

11 V 11 Formation Options

All formations are based on having a goalie and 10 field players.

4-3-3 (4 defenders, 3 midfielders, 3 forwards)

Strength

- Solid back 4
- Very flexible system and popular among top teams
- 3 players in mid field will make sure you are not outnumbered.
- 3 attackers that can play wide and spread out – force other team to defend.
- Easy to play out of back.
- Can have 1 holding and 2 attacking mids or 2 holding and 1 attacking or they can rotate.
- Outside defenders can push up and attack

Weakness

- Can get outnumbered in wide areas – with 3 players playing central – backs need to roll up to help.
- Center striker can become isolated if outside strikers drop to help.
- Only 1 option in the box in the middle
- Might be hard to play thru the midfield.
- May be difficult for youth players.
- Need to be a very strong possession team to play this formation



4-5-1 (4 defenders, 5 midfielders, 1 forward)

Strength

- Very solid defensively – can defend wide and in the middle.

- 3 central midfielders can be 2 holding and 1 attacking or 2 attacking and 1 holding.
- Triangle in the middle
- Similar to 4-3-3 but pulling forwards into the midfield.
- Good defensive coverage

Weakness

- Isolated forward. Need to hold ball up and play with back to goal to play with midfield.
- Hard to teach defense to go forward.
- Very defensive and for younger players it can be playing not to lose.



4-2-3-1 (4 defenders, 2 holding mids, 3 attacking mids and 1 forward)

Strength

- Same as 4-5-1 but giving attacking mids freedom.
- 2 holding mids and 3 attacking Mids. Outside mids act as wingers.
- Clear distinction between 6 defenders and 4 attackers
- Can get defenders more involved.
- More attacking then 4-5-1
- Strong midfield base
- Very flexible formation

Weakness

- Hard to get holding mids to hold. Need to play in 10-yard space in front of defense.
- More complicated – will take time to understand.
- Attacking midfield must be focal point of attack



3-5-2 (3 defenders, 5 midfielders and 2 forwards) or (3 defenders, 2 holding mids, 3 attacking mids and 2 forwards)

Strength

- Good for young players because they do not have leg strength to switch point of attack to expose only 3 defenders.
- Lots of numbers in midfield
- 2 forwards working together.
- Easy to play out of back.
- Need a holding mid to always stay between ball and goal.
- Good to dominate possession.
- Plenty of options to build out of the back.

Weakness

- 3 defenders need to slide side to side.
- Wide mids must get up and down to attack and defend. Need fit outside players.



3-4-3 (3 defenders, 4 midfielders and 3 forwards)

Strength

- Lots of attack-especially in wide areas.
- Creates diamond of support.
- Spreads field and lots of 1 v 1.
- Attacking players need to slide to ball side to pressure opponent.
- Width comes from wide midfielders.

Weakness

- Can get out numbered in midfield if players are playing wide.
Need 2 strong central Mids.
- Back 3 must stay home and defend.
- 3 defenders are risky.
- Physically demanding-need fit wing backs
- If outside midfielders are not wide, then you are too compact.
Need to be wide to spread the opponent's defense.
- Uncommon formation



4-4-2 (4 defenders, 4 midfielders and 2 forwards)

Strength

- Great cover in the back
- Easy to use.
- 2 players up front working together
- Wide wingers

Weakness

- Classic formation but not used much anymore.
- Not enough options to build out of the back.
- Outnumbered in mid field with only 2.
- Not much possession, too much long ball because they do not have help in middle.
- Compact's game and leads to long ball.
- Need to have very athletic outside midfielders to get up and down field to support defense and forwards.

