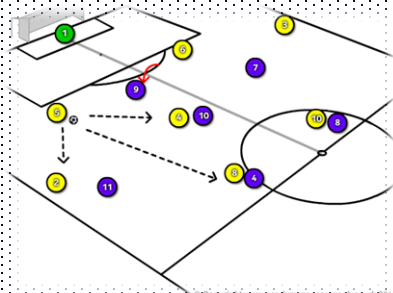


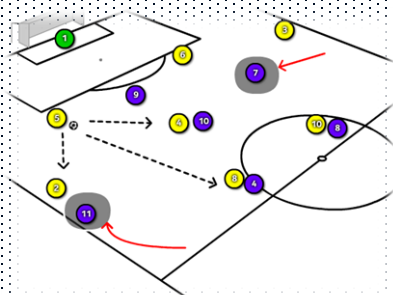
DEFENDING FROM THE FRONT IN A 4-3-3



ROLE OF THE #9... "CUT THE PITCH IN HALF"

The striker is asked to "Cut the pitch in half" or "Show the defender one way. I'd ask #9 to prioritise this shape over winning the ball. Why?...."

This stops the back four using the width of the pitch, forcing the CB to play into FB or a straight ball into midfield. This is vital as it allows the midfield to get **compact** as they can prioritise the area of the pitch to defend. The midfield can take their shape from the #9 and try to read the next pass.



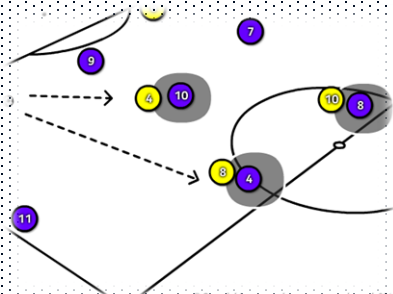
ROLE OF THE WINGERS... "SHOW INSIDE"

The wingers #7 and #11 are asked to show the opposition inside. This for a number of reason...

- There is more "Traffic" /opposition inside and a higher chance of them losing possession!
- Its stops the FB playing a direct ball into the "channel" and stops them getting higher up the pitch
- In many cases you are showing the full back on to their weaker foot and asking them to think!

The body shape and approach of the winger is very important, again priority is "Cut the line" then try and win the ball!

NOTE The opposite winger comes inside in case the opposition #4 manages to "bounce" the ball from #5 to #6/#3. If he stays wide the opposition may spring out the other side...which can leave you exposed.



MIDFIELD THREE... "GET TIGHT, SEND THEM BACK"

The midfield 3 are asked to get tight and **make the play predictable**. By forcing the defenders one way the #10/#4/#8 can get tight and stop them receiving to play forwards.

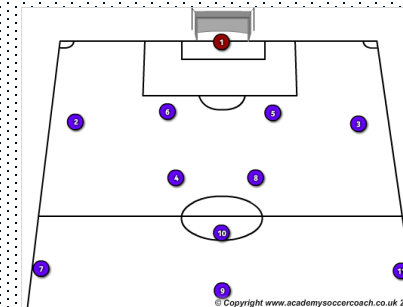
Making the opposition's play predictable or getting them to play backwards is success!

NOTE The opposition's deepest midfielder (#4) must be stopped, if he manages to open to the other side or receive the ball and play forwards the #9's hard work is wasted! See point above regarding the winger on the opposite side.

4-2-3-1 / 4-1-2-3
or
4-3-3??

For the purpose this article the team are set up below. If you wanted to play the midfield inverted, so with #4 as the holding player the principles are the same.

You may ask your #8 or #10 to drop when out of possession.



PRESS or DROP?

For me these are **principles of defending**, it is fashionable in the modern game to PRESS and try and win the ball back high up the pitch...which has obvious benefits.

I would ask my #9 and Wingers to use the same approach whether they are pressing or dropping slightly deeper.