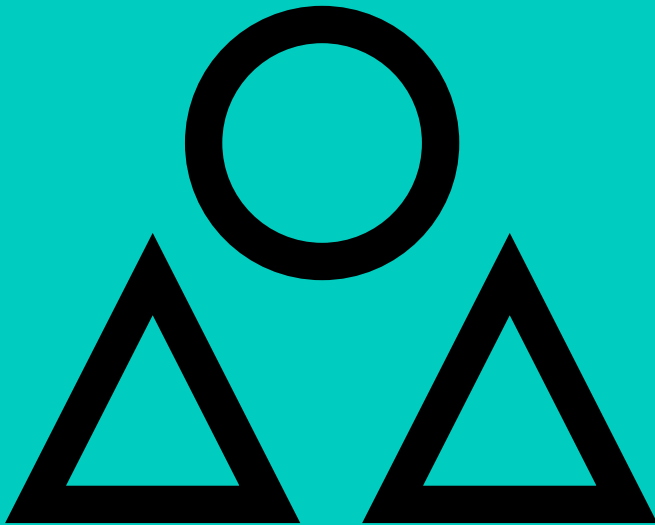


TWO VERSUS ONE

Strong Decision-Makers On The Pitch



Bernhard Peters · Andreas Schumacher

Hansi Flick

Bernhard Peters and I have known each other since 2006. During his years at Hoffenheim, Bernhard transformed the club's good youth program into a nationally recognized strong TSG youth academy, which has since consistently produced exceptionally well-trained players. One of them was Niklas Süle, who passed through all the stages of the TSG academy under his guidance, from the U15s up to the professional team. Now, he plays for me at FC Bayern and also plays a significant role as a central defender for the national team.

For Bernhard Peters, a holistic approach to player development has always been important: from training in all the essential performance factors of football, to tactical decision-making in different spaces and positions, to specific character development. His goal was and still is to ensure that players are not only well-trained in football skills but also, as he likes to put it, „good people with clear edges and character“ in life.

4 Bernhard Peters and I have watched many matches of the youth teams at the Dietmar Hopp Stadium in Hoffenheim, but above all, we observed Bundesliga matches of TSG from the stands and then had many discussions. Often, these discussions led to new ideas for training practices. I was always happy to drive from my hometown of Bammental to the training center in Zuzenhausen to watch video footage of Bundesliga and national team games with him. These exchanges were always inspiring—also with a view to training design for the national team. I was often impressed by how he distilled key principles from a game and created highly effective practice drills from them. He applied this method during his previous, highly successful tenure as head coach of the German men's national hockey team and later in his role as a sports director in football. It can truly be said that Bernhard Peters has greatly enriched the thinking around the vital connection between training and match play in football.

The book by Bernhard Peters and Andreas Schumacher skillfully captures this mindset, the systematic approach, and the significance of 2v1 situations in football with great depth of detail. Coaches and practitioners of all levels and age groups can benefit from it, especially for training an offensive playing style aimed at scoring many goals with a variety of solutions, just as we do at FC Bayern.

Even now, we continue to discuss further developments in football regarding players, game principles, and the resulting training ideas. Bernhard Peters is a true expert, but our friendship extends far beyond football.

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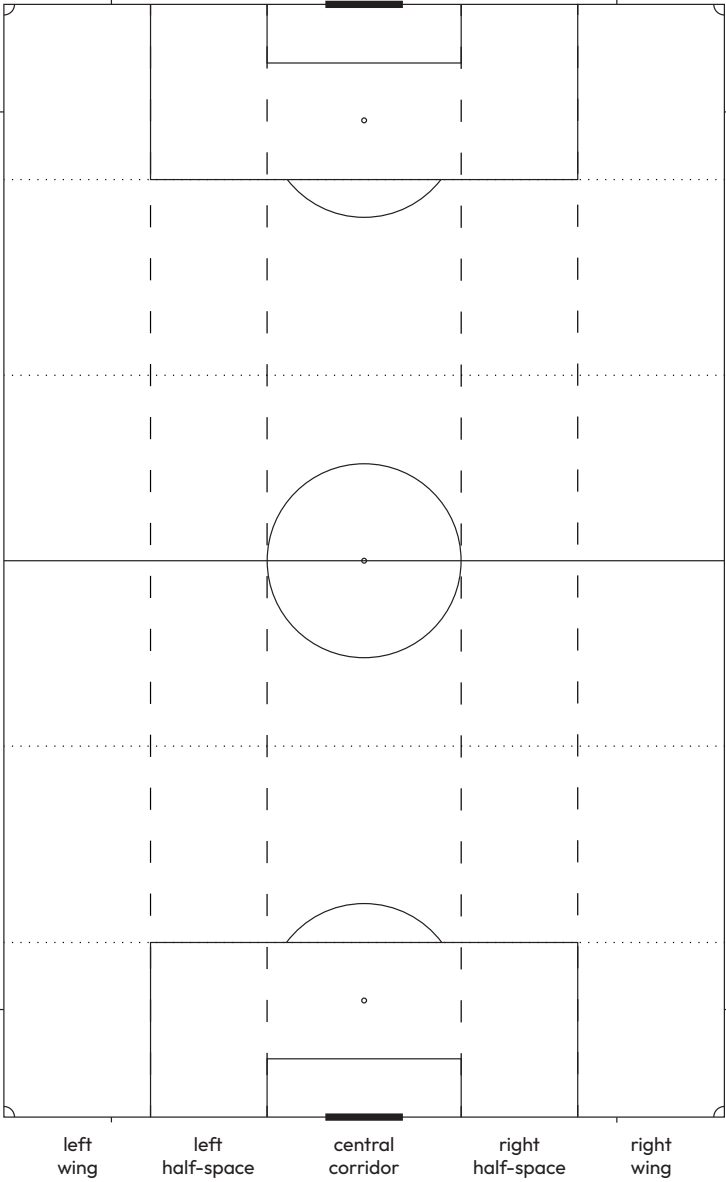
280-287

OUR PLAYING FIELD

We focus on dividing the playing field and have established the following rule: whenever we speak from our team's perspective, we will depict this graphically from bottom to top or from left to right. Vertically, we have divided our field into five lanes: the left wing, the left half-space, the central corridor, the right half-space, and the right wing. What is the idea behind this division, and what are its advantages? Firstly, it makes it easier to locate and analyze game situations and provides a methodical, and didactic tool for quickly and precisely setting up and recreating situations. Moreover, it serves as a clear structure for designing training exercises. Players learn to attack towards the goal from their respective positions as directly as possible and through narrow corridors. Overall, we aim to create clearer playing and attacking actions, leading to greater recognition and even better spatial and game understanding.

14 But why five corridors? This primarily has to do with the half-spaces. They are crucial for penetrating behind the defensive line into depth and then successfully moving directly towards the goal. A small lateral shift from one half-space to another often creates dynamic situations, and there is always the option to continue play to the left or right or move inward or outward. Playing in the half-spaces differs in variability and dynamism from wing play and central play due to the proximity to the goal and the lower density of opponents. The game and individual situations can be analyzed more precisely using the five lanes, allowing for more detailed training planning. The zone within the penalty box half-space is also one of the most interesting and rewarding assist-zones.

How can this help players on the field? Precisely locating game situations helps players to orient themselves more consciously in their roles on the field. They develop a better sense of distances and spaces. In the offensive phase of play, this helps to recognize, create, and play out dynamic situations towards the goal. In our game philosophy, the player, regardless of their position on the field, is capable of solving situations in possession of the ball intelligently and with purpose.



PART ONE



2v1 Basics

2v1 Basic Situations & Variations



Every ball action fundamentally involves the decision of whether the ball carrier continues the action alone or with the support of a teammate. The basic situations illustrate the different formations and describe the behavior of three players: the ball carrier, an opponent, and a supporting teammate.

The objective of the 2v1 is to outplay the opponent and carry the numerical advantage into the next line. Creating 2v1 situations and subsequently making successful decisions to resolve these situations allows attacks to be executed at an appropriately high speed all the way to a goal-scoring opportunity.

The aim of the attacking team is to develop the attack. On the way forward, opponents must be consistently overcome. From the four initial 2v1 situations, various decisive actions emerge to penetrate the space behind the opponent and maintain momentum towards the goal. We distinguish four basic 2v1 situations (see fig. 20, p. 46). None of them are exactly the same, so the four basic 2v1 situations can be resolved with many variations. Some of these will be presented below.

To illustrate the variations, we have used real game situations from Manchester City as practical examples and graphically represented them. While these situations can be found on any nearby sports field, with your own team, or with your favorite team, the quality and availability of the footage, as well as the frequency, regularity, and clarity of 2v1 situations in Pep Guardiola's game philosophy, facilitated our research and clear presentation.

BASIC SITUATIONS

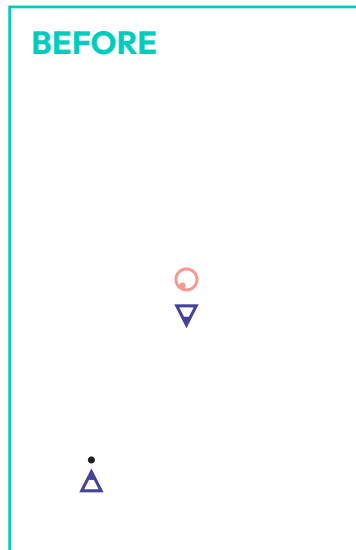
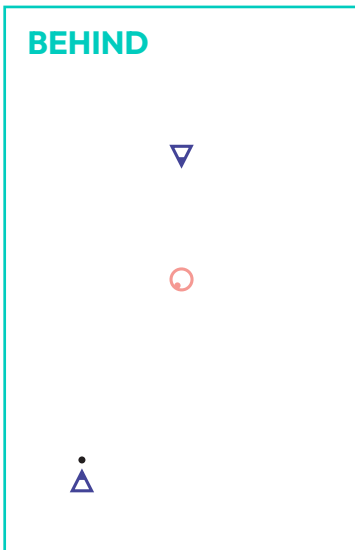
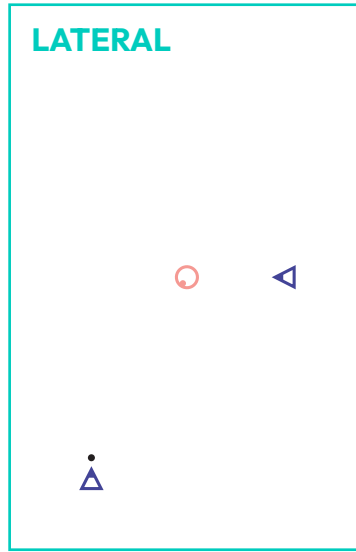
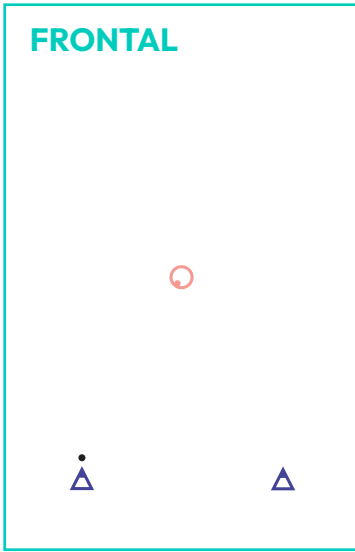


fig. 20

BASIC 2v1 SITUATION: FRONTAL – Teammate Facing Opponent

In this basic situation, two players from the attacking team are positioned on the same line, directly in front of an opponent (see fig. 21). Both attackers face in the direction of play, but are still in front of and within the field of vision of an opponent. The attacking players move toward the defender and attempt to create a dilemma for him, making a decision to break into the space behind him. Since no situation is exactly the same as another, the starting position can vary as shown below, but these two setups still fall into the category of a frontal 2v1.

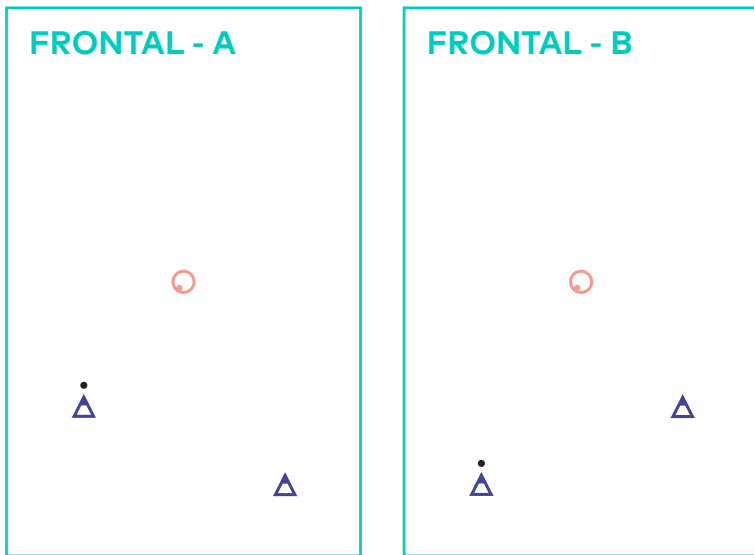
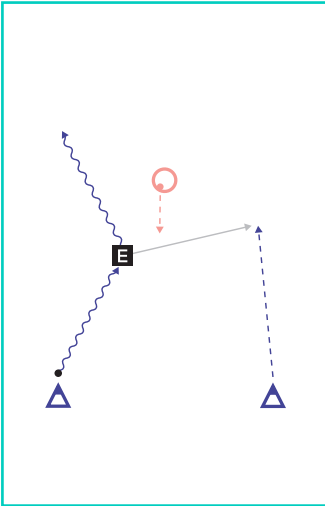


fig. 21

Variation: Dynamic Breakthrough

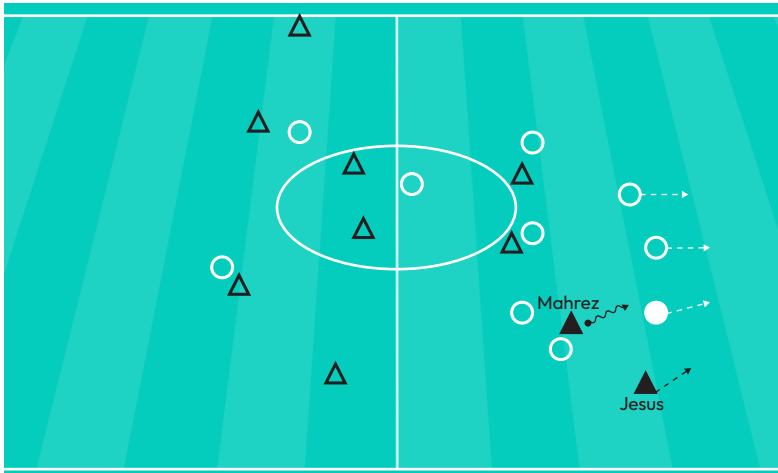


In this frontal 2v1 situation, the ball carrier is supported by a teammate positioned slightly diagonally from him. The appropriate solution depends greatly on the opponent's behavior, which can be proactive, reactive, or a mix of both.

The ball carrier has several options to choose from. He can use a passing feint to throw the defender off balance, then accelerate to dribble past him, or pass the ball in front of the defender into the path of his teammate, allowing the teammate to break through with their first touch. If the ball carrier and his teammate see the space behind the defender early, they can also

pass diagonally into that space or into the run of the teammate.

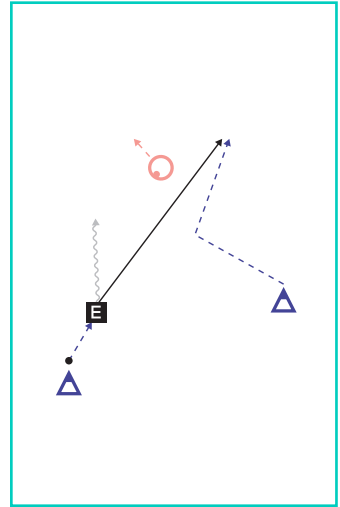
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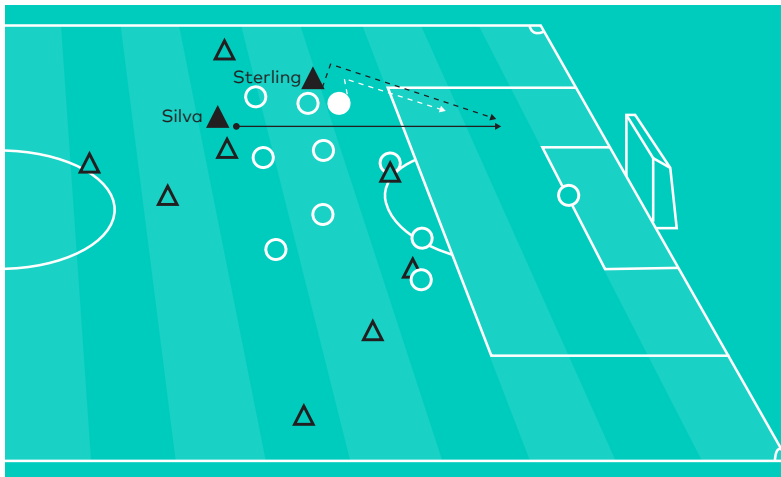
22.02.2020 - Leicester City v Manchester City - 79:34 - GOAL 0:1

Variation: Running Feint

Depending on the setup and positioning, the teammate can also take the active role, creating space and solution options. If the defender is closer to the teammate than to the ball carrier, the teammate can use clever running feints, changes in direction, or changes in speed to surprise or unbalance the defender. This can help solve the 2v1 situation and aid in making the right decision. This creates an opportunity to utilize the teammate's gained positional advantage in a targeted and dynamic manner.



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03.09.2019 - Manchester City v FC Watford - 58:46 - GOAL 3:0

PART TWO

2v1 Playing Style



Planning Funnel

**The best
training is
written by the
game**



With the planning funnel, we introduce a detailed method for developing training forms directly from the game itself (see fig. 40). Through a comprehensive analysis of the previous game, strengths and weaknesses are identified and assigned to the game phases and elements. Specific scenes related to the elements serve as a template for creating training forms. Using this filter method, various training forms (game action, game situation, game phase, and game forms) can later be derived directly from the game.

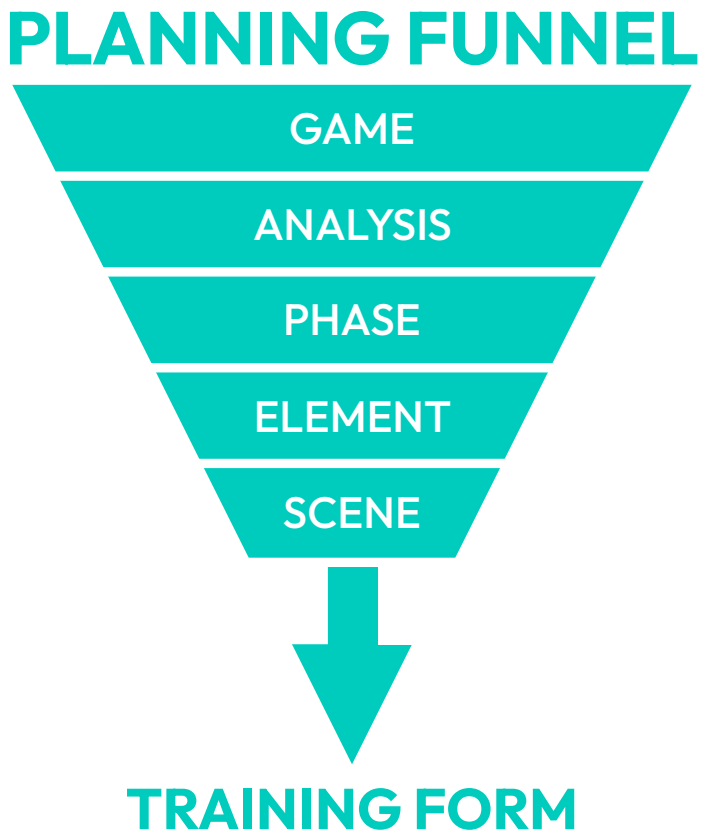


fig. 40

PART THREE



2v1 Practice

Game Elements



In the context of our philosophy, we will first provide an explanation of the tactical tasks within each specific area of the field for each game element (see fig. 50). The coaching tasks will compile all responsibilities for both coaches and players. For each game element, we will include simple, advanced, and complex training forms. The organization and procedures are described in such a way that they lead to the desired decisions, particularly in all 2v1 variations. Through these training forms, the coach expands their practical competence in guiding and facilitating player decision-making.

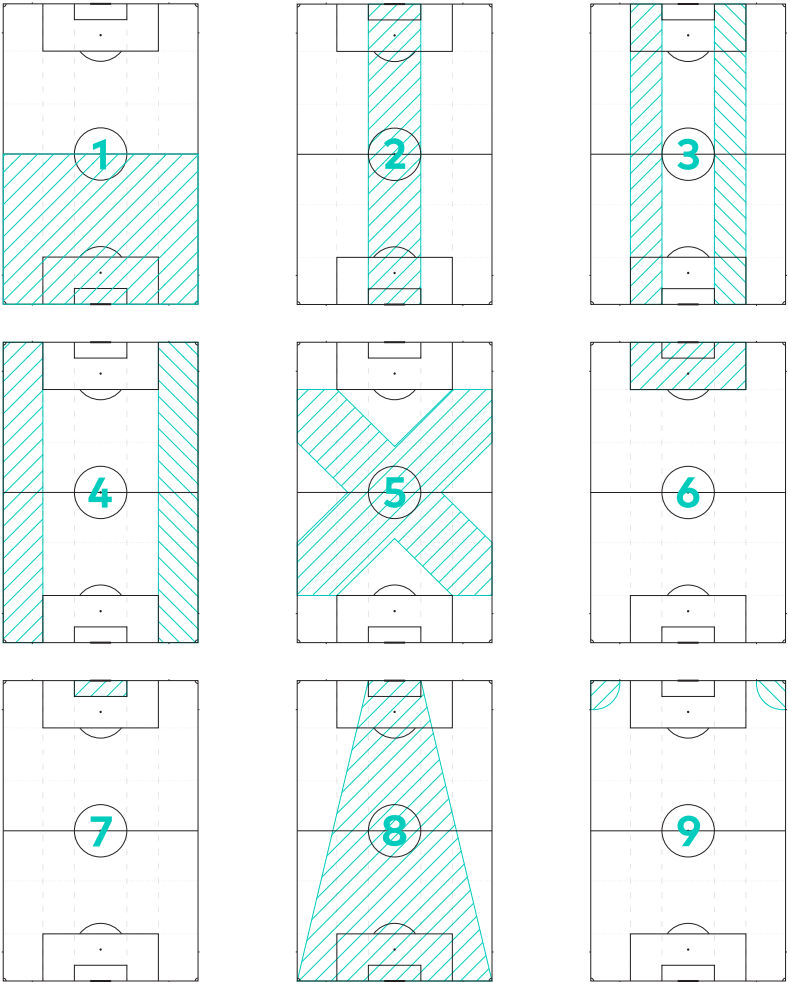


fig. 50

Counter Attack

with
Game Element
8

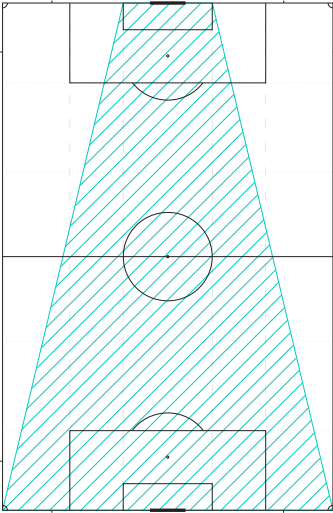


When possession is regained, parts of the opposing team are often disorganized. Offensive transition actions arise precisely at this moment. The following situations can be distinguished:

- **The ball is regained through a successful tackle.**
- **The ball is intercepted from an opponent's pass.**
- **Possession changes due to a throw-in or a game interruption.**

The aim is to exploit the opponent's temporary disorganization and penetrate dangerous areas as quickly as possible. For training follow-up actions after regaining possession, our game element COUNTER ATTACK is applied during offensive transition actions.

8. GAME ELEMENT: COUNTER ATTACK



The counter attack is a specific game element that occurs immediately after ball recovery. The team takes the initiative and leverages the element of surprise and the disorganization of the opponent's spread-out formation with an initial forward pass — a vertical pass played with one or two touches toward the opponent's goal.

There are two types of counter attacks:

Direct Counter attack: Initiated with an opening pass to the deepest possible target and quickly concluded. **Indirect Counter attack:** when a direct vertical pass is not possible, the attackers must first move into other spaces. This involves switching lanes or quickly shifting play through a supporting player.

The indirect counter evolves into a fast attack, requiring dynamic execution in small equal (1v1, 2v2, 3v3) or numerically advantageous (2v1, 3v2, 4v3) situations.

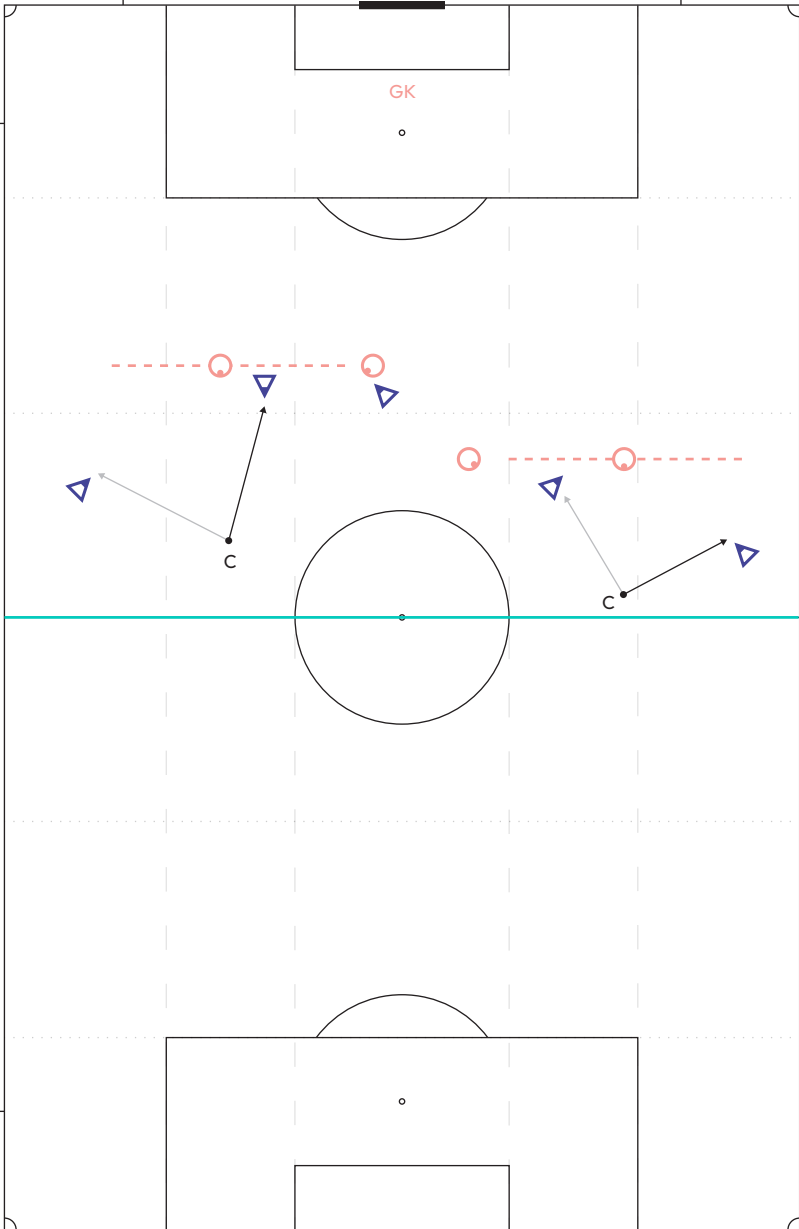
Statistical analysis shows that the highest probability of successfully concluding a counter attack is within seven seconds of ball recovery. Training exercises should simulate this time and pressure to ensure the team executes counters directly, quickly, and decisively. This requires maximum pace and absolute precision in off-the-ball movement, running paths, and passing.

Following a stoppage, a quick restart can also create counter attack-like situations against an unorganized opponent.

COACHING TASKS:

- Instead of focusing on dribbling after winning the ball, emphasis should be placed on a quick first pass into depth to bypass as many defenders as possible. Ideally, the ball can be played directly behind the defensive line, forcing opponents into foot races facing their own goal.
- Improve decision-making to enable the fastest and most purposeful counter attack initiation with the deepest possible vertical pass.
- Quick forward runs after the vertical pass to create numerical superiority.
- „Give-and-go“ in dynamic 2v1 situations with ample space and large distances, including lay-offs and overlapping runs from behind to establish an advantage.
- Encourage opposite cutting movements in vertical playing lanes with three players: the off-ball player observes their ball-near partner actively offering support.
- Use of the „third man“ to bypass defenders and defensive lines.
- In 3v2 counter situations, prioritize passing to the central player. The two other attackers should position themselves such that the defenders are aligned in the same plane between them.
- Coach players to advance into tight distances for counter attack support and quick ball recovery.
- Ensure tactical discipline with predetermined penalty-area occupation through coordinated runs.
- Make quick, decisive plays for goal-scoring opportunities during the counter attack.
- Use timed challenges to create pressure for quick solutions, such as setting a time limit for shots or introducing chasing defenders.
- Place multiple balls near the sidelines in training exercises to enable swift restarts after the ball goes out of play.

DYNAMIC COUNTER ATTACK VARIATIONS



Setup and Organization

- Set up various counter attack scenarios in one half of the field with a goal and goalkeeper.
- Mark defensive lines at different heights on both sides.
- Create a 3v2 situation on the left and a 2v2 situation on the right.
- Do not mark counter attack targets for the defensive players.

Process and Objectives

- The coach initiates the counter attack on one side with a pass.
- Set an appropriately quick time limit depending on the starting position and skill level.
- Play with offside rules.
- Defensive players focus on training counter attack defense.
- In this setup, the transition impulse is omitted, and the focus is placed solely on dynamically executing the counter attack situation.

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Variations

- Start from various ball recovery zones (first, middle, and final thirds).
- Counter attack against defensive lines positioned at varying heights between the midfield line and the edge of the penalty arc.
- Execute counter attacks in numerical equality with ample space or in slight numerical superiority within tighter corridors.
- Set time and pass limits.

Set-Pieces

with

Game Element

9



Successful set pieces can be the deciding factor in hard-fought and close matches. Approximately 30% of goals come from set pieces. By adhering more strictly to pre-set agreements, extensive training, and innovative ideas, this percentage can be further increased. Significant scoring opportunities can be created, especially from central and lateral free kicks, throw-ins in the final third, and corners.

A crucial tactical tool is the quick execution of set pieces against an unorganized opponent. The importance of set plays must be reflected in training through adequately allocated time. Elaborate ideas and increased training commitment are required to establish competition-ready routines for high-pressure moments. During the preseason, dedicated sessions or sub-sessions should be allocated specifically to this. However, in-season, merely addressing set pieces briefly in the final practice before a match is insufficient to ensure stability under the emotional and chaotic conditions of a game.

Training should occur in small groups and the full team, starting early in the week with match-like conditions, and then reinforced in the final session before the game to solidify these routines for specific scenarios. Motivating, varied, and match-oriented training should incorporate set pieces through rules to provoke action or unique conditions for set plays within game-based formats.

Hard-working players can develop into specialists, giving them a strong case for earning playing time. In youth football, several players should be trained for each specialist role. We need players who can consistently hit target areas with high accuracy on both in-swinging, and out-swinging corners. Players must also be developed as heading specialists, blockers, and strong finishers for direct attempts. Additionally, we need top-tier free-kick specialists for central or lateral positions in the attacking third. Only when precise long corners or exceptional direct free kicks pose a genuine „lethal weapon“ threat will short-corner variations become more effective, as the opponent will be equally concerned about both options.

Setup and Organization

- A goal with a goalkeeper is positioned diagonally inward on the field.
- At the same distance from the corner of the field, another diagonally positioned goal with a goalkeeper is set up along the sideline.
- The inner posts of both goals are connected to form a sideline.
- On the corner kick distance line, mark a nine-meter-wide defensive line leading to each goal and place one defender on each line.
- The neutral player acts as the corner kick taker, supported by an additional offensive player.
- One attacker and one defender are positioned near the goal area at the ball-near corner.
- The third defender is positioned at the edge of the penalty area.
- Another offensive player stands in the backfield.

Process and Objectives

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- The corner kick is executed to the respective attacker.
- Once the defensive line is bypassed through an attacking player's run or a pass, the defender on the defensive line may track back.
- After gaining possession, the defensive team is allowed to launch an attack on the opposite goal.

Variations

- Play the corner kick unexpectedly to one of the two nearby players. The direction of play is determined by the first pass.

PART FOUR

2v1 FUN- damentals in Children's Football



THE 5v5

In the subsequent age groups, the 5v5 format is mostly played indoors. Compared to the 3v3 format, the 5v5 adds an extra outfield player and a goalkeeper. With central goals, this variation provides enjoyment for players of all age groups.

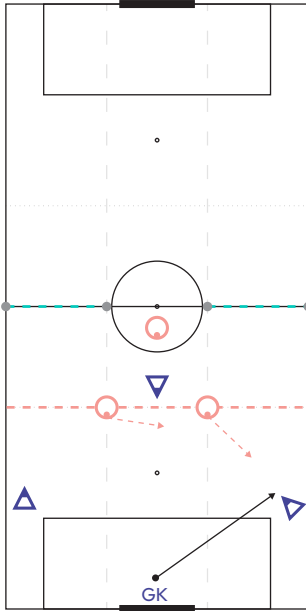
Here too, players experience numerous ball actions and touches due to the still limited number of players, as well as unconscious, learning-promoting perception and decision-making training. They also learn solutions for equal, numerical superiority, and inferiority situations. The 5v5 fosters and supports our idea of a game culture. Alongside the 3v3, it is the officially recognized competition format for the U10/U11 age group. The 5v5 field is 40 x 20 meters, with a 5 x 2-meter small-sided goal at each end. This format is highly attractive and is played in futsal even up to the adult level.

With closer observation, one can consistently recognize small overload situations due to the limited number of players, frequent possession changes, and two goals. The 2v1 scenario is often consciously utilized here.

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Compared to the later 11v11 game, the intensity and individual responsibility per player are higher. Players' perception and decision-making skills are significantly challenged, and their technique must be much more precise. Every player is automatically involved in all phases of play, and everyone on the field regularly gets opportunities to shoot at goal.

In contrast to the full-sized adult game, 5v5 allows observers to more clearly discern the playing ability of individual footballers, whereas, in the larger spaces of 11v11, one often sees only their overall effectiveness on the game. In South America, futsal or 5v5 is often described as the natural talent development program for children. This format is commonly played on the streets there.

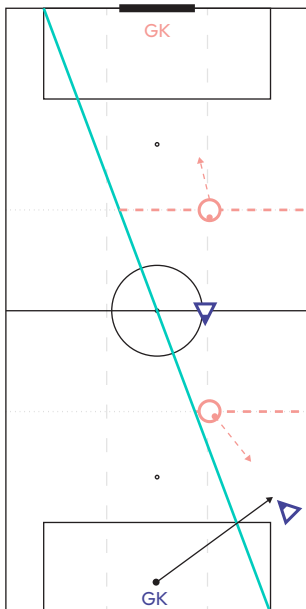


4v2 TO 2v1

Set up seven players in a 4v3 scenario on one half of the field. Mark a defensive line at the level of the final third and position two defenders on it. The third defender starts within the center circle. On the left and right sides of the midfield line, mark two 7-meter-wide gate lines. The goalkeeper initiates play with a pass to a teammate ahead of them. Upon the pass, the two defenders on the line engage in ball recovery. Once the defensive line is bypassed, the third defender is allowed to leave the center circle.

The objective for the attacking team is to dribble through one of the gate lines.

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2v1 TO 2v1

In the 5v5 field, mark a diagonal line. Both third lines serve as defensive lines, each occupied by one defender. The goals are positioned on the baseline with goalkeepers. One attacker is positioned in the defensive third, and another in the middle third of the field.

The goalkeeper initiates play with a pass to the teammate next to them. The objective is to bypass both defensive lines and score in a 2v1 situation. Additionally, play can occur simultaneously on both sides, and the setup can be expanded to a 3v2 scenario.

AUTHORS



Bernhard Peters, (born 1960) has been working in football as a sports director since 2006, initially at TSG Hoffenheim and later at Hamburger SV. Previously, he served as the national coach for the German hockey team, achieving titles such as World Champion, European Champion, and Olympic participant. Bernhard Peters has spent decades exploring the methodology and tactics of hockey and football. Since 2006, he has focused on the methodical advancement of offensive play training in professional football. Since 2021, through his company BPTC Sports, he has been supporting associations, clubs, coaches, and teams in national and international football with strategic, content-based, and operational implementation.



Andreas Schumacher, (born 1981) holds a master's degree in sports science and has worked as a football coach and coach developer in various performance and age groups since 2008 (Hamburger SV, VfB Stuttgart, St. Louis City SC, 1. FC Magdeburg). Among other roles, he served as an assistant coach in the Bundesliga for VfB Stuttgart and 2nd Bundesliga for Magdeburg. Since 2017, he has been active in high-performance environments and is regarded in the industry as an innovative and independent thinker.



Lena Schumacher, (born 1991) is a freelance communication designer operating under her brand designcolorlove. In 2015, she completed her bachelor's degree in fashion and design management with a focus on visual communication. Lena Schumacher – expert in minimalist brand design – helps ambitious coaches build a personal brand that reflects their values and sets them apart in a competitive market.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We feel deeply compelled to express our heartfelt thanks to our designer, Lena Schumacher, for the outstanding design of this book. Without Lena, this book would not exist. With her ambition, expertise, determination, and clarity, she continuously pushed us, the authors, to refine, revise, and perfect our ideas. She single-handedly gave this book its unique expression—her distinct design style. Lena’s strong personality shines through in a pivotal way!

Despite countless hours dedicated to lovingly caring for her little Jonathan, Lena managed to select all materials and colors, create every drawing of the game scenes and exercises, and take full responsibility for the overall design of the book. She constantly challenged us to rethink and improve until the very last detail.

Lena Schumacher has shaped our book project, *Two Versus One*, with unparalleled expertise, heart, and passion.

A heartfelt thank you from Bernhard and Andreas!

» The book by Bernhard Peters and Andreas Schumacher skillfully conveys the structure and importance of 2v1 situations in football with impressive depth and clarity. Coaches and practitioners of all performance levels and age groups can benefit from it. Just like we do at FC Barcelona. «

Hansi Flick

» This book is the first to structure offensive elements of the game and their training with the crucial tactical foundation of the 2v1 situation as its basis. Every coach can use this methodical support to develop offensive football. «

Julian Nagelsmann

» For the analysis and practical application of modern training for attractive, attacking football, there's nothing more systematically derived for us coaches. This book offers a brilliant template for training. It's about quick, successful decision-making in real game situations. Here, with the 2v1 as the core of the game, a training methodology close to the

Jürgen Klinsmann

» With this book, Bernhard Peters and Andreas Schumacher have created a kind of bible, where you can find and internalize every variation of the 2v1 in a highly structured and well-organized way. If I were a coach, I would definitely get this book and read it slowly and thoroughly. There's an incredible amount to learn from it. «

Oliver Bierhoff