



U . S . S O C C E R F E D E R A T I O N

TALENT ID PHILOSOPHY, KEY QUALITIES & POSITION PROFILES



U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION

THE U.S. WAY TALENT IDENTIFICATION PHILOSOPHY

Supported by scientific research and built on our mission, values, and beliefs:



Talent is developed in the “right” environment



Talent identification starts with the clubs, for which they need quality, diverse and expansive scouting networks



Identification and examination must happen in the context of the game, taking into consideration the conditions, level and demands



Players develop at different rates and their performance trajectory is non-linear



Talent ID is a long-term examination and monitoring process, where current performance and future potential are influenced by environment, age and maturation



When looking for an ideal talent, the key or exceptional qualities of a player are different for every club and/or federation because it should be connected to their identity



Scouts need to use a common structure for examining players and speak the same language



Scouts must gather information that is objective (factual) vs subjective (opinions) and apply a quantitative analysis throughout the examination, reporting and decision-making process



In a gender-neutral talent identification framework with a gender-specific scouting strategy



In building relationships with all communities (collaboration is a force multiplier)



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6 KEY QUALITIES OF A U.S. PLAYER

When identifying and monitoring players with future national team potential, U.S. Soccer Talent Scouts are trained to observe and assess player's actions based on 6 Key Qualities





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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
- Shows versatility and flexibility to play multiple roles or positions in different systems
- Uses creativity to find new and different solutions

TECHNICAL EXECUTION

Ball mastery & skills under pressure

- Moving easily with the ball, staying calm under pressure
- Receiving and playing in tight spaces (use of both feet)
- Receiving to play forward
- Playing 1 and 2 touch
- Precise passing that sets up the receiver (range of passing: long, break lines, short, etc.)
- Dribbling and running with the ball to break lines and accelerate attack (use of 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)

RESPONSIBILITY & INITIATIVE (SELF-REGULATION)

Responsible for one's own learning, development & performance

- Demonstrates self-knowledge and applies to their role and responsibility within the team
- 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)
- Behaves like 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 with teammates and coaches (verbal and non-verbal)
- Creates a personal development plan
- Holds self accountable (no excuses, delivers on agreements and promises)

PHYSICAL EXECUTION

Movement skills & fitness

- Moves efficiently (agility, coordination, balance)
- Uses body in duels to protect the ball, control or disrupt the opponent
- Makes quick, explosive movements to separate from opponent (accelerating, decelerating, turning and recovering, jumping)
- Repeats high intensity actions (sprints)
- Exudes strength, power and endurance
- Has specialized physical attributes and stature for positional role

GROWTH MINDSET & WINNING MENTALITY

Continuous drive to improve & compete

INTENSITY (FOCUS)

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

COMMUNICATION

- Communicates with teammates on the field to solve game situations (gives and receives)
- Communicates off the field to improve self and team (open and often)

MOTIVATION & DETERMINATION

- Shows joy, passion and enthusiasm (fun and freedom)
- Challenges self (development)
- Pursues goals (desire)
- Never gives up (relentless)
- Faces adversity and overcomes fear (brave)
- Pushes self to limits (body and mind)
- Believes in self (confidence)
- Contributes to team performance and result (deliberate)

EMOTIONAL STABILITY & CONTROL

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

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



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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
- Supporting forward with intent
- 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/WINGERS (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



POSITION PROFILES

GOALKEEPER (1)

ATTACKING

READING THE OPPONENT'S PRESSURE	RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITY: SPACE, TIME AND RISK
	Observe and analyze position of teammates and opponent's players
	Identify the intention of opponent's players (pressure)
	Find player with an advantage
INITIATING BUILD UP AND PLAYING FORWARD WITH INTENT: STATIC AND DYNAMIC SITUATIONS (KICK/ THROW)	ORIENTING AND RECEIVING (UNDER PRESSURE)
	Read pressure of direct opponent
	Adapt body shape to receive and play quickly
	PLAYING THROUGH
	Play a calculated risk pass: Break lines when possible
	PLAYING OVER
	Play into: Play precise long pass into a player within the defensive block (bypass first/second line)
	Play Onto: Play long pass towards teammate or zone
	Play behind: Play long pass behind defensive block of the opposition (back line)
	PLAYING AROUND
	Diagonal pass: Skip a player when possible
	Switch play: Exploit weak side
ADJUSTING POSITION IN RELATION TO TEAMMATES AND BALL	SUPPORTING
	Push up the defensive line
	Move and support behind the ball: act as an outfield player
	Countermeasures: Take defensive preventive actions, provide cover behind defensive line
	CLEARING
	Clear the ball: No risk mentality

ATTACKING - DEFENDING

ADJUSTING POSITION, DIRECTING TEAMMATES AND ANTICIPATING THREATS	Adjust position and bodyshape in relation to goal, ball, opponent and teammate
	Track position, movement of opposition supporting players and direct teammates
	Anticipate (intercept) balls played behind the back line (long or through)
	Provide support for defender (back pass)

DEFENDING

LEADING DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION	RECOGNIZING THREATS: UNPROTECTED SPACE, TIME AND RISK
	Observe and analyze position and movement of opponent's players and teammates
	Identify the intention of opponent's players
	ORGANIZING COMPACT DEFENSIVE BLOCK
ADJUSTING STARTING POSITION	Determine/Check position and distances between teammates
	Direct teammates to maintain vertical and horizontal compactness: Push up / Shift / Hold the line / Drop off and/or mark opponent
CONTROLLING THE SPACE: ANTICIPATING AND INTERCEPTING THROUGH BALLS OR PASSES BEHIND THE BACK LINE	Reposition continuously in relation to ball, teammates and goal
	Adapt bodyshape and stance
	Move into space to intercept and clear the ball when realistic chance of winning the ball
	Move into space to gain possession of the ball
CONTROLLING THE BOX: DEFENDING CROSSES AND 1V1 SITUATIONS	Hold position: Waiting for the game situation to develop or allow your teammates to challenge
	Recover towards the goal: Allow your teammates time to recover and reorganize
	ANTICIPATING AND INTERCEPTING CROSSES AND LONG PASSES
	Intercept low/high - catch-punch - deflect (under pressure/crowded area)
PROTECTING THE GOAL: PREVENTING SCORING	DOMINATING 1V1 SITUATIONS
	Engage: Close-down space and/or force to one side (timing & create angle)
	Challenge: Use of body to win ball, make save, delay or throw-off opponent (Spread-Block-Smother)
	MAKING SAVES (LONG - CENTRAL - ANGLED - CLOSE)
DEFENDING - ATTACKING	Set position: Stance, distance, angle
	Secure ball: 1-2 touch(es)
	Move the ball away into safe spaces (Parry/Deflect/Punch/Foot)
	Improvising (whole body)
DEFENDING - ATTACKING	REACTING IMMEDIATELY TO RECOVER FOR SECOND PHASE
	Recover the ball or make second save
	Reposition: Adapt body shape and stance

DEFENDING - ATTACKING

INITIATING THE COUNTERATTACK OR BUILD-UP	INITIATING COUNTER-ATTACK
	Break out from crowded area immediately after securing the ball
	Pass forward (throw or kick) to initiate the attack immediately. Find the player with an advantage
	INITIATING BUILD-UP
	Keep the ball and allow teammates to take attacking positions
	TAKING COUNTERMEASURES
	Push up the defensive line: Keep team connected
	Take defensive preventive action (to counter the counter) (Sweeper-Keeper)



POSITION PROFILES

FULL BACK (2-3)

ATTACKING

SUPPORTING BUILD UP PLAY	READING THE OPPONENT'S PRESSURE
	Observe and analyze position of teammates and opponent's players
	Identify the intention of opponent's players (pressure)
	POSITIONING IN RELATION TO GOALKEEPER, DEFENSIVE LINE AND MIDFIELDERS
	Adjust position (width, height and depth) to provide passing option or create space for teammates
RECEIVING AND PASSING UNDER PRESSURE	ORIENTING, CONTROLLING AND TIMING
	Adapt body shape to receive pass (in order to play forward and play quick)
	Make first touch forward or use first touch to escape pressure
	Draw opponent, invite pressure and break it
	Play a precise pass with appropriate ball speed, create conditions to play forward
PLAYING FORWARD WITH INTENT (WITH THE BALL)	RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITY: SPACE, TIME AND RISK
	Identify free teammate or teammate with advantage
	PLAYING THROUGH
	Diagonal pass forward: Play a calculated risk pass - break lines when possible
	Dribble with ball to create numerical overload/break lines in midfield (and final third)
	Give and Go: Combine with teammate to receive again
	PLAYING OVER
	Play long or cross pass to weak zone/weak side
	PLAYING AROUND
	Pass forward to find open player or play behind
	Switch play when unable to progress (center back)
SUPPORTING FORWARD WITH INTENT (WITHOUT THE BALL)	Support and penetrate in middle or final third: wide or inside
	Make underlapping and overlapping runs
	Take a higher position in and around the box
ADJUSTING POSITION IN RELATION TO TEAMMATES, OPPONENT AND BALL	Move up with the defensive line
	Stay connected with wide forward and/or central players
	Countermeasures: Take defensive preventive actions - move central, identify marking reference, anticipate threat
DOMINATING 1v1	Escape and draw the opponent
	Dribble: Take on the opponent
CROSSING	Observe and analyze positions and movements of attacking teammates and opponent's players
	Identify target and timing of the cross
	Play an accurate cross (air or ground) with appropriate ball speed (early, late, cut-back)
FINISHING THE ATTACK: SCORE OR ASSIST	Finish from distance: come from outside or straight
	Make aggressive (late) runs in the penalty box
	Finish or lay off in penalty area: head or foot

ATTACKING - DEFENDING

READING AND PREVENTING THREATS	PROVIDING ORGANIZATION
	Recover quickly, to regain defensive position
	Anticipate the long ball
	Track movement of opposition supporting players
	PREVENTING AND DELAYING
	Counter-press to regain the ball
	Delay the opponent or drop to reorganize
	Challenge when realistic chance of winning the ball: Tackling or intercept
	When necessary, make a strategic foul to stop the opponent from getting behind

DEFENDING

READING AND POSITIONING	RECOGNIZING THE OPPONENT'S BUILD-UP
	Observe and analyze the position of opponent's players and teammates
	Identify the intention of opponent's players
	CREATING AND MAINTAINING COMPACT DEFENSIVE BLOCK
	Determine/Check position and distances between teammates
	Maintain vertical and horizontal compactness
	Push-up/Shift/Hold the line/Drop off
	Stay connected to the center back to close central areas
	Recognize pressing moment
	Direct wide forward
ANTICIPATING AND PREVENTING THREATS	RECOGNIZING UNPROTECTED SPACE OR DISADVANTAGES
	Within the defensive block: Link up players between the lines or numerical advantage
	Behind the defensive block: Penetrating players
	Around the defensive block: Weak side space (Split-Vision)
	ZONAL DEFENDING: (RE)POSITIONING AND MOVEMENT
	Hold: Stay with the line
	Drop: Drop and delay when outnumbered
	Step: Step up when opponent facing own goal: Intercept or deny turn
	Track: Adapt body shape, anticipate and track runner
	Provide cover to center back
	Pass on attacking player at right moment
	Switch position with center back when center back covers in wide area
	DENYING AND DISRUPTING FORWARD PASSES
	Adapt body shape to anticipate pass
	Intercept through pass or long ball: One touch defense, Keep or Clear (head/foot)
	CHALLENGING
DOMINATING 1v1	Create 1v1 in 2v1 situation
	Close-down opponent (reduce time and space on the ball)
	Use of body to block or disrupt movement of the opponent
	Challenge when realistic chance of winning the ball: Heading, tackling or intercepting
	OPPONENT RECEIVING BACK TO GOAL
	Deny turning
	Intercept ball or stay behind (bump)
	OPPONENT FACING FORWARD WITH BALL
	Press or Delay (keep opponent out of the penalty area)
	Force to one side and/or isolate
DENYING AND DEFENDING CROSSES, PREVENTING SCORING	OPPONENT RUNNING (WITH AND WITHOUT THE BALL)
	Recover: Chasing, getting goal side
	Mark and track (body shape)
	Deny the cross: Prevent service
	Position to protect goal: First post or second post
	Split-Vision: Never lose sight of direct opponent and ball
	First to the ball: Duel on the ground and in the air
	Block shots
	Clear the ball: No risk mentality

DEFENDING - ATTACKING

RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITY	STARTING AND SUPPORTING COUNTER-ATTACK
	Initiate the attack immediately with forward pass
	Penetrate with ball
	Give and Go: Combine with teammate
	Penetrate without ball
READING THREATS: PROTECTING AGAINST COUNTERATTACK	Move quickly into a supporting position (behind the ball)
	SECURING POSSESSION AND INITIATING BUILD-UP
	Keep the ball and play out of pressure when you can't play forward (allow teammates to take offensive positions)
	TAKING COUNTER-MEASURES
	Push up the defensive line: Keep team connected
	Take defensive preventive action (to counter the counter)



POSITION PROFILES

CENTER BACK (4-5)

ATTACKING

SUPPORTING BUILD UP PLAY	READING THE OPPONENT'S PRESSURE
	Observe and analyze position of teammates and opponent's players
	Identify the intention of opponent's players (pressure)
	POSITIONING IN RELATION TO GOALKEEPER, DEFENSIVE LINE AND MIDFIELDERS
	Adjust position (width, height and depth) to provide passing option or create space for teammates
RECEIVING AND PASSING UNDER PRESSURE	ORIENTING, CONTROLLING AND TIMING
	Adapt body shape to receive pass (in order to play forward and quickly)
	Make first touch forward or use first touch to escape pressure
	Draw opponent, invite pressure and break it
PLAYING AND MOVING FORWARD WITH INTENT (WITH AND WITHOUT BALL)	Play a precise pass with appropriate ball speed, create conditions to play forward
	RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITY: SPACE, TIME AND RISK
	Identify free teammate or teammate with advantage
	PLAYING THROUGH
	Pass Forward: Play a calculated risk pass - break lines when possible
	Dribble with ball to create numerical overload in midfield (and final third)
	Give and Go: Combine with teammate to receive again
	Penetrate without ball into middle or final third
	PLAYING OVER
	Play long or cross pass to weak zone/weak side
ADJUSTING POSITION IN RELATION TO TEAMMATES, OPPONENT AND BALL	PLAYING AROUND
	Switch play (diagonal pass) to exploit weak side, skip a player when possible
	Support behind the ball
	Push up the defensive line
FINISHING THE ATTACK: SCORE OR ASSIST	Countermeasures: Take defensive preventive actions - provide marking or cover to anticipate threat
	Finish from outside the penalty box: Shoot from distance
	Finish or lay off in penalty box: Head or foot
	Make the final pass

ATTACKING - DEFENDING

READING AND PREVENTING THREATS	PROVIDING ORGANIZATION
	Return quickly to central position
	Anticipate the long ball
	Track movement of opposition supporting players
	PREVENTING AND DELAYING
	Delay the opponent or drop to reorganize
	Challenge when realistic chance of winning the ball: tackling or intercept
	When necessary, make a strategic foul to stop the opponent from getting behind
	Challenge to prevent shots or entry to penalty box

DEFENDING

ORGANIZING AND LEADING	RECOGNIZING THE OPPONENT'S BUILD-UP
	Observe and analyze the position of opponent's players and teammates
	Identify the intention of opponent's players
	CREATING AND MAINTAINING COMPACT DEFENSIVE BLOCK
	Organize defensive positioning to maintain vertical and horizontal compactness: Push up / Shift / Hold the line / Drop off
	Determine/Check position and distances between teammates
	Recognize pressing moment
	Direct teammates
ANTICIPATING AND PREVENTING THREATS	RECOGNIZING UNPROTECTED SPACE OR DISADVANTAGES
	Within the defensive block: Link up players between the lines or numerical advantage
	Behind the defensive block: Penetrating players
	Around the defensive block: Weak side space (Split-Vision)
	ZONAL DEFENDING: (RE)POSITIONING AND MOVEMENT
	Hold: Stay with the line
	Drop: Drop and delay when outnumbered
	Step: Step up when opponent facing own goal, intercept or deny turn
	Track: Adapt body shape, anticipate and track runner
	Provide cover to center back or full back
DOMINATING 1v1	DENYING AND DISRUPTING FORWARD PASSES
	Adapt body shape to anticipate pass
	Intercept through pass or long ball: One touch defense, Keep or Clear (head/foot)
	CHALLENGING
	Close-down space (reduce time and space on the ball)
	Use of body to block or disrupt movement of the opponent
	Challenge when realistic chance of winning the ball: Heading, tackling or intercepting
	OPPONENT RECEIVING BACK TO GOAL
	Deny turning
	Intercept ball or stay behind (bump)
DEFENDING CROSSES AND PREVENTING SCORING	Win aerial duels (heading)
	OPPONENT WITH BALL FACING FORWARD
	Press or delay (keep opponent out of the penalty box)
	Force to one side and/or isolate
	OPPONENT RUNNING (WITH AND WITHOUT THE BALL)
	Recover: Chasing
	Mark and track runner from midfield (body shape)
	Position to anticipate cross and protect goal (in and around the penalty box)
	Split-Vision: Never lose sight of direct opponent and ball
	First to the ball: Duel on the ground and in the air (defensive heading)
	Block shots
	Clear the ball: No risk mentality

DEFENDING - ATTACKING

RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITY	STARTING AND SUPPORTING COUNTER-ATTACK
	Initiate the attack immediately with forward pass
	Penetrate with ball
	Give and Go: Combine with teammate
	Penetrate without ball
READING THREATS: PROTECTING AGAINST COUNTERATTACK	Move quickly into a supporting position (behind the ball)
	SECURING POSSESSION AND INITIATING BUILD-UP
	Keep the ball and play out of pressure when you can't play forward (allow teammates to take offensive positions)
	TAKING COUNTER-MEASURES
	Push up the defensive line: Keep team connected
	Take defensive preventive action (to counter the counter)



POSITION PROFILES

CENTRAL MIDFIELDER (6-8-10)

ATTACKING

SUPPORTING BUILD-UP PLAY	READING THE OPPONENT'S PRESSURE
	Observe and analyze position of teammates and opponent's players
	Identify the intention of opponent's players (pressure)
	POSITIONING IN RELATION TO GOALKEEPER, DEFENDERS AND MIDFIELDERS
	Drop to create an advantage and provide more passing options
RECEIVING AND TURNING UNDER PRESSURE	Align positioning with other midfielders and create space for defenders to move or pass forward
	POSITIONING BETWEEN THE LINES TO RECEIVE (SPATIAL AWARENESS)
	Move into space and provide (diagonal) passing options between the lines
	Unmark from direct opponent: Move into blind spot
	Rotate and align movement with other central midfielders
	Scan 360° and read pressure from opponent before receiving
	PLAY (FORWARD) IN TIGHT SPACES
	Open body shape to receive and play forward
	Make first touch forward to receive or turn when no pressure
	Turn using body of opponent
PLAYING FORWARD WITH INTENT	Protect and secure the ball
	One touch play backwards (or sideways) when unable to turn
	DICTATING THE PACE OF THE GAME: ACCELERATING PLAY OR SLOW DOWN PLAY
	Recognize when to play forward or keep possession
	Receive and pass quickly: Make limited touches
	Dribble forward at speed when no passing option and/or when open space
	BREAKING LINES AND PRESSURE
	Use of deception and disguise
	Play a precise pass with appropriate ball speed, set-up the receiver
	Break lines with high-risk pass forward when possible
ADJUSTING POSITION TO PROVIDE BALANCE AND SUPPORT	Give and Go: Combine with teammate to receive again
	Play long or cross pass to weak zone/weak side
	Switch play quickly to isolate in 1v1 or create overload on the weak side
	Move forward and take position behind the ball
BREAKING DOWN COMPACT DEFENSE AND FINISHING THE ATTACK	Win 2nd ball (anticipate)
	Take counter measures: Protect against counter
	CREATING SCORING OPPORTUNITIES
	Make the final pass: Varied passing or crossing in front or behind the back line to assist
	Create 1v1: Take on opponent
	Create 2v1 or 3rd man combinations in tight areas
	Make aggressive forward runs in the penalty box
	Support from behind: Make late runs in the penalty box (rebounds, cut-backs)
	SCORING
	Finish from outside the box: Shoot from distance
	Finish in penalty area: Head or foot

ATTACKING - DEFENDING

COUNTERPRESSING OR PROVIDING BALANCE	PRESSING (ADVANCED POSITION)
	Pressure the ball immediately after losing it to regain possession or prevent the counterattack
	ORGANIZING
	Return as quickly as possible in the defensive block: Get organized and balanced
	Track movement of opposition supporting players
	DELAYING (DEEPER POSITION)
	Delay the opponent to allow teammates to return in the defensive block
	Make strategic foul when necessary, to allow team to reorganize
	ANTICIPATING
	Stop pressing/chasing and take anticipated attacking action, move into dangerous position

DEFENDING

CONTROLLING OPPONENT'S BUILD-UP	RECOGNIZING THE OPPONENT'S BUILD-UP
	Observe and analyze the position of opponent's players and teammates
	Identify the intention of opponent's players
	CREATING AND MAINTAINING COMPACT DEFENSIVE BLOCK
	Determine and check positions and distances between teammates: Marking references and space
BUILDING AND INITIATING PRESSURE	Direct teammates to make and keep compact defensive block
	BUILDING PRESSURE
	Shift and move to reduce central space, time on the ball and cut off/block passing lanes
	Make play predictable: Force play backwards or towards the preferred pressing zone
	Help teammates to outnumber the opponent
	PRESSING IN THE IDENTIFIED SITUATION
	Pressure the opponent when chance of winning the ball (timing/cues)
	Increase speed and intensity: Close down space, force mistake
	Dispossess the opponent, regain the ball without fouling
	Regain defensive position when pressure is broken
DENYING FORWARD PASSES AND PENETRATIONS	Track the attacking movement of the opposition players with and without ball: Zonal or Man-Mark
	Cut off passing lanes to advanced midfielders and forwards
	Intercept passes to advanced players
	Provide cover to create 2v1
	CHALLENGING AND DISPOSSESSING
DOMINATING 1V1 SITUATIONS IN CENTRAL AREAS	Close-down, reduce time and space on the ball
	Win the ball: Heading, tackling or intercepting
	Use of body to block or disrupt movement of the opponent
	Make a strategic foul when necessary to allow team to reorganize
	OPPONENT RECEIVING BACK TO GOAL
	Intercept the ball
	Deny turning
	Force backwards
	OPPONENT WITH BALL FACING FORWARD
	Press and/or delay
SCREENING AND PROTECTING SPACE IN FRONT OF CENTER BACKS	Force sideways
	Hold central position and stay connected to center backs
	Win aerial duels on long balls (defensive headers) in front of the back line
	Challenge and win 2nd balls
	Turn, chase and recover
	DEFENDING CROSSES
	Support full back to deny crosses
	Split-Vision: Never lose sight of direct opponent and ball
	First to the ball: Duel on the ground and in the air (defensive heading)
	Clear the ball: No risk mentality
DEFENDING CROSSES, PENETRATIONS, AND SHOTS	DENYING PENETRATIONS
	Deny short-combinations
	Switch from zonal marking to player tracking
	Track late runs in the penalty box
	BLOCKING SHOTS
	Block shots from inside and outside the penalty box

DEFENDING - ATTACKING

PROVIDING AND KEEPING BALANCE	STARTING AND SUPPORTING COUNTERATTACK
	Initiate the attack immediately with forward run, pass or dribble
	Move quickly into a supporting position (in front or behind the ball)
	Move up and stay connected between the lines
	SECURING POSSESSION AND INITIATING BUILD-UP
	Keep the ball and play out of pressure when you can't play forward
	TAKING COUNTERMEASURES
	Take defensive preventive action (to counter the counter)



POSITION PROFILES

WIDE FORWARD (7-11)

ATTACKING

POSITIONING AND SUPPORTING BUILD-UP PLAY	STRETCHING THE OPPONENT: STARTING POSITION
	Position high and wide to spread opposition and create space for self and teammates
	Position inside to overload central area and create space for full back to move up
	READING THE OPPONENT'S PRESSURE
	Observe and analyze position of teammates and opponent's players
	Identify the intention of teammates and opponent's players (pressure)
	MOVING BETWEEN OR BEHIND THE LINES
	Identify space and move (or stay) to provide (diagonal) passing option between the lines
	Move inside to create space for full back to move up
RECEIVING UNDER PRESSURE	Come deeper to support and provide (diagonal) passing option
	Run behind the defensive line
	RECOGNIZING TIME, SPACE, OPPORTUNITY AND RISK: SPATIAL AND POSITIONAL AWARENESS
	Isolate full back in 1v1 or take position in between (1v2)
	Position to gain advantage over your opponent: in front, behind or next to (use of counter movement and blind spots)
	Scan 360° and read pressure from opponent before receiving
	RECEIVING AND TURNING TO PLAY FORWARD (IN TIGHT SPACES)
	Open body shape and make first touch forward to escape pressure
	Receive long and short passes on the run
MAKING AGGRESSIVE FORWARD RUNS	Use body of opponent to turn and face goal
	Use first touch to eliminate and beat direct opponent
	SCREENING/SHIELDING THE BALL (RECEIVING BACK TO GOAL)
	Protect and hold the ball under pressure, wait for supporting teammates to move into better positions
	One touch play backwards to supporting teammate (3rd man)
	BEATING THE OFFSIDE LINE
	Adapt (vary) starting position and times run to stay onside
	Adapt shape of the run to stay onside line (diagonal or bent)
	RUNNING WITHOUT THE BALL
DOMINATING 1v1	Make well timed vertical or diagonal runs behind the defensive line
	RUNNING WITH THE BALL
	Run with the ball at high speed over distance (from deeper areas)
	ISOLATING DEFENDER: CREATING 1v1
	Escape and/or draw defender out of position
	DRIBBLING: TAKE ON (ELIMINATE) OPPONENT
	Recognize body position, space and cover to go past opponent
	Use change of speed and/or change of direction to beat or separate opponent
	Use body feints and quick movements to beat or separate from opponent
COMBINING WITH TEAMMATES	CHANGING TEMPO
	Speed up playing by making limited touches and passing quickly
	PASSING TO SET UP RECEIVER
	Play through pass to penetrating teammate to receive in behind
	Cross pass: Move inside or lower to play long ball to weak side
	Give and Go: Combine with teammate to receive again
	Flick or deviate in one touch
	IDENTIFYING SPACE AND TARGET
	Recognize space and position of attacking teammates and opponent's (watch for late runners)
CROSSING	DELIVERING CROSSING
	Cross in the box using Left or Right
	Cross at right time to beat defenders and goalkeeper (early, late or cut-back crosses)
	Cross accurately with appropriate ball speed from different positions behind or in-front of backline
FINISHING AND SCORING	Make aggressive (late) runs in the penalty box
	Lose opponent: In front or out of sight
	Finish from the cross or pass: With head or foot
	Finish second/loose balls: Anticipate and react quickly
	Finish from distance off the dribble: Come from outside

ATTACKING - DEFENDING

COUNTERPRESSING OR PROVIDING DEFENSIVE BALANCE	COUNTERPRESSING
	Pressure the ball immediately after losing it to prevent the counterattack and/or regain possession
	Chase immediately (sprint)
	ORGANIZING
	Return as quickly as possible in the defensive shape (Get organized and balanced)
	Track movement of opposition supporting players
	Cover for overlapping full back
	ANTICIPATING
	Stop pressing/chasing and take anticipated attacking action, move into dangerous position

DEFENDING

READING AND POSITIONING	RECOGNIZING THE OPPONENT'S BUILD-UP
	Observe and analyze the position of opponent's players and teammates
	Identify the intention of opponent's players
	CREATING AND MAINTAINING COMPACT DEFENSIVE BLOCK
BUILDING AND INITIATING PRESSURE	Determine and check position height, width and distances between teammates
	Move in coordination with teammates. Keep compactness and closes spaces
	BUILDING PRESSURE
	Shift and move to reduce space, time on the ball and cut off/block passing lanes
	Make play predictable: Force play backwards or towards the preferred pressing zone
	Move centrally to provide cover and balance: Monitor central player or wide player on the weak side (split-vision)
	PRESSING IN IDENTIFIED SITUATION
	Identify pressing cues: Pressure the ball
DENYING FORWARD PASSES AND PENETRATIONS	Increase speed and intensity: Close down space, force mistake
	Dispossess the opponent, regain the ball without fouling
	Take defensive position when pressure is broken or take an anticipated attacking position
	PREVENTING OPPONENT FROM PASSING AND DRIBBLING FORWARD
DEFENDING LOW IN WIDE AREAS	Recognize overloads in wide areas: Hold lower position
	Cut off passing lanes and intercept passes to advanced midfielders and forwards
	DEFENDING PENETRATIONS
	Track back to mark attacking movement of opponent (with and without ball)
ANTICIPATING COUNTERATTACK	Pass on direct opponent and take anticipated attacking position
	Support full back to provide cover or double team
	DEFENDING CROSSES
	Deny the cross: Prevent service (strong side)
DEFENDING LOW IN WIDE AREAS	Position and mark in/around the penalty box (weakside)
	DEFENDING 1v1
	Keep attacking player in front, close space, force backwards
	BLOCKING SHOTS
	Block shots from inside and outside the penalty box
ANTICIPATING COUNTERATTACK	Stop tracking and take anticipated attacking action

DEFENDING - ATTACKING

CREATING DANGEROUS COUNTERATTACKS: MOVING AND PLAYING FORWARD	ANTICIPATING COUNTERATTACK
	Unmark from defender before the ball is regained and provide (diagonal) passing option or run behind
	CONTINUING COUNTERATTACK
	Receive, turn and play forward
	Run at defender and create 2v1 or finish the attack
	Hold and protect the ball and wait for support when unable to play forward
	STARTING AND SUPPORTING COUNTERATTACK
	Initiate the attack immediately with forward run, pass or dribble
CREATING DANGEROUS COUNTERATTACKS: MOVING AND PLAYING FORWARD	Move quickly into a supporting position in front or behind the ball



POSITION PROFILES

CENTER FORWARD (9)

ATTACKING

POSITIONING AND SUPPORTING BUILD-UP PLAY	STRETCHING THE OPPONENT
	Position high and central. Occupy opposition center backs, serve as target and create space for self or teammates
	READING THE OPPONENT'S PRESSURE
	Observe and analyze position of teammates and opponent's players
	Identify the intention of teammates and opponent's players (pressure)
	MOVING BETWEEN OR BEHIND THE LINES
RECEIVING UNDER PRESSURE	Drop into midfield to create an advantage and provide passing option for teammates
	Drop into midfield to create space for a penetrating midfielder
	Run behind the defensive line
	RECOGNIZING TIME, SPACE, OPPORTUNITY AND RISK: SPATIAL AND POSTIONAL AWARENESS
	Isolate center back (lv1) or take position between center backs (lv2)
	Unmark from direct opponent: in front, behind or next to (use of counter movement and blind spots)
	Scan 360° and read pressure from opponent before receiving
	RECEIVING AND TURNING TO PLAY FORWARD
	Open body shape to receive facing forward (first touch forward)
	Receive long and short passes on the run
	Turn and face goal (use body of opponent)
	Use first touch (and/or feinting) to eliminate or beat direct opponent
MAKING AGGRESSIVE FORWARD RUNS	SCREENING/SHIELDING THE BALL (RECEIVING BACK TO GOAL)
	Receive long ball: Air and ground
	Protect (shield) the ball under pressure, wait for support (lay off) or draw foul
	Lay-off: One touch play backwards to supporting teammate (3rd man)
	BEATING THE OFFSIDE LINE
	Adapt (vary) starting position and time run to stay onside
DOMINATING 1v1	Adapt shape of the run to stay onside line (diagonal or bent)
	RUNNING WITHOUT THE BALL
	Make well-timed vertical or diagonal runs behind the defensive line
	RUNNING WITH THE BALL
	Run with the ball at high speed over distance (while holding off opponent)
	DRIBBLING: TAKE-ON (ELIMINATE) OPPONENT
COMBINING WITH TEAMMATES	Recognize body position, space and cover to go past opponent
	Use change of speed and/or direction to beat or separate from opponent
	Use body feints and quick movements to beat or separate from opponent
	Play a through pass to penetrating teammate in-behind
	Switch play quickly to isolate in 1v1 or create overload on the weak side
	Give and Go: Combine with teammate to receive again
FINISHING AND SCORING (CREATIVITY)	Flick or deviate in one touch with head or foot
	Recognize space and position of opponents (and teammates)
	Make well timed runs (aggressive, delayed/late, pull away/drop off) in the box to unmark or to create space for teammates
	Hold-off or lose direct opponent
	Finish from distance or off the dribble
	Finish from cross or pass: With head or foot
	Finish second/loose balls: Anticipate and react quickly
	Recognize teammate in a better position to score (assist)

DEFENDING

READING AND POSITIONING	RECOGNIZING THE OPPONENT'S BUILD-UP
	Observe and analyze the position of opponent's players and teammates
	Identify the intention of opponent's players
	CREATING AND MAINTAINING COMPACT DEFENSIVE BLOCK
	Determine and check defensive position (height) and distances between teammates
BUILDING AND INITIATING PRESSURE	Move in coordination with teammates. Keep compactness and close spaces
	BUILDING PRESSURE
	Shift and move to reduce space, time on the ball and cut off/block passing lanes
	Make play predictable: Force play backwards
	Make play predictable: Force to one side, and prevent switch
	PRESSING IN IDENTIFIED SITUATION
	Identify pressing cues: Pressure the ball
DENYING FORWARD PASSES AND PENETRATIONS	Increase speed and intensity: Close-down space, force mistake
	Dispossess the opponent, regain the ball without fouling
	Take defensive position when pressure is broken or take an anticipated attacking position
	PREVENTING OPPONENT FROM PASSING AND DRIBBLING FORWARD
	Recognize overload in central areas: Hold position
	Cut off passing lanes and intercept to advanced midfielders and forwards
	ASSISTING THE MIDFIELDERS
ANTICIPATING COUNTERATTACK	Press from behind
	Pass on direct opponent
	DEFENDING IN LOWER CENTRAL AREAS
	Take position to screen and protect in a lower block (understanding game situation)

DEFENDING - ATTACKING

CREATING DANGEROUS COUNTERATTACKS: MOVING AND PLAYING FORWARD	ANTICIPATING COUNTERATTACK
	Stop defending and take anticipated attacking action
	Unmark from defender before the ball is regained and provide (diagonal) passing option or run behind
	CONTINUING COUNTERATTACK
	Receive, turn and play forward quickly
	Run at defender and create 2v1 or finish the attack
	Hold and protect the ball and wait for support when unable to play forward
	Move quickly into a supporting position in-front of the ball
	STARTING COUNTERATTACK
	Initiate the attack immediately with forward run, pass or dribble

ATTACKING - DEFENDING

PREVENTING DANGEROUS COUNTERATTACKS	COUNTERPRESSING
	Pressure the ball immediately after losing it to prevent the counterattack and/or regain possession
	Chase immediately
	ANTICIPATING
	Stop pressing/chasing and take anticipated attacking action, move into dangerous position