**4-4-2 Formation Guide**

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**1) Forward (# 9) during the run of play:**

**On offense:**

• Our forward gets high to the opponent’s line of defense (to stretch the field holding their line of defense high so that we have room underneath to work on offense)---take as much space as they will give you; get as high as our opponent’s deepest defender so that you are “on sides”.

• Our forward will crash the nearside goalpost when the ball is wide.

• Our forward checks to the ball; get open to space in order to provide a passing option.

• Stay at least 10 yards away from teammates while working together.

**On defense:**

• Our forward cuts passing lanes.

• Our forward attacks the ball to become the first defender at our chosen line of confrontation (low, medium, high pressure);

• Close down: quick, slow, sideways, low, shepherd (steer) wide in all parts of the field. Deny the long/penetrating pass.

**2) Mids (# 8s) during the run of play:**

**On offense:**

• Our weak-side mid compresses inside to space providing a passing option; check to the ball. Crash the far-side goalpost when the ball is wide.

• Our strong-side mid gets to the line, open, ready to receive a pass, body open to the ball and to goal. Crash the near side goalpost when the ball is wide.

• Work with Forwards, Outside Backs, and Center Back to move, widen, & penetrate the defense.

• Provide overlapping runs with striker (run wide if our striker is inside, run inside if our striker is outside).

**On defense:**

• Our weak-side mid, if no man up field in your channel, compress inside to a man (mark him, pass him off and then take the next man up field in your area, zonal defending, always shepherd (steer) wide in all parts of the field).

• Our strong-side mid, the play will be near you so either pressure (quick, slow, sideways, low), or cover (second defender), or mark a man near you cutting the passing lane to the man you are marking.

• Recover to mark a man in the goal channel, stay with him and then pass him off to a deeper teammate then sprint up field to take the next man up field in your area; zonal defending; shepherd wide.

• Be the first defender if the first attacker is near you. Don’t just drop into space behind you—step to a man. Do not get even (lateral) with our line of defense. Take a man up field in the goal channel.

• On set pieces, delay the attacking teams kick on fouls & control the area at the top of our box. Provide strong headed & kicked clearances out of the goal channel.

**3) Outside backs (# 2 & 3) during the run of play:**

**On offense:**

• All backs push up quickly once possession is won (create offsides) and compress the field (vertical compression) to about 35 yards from the ball.

• Our weak side outside back compresses inside to create the line of defense with the other backs.

• Our strong side outside back attacks up field (play like a forward but get back on transition); Provide overlapping runs with outside mids (run wide if our outside mid is inside, run inside if our wide outside mid is outside---look for space upfield).

**On defense:**

• All backs drop to create the line of defense.

• Once the line of defense is set, then our weak side back balances and our strong side marks.

• Mark inside, shepherd wide in all parts of the field.

**6) Inside back (# 4) during the run of play:**

**On offense:**

• Ensure all backs push up to compress the field (vertical compression) to about 35 yards from the ball.

• After winning the ball, dribble/carry the ball until the opposition closes you. Then pass to penetrate or widen the play.

• On offense or set pieces, if a back goes up field on attack, switch to a two-man defense, and if possession shifts, jockey to delay the attack.

**On defense:**

• Center back holds the goal channel.

• On defense, step up to become the first defender if the first attacker is near you. An outside back should then get into a cover position behind you (second defender).

• If marking one opponent, stay goal side of him.

• Once our line of defense is set, the center back should be slightly retracted behind our line of defense (to collect long balls over the top or through balls).

• Start to organize our defense as soon as the ball crosses the half way line----organize our mids and our backs loudly, start early!!!!!

**7) Keeper (# 1) during the run of play:**

**On offense:**

• Ensure all backs push up to compress the field (vertical compression) to about 20 yards from the ball.

• After winning the ball, run forward to quickly play the ball behind the opposition forwards/midfield with focused ball distribution outside of the goal channel.

• When receiving a backpass, switch the field of play quickly to the opposite back/wing to generate penetration.

**On defense:**

• Always guard the near post and catch or push saves wide of the goal channel.

• Be decisive on your line: Stay on your line unless there is a ball played in the air inside the 6 yd box or a one-on-one break into the box.

• Start to organize our defense as soon as the ball crosses the half way line----organize our mids and our backs loudly, start early!!!!!