

READING THE GAME

Learn how to watch the game as a coach, not as a spectator. Following is a general format for analysis for both your opponent as well as your side.

GAME ANALYSIS – THE OPPONENT

1) GOING INTO THE GAME

- a) Type of game (friendly, qualifying, knock-out)
- b) Injuries, suspensions, etc.
- c) Opponent's mentality and morale
- d) Your own team's mentality and morale, your own players' perceptions of the opponent

2) TEAM STRUCTURE

- a) Number of forwards
- b) Midfield composition
- c) Back players

3) ATTACKING TENDENCIES

- a) Game-maker (schemer)
- b) Main goal scorer
- c) Patterns of runs
- d) Restarts

4) GOALKEEPING

- a) Distribution
 - i) Comfort
 - ii) Quickness
 - iii) Choice: starting a counterattack vs playing for possession

5) DEFENDING TENDENCIES

- a) Number of back players
- b) Midfield composition
- c) Role of forwards in defending
- d) High pressure or low pressure defending
- e) Man to man marking, zone, or combination
- f) Restarts
- g) Goalkeeper

6) ASSESS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- a) Style of play - Direct/Indirect play, transitions
- b) Speed (team and individual)
- c) Size (is it relevant?)
- d) Technical (how do players handle tight spaces) -Tactical abilities (understanding of the game, do they come up with good plans, do they adjust)
- e) How does a, b, and c above affect our attacking and defending

7) PREPARATION

8) TEAM STRUCTURE

- a) Backs:
 - i) number of players
 - ii) shape (line – “flat back”, diamond, box, sweeper?)
 - iii) Size and speed
- b) Midfielders
 - i) Shape, roles in attacking, roles in defending, going forward, covering for defenders, etc.
- c) Forwards
 - i) Numbers
 - ii) Shape: high and low, in tandem

9) ATTACKING TENDENCIES

- a) Direct (long balls to target taking as many players as possible out of the game with one pass)
- b) Organized build-up (short passes, playing for possession)
- c) Counterattacks – two types
 - i) Direct ball right to target player
 - ii) Short passes, then a quick switch of field
- d) Predominant attacking patterns – areas of the field that certain players favor
- e) Restarts
 - i) Quick restarts
 - ii) Set pieces
 - iii) Specialties
 - iv) Types of service and runs

10) GOALKEEPING

- a) Distribution
 - i) Comfort
 - ii) Quickness
 - iii) Choice: starting a counterattack vs playing for possession

11) KEY PLAYERS

- a) Playmaker: one playmaker or many? Does your system of play maximize your advantage?
- b) Key scorers
 - i) Does he/she create his own scoring opportunities or does he need to be set up?
 - ii) What kind of service does he/she need to get into a scoring position?
 - iii) Does he/she favor the right, left, or middle?
 - iv) What is his/her relative size compared to the defenders?
- c) Goalkeeper’s impact – can your goalkeeper decide games – for or against?

12) DEFENDING TENDENCIES

- a) Organization of backs
- b) Organization of midfielders – do they channel the play inside or outside, toward specialized defenders?
- c) Role of forwards in defense: do they help make the play predictable for the midfielders and defenders? Which area of the field do they channel the ball to?
- d) Defending style: where do they start challenging the ball? (high-pressure vs low pressure)
- e) Primary zone of confrontation
- f) Marking man-to-man vs zone defending
- g) Restarts – opponent’s styles and speed of transition vs our team’s organization and speed of transition; offside trap?
- h) Goalkeeper
 - i) Strengths: shot blocking (no rebounds?), courage, reading the game
 - ii) Weaknesses: foot skills, no command of the box (does not come out), afraid of crosses, unable to organize restarts, executing restarts and distribution