

DEFENDING POSITIONS

A defender is an outfield player whose primary roles are to stop attacks during the game and prevent the opposing team from scoring goals. Center-backs are usually in pairs, with 2 full-backs to their left and right, but can come in threes with no full-backs. There are four types of defenders: center-back, sweeper, full-back, and wing-back. The center-back and full-back positions are essential in most modern formations.

The sweeper and wing-back roles are more specialized for certain formations.

•→ **CENTER BACK**

A center-back (also known as a central defender or center-half, as the modern role of the center-back arose from the center-half position) defends in the area directly in front of the goal and tries to prevent opposing players, particularly center-forwards, from scoring.

•→ **RIGHT OR LEFT BACK**

The right or left-back is a wide defender and will play alongside the central defenders. They provide cover from attacks in the wide position as well as act as a direct route for distribution while playing out the back. These positions are also referred to as full backs.

•→ **SWEEPER**

The sweeper is in the central defensive position and will normally drop deeper than another covering center back. They will normally deal with long balls played long over the top or in behind by the opposing team.

•→ **WING BACKS**

The wing-backs are players that maintain the right or left-back duties but are instructed to cover a more attacking position and generally sit higher in their starting position. Think of it as a more attacking full-back.

THE COACHING NUMBERING SYSTEM

We have assigned numbers within a 4-4-2 system and many coaches will coach within this numbering system to help players understand their role within the team.

Defenders

- 1 - Goalkeeper
- 2 - Right Back
- 3 - Left Back
- 4 - Sweeper
- 5 - Center Back

Midfielders

- 6 - Central Defensive Midfielder
- 8 - Central Attacking Midfielder
- 7 - Right Wing
- 11 - Left Wing

Attackers

- 9 - Striker
- 10 - Forward



THE ROLE OF THE FIRST DEFENDER

We have some key things to understand when it comes to defending. We defend in 3's and until we have the protection and the reassurance of having our back up risks cannot be taken.

We must

DELAY FORWARD ATTACKING AND **DENY** THE WANTED SPACE

Players must recognize when their team is organized and when they are unorganized in their formation. Do they have the following in position

1ST DEFENDER - PRESSURE

2ND DEFENDER - COVER

3RD DEFENDER - BALANCE



THE ROLE OF THE FIRST DEFENDER

The role of the pressure defender is paramount the decision-making is done correctly. How do we successfully apply pressure to the ball -

1 - FAST TO SLOW



We need to get to the attack quickly. Cover ground and close them down fast but as you get close to them slow up and control and maintain your space first.

2 - TALL TO SMALL AND WATCH THE BALL



As you now have the space controlled produce a stable body stance. Get low and become stronger.

3 - SIDE ON APPROACH



Position your body so you cannot get nutmegged. Side on will create less opportunity for this to happen.

4 - ARMS LENGTH AWAY



Don't get too close as the attacker wants the space behind you! Stay an arm's length away so if the attacker uses speed to pass you will have an advantage and can cut them off.

5 - ANGLE OF APPROACH



Position your toes towards the closet line and control the space towards the side where there is less danger.

6 - PATIENCE AND CALM



DONT STEP IN! ITS WHAT THEY WANT! MAINTAIN YOUR SPACE! DELAY AND DENY

7 - TACKLE WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT - BLOCK OR POKE

Place your tackle when the time is right, a bad touch, or a quick strike BUT make sure you have Cover and balance in place and your team is organized.

ATTRIBUTES OF A DEFENDER

TECHNICAL –

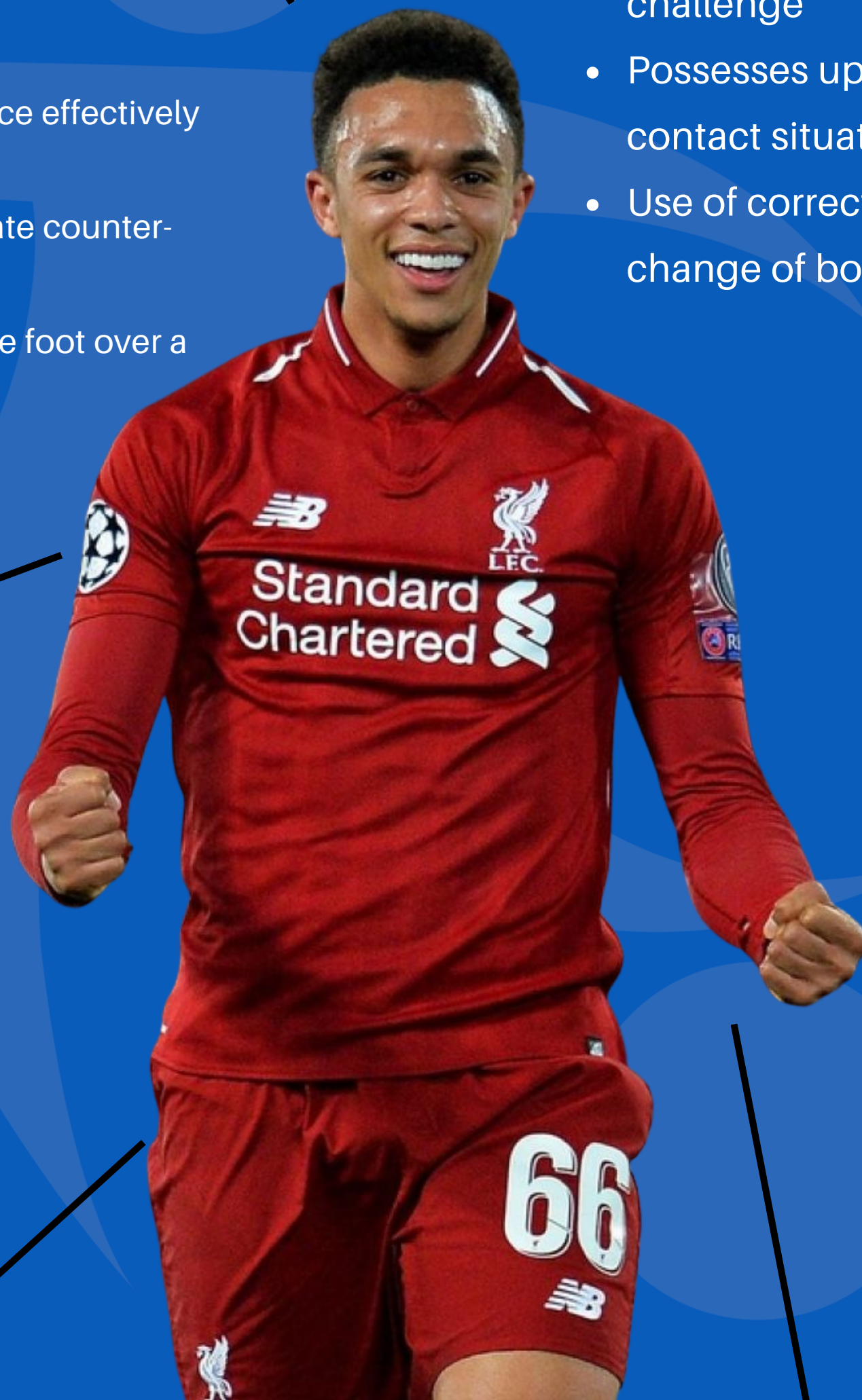
- Reads the game well and positions effectively
- Understands when to mark opponents
- Pressures opponents effectively, intercepting passes, spoiling possession, and controlling space
- Can defend in 1v1 situations
- Tracks opponents runs and movements
- Challenges decisively and fairly
- Can cover other defenders and mark and control space effectively
- Runs with the ball into midfield with composure
- Can play accurate passes to forward players and create counter-attacks
- Passes the ball with both feet, using any surface of the foot over a variety of distances with deception and spin/curl
- Can beat an opponent with a safe trick if needed.

PHYSICAL

- Quick and Explosive over short distances
- Can compete aerially possessing spring and timing when jumping for a challenge
- Possesses upper body strength for contact situations
- Use of correct body shapes and change of body weight effectively

TACTICAL –

- Understands how to defend individually and as a team unit
- Defends with composure and control
- Reads and anticipates play and makes good decisions
- Supports receives and plays in and from the defending 3rd of the field
- Can combine play with goalkeeper and midfield players
- Changes the ball direction when in possession



PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Competitive and Composed
- Willing to chase down forward passes delivered in behind the opposing defenders.
- Adaptable and aware of the state of the game
- Shows bravery in potential goal scoring areas
- Displays intelligent positioning and cunning movement

SOCIAL

- Can interact with fellow players in a positive manner
- Is coachable and listens to players, coaches and seeks advice
- Deals with success and failure constructively

SESSION 4 – IN AND OUT OF POSSESSION

A complete player must know their responsibilities when on and or off the ball. You have a different job within both transitions.

OUT OF POSSESSION -

1 - Become Organized

- React quickly
- Defensive Shape
- Making play predictable
- Form high to medium block

2 - The Defending Unit

- Form the defending 3 unit (Pressure/ Cover/ Balance)
- Compactness and force play wide
- React on mistakes and weakness of the opponent

3 - Press When Organized

- As a unit press the opposing team
- Pressure Cover Balance unit

4 - Awareness Of Attacking Runs

- Be aware of attackers making runs off the ball
- Protect valuable spaces on the field
- Closer marking when in dangerous areas

IN POSSESSION -

1 - Possession and Build

- Maintain the ball
- Control possession

2 - Press up the field (Support)

- Move up the field with the build-up to assist the attack
- Press the field creating a unit in the opposing half

3 - Create scoring opportunities

- Move forward to attacking third of the field
- Make runs forward - overlapping

