

## Team Shape

Spacing is essential in any directional sport, and the best way to teach spacing is through a team shape. The best shape to have on the field is one that makes several triangles to allow for passing angles. This can be taught as early as 4 years old and a natural progression can be seen as the players age up. 4-year olds may not completely understand the concept, they can start to understand these concepts.

Balance on the field requires 3 areas to be covered: depth, width, and height. These can be accomplished through several formations, and HSC will use a natural progression through each age group to help players understand these concepts.

Depth: deep areas are those closest to the team's own goal

Width: wide areas are the areas closest to the sidelines

Height: high areas are those closest to the team's opposing goal

### Shapes by age group (click on links to see diagrams)

[4v4](#): Basic diamond formation allows each point go cover depth, width, and height. 4-year-olds know what a diamond or kite looks like, and it is easy for each player to go to a certain area on the field. Granted, these players will most likely not stay in these areas, yet have them start in these areas on every restart of play. Remind them to "get in their shape". This shape also allows the players to have 1v1 matchups, which is the best matchup in soccer. Rotate players through each role.

[5v5](#): Diamond formation with a central player. The central player adds options for passing across and up the field, yet still allows for every player to be in a 1v1 matchup while still providing depth, width, and height.

[8v8](#): 2-3-2 formation. This is a natural transition from a 4v4 or 5v5 shape because this formation gives 2 diamond shapes on the field connected by the central midfield player. The defenders provide the depth, the outside midfielders the width, and the 2 forwards the height. The outside midfielders are the workhorses here and will be doing the most work to provide width up and down the field. The central player is a passing link between the two sides of the field and the defenders and forwards.

[9v9: 2-4-2](#) formation (see diagram). This is the most natural and simplest progression from the 2-3-2 formation. The extra midfield player allows the 2 midfield players to have more specific roles: defensive and attacking. The defensive midfielder is responsible for changing the point of attack and connecting the defensive lines with the attacking lines. The attacking midfield player is responsible for switching the point of attack in the attacking part of the field, attacking the defense, and working with the forwards to score. The wide midfield players need to provide

width up the field and connect with the attackers for crosses, yet can provide defensive width as well. Again, the wide players are the workhorses and need to be as wide as possible.

**9v9: 3-2-3** formation. This option allows for the width of the field to be covered by the outside backs and wing players. The wide defenders must get wide in the attack and then compact and tight in defense. A drawback of this formation is the one of the two options for an outlet for a defensive pass is vertically up the field instead of with a passing angle. The wide forwards need to be as wide as possible in the attack.

**10v10: 3-4-2** formation. This is a natural transition from a 2-4-2 and gives the best depth, width, and height for teaching the game. The 3 defenders can stay somewhat compact, providing depth and defensive coverage while the width is provided by the wide midfielders. The defensive and attack midfield players can link the defensive and attacking lines in the 2-4-2. The forwards provide the height and should try to stay between the defenders while the outside midfield players are encouraged to run up in the attack to provide width and service with their crosses.