



NORCAL FUTSAL GAME MODEL



ATTACKING IDENTITY

Dynamic Possession with Vertical Penetration

We prioritize attacking with the ball when in possession, aiming not simply to retain the ball, but to continuously advance and create scoring opportunities. We utilize dynamic possession to constantly move the ball forward, leveraging our players' positional awareness and exploiting the opponent's weaknesses with player and ball movement. This proactive approach, combined with our focus on vertical penetration, ensures we create scoring opportunities through quick, decisive attacks. Securing superiority (Numerical, Positional, and Qualitative) in key areas and launching explosive vertical attacks as opportunities arise, all while adapting to the opponent's tactics, are crucial for our success.



DEFENSIVE IDENTITY

Situational Adaptability: A Zone and Man-Marking Blend

Our defensive philosophy emphasizes adaptability to our starting structure and tactics to effectively contain the opponent. In games we initially employ a strategic mid-press to disrupt the opponent's build-up, transitioning to higher pressure or a more conservative lower block as needed dependent on the level of the opponent, the score, and/or time on the clock. We utilize a blend of zonal marking for overall organization and man-to-man marking for specific situations, aiming to limit the opponent's scoring opportunities. With a mid-press, we pressure the opponent in their own half of the court, but not as high up the court as a high press.

The aim is to force turnovers in the opponent's half, regain possession quickly, and launch counter-attacks. It's important to note that the specific distance and intensity of the mid-press will vary based on our team's strengths, weaknesses, and the opponent's tactics. However, the core principle remains the same: to disrupt the opponent's build-up play in their own half without committing too many players high up the court.

In a mid-press, players maintain a position slightly advanced compared to a low-block defense, aiming to pressure the ball carrier and close passing lanes in the opponent's half. This press is moderately aggressive, balancing the need to disrupt the opponent's build-up play with maintaining organized defensive shape and preventing being easily bypassed.

Once the game begins, **Adaptability is key.**



FORMATIONS

Strategic Adaptation

When we talk about formations we don't mean rigid organizations or lines but rather the organized occupation of the court in accordance with certain objectives, roles and functions. This distribution is used to establish a series of interactions between the members of the team (tactics) in order to achieve the objective without losing organizational balance. Formations must be dynamic and flexible as they are constantly being broken down and reorganized during play. We move in and out of various formations, all depending on the players on the pitch, the opponents and the circumstances of the match.

We regularly utilize different formations for attacking and defending, adapting our player positioning to optimize effectiveness for each phase of the game. This flexibility allows us to control the flow of the match and maximize our chances of success. In attack, we mostly utilize a 1-1-2-1 (Diamond formation), and sometimes move into a 1-2-1-1 formation against well-organized zonal defending. When we defend, it's typically in a 1-2-2 (Square / Box) or our traditional diamond shape, the 1-1-2-1.



ATTACKING PRINCIPLES

Ball Possession: Prioritize maintaining control of the ball to move the opponent to create scoring chances. This can be achieved through positional awareness, precise passes, and using a diverse repertoire of receiving techniques to keep the ball moving and prevent turnovers.

Player Movement: Continuous movement without the ball. Create space for teammates, exploit defensive gaps, and offer passing options.

Superiority:

- **Numerical Superiority:** Create overloads in key areas by having more players than the opponent, increasing the chance of scoring opportunities.
- **Positional Superiority:** Occupy advantageous positions to force the opponent to make difficult decisions, open passing lanes, and gain an edge.
- **Qualitative Superiority:** Create and exploit mismatches. Utilize a player who is better than their direct opponent to gain an advantage in specific situations and positions.

Vertical Penetration:

- **Directness:** Utilize direct passes, dribbling and shooting to quickly exploit openings and attack the opponent's goal when there is an opportunity.
- **Counter-attacks:** Take advantage of transitions after winning possession, utilize space behind the opponent's defense, and launch quick attacks for scoring opportunities.

Decision-Making & Improvisation: Perceive, conceive, act and adapt. Futsal rewards improvisation and quick thinking. Players should be encouraged to make quick decisions and execute creative solutions during attacks.



DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

Defensive Organization: Players maintain assigned roles and responsibilities within a chosen formation, adapting their positioning to the opponent's tactics using:

Zonal Marking: We primarily utilize zonal marking, where players are responsible for defending specific areas of the court, and the player(s) in those areas.

Man-to-Man Marking: In specific situations, we switch to man-marking individual opponents, particularly in our defensive third and also against:

- **Back post runners:** To limit easy goals by unmarked opponents
- **Dangerous attackers:** To limit their influence on the game.
- **Set-pieces:** To disrupt the opponent's set piece routine / plan.

Maintaining Distances: Players maintain appropriate distances between themselves and teammates and opponents to cover space effectively.

Communication: Constant communication is crucial for coordinating movements and switching marks, alerting teammates to potential threats, and deciding when to switch between zonal and man-to-man marking.

Pressing: We employ pressure in specific situations to disrupt the opponent's build-up play and win the ball back high up the court. Pressing strategies can vary based on:

- **Opponent's playing style:** High press against teams that build slowly, delayed press for teams that build and counter-attack quickly.
- **Game situation:** Higher press when chasing a goal, lower press when protecting a lead.

Covering and Support:

- Cover teammates who are drawn out of position due to man-marking.
- Provide immediate support to teammates facing pressure from multiple opponents.
- Fixo to maintain a defensive shape where they cover the space behind teammates. No attacking player should be allowed to operate freely behind the fixo.

Counter-Pressing: We aim to immediately win the ball back after losing possession through:

- **Aggressive recovery runs:** Players read & react quickly to regain possession.
- **Coordinated pressing:** Players work together to prevent passing lanes and force turnovers.

Disciplined Approach: Maintaining composure and avoiding unnecessary fouls is crucial to preventing the opponent from creating scoring opportunities from set-pieces and accumulated foul penalties.



ATTACKING TRANSITION PRINCIPLES

Speed of Action and Thought

- Exploit disorganization: Immediately capitalize on the opponent being out of their optimal defensive shape.
- Quick decision-making: Identify opportunities and make fast decisions about passing, dribbling, or shooting.
- Forward Runs: Attackers should make immediate forward runs to stretch the opponent's defense and create space.
- One player to hold near mid-court to ensure defensive cover in case we lose the ball in transition.

Creativity and Variation:

- **Unpredictable Attacking:** Surprise the opponent with unexpected passes, creative runs, and skill moves to unbalance their defense. Encourage players to improvise and adapt based on the situation, taking advantage of specific opportunities as they arise, including switching the point of attack with quick long passes to move the defense and expose gaps.

Controlled Transition / Maintaining Possession (when necessary):

- If a direct attack isn't immediately viable, prioritize maintaining possession with patient build-up play, utilizing ball and player movement to create a better attacking opportunity, avoiding forced passes, and controlling the tempo until a clear opening arises.



DEFENSIVE TRANSITION PRINCIPLES

Immediate Pressure and Delay: Apply pressure on the ball carrier when possession is lost. Player closest to the ball carrier should pressure the opponent immediately to disrupt their decision-making, slow their attack, and buy time for teammates to reorganize. Everyone player sprinting to get “behind the ball.”

Deny forward progress: While pressuring the ball, defenders should position themselves to prevent direct forward passes and dribbles, forcing the attacking team to play backwards or sideways.

Compactness: Close down space. Players should quickly regroup, closedown passing lanes and reduce the opponent’s space.

Central coverage: Prioritize protecting the central channel of the court, the most dangerous area, by shifting as a unit to deny space for shots or through passes.

Balance and Depth: Create defensive layers/lines. Establish layers of defenders to create depth, making it harder for the attacking team to break through. Avoid overcommitting while applying pressure, players should avoid leaving gaps behind them and maintain balance in case the opponent shifts the ball quickly.

Communication:

- Vocal: Players should communicate actively with each other to mark opponents, cover spaces, and trigger defensive shifts as a unit.
- Visual: Use body language and visual cues to coordinate movements and ensure defensive organization.