

# ATTACK UNDER PRESSURE

In the previous article we explained what a coach, whose team plays in a 1:4:3:3 formation, can do during the game if the opposing team switches from 1:4:3:3 to a 1:3:4:3 formation. The options to influence his players vary from making some substitutions to adjusting the style of play. A thorough preparation of your players for such a game situation is obviously essential. How do you prepare your team for this?

If the opposing team suddenly plays with a man advantage situation in the midfield, certain threats can originate that have to be neutralized, but also opportunities that the team should take advantage of. Players need to practice on these situations; they can experience it themselves and discover which solutions in the various situations offer the best results.

## IMPROVING THE ATTACK

In this article we will focus on the offense, in which the objective is to improve the build-up out of which scoring chances need to be created. The players need to be made clear during practice what the threats and opportunities exactly are if the opponent switches from 1:4:3:3 to 1:3:4:3. The threats are:

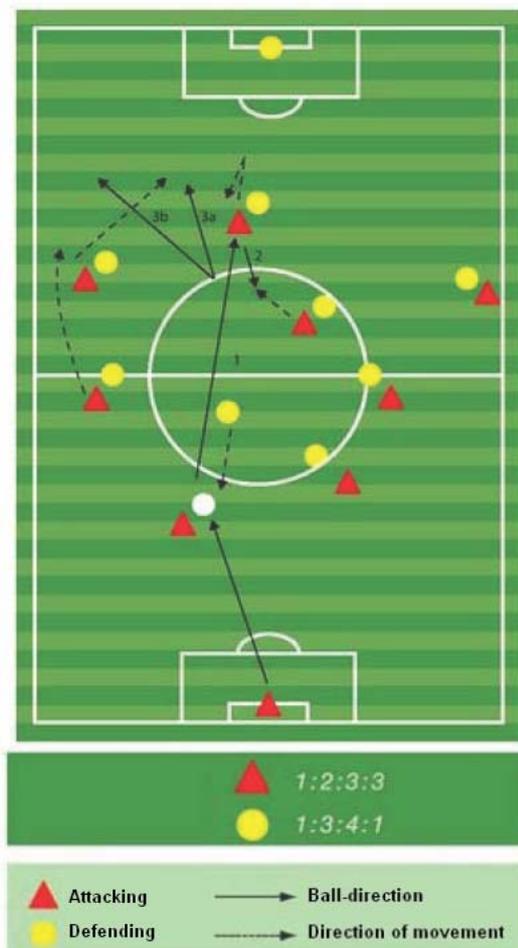
- The build-up is disrupted immediately. Defenders and midfielders are marked tightly and the goalkeeper sends the long ball to the forwards, because the defenders (and midfielders) can't be reached (one against one).
- The pressure starts immediately when a defender receives the ball. There is a risk that the ball will be lost close to the penalty area.

We consider three attackers playing one on one with three defenders a chance.

## TO NEUTRALIZE

The coach organizes his practices in such a way that the players experience what it is to play against a 1:3:4:3 formation. He

must think about the proper objective, the formation during practice (of his own team and the opposing team), the methodical steps and how the players can be influenced during the session. Obviously the abilities of his players play an important part in this. Strictly speaking he already should have conducted the whole practice over in his head several times over. As an example, we will show a training exercise that is focused on improving the co-operation between the midfielders and the attackers after a long ball from the goalkeeper or a defender (see drawing). With this exercise the players are practicing how to neutralize the first threat that was described above and in which at the same time the action is aiming to create chances (which is the purpose of a build-up).



In this training exercise the coach focuses on instructing:

- The players with the ball (pass the ball in front of your teammate so he has the possibility to immediately pass the ball on, pass the ball once the contact with the attacker has been established, and take your opponent on when you are facing him in a one v one situation etc.).
- The players without the ball (free yourself from your direct opponent, take advantage of the space created by teammates, move into space “in the back of” (behind) an opponent, so he loses eye contact with you).
- The opposing team (first back off (low pressure), then pressure on the player with the ball, immediate pressure on the players with the ball, take away all the passing options for the player with the ball, etc.).



### METHODICAL STEPS

The coach can increase the intensity by asking the opposing team to put more pressure on the goalkeeper and the defenders of the team he is coaching. Eventually one of the opponent's midfielders can move forward towards the “second” defender, which would result in the goalkeeper having to pass the long ball.