



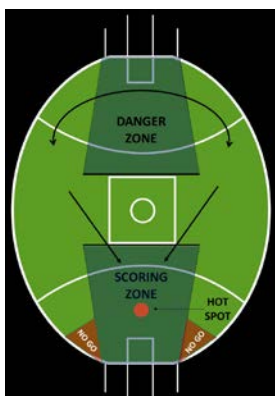
## Game

# Developing a Pattern of Play

Following is a simple approach to developing a pattern of play which can form the basis of a team plan. A pattern of play should be recognisable and applicable to all game situations and is generally developed in a series of stages.

The table below is devised for implementing a longer-kicking approach to the game. The emphasis builds on each stage as do the key terms.

STAGE	EMPHASIS	KEY TERMS
Stage 1	The development of the basic skills of the game need to be established to perfect any game-plan or pattern of play. Emphasis can then be applied to kicking the ball longer as a key requirement for the style of play a coach wants to implement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal-to-goal line</li> <li>• Scoring zone</li> </ul>
Stage 2	Fundamental to any game is the ability to win the ball in a contested or neutral situation. And then having the capacity to give the ball to teammates in better positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contest line</li> <li>• Contest set-up – stoppages and general play</li> <li>• Corridors</li> </ul>
Stage 3	Fewer possessions and longer kicking to key marking players and then the organisation of player numbers to crumb the aerial contest is a key feature of a long-kicking game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoring zone</li> <li>• Kicking long</li> <li>• Key marking targets</li> <li>• Front and square players</li> <li>• Run and carry</li> </ul>
Stage 4	Setting up in general play and the use of the ball and role of players.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switching the play</li> <li>• Handball receives</li> <li>• Leading options</li> <li>• Creating space</li> <li>• Tempo of ball movement</li> </ul>



### BASIC PATTERN

To move the ball out of the danger zone, either by switching wide to outside corridors or using central corridor if players receiving are free and who can run and carry or at the very least maintain possession.

### DANGER ZONE

- In possession, the ball should be cleared from this zone and not brought back into it unless player receiving is well clear.
- No risks in possession, particularly backward of centre.
- Key is to maintain possession.

### SCORING ZONE

- Bring the ball into the scoring zone as quickly as possible.
- Look for key marking forwards or leading targets.
- Hit the scoring zone with numbers if kicking long.



## Game

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### THE GAME SET-UP

**On-Ball corridor** is the corridor where the ball is.

As a general rule, the following applies:

- The bulk of players will move towards this corridor because that is where the play is setting up.
- The team not in possession will pressure the ball at the contest line and in general play try and win possession back or pressure disposal.
- They will also cover the corridor or off ball corridor to stop switch of play to space in all situations, but particularly if the team in possession is in a mark or free kick situation.
- Depending on the pattern of play of the team in possession and the part of the ground they are in possession, this will determine how they will play the ball.

• Long-kicking teams forward of centre will kick to the scoring zone, a run-and-carry team will often create confusion among the defending team by running at them and gaining ground until they can find a free target in the scoring zone. A possession-based team will try to maintain possession and build more methodically until they can set up a shot at goal by working the ball around to find the best possible option.

### WORK LINE

Once out of the danger zone, this is the direct path into the scoring zone.

### CONTEST SET-UP

This basic set-up around a contest is relevant to:

- Centre bounces.
- Boundary throw-ins.
- Marking contests.
- Pack situations.

### BASIC PATTERNS

Players set up to cover all the options around a contest (where ball is). And where they can transition quickly to either defend or attack.

# Centre Bounce (Specific Roles)



## RUCKMAN (R)

Stands to face 12 o'clock. Using preferred (e.g. RH) hand, the target areas are (see diagram):

1. 9 o'clock.
2. 3 o'clock.
3. 12 o'clock.
4. 6 o'clock.

## MIDFIELD 1 (M1)

The midfield 1 role is to:

- Never get in front of ball and remain behind the contest – play the sweeper role.
- Assist the defence by reading opposition ruckman's target hit out areas.
- Present as a straight running option.

## MIDFIELD 2 (M2)

The midfield 2 role is to:

- Be the primary target for ruckman's tap work and move to target area.
- React to assist defence if team lose hit-out.

## MIDFIELD 3 (M3)

The midfield 3 role is to:

- Cover the forward side of contest.
- Create a pathway for Midfield 2 by blocking.
- Be a target for 12 o'clock target area hit out.
- Use handball to any straight running option.

## WINGERS (W)

The wingers need to:

- Start and then run in behind contest.
- Once hit-out is won, move forward and attack.

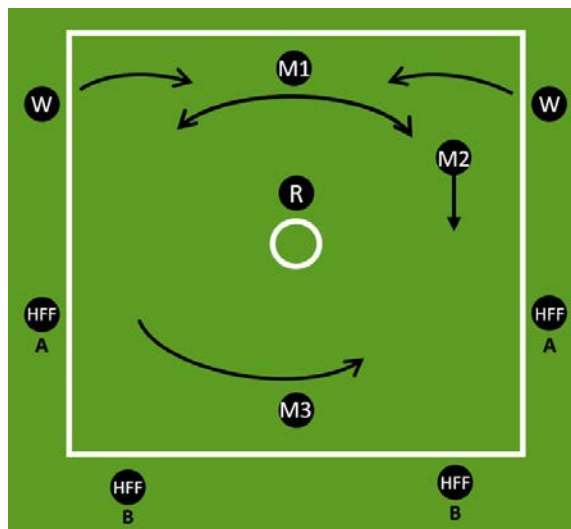
## DEFENDERS (D)

As a general rule all defenders:

- Start man-on-man.

## HALF-FORWARD FLANK (HFF)

The half-forwards can start in either position A or position B (as per diagram). They can work together by starting in position A or B or they can alternate where one starts in position A and other in position B.



Over time, teams can develop more detailed game-plans based around specific situations such as which team has the ball (or is it neutral), which zone the play is in (forward, midfield or defensive) and variables related to desired player and ball movement such as direction, distance and speed.