

Zonal Marking In-Depth by Adin Osman Basic

Source: <https://spielverlagerung.com/2018/10/11/video-in-depth-analysis-on-zonal-marking/>

- **Access:** Based on your positioning in relation to the player with the ball, your ability to step to, or defend, him.
- **Pressing triggers in uncontrolled areas of the field**
 - Many pressing triggers for teams take place when the ball is played into an area of the field where they don't have control. A team knows how they are going to set up defensively. Therefore, they know the areas of the field where they have the least control. So, it is easy to predict where the ball will be played in these situations. They then identify triggers and create pressing traps within these contexts.
 - For many teams defending in their own half, they will sit deep, compact both vertically and horizontally. They will likely leave uncontrolled the two center backs, as well as two inverted outside backs. Therefore, this team will likely talk about what to do when the outside back has the ball, when the outside back plays back to the center back, etc.
- **The ball-goal line:** The line directly from the ball to the goal.
 - First, you always want to defend with priority the ball-goal line.
 - Next, you protect the spaces that enable new ball-goal line access by the opposition.
- AOB says: It makes more sense to press high, as opposed to immediately drop into a low block. When you press high, you force the team to play through you until you drop into a medium block, then play through you again until you drop into a low block. Therefore, by challenging them more, you are decreasing the chance that they build into your half, and giving yourself more opportunities to win the ball.
- **Coaching points that I am thinking so far...**
 - Defending in our own half
 - Horizontal compactness and shifting
 - Creating and executing pressing traps in wide areas
 - Fronting defenders & covering lines
 - Trapping, pressing, and vertical shifting of the blocks
 - Recovering and reorganizing (what to do when the opposition penetrates you)
 - Receiving, winning aerial balls (and covering the attempting player)
- **AOB's (4) actions of defending:**
 - On-the-ball actions
 - 1) Tackle the ball
 - 2) Intercept the ball
 - Distant actions
 - 3) Cover teammate
 - 4) Cover a passing line

- Interesting note: According to AOB, these actions do not include “covering space.” He says that the better teams are more focused based on their opponents.
- **Keys for individual success:**
 - Scanning
 - Where is the ball?
 - Where is my teammate?
 - Where is the opponent?
 - Body shape
 - Position and move yourself diagonally. Humans are fastest moving, first, forward, then, diagonally.
- Important components of the action:
 - The Moment
 - The speed
 - The direction
- Note: If space and time of the opponent on the ball is decreased, it increases the likelihood of an error and defensive success
- **Three steps of defending / pressing:**
 - Preparation
 - Execution
 - Follow-up: Once you press and force an action, keep pressing! Keep reducing the space and time of the opponent on the ball.
- **Reference points:**
 - 1) The shape / collective structure
 - 2) The ball
 - 3) Opponents
- **Layers of defense:**
 - Players closest to the ball pressuring the ball
 - Next closest players covering passing options
 - Farthest players, generally uninvolved, covering the “covering players”
- Note: Zonal marking is just a visual effect of the fact that a team has a strategy to defend based on their shape and the opponents around them. It’s not like each player has his own “zone.”
- Note: The amount of distance that a player can leave between himself and an opponent off-the-ball for whom he is marking depends on the player’s individual ability to cover space over time!
- **Individual coaching philosophies:** We can shift and position ourselves based on...
 - 1) Our collective shape: Stick to your position
 - 2) The opponents (man-marking)
 - 3) Individual freedom: Players may choose to mark opponents, or cover passing lines, a combination of both, etc. This model results in less shape and greater spaces, but theoretically less passing options and less accessible space.
- **AOB’s definitions of...**

- Covering: Shifting to cover the ball-goal line
 - Pressing: Going to actually WIN the ball
- I need to come up with pressing traps based on the fact that most teams in PA West play 4-3-3
- Keys:
 - Group movements.
 - Shift with speed, aggressiveness, and relation to opponents.
 - Balance in shape: Not too narrow, not too wide
- **Two types of pressing:**
 - False press: After pressing a team all game, sit back, send one guy to create the illusion of press, and receive the long ball that you have conditioned them to play to an area of the field where, because you are sat back, you have a numerical advantage.
 - Resting press: A higher block with “resting positions” close to the opposition that also protect valuable spaces on the field (the middle) to create the illusion of press, but you are not actually chasing or pressing any balls.