



**EMERGING  
TALENT  
PROGRAMME**  
*the pathway to develop Irish football*



**Read the GAME by thinking of the 3 main moments:**

- **When you or your team is in possession**
  - **When the opponent is in possession**
- **The moment the ball is won or lost (transition)**

### **Opponents in Possession**

#### **Goalkeeper**

- Be alert - follow the play even if it is in the opposition half
- Act as a sweeper when your team is pushed up
- Get off your line quickly and decisively when long balls are played forward
- Deny goals
- Give direction to your defenders

#### **Right & Left Defenders**

- Prevent crosses, shots
- Squeeze the play away from goal
- Do not dive in on tackles, do not foul, keep your man in front of you
- Closer to goal, the tighter the marking/be aggressive but not reckless Mark on the inside line
- Close down the ball between the ball and the goal
- Cover when central defenders are challenging
- Do not fall behind the Centre backs. Hold the line
- When right side defender is challenging, tuck inside and cover the line
- Understand your recovery lines if beaten

#### **Central Defenders**

- Prevent shots on goal
- Tight marking close to goal
- Keep the defensive line compact
- Do not allow the player with the ball to turn. Keep your man in front of you
- Anticipate the pass and intercept. Be aggressive but not reckless
- Do not foul
- Challenge in the air and head up and out
- Cover
- Mark on the inside, line on the same side of the ball

- Stay between ball and goal
- Understand your recovery lines

### **Central Midfielder(s)**

- Play your position; do not play too far forward
- Pick up opponents that push forward
- Track players that are unmarked and making runs into dangerous space
- Cover on the side of your team when the full back goes forward
- Anticipate forward pass
- Get goal side of the ball as quickly as possible

### **Right and Left Midfielders**

- Prevent forward passes by closing down the ball and/or space
- Play in your zone; mark tight around the ball; cover space furthest away from ball.  
When teammates are pressuring in the opposition's half, pick up tight; deny any room for escape; do not drop off
- Track immediate opponents running behind your back
- Do not spread your line and leave gaps
- Get goal side of the ball as quickly as possible

### **Wingers**

- Responsible for fullbacks and space in midfield. Track overlapping full back
- Tuck inside when the play is on the opposite side or midfield
- Deny forward passes in the build up of opposition
- Deny crosses
- Recognize the most dangerous situation, i.e. your direct mark or space behind pressuring defenders
- Get goal side of the ball as quickly as possible

### **Strikers**

- Pressure the build up
- Choose the correct moment to challenge; you can take more risk in your challenge
- Do not chase if the team is in complete control or you have no support
- Keep the play and opponent in front of you. DELAY the build up

### **In possession (the build up phase/attacking phase)**

#### **Goalkeeper**

- Remain alert and involved
- Start the attack with good distribution
- Throw out, kick, goal kick, pass
- Good communication with all teammates

### **Central Defenders**

- Look to play forward
- Switch the play

☒☒ Push yourself and the line up where possible

- Support in depth
- Recognize when to join the attack from deep
- Be demanding

### **Defenders**

- Left / Right create width in the build up (this will force pressuring players to make a decision)
- Central move away
- Recognize the moment to go forward and join the attack
- If left side is on the attack, right side must tuck inside
- Support behind the side midfielder

### **Central Midfield**

- Long range shooting from layoffs
- Try to get into scoring positions of attack through combining with strikers
- Play your position in the build up phase
- Link defenders to midfield (stand sideways on) | link midfield to attack
- Support central strikers
- Don't move forward too early or without caution. Remember the space behind you
- Look to be available to switch the point of attack

### **Midfield - Left & Right**

- When attack is on the other side (flank) look to arrive into the penalty area late
- Avoid crowding the winger, by drawing defenders into his space, especially when the winger is in a 1 v 1 situation (support in depth at the correct distance)
- Maintain good positioning and distance in relation to defenders, wingers, etc. .
- When the winger is outnumbered; i.e. 1 v 2 destroy the cover with runs off the ball
- Recognize when the ball needs to be switched (avoid square passes)
- Weigh the risk of running with the ball in midfield
- When you cut inside look to combine with strikers

### **Wingers - Wide Players Left & Right**

- Come inside when the play is on the opposite flank (wing)
- Quality of the cross is important. Cross away from keeper, behind the defenders, below head height. Strike the cross with pace.
- Beat your man (1 v 1) Learn to go both sides

- When you receive the ball, where possible, attempt to square yourself off with the defender; i.e. Position your body towards the goal or opposite corner flag, rather than down the line
- Score goals

### **Central Striker or Strikers**

- Read the build up play; do not move into space too early to receive long balls

Recognize when to hold the ball up or lay it off

- Move away from the vision of the marker, before you make your runs
- Know when to run deep versus when to come to the ball (look to get behind your marker)
- Make a dummy run to move defenders into poor defending positions, before you show for the pass
- Get into the penalty area; anticipate where the ball will arrive
- Take risk do not lose the ball through hesitation. Run at the defence 1v1 look to enter the box, shoot ASAP.
- Score goals

### **Transition**

#### **The moment the ball is won**

- Look to play forward (look to attack)
- Attack with speed while the opposition is off balance
- Look to attack behind the defence
- Look to run behind the defence
- Go 1 v1 or even 1 v2

#### **The moment the ball is lost**

- Look to win it back
- Nearest player to the ball put pressure on the ball.
- Deny forward play
- Do not push (to pressure) until you get the signal from behind you
- Recover goal side of the ball as quickly as possible

**General**

- Observe the game around you. Do not simply look at the ball.
- Do not let balls bounce
- Be first to the ball
- Move to the ball
- Attempt to lose your marker (stay out of their vision)
- Your movement dictates the pass
- Close to the ball mark tight
- Furthest from the ball cover space
- No pressure on the ball be aware of the space behind you