COACH YOUR TEAM TO SCORE MORE GOALS

Data-Driven Analysis of Europe's Elite Used to Create 16 Training Sessions

Paco Cordobés

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Written by
Paco Cordobés

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MEET THE AUTHOR:
PACO CORDOBÉS (UEFA PRO COACH)

- **UEFA Pro Coach**
- **Degree in Physical Education**
- **Professional Football Coach & Analyst**
- **Owner of Football Coaching Education Company (abfutbol)**
- **Editor for Coaching Books and Magazines**
- **Former Professional Football Player**

Paco Cordobés (UEFA Pro Licence) is a professional football coach, academy football coach, analyst and football coaching book and magazine editor.

This provides Paco with a unique insight into what it takes to reach the elite level and what is required for coach and player development.

Roles and Experience in Football:

- Professional football analyst at Atlético Madrid, where I participated in top signings such as Lucas and Theo Hernández, and Saúl.
- Editor and publisher of 150+ titles of football coaching books and magazines (abfutbol).
- Books include working with World Cup winner Vincente Del Bosque, Champions League winner Rafa Benitez, Europa League winners Unai Emery and Julen Lopetegui, and Premier League winner Manuel Pellegrini.
- Professional football coach at various Spanish academies (U7 to U18).
- Professional football player at A.D. Alcorcón (Spain).
- Professional football analyst at AFC United Eskilstuna in Allsveskan (Swedish top tier league).
- Runner-up in Swedish Cup (Svenska Cupen) as coach in 2019.

INTRODUCTION

This book is born from the **idea of uniting two very interesting aspects for the coach, the analysis of the real game and the training**. Coming closer to understanding that most goals at the professional level start in training, there is a lot of work behind each goal.

Spectators think that most of the goals we see are the product of the individual quality of the players, of their inspiration. Much of this statement is so, the different decisions of the player are born from his intuition, but although we do not perceive it, another large part comes from previous training work, from practice. A player's decision making can be between two, four, ten decisions, but he can only choose one and it has to be the correct one. The previous correct training work leads to a correct final decision and increases the percentage of success in his actions. **With the real match goal examples and training sessions related to these goals, we hope to inspire the creativity of coaches to design tactical solutions**.

Each way to defend or attack is chosen based on the team you have, as a coach you must use training sessions that best suit your team. A coach can play with a game system, or a style, however, if he does not have the right players, it may be more difficult to achieve a successful result. For example, if you don't have fast players in your attack and you decide to play counter attacking football, everything will be more difficult for your team.

We focus on **Manchester City**, **Inter**, **Real Madrid**, **AC Milan**, **Bayern Munich**, **Napoli**, **Liverpool**, **PSG**, and **FC Barcelona**.

They are among the best teams in Europe, and the world. We present goal examples for various different attack types in different sections, all followed by the work behind this attacking style.

To analyse Champions League goals is to understand what modern football is like. In this book, we introduce ourselves into small details of how the best football teams play, and we relate it to a practical part to understand how to train to play like this.

Despite Big Data, GPS and the rest of the spectacular technologies, intelligence and thinking are still the most important part to work on in training. Football is increasingly being studied, analysed, but also thought about, both from the outside with the coaches preparing their matches, and inside the training pitch, with the decision-making of the footballers, which is why the training sessions have to be creative.

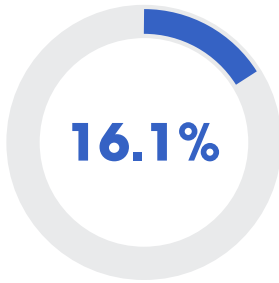
We are not trying to show a magic recipe, that is not our mission. We try to make the coaches who read this book think. The **question is how the best teams and coaches in the world score their goals, and then we present ideas for how to train these methods**. In this way, I want coaches who read this book to be inspired to look for solutions for their attacking play. We must understand that goals do not come by chance, but by the way your team trains, **"How you train is how you play. That's how you play, that's how you score."**

I hope coaches enjoy this book because it is full of examples and tactical solutions, and ideas to do other original exercises.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GROUP STAGE GOALS (2022-2023 SEASON)

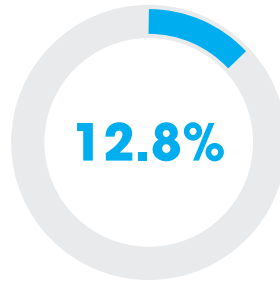
304 Goals in 96 Matches

MATCH DAY 1



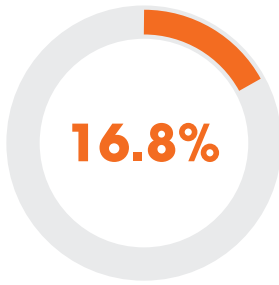
49 GOALS

MATCH DAY 2



39 GOALS

MATCH DAY 3

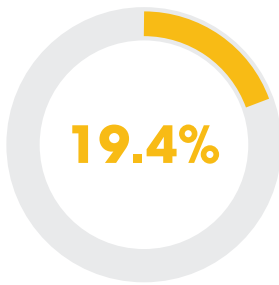


51 GOALS

MATCH DAY 4

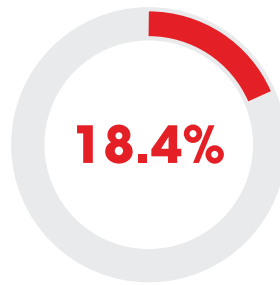
50 GOALS

MATCH DAY 5



59 GOALS

MATCH DAY 6



56 GOALS

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HOW DID WE COMPILE THE STATISTICS FOR THIS BOOK?

The data and statistics is the key to the book, with all the goals from the group stage of the 2022/23 Champions League viewed and analysed.

They were then classified based on different categories:

- **Type of Goal**
- **Type of Assist**
- **Pitch Zone of Assist**
- **Pitch Zone Goal Was Scored (Finished)**
- **Tactical Aspect for Each Goal Scored**

Based on these premises, different classifications have been made to delve deeper into the following question...

HOW ARE GOALS SCORED AT THE ELITE LEVEL?

The "goal" is the summary of everything that has happened before achieving it. By analysing the goals of some of the best teams in world football, we can discover how these teams attack and why they play like this.

From this, we enter the second large part of this book, which is the full progressive training sessions. As mentioned in the introduction, we do not seek to give magical solutions. The aim is to inspire coaches, to make them think, so that they are clear, that finding the right tasks in training will have an optimal result in the achievements of their team.

It is evident that we have focused on looking at only one major aspect of the game, the attacking phase (and counter attack). We have analysed all the goals thoroughly and classified them because we wanted to study the attacking play of the top teams in Europe, but with small details within the explanations of the tactical examples, we have also mentioned defensive errors in some cases.

Therefore, another of the functions of this book is that it serves to realise that most of the goals that occur in professional football come in part due to defensive errors that must also be worked on.

As you can imagine, watching all the goals from so many teams and then classifying them is an "exhaustive" job, but it was necessary. It is the "scientific" test to know what is happening in modern elite football. Perhaps it would be good if there were more works of this type to delve deeper into the game, and by relation, into the type of training that makes the game better. I believe that this is what we, the authors, the publishers are for - to help coaches in these aspects, to give them clues, inspire them, help them to improve their training, and indirectly improve the game of football as a whole.

STATISTICS → TACTICAL EXAMPLES → TRAINING SESSIONS

1

Statistics

- **Data source from UEFA Champions League Group Stage matches during the 2022/2023 season**. Goal statistics collected by studying each of the 304 goals scored across the 96 matches (6th September - 2nd November 2022).
- Each goal was assessed and put into various categories: Type of goal, type of assist, pitch zone of assist, pitch zone where goal was scored from, and the tactical aspect for each goal scored.

2

Tactical Examples

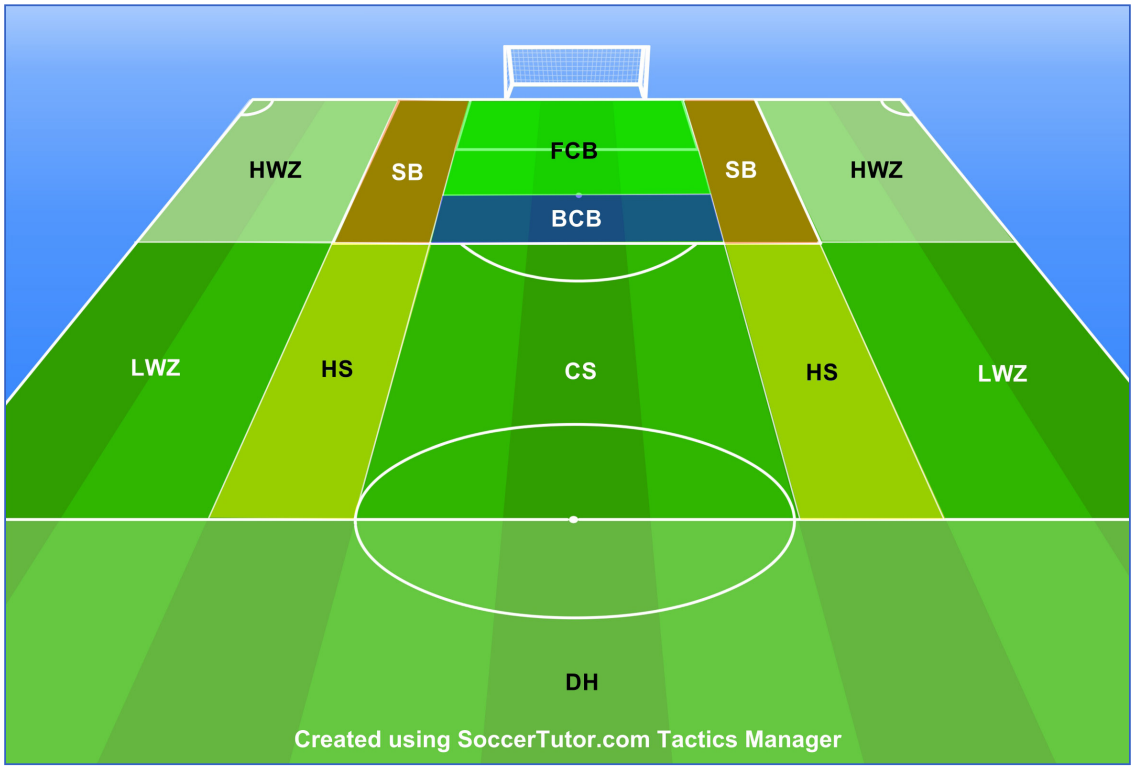
- **Real match examples of top UEFA Champions League teams scoring a goal** using the relevant data statistic e.g. Goals scored from through passes, or goals scored from centre of box, etc.
- Each action, pass, individual movement with or without the ball, and the positioning of each player on the pitch including their body shape, are presented, along with a full description of the goal.

3

Training Sessions

- The statistical analysis and tactical examples are then used to create full progressive training sessions to coach the specific topic described. There are **16 Training Sessions included in the book which fully outline how to create and score goals**.
- You the coach can then implement the practices into your sessions, so your team can be more efficient in training and score more goals in competitive matches.

PITCH ZONES: DETERMINING WHERE GOALS ARE ASSISTED AND SCORED FROM



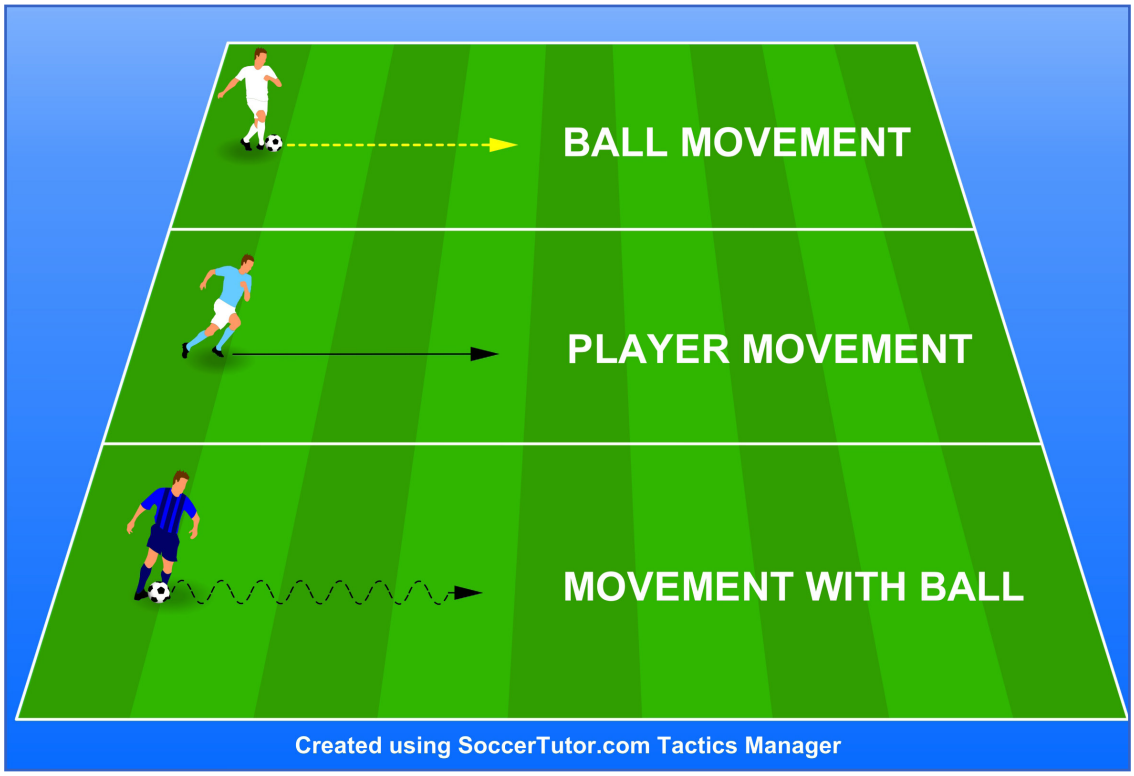
- **DH** = Defensive Half
- **LWZ** = Low Wide Zones
- **HS** = Half Spaces
- **CS** = Centre Space
- **HWZ** = High Wide Zones
- **SB** = Side of Box
- **FCB** = Front Centre of Box
- **BCB** = Back Centre of Box

This is how we divided the zones of the pitch before beginning our research.

When analysing each goal, we could then determine which zone the assist was played from, and which zone the goal was scored (finished) from.

This is valuable information because we can determine how and where most goals are created from, and where they are finished from. This can then be applied into your training so that you maximise the efficiency of your team to create chances and score goals.

DIAGRAM KEY & COACHING FORMAT



Tactical Examples

- The goal examples all come from the **UEFA Champions League Group Stage matches during the 2022/2023 season** (6th September - 2nd November 2022).
- Each action, pass, individual movement (with or without the ball) and the positioning of each player on the pitch including their body shape, are presented with a full description of the goal.

Training Sessions Based on Goal Type

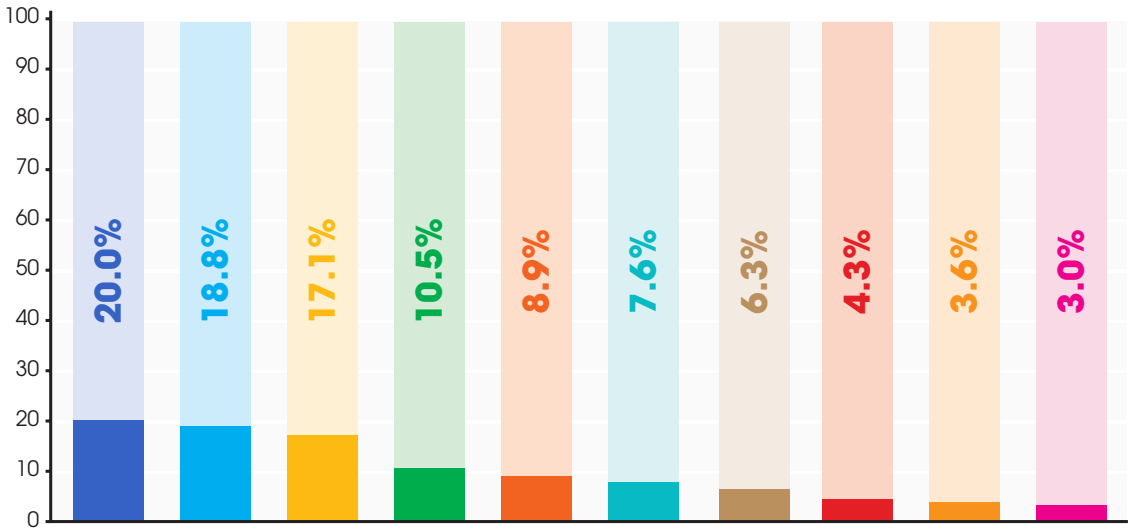
- Technical and Functional Practices
- Small Sided Games
- Tactical Conditioned Games
- Name (Objective) and Full Description

TYPE OF ASSIST

Breakdown of How Goals are Created

TYPE OF ASSIST: BREAKDOWN OF HOW GOALS ARE CREATED

Type of Assist for All Goals Scored During the Champions League Group Stages in the 2022-2023 Season (304 Total Goals)



Cut Back	N/A	Through Pass	Simple Pass	Corner Kick
61 Goals	57 Goals	52 Goals	32 Goals	27 Goals

Deep Cross	Wide	Lay-off	By-line Cross	Long Pass
23 Goals	19 Goals	13 Goals	11 Goals	9 Goals

* N/A = Penalty/Free kick/Deflection/Rebound

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TACTICAL EXAMPLES

2. CUT BACKS (20.0% OF GOALS)

RB Leipzig 3-2 Real Madrid (Vinicius Jr. 44') - 25/10/2022

Goal Example 1 (Real Madrid)

Cut Backs = 61 of 304 Goals Scored (20.0%)

Description

The start of play is wide with the right back **Carvajal**. The attacking midfielder **Asensio** arrives from deep, receives the square pass, and dribbles the ball all the way to the by-line inside the box. From there, he plays an aerial cut back cross for the movement of left winger **Vinicius Jr**, who beats the defender to the ball to score with his head.

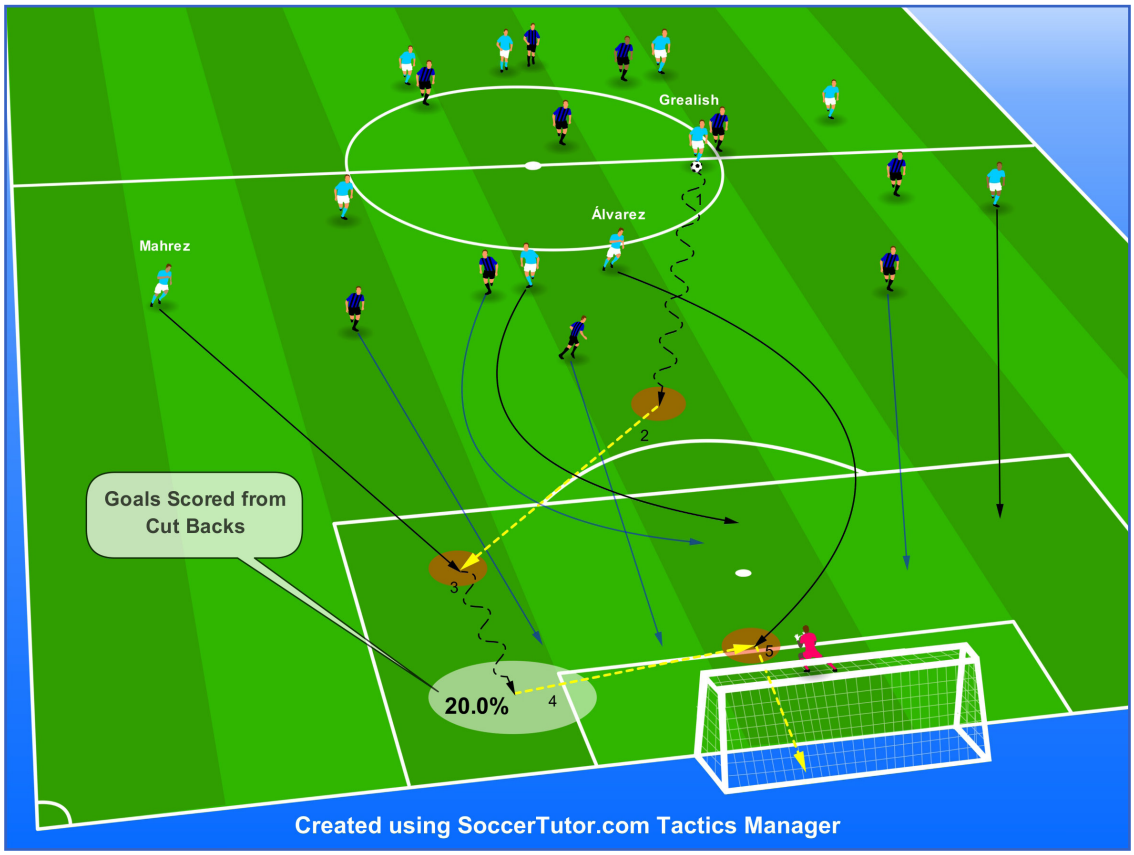
Key Aspects

1. **Carvajal's** wide position makes the RB Leipzig defence more open and Real Madrid have more space for their attack.
2. Another Real Madrid midfielder plays a key role by dragging a defender away from the play and towards the corner to create space for **Asensio** to exploit.
3. Attacking midfielder **Asensio** runs very quickly to take advantage of the created space and he is faster than the defender.
4. The winger **Vinicius Jr** anticipates the defenders' movement, arrives with perfect timing, and takes advantage of his speed in small spaces.

Manchester City 5-0 Copenhagen (Álvarez 76') - 05/10/2022

Goal Example 2 (Manchester City)

Cut Backs = 61 of 304 Goals Scored (20.0%)



Description

Play begins with City's left winger **Grealish** dribbling past 2 defenders trying to win the ball from him. He advances forward with the ball and passes to the right for the well timed run of the right winger **Mahrez**, who then dribbles towards the by-line and plays a cut back pass between 2 defenders for the run of the forward **Álvarez** to score from close range.

Key Aspects

1. The attacking players ahead of **Grealish** do not stop and offer support, but instead all run forward and drag the opposing defenders away with them. This creates space for **Mahrez** to receive in the box on the right.
2. The forward **Álvarez** takes advantage of the defenders all running back towards their own goal to make his run into the centre of the box almost unnoticed.
3. Then **Grealish** looks and positions his body to the left to deceive the defenders before playing the pass to the right side.

TRAINING SESSION 2

FOR CUT BACKS (20.0% OF GOALS)

SESSION FOR THIS TACTICAL SITUATION (4 PRACTICES)

1. 3v1 in Wide Area, Overlapping Full Back Run and Cut Back for Oncoming Runners to Score

Description

- The Coach starts the practice with a pass to the blue full back **(FB)**, who enters the wide area to create a 3v1 situation.
- The 3 blue players combine and then play a pass for the overlapping run of the full back **(FB)** into the high corner area.
- After the pass, the 2 teammates run into box (one to the near post and the other to the far post).
- The full back **(FB)** receives and cuts the ball back for either teammate to score.
- When the phase ends, the practice continues with the next players waiting on the other side.
- The practice is performed on both sides of the pitch alternately.

2. Pass to Winger Out Wide for 1v1 and Cut Back for Oncoming Runners to Score

Description

- The Coach starts the practice with a pass to the blue midfielder **(M)**, who then passes out wide and in front of the winger **(W)** so they can run onto the ball.
- The red defender **(D)** runs around the mannequin and takes up a defensive position within the corner area.
- The winger **(W)** moves forward with the ball into the corner area and starts a 1v1 action.
- The winger's **(W)** aim is to beat the defender and then play a cut back pass for either the forward **(F)** or the midfielder **(M)**, who make runs to the near and far post areas respectively to score.
- After finishing the phase, the 3 participating players return to their starting positions. Alternatively, they can rotate positions.
- When the phase ends, the practice continues with the next players waiting on the other side.
- The practice is performed on both sides of the pitch alternately.

VARIATION

3. Pass to Winger for 1v1 High Up the Flank and Cut Back to Edge of the Box for Shot

Description

- The practice starts with the midfielder's **(M)** pass to the full back **(FB)**.
- The full back **(FB)** passes to the winger **(W)** in the corner area.
- The red defender **(D)** on that side moves across into the corner area as soon as the winger **(W)** takes his first touch. We now have a 1v1 situation.
- The winger **(W)** aims to beat the defender and then cut the ball back to the edge of the box to a teammate.
- The forward **(F)** and the midfielder **(M)** both time their movements well to receive (one through middle of the 2 cones and one to the right side of them), so the full back **(FB)** has 2 good options.
- The player who performs the cut back has to raise his head and look where his teammates are located to play the ball into the correct position at the right speed.
- When the phase ends, the practice continues with the next players waiting on the other side.

PROGRESSION

4. Cut Backs and Finishing in a 6v6 (+2) Four Corner Area Game

Description

- Using half a full pitch, we mark out 4 corner areas as shown.
- We play a 6v6 (+2) game with one condition to score a goal: **The final pass has to come from a corner area**.
- The practice starts from either GK. The 2 yellow Jokers **(J)** always play with the team in possession.
- The defenders cannot enter the corner areas, they can only try to intercept passes played into them.
- When a goal is scored, restart from the GK of the team that just conceded.
- The teams play short 5-7 minute games. The outside resting team rotate in after each game, and the 2 Joker players must therefore switch roles too.
- The team that scores the most goals after a set number of games wins.

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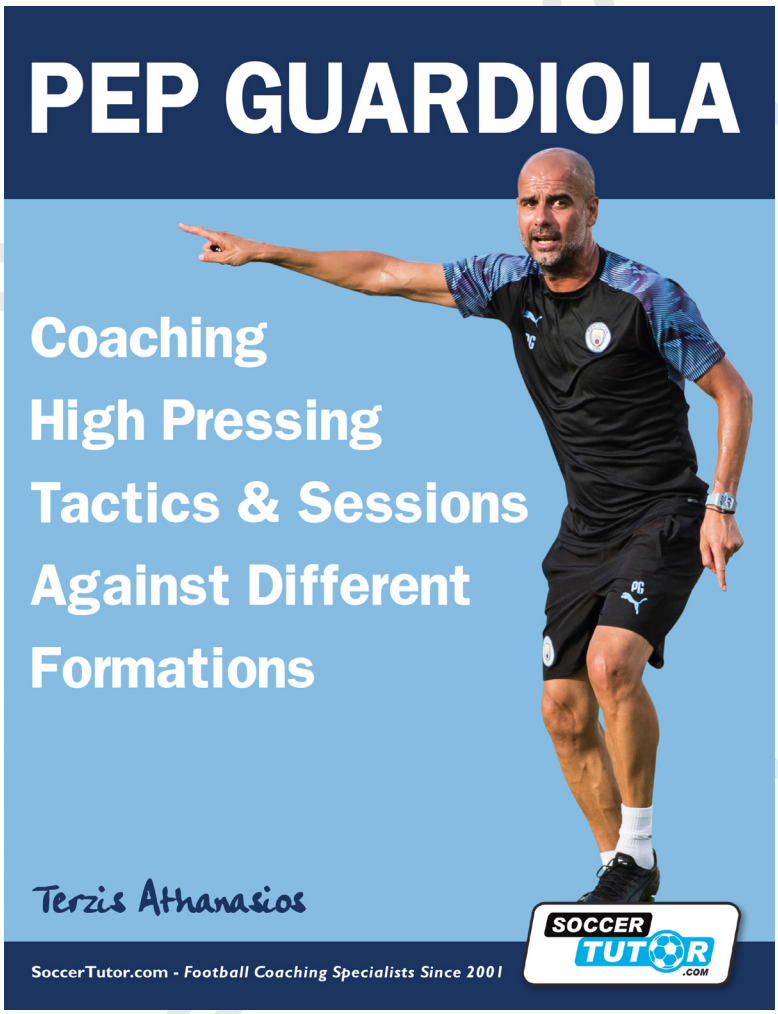

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