

SET PLAY SITUATIONS IN MATCH PLAY

The following presentations are organized in their **simplest forms** due to the fact that players are often changing during games and it can get confusing for them to have to remember complicated setups. **Simplicity** is the best policy for quick and effective organization and the team still has the benefit of knowing what they are doing from a pre-planned move or moves whilst the opposition don't have the benefit of this. This gives us an important **advantage** as almost fifty percent of goals are scored from set plays in soccer where they are practiced and perfected.

I appreciate that **different age groups** produce their own specific problems for instance the younger ones can't often reach the goal area from corners so practicing short corners might be the order of the day, or certain teams may not have a player on the team who can accurately take a free kick around the box to get a direct shot at goal. Also **differences in gender** may mean certain set plays can't be used for example it may be more likely we have a male with a long throw than a female. There's not much I can do about this, it's a fact of life so all I'm trying to do is offer solutions from set plays where they can be applied and attempted with a chance of success.

There are many more complex set plays we could use but because of time to practice, constant changes in personnel on the field, age and gender differences I have tried to establish simple easy to understand routines that may suit most teams on most occasions.

I will cover the following set plays for and against:

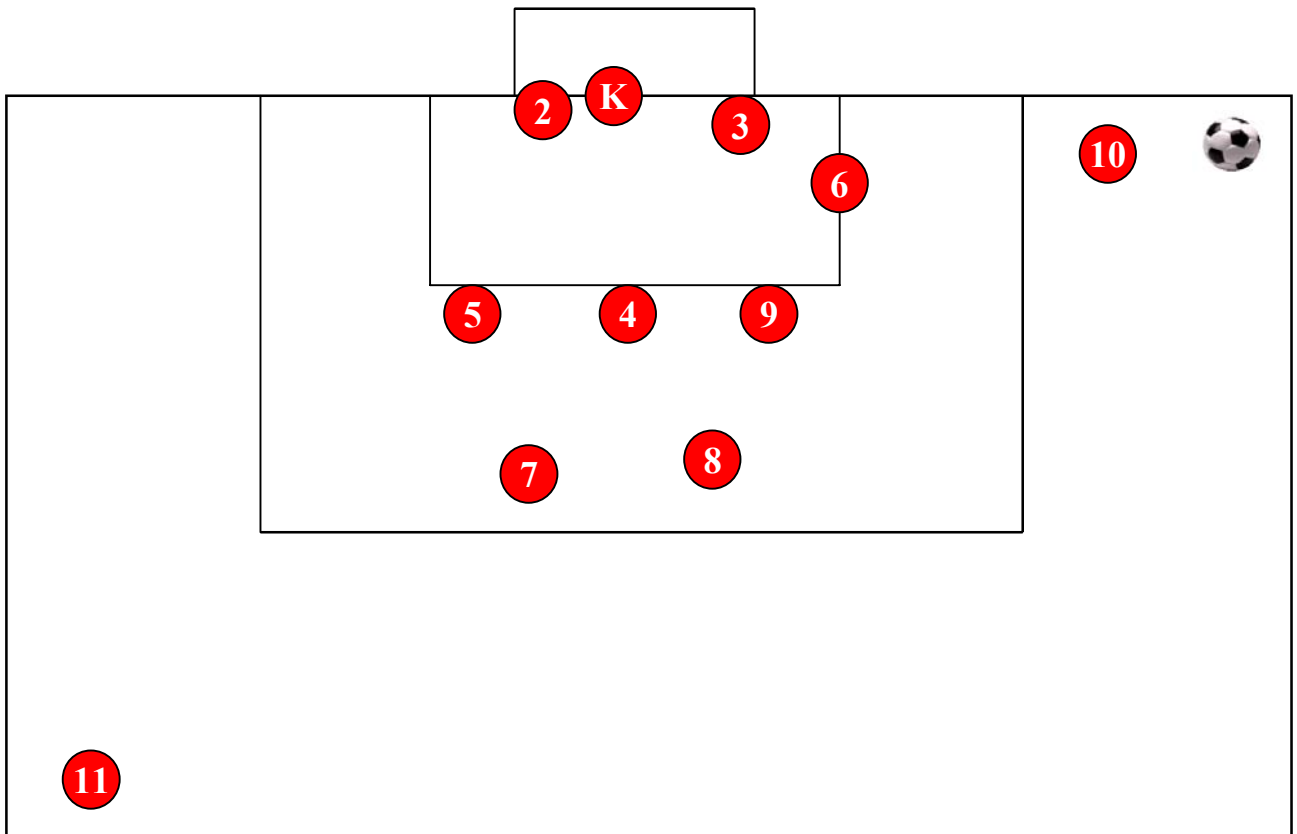
1. **Attacking Corners.**
2. **Attacking Free kicks**, central, wide and from deep.
3. **Attacking Throw – ins**, short and long.
4. **Defending against Corners**, zonal marking, player marking and mixed marking.
5. **Defending against Free kicks**, central and wide with wall arrangements.
6. **Goal kicks** for and against.

It is always useful to have at least two different attacking corners (three is better), and attacking free kicks, from central and wide areas and attacking short and long throw ins (if you have a long thrower) in the last third.

It is also important to work on throw ins in general as so much of possession is given away in these situations, it is almost easier to gain possession from the opponents throw - ins than keep it from our own throw - ins. I will offer ideas to help this.

(Wayne Harrison)

ZONAL MARKING FOR CORNERS AGAINST

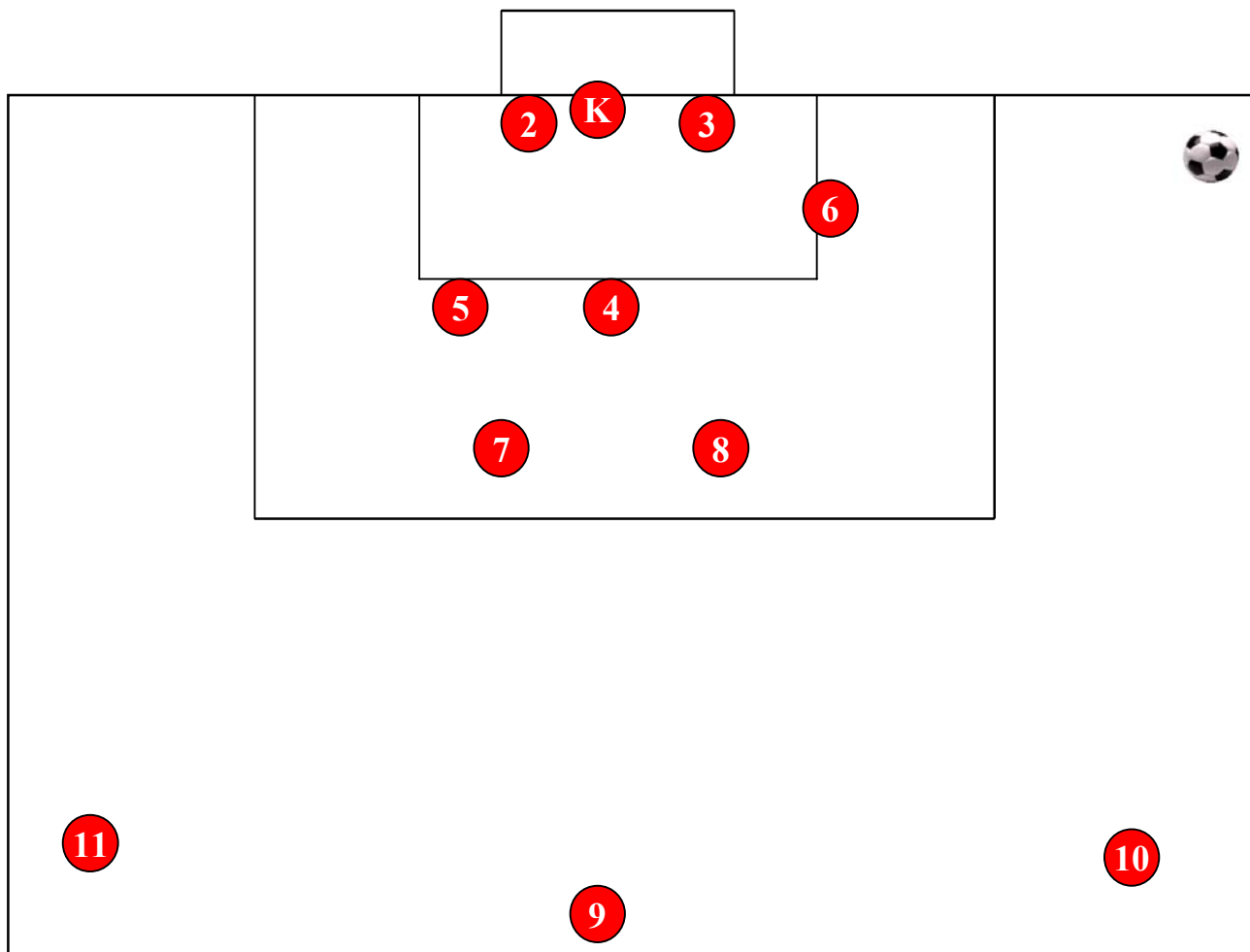


1. Everyone marks **zones** in the box so wherever the ball goes there is a player in the box to attack the ball. The above set – up doesn't have to mean certain numbers are in specific positions for example the actual player who wears (6) may be too small to take up the above position. I'm using numbers for convenience of explanation, height and heading ability are determining factors. If you can tie in positions on the field relating to positions in the box it can help as players will break out straight into their natural positions from a clearance from the opponents corner (eg left and right side). (2) positions inside the post, (3) positions at arms length in front of the near post (if the ball goes beyond this position (3) can drop back onto the line to protect the goal).
2. Position (6) is an important zone to protect as many deliveries arrive there so have a tall player who can head a ball here. (9), (4) and (5) take positions in line with the near post, middle of the goal and far post and attack anything in front of them (don't drop back and try to clear the ball if it goes over them except (5) if this is the last player). (7) and (8) mark **zones** either side of the penalty spot and can close down shots from the edge of the box from secondary possession. (10) positions 10 yards away to **block** the **view** of the corner kick taker, this position changes depending whether it's an out- swinger or in- swinger (get into the line of flight of the ball).

A diagram of a soccer field illustrating player positions and movement paths. The field is divided into three main rectangular sections: a top section (Goalkeeper's area), a middle section (Midfield), and a bottom section (Attacking area). A goal is located at the top center. A player labeled 'K' (Goalkeeper) is positioned in the top section. Ten other players, numbered 1 through 10, are distributed across the field. Player 11 is positioned at the bottom left. Dashed arrows indicate movement paths from various players towards the goal. A solid curved arrow shows a path from player 10 towards the goal. A solid straight arrow points from player 11 towards the goal.

- (Wayne Harrison)

DEFENDING AT CORNERS USING ZONAL MARKING



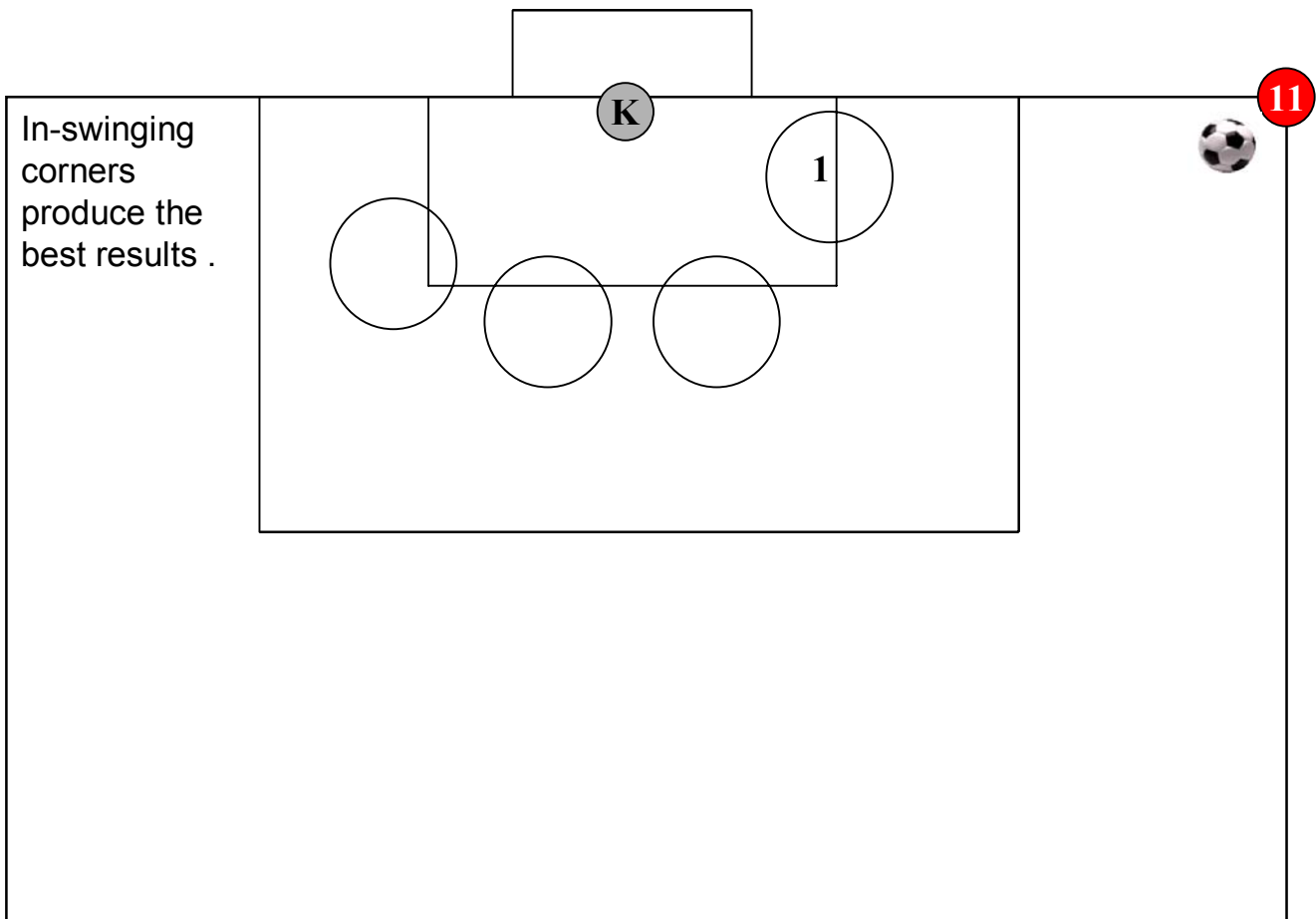
1. Leaving **three up** means the opposition will likely leave **four back** to mark them. This leaves **seven players**, of which **one** is the keeper and **one** is the corner kick taker. This leaves five of which they need to leave at least one around the edge of the box for any clearances to win the second ball. Therefore we have **four attacking** players left to attack inside the box and we have **seven defending** players to defend inside the box outnumbering the attackers by three players.
2. Players (2) and (3) cover the posts, (6) is **screening** at the edge of the six yard box (many crosses will be cut out here), (4) and (5) mark important zones at the mid - goal and far post areas (or can man – mark), (7) and (8) zone around the penalty spot and (9), (10) and (11) are ready for a quick break counter attack or clearance. Defending players pick up players who come into the zones they are marking if they are zoning.
3. If you are winning and it's near the end of a game the opposition will probably send all players up for their corner, they have nothing to lose so you wouldn't stay with this set – up (unless you are very brave!!). Leaving any players up can depend on the **position of the game**.

CORNERS



1. This is a **mixture** of marking **players** and marking **zones**.
2. Players mark zones except for (5) and (10) and maybe (9) if three is needed to man mark in the box (pick up the best headers on the opposition). If you leave two up spread them out so they are harder to mark if a quick break is created.
3. If you need an extra player in the box to defend take a player off the far post (near post player is more important to leave) but only if the keeper is comfortable with this.
4. Use **big for big** when marking players (if they can head the ball!!!).
5. This is the **most popular** way to defend a corner kick as for instance with players (5), (10) and (4) they can run and jump with the players they are marking because they move with them. In these positions if they are marking zones the opponent who enters their zone gets a **running jump**, whilst the defender has a **standing jump** (unless they attack a ball delivered in front of them).

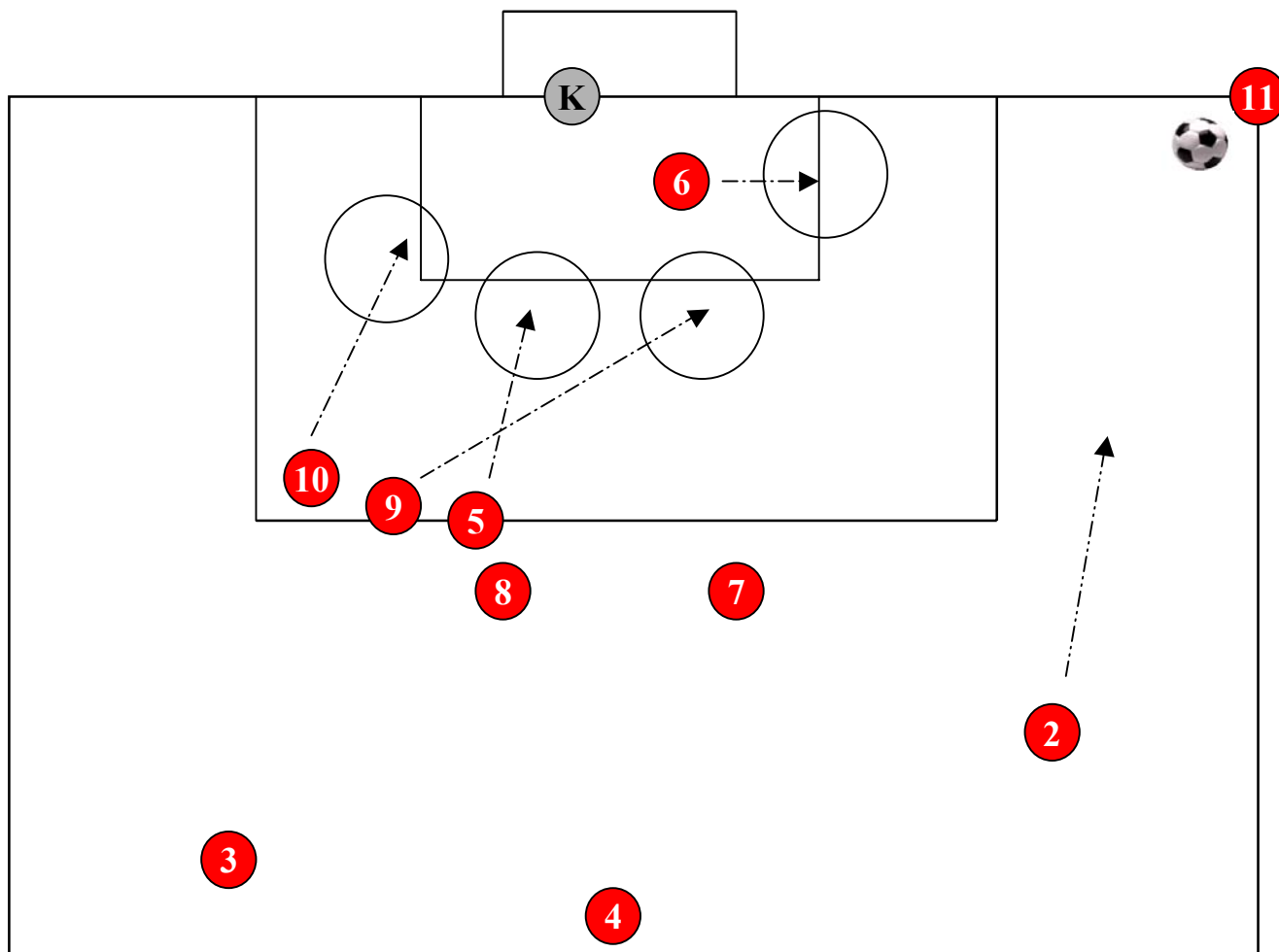
ATTACKING CORNERS WITH TARGET ZONES



1. Have **four zones** to deliver the ball into and have players taking care of attacking those zones.
2. Zone **One** is for a **flick on** to create a secondary possession situation, this is a particularly **difficult ball** after the flick on to defend against for defenders as they aren't sure where the ball will go from the deflection.
3. Four zones to attack takes the **pressure off** the **kicker** as it means **"virtually"** anywhere the ball is delivered into the danger zones in the box we will have a player to attack the ball. Each player must **expect** the ball to come into the zone they are attacking so they aren't caught flat footed in the box and miss an opportunity to make contact with the ball.
4. Players must make **lots of movement** to make it difficult to mark them but still end up attacking their designated zone.
5. Always have a player attacking **zone one** as many deliveries will arrive there under hit (it's a fact) or it could be they have planned a near post corner flick on.

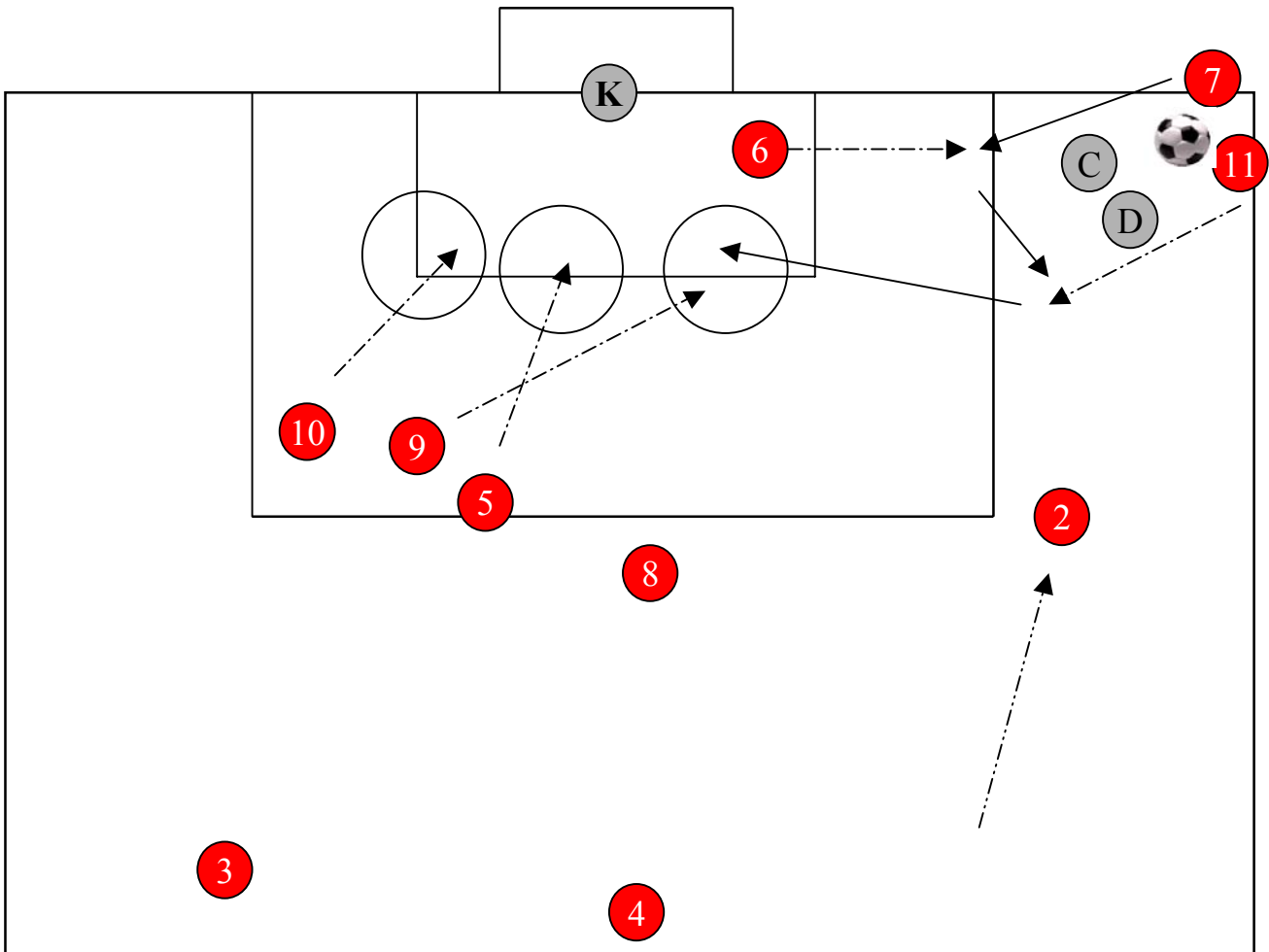
(Wayne Harrison)

ATTACKING CORNERS AND THE ARRANGEMENTS OF THE PLAYERS



1. You can have **signals** from the kicker for **different** corner kicks, for example a near post corner or a far post corner. The four target players must move around so the opposition don't know which areas they are attacking. (8) and (7) cover **anticipation areas** around the box for secondary possession should the defenders clear the ball.
2. To put the keeper under pressure you could send a player to stand **in front** of the **keeper** to block their view of the ball being delivered. This is particularly useful if the ball is delivered into the six yard box and the keeper tries to come and catch it.
3. To **vary** the **play** (6) can go **short** and play a **1 – 2** with (11) so the delivery is from a better angle. Here (2) could go short to receive too and deliver the cross from there. If (6) is marked tightly then this run can take the marker out this important area and **free** it for a delivery there, another attacker can move into that **space** to attack the delivery. Leaving three at the back may **not** be necessary because the opponents may bring everyone back and therefore you can put **more** into the box to **attack** the cross.

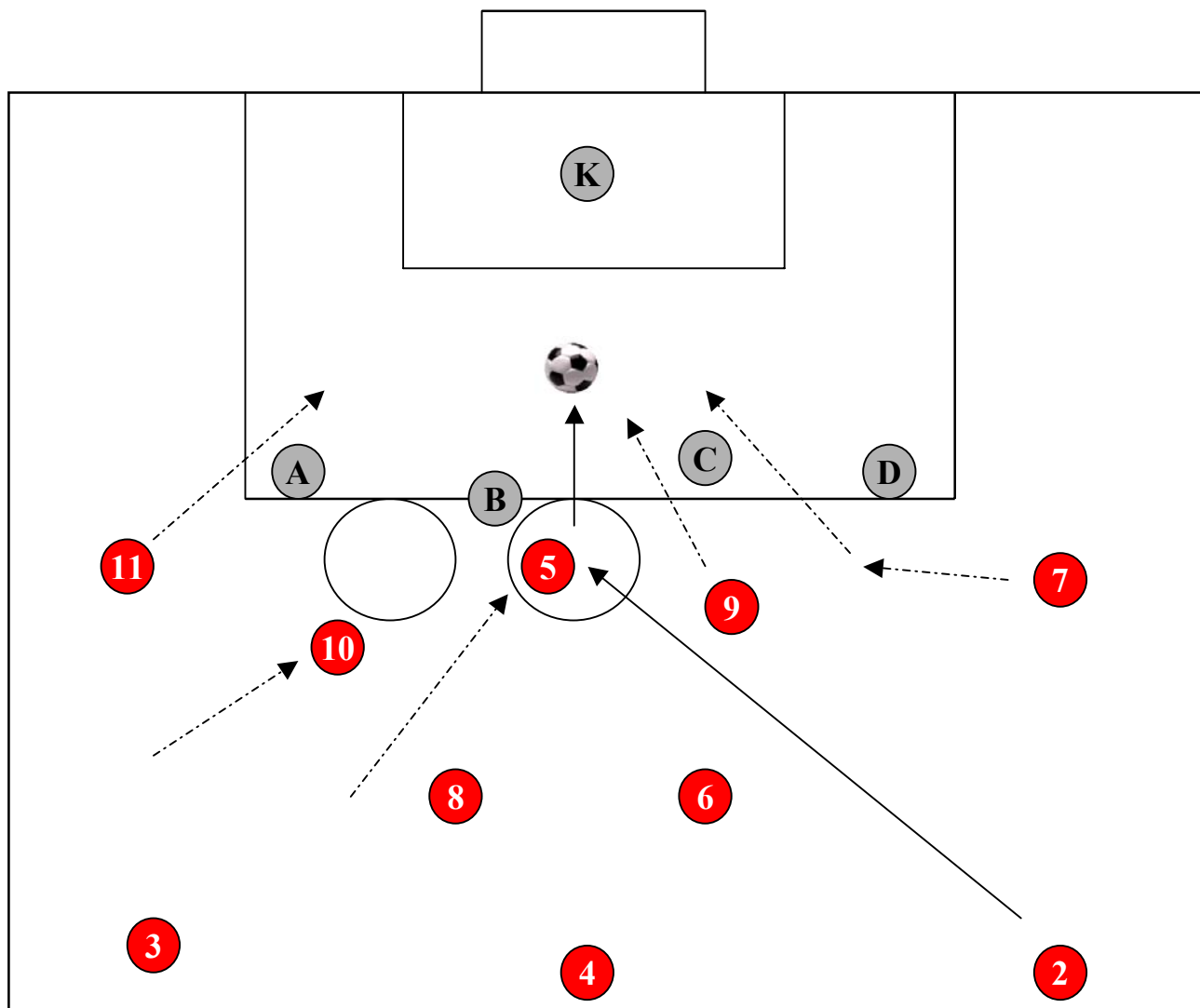
ATTACKING SHORT CORNERS



1. Two players go out to take the corner and should draw out two defenders with them. (7) ignores (11) and passes past the defenders to (6) coming short. (6) keeps control and (11) who has already made a run past the defenders receives a pass off (6) and crosses the ball into the box. If it is done quickly enough we should catch the defenders out as they don't know what is happening but we do.
2. (6) may run out to receive and if no defender goes with them they can receive and turn and cross or shoot depending on the angle.
3. Also a short corner can be taken to (2) running late into space to receive the ball from the corner. (2) should have time to measure the cross into the box .
4. Players in the box know what is happening and position accordingly in the box, we can use a signal to show it is a short corner. Also when two players go short and the opposition expect a short corner we can play a ball straight into the box to catch them out.

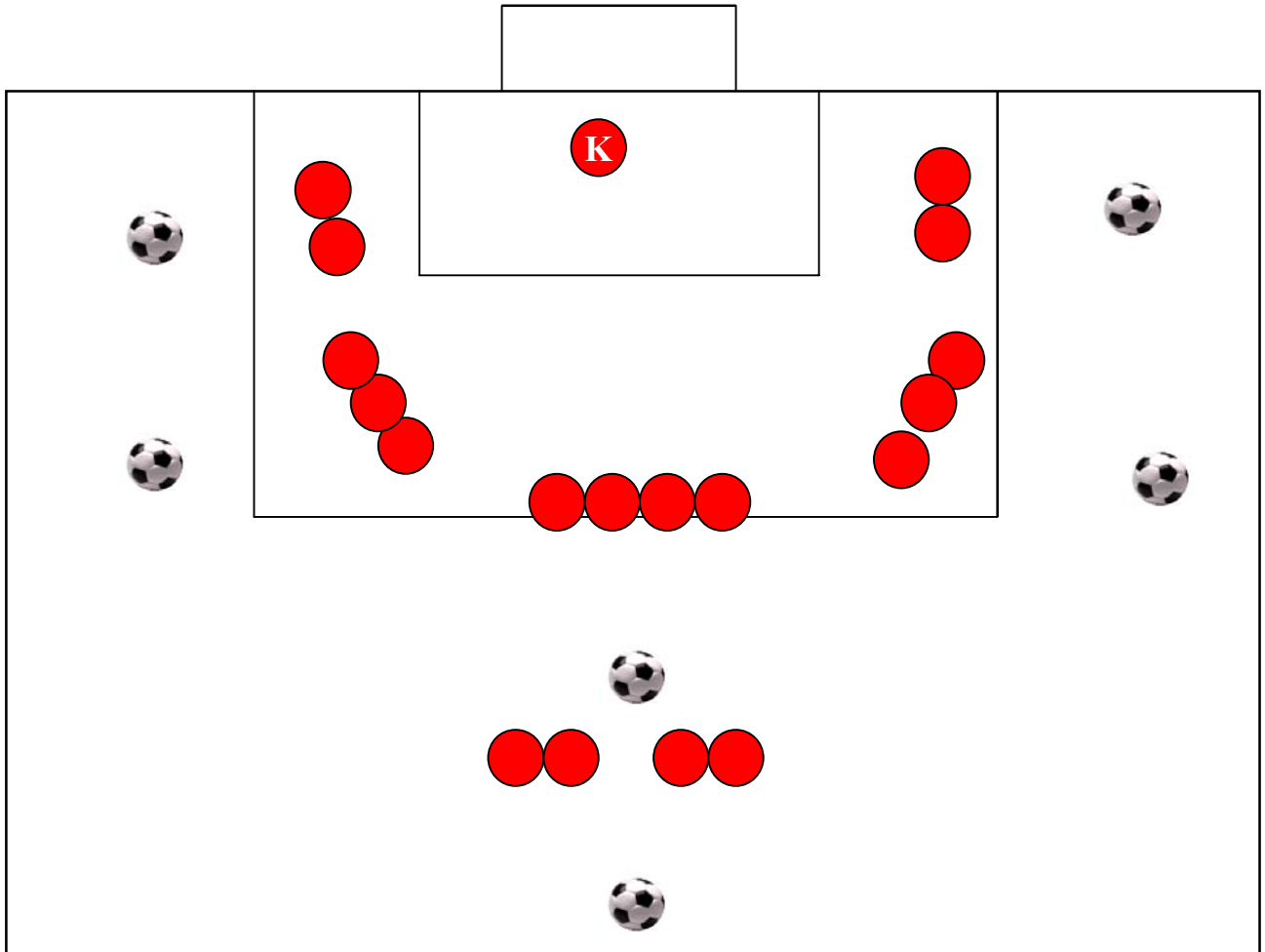
(Wayne Harrison)

WINNING BACK POSSESSION IN THE ATTACKING THIRD FROM A SET PLAY



1. For a **basic** free kick from **deep** into or around the penalty box the above set up is ideal. Have your **best** headers of the ball; above (5) and (10) running and attacking two (or three) areas, and have **other players** making runs forward off their **anticipated** headers as above (7), (9) and (11) or also (10), if (5) is the **pre - arranged** target. Midfield players are in **anticipation areas** to pick up the **second ball** if defenders win the headers to keep the ball in the attacking third.
3. **Coaching Points** : a) **Quality Delivery**, b) **Team Arrangements** (pre – planned positions), c) **Attacking the Ball** (head across or at goal or put defenders under pressure so no free headers), d) **Stay Compact** (around the ball so wherever it goes we have a player), e) **Second Ball** (keep the ball in for a shot or cross).
4. For variation to catch the opposition off guard **pass** into a **striker's feet** (or) down the **side** to a **wide** player and link up from there.

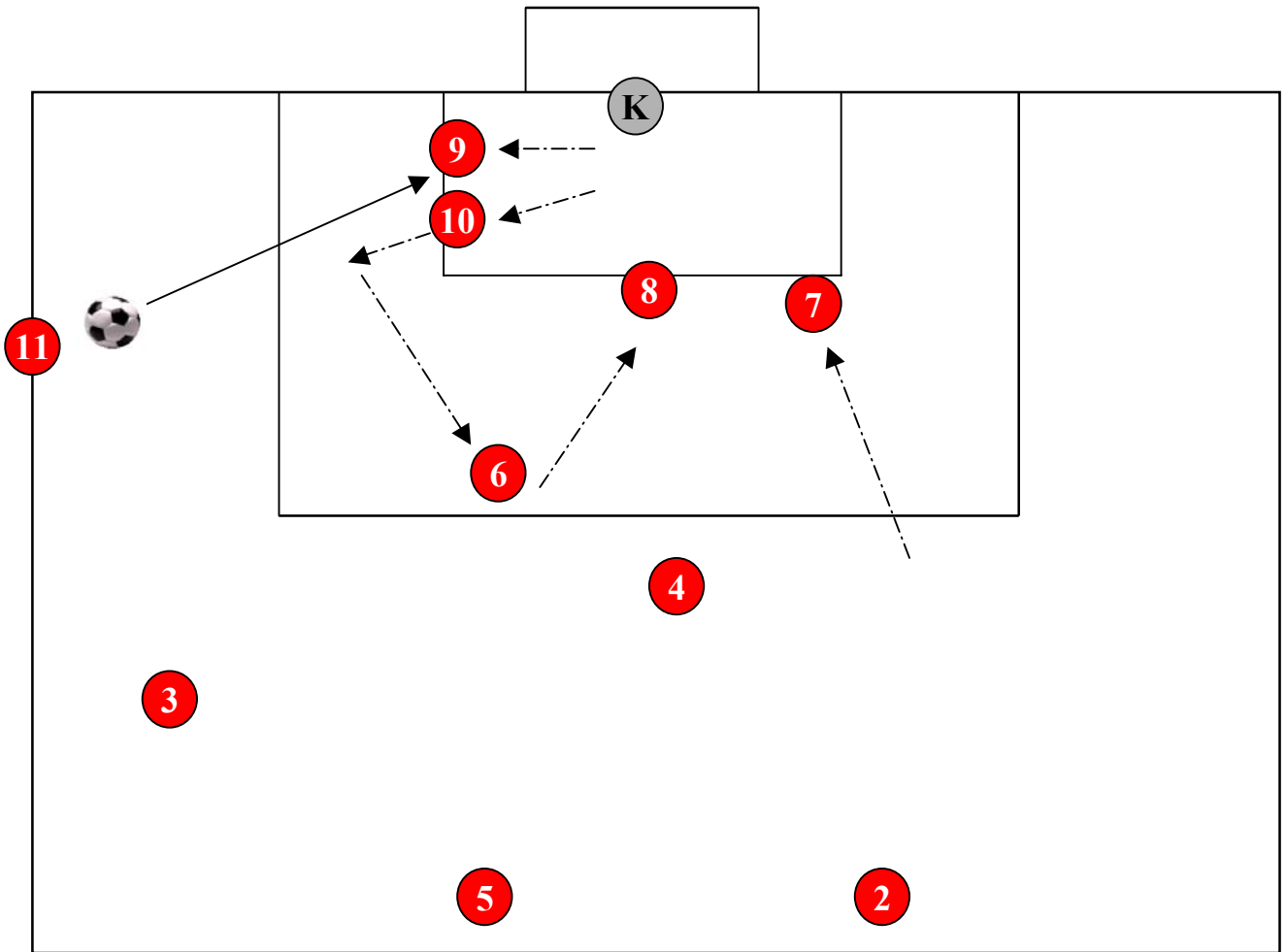
WALL ARRANGEMENTS AROUND THE PENALTY AREA



1. Where there are **four** in the wall you could use **five** also if required. Another way to set this wall up would be to **split it** in the **middle** so the keeper can **see** the ball incase an opposition player can bend it around the wall and the keeper needs to see it to help determine the trajectory of the shot, where it is coming from and when it's played.
2. You can see above how the **split wall** would look (though it isn't in it's proper position it would be on the edge of the box). It is best if the keeper **lines up** the walls as their position most affects the keepers position.
3. You could have one player **facing** the keeper in the wall pulling players into position on the keepers command but still being in the wall itself and be in position should a quick free kick be taken.
4. For free kicks where the ball is central (and you would normally have a wall) and it could be shot but it is a fair distance out, say 25 yards, a keeper may decide to have **no wall** up so he / she can see all the ball and invite the shooter to try and beat them.

(Wayne Harrison)

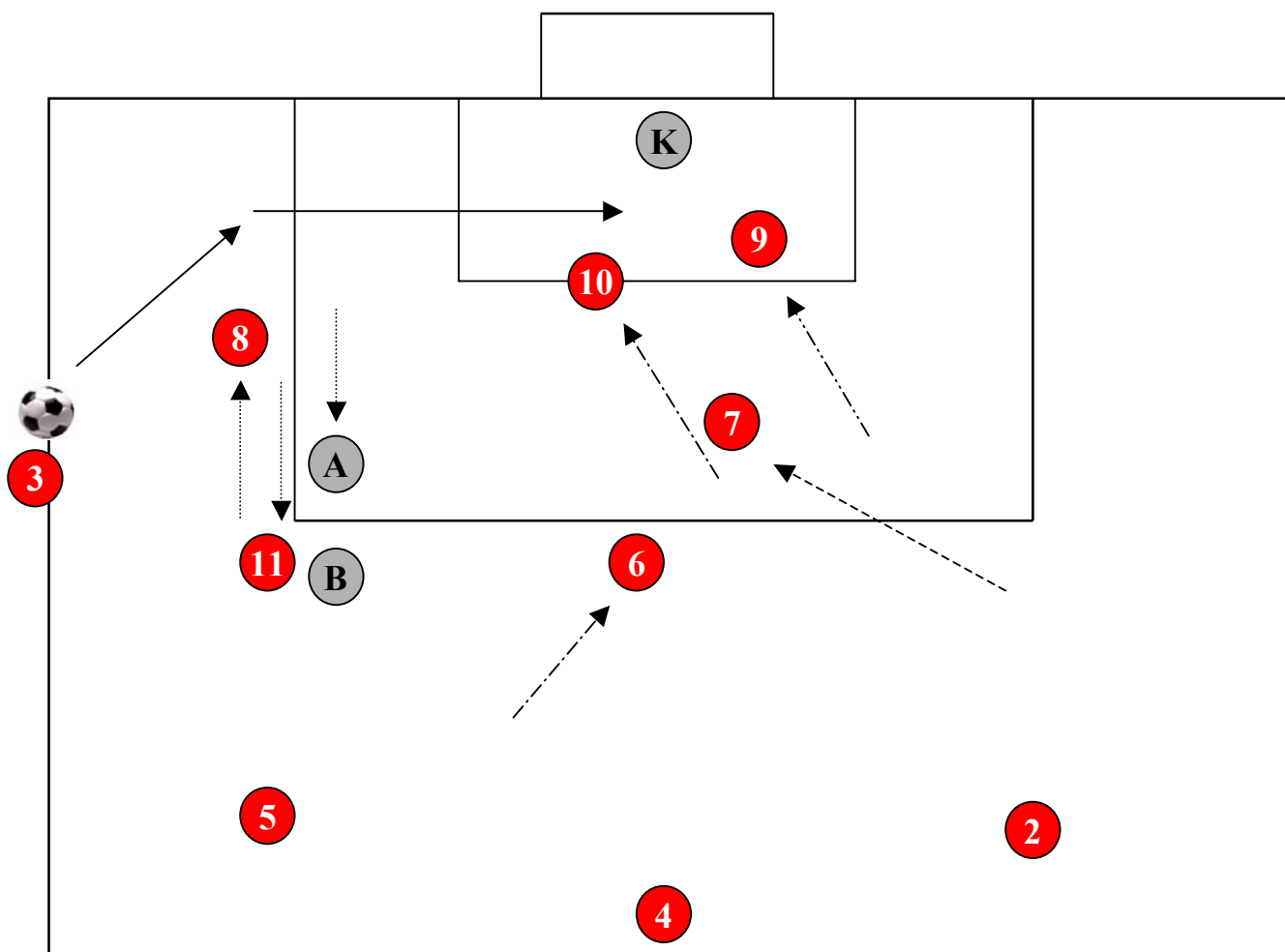
LONG THROW – INS IN THE ATTACKING THIRD



1. (6) comes to the ball and **spins away** pulling a defender out also, and takes (8)'s place on the edge of the box to be ready for headed clearances from defenders.
2. (9) and (10) fill the **spaces left** to receive the throw for a **flick on** (two targets to throw the ball to covering two areas). (8) and (7) attack the areas **behind** these players where the flick on is likely to go (mid goal and far post areas).
3. Throw the ball **near** to the goal line so if a defender wins the header under pressure you may win a **corner** and therefore another set play and another chance to work a **pre – planned move**.
4. If you want an **extra** player in the box to attack the flick on then have only one target to hit from the throw.

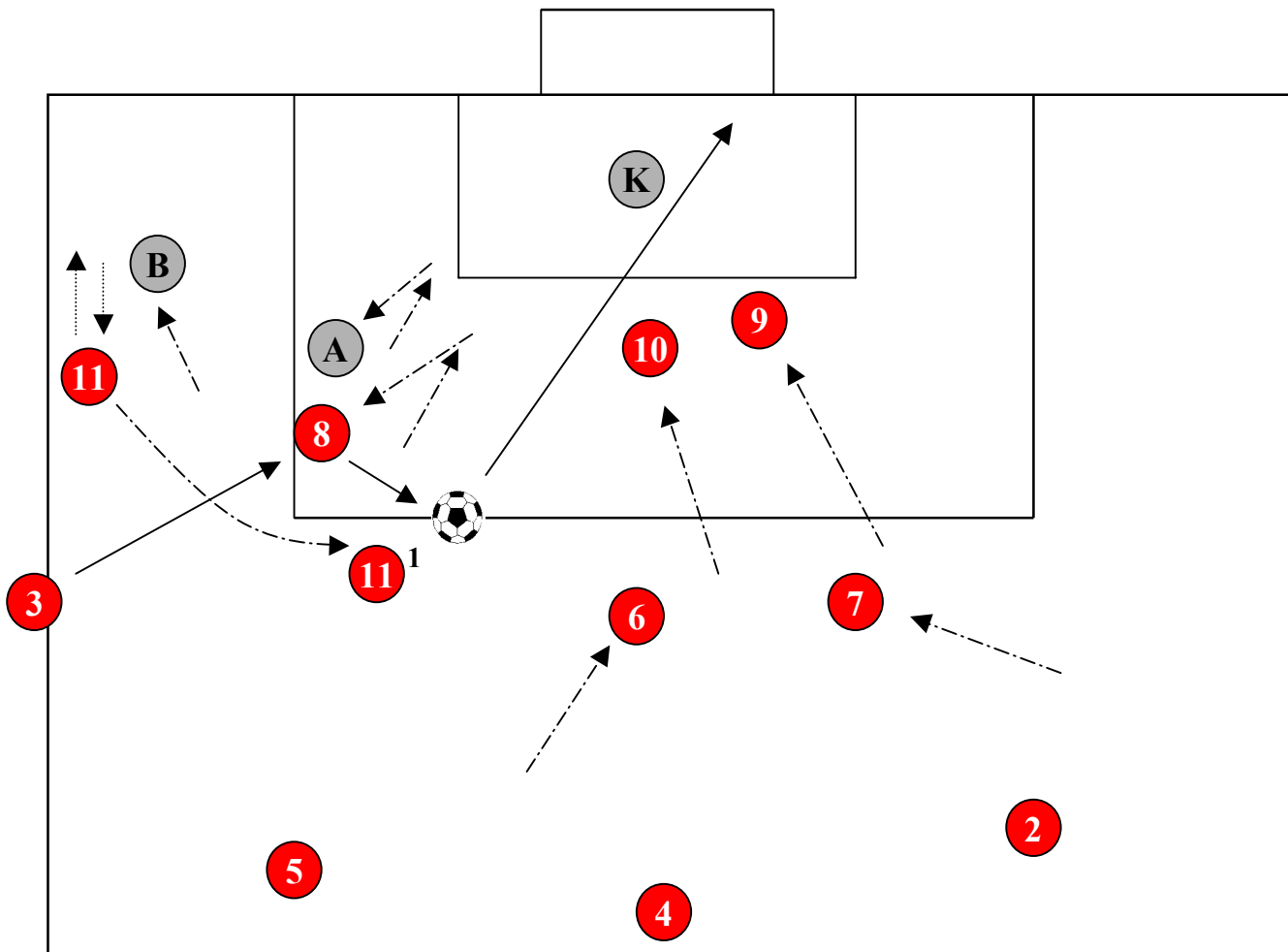
(Wayne Harrison)

THROW – INS IN THE ATTACKING THIRD



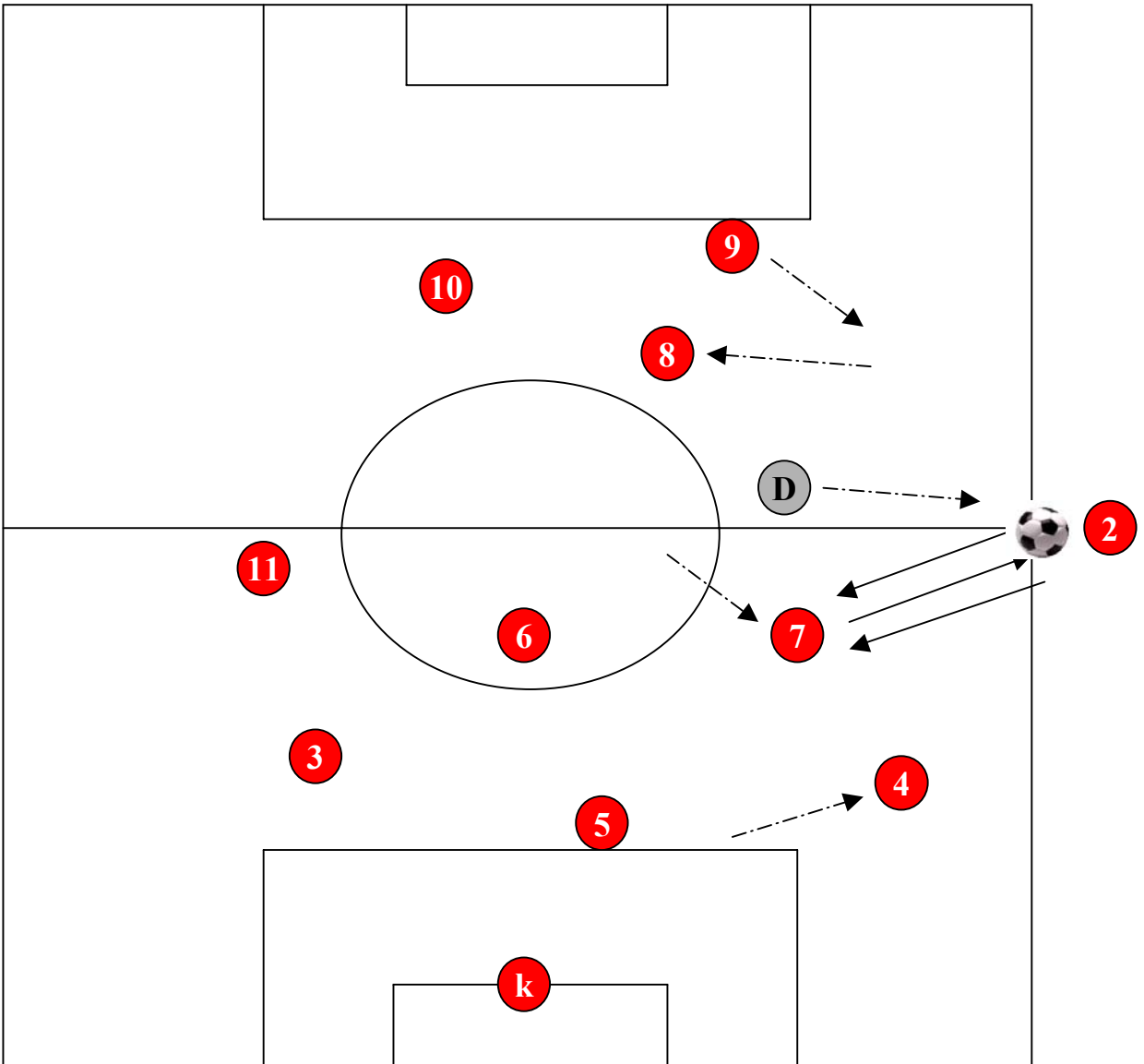
1. This is a **basic crossover** move. The person who receives the throw to cross the ball starts their run **second**, here (8) is to cross the ball so (11) runs first towards (8) and **blocks** the path of the defenders run so the defender, (A), has to run around (11) allowing time and space for (8) to receive the throw and cross the ball. Timing is the most important part of this move.
2. The ball is thrown **flat** into the path of (8) so it's a continuous movement of **run / throw / cross**. Teammates in the box make their runs into the box to get on the end of the cross covering different areas to receive the ball.
3. Have a left footer coming onto a left foot cross and a right footer onto a right foot cross therefore (8) is **right footed** and (11) is **left footed** (two footed players would be a bonus).
4. For (11) to cross the ball, (8) makes the first run. The crosser **always** has to be the **outside** player never the inside player of the two. (Wayne Harrison)

THROW – INS IN THE ATTACKING THIRD



1. Ensure players do not get too close to the player taking the throw in. Space must be created in front of the thrower for players to be able to move into and receive the ball.
2. (8) can move away to check back to the ball to get free from (A). (11) can run off (B) then check back to run across (8) to receive the one or two touch lay off inside into space.
3. (11) can take the ball on to cross or shoot at goal depending on the angle.
4. Timing of the throw, run, pass is the issue here, synchronicity is the key.
5. It is best if you have a right footer receiving the pass off (8) so they are coming onto their strongest foot to shoot or cross and likewise on the right having a left footer (if you have one) cutting inside.

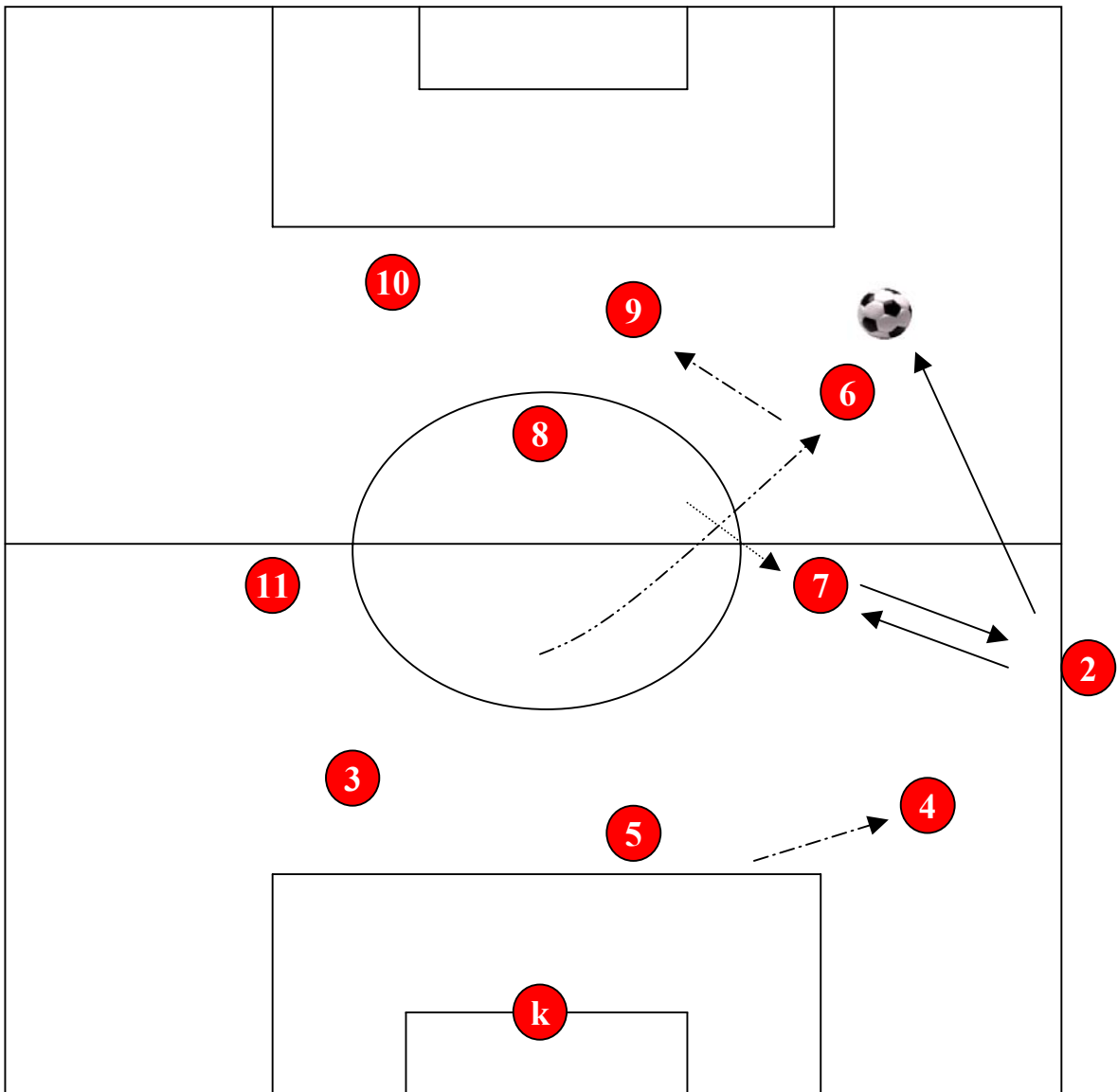
MAINTAINING POSSESSSION FROM THROW- INS



1. A simple way to keep possession of the ball from a throw in is above where (8) moves away from the space taking a defender away and (9) comes into the space left to receive the throw.
2. If (9) **can't turn** then (6) and (7) or the thrower (2) must make them selves available to receive with a pass **back** to them. Also (2) can run on to accept a through pass from (6) or (7) or just create space by moving a defender away.
3. Midfield players should try to stay **alongside or behind** the thrower as in (7)'s case so they are facing forward when they receive the ball. This creates space in front for the strikers to come back into and receive to feet. A good way to keep the ball is for (7) just to pass back to the thrower (2) as the thrower often is **not marked** up. This will draw (D) to the thrower and leave (7) so (2) passes back to (7) who is free again.
4. Last resort pass back to (4) and start again.

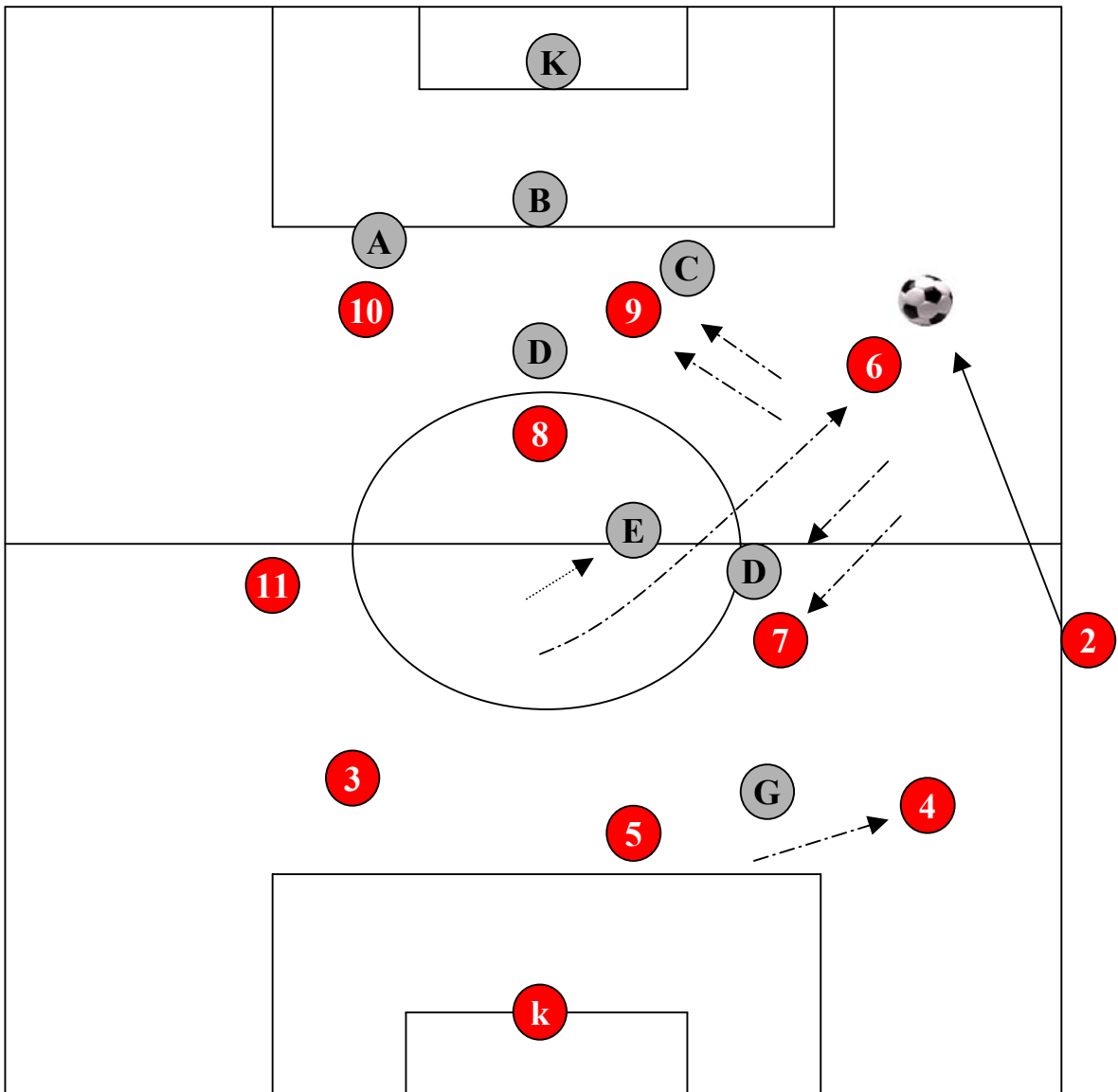
(Wayne Harrison)

MAINTAINING POSSESSSION FROM THROW- INS



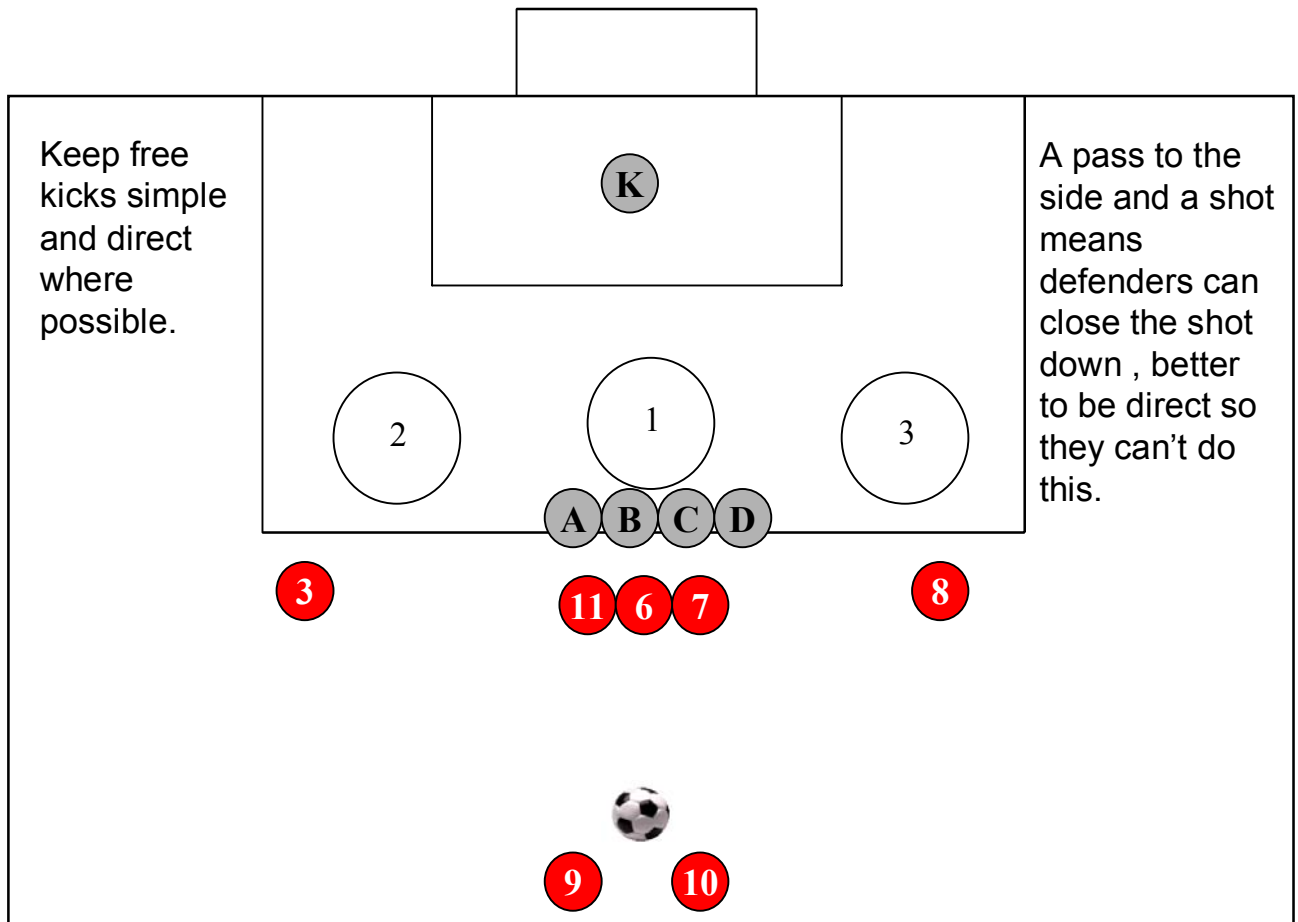
1. (9) clears the space in front as (7) receives the throw from (2). (7) passes back to (2) who plays a pass into the space created by (9). As the ball is received by (7) the run by (6) begins. (2) receives it back and passes into the path of the run from deep by (6).
2. The way players mark it is a good possibility that (6) will not be tracked and will get free to receive the pass.
3. A more direct way with fewer touches on the ball so less chance for error would be for (9) to make the run away from the space, (7) to come short but at a steeper angle again to create space and for (6) to make the run and the throw goes direct saving the 1 – 2 where a bad touch or lay off can ruin the move.

MAINTAINING POSSESSION FROM THROW- INS



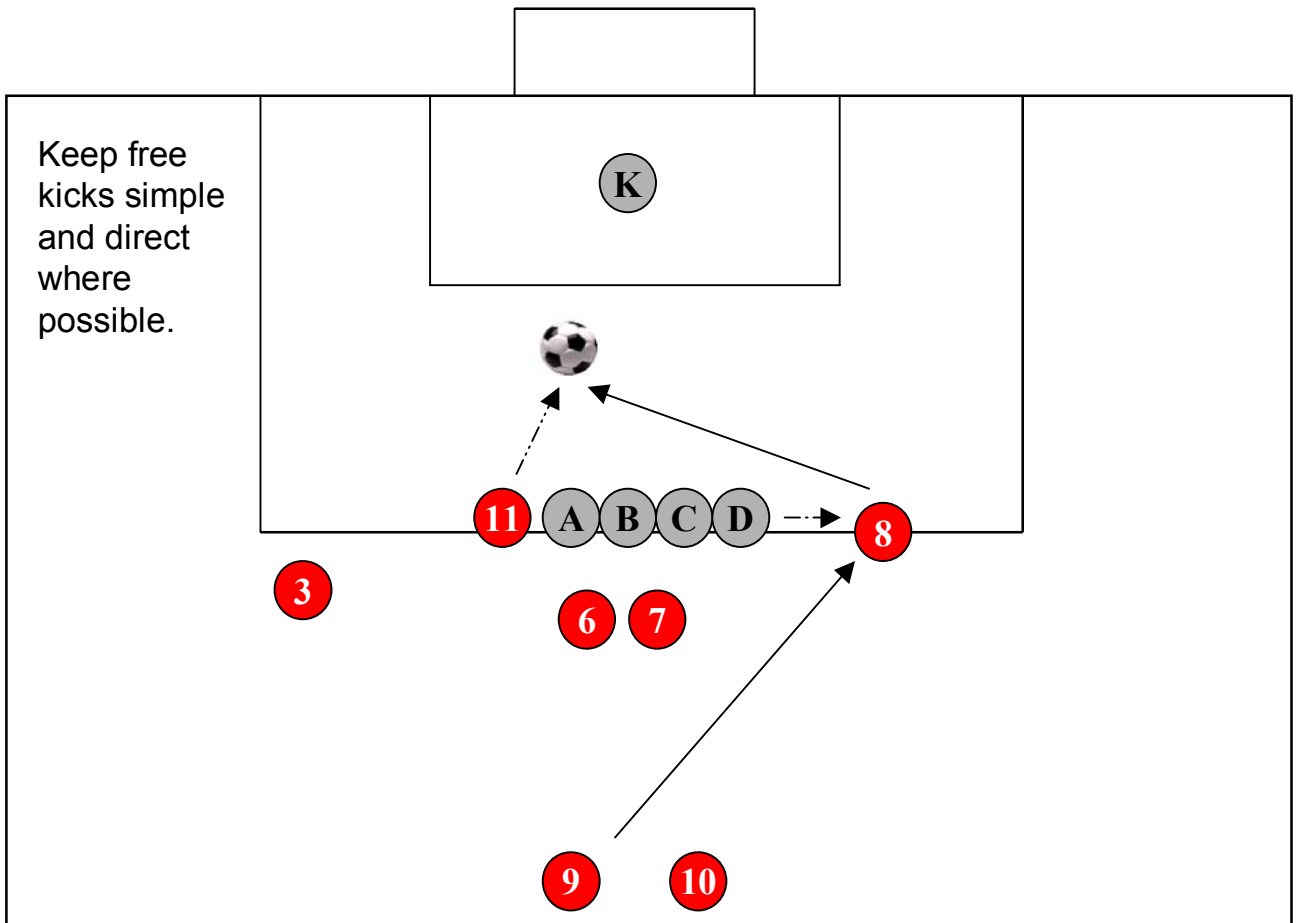
1. Here I have included some defenders to show how you can move players around to create space for the throw.
2. This is the more direct throw in, throwing into the path of the run by (60 who has eluded the marker with a quick burst of pace to get free.
3. If defenders do not follow the movements of the attacking players then the thrower can throw the ball into the feet or into space to the players who have got free. For example (D) may stay in the space and not track (7) so throw the ball into (7)'s path. (7) must check back but face forward in case this happens so the body position is facing forward to receive the pass.
4. Players should try to receive the throw facing forward rather than backwards where it is possible as in (7)'s case.

ATTACKING FREEKICKS FROM A CENTRAL POSITION



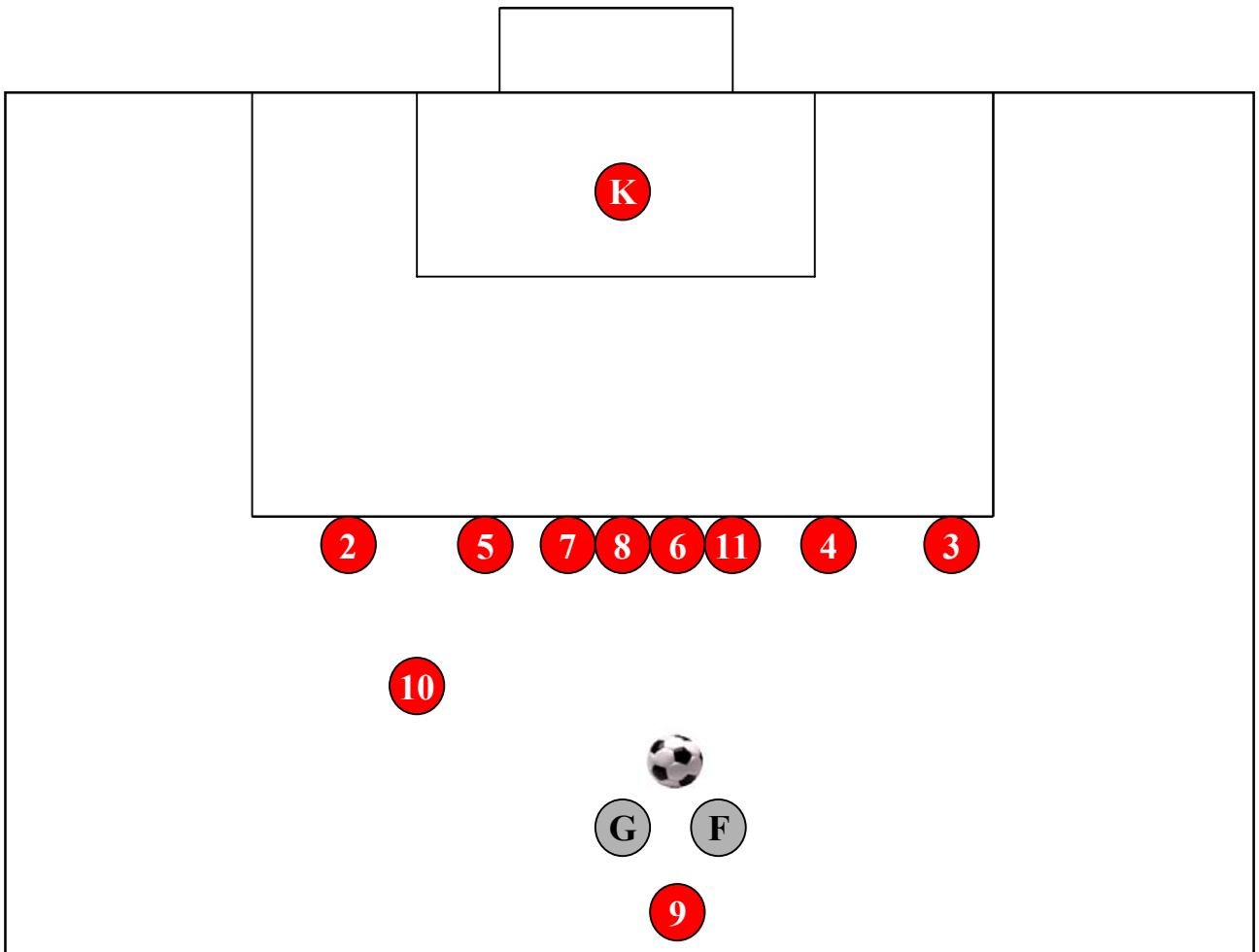
1. Here we have three players lined up in front of their wall. This to **block** the keepers **view**. They stand a **few yards away** from the wall so defenders can't hold them in. As the player who shoots moves towards the ball they break both ways around the wall for rebounds. The space **behind** the wall is open so a **chip** behind it may also work for the breaking players to receive especially if it is a little too far out for a shot.
2. If it is just too far out to shoot then also a ball to areas **2 or 3** for players running on to may be useful especially if the opponents are expecting a direct shot at goal. Decide who is taking the kick and everyone knows it will be the **first player** who moves to the ball. If (10) is taking it (a direct shot at goal) then (9) must **shape up** as if preparing to shot to **distract the keeper**.
3. It is best if it's the first player because the keeper **isn't sure** who will take it. If the first one runs over the ball the keeper knows **definitely** it will be the **second** player who will shoot. This keeps the set play **simple** to execute plus opponents can't close down the ball as it is a direct shot not a lay off.
4. You can put a couple of players on the **end** of the defenders **wall** if you have a player who is very accurate. The free kick taker shoots at the attackers who cover a corner of the goal and they must get out of the way of the ball.

ATTACKING FREEKICKS FROM A CENTRAL POSITION



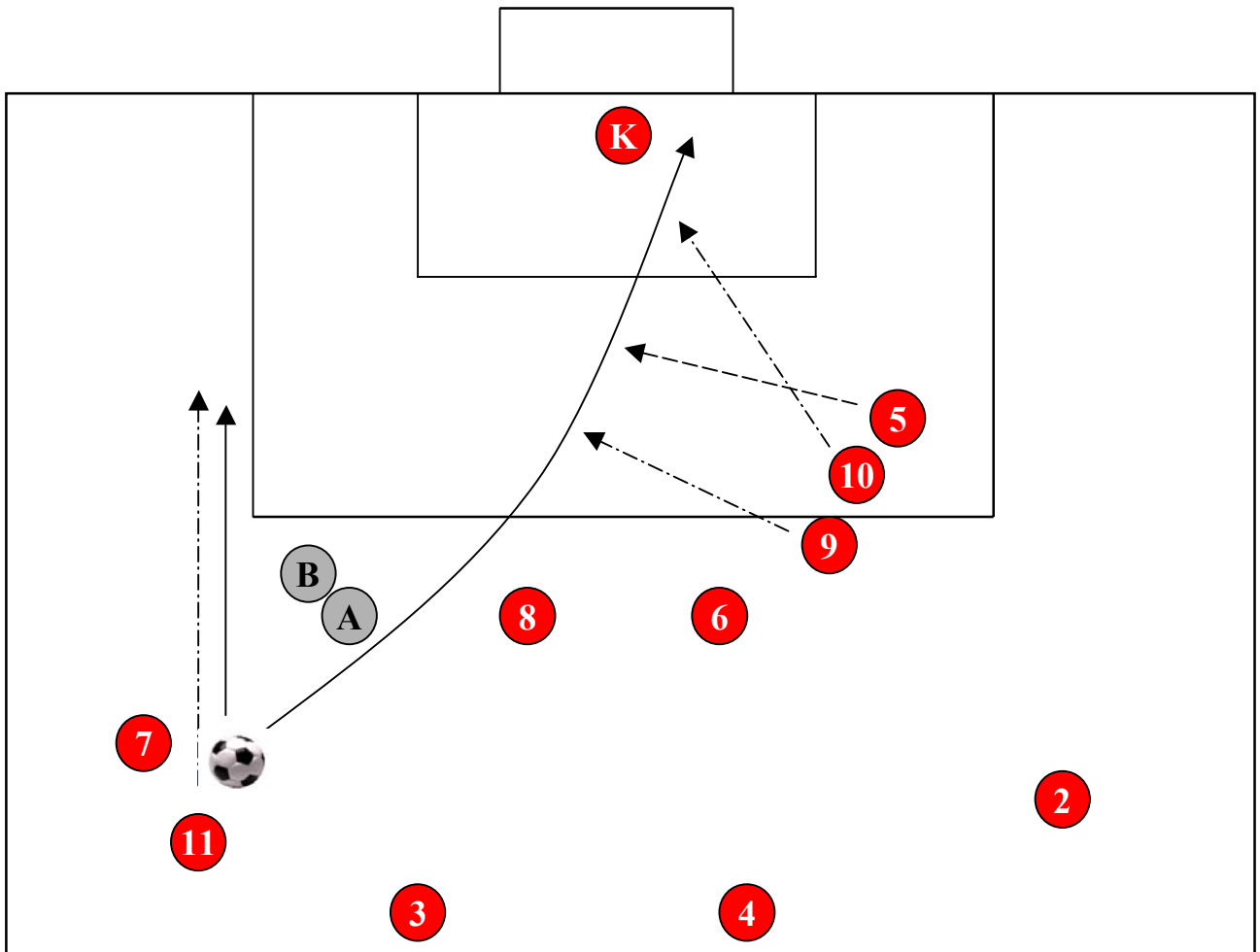
1. Shape up to shoot so they are expecting a shot, (8) pulls away from the side of the wall to receive a pass from (9) and plays a one touch pass into the path of (11) who has started on the other end of the wall.
2. The timing of the movement by (8), timing of the pass by (9) and the timing of the run by (11) are all important. (11) must not go too early as to be offside.
3. If (8) receives in space (unlikely) then that player can shoot.
4. This is simple but can be effective. Have (3) on the other side call for the ball and make a movement as if to receive it as a distraction then immediately play the pass to (8).
5. You could even have (10) run over the ball continue the run and receive the pass from (8) as (10) may not be picked up by anyone.

DEFENDING FREEKICKS CENTRALLY



1. Usually it's the **four midfield** players who go in the wall with the biggest being on each end as that's where the ball is usually placed on a shot (trying to bend around the wall).
2. The keeper can line the wall up or you can have an outfield player do it from behind the ball, here (9) lines the wall up.
3. To get the position right (6) should be lined up off one post then (11) put **outside** this line so it's very difficult to bend the ball around the wall.
4. (5) should line up off the other post and this player can charge the ball down if it's played to the side.
5. Other players mark **space** or **players**. (10) can close down the pass to the side.
6. No one must drop back behind the line of defenders because this allows the opponents to get closer to the goal and not be offside so make sure the team **hold the line**.
(Wayne Harrison)

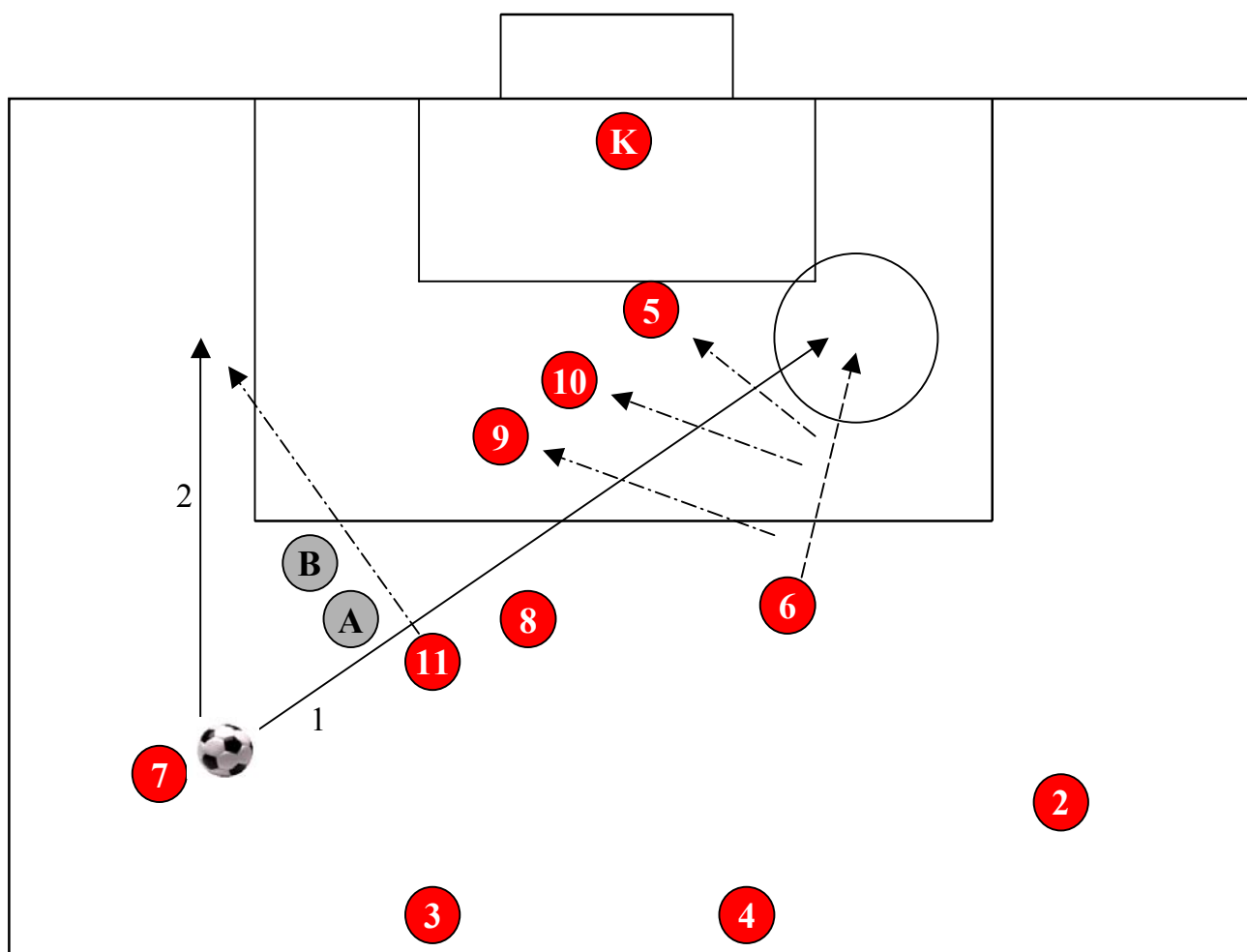
ATTACKING FREEKICKS FROM WIDE AREAS



1. The ball is **driven** with **pace** to the far post area but on the goal, almost like a cross or a shot. This is to ensure if no one makes a contact on the ball the **keeper is forced** into making a save whatever the outcome.
2. Have players attacking the ball at **different** points along the flight path of the ball. Use a left footer on the right and a right footer on the left so you get an **in- swinging** delivery.
3. Have two players on the ball, (11) can run up to the ball and past it, and then (7) either delivers the ball into the box or passes the ball into the path of (11) to cross from near the touchline and from a different angle. Have a **signal** for the ball down the side so everyone **knows** what is happening and can position themselves accordingly (both hands in the air by (7) means the one down the side).
4. You could have (11) on the inside of the wall and have the run down the side from here.

(Wayne Harrison)

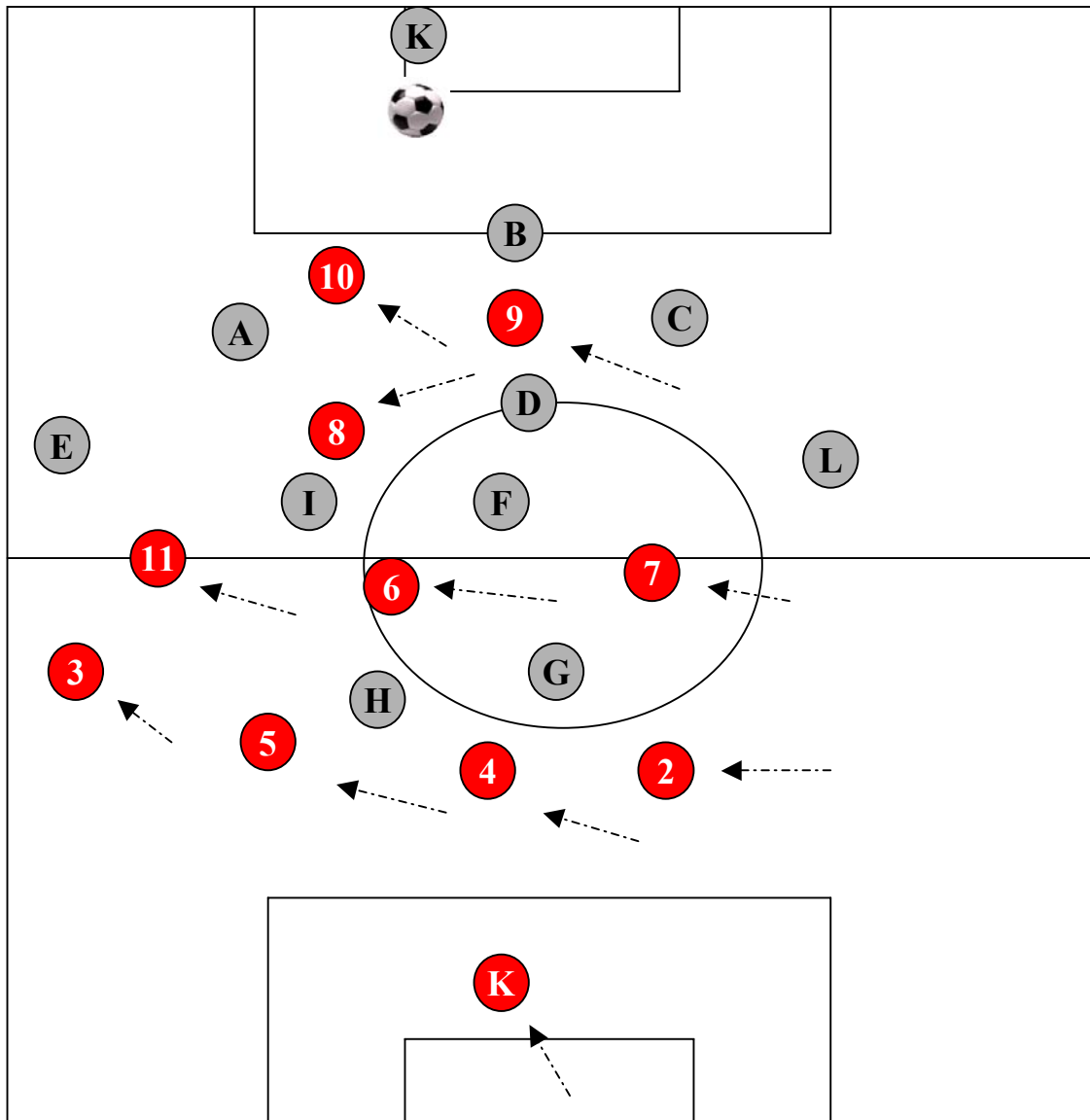
ATTACKING FREEKICKS FROM WIDE AREAS



1. **Move 1** - The three players (5), (9) and (10) make runs across the box to create space behind from where they have come for (6) to make a curved run to meet the ball. Defenders will be pulled **away** from this area by these runs.
2. (6) either heads for goal or back across goal for the three players already in there. They take up different positions so wherever the header goes one may have a chance to get on the end of it and have a strike at goal with a shot or another header.
3. **Move 2** - (11) here makes the run down the side from the end of the wall and it will be difficult to be picked up and tracked from here.
4. These types of free kicks are kept simple to be more effective, this one is just three runs together from the three attackers in the box, a cross and a run and header.

(Wayne Harrison)

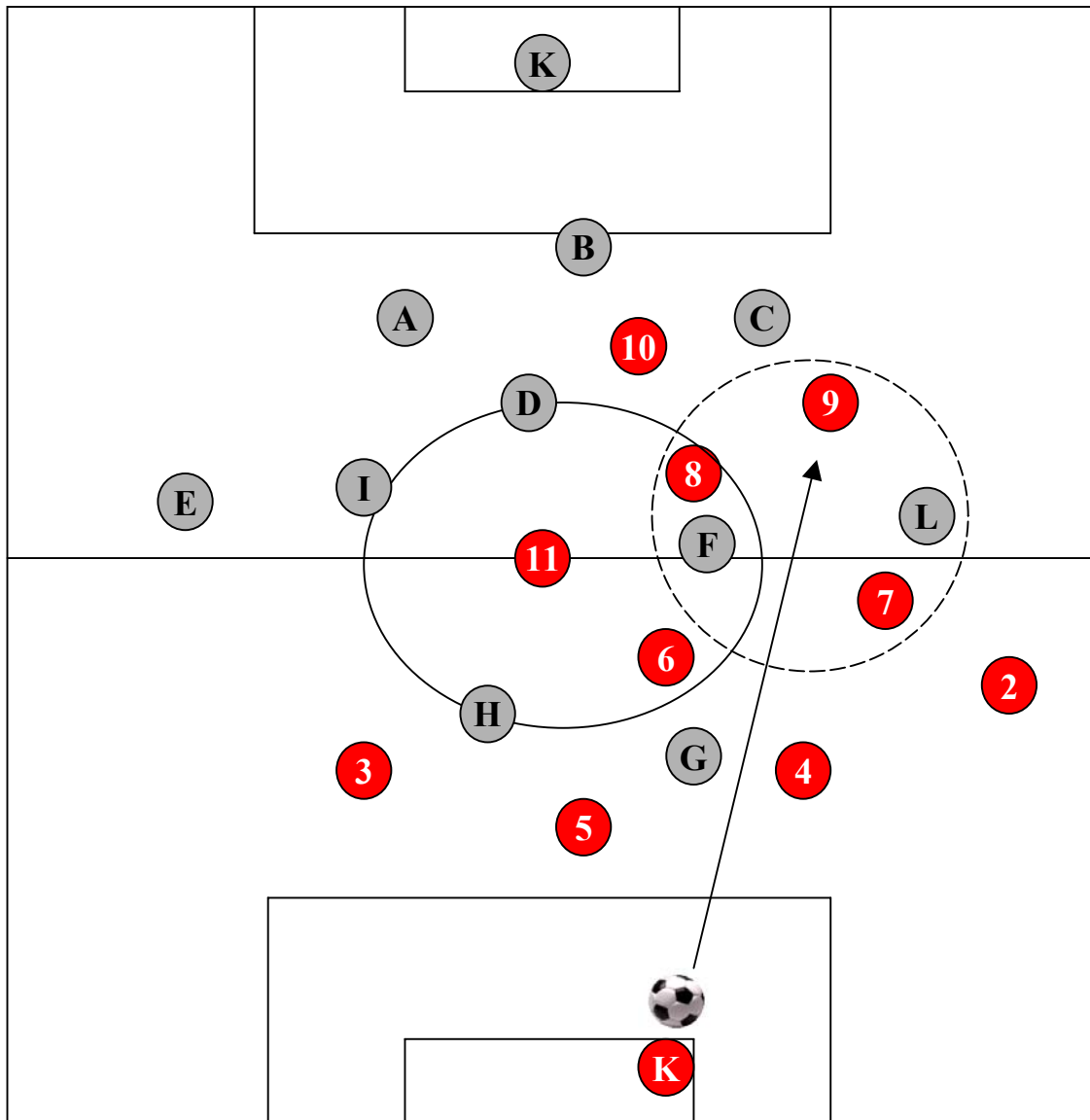
DEFENDING AGAINST A GOAL KICK



1. All the team move across the field to where the ball is likely to be kicked. Use the **SLIDE** call so everyone knows what to do with just a one word command.
2. If they try to play out the other side and catch us everyone must adjust quickly back across the field.
3. Strikers try to position in front of defenders in case the kick is a bad one. If nothing else this makes the defenders mark our players when they actually have possession of the ball.
4. Back four take their positions up the field depending on how far the keeper can kick the ball. For younger teams all the players may be in the attacking half of the field except the keeper.

(Wayne Harrison)

POSITIONING FROM OUR GOALKICK



1. Our players know where the keeper is going to kick the ball so they get into position close to the area the ball is likely to land with as many players around that area to be able to have the best chance to gain possession, either with the first player to touch the ball or from second ball possession.
2. Above, the keeper is trying to get the ball into the opponents half towards the right of center and our team have positioned several players around that area for first or second ball possession possibilities.
3. Vary the side the ball is kicked towards to try to confuse the opposition (keeper can have signals), and the players can move towards the designated area as late as possible to give the opponents as little time as possible to adjust their positions and be ready to counter. (Wayne Harrison)