KNVB Coaching Corner

Analyze your opportunities and threats

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As the coach of a team you have introduced a team organization/formation and the players are able to connect better and better on the field, not only during practices, but also during games. But what happens if the opponent suddenly changes its playing concept during a game? What are the opportunities and threats for your team and how does a coach prepare his team for this?

In a previous training outline we spoke about the development of a playing style. An outline with a plan showed an example of a methodical approach to improve the build-up on the opponents half. The central theme was the cooperation between the attacking midfielder and the forwards in the 1:4:3:3 team organization/formation. Imagine that the coach has worked on this concept during the various practices; the cooperation in games gets better and better. Now the following happens; the opposing team changes the team organization/formation in the second half and they switch to 1:3:4:3.

To ANALYZE

How do you deal with this as a coach? First of all it is important to figure out why the opposing coach made this change. Is it an all-or-nothing approach or is at an approach to try to force something? Let's say the team is leading 1-0 and that the team is playing well. What could be an approach to get the win in this game? The first step is to make an inventory of the opportunities and the treats. Following we show you the various opportunities and threats which may occur in offense and in defense.

TEAM FUNCTION OF ATTACK

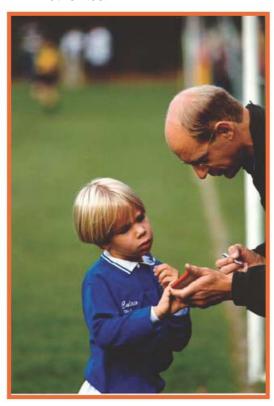
Threats:

 The build-up is disrupted immediately; defenders and midfielders are pressured. The goalkeeper plays the long ball to the forwards because the defenders (and midfielders) can't be reached (1v1).

- The pressure commences immediately when one of the defenders receives the ball. The risk occurs that the ball is lost close to your own penalty box.
- Defenders can't move up into the midfield.

Opportunities:

 The attackers are playing all 1v1 opposite the three defenders of the other team.



TEAM FUNCTION OF DEFENSE

Threats:

- The midfield is one player short.
 Three midfielders are standing opposite four midfielders on the other team.
- One defender moves into the midfield to create pressure or to restore the balance. The three remaining defenders operate 1v1 opposite the three attackers of the other team.

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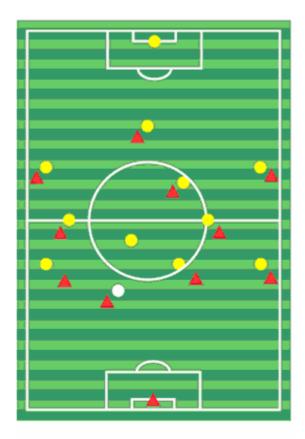


Opportunities:

- The three forwards have more chance to disrupt the build-up of the three defenders of the opponent.
- The three forwards can immediately pressure the defenders of the other team, which results in the long ball. When using the long ball the opponent can't take advantage of the man advantage situation in the midfield.

TO CHOOSE

Obviously all of this will be influenced by the qualities of your own players and that of the opposing players. Are my defenders quick enough to handle a 1v1 situation? Are they strong in the air? The same counts for the players on the opposing team. Are the defenders, in combination with the goalkeeper, strong in the buildup? Are the forwards fast and do they have good individual skills? Many more similar questions can be asked. Based on all the available information the coach now has to make a choice. One option is to adapt a new team organization/formation. The coach can also change the style of defense and/or offense. Perhaps he chooses to do both.





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