

# **LWYSA**

## **Training Program**

### **Book 9**

### **Systems of Play**

### **U7-U11**



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# **WELCOME TO THE LAKE WASHINGTON YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION FAMILY OF PROGRAMS**

In 1967, a group of individuals got together and formed an Association for our youth, centered around the game of soccer, which has endured and developed the following organizational philosophy.

## **VISION**

To be recognized by our membership and soccer community as a world-class provider of youth soccer services.

## **MISSION**

To promote the game of soccer and to provide opportunities for all youth under the age of nineteen who register with us, to play affiliated soccer at a level commensurate with ability and interest. We will emphasize the development of self-esteem, good sportsmanship, fitness, achievement, teamwork and skill through the playing of the game; and provide educational opportunities to further develop all players, coaches, referees and administrators.

The Vision and Mission statements above are our creed. Following in this thought, the Association takes great pride in its approach of teaching life's lessons to our youth. This environment is intended to create an enjoyable soccer experience as well as develop young athletes.

Many individuals have contributed to the success of the Association Programs over the years. To all those individuals, the Association is truly grateful for the contributions and sacrifices they made in behalf of our youth.

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## **Systems of Play for U-7 to U-11 Teams**

Although I personally love to see younger players enjoying themselves simply by chasing after the ball I do recognize the need for order when it comes to team play.

That order involves the team shape and the positional play of the players making up that shape.

In three versus three play I have shown three different ways of shaping the team although coaches should be aware that at that level the ball is more of a magnet to the kids than the positional demands of the coach. However our aim is to create situations where the players can develop a triangular support shape when possible.

In four versus four we introduce a goalkeeper so that the outfield players can be more adventurous in going forward knowing that the sweeper keeper will be the last line of defense. Once again the triangular support shape should begin to form consistently. Also the four players [Three outfield players and a goalkeeper] can form a diamond shape when in possession providing the team shape with width and depth.

Five versus five provides the coach the choice of using a solid positional system like the two defenders and two forwards who hold their positions or a more mobile system like the one defender, one forward and two midfielders. In this system the midfield players are required to assist the lone defender on defense and also to assist the lone attacker on offense. The other possibility would be to play two solid defenders, one attacking player and one midfield player whose job would be to assist the defense when needed and to assist the lone attacker when the team is on offense. As always the coaches decision would depend on the strengths and weaknesses of the players.

The six versus six system of play should be a perfect system for anyone who has played or coached basketball because the tactical input could be similar. However the soccer systems that I would suggest would be 2-2-1 system that would provide the team with two solid defenders, one attacking player and two midfield players who would compete in the midfield and assist the defenders and forward when necessary. Another system

would be a 2-1-2 positional one where Defenders and forwards would be required to hold their positions and the midfield player would hold the midfield position to be of assistance to either group. The third system I could suggest would be a 1-3-1 system of play. This system would put a huge demand on the mobility of the midfield players to assist the lone defender and the lone attacker whenever the play is in that area of the field.

Nine versus nine gives the coach the chance to emphasize his attacking or defending preferences. Many coaches prefer to play it safe by playing the 3-3-2 system of play that requires three solid defenders, two solid attackers and three midfield support players. Another way of playing would be the 3-2-3 system that would have three solid defenders, three solid forwards and two fetch and carry midfield players. The other way of playing would be to place the players in a 2-4-2 system of play. This system would have two solid defenders, two solid attackers and four very mobile midfield players.

As the players and their coaches approach the time when they will be playing eleven-a-side soccer they should have learned something about positional play and working with a specific player group. The recreational program at Lake Washington will assist this tactical and positional awareness by encouraging players and coaches to discuss the tactical and positional demands along with the normal technical demands of the game.

We believe that the more players know about the game of soccer the more enjoyment they will get from playing the game.

### 3V3 First System of Play

This system attempts to provide balance through positioning.

The players are each given a position to play

Player 'A' is responsible for holding a solid defensive position

Player 'C' is responsible for holding an attacking position

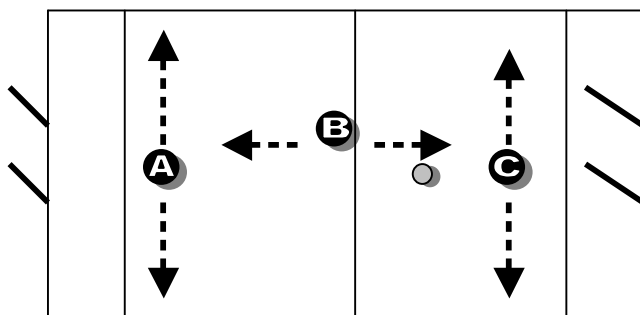
Player 'B' is expected to support both of these players from a central midfield position

The positional play should allow the team to have at least two players in the area of the ball

The support positioning of player 'B' will require more effort from this position than the other two therefore coaches should look to substitute this position regularly

If the opponents decide to play with three players around the ball they will be open to a quick counter-attack by the team playing this formation because the player 'C' is always in an advanced attacking area

Also, with player 'A' staying back in the defensive area the opponents should never have an open goal to shoot on



## 3V3 Second System of play

This system of play is an attacking triangular system

The players move up and down the field in a triangular shape

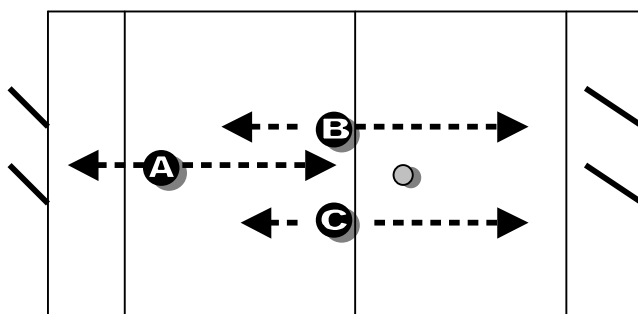
This shape allows the players 'B' and 'C' to break forward in attack supported by player 'A' who provides depth to the team shape

The system also calls for players 'B' and 'C' to drop back on defense to support defender 'A'

This type of triangular support shape will allow all three players to keep in touch whether the team is attacking or defending

The biggest problem for the coach will be to encourage the back player to advance in support of the attackers to provide an easy outlet for either of the forwards when they are being pressured

The coach must convince the players that retaining the smaller shape of the triangle is preferred to allowing that shape to become too spread out



### 3v3 Third System of play

This triangular system of play is designed to be much more defensive than the other two systems described above

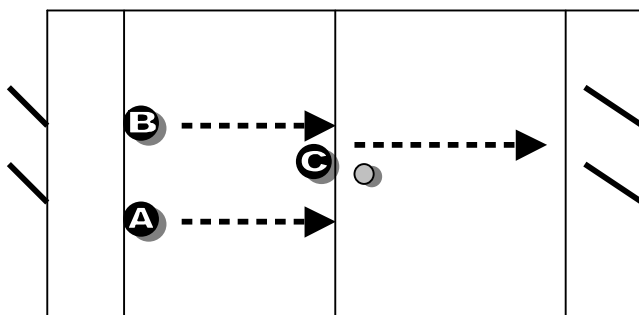
The coach could use this system when faced with a team that has a particularly good attacking player

The coach could also use the system against a team that throws caution to the winds and attacks with all three of its players

The system is simple enough to play because it provides the team with two defensive players and one attacking player

Of course the attacking player would be asked to drop back to the halfway line when the team was defending but more importantly would be required to break forward quickly into an attacking position when the team regained possession of the ball

The defensive players would hold their deep positions when defending making sure that the attacking team had to work hard for everything they get





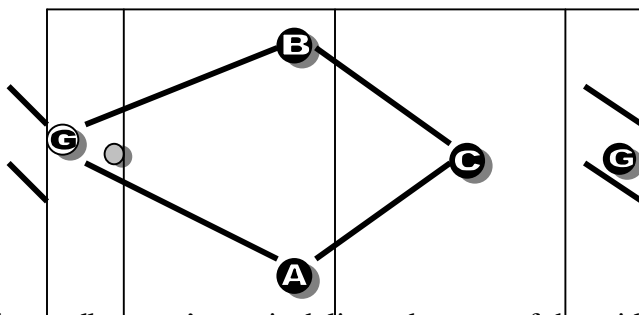
## 4v4 First System of play

This system of play introduces the goalkeeper to the team for the first time

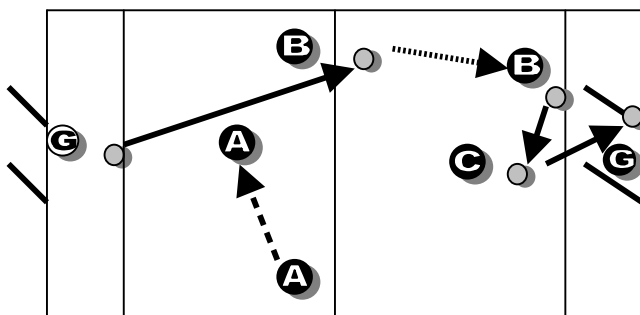
This allows the team shape to change from a triangular base to a diamond base

As you can see from the diagram when the keeper has the ball and is about to put it into play the players open their positions to form the diamond shape

The diamond shape is good for providing the attacking players with space to collect any pass from the keeper



The goalkeepers' pass is delivered to one of the wide players who should carry the ball into the attack while the other wide player should move into a central support area



## 4v4 Second System of Play

Another attacking shape would be the triangular shape formed by the out field players

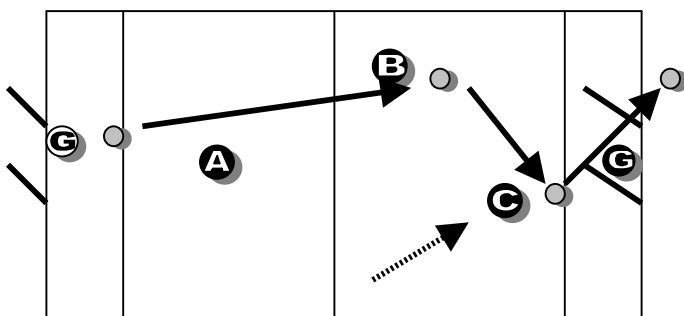
This shape would put two attacking players in wide positions while the third player remained in a defensive position

This would allow the forward players to start wide then move into a central position when the other wide teammate received the ball

This type of positional movement should be timed to create a penetration play for the attacker receiving the pass from the wing teammate

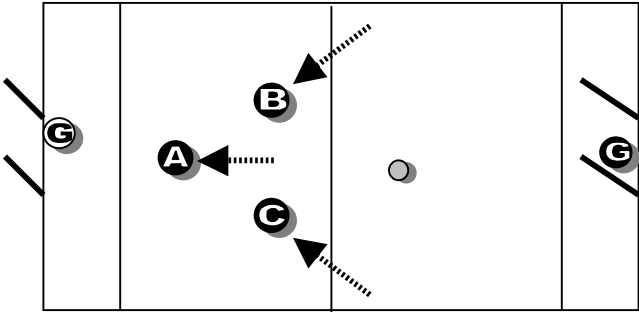
As this play is developing the defensive support player should keep a position behind the two attackers to be available to support the play and if possible to receive a back pass and change the point of attack to a wing or central area

This type of support position by the defensive player allows a broken play to be resurrected again by using a simple pass back to that deep supporting player who can keep the attacking move alive



Defensively the shape of the team could still retain its triangular shape but the distance between the players should be cut down

This would provide a strong central barrier to the opponents attack forcing them to use the less direct wing route



## 5v5 First System of Play

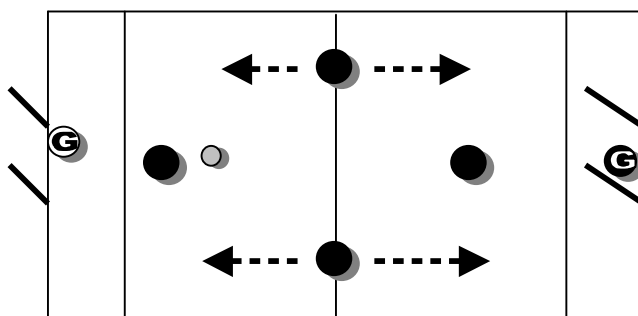
This shape has two solid outfield positional players and two mobile midfield players

The positional players are the center back who holds position in front of the goalkeepers area and the center forward who maintains a central attacking position in the opponents half of the field

The two wing positions are taken up with players who are expected to be mobile enough to support both the attacking player and the defensive player

The thing I like about this system of play is that it provides the team with three attacking players on offense and three defensive players when defending

*This system also provides width and depth to the team shape allowing the players to open up on attack and to close down on defense without over exerting the two midfield support players*



## 5v5 Second System of Play

This system of play is a basic positional system

In this system we combine two players in each half of the field so that they can perform their team duties as partners

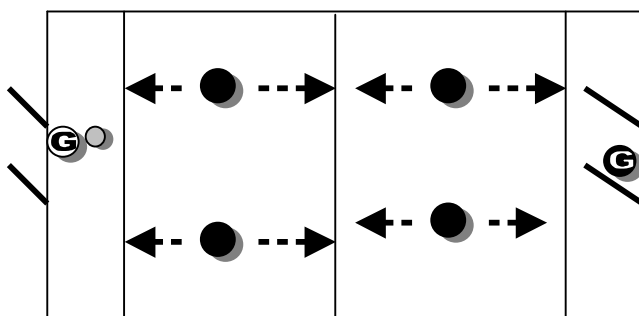
The two back players are expected to defend their area of the field through one player aggressively challenging for the ball while the teammate provides cover

This type of defending can be effective with players of this age because they are not yet into controlling the game through passing the ball and tend to overdo the dribbling

The two attacking players should stay in the attacking area of the field so that a ball winning defender can supply them quickly with a pass

The other good point about this system is that if the feed to the forwards is supplied quickly enough they will have a two versus one situation against a lone defender

To enable the forwards to take full advantage of these situations the coach should run some two versus one shooting drills at every practice.



## 5v5 Third System of Play

This system mixes positional play with interchanging of one players position to provide an extra defender without losing the second attacker

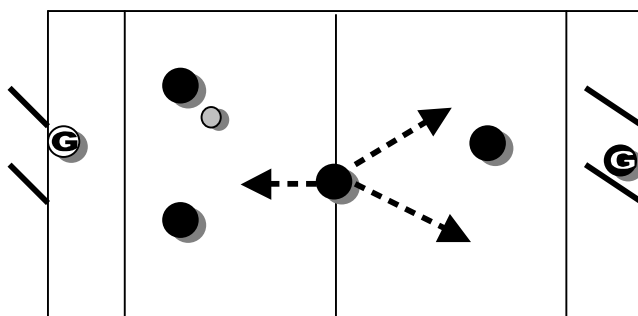
The positional players begin with the two defensive players whose job is to defend their half of the field

The other positional player is the forward whose main purpose is to create attacking space for himself in order to receive the forward pass

The key player in this formation is the midfield player who takes on double duty in the shape of an extra defender when the team is on defence and an extra attacker when the team is on offense

This type of double duty for players with extra physical and technical ability allows the coach to bolster the defensive and offensive parts of the teams play while providing the special player with challenges that will help to improve that player

*Our aim as coaches is to challenge every player by providing them with tasks that they can do and as some players can handle bigger challenges than others this system of play provides for that opportunity as well*



## 6v6 First System of Play

This system of play provides the team shape with a strong defensive presence by having two defenders holding their positions in the defensive half of the field

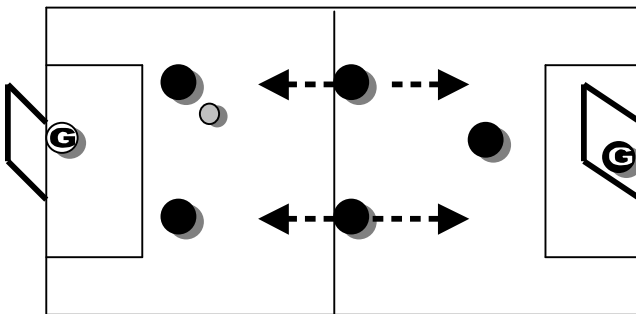
The midfield players are asked to do double duty by supporting these defenders when the team is on defense and by supporting the lone forward when the team is on attack

The lone forward holds position at all times by staying on or over the halfway line. This will force at least one defender to hold back at all times otherwise the forward will be open for a quick counter attack on goal

By positioning the players in this way the coach has provided the team with four defenders and a goalkeeper when the team is on defense

When the team is on offense the midfielders support the lone forward making the attacking force a group of three attackers

In this system the coach is relying on strong defense and quick counter attack offense to defeat the opposing team



## 6v6 Second Systems of Play

This system of play provides the team with a balanced attack and a balanced defense because of the positioning of the defending and attacking players

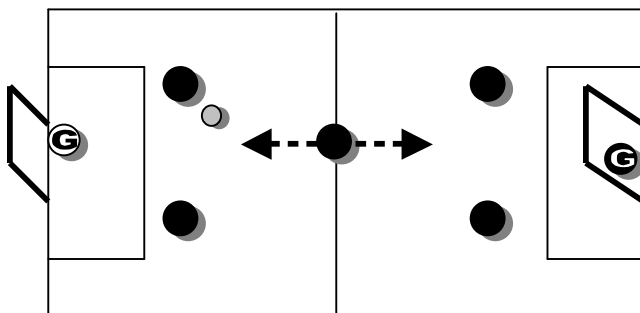
The positioning of the defenders requires both of them to stay in their own half of the field so that they can be on hand at all times to protect their keeper

The forwards are required to remain in the attacking half of the field to be ready to attack the opponents goal immediately the ball is passed to one of them

The midfield players' job is to assist both the defenders and attackers by supporting the defenders when on defense and the attackers when on offense

The system should provide the team with three attackers and three defenders plus a goalkeeper at all times

The positioning of the defenders, which should limit the opponents attacking threat while the two forwards positioned in the attacking area should provide an ever present threat on offense, provides the solid part of this system





## 6v6 Third System of Play

This system of play is balanced by the mobility of the midfield players

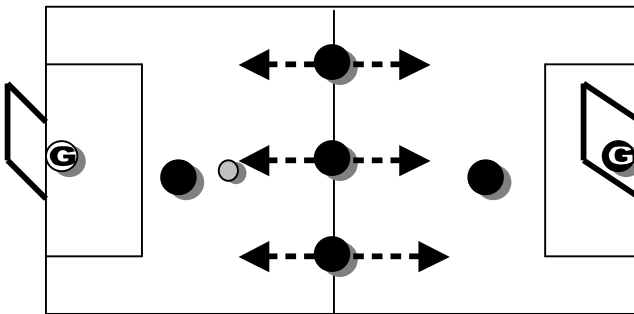
The system requires one defender to remain in a solid defensive position acting like a sweeper behind the midfielders

The system also requires a forward player who should remain in the attacking area of the field in order to provide a constant threat to the opponents

The main body of the team lies in the midfield where the players are required to support the offense and the defense by using their mobility to provide a numerical advantage over the opponents

The result of the midfield mobility and the positioning of the lone forward and defender should give the team four defenders plus a goalkeeper when defending and four attacking players when the team is on attack

In this system it is important that the lone attacking player can hold the ball long enough to allow the midfield players time to get into their attacking support positions



## 9v9 First System of Play

As we advance into the higher numbers of players that make up the team, coaches must make sure to play a system that provides the team with defensive, midfield and offensive balance

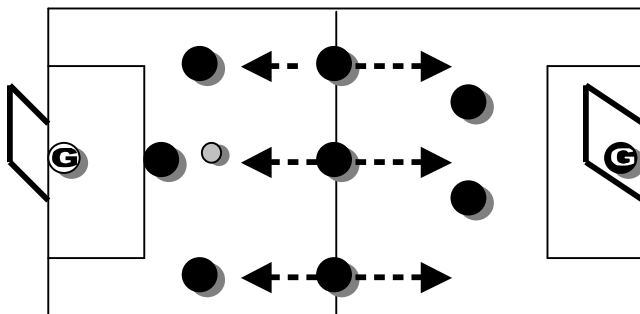
This 3-3-2 system of play will provide the defense with three defenders plus a goalkeeper at all times and with as much as six outfield defenders when the midfielders join the back line defenders

The system also provides the team with two attackers at all times and with as much as five attackers when the midfielders support the attack

The coach must choose the system that best suits the talents of his players and this system requires three solid strong defenders plus two attackers who are adept at holding onto the ball and scoring goals

The system also requires three midfielders who are mobile enough to provide support for the defenders and the attackers

Like most systems of play once the players become used to the positional requirements the coach can work on the teams style of play and introduce some flowing movement into the mix



## 9V9 Second System of Play

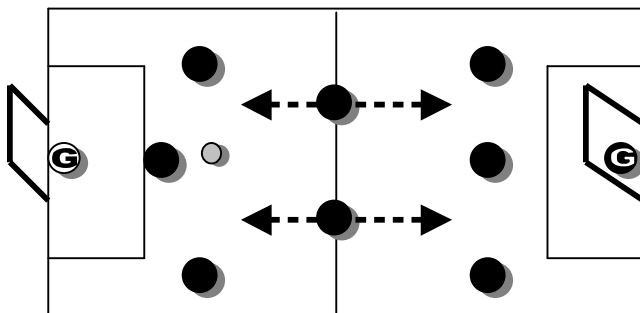
The 3-2-3 system of play would be preferred by coaches who decide that they have the type of players who can fit into the three different roles required by this system

Like most 9v9 systems of play a back line of three players protects the goalkeeper. The central defender would stay in the central position while the two wide defenders would be expected to defend their wing area when the ball is on that side. However when the opponents' attack is being formed down the opposite wing the wingback would be expected to cover round into a more central area to assist the central defender

The two midfield players would be expected to fetch and carry the ball from the defenders to the forwards and then to support the attack from a position of depth

When the team is defending the two midfielders would be expected to attempt to win the ball in the midfield or failing that to drop back in support of the back line defenders

The three attackers would be expected to provide balance in the attack by penetrating the wings and central attacking areas in order to get crosses into the goal area and shots on goal



## 9v9 Third System of Play

One of the most popular systems is the 2-4-2 that provides the team with two back line defenders, four midfield players and two forwards

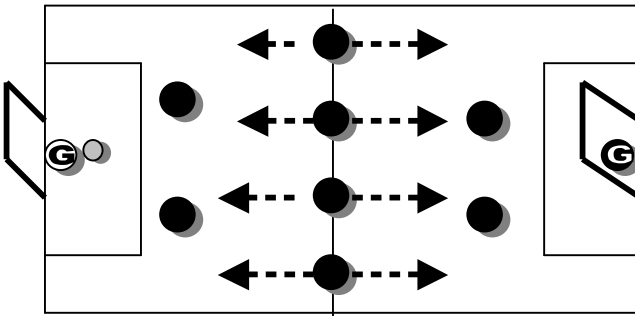
This system provides a solid stay at home defending duo whose job is to block the central attacking area

The system also provides an attacking force of two forwards whose first task is to score goals but whose second task is to hold the ball long enough to allow the midfielders time to re-position themselves from defensive support to attacking support positions

The main working force is situated in the midfield where players are required to perform four different tasks

These players must combine together to defend the midfield area and when needed to drop into a deeper defensive area to assist the back line defenders

On offence they must retain control of the ball in the midfield area in order to advance the ball into the attacking area while at the same time attempt to break forward onto the attack by making penetrating runs with and without the ball.



## Notes:

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