

My Notes on “Pressing, Counterpressing, & Attacking” by Marti Perarnau

Source: <https://www.martiperarnau.com/pressing-counterpressing-and-counterattacking/>

Technical topics:

- Checking shoulder
- Pressing cues
- Tackling technique
- Curving/arching run
- Communication

Progression:

- Pressing individually
- Pressing in pairs
- Pressing in fours
- Etc.

Terms:

- Pressure (the tension itself) vs pressing (creating tension with the intention of getting the ball back)
- Pressure forces an action to occur, so force/manipulate your opponent into making an action that benefits your team
- First, you must “condition” the attacking team to play in a way or to a place on the field where you want them in order to press
- Pressing cues:
 - Field of view
 - Ability of the player
 - Connectivity of the opponent
 - Nature of the pass
 - Orientation of the player
- Timing of the press: Press as the ball is traveling to the opponent because it cannot dramatically change direction, so immediately upcoming events are easily predictable, and it is also easier to get the ball from the opponent before he has control of it.
- Direction of pressing
 - Diagonal
 - Vertical
 - Forwards
 - Backwards (moving towards your own goal to press the ball)
 - Horizontal
- Fronting: Preventing the player from getting the ball rather than allowing him to and defending from there

- If the opposition fronts your midfield line, play over the top to your forwards, and the near midfielder who was fronted easily becomes the third man

Types of Defending vs. Attacking Responses

Type of Defending	Attacking Response
Man marking	Pull marks out of position and play through vacated space
Flexible man marking: Transitioning marks in order to not vacate enormous loads of space	Play in between the opponents
Space oriented man marking: Defenders stay true to zonal responsibilities and mark the man in their zone	Create overloads
Position oriented zonal marking: Players' positions are determined by relation to their teammates. They shift as a unit based on the movement off the ball, but maintain the same relationships with each other.	Give them the ball! Maintain your game plan, but be a bit more ambitious in attack, knowing that if you lose the ball, it's okay. When they get the ball, they may be more prone to expand in attack. You are allowing them to pull themselves apart for you. Then, you can press, win the ball back, and attack the areas where they are exposed.
Man oriented zonal marking: Defenders are responsible for their own zones, but shift slightly towards a player who enters their zone.	
Space oriented zonal marking: Shift as a unit, clog space around the ball	
Option oriented zonal marking: Take away attacking options and prevent the ball from going where it is dangerous to you	

Types of offense:

- Proactive: Seek to change the structure of the defense
- Active: Seek to play the same way no matter what
- Passive: Does not seek to attack
- Ignorant: Ignores the defense

Types of pressing:

- Counterpressing: High pressing
- Rhythmic pressing: A team varies the intensity of its press throughout the game
- False press: After you have pressed intensely for a period, you can display some, but not all, characteristics of your press in order to fake the other team into thinking the press is coming and playing a certain way, while meanwhile you don't follow through with this press and instead conserve energy
- Resting press...?

Objectives of pressing:

- Guide opponent away from pressured areas
- Increase the difficulty of executing a decision for the opponent

Types of compactness:

- Spatial: Not a lot of space within the team's block
- Tactical: Not a lot of playing options through the team's block
- Dynamic: The team is positioned in their block to more easily anticipate the opponent's actions and press
- Synergistic: Within the block, there is cover and layers to any trigger, movement, or action.

Counterpressing:

- Definition: Pressing the ball in transition from offense to defense
- Should only be done when you have an overload, or an easy opportunity to create an overload.
 - Bad opportunity: Pressing the ball after giving it away on a long ball forward. The striker was likely alone, or maybe 2v4, etc.
 - Good opportunity: A bad pass gives the ball away in midfield. If you were looking to move around and create angles of support in attack, you likely could press the opponent successfully, with higher numbers coming at him from a variety of angles.

Questions:

- 15-pass rule...
 - Why is it necessary?
 - Why do players need 15 passes to get into position? Can't they move there in a few seconds?
 - When is this required? Transition from defense to attack?
- What to do if your counterpress or high press breaks down?

Types of counterpressing

- Space-oriented
 - Dortmund (Klopp)

- Team shifts in a block towards the ball
- Position oriented zonal marking
- Not intentionally cutting off passing lanes, but the sheer number of players clogging the area naturally does.
- Pressure on the ball is necessary because without it, the attack can easily switch play to your weak-side (the side away from which you have shifted)
- Man oriented
 - Bayern (Heyneckes)
 - One or two players pressure the ball, while the others are “touch tight” on their marks
 - This strategy relies on lots of tackling. “Touch tight” defenders must be ready to challenge for the passes that come their way.
 - Weaknesses: You will struggle against a team with players who are...
 - Also good tacklers
 - Excellent 1v1
 - Excellent on 50-50 balls
 - Excellent in tight spaces
 - Are smart enough to pull your man markers out of position
- Passing lane oriented
 - Pep (Barca)
 - Predatorial
 - Coax opponent to play into a certain lane/space/area before pouncing in the ball
 - Also good to force the ball backwards or force a long ball
 - Force opponents into less strategically important areas (sidelines, or anywhere where space is congested)
- Ball oriented: Everyone press (old school and dangerous because it’s easy to get in behind the pressing team and counter)

Why press in central areas? (Atletico) Great position to counter attack

Counter Attacking

- Defensive characteristics to expose...
 - Greater amounts of space
 - More options
 - Less defensive pressure
- Speed of attack: Huge advantage for counterattacking team
 - Force defense to react instead being proactive
 - Defending is more difficult at higher speeds
- Width is overvalued
 - Max width required is from half-space to half-space
 - Counterattacking requires short, quick passes towards goal. Too much width makes this difficult.
- The type of counterattack depends on the type of press

- Pressing creates an overload of defenders in an area of the field
- These defenders turn into attackers when the ball is won, which now means an overload of attackers.
- You may decide how to press based on where and with whom you want to have an overload of attacking players for a counterattack.
- Counterattacking passes
 - Find the target man as soon as possible
 - Play the way you are facing
 - Diagonal
 - Lay-off/set
 - Return pass (straight back)
 - Find a player facing forward in the half space
 - Find players reaching full speed running forward
 - If you win the ball back, your job is done. Find someone else to start the counter.
 - Diagonals
 - Half-space to half-space diagonal passes
- Counterattacking runs off the ball
 - Peel off into space
 - Runs in behind the defense
 - Strategically make runs to pull defenders away in order to open up space for a teammate who may get the ball
 - Runs to create overloads
 - Runs to pull away defenders from crowded areas and create 1v1s.
 - Binding runs: Force defender to choose between the runner or the player with the ball
 - Evasive runs: Run from Center to either flank
 - Runs into space just vacated by a dribbling player in attack—They either find open space to receive a pass, or pull defenders away from the attacker and allow the attacker to continue building momentum

Goal in attack: Attack while putting your players in positions to counterpress as well as protect the goal should they lose the ball

Goal in defense: Defend the goal and seek to get the ball back while putting your players in positions to attack (possess or advance towards goal with an opportunity) should they recover the ball