



## **Role of Holding Midfielder**

The holding midfield player has numerous responsibilities. Physical speed is not considered a major factor for players in this position (although it never hurts) as this is, really, a sweeper in front of the back players with little need to make long searching runs.

Defensive midfielders vary in size from the diminutive Deschamps of the 1998 French World Cup Champions to his fellow countryman Viera who, at 6'4" is a giant of a player. A low center of gravity, helps as this player, generally, does a lot of tackling.

Mentally, a thorough awareness of player movement, especially on the weak side of the field and anticipation of when a pass is about to be made by an opposing player are excellent psychological qualities. Continual swiveling of the head is a characteristic of good holding midfielders.

Some of the tasks of the holding midfielder are as follows;

### **Defending**

- Slowing down counter attacks
- Picking up, what is commonly called, the “shadow center forward” who plays behind the lead or target center forward.
- Falling back into the back line if a player goes forward or “rotates” into the midfield which commonly happens to outside backs in a 4-3-3.
- Screens the center backs and picks off passes meant for center forwards. The holding midfield player is in an ideal position to double team a center forward who is being held up by a back line player.

### **Attacking**

- Receiving ball from back players and relaying the ball to the forwards or other attacking players.
- Being in a position to receive the ball from back line players who are under pressure and need a simple passing option.
- Available to change the point of attack. This is helped by virtue of the fact that the holding player generally plays behind the other midfielders.
- Starts counter attacks with long passes or runs ball forward (only if another midfielder holds).
- Holds in a central position to allow outside backs to go forward.



## Warm Up

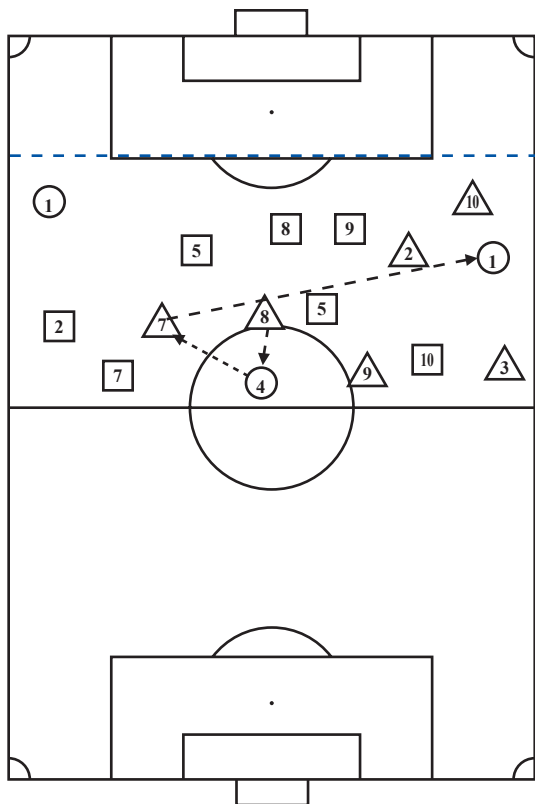
7 red vs. 7 blue + 1 neutral player; 2 neutral GK's

The +1 is the holding midfielder in yellow

Space - 75 x 40 yds.

Objective - for a team to hit the ball in the air so the GK can catch it

The ④ helps whichever team is in possession to keep ball, but cannot score.



## Defending The Counter Attack

4 neutral, unopposed midfield players in the middle who attack in both directions

2 center backs & a holding midfielder vs. two forwards at either end of the field

Space - 75 x 80 yds.

Midfielders receive ball from ① and attack ○ team. form a containing triangle and drop back to top of penalty box. When shot is taken or interception made, ball is played to midfield unit who turn and attack in opposite direction.

