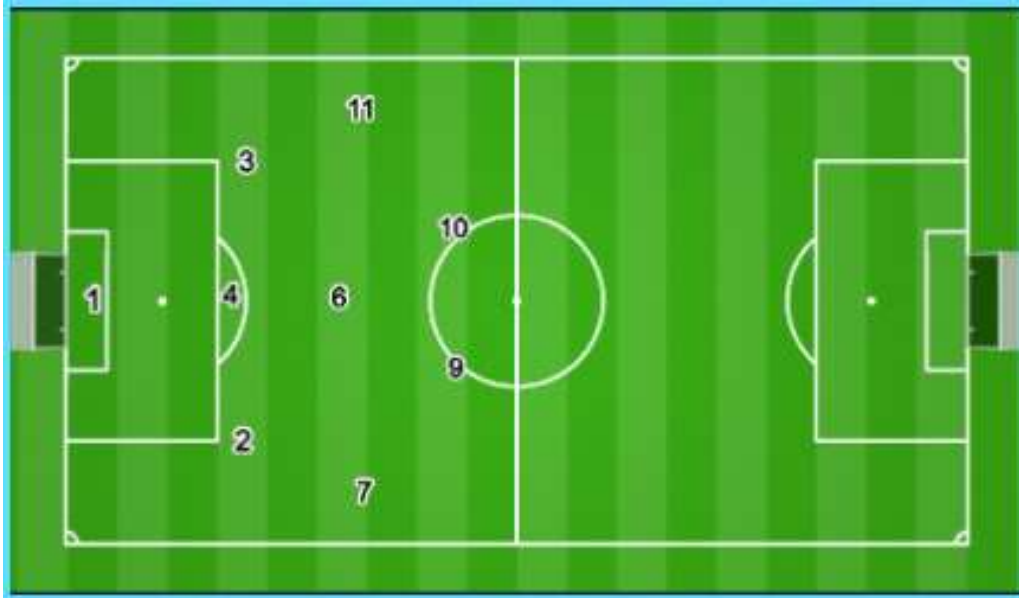


3-3-2



This must be one of the most common 9v9 formations in existence and it's primarily down to the good practice it provides for playing the world's most standardized 11v11 formation: 4-4-2. 3-3-2 has several more issues in eliminating space around the field than its natural successor in 4-4-2, but is still a simple, effective approach to winning games in 9v9 for managers and coaches who don't want to over-complicate things.

ADAPTABLE FORMATIONS FOR 11v11

- 4-4-2
- 3-5-2

PLAYERS REQUIRED

- Wide midfielders who have attacking flair and talent.
- Strikers who have the ability to work in a pair and be unselfish.
- Good passers around the field. Either defenders or midfielders can effectively control the game with their distribution.

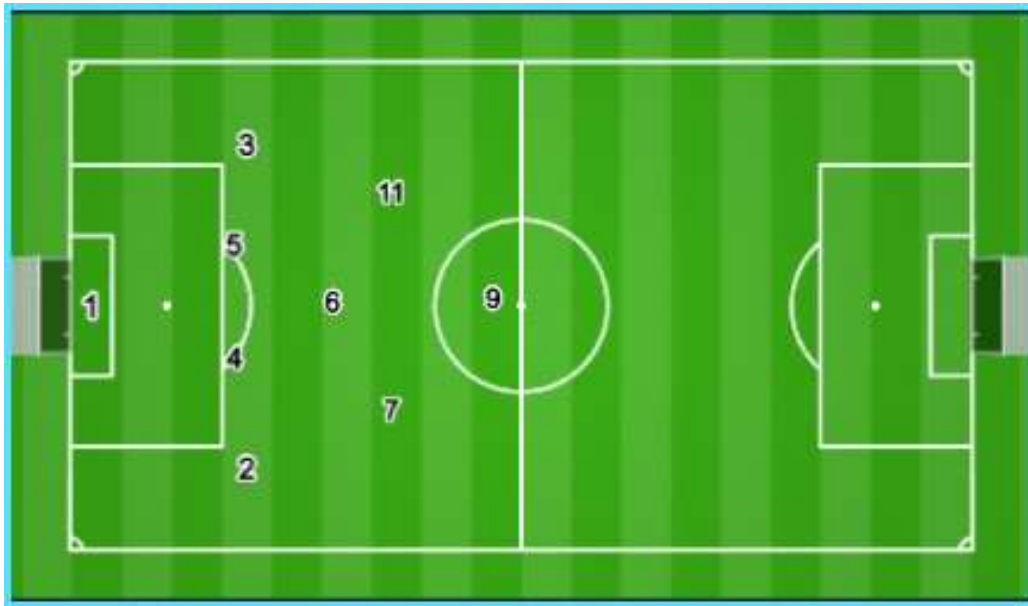
PROS

- Simplistic and naturally effective for a possession styled game.
- In theory, it does not overload any given area on the field.
- Allows an attacking duo to develop together and learn how to play effectively with 2 up top.
- Players don't need to be particularly fast or talented on the ball as necessary coverage should always be near to win the ball back.

CONS

- Midfielders struggle to really understand their roles. Sometimes complex formations actually allow players to understand whether they are to be more offensive or defensive, whereas 3-3-2 does not offer that to the midfielders.
- 2 strikers up top can become incredibly isolated, especially if midfielders play right on top of the defenders.
- Restricts players to very specific roles as if they abandon their roles even momentarily, the entire balance of the team is lost and not easily recoverable.

4-3-1



The 4-3-1 is one of the best formations to get team used to playing 11v11 football. The standardized way of playing 11-a-side around the world is with a back four. 9v9 might just be the best time to introduce the arc of the back-four and get teams thinking about the notion that defense is the best form of attack.

ADAPTABLE FORMATIONS FOR 11v11

- 4-2-3-1
- 4-4-2

PLAYERS REQUIRED

- At least four strong defenders in the squad, otherwise you're better off playing with three.
- Outside defenders and wide midfielders who are fast and can carry the ball up the field.
- Central midfielder who can support attack and not play right on top of the defense.
- A striker who knows how to get into a game even when they get isolated. Striker must also be quick and able to chase down the opposition defenders.

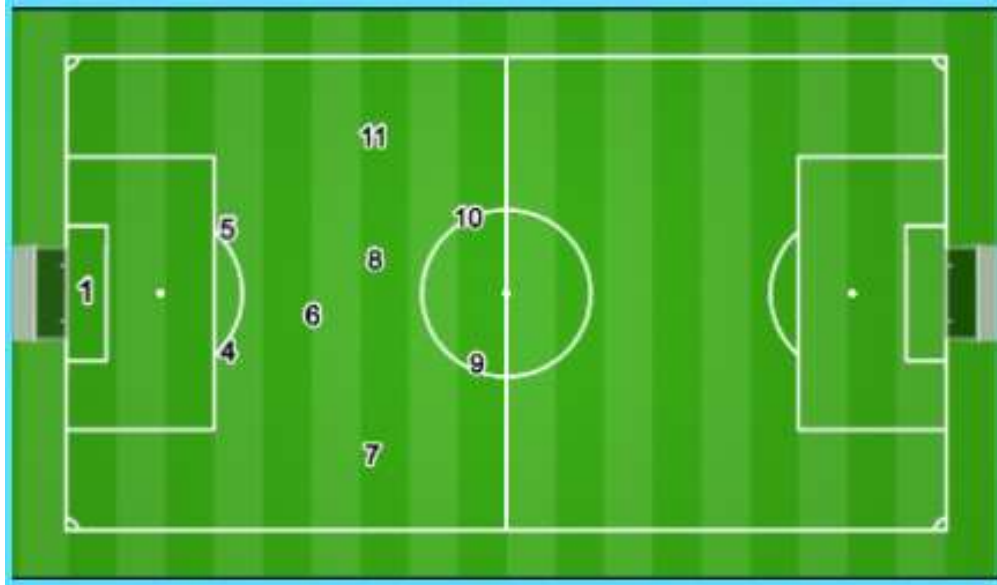
PROS

- Effective for wing play.
- Right/left defenders can push high and take the ball up the field without apprehension about who might cover them.
- If outside defenders can mark opposition wingers and inside defenders can mark opposition strikers/attacking midfielders, the other team's attack is completely shut down.
- Teaches players how to play in a 4-defense system very early in their development.
- Effective for keeping clean sheets.

CONS

- Midfielders need to quickly learn that they have an integral role in supporting the striker in attack. If there's no support, the striker will become extremely isolated.
- Can become overly defensive if outside defenders or central midfielder show no attacking prowess or become static.
- Limits striker to play within a specific, 'chaser' like style.
- With an extra player in defense, you always have at least one less player joining attacks.

2-4-2



The 2-4-2 is fantastic for keeping possession of the ball, while also prepares players for a variety of different 11-a-side formations including 4-4-2, and 4-5-1. It's also easily adjustable into a 2-3-1-2 and fantastic for teaching young central defenders, central midfielders, and strikers alike how to work effectively in pairs.

ADAPTABLE FORMATIONS FOR 11v11

- 4-4-2
- 4-5-1

PLAYERS REQUIRED

- Wide midfielders who have attacking flair and talent.
- Strikers who can work in a pair and be unselfish.
- Good passers around the field. Either defenders or midfielders can effectively control the game with their distribution.

PROS

- Overloads the midfield, allowing teams to control possession and manipulate the ball effectively.
- Central midfielders can move interchangeably and have a level of freedom not present in formations that restrict them to either a defensive or attacking role.
- Develops players to learn how to effectively work in pairs.
- Although better suited for a possession-styled game, it still works for a counter attacking game if wingers are fast and can get up and down the line.

CONS

- Defenders must be fast as any slip-ups from right/left midfielder will leave the team easily exposed.
- Requires midfielders to be tactically aware of when to join attack vs. defense as their roles are loosely defined.
- The two defenders need to be vocal and strong leaders, otherwise marking may be a massive issue. Most teams will play with a front three, requiring defenders and midfielders constantly to be in communication over who has the opposition's wide players.
- If a defender gets drawn too far wide due to lack of necessary cover, a massive gap in the middle might be exploited by the other team.