



Sarnia FC

Principles of Play

ATTACKING PRINCIPLES

PENETRATION

SUPPORT

WIDTH

MOBILITY

SURPRISE

DEPTH

DEFENDING PRINCIPLES

DELAY/PRESSURE

COVER/SUPPORT

CONCENTRATION

BALANCE

CONSTRAINT

COMPACTNESS

Attacking Principle 1 –Penetration

When in possession of the ball, the first attacker should ask himself, “Can I score?” If the answer is yes, he will shoot and penetrate the defense by shooting. If he cannot score, he will look to make a pass which will penetrate the defense. If this is not on, he will then attempt to penetrate by dribbling or running.

Attacking Principle 2 –Support

In order to maintain possession of the ball, the first attacker will need good support from the second and third attacker(s).

Simply put, the second and third attackers must provide forward backward and sideways options to the first attacker (player on the ball).

Attacking Principle 3 –Width

In order to stretch the opponent’s defensive shape, attackers will use the width of the field to tempt them away from covering the dangerous area in front of goal.

Attacking Principle 4 –Mobility

Attackers will make runs into different areas of the field in order to draw defenders out of their positions, trying to unbalance the defense

Attacking Principle 5 –Vertical Stretching

Attackers will try to stretch the space between defensive lines, by playing as deep as possible and off the shoulder of the last defender. The intention is to stretch the opponent vertically.

Vertical stretching can also be achieved by players behind the ball dropping off to create space ahead of themselves.

Attacking Principle 6 – Improvisation/Creativity/Surprise

Attackers will try to break down defenses by employing the element of surprise. Tools such as back-heels, overhead kicks, diving headers, feints and fakes are all used for this purpose.

Defending Principle 1 –Pressure/Delay

To prevent the first attacker penetrating by the previously mentioned methods, the first defender must apply pressure to the ball, or delay the penetration by preventing the shot, pass or dribble. Stop the forward movement of the ball.

Defending Principle 2 –Cover/Support/Depth in Defense

To negate the options provided for the first attacker, the second defenders must give cover to the first defender. This means that the second defenders will cut off passing lanes and will be ready to take the loose ball as the first attacker tries to get past the first defender.

Defending Principle 3 –Concentration

To avoid being stretched, the defenders will tend to concentrate their numbers in the dangerous area in front of goal. They will get into this area by means of recovery runs which will tend to get them between the ball and the goal.

Defending Principle 4 –Balance

In order to retain defensive balance or shape, the third defenders will balance off the weak side of the attack, and will pass off runners if possible. Alternatively, they may track and have someone else maintain defensive balance by taking their place.

Defending Principle 5 –Compactness

To counter this, defenders will try to compact the vertical distance allowed the attackers by pushing up their back and midfield lines towards the opponent's goal, effectively reducing the on-side attacking space.

This also has the effect of keeping small spaces between the defensive lines, making it difficult for the opponent to play through.

The goalkeeper must be considered in this movement, having the job of reducing the space between him and the last defender.

Defensive Principle 6 – Patience/Discipline/Restraint

To avoid being beat by a creative move, defenders will employ the principle of restraint or patience, waiting for the attacker to make a mistake, before attempting to win the ball.