



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum

[www.southsideyouthsoccer.com/coaches](http://www.southsideyouthsoccer.com/coaches)



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



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# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## Coach Behaviour



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## Coach Behaviour

Remember they are **children**. Treat them as **children**, not mini adults.

AGE SPECIFIC TRAINING IS VITAL!

Player **development** is more important than winning!

Players mirror coach behaviour. Be **enthusiastic**, **energetic** and **positive**.

**Question** the players instead of telling them what to do

Allow players to **make decisions** themselves through practice activity design

Allow players to be **creative**

Grow the players' **love** for the game of soccer

They will make mistakes, which is good. Learning is not a steady climb, there will be **ups and downs**





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## Coach Behaviour

Coaching can be an emotional time, however, it is key to remember that youth soccer is for children to have fun, develop and learn new skills, not for bragging rights of the coaches.

Our **job** as coaches is to **develop** players' **ability** as well as their **love** for the game.

### Coach Behaviour

Try to be calm and supportive for the players. The players mirror coach behaviour, so if the coach is getting aggressive and emotional, this will emulate in the players and will slow their progress as they will not be making the correct decisions.

### Coach Feedback to Players

When giving feedback to players, try to keep it positive and constructive. If they have tried the same pass 3 times and it isn't working, ask them what they could do next time or why it isn't working. Try to avoid phrases such as 'don't, can't, won't' as these will stop players from trying new things. Just think, did Neymar, Messi, Ronaldo all keep it simple' or 'clear it'?!

### Questioning

Instead of always telling players what to do or what not to do, try questioning them as well. You will be surprised with how much they actually know!

Questioning will help to accelerate the players' learning as they are analyzing, thinking and developing an answer, rather than being told.

### Age Specific Training

Training must be specific to age group. U6s do not need to be taught how to defend with a back four or on the counter — dribbling would be more appropriate for example.



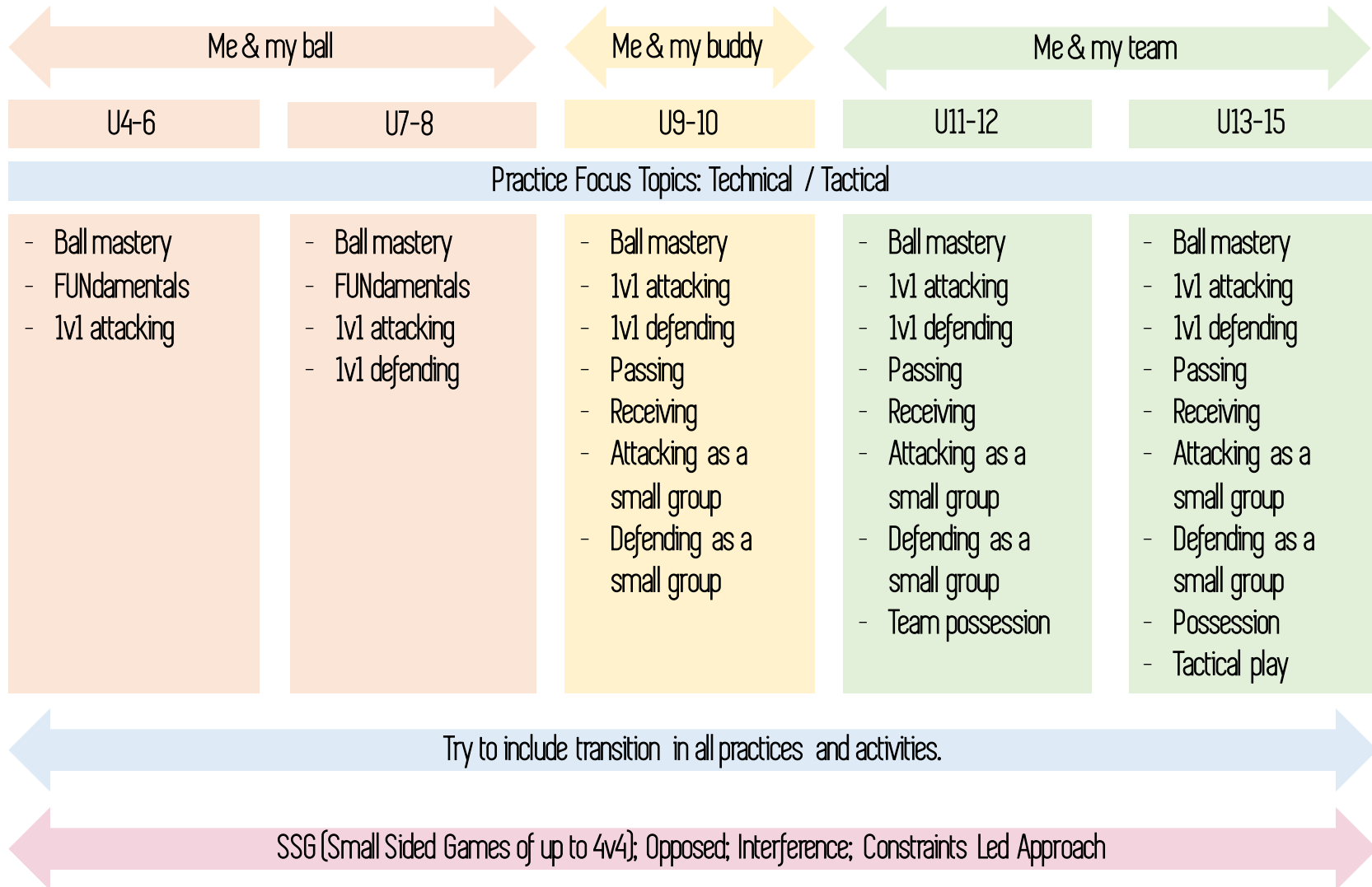
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## Practice Support



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## Technical / Tactical Key Coaching Points / Topics

### Ball Mastery:

Ball mastery involves the players getting used to having the ball at their feet. This includes:

- Lots of small touches
- Different surfaces of the foot
- Turns / moves / tricks
- Scanning on ball (for space, teammates, opponents)

### FUNDamentals:

These are basic fundamental movements children should use to improve their agility, balance and coordination to be physically literate. For example:

- Running
- Jumping
- Hopping
- Kicking
- Changing direction.

### 1v1 Attacking:

1v1 attacking incorporates beating an opponent in a 1v1 situation. This should include:

- Dribbling
- Running with the ball
- Facing an opponent
- Back to opponent
- Turning
- Opponent to side (jockeying)
- To beat opponent
- To hold the ball up
- Turns / moves / tricks
- Creativity

### 1v1 Defending:

1v1 defending should include:

- In front / facing attacker
- Attackers back to defender
- Body position (side on)
- To show away from goal / forcing play
- Delay / deny / press
- Speed and angle of approach
- Distance
- The 4 S's
  - Shut down - quickly pressure
  - Slow down - a few yards before
  - Sit down - knees bent
  - Show down - patiently try to win the ball



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## Technical / Tactical Key Coaching Points / Topics

### Passing:

- To retain possession
- To penetrate / play forward (breaking lines)
- Different distances
- Different heights
- Different surfaces of the foot
- Driven, lofted, instep
- Combination play
- To feet
- To space
- Weight of pass
- With disguise
- With curl
- 1 and 2 touch play
- Decision making

### Receiving:

- Body positioning / half-turn (side on)
- To play forwards
- Under pressure
- In space
- In a tight area
- From different heights
- To hold off players (shield)
- To beat a man off first touch
- Back to goal
- Facing goal
- Turning
- Scanning — prior, during, post
- Movement — away-near or near-away; into space; in a tight area

### Attacking as a small group:

- Attacking as a small group should include working in 2v2 to 4v4. This would also include **under-loads** and **over-loads**, such as 2v1, 3v1, 3v2, 4v2 etc. in favor of either the defenders or attackers depending on the challenge level.
- Topics could include:
- Counter attacking
  - Finishing
  - Creating space
  - Playing forwards
  - When to dribble or pass

### Defending as a small group:

- Works in the same way as attacking in a small group.
- Topics could include:
- Pressing
  - Defending when organised
  - Defending when outnumbered
  - Compactness
  - Marking
  - Intercepting



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## Technical / Tactical Key Coaching Points / Topics

### Team possession:

Team possession should involve the team learning how to keep possession. This should incorporate all previously taught skills and putting them together as a team.

Topics could include:

- Combination play
- When to retain possession
- When to penetrate (pass forward)
- Build up play from defence

### Tactical play:

Tactical play should contain sessions that look at the tactical principles of the game. Activities should involve 2 units at a time as a minimum, for example, defenders and midfielders or midfielders and strikers (see picture right).

The topics used will be similar to those of attacking and defending in small groups, just on a larger scale.

These focus on how the team will set up to defend, how they will attack, how you would approach a team who press or play a long ball.





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## Technical / Tactical Key Coaching Points / Topics

### Transition:

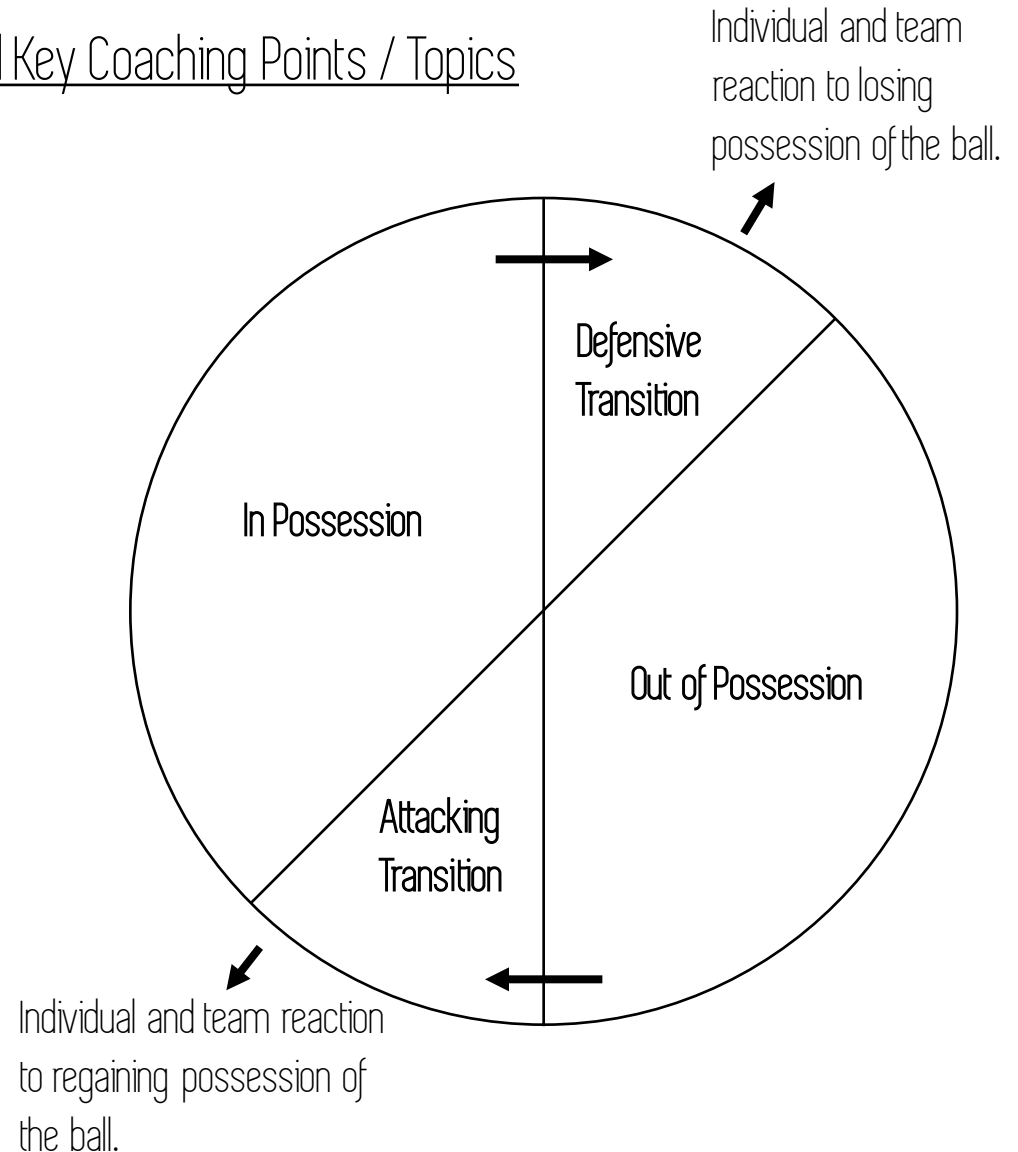
There are two moments of transition in soccer:

Defensive transition — the first few seconds after the team lose the ball.

Attacking transition — the first few seconds after the team regain the ball.

Try to incorporate transition into all sessions to allow players to learn to **recognise** and **react quickly** to either regaining or losing possession of the ball.

Idea: Allow the defenders a way of scoring if they win possession so they react to regaining. Thus the attackers will then be required to react to losing possession.





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## Session Structure

A common approach to session structure around the world of youth soccer at the moment is the **Whole —Part — Whole** layout.

We suggest all coaches at SSYS should adhere to this structure.

This method is split into three sections.

### Whole

Small sided game (SSG) up to 4v4.

Encourage the players to be creative and try new things.

You could add **challenges** to bring out your topic.

For example, if you are working on dribbling at an opponent, you may say **try** to beat a player whilst dribbling'. Again, encouraging and being supportive.



### Part

The part is an activity or practice that is used which will support you to meet the aims of your session topic.

Keeping with the dribbling at an opponent topic, you could set up a game such as 'cross the river' whereby players have to dribble from one side of the area to the other without being tackled by the defenders (the sharks) in the middle (the river).



### Whole

Small sided game (SSG) up to 4v4.

In this whole we really need to be coaching the key points talked about earlier — but being positive and constructive, asking questions.

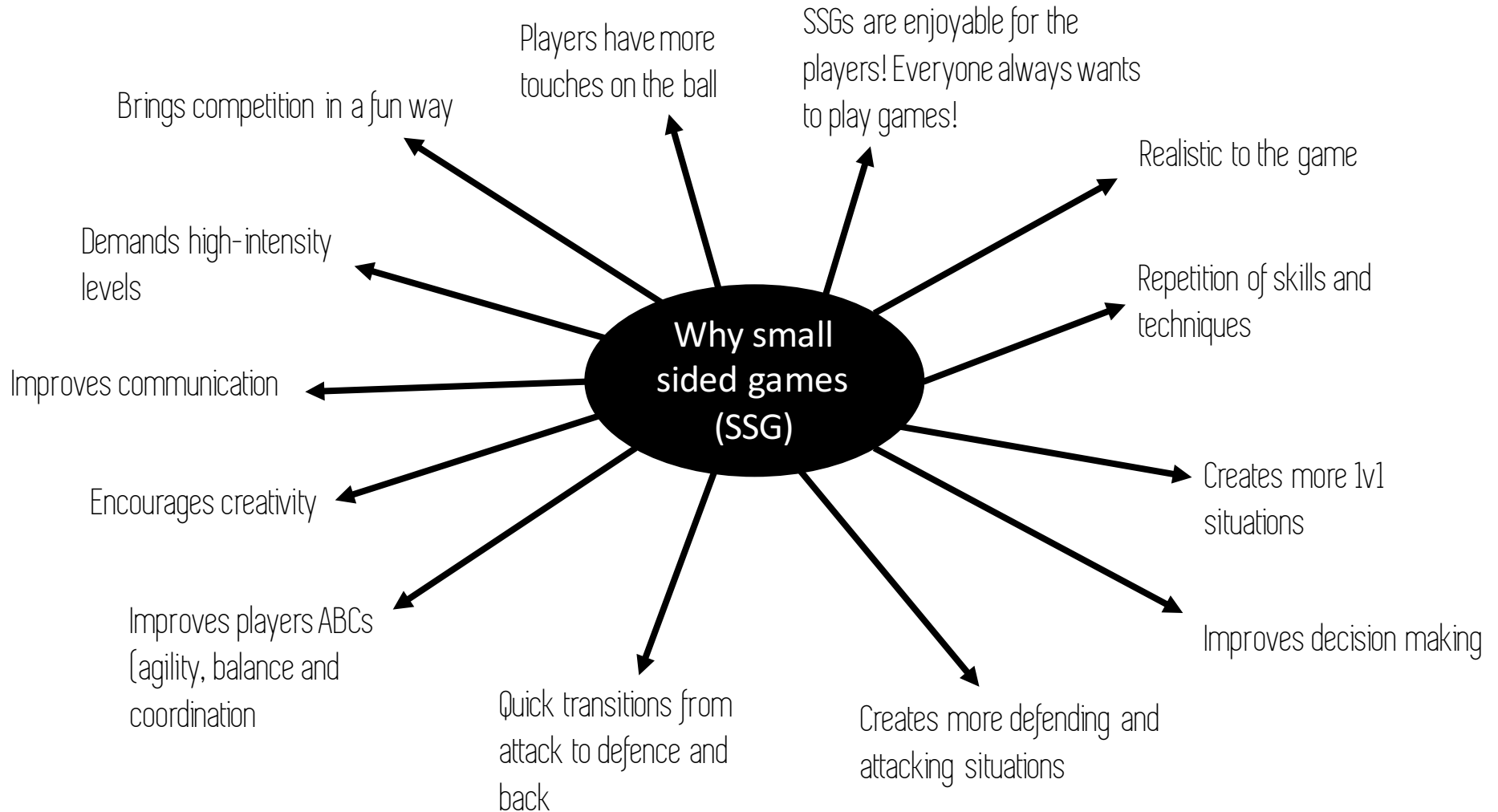
You could use the following constraints:

- Scenarios (team A are 2-0 up in the world cup final)
- Challenges (try to dribble past a player using a skill)
- Extra goal (completing a skill to beat a defender is an extra goal)



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## Session Structure Idea





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## Practice Structure

Practices are more enjoyable for players and thus increase engagement when they are made **fun** and **challenging**. Practices should also try to include as much interference and/or opposition as possible as it is found to improve the decision making and long term development of players.

### Opposed Sessions

Opposed sessions include an opposition for the players. This could be 5 people dribbling and 1 person tackling.

Having an opposing player creates an environment where players are required to think, adapt and **make decisions**. Players learn through exploring and discovering, make decisions that relate to the context on the game, and promotes skill acquisition (ability to complete a skill under pressure).

“ *Technique learnt in isolation (no opposition) almost has to be re-learnt when attempted to be used against an opponent.* ”

Ben Bartlett, Senior Coach Developer at The FA

### Constraints Led Approach

As touched on earlier, a constraints led approach to coaching is changing aspects of the practice and challenging and rewarding players for attempting and completing tasks inline with your topic. Examples are:

- **Change the size of the pitch / area** (big, small)
- **Change the layout of the pitch / area** (split into halves, thirds, squares)
- **Restrict** (all passes must for forward, play with either 1 touch or 4+, must enter a wide area before scoring)
- **Reward** (goal from a cross = 3, number of passes before a goal = number of goals scored, skill past a player = 1 extra goal)



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## Game Support



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## Game Support

Positional Roles and Responsibilities



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum




## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

Although the follow diagrams show the roles in an 11v11 environment, these roles still remain the same in any formation.

Key:

Run 

Pass 

Dribble 



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## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Team

#### In Possession

- **Create space** by dispersing with width and depth
- **Penetrate** forwards when possible via dribble, pass or shot
- **Movement** to create space for themselves or teammates
- **Support** the player on the ball from in front, behind and to the side
- **Creativity** and **invention** with passing, dribbling, shooting or movement off the ball

#### Out of Possession

- **Delay** attacker by pressing to slow down rather than tackle
  - **Compactness** from team by becoming narrow
  - **Depth** by covering space behind pressing defender
- **Balance** by defenders away from the ball covering important areas of pitch
- **Control** and **restraint** to remain patient and not 'dive' into tackles



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



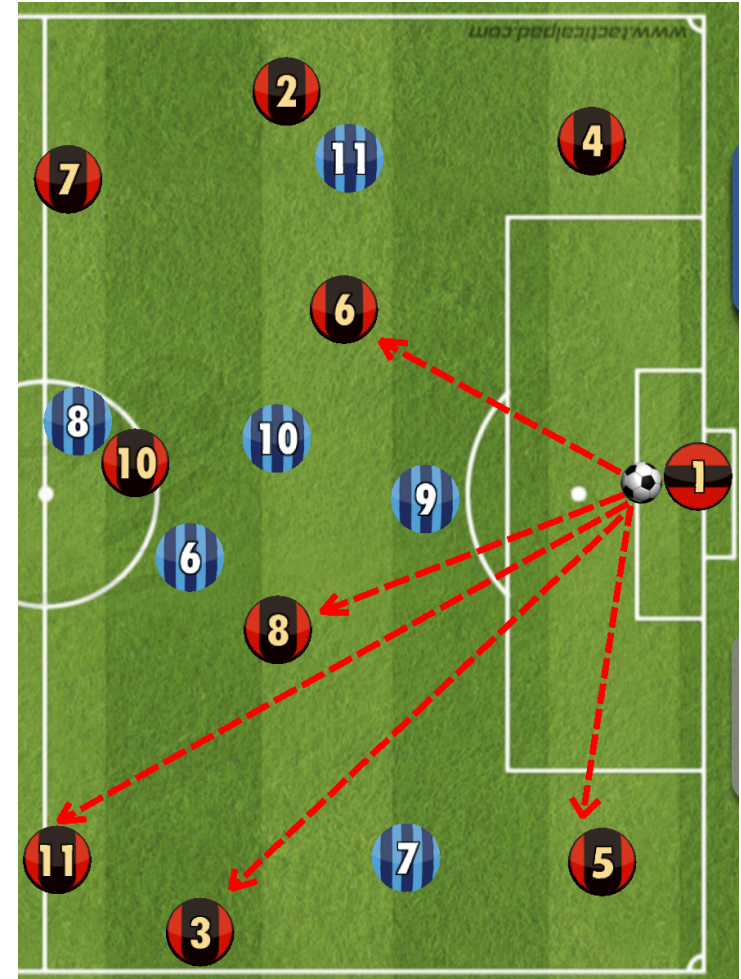
## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Goalkeeper (1)

#### In Possession

The GK should look to pass the ball out to the player in the best position with time and space. Playing to the player in the best position will allow the team to build up possession quickly and effectively.

The options should be to the full backs, centre back, centre midfielders or wide midfielders. The pass is best along the floor, possibly driven with laces, to enable quick play. A lofted ball into the wide midfielders is another option.





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

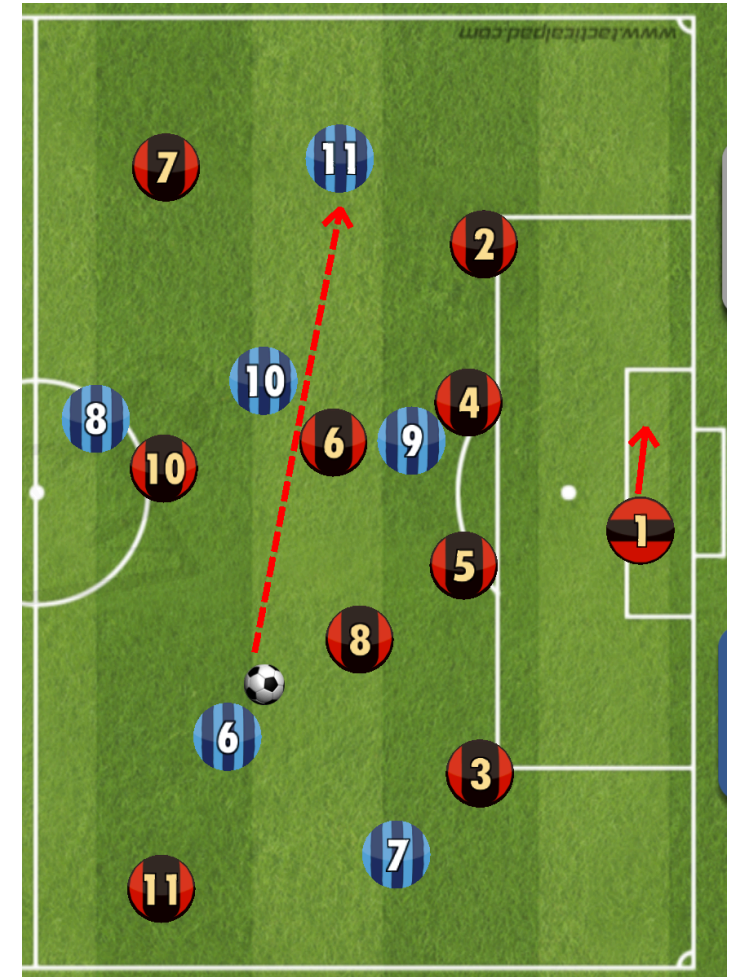
### Goalkeeper (1)

#### Out of Possession

The GK should position themselves correctly to where the ball is on the pitch. This means shifting from side to side as the ball moves.

Goalkeepers should take command of their area and adopt a good starting position.

As the goalkeeper can see the whole pitch, they need to communicate with the defence to inform them of opposition attackers and where to cover and mark.





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## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

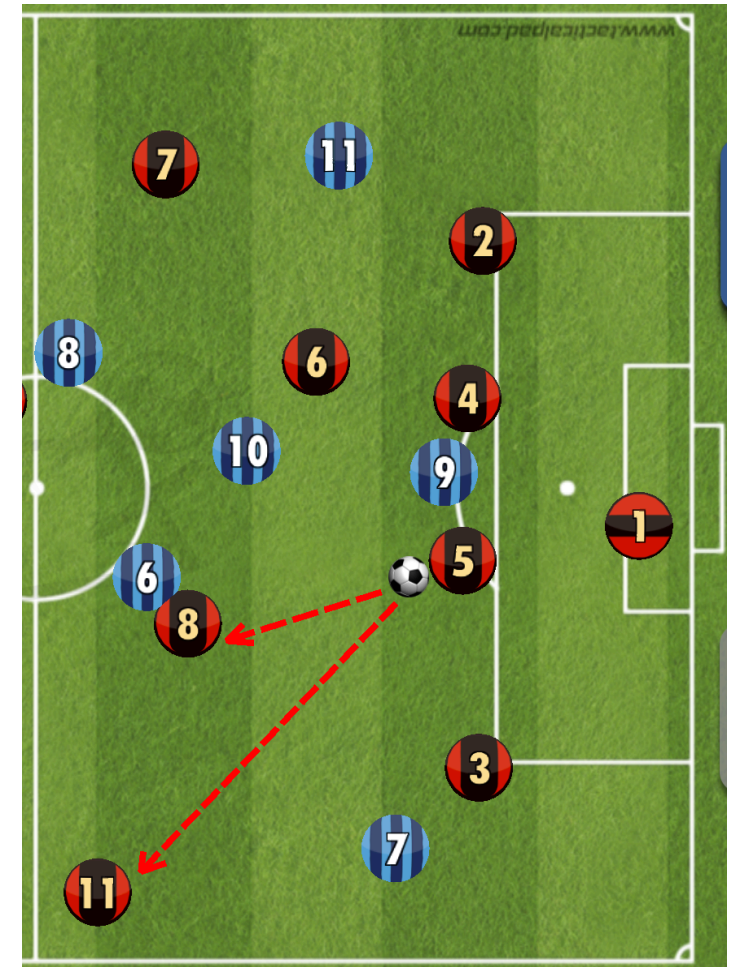
### Centre Back (4 and 5)

#### In Possession

Centre Backs should look to play forwards when possible. This means receiving and taking their touch forward into space and passing forwards if there is a passing option.

If they cannot pass or dribble forwards, a pass to the sides or backwards to retain possession are good ideas.

Centre Backs should be confident on the ball and happy to receive, turn, dribble and pass. It is also important they move to provide effective passing angles.





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## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Centre Back (4 and 5)

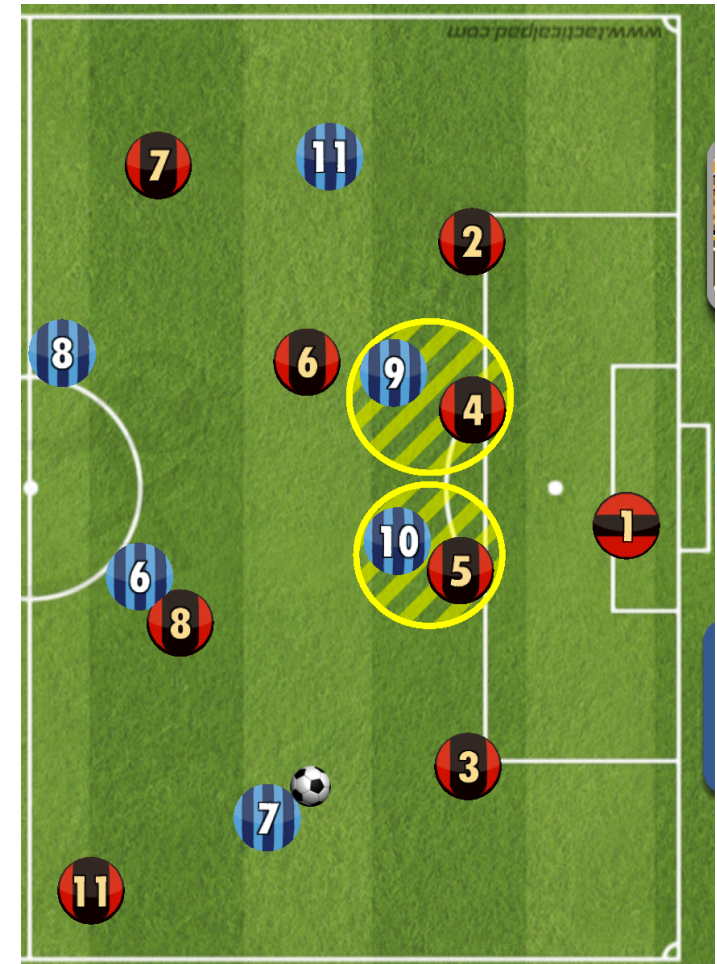
#### Out of Possession

Centre backs should work together to decide when to drop back and protect space behind them and when to press the ball and close down space between the attacker and themselves.

They should always mark goal side (between the attacker and the goal) and ball side (on the side of the attacker where the ball is) (see picture right).

When losing possession centre backs should recover quickly with straight runs back to the goal.

Centre backs should shift from side to side relevant to the position of the ball on the pitch. They should also provide cover for the full backs if required.





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## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Full Back (2 and 3)

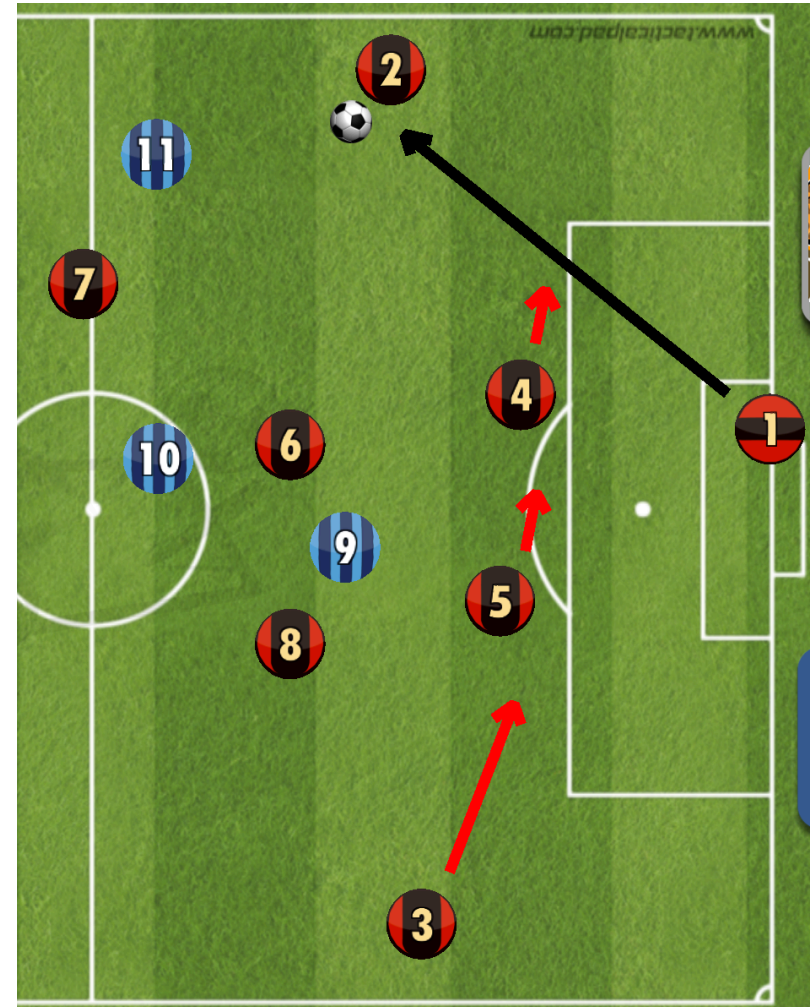
#### In Possession

The full backs' first thought should be to play forwards where and when possible. If there is space in front, the FB can dribble out of defence until a passing option appears.

They should look to receive the ball from the goalkeeper to start the build up in possession. As soon as the goalkeeper has the ball, they should make the pitch big by spreading out.

When the ball is on their side of the pitch, the full back should provide support from behind as well as making an overlap or underlap to get past the wide midfield to receive the ball in an attacking position.

If the ball is on opposite side of pitch, they should shift inside to cover central areas next to centre backs.





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



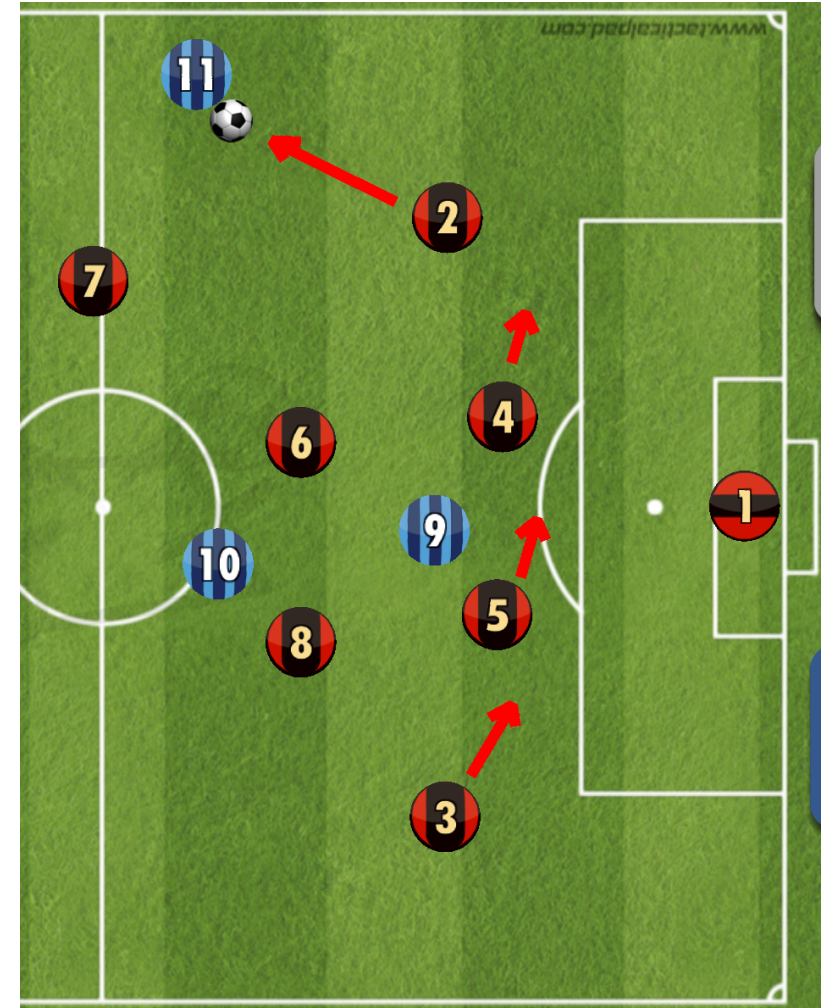
## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Full Back (2 and 3)

#### Out of Possession

When the team loses possession centrally, the full backs should drop and close off the centre of the pitch.

If the ball is played to the opposition wide midfielder, the full back that side should quickly press the wide midfielder. When this happens, the centre backs will slide across to cover and the opposite full back should also come into the centre of the pitch alongside the centre backs (see picture right).





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



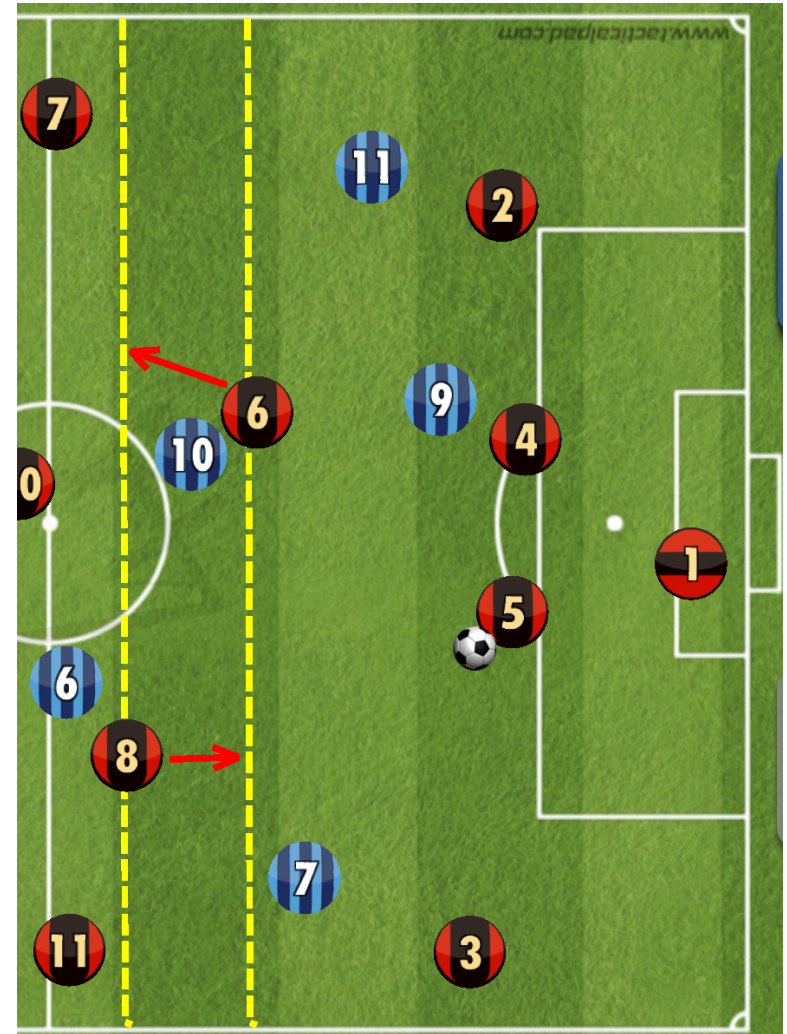
## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Centre Defensive Midfielder (6 and 8)

#### In Possession

Centre defensive midfielders are required to always be available to receive the ball in the centre of the pitch. They should be creating angles to receive and then look to play forwards when possible, but sideways or backwards if there are no options.

If there are two CDMs, they should work together and play off different lines. This means splitting from side to side as well as one playing slightly higher (represented by the yellow lines in picture). They can also rotate sides and depth to create space for each other and the team (red arrows in picture).





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Centre Defensive Midfielder (6 and 8)

#### Out of Possession

Out of possession, the CDM or CDMs should quickly become narrow to protect the centre of the pitch. They are required to block the passing lanes into the striker or centre attacking midfielder. They need to slide across from side to side in relation to the ball position on the pitch.

If the opposition are playing with a centre attacking midfielder, then the CDMs need to follow and mark the CAM.







# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



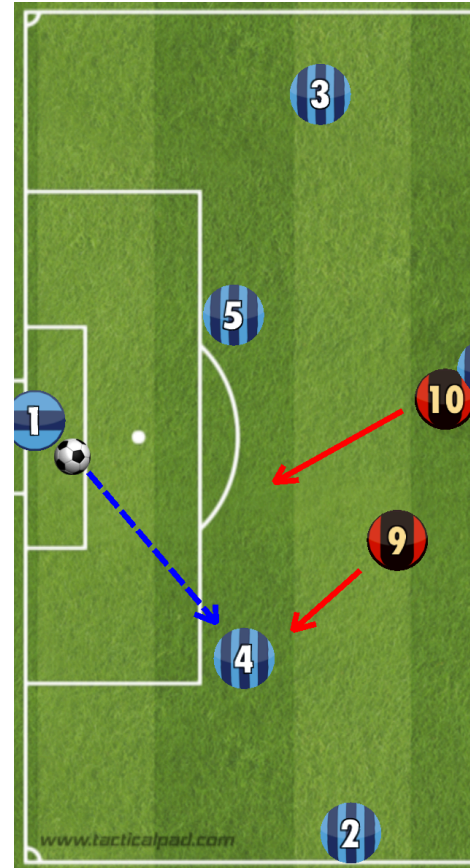
## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Centre Attacking Midfielder (10)

#### Out of Possession

When out of possession, the centre attacking midfielder has two roles. If the team presses, the attacking midfielder looks to apply pressure and close down the opposition defenders on the ball.

However, if the team drop off, the centre attacking midfielder should quickly drop into the centre of the pitch in front of the centre defensive midfielders, trying to block passes into the opposition midfield.





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## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

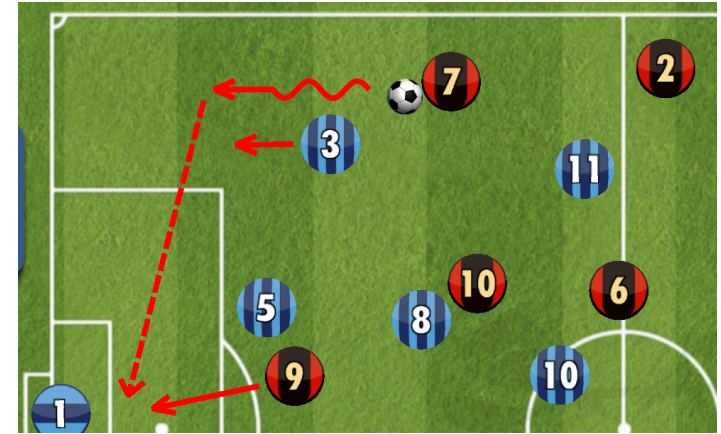
### Wide Midfielder (7 and 11)

#### In Possession

Wide midfielders should occupy the wide areas of the pitch to provide themselves space to receive, but also to create passing lanes for the centre attacking midfielder or striker.

When on the ball, wide midfielders should try to beat defenders in 1v1 situations using dribbling skills and moves. Furthermore, wide midfielders can link up with the centre attacking midfielder and strikers by passing quickly.

When dribbling, the wide midfielders can either drive down the line with the idea of crossing the ball, or they can dribble inside the opposition full back creating space wide for their team's full back to run into (see pictures right).





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

### Wide Midfielder (7 and 11)

#### Out of Possession

As soon as the team lose possession in the middle of the pitch, the wide midfielders must recover quickly and become narrow to prevent passes through the middle of the pitch.

When the ball is on their side of the pitch, the wide midfielder should go out and press the oppositions full back or wide midfielder, depending on who has the ball.

If the opposition wide midfielder has the ball, they should recover and help their team's full back and create a defensive 2v1. However, they need to watch for the run of the opposition full back.





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## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

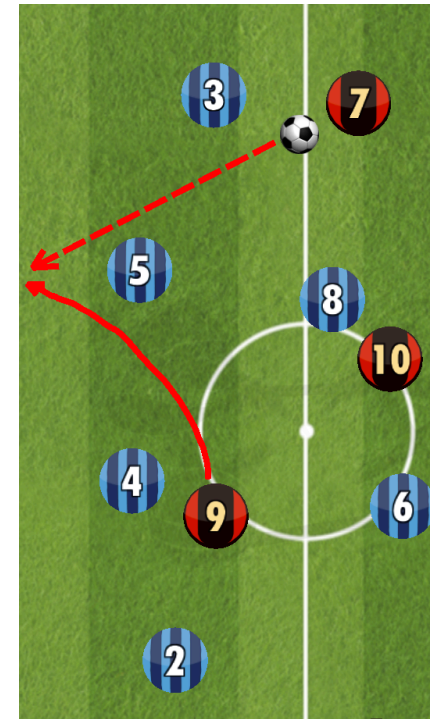
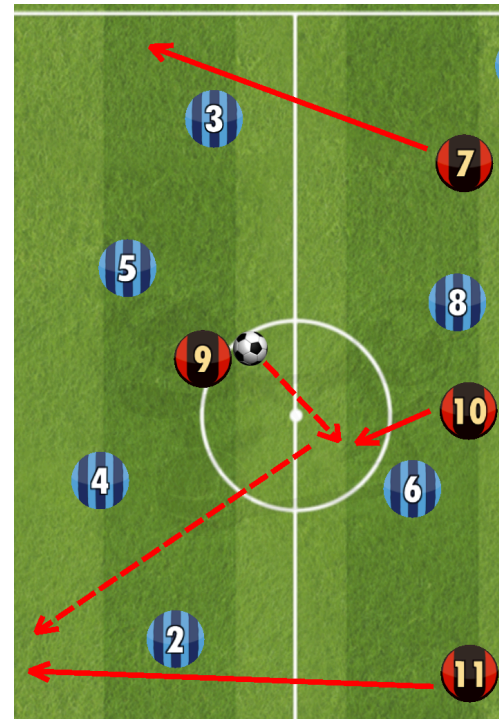
### Striker (9)

#### In Possession

The ST's role is to stay high up the pitch to provide an outlet when the team win the ball. When in attack the ST should make runs behind the opposing defenders as well as coming in front to receive and hold up the ball to bring other players into play.

A striker will need to hold the ball up when he is isolated with no teammates near him. By holding up the ball and protecting it, it allows the team to catch up and supply support. When holding the ball up, the striker should look for options to play forwards or back to another player who can then play it forwards.

Making runs in behind the defence need to be timed so they do not go offside.





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## Positional Roles and Responsibilities

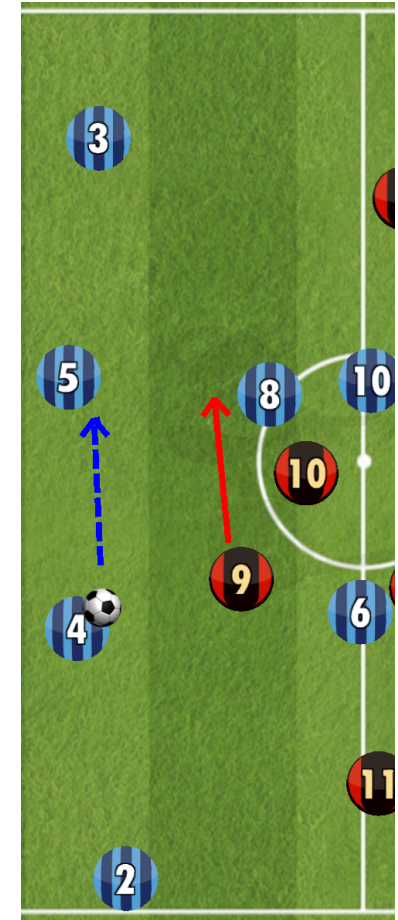
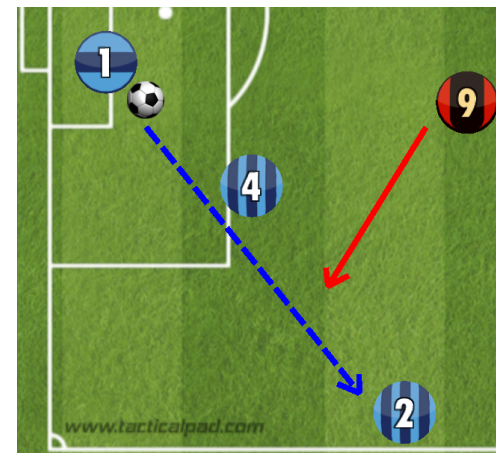
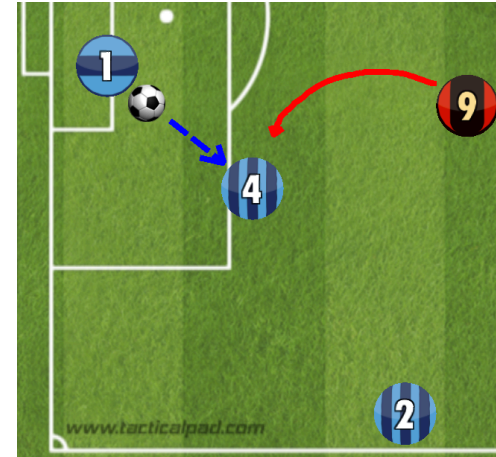
### Striker (9)

#### Out of Possession

The striker is the player who triggers the team to press or drop. The team must follow the strikers lead.

When the striker presses, they need to angle their approach so that it cuts off a pass back across goal. This is to make play predictable and force the team to one side. The striker should press the CB primarily, and then shut off the pass back to the CB if it goes to the FB.

If the striker decides to drop, they must drop centrally and shift from side to side depending on the position of the ball. The objective is to block off any passes into the centre midfielders for the other team.





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## Game Support Formations



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



U4 — U6



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U4 — U6 Formations

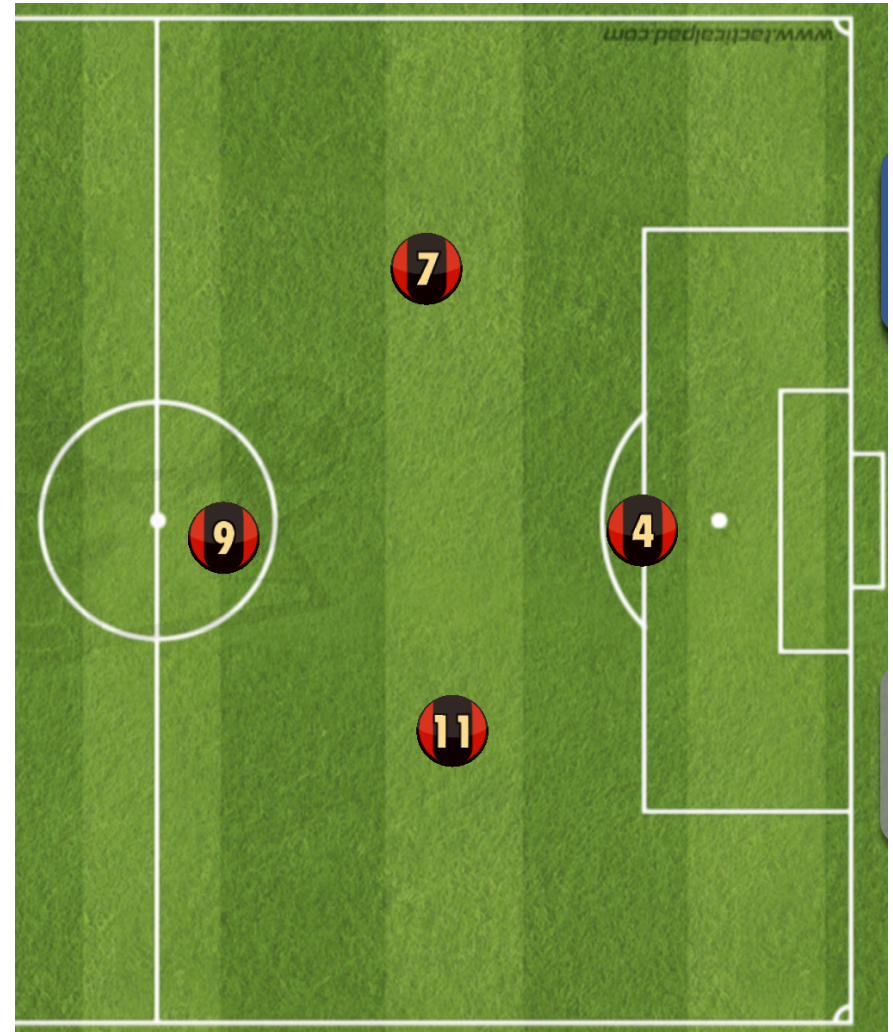
At U4 — U6, teams play 4v4 matches with no goalkeepers.

The formation and tactical positioning is *not* important at all at this age!

A starting formation is 1-2-1, however players should be allowed to be free to roam from their position with the opportunity to focus on **individual** skills, such as dribbling, ball control, tricks and moves, and their general agility, balance and coordination.

Developing the **individual** is key at this age.

Let them dribble! (think Messi, Ronaldo and Neymar!)





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



U7 — U8



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U7 — U8 Formations

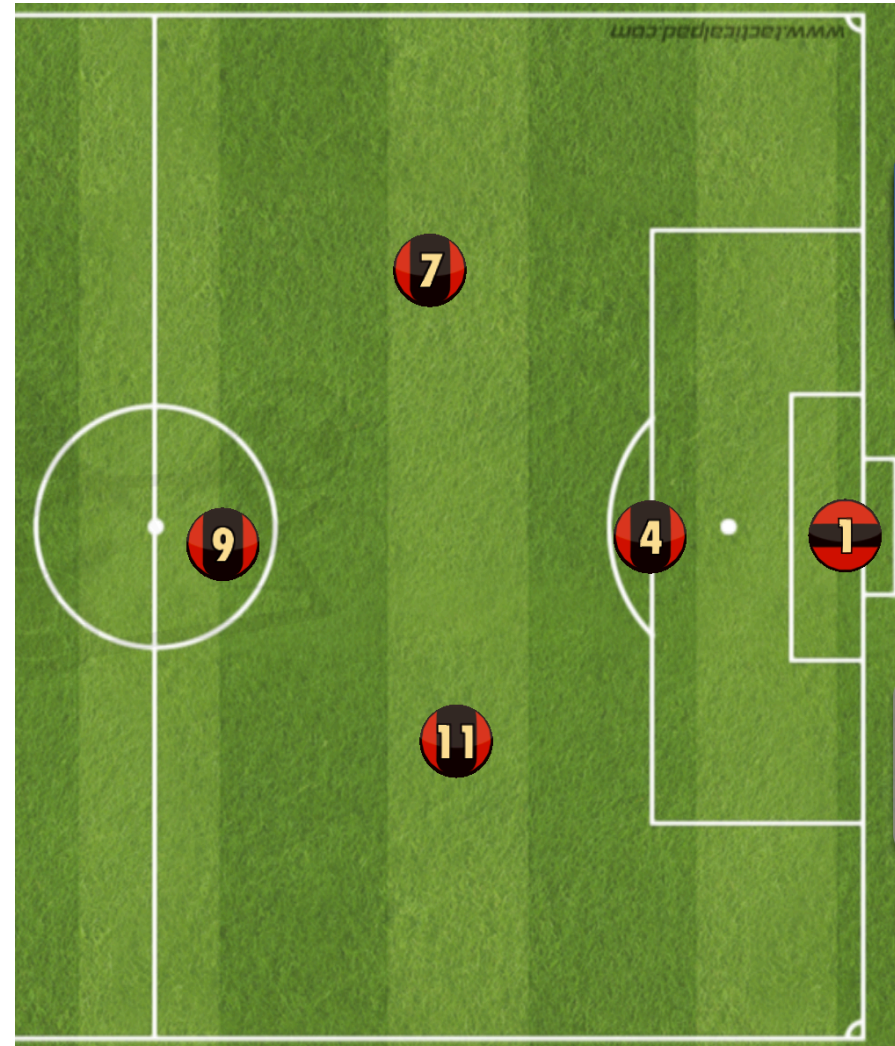
At U7 —U8, teams play 5v5 including a goalkeeper.

The formation and tactical positioning is *not* important at all at this age!

A starting formation is GK-1-2-1, however players should be allowed to be free to roam from their position with the opportunity to focus on **individual** skills, such as dribbling, ball control, tricks and moves, and their general agility, balance and coordination.

Developing the **individual** is key at this age.

Let them dribble! (think Messi, Ronaldo and Neymar!)





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



U9 — U10



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U9 — U10 Formations

At U9 — U10 all teams play 7v7 including a goalkeeper.

The suggested formations are:

GK-2-3-1

GK-3-2-1

GK-1-4-1



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U9 — U10 Formations

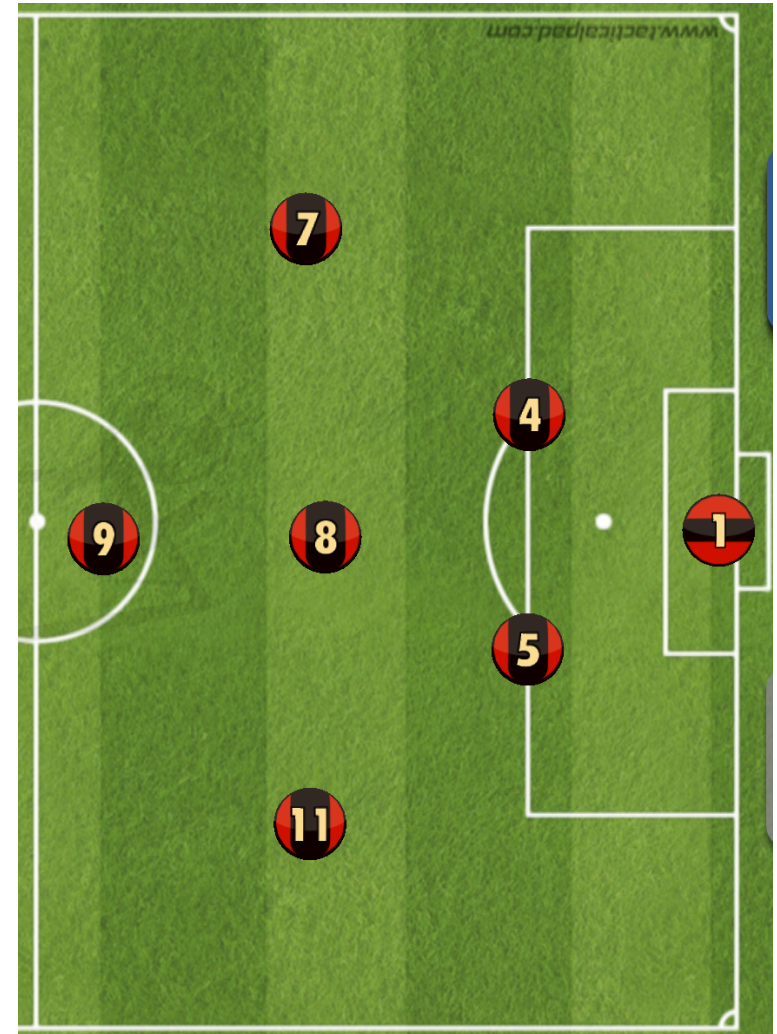
### GK-2-3-1

#### Pros:

- Solid defence with 2 centre backs, allowing attackers to attack
- Wide midfielders are able to join the attack as well as support in defence as full backs
  - Good width and depth to create space

#### Cons:

- Centre midfielder can become isolated on their own
- Could be a lack of support in attack and defence if wide midfielders don't work hard
  - Requires a lot of hard work from midfielders





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U9 — U10 Formations

### GK-3-2-1

#### Pros:

- Solid defence with 3 defenders
- 2 centre midfielders preventing opposition playing through the middle
- Able to defend wide areas effectively

#### Cons:

- Possible lack of support in attack
  - No width when attacking





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U9 — U10 Formations

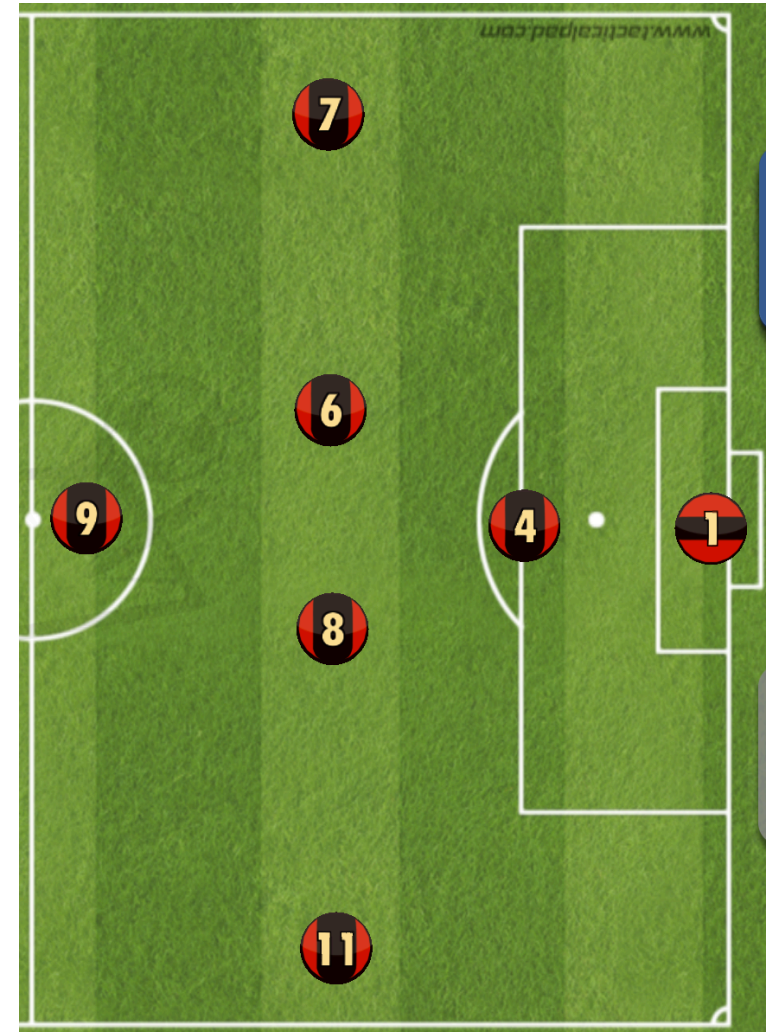
### GK-1-4-1

#### Pros:

- Good width and depth in attack
- The two centre midfielders whereby one is able to drop into centre back or into attacking midfield

#### Cons:

- Wide midfielders have a difficult job of getting and and down the pitch
- Centre defender can be left isolated
- Can be prone to counter attacks





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



U11 — U12



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U11 — U12 Formations

At U11 — U12 all teams play 9v9 including a goalkeeper.

The suggested formations are:

GK-3-2-3

GK-2-4-2

GK-3-4-1

GK-2-2-3-1



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U11 — U12 Formations

### GK-3-2-3

#### Pros:

- Good balance of defence and attack
  - Solid 3 players in defence
  - Good width in attack

#### Cons:

- Centre midfielders could be outnumbered if playing a team with 3 in the middle
- Wide midfielders must work hard to get back to support defence





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U11 — U12 Formations

### GK-2-4-2

#### Pros:

- Solid through the centre of the pitch
- Good width with the 2 wide midfielders

#### Cons:

- High pressure on wide midfielders to support attack and defence.
- Centre backs need to be tactically aware to organise and communicate with midfielders





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U11 — U12 Formations

### GK-3-4-1

#### Pros:

- Wide midfielders have the freedom to join the attack as 3 defenders can provide cover
  - Hard for teams to break down through the middle

#### Cons:

- Forward can become isolated on their own
- 2 centre midfielders could get overrun by a 3 player midfield





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U11 — U12 Formations

### GK-2-2-3-1

#### Pros:

- Good width provided through the wide midfielders
- 3 centre midfielders to protect the middle of the pitch
- 3 central midfielders can work together to combine
- Centre attacking midfielder can support the striker

#### Cons:

- Gaps wide in defence for the opponent to exploit
- High tactical understanding needed by centre defensive midfielders to support the defence
- Wide midfielders require high stamina and work ethic to support attack and defence





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



U13+



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U13+ Formations

At U13+ all teams play 11v11 including a goalkeeper.

The suggested formations are:

GK-4-2-3-1

GK-4-4-2

GK-3-5-2



# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U13+ Formations

### GK-4-2-3-1

#### Pros:

- Good balance of width and depth
- 4 defenders allows support in attack always
- 3 centre midfielders provides ability to outnumber and outplay opposition midfielders in attack and defence

#### Cons:

- Striker can become isolated
- Centre midfield can become congested if players don't move effectively





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U11 — U12 Formations

### GK-4-4-2

#### Pros:

- Easy to understand positioning in defence and attack
- Good stability of support in defence and attack

#### Cons:

- Centre midfielders can become outnumbered and broken down easily
- Can be easy for opposition to line up against





# Southside Youth Soccer Coaching Curriculum



## U11 — U12 Formations

### GK-3-5-2

#### Pros:

- Good width in attack
- Centre midfielders can outnumber opposition in centre of the pitch
  - 2 strikers work together to support each other

#### Cons:

- Big gaps in full back positions when defending and team need to be very tactically aware of how to defend in wide areas

