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Thread: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

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25-04-2010 22:27 #1

SFraser
Semi Pro

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

The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

In Football Manager it is very easy to get caught up in "Formations" and "Tactics" and how they should be working in some preconceived fashion. 4-4-2 with decent wingers and an MCa/MCd and FCa/FCd combination should work really well if you have the right players, as it has threat down the wings and a nice staggered arrangement of players from back to front through the middle, would be a good example. Although there is not alot wrong with that way of thinking, and there is no reason why it shouldn't work and it very often does work, it is my opinion that it doesn't really take into account the real heart of good football tactics which is the understanding and exploitation of space.

Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that choosing a formation for your players or players for your formation is an "inferior" way of playing, as that is clearly daft. Choosing formations and players is the meat of tactical design. What I am saying though is that the meat of tactical gameplay, the next step and possibly the biggest step in designing attacking tactics is how you use your formation and players to create and exploit space in the opponents formation. In my opinion this is not only the heart of the tactical gameplay itself, but the distinction that is the root source of so much frustration and difficulty for many FM players.

It is relatively easy to design a solid tactic for your players and team, and everyone that plays FM spends a great deal of time doing precisely this. How you go on from here is a big dividing line between FM players if these forums are anything to go by. Alot of people would seem to decide "that should be that", that it should simply work, and if/when it doesn't they become frustrated and unsure about the game. I wish to talk about what is in my opinion not only the next step but the biggest step in Tactical Management in FM, using your solid formation and tactical basis to then actually play the game, to actually defeat opponents by using it to create and exploit space for your players against opponent teams. First up though, a bit of theory or "excessive verbosity" as it is otherwise known as when I post.

Importance of Creating Space

In real life football tactics are a combination of several "tactical components". First is the general pattern and arrangement and tactical setup that suits your players well, that your players are comfortable with, and that your players ideally excel in. This is the "ideal" tactics to get the best out of your players in a certain shape and style of play. Everyone that plays FM looks for this and attempts to design this.

The second component is the tactics that will actually improve your performance against your opponent. Focusing play here, tactical misdirection and sleight of hand there, beefing up in some other area, maximising threats against weak areas, or even occassionally a complete shift of perspective in general style and specific patterns of play.

In every real life football match you watch these two components will be in operation in the overall tactics of both sides. Being able to see it in a general sense is a different matter, being able to understand it in detail should be incredibly difficult as that is the point, one manager is trying to defeat another. It is probably most easiest to see in the highest profile matches, as they have the widest coverage and generate the most discussion and debate. By see I mean see variation and adaption and change from match to match, not instantly comprehend the point.

For me the most important of these tactical issues in an attacking sense is the creation and exploitation of space. I consider it key because entire nations have embraced tactics and formations based around this philosophy, because commentators and pundits wax lyrical about players capable of creating and exploiting space, because attacking players in space on the pitch are devestating and because as you watch games over 90 minutes almost all the tactical nitty-gritty of changes comes down to attempting to

find space, use space well, or shut it down.

Creating space for players that can exploit it, or playing players that can exploit space in space, is absolutely huge in a tactical sense. Cristiano Ronaldo is the greatest example of this in my opinion. In terms of attributes, mentality and playstyle he is a pure striker yet he plays on the wing and drives infield. He is a decent winger, not very good at all at genuine playmaking, and absolutely brilliant at attacking the goal and scoring goals. He plays on the wing for Madrid and played on the wing for Manchester United because he is not the best at finding space but would get a lot of space on the wing to build up a head of steam to take players out of the game and drive infield and shoot at goal. Playing him upfront has never been that successful for his clubs. He has scored a few absolute rockets from 30-40 yards playing upfront, but is otherwise easier to tackle and harder to find, and creates and exploits a lot less space for his abilities.

Lionel Messi is in a similar vein. He either plays down the wing or in the "hole" because if pressed right up against Centrebacks most of his game is destroyed barring the ball over the top or the good run. He cannot receive the ball easilly, he cannot help in constructing moves and creating space from midfield, and it is far easier for 2 Centrebacks and a DM to force him onto his weaker foot than it is for a lone Fullback when he does get the ball. Not to mention he is pretty useless in the air.

These are all examples of players put in space, and ultimately the key aim of all attacking tactics is to get the right players in the best space. What I want to talk about is not plonking players into space, but how you use your tactics to create space for players to play their best game and exploit the opponents weaknesses.

Tactical Creation of Space

The best place to start is the good old 4-4-2 versus 4-4-2. I make a 4-4-2 and you make a 4-4-2. There is little space for either side, the formations are identical, so my midfield man marks you midfield and vice versa leaving both sets of Fullbacks free to deal with Wingers or Strikers that escape from man marking. While the better team should win, the worse team that spends all it's cash on a quality winger and striker and comes against a slightly weaker Centreback and Fullback has a very good chance of winning. Pretty tedious and basic stuff to be fair.

When I drop a striker into the AMC slot you suddenly have a huge problem. I have a dangerous attacking player in space, he can drop deep to outnumber you in midfield, and he can bomb forward to make up the usual compliment of players upfront. I could do the same by telling one striker to play high and make plenty attacking runs, while I tell the other striker to play deep and stay deep. If I then sign a pure goalscoring weapon of a player for my advanced striker, and an intelligent and creative and hardworking player (Eric Cantona anyone?) for my deep striker then I have made a real mess of your formation and you are in a lot of trouble. This is also pretty basic stuff, everyone playing FM comes up against these kinds of issues, 4-5-1 formations based off these issues, and the world of football that we play in FM is very much attuned and aware of these issues. It was just a rather good example.

Another good example is a game I recently played in FM. It is infact the game that prompted this thread.

There was a recent topic in these forums about Roy Hodgsons 4-4-2, posted by Crouchaldinho. You can find it here http://community.sigames.com/showthread.php?t=203951.
Roy Hodgsons 4-4-2 has been very, very successful and is very, very tough to break down. Since he took over at Fulham the story has been one of immense success, and he rightfully has been acknowledged as one of the highest achieving managers in the league. The calls for Hodgson to be named Manager of the Year last season were widespread and more than valid. As a Manchester United fan I find it hard to look past Alex Ferguson when he wins a title, especially after the performance of the side last season and considering it was three on the trot which not even Mourinho achieved, but if Hodgson had won it I would have considered it neither wrong nor undeserved.

Anyway I had the pleasure of taking my Manchester United side to Craven Cottage to face the FM version of Hodgsons 4-4-2, off the back of a 1-0 defeat to thoroughly outperformed Juventus side in the European Cup three days ago. Such is the life of a manager.

Craven Cottage is a short pitch, aimed at reducing the gap between defence and attack to effectively turn the game into a fight in the middle of the pitch, reduce all space for players, and feed off scraps in and around the box. Against a team like mine the FM version of Hodgson plays two very deep CM's protecting the back four, one of which does get forward but has very little distance to go to attack the opponent, Danny Murphy.

It is quite the annoying setup. No intention of doing anything other than defend the 18 yard line, smother the midfield, and counter-attack on a pitch as short as my clubs title record is long.

Ofcourse a team with my level of quality should defeat Fulham easilly, dominate them and smash them into submission. However I have rediculous levels of debts that can be supported only by winning titles, an ageing squad of which most will retire before my debt repayments ease off, and I cannot afford to throw away any points in this game by being blase and lacking attention to detail.

The key principle of my tactical setup for this match was exploiting Fulhams two man midfield and

counter-attacking system to create space for my midfielders to score goals while putting them under immense amounts of distracting pressure. Thanks to my success last season and injuries to key players, both teams setup like this:



The key tactical principles here were to sit Evans and Vidic deep as they lack pace to deal with Zamora and Kamara, which would in turn create space. Likewise Nani and Valencia would stay tight to the touchline and with the support of Fabio and Rafael would act as pure wingers for Berbatov. Berbatov was pushed as high as possible with the instructions to HUB and TTB. This wingplay + targetman setup was designed to push the Fulham defence right back and leave space for my Central Midfielders and Wayne Rooney to dominate the two man Fulham midfield, and play off of the advanced Berbatov for goal scoring chances.

My three man midfield worked as expected and Sandro played a pass to the slightly offside Rooney early in the game, which Rooney buried. However I had done something I never do and that was give the completely wrong teamtalk, no doubt "inspired" by my still present rage at having somehow lost to Juventus. While Rooney was revved up, both my wingers and both my fullbacks were playing Nervous and I was getting destroyed down the wings. My wingers couldn't pass or dribble, my Fullbacks couldn't tackle, and Fulham equalised from a Free Kick that Rene Alder of all people simply fumbled into the back of the net. Let that be a lesson to you as much as it was to me.

I stabilised things at half time and dominated the game as expected, but could not score. My play was better but not good and Fulham were coping with the single free man in midfield.

As the game grew to a close I threw the dice. I swapped Berbatov and Rooney and played Rooney upfront chasing throughballs and running channels, I pushed Fabio and Rafael as high and wide as I could get them, and I swapped Valencia for Douglas Costa and Nani for Giggs and pushed both wingers into a narrow three AMC alongside Berbatov. This was gung-ho width and five against two in the Centre.

I instructed Giggs and Costa to run from deep regularly, while Berbatov was told to run from deep rarely. The final, winning goal came in the 94th minute when Costa received the ball high up the pitch, turned and played the unmarked Berbatov clean through on goal after a late as hell run from deep.

While it was not anywhere near even a decent performance and nowhere near a spanking, I get plenty of those results and never post about those because they tell you nothing. The tight tactical battles you win by a sliver despite your own epic failures that you understand are the games you learn everything about FM. In this game I learned not to be so cocky in my approach to teamtalks as well as my approach to numbers in space, but I also learned that understanding space brings you goals, and desperately exploiting space can sometimes pull you wins out of nothing.

It's not the greatest example of the tactical creation and exploitation of space ever, but again it is quite useful.

Principles of Creating Space

Examples of creating and exploiting space are only examples. They are meaningless if you don't understand why it is important and how to do it. If this post has not explained why it is important then that is my bad. Explaining how to do it, or atleast how to think about doing it is what I want to do next.

The first and most important principle in creating space is to look at your opponent and the space he leaves. If you don't look at your opponent then you are not playing FM properly and you are not playing Football properly. Any game that lets you get away with not looking at the opponent is not a football simulation, no matter how good/bad a simulation of football you think FM is. FM is the best in my opinion precisely because you can only achieve consistent results through studying the opponent, unless you put yourself in a seriously strong position. In this respect it is slightly weak because it is possible to get away with ignoring the opponent, but usually when the opponent is ignored, managers suffer and the complaints that arise from this issue only reinforce my view that this is the top football simulator around.

It doesn't matter what you successes or failures are, if you do not study the opponent you are not a football manager. This is in my opinion one of the fundamental and key flaws in the gameplay of FML. It's "support" of the study of opponents is both immensely tedious and yet non-existent at key phases. FML is a failure because it tries to be a good online game and not a good online game of Football Management. Likewise players that attempt to "rush through" FM10 will fail, become frustrated, and not recognise the experience, let alone the key details that seperate the gamer from the manager.

The second most important principle of space creation is to use actual attacking threats as creators of space. A quality "Off The Ball" and "Anticipation" forward pushed high up on the shoulder of a Centreback may not be your key outlet but he is still an outlet. He also deprives the opponent of the ability to play the offside trap, he deprives the opponent of the ability to leave him 1v1 with defenders, he deprives the opponent of the ability to "close ranks" as much as he would like, but crucially he creates space for other players. He may not be your "key" threat but in being a threat he forces the opponent to deal with him which opens up opportunities for other players in your side to exploit space.

The third most important principle is understanding the difference between Depth and Width. Width exposes or reduces gaps in lines of players, creating opportunities for runners or closing off opportunities for runners. Depth creates problems between lines or reduces problems between lines, which creates or reduces the opportunity for players to "play their own game" and also to pick out runners.

Width = holes. Depth = space. A good combination of the two is lethal.

The fourth principle, and arguably the most important principle, is the intelligent exploitation of space. If the opponent is lured wide this creates excellent potential for link-up play through the middle. If the opponent is lured narrow this creates excellent opportunities for crosses into the box. If the opponent is lured forward this creates excellent opportunities for quick and decisive attacks. If he is lured deep this creates excellent opportunities for clever and measured attacking build up play. Putting the right players in the right space with the right tactical idea is therefore absolutely key.

I wanted to go into significantly more detail, and especially to show the great example of 4-2-1-3 in creating lightyears of space for the AMC, indeed to look at a lot formations for creating space, but I am running out of steam with this post. I may look at them in depth later as examples, and if anyone else would like to start that discussion and exploration be my guest.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 03:48 #2

edwinteo

Amateur

Join Date: 18th August 2008
Posts: 324

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

interesting topic. i have been trying to think along that lines, to get my narrow 4-4-2 diamond formation work again.

I have been successful for 2 season, but the AI has understood my formation, so basically having better players is not cutting it anymore. i made the mistake of trying different formations, ie. playing the squad in non-natural positions. and i have not gotten good results. my team has no natural wingers, and a glut of central midfielders, without the usual specialists.

Best 11

GK Asenjo
DR Rafinha
DL Juan Vargas
DC Ivan Marcano
DC Gerald Pique
DMC Miguel Veloso
MC Joao Mountinho
MC Felipe Melo
AMC Sergio Aguero
ST Adriano
ST Diego Forlan

Rotation Subs

DC Phil Jagelika
DMC, MC Jack Rodwell
DMC, MC Ignachio Camacho
DMC, MC, AMC Raul Garcia
AMC Diego Buottanonte
ST Edison Cavani
ST Edin Dzenko

My style of creating space is as follows, hope to get some advise to be more solid defensively and create more offensively.

First off, i play Miguel Veloso at DMC as DL playmaker. To create space for him and passing options, i tried to model AC milan of old, and use Melo as a Ball-winning aggressive midfielder. Joao Mountiho because of his impressive mental stats, i use as a Box to Box midfielder. the fullbacks, i play as wingbacks, charging up the field to offer width and a wide outlet for Veloso.

Aguero at AMC, i tend to play as Inside forward, to go into the box. Adriano plays deep, with through balls and hold up ball, to create space in the penalty box and to draw out one defender. Forlan is playing on the shoulder of the last defender as Advanced Forward to create space for in the in-coming Aguero.

Joao Mountinho playing Box to Box arrives late or ends up at the edge of the penalty box to offer a back passing option.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 06:05 #3

aderow

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

I've always understood the importance of space since the day me dad beat into me head (almost too literally).
Unfortunately I would say that I would be placed in the lazy FM player category as the only time I try to exploit the opponent is when they are playing very narrow (by playing down the flanks).

When I up against a team who plays 3 centerbacks, I usually play wide and set a winger as a target man with 'run unto ball'.

However I have never tried concentrating on creating space in the middle via staggering player positions or their mentalities. I have always liked playing fluid in attack (same mentality for my 4 attackers) while somewhat rigid in defense.

Now with what SFraser has suggested I may try playing an AMC or lowering the mentalities of one of my forwards when combating a team that defends with 2 lines of 4.

Now in what sort of situation do you think would be an appropriate time to concentrate on finding space in the middle rather than down the wings? How would you do so?

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 07:11 #4

lam

Part-Timer
Join Date: 1st June 2007
Location: London
Posts: 1,915

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Another great thread SFraser! and one I really enjoyed reading. I struggle with exploiting space and this is a good step in the direction of understanding it.

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
>
> ***The fourth*** *principle, and arguably the most important principle, is the intelligent exploitation of space. If the opponent is lured wide this creates excellent potential for link-up play through the middle. If the opponent is lured narrow this creates excellent opportunities for crosses into the box. If the opponent is lured forward this creates excellent opportunities for quick and decisive attacks. If he is lured deep this creates excellent opportunities for clever and measured attacking build up play. Putting the right players in the right space with the right tactical idea is therefore absolutely key.*

When I first started using the TC and shouts I was particularly successful with the combinations of:

1. Play narrower and exploit the flanks
2. Play wider and exploit the centre.

Both of which work well with your comments above

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**

> *I wanted to go into significantly more detail, and especially to show the great example of 4-2-1-3 in creating lightyears of space for the AMC, indeed to look at a lot formations for creating space, but I am running out of steam with this post. I may look at them in depth later as examples, and if anyone else would like to start that discussion and exploration be my guest.*

Please please please do not be put off by going into detail because of previous fools posting in your threads. Your comments are taken on board by those of which you aim for!

If I can ask one thing..... if you get the chance/inclanation. Can you please take some time to talk about FRW/RFD and how this is used to create space.

I ask because I love the idea of play the formation you show or a solo striker with attacking wings, however I continualy fail at solo striker formations and I beleive one of the key things is that I do not understand the use of RFD when playing players in areas that are already in space.

Regards

Lee

Reply **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 09:12 #5

DavidRicardo

Amateur
Join Date: 17th November 2008
Posts: 152

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Excellent post, SFraser...!

Reply **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 09:26 #6

Jenko_EFC

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Very interesting read, I would like to think of myself in the category of managers who adjust every game, take my time through things etc and I feel it is much more rewarding and the game does reward players that don't just skim through the game. I also like to manage Manchester United when I manage one of the big 4 as Arsenal will get easy in a few years with all their 'wonderkids', Chelsea are a team I dislike because they remind me of Manchester City who just bought their way too the top and I dislike Liverpool for obvious reasons! So with Manchester United they have some debts, a versatile mixed squad and they stole Rooney off us haha! However, you make interesting points about a 4-4-2 and I find it quite difficult to beat by a clear margin and against 4-4-2 your best bet is to create space and beat them in the positions where they have no one there. Start from the back and ususally one drops deep unless they are both suited to advanced forward roles which I believe Fulham's are so no need for a 'stopper', and the fullbacks are personal preference as I like a left attacking fullback and a right defensive one with a defensive left winger and an attacking right one. In the midfield, I play split with a defensive midfielder (ball-winner usually) and an attacking one (advanced playmaker normally). The strikers are important and I believe good use of a trequarista or deep-lying forward is essential against a team with no DM's and a deep defensive line with an attacking one who moves into channels ie; Rooney complete forward attack.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 11:05 #7

PnyX

Amateur
Join Date: 27th December 2005
Location: Spit Fiyah!
Posts: 115

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Great post as usual SFraser. I had been thinking about doing a thread on a similar topic but couldnt find the time. The idea of creating space or having "that free man" in midfield has obsessed me for a while now and you worded you worded your post perfectly. I currently play a 433 with 3 strikers and depending on the oposition, use one or two of those strikers to create the extra man/men needed.

Edit:
Just played away to Fulham now managed by a 352 loving Stochkov with my Everton team (recently crowned champions). That 3 man midfield was definitely going to be too much for 3 man midfield. So i opted to play my FCl as the furthermost striker and bring the FC and FCR pretty deep with the latter being the deepest. This gave my attack line a \ shape and added numbers to my central midfeild. Note that I have used this attacking shape to good succes in the past. My 3 man midfield aided by my fullbacks will keep the 5 man midfield occupied while my 2 players in the hole will help out defensively and hopefully create mayhem offensively.

the first goal was as anticipated, Olic my FCR collected a ball from my DM Rodwell and fed Cardozo my FC who in turn fed Fed Vaughan my FCL who slot it home. My 2 deep strikers had pulled 2 of the Fulham DCs

into the midfield leaving space for Vaughan to exploit on his stronger foot.

Interestingly, Fulham changed to a 532 in the second half, and I reacted accordingly, Turning my FC into the furthest attacker and pulling his flankers deeper and narrow and encouraging my FBs to eat up that space. The 2nd and 3 goal where from Olic pulling the full back infield and leaving space for Old Nev to cross perfectly for Cardozo. 3-0 game over.

Space is key!!

Last edited by PnyX; 26-04-2010 at 11:18.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 11:50 #8

Cleon

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Fantastic post, don't worry about idiots posting and attacking you either(from previous threads), I'll just delete such posts and ban the users

Would you mind if I posted some stuff from my games using asymmetric formations about how I get them creating space? It's good that finally someone has posted about something that I believe strongly in and spent many hours creating tactic's that create as much space as I can.

Great post yet again btw

Last edited by Cleon; 26-04-2010 at 12:25.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 14:04 #9

Kazza

Amateur
Join Date: 15th August 2005
Location: In the Blue Yonder
Posts: 783

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

As usual a well thought out well presented thread, thanks. It has lots of interesting ideas and raises lots of questions re the approach to the game.

I realise that I too like others, fall into a slightly lazy FM player. Not intentional but it is just that I do not always grasp some of the fundementals that a lot of you chaps seem to know with ease.

I like to play 442 as an old traditionalist and find other formations difficult to encompose (probably my age), old dog new tricks philosophy. Though I do like the idea of dropping a FC/SC into an AMC position, depending on how the play is going. I have occassionally dipped into 451 and I do look at the opposition's formation but also look at who the opposition is and what the odds are.

How do you measure your results re space? Do you watch a full game or/and use the stats post match?

Anyway thanks this has given me some more food for thought.

K

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 14:11 #10

mg539

Amateur
Join Date: 30th October 2007
Posts: 381

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **aderow**
> *I've always understood the importance of space since the day me dad beat into me head (almost too literally).*
> *Unfortunately I would say that I would be placed in the lazy FM player category as the only time I try to exploit the opponent is when they are playing very narrow (by playing down the flanks).*
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> *their mentalities. I have always liked playing fluid in attack (same mentality for my 4 attackers) while somewhat rigid in defense.*
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>
> *Now in what sort of situation do you think would be an appropriate time to concentrate on finding space in the middle rather than down the wings? How would you do so?*

I've just posted in another thread how I combat a 3-5-2, so here it goes:

In my game after Benitez left liverpool employed a 3-5-2 for a season before changing to a 3-4-3.

I actually found this really hard to play against and replayed the match a few times until I got to grips with it (although I continued from the first result obviously!)

The problem I found was that the two wide players (Gerrard and Yago in this case) were very defensive without the ball and played more as full/wing-backs than wide midfielders. This meant that although they were vulnerable to the quick ball wide, because they had three centre-backs they dealt with almost all crosses comfortably, but if I attacked with more patience, the wide players got back and almost man-marked my wingers, leaving the centre-mids to mark out my midfielders. This meant my attacks usually ground to a halt and eventually I lost the ball.

The way I countered it was playing very narrow and encouraging the full-backs to push on. This meant their wide players became over-loaded and with my wingers playing narrow, it meant they could link-up with my strikers easily to isolate one of the wider central defenders in a 2 on 1. Now my winger would play a short through ball to my striker who would duly finish from 8 yards out.

I find it interesting that we have found the same problem but solved it in completely opposite ways! My way here gives my "winger" space around the box by forcing the opposition wide midfielder to track my full-back, but it would be quite easy to adapt it to force their wide player to track my winger, giving my full-back acres of space (in fact this was exactly what happened for the last 20 minutes, and my left back got 2 assists...)

The important thing here is not how much space, but where the space is (quality not quantity in other words!) Alot of people complain about their players hitting too many long shots, but this usually boils down to having their strikers pressed against the opposition centre-backs on the edge of the box. This leaves miles of space for their attacking CM to run into, but which closes up 20-25 yards out. The CM then faced without a forward pass and nowhere to run then blasts the ball wide, many times in the match.

In my example above my winger had alot of space when I played wide, but couldn't do much with it. When I played narrower he had less space, but was in a much more dangerous area, and had far too much space for where he was on the pitch, meaning an easy pass for a striker to score or room to go on and score himself!

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 15:46 #11

aderow

Youth Team

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **mg539**
>
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>
> *In my example above my winger had alot of space when I played wide, but couldn't do much with it. When I played narrower he had less space, but was in a much more dangerous area, and had far too much space for where he was on the pitch, meaning an easy pass for a striker to score or room to go on and score himself!*

That's pretty interesting. I understand how playing narrower could increase space on the wings, which in this situation we both chose to exploit. Whenever I've played against formation, I've noticed that the oppositions' CBs were generally tight when the were attacking leaving tons of space on both sides. So that's what I did....and since I play with very attacking wingers (almost forwards) every time I regained possession it was a counterattack.

I remember in FM09 that marseille played with a wide 442 diamond and it was the nost trouble I've ever had in this game, both home and away. Against this formation what sort of space is there to exploit and how would I go about doing so?

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 18:15 #12

SFraser

Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Cleon**
>
> *Would you mind if I posted some stuff from my games using asymmetric formations about how I get them creating space? It's good that finally someone has posted about something that I believe strongly in and spent many hours creating tactic's that create as much space as I can.*

Go for it Cleon. The more the merrier.

> Originally Posted by **aderow**
>
> *Now in what sort of situation do you think would be an appropriate time to concentrate on finding space in the middle rather than down the wings? How would you do so?*

Alot of factors come into play when deciding whether it is best to concentrate attacks through the centre. Opponent strengths and weaknesses in terms of tactics and ability, and your own attacking strengths tactically and in player ability would be the key issues. Pitch would also play an important role, as would conditions, and a variety of other factors.

To actually create space in the middle requires that "tactical sleight of hand" I talked about. You cannot create space effectively by compressing and condensing play into the centre of the pitch, and I think this is where a lot of people go wrong, attempting to pack areas they wish to attack/play in with lots of players.

You need to first of all judge both how you can create it effectively and how you can use it effectively, and combine these into an overall gameplan. Creating space in the middle requires that you produce attacking threats in terms of width and depth, so for example two aggressive attacking wingers and two aggressive attacking wingbacks threatening to deliver the ball to a targetman, like my Fulham example. This means that while you wish to play through the middle and attack through the middle and have your biggest threat through the middle, you are creating space by threatening the flanks and threatening direct balls to your targetman, and you can use this "distraction" as an actual threat if you get crowded out in the middle.

The key point it is to create multiple options for attack and multiple threats for the opponent to deal with that maximise the possibility for your key, chosen, desired line of attack to operate in ideal conditions. If you can then combine this again to very good "distracting" attacking play, and get good link-up play for example between wingers and wingplay attacking theat and CM/Playmaker/Deep Striker central attacking threat then you can use both to great effect.

The "Holy Grail" of attacking football would be multiple options of immense attacking threat that each create space for each other and magnify the threat of each other, and are capable of linking up with complete ease. Wingers and strikers capable of latching onto balls over the top from a deep playmaker, forcing the opponents defence back towards it's own goal, creating space for the central players to operate in and dominate the midfield and attack players from deep positions in the attempt to overload

marking systems and put defenders in a "Catch-22" position. But that theory must be put into practice, ensuring you are actually threatening the opponent, actually creating space in the first place and not simply cutting off your own options and walking straight into brick walls with no way out.

This requires that you understand the opponents tactics. His shape, his strengths, his weaknesses, and that your own shape and instructions are threatening the opponent and not threatening some abstract theory. In my Fulham example, my initial "theory" was adequate, but the extreme width of my wingers allowed Fulham to play narrow and deep with two lines of four and put my wingers completely out of the game as I could neither find them easilly nor get good behaviour out of them. They would receive the ball and be tightmarked, closed down, and have limited options to play their way out. This did mean that Fulham left the centre under-manned and I did score early through the centre, but it was not untill I tucked my wingers into midfield and had them playing inside the fullbacks with my own fullbacks playing on the outside of the opponents fullbacks that I managed to really control the game.

And this also left Fulham with opportunities to attack down my flanks but my spine was strong and playing well and they offered little in final threat, even if they did get a lot of corners and a lot of possession time down the flanks.

The key thing in the Fulham game is that despite my inability to get real quality play from my wingers and lone striker, because that threat of wingplay+targetman was a threat Fulham dealt with all too well, my two goals did come through the specific space a targetted for attacking and scoring goals, as I did maximise that space as much as possible despite my poor wingplay, and did exploit it well. Had I managed to couple this central attackign strategy with good and well constructed actual threat down the flanks, and a decent teamtalk, the scoreline would have been comfortable.

The Fulham example is an example of my "distraction", my "tactical sleight of hand" simply not being well constructed and well organised and well played, but ultimately it did manage to do it's job enough times to create real, solid goalscoring chances through the centre.

I would like to keep going with this line of discussion and talk about that 4-2-1-3 I promised in my first post. It's not some kind of perfect formation, or perfect strategy or anything of that kind but it is easy to use to show some good points.

4-2-1-3 Space



Here you see a 4-2-1-3 formation along similar principles to the one I used against Fulham. The striker and two wingers offer the threat of tearing past a fullback and whipping in a cross to the lone striker and support running from deep. The second image shows his it would usually pan out in attacking areas, and you can see how it clearly aims to attack the middle and find space in the middle, but because of the way the threats are created and the team plays, the only player actually in space and capable of providing a real threat is Rooney.

The two wingers are pushed up to prevent the opponent from isolating Berbatov and pushing their defence forward and compressing the space for Rooney. The unfortunate cost is that no player other than Rooney is in space, both my wingers are isolated and highly unlikely to be any real threat, and my

Fullbacks have to shuttle back and forth defending as well as supporting as well as threatening an attack. Good principle, bad practice, but that is not to see it could not be lethal with other players on the wings, players great at running of the ball and timing runs.

This formation could work beyond freeing the AMC for other sides and players, but not for me with this team.



This second one against two lines of four, similar in principle to the Fulham game, is a throw of the dice and somewhat gung-ho in it's approach to scoring a goal. Rooney swaps with Berbatov and instead of playing as "back to goal targetman" starts running channels and threatening the back line with workrate, pace, and movement. The two CM's can hit the lone runner, the two fullbacks are now the only ones providing width apart from Rooney, and there are three highly creative players occupying that AMC space. Instead of wasting wingers that provide a hint of a threat and little else, that central gap is being bombarded and the formation still maintains that wide and high threat, but a much more effective one because the players doing so can linkup in multiple ways. Longballs over the top, sprinting down the flanks, or a flourish of rapier like passes from just infront of the 18 yard line.

Now ofcourse there are many, many other ways of achieving a similar thing, no doubt many vastly superior ways to what is shown here, but the principle is the important thing.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 19:01 #13

aderow

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Do you think the weather conditions might have affected your teams performance?

How much freedom did you give you players? Do you think that free roles/'move into channels' would help get you play to look for and exploit the space you want them to?
Also, did you attackers have the same mentality?

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 19:03 #14

dankrzyz

Semi Pro
Join Date: 26th November 2007
Location: Dallas, Texas, USA
Posts: 2,069

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
>
> *To actually create space in the middle requires that "tactical sleight of hand" I talked about. You cannot create space effectively by compressing and condensing play into the centre of the pitch, and I think this is where a lot of people go wrong, attempting to pack areas they wish to attack/play in with lots of players.*

The more I learn this lesson, the better my play becomes.

Right now I'm playing with a 4-2-3-1 with (mirrored) wide inside-forwards that move into channels (and into the box). But with two inside-forwards, the AMC, and the FC, and perhaps the odd charging MC or wandering fullback, things get very crowded in the middle. It also pulls nearly all of the defenders into the box. My attacks seem to get stuck in the muddy packed middle. I score mostly from a free-flowing counter-attack or when I steal possession from an opponent mistake or misplaced pass. Build-up play gets stuck without space, as I've described.

After reading this post, a few possible changes to my current tactic come to mind:

1.) Play a 4-3-3, Barcelona style, with a DMC instead of an AMC, to reduce the congestion in the middle of the pitch. Allow the attacking MC to become an attacker late into the box, instead of charging or drifting into an already crowded area.

2.) Vary my wide players' roles/instructions. Probably one Inside Forward moving into channels to essentially become a second striker would suffice. Perhaps couple that with a more true winger or even a wide Advanced Playmaker to mix up the attack. One to draw defender inside, one to draw them out, perhaps creating a mistake or some space for the FC or AMC to exploit. *(Does anyone actually use the wide Adv PM role? Never see/read it in these forums, always the IF or Winger...)*

3.) If my wide players are moving toward the middle, into channels or otherwise, what am I doing with the space that creates along the flanks? Probably not enough. I need to re-examine where my fullbacks move into and what they are able to do with the ball when it's kicked out to them in space.

One thing I have benefitted from was using my lone striker as an Advanced Forward or Poacher, to stretch the defense and put pressure on the opponent central defenders. This gives the AMC a little more space with which to work. A FC(s) and AMC(a) play too closely, in much of my experience.

Last edited by dankrzyz; 26-04-2010 at 19:05.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 22:17 #15

SFraser

Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Iam**
>
> *If I can ask one thing..... if you get the chance/inclanation. Can you please take some time to talk about FRW/RFD and how this is used to create space.*
>
> *I ask because I love the idea of play the formation you show or a solo striker with attacking wings, however I continualy fail at solo striker formations and I beleive one of the key things is that I do not understand the use of RFD when playing players in areas that are already in space.*

Run From Deep specifically is a huge instruction for how you want to play your football, and can be very counter-intuitive to use. Alot of instructions are like this, doing precisely what they say they do, yet the consequences are not what you might expect. RFD is very much like this, encouraging players to move forward early and often from "layer" to "layer" and attack space higher up the pitch, with the end result often being players that are pressed tight against defences, or clog up areas of the pitch, or find themselves in very difficult to reach positions. Ofcourse good effective use of RFD can create plenty of chances, escape markers, overload defenders, and quickly shift play from defensive to middle to attacking third, but it is very much important to use it wisely.

I have a good example of the perhaps counter-intuitive use of RFD from my game against Arsenal today. Arsenal were at home, and like to play very good attacking football using the middle of the pitch and the flanks in equal measure, all revolving around Fabregas who quietly sneaks up from a deep position and is covered by a DM. Today they played 2 DMs, one in the true DM position and another in the second CM slot. Now we all know Arsenals defence is not the strongest in the world, but the danger they have through the middle and down the flanks is immense. Now Arsenals defensive problems, like all true defensive problems, do not begin and end with the GK, CB's and FB's. It is a team wide lack of defensive capability, organisation, and even will.

Both teams setup like this:



You can see I still have no proper Leftback. Fabio was knackered after the Fulham match, Evra is still out with a Hamstring problem, O'Shea still has a week for his twisted ankle. So there will none of my usual marauding Fullback attacks down the left flank, but still I kept to this formation as I like how it plays, and it still has a very strong backline.

You might think that my formation is defensively rock solid and you would be right. My midfield trio should cause serious problems to Arsenals buildup play. You might also think that my formation is very counter-attacking, that I intend to sitback with four centrebacks, harrass Arsenal with 3 monsterous battleaxe CM's and ping balls forward for my pacey forwards to frighten the life out of Arsenals defence while those three CM's bomb forward in support. Well you would be wrong.

The intention was to absolutely destroy every Arsenal player that got a toe to the ball, and set a massive wall of Centrebacks between their attacking players and goal, but my attacking plan was to simply pass Arsenal to death, probe their space leaving, defensive backbone lacking team untill I created quality chances. The only players in my team with RFD were Evans + Brown set to mixed, and Fletcher set to mixed. Douglas Costa dropped deeper than Rooney and played slightly wider to produce a slightly lopsided front three, but they were all just advanced link up men looking to keep possession, maybe beat a man, and jostle for good quality space while Fletcher bombed backwards and forwards looking for gaps.

The final result was this:



22 Fouls, 59% possession, 3 CCCs, and they had 2 shots all match.

Arsenal already created plenty of space for me by A: being Arsenal and B: being at home. All I had to do was get players in the right positions, keep them there, and play good football. Two lines of three players all looking for space but not making forward runs, supported by my Fullbacks that carefully moved up the pitch and kept it simple. The only player in my midfield/attack that had RFD above rare was Fletcher. The rest just sat infront of the Arsenal defence and roamed around their rather defensively weak three man midfield.

While Valencia, Rooney and Costa did run with the ball, dribble, playmake, play throughballs etc. they did it from space infront of the defence and did it running at defenders.

I specifically chose high Workrate players for this match outside my back four. 13-15 for my wide, technical attackers and 16-18-18-19 though the middle. Specifically hard tackling, specifically high closing down, and forced Arsenal to either play through my monsterous centre or lump it down the flanks to my really good coverted CB fullbacks. They didn't really have much fun in this game, even though they didn't play particularly badly.

In terms of Run From Deep I didn't have to do much to create space, I didn't particularly have to play excessively wide, or push men forward and drop men deep to create space in the middle. All I had to do was play inside Arsenals Fullbacks and Wingers and enjoy the huge quantity of space they would offer me. Then I had to make sure I did not press the self-destruct button on this excellent pitch and in this excellent space for playing football by encouraging my players to bomb forward and getting them cut-off and lost behind Arsenal defenders, or clogging up the 18 yard line with 5 attacking players + Arsenals 7 man defence.

Run From Deep is very good at creating space, getting into space, overloading space but it is also very good at clogging up space, moving out of space, or cutting off options to players. Run From Deep rare is very, very good at getting players in space to just stay there and play their football.

Whenever you are thinking about Run From Deep, think about the example of a Central Midfielder. The best position for a Central Midfielder is very often just staying in the Centre of the pitch. Run From Deep, Roaming, Wideplay etc. can only move your CM away from the Centre. The same goes for the Lone Striker. It is all about what you *actually* want players to do, and not overcomplicating things is sometimes very hard when it comes to constructing tactics.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

26-04-2010 22:33 #16

mg539

Amateur
Join Date: 30th October 2007
Posts: 381

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **aderow**
>
> *That's pretty interesting. I understand how playing narrower could increase space on the wings, which in this situation we both chose to exploit. Whenever I've played against formation, I've noticed that the oppositions' CBs were generally tight when the were attacking leaving tons of space on both sides. So that's what I did....and since I play with very attacking wingers (almost forwards) every time I regained possession it was a counterattack.*
>
> *I remember in FM09 that marseille played with a wide 442 diamond and it was the nost trouble I've ever had in this game, both home and away. Against this formation what sort of space is there to exploit and how would I go about doing so?*

I used to also hate playing against this formation, but now with the tactics creator I love it!! I'll give a proper response tomorrow with screenies etc in a new thread or in this one...

Reply | Reply With Quote

26-04-2010 23:02 #17

mg539
Amateur
Join Date: 30th October 2007
Posts: 381

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Right I've just finished the screenies and because there are so many simply ways to exploit it, there are a total of 15 shots explaining 3 goals, so I'll start a new thread in how to combat 4-4-2 diamond tomorrow if that's ok!

Reply | Reply With Quote

26-04-2010 23:27 #18

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

got a question how would you combat chelseas narrow diamond formation

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 00:09 #19

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

kris because chelsea play extremely narrow they leave the wings and all the space that you can find there.....especially if you are playing on a wide pitch.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 00:26 #20

SFraser
Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **KrisL**
>
> *got a question how would you combat chelseas narrow diamond formation*

> Originally Posted by **aderow**
>
> *kris because chelsea play extremely narrow they leave the wings and all the space that you can find there.....especially if you are playing on a wide pitch.*

On top of exploiting the space Chelsea leave down the flanks, because it is Chelsea you can tire out their OAPS by making them chase the ball from flank to flank for 60 minutes.

The space Chelsea leaves is obvious, but the issue with Chelsea is that they are so strong as a team you cannot simply go out and exploit that space to attack from kick off. They will overpower you in midfield, dominate you upfront, and parry your attacks with ease. Chelsea control the most important part of the pitch by far, and they control it with ease.

Chelsea require quite a detailed strategy of defending the Drogba flick ons and Deco/Lampard/Ballack etc. longballs to the pacey striker, and the defeat of their attacking fullbacks that pop up once you are overloaded to whip a cross into their giants, and the complete throttling of the space around the D. The best way to do this is to defeat the problem at source by keeping possession and making them chase the ball for 60 minutes.

This not only deprives them of possession but it keeps your players in your half or close by for winning the ball back early, and it exhausts Chelsea no end.

The biggest benefit from exploiting the space Chelsea leaves down the flanks is not attacking opportunities, but the opportunity to tire Chelsea out and defeat them in detail in the late stages of the match.

That is an excellent example of using space not simply to attack, but as a part of a holistic strategy for dealing with very, very strong teams. Worth a thread of it's own in principle, but I certainly wouldn't object to anyone discussing it here .

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 01:07 #21

phidelta42

Amateur

Join Date: 3rd April 2007
Location: Stockton-on-Tees
Posts: 613

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
>
> *On top of exploiting the space Chelsea leave down the flanks, because it is Chelsea you can tire out their OAPS by making them chase the ball from flank to flank for 60 minutes.*
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>
> *That is an excellent example of using space not simply to attack, but as a part of a holistic strategy for dealing with very, very strong teams. Worth a thread of it's own in principle, but I certainly wouldn't object to anyone discussing it here .*

Agree with some of this. I like to have a couple of wide midfielders on support duty, but play with little width. I think you have to play very narrow, to stand a chance, even with a strong team, against Chelsea. The wide players are key for maintaining possession, and on support duty sit nicely in the space Chelsea leave. They probably do help tire Chelsea out but that is really a pleasant side effect rather than an aim. The wide players need to be full of energy though as they will be chasing the two CMs, and the advancing fullbacks, when not in possession. Getting them set up to close down the two Chelsea CMs and occupy the free space when in possession is the key to beating them. There are different ways to deal with the DMC and AMC, but I'd either play a heavily split midfield pair,with a strong team, or a central 3 with a weak team (so flat 451).

Chelsea's fullbacks have not often troubled me they bomb forward but rarely provide anything other than an out ball, they are Chelsea's weakness if you want to try and exploit the space they leave but I don't really target them. Against Chelsea its probably best to just do what you can to shut down their midfield and keep things tight at the back.

Narrow diamond is great at countering quickly through the middle, and thats when the AMC does the most damage. Shut down the midfield as best as you can and the AMC ends up starved of service. If you can keep possession in wide areas, in the middle third, there's always the chance that Chelsea will open up in search of a goal and can be picked off.

Last edited by phidelta42; 27-04-2010 at 01:40. ***Reason:*** *spg*

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27-04-2010 01:40 #22

aderow

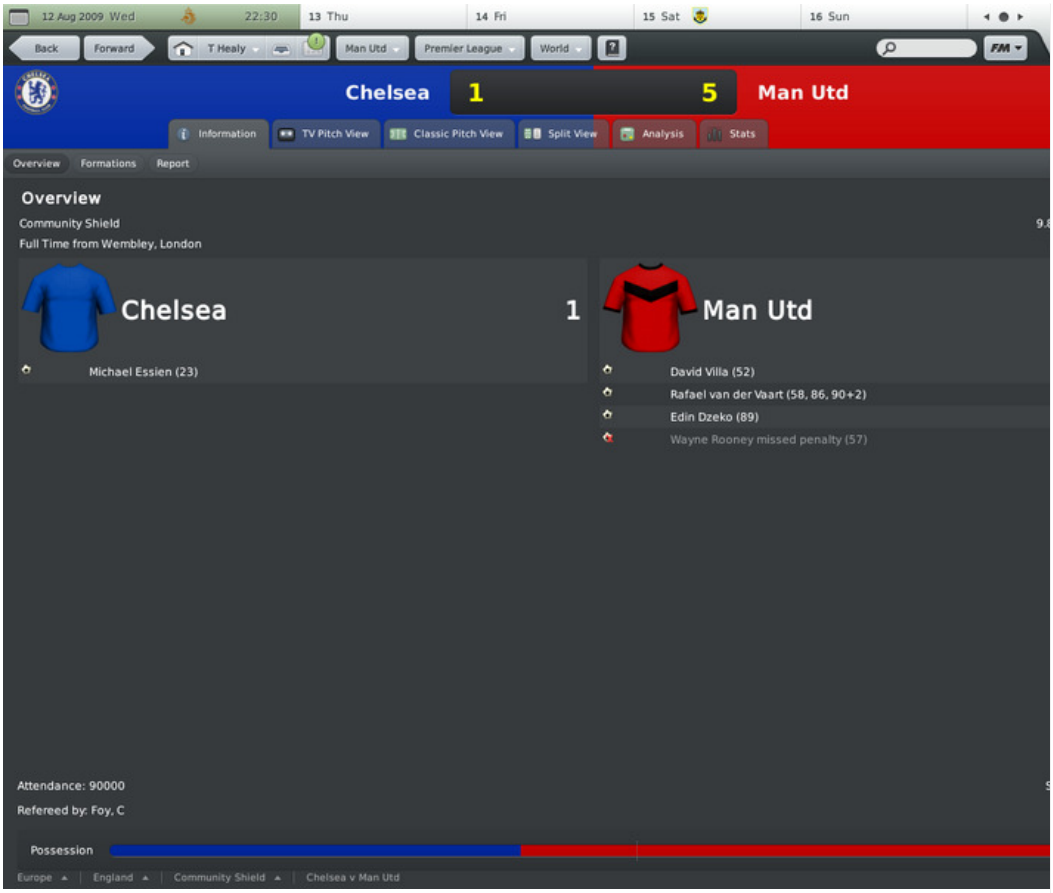
Youth Team

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
>
> *The biggest benefit from exploiting the space Chelsea leaves down the flanks is not attacking opportunities, but the opportunity to tire Chelsea out and defeat them in detail in the late stages of the match.*
>
> *That is an excellent example of using space not simply to attack, but as a part of a holistic strategy for dealing with very, very strong teams. Worth a thread of it's own in principle, but I certainly wouldn't object to anyone discussing it here .*

Perfect example of this:





I played down the flanks and had chelsea chasing around until they cracked. This lead to me scoring 3 goals in the last 10+ mins of the match. Nice debut for van der vaart I must say

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 01:43 #23

phidelta42

Amateur

Join Date: 3rd April 2007
Location: Stockton-on-Tees
Posts: 613

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **aderow**
>
> *I played down the flanks and had chelsea chasing around until they cracked. This lead to me scoring 3 goals in the last 10+ mins of the match. Nice debut for van der vaart I must say*

Were your goals on the counter perchance?

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 03:29 #24

aderow

Youth Team

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **phidelta42**
>
> *Were your goals on the counter perchance?*

The goals went like this:

Villa - Pass from van der vaart, who was about 30 yds from goal, to berbatov, who was just inside the box. Berbatov one touch pass to Villa, who was about 5 yds away from him.

VDV (1) - Villa out on the left wing plays the ball to VDV at the top of the box. VDV dribbles into the box and beats Cech at the near post.

VDV (2) - This one was a counter. 4 on 2 counter off of a corner (Im a mad man I know). Wes brown sprints down the right side and plays into the box. VDV, for some reason is the furthest player up the pitch and gets to the ball before Cech does.

Dzeko - Corner cleared out and collected by evra. Evra plays it back to the corner kick taker villa. Villa plays it back to evra and every plays it to the right wing where o'shea has tracked back to after the corner. O'shea brings it forward and then plays a through ball past 3 chelsea players to Dzeko in the box.

VDV (3) - Evra plays the ball to park on the park on the left. Park cuts back past bosingwa and play a through ball in to Villa. Unbelievably 4 chelsea players go to close down Villa. Villa then squares the ball back to VDV sitting at the top of the box. VDV is a like a child in a candy store as he dribbles in the box completely unmarked and slots it past Cech for his hattrick.

It seemed that as the game was closing, Chelsea began to close down with multiple players. They were being pulled out of position and I suspect that this was due to the fact that they were losing. When park received the ball on the left wing, I saw Lampard running over to assist bosingwa but this in turn led to space opening up in the middle which VDV used exceptionally well. This is the case for his first and third goals.

Dzeko's goal came from my players quickly recycling the play. Before chelsea had a chance to get out of their own box, my wingers and full backs were waiting on their respective wings ready to play in the perfect cross. The wings were completely open and and I had 4 players who had enough space to get the job done. Evra played the ball to o'shea on the other wing, and he opted to play it on the ground past 3 chelsea players. I think that the success of the pass is down to the point that SFraser brought up earlier, they were tired. After chasing the ball for over an hour, they were definitely mentally and physically close to exhaustion and prone to killer passes.

I must say that SFraser has brought up a very good point here. It turns out that 3 of my goals came down to the exploitation of space that was created.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 03:39 #25

phidelta42

Amateur

Join Date: 3rd April 2007
Location: Stockton-on-Tees
Posts: 613

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

I'm not entirely convinced on the tiredness aspect. In FMLive plenty of teams got away with tactics that demanded too much physically of their players, with instant recovery after games, they could do so, but ultimately in games I never really saw teams performance drop off as badly as one would hope. The key battle was always in getting your opponent to attack so you could carve them open on the counter.

Chelsea's strategy in FM10 is essentially a typical FMLive manager's apporach :s

I still think with Chelsea you beat them by getting them to attack, whether the goals come from counters or not. 41212 gets progressively weaker as a tactic the wider the team is asked to play. I think in this game when you equalised Chelsea went too attacking. Had you not got the equaliser when you did and had to go gung ho in search of it I suspect Chelsea would have added another couple of goals with counters through the middle, tired or not.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 04:01 #26

aderow

Youth Team

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **phidelta42**
>
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The thing is only one of my goals came from counters. The rest were from my attack.
I understand how you feel about the tiredness....even if they were tired, players of that level are paid not to allow things like a full back cutting through 3 of them with a pass. At the same time, at the point in the game with the way that chelsea were chasing the ball around, you shouldn't be suprised that team develop holes in their defense. And this space can appear on the wing, in the box, or in both places at once.

Now chelsea took the lead against the run of play. The had a good 10-15 minutes where they got 6 or 7 shots off. And that was it. The rest of the game they were generally either pinned in their box, or trying to close down my wide men with multiple of their own players causing space to open up in the middle. The reason I didn't score earlier was because my attackers were squandering their chances.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 04:12 #27

phidelta42

Amateur

Join Date: 3rd April 2007
Location: Stockton-on-Tees
Posts: 613

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **aderow**
>
> *The thing is only one of my goals came from counters. The rest were from my attack.*
> *I understand how you feel about the tiredness....even if they were tired, players of that level are paid not to allow things like a full back cutting through 3 of them with a pass. At the same time, at the point in the game with the way that chelsea were chasing the ball around, you shouldn't be suprised that team develop holes in their defense. And this space can appear on the wing, in the box, or in both places at once.*

I'm not suprised at the increase in space for your team to exploit I'm just assuming, perhaps wrongly, that it happened because they went to a more attacking strategy, if not at 1-1 then certainly at 1-2. More width, more closing down etc will have removed their usual defensive solidity, and reduced the effectiveness of their midfield, although it sounds like it wasn't doing the job anyway My gut is Chelsea gave you more space through that change in strategy rather than your team finding it.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 08:26 #28

Cleon

Moderator

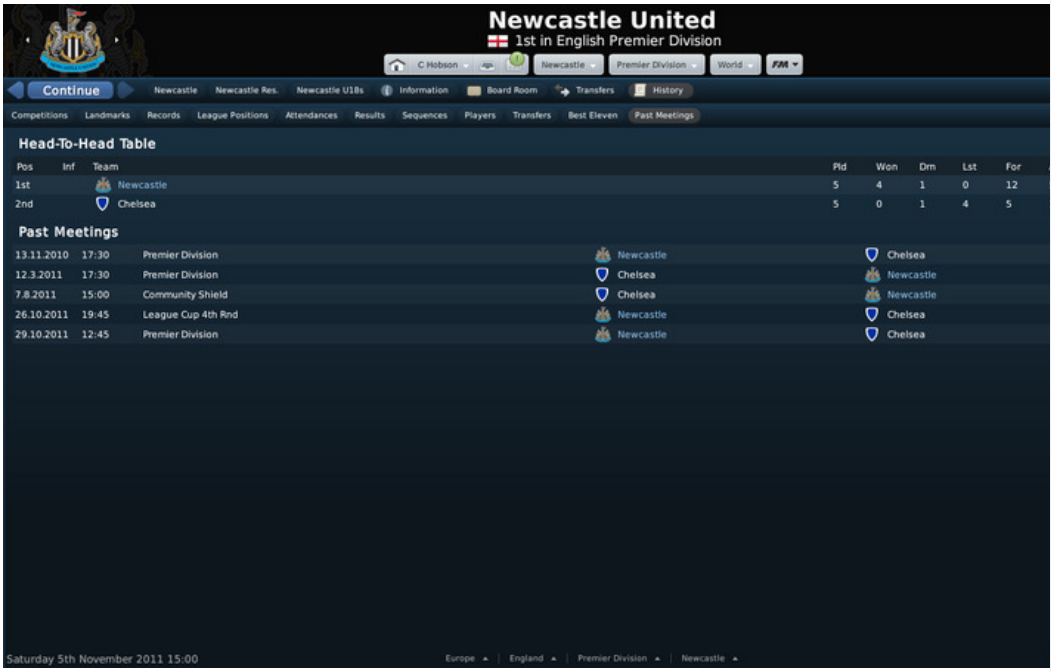
Join Date: 22nd February 2003
Posts: 20,487

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Before I start, if anyone wants to know more about how I set up and the shape of my tactic then it can all be found in here http://www.community.sigames.com/showthread.php?t=203162

This way I can keep what I talk about purely about the space and keep on topic.

I have a really good record against Chelsea playing as Newcastle. I've just started season 3 and these are the results so far;



Last season I struggled as my team had only just come into the league. So man for man I was a lot weaker than Chelsea. But by exploiting the space I create in game I made up for that. When I put 3 past them last season in the 2-3 win they had only conceded 6 goals in 27 games. So to put 3 past them was some achievement. This season I've beat them 3 times already in the first 2 months of the season.

The key for me beating them isn't to play a possession game but instead it's the midfield battle. As long as I can win the ball back in the middle then I have enough pace in my side to exploit the wings.

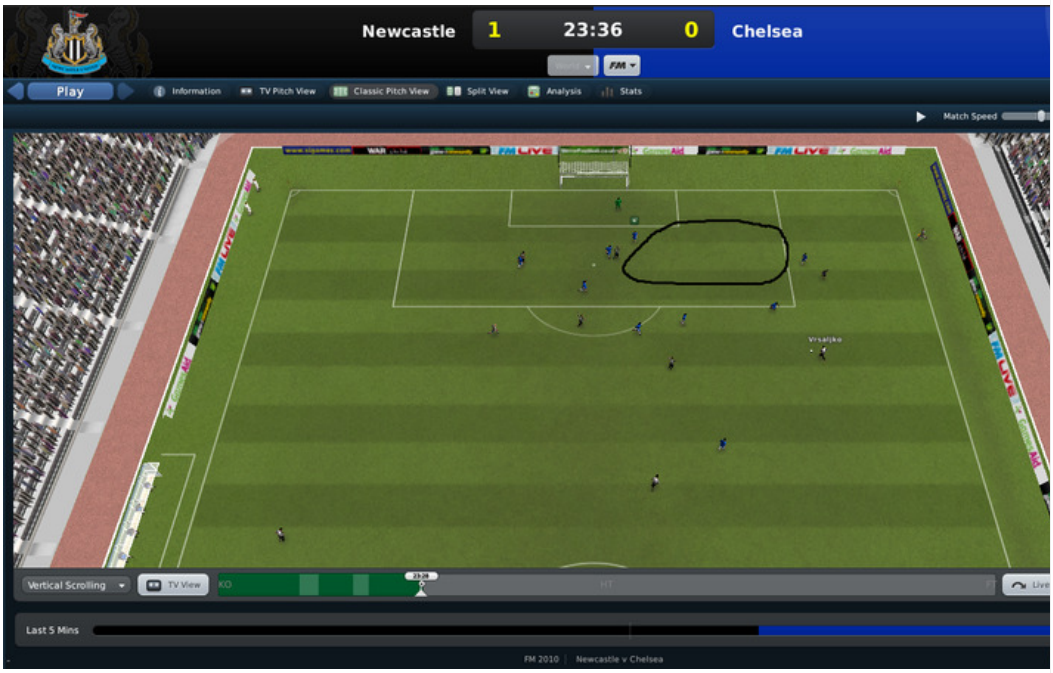


In that screenshot my AMC and left back hound the Chelsea player and win the ball back. Now look at the massive amounts of space that my AMR and MC have especially on the wing. For this game I played wider than normally, to force Chelsea's midfield to be wider apart when trying to close down my own players.
If you look at my defensive player's you'll see they are quite comfortable and positioned well to deal with

any threat Chelsea could have caused if I had not won the ball. I'm happy to let Chelsea have a lot of possession as long as it is all midfield possession. I don't rush closing them down as I like to hold my shape. My players are set up to close the opposition down in the right areas just before they get to any dangerous areas of the pitch. Because of this Chelsea has to pass sideways and backwards a lot. To show what I mean look at this screenshot;



The only options they really have are to pass to the people circled in red. I have 9 players back behind the ball. That might seem a lot but because of how I've set up it allows me to harass them in important areas and then break very fast. If you look at how Chelsea are positioned you'll see there is lots of empty space to exploit.



My right back gets lots of space and is more attacking than normal for this game to exploit the space on the wings. Now from this screenshot it doesn't look like he has any real options to threaten the goalkeeper. But if you look close he does. If he puts the ball into the area that is circled my striker should get onto. Or the AMR might make a run into the space. If you look at positioning of my striker you'll notice he already has

the advantage over his marker. His marker is the wrong side of him.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 08:26 #29

Cleon

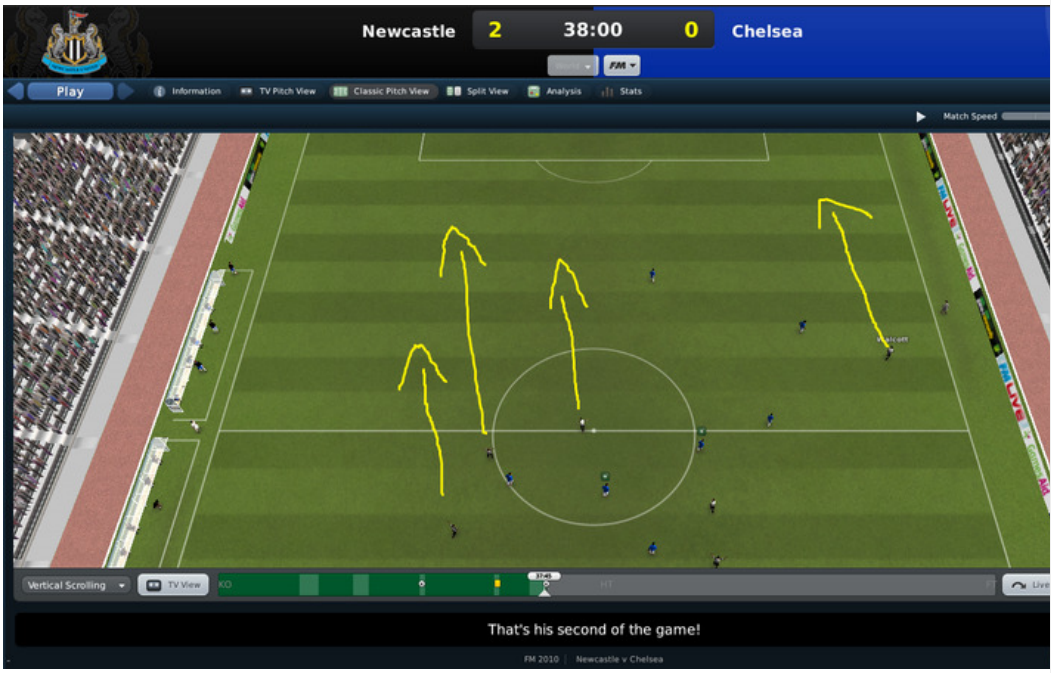
Moderator

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space



Lo and behold the ball is played into the space and Neymar slots it home for 1-0.



This is the build-up for goal number 2. Again I win the ball in the middle and break quickly. But just look at all the space in the middle and the left side of the pitch. Walcott drives down the right and does a simple cutback for the most central player Neymar and he slots it home for 2-0.



In the final screenshot this is 2 player's creating space for themselves. Fleck drives past his man because as you can see his marker is injured but also a fair distance away from him. My left winger is also free for the pass should he choose that option. As Fleck drives forward Chelsea's right back comes across to cover but it's too late and he has far too much space to make up. Fleck just slots it home for 3-0. If the right back had made up the space to attempt a tackle I'm confident Fleck would have passed to the left midfielder who was unmarked.

Last edited by Cleon; 27-04-2010 at 08:28.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 09:41 #30

PnyX

Amateur

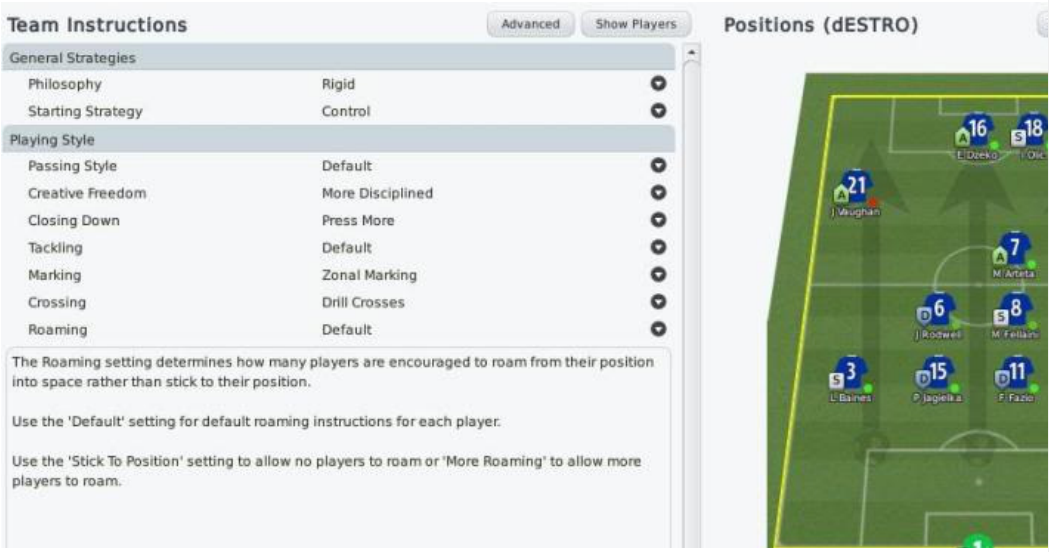
Join Date: 27th December 2005
Location: Spit Fiyah!
Posts: 115

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Last night I found myself in the CL final with my Everton team against Barca with the chance to complete a historic quadruple (League, Carling Cup, Community Shield and Champions League!). Pre-match odds were stacked against me and my pre-match report had me lacking in every domain except aerially!
My approach to the game was I watched Barca's previous game a bore draw 1-1 against Malaga, which didn't tell me much given that Pep had rested all his players for the big day. All I knew was they were going to line up in their traditional 433.
From my real life experience of barca and after that real life destruction of Arsenal, I kind of knew that the main threats will be the in-cutting Messi, pass master Xavi and the marauding Dani Alves exploiting the space left by Messi pulling infield.
My strategy was simple, as opposed to trying to create space for my team, I was going to deny Barca the space they need and force them to play a certain way while hoping I could get them on a set piece or counter down the space left by Dani Alves.
To deny Messi space to cut infield, I played with 2 DMs with Rodwell charged to occupy that space. My Duracell Bunny Olic was going to run like crazy today closing down the DM and the CBs. The starting line ups were as follows:



3 things jumped out, (1) Iniesta and Messi were going to be in the same zone which suited me well knowing that iniesta plays slightly higher up than Xavi, (2) Xavi was playing on the other side of Messi, which meant I could cut out his supply to Messi and (3) Barca's left side bar Xavi was pretty useless.
I changed my formation to this:



Arteta was to force Xavi to play down the 'dead' Barca left and Rodwell and Baines occupy Messi and Iniesta. Vaughan was to track Dani Alves and pounce on any counter opportunities. I was happy to let the Puyols and Abidal have plenty possession at the back.

The game played out just as I planned, Barca was forced to shoot from distance and Iniesta and Messi had no space in which to operate. Arteta was pushing Xavi away from the danger men and the barca CBs had plenty of passes in harmless areas.
My break came at the 82 minute, An Arteta free kick to the towering head of Fellaini and 1 - 0. That aerial dominance finally paid off! Barca then did something pretty strange, Xavi, Touré and Turan had been replaced by Hleb, Marquez and Busquets by this point and they switched to a 5 2 3 with Ibra, Messi and Hleb up front, Iniesta and Busquests in the middle and the rest at the back! I reacted promptly; bring on Cahill to play at MR and Olic at ML with a DM and 2 MCs and a lone striker, playing on the break. This forced a corner on 89 mins which Jaglielka headed home.
I didn't try to outplay a technically superior Barca, I just stopped them playing and prayed for set pieces!





You can see how many passes Xavi lost and how Barca was forced to play in thier own half. Messi managed just 2 shots from distance with Iniesta taking 4 from distance.

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27-04-2010 09:42 #31

mg539
Amateur

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Join Date: 30th October 2007
Posts: 381

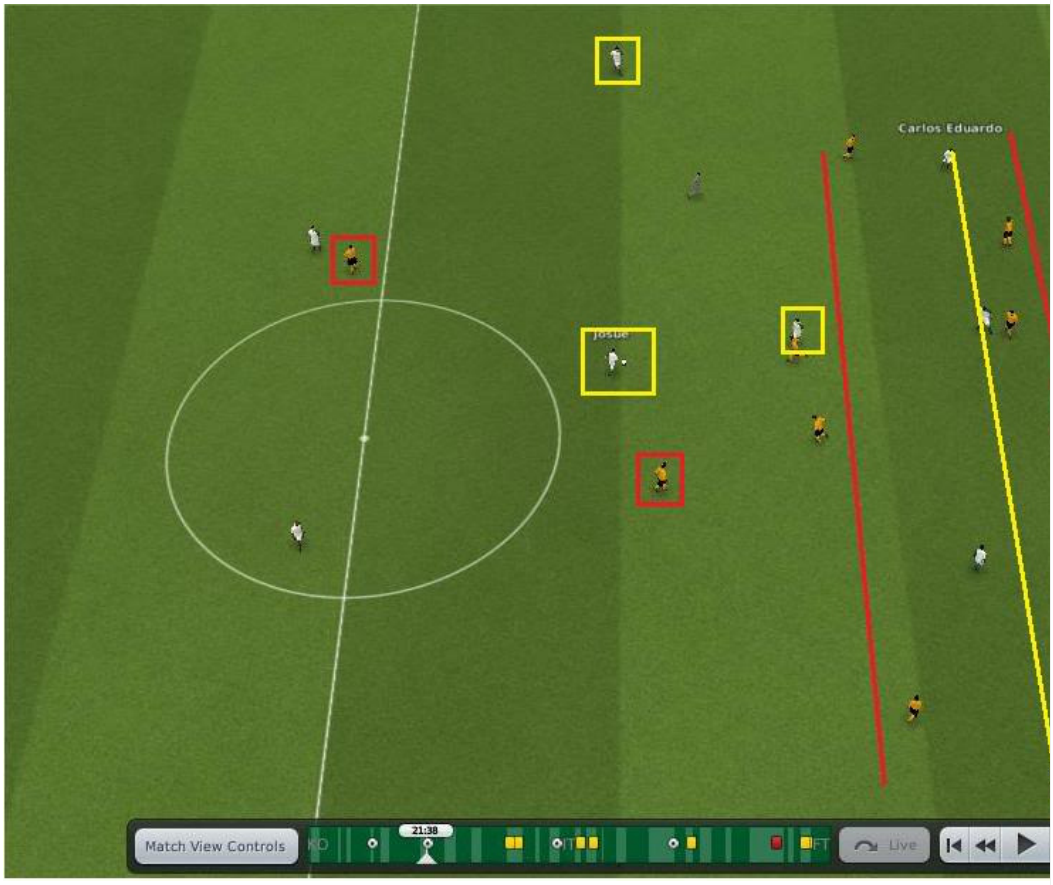
Yesterday I was asked by aderow how I found space against the opposition playing 4-4-2 diamond. This immediately made me think of my champions league debut year on my current save, where in the group stages my little Wolves beat Wolfsburg 4-0 both home and away, so I'm going to concentrate on the first match away to show how you can beat a team when massive underdogs. I find SFraser's threads very interesting, but with the greatest of respect his results are achieved with Man United meaning most of the time his side is more skilled man-for-man than the opposition, which is not the case here:

Hopefully my example here will provoke discussion from others how they counter the same formation and others, since the discussion started by countering the 3-man defence, to which we had completely different solutions to take advantage of the same thing, both of which seem to work!

First lets look at the formations:
Now, the obvious bit of space is between the DMC and the AMC, but actually, the most space is either side of the DMC - -by forcing him to commit to one side of the pitch the other becomes completely open in the centre of the park. I take advantage of this by making my MCl be Box-to-Box and my FCl a deep-lying forward. My FCr is given poacher instructions, with the key thing being "moves into channels", dragging the DMC to my right, giving the B2B and deep-lying forward acres of room.

This gives the following line-up:
Goalkeeper
Fullbacks(Auto)
Central Defenders (Defend)
Wingers(Support)
Ball-winningCM(Defend)
B2B(support)
Poacher(attack)
Deep-lying forward(support)

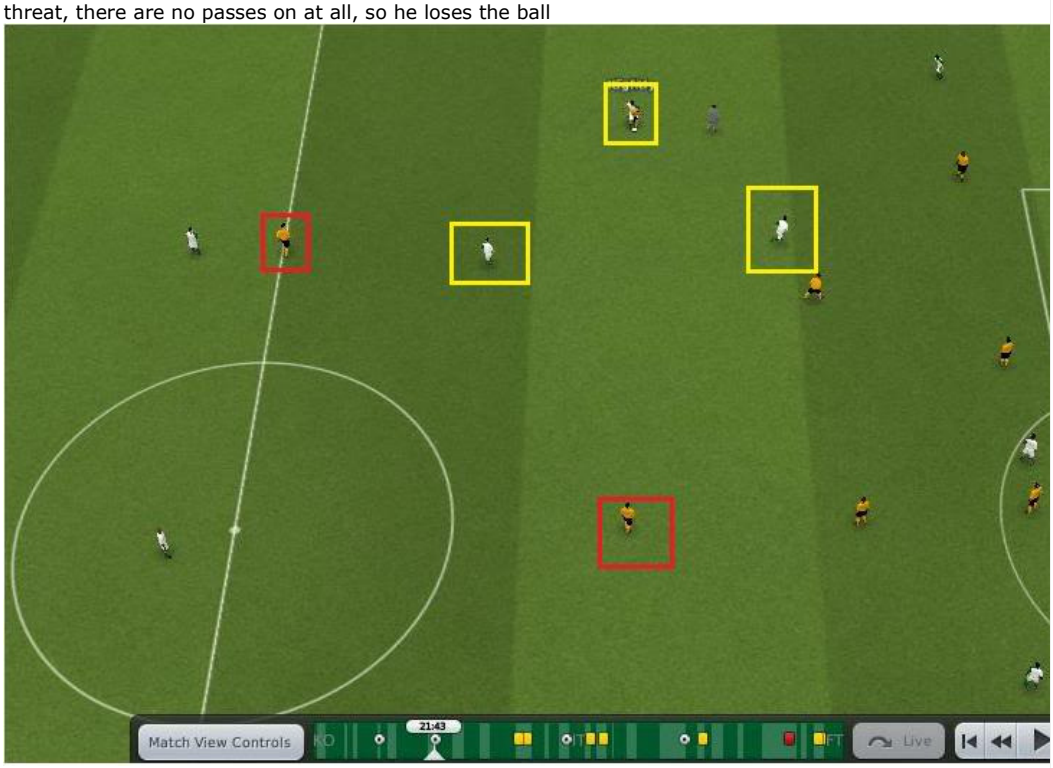
They probably had minor tweaks, but nothing substantial. For team instructions, standard and balanced, maybe less creative freedom, press more.
For OIs I usually follow my assistant's advice, but here I decided to tight mark, always close down and tackle their AMc hard - this may seems OTT but he is their team's link man. If I can cramp him room enough to take him out of the game, they will never break through my line.



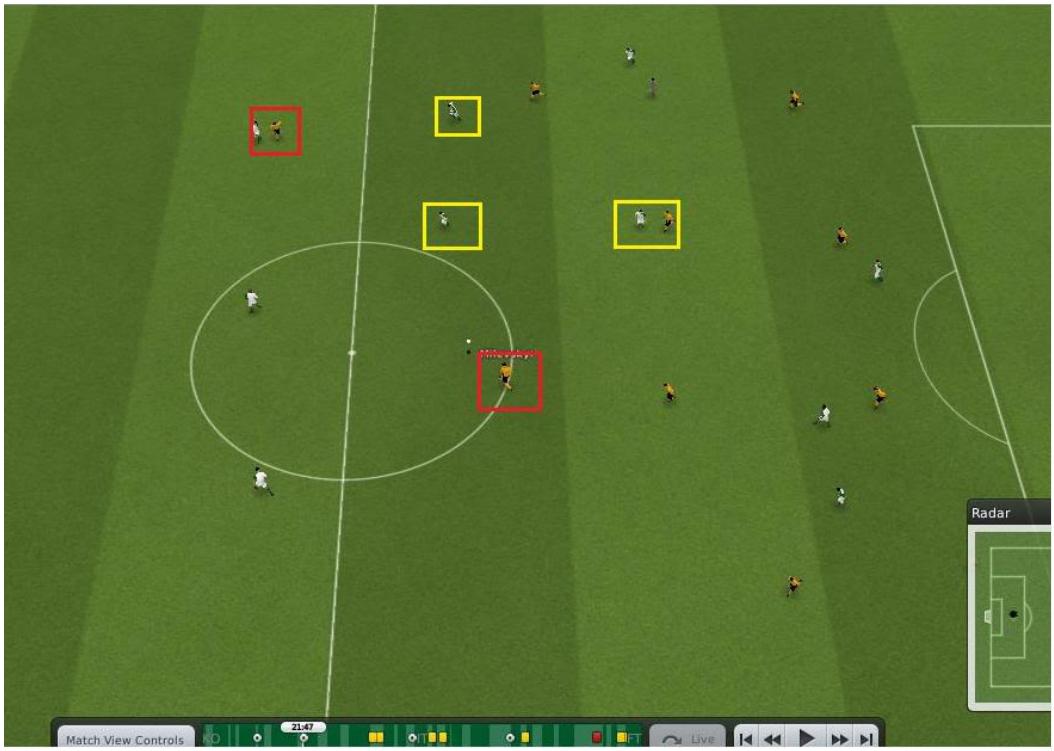
Notice here how their wide midfielders have actually gone and joined their strikers in a line, creating huge spaces out wide. My defensive line is pushing up and denying them any space, while my ball-winning CM is tight on their AMc, also my B2B is now closing down their DMc with my DLF in attendence - he has to get rid to the only man in space, the LB.



My right winger closes him down, meaning apart from passing back to the DMc, who will soon be under threat, there are no passes on at all, so he loses the ball



Notice how my DLF is still way inside my own half, meaning he is available for the pass to exploit the huge space around him, due to their DMc and AMc being so far down the left hand side of the pitch. Notice also how my poacher is already moving into the channel where the LB would usually be, who has been caught higher up the pitch.



My DLF has received the ball with no pressure, while the opposition defence has shifted left in an attempt to plug the gap, leaving my poacher to make a diagonal run across the CB. My DLF plays a first time ball over the top to my poacher a couple of yards clear. He fluffs the chance with the keeper blocking, but my DLF runs forward to support him so has the easiest of goals from the edge of the area, keeper on the floor, all defenders around my poacher.

Last edited by mg539; 27-04-2010 at 10:03.

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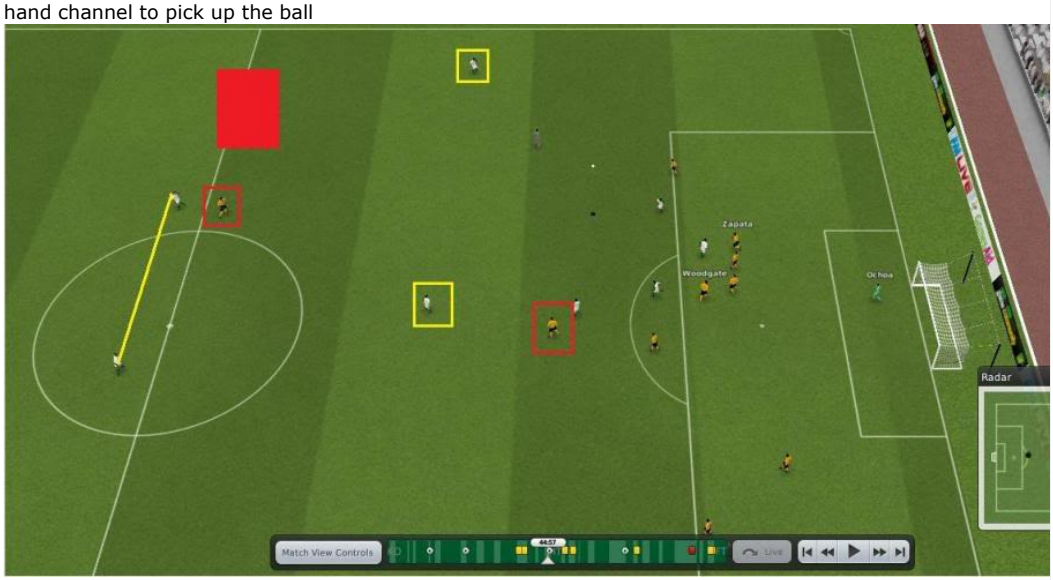
27-04-2010 09:52 #32

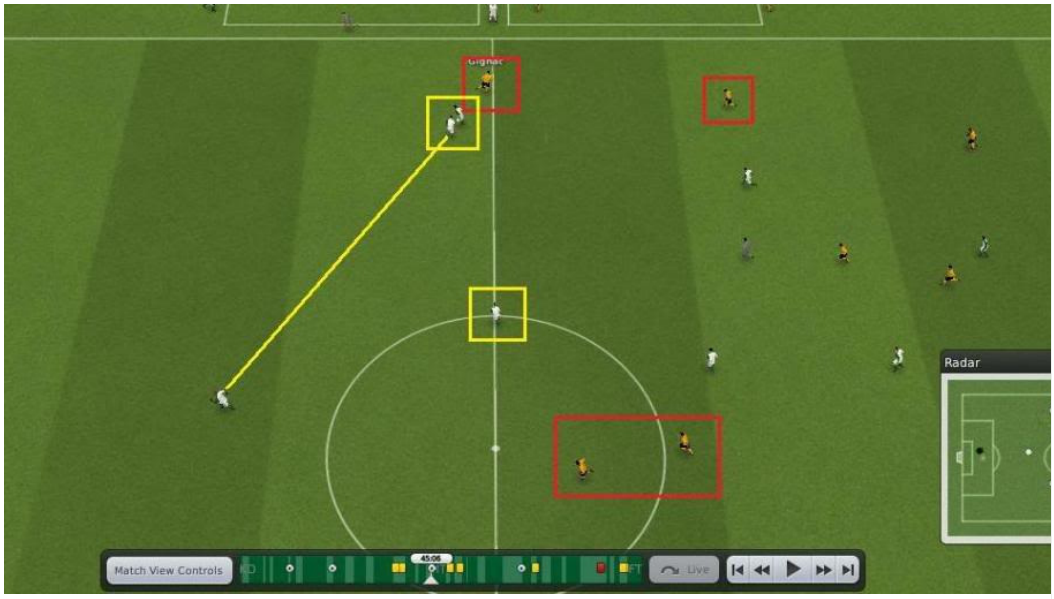
mg539

Amateur
Join Date: 30th October 2007
Posts: 381

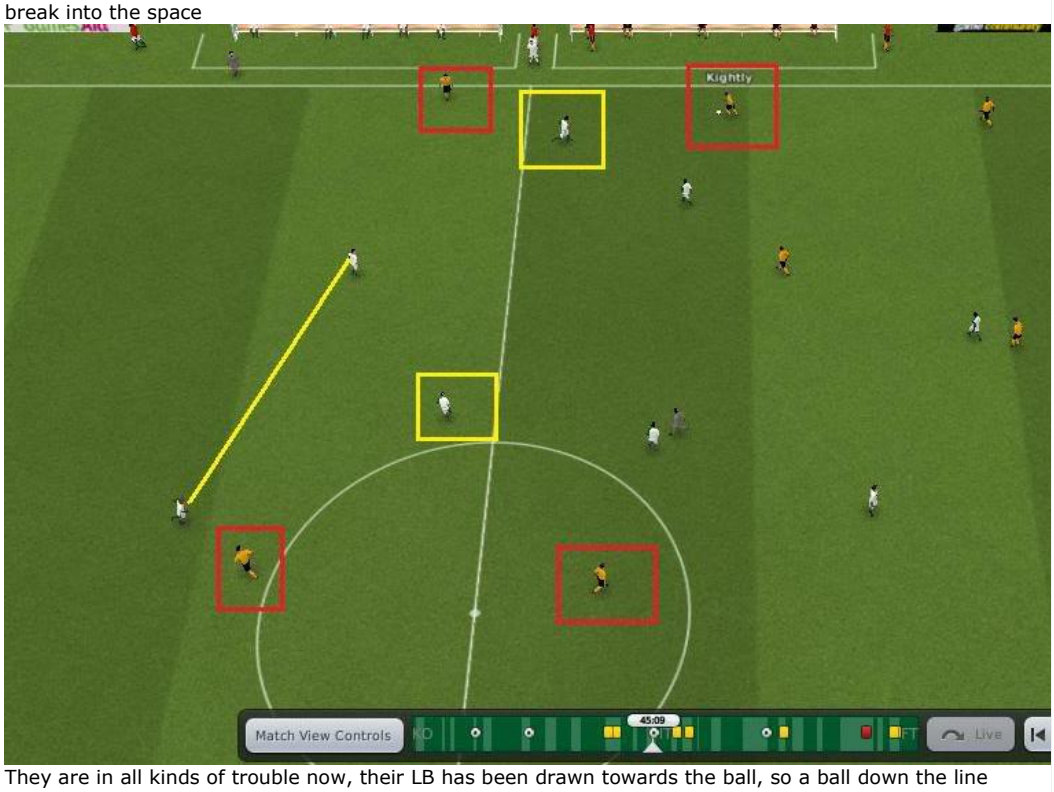
Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Its a similar story next, here Dzeko has just ran around 2 defenders and had a shot which my keeper deflected back out into the area, where a defender has booted it clear. My poacher moves into the right hand channel to pick up the ball

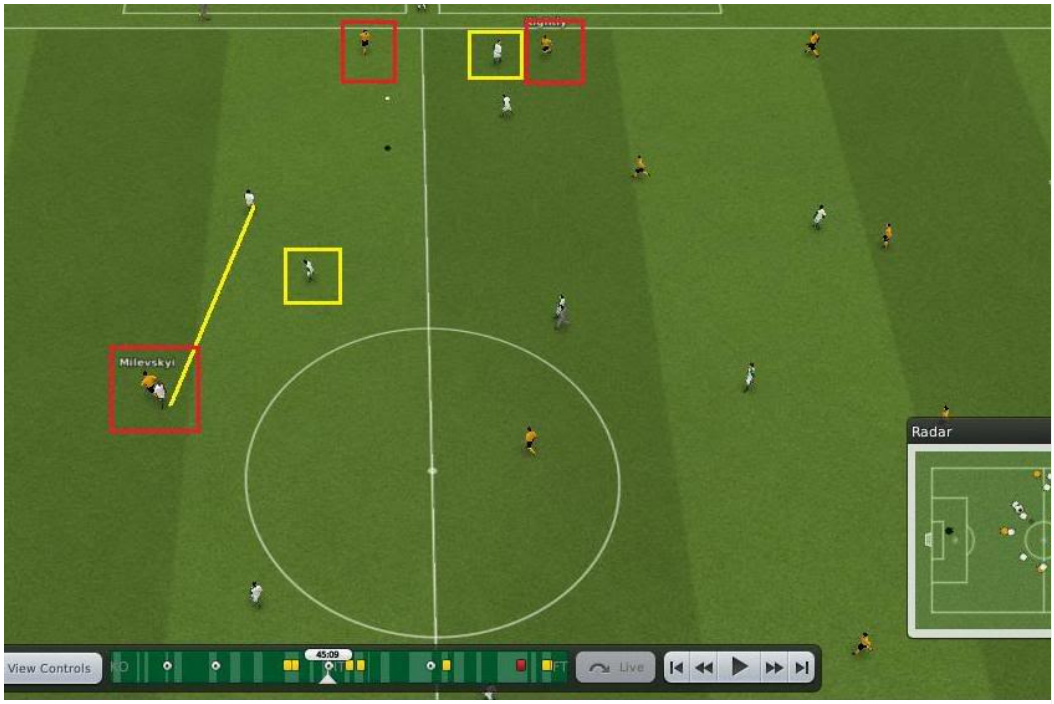




Now he has drawn markers down my right-hand side, he lays it off to my winger, while my B2B and DLF break into the space



They are in all kinds of trouble now, their LB has been drawn towards the ball, so a ball down the line would send my poacher through, while my DLF is 1-1 with their RCB due to the whole defence being dragged over. My B2B has sensibly stopped his run - the DMc hasn't tracked him so could cut out the pass, so he has to be on hand to provide cover if necessary.



My winger chooses the ball over the top to the centre of the pitch, my DLF chips the keeper from the edge of the box.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 10:00 #33

mg539

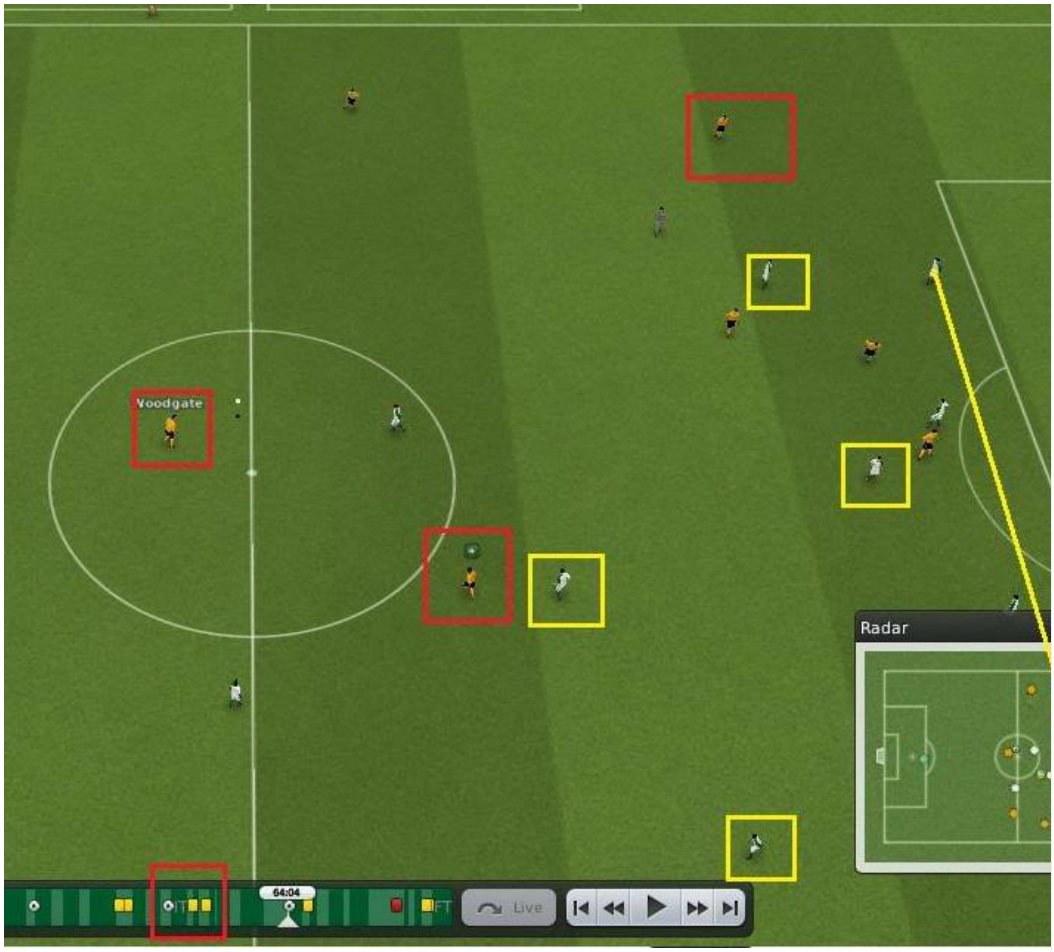
Amateur

Join Date: 30th October 2007

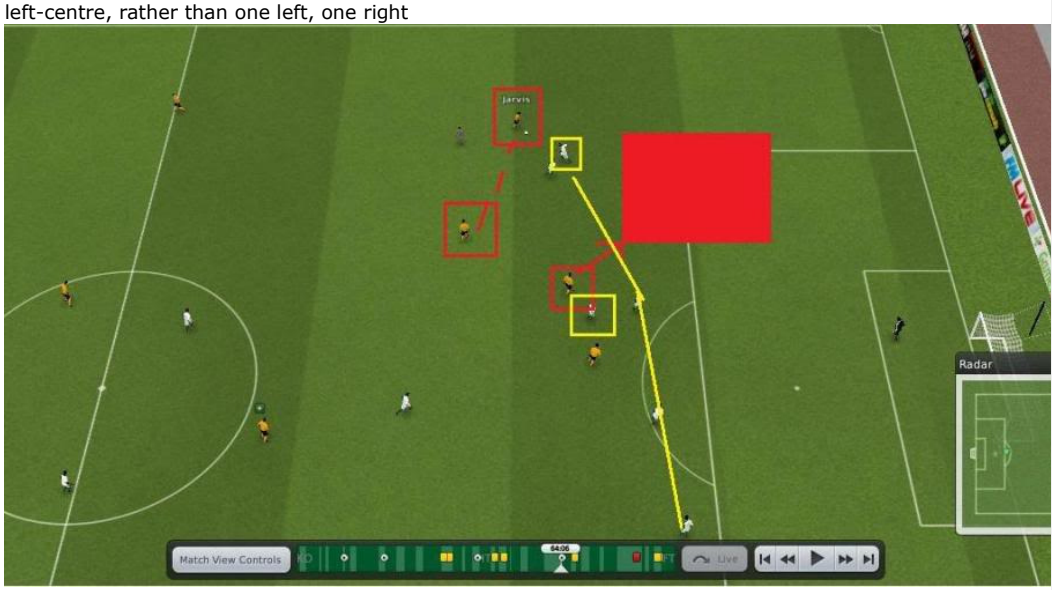
Posts: 381

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

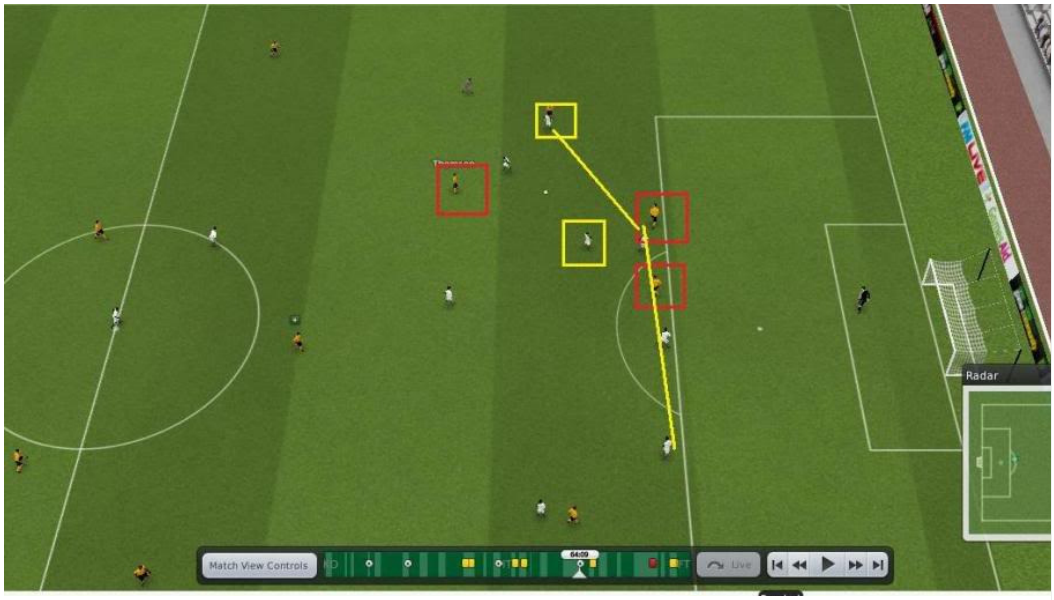
Here is my fourth goal, one where I was already on the attack rather than the opposition - my attack has just broken down and my DMc has mopped up, then passed to my CB, who plays a long diagonal ball out to the left wing. I've highlighted their diamond - even on a wide setting it is narrower than my flat 4, so my winger has alot of room...



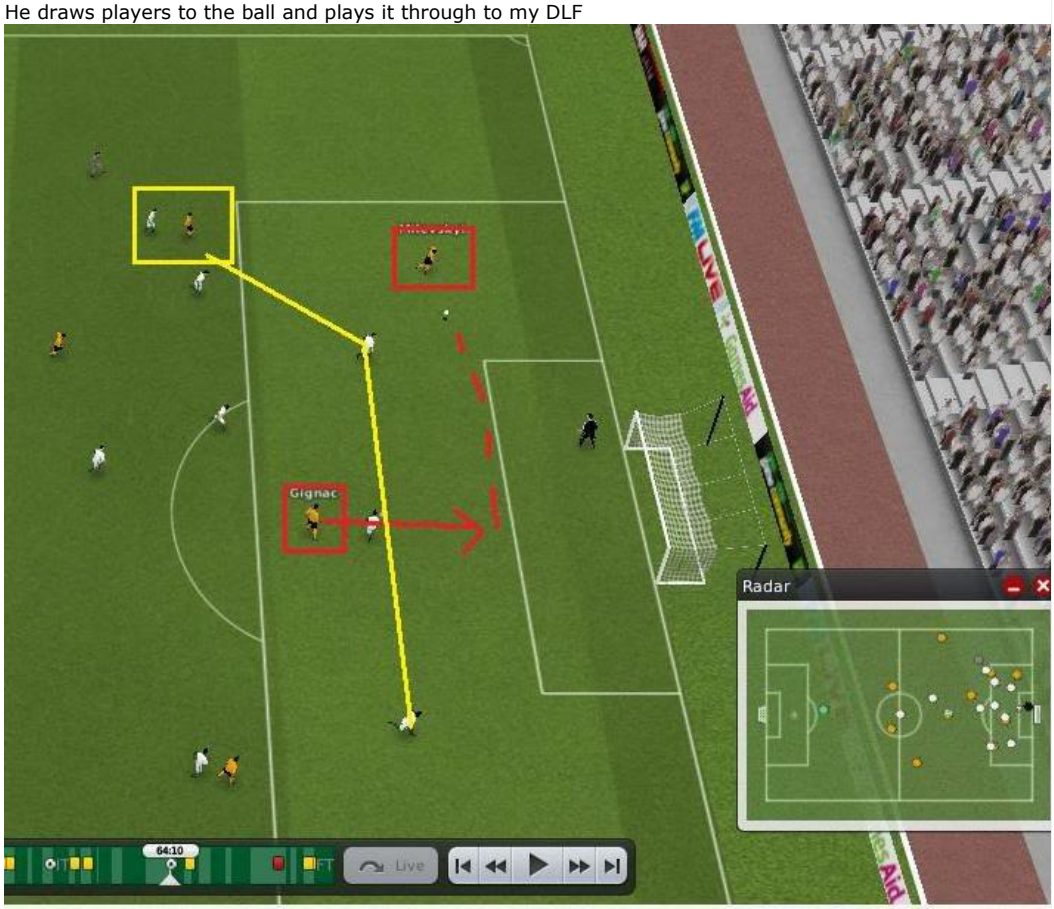
Now here is some interplay between my winger, B2B and DLF, demonstrating why they are both left-centre, rather than one left, one right



My winger could play my DLF in now, but Jarvis is not a good passer, so he plays it simple to my B2B



He draws players to the ball and plays it through to my DLF



My DLF now has acres of space to fizz the ball across the box to my awaiting poacher to tap-in.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 10:14 #34

mg539

Amateur

Join Date: 30th October 2007

Posts: 381

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

So my conclusions from all that are
a) cramp the opposition for space by having a slightly high defensive line, focus closing down on their AMc
b) space is primarily either side of the DMc, best utilised by drawing him wide, allowing players to break free down the centre.
c) A DLF and a partner who moves into channels is crucial!! Two goals have my DLF knitting the play together from deep, while the other he is the outlet found on the break. Two of the goals are also reliant on my poacher dragging markers wide as well as the DMc for others to take advantage of.

d) I have a personal preference for a B2B on the same side of the pitch as my DLF. While i'm sure he could be an advanced playmaker, or on the opposite side to my DLF, hopefully 2 of the goals show why this is my preference.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 10:15 #35

mg539

Amateur
Join Date: 30th October 2007
Posts: 381

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Hope that's ok Cleon - the reason I initially gave it its own thread was because its so long, and quite specialised analysis! Is there anything ppl would like to add?

Just to finish, I had 14 shots on target to their 6, 9 CCC to their 3! One of those 3 lead to the second of my goals here though. Obviously I'd prefer them to have had less, but I accept the occasional slip-up from a high line if it means winning the ball higher up the pitch for attacking

Last edited by mg539; 27-04-2010 at 10:48.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 10:59 #36

Cleon

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Some great discussion happening in here.

Lots of tips on exploiting the space differently too

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 12:45 #37

PhroX

Semi Pro
Join Date: 18th March 2007
Posts: 2,038

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Very intersting read, and I think I'm almost implementing some of these ideas (by accident or design) in my current game as Eastleigh, in particular the thought about playing wide but focusing down the centre. I found this by accident (I clicked the wrong option and was mighty impressed by what happened). My standard tactic is a 4-2-3-1. I'm only in the BSP, so my players aren't great by any means, but the way my attacking 4 create space around the opponents back line is very impressive.

Sorry, no screenshots (I'm at uni, might try to get a few when I get home)

My forward is set to TM/Support, plus he has the "runs into channels" PPM, AM is AM/Attack, AML is IF/Attack and right footed, AMR is winger/attack, plus I've a deep lying playmaker in the CM position and DM DM behind them (some minor individual tweaks). Even the IF stays pretty wide to start with, due to the high width setting drawing their FBs out, but the ball generally finds it's way to the AMC or MC due to the central focus. If the opposition midfield close them down, or restrict options, the ball usually goes back to my DM and FBs.

The interesting stuff tends to happen when the AMC pushes high enough up for one of the opposition DCs to get interested in him. If the DC pushes up a little to mark him, or tackle if he has the ball, their D-Line is no longer flat, and there's a gap to one side. If it's the left side, my IF often suddenly cuts inside his fullback, either leaving him in space, or drawing the other DC, leaving my striker alone. The striker, thanks to his PPM, also often draws the DCs to one side, leaving space which the AMC can step into. The AMR, a pure winger, really forces the opposition's DL to stick wide, preventing him from covering when the DCs create gaps. If the DC doesn't step up immediately, I've got my AMC with the ball on the edge of

It doesn't always work, but probably more so than at any time in the past, I can really see how it's all fitting together and why I'm able to create the kind of gaps in the oppositions defense. It's all about pulling their players around by threatening areas and forcing them to make awkward decisions.

As an aside, the formation started as a 4-2-2-2 (ie 4-4-2 with aggressive classic wingers), but I couldn't get a good second striker this season, so I tried using an AMC instead. The former tactic certainly had it's advanatges - it was devastating on the counter, and got soooo many crosses put it - but it didn't create nearly as much space around the box that I can with the AMC, which I guess is the point of that position: to find and exploit spaces in formations like the 4-4-2.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 16:45

aderow

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **phidelta42**
> *I'm not suprised at the increase in space for your team to exploit I'm just assuming, perhaps wrongly, that it happened because they went to a more attacking strategy, if not at 1-1 then certainly at 1-2. More width, more closing down etc will have removed their usual defensive solidity, and reduced the effectiveness of their midfield, although it sounds like it wasn't doing the job anyway My gut is Chelsea gave you more space through that change in strategy rather than your team finding it.*

You are right. At the end of game chelsea start to throw multiple players at my own in order to try and win the ball back thereby increasing the amount of free space in front of their own goal. But it was the exploitation of the initial space is what gave me the lead in the first place. At that point Chelsea had no choice but to take risks in order to get back into the game.

In the end, you take what is given to you.

Last edited by aderow; 27-04-2010 at 17:05.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 16:46 #39

SFraser

Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **mg539**
> *So my conclusions from all that are*
> *a) cramp the opposition for space by having a slightly high defensive line, focus closing down on their AMc*
> ***b) space is primarily either side of the DMc, best utilised by drawing him wide, allowing players to break free down the centre.***
> *c) A DLF and a partner who moves into channels is crucial!! Two goals have my DLF knitting the play together from deep, while the other he is the outlet found on the break. Two of the goals are also reliant on my poacher dragging markers wide as well as the DMc for others to take advantage of.*
> *d) I have a personal preference for a B2B on the same side of the pitch as my DLF. While i'm sure he could be an advanced playmaker, or on the opposite side to my DLF, hopefully 2 of the goals show why this is my preference.*

That's some good stuff, and particularly the bit I bolded which is a constant factor in all tactics with a DM, and I think is worth going into in a bit of depth because in my opinion it has had a huge impact on real life tactics especially at the higher levels.

In my opinion it is absolutely no coincidence that the rise in the number of teams playing a DM/4-5-1 variation has corresponded to the demise of the true Second Striker and the rise in the number of the teams playing their "Second Strikers" from wide wing positions, especially in England. The space on the pitch against these tactics is two bands running from Winger to Fullback and inside to the DM, and that is pretty much the exact space played in and attacked from deep by all the "megastar" attackers of the last decade or so. Everyone from Henry to Ronaldinho to Kaka to Ronaldo to Messi has made it into the record books and won top personal awards by having the talent perfectly suited to attacking this space with immense ability, and this exact space that they are perfectly suited for attacking is the space that has emerged as a general trend in most top level competitions where teams play 4-1-X formations.

Barring Cannavaro for the World Cup and the peerless Zidane, almost every player that has won either World or European Player of the year in the last 6-8 years has been a wide attacking player that attacks from deep and drives towards goal. In that same time there has been a huge drift in the Premiership away from the late 80's, early to mid 90's 4-4-2 and 4-4-1-1 towards 4-3-3 or 4-5-1 or 4-1-4-1 type formations. And we have also been introduced to ideas and roles like the "Defensive Forward" "Defensive Winger".

I think this "tiny little detail" about the DM and the space being either side of him, is actually absolutely huge and one of the most important tactical issues in the game for the last 5 years or so.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 17:04 #40

Danmanager08

Amateur
Join Date: 5th September 2008
Location: Blackburn
Posts: 95

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

This is a great read. However, I struggle to find space against the opposition when they play a 3-5-2. In League 2, the top 3 teams are playing this tactic, and each match I play against them, everything goes wrong. My players can't find space at all. Just to much going on in the midfield, and when they have the better players, it's impossible.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 17:16 #41

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Danmanager08**
> *This is a great read. However, I struggle to find space against the opposition when they play a 3-5-2. In League 2, the top 3 teams are playing this tactic, and each match I play against them, everything goes wrong. My players can't find space at all. Just to much going on in the midfield, and when they have the better players, it's impossible.*

I understand how you feel. The point of the 3-5-2 imo, is to stiffle the opposition and control the midfield by packing as man players as they can in it. In these situations, I would probably employ stronger center mids and fast wingers. The disadvantage of the 3-5-2 is the fact that it leaves both wings open for a counter.

Counterattack or not, space is space. In fact, the only reason you can counter is because there is space to run into.

If you are attacking there will opportunities to make diagonal cutting passes to your wingers. Now if one of the 3 CBs pulls wide to try and deny you space on the wing, even better. It opens up some space in the middle and you still have the other wing wide open.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-04-2010 17:23 #42

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
> *That's some good stuff, and particularly the bit I bolded which is a constant factor in all tactics with a DM, and I think is worth going into in a bit of depth because in my opinion it has had a huge impact on real life tactics especially at the higher levels.*
>
> *In my opinion it is absolutely no coincidence that the rise in the number of teams playing a DM/4-5-1 variation has corresponded to the demise of the true Second Striker and the rise in the number of the teams playing their "Second Strikers" from wide wing positions, especially in England. The space on the pitch against these tactics is two bands running from Winger to Fullback and inside to the DM, and that is pretty much the exact space played in and attacked from deep by all the "megastar" attackers of the last decade or so. Everyone from Henry to Ronaldinho to Kaka to Ronaldo to Messi has made it into the record books and won top personal awards by having the talent perfectly suited to attacking this space with immense ability, and this exact space that they are perfectly suited for attacking is the space that has emerged as a general trend in most top level competitions where teams play 4-1-X formations.*
>
> *Barring Cannavaro for the World Cup and the peerless Zidane, almost every player that has won either World or European Player of the year in the last 6-8 years has been a wide attacking player that attacks from deep and drives towards goal. In that same time there has been a huge drift in the Premiership away from the late 80's, early to mid 90's 4-4-2 and 4-4-1-1 towards 4-3-3 or 4-5-1 or 4-1-4-1 type formations. And we have also been introduced to ideas and roles like the "Defensive Forward" "Defensive Winger".*
>
> *I think this "tiny little detail" about the DM and the space being either side of him, is actually absolutely huge and one of the most important tactical issues in the game for the last 5 years or so.*

I think that when attacking the most dangerous 'spaces' would be these:

1. Either side of the DM since he can be pulled either way.
2. The space between the CB and the FB. It causes the FB to be pinched in leaving the wing open.
3.The space between the sideline and the FB. Pulling the FB wide leaves space between him and the CB.

In all these areas, if said key player (DM or FB) is beaten, another player (likely a CB) is forced to move in and cover him. And this results in space be generated in the most dangerous place of all; in front of goal.

I'm interested to hear how people would go about creating space in these areas.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 17:39 #43

SFraser

Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **aderow**
>
> *I think that when attacking the most dangerous 'spaces' would be these:*
>
> *1. Either side of the DM since he can be pulled either way.*
> *2. The space between the CB and the FB. It causes the FB to be pinched in leaving the wing open.*
> *3.The space between the sideline and the FB. Pulling the FB wide leaves space between him and the CB.*
>
> *In all these areas, if said key player (DM or FB) is beaten, another player (likely a CB) is forced to move in and cover him. And this results in space be generated in the most dangerous place of all; in front of goal.*
>
> *I'm interested to hear how people would go about creating space in these areas.*

The perfect way, somewhat ironicly, would be to play a 4-1-2-2-1 with attacking fullbacks and two attacking playmakers. 4-1-2-2-1 versus 4-1-2-2-1 is one of the most attacking games you find around these days.

Fullbacks play high and wide, wingers play deeper and tuck infield, and this would give excellent opportunities to exploit the opponents fullbacks particularly if his wingers do not give much defensive cover. Lone Striker occupies two Centrebacks with his movement, and this leaves only the DM and 2 CMs to contend with 2 playmakers threatening balls to the striker or through the outside channel of the Centreback to the Wingers. And then only if neither the CM's nor DM is required to deal with the opponents wideplay.

And this does not account for the opponents DM that could advance, occupy space, overload a flank, or act as playmaker for the movement of the two more advanced CM's. Playing a 4-1-2-2-1 against a dangerous opponent playing 4-1-2-2-1 is suicide unless you tighten up your back four + midfield 3 into a solid block keeping everyone infront of them. Opening up to play football or failing to tighten up sufficiently when defending means one mistake, one error, one good move or pass or run brings the entire house of cards tumbling down and immediately exposes a Centreback.

Ofcourse when playing that system, the exact same thing can be done to you.

Last edited by SFraser; 27-04-2010 at 17:43.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 20:08 #44

Jenko_EFC

Amateur

Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593



Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Very interesting discussions going on here so I thought I'd attempt to replicate some of the match analysis going on here I started (again) as Everton and spent most money on staff but sold and bought . Tactically I like to have alot of options and I felt I was lacking a player who simply chases shadows and lays it off to the more creative players Arteta, Pienaar etc. I also felt I lacked an entire right hand side unless I play Arteta there who is better in the centre and injured or Pienaar but he works best with Baines I feel. We have alot of creative midfield players so we should play nice stuff and posession based football against most teams which gives me the upper hand against teams that lack pace/stamina. I also felt I needed a big lump which I don't have bar Anichebe who's injured until February.
with Diarra I have an all-action defensive midfielder/ball-winning midfielder and in Borriello I also have 16 in stamina and workrate, decent finishing and superb in the air.

So now I had a defensive fullback (Neville) backed up by a young wingback (Coleman) on the right with an attacking wingback (Baines) backed up by a versatile defensive fullback on the left (Distin), a player with exceptional passing ability for a centre-back (Heitinga), a no-nonsense limited defender (Jagielka) who when fit will be my first choice with a quick mentally poor defneder (Yobo) who is the perfect backup if I need pace in the backline and an aeging but with 16 pace and acceleration backup (Distin).
Now I knew my backline without Distin lacked height so I can play Fellaini very defensive to make up for that, an all action midfielder who has immense stamina and workrate (Diarra) and a decent young playmaker with good physical attributes. On the wings I had either the pace of Pienaar or the creativity of Arteta and Bilyaletdinov. Up-front I had a lazy yet superb finisher (Yakubu), a pacey, hard-working target man who is also good at passing and finishing. I have Vaughan, Saha, Anichebe and Baxter to fall back on.

So I knew I had alot of options now. I sold Osman because he went for £8.75m. I also sold Hibbert as it gives Coleman a chance to be backup.

Getting a bit off topic there but I was just showing you how I analyse a squad and find myself options I need for the season. So back on-topic I have sorted out my squad and I'm about to approach my first game: Liverpool (H). Tough game hey! Well I was underdogs. My scout report told me they play 4-4-2 and Torres is a match winner and needs to be watched carefully and they are missing Krygiakos, Agger, Aqualini and Mascherano. My pre-match advice said I had a height advantage. What was I expecting? Well we both had bad injury problems, they had five out and we had four out and Yakubu doubtful.

Looking at their tactics screen they play a 4-2-3-1 with wingers. Gerrard would drop deep and roam, Babel and Maxi would cut in and support Torres and they'd defend with 6 men and occasionally throw forward their fullbacks. So what was my plan? Counter down the wings with pace, win the midfield battle and without Agger they had paceless centre-halves who all are less than Borriello at jumping.

I lined up with a 4-1-3-1-1 as you'll see in a minute. Borriello bullies their defence with his brilliant movement by 'moving into channels' and uses his height and jumping to beat them in the air. Pienaar uses his pace as a counter attacking option down the flanks by 'hugging the touchline' but starting from a central position dragging their defensive midfielders out of position and creating space for Borriello to drop into. Two ball-winners and a deep-lying playmaker to win the midfield battle and use some of my creativity in the midfield to initiate attacks. A defensive midfielder to help ensure the inside forwards don't cut in too much in the centre as my ball-winners, fullbacks and this anchor man deals with them, My centre backs are normal but on cover and with a deep d-line to prevent them hitting us with too much space.



On the opposition instructions I done some things like close down Lucas etc but I went onto their wingers I showed them onto the same foot as the side they're playing on as they'll play balls into the box more and I'm confident Distin, Fellaini or Yobo will win the headers. My teamtalk worked as I had **5** players looking motivated! For the beginning of the match, Liverpool dominated posession but we held our shape and were denying them space and thhey were forced back but sometimes we'd win the ball and find Bilyaletdinov who'd play a through ball to Pienaar which caused them danger. After 15 minutes we changed to a more direct game and we dominated them, Borriello's superior off the ball movement and flick-ons to Pienaar was the start of alot of attacks and my fullbacks were in acres of space when we got forward with our patient build up play as their players were more bothered trying to beat my midfield. Our closing down game was starting to work as their defenders lacked composure and we nearly scored when Pienaar tackled Carragher and almost scored.



What do we see here? Well my playmaker Bilyaletdinov picks up the ball in midfield and has many options which were all planned by me, to his left you see Leighton Baines surging forward in space as they're occupied with the centre and are playng too narrow whilst Borriello has his back to goal ready for a 1-2 because he has target man 'mixed' so sometimes he'll get it to feet, other times to his head or to run onto ball to take advantage of their slow defence and Pienaar is inside of Skrtel waiting or a through ball. Eventually, Bilyaletdinov searches out Pienaar but his first touch is too much and Reina comes out and wins the ball.



In this one we see Diarra roams out of position and claims the ball off Neville and plays a ball to Pienaar over the top again. We also see Borriello dropping deep and taking the defnsive midfielders who are supposed to be marking Pienaar with him and my centre-midfielders are in acres of space (Rodwell 26 and Diarra 6). Again, another poor touch from Pienaar drives him into the corner and eventually tackled. Later on they injured Pienaar bu he could play on but I decided not to take a risk and brought him on for Cahill who would help with our direct game as well as his pretty impressive physicals. So far I am impressed with how we've dealed with Torres who is 'playing nervously' and on a 5.9, let's see if that lasts...

Half-time came and I was very happy, we'd defended incredibly well, counter attacked them where they're weakest and we were just missing a goal but I'd settle for 0-0. They brought on Kuyt for Maxi.

I looked at my options as Borriello was getting tired. An unfit Yakubu vs a fully fit Saha was no contest and I brought Louis on. He also has 16 for jumping which matches Borriello and their tallest centre-half and is in my opinion a better player when he's fit.

78th minute and it's 0-0. I had two options: attack or defend. I decided to choose the safest option and stay on counter as I'd used it all game apart from some spells on control. The in the 81st minute their defensive midfielder Torosidis (A Greek signed for £5.5m from Olympiakos) got sent off for two bookable offneces! They changed to a normal 4-3-3 but 4-3-2 so tried to dominate midfield and have a two man midfield. I kept things the same except my opposition instructions as telling Kuyt onto his right foot when playing as a striker isn't exactly the best idea ever is it? They then brought on Insua for Gerrard even though Aurelio had a knock and put Fabio in midfield.

4 minutes injury time. I could have went attacking but again decided against it. My counter attacking had been working all match so why change it now? For some reason they insisted on time-wasting which I didn't mind I was happy with 0-0!

So although I had a decent plan on counter attacking which worked we created good scoring opportunities and defended brilliantly with every defender getting at least 7.2. I was very happy with the draw against Liverpool without Yakubu, Jagielka, Arteta, Anichebe, John Heitinga, Dan Gosling all out injured! I could have took a risk and possibly won the game but decided to play it safe and got the draw. We countered them alot in the air, on the ground and especially when Pienaar was on, with through balls!

Reply **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 20:52 #45

kenny-15

Amateur

Join Date: 15th February 2007
Posts: 24

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Hello.
I always hard to find ideas for Real Madrid formation.
I play with Sevilla. When I play against Real Madrid the always create a lot of chances, and my team don't create chances.

R. Madrid formation:
---------GK---------
RB----CB----CB-----LB
------DM----DM------

AMR----------------AML
---------FC--FC--------

any ideas?

Reply **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 22:31 #46

SFraser

Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Jenko_EFC**
> *Looking at their tactics screen they play a 4-2-3-1 with wingers. Gerrard would drop deep and roam, Babel and Maxi would cut in and support Torres and they'd defend with 6 men and occasionally throw forward their fullbacks. So what was my plan? Counter down the wings with pace, win the midfield battle and without Agger they had paceless centre-halves who all are less than Borriello at jumping.*

Great description of your gameplan and match there Jenko, and the quote above was my particular favourite. What was your plan? If we could have signatures in this forum that would be mine. Seems a lot of people prefer to go for the not very effective single tactic download and don't get involved in the meat of the game that is tactical planning for the next match. Missing out on pretty much the whole point of FM doing that, but that's a bit of a rant.

You played for the draw and had some good counter-attacking opportunities, but I did wonder while reading you analysis if you missed a trick. When you mentioned Saha and Cahill I immediately thought of Saha running the offside trap and channels, and playing in Cahill after a run from deep. I would imagine the poor delivery of Saha and the Preferred Position limitations of Cahill and Pienaar would make that combination difficult to produce effectively, but the stats of Cahill absolutely scream unstoppable late runs from deep after total physical and mental/workrate domination of his zone.

You highlighted the combination of Paceless and Jumping lacking Centrebacks for Liverpool, and I can't help but think that had you tried to design even a two man attack of pace + channels combined to late runs from Cahill that you would have made a mess of Liverpools defence on the counter, even if the delivery from wide was less than decent. Tim Cahill in FM10 is just a shade off of Michael Owen when it comes to Movement and Anticipation, and even a pretty dodgy cross placed halfway between Cahill and

Goalkeeper I would put good money on Cahill reaching first, especially if he is arriving late from deep and the defenders can't see him as they are chasing Saha.

You will know Everton better than I do in FM, but if you have not considered that combination, or considered it and dismissed it, I would say give it a try and see how it works because you might underestimate Cahills ability to reach the ball, and over-estimate Saha's poor delivery when defenders are chasing back to their own goal.

With a player of Cahill's mental and physical class in your side you might want to consider buying some young cheap forward precisely to latch onto balls over the top and whip in a decent cross for his runs from late, specifically for when you are defending and counter-attacking the top four. I can tell you now that the only player Cahill would not dominate in this fashion in my United side is Vidic, and that would be one hell of a contest only if Vidic was not overloaded, and could attack Cahill properly by attacking the ball with his back to goal and not running towards goal which would be the precise situation your counter-attacking gameplan would produce, and produce it regularly.

I think you might have missed a trick there, but I could be very wrong.

Last edited by SFraser; 27-04-2010 at 22:34.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 22:34 #47

batata169

Amateur

Join Date: 9th June 2009
Posts: 435

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

SFraser, can you please help with finding space in madrid's formation ?

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-04-2010 22:43 #48

SFraser

Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **batata169**
> *SFraser, can you please help with finding space in madrid's formation ?*

It's almost exactly the same space as Liverpool left for Everton in Jenko's post, and I would use exactly the same principle to defeat it, although not necessarily crosses to an aerial threat.

Madrid play 2 deep CM's because their defence is very dodgy for the level they play at, while their attack is absolutely potent. The Madrid attack is pretty direct and one dimensional though. It relies upon widemen getting the ball and running past players towards the middle, and either scoring goals directly after a wonder run/shot or playing passes to Van Nistelrooy/Benzema. That is pretty easy to defeat by making sure you force the wideplayers to stay wide. The "real" danger in the Madrid side is when they use a playmaker as Second Striker, because then all three World Class strikers now feed off a really clever deep striker, and this is lethal. This will require you to force Ronaldo/Kaka etc. wide and clog up the centre with players, which limits your attacking options.

When Madrid hit such a narrow, tight, numerous brick wall they chuck forward their fullbacks. This gives you the perfect opportunity to use a Striker to run the channels, and have one of your CM's bomb forward late from deep. The Madrid defenders are not clever, and can be seriously attacked by playing the ball from wide to late runs even if they have numbers back to defend.

It's always a tough game but the principle usually works, like the Chelsea match. Against Chelsea I tire their players out by maintaining possession from flank to flank and then attack hard for the last 30 minutes. Against Madrid I pack the defence and force everyone deep or wide, then use my Striker as a Winger, and bomb forward a good goalscoring CM to latch onto the pass after a run from deep.

Both are examples of using the wide space. They might not be the best strategies or the most effective use of the space, but they are both space using strategies with different purposes and points and the principles of both strategies do matter and work in FM. Ofcourse it does depend on the opponent and alot else, especially your own ability and creativity at the game. Even the most dull and uncreative manager can only benefit from atleast trying to make a plan around using space. If the plan sucks the plan sucks, but atleast you are on the right track.

Last edited by SFraser; 27-04-2010 at 22:53.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

28-04-2010 02:57 #49

aderow

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Of course when facing a team with the caliber of attack that Real, you'd want to keep them from having the ball as much as possible. But, in order to exploit the space mentioned above, you would need to take on the attack head first and frustrate them to the point at which they will bring their full backs into in if they have not already.

If you, yourself, are on the attack though, I think that space that you would want exploit is the space in front of their dodgy defense. And in order to do so, you would need to force their DMs out of position. You would need to get them to push up in order for there to be space in front for a deep forward or attacking midfielder to operate.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

28-04-2010 08:15 #50

suikoden

Amateur
Join Date: 28th June 2007
Posts: 85

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Thanks for the excellent thread and mood SFraser

> Originally Posted by **PnyX**
>
> *You can see how many passes Xavi lost and how Barca was forced to play in thier own half. Messi managed just 2 shots from distance with Iniesta taking 4 from distance.*

Good read but Xavi didn't really misplaced too many passes. He was still getting over 80%. You wouldn't want your playmaker to be getting too high for pass rate as that means he is not really taking chances or swinging it wide into space. But in your case it looked like Xavi wasn't really probing. He made a lot of passes which suggest that he initiated a lot of the attack with short passes. In that case forcing an 80% pass rate out of Xavi is good. Shows that stats without context mean nothing.

I really like how you limited Messi and Iniesta though. That is quite an accomplishment.

My favourite space to exploit on the pitch is between the full backs and CB's. Your player has so many options there. The most in my case. For my formation there is nowhere as dangerous as when a player drifts there with or without the ball. For some reason I have eboue, who plays at amr for me with cut inside instead of moving into channels, doing really well. He has a 7 for finishing but scores often. Got a hattrick in my last game. He always cuts into that channel on the edge of the box. If he has the ball he usually plays it in or shoots. Without the ball he gets picked up by my midfielders before the defense as he runs into the box.

I have my striker who moves into channels and my aml moving into channels with amr cut inside. As eduardo seems to like to drift left and my aml comes in from the left (but not all the way) the defense shifts to the left (from my perspective, right for theirs). Their left back doesn't shift over because he has to worry about the amr and right back. That leaves a big gap between their left cb and left back. Which is the space eboue seem to have a propensity to exploit. What bugs me is that I can't get Arsahvin or walcott to be as devastating. RvP and Eboue are excellent in that role though.

Another note is that I have my aml dribble down the left a lot to get the attention of the defense. Vela/Nasri/Arshavin is getting 10-20 runs down the left side. That really leaves big gaps on the right and as Arsenal don't cross the ball gets played infield and whipped to the right.

Btw I see a few people with Dzeko in their side. How is he in 10.3? Is the goal by head really down as people say or is it just them not adapting?

Last edited by suikoden; 28-04-2010 at 08:21.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

28-04-2010 15:59 #51

Jenko_EFC

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**

Posts: 593

Great description of your gameplan and match there Jenko, and the quote above was my particular favourite. What was your plan? If we could have signatures in this forum that would be mine. Seems a lot of people prefer to go for the not very effective single tactic download and don't get involved in the meat of the game that is tactical planning for the next match. Missing out on pretty much the whole point of FM doing that, but that's a bit of a rant.

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I think you might have missed a trick there, but I could be very wrong.

My gameplan firstly was to utilise the pace of Pienaar down the wing but start central with Borriello dropping deep to cause further disruption the defensive midfielders which did work. Mainly, we controlled the ball in defence with Bilyaletdinov, Rodwell and Diarra all dropping deep t help out with defensive duties which worked a treat and play long balls for my tall, hardworking striker and my pacey hard-working attacking midfielder, but eventually Pienaar was injured and Borriello was starting to get tired so brought on Saha and Cahill who I thought could play the same roles but from different positions but with Saha also trying to get in the box more as he is an acceptable finisher and I needed a goal on the counter so unless Baines or Neville got forward there was no wingplay so lack of crosses but a lot of long balls forward for Cahill to nod onto Saha. This worked well too but lacked any creativity up-front and we really missed Arteta as Bilyaletdinov just isn't as good at controlling the tempo like Mikel. I was absolutely amazed at my defending, I'd never got Yobo and Distin working well as a partnership together, ever! Yet Torres played awful and Yobo got man of the match and Distin was 0.1 behind on 7.3 I think. Which was partly down to my isolation gameplan where we tight marked and closed him down, Got their wingers onto the foot where they played to make them cross and I was sure I'd win the header and also played ball-winners both marking Gerrard to make sure he was chased around alot and never saw much of the ball. I was, however, content to allow their defensive midfielders have the ball as they couldn't do anything with it as we'd win in the air, on the wing and down the middle.

EDIT:
So in conclusion, I think Saha running the channels and offside trap with Cahill's late runs in the box is a good idea and one I did indeed think of but felt it necessary to have Cahill as the main long-ball guy and have Saha in the box as much as I could as I needed a goal late on and needed a 'lump' to boot the ball to when we counter-attacked to simply nod it on to Louis Saha.

EDIT2:
I would just like to say how immense the discussion is in this thread, definitely worthy of it's sticky!

Last edited by Jenko_EFC; 28-04-2010 at 18:22.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

30-04-2010 08:34 #52

Wizard of Oz

Amateur

Join Date: 11th January 2009

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Hi all,

Location: Melbourne
Posts: 114

Firstly great thread which has provided me with a lot to think about. I wondered what peoples thoughts were on adapting different formations to counter opposition and develop attacking space. I was under the impression that to get players to follow instructions better it was ideal to keep to one formation as much as possible. Reading some of the very insightful posts above it seems other posters are more willing to adapt formations to suit specific opposition. Maybe this is only for games against top opposition and then for other games a more settled formation is used?

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

30-04-2010 12:50 #53

Jenko_EFC
Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Wizard of Oz**
> *Hi all,*
>
> *Firstly great thread which has provided me with a lot to think about. I wondered what peoples thoughts were on adapting different formations to counter opposition and develop attacking space. I was under the impression that to get players to follow instructions better it was ideal to keep to one formation as much as possible. Reading some of the very insightful posts above it seems other posters are more willing to adapt formations to suit specific opposition. Maybe this is only for games against top opposition and then for other games a more settled formation is used?*

Personally, I adjust every game. I mean do you think most manager's simply play one tactic all season, every season? (Well maybe Rafa) There is, however, nothing wrong with doing that if you're playing to your team's strengths but it is much more rewarding this way I feel, again there is nothing wrong with for example; you have wingers who are more suited to the 'inside forward' role and you play them there all season. The main thing is the central midfielders and are the most adjusted as sometimes I wouldn't want a ball-winner in a game against a low team when playing with a DM etc.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

30-04-2010 15:25 #54

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

This has nothing to do with this thread but I didnt want to start another. How do you get your strikers to be more clinical, I get this message from the assistant feedback every game and I was wondering if it is possible.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

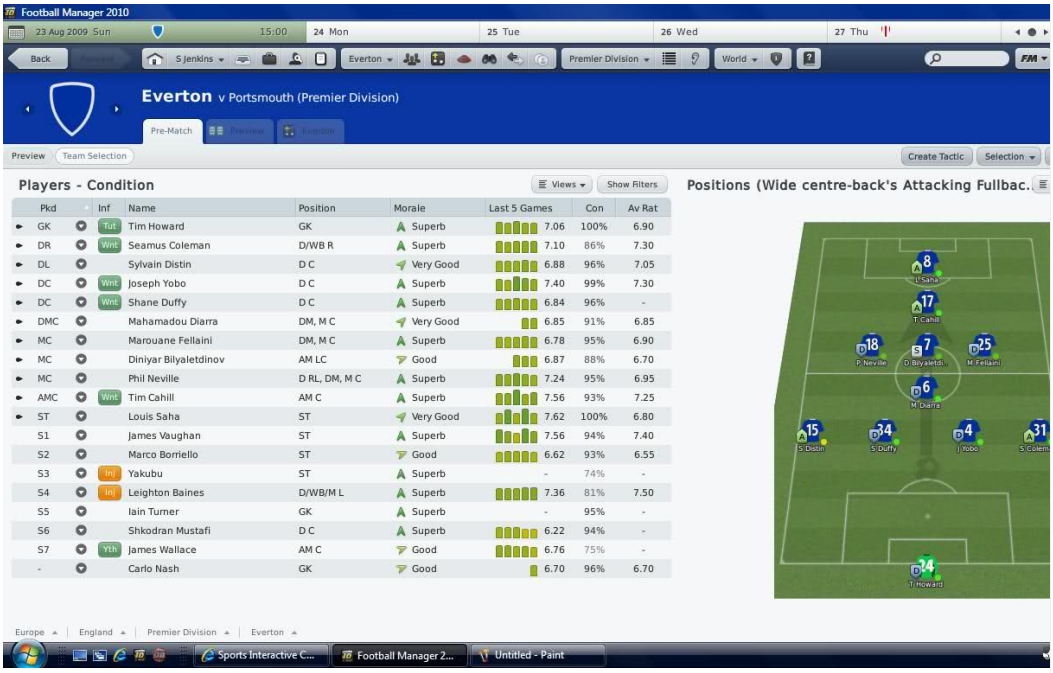
30-04-2010 21:50 #55

Jenko_EFC
Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
> *I wonder while reading you analysis if you missed a trick. When you mentioned Saha and Cahill I immediately thought of Saha running the offside trap and channels, and playing in Cahill after a run from deep.*

Well, you inspired me to at least give it a try against Portsmouth also using a system I am trying in my thread about attacking wing-backs and wide centre-halves. Injuries to Baines, Yakubu, Jagielka, Pienaar, Heitinga, Anichebe, Arteta, Rodwell, Baxter and Gosling led me to play this:

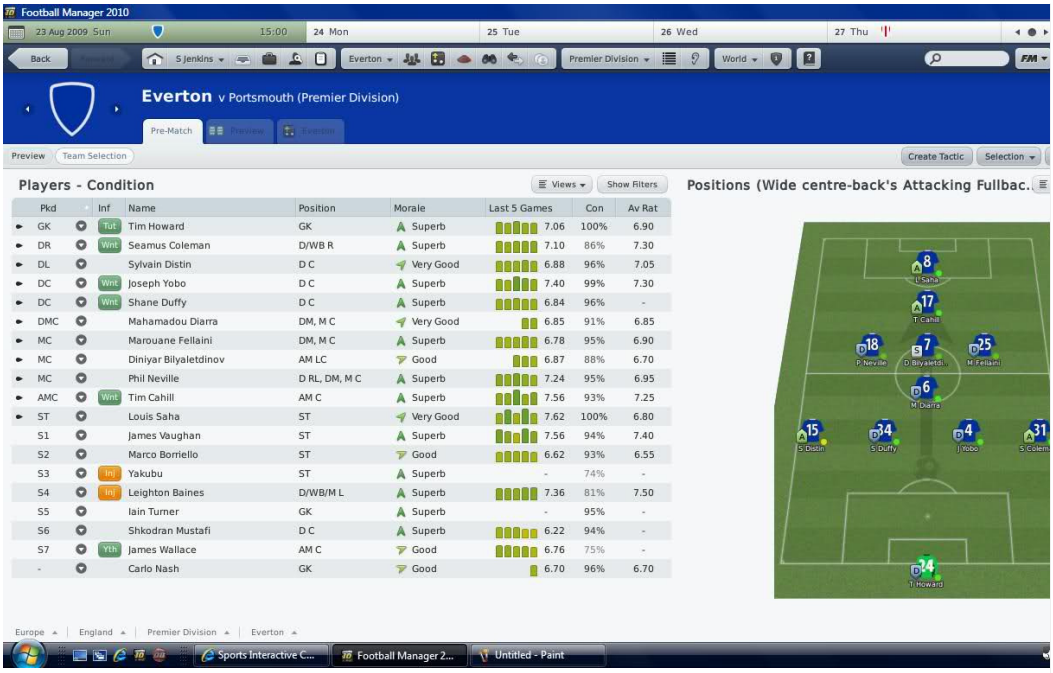


With 2 ball-winners, deep-lying playmaker, Saha as a complete forward to move into the channels and Cahill as an attacking midfielder and make late runs in the box, you can find out about my defence in this thread http://community.sigames.com/showthread.php?t=206018. They played a 4-2-3-1 the same as Liverpool but with defensive minded centre-mids so I planned on winning the midfield battle, getting forward with my pacey fullbacks and using Saha as my 'false 9' type player who simply moves into the channels and allows Cahill to run into the box and disrup their slightly shorter centre-backs. We'd win the midfield battle I'd hope by having two hard-working players chasing them around and laying it off to the creative Bilyaletdinov who'd play through balls to Saha who'd move into the channel because of his pace advantage and swing balls in to the slightly taller Tim Cahill who I was confident would win the inevitable aerial battle, it all seemed to make sense and work. Although, it is using my defensive tactic I won't be keeping too big an eye on that and try to focus on our attacking outlets.

Their attacking system was obvious, use very fast inside forwards with no crossing ability what so ever and play in Piquionne a big, fast, strong striker. So I'd show them wide and Piquionne was slower than Yobo and smaller than him but faster than Duffy but the same jumping stat as him so I thought I could win this.

Goal 9 minutes in, Yobo won the header at the back post, well I say a header there was suspicions of handball apparantly Joseph Maradonna Yobo! The goal was not worth a screenshot but was happy with 1-0 so went to counter. Another spectacular goal from Bilyaletdinov, Saha drifted wide and got a bll in for Cahill to nod down to Diniyar who struck it from 18 yards. 2-0. We were dealing with their wingers with relative ease, they'd cut in and we were good enough defensively to either show them wide or tackle them and if they went wide their crossing was awful and we'd win the header 9/10. Their attempts at the counter attack were pitiful as they'd simply hoof it to the flanks but Yobo would outpace him and outjump him whilst Duffy was getting the better out of him which was nice.

Half-time 2-0 and no real things happening up top so decided to take a closer look at my tactics but not much was wrong except Cahill had 'normal' mentality so I changed it to attacking so hopefully he'll get forward more. They brought on all 3 subs at once at half-time: Rocha, Piquionne and Yebda were taken off and Wilson, Primus and Kanu were brought on. Kanu had 16 jumping whilst Yobo had 17 and Duffy had 14 so I put Fellaini in DMC slot as you may know he drops really deep and also becomes one of my defenders if you read my thread and he had 19 jumping!



You see how wide we were and thhe positions (17) Cahill was getting into whilst Saha (8) dropped deeper. You also see my defensive system so far as it's a work in progress as Fellaini marks their forward whilst my centre-back's get wide. This led to a ball in from Coleman which found Cahill but his header hit the crossbar!



This is a counter attack using the pace of Utaka who took the ball off Distin, as you see Duffy (34) is immediately over and shows him outside and he tries to find Kanu (27) but the pass is intercepted by (25) Fellaini. Also, see (4) Yobo covering and is also quite wide and was wider a second before this was took.

57th minute and they scored, a counter attack over the top and O'Hara outpaced young defender Shane Duffy who isn't the fastest defender in the world. Nice counter-attacking goal though but I doubt it would have happened had I a full squad to choose from!

They changed to a narrow 4-4-2 diamond for some bizzarre reason as they didn't have the fullbacks to do it and I was extremely wide so would just exploit that whch I did .

I brought Vaughan on for Saha and Wallace for Bilyaletdinov as they were both tired, Vaughan has alot of pace which I felt was needed and Wallace is a younger version of Diniyar in my opinion.

http://i42.tinypic.com/262vaef.jpg

Vaughan broke free and Cahill's late run in the box resulted in a goal! 3-1. The reason Fellaini (25) isn't defensive in this one is because he has played a through ball to Vaughan (A splendid one at that) and was pulled out of position. Was really happy with this goal as it was exactly what I was aiming for!

The last few minutes were nothing, just us keeping the ball in midfield and a few balls through for Vaughan. I was happy with 3-1 and disappointed with our conceded goal but that's what happens when you have 11 or so players out injured!

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

30-04-2010 22:31 #56

Wizard of Oz

Amateur

Join Date: 11th January 2009
Location: Melbourne
Posts: 114

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Jenko_EFC**
>
> *Personally, I adjust every game. I mean do you think most manager's simply play one tactic all season, every season? (Well maybe Rafa) There is, however, nothing wrong with doing that if you're playing to your team's strengths but it is much more rewarding this way I feel, again there is nothing wrong with for example; you have wingers who are more suited to the 'inside forward' role and you play them there all season. The main thing is the central midfielders and are the most adjusted as sometimes I wouldn't want a ball-winner in a game against a low team when playing with a DM etc.*

Naturally I still change tactics during the season but I thought that most people then kept within the same formation. I remember reading on several different post that it takes 10 -12 games to get use to a formation ie 442/433 and so on. Hope this isn't too off topic but surely it has some kind of impact on changing your formation to create space against a particular opposition.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

30-04-2010 22:39 #57

Jenko_EFC

Amateur

Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Wizard of Oz**
>
> *Naturally I still change tactics during the season but I thought that most people then kept within the same formation. I remember reading on several different post that it takes 10 -12 games to get use to a formation ie 442/433 and so on. Hope this isn't too off topic but surely it has some kind of impact on changing your formation to create space against a particular opposition.*

Nah, not off-topic really and a good question, I personally have never thought about it taking games to get used to the system as I change alot sometimes small changes sometimes big changes. I used to stick with one no matter what but now with the tactics creator it's so easy to play different roles for different games etc.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

01-05-2010 23:59 #58

Uncle_Sam

Part-Timer

Join Date: 29th June 2007
Location: WWW.FMNORTHAMERICA.COM
Posts: 1,218

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Fascinating read, great input from everyone. Hopefully I don't botch it up.

In my current game I took over Auckland City in New Zealand in 2014. After creating a 4-4-2 to mimic the USA National Team's style with Ivory Coast, I wanted to experiment with some asymmetrical formations to create space, and Auckland City turned out to be the perfect team. I only had $350K to spend, and the team had had a couple of years of poor results, so no one that I could afford wanted to sign for me. This meant I had to roll with the squad I had, which still among the best in the league.

Looking at my squad, I had two forwards that I had to get on the pitch, so the tactic would have to have a forward pair. Olsen had a pace of 18, so I set him as a Poacher so he could sit on the opposing back line and steal some goals and leave space underneath him for my deep lying forward, Bendetto.

In the midfield, I had a good young English right winger named Walker. What I did not have, however, was a left sided midfield player. I'll come back to that in a moment. I did have two good defensive midfielders and a pretty solid two-way midfield player (Clapham). So with the two defensive midfielders I figured I would have a couple of destroyers on the field, one who sits back (Salley) and one who acts as a ball winner (Roberto).

I have solid players along the back four. My right back (McCLenahan) is strictly a fullback, but the left back (Parraga) is a good wing back. This helped my issue with no left midfield player, because I could

slide Parraga up to wing back so he would be more aggressive going forward. The resulting shape looks like this:



As you can see, I've slotted Salley over to DML to cover for Parraga who bombs forward. Walker I have pushed up to AMR, with Roberto acting as a ball-winner behind him. Walker plays as an inside forward so he will cut inside. To open space for his runs, I have placed Olsen as an FCC with Benedetto playing FCL. Walker cutting inside also gives space to McClenahan when he does make his runs forward. When I want to go real attacking, I have an AMC I can bring on for Clapham.

By the way, I do change the starting strategy. I have been using Attacking mostly, and so far so good with 4 wins from 4 matches and outscoring the opposition 15-3.

Last edited by Uncle_Sam; 02-05-2010 at 00:34.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

02-05-2010 01:23 #59

Jenko_EFC
Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Uncle_Sam**
> *<Long Post>*

Nice to see you're doing well. Interesting shape as well, so does the left wing-back get forward and the defensive midfielder covers giving the left centre-mid freedom to roam forward whilst on the other wing, a slightly more defensive style takes place, the attackiing player is the Right-winger, the support/automatic is the CM and the defensive is the full-back, right? Wondering why you placed you FC into the centre as he 'moves into channels' anyway making him move wide when he sees fit so wouldn't need to play anywhere else as he'd still create space by moving out of position.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

02-05-2010 01:41 #60

Uncle_Sam
Part-Timer
Join Date: 29th June 2007
Location:

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

I actually have the Moves Into Channels turned off on my poaching FC. I want him to sit right between the two center backs, to try and confuse their marking. It's worked pretty well, he has 6 goals in 6

WWW.FMNORTHAMERICA.COM
Posts: 1,218

appearances. If the opponent comes out in a three man back line then I will change things up a bit up top, but so far every team I've played runs a 4-4-2.

My attacks on the right generally consist of getting the ball out to my winger who is usually in space and allowing him to make plays. On the left, I've seen some pretty good combinations between the FCL, MCL, and the wing back overlapping from the back.

Reply | Reply With Quote

02-05-2010 01:45 #61

Jenko_EFC

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Ah, I see he simply waits for a ball over the top, or a through ball etc. Nice idea. I'd imagine your left would make some nice link up play with the DM holding, the CM attacking with the fullback linking up. Nice approach and good results :).

Reply | Reply With Quote

02-05-2010 02:12 #62

Uncle_Sam

Part-Timer
Join Date: 29th June 2007
Location: WWW.FMNORTHAMERICA.COM
Posts: 1,218

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Yea, that's what I was saying about different types of attacks. On the left you have the link up play and on the right you've got a winger beating guys one-on-one wreaking havoc that way. Put a poacher with 18 pace right smack in the middle and it adds up to a fairly dynamic attack. This is the right winger:



Obviously his positioning leaves something to be desired, but he's a magician with the ball at his feet. He's only 20 years old, so I'm hoping to get one more season out of him before some big teams inevitable come calling. I'm sure I'll be able to pay the operating budget for a year or two with the money I get out of him.

It's been kind of fun to build a formation based strictly on my personnel. I know eventually the makeup of the team will change, or I will move on to a new club, but I kind of dread when that happens because this is working so well. But I'm sure it will be just as interesting building something else with a new set of players.

Reply | Reply With Quote

02-05-2010 02:15 #63

Jenko_EFC

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

His positioning doesn't matter, his off the ball is the same thing but for attackers and vice-versa. He looks very good for your standard and has tremendous crossing if you have a target man as well! He's got the attributes where it counts though and hopefully you can keep hold of him for a while!

Reply | Reply With Quote

02-05-2010 02:23 #64

SFraser
Semi Pro
Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Uncle_Sam**
> *he's a magician with the ball at his feet.*

I think in that player you might be seeing the positive influence of Flair when combined to decent Decisions but low Anticipation. He is not a player that is going to thread a perfectly timed ball, or beat a defender by whipping the ball away at the last millisecond, but instead he is going to attempt the audacious coupled to decent choice of option.

I know that there is a bit of a tendency to view Flair as a negative attribute, but like Aggression it can actually be one of the most beneficial attributes in a players locker if he has the rest of the attributes to match.

Reply | Reply With Quote

02-05-2010 09:37 #65

phidelta42
Amateur
Join Date: 3rd April 2007
Location: Stockton-on-Tees
Posts: 613

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
> *I think in that player you might be seeing the positive influence of Flair when combined to decent Decisions but low Anticipation. He is not a player that is going to thread a perfectly timed ball, or beat a defender by whipping the ball away at the last millisecond, but instead he is going to attempt the audacious coupled to decent choice of option.*
>
> *I know that there is a bit of a tendency to view Flair as a negative attribute, but like Aggression it can actually be one of the most beneficial attributes in a players locker if he has the rest of the attributes to match.*

I doubt many people see flair as a negative attribute, luxury sure but negative no.

Reply | Reply With Quote

03-05-2010 19:46 #66

PhroX
Semi Pro
Join Date: 18th March 2007
Posts: 2,038

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **phidelta42**
> *I doubt many people see flair as a negative attribute, luxury sure but negative no.*

IMO, Flair is a negative attribute when coupled with low mental stats, in particular Decisions. With good mental stats though, I'd consider it a positive stat.

Reply | Reply With Quote

03-05-2010 19:57 #67

SFraser
Semi Pro
Join Date: 19th September 2008

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **phidelta42**
> *I doubt many people see flair as a negative attribute, luxury sure but negative no.*

I wouldn't call Flair a luxury stat. Little point having Wingers/Forwards/AMCs/Playmakers that dont want

Posts: 2,664

to try anything other than the completely simple.

Reply | Reply With Quote

06-05-2010 09:40 #68

phidelta42

Amateur
Join Date: 3rd April 2007
Location: Stockton-on-Tees
Posts: 613

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **PhroX**
> *IMO, Flair is a negative attribute when coupled with low mental stats, in particular Decisions. With good mental stats though, I'd consider it a positive stat.*

I see what you mean here, but even with a ropey player I don't really see it as negative. If a player is poor to the point that they'll struggle to execute anything at all, I'd rather they try the unexpected and occaisionaly pull it off than keep it simple all the time and still mess up the basics often. I think interms of viewing attributes positively/negatively, same with PPMs, for me I wouldn't refuse to sign a player based on high flair whatever their other stats so I can't see it as negative. Low jumping is probably the only single attribute I'll reject an otherwise worldclass player on. That said I usually manage at the top level, so the players I'm looking at in the first instance are unlikely to have the weaknesses that you see as making flair a negative quality.

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
> *I wouldn't call Flair a luxury stat. Little point having Wingers/Forwards/AMCs/Playmakers that dont want to try anything other than the completely simple.*

Is that really how flair works, as a modifier?

I'd always take a 20/20/10 passing/creativity/flair midfielder over a 14/14/20, given the choice. Likewise a striker I'd rather have the high finishing/composure and low flair combo. Low flair for a winger makes me remember Beckham, you always knew what he'd do from wide areas, but he was still one of the very most effective widemen in his pomp. Every time, shift the ball 2 yards to free up space for the pinpoint cross. Can't even remember any examples of him actually taking his man on, although he must have once or twice.

If flair does work as a modifier in a similar way to technique then I would change my mind.

Reply | Reply With Quote

08-05-2010 09:21 #69

matty1294

Amateur
Join Date: 2nd November 2008
Posts: 122

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

SFraser, do you start with a base formation? If so what is it? And what do you do for pre-season friendlies?

Reply | Reply With Quote

10-05-2010 19:10 #70

MadMax7

Amateur
Join Date: 30th December 2009
Posts: 2

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

This is a great topic! Don't want to get my hopes up, but seems I could be on to something thanks to this.

Just played two games, in a relatively inconsistent season with Liverpool (some really good wins, but alot of draws due to throwing away leads late on). Just implemented some of the ideas in this thread in the second leg of a European Cup game against Bordeaux, with a one goal deficit to turn around. Bordeaux were playing a midfield diamond, but with the right and left sided midfielders playing wide (i.e. not like in the narrow version you often see Chelsea playing in FM where everyone is central), one deep lying defensive midfielder and a guy in the hole behind two strikers. I played a variation of 4-5-1, with a deep lying defensive midfielder, two central midfielders playing tight (idea being to exploit the big gap left by Bordeaux's set up) and two wingers, to exploit the space either side of the defensive midfielder. Worked a treat - dominated possession, restricted them to one clear cut chance and won 5 - 0!

Next game was an FA Cup semi against Chelsea, who were playing the narrow diamond I mentioned above. I went with the same system but was getting totally outplayer - 42 per cent of possession and only 1 shot in the first half although it was 0 - 0. Halftime I decided to move the deep lying defensive midfielder forward so I had a three man midfield (idea to try and dominate Chelsea's two man central pairing) while keeping the width to exploit the gaps either side of the defensive midfielder. Also, subbed those who were not performing. Worked well - recovered to around 46/47 per cent of possession and started to cause them problems going forward. Got a goal with a minute remaining. Chelsea put four up

front so I moved all five midfielders into a line and grabbed another goal in injury time.

So, early signs are promising but will keep going for the last few months of the season. Next plan is to try and beat the common Premiership 4-4-2 with a 4-4-1-1 formation.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

11-05-2010 00:42 #71

Uysaler Emircan

Amateur
Join Date: 21st February 2005
Location: www.addmanager.com
Posts: 81

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Great thread, thanks to all contributers.

I also like the assymetric approaches to create space. I came up with an assymetric 4-3-3 http://community.sigames.com/showthread.php?t=150080 and an assymetric 4-4-2 http://community.sigames.com/showthread.php?t=145424 to break the ground covering usual 4-4-2 and 4-3-3 shapes.

My only problem with these shapes and the match engine is that, when I have just one winger, I actually want him to switch between right and left flank during the game. Solid 3 man midfield will stay there, and he will be the dynamic part that can create space and break the opposition defense's symmetry. But there is no option like this in tactic that can make him change space. You have to do it manually each game which gets really annoying after a point. Can't this "winger switching flanks" option be added to the next game? We can create the ideal assymetric, space creating approach if this happens.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

12-05-2010 07:07 #72

Wizard of Oz

Amateur
Join Date: 11th January 2009
Location: Melbourne
Posts: 114

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

I have been having problems in defeating teams that play 4-3-1-2 with the midefielders all as CM's. Inter are a good example of this. I suspect that I should be trying to exploit the space between the three mids and the defense. I normally man-mark the AMC and close down the three CM's. I was thinking that I should play 4-1-2-2-1. Then my DMC can easily control the opposition AMC and then I can play my two AM's as either wingers or inside forwards and run from deep to attack their defense. This will stop their full backs from being able to bomb forward to give their CM's a wide passing option. What do you think?

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

12-05-2010 21:03 #73

aderow

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Playing an anchor would be a good idea if you are trying to limit the space that the opposing AMC has. As for creating space against them.....I actually played inter last night and won 4-1 with about 5 youngsters playing

I play a 4-2-4.....here's what I did:

Usually I have both of my CMs run from deep ocassionally (set on mixed) so they can mix up their runs but since I started hargreaves, who can play DM, I set his on rarely to keep him anchored in midfield and keep an eye on sneijder. In the first half I played wide and down the flanks.....and it failed miserably....my youngsters couldn't handle Inter's first team (I guess Mourinho didn't realise it was a friendly.....).
In the second half I decided that would play narrower in order to occupy the other Inter mids while still playing down the flanks. This worked as it turn the center the park into a battlefield while leaving the wings open for my FBs and AML/R to bomb up and down it. Many times it was my repective FB and AM working together against the opponents lone FB. Also, my forwards like to pull out wide which meant that they were pulling Inter's defenders out of position. And I ended up scoring 3 goals in the second half.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

13-05-2010 22:22 #74

olejosed

Amateur
Join Date: 9th August 2008
Posts: 37

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Brilliant post!! There should be more people like you SFraser Thanks!

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

#75

18-05-2010 15:08

lucatonix

Part-Timer
Join Date: 17th December 2008
Posts: 1,017

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

To deal with Chelsea, do you think this formation will work, because my team currently doesn't have any ball-winning type midfielders.
-------GK--------
---CB--CB--CB---
-----DM--DM-----
-W--CM--CM--W-

-------ST-------

The aim here is to croud out the centre of the park so good ball-winning skills are not particularly needed. The Wingers will need good pace and stamina to take the FB position when defending but collect the ball to attack down the wing on the counter. I'm hoping that Chelsea's FBs will assist in the attack so I can use my quick wingers to counter in massive hole left and cross to either my ST or two CMs.

Reply | Reply With Quote

18-05-2010 15:30 #76

Jenko_EFC

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **lucatonix**
> *To deal with Chelsea, do you think this formation will work, because my team currently doesn't have any ball-winning type midfielders.*
> *-------GK--------*
> *---CB--CB--CB---*
> *-----DM--DM-----*
> *-W--CM--CM--W-*
> *----------*
> *-------ST-------*
>
> *The aim here is to croud out the centre of the park so good ball-winning skills are not particularly needed. The Wingers will need good pace and stamina to take the FB position when defending but collect the ball to attack down the wing on the counter. I'm hoping that Chelsea's FBs will assist in the attack so I can use my quick wingers to counter in massive hole left and cross to either my ST or two CMs.*

I don't see any major flaws there, two markers for their two forwards and a sapre is fine, 2 DM's will contain the AMC and any on-rushing midfielders and the CM's should deal with the opposing ones. This should be a contain tactic and against a really sound defensively Chelsea you will find it very hard to score and should they pop up with a moment of brilliance you will probably not get an equalizer.

The only slight fault is one I've made plenty times before and that is their DMC, Obi Mikel. He isn't a Lampard, Ballack or Cole standard but he is an anchorman and a good one at that and without a 'distraction' ie; a drop deeping forward or a AMC that drifts wide, you may struggle as he will constantly be a pasiing option for the midfielders and may choose the safe option and play it to the defenders and mainly Carvalho who if I remember correctly isa decent passer and may find someone else like Bosingwa who could start an attack. Don't change anything drastic as that's a nice set-up but keep an eye on Mikel just incase .

Reply | Reply With Quote

18-05-2010 16:47 #77

lucatonix

Part-Timer
Join Date: 17th December 2008
Posts: 1,017

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Yeah I wiill see how that works, but won't be playing Chelsea for quite a while though. Might try to set up some friendlies with them at the end of the season to try this out.
I suppose it the DMC holds the possession too much I could make the ST chase the CBs and DM to reduce his passing options so he might choose some riskier passing options.

Reply | Reply With Quote

18-05-2010 17:12 #78

Jenko_EFC

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Maybe a defensive forward although as I say you will struggle to win but should get a draw unless you're severely unfortunate. You could try a deep-lying forward which should provide a 'distraction' os he doesn't chase the wingers and be a decent goal threat.

Reply | Reply With Quote

18-05-2010 17:28 #79

lucatonix

Part-Timer
Join Date: 17th December 2008
Posts: 1,017

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

To make it more attacking I could move a DM into CM to try and mark out the diamond and the centre CM could close down the DMC, plus it would increase my attacking options. Would need a good DMC to neutralise Lampard though.

Reply | Reply With Quote

19-05-2010 14:26 #80

lucatonix

Part-Timer
Join Date: 17th December 2008
Posts: 1,017

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

The 3-2-4-1 did work although it did got to extra time. Scored twice on the counter attack after making subs. Chelsea went down to 10 men due to injuries so that meant i could remove one of the DMs bring on Gourcuff in AM who ran riot but had no support. Then I took of Dzeko and played Van Persie and made the CMs far more attacking and took the game to Chelsea. This made me go 1-0 up.

Then Song got injured and after subbing Montolivo I had no DMs left, so I played Denilson in DM and moved Van Persie into AM and put Gourcuff at CM. This stalemated Chelsea with the diamond because both teams were absolutely shattered. We scored again from a counter at a corner when Van Persie tackled Mikel at the edge of the box after the ball had been cleared and ran unchallenged to the opposite end of the pitch to score.

Chelsea scored promptly but this was just a consolation from the penalty spot.

Just found out I have been rewarded with Watford in the final of the FA Cup after this Chelsea win.

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2010 02:55 #81

Lamps_indonesia

Amateur
Join Date: 9th April 2010
Posts: 4

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

I don't know if this is still inside the topic of creating space or not. I just recently read this post and have applied it to my tactic. And I must say the results were truly satisfying. My basic formation is a 4-5-1 but I change it depending on my opposition's formation. Just now I battled home against liverpool for a 3-3 premiereship draw. I'm on my fifth season 2014/2015.

My point is this: usually before going into a match I look at my opponents' formation from their fixtures. And from Liverpool's 5 latest fixture that I looked, all of them show that Liverpool plays a 4-4-2 match with Fatih Terim (his profile said that he preffers a 4-4-2 formation). Even my scout Bryan Robson reported that Liverpool played 4-4-2. So I set up my 4-5-1 to create space for their 4-4-2. And imagine to my surprise when they suddenly changed to a 4-1-2-2-1!! I tried to set up my formation again but I already brought the players for my 4-1-2-2-1 to counter what I had thought their 4-4-2. (weird sentence, huh?)
and the best I could do was draw against them.

So to sum up:
The AI seems to be strange playing 4-4-2 against any AI opponent regardless of their formation and just suddenly changed their formation just so they can counter the humans' player formation. I mean, after my match they played against a 4-5-1 Tottenham and they played with a 4-4-2. What the heck??!!

Oh, and also Benfica did this to me although their changing from a 4-1-2-1-2 wide diamond to a narrow diamond seemed somewhat understandable compared to the drastic 4-4-2 to a 4-5-1. I lost to them in a 4-3 aggregate.

Oh and my point for this thread is that the AI does this after I've applied SFraser's pointers on creating space. Pretty weird, huh? Well, maybe. I just wanna share it.

btw thanks a lot SFraser for this wonderful thread. Without it my FM-ing football couldn't achieve a new level..

Last edited by Lamps_indonesia; 20-05-2010 at 03:01. ***Reason:*** *Forgot to write something at the bottom.*

Reply **Reply With Quote**

20-05-2010 03:55 #82

Falahk

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

im going to talk a breafly about how i came about to beat Manchester United coached by Javier Aguirre in the super cup (a team I also knocked out of CL, Rafael even got sent of in the away leg lol), anyway I will focus on the super cup game

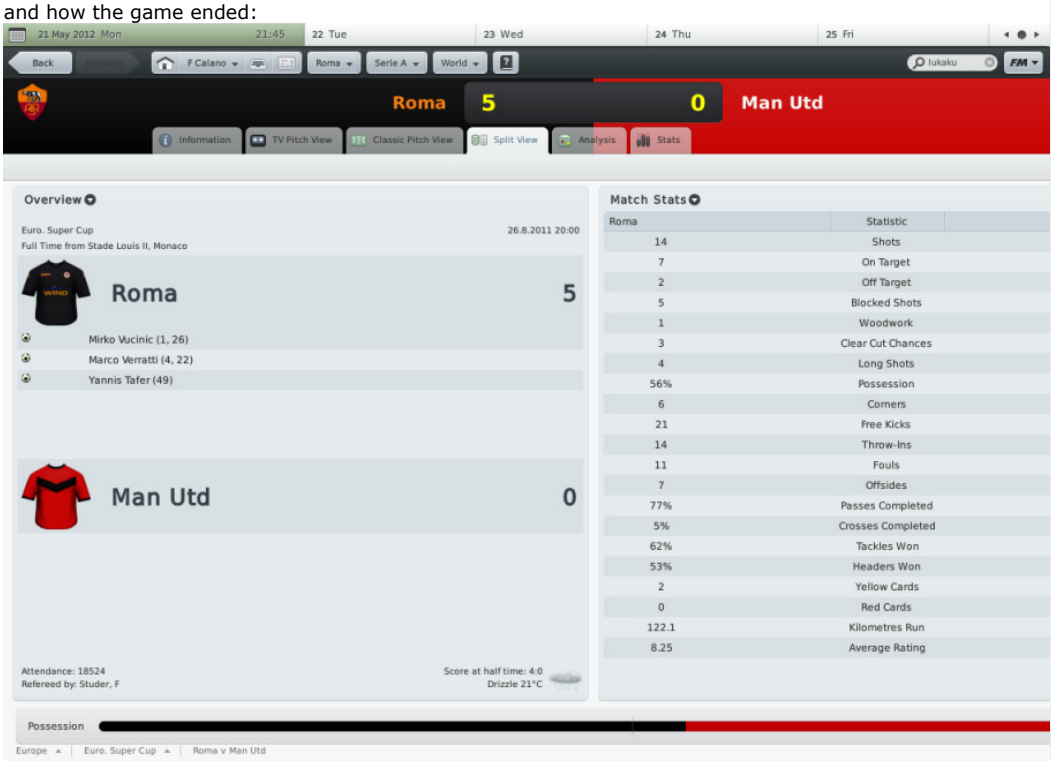
line ups was as follows:



experiance have made me spot how vurnable wide 4-2-3-1 formations are to good teams playing 4-3-1-2, and Aguirre seams very consistant in playing this wide 4-2-3-1 formation, which made my pick of formation easy.

so why is this the case? I supose it can pretty much be sumed up like this:
De Rossi cancel out Martin
my back line deals with the wingers and striker
my wide cm's keep Carrick and Fletcher under control
Verratti is left alone in the hole and open to do his magic (2 goals, 1 assist)

and how the game ended:



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#83

20-05-2010 04:24

vasilli07

Part-Timer
Join Date: 10th November 2004
Location: Singapore
Posts: 1,643

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Can anyone give me some pointers on how to break Inter down? In my 4 games with them, I could not beat them and I'm not even close to that.



My formation is a kinda of 4-3-3. AML is the advanced playmaker while my right side forward will drop abit deeper to play on the right. My DR is a wingback with attack duty.

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20-05-2010 11:16 #84

ObaMartins09

Amateur
Join Date: 27th June 2007
Posts: 778

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Inter are an extremely versatile side and coached by Mourinho they are incredibly difficult to beat - I'm not surprised you're having trouble doing so.

Firstly your formation seems rather unorthodox. Personally I'd push Seedorf inside to the AMC slot to close the space Cambiasso has when in possession and also to match up a 4v4 central midfield.

The space now is clearly down the wings. One of your strikers needs to be roaming out to the flanks to try and counter the inevitable runs of both Santon and Maicon. As for your own full-backs, they need to attack the space in front of them almost making a 2-1-4-1-2 formation in attack with Filipe and Zambrotta pushing the Inter full backs back.

Sneijder is clearly the key to the chances Inter create from open play so negating his threat should be a priority. Sandro is a terrific player so a simple man-marking system should work here but if Sneijder is drifting wide often to pull Sandro away from the middle then you might have a problem. Keeping Sandro on a zone marking system in this scenario would work so that he marks Sneijder in his main area of threat.

Inter's front two are tricky too - with Eto'o pinning your CB's deep and Pandev roaming around him. Having the defender marking Eto'o on a cover role and the other as a normal defender should be fine.

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2010 19:24 #85

aderow

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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

So Ive been thinking.....you can only exploit space when you are attacking and you can only attack when you have the ball. By pressing your opponent with high closing down and a high defensive line, you should be able to regain possession more frequently. Now the only downside from this is that pressing high up limits the amount of space that there is for you to create, exploit/use. Now because of this I decided that I would employ a lowered defensive line in order to allow more space that could be potentially used by my attackers.

Now the other part of this was the closing down. There's both an upside and a downside to high closing down. First it increases the likely hood of you winning possession in dangerous positions high up the field. If you are able to successfully regain possession high up the field, unless the opponent that you stripped is able to come back at you retake the ball, another opponent will be forced to step in leaving space in behind him. At that moment that you win the ball from your opponent it is almost like they are playing down a man. At that point it becomes very easy to use two to beat one as there is more space to do so. If you have other players in good position, then it may be easy to exploit the newly created space in order to create a chance on goal and hopefully score.

On the other hand, by furiously closing down, your players will likely become fatigued quicker. Of course if you have the right players, then this may not be much of an issue. The big issue is that there will be times when your attackers will venture back to help out with you defense. As usual the likely hood of regaining possession will be higher when closer to your goal, but when you do manage to do so it will mean that you will likely end up with a less than potent counter attack. This could potentially be an issue against sides with very organised defenses. Even if you leave a man high up the field while the others go back and defend, in the event of a counterattack your opponents may be able to close down and eliminate the free space before you are able to capitalise on it.

These are things that have been going through my mind. I hope you find it helpful as you look for more ways to exploit free space.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

22-05-2010 14:57 #86

Jenko_EFC

Amateur

Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Been reading zonal marking's preview of Bayern vs Inter here and looked at their interpertation of how Inter create space for Sneijder by having their forwards move to the right when they have possession which leaves Sneijder with a run from deep and open. Was wondering how to incrporate into FM as this could be very dangerous at Everton with Cahill running in to crosses. So I'd shape up with my lone striker one position to the right with hug touchline as wideplay, my right winger as an inside forward and my attacking midfielder one space to the right and a trequarista. Hopefully I've explained it fine but if not I'll post screenshots later.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

22-05-2010 16:34 #87

SFraser

Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Jenko_EFC**
>
> *Been reading zonal marking's preview of Bayern vs Inter here and looked at their interpertation of how Inter create space for Sneijder by having their forwards move to the right when they have possession which leaves Sneijder with a run from deep and open. Was wondering how to incrporate into FM as this could be very dangerous at Everton with Cahill running in to crosses. So I'd shape up with my lone striker one position to the right with hug touchline as wideplay, my right winger as an inside forward and my attacking midfielder one space to the right and a trequarista. Hopefully I've explained it fine but if not I'll post screenshots later.*

They mentioned something similar in their analysis of the first leg between Inter and Barcelona. I have not seen enough of Inter this season to know if that is actually a tactical design, or just a product of that specific game.

Either way, to do in FM would be orders of magnitude more complex than pointing it out and explaining it to a team in the dressing room in real life, because the specific instructions do not exist in FM and would have to be produced through exploiting a "cascade" of movement in your team with a deep winger, a roaming striker with RFD rare, a central striker with no roaming and RFD often, and then finally a Midfielder on the opposite side to the deep winger with RFD Often and roaming.

Your way might also work, but it's pretty obvious from both methods that it would require a huge amount of movement control through RFD/Positioning/Roaming exploitation etc.

That's not say it cannot be done, and I am sure if neither your method nor my method works out first time then a solution can be found somewhere between the two.

If someone could just find out the exact difference in timing between a Roaming movement into space and a RFD as a move begins, then being able to design this kind of thing would be alot easier, but hugely unrealistic.

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22-05-2010 17:56 #88

Jenko_EFC
Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

I presume it would be difficult but it was the main topic I was interested in like where they bundle on the right to create space on the left. I too do not know if Inter do it as I don't watch much of their games either although the general strategy of such a thing would be a very good tactical weapon to use against an offensive fullback like it worked against Alves presumably against Barca and could switch sides depending on the opponents.

An inside forward or attacking midfielder would love such space to roam into and was/is a fascinating idea to try and produce but would take alot of time to get right. I doubt it is a 'tactical gameplan' from Mourinho as such but an occurance of a roaming striker, an offensive right winger and a striker moving to the right when possession is there along with a left attacking midfielder. To distract the right-back and centre-half would also be a task but I suppose with the right attributes he could win the header or get there in time for a volley. If they played particularly narrow pushing him to left wing would help with a RFD.

Realism is difficult in a game and it is not as simple as real life where you'd say "You's roam to the right and you make a run from deep" which I suppose would make life a lot easier! One possible thing SI could include and I'd like would be a small option after wideplay to select where ie; hug touchline - right/left /both. Which'd help lots too.

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30-05-2010 23:13 #89

llama3
Semi Pro
Join Date: 27th October 2006
Location: Highbury House.
Posts: 1,616

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

fantastic article SFraser, as ever good analysis and spot on. Have realised about applying match by match instructions better and am reaping the rewards that I thought I would need the transfer market to achieve!

Reply | Reply With Quote

24-06-2010 19:53 #90

charlstonbigspuds
Amateur
Join Date: 8th December 2008
Posts: 230

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

can i just ask when you are studying the opponents weaknesses,do you do it by watching a previous game or just studying their team/formation.

Also i watch the game in full on classic 2d but on quite a quick speed is this two fast to study the game properly?

Reply | Reply With Quote

24-06-2010 21:25 #91

Jenko_EFC
Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Normally, the opposition's formation although to get a decent idea of player roles I look for a match where they played a similar rep team to me and look at the analysis page and key/extended highlights although I onlt do this when it's an important match.

Personal preference. Personally, I watch 2-D Classic and 3 or so notches from the fastest which goes at a fast enough pace whilst I can still see perfectly what's happening although people may prefer faster/slower.

Reply | Reply With Quote

25-06-2010 14:15 #92

charlstonbigspuds
Amateur
Join Date: 8th December 2008
Posts: 230

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **Jenko_EFC**
> *Normally, the opposition's formation although to get a decent idea of player roles I look for a match where they played a similar rep team to me and look at the analysis page and key/extended highlights although I onlt do this when it's an important match.*

> *Personal preference. Personally, I watch 2-D Classic and 3 or so notches from the fastest which goes at a fast enough pace whilst I can still see perfectly what's happening although people may prefer faster/slower.*

Thanks 👍,how to long does a match generally take on that speed?

i normally have it one from the fastest which to be honest is too fast to study the full game correctly,i have plenty of time to play game at the min but usually i go for that speed due to time limitation,which will be the case again soon.😢

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

25-06-2010 14:28 #93

Jenko_EFC
Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Not too sure exactly becuase I'm like an adjusting machine when a match kicks off if something isn't perfect! Time is the most difficult thing to get right in real life and the game, you have two options, watch very fast and not "enjoy" the football you've set out or watch it in absolute detail but play 1 or 2 games per night if you go into the quite extreme zone. Personally, when my machine is running fine I get through 3-4 games per night but not very often.

It's like juggling or spinning plates, you are on too long and you suddenly become slightly bored and complacent but if you're on too fast you may miss a few things. Give it a try and see, have about the first 20 mins of a match on that speed and see if it suits you, if not adjust until you get it perfect for you.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

25-06-2010 17:38 #94

charlstonbigspuds
Amateur
Join Date: 8th December 2008
Posts: 230

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

Can i ask how you would approach the dilemma i have at the min(a lot of questions i know) in terms of attacking.

i manage crystal palace in the prem finished 10th in second season being solid playin a 4-4-2 with the 2 CM moved to DM,i then signed some better quality creative players(im a sucker for them),and upon tryin to now be more attacking i found my team finishing 12th.

any tips on making the step from being a negative team to a one that can create the space and actually utilize it would be greatly appreciated.thanks

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-06-2010 11:25 #95

Jenko_EFC
Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **charlstonbigspuds**
> *Can i ask how you would approach the dilemma i have at the min(a lot of questions i know) in terms of attacking.*
>
> *i manage crystal palace in the prem finished 10th in second season being solid playin a 4-4-2 with the 2 CM moved to DM,i then signed some better quality creative players(im a sucker for them),and upon tryin to now be more attacking i found my team finishing 12th.*
>
> *any tips on making the step from being a negative team to a one that can create the space and actually utilize it would be greatly appreciated.thanks*

Read, re-read and read this thread again! There's alot of tactical ideas on exploiting different formations in this thread and if you come up against a different shape, create your own plan and report back.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-06-2010 00:02 #96

SFraser
Semi Pro

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space



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

> Originally Posted by **charlstonbigspuds**
>
> *Can i ask how you would approach the dilemma i have at the min(a lot of questions i know) in terms of attacking.*
>
> *i manage crystal palace in the prem finished 10th in second season being solid playin a 4-4-2 with the 2 CM moved to DM,i then signed some better quality creative players(im a sucker for them),and upon tryin to now be more attacking i found my team finishing 12th.*
>
> *any tips on making the step from being a negative team to a one that can create the space and actually utilize it would be greatly appreciated.thanks*

If you are playing defensive football, your attackers have to be strong and ruthless. If you play attacking football, your defence has to be strong and ruthless. Playing more attacking football and signing better attacking players is only going to make your defence weaker.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

27-06-2010 22:58 #97

mg539

Amateur
Join Date: 30th October 2007
Posts: 381

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **charlstonbigspuds**
>
> *Can i ask how you would approach the dilemma i have at the min(a lot of questions i know) in terms of attacking.*
>
> *i manage crystal palace in the prem finished 10th in second season being solid playin a 4-4-2 with the 2 CM moved to DM,i then signed some better quality creative players(im a sucker for them),and upon tryin to now be more attacking i found my team finishing 12th.*
>
> *any tips on making the step from being a negative team to a one that can create the space and actually utilize it would be greatly appreciated.thanks*

This is one of the hardest things to do tactically imo, personally I keep playing neutral/defensively and keep improving my players. Its only once I've reached champions league football that I try expansive stuff!!

1) I assume in buying more creative CM's you've sacrificed a DM, thus you can't dominate the midfield physically anymore. If you have the moral conviction to play this way, even with mid-table standard players then make sure the DM you do play is very good mentally/physically, and if they are rubbish technically that's fine - just put him on a very limited role so his creative partner does the creative work! Again, imo, dominating the central midfield space is fundamentally important so although you may like to play expansively, you have to accept that you're giving the opposition more space as well, so I would stick to two solid players in CM and then put creative players either wide or behind the striker(s).

2) This is another assumption, but if you played a 'solid 4-4-2 with two DM's' then I guess you play with quite a deep defensive line? This wouldn't have been a problem with two DM's but if one has been sacrificed, or if your midfield is higher up the pitch, there is now a space between your central midfield and defense which decent opposition will ruthlessly exploit! It's a risk do do this with slow defenders but I would suggest your defenders should now press more and so play higher up the pitch. Don't do this if your opposition plays with two quick strikers right up top though (however this is rare - to my knowledge only Sunderland do regularly in-game, with Bent/Campbell)

3) Final point - never play a standard 4-4-2 diamond: look at my posts earlier (wolves v wolfsburg) to see how easily it can be exploited!

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

#98

ProZone

Amateur
Join Date: 3rd December 2009
Location: Bristol
Posts: 320

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

SFraser, there has been mention in this thread of delaing with Chelsea's 4-1-2-1-2 and you have posted about keeping possession on the flanks to tire Chelsea's players. Can you go into considerably more detail on how you would do this. Some pointers as to a starting formation, philosophy and strategy would be great along with any specific roles given to players, individual instruction modifications and/or touchline shouts.

I get the idea, just having real trouble with the implementation.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

28-06-2010 15:27

charlstonbigspuds

Amateur

Join Date: 8th December 2008
Posts: 230

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **mg539**
>
> *This is one of the hardest things to do tactically imo, personally I keep playing neutral/defensively and keep improving my players. Its only once I've reached champions league football that I try expansive stuff!!*
>
> *1) I assume in buying more creative CM's you've sacrificed a DM, thus you can't dominate the midfield physically anymore. If you have the moral conviction to play this way, even with mid-table standard players then make sure the DM you do play is very good mentally/physically, and if they are rubbish technically that's fine - just put him on a very limited role so his creative partner does the creative work! Again, imo, dominating the central midfield space is fundamentally important so although you may like to play expansively, you have to accept that you're giving the opposition more space as well, so I would stick to two solid players in CM and then put creative players either wide or behind the striker(s).*
>
> *2) This is another assumption, but if you played a 'solid 4-4-2 with two DM's' then I guess you play with quite a deep defensive line? This wouldn't have been a problem with two DM's but if one has been sacrificed, or if your midfield is higher up the pitch, there is now a space between your central midfield and defense which decent opposition will ruthlessly exploit! It's a risk do do this with slow defenders but I would suggest your defenders should now press more and so play higher up the pitch. Don't do this if your opposition plays with two quick strikers right up top though (however this is rare - to my knowledge only Sunderland do regularly in-game, with Bent/Campbell)*
>
> *3) Final point - never play a standard 4-4-2 diamond: look at my posts earlier (wolves v wolfsburg) to see how easily it can be exploited!*

thanks for this,your pretty much spot on i sacrificed my DM for a more creative CM(aaron ramsey).id thought this might be the case and have started playing the DM again and i have started the season well. Now i just have the problem of leaving a top CM on the bench cant manage to build an attacking 433 wingers(but thats a problem for another day!)

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28-06-2010 19:06 #100

SFraser

Semi Pro



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

Re: The Tactics of Attacking : Creating Space

> Originally Posted by **ProZone**
>
> *SFraser, there has been mention in this thread of delaing with Chelsea's 4-1-2-1-2 and you have posted about keeping possession on the flanks to tire Chelsea's players. Can you go into considerably more detail on how you would do this. Some pointers as to a starting formation, philosophy and strategy would be great along with any specific roles given to players, individual instruction modifications and/or touchline shouts.*
>
> *I get the idea, just having real trouble with the implementation.*

Keeping possession on the flanks is just one aspect of tiring the Chelsea players out. The key principle is to make them move around and battle more than they would like to, for long periods of the game. The strength of Chelsea through the middle is actually counter-productive to the "stamina game" where they are weak because it naturally encourages you to defend through the middle, encouraging their defense forward and fullbacks to overlap. Which in turn leaves you with space to attack down the flanks and in behind Chelsea. So all you are really doing is combining the usual centrally solid, counter-attacking system with a bit of possession play in wide areas.

In terms not only of space but also in terms of getting Chelsea to chase the ball, you want to have a threat upfront that is running behind the defence and chasing the ball into channels. This is not only a good way to counter-attack Chelsea anyway, but is a good way to make Chelsea shuttle back and forth up and down the field, and it is also a good way to receive the ball in the wide channels and construct attacks from wide areas like you might do against Madrid, but also to keep the ball.

The usual counter-attacking system against a team with numbers through the middle is to lob balls down the flanks to a striker that is running the channels, then get him to deliver a good ball to the midfield runners. Maybe a Winger/Inside Forward is running into the box, or maybe you use your wingers to man-mark the opponents wingers and use a CM to make runs into the box. Either way the opponents defence is going to be chasing the ball wide and then facing a runner from deep. It's the basic premise of a good counter-attack.

The start of all good counter-attacks is a good ball over the top from deep. You win the ball deep, play it to your "playmaker" then he lobs a peach over the top to a runner. Against a narrow team, this guy can

also lob balls from flank to flank. He is your "playmaker" so he should be decent on the ball anyway, so depending on whether you choose "get the ball forward" or "retain possession" you should be able to control whether he is doing flank-to-flank stuff or over-the-top stuff.

In short if I were to design a formation against Chelsea, assuming a level of quality of players that is not light years behind Chelsea, I would be looking to do the following things:

1. Pack the midfield, very much leaning towards three midfielders. Two of these midfielders would be very physical, high stamina players playing relatively deep but getting in amongst the Chelsea players when they move close to the D. The third CM would be a DLP, tasked with "for the love of god" not leaving his position to hunt the ball, because Chelsea will destroy you through the middle if you give them space. 2 CB's and a DM/DLP sitting in a big triangle that moves as a unit forwards or backward and never concedes an inch of space through the middle. The instant your DLP or DM leaves his position ahead of the centrebacks, Lampard and Ballack are going to link-up and play a throughball to whoever Chelsea have upfront.

Someone like Scholes or Carrick is prime for this role. Don't get them move, get them to sit right infront of the two Centrebacks and ping balls around the pitch.

Then you can use your two CM's to hunt and destroy the ball. If you set up this "triangle" properly (and I keep going on about the central defensive triangle because it is utterly vital to understand in defensive football) then you can involve your Fullbacks in linking up with your CM's to hunt the ball.

2. Play two wingers/inside forwards. If these guys are man-marking the Chelsea fullbacks and have pace and skill then not only are your own fullbacks free to defend other areas, like the centre of the pitch, but your two widemen are always in the prime position to take on the fullback and beat him quickly. The very fact that your widemen mark the Chelsea fullbacks means that your widemen are always in the prime position to exploit any failure or weakness or error by the Chelsea fullback. If your fullback wins the ball it is 2v1 in a deep area giving you the ball and you can then drive towards the Chelsea centrebacks from deep. If you did not man-mark the fullback then you winger might be man-marked 50 yards up the pitch by John Terry. Good luck winning that pass.

It also gives you constant ability to outnumber the Chelsea wide players no matter where they are. Your widemen follow them deep and double mark them with your fullbacks to prevent crosses to the Chelsea central behemoths. You win the ball and it's 2v1 down the flank in close quarters. You could keep the ball there all day, or play it to your DLP and get him to whip it to the other flank.

If the Chelsea fullbacks drop back into their defensive areas, it is just a usual system with your Wingers playing high and wide. You can push your fullbacks forward while your CM's stay deep and make overlaps or link-up play down the wings.

3. Always play a man over-the-top. Chelsea are a team that loves it when you give them the space to move their defence into your own half. They will happily sit there and utterly dominate you Chelsea style inside your own half unless you have a really potent ball over the top. There is very little more punishing in football than a Chelsea defense sitting on the half-way line. Even if their forwards are horrific and having nightmares, every ball you clear will be on the edge of your own box in no more than ten seconds time.

So a DLP is you main man. A good DLP that can switch play from flank to flank or lob balls over the top is key. Keep your CM's narrow and battle-axe like, with your CM's hunting the ball down once it gets into your half. Use your widemen to follow the Chelsea fullbacks, and use your CM's + Fullbacks to press the ball in midfield. Out number them wide and let them have a DLP of their own in acres of space because you are not coming forward as a team. Your defensive triangle forces their attacks wide. You double up down the flanks and use Physical CM's to harrass and chase, and then you lob balls over the top or play possession football down the flanks and from flank-to-flank to tire them out.

If your "core" is particularly solid, you can then allow your battle-axe, stamina endowed CM's as well as your WF's to bomb forward into the box to receive balls from your channel running lone striker. This in particular will cause a huge amount of "back-to-front" motion in the Chelsea midfield.

Basically out-stamina and out-mark them in "mobile/less vital" areas. Out position and pass them in key defensive areas. Out run them through the centre of their defence. And make sure you can out-jump Drogba and Lampard and Ballack inside the box. Chelsea are not an easy team to beat but if you defend a good shape well through the heart of your defence, battle well in midfield, outnumber them down the flanks, and outrun them upfront you can whittle down their stamina and do what you like for the last half hour of the match. The only players of yours that should be doing much running are your 2 CM's and Striker, while most of their team apart from their DLP should be running around like mad.

Bit of a wall of text here, and probably not the best analysis ever. Sorry about that.

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