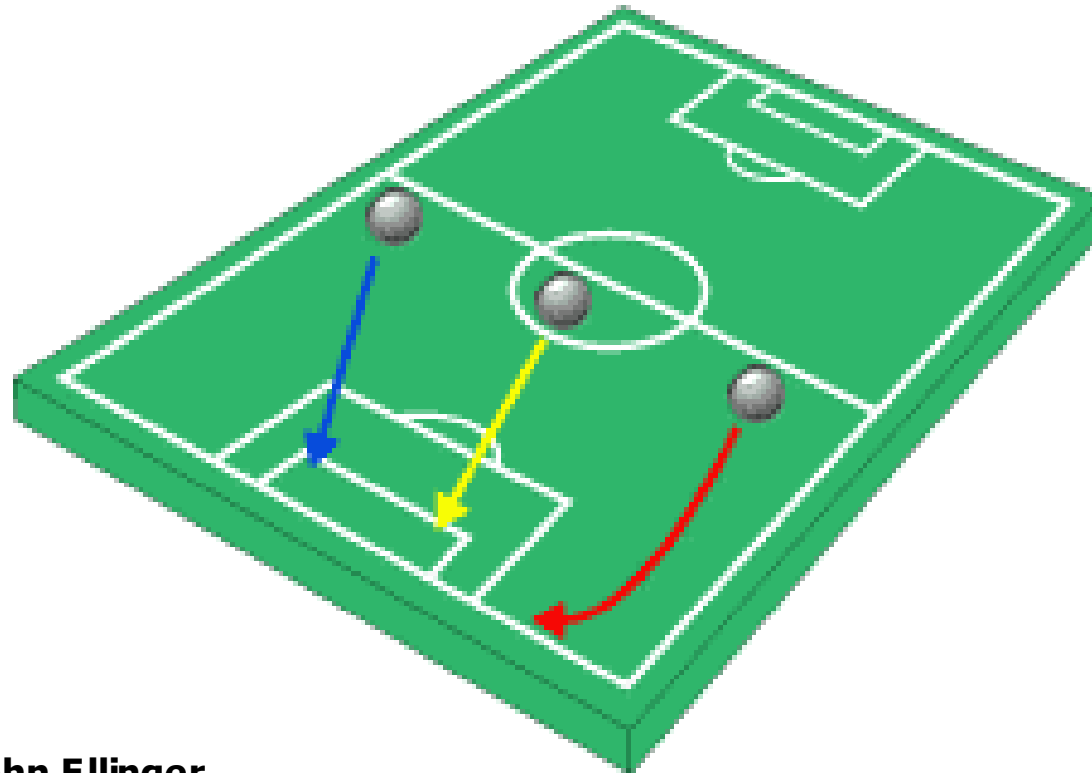




Progressive systems of play



Presenter: John Ellinger
Technical Director-US Youth Soccer



Choosing a System of Play

1. System must fit the players based on four pillars of the game:
 - **Technique, Tactics, Physical, Mental**
2. Individuals possess different qualities and should be placed on the field so that they can express those qualities.
3. Players should be placed in comfortable areas on the field accordingly to their strengths.
4. Players should be encouraged to create, put in places to score and defend.



General Considerations when selecting a System

1. Numbers up in defense, numbers up or even in the midfield, and numbers down in attack, but the intent is to get numbers up.
2. Must be concerned with not giving up a counter – attack goal.
3. Match – ups in certain positions.
4. Score, weather, field size, importance, theme, etc...
5. Game day roster decisions:
 - **HS/ODP/Club**
 - **Yellow/Red card suspensions**
 - **Injuries**



Systems, Styles, and Shapes

- 1. Arrangement of players from back to front**
- 2. Goalkeeper is constant.**
- 3. Each team may play the system differently**
- 4. Each team may play the same system but with a different style.
Style is a reflection of culture.**
- 5. The shape changes based on spatial relationships between
players.**
- 6. Teams may have a "shape for attack" and a "shape for defense".**

History

Styles:

- 1) **Individualistic - South Americans**
- 2) **Slow build up – Eastern European**
- 3) **Direct Play - Northern Europeans**
- 4) **Counter soccer (Catenaccio) – Italians**



Deployment of Players

1. **Players must meet the demands of the game.**
2. **The principles of play must be considered.**
3. **Players should have an appreciation for all positions.**

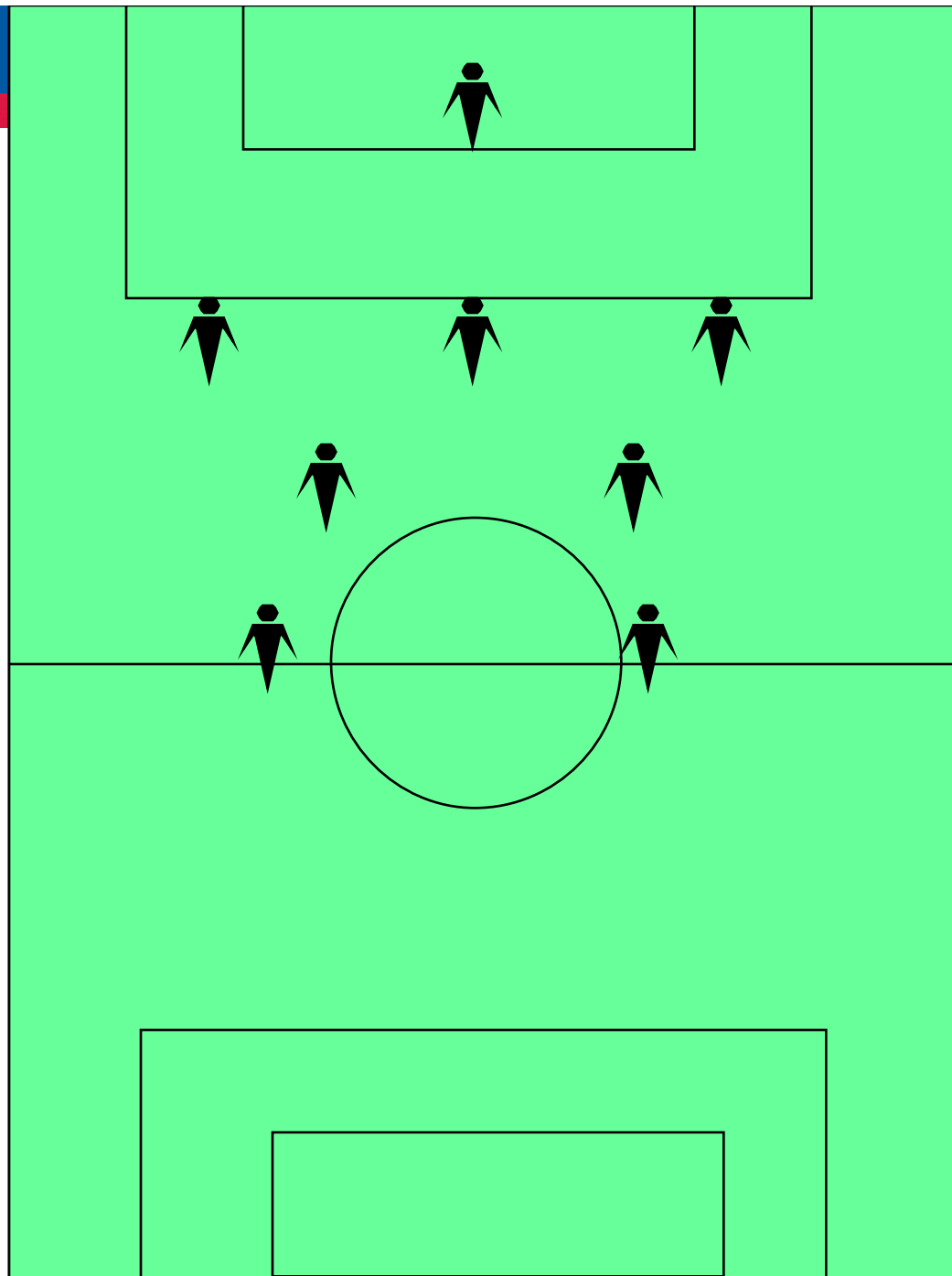
No System Guarantees a Victory!!!!



U12 Systems of Play

3 – 2 – 2:

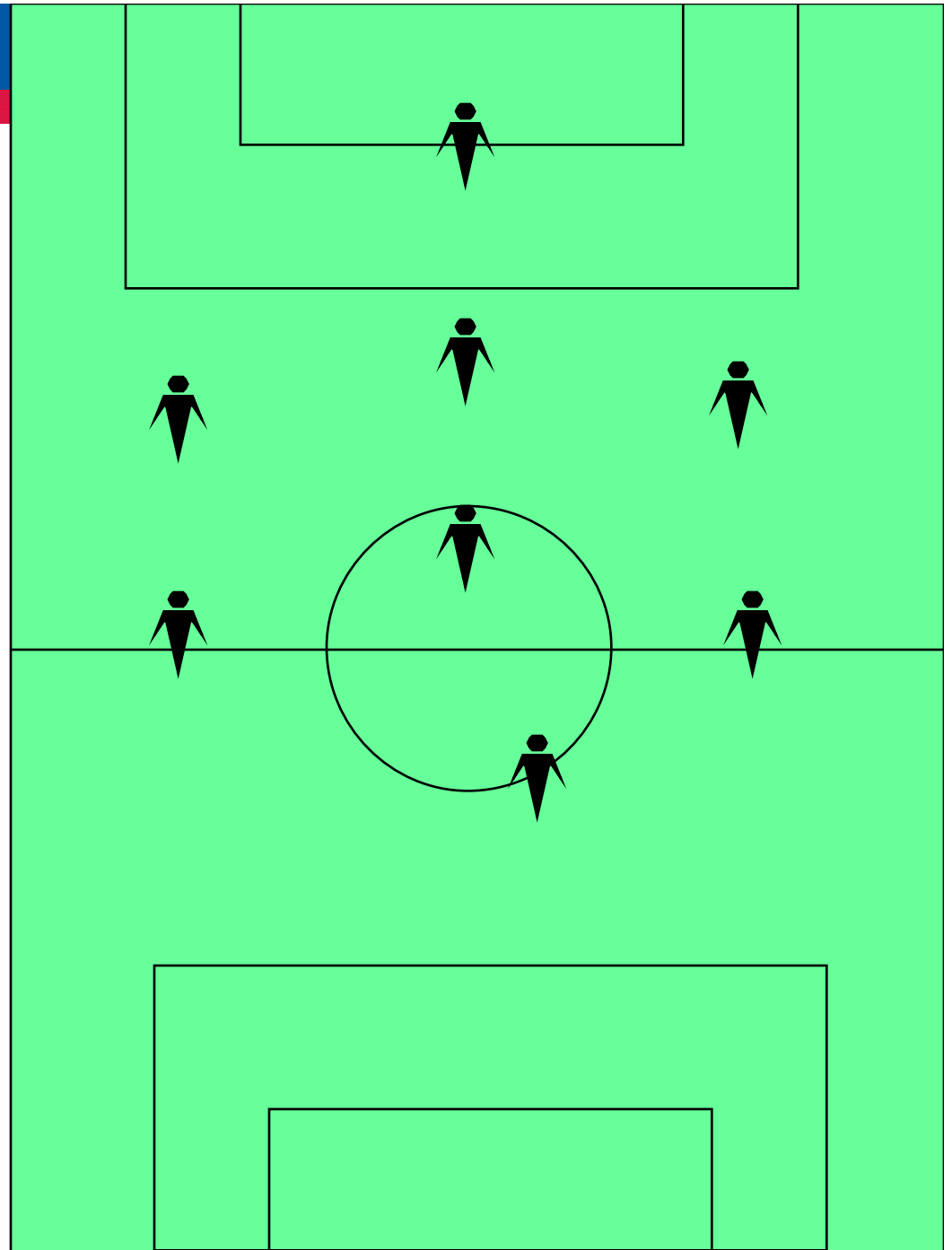
- Allows players to execute the principles of play
- Players are allowed to attack and defend
- When played on an appropriate sized field, players are allowed to:
 - (1) switch the point of attack
 - (2) attack the far post on corner kicks from the flow of play
 - (3) stay compact
- Easiest in which to form triangles around the ball
- Easiest in which to provide support on offense and defense
- Easiest formation to coach (**best suited for the novice coach**)



U12 Systems of Play

3 – 3 – 1:

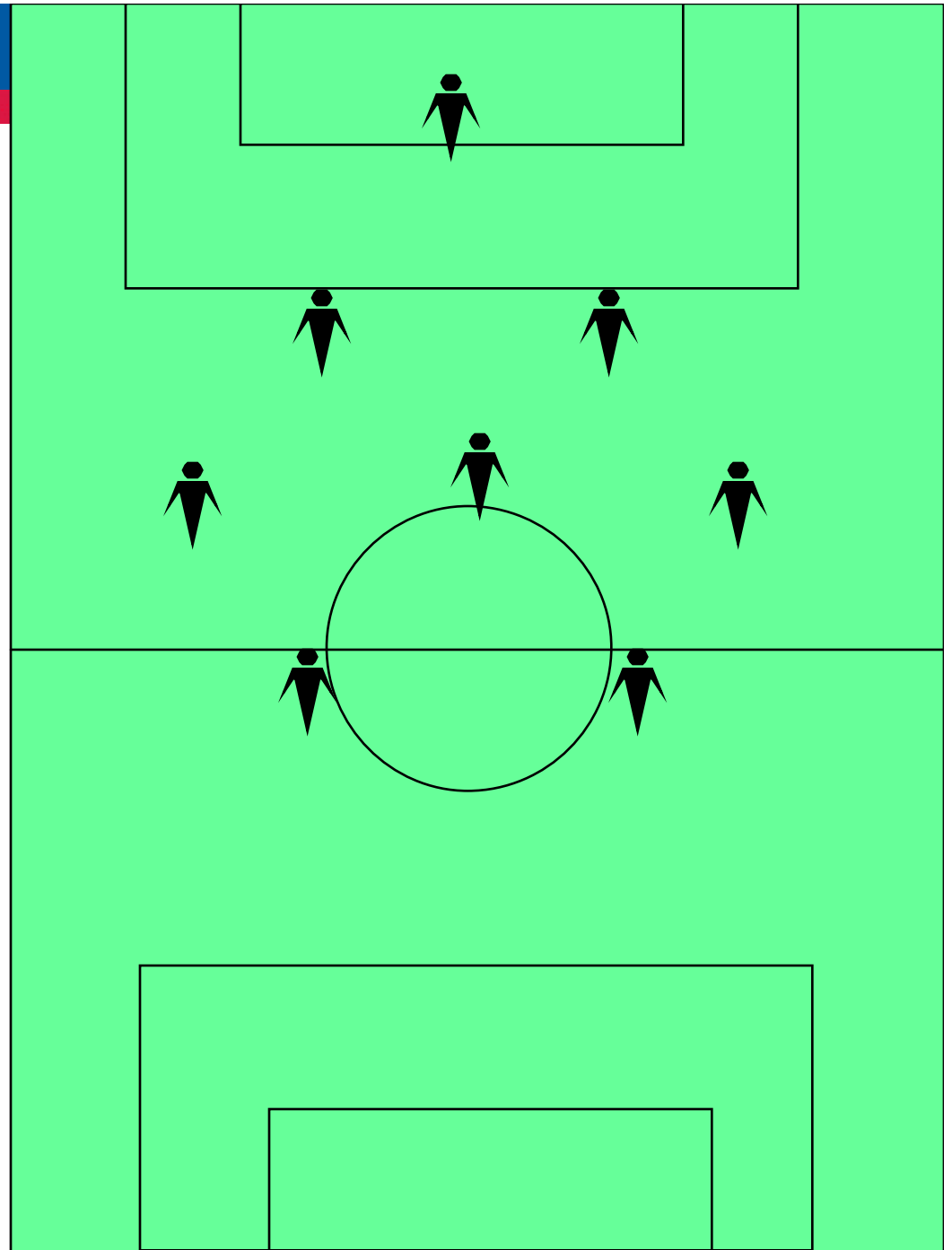
- Strengths of 3 – 2 – 2
- May require the center forward to play 'off-center' to one side. This allows for combination play with the CM and WM.
- Opposite flank is now open for a possible overlap by the outside back or wide midfielder



U12 Systems of Play

2 – 3 – 2:

- Strengths of other two formations
- It is the most demanding on the players and coach
- The formation emphasizes transition and the tactical awareness that makes transition possible
- Considerable demand of vision and communication is placed upon the players
- Zone defense, requiring tactical growth is mandatory



4 - 4 - 2

Strengths:

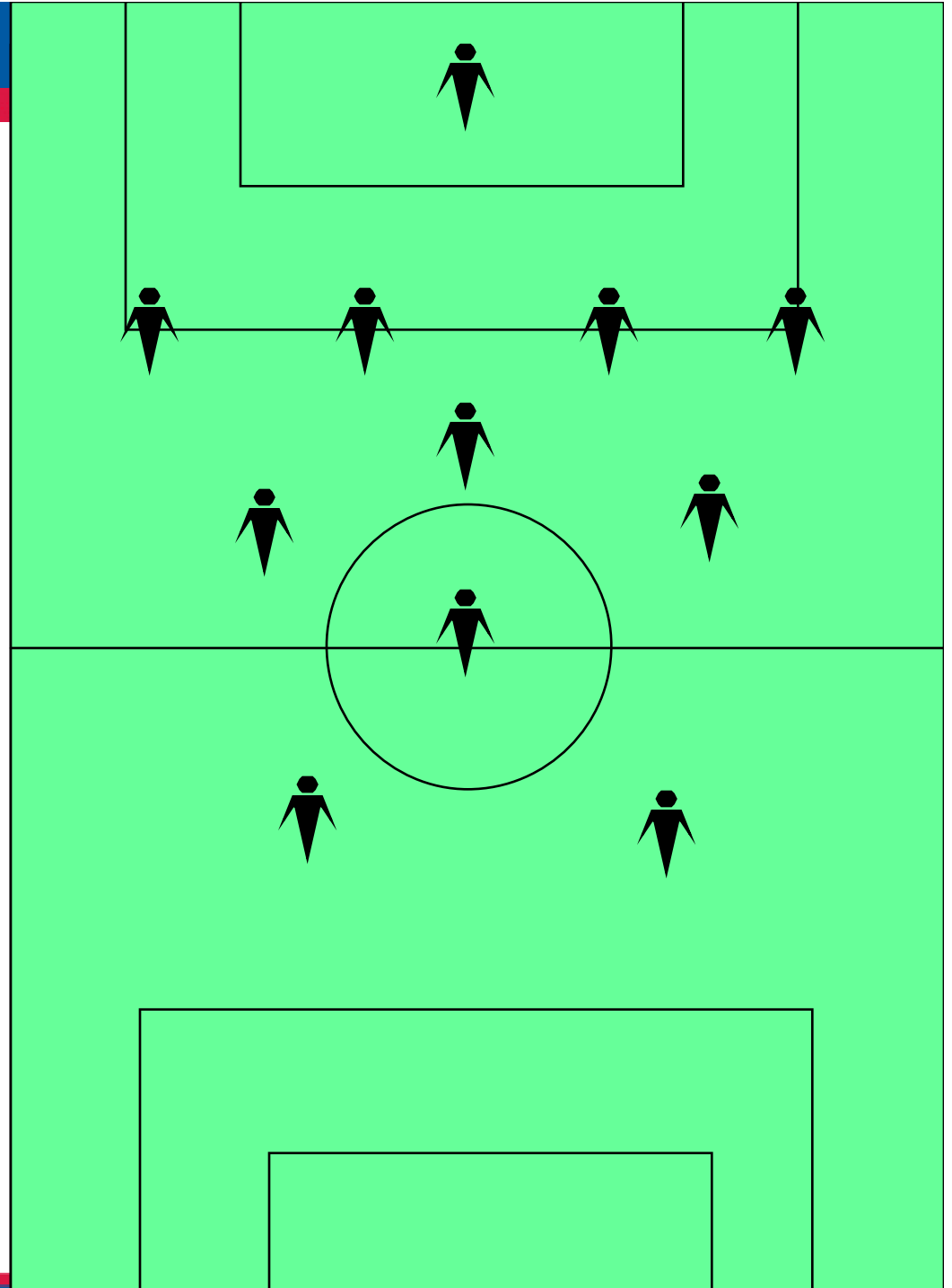
- Strengthens MF with 4th player
- Strikers can function in middle or on flanks
- Suitable for teams with good tactical understanding

Weaknesses:

- Much distance to cover
- Flanks can be countered into

Midfield Configurations:

- Flat (CM's share space)
- Diamond
- ACM/DCM
- Two flank MF's pushed high and wide



3 - 5 - 2

Strengths

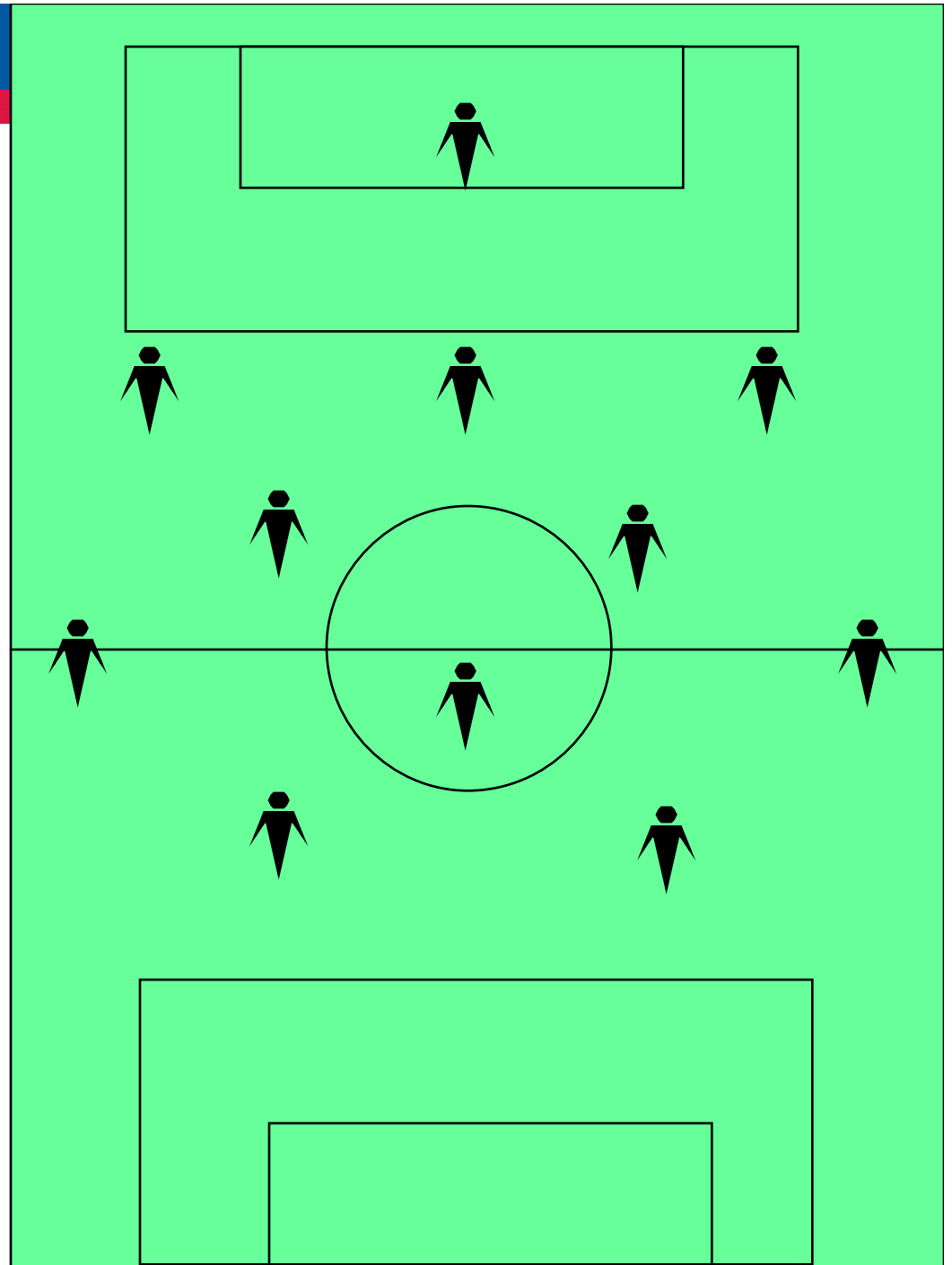
- Used against teams with 2 FR
- Defensively efficient
(2 markers, 1 free player)
- 5 MF easier to zone cover
- Simpler to close and press

Weaknesses:

- Harder to play out of the back
- Flanks exposed

Midfield Configurations

- 2 DCM's/3 across
- DCM/4 across



4 - 2 - 3 - 1

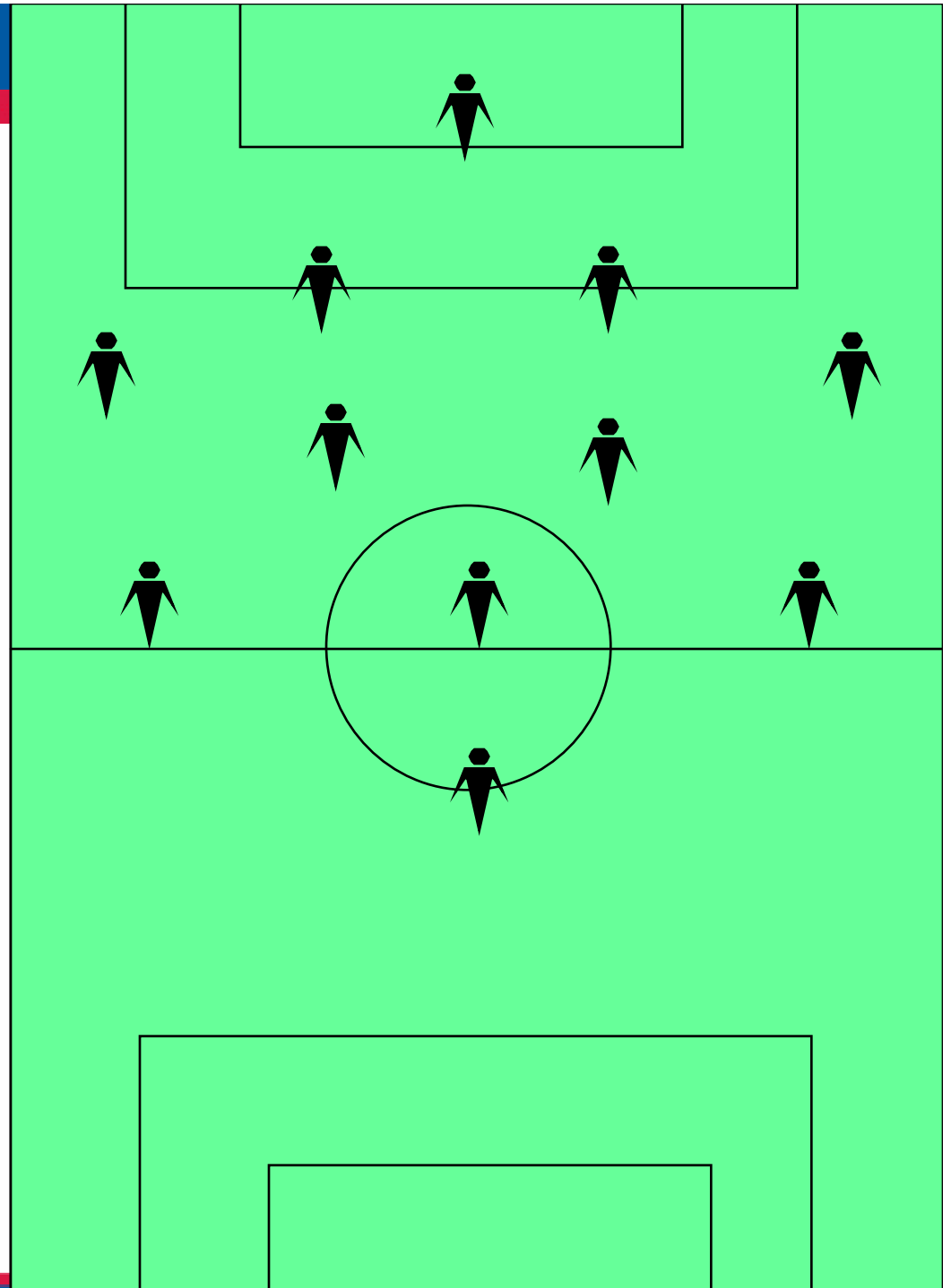
Strength:

- Reinforce Defense
 - 2 CM's shielding back line
 - Outside backs give width

Weaknesses:

- Uneven deployment
- Forward left on own

(Portugal-safety first)



4 - 3 - 3

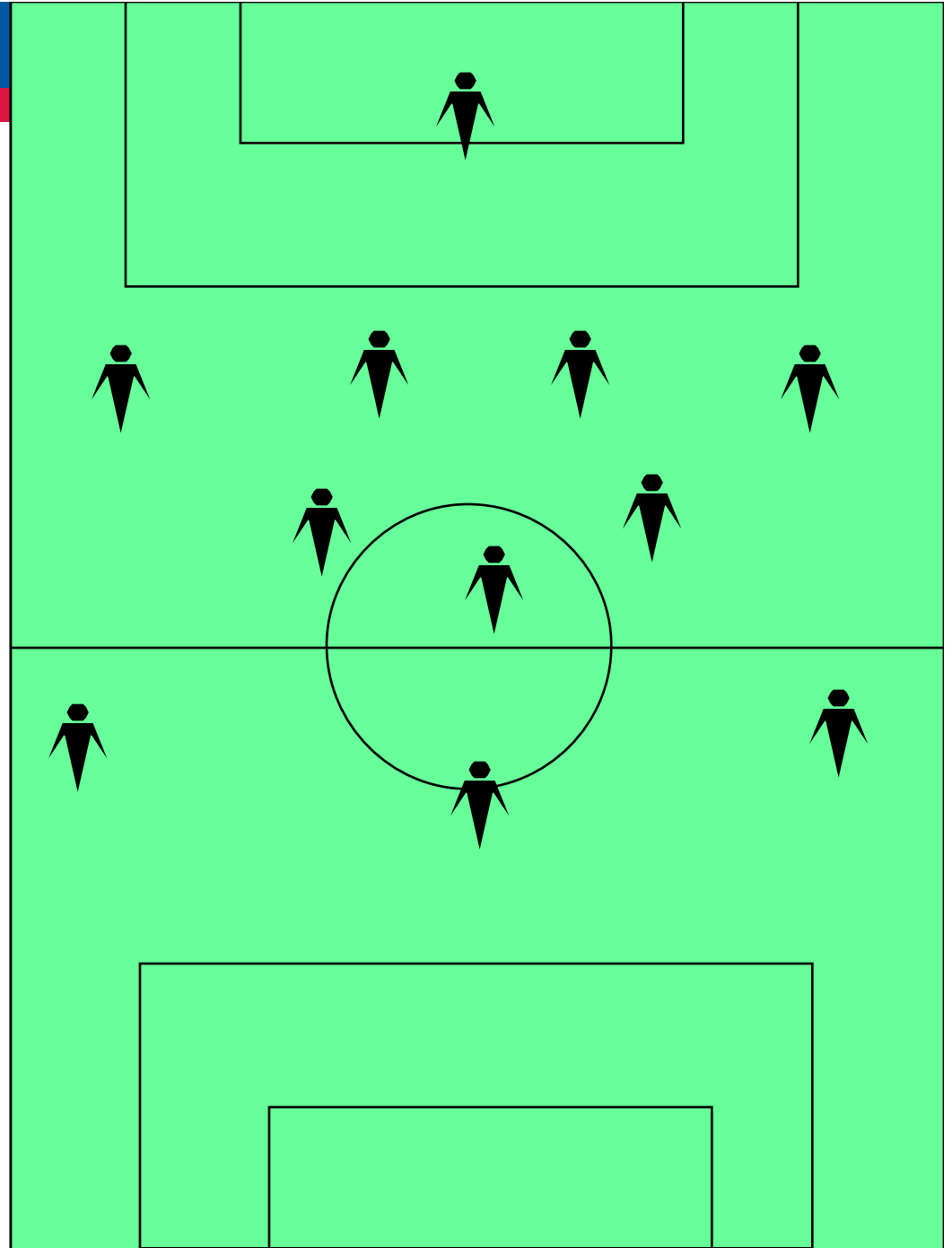
Strengths:

- Balanced Formation
- 3 Forwards; Width in Game

Weaknesses:

- Weakens MF tactics
- Difficult to zone & press

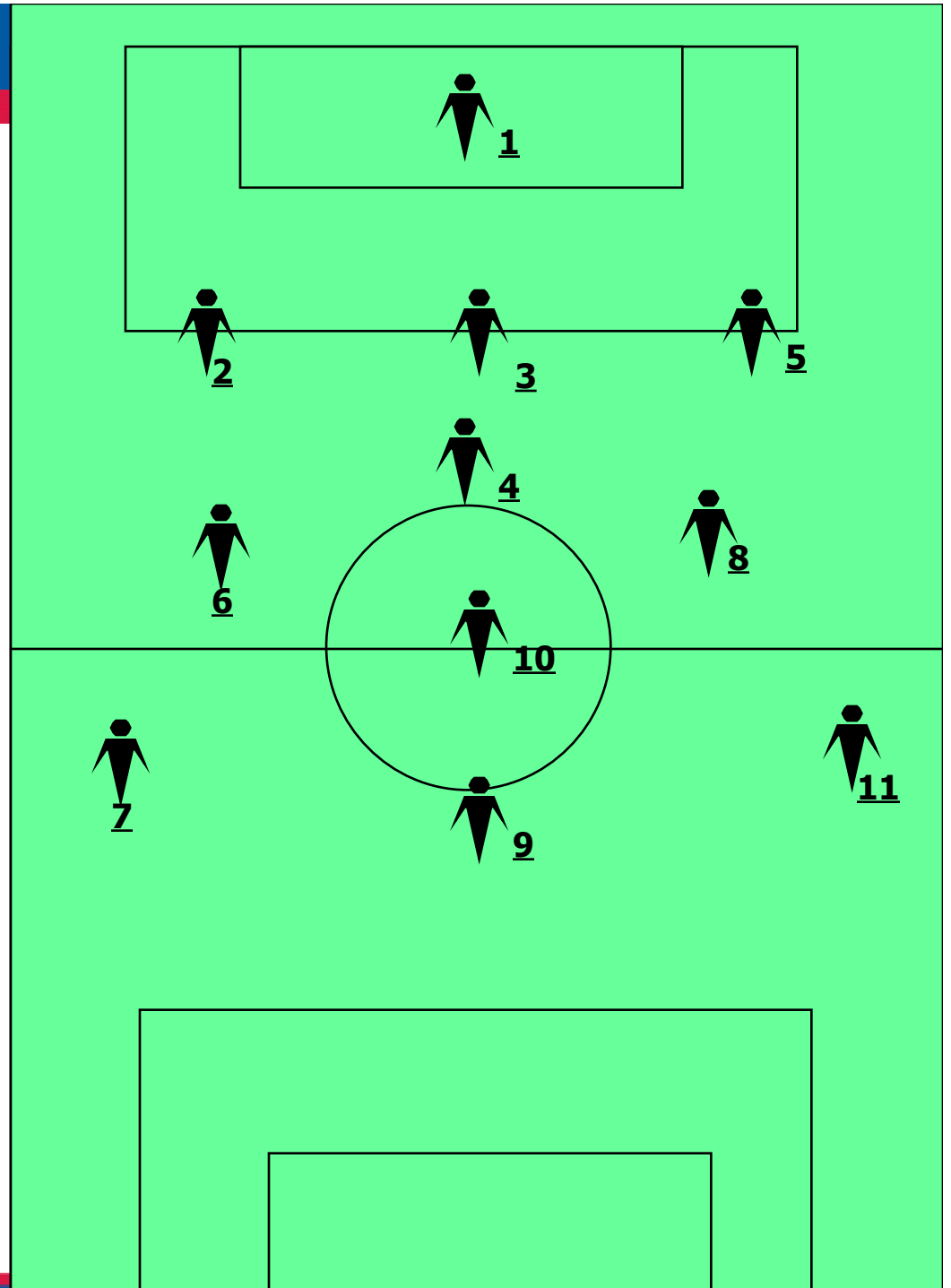
(Italy-fluid and high pressing)



3 - 4 - 3

AJAX System:

- Squad of 18—
- 5 RS players for 2,6,7
- 5 LS players for 5,8,11
- 3 players for 3,4
- 3 players for 9,10



4 - 1 - 4 - 1

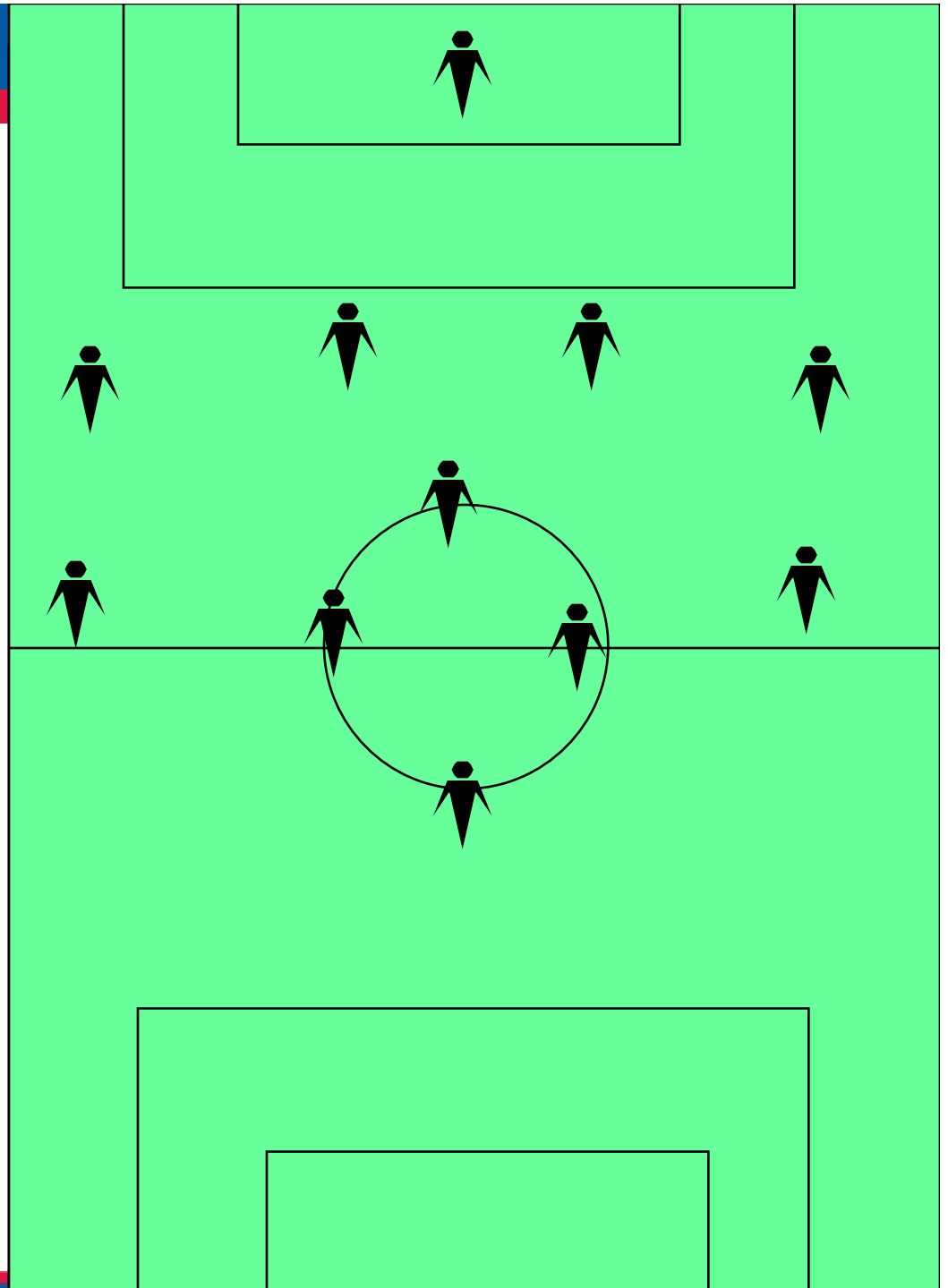
Strength:

- Reinforces defense
- Increasingly popular
- Aim to create blocks

Weaknesses:

- Forward left on own
- Back line tends to sit deep
- Wide mf's tend to drift inside

(Spain—possession game)



Any Others?

4 – 2 – 2 – 2 (Brazil)

Fabio Capello:

- **Milan (4-4-2)**
- **Roma (3-4-1-2)**
- **Juventus (4-2-2-2)**
- **Real Madrid (4-2-3-1)**

Adjustments

- 1) **The needs of the team**
- 2) **The opposition's system of play**
- 3) **Weather**
- 4) **Score of the game**
- 5) **The importance of the game**
- 6) **Injury or ejection**
 - **Playing man down—
4-4-1 or 3-4-2 ??**





Summary

1. The players must meet the demands of the game: Not the demands of the coach or system
2. Each player should have an appreciation for every position.
3. Functional training can take place for older players.

The system is only as good as the players!!!!