

Specific Team Instructions

The next stage of creating your tactic is to select your specific team instructions. These are added to your chosen mentality and fluidity to more precisely define your desired tactical style.

All of the specific team instructions available for you to use are discussed in detail below. For each instruction the effects on your tactic are outlined so that you are aware of exactly how the instruction tells your players to alter their play from the style that has already been set by mentality and fluidity.

Having established its effects, it is then discussed how the instruction can be incorporated into a tactic, in particular focusing on its uses with more defensive and more attacking mentalities.

Mentality, fluidity and specific team instructions can all be altered for different matches and at any point during a match. Therefore, also summarised, for each specific team instruction, is how you might be able to effectively use the instruction as a match strategy, either against a particular type of opposition team or in a particular match situation. Bear in mind that when altering your specific team instructions for such strategies, it may be beneficial to change your mentality or other team instructions as appropriate to suit your new style of play. More details of which mentalities and specific team instructions suit particular tactical styles will be provided later, in the Tactical Styles guide.

Finally, for each instruction a brief summary is provided of related attributes that you may want to look for in your players when considering whether to use the instruction.

Read *Inverting the Pyramid* to further improve your tactical knowledge and understanding.

| Possession | Penetration | Defending | General |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Go Route One | Exploit The Flanks | Hassle Opponents | Take A Breather |
| More Direct Passing | Exploit The Left Flank | Stand Off Opponents | Much Higher Tempo |
| Retain Possession | Exploit The Right Flank | Get Stuck In | Higher Tempo |
| Shorter Passing | Exploit The Middle | Stay On Feet | Lower Tempo |
| Pass Into Space | Look For Overlap | Use Tighter Marking | Much Lower Tempo |
| Work Ball Into Box | Shape | Use Offside Trap | Be More Expressive |
| Play Out Of Defense | Play Wider | | Be More Disciplined |
| Pump Ball Into Box | Play Narrower | | |
| Clear Ball To Flanks | Much Higher Defensive... | | |
| Hit Early Crosses | Push Higher Up | | |
| Float Crosses | Drop Deeper | | |
| Drill Crosses | Much Deeper Defensive... | | |
| Run At Defense | Stick To Positions | | |
| Shoot On Sight | Roam From Positions | | |
| | Allow Wide Players To... | | |

Key: ● Selected ● Unselected ● Conflicting

✓ Ok Undo Revert Clear Cancel Presets... ▾

Possession

Go Route One

Your players will attempt much more direct passes, and play at a higher tempo with more width.

With more defensive mentalities, your more defensive players will pass more direct by default and your more attacking players will pass shorter.

With more attacking mentalities, your more defensive players will pass shorter by default and your more attacking players will pass more direct.

This is a more extreme version of More Direct Passing, explained in detail below, and so can be used where more urgency or directness is required.

More Direct Passing

Your players will attempt more direct passes, and play at a slightly higher tempo with slightly more width. This is a less extreme version of Go Route One.

With more defensive mentalities, your more defensive players will pass more direct by default and your more attacking players will pass shorter.

With more attacking mentalities, your more defensive players will pass shorter by default and your more attacking players will pass more direct.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality to get more direct balls forward when counter attacking, quicker than the mentality allows by default, to quick central and wide attackers who can take on a high opposition defence or chase balls behind the defence, or to a strong central or wide attacker with good aerial ability who can hold up the ball for quicker teammates.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality to get more direct balls forward to a tall, strong central or wide attacker who can hold up the ball for supporting teammates and cause problems for the opposition close to goal.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality to get more direct balls forward to quick and skilful wide attackers.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when creating few good chances; when needing a goal late in the match; when your central and wide attackers have more Acceleration and Pace than their markers, perhaps after making an appropriate substitution, and perhaps as a way of counter attacking against an opposition team that is pushing high up; when your central or wide attackers have an aerial advantage over their markers, perhaps after making an appropriate substitution, and perhaps as a way of creating chances against an opposition team that is sitting deep; or when the opposition is defensively strong in midfield or has more players in midfield.

Your opposition team report will show you in advance if the opposition tends to concede more goals from direct passes.

More direct passing is most effective when the pitch is either wide or long, including if it is both long and narrow. Wet weather and poor pitch conditions also favour more direct passing.

Attributes

Defensive and supporting players – Passing, Technique, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions

Attacking players – First Touch, Heading, Anticipation, Off The Ball, Work Rate, Acceleration, Jumping Reach, Pace, Stamina, Strength

Retain Possession

Your players will make much shorter passes, and play at a lower tempo with less width.

With more defensive mentalities, your more defensive players will pass more direct by default and your more attacking players will pass shorter.

With more attacking mentalities, your more defensive players will pass shorter by default and your more attacking players will pass more direct.

This is a more extreme version of Shorter Passing, explained in detail below, and so can be used where more patience or control of possession is required

Shorter Passing

Your players will make shorter passes, and play at a slightly lower tempo with slightly less width. This is a less extreme version of Retain Possession.

With more defensive mentalities, your more defensive players will pass more direct by default and your more attacking players will pass shorter.

With more attacking mentalities, your more defensive players will pass shorter by default and your more attacking players will pass more direct.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality to build up attacking play in an even slower and more controlled manner than the mentality allows by default, in deeper areas of the pitch where there is likely to be more time and space available for your more creative, attacking players.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality to build up attacking play in a slower and more controlled manner than the mentality allows by default. You will need more creative and technical defensive and supporting players, and supporting and attacking players with good off the ball movement, as your team will be attacking higher up the pitch where space is more constricted.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when leading to limit the opposition's possession and chances; when your possession percentage is low; when your passes completed percentage is low; when direct passes are being easily dealt with by the opposition defence, when your central or wide attackers have less Acceleration and Pace than their markers or have a physical disadvantage over their markers, possibly after making an appropriate substitution; or when the opposition is defensively weak in midfield or has fewer in players in midfield, perhaps after you switch to a formation with more midfielders.

Your opposition team report will show you in advance if the opposition tends to concede more goals from short passes. Shorter passing is most effective when the pitch is either short or narrow, unless it is both long and narrow. Dry weather and good pitch conditions also favour shorter passing.

Attributes

Creative players – First Touch, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Teamwork

More advanced players – First Touch, Anticipation, Off The Ball, Acceleration

Pass Into Space

Your players will attempt through balls more often. Through balls are forward passes beyond an opponent for a teammate to run onto.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality and shorter passing to encourage all your players to attempt more risky passes through the opposition, or with a more defensive mentality and more direct passing to encourage all your players to attempt more through balls for your attackers to run onto.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality and shorter passing to encourage all your players to attempt more risky passes through the opposition.

As a match strategy

It can be useful if struggling to play through the opposition and create chances, despite having a high possession percentage, or when the opposition's defensive players have less Acceleration and Pace than your attacking players or poor Marking, Anticipation, Concentration and Positioning.

Attributes

For passing – Passing, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions

For receiving – First Touch, Anticipation, Off The Ball, Acceleration, Pace

Work Ball Into Box

Your players will rarely attempt long shots.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful as part of any tactic to discourage all your players from speculative long shots, either to help create better chances or because your players have poor long range shooting ability.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when many long shots have been attempted unsuccessfully but few good chances have been created.

Attributes

Supporting and attacking players – Poorer Finishing, Long Shots, Technique, Decisions, Teamwork

Play Out Of Defence

Your defenders and more defensive midfielders will make much shorter passes.

With more defensive mentalities, your more defensive players will pass more direct by default.

With more attacking mentalities, your more defensive players will pass shorter by default.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality and a shorter passing approach to encourage your more defensive players to make shorter passes than the mentality allows by default, so that passing moves can be built up by more advanced players.

It can be useful with a more direct passing approach to encourage direct passes to come from more advanced players with better technical and creative ability.

If you are playing a deeper player in midfield or a defender who has good technical and creative ability then you may want to instruct him individually to make more direct passes.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when your “passes – defence” percentage is low and your defensive players are playing too many wasted direct balls; when you want to keep hold of possession, unless perhaps the opposition is pressing high and giving your defence little time and space; or when your team is struggling to create chances because your creative midfielders are not receiving the ball enough.

Attributes

Defensive players – Poorer Passing, Technique, Creativity

Pump Ball Into Box

Your players will be more likely to pass into the central areas of the pitch, with your defenders and more defensive midfielders attempting very direct passes and rarely attempting through balls. Your wide players will sit narrower and try to hold up the ball rather than taking it forward down the flanks, and your wide defenders in particular will attempt crosses more often. Your central attackers will make more forward runs off the ball in an attempt to get on the end of long passes.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more attacking strategy if you have at least one central attacker with good aerial and physical ability to target, and more defensive players able to deliver long aerial passes to him.

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality if you have at least one central attacker with good aerial and physical ability who can hold the ball up for quicker attacking players on the counter attack.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when your central attackers have a physical advantage over their markers, perhaps after making an appropriate substitution, and perhaps as a way of creating chances against an opposition team that is sitting deep,

especially when needing a goal late in the match; or when holding on to a result against attacking opposition in order to relieve pressure.

Attributes

More defensive players – Passing, Technique

Central attackers – First Touch, Heading, Work Rate, Jumping Reach, Strength

Clear Ball To Flanks

Your players will be more likely to pass into the wide areas of the pitch, with your defenders and more defensive midfielders attempting very direct passes and rarely attempting through balls. Your wide midfielders or wide attackers will stay wider in an attempt to receive passes on the flanks.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality if you have wide midfielders or wide attackers with good aerial and physical ability to target, and more defensive players able to deliver long aerial passes to them.

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality if you have wide midfielders or wide attackers with good aerial and physical ability who can hold the ball up for quicker attacking players on the counter attack.

As a match strategy

It can be useful if your wide midfielders or wide attackers have a physical advantage over their markers, perhaps following a substitution, especially when needing a goal late in the match.

It can be useful if holding on to a result against attacking opposition in order to relieve pressure by clearing the ball into safer areas.

Hit Early Crosses

Your wide defenders will dribble with the ball rarely, and attempt crosses often and from deeper positions. Similarly, your wide midfielders and wide attackers will attempt crosses from deeper.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more attacking strategy if you have central attackers with good aerial and physical ability to target, and wide defenders, and midfielders or attackers, with good crossing ability or poorer speed and skill.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when your wide players are struggling to get past the opposition's wide defenders; when the opposition's wide defenders have good Tackling, Anticipation, Positioning, Agility, Balance, Acceleration and Pace; or when your central attackers have an aerial advantage over their markers, perhaps after a substitution.

Your opposition team report will show you whether the opposition tends to concede goals from crosses.

Attributes

Wide defenders, midfielders and attackers – Crossing, Passing, Technique, Anticipation, Decisions

Wide midfielders and attackers – Poorer Dribbling, Flair, Acceleration, Agility, Balance, Pace

Central attackers – Heading, Anticipation, Off The Ball, Acceleration, Jumping Reach, Strength

Float Crosses

Your wide players will attempt higher crosses aimed at the far post.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful if you have wide players who are good crossers and at least one central attacker who is good in the air.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when your central attackers are better in the air than their markers.

Attributes

Crossers – Crossing, Passing, Technique, Anticipation, Decisions

Central attackers – Heading, Anticipation, Off The Ball, Jumping Reach, Strength

Drill Crosses

Your wide players will attempt lower crosses aimed at the near post.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful if you have wide players who are poorer crossers and central attackers that have poorer aerial ability.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when your central attackers are worse in the air than their markers.

Attributes

Crossers – Poorer Crossing, Passing, Technique, Anticipation, Decisions

Central attackers – Poorer Heading, Anticipation, Off The Ball, Jumping Reach, Strength

Run At Defence

Your more attacking players will dribble with the ball more often.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with more direct passing or a higher tempo as part of a more direct or urgent approach.

It can be useful with shorter passing in providing an alternative method of playing through the opposition.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when struggling to break through the opposition's defence with short passing, perhaps because they are standing off your attackers; when the opposition's defensive players have poor Marking, Tackling, Anticipation, Positioning, Acceleration, Agility, Balance and Pace; or when the opposition's tackles won percentage is low.

Attributes

More attacking players – Dribbling, First Touch, Technique, Anticipation, Decisions, Flair, Acceleration, Agility, Balance, Pace

Shoot On Sight

Your players will attempt long shots more often.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful as part of any tactic to encourage all your players to shoot as often as possible, perhaps as part of a more direct, urgent approach or because your supporting and attacking players have poor creative ability.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when needing a goal but creating few chances, particularly against very deep opposition or when other strategies are unsuitable or not working; or perhaps against a poor opposition goalkeeper.

Your opposition team report will show you whether the opposition tends to concede goals from long shots.

Attributes

Supporting and attacking players – Finishing, Long Shots, Technique, Decisions, Teamwork

Supporting players – Poorer Passing, Anticipation, Creativity

Penetration

Exploit The Flanks

Your players will be more likely to pass into the wide areas of the pitch and your wide players will stay wider in an attempt to receive passes on the flanks. Your wide defenders will play with more attacking mentalities, make more forward runs off the ball and attempt crosses more often. Your central midfielders will try to hold up the ball rather than taking it forward through the middle.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful if you have quick, skilful wide defenders and wide midfielders or attackers.

Alternatively you may want to use more physical wide midfielders or attackers to hold the ball up for your wide defenders, but this is likely to overly rely on your wide defenders to create chances.

It can be less suitable with a shorter passing tactic where you have very good technical and creative players in all attacking areas, as the focus of attacking play will be less mixed.

If you want your wide midfielders or wide attackers to stay wide then they would also benefit from good crossing ability, while it would be an advantage to have at least one central attacker with good aerial ability.

If you want your wide midfielders or wide attackers to cut inside when on the ball then they would benefit from good creative ability.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when the opposition is playing with a lot of central players or narrow width; when their central players have very good defensive ability; when the opposition's defence is easily dealing with attacks focused through the middle; when your central attackers have an aerial advantage over their markers; or when the opposition's wide defenders have poor Marking, Tackling, Anticipation, Positioning, Agility and Balance, are tired, injured or have less Acceleration and Pace than your wide players, perhaps after making appropriate substitutions.

Exploiting the flanks can be useful when playing on a narrow pitch as the central areas are more likely to be congested. Your opposition team report will show you if the opposition tends to concede goals from crosses.

Attributes

Wide midfielders and attackers playing wider – Crossing, Dribbling, First Touch, Anticipation, Flair, Off The Ball, Acceleration, Agility, Balance, Pace

Wide midfielders and attackers cutting inside – Dribbling, First Touch, Passing, Technique, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Flair, Off The Ball, Teamwork

Wide defenders – Crossing, First Touch, Technique, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Off The Ball, Teamwork, Work Rate, Acceleration, Agility, Balance, Pace, Stamina

Exploit The Left Flank

Your players will be more likely to pass into the left side of the pitch and your left-sided players will stay wider in an attempt to receive passes on the left flank. Your left-sided defender will play with a more attacking mentality, make more forward runs off the ball and attempt crosses more often. Your central and right-sided midfielders will try to hold up the ball rather than taking it forwards themselves.

This is similar to exploit the flanks, explained in detail above, but is useful if you want to focus play on the left side only.

Exploit The Right Flank

Your players will be more likely to pass into the right side of the pitch and your right-sided players will stay wider in an attempt to receive passes on the right flank. Your right-sided defender will play with a more attacking mentality, make more forward runs off the ball and attempt crosses more often. Your central and left-sided midfielders will try to hold up the ball rather than taking it forwards themselves.

This is similar to exploit the flanks, explained in detail above, but is useful if you want to focus play on the right side only.

Exploit The Middle

Your players will be more likely to pass into the central areas of the pitch. Your central defenders and more defensive central midfielders will play with more attacking mentalities and attempt through balls more often, while your supporting and attacking central midfielders and central attackers will make more forward runs off the ball in an attempt to receive these through balls. Your wide players will sit narrower to contribute more in the central areas.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a shorter passing tactic if you have central midfielders and central attackers with very good technical and creative ability, and at least one quick central attacker with good off the ball movement and skill but perhaps less aerial ability.

It can be useful with an attacking mentality and more direct passing if you have at least one central attacker with good aerial ability and off the ball movement.

It can be useful if you use a formation without wide midfielders or wide attackers.

It can be less suitable with a shorter passing tactic where you also have good wide players, as your team will be less able to use width to play through the opposition.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when the opposition is playing with fewer central players or wider width; when the opposition's wide players have very good defensive ability; when the opposition's defence is easily dealing with attacks focused down the flanks; when your central attackers have an aerial disadvantage over their markers but have good off the ball movement or skill; when the opposition's central defenders and midfielders have poor Marking, Tackling, Anticipation, Positioning and Agility, are tired, or injured; or when the opposition's defenders have less Acceleration and Pace than your central attackers, perhaps after making appropriate substitutions.

Exploiting the middle can be useful when playing on a wide pitch as the central areas are less likely to be congested.

Your opposition team report will show you if the opposition tends to concede goals from passes from central areas.

Attributes

Creative central players – Passing, Technique, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Flair, Teamwork

Central attackers – First Touch, Dribbling, Off The Ball, Acceleration, Pace

Look For Overlap

Your wide defenders will play wider with more attacking mentalities and make more forward runs off the ball. They will also attempt to cross more often but only once they have reached more advanced positions. Your wide midfielders and wide attackers will allow your wide defenders to move past them by sitting narrower with more defensive mentalities, making less forward runs off the ball, dribbling less often and attempting to hold up the ball rather than taking it on themselves.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful when using a narrow formation to provide more width in attack.

It can be useful when you have wide midfielders or wide attackers who are slow or less skilful.

You will need good attacking wide defenders with good fitness, and preferably supporting and attacking players with good aerial ability to get on the end of crosses.

As a match strategy

It can be useful against opposition full backs with less support, for example because the opposition is using attacking wide players; to create chances against an opposition team that is sitting deep, preferably if you have attacking and supporting players with good aerial ability to get on the end of crosses, when the opposition's wide defenders have poor defensive ability, are tired, injured, or have less Acceleration and Pace than your wide defenders; when the opposition is playing with a lot of central players or their central players have good defensive ability.

Look for overlap can be effective on a narrow pitch where the middle of the pitch can be more congested.

Attributes

Wide defenders – Crossing, Dribbling, Anticipation, Decisions, Off The Ball, Work Rate, Acceleration, Pace, Stamina

Shape

Play Wider

Your players will play with more width by positioning themselves further apart from teammates to their left and right. They will also be more likely to pass into the wide areas of the pitch.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play narrower by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play wider.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more adventurous shorter passing tactic to give your players more space to play through the opposition.

It can be useful with more direct passing to encourage your players to play the ball to your wide midfielders or wide attackers, and to give these players more space.

It is most useful with narrower formations where your players will naturally be positioned closer together.

You would benefit from having quick, skilful wide defenders and wide midfielders or attackers. Alternatively you may want to use more physical wide midfielders or wide attackers to hold the ball up for your wide defenders and central players.

If you want your wide midfielders or wide attackers to stay wide then they would also benefit from good crossing ability, while it would be an advantage to have at least one central attacker with good aerial ability.

If you want your wide midfielders or wide attackers to cut inside when on the ball then they would benefit from good creative ability.

Your central midfield players would benefit from good passing ability and intelligence so that they are less likely to concede possession.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when the opposition is playing with a wider formation than yours; when their central players have very good defensive ability; when few chances are being created and more space is needed in attack in order to play through the opposition; when your central attackers have an aerial advantage over their markers; or when the opposition's wide defenders have poor Marking, Tackling, Anticipation, Positioning, Agility and Balance, are tired, injured or have less Acceleration and Pace than your wide players, perhaps after making appropriate substitutions.

Playing wider can be useful when playing on a narrow pitch as the central areas are more likely to be congested, with players closer together.

Your opposition team report will show you if the opposition tends to concede goals from crosses.

Attributes

Wide midfielders and attackers playing wider – Crossing, Dribbling, First Touch, Anticipation, Flair, Off The Ball, Acceleration, Agility, Balance, Pace

Wide midfielders and attackers cutting inside – Dribbling, First Touch, Passing, Technique, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Flair, Off The Ball, Teamwork

Wide defenders – Crossing, Passing, Anticipation, Decisions, Teamwork

Central midfielders – Passing, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Off The Ball, Teamwork

Play Narrower

Your players will play with less width by positioning themselves closer to teammates to their left and right. They will also be more likely to pass into the central areas of the pitch.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play narrower by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play wider.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more cautious shorter passing tactic to allow your players to more easily keep possession, perhaps because your central midfielders have poor passing ability and intelligence.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality and more direct passing to encourage your players to play to a strong attacker with good aerial ability, and to give the attacker more support from teammates to his left and right.

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality and more direct passing to focus more on preventing opposition chances being created, and possibly also to encourage your players to play to a strong attacker with good aerial ability when counter attacking, whilst also giving the attacker more support from quicker teammates to his left and right. It is most useful with wider formations where your players will naturally be positioned further apart.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when the opposition is using a narrower formation than yours; when holding onto a result late in the match; when the opposition is creating a lot of chances through the central areas; when the opposition has central supporting and attacking players with good creative and technical ability; or when you have a central attacker with a physical and aerial advantage over his markers and you want to play direct balls to him, perhaps as a way of creating chances against opposition that is sitting deep, and perhaps after making an appropriate substitution.

Playing narrower can be useful when playing on a wide pitch as the central areas are likely to be less congested, with players further apart.

Attributes

Midfielders – Poorer Passing, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Off The Ball, Teamwork

Physical central attacker, if used – Heading, First Touch, Bravery, Teamwork, Jumping Reach, Strength

Much Higher Defensive Line

Your defensive line will position itself much higher up the pitch, much closer to the halfway line and your midfielders. Your players will close down opposition players who are on the ball earlier and so higher up the pitch.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play lower by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play higher.

This is a more extreme version of Push Higher Up, explained in detail below, and can be useful if even higher positioning is desired.

Push Higher Up

Your defensive line will position itself higher up the pitch, closer to the halfway line and your midfielders. Your players will close down opposition players who are on the ball slightly earlier and so slightly higher up the pitch. This is a less extreme version of Much Higher Defensive Line.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play lower by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play higher.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality to encourage your players to position themselves higher up the pitch than the mentality allows by default, perhaps to allow your players to start passing moves closer to the opposition's goal.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality as part of a very high and more aggressive approach that attempts to win the ball back more quickly and attack closer to the opposition goal.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality with direct passing aimed at a strong central attacker with good aerial ability, who can cause problems for the opposition defence closer to their goal.

It can be useful as part of any tactic if you have quick, capable defensive players, as it can help keep the opposition further away from your own goal.

You would benefit from having intelligent defensive players able to stop balls being played behind the defensive line, with good speed to catch up any opposition attackers who do get in behind.

A quick sweeper keeper can also be an advantage.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when needing a goal late in the match; against an opposition team that is sitting deep if you have a strong, central attacker with good aerial ability to target; when the opposition is having too much time and space on the ball; when the opposition is playing direct to a strong target man, so that he can be kept further away from your goal; when your more defensive players are quicker than the opposition's more attacking players, so that the opposition has less time and space to build up attacks and is kept further away from your goal.

A high defensive line is most effective on a long pitch. Your defenders will have more time to catch any opposition attackers that break clear behind your defensive line, and it will help to reduce the larger gap between your defence and midfield that could otherwise be exploited by the opposition. Furthermore, your defenders will not be required to make passes over such long distances.

It can be less suitable if the opposition's supporting and attacking players have good Dribbling, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Off The Ball, Acceleration and Pace, unless already using never close down opposition instructions for such players. Otherwise, the opposition players may be able to pass around or dribble past your players.

In particular, it can be less suitable if the opposition's central or wide attackers have better Acceleration and Pace than your defenders, as they will be more difficult to catch should they get behind your defensive line.

It can be less suitable if your players are tired, as closing down will be less effective and will cause you player to tire even more, particularly in hot conditions.

Attributes

All players, especially more defensive – Anticipation, Decisions, Determination, Positioning, Work Rate, Acceleration, Pace, Stamina

Physical attacker, if used – First Touch, Heading, Aggression, Teamwork, Work Rate, Jumping Reach, Strength

Drop Deeper

Your defensive line will position itself lower down the pitch, closer to your own area and further from your midfielders. Your players will close down opposition players who are on the ball slightly later and so slightly lower down the pitch. This is a less extreme version of Much Deeper Defensive Line.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play lower by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play higher.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality as part of a very deep and cautious approach that attempts to prevent the opposition playing through your team, perhaps to encourage them forward and open up gaps to exploit on the counter.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality to encourage your players to position themselves deeper down the pitch than the mentality allows by default, perhaps to give your players more time and space to create passing moves.

It can be useful as part of any tactic if you have slow, less capable defensive players, in order to reduce the chances of the opposition team playing through your team or getting in behind your defensive line.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when holding on for a result late in the match; against an opposition team that is pushing forward; if the opposition's supporting and attacking players have good Dribbling, Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Off The Ball, Acceleration and Pace, to make it harder for them to play through your team; if the opposition's central or wide attackers have better Acceleration and Pace than your defenders, so there is less space for them to run into behind your defence; or if your team is struggling to create chances against an opposition team that is sitting deep, to encourage them to come forward.

A deep defensive line is most effective on a short pitch. It will help to reduce the chances of your defence conceding possession to high pressing opposition attackers, as well the chances of attackers getting in to dangerous positions behind the line.

It can be less useful if the opposition team is playing direct to a strong target man, as he will be more dangerous closer to your own goal.

It can be less useful when the opposition's supporting and attacking players have good Long Shots and Technique as they will more opportunities to shoot at goal. However, such opposition players can be closed down individually using opposition instructions.

Attributes

All players, especially more defensive – Poorer Anticipation, Decisions, Determination, Positioning, Work Rate, Acceleration, Pace, Stamina

Much Deeper Defensive Line

Your defensive line will position itself much lower down the pitch, much closer to your own area and much further from your midfielders. Your players will close down opposition players who are on the ball later and so lower down the pitch. With more defensive mentalities your players will play lower by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play higher.

This is a more extreme version of Drop Deeper, explained in detail above, and can be useful if even deeper positioning is desired.

Stick To Positions

When your team is in possession, fewer of your more attacking players will roam from their assigned positions to another area of the pitch.

With more defensive mentalities less of your more attacking players will roam by default and with more attacking mentalities more will roam.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality to encourage less players to roam than the mentality allows by default in order to be more controlled and structured in attack.

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality to encourage even fewer players to roam in order to help keep possession or be even more controlled and structured in attack.

It can be useful in all tactics if your attacking players have poorer intelligence and technical ability.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when leading to encourage players to play more cautiously, or if conceding possession frequently during attacks.

Attributes

Attacking players – Poorer Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Flair, Off The Ball and good all round attacking technical attributes

Attacking and supporting players – Poorer Anticipation, Decisions, Off The Ball, Positioning, Teamwork

Roam From Positions

When your team is in possession, more of your more attacking players will roam from their assigned positions to another area of the pitch.

With more defensive mentalities less of your more attacking players will roam by default and with more attacking mentalities more will roam.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality to allow more attacking players to roam than the mentality allows by default, resulting in more fluidity in attack.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality to allow even more attacking players to roam than the mentality allows by default, if a high level of fluidity in attack is desired.

Your attacking players will need to be very intelligent to know when and where to roam, as well as having the technical and mental ability to play elsewhere in attack, and your supporting and attacking players will need to be intelligent enough to know when and where to fill in for any teammates out of position.

As a match strategy

It can be useful if struggling to play through the opposition and create chances, despite having a high possession percentage, as long as you have enough capable players.

Attributes

Attacking players – Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Flair, Off The Ball and good all round attacking technical attributes

Attacking and supporting players – Anticipation, Decisions, Off The Ball, Positioning, Teamwork

Defending

Hassle Opponents

Your players will play at a higher tempo when your team is in possession and close down opposition players who are on the ball much earlier when your team is defending. Your defensive line will play slightly higher, while those players not closing down the man on the ball will mark opponents more tightly.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play at a lower tempo and close down later by default.

With more attacking mentalities your players will play at a higher tempo and close down earlier by default.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality to encourage your players to close down earlier than the mentality allows by default, perhaps so passing moves can be started higher up the pitch after possession is won back.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality as part of a very aggressive defensive approach that attempts to win the ball back quickly.

Hassling opponents can cause the opposition to make more mistakes and concede possession more easily, but you will require hard working and fit players with good defensive intelligence for it to be effective.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when needing a goal in order to win back possession more quickly; when the opposition is having too much time and space on the ball; when the opposition's players generally have poor Composure, Dribbling, Acceleration, Anticipation, Decisions, Off The Ball and Pace; or when the opposition tends to concede goals from their own mistakes.

Your opposition team report will show you how many goals the opposition has conceded as a result of mistakes.

It can be less suitable if the opposition's attacking players have good Composure, Dribbling, Acceleration, Anticipation, Decisions, Off The Ball and Pace, unless already using never close down or never tight mark opposition instructions for such players. Otherwise, the opposition players may be able to pass around or dribble past your players.

It can be less suitable if your players are tired, as closing down will be less effective and will cause you player to tire even more, particularly in hot conditions.

Attributes

All players, especially more defensive – Anticipation, Decisions, Determination, Positioning, Work Rate, Acceleration, Pace, Stamina

Stand Off Opponents

Your players will play at a lower tempo when your team is in possession and close down opposition players who are on the ball much later when your team is defending. Your defensive line will play slightly deeper, while those players not closing down the man on the ball will mark opponents less tightly.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play at a lower tempo and close down later by default.

With more attacking mentalities your players will play at a higher tempo and close down earlier by default.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality as part of a more cautious defensive approach that attempts to prevent the opposition playing through your team, perhaps to encourage them forward and open up gaps to exploit on the counter.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality to encourage your players to close down later than the mentality allows by default, perhaps to encourage the opposition forward more so gaps can be exploited when possession is won back.

It can be useful as part of any tactic if your players are less hard working and less fit with poorer defensive intelligence.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when holding onto a result; when the opposition is staying very deep in order to encourage their players forward; when trying to contain opposition players with good Dribbling, Acceleration, Anticipation, Decisions, Off The Ball and Pace, so it is harder for them to play through your team; or when your defence appears to be losing its shape and allowing the opposition to exploit gaps.

It can be less useful when the opposition's supporting and attacking players have good Long Shots and Technique as they will be given more time and space to shoot at goal. However, such opposition players can be closed down individually using opposition instructions.

Attributes

All players, especially more defensive – Poorer Anticipation, Decisions, Determination, Positioning, Work Rate, Acceleration, Pace, Stamina

Get Stuck In

Your players will attempt earlier and more risky tackles when with an opposition player who is on the ball.

With more defensive mentalities your players will tackle later by default and with more attacking mentalities they will tackle earlier.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality to encourage your players to tackle earlier than the mentality allows by default, perhaps so passing moves can be started higher up the pitch after possession is won back.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality as part of a very aggressive defensive approach that attempts to win the ball back quickly.

It will cause opposition players to be less willing to run with the ball and take players on, although both sets of players will be more likely to pick up knocks and injuries.

Your players will require good tackling ability to lower the increased chances of free kicks and bookings being given against your team.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when needing a goal in order to win back possession quickly; when the match referee is very lenient; or when the opposition's players have low Aggression, Bravery, Determination and Strength.

It can be less suitable if your team's tackles won percentage is low; if the opposition has players with good Dribbling, Technique, Flair, Acceleration, Agility, Balance and Pace, unless already using easy tackling opposition instructions for such players; or if the opposition has a good success record from free kicks, has good free kick takers or is dangerous in the air.

Your opposition team report will show you if the opposition tends to score goals from free kicks.

Attributes

Defensive and supporting players – Tackling, Bravery, Decisions

Stay On Feet

Your players will attempt later and less risky tackles when with an opposition player who is on the ball.

With more defensive mentalities your players will tackle later by default and with more attacking mentalities they will tackle earlier.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality as part of a more cautious defensive approach that stands off opposition players and attempts to hold them up, perhaps to encourage them forward and open up gaps to exploit on the counter.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality to encourage your players to tackle later than the mentality allows by default, perhaps to encourage the opposition forward and give your players more time and space to create passing moves after possession is won back.

It can be useful as part of any tactic if your players have poorer tackling ability, as they will be less likely to pick up bookings or allow opposition players to get past them as easily.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when the match referee is strict; when conceding too many free kicks, particularly if the opposition has a good success record from free kicks, has good free kick takers or is dangerous in the air; when the opposition's attacking players appear to be riding your defenders' challenges; or when the opposition has players with good Dribbling, Agility or Balance, as well as good Aggression, Bravery, Determination and Strength.

Your opposition team report will show you if the opposition tends to score goals from free kicks.

Attributes

Defensive and supporting players – Poorer Tackling, Bravery, Decisions

Use Tighter Marking

Your players who are not closing down the opposition player on the ball will stay closer to the opposition player they are marking.

With more defensive mentalities your players will mark more tightly by default and with more attacking mentalities they will mark less tightly.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with more defensive mentalities to encourage your players to mark more aggressively whilst still being defensively cautious.

It can be useful with more attacking mentalities to encourage your players to mark more tightly than the mentality allows by default, perhaps as part of an aggressive defending approach.

It can be less suitable if you want your supporting and attacking players to be in more space after possession in won so that counter attacks can be started more easily, and if you want your team to be well structured and keep its shape defensively.

More control can be gained over marking using player instructions, as explained below.

If using tight marking you would benefit from defensive players with good aerial ability so they are less likely to be taken out of the game by an opponent's headed flick-ons, and good speed and overall marking ability so quick and skilful opponents are less likely to get away from them and leave your team defensively vulnerable.

As a match strategy

It can be useful against opposition with supporting and attacking players who have poor off the ball movement and skill, and are slower than your defensive players.

It can be less useful if the opposition has an attacker with better aerial ability than his marker.

You can specify before and during a match which of your players you want to mark which a particular opposition player, and also any of your players who you specifically want to mark more tightly, perhaps because you have told them to mark a certain opponent. Therefore, it may be best to leave this team instruction unselected in order to gain more control over marking using player instructions.

Attributes

Marking, Tackling, Anticipation, Concentration, Decisions, Positioning

Use Offside Trap

Your defenders will be more likely to attempt to catch opposition attackers offside by taking up a slightly higher position before attacking passes are made to them.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality, where your players close down further up the pitch and play a higher defensive line.

In such a tactic, defenders are more likely to have to deal with opposition attackers without the support of your midfield, making the offside trap a useful defensive strategy. Space will be congested for opposition attackers, making it easier for your defence to step up slightly when appropriate and play off side. There will also be more space behind your defence, meaning there will be more time for your defenders to recover and catch up any opposition attacker who beats the trap.

The offside trap will be more effective with an intelligent, well organised defence, made up of players who have played together for a long time and so are very familiar with each other. Your defenders will also need to be quick in case an opposition attacker beats the trap, while it would also be worth considering if your defenders can speak a common language. Loose marking in defence, no man marking and identical duties for both centre backs would suit the offside trap as the defensive line is likely to be better positioned as a result.

As a match strategy

It can be useful against opposition that uses more direct passing or has attackers with less speed than your defenders and poor off the ball movement.

It can be risky against a shorter passing team, particularly if they are also using a higher tempo, as well as against opposition with quicker attackers and good off the ball movement.

Attributes

Your defenders – Anticipation, Concentration, Decisions, Positioning, Teamwork, Acceleration, Pace

General

Waste Time

Your players will try to waste time more when in possession by employing delaying tactics such as hanging onto the ball or taking time over throw-ins and set pieces. This instruction is only available when using a defensive or contain mentality.

As a match strategy

Can be useful late in a match when holding on to a result to tell your players to waste even more time than they will by default with the defensive or contain mentality. Be careful not to use this too early as it may backfire and cost you a goal, leaving you with less time left to try to score in.

Take A Breather

When your team is in possession, your players will play at a lower tempo and make less forward runs off the ball.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when leading comfortably or playing in hot conditions to help keep players fit or when used temporarily before greatly increasing the tempo in order to try and catch the opposition off guard.

You may also want to use it as part of a strategy to keep possession when holding on to a result or trying to contain the opposition.

Retain possession or shorter passing; and/or work ball into box and/or play narrower and/or stick to positions and/or waste time; and/or lower tempo or much lower tempo; and/or be more disciplined – as part of a strategy to help keep possession or restore fitness, perhaps temporarily.

Much Higher Tempo

Your players' attacking play will be much more urgent. They will focus on moving the ball around much quicker and working the opposition defence much more.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play at a lower tempo by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play at a higher tempo.

This is a more extreme version of Higher Tempo, explained in detail below, and so can be used where even more urgency is required.

Higher Tempo

Your players' attacking play will be more urgent. They will focus on moving the ball around quicker and working the opposition defence more. This is a less extreme version of Much Higher Tempo.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play at a lower tempo by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play at a higher tempo.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality and more direct passing to play at a higher tempo than the mentality allows by default, and encourage quicker balls forward to quick, skilful attackers who can take on a high opposition defence

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality and shorter passing to play at a higher tempo than the mentality allows by default, and encourage quicker passing moves by quick, intelligent supporting and attacking players with good technical ability.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality and more direct passing as part of a very quick, direct approach.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when needing a goal late in a match in order to play more urgently; against an opposition team sitting very deep in order to get even quicker direct balls up to a strong attacker with good aerial ability; against an opposition team that has defenders with poor defensive intelligence and ability in order to attempt to play through them quickly with short passes; or against a tired opposition team.

Attributes

All players – First Touch, Passing, Anticipation, Concentration, Creativity, Decisions, Off The Ball, Work Rate, Acceleration, Pace, Stamina.

Lower Tempo

Your players' attacking play will be more patient. The team will focus more on keeping control of the ball and waiting for space to open up in the opposition defence. This is a less extreme version of Much Lower Tempo.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play at a lower tempo by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play at a higher tempo.

As part of a tactic

It can be useful with a more defensive mentality and shorter passing as part of a very patient attacking approach, in order to help keep possession or play through the opposition as and when opportunities appear.

It can be useful with a more attacking mentality and shorter passing to play at a lower tempo than the mentality allows by default, in order to give your players more time to play through the opposition.

Alternatively, it can be used with more direct passing to make longer range passes more considered, rather than opportunistic.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when holding on to a result late in the match, by helping your players to keep possession more easily; against an opposition team sitting deep in order, by helping your players wait for appropriate opportunities to play penetrative short passes through the opposition; against an opposition team that has defenders with good defensive intelligence and ability that are more likely to be able to cope with a higher tempo; or when your players are tired.

In hot conditions a lower tempo can be useful for helping your players to conserve fitness.

Attributes

All players – Poorer First Touch, Passing, Anticipation, Concentration, Creativity, Decisions, Off The Ball, Work Rate, Acceleration, Pace, Stamina.

Much Lower Tempo

Your players' attacking play will be much more patient. The team will focus much more on keeping control of the ball and waiting for space to open up in the opposition defence.

With more defensive mentalities your players will play at a lower tempo by default and with more attacking mentalities they will play at a higher tempo.

This is a more extreme version of Lower Tempo, explained in detail above, and so can be used where even more patience is required.

Play Even Safer

Your players will attempt through balls more rarely and make less forward runs off the ball. This instruction is only available when using a contain mentality.

As a match strategy

Can be useful when holding on for a result late in the match and facing very heavy attacking pressure from the opposition to make your players even more cautious when in possession than they are by default with a contain mentality.

Take More Risks

Your players will attempt through balls more often and your supporting and attacking players will make more forward runs off the ball. Your players will also dribble with the ball more. This instruction is only available when using an overload mentality.

As a match strategy

Can be useful when in desperate need of a goal late in the match to make your players even more urgent when in possession than they are by default with an overload mentality.

Be More Expressive

Your players will be given more creative freedom. They will be more likely to use their own intelligence to decide whether to attempt higher risk-reward actions such as forward runs, forward passes, through balls, dribbles and shots, regardless of their given individual mentalities and other player instructions.

With more rigid playing styles your players will play with less creative freedom by default and with more fluid playing styles they will play with more creative freedom.

As part of a tactic

Can be useful with a more rigid playing style to give your players more creative freedom than the playing style allows by default, in order to make use of an intelligent and technically able team to make attacking play more dynamic and unpredictable.

Can be useful with a more fluid playing style to give a highly intelligent and very technically able team very high levels of creative freedom, as long as you are willing to forgo tactical control.

As a match strategy

It can be useful if struggling to play through the opposition and create chances, despite having a high possession percentage, as long as you have enough capable players.

Attributes

All players, particularly supporting and attacking – Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Flair, Off The Ball, Teamwork and attacking technical attributes

Be More Disciplined

Your players will be given less creative freedom. They will be less likely to use their own intelligence to decide whether to attempt higher risk-reward actions such as forward runs, forward passes, through balls, dribbles and shots, regardless of their given individual mentalities and other player instructions.

With more rigid playing styles your players will play with less creative freedom by default and with more fluid playing styles they will play with more creative freedom.

As part of a tactic

Can be useful with a more rigid playing style to gain even more tactical discipline from your players and help your team keep control of possession, perhaps due to very low intelligence and technical ability.

Can be useful with a more fluid playing style to give your players less creative freedom than the playing style allows by default, in order to gain greater tactical control over your players and make attacking play more considered, perhaps because your players don't have high levels of intelligence and technical ability.

As a match strategy

It can be useful when leading to encourage players to play more cautiously, or if conceding possession frequently during attacks.

Attributes

All players, particularly supporting and attacking – Poorer Anticipation, Creativity, Decisions, Flair, Off The Ball, Teamwork and attacking technical attributes

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