

# Attacking Against Teams which Defend in the Low Zone



Spain scored 37 of their 86 goals (mostly from 2009-12) in this period against opponents who defended in the low zone. In these situations the opposition would have many players in the low zone (minimum 8) and all of them would be behind the ball.

*In this situation Spain would score in 5 different ways:*

## 1. Attacking Inside the Penalty Area

In this situation Spain have pushed the opposition back into their own penalty area and attack with many players in and around the penalty area. The ball is played into the box with good passing or dribbling from one player. The player who receives a pass inside the box works with high quality and speed (under pressure of time and space) to finish the attack.

## 2. Attacking in and Around the Penalty Area (*combination play or passing in behind the defensive line*)

In this situation the opposition also have many players on the edge of the box and Spain found solutions in 2 different ways.

1. Maintain possession and at the correct time use quick combination play on the edge of the box (usually between 3 players) that usually included different variations of a third man run.
2. The second way was to eliminate the 2 lines of the opposition (midfield and defence) with a technical pass in behind the defensive line into an area where another player has moved into space (exploiting this to finish the attack).

## 3. Shooting from Outside of the Penalty Area

The Spanish team would work very well to maintain possession in the opposition half and then create a situation for one player to be in a good position near the penalty area in the centre. This player then shoots from outside the box, finishing the attack.

#### **4. Attacking from the Flanks**

When the opposition had many players in the centre of the pitch, Spain would use the full width of the pitch. They would often switch play from side to side to change the point of attack and exploit the weak side of the opposition.

In this case, depending on the opposition they were playing, Spain would use crosses with a mid-height (1) or low crosses (2).

When crosses with a mid-height were used, the opposition were positioned on the edge of the penalty area and the cross would go in behind the defensive line (mostly to the far post).

When using low crosses Spain would first create a numerical superiority (2v1) on the flank with an overlapping (or under-lapping) movement and the cross could go to either the near or far post.

#### **5. 1v1 / 2v2 Play (individual creativity)**

Finally we show Spain's creativity where one player has the ball in a 1v1 or 1v2 situation. The player/s used their technical quality and speed to exploit the opposition and finish the attack.

# GOAL ANALYSIS

## Attacking in and Around the Penalty Area (1)

06-Sep-2011: European Championship 2012 Qualifying

Spain **3-0** Russia (2nd Goal): Guiza - Assist: Fabregas

Spain in a 4-4-2 vs Russia in a 4-1-3-2



Guiza (like Bojan for the third goal against Armenia) has the opposition's left back in front of him and passes to Ramos inside and then makes a diagonal run into the penalty area.

Russia have the 4-1-3 part of their formation in the defensive half.

Fabregas moves to the right and provides support to Ramos.



Ramos is under pressure from the defensive midfielder and the centre back.

Ramos passes to Fabregas and while the ball is travelling, Guiza and Silva make third man runs into the penalty area.

Fabregas plays a technical chipped 1 touch pass in behind the defensive line (in between the left back and right centre back).

Guiza gets there ahead of the left back and controls with his chest. He executes a chipped shot over the goalkeeper to score.

# GOAL ANALYSIS

## Attacking in and Around the Penalty Area (2)

29-Mar-2011: European Championship 2012 Qualifying

Lithuania 1-3 Spain (3rd Goal): Mata - Assist: Silva

Spain in a 4-3-3 vs Lithuania in a 4-4-2



Alonso is under pressure from the right midfielder on the flank and passes to Xavi. Xavi has the 2 Lithuanian strikers left and right of him and the other 7 opposition players in front of him.

There are 5 Spanish players in behind the opposition's midfield line and level with the defensive line.

Silva drops off at a good angle to support Xavi.



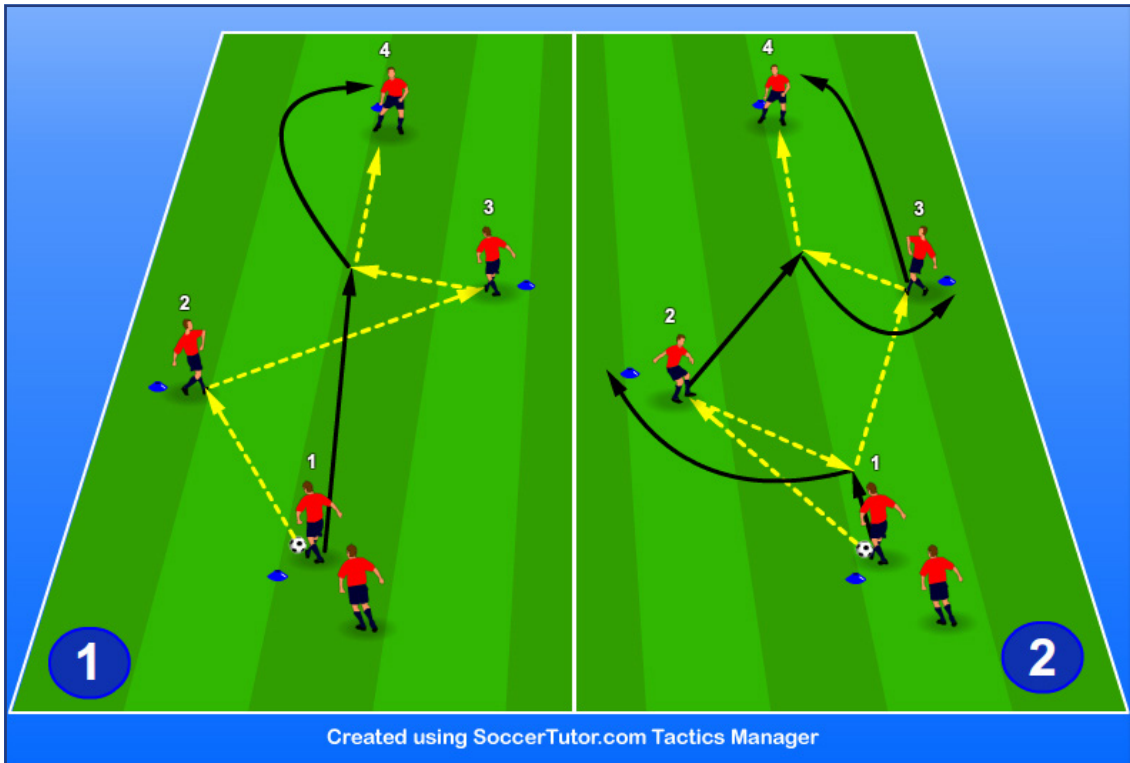
Xavi passes to Silva and while the ball is travelling, Mata makes a third man run into the penalty area.

Silva plays a 1 touch pass into Mata's path.

Mata shows good control and finishes well past the rushing goalkeeper.

# SESSION FOR THIS TOPIC (6 Practices)

## 1. One Touch Combination Play and 3<sup>rd</sup> Man Run



### Objective

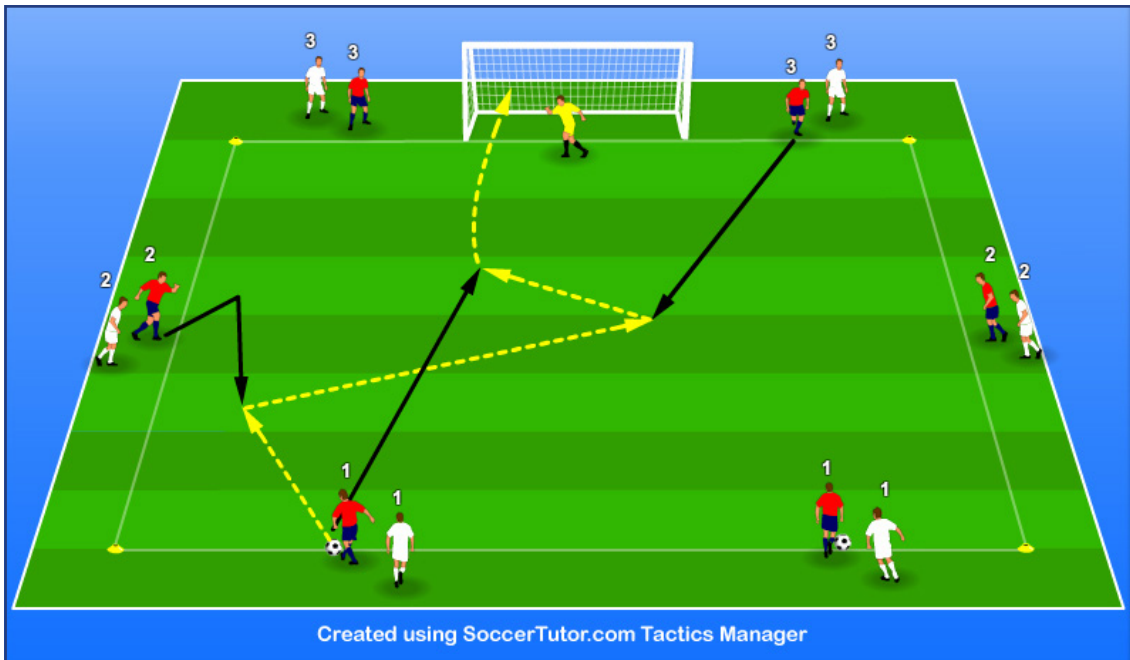
We work on our passing, timing and movement in one touch combinations, with the focus on 3<sup>rd</sup> man runs.

### Description

1. We have 6 players and use 4 cones (in the positions shown). Player 1 starts with 1 ball and passes to player 2 who passes to Player 3. As soon as Player 1 has played his pass, he moves forward (3<sup>rd</sup> man run) and receives the next pass from Player 3 and passes to Player 4 using 1 touch.  
The practice continues from player 4 now as he passes to player 3. Players 2 and 3 stay in their positions until the coach changes them.
2. Player 1 plays a one-two combination with Player 2. Player 1 passes to player 3. As soon as Player 2 has played his pass, he moves across (3<sup>rd</sup> man run) to receive the next pass from Player 3 and passes to Player 4 using 1 touch. All players now move up one position (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4). Now the practice continues from this side.  
Both drills must be executed from both sides.

## PROGRESSION

### 2. One Touch Combination Play and 3<sup>rd</sup> Man Run with Finishing



#### Objective

We have the same objectives as the previous practice, but we also now work on finishing.

#### Description

In an area 30 x 30 yards we work with 12 players and a goalkeeper. We have 6 positions with 2 players on each one. We have 2 groups and each group has 3 positions (numbered) with 6 players.

Player 1 passes to player 2 who checks away from the cone before receiving. Player 2 passes to Player 3 who has run deep to receive.

As soon as Player 1 has played his pass, he moves forward towards goal (third man run) and receives the first time pass from Player 3 and shoots at goal.

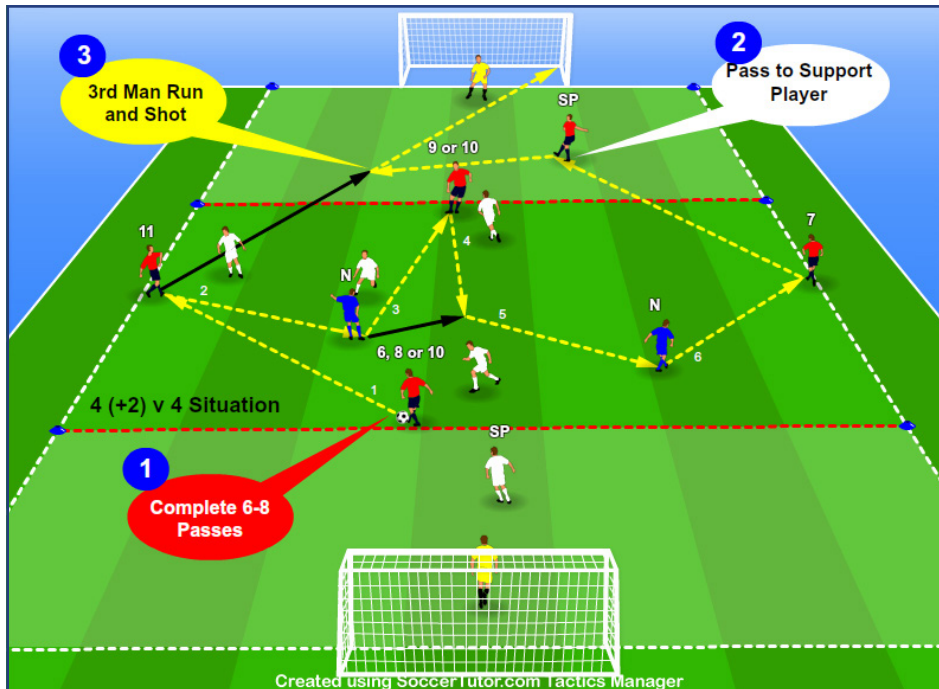
Each player in the first group move up one position (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 1). The drill continues with the second group. Player 1 on the right starts the same sequence.

#### Coaching Points

1. The players need to use the correct angles and body shape to be able to make the right passes.
2. Player 2's first movement should be the same as if checking away from a marker before moving to receive.

## PROGRESSION

### 4. Attacking Combination Play with 3<sup>rd</sup> Man Runs in a 6 v 6 (+2) Small Sided Game



#### Objective

To develop quick combination play, 3<sup>rd</sup> man runs and finishing in a small sided game.

#### Description

In an area 38 x 14 yards divide the pitch into 3 zones. The middle zone is 14 x 14 yards and the 2 end zones are both 12 x 14 yards each. In the middle zone we have a 4v4 and 2 neutral players. Each team has 1 extra support player in the high zone.

The game starts with one team in possession in the middle zone with a 4 (+2) v 4 situation. In this example the reds are in possession and the 4 red players can only move along the sides of the middle zone. The 2 neutral players move around inside and provide support for them.

The objective for the team in possession is to complete 6-8 passes and then pass to their support player in the high zone. If this happens, another player (using a 3<sup>rd</sup> man run) runs forward to support, receives a first time pass from the support player and shoots at goal.

The support players can stay the same or can change position with the player who shoots.

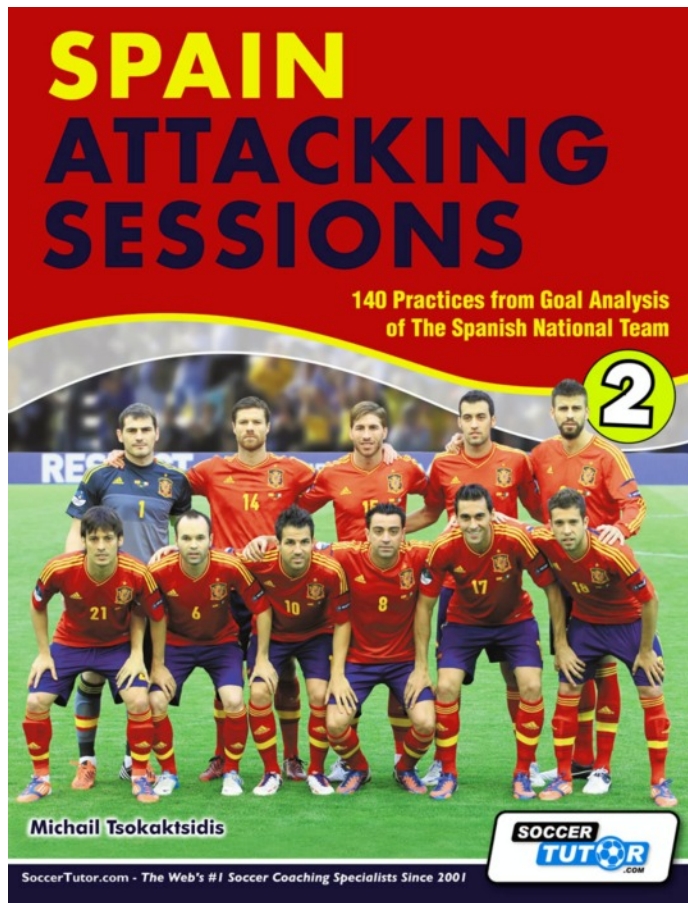
#### Rules

1. Red and white players are limited to 2 touches in the middle zone and 1 touch in the end zones.
2. Neutral players and support players are limited to 1 touch.



## 140 Practices from Goal Analysis of the Spanish National Team

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