

# HOW TO USE THIS CONTENT IN YOUR PRACTICES AND SESSIONS

Some coaches may ask 'How do I use these phases of play to create practices and sessions?'

Here we are going to show you how.

We are going to use a phase of play shown below from Chapter 3. This is a phase of play which was repeated many times by Real Madrid in the 2011-12 season.

## MAINTAINING SAFETY AND BALANCE IN AN OPEN BALL SITUATION: CENTRAL MIDFIELDER IN SPACE

On diagrams 2.10, 2.11 and 2.12, there is an open ball situation and the ball carrier has moved forward with the ball in space.

On diagram 2.10, the ball carrier No.6 moves forward with the ball. Alonso moves to close him down. Until he manages to do it, there is an open ball situation. All 4 Madrid defenders move back to retain a safe distance and to prevent the forwards from receiving the ball in the dangerous areas.

Ramos follows No.9's diagonal run and together with Pepe they seek to prevent No.9 from receiving a vertical pass.



On diagram 2.11, the situation progresses. Alonso has reached No.6 and contests him. This is now a closed ball situation and No.6 loses the chance to pass the ball forward. As soon as the Real defenders assess the new tactical situation, they stop moving towards their own goal.



Finally on diagram 2.12, No.6 is under Alonso's pressure and moves towards the sideline. As the ball cannot be passed forward the 4 defenders step up a few yards and restore the team's compactness while also leaving the opposition's forwards in an offside position.



# EXAMPLE PRACTICE

## DEFENDING AN OPEN BALL SITUATION



## Objective

To develop defending in an open ball situation and offside tactics.

## Description

Using a full size pitch, 4 defenders and a defensive midfielder practice this tactical situation. The 1 attacking player starts with the ball. All 6 players in the practice start in the positions on the cones as shown.

The attacking player starts with the ball. As soon as he starts to dribble forwards, the 4 defenders move back to the cones behind as if they were tracking runners. The defensive midfielder sprints across to close down the ball carrier.

As soon as the defensive midfielder closes down the ball carrier, all 4 defenders need to sprint forwards together in a line. This is because the tactical context has been changed to a closed ball situation. The movement would leave the attacking players in offside positions.

## Coaching Points

1. The timing of the defender's movement is the key here. The movements back and forward need to be at exactly the right moment.
2. The movement of the 4 defenders needs to be in unison, making sure they all remain in a straight line together.
3. Start of the drill slowly and gradually increase the speed.

# PROGRESSION

An example where there is an open ball situation and the defenders track the runners.



When a closed ball situation is achieved the defenders move forward in a line, leaving the forwards offside.



## Objective

To develop defending in an open ball situation and offside tactics.

## Description

Using a full size pitch, 4 defenders, a defensive midfielder and 4 attackers practice this tactical situation. All 9 players in the practice start in the positions on the cones as shown.

The attacking player starts with the ball. As soon as he starts to dribble forwards, the 3 forwards make runs in behind the defence to receive the ball. Once he crosses the halfway line in between the cones he is allowed to make a pass. Their aim is to score a goal.

The defenders track the runs as there is an open ball situation. Their aim is to prevent a shot on goal and clear the ball.

If the defensive midfielder is able to close down the ball in time and prevent him making a pass, a closed ball situation will be achieved. At this point, all 4 defenders need to sprint forwards together in a line. The movement leaves the attacking players in offside positions.

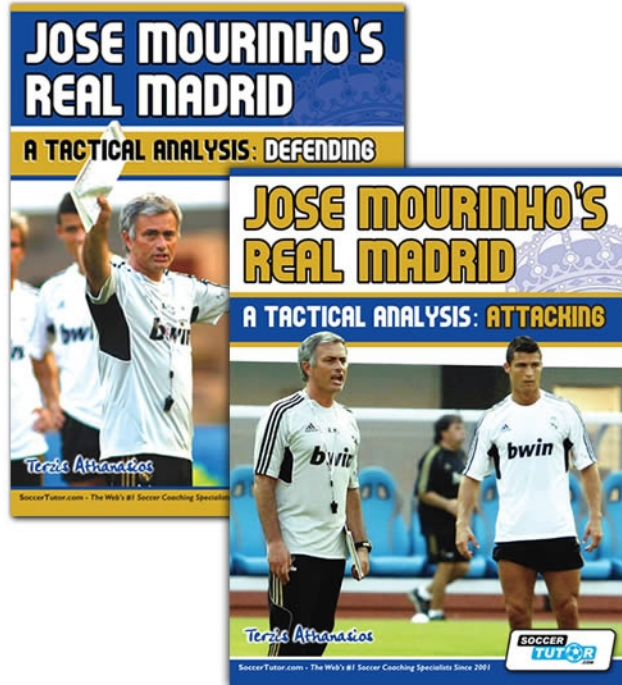
## Coaching Points

1. This exercise can also be used to practice attacking in the same situation.
2. Use players in their correct positions to practice their specific roles and responsibilities.
3. The timing of the defender's movement is the key here. The movements back and forward need to be at exactly the right moment.
4. The movement of the 4 defenders needs to be in unison, making sure they all remain in a straight line together.
5. The pass in behind the defence needs to be weighted well for the attacker to run onto the ball.
6. You can introduce a points system to encourage competition between the 2 teams.

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