INTRODUCTION

The following project contains tactical exercises that have been formulated from the tactical situations which are presented in the book Jose Mourinho’s Real Madrid a tactical analysis: Defending (the book is sold by soccertutor.com).

The project’s aim is to provide training sessions for several tactical situations during the defensive phase the way it was carried out by Jose Mourinho’s Real Madrid. Specifically there are 13 tactical situations and there is a training session for each one of them. The total is 40 quality defending practices.

The 13 training sessions are:

1. No risky goalside marking
2. Transition from a close to an open ball situation (taking up the appropriate position to retain an advantage in a potential long ball)
3. Transition from an open to a close ball situation
4. Defending near the side of the penalty area
5. Defending near the sideline and close to the penalty area
6. Collaboration of the fullback with the winger and the defensive midfielder
7. Balanced or goalside position of the winger
8. Pressing (creating a strong side and making play predictable)
9. Pressing (forcing the ball towards the centre, preventing the pass to the fullback)
10. Defending on the weak side
11. Defending when pressing wasn’t possible after a switch of play towards the centre back
12. Defending when pressing application wasn’t possible after a switch of play towards the midfielder
13. Negative transition near the sidelines
TACTICAL SITUATION: NO RISKY GOALSIDING MARKING

DRILL 1: NO RISKY GOALSIDING MARKING (CENTRAL DEFENDERS)

Objective: Goalside marking of the central defenders against the forwards

Players: 12

Description: The drill is executed in about the 2/3 of the field. The four blue players are placed on the red cones and pass the ball to each other. On the other hand the one central defender of the white team is inside the blue area (indicated by the blue cones) together with the respective blue forward. As long as the four blue players pass the ball to each other, the blue forward moves inside the blue area, while the white central defender seeks to retain a goal side position against him. As soon as one of the blue players (midfielders)
moves forward with the ball, the forward makes a movement to receive a potential long ball inside the red area behind the central defender’s back. The player in possession makes a forward pass and the central defender seeks to prevent this by making a clearance before the opponent reaches the ball in a dangerous position.

**Progression 1:** Both central defenders are placed inside the blue marked area as well as two forwards

**Progression 2:** A GK is added

**Coaching points:**
- Take up the appropriate position (goalside) to retain an advantage in case of a pass behind the back
Objective: Goalside marking of the fullbacks against the wingers

Players: 12

Description: The drill is executed in about the 2/3 of the field. The four blue players are placed on the red cones and pass the ball to each other. On the other hand the one or both fullbacks of the white team are inside the yellow area (marked with the red cones) together with the respective blue winger or wingers. As long as the four blue players pass the ball to each other, the blue wingers move inside the yellow areas, while the white fullbacks seek to retain a goalside position against them. As soon as one of the blue players moves forward with the ball, the wingers make a movement to receive a potential long ball inside the red
area behind the fullback’s back. The fullbacks seek to prevent them from receiving in a dangerous position.

**Coaching points:**
- Take up the appropriate position (goalside) to retain an advantage in case of a pass behind the back

**TACTICAL SITUATION:**
**TRANSITION FROM A CLOSE TO AN OPEN BALL SITUATION**

**DRILL 3: TRANSITION FROM A CLOSE TO AN OPEN BALL SITUATION**
*(CENTRAL DEFENDERS)*
Objective: To take up a suitable position that enables the defenders to retain an advantage when there is a switch from a close to an open ball situation.

Players: 9

Description: The drill is executed in about the 2/3 of the field. The three blue players are placed inside the blue area and pass the ball to each other while the two white midfielders seek to put pressure on them. The two white central defenders mark the two opposition’s wingers outside the yellow marked area. The two central defenders take up positions according to the situation. If there is a close ball situation they are close to their direct opponents. However as soon as an opponent free of marking receives the ball and is able to make a forward pass, there is an open ball situation. So the central defenders drop back immediately into the yellow area in order to retain an advantage in case of a pass behind them. The defenders have also to read the body shape of their direct opponents. If the last are positioned with their back to the goal and there is no way to move towards it, the defender has to stay close to him. In cases that the forward has a position that enables him to move towards the goal (half turned or completely turned), the defender should drop back inside the yellow area. In diagram 1 both forwards have positions that enable them to move forward immediately.

Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation and the body shape of the opponents
- Well timed movements
DRILL 4: TRANSITION FROM A CLOSE TO AN OPEN BALL SITUATION (CENTRAL DEFENDERS) PROGRESSION

Objective: To take up a suitable position that enables the defenders to retain an advantage when there is a switch from a close to an open ball situation and prevent the forwards from receiving into the dangerous area.

Players: 9 + GK

Description: The drill is a progression of the previous one. This time as soon as there is an open ball, the central defenders drop back immediately into the yellow area in order to retain an advantage and seek to neutralize a potential pass behind their back towards the forwards. After the clearance the defenders move forward in a synchronized movement, taking advantage of the transmission (clearance) phase. If the forwards receive the ball...
inside the dark blue area, they try to score. The defenders have to read the body shape of the opponents. So if the forward’s body shape doesn’t enable him to move forward, the defender who marks him stays close to him and doesn’t drop back.

**Coaching points:**
- Well timed movements
- Reading the tactical situation as well as the body shape of the opponents
- Quick moving forward
- Synchronized movements

**DRILL 5: TRANSITION FROM A CLOSE TO AN OPEN BALL SITUATION (FULLBACKS)**
Objective: To take up a suitable position that enables the defenders to retain an advantage when there is a transition from a close to an open ball situation

Players: 9

Description: The drill is a variation of drill 3. This time it is the two white fullbacks who mark the two opposition’s wingers outside the yellow marked area. The two fullbacks take up positions according to the situation. If there is a close ball situation they are close to their direct opponents. However as soon as there is an open ball, the fullbacks drop back immediately into the yellow area in order to retain an advantage. The fullbacks have to read the body shape of the opponents too.

Coaching points:

- Well timed movements
- Reading the tactical situation
- Reading the opposition’s body shape
DRILL 6: TRANSITION FROM A CLOSE TO AN OPEN BALL SITUATION (FULLBACKS) PROGRESSION

Objective: To take up a suitable position that enables the defenders to retain an advantage when there is a transition from a close to an open ball situation and prevent the forwards from receiving into the dangerous area

Players: 10 + GK

Description: This is a variation of drill 4 and a progression of the previous drill. The two fullbacks take up positions according to the situation. If there is a close ball situation they are close to their direct opponents. However as soon as there is an open ball, the central defenders drop back immediately into the yellow area in order to retain an advantage and seek to track the wingers’ runs and neutralize a potential pass behind their back. After the
clearance the defenders move forward in a synchronized movement, taking advantage of the transmission (clearance) phase. If the wingers receive the ball inside the dark blue area, they try to score.

Coaching points:
- Well timed movements
- Reading the tactical situation
- Quick moving forward
- Synchronized movements

DRILL 7: TRANSITION FROM A CLOSE TO AN OPEN BALL SITUATION
(FULLBACKS + CENTRAL DEFENDERS) PROGRESSION
Objective: To take up a suitable position that enables the defenders to retain an advantage when there is a transition from a close to an open ball situation and prevent the forwards from receiving into the dangerous area

Players: 13 + GK

Description: This is a progression of the previous drills. This time the defenders not only take up positions inside the yellow area but also try to neutralize the potential pass behind their backs. So as soon as an open ball situation arises the defenders as well as the forwards make movements inside the dark blue area. The forwards seek to receive and score while the defenders try to neutralize the long ball and then move forward in synchronization. The passes can also be directed outside the blue marked areas. However the defenders have to neutralize them in case they are directed into dangerous positions inside the blue marked area.

Coaching points:
- Well timed movements
- Reading the tactical situation as well as the body shape of the opponents
Objective: To take up a suitable position that enables the defenders to retain an advantage when there is a transition from a close to an open ball situation and prevent the forwards from receiving into the dangerous area.

Players: 14 + GK

Description: In this drill the blue players play 3+1 outside player against two white midfielders inside the light blue area. The blue players search for creating an open ball situation in order to make a long ball towards the forwards, while the white midfielders seek to win the ball and drive it through the red end line. During this first stage they can only achieve this by driving it through the red line indicated by the yellow cones. As soon as the
long ball is made, the forwards seek to receive the pass and score. In case they score a goal after receiving inside the dark blue area the goal counts triple. They can also receive a pass inside the unmarked areas. In this case if they score the goal counts as a single goal. After the long ball is made the players move inside the playing field in a 6 v 7 game. In case the whites win the ball they can score by driving the ball through the half way line or by receiving a pass behind it within 8 seconds. As soon as the blue team wins the ball the game starts with the outside blue player in possession and the players move to their starting positions.

**Coaching points:**

- Well timed movements
- Reading the tactical situation as well as the body shape of the opponents
Objective: To take up a suitable position that enables the defenders to retain an advantage when there is a transition from a close to an open ball situation and prevent the forwards from receiving into the dangerous area.

Players: 13 + 2 GK

Description: In this drill, the blue players play 3 v 2 inside the light blue area and seek to create an open ball situation with the help of the players inside the red area. As soon as this takes place, the blue forwards seek to receive a long ball and score. If they receive inside the dark blue area and score, the goal counts triple. If they receive inside the red or the unmarked area and score, the goal counts as a single one. The white defenders...
seek to prevent them achieving their aims, win the ball and score within 8 seconds. As soon as there is a pass outside the light blue area, all players move freely inside all areas. When the blue team wins the ball the game starts with the blue GK in possession and the players move to their starting positions.

Coaching points:
- Well timed movements
- Reading the tactical situation as well as the body shape of the opponents

TACTICAL SITUATION:
TRANSITION FROM AN OPEN TO A CLOSE BALL SITUATION

DRILL 10: TRANSITION FROM AN OPEN TO A CLOSE BALL SITUATION

Diagram 1
Objective: To recognize the tactical situation and have the appropriate reaction

Players: 7

Description: The drill is executed in about the 2/3 of the field. The two blue players are placed on the red cones and pass the ball to each other. As soon as one of them decides to move forward with the ball an open ball situation arises and the defenders move back in synchronization to retain a safety distance (diagram 1). When the player in possession stops his forward movement the defenders also stop moving backwards. As soon as he passes back, the players take advantage of the transmission phase and move forward along in the same line. They stop their movement when the ball reaches the feet of the new player in possession (diagram 2).
Coaching points:
- Well timed movements
- Synchronized movements

DRILL 11: TRANSITION FROM AN OPEN TO A CLOSE BALL SITUATION PROGRESSION

Objective: To recognize the tactical situation and have the appropriate reaction

Players: 10

Description: The drill is a progression of the previous one. Three blue forwards are added and the four white defenders have to deal with them. The two blue players are placed on the red cones and pass the ball to each other. As soon as one of them decides to move...
forward with the ball an open ball situation arises. The defenders read the body shape of the forwards and track or not their runs. When the man in possession passes back (option 1), the defenders should sprint forward along in the same line. However the same player has also another option. He can make a long ball behind the defenders (option 2) targeting one of his team mates. In case the forwards receive the ball they try to score. By giving two options to the player in possession forces the defenders to read the tactical situation and react accordingly. The coach focuses on the synchronization of the players during their movements

**Coaching points:**

- Reading the tactical situation
- Well timed movements
- Synchronized movements
Objective: To recognize the tactical situation and have the appropriate reaction

Players: 16 + GK

Description: There is a 4 + 1 v 2 inside the blue area. In the centre of the field there is a pole that determines the strong side of the playing area. The two blue players with the help of the outside player try to pass the ball to the two target (yellow) players, while the whites seek to win the ball and drive it through the red lines on the left, on the right or in front of them. As soon as one of the yellows drives the ball out of the marked area there is an open ball situation and the player in possession can pass the ball forward. However the weak side’s defensive midfielder moves to close him down immediately. If he succeeds and creates a close ball situation the yellow player is forced to pass back (option 1). The blue
players inside the blue area seek to retain possession and achieve again the same aim. If
the yellow player tries a forward long ball (option 2), the second yellow player moves out of
the blue area and makes it 6 v 5. The defenders try to neutralize the long ball and with the
help of the defensive midfielders seek to drive the ball through the half way line within 8
seconds in a 6 v 5 game.

Restriction: The strong side’s defensive midfielder doesn’t put pressure on the yellow
player who comes from the blue area. He only takes part in the game after the yellow
player in possession makes the long ball.

Coaching points:
• Well timed movements
• Synchronized movements
• Reading the tactical situation
Objective: To recognize the tactical situation and have the appropriate reaction

Players: 22

Description: The two teams play 6 v 4 inside the dark blue area. There are two areas of light blue and white for the attacking midfielder of the blue team who moves freely in both of them. Inside the two areas are placed the two defensive midfielders of the white team. The blue players inside the dark blue area seek to find a way and pass the ball to the attacking midfielder inside the marked areas. As soon as this player receives the defensive midfielder of the weak side moves to close him down. There is either a back pass inside the blue area or a forward pass towards the forwards. The game goes on according to the new tactical
situation. In case there is a forward pass the players move freely in and out of the marked areas.

**Restriction:**

- The strong side’s defensive midfielder of the white team takes part in the game as soon as there is a forward pass to the forwards.
- The blue players have to score within 10 seconds after the forward pass, while the whites have 8 seconds available to counter in case they win possession

**Coaching points:**

- Well timed movements
- Synchronized movements
- Reading the tactical situation
**TACTICAL SITUATION:**
DEFENDING NEAR THE SIDE OF THE PENALTY AREA

**DRILL 14: DEFENDING NEAR THE SIDE OF THE PENALTY AREA**

**Objective:** Defending near the side of the penalty area

**Players:** 10 + GK

**Description:** There is a game of 4 + 2 (outside players) v 4. The teams play inside the purple marked area. The blue team’s aim is to score a goal either after a cross (low or high) or after a back pass towards the outside players who can enter the purple area. The white
team seeks to defend effectively in both situations by retaining compactness and by providing the appropriate coverage.

**Restrictions:** The outside players cannot enter the purple area when they are in possession. Furthermore they can use only two touches either inside or outside of the playing area.

**Coaching points:**

- Reading the tactical situation
- Defending effectively inside and just outside the box
- Synchronized movements
- Providing the appropriate cover
TACTICAL SITUATION:
DEFENDING NEAR THE SIDELINE AND CLOSE TO THE PENALTY AREA

DRILL 15: DEFENDING NEAR THE SIDELINE AND CLOSE TO THE PENALTY AREA

Diagram 1
Objective: Defending outside of the penalty area and near the side line. Fill the created gap and create numbers up inside the box.

Players: 11 + GK

Description: There are four players (midfielders) of the blue team, in positions indicated by the red cones. The holding midfielder of the white team is placed on the yellow cone. The drill starts with the blue midfielders in possession. They pass the ball to each other until the ball reaches one of the side midfielders while the whites shift according to the ball position. As soon as the side midfielder of the blue team receives, the forward of the strong side makes a movement towards the sideline. The central defender follows him while the white holding midfielder enters the box to fill the gap and create numbers up situation. The forward receives the ball holds it for a couple of seconds and then passes it back to the side midfielder. The white holding midfielder moves out of the box and the drill starts again.
Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation
- Synchronized movements

DRILL 16: DEFENDING NEAR THE SIDELINE AND CLOSE TO THE PENALTY AREA 2

Objective: Create numbers up situation (or at least equality in numbers) inside the penalty area with the help of the defensive midfielder.

Players: 13 + GK

Description: There is a game of 5 + 2 (outside players) v 6. The teams play inside the purple marked area. The blue team’s aim is to move the ball inside the white marked areas near the sidelines by using the forwards’ well timed runs and then get a cross in order to
score a goal. As soon as the ball reaches the forward inside the white area, the central defender of the strong side should enter the blue marked area without seeking to block the potential cross. The white team’s players have to fill the created gap, defend against the cross inside the box and pass the ball to the coach who is placed within the yellow marked area.

Coaching points:

- Reading the tactical situation
- Defending effectively inside the box
- Synchronized movements
- Well timed runs

DRILL 17: DEFENDING NEAR THE SIDELINE AND CLOSE TO THE PENALTY AREA 3

[Diagram of soccer field with players and markings]
Objectives: Creating numbers up situation inside the box as well as defending effectively inside it (marking the players and neutralize the cross)

Players: 14 + 2 GK

Description: The two teams play 8 v 8. The blue team’s aim is to drive the ball or receive a pass inside the white areas near the sidelines. As soon as this takes place, the white player responsible for the player’s marking (fullback or central defender) enters the blue area without trying to block the potential cross. The blue player in possession gets the cross inside the box in order for his team mates to score a goal. The white players seek to create numbers up inside the penalty area by the dropping back of the defensive midfielder and neutralize the potential cross. In case they win possession they try to score a goal within 8 seconds.

Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation
- Retaining superiority in numbers inside the box
- Synchronized movements
- Well timed runs
TACTICAL SITUATION: COLLABORATION OF THE FULLBACK WITH THE WINGER AND THE MIDFIELDER

DRILL 18: COLLABORATION OF THE FULLBACK WITH THE WINGER AND THE MIDFIELDER 1
Objective: Collaboration of the fullback with the winger and the defensive midfielder

Players: 10 players

Description: The coach passes to one of the blue team’s wingers. At the same time, the white team’s fullback has to read the tactical situation and apply either aggressive marking (diagram 1) or passive marking (diagram 2). Furthermore, the midfielder has to be aware of the tactical context too, as the coach can shout ‘pole’ (diagram 2) before he passes the ball. This verbal signal means that the white team’s winger has to run around the red pole and he is not able to provide help to the fullback. So the midfielder should enter the marked area to provide support to the fullback and create a 2 v 2 situation. The blue players’ aim is to dribble the ball through or receive a pass beyond the red marked line (between the two blue cones), while the white team’s players seek to prevent this. The offside rule is applied.
Restrictions:
- The first pass should not be intercepted by the fullback

Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation
- Coaching between the players
- Synchronized movements
- Well timed runs

DRILL 19: COLLABORATION OF THE FULLBACK WITH THE WINGER AND THE MIDFIELDER 2
Objective: Collaboration of the fullback with the winger and the defensive midfielder

Players: 8 v 8 + GK

Description: The game starts by the coach’s pass to one of the blue team’s wingers inside the blue areas. The blue team’s aims are to drive the ball through the red line or receive a pass beyond it (the offside rule is applied). In case the blue team achieves one of its aims inside the blue area, they score one goal and they try to score another one by shooting on goal. If they feel that the aims inside the blue area are not possible to be achieved they can move the ball outside of it and try to score by building up through the centre. When the ball is passed outside of the blue area, the players play without limitations as regards the marked areas. However the blue players can pass the ball back to the coach and the last one can direct it towards the wingers in order to start a new attack through the flanks. In this occasion there are again the same limitations. The white team’s players try to defend
successfully, win the ball and score to one of the two small goals near the sidelines (if they win possession during the blue team’s attempt to attack through the flank) or by passing the ball to the coach within the purple area (if they win the ball after an attack through the centre). The coach determines if the white winger can take part in the defensive play immediately (diagram 1) or after running around the pole first (diagram 2).

Restrictions:

- The pass from the coach should not be intercepted by the fullback
- Only the defensive midfielder can enter the marked area in the first stage of the game. This takes place if the winger is told to run around the pole
- The whites should score within 8 seconds

Coaching points:

- Synchronized movements
- Reading the tactical situation
- Well timed runs
- Coaching between the players
DRILL 20: COLLABORATION OF THE FULLBACK WITH THE WINGER AND THE MIDFIELDER 3

Objective: Collaboration of the fullback with the winger and the defensive midfielder

Players: 20 + 2 GK

Description: There is a 6 v 4 situation inside the purple marked area and a 1 v 1 situation inside the blue marked area near the sidelines. Inside the blue areas only the fullback, the defensive midfielder and the winger of the white team as well as the fullback and the winger of the blue team are allowed. The game starts with the blue team’s GK in possession. The blue team’s players have to complete more than two passes before they pass the ball to one of the wingers inside the blue area. As soon as the ball is passed to the winger of the blue team, the whites have to react according to the tactical situation in order to prevent the
opponents from attacking through the flank. Furthermore the players of the purple area can move out of it but except for the winger of the strong side they cannot enter the strong side’s blue area. If the blue players cannot develop an attacking maneuver through the flank they can move the ball to the centre and attack through it (2\textsuperscript{nd} stage of the drill). In this 2\textsuperscript{nd} stage the players move freely in all areas and try to find another way to score without limitations. However the blue players can also pass the ball back, inside the purple area, in order to start a new attack (moving back to 1\textsuperscript{st} stage again). When the white team regains possession there are no limitations as regards the marked areas whereas they have to score within 8 seconds. When the blue team wins the ball back they should pass it back to their GK in order for the players to take up positions and for the game to start again.

\textbf{Restrictions:}

- The pass towards the winger should not be intercepted by the fullback

\textbf{Coaching points:}

- Synchronized movements
- Reading the tactical situation
- Well timed runs
- Coaching between the players
TACTICAL SITUATION:
BALANCED OR GOAL SIDE POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS

DRILL 21: BALANCED OR GOAL SIDE POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS
Objective: To adjust the positioning according to the position of the winger

Players: 5 + GK

Description: Inside the playing area there are four mannequins that represent the positions of the opponent defenders (fullbacks and central defenders). All white players have a zone of responsibility (marked triangles or squares). Inside these zones there are red cones that indicate their starting positions as well as yellow and blue. The coach starts the drill by making a long ball towards the goalkeeper. As soon as the last one catches the ball, the wingers move either to the yellow cones (balanced position) or to the blue ones (goalside position). The respective defensive midfielder has to adjust his position to the winger’s position and move either to the yellow if the winger had moved to the yellow or to the blue one if the winger had moved to the blue one. This is the first stage of the drill. What is left is the positioning of the attacking midfielder. His positioning depends on the
strong side’s winger position. So three or four seconds after receiving the long ball, the GK moves towards one of the green cones on the right or left. The attacking midfielder moves towards the strong side and takes up a position according to the position of the strong side’s winger on the yellow or blue cone (diagram 2). A centre forward can be added during this drill however his positioning is not related to the positions of the wingers.

Coaching points:

- Reading the tactical situation
- Well timed movements
- Synchronized movements

DRILL 22: BALANCED OR GOALSIDE POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS 2
Objective: To adjust the positioning according to the position of the winger

Players: 12 + GK

Description: The blue team defenders take up the positions which are indicated by the red cones (defensive positions) in a 4-2 formation (refers to the 4-4-2 formation). The drill has two stages. It starts with a long ball from the coach towards the goalkeeper. As soon as the goalkeeper receives the ball, the blue team’s defenders move towards the yellow cones in order to take up attacking positions. The white wingers shift to take up either balanced or goalside positions against the opposition’s fullbacks. The midfielders of the white team should read the tactical situation and take up positions according to the wingers’ positions in order to keep the team balanced. During the first stage which can be held for 2-3 minutes the coach corrects any potential mistakes in positioning. During the second stage the GK passes the ball to one of his team mates. The blue team’s aim is to drive the ball through the red half way line while the whites try to prevent it win the ball and score within 8 seconds. The drill can be executed against various formations (4-2-3-1, 4-3-3 etc).

Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation
- Synchronized movements
Objective: To adjust the positioning according to the position of the winger

Players: 13 + 2 GK

Description: Two GKs are added. Now the aim for both teams is to score on goal. In case the whites win possession they have 8 seconds to score. During the first 10 minutes, when the goal goes out of play the game restarts with a long ball from the white GK towards the GK of the blue team. The drill can be executed against various formations (4-2-3-1, 4-3-3 etc).
Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation
- Synchronized movements

TACTICAL SITUATION: PRESSING WHEN THE WINGERS HAD GOALSIDE POSITIONS

DRILL 24: PRESSING, GOALSIDE POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS (CREATING A STRONG SIDE AND MAKING PLAY PREDICTABLE) 1
Objective: Creating a strong side, making play predictable

Players: 13

Description: In a playing area of 30 X 30 yards the 9 blue players play against 4 whites and try to retain possession. The white players seek to put pressure on the ball in order to make play predictable. By this way they are ready to put immediate pressure on the next player in possession while at the same time the player behind the front line moves to block the potential passing lane. On diagram 1 No9 forces play towards the right. No22 is ready to put pressure on the next pass while No10 moves to block the potential through ball. No7 shifts towards the centre as the pass towards the right is blocked. On diagram 2 No10 puts pressure on the ball and forces play towards his left. No22 is ready to put pressure on the next pass while No9 moves to block the through pass. No7 moves towards the centre.
Restrictions: The blue players should use definitely three touches during the first 5 minutes and for the rest 5 minutes two touches.

Coaching points:
- Putting pressure from the side
- Creating a strong side
- Move towards the potential passing lanes
- Synchronized movements

DRILL 25: PRESSING, GOALSIDE POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS (CREATING A STRONG SIDE AND MAKING PLAY PREDICTABLE) 2
Objective: Creating a strong side, making play predictable, blocking the through ball and creating numbers up situation near the ball zone.

Players: 15 + GK

Description: The two teams play 6 v 7 inside the playing area whereas there are two target players inside the yellow zone. The blue team’s formation is 4-2-1 that refers to 4-2-3-1 formation. The starting positions of the white players are on the yellow cones. As soon as the first pass is made No9 moves to create a strong side and make play predictable. The players shift towards this side with the aim of blocking the through pass (No14), getting ready to put pressure on the next pass (No7) and creating numbers up near the ball zone. The blue team seeks to find a way to pass the ball towards the target players or complete more than three consecutive passes. In case the whites win possession they should
counter within 8 seconds. The drill can be used against various formations which are based on a four man defence (4-4-2, 4-3-1-2, 4-3-3).

Restrictions:
- The passes to the target players must be made from the central defenders.
- Long balls are forbidden for the blue players.
- The blue players are not allowed to pass the ball back inside the red area (box).

Progression: In this occasion the player who puts first pressure on the ball is the attacking midfielder. The centre forward takes up position in one of the two yellow cones which are of the centre. The GK directs the ball towards the opposite side of the one that the centre forward is placed (diagram 2).

Coaching points:
- Putting pressure from the side
- Creating a strong side
- Move towards the potential passing lanes
- Synchronized movements
DRILL 26: PRESSING, GOALSIDE POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS (CREATING A STRONG SIDE AND MAKING PLAY PREDICTABLE) 3

Objective: Creating a strong side, blocking the through ball, preventing the switch of play and creating numbers up situation near the ball zone

Players: 20 + 2 GK

Description: The two teams play 11 v 11. The blue team’s formation is 4-2-1 that refers to 4-2-3-1 formation. The blue team has several aims in this game: a) to make (the central defenders) successful through passes towards the players inside the unmarked area, b) to obtain a switch of play towards the opposite (weak side) and c) to score on goal. The whites seek to prevent these aims by applying pressing high up the field, force the ball wide and create numbers up situation near the ball zone. In case the whites win possession they
should counter within 8 seconds. The drill can be used against various formations which are based on a four man defence (4-4-2, 4-3-1-2, 4-3-3).

Restrictions:

- The passes to the players inside the unmarked area must be made from the central defenders.
- Long balls are forbidden for the blue players.
- The blue players are not allowed to pass the ball back inside the red area (box) to obtain a switch of play.

Coaching points:

- Putting pressure from the side
- Creating a strong side
- Move towards the potential passing lanes
- Synchronized movements
TACTICAL SITUATION: PRESSING WHEN THE WINGERS HAD BALANCED POSITIONS

DRILL 27: PRESSING, BALANCED POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS (THE WINGER PUTS FIRST PRESSURE ON THE BALL) 1

Objective: Putting pressure immediately, blocking the pass towards the fullback as well as the through ball.

Players: 14

Description: This is a 6 v 6 drill in a playing area of 40 X 40 yards aiming of winning the ball quickly during pressing application. The blue fullbacks are placed on the blue cones while the white players are placed on the red ones. The blue team’s aim is to find a way to pass the ball towards the two target players inside the red area or to complete more than
three consecutive passes. The coach starts the drill by passing to one of the two central
defenders. As soon as the pass from the coach is made, the winger takes advantage of the
transmission phase and moves to put pressure on the new man in possession.
Furthermore the centre forward moves to block the potential switch of play. The rest
players seek to take up positions which enable them to prevent the pass towards the target
players and the fullback. The drill can be used against various formations which are based
on a four man defence (4-4-2, 4-3-1-2, 4-3-3).

**Coaching points:**
- Putting pressure from the side
- Taking advantage of the transmission phase
- Move towards the potential passing lanes
- Synchronized movements
DRILL 28: PRESSING, BALANCED POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS (THE WINGER PUTS FIRST PRESSURE ON THE BALL) 2

Objective: Forcing the ball towards the inside, preventing the pass towards the fullback.

Players: 15 + GK

Description: The two teams play 6 v 7. The two target players are inside the dark blue areas. The blue team’s formation is 4-2-1 that refers to 4-2-3-1 formation. Their aim is to pass the ball to the target players (1 point) and drive the ball through the red end line (2 points). The starting positions of the white players are on the yellow cones. As soon as the first pass is made the winger moves to put pressure on the new man in possession. The players shift according to the position of the ball and seek to prevent the blue team’s aims. In case the whites win possession they should counter within 8 seconds. The drill can be
used against various formations which are based on a four man defence (4-4-2, 4-3-1-2, 4-3-3).

Restrictions:
- Long balls are forbidden for the blue players.
- The blue players are not allowed to pass the ball back inside the red area.

Coaching points:
- Forcing play towards the centre
- Taking advantage of the transmission phase
- Synchronized movements

DRILL 29: PRESSING, BALANCED POSITIONS OF THE WINGERS (THE WINGER PUTS FIRST PRESSURE ON THE BALL) 3
Objective: Forcing the ball towards the inside and preventing the pass towards the fullback.

Players: 16 + 2 GK

Description: This is a progression of the previous drill. The two teams play 8 v 8. The two target players are again inside the dark blue areas. The blue team’s formation is 4-2-1-1 that refers to 4-2-3-1 formation. Their aim is to pass the ball to the target players (1 point) and score after driving the ball towards the red line (3 points). As soon as the first pass is made the winger moves to put pressure on the new man in possession. The players shift according to the position of the ball and seek to prevent the blue team’s aims. In case the whites win possession they should counter within 8 seconds. The drill can be used against various formations which are based on a four man defence (4-4-2, 4-3-1-2, 4-3-3).

Restrictions:
- Long balls are forbidden for the blue players.
- The blue players are not allowed to pass the ball back inside the red area.

Coaching points:
- Forcing play towards the centre
- Taking advantage of the transmission phase
- Synchronized movements
TACTICAL SITUATION:
DEFENDING ON THE WEAK SIDE

DRILL 30: DEFENDING ON THE WEAK SIDE 1
**Objective:** Defending on the weak side

**Players:** 13 + GK

**Description:** The two fullbacks of the white team as well as the defensive midfielders are placed in positions indicated by the blue cones. The two white wingers are placed in positions indicated by the yellow cones. There are four yellow cones. The two of them are placed lower and the other two are placed higher in the field in order for the wingers to take up either balanced or goalside positions. The players of the blue team take up the positions indicated by the red cones. The coach starts the drill by passing the ball towards the one of the blue fullbacks. Then he calls the position (goalside or balanced) that the weak side’s winger has to take. As soon as the ball is passed to the blue fullback, the white players should shift towards the strong side leaving the weak side unoccupied. The fullback in
possession passes to the midfield player who switches the play towards the weak side. The blue players inside the blue area try to work in collaboration and find a way to take a cross targeting the two forwards who are unmarked while the whites have to recognize the tactical situation which depends on the winger’s position (goalside or balanced) and defend successfully by preventing the potential cross. The red arrows indicate the movements of the players after the switch of play.

Restrictions: Only two players from each team are allowed inside the blue areas.

Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation
- Synchronized movements

DRILL 31: DEFENDING ON THE WEAK SIDE 2
**Objective:** Defending on the weak side

**Players:** 16 + GK (8 v 8 + GK)

**Description:** The two blue fullbacks are inside the light blue marked area while the white wingers are on the pink cones. The coach starts the drill by passing to the defensive midfielder. The blue winger enters the blue marked area and there is a game of 2 + 1 outside player (def. midfielder) v 1 white player. The blue players play with one touch against the white winger with the aim of completing more than four passes. The white winger seeks to win possession or kick the ball out of the area. If the blue players achieve their aim the coach directs another ball to the weak side and the weak side’s white winger has to run around the pole and then move to provide help. If the blue players don’t succeed in completing more than four passes, the white winger of the weak side can provide help immediately. The blue team seeks to attack on the weak side and score. The blue players try to take advantage of the numerical superiority (if there is) on the weak side and play their attacking move either on the flank or if they find difficulties, through the middle. The white team seeks to defend successfully, win the ball and score in one of the two small goals (2 points) or by passing the ball to the coach who is placed within the blue area.

**Restriction:**
- The defending players should leave the weak side unoccupied
- The whites should counter within 8 seconds

**Coaching points:**
- Reading the tactical situation
- Synchronized movements
Objective: Defending on the weak side with the aim of compensating for the advanced position of the winger and taking advantage of his positioning during the transition.

Players: 20 + 2 GK (11 v 11)

Description: The teams play 11 v 11. Both of them when they defend, they have to leave the weak side unoccupied. Furthermore during the first half the wingers of the white team can not drop back inside the defensive part of the field. So the white team’s defensive midfielder should provide support to the fullback in order to prevent the opposition from outnumbering them on the flanks. The white team seeks to take advantage of the advanced position of the winger during the counter attack. During the second half the teams switch roles.
Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation
- Synchronized movements

**TACTICAL SITUATION:**

**DEFENDING WHEN PRESSING WASN’T POSSIBLE 1**

**DRILL 33:** DEFENDING WHEN PRESSING WASN’T POSSIBLE AFTER A SWITCH OF PLAY TOWARDS THE CENTRE BACK ON THE WEAK SIDE 1
Objective: Defending when pressing application wasn’t possible after a switch of play towards the centre back

Players: 9

Description: There are four coloured areas. Inside the light blue there are the two target players for the blue team. Inside the yellow one there are three midfielders of the white team who shift according to the ball position. A blue player is inside the red area who seeks to help his two outside team mates (centre backs) to move the ball on the weak side. A switch of play can also be obtained by a sudden pass from one centre back to the other and a quickly forward movement by the new man in possession. The blue team’s aim is to obtain a switch of play towards the weak side and take advantage of the available space in order to pass the ball to one of the two target players, while the whites shift according to the ball position and in case that a switch of play is obtained they try to defend successfully by blocking the potential passing lanes.

Restrictions: All the white players except for the two blue outside players, don’t move out of their areas.

Coaching points:
- Reading the tactical situation
- Preventing the vertical or diagonal passes
- Retain a safety distance
- Synchronized movements
DRILL 34: DEFENDING WHEN PRESSING WASN’T POSSIBLE AFTER A SWITCH OF PLAY TOWARDS THE CENTRE BACK ON THE WEAK SIDE 2

**Objective:** Defending when pressing application wasn’t possible after a switch of play towards the centre back

**Players:** 11 + GK

**Description:** The two teams play 5 v 4 inside the blue area while there are two target players for the blue team inside the yellow area. The starting positions of the centre forward and the attacking midfielder are inside the red zone in the centre of the field. However as soon as the ball has been passed to one of the centre backs, both of them should move out of the red zone towards the strong side. The blue team’s aim is to find a way to move the ball quickly towards the other centre back on the weak side and succeed in passing the ball.
to one of the forwards inside the yellow area. On the other hand, the white team tries to defend successfully on a potential switch of play by dropping back and blocking the potential passing lanes. If the blue team can’t find a way to achieve its aim after the switch of play, they can pass the ball back to the GK in order to start a new attack. In this occasion both white No9 and No10 move inside the red zone. During the first 5 minutes the focus is on defending. After this period, the coach allows the whites to counter within 8 seconds in case they win possession.

**Coaching points:**

- Reading the tactical situation
- Preventing the vertical or diagonal passes
- Retain a safety distance
- Synchronized movements
DRILL 35: DEFENDING WHEN PRESSING WASN’T POSSIBLE AFTER A SWITCH OF PLAY TOWARDS THE CENTRE BACK ON THE WEAK SIDE 3

Objective: Defending when pressing application wasn’t possible after a switch of play towards the centre back

Players: 22 + 2 GK

Description: The two teams play 11 v 11. The game starts with the blue GK in possession. The starting positions of the centre forward and the attacking midfielder of the white team are inside the central red zone. Only the three midfielders and the centre forward of the white team are allowed in the red and blue areas. As soon as the ball is passed towards the one side the attacking midfielder and the centre forward have to move towards the strong side. The blue team’s aim is to find a way to pass the ball to the weak side’s centre.
back. In case this fact takes place one point is scored for the blues and they can score another two if they manage to pass the ball inside the yellow area. If they score three more points are scored. The white team has to defend successfully in case the weak side’s centre back receives, by blocking the potential passing lanes towards the yellow area and force the ball towards the side line. Then they should prevent the blue team from scoring. If they win possession they try to score within 8 seconds.

**Restrictions:** Only the four white players (defensive midfielders + the attacking midfielder and the centre forward) are allowed inside the blue areas during the defensive phase

**Coaching points:**

- Reading the tactical situation
- Blocking the vertical passing lanes
- Retain a safety distance
- Synchronized movements
TACTICAL SITUATION: DEFENDING WHEN PRESSING WASN’T POSSIBLE 2

DRILL 36: DEFENDING WHEN PRESSING WASN’T POSSIBLE AFTER A SWITCH OF PLAY TOWARDS THE MIDFIELDER WITH FREE SPACE 1

Objective: Defending when pressing application wasn’t possible after a switch of play towards the midfielder with free space in front of him

Players: 9

Description: There are four coloured areas. Two blue midfielders are positioned inside the dark blue area. Two blue players are outside the marked areas while the white attacking midfielder’s starting position is inside the red area. The red area is inside the blue one. This player as well the other two white midfielders and the two blue midfielders move freely
inside the red and the light blue areas. The blue outside players pass the ball to each other and the white players shift according to the position of the ball. The white attacking midfielder should always try to take up position towards the strong side. As soon as the blue outside players realise that white No10 is in the strong side they pass the ball to the midfielder inside the dark blue area. This player receives and moves forward with the ball. As soon as he enters the light blue area the players can move inside the yellow area as well. The blue players seek to drive the ball through the red end line while the whites try to prevent it.

**Coaching points:**
- Reading the tactical situation
- Preventing the numerical superiority
- Retain a safety distance
- Synchronized movements
- Playing for time
DRILL 37: DEFENDING WHEN PRESSING WASN’T POSSIBLE AFTER A SWITCH OF PLAY TOWARDS THE MIDFIELDER WITH FREE SPACE 2

Objective: Defending when pressing application wasn’t possible after a switch of play towards the midfielder with free space in front of him

Players: 12 + 2 GK

Description: There are three coloured areas, a yellow, a blue and a red one (which is inside the blue). The white’s No10 starting position is inside the red area. The blue team has four while the white three midfielders inside the red and blue area. Two blue defenders are positioned outside the marked areas. Furthermore there are three white players (a centre forward and two wingers) on the yellow cones outside of them. The centre forward takes part as soon as the ball is passed inside the blue area whereas the wingers...
participate only in the attacking phase. The two blue defenders seek to pass the ball to the midfielder on the weak side. When this happens the white midfielders with the help of the centre forward try to deal with the situation while the blue players seek to score on goal. During this phase all players can enter the yellow area. If the whites win possession there is a 6 v 6 game. If the ball goes out of play the game restarts with the blue GK in possession.

Restrictions: The white team should counter within 8 seconds.

Coaching points:

• Reading the tactical situation
• Preventing the numerical superiority
• Retain a safety distance
• Synchronized movements
• Playing for time
TACTICAL SITUATION: NEGATIVE TRANSITION NEAR THE SIDELINES

DRILL 38: NEGATIVE TRANSITION NEAR THE SIDELINES 1
Objective: Getting ready for negative transition

Players: 11

Description: Several cones are placed on the field. The pink cones indicate the starting positions of all the players. However the fullbacks and the wingers have also the option of taking up positions on the blue cones. To which positions will these players move to, is determined by the coach. The drill starts as soon as the coach calls a colour and passes the ball to the right central defender in order for the fullbacks and the wingers on the left to have time to move into the called colour. The right central defender directs the ball towards the left central defender and the last one towards the fullback or the winger who at the meantime have moved on the cones with the called colour. The new man in possession holds the ball for a couple of seconds to give time to the players to take up the appropriate positions to provide support and get ready for negative transition. The players take up
positions according to the player’s passing option (black arrows for option 1 and red arrows for option 2). Then he passes back to the coach and the players get back to their starting positions. The drill now can start again. In case the coach calls a colour and then “movement” the players move to the specific colour and after receiving the pass from the central defender make movements in order to achieve a combination (diagram 2, 3). The rest players should adapt to the new positions of the fullback and winger and get ready for negative transition. On diagram 3 the players take up positions on the blue cones (black arrows) and then move to retain the team’s balance (red arrows). The drill can also be executed towards the right.

**Coaching points:**

- Reading the tactical situation
- Retain a safety player
- Quick reaction of the players
- Synchronized movements
DRILL 39: NEGATIVE TRANSITION NEAR THE SIDELINES PROGRESSION 2
Objective: Getting ready for negative transition

Players: 15

Description: This is a progression of the previous drill. Two blue marked areas are added near the sidelines as well as four opposition’s players who mark the fullbacks and the wingers. The coach again determines the positions of the players by calling a colour and directs the ball to one of the central defenders. The central defender passes to the other central defender and the last one directs the pass on purpose towards one of the opponents who mark his team mates, while his team mates have taken up the appropriate positions. The new player in possession seeks together with his team mate to drive the ball through the red lines in order to score or retain possession for more than 8 seconds inside the marked area. On diagram 2 the players move first to the correct cones (black arrows) and then try to carry out the negative transition (red arrows).
Coaching points:

- Reading the tactical situation
- Retain a safety player
- Quick reaction of the players
- Synchronized movements

**DRILL 40: NEGATIVE TRANSITION NEAR THE SIDELINES 3**

**Objective:** Negative transition near the sidelines

**Players:** 22

**Description:** There are two blue marked areas near the sidelines which indicate the area of significance. The teams play 11 v 11. The whites seek to build up within the blue areas while the blue team’s aim is to defend successfully.

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As soon as the whites lose possession inside the blue marked areas they should react quickly and regain possession within 8 seconds. After 10 minutes the coach asks from the whites not only to win possession within 8 seconds but also to prevent the opponents from driving the ball outside the blue areas or from making a successful pass towards a player outside of it.

**Coaching points:**

- Reading the tactical situation
- Retain a safety player
- Quick reaction of the players
- Synchronized movements

**Assessment:** All the tactical situations which are presented, have been analyzed in the defending part of Jose Mourinho’s Real Madrid book.