

A Guide to Tactical Analysis for Broadcasters and Media
2019 FIFA Women's World Cup France and NWSL 2019 Season Edition
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The purpose of this document is to share the common questions analysts of our beautiful game often ask ourselves during matches. It is recommended that when watching a match, you have written down the flat shape both teams are playing in, along with its corresponding position with shirt number and NOT positional number. The general public is not expected to know numbers by positional play. Therefore, when you call a match or write about it, it is recommended you use the commonly used position names and not numbers.

As broadcaster and media persons, we are educators of the game, and we must understand that the general public does not understand positional movements. Thus, we must explain those functions. When calling a match, there is not much time for an elaborate class on the specific position or function. It is recommended that you keep it simple and give the "big picture" and not the very in-depth one. **You are not the coach.**

It is important that you familiarize yourself with positional movements and penetration options. For example, the player on the ball can take-on a player in three ways: 1. Going through the player, 2. Going around the player, 3. Going over the player. With that said, likewise for positional for attackers, midfielders, defenders, and goalkeepers. Likewise, basic functions of "tracking back" and "dropping".

When we have tactical changes, such as a substitution or a shift in shape, it is recommended you reference the most impacted positional change and their potential options/possible reasoning for this change. When analyzing the game, it is important to mentally ask yourself questions around the four phases of play, which in turn, can make analysis much easier and straight forward.

Four phases of play –

1. Attacking
 2. Losing the ball
 3. Winning the ball
 4. Defending.
- The transition between phases can happen every few seconds and hundreds of times during a game, and sometimes, it's difficult to clearly identify one phase from another.
 - The phases of winning and losing the ball typically do not happen for a long time, and they usually last seconds.
 - In general, the attacking phase will typically happen in the final third of the field and defending in the defensive third.
 - Defending can also occur in other sections of the field, likewise attacking.

Attacking Phase –

- When a team is attacking, what shape do they get themselves into?
- What do the players immediately around the ball do?
- What is the speed of the attack?
- What areas of the pitch does the attacking team look to exploit?
- Is the ball played on the ground or in the air?
- Is the attacking style direct or more passing focused?
- How many players are fully committed to going forward when attacking?
- What shape does the attacking team leave in midfield and at the back (including the goalkeeper)?

Transition to Defend or Losing the Ball –

- Immediately following the attacking team losing the ball, how do they react?
- If pressure is to be applied high up the pitch, how long should this last?
- What does the player nearest to the ball do and what reaction is there from the players around the ball?
- If pressure is applied what shape does the team adopt?
- How do players around the applied pressure and play react?
- If the team are to drop back, how far do they drop?
- Who/what triggers this decision?
- How does communication play a part?

Defending Phase –

- Where does the defending team wish to defend?
- Who presses the ball first?
- How aggressive is this pressure?
- Who covers the initial pressing player?
- How does the goalkeeper impact on the defensive decisions?
- What defensive strategy does the team apply?
- How many players are expected to drop back to defend?
- What areas of the pitch do the defensive team look to force the attacking team into?
How high / deep is the defensive line?

Transition to Attack or Winning the Ball –

- When the ball is won, what does the player in possession look to do first? Where do they go?
- What is the reaction of the players away from the ball?
- What shape does the team adopt in these initial seconds?
- How quickly is the ball moved when won?
- What areas of the pitch do the team in possession look to exploit first?
- What type of strategy does the team in possession use?
- Are the team set to quickly defend again should the ball be lost?