

The background is a solid dark blue color. Overlaid on this are several abstract, light blue elements. There are multiple sets of thin, parallel lines that curve and flow across the frame, creating a sense of motion and depth. Additionally, there are larger, semi-transparent geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, that are layered on top of each other and the wavy lines. The overall effect is a modern, tech-oriented aesthetic.

## 2.4 Tactical Analysis

# Introduction

- In this section I will be identifying the strategies and tactics that teams generally use to counteract either a change in the score-line or a change in the oppositions formation.
- Also, this section reviews how I participate in football, from my perspective and which tactics I employ and the competitive plans I use too.





# What is the difference between Strategy and Tactics.

In game theory, a player's **strategy** in a game is a complete plan of action for whatever situation might arise. Whereas a **Tactic** is a plan for attaining a particular goal.

Strategy means 'a global plan to reach a long-term goal. Tactics, on the other hand, means a short term plan or behaviour.

# Tactics

There are lots of tactics in football that are used during matches, some examples of this are:

- Possession football
- Counter-attacking football
- Long-ball/Direct football
- Wide-play and alternating wingers
- Zonal defence
- Man-to-Man marking

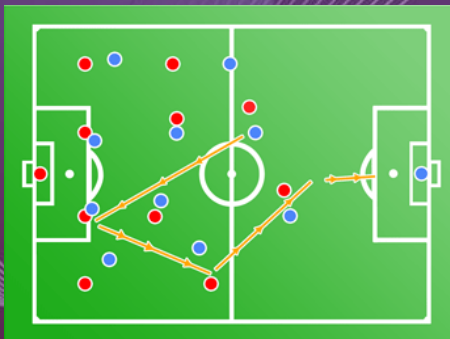


With the use of changing formations, there are different formations to use to counteract either the opposition's tactics or even whether your team may be winning or losing. For example, a defensive 5-4-1 tactic may be employed to make sure you don't concede whilst having a 2 goal lead. Or you may play a tactic whereby the wingers swap wings, this confuses the opposition's defenders and could catch them off guard.



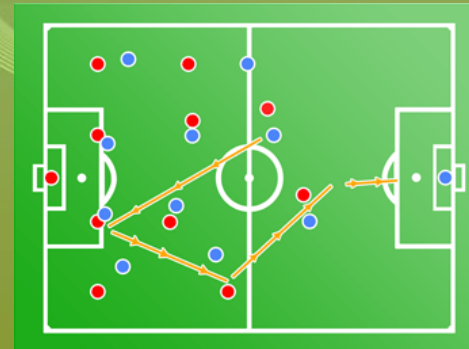
# Possession Football

- Teams that aim to retain control of the ball over longer periods of time, in the process making a large percentage of passes that give low risk of losing the ball, are said to play possession football. Utilising these tactics demands players to be skillful in ball control and precise passing. If successful, it will tire the opposing players because they have to run and tackle more. Also, the term sometimes indicates that each player retains possession for a longer period of time, using more touches.
- Who used it: Luis Aragones for Spain in the UEFA Euro 2008.



# Counter-Attacking Football

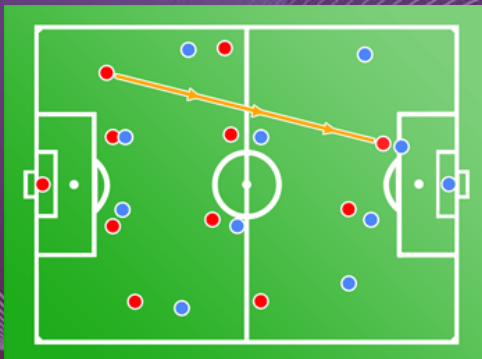
- The aim of this type of football is to catch the opponent on the "break". When they give away possession in midfield or attack, opposing players will tend to be further up the field than usual and may not be able to quickly adjust to a defensive mindset. In some cases, defenders and midfielders may join in the counter-attack, trying to outnumber or otherwise overtake the opposition by quick and intelligent movement and fast passes. Teams playing successful counter-attacking football will try particularly hard to dispossess the opponent's midfielders.



ATTACKING TACTICS

# Long Ball/Direct Play

- This means that players spend little time with the ball before passing. The direct attack is sometimes associated with the long-ball style. Long ball is the term used in association football to describe an attempt,, to distribute the ball a long distance down the field via a cross, without the intention to pass it to the feet of the receiving player. It is a technique that can be especially effective for a team with a tall striker



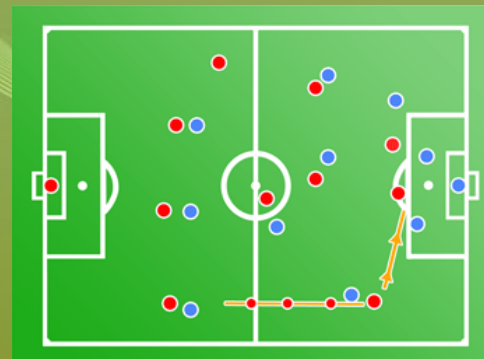
# Wide/Depth Football

Width and depth are both principles of offence and defence as follows:

*Width in attack*- the attacker tries to stretch the enemy by maximizing width and space

*Width in defence*- the defender tries to contract and deny width and space

*Depth in defence*- the defender also uses depth by providing covering support for a teammate, but may abandon depth temporarily to set an offside trap.

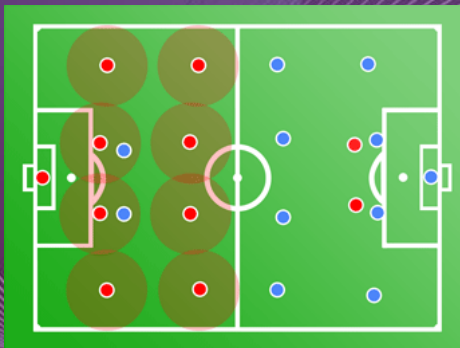


ATTACKING TACTICS



# Zonal Defence

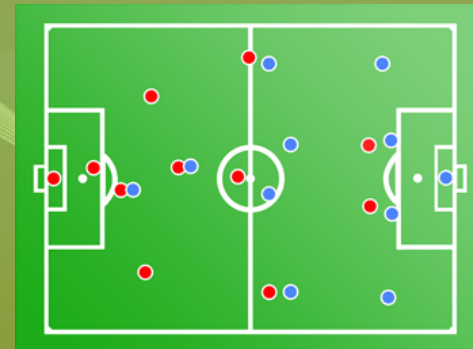
To cover for a team's (or player's) lack of pace or technique, every defender and midfielder is given a particular zone on the pitch to cover when the opposition has the ball. It is fundamentally simple but allows sides to deal with all types of attackers on the opponent's team. However, it can be fraught with danger if any individual fails to cover his area of the pitch.



## DEFENSIVE TACTICS

# Man-To-Man Marking.

Whereas the defenders and midfielders are responsible for zones in Zonal Defence, man-to-man marking means certain individuals are responsible for guarding a particular opponent. However, man-to-man marking requires incredible discipline on the part of the marker, and good decision making on the part of the manager.



# Formations

Formations in football are a method of positioning players on the pitch to allow a team to play according to their pre-set tactics. Different formations can be used depending on whether a team wishes to play more attacking or defensive football. Formations can be altered during a game, but this requires adaptation by the players to fit in to the new system. There are types of tactics that can be used and it is the skill of a manager to change these effectively during a match. It might be to play more defensively to hold on to a lead. Or if the team are losing to be more attacking and push the players further forward. To alter the way the team is playing requires some players to change position.

- 4-4-2 (Four Four Two) Formation
- 4-5-1 (Four Five One) Formation
- 4-3-3 (Four Three Three) Formation
- The 'Diamond Formation' (4-3-1-2 )
- 5-3-2 (Five Three Two) Formation





# 4-4-2

- **It's the most common formation in British football.** It is an adaptable system where the midfield give plenty of support to both the defence and the attack.
- You are likely to get players who are more attacking and more defensive than others within this system.
- So deciding how to play against a team with a 4-4-2 formation might not be as obvious as it would appear sometimes.
- Sometimes, one of the two central midfielders will be expected to get more forward to support the strikers.
- Sometimes the two midfielders will take turns in pushing forward to keep the defenders guessing.



# 4-4-2 Diamond

**It was the word on everybody's lips during Euro 2004.** Holland used it, and then England tinkered with it.

It's effectively a 4-4-2, but with midfielders having specific roles within their usual jobs. One of the two central midfielders will be expected to get forward as often as possible and support the strikers. While the other midfielder will play more deeply, providing extra protection to the defence. In England's case, Frank Lampard has played the more defensive holding role.

ATTACKING FORMATIONS

# 4-4-3

**This formation is quite an attacking one.**

The three midfielders will normally play quite closely together to give protection to the defence.

While the three strikers will split across the pitch to provide width to the attack.

Very few teams actually start with this line-up. But if a manager needs a goal late on in a game then he may opt to move to three upfront.



# 5-3-2

**This formation has grown more popular over recent years.**

It has three central defenders - occasionally with one acting as a sweeper.

It combines defence and attack, but it is very reliant on the two wide players who operate as wing-backs. It is their job to work the full length of the pitch, supporting both the defence and the attack.

If these two attacking defenders struggle with the pace of the game the team can be left short of support - be it up front or at the back.



## ATTACKING FORMATIONS



# 4-5-1

If you're holding a one goal lead in a two-legged match then this could be the best formation.

It's often seen in European games where teams face a tough away fixture and the manager packs the midfield.

The striker often has a lone battle up front. But it can be very effective - particularly when keeping possession.

For it to work properly the striker has to be good at holding up the ball.

This gives the midfield players a chance to get forward and offer support.



# 4-4-1-1-

This formation is not as confusing as it looks.

It's simple. It's having someone playing just behind the main striker but ahead of the midfield.

Paul Scholes has done it a lot for Man Utd.

This player is dropped between the opposition midfield and defence and will get more time and space on the ball. And hopefully be in a position to create more goalscoring chances.



DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS

# When and Where to Perform Tactics

Adaptations made during a game when under pressure or in a comfortable lead. There are types of tactics that can be used and it is the skill of a manager to change these effectively during a match.

- It might be to play more defensively to hold on to a lead.
- Or if the team are losing to be more attacking and push the players further forward.

Some very common tactics that are employed by teams are the uses of substitutions or even changes in formation. For example, if my team is leading by two goals, I would make sure that my defenders don't concede another goal, which means I would put extra defenders on making it 5-4-1.

The opposition, being 2 goals down, would put a more attacking formation like 4-3-3, with more strikers forward.

Another example would be if I was drawing against a team with a few minutes to go, I would throw some more attacking players (preferably a tall one) on, so with the new fresh legs on the pitch, we can catch the defenders off guard with some possession play. With a tall striker, all set pieces



# When and Where to Perform Tactics Continued

towards the end of the game would be focused on providing him with a header, trying to get another goal.

**Narrow formations.** Teams with a surfeit of central midfielders, or teams who attack best through the centre, may choose to adopt narrow formations such as the 4-1-2-1-2 or the 4-3-2-1 which allow teams to field up to four or five central midfielders in the team. Narrow formations however depend on the full backs (the flank players in the "4") to provide width and to advance upfield as frequently as possible to supplement the attack in wide areas.

**Wide formations.** Teams with a surfeit of forwards and wingers may choose to adopt formations such as 4-4-2, 3-5-2 and 4-3-3, which commit forwards and wingers high up the pitch. Wide formations allow the attacking team to stretch play and cause the defending team to cover more ground.

**Change to attacking formations.** When chasing a game for a desirable result, teams tend to sacrifice a defensive player or a midfield player for a forward in order to chase a result. An example of such a change is a change from 4-5-1 to 4-4-2.

# When and Where to Perform Tactics Continued

**Change to defensive formations.** When a team is in the lead, or wishes to protect the scoreline of a game, the coach may choose to revert to a more defensive structure by removing a forward for a more defensive player. The extra player in defence or midfield adds solidity by giving the team more legs to chase opponents and recover possession.

Formations can be deceptive in analysing a particular team's style of play. For instance, a team that plays a nominally attacking 4–3–3 formation can quickly revert to a 4–5–1 if a coach instructs two of the three forwards to track back in midfield.



# Physical Conditioning

- As with all team sports, playing position clearly affects the physical requirements. It is generally accepted that a goalkeeper does not need the same level of aerobic conditioning as a central midfielder. The distance covered by outfield players has been well researched. In a match, they each cover about six miles, though this obviously depends on whether you are a utility midfield player or a sweeper. There does not appear to be much difference between the distance covered by the top professionals and non-elite players.
- This means that all outfield players need a reasonable level of aerobic conditioning.
- Development of speed is essential in soccer, where ability to reach the ball first, or outrun opponents, is paramount. Good soccer players will turn out 30 metre sprint times of well under 4 seconds, yet this alone is not enough.
- For me: my physical requirements for a striker, would be a high cardiovascular and muscular endurance. Speed, is used to avoid challenges from opposition defenders.

# Physical Conditioning Continued

Cardiovascular fitness is without a doubt, one of the most key components of every footballer. For me, I struggle to last 90 minutes without stopping twice or three times, because I have to breathe. If I can improve my fitness, I will be able to last for longer durations of time, without suffering from fatigue.

My Upper Body Muscular Strength will have to improve, if I am to muscle opposition players off the ball, or shield the ball, when I have possession of it. I need this factor most when I'm dribbling at speed, as this is the point when I am most liable to lose possession.





# Rule structure and scoring system

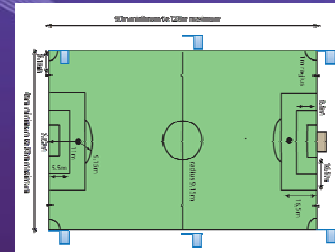
- At its core, football is a game with two teams of eleven players, played over the course of 90 minutes. This period is split into two 45-minute halves. The objective of the game is to score more 'goals' than the opposition. The term 'goal' refers to two areas either side of the pitch, each one defended by one of the teams. A 'goal' is scored by depositing the ball into the opponent's area.
- Football can be played on a natural or artificial (e.g. AstroTurf) surface. However, the shape of the field must be rectangular, with the dimensions of 90-120 metres long by 45-90 metres wide. Notably, the guidelines for international matches are stricter (100-110 metres x 64-75 metres).
- To be in an offside position is to be closer to the opponent's goal than the last opposition outfield player (therefore excluding the goalkeeper) and the ball. However, to commit an offside offence is to have the ball played forward towards you while in that position. As such, **you can be in an offside position and not commit an offside offence.**
- The perennial problem for newcomers to football is understanding the offside rule. This is made somewhat harder by the fact there are two

# Rule structure and scoring system continued.

elements to offsides in football; being in an offside position, and committing an offside offence. With a wider pitch, there is more room for the midfielders to spread the ball. If the pitch is narrow, it would be harder for teams to penetrate the oppositions midfield/defence as it would be really congested.

- If the pitch is wider, than there would be more mobility for all the players as there is more space on the pitch to use. If the pitch is narrower, the middle of the pitch is congested , the concentrations levels of the players would be higher.
- Obviously there are various ways in which teams try to bend the rules for their advantage. Cases include diving, also scoring from offside positions occur frequently. One specific example of bending the rules, is that the goalkeeper can only have the ball for a certain amount of time. The “six second rule” makes sure keepers don’t time-waste, but a lot of the time, if their team is winning, they will try to use up that allotted time and even more to make sure the other team does not score.

If the keeper has the ball too long, then it is a bookable offense, for deliberate time wasting.





# Anticipation and Deception

## Examples of Deception:

- The following are fouls or poor conduct practices in football:
- Pretending injury in order to delay play or getting an opponent booked or sent off
- Teasing opponents to get them out of balance
- Attempting to influence the referees
- Stealthily touching the ball with the hands
- Stealthily holding the shirts of opponents players
- Illegally stopping players in a counter-attack
- Recklessly duelling with the opponent's goalkeeper
- Professional fouls



# My individual tactics for my Position.

- As a striker, I am usually vital when my team employs the “Long Ball/ Direct” tactic. This is because my movement and pace usually allows me to split the oppositions defence and allow my keeper to play first time long ball (Route One). Usually this tactic is used towards the end of a game, when the oppositions defenders get tired and their legs feel heavy.
- This is also appropriate to the “Counter- Attacking” tactic, because my team’s general movement combined with my relatively fast pace allows through balls to be played, till the end result, more often than not, is a goal. This tactic would be played when the oppositions defenders play a high line, or when they are pushed further forward, when they may have a set piece like a corner or free kick.



# My Individual Tactics for my Position.

My Individual Tactics (for my school team) compared to those of an Elite footballer in the same position:

As seen previously, I like to utilise the “Counter-Attack” tactic, as my team and I have a collectively faster squad than most opposition, so we try to use this strength against them, when the opposition are most vulnerable (on the counter attack). An elite player in a similar position, could be someone like Manchester United’s Wayne Rooney. Manchester United, frequently use the “Counter-Attack” (their main tactic), as their squad has enough pace and have some great distributors of the ball, that they can switch from being defensive to offensive in a matter of seconds. What is also a benefit for both of us, is our work rate, when we play this tactic, fortunately Rooney has an high level of stamina which is ideal for the positions and tactics he’s involved with. Also, with their great distributors from midfield (Michael Carrick) they can also play the “Long Ball” tactic, which my team also use.

# My Team's Tactics

My Team employs several tactics during a game, which are dependant on the squad, the opposition and the score at the current time. As well as the tactics on the previous two slides, here are a few more that my team uses:

**Possession Football:** Very much like Arsenal's approach to the game. All it requires is for our players to 'pass and move' and by having the ball for as long as possible before the opposition intercepts. We use this because it frustrates the opposition and tires them quickly, because they are always looking to close you down. After a while a "killer pass" is threaded through for one of our strikers to take the keeper on. As long as my team has the ball, we have control over the game.

**Set-Plays:** Because my team is gifted with great headers of the ball, we try to cross the ball as often as possible, from the wings and we also use corners and free kicks to our advantage, because we have tall, strong players with an aerial prowess.



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