



Set pieces: Defending Wide Free Kicks

Ben, Sara and Andy





2012 Manchester United Squad: Key Players



De Gea
6'4



Rooney
5'10



RVP
6'1



Evans
6'3



Vidic
6'3



Rafael
5'8



Ferdinand
6'4



Valencia
6'0



Carrick
6'2



Smalling
6'4





2012 Manchester United Wide Free Kicks: Defensive Principles



- Organize quickly and collectively
- Understand and perform defensive roles
- Win the first ball (and second if necessary)
- Launch counter attack



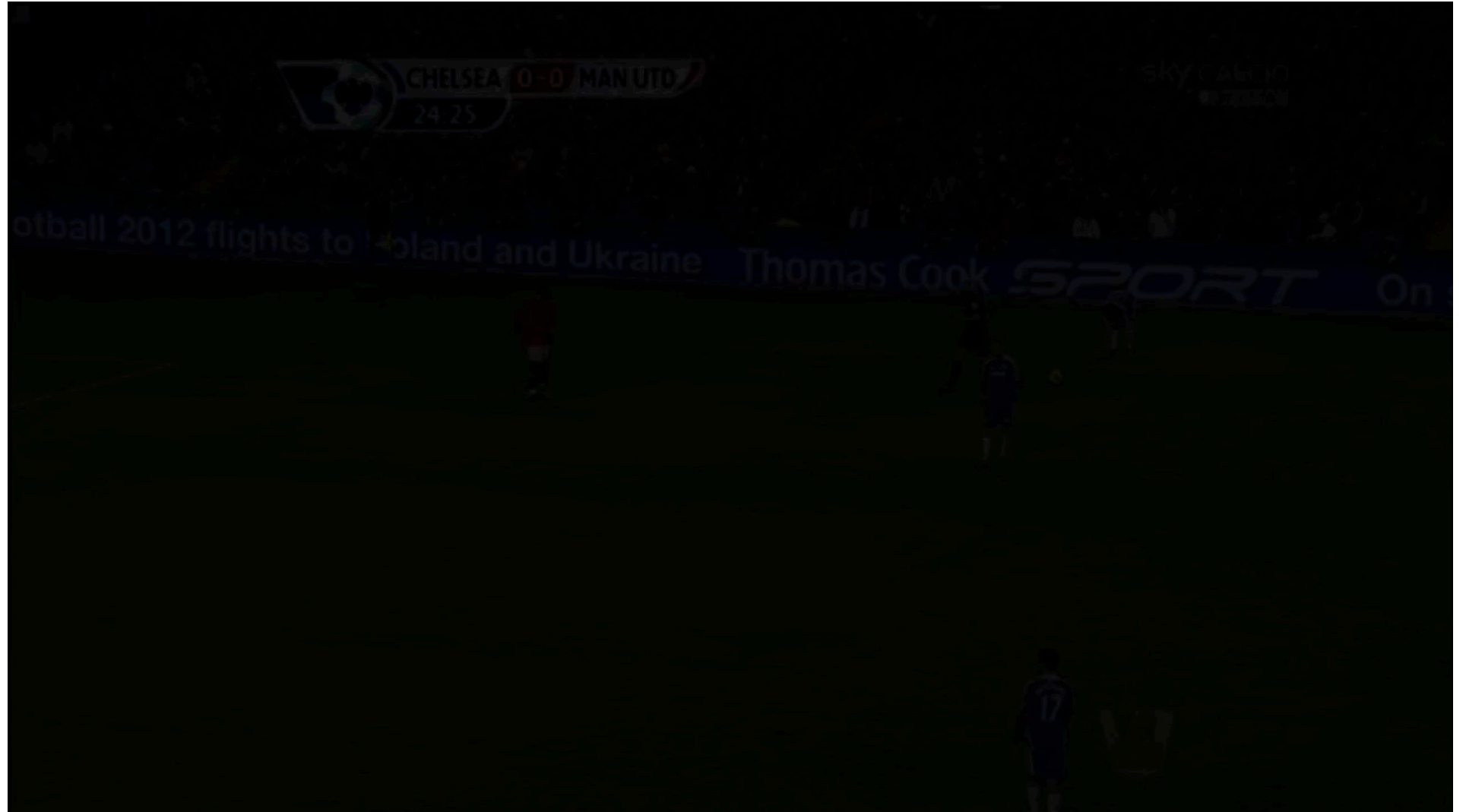
2012 Manchester United Wide Free Kicks: GK Role

- Heavily involved in organization
- Handles most balls played in behind back line
- Clear line on sight towards ball
- Early vocal call - “keeper” or “away”
- Once ball has been delivered and cleared, organising the “2nd Phase”





2012 Manchester United Wide Free Kicks: Film





2012 Manchester United Wide Free Kicks: Organization

1. Wall/Short runners

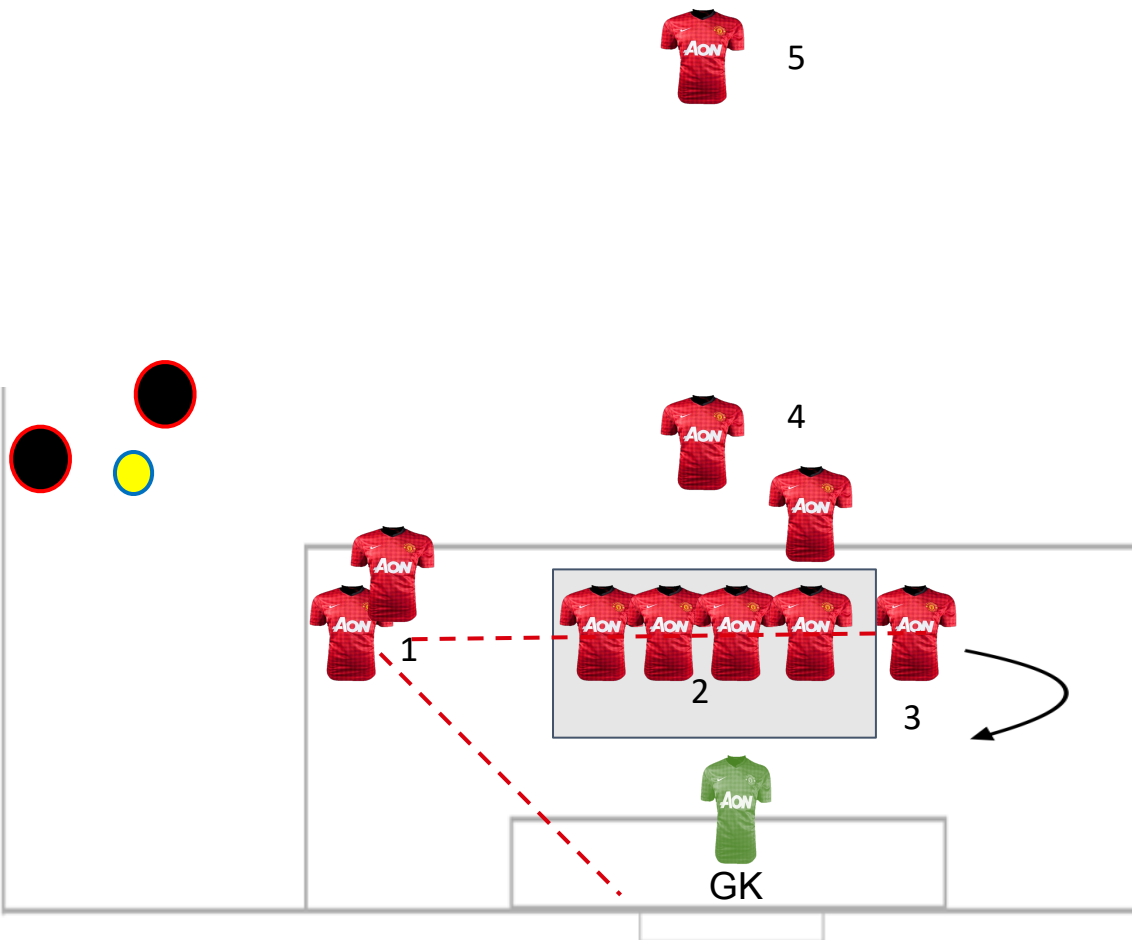
- Middle of wall is lined up with front post
- Players who are quick and able to apply pressure to short or quickly taken free kicks (especially down the line)
- Fantastic 1v1 defending ability and mentally switched on
- Prevent 2v1 situation

2. Central Zonal markers (4-6 players)

- Strong headers of the football
 - Small gaps in between players so runners cannot penetrate centrally
 - Forward body position so clearances are away from goal
- Depending on GK preference**
- Higher line if GK wants more space to attack (In line with wall)
 - Lower line in GK is more comfortable claiming through bodies

3. Central zone end player (back post)

- Similar duties to central zone player
- Player can see across whole line, they are responsible for communicating if the GK is occupied
- Runs around the back to protect the back post



4. Man markers on edge (2-3 players)

- Responsible for blocking and staying with central runners to protect zonal markers
- Most important players for defending the second ball, must put pressure on the ball, if they win the ball look to create a counter attack or clear to wide areas

5. Attacker stays up top (depends on scoreline)

- Forces opposition to keep 2 defenders back, if not creates a 1v1 which is even better
- Central position so can attack the ball on either wing if the ball is cleared
- Fast, short, usually better at scoring goals than stopping them





2012 Manchester United

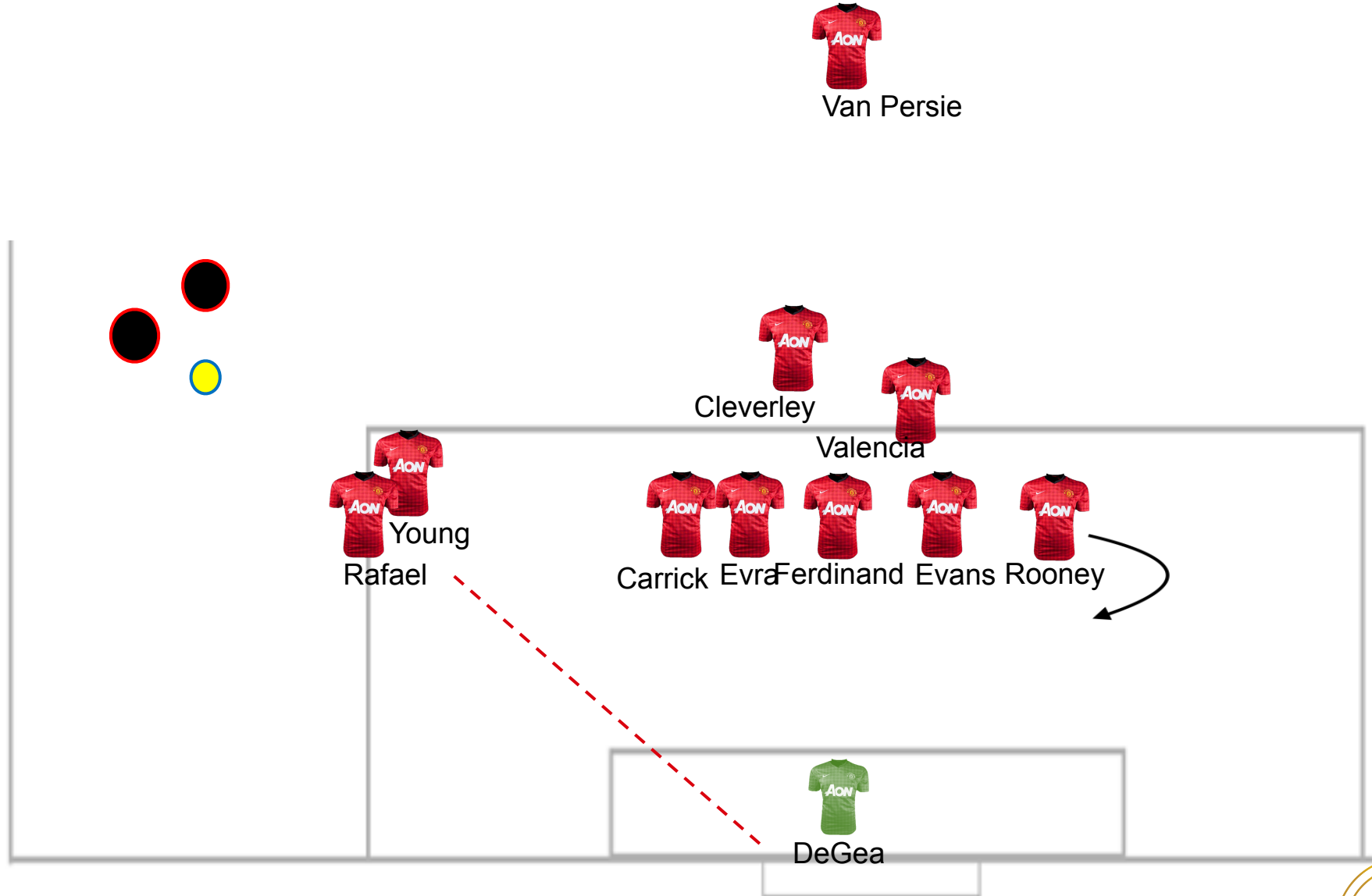
Example of central zonal markers with tight gaps





2012 Manchester United Wide Free Kicks: Example setup

- Wall
- First Defender
- Central Zoaal
- Markers at Edge
- Far Post Player





Pros +

- Clear and distinct roles, easy to set up quickly for players, no confusion about who is responsible for which player as there are clear waves of defending lines
- Able to leave a player up top means the opposition are forced to leave 2 players behind unless they are willing to risk 1v1, in which case this is even better
- High line means opposition are susceptible to being caught offside
- Different zones are covered:
 - Short/quick
 - Central
 - Edge
 - Front post
 - Back post

- High line leaves a large amount of space between GK and defenders for the opposition to attack
- Compact centrally leaves spaces in the half spaces both at front and back space
- Mixing zonal and man marking can sometimes allow runners in between the waves of defence, so man-markers need to be very switched on

Cons -





2012 Manchester United Implementation: During the week



Training

- Whiteboard
- Video/Pictures
- On the training field
- Subbuteo table



Pre Match

- Whiteboards in change rooms with players in their roles and specific man marking duties

During Match

- Assistant or GK coach with booklet in dugout to show substitutes
- Half time: Fast and brief video review if we are missing an obvious threat or there is a clear problem in our setup

Review Process

- After watching video feedback assess whether there are any mistakes/holes and if these are caused by individuals or the setup itself - in which case we make adjustments



2012 Manchester United Review Process Example



Example goal conceded against Chelsea - Closest player attracted to ball which created space in between the central zonal players and runner did not stay with his man - Individual error rather than team error





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