

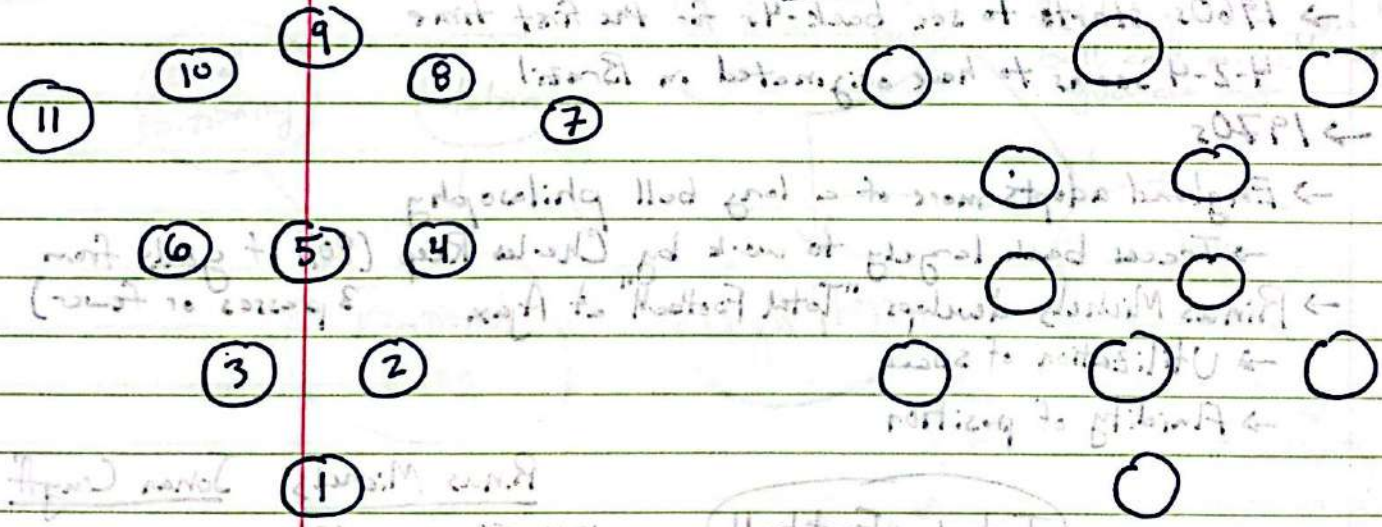
"Inverting the Pyramid" by Jonathan Wilson

SMGT 432: Tactics History Lecture

Origins

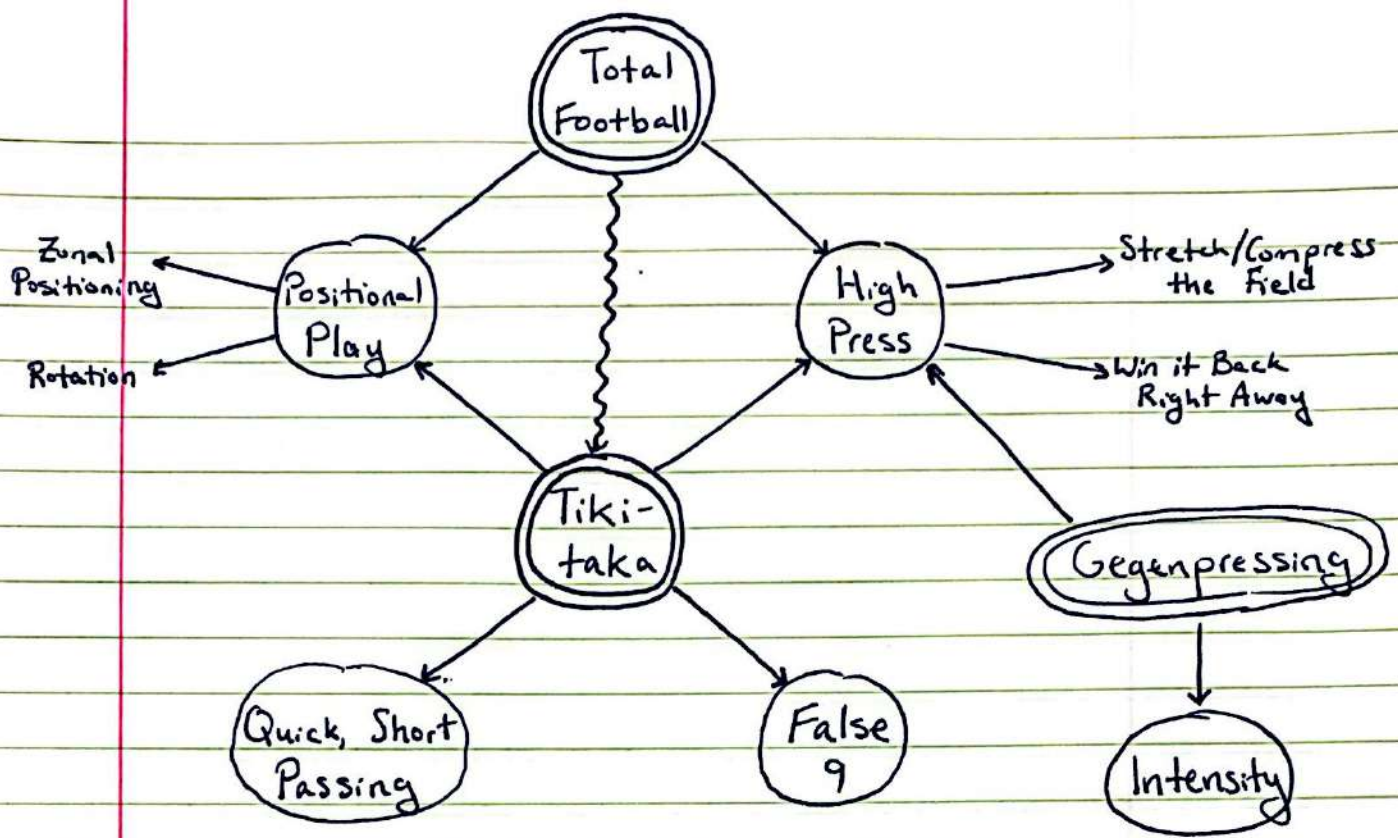
- 1880s-1920s dominated by 2-3-5 formation (the "pyramid")
 - 1928: teams start wearing shirt numbers corresponding strictly to position
- 1930s-1960s dominated by W-M formation
 - 1925: offsides rule revised to require only two defenders behind the attacker
 - Austria used the "false 9" in the 1930s
- In 1960s, teams start to use back-4 formations
 - 4-2-4 seems to have originated in Brazil

2-3-5



1970s

- England adopts long ball strategy
 - Traces back to analytics by Charles Reep ("80% of goals come from 3 passes or fewer" (but 92% of possessions are 3 passes or fewer))
- Rinus Michels develops "Total Football" at Ajax
 - Utilization of space
 - Fluidity of position
 - Generally a 4-3-3



Rinus Michels

1946-58 Ajax (P)

1965-71 Ajax

1971-74 Barcelona

1975-76 Ajax

1976-78 Barcelona

Johan Cruyff

1964-73 Ajax (P)

1973-78 Barcelona (P)

1981-83 Ajax (P)

1985-88 Ajax

1988-96 Barcelona

Pep Guardiola

1990-2001 Barcelona (P)

2008-12 Barcelona

2013-16 Bayern Munich

2016- Manchester City

Jürgen Klopp

1990-2001 Mainz 05 (P)

2001-08 Mainz 05

2008-15 Borussia Dortmund

2015- Liverpool

EPL Formations

2020-21 4-2-3-1 >> 4-4-2 > 4-3-3 >> 3-4-2-1

2021-22 4-3-3 > 4-2-3-1 >> 4-4-2 > 3-4-2-1

2022-23 4-2-3-1 > 4-3-3 >> 3-4-2-1 > 4-4-2

Formation Research

→ Forcher et al. (2023) did a systematic review of the literature

→ More focus on identifying formations than impact of formations

→ More focus on impact on physical performance than technical performance

→ Biggest impact: back-3 is much more physically demanding than back-4