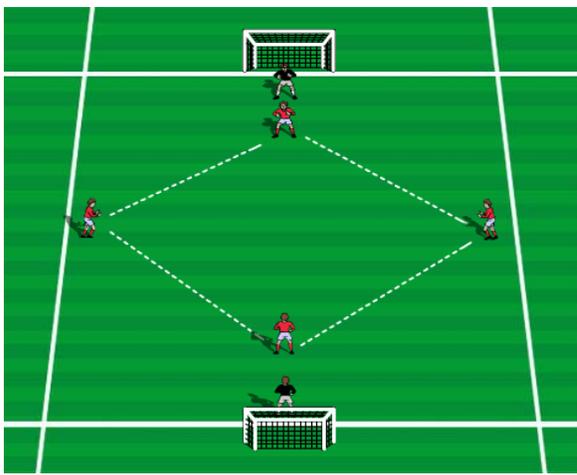


CLUB USA TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

A club is more than just a name and uniform. There should be technical and tactical connections between the age groups. From a tactical perspective, team shape is the key unifying principle. The diamond is the basic shape. It is the minimum number that has three lines: forward, mid and back. It also has all three passing options: forward, sideways and backwards. Thus the goal is to teach positional roles within the diamond shape. The shape itself teaches the concepts that need to be taught.

Tactical Development focuses on teaching the individual player the responsibilities and possibilities of the positions in the **diamond formation** that will remain the same regardless of the number of players on a team.



5v5 Game

Use a diamond shape: 1-2-1, where all passing options are present. There are also good visual cues provided by the defenders positions. The key positional instructions are: The forward stays up to stretch the field. The midfielders go all the way wide to stretch the defense. The defender moves diagonally with the goalkeeper to provide good passing options. **This 5v5 game should be a teaching tool for every coach in our club.**

The Center Back should always look to play forward as his first option. (The forward needs to stay deep to make this possible). The second option is to pass sideways. Then he must move to support the pass. This movement often opens up space for a forward pass when the ball is returned to the Center Back.

Be sure to constantly fix the shape during play. The wide players stay on the sideline but must always run sideways in order to

better see the field. They should take their markers away and then check back for the ball. If they have space, the wide players should take the ball on the front foot and attack the defender. **Go forward if you can, or else sideways. Pass back if you must. Passes to wide players should be to the proper foot: front foot if there is time to turn, back foot if closely marked.**

There are three combination plays to give the wide players some tactical ideas. They are: a double pass, a wall pass and a self pass.

The **double pass** has the Center Back pass to the wide player and move towards him in support. The wide player passes the ball back and spins behind his marker to head up field. Finally, the Center Back passes the ball forward to the running wide player.

The **wall pass** has the wide player receive the ball and pass to the checking forward. The wide player continues up the line and receives the ball back from the forward with a one-touch pass.

The **self pass** is a clever little trick for the wide player to get around a tight marker. When the ball comes to the back foot with the marker tight, the wide player flips the ball up and around the front of the marker while running around behind the marker to retrieve the ball.

Advantages of the 5v5 Game

1. Smallest number of outfield players necessary to understand:

- A. 3 passing directions (pass forward, sideways, backwards)
- B. 3 line alignment (defense, midfield, attack)
- C. Constant involvement

2. Visual Cues

- A. When to play forward
- B. When to play sideways
- C. When to play backwards

BASICS TASKS IN 5V5 GAME

- **Own team in possession**

Sweeper: insure high quality distribution out of the back, do not give the ball away (take no risk), support other players from behind, instruct players in front of you.

Midfielders: provide a link between the sweeper and striker and support them, create space by stretching the opponents across the field, play yourself free (run, 1-2 combination), instruct forward player, score and set up goals.

Striker: score and set up goals, to create space by holding the opposing sweeper deep, offer quality targets to teammates, dummy runs, move towards the ball.

- **Opponents in possession**

Sweeper: tight marking, reading situation, do not be beaten, cover teammates back, do not be pulled too far out of the center, instruct players in own team.

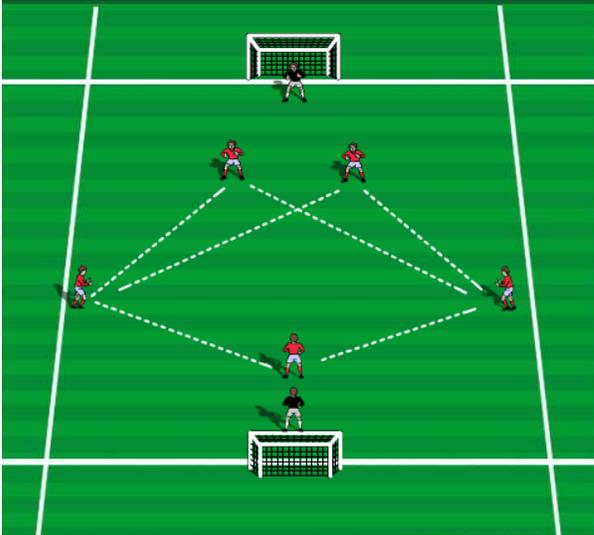
Midfielders: mark direct opponent, give cover to teammate, do not be beaten, play close to each other (stay compact), instruct each other, reading the game.

Striker: neutralize the opposing sweeper, disrupt playing out of the back, prevent long ball forward, pressure player on the ball, track down any forward runs made by the sweeper.

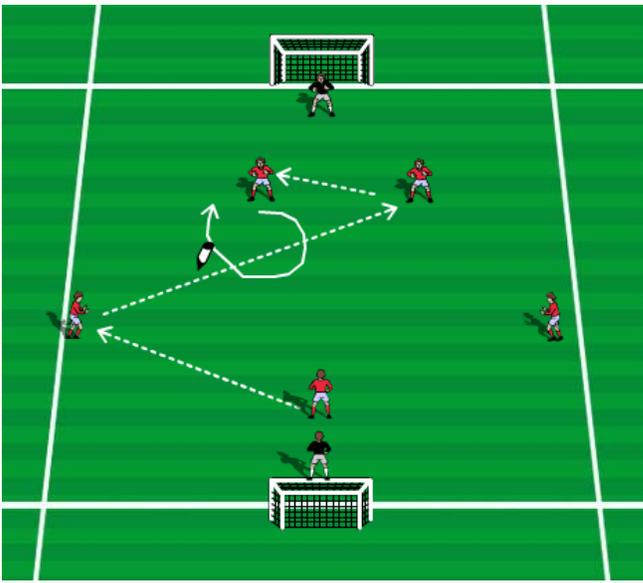
VARIATIONS FOR RULES OF THE GAME

- **Start and restart of the game:** Player's choice, first ball is free, new ball is in, free ball is in.
- **Conditioning of the game:** one touch passing, two touch passing, three or fewer touches, must use three or more touches, ball cannot stop, one touch to score, a set number of passes before scoring, keep the ball below the knees or on the ground, score from the air only, no returning the ball to who gave it to you, in order for goal to count everybody must be across the half line.

6v6 -TIMING OF THE CHECKS



The team is shaped with a keeper, three back players and two front players. The two forwards stay staggered. When the outside defender gets the ball and looks up, the near forward checks to the ball. The pass, however, goes to the far forward. The checking forward spins around outside her marker and receives the return pass from the far forward. (The forwards in this exercise could also be a pair of center midfield players).



8v8 GAME

Every team in our club, who plays 8v8 games, needs to play this formation.



The 8v8 game is played in the 2-3-2 shape. This shape is really two diamonds side by side. The advantages of this formation are as follows. The two defenders feel pressure and learn to play out of it. The two wide players stay wide and open up the space. The two forwards stay up to stretch the field.

This formation has the same visual cues and passing angles as the 5v5 formation learned at an earlier age. Players should stand sideways for passes. This makes it clear what foot to pass to depending on the pressure. The center midfielders should not move in such a way as to cut off the long pass to the forwards. The wide players should not drift into the field and need to remember to run sideways when going up and down the line. When the keeper has the ball, defenders go wide which could open up the center midfielder who should be standing sideways. Forwards use criss-cross, diagonal runs and checking in order to combine.

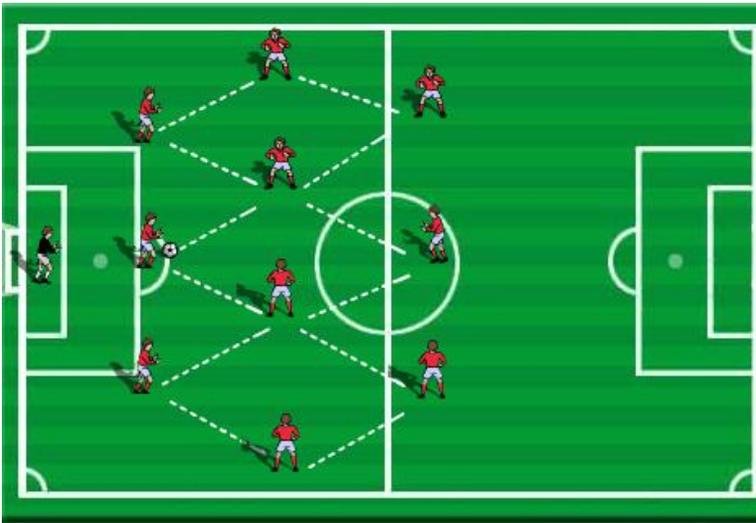
Benefits of the 8v8 Game

1. 2 diamond shapes
2. Development of defenders skills
3. Wide midfielders
4. Forward players play together

5. Forwards can work with central midfielders
6. Midfielders attack across the field

11V11 GAME

In regard to the 11v11 game, the club USA does not want to force every coach in the club to play a certain formation. The club USA encourages coaches to expose players to a variety of formations (1:4:4:2, 1:4:3:3, 1:3:4:3...). In every formation there are countless possibilities to create diamond formations anywhere on the field. Coaches need to make sure that players create this shape on the field.



11v11 Game

Be sure to look away from the player with the ball and see the supporting players.

Regardless of formation used, be sure that diamonds are formed around the ball.

Pay close attention to the body position of the players supporting the player on the ball.

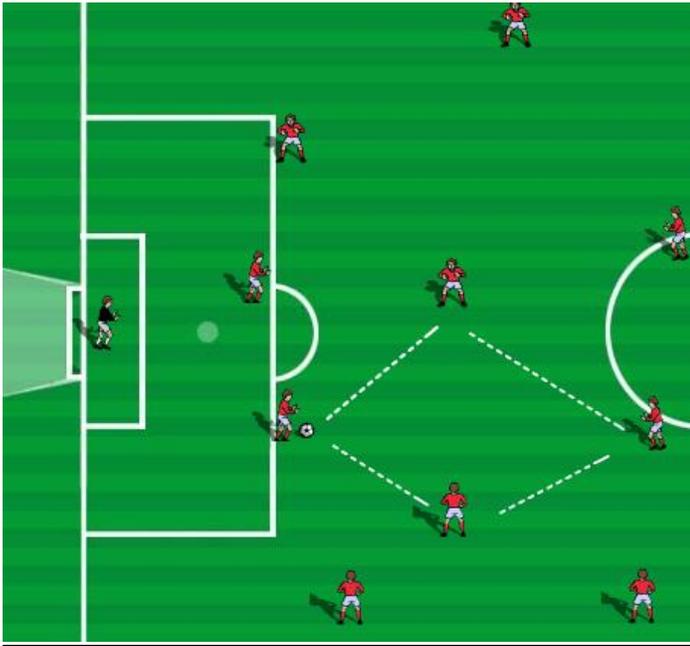
This game of 11v11 is in the 3-4-3 shape. **This shape is really three diamonds side by side.** The coach can give a few pointers to the players. The Fullbacks should play “on the slant,” never flat. The far side flank midfielder must drop into the back line to balance the defense. Some coaches like to leave three forwards up front for the counter attack. The other option is to have them drop back to double team the ball. Finally, the keeper in this system must double as a sweeper.

The Ultimate Developmental Shape – The 3-4-3

1. Defenders learn to pressure, cover, balance
2. Teaching concepts are consistent
3. #7 and #11 wide midfielders are complete
 - A. Defending third – balance
 - B. Midfield third – width

- C. Attacking third – crosses and shots
4. Central midfielders work together
 5. Develops strikers

1:4:4:2 SHAPE



1:4:3:3 SHAPE

