

Walking Football Strategies

In Possession:

- **Make the Pitch Big** - position players wide on right, up front striker & wide on left
- **Keep the ball moving** and other team off balance
- If you can't play forward, **play** to someone who can (no turning)
- **GK - play quick** (if disorganised defence), or wait for team to be in good positions before distributing

Out of Possession:

- **Nearest player** to opposing ball carrier tries to prevent quick forward pass
- **Make the pitch small** (make team spaces compact)
- Make opposition predictable - **squeeze opposition to one side**

In Possession:

- When we win the ball, team to immediately get into positions to maximise difficulty for opposition to cover them:
 - "Make the Pitch Big"
 - All players to get away from the player they were marking
 - Get into team shape asap (GK- central defender - mid 3 - full forward)
 - Wide players high and wide (create space to drop back into to receive the ball)
 - Striker to stretch the opponent vertically (also create space to drop back into)
 - Central Midfield and Defender make sure they aren't blocking passes forward (esp if GK has the ball)
 - Must be conscious of danger if we lose possession (if we are spread out, we are open to counters)
- Immediately when we gain possession, look for a quick forward pass, but if it isn't on, secure possession
- If GK has the ball, immediate pass forward only if the striker / forward is free or can isolate an opposing defender (*without risking the ball being intercepted*), otherwise, GK to wait until the team is in our 'in possession' shape.
- **Call the name of the player you are passing to**. Followed by "turn", "time", "man on" - e.g. "Colin, turn"
- **Pass to the foot** of the player furthest from the defender
- **Keep the ball moving** (can be return pass to player who just passed you the ball - except GK)
- Rotations and spaces (no more than 2 players in a vertical or a horizontal line)
- **Position connections** - for example if defender drives forward with the ball centrally, central midfielder drops back to be defender as cover.
- **Play way you are facing** (unless you have scanned or are on the half turn)
- Good motto is "If you can't play the ball forward, play it to someone who can"
- So, emphasis especially on midfielders to scan + receiving on half-turn to play forward quickly
- Be aware of the safest 'escape' route if a player is hemmed in or can't pass forward (can we reset to the GK, or deflect off an opponent for a throw in rather than play a risky pass that is intercepted)

Out of Possession:

- GK & Defender to be especially **vocal** in organising team.
- **Team shape** out of possession (GK-3-1-1 or GK-2-2-1)
- When we lose possession:
 - the job of the **nearest player to opposing ball carrier** is to prevent a quick forward pass and slow down the opposition play
 - All other players to immediately **get goal side** of and close to remaining opponents
 - **Defending 1 v 1 rather than Zonal**
 - **No “double teaming”** unless you’re certain to win the ball as that will leave a spare opponent

Attitude and Mindset:

- Open Mindset: be willing to **learn new football tactics and techniques** and be ‘coachable’
- **Encourage team mates** with words and body language
- **Be louder and more positive than any opponent** - we cannot always be more skillful than opponents, but we can always be more united, vocal and encouraging.
- **Forgive mistakes, praise effort**
- **Referee** is never wrong (pressure ref in positive ways by praising and being helpful / **respectful**)
- Adapt to how ref is controlling the game (**don’t complain**, take advantage without being cynical)
- **Ignore opposition** if they attempt to provoke a reaction
- **Have fun** and try to ensure opposition see you having fun (whatever they do, however they behave)
- **Praise opponents good play**, but show it doesn’t deter you (show it encourages you to try harder)
- Before giving feedback to a team mate, think about how they might react. **Will your comment make them better or make them bitter?**
- Australian sportsmen have a definite “**Aura**” - renowned for mental strength, a never-say-die attitude and for punching above our weight - use this to **intimidate opponents** (in a nice way! no sledging)