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Thread: Building a Cohesive Team

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26-02-2011 22:41 #1

SFraser

Semi Pro

Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

Building a Cohesive Team

It is easy to get caught up in the huge amount of tactical options in this game, tweaking mentalities a point at a time in the hope for finding the "secret balance" that will make your team click. I know because I did it. I don't bother with that any more because the most important aspect of tactical instructions is simply shape and action. You define a rough shape that suits your strategy, then you tweak the actions you want your players to perform. If you have set up a good shape and decent action instructions and you have tactical problems then no amount of tweaking instructions will help, because your tactical problems are elsewhere.

By far the most important aspect of all Tactics in FM is selecting players that compliment each other. Selecting a set of players that makes tactical sense is indescribably more important than your tweaks to their natural behaviour, which is all the tactical instructions do. Tactical Instructions modify the behaviour of your players, therefore the single most important thing in FM tactics is choosing the right group of players, followed closely by a decent shape for them to play in.

While this may seem obvious, it is important to realise that the heart and soul of this game is attributes and that nothing is more important than the attributes of the players you put on the pitch. The huge number of attributes combine to produce detailed calculations for every single event that occurs on the pitch, and there is nothing you can do as a manager that is even remotely close to the tactical power of putting a set of attributes on the pitch that makes tactical sense.

Tactical Sense

This is the true heart and soul of FM as I see it. Many tactical instruction flaws can be forgiven simply by having a very effective team unit. The right players in a good shape will overcome many of your worst tactical instruction faux pas simply because you got the most important part right in the first place.

Knowing the tips and tricks of tactical sense is what we all come here for, is what we all hope to learn from playing the game and writing on these forums. Knowing these things is what gives us all an increasingly superior team. All of these are simple things, but the more we can know and learn the more we can overcome our weaknesses in the fine details of the game.

Let me give you some examples:

1: It is not good tactical sense to have your wingers crossing the ball to a pacey but weak striker, unless his Off the Ball and Anticipation is amazing and the winger delivery is amazing.

2: It is not good tactical sense to have all pace on one flank and all creativity on another flank.

3: It is good tactical sense to select a midfield that can attack based on your strikers strengths.

4: It is good tactical sense to support an awesome playmaker with lots of players that have good Off The Ball movement.

5: It is good tactical sense to flank the slow with the fast.

6: It is good tactical sense to flank the weak in the air with the strong in the air.

7: It is good tactical sense to surround poor defenders with good defenders, like a defensively weak attacking fullback with your strongest defensive CM and strongest CB.

And so on.

Absolutely none of this has anything to do with Tactical Instructions. This is 100% about building a logical and solid selection of players that are all singing from the same hymn sheet. It is about reducing weaknesses and maximising strengths that exist in your group of players.

The Attacking Example

This is a example from my own save, and the example that highlights my point perfectly I feel. A few seasons ago I found an awesome regen Striker that I developed into this:



Those of you that immediately asked "what instructions are best for him?" should go back to the top and read this post again.

This player is a goalscorer, the most pure example of a goalscorer I have come across in my time playing FM. He has a few weaknesses, he is not awesome in the air, he is not lightening fast on his feet, and he is not the most creative genius that ever played football. What he is is all round solid but completely lethal at beating the last barrier between him and the back of the net. Of all his talents what really stands out is his movement, finishing and anticipation of events.

The real question you should be asking given his ability is "how do I support him?"

The answer is clearly not with two traditional wingers. My answer is:



Starting from the back:

Evans: Slightly pacey but defensively epic. Lacks technical skills and a bit of height but is an awesome defender.

Chiellini: Slightly pacey and defensively epic, he is a hero of my back line.

Vidic: A defensive monster that lacks pace.

Alaba: Pacey but lacks height. Has playmaking abilities in abundance.

Sandro: Pacey, strong, intelligent. He has height and stamina and strength and pace and creativity and anticipation. My best all round midfielder.

Ramirez. Slow and weak but is positionally stronger than Sandro and has greater creativity + passing. Good in the air too.

Pjanic: Reasonably quick off the mark but his strength is easilly his 20 for Creativity. He is a slightly fast utter genius.

Ozil: Pace, Off the Ball Movent, Dribbling but his strengths by a mile are his Creativity, Passing, Teamwork, Decisions. He is weak in the air.

Aguero: A striker playing on the left wing. Off the Ball, Finishing, Anticipation. Slightly inferior in Creativity and Passing. Very poor in the air.

From flank to flank:

My pace lacking Rightback is covered by my fastest Centreback, He lacks intelligence so my most awesome playmaker plays at Right Wing. My worst midfielder in terms of intelligence plays at RCM but he has pace in abundance and no physical flaws. Fast and awesome defensively.

My pacey leftback with bags of creativity supports my Left Winger. My left Winger is basically a striker playing wide, so my Left CM is my most positionally sound midfielder and my most creative midfielder. He is slow but those around him are fast. He is good in the air but not physically strong, so Vidic is behind him.

Upfront:

My epic striker has Mesut Ozil behind him. Ozil has 18 for teamwork, 17 for Off the Ball, 17 for Flair, 18 for Decisions, 19 for Creativity, 19 for Passing. This guy is an awesome and brilliant playmaker. He is weak in the air.

What this means is my team is strong in the air through the middle, it has Creativity closest to the best Off the Ball players, it has pace interspersed between my slowest players, and as a rule it has Creative players looking for my Off the Ball strikers as my attacking setup, ignoring crosses unless they are

devestatingly accurate. My attacking and defensive ability is balanced. My whole team is balanced. Nothing is more important than the balance of defensive ability and attacking threat in my team.

And none of this involves the Tactical Instructions.

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27-02-2011 00:10 #2

telV7

Amateur
Join Date: 5th June 2008
Location: melbourne, Australia
Posts: 569

Good read Sfraser and some interesting points.
I would be curious to see how this ties in with FM11 and the Match preparation and individual training focus.
The thinking being that by use of team blend you can develop over time a "balanced" team.
Also with the individual training focus you could for example develop that "pacey but weak" striker to receive those ball better from your wingers.

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27-02-2011 00:34 #3

aderow

Youth Team
Join Date: 7th October 2008
Location: From Lagos to London to Chicago
Posts: 4,064

Interesting stuff SFraser.

When I was younger I used to be obsessed with signing all of the best players.....but just because you have the best players doesn't mean they will form the best team.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-02-2011 01:13 #4

SFraser

Semi Pro



Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

> Originally Posted by **aderow**
> *Interesting stuff SFraser.*
>
> *When I was younger I used to be obsessed with signing all of the best players.....but just because you have the best players doesn't mean they will form the best team.*

Maybe the best team has the best players...

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27-02-2011 12:20 #5

Lexis

Amateur
Join Date: 16th November 2008
Posts: 52

A good post SFraser . I Agree to your statement of attributes > tactical instructions however tactical instructions can transform a good team into a very good team.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-02-2011 12:23 #6

Frank327

Amateur
Join Date: 27th October 2010
Posts: 72

Very nice example of mixing and matching the skills of your players, but I take it you've got some attacker(s) on the bench that's good in the air? Once a team starts sitting deep I imagine your team will have a rough time breaking it down. Also I find it weird that you place your ultimate goalscorer in a support role, and your playmaker in an attack role. I would've thought having your goalscorer as advanced forward - attack and your playmaker behind it in a support role would make them play more effectively both in offense and defense.

One thing I often try to achieve with a 4-2-3-1 is to have a pure winger on one side who can supply lots of crosses, and combine that with striker and inside forward on the other wing who are both strong in the air. It kinda combines the best aspect of having a strike partnership with the best of having a 4-2-3-1.

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27-02-2011 12:57 #7

Cleon

Moderator

Join Date: 22nd February 2003
Posts: 20,487

> *Very nice example of mixing and matching the skills of your players, but I take it you've got some attacker(s) on the bench that's good in the air? Once a team starts sitting deep I imagine your team will have a rough time breaking it down*

If a team is hard to break down the last thing you'd want to do is get into an aerial battle with them. If your player's cannot get and make the space to begin with then playing an aerial game just won't work imo. What you need to do is try and retain possession and have other player's running off the ball and forcing the opposition to come out for the ball and thus creating space to exploit.

> *Also I find it weird that you place your ultimate goalscorer in a support role, and your playmaker in an attack role. I would've thought having your goalscorer as advanced forward - attack and your playmaker behind it in a support role would make them play more effectively both in offense and defense.*

But by playing the way you suggest, the forward will always be the advanced player and this would make him far more isolated and easy to mark out of games. Playing the way SFraser sets him up is something I would also utilise. It allows him to hang back a little and if he's intelligent enough create space for the attacking midfielder to run into. It also allows link up play and makes it a lot harder for the opposition to mark against.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-02-2011 13:40 #8

Frank327

Amateur

Join Date: 27th October 2010
Posts: 72

> Originally Posted by **Cleon**
> *If a team is hard to break down the last thing you'd want to do is get into an aerial battle with them. If your player's cannot get and make the space to begin with then playing an aerial game just won't work imo. What you need to do is try and retain possession and have other player's running off the ball and forcing the opposition to come out for the ball and thus creating space to exploit.*

That often works, but when the opponent starts playing narrow and deep, there's no way to play around them anymore, and you're pretty much forced to crosses into the box. Of course if your players are absolutely brilliant (like the players in the example) they might still be able to play through it.

> Originally Posted by **Cleon**
> *But by playing the way you suggest, the forward will always be the advanced player and this would make him far more isolated and easy to mark out of games. Playing the way SFraser sets him up is something I would also utilise. It allows him to hang back a little and if he's intelligent enough create space for the attacking midfielder to run into. It also allows link up play and makes it a lot harder for the opposition to mark against.*

The way I described it is the Ajax way of playing. The forward sits on the shoulder of the last defender to create space for the AMC in the hole. If the AMC receives the ball, at least one CB has to challenge him, is pulled out of position which creates space for the striker. In my experience, the striker is never isolated if there's also an AMC. Of course, the advanced striker wouldn't be too involved in buildup play, and only really becomes dangerous at the last moment, but that's exactly what fits the striker in the OP.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-02-2011 13:49 #9

Cleon

Moderator

Join Date: 22nd February 2003
Posts: 20,487

> *That often works, but when the opponent starts playing narrow and deep, there's no way to play around them anymore, and you're pretty much forced to crosses into the box. Of course if your players are absolutely brilliant (like the players in the example) they might still be able to play through it.*

No even without brilliant player's you can always play round someone, always. You don't have to go aerial at all. How do you expect to get people on end of crosses when you can't even break them down to begin

with? Your reasoning makes no sense because they player's can't even get into the box to get on the end of a cross. So why does aerial threat work better?

> *The way I described it is the Ajax way of playing. The forward sits on the shoulder of the last defender to create space for the AMC in the hole. If the AMC receives the ball, at least one CB has to challenge him, is pulled out of position which creates space for the striker. In my experience, the striker is never isolated if there's also an AMC. Of course, the advanced striker wouldn't be too involved in buildup play, and only really becomes dangerous at the last moment, but that's exactly what fits the striker in the OP*

While FM has real life elements it's not a true reflection of real life. I guarantee if you watch back over some of your FM games your striker is isolated at times, it's impossible for it not to happen to you if he's always the most advanced player. What happens when a decent team cuts off the supply to the AMC? :P Your striker can't get into the game due to how you've set up as it relies heavily on the AMC getting and creating the space to begin with.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

27-02-2011 14:06 #10

SFraser

Semi Pro



Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

> Originally Posted by **Frank327**
> *Also I find it weird that you place your ultimate goalscorer in a support role, and your playmaker in an attack role. I would've thought having your goalscorer as advanced forward - attack and your playmaker behind it in a support role would make them play more effectively both in offense and defense.*

> Originally Posted by **Frank327**
> *The way I described it is the Ajax way of playing. The forward sits on the shoulder of the last defender to create space for the AMC in the hole. If the AMC receives the ball, at least one CB has to challenge him, is pulled out of position which creates space for the striker. In my experience, the striker is never isolated if there's also an AMC. Of course, the advanced striker wouldn't be too involved in buildup play, and only really becomes dangerous at the last moment, but that's exactly what fits the striker in the OP.*

Fair points but if you look at my screenshot you will see Aguero is wearing the number 9 shirt and that is for a reason. Aguero is my true striker and top goalscorer in my team. He only has to pull off the shoulder of the fullback to get clean through on goal while the opponents Centrebacks are struggling with the movement of Jaume and Ozil playing close together.

I have basicly pinched the Spain/Barcelona idea of playing David Villa in a wider position, giving the true striker far more space and far less defenders to contend with to get into goalscoring positions. While my players through the middle should have enough about them to open up most defences, an opposition Centreback duo cannot cope with a playmaker in the hole, a central forward dropping deep to link up then making attacking runs AND a pacey and lethal striker making attacking runs from wide positions.

As far as the arguement for whipping in crosses, at the level I play at the most important things in a cross are the accuracy of the delivery and the quality of movement to beat defenders. Premiership and Champions League defenders are strong and good in the air. A player like Curtis Davies is only slightly weaker when physically defending crosses than Nemanja Vidic. Buying a true brute of a striker will cause me problems in terms of general play when he starts and squad rotation/man management for only a minor gain in some matches. I am far better off playing to my strengths by looking to exploit creativity and accuracy of delivery with high levels of movement and anticipation.

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27-02-2011 14:09 #11

KrisL

Amateur

Join Date: 25th August 2009
Posts: 159

so is you're wingers instructed to make penetrating runs through the opposition defense for ozil to play through and they can either shoot or lay off to the striker since none of youre attacking trio have any real height

Reply **Reply With Quote**

27-02-2011 19:25 #12

Abramovic

Semi Pro

Join Date: 10th August 2004

Very interesting post but can this approach work at lower levels of the game ? I mean my Wigan team wont have the same skill set as Man U, leading to a disjointed team as such. Granted that problem can be

Location: PSN: King_pin0
Posts: 2,798

partially adjusted through team instructions

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-02-2011 20:53 #13

KrisL
Amateur
Join Date: 25th August 2009
Posts: 159

it looks like it would depend on whether you have the same kind of players at your disposal and if not then changing ur settings to suit your players

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-02-2011 21:24 #14

Abramovic
Semi Pro
Join Date: 10th August 2004
Location: PSN: King_pin0
Posts: 2,798

That is what im getting at, if i have 3 or 4 crappy players in my first eleven its very hard to balance the side. SFraiser can have all of his mids on attack due to them being world class or there abouts, but if i were to use this system i dont think i would create any attacking threat.

Im more the willing to upload screenshots of my team to see if yous can follow the above example for my side as im not

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-02-2011 21:32 #15

Ampalaea4
Amateur
Join Date: 11th November 2008
Posts: 145

So lets say I have players with high teamwork, anticipation, creativity, decisions, that mean they are clever and play for the the team and not for themselves.Would you suggest me to put all instructions on mixed to this players and give them high creative freedom in order to leave them to chose how they play? mixed passing, run with ball, run from deep, cross ball, long shots... put time waste on the center - sometimes in order to let them chose when is better for team to waste time and when not..

I have noticed that a lot of world class wingers/attacking midfielders are lacking in teamwork/work rate (cristiano ronaldo, messi) making me not want to sign them even if I can.. because I value too much these attributes cause I play a very fluid philosofy and these attributes are vital for me.. do you think I overvalue these attributes?Are there really so important to make me sign less technical skilled players instead of world class players who lacking these attributes?

Last edited by Ampalaea4; 27-02-2011 at 21:34.

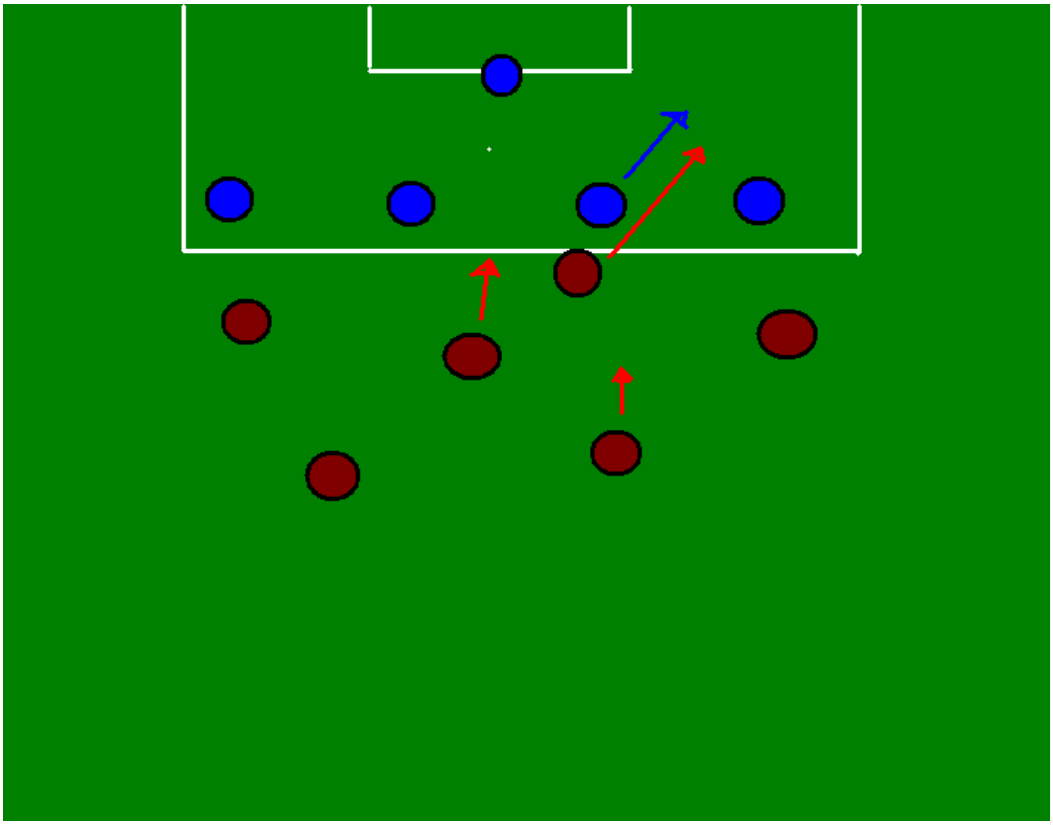
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27-02-2011 22:28 #16

Falahk
Part-Timer
Join Date: 26th January 2010
Location: Falun, Sweden
Posts: 1,799

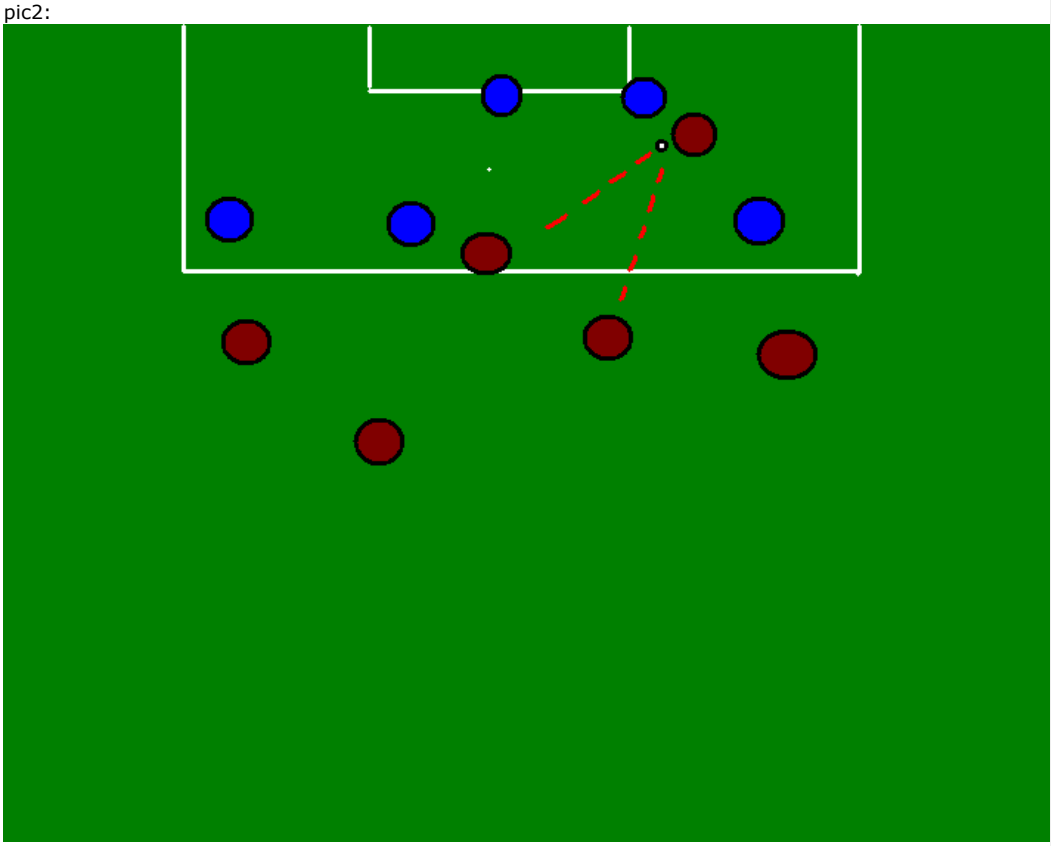
here goes an illustration of what I assume Frank327 ment

pic1:



here we see the intended movement of the team, the advance forward is assumed to ether run onto the ball using his pace, or run with the ball down the right side channel or a combination of both, dragging one CB with him (since he got a strong right foot its the most likely direction he will drift, which is why the supporting MC is placed on the right side of the pitch), while supporting AMC and MC breaks forward

pic2:



here we see how the move develop on pretty regular basis, this offers the striker with a dangerous back pass to the supporting players, most of the time to the AMC, or at times the MC, both will be in acres of space ether for a tap in or a ccc

used a tactic like this with Toon on fm10, my AMC, Matías Fernádez scored roughly a goal a game once he had settled down, while my supporting CM, Alan Smith bagged about 10 goals

Reply | Reply With Quote

28-02-2011 19:18 #17

Flohrinho

Amateur
Join Date: 16th March 2010
Posts: 292

As always a good read SFraser and nice topic for a good discussion I think.

Concerning my team I have a slightly different strategy when I start building my team.

Since I like every player to be involved in every phase of the game as much as possible I prefer polyvalent like for example Sandro in your setup and someone like Pastore, Bale as a winger and so on since those players don't have problems contributing to every phase of the game and don't mind get stuck in as much as they don't hesitate to push forward and get involved in the attacking game.

But apart from that I also look at playing couples of players that compliment each other well so for instance a player like Sahin with a player like Bender for Dortmund both defensively responsible players with high work ethic and teamwork ratings but one that is a real defensive power house and one that has all the attributes a great play maker needs.

Concerning your suggestions in real life I would say Manchester Uniteds squad is actually a great example of what you suggested since they have a lot of players that complement each other very well.

In attack we have the "creative genius" in Berbatov, the "working power house" in Rooney, the "speed demon" in Hernandez, the "allrounder" in Welbeck and the "target man" in Macheda.

There are like 5 strikers in Manchester United squad and all a different type of players that can be utilized for different tactical purposes and in different combinations to great effect.

Also the defensive partnership of Rio and Vidic always impressed me since they seam to complement each other almost perfectly combine this with the offensive mentailty of Evra on the left and the more conservative O'Shea or Brown on the right and you will have a defensive line that almost perfectly complement each others strengths and weaknesses.

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02-03-2011 23:16 #18

ThinkingHurts

Lurker
Join Date: 24th January 2009
Posts: 1

Hey out of interest if I may how would you about setting up a striker playing out wide in that fashion, i've tried myself but they always under perform for me acting more as wingers than actual stikers out wide, getting assists but rarely goals. Or does it just come down to having a good player in that position?

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04-03-2011 19:08 #19

higgins

Part-Timer
Join Date: 5th August 2008
Location: Torino, Italy
Posts: 1,268

> Originally Posted by **Abramovic**
> *Very interesting post but can this approach work at lower levels of the game ?*

In a word?

No.

Reply | Reply With Quote

05-03-2011 17:27 #20

nik1313

Amateur
Join Date: 11th December 2009
Posts: 132

Sure yes for the thread.could be used against oppoments who are not really a threat offensively.
a "weaker link" in our team in the central midfield, a player who can only do basic things, is enough most of the times.
possesion is not everything and you want to mislead your oppoment from playing too defensively, in order to grab a win easily
plus this helps for rotation

Reply | Reply With Quote

06-03-2011 09:59 #21

Bruce Higham

Amateur
Join Date: 3rd February 2009
Location: Queensland, Australia
Posts: 198

> Originally Posted by **Abramovic**
> *That is what im getting at, if i have 3 or 4 crappy players in my first eleven its very hard to balance the side. SFraiser can have all of his mids on attack due to them being world class or there abouts, but if i were to use this system i dont think i would create any attacking threat.*
>
> *Im more the willing to upload screenshots of my team to see if yous can follow the above example for my side as im not*

It depends on what you mean by system - if you mean can you play with the roles/player instructions sfraser has used in his team, then probably not as his teams strengths are probably not your teams strengths.

If however you mean can you play with a balanced side as sfraser's post suggests, then of course you can. His point in fact is that it means all the difference between winning and losing. Balance your players weaknesses with other players strengths. Tall with short, fast with slow, good defenders with poor defenders, good technique with poor technique etc. And what I do is that what the majority of the teams strengths are - their is my playing style. Simple.

Last edited by Bruce Higham; 06-03-2011 at 10:00. ***Reason:*** *Argggghh, iPad. I'll have to get the second version. :)*

Reply | Reply With Quote

18-03-2011 20:01 #22

brookie1402

Part-Timer
Join Date: 18th September 2007
Location: RIP Sir Bobby Robson
Posts: 1,651

Another great thread. I think people are missing the point of this thread a little bit by getting too caught up in individual instructions. It is all about balance and using logic to build a team which complements each other by covering weaknesses and encouraging strengths.

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23-03-2011 00:28 #23

Neil Train

Amateur
Join Date: 31st May 2006
Posts: 656

the sentiments expressed in the start of this thread are so good and make so much sense i copy/pasted it into the text doc i'm using for my copious notes as i progress through (another) first season.

Reply | Reply With Quote

25-03-2011 17:41 #24

kingjericho

Part-Timer
Join Date: 15th November 2008
Location: Portugal
Posts: 1,359

> Originally Posted by **higgins**
> *In a word?*
>
> *No.*

I think it may, with due distances of course. The point here is to try to compliment the best and the worst

of your squad. Even at LLM there are good players (for their level). Where you read Vidic and Ozil you can read Jones and White, it's all a matter of adapting to your needs.

Reply | Reply With Quote

26-03-2011 12:32 #25

SREDNA

Amateur

Join Date: 16th December 2009
Posts: 5

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
>
> *By far the most important aspect of all Tactics in FM is selecting players that compliment each other.*

Crouchaldinho what's taking you so long?

OT, great post as usual SFraser!

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flounder

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