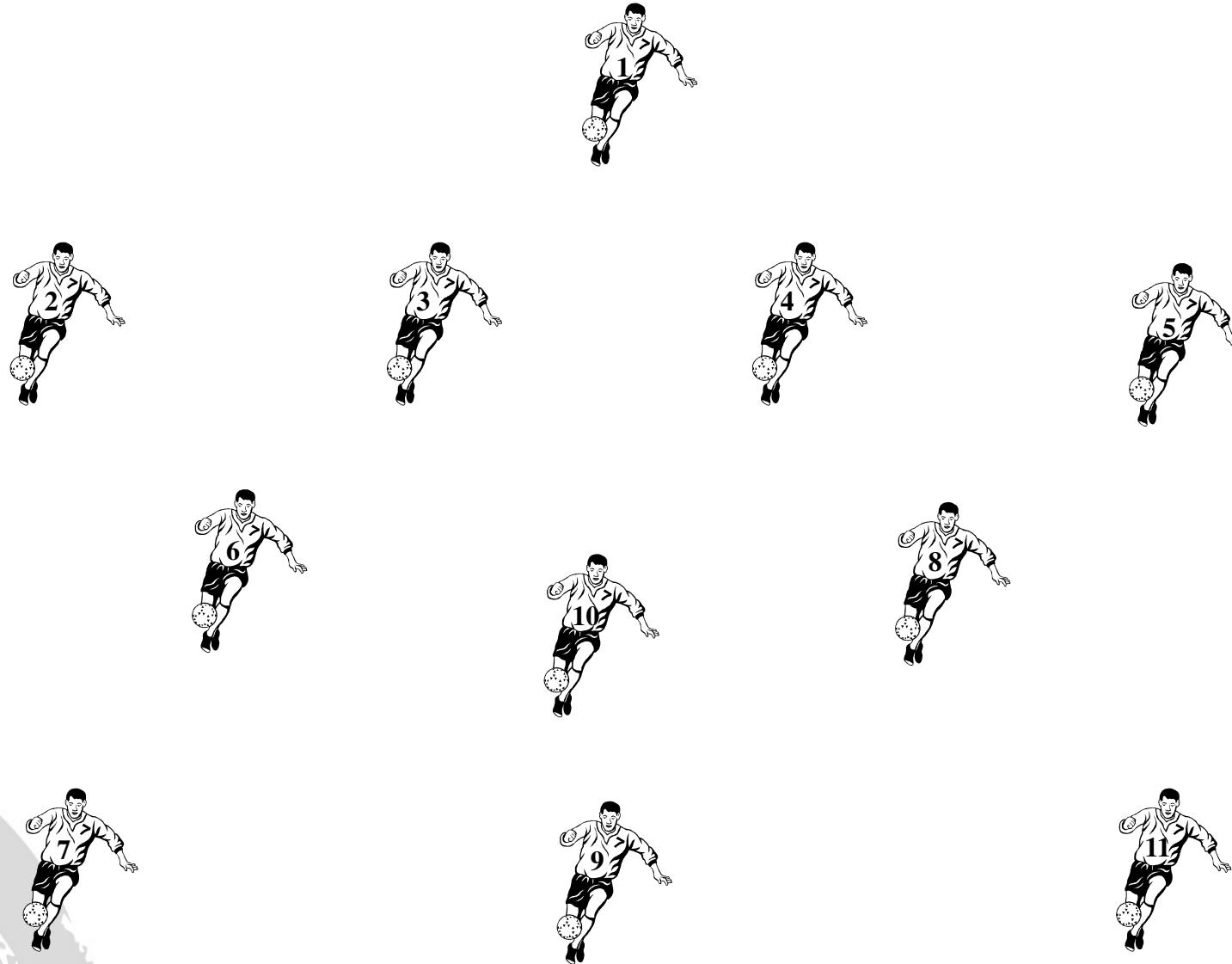


## The 1-4-3-3 formation



1 – 4 – 3 – 3 Formation

<i>Learning to master the ball</i>	<u>U/6 – U/7</u> 4 v 4	<i>No formation/tactics only very general instructions</i>	Getting a ‘T I C’ for football
<i>Learning to act with the ball purposefully</i>	<u>U/8 – U/9</u> 7 v 7	<i>1-3-3 formation/basic tactical instructions/ everyone plays <u>all</u> positions</i>	<b>T I C</b>
<i>Learning playing together purposefully</i>	<u>U/10 – U/11</u> 9 v 9	<i>1-3-2-3 formation/limited tactical instructions/talent for specific positions more clear (but still flexible)</i>	<b>T I C</b>
<i>Learning the positions and basic tasks in the 1-4-3-3 formation</i>	<u>U/12 – U/13</u> 11 v 11	<i>1-4-3-3 formation: extending tactical instruction explaining the positions and basic tasks</i>	<b>T I C</b>
<i>Learning how the basic tasks link together</i>	<u>U/14 – U/15</u> 11 v 11	<i>1-4-3-3 formation: choice/ specialising for a position + corresponding tactical instruction</i>	<b>T I C</b>
<i>Learning how to play as a team</i>	<u>U/16 – U/17</u> 11 v 11	<i>1-4-3-3 formation: extending development on one position related to the teams output</i>	<b>T I C</b> <a href="#">Football-Conditioning</a>
<i>Performing/winning as a team</i>	<u>U/18 – U/19</u> 11 v 11	<i>1-4-3-3 formation: perfection per position and as a team: result-oriented team-work</i>	<b>TIC</b> <a href="#">Football-Conditioning</a>

# Analysis - Weaknesses

➤ Overall technical GAME skills, in particular:

- Individual attacking qualities (creativity);
- First touch under pressure;
- Short passing game;
- Handling speed in tight areas.

➤ Ball possession/positioning play, in particular:

- Playing out from the back;
- Controlling / changing the speed of the game;
- Successful attacking combinations.

➤ Tactical maturity, in particular:

- Tactical awareness, 'reading' the game;
- Leadership; decision making on the pitch;
- Game 'cleverness', being 'street smart'.



## Rationale

- In the 1-4-3-3 formation there are 3 lines with a balanced spread of players over the pitch ('triangles' of players) which creates an ideal condition for:
  - effective positioning play, playing out and combination football
  - creative and varied attacking play using the width of the field
  - early disturbing and pressuring after losing possession
- For youth players, the positions and the attached basic tasks are logical and recognizable, which makes learning to play as a team easier to develop
- The Optus SSF formats 7 v 7 (1-3-3) and 9 v 9 (1-3-2-3) lead up to the 1-4-3-3 formation in a logical and methodical manner

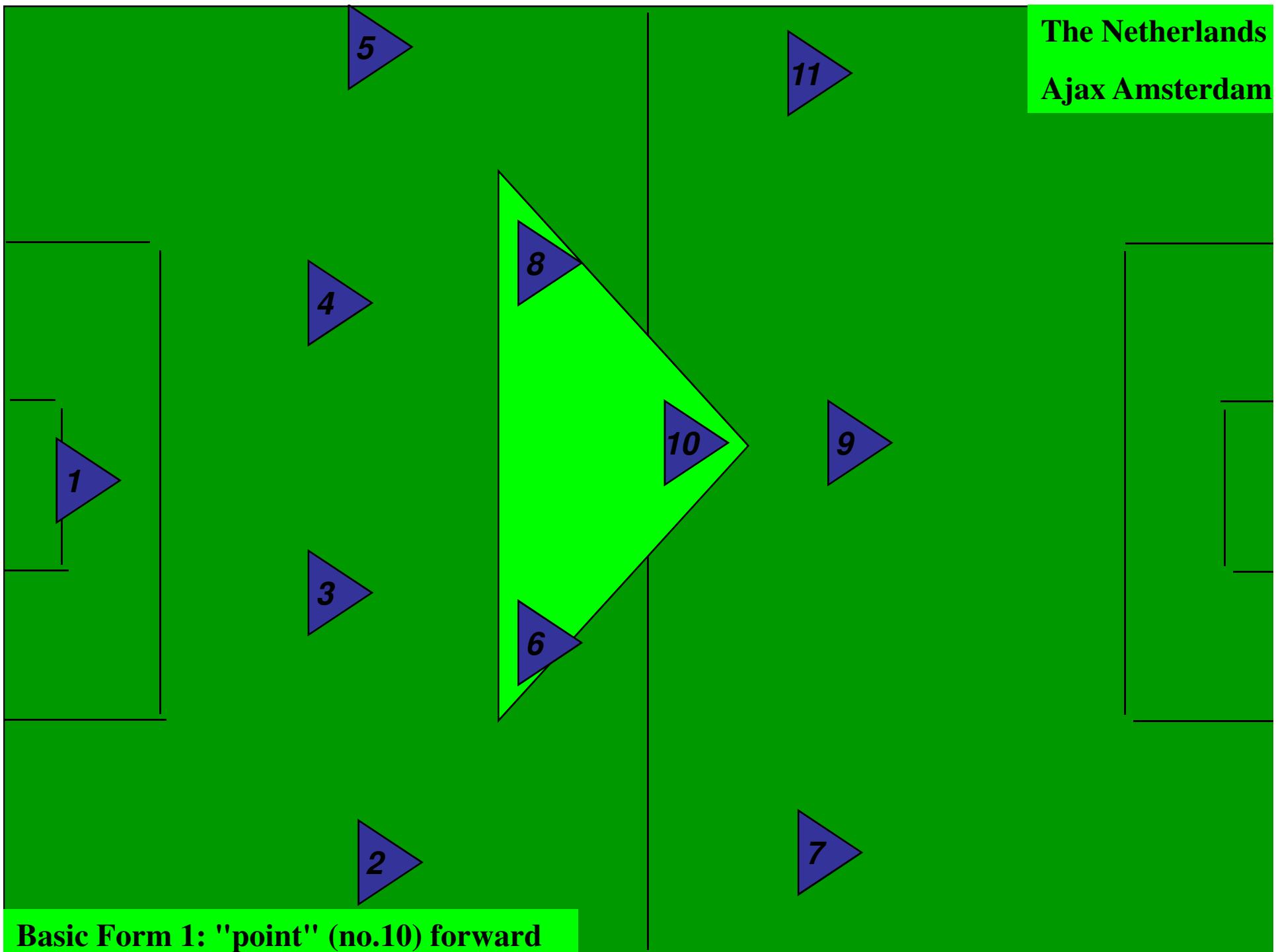


## **Basic forms**

- The 1-4-3-3 formation has 2 basic forms, with a number of derived (offensive or defensive) variations:
  1. The midfield triangle with the "point" (no.10) forward.
  2. The midfield triangle with the "point" (no.6) to the rear.
- Players in the age categories U/12 to U/15 should learn to master basic form 1.
- U/16 to U/19 should also learn to master basic form 2 and (a number of) the variations.

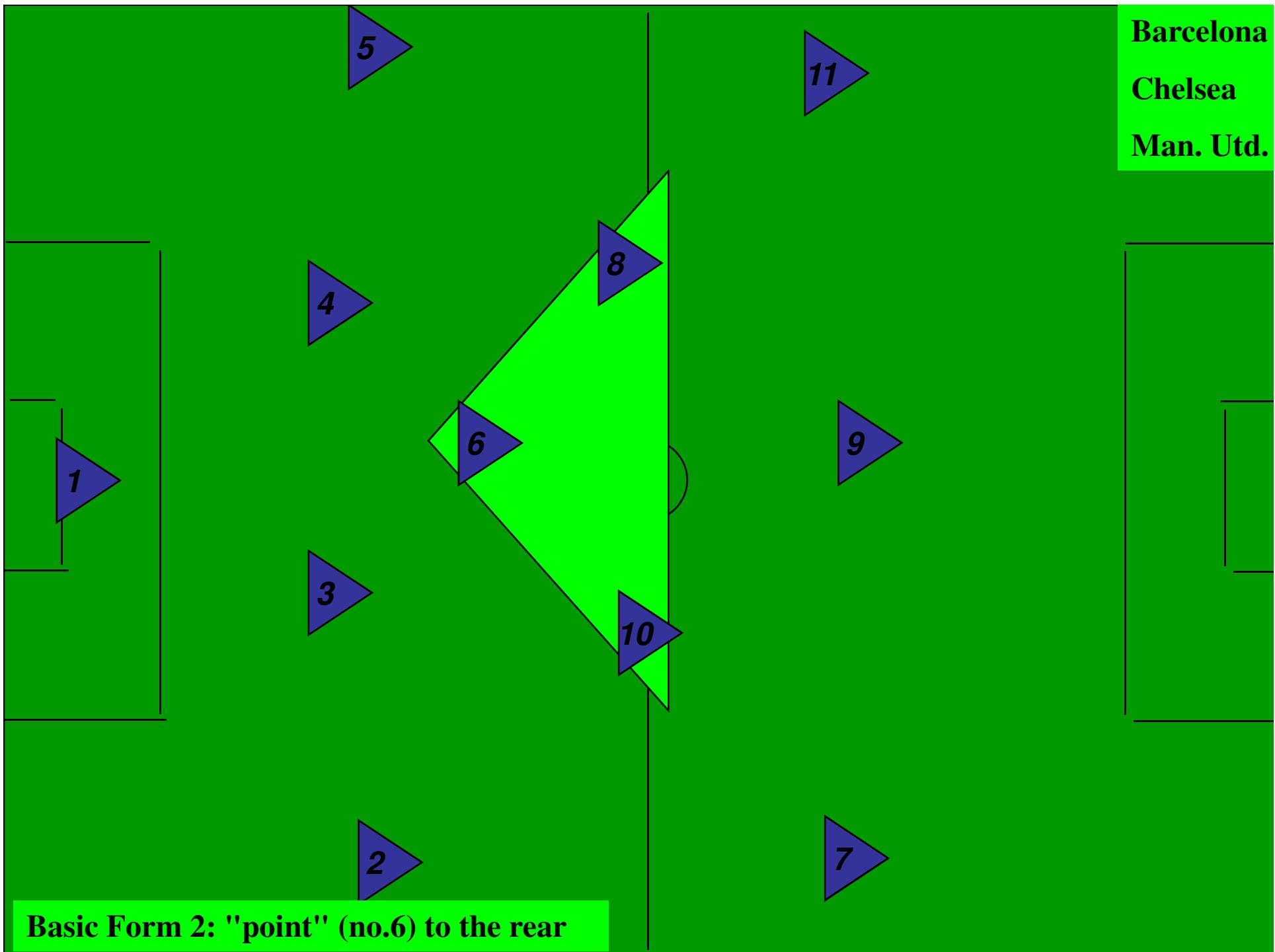


The Netherlands  
Ajax Amsterdam



Basic Form 1: "point" (no.10) forward

Barcelona  
Chelsea  
Man. Utd.



## General defensive principals

1. Direct transition of all players (no time to ‘mourn’)
2. Restore formation (no mixing of the lines)
3. Make team compact: short distances between lines and players
4. Zone defending (everyone responsible for own zone)
5. Pressurized defending by the whole team, forcing the opponent to play wide or back or lose the ball
6. Players to always coach the players in front of them (help your team mate)



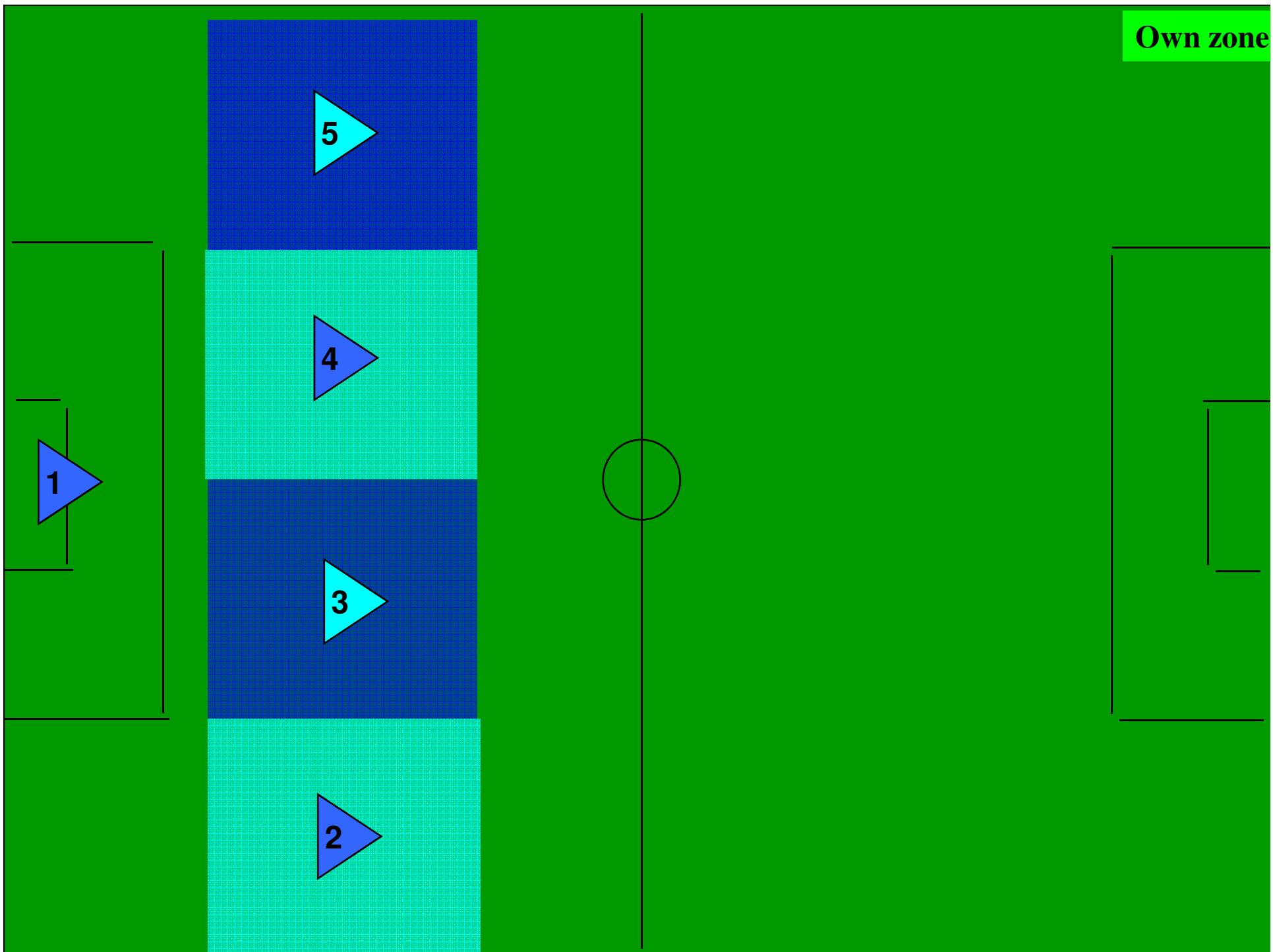
## Defensive principals per line

### defenders & goalkeeper (1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5)

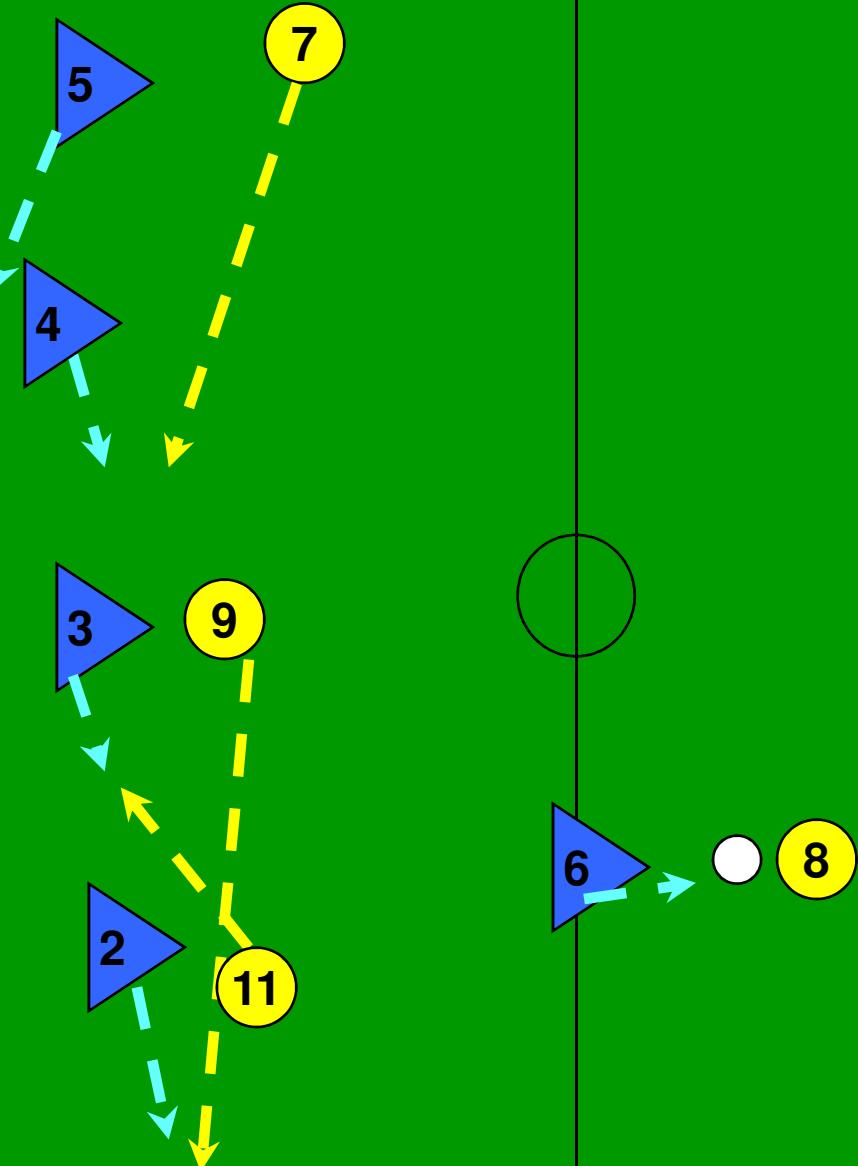
- Always maintain the structure/organisation of the defence line
- Everyone responsible for own zone (zone defence) so:
  1. Horizontal take over: pass players on in case of *switching* opponents (*width* of pitch)
  2. Vertical take over: pass players on in case of *overlapping* opponents (*length* of pitch)
- Cover each other (diagonal covering) , goalkeeper to act as ‘sweeper’ if required
- Keep opponent away from own goal (communication)
- Sharpness, manoeuvrability and insight (positioning/timing) are absolute requirements for modern central defenders (Neill, Vidic, Terry)
- Modern full backs need to be fast, explosive and manoeuvrable rather than big and strong (Wilkshire, Cole, Evra)



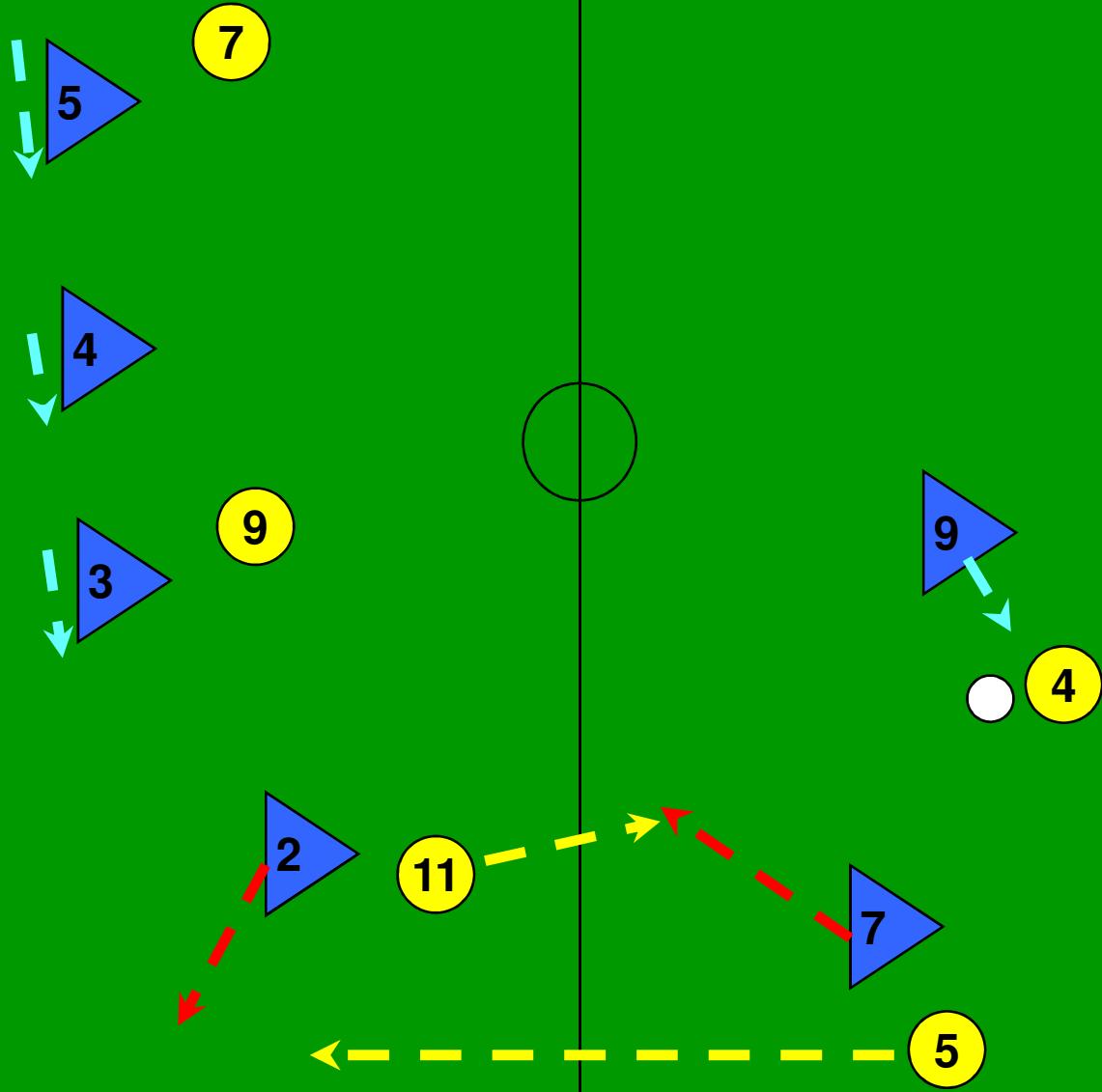
Own zone



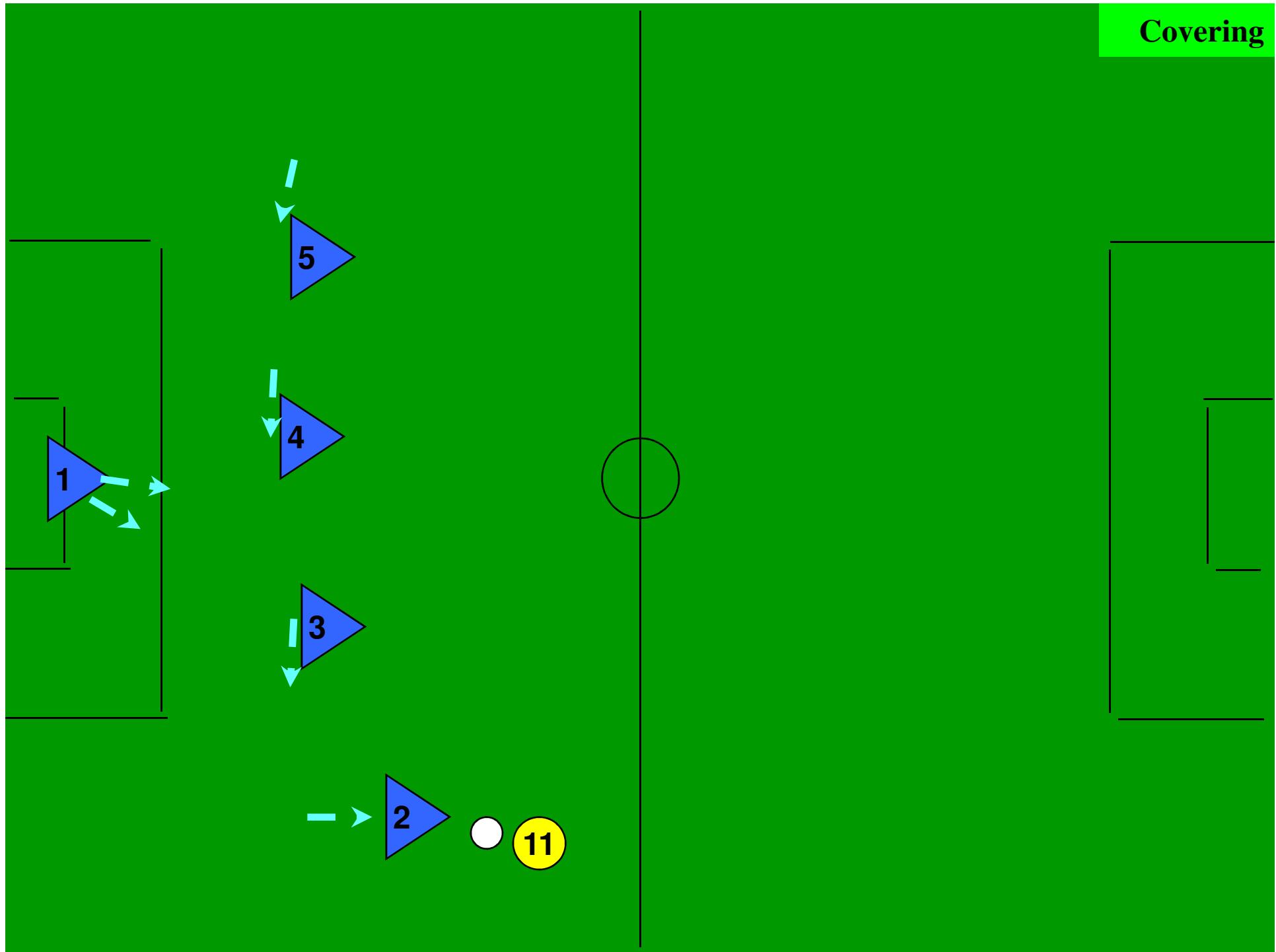
**Horizontal take over  
(switching opponents)**



Vertical take over  
(overlapping  
opponents)



## Covering



## Defensive principals per line

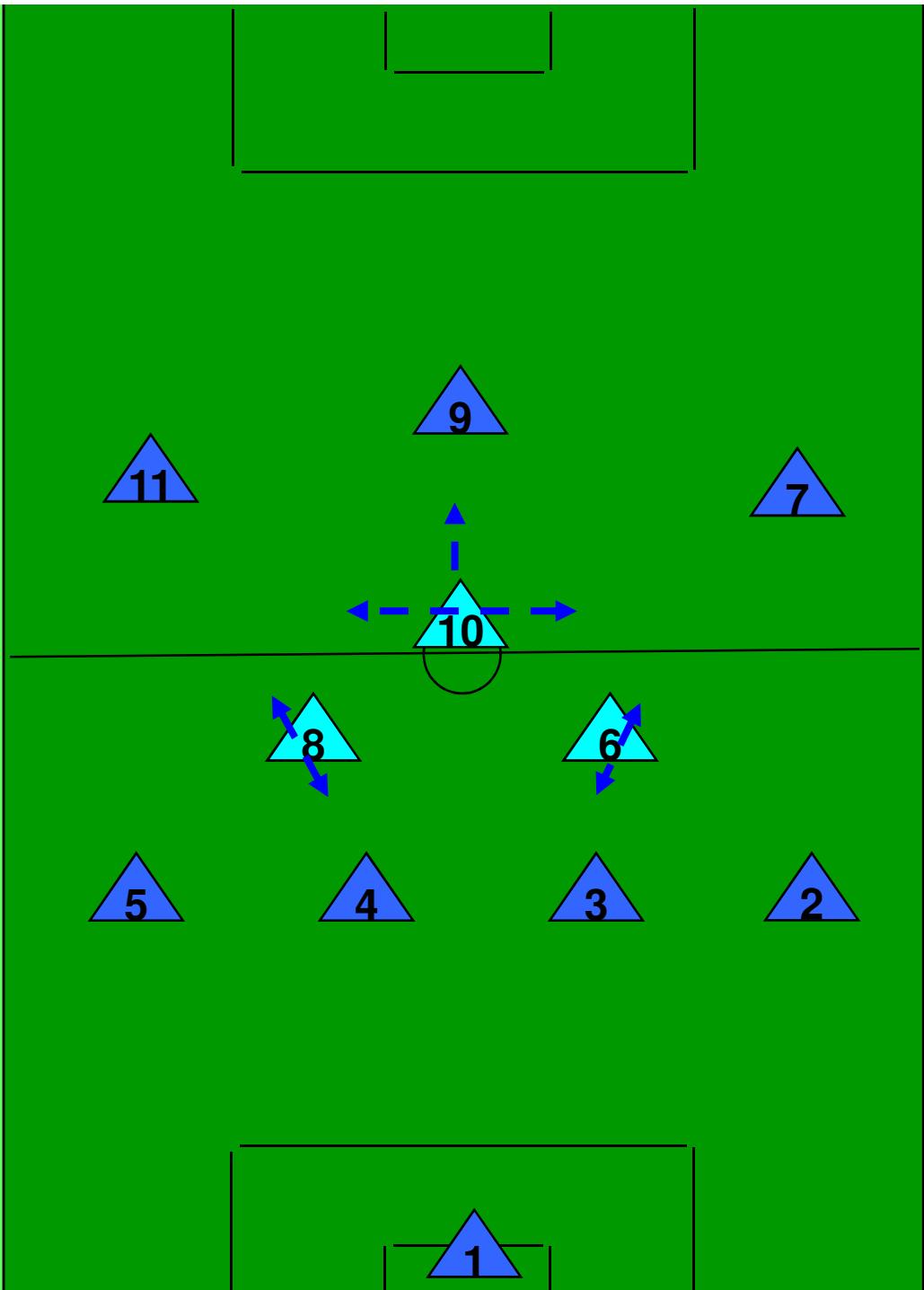
### Midfield (6 – 8 – 10) pointed forward:

#### No's 6 & 8

- Cover the central and lateral defensive midfield area's
- Screen/shield the lines to the strikers
- Take over positions, 'fill' gaps and stay 'behind the ball' (at least one of both)
- Ball 'winners' with strong tactical awareness/insight
- Grella, Carrick, Essien

#### No. 10

- Connects with 6 & 8 to form a 'bloc' on the midfield
- Covers the central offensive midfield area
- Supports No.9 in pressuring the opponents central defenders
- Bresciano/Cahill/Bergkamp



## Defensive principals per line

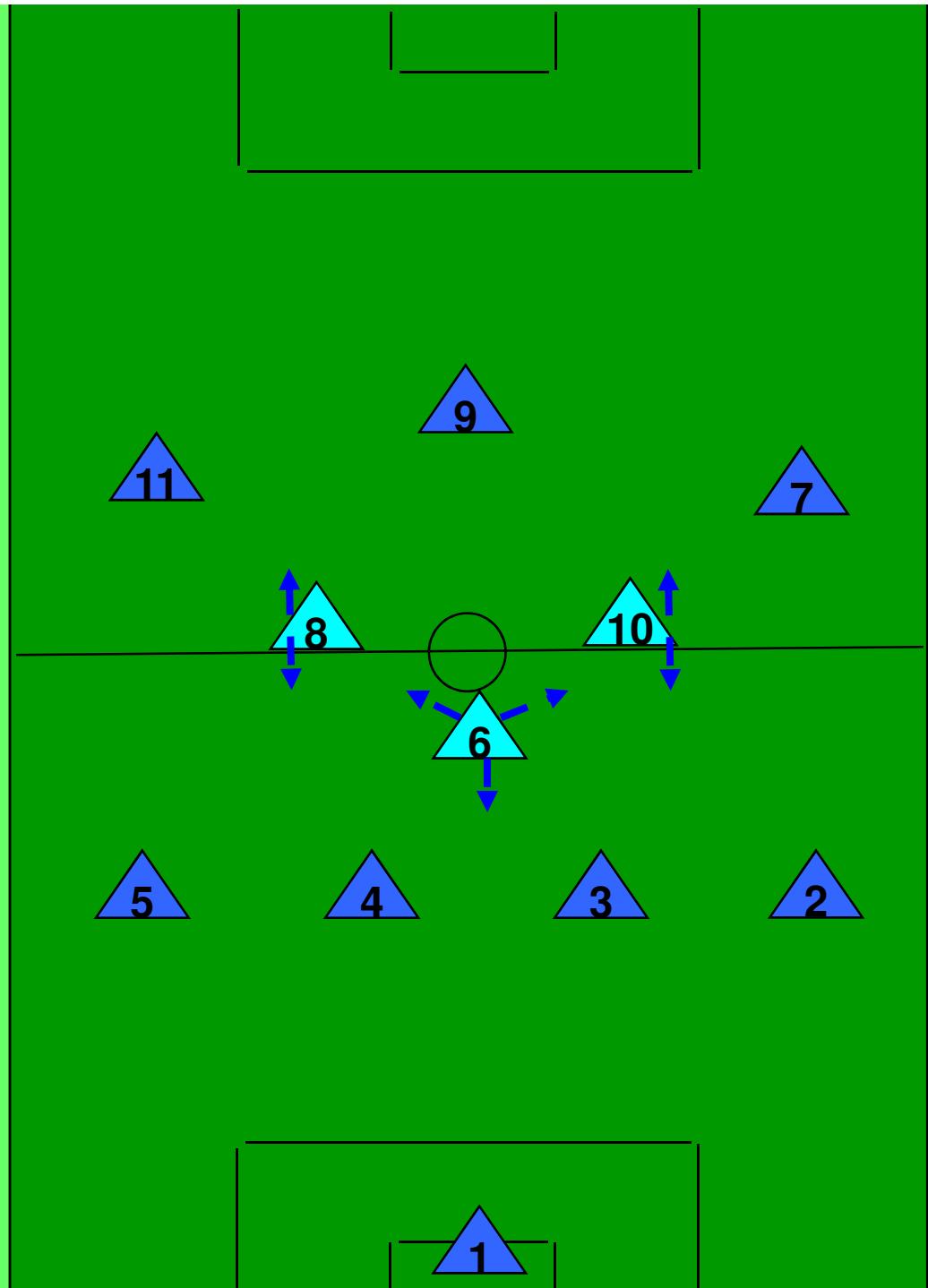
### Midfield pointed to the rear:

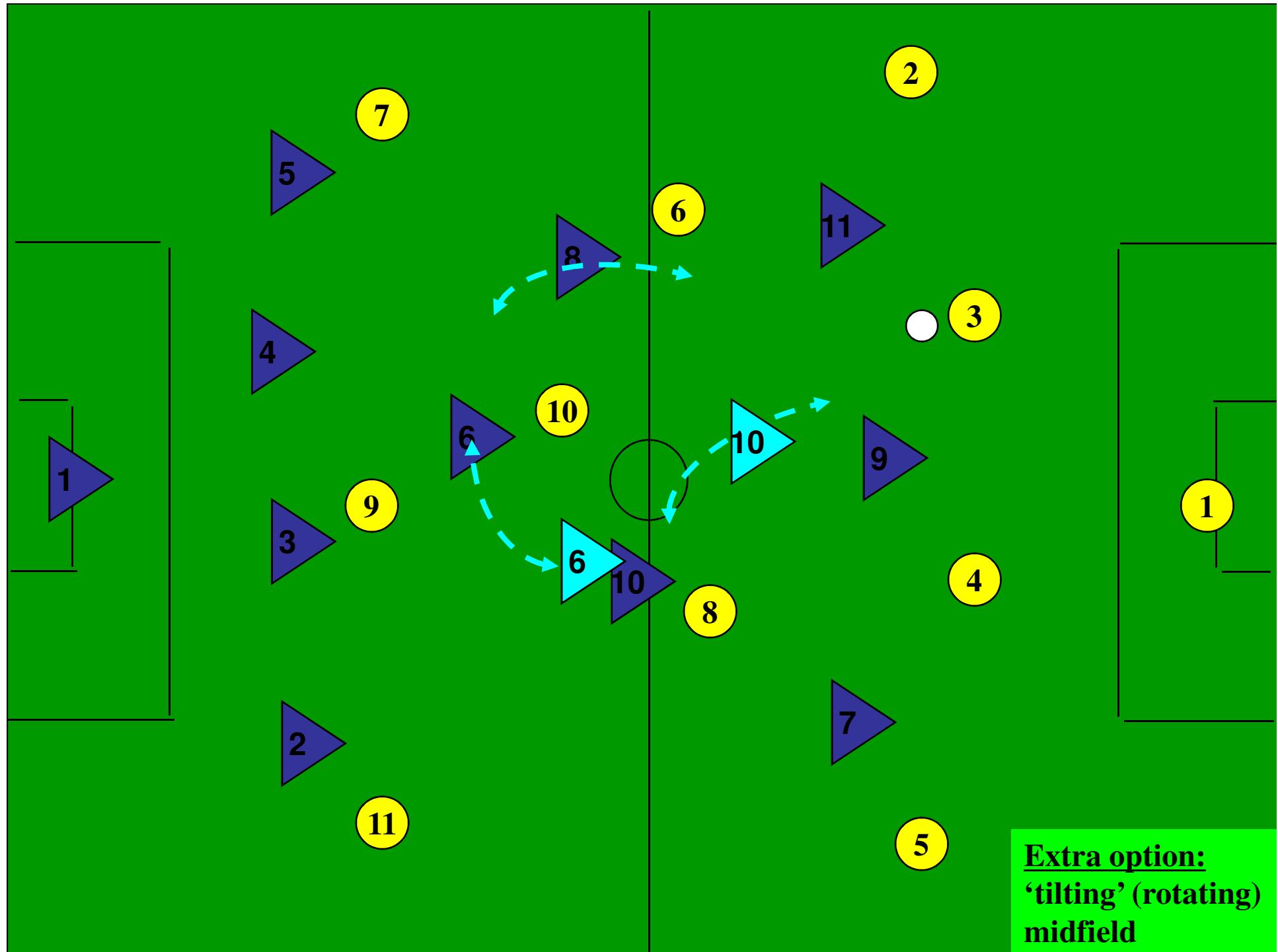
#### No. 6

- Covers the central defensive midfield area
- Screens/shields the line to the strikers
- Takes over positions, 'fill' gaps and always stays 'behind the ball'
- Ball 'winner' with strong tactical awareness/insight, on field leadership
- Carrick, Essien, Mascherano

#### No's 8 & 10

- Connect with 6 to form a 'bloc' on the midfield
- Cover the lateral midfield area's
- Technical and tactical 'all round' midfielders that are able to bridge large spaces
- Gerrard, Lampard, Ballack, Xavi, Iniesta





## Rotating midfield triangle

- When transitioning from BP to BPO: the midfield triangle rotates from 'point' forward to 'point' to the rear
- Rotation to left or right depending on qualities of own players and opponents (own No.10 rotates back to opponents most defensive midfielder)
- No. 6 gives cover to No's. 8 & 10 and shields/screens the line to opponents No. 9
- Choose the right moment to pass on opponents and press (communication/coaching)
- Keep the midfield shape, stay compact and always press the ball (communication/coaching)

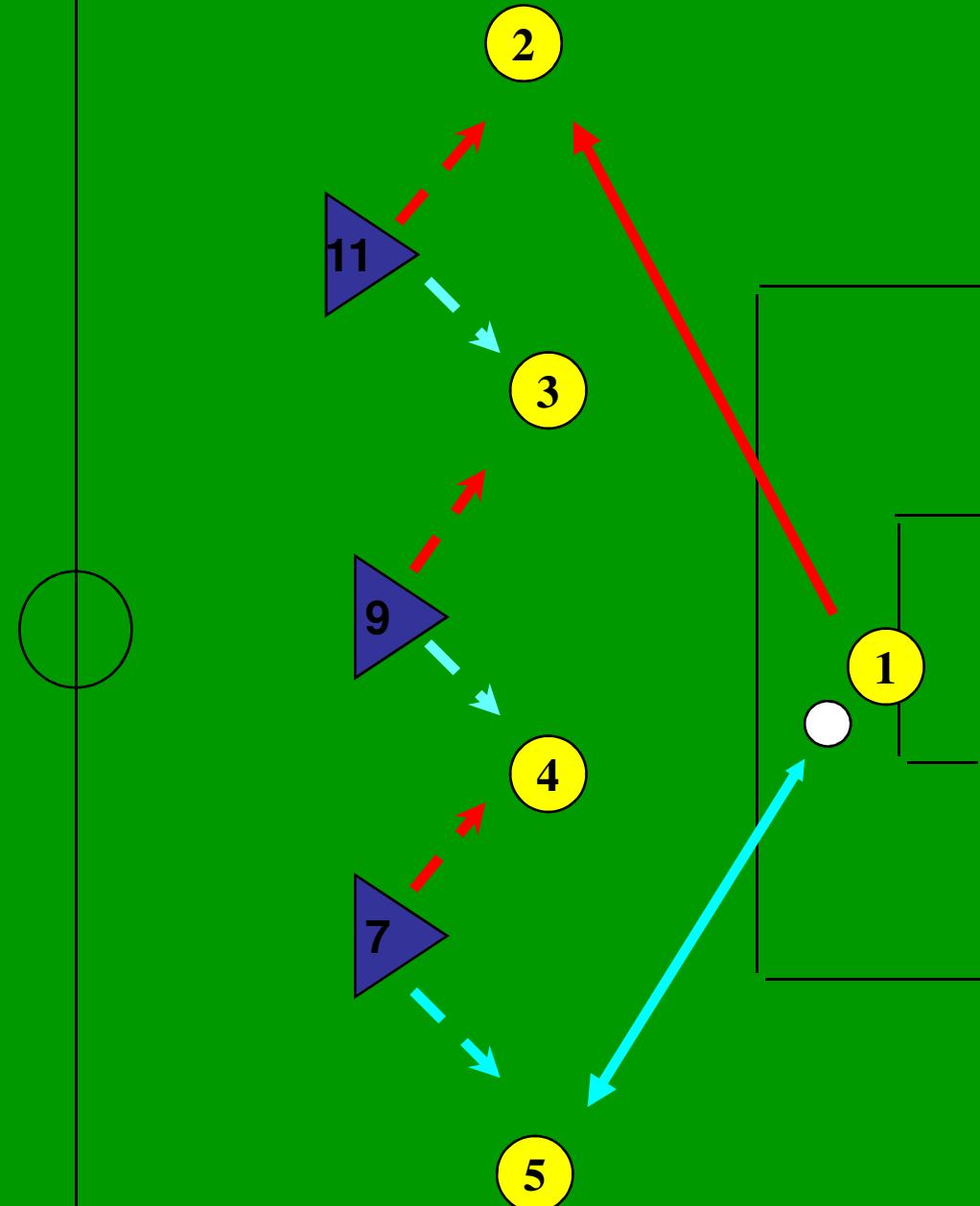


## Defensive principals per line attackers (7-9-11)

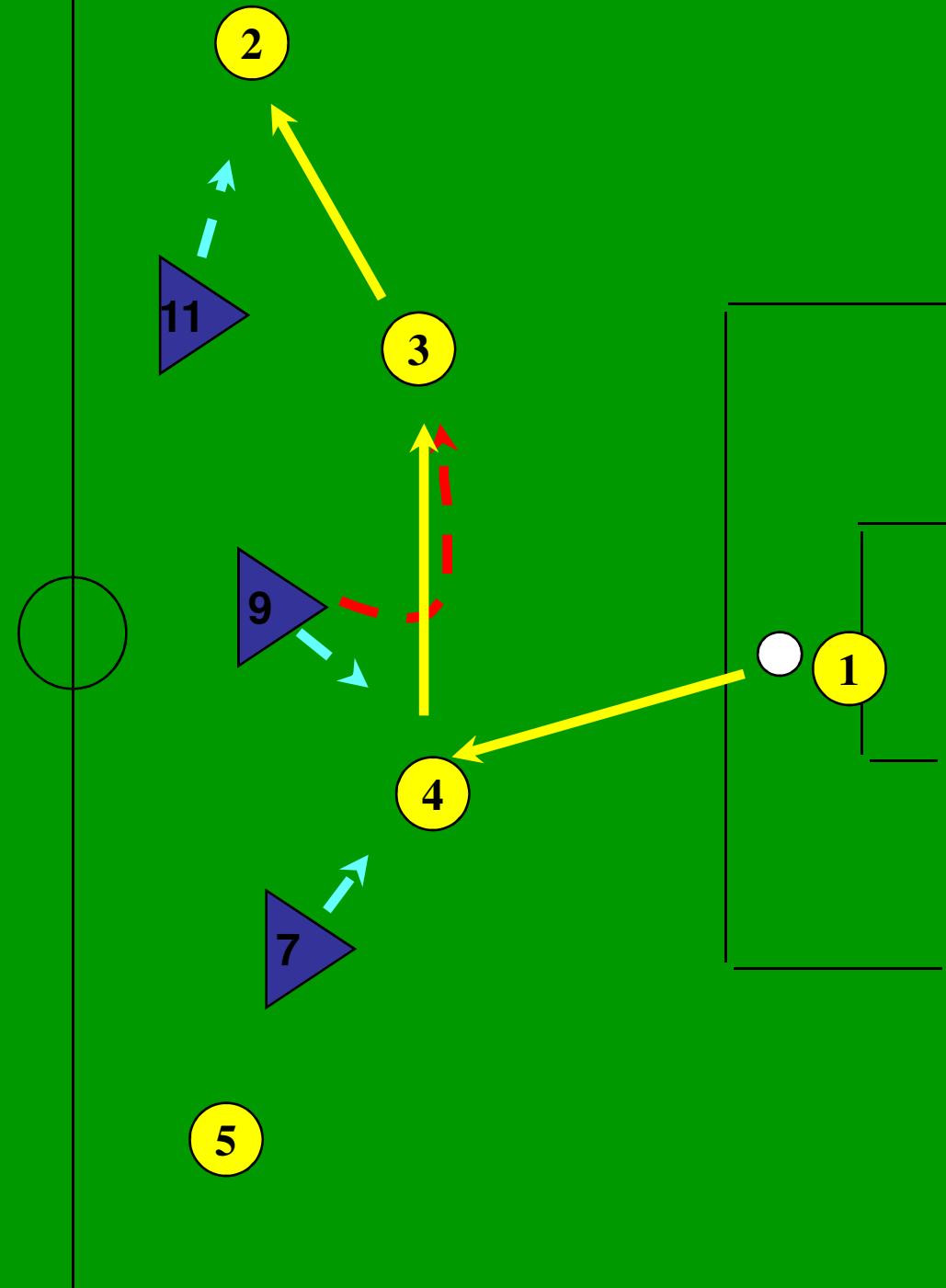
- Immediate transitioning from BP to BPO (especially important for attackers!)
- ‘Connect’ to the midfield ASAP
- Work together as a ‘bloc’ (communication!)
- Squeeze and delay opponents playing out in a 3 v 4 situation while ‘leading’ them to a flank
- start pressuring collectively on the signal from (one of) the designated axis player(s)
- Prevent opponent from playing a forward pass where possible, otherwise always force opponent to give the forward pass under pressure
- Prevent defenders from moving into the midfield
- Take over each others positions/tasks if necessary

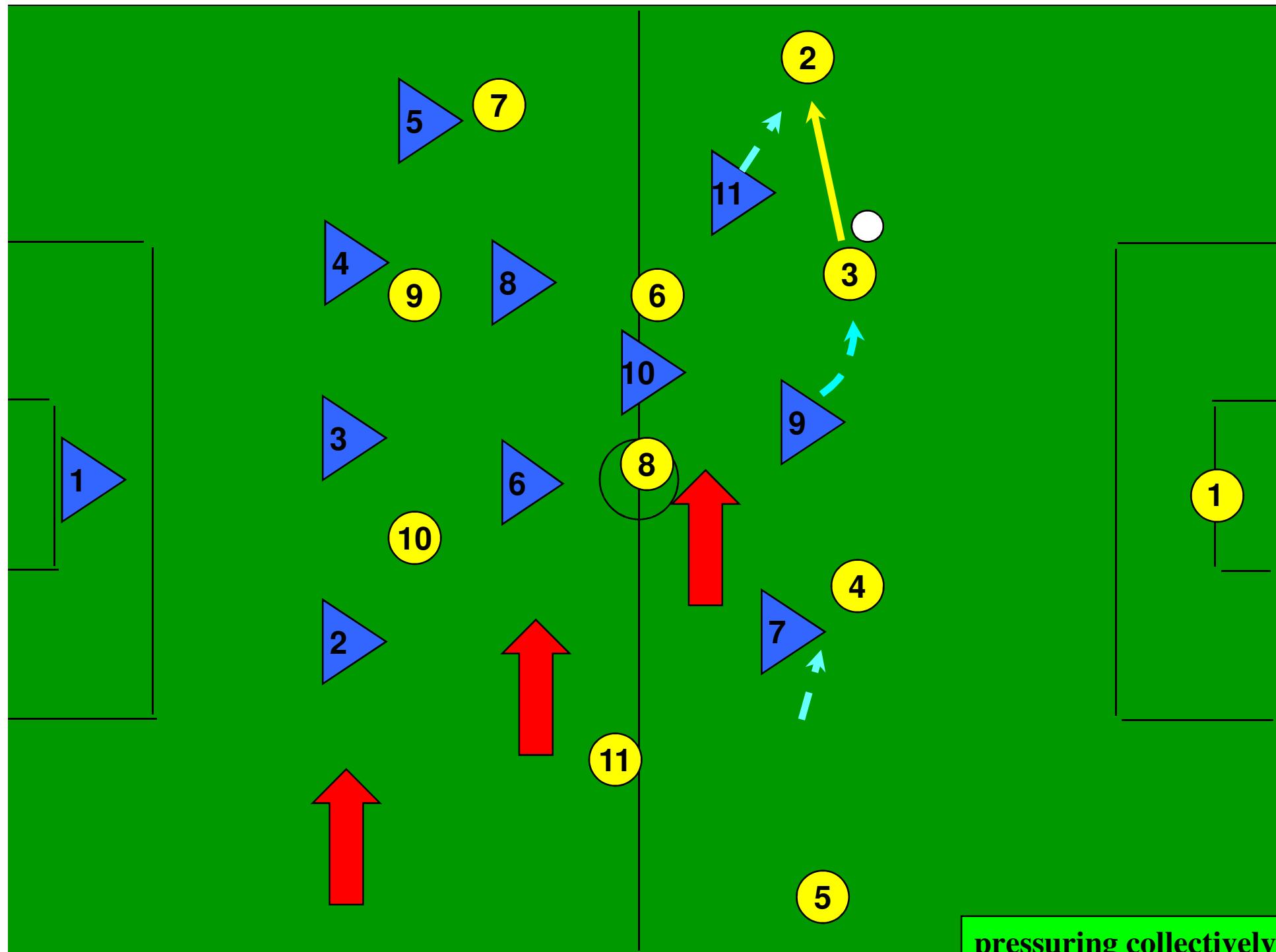


Work as a 'bloc'  
Squeeze and delay



## ‘Leading’ to a flank





pressuring collectively

## General offensive principals

1. Immidiate and quick transition BPO to BP by all players, restore / maintain formation
2. Open up the spaces (make the field 'big') without losing the cohesion between the lines
3. Proper posotioning: face 'open' (side on, forward) so that forward situations are always in your field of vision
4. **Playing out** is an absolute requirement in order to control the tempo of the game and 'feed' the attackers in a succesful manner, but:
5. No square passing (outside to inside) in building up phase (deadly in case of interception!)
6. Always look for a forward pass as first option (vision: not only look for the nearest option)



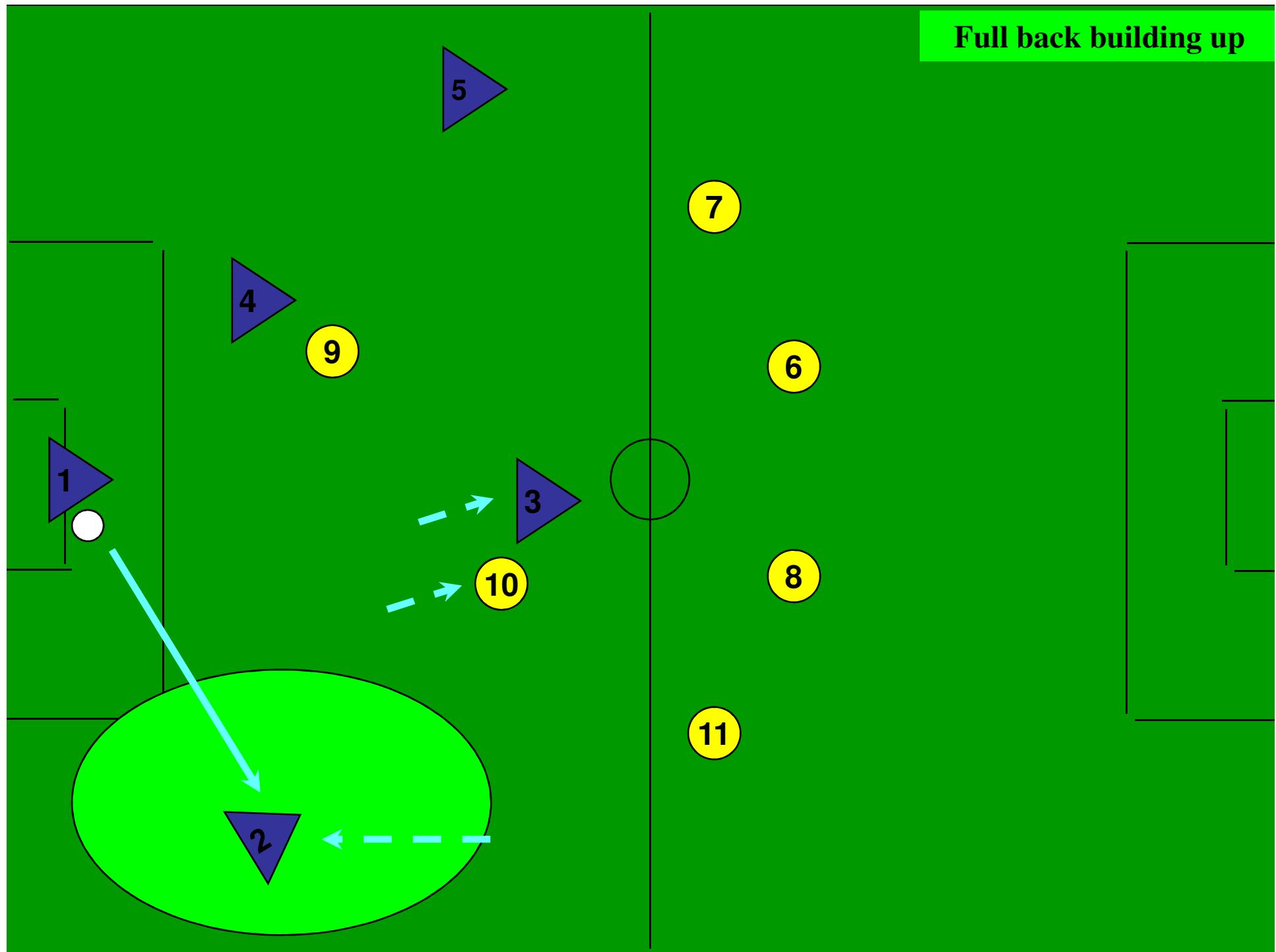
## Offensive principals per line

### defenders & goalkeeper (1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5)

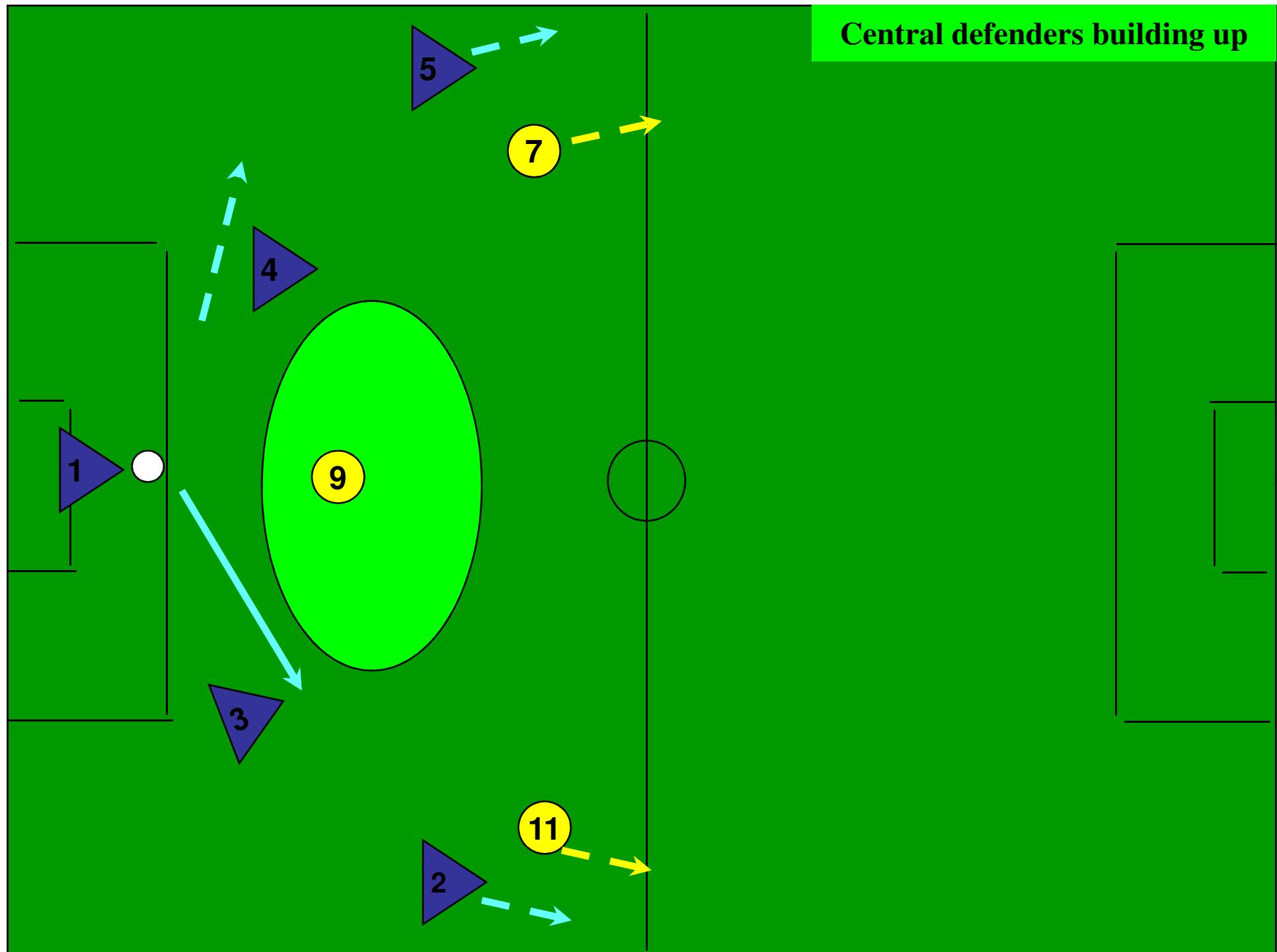
- **Playing out is a means to an end! The purpose is to go forward while keeping possession!**
- This requires dynamic participation of all players and through good positioning play and fast and precise passing:
  1. create the right moment for the forward pass or:
  2. have a defender move into midfield to create an ‘extra player’ in the midfield
- The goalkeeper is the 11<sup>th</sup> outfield player while playing out! (fast change of direction; recognizing the right moment to play the forward pass; etc.)
- If the opponent uses a formation with 2 strikers the emphasis is placed on building up through the full backs (central defenders to create space)
- If the opponent plays with 3 strikers the emphasis is on building up through central defenders (full backs to create space)
- In case of a situation when there is no free player in the back third the ‘footballing’ qualities of the goalkeeper become essential



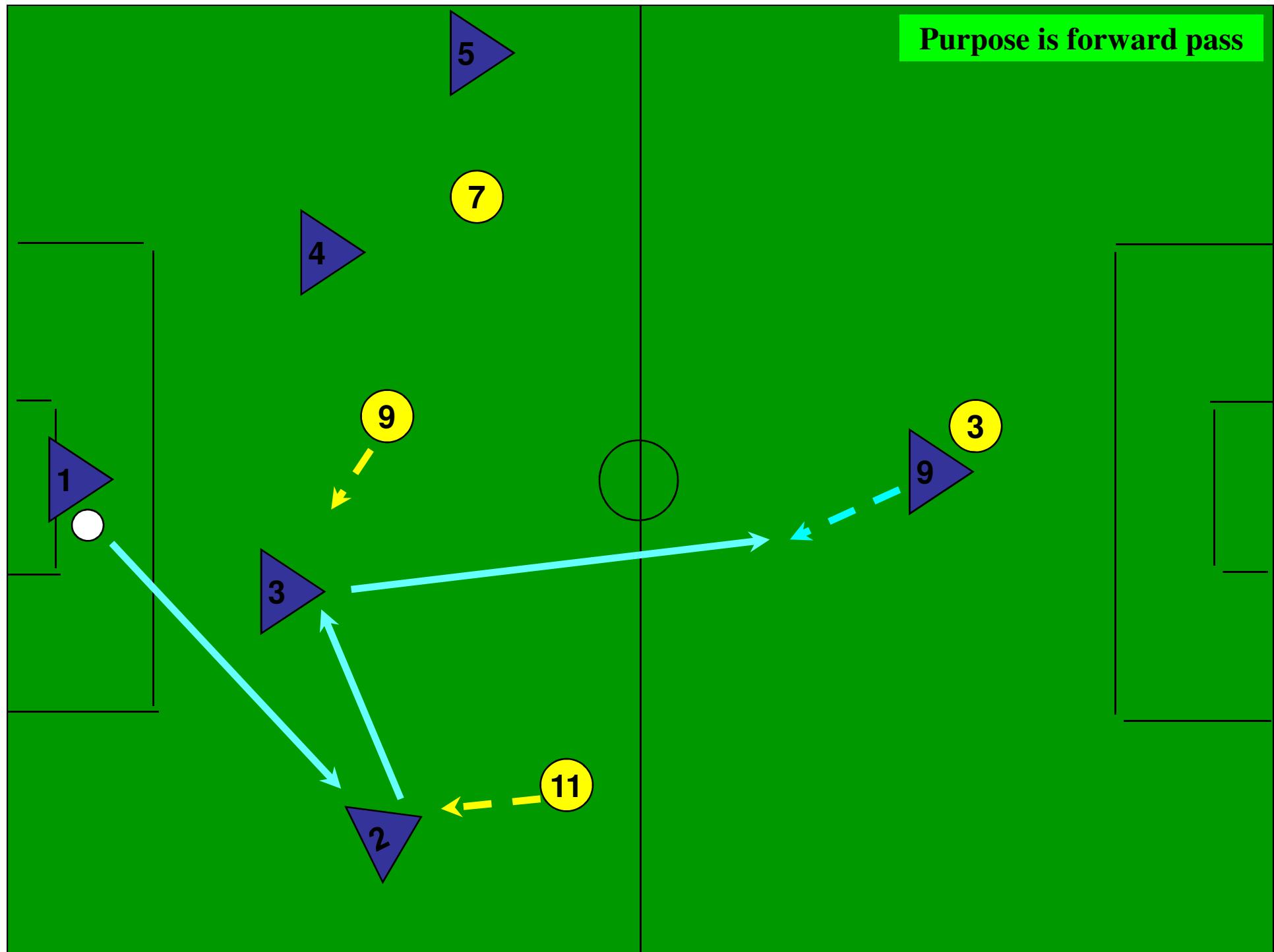
## Full back building up



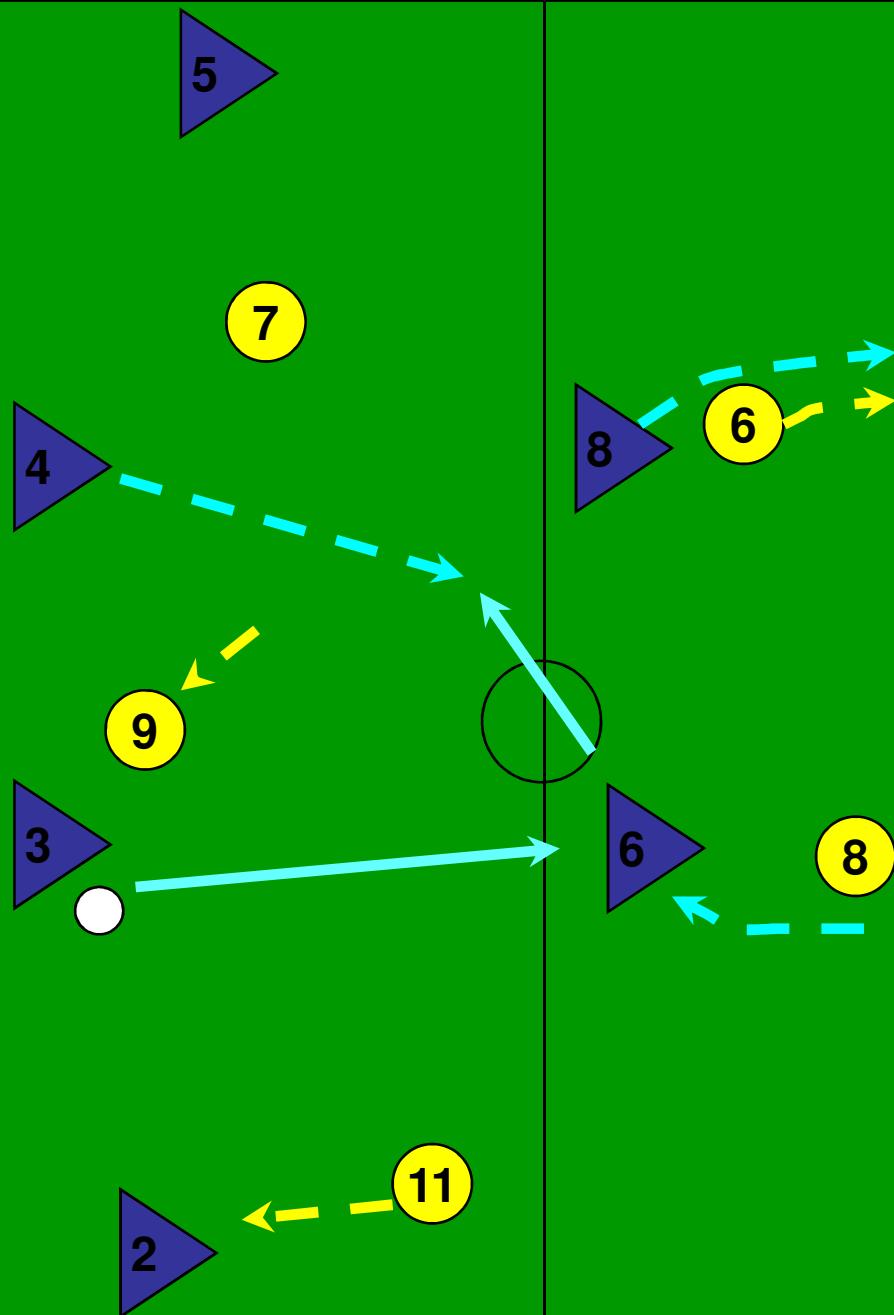
## Central defenders building up



Purpose is forward pass



## Defender in midfield



## Offensive principals per line

### Midfield pointed forward:

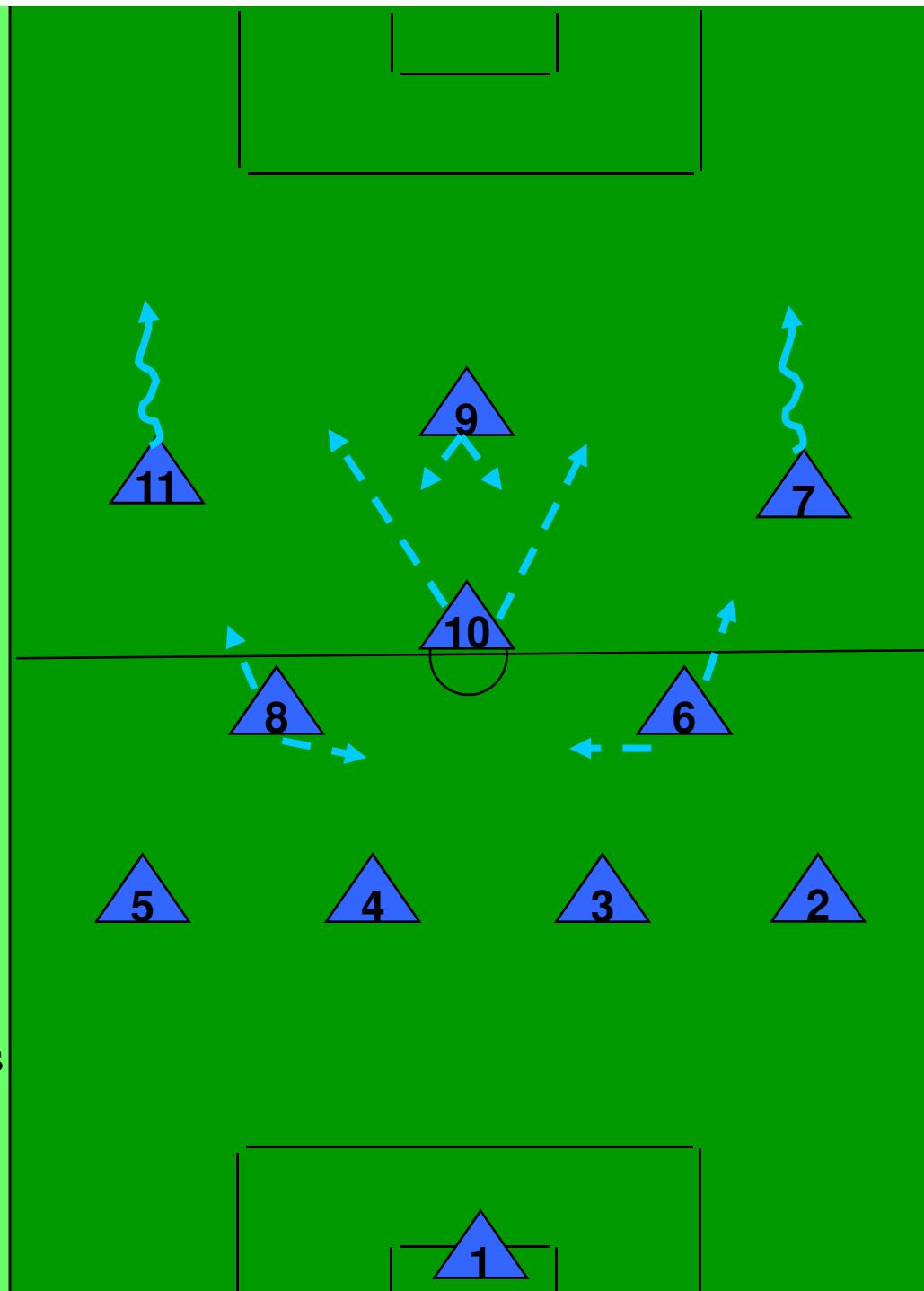
#### No's. 6 & 8:

- ‘transfer’ playing out to attacking
- feed and support the attacking ‘bloc’
- good game (passing) skills, vision and handling speed are required!

#### No.10 (key player in this formation):

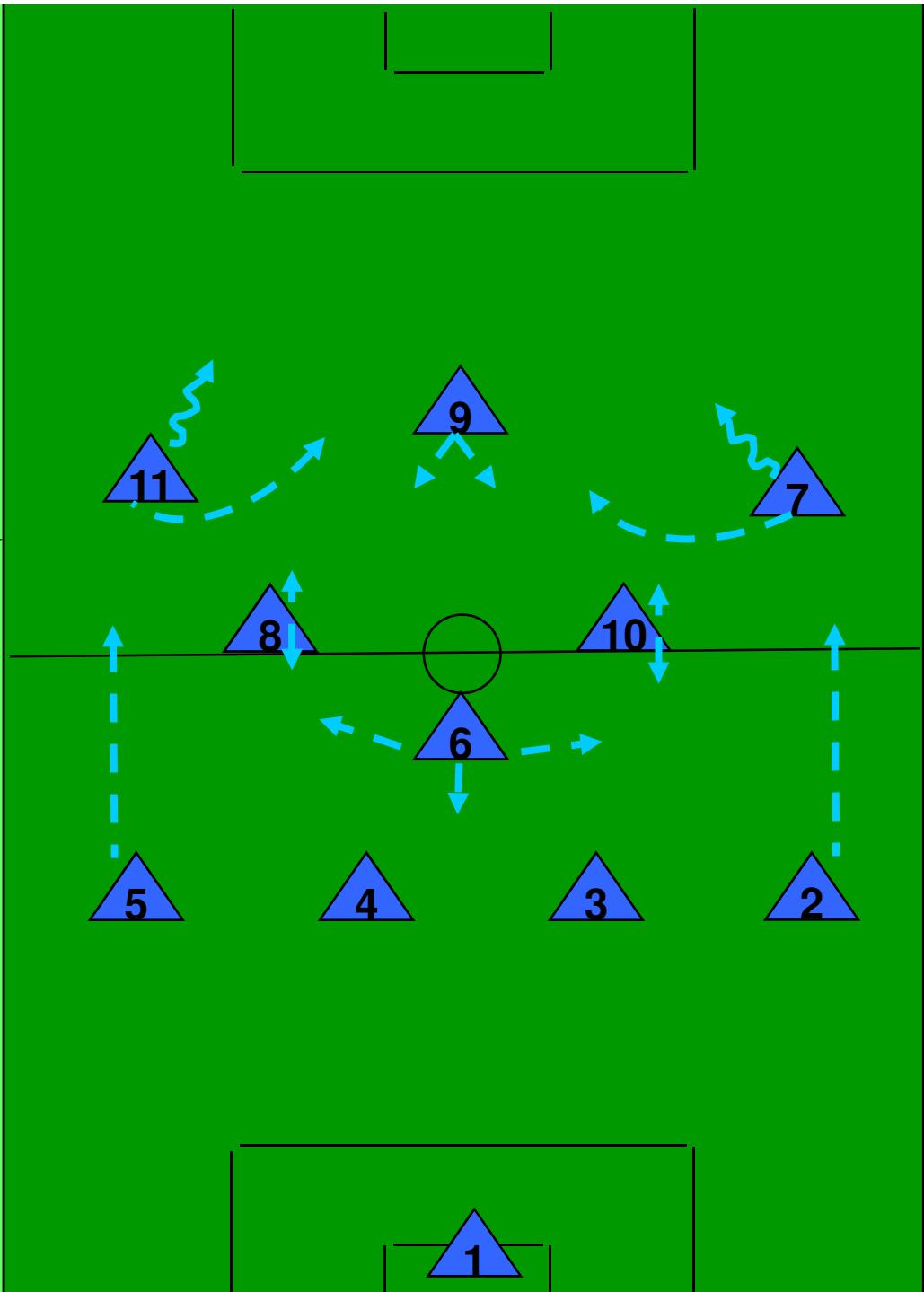
- attacking midfielder (not a traditional ‘playmaker’)
- good ‘interaction’ with the strikers (especialy with No. 9)
- penetrate in front line and look for scoring chances
- good anticipation/feeling for right moment
- good tactical insight, technique and handling speed

➤ In this formation No's. 7 & 11 are more traditional ‘wingers’ making attacking moves in the wide positions and providing assists and crosses. They can come inside but well timed, not ‘closing’ the spaces for No.10. (Robben)



## Midfield pointed to the rear:

- No. 6 is the ‘controlling’ midfielder. He/she always has to stay ‘behind the ball’ and take over the positions of the players that go forward. No.6 also holds a key role in playing out and is a player with strong game (passing) skills and vision. (Essien, Mascherano, Toure, Carrick)
- No’s 8 & 10 ‘feed’ and support the strikers. They have strong individual skills, vision and handling speed. They provide the assists for the strikers and have goalscoring abilities. These are the ‘complete’ midfielders. (Lampard, Gerrard, Xavi, Iniesta)
- In this formation No’s. 7 & 11 are ‘multi functional’ attackers making attacking moves to the inside (and outside) starting from wide positions. The 3 attackers often switch positions but the formation should always be maintained. (Christiano Ronaldo, Messi, Rooney, Henry)



## Offensive principals per line

### The attackers (7 – 9 – 11)

#### Wing attackers No's. 7 & 11:

- starting from wide positions going outside and inside
- are creative and pro active (with the ball and running off the ball)
- provide assists, crosses and have goal scoring ability  
(Messi, Chr.Ronaldo, Rooney, Kewell)

#### Central striker No. 9:

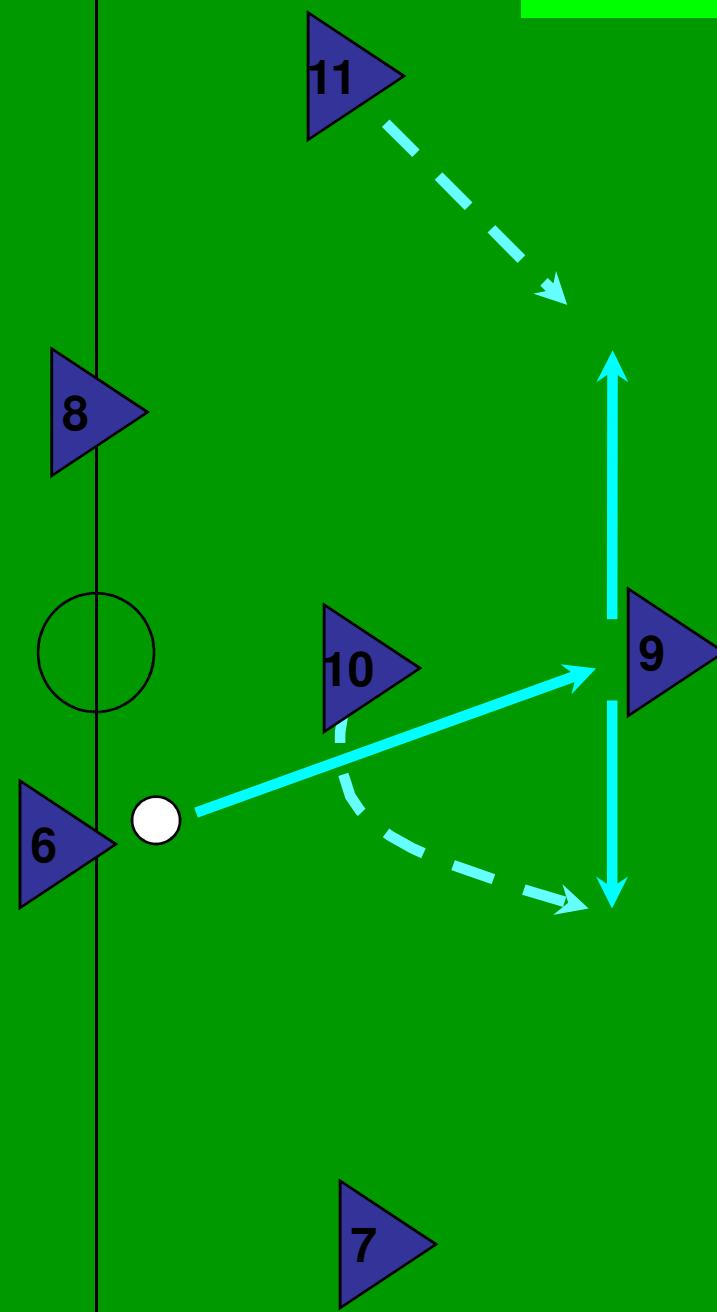
- strong in receiving and holding the ball with his/her back to the goal
- strong in attacking combinations
- goal scorer  
(Drogba, Torres, Adebayor, Viduka?)

#### Collective important aspects in the attacking third:

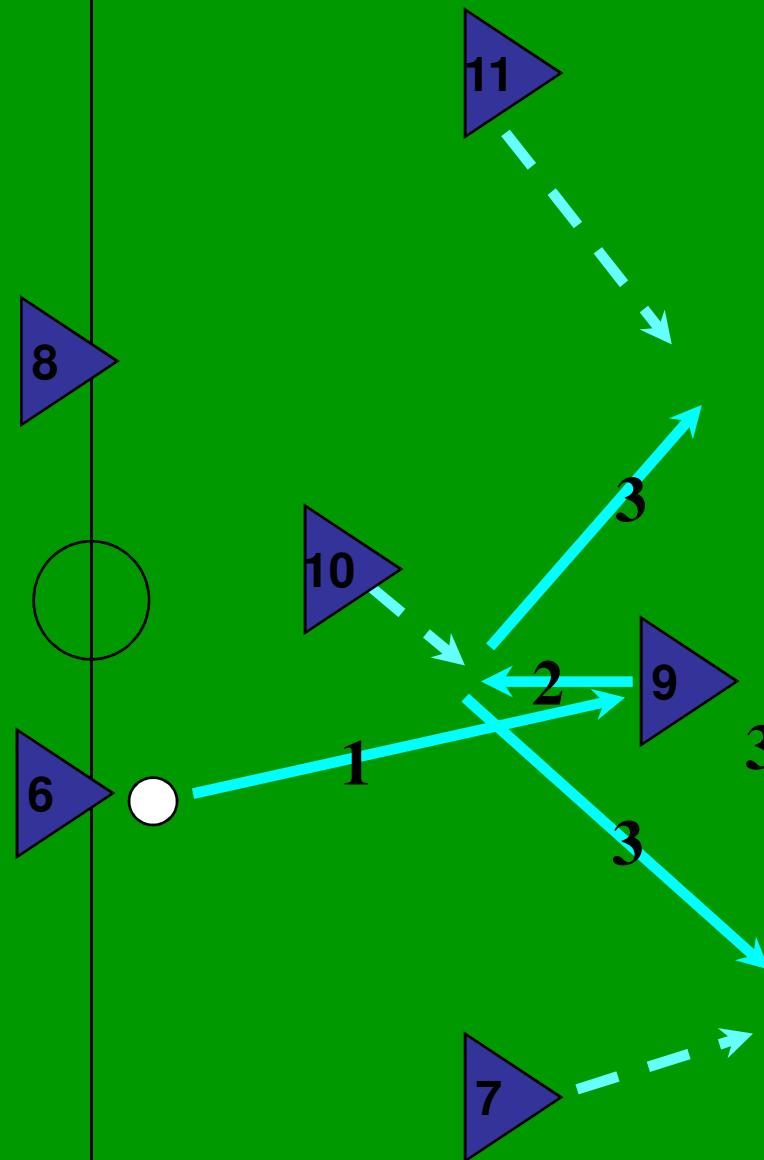
- Fast/direct combinations (wall-pass; no look pass; 3<sup>rd</sup> man; etc.)
- Individual attacking qualities and ability to improvise
- Effective positioning in front of goal

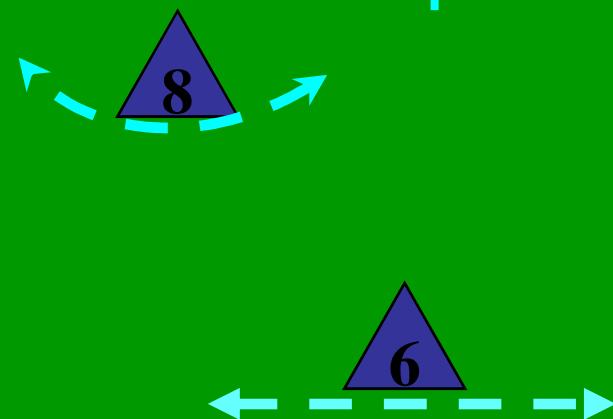
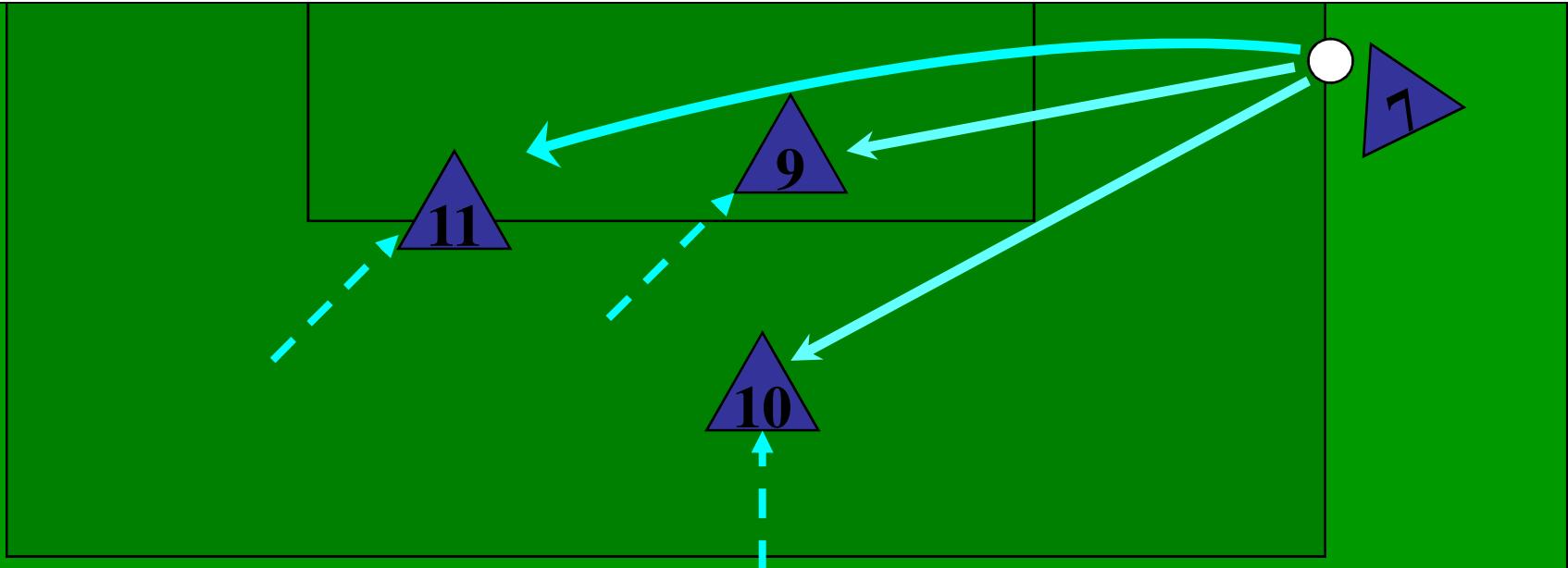


## Attacking combinations



## Attacking combinations



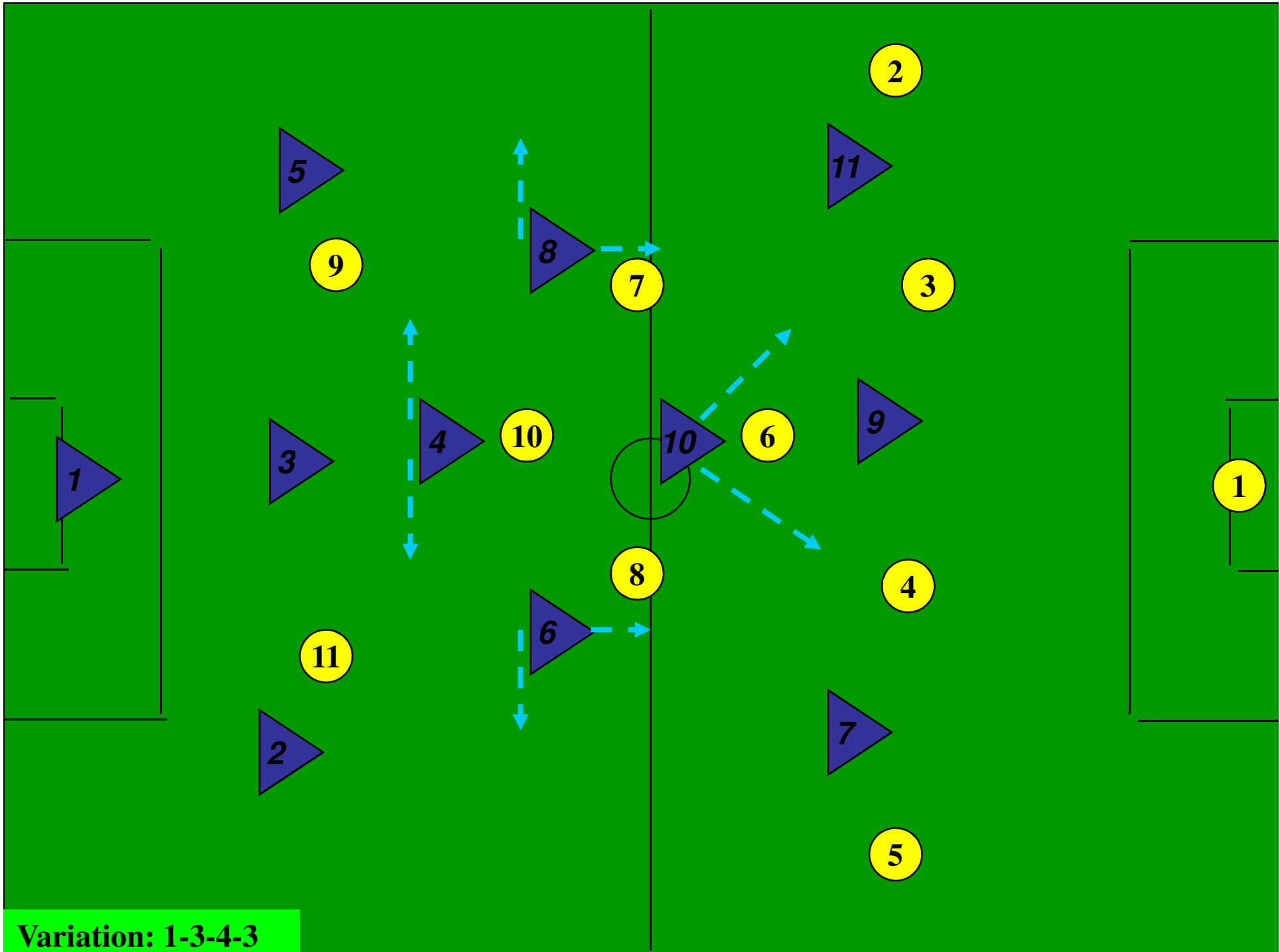


Positioning in front of the goal

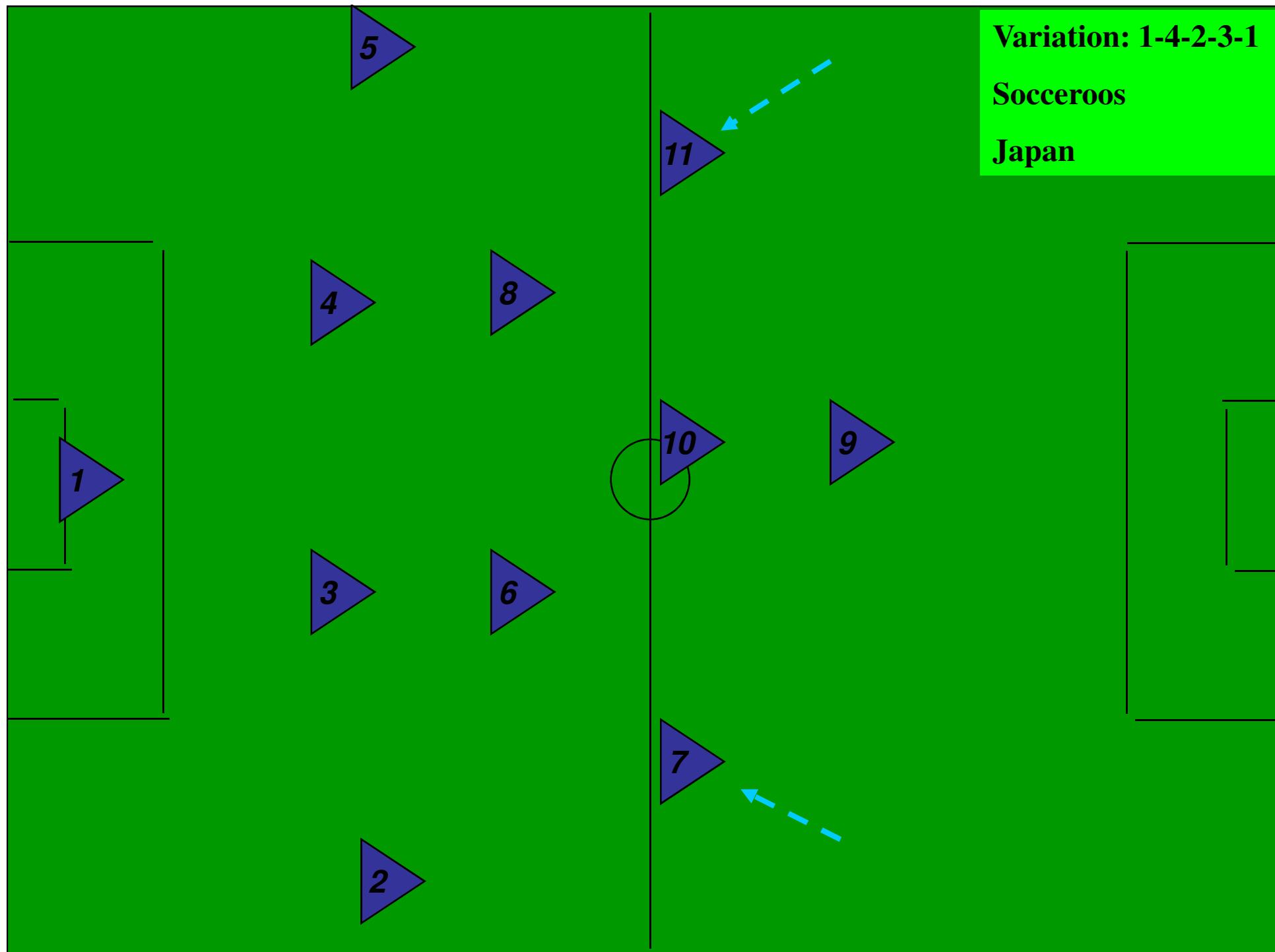
## **Variations of 1-4-3-3**

**(only top level)**





**Variation: 1-4-2-3-1**  
**Socceroos**  
**Japan**



**Variation: 1-4-1-4-1**  
**Czech Rep.**  
**Bahrain**

