

6v6 Formations

The Middleton Youth Soccer recommends the 2-1-2 formation for its 6v6 teams, for reasons that are explained below. But coaches may find it useful to consider other formations depending on their players and the circumstances. It's unusual to find a 6v6 team that can flexibly adapt to many formations, so we recommend settling on one and sticking with it. The notes below set out some key criteria that your formation should fulfill, and offer an evaluation of some of the primary 6v6 options.

Your Formation Should Make Passing Easy

- Draw formations on a piece of paper, making dots for each position, and then see how many triangles I can draw by connecting the dots. More triangles means better natural passing options.

Your Formation Should Provide Depth and Width

- Set up your players so that their natural positioning gives them maximum coverage of the field. Don't create narrow channels that force them to run madly from side to side. Don't create big gaps from front to back that force them to scramble to cover the middle. Whatever formation you play, maximize depth and width by having your team move up and down the field as a unit.

Your Formation Should Fit Your Players

- If your team is fast and covers a lot of ground, or tends to control the ball, you can afford a formation that commits more players to the attack – just be aware of the risk you take in doing so.
- If your players are not dominant athletes, consider a formation that keeps more players “behind the ball” – in midfield or back, closer to your goal – until you have won possession. THEN send your players forward once they have possession.

Remember, when we speak of soccer formations we count FROM THE BACK.

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2-1-2 Think of this as a square with a dot in the middle. Lots of natural triangles, 3 rows for depth, width in attack and defense. The midfielder's job is to help in defense and support your 2 forwards, so it can be a lot of running.

2-2-1 This stacks the midfield, but it's a tough one to teach younger players because the two midfielders almost always think of themselves as wide players. Which means you've got a great gaping hole in the middle of the park. The other thing we don't like about this formation is the fact that it isolates a single striker up top, and we'd much prefer to teach kids to play in pairs up there. If you choose this formation, make sure you teach your midfielders to slide across the field. So if your right back has the ball your right midfielder slides over to the right wing and your left midfielder slides into the middle of the field to give a diagonal passing option AND to cover if the right back gives the ball away! The midfielders do the opposite if the left back has the ball.

2-3 Probably the most commonly seen 6v6 formation. Gets bodies into attack efficiently. Decent number of natural passing options. 3 main problems: first, it's only 2 rows deep – not fabulous depth. Second, if they play a 2-3 as well then they've got 3 attackers on your 2 defenders unless you get a forward to help out in back. Finally, the forwards line up in a straight line and tend to stay that way, which makes defending them EASY and which substantially reduces passing options. If you go with the 2-3, teach your center forward about playing slightly behind his 2 wings to create a triangle.

