

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF VARIOUS SYSTEMS OF PLAY

Chris Petrucelli, Coach of the University of Texas Women's team, presented the following article during an NSCAA convention.

Three Front System (4-3-3 Or 3-4-3)

Defensive advantages:

- Ability to be able to play high-pressure up front.
- Forces opponents to play the ball forward, not sideways.
- Forces opponents to adjust.
- Aggressive style of play, forces opponents to change rhythm.

Offensive Strengths:

- #'s up front.
- Less running compared to a 2-front system.
- Easier to create width.
- Key positions in the penalty box, 1st post, far post and penalty spot are occupied.
- Attacking style of play.

Disadvantages:

- 3 players are easy to play out of the game.
- 3 players often with their back to the goal.
- Defend with 7 players instead of 8.
- 3-back system is vulnerable on the outsides.
- Players are already standing in areas you want to attack, occupying space.

The 4-4-2 System

Defensive Strengths:

- 8 players behind the ball.
- Easy to stay in zonal shape.
- Good high pressure system, easy to channel.
- Good match up against a 3-front.

Offensive Strengths:

- 4 players in the midfield receiving the ball facing the goal.
- Easier for backs to join the attack.
- The 2 targets are mobile, not restricted to a certain area.
- More space for the 2 targets to move in.
- Targets can compact the defence by staying central, or stretch the defence by staying wider.
- Easy to change the point of attack.

Disadvantages:

- The two target players can get isolated.
- Outside midfielders have to cover a lot of ground going forward and coming back
- It can get confusing at times for 4 defenders to deal with two target players.
- Both centre midfielders have to understand their role, otherwise there will be a big space in the middle of the field.

The 3-5-2 System

Strengths:

- Flexibility.
- Large number of players in the middle of the field.
- Ability to outnumber opponents in the midfield.
- If you have a large number of midfield-type players.

Weaknesses:

- Tend to overload.
- Only 3 defenders, therefore you are isolated on the flanks.
- Easy to expose spaces.
- Only 1 defender on each flank, therefore a lot of pressure on those players both offensively as well as defensively.