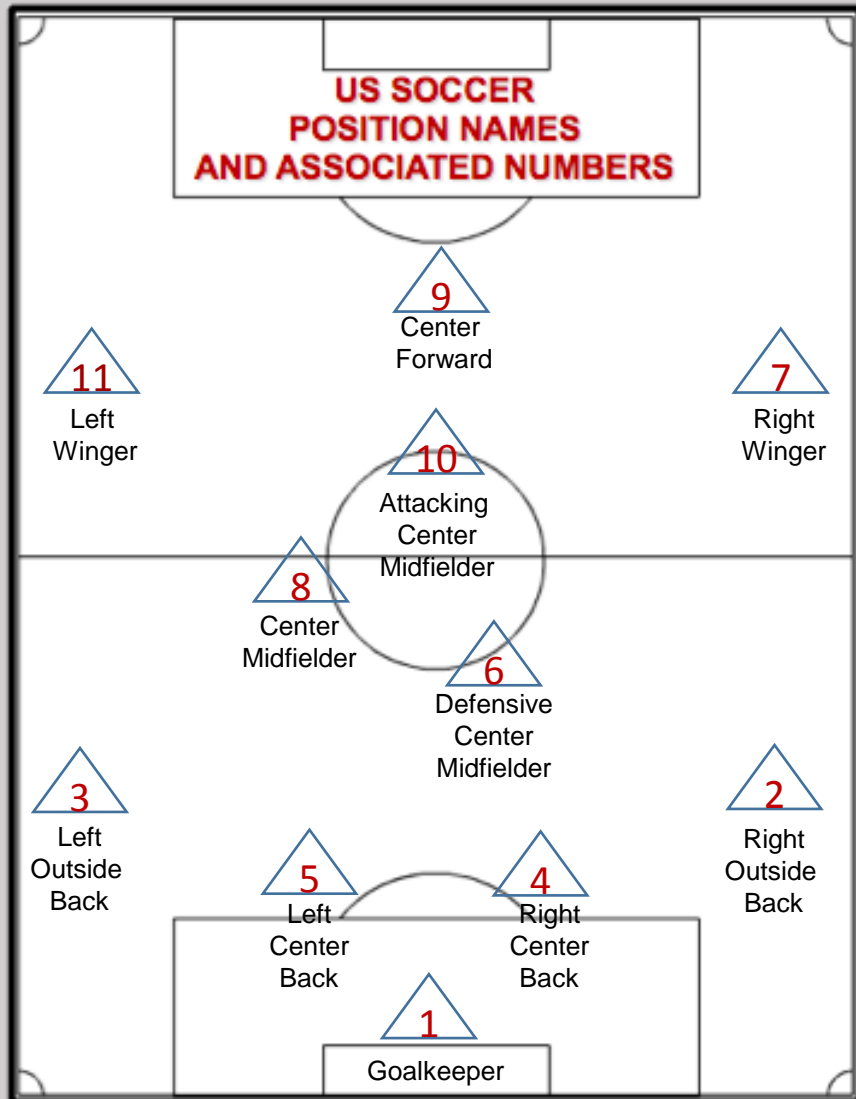




U.S. Soccer By the Numbers

The positions and typical roles of the
U.S. Soccer player numbering system

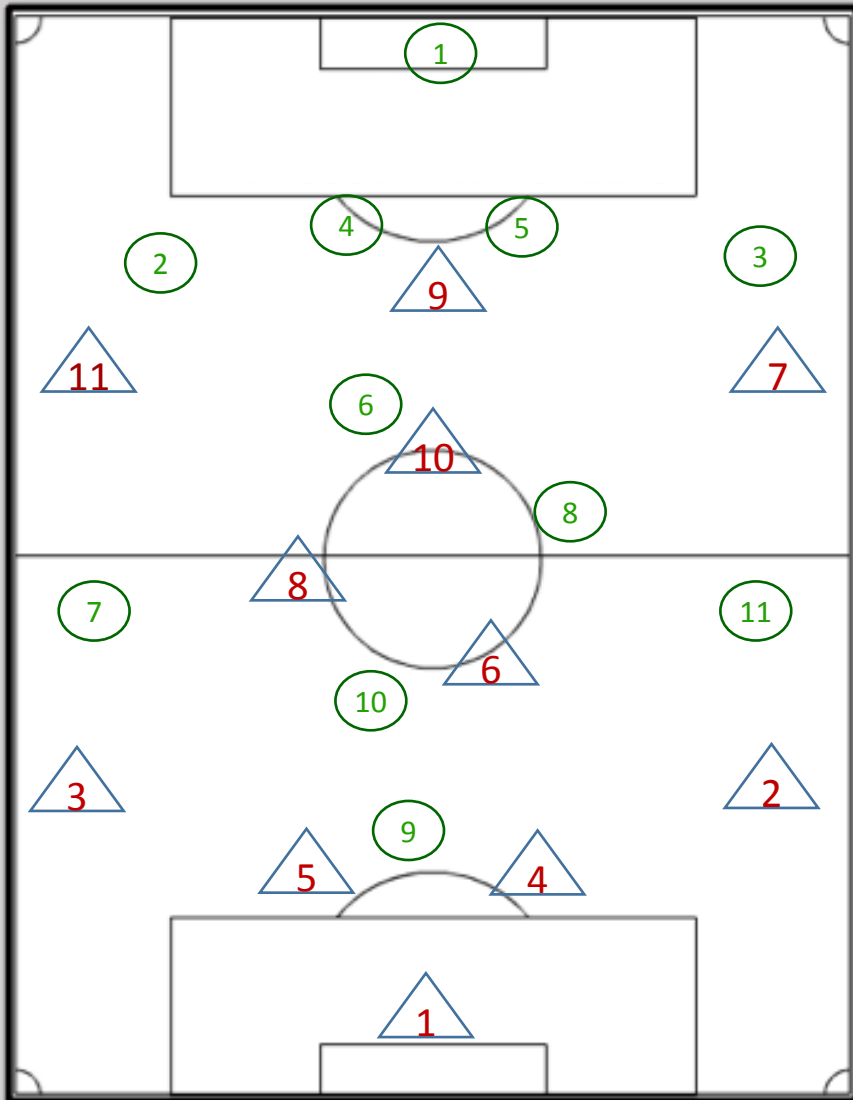
Overview



- A numbering system allows for a common and consistent language for addressing player roles
- A team's system and individual roles should account for the unique qualities of the players
- Different countries use slightly different systems of numbering

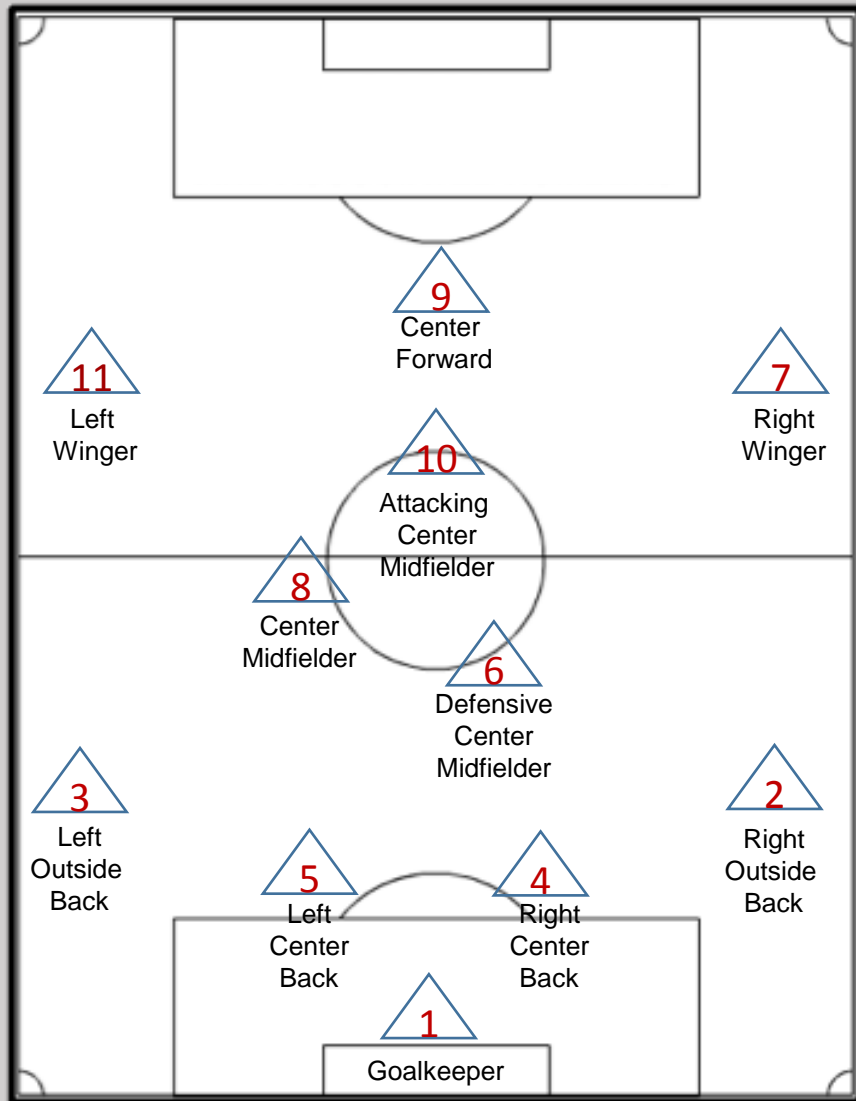


Diagram Protocols



- Use triangles \triangle for own team
- Use circles \bigcirc for opposing team
- Own team goes up the page
- Opposing team goes down the page
- For a training plan, write position #'s inside shapes
- For a technical/scouting report, include jersey #'s and surnames.
- Tactical arrows \dashrightarrow indicate typical player movements

SYSTEM: "1-4-3-3"



3 FORWARDS

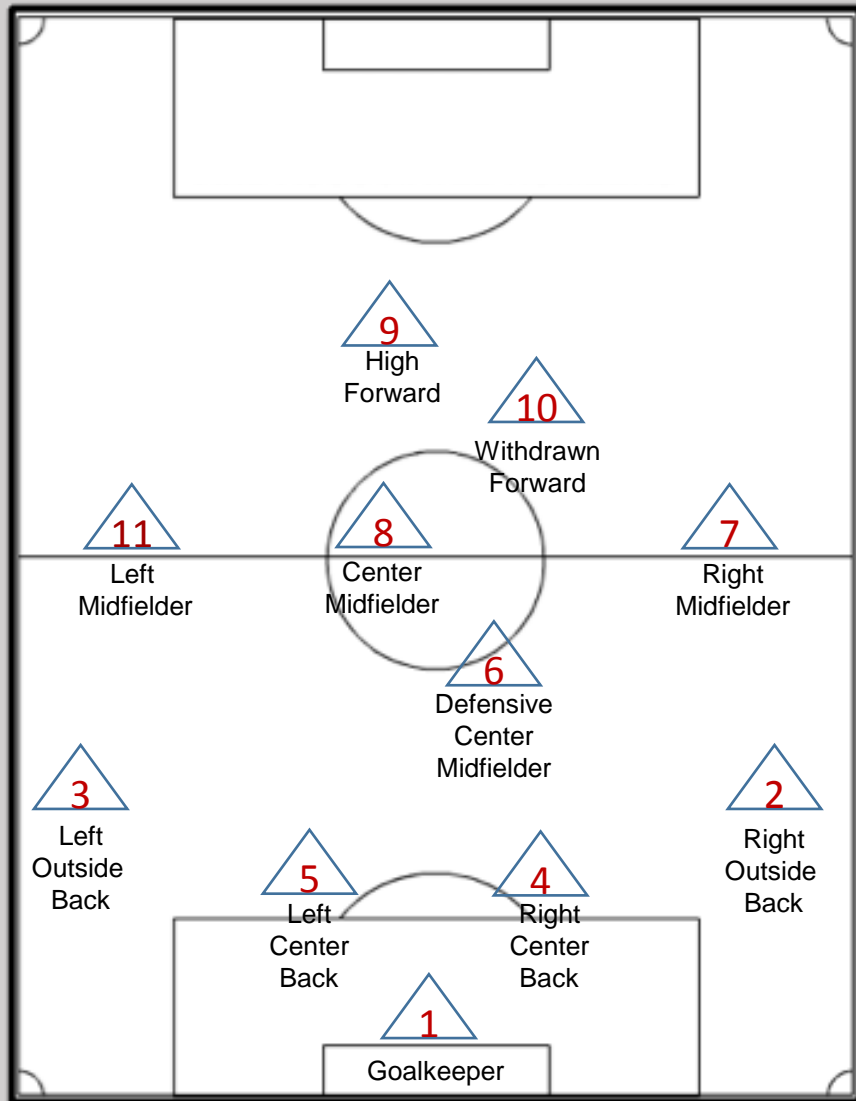
3 MIDFIELDERS

4 BACKS

1 GOALKEEPER



SYSTEM: "1-4-4-2"



2 FORWARDS

May be twin 9's side-by-side
or 9 high and 10 underneath

4 MIDFIELDERS

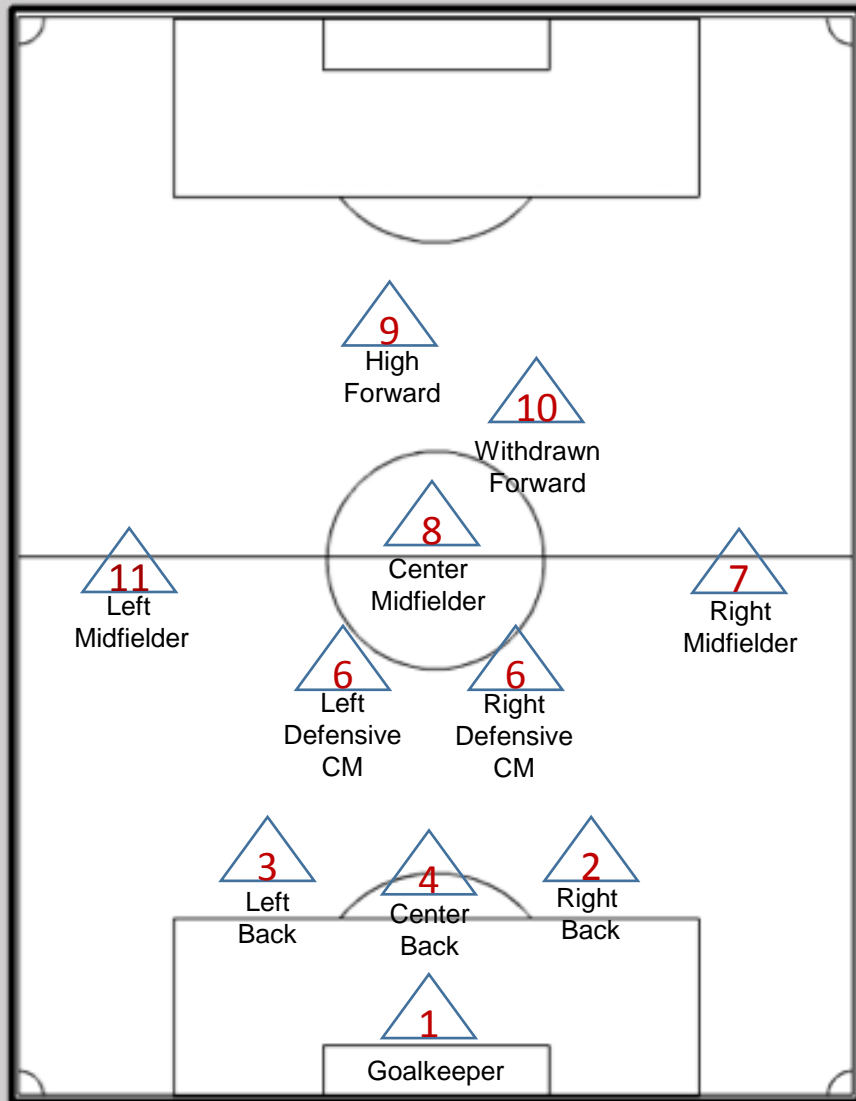
May be various shapes, incl. flat, diamond, unbalanced
(7 or 11 tucked in with other one wide)

4 BACKS

1 GOALKEEPER



SYSTEM: "1-3-5-2"



2 FORWARDS

May be twin 9's side-by-side
or 9 high and 10 underneath

5 MIDFIELDERS

Central 3 typically a triangle or inverted triangle
Wide mf's may be endline-to-endline players

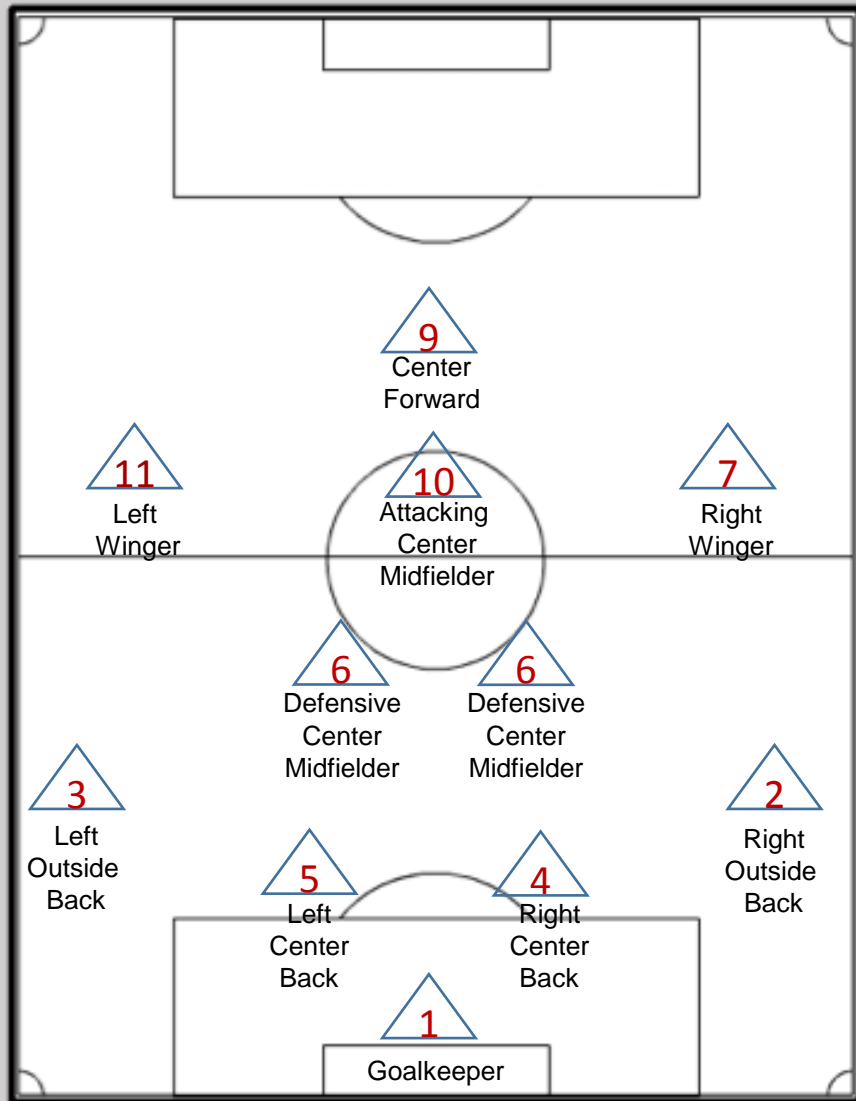
3 BACKS

1 GOALKEEPER



SYSTEM: “1-4-2-3-1”

Systems may be broken down into an extra line to more accurately describe the roles of players, and the trend for some players to play “between the lines”



1 CENTER FORWARD

1 ATTACKING MIDFIELDER
2 WITHDRAWN WINGERS

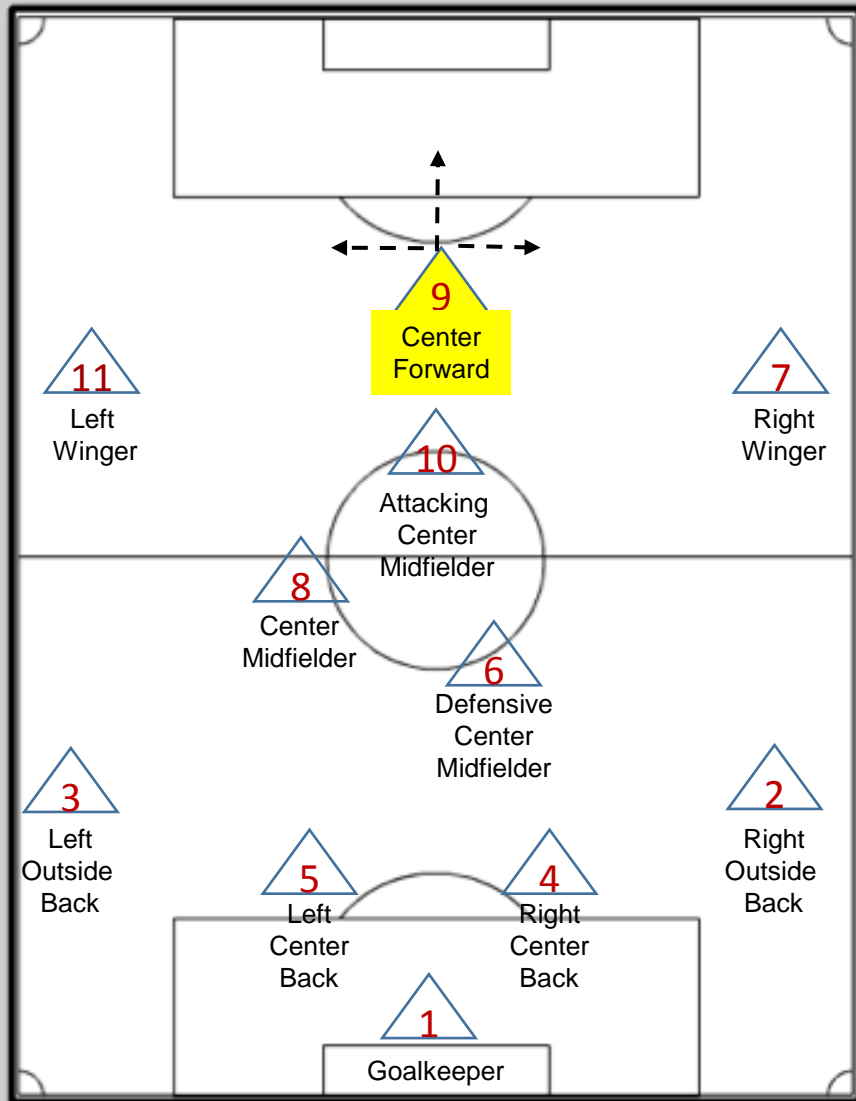
2 DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDERS

4 BACKS

1 GOALKEEPER



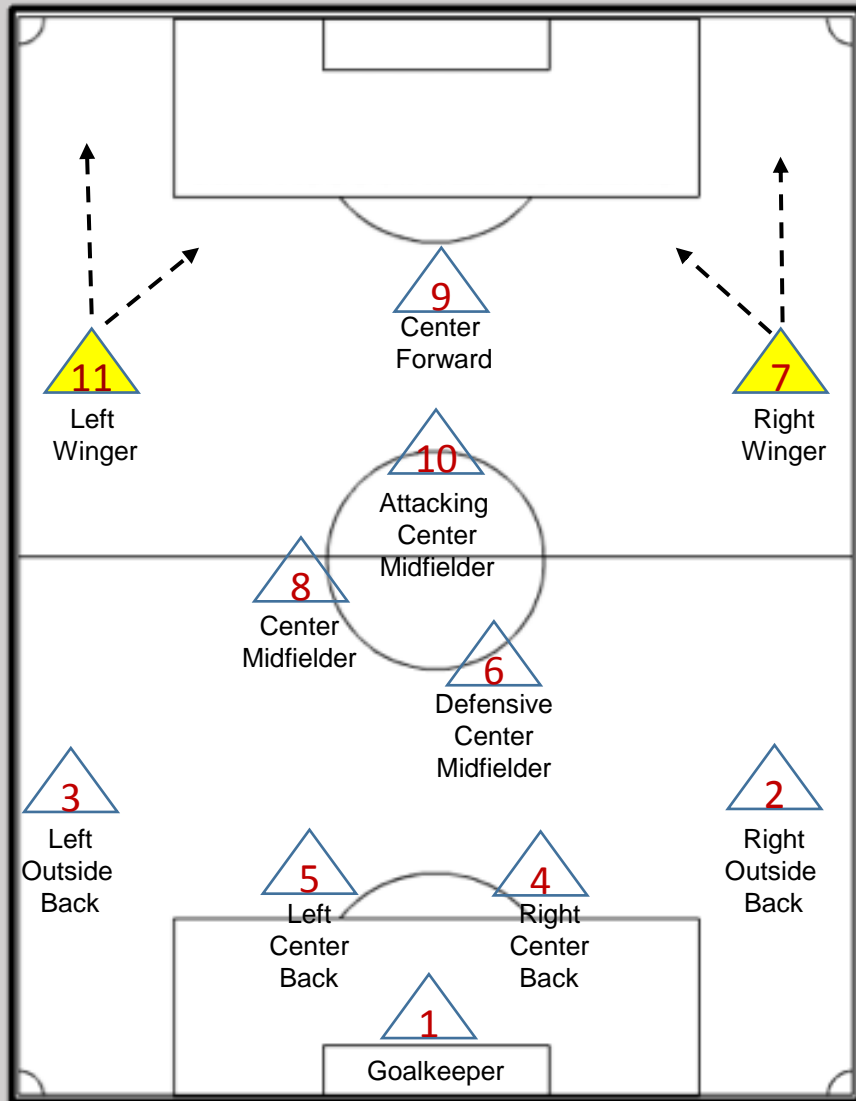
Typical Roles: #9



- Score goals
- Provide a high passing option
- Play with back to goal
- Hold ball to allow teammates to advance
- Threaten spaces behind back line
- Win air balls: flick-ons and shots
- Defensively help steer opponent's attack



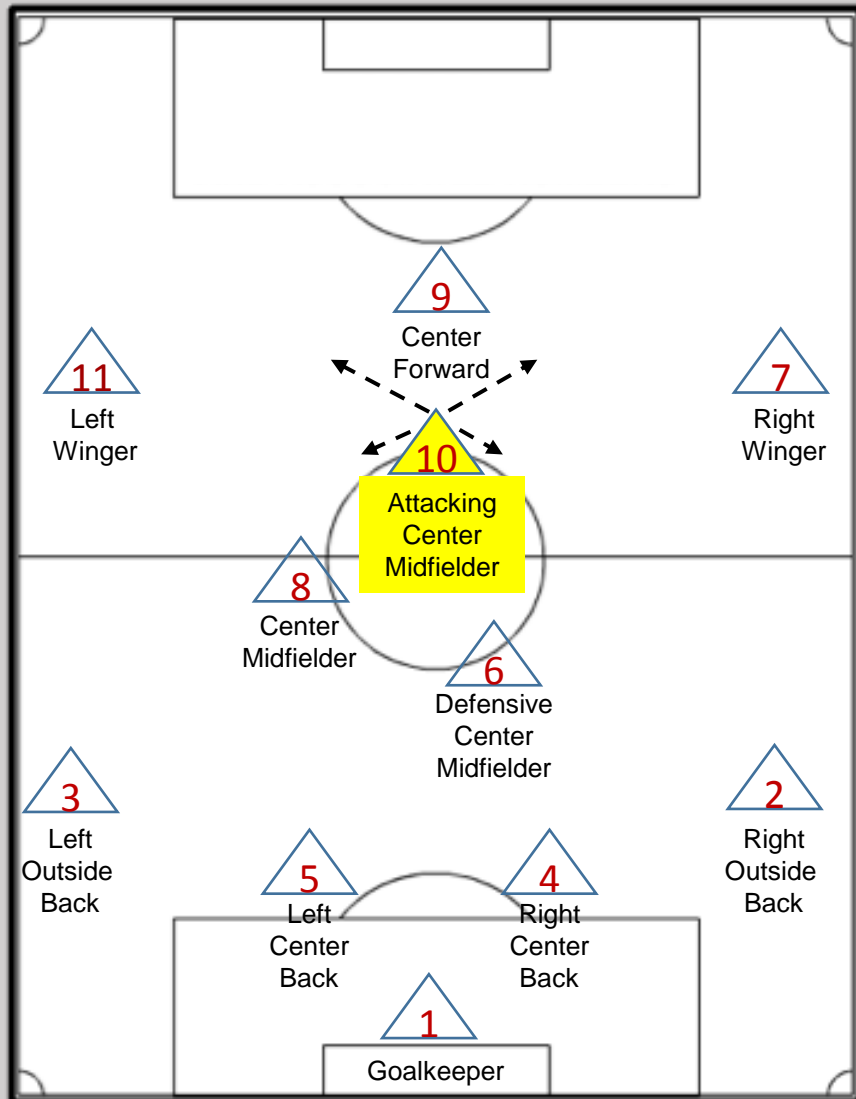
Typical Roles: #7 & #11



- Provide width in attack
- Threaten spaces behind back line
- Attack flanks and serve balls centrally
- Cut inside with ball to score or pass
- Defend wide spaces, protect wide backs
- Press ball to help steer opponent's attack



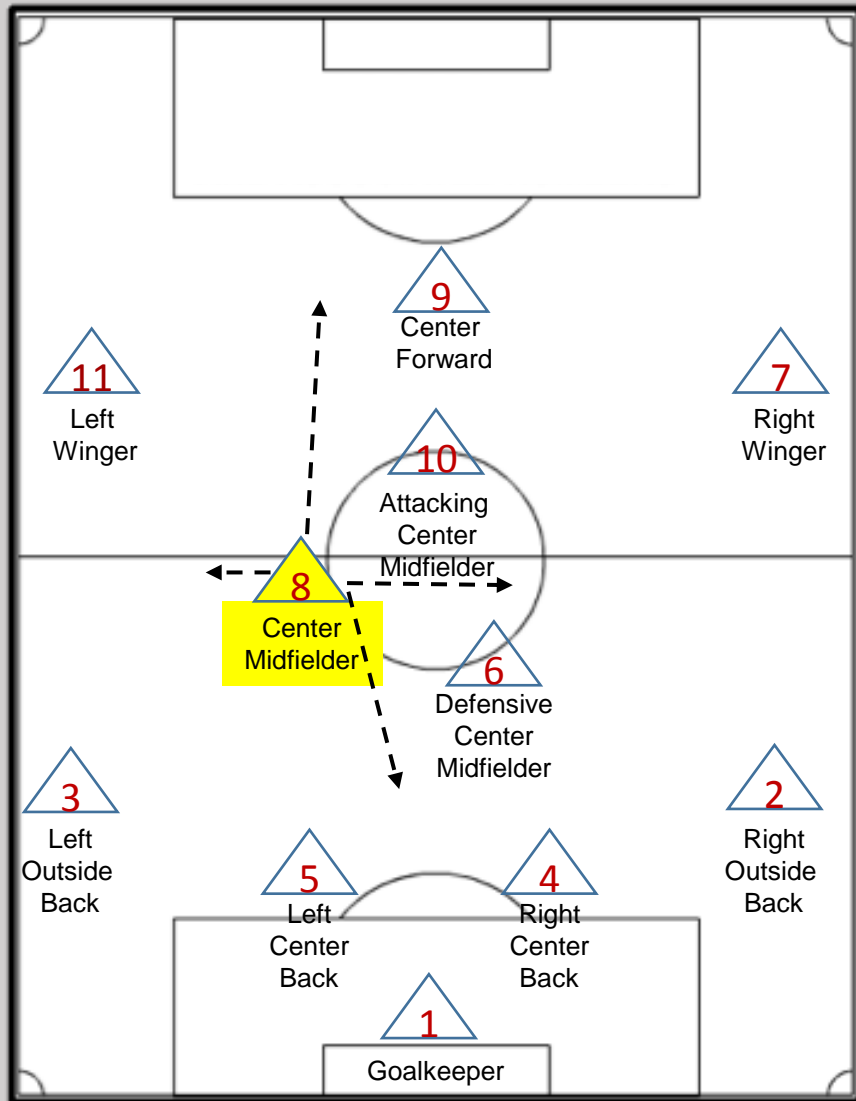
Typical Roles: #10



- Link midfield and forward lines
- “Playmaker” – create scoring opportunities for others or self
- Possess and distribute ball
- Play through balls for #7, 9, 11
- Dribble to beat defenders or create passing options
- Help defend center of field



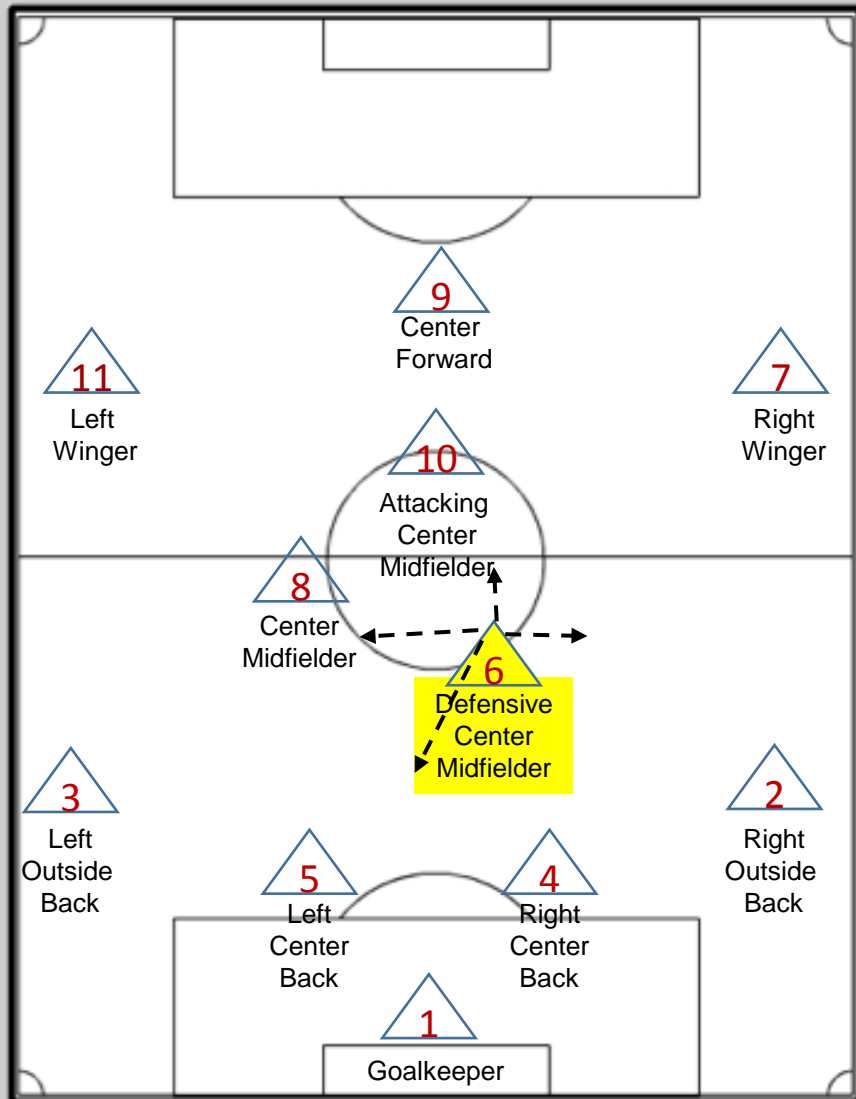
Typical Roles: #8



- “Box-to-box” – attack and defend
- Key energy source
- Offer passing options to all teammates
- Connect players in possession
- Defend center of field – pressure ball and cover for teammates, esp. 10 and 6



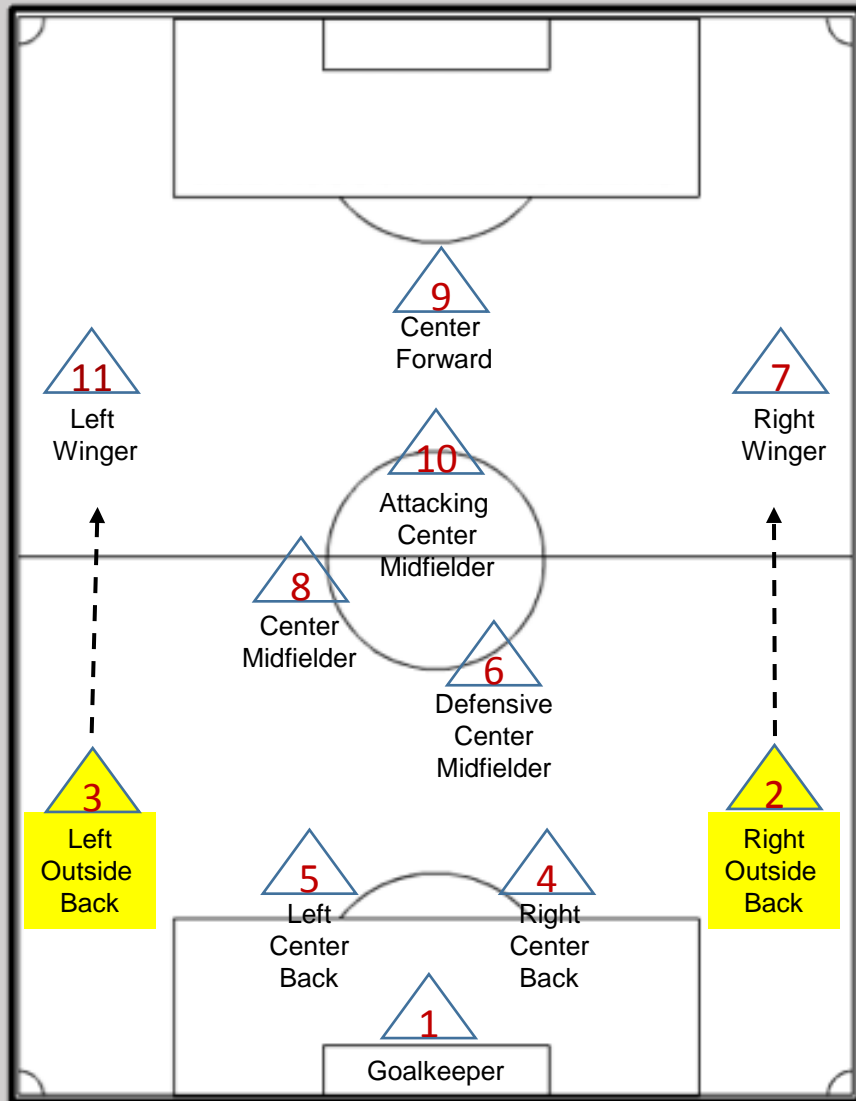
Typical Roles: #6



- “Holding” midfielder, primarily defensive
- Win possession – interceptions and tackles
- Pressure ball to deny penetration
- Occupy space between backs and midfield
- Screen opposing forwards
- Delay or destroy opponent counterattacks
- “Pivot” – Support to change point of attack



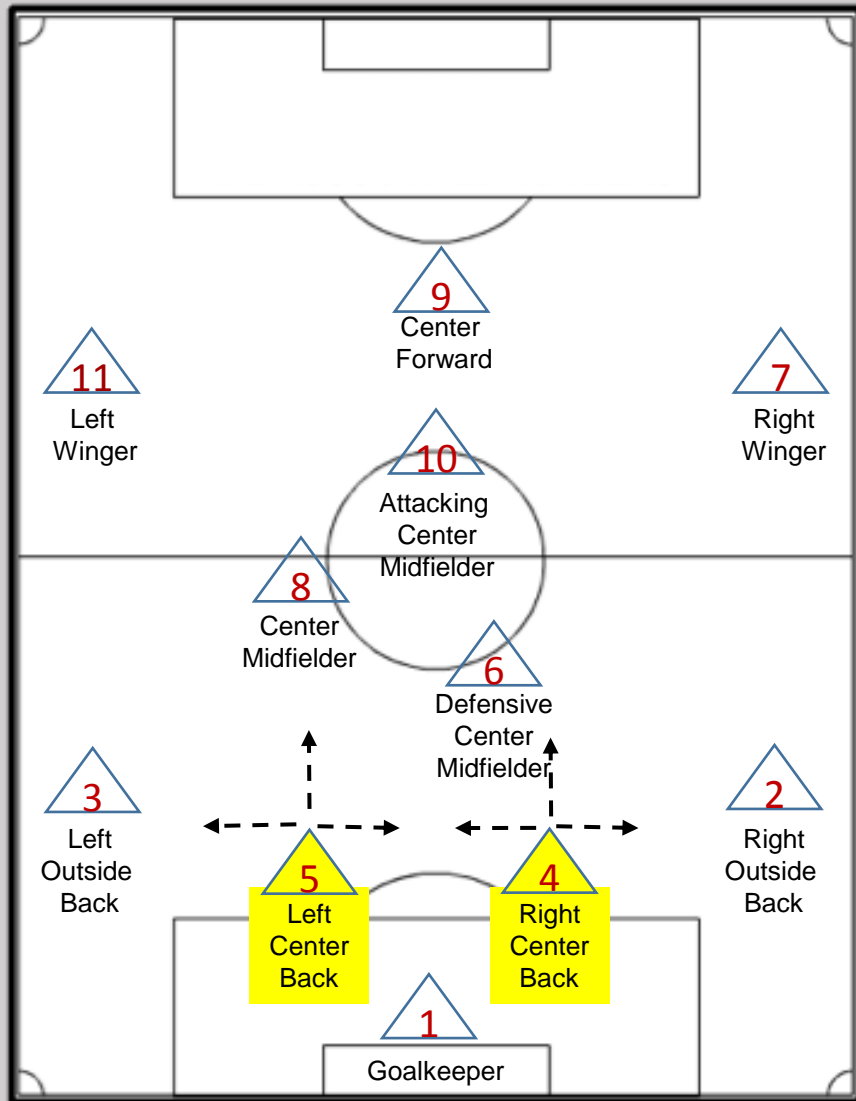
Typical Roles: #2 & #3



- Defend wide attackers and deny crosses
- Provide cover for #4 or 5, 7 or 11
- Provide balance on back line's weak side
- Help build possession out of the back
- Get forward in attack – support or overlap



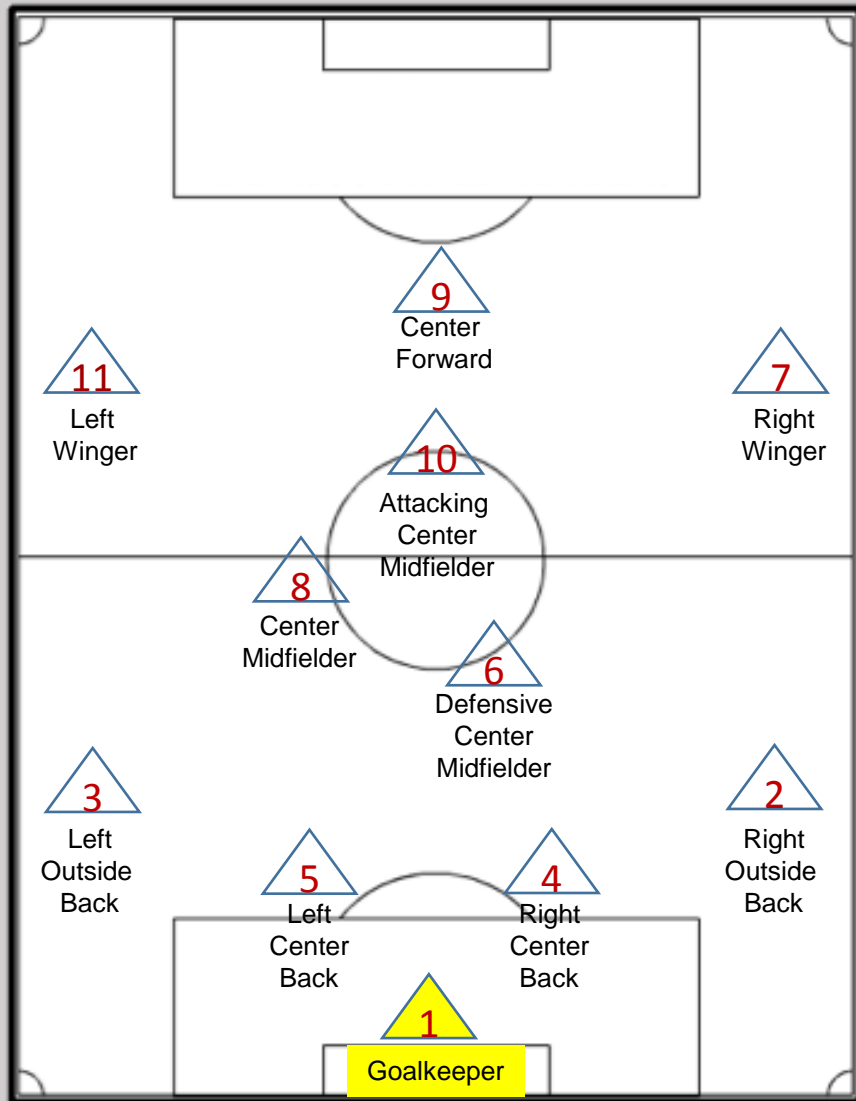
Typical Roles: #4 & #5



- Deny opponent scoring chances
- Defend opposing forwards, esp. #9
- Provide cover for each other and #2, 3, 6
- Intercept passes, win tackles and air balls
- Help build out of the back or connect long passes
- Deep support for teammates in possession



Typical Roles: #1



- Stop shots / prevent goals
- Intercept crosses and air balls
- Cover space behind back line
- Organize defenders / communicate
- Support (back pass) teammates in possession
- Take goal kicks and deep free kicks
- Distribute / initiate counter attack

