



Principles of Team Play

These are essential concepts and ideas that are fundamental to effective soccer and successful team play.

Players that understand the *DEFENDING* and *ATTACKING PRINCIPLES OF PLAY* will play the game of soccer in an effective and competent manner

The Principles of Team Play are defined as a set of norms that provide players the possibility of rapidly achieving tactical solutions for problems that arise in the situations they face.



Principles of Team Play

Basic factors in a Player's Performance.

- ***Individual skills and technique***
- ***Fitness - (Mental - Physical)***
- ***Understanding of the game***

Always include your goalkeeper in your tactical training



Principles of Team Play

In the game of Soccer, technical and tactical skills, physical fitness and cognitive processes underlying decision-making are considered essential requirements for excellence in performance by an individual player and the team as a whole.

The soccer environment is often complex with the players frequently required to make numerous decisions. The spatial organization of the players on the field, the movements of the ball and the alternatives of action of both teammates and opponents are constantly changing.



Principles of Team Play

The frequency, chronological order and complexity of the various game situations that will arise during the course of a game cannot be predicted.

This unpredictability demands that individual players and the entire team “develop and refine” the skills and the capacity to adapt and respond effectively to the different scenarios that are present in each phase of the game in accordance with pre-determined and established team concepts and framework.

In this constantly changing environment there is one element, one guide, one factor that is always constant and it does not change.....

"The Principles of Team Play"



Principles of Team Play

They need to be understood by all players as well as observed in their behavior during training since they are intended to facilitate the achievement of team objectives.

The successful execution of the Principles of Team Play will enhance the players' ability to occupy or deny free space and will improve the movements and positioning of players on the field.

It will help the team become more efficient at controlling the game, maintaining ball possession, performing variations in the circulation of the ball, changing the pace of the game and materializing tactical actions aiming to break up opponents' balance and, consequently, to create more scoring opportunities.



**DEFENDING
PRINCIPLES
OF
PLAY**



TIME and SPACE.

- Soccer can be viewed as a contest between two teams trying to use **TIME** and **SPACE** to maximum effect. To understand these concepts, and how they affect all other factors in the game, is to understand to game of soccer.
- Coaches and players that are aware of both the defensive and attacking use of time and space are better able to understand the tactical side of the game.



TIME and SPACE.

- If you look at every situation in soccer in terms of ***TIME*** and ***SPACE*** you will be able to explain it.
- ***DEFENDING*** is about denying time and space in critical areas.
- ***ATTACKING*** is about creating space and finding space, about moving the ball quickly, probing the oppositions defensive position, testing their concentration and waiting for a player to be out of position and take advantage of their mistakes.



THE PRINCIPLES OF TEAM PLAY.

Possession

T R A N S I T I O N

ATTACKING

DEFENDING

Penetration

Support / Depth

Dispersal / Width

Mobility

Improvisation / Creativity

Delay

Depth / Support

Concentration (Compact)

Balance / Cover

Control / Restraint



Principles of Team Play

Transition

“The process of recognition and response in the first few moments following the regain or loss of possession.”

The process of transition may start earlier. Do the very best teams and players actually predict when the ball might be won or lost and begin scanning, deciding, adjusting and reacting before a turnover in possession?

Having a clear picture of the changing arrangement of players and space may allow decisions to be made instantly and immediately rather than reactively.

The most important tactical situations in soccer occur at the moments when the ball changes possession. Because drills typically STOP at the moment of transition, the most critical tactical situations are often eliminated from the natural learning process.



Principles of Team Play

Transition

Effectively managing moments of transition is considered one of the key elements of gaining a competitive advantage and a key part of many teams' game plans.

The four phases of the game:

Defensive transition --- Defensive organization,
Attacking transition --- Attacking organization.

The faster you are able to react as a team in the transition phases, the more successful you will be!



THE PRINCIPLES OF PLAY.

Ball Possession.

Ball Possession determines the behavior of each individual player on both teams.

Ball possession determines the behavior of each unit on both teams

Ball possession determines the overall individual and collective behavior of players on both teams.



THE PRINCIPLES OF PLAY.

Ball Possession.

When your team has the ball, everyone on the team becomes an attacker.

Your goals as the attacking team are:

- Keep possession of the ball
- Move the ball forward
- Create chances to score a goal
- Score Goals

The moment your team loses possession of the ball, everyone on the team becomes a defender.

Your goals the defending team are:

- Regain possession
- Limit the chances for the other team to get into scoring positions
- Stop the other team from creating chances to score a goal



IMMEDIATE CHASE

Pressure the ball and the player as soon as your team has lost

The moment possession is lost the nearest players try to regain possession by applying pressure on the ball carrier.

Do not let them play the ball forward !

Players giving immediate chase can also help to delay the attack by making recovery runs that deny the opponent the opportunity to play the ball quickly forward.



DELAY

Slowing the forward movement of the ball when opponents have possession

Reducing the time, space and attacking options available to opponents.

On loss of possession, defenders reduce the time, space and attacking options available to opponents. The ability of one or more player to deny shooting opportunities and preventing forward passing and/or dribbling options. The nearest defender closes the space down between him/her and the player on the ball.

While applying pressure the defender must be careful to not over-commit. If he is beaten easily the time for the team to organize is shortened.



DELAY

Slowing the forward movement of the ball when opponents have possession



Deny

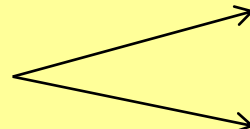


1. Space and Time
2. Freedom of choice

Pressure to:



Gain



1. Time
2. Make play predictable



DELAY

Slowing the forward movement of the ball when opponents have possession

Key Factors:

1. Pressure player on the ball (Angle - Distance – Body position)
2. Force the player not to see options available to play the ball forward.
3. Support /Cover - Deny space & time around and away from the ball.
4. Marking opponents. Decision to be tight or loose when not in possession.
5. The closer to the ball & the closer to the goal the tighter you should be.
6. **Positioning of your body is also important to be goal side and ball side depending on the pressure on the ball and passing options available**
7. Compression by 'Back Players'. Reducing the space between defenders and between the lines of defense



SUPPORT IN DEFENCE (OR DEPTH)

The quick organization of players behind the first defender

- The arrangements of players in order to reduce opportunities for the opposition to pass, or run in anticipation of a pass, to the back of the defense.
- While the ball is being pressured all other players should be recovering into defensive positions.
- With the principle of support, a player takes position behind one or more teammates to be able to intervene if the opponent plays or dribbles the ball past them. With recovery, a player heads back to a position of support for one or more teammates
- The positions taken should support the pressuring defender in the event he is beaten. ***“DEFENSIVE COVER”***.



Counters the Attacking Principle of Penetration...



SUPPORT IN DEFENCE (OR DEPTH)

The quick organization of players behind the first defender

Key Factors:

1. Discouraging opponents from playing behind, between or around the defense.
2. Maximum cover to any player facing an opponent with the ball.
3. Triangular relationships
4. Recovery lines



BALANCE / Cover

Positioning of defenders to cover vital spaces and prevent the attackers from getting behind the defenders.

- Balance enables a defense to move fluently in any direction while providing cover against penetration in all areas.
- As the team concentrates their defense in the area of the ball, defenders away from the ball must position themselves to provide cover and support across the defensive front.
- Positioning is based upon the position ball, players' movements and positioning on either side of the ball and position of your teammates.
- Players always have to be able to see the ball and the player(s) who could unbalance the defensive posture
- Sealing off dangerous space away from the ball. Prevent attackers from making penetrating runs into spaces in which to receive the ball for an attempt on goal.
- All players who are on the opposite side must seek positions in which to provide balance to the defense.



- One line of Defense:** - Flat line across the field
Two Lines Defense: - First Player pressures - All others hold the line
Three Lines Defense: - First Player pressures – 2nd covers – 3rd – 4th drop behind 2nd defender.



BALANCE / Cover

Positioning of defenders to cover vital spaces and prevent the attackers from getting behind the defenders.

Key Factors of Cover/Balance

Cover

Involves 'Secondary defenders' and distant defenders.

Implies an understanding of:

- Angle of cover
- Distance of cover
- Timing
- Sealing off and denying space

Position of Covering player is Influenced by the following factors:

- 1.Position of the first defender who applies and dictates pressure on the ball
- 2.Proximity and actions of opponents
- 3.Movement of the ball
- 4.Area of the field



BALANCE / Cover

Positioning of defenders to cover vital spaces and prevent the attackers from getting behind the defenders.

Cover

'Split' responsibility:

- a) When to cover
- b) When to mark opponent

Distant defenders-cover spaces and mark opponents

Balance

Implies an understanding of marking/covering spaces as opposed to players

A two-fold concept of:

1. Covering spaces
2. Responsibility for distant opponents



Counters the Attacking Principle of Dispersal & Mobility...



BALANCE

Positioning of defenders to cover vital spaces and prevent the attackers from getting behind the defenders.

Understanding of the above leads to:

1. Interceptions of passes
2. Covering, tracking runners from deep positions
3. Marking opponents when necessary



CONCENTRATION / COMPACTNESS

The limiting of time and space by defenders squeezing centrally behind the ball

The 'Grouping of players'. Denying the space through the middle, preventing any passing or dribbling channels between defenders

As players recover towards their own goal and organize their defense, the objective is to limit the time and space to the opponent by concentrating their defense in the area of the ball.

Defenders also recover centrally towards their goal in order to limit the opponents ability to directly attack the goal.



Counters the Attacking Principle of Penetration & Support/Depth...



CONCENTRATION / COMPACTNESS

The limiting of time and space by defenders squeezing centrally behind the ball

Key Factors of Compactness

1. Reduce space between defenders and between lines of defense
2. Outnumber the opponent around the ball and the immediate areas
3. Outnumber the opponents between the ball and the goal
4. Can be established in any and all phases of the game but specifically so in the central areas up to 35yds away from goal



Closely Related to Support, Cover, Balance

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CONCENTRATION / COMPACTNESS

The limiting of time and space by defenders squeezing centrally behind the ball

Compactness requires an understanding of:

1. Lines of Recovery
2. When to recover –retreat
3. How Far, how quickly to recover
4. Roles & Responsibilities when behind the ball
5. Judgment of distances/angles & intentions of the ball-holder
6. Pressure & Support around the ball



Closely Related to Support, Cover, Balance

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DISCIPLINE & PATIENCE (Control and Restraint)

The principle of defending with composure understanding and an awareness

1. The defending team should remain patient and exercise “**Control and Restraint**” and not dive in by reckless defending.
2. Players must be disciplined and play “under control” when challenging for the ball.
3. Too often players make poorly timed or off-balanced attempts to win the ball.
4. Players should refrain from tackling until they are confident they will win the ball.
5. Keeping focused, concentrating on your role and responsibilities on and off the ball defensively.
6. Patience and Timing



Counters the Attacking Principle of Surprise



DISCIPLINE & PATIENCE (Control and Restraint)

The principle of defending with composure
understanding and an awareness

Control/Restraint

Lack of control & restraint is revealed by defending players who:

1. Are wrongly drawn toward the ball
2. Are ball watchers and forget their defensive & covering responsibilities
3. Challenge unfairly and concede unnecessary free-kicks



Counters the Attacking Principle of Surprise



SURPRISE

The employment of unusual and unexpected defensive actions

1. The ability to do the unexpected.
2. It requires a thorough understanding of the defensive principles, an understanding of individual, group and team roles and responsibilities.
3. Example - switching from low pressure to high pressure

