



Flagstaff Revolution Central Midfielder Position Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help parents and players better understand the roles and responsibilities of a Flagstaff Revolution central midfielder. Playing as a midfielder is difficult. It requires constant movement that drains players physically; it requires constant visual scanning and decision-making that drains players mentally. Parents and players can become confused by how the player is being tasked. This is understandable and the roles and responsibilities may seem overwhelming. Are they attackers? How far forward are they allowed to be? Are they defenders? How often must they retreat in front of our own goal to help defend? This guide aims to help answer some of these questions and shed light on how midfielders can work together to fully enable the team to succeed.

The Triangle Midfield

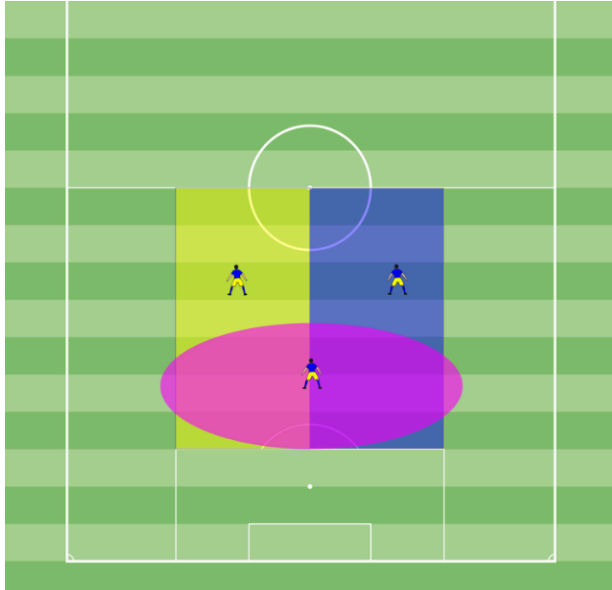
The idea behind using a triangle midfield is to leverage the internal passing angles between the three midfielders to create a positional advantage against the opponent in the middle of the field. Rather than rely on a skilled player or two to simply dribble the ball forward, the midfielders work together to advance the ball in to the opponents half. In addition to the internal midfield triangle, teammates may connect with one side of the midfield triangle to form an adjacent triangle. For example, the left winger may position himself to the side of the defensive midfielder and the left attacking midfielder. This sort of positional advantage can be used to overwhelm an opposing midfielder or defender. As more defenders join to try and negate our advantage, other teammates will find themselves open in dangerous areas of the field.

Playing in a midfield triangle requires skill, stamina, intelligence, and patience.

Here is an [article](#) from a few years back that details how Barcelona were trying at the time to recreate the magic of their unstoppable midfield trio of Xavi Hernandez, Andres Iniesta, and Sergio Busquets. It's a useful introduction to what made each of these players so special.

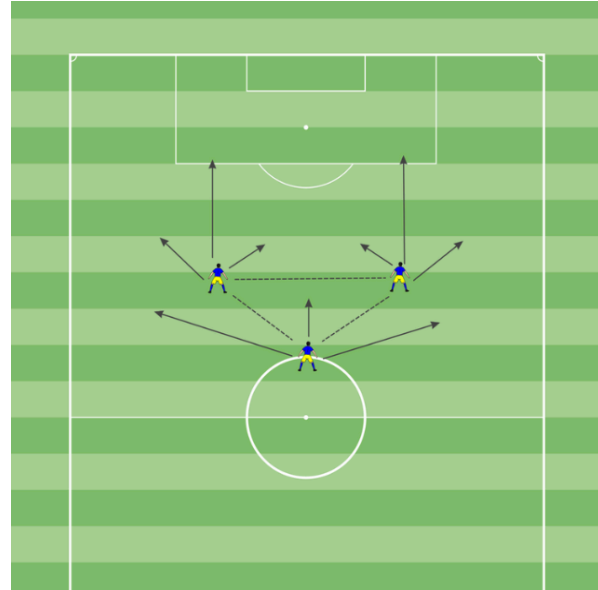
Basic Positioning

The two attacking midfielders and the defensive midfielder *must* work together in all phases of the game. They may rotate with each other and other teammates as necessary to exploit the space vacated by opposing players. When the opposition is in possession of the ball, they work together to pressure ball carriers in the midfield as well as covering passing lanes as their teammates pressure ball carriers elsewhere. During counter attacks, they retreat towards the goal to help cover open space and attackers.



When defending, midfielders should look to add pressure to any ball carriers in the midfield. In general, they defend in their own zones but must be willing to cover for teammates anywhere on the field. When the forwards are pressing in the opposing half, midfielders should work together to cut out all passing lanes.

The defensive midfielder must play more horizontally—especially during opposing counter attacks. He must add initial pressure so that the center backs can cover and balance or fill in for center backs who have to leave their position to pressure an opponent.



When attacking, the midfielders serve as the engine of the team. They play together to invite pressure into the middle of the field and create the free man. Once created, the midfielders must switch play to that free man so that the attack can advance. They may rotate internally with each other as needed to exploit space vacated by opponents.

The attacking midfielders should primarily attack from the half spaces but can also look to overlap with the wingers and combine with the striker centrally. They shoot from distance when open to do so.

The defensive midfielder shadows the ball from side to side, ensuring players have a **clear** option to recycle the ball to.



Required Skills

- Passing vision and awareness to connect passes with teammates; know when to recycle possession and reload the attack
- Ability to identify open space—even if small—and move into it quickly to receive passes
- Physical stamina to cover large portions of the field in both the attack and defense
- Use both feet to play accurate, well-weighted passes
- Clean and productive first touch that enables them to receive passes calmly and evade pressure
- Remain composed and absorb pressure when on the ball, pass around or through pressure
- Resistant to opposing press (defenders bearing down)
- Evade pressure via skill on the ball (changes of directions, spins, shielding) to buy time for passes and/or shots
- Penetrate by dribbling and/or passing to advance the attack
- Identify open areas near the opponent's goal to move to and support the attack
- Shoot from distance
- Make late-arriving runs into the penalty area for delayed crosses and cutbacks to shoot



Video Analysis

Barcelona midfield analysis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1MZJeevZ6E>

Tifo Primer on the 433 Formation and the Triangle Midfield within it

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvkkYJ2YW-A>

Online Soccer Academy Breakdowns

Defensive Midfielder Primer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMVRNBUYFKE>

Central Midfielder Primer (box to box)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVZWQVcep8k>

Attacking/Central Midfielder Highlights

These midfielders have very distinctive strengths and styles. Encourage your player to emulate what inspires them most.

Xavi Hernandez

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yuEt7GzbiU>

Andres Iniesta

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIbmWdYEV18>

Luka Modric

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWy0kq_ubWk

Kevin De Bruyne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XaiAIUisq4>

Zinedine Zidane

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIbmWdYEV18>

Toni Kroos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NCgcYZ6o7Y>

Thiago Alcantara

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0x43TeXIQ3Y>

Weston McKennie

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTOFM-DeDIg>



Defensive Midfielder Highlights

These midfielders have distinctive strengths and styles. Some are known as “registas”, or deep-lying playmakers, while others could be classified as destroyers who are relentless in pursuing opposing attackers. All of them are capable both defensively and offensively though.

Andrea Pirlo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUg9Sx28MIA>

Sergio Busquets

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6wGyzHjNJo>

N’Golo Kante

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ybd6Xemx0c>

Casemiro

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIB0A6iB_u0

Tyler Adams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2PSMHkrx0U>