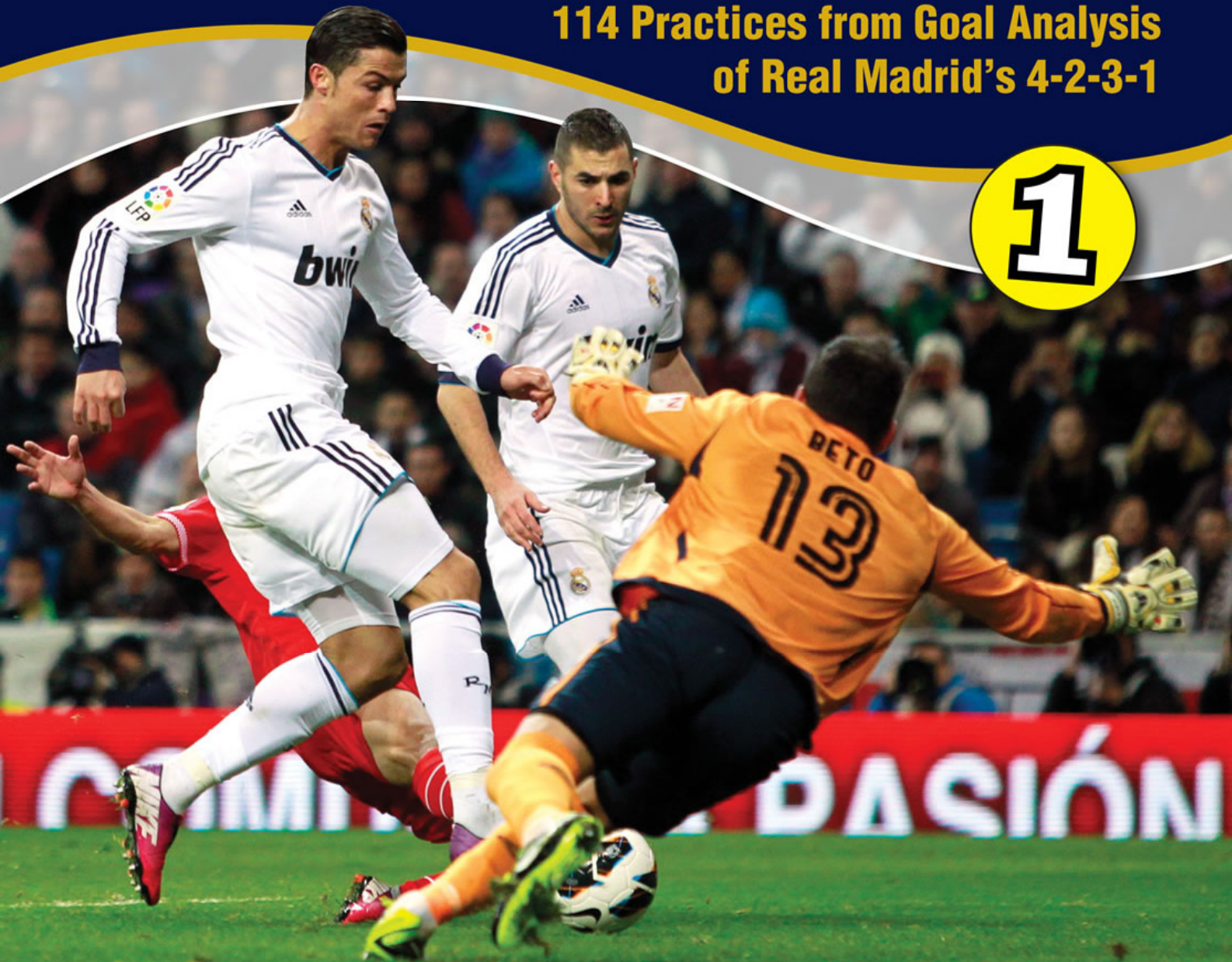


# ATTACKING & FINISHING TRAINING SESSIONS

114 Practices from Goal Analysis  
of Real Madrid's 4-2-3-1

1



**Michail Tsokaktsidis**



# CHAPTER 3

## ATTACKING AGAINST OPPONENTS WHO USE A HIGH DEFENSIVE LINE

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# ATTACKING AGAINST OPPONENTS WHO USE A HIGH DEFENSIVE LINE



Some teams decide to defend against Real Madrid with a high line at the start of a match or sometimes during a match if they were behind and needed a goal or because a player had been sent off (11v10).

In these cases Real Madrid focused a lot of their game on getting round the back of their opponents. This was mainly with direct forward passes in behind the back four (especially in the lateral space in between the full back and the central defender).

Passes into space gave a big advantage to the quick Real players who had good dribbling ability and it also enabled the other players to quickly move up from the back to provide support and finish the attack.

In this phase with pressure from the opposition high up the pitch and a numerical disadvantage Real Madrid's objective would be:

1. Maintain possession with accurate passing to feet in the low zone.
2. Use 1 touch passing combined with quick support play (1-2 combinations) to break through the pressure.
3. Forward pass to the player highest up the pitch into space and in behind the high defensive line.
4. Provide fast support for this player to quickly finish the attack.



# GOAL ANALYSIS

## Playing the Ball in Behind a High Defensive Line (1)

24-Mar-12

**Real Madrid 5-1 Real Sociedad (5<sup>th</sup> Goal): Ronaldo - Assist: Higuain**


The opposition are very compact in closed lines high up the pitch. There is free space in behind the back 4. Ramos has the ball with 10 opponents in front of him, but with one pass round the back of the left back he neutralises all 10 players. Higuain leaves his direct opponent to make his diagonal run in behind. Ronaldo also starts to move and takes up a good position in the penalty area.



Higuain drives the ball across the box at the perfect time and the short parallel pass meets Ronaldo's movement into space and he scores.

# GOAL ANALYSIS

## Playing the Ball in Behind a High Defensive Line (2)

24-Sep-11

Real Madrid **6-2** Rayo Vallecano (6<sup>th</sup> Goal): Ronaldo - Assist: Ozil

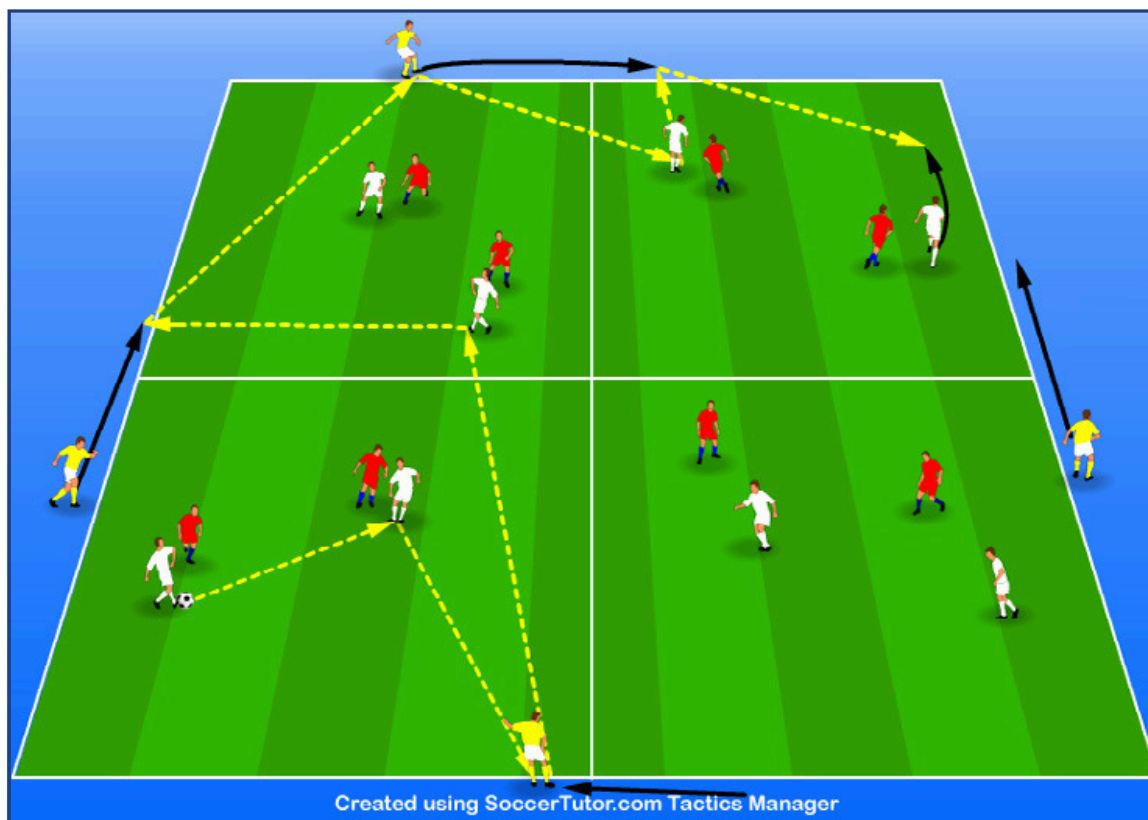


The opposition are playing a very high line and Ramos with 1 pass inside to Ozil takes 6 players out of the game and gives the advantage to Real Madrid in the centre.

Ozil dribbles the ball further inside and Ronaldo makes a good diagonal run in between the right back and the central defender. The run and pass are timed perfectly for Ronaldo to receive in behind. Ronaldo takes the ball round the goalkeeper who brings him down for a penalty. He converts it himself to score.

# SESSION FOR THIS TOPIC *(4 Practices)*

## 1. 4 Zone Possession Game



### Objective

To develop possession play with high pressure in limited space and time.

### Description **8 v 8 (+4 Neutral Players)**

In an area 20 yards x 20 yards, we split the pitch into 4 grids which are 10 yards x 10 yards each. In each grid we have a 2v2 situation. We also have 4 neutral players who can move all the way along their side of the square without entering the grids. The neutral players play with the team in possession.

If a team completes 8 passes or keeps the ball for 10 seconds they win 1 point. If a team passes through all the grids without losing possession they get 2 points.

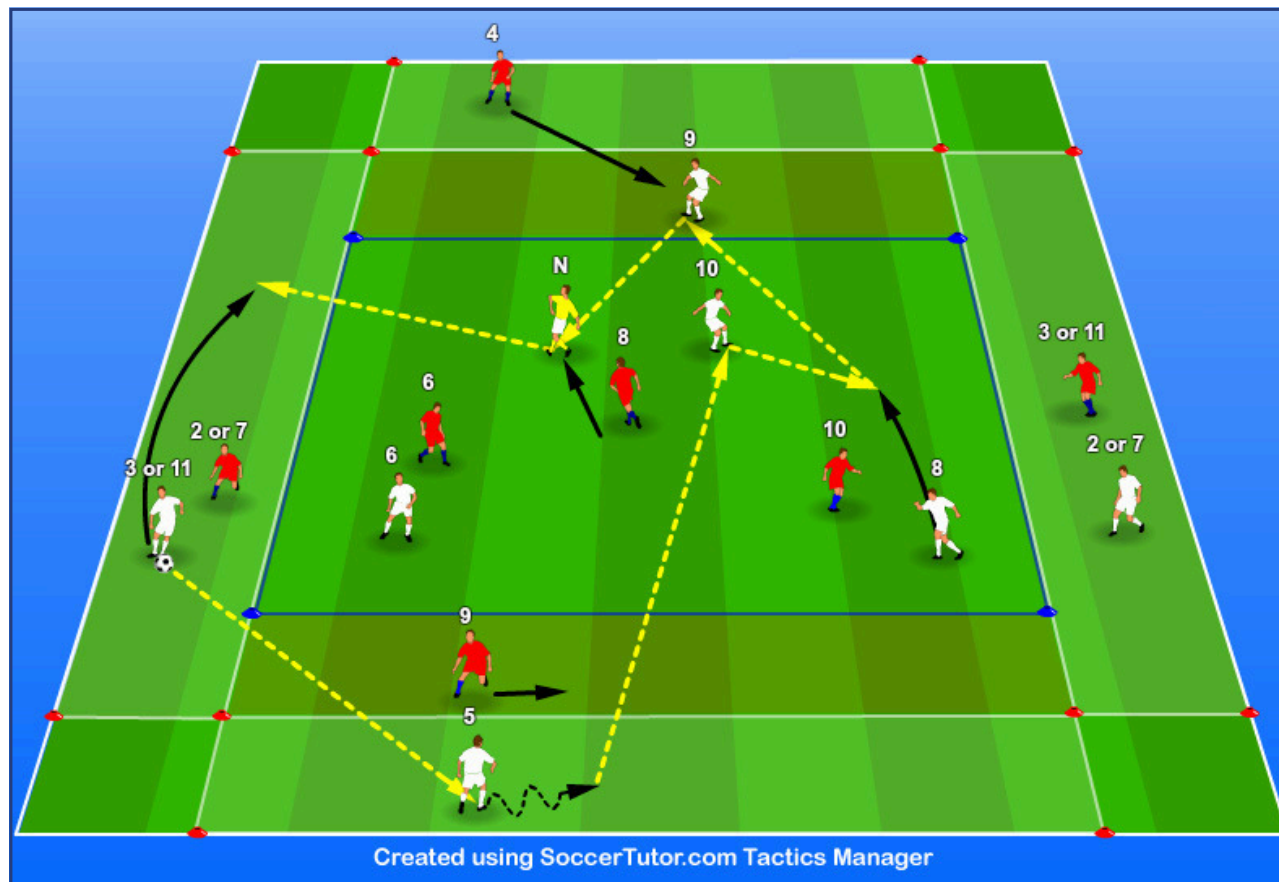
**Different Rules:** **1)** Unlimited touches for regular players and neutral players are limited to 1 or 2 touches. **2)** 1 or 2 touches for all players.

### Coaching Points

1. Correct body shape (open up on the half turn) and positioning is important to view where the options for where the next pass is going.
2. Players need to protect the ball in these 1v1/2v2 situations; put their body in between the opponent and the ball.
3. Key aspects: Speed and quality of pass, good decision making, correct angles and distances for support play and creative combination play and movement.

## PROGRESSION

### 2. Position Specific 7v7 (+1) Possession Game



#### Objective

To develop possession play with high pressure in limited space and time.

#### Description 7 v 7 (+1 Neutral Player)

In an area 20 yards x 25 yards, we have 7 grids. In the central zone, we have 1 large grid which is 12 yards x 12 yards and 2 smaller grids which are both 2 yards x 12 yards. We have 4 grids on the outside which are 16 yards x 5 yards.

In the large central zone, we have 3v3 (+1 neutral player). In the side zones, we have wide players (full backs & wideforwards) in 1v1 situations. In the end zones we have a central defender (red 4 and white 5) and in front of them we have the striker (9). The central defender can enter the striker's zone, but the striker cannot enter his. The striker can only press the central defender from his zone with the objective of preventing/intercepting a pass.

If a team completes 6 passes or keeps possession for 8 seconds they get 1 point. If a team passes the ball through all the grids without losing possession they get 2 points.

### Rules

1. The central defenders and the side players have 2-3 touches, strikers and the neutral have 1 touch, inside players with unlimited touches.
2. The central defenders and the side players have 2 touches, strikers and the neutral have 1 touch, inside players with 2-3 touches.

### Coaching Points

1. The inside players need to be constantly thinking of changing the direction of play to the outside zones.
2. The side players (especially) need to check away from their markers before moving to receive the ball as they have limited space to play in.
3. Judging whether to play a pass to feet or into space for your teammate is important in this practice.
4. The side players need to be strong in their 1v1 situations (shield the ball from the opponent).
5. The angles, distances and quick/sharp movements of the support players is key to success in this practice.



## PROGRESSION

### 3. Building Up Play Through the Lines in a Position Specific Practice



#### Objective

To develop possession play with high pressure in limited space and time (with support play).

#### Description 11 v 10

In an area 45 yards x 35 yards, we have one team with 1 GK and 4 players in white (the defenders), 2 in blue (the centre midfielders) and 4 in yellow (the AM, LF, RF and striker) using the 4-2-3-1. The other team have 10 players who are all wearing red. The red team are applying pressure high up the pitch. The objective is to play the ball out from the back under pressure from the opposition with limited space and time.

The players look to work through the lines and back; the ball moves from the white to blue, and then back to white who supports. The ball is then passed from white to yellow and back to blue who supports and finally to yellow.

If the multi-colour team completes 6-8 passes or keep possession for 8-10 seconds they get 1 point. If the ball is played from the GK, to white, to blue, to yellow and all the way back to the GK they get 2 points.

If the reds win possession, they must score within 5-6 passes in the goal. This is a quick transition for the multi-colour team from attack to defence.

### **Different Rules:**

1. Whites have 2-3 touches, blues have 1 touch and yellows have unlimited touches.
2. Whites have 2-3 touches, blues have unlimited touches, yellows have 2-3 touches.
3. All players have unlimited touches.

### **Coaching Points**

1. Correct body shape (open up on the half turn) and positioning is important to view where the options for where the next pass is going.
2. Decision making is important; when to hold the ball, play a first time pass or dribble forwards.
3. Creating space and checking away before moving to receive will be essential to maintain possession and build up through the lines.
4. Vertical passes are very effective and allows play to move forwards much quicker as they take multiple defenders out of the game.
5. Using the full width by switching the play from one side to the other maximises the space and makes it easier to maintain possession.
6. The attacking team must be very alert to a potential transition from attack to defence and quickly pressure the ball carrier (getting bodies back behind the ball).
7. The angles, distances and quick/sharp movements of the support players is key to success in this practice.

## PROGRESSION

### 4. Playing in Behind a High Defensive Line in an 11v11 Game



#### Objective

To develop the ability to attack in behind the defensive line against opponents who use a high defensive line.

#### Description

Using a full pitch, we split the area into 3 zones as shown in the diagram. The central zone is the high line defensive zone for the red team. There is a safe zone for the white team and the third zone is the final attacking zone for the white team.

The practice always starts with the white team in possession who build up play from the back under high pressure from the red team. The objective is to keep possession under pressure and breakdown this pressure with passes in behind the defensive line. The red team are not allowed in the safe zone and they can only enter the attacking zone once the ball has been played in there. The red team has 8-10 seconds or a maximum of 6-8 passes to score if they win the ball (quick transition play). This rule makes the white team have a quick transition to defend.

#### Rules

White team must complete 6-8 passes before passing the ball into the final zone.



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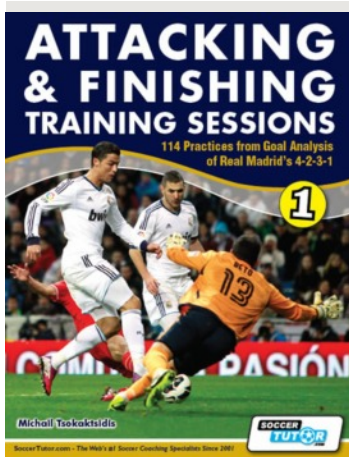
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