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TOP 20 COACHING SESSIONS



MICHAEL JOLLEY

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for downloading
'Top 20 Coaching Sessions'.

When I first began coaching 10 years ago, I was keen to see more experienced coaches work, and use their ideas in my own coaching. This is how most coaches learn to start off with, by taking ideas from their peers. So the purpose of this document is to help coaches towards the start of their coaching journey who are seeking some ideas for sessions with their players.

As you go forward in your coaching, you will I am sure - like me - conclude that every session is simply a variation on a theme you have already seen, or coached, and "there is nothing new under the sun".

It is when you realise this, that you begin to think more independently and design every

session yourself from scratch, that you will accelerate the effectiveness of your coaching. You will customise every session to fit the requirements of your players with a high degree of precision. I hope that more advanced coaches can still take something from this document by adapting the sessions to meet your own objectives. I encourage you to play with the parameters of these sessions and make them your own.

The sessions I have chosen are 20 of my favourites - favourites in the sense that they take the players through a process of learning towards some clearly defined outcomes.



INTRODUCTION

For several of these sessions, there is very little explicit 'intervention coaching'. That was less relevant to me than the extent to which the sessions meet the objectives for the players.

Nobody in football coaching is performing rocket science. I have learnt that working progressively and diligently with your players on the same themes, but not always in the same way, works well. 'Disguised Repetition' might be a good way to express this. The sessions must always challenge the players, without over extending them initially.

I do NOT, for one moment, claim to be anything other than a coach who wishes to share some of the insights I have learned on my coaching journey so far. If I can help one other coach with this document then I will have achieved my goals for this project. I genuinely hope there is some value for you in this document.

Best of luck in your coaching,

Michael Jolley

p.s. please share this on Twitter so other coaches can benefit ...



TOP 20 COACHING SESSIONS

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|
| 1. | Diamond Passing | 11. | Small Sided Game With Rotation |
| 2. | One Touch Passing | 12. | Game Awareness |
| 3. | Recycle Passing | 13. | Break Lines |
| 4. | Timing Your Runs | 14. | Small Sided Game With Transition |
| 5. | Switch Play Passing | 15. | Defensive Distances |
| 6. | Playing Through Midfield | 16. | Defending When Outnumbered |
| 7. | Possession & Transition Part 1 | 17. | Defending Triggers |
| 8. | Possession & Transition Part 2 | 18. | Recognising Underloads & Overloads |
| 9. | 'Possession Has Consequences' | 19. | 2v1 With Transition |
| 10. | Basic Rotation | 20. | 11v11 Scenario |



SESSION 1: DIAMOND PASSING

Objective

To improve quality of passing and receiving, so that ball possession can be retained until the right moment to put the ball at risk .

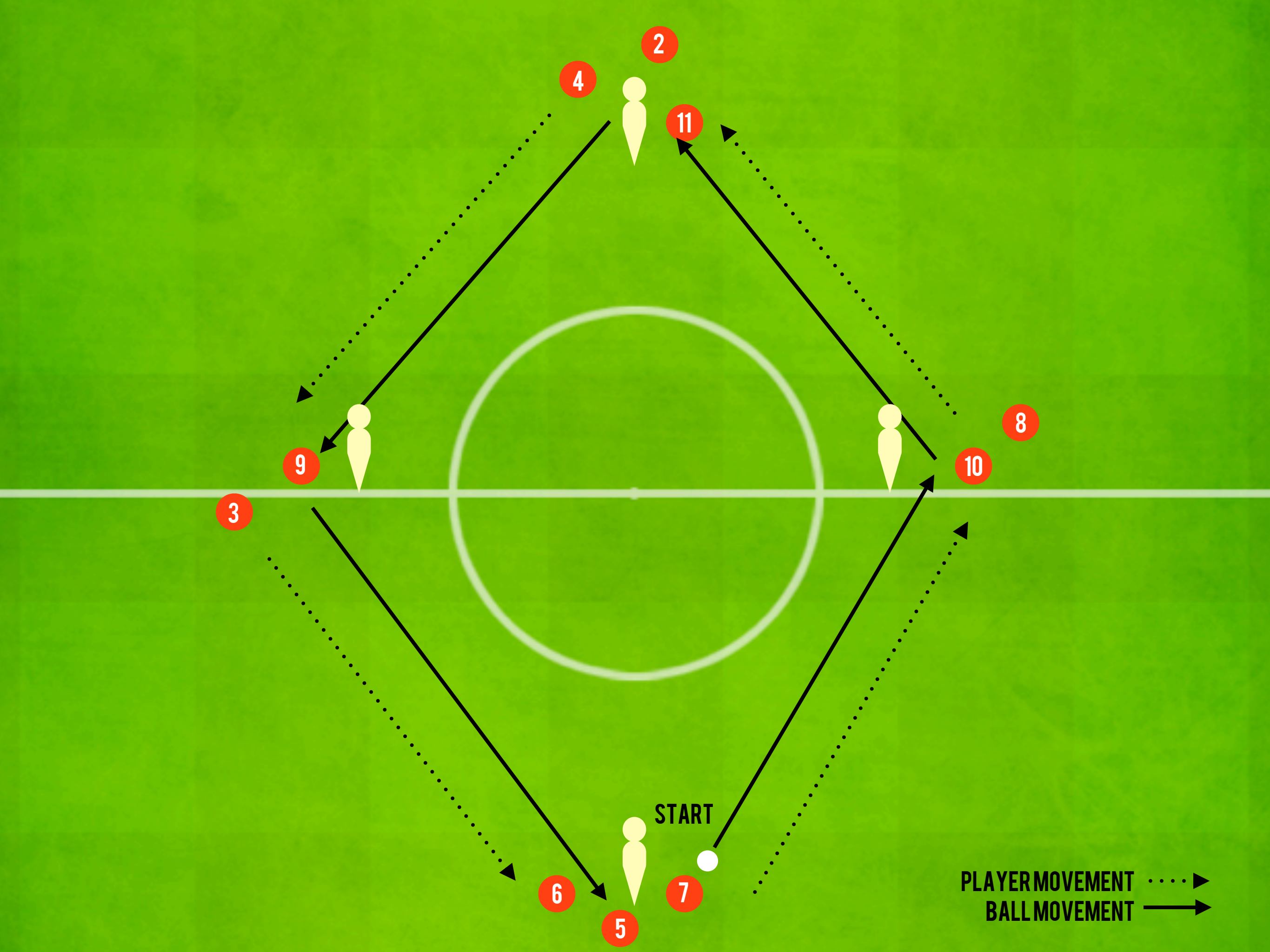
Organisation

- ✓ Players pass and follow.
- ✓ At least 2 players per station/mannequin
- ✓ Start with 1 ball, progress to 2 balls
- ✓ Vary the passing distances and angles
- ✓ Vary receiving in front or behind
- ✓ Change the ball direction to change the technical demands.
- ✓ Progression: player can apply pressure to receiver after his/her pass > receiver's first touch must go away from pressure

Key Messages

- ★ Accuracy, speed, feel of the pass
- ★ Pre receiving movement > 'go to show, show to go'
- ★ First touch away from pressure
- ★ A soft first touch
- ★ A tight first touch
- ★ Open body position and awareness of the space
- ★ Speed on the ball





SESSION 2: ONE TOUCH PASSING

Objective

To improve the players quality in playing incisive, one touch passes.

The ability to play one touch is increasingly significant at the highest levels of the game. Long possession chains are increasingly prevalent, but players who can play one touch to 'beat the block' can make the difference.

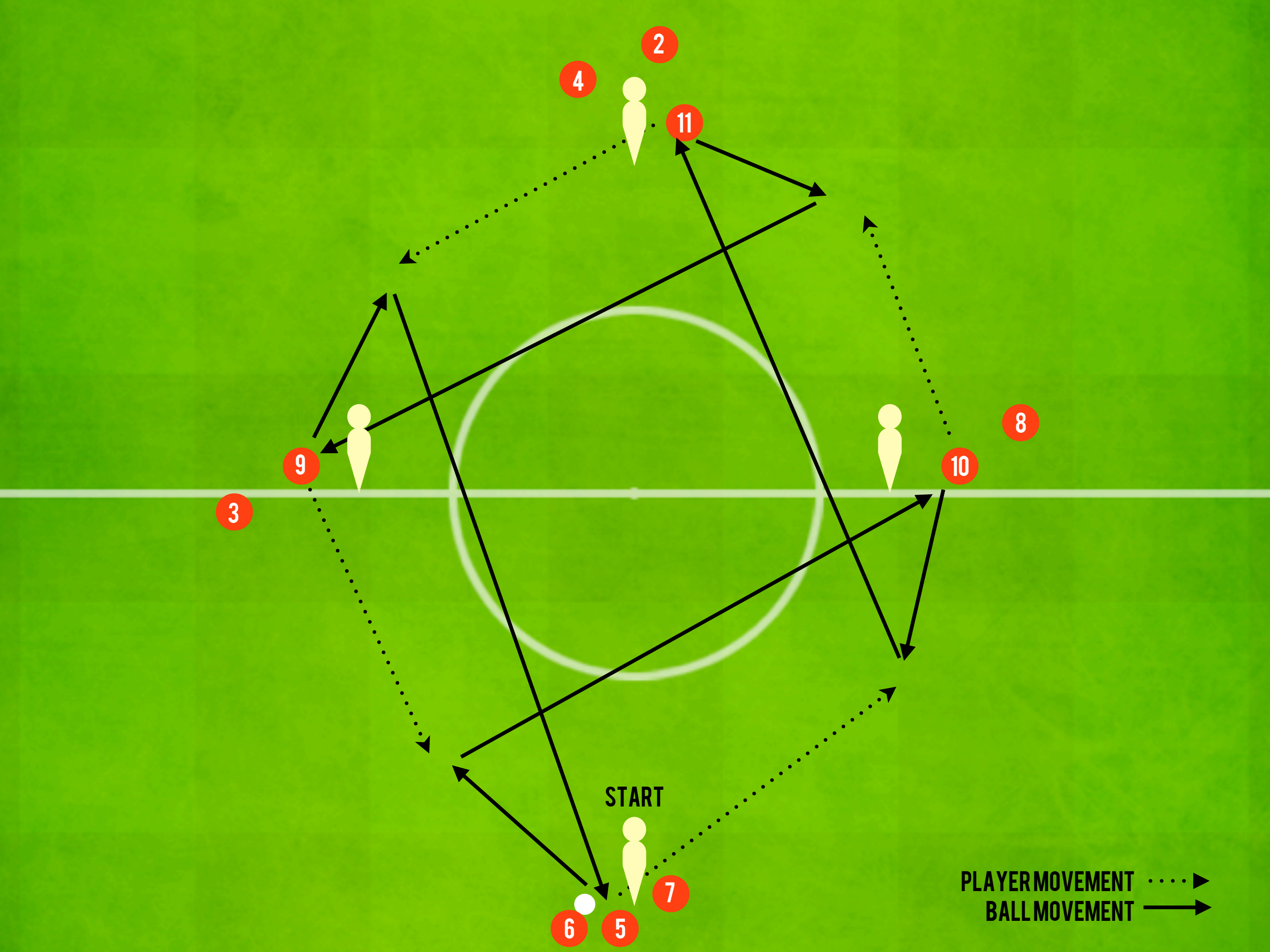
Organisation

- ✓ Players set the ball back and spin to receive the next set.
- ✓ Players deliver angled first time passes to the next station, then join the current station.
- ✓ At least 2 players per station/mannequin
- ✓ Just one ball per group.
- ✓ Vary the passing distances and angles
- ✓ Change the ball direction to change the technical demands.
- ✓ Progression: Short wall passes on 2 opposing stations to change the tempo of play.
- ✓ Introduce small gaps/gates that players must get the ball through

Key Messages

- ★ Accuracy, speed, feel of the pass
- ★ Pre receiving movement > 'go to show, show to go'
- ★ 'Soft' sets
- ★ Speed on the ball over greater distance
- ★ 'Punch' the ball through a gap
- ★ 'Check' the ball to make it slow beyond the gap





SESSION 3: RECYCLE PASSING

Objective

To improve the efficiency with which the players cycle and recycle the ball.

These qualities are the building blocks of long possession chains.

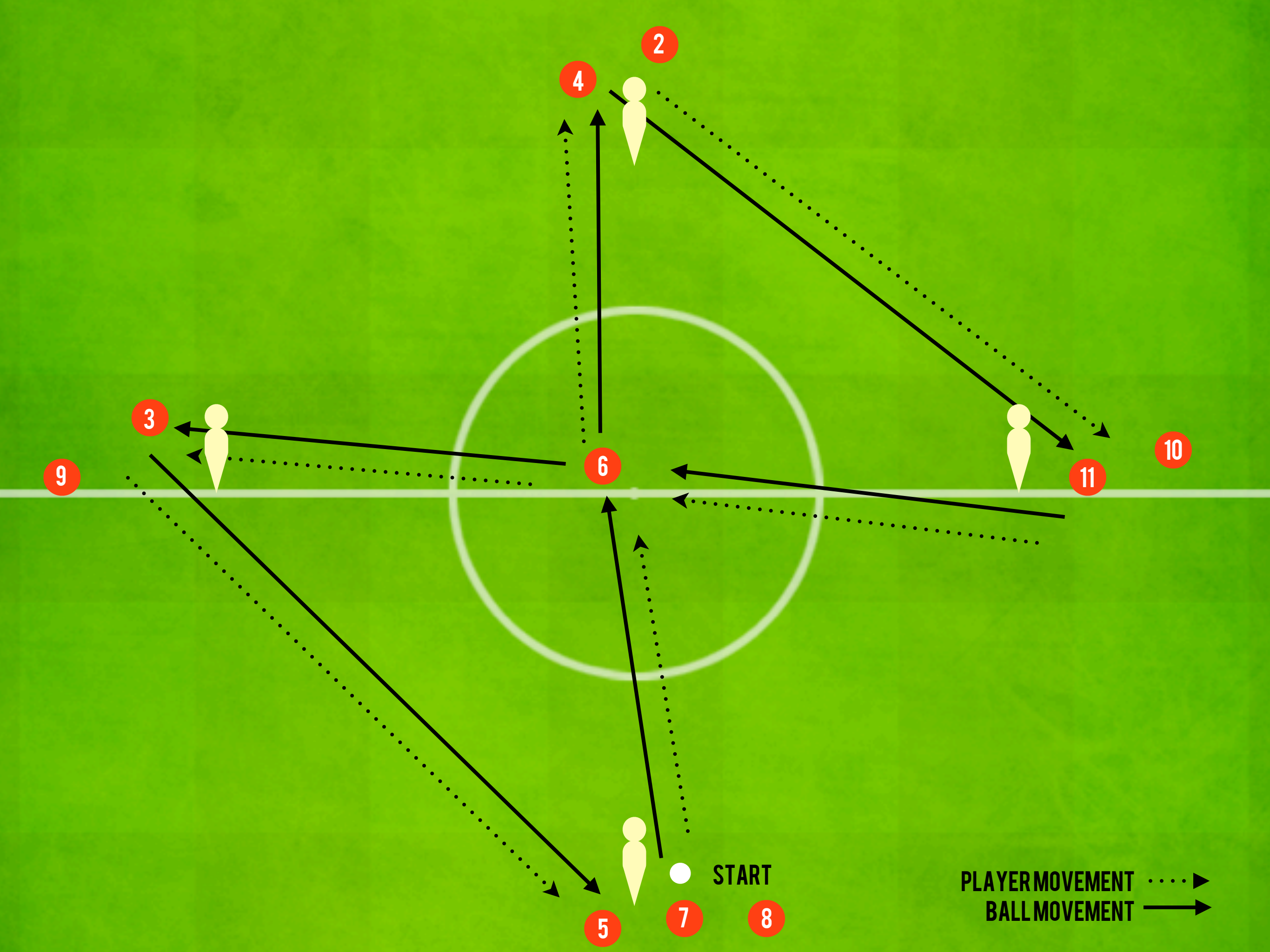
Organisation

- ✓ Only one player in the centre at any one time.
- ✓ Pass and follow in a figure of 8 pattern.
- ✓ First touch on the sides must go behind the mannequin to change the angle.
- ✓ Player in centre can set back or turn.
- ✓ Progression: Miss out the centre player with a longer pass, he must spin and be a wall for diagonal receiver.
- ✓ Change direction to alter technical demands.

Key Messages

- ★ Accuracy, speed, feel of the pass
- ★ Pre receiving movement > 'go to show, show to go'
- ★ 'Soft' and 'Tight' first touch.
- ★ Speed on the ball over greater distance
- ★ Make the ball travel quickly through the stations.





SESSION 4: TIMING YOUR RUNS

Objective

To improve the timing and shape of players runs.

Short diagonal darts and arced runs are key for players when receiving a pass that breaks a line.

Note: this session takes some time to master and is challenging for most players initially. However, once the pattern is clear to the players, the detail that emerges is worth the initial test!

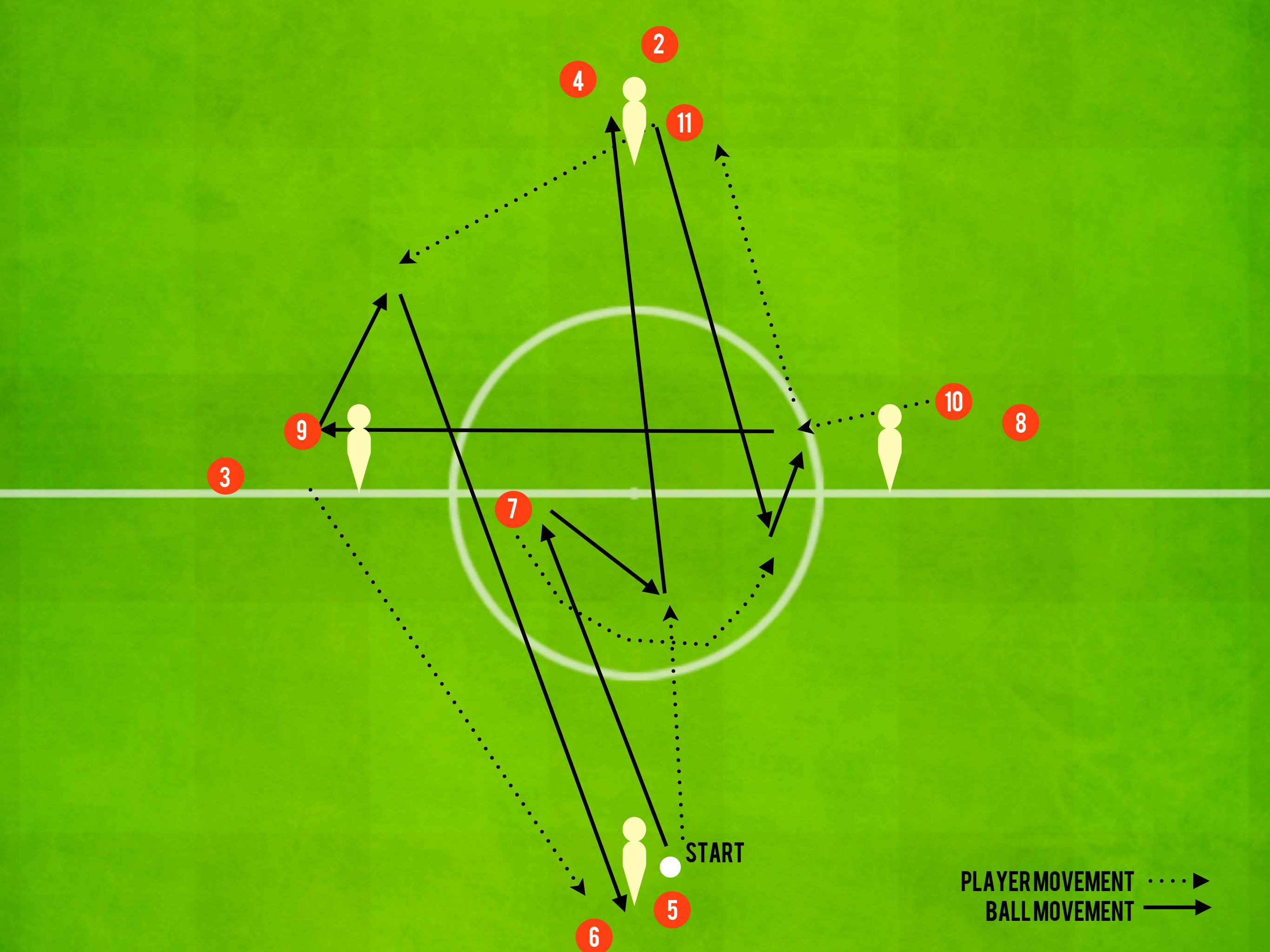
Organisation

- ✓ 5 bounce the ball off 7, then play diagonally across to 11.
- ✓ 7 to overlap 5 as 5 plays out.
- ✓ 11 touch round back of mannequin, then play back into original centre player (7).
- ✓ 7 drop the ball for adjacent player (10) who must time run across face of 7 to coincide with the drop
- ✓ 10 play across to 9, set back for 11 who plays to start position again.
- ✓ Rotation is 5 becomes 7; 7 becomes 10; 10 becomes 11; 11 becomes 9; 9 becomes 5.

Key Messages

- ★ Accuracy, speed, feel of the pass
- ★ Pre receiving movement > 'go to show, show to go'
- ★ 'Soft' sets
- ★ Speed on the ball over greater distance
- ★ 'Punch' the ball through a gap
- ★ Timing of runs
- ★ Shaping of runs





NEED SOME HELP WITH THIS ONE??

Get some help from other coaches with this session by [tweeting](#) this document ...



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SESSION 5: SWITCHPLAY PASSING

Objective

To improve the players quality of playing passes over larger distances.

This is critical when you are asking players to play away from pressure from the opponent.

Organisation

✓ 7 bounce the ball off 6 and play to 4

✓ 6 follow the long pass and replace 4; 7 replace 6 and prepare for the next ball

✓ 4 receive behind the mannequin and pass and follow to 8; 8 pass and follow to start

✓ Next ball commence quickly; 5 bounce off 7 and play to 11. Sequence repeats.

✓ Progression: quick wall passes on the outside stations.

✓ 6 can receive, turn, and play out himself.

✓ Move the far mannequins back to adjust distance and type of pass.

✓ Progression: 'Wide-Player/ Full Back / Midfield combinations between 4-6-8.

Key Messages

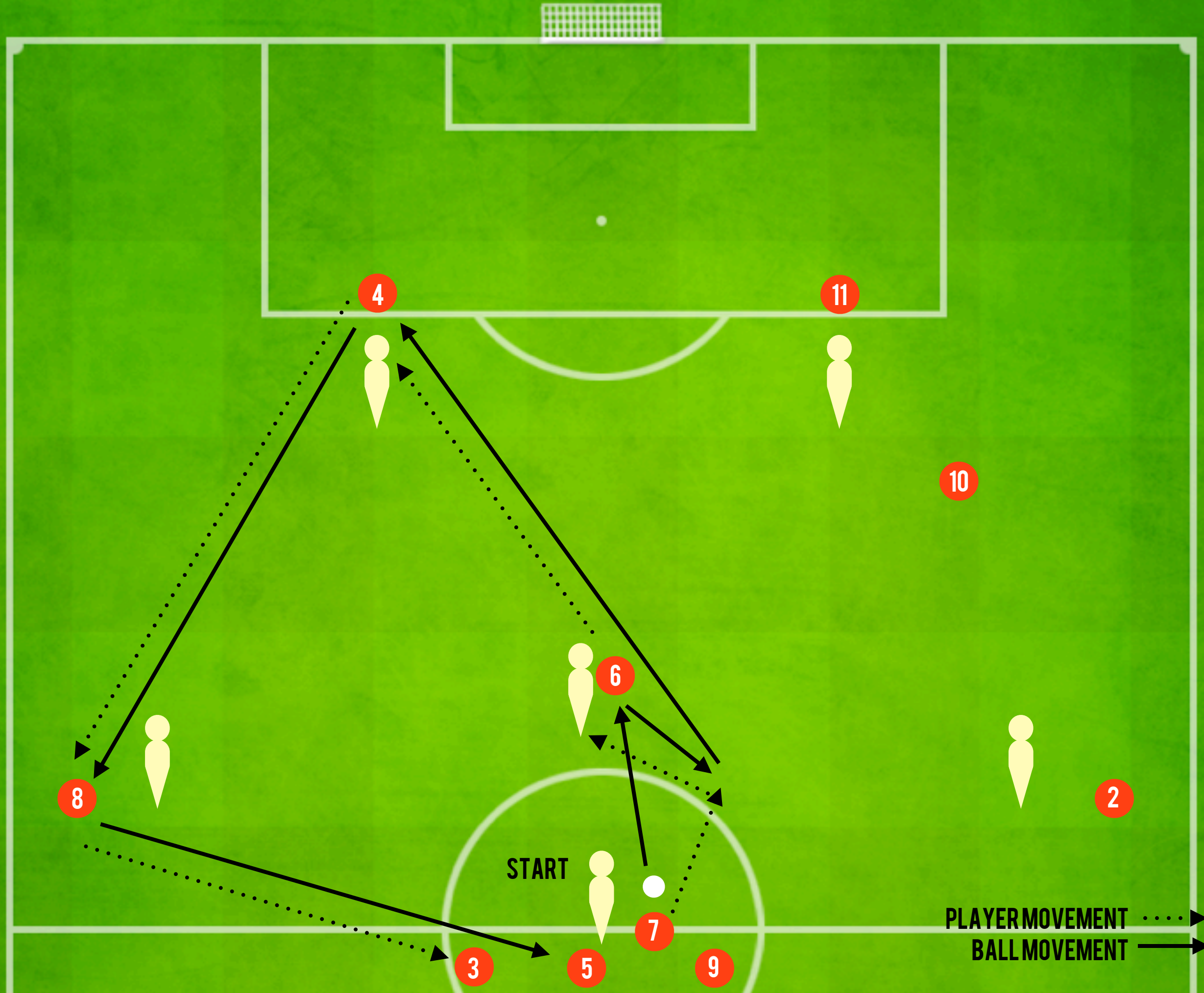
★ Speed on the ball over greater distance

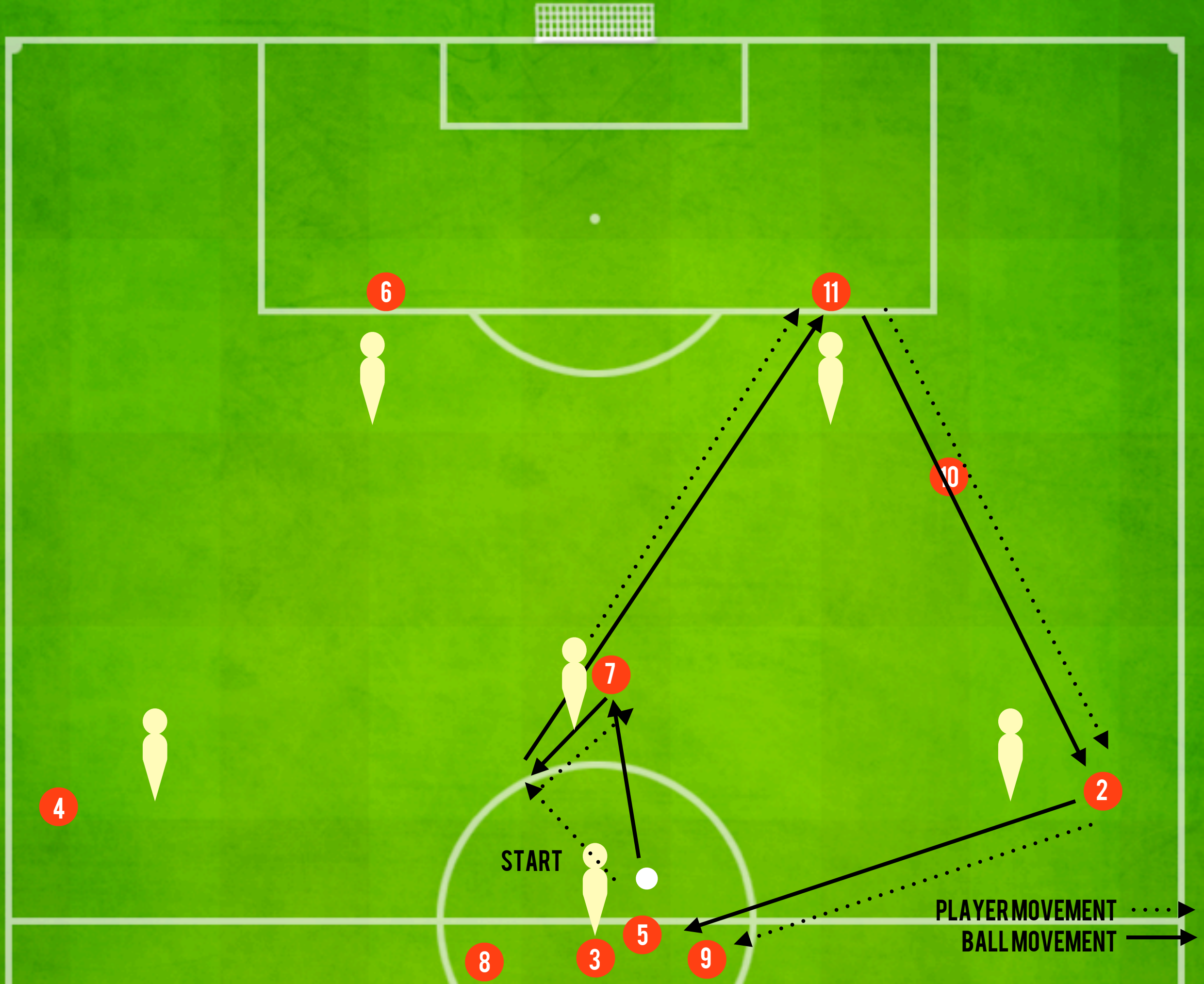
★ Turns to play out the other side

★ Receiving skills down the sides (bigger first touch > in front)

★ Combinations in the progression







SESSION 6: PLAYING THROUGH MIDFIELD

Objective

Playing through midfield requires you to have a plan for how you will get your midfield players on the ball facing forward.

This can be achieved through individual or combination movement.

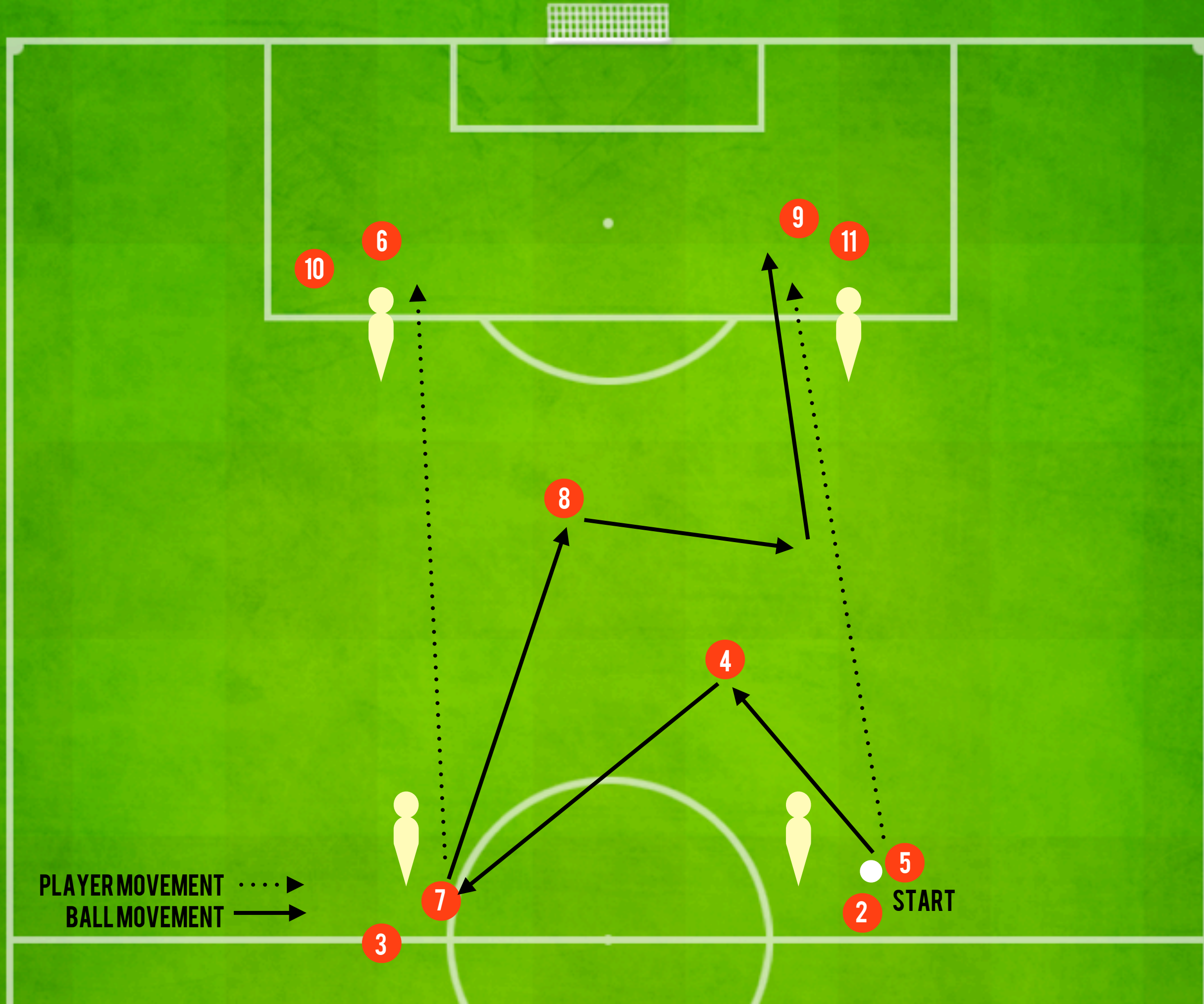
Organisation

- ✓ Two centre players should be a 'pair' - central midfield players, or strikers, or a wide player and full-back
- ✓ Two centre players remain in centre until you change them
- ✓ 8 & 4 split yourselves, one high, one low
- ✓ 5 bounce the ball through 4 into 7
- ✓ 7 play long into 8
- ✓ 7 & 5 & 4 make combination runs to receive set from 8
- ✓ Play out to 9, 5 & 7 follow out. Repeat sequence.
- ✓ 4 and 8 can rotate, or not, on triggers you choose.
- ✓ Progression: all one touch (everyone)

Key Messages

- ★ Accuracy, speed, feel of the pass
- ★ Pre receiving movement > 'go to show, show to go'
- ★ 'Rotation of midfield players
- ★ Runs of support players, angled - scissors - overlaps - underlaps





PLAYER MOVEMENT
BALL MOVEMENT ———

SESSION 7: POSSESSION & TRANSITION PART 1

Objective

To improve the players' transition from in-possession to out-of-possession and vice versa

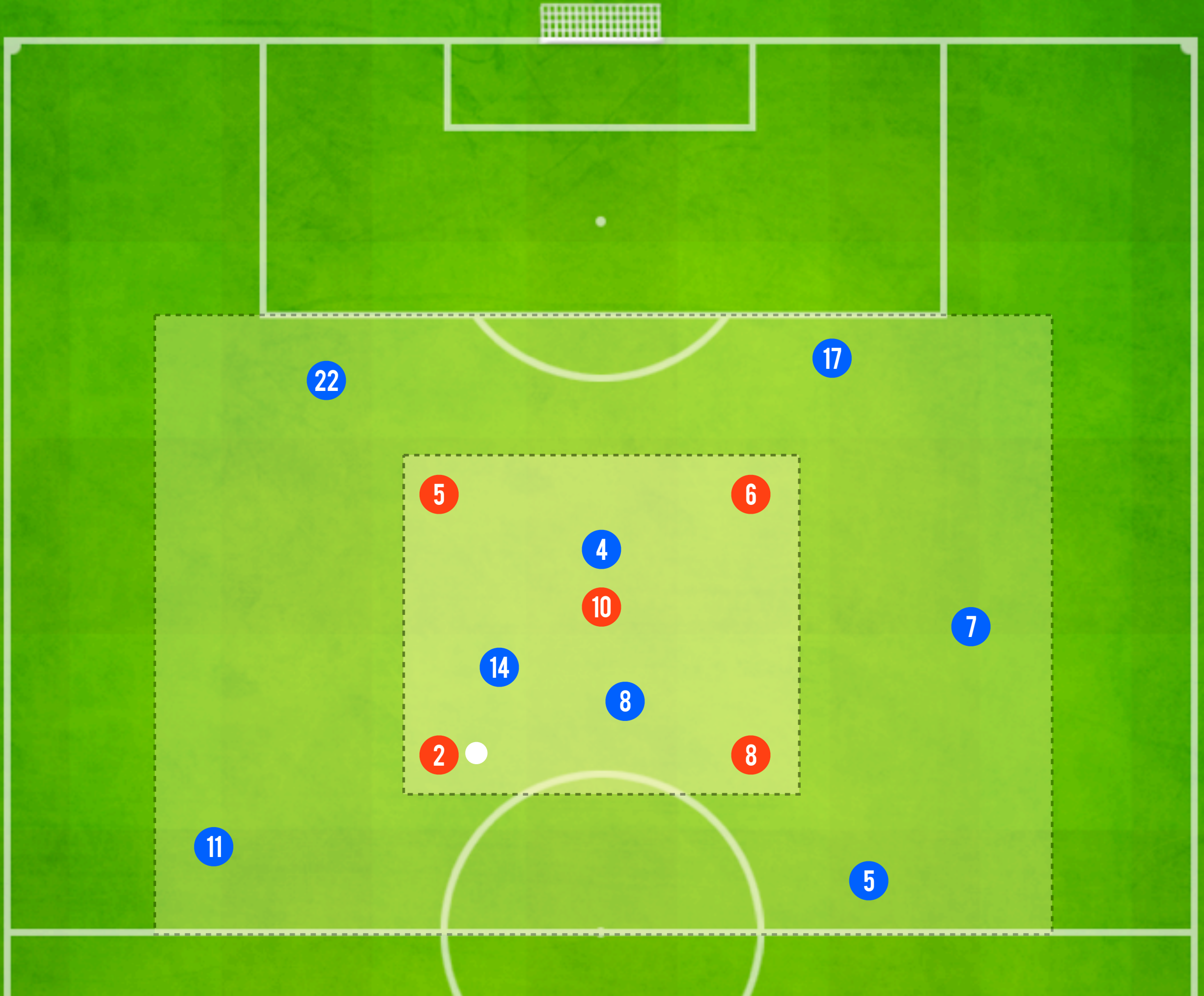
Organisation

- ✓ 5v3 possession inside the internal square
- ✓ 3 blues can switch so they press in 'bursts'
- ✓ If Blues win the ball, they play to the outer square, and the overload switches in their favour (8v5)
- ✓ Reds must now win the ball back and try to return it to the internal square where they have their overload.

Key Messages

- ★ 'Resting with the ball' > controlled possession is a time to recuperate from pressing
- ★ Changing the tempo of play
- ★ Keeping the ball away from pressure
- ★ Conceding possession has consequences!





SESSION 8: POSSESSION & TRANSITION PART 2

Objective

To improve the players ability to retain ball possession and move the opponent around to create the right moment & right opportunities to play over, round, or through the opponent's block.

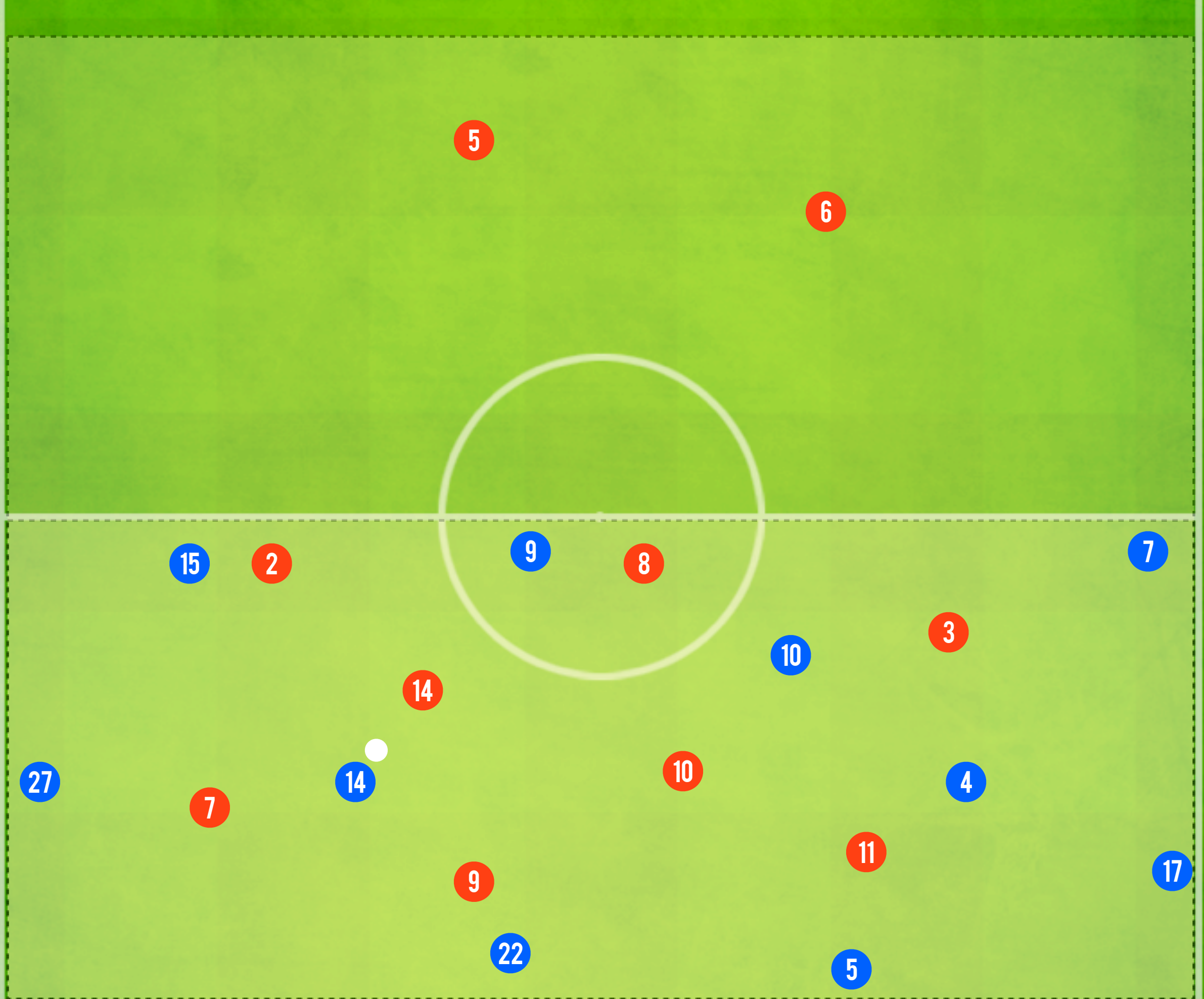
Organisation

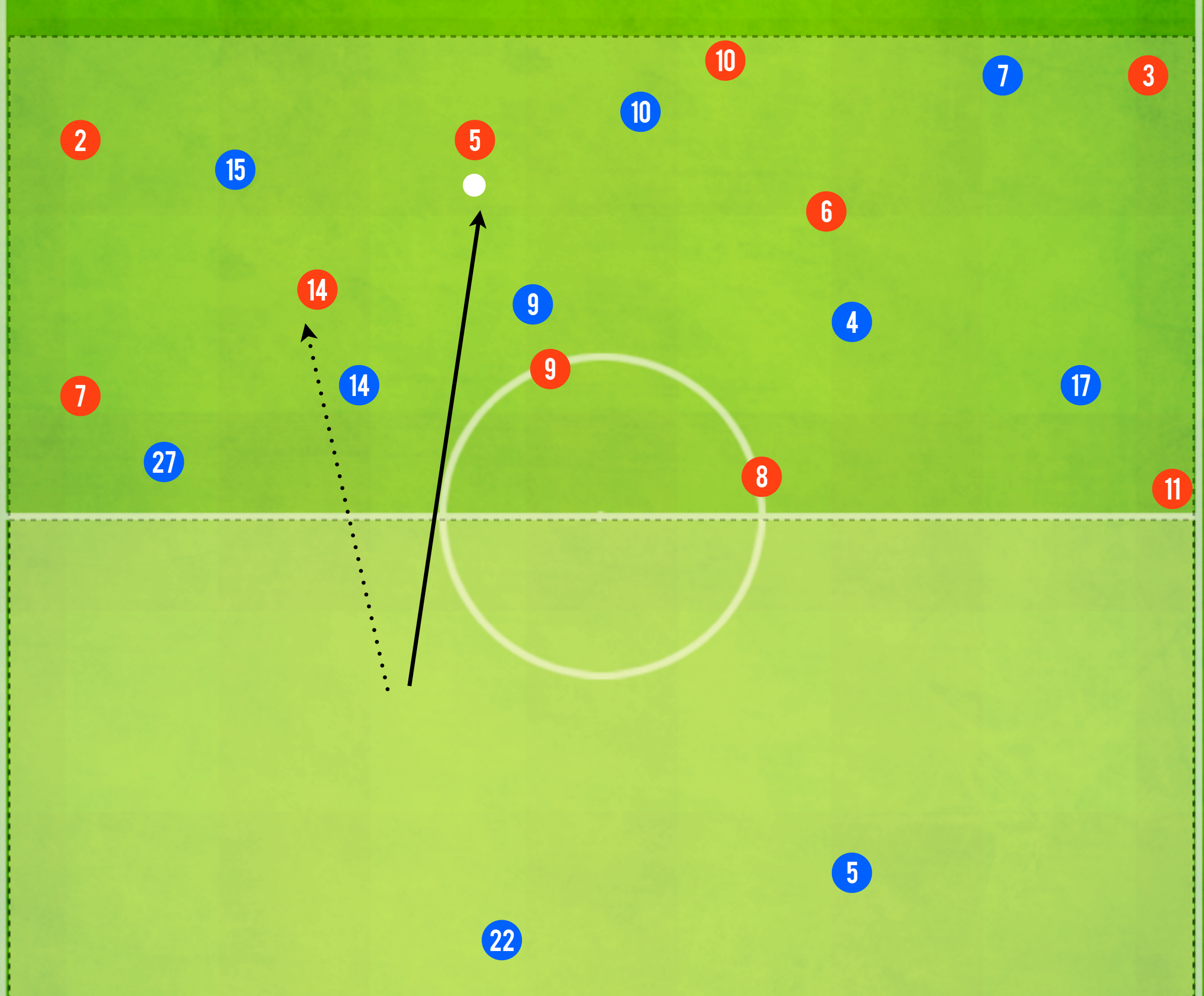
- ✓ 10v10: 10v8 in half area.
- ✓ 2 spare players must reorganise away from the ball.
- ✓ Blues must cycle the ball to find the 2 free players.
- ✓ Reds must win the ball and transfer it to their 2 spare players in their overload area.
- ✓ 8 blue players can go and press.
- ✓ Progression: adjust the area to raise or reduce pressure.
- ✓ Coach group defending > pressing in groups (Chaser > Hunter > Winner).
- ✓ Progression: Scenario analysis > you are 1-0 behind with 6 minutes left, how will you press?
- ✓ > you are 1-0 ahead with 4 minutes left, what will you do with possession?

Key Messages

- ★ Decision making with the ball
- ★ Playing away from pressure
- ★ Bodywork to retain against pressure
- ★ Fast & effective transition when you lose it.
- ★ Fast & effective transition when you win it.







SESSION 9: “POSSESSION HAS CONSEQUENCES”

Objective

To improve the players ability to retain ball possession and move the opponent around to create the right moment & right opportunities to play over, round, or through the opponent's block.

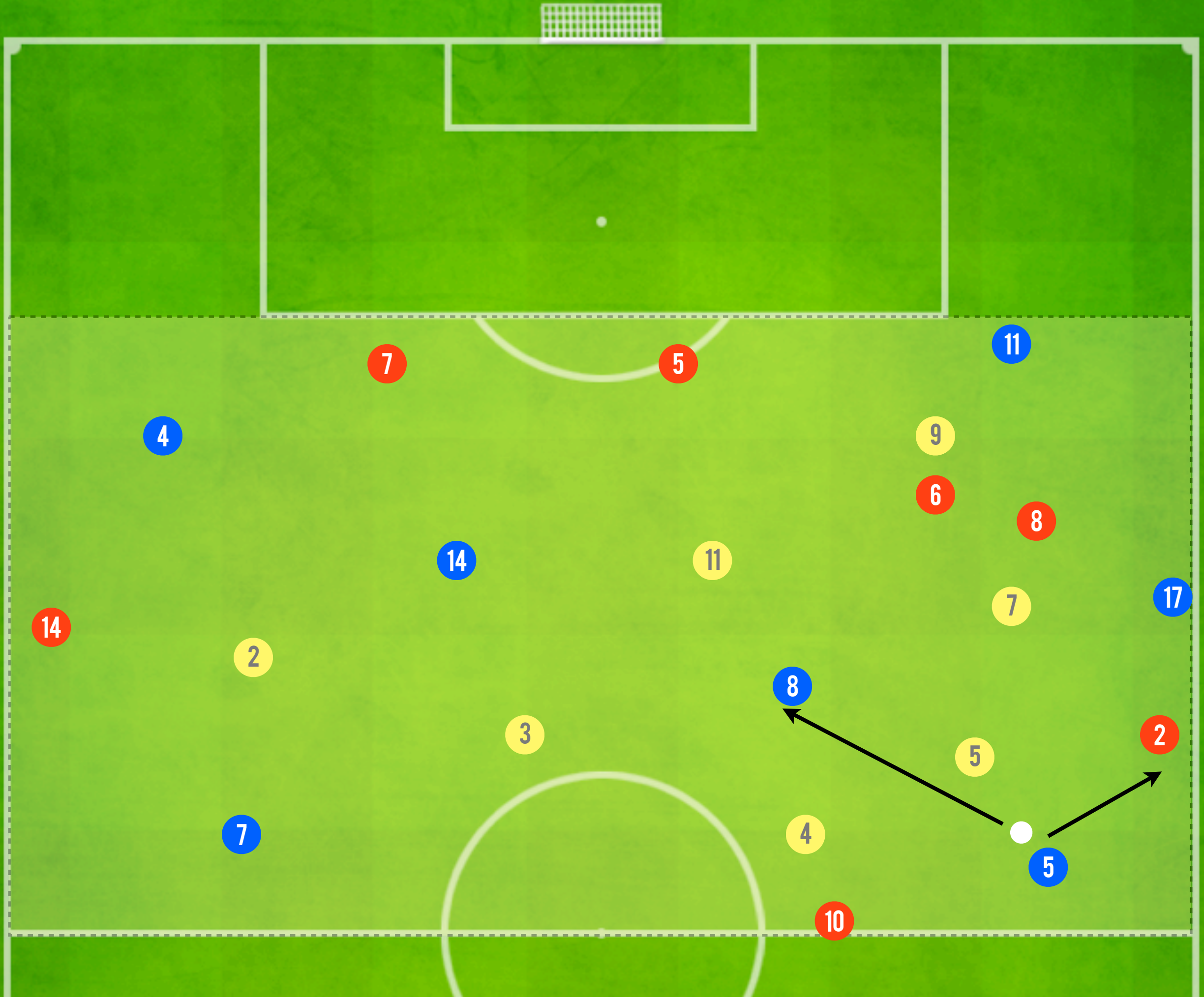
Organisation

- ✓ 3 teams of 7 or 8 players
- ✓ Blues & Reds in possession, yellows trying to gain possession.
- ✓ If Reds turn the ball over, they become the chasers, trying to win the ball from blues and yellows.
- ✓ Progression: adjust the area to adjust the pressure
- ✓ Go to 2 balls

Key Messages

- ★ Decision making with the ball
- ★ Playing away from pressure
- ★ Bodywork to retain against pressure
- ★ Fast & effective transition when you lose it.
- ★ Fast & effective transition when you win it.





SESSION 10: BASIC ROTATION

Objective

To introduce the idea of rotational movement to the players when the team is in possession.

To enhance the players movement when the team is in possession of the ball so that the player with the ball has more options.

To improve opportunities to get forward facing players in possession when playing against a zonal defence.

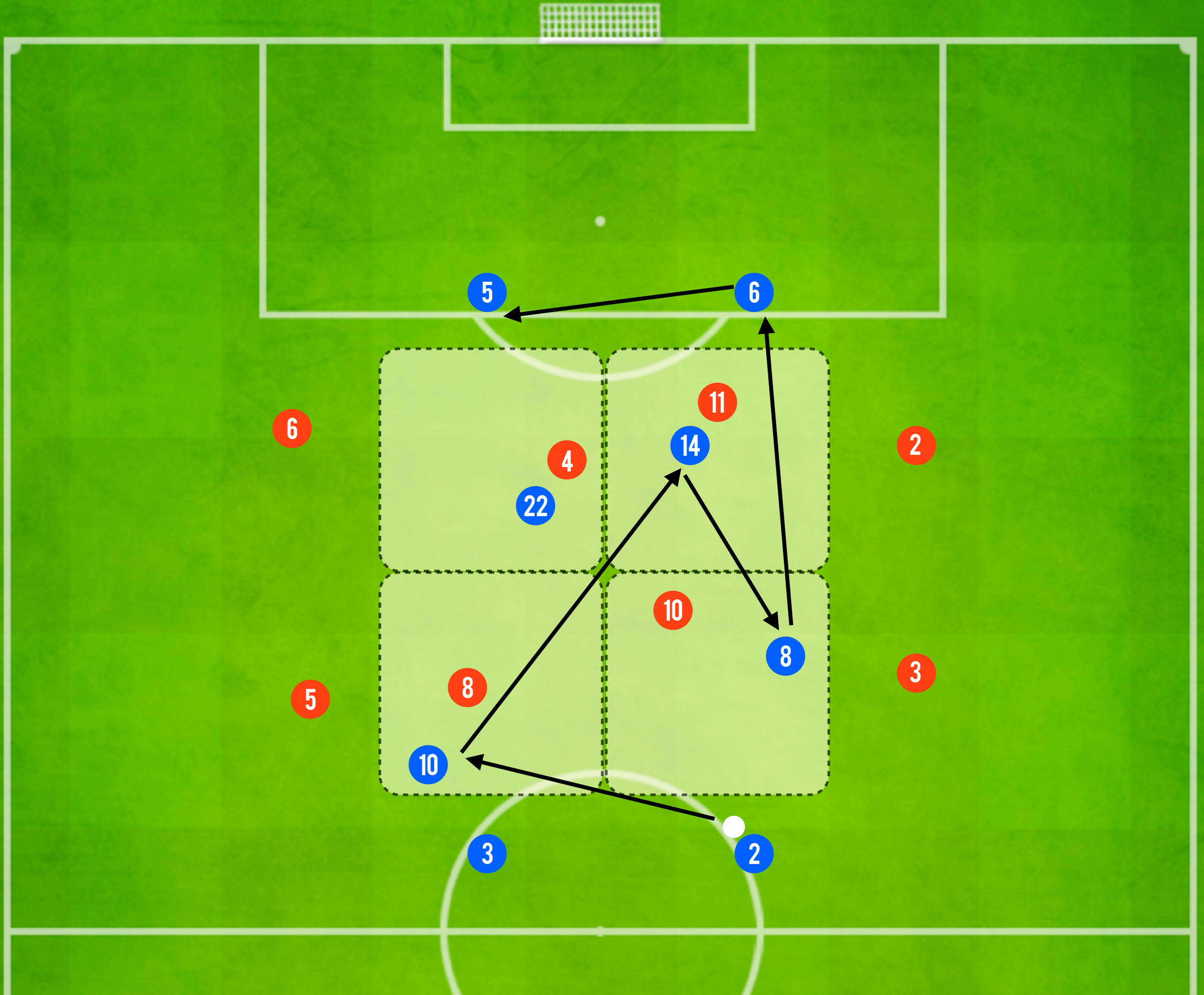
Organisation

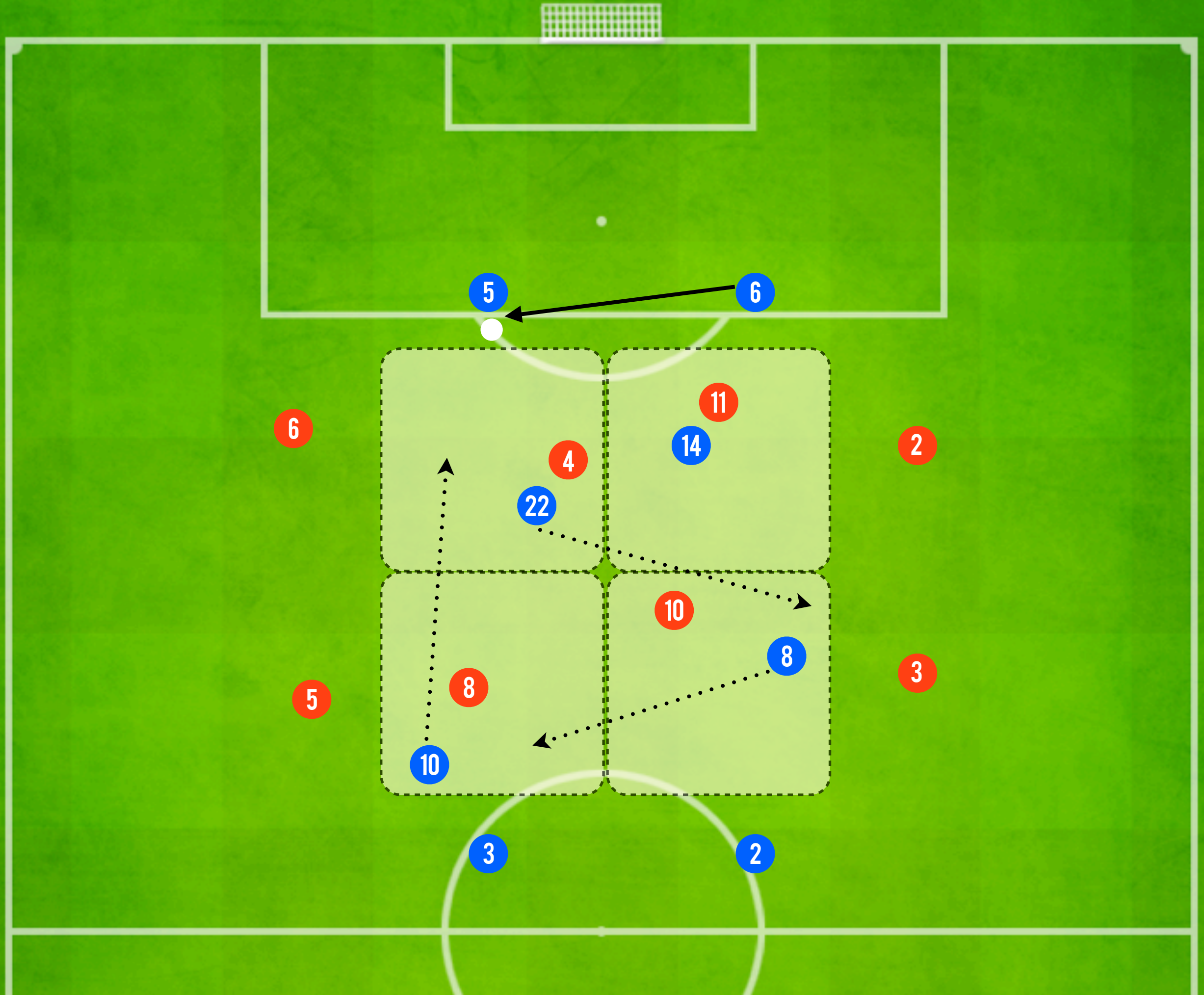
- ✓ 10x10 squares x 4
- ✓ One player from each team in the 10x10 squares
- ✓ There must be 1 player from each team inside the mini squares AT ALL TIMES.
- ✓ So if red 4 runs right, red 11 must run left to fill the space.
- ✓ Objective is to play across from one side of the grid to the other. Reds to reds, blues to blues.
- ✓ When the ball goes into the sides, it must go across at least once before it comes back in.
- ✓ Coach the movement in the grids to create passing combinations to transfer the ball safely across.

Key Messages

- ★ When / How / Who / Where / Why to rotate.
- ★ When and how to deliver a pass into the rotational movement.
- ★ When to play away from the rotational movement.
- ★ Defending against rotation > when to track, when to pass on







SESSION 11: SSG WITH ROTATION

Objective

To increase the players understanding of rotational movement to an advanced level.

To place the basics of rotation in a game context.

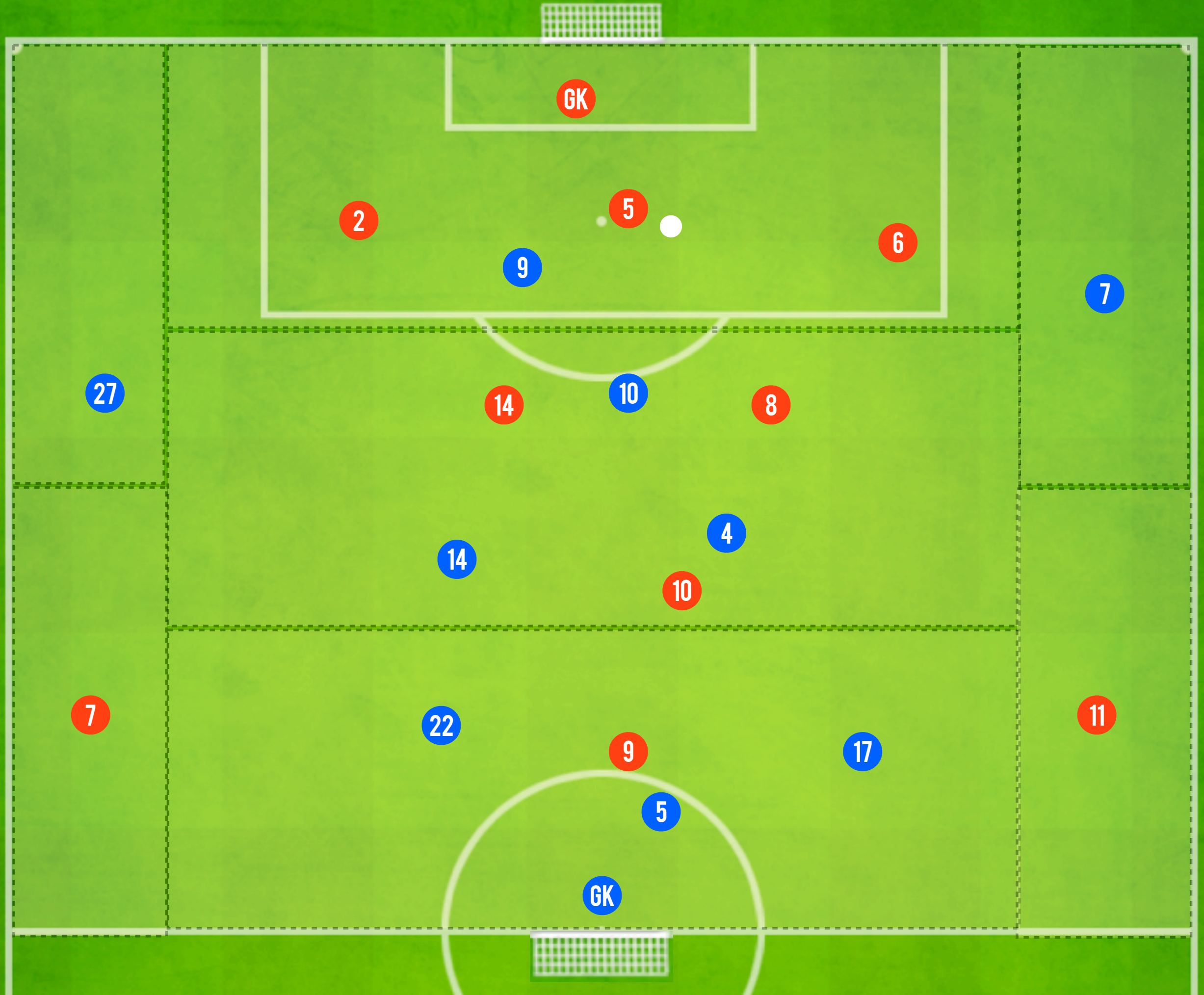
Organisation

- ✓ Distribute the players as shown in the diagram.
- ✓ Pitch divided into 3 zones with 2 wide channels.
- ✓ When the ball changes from one zone to another; 1 player from the team in possession can join to create an overload.
- ✓ Players look to get the ball out to players in wide zones.

Key Messages

- ★ Forward passing
- ★ Creating and recognising overloads
- ★ Exploiting overloads efficiently
- ★ Getting balls into wide areas > who, why, how.
- ★ Finishing long passing sequences with a strike at goal.





SESSION 12: GAME AWARENESS

Objective

To improve the players understanding of playing in 360 degrees.

To help the players prioritise in and out of possession.

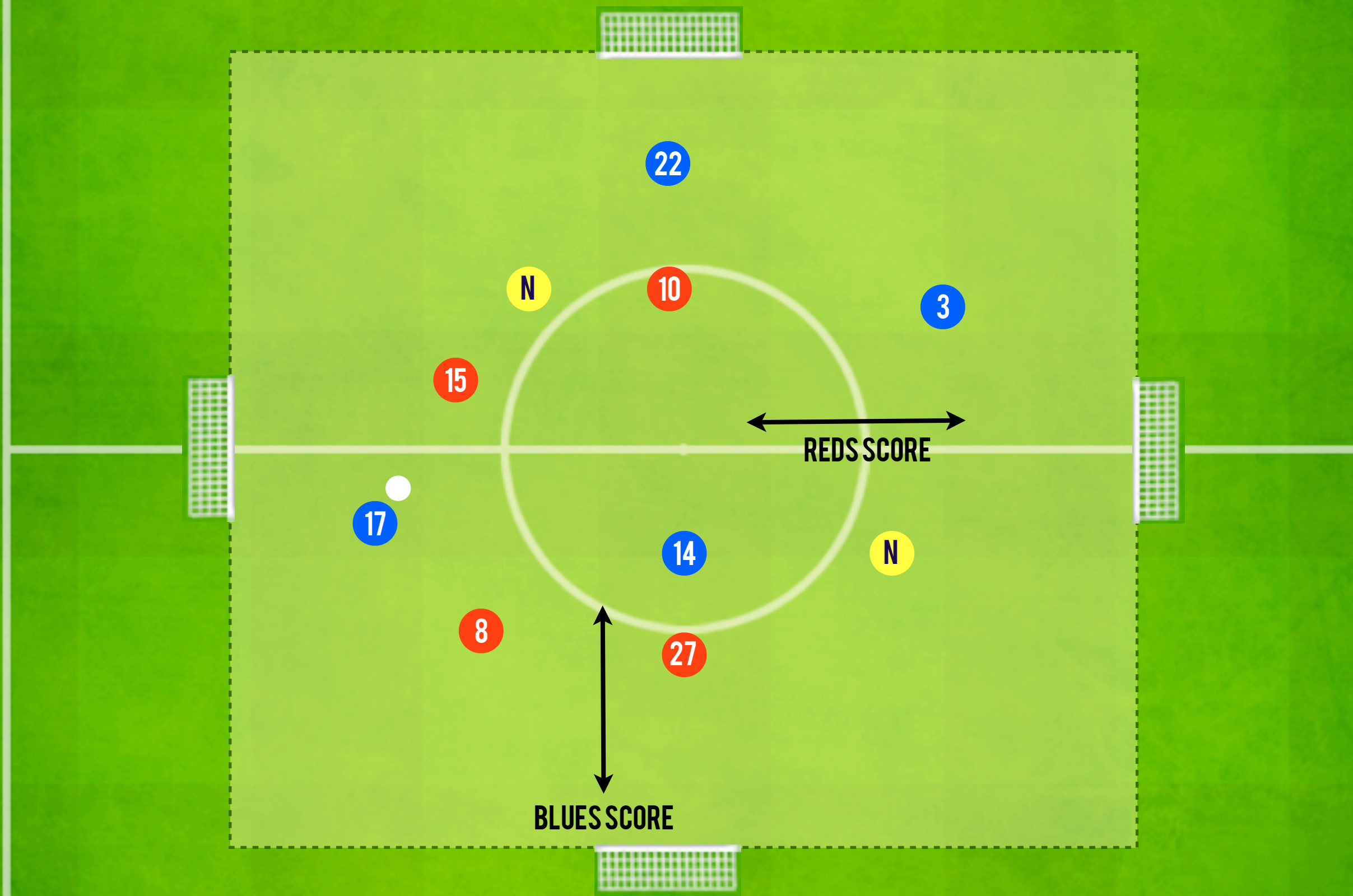
Organisation

- ✓ Directional game
- ✓ 4v4 with 2 neutral players who create 6v4 in possession.
- ✓ Reds score in the horizontally opposite goals
- ✓ Blues score in the vertically opposite goals.
- ✓ Use small goals, or include 4 GKs if you wish
- ✓ Progression: teams score in adjacent rather than opposite goals

Key Messages

- ★ Recognising and exploiting overloads
- ★ Forward passing
- ★ Receiving on the half turn
- ★ Awareness of playing in 360 degrees
- ★ Going quickly at the right moment.





SESSION 13: BREAK LINES

Objective

To improve the players ability to play and receive incisive passes.

To help the players find and exploit moments to get behind a defensive line.

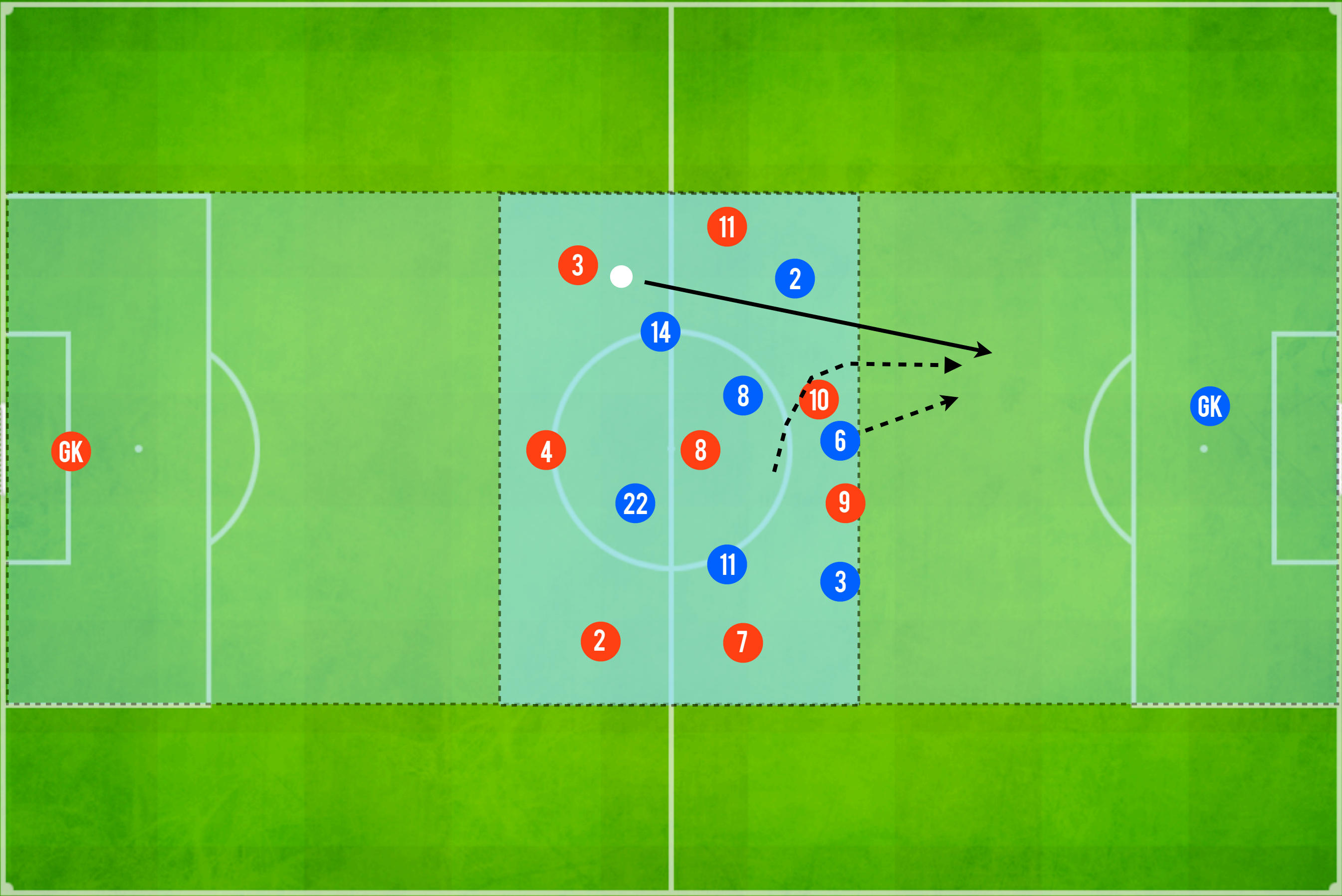
Organisation

- ✓ 8v8 in the central area.
- ✓ After a team has made at least 2 passes, they can play a pass in behind the opponent defensive line for a player to to run onto and score.
- ✓ Player has a maximum of 3 touches to score
- ✓ Offside applies
- ✓ Progression: as above but two attackers and one defender allowed into scoring zone > finish must be 1 touch.

Key Messages

- ★ Quality and timing of through passes.
- ★ Weight of pass
- ★ When to put the ball at risk > when to keep the ball
- ★ Marrying forward runs and forward passes
- ★ Arcing and timing a run
- ★ Recovery runs





SESSION 14: SSG WITH TRANSITION

Objective

To improve the players reaction times in the transition phase.

To encourage players to 'play in the future', meaning they quickly move on from the current situation to the next.

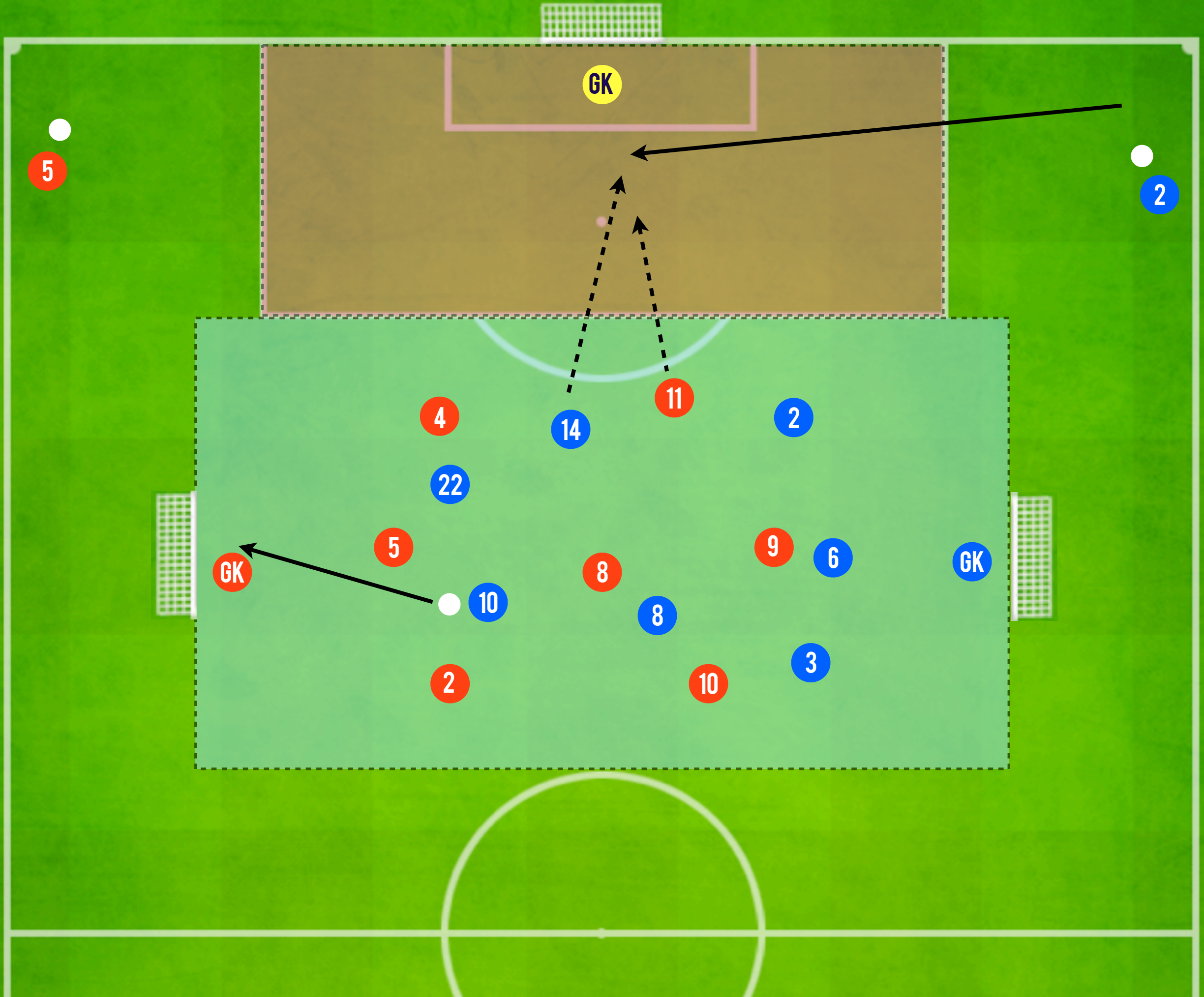
Organisation

- ✓ 8v8 in the main playing area
- ✓ Both teams also have a designated crosser.
- ✓ On a designated trigger decided by the coach (example - shot on target) > team can send a player into the adjacent attacking zone to receive a crosser from their server.
- ✓ The defending team can also send a player into prevent a goal
- ✓ Goals can be scored in the main playing or via crosses in the adjacent goal.
- ✓ Progression: 2 players from each team can break in
- ✓ Progression: adjust the trigger.

Key Messages

- ★ Fast and effective transition
- ★ Runs into the box
- ★ High quality crossing
- ★ Finishing
- ★ Mental skills > reaction & intelligence
- ★ Recovery runs





SESSION 15: DEFENSIVE DISTANCES

Objective

To improve the players judgement of distance and movement when playing in a unit of 4 players.

To improve players ability to play through small gaps and break lines.

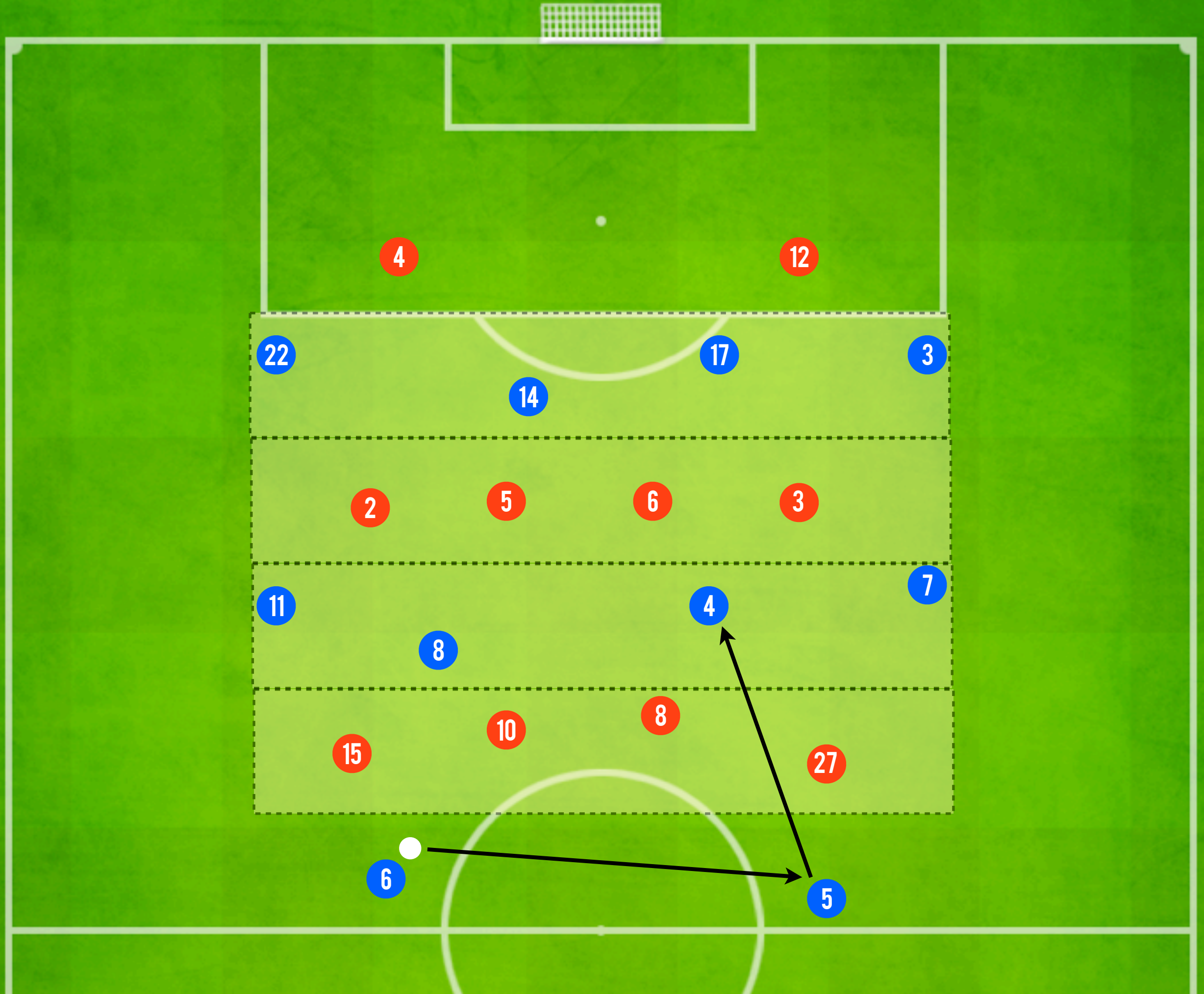
Organisation

- ✓ Blues play to blues
- ✓ Reds play to reds
- ✓ Players organised in units of 4
- ✓ Players must stay in their area
- ✓ Shift the ball across laterally to play through or round the opposing unit.
- ✓ Shift the ball across quickly on the outsides.

Key Messages

- ★ Distances between players in the unit
- ★ Sliding in a unit
- ★ Pressing, covering, and balancing
- ★ Don't 'over cover' (get too narrow) so you're easy to play around
- ★ Can you play quickly through a gap, with disguise?





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SESSION 16: DEFENDING OUTNUMBERED

Objective

To improve the players understanding of defending priorities.

Understand when to decide, when to commit, when to delay.

Organisation

✓ 8 bounce the ball unopposed off 9 and then attack 3v2.

✓ 5 & 6 defend and prevent a strike at goal.

✓ At end of attack, 5 & 6 recover to start position and new trio attack them.

✓ Progression: introduce a recovering player to assist the 2 defenders.

Key Messages

★ Delay until the right moment.

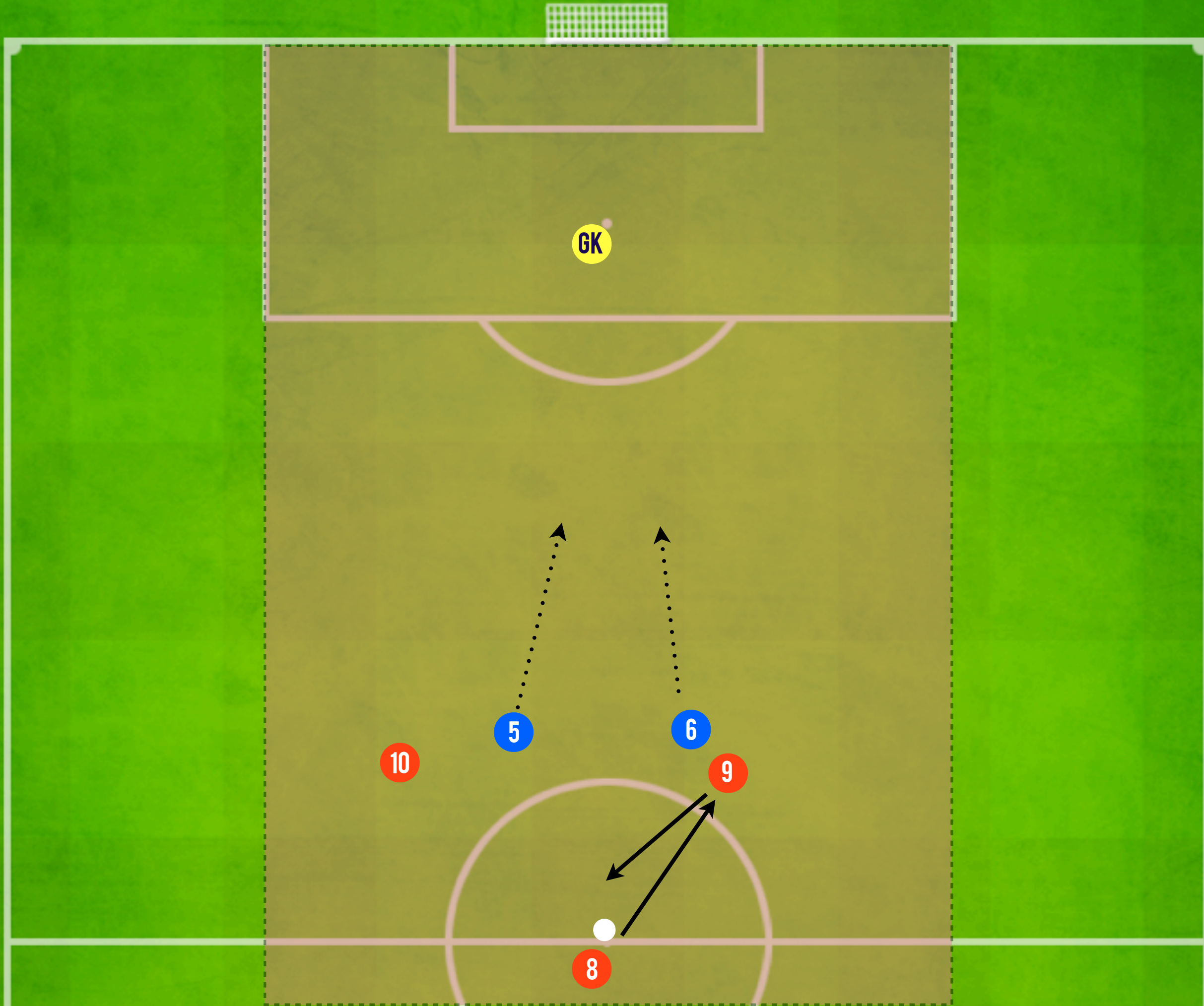
★ Stay together and work together.

★ Know how and when to use offside

★ Body position to see at least 2 players

★ Understand risk/reward in defending





SESSION 17: DEFENDING TRIGGERS

Objective

To improve the players understanding and movement in relation to the movement of the ball, and the amount of pressure on the ball.

To coordinate the movements of the players in the defensive unit.

To maintain appropriate distances between the units in relation to the movement of the ball.

Organisation

✓ Reds cycle the ball between themselves.

✓ Coach the blue players & gk on the appropriate position relative to the ball position.

✓ Introduce pressure on the ball and explain how this impacts on the position of the back four.

✓ Use 4 basic triggers:

✓ Up > ball backwards

✓ Slide > ball lateral

✓ Hold > assess pressure on the ball, ball 'at risk'

✓ Drop > when the ball is likely to go in behind you..

Key Messages

★ Stay in line

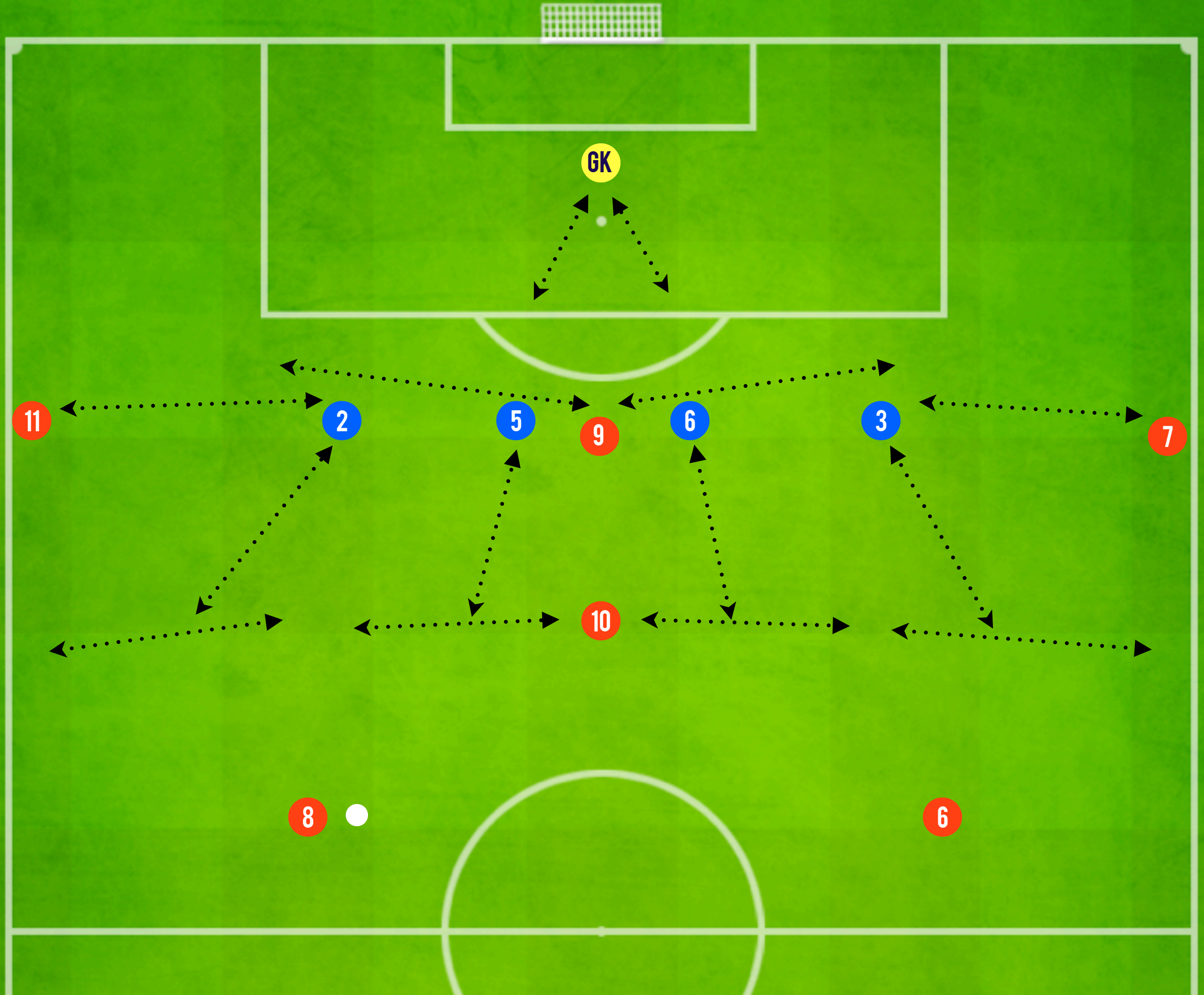
★ Read the triggers

★ Read the pressure

★ Different types of movement (forward, side, back, on angles)

★ When to step out of the unit to deal with a player between the lines.





SESSION 18: RECOGNISE UNDERLOADS & OVERLOADS

Objective

To improve the players' ability to control the tempo of the game, with and without the ball.

To improve the players' ability to recognise overloads to exploit and underloads to delay.

Organisation

✓ 10v10: each player from both teams is given a number between 1-10.

✓ Coach calls 4 numbers from one team (e.g. blue 1,2,3,4).

✓ Those players have to leave the pitch and sprint around a mannequin on the outside leaving a 10v6 in the area until the 4 players return.

✓ Keep possession in 10v10 situation but change the tempo and attack quickly to exploit the 10v6

✓ Delay when defending an overload until recovering players return

Key Messages

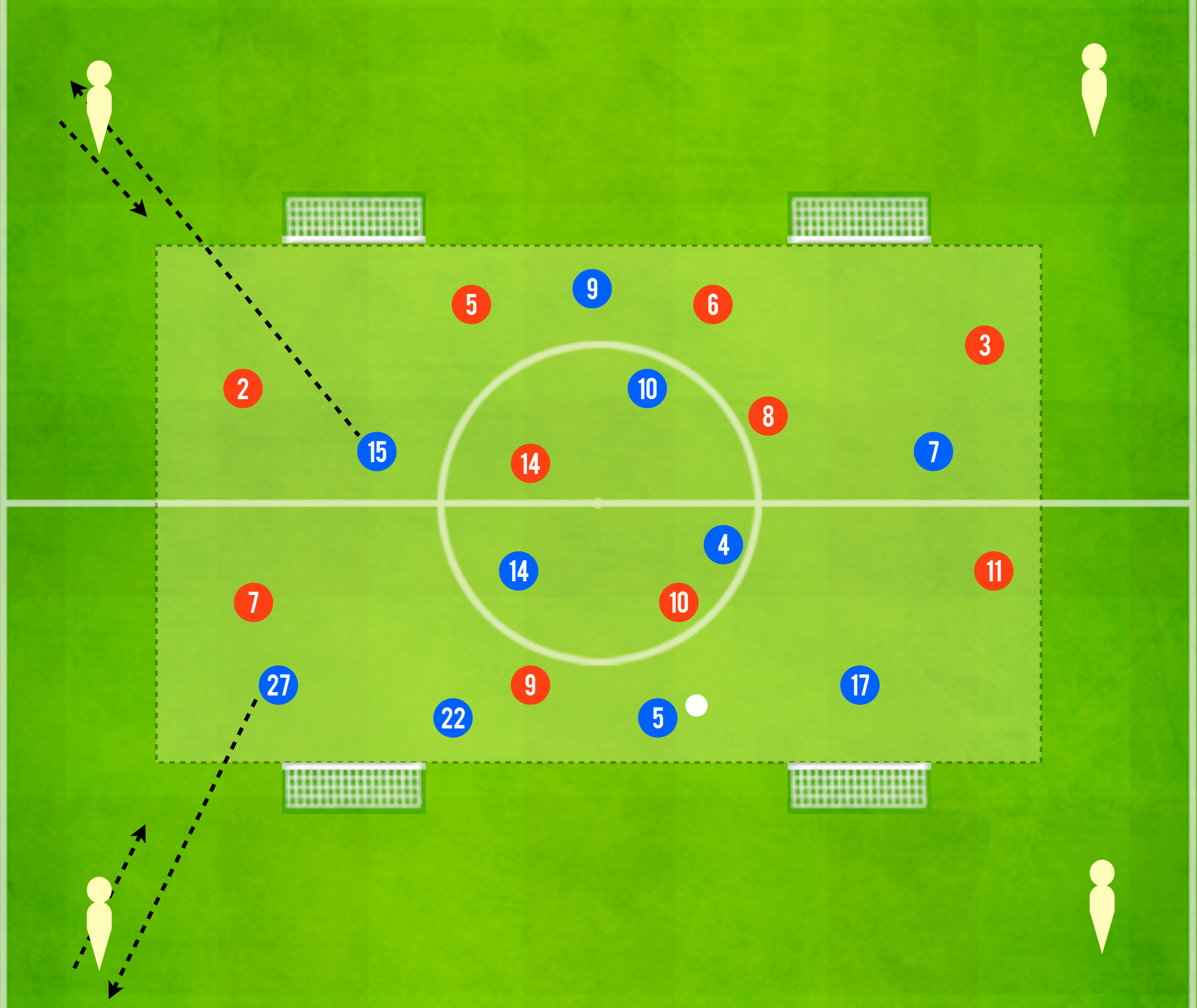
★ Retaining possession until the right moment to attack quickly

★ Exploiting overloads

★ Delaying underloads

★ Recovery runs





SESSION 19: 2V1 WITH TRANSITION

Objective

To improve the players' ability to switch from attack to defence and vice versa.

To improve finishing and combination play.

To improve defending in and around the penalty area.

Organisation

✓ 22 plays across to 8, 22 must then close to defend 1v2 against 8 & 2.

✓ The 2 attackers must combine quickly to get a strike on goal.

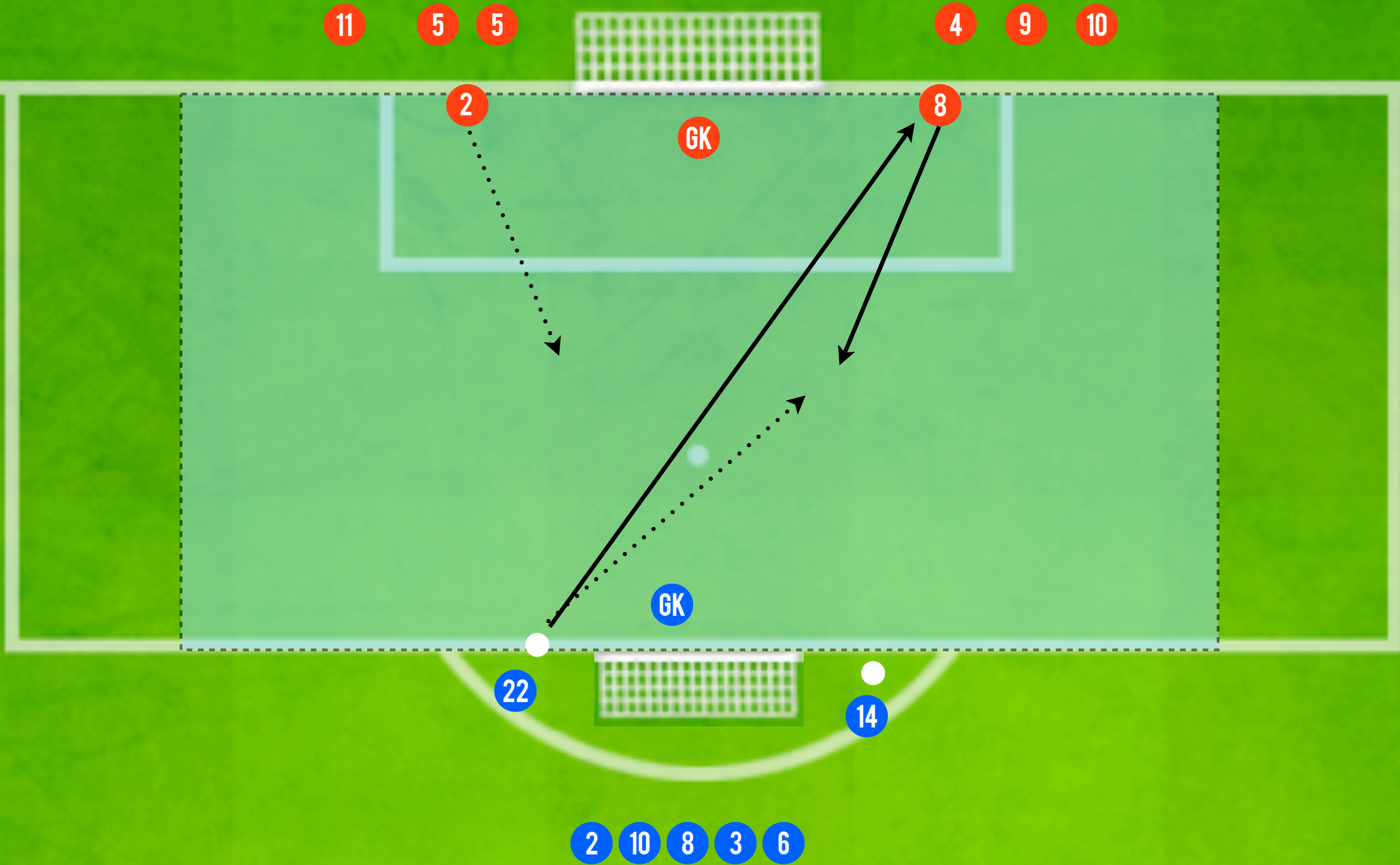
✓ At an appropriate moment the coach blows a whistle and at this point the first ball is dead, and 14 brings his ball out to play 2v2.

✓ The appropriate moment is when the coach decides the attackers have not sufficiently exploited their 2v1 overload.

Key Messages

- ★ Exploit overloads
- ★ React to new situations
- ★ Finishing
- ★ Defending in the box





SESSION 20: 11V11 SCENARIO

Objective

To immerse the players in real scenarios that will prepare them for competitive play.

To teach and coach in the real game.

Organisation

✓ Show the players a video with a particular match situation prior to the session.

✓>> For example, team winning an important away match with 15 minutes left.

✓ Give one team the challenge: 'you are the away team, how will you defend your lead (and counter attack) in the final 15 minutes of the game?'

✓ Go and coach the game 'as live' and play out the scenario.

✓ Have incentives and implications for the success or otherwise of the team who face the challenge.

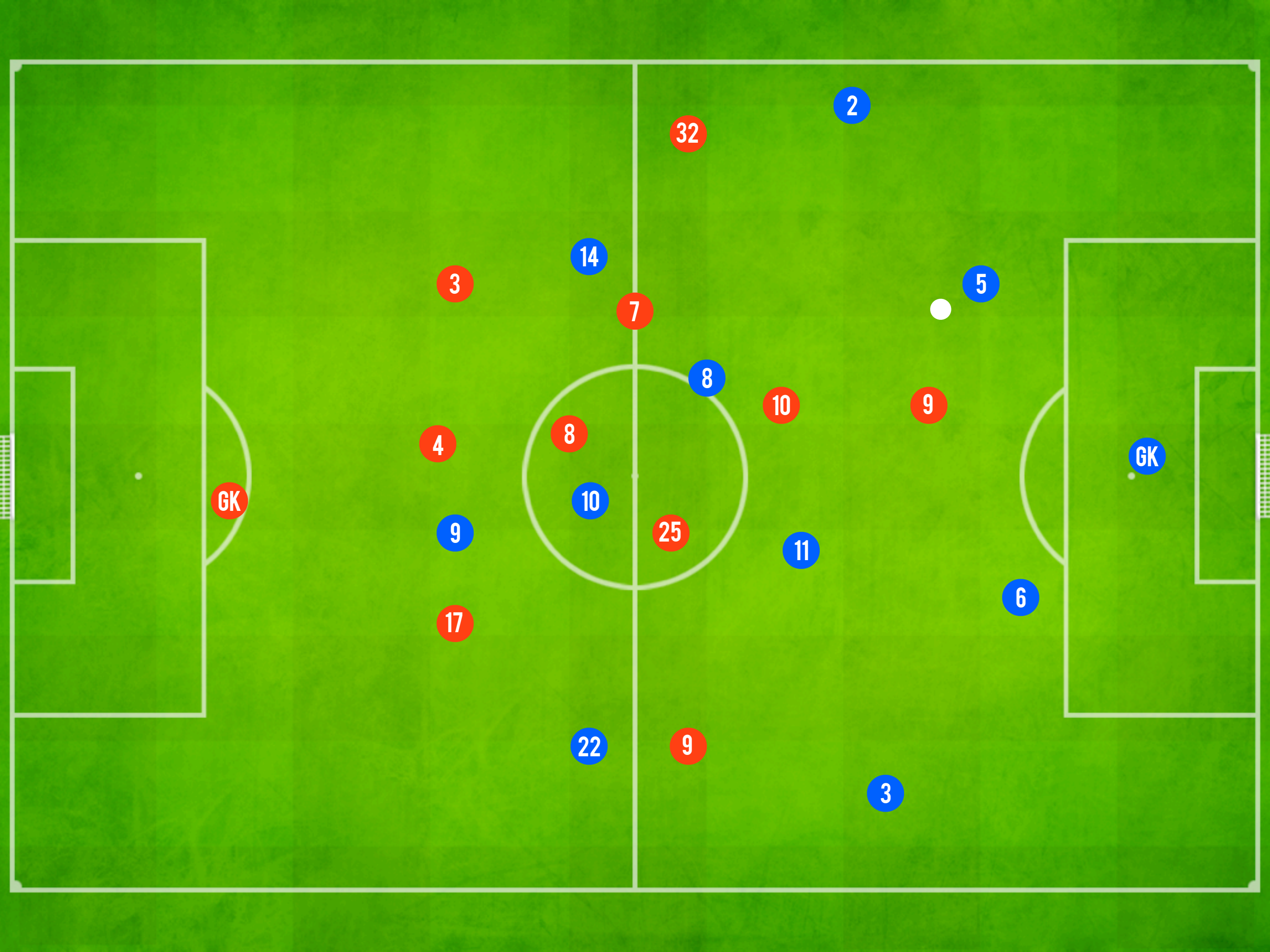
Key Messages

★ Play according to the 'state of the game'

★ Play for an outcome

★ Find a way, find a solution





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THANK YOU

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