

Cherry Hill FC

Attacking Principles

Penetration - the most important objective of any attack is to penetrate the opponent's defense.

Penetration can be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- Dribbling through or past the opposing players.
- Passing the ball through or past the opposing team.
- Shooting.

Support – refers to the arrangement of teammates in front of, behind and to the side of the player in possession. These players offer immediate passing options that allow the team to maintain possession of the ball whilst trying to develop a successful attack.

Width – refers to the spreading out across the field to disrupt the concentration (see defensive principles) of the defensive team. The idea is to try to force the opponent to spread out thus creating gaps that can be exploited and penetrated.

Depth – refers to the positioning of teammates in advance of and behind the player in possession. Similar to support but includes teammates not offering immediate passing options.

Mobility – refers to the ability of the attacking team to make runs off the ball to unbalance and disrupt the defensive team. Allows attackers to find and create space and forces defenders to make decisions. The aim is to create gaps to penetrate effectively.

Improvisation – refers to a player's ability to break down a defense out of nothing. A piece of skill, a trick, a creative pass or a piece of "magic" that is unexpected and catches the defensive team by surprise can lead to goal-scoring opportunities.



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Defensive Principles

Pressure – the idea is to win back possession of the ball before the opposition can find a rhythm or build any significant attacks. If an attempt to win back possession of the ball is deemed “too risky” (example, if a midfielder misses a tackle the team may lose their defensive shape) the best option is to exhibit restraint and be patient.

Delay – the key consideration within the concept of “delay” is to get players behind the ball in a good defensive shape to help prevent penetration from the attacking team. An experienced defender will show restraint, stay on their feet and steer attackers into areas away from their goal. Just a few seconds delaying an attacker will allow teammates to retreat and offer help. Delay relates to individual as well as team defending.

Cover/Support – this can be provided by one or more players and refers to the distance and angles at which teammates offer defensive help. For simplicity sake the player putting pressure on the ball can be referred to as the first defender, and the nearest supporting player can be referred to as the second defender.

Depth – similar to the concept of support but includes all players behind the player putting pressure on the ball. It is important for a team to have good depth in defending in instances when there is no direct pressure on the opponent with the ball.

Compactness / Concentration – compactness refers to the distance between the defensive team’s front players and back line. Good pressure on the opponent will allow the defensive back line to step up making the field more compact with less space for the opposition to exploit. In contrast, if there is no pressure on the opponent the back line may need to retreat resulting in a less compact area. Concentration refers to the “pinching” in of the defensive team to, again, squeeze the space making it more difficult for the opposition to play.

Balance – this refers to the positioning of teammates and defenders in relation to opposing players who are not in immediate support of the ball. It is not enough to simply have a lot of players behind the ball, they must have the appropriate width and depth. The positioning of all balancing players is determined by the distance from the ball to their opponent.

