

d) Exploiting Space Between the Centre Back and Wing Back On the Weak Side



After 3 consecutive passes, the defensive midfielder Pirlo (21) receives in space. As soon as he receives, the attacking midfielder Marchisio (8) starts his forward run into the gap in the opposition's defensive line. Pirlo (21) plays an accurate pass into the available space for Marchisio (8) to run onto, receive and score.



ASSESSMENT:

This action could also be taken in collaboration with the forward on the weak side, however in this situation there was usually more space available for the attacking midfielder.

The attacking midfielder on the weak side (Marchisio in the diagram) was usually in a more advanced position than the attacking midfielder on the strong side (Vidal in the diagram).

The attacking midfielder on the strong side was usually in a neutral position (not very deep/not very high) - this was so that he could act as a link player as shown in the diagram above with Vidal passing to Pirlo (21). This deeper position meant he wouldn't be able to exploit the available spaces between the opposition defenders.

PROGRESSION

3. Exploiting Space Between the Centre Back and Wing Back On the Weak Side in a Functional Practice



Description

Here we have another progression. We add 2 red midfielders and 3 red forwards. A large white zone is marked out as shown, divided down the middle (blue line) so the players can easily recognise the strong and weak sides.

The goalkeeper starts the practice by passing to a black player in the white zone and we have a 4 (+3) v 3 situation - the goalkeeper and attacking midfielders (8 and 23) act as outside players limited to 1 touch. If the reds win the ball they try to score in one of the two mini goals within 6 seconds.

The aim is to pass the ball to the free player (No.21 in diagram) so he has time to play an accurate long pass to the attacking midfielder (8) on the weak side. No.8 aims to receive within the blue area and score.

If the long pass is not accurate or the ball is not received within the blue area or a red defender manages to block the pass, the coach passes a new ball to one of the red midfielders who can enter the white zone. This creates a 5 v 4 counter attack as the reds try to score in one of the mini goals within 6 seconds.

Restrictions

1. The attacking midfielder player is limited to 2 touches - receive and shoot.
2. The red defenders are not allowed to leave the yellow zone at any time.

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