

CHAPTER 4

CREATING AND EXPLOITING 3 V 2 SITUATIONS NEAR THE SIDELINE

STEP 4: EXPLOITING THE NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE CREATED

After creating a 3 v 2 situation near the sideline, Bielsa's tactics are to use this numerical advantage to move the ball to the free player. This can be done through intelligent positioning, good decision making and accurate passing. All the following options can be applied to all formations:

Option 1 (a): Direct Pass to the Full Back Who is Free of Marking Near the Sideline



In this example, the winger (11) already has a central position and moves at the appropriate angle to provide a passing option. The left back (3) is in an effective position and at a good angle too. This positioning makes it impossible for the opposition winger (blue No.7) to block both passing options for the man in possession (5).

The centre back (5) has to decide which is the best passing option according to blue No.7's positioning. If blue No.7 decides to apply pressure in a way that blocks the inside pass towards white No.11, the pass towards the unmarked left back (3) is easy - this is shown in the diagram above.

Option 1(b): Exploiting the 2 v 1 with the Winger's Run into the Space Behind the Full Back



This diagram follows on from the example on the previous page. As soon as the left back (3) receives, he has available time on the ball and free space to move forward. This action creates a 2 v 1 numerical advantage near the sideline and a 5 v 4 advantage for the attack.

The aim for the team is to launch a quick attack from this point. This is to prevent the opposition midfielders from having enough time to get back and provide help to the defenders.

As we have a 2 v 1 situation in the highlighted area, the blue right back (2) has to move forward to contest the ball carrier. The winger (11) reads the situation and makes a diagonal run to receive in behind the blue right back, as shown in the diagram.

A successful pass to the winger (11) in this situation can lead to creating a goal scoring chance.

Option 2: Quick Combination Play to Move the Ball to the Free Full Back When the Direct Pass is Blocked



For the second option, the opposition winger (7) applies pressure in a different way and this time blocks the direct pass to our left back (3). As explained before, blue No.7 is unable to block both passing options, so this leaves our left winger (11) free of marking, ready to receive a pass from the centre back in possession (5).

In this situation, the reaction of the opposition right back (2) is the key. There are 3 possibilities:

- **Option 2 (diagram above):** If the blue right back (2) waits for the pass to be made and then moves to put pressure on the ball by taking advantage of the transmission phase (the time the ball takes to travel), the white winger (11) may not be able to receive and turn. However, the winger (11) can play as 'link player' in order to move the ball to the left back (3) who is free of marking.

After the pass towards No.3 is achieved, both the options shown on the previous two pages can be used (option 1b: 'exploiting the 2 v 1 with the winger's run into the space behind the full back' and option 1c: 'the winger exploits the space created in the centre by forward's run out wide').

- **Option 3 (page 79):** The blue right back (2) retains a balanced position and does not move forward to contest our winger (11) which allows him to receive and turn - this is option 3 described on the next page.
- **Option 4 (page 80):** The blue right back (2) moves forward to contest the winger before the pass is made so he is unable to receive. The left back (3) must move forward into the free space.

Option 3: The Winger is Able to Receive in Space and Turn with 2 Passing Options



In this third option, the opposition winger (7) applies pressure in a way and that blocks the direct pass to our left back (3), as shown in option 2 on the previous page. As blue No.7 is unable to block both passing options, this leaves our left winger (11) free of marking, ready to receive a pass from the centre back in possession (5).

In option 2, the opposition right back (2) moved forward to prevent our winger (11) from turning. In this example, he doesn't move forward to put pressure on white No.11 after the centre back's (5) pass, but instead stays in a balanced position to control both No.11 and the left back No.3.

This enables the winger (11) to receive the pass from the centre back unmarked, turn and move forward with the ball. As soon as he is able to do this, the opposition midfielders are taken out of the game and we can launch a quick 5 v 4 attack.

A 2 v 1 situation is created again near the sideline. The winger (11) has 2 options:

1. Pass to the left back (3) who makes an overlapping run.
2. The winger can use the distraction of the left back's run to give him enough time and space to play a through pass in behind the defensive line in the centre. Another attacking player (No.10 in diagram) must make a well-timed run to meet this pass.

Option 4: Exploiting the Space Behind the Opposition Full Back Who Moves Forward to Mark Our Winger



In this final example, the blue right back (2) moves forward to mark our winger (11) before the pass is made so he is unable to receive. This prevents the centre back (5) from being able to pass to him. However, this early forward movement of the blue right back (2) creates space behind him.

If the man in possession (5) has enough time on the ball to play an aerial pass, the available space can be exploited by the forward run of the left back (3), as shown in the diagram.

In this situation, the white team would have a 4 v 3 numerical advantage for their attack and a good chance to create a goal scoring opportunity.

SESSION 6

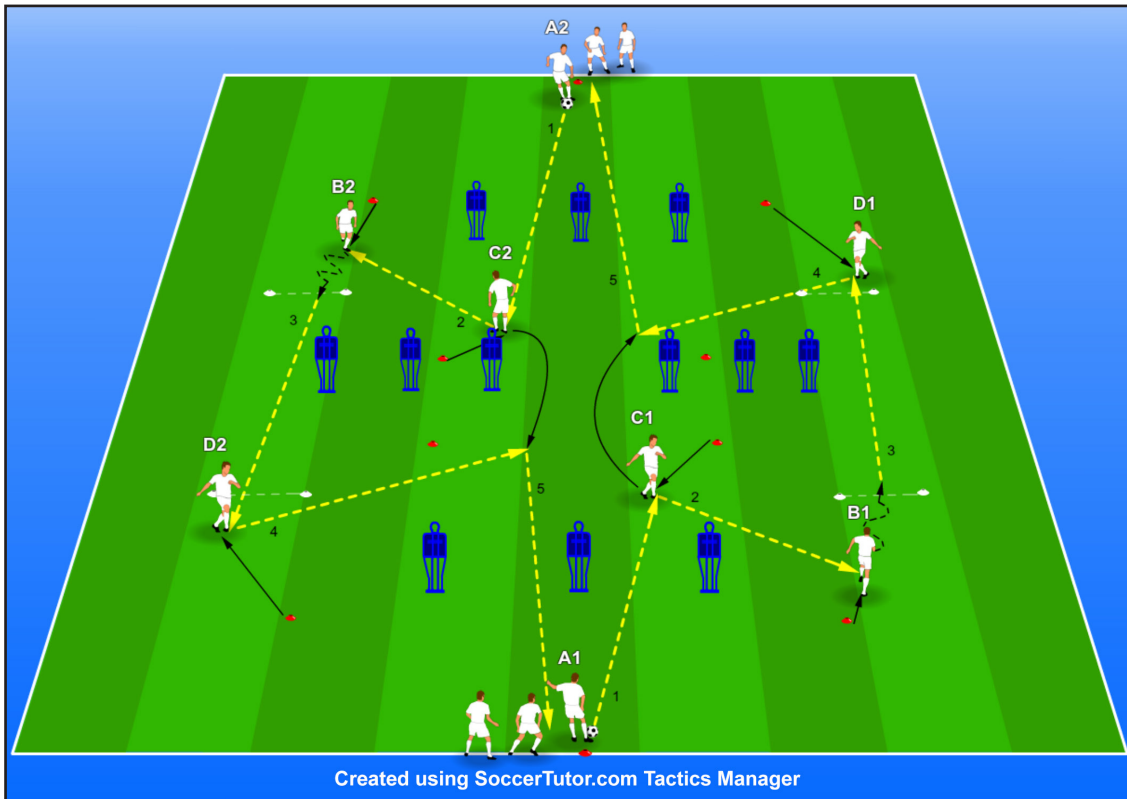


**Based on Tactics of
Marcelo Bielsa**

Creating and Exploiting 3 v 2 Situations Near the Sideline

SESSION FOR THIS TACTICAL SITUATION (8 PRACTICES)

1. Moving into Available Passing Lanes with Quick Combination Play (Unopposed)



Objective: Pass/receive at different angles - focus on timing movement into available passing lanes.

Description

In a 35 x 50 yard area, we have 12 players, 2 balls (1 at either end as shown), 12 blue mannequins (or large cones), 4 white cone gates and 10 red cones to mark out starting positions.

The practice starts simultaneously with players A1 and A2 at opposite ends. We will explain the sequence starting from A1 - this is replicated on the other side, as shown. Player A1 passes to C1 who drops back and passes into the path of B1 who dribbles forward through the white cone gate. Player B1 then passes forward to D1 who has dropped back towards the available passing lane to provide a passing option. While this has been happening, player C1 has made a curved run to receive the next pass from D1. When he does, he passes to the second start position (A2) and the sequence continues with the next player.

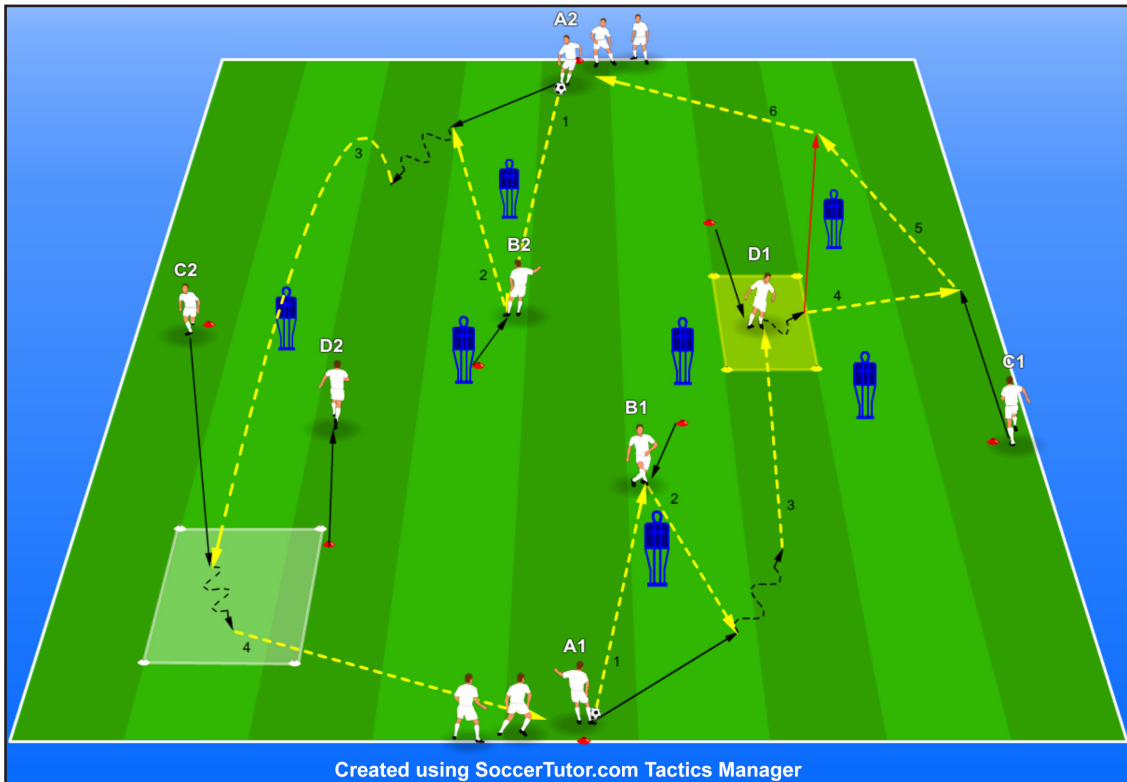
All players move to the next position (A -> B -> C -> D -> Start).

Coaching Points

1. Move towards the passing lanes to receive the forward passes at the right moment.
2. Time the movement around the mannequins to receive the lay-off on the move.

VARIATION

2. Synchronised Movements and Combination Play Between the Full Back and Winger (Unopposed)



Description

This is a variation of the previous practice - the positions of the red cones and the blue mannequins (or large cones) change, as shown in the diagram. We also mark out 2 areas - one is 4 x 6 yards and the other is 5 x 8 yards.

The practice starts simultaneously with players A1 and A2 at opposite ends. On the right side, A1 plays a one-two combination with B1 who drops back - A1 receives back, dribbles forward and passes into the small area where D1 (winger) drops back to receive and turn. At the same time, C1 (full back) makes a run forward to receive out wide. To complete the sequence on this side, C1 passes at an angle for D1 who makes a run inside the mannequin and passes to the second start position (A2).

On the left side, A2 plays a one-two combination with B2 who drops back (D2 drops back and C2 moves forward) - A2 receives back, dribbles forward and plays an aerial pass into the larger area, into the path of C2. C2 finishes the sequence by passing to the A1 start position and the practice continues. All players move to the next position (A -> B -> C -> D -> Start).

Variations

1. The practice can be reversed so the players work on these combinations for the left side of the pitch.
2. Player D1 can use 1 touch to pass to C and move behind the mannequin to receive again (instead of turning).

PROGRESSION

5. Playing to the Free Player in a 3 v 2 Tactical Situation Near the Sideline



Description

This is a progression of the previous practice - we now add an extra defender so we have a 3 v 2 situation in each group. To start the practice, the outside player now passes to player A who enters the area.

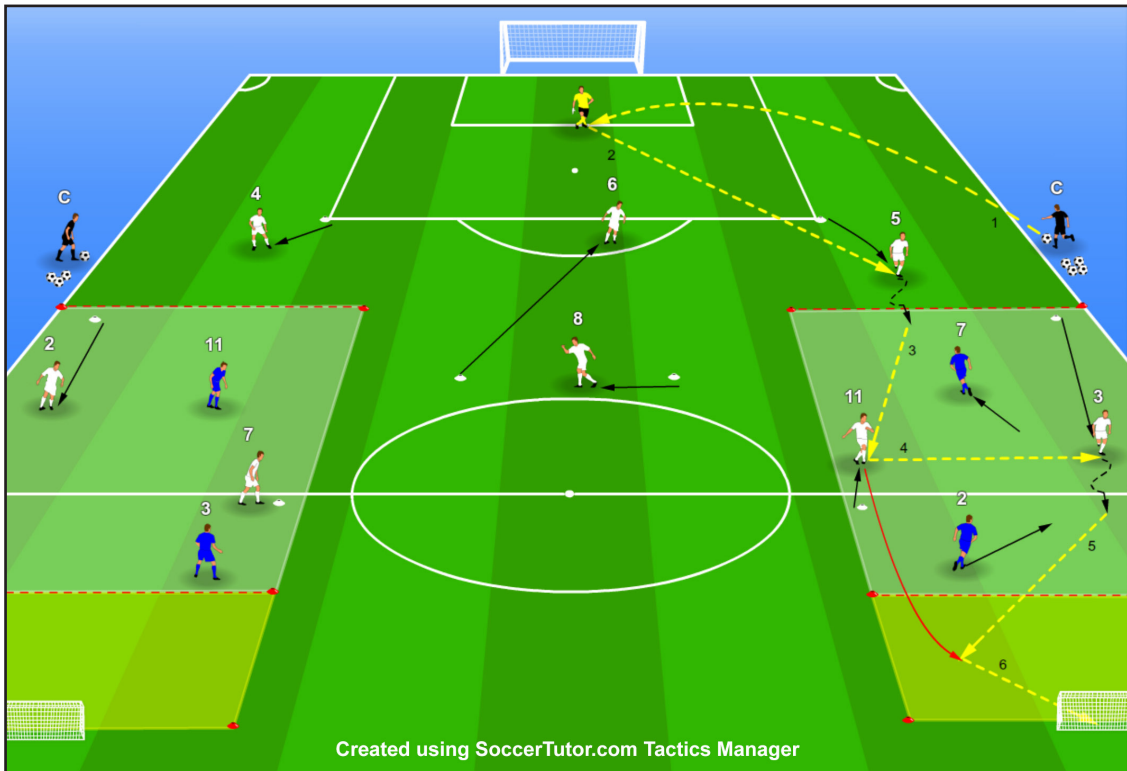
Depending on the reactions of the 2 blue defenders, the aim for the white team is to use their numerical advantage to dribble the ball into the attacking half or receive a pass within it, then score. Two examples of combinations are shown in the diagram:

1. Left side of diagram - the first blue defender closes down the ball carrier (A) and the second defender follows the winger's (C) movement to drop back. This creates space for the full back to move forward, receive in the attacking half and score a goal.
2. Right side of diagram - the first blue defender does not block the direct pass to the full back (B) so a 2 v 1 situation is created straight away. The second defender moves to close down B who dribbles forward and plays a pass into the path of C, who makes a curved run in behind - he then scores a goal.

All white players move to the next position (A -> B -> C -> Start). The practice can be reversed so players work on these combinations for the left side of the pitch. Only player B can enter the attacking half with the ball.

PROGRESSION

6. Creating and Exploiting a 3 v 2 Numerical Advantage Near the Sideline in a Functional Practice



Objective: We work on taking advantage of a 3 v 2 tactical situation near the sideline.

Description

Using 2/3 of a full pitch we mark out 2 zones near the sidelines as shown. Within each zone we have a full back and a winger for both teams - there is an end zone within the zone and a goal. Outside of the zones, we have 2 white centre backs (4 & 5) and 2 central midfielders (6 & 8). The white players start on the white cones.

The practice starts when the coach plays a long ball towards the goalkeeper and the players adjust their shape to a 3-3-2 (from Bielsa's 3-3-3-1) as if building up play against 2 forwards. The 2 centre backs (4 & 5) move out wide to receive and the central midfielder (6) moves back to create a back three.

After a centre back receives (No.5 in diagram), he moves into the side zone on that side and the aim for the whites is to take advantage of the 3 v 2 situation, to either dribble the ball through the red end line or receive a pass beyond it and score within 8 seconds. The blues cannot defend behind the red line and the offside rule is applied throughout.

If the blue players win possession, they launch a counter attack and must dribble the ball through the opposite red end line or receive a pass beyond it within 5 seconds (1 goal). The midfielder in the centre (8) can enter the side zones when the white team are in a negative transition.

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