and range of passing in the middle of midfield. We try to get her lots of minutes in that position at 7 a side, which in turn means she's more comfortable there when we play 11 a side.

Plan

Session Date	22/01/20
Training week	3
Number of players	25
Goalkeepers?	1
Coaches	1
Focus	Finishing
Notes	Work on finishing from different angles, both under pressure in a 1v1 & receiving the ball from a set

Diagram



Review

Reflection on session	What went well	Even better if	Questions to think about
How we coach (coaching behavior, positive interactions)	Clear instructions, simple tasks.	Spend more time with each group, rather than running between the two	What's the difference between shooting and finishing? How can we make sure there's the same effort and enjoyment in other topics?
How we play (playing opportunities, players experiencing different positions)	Good opportunities to get lots of repetitions shooting, experience feeding balls into #10 & #9, as well as transition into being a defender	More keepers would mean more reps shooting	Could the session work with defenders, midfielders and attackers in different groups? What are the actions in a game that set up a chance to finish?
How we support (safety of players, individual challenges)	Not ideal to have non goalkeepers playing in goal, minor injuries in matches	Make the distance the defenders have to travel bigger	
The future player (player ownership, realism to game)	Could run without coaches, players could suggest passing patterns	Involve a defender next time, more than one keeper at session	Where could you do this session away from training?

Stand out players?	Izzy Agaylea, Fleur Cousens, Sacha Hilhorst
Players of the week	Sacha Hilhorst

With such large numbers at training, I find it useful where possible to divide the group into smaller groups. When coaching finishing, I find it effective to set both groups off, then work with one group at a time. I intervene to work with individual players as they strike the ball, or just afterwards. It's important to praise the success that you see, even if you don't stop the session to do that. That said, it can be really effective for players to see their peers modelling success.

Coaching behaviour

I make sure I greet as many players as I can at the start of a session, before starting to get things set up.

I'll normally have a few players to talk to about how they found a session recently, or what position they're going to play in the next match. With such a big group of players (50), I often find I need to message players individually before or after training, too.

When coaching, I like to run sessions with multiple variables, that allow for players to make decisions throughout. That way, when it comes to playing matches, they're ready for scenarios that force them to make decisions.



How we support

- minutes and positions
- formations the players experience
- working with key social influencers



Minutes and positions

As a club, we make sure that players get the opportunity to play a good number of minutes every time they play in a match. This is different for 7 a side and 11 a side, although both leagues allow for rolling subs. The coach is responsible for making subs. In the absence of a coach, the captain lays out the sub patterns with the players before the game.

For 7 a side matches, the player who starts as a sub, comes on as plays the rest of the game - unless they choose to come off, or become unable to play. Every player spends time as a sub every game. For 11 a side matches, everyone in the squad plays for at least 60 minutes. Players who start as subs come on after 30 minutes, then play the rest of the game. We then make subs at half time, after 60 minutes, and after 75 minutes. If a player chooses to come off, or becomes unable to play, then changes are made accordingly. Most players in the club have a favourite position, so I try and give them the majority of their minutes in that position. For the formations we play, most players go into one of six positions:

- Goalkeeper
- Full back
- Centre back
- Central midfielder
- Winger
- Striker

As a coach, I'm trying to encourage players to feel confident about experiencing playing different positions.

Formations the players experience

7 a side

We play in a 2-3-1 / 3-1-2. This depends on whether we have a centre back in the squad who is confident to be left to defend 1v1, and whether we have a striker who can play up front on their own.

Most games, we play 2-3-1, and our teams are either more attacking, or more defensive based on who is in the squad for that particular game.

When we play against stronger sides, we tend to have less of the ball, and our focus is on staying compact, and forcing mistakes.

When we play against weaker sides, we enjoy more possession, and are able to take with more risks, though more forward runs, and committing more players forward when attacking.



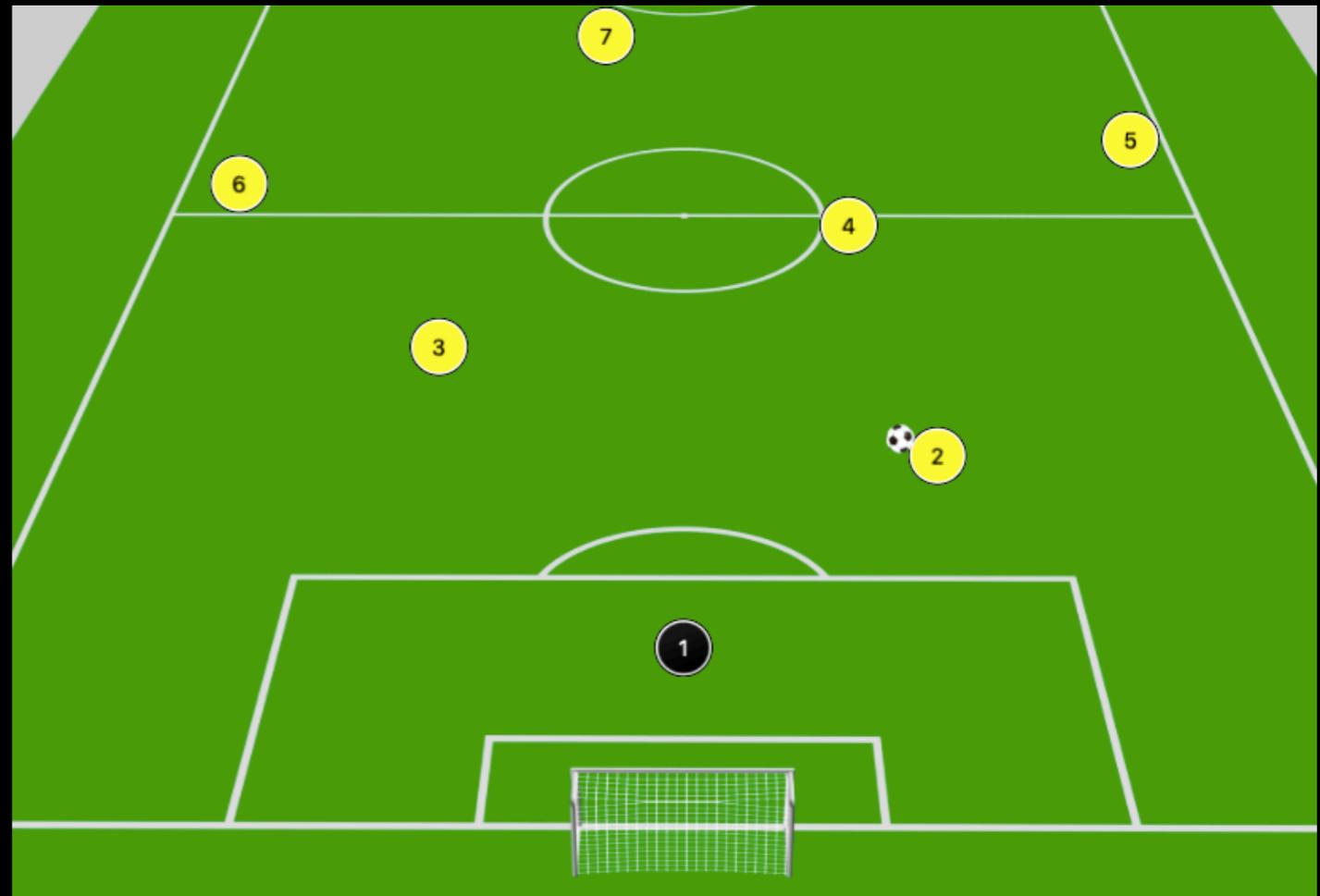
Formations the players experience

7 a side - in possession

In possession, we try to play through one of the defenders and get them to join the central midfielder when building up. It becomes more of a 1-4-1. This allows the wide players to stretch the opposition, and support the striker.

This shape allows us to play out to our wide players, with space for them to run in to, or play into our striker, to set the ball for the three players running forward to support the play.

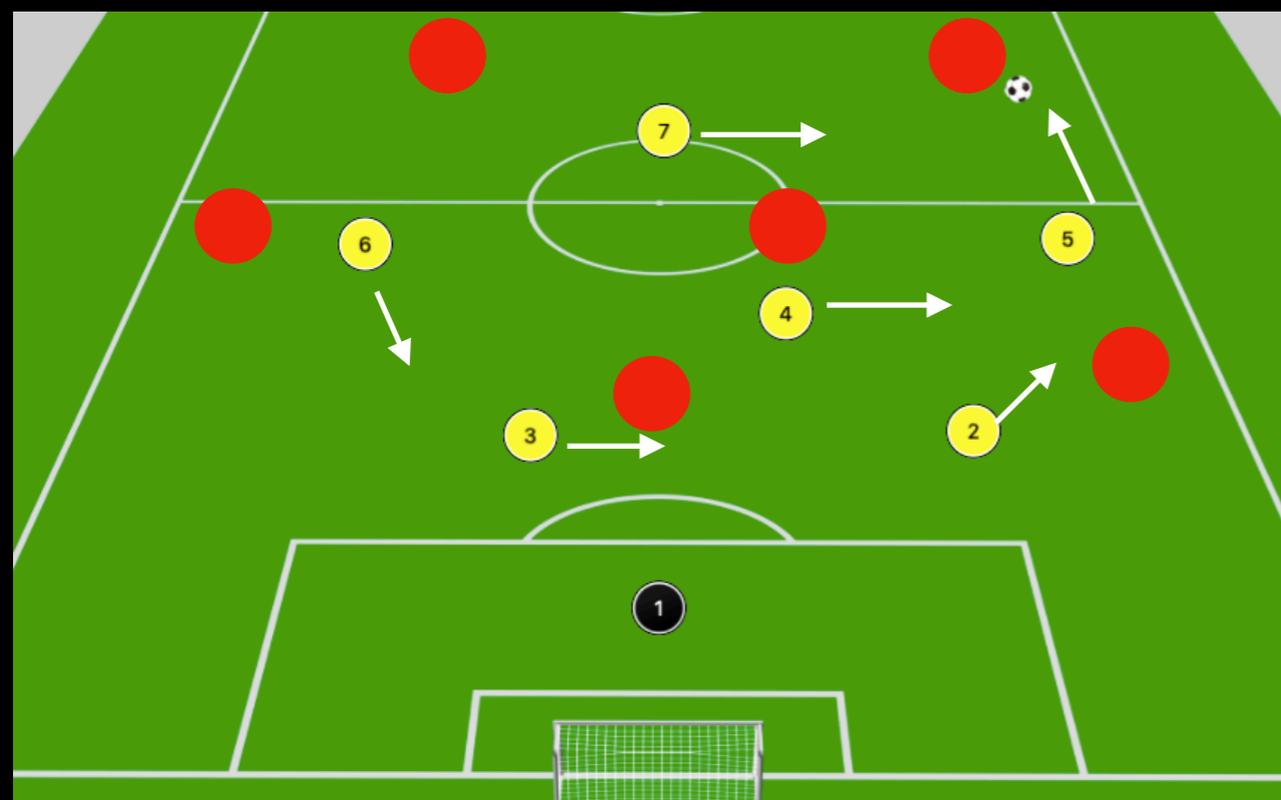
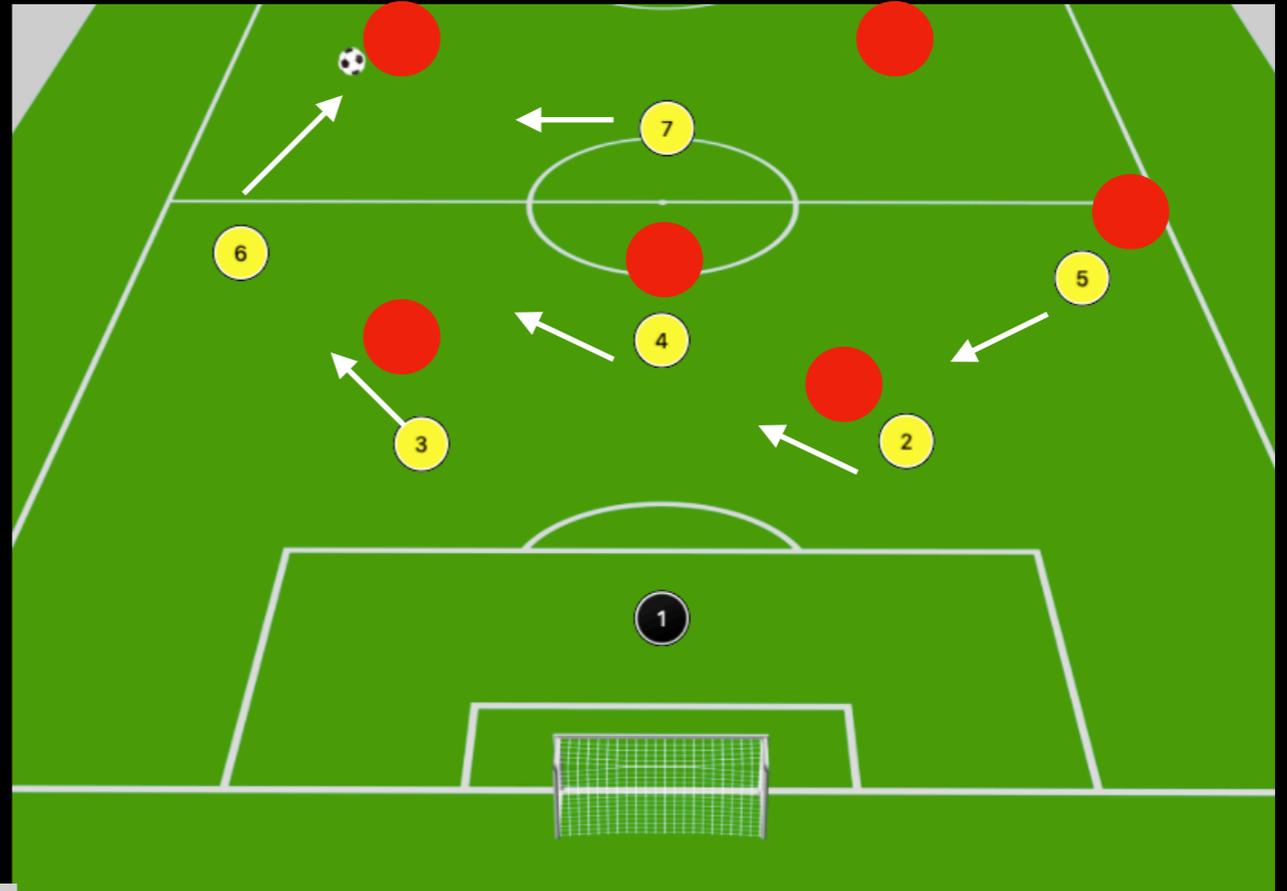
With that, we've put a greater emphasis on longer passing, and switching the play at training. We need our defenders to be confident enough in their passing to be able to play directly into forward areas.



Formations the players experience

7 a side - out of possession

Out of possession, we try to get back into our 2-3-1 shape as quickly as possible. Our the wide midfielders engage the ball in wide areas, and show the ball inside. The other players shuffle across to compact the space in the middle of the pitch. The opposite winger (#5), ignores the player outside of them, and focuses on keeping the gaps small.

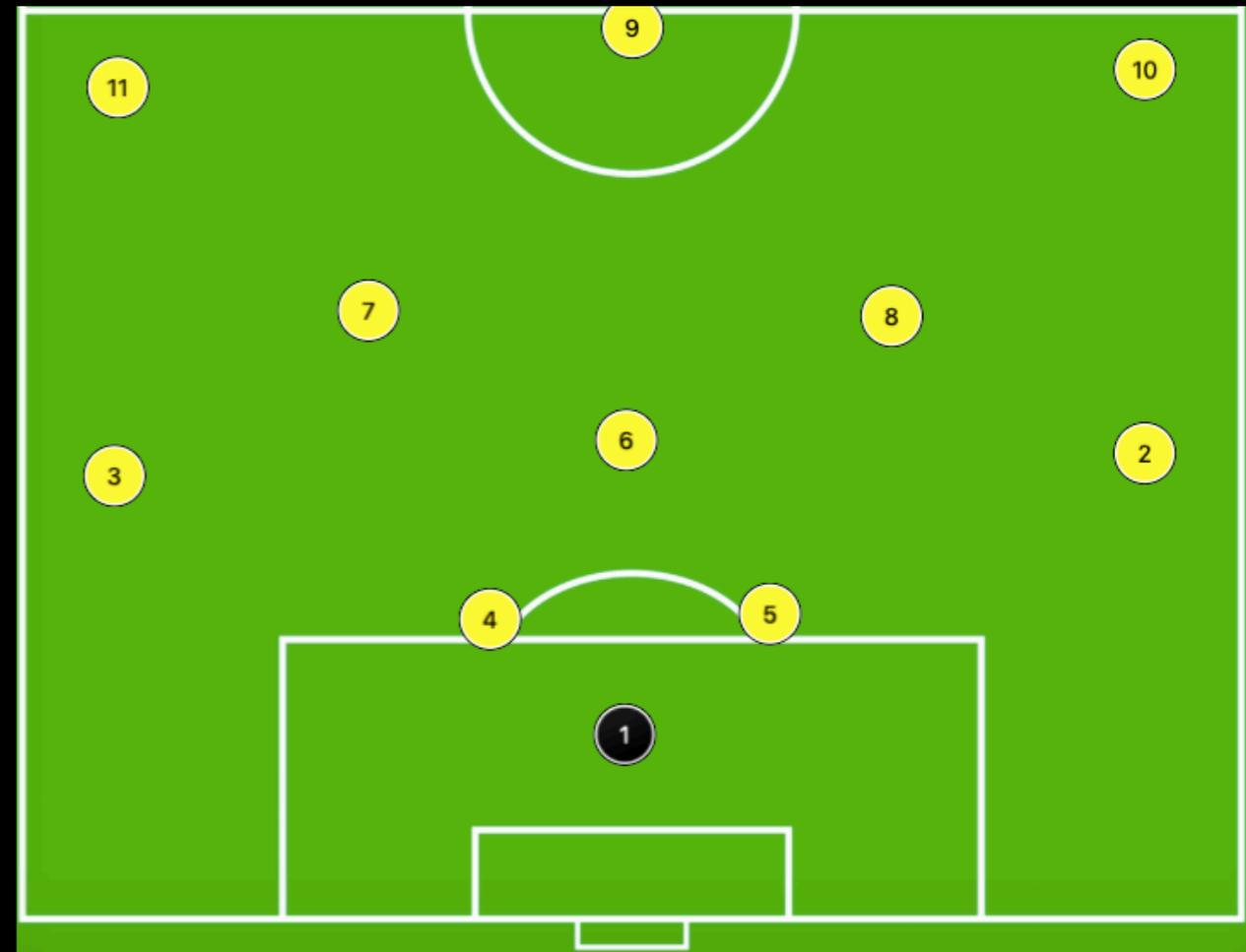


As we shift from one side of the pitch to the other, it's important that #5 comes round the ball to block the pass up the line. #6 now has to be aware of the space between them and #3, so they drop to close that gap.

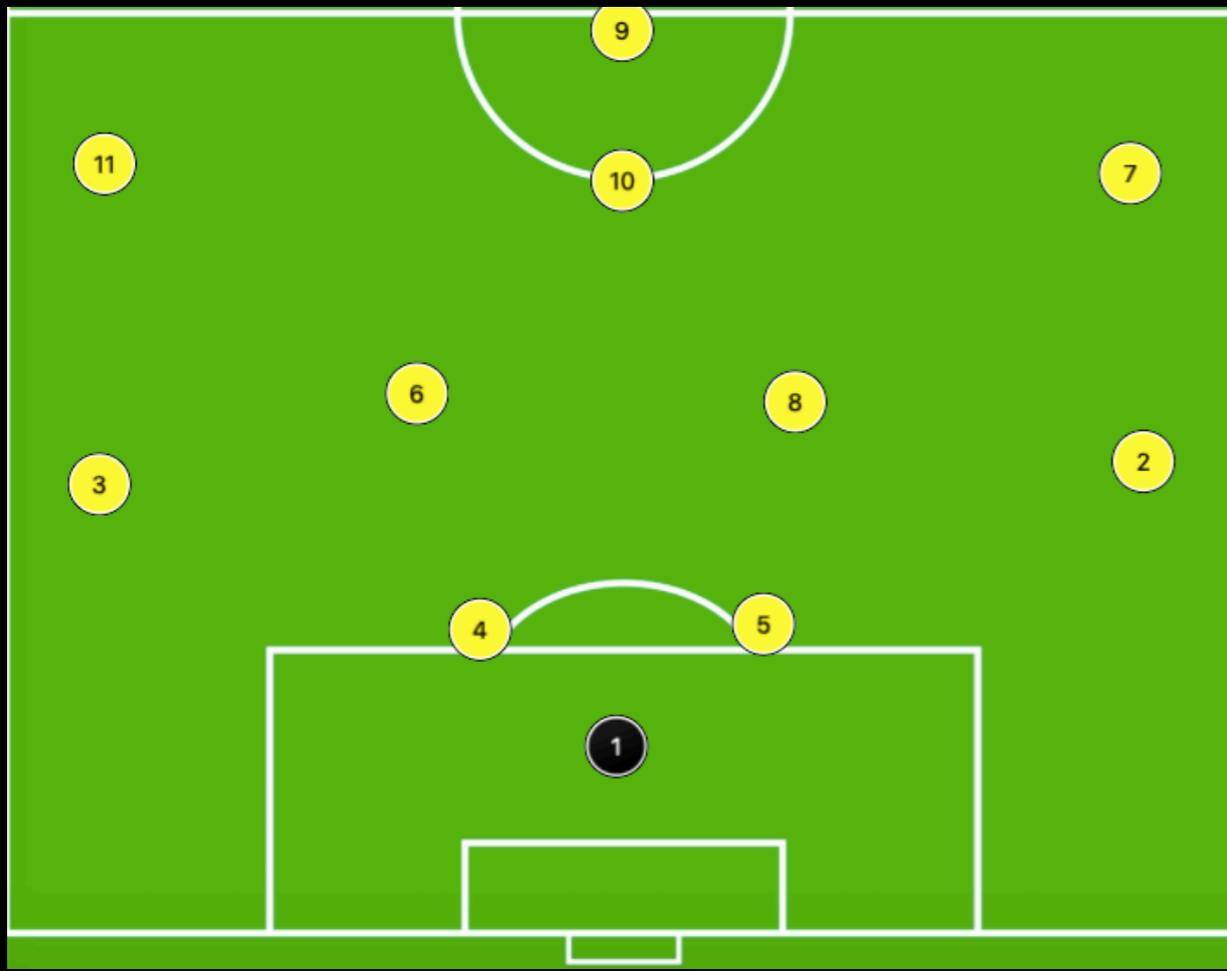
Formations the players experience

11 a side

We normally play 4-3-3, or 4-2-3-1 depending on who is in the squad. There are a few players in the squad who are excellent at receiving the ball between the lines, and who can press as strikers. So when they're in the squad we tend to play with a #10 behind the striker.



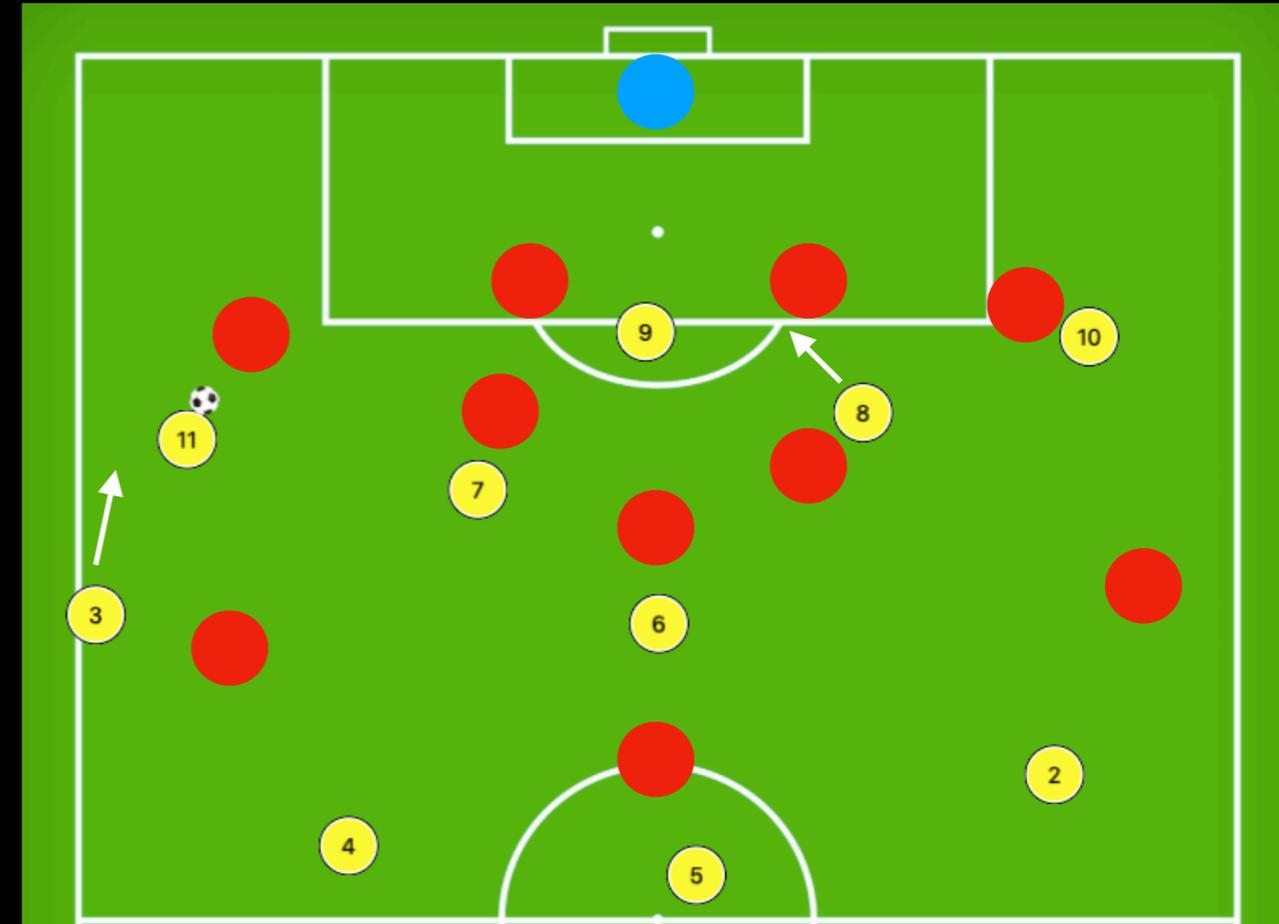
We have a couple of players who are really good at regaining the ball, and winning headers, so when they play, they normally play as the deepest midfielder (#6). This allows #7 and #8 to put pressure on the ball higher up the pitch, as well as help compact the middle of the pitch.



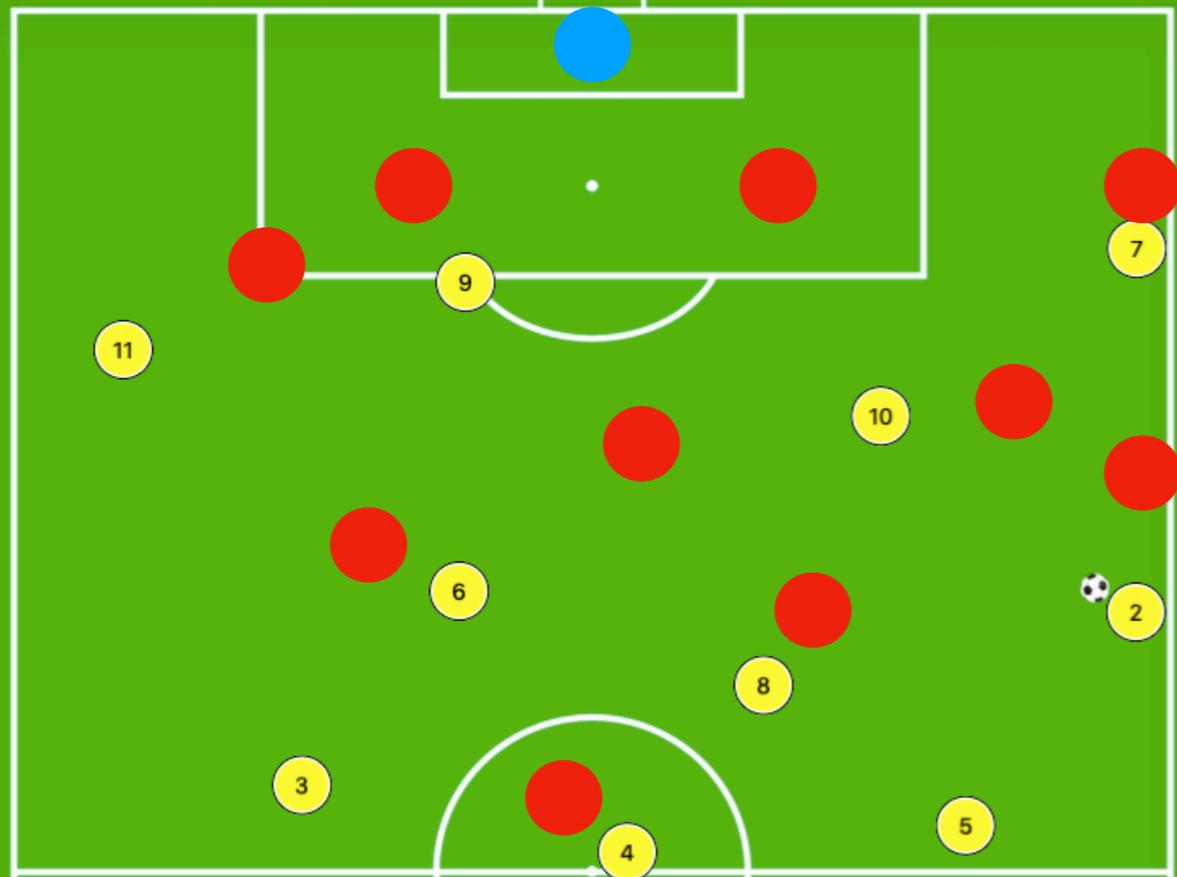
Formations the players experience

11 a side - in possession

When playing like this, the aim is to get the ball into the feet of #10, so the wide players stretch the pitch to occupy the opposition's full backs, and #10 moves to be an option the ball between opposition players. We want the full backs to join in with build up, or cover.



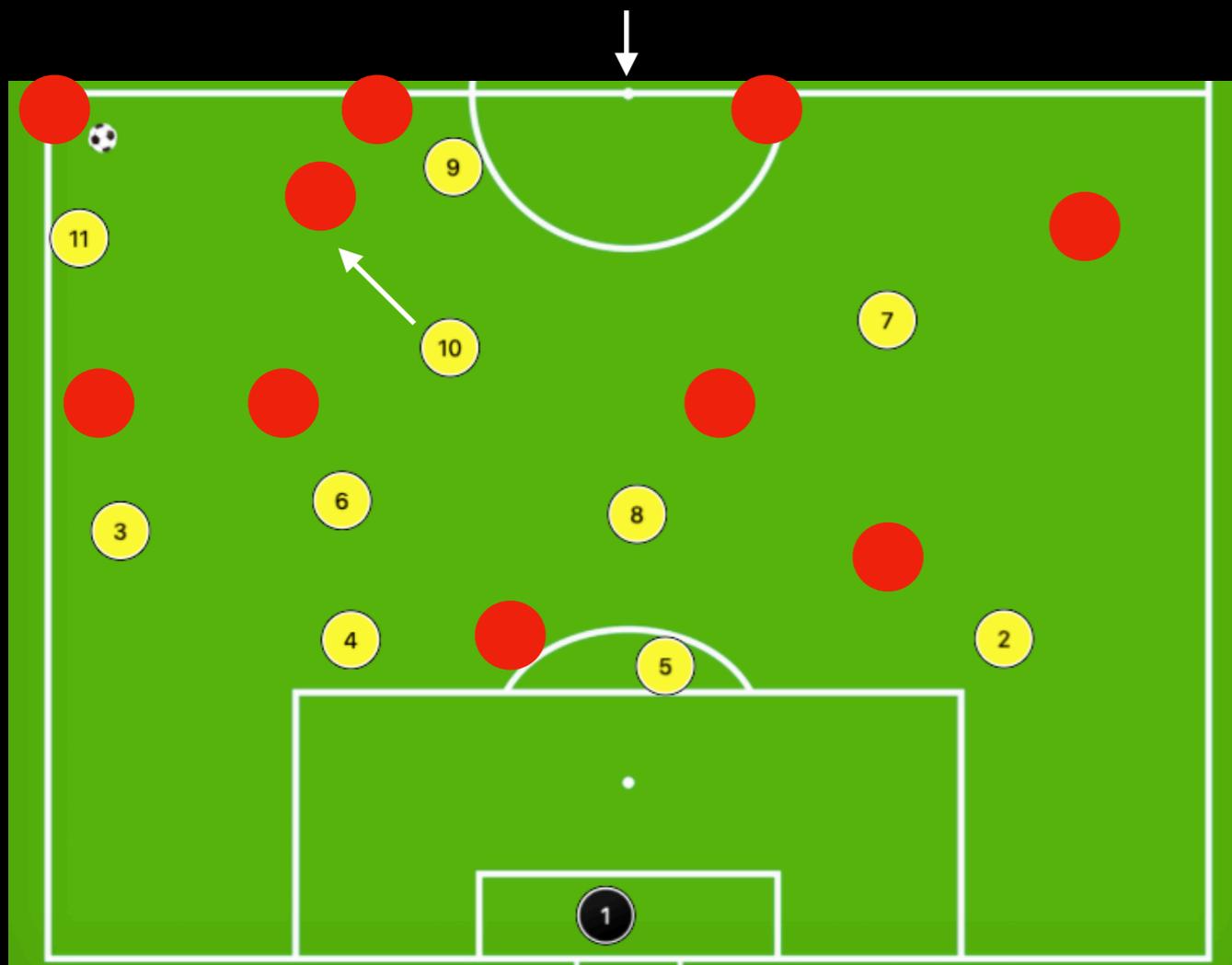
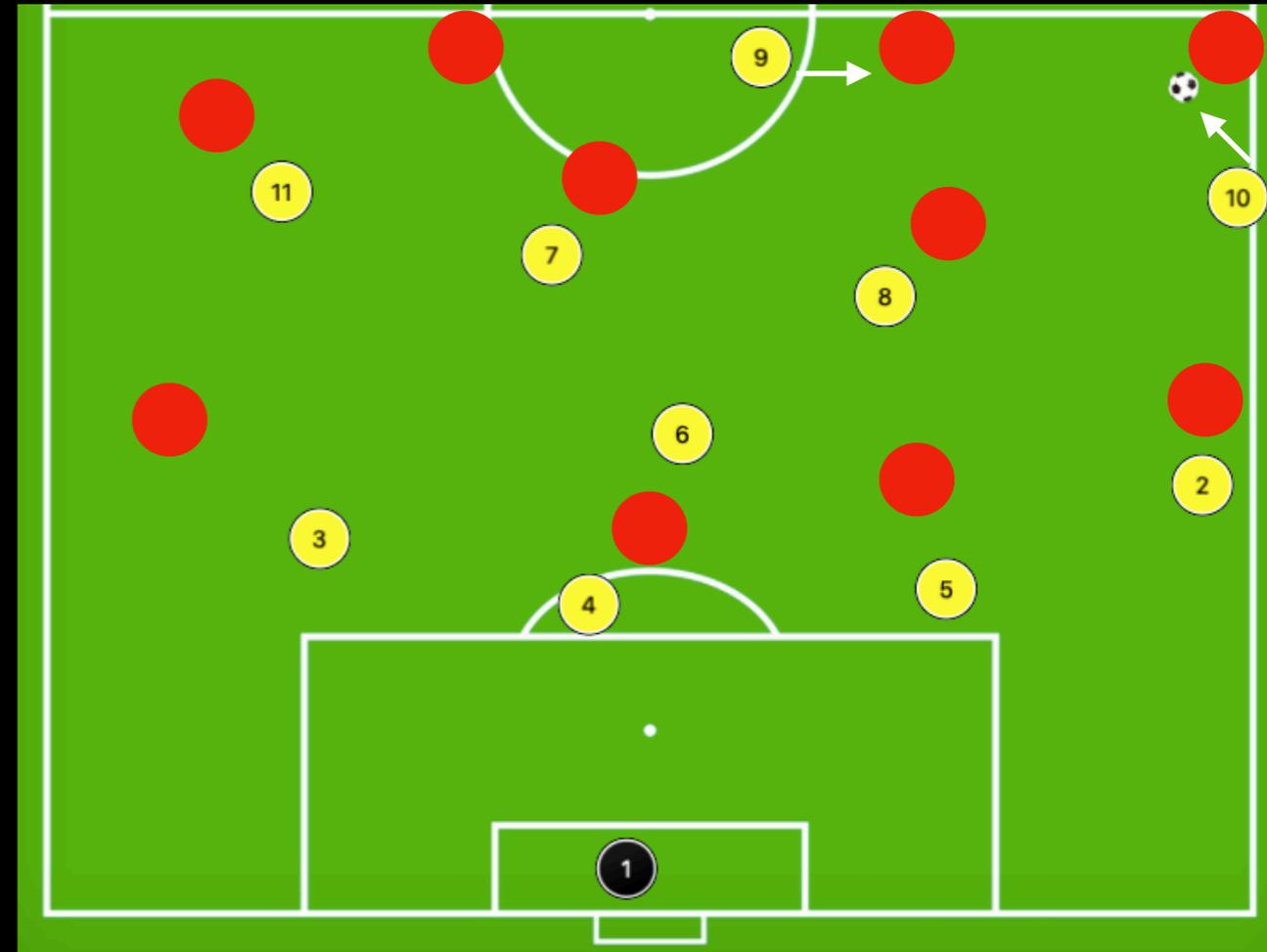
Here, we want our wingers to have the space to be able to play 1v1 against their defenders. The midfielder on the side of the pitch with the ball (#7) is an option to play, #8 attacks the box, and our #6 always has the game in front of them. Again, full backs are involved, this time with an overlap, or covering.



Formations the players experience

11 a side - out of possession

We can use our #10 to mark the opposition's deepest midfielder if they're heavily involved in build up. If not, our #10 can join the striker in pressing the opposition centre backs. Wingers and full backs work together to block the touch line, and midfielders are marking and ready to regain the ball. Defenders are compact, ready to intercept, or for play to switch.



Our wide player blocks the line, our striker closes off the centre back, encouraging the pass into their midfielder. Our #7 and #8 are aggressive to mark and try to regain the ball, our #6 covers them both, and screens the striker behind them. Full back on the side of the ball goes to engage the ball if the player they're marking receives it.

The future player

The players I coach play for Goal Diggers at 7 a side, 11 a side, or both, and regularly attend training on a Wednesday. I normally coach them two or three times a week, and have worked with them for varying amounts of time.

I have spoken to a number of players about including them in this project. The idea is for us to identify their strengths and things to improve on together, before monitoring their development in these areas over an eight week period.

Whilst my primary focuses are looking at coaching across the four corners (technical, tactical / physical / social / psychological) it also became clear that players would develop different skills, across different playing formats, at different rates. This, coupled with the fact that these players also play football when I'm not their coach, encouraged me to think about some other questions, too:

- what do these strengths look like at training, 7 a side, and 11 a side?
- why are players progressing at different rates?
- what can I do to support their development when I'm coaching them? how can I monitor their progress when I'm not coaching them?
- what do I want from players in certain positions? what steps can I take to help these players reach that point?

It's worth saying, too, that I coach these players across the *four corners*: technical / tactical, physical, social, and psychological.

I'd say there is most consistency with how I coach this corner across the club. This is normally in the form team talks / diagrams for a specific group of players, or individuals who need specific instructions before a particular game.

Technical Tactical

This is the my most often neglected corner of coaching. Having multiple coaches, along with a number of senior players who captain teams when coaches aren't there, means players the chance to check in with multiple people when it comes to psychological aspects of the game. Since changing the way I review sessions and matches, I've found that I do more coaching on confidence, how to move on from games, how to maximise GDFC's playing opportunities to fit with other commitments etc.

Psychological

Physical

This varies player to player. I incorporate game related fitness practices into my sessions for groups of players, but also coach players individually on things they can do to improve the physical aspects of their game.

Social

Most of my coaching here comes in the form of building cultures of collective ownership, and communication. In order for players to develop, there need to be clear social channels between coach(es) and players, but also between players with no coaches.

How we play

- my playing philosophy
- GDFC in possession
- GDFC out of possession
- GDFC in transition
- GDFC 2020/21



My playing philosophy

I believe that if you can stop the opposition from playing to their strengths, that gives you a chance to win the game.

I accept that the teams I coach will often play without the ball for long spells of a game, so I prioritise organising a team out of possession, and emphasis being ready in transition scenarios.

I spend more time working with players on their understanding of the game, and positioning than I do working on their technical ability, because I want them to get to the point where they can play in matches without hurting their team. Once they have the confidence to be regularly playing, and contributing to a team, I focus more on their technical components in possession.

—

I recognise that this has been developed through working with a group of players who have a range of playing experiences and playing ages. When I'm working with more technically capable players, I focus more on in possession principles of play, and technical components.

GDFC in possession

As a club, our in possession principles have evolved as the membership has grown, and more experienced players have joined. With the current membership and squad lists, I would say that we:

- get the ball to our most creative players as much as possible
- play direct, and regain second balls
- encourage wide players - full backs and wingers - to be involved in the build up of our play

-

These apply to our 7 and 11 a side teams. 5 a side has become an opportunity for players to enjoy playing a style of football which gives them lots of opportunities for touches on the ball, and the chance to build chemistry with lots of different players in the club. It has also become a chance for players to run their own teams for matches, and decide on their formation and sub patterns etc.

GDFC out of possession

Again, these have changed over my time at the club. Currently, these principles are:

- wide players block the touchlines, and show inside
- be aggressive to defend the ball in front while it's in front of you
- where possible, provide cover and balance

-

From next season, I'm planning for us to become a team that defends 1v1 all over the pitch. In order to make this change, we're going to need work more heavily on defending 1v1 situations, and for players to work on their fitness individually.

GDFC in transition

There is a big focus on transition elements in our practices, and we emphasise anticipating transition moments in matches. Our 7 and 11 a side teams respond to regaining or losing possession by:

Regain

- getting the ball on the floor as quickly as possible
- stretching the pitch to be an option to receive the ball
- looking to penetrate once the ball is secured

Losing the ball

- the player closest the ball deciding whether they can win it back
- compacting the pitch to close gaps
- recovering into our shape, ready to block the line and show the opposition inside

GDFC 2020/21

Our 11 a side team are planning to go away for a pre-season training camp over the summer.

We will have four training sessions over the course of two days to work on a new shape, both in possession and out of possession. We'll then play a friendly on the third day.

Moving to a new shape, 3-4-3 at 11 a side, and 3-2-1 at 7 a side, plays to the strengths of lots of players in our squad, and offers players the chance to experience playing multiple positions, something that I value as a coach, and we value as a club.



We have multiple players who have the fitness levels to be able to play as wing backs, and a good balance of creative players who can play in the attacking positions, and disciplined, defensive minded players who can defend in the middle of the pitch.

As a GDFC player, you should be asking yourself these three questions regularly:

- Why do I play?
- How do I play?
- How will I play?

As your football develops, what you want from the club will change. Know your goals, and use the coaches to help you get there.

please email questions you have to coaches@goaldiggersfootballclub.com,
or contact Josh directly.