



BASED ON RSC ANDERLECHT FILOSOPHY

# PLAYING FOOTBALL IN AN EIGHT A SIDE FORMATION

GAME MODEL



LITHUANIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION | THE CENTRAL CIRCLE



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A man with short dark hair, smiling, wearing a black suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is standing in front of a football stadium with rows of yellow and red seats. A white microphone stand is visible in the background.

## INTRODUCTION

Launching of the Anderlecht program gives a possibility for all academies to follow the same methodology, and LFF will do the monitoring.

We want a clear structure and a technical director to shape the whole model. Each coach will work according to the overall philosophy of the RSC Anderlecht Vision.

Actively we working in order to reform the entire structure of Lithuanian football, from education of coaches to national teams.

Edgaras Stankevičius  
Secretary General at Lithuanian Football  
Federation





## A. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RSC ANDERLECHT GLOBAL GAME MODEL

This global Game Model was drafted to inform, to standardize, to lead, but not to dictate. Creativity, inventiveness and development should never be restricted in youth football. This Game Model must therefore be a constant incentive for “updating and sharing knowledge”. It must form a guideline for leading young TALENT to professional football. The philosophy behind it take full account of club history, culture, location, competition, supporters and financial scope.

## B. THE GENERAL IDEA (OR THE RSCA TATTOO)

The general football idea is based on “having the ball”.

The advantages of ball possession are numerous:

- Team is proactive instead of reactive
- Team is taking initiative
- Team is dictating (forward) direction and off intention of the game
- Team is dictating and influencing pace of the game
- Every player on the ball becomes a ‘playmaker’
- Mental advantage by having the ball than by chasing him
- Bigger football education value and attractivity player/supporters
- Statistically possession delivers more winning games

“If you play based on possession, you don’t have to defend, because there is only one ball” (Johan Crujff)



## C. PLAYING 8 A SIDE BASED ON GAME MODEL 8 <> 8 RSC ANDERLECHT

### 1. PLAYER PROFILE

Each training session the attention of the coach and the content of the exercises have to focus on:

- First control (player and ball in movement)
- To drive and progress
- To eliminate (1 <> 1)
- To pass and / or shoot
- To score (and celebrate)
- To recover the ball **with fast transition B+ → B- and B- → B+**

### 2. ANIMATION, STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES

- Animation 8 <> 8: in a double diamond shape (1-3-1-3)
  - Position 1: goalkeeper
  - Position 2: lateral defender
  - Position 3: central defender
  - Position 5: lateral defender
  - Position 7: right winger
  - Position 10: central midfielder
  - Position 11: left winger
  - Position 9: deep striker





- No flexibility BUT ...
- Versatility with Multiposition (formation) en Best Position (international tournaments)
- Attacking, creative and dominant football based on “efficient and progressive ball possession (70% | DNA)
- Properly start up from behind through fast recovery of goalkeeper (mostly via lateral or central defender)
- High speed of execution and dictating / influencing tempo of the game (faster – slower)
- Players (audacious) taking initiative on every position
- Dribbling 1 <> 1 (elimination protection, orientation) stays a priority in the 5 <> 5 / 8 <> 8
- No tackling but focus on anticipation or interception and negative press
- Never adapting to the strength of the opponent
- A fluent shift between defence and attack and between attack and defense (transition)
- Dividing the pitch into 2 zones
- Creating and finishing to score and to win (challenge strike!)



### 3. ANIMATION IN B+

#### Start up from behind (with and without pressure)

- By central defender (3)
- By lateral defenders (2) and (5)
- By strikers (7), (9) and (11)

#### Offensive strategies

- Around opposing block
  - Flank initiatives < dribbling by (7) and (11)
  - Late crosses – Normal – Early
- Through opposing block
  - Infiltrations with ball
  - Short and fast combinations
  - (Last) subtle passes (cueing, Pic Methods)
  - Distance shootings
- Above opposing block
- Finishing by a goal

#### Collective approach

- ☞ Don't create automatisms ...
- ☞ To develop connections between 2, 3, 4 and 5 players

**Individual approach**

- ☞ With ball (looking for accuracy with effective decision making)
  - Passing (diagonal, turned forward, in intervals, eliminating)
  - Infiltrations
  - Dribbling (protection, orientation, eliminating)
  - Shooting
- ☞ Without ball (physic and smart abilities)
  - To create space (width, length)
  - To move (out of marking, free space, give and go, ...)
  - Notion of timing and space awareness

**4. ANIMATION IN B-****High defensive block****Medium defensive block**

- Formation defensive block B+ / B-
  - Distance block width and length
- Sliding movement of block
- Active pressure
  - To defend by advancing
  - Out of zone
  - Negative pressure
- Removing the ball (no tackle)
  - Ball's interception
  - Defensive duel
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> ball

**Low defensive block****Collective approach**

- ☞ Don't create automatisms ...
- ☞ To develop connections between 2, 3, 4 and 5 players

**Individual approach**

- ☞ Without ball (physic, mental and smart abilities)
  - Tireless player (physic)
  - Engagement, combative, conqueror (mental)
  - Position games, anticipation, communication (smart)

**5. ANIMATION B+ TO B-**

- Player who lost the ball try immediately to recover without tackling or committing fault
- Other players quickly come back in the defensive block

**6. ANIMATION B+ TO B-**

- After recovery, player doesn't lose the ball < dribble or protection (keeping)
- Player tries to see and has the first intention to quickly play forward



## 7. SET PIECES IN B+ AND B-

Little specific attention is paid to the execution of set pieces on training. We believe that these special skills (kicking to goal and defending our goal) are extensively practiced by the players in their free time. Kicking to goal is an easy to simulate exercise in many circumstances (school, garden, ...).

### B+

- Players quickly restart the game by a pass to free player or dribbling (competition)
- Thrown in by drive, dribble or pass (no hands)
- *Players shoot to the goal (indirect free kicks) if not far away from the goal (only tournament)*

### B-

- Players quickly prevent shooting with a wall (indirect free kicks)
- Players close the centre of the goal (corners)
- Players take position between goal and opponent

## D. CREATING OUR OWN FOOTBALL IDENTITY

In order to further develop and deepen our own football philosophy - based on the RSC Anderlecht philosophy and football culture - we have chosen to deepen our football identity through a number of well-considered basic principles and playing methods – modules for each formation (from 5<>5 to 11<>11). These basic principles have been specifically developed per formation 5<>5, 8<>8 and 11<>11. For formation 8:8 specifically the BASIS ELEVEN principles have been developed together with the play mode modules building from the back and defending. These are our LFF translations of RSCA's GAME MODEL 8 <> 8. They have been developed specifically to stimulate Lithuanian individuality and to create certain uniformity in everyday practice on the field.

### 1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

Contemporary football is characterised by a lot of movement and a number of changes of position within a (large) space. In today's and tomorrow's football, the trick is to make optimal use of the spaces when owning the ball so that, on one hand, the ball owner has and retains the necessary space (during the free running of the other players and his own running action), but on the other hand, after the ball has been played, the player continues to move intelligently so that the newly created playing possibilities are maximised. Because a football situation is rarely ideal, a player should always be able to control the situation individually in case of ball possession (dribble < ball retention). On the other hand, the trick is to consciously make the spaces smaller in case of loss of ball, so that the opponent has to play under pressure and the chance of conquering the ball is much higher.

A number of basic principles should help our players to gain (spatial) insight into the complex game of football and give them the opportunity to solve difficult situations that arise during the game more easily and with more chances of success. As LFF we need to stimulate our youth players in their insightful ability to take a first cautious step in our own way of playing - development at this age.

### 2. BASIC ELEVEN PRINCIPLES

Our BASIS ELEVEN (EF) principles concern objectives for insightful ability for the final phase within a 8<>8 formation. Training in ball possession is of course essential. They apply to every player regardless of his position

on the field and these 11 principles all aim to teach our players **in ball possession and ball possession** to deal better with the space offered to them or to help them individually create space for themselves in ball possession or to take space away from them in case of loss of ball. We try to incorporate these principles as much as possible in our training sessions without adding a lot of theory. Let the experience be the best teacher.

### 1. Ball possession < As an Individual < Creating and Maintaining Space

**HF01** "THE GO PRINCIPLE" (action after action): ball owner becomes free man.

THE GO PRINCIPLE tries to persuade our players of the reflex to think along with the new ball owner in a solution-focused way after the pass has been played. This can be done in the following way:

- 1:1 form in which a second task follows immediately after a goal

The final result is that players learn to do the most desired run without the ball after the action. This can be done in all directions, but rarely be done towards the ball owner. This will reduce his space.

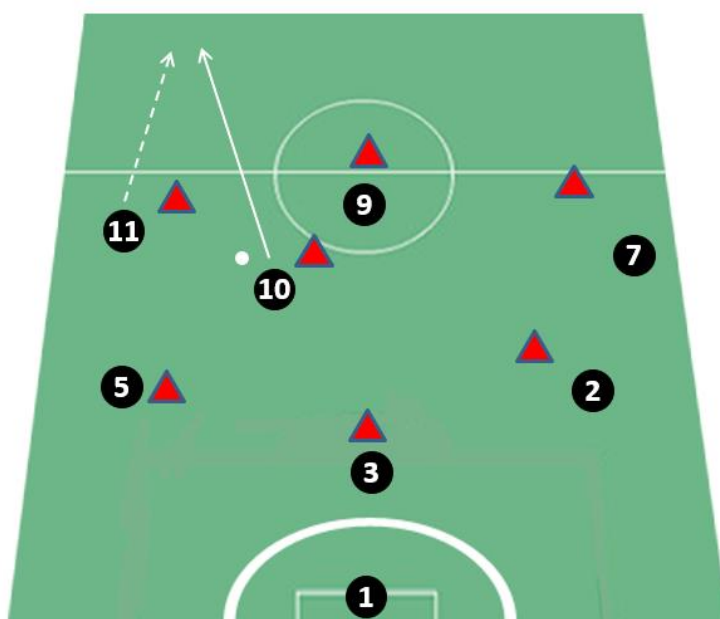
**BE02** "SEND A MESSAGE WITH THE BALL PRINCIPLE": away from the pressure zone or ball in space.

Usually the player with the ball oversees the situation and thus the space better than the person who gets the ball. We ask the player with the ball to "look over the ball". If he succeeds, he is able to give a "message" with the ball. Concretely, by this we mean that he can take care of it:

- that the action takes place on the side where the opponent is weakest and where there is most space
- that the ball is consciously played in space in such a way that we can put/keep a fellow player walking and we can increase or decrease the tempo.

If the player is free, he always makes sure that the player can oversee as much of the playing field as possible after his assumption, so that more solutions are possible. Processing in the exercise material is possible via:

- Having the defender in the back choose a position after which the attacker plays his fellow player over the right side.
- Fit with (continuous) play on the furthest foot





**BE03 "THE SHADOW PRINCIPLE":** The free man asks for the ball and comes out of the shadow.

Core idea of the principle (sun versus shadow principle): the player at the ball is equal to the sun (player with ball = sun). And in the world as we know it, there is only one sun. Just like there is only one ball on the field when we play a football match.

*As for the freeman who "wants to play in the sun":*

- The ideal position in relation to the sun is in the shadow of the opponent who prevents you from getting the ball (who cuts off the passing line). When you actively ask for the ball, you offer yourself just outside the opponent's shadow in such a way that you stand in the sunlight for a while (to the left or right of the shadow). In that way, your teammate will be able to "discover" you, so he can play the ball towards you.
- If you get the sun's rays directly from the ball on you for too long, you will be too close to the sun for too long and you will certainly get sunburned or you will stand still for too long and you will be very easy to defend.
- If you always remain completely in the shade, this is a sign that an opponent prevents the other player at the ball from noticing or seeing you! So come out of the shadows at the appropriate time!
- If you are too close to the sun, your teammate probably has far too little space around him.

*As far as the ball owner is concerned, "who gets too hot when he has been in the sun for too long":*

- There is only one person on the team who can be the sun (the one with the ball). You can only be the sun for a short period of time in a row, otherwise you will burn up. After giving the pass, you pass on the property (to be the sun for a short time) to a teammate. However, you will then make sure again that you are (just) far enough away from the ball in order not to burn it. You have to remain available to receive the ball, so that you cannot freeze to death.

The above is a child-friendly way of learning to "get the ball played between the lines". This should result in players learning not to present themselves by going into the ball but by running left, right or away from the ball from a position between the lines.



The SHADOW principle requires a strong focus on the environment.

After all, the environment variables determine the progress of the game, not what a player (or worse: what a coach/parent) had in mind for the situation. The ultimate attempt is to let the players focus on the environment (fellow players and opponents) and to adjust their actions accordingly.

**BE04 “THE PRINCIPLE OF “HOLDING ON”:** ball keeper keeps the ball on purpose through an individual action (with a focus on ball retention).

As stated above, a player must at all times be able to control the situation individually when in possession of the ball:

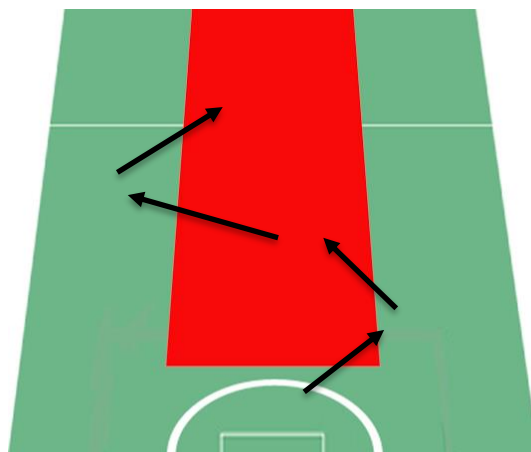
- Player shields ball well from opponent and calmly looks for a solution to the ball
- A dribble is not used to make a 1:1 difference in depth, but to ensure possession of the ball in the team, because no one is playable.

**BE05 “THE 5 SECONDS – PRINCIPLE”:** ball keeper plays the ball quickly on resumption of play.

Rather, in youth football, a resumption of play is seen as the moment for playing "a long ball". The opponent almost automatically walks backwards as a team and always lets players "loose". This short period of time (3 to 5 seconds) should be actively used to quickly play the ball to the free man (see previous principles!) in order to take full advantage of our opponent's disorganisation.

**BE06 “THE RED CARPET – PRINCIPLE”:** the ball owner plays the ball at an angle to his team-mate.

A basic rule in the build-up of the game is that the ball must always be played with passes that are played at an angle to the other players.



The "Red Carpet" is an extension of the (invisible) small goal area and runs from goal to goal. The visualisation principle for playing in and out via the red carpet is ideal in order to achieve a smooth ball circulation, to be able to easily change the playing side (changeover pass), to put our wing-players in the most ideal position to be able execute an individual action and to be able to make triangles.

If the ball is played in a straight line:

- the ball is predictable and easy to intercept
- there will be no depth in the game (same place - same zone)
- the other player usually has to control the ball with his back to the opponent.

Of course, there are game situations in which a straightly lined pass is possible:

- Send the wing into the depth with a pass along the sideline if there is room in the back of the opponent's position 2 or 5.
- When a player can give a handball to the additional 3rd man.

**BE07** **“THE 9 METER – PRINCIPLE”**: ball keeper expressly deals with the free space when restarting play. The situation is described by the trainer using the term "9".

Of course, the 5 seconds principle does not always come as a surprise. At a certain point, our opponent becomes smarter and emphatically redirects himself during a resumption of play into losing the ball.

Our 9 meter principle responds to this new situation. We teach our players that a game resumption also creates a unique situation in football. It is the only situation where the ball is not "loose" and where an opponent has to stand at a distance (9 meter principle) from the ball. We can stand with 2 players close to the ball on which - a bit sinning on the Icarus principle but still following the principle of action after action - a player briefly taps the ball to a fellow player and immediately looks for free space. The principle of "switching on" and more specifically the conscious working with overlaps, where a third player serves as support player, is ideal to play out in this situation.

## 2. Ball Loss < As Individual < Self Determining Space

**BE08** **“THE PRESS – PRINCIPLE”**: when losing a ball, everyone thinks "ahead" and defends the space to the front.

The first individual principle in ball loss is the individually forcing forward defence of our players. It is actually a logical follow-up to our footballing choices in ball possession in which we want to be dominant. We also want to impose our will in ball loss, so we don't choose "action" for reaction. Learning how to read the game in ball loss requires playing on "interception", including our goalkeeper!

**BE09** **“THE LOCK – PRINCIPLE”**: in ball loss, the playing angles of our opponent in ball possession are closed.

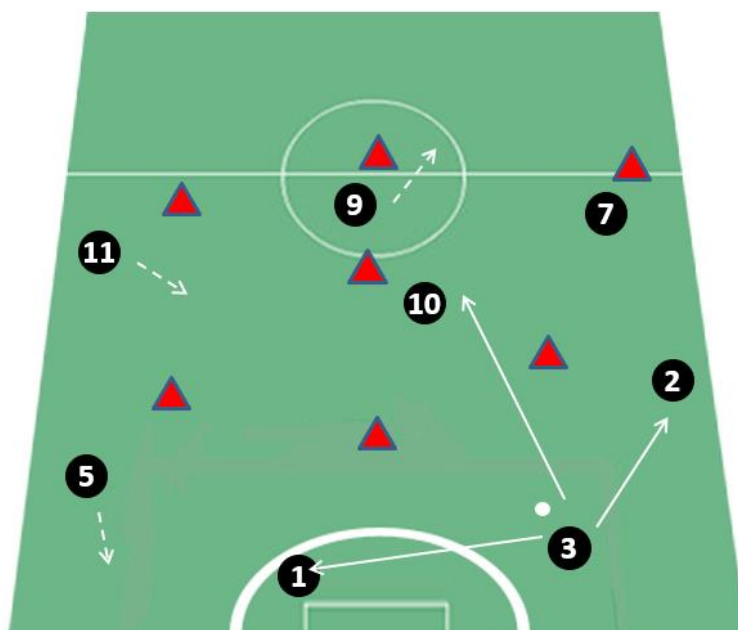
The second (and last) individual principle in ball loss is the choice to close the playing corners. This is also a logical sequel to our footballing choices in ball possession in which we want to be dominant. Learning to read the game well in losing the ball calls for excluding as many pass options as possible for our opponent, in such a way that we can regain possession of the ball. First and foremost, we take every choice for depth out of our opponent's play (unless a kick in the depth is out of powerlessness).

## 3. Ball Loss < As Team + Individual < Make Space Small

**BE10** **“THE "TEAM" – PRINCIPLE”**: When we're in ball possession, we try to make the space as big and as wide as possible.

It's easier to play football in a large space (the field) than in your living room. When we as a team are in possession of the ball, we try to make maximum use of the pitch by making it as big and as wide as possible. If too many players get close to the ball (or if we all get into the ball), we also bring opponents closer to the ball. We must avoid that at all times. Attention: also the space towards our own goal (first play backwards to build forward in a targeted way) must invariably be used.





#### 4. Ball Loss < As Team + Individual < Make Space Small

**BE11** “THE SMALL – PRINCIPLE”: If we lose the ball, we as a team try to make the pitch as small as possible.

There is only one ball in the game. We stay as alert as possible when we don’t have the ball and the whole team moves in the direction of the ball. With this, we ourselves determine the room for the others (opponent).

- The opponent who is furthest from the ball is left uncovered. He is the least “dangerous”.
- If the ball is on its way, all of our team must be on the move.

#### 5. General Underlying Basic Principles

##### 1. Ball possession

- open wide

Open wide: as much space as possible is created across the width when our flank players open up to the sidelines. The opponent is obliged to defend more widely, so that there is also more space in the center of the field.

- Open deep

Keeping and bringing depth: the more depth we can bring, the more space is created for the attackers to break loose, for the midfielders to combine in the midfield and for our wingbacks to find the open space.

- Infiltration with ball: Lead or dribble: Challenge

"Challenge" when leading or dribbling means that the player at the ball, wants to pass the opponent with a dribble or to free a teammate.

- creating a goal opportunity through an individual action

By eliminating one or more opponents by means of a dribble, the player at the ball can have a goal chance. A targeted dribble is needed to make sure no one comes back after shaking the opponent off.

- Finishing a goal chance as quickly as possible

The player at the ball kicks to goal in 1 time or after a short accurate ball hit if he is close to the goal. The opponent cannot block the shot.

- create space for oneself and make use of it

In order to get out of the opponent's cover and thus be playable, the player moves through which he obliges his direct opponent to choose between following (= cover) or holding position (= stay). If the opponent does not follow, the player becomes playable. If the opponent does follow, then the player as soon as possible a movement in the opposite direction, i.e. 'unhooking and then going deep' or 'go deep and then unhook. This means that the player first moves away from the ball and then towards the ball or vice versa. The opponent reacts to the first movement and is subsequently taken at an opposing footing. by the 2nd movement performed in the opposite direction. At this time, the player also playable. So the player makes a pre-action to get away from his direct opponent and playable.

The movement towards the ball is not straight towards the ball but diagonal so that at the time of the ball takeover the turning in to target counterparty is easier.

- create space for fellow player and make use of it

We not only move to become playable ourselves but also to create space for a fellow player.

- no 'stupid' ball loss

We meet this TEAMTACTIC the least. We are convinced that mistakes make a part of development and that experience is the best teacher. Certainly at this age we must have the guts so we don't get scared soccer players who only dare to play a ball to the back.

- skip one or more lines when passing (deep or lateral)

The best diagonal passes are those where:

- a player in the same line is skipped from the center to the flank : e.g. (3) to (5)
- one or more lines are skipped from the centre to the flank: e.g. (3) to (11) or from the flank to the centre, e.g. (2) to (9).

Of course, this will be more the case with U13 than with U10 ... The ability to give such a pass is more given to a 12-year-old than to a 10-year-old.

- infiltration at the right time

"Space" means that there are no or few opponents in that zone. By sliding into that space a numerically advantageous situation arises there. The infiltration must also take place at the right time in function of being able to get the pass in favorable conditions. If the player's infiltration is too early stakes, this can provoke a reaction from the opponent that makes it impossible for the ball to play in good conditions. be played. If the player deploys his infiltration too late, he may e.g. not get enough support from the player. who received the ball.

- infiltration without ball: give & go

After the pass, the passerby moves immediately and quickly towards the goal. The player benefits from the fact that his direct opponent is distracted by the pass and loses sight of him for a moment. If the ball is played back we get a 1-2 movement.

- infiltration with ball

An infiltration with the ball at the foot towards the goal leads to a gain in ground while the team remains in possession of the ball.

## 2. Ball loss

- positive pressing on the ball owner

Pressure must always be put on the person who has the ball by a player who positions himself between the ball and the own purpose. The closer to the goal, the more aggressive the pressure on the ball owner. In order for a player to be able to keep up the pressure to move, a compact block must be formed and the player must move to the pass receiver as soon as the pass leaves.

The first purpose of putting pressure is to prevent the ball carrier from giving a dangerous pass in depth. It is not a must for the player who puts the pressure to recover the ball.

- Never lose the duel

The player making the challenge does so not only to prevent the dangerous depth pass but also for the purpose of taking the ball, if possible.

Favourable situations for taking the ball arise when the ball is too far from the opponent's foot (e.g. bad passing or bad dribbling). If the player decides to take the ball by tackle, he must be 100% sure to have the ball. In the RSCA vision tackling is not being promoted.

- Do not get eliminated by an individual action in the **zone of the truth**

In the zone of the truth, the player at the ball must be attacked as quickly as possible by his direct opponent while the player avoids being eliminated by a dribble and the player at the ball gets the opportunity to have a shot a goal. The distance to the ball owner is as short as possible (= aggressive pressing) to prevent him from shooting on goal. However, that player should not be attacked too close, so the defender can be easily passed by a dribble.

The ideal distance for the 1-1 duel is 2m. The player will not be surprised by a feint by looking closely at the ball and not turning the body when the ball owner pretends to be shooting.

- Blocking off goal attempt

In the zone of the truth, it is absolutely necessary to prevent an opponent from shooting to goal. Every kick directional target may result in a goal.

The direct opponent of the player wishing to shoot to goal must be very close to the ball at the moment of the kick. This allows the target attempt to be blocked.

- close

If the opponent has the ball, the team tries to limit the real leeway for the opponent. The restricting the scope for manoeuvre means that the other party is prevented from building up the to enter the truth zone.

- equal distance

The distances between the players are about 5 to 10 metres, which means that it is always possible to put pressure on the owner of the ball and that it is more difficult to make a dangerous depth pass. These distances are reduced depending on whether the player is closer to the ball, the ball is closer to the goal or is more centrally located.

- negative pressing on the ball carrier

A switched-off player puts pressure on the back of the player at the ball. E.g. (11) puts pressure in the back of infiltrating right flank defender of the other party. Such pressure obliges the player at the ball to quickly decide and play what can result in ball loss.

- mutual coverage by closest fellow player

A good coverage on the team-mate attacking the ball owner allows the ball to be held diagonally deep. be played .



- a sliding goalkeeper

The goalkeeper takes over the task of the classic libero. The goalkeeper plays as far away from the goal line as possible which increases his range of action within which he can intercept a depth pass. As far as possible means he won't be surprised by a possible lob ball. The goalkeeper's position depends of the height of the last line. The higher that last line, the further ahead the goalkeeper is.

- duel never lose: never let yourself be eliminated

The player entering the duel does so not only to prevent the dangerous pass but also with the aim of taking the ball away if possible.

Favourable situations for taking the ball away arise when the ball is too far from the opposing team's foot (e.g. poor ball acceptance of pass or poor dribble). If the player decides to take the ball away by tackle, he must be 100% sure to have the ball.

- Trying to win the game at 100% certainty

Favourable situations to take the ball away, which occur when the ball is too far from the foot (poor control or dribble). Player only chooses a tackle at 100% certainty. In a tackle the player will try to ball possession to come.

- recover the ball by interception

By a correct and aggressive pressing on the ball holder and by a compact block formation, the player gets under pressure on the ball and playing possibilities are limited. This creates the chance of bad passes. The players in the block are always attentive to intercept such a bad pass.

If a player manages to intercept a bad pass, the situation is favorable to counter-attack. play because the player who intercepts the pass has the game in front of him and there are usually 2 opponents. are eliminated, i.e. the passer and the opponent to whom the ball went.

### 3. OUR PLAYING STYLE - MODULES

The ability to play football and the vista (ability to see things clearly) are linked to the main moments in football on the basis of game intentions: ball possession, loss of ball and the transition.

- Ball possession:
  - Building from the back
  - Attacking
    - In our 5 <> 5 module this is not dealt with separately. A good build-up from the back ensures that our players receive passes higher on the pitch in the most comfortable way. Then the 1:1 action has to be stimulated, next to the creativity of the player! At all times we must avoid "robot football" in this formation.
- Loss of ball:
  - Defending

The game intention "transition" is not specifically used as a module in this model. This does not mean that the transition is not or less important to us. The opposite is true! The moment the ball changes camp seems to become more and more decisive in contemporary football. The training of the transition moment is therefore continuously dealt with. After all, in any form with other players and opponents, one can speak of transition moments.





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