



Decision Making in Games

Reading the game in context to understand options for action

Context is key

- Where are you on the pitch?
- What is your role?
- Where are your opponents?
- Where are your teammates?
- Where is the ball?
- What are the risks vs rewards?
- What is your chosen objective in that moment?



Context is key

- Where are you on the pitch?



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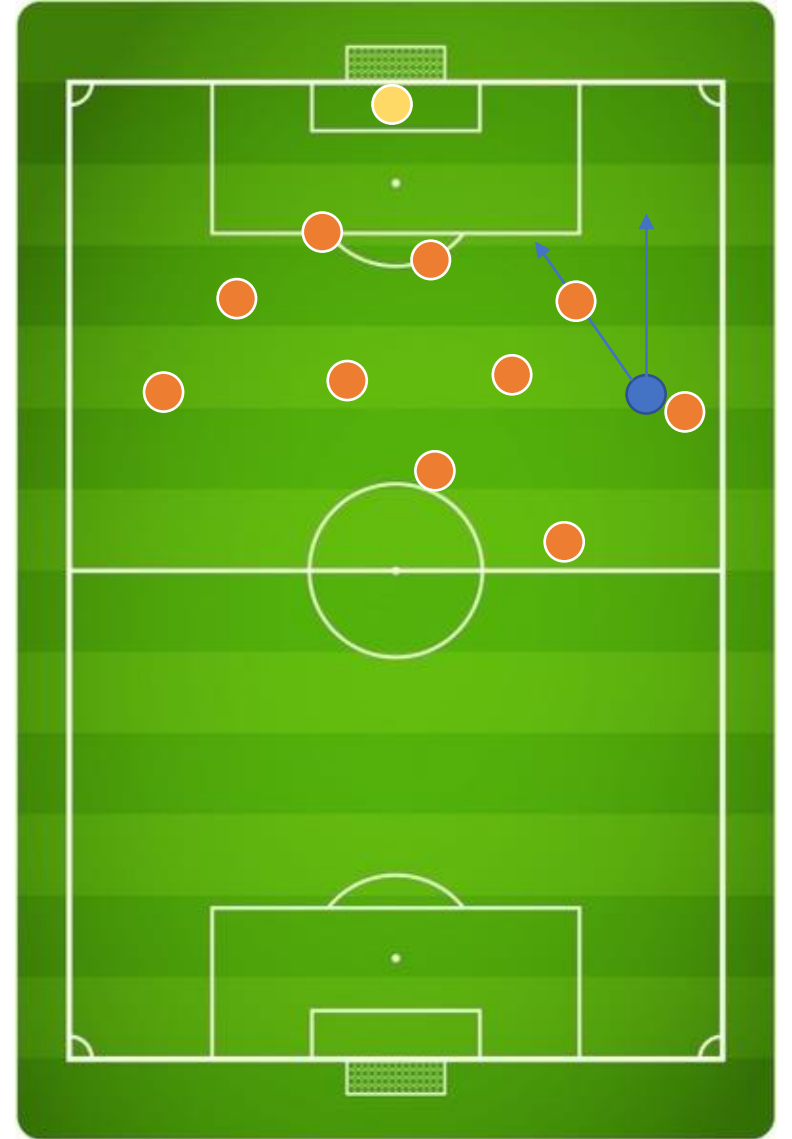
- Where are you on the pitch?
Midway in opponents half, wide on the right flank



Context is key

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- What is your role?

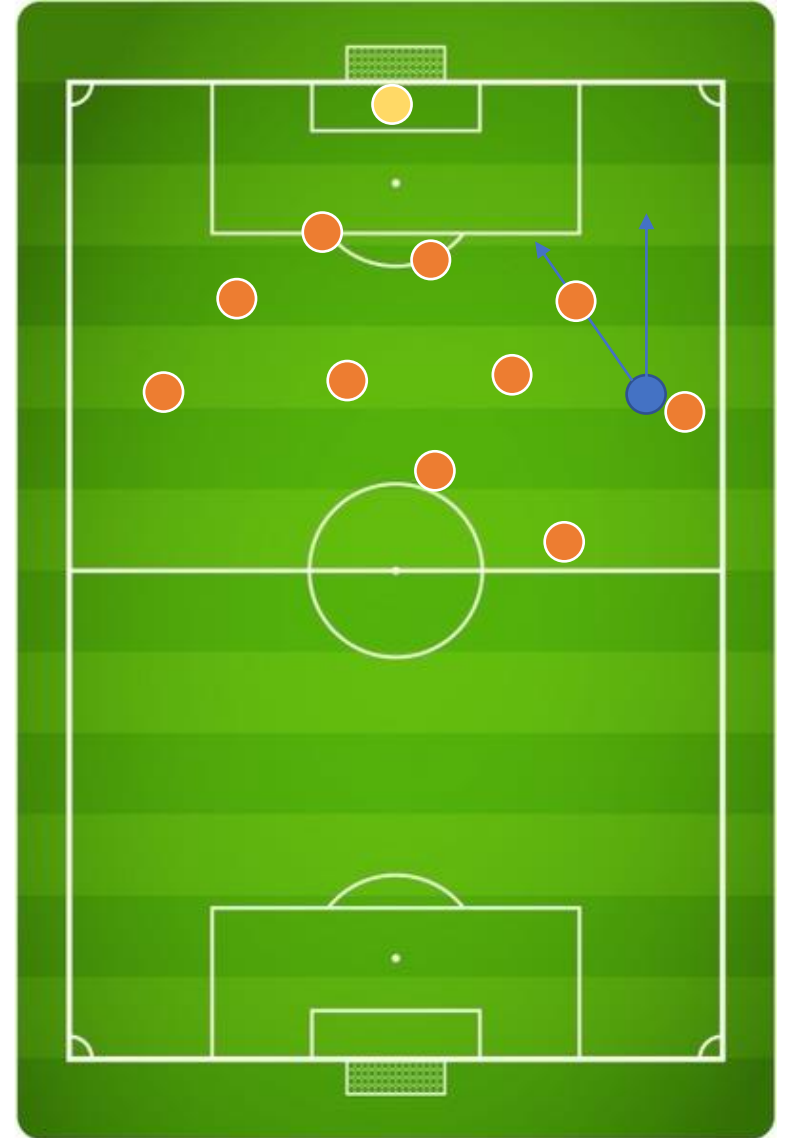
RM used in a high-pressing team with defensive duties in the attacking third. An outlet player that stays high and wide when our team is defending in mid and defensive thirds.



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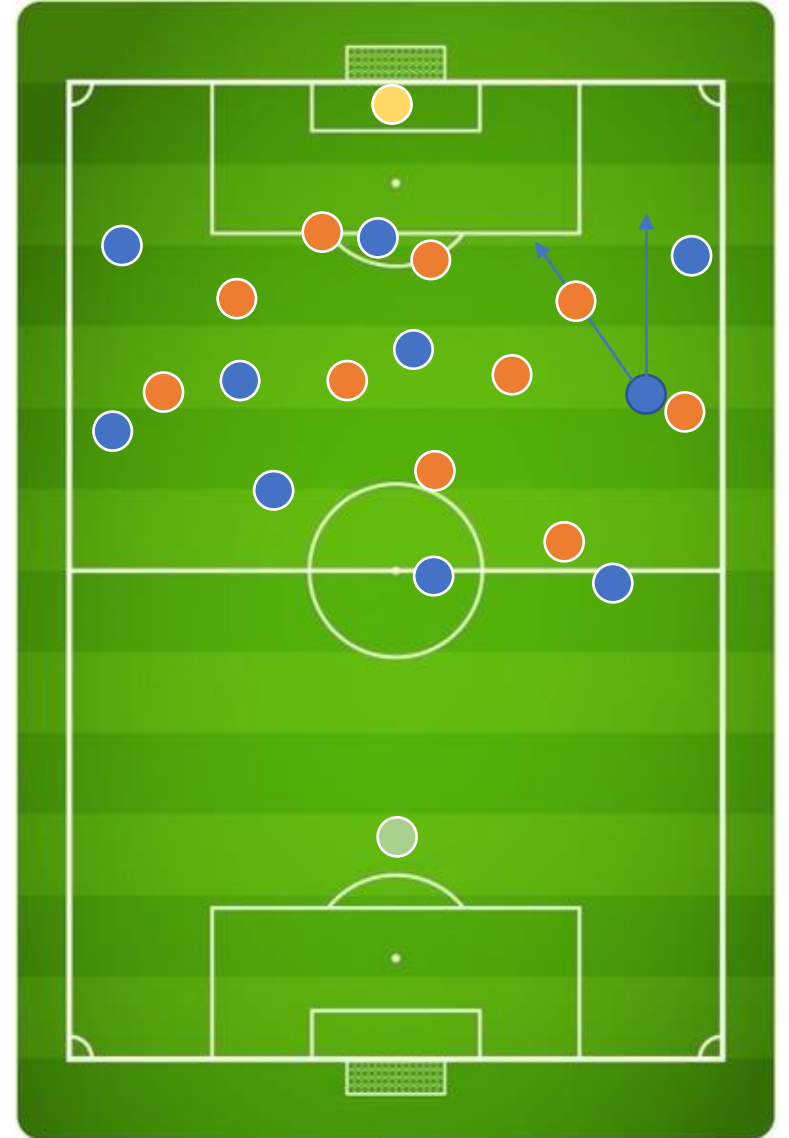
Primarily inside and ahead of me. 1 opponent applying pressure from behind and 2 opponents staying high – limiting my backwards options.



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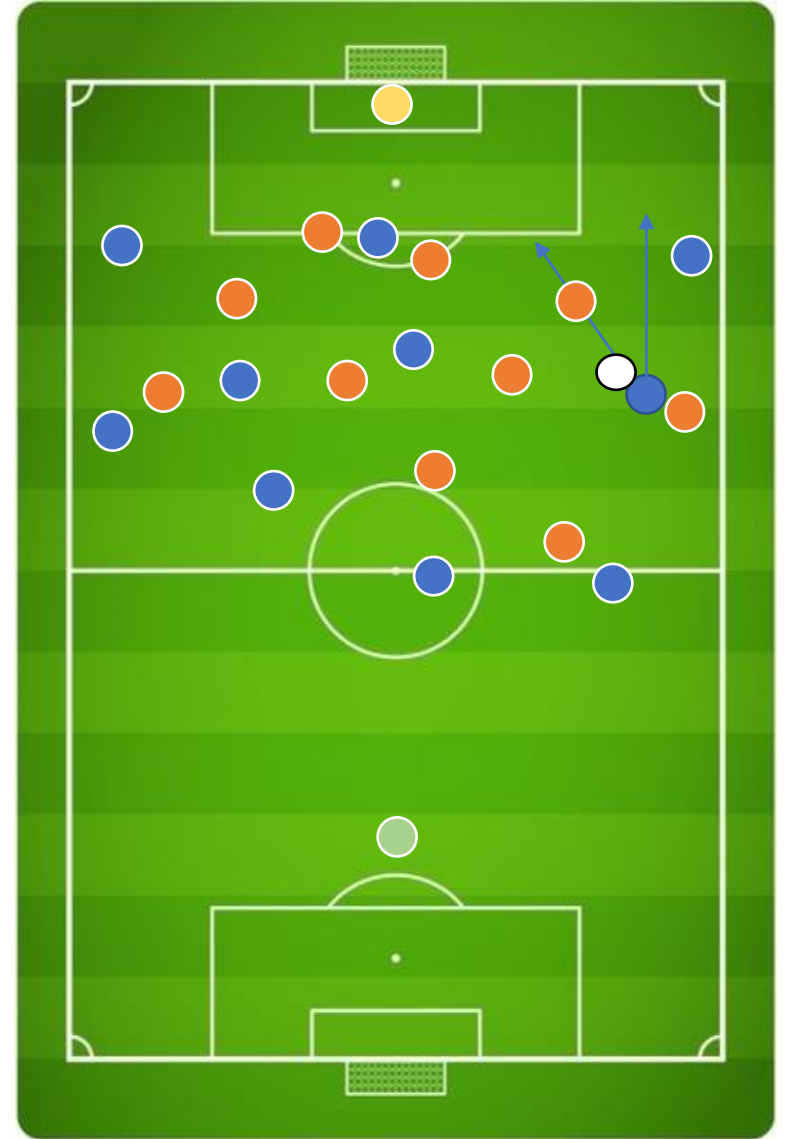
Many are on defenders' blind sides, there is one obvious and clear passing lane down the flank, most teammates are on the weak side of the pitch.



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We are in possession. I have the ball.

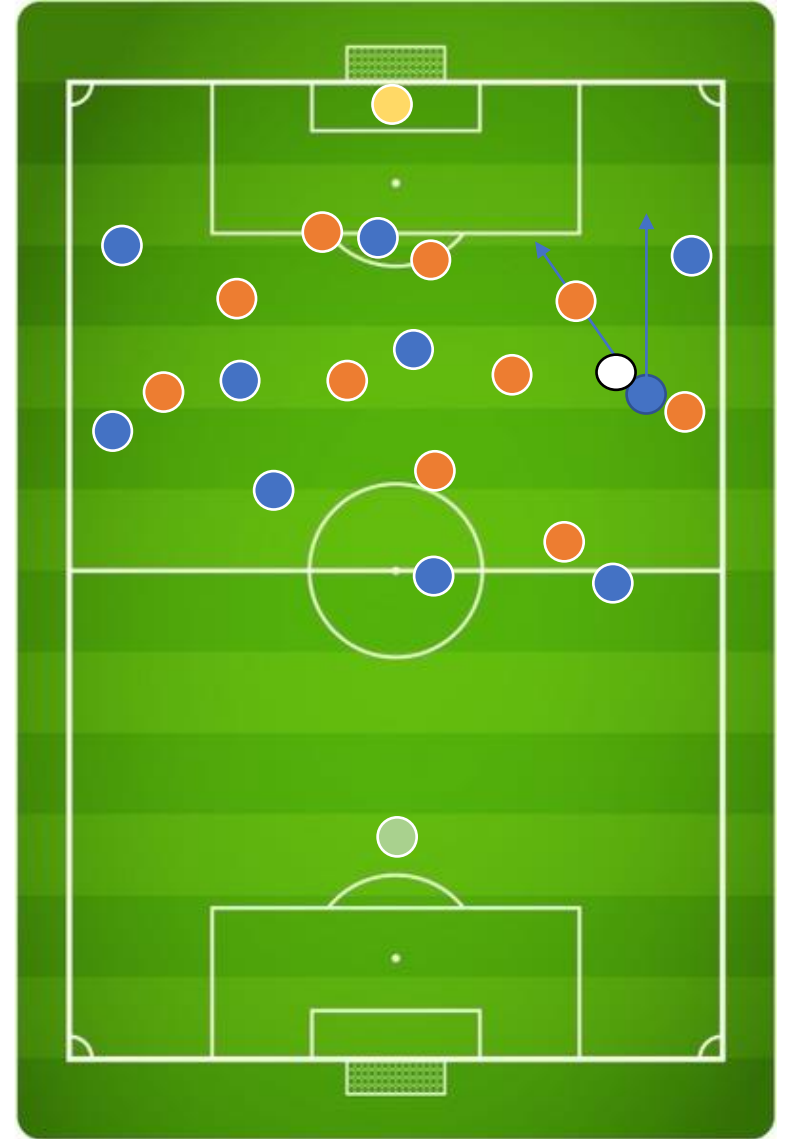


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- Where are your teammates?
- Where is the ball?
- What are the risks vs rewards?

Risks: losing possession high & wide, counterattacks

Rewards: maintaining possession; dribble or pass in final third, close to the goal to score, drawing a foul



Making a decision based on what we know

What we know:

You're on the right flank of the final third with the ball as an attacking RM with an opponent applying pressure from behind & one closing down from the front inside. You see 1 clear passing option down the line. This is not a risky space if you should lose the ball, but you stand to gain a goal if you can keep the ball & play it into the danger area. A penetrating pass/ball will rely on teammates understanding your vision and a difficult pass execution by making runs on to the ball behind the last line. There are options to combine if teammates can read your intentions.



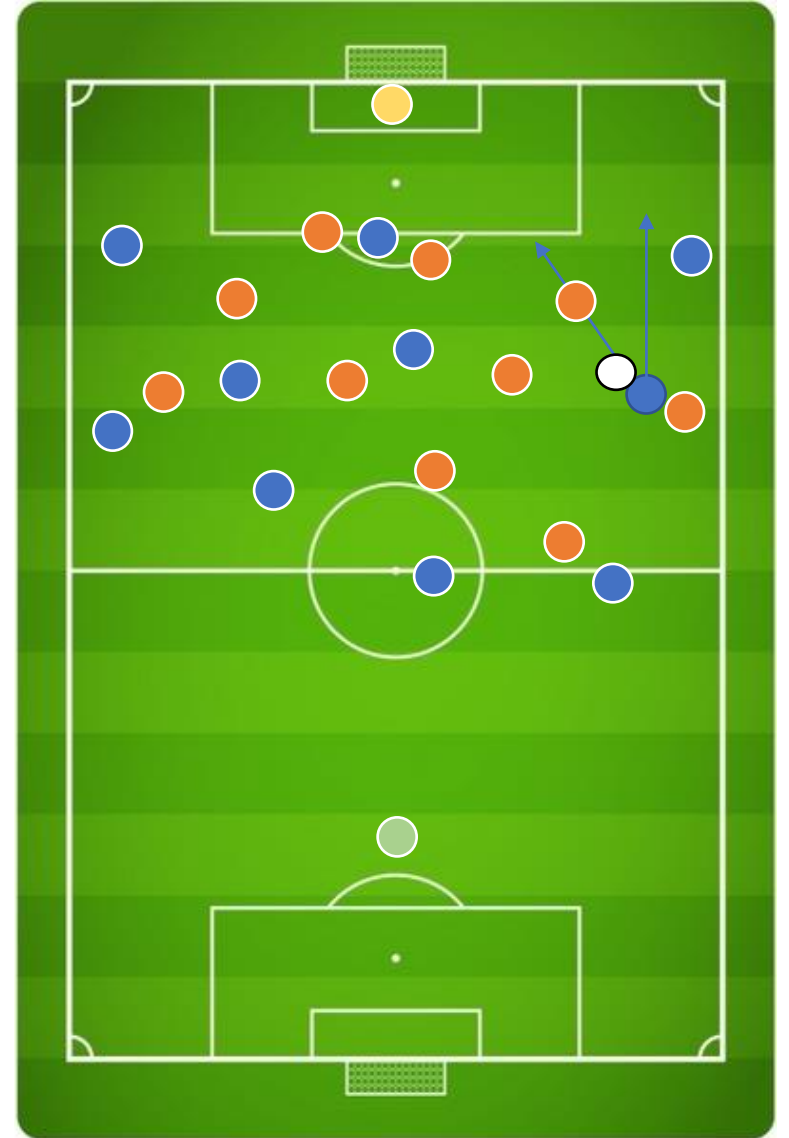
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Coach's preference & team philosophy will determine what is coached/suggested in training

- Techniques
- Skills
- Positioning & Team Shape
- Movement
- Options!



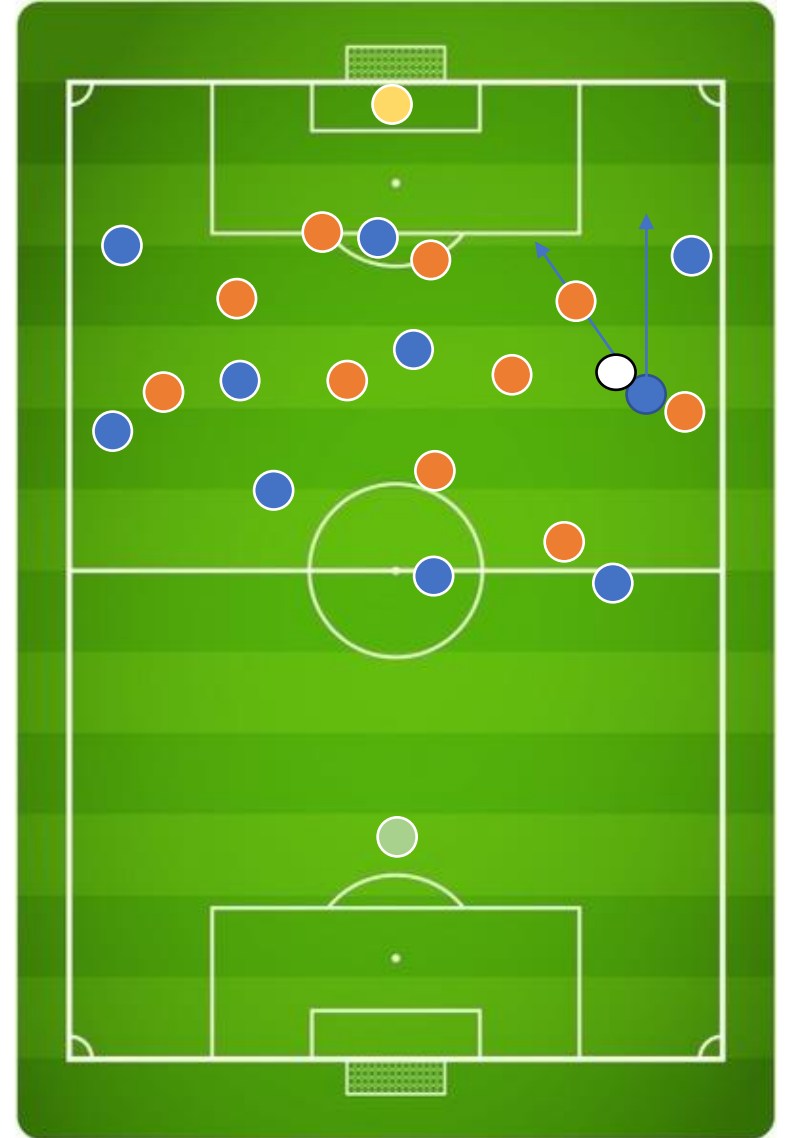
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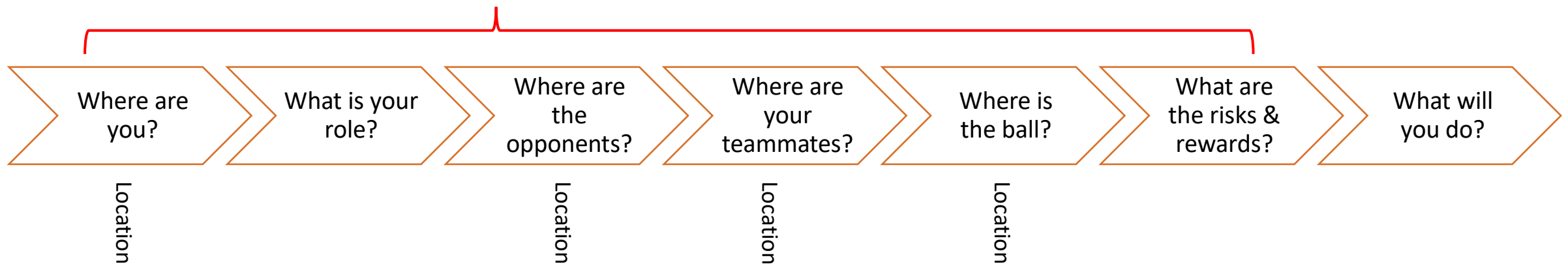
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Example: What *could* you do? (Give options)

- A) Hold off opponent & carry the ball inside
- B) Quickly play a pass down the line, then support
- C) Quickly play a cross into the box
- D) Use opponent's momentum to turn them & create some time in space to make the next decision
- E) Something unscripted

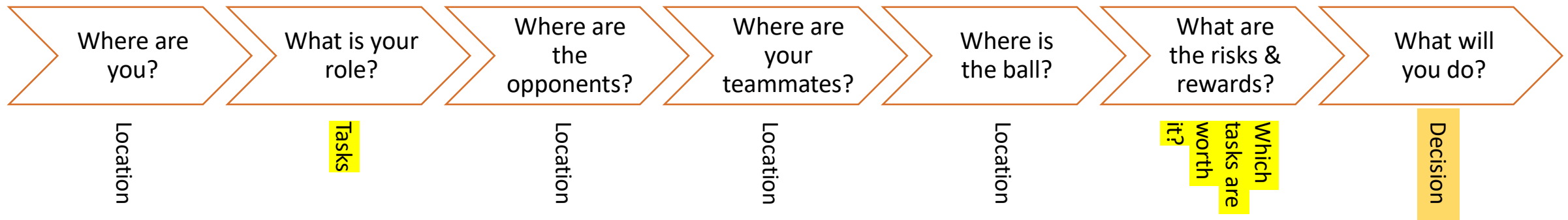


You need to know before you know what you need



These are all related e.g. where are you related to teammates, to the ball, to opponents?

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Task

- Select a game to watch & select a particular player to observe
- Make notes about what you perceive as this player's responsibilities in different moments of the game using the framework outlined:
 1. Based on a scenario (location of player, opponents, teammates & ball), find out what is the player's role, what options were available and what they chose to do.
 2. What made the player successful/unsuccessful?