



U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION

## KEY QUALITIES OF A PLAYER



### GAME UNDERSTANDING & DECISION-MAKING

Read situations, anticipate & make quick decisions under pressure

- Observes and analyzes the position of teammates and opponents
- Identifies cues and intentions of teammates and opponents
- Recognizes space, time and risk/opportunity
- Processes information quickly, thinks ahead and acts fast (makes the best choice)
- Manages the pace of the game, recognizes when to accelerate or slow-down play
- Understands position and role, based on style of play, team principles and strategy
- Adjusts position and moves into space quickly/ahead of time to provide support/cover, aligns actions with teammates
- Scans continuously
- Adapts body shape
- Versatility and flexibility to play multiple roles or positions in different systems
- Uses creativity to find new and different solutions

### RESPONSIBILITY & INITIATIVE (SELF-REGULATION)

Responsible for own learning, development & performance

- Takes ownership, sets goals, plans, monitors, (re)evaluates
- Takes initiative, is proactive (creative), sees opportunities to take action without being told
- Manages personal lifestyle and environment (rest, recovery, sleep, nutrition, injury prevention/care, mental health)
- Is a role model under all circumstances
- Builds relationships, helps and supports teammates and staff
- Prepares for every game/session
- Reflects on and evaluates one's own performance (self-critical)
- Receives feedback, asks questions (coachable)
- Communicates openly and often (coaches, teammates)
- Creates a personal development plan
- Holds self accountable (no excuses, delivers on agreements and promises)

### GROWTH MINDSET & WINNING MENTALITY

Continuous drive to improve & compete

#### FOCUS (INTENSITY)

- Gives maximum effort (work ethic)
- Concentrates, stays on task
- Commits to the process (sacrifice)

#### MOTIVATION & DETERMINATION

- Shows passion/enthusiasm
- Challenges self
- Relentlessly pursues goals (desire)
- Never gives up
- Is brave, fearless (not afraid of mistakes)
- Pushes self to limits (body and mind)
- Believes in self (confidence)
- Is a team player, selfless (giver)

#### EMOTIONAL STABILITY & CONTROL

- Overcomes adversity & setbacks
- Deals with pressure
- Stays composed
- Behaves maturely
- Is true to self

### TECHNICAL EXECUTION

Ball mastery & skills under pressure

- Comfortable/calm with ball under pressure
- Receiving and playing in tight spaces
- Receiving to play forward
- Ability to play 1 and 2 touch
- Precise passing that sets up the receiver (long, break lines, short, etc.)
- Dribbling/running with ball to create (body feints, change of speed and/or direction)
- Making quick combinations
- Creating chances and finishing (final pass/shot)
- Heading
- Dominating 1 v 1 (take-ons, challenges, regains, tackles)

### PHYSICAL EXECUTION

Movement skills & fitness

- Moves efficiently (agility, coordination, balance)
- Uses body in duels to control or disrupt the opponent and/or protect the ball
- Is explosive, makes quick movements (accelerates) and/or jumps higher (separating from opponent)
- Exudes strength, power and endurance
- Repeats high intensity actions (sprints)
- Has specialized physical qualities and stature for position

### LEARNING ABILITY

Capacity to adapt to a higher level

- Shows an ability to excel
- Adapts to new situations quickly
- Absorbs and applies new information quickly

\*Observed over an extended time, includes games and training sessions



# POSITION PROFILES- TRAITS



## GOALKEEPER (1)



### TRAITS:

- Directing teammates, leading defensive organization (clear communication)
- Anticipating and intercepting crosses and balls behind defensive line (starting position)
- Stopping shots and dominating 1v1 situations (bravery)
- Reading pressure and initiating build-up
- Receiving and passing under pressure (short and long)

### PHYSICAL:

- Strength and power, agility and quick reactions to control the area and protect the goal (air and ground)

## FULL BACKS (2,3)



### TRAITS:

- Continuously adjusting body shape and position to provide support and cover (height and width)
- Dominating 1v1 duels to create or regain the ball
- Receiving, dribbling and making quick combinations to create chances (crossing and shooting)
- Making overlap and underlap runs to create advantage

### PHYSICAL:

- Speed, quickness, agility and endurance

## CENTER BACKS (4,5)



### TRAITS:

- Leading defensive organization
- Dominating 1v1 situations (heading, tackling and intercepting)
- Zonal marking, anticipation and preventive actions (shifting, stepping, dropping, and covering movements)
- Reading and breaking pressure (calm and decisive)
- Range of passing (through, over and around defensive block)

### PHYSICAL:

- Strength and power in duels (jumping), speed and agility

## MIDFIELDERS (6,8,10)



### TRAITS:

- Dominating positionally and individually, controlling and protecting central area
- Positioning between lines (spatial awareness and body orientation) and quick decision making (360° scanning)
- Technically advanced-receiving and turning in tight spaces, passing range including final pass
- Recognizing when to play forward, switch play and keep possession (ball security)
- Breaking down compact defenses and finishing the attack (insight and creativity)
- Providing offensive/defensive balance

### PHYSICAL:

- Agility, endurance, quickness and use of body to protect ball

## WIDE FORWARDS (7,11)



### TRAITS:

- Dominating 1v1, dribbling and running with the ball to take-on opponent, creating chances and scoring
- Shooting and crossing (early, cut-back, etc.) off the dribble, coming inside or wide
- Making aggressive runs with and without the ball
- Reading and initiating pressing moments, closing space with speed and intensity
- Denying penetrations and assisting fullback in wide areas

### PHYSICAL:

- Speed, change of direction and body feints
- Ability to make repeated accelerations

## CENTER FORWARD (9)



### TRAITS:

- Creating chances and scoring goals (foot or head)
- Receiving and holding the ball under pressure
- Making varied runs (movements and timing) to get behind opposition back line and create space for self and teammates
- Anticipating and moving into dangerous positions, untracking from opponent
- Receiving and passing under pressure (short and long)
- Showing advanced levels of focus, determination and control

### PHYSICAL:

- Strength to hold off opponent, explosiveness to separate from opponent