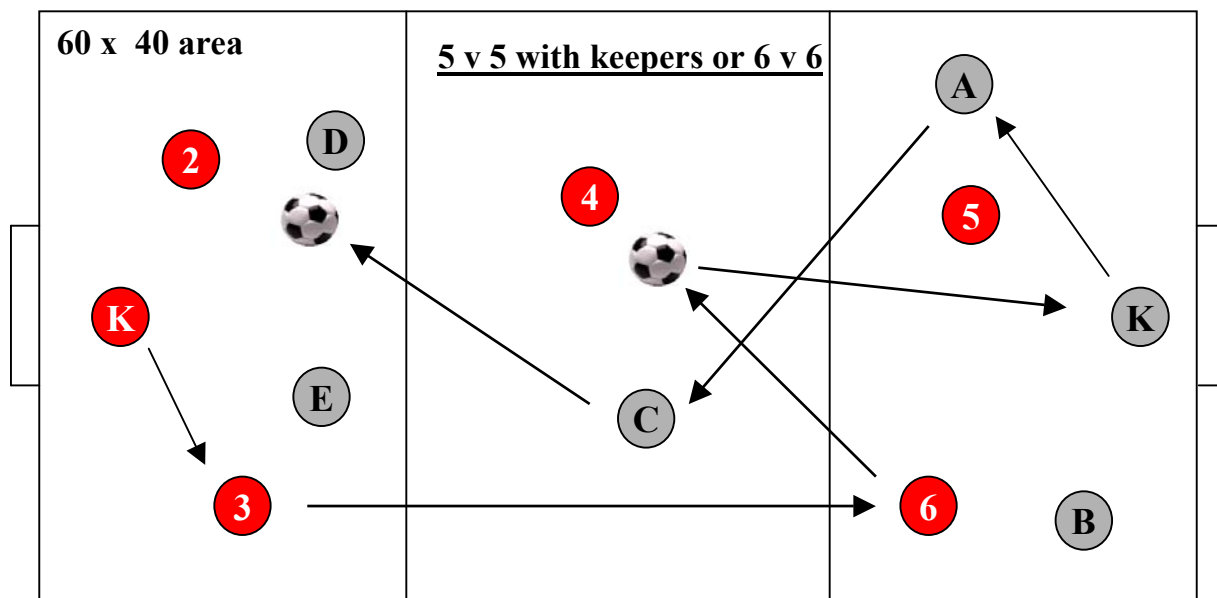


## TRANSITION GAMES MAINTAINING SHAPE AND BALANCE

The following set ups can be used with different numbers of players to suit training needs (odd number use a free player). You will achieve the same results be it 4 v 4 , 6 v 6, 7 v 7, 8 v 8, 9 v 9 up to 11 v 11. Last year we developed the concept of defenders attacking, this year the theme is transitions.

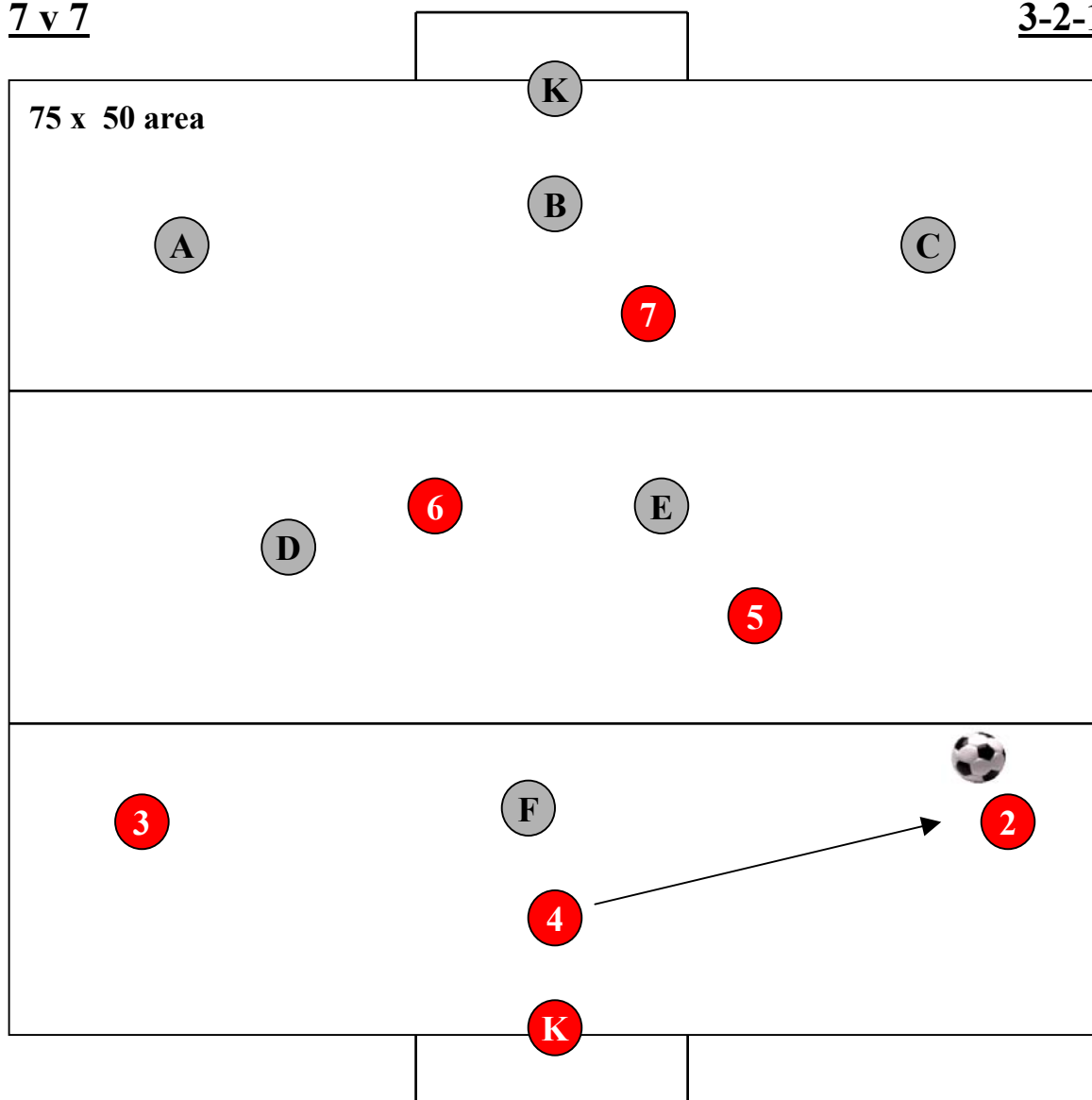


1. Playing **through each other** a ball per team to begin using the principles developed with the use of the A.I.A. program. Players stay in own zones to begin, maintaining shape throughout the team. They can shoot at the end of the move then start a new move from the keeper again. The coach can suggest options using one word to get them to think about different types of movement; forward, back, switch, etc, then let them work it out themselves.
2. Develop by allowing players to cross over zones to support each other. Still no opposition just two teams playing through each other. Once the move is over they return to their original team shape. Initially have the same players drop back to their respective zones.
3. Develop – Have them return to the original team shape but encourage other players to do it depending on where they are on the field. An example; (2) runs forward and finishes in the attacking third (an attacking overlap run in a game), wait to see if the players recognize that (4) drops back into the defensive third to cover and (2) drops back to the middle third (shortest route back), so (2) only has to get back 15 yards instead of 30 yards.
4. Develop – Into a competitive game situation. Defending players must stay in their own zones to allow the attacking concept to take shape.

## PLAYERS STAYING IN THEIR OWN THIRDS

7 v 7

3-2-1



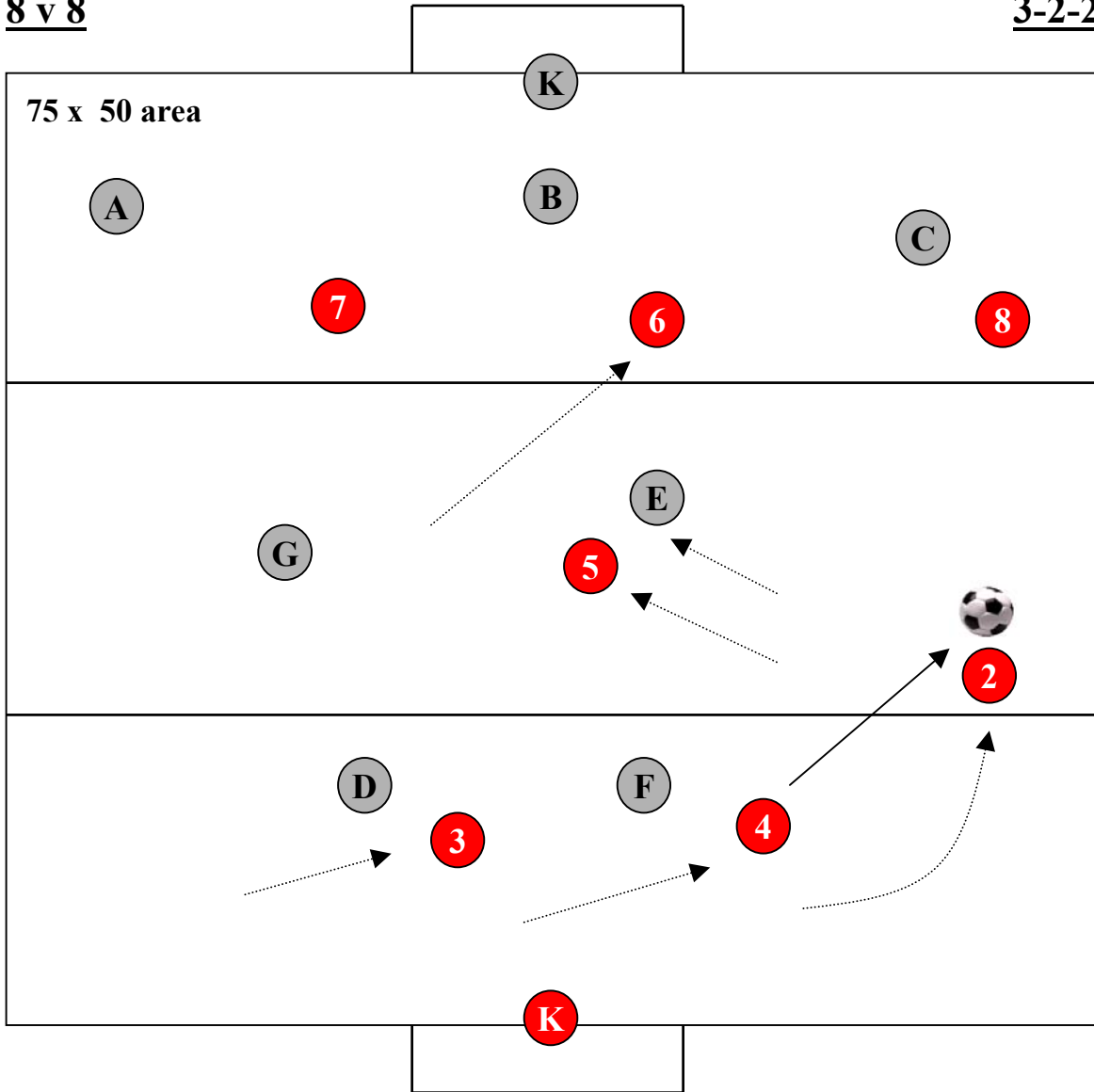
1. To ensure the players have a chance to build up the play from the back have a 3 v 1 overload at each defensive third to begin to session.
2. We are looking to be successful with offensive play building up from the back and this gives it a greater chance of success and thus the positive reinforcement of the players.
3. As they get better at this and gain success you can change it to a 3 v 2 situation so it is more difficult to achieve. 3 v 2 means an 8 v 8 situation with the players developing play but staying in their own third to emphasize team shape through the units.

(Wayne  
Harrison)

# TRANSITIONS BETWEEN THIRDS

8 v 8

3-2-2

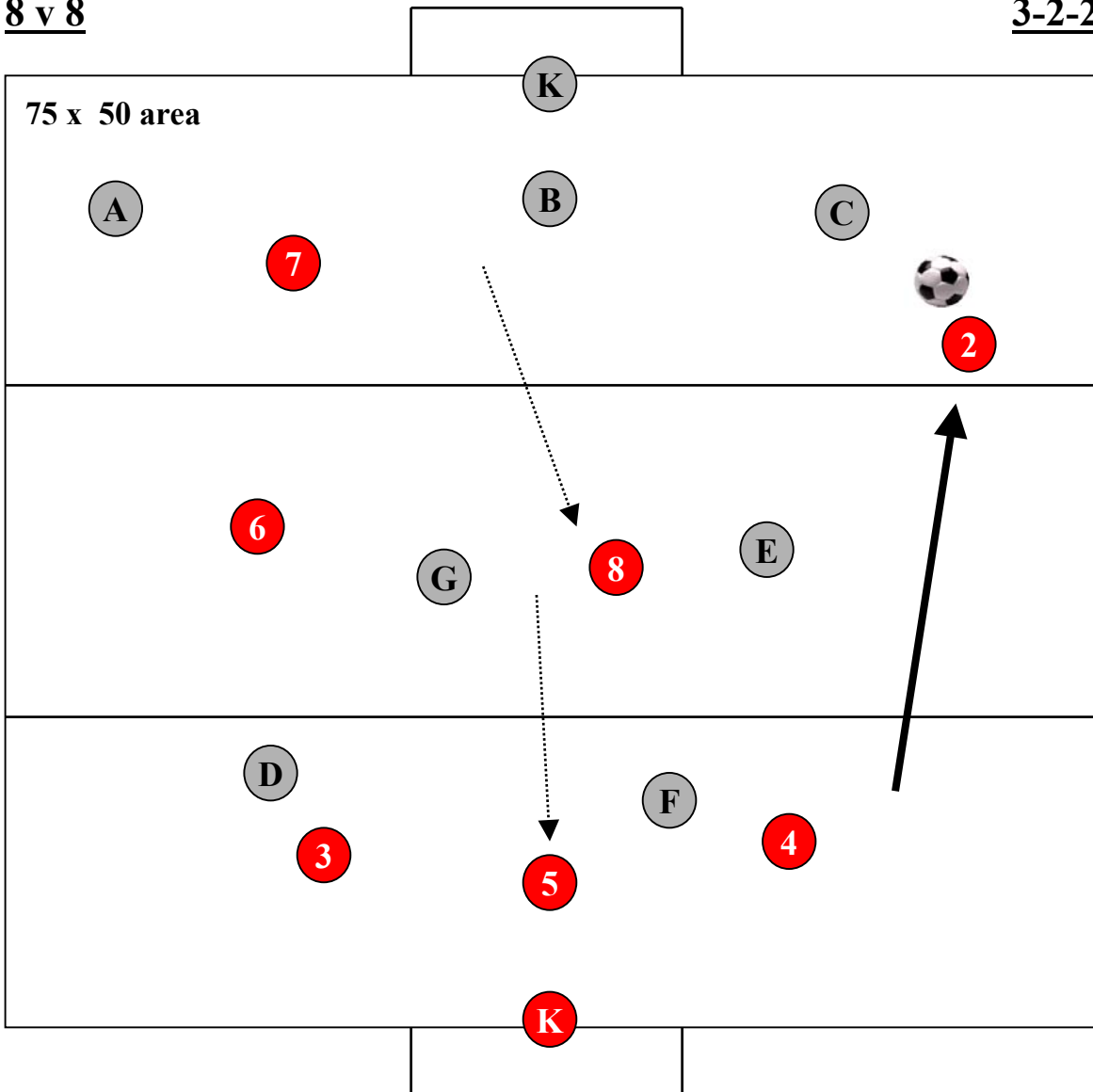


1. Now we are transitioning between thirds and as a defender changes the balance in midfield from a 2 v 2 into a 3 v 2, a midfielder then moves into the attacking third to change the balance from a 2 v 3 into a 3 v 3.
2. (5) clears the space for (2) to bring the ball forward. (4) and (3) cover across behind the field to support and be in a good position to cover should the move break down. This is clearing the space in front of the ball and filling in behind the ball.
3. (6) makes a run into the attacking third to be another target for (2) to pass to.
4. If the player can't go forward and has to play it back ensure the players behind the ball get in positions where they are free to receive it and able to support the player on the ball.  
(Wayne Harrison)

# TRANSITIONS OVER TWO THIRDS

8 v 8

3-2-2

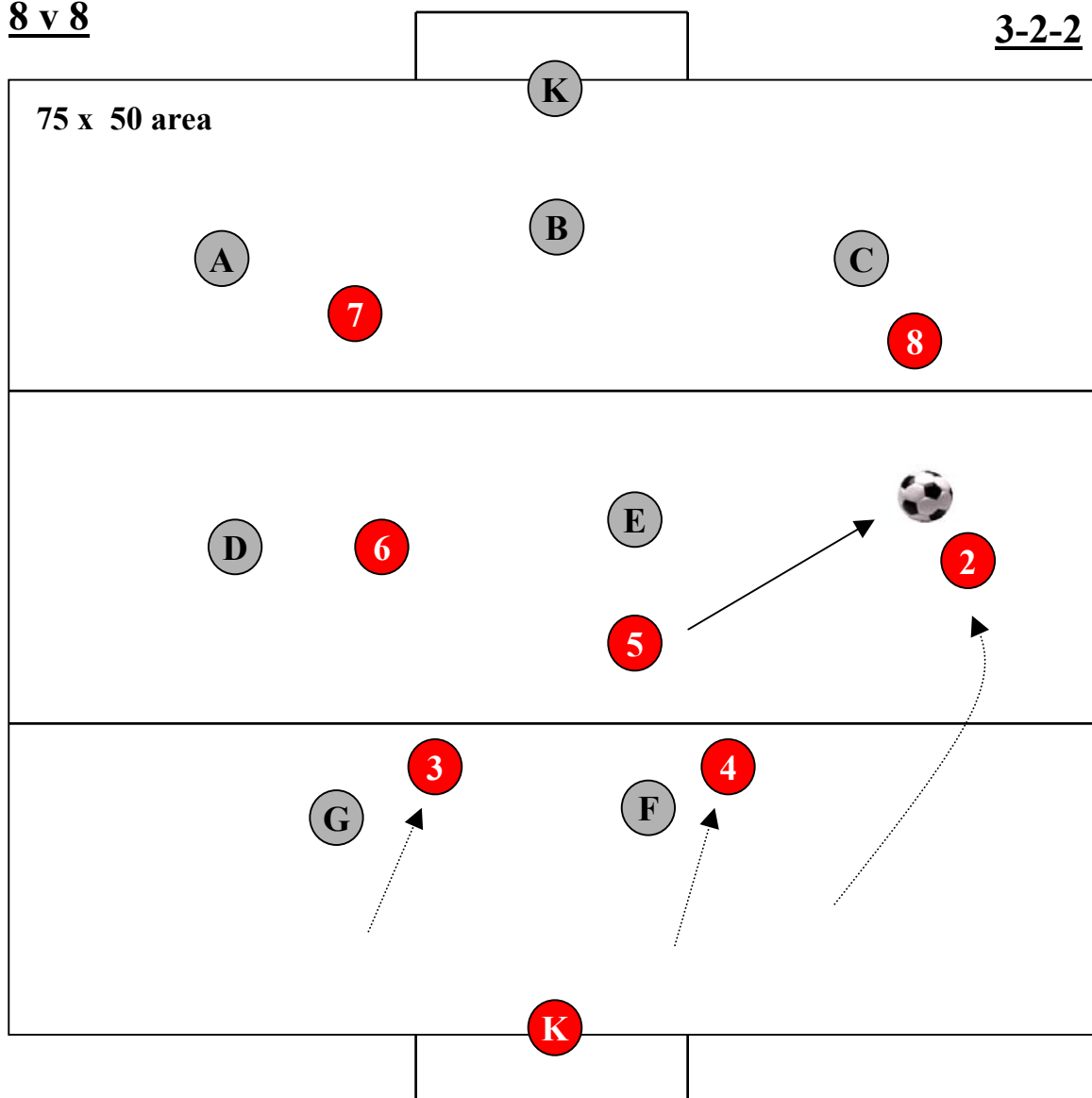


1. (2) on the ball may run over three zones with the ball, if and / or when the move breaks down and the opposition win the ball, (5) can replace (2) and (8) can replace (5) so each player gets back the team shape by the shortest route. This encourages particularly the fullbacks to attack down the flanks as they know they don't face a 50 yard run back in a game situation because a teammate will cover for them. It may only result in a 10 or 15 yard run initially saving energy and time.
2. This method of playing gives **FREEDOM** to the players. You can encourage the players to communicate with each other as this is happening, for example (2) runs forward with the ball and instructs (5) to be prepared to cover.
3. Players **change back** to their positions **as soon** as they can within the game. Can **run** the ball in, **pass** it in, or pass it in to a **runner** from your own zone.

## OVERLAP PLAY

8 v 8

3-2-2



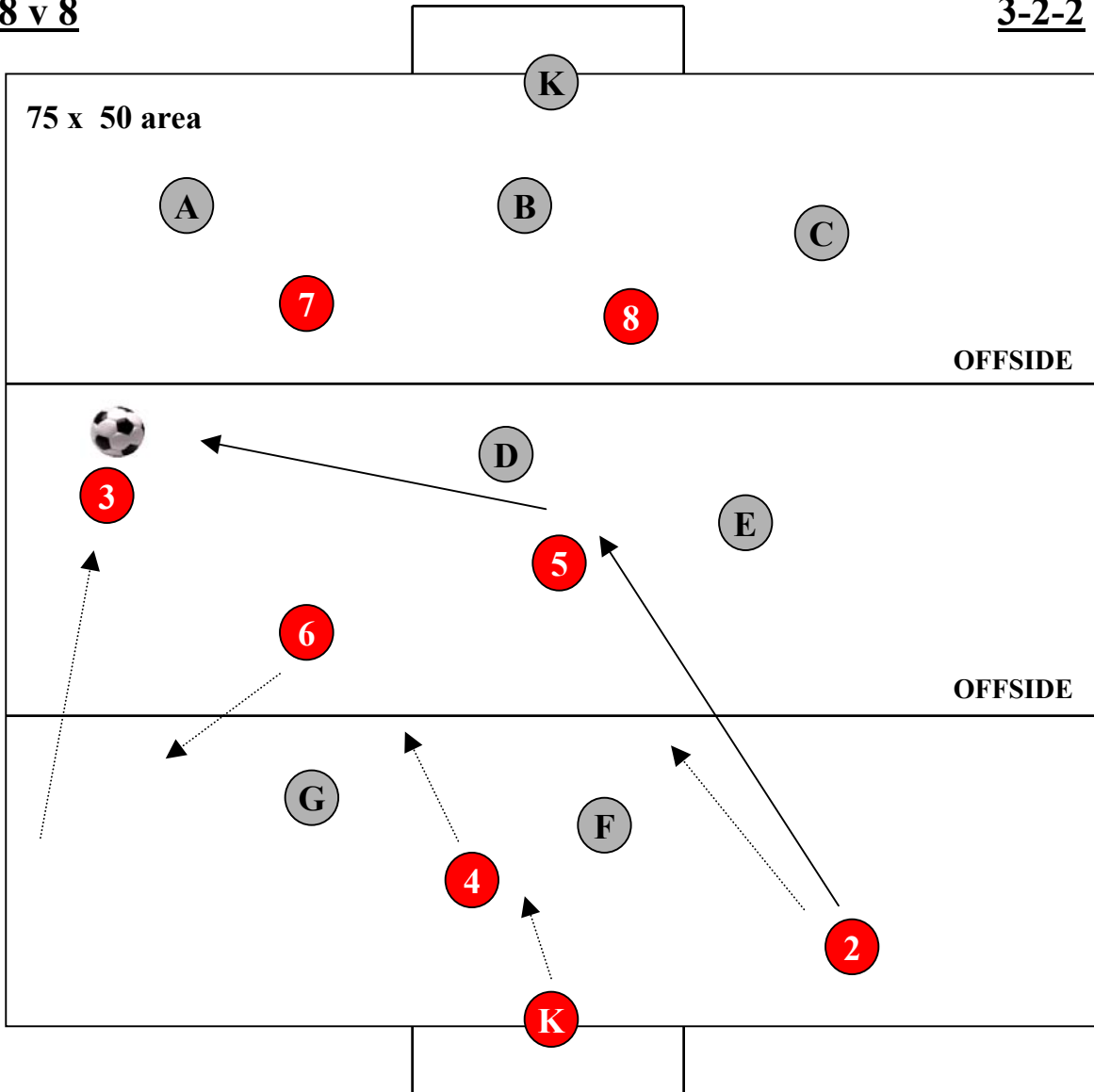
1. Here a full back makes an overlap run to provide an option for (5) to pass to. This is a particular movement that can be practiced and developed in this set up as the run is difficult for the opposition to identify and counter.
2. The overlap can occur also from the middle third into the attacking third.
3. Wide defenders need to be constantly encouraged to get into good wide receiving positions to take the ball forward into attacking areas of the field.
4. The fact that (F) can't track the runner into the middle third yet during this progression helps highlight the importance of this kind of attacking run from a wide area.

(Wayne Harrison)

# INTRODUCING OFFSIDE

8 v 8

3-2-2

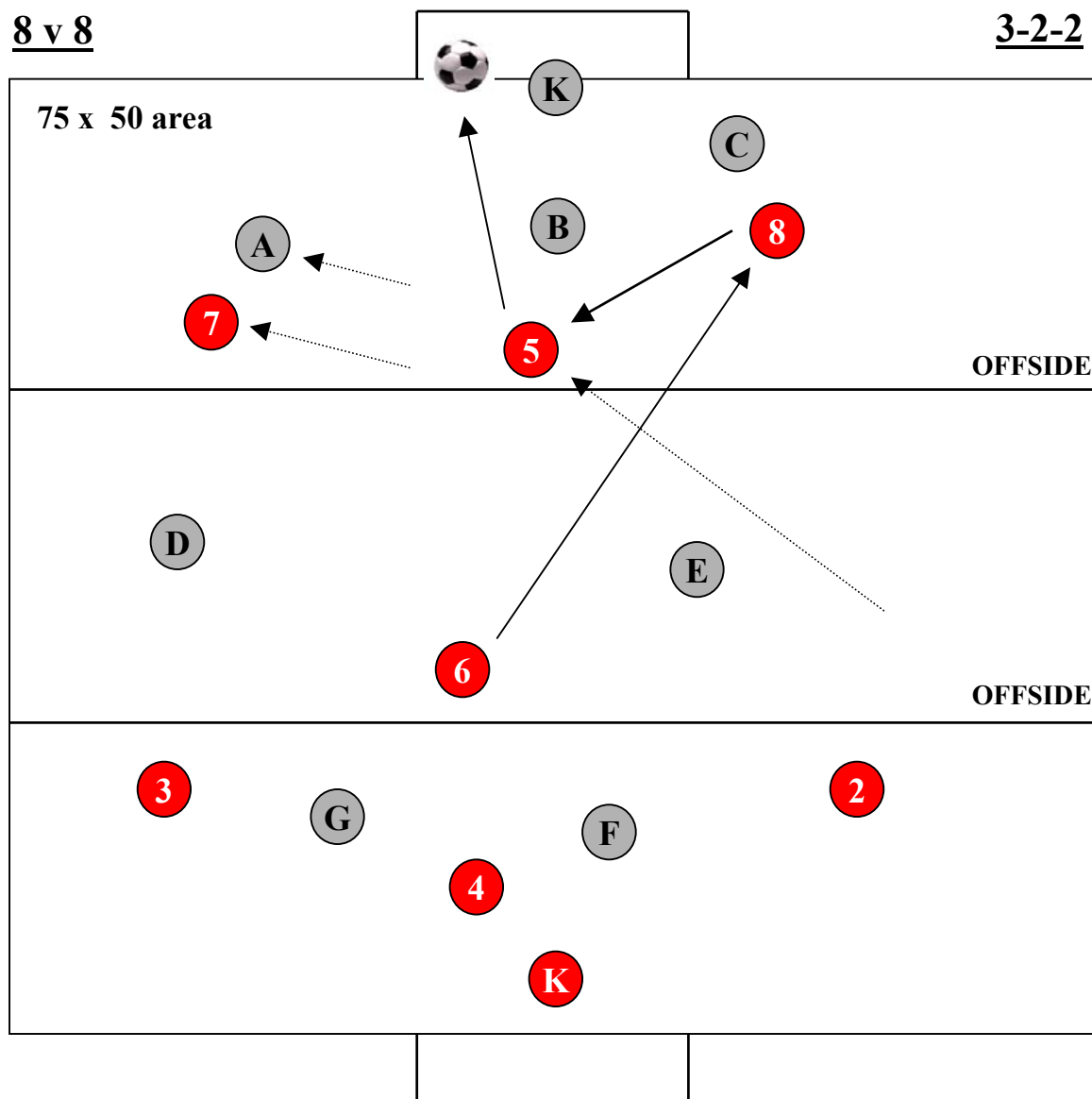


1. Player (2) passes the ball into the middle zone to (5), (3) moves up from the defensive zone to the middle zone to support. This type of **transition movement** is important because it allows players to move **freely** between the zones knowing they will have a team mate covering for them. Develop – Have **offside from the defensive third** of the field. (2) passes the ball forward and both (2), (4) and the keeper push up.
2. In terms of the **opposition** this rapid movement and transition makes it **difficult** for them to pick players up, to read what your team is doing. Usually (D) would be marking (6) (who can cover) but now has to think about marking (3).
3. This means defenders **aren't just** defenders, midfielders **aren't just** midfielders and attackers **aren't just** attackers they work to **help each other** through the three units of the team and are free to mix the game up. This is **total soccer** played to encourage the **free movement** of players throughout the teams.  
(Wayne Harrison)

## OVERLOAD IN ATTACK TO MAINTAIN POSSESSION

8 v 8

3-2-2



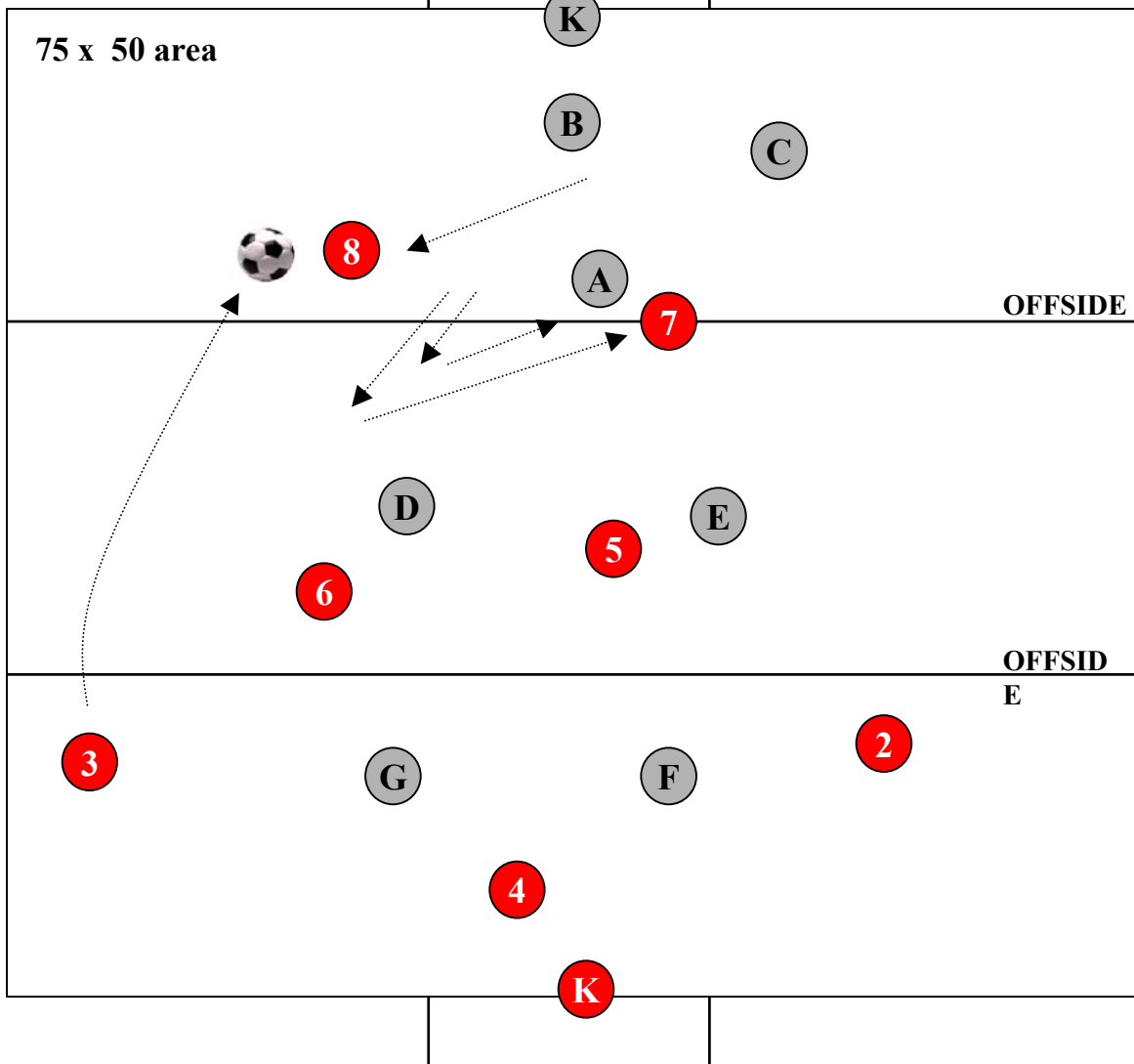
1. Here (6) plays the ball to (8) and (5) makes a run off the ball to support in the attacking third. (8) may be able to lay the ball off for (5) to shoot at goal. (7) moves (A) away to help (5) find space to shoot. You can practice this session with different numbers of players to get the same effect building up to an 11 v 11 game.
2. **Transitions** can depend on the **stage** of the game; if your team is chasing the game to score being a goal down then (7) would probably **stay** in the attacking third, not cover for (5) to keep an **overload situation** there but the basis of the session is to show how to maintain a balanced shape in your team.
3. Practice movement (switching) of strikers and midfield players to move defenders around (especially if they man mark), so play isn't in straight lines all the time. For example in another situation (8) and (7) may switch sides to create space for one another (see over).

(Wayne Harrison)

## SWITCHING POSITIONS

8 v 8

3-2-2

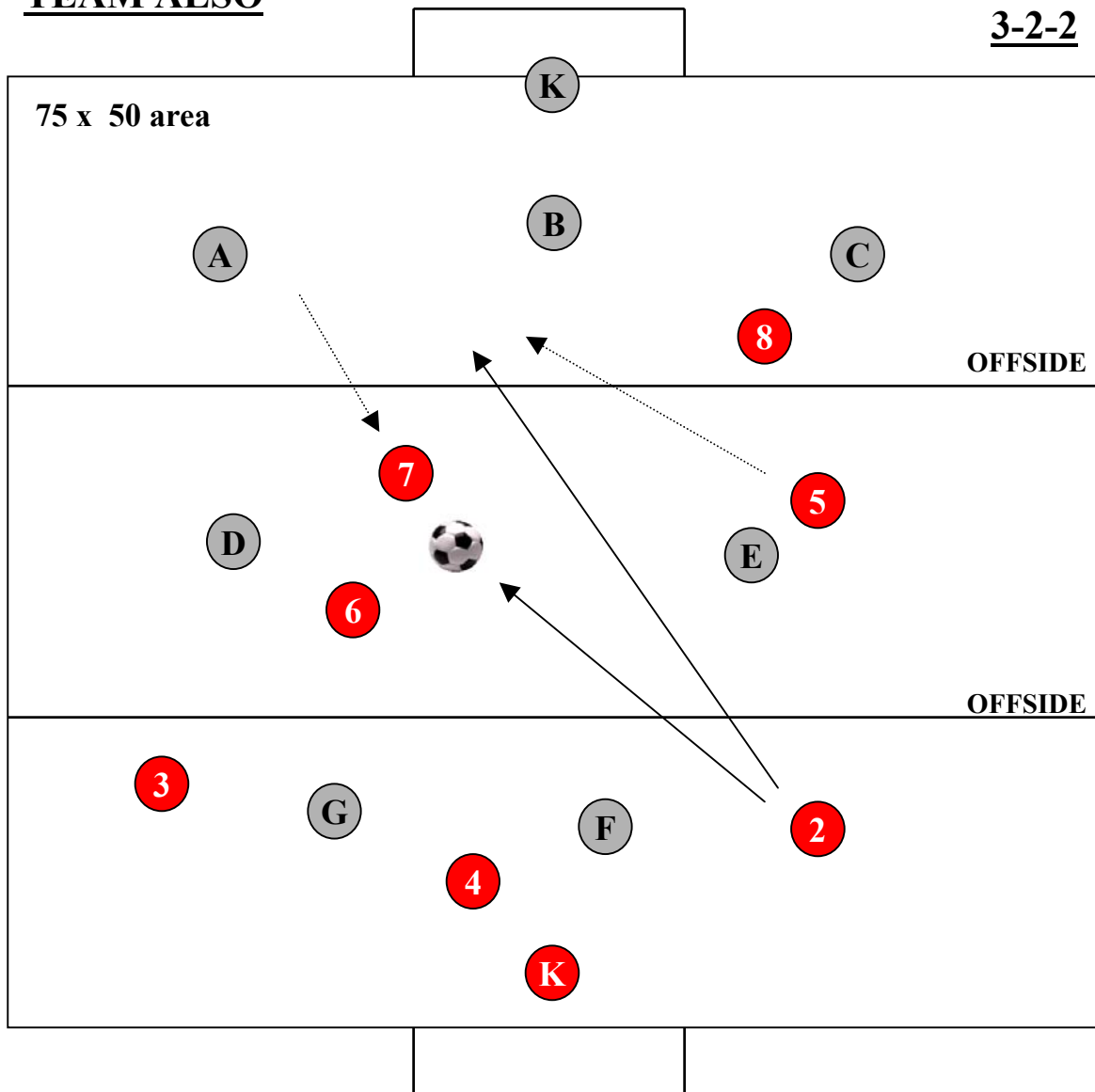


1. Here (7) checks to the ball then checks away creating space for (8) to come in to receive the pass. (8)'s movement should be late and fast to get away from (B) or (C). If (8) goes too early he / she closes down their own space and allows (B) or (C) to track and get there early to stop the move.
2. Another option could be (5) making a diagonal forward run into the space created by (8)'s movement or even (6) moving into the space. The best move of these two would be (5) as the run is harder to pick up and is from an angle not in a straight line as (6)'s run would be. In this situation (8) could also make a run away from where the ball is going to take (B) away from the area (3) is playing the ball into.

(Wayne Harrison)

# TRANSITIONS BETWEEN THIRDS FOR DEFENDING TEAM ALSO

3-2-2



1. Develop – Have players able to transition back into zones from the attacking third to the midfield third, the midfield third to the defensive third. Defenders still cannot move between zones.
2. A situation can be a striker moves back into the midfield third (to receive to feet or free space for someone else to move into) .and a midfielder moves forward into the attacking third.
3. Develop – Allow defending players to track attacking players into the other zones. When this happens the above situation means the defender follows the striker going short creating space behind for another striker to move into or a midfielder to break forward into. Ultimately **open the game** up so the players have **no** boundaries to use for focus and see if they can work out how to keep that balance and shape on an open field of play.

(Wayne Harrison)

# PROGRESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM START TO FINISH

Set up is as follows; the field is arranged in thirds; defending, midfield and attacking thirds. In the set up we have here we have a 3 v 2, a 2 v 2 and a 3 v 2. If you have problems getting the movement going from the back in a 3 v 2 then have a 3 v 1 at each end to begin (to make it easier to find space) and have a 3 v 3 in the middle.

## 1. STAY IN OWN THIRD.

Players **stay** in their **own** thirds to get a feel for how to maintain shape and how to use width in attack. Spread out in possession in a 3 v 2 overload at the back in the defending third to create a situation where the players are available to receive the ball in space and pass it forward.

## 2. TRANSITION BETWEEN THIRDS

Players are allowed to **transition between** thirds but only one at a time. The defending team cannot move between thirds to track the attacking players. When the attacking team lose possession they then become defenders and must immediately drop back into the third they started in. The reason for dropping back and not trying to win it back there and then is because we are working on offensive play and want both teams to have the opportunity to build up play. Can **run** the ball in, **pass** it in, or pass it in to a **runner** from your own third.

## 3. TRANSITION OVER TWO THIRDS

Transitions between thirds still but allow players to transition forward over **two of the thirds** for example a defender moves forward into the middle third and ends up in the attacking third. If the move breaks down and the players have to get back into their original shape have the players identify who needs to drop into the defending third. It may not be the actual defender themselves but may be the closest player to the defensive third who can drop back in and **cover** for them thus saving a long run back for the defender. Players get back into their correct position when the situation allows. Look for overlap runs from behind the ball.

## 4. OVERLAP PLAY FROM WIDE DEFENDERS

This particular type of movement is a very important one to develop in this session and the opportunities presented to do so will be numerous.

## 5. OFFSIDE FROM THE DEFENDING THIRD

Introduce **offside** in the **final thirds** at both ends of the field. This encourages teams to move up as the ball is played forward.

(Wayne Harrison)

6. **OVERLOAD IN ATTACK MAINTAINING POSSESSION**  
Here we have worked the ball into the attacking third and we leave an overload in this third to regain possession should it be lost. This may depend on the game situation where we are chasing the game being a goal down and have to take chances.
7. **SWITCHING POSITIONS**  
Work on **movement** of midfielders and strikers in terms of play not always being in straight lines. For example movement across the field where two midfielders may **switch positions** or likewise up front where strikers can switch about thus moving defenders around.
8. **TRANSITION BACKWARDS BETWEEN THIRDS**  
Allow players to **transition** between thirds **coming back** as the initial movement, for example a striker may drop back into the middle third to receive. A midfielder may push on into the space the striker created by the movement.
9. **TRANSITIONS OF DEFENDING PLAYERS**  
Allow **defenders** to **track** players into the other thirds they venture into. Now all players can move between thirds but still have it only **one at a time**. This helps highlight how to create space for someone else by the movement of players; a striker comes short, pulls a defender with them and space is created in the area they came from for another striker or a midfielder to move into to receive the pass.
10. **FREE PLAY**  
**Open the game up.** See if players can maintain their shape without the help of the thirds, if they can transition between units but also keep their balance.
11. **NUMBER OF TOUCHES RESTRICTION** Introduce a three, two then one touch restriction to see if the players can work more quickly and still gain success. This speeds up their decision making in the game. When it is one touch, condition it so they can take more than one touch ( a pass may be so heavy they need two touches) but emphasize they use one touch if it is on to do so. This keeps it realistic.
12. **CONCLUSION** We have developed the session from working in thirds, introduced many progressions to work up to letting the game go free and observing if the players can incorporate into the free game situation, all they have learned.
13. I would recommend using this session on a regular basis and set it up for the scrimmage you usually do at the end of a coaching session.

(Wayne Harrison)