



Flagstaff Revolution Center Back Position Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help parents and players better understand the roles and responsibilities of a Flagstaff Revolution center back. If a child is playing center back, parents may erroneously think the coach feels their child is slow, less athletic, and can and will only ever play a defensive position. A thorough reading of this guide and viewing of the many supporting videos will dispel these notions and allow you as a parent to better understand how the center back position is key to the Club's style of play and helps your child develop the skills needed to become a complete player.

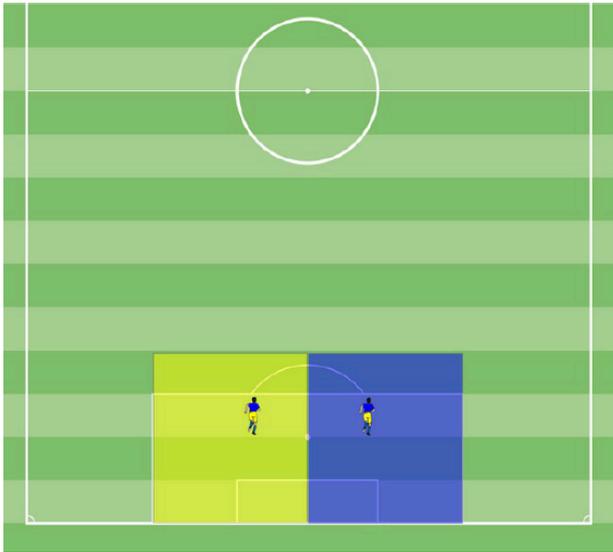
The Modern Center Back

Center backs in today's game are much more than good 1v1 defenders that simply stop an opponent's attack. In addition to winning the ball from opposing attackers on the ground and in the air they drive the team's initial attack by penetrating the opponent's first line of defense either by dribbling or passing. This task is critical to the team's ability to disorganize the opponent as it pulls their players out of position while chasing the ball, creating more space for the attack. The center back's ability to win the ball, advance with the ball at their feet, quickly visually analyze space, and play a timely and accurate pass either through or around opposition pressure is crucial to the team having a numerical and positional advantage during each attack. When the team's attack stalls, center backs must be available and capable of receiving recycled passes as well as starting the next attack through the process described above. Thus, they are not only a critical part of the team's ability to stop the opponent's attack, they are a critical piece of our ability to play our preferred style—using purposeful possession of the ball to attract opponents and then attack the goal from the open space vacated by those opponents.

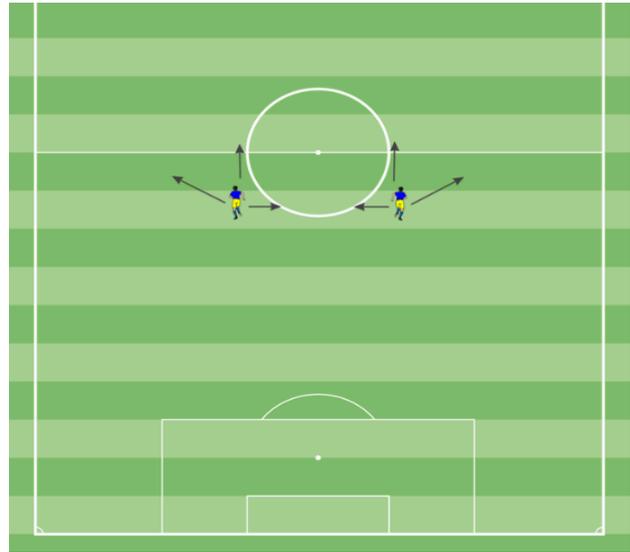
For more information on what makes a modern center back, read [this article](#).

Basic Positioning

The center backs must work as partners to both defend and attack. Together they can both pressure attackers as well as cover for each other. They can force attackers wide while delaying, so that other teammates can recover and help defend. As a team, they should rarely be more than 10-15 yards apart.



When defending, each center back takes roughly half of the penalty area. When one pressures a ball carrier either centrally or out wide, the other provides cover in case their partner gets beat. When counter attacks develop, they use their speed, strength and body position to delay until teammates can recover and help defend. They use the width of the goal posts as a reference for their starting points.



When attacking, the center backs methodically move forward, trailing their teammates in possession. They shadow the movement of the ball-- visually scanning the field and adjusting their positions to ensure that each ball carrier has an option for a **clear** recycled pass. If space is available for them to advance the ball they should dribble and penetrate the midfield or wings. Once they pass the ball away they work back toward the halfway line and continue to shadow and scan.



Required Skills

- 1v1 tackles and aerial defense
- Use pressure, cover, and balance with teammates to defend the goal
- Delay attacks using speed, strength, and body position
- Absorb pressure when on the ball, remain composed and pass around or through pressure
- Look around and adjust position on the field frequently to identify potential attacking threats as well as potential passing targets in case of recycled passes
- Clean and productive first touch that enables them to receive passes calmly, evade pressure and effectively clear balls as needed.
- Penetrate by dribbling when no pressure materializes to advance the attack
- Clear crosses and entry passes from opposition attackers both on the ground and in the air during attacks and set pieces.
- Think tactically while maintaining an assertive, aggressive but calm and focused demeanor.
- Clear, frequent communication with other defenders, including the keeper and attacking players as needed.



Video Analysis

Overview of how center backs must play in possession

<https://youtu.be/RkJzW7B7iFk>

How Jerome Boateng and Mats Hummels played together at Bayern Munich

<https://youtu.be/0Wz5EL8b-TI>

Analysis on how/why modern center backs are required to progress the ball

<https://youtu.be/J0izMLd9wn0>

3 essential center back drills

<https://youtu.be/vTjbaMDZ8Zs>

General Defensive Drills

Online Soccer Academy

General 1v1 defending

<https://youtu.be/-hZJ1CADebQ>

Defending fast attackers

https://youtu.be/t4hyW_35O6k

Defending once you get beat

<https://youtu.be/5bblosa4ZGI>

Center back highlights

Sergio Ramos

https://youtu.be/ZL54xup_WLw

Virgil Van Dijk

<https://youtu.be/RMTwhSFYBtk>

Thiago Silva

<https://youtu.be/1XuBwU4jq4g>

Mats Hummels

<https://youtu.be/dIR8EcuizTU>

Walker Zimmerman

https://youtu.be/-b_69N30pGA