



Timo Jankowski

★★★★★
Out think
Out play
Out score

Successful German Soccer Tactics

The Best Match Plans for A Winning Team

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SPORT

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CHAPTER 16

Encountering Identical Systems of Play

When two identical systems of play meet, the analysis points are nearly identical, regardless of the systems of play involved.

Next to the individual playing level of each player, a required higher running effort, as well as better timing and more accuracy and efficiency when shifting against the ball are of major importance when two identical systems of play meet.

The goal is to change the even number situations on the field into superior number situations through ball-oriented play and a high running effort.

Achieving this requires constant attempts at shifting near the ball and double- and even triple-teaming the opponent.

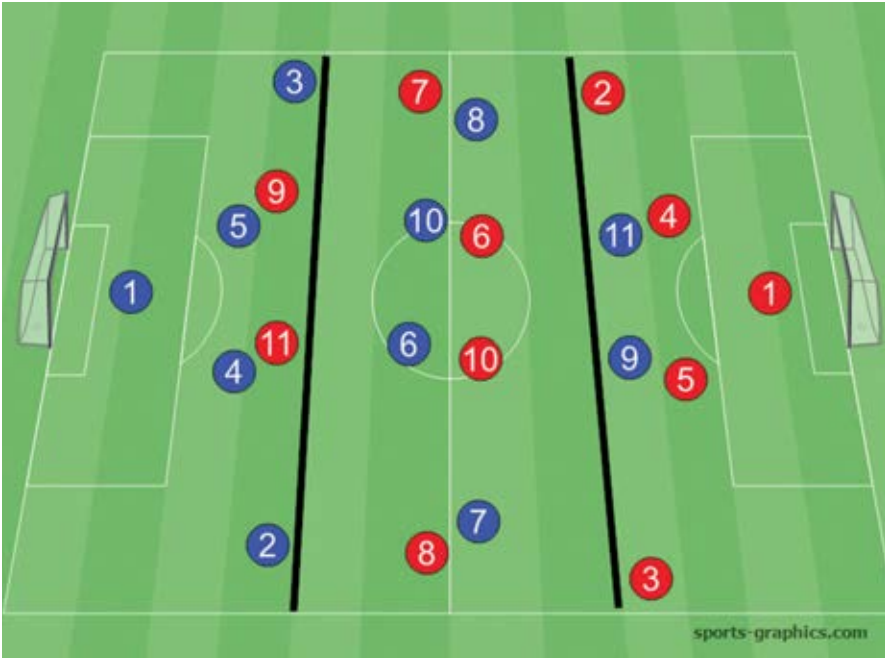
Another option is to switch to another system of play that creates advantages and makes it easier to even out possible weak points. So it is always beneficial when a team is able to play in different formations and systems and can be flexible.

External factors, such as home advantage or team ranking, also play an important role.

16.1 BREAKDOWN OF THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN IDENTICAL SYSTEMS OF PLAY

BY EXAMPLE:

1-4-4-2 IN A LINE VS 1-4-4-2 IN A LINE



A) STARTING SITUATION

As the illustration shows, blue is in the defensive zone with a superior number ratio of 4:2.

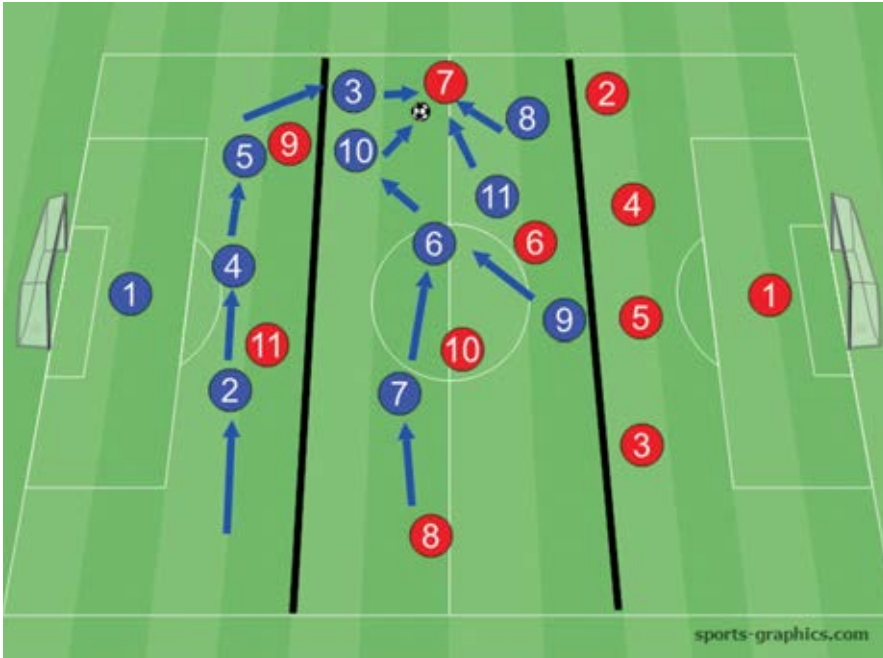
Four blue players encounter four red players in the midfield area, resulting in an equal number situation.

In the offensive zone, the two blue attacking players encounter four red defenders.

On the wings, the two wingbacks encounter the red outside midfielders.

B) DEFENSE

It is important to establish a superior number situation in defense near the ball using good shifting movements. These shifting movements are explained in more detail with the example of two possible game situations.



Situation 1: Ball on the wing

The red outside right midfielder receives a pass after a shift in play.

The left wingback immediately moves up to challenge the player in possession.

Ideally, he forces the player in possession to turn to the rear, where the outside midfielder pressures him, and they try to double-team and win the ball.

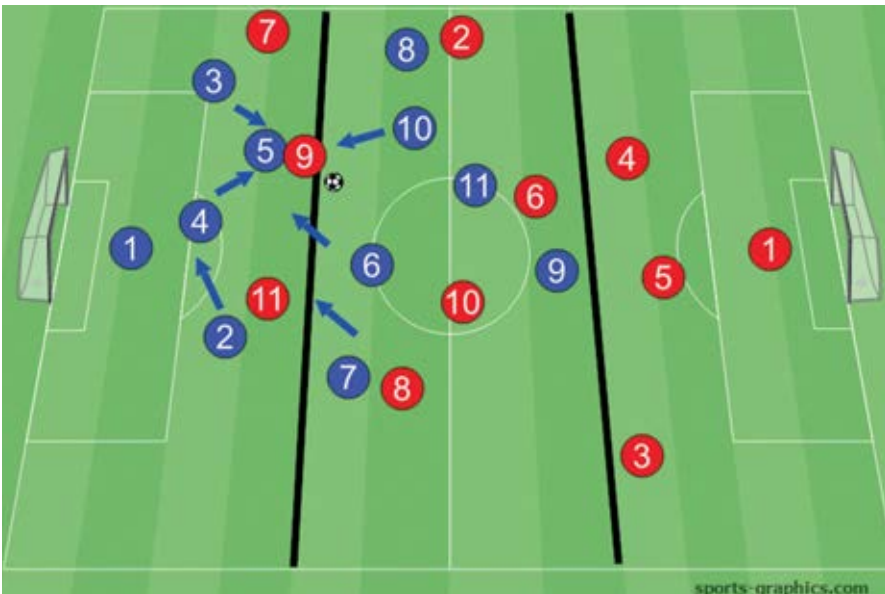
Here the following principle applies:

The player near the goal challenges the attacker; the player away from the goal wins the ball.

The blue number 10 tries to dribble by adding pressure from the side and at the same time blocks the passing lane of player 9 of the red team.

The blue back four has pushed through completely, still ensuring the superior number against the two red attacking players.

The blue right outside midfielder moves in, and the blue striker near the ball moves to the red 6 to prevent a return pass from 7 to 6.



Situation 2: Ball in the center

The red attacking player 9 receives a chip pass.

The central defender near the ball steps out to challenge him.

The wingback and the off-ball central defender immediately safeguard and form a triangle defense to ensure graduated depth.

The blue player 10 immediately puts forward pressure on player 9 and actively tries to win the ball.

Player 6 comes from the side to offer support.

C) OFFENSIVE

Here the goal is to work against the opponent's shifting movements.

This can be achieved by doing the following:

- Creating space by fanning out wide and deep.
- Fast shifting play.
- Playing across lines.
- Combination play with brief ball contact.
- Chip passes to the strikers.
- Diagonal balls in behind the back four.
- Also creating superior number situations in offense, which also offers an advantage for counter-pressing during a possible turnover.

16.2 ENCOUNTER BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF PLAY

BY EXAMPLE:

1-4-4-2 IN A LINE VS 1-4-2-3-1

When two different systems of play encounter each other, it is very important to know where open spaces in the opponent's ranks can develop during offensive play and where possible open spaces for the opponent must be eliminated during defense.



A) STARTING POSITION

In the defensive zone, the blue team has a big numbers advantage with four defensive players against one attacking player.

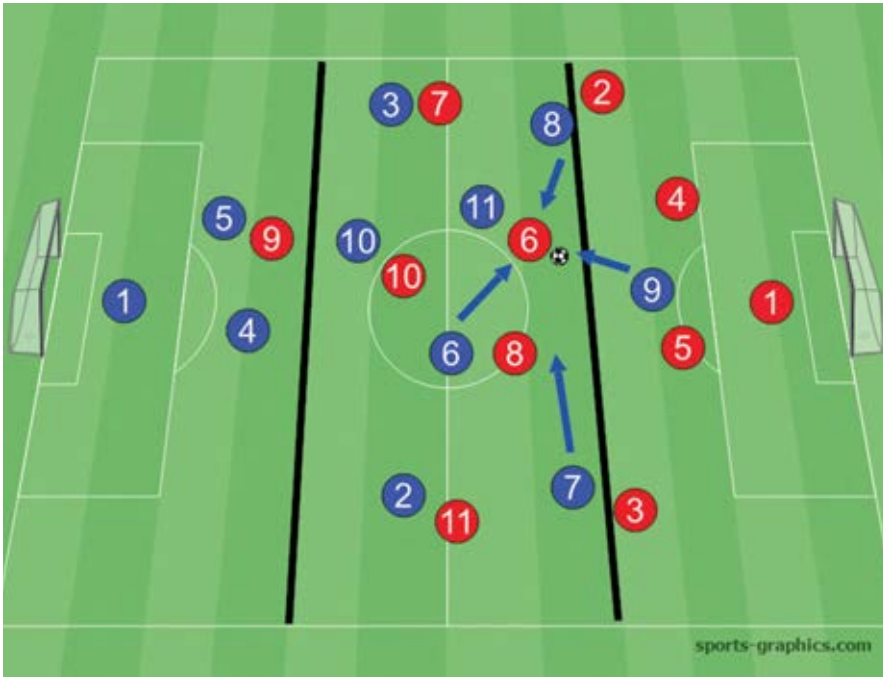
As a result, there is a 4:5 inferior number ratio in the midfield area.

In the offensive zone, the four red defensive players face two blue attacking players.

B) DEFENSE

Here, answering the question of how to even out the inferior number in the midfield—especially how to handle the opposing number 10—is critical during defensive play.

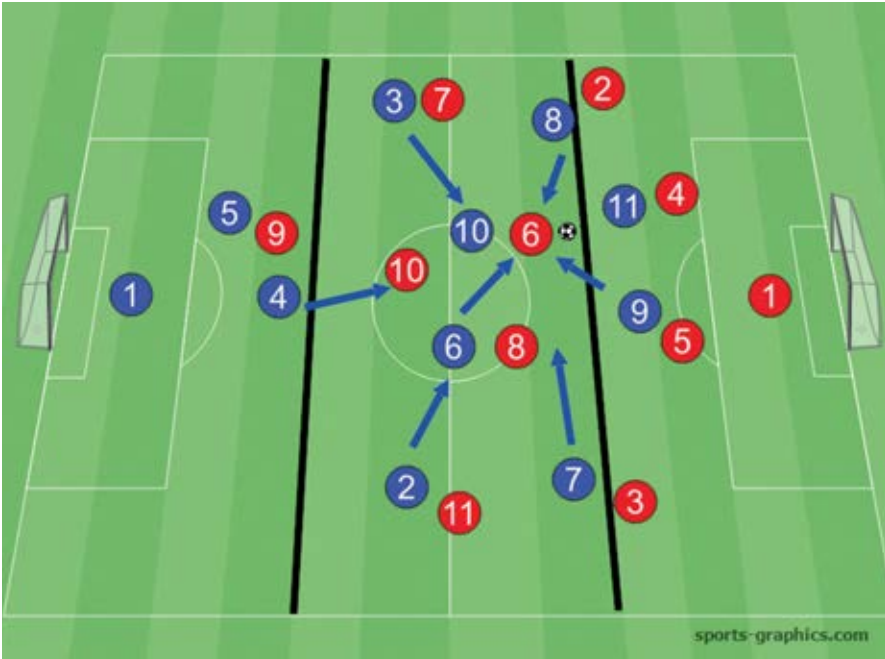
Because there is an extra line available with the 1-4-2-3-1-formation, it is also important that the four blue midfielders make sure they don't lose the opposing player at their back, which easily could cause lines to be crossed.



Solution 1: Dropping striker

The blue attacking player 11 near the ball drops back in the midfield area to prevent a superior number situation for the opponent.

Of course it must be understood that this can only be a situational solution because both attacking strikers most likely would not be able to sustain this major extra effort for more than 90 minutes and would also lack the strength for offensive actions.



Solution 2: The central defender steps out.

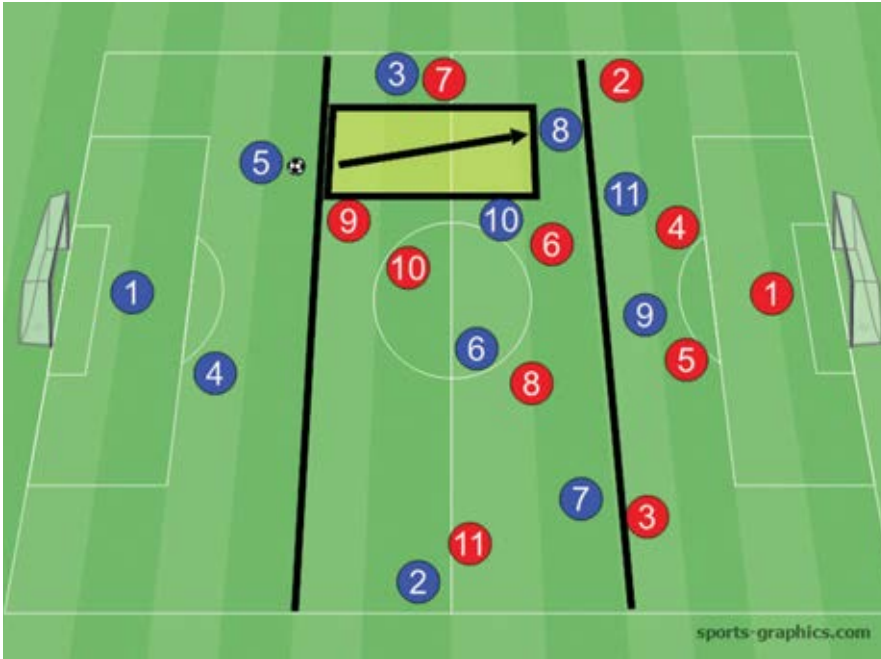
If the action is bold and additional pressure is put on the opponent in the 1-4-2-3-1, one of the two central defenders shifts position toward the red player 10, pressuring to the opponent.

Exercise caution in case the opponent tries for a long ball.

In this situation, the central defender must immediately drop back to form a triangle defense with his adjacent players.

C) OFFENSE

When playing against a 1-4-2-3-1, space frequently opens up behind the two outside midfielders because these two often have a very offensive focus.



Skillful tactical behavior from the outside midfielder—who shows flexibility on his running paths and must also ask for and go to the ball in the center—is as important as good, spacious passing from the central defender.

If the blue defender near the ball then comes along, good situations often emerge for overrunning the opponent on the wing.