

A Strong Midfielder Can Protect The Defense And Launch Attacks

By David Clarke

When you have a strong player who is good at winning the ball and can make accurate long passes your natural reaction might be to play them in defense.

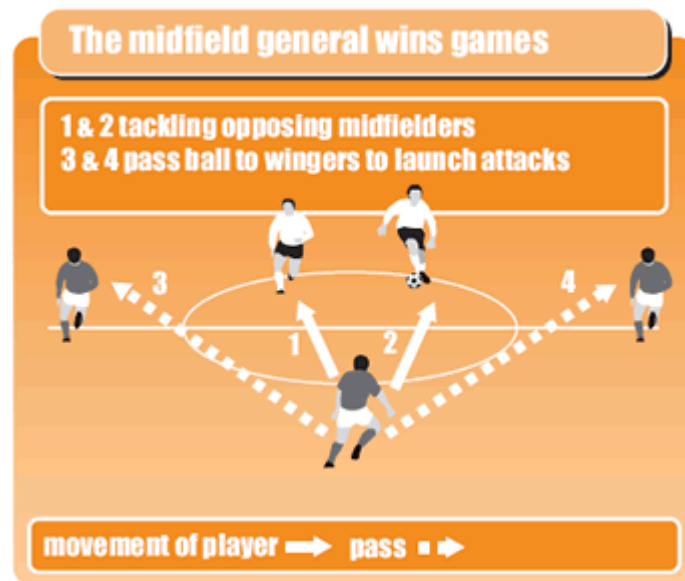
After all that's what a good defender does... but I like to put that player in front of the defense into midfield, to protect the defenders and to make use of their kicking ability by turning them from hopeful defensive clearances into penetrating attacking passes.

It may seem that you are losing a great defender, but what you are doing is adding backbone to the team so that all your natural tackles are not in the back line.

It is a very central position for the team, someone who can win the game for you by defending in the middle of the pitch breaking up attacks before they get anywhere near to the penalty area.

If you're watching the English Premier League you'll have heard this position described as the Makelele role, after former Chelsea midfielder Claude Makelele.

This is what you want to see from a match-winning midfielder.



- Tell your player to play just in front of the central defenders. Get them to close down any player running at the defense and stop them in their tracks.
- You've seen games where the opposition kicks off and runs right through your team to score. This player stops that. They target the man with the ball and make sure they get it.
- And when they do get the ball, they immediately look to open up the opposition defense.
- The rest of the team has to be ready to support this role and be open for the pass.