

**BARNSELEY**

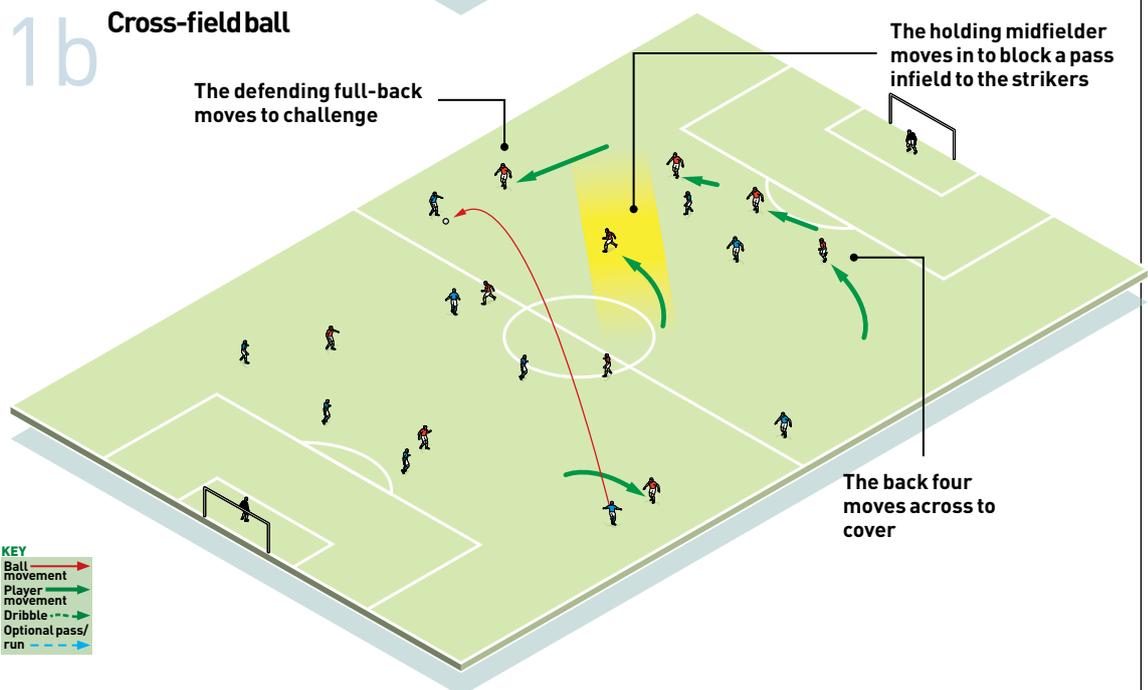
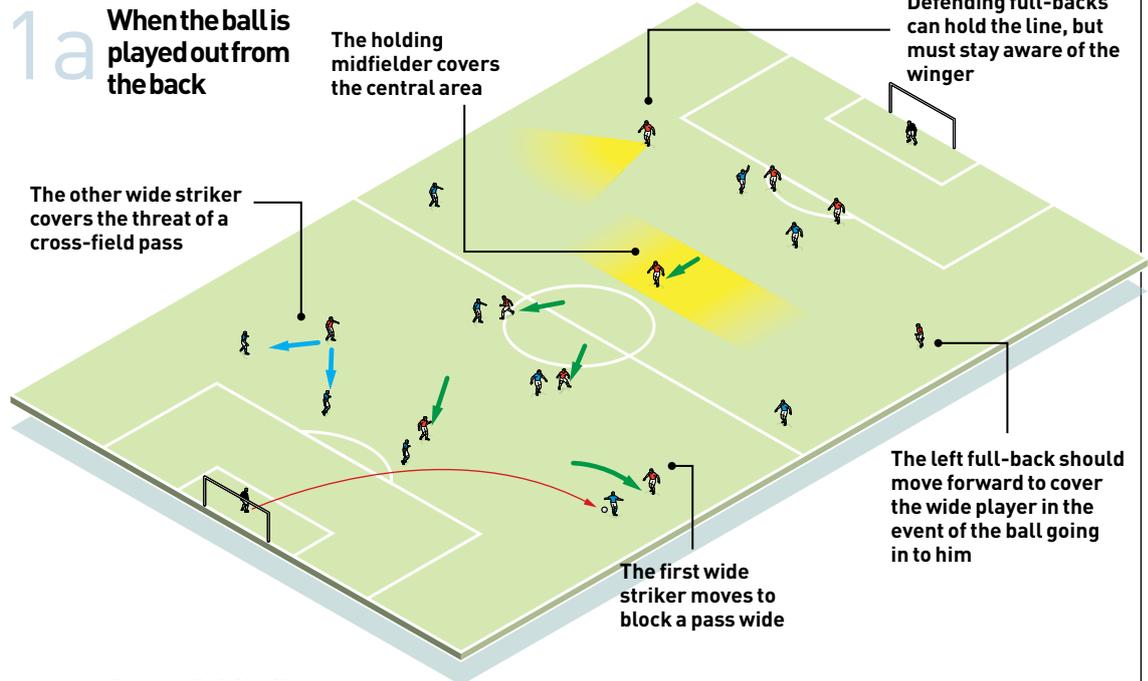
**Danny Wilson**  
**Defending from the front in a 4-3-3 situation**

**Overview:**

This session coaches players on understanding defensive positioning. It enables us to teach how to channel opposition passes into areas of strength for us, where we can attempt to turn possession over. Furthermore, it gives players an idea of which passes we can allow and which should be prevented. As a result, the session will help prevent us from being overstretched, or exposed to positions of vulnerability.

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**DEFENDING FROM THE FRONT**



**KEY**  
Ball movement  
Player movement  
Dribble  
Optional pass/run

**SET-UP**

<b>AREA</b>	Full pitch
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	Balls, cones, goals
<b>NUMBER OF PLAYERS</b>	11v11
<b>SESSION TIME</b>	As long as required

**What do I get the players to do?**

We set up as shown, 11v11, on a full pitch, with teams lining up in 4-3-3 (reds) and 4-4-2 (blues) formations. The opposition keeper starts play by throwing the ball out to his right-back.

What follows is the gradual learning of a bespoke coaching

set-up, with players understanding their roles, both as individuals and banks of players. By following this outline closely, we can successfully defend from the front in a 4-3-3, as well as still retaining the positive attacking elements that are so prevalent in this offensive formation.

A common problem is when the striker allows the full-back to play the pass into the wide man, enabling the opposition to start their attack. To prevent this we put in place a key part of defending from the front – namely that our striker has to arc his run so as to cut off the line from the full-back to the wide man, forcing



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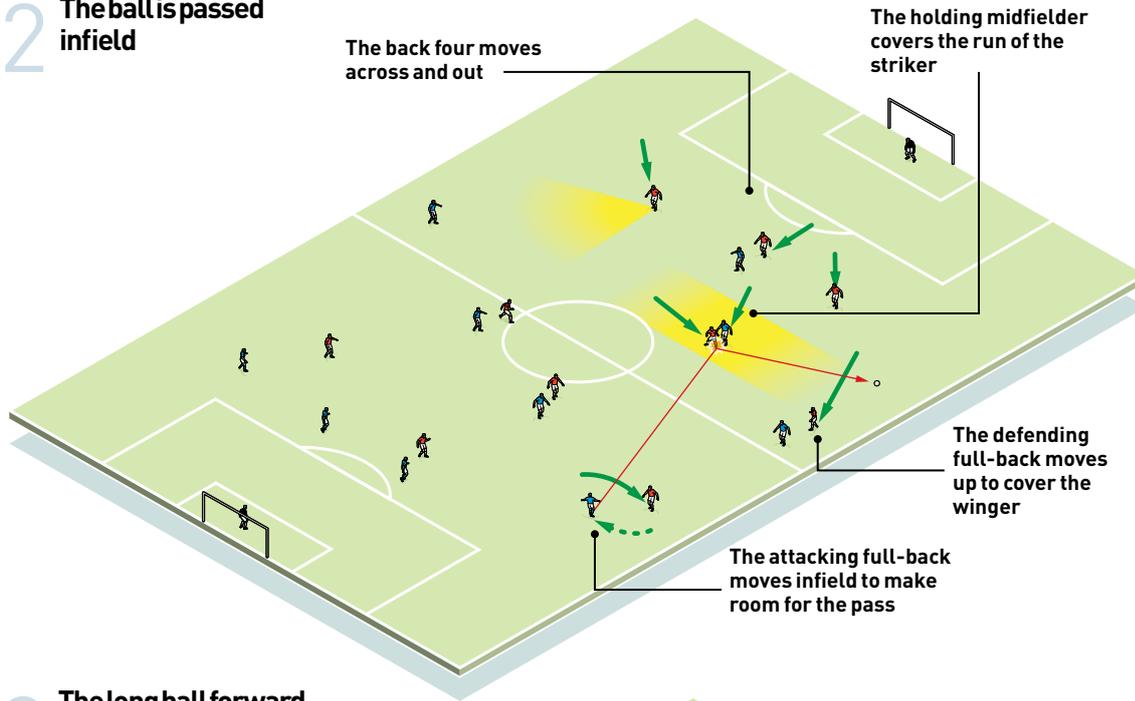
Barnsley manager Danny Wilson has now enjoyed 38 years in professional football – his first involvement in the game being as a player for Wigan Athletic in 1976. He went on to make over 100 appearances each for Chesterfield, Brighton & Hove Albion and Luton Town, as well as enjoying successful spells at Bury, Nottingham Forest, Sheffield Wednesday and Barnsley.

As a manager, his CV is similarly impressive, in 1997 taking Barnsley into the Premier League for the first time in the club's history, as well as also earning promotion for Hartlepool United in 2007, before taking Swindon Town to the League One Play-Off Final in 2009.

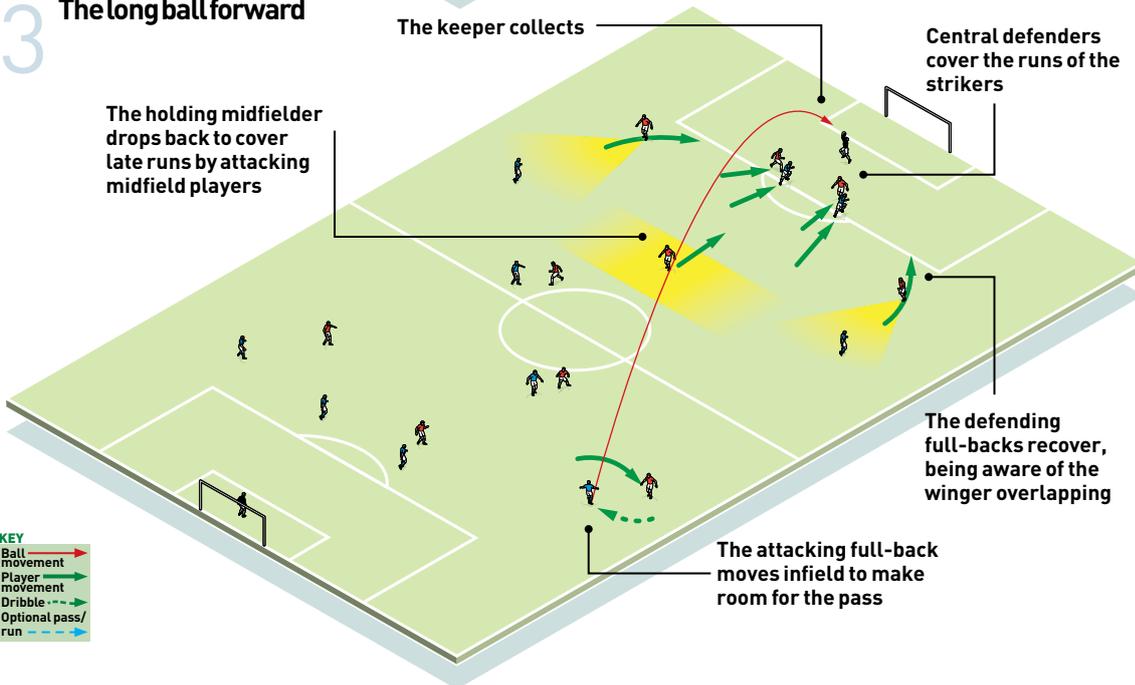
The 54-year-old has also managed Bristol City, MK Dons and Sheffield United.

**DEFENDING FROM THE FRONT**

**2 The ball is passed infield**



**3 The long ball forward**



**KEY**  
Ball movement  
Player movement  
Dribble  
Optional pass/run

“Through intense and repeated coaching, each player can cement his part in the process.”

him to play inside or backwards (1a).

As soon as the striker locks into the right-back, that is the trigger for his team mates to move forward and press. The central striker is aware of the other centre-back, or is in a position to stop a cross-field pass to the left-back.

Two centre-midfielders mark 'ball side' and press inside the ball. The deeper centre-midfielder stops any long ball into the strikers (2).

Centre-backs hold a deeper line so as not to be turned around. The right-back doesn't have to go tight to the winger or right-back on cover, but remains

aware of the diagonal ball. The keeper sweeps up any longer ball (3).

**What are the key things to look out for?**

The set-up succeeds or fails on the basis of players knowing their roles and responsibilities when defending from

the front. Through intense and repeated coaching, each player can cement his part in the process and, as a result, can create a definite team principle of suffocating the threat that comes when the opposition is in possession. ■