



INTERNATIONALS
Soccer Club



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Internationals Soccer Club: A History of Excellence

The Three Moments of Soccer

Every second of every soccer game belongs to one of the 'three moments of soccer'

They are:

1. Own possession (when you have the ball - attacking)
2. Transition (when the ball is won or lost)
3. Opposition possession (when the other team has the ball - defending)

Own Possession (attacking)

The game plan during own possession is to move the ball downfield so that chances can be created (the build-up) and to score goals.

General Principles are: Create as much space as possible, both width and depth; Aim to get forward - play the ball deep when possible (first choice); keep possession, this is vital to the objectives of the game; if you can't play forward, play wide to prepare for a forward pass; try to maintain good formation.

Opposition in Possession (defending)

Game Plan. Disrupt the opposition build-up. Win the ball back. Stop the opposition from scoring.

How? Make the field of play as small as possible, depending on the strength of the opposition; move towards the ball (pressing), move towards own goal (fall back), Push towards the sideline (squeezing). Pressure the ball. Mark closely when in the vicinity of the ball (cover). Positional/zonal marking further from the ball (balance).

Note. The Game plan will not be achieved if you foul, so avoid giving away free kicks.

Transition – the moment in between attacking and defending

Game Plan. Switch game plan from own possession to opposition possession (or vice versa) as quickly as possible.

How?

1. Loss of possession. Player nearest to the ball tries to stop it being played forward by pressuring the player on the ball, forcing her to play square, hold the ball, run with it or pass back. All players contribute to preventing a goal by squeezing the opposing players (prevent them moving inside). Block the shot. Take up a position which will avoid any direct



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threat (pressing). Mark tight close to the ball if enough teammates are available (delaying). Positional/zonal marking if not enough teammates are available (delaying, do not dive in, do not get passed).

2. Winning the ball. The player winning the ball (interception, tackle etc) looks first to playing the ball forward. Players further away ask for the ball (avoiding offside). Player gaining possession can push the ball forward into space and run into it himself to negate the offside trap (depending on starting position). Spread out to create as much space as possible. Try to stay out of the opponents' field of vision. Be useful by taking the initiative and anticipating where the ball will go, including dummy runs to draw attention away from teammates.

3. From defense to attack - how to get the ball from your penalty area to the opponents' penalty area. The quickest way is the long ball (route one). But this requires certain preconditions: Good kicking technique (speed, height and direction); the player must have time and space to make the kick (not easy when opponents are near; communication between kicker and receiver; kicker must recognize the moment when the deep ball can be played. The second way is using good positional play to enable the long ball. This requires knowledge of the purpose of positional play. Players must take position relative to the opposition players and the space available in such a way as to create opportunities to play the long ball. Whether or not the long ball will be played rest on whether or not a teammate gets into the right position at the right time. The quality of positional play can be improved by moving the ball faster (opponents have to run more), taking positions at the right time, taking the right position (not too close, not too far away).

4. From attack to defense after losing possession (in depth principles of 1).

General principles are; player nearest the ball must do all that he can to prevent the long ball, this could be the player who has just lost the ball, but often he is not in a good position to do so and another player must take this task; All players must switch immediately to defensive mode, there is no time for emotions such as disappointment at losing the ball or anger with the player who has lost the ball, players close to the ball mark tightly. further away close down space, cover teammates and mark zonally; The sweeper (or last man) must decide if he is going to push up and play the offside trap or fall back and deprive the striker of space (risky with a flat back four and requires good coordination); keeper can act as extra sweeper by coming out of penalty area; if there are too few players near the ball (e.g. you have been hit on the break) players must take up zonal covering positions and delay the opponents by good positional play and pressing up towards the ball so that stranded players can get back into useful positions.

When your are attacking there must always be a good balance between those actively involved in the attack and those holding back to clean up if possession is lost.

Finally, the general principle is deny the opposition space to play (push up towards the ball), be ready (and able) to down space and most importantly do not get passed.

adapted from [National Soccer Coaches Association of America](#), *PLAYING STYLES, FORMATIONS, FUNCTIONAL TRAINING*, 1998.

www.internationalssoccer.com: Internationals Member Resources: 3 Moments