



MARCELO BIELSA

TACTICAL PROFILE

Radosław Bella

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE SEASON 2014/2015

FOREWORD:

The last 18 months of work translated into approx. 155 pages, over 20 000 words and 500 pictures that were supposed to help understand Marcelo Bielsa – tactical genius. Everything I wrote down I tried to describe in football language. I didn't want the e-book to become scientific work, because I never forgot Vitor Frade maxim: „Football has got too much game to become a science. However, it has also got so much science, not to be consider just a game. I didn't want to look at the games from the analyst point of view because it's not my job. The quoted situations and numbers are only a reflection of concepts and statistics in the tactical context of the game. I also have no ambition for my passion for football to start and end with computer because Coach's place is on the pitch.

My main goal was to get to know and discover all the possible details that could help in the development of my teams and players in future. I hope that you will also find them useful, because I believe that better coaches = better players. After many hours spent of analyzing Marcelo Bielsa, I came to the conclusion that it was a very hard, but truly developing platform to learn. In my opinion people learn new and the most important things through hardship. What I understood, I tried to describe. What I didn't understand, I subject to further analysis. However, I do not want to be a servant of the ideas of „El Loco“, because only when the ideas become part of the coach, can't hey become engaging and contagious. I wish everyone many conclusions and doubts.

*Radosław Bella
Student of the game.*

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



Radosław Bella, a young generation coach (who has already gained experience at the highest Polish level - Ekstraklasa in Miedź Legnica alongside coach Dominik Nowak, working with him as the coach of reserve team and Śląsk Wrocław as the individual preparation coach of the most talented players in Academy) did titanic work analyzing the games of Olympique de Marseille, run by Marcelo Bielsa in the 2014/2015.

Interesting perspective of the coach, who adapted his team to opponent's game, but always stuck to his own playing style. M. Bielsa has always emphasized that great team is one that not dependent on the opponent and has always paid attention to direct attack, which is the most difficult in football. He evaluated the development of his team based on the number of created goal situations. M. Bielsa also emphasized that he doesn't like teams based only on individualities, because such a team is left solely at the mercy of these players.

„Why do they call me crazy? Because some of the answers I've chosen don't fit those who others chose”. I think these words best reflect M. Bielsa's approach to football philosophy.

K. Paluszek

Director of Development Śląsk Wrocław S.A.

The study by Mr. Radosław Bella belongs to the increasingly popular group of contemporary foreign publications dealing with the subject of tactical analysis of specific teams or training philosophies. Until now, we have not had this type of publication on the domestic publishing market, which is why we should accept the work on football philosophy by Marcelo Bielsa – one of the best coaches in the world - as a significant enrichment of Polish football literature. Reading Marcelo Bielsa – Tactical Profile, from the first to the last page, shows the great contribution of work that R. Bella has put into the analysis and presentation of the tactical issues discussed. Many tactical nuances and details of the strategy, dynamic description and graphic design of photos are just some of advantages of this development. I highly recommend and encourage all football coaches to read that e-book.

M. Stępiński

Poland Women's National Football Team A

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



Congratulations to Radosław in creating this e-book which gives the reader an in-depth analysis of one of the most forward-thinking coaches – Marcelo Bielsa.

I met Rado when he came to Ludogorets on a club visit to expand his knowledge in November 2018. It was clear Radosław was a coach keen to expand his knowledge in all areas of coaching and the integration of science into his coaching process. Radosław provides an analysis of the Game Model of this elite coach, but also a great insight to his big & sub principles of play through the phases of play. We as the reader get a game by game strategic analysis of the specific strategy for each match and how that relates to his game model. Radosław himself is a forward-thinking coach, and this shows in his application and dedication to delivering this e-book for coaches to enjoy. Coaches will be able to use this e-book to challenge their own thoughts on Game Model and Game Strategy for their development. The tactical concepts are clear in this analysis by Radosław, so Coaches of all levels will be able to gain experience and heighten their football contextual knowledge.

Ian Coll

*Head of Sports Science PFC Ludogorets Razgrad
Former Head of Sports Science Celtic Football Club*

Well done to Radosław Bella for producing this e-book which gives an insight into one of the worlds most admired and respected coaches in world football Marcelo Bielsa, who we are now very fortunate to have here in England plying his trade at Leeds United FC very successfully and hoping to get his team promoted to the Premier League?

Radosław demonstrates through a series of pictures and diagrams Bielsa's method and style of play that has gained the success wherever he has coached throughout his career and shares this with you and all those who read it.

Like Bielsa, Radosław is himself a 'student of the game' and is very astute young coach who has a thirst for knowledge! I first met Radosław him when I was invited to deliver on behalf of the Polish Football Federation to Polish coaches in Wrocław and subsequently when he has visited on other occasions whenever I deliver in Poland and also when he visited England to observe me delivering a UEFA 'B' Licence. Read the e-book and I am sure you will pick up some very interesting thoughts and ideas to challenge all levels of coach!

*Colin Reid UEFA 'A' License Coach
FA Licensed Coach Development
Millwall Lionesses 1st Team Manager*

ACKNOWLEDGE:



The E-book would have never been created without help from many great people. I would like to thank and share love for my wife Anna, son Stasiu, my parents and brother. I always feel your suport.

The quality of e-book is also because of the huge support Mr. Krzysztof Paluszek. Thank you for invaluable help and time you gave me.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Ian Coll and Sławek Cisakowski for their honest feedback and the hours they spent correcting my errors.

I also would like to thank every person, teacher and coach that I have had the opportunity to meet on my coaching path.

In the end, I would like to thank all the people I will hopefully meet because of this E-book. Sometimes end means new beginning.

Radosław Bella



CONTENTS

FOREWORD:.....	1
ACKNOWLEDGE:	4
RADOSŁAW BELLA.....	7
INTRODUCTION:.....	7
MARCELO BIELSA:.....	7
A NOTE FROM AUTHOR:	8
KEY:	9
GAME 1: first – set up.....	10
GAME 2: we versus opponent's	16
GAME 3: beginning of victories	21
GAME 4: Bielsa team's.....	24
GAME 5: pressing.....	30
GAME 6: movements.....	33
GAME 7: numerical advantages.....	36
GAME 8: take the ball back	40
GAME 9: strategy	43
GAME 10: pressing trap	46
GAME 11: eight victories and defeat.....	48
GAME 12: opponent should adapt to our team.....	52
GAME 13: by the wings.....	55
GAME 14: attention to the ball	57
GAME 15: between the lines	59
GAME 16: what the opponent cannot see.....	62
GAME 17: our game = opponent problems	65
GAME 18: lost in space	69
GAME 19: outside the ball area.....	72
GAME 20: pass the ball behind opponent's midfield line	75
GAME 21: run into the penalty box.....	80

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



GAME 22: no more than four passes	83
GAME 23: when every meter matters	86
GAME 24: stick to the plan.....	89
GAME 25: la Salida la Volpiana	92
GAME 26: losing the ball will not be a problem	96
GAME 27: behind the opponent.....	101
GAME 28: killer pass.....	106
GAME 29: security.....	110
GAME 30: rotations	114
GAME 31: man on man marking	117
GAME 32: switching play.....	128
GAME 33: pass and run my friend	132
GAME 34: reckless attack	137
GAME 35: axis on the pitch.....	140
GAME 36: the fourth is useless.....	145
GAME 37: balance	149
GAME 38: farewell	154
SUMMARY:.....	158
RADOSŁAW BELLA.....	158

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE: SEASON 2014/2015

INTRODUCTION:

The main goal of this e-book is to illustrate, even in a small percentage, the genius of Marcelo Bielsa. This is a collection of notes based on the author's analysis of the Olympique Marseille games from the 2014/2015 season. The tactical concepts and repetitive team behaviors can be an inspiration to create your own coaching thoughts. Given that, I did not know the plan for a particular match and the individual tasks of the players, so this e-book cannot be considered as a truth that does not require more evidence, and any attempts at possible application of the presented tactical concepts may result in failure. The e-book was created only for educational purposes - not commercial.

MARCELO BIELSA:

is an Argentinian professional football manager and former player who played as a defender. At 35, he became the coach of club which he was a homegrown - Newell's Old Boys. In the years 1998–2004 he was the Manager of the National Team of Argentina. After many successes (Olympic gold medal and runner-up Copa America) he resigned saying: "Six years of work with the National Team is a mental effort comparable to twenty years spent in the club." In 2007, Bielsa became the head coach of the Chilean National Team, where after 12 years he was promoted to the World Cup with him, reaching the 1/8 final. In July 2011 he became the Athletic Bilbao Manager. He cooperated with the club from the Basque country until 2013. At the beginning of the 2014/2015 season, he was announced as a new Manager of Olympique de Marseille.

RADOSŁAW BELLA

...

Polish Football Coach. 32 years old. Currently coach at Śląsk Wrocław U16 and SMS Junior. Previously First Coach at MKS Miedź Legnica Reserve Team (III Polish League).

UEFA A Licence Coach. Author coaching blog www.szachimat.com – Radosław Bella – Blog Trenerski. Student of Psychology on SWPS University in Wrocław. Participant of many coaching conferences in Poland and abroad. Participant Football Periodisation Mentorship in Amsterdam and Periodizacao Tactica in Porto and Football Braining in Porto. Also many coaching interships abroad. Inspired by Marcelo Bielsa's style of play for many years.



He won the 4th place in the league with the French club. On August 9, 2015, after losing first friendly game against SM Caen, he resigned. At the beginning of the 2017/2018 season, he became the coach of Lille OSC, where he served as head coach until December 2017. From June 15, 2018, he fights with Leeds United F.C. for a return to the English Premier League.

A NOTE FROM AUTHOR:

Marcelo Bielsa is recognized as the most important teacher of many great manager's, such as: Mauricio Pochettino, Diego Simeone, Jorge Sampaoli and Pep Guardiola. He is also an inspiration for many coaches who are constantly trying to analyze his ideas for the game. The nickname "El Loco" (crazy) fully shows his personality. He is known for striving for crazy perfection every day, where at the finish line you can see a team not bending to anyone, imposing their aggressive style, still in the attacking phase, running faster and a little more time than 90 minutes. A revolutionary, idealist, perfectionist, football fanatic are one of the most frequently repeated nicknames, characterizing his personality and working methods.

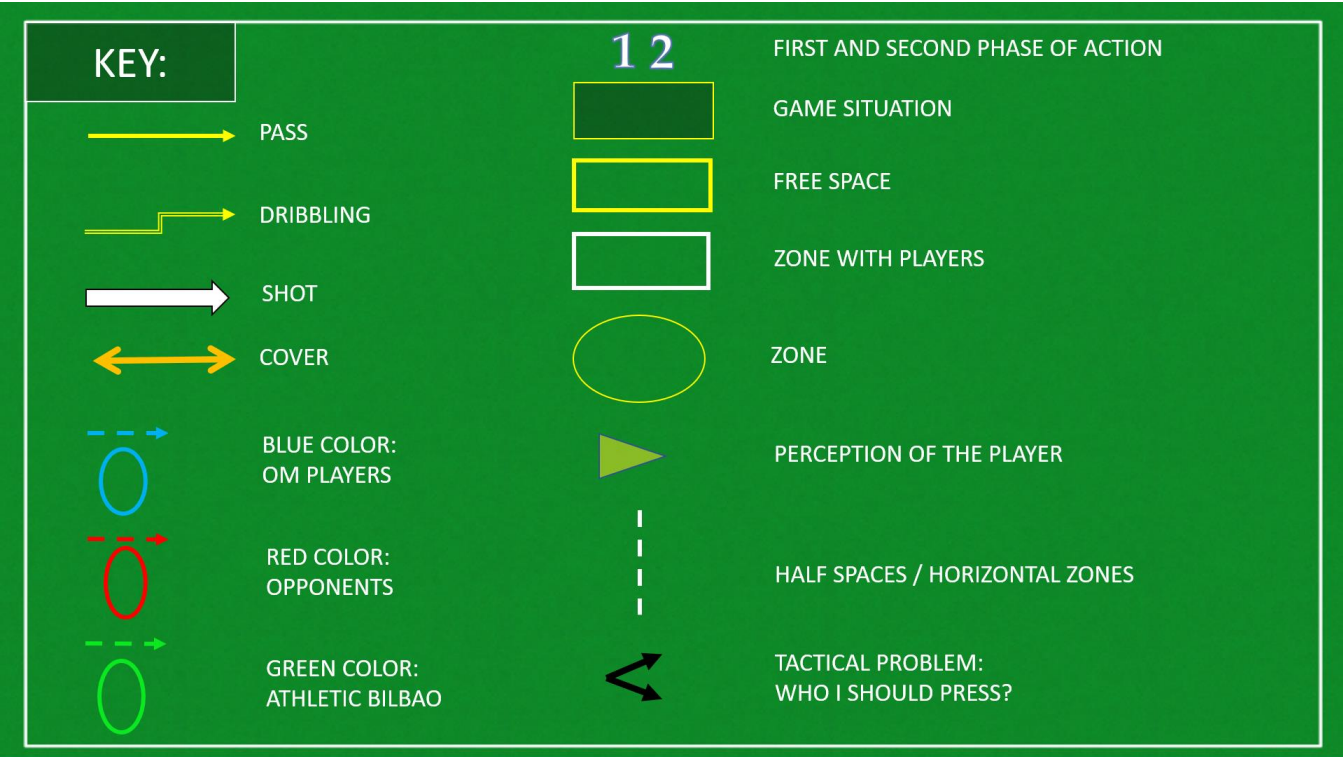
High pressing, the highest and the fastest pressure to recovery ball from the opponent, tactical discipline, and also great creativity with the ball are the foundations of his idea for the game. If it is true that the game of the team is the fingerprint of the coach, it can be seen here very clearly. Often called 'total football', the model in which Les Phocéens (Phoenicians) played was very unique. Seemingly crazy players' behavior, tactical concepts not logical from the general perspective and very high intensity of the game may seem to be crazy ... but often "in his madness there is a method". A lot of moments of the game were full of events that I met for the first time in my life. Unfortunately, I didn't have the opportunity to meet or talk to Marcelo Bielsa but analyzing his team's game is a great learning opportunity and at the same time a big challenge. It is hard to analyze the game of a coach whose knowledge is ahead of the era. While analyzing each game, I tried to get rid of my own beliefs. I have in mind the fact that many times to try to understand something, you must abandon the schematic - learned from your own past - way of thinking. You should look for new ideas to understand El Loco, who one day said:

„A man with new ideas is a madman, until his ideas triumph”.

I invite you to get familiar yourself with some of these ideas.

Radosław Bella

KEY:



GAME 1: first – set up

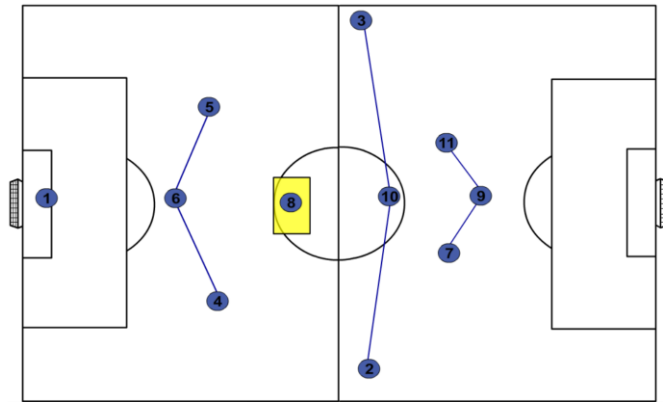
09.08.2014. Stade Armand-Cesari. Bastia. Ligue 1.

„I always tell my guys that our playing style is about movement”

S.C. BASTIA 3:3 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

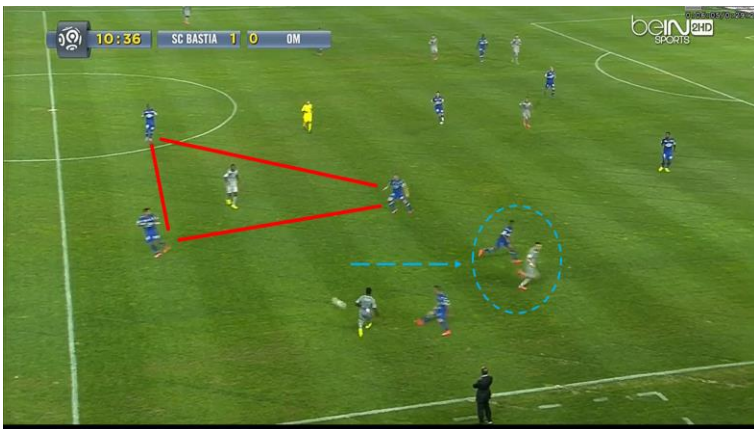
That was the first official game under Marcelo Bielsa in Ligue 1. First opponent S.C. Bastia played in 1:4:4:1:1. OM began, as the future will show in the most common 1:3:1:3:3 alternating with 1:3:3:1:3

The central midfielder (circled in yellow) was a very important role in build up. Very often he showed up behind the first line of the opponent's pressing - strikers, positioned differently: vertically or horizontally. Regardless of the number of players opponent first pressing line, his positioning often gave the option to pass, after which two Bastia opponents were beaten.



DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER

He played a key role in scoring the first goal. After 8 passes (two changes direction of play), the OM team scored.

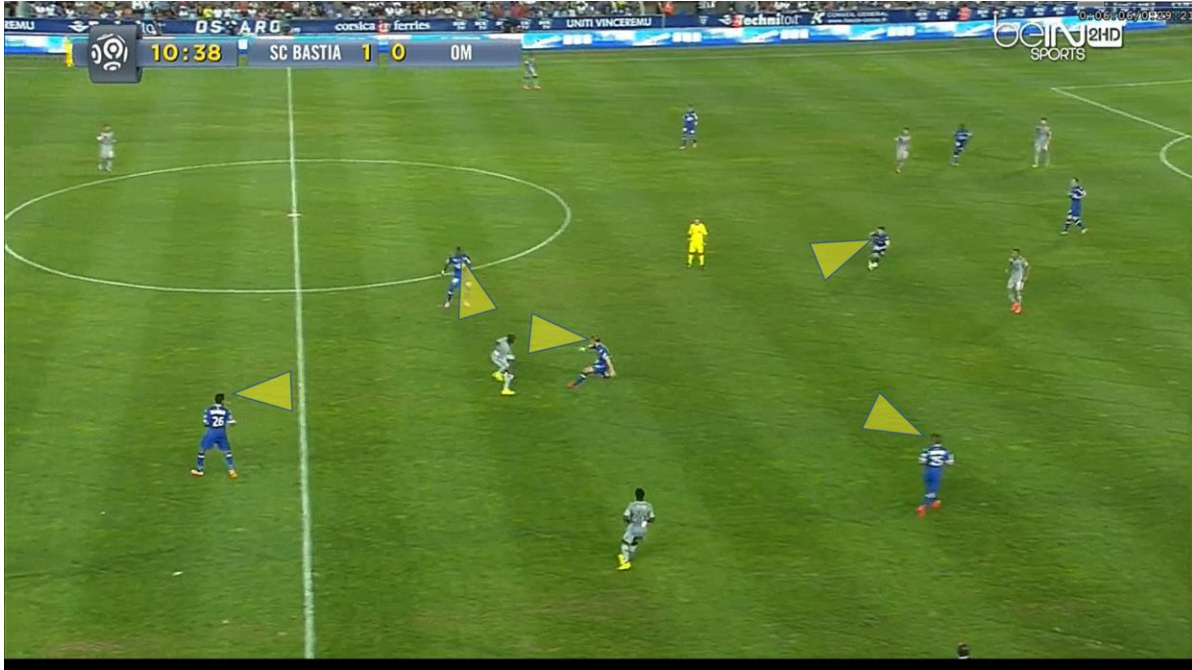


Florian Thauvin (marked in yellow) takes his opponent with his move, making space for the other midfielder who is positioned between the lines. In the OM team, everything was based on movement. Very often the player who made the move - as in this case Thauvin behind the back of the opponent's left defender – didn't receive the ball. But the ball arrives to his teammate (in this case Imbula) who used the opponent's position change.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



The biggest benefit of setting between lines is the fact that one player absorbs the attention of more than one opponent. This means that the player when he receives the ball has more time, which is used by the next players showing up to play. Between vertical and horizontal lines:



Another important element when scoring the first goal was to dribble the ball to the opponent. This may be a surprise, but dribble the ball directly on opponent, at some point he will put some pressure on the player with the ball. It means that he will leave his place. This is the best moment to pass.



Where their ball is, there is pressure. Dribble directly on to the opponent (yellow player) we can expect two situations. At first, he can put some pressure and leave his place, or stand passively and when we will pass to a teammate, opponent will be late to stop us.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



As I said before if he leaves his position, then it's the best time to pass. With one pass we can beat one opponent, making extra space for the partner who received the ball. The player with the ball must fully control the opponent's position and the ball. That will be the common solution winning 2v1 situation. After that situation OM cross and scored a goal.

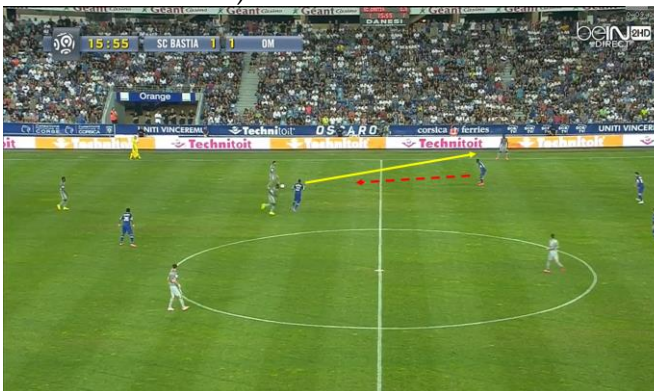
Very often the centre backs or midfielders dribble the ball directly to the opponent waiting for his move. Crucial thing is to observe moves of opponent.

3 OPTION SOLVING THAT SITUATION

OPTION A (when opponent stay in his position): OPTION B (when opponent close passing line to winger):



OPTION C (when opponent close passing line to central midfielder):

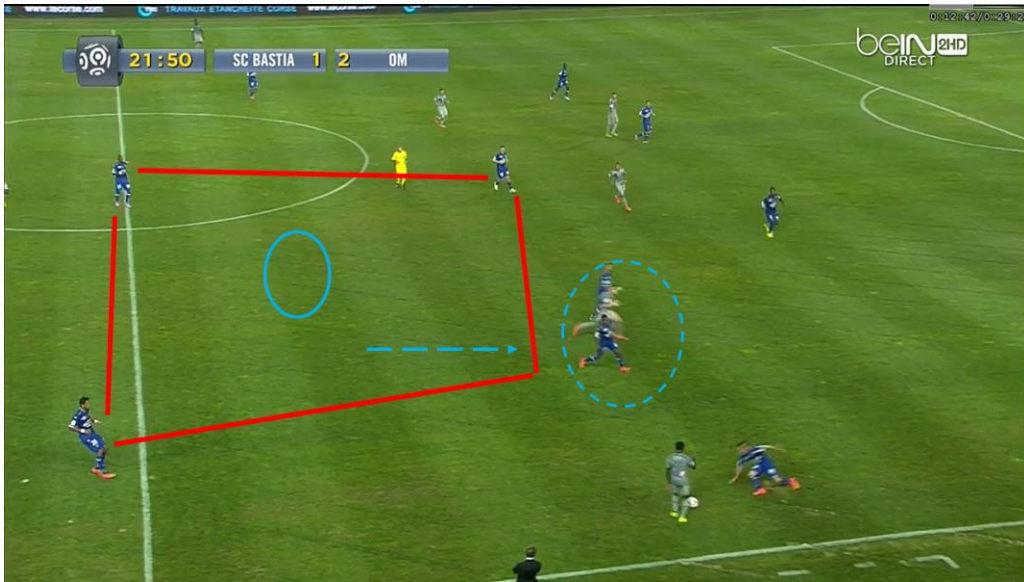


It all depends on what the opponent does. If he press a player with the ball cutting off the center - a passing line to winger is formed. If cuts off the wing - a passing line of central formation is created. Dribble the ball towards him provokes him to leave the position. It is then a signal for a teammate (positioned behind the opponent to create a pass line) to show up and after receiving the ball, pass to the partner who will be facing the action.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

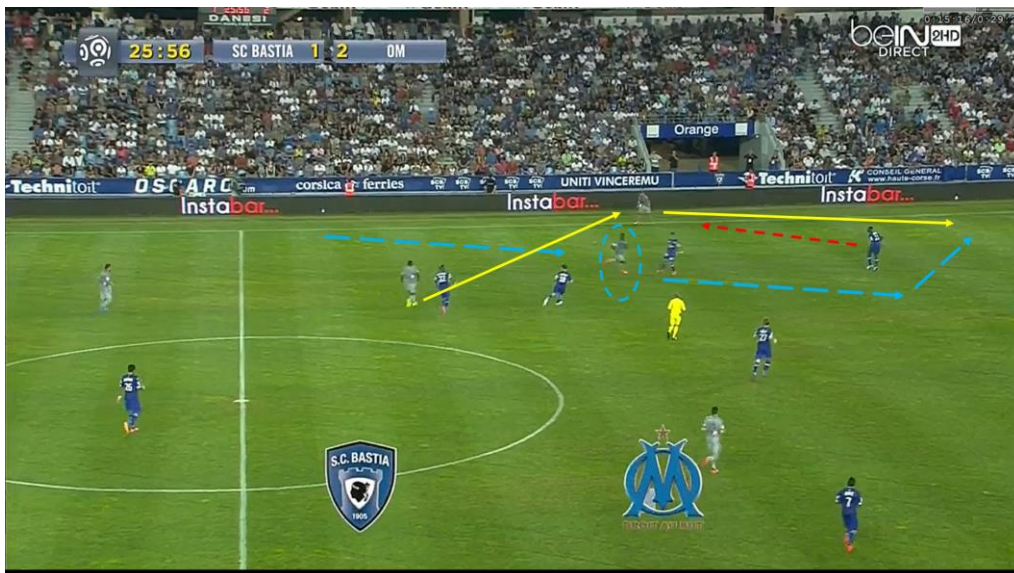


10 minutes later another similar situation, but there was already a lack of player between the lines. Again, the OM player made a move behind the back of the opponent's left defender, taking the opponent from the inside which covers him, making space in the middle. Unfortunately, the player with the ball had no pass option and lost the ball.



FULLBACK:

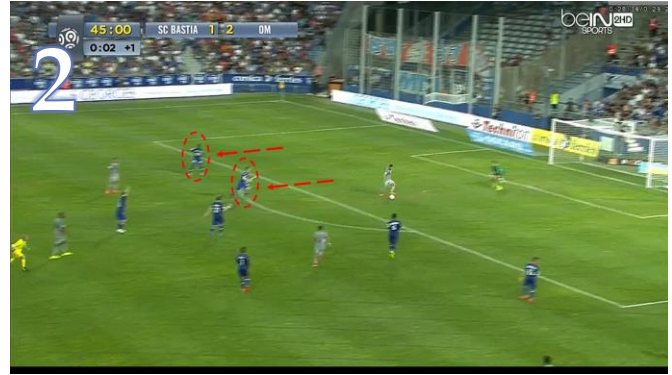
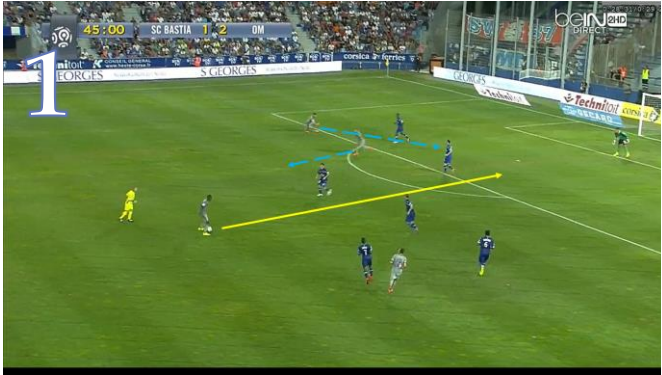
Each player had the task of influencing the rival's position with his movement. Very frequent rotations on the wings were supposed to move the opponent, so that one of the players always had an open pass line. The rotation of fullback - which goes inside - opened the pass to the winger. But that wasn't end. Only after the winger got the ball, the next move of the fullback was to run behind the right defender of the opponent who pressed the winger with the ball. This was a very common behavior of fullbacks:



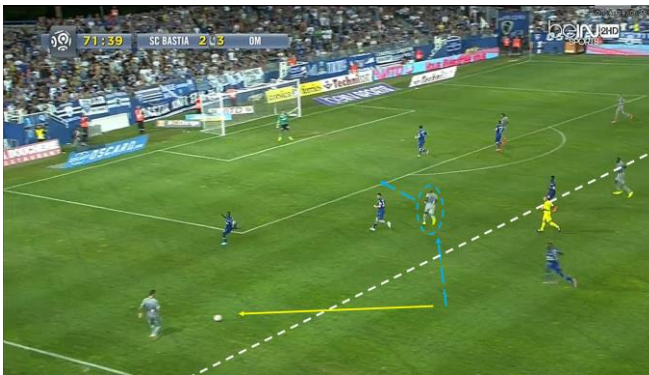
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



With the first move OM players create a free space, then they choose the best positioned player to pass. Passing and movement always change the scenario, and thus the position of the opponents. Players must, however, constantly observe and analyze how the game changes.



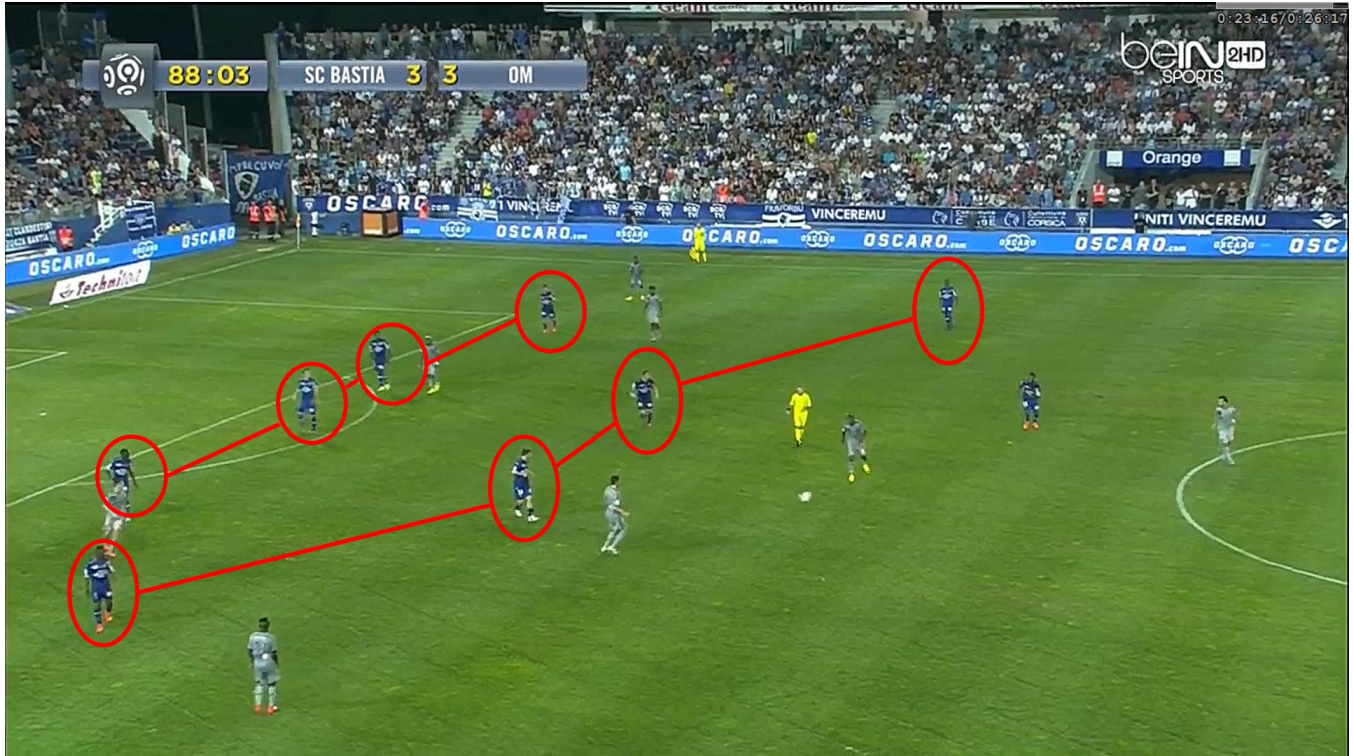
When the player with the ball is facing the direction of the attack and is not pressed, another rotation of the players from the front (above the ball) took place. Mobility always affects the opponent's position and passing behind the opponent's defense line seems to be Marcelo Bielsa's team's top priority. After going to final third of the pitch (blue line), the players were oriented towards finishing the action. The move of the player, who passed to the free teammate on the wing, indicated that he would no longer be interested in playing in this part of the pitch. A very large number of crosses (after which two goals were scored directly) seemed to confirm this:



Errors were also visible in this game. However, the first game was the beginning of what OM will show soon. A very offensive team that attacked seven, eight, and sometimes even nine players.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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Over time, however, Bielsa team became better and more unpredictable for opponents. Constant rotations and exchanges of positions were aimed at disorganizing mostly focusing only on defensive and counterattacks teams.

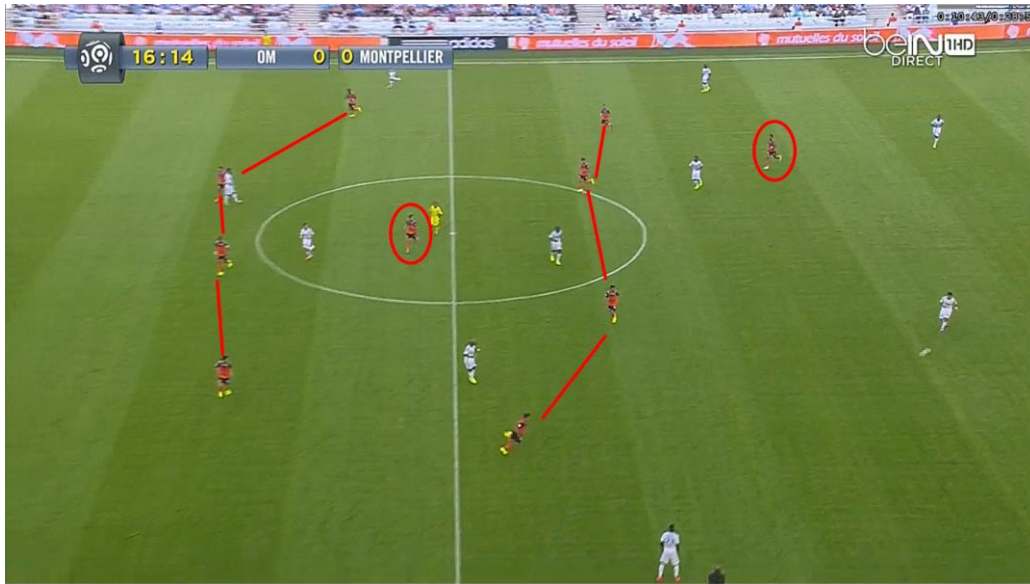
GAME 2: we versus opponent's

17.08.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

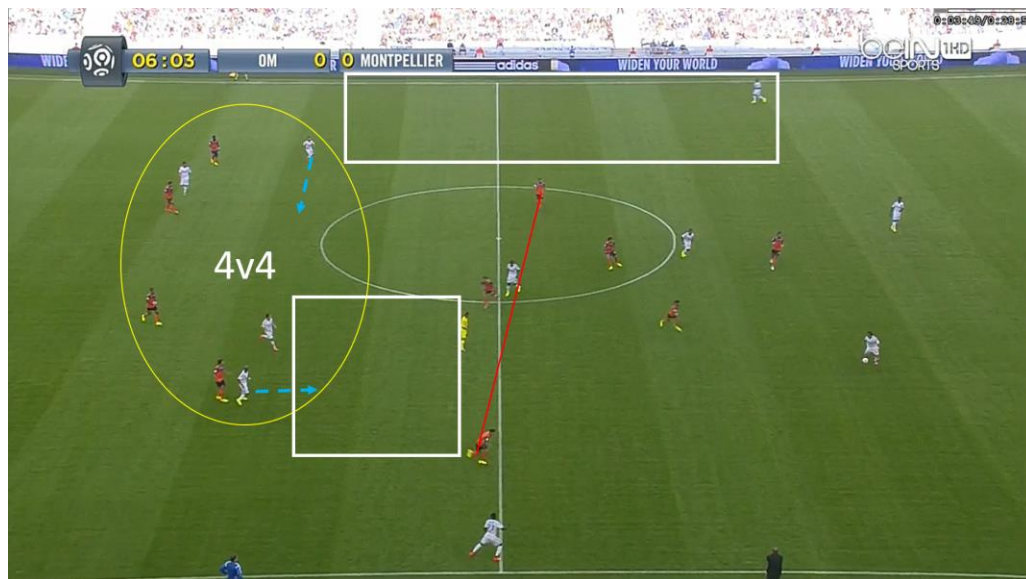
„A great team isn't dependent on the opponent's game”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 0:2 MONTPELLIER HSC

In the second game OM was faced with a team who was set up with a very narrow 1:4:1:4:1.



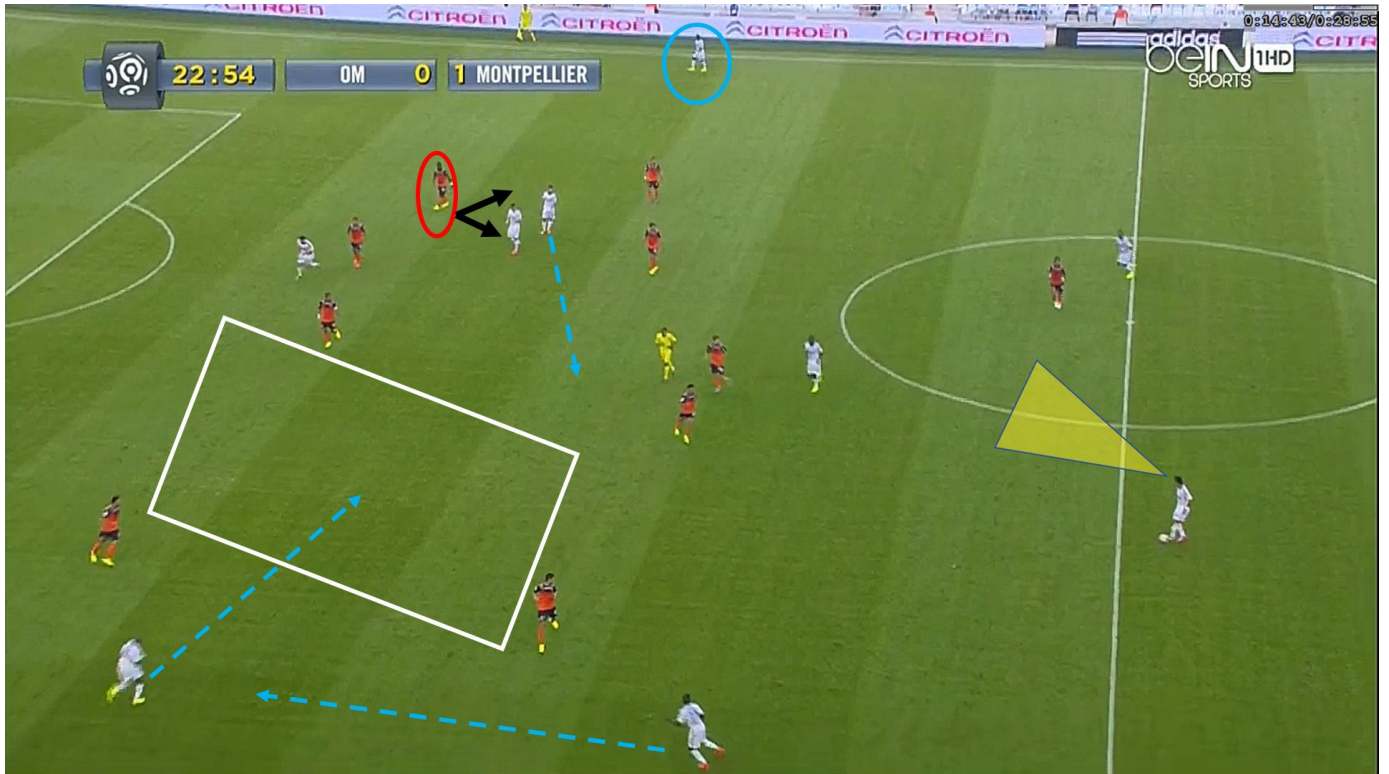
OM came out in a different setting than in the previous game. 1: 4: 2: 3: 1, which Bielsa often used, did not result in more possession, but more chances to score and shots (7 more). Still, this did not translate into a result.



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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In the picture above, you can see how OM try to build up. In this game they very often started attack on the left side, by passing to Ayew, who was asking by his move for the ball. Two midfielders positioned close to each other absorbed the opponent's midfielders, and the Montpellier's winger left a space behind him (Ayew entering the white space). The winger on the other side narrowed in so that the right fullback had a lot of space (white space in picture above) after switching play.



A frequent attack from the left side caused the opponents were to narrow on their right side. This opened the possibility of switching play to right fullback.

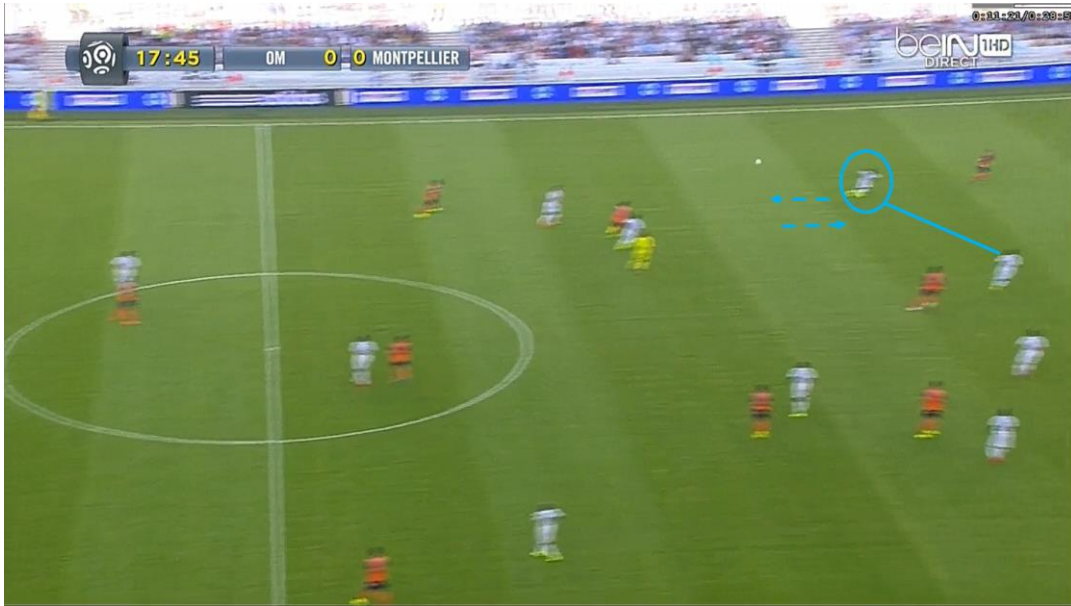
EYE CONTACT DURING SWITCHING PLAY



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

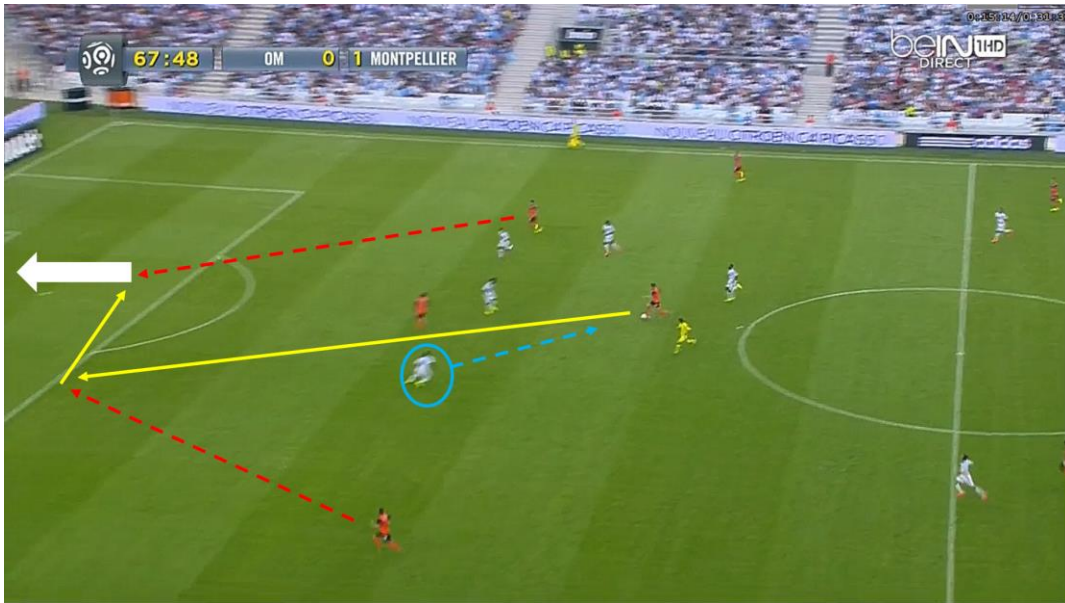
...

FIRST LOST GOAL:



The OM team made a lot of individual mistakes, which resulted in lost goals. At the first goal, after not collecting the "second ball", Montpellier centre back (El Kaoutari) took a long pass, between the wrongly positioned right fullback, (Djadjedje first left his zone and then he returned) and the centre back, created a 1v1 situation with the goalkeeper, used by Mounier.

SECOND LOST GOAL:



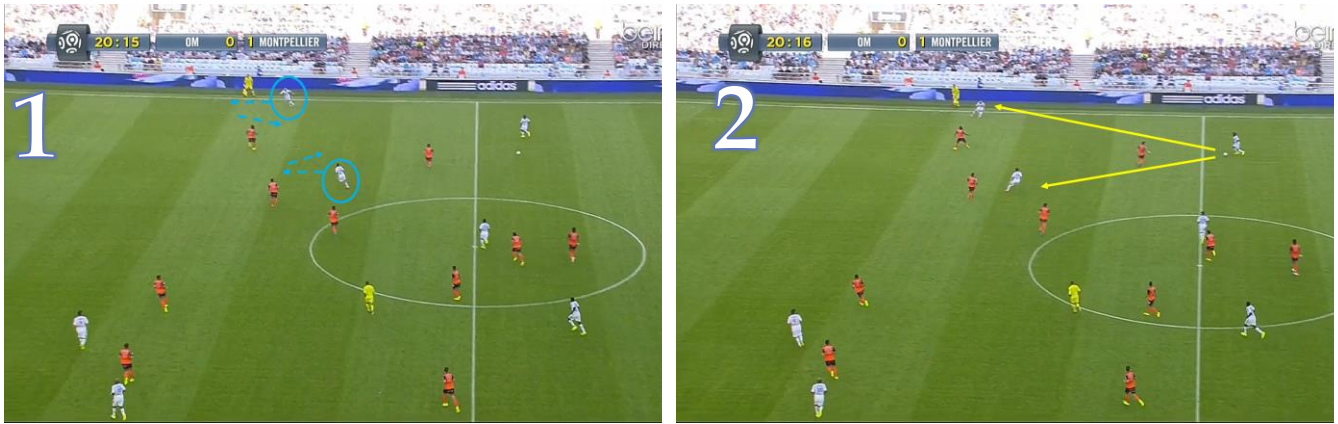
The second lost goal is the loss of the ball in the half of the opponent and incorrect behavior of Romao, who in the second half on the right defense replaced the player who made previous mistake Djadjedje. In this game, the OM team reacted too late after losing the ball (defensive transition), resulting in two goals being lost. After all, the team was slowly acquiring habits characteristic of Bielsa syndrome.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

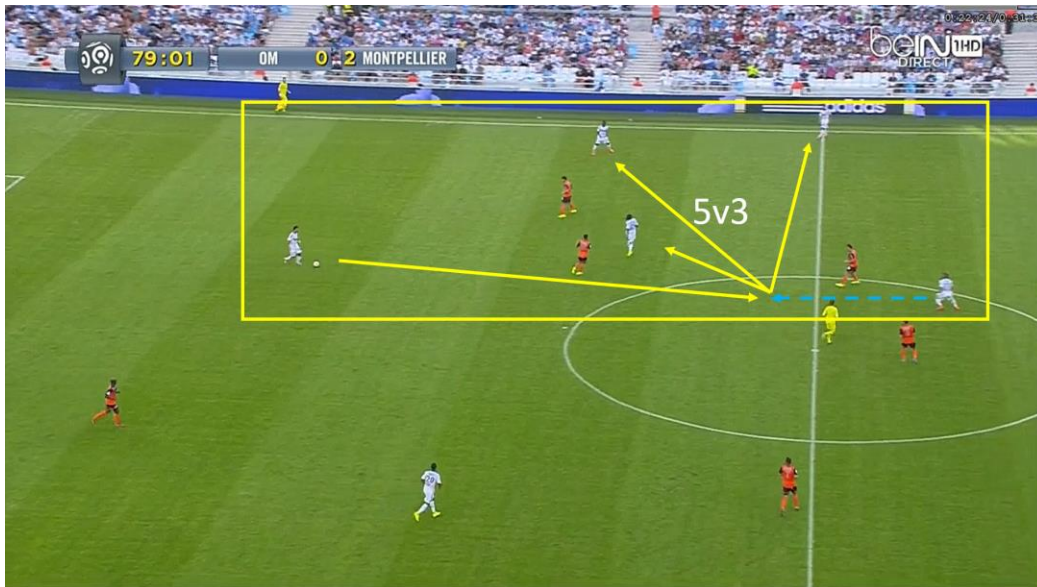


FLEXIBILITY:

The players were still very mobile compared to the player with the ball. Constant movement to lose cover is the basis of individual tasks in the Bielsa team.



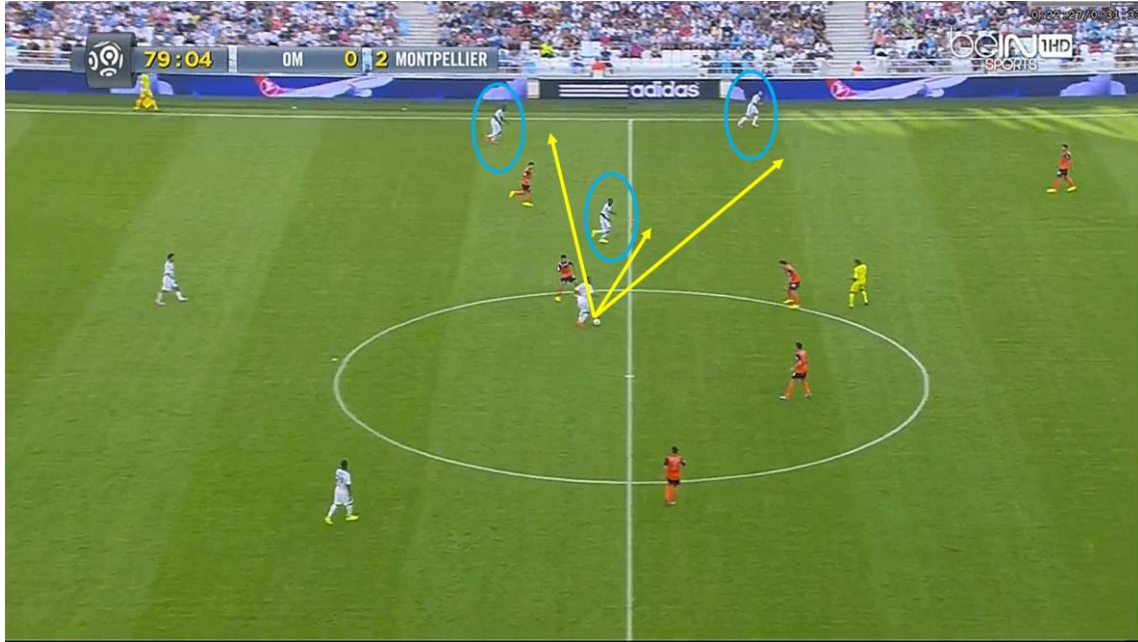
A different set-up and better understanding of when and how to lose cover, more and more often allowed OM to go to the final third. In addition, the players closest to the ball partner positioned themselves behind the opponent's pressing line when their teammate was not pressed. This set up always leads to a numerical superiority.



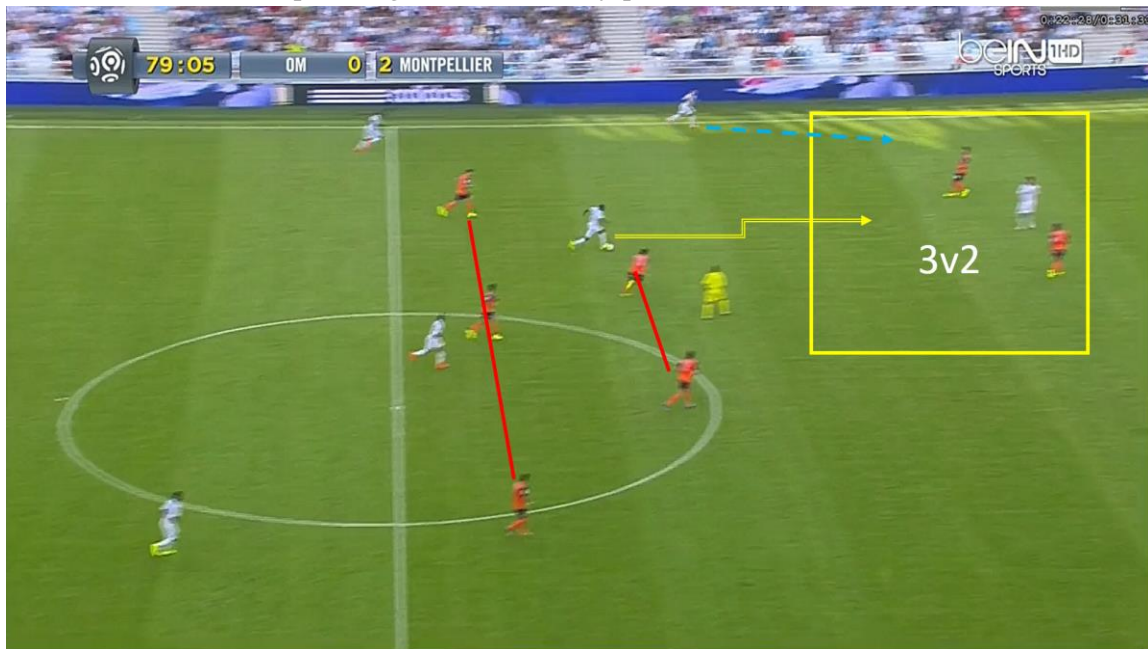
After passing the ball to the furthest player (Payet going down), he can pass the ball to up to three (!) teammates who will be facing the attack direction!!! It is worth noting that to go forward with the ball, often you should pass backwards. Backward pass is not a reflection of fear, but the beginning of the next action. Changing the direction of the next attack.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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This makes attacking much easier. Pass to the player who will be facing the action (facing towards the game). First, because the first pressing line has already passed (two strikers – red line).



After passing the first pressing line, everything is easier. Each subsequent progress in the action (dribble or pass) can cause a numerical advantage around the ball.

This game - despite being a lose - was a good omen for the future, because OM players increasingly understood various tactical concepts and their individual tasks in the context of team tactics.

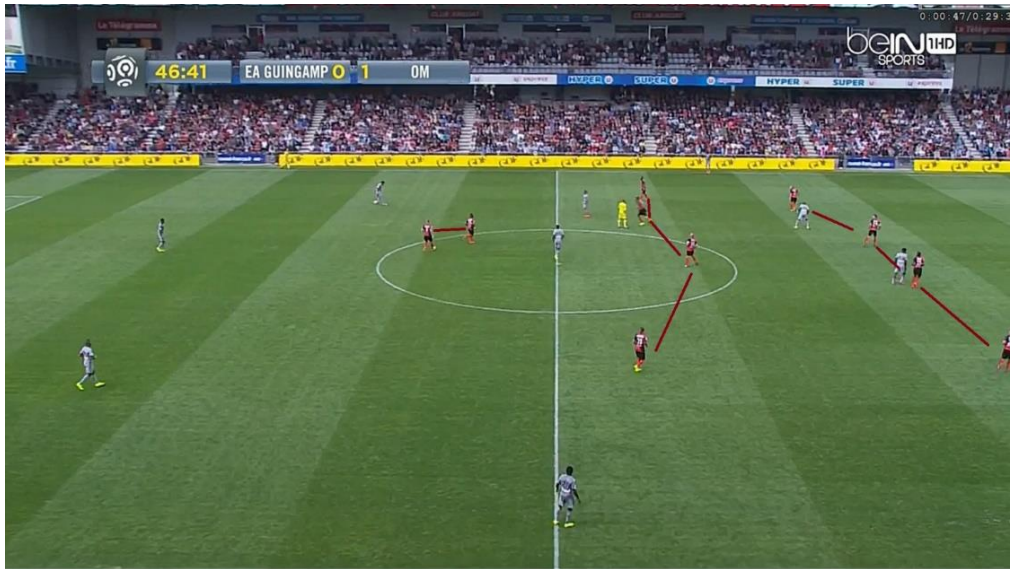
GAME 3: beginning of victories

23.08.2014. Stade de Roudourou, Guingamp. Ligue 1.

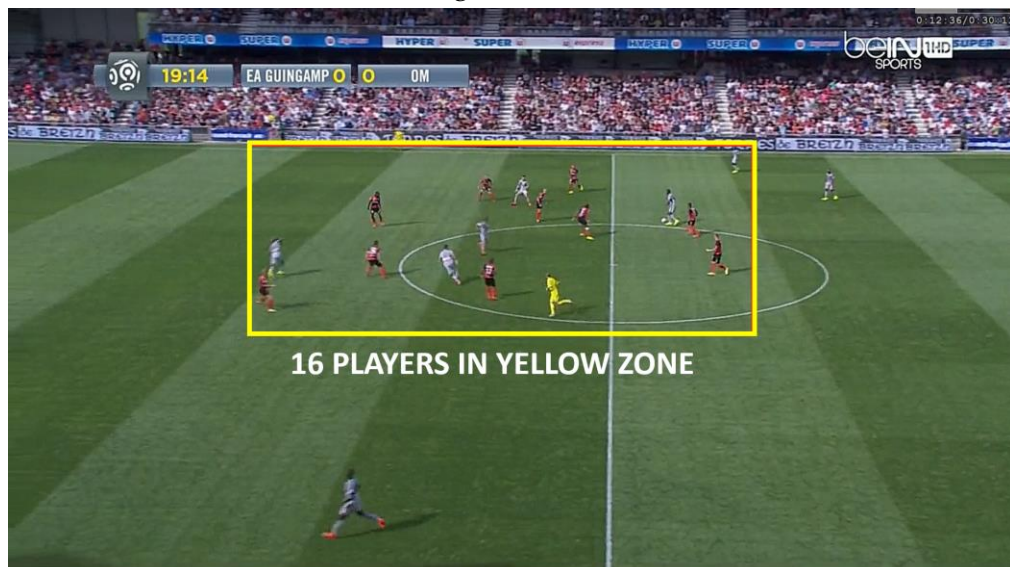
„I have no other duties than winning”.

EA GUINGAMP 0:1 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

With this game OM started a series of 8 wins in a row, where in each of these games had at least 56% possession of the ball. However, it wasn't just possession that made the team win.



OM's plan was very visible in this game. The very narrow set up of the Guingamp team (1: 4: 4: 2). Bielsa team responded by constant changes of attack (overload to isolate). Where the ball is always, we have pressure. For this reason, when the team starts to attack the ball with the left side, with a well-organized opponent in defense, one of the ideas is to change the direction of the attack.

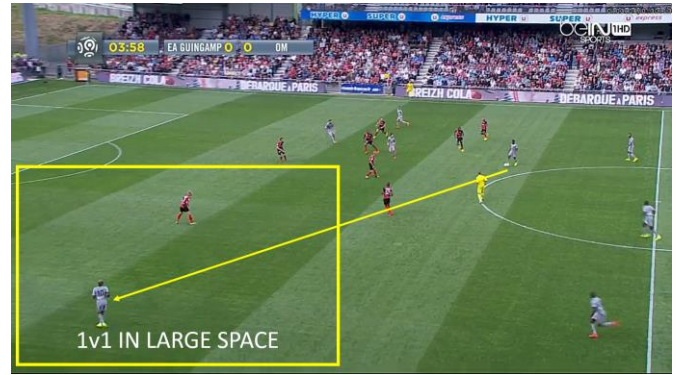
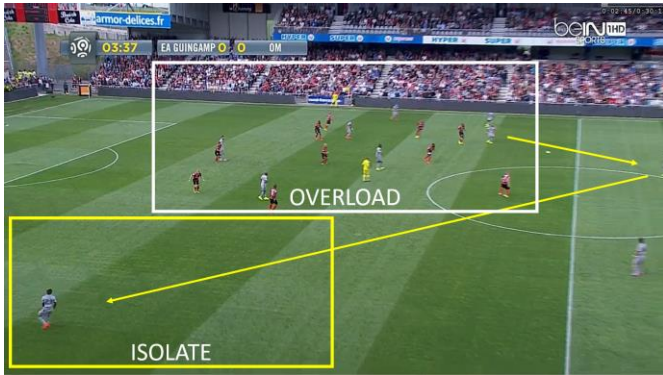


MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

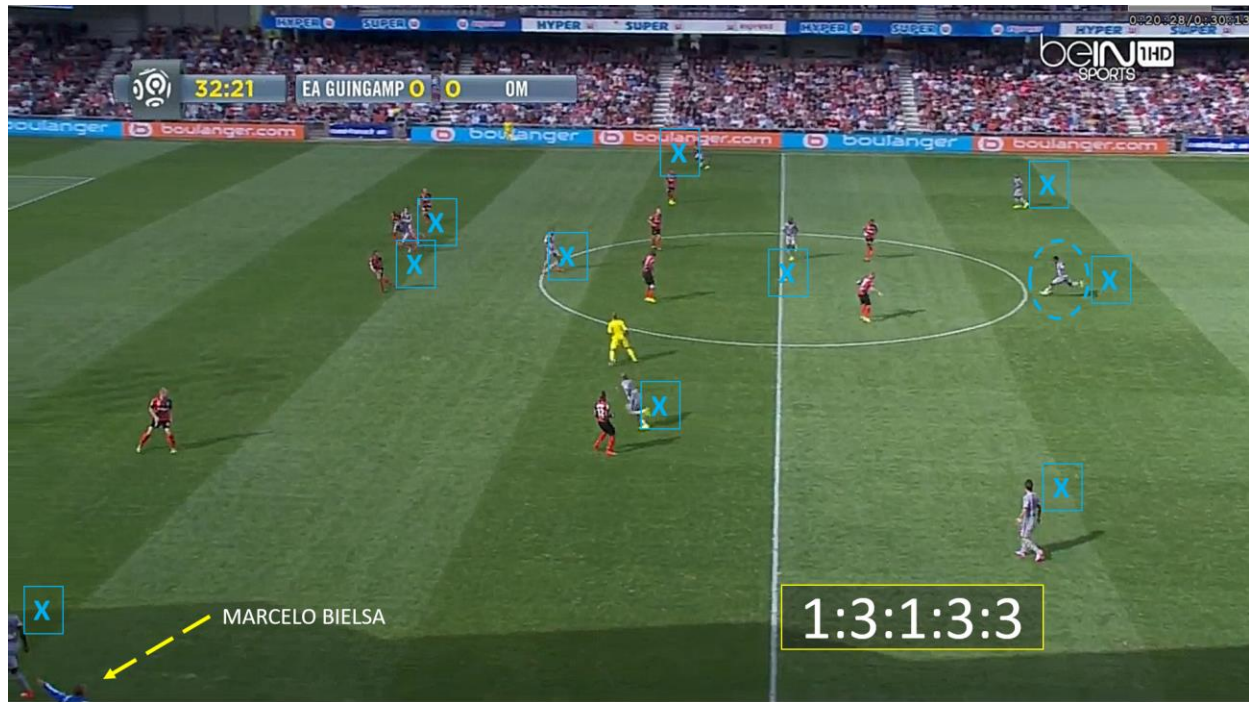


Switching play always give a time and space on the other side.

OVERLOAD TO ISOLATE:



Each quick switch point of attack will result in large space for the partner on the other side.



It was often a popular tactical concept when the opponent defended very narrowly, regardless of the setting up OM played.

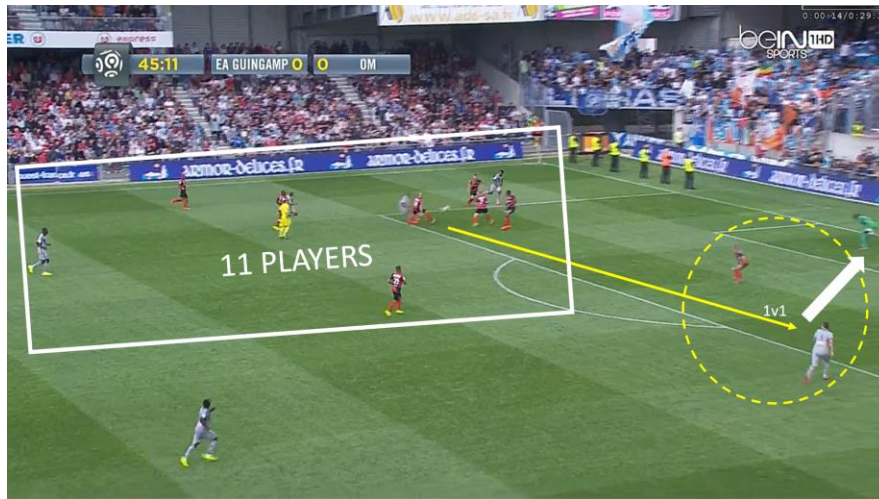


Set up of Bielsa's team is indeed very arbitrary and flexible. Often, we saw the change of setting, but resulting from the game needs. Only very good tactical teams are able to adapt to the game requirements on an ongoing basis. The players seemed to understand this better and better. Within their own philosophy, they were able to show their talent.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



It was after starting the attack on the left side and moving the ball to the other side (where the 1v1 situation was isolated) that OM scored the only goal of this game, at the beginning of the second half:

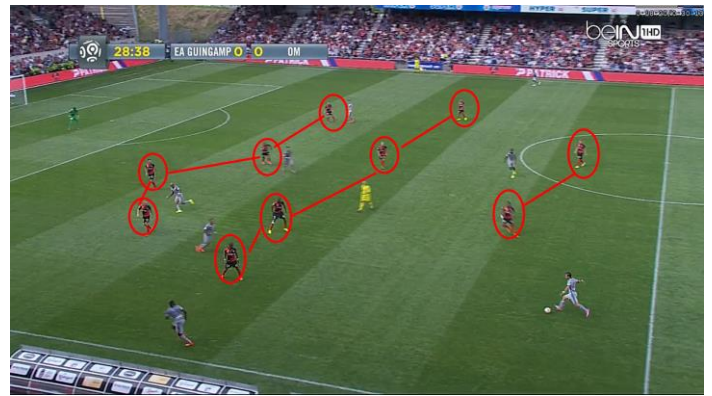


Another thing that determines space and makes the opponent disorganize is the movement of players above the ball. This way Bielsa team caused the opponent's defensive structure to stop to exist and to change:

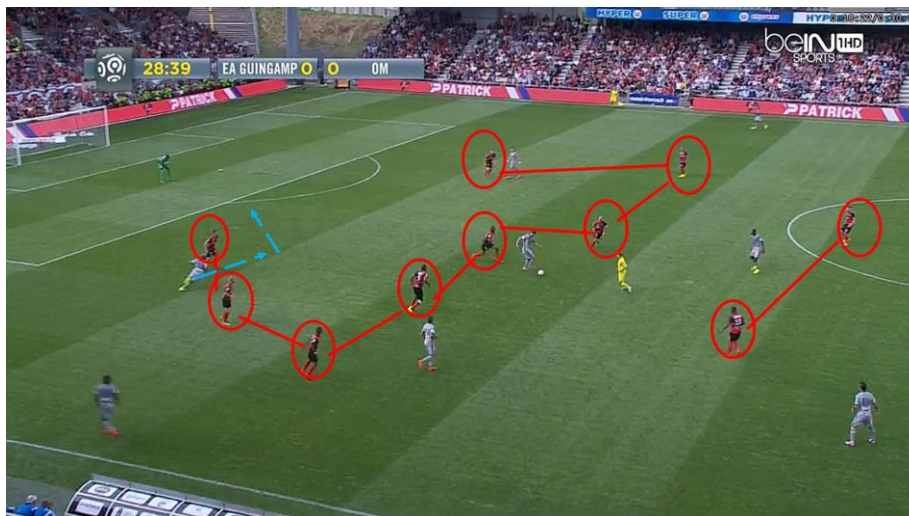
MOVEMENTS PLAYERS ABOVE THE BALL



OPPONENT'S DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE



MOVEMENT OF FOUR PLAYERS – CONSEQUENCES IN DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE



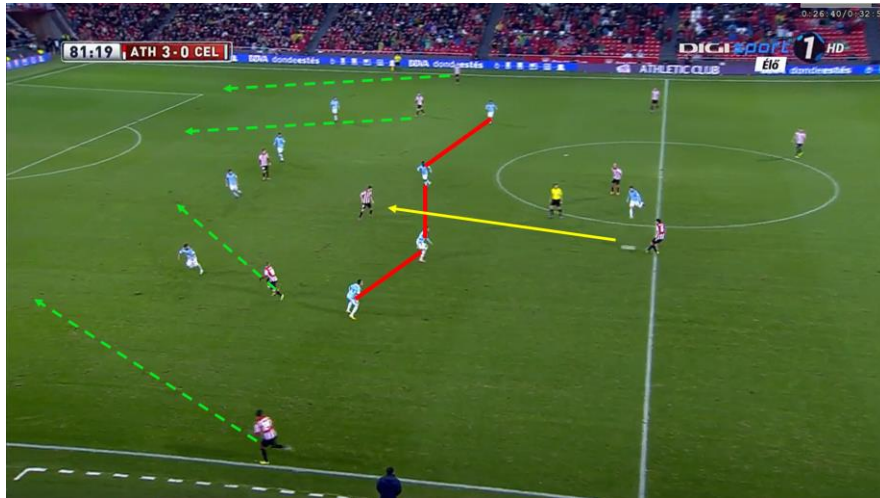
GAME 4: Bielsa team's

29.08.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

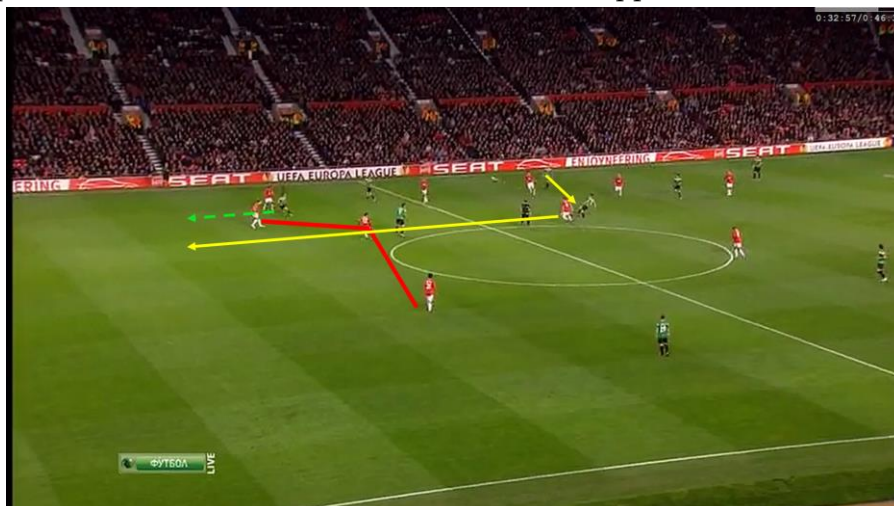
„I'm obsessive in attack, I never consider playing from counterattack.”

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 4:0 OGZ NICE

Game began with direct attacks by Bielsa team. Many attempts of vertical passes, which were a very frequent attempt to create scoring chance, caused great difficulty to the Nice defending line. To understand the philosophy of the game Marcelo Bielsa, we must for a moment give up the analysis of the OM team, which still resembled the team marked DNA "El Loco". Let's look at the Athletic Bilbao team, which has mastered the model of his coach's game to a very high degree. The goal of the attack game is to **deliver the ball to the penalty area as soon as possible** (from there the most goals are scored). **The shortest road is vertical passes:**



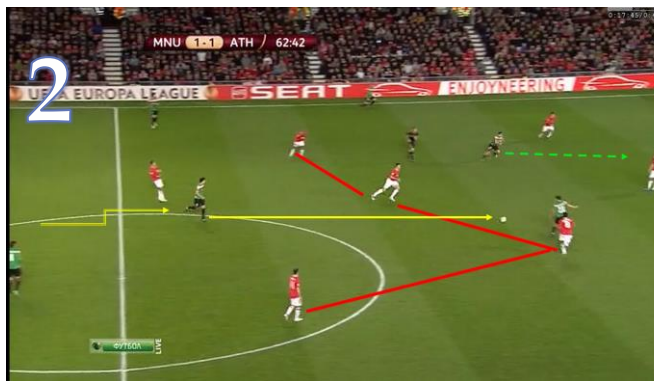
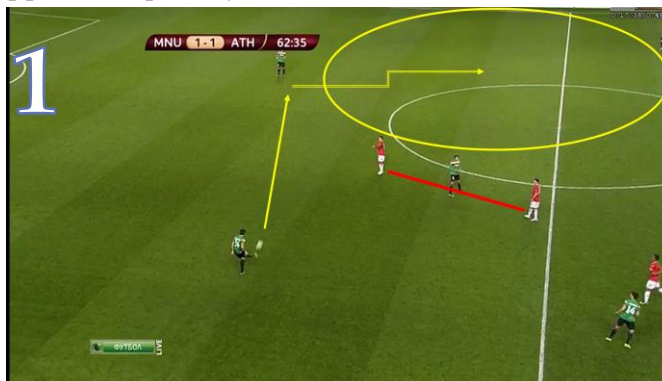
Once the opponent's midfield line is beaten by first vertical pass, in the next step players are oriented to the second final pass, which this time is to beat (overcome) the opponent's defensive line:



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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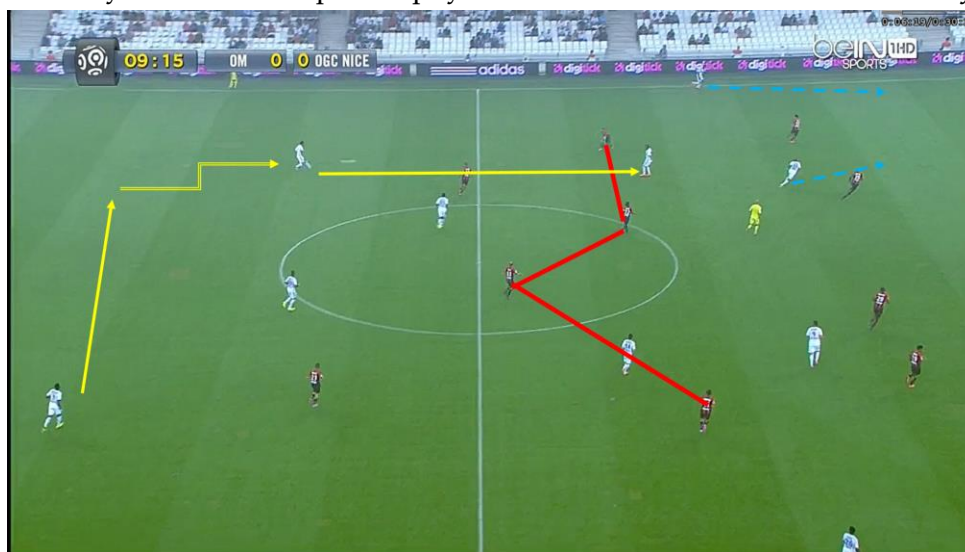
Lots of actions, which began with the central defenders, were to end by vertical (final) pass to the opponent's penalty area which is advanced area action.



Action from Athletic Bilbao vs Manchester United game.

Two vertical passes destroy the opponent's defensive structure. Such applications were a priority for the OM team. The idea of verticality (penetrating opponent's lines) is crucial. Every action designed with the purpose of creating the space to dribble into, the passing line and/or the structure to work the ball forward.

The OM team slowly entered in the philosophy of Marcelo Bielsa and there were many similarities:



When we compare these pictures, we can see the foundations of the game in attack:

- 1 / Progression in the game - actions to progress in the game.
- 2 / Vertical pass - forward!
- 3 / As quickly as possible, along the ground or long ball
- 4 / Beat last line of the opponent + finalizing the action in the penalty area.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



SIMILARITIES TO THE ATHLETIC BILBAO GAME:

Goal action in
Athletic vs
Manchester
United game.

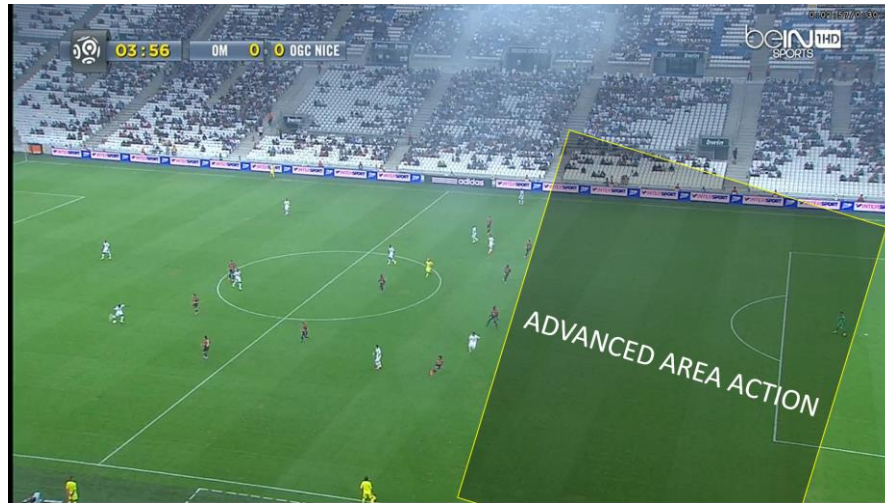


Picture from
game Belgium
vs Japan.
Only to explain
the concept of a
final pass to
advanced area
action from a
tactical camera
– for e-book
needs.

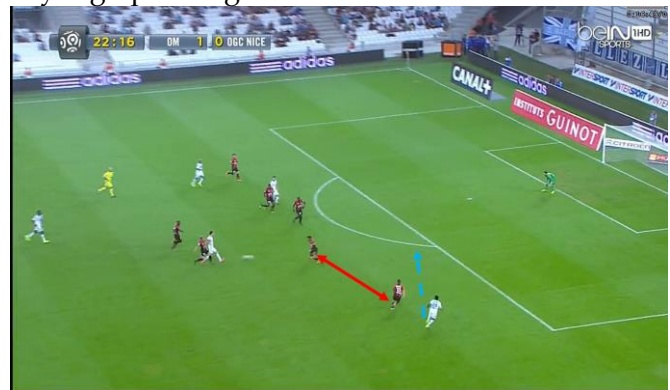


OM players, regardless of whether it was a positional attack or a counterattack, attempted to pass to the right winger or the striker, who, as soon as he saw the large distance between the left defender and the centre back - ran into the space of immediate danger. This is the answer to the highly placed opponent defensive line:

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

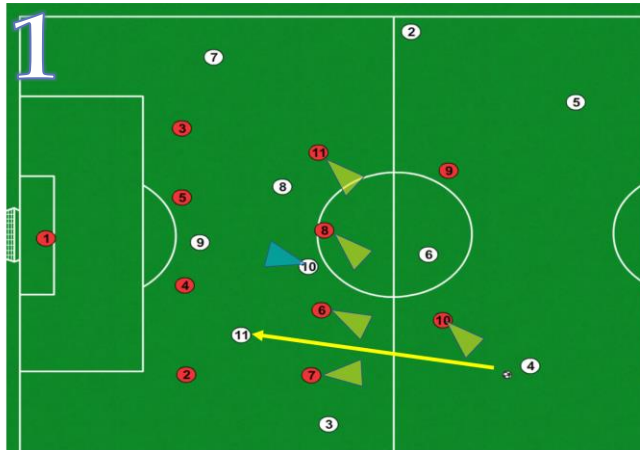


Passing behind the defense line, over time, moves the opponent closer to his own goal and discourages rivals to try high pressing:



The OM team very often used the tactical concept called „3rd man“. After one of these actions the first goal came. Pass the ball to furthest player who immediately pass the ball to the player who will be facing the action. The opponent who looks at the ball does not see (does not control) the 3rd player.

OPPONENTS PERSPECTIVE



NUMBER 10 (3rd MAN)



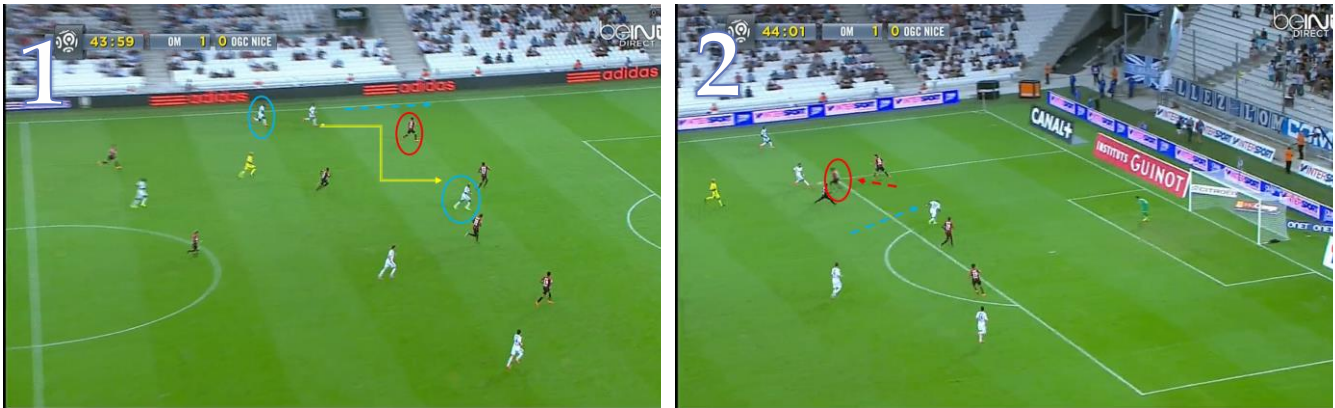
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



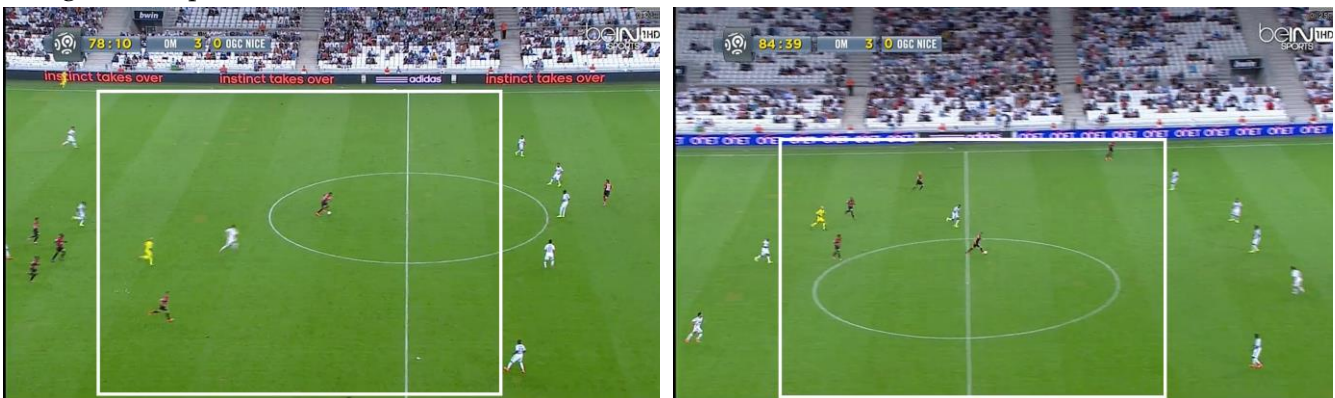
COMPARISON OF OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE WITH ATHLETIC BILBAO



The second goal showed once again how team automation can be an effective weapon. In the first game, the player with the ball was dribble directly on opponent until he left his position. This situation also occurred when the second goal was scored. You can see the attack on the left side again. The left OM fullback by connecting to the offensive caused trouble to the opponent (temporary 2v1). The player with the ball could then dribble the ball to the center defender and "release" his teammate at the right time:



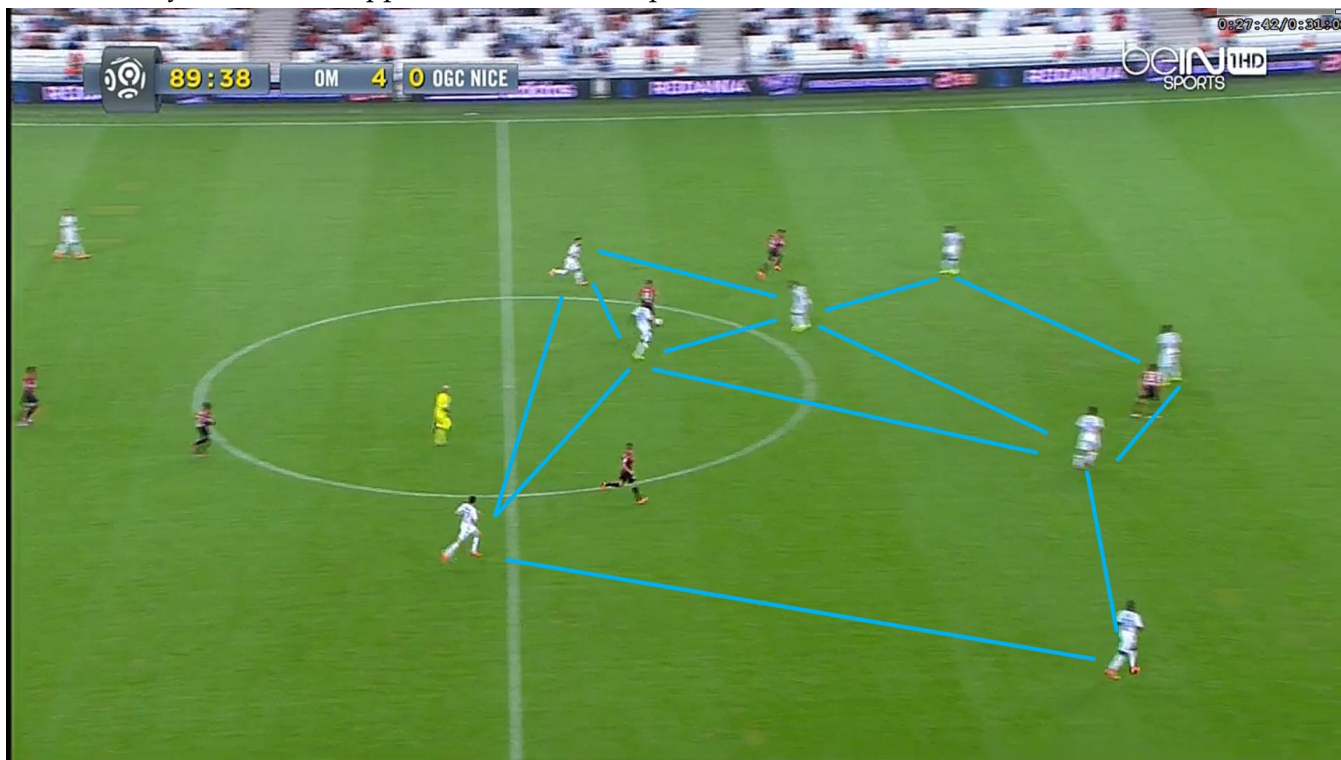
What's more interesting in this game is the fact that after 65 '(at 3:0) the Marcelo Bielsa team switched to the 1: 5: 4: 1 set up and more often try a counterattack. However, the lack of shortening (squeeze) of the playing field by the defensive line exposed the team to re-counterattack. However, five defenders managed to stop the rival counterattacks.



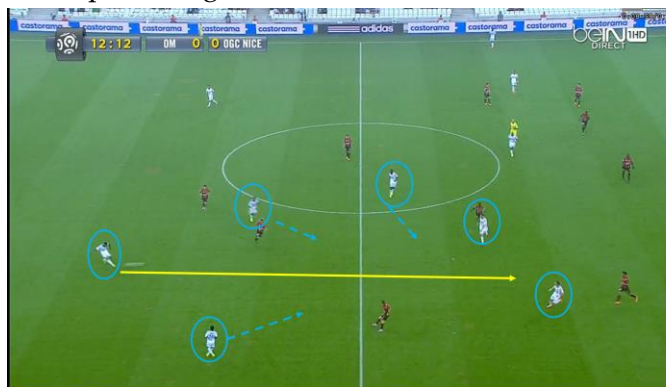
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



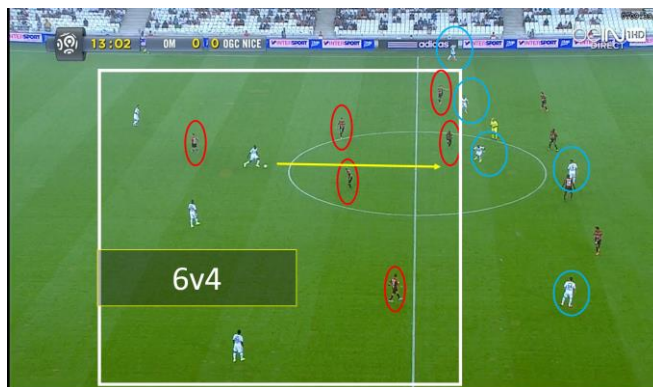
If the defense line kept up with the counterattack (they would squeeze to make the playing field smaller) and the formations were close to each other (a special midfield line with the defensive line), they automatically covered the opponents with more space:



It is much easier to defend when an opponent receives a ball. When the distances between returning teammates are adequate, defense and return under the ball become easier. Due to the fact that it is not possible to defend the goal light - due to the return under the ball - good communication and close distances allow you to delay the opponent's counterattack and return the whole team to the ball and to a compact setting. It should also be remembered that it is from a good attack structure that the correct loss response begins:



In the event of loss of the ball (in any place), the OM team would be able to react well due to the appropriate distances between players when they attacked.



In the event of a loss in this situation - when the player with the ball is not surrounded by his partners, the opponent start counterattack with numerical advance.

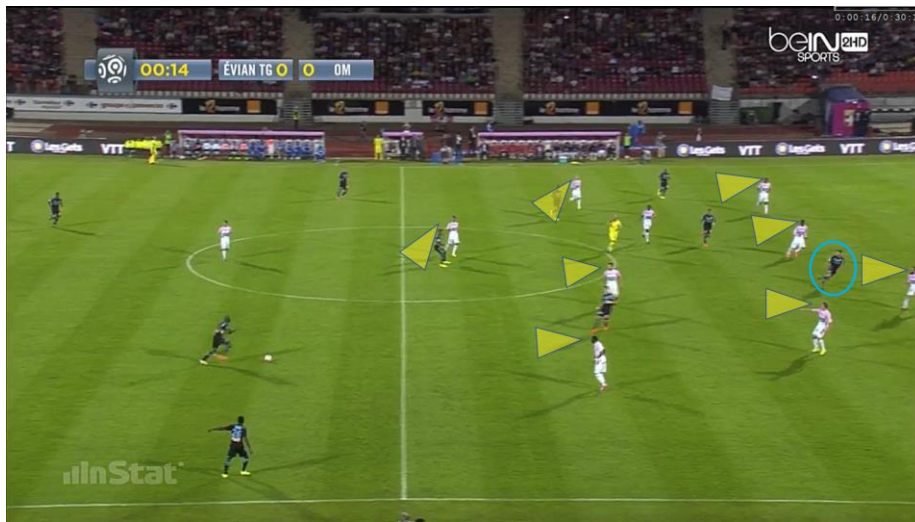
GAME 5: pressing

14.09.2014. Parc des Sports d'Annecy. Annency. Ligue 1.

„There is a big difference between teams waiting for a rival's mistake and teams that cause these mistake”.

THONON EVIAN GRAND GENEVE FC 1:3 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

OM took the lead from the first minute. Evian set up very narrow medium block 1: 4: 2: 3: 1. After one changing of the side of attack by OM players, the centre back played a long ball behind the Evian defensive line of the opponents back (after movement show/go by Gignac):



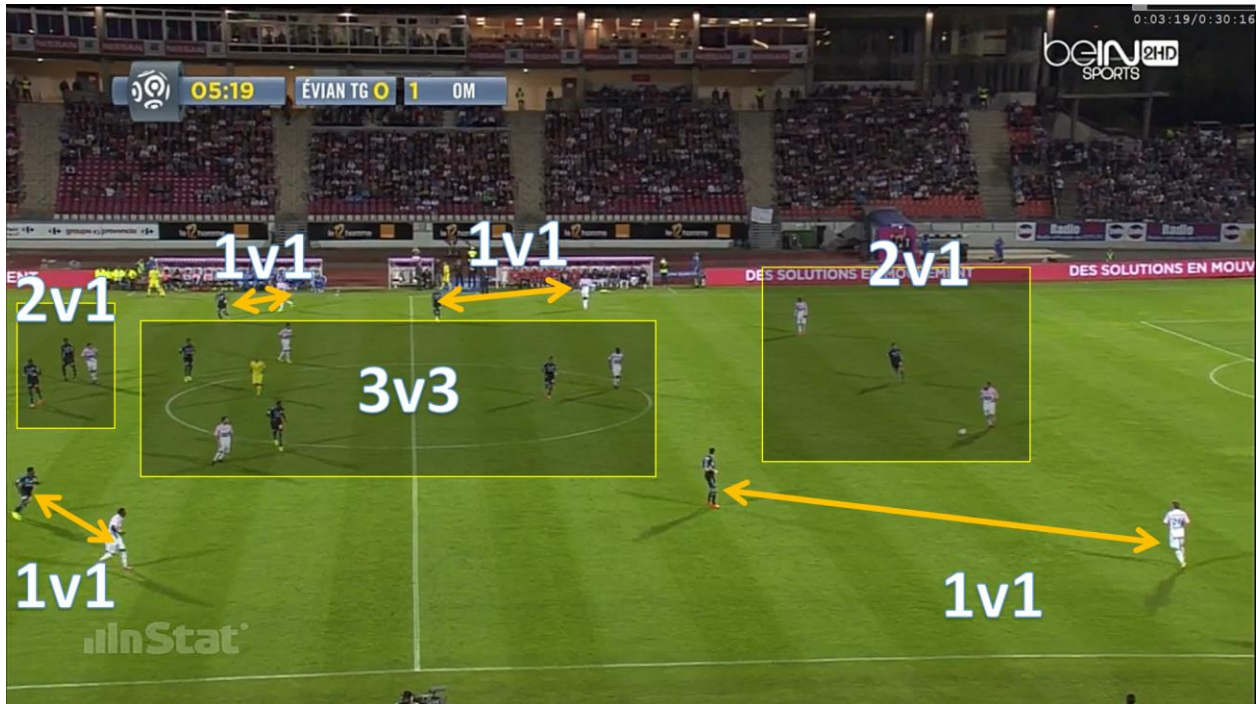
During switching play, the opponent very often looks only at the ball. This is the right moment to attack your opponent's defense line (diagonal or blind side run behind the defense line). However, this is not the only moment. If the player with the ball is not pressed (as in the case of goal action), this is the right time to start running behind the opponent's line. This was very common behavior of the team.



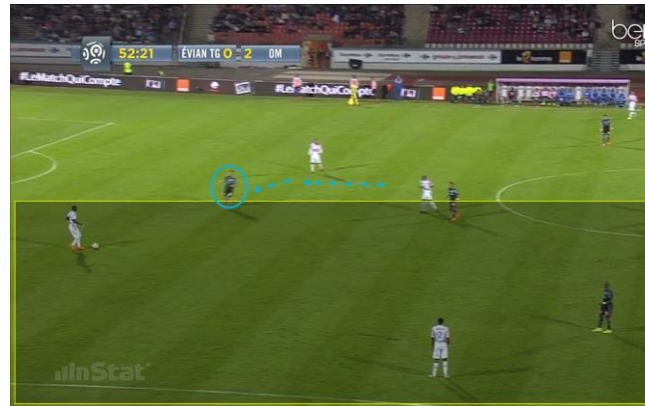
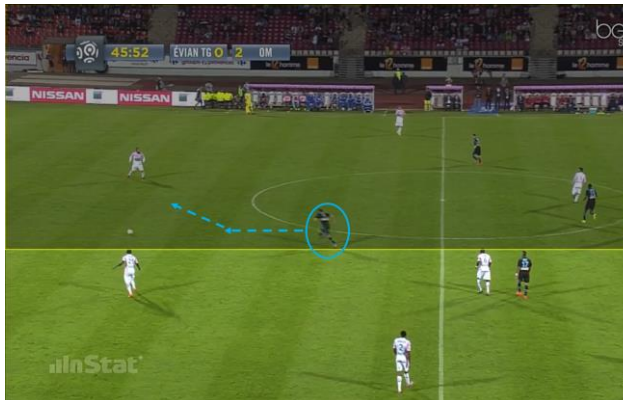
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



During defense OM start pressing in the setting 1: 4: 2: 3: 1 - which resulted in good balance in each formation. Pressing was short because it was important to recover the ball as quickly as possible. Bielsa believes that it is unnecessary to defend longer than necessary (action instead of passive defense).



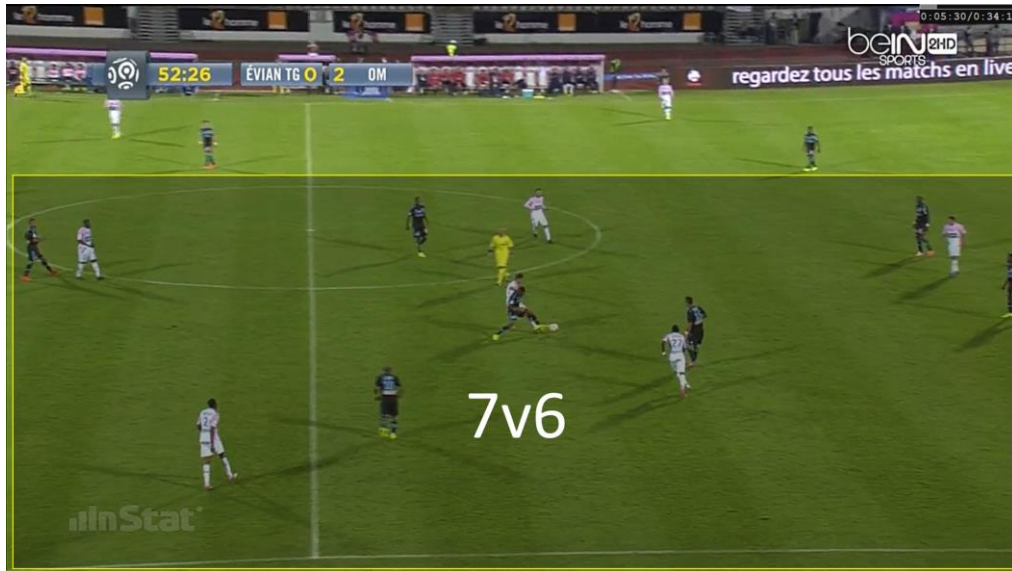
Pressing started with Gignac, who was pushing the central defenders (making it impossible to pass between them), thus dividing the pitch in half (marked zone). Running the bow (yellow arrows) force the opponent to choose one side of the attack.



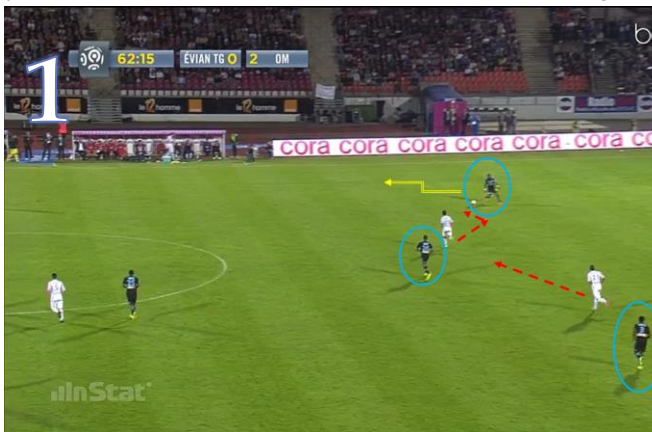
Considering football as a game of time and space, when start pressing you should reduce your opponent's pitch so that he doesn't have the freedom in attack. Small pitch - high defense activity. We will then lead to two benefits: reducing the field of defense and an advantage around the ball. There is one condition - the opponent cannot change sides. The figure below shows the effect of a good pressing trap.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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When you have numerical advantage, you should press the opponent and do not let him get out of the press. Without aggressive dash, even shortening and closing the space will not help, as Evian found out. In the initial phase, they also set up pressure, but later allowed (despite the advantage!) To change side by OM - which resulted in the loss of the third goal:



GAME 6: movements

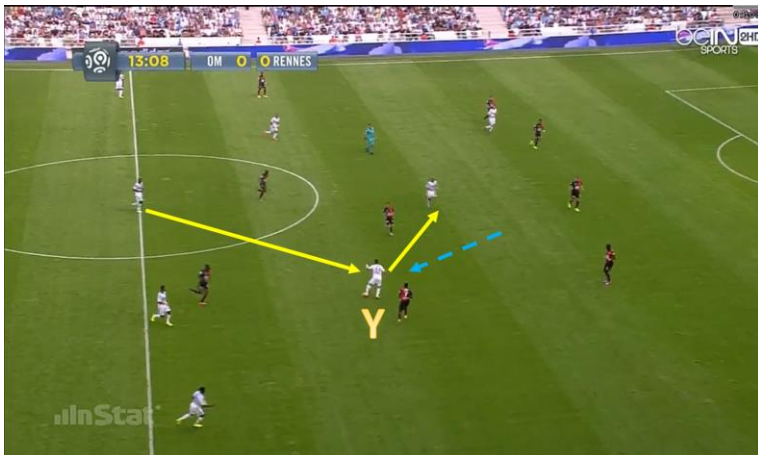
20.09.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„There are five types of movement without a ball that lose cover”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 3:0 STADE RENNAIS FC

OM came out in one of their more offensive set up 1: 3: 1: 3: 3. Game completely dominated by the team from Marseille. The possession of the ball at the level of 59%, but in the first half it did not translate into goal situations. It can be said that even Stade Rennais FC had better chances to score, especially after set pieces (5 corners). They scored a goal that was not correct (after a free kick) - the shooting player was on offside. What caught the eye was the players' movement "over" the ball. Bielsa at one of the coaches' conference (in Amsterdam) showed 5 moves losing the cover. It was not until the sixth game that they were used all:

MOVEMENT 1



First was move to the ball carrier and receive with the turn (letter Y) and attempt to pass the ball forward. Frequent movement made by wingers and players positioned between the lines. Very often after that kind of receiving, the player with the ball tried to pass the ball into the box (vertical pass).

MOVEMENT 2



Movement behind the back of the defenders. Very often, Bielsa emphasized that this move was intended to "break" the defender's position and change the shape of whole defensive line. Movement made very often during finalization. We have here a positional advantage (thanks to my position - facing the goal, I have an advantage over my defender - he has his back to the goal).

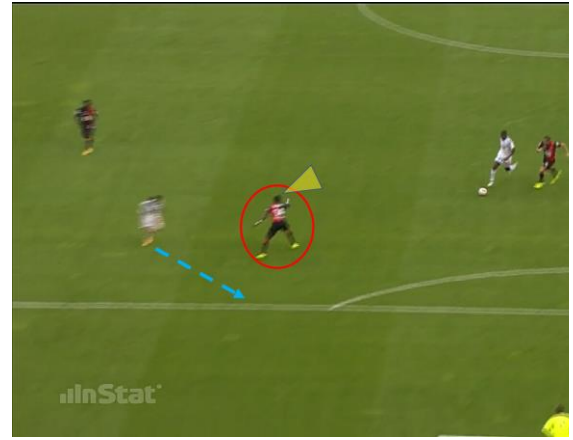
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



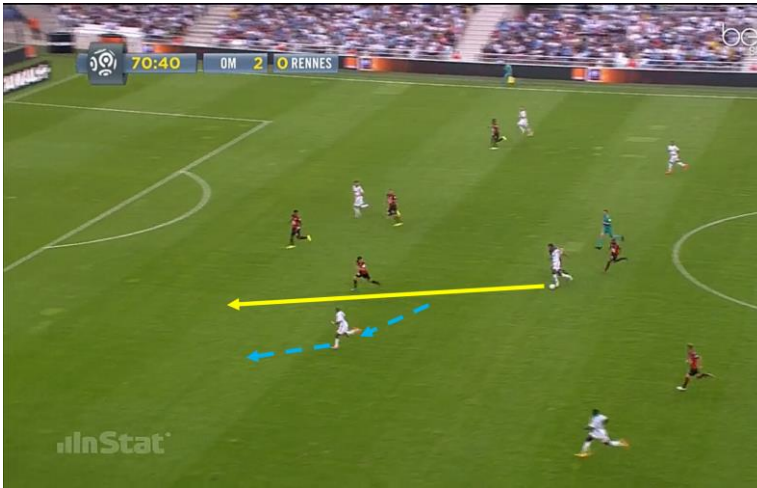
POSITIONAL ADVANTAGE



POSITIONAL ADVANTAGE

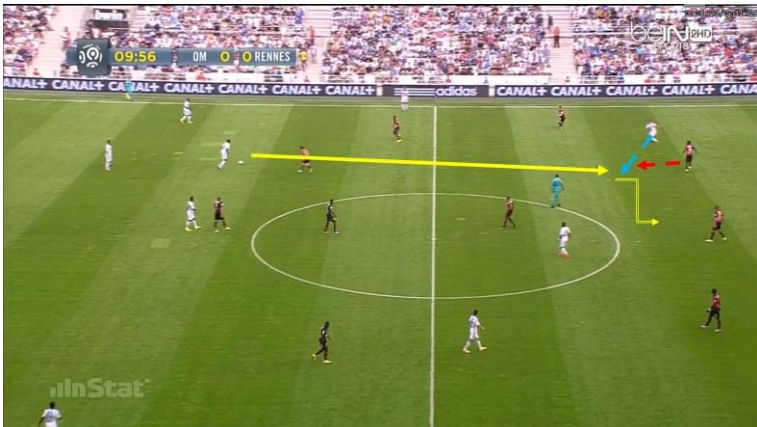


MOVEMENT 3



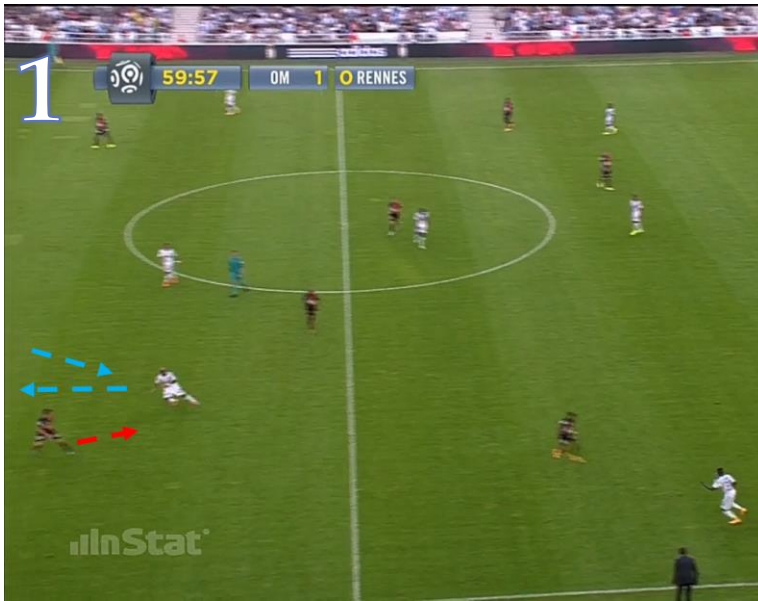
That movement (number 3) is mainly used during counterattacks. If a player with the ball dribble straight ahead, the opponent narrows. The goal of the counterattacking player (who is without the ball) is to move away from the defensive line - creating a pass opportunity. This move makes it possible to pass the ball next to the opponents, although at first it was not possible. If the opponent runs after the expanding player, he opens the space between them so player can do movement number 2.

MOVEMENT 4

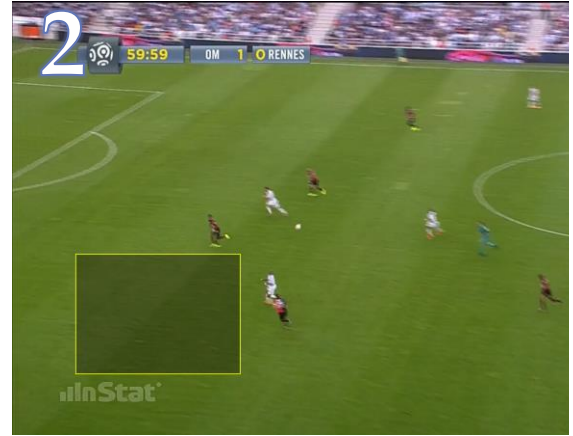


This is a move that aims to pass the opponent by good first touch (receiving). Initially, player shows in free space, then with the first touch go to free zone and pass the pressure of the opponent covering me. Most often it is played by players playing on the wings.

MOVEMENT 5



The movement aim is to pull the opponent out of his position and run behind him - into free space that player made by this movement.



OM players, thanks to mastering these moves, often easily moved to different places on the pitch. Players must also predict where his opponent will be. With this knowledge, your position and move will cause big problems for your cover. The three reference points are:

1/ Place of the ball - when the defender is focused on the ball, the striker must be able to use it.

2/ Position relative to the covering defender – the place where you start your move (basic position) that will affect the defender's behavior.

3/ Anticipation - where the opponent is currently looking and where the partner with the ball is looking.

After each analysis of the OM game, you can think that it is not the set up or positions in formation matters the most. The real formation and set up was the movement of players without a ball. It wasn't the game system that forced players to move. It was the movements without the ball that formed the team's position.

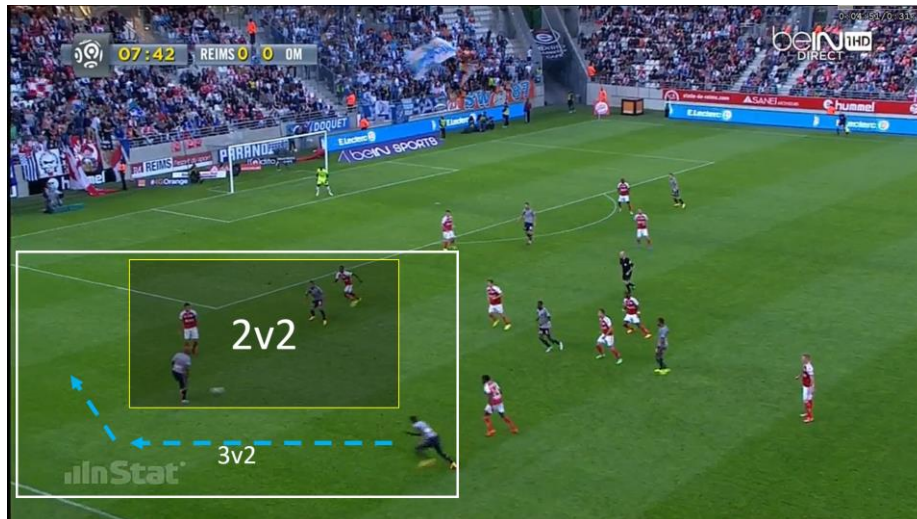
GAME 7: numerical advantages

23.09.2014. Stade Auguste-Delaune . Reims. Ligue 1.

„By objectively and reliably judging team development, we need the number of opportunities we have created to score a goal”.

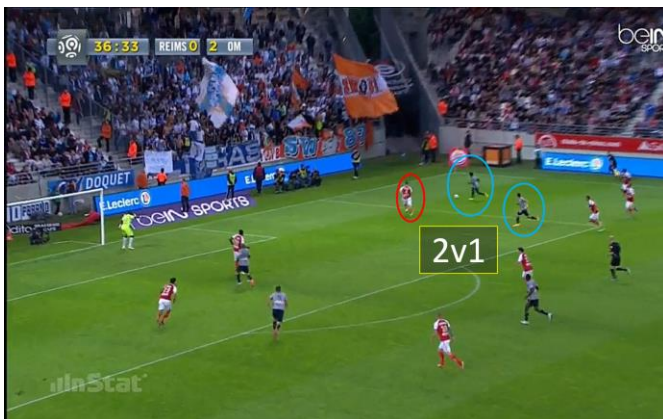
STADE DE REIMS 0:5 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

Another game that was completely under the dictation of Marcelo Bielsa team. Big possession of the ball, which translated into the number of entries into the penalty area. OM take 14 shots. In this game, the advantage was created on the wings. The OM team sought numerical and positional advantage. While the positional advantage was discussed on the occasion of the previous game, the pursuit of numerical advantage had a large impact at the goals. The first goal was scored because position of fullback was very high, and he created a 3v2 (assist by the fullback joining the action - Mendy):

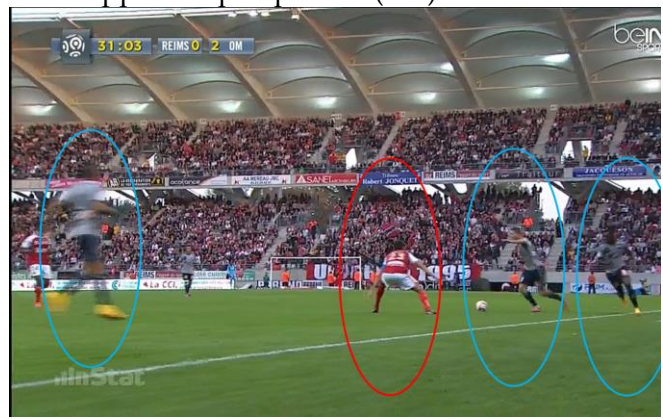


Mostly OM try to attack by left wing and try to create numerical advantages there.

2v1:



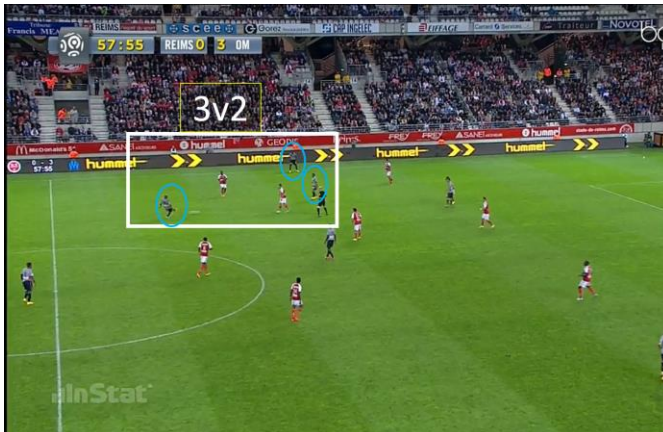
3v1 – opponent perspective (red):



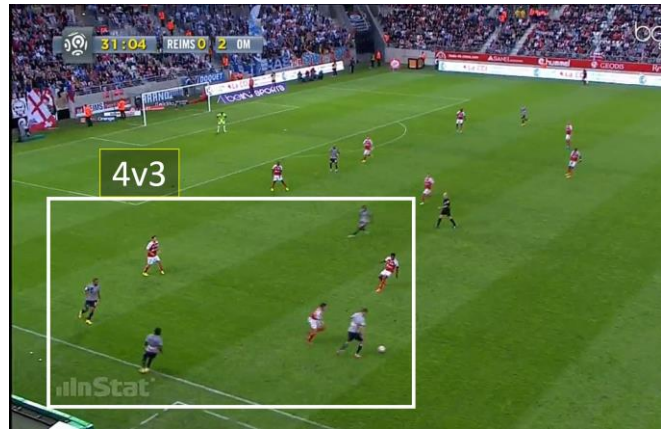
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



3v2



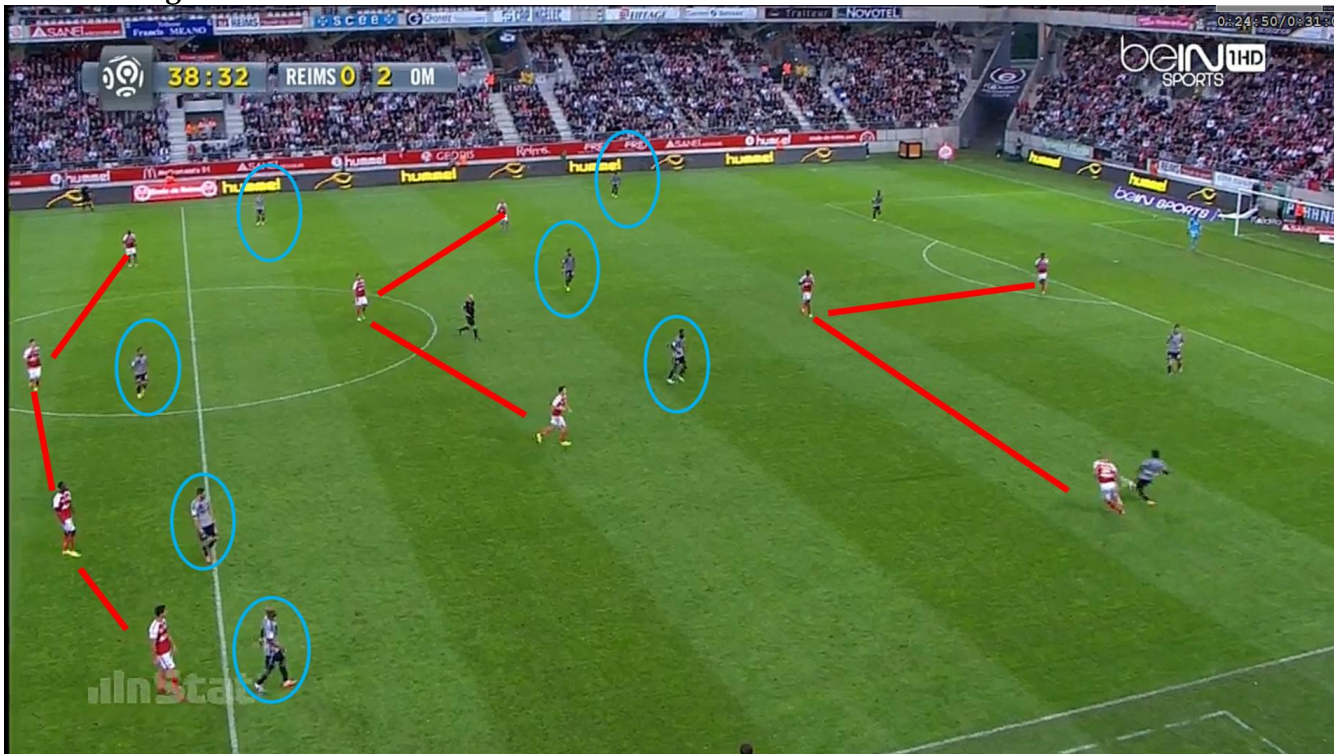
4v3



If we use a numerical advantage during the finalization (final third), there will be a chance end the action by pass the ball into penalty area (cross, final pass, etc.). Situation 3v2 above is a beginning of the fourth goal. After pass between two opponents, OM player changed side and the situation was finished on the other side.

Stade de Reims tried high pressing (most game try to pick up the ball near Mandanda's goal - OM goalie). Bielsa team reacted to that pressure in two ways:

1.Positioning – between the lines.



Marcelo Bielsa team formed an offensive structure that allowed them to cover key space on the field, which made it easier to escape from opponents pressing. At the same time, thus enabling better interpretation of game situations, players could more effectively adapt to the opponent's game. The structure is based on the distance between teammates, which allows you to work as a collective

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



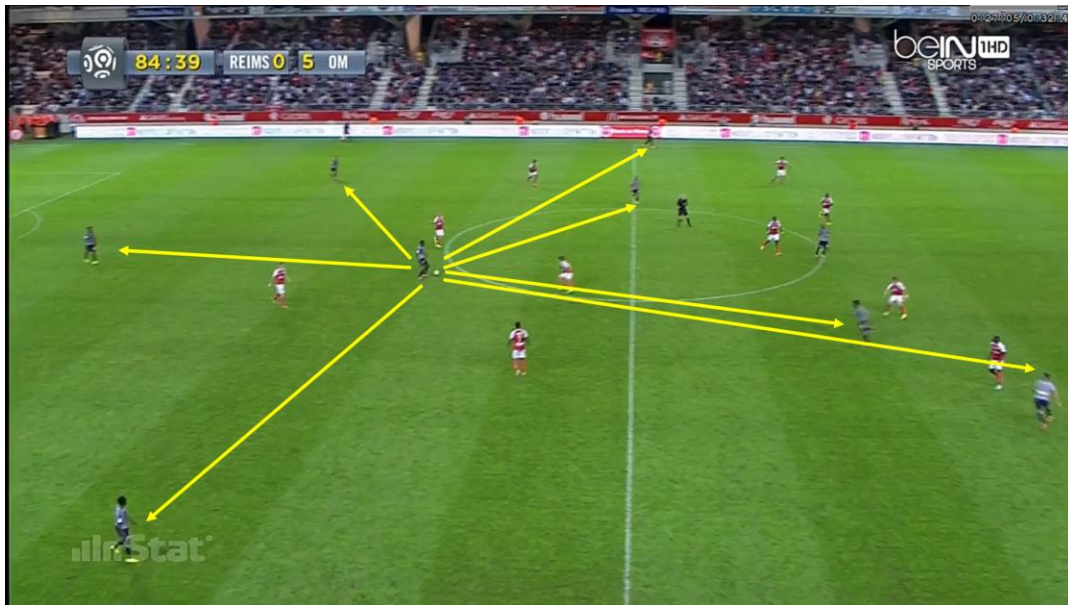
unit (better communication), both on a macro and micro scale. The response to events is based on the following parameters:

a / ball location, b / free space, c / positioning of teammates, d / positioning of opponents.

2. Support - a player with the ball when he was pressed, players from the higher formation show down and give support (pass option).



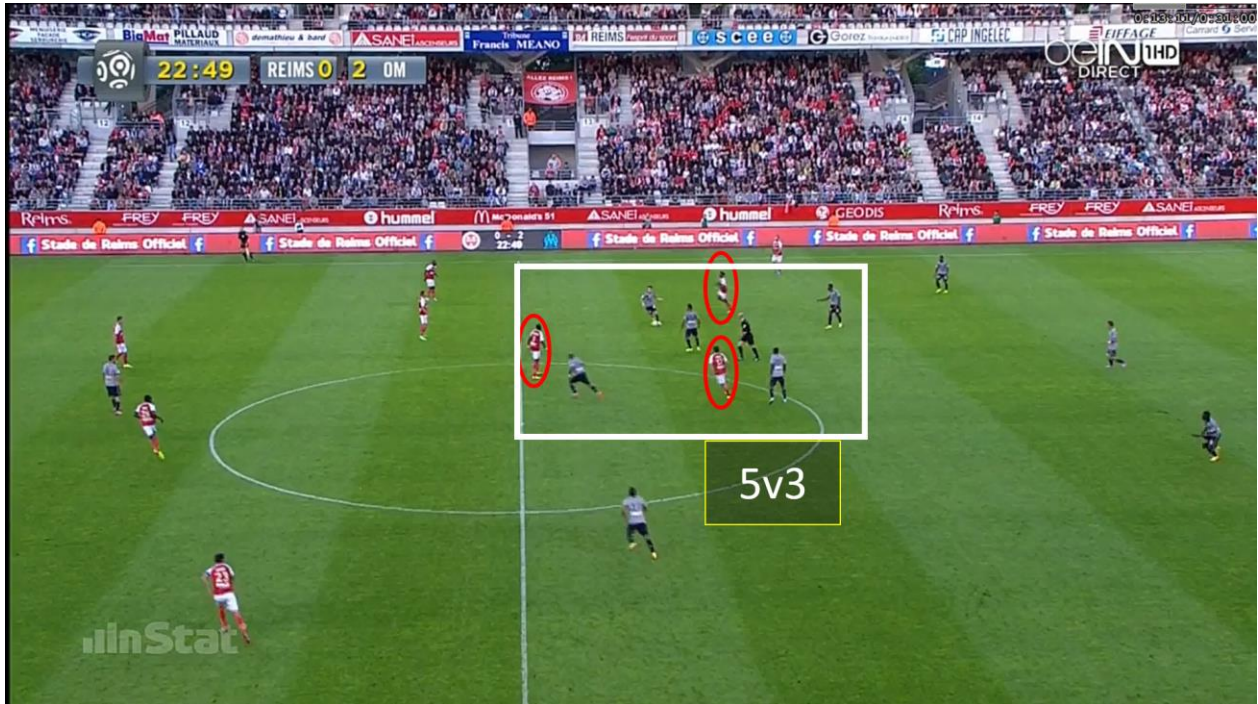
Support results in better communication (connections) between players. The fact that a player with the ball has possibility to pass causes greater safety (and maybe less risk) when building an action. Without the support you are forced to play 1v1 or just kick the ball away. So, communication between players is key:



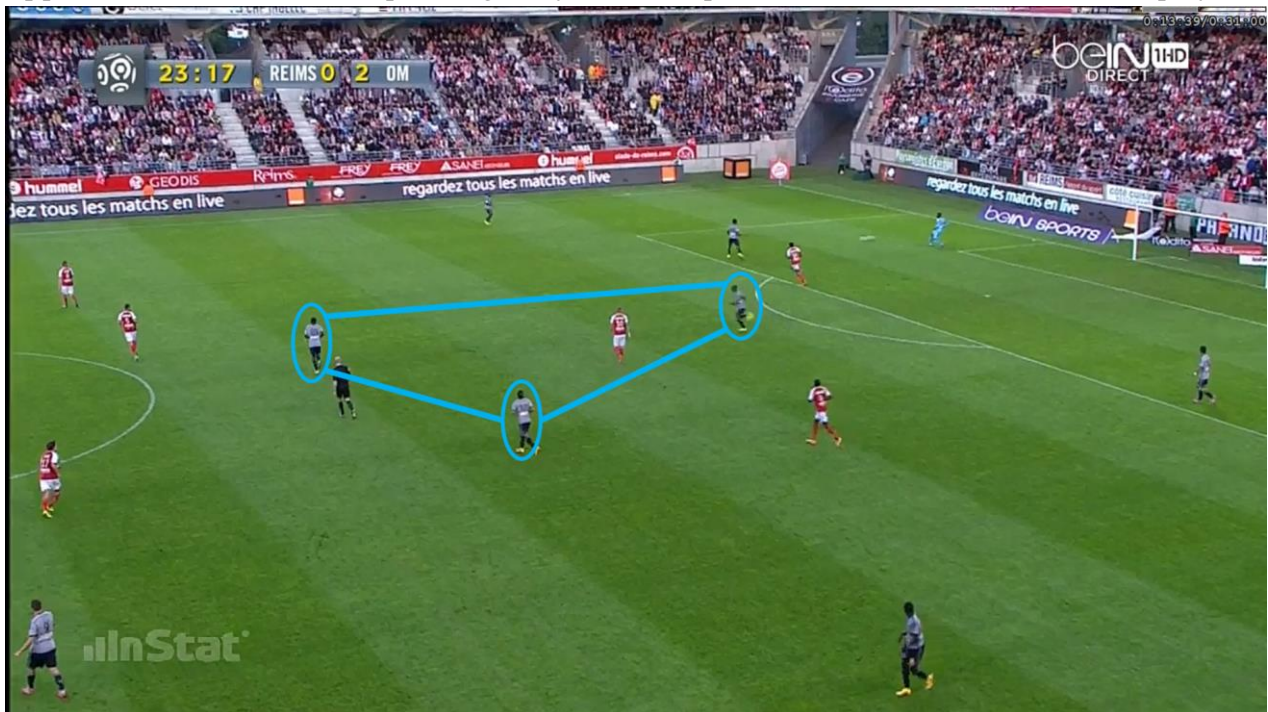
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



Another important tactical move by Marcelo Bielsa was to dominate the center of the pitch:



The numerical advantage in midfield has a huge impact on future events. Just as in chess, the most important thing is to master the center of the board, so in football the dominated middle causes troubles for opponents. The reason is simple – it gives you more options to attacks (few directions of play).



If the midfield is able to control the game, other players can move into attacking positions. That seems to be priority for football team who wants to play offensive football.

GAME 8: take the ball back

28.09.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„I know that success after winning lasts 5 minutes. After that is only huge empty”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:1 AS SAINT-ETIENNE

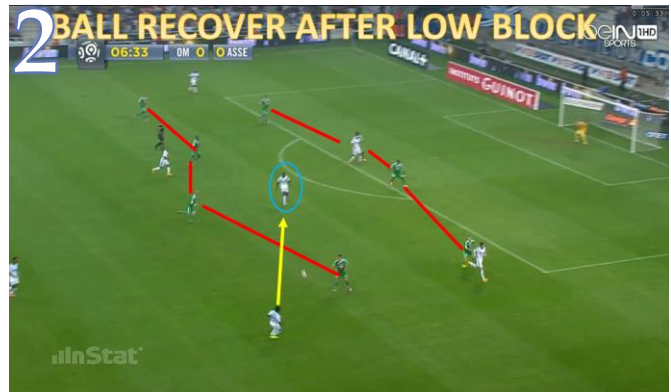
This game wasn't very good as previous games in this period. Despite this, the team scored two goals in the first half. The first goal starts with recovering the ball in front of their own penalty area, pass to Imbula, who dribbles the ball for a long time and passed to the wing. After this pass he went between the lines and there he received the ball. From the penalty box he beat the goalkeeper with a great shot:

FIRST GOAL:

ZONE OF RECOVER THE BALL →



20 SECONDS LATER

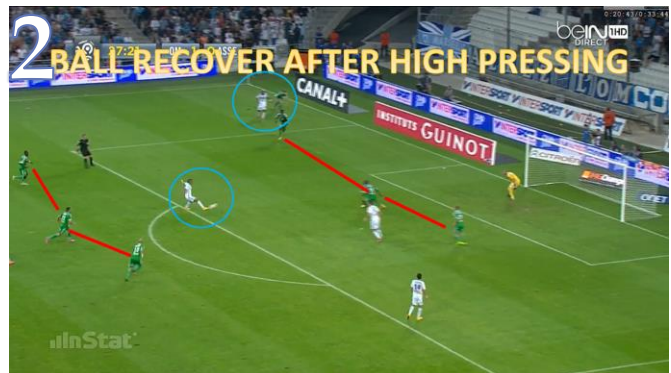


SECOND GOAL

ZONE OF RECOVER THE BALL →



2 SECONDS LATER

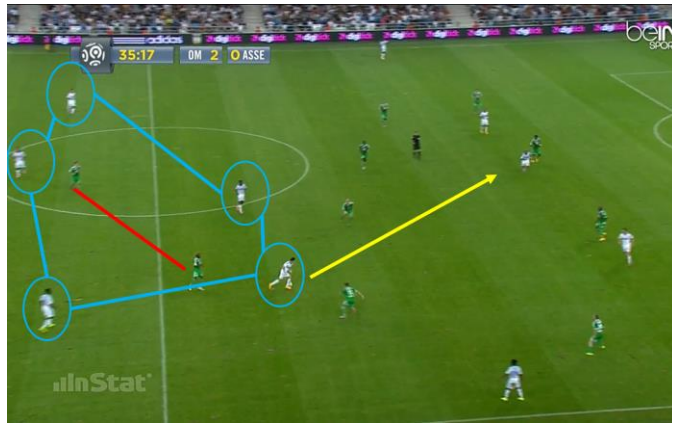
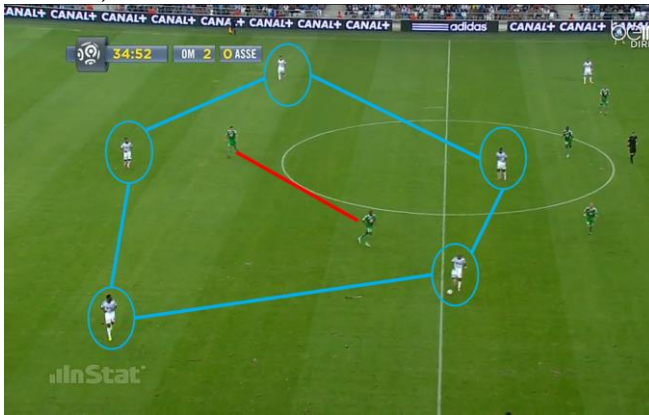


After scoring two goals, the OM team took the lead. For a long time, OM patiently built their actions by the two central midfielders. Their role was crucial, because after receiving the ball towards to the opponent's goal, they always tried to pass forward - between opponents' midfield and the defensive line (vertical pass).

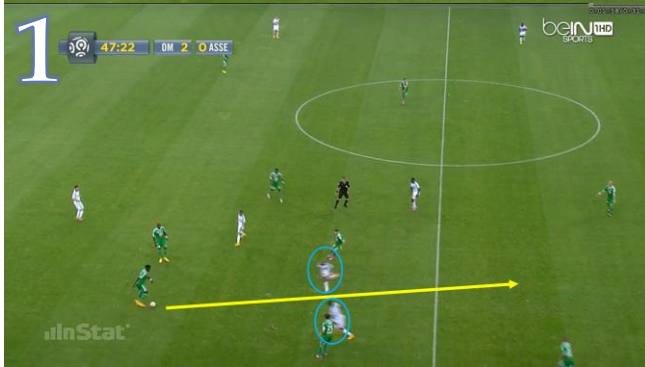
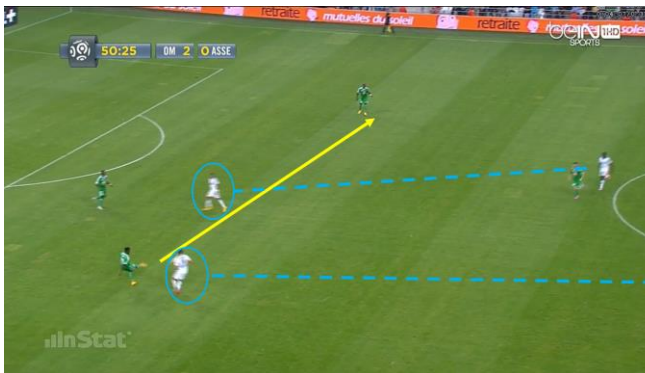
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



Build up with five player: three centre backs and two central midfielders (positioned behind two strikers):

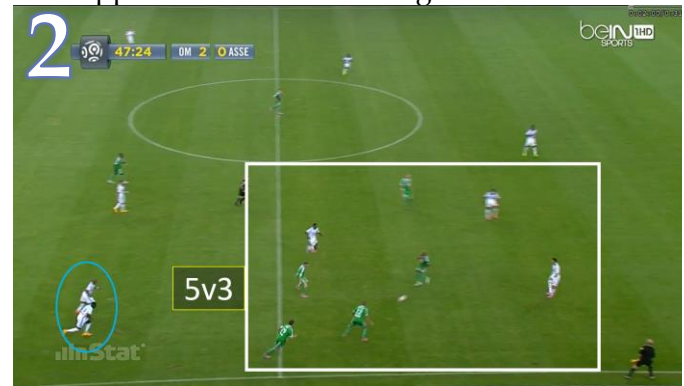


On the second half OM start in bad shape in pressing and also without compactness. To many space (during high pressing) between formation helped opponents control the game. They scored one goal.



← Too big distance between the first and second pressing line caused a large space from opponents' point of view in which it was easy to pass to teammate. With the fact that Bielsa never waits for the opponent. This is an admirable attitude, but it should be remembered that pressing in the minority is less dangerous – it makes it easier for opponents.

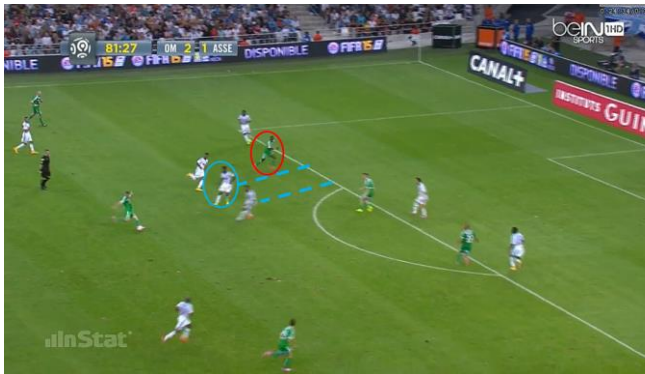
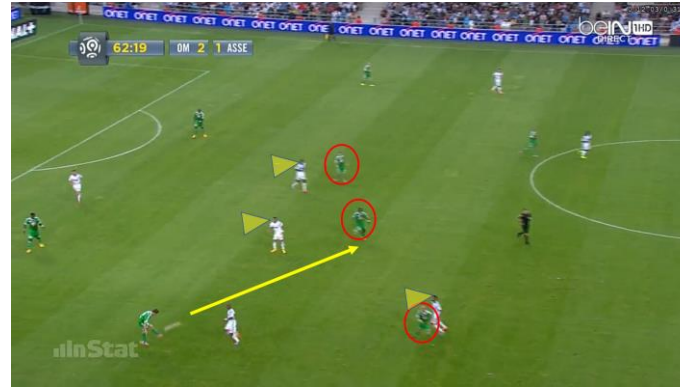
← Two players put pressure on one opponent with the ball. That pressing carries a lot of risk. In case of passing pressing (while leaving your coverage) - the opponent has the advantage:



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



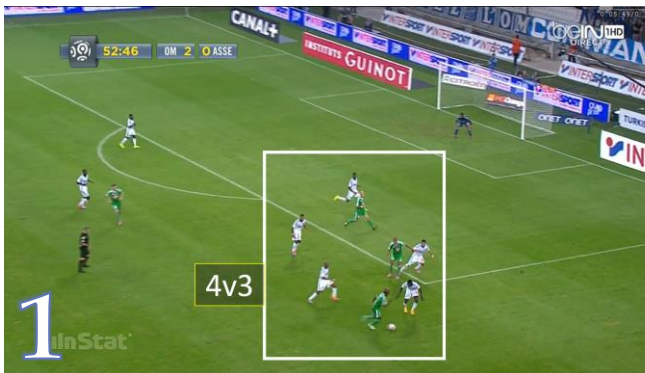
You must be especially careful when putting the pressure on the player with the ball – You will leave the player behind your back that you had cover. Passing at the right time - will win your back (red players)→



← While the risk on the opponent's half is lower, on their own half it can result in a very dangerous situation. In the picture on the left, the two central defenders + central midfielder press the player with the ball - leaving behind them space and 3v2 situation in favor of the opponent. Too many players putting pressure at the ball result in the discovery of space behind their backs or on the other side.

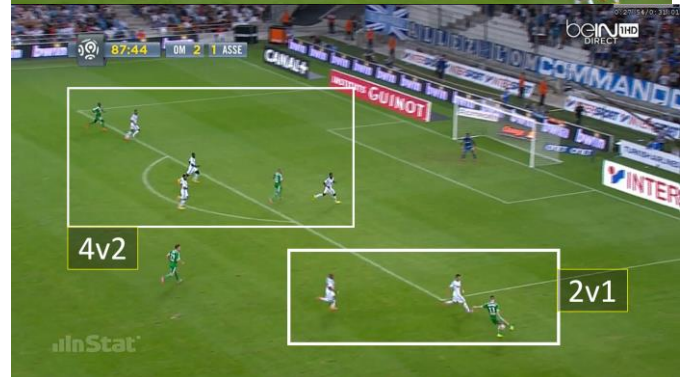
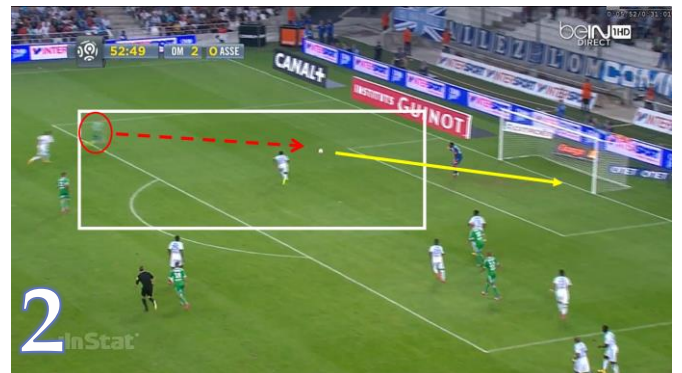
THIS IS HOW THEY LOST A GOAL:

UNCOVERED SECOND SIDE



After a lost goal (picture 1 and 2) and two changes at 7 minutes intervals, the OM team regained control of the game. Situations in the penalty area (even the one where the goal was lost) no longer repeated until the end of the match. A similar situation and good positioning of the team relative to the situation described above →

SITUATION AFTER CROSS:



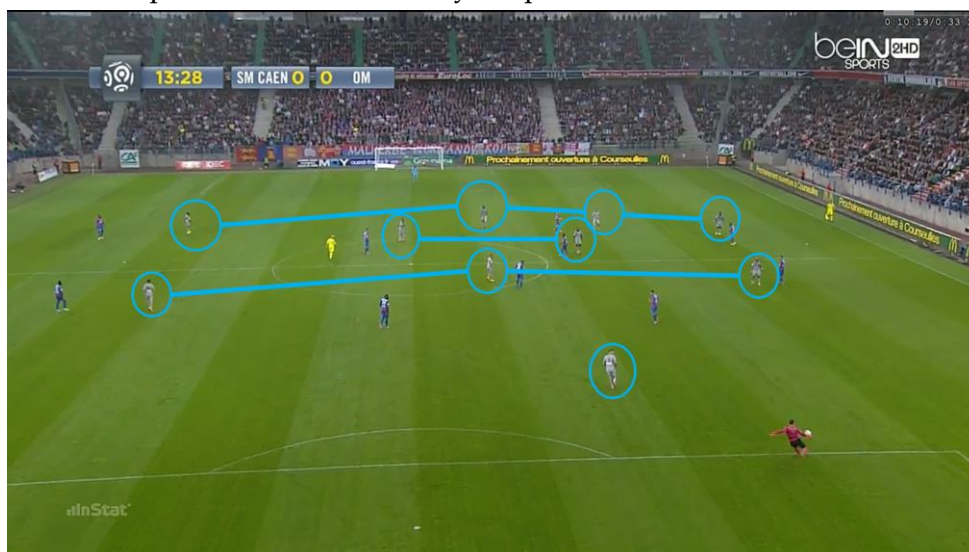
GAME 9: strategy

04.10.2014. Stade Michel-d'Ornano. Caen. Ligue 1.

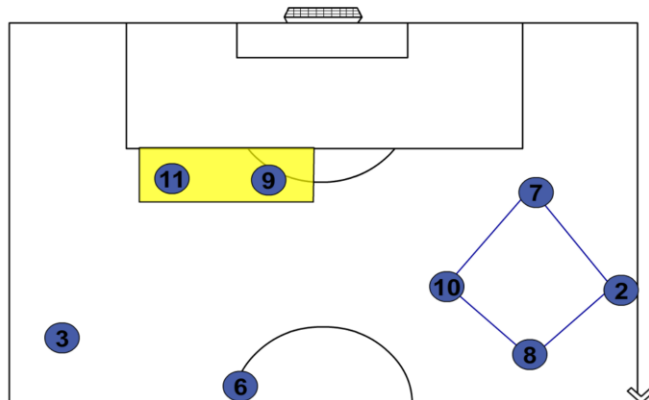
„I have never given up on compliments. Compliments in football are pure hypocrisy”.

SM CAEN 1:2 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

In first five minutes S.C. Caen started with high pressing and they created two dangerous situations because of that. OM set up in 1:4:2:3:1 – as usually couple of weeks.

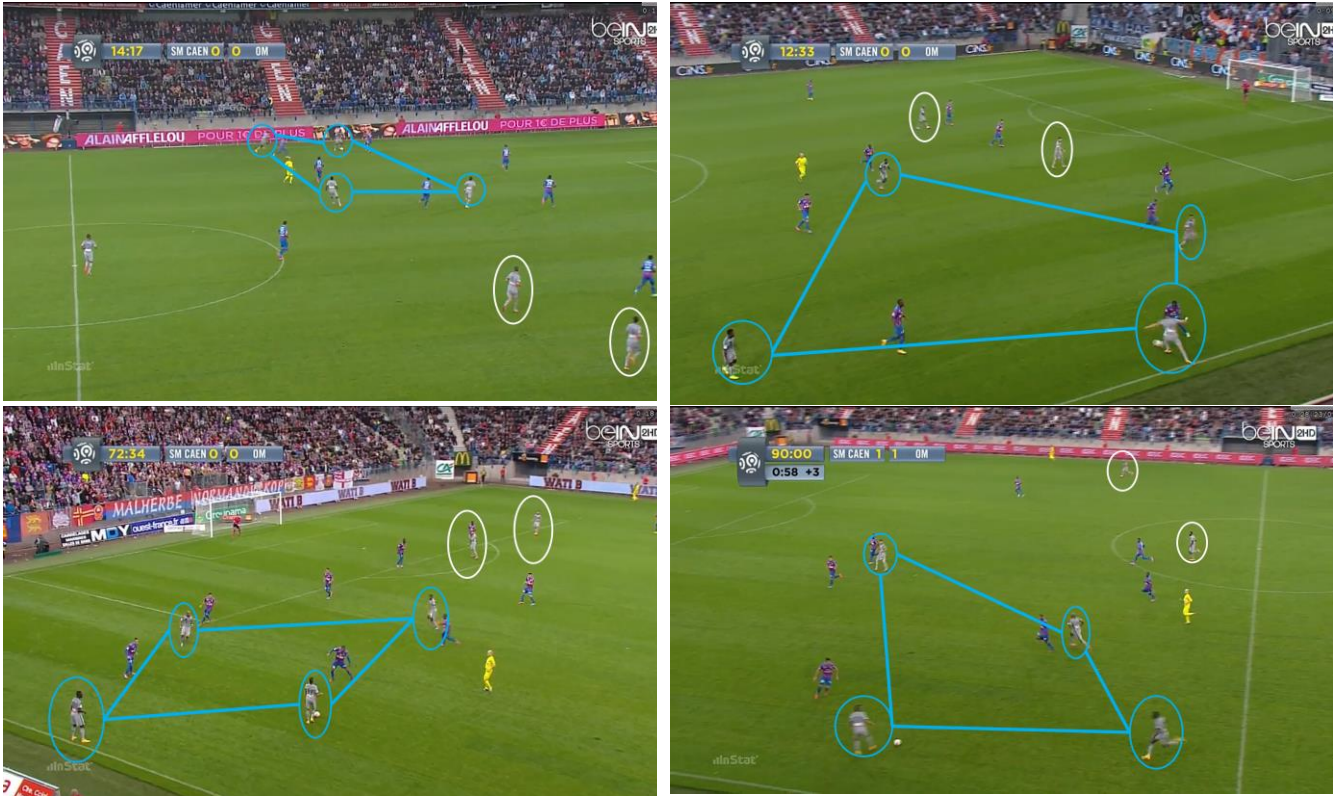


The OM team, which uses a high opponent's defensive line, very often tried to play vertically (final pass in advanced area action) Over time, the game became more and more controlled by Bielsa team. One repetitive positioning was visible at the stage of finalizing the attack. Regardless of whether the attack was led by the right or left wing, the offensive structure and the idea to end the action look like this:

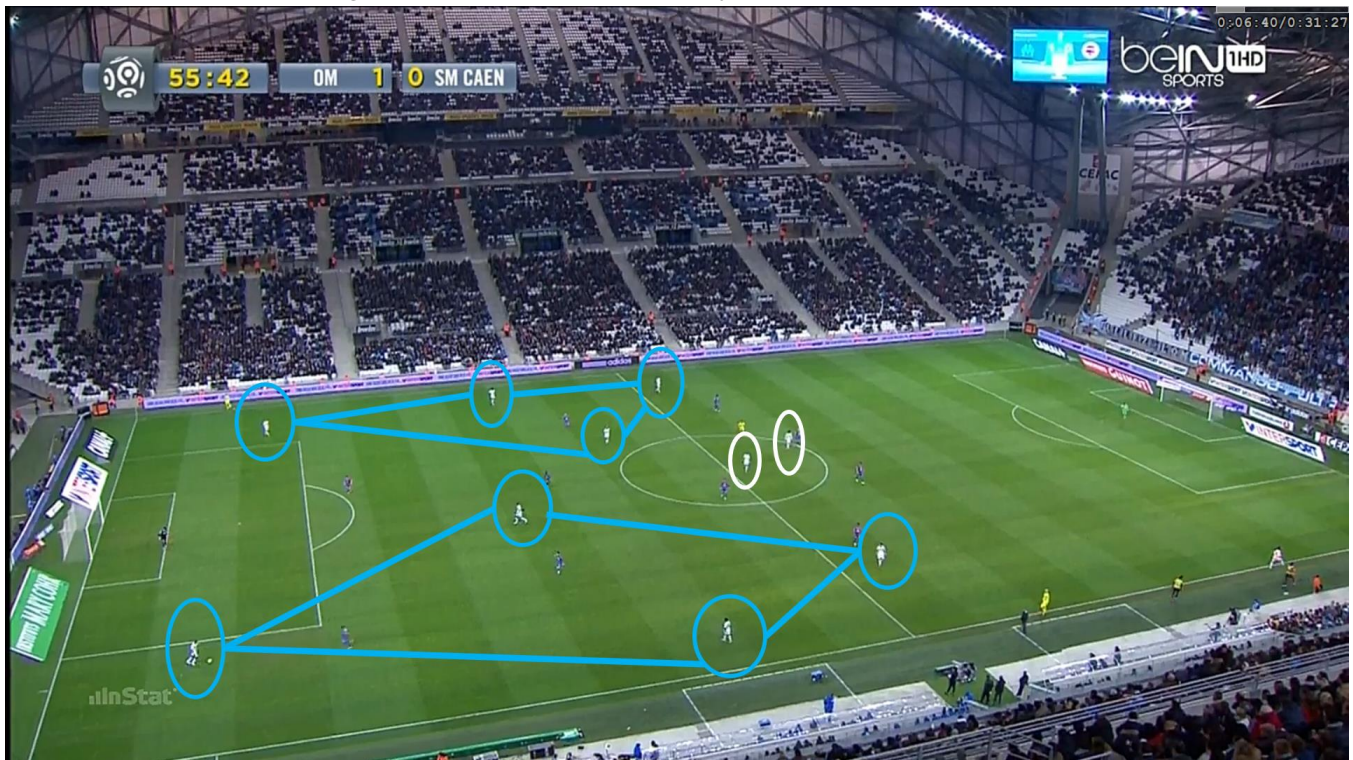


Four players on the wings were responsible for beat opponent's midfield line. A frequent action due to individual wing characteristics (right footer on the left and left footer on the right) was to dribble the ball inside and try to finish the action on the other side. Backward pass option was given by one of the central midfielders and central defender. Other players (centre backs) are not included in the picture.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



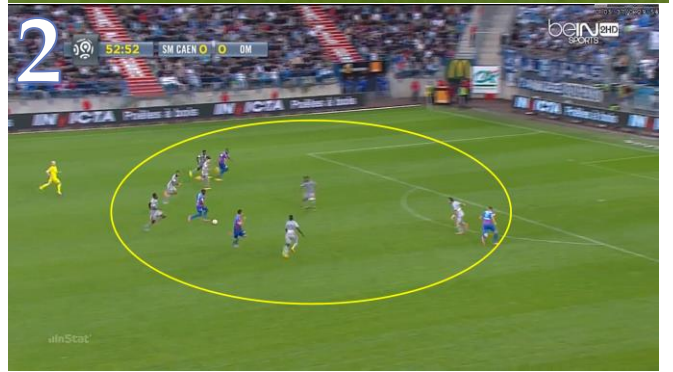
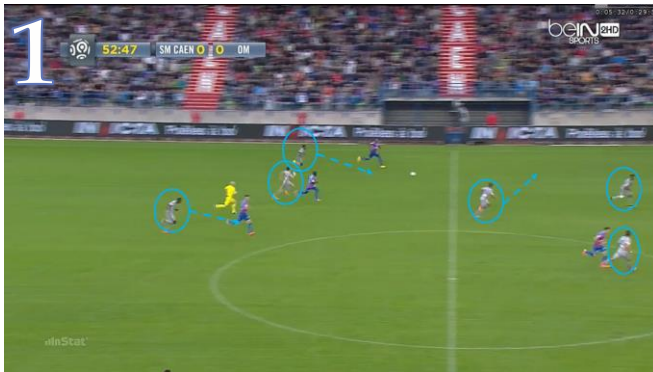
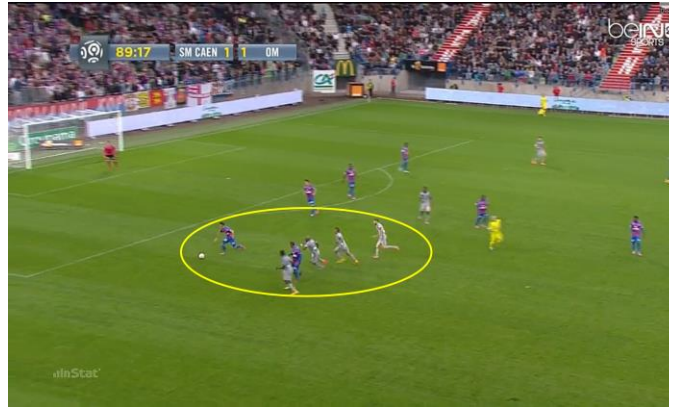
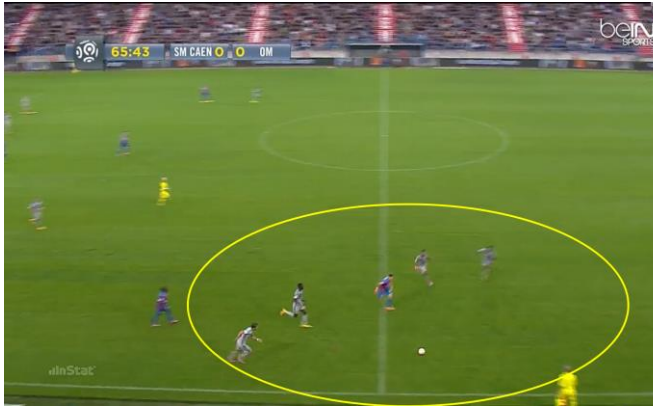
Five months later (second game between those teams), you will see similarities.



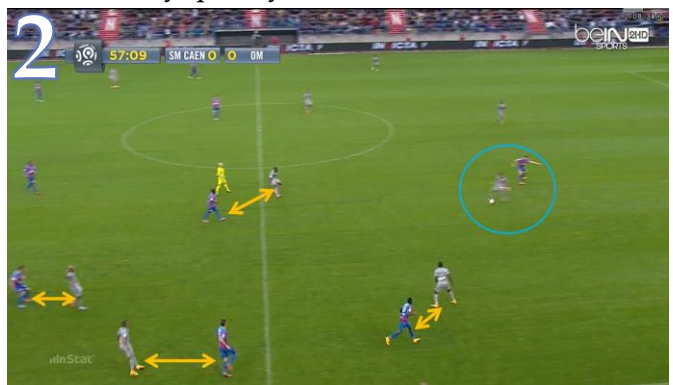
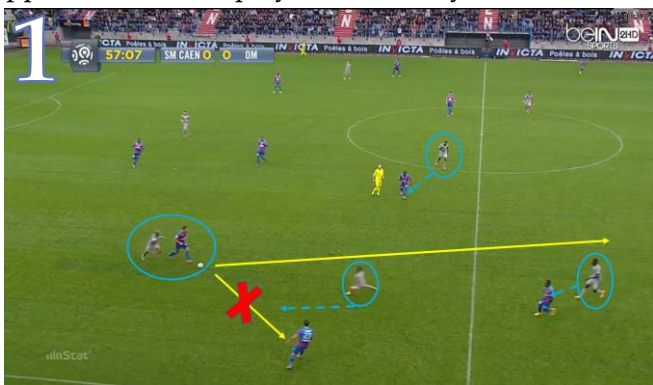
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

...

OM scored first goal after corner kick. The opponent scored after a free kick. The last 6 minutes was Bielsa team attacks and goal in additional time. For a long time, one could see a huge commitment in the OM team and a great attitude. In addition to high pressing and playing in the attack, it is worth paying attention to pressing after a loss. The photos above all show the way of thinking during the loss of the ball and the desire to receive as soon as possible.



When the OM team not only ran to the opponent with the ball, but also closed the passing line to the opponent's closest players, then they often recovered the ball very quickly:



GAME 10: pressing trap

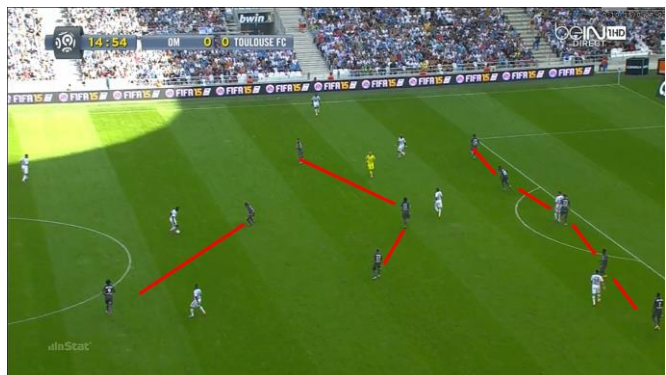
19.10.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„The moments after which I became worse are directly related to success”.

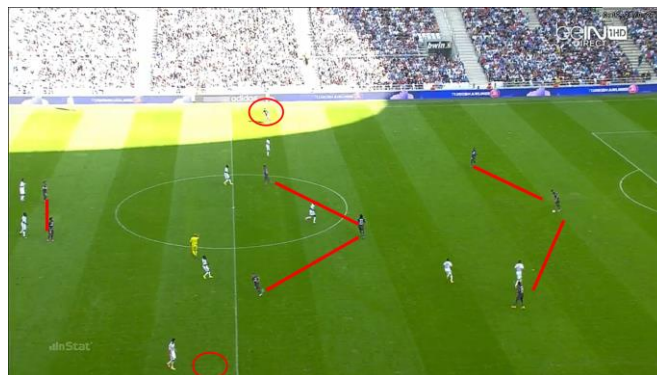
OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:0 FC TOULOUSE

OM played for the first time a team which in the defensive phase was set 1: 5: 3: 2 and attack 1: 3: 5: 2

FC TOULOUSE DEFENSIVE SHAPE

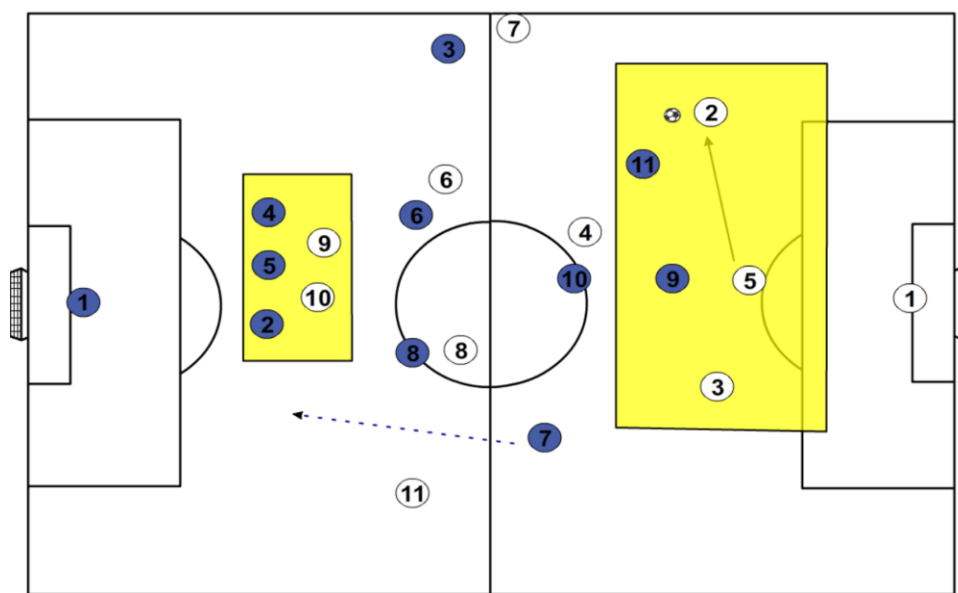


FC TOULOUSE ATTACKING SHAPE



Pressing:

The first thing that has been visible since the beginning of the game is a different way to start pressing than previously by the Bielsa team. The positioning of OM players allowed (provoked) the opponent to pass the ball to one of the central defenders in the half-space:



In the picture: OM blue, Toulouse white.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

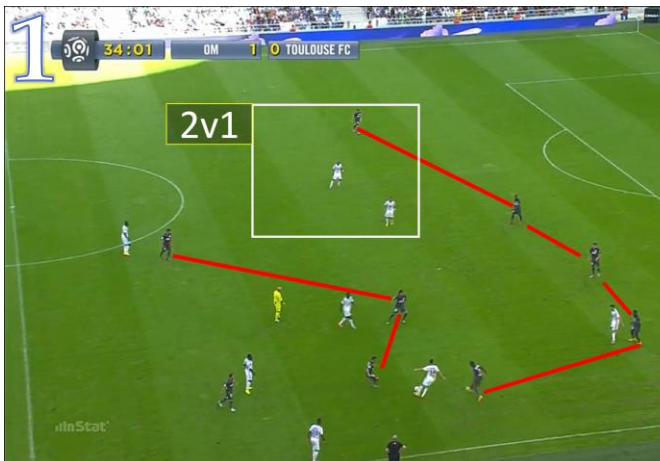
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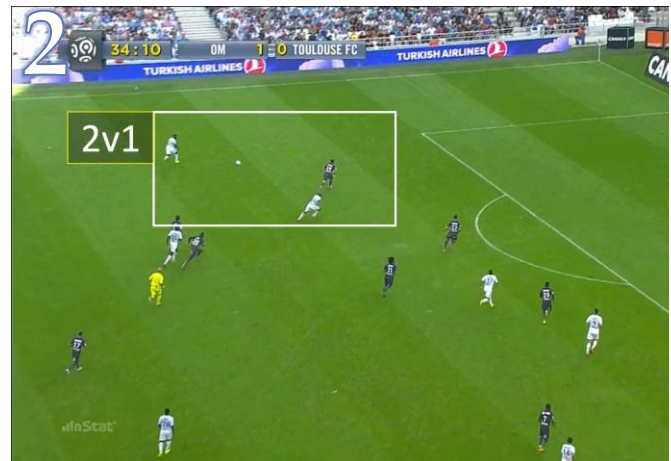
The two strikers put pressure on the three central defenders of FC Toulouse creating from 3v2 situation in advance for opponents to the 2v2 in balance. In the middle of the pitch everyone was responsible for their player (3v3 situation in balance). 1v1 situation on the wings. On the other side, the fullback was returning to the defense line. The opponent usually played long ball. This was not a problem for OM because there was always a 3v2 advantage in the back. Bielsa team was perfectly adapted to that situation.

In offensive phase OM use switching play. With 3 opponents in midfield who were very narrow, after changing side often creates a 2v1 (from this situation OM scored goal, description below).

BEFORE SWITCH



AFTER SWITCH



GAME 11: eight victories and defeat

26.11.2014. Stade de Gerland. Lyon. Ligue 1.

„Conceptually, for me, all the matches are the same – you have to dominate and play everything you can. Anything else doesn't fit into my ideas”.

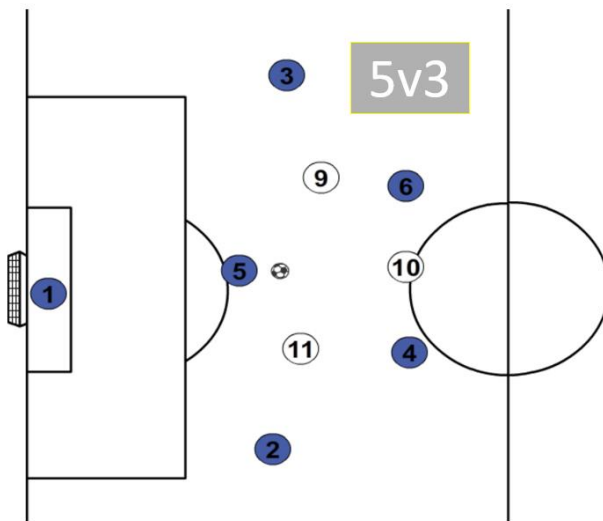
OLYMPIQUE LYON 1:0 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

After eight wins in a row it was time to lose. For the first time, OM's opponent played with a 1: 4: 3: 1: 2 setting in the defensive phase, which neutralized OM build up.



Lyon most of the time in the first half assumed high pressure, where three highly positioned players were supported by the second pressing line (three midfielders). The four defenders moved as unit with the movement of the ball. The effectiveness of pressing was evidenced by the large amount (15 !!!) of ball loss in the first 15 minutes by OM.

OM's idea for build up was good in theory. By set up 3: 2: 4: 1 - three defenders with the support of two playmakers were supposed to beat the opponent first line of pressure. The problem appeared, however, when three Lyon midfielders started pressing trap. By adding the right attitude, the whole team "attacked" the pass to one of the centre backs positioned in half space.

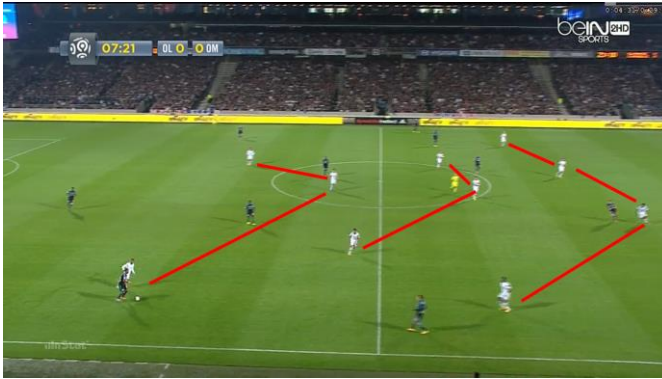


In the first ten minutes OM lost the ball 11 times and fouled (after their mistakes) three times, of which Lyon had three dangerous free kicks from around 25-30 meters. Lyon players did not always receive the ball in the half of OM, but the beginning of the pressing was high, close to OM goal.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

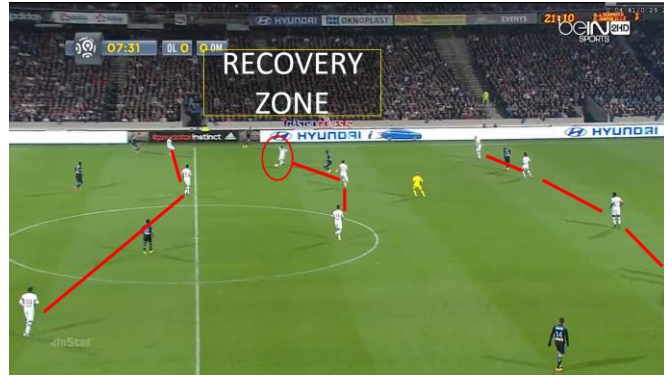
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PRESSING BEGINNING:

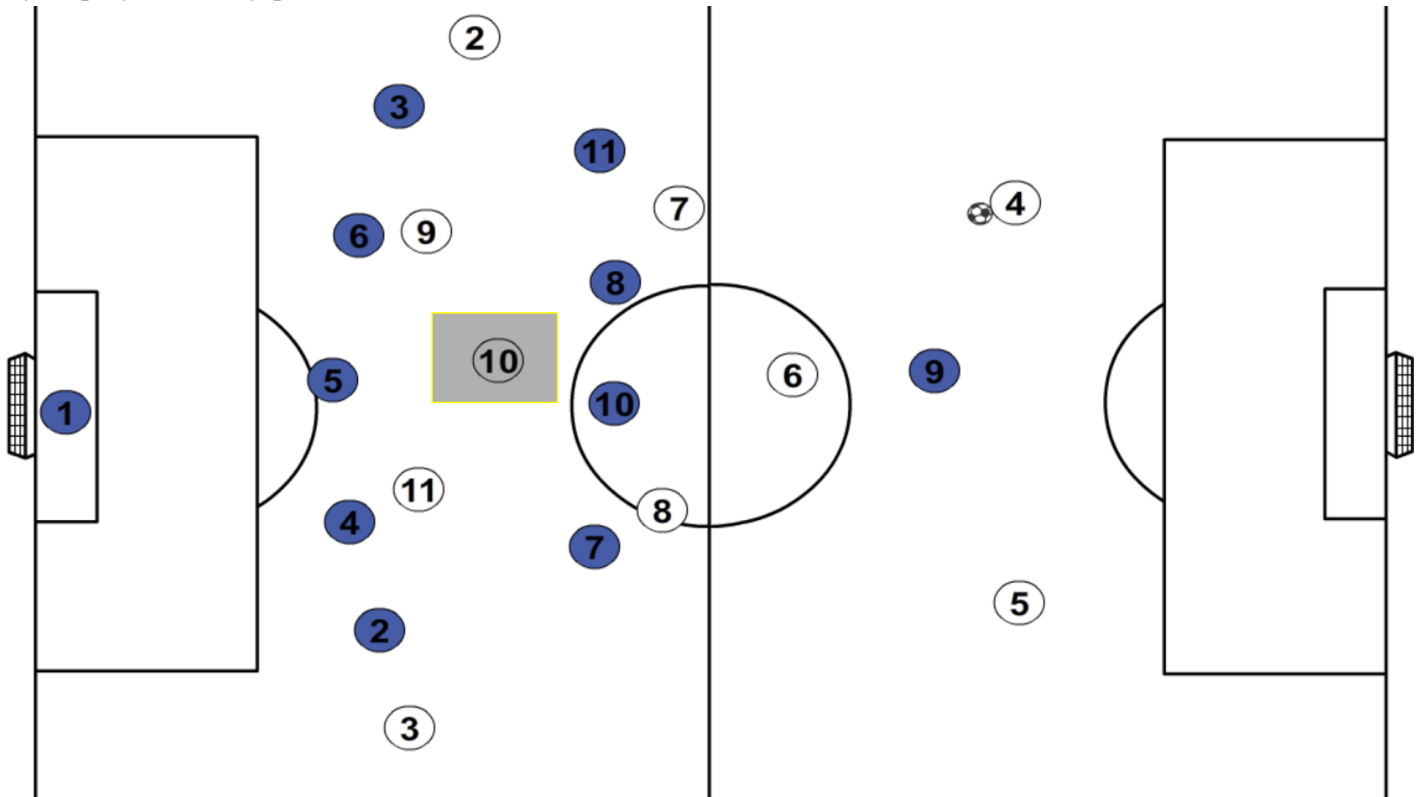


Pressure on OM centre back.

RECOVERY ZONE



In addition to problems with progress with the ball to Lyon half, OM also had a problem in the defense phase. Marcelo Bielsa put the team in a 1: 5: 4: 1 setting - sometimes 1: 5: 3: 2 to neutralize many offensive Lyon players nearly positioned OM defensive line:

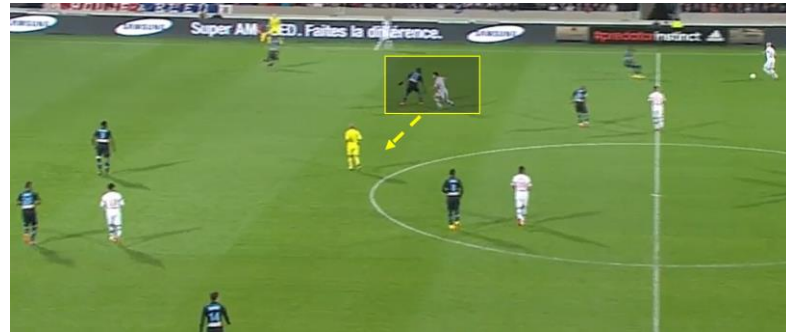
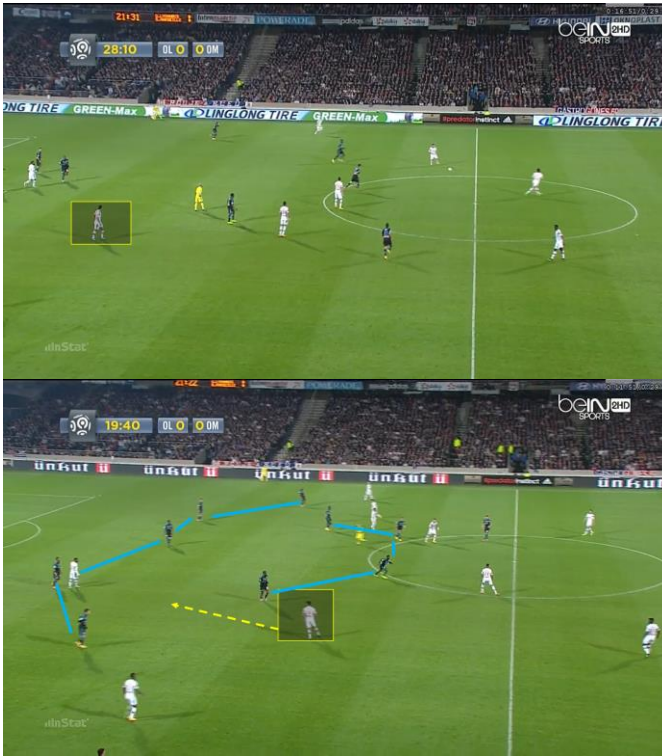


Five defenders in the back (OM played in this set up for the first time) were responsible to put always pressure when one of opponent show up and ask for the ball (9,11,2,3), OM always would have the advantage (5v4). Bielsa wanted to have an advantage at all costs behind the backs of his midfield line. The four midfielders were to press the four midfielders, and Gignac (striker) was to cut off the pass line between the Lyon's central defenders.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

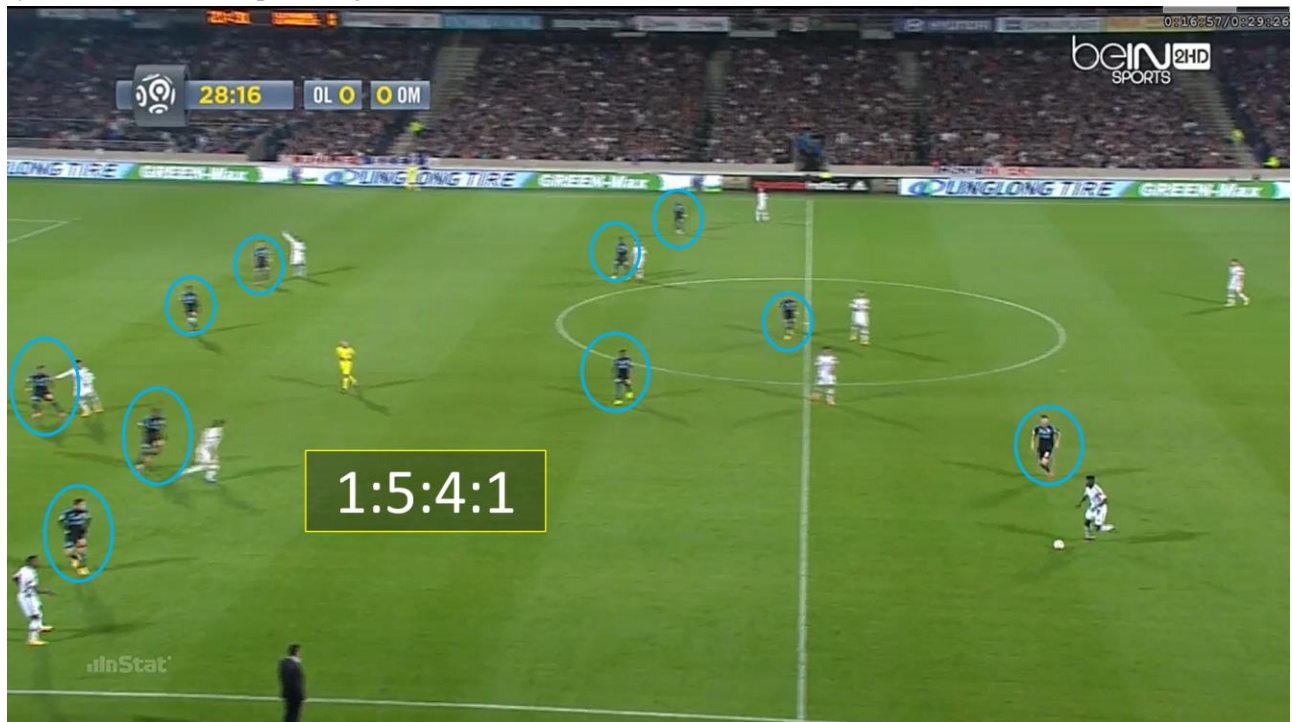


The problem appeared when G (position 10) - showed up between the lines:



Very good positioning between the lines (even though OM had five players on the defensive line) meant that Gourcuff was often in the free position. He didn't always get the ball, but it made it easier to keep OM's midfield line from under pressure. It was a big OM tactical problem. When finalizing, Gourcuff was very close to the penalty area (due to its position). In addition, the player often run in the opposite direction of movement of the ball - also in the opposite direction to the opponent's move

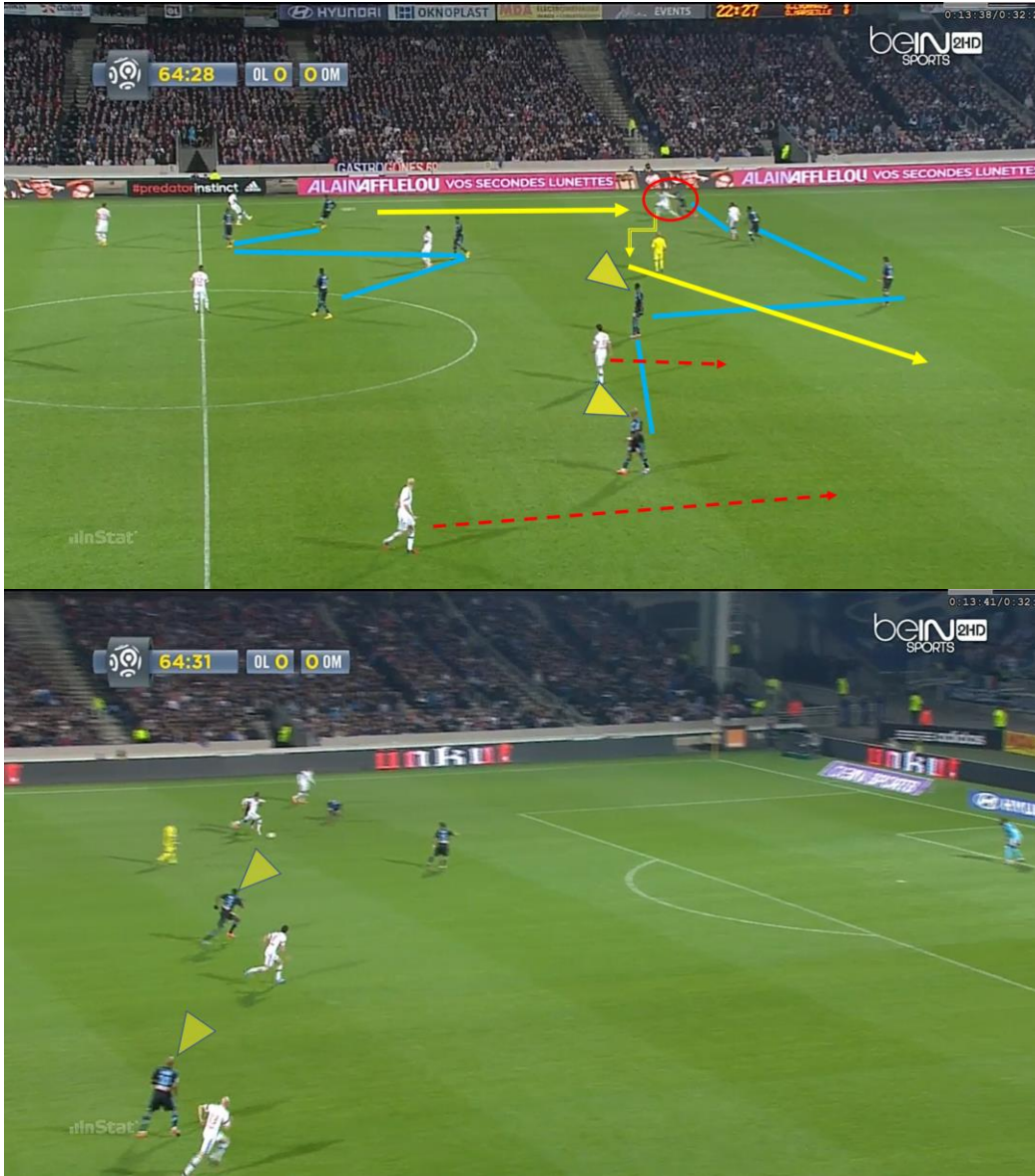
However, this was not the only problem. In the medium pressing OM was not well positioned in relation to the ball. Distances between formations were too big and lack of cooperation between formations when they tried to start the pressing.



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



In the second half there was an increasing control of the OM team. After a few vertical passes the team from Marseille had 3 chances to score. Although Bielsa team looked good in the attacking phase, the defensive structure left much to be desired. After a very poor positioning, the Lyon team scored a goal after switching play. Surprisingly, the position of the OM team and how focused players were on the ball - not seeing the running opponents.



The OM structure (blue lines) show how the lack of compactness influenced the further course of action. Two defenders (who are focused on the ball) have previously press. They stayed after press in higher position.

Bad position in defense of two defenders (one pass passed the players on the other side) and lack of perception in defense, caused a late reaction. Olympique Lyon scored the only goal in this game.

The defending left a lot to be desired. It is the defense line that determines the striker position (Gignac). The distances were too large, making communication between the formations impossible. Since then, Bielsa team has never once defended in this setting. It was the only game in the 2014/2015 season where OM defended in the 1: 5: 4: 1.

GAME 12: opponent should adapt to our team

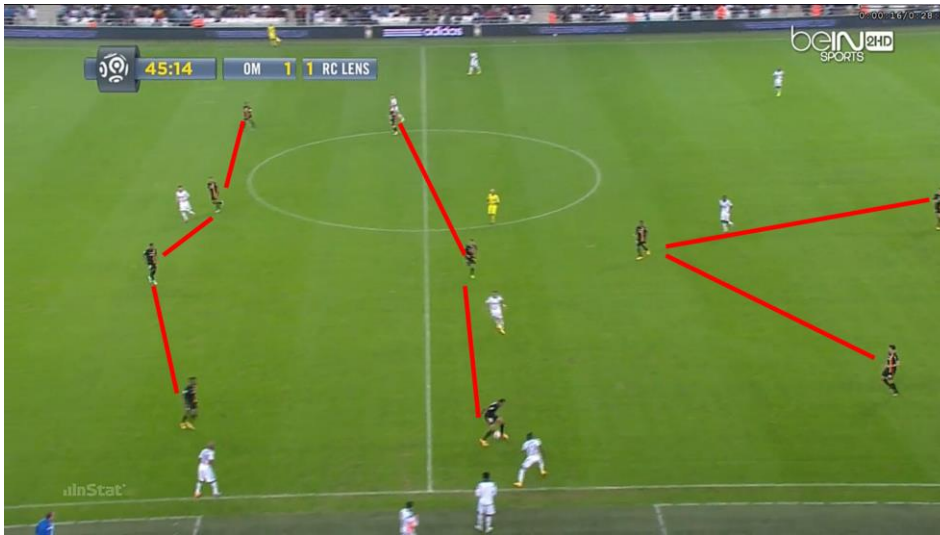
02.11.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„If football were played by robots, I would win everything”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:1 RC LENS

After the last lost game, OM played with RC Lens team with the offensive-minded coach Antoine Kombouaré (who, after analyzing his opponent's last game), also set his team 1: 4: 3: 1: 2. That was the common situation when someone beat OM. Until now, in 90% of meetings he used the 1: 4: 3: 3.

Very similarly RC Lens tried to start pressing (as in the previous OL game), but there were a few differences that did not give the expected effect at the end.



Note the similarities in Lens and Lyon. As in the previous game, OM opponents start with high pressing by three highly positioned players, supported by the second pressing line (three midfielders). The four defenders moved as unit with the movement of the ball.

It was a plan prepared strictly for that game. There were many similarities in RC Lens and Lyon, but the effect was different. The three differences that had a key impact on the meeting were:

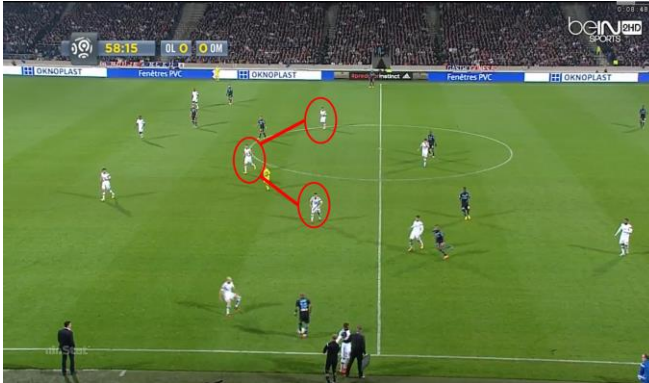
1. Quality of players (Lens finished in last place - Lyon was runner-up in France). Due to the difference in the quality of players, in this game it could never be said that, e.g. every 1v1 is equal. This is another form of superiority: **qualitative superiority**. This is an idea that is well known. Searching for 1 vs. 1's, 2 vs. 2's, and more with your best players vs the opponent's worst players is a common strategy in football. Juanma Lillo defines this kind of advantage at the level of probability. From the perspective of a weaker player, the chance of winning 1v1 situation is 50%. But the probability of winning this duel is greater in favor of a better player.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

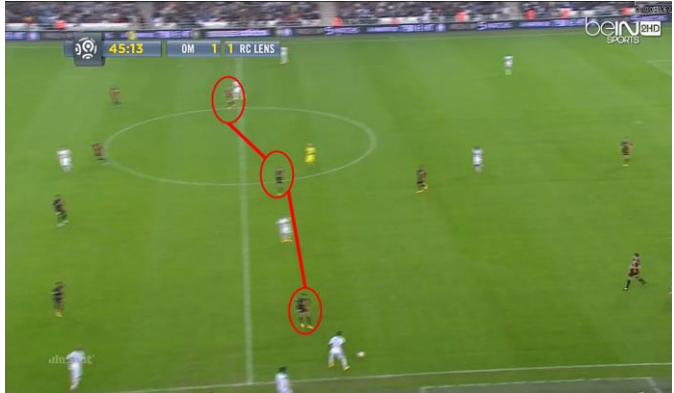


2. Positioning of three midfielders.

The position of the midfielders in Lyon (picture on the left) is significantly different from the position of the RC Lens midfielders (on the right). The difference lies in the depth and width of positions. The midfielders of RC Lens are set wider than the Lyon's - hence it is easier to make progress in the game (one pass passes the entire formation. In the case of Lyon (by position of holding midfielder which is lower than the other two central midfielders) it is much harder because the geometry of defense makes it difficult for opponents to beat the line by pass.



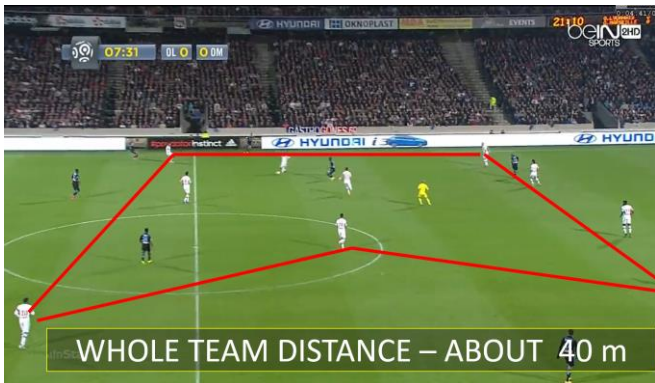
LYON – white shirts.



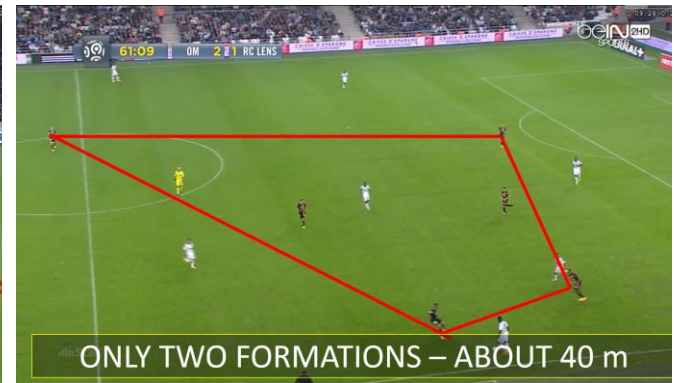
LENS – black shirts

3. Tactical discipline - keeping the distance between formations (compactness).

It is enough to notice at what distances the Lyon team is set, and how the Lens team is set. The distance between the defense formation and the attack formation is too large in the case of Lens, making OM much easier to beat that pressing. The distance between the most advanced players (two strikers) and the defense line prevented any communication in the team during the defending phase.



LYON – communication possible

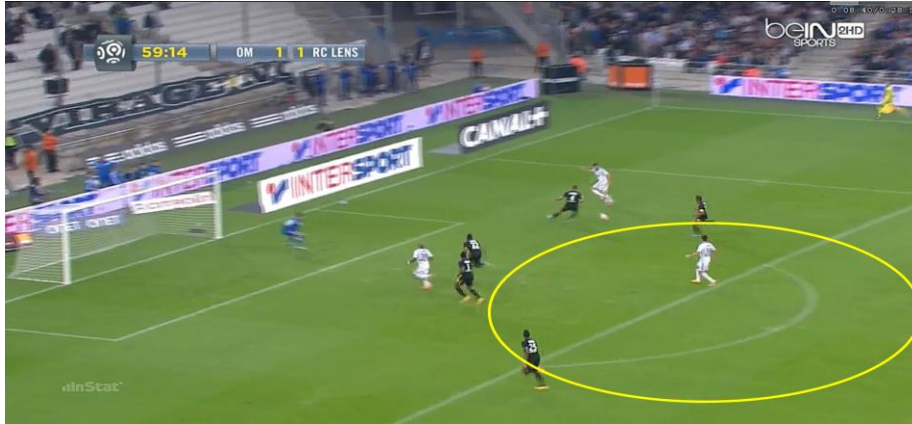


LENS – communication impossible

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

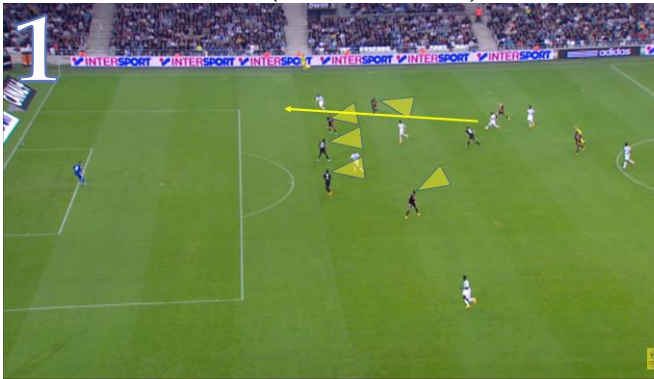


With the skills of OM players and with the bad pressing structure of the Lens, Bielsa team was many times able to switch direction of attack. OM's first goal was scored from a corner kick.

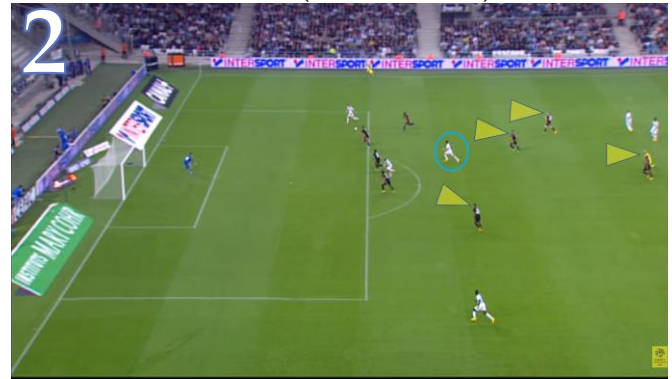


Because of big distances between the Lens formations, OM just scored a second goal from the back pass (between the defense line and midfield line - which did not return "under the ball" after losing the fight for the 2nd ball. You can also see that Lens defenders and midfielders in every second of the action are directed only at the ball, which is a mistake when you are defending the penalty area:

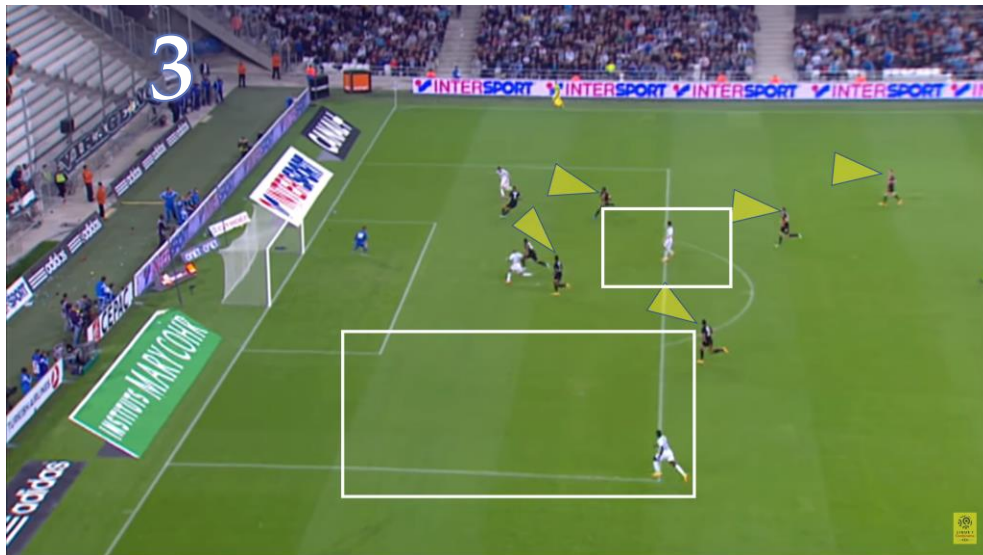
LENS DEFENDERS (BEFORE PASS):



LENS MIDFIELDERS (AFTER PASS):



CROSSING



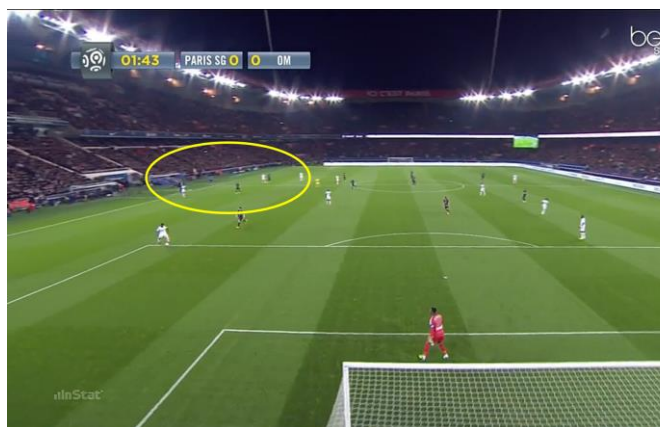
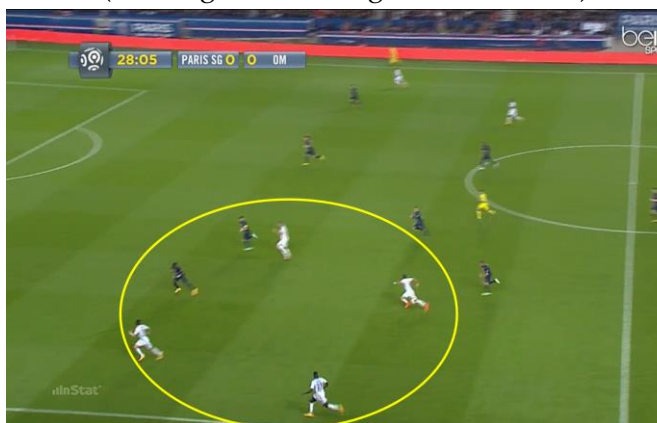
GAME 13: by the wings

09.11.2014 Parc de Princes. Paris. Ligue 1.

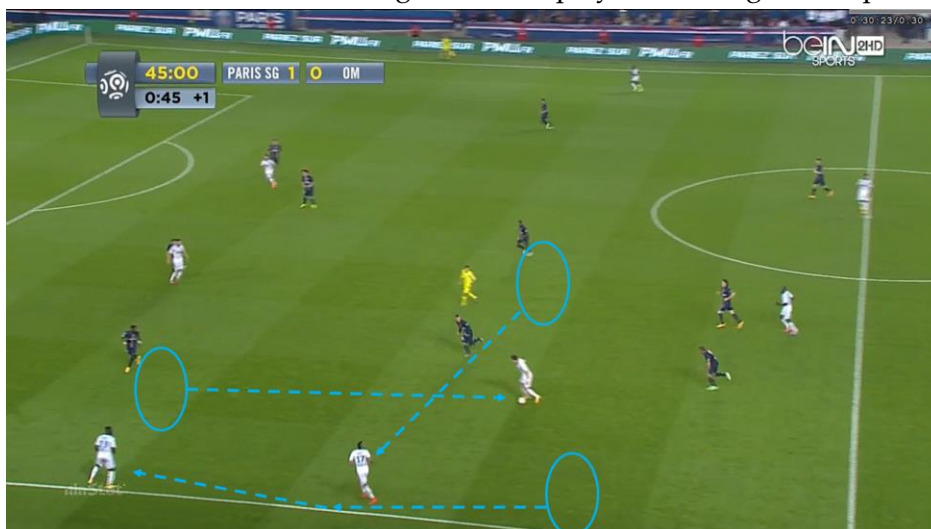
„The game should be analyzed in three dimensions. Faithfulness to your style, domain of game (ball possession) and number of chances to score”.

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN 2:0 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

Game at an absolutely top level. During the first 10 minutes, OM took 5 shots (including one hit the post), which was a consequence of a very good positional attack (switching play) and high pressing in the 1: 4: 2: 3: 1 set up. Bielsa team was the dominant side in every respect (number of shots, chances to score, possession of the ball, etc.). Two ways that led to this were rotation between players and overloading the left side (creating an advantage: 4v2, 3v2, 4v3):



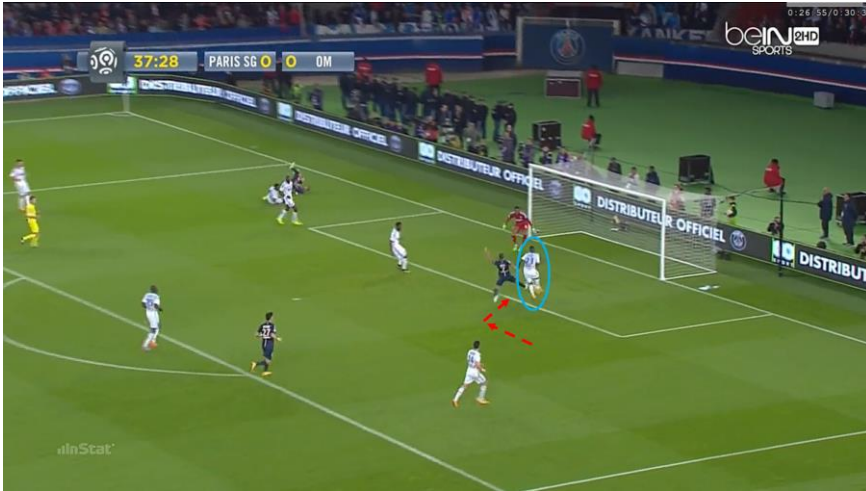
In build up - the winger went in between the lines, the central midfielder often positioned at the sideline, which caused the fullback too went in (Mendy set very offensive). Gignac (striker) was constantly positioned on the left side of the field, showing himself to play and asking for the pass in this sector:



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

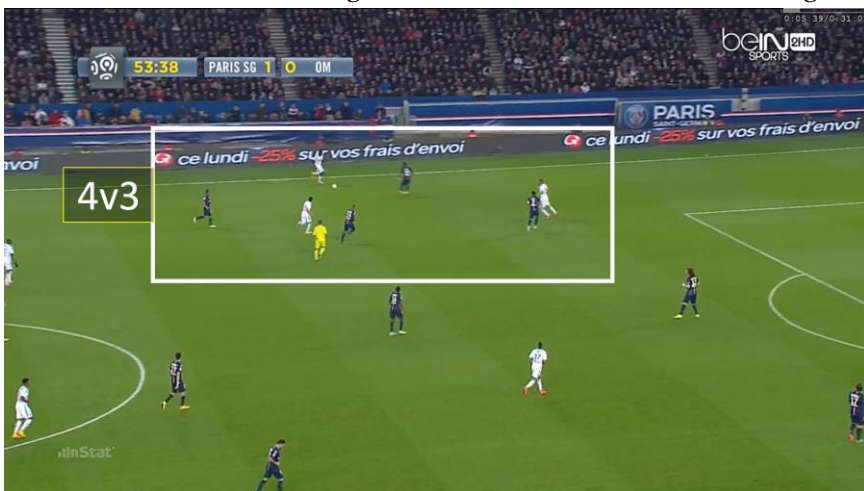


OM in the first half was better than PSG in every aspect. The number of opportunities created, the number of entries with the ball into the penalty area, shots, possession of the ball, etc. All it took was one mistake in defense during the cross:



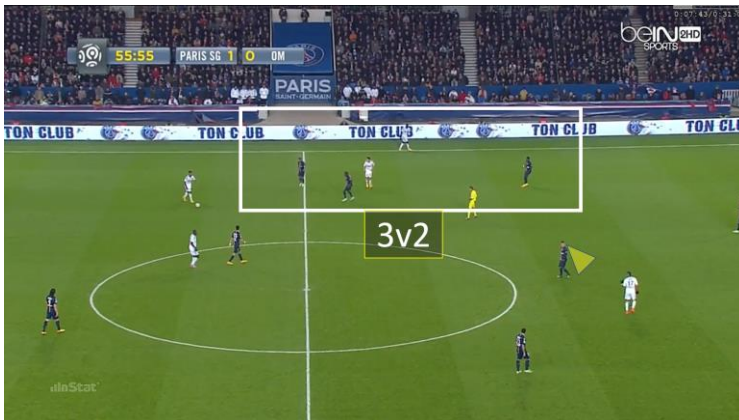
Mendy before the cross was unaware that Lucas was behind him (bad perception). During the cross, the opponent ran in from behind his back, passed cover and scored a goal.

In the second half, the PSG game was better thanks to better organization in defense of Parisians.



Laurent Blanc's team defended wings much better than the first half especially thanks to Verratti behavior. He led the defensive advantage to his right, and the 1: 4: 1: 4: 1 position allowed the defensive midfielder to help protect the wings during OM attack.

In addition, Marco Verratti was the player who followed Payet (made an advantage in the first half on the wings):



The fact that Payet on PSG half has always been under pressure from Verratti, significantly make OM's attack herder in the second half.



GAME 14: attention to the ball

23.11.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„Success is an exception that happened sometimes”.

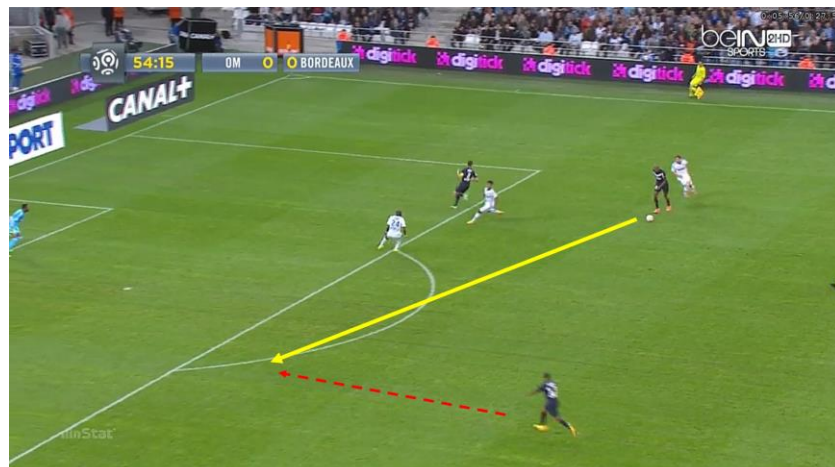
OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 3:1 GIRONDINS BORDEAUX

OM started the game with Bordeaux as usually with a very offensive disposition. Initial 1: 4: 2: 3: 1, often changed to 1: 3: 1: 3: 3. Bielsa team still had problems with the defensive transition (although they always reacted immediate pressure after losing the ball). The problem was that the opponent who change side after receiving the ball always had an advantage or a situation to score. This situation repeated many times during the season! Bielsa team suffered a lot when they didn't pick up the ball immediately because the three defenders who were stayed at the back had a very difficult task:

WHEN THE OPPONENTS GET THE BALL BACK (PRECIOUS GAMES)



Game with RC Lens – 3v3 on big space. Game with Toulouse – 3 defenders against five. This was also the case on this game. Bordeaux again and again countered until they scored at the beginning of the second half. After getting the ball back and changing the direction of play, they created a dangerous situation:



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

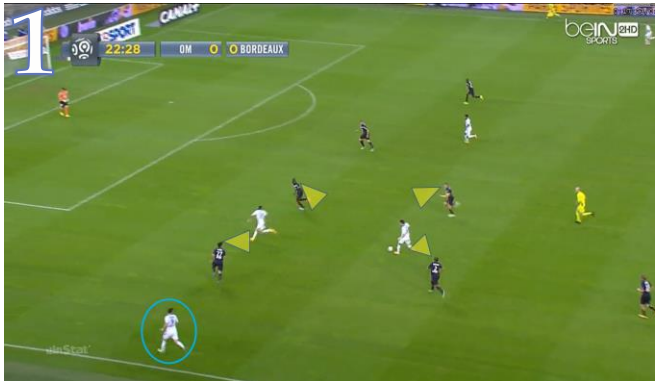
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The loss of the ball in the OM team was somewhat a consequence of the playing style (vertical passes, driving the ball in half of the opponent). The player with the ball dribble to the last moment of pressure (risk). Thanks to this, two or more opponents are focused completely on the ball carrier, leaving the other players uncovered:

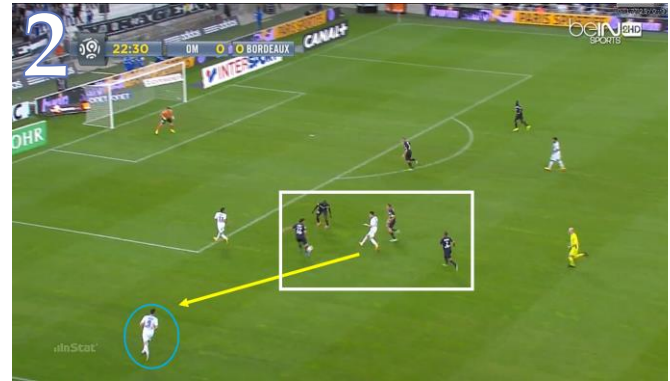


It is very risky but dribble the ball directly on opponent and pass in last moment, make my teammate uncovered. The ball carrier provokes with the ball and causes pressure, then pass the ball to the already free teammate at the last moment.

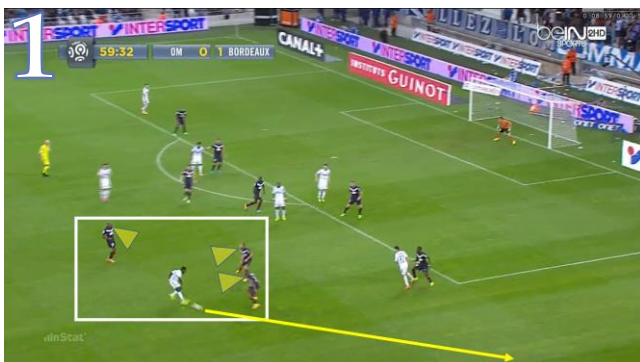
DRIBBLE TO PRESSURE



MAKE A TEAMMATE UNCOVERED AFTER PASS



First OM goal was scored in this manner. After pass from the pressure, the right wing had a more space and time to cross:



GAME 15: between the lines

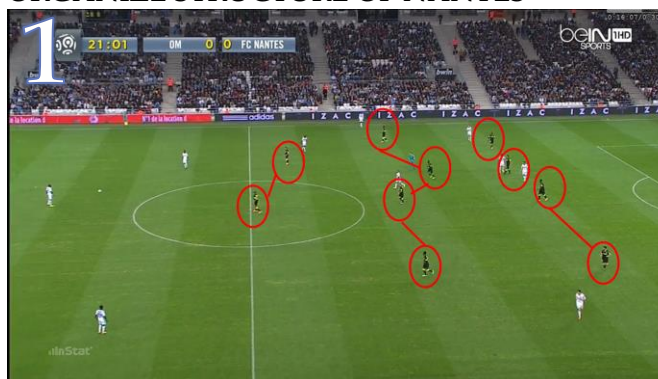
28.11.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„The players will never forget how they felt with you”.

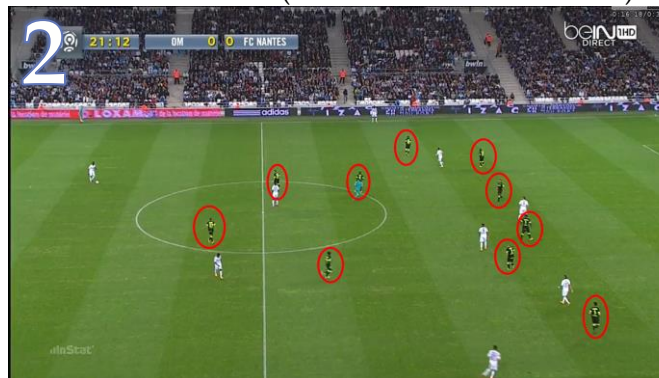
OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:0 FC NANTES

OM's next opponent was FC Nantes defending in medium block in a 1: 4: 4: 2 or 1: 4: 2: 3: 1 shape. What characterizes Bielsa team when facing a well-organized opponent is to try to disorganize their structure as often as possible. The high position of the strikers, many players close to the opponent's defensive line, and constant movement and rotation in positions allowed OM to disorganize the shape of the FC Nantes.

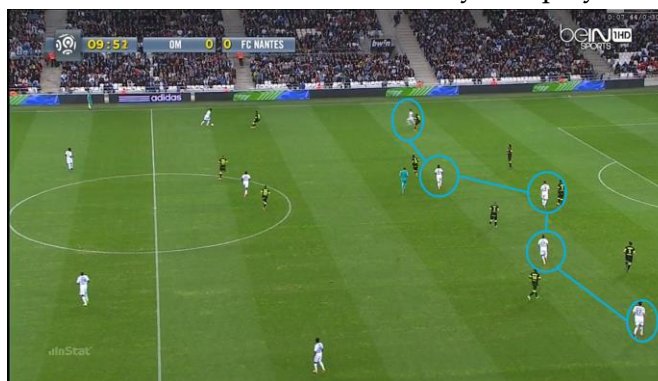
ORGANIZE STRUCTURE OF NANTES



10 SECOND LATER (AFTER OM ROTATIONS)



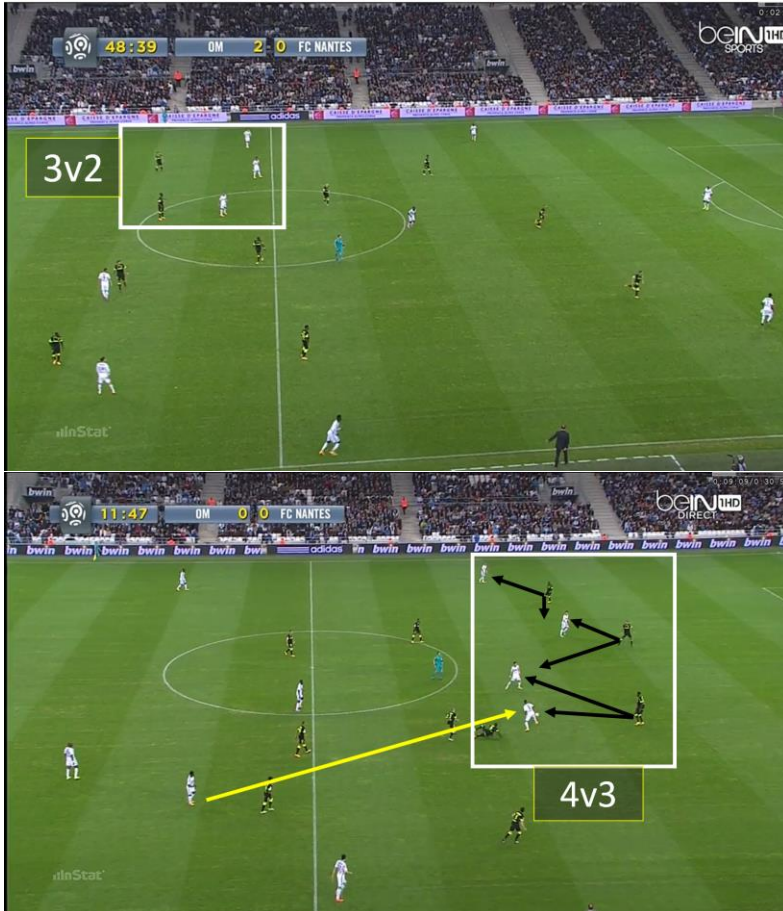
Constant movement and rotations by OM players allowed to had control in final third.



Another advantage of a large number of players placed high - apart from disorganizing the rival structure - is making it difficult for individual cover. The player, because he often has two or more players in his zone, has a difficult task. Each ball that beat midfield line makes it convenient to finalize the action.

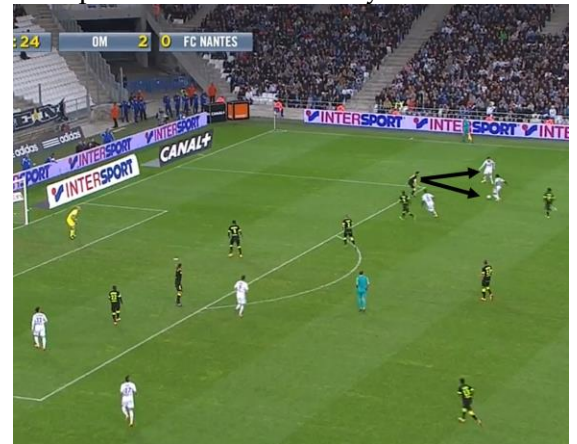
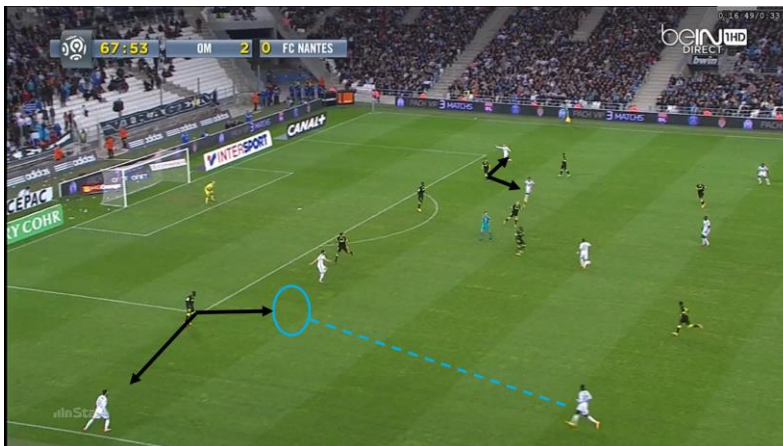
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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The defensive line during defensive phase always must help and communicate with midfield line. A lot of opponents between the lines makes this impossible (they focus on their area). This made it easier for OM defenders to beat midfield line. In addition, a high positioning creates an advantage in each pitch zones. Considering how many times OM has attacked with the right side relative to the left wing, it can be safely said that the game plan included creating an advantage on the right wing. The second picture illustrates how dangerous the situation can be when the ball beat the opponent's midfield line.

Taking the perspective of FC Nantes (especially the fullback), there was a problem on the pitch: "which player to cover? Which one to press?" Constant situations of 2v1 / 3v2 on that side was very difficult situation to defend. It is relatively easy to beat one defender during a 2v1 advantage. This situation took place almost constantly.

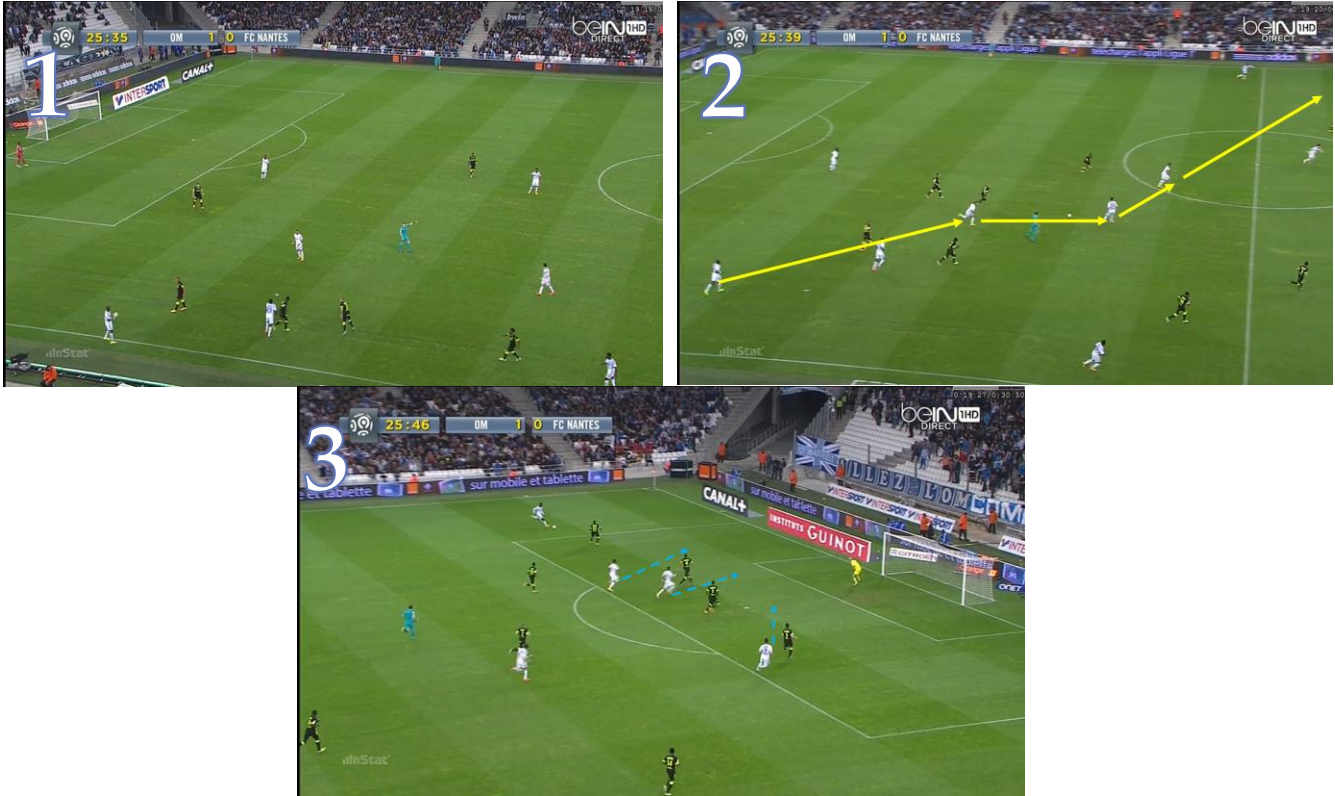


MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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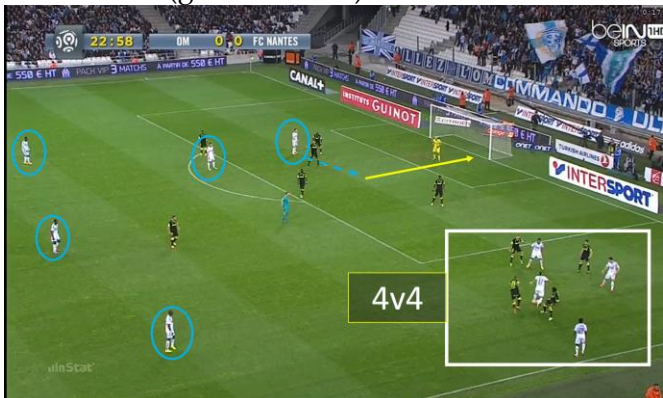
Also noteworthy are set pieces. OM scored two goals after this phase of the game.

THROW IN:

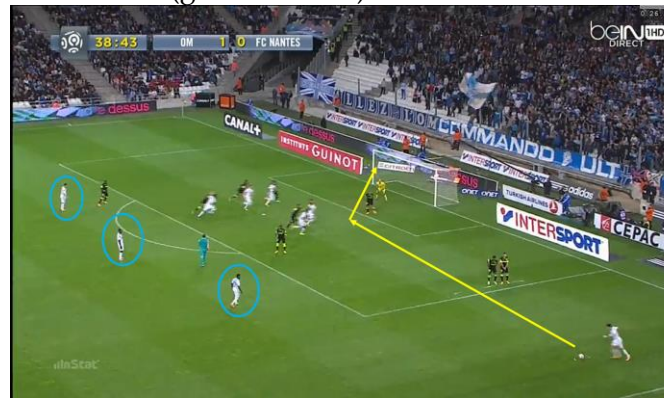


Each throw in - regardless of whether it started OM from its own half or the opponent – Bielsa wanted to end with finalization. From their own half, OM often changed sides to get to the fastest possible finalization and deliver the ball to the penalty box (pictures above). If the throw-in was made from the opponent's half, OM tried to win a "small side game" and deliver the ball to the positioned players in the penalty area:

THROW IN (goal situation)



FREE KICK (goal situation)



GAME 16: what the opponent cannot see

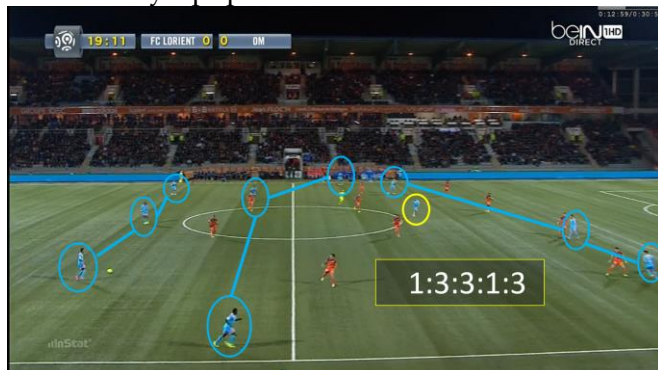
02.12.2014 Stade du Moustoir. Lorient. Ligue 1.

„Football needs the player to have self-esteem, but self-esteem leads to vanity and vanity makes you selfish. The coach must learn to control it within a group”.

FC LORIENT 1:1 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

FC Lorient start the game with set up 1: 4: 4: 2 in defense and focused mainly on counterattacks. Bielsa team (in his favorite setting) was deployed in 1: 3: 3: 1: 3. Based on this game, we will analyze this set up – especially during attacking on the wings.

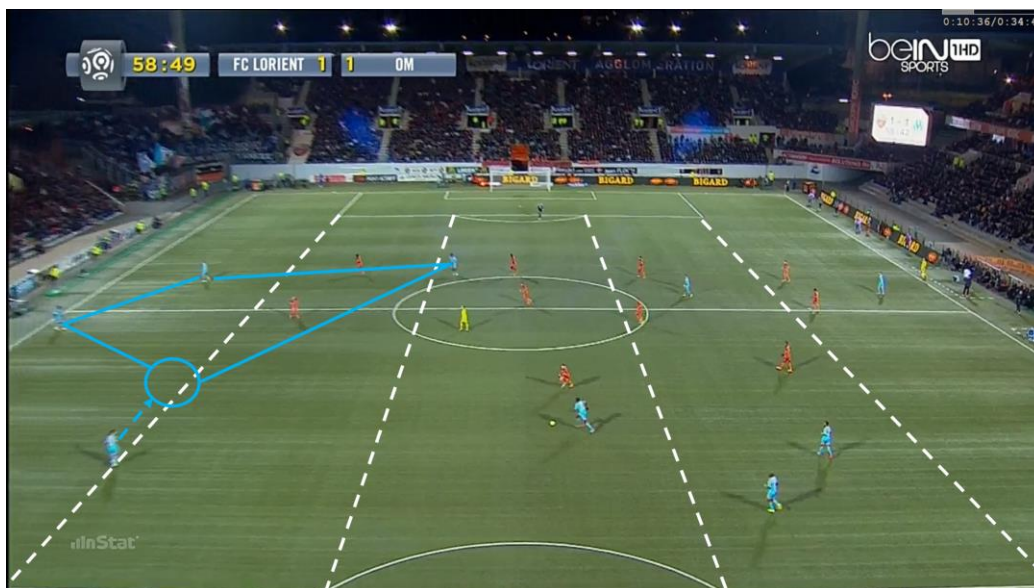
1:3:3:1:3 Olympique de Marseille



1:4:4:2 FC Lorient



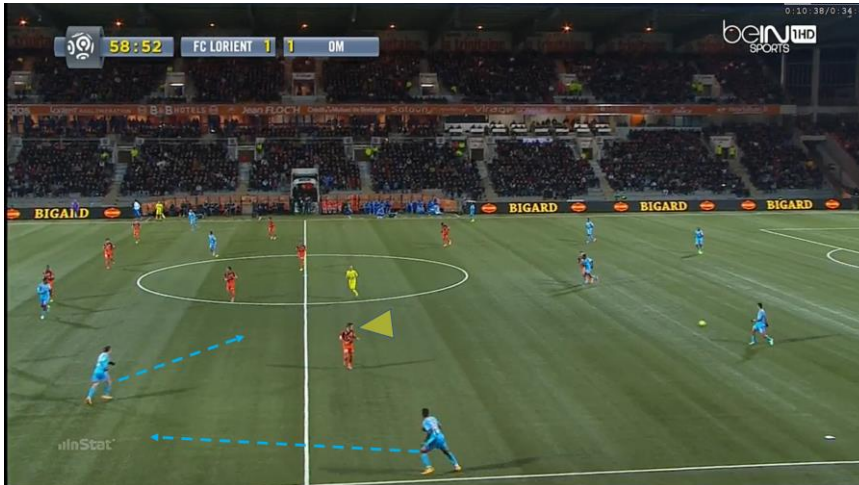
The three centre backs, fullbacks and two central midfielders (one positioned between the defensive line and the opponent's midfield, the other supports the defenders putting the ball in half of the opponent), ensure that the ball is delivered to half of the opponent. This set up is very helpful when you are attacking the wing. The players on wing, the striker and the central defender who introduces build up create an advantage on that side.



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



In addition to numerical superiority, attention should be paid to the position of individual players relative to the opponent.

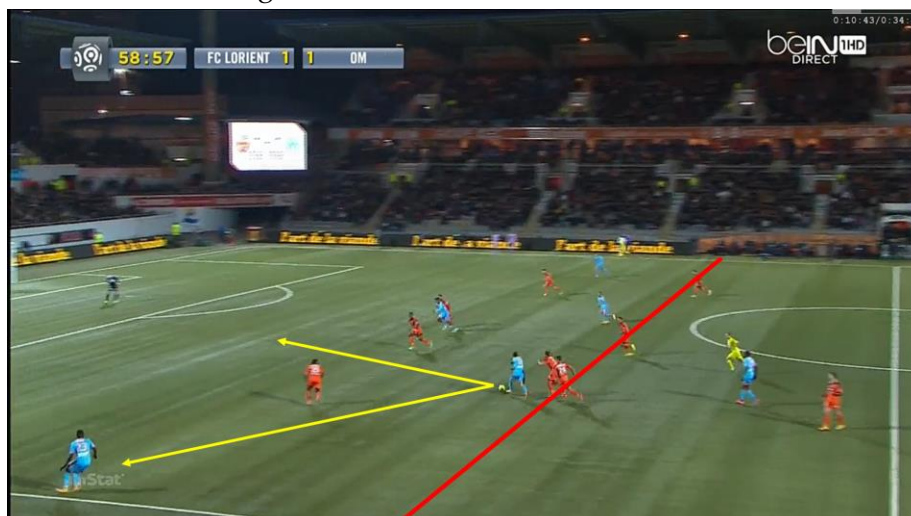


We analyze that problem briefly before. The center back dribbles the ball directly on the winger, followed by two players rotating. By positioning ourselves behind the opponent's back, we confuse him:

- 1 / Do I press the player with the ball?
- 2 / Do I stay in block and delay?
- 3 / Which passing line should I close?



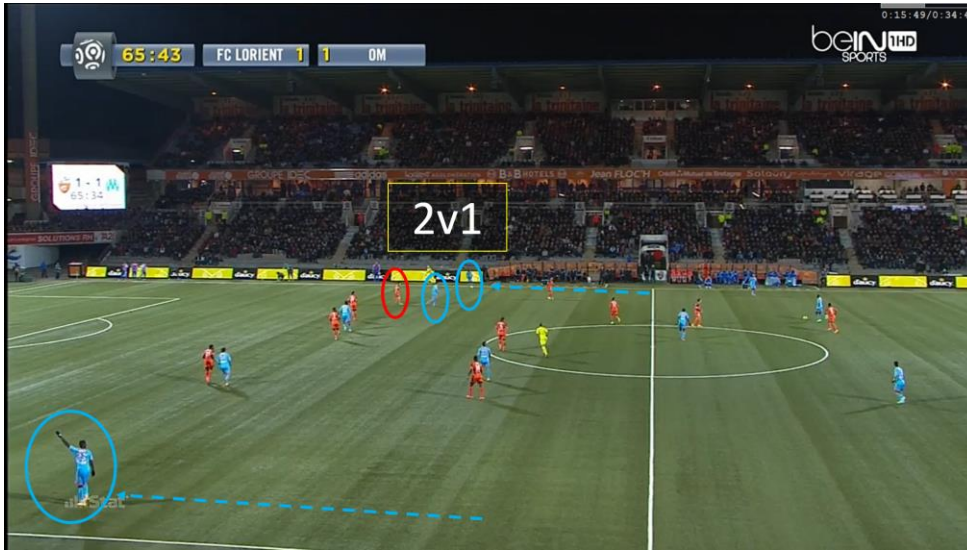
When center back pass the ball to teammates you won the winger back. Further options to vertical pass are open. When you beat opponent's midfield line, that can be a signal for the rest of the teammates to start finalizing the action - delivering the ball into the box.



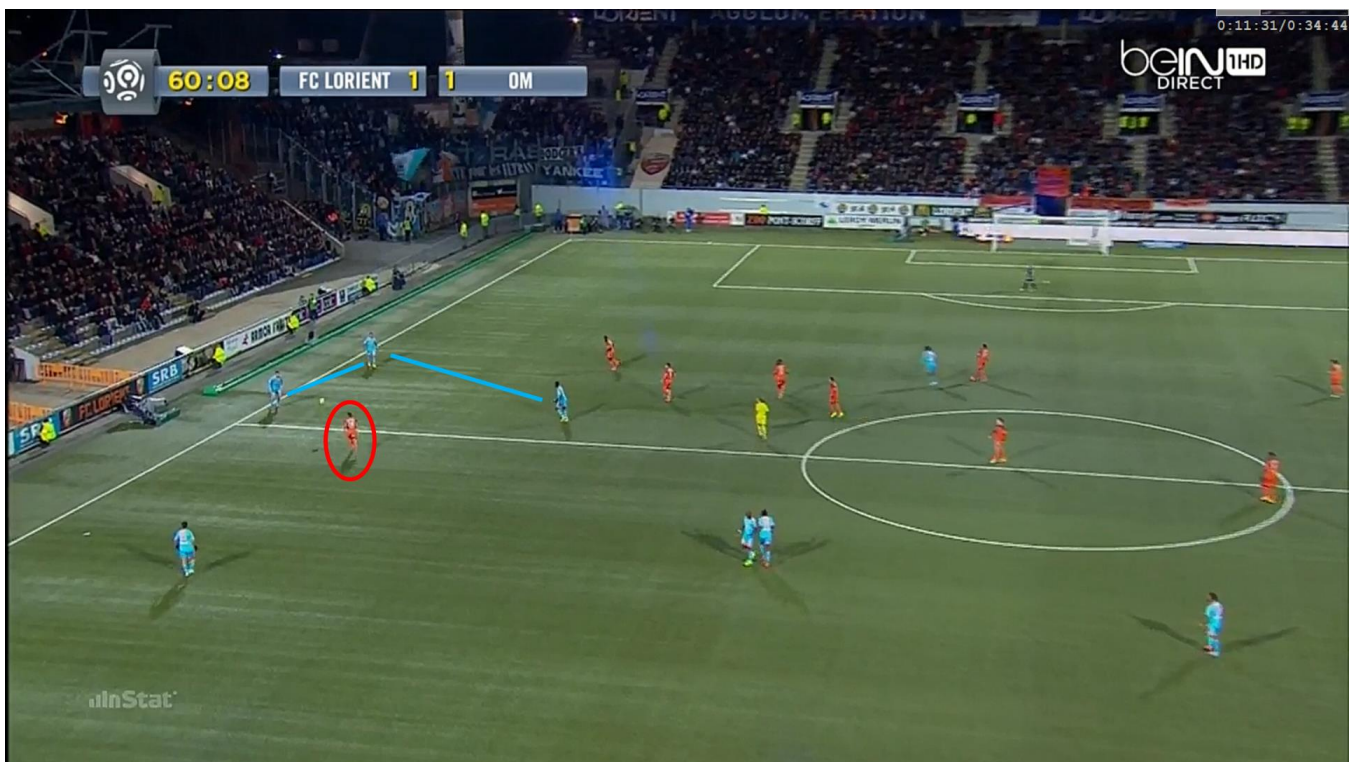
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



High fullback's position makes the opponent's left/right defender has two players to cover, and his partner (winger) after passing - a back gained.



This is very difficult task during the defense phase for opponents. They must come back and does not start defending from the goal line. From the fullback perspective, there is also a small chance to stop the situation when he is alone against two opponents (because winger is higher than ball). See below.



From a wing attack perspective, these positions are crucial. Appropriate positioning and reacting to what the opponent do will cause that relatively often it will be possible to get the opponent's midfield line, and thus, get closer to the opponent's penalty box. This is the only goal for OM scored Payet, who received the ball after switching play and individually ended the action by scoring the goal. Lorient scored after a penalty kick. It was the third game in a row away without a win.

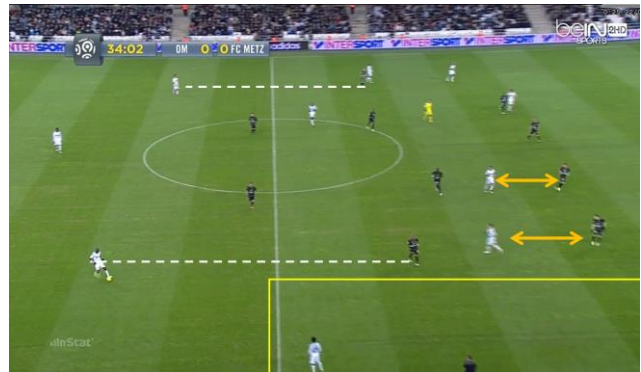
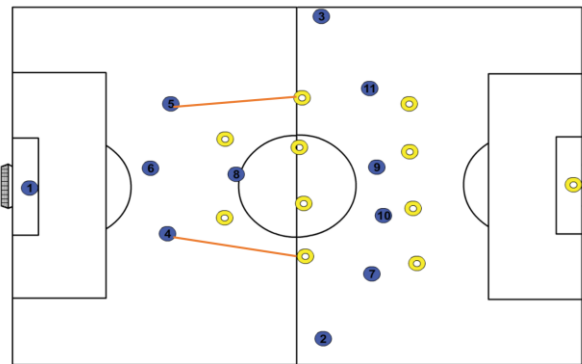
GAME 17: our game = opponent problems

07.12.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

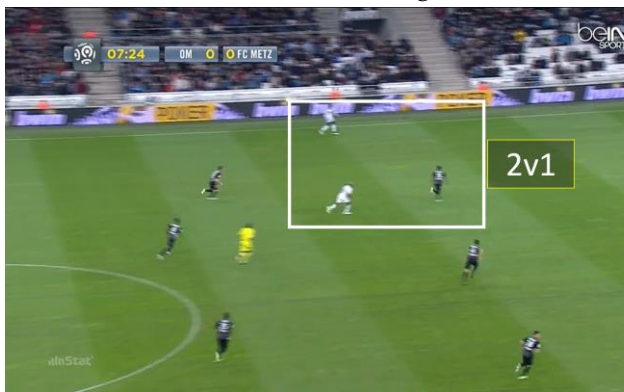
„Totally automated teams are useless. They can't play when they lose their script”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 3:1 FC METZ

Game with FC Metz is another opportunity to face a deeply set team in a 1: 4: 4: 2 defense. The OM way of playing was repetitive. The set up 1: 3: 3: 1: 3 in the attack phase and 1: 5: 4: 1 in the defense phase. Highly set fullbacks created a 2v1 situation on wings. What was different was position centre backs. A detail that made a big difference. Shorter distance between them (if they had the ball) caused the opponent's wingers position was narrow. This, in turn, caused fullback to have a lot of space on the wings.



This positioning causes confusion for the opponent's winger team. FC Metz was set up very narrowly, so when the centre back OM changed sides, the situation 2v1 was created:



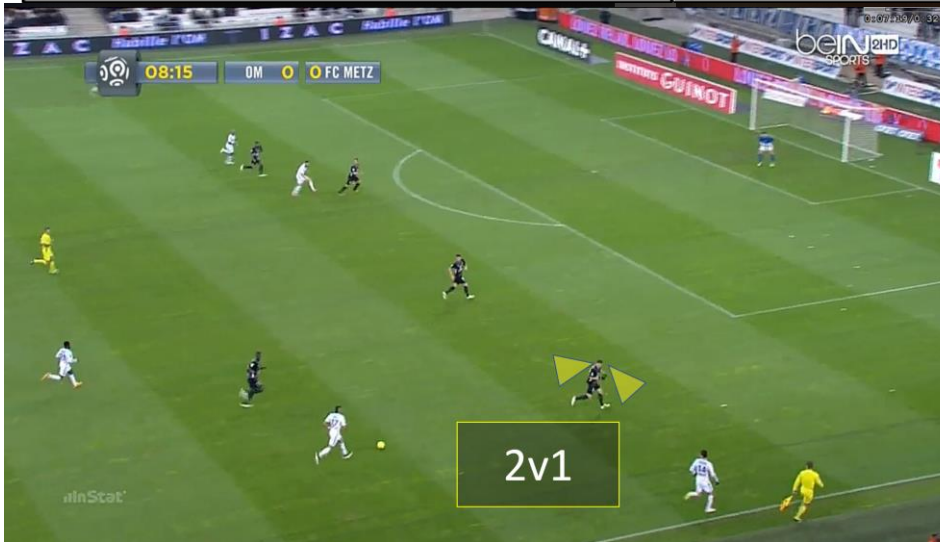
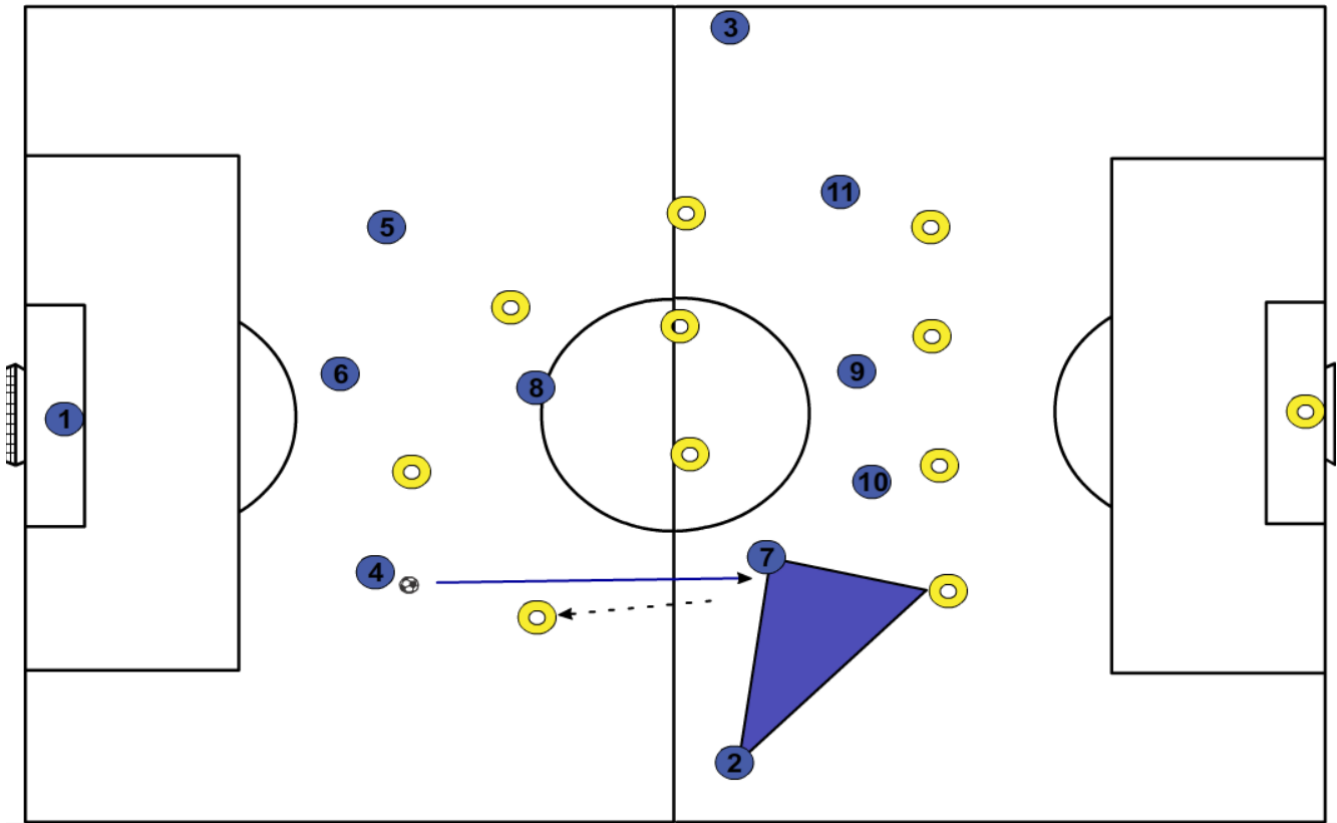
As we analyzed before, high fullbacks position cause situation 2v1 (which was priority during attack on the wings) as a consequence.

Undoubtedly, the advantage of this set up is the fact that you do not need to change side to create 2v1 situation. The narrow positioning of centre backs will cause narrow position of opponent's wingers. The pressing of winger took great risks. Each pass to OM midfielders causes a problem for FC Metz's fullbacks (2v1 situation – look also previous games).

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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TACTICAL PROBLEM:

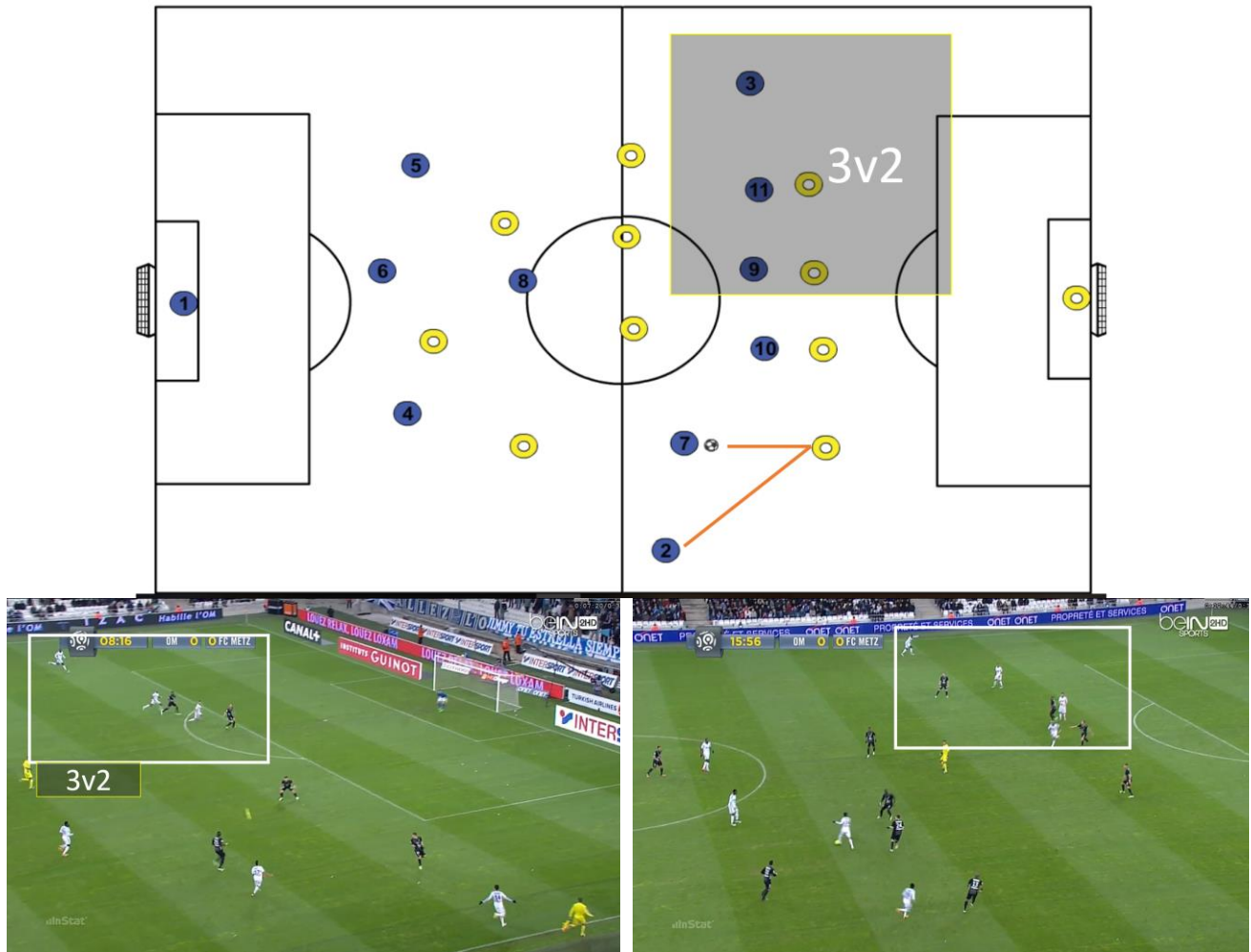


Fullback Perspective:
Press or delay?
Until what moment delay?
When to press?
Whom to press?
Let cross or force a pass to the winger?
Very difficult situation to solve. The surprised player is already half defeated.
Payet (ball carrier) must decide and execute decision.

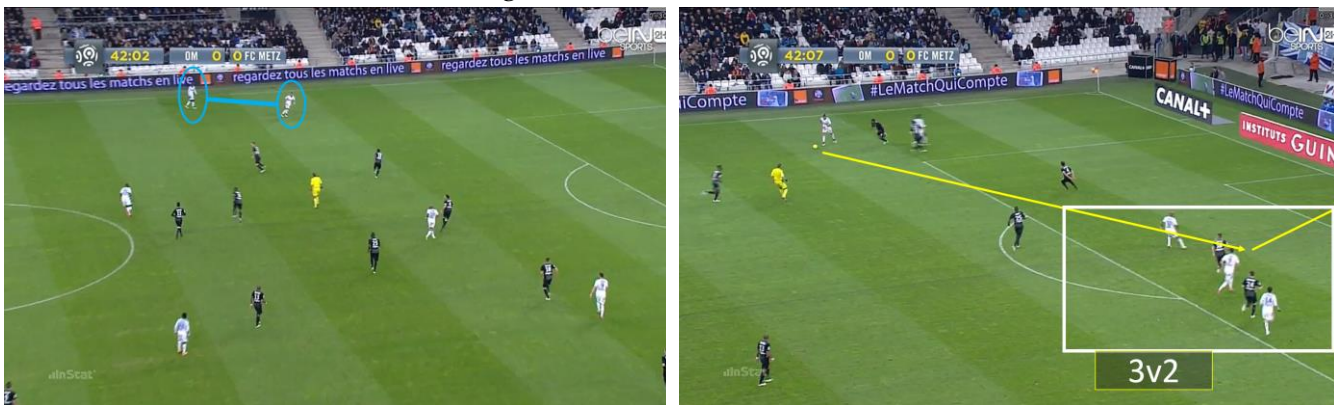
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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This is not the end of the problems. If this situation occurs, the entire defense line tries to save wings and narrow the playing field towards the place where the ball is. Another problem that arose from this title in opponents is ... OM's advantage on the other side:



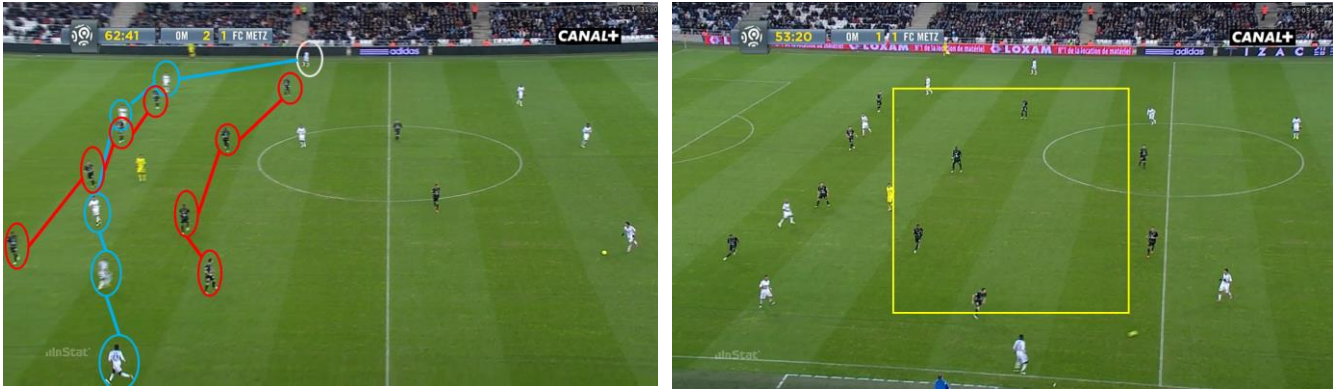
This is how Bielsa team scored the first goal:



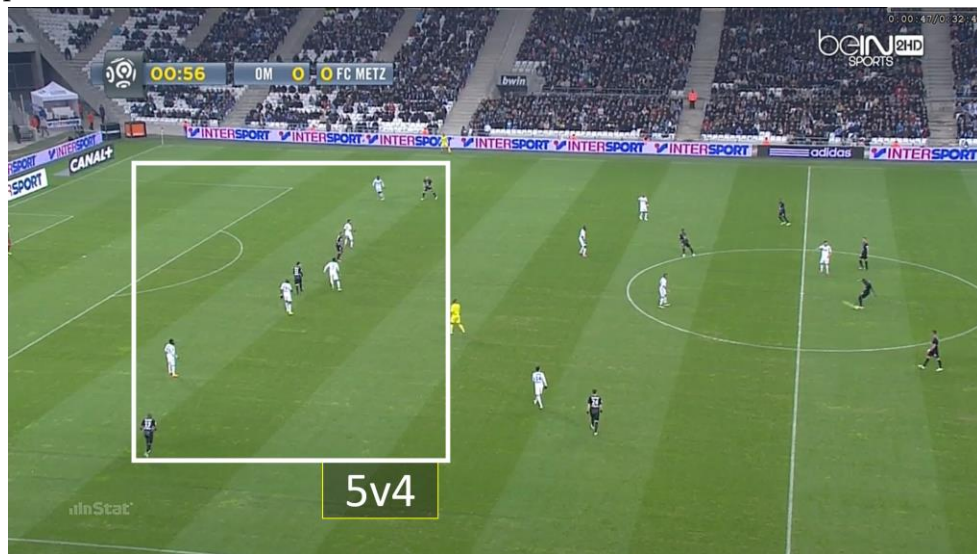
Now centre backs had a problem. Should I stay with opponent or go narrow? Let to cross or try to help fullback? Stay and defend a crucial zone in penalty area? If cover, who I should take?

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

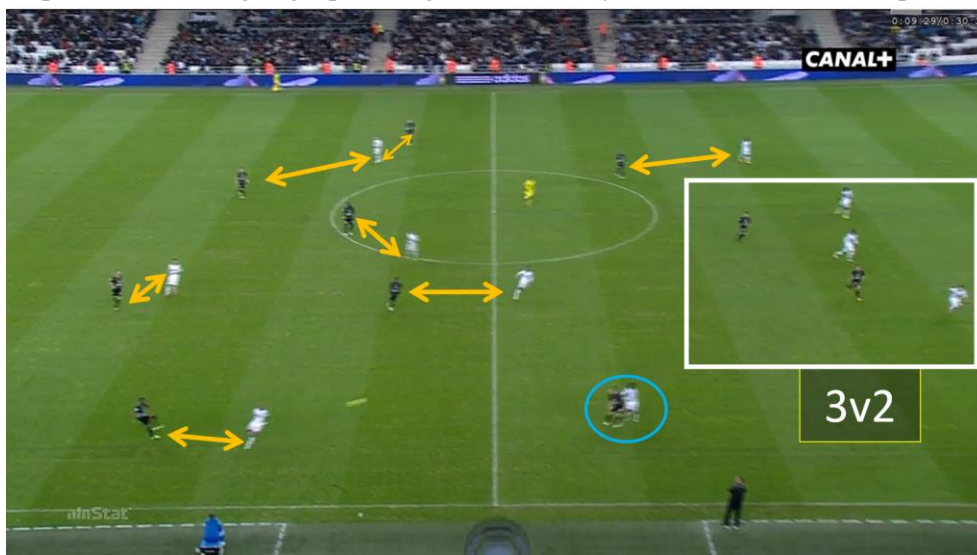
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Metz in defense, often in situations of 5v4 - and even 6v4 (!) In favor of OM. The fact that Bielsa “gave up” the position of the central midfielders (right picture) also caused more players to occupy the lateral sectors of the pitch:



This set up was quite safe during high pressing (at the back you have numerical superiority).



GAME 18: lost in space

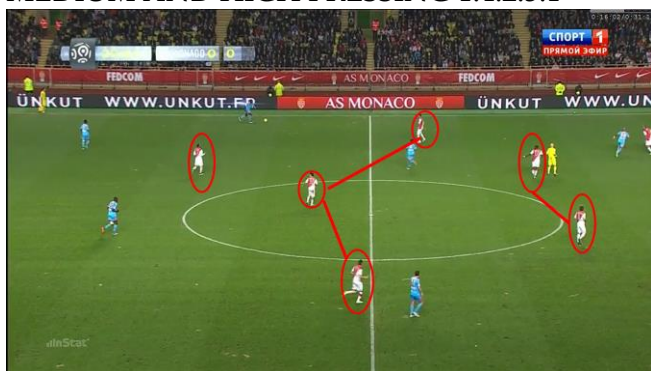
14.12.2014 Stade Louis-II. Monaco. Ligue 1.

„Coaches only make two mistakes. Some force players who can fly to walk. Others pretend that players who only walk can fly.”

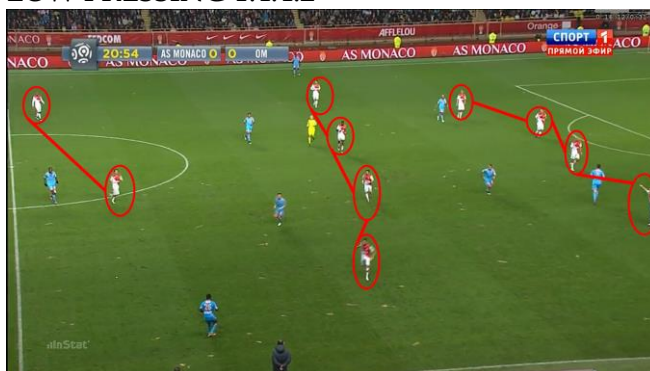
AS MONACO 1:0 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

It was another game in which Bielsa team had much more possession than the opponent. A great difficulty, however, was the very good defensive structure of AS Monaco. Both teams were set up in the same system (1: 4: 2: 3: 1), so it was difficult to gain an advantage in each zones (areas). AS Monaco, under Leonardo Jardim, in the defensive phase he positioned team in set up depending on where the ball was:

MEDIUM AND HIGH PRESSING 1:4:2:3:1

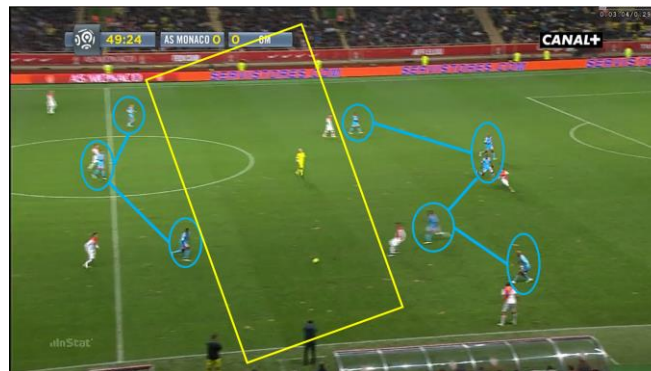
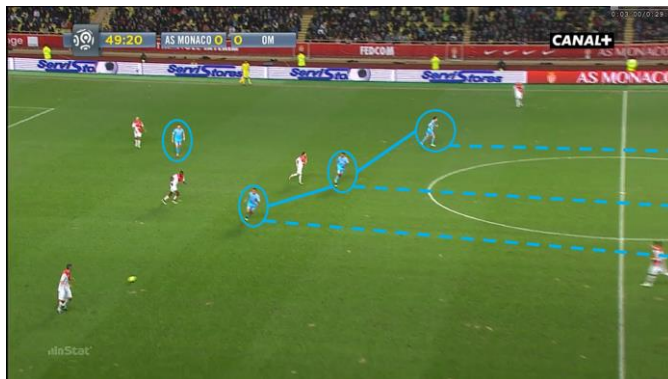


LOW PRESSING 1:4:4:2



OM was often lacking such compactness. Too large distances between formations (often caused by man to man marking), prevented control over the center of the pitch. More players closer together = more players around the ball. This makes it harder pass forward. It also reduces the number of passing lines, making it more difficult for opponents to play with progress.

DISTANCE BETWEEN OM FORMATIONS DURING PRESSING:

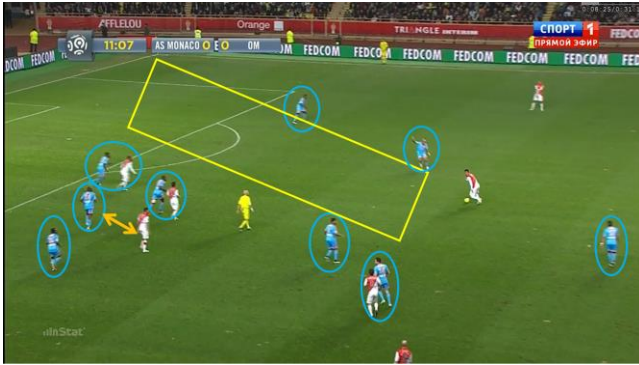


MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

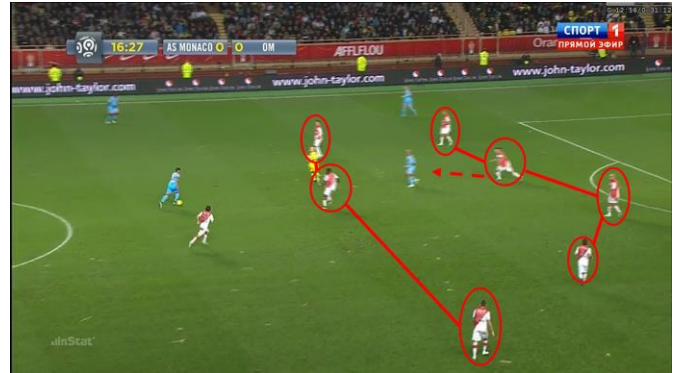


Lack of compactness and constant pressing mean that you often lose control of the center of the pitch. The Bielsa team was often known with high, man to man pressing. Different free spaces were created then - sometimes in key places on the pitch. We will compare two similar situations with another type of cover:

OM MAN TO MAN MARKING

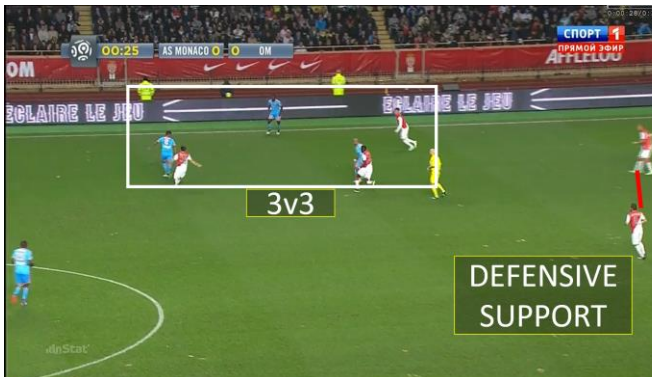


AS MONACO ZONAL MARKING:



Man to man marking makes players covered, but space is not always controlled. If the opponent has the ball in the center of the field, and the defending team does not control the middle sector, they put themselves in danger. Zonal cover allows better access to the ball (players closer together) and at the same time protects the most important place on the pitch. Individual players are not always covered then but being well-positioned can be a better response to opponent attack.

Next thing are low positions of the wingers in low block. That means the OM team no longer created numerical advantage on the wings:

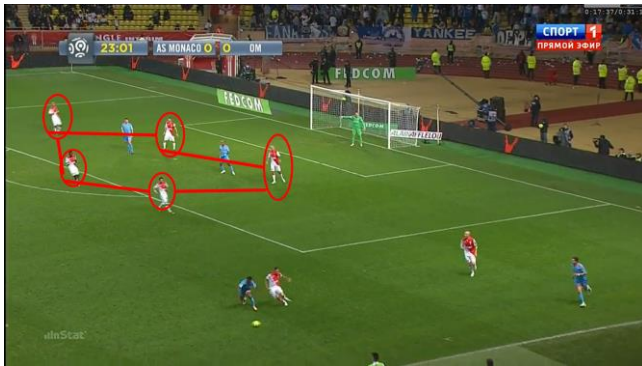


The wingers, central midfielders and the Monaco defense line were very close together. Before starting the pressing, each player in the team must be in the optimal position, thus ensuring the balance of the team before starting organized pressing. Earlier compactness is crucial. Consequently, compactness leads to much less physical exhaustion of individual players. Man to man marking requires constant running after the opponent.

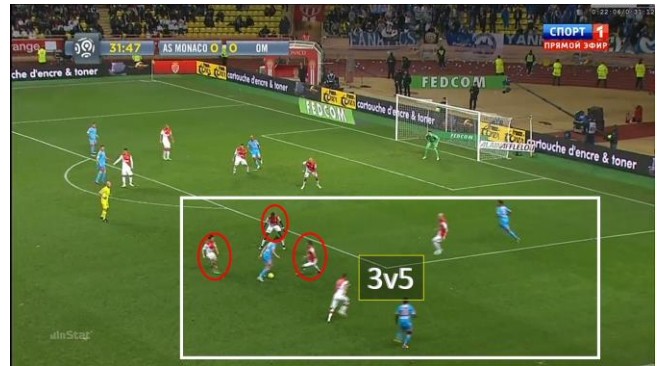
Adaptation of the defense game AS Monaco to OM attack:

Considering the way OM tried ended the action, the AS Monaco team led an advantage or balance in defense and were oriented towards protecting the penalty area. Despite of big pressure on the player with the ball, the Jardim team quickly organized themselves in the penalty box to avoid danger. AS Monaco coped much better with the idea of playing players OM.

AS MONACO DEFENDING PENALTY BOX

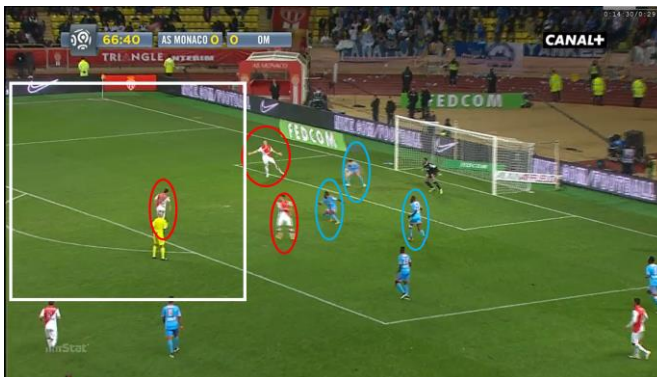


AS MONACO DEFENDING BALL AREA

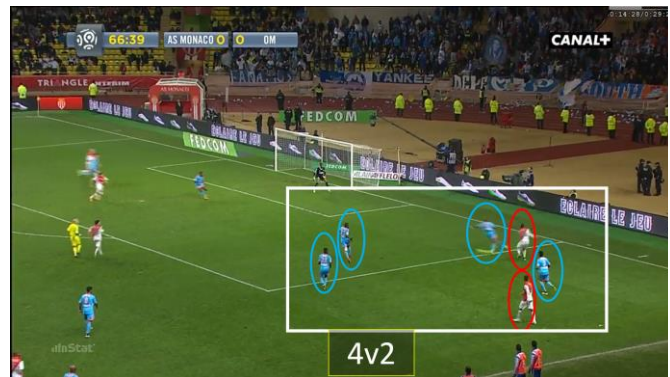


What worked very well in the AS Monaco team didn't work with OM team. The OM defending the penalty area looks very bad and in a similar situation to the one above it was misaligned:

OM DEFENDING PENALTY BOX



OM DEFENDING BALL AREA



While the advantage around the ball was visible, goal scorer Bernardo Silva was completely out of control (picture left – white zone). In the penalty area, poorly positioned OM players could not defend themselves against losing a goal.

Until the end of the game, AS Monaco tried counterattacks. The OM team could not create a dangerous situation. Probably opponents were increasingly analyzing the Bielsa team. What the teams in previous games could not (defend wings), AS Monaco coped very well with the OM to avoid danger. Distance between Monaco centre backs and striker was good enough to communicate in good manner. Compactness has a great influence not only on defensive phase but also on counterattacks. Better compactness means more attempts to recovery the ball, that cause more chances for counterattack.

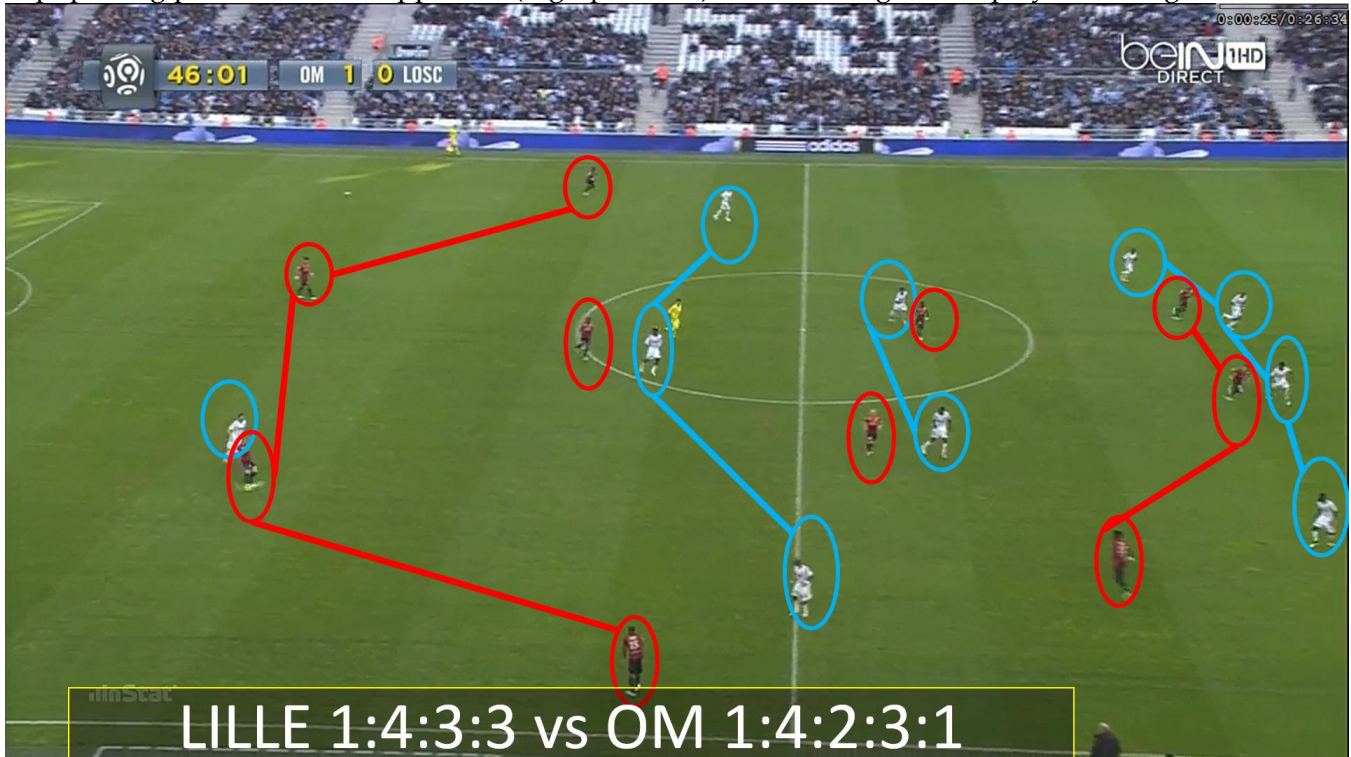
GAME 19: outside the ball area

21.12.2014. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„I don't agree to isolating a good game from victory. You play well to win. There is nothing in between”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:1 LOSC LILLE

LOSC Lille was the next opponent, playing mostly in the 1: 4: 3: 3. OM responded with 1: 4: 2: 3: 1 and kept putting pressure on the opponent (high pressure), often forcing him to play with long ball.



Bielsa team - as in every game - was on the ball most of the time (it never happened that any opponent this season had more possession than OM). After receiving the ball, Lille's team changed sides most often during counterattack. It was a difficult task for OM fullbacks, who have always offensive attitude, which makes the distance to return larger.

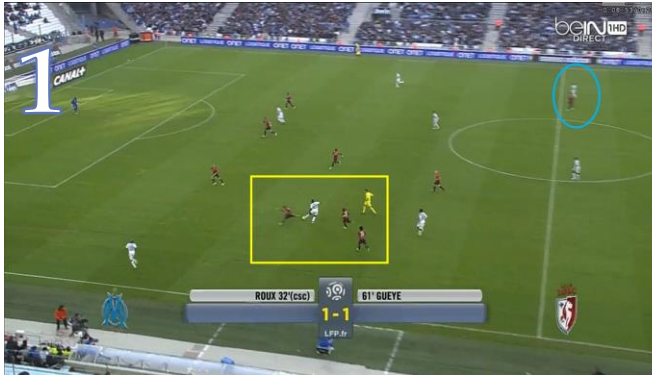
Thanks to the good defensive transition, OM avoided many dangerous situations from the opponent. Based on the next three situations, I would like to analyze how demanding the position of fullback in the team Marcelo Bielsa is.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

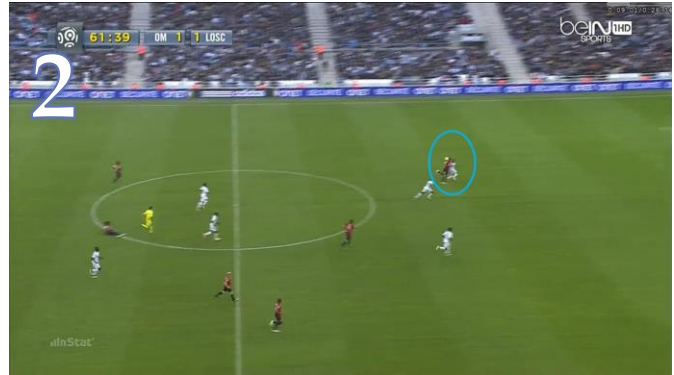


DEFENSIVE TRANSITION

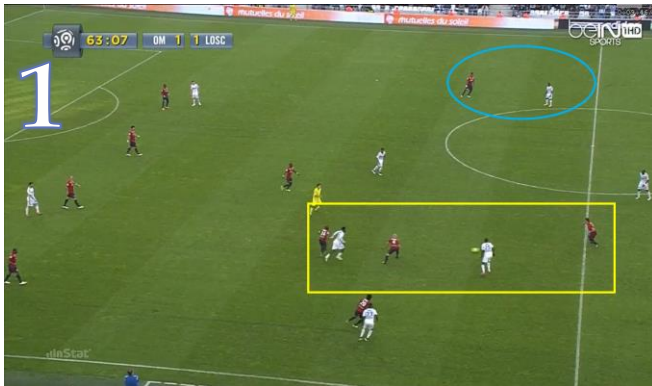
WHEN OM LOSE THE BALL (YELLOW AREA)



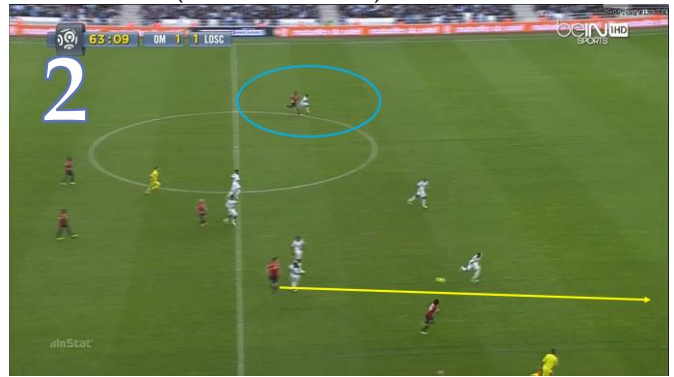
REACTION (7 seconds later – fullback)



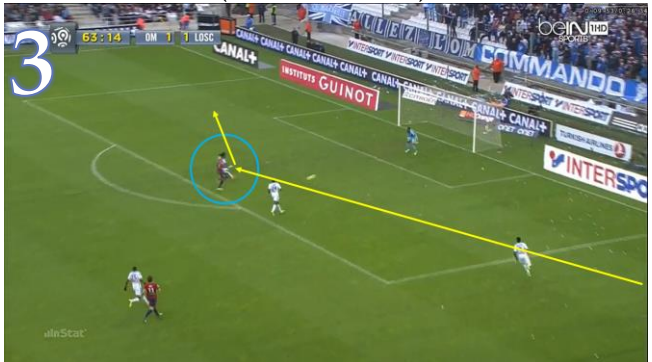
LOSE AREA



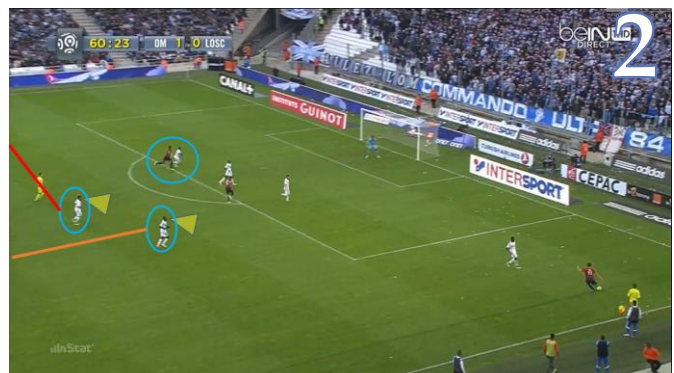
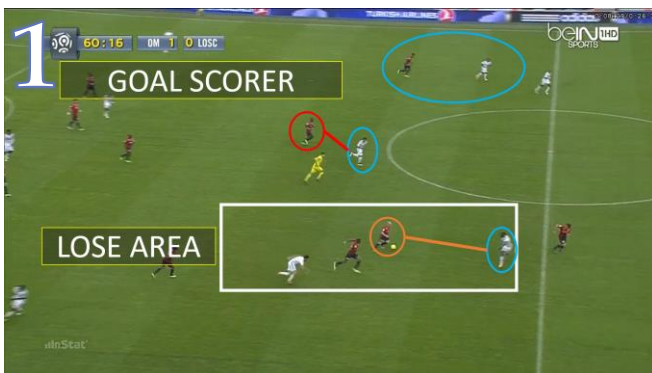
REACTION (2 seconds later)



NEXT ACTION (5 seconds later).



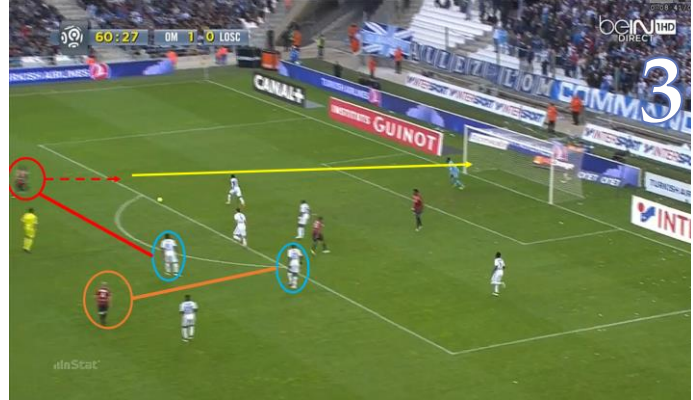
In both situations described above, the fullback (on the other side) reacted very well. Imagine what would happen if he lost a running duel by 1 meter? Twice the opponent most likely got to the ball first. OM was not always ready to pick up the ball immediately, even though they strove for it. Equally important was the reaction of the whole team – not only closest players. Lack of return causes trouble. OM lost a goal after bad defensive transition.



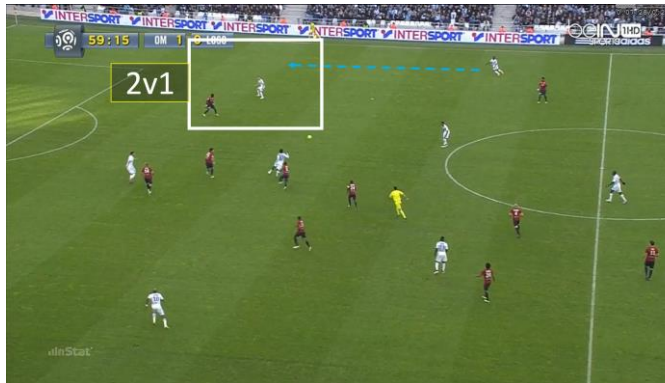
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



The central midfielders reacted very well in terms of the pace of return, but they were not aware of what was going on behind their backs, so they did not control the blind side. They couldn't predict what might happen next? As it turned out later, OM often did not control the blind side (behind their back) during transitions. The only player who wanted to fix the teammates mistake was the fullback, who we took a closer look at.



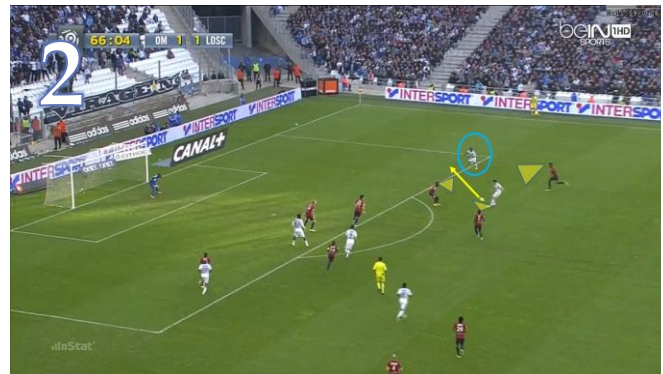
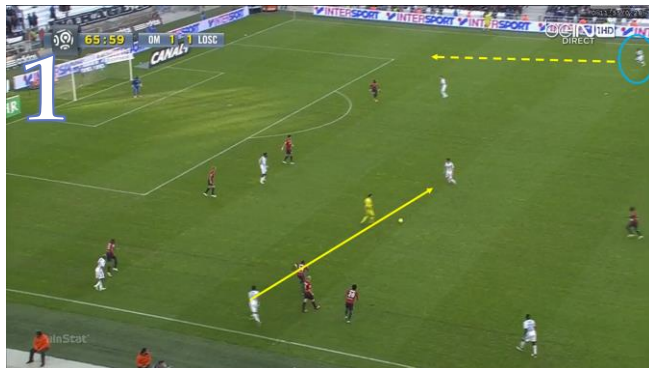
One might wonder why risk and set the fullback so high, since when he loses the ball he must react as soon as possible and have a large distance to perform? There is a very logical explanation for this. Imagine an OM team not losing the ball and they switch direction of attack?



Very often this is how the OM team created goal situations.

Switching play and use offensive fullback. That is why fullbacks were so important for the OM team. Just as the counterattack may end on the other side and the fullback must return, so when attacking they are the players who finish the action on the other side of the pitch.

FULLBACK AFTER SWITCHING PLAY



The defensive transition will be further discussed in game 26. We will compare ways of reacting to the loss of the ball with the previous Bielsa team.

GAME 20: pass the ball behind opponent's midfield line

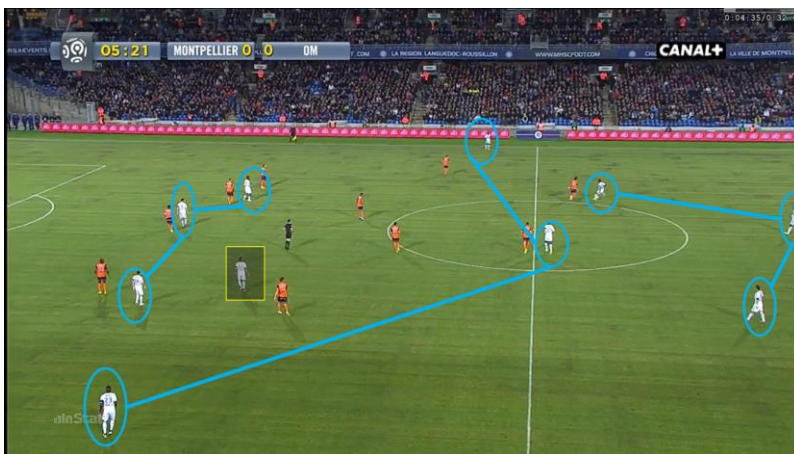
09.01.2015 Stade de la Mosson. Montpellier. Ligue 1.

„Do you know that I die after every failure? Another week is like hell. I feel like disabled. Fortunately, it's only 7 days.”

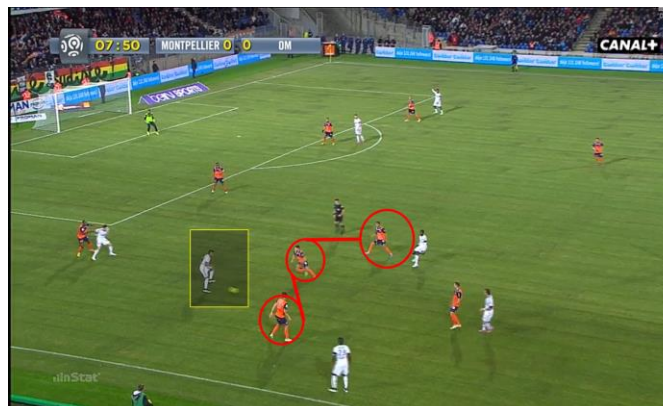
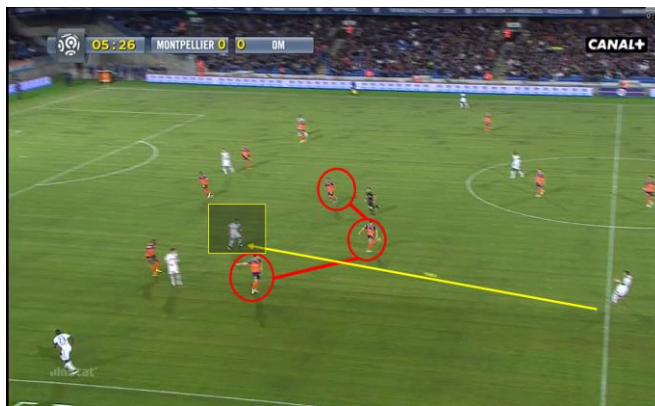
MONTPELLIER HSC 2:1 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

After a three-week break from the games, the OM team started with an away game from Montpellier HSC. Compared to last game, Montpellier started the game in a 1: 4: 4: 2 set up.

OM came out in a 1: 3: 3: 1: 3. Payet's role was crucial. He started every attack on the opponent's half:



Payet play mostly between the lines and when he received the ball, his teammates know that finalization starts.

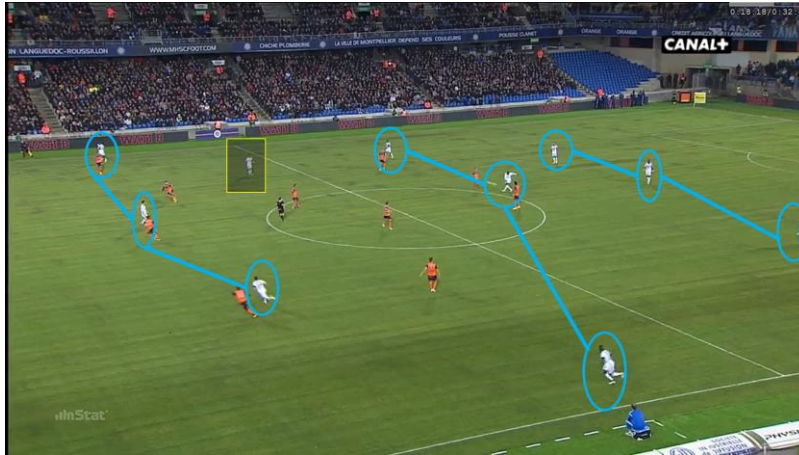


The Montpellier team had big problems with the Payet position. Most often Payet was in the sector where OM started the attack. Nevertheless, his role was flexible. The player has had a lot of freedom of movement on the pitch. Not every move was planned, some were instinctive.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

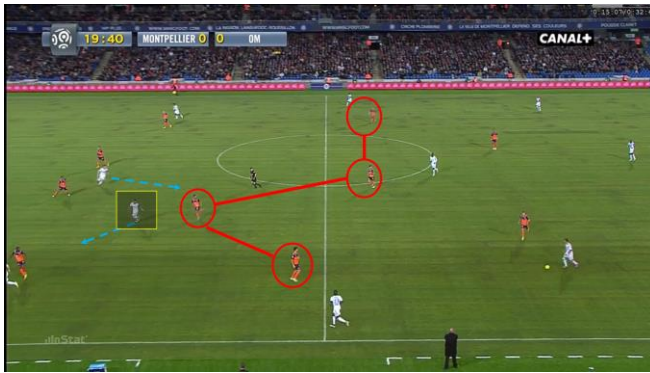


PAYET POSITION

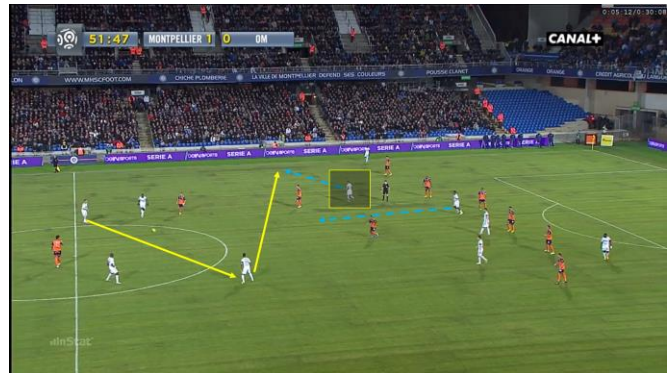


However, if Montpellier's defensive line was able to cover the pass line (more in analyzing the next game), OM players used rotations - one of the most important aspects of Marcelo Bielsa game model.

PAYET ROTATION WITH STRIKER

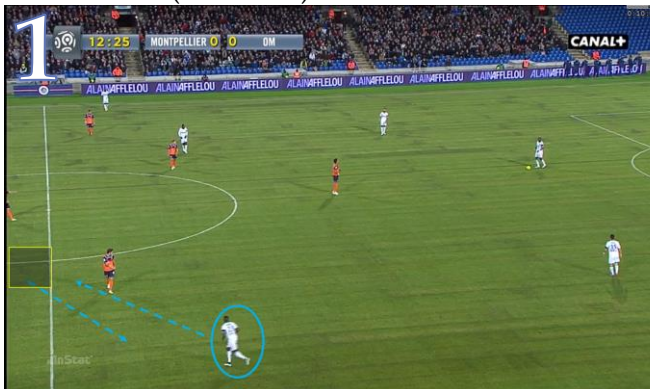


PAYET ROTATION WITH WINGER

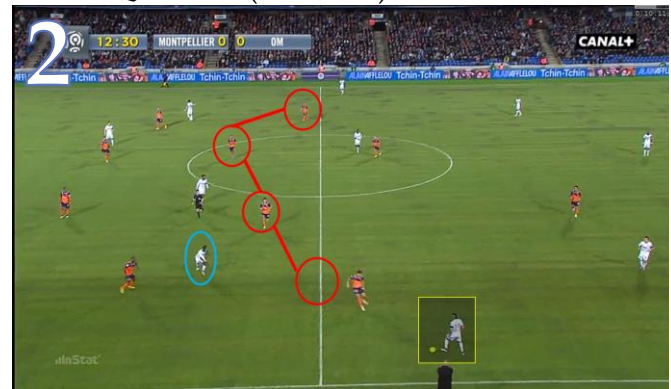


The most unique rotation for Bielsa is the rotation of the central midfielder or winger with a fullback who enters the middle sector of the pitch and plays the role of central midfielder (Mendy).

ROTATION (PHASE 1)

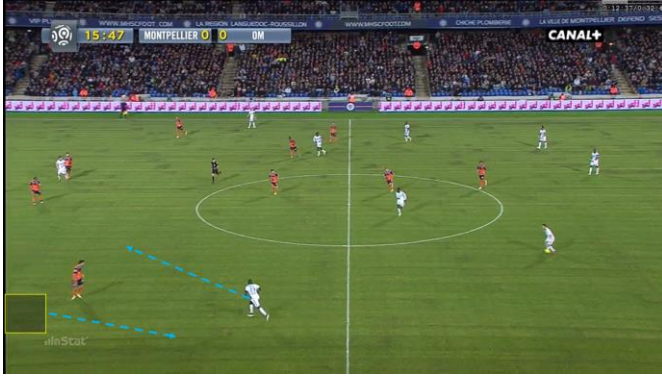


CONSEQUENCE (PHASE 2)

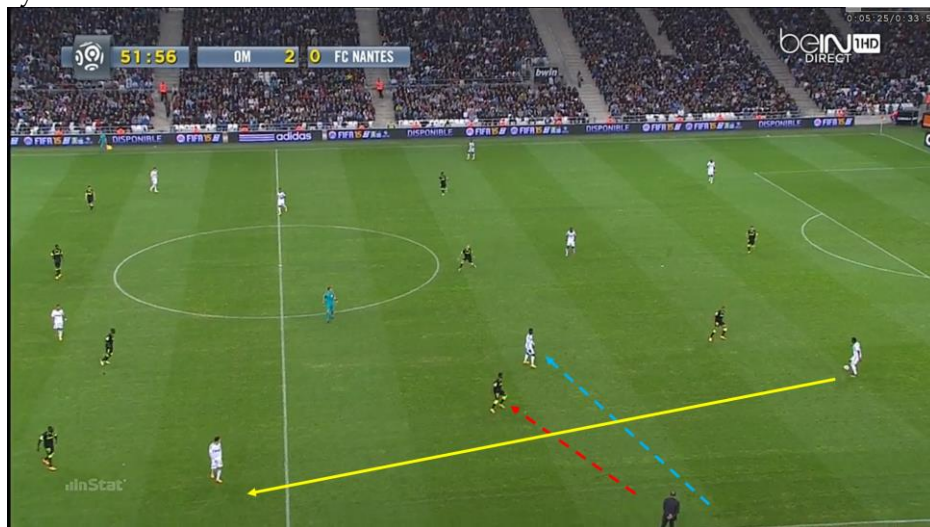


Consequently, Payet - the main playmaker (the best OM player at that time) has the ball more often than being only inside and starts most of the attacks.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

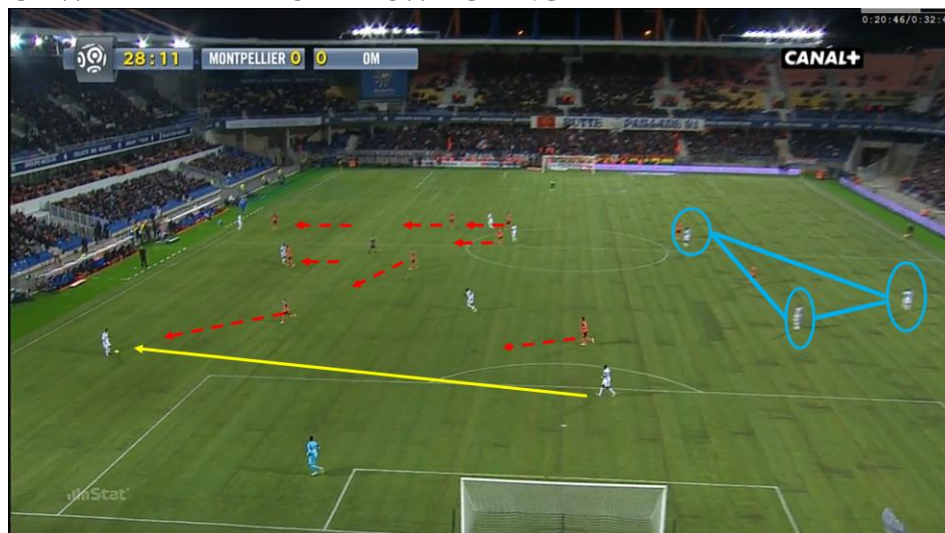


When the fullback goes inside, not necessarily the next player must run in his place. If his move inside causes the opponents winger to move in, then the pass line opens (game picture from FC Nantes). It was one of many used rotations:



Very often OM players rotated when the centre back had the ball. This changed the position of rivals. If you did not have to rotate, players from Marseille ran into free places. This situation usually occurs after changing sides.

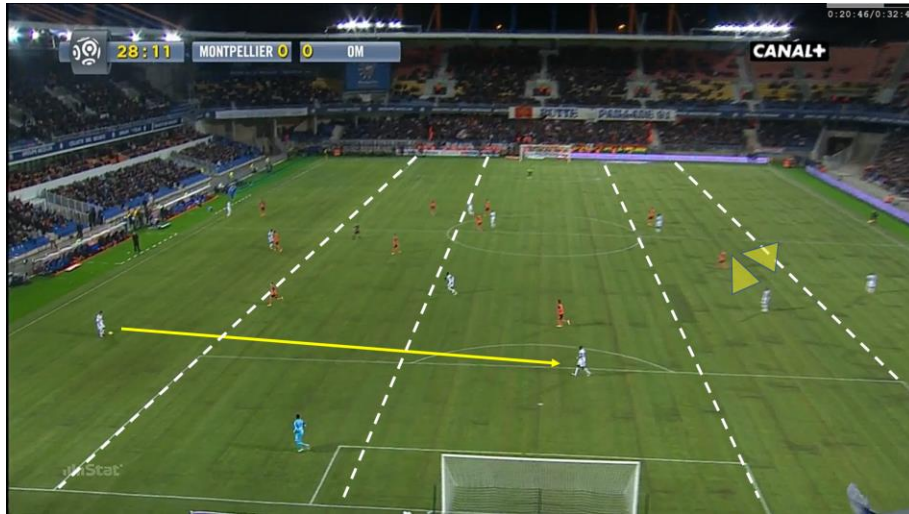
START ATTACK WITH THE LEFT SIDE + SWITCHING PLAY



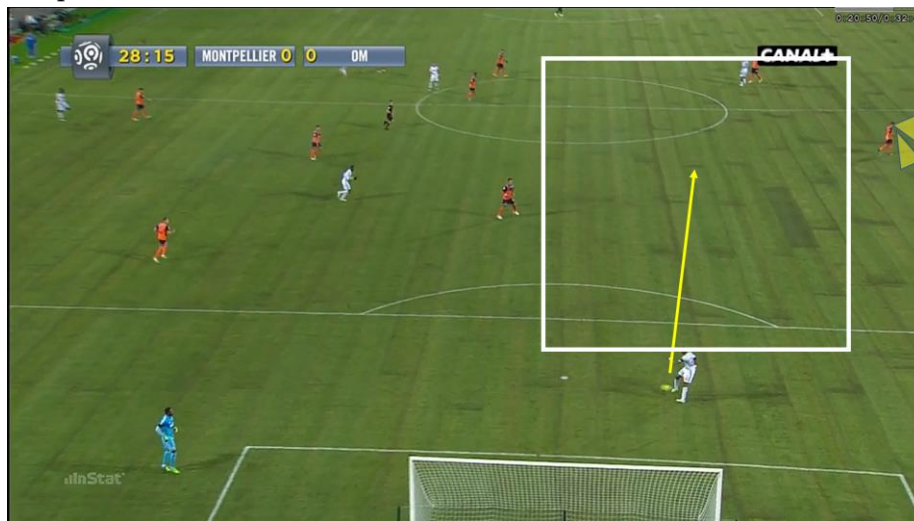
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



The initial positioning of OM players means that after switching play - opponents on the other side have a big problem in each game.



There is also a free space - to make it easier for the center back to dribble the ball.

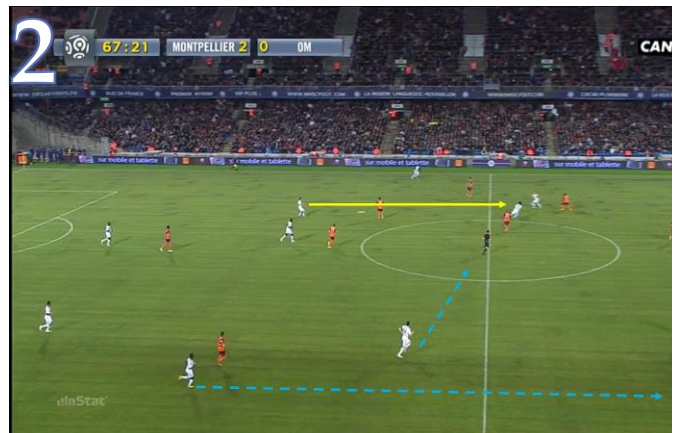


This is how OM scored the first goal (at 2: 0 for Montpellier):

START ATTACK ON LEFT SIDE



FINISH ON RIGHT SIDE



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

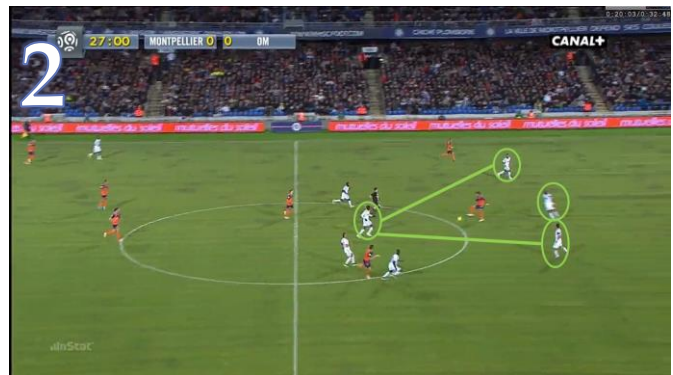
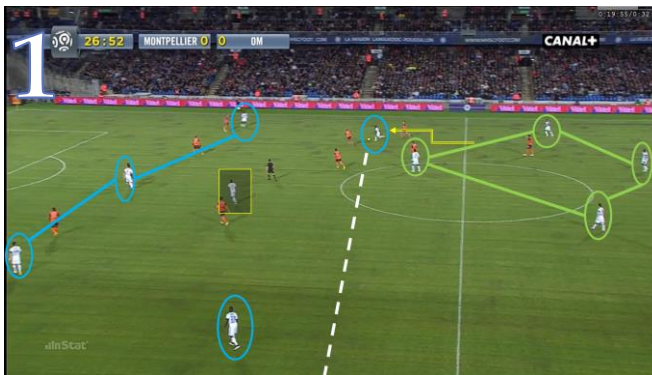
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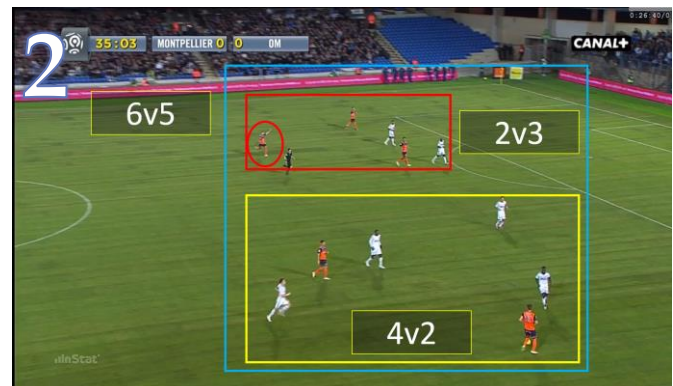
Manipulating the opponent with the ball, moving the opponent and changing the game side often cause gaps between the lines. They also cause (with a good distribution of the team) advantages in various sectors of the pitch. This is a very effective way of conducting an attack, but also risky. Players "under" the ball must move and delay the side sector in the event of loss. Their response and positioning are crucial in moving from attack to defense and preventing counterattacks.

PLAYERS ABOVE THE BALL:

OFFENSIVE SUPPORT BY FOUR PLAYERS UNDER THE BALL:



In most cases, the players' response under the ball was adequate and often counterattacks were suppressed in the bud. Unfortunately, a good response was still not enough. The OM team had huge problems covering not only the penalty area but also near penalty box in the defensive transition (blind side).



Despite the good reaction and the return of six players to the ball, in the key area of the pitch the Montpellier team had the advantage - the player marked in blue scored a goal from the penalty area. The lost goal was almost a copy of the lost goal from the previous game from Lille.

After this defeat, OM fell to 2nd place in the table.

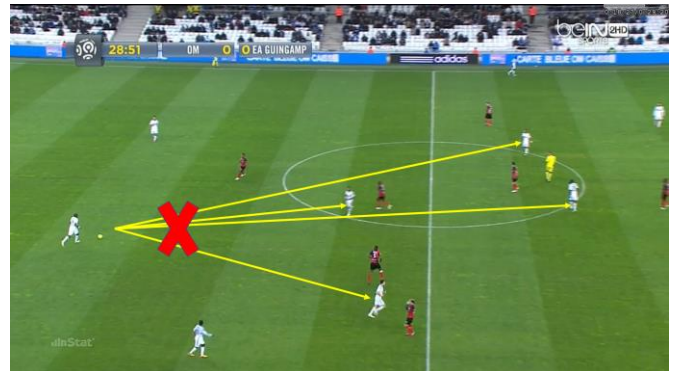
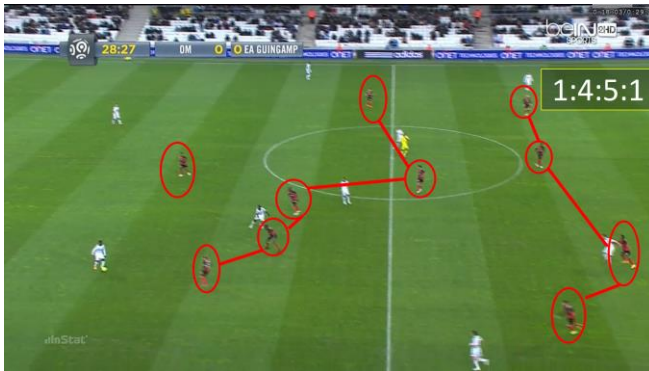
GAME 21: run into the penalty box

18.01.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„When I need to choose striker, I will choose a guy who will run to the penalty box 220 times on 220 chances”.

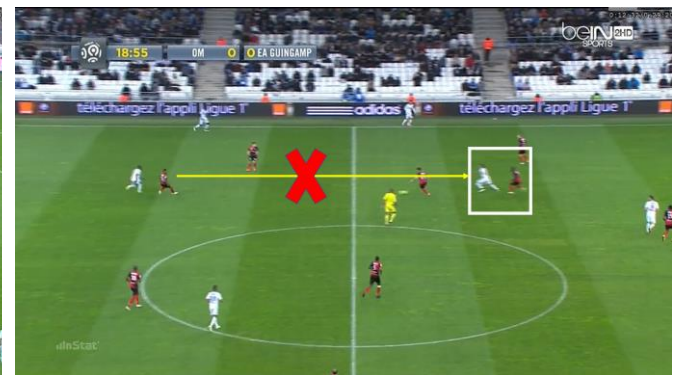
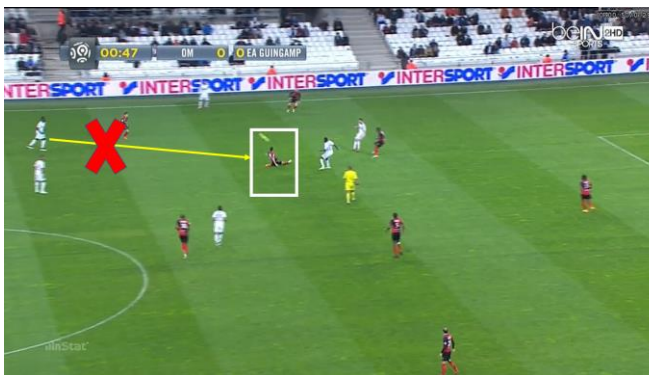
OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:1 EA GUINGAMP

Game completely under OM's dictation in terms of ball possession (66% to 34%). A lot of created situations. However, Guingamp had an idea for this game. The 1: 4: 4: 2 or 1: 4: 5: 1 setting was intended to narrow the central sector of the pitch. Narrow set up in midfield line (five players) had to prevent OM's vertical passes.



The vast majority of attempts to pass between lines ended with the ball intercepting with those five midfielders. If we add the fact that each time Guingamp's defenders went out after the OM striker ask for the ball, you can imagine how hard it was for OM to get through the middle sector of the pitch.

VERTICAL PASSES ANTICIPATION

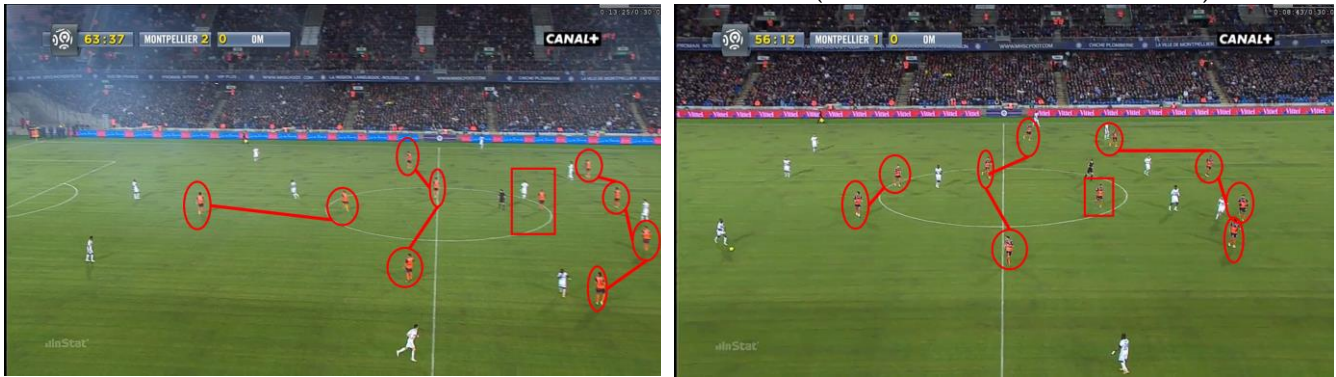


Guingamp players played very aggressively and disciplined in the defense phase. The teams from Ligue 1 knew the philosophy of OM better and better. In the previous game, Montpellier, who had a huge problem with Payet between lines in the first half, changed the set up to 1: 4: 1: 3: 2 during the break - where one of the midfielders blocked the pass line to Payet, which made the OM team difficult overcoming subsequent rival lines:

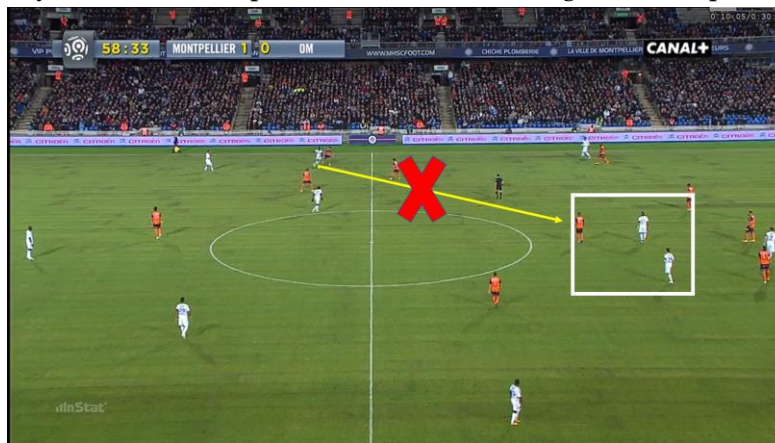
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



LAST GAME WITH MONTPELLIER SECOND HALF (AFTER CHANGING SET UP):

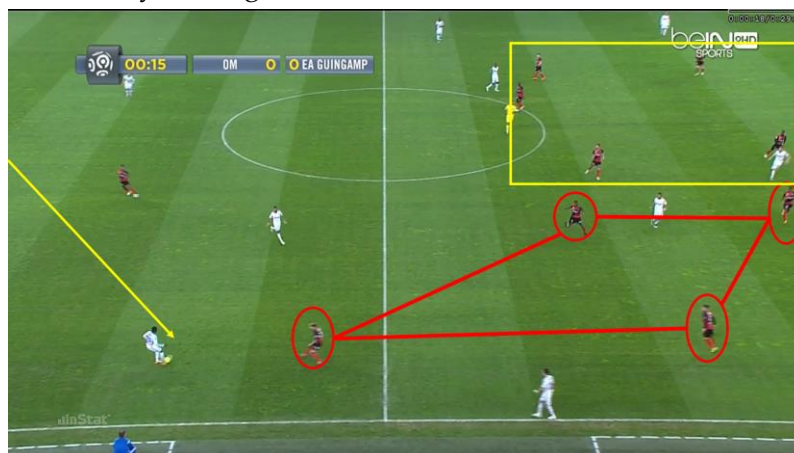


Each of the team tried (by their own set up) to avoid the most dangerous weapon of OM – vertical passes.



Back to the game:

When OM was changing the direction of attack (which was a very effective way in the previous game of these teams - see Game 3) the Guingamp team had at least four players (reds) on the wings (thanks to five players in midfield) and could simultaneously control the center of the pitch (players in the yellow zone). You can see the similarity to the game from AS Monaco.

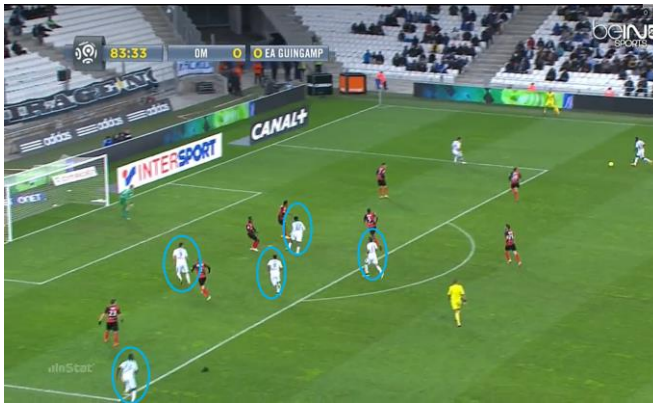


The Guingamp team successfully and bravely defended themselves up to 84 minutes. Then, after changing the side of the game and cross, Lemina scored a goal. It is interesting to note the number of players entering the OM team's penalty area during the cross:

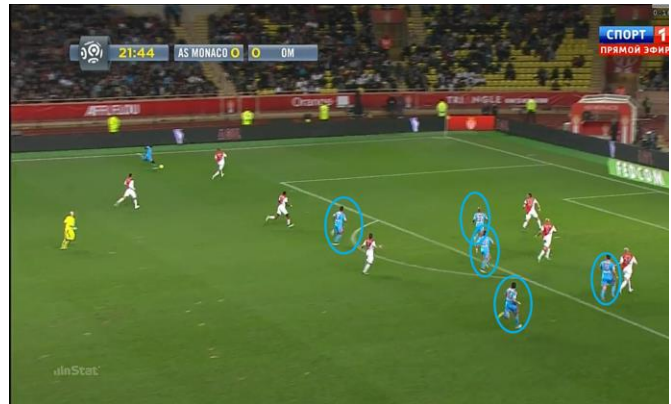
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



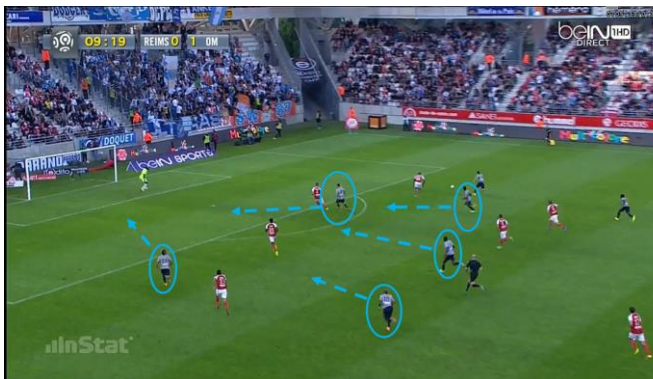
GOAL SITUATION



GAME WITH MONACO



GAME WITH REIMS



At least five players running into the penalty area (sometimes even more) are not a consequence of the last minutes of the game. Chance to score will rise with more players who are run into crucial areas in penalty box. This was the repetitive behavior of OM players during the season. They always moved in prime scoring area.

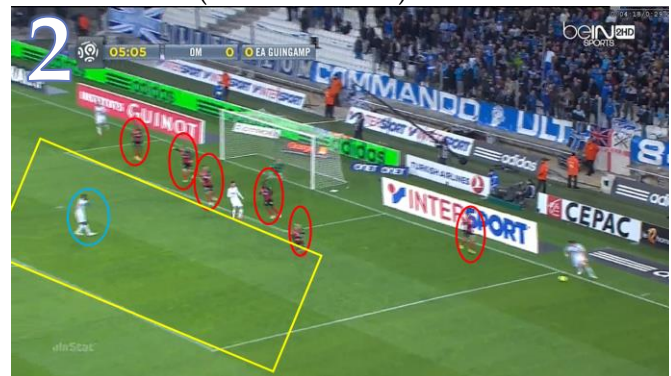
Often, crosses are not considered to be the most effective weapon in the finalization of the action, but what happens after the cross may be significant. On the first attempt to pass the ball into the box, often the opponent is organized. However, when the attacking team gets the ball again after this pass, they start the 2nd attack. Often that disorganized opponents:

GUINGAMP PLAYERS POSITIONING:

First attack:



Second attack (4 seconds later):



The 2nd attack disorganizes the opponent's position, creating space for OM players in the penalty area.

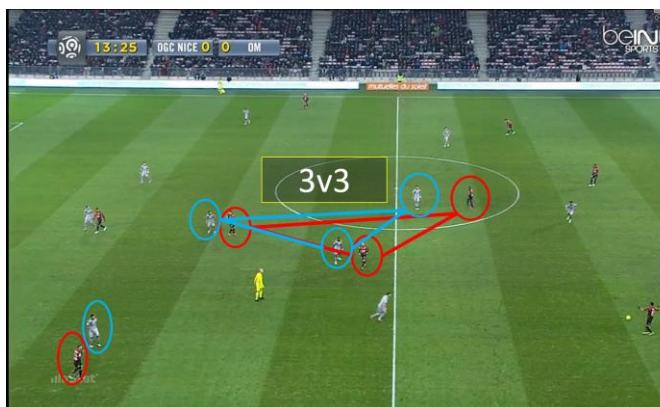
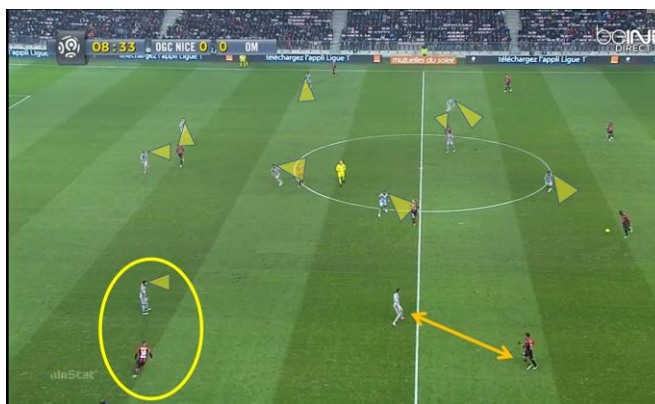
GAME 22: no more than four passes

23.01.2015 Allianz Riviera. Nicea. Ligue 1.

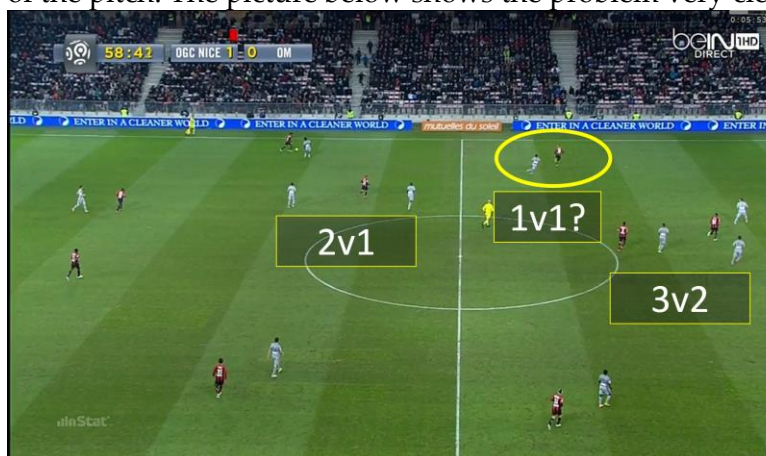
„I'm not a teacher. Things I've achieved in football don't give me the right to be in this position.”

OGC NICE 2:1 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

OGC Nice led by Claud Puel set in a 1: 4: 3: 3. OM set up while pressing 1: 4: 1: 4: 1 or in the attacking phase 1: 4: 2: 3: 1, switching to 1: 3: 3: 1: 3. When considering pressing Marcelo Bielsa's teams, it's hard to see the moment of start. One can get the impression that pressing is to be used whenever the team is not in possession of the ball. What can be stated is that OM did not allow the opponent to exchange more than four passes. This is very aggressive pressure which often ends in fouls.



During the pressing, OM players oriented on their opponents (man marking). Lemina (right-back) very often did not control where his opponent was positioned, which made Nice a threat mainly to this side of the pitch. The picture below shows the problem very clearly:



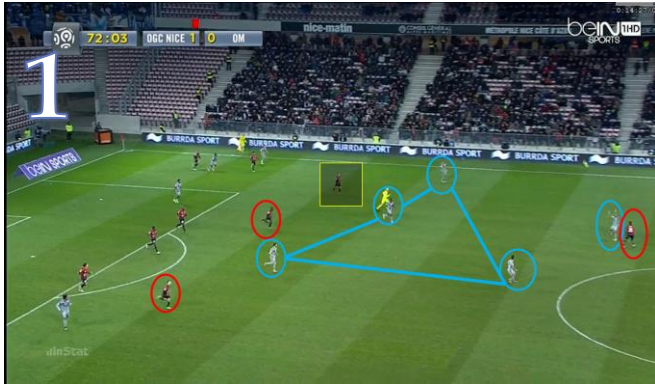
The OM team was very well positioned during pressing. Despite the advantage in the middle sector of the pitch, Nice tried to send the ball behind Lemina's back. Due to the positional advantage that the Nice player had, it can be said that it was not an equal 1v1 duel with Lemina, with a good ball behind his back, he had no chance to catch up with his rival. In 65' Lemina left the field (sub).

Playing very aggressively, OM often fouled. Nice's first goal was scored after a free kick (previously interrupted by a foul action during the pressing). The second goal is again a similar error in coverage (this time Romao) and once again a bad defensive transition.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

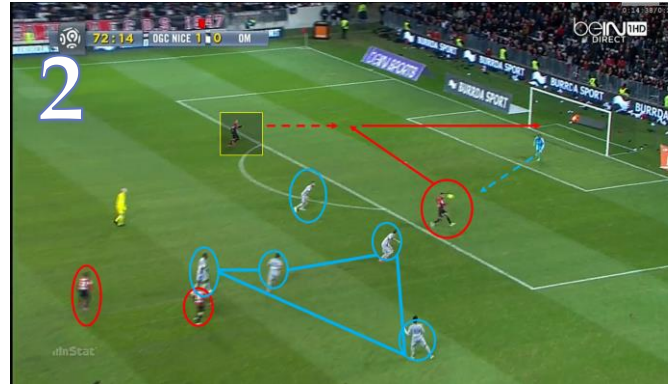


OPPONENT BEHIND ROMAO BACK



goal scorer marked in yellow/grey square.

OM PLAYERS COME BACK



The attention of all returning players is focused on the ball. Lack of awareness of other side.

ATTACK

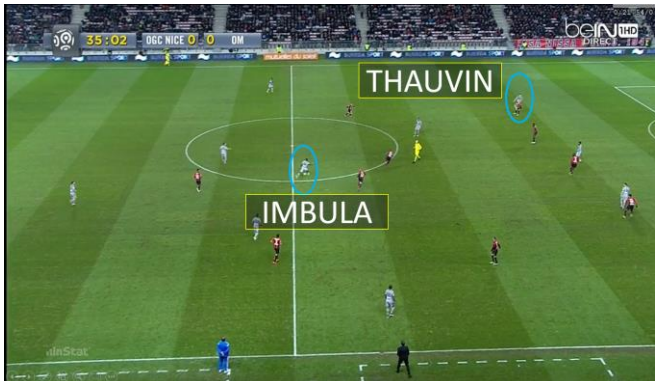


he first half in terms of attack was average by OM. Very low mobility (as for Bielsa team) and the lack of creating a passing lines by a large number of players, made it difficult to lead the ball to half the opponent.

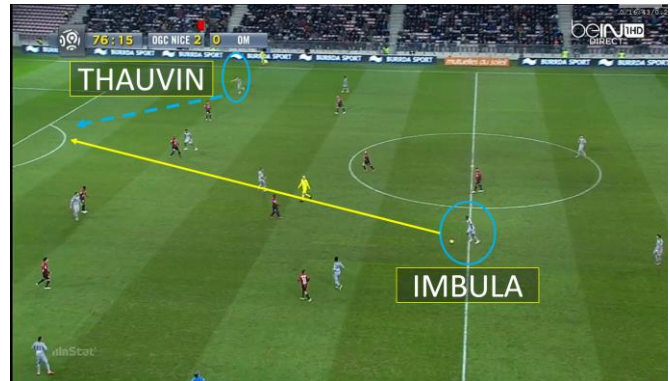
Very few attempts of vertical passes. The only threat from OM was the long ball behind the defensive line.

Bielsa players created four chances to score a goal by long balls. After one of them, Thauvin scored an honorable goal (after Imbula pass behind the opponent's defensive line).

LONG BALL BEHIND DEFENSIVE LINE



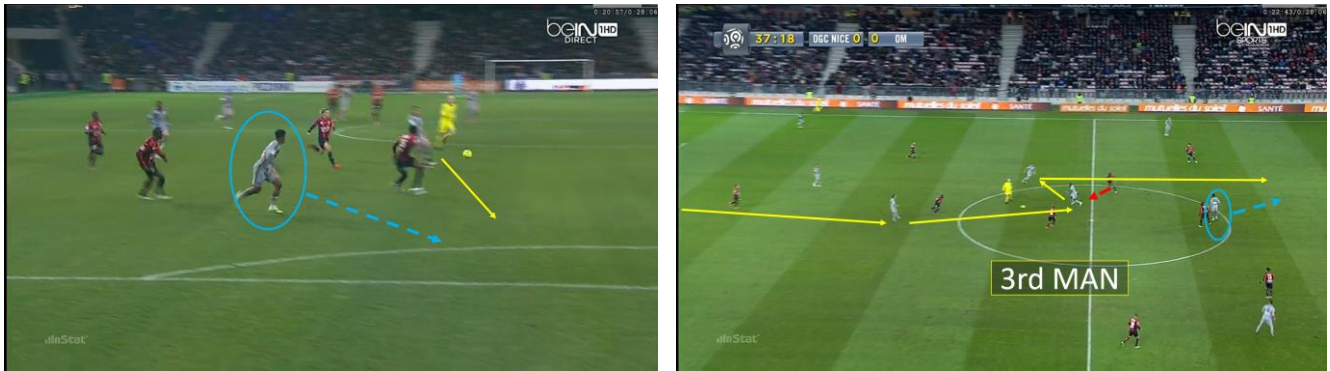
GOAL – SECOND HALF



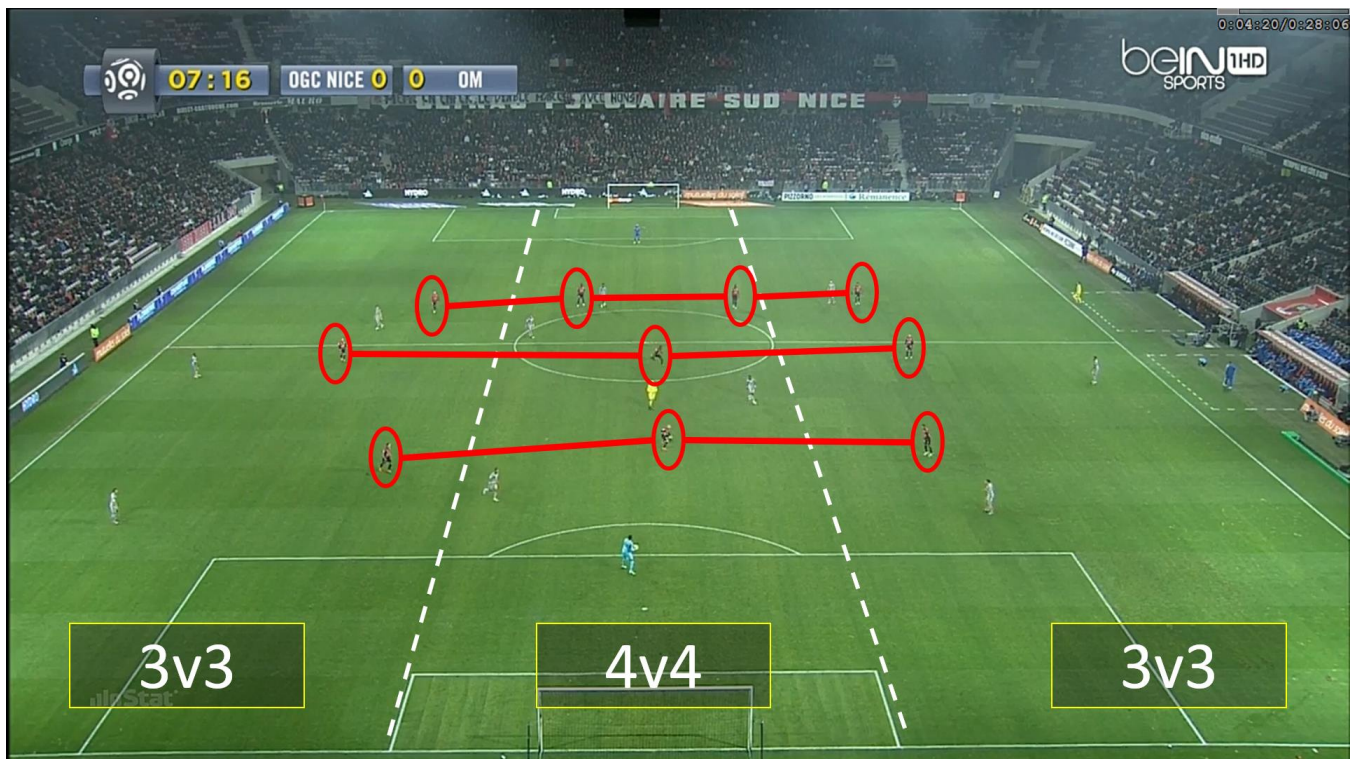
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



OTHER VERTICAL OR KILLER/FINAL PASSES



Game with Nice was the third game lost in a row away. The OM team also created fewer chances to score a goal, but opponents were better at pressing the OM team:



GAME 23: *when every meter matters*

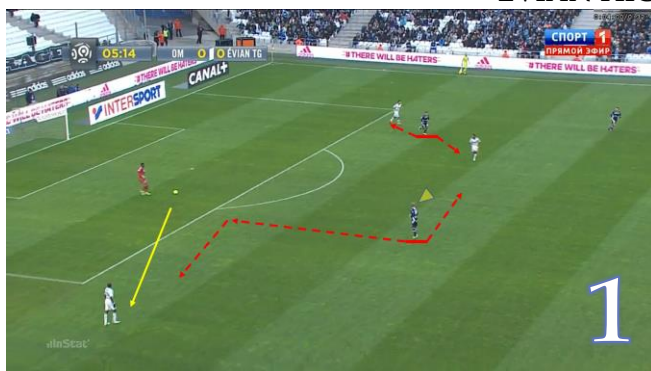
31.01.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„To achieve success, two things must be present: suffering and humility”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 1:0 THONON EVIAN GRAND GENEVE FC

The first half - especially the first 20 minutes - is a very good defending by Evian team (1: 4: 2: 3: 1) and a counterattack (3 dangerous situations to score).

EVIAN HIGH PRESSING

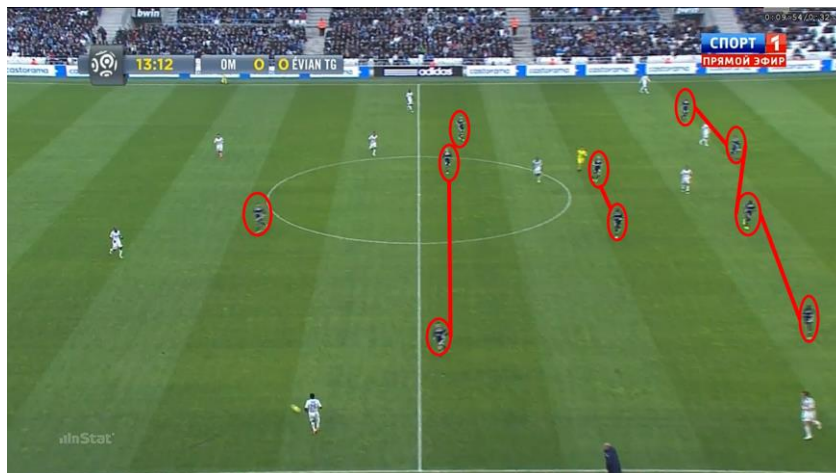


1. From numerical advantage 4v2 situation for OM, depending on the pass (where the goalkeeper will pass), Evian players led to a situation in which they forced the OM centre back to start the attack sideways.



2. Players in the middle sector (square) prevented from passing to middle corridor. Evian started a pressure, forcing OM players to long balls.

MEDIUM BLOCK

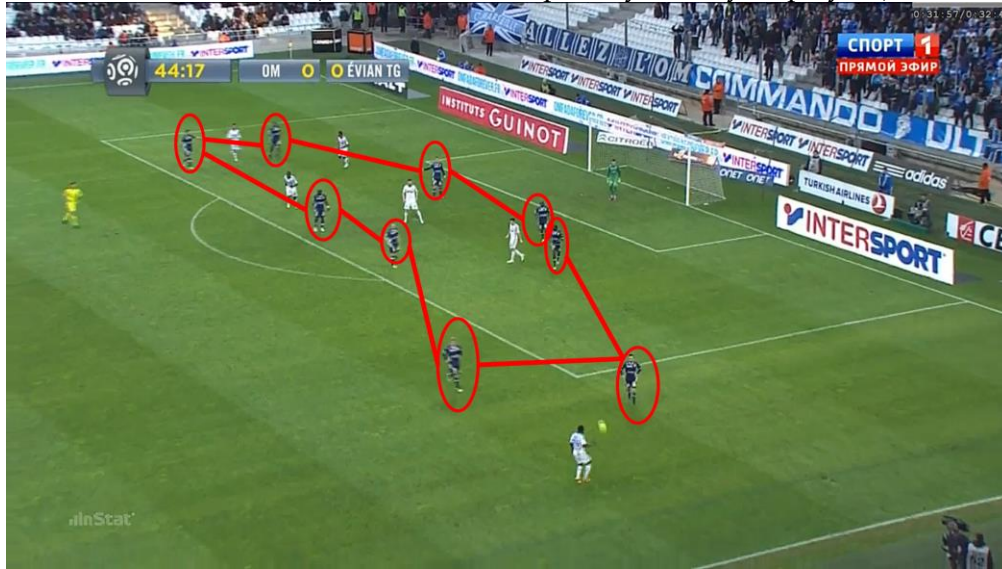


In the middle sector of the pitch – because of their defensive position - the Evian team had an advantage, which caused Bielsa players considerable difficulties in creating the situation.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

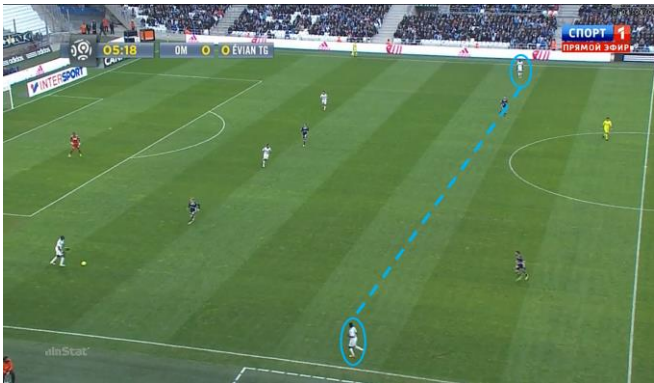


LOW BLOCK (Protection of the penalty area by 10 players)



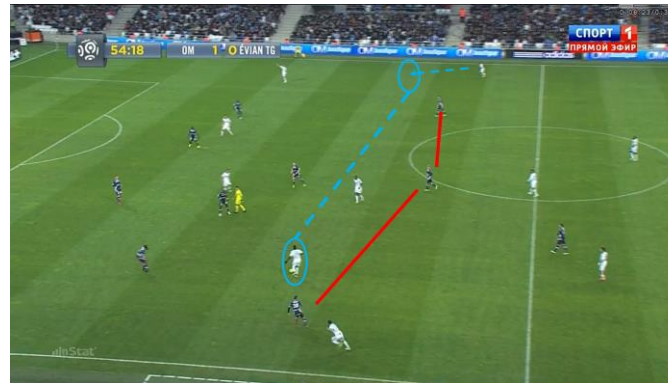
In the first half, the OM team had a lot of difficulty to beat the opponent's midfield line. In the second half there was a difference in the position of the fullbacks, which made the game OM look better.

FIRST HALF

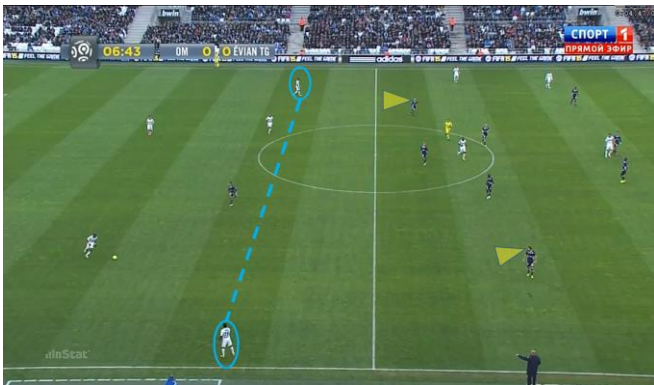


Evian high pressing = low positioning of fullbacks

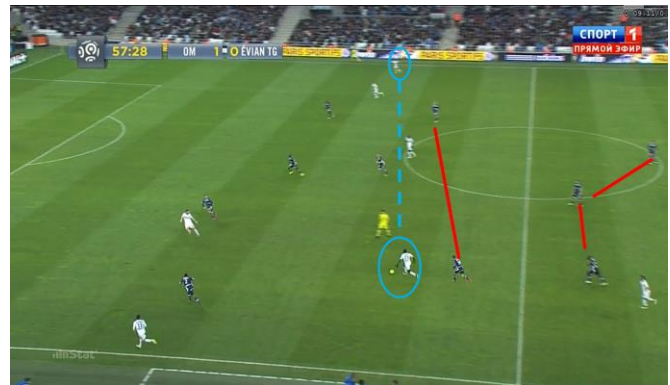
SECOND HALF



Evian medium pressing = higher positioning fullbacks.

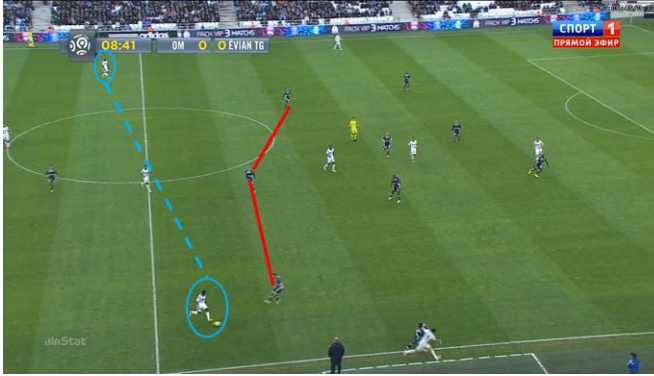


The low position of the fullbacks causes the opponents (especially wingers) to see the ball and the opponent simultaneously.

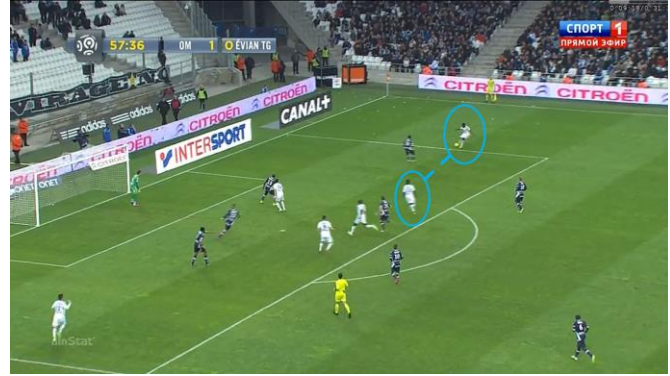


Rotations on the wings and positioning behind the Evian midfield line. When Mendy received the ball, he was behind Evian winger.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

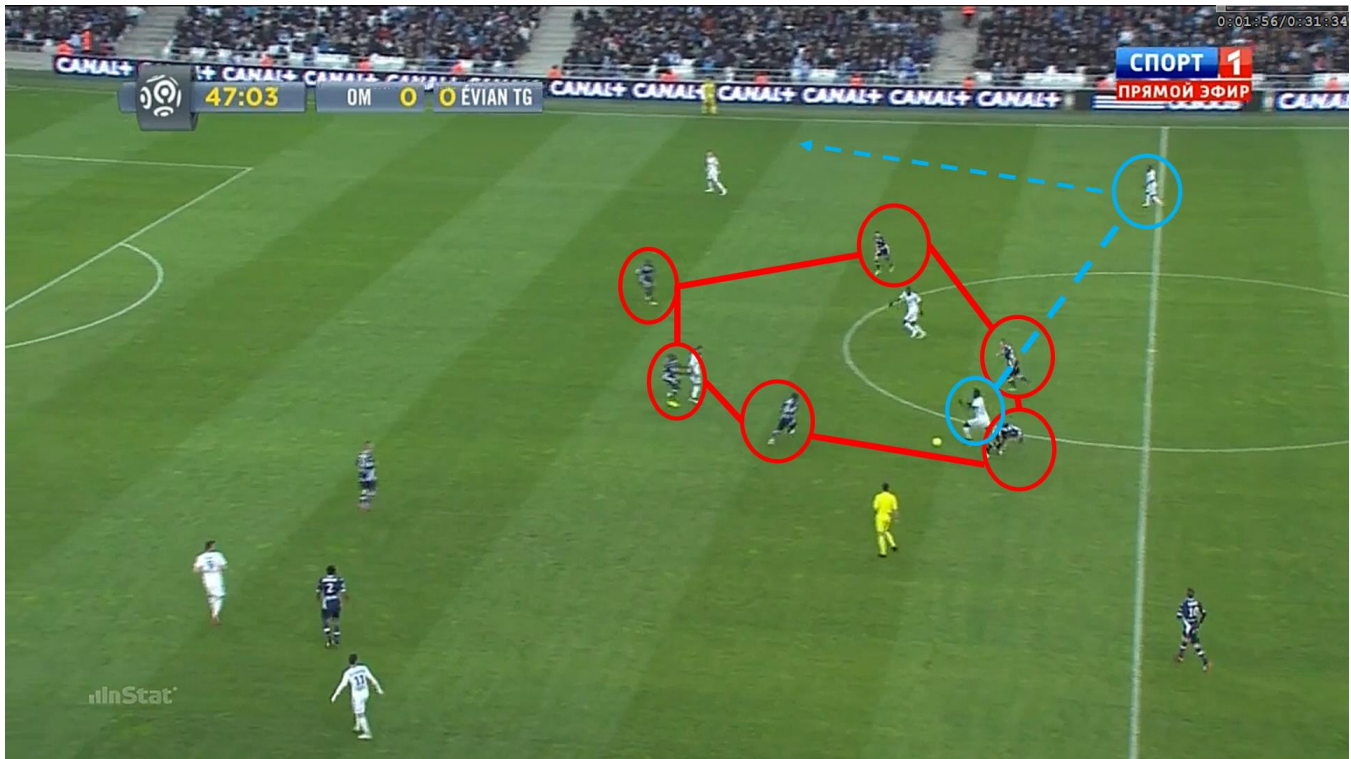


Consequently, this setting, when the fullback gets the ball, does not get behind the opponents back and makes for opponent's winger it easier to press



Consequently, this setting allowed fullbacks to participate in the further stage of finalization.

Both fullbacks (Mendy and Djedje), being placed higher, took part in the action, after which (despite a significant advantage in the middle sector of the team Evian) a penalty was dictated. As it turned out later, it was the only winning goal of this meeting.



GAME 24: stick to the plan

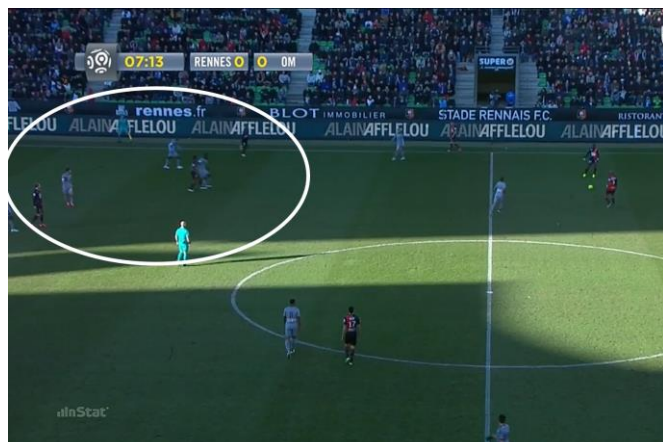
07.02.2015 Roazhon Park. Rennes. Ligue 1.

„Accept injustice and swallow the poison. At the end everything is leveling out”.

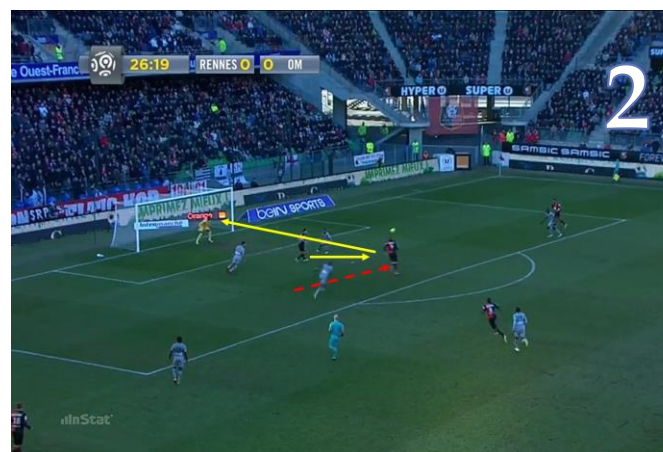
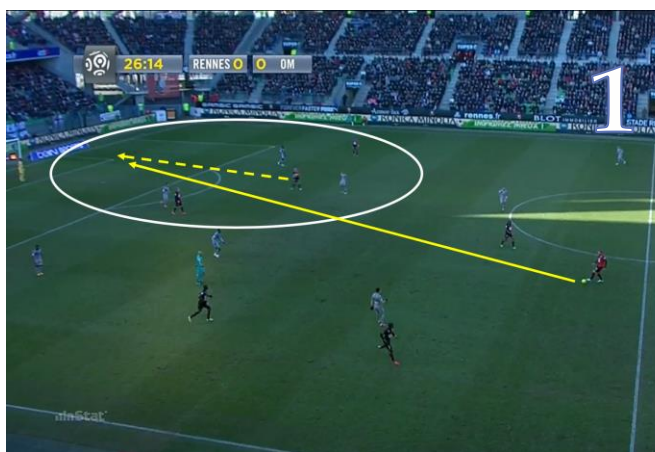
STADE RENNAIS FC 1:1 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

More and more teams started with the same set-up as OM to neutralize the advantage in every zone of the pitch. This was the case this time, both teams set up in 1: 4: 2: 3: 1, interestingly Stade Rennais played for the first time in this setting since 15 matches.

What characterized Rennes was the creation of a 3v3 situation on the right wing:



Rennes, the player in position number 10, was constantly positioned himself on the wing, rarely ask for the ball. This was to increase the chance win long ball and collect a possible second ball. This is how Rennes scored goal:

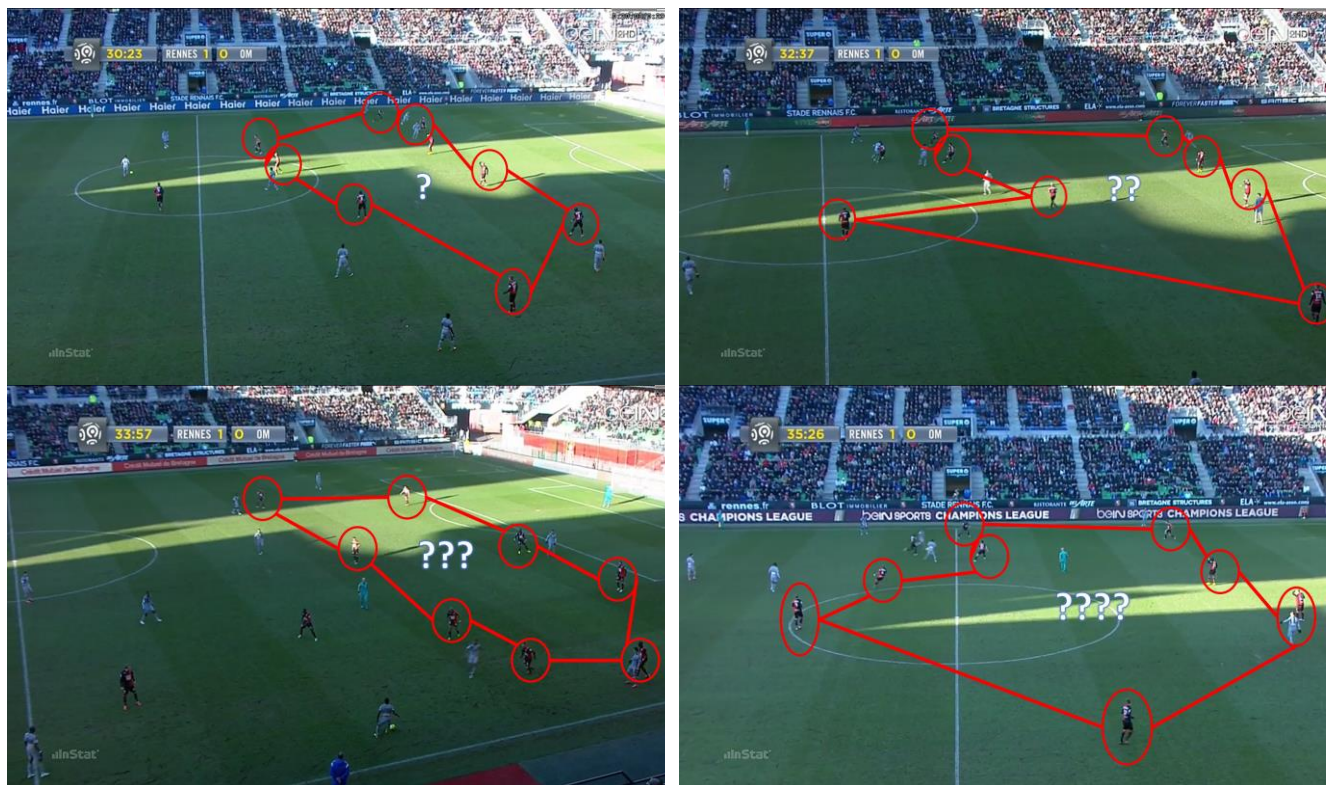


The player in position number 10 ran behind the defensive line of the opponent and winning the duel in the air, passed to the striker who finished the action.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



In the first half, the OM team, despite a clear advantage in possession of the ball (62% to 38%), could not create a goal situation. One of the reasons the team was unable to go to the finalization phase was the incorrect placement (lack) of players, especially between the opponent's lines:



Lack of players between lines often results in no forward pass (no progression in attack). In the fourth situation above, you get the impression that only the referee is well positioned (between lines). By this positioning, Bielsa team often play only long balls. OM took only three shots (none on goal) with one key pass. The second half is less possession of the ball (further in favor of 52% to 48%) and better positional attack play. Apart from the very dangerous counterattacks, the OM team looked much better in terms of space use during build up/ progression/ creation and finalizing attack.

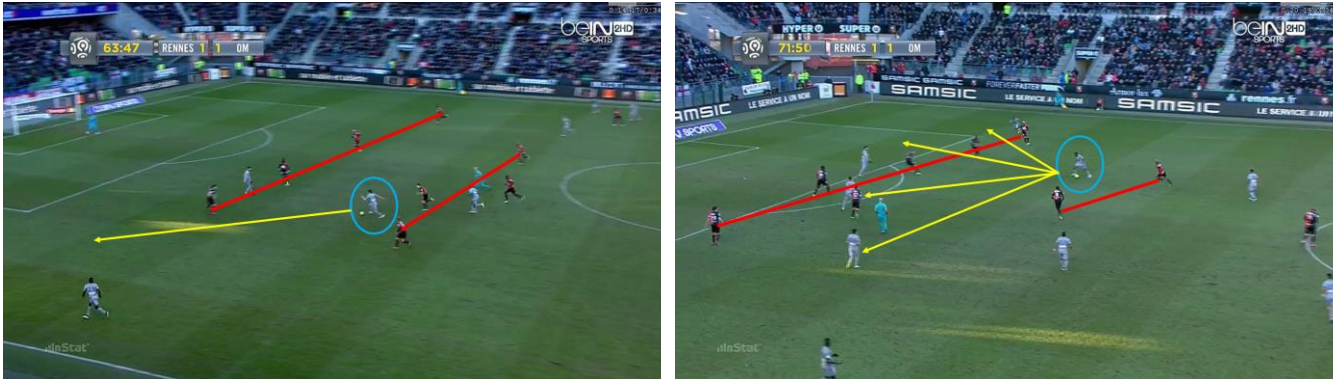


When players are positioned between lines (which was a strong strength of Bielsa team in the first part of the season), the centre backs have more pass options when taking the ball out of their own half.

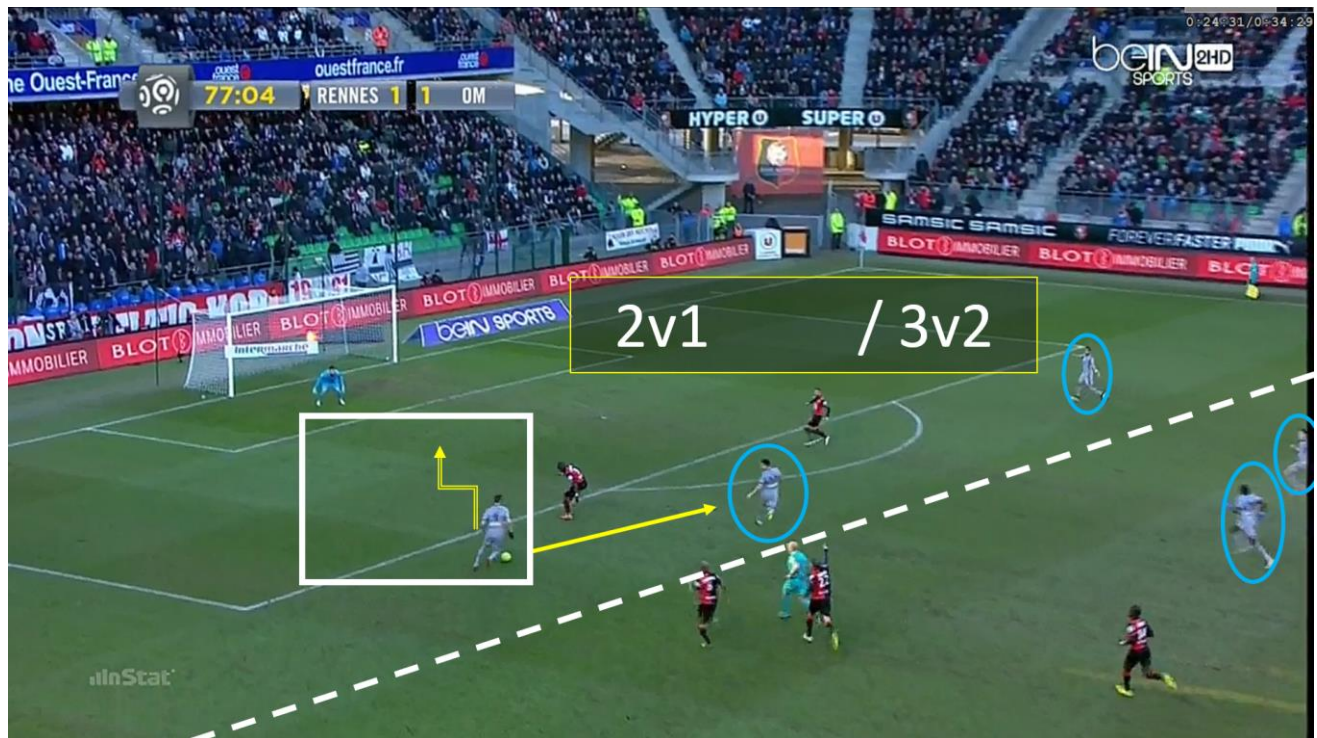
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



When eliminate opponents second line, there is an opportunity to start finalizing (Fig. 1). There is often a decidedly greater number of possibilities for forward (penetrating pass) or open wide spaces (Fig. 2).



What was the effect? Higher number of entries with the ball into the penalty box, which translated into the number of shots (7). The goal was scored from a corner kick. Unfortunately, effectiveness of shots was still a problem, especially during counterattacks. Very bad decisions under the penalty area resulted in the creation of Rennais counterattacks from convenient situations:



In the most convenient situation, Gignac drove the ball inside (at his partner), took a shot at the blocking defender. This game was the first of three consecutive draws.

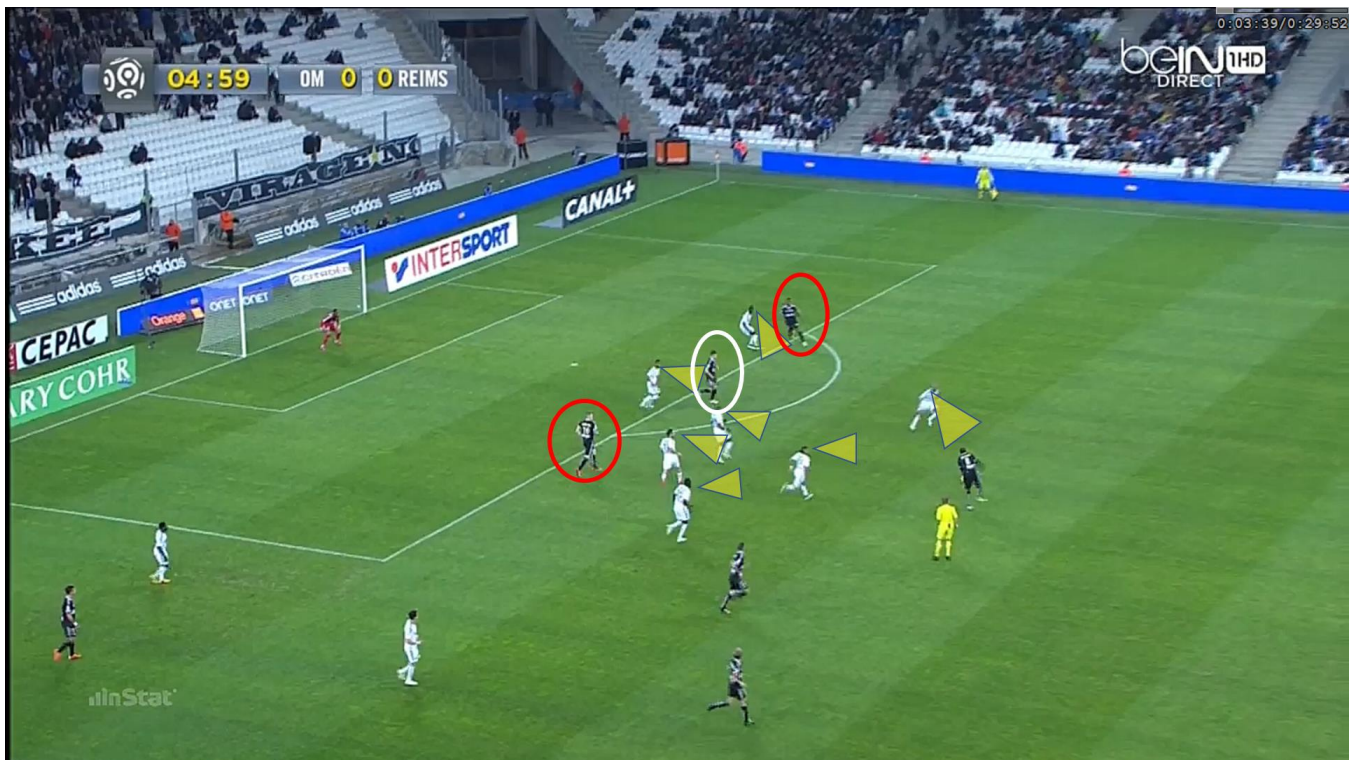
GAME 25: la Salida la Volpiana

13.02.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„Trust is synonymous of relax. I prefer fear, he forces you to be careful”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:2 STADE REIMS

OM started the game in a slightly different way than usual, namely during the ball was changing their position. Before we get into the description of the positional attack and the idea of dominating the rival, we will analyze the first goal lost by OM. When you think about Marcelo Bielsa, one of the first things that can be associated with this great person is pressing. It is true that the OM team sought immediate pressing. Often pressing looked like a mass race. While the goal is to get the ball high to be closer to the opponent's goal, in the penalty area, calculating is sometimes useful. Unfortunately, all players who were around the ball had coded pressure on the player with the ball:

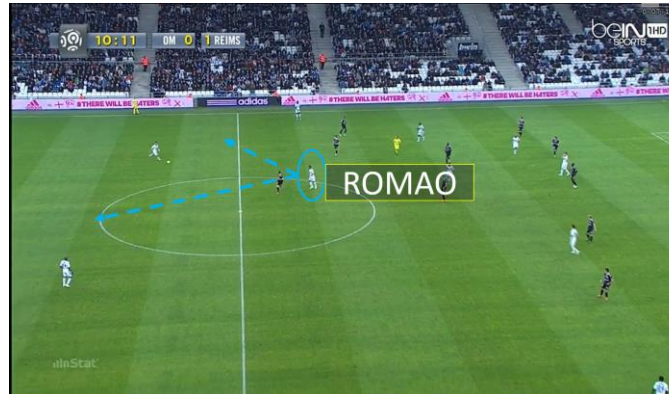
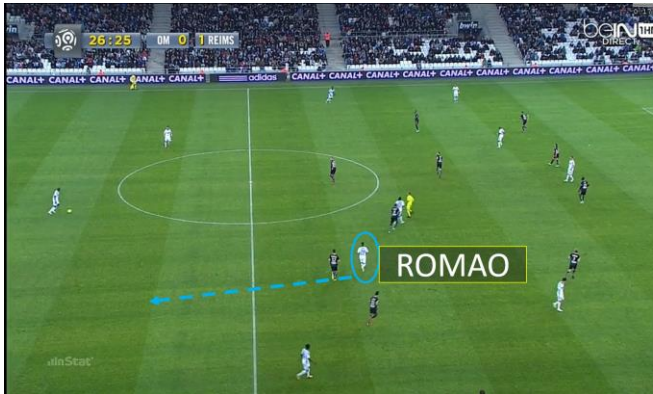


The situation shows how rooted pressure on the ball is in Bielsa players. Unfortunately, OM players did not control what was happening around. They never deny and prevent opponents progress in their own penalty box. Opponent with the ball shoots at the post and player marked in white took advantages of rebound. Lack of control over other players only increased Reims' chances.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

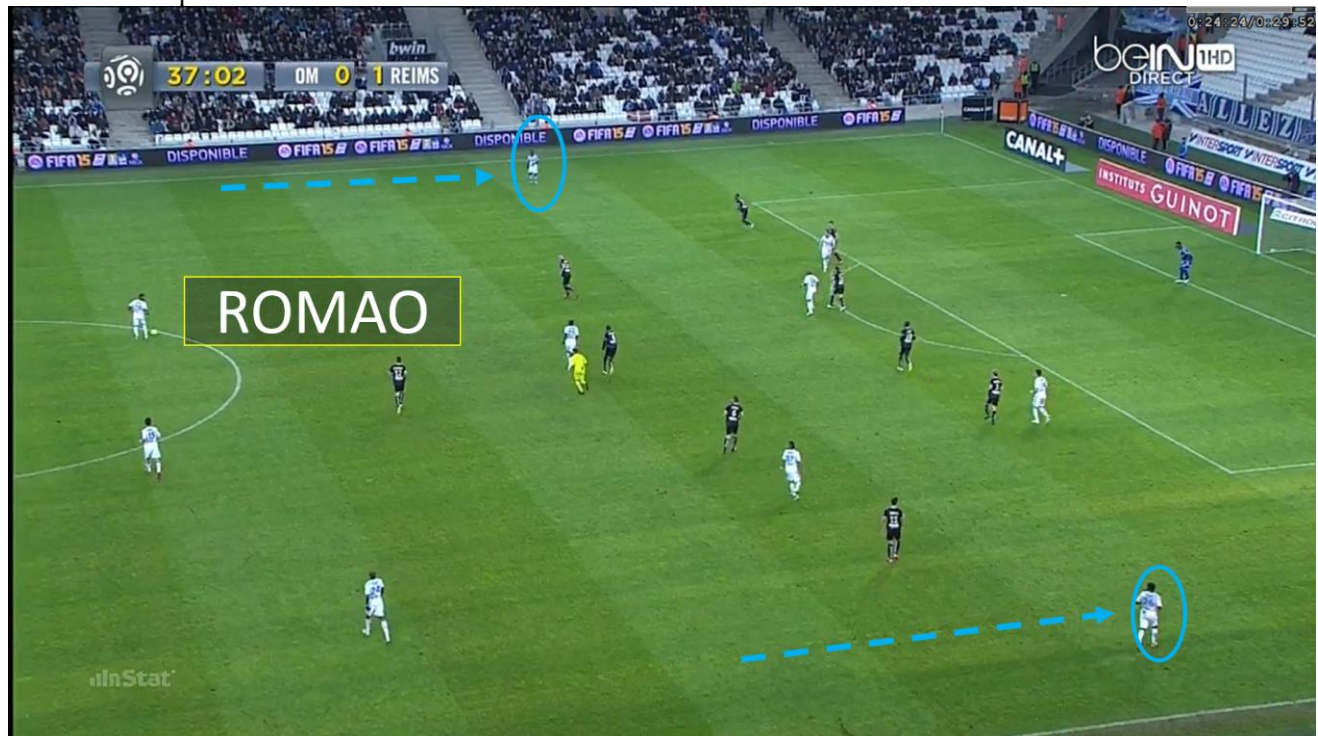


During the attacking phase, OM players used "La Salida la Volpiana". The way to change the set up with the four connected defenders into three, while building up the action was initiated by the Mexican selector Ricardo La Volpe.



This is one of the most effective ways to dominate an opponent. Why?

1. FULLBACK CAN TAKE FURTHER POSITION - behind the opponent's midfield line, sometimes even on the opponent's defense line. As in other games, they create a 2v1 situation in the side sectors of the pitch.

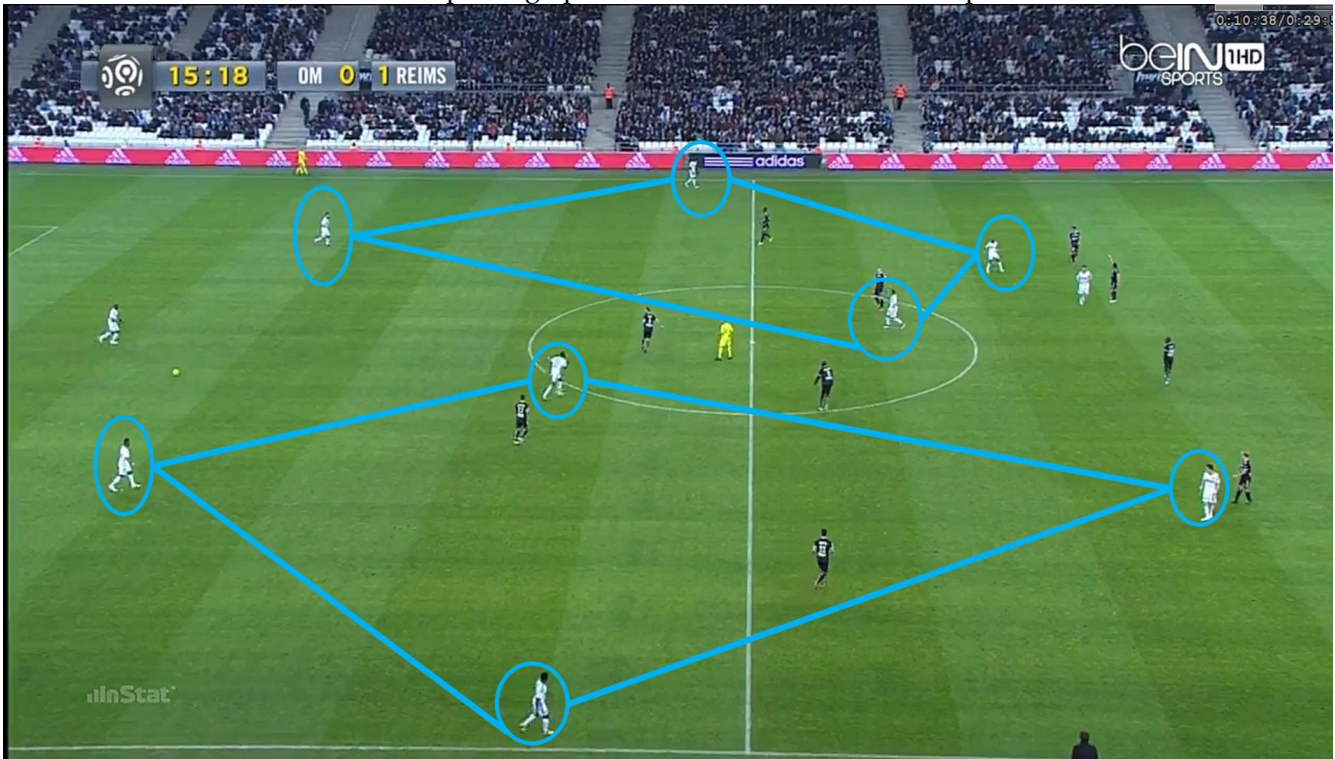


Because of that you can have inverted wingers and thanks to this opponent's defensive line gets narrow. You open the space for attack from the wing.

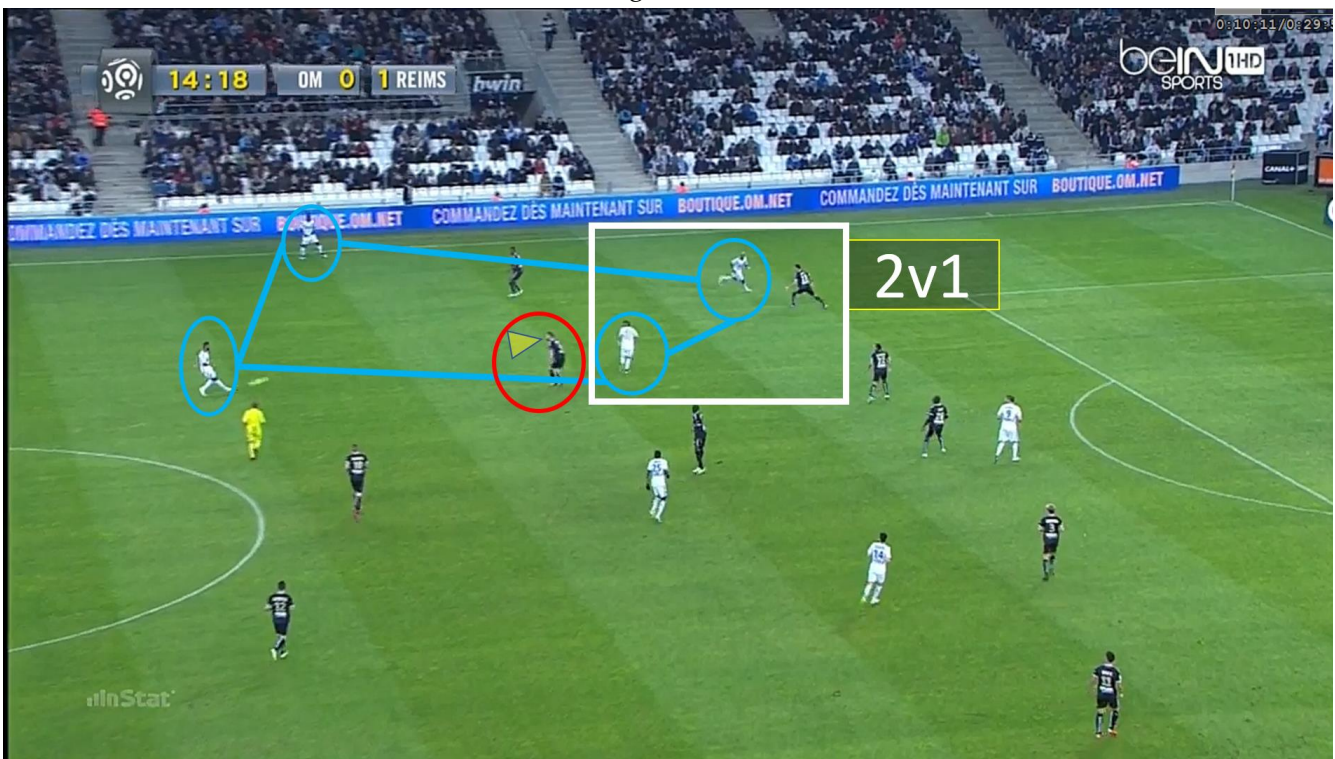
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

...

2. DIAMOND SHAPE – more passing option forward when OM build up.



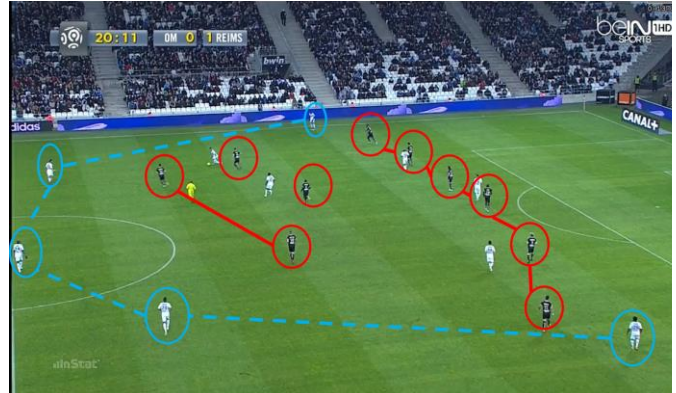
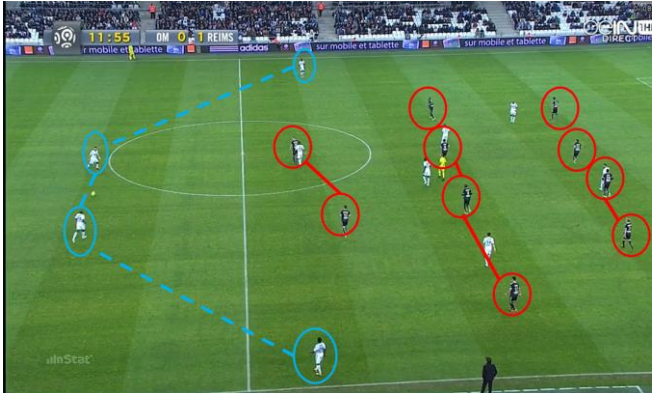
3. EASIER TO PENETRATE WITH THE BALL by the half-right / half-left center back because the central midfielder of the opponent does not know: do I press the player with the ball? Stay in the zone? In addition, OM has also an advantage behind him.



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

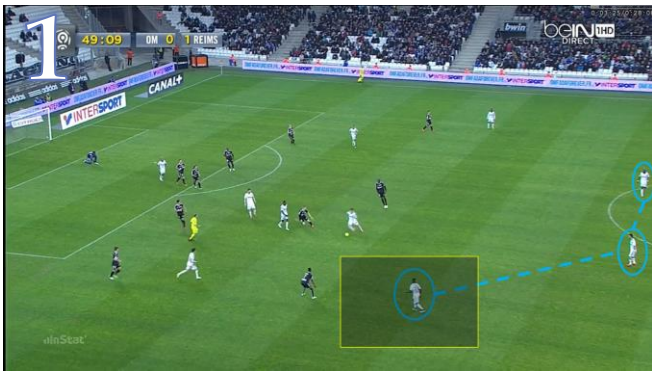


4. CHANGE OPPONENTS DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE. Often, because of changing OM set up, opponents wingers begin to move closer to the midfield line, which makes more space on the wings.

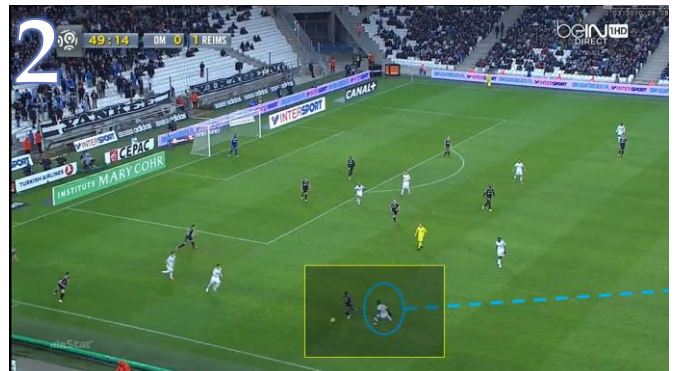


5. MORE SAFETY TEAM IN ATTACK. If OM lose a ball, one of the three defenders (closer to the area where the team loses the ball) can react faster. It was probably a way to improve the defensive transition.

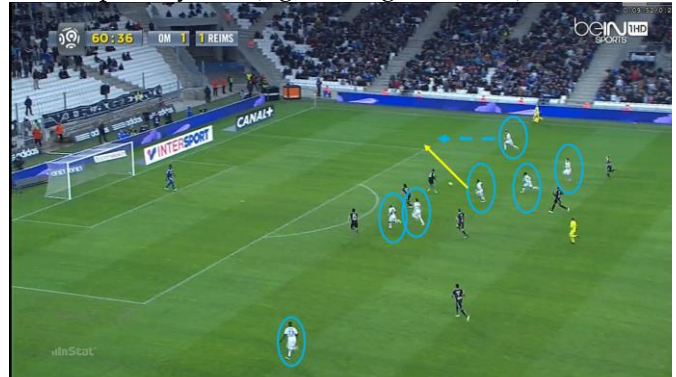
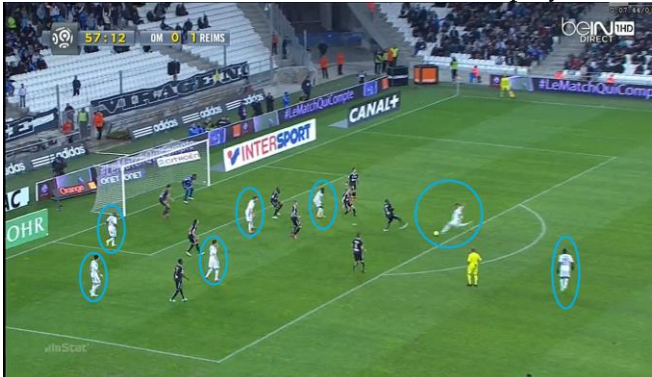
3 SECONDS BEFORE LOSING THE BALL



DEFENSIVE TRANSITION 3 SECONDS LATER



6. EASIER FINALIZATION - more players run into the penalty box (fig. Left - goal action).



Marcelo Bielsa team during the attacking phase constantly created dangerous situations. This is something that the Marseille coach has repeatedly emphasized at press conferences. OM players took 21 shots into the goal. Unfortunately, that wasn't enough, and the game ended in a 2-2 draw.

GAME 26: losing the ball will not be a problem

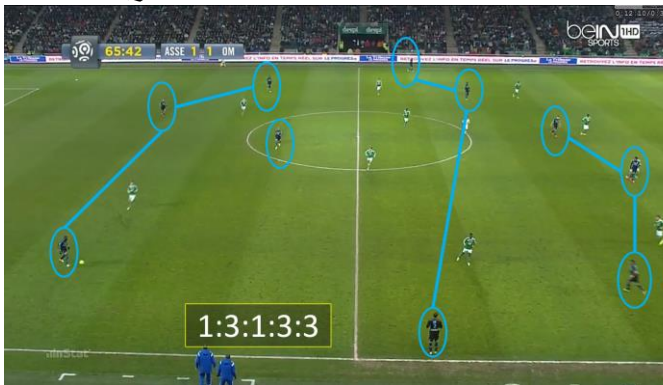
22.02.2015 Stade Geoffroy-Guichard. Saint Etienne. Ligue 1.

„You should always fight for the win and learn from the competition with your opponents”.

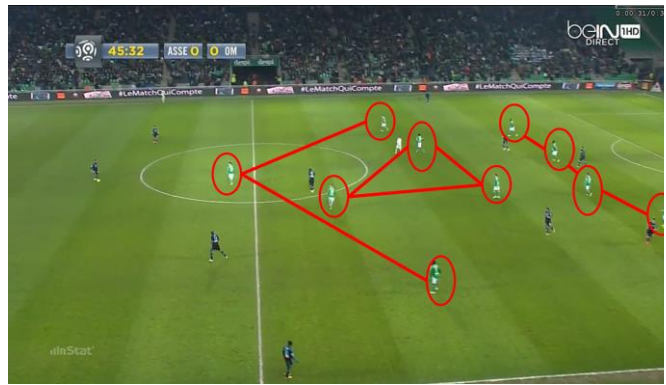
AS SAINT ETIENNE 2:2 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

The first half by OM very similar to the game with Stade Rennais. Despite their huge advantage in terms of ball possession (58% to 42%), OM took only 2 shots. Saint Etienne set very narrowly in defense (protecting the middle sector of the pitch and preventing OM's vertical passes) in 1: 4: 3: 3. The OM team from 1: 4: 2: 3: 1 went to 1: 3: 3: 3: 1 or 1: 3: 1: 3: 3:

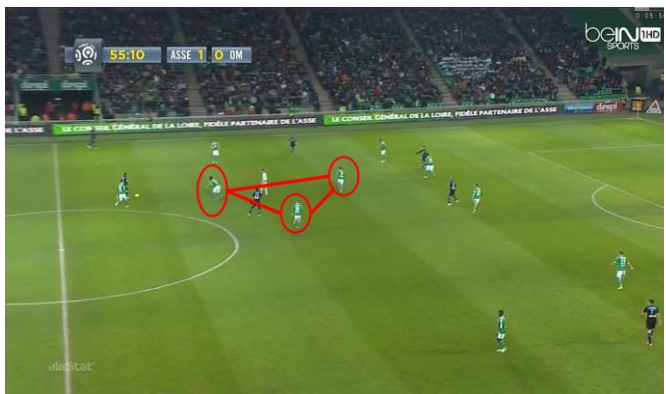
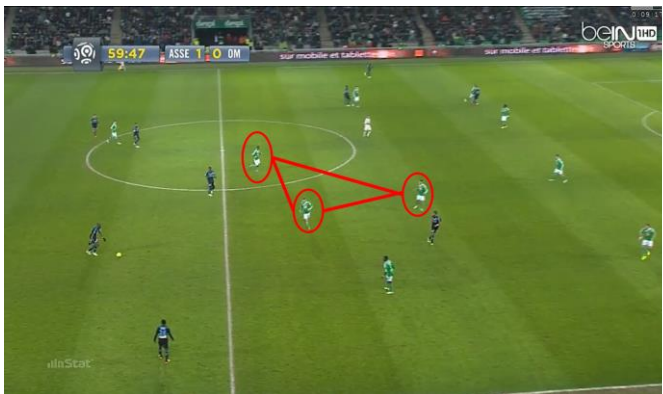
OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE



AS SAINT ETIENNE



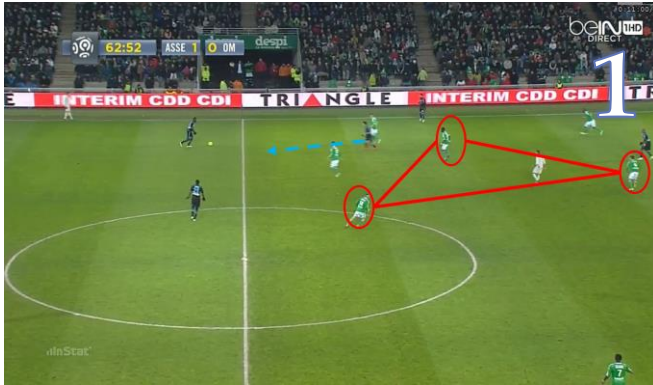
The central midfielders played a key role in the AS Saint Etienne defense phase. Regardless of which side the OM attack started, the midfielders moved very well closing the passing line from the central defenders of Marcelo Bielsa.



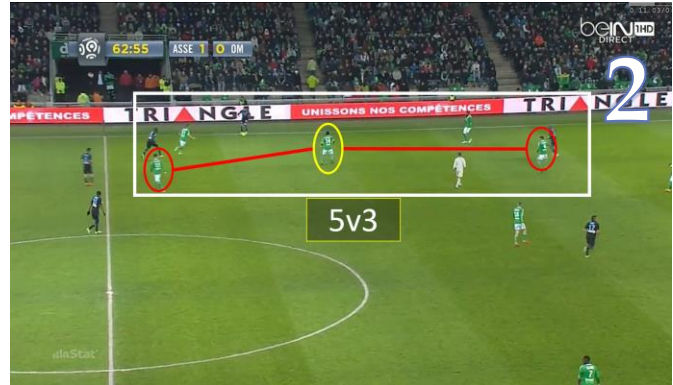
Central midfielders were supported with narrowly positioned wingers. Saint Etienne's players made one significant mistake in the defense phase, which cost them a loss of goal:

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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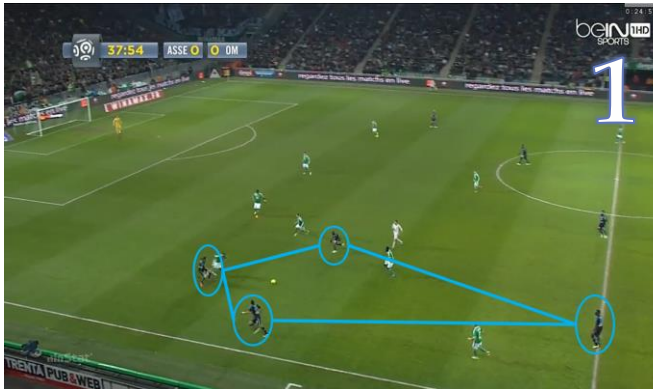
Seemingly harmless situation and numerical superiority of Saint Etienne. The winger got out of his zone.



He was replaced by one of the midfielders (marked in yellow), which gave Allesandrini a lot of space to cross, which Batshuayi finished.

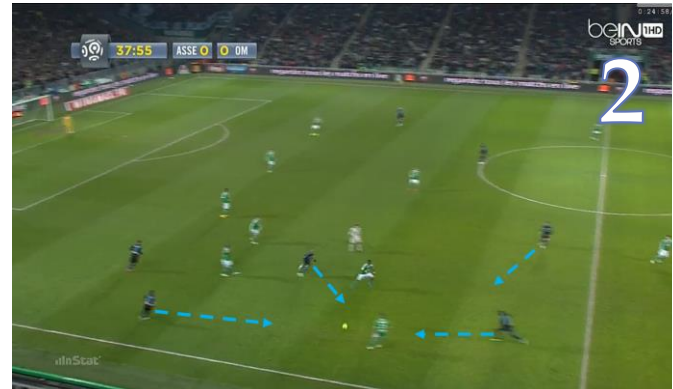
For the OM team, the transition from attack to defense was also crucial in this game.

OM LOST THE BALL IN THIS AREA:

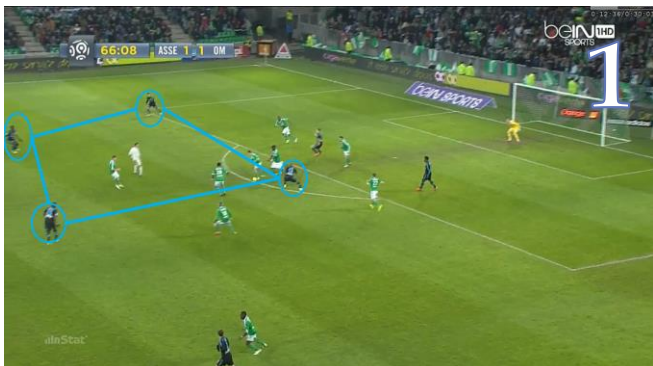


The ball was not always picked up immediately after pressure. However, after one of defensive transition, Batshuayi scored a goal:

PLAYERS CUT PASSING LINES

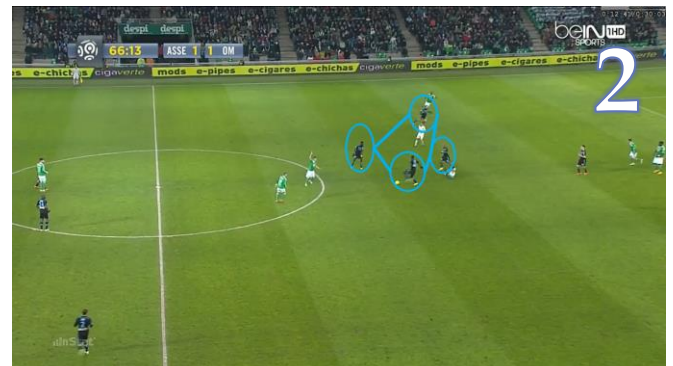


OM LOST THE BALL IN THIS AREA:



Immediate pressure and counterattack allowed him to score a second goal. Unfortunately, in the last minute (despite the numerical advantage in the penalty area), OM loses the goal. After the third draw in a row, OM falls to 3rd place in the table.

IMMEDIATELY PRESSING ON THE BALL



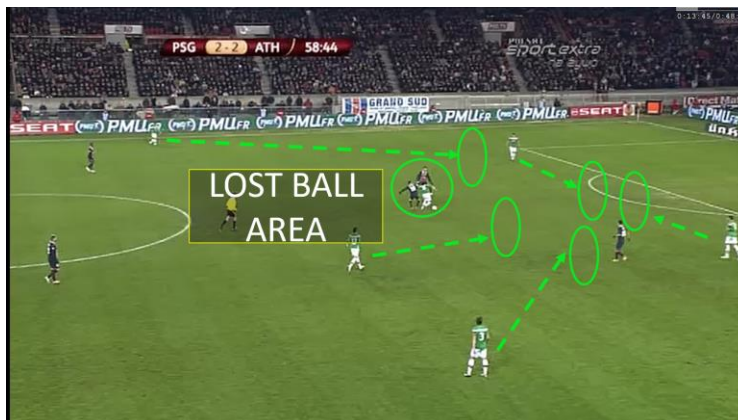
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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Based on the situation from the matches of the former team of Bielsa, the phase of transition from attack to defense will be discussed. There are many similarities to how they respond to the loss of the ball.

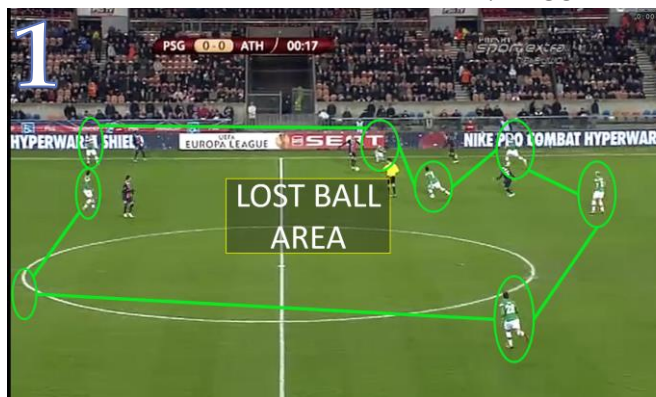
The better the attacking structure of the team, the easier it is to switch from attack to defense, because the correct positions of the players in the attacking guarantees the right distance between them. The defensive transition should not be considered only for the nearest players. Also important are players who are on the other side (back to game 19). The area of ball loss is also key:

1. LOSS THE BALL DURING BUILD UP:



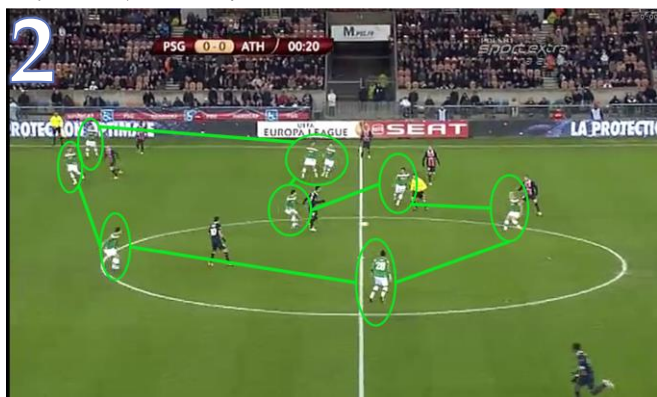
Any loss here may result in a loss of goal. Therefore, it is not necessary that the ball be picked up by the players. The most important thing is to take the right position in the penalty area as soon as possible to prevent a possible loss of goal.

2. LOST BALL IN THE MIDDLE:



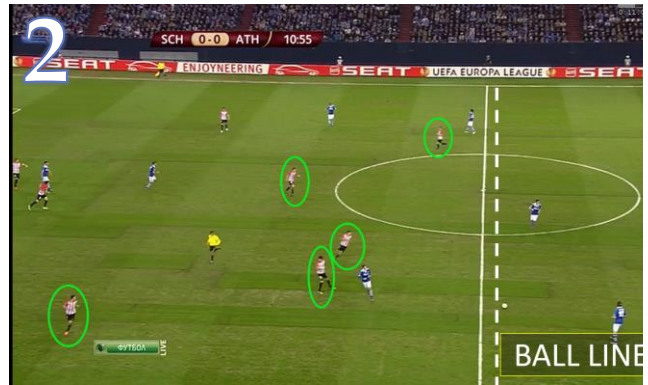
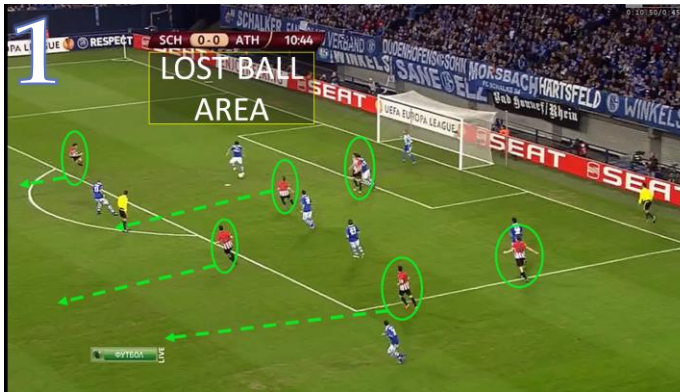
WIDTH AND DEPTH

In the moment of losing the ball, first of all, close the opponent's space (transition from wide and depth set up to narrow and compact) and try to pick up the ball immediately. Closing the space of the opponent prevents him from passing forward and prevents counterattacks. Every meter matters. It can depend on player reaction whether the opponent risks and manages to pass forward or chooses a safer option – back pass.



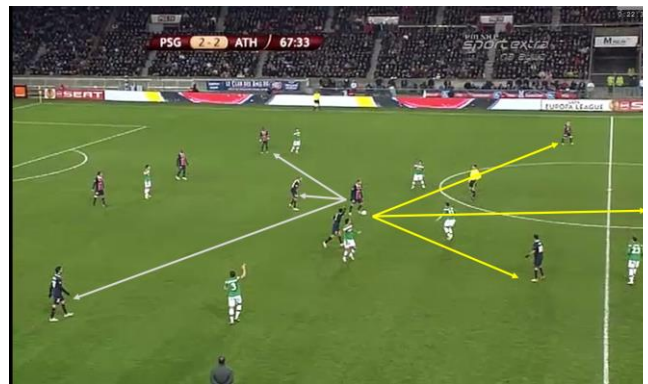
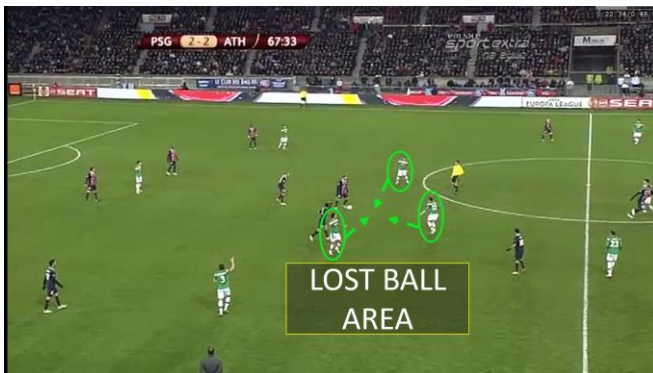
NARROW AND COMPACT

3. LOST BALL IN FINAL THIRD:



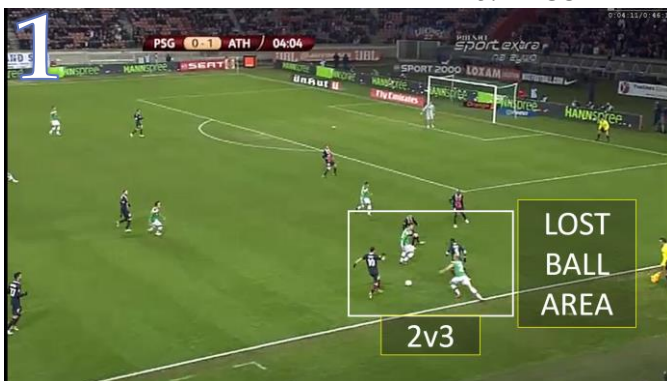
Losing the ball in the opponent's penalty box does not immediately turn into a scoring chance. Therefore, the priority is to try to pick up the ball immediately to be closer to the opponent's goal. However, if it is not possible to immediately pick up the ball, each player should return under the ball line to start pressing with compactness.

4. LOST BALL IN THE MIDDLE:



When an opponent regains the ball back in the middle sector of the pitch, he often has the ability to pass in any direction. Therefore, the priority should be to close three directions of the forward pass (yellow lines). When the opportunity arises, try to pick up the ball, if you do not need to let the opponent pass backwards (gray lines).

5. LOST BALL ON THE WINGS



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

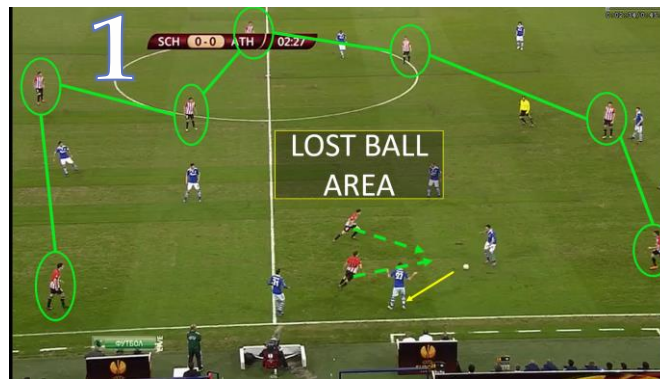
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When a team loses the ball on the wings, try to pick up the ball as soon as possible. The side line, which is one of the "best defenders", helps us in this - it takes the opponent's space. The opponent has only three pass directions (forward, to the middle or backward).

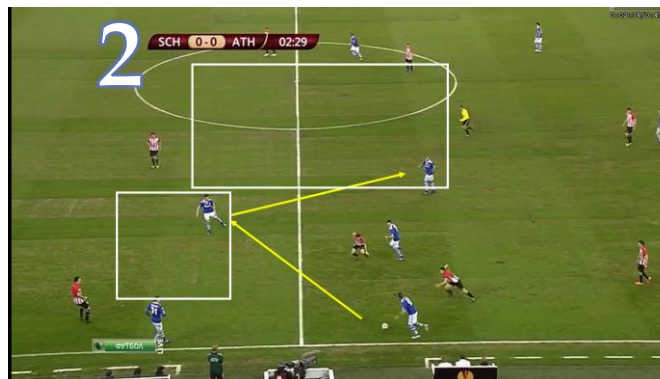
When we close the forward line, the chance to pick up the ball opens. The opponent risks a lot by passing to the middle (possible anticipation = counterattack). A backward pass can be a signal to continue pressing and put pressure on your opponent.

During transitions every player is important. Regardless of where the ball is lost or the game moment. The most common mistakes are late reaction or the reaction of a small number of players. Bielsa team often faced this problem, especially with Olympique de Marseille. If only the closest players react and the other teammates stay in their places, it is easier for opponents to get out of pressing. You don't always pick up the ball in first moment. Immediate pressing after a loss (closest players), if it does not lead to regain the ball back, it very often leads to an opponent's mistake (inaccurate pass, kicking the ball away etc.) Passivity after the ball loss of players in another area of the pitch (marked on the picture below) means that the opponent's space is not closed (free space is created), which makes it easier to start a counterattack:

MOMENT OF LOSING THE BALL



LACK OF CLOSE THE SPACE:



After the third draw in a row, the OM team fell to third place in the table.

GAME 27: behind the opponent

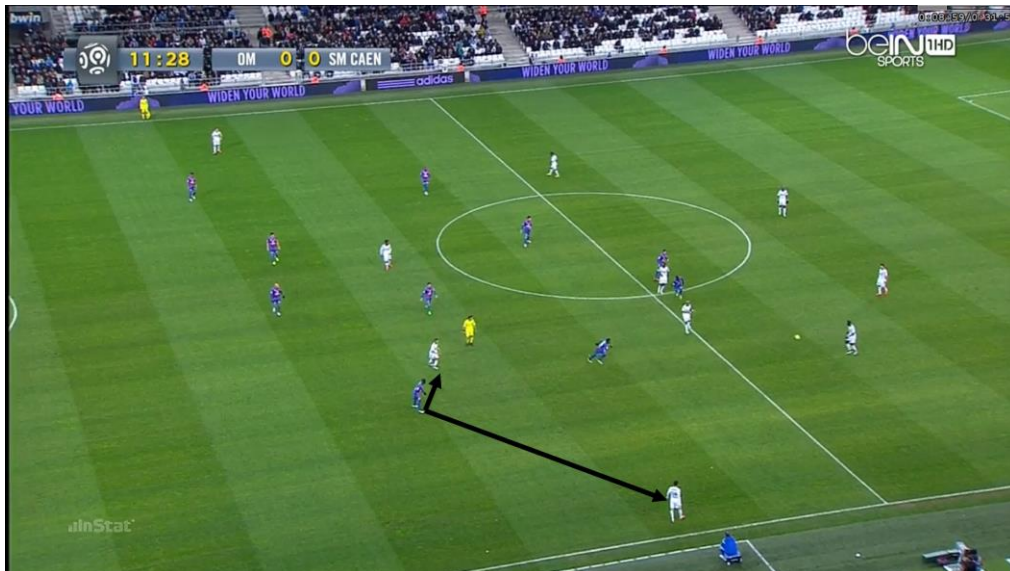
27.02.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„Football is by definition a something that must create great joy or great sadness”.

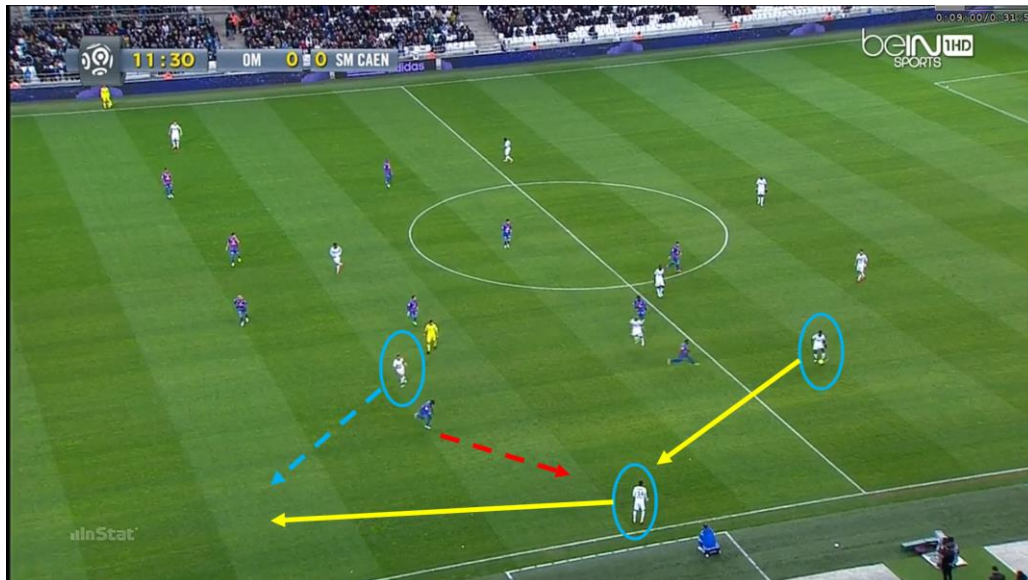
OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:3 SM CAEN

Game that OM had under total control up to 65 minute. The were winning 2:0 fully deservedly, especially by pulling opponent fullbacks out of their area and running OM players behind his back.

BEFORE PENETRATION PASS



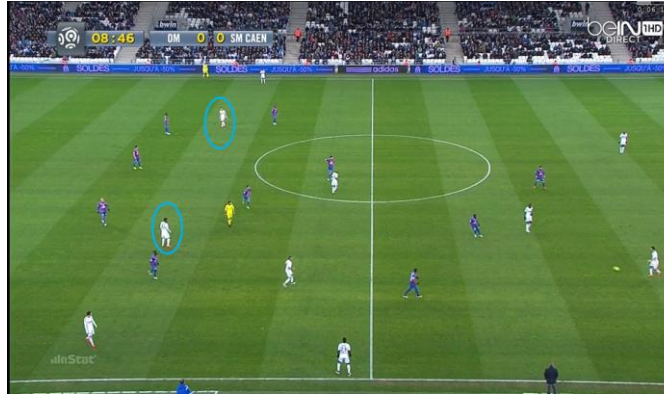
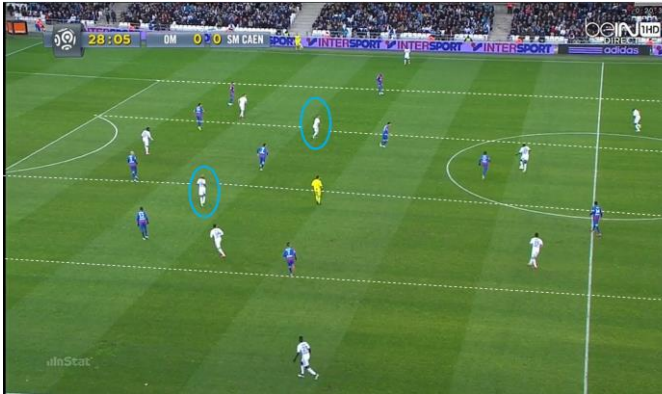
AFTER PENETRATION PASS BEHIND OPPONENTS FULLBACK



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

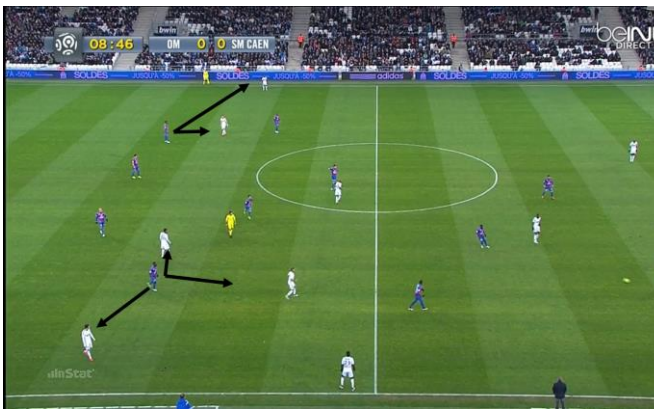


It's hard to say about the constant attacking structure of OM in this game (1: 3: 1: 3: 3 or 1: 3: 3: 3: 1 and 1: 3: 3: 1: 3), but what can be said with certainty , it's an attempt to pull opponents fullback out of his position. Just by set up players between the lines confused Caen's defenders.

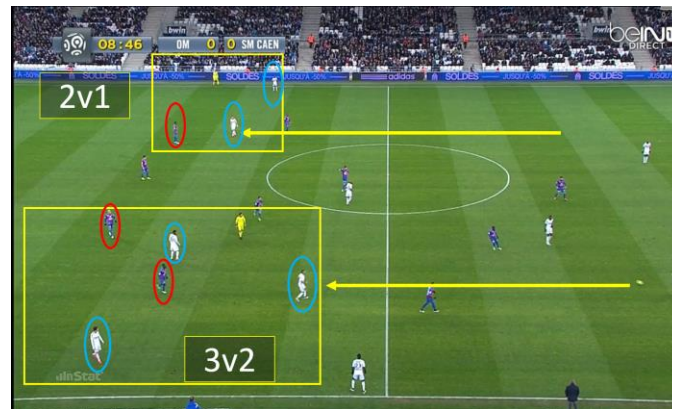


Opponents fullback has basically two problems:

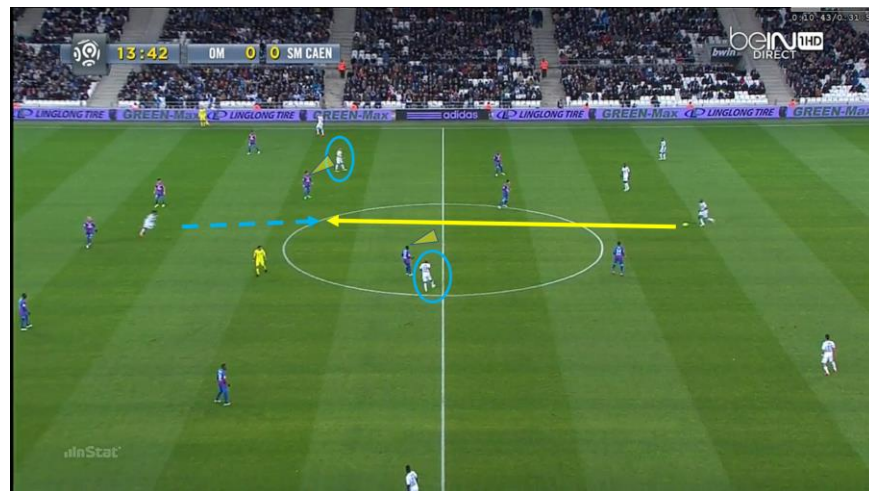
WHO I GONNA PRESS?



OM NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE



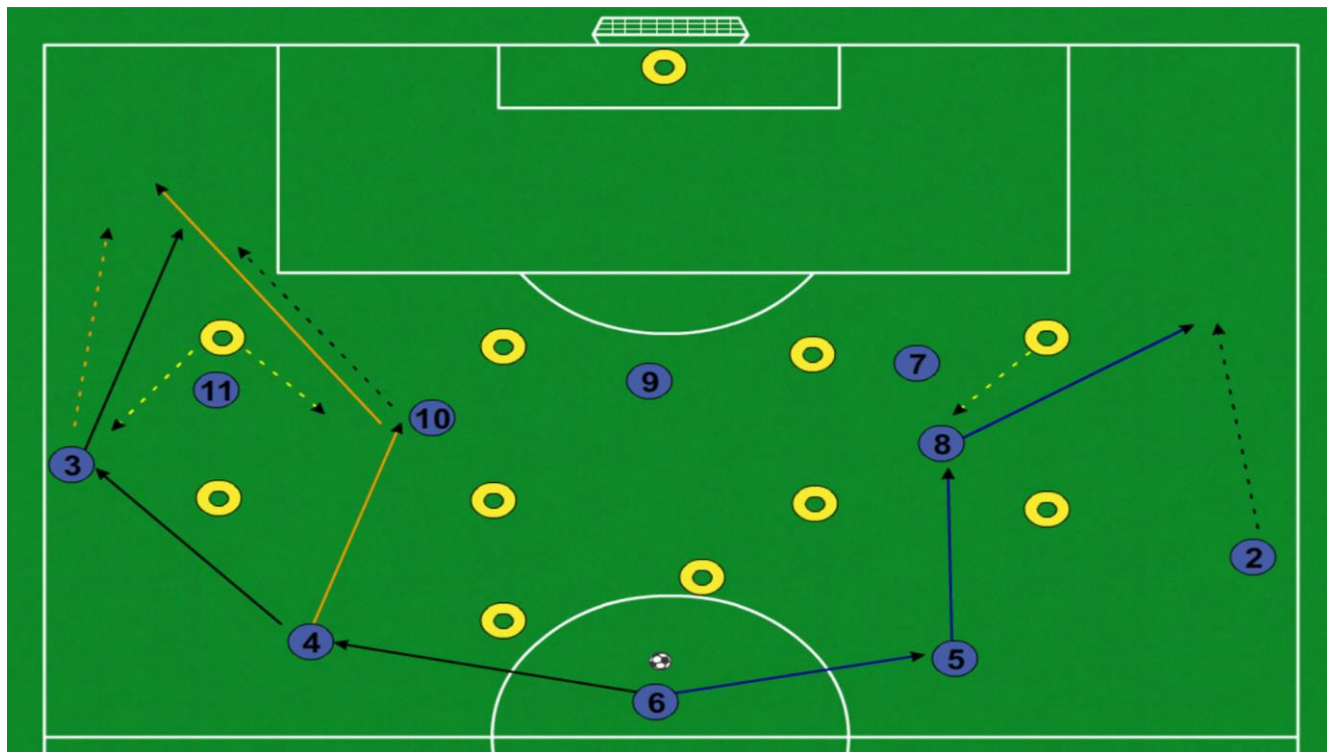
Another advantage of setting up such players in half spaces is making space for the outgoing striker (this, we will not discuss in the rest of the game analysis):



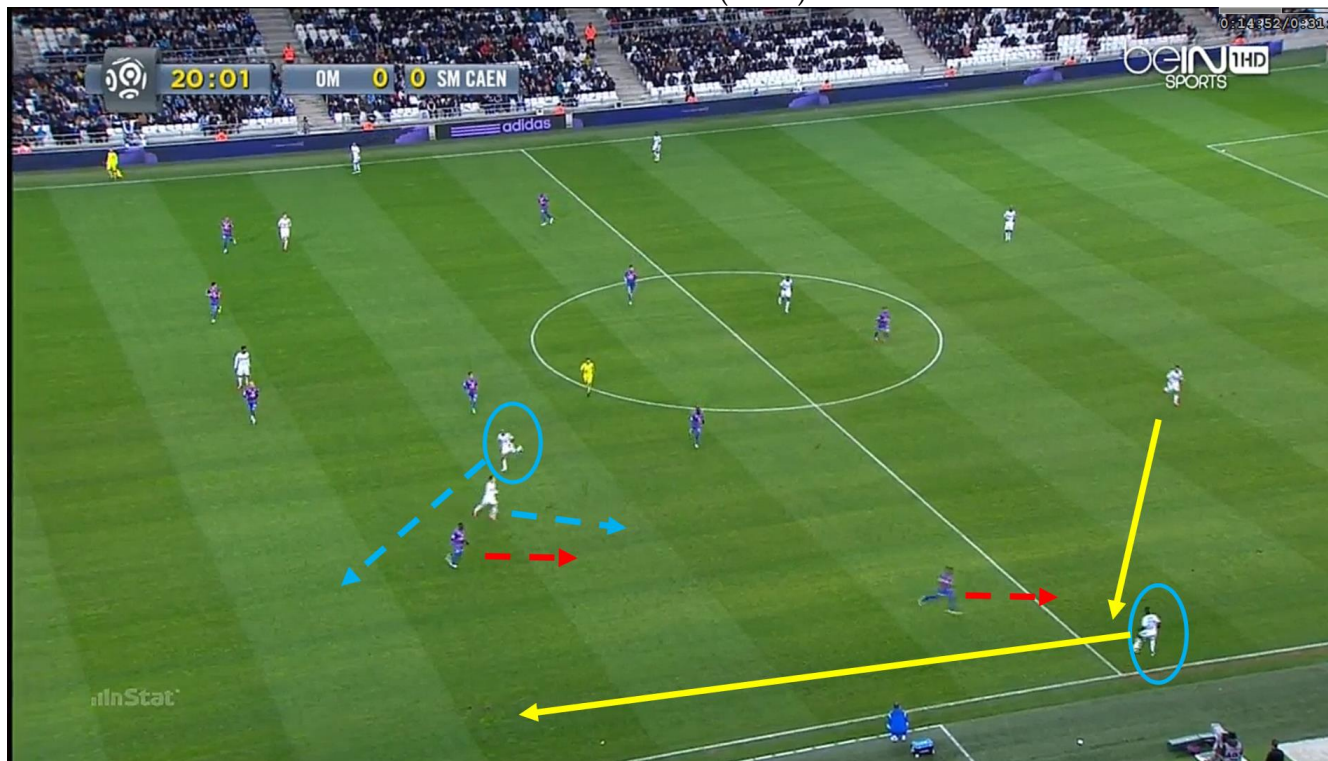
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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There are three options to resolve this situation in the attack phase (black, orange and blue):



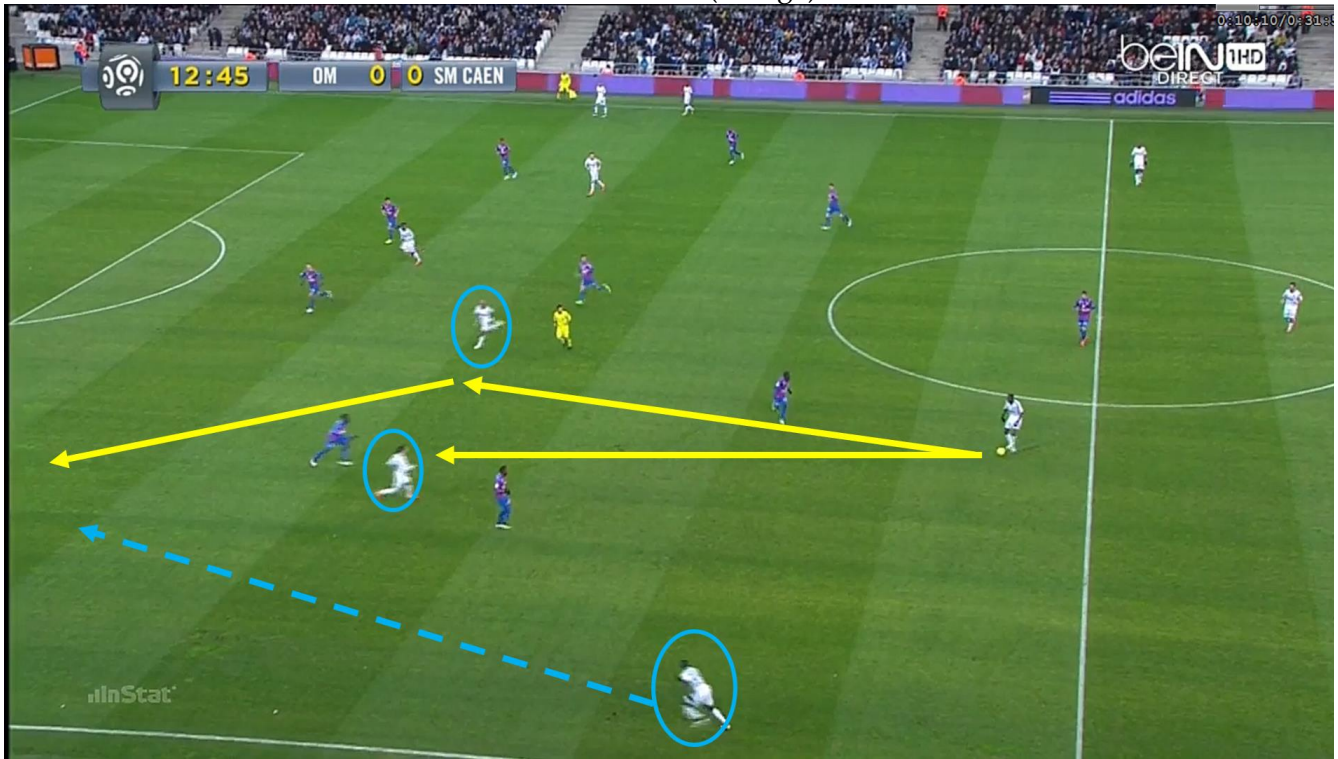
OPTION ONE (black)



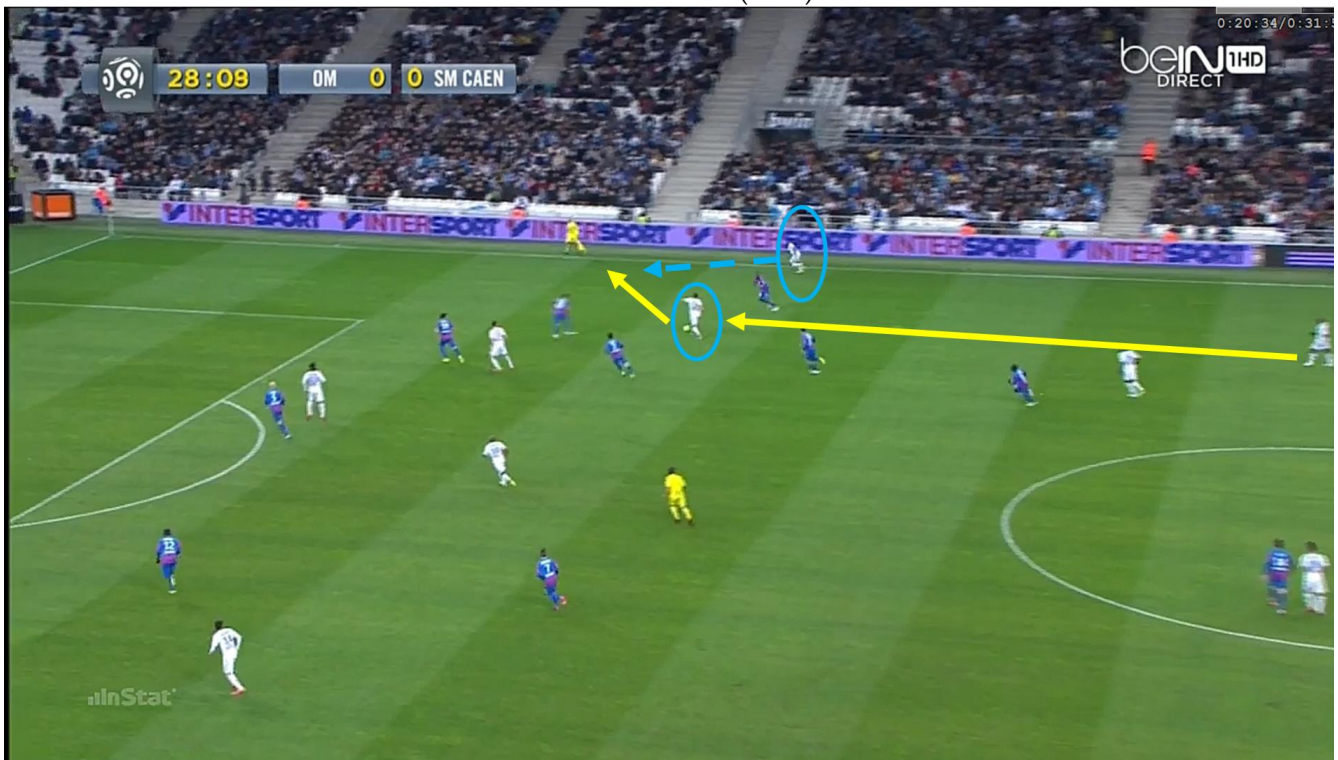
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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OPTION TWO (orange)



OPTION THREE (blue)



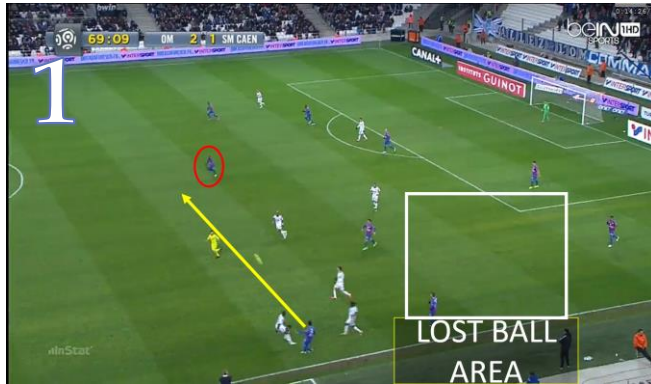
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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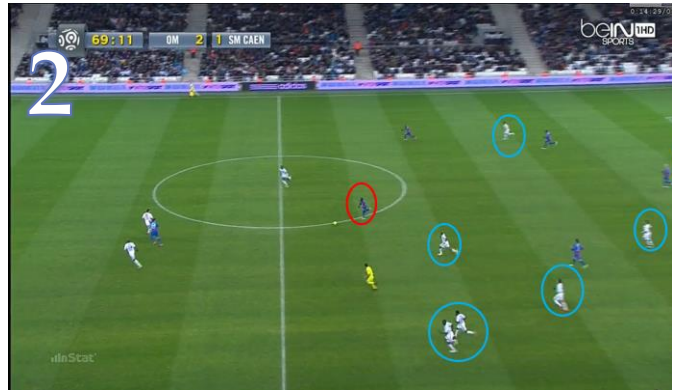
As I mentioned, OM up to 66 minute fully controlled the events on the pitch. After a goal from a corner kick, they started making many mistakes with the ball. The second and third goals are a constant problem in the defensive transition. Almost identically lost goals, after losses in a similar place. The entire midfield line applied pressure after losing the ball - unfortunately with one pass (changing the direction of the attack - first pass inside) players Caen led effective counterattacks, scoring the second and third goals respectively:

SECOND GOAL FOR CAEN (70')

OM LOST THE BALL IN THIS AREA

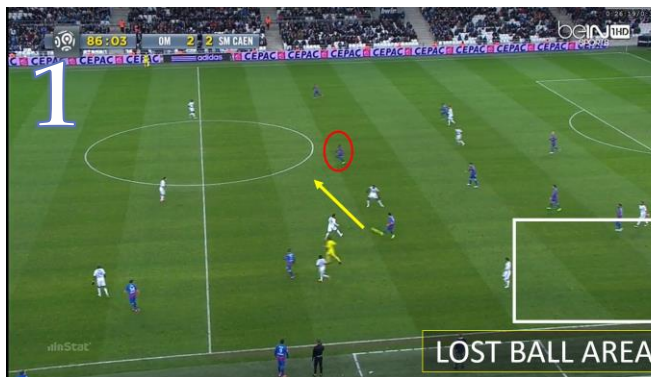


CAEN SWITCHING PLAY

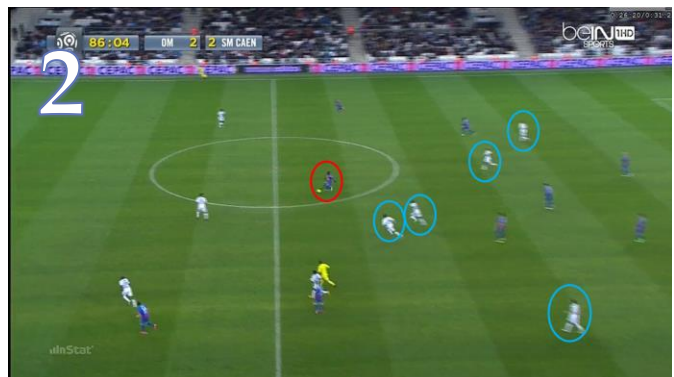


THIRD GOAL FOR CAEN

OM LOST THE BALL IN THIS AREA



CAEN SWITCHING PLAY



It's hard not to notice the similarities. Almost identical situations show the importance of changing the side of the game after defensive transition. The pass, which changes the direction of the counterattack, most often passes many rivals. This is another goal lost this season in a similar way (see games with Lille, Montpellier or Lens). Despite the very good OM game, they lose to Caen (14th place in Ligue 1).

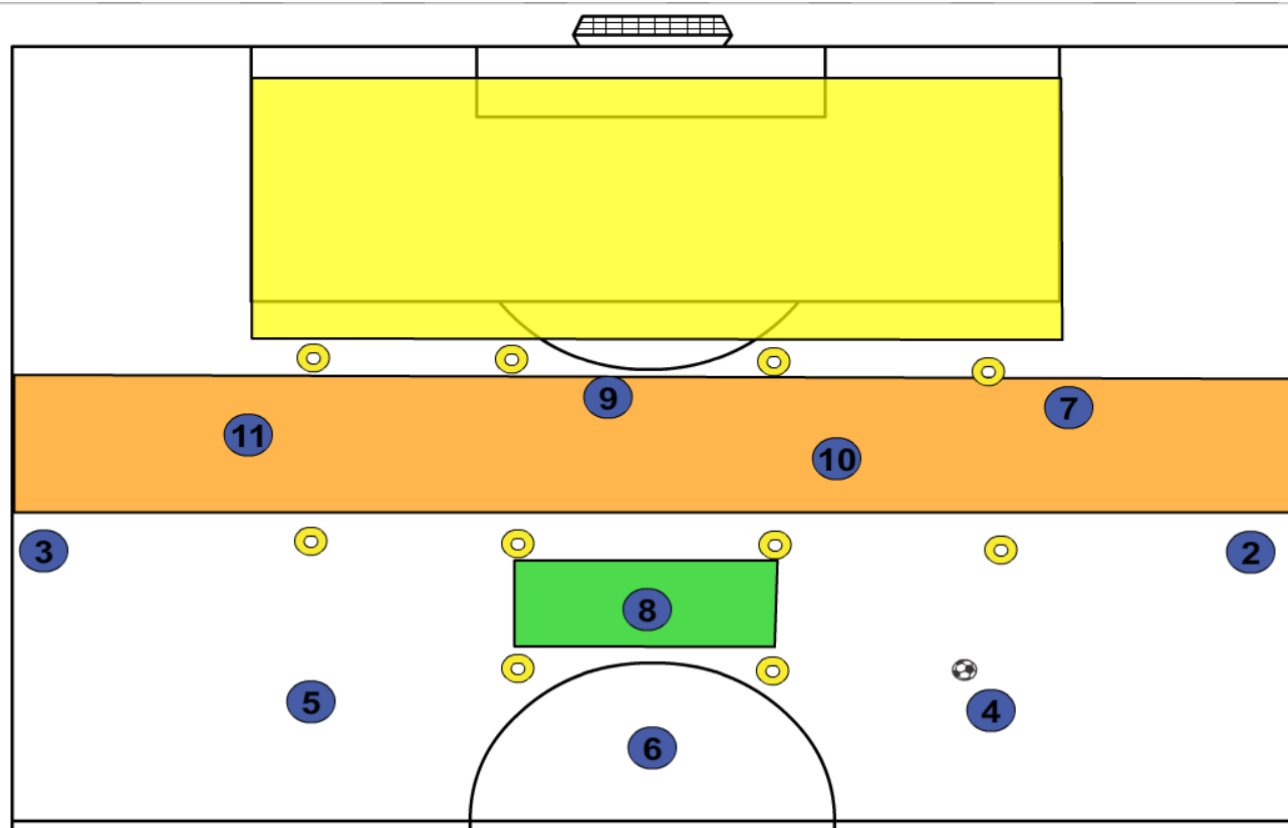
GAME 28: killer pass

06.03.2015 Stadium Municipal. Toulouse. Ligue 1.

„A single good performance never resulted in any trophy”.

FC TOULOUSE 1:6 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

The OM team started by scoring two goals at the beginning of the game. Bielsa players tried to look for the ball behind the defensive line of Toulouse. Especially when midfielders had a ball, they tried to penetration by final pass. It was not new; it is one of the priorities of each player of Marcelo Bielsa midfield formation. OM players tried to beat the opponent's lines, deliver the ball behind their backs, regardless of where they were on the field:

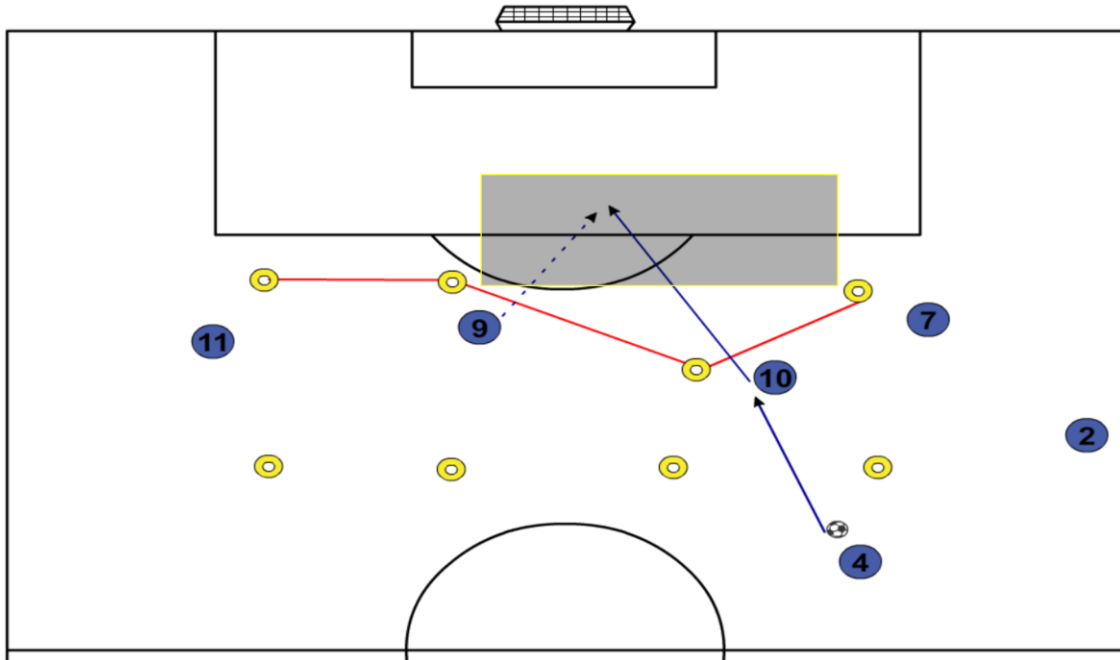


The zone behind the opponent's defensive line (marked in yellow) is the zone from which the most goals are scored. That's why OM players often tried to play behind the defensive line as a priority. However, most teams in Ligue 1 already knew that. Bielsa players (from the front formations) tried to get center backs out of their position. This can be done in two ways:

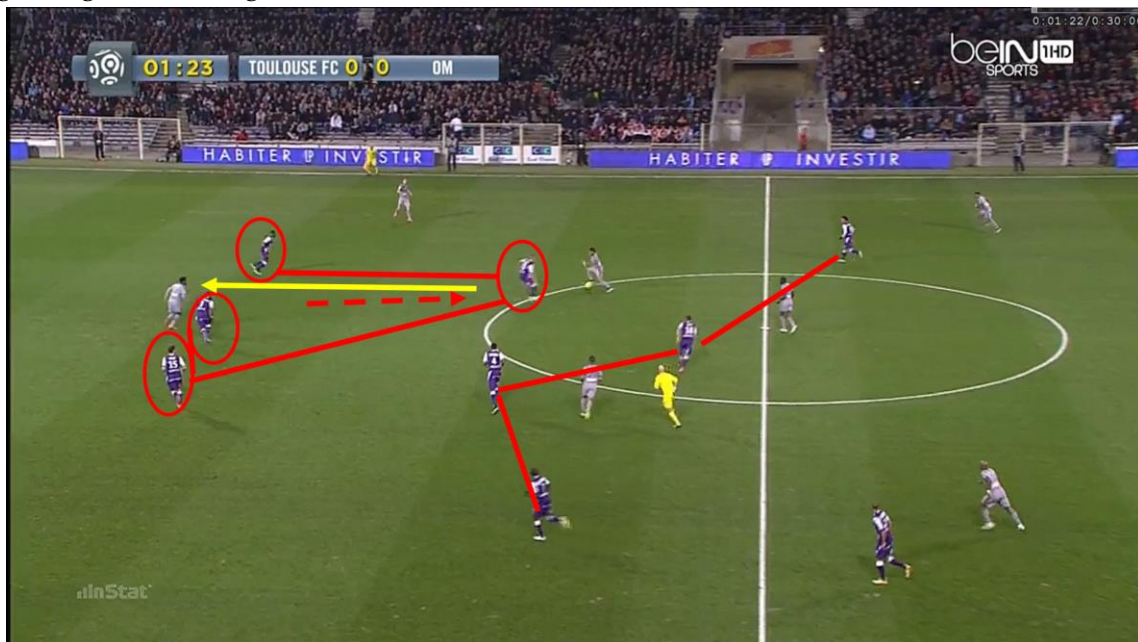
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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VERTICAL PASS BETWEEN LINES + PERCEPTION BALL CARRIER



If the central defender leaves the zone to press the player with the ball - he reveals the place behind his back. It is then a signal that the winger or striker runs into the free space and receives a ball advanced action area (yellow zone above). It is worth noting that the first goal was just a consequence of such "pulling" from the zone of the opponent's central defender and the final pass by Payet to Batshuayi. The second goal was scored after a free kick - interestingly - the foul was committed by a defender pulled out from the defensive line on the player taking the ball between the lines. The figure shows the beginning of the first goal:



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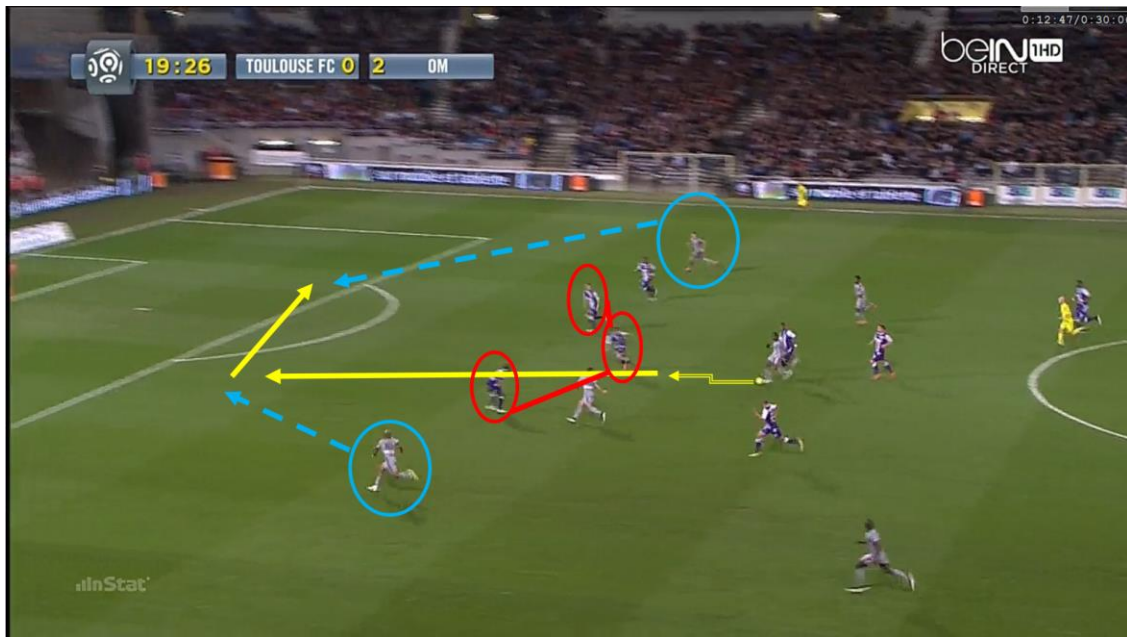
A diagram of a soccer field illustrating player positions and movement paths. The field is bounded by a top and bottom line, with a goal area at the top. A goal is located at the top center. The field is divided into two halves by a horizontal line. The top half contains a goal area and a goal. The bottom half contains a goal area. The field is populated with 11 players, represented by blue circles with numbers. The players are numbered 1 through 11. The positions are as follows: Player 1 is at the top center, near the goal. Player 2 is at the top right. Player 3 is at the top left. Player 4 is at the bottom right. Player 5 is at the bottom center. Player 6 is at the bottom left. Player 7 is at the top right. Player 8 is at the top center. Player 9 is at the top left. Player 10 is at the bottom center. Player 11 is at the bottom left. Movement paths are shown with arrows: a red line connects Player 1 to Player 2, and another red line connects Player 3 to Player 4. A blue dashed line connects Player 5 to Player 6. A blue solid line with a zigzag arrow connects Player 10 to Player 7.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

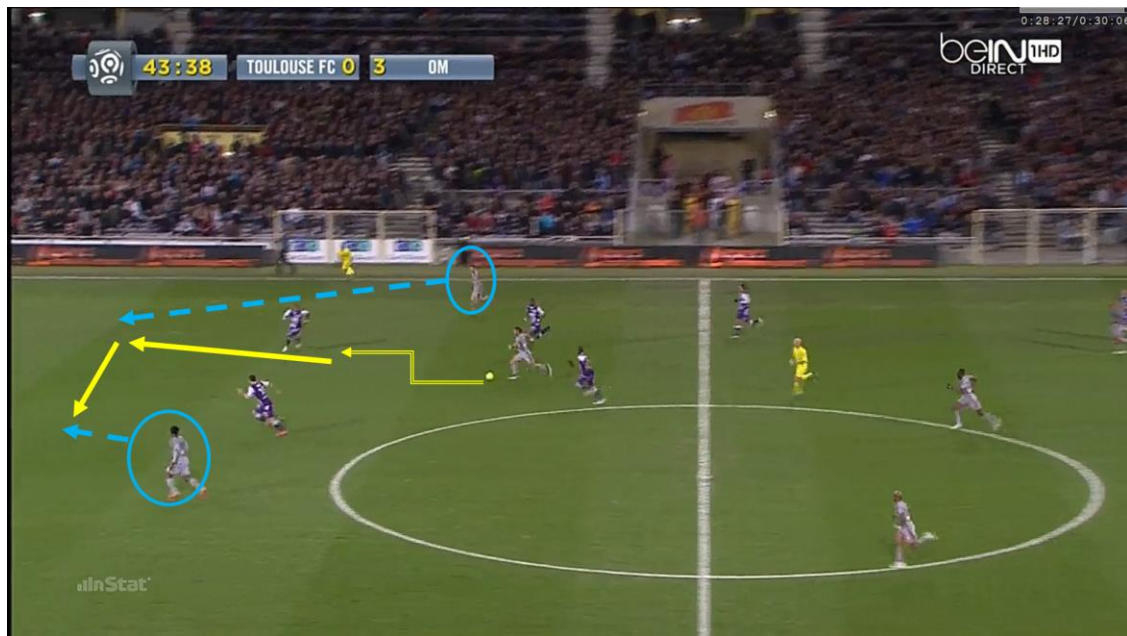
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This is how the third and fourth goals were scored:

THIRD GOAL:



FOURTH GOAL:



Dribble the ball on the opponent (in this case the central defender) + passing at the right time (usually this is the moment when opponent take a first steps towards the player with the ball) is a very good time to pass and "release" the player to whom I pass. This is a very effective tactical concept during the finalization of the action. Bielsa team also uses that during counterattacks. Until the end of the game, the OM team-controlled events on the field. He lost one goal after a counterattack but later scored two more. It was the first victory away since eight games.

GAME 29: security

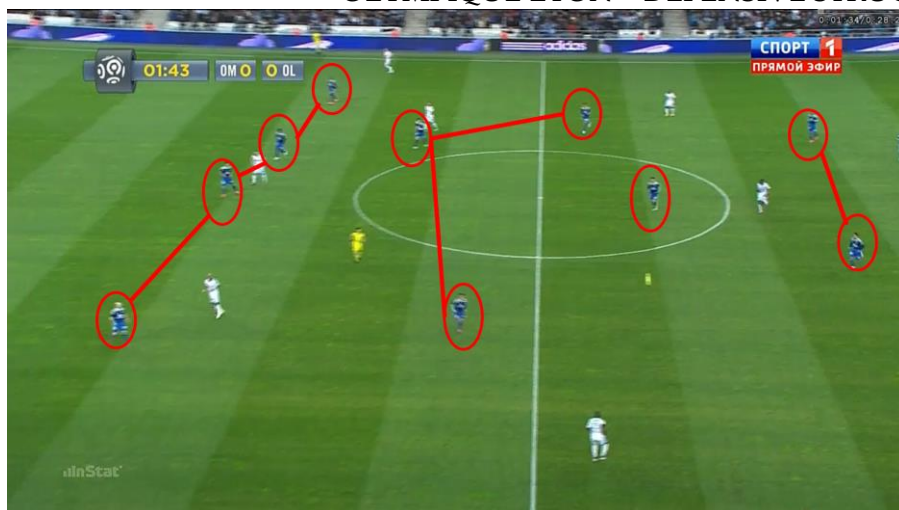
15.03.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

*„There are no excuses when someone goes to the pitch without thinking about winning.
It's obligation to start the game with this thought.”*

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 0:0 OLYMPIQUE LYON

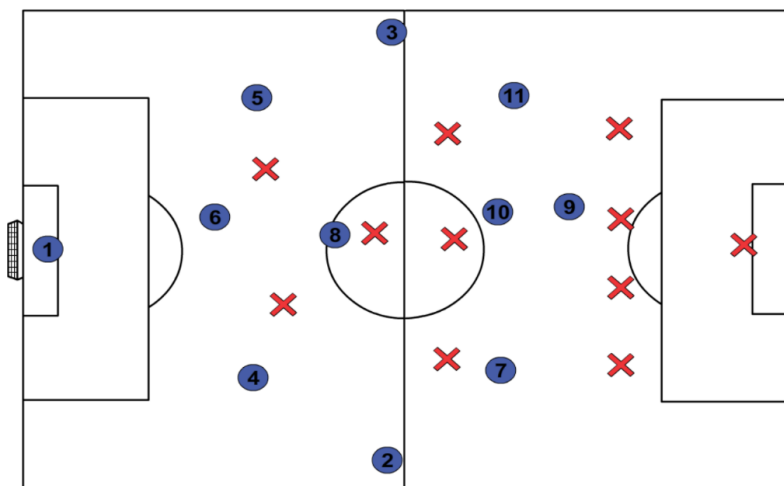
A game that was very important from the perspective of the table's layout. This and the next game were the only, as it turned out later OM chance to return to the highest place. The Lyon team played in their favorite 1: 4: 3: 1: 2 set-ups, which neutralized OM's positional attack in the autumn round. Lyon joined the game without their biggest star (Gourcuff).

OLYMPIQUE LYON – DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE



Lyon had the most dangerous duo of strikers (Lacazette and Fekir). Lyon was also the leader of the Ligue 1 table for ten games. The last thirteen games, they lost only once. On 28 previous matches, almost all played in this setting (one game in 1: 4: 3: 3). It was currently the best team in France.

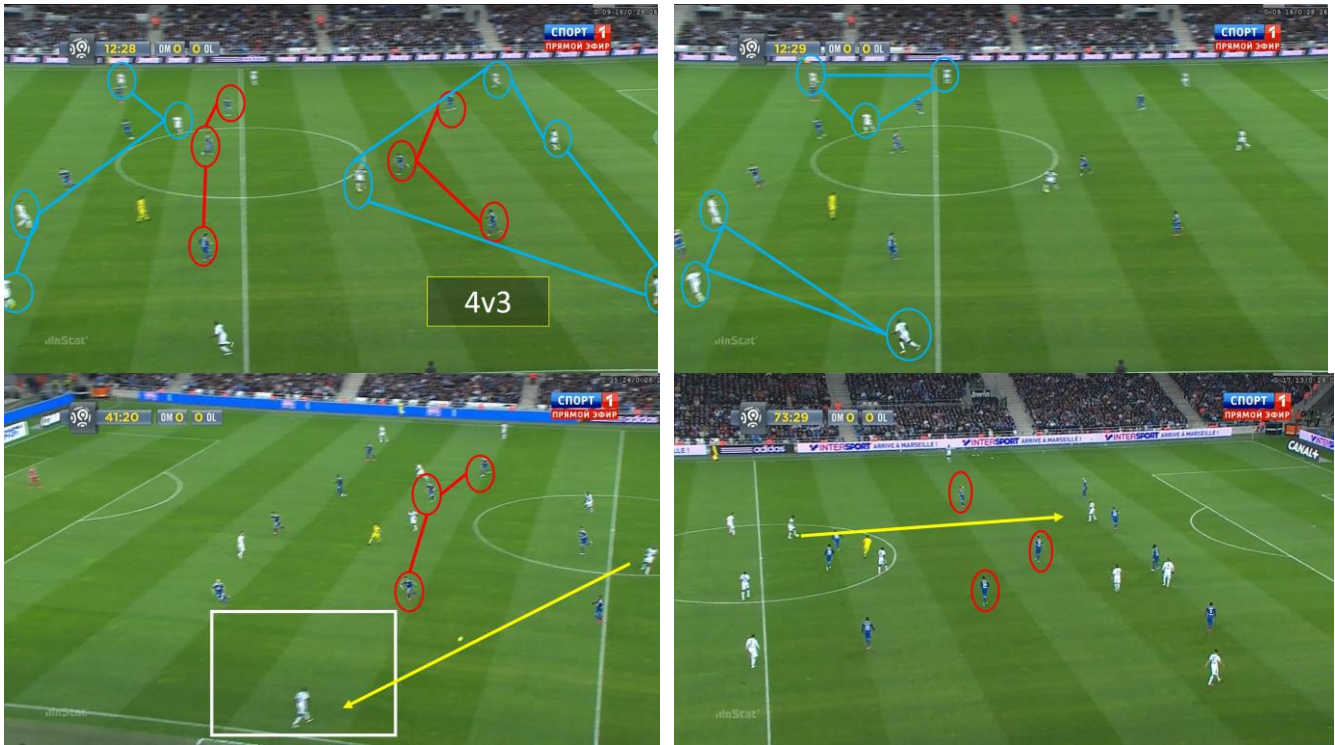
In the previous game OM was set 1: 5: 3: 2 or 1: 5: 4: 1 and could not cope with Lyon (see GAME 11). Marcelo Bielsa set the team in 1: 3: 3: 3: 1. Let's look what we would expect:



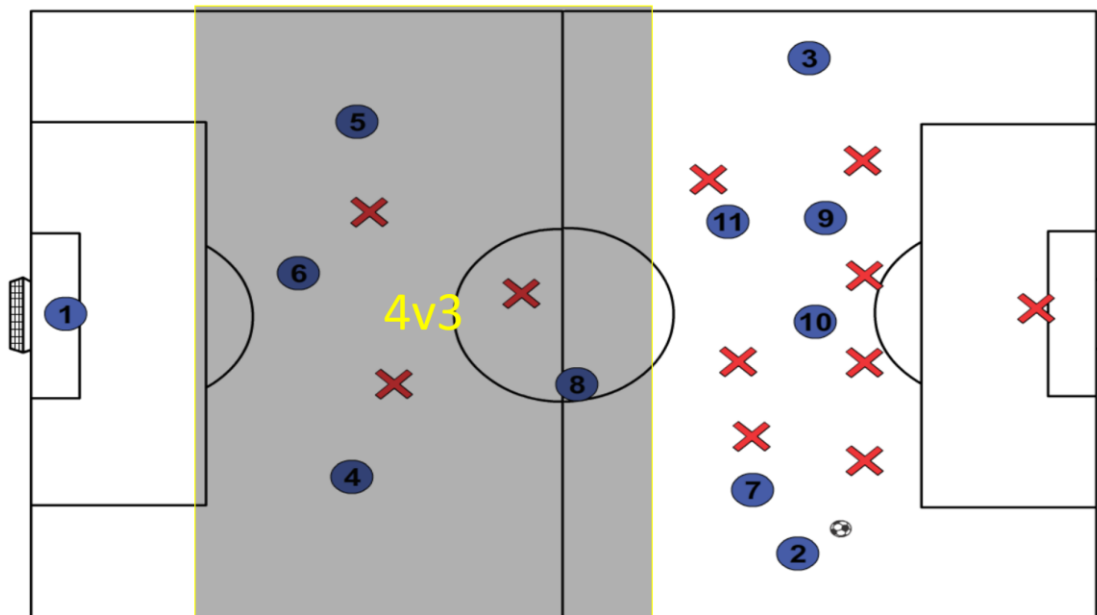
Four OM players behind Lyon's midfield line. 4v3 situation in build up. Plenty of space for fullbacks. After joining fullbacks' higher position, 3 players on each wing. Three Lyon players on the midfield are wider apart, which made it possible to play vertically (especially after changing sides of the game).

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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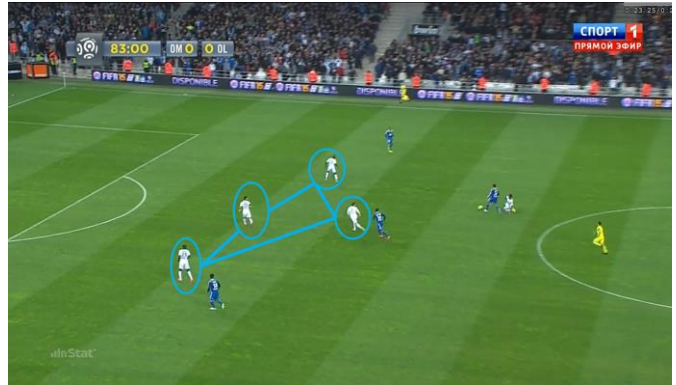
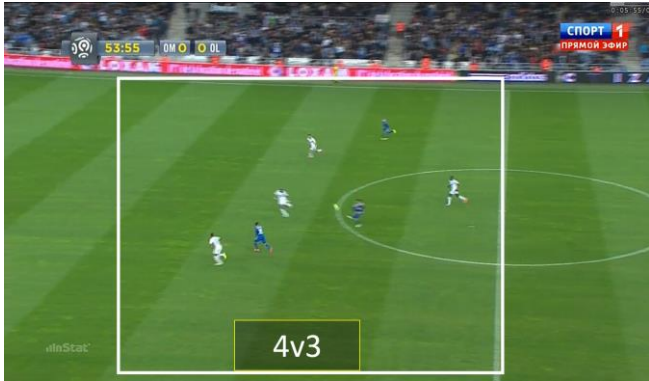


The OM team was quite successful in penetration Lyon's midfield line. However, the problem arose when they lost the ball during finalization. Why?



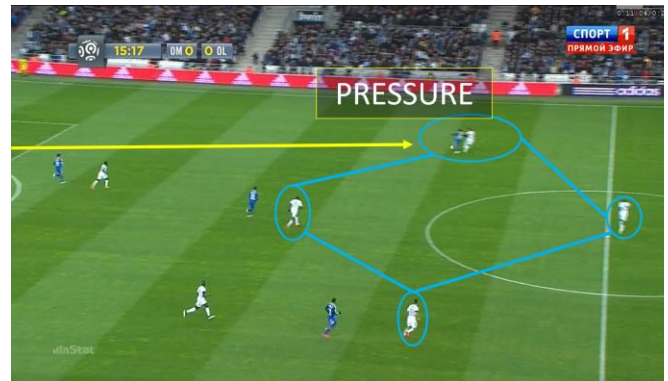
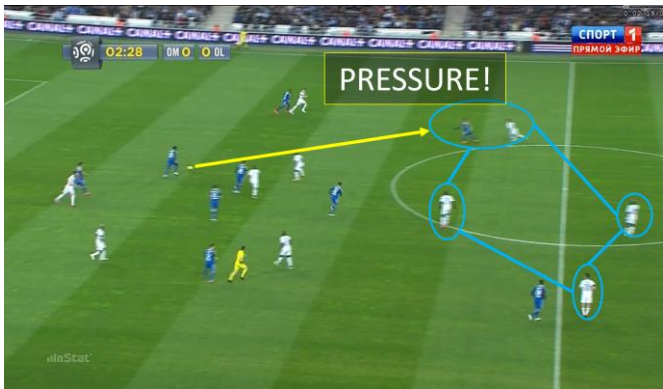
Any - even accidental – kicked ball in counterattack was a threat. Despite the advantage at the back (4v3, sometimes 3v3) OM, it is too big a defensive area to talk about security.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

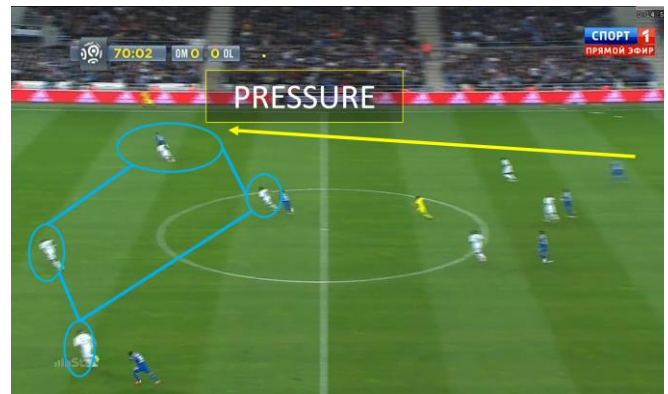
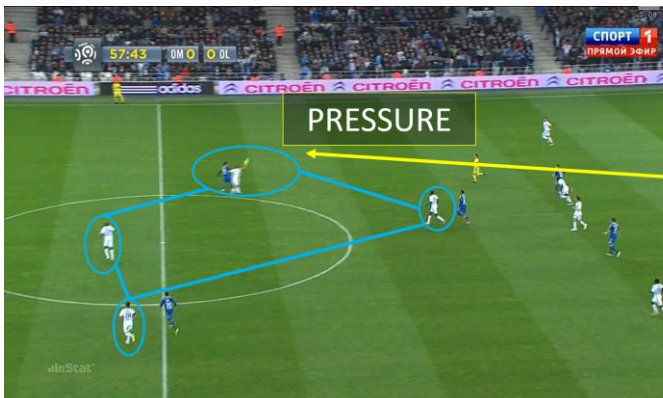


Four players: Morel, Fanni, Romao and Imbula were well prepared that day. Only these four players during the entire game prevented as many as twenty (!!!) dangerous counterattacks of Lyon.

FIRST HALF – PREVENTING LYON COUNTERATTACKS



SECOND HALF – PREVENTING LYON COUNTERATTACKS

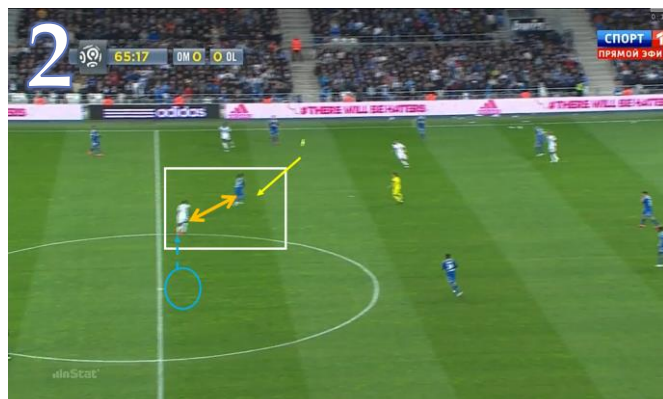
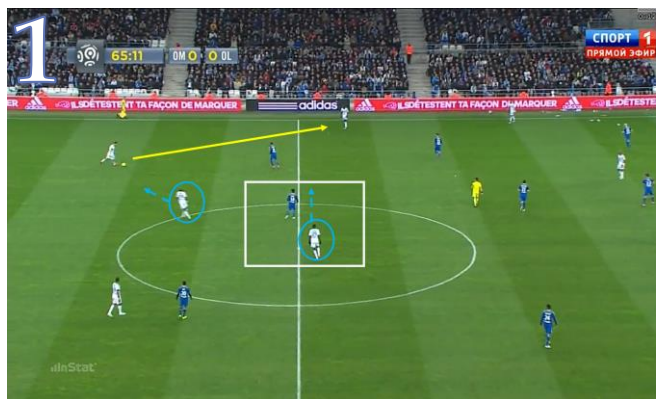


Players under the ball shouldn't only wait for opponents' counterattack. Everything must be done to predict this.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



When player dribble the ball forward, often one of teammate go under the ball. They try to closely follow the events on the pitch (try to make action safer) and predict whether in the event of a risky pass the ball forward or losing a 1v1 duel, they will react!

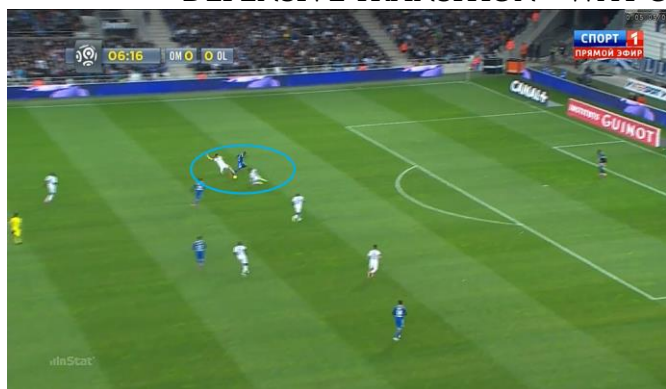


Based on the above pictures, it can be presumed that if Imbula (in the white field) had not followed the action before, the ball would arrive to the foot of a lonely opponent. It would make it easier to start a counterattack. By anticipation and reacting early, Imbula ensured team safety in this situation. Lyon had to change sides and start building action from the beginning.

Intensity:

The Marcelo Bielsa team gave their best that day. The intensity, pressure and willingness to win were impossible to describe. High levels of aggression resulted in quick recovery of the ball during the defensive transition. The only drawback was the red card for Morel. The OM players' way of thinking was fight for the win.

DEFENSIVE TRANSITION – WAY OF THINKING AND COMMITMENT



Game ended with draw. The number of dangerous situations gently in favor of OM. Gignac hit the post twice. The referee did not whistle two situations in which each team should have awarded a penalty kick. A game full of controversy and quick attacks from both sides.

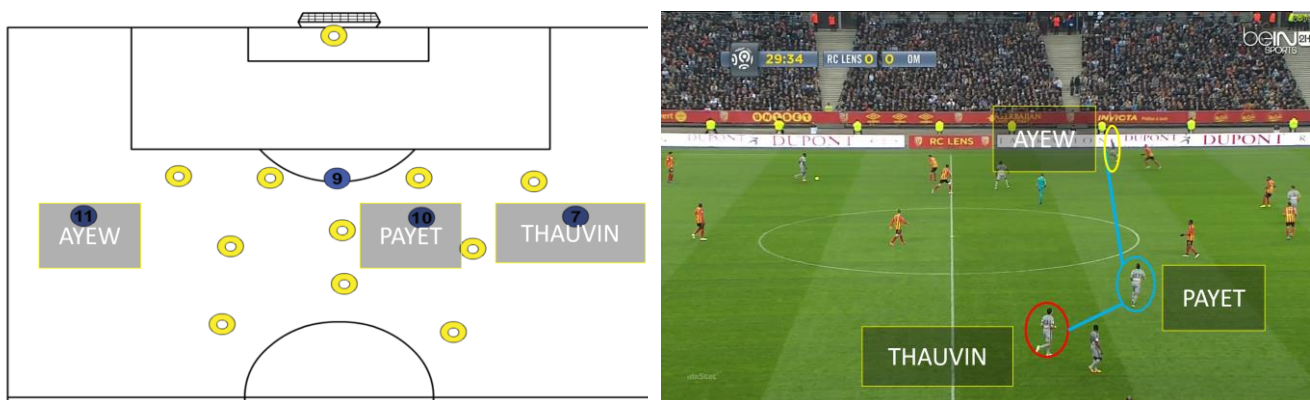
GAME 30: rotations

22.03.2015 Stade de France. Paris. Ligue 1.

„We should know what build us and what is secondary. If this knowledge is missing, you will always be wrong”.

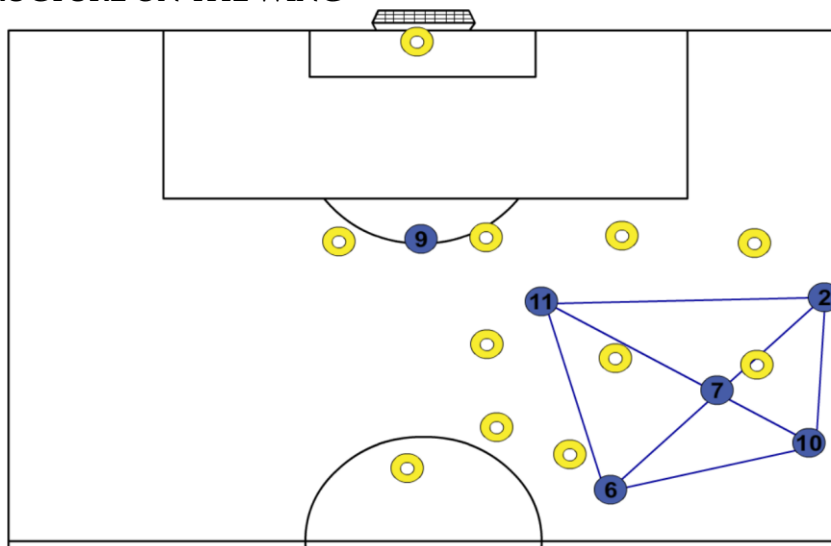
RC LENS 0:4 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

The RC Lens started in a 1: 4: 3: 1: 2 (like Lyon). The plan for this game for OM was to create an advantage in the middle sector of the pitch and on the wings. Three of the four goals were scored in a similar way. To better understand how these situations came about, we should analyze the three offensive players, usually positioned between RC Lens lines:



Rotations are often used in the way Marcelo Bielsa plays. These three players rotated not only among themselves, but also with other players. For the purposes of illustrating this concept, the following players are marked in colors: Ayew - yellow, Payet - blue, Thauvin - red.

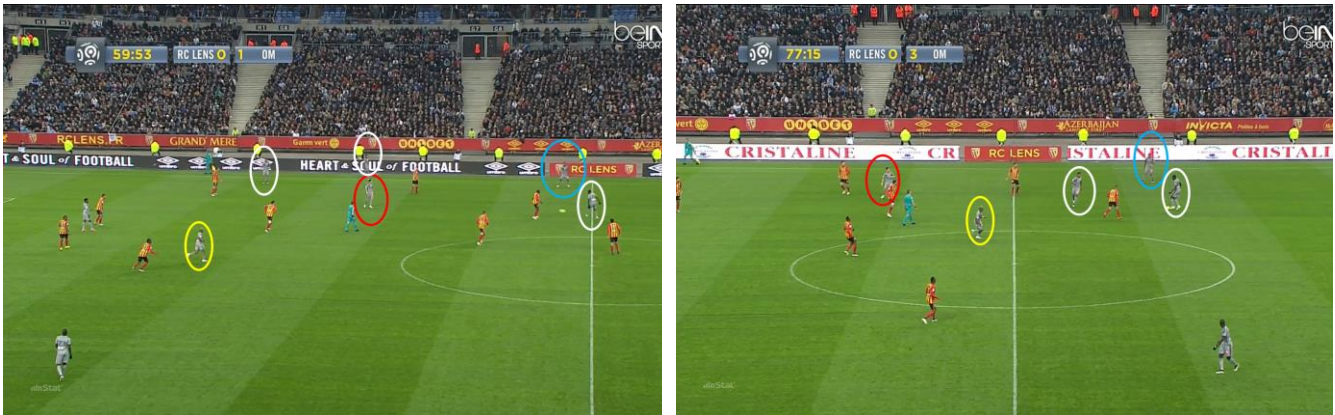
ATTACKING STRUCTURE ON THE WING



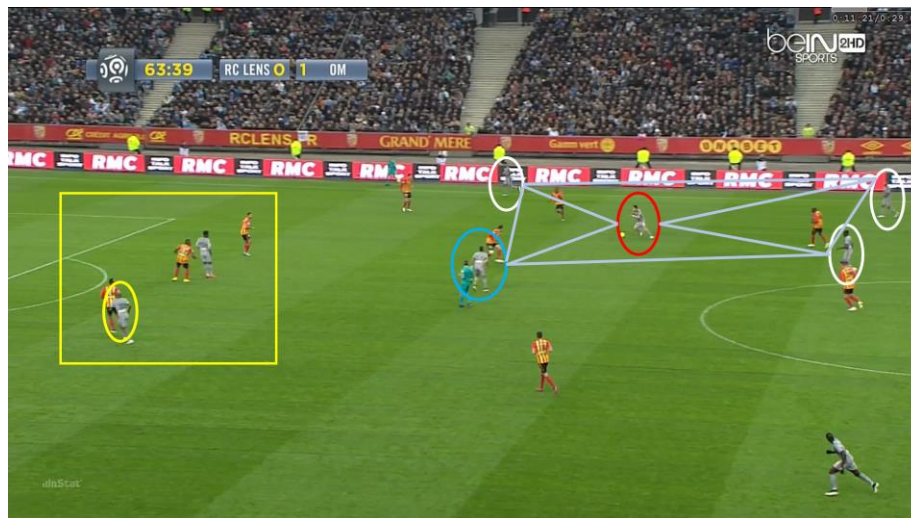
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



PLAYERS DIFFERENT POSITIONS



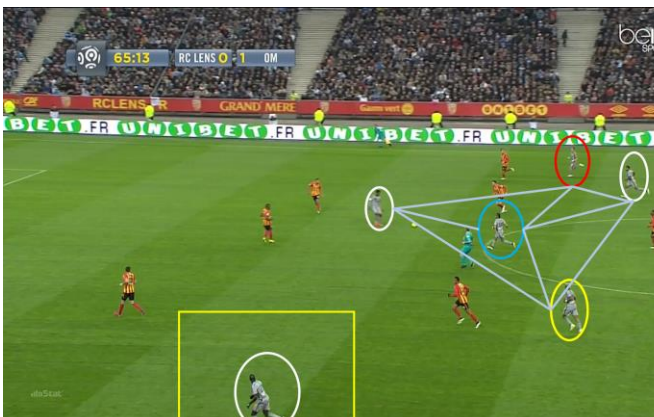
MAIN IDEA:



As you can see in the figure above, the players were sometimes on positions rather than strictly assigned to the positions. They changed their place without changing the shape of the structure. On the other side (players in the yellow square) were responsible for finishing the action. Let's get to the analysis of goals scored in two phases of action: 1 / creating the situation and 2 / finalization.

SECOND GOAL:

CREATING THE SITUATION



FINALIZATION:

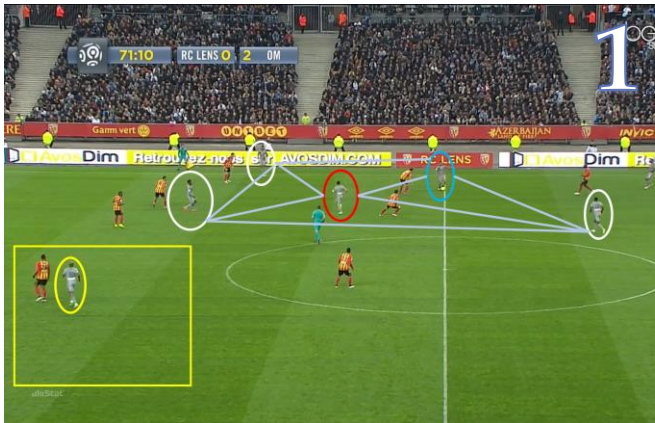
Connection of five players in the right wing and one player on the other to finalize the action. After this situation there was a free kick. After Payet's shot in the post and Romao finishing cause a goal. T idea led to the free kick from which the goal came, but it was not a direct cause of second goal.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

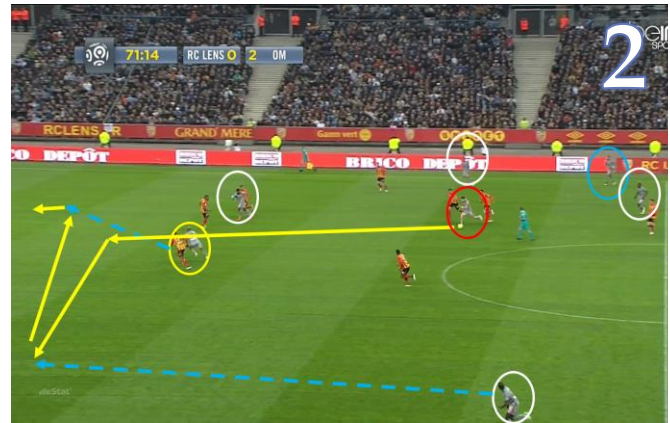
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THIRD GOAL:

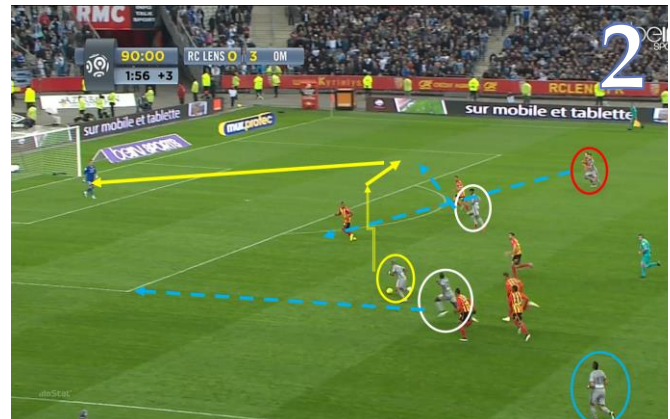
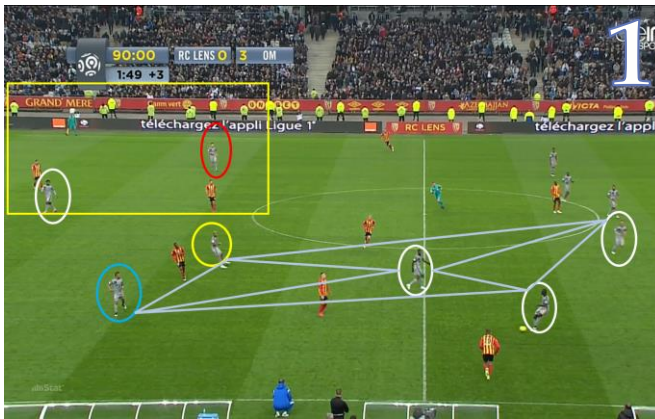
CREATING THE SITUATION



FINALIZATION:



FOURTH GOAL



Each of the goals analyzed had its beginning on the wings. The team's shape has been maintaining in every situation, different players in positions and finalization on the other side of the pitch. As soon as the ball was passed to the partner who was forward or passed to the partner over the line, OM players were starting finalization. How important is the speed at which the action ends, let it show how much time since pass between the lines/to the partner passed to score a goal.

Second goal: 5 seconds from the creation of the action to the foul (free kick).

Third goal: 7 seconds from creating the action to finalizing the action with the goal.

Fourth goal: 9 seconds from creation the action to finalizing the action with a goal.

The method of starting and ending the attack, the cooperation of the three analyzed players, the rotation of positions and the intensity of running players into the penalty area was admirable. These action components were the team's success.

Now OM was waiting for a key game this season.

14 days to game with Paris Saint Germain at Stade Orange Velodrome in Marseille.

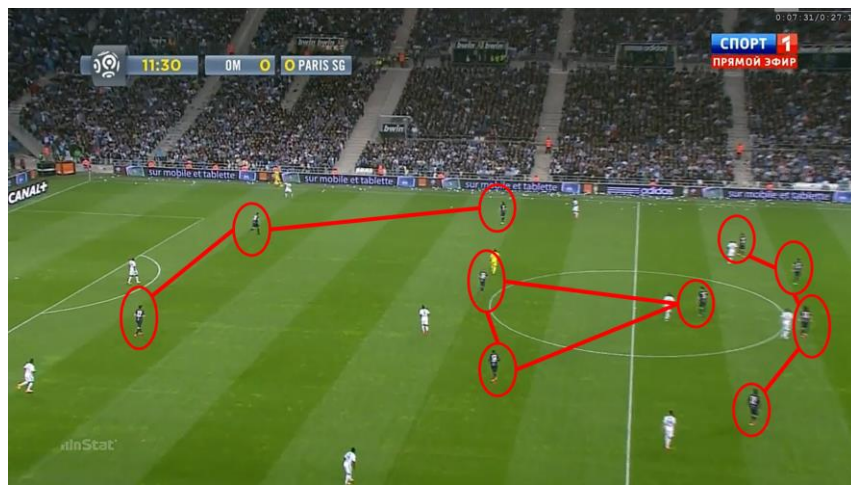
GAME 31: man on man marking

05.04.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

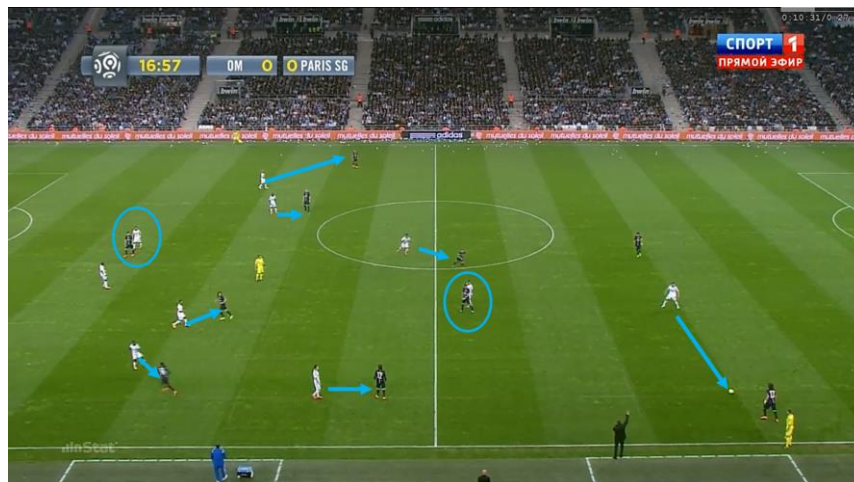
„Why do they call me crazy? Because some of answers I've chosen do not match with those who have chosen others”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:3 PARIS SAINT GERMAIN

A game that all football France has been waiting for. OM without their best midfielder Imbula. PSG set as usually 1:4:3:3.



PSG set up was one of the last predictable things in this game. The PSG team in the first half very often did not manage to optimally position themselves, because OM was constantly pressing on the players of PSG. There was no longer possession of the ball. It was difficult to observe more than 4 passes. What's more, it is even more difficult to say in what setting up during the defense phase OM was to defend. The reason was obvious. Individual coverage around the pitch. Man on man marking.



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



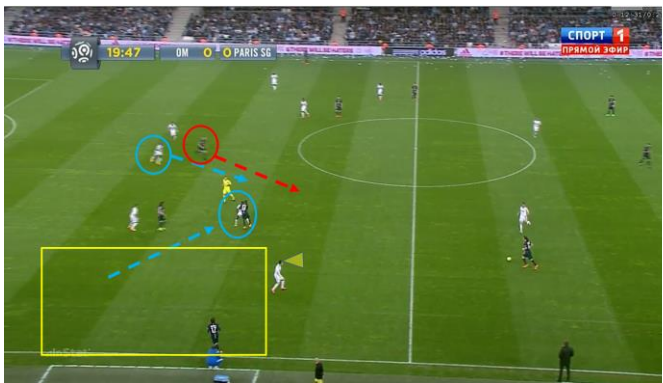
While in the photo above you could attempt that the OM set up was 1: 4: 2: 3: 1 but set up wasn't the most important that game. Of course, the set up was flexible, between 1: 3: 3: 3: 1 and 1: 4: 2: 3: 1, but the priority was the pressure on the whole pitch individually (man marking). OM did not press in the minority. He was aware of the individuality and big skills of PSG players. This type of pressing was supposed to deprive the advantages of the best Laurent Blanc players.

DISADVANTAGES:

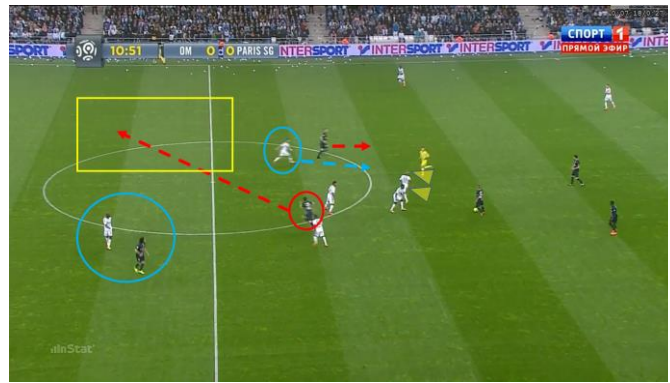
We'll start with the disadvantages of individual coverage throughout the pitch (man marking). Most importantly - we are dependent on the opponent's move. This creates spaces - especially behind the back of the player who press.

Djedje (right-back) covered Matuidi individually in the central zone of the pitch. The three central defenders have always followed one of the players: Ibrahimovic (especially Fanni), Cavani or Pastore. Gignac pushed David Luiz and Thiago Silva, and Payet often didn't let Verrati play freely. Going constantly with a player always involves one basic risk. Leaving my place, I leave space behind me. When you have zone cover, usually the closest player from the formation moves towards place that you left. It is different, however, when everyone has one player to cover.

FIRST SITUATION

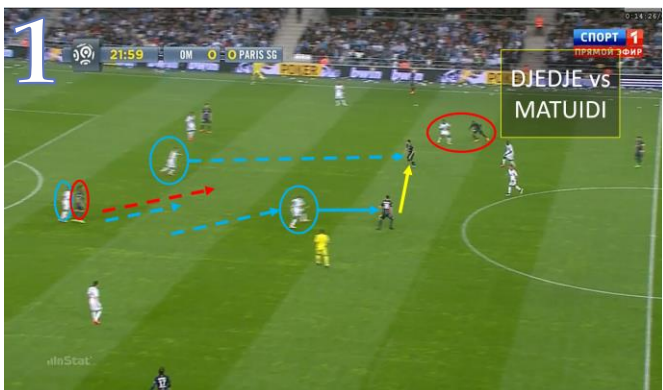


SECOND SITUATION

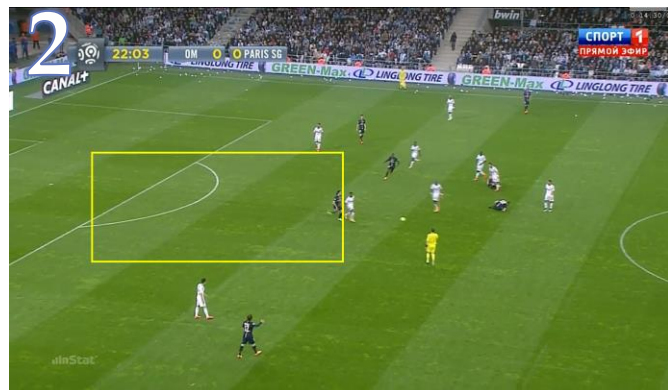


THIRD SITUATION

BEFORE FREE KICK

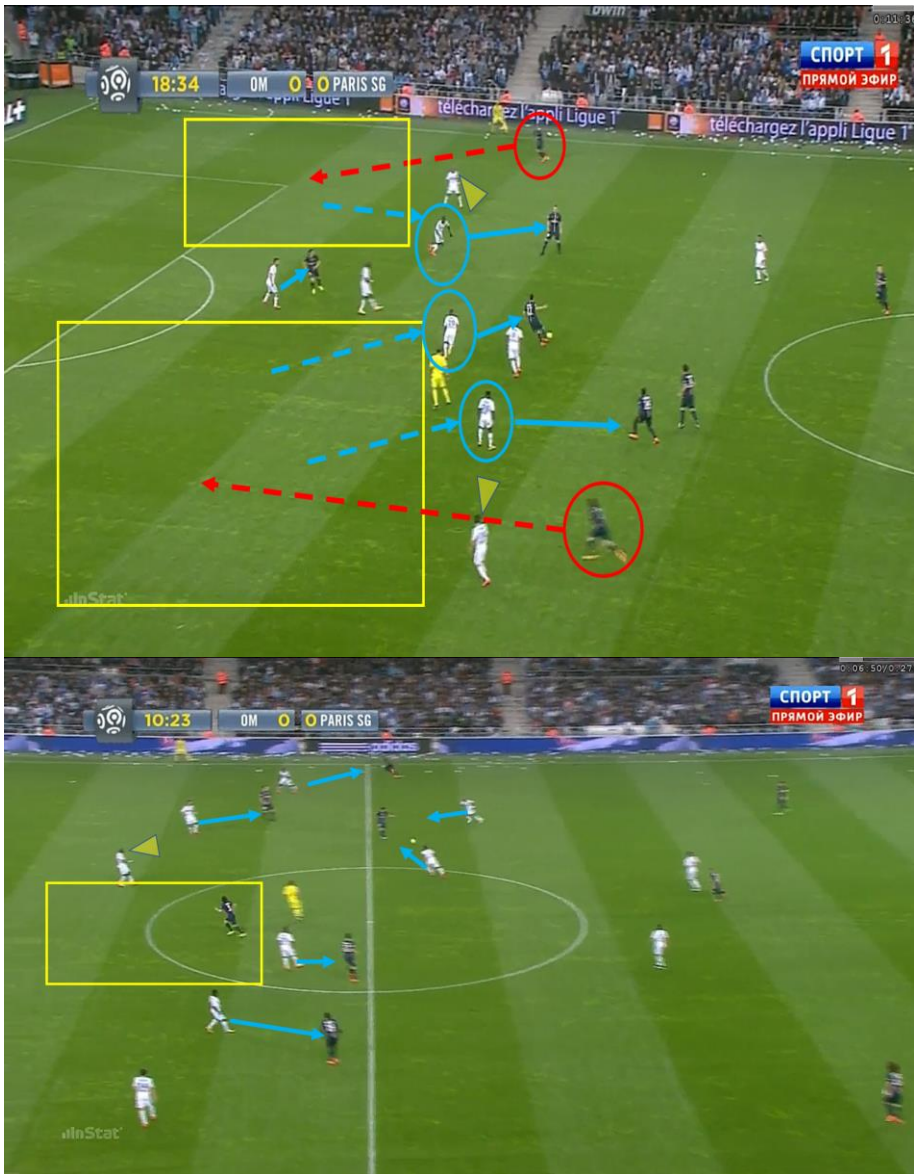


FOUL MOMENT



A moment earlier Djedje (right-back!!!) came after Matuidi, to the other side of the field (marked with a red circle)

FOURTH SITUATION



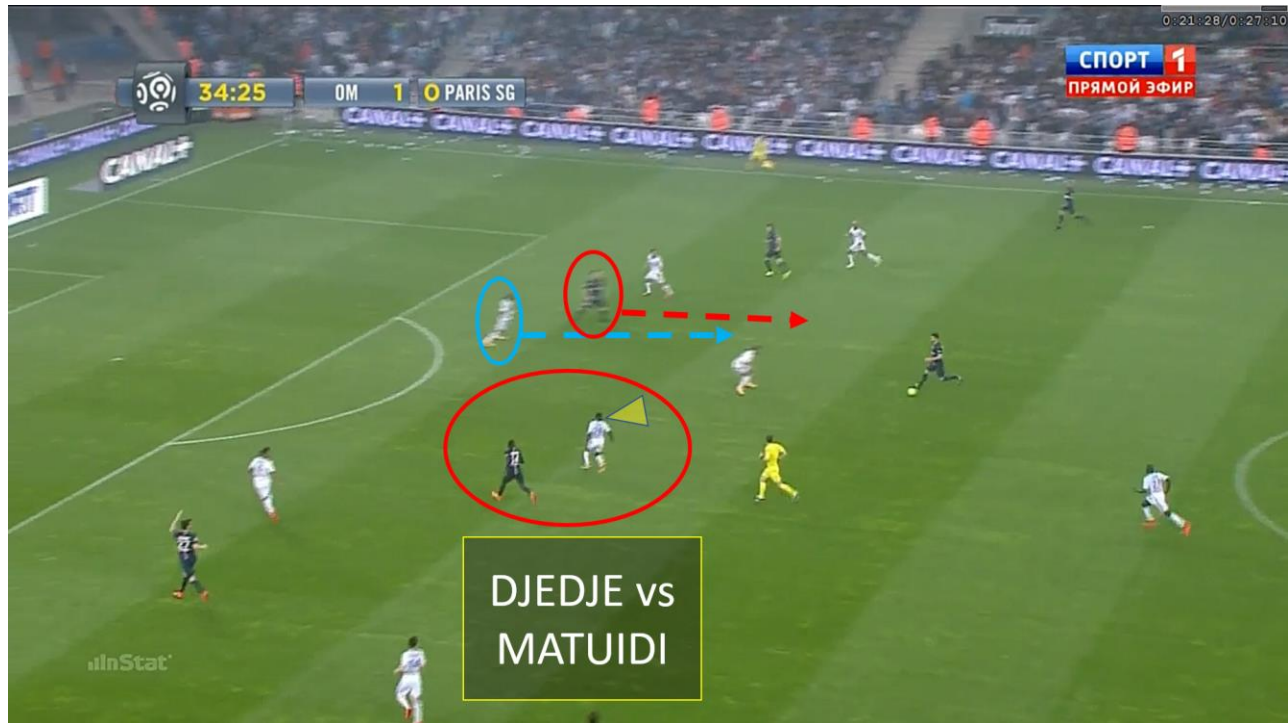
The situation that most shows the disadvantages and risks of using man marking around the pitch. Plenty of space behind the back because each player follows his opponent. If the opponent does not leave, the player stays. It may then happen to such a bizarre situation, in which only one player will be left behind like sweeper (as in the picture beside and below). Lack of offside position of PSG players, only encourages them to run behind...line?

However, it was not until 35's that PSG scored a goal. Matuidi took a shot, whom Djedje didn't look after for the first time.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

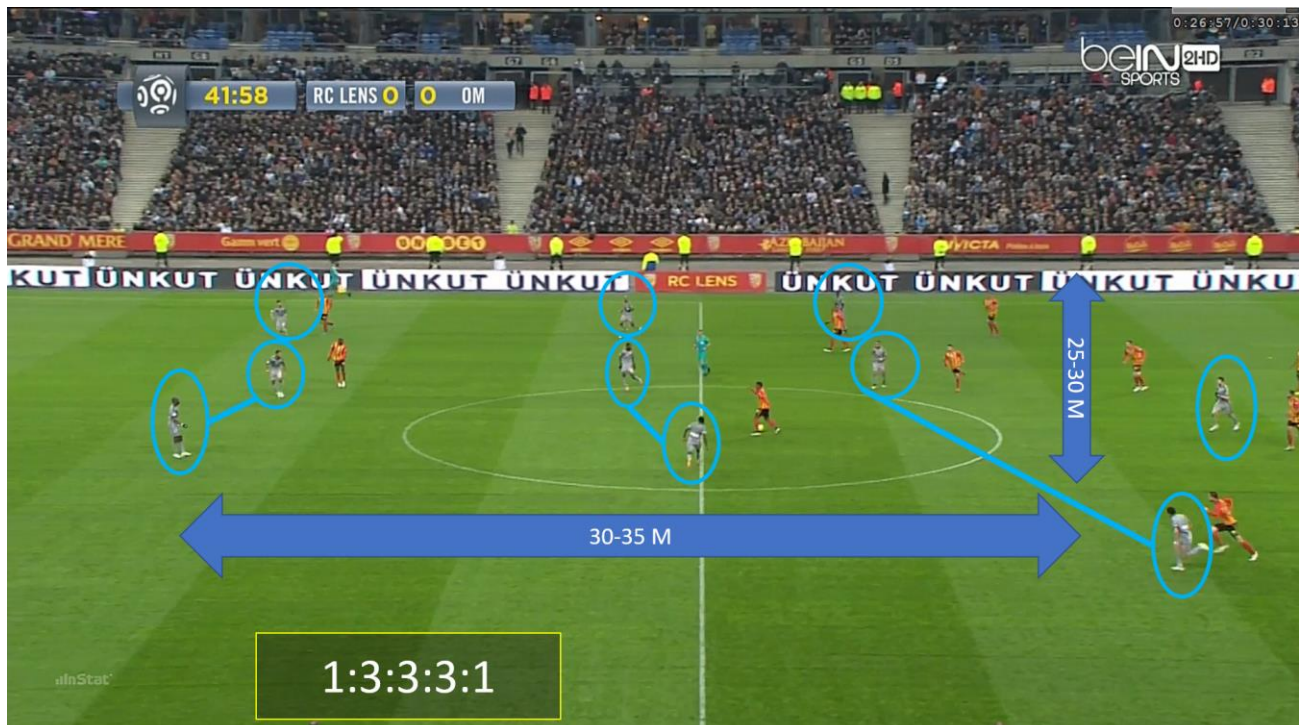


Djedje absorbed by the ball, allowed the opponent to position himself behind him:



By watching all these situations, are you able to tell what was defensive structure of OM? The organizational structure wasn't even like previous games, for example:

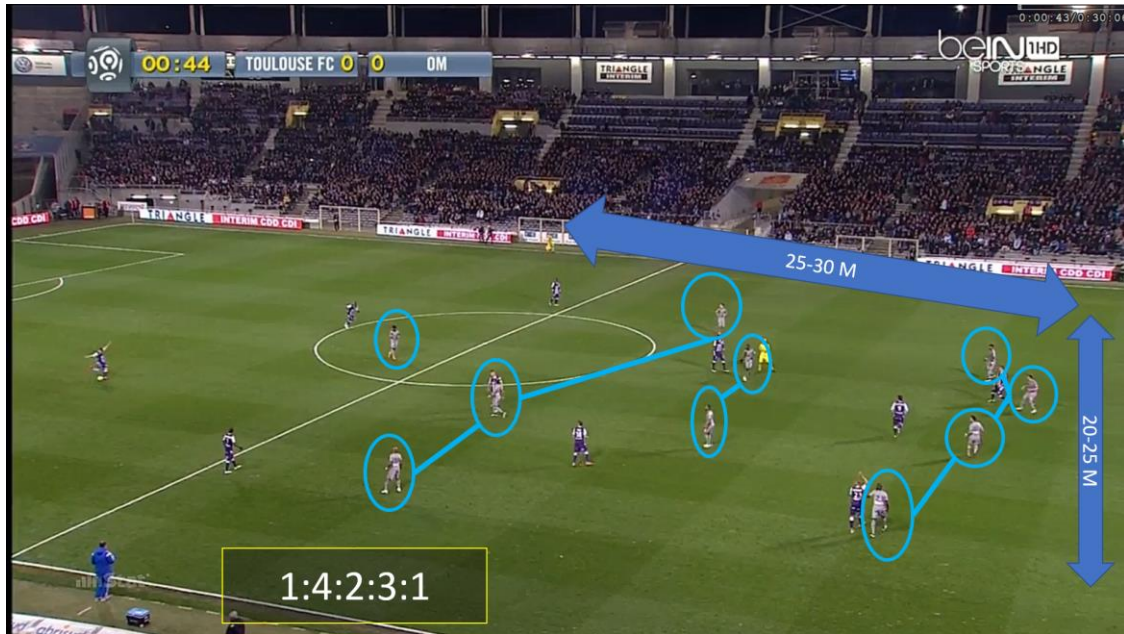
GAME WITH RC LENS:



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

...

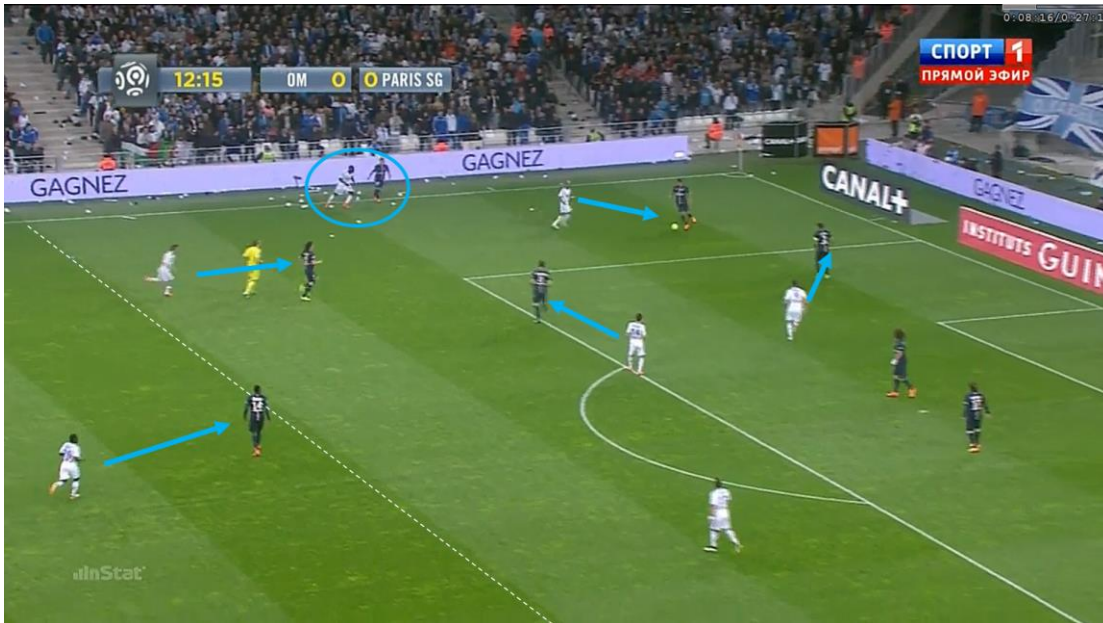
GAME WITH TOULOUSE FC



Advantages:

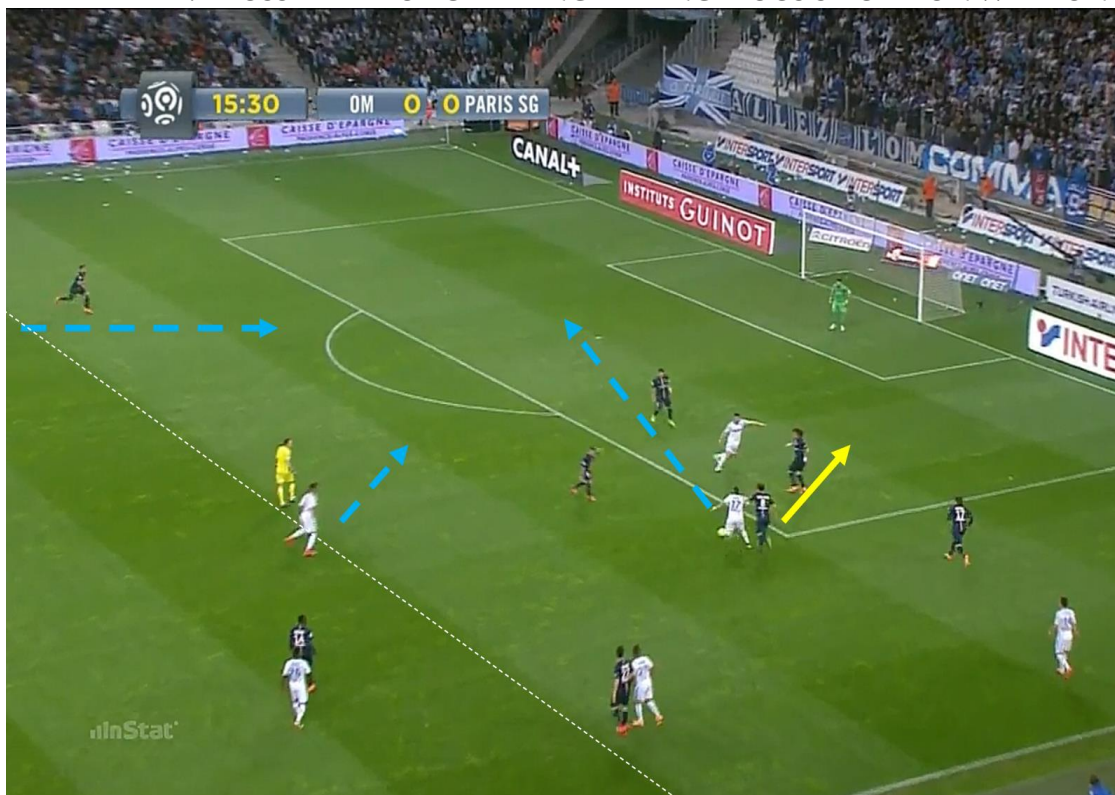
Can you risk the statement that Bielsa allowed his team to play without tactical discipline? Certainly, this kind of pressing can be a big surprise. Or maybe only El Loco and his players knew how to play this match? However, it can be said with full responsibility, it also had a lot of advantages, which translated into dangerous situations.

1. PLACE OF HIGH PRESSING AND DISTANCE TO THE GOAL



Taking the ball in final third means that the distance to the opponent's goal is conducive to immediate finishing of the action.

2. POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A DANGEROUS SITUATION WITH ONE PASS



Regardless of whether the opponent build up or starts with a throw-in, after collect the ball in this area of the pitch by OM players, often one pass is enough to create a good situation to score.

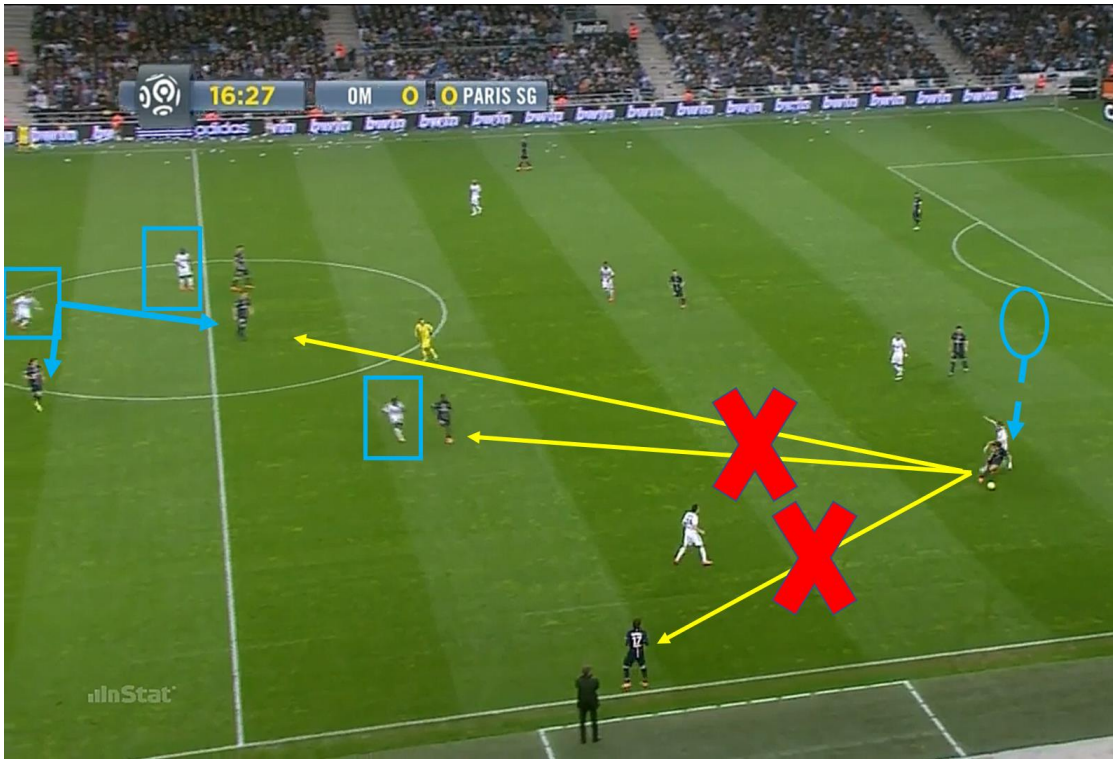
3. CONTINUOUS PRESSURE ON CENTRE BACK DURING BUILD UP



Constant pressure on center backs while they start to build up creates a chance for mistakes:

- 1/ Loss of the ball
- 2/ Long ball without intention
- 3/ His Head down with the ball, etc.

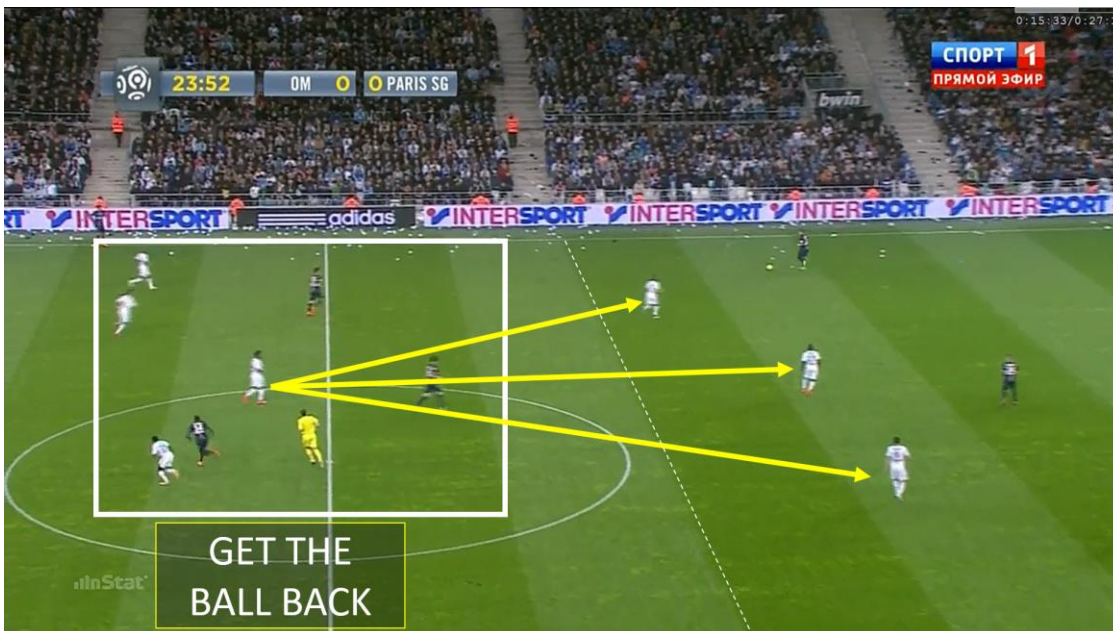
4. CLOSING FORWARD PASSING LINES



Closing the pass line or positioning such that the pass to my opponent becomes a chance for press. OM players stay between two opponents and provoke pass.

After high pressing action, the OM team won the throw-in and stayed on the opponent's half. It cannot be said that this was the direct reason for scoring the first goal, then a moment later (after the second throw in), Gignac scores the first goal. 30 seconds between high press and winning the throw in and scoring the goal. It can be said that indirectly high press had an impact on the goal.

5. PASSING FORWARD LINES DURING COUNTERATTACK

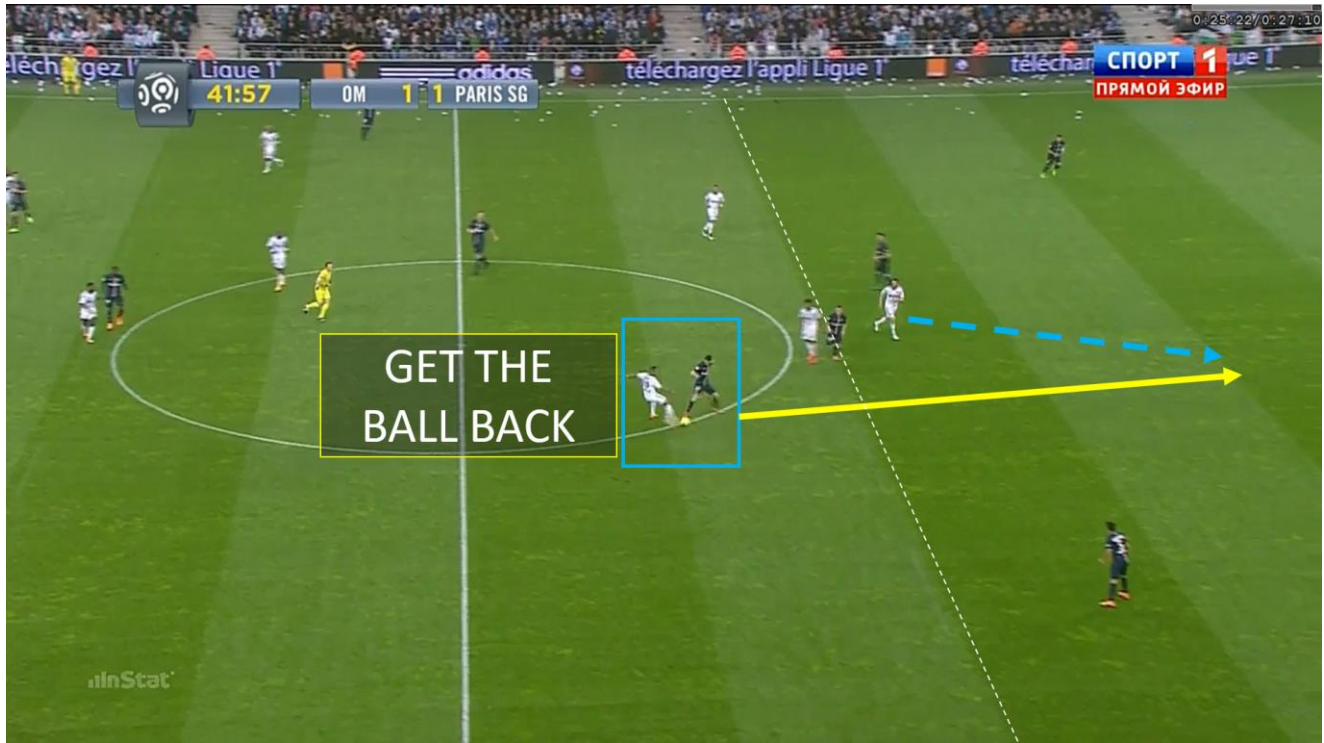


OM team didn't recovery the ball always in the first pressing line. Often, they provoke pass to the central zone and then start counterattack forward lines were formed.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

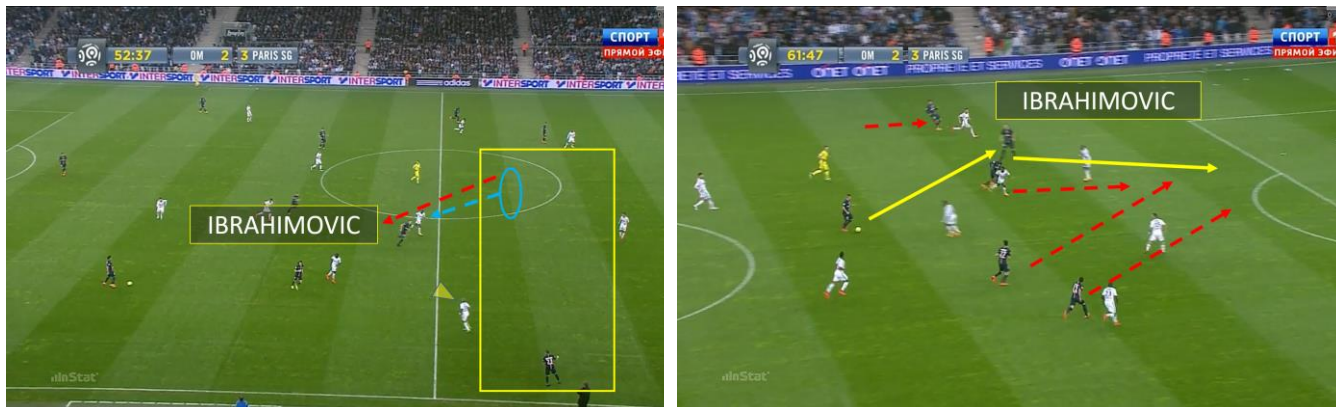


While high pressure only indirectly contributed to the first goal, it was directly at the second. It was in the manner described above that OM took the second lead. Romao, after picking up in the middle zone, directly passed to the outgoing Gignac 1v1 with goalie.



You can argue over the validity of this method of pressing. One can talk about numerous disadvantages and some of its advantages. Nevertheless, the OM team went down for the break leading 2: 1. The second half did not change much in the way both teams play. One could get the impression that OM intensity during pressing started to fall. There were not enough power to think about next action than fatigue, especially at key moments of the game. What was noteworthy was the striker's game: Gignac on the OM side and Ibrahimovic on the PSG side. Thanks to them, teams created dangerous situation.

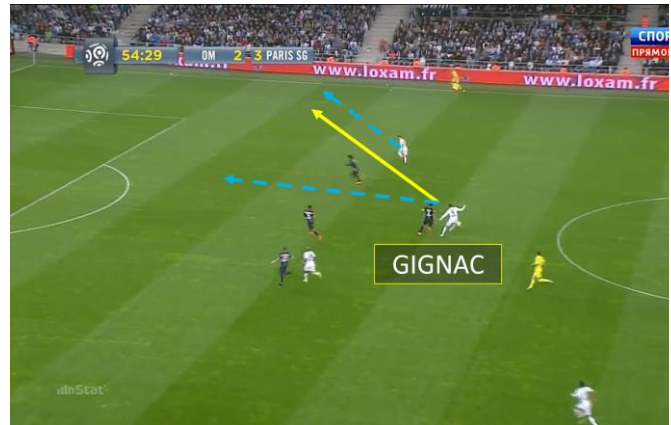
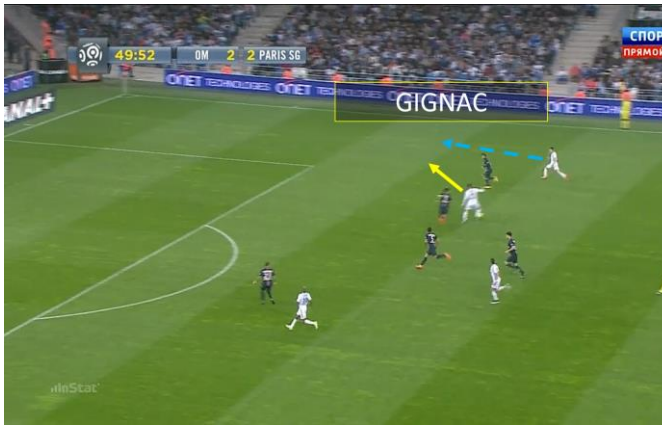
IBRAHIMOVIC



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

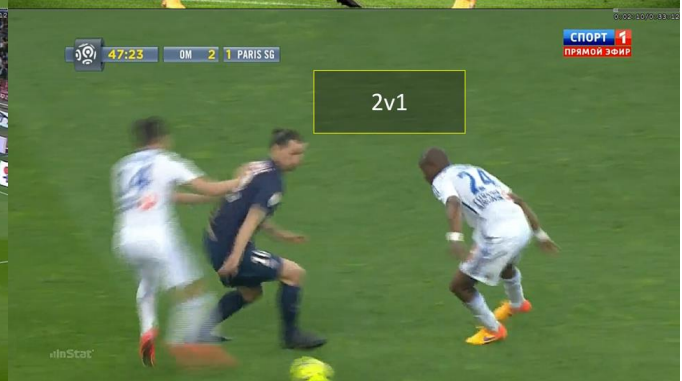
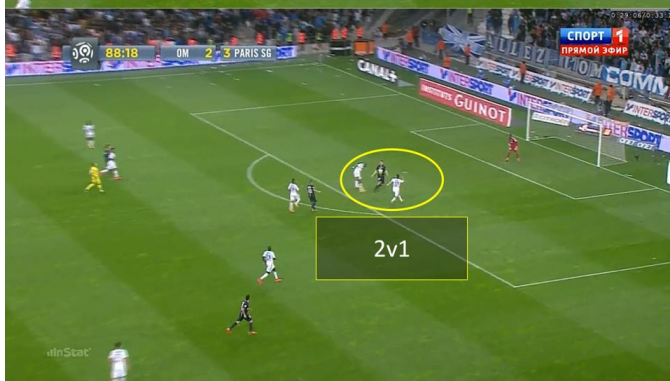
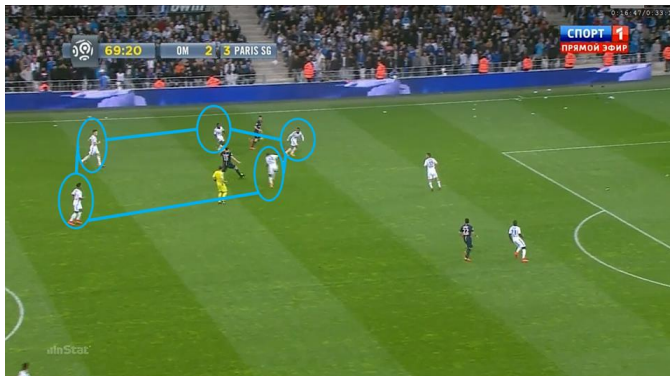


GIGNAC



IBRAHIMOVIC:

Constant pressure is often an effective tool for recovery the ball from an opponent. The problem arises when the opponent feels very well playing with the opponent on his back. Pressing, which impressed the supporters and may specialists, over the course of the game stopped to impress PSG players. Especially Sweden striker.



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

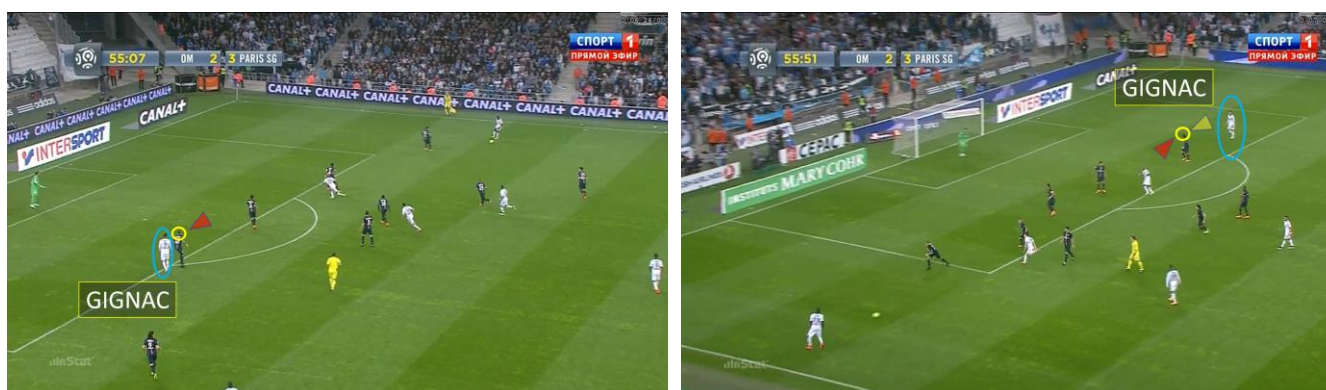


GIGNAC:

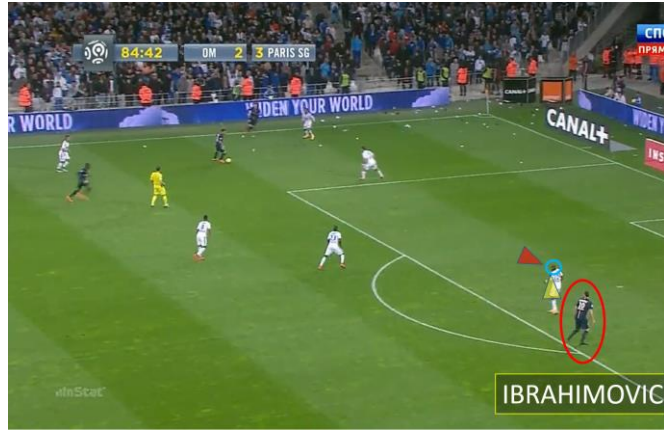
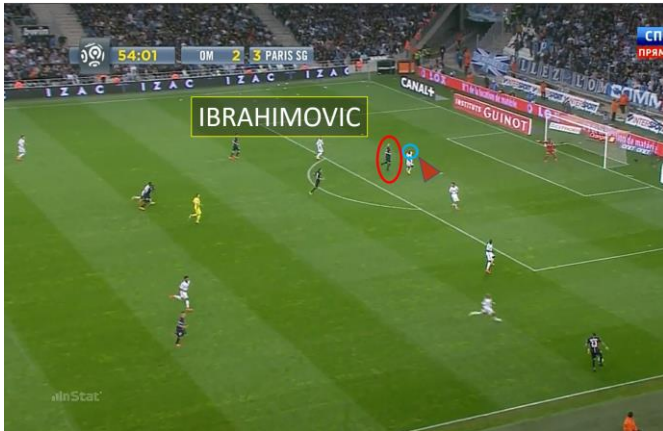
The player who scored two goals that day was not only the executor. He participated in creation actions. He mainly ran on final pass, but also often kept the ball in front.



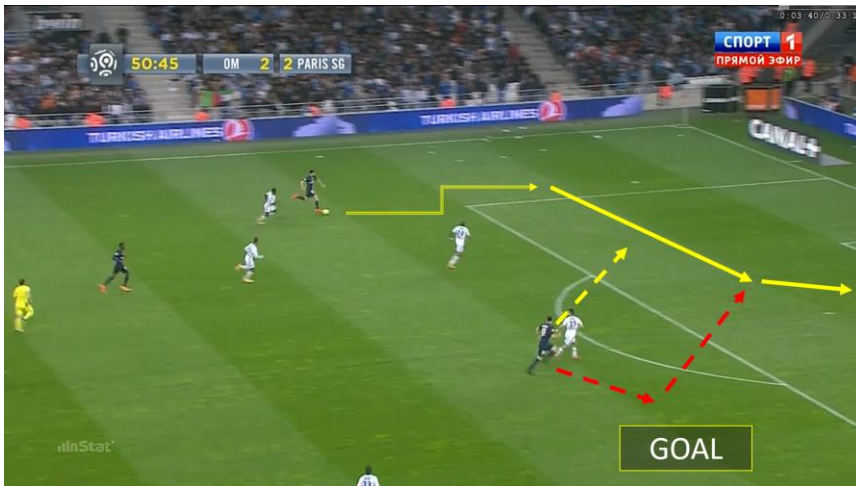
Both players played at their highest level. They were very dangerous with the ball, but also without the ball came to the situation. Especially since their movement path has always been in the opposite direction to the movement covering their defenders. The correct starting position (the opponent who does not see the ball and the striker at the same time) meant that with a good cross, defense was difficult.



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



Thanks to this position we have control over the opponent's position (positional advantage). We also have control over space. If I am in a convenient starting position, I can decide where to run.



When the partner with the ball has control and he can pass the ball, it is the right time to run into space. That's how Ibrahimovic scored the winning goal. The PSG striker had two options to run into space. 1 / Before the defender (yellow movement path) – then OM center back sees him. 2 / Stretch your opponent + run behind him (this is the goal).

The game ended with a PSG victory. At the game conference Marcelo Bielsa stated that it was a well-deserved result, and the strategy chosen for this game should be different.

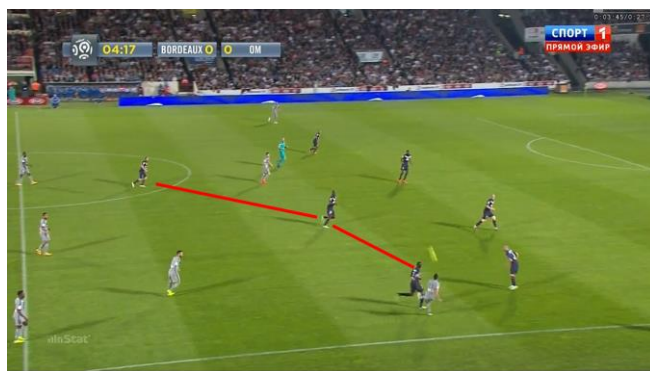
GAME 32: switching play

12.04.2015 Matmud Atlantique. Bordeaux. Ligue 1.

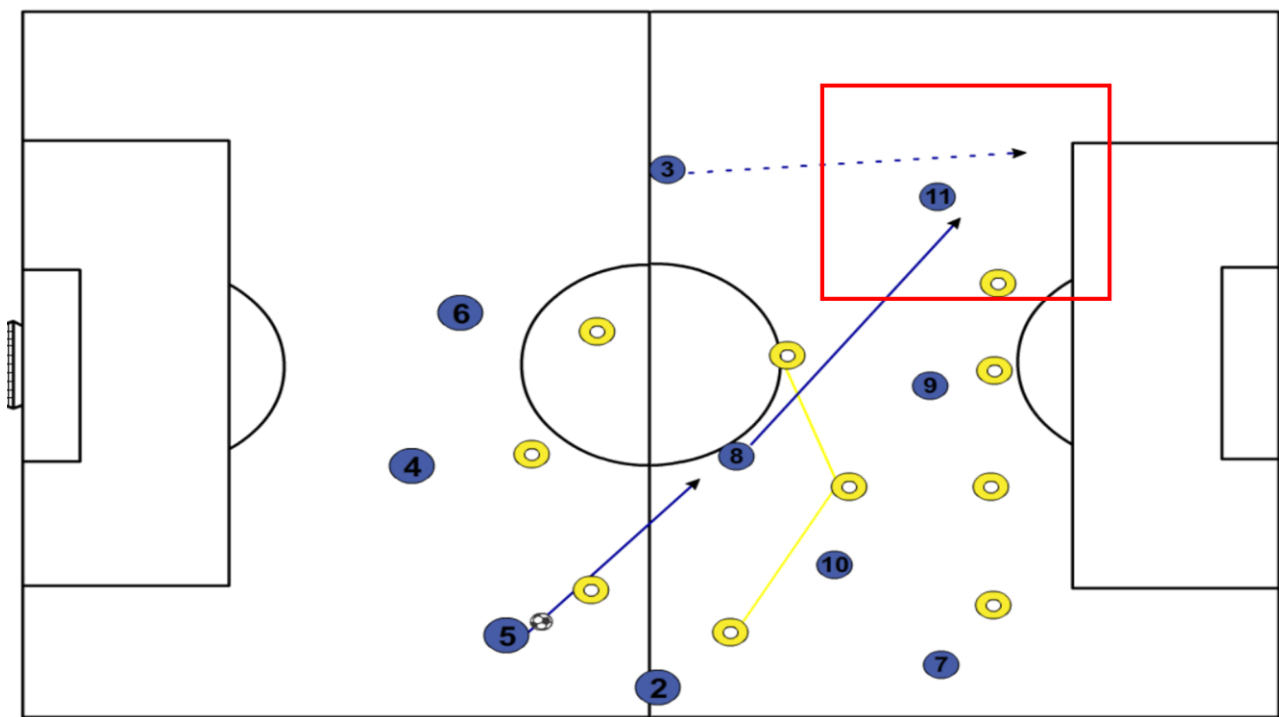
„Leaders need to be heard. The best way to achieve this is to say little”.

FC GIRONDINS BORDEAUX 1:0 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

Increasingly, teams changed their setting to 1: 4: 3: 2 or 1: 4: 3: 3 when they played with OM. The Bordeaux team was flexible between these two set ups. What could be observed was the very narrow position of the central midfielders and their movement into the side sectors of the pitch.



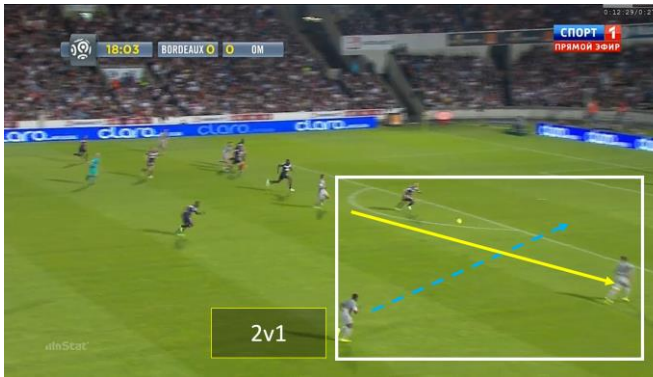
This has many advantages, but it creates for opponents a chance to change side of attack, often with one pass. This is how OM created a 2v1 or 1v1 situation in a large area (OVERLOAD TO ISOLATE):



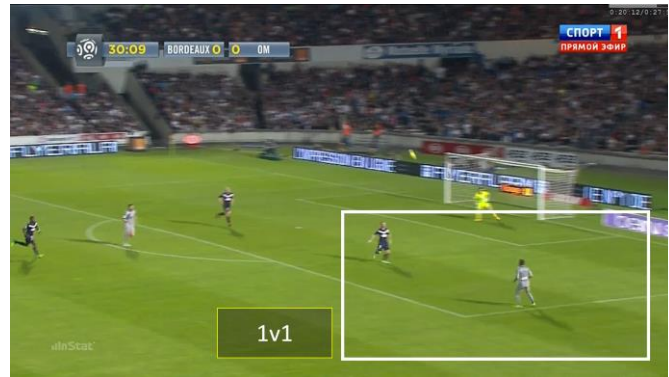
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



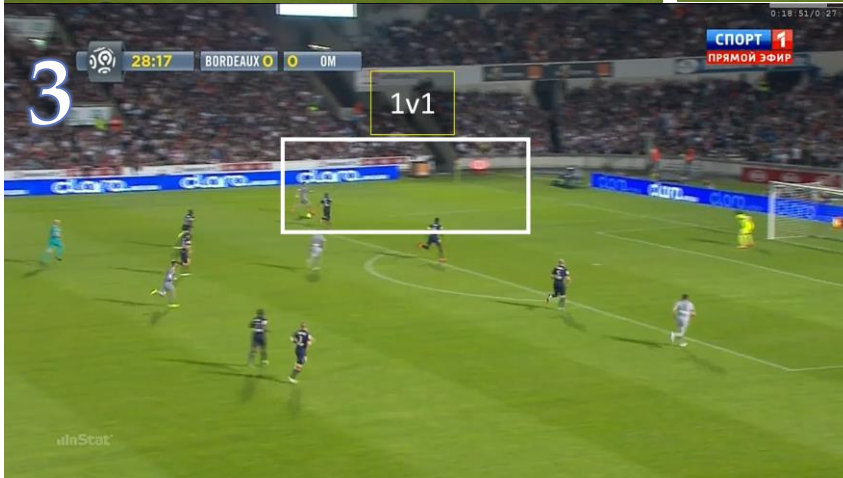
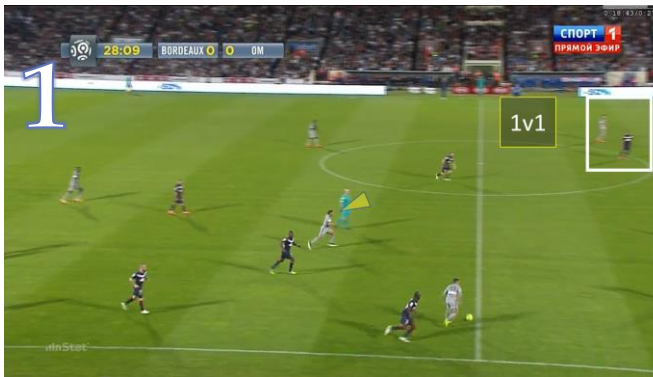
2v1



1v1



From the beginning of the game, we could see the repetition and intention with which OM played. On the example of Payet and at the same time the most dangerous situation in the first half (described below) it can be concluded that in this way Bielsa team wanted to create and finalize the action. Payet twice (before he even received the ball) analyzed the situation on the other side of the pitch:

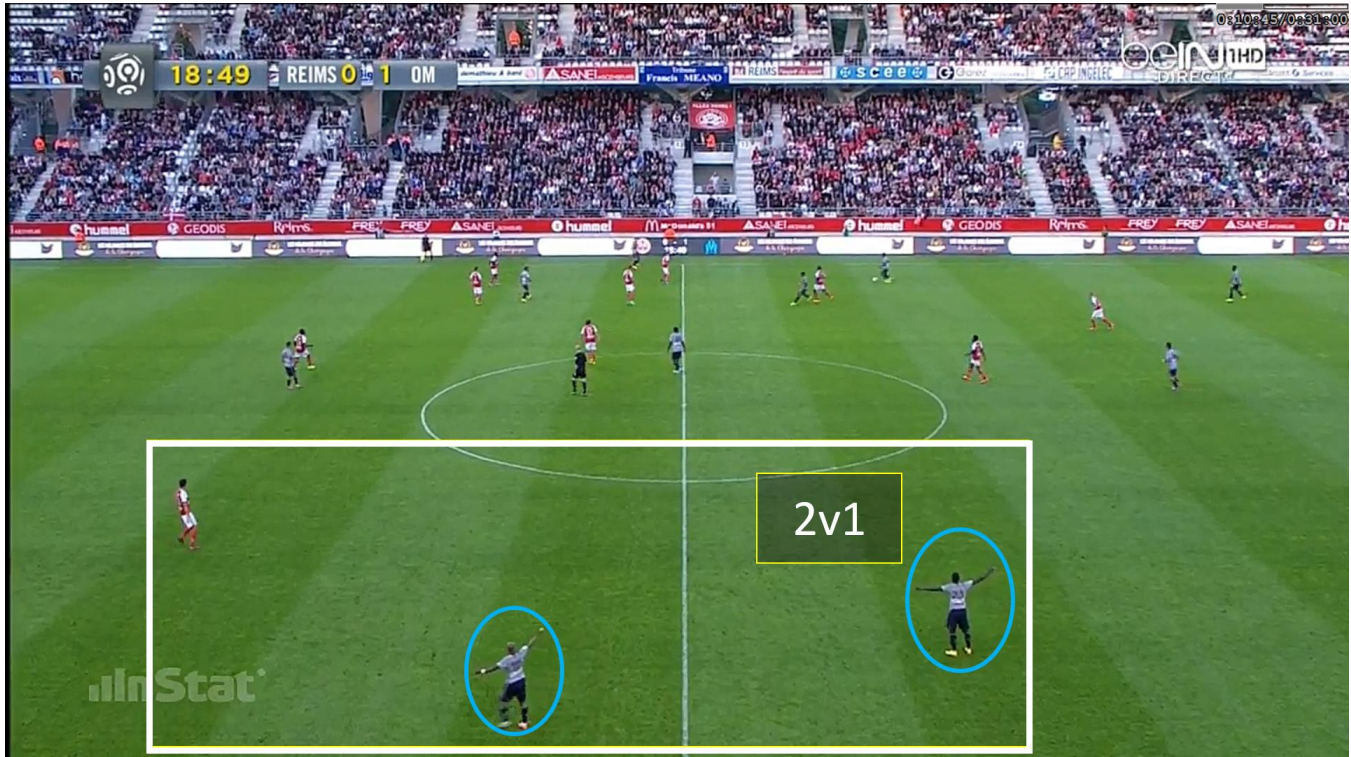


In addition, Bielsa loves wingers who can win 1v1 duels. He said one day: “I am an admirer of dribbling. Two dribbles together change the content of a game, they clear things up, supply fresh oxygen, make a match healthier”.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



We shouldn't think that OM's game was lack of creativity. What I am trying to present is not intended to put OM's philosophy into a few tactical principles. Throughout the season, Bielsa team showed their unpredictability and the players a huge talent. Few games ago:



Knowing the principles described above (which were repeated with great frequency) and the situation presented above (picture), one could say with confidence that Bielsa's team will change sides. Thauvin decided, however, to continue the action with the same side (where OM players were not numerical advantage) and dribbling created a situation that he did not waste and turned into a Gignac goal.

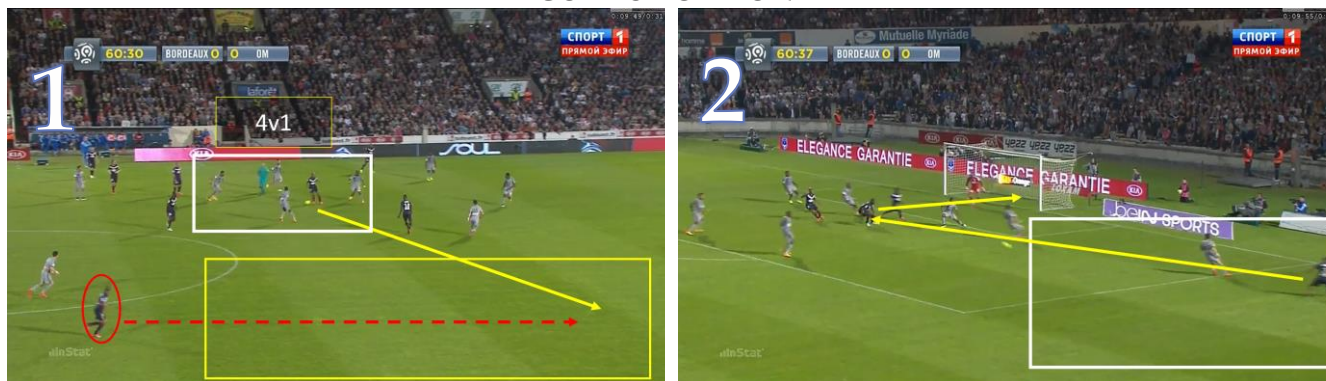
Watching another OM game this season, one could notice the harmony with which OM players move. This seemingly superficial chaos had its order. Repeatedly, it seemed as if Bielsa was controlling everything from the sideline. In addition to the strictly defined structure and plan for the game, Bielsa players had also the opportunity to make their own decisions within game model.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

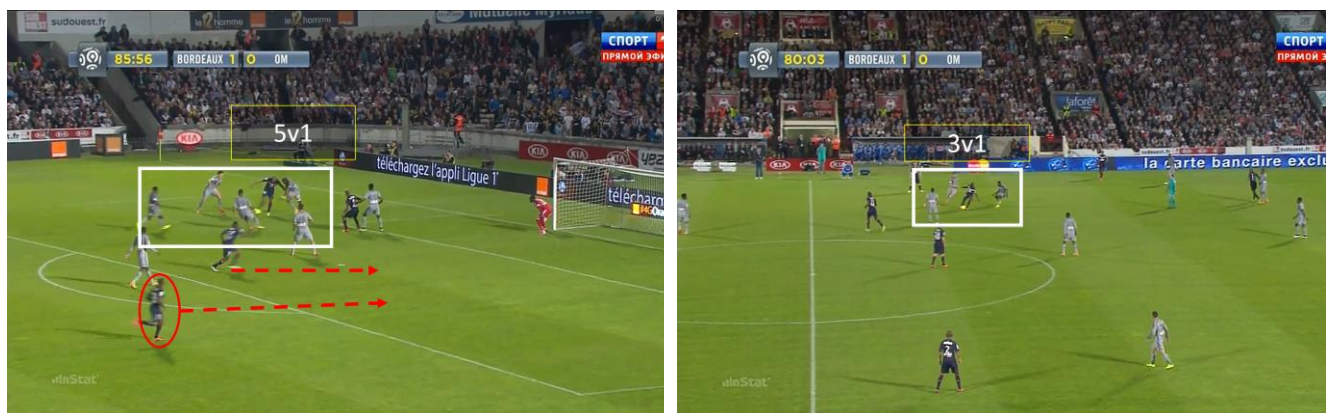
...

OM attacked for most of the game. Between 45 and 60, Bielsa's team should score at least 2 goals. Unfortunately, what was supposed to be an effective OM weapon, ensured victory for the Bordeaux players. Despite the huge advantage around the player who made the key pass, the OM team lost the goal and a chance to score 3 points.

GOAL SITUATION



Increasingly, it was noticeable - observing the players - imposed fatigue from the entire season. This is a subjective observation. However, the quality and frequency of planned actions dropped especially at the end of the games. Something that seemed unimaginable became a team drawback - the players' passivity in defense. Pressing the opponent with the ball was less and less intense and it was easier for opponents to escape from the pressure.



Pictures from the above situations show that it is not enough to have numerical advantage around the ball. You can't be passive in defense. It's not about pressing to run after your opponent but try to take the ball back. In both situations, Bordeaux players didn't lose the ball, moreover, they created convenient situations to increase the score. After this game, the OM team dropped to 4th place in the Ligue 1 table.

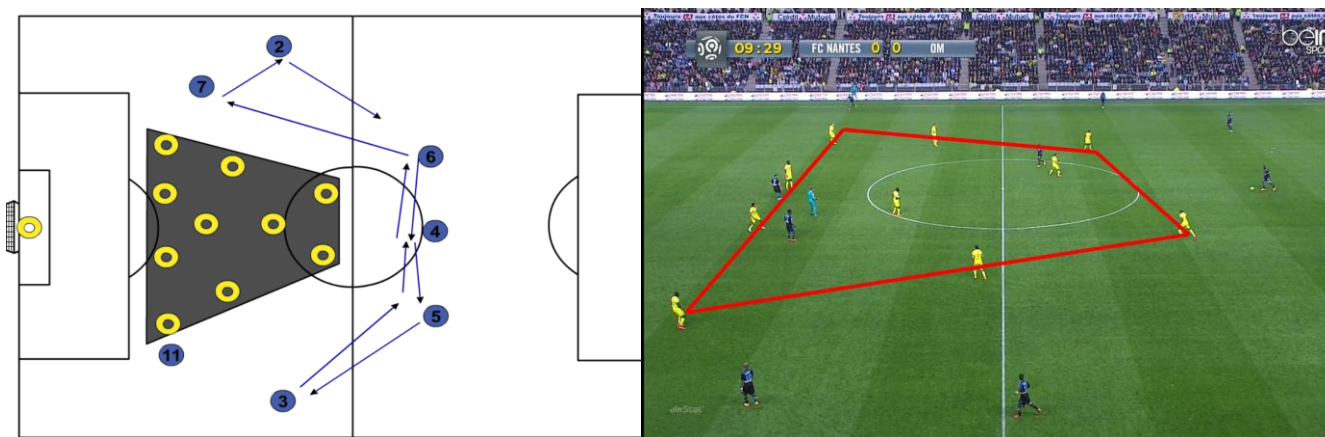
GAME 33: *pass and run my friend*

17.04.2015 Stade de la Beaujoire. Nantes. Ligue 1.

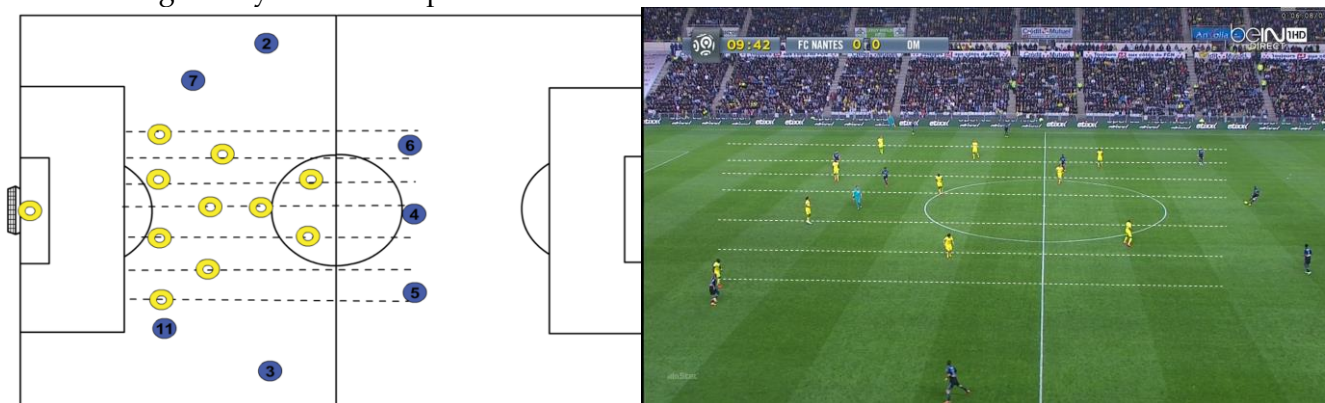
„You don't risk if you don't reward the effort someone deserves. You risk rewarding a victory you didn't deserve”.

FC NANTES 1:0 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

Another team in this round, who compete Bielsa team in the 1: 4: 3: 1: 2 position. To understand the game plan for Nantes, take a moment to set up:



If we look at the 1: 4: 3: 1: 2 set up from a bird's eye view, we can get the impression that it resembles a trapezoid. The concentrated center does not allow vertical passing. What Nantes wanted was a continuous game by OM on “trapeze” side walls.



Narrowing the middle sector causes very good communication between players. In addition, players are positioned vertically with good distance, which allows the geometry of the team shape to better anticipate opponent pass - even when OM beat one of the pressing lines.

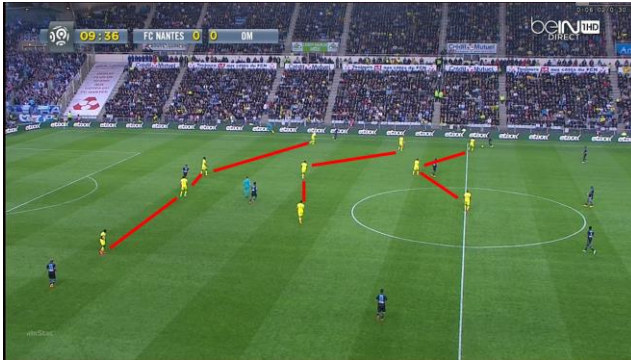
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



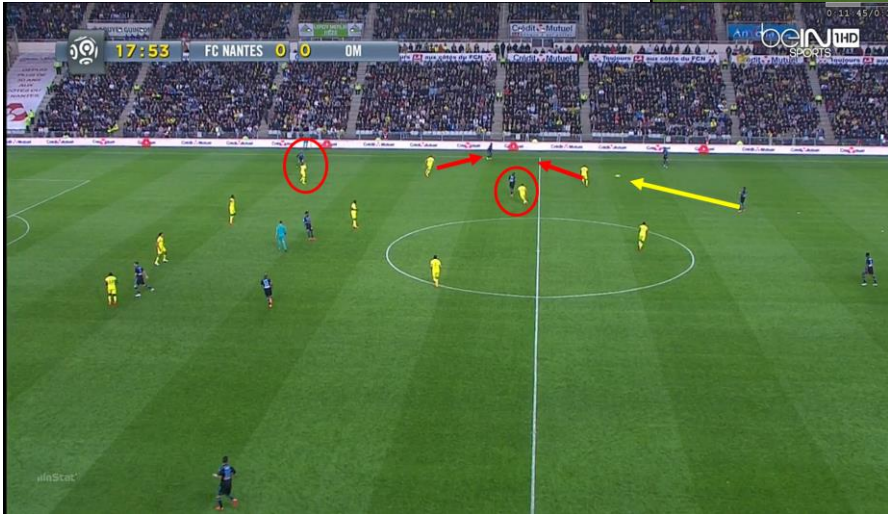
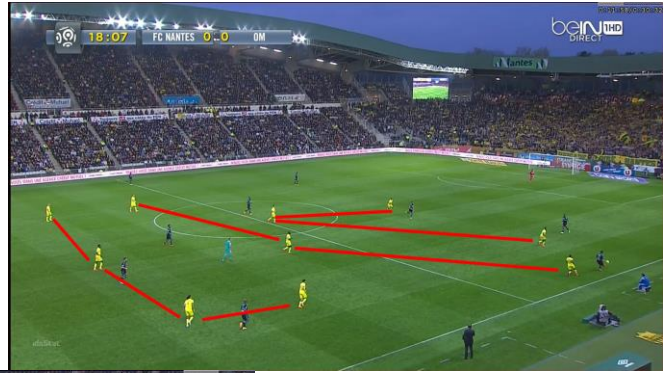
Nantes Pressing:

That kind of set up imposes a pressure to the wings - most teams don't play through such a concentrated center. Nantes, whether the ball was on the right or left, immediately began press!

BALL ON THE LEFT SIDE



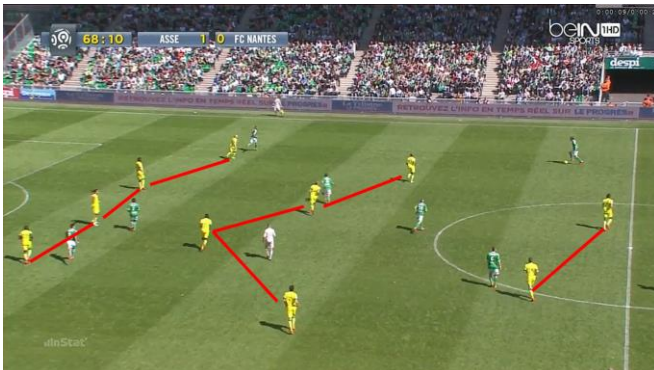
BALL ON THE RIGHT SIDE



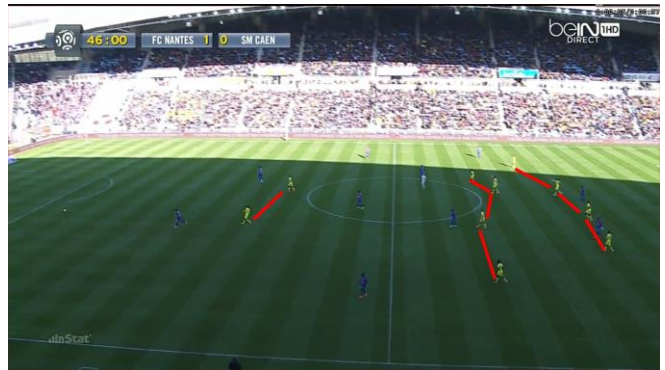
When one of OM central backs started the pass, then the entire Nantes team assumed pressure, trying not to let OM players out of the side zone. After receiving the ball was directly played to one of the two attackers.

Marcelo Bielsa couldn't predict that set up. In previous games, they played 1: 4: 4: 2. Opponents have already learned OM game model and they often changed their shape, only for this one game.

NANTES GAME WITH SAINT ETIENNE



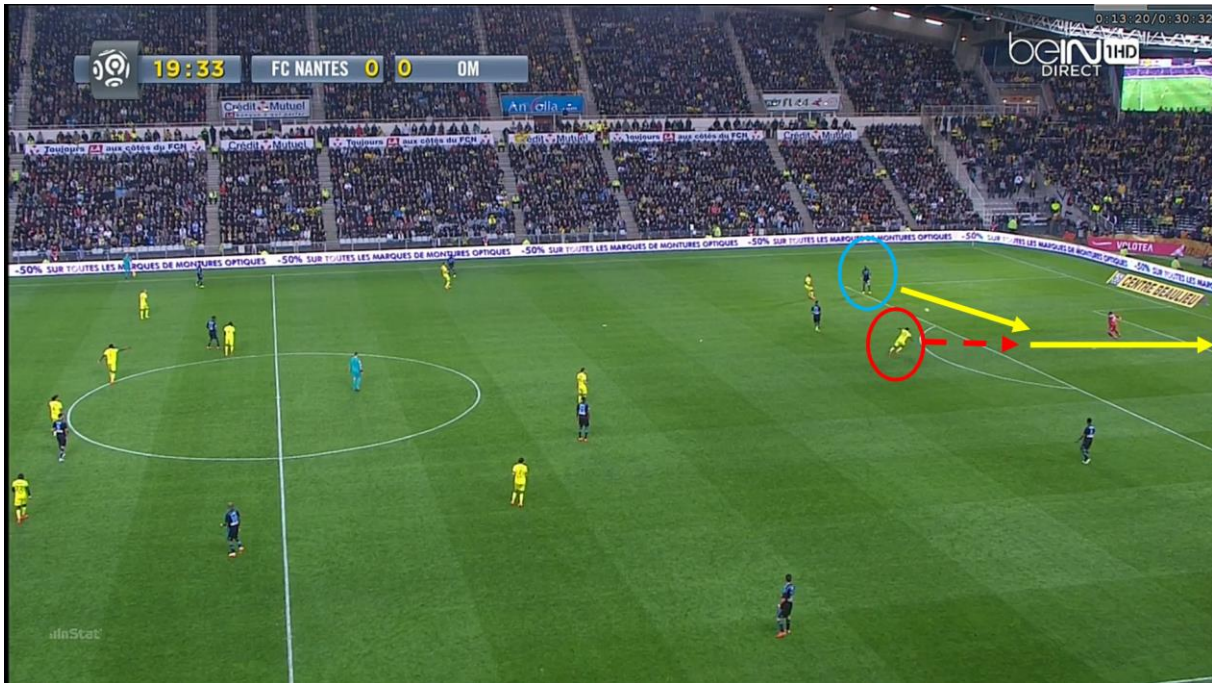
NANTES GAME WITH SM CAEN



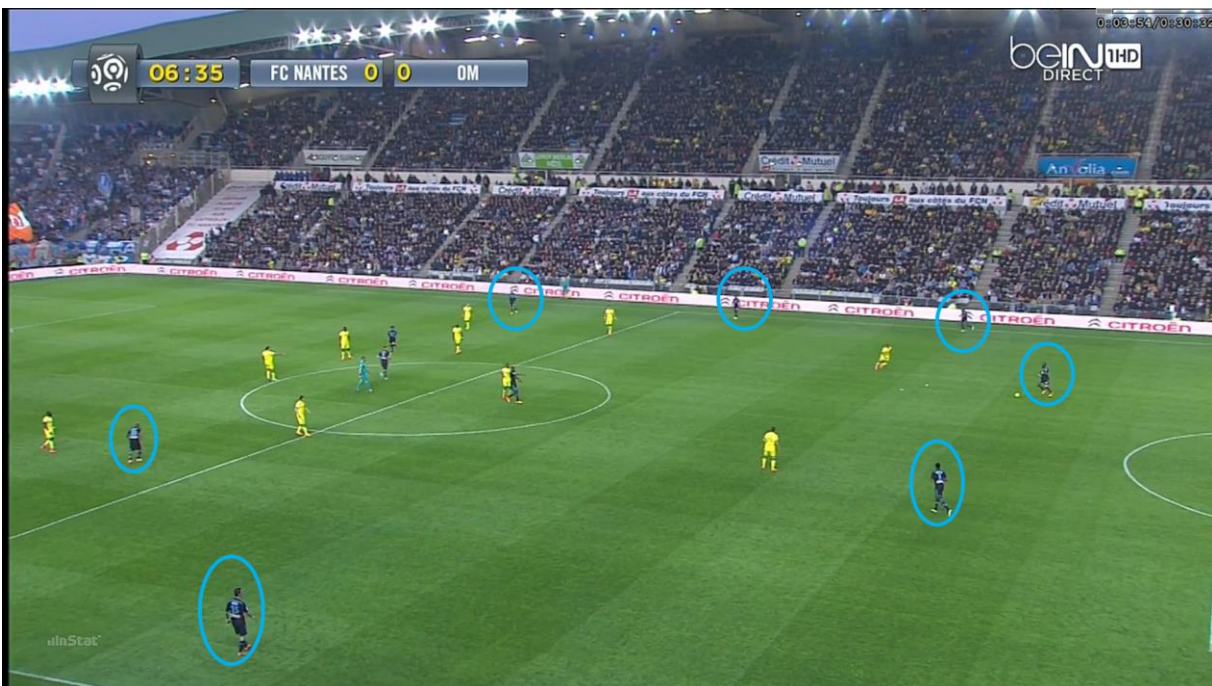
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



One of Nantes counterattack ended with goal. After a good and high position, one of the strikers took the ball unfortunately passed the goalkeeper from center back and scored:



OM decided to attack by wings. After changing sides, they tried to progress on opponent's half. Many players on the wings was to help get the numerical advantage.



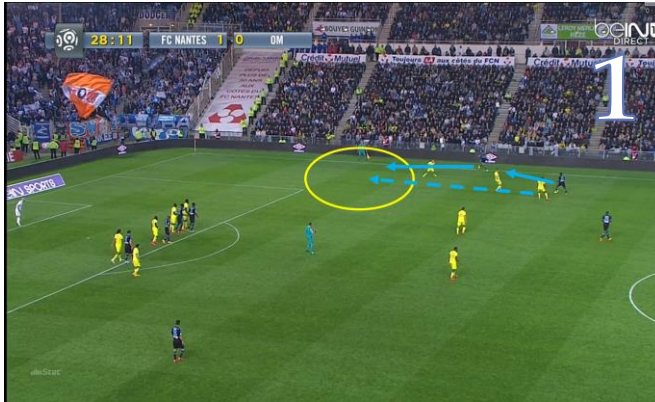
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

...

Pass and go!

It is a tactical concept that OM players used very often. The player with the ball pass to the player set above and overtake him, giving another option to pass forward.

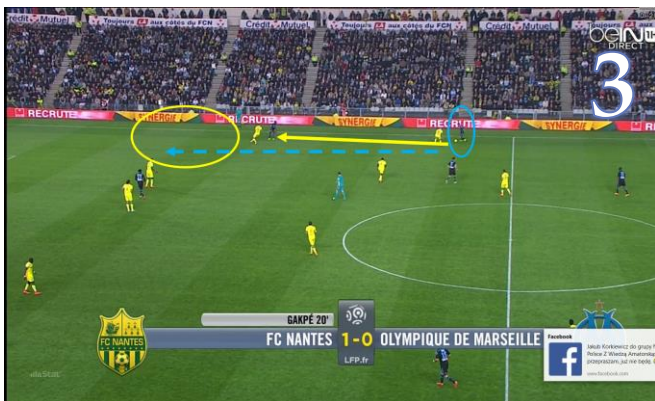
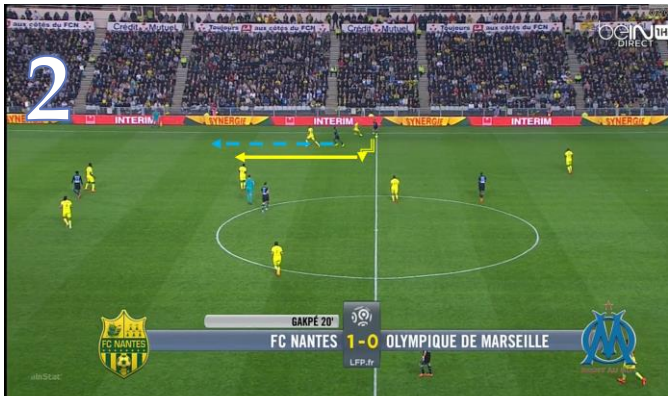
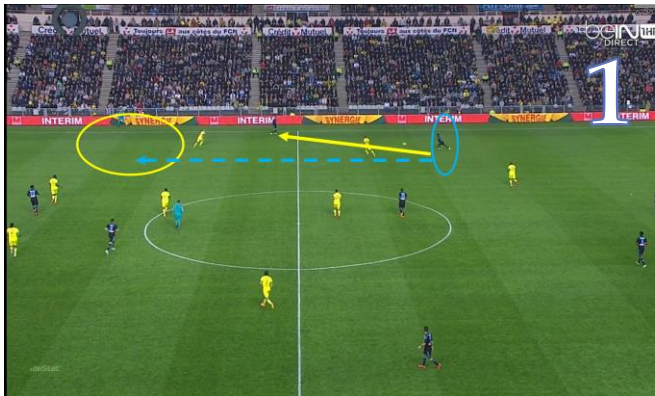
FIRST PASS + GO



CREAT NEXT FORWARD PASSING LINE



After the first pass, it is not always necessary to pass the ball forward. If the player who made forward run takes the opponent with him, the ball can be taken inside in free space. What was amazing was the fact that two cooperating players were able to repeat this concept in each subsequent pass!!!



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

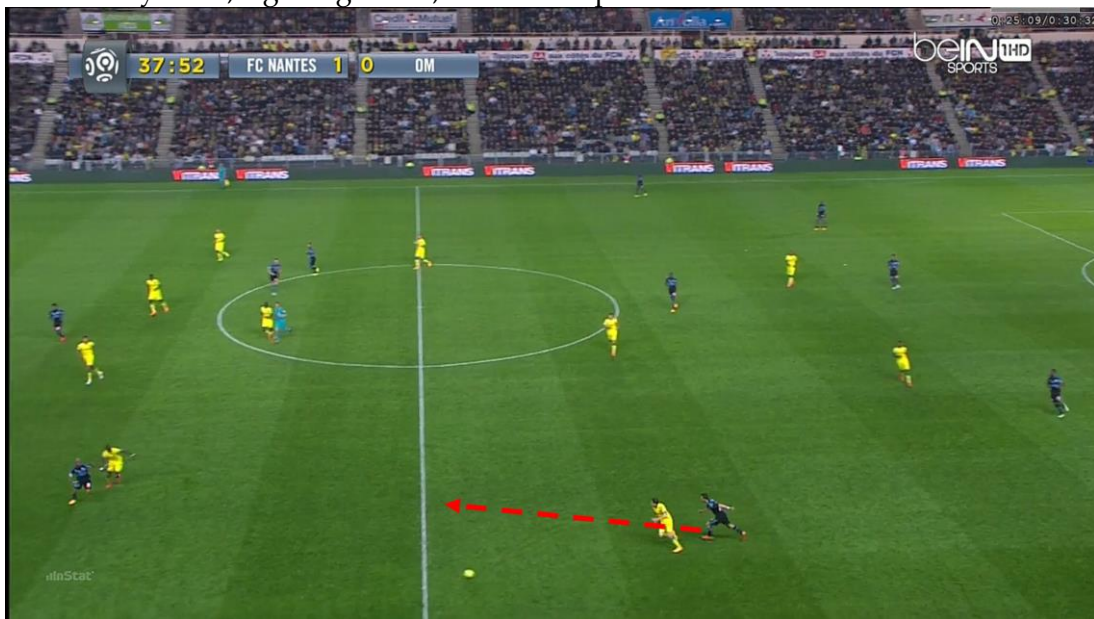
...

EXECUTION OF THE DECISION (PASS AND GO)

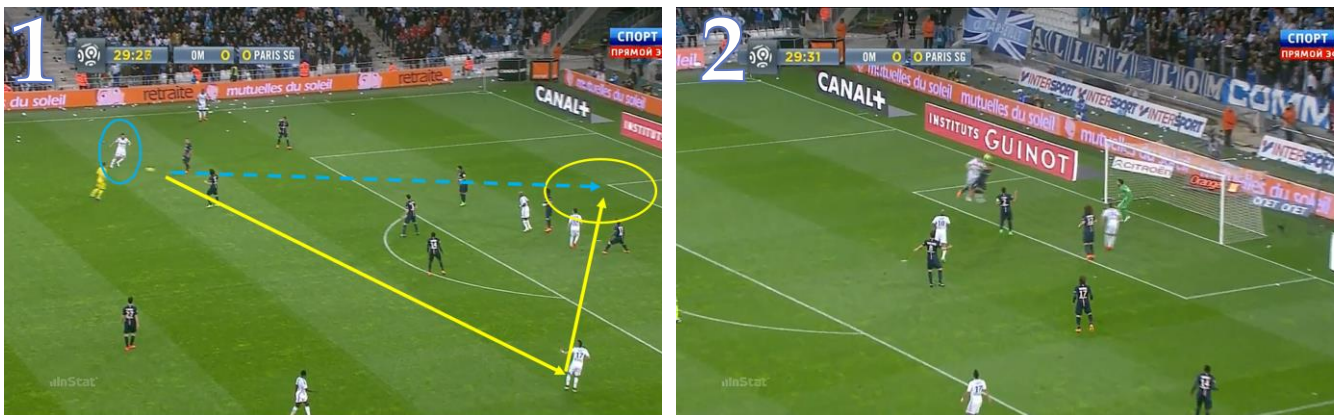
This pass not only give possibility to progress, but also passes the opponent who is making the pressure. At the moment of pass (when the leg is already landing) the player immediately accelerates:



Left leg marked in yellow, right leg - blue, movement path - red.



It is worth mentioning that this concept was used in earlier games. Just analyze the goal scored by Gignac with PSG two games before:



Unfortunately, in the game with Nantes no way brought the goal.

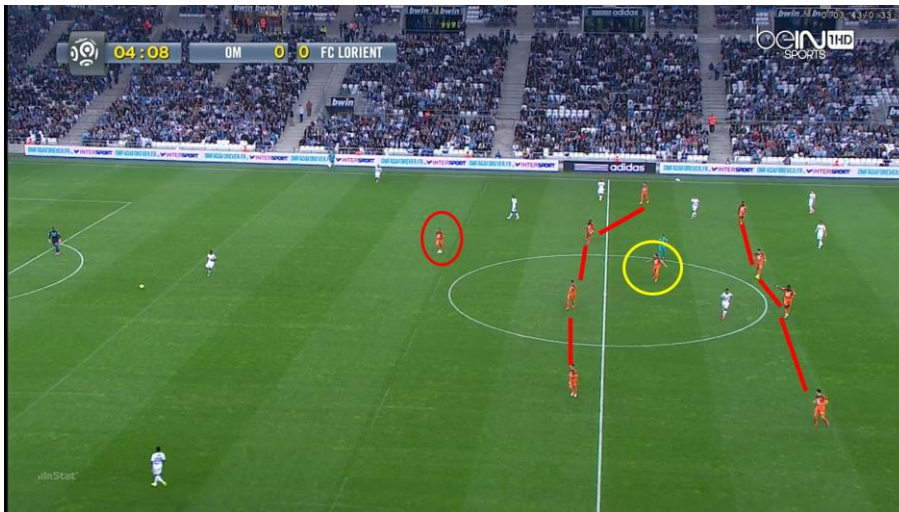
GAME 34: reckless attack

24.04.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

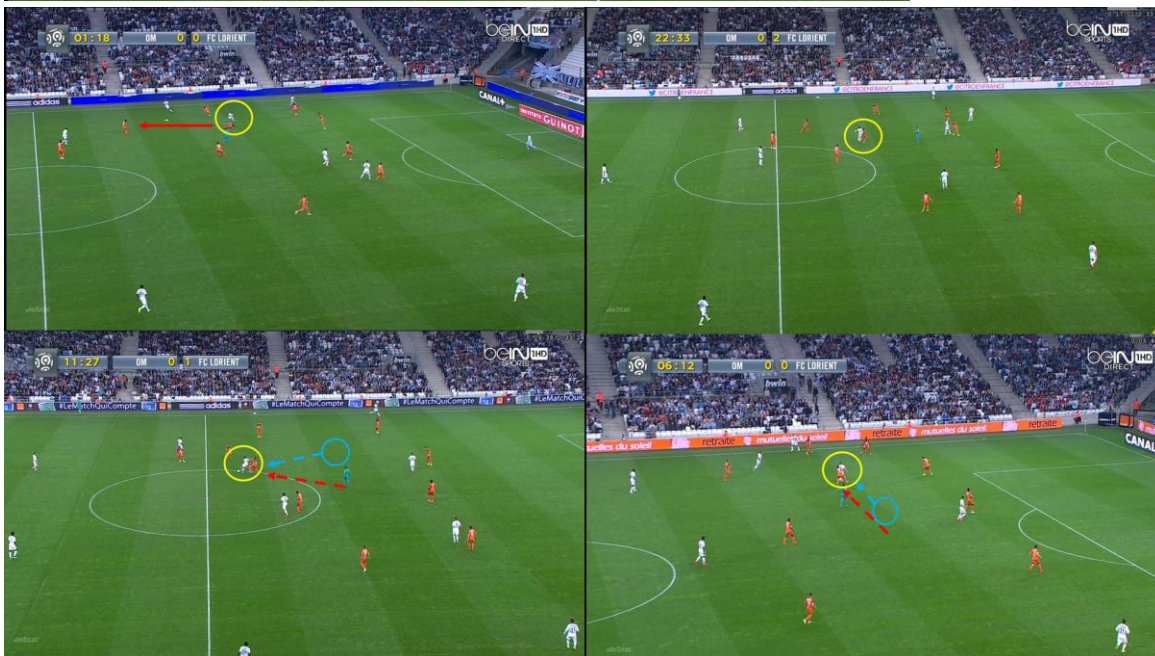
„The moments that made me better are connected with failure”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 3:5 FC LORIENT

FC Lorient being 16th in Ligue 1 caused a big surprise in this game. Everyone in Marseille was counting on OM win, who lost the last three game. Ripolle's team was very well organized in a 1: 4: 1: 4: 1. Lorient pressed OM on the wings, not allowing to play between her midfield and defense line. The Lorient player who had the most important defense task was Mostefa Mehdi (yellow).



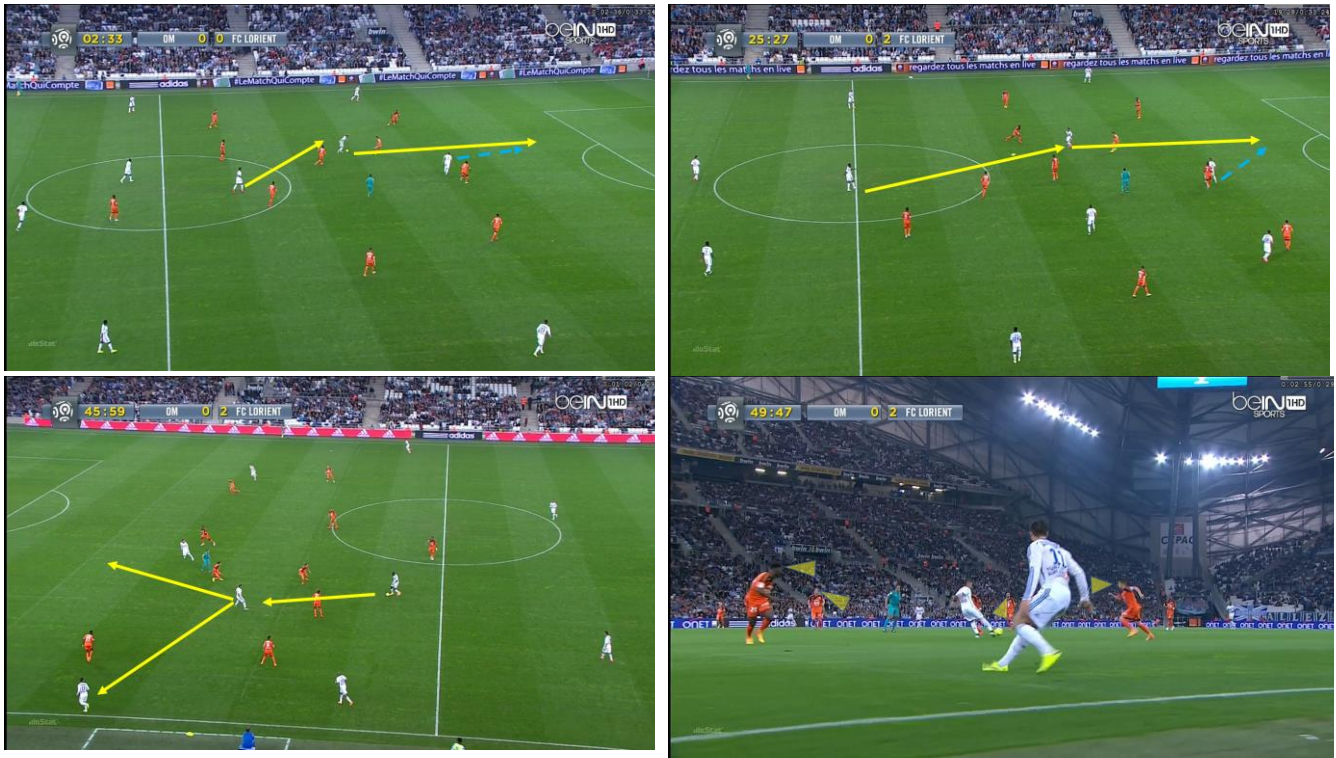
Mehdi was set as defensive central midfielder. He not only instructed and conducted the whole team (as shown in the figure), but also ran a lot. He was very smart. Every time OM passed between Lorient lines; Mehdi was there. He also assisted the players on the wings so that OM would not have any numerical advantage.



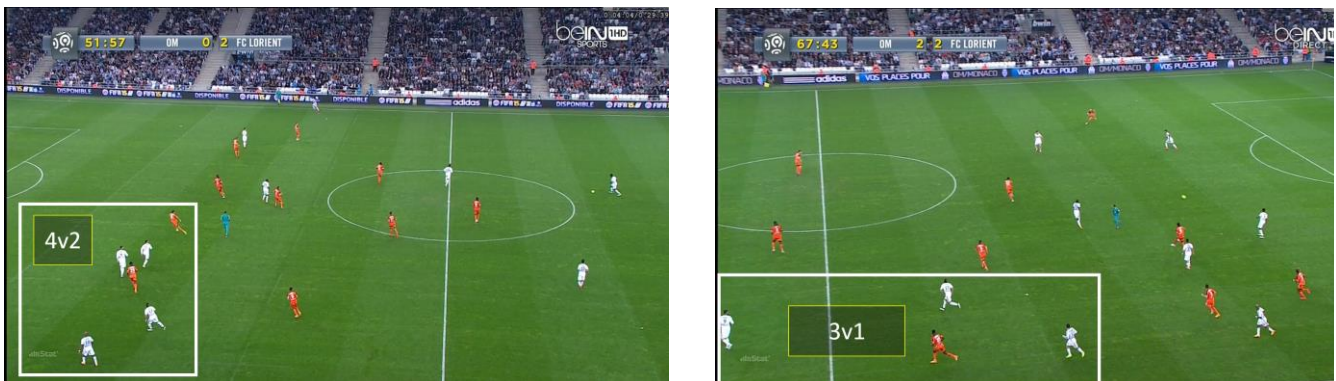
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



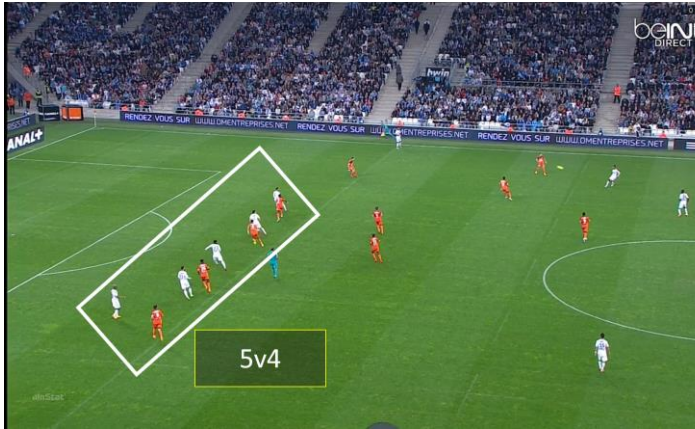
As soon as the ball passed between Lorient's lines, OM tried to immediately pass to Gignac who moved behind Lorient defensive line and except penetrating pass.



The player who's positioned between the lines focuses the attention of more then one opponent (Fig. right). This means that the other players gain more time when they received the ball from teammate. In the second half, OM players were trying to create a numerical advantage on the left side of the pitch. Stepping down to the side, Payet and Gignac helped in overload Lorient players on the wings.



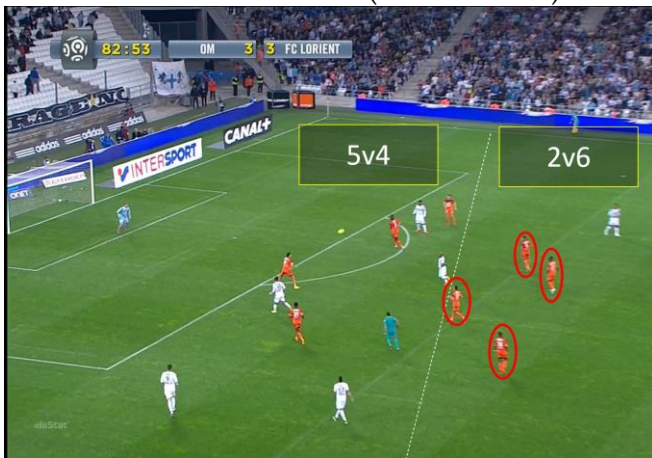
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



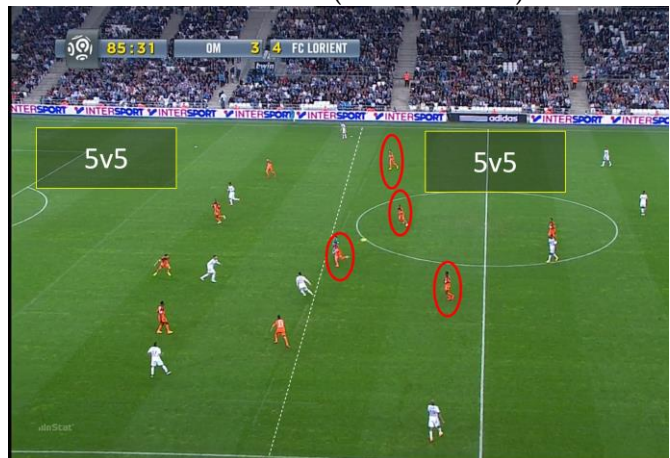
← The next goal was also to create a numerical advantage over the number of players in Lorient defensive line. After this action (movement behind Lorient defenders) Batshuayi scored a goal. Other goals scored by OM after set pieces.

Large number of players overloading opponent's defensive line also carries risks. Especially during long ball. It is true that the chance of winning the air duel increases (advantage as in the picture above), but every ball struck by opponents will most likely go to the opponents' midfielders (marked yellow below). They will collect the "second" ball. In this way Lorient started two counterattacks:

LORIENT FOURTH GOAL (BEGINNING)



LORIENT FIFTH GOAL (BEGINNING)



In the situations analyzed above, the ball was collected by one of the players marked in yellow. Often, that's how OM lost goals because of opponent's counterattacks. Next what we can see is the number of players who will not be able to return because a distance between marked opponents and them. It is very difficult to defend against such a counterattack. Each of the marked players moved into the OM penalty box. It was the fourth defeat in a row. The problem wasn't only defensive transition but also players high position's before transition. After this meeting, Bielsa team fell to 5th place Ligue 1.

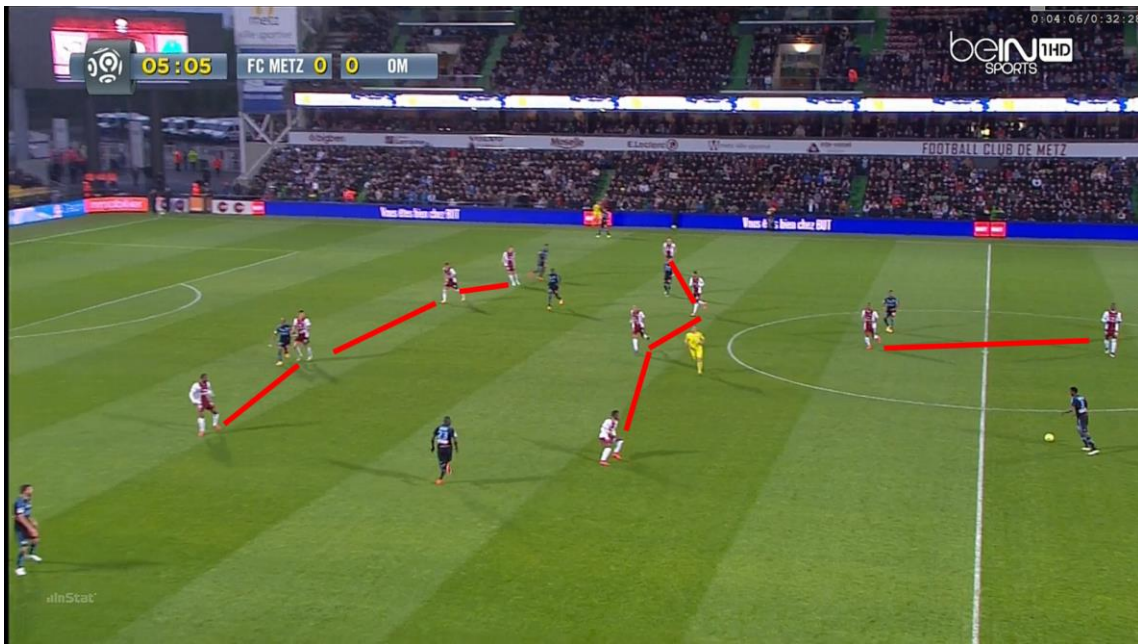
GAME 35: axis on the pitch

01.05.2015 Stade Saint-Symphorien. Metz. Ligue 1.

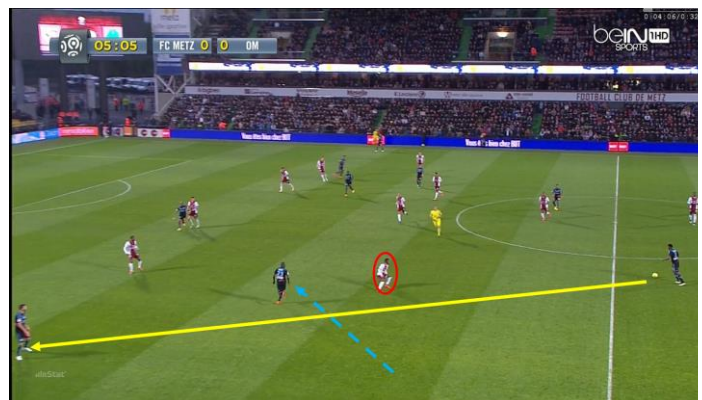
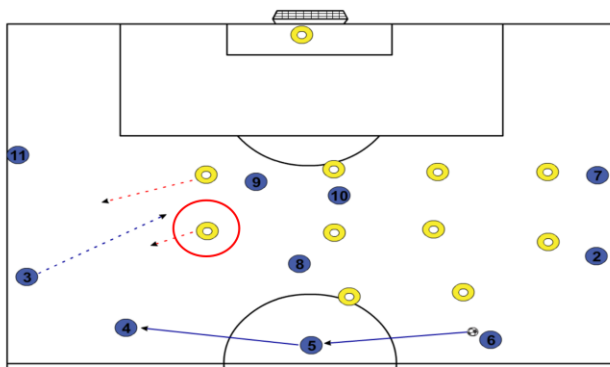
„It is not possible to acquire knowledge without discovering it”.

FC METZ 0:2 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

After four defeats in a row, that was OM time to win. FC Metz team focused on playing in low / medium pressing 1: 4: 4: 2:

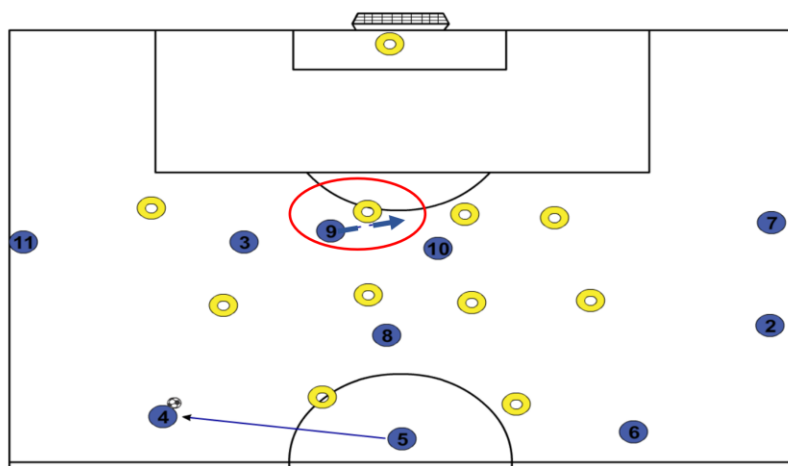


Because of opponent's compactness in defense, the OM team changed sides of the game as often as possible. A frequent rotation was inverted fullback to stop on the position opponent's winger. A passing line to the teammate then was formed:

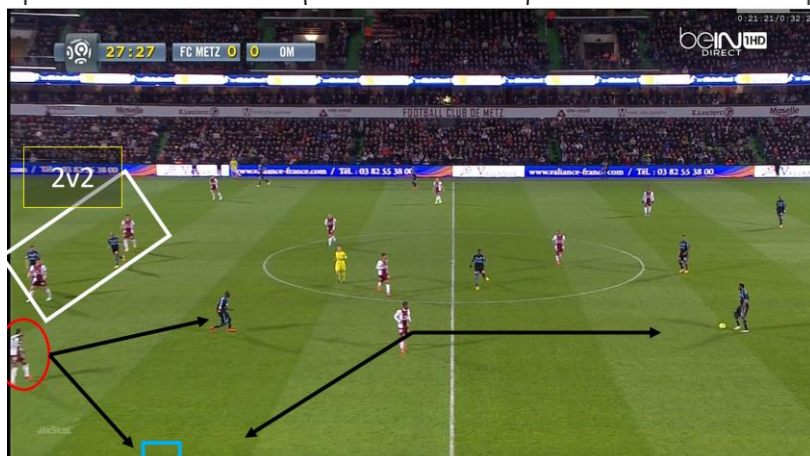


The opponent's winger (marked in red) when he sees an oncoming opponent running behind him, must stop and close the pass line to the middle (between him and central midfielder).

During this rotation also important is striker role.



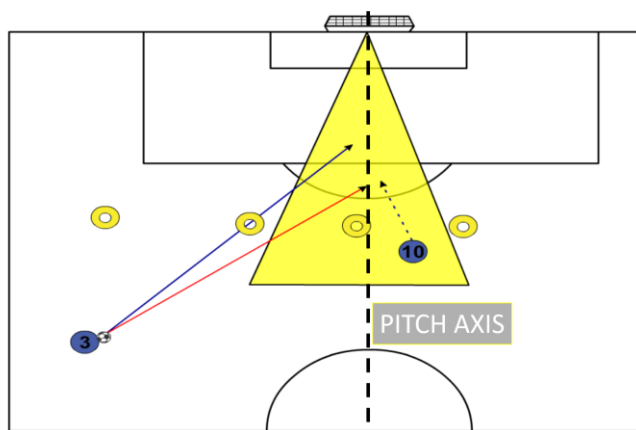
← If the OM team changed sides and the opponent moved to the ball, then Gignac also made the move in the opposite direction. This is how to stop move of opponent's center backs. If they stop moving to the ball (because of striker position), more space will be created to attack on the wings. This is not the only advantage of this movement.



← OM cause in this manner problem for opponent's fullback (marked in red). Should he cover opponents inverted fullback? Should he close the passing line to winger?

It is not difficult to imagine if Gignac would also go on the wing (despite being in middle), then the fullback had a support of the center backs.

Everything was aimed to beat the opponent's midfield line (vertical pass) or going to the finalization phase (final third). When this goal was met, the player with the ball most often looked for the ball (final pass) behind the defensive line. We will now analyze the place where the ball was played.

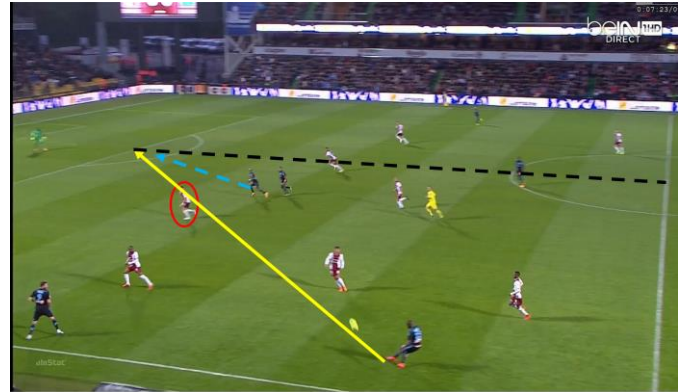
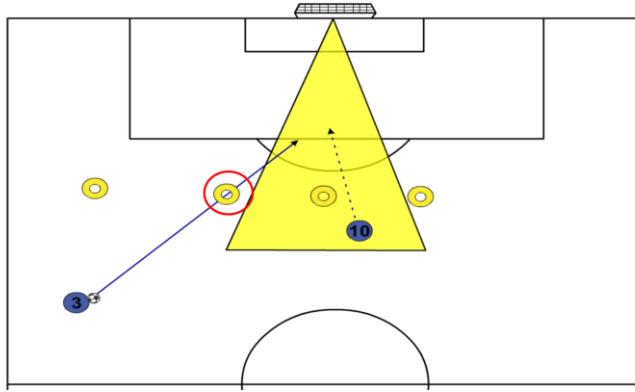


The closer to the goal, the better it is to pass the ball as close as possible to the center axis of the pitch (marked in black). The player who will take the ball closer to the center has more space and possibilities (the goalkeeper will stand in the center so he will reveal two sides of the goal relatively evenly). We are also increasing the margin of error during receiving the ball. Being in the middle of the goal after receiving the ball we have an easier situation to score

Variant 1 (marked above in blue) shows the long ball above one center back.

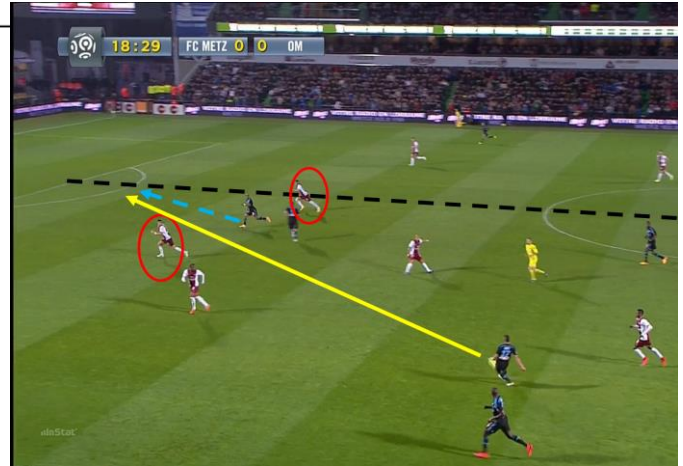
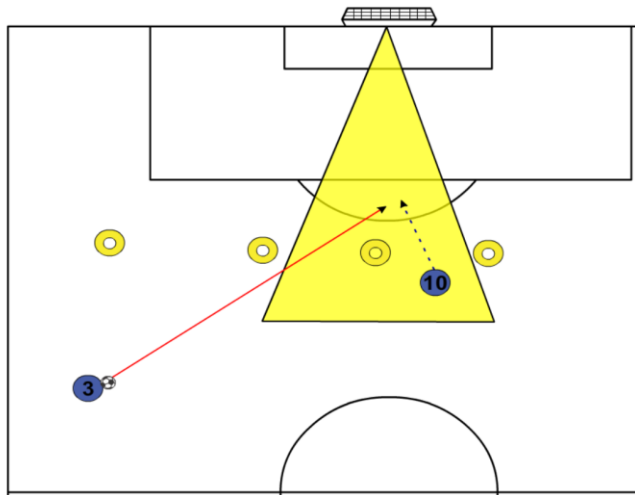
Variant 2 (marked above in red) is a pass between opponent's center backs on the ground. Both passes should be played as close as possible to the pitch axis.

VARIANT ONE:



Long ball, which falls just behind the back of the center back (marked in red) is easier to control. If a player receives the ball well, he will be 1v1 with goalkeeper on the middle of the penalty box.

VARIANT TWO:

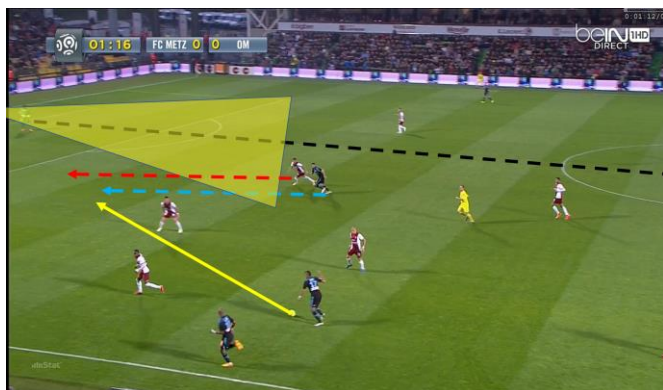
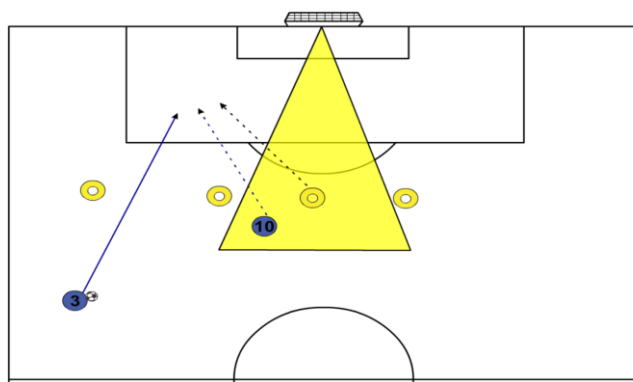


A strong pass on the ground between the middle defenders makes the striker have a similar situation to score. It is also in the middle of the goal.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

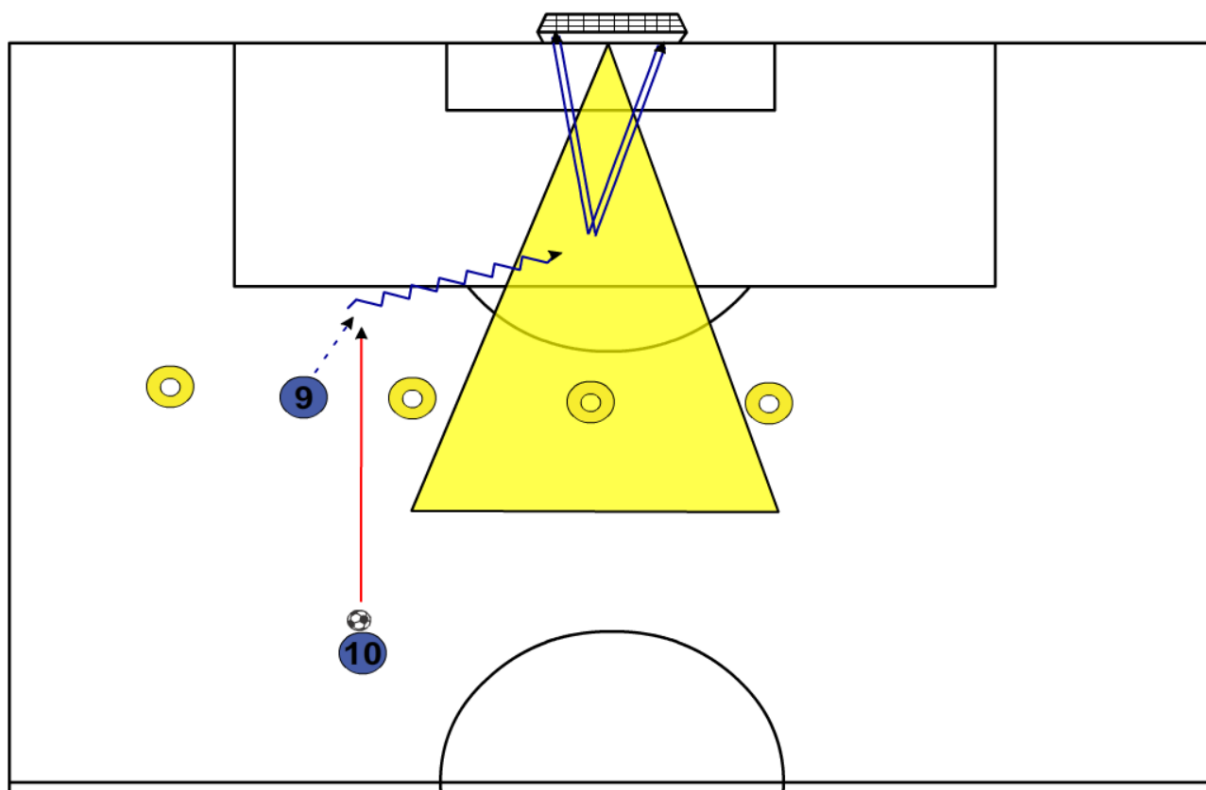
• • •

The yellow zone behind the defensive line is where the final ball should be passed. Such a pass will not “throw” the partner out of the goal area. However, if the ball is out of this zone, the opponent may press the player at the sideline, or he will simply be away from the goal:



The ball played outside the yellow zone not only causes the exit of the goal light, but also results in our attacker running to the ball and not seeing the goal simultaneously. This is of course the result of going beyond the central axis of the pitch. This made the task for the opponent’s center backs easier (he sees the ball and the opponent at the same time).

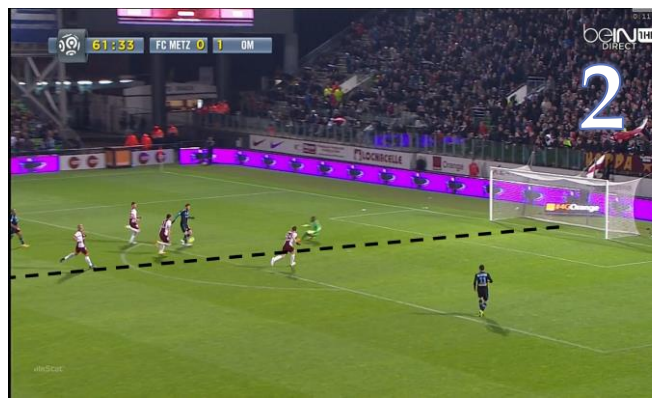
If striker is outside of this area, he has to do everything to return to the yellow sector (close to the central axis). Preferably with one touch. That's what Gignac did at the second goal (first he scored after a corner kick at the end of the first half).



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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GIGNAC GOAL – TWO PERSPECTIVE'S



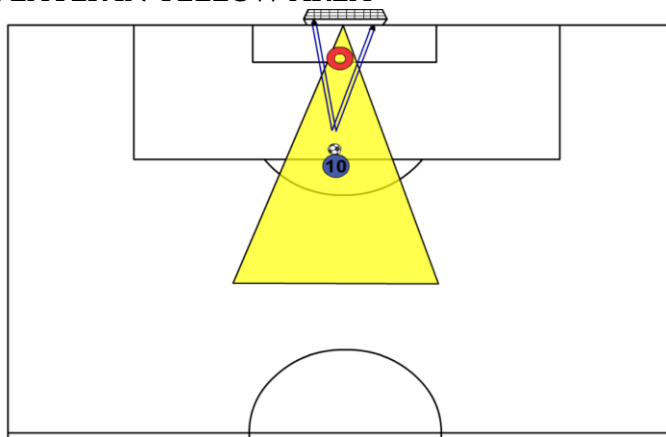
SPACE OF THE FIRST TOUCH (RECEIVING)

SHOT POSITION AFTER RECEIVING



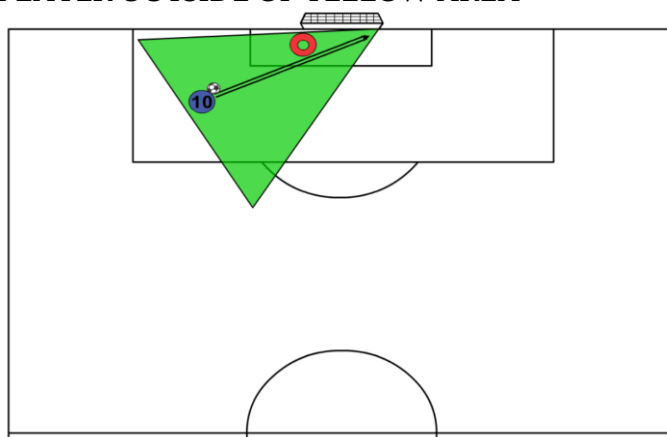
The situations presented above are intended to show the intention of receive the ball to the central axis. If the player with the ball is unable to receive the danger area, at least he should try to go with the ball as close as possible to that area. This affects the position of the goalkeeper. Goalkeeper perspective:

PLAYER IN YELLOW AREA



EASIER TO SCORE

PLAYER OUTSIDE OF YELLOW AREA



MUCH DIFFICULT SITUATION TO SCORE

It was the first of four consecutive and at the same time the last game of the season, which ended in victory for the team from Marseille.

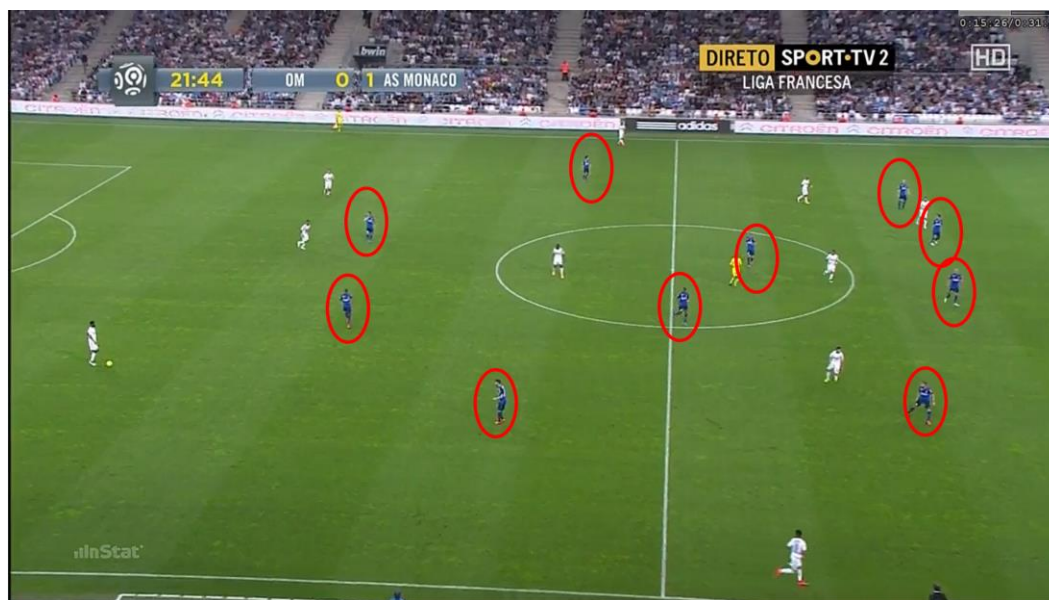
GAME 36: the fourth is useless

10.05.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

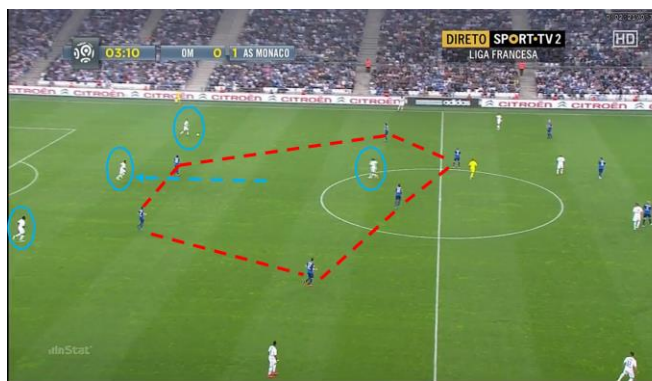
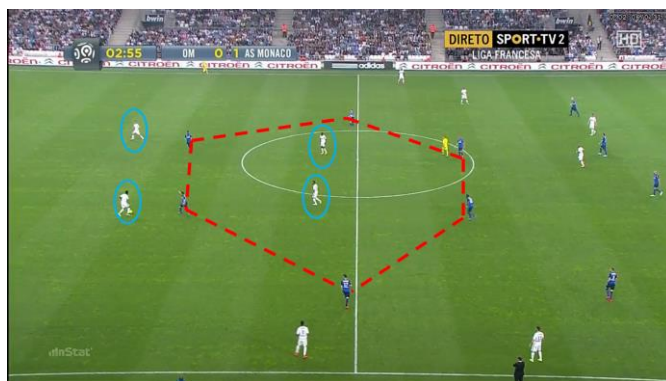
„A lot of coaches will tell you that you must decide your philosophy based on the players you've got – I don't agree. It's very hard to convince a player of something that you don't believe in to the death”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 2:1 AS MONACO

OM played with the third team in Ligue 1 the AS Monaco. After 45 seconds, Bielsa team was losing, thanks to Moutinho. It was the fifteenth game of the season in which the opponent was the first to take the lead in games with OM.



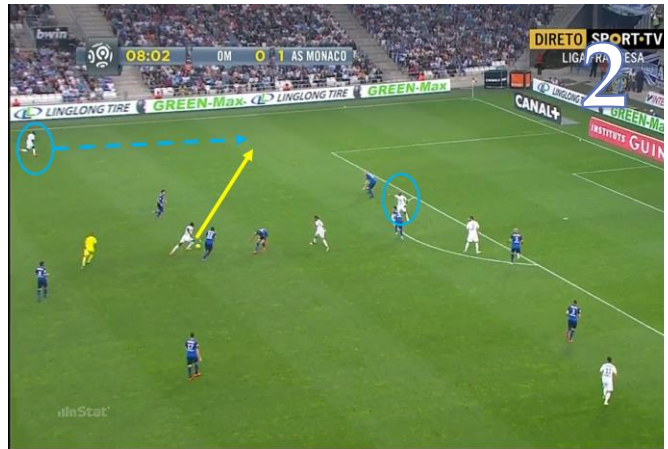
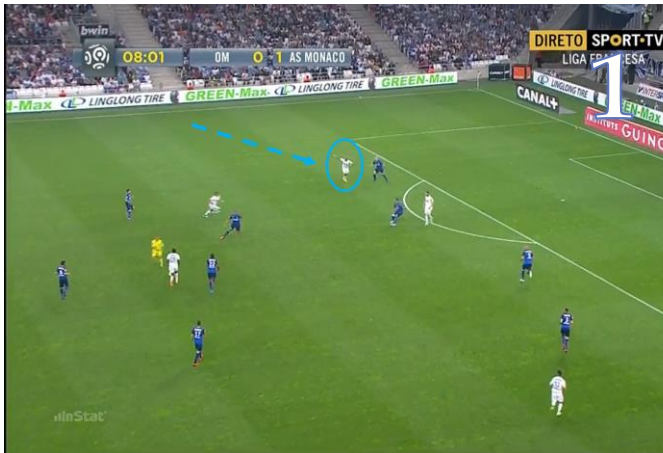
Bielsa team played alternately with 1:4:2:3:1 and 1:3:3:3:1:



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

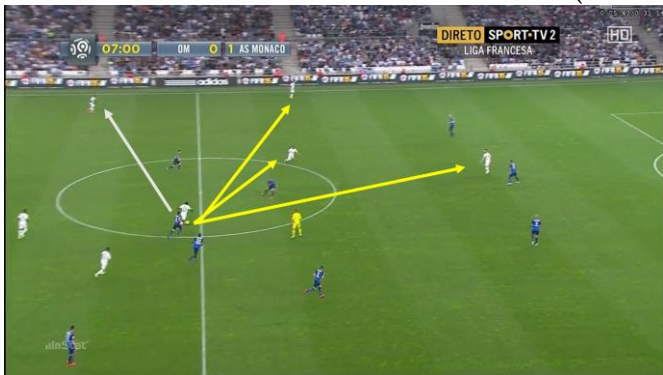
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OM was already tactically aware of their game model, that the automatisms that Marcelo Bielsa mentioned at various press conferences were visible:

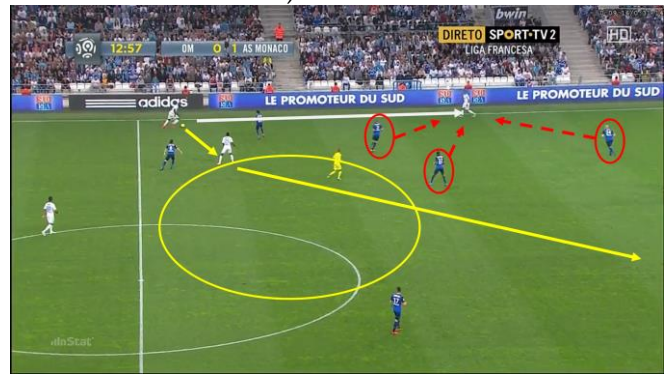


The players could already predict what would happen. Anticipation in football situations has a positive effect on the game and speeds up the action. However, often players with the ball made a mistake in making decisions (e.g. pass to a less optimal place) or during execution of decision (technical performance).

BAD DECISION (PASS IN A WRONG PLACE):

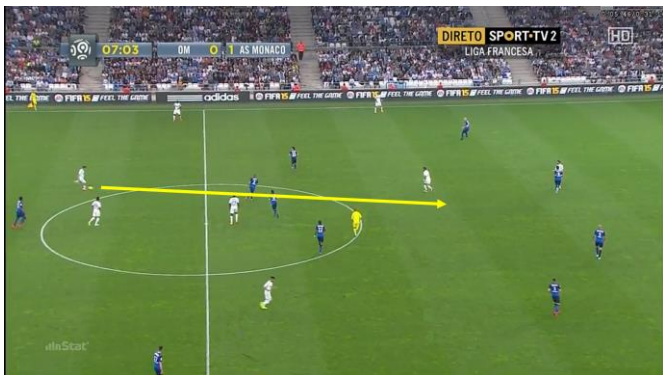


With three forward passing options, the OM player passed back (white arrow).

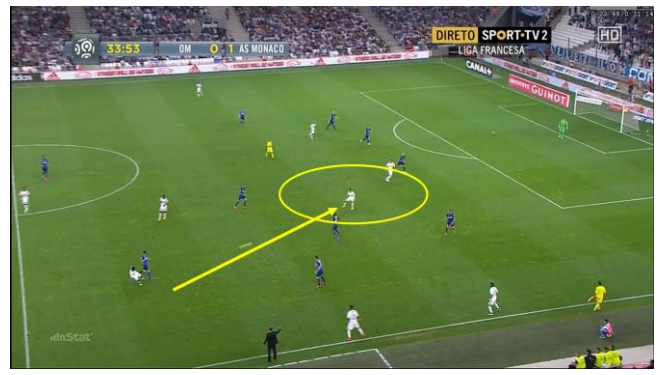


Having the opportunity to switch, the OM player continued attack without numerical superiority.

BAD EXECUTION OF THE DECISION:



Good decision, bad pass.



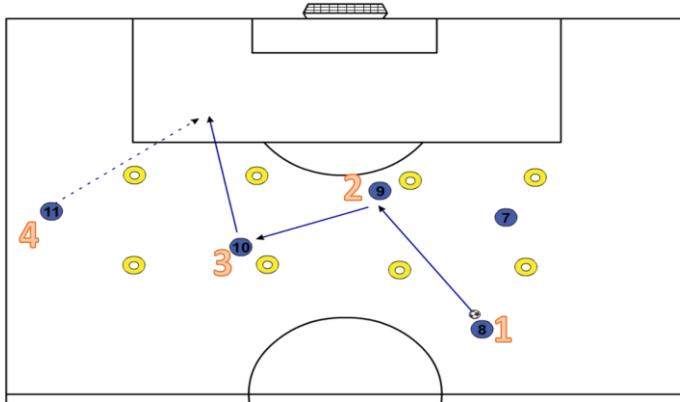
Bad control – even if player has a free space.

MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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NO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "FOUR" RUNNING PLAYER CONCEPT

The running fourth player is an extension of the 3rd Man concept. Make it simple: The player on the ball (first) during the attacking phase, must pass as far as possible on the ground (vertical pass). The person who receives the ball (second) is to play the ball to the player (third) who will be facing the goal, but closer to the opponent's goal, than the player who started the action at the beginning.

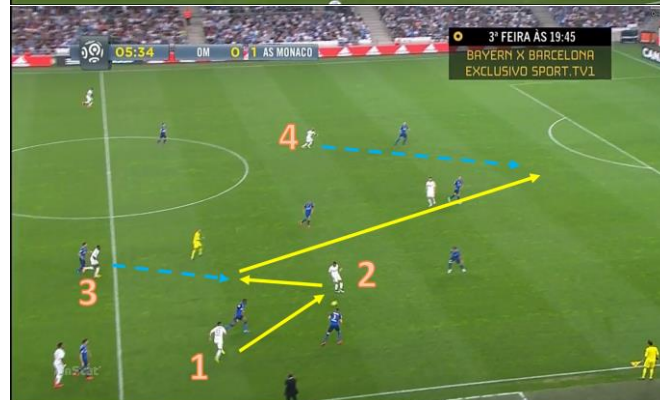
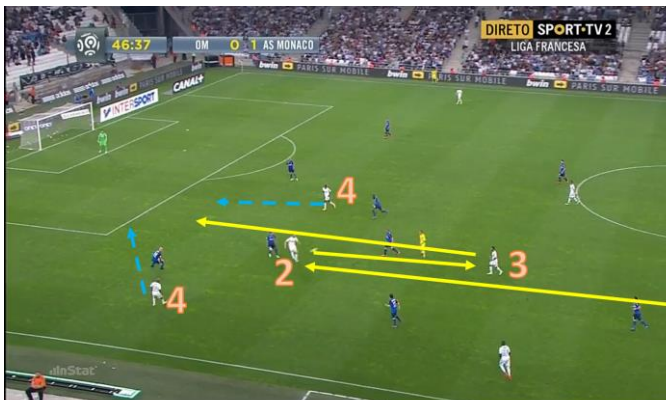
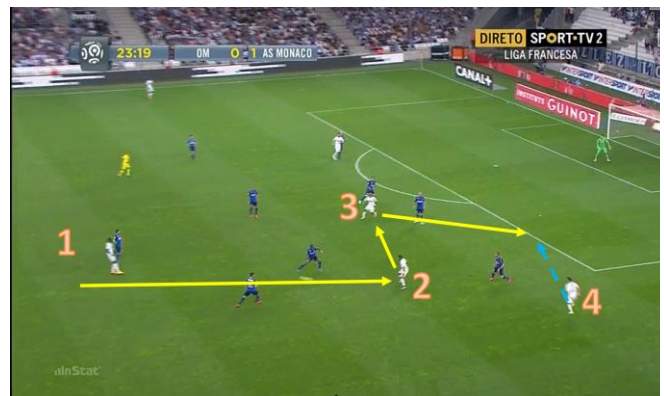
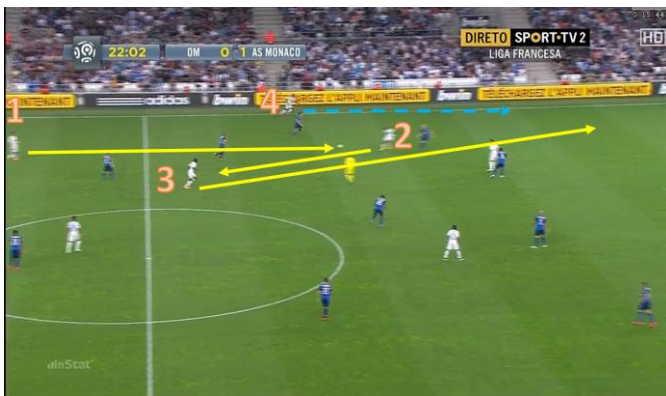


The fourth player (usually on the other side), when he recognizes (3rd Man concept) the moment, moves behind the opponent's defensive line. It can be paraphrased (in simple terms) that the **concept of the third player is a triangle game and the fourth player is in a diamond.**

Three components of this concept:

- 1 / Passing through lines (vertical pass).
- 2/ The 3rd Man concept
- 3 / Run behind the opponent's defensive line.

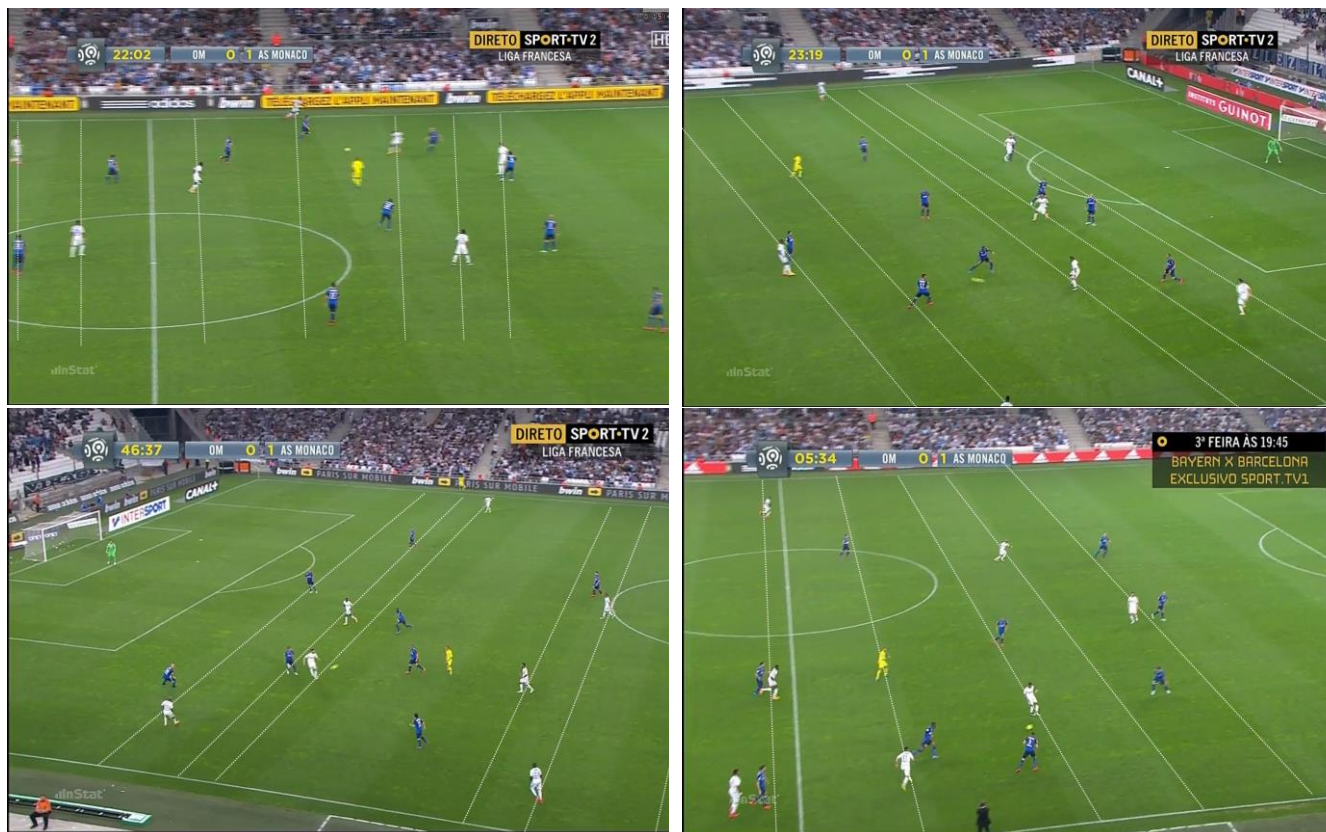
Unfortunately OM players, who knows how to use 3rd Man concept, didn't notice the fourth player. They always begin the action when player (1) gives a pass for (2) who does a first touch with the third man (3) but without playing with (4).



MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



Each of the actions presented ended with a "third" player ("fourth" player was not used). Not once did they lose the ball, so they continue actions. Placing the players (at different heights) helped in creating the pass line and significantly made the attack easier (playing in a "diamond" or „triangle"). Those positions of players are crucial in implementing these concepts. Analyzing once again the same situations presented above, this can be seen:



What is an amazing advantage of these two concepts is their flexibility. They are not assigned to specific players in specific positions. They are used in various places on the pitch. It is independent of the game system. This understanding of the set up helps manage the ball in the most optimal way. Other things that should be consider in application of 3rd or 4th Man concepts:

- The first player who has the ball has to make brave decision. If the player has spaces to pass, he must move the ball to attract the opponents and find free players to execute the pass.
- When the first player has the ball, he has to be able to look far. With his pass, he has to break his opponents' pressure lines.
- The second player has to move between lines where he attract opponents and play with the 'Third Man'. This pass should be very quick (preferably one touch) so that the line that we have just overcame, does not have time to come back
- The beneficiary of this action will be the 'third man' who must be able to see the space and make a decision: progress with the ball or find 4th Man.

GAME 37: *balance*

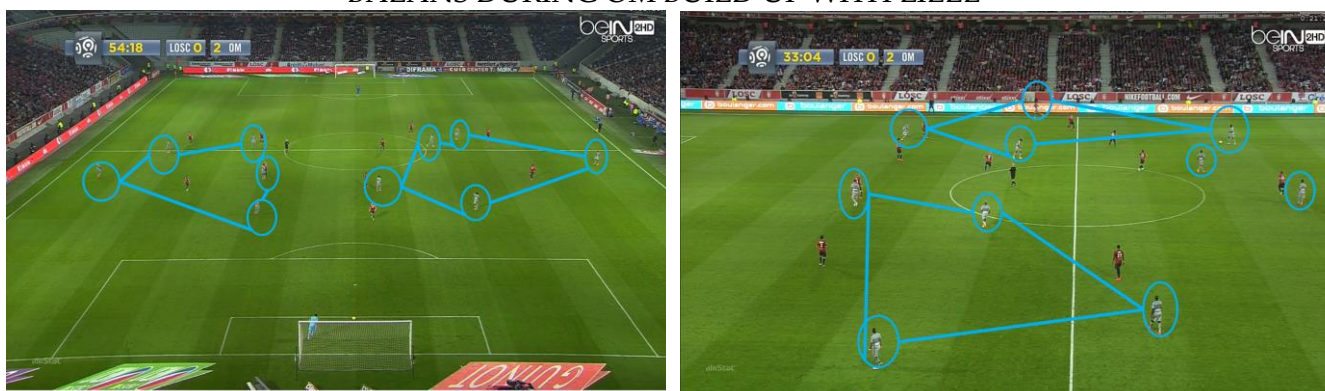
16.05.2015 Stade Pierre-Mauroy. Lille. Ligue 1.

„You have two possibility in our environment. You either win or learn”.

LOSC LILLE 0:4 OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

OM in this game showed the importance of tactical discipline in attacking. Compared to the defense phase, or rather the pressing, where it can often be said about the dominant structure of the team, in the attacking phase Bielsa team-maintained balance.

BALANS DURING OM BUILD UP WITH LILLE

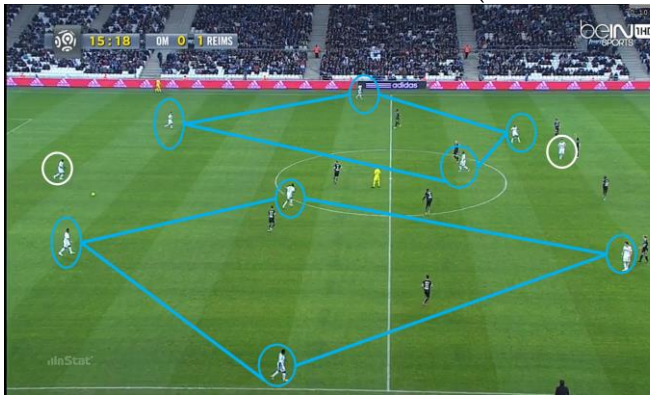


Team balance does not always mean equal distribution of each player on the pitch. This attacking structure depends on the way the team want to build up (for example three/four defenders at the back). It is also often adapted to specific opponents and their positioning. You need to take in to account skills of your players too. An effective attack also depends on taking advantage of your opponent's weaknesses and hiding your own flaws. Another aspect taken into account when it comes to the structure of the team's attack is the number of opponent's players in the first pressing line (does the opponent play with one / two / three striker?). Also considered are the opponent's defects, the type of pressing they used, weak points (players), free spaces, are one of many aspects that Bielsa considered when considering the next game. When you are preparing a game scenario in your head, you should always define your opponent's game in every possible way. It can be assumed that therefore the team of Marcelo Bielsa so often changed the set up not only between games, but also during one particular game.

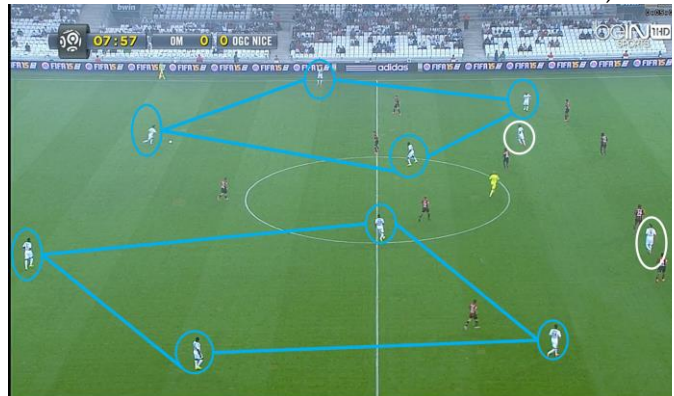
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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OM ATTACKING STRUCTURE (GAME WITH STADE REIMS vs GAME WITH OGC NICEA)

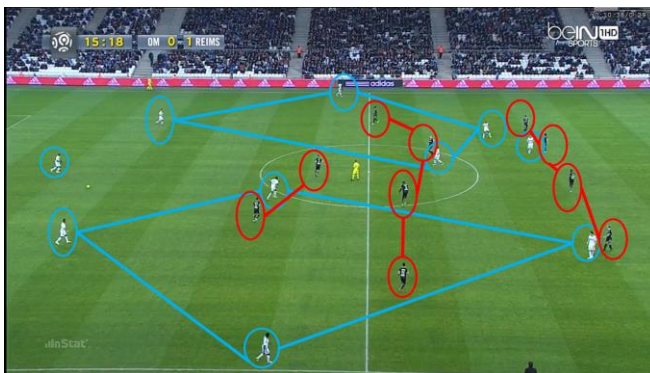


Build up -three at the back during (1:3:3:1:3).

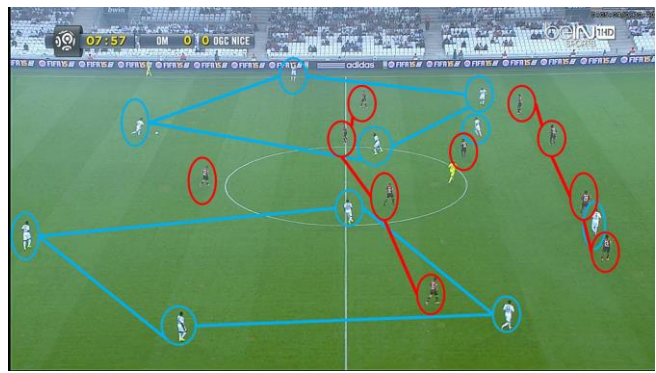


Build up – four at the back (1:4:2:3:1).

COMPARISON WITH DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE OF OPPONENTS



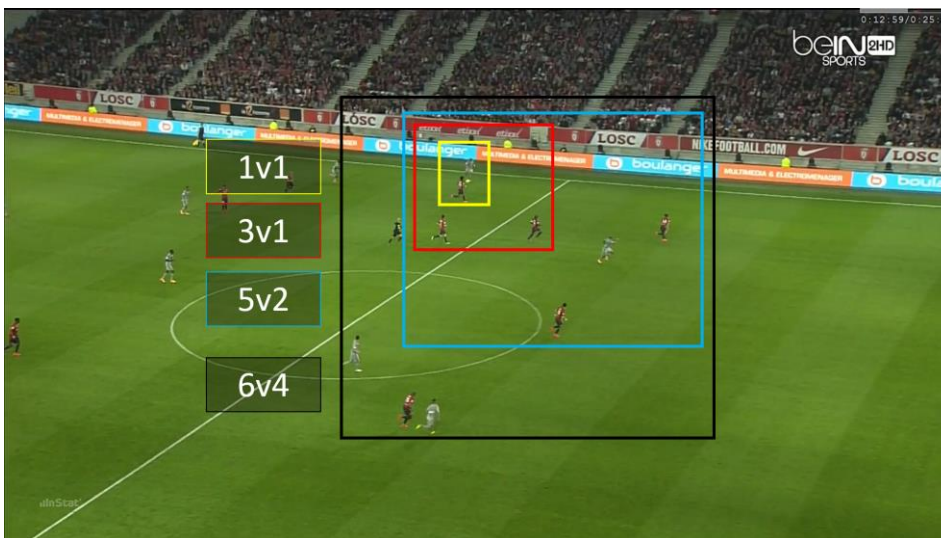
STADE REIMS – 1:4:4:2



OGC NICEA – 1:4:1:4:1

A good positional structure is necessary for further progress in the game. If the opponent is not interested in active pressing, but only focus on disturbing, then it is much easier to use rotations from the ordered structure of the attack (see earlier games: "we are in position for a while, not positions").

TACTICAL PROBLEM – OPPONENTS IN DEFENSE ARE MOSTLY ON NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE



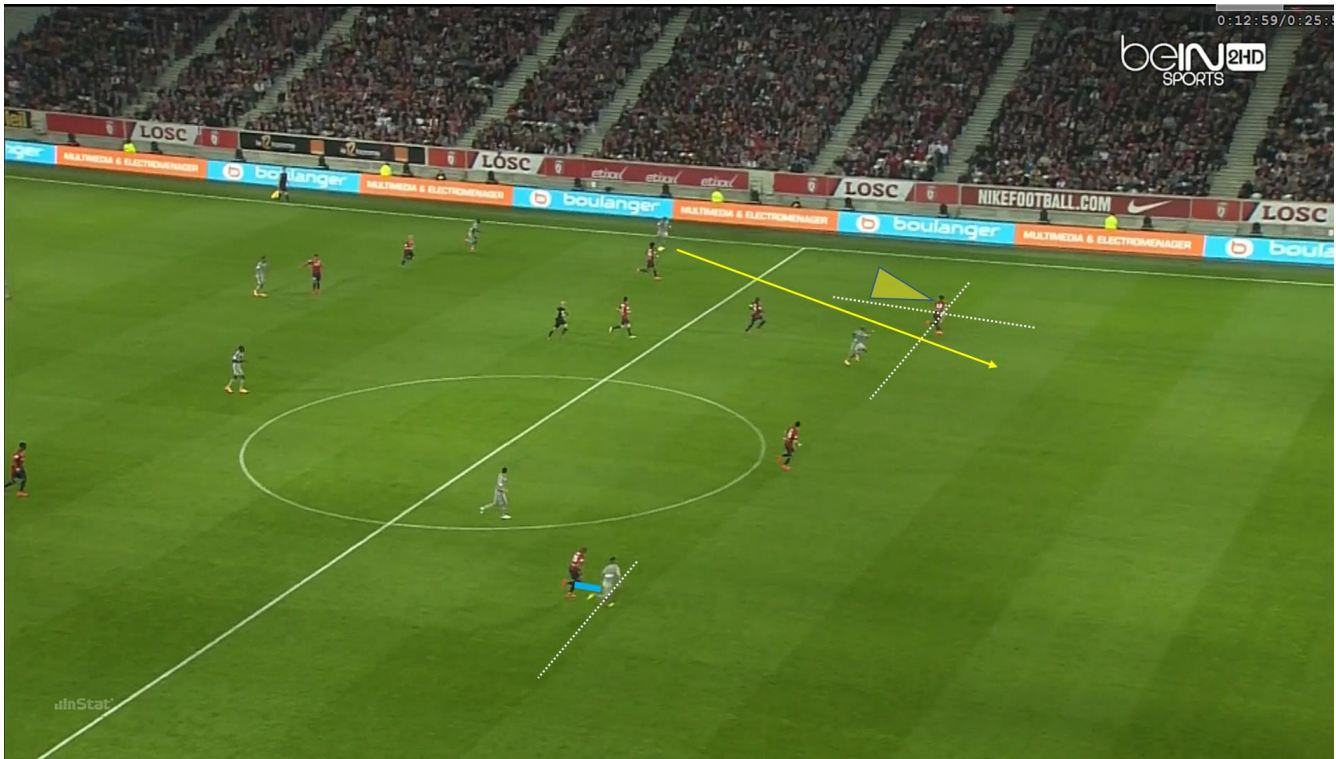
One can get the impression that with an optimally placed team in attack, it's hard to overload any zone because of width. This is somewhat true. Could it be foreseen that in 4 seconds will score a goal from this situation? The beginning of most goals takes place in zones where we have no numerical advantage.

So why are we scoring goals? This happens not because of numerical but positional advantage. Having a player better position against the opponent is more important than the number of players in the key zone.

Positional advantage:

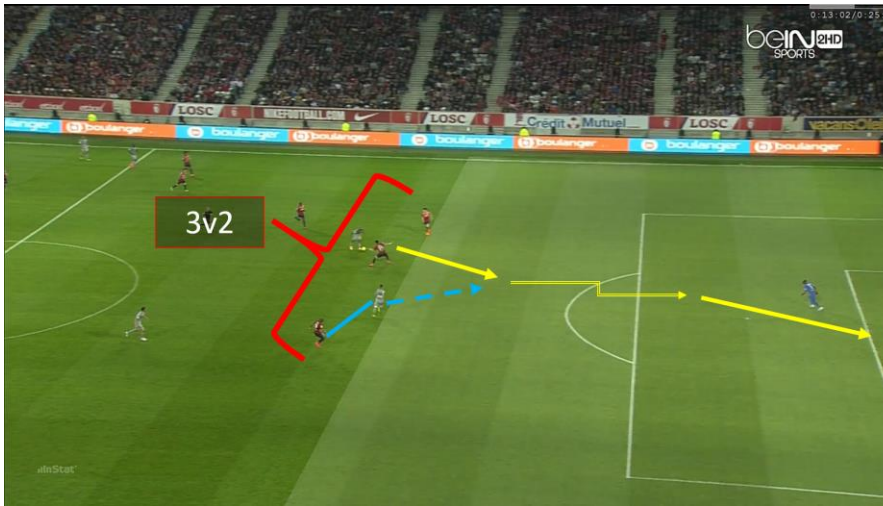
It is considered from the perspective of 1v1 duel (individual tactic). We talk about positional advantage when the player is better positioned in relation to the opponent. What is better? Depends on the goal, where is direction of the attack / defend, where the ball is and what may happen next. Gignac often positioned himself so that the player who covers him does not see the ball and him at the same time. Because of this position, Gignac reached the ball faster when he ran onto the final pass. Analyzing the goal situation, we can notice two positional advantages:

BEGINNING OF ACTION



Despite the numerical advantage around the ball (more Lille players), OM scored. It is noteworthy that Ayew (asking the ball behind defensive line) and Allesandrini (goal scorer) have a positional advantage. The first one is placed in such a way that the defender in the case of a penetrating pass to the central axis of the pitch will not catch up his cover (as happened). He also cannot see Ayew and the ball at the same time, in addition he runs towards his goal at full speed, while keeping his head towards the ball (without observing the opponent). Allesandrini, in turn, is closer to the opponent's goal than the opponent chasing him (does not cover from the goal). With a very fast winger, it is very difficult to shorten the distance to him and control the opponent.

4 SECONDS LATER

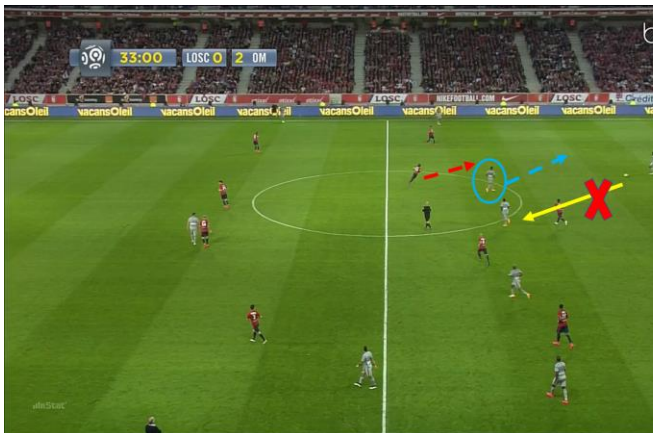


Ayew, when received the ball, was closer to the goal than the opponent covering him before, and Allesandrini increased his advantage over the chasing opponent and ran asking the ball to the penalty box.

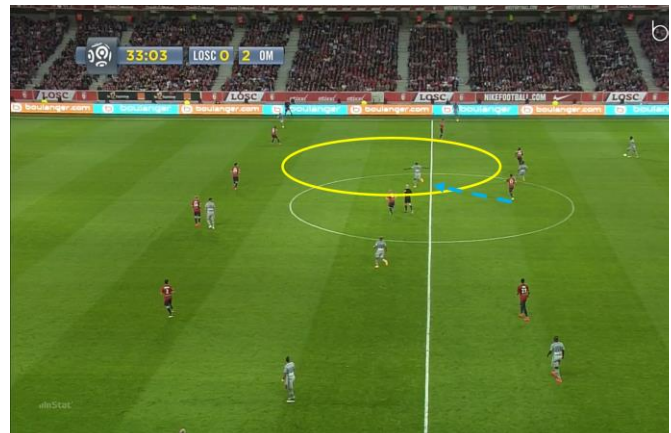
Opening space:

This is the second way to beat the number advantage of rivals. If the opponent is well organized in defense, they strive to be narrow - especially around the ball. That makes it a numerical advantage. The vast majority of OM opponents defended in low pressing. Frequent rotations allowed the player to open the space to pass or dribble the ball.

BEFORE ROTATION



AFTER ROTATION



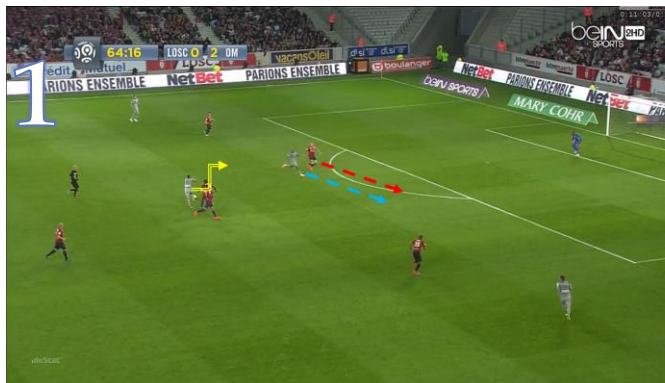
No passing lines. The partner who asked for the ball by move, taking the opponent out of position, behind which opens a space in which another teammate can run. This is the situation that allowed us to provide more possibilities. The lifetime of the pass line is short and OM players have not always used the moment to pass, but in this way, they wanted to disorganize their opponent with their movement, which was already visible in the analysis of previous games.

Opening the space to the player with the ball is not only used to create the possibility of passing. It also helps to dribble the ball into the free space.

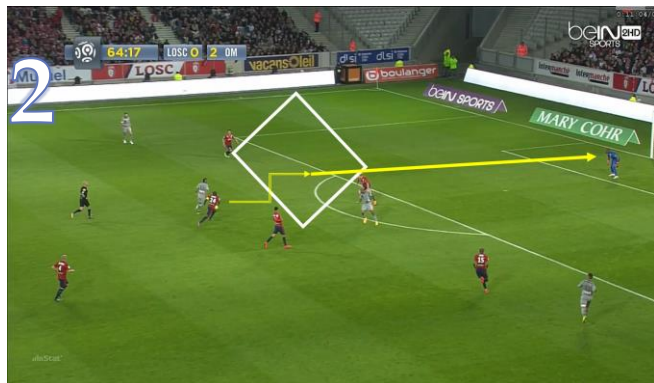
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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MOVEMENT TO OPEN SPACE:

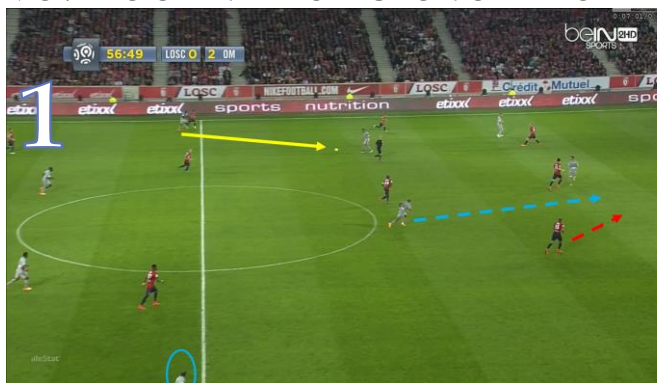


FREE SPACE TO DRIBBLE:

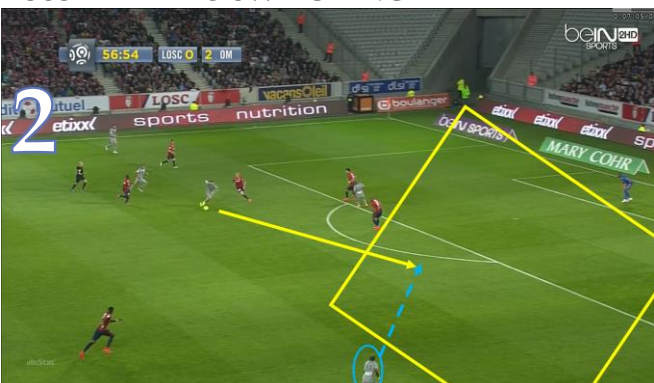


The presented situations helped OM to pass the ball vertically or to dribble the ball forward. It should also be mentioned that Bielsa players also used opening space to change the direction of play.

MOVE TO OPEN THE SPACE ON OTHER SIDE



POSSIBILITY TO SWITCHING PLAY



It should be remembered that in most situations on the pitch, only players who start the action (defense line and center midfielder) can have numerical advantage. The closer to the opponent's goal, the more opponents in the smaller space. Sometimes we are able to create a numerical advantage on the side of the pitch. After entering to the final third, we are almost always imbalanced.

In seven days, the OM team had the opportunity to say goodbye with the victory in front of their own audience in the last game of the season. The opponent was Bastia - the first and last rival of the current season. The first and last game between these teams also analyzed in this e-book.

GAME 38: farewell

23.05.2015. Stade Orange Velodrome. Marseille. Ligue 1.

„It is not right to judge what has been achieved but what we deserve”.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE 3:0 S.C. BASTIA

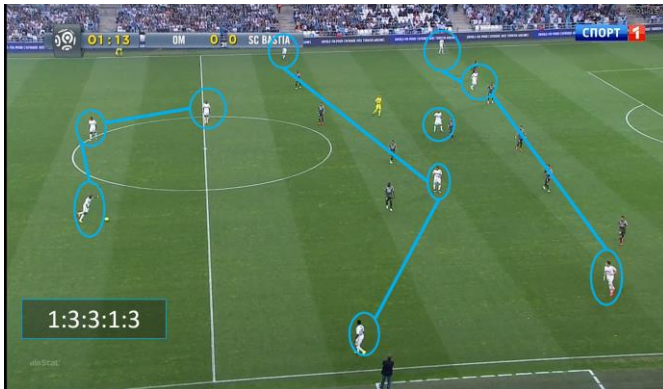
It was the last official game under Marcelo Bielsa in Ligue 1 this season and before the last as the coach of the team from Marseille ever. Bastia defended in the 1: 4: 4: 1: 1, while OM began, in the 1: 4: 2: 3: 1 alternating with 1: 3: 3: 3: 1. The last game will be used to summarize the entire e-book. This game will be a comparison of teams led by Marcelo Bielsa and showing similarities between them.

OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE (2014/2015) vs ATHLETIC BILBAO (2011/2012)

I will also analyze the game from the 2012 UEFA Cup semi-final: Athletic Bilbao vs Sporting Lisbon, led by Ricardo Sa Pinto at that time.

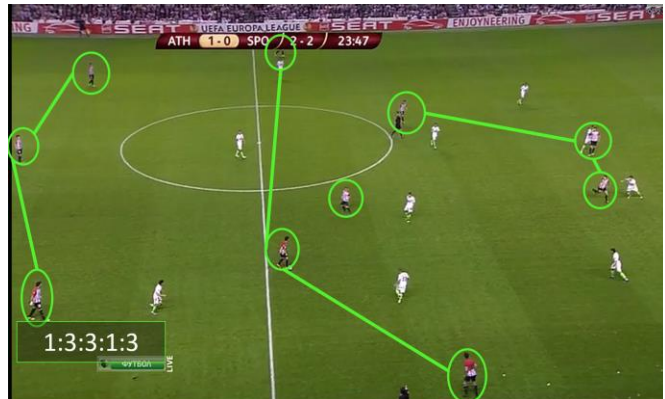
OLYMPIQUE DE MARSEILLE

1:3:3:1:3

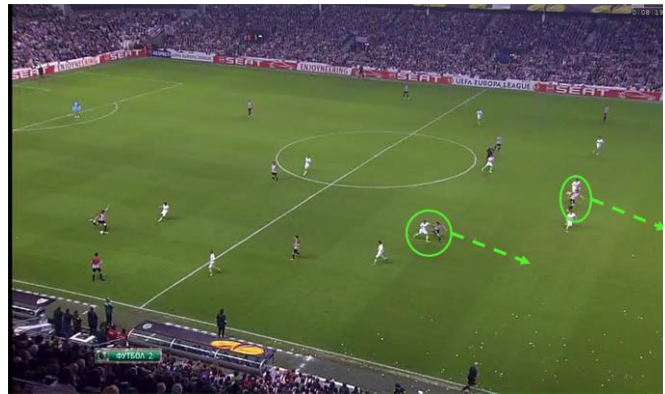


ATHLETIC BILBAO

1:3:3:1:3



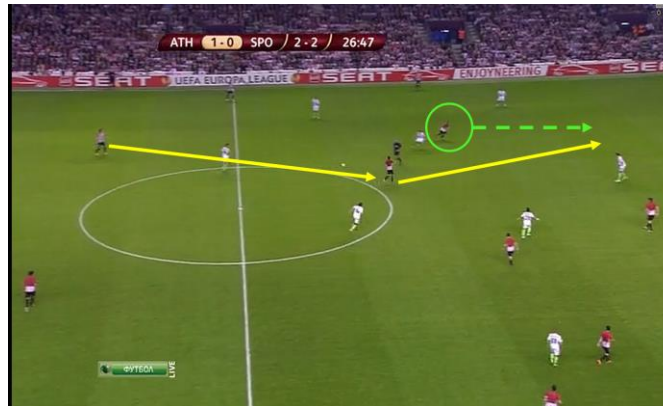
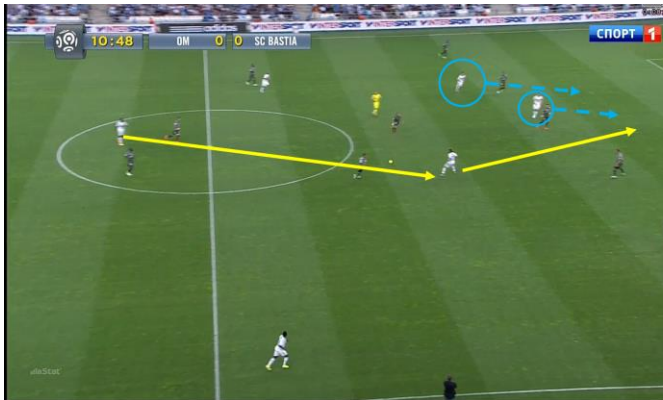
LONG BALL BEHIND DEFENSIVE LINE



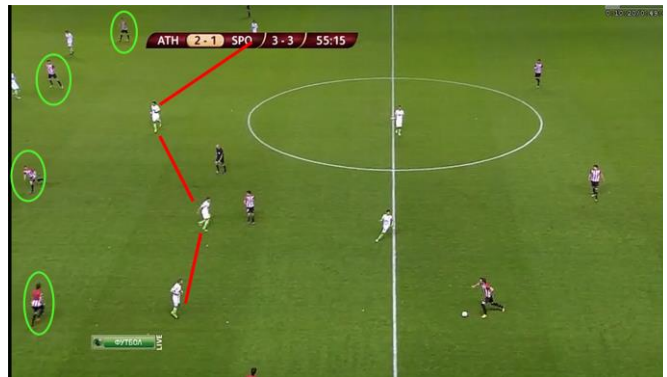
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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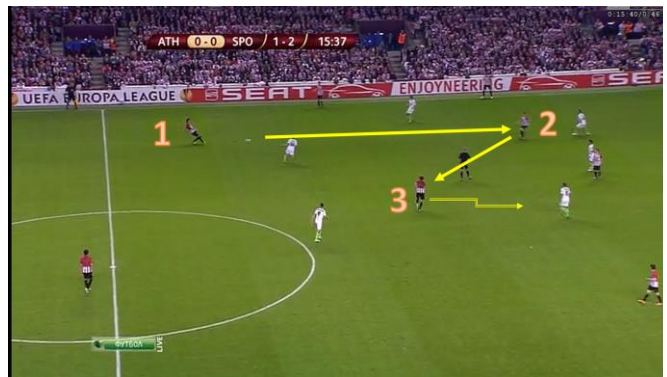
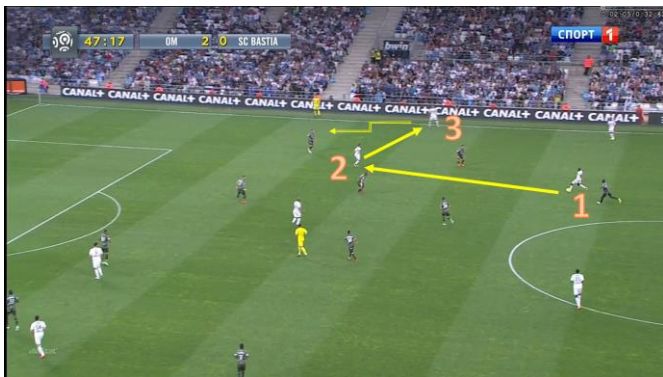
VERTICAL PASSES



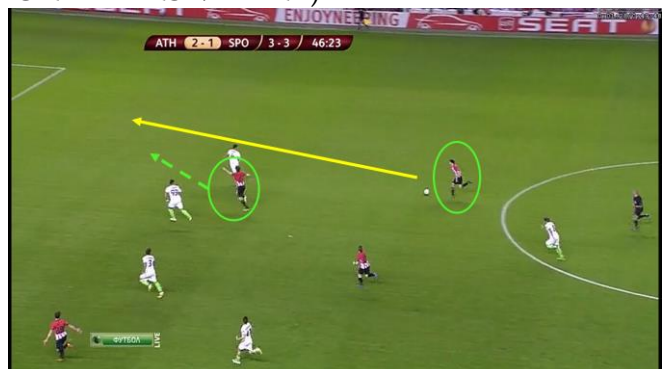
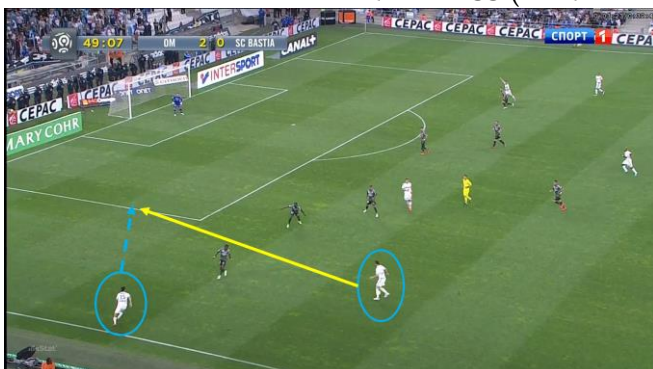
BETWEEN THE LINES



3rd MAN CONCEPT



FINAL PASS (PENETRATION DEFENSIVE LINE)



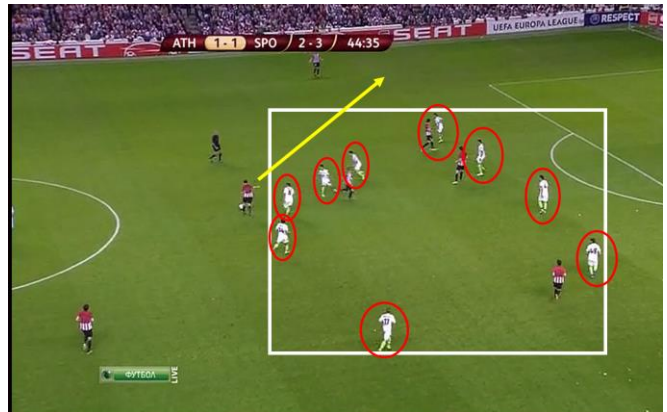
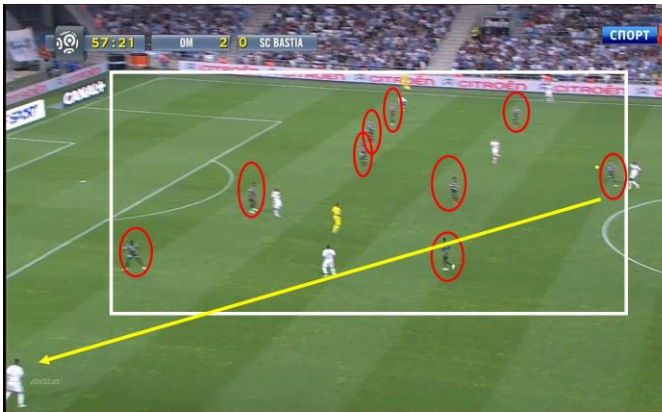
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE

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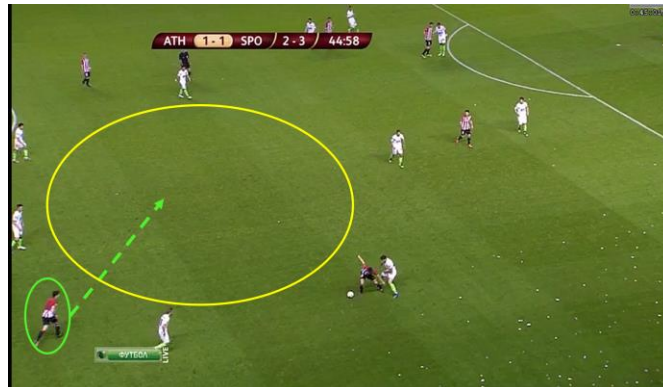
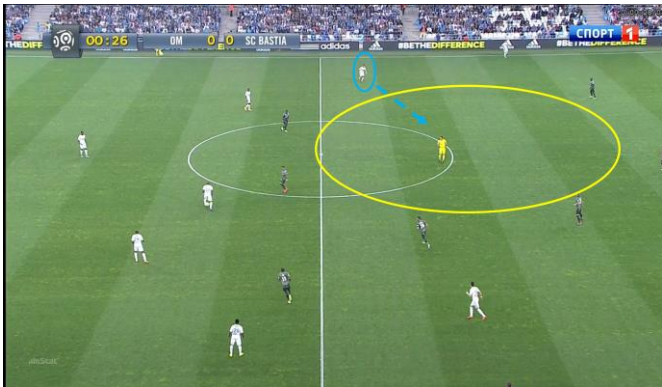
ROTATIONS



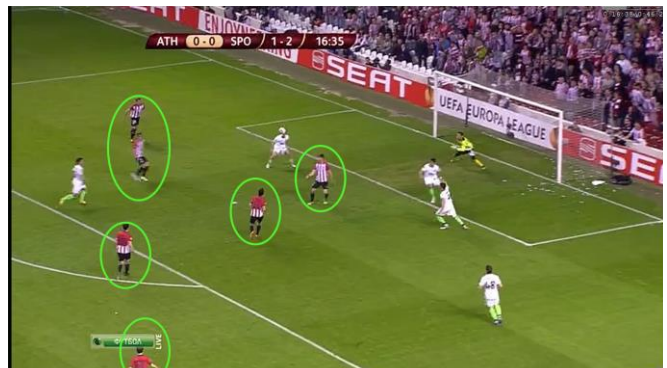
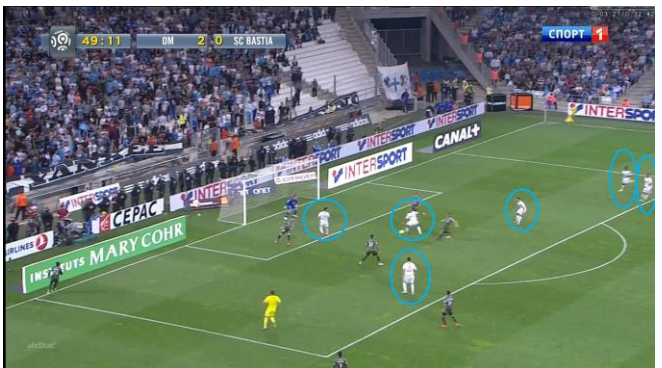
SWITCHING PLAY



INVERTED FULLBACK



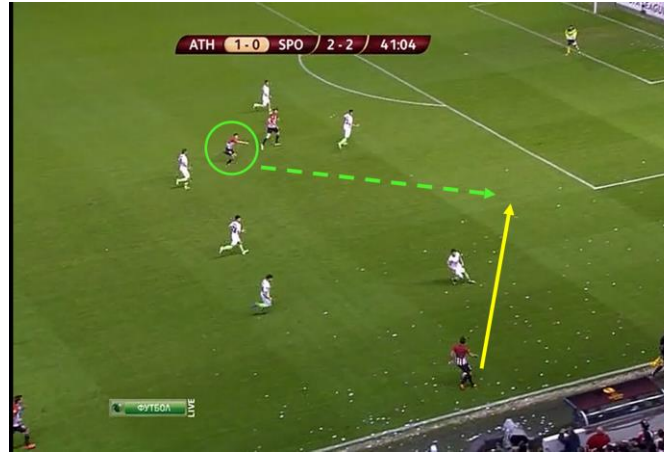
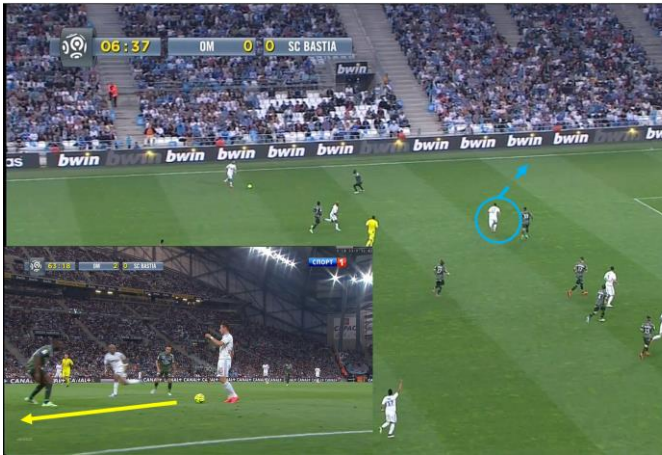
RUN INTO PENALTY BOX



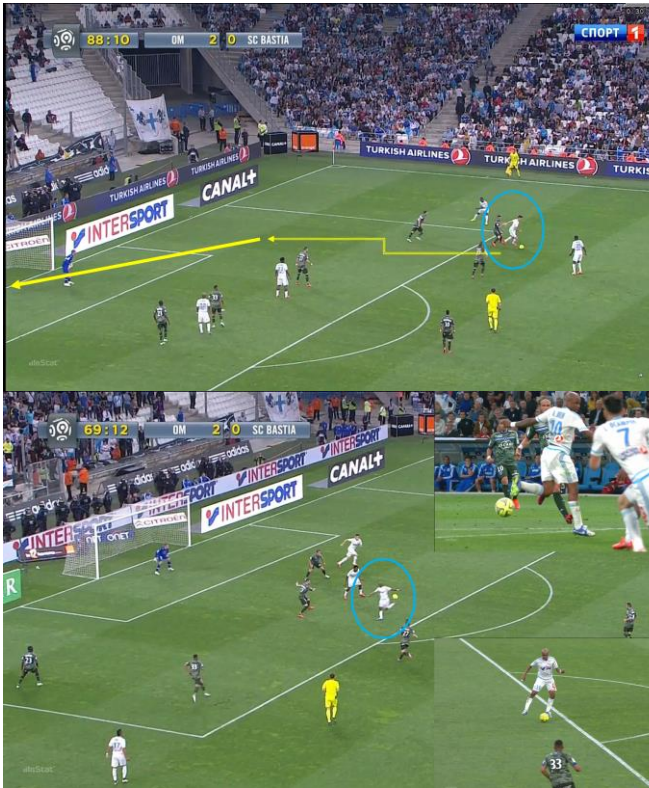
MARCELO BIELSA TACTICAL PROFILE



RUN BEHIND OPPONENT FULLBACK

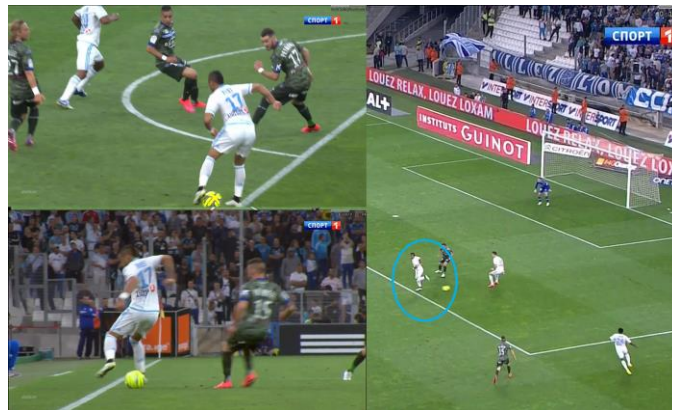


There are many similarities in the game of these two teams. In addition to automated tactical concepts, Bielsa greatly appreciated improvisation, especially in the finalization phase. Marcelo Bielsa didn't seem nervous about ball losses after technical errors or taking a risky pass. Two goals in the game with Bastia were scored after two individual actions.



First, Payet dribbled Bastia's right-back and finished action with a goal.

← Lucas Ocampos later turned with the ball (with his rival on his back) and dribbled three (!!!) opponents, taking advantage of the situation 1v1 with the goalkeeper. Pictures below also show how confident and creative was OM players during the season.



Olympique de Maresille ended Ligue 1 on the fourth place.

SUMMARY:

Notes contained in the e-book were intended to bring closer the tactical profile of the Olympique de Marseille team from the 2014/2015 season. Under the leadership of Marcelo Bielsa, the team has made tremendous progress as a collective and players as individuals. If the coach is judged by the results, it was not a successful season. Bielsa words after one of the games did not work: "If you play like today, at the end you will get the reward you deserved." Many people - including top-level coaches - value El Loco very much. However, Marcelo Bielsa is missing a spectacular success that he undoubtedly deserves. One of his statements outlines his distressed personality: "Football is by definition something that must create great joy or great sadness. Win or lose. Blood or applause. When you lose, there is a tendency to downplay your work and attack you because you have been worse in this game. " He doesn't adapt his tactics to the players ability he currently has in his team. This is not how Bielsa understands football. Perhaps he is the only person in the world who understands how his team need to play. Perhaps the problem is not in the Coach, but is there someone so perfect to play as he requires? His greatness also lies in the fact that he can infect people around his person. Undoubtedly, he is a person who has a huge impact on football world. I must admit that it is very difficult to analyze the game and keep up with Bielsa. I am deeply convinced that I saw everything through the eyes of a layman, watching the team of a real Master.

"He has his own way of playing, but his teams never manage to play the way he wants. We haven't seen much news so far. He has them in his head" - says Charles Bietry, who deals with communication and the image of LOSC. The former journalist as one of the few had the opportunity to see daily Bielsa work during training sessions because they are closed – "After seeing 15 or 20 sessions, I began to understand what he meant. His style is very difficult to practice and very complicated to implement. He strives for the ideal. I believe he will succeed - ends Bietry."

RADOSŁAW BELLA

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Feel free to contact (English).

„Knowledge and action must go together. They cannot be separated.”

Jordan B. Peterson

COOPERATION:



The poster is for the 'CR1 Football Coaches' Conference'. It features a dark background with a football pitch and stadium lights. At the top, it says 'PROFESSIONAL COACHING BY PROFESSIONAL COACHES' on the left and 'A WORLD CLASS COACHING SYSTEM' on the right. In the center, 'CR1' is written in large white letters, with '2 0 2 0' below it. Below this, the title 'CR1 FOOTBALL COACHES' CONFERENCE' is written in large white letters. The dates 'Monday 10th - Thursday 13th February 2020, Essex, England' and location '(Only 40 minutes from Stansted Airport (STN) - London)' are listed. A list of activities includes: 4 days/3 nights in a 4* Hotel, visit to a top London club's academy, UEFA A License coach demonstration, visit to a professional Championship league match, and top guest visits & professional 'UEFA' coaches delivering both theory & practical workshops. Contact information includes a phone number '+44(0) 7974 359 888' and an email 'reidfootball@live.co.uk'. The Acer BiD logo is at the bottom.

"PROFESSIONAL COACHING
BY
PROFESSIONAL COACHES"

CR1
2 0 2 0

"A WORLD CLASS
COACHING SYSTEM"

CR1 FOOTBALL COACHES' CONFERENCE

Monday 10th - Thursday 13th February 2020, Essex, England
(Only 40 minutes from Stansted Airport (STN) - London)

- 4 days/3 nights in a 4* Hotel (on site pool & gym), food, transport and visits to TOP facilities are included for £700 GBP. Places are limited, advised to book early to ensure your place!
- Visit to a top London club's professional academy to observe professional coaches working
- UEFA A License coach, Colin Reid, demonstrating the 1/3/4/3 system for both in & out of possession both theoretically & practically
- Visit to a professional Championship league match at a London club
- Top guest visits & professional "UEFA" coaches delivering both theory & practical workshops

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR
TO RESERVE YOUR EXCLUSIVE
PLACE, PLEASE CALL:

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Or email: 
reidfootball@live.co.uk

ACER BiD

'How ironic is that I have my own CR1 Coaches Conference in February that coincidentally demonstrates the 'almost' identical 1/3/4/3 system used by Marcelo Bielsa whilst at Olympique De Marseille in the 2014/2015 season and you are of course welcome to attend to visit and see the practical delivery and how to prepare and implement the system practically for your own team'

Colin Reid

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