

2c) Building Up Play and Attacking from the Centre When the 2 Opposition Forwards Force Play Inside

The central area of the pitch is the most crucial - if a player receives with time and space on the ball in the centre, he will have many options available. A defensively well organised team would usually prevent the opposition from achieving this, however, sometimes teams have a strategy to squeeze the play and force the ball towards the inside. In this situation (shown in diagram below), the 2 opposition forwards stay wide and leave No.6 to receive and move forward with the ball.

Even in this situation, the attacking team should be prepared to break through the pressure.

Finding Passing Lanes and Available Space when Play is Forced Inside



No.6 receives and moves forward as the two blue forwards (9 & 10) stay wide. The three passing options for the player in possession (6) are the through passes towards the midfielders between the lines (7, 10 or 11), which could lead to them receiving and turning to attack in the opposition's half.

Alternatively, as the blue team's wingers (7 & 11) converge to narrow the passing lanes, more space is available for the wing backs (2 & 3) near the sidelines. The more the blue team's wingers converge to block the passing lanes, the passes towards the No.7 and No.11 become almost impossible, but the space near the sidelines becomes bigger for an easy aerial pass into the available space.

Playing a Through Pass in the Centre When the Opposition Wingers Stay Wide



This is an alternative situation to the previous diagram.

If the opposition wingers (7 & 11) stay wide to restrict the space near the sidelines (rather than converge into the centre), the passing lanes get wider and a through pass is made much easier.

In the diagram example, No.6 is able to play a through pass to No.7 who turns. This takes all 4 opposition midfielders out of the game.

It is possible to create a 6 v 4 situation for the attack if the wing backs are in advanced positions.

Opposition Full Back Moves Forward to Stop Midfielder Receiving Between the Lines, but Space is then Created in Behind



In this variation of the previous diagram, the opposition's left back (3) moves forward to mark No.7 and prevent him from receiving and turning.

Although this blocks off No.7 as a good passing option, the left back's movement forward creates space behind him.

The right wing back (2) makes a run forward to receive the aerial pass in the available space.

In this situation we could have a 5 v 4 situation for the attack.

SESSION 1



**Based on Tactics of
Marcelo Bielsa**

Building Up Play and Attacking from the Centre

SESSION FOR THIS TACTICAL SITUATION (3 PRACTICES)

1. Reading the Tactical Situation to Play the Right Pass When Building Up Play from the Centre



Objective: Practice building up play and attacking from the centre (you can adapt this to different formations).

Description

Using 2/3 of a full pitch, we mark out 1 central area, 2 side areas, 2 blue mannequins and 3 mini goals as shown. We have 7 white players (+GK) who all start on the white cones and 2 blue wingers who start on the blue cones.

The practice starts as soon as the goalkeeper receives the long pass from the coach. We are practicing Marcelo Bielsa's tactics, so at this point the white players adjust from their 4-2-3-1 positions to form a 1-3-3 (from the 3-3-3-1 described in the analysis within this chapter).

The central midfielder (6) drops back, receives from the goalkeeper and moves forward. The white midfielders who can be potential receivers (7 & 10) move inside the central area. No.6 has to read the reaction of the blue winger/s and make the best decision.

Scenario 1: If the blue winger stays wide to control the space, the correct choice is a through pass between the winger and a mannequin (representing central midfielders). The white midfielder (No.7 in diagram) can either receive, turn and pass into the mini goal himself or play a first time pass to No.10.

Restriction: The midfielders must receive, turn and pass within the central area.

Scenario 2



Scenario 2: This second diagram shows the decision making when the blue winger (11) moves inside the central area to create a compact midfield.

Instead of attempting a through pass, No.6 plays an accurate aerial pass for the forward run of the wing back (No.2 in diagram). The wing back then receives and passes into the small goal.

Restriction: The long pass to the wing back must be directed and received within the yellow side area.

Coaching Points

1. Players need to quickly read the tactical situation and demonstrate the correct decision making.
2. There needs to be synchronised movements, good ball reception, turning and combination play within limited space and accurate passing.

MARCELO BIELSA

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