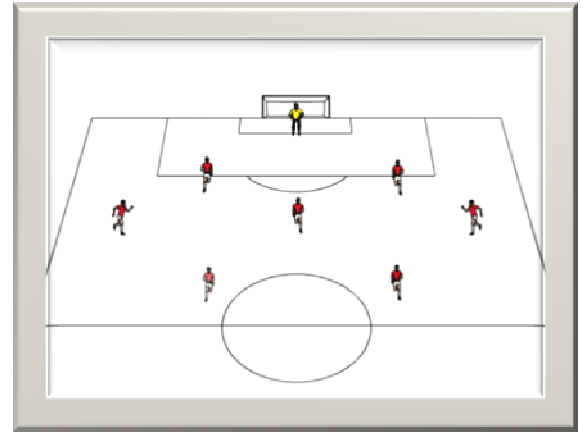


# 8 v 8 Formations

No matter what formation you choose to play, team shape is a vital component to how successful your team will play in the game. In this article we will look at various options for the 8 vs. 8 system of play. The transition from 6 vs. 6 to 8 vs. 8 will introduce a “third line” to the game. Now instead of observing a game that has attackers and defenders, we’ll now see the beginning of midfield play which will connect the attacking and defending lines. The 8 vs. 8 game will mirror the 11 vs. 11 in both team shape and rules of the game. Players will begin to understand the concept of “team shape” and have the technical ability to apply certain tactical concepts a coach may want to implement.

## 2-3-2

If you choose to play in the 2-3-2 system you’ll be asking the wide midfielder players to provide the width for the team. This is a very good system in terms of having defensive “compactness” through the middle of the field. Keeping two players up top will also provide your players good options to play forward when they regain possession of the ball. However, one area of concern is when an opponent plays the ball in behind your wide midfielder. If the “ball side” central defender gets drawn out of the middle, how do we react? Do we ask the central midfielder to “drop in” to cover the vacated space or do we ask the “far side” defender to slide over to provide cover and have the wide midfielder “track back” into the initial position of the “far side” defender.



## 3-2-2

The 3-2-2 system is an excellent choice if you have athletic flank players that can cover a lot of ground. The outside backs would be responsible for covering the entire width of the field. By adding an extra player into the central midfield the core of the team should be strong at winning both “1st and 2nd Balls”. One drawback to this formation in terms of player development is the lack of flank play. Young players tend to pound the ball down the middle of the field and fail to recognize the need to establish the width of the field. This system won’t take players out of their comfort zone and teach them to attack the spaces out wide which will become more and more important as they transition to the 11v11 game.



## 3-3-1

Choosing the 3-3-1 formation may be appropriate at certain times in a game, but it should not be selected as your preferred system. If you are playing against a stronger opponent or your team is fatigued it may make sense to have more players get “behind the ball”, but the general attacking pattern of this formation is the “Counter-attack”. By nature, choosing to play counter-attacking soccer is a result oriented decision and not based on player development. It is important that we teach our young players the value and enjoyment of attacking soccer and although the 3-3-1 system can be effective for a result, it is negative system in general and one not suited for player development.

