

## 3-5-2

The complexity of the formation, especially concerning the covering of team-mates and beginning attacks, demands a certain blend of players. The back three must have at least one player who is an excellent passer, while the other two must be stalwart defenders in their own right; adept at man-to-man marking and showing positional discipline. It is also possible to play a zonal defensive marking system in a 3-5-2 formation, but doing so requires the speed of thought and movement to track opponents as they wander in and out of zones looking for gaps between defenders. This usually results in a midfielder playing in one of the three backline positions.



## Defending and positioning

### The Back Three

With three central defenders, a back line will have a spare man even against a 4-4-2. Having a sweeper adds value and flexibility that can adjust to certain situations in a game, and being able to deploy three at the back is a must. The biggest worry for a 3-5-2 is when one of the defenders is dragged infield, or gets lost. The success of a back three lies in its rigidity, so when the line is destroyed, the outside two will squeeze in to try and compensate. This leaves massive holes, as there are no full-backs whatsoever. This is where the danger of the false-nine lurks.

The central defender must be dominant in the air and be happy to move forward with the ball—if he isn't positionally perfect, none of them are. It's flawless, or it's tragic. When three at the back meet one up front, it can become tough to figure out who should mark the front man. But there should always be a defender sweeping in behind. If the opposing team decides to push two strikers onto the back three, then there should be two central defenders man marking whilst the spare defender sweeps behind.

### Wingbacks

True wing-backs are really just deep-seated attackers. Modern football is seeing the increased importance of attacking values in left- and right-backs. So sticking to your roles and having the discipline to defend as a unit gives us a platform to counter attack any team.



## Attacking

### Attacking Front four

The two strikers playing up front also means it's possible for the frontline to create and score chances with minimal assistance, especially if the ball is played to them quickly whilst springing a counter-attacker, it provides an opportunity for one of the back three to push up into midfield and provide support while in possession. Having a player constantly positioned in the wide area stretches the pitch to its limit, creating plenty of room for passing in the middle of the park to play our game.

