

Small sided formations

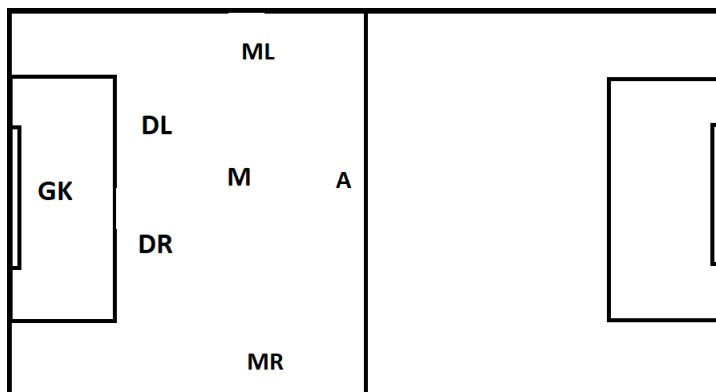
When setting up a formation, its always important to contemplate your players first and what you have available to you. Speed, control, smarts, some of these, none of these. You set up a formation that best suits what you have and can work with. As you break down the options think about how you can best put your players into a formation that will work for them, not how you can get your players to work in a formation you like.

It is also important to think about what your objective is, training or winning. For academy level we will focus on training. We want a formation that will encourage ball movement, and give an understanding of all three levels of play on the field, offense, midfield and defense. Most youth level coaches spend all their time focusing on offense, and say because they have defenders as part of the activity, they are focusing on defending and rarely ever work on midfield. Soccer is not a shoot out sport. It is a defend, build and attack sport not attack, attack, attack and hope we attack better than they do. Let's look at some formations that will help us with a training mentality work from the back. Defend, build, attack.

Here are some ideas of movement. Straight lines are passes, dashed lines are runs. Numbers represent the movement of the ball starting at 1, which would represent a point of turnover of the ball or distribution from the keeper. Notice my defenders are moving and active with offense and moving up with the play and my attackers are engaged defensively coming back to assist.

7v7 (First number is always starts from the back and the keeper is never included since it is always there)

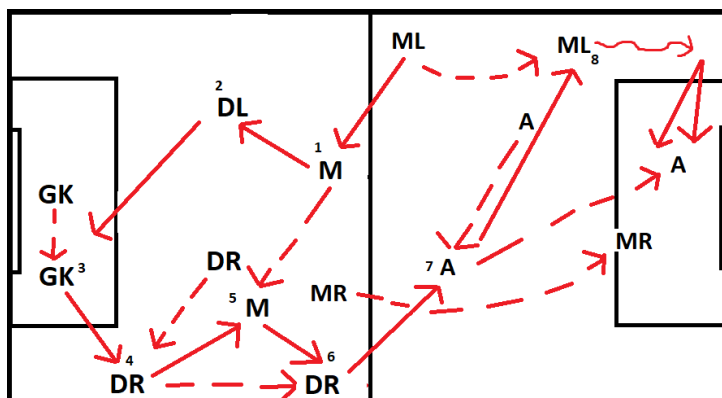
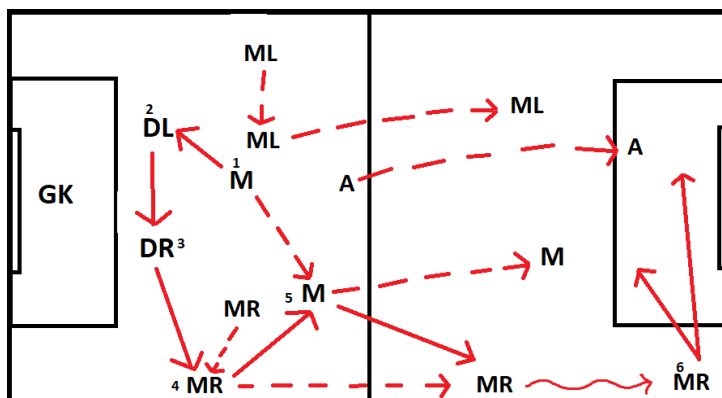
2-3-1



Defend with a 4+1 drop back. The center (M)idfielder leads direction of attack from opposing team by pushing the play one way or the other, attempting to stop the attack from coming straight down the middle of the field. Outside (M)idfielders drop back to assist with defense allowing (D)efenders to pinch central to block lanes of attack and mark more dangerous players. (A)ttacking players drop to middle and stay higher to keep players out of the attack on the other team by requiring players to remain out of the play in case of turnover.

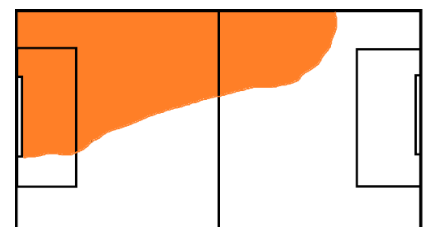
Build out of the back with active (D)efenders and (M)idfield movement. Outside (M)idfielders create width by working all the way to the line and staying with the level of the ball through the midfield when the ball is on their side of the field, opposite (M)idfielder pinches in to keep shape and create a quick second pass option. Attacks typically come from building into the final third and finding crosses or passes back to the top of the goal box for one and two touch shots on goal.

Ball Movement concepts:

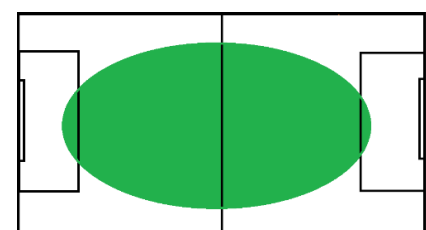


Players general range:

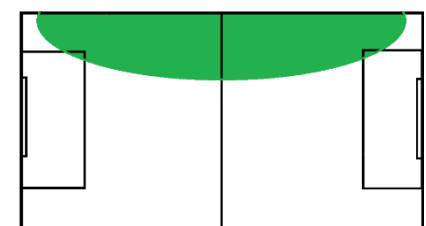
Defenders



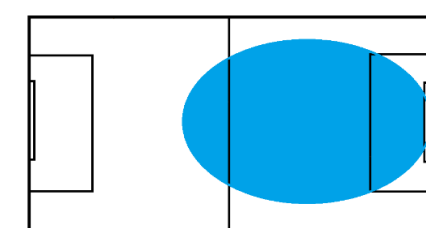
Inside Midfielder



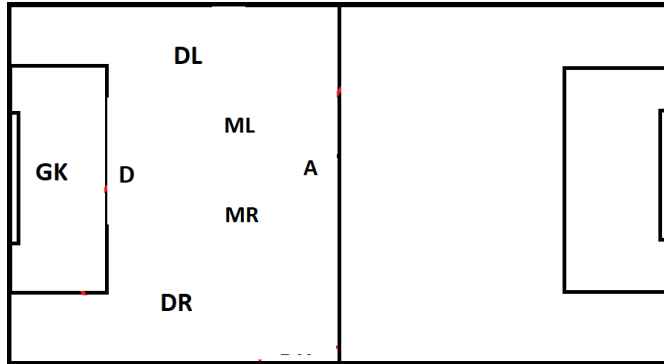
Outside Midfielders



Attackers



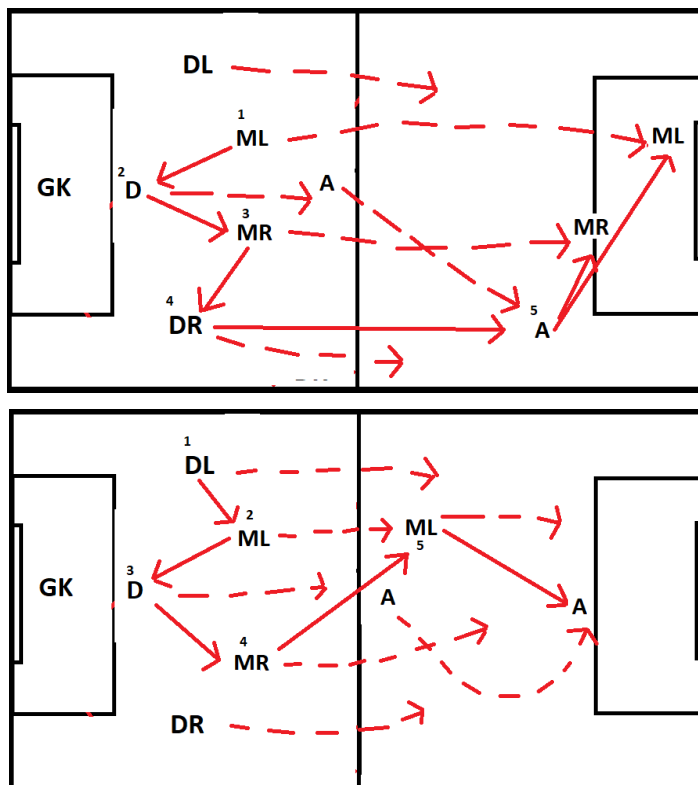
3-2-1



Defend with 3 + 1 + 1 where (M)idfielders share roles with who is first pressure and who drops back to fill passing lanes and mark, outside (D)efenders backup the midfielders and center (D)efender covers lanes and jumps on through balls. (A)ttacker's defensive role is to get play moved to the outside by pressuring the player with the ball from the inside out.

Build up is more linear in movement. Where the ball is moved up and down in channels. (D)efenders and (M)idfielders connect to create space between lines to expose and release (A)ttackers to goal. Final third attacks typically come out of the middle third with direct passes to attack the goal with 1v1 opportunities.

Ball Movement Concepts:



Players General Range:

