

ATTACKING PLAY

The following session and activities focus on developing attacking play through the use of 3 "strikers". This may be in a situation where an attacking midfield player pushes on to the opposing sweeper OR where a team plays with 1 true center forward and 2 "wingers". These are suggestions on how to adjust your team shape as well as affect the shape of the opposition in the detailed explanations / diagrams below.

Set Up:

Half pitch with 6 attacking players against 4 defenders and a goalkeeper as shown in Diagram (a) below. Play begins with a pass from the coach (c)



Diagram (a)

Explanation:

1. A 3 v 3 situation is the result of pushing the attacking midfield player (8) onto the sweeper. Now the opposition has no cover unless they change their shape (which is unlikely to happen) so we are at an advantage. The sweeper does not like to be man-marked as they are usually the free player so may try to drop deeper to escape the marking thus allowing us to push up as a team and giving us an advantage.

2. Movement of the 3 front players can seriously affect the positioning of the defenders as they will likely follow them if they usually use a **man-marking** philosophy. This will create a lot of space to be exploited by us centrally, if they marked zones this disruption of the defense would not happen. We are technically **playing three strikers** but calling them wingers **plants the seed** that they need to play wide.

Explanation of Movements:

Set the players up in a situation where the two strikers go touchline tight and the attacking midfielder pushes onto the sweeper. Observe what the defenders in a diamond defense do?
See Diagram (b) below.

*If they man-mark them they will then we have 3 x 1 v 1 situations in the attacking third with no cover on.



Diagram (b)

Also, this has created a lot of space (red boxes) inside between the sweeper and the center backs for players to break into and for the ball to be passed into. These spaces are in important parts of the field where players can exploit the man-marking ideas of the opposition. If they mark inside them (zonal) then particularly the two wide strikers are free to receive to feet in space.

*The stopper (D) in this situation often does not know where to go or who to mark



Diagram (e)

Coaching Points:

- a) Timing of the run by (9).
- b) Quality of the pass by (7).
- c) Timing and weight of the pass by (7).
- d) Timing of the run by (8) into space, late and fast to escape the marking of (C).
- e) Angle of runs.

* If (8) goes into the space too early then (C) is taken into that space which means (8) has less room to work in. If (8) has time, move (C) away from the space to come back to create more time to receive the pass and space to run into.

Progression:

The numbers are increased to 9 v 8 as shown below.

Explanation:

In the situation below the attacking team has created space down the sides in the channels.



Diagram (f)

Options:

1. Midfield players may break into those areas or strikers may check back into those areas to receive a pass inside the marking defender. It also creates space for a pass down the side for (8) to receive and attack the sweeper.
2. The strikers must be unselfish in their play to do this for the team. It can be implemented at certain times during the game to confuse the opposition defenders.
3. They are making runs to create space for other players not necessarily themselves but if defenders do not follow them then as a consequence of their movement they themselves get free.

Below in Diagram (g) is the same situation except the central defenders stay and mark "zones" Since the defenders remain centrally, marking zones, the space is now in the wide areas not centrally as before. Midfield players can link up and support the strikers in these areas to create overloads



Diagram (g)

Defensive Team Adjustments

In Diagram (h) below the wide midfield players have dropped back deep to mark the "wingers" of the attacking team. Teams may do this to counter the attacking action which means full-backs (2, 3) can now attack with ease.

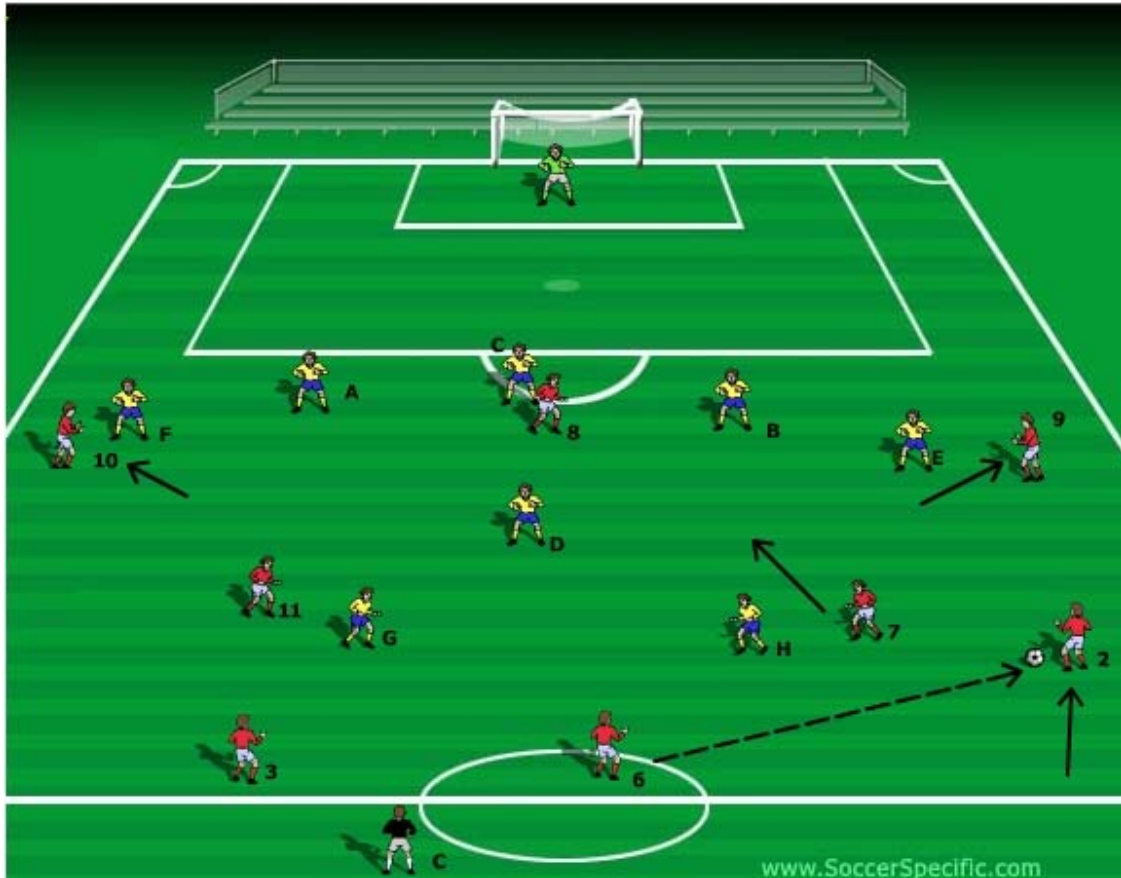


Diagram (h)

Explanation:

1. Two forwards pull out wide - Central defenders stay central and mark the space and let the two strikers go wide into wingers positions.
2. Two wide midfield players drop back to mark them..
3. The defending team become very defensive now and find trouble getting forward and attacking because they have so many players playing in deep positions.

Spreading the Attack

See Diagram (i) below.

Strikers break wide to become wingers. They create space inside for central striker (8) in particular.



Diagram (i)

Options:

1. Wingers can check back inside to receive into the space they created (see #9's movement above) in the first place. **Outside-to-inside** run is a great run to make to either receive a pass or create space for a team mate to receive a pass.
2. (9) takes (B) wide then checks back into the space to offer a second option of a pass from (3).
3. Can make the pass from a central position too, from (6) for example as shown above.

Getting Midfielders and Strikers / Wingers "In"

See Diagram (j) below. Same situation where space has been created down the sides in the channels. Midfield players may break into those areas or strikers may check back into those areas to receive a pass inside the marking defender. It also creates space for a pass down the side for (8) to receive and attack the sweeper.



Diagram (j)

The strikers must be unselfish in their play to do this for the team. It can be implemented at certain times during the game to confuse the opposition defenders. They are making runs to create space for other players not necessarily themselves but if defenders do not follow them then as a consequence of their movement they themselves get free.

Getting Full-Backs "In"

See Diagram (k) below. Now creating space up front for fullbacks to break forward from deep.

