THE TRANSITION FROM ATTACK TO DEFENCE

THE TRANSITION FROM ATTACK TO DEFENCE (NEGATIVE TRANSITION)

DEFINITION

The transition from attack to defence (or negative transition) is the phase which starts as soon as possession is lost and ends when the defending team manages to achieve good defensive organisation. After this moment, the defensive phase starts.

ATLÉTICO MADRID'S DEFENSIVE PHASE

Atlético Madrid's success under Diego Simeone is mainly based on their tactics in the defensive phase and the transition from defence to attack.

The basic elements of Atlético Madrid's defensive phase are fully described on **Page 18**.

ATLÉTICO MADRID'S TRANSITION FROM ATTACK TO DEFENCE

There are also many more details about Atlético's defensive play in the transition from attack to defence. These are fully analysed and presented in this section of the book with 4 different tactical situations:

1. Retaining a Numerical Advantage at the Back During Build-up Play
2. Negative Transition After Losing Possession from a Long Pass
3. Negative Transition After Losing Possession During a Switch of Play
4. Counter-Pressing After Losing Possession During Combination Play

TACTICAL SITUATION 4

Counter-Pressing After Losing Possession During Combination Play

The content in this section is from analysis of Diego Simeone's Atlético Madrid teams during the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 seasons.

The analysis is based on recurring patterns of play observed within the Atlético Madrid team. Once the same phase of play occurred several times (at least 10), the tactics would be seen as a pattern. The analysis on the following pages are examples of the team's tactics being used effectively.

Each action, pass, individual movement with or without the ball, and the positioning of each player on the pitch including their body shape, are presented.

The analysis is then used to create a practice to coach this specific tactical situation.

COUNTER-PRESSING AFTER LOSING POSSESSION DURING COMBINATION PLAY IN THE CENTRE

a. Creating Triangle Shapes and Maintaining Short Distances Between Players During the Attacking Phase

For Atlético Madrid to use short combination play, specific elements must first exist. The distances between the players need to be short and there should be triangle shapes set up. If an opponent wins the ball, they can then be immediately pressed.

When Atlético use combination play in tight spaces, the distance between the players is short. If there are also triangle shapes, there are good conditions for Simeone's team to use counter-pressing to win the ball back immediately.

In this example, the forward **D. Costa (9)** drops back to receive or create space and the white centre back No.5 follows him, thus creating space for **Saúl (8)** to exploit in behind via a pass from **Koke (6)**.

However, the pass towards **Koke (6)** is intercepted by the white central midfielder No.6 and the Atlético players have to react in the appropriate way for the transition from attack to defence to be successful. The description of this situation continues on the next page...

b. Applying Counter-Pressing Immediately After Losing the Ball to Win it Back as Quickly as Possible

The reaction of the players is immediate, and the new ball carrier is pressed by 3 Atlético players from different directions, who create a pressing triangle.

The aim for **Rodri (14)**, who is at the base of the triangle, is to apply pressure immediately and prevent the ball carrier from having any time and space on the ball.

The other 2 players in the triangle are the left midfielder **Koke (6)** and the forward **D. Costa (19)**. They move to press from behind and win the ball if white No.6 hesitates or tries to change direction.

Most of the white players are eliminated as passing options because the passing lanes towards them are blocked.

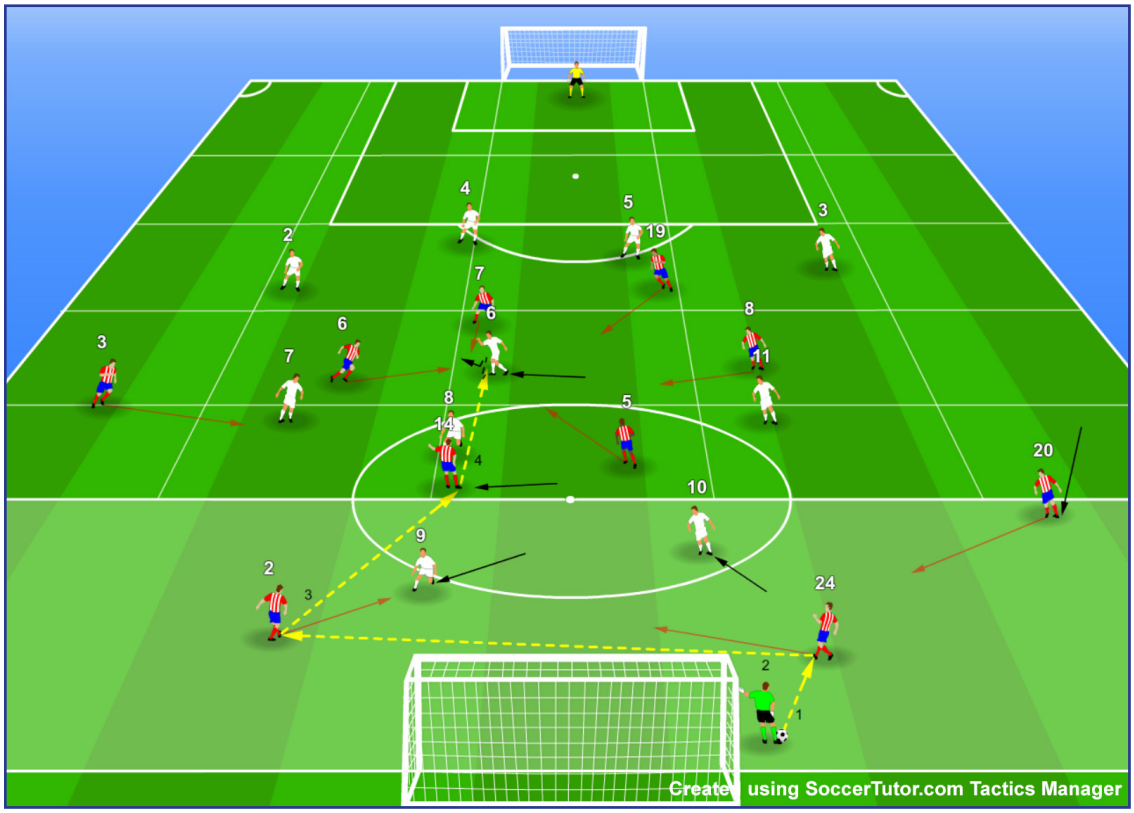
In addition, potential receivers white No.8 and No.10 are marked by the central midfielder **Thomas (5)** and centre back **Giménez (24)** respectively.

At the same time, there is safety with a 3v2 numerical advantage at the back. Atlético have their two centre backs **Godín (2)** and **Giménez (24)**, and right back **Juanfran (20)** against the two white forwards No.9 and No.10.

PRACTICE FOR "COUNTER-PRESSING AFTER LOSING POSSESSION DURING COMBINATION PLAY"

PRACTICE FOR THIS TACTICAL SITUATION

Counter-Pressing After Losing Possession During Short Combination Play in a Conditioned Game



Description

- The 2 teams play an 11v11 game in 2/3 of a full pitch and there is a 30 yard low zone for the red's build up play
- The practice starts with the red team's GK and the reds attack by using passes no longer than 10-15 yards. If this is difficult to apply, you can divide the pitch into small areas as shown.
- The red players are only allowed to pass to team-mates in neighbouring areas. They try to create triangle shapes and score using short combination play. The white players try to win the ball and then score with a counter attack.
- If the reds lose the ball, they should have players close enough to the ball to apply counter-pressing immediately.
- Please **see the analysis pages in this section** for the correct defensive reactions.

Coaching Points

1. Good off the ball movement is essential to create triangle shapes.
2. Synchronisation is needed for the players movements and good communication.

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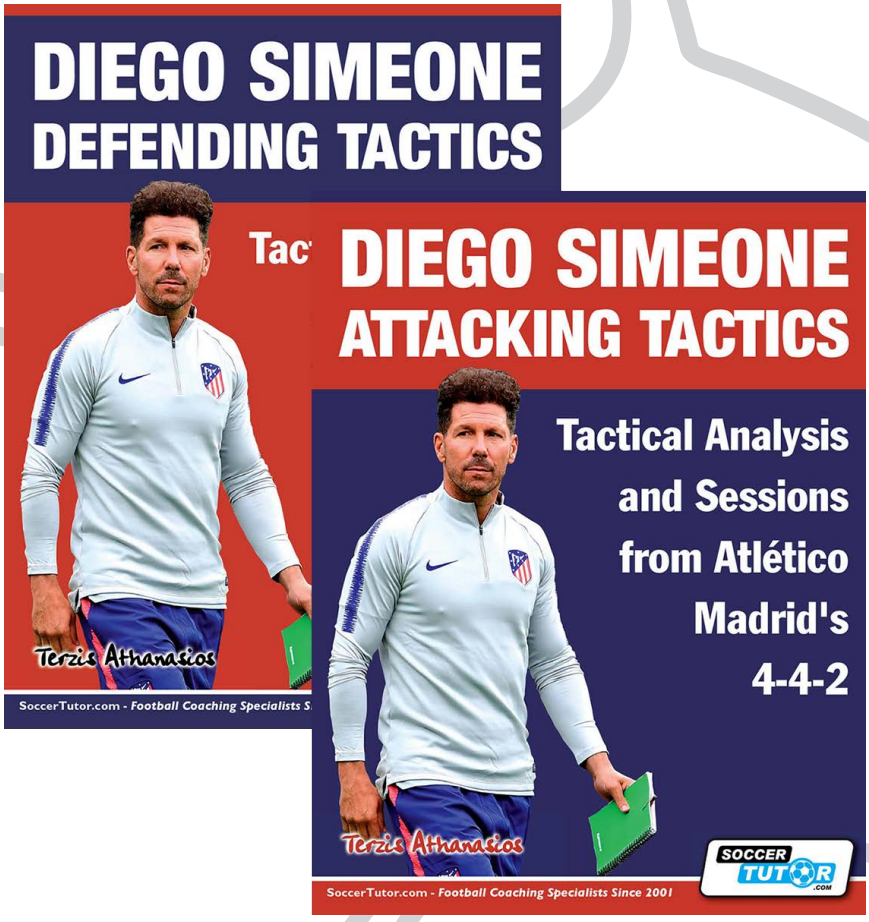

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