

Counter Attacking

For any team the moment they lose possession is when they are at their most vulnerable. For the attacking team it is a moment of opportunity, an opportunity to exploit the space, vacated by the attacking team. The thinking behind the counter attack is to gain possession of the ball, play forward early not allowing the opposition to retreat and regroup. Counter attacking has several advantages, however to play in this style many factors need to be taken into consideration. These include:

- Strength of opposition- When playing against stronger opposition, the tactic of absorbing pressure is often used and then when possession is won back, you play forward quickly and hit the team on the break.
- Technical and Tactical attributes of players- To play on the counter attack, players must have the ability to play the ball forward or behind opposition's defense, over distance, quickly and accurately. If the players cannot play the ball forward quickly and accurately, it will simply result in a loss of possession
- Oppositions style of play- If the opposition attempt to employ the tactic of squeezing high up the field, which may result in a lot of space to exploit in behind.
- Physical attributes of players- Counter attacking requires the ability to play the ball forward to a player or players that can hold the ball up, to allow teammates to cover the ground to join the attack. This requires a high level of mobility from many players. Teams that have the luxury of extremely quick forwards may use them to run at the opposition's defenders.
- Game Situations- The counter attack can be used in many situations and many times in games. These situations may include defensive free kicks and corner kicks which are good examples, as the opposition has pushed players forward. Late in a game when the opposition is down by a goal, they may push players forward, also leaving space to exploit.
- Field size and conditions- If your team is playing on a smaller field it may not offer the space to exploit on the counter attack. Playing on a poor surface, may force teams to utilize a counter attacking style, because the surface is not conducive to a passing build up game.