

WHAT SYSTEM DOES YOUR TEAM PLAY?

I. ON ATTACK

- A. What is the attacking shape?
 - 1. Who give you width coming out of the defensive 1/2?
 - 2. Who give you width in the attacking 1/2?
 - 3. How do you create width in the attack or re-create it if a different line or different players reform your shape in the attacking 1/2 or attacking 1/3?
 - 4. How does our shape invite penetration and how many players do we commit to it?

- B. How do you get in?
 - 1. What is your scheme to get in behind their back line?
 - 2. Do you play behind so that you can play in front or do you play in front so you can play behind?
 - 3. How do you pull the defense apart (how do you unbalance you opponent)

- C. How do you organize the attacking box?
 - 1. How many players do you commit to your attack?
 - 2. What is you end-line series?
 - a. How many do you commit?
 - b. What are their runs?
 - c. Where is your first choice of service?
 - 3. What is your attacking 1/3 flank series?
 - a. When is it on?
 - b. Where is your first choice of service?
 - c. What are you service choices if the defense is flat? Staggered?
 - 4. What are you tactical choices from the top of the box?
 - 5. How do you organize the box when you shoot (for maximum rebound framing)?

- D. What is your system against a bunker; maximum high pressure; different systems?

- E. What is your philosophy on each attacking set piece?

II. ON DEFENSE

- A. What is the defensive shape?
 - 1. Do you zone?
 - 2. Do you play man to man?
 - 3. Do you play a combination man-man/zone?
 - 4. Do you play a flat back or do you play with a sweeper?
 - 5. Do the forwards defend or funnel?

- B. How do you prevent teams from getting in?
 - 1. Where is your defensive restraining line (where do you begin your line of confrontation)?
 - 2. How does our width match their width?
 - 3. Do you play high pressure or low pressure or both?
 - 4. What is the distance of your compaction from your high pressure point to the final line of your defense?
 - 5. What is your width of concentration from your flank pressure point to the balancing weak side player?
 - 6. What is the starting position of your goalkeeper?

- C. How do you organize the defensive box?
 - 1. When do you push players outside?
 - 2. When do you push players into cover?
 - 3. Do you man mark through the box or cover space?
 - 4. What is your goalkeeper responsible for?

- D. Do you have a system or philosophy for goal-up or goal-down?

- E. What is your philosophy on each defensive set piece?

To at least some extent we need to be able to answer some of these questions about our opponent. If we are not in a position to scout our opponent before hand, some of these questions (the most critical ones) need to be gathered from your observation of the first half. This is also a coaching quality you can gain through experience and personal focus. The reason I add “personal focus” is because experience does not necessarily give you this quality unless you view your opponents with a similarly critical scrutiny.

The essence of this exercise is that you must have a complete understanding of match analysis, as well as advanced knowledge of the game, to effectively make good decisions at half time. With a good understanding of your own teams’ capabilities, and an in depth analysis of your opponent in the first half, and effective coach can then make adjustments at half time that will enable his/her team to gain an advantage in the 2nd half.