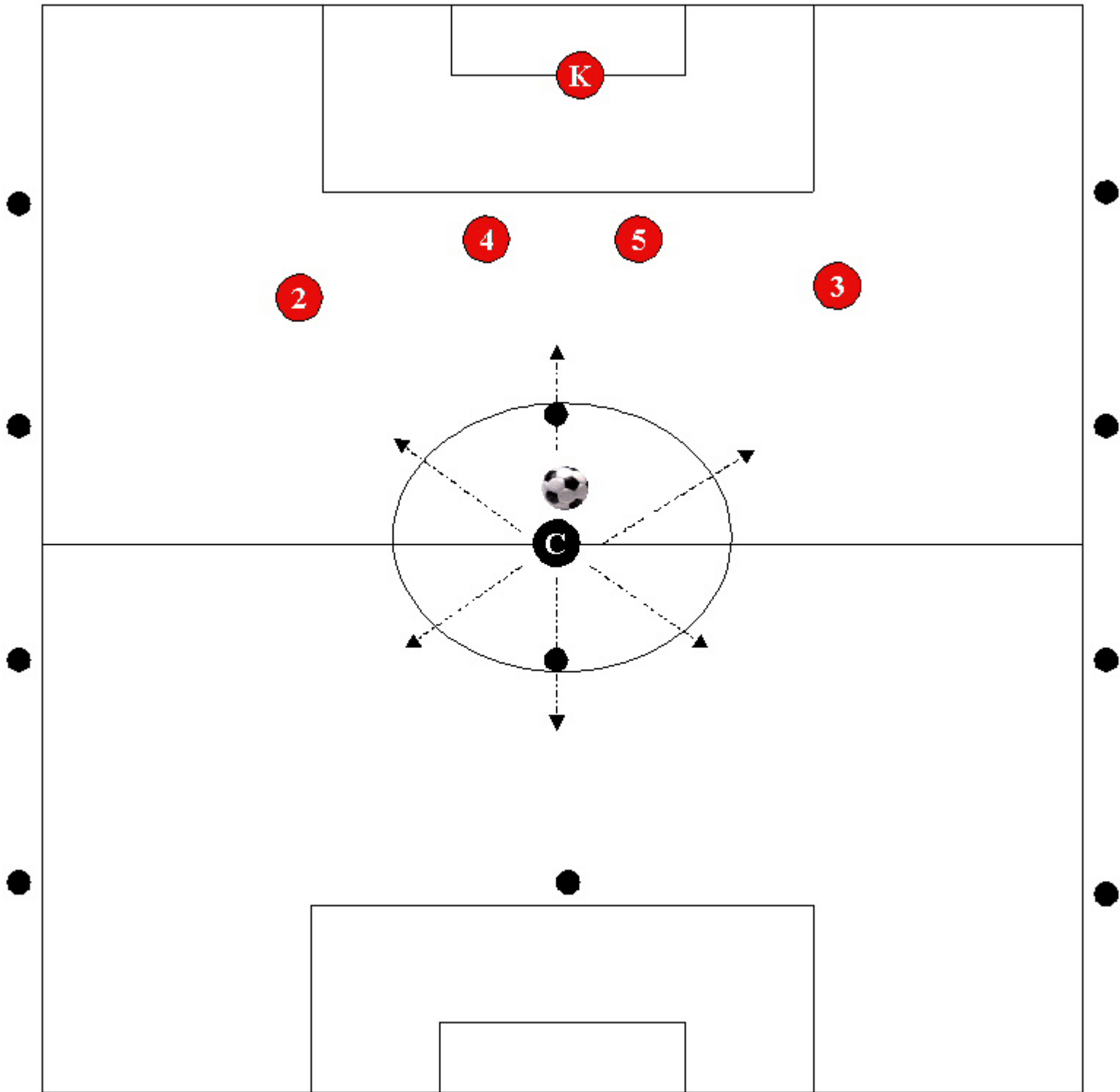


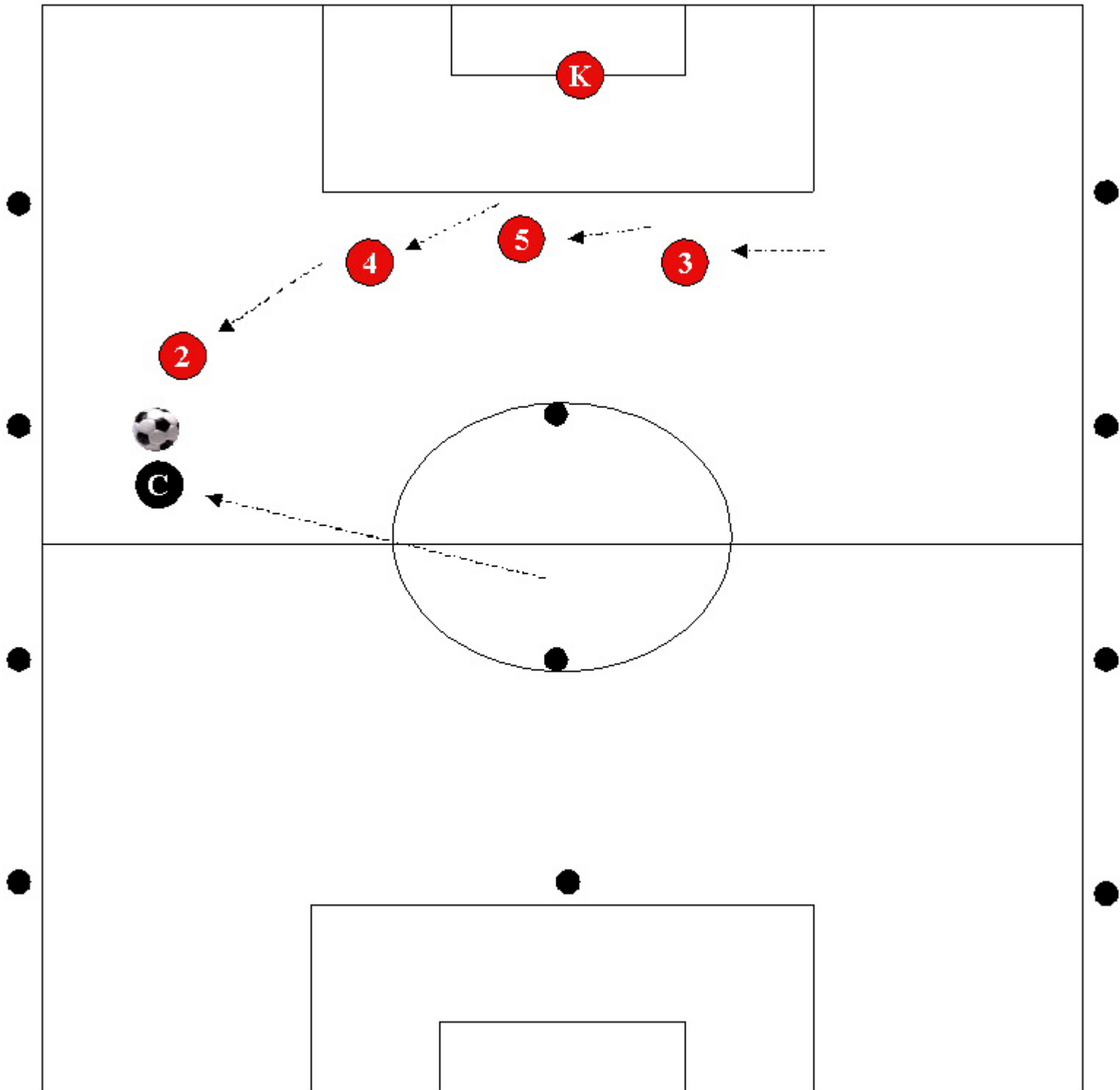
# TRAVELING WITH THE MOVEMENT OF THE BALL BUILDING TO AN 11 v 11

## DEVELOPING PLAY WITH A DEFENDING BACK FOUR



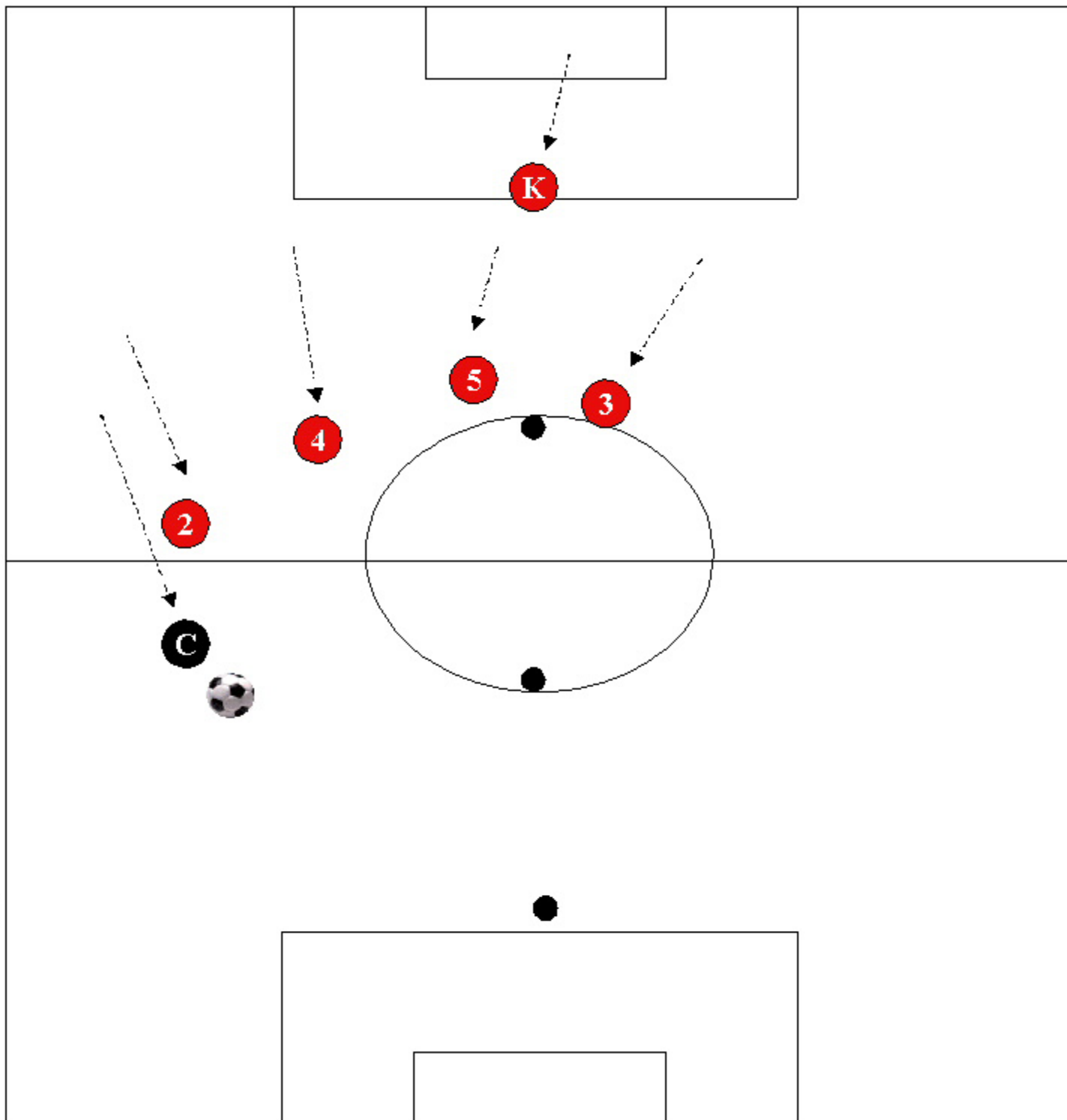
1. The session is designed to show how to work on team shape building up from a back four only. Side cones are 20 to 25 yards apart as are the defenders and the coach. The coach moves with the ball and the defenders mirror the movement maintaining the distances between them.

2. You can use the signal words UP, OUT, HOLD, DROP, and SLIDE (discussed later in Chapters six and seven), to determine the movement. Eventually we need to work up to an 11 v 11 situation showing how to work a team as individuals, as units and ultimately a team.



1. Here the coach moves to the outside and the whole back four adjust their positions across the field (slide) to compensate for this movement, (2) being the player to apply immediate pressure on the ball.

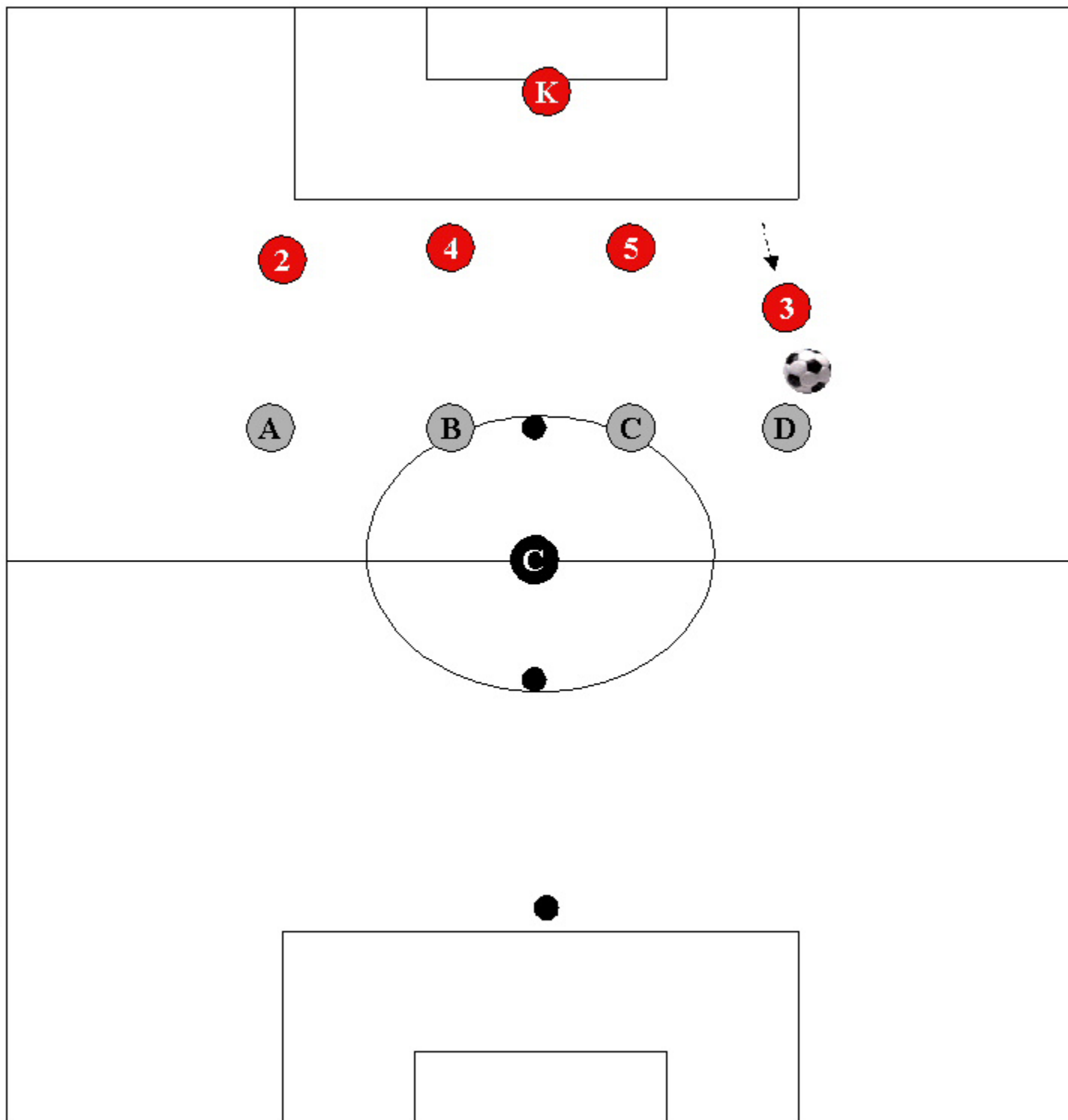
2. Re-emphasize the idea that the players are tied as links in a chain and so have to move together as links of a unit or even tie them up with the rope so they feel how it is when they move together.



1. The coach moves back up the field so the back four unit moves up also based on the position of the ball.
2. (2) Is still the pressing player so must stay close to the ball should the coach turn.

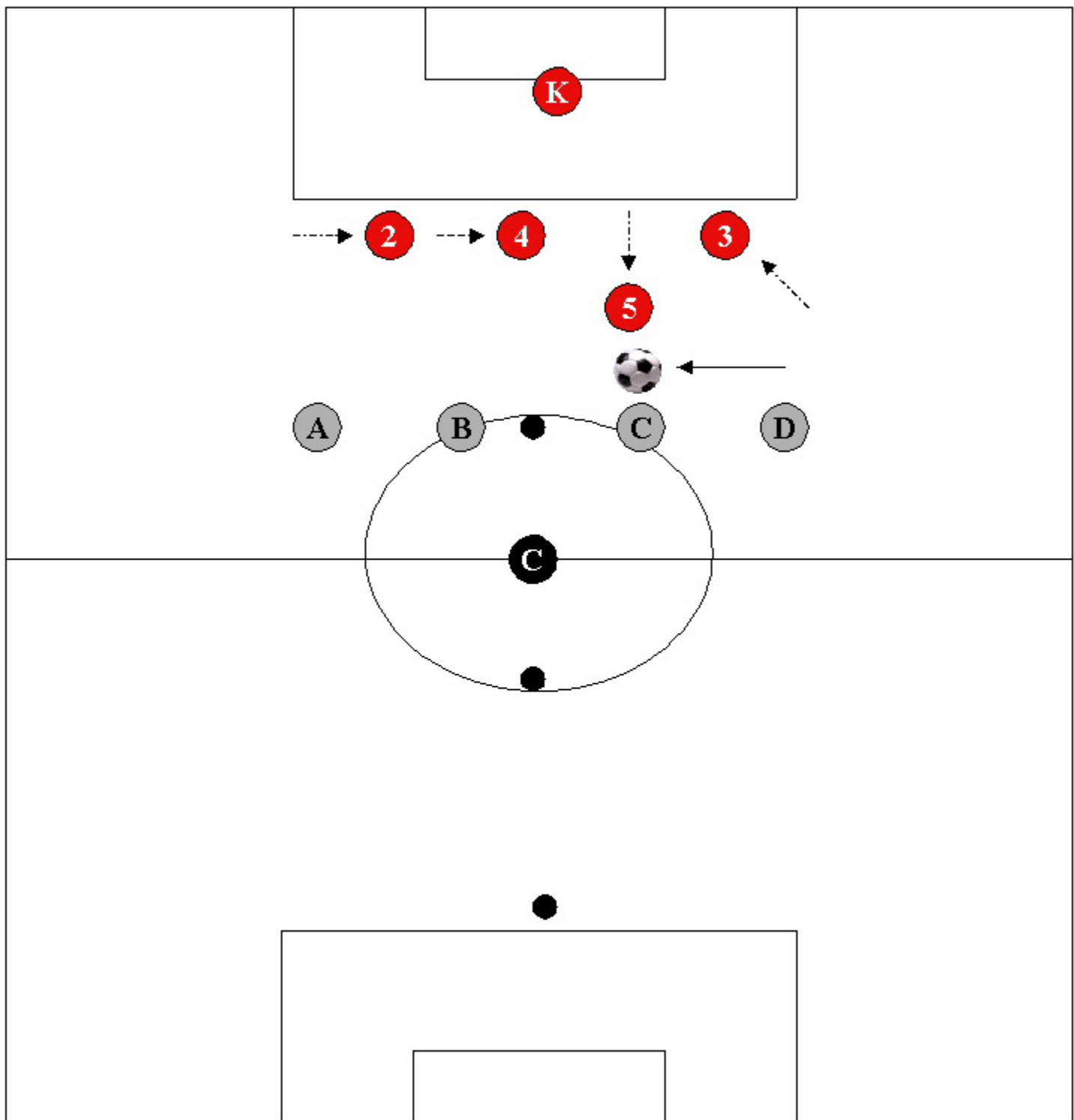
3. The back four works up to the half way line based on the position of the ball.

### INTRODUCING OPPONENTS TO SHADOW DEFEND AGAINST



1. Players with the ball pass it across in front of the defenders. Defenders adjust their positions to mirror this movement. This is working on marking zones and marking players and distinguishing between the two depending on where the ball is.

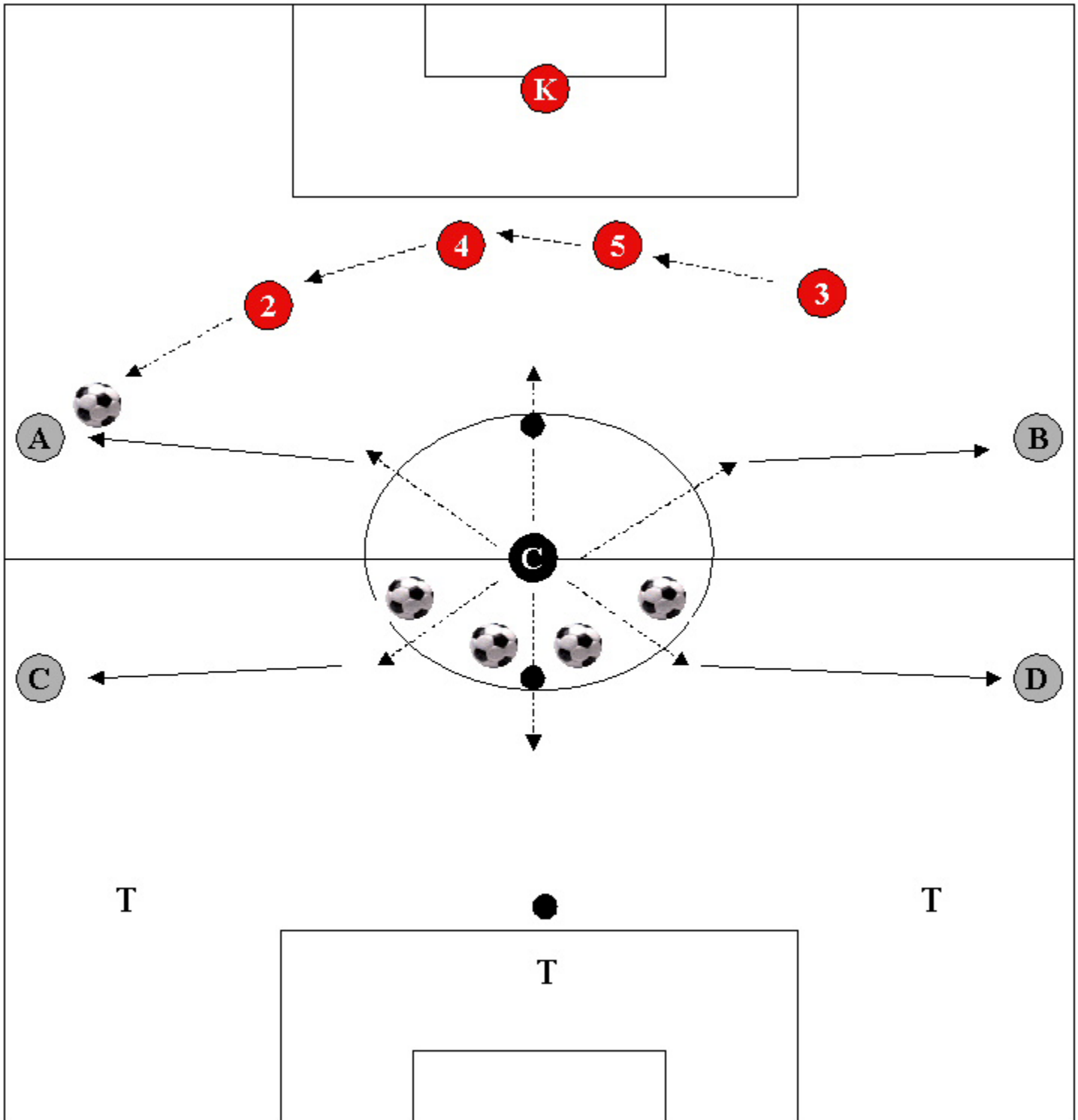
2. Pass across to the next player and hold the ball there, check the defenders positions, then move the ball again.
3. Use the side cones as guides to distancing between units as they are introduced.



1. The ball has been passed inside and the defenders adjust closing down the player on the ball and closing down the spaces around the ball.
2. This is continued using all the players sometimes missing a player out with a pass so it goes across two players to test the defenders and how they adjust.
3. Once they have grasped this concept you can move the players to the next progression.
4. In the next phase of the session have extra balls ready in the center circle to keep the flow of the session going.

## INTRODUCING STATIC WIDE PLAYERS FOR THE DEFENDERS TO TAKE THEIR SHAPE OFF AS THE BALL TRAVELS

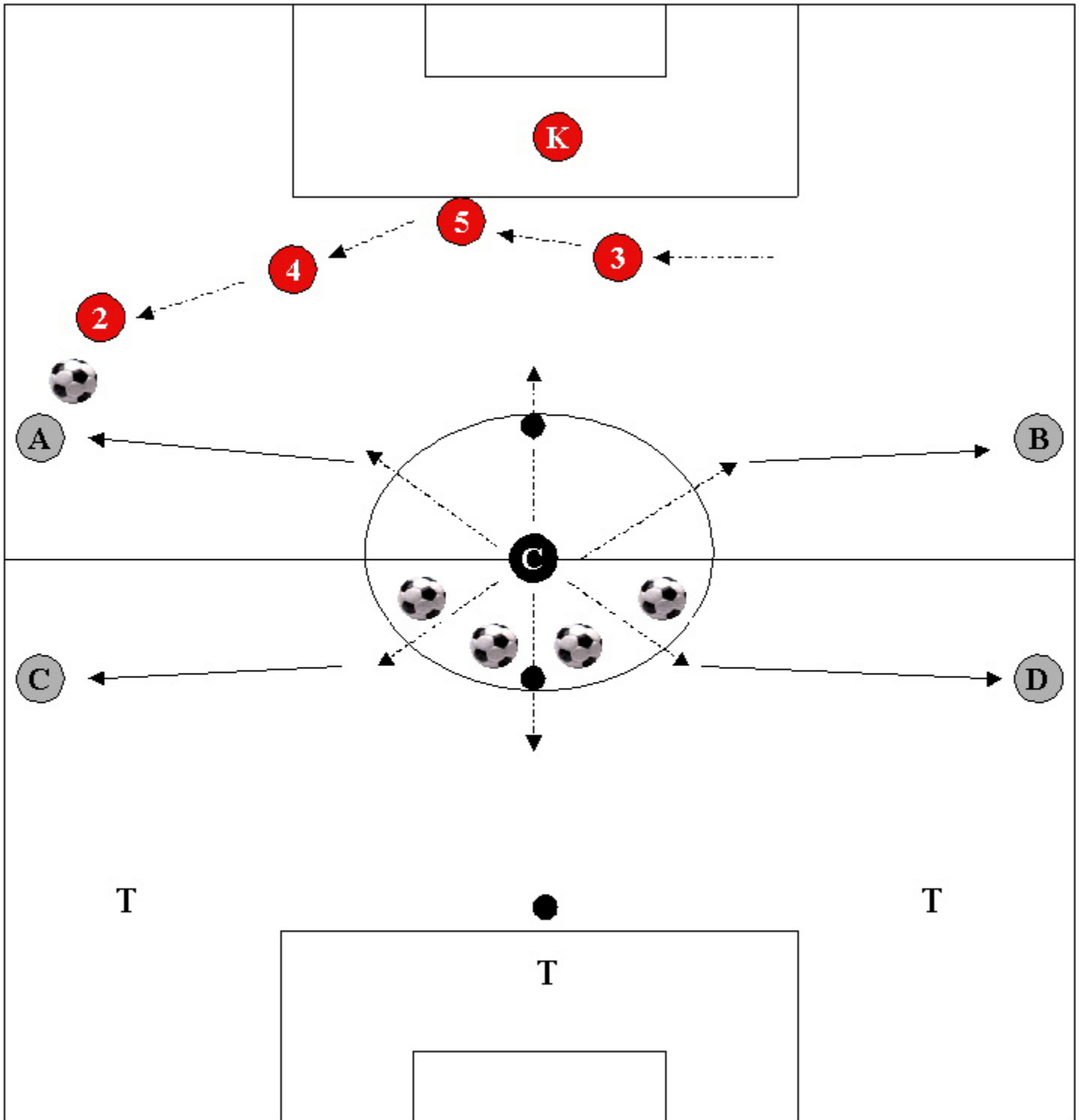
INTRODUCE TARGETS (T) FOR THE DEFENDERS TO PASS TO IF THEY WIN THE BALL. THE COACH CAN THEN START THE SESSION AGAIN.



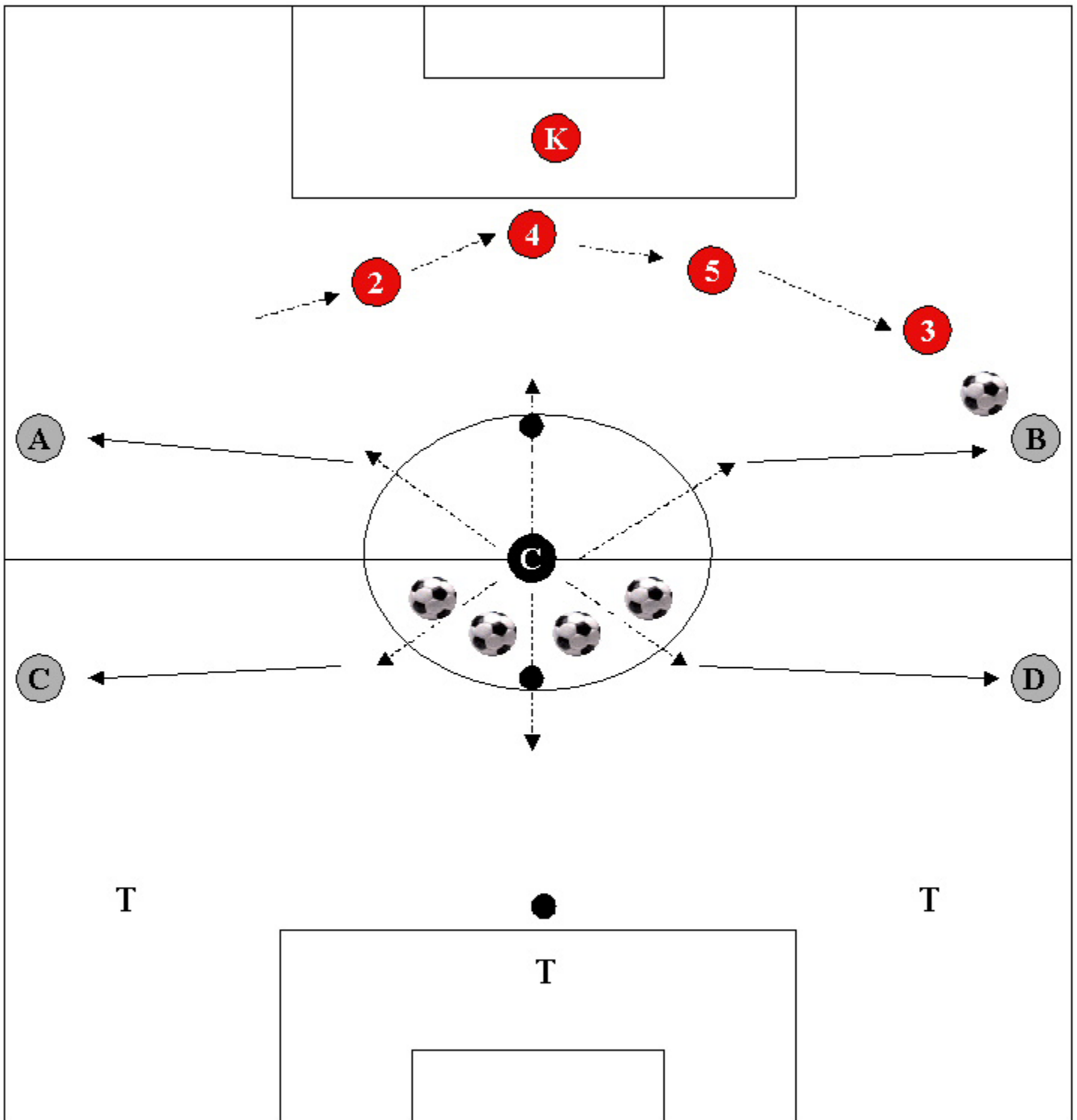
1. The coach now has players to pass the ball to (opponents). These players initially must be in static positions to check the set up. You can use a rope

to tie the four defenders together to get the idea of moving as a unit. Players maintain an open stance so they can see opponents as well as the ball.

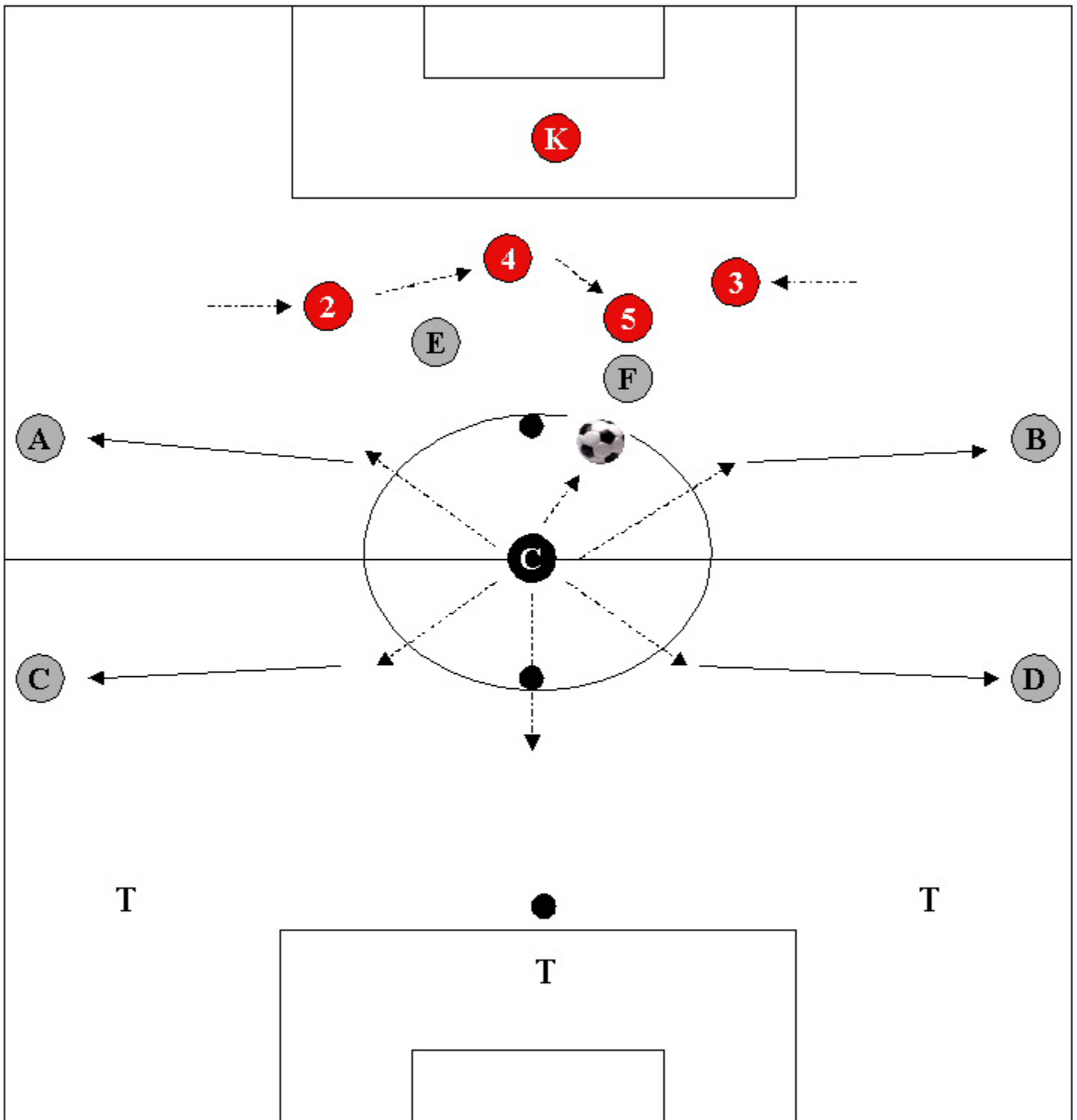
2. When the ball is at (C) or (D) the back four take positions with regard to (A) and (B) and do not get drawn to the ball.
3. Defending team (numbers) can win back the ball only with **interceptions of passes** not with tackles to allow us to look at the shape they achieve.



1. Here we see how the back four should look once the ball has been passed wide and defender (2) has closed the ball down.
2. Notice the back four is NOT flat but like angled links between each player with the central defender (5) the deepest player. This player can effectively be called the sweeper. When the ball is at (B) on the other side, (4) becomes the sweeper.
3. The second center back is the deepest player and the two center backs share this responsibility depending on which side of the field the ball is positioned.

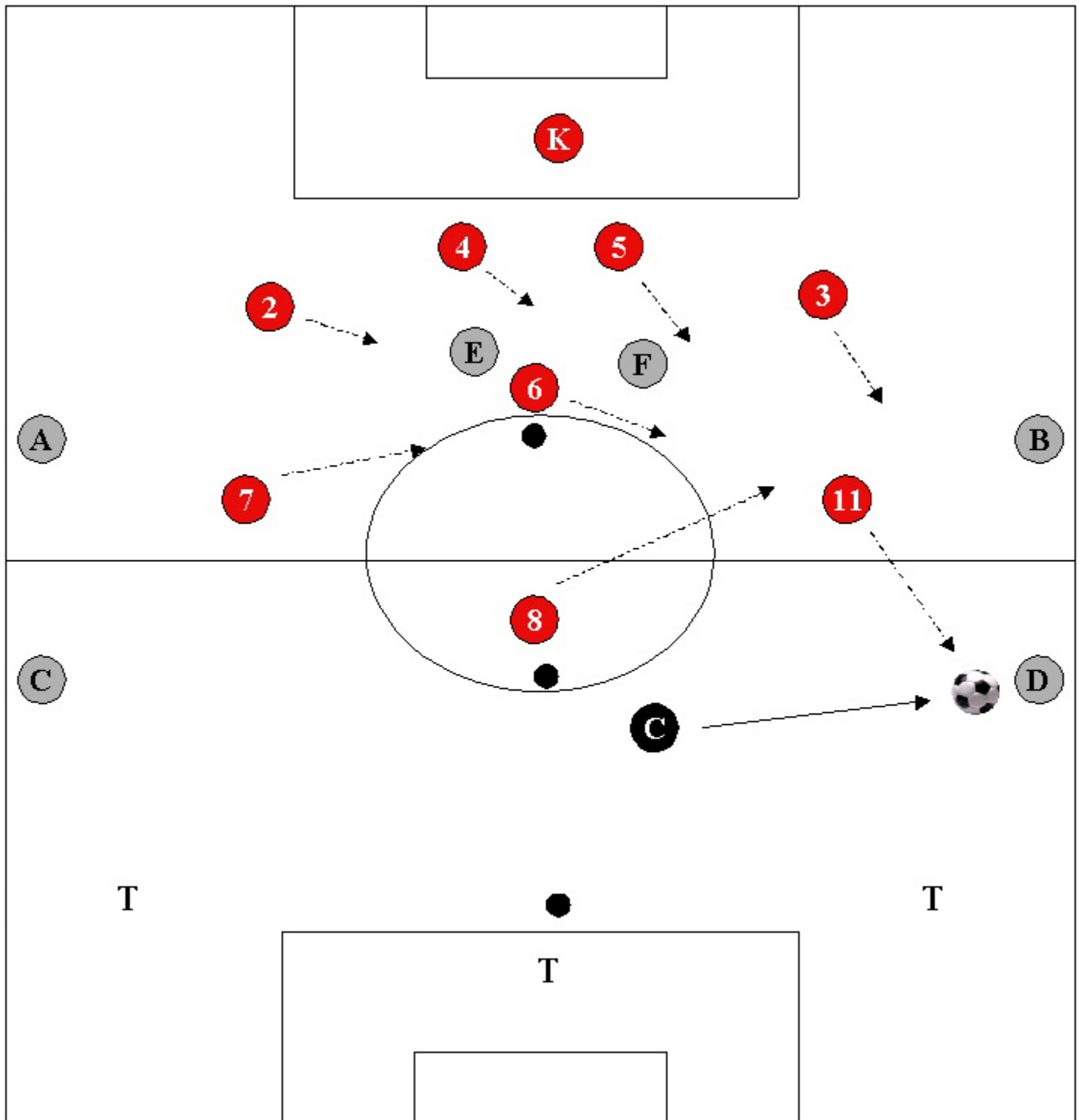


1. Here the ball has gone to the other side of the field and the back four adjust accordingly across the field.
2. The sweeper is now (4) and the players are marking players and zones, the closer to the ball the more they mark the player, the further from the ball the more they mark space.
3. Introduce two strikers on the attacking team to check the positions of the defenders with more choices on where the ball is on the field.



1. The strikers now offer more options of passes and the defending players have more decisions to make. Again you could stop / freeze the play at any point and check the defenders positioning is correct.
2. Defenders position themselves based on the position of the ball, their immediate opponent and the goal. At the same time they must maintain their shape to ensure there are no holes created between them for the opposition to exploit.
3. Notice they stay tight as a unit around the position of the ball.

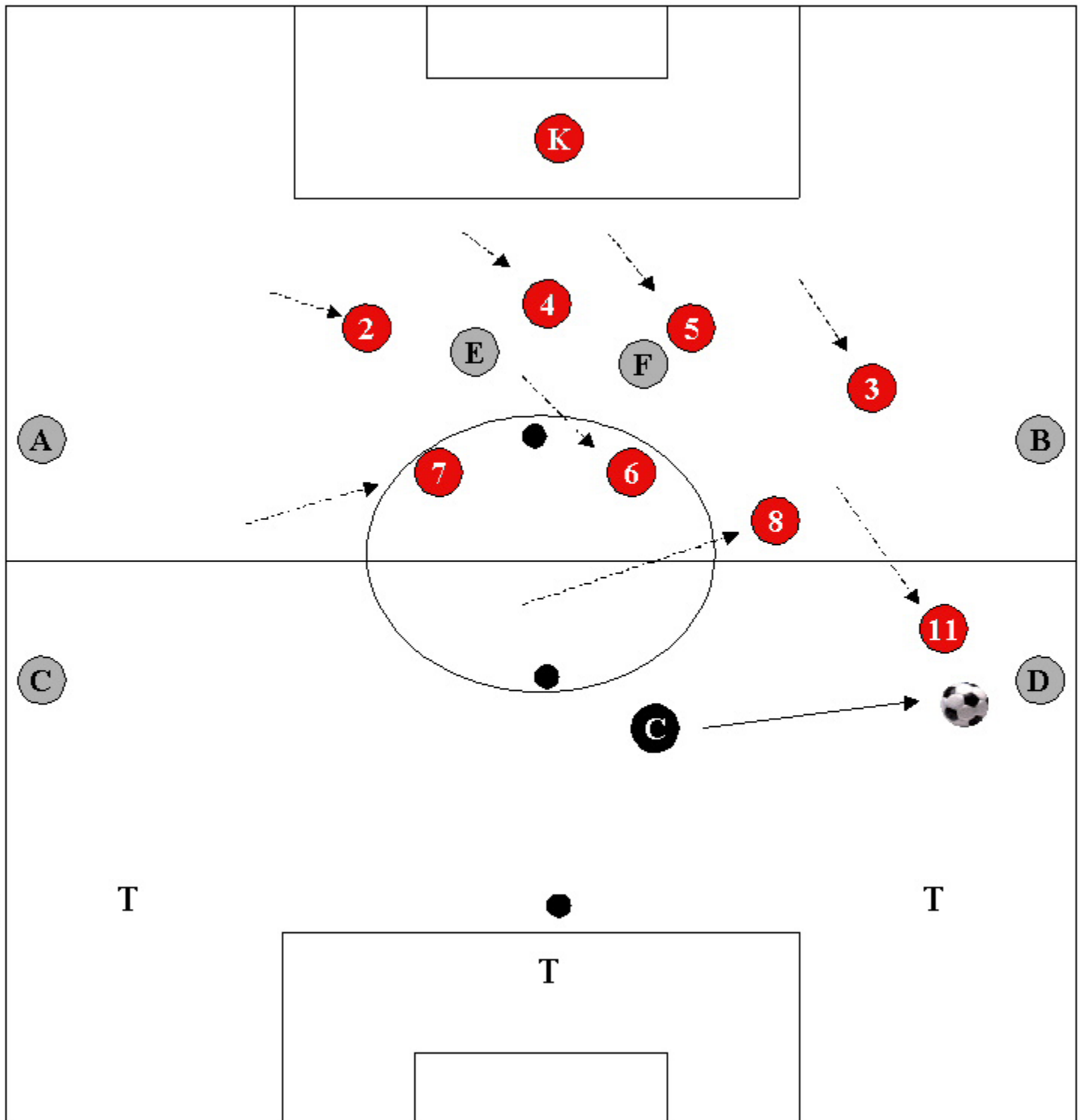
**DEVELOPING DEFENSIVE PLAY INTRODUCING A MIDFIELD  
FOUR IN FRONT OF THE DEFENSIVE FOUR**



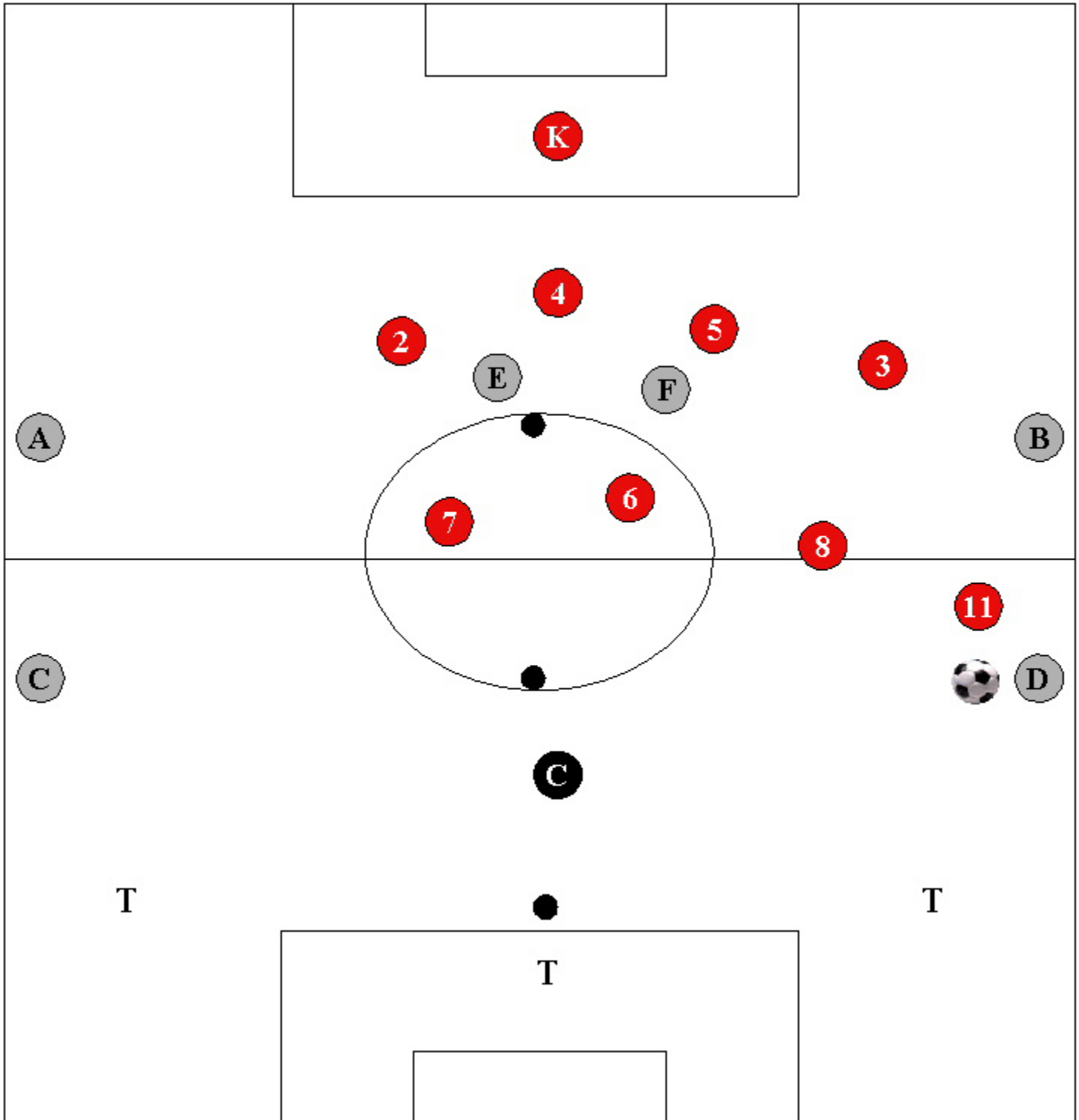
1. Here we have the midfield set up as a diamond.
2. Midfield adjusts as the ball is passed to (D). (11) Closes, (8) drops in to support, (6) and (7) squeeze across. The back four push up and across to

maintain the distance between themselves and the midfield. (8) Could **double up** on (D) with (11) as an option.

- (D) passes the ball to the coach again and the ball is switched to another player and the defenders adjust again as a team to compensate. Wide players still static just receiving and passing. Defenders can still only intercept passes as we are working with the positioning of the defending team. If they win it with an interception they pass it to the coach or a target and we start again.



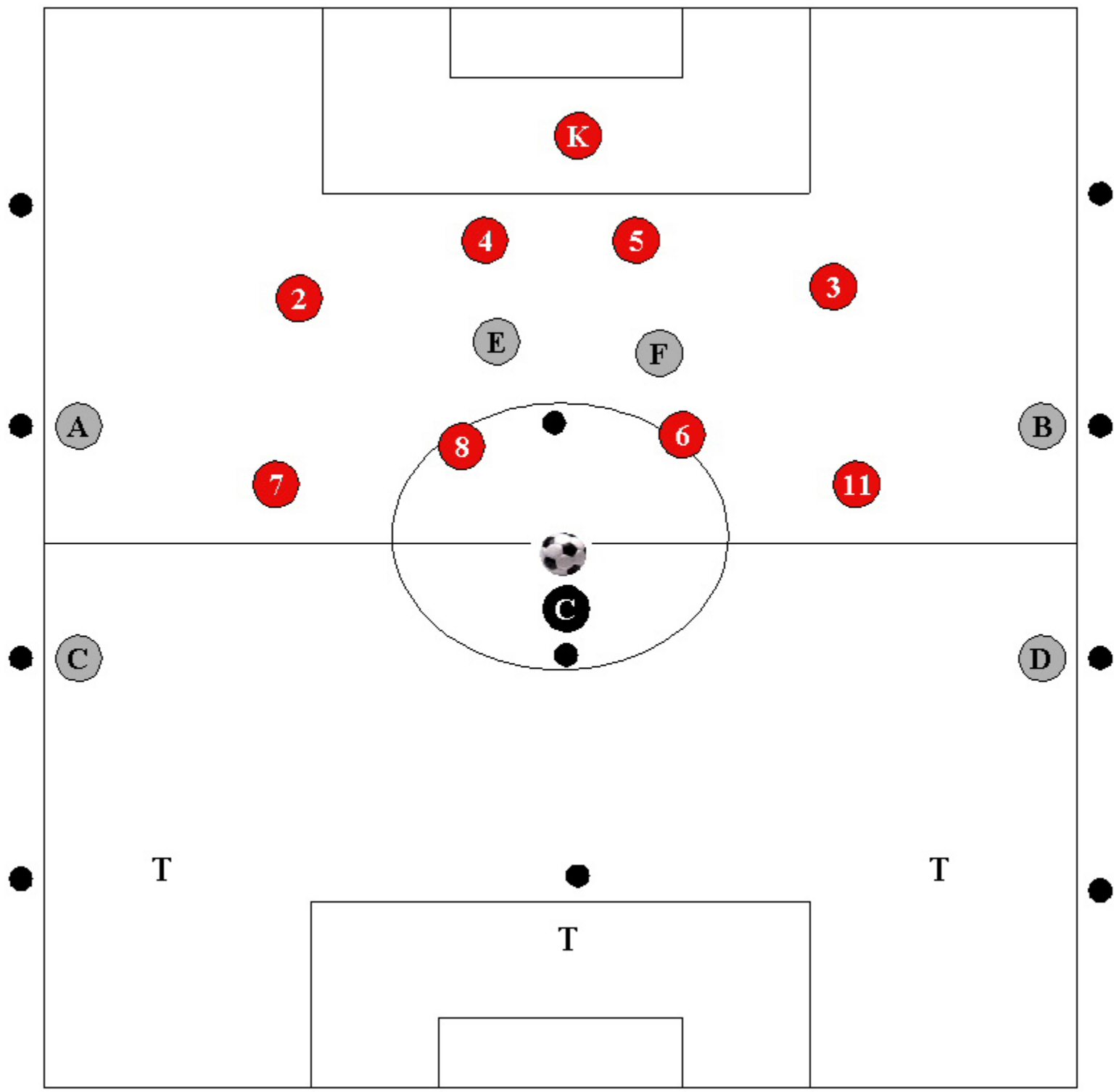
1. This diagram shows the positions of the players after they have adjusted to the pass to (D) with (11) being the pressing player showing (D) inside to the defensive support.
2. By the time the ball is transferred across the field to (C) the defending team can travel as the ball travels and has time to get across. The immediate danger areas are the spaces around the ball and they need to be filled as above leaving the opposite side of the field more open.



Midfielder has five possible jobs to think about when defending depending on the individual situation:

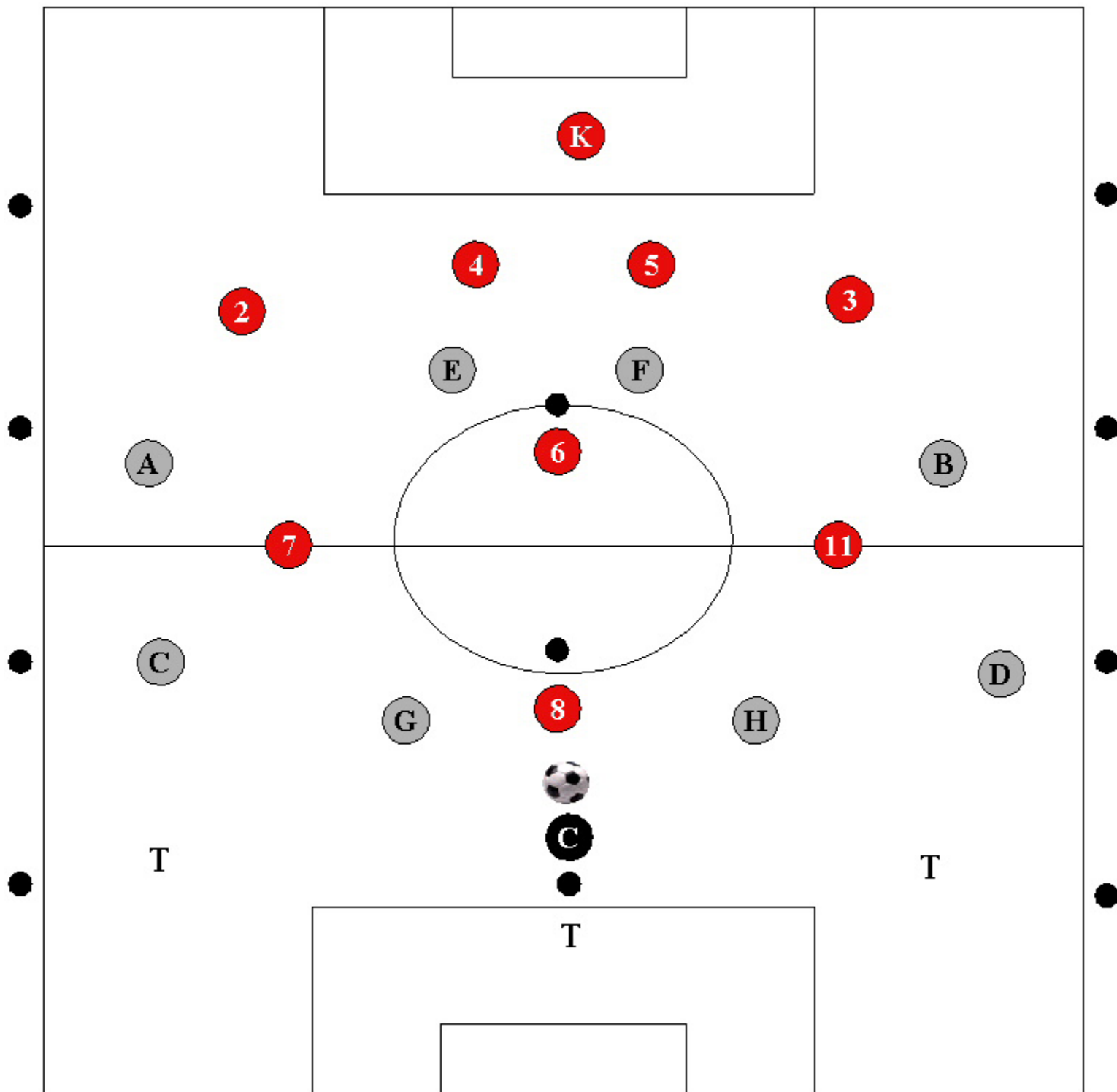
1. **Recover** back to get goal side of the ball.
2. Be the **pressurizing** player to stop the player on the ball (win, delay or force one way).
3. Or **support** the pressurizing player with angle, distance and communication.
4. **Cover** (mark / zone) their own opponent so as they receive the ball they can close them down.
5. **Step** into the **passing lanes** to prevent forward passes getting through midfield to strikers.

Any combination of these 5 jobs will apply at any one time depending on the situation in the game.



1. Introducing the same shape midfield as the back four. You can vary the shape depending on how you set your own team up. Try to maintain the same distance (about 5 to 10 yards) between the back four and the midfield four as they move up and down the field. Maintain the same distances between the players and the position of the ball up to the half way line.
2. The midfield players in this set up use the same principles of adjustment as the back four players maintaining their shape and keeping tight around the position of the ball.

## TACTICAL DESIGN AND KEY COACHING POINTS IN AN 8 v 8

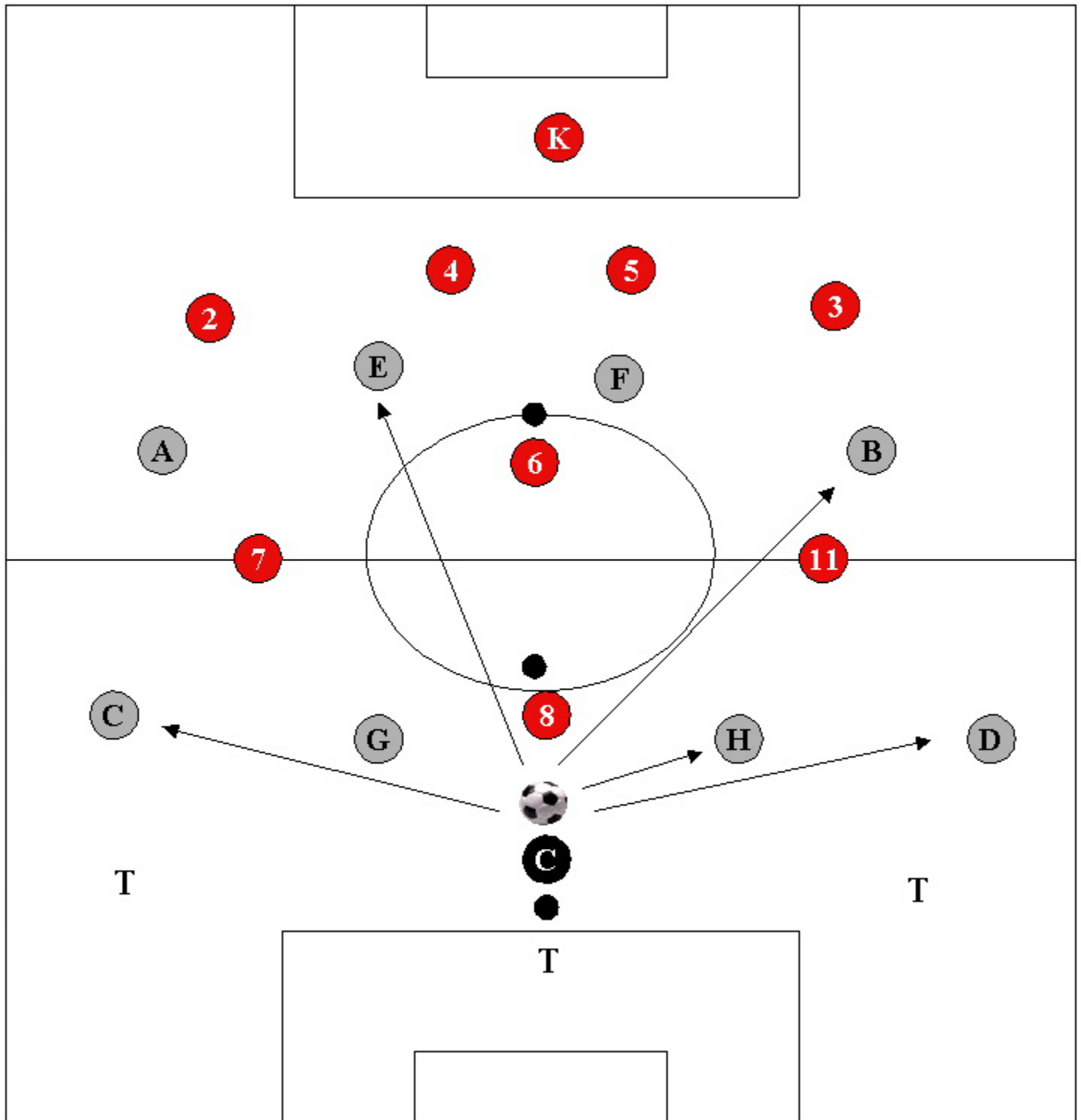


### Tactical Design

1. Pressure.
2. Support.
3. Cover / Balance.
4. Recover.
5. Double Team.
6. Track.
7. Compactness.

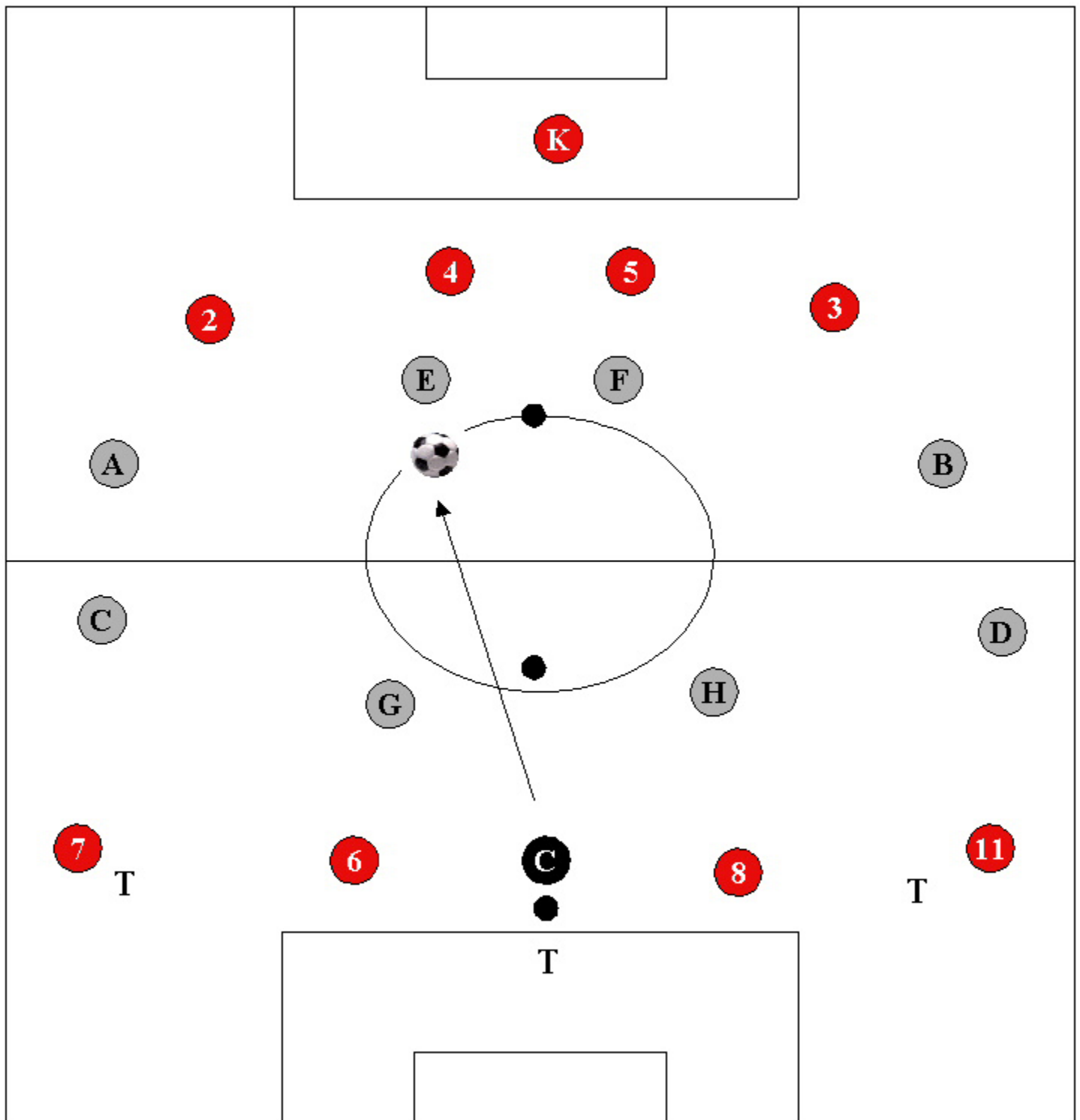
1. Introduce two attacking midfielders and allow all the players to go free. Coach the faults as they happen in free play, correcting the positioning of the players.
2. When the defending team win the ball (only through an interception initially) they must pass to the targets or they can pass to the coach working the ball out where they can. The Coach can then start a new game.

### TACTICAL DESIGN PLAN



1. Once the players get used to the tactical plan allow the defenders to now tackle the opponents and win the ball back as in a game situation.
2. The coach can pass the ball to various attacking players in different positions on the field and the defending team must try to regain possession and get the ball to a target goal or the coach and the session begins again.
3. This ensures the defending team has lots of repeated opportunity to practice defending because as soon as they win the ball and get it to the target or the coach the attacking team get the ball back and the process begins again.

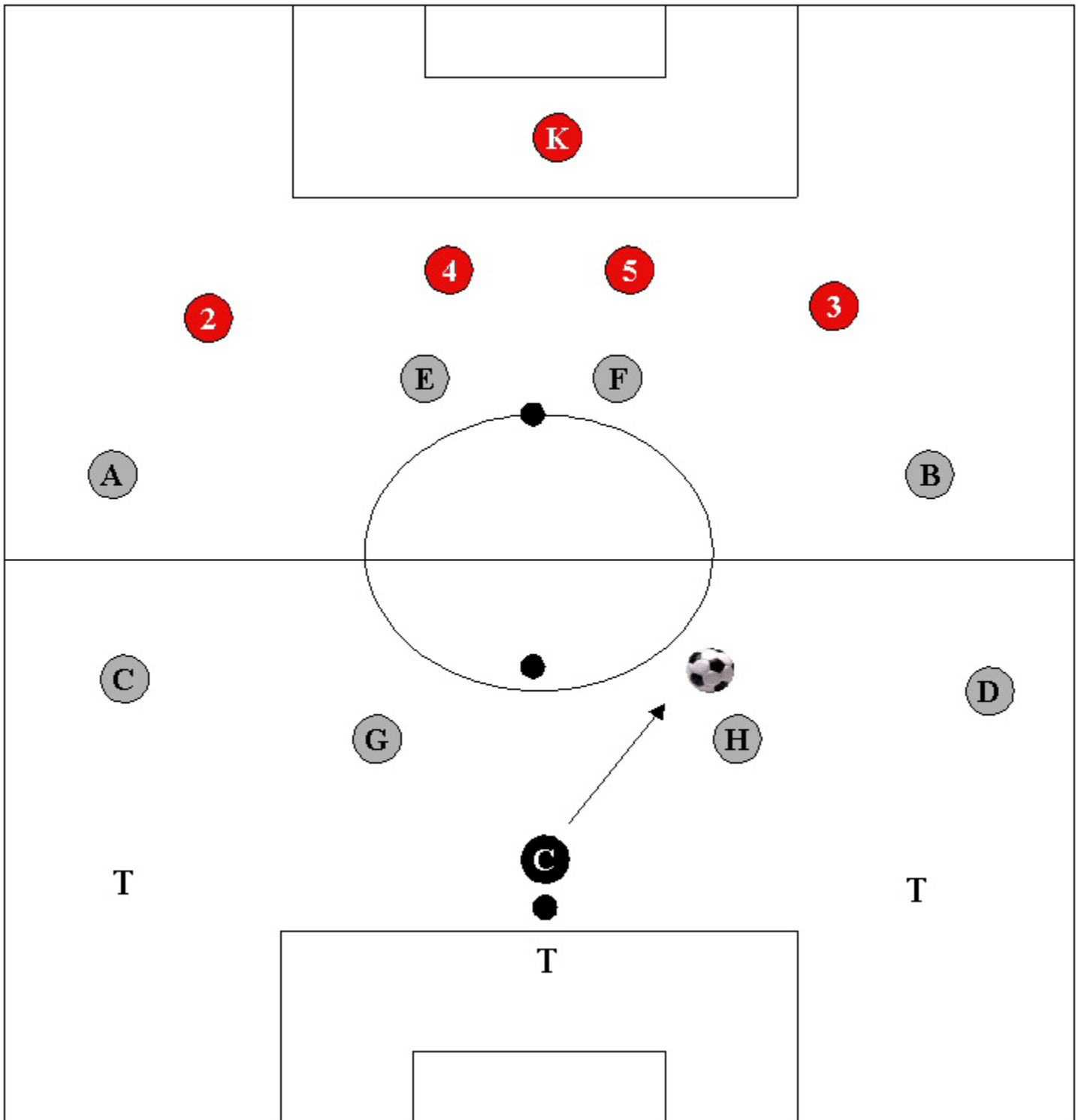
## DEFENDING WITH A BACK FOUR AND FOUR RECOVERING MIDFIELDERS AGAINST EIGHT ATTACKERS



1. Make the defensive challenge more difficult by putting the midfield in recovering positions to help the back four. The back four can be patient when the ball is in midfield and keep their shape delaying the opponents until the midfield recover back to help. Have a time limit before they can begin their recovery.

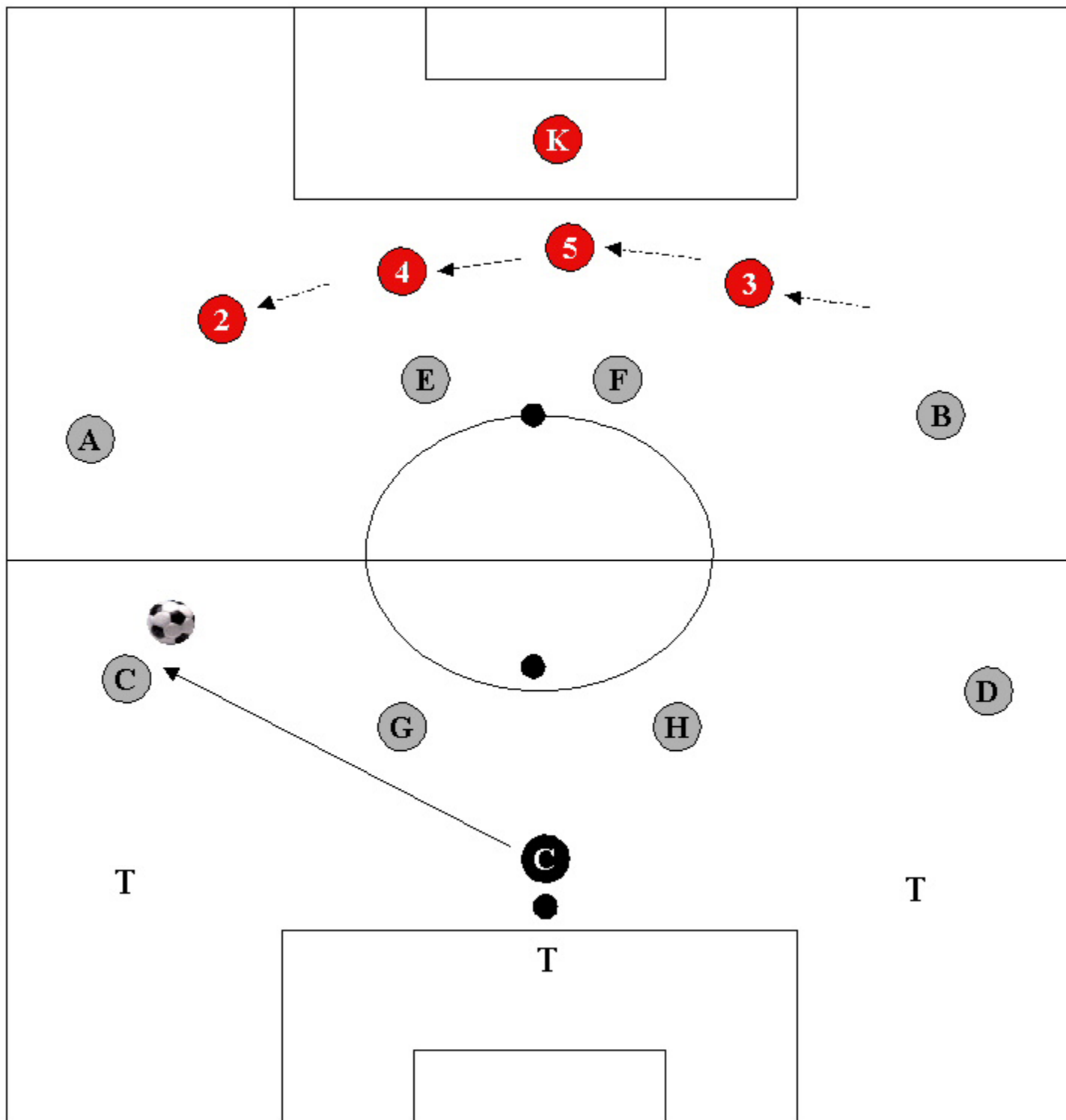
2. Do the session with the four recovering midfielders first then make it more difficult and use only two recovering midfielders then just have the back four against the 8 attacking players and see how many goals the attacking team can score in an 8 v 4 overload situation in their favor. Can a back four prevent eight players from scoring? If they score work on what went wrong.

### DEFENDING WITH A FOUR AGAINST EIGHT OVERLOAD SITUATION



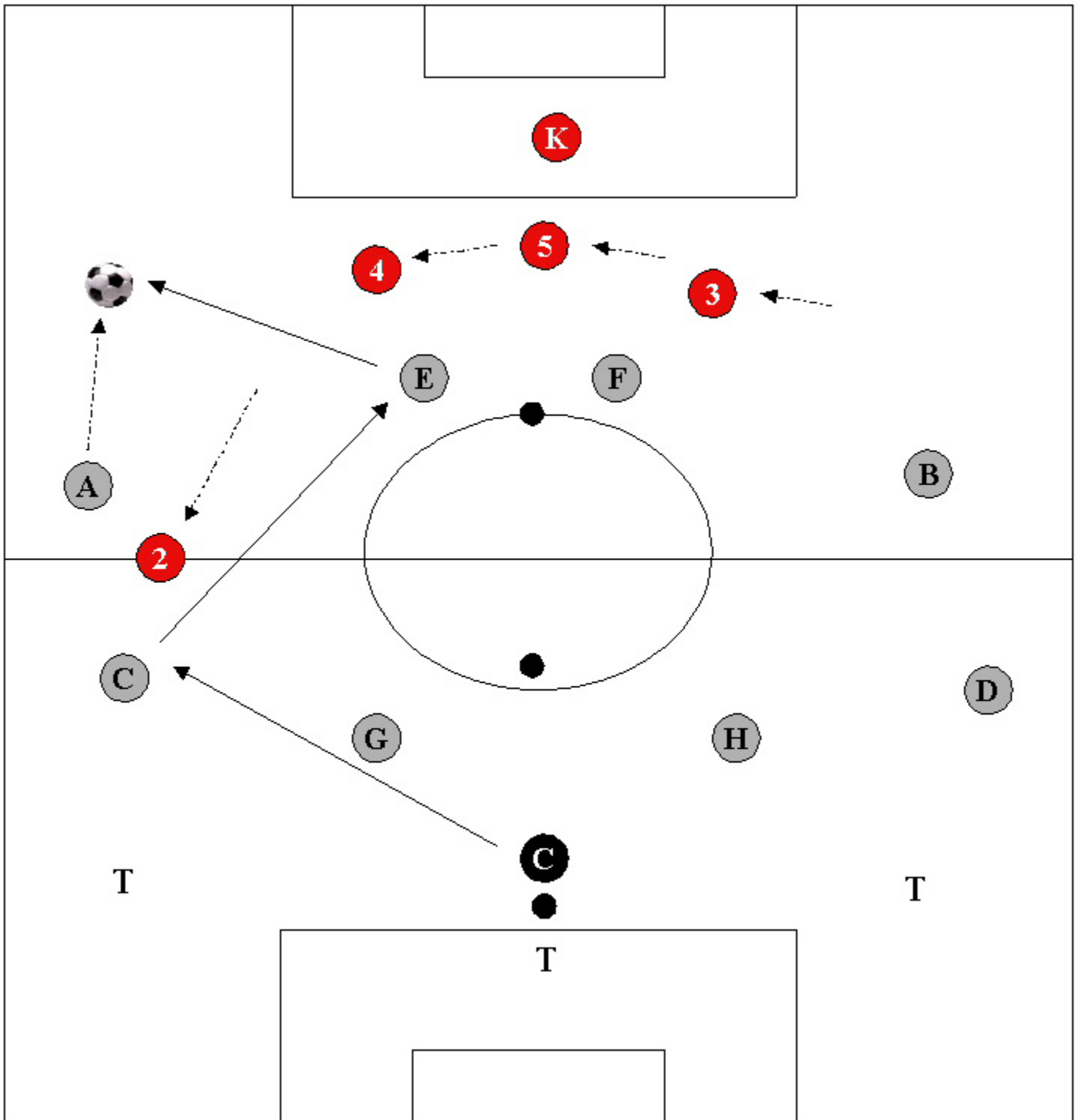
1. Now we are really testing the back four players and seeing if they have grasped how to defend as a unit and how to decide when to mark a player and when to mark space in a 4 v 8 over load against.
2. Pay particular attention to the wide defenders being drawn to close down (C) or (D) and leave (A) and (B) free thus breaking up the shape of the back four unit and offering opportunities to the attacking team to get behind the defense in wide areas. Also observe the central players being drawn into midfield. Patience is the key here, let them play in midfield there is no danger there in this situation.

## TO CLOSE OR NOT TO CLOSE IN WIDE AREAS USING A 4 v 8 SET UP



1. This is the best course of action where the back four stay intact and allow the midfielders of the attacking team to play and pass the ball in front of them.
2. They only attempt to close players down as they get closer to the goal or the ball gets closer to their immediate opponents.

- Here (C) gets the ball but is no danger and (2) holds position aware of where (C) is but moves across the field slightly closer to (A) just in case (A) receives the ball. If the ball is passed to (A) then (2) has to close (A) down. The rest of the back four move slightly across also, maintaining their distances.

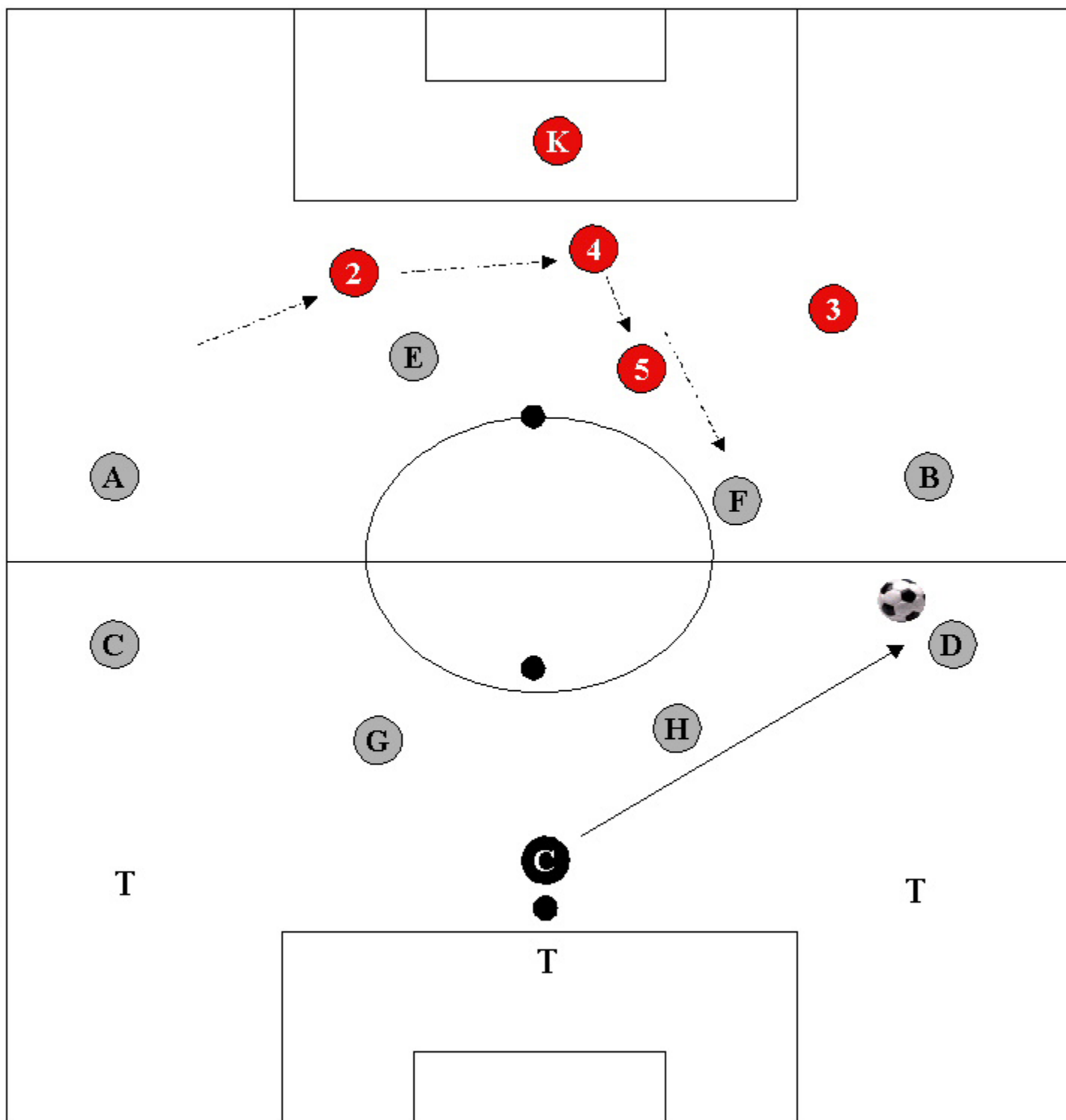


- This is an example of what can happen if the wide defender is drawn to the ball when it is at (C). Notice as (2) leaves the space and closes (C), the ball is passed into striker (E) who can lay off the ball wide into the open space that has been left by (2) for (A) to run into unopposed. This now

compromises (4)'s position who now has a 2 v 1 against. If (2) were to anticipate the pass early and be in a position to intercept, then would it be possible to close (C) down and have success.

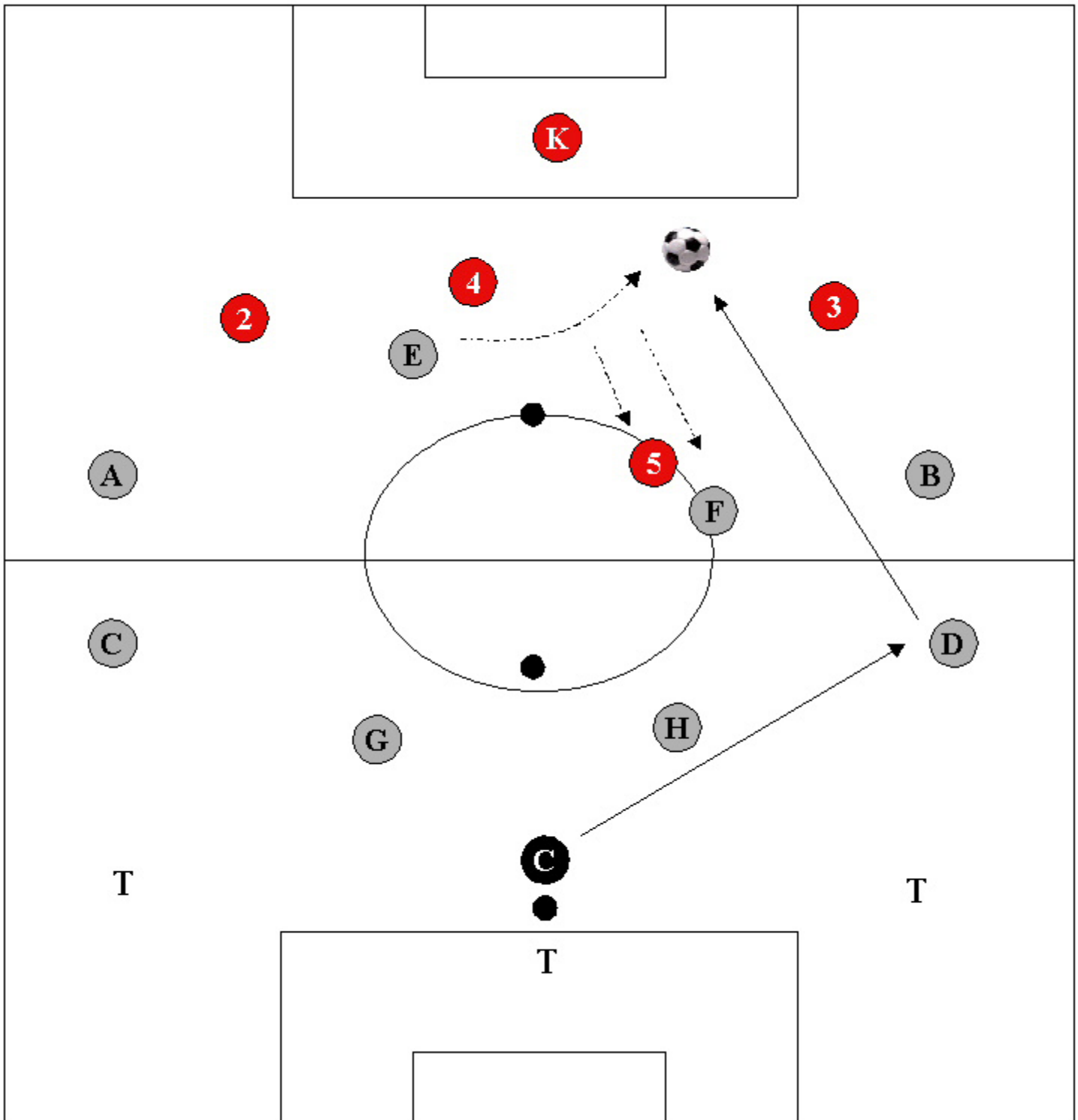
2. If the defending team is playing offside then (2) closes (C) down quickly and the other three defenders push up together and catch the strikers offside but I would not advise this course of action as you are relying on too many variables, the officiating getting it right, and all the players timing the movement together.
3. If you were to tie the four up this would prevent this situation happening and let the players feel how they should position with the restriction of being tied together.

## TO CLOSE OR NOT TO CLOSE IN CENTRAL AREAS USING A 4 v 8 SET UP



1. This is the best course of action when a central player's position is threatened by a movement short by the striker. (5) Only goes so far then lets striker (F) go deep into midfield. In a game situation a midfielder could pick up (F) on entering their zone.
2. As extra cover, as (5) goes short, (4) moves across to cover the space left by (5) and (2) moves across to cover the space left by (4)'s movement

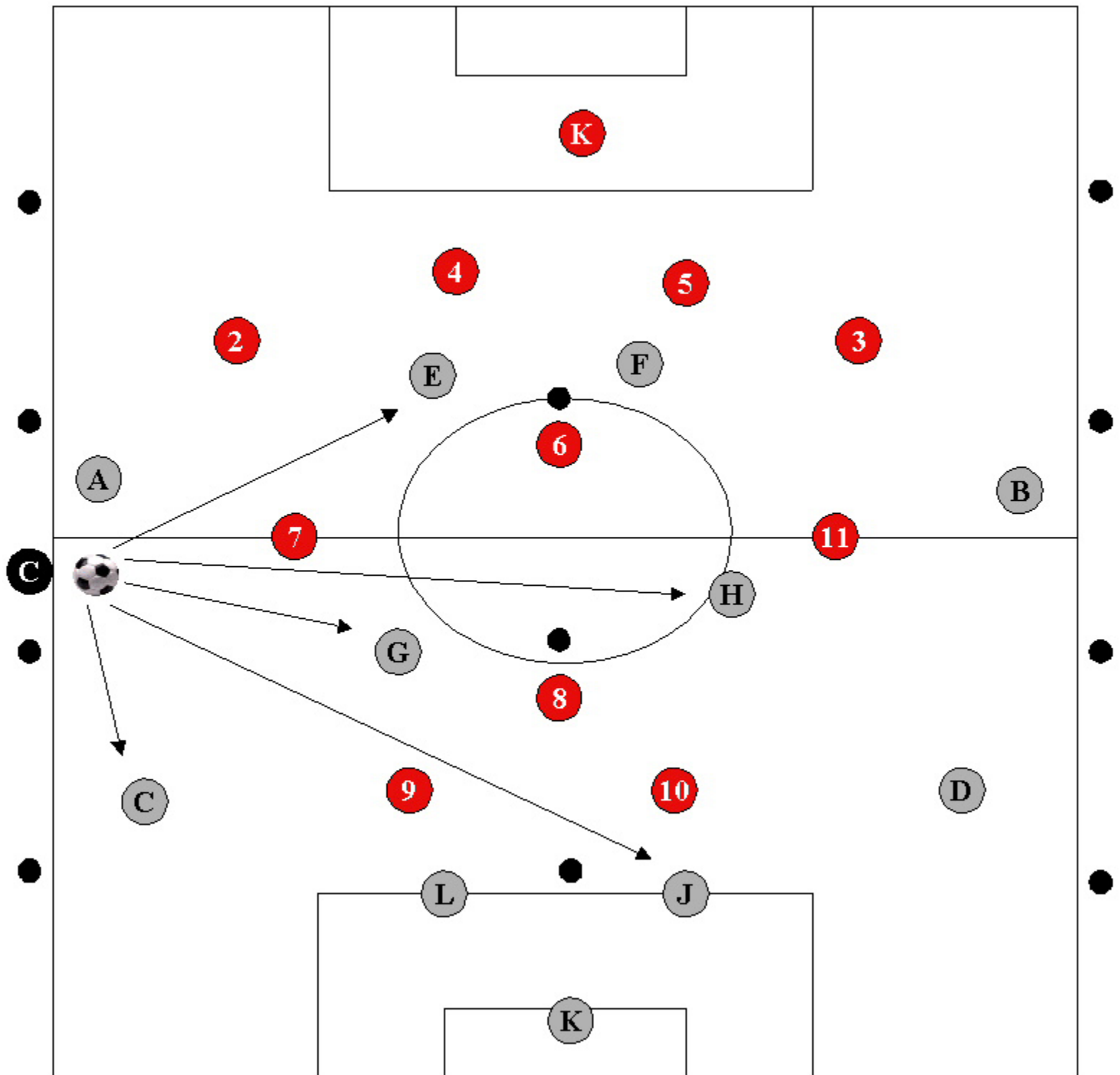
leaving the outside space free. The best scenario is if (5) only goes so far then drops back to establish the chain link of the back four again maybe even dropping into the position (4) left to fill the first space if this player has covered across.



1. A position to avoid getting into would be when the striker goes short to receive the ball to feet. The central defender must decide how far to follow but not allow a big hole to be made behind by being pulled away from the other three defenders.

2. The above example shows the defender going too far and being drawn into midfield. The correct decision would be to only go so far as to not lose touch with the back four unit shape, if the striker keeps going short then he / she is moving away from the danger area and into an area where they will be less of a danger to the back four.
3. (4) And (2) can still move across and fill the spaces left but (5) doesn't want to get too far away from them to become isolated.
4. The idea of offside play applies here too as mentioned at the last diagram.

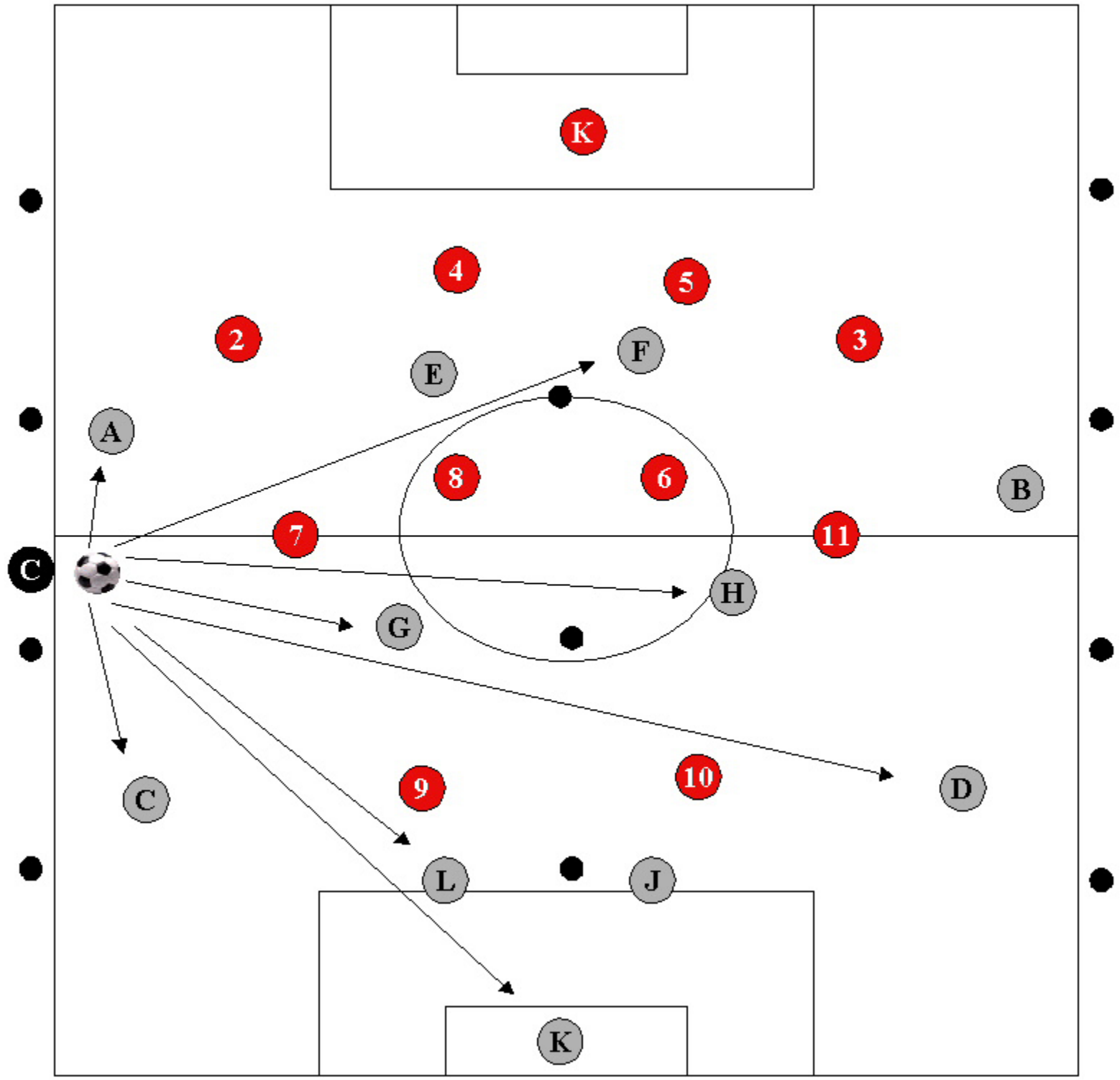
**TACTICAL DESIGN FOR AN 11 v 11 DISTRIBUTING THE BALL TO VARIOUS LOCATIONS ON THE FIELD TO DEFEND AGAINST**



1. Here we have developed the practice into an 11 v 11 game situation, still working with the defending team (numbered team). The coach serves to the opponents in different locations on the field and the team need to try to win the ball back individually and collectively.

2. The target for the defending team when they win the ball could be to just chip the ball into the opponent's keeper and the defending team has to work to win the ball again starting from where the coach serves the ball.
3. I have shown zonal defending as a team using a 4-3-1-2 system of play with a diamond shaped midfield but the same principles apply with other systems using the zonal method of defending and it is easy to practice this method with different shapes of teams. Building up to the 11 v 11 set up I touched upon a flat four in midfield also as well as the diamond four, it depends on your preference which way you use.
4. Over the page the same idea with a different set up (4-4-2). You can set the session up in your preferred team system of play and / or set the other team up in the system of play you know your next opponents play to practice defending against.
5. There are numerous variations to use in this set up to achieve your defensive goals.

## DEFENDING IN AN 11 v 11 USING A DIFFERENT SYSTEM OF PLAY



1. Here we are using a 4 – 4 – 2 system to work the defending set up.
2. It is the same idea as the previous diagram the coach can play the ball into various situations always to the other team to attack and for the defending team you are coaching to try to win back the ball.

3. Once you have used the target plan to allow lots of opportunity for defensive situations to practice, the defending team can now be allowed to attack the opposition as a reward for regaining possession and score a goal if possible.
4. Eventually let the game go free and coach the defending team correcting faults as they happen.