

The intelligent formation

By David Clarke

Wayne Rooney, Jack Wilshere, Steve Gerrard - the intelligent player who can go wherever he feels he is needed on the pitch. An Iniesta or Xavi for your team. If you have an intelligent player who can influence the game why tie him down to a position?

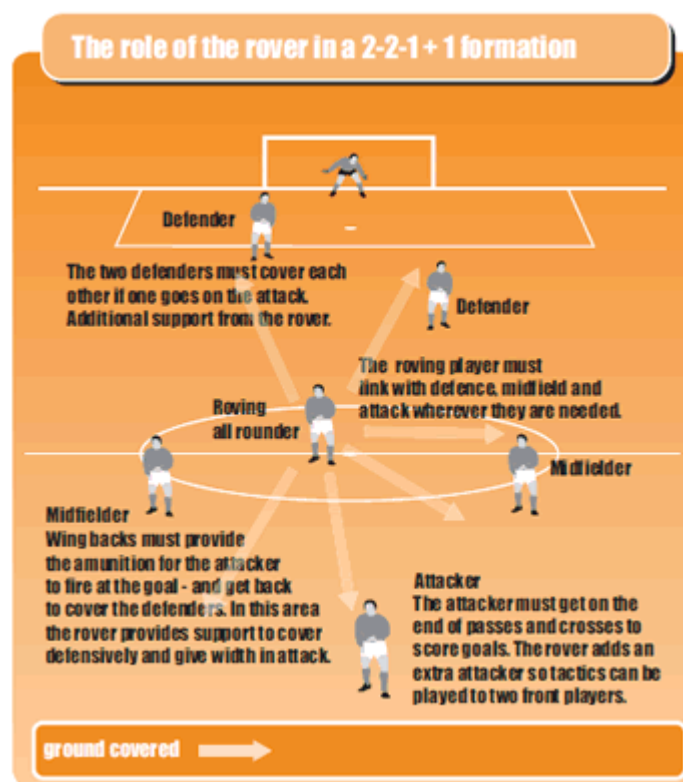
One formation you won't find written down in the text books, but one I know a lot of soccer academies use, is where you have one player who is free to move wherever the team needs him. That player could be needed in defence, midfield or attack.

Often coaches find there is one player in their team who is just that bit better than everyone else in all areas of the pitch. It's the equivalent of the all-rounder, and it isn't easy to pinpoint their best attribute. In this case, let them be a "rover", going where the game tells him or her to go.

They use their soccer intelligence to go where they are needed.

If the game is balanced, the person plays in the midfield. If the team is struggling, the rover may find himself at the back of the team. Wherever the game needs this player, that's where he goes.

At the moment I am playing this formation with my U10s team. We are playing seven-a-side and the best way to keep the field balanced is to use a 2-2-1 formation with one floating player.



Formations for different numbers

- For 7v7 play 2-2-1 + 1
- For 8v8, play a 2-2-2 + 1
- For 11v11, play a 3-3-3 + 1

Always remember that systems do not win games, but your players' ability to carry out the plan does – which is where you, the coach, come in!.