

## The 3-5-2 Formation

The **3-5-2 System** can be considered both an attacking and defensive formation. It is made up of three defenders, five midfielders and two forwards.

Three midfielders will generally play in a central area while two wide midfielders will have the freedom and responsibility of running the entire sideline. Since the back line only consists of three players, one central (sometimes two) midfielder will generally take on the role of defensive midfielder. This player will act as a defensive barrier between the back three and the midfield area.

Wide midfielders have the responsibility of providing width in attack yet at the same time must provide adequate cover for the back three when their team is defending.

Many times the 3-5-2 formation will transform into a 5-3-2 formation when a team is defending. Both wide midfielders may drop into defensive positions making it difficult for the opponent to penetrate. A defensive posture taken by many 3-5-2 teams is it can be seen, both wide midfielders have dropped into defensive positions.

## The 4-5-1 Formation

The **4-5-1 system** has been adopted by many teams in recent years.

It consists of four defenders, five midfielders and a lone forward. A standard 4-5-1 line-up.

While defending, the 4-5-1 offers greater numbers behind the ball making it extremely difficult for opponents to create goal-scoring opportunities.

In attack, the 4-5-1 is conducive to the use of a counter attacking strategy. The lone forward cannot put a lot of pressure on the back line of the opposition with the result being the opponent maintains a lot of possession in their own half of the field. The strategy is to lull the opponent into throwing players forward into an attack before regaining possession and quickly exploiting the space. Successful counter attacking requires a high level of athleticism and mobility since supporting players need to cover a lot of ground quickly in order to offer support to the lone forward.

The 4-5-1 is a favored formation of many teams playing on the road, in a hostile environment and against a superior opponent.

## The 4-4-2 Formation

The 4-4-2 is a favored formation for many of the top teams in the world today.

The 4-4-2 provides for a well-balanced attack as well as defense. It usually consists of four defenders strung along the back line, four midfielders (right, left, two central) and twin center forwards. The formation allows a team to defend with a block of eight players yet at the moment of gaining possession allows for any of the four midfielders as well as defenders to join the attack

Several variations exist within the 4-4-2 formation. Teams may opt to tuck their wide midfielders inside to overload the middle area. Other teams may opt to use a man marker and a sweeper instead of a flat-back four. Part of the success of the 4-4-2 formation is the fact that it can be tweaked and varied yet still maintains its integrity as a solid formation both in attack and defense.

A slight variation on the standard 4-4-2 formation. A team has opted to play with four central midfield players to allow them to clog the middle while defending, and on attack, bring their fullbacks forward

**Enjoy and remember that a System is just away of lining up your team so coach to the players strength and find a system to fit your players that you have.**