

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

ATTACKING

-----VS.-----

DEFENDING

PENETRATION/POSSESSION

Upon gaining possession, the first option should be moving the ball forward via dribbling or passing. This is the responsibility of the First Attacker. The main key here is maintaining possession.

PRINCIPLE #1

PRESSURE/DELAY

Upon losing possession the first option for the player (First Defender) closest to the attacker with the ball is to apply immediate pressure to regain possession. If there is no support, the second option would be delay the attack.

SUPPORT: WIDTH & DEPTH

The first attacker should always have support to his or her right and/or left (wide) and behind. These are the roles of the second and third attackers. Principle #1 is still in effect here as the option should still be getting the ball forward.

PRINCIPLE #2

COVER & BALANCE

While the first defender provides pressure (or delays the attack), teammates must provide support via Cover (defending the second attacker) & Balance (closing down space, marking all other attackers).

MOBILITY

As the ball moves forward, other attackers need to be making creative runs off the ball to create space for the first attacker and also to create goal-scoring opportunities. Creative runs include diagonal runs away from the ball or goal and overlaps.

PRINCIPLE #3

ORGANIZATION

All other defenders must be organized, closing down space and compacting as a unit in the middle of the field. Defensive rotation becomes of utmost importance here whether employing a man-marking or zonal defending system.

FRAMING THE BOX & GOAL

As the ball enters the attacking half of the field and the ball gets nearer the goal, attacking players must look to frame the 18-yard box, keeping width in mind, and framing the goal at the Near Post, the Far Post and the middle area of the goal

PRINCIPLE #4

COMPACTNESS

As the attacking team gets nearer the goal, defending players must remain organized and think "Compactness" — limiting the space available in front of the goal.

TAKING THE SHOT

All attacks must end with a shot at goal. If organized, the attackers will have the goal and box framed, thus a shot missed can act as a cross with the goal and box framers looking for a rebound and a shot. Remember: "The worst shot is the one not taken!"

PRINCIPLE #5

CLEARING THE BALL/ MAKING THE SAVE

"When in doubt, kick it out!" Clearing the ball out of harm's way should always be the first option. If a shot gets through, the Goalkeeper should make the save and thus begin the transition to attack.