

# Nepean Hotspurs Soccer Club

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# TACTICAL EVOLUTION OF THE GAME

from Alcock's Dribbling Game of 1860 to 4-3-3 Formation of XXI Century

## ALCOCK'S DRIBBLING GAME

The earliest soccer “formation” emerged in 1860 when soccer teams were gradually splitting into two camps – association football and rugby football. Until 1860 most codes prohibited forward passing altogether necessitating forward movement of the ball by dribbling only. C.W. Alcock and his club Wanderers FC, the chief proponents of the dribbling game, argued that it represented pure soccer, as distinct from rugby where passing the ball (albeit) by hand) was a distinctive trait. In the dribbling game, there were seven (or eight) forwards, each a dribbling expert, one or two fullbacks in support of the attack, and one fullback to challenge the opposing dribbler.

# ALCOCK'S DRIBBLING GAME

GOALKEEPER



FULLBACK



RIGHT HALFBACK

LEFT HALFBACK



FORWARDS



# SCOTTISH PASSING GAME

Queen's Park Glasgow, the Scottish national team, and the London club Royal Engineers created the first tactical revolution during the 1870s when they introduced the concept of passing among their players. The soccer-rugby split had occurred by this time, and the passing game was the first sign that soccer was maturing. To accommodate the increased goalscoring potential, another fullback was added on defense, thus reducing the forward line to six players. The Scottish method was eventually perfected by the English amateur club Corinthians during the 1880s, and became commonplace. Ultimately, it signaled the birth of modern soccer

# SCOTTISH PASSING GAME

GOALKEEPER



RIGHT FULLBACK

LEFT FULLBACK



RIGHT HALFBACK

LEFT HALFBACK



FORWARDS



# THE CLASSIC FORMATION 2-3-5

The development of passing techniques spelled the need for tighter, more sophisticated defenses, and in the late 1870s a third halfback was seen on some teams (Cambridge University, 1877 and Wrexham F. C. 1878). England's National Team first employed three halfbacks in 1884, followed by Scotland in 1887, by which time the practice was widely adopted. Preston North End was the first really successful club to use 2-3-5, winning the first two English championships in 1889 and 1890. The 2-3-5 remained the standard formation in soccer for 40 years, and was used in Central Europe until the post-World War II era, modified by a lower intensity and a more fluid expression, yielding the so-called "Danubian" style

# THE CLASSIC FORMATION 2-3-5



# CHARLIE BUCHAN'S THIRD BACK GAME

After the offside law change in 1925, goalscoring in English soccer increased immediately by 35%. Arsenal inside forward Charlie Buchan, an exceptionally bright player with excellent goalscoring skills in his own right, suggested to his manager Herbert Chapman that the center half be pulled back to a purely defensive position to mark the opposing center forward (hence his designation as a stopper). In addition, an inside forward who was more adept at distribution than goalscoring was pulled back to a deep lying forward position. Chapman's Arsenal adopted this with great success in the late 1920s.

# CHARLIE BUCHAN'S THIRD BACK GAME



# W – M FORMATION

This became an immediate extension of Buchan's third back plan, in which both inside forwards, rather than just one, were drawn back, creating the geometric appearance of a W-shaped defense and M-shaped offense. Herbert Chapman's Arsenal of the 1930s, which dominated English soccer for a decade, made it world famous, and it remained the standard formation in England and assorted anglophile strongholds until the 1950s.

# W-M FORMATION



## ***METODO* OR “METHOD”**

Vittorio Pozzo, manager of Italy’s national team during its decade of world domination in the 1930s, adapted the highly successful attacking center half concept of Manchester United’s 1907-11 team – which he has observed closely while living in England – and combined it with the attacking M of Arsenal’s W – M formation. In the 1940s, Pozzo reluctantly transformed his attacking center half into a stopper, a revised plan he called *sistema* (system).

# ***METODO OR METHOD***



# ***VERROU* OR SWISS BOLT**

Developed by Karl Rappan, Austrian manager of Servette Geneva and Grasshoppers Zurich during the 1930s, the “Swiss Bolt” called for separate attack and defensive formations. In the attack, a 3-3-4 pattern emerged in which the center back and two wing backs advanced all the way to the midfield line; the three halfbacks supported the forward line of two wings and two insides, the center half serving as a virtual deep-lying center forward. In the defense, all 11 players retreated deep into their own half; the center half became a center back who roved from one side to the other (hence the “bolt” designation), much as the *libero*, or sweeper did in later years. The purpose of the plan was to create the illusion that the opposing attack or defense was in turn, out-manned, but it required great stamina from its players. *Verrou* was important in anticipating the more garrisoned Italian bolt system, the dreadful *catenaccio*..

# ***VERROU* OR SWISS BOLT attacking formation**



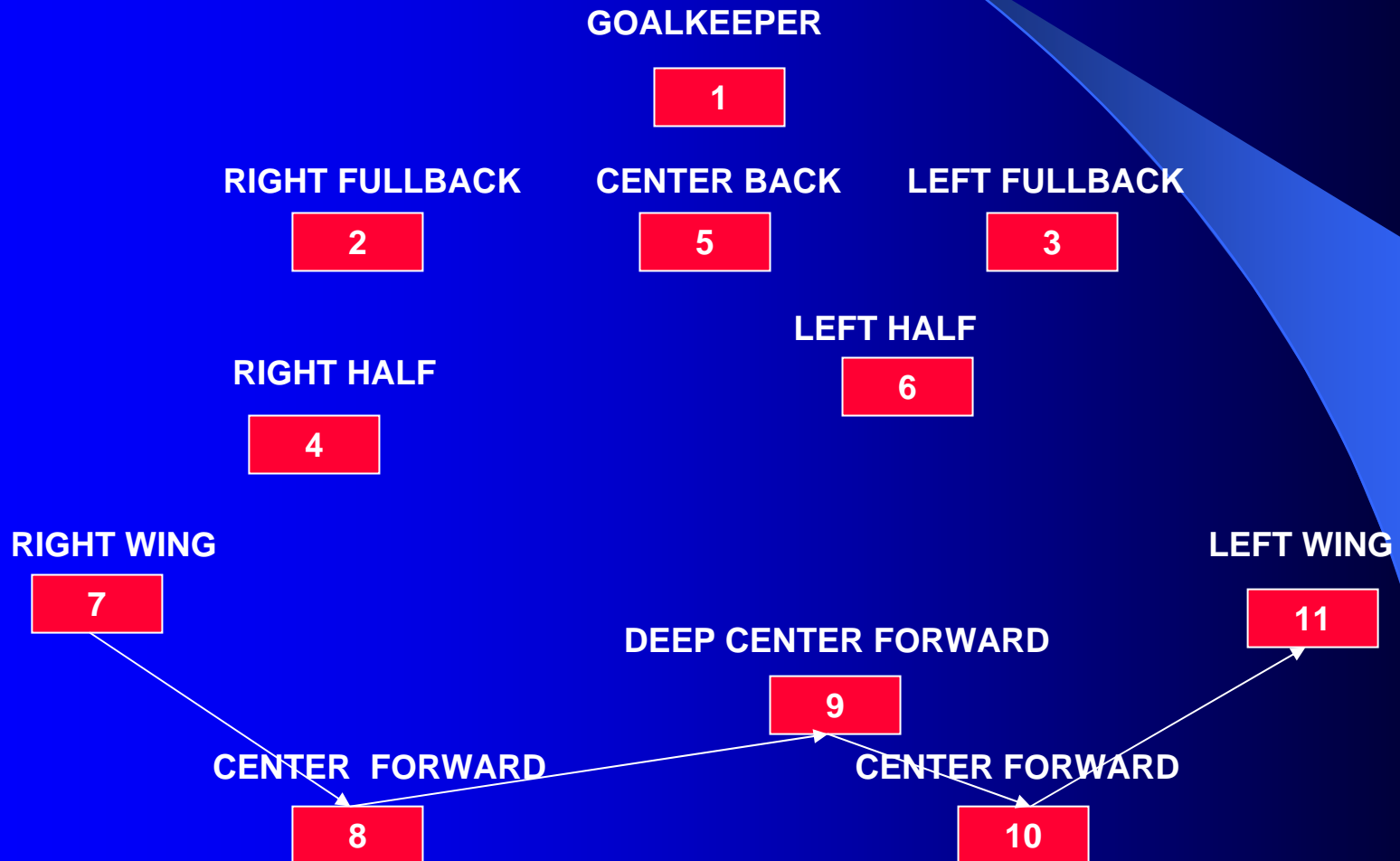
# ***VERROU* OR SWISS BOLT** defensive formation



# HUNGARIAN W ATTACK5

Hungary lost one match in six years between 1950-56 (the World Cup final in 1954) playing its own 4-2-4, a system unknown in Europe up to that time, and more accurately called the Hungarian W attack. It called for three center forwards, one deep-lying (Hidegkuti) and two well advanced (Kocsics on the right and Puskas on the left), flanked by two slightly receding wings. The two midfields were staggered, Bozsik on the right supporting the attack, Zakarias on the left acting as the first line of defense. Three backs brought up the rear, but they too advanced to the opponent's half of the field on attacks.

# HUNGARIAN W ATTACK



## 4-2-4 SYSTEM

This was introduced by Paraguayan national team under coach Fleitas Solich in the 1953 South American Championship, but it was made famous by the unbelievable skilful Brazilian World Cup-winning team of 1958. Brazil's two center-backs in the middle of the defense were flanked by two wing backs who were expected to initiate attacks along the touch lines (resulting to an astonishing 2-4-4). The two midfield players were offense-minded as well and the forward line consisted of two central strikers (Vava and Pele), and two wings (Garrincha and Zagalo), the former an attacking right side winger, the latter a supportive winger who dropped back on the left side.

# 4-2-4 SYSTEM

GOALKEEPER

1

RIGHT BACK

2

CENTER BACK

5

CENTER BACK

6

LEFT BACK

3

RIGHT MIDFIELD

4

LEFT MIDFIELD

8

RIGHT WING

7

CENTER FORWARD

9

CENTER FORWARD

10

LEFT WING

11

# CATENACCIO

The roots of this pervasive defensive plan go back to the northeast of Italy in the late of 1930s, probably as a result of exposure to the *verrou*. In 1948, Triestina employed it successfully against the big clubs of the Italian league that had recently been inundated with high scoring foreign players. Other small clubs adopted some form of *catenaccio*, and by the early 1950s even the giant Milan and Turin clubs adopted it.

*Catenaccio* (“great bolt or chain”) involved three or four defenders who were supported in the rear by a *libero* (sweeper) who roamed from side-to-side plugging up the slightest hole left by a defender. In front of the defense, three midfielders more often defended than attacked, and there were two or three strikers on the forward line. In *catenaccio*, the offensive power usually took the form of a counterattack rather than a slow build-up. Its most regressive form involved a back line of four plus the sweeper, and a forward line of only two. A second form included three backs and three forwards. *Catenaccio* eventually engulfed Italy, and helped its well-rehearsed practitioners such as Inter Milan and its coach Helenio Herrera to dominate European Club tournaments until during the 60s and 70s. The Italian national team however, was unsuccessful with this system, and it was eventually unable to disassociate the system itself from the defensive attitude it created.

# ***CATENACCIO*** – first formation



# CATENACCIO – second formation



## DUTCH TOTAL FOOTBALL

“Dutch Total Football” is the label for an influential theory of tactical approach in which any player can take over the role of any other player in the team. It was pioneered by Dutch football club Ajax. It was invented by Rinus Michels, "The General", a famous Dutch football trainer/coach.

In Total Football, a player who moves out of his position is replaced by another from his team, thus retaining the team's intended organizational structure. In this fluid system, no player is fixed in his nominal role; anyone can be successively an attacker, a midfielder and a defender.

Total Football's tactical success depends largely on the adaptability of each footballer within the team, in particular his ability to quickly change positions depending on the situation. The theory requires players to be comfortable in multiple positions; hence, it puts high technical and physical demands on them.

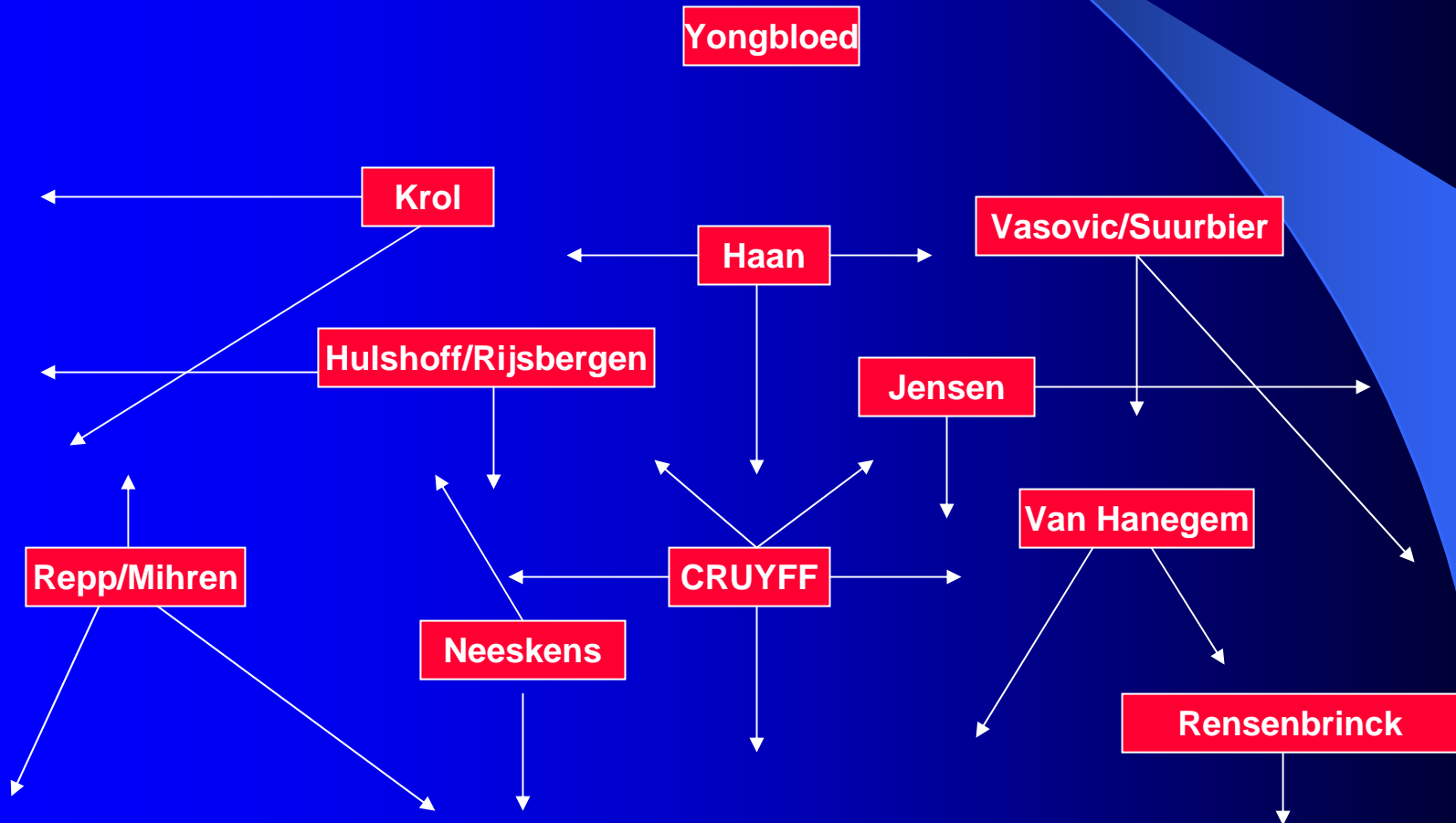
The foundations for Total Football were laid by Jack Reynolds, who was the manager of Ajax from 1915–1925, 1928–1940, and 1945–1947.

Rinus Michels, who played under Reynolds, later went on to become manager of Ajax himself and refined the concept into what is known today as "Total Football", using it in his training for the Ajax squad and the Netherlands National team in the 1970s. It was further refined by Stefan Kovacs after Michels left for Barcelona. Dutch forward Johann Cruyff was the system's most famous exponent.<sup>[1]</sup>

Although Cruyff was fielded as cenTeR forward, he wandered all over the pitch, popping up wherever he could do most damage to the opposing team. This resulted in a need for a dynamic system like Total Football. Cruyff's teammates adapted themselves flexibly around his movements, regularly switching positions so that the tactical roles in the team were always filled.

The 1972 European Cup final proved to be Total Football's finest hour. Ajax's 2–0 victory over Inter Milan meant the death of *Catenaccio* and triumph of Total Football. The Inter defensive system was finally undermined and defensive football was destroyed.

# DUTCH TOTAL FOOTBALL



# WINGLESS 4-4-2 SYSTEM

England won the World Cup in 1966 with this formation, but eventually entered a long period of mediocrity with it as well. There were four back at the rear, a roving “defensive screen” (Nobby Stiles) in the sweeper tradition (but in front of his other defenders); three midfielders, the central one of these (Bobby Charlton) a virtual deep-lying center forward; and two central strikers. The wing positions were in effect erased from the field. This was one of the weakest attacking systems yet devised, but it provided an effective defense.

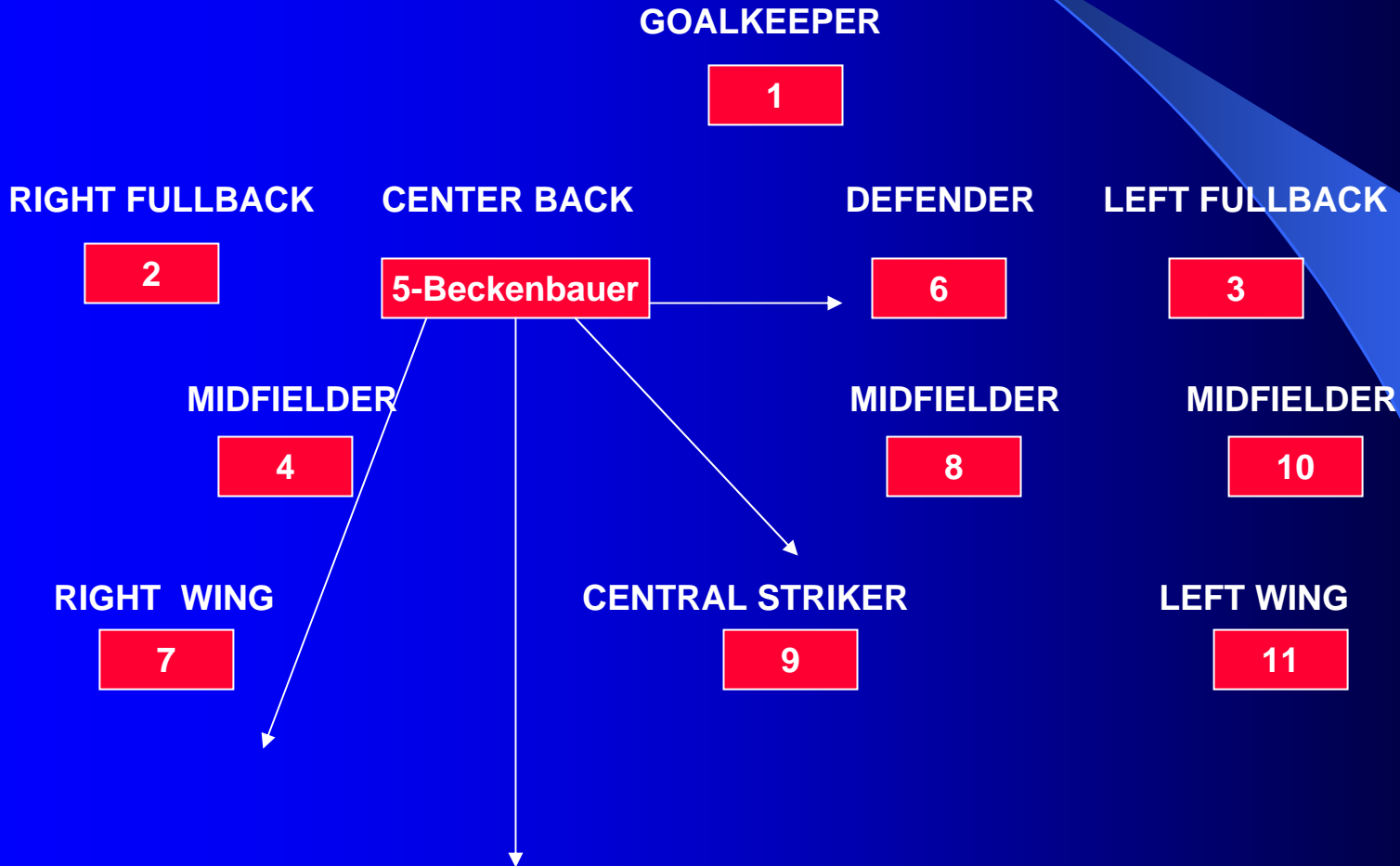
# WINGLESS 4-4-2 SYSTEM



## BECKENBAUER'S ALL-PURPOSE SWEEPER PLAN

The various systems were so interlocked by the late 1960's that diagrammatic patterns began to lose their significance altogether. In West Germany, the ex-midfielder Franz Beckenbauer, one of the most complete players in the history of the game, transformed the sweeper position into an attacking as well as defensive role. Beckenbauer roamed from side to side both in front of and behind the defensive line, and occasionally launched an attack, sometimes advancing into the opponent's penalty area to score goals. Though Beckenbauer's sweeper role could be adopted to almost any existing system, it has most often been incorporated into a 4-3-3 system. The genius of Beckenbauer's concept, however, was that it virtually obviated all traditional systems, and anticipated the less restrictive marking that gave rise to 3-5-2 (three centerbacks) system and convertible 4-3-3 system with "flat" 4 defenders and "compact zone"

# BECKENBAUER'S ALL-PURPOSE SWEEPER PLAN



# 3-5-2 FORMATION



## 4-3-3 SYSTEM

This system, currently widely used in different applications, was seen in its most entertaining form when Brazil employed two central strikers and a wing on the forward line. The former left wing of 4-2-4 system (Mario Zagalo) had by now dropped back to an authentic midfield role. Right and left backs were free to advance at will as they had in 4-2-4 system. A modified form of one the 4-3-3 one of the best teams in history of the game, the 1970 World Cup winning Brazilian team has one center forward (Pele) and two wings (Jairzinho and Rivelinho) evenly displaced.

# 4-3-3 SYSTEM: BRAZIL FORMATION AT A WORLD CUP IN 1970 IN MEXICO



# PLAYING CONCEPT CANADA 4-3-3



# PLAYING CONCEPT CANADA 4-3-3

## INVERTED MIDFIELD



# OTHER NOTABLE SYSTEM OF PLAY

## ARGENTINE SYSTEM OF PLAY



