



Marcelo Bielsa

Game Systems

Edited by Pedro Mendonça

Be a Coach!

- **Something crucial for someone to be a coach: the ability to convince! Based on conviction and passion. Being passionate about the work and sharing it.**
- **For Marcelo Bielsa, there are 10 (and only 10) tactical systems in football.**
- **Besides these 10, there are systems that he considers to be consequences of desperation (systems used in the last minutes of the game to keep or change a result).**

Be a Coach!

- Emotion is the coach's greatest ability, it's decisive. We must truly believe in what we propose. Only then will we convince others.
- As a coach, he guides the team according to how he feels. He strives for players to adapt to his ideas and not the other way around. He proposes to them what he feels.
- Marcelo Bielsa wants, whenever possible, to attack with 6 players and have 4 men behind as cover..

Be a Coach!

- At all times, players must strive 100%, without exception. The secret lies in emotion as a catalyst of virtue.
- When we have great players, the important thing is not to bother them with our intervention.
- When we train less gifted teams, we have to intervene to develop the players.
- The coach CONVINCES. How to convince: using the word and example!
- One of the virtues of the coach is the flexibility.

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Be a Coach!

- I want to live 4 hours a day with people who are worth it. Who don't have to choose between being stupid or perverse (this is the choice in most cases).
- The Respect is horizontal in relation to the players (and always has value), the Discipline is vertical in relation to the players (and only has value when we have power).
- We should never allow players' behaviors to make them worse people. Respect is always more valuable than Discipline!
- We can only build a solid group if the players and the coach respect each other in public (for example, players when they are replaced should not manifest themselves negatively; and coaches, when players make mistakes, should not gesture during the game as a way to display irritation).

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Attacking Principle

- To arrive at a place where the opponent does not expect that.

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Individual Marking

- Whenever a team, instead of using zonal defense, uses individual marking, the coach and the tactical development of the team are criticized. But if we want to put pressure on the opponent, the pressure has a non-negotiable principle: not to let the opposing team have a “free man”. If we press and there is a “free man”, the opponents will pass the ball to him to overcome the pressure. Numerical equality is needed, while supporting the sector under pressure. So, to avoid individual marking, it is necessary to change the marking. It's a mistake not to follow the opponent and protect a place where the opponent is not there. We must change the marking to be as close as possible to the original position. But change the marking in football is exceedingly difficult.

Reference Scheme

- With these original positions, it is necessary to build the 10 game systems:



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Reference Scheme

• The 10 game systems known:

With a Line of 4 Defenders

With a Line of 3 Defenders

1-4-2-3-1

changes to a

1-3-3-1-3

1-4-3-3

changes to a

1-3-4-3

1-4-3-1-2

changes to a

1-3-4-1-2

1-4-2-4

changes to a

1-3-3-4

1-4-2-2-2

changes to a

1-3-3-2-2

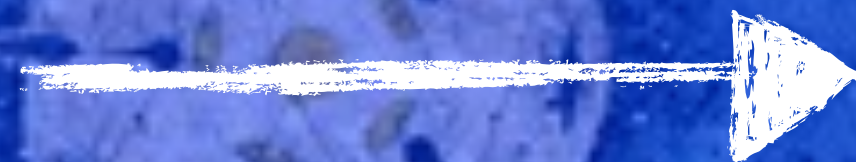
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Reference Scheme

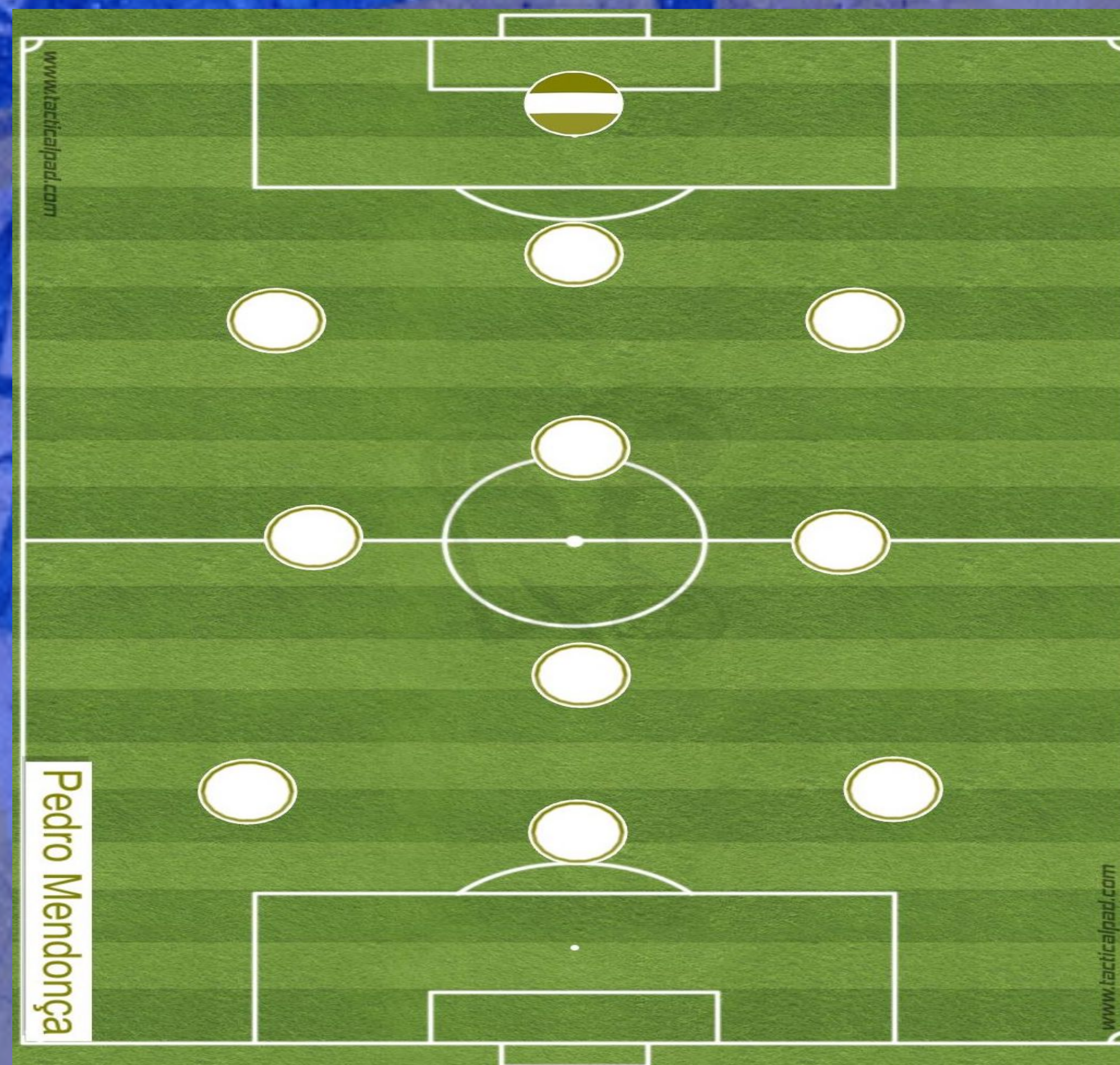
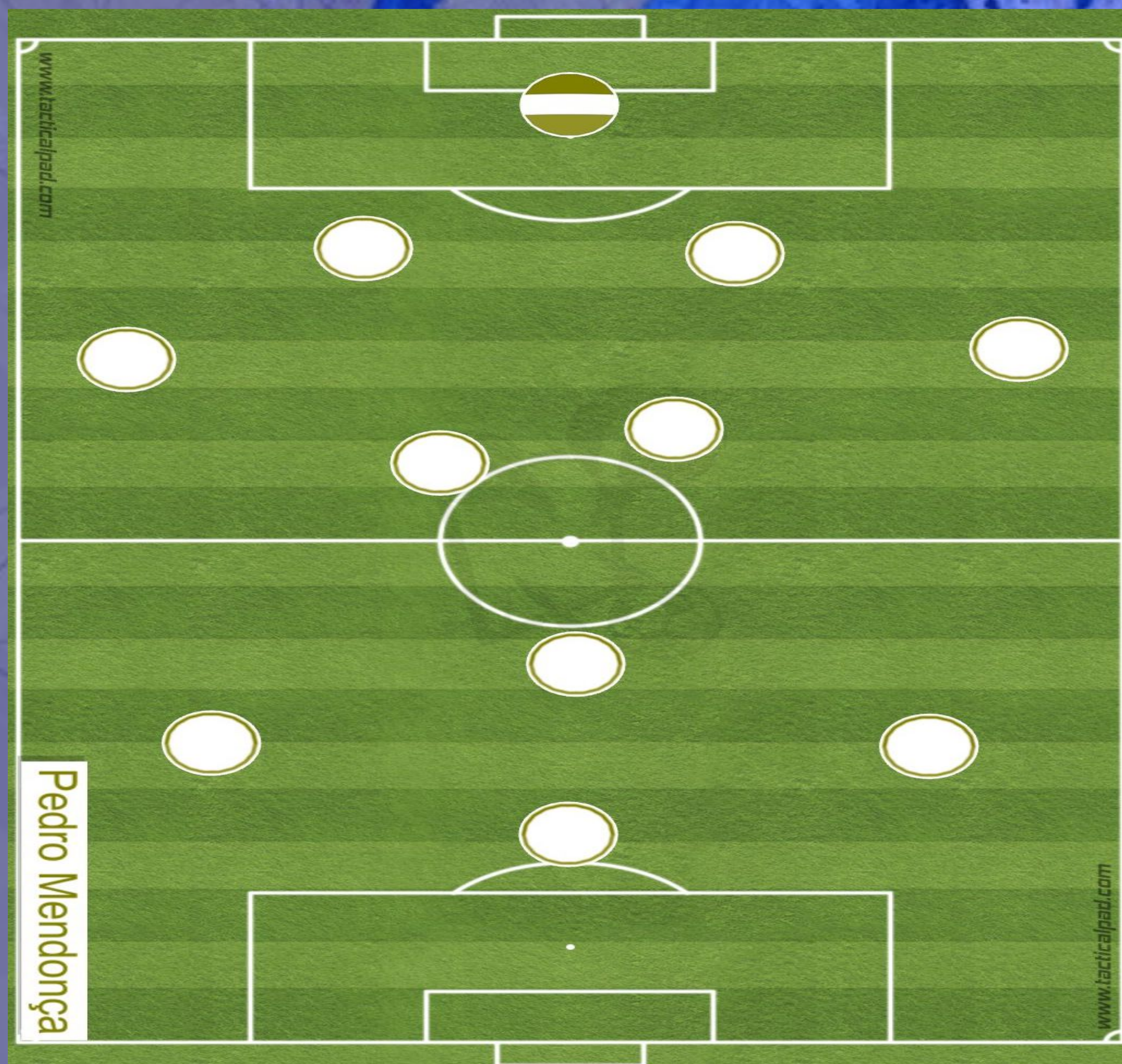
- **Big teams can change the game system with the same players.**
- **Those who have quality can play in every way possible with the same players (without making substitutions).**
- **The major national teams always have the same players (no more than 18 players ready to be used).**

10 Game Systems

1-4-2-1-3



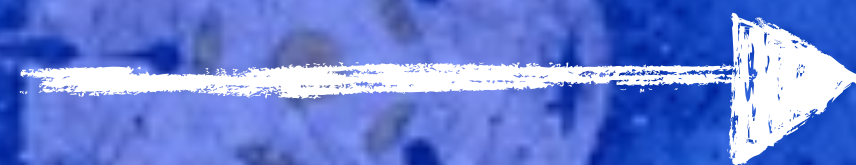
1-3-3-1-3



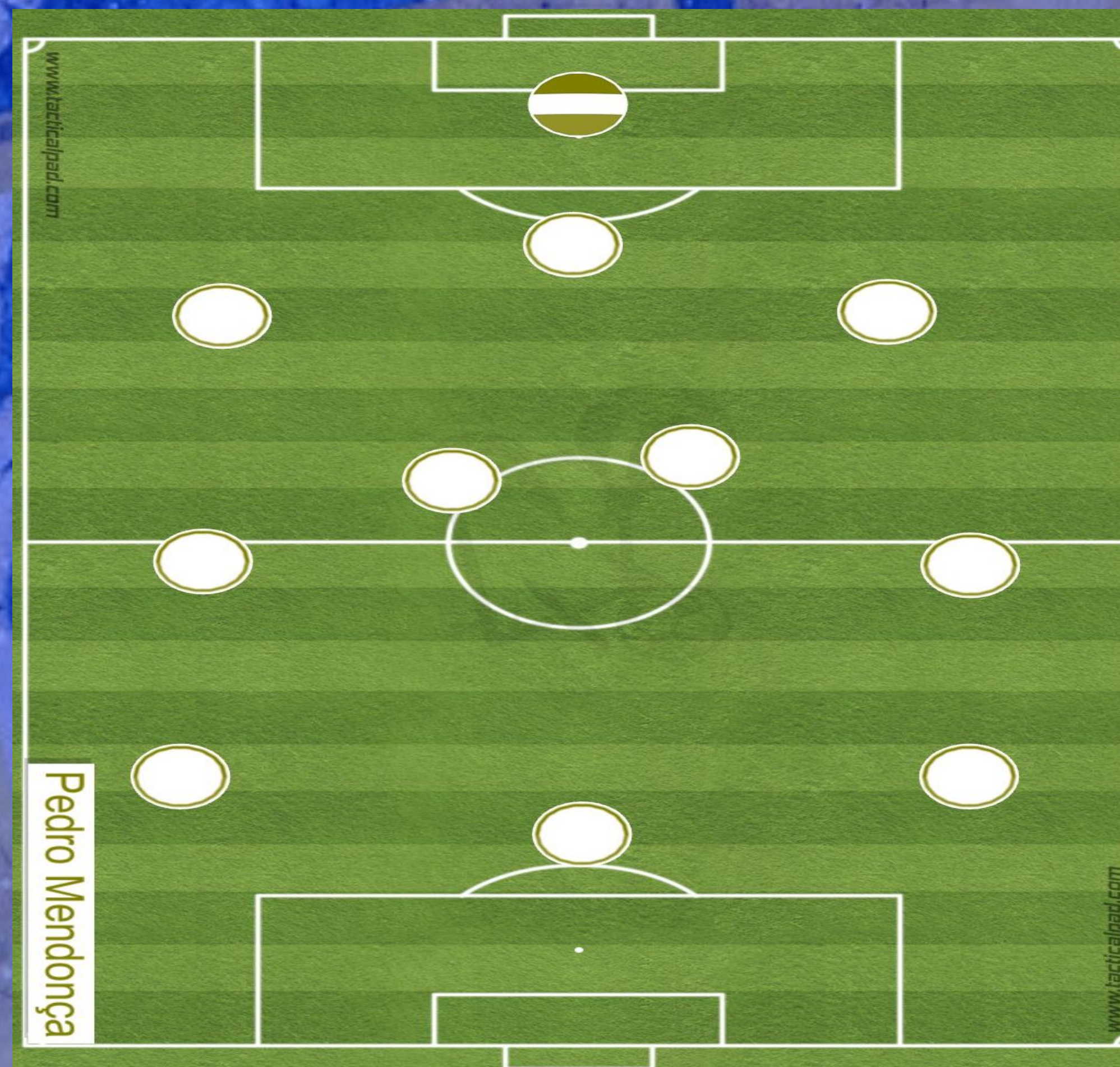
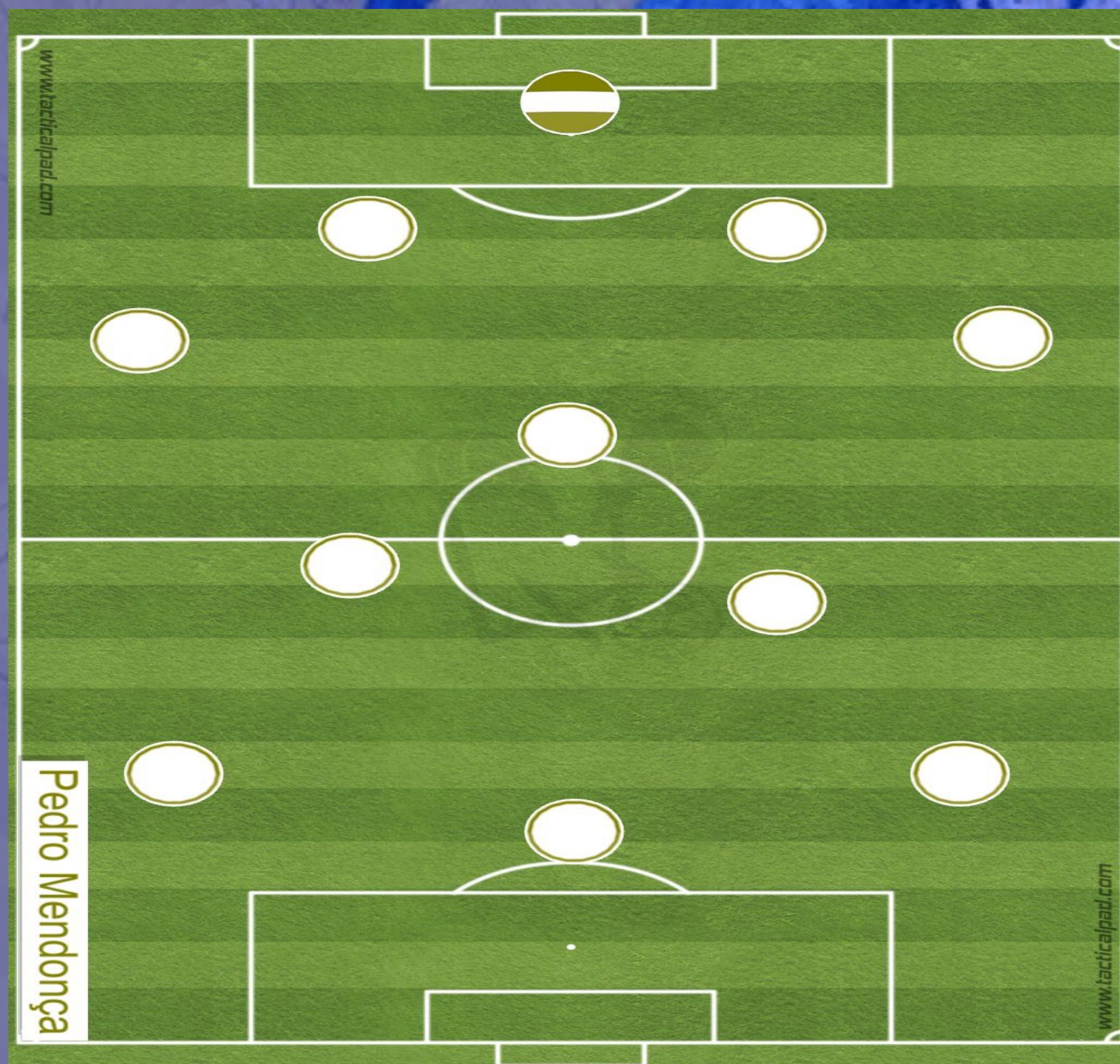
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10 Game Systems

1-4-3-3



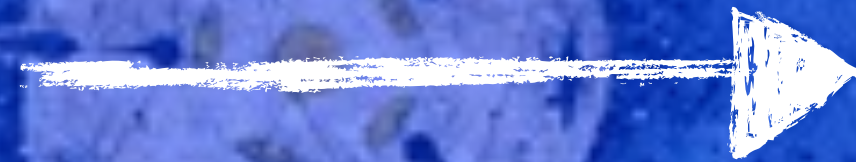
1-3-4-3



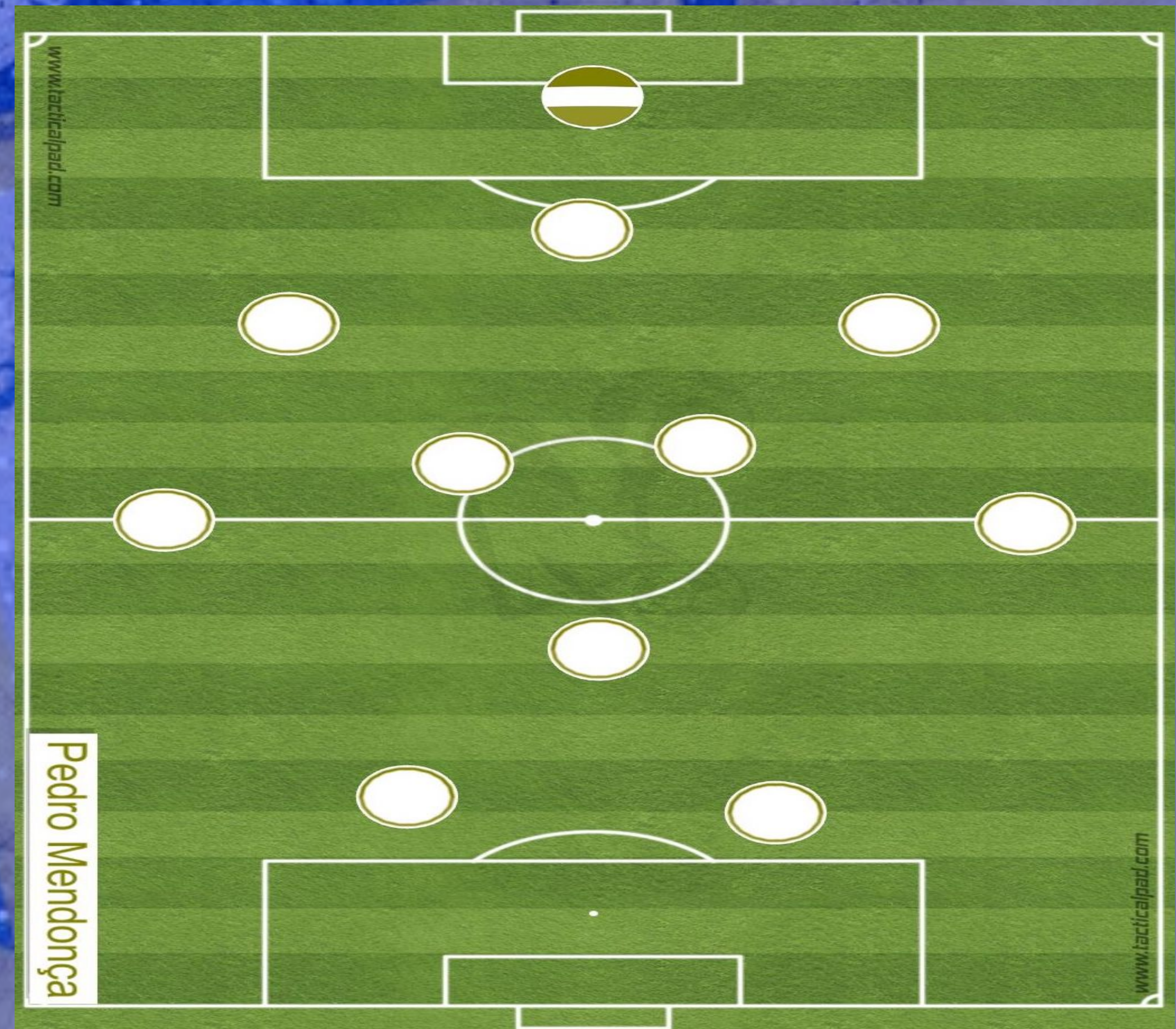
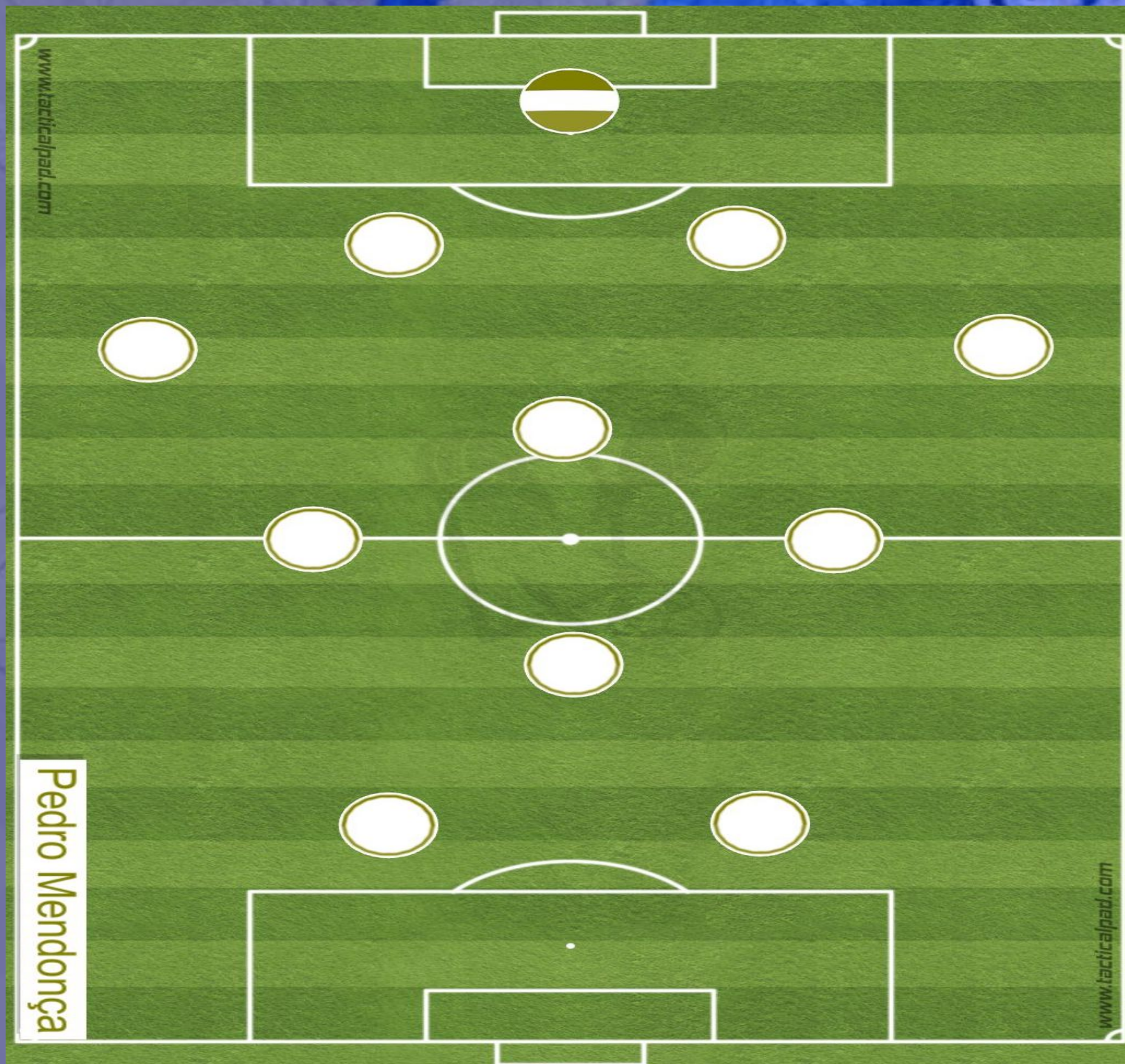
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10 Game Systems

1-4-3-1-2



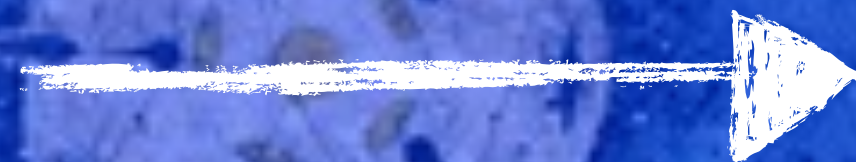
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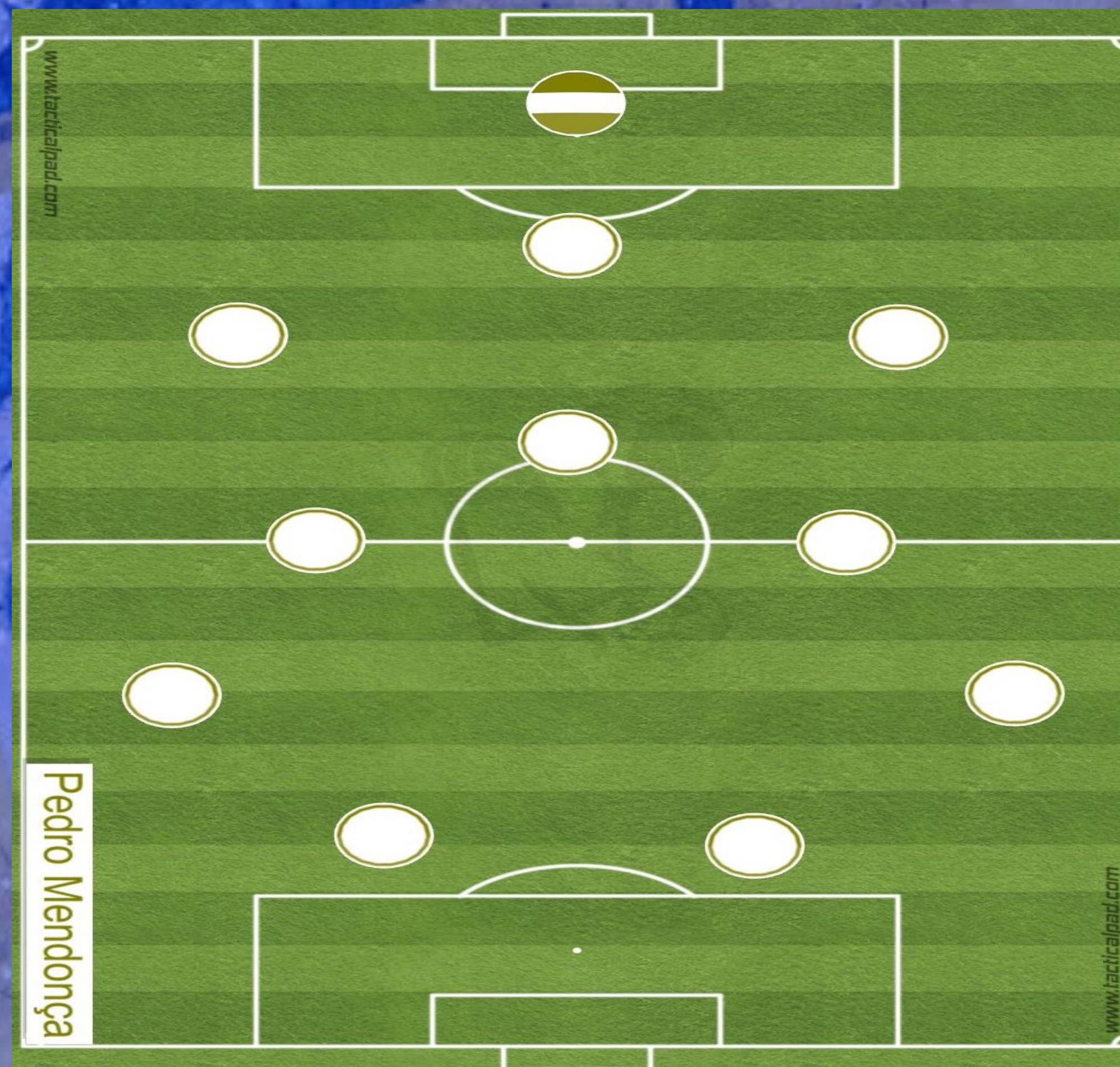
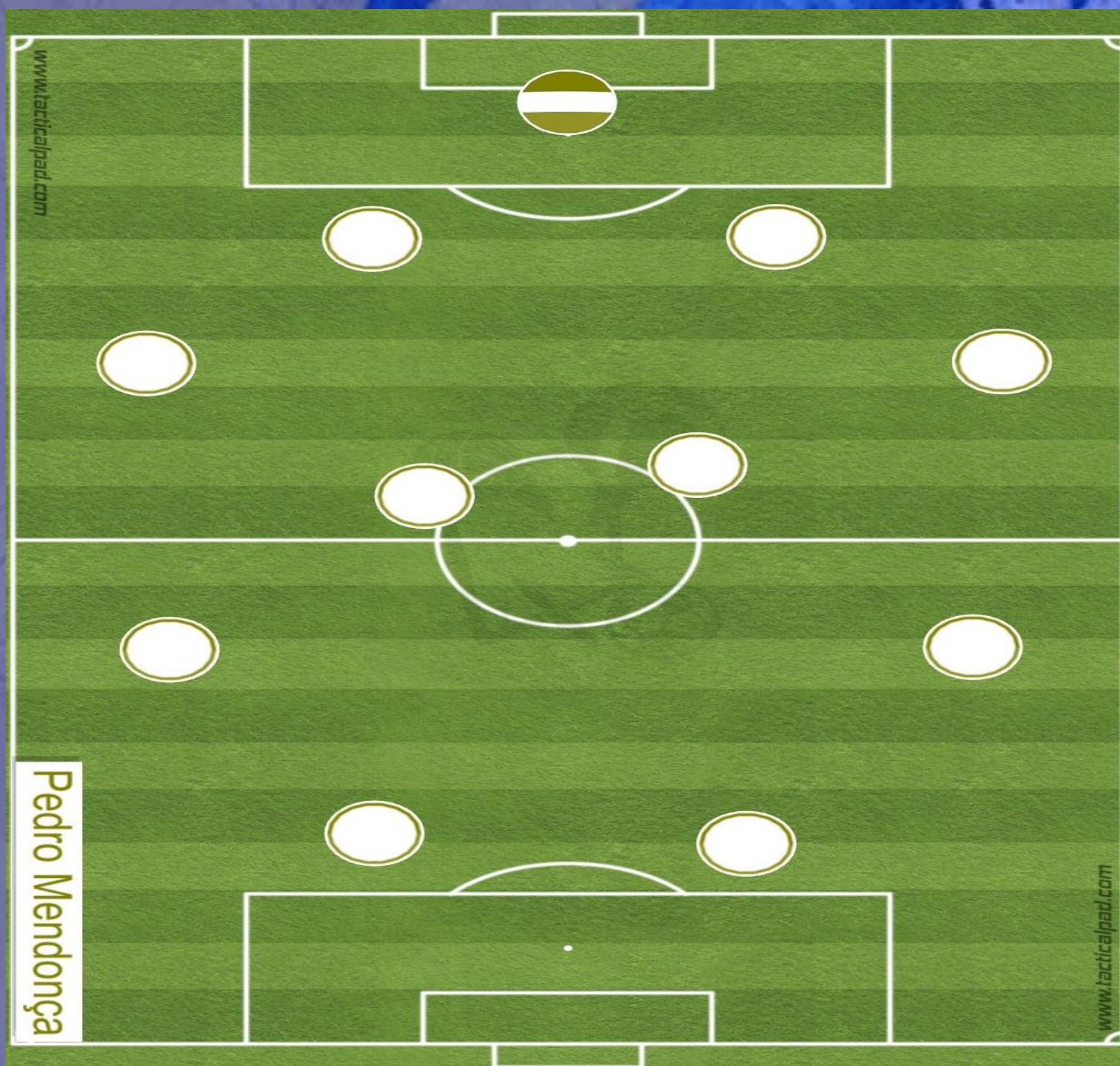
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10 Game Systems

1-4-2-4



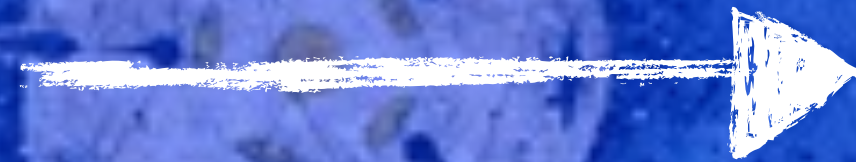
1-3-3-4



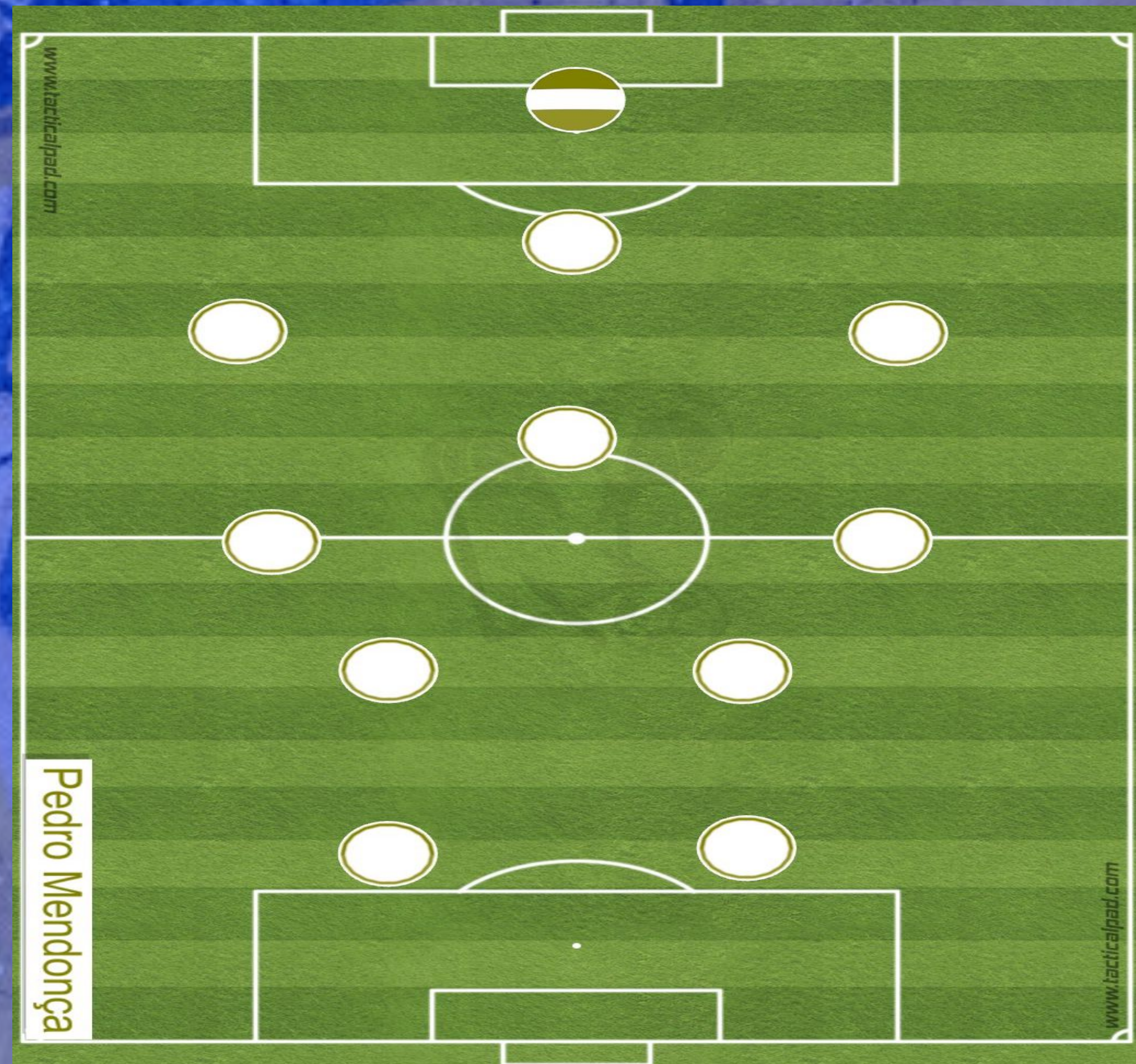
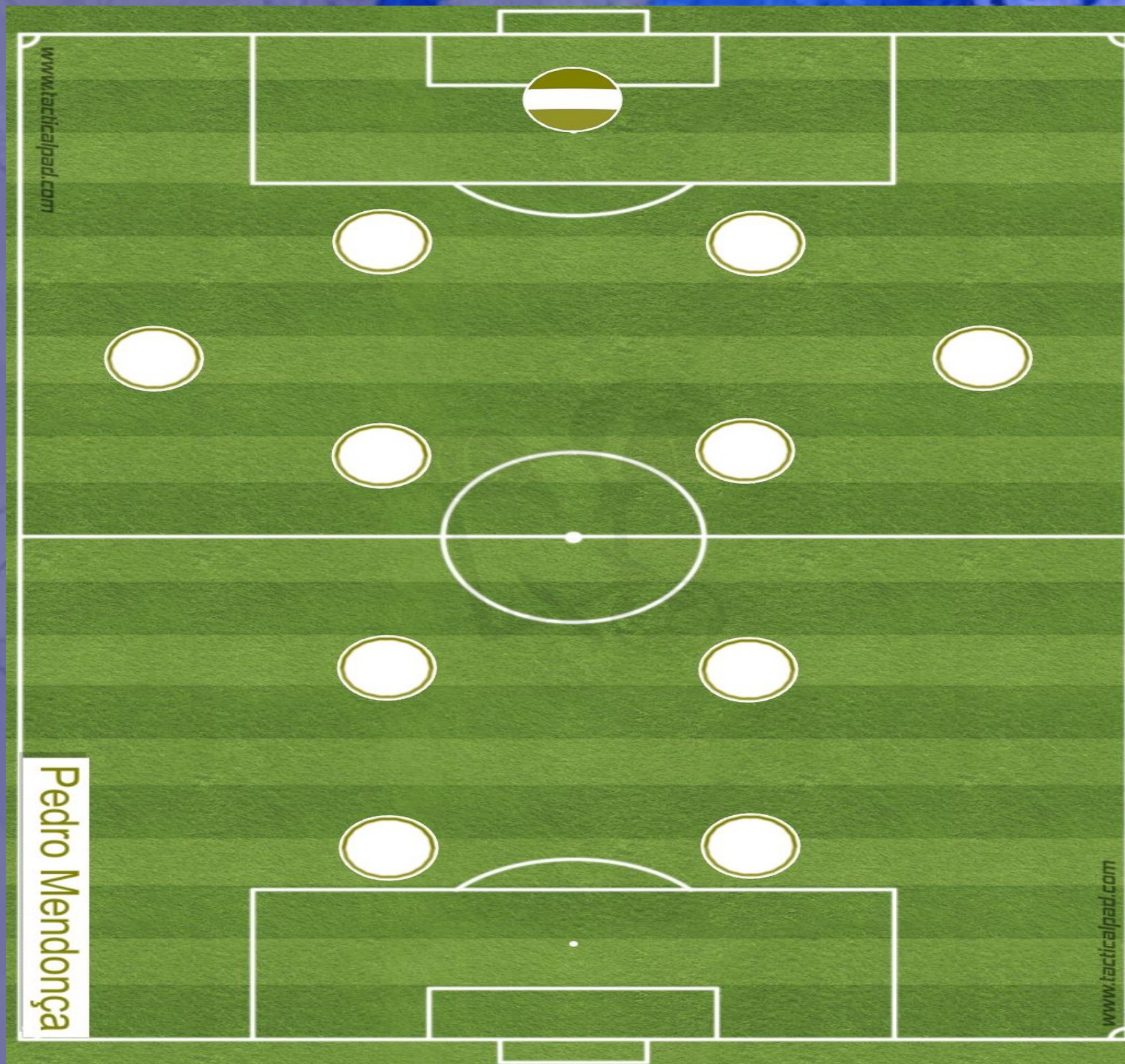
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10 Game Systems

1-4-2-2-2



1-3-3-2-2



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Game Systems

- Systems evolve, defenders are replaced to add midfielders, and Forwards are played as midfielders (the Defender moves up or the Forward goes down). It is the only principle of tactical development. I believe that game systems have residual importance in the game (because what we consider static changes during the game).
- With the same players, we can create several game systems, it's not unnatural. During the game, the team adopts several systems to respond to the mobility of the game.
- The game systems must be symmetrical, something essential for Marcelo Bielsa.

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Relationship between the Game Systems of the Teams

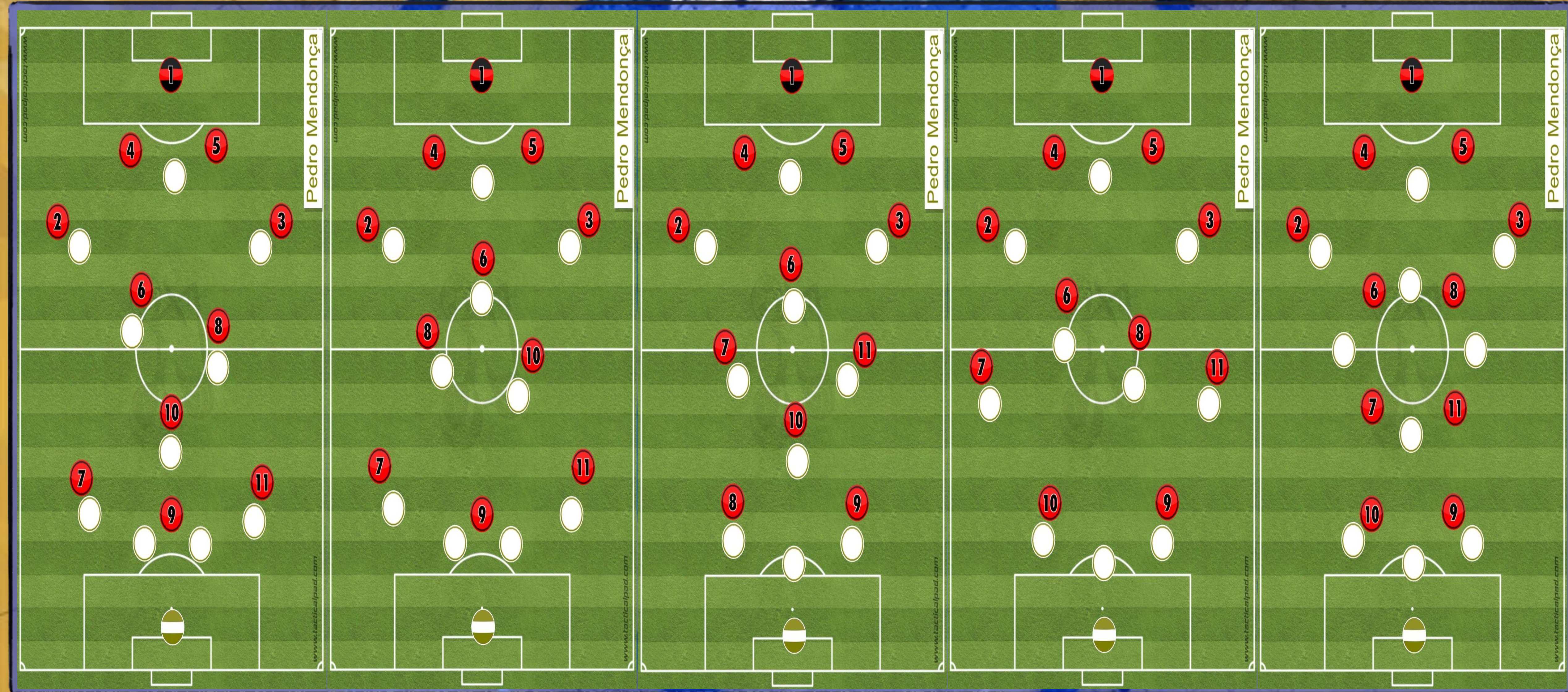
- In the most important matches, the mirror phenomenon happens. There is one player from one team, there is another player from the other team next to him, and there is always an extra defender further back. In the most important matches, the coaches adapt their teams to the opponent.

How to face the 10 Game Systems?

When we play against each of the 10 systems	The following game system is used
1-4-2-1-3	1-4-3-3
1-4-3-3	1-4-2-1-3
1-4-3-1-2	1-3-3-1-3
1-4-2-4	1-3-3-4
1-4-2-2-2	1-3-3-1-3
1-3-3-1-3	1-4-3-1-2
1-3-4-3	1-4-2-4
1-3-4-1-2	1-3-3-2-2
1-3-3-4	1-3-3-4
1-3-3-2-2	1-3-4-1-2

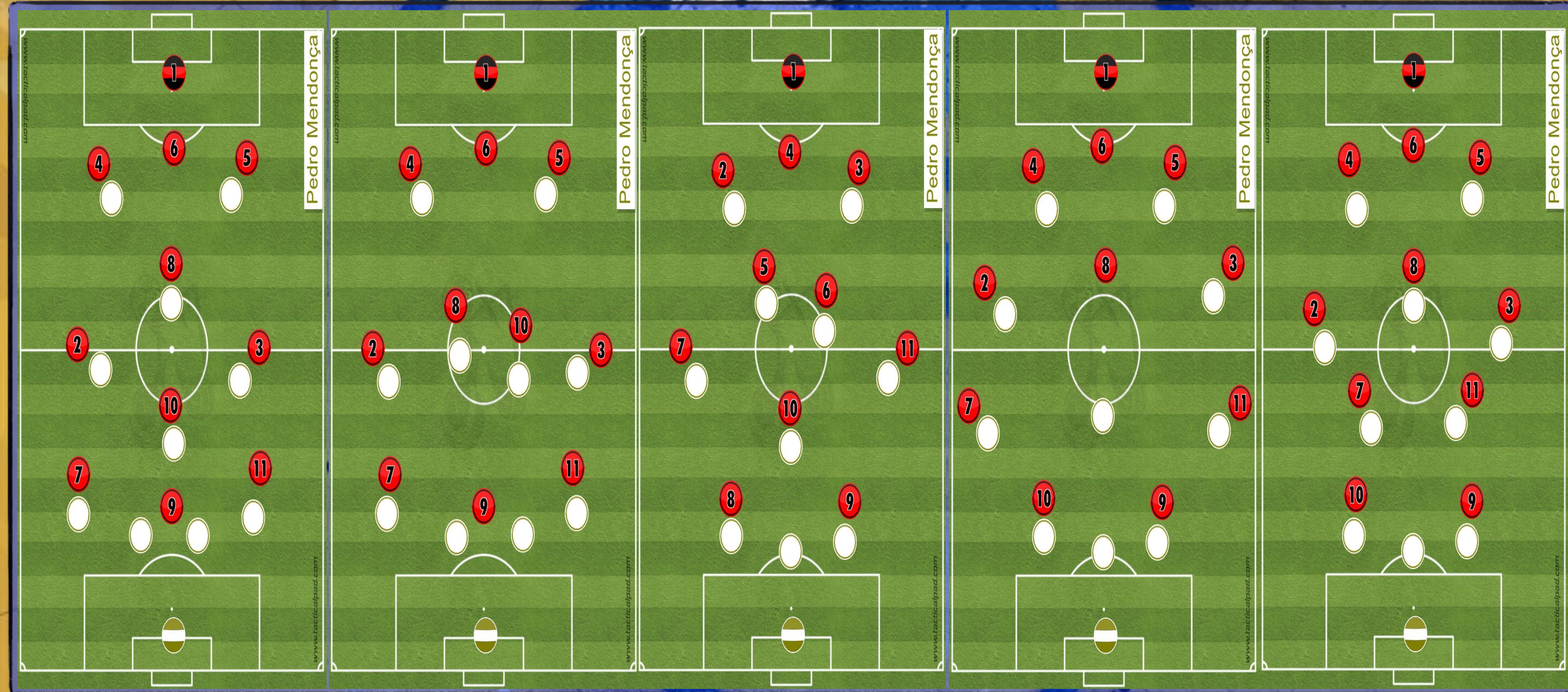
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How to face the 5 Game Systems that have a Defensive Line of 4 players



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How to face the 5 Game Systems that have a Defensive Line of 3 players



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• Train all the Game Systems

- Six “11v11” games, repeated twice each, are enough if we want to train the way we face the 10 known systems.
- In a 60-minute training, we change the game system every 10 minutes. Therefore, in 2 trainings, the players will experience the 10 Game Systems. And we will have at least 5 years, that is: the tactical knowledge of a newcomer to the main team is not the same if he went through this process. This is quite easy to do. It can go wrong for 1 year, for a few months. But, as time goes by, the players start to assimilate this change.

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Alternating the 10 game systems during the youth development years

Shortcoming:

- These game systems are changed only in one way (e.g. the right Full-Back always moves from the defensive line to the midfield line) and not in 4 ways (all players alternately move up to the midfield line). That is, the defensive midfielder would only learn to play in the 3-man line, but the right and left Full-Backs would not.
- In the short term, players may not need to play on other positions. But, in the future, they will need to.

Solution:

- In youth football, for 1 week, a method is applied (for example, the right Full-Back moves to the midfield line). In the following weeks, the remaining players do the same (for example, Center Back moves up to the midfield line).

Youth Football

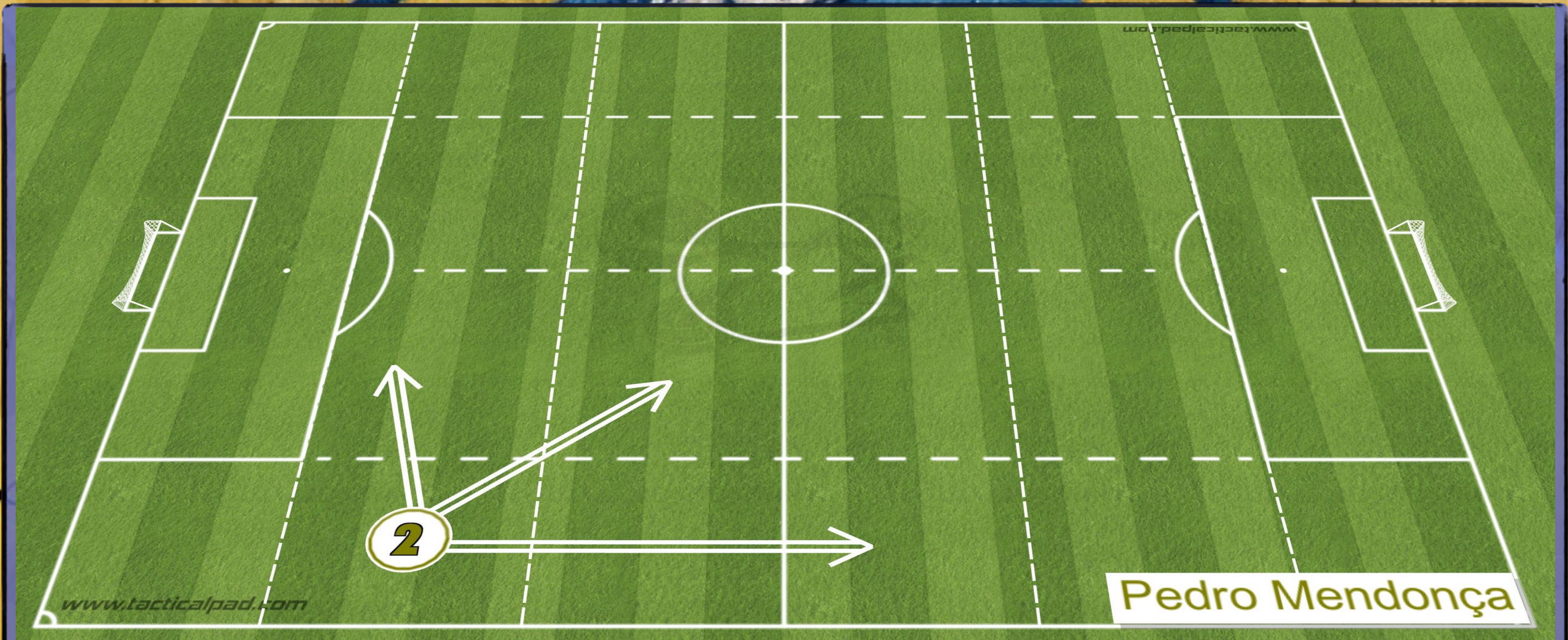
- My opinion is that all youth teams should play for 1 year in each game system instead of always playing with the same (or use a game system every 2 months and the respective variation over a season).
- Style and model are not the tactical arrangement in a game system. The model of a club is not the design, the model is whether the ball is played through the pitch or in the air, how we interpret the rules, etc.
- Why should the game system be changed in youth football? Because the player will play in at least 3 different positions, starting with the one that is natural to him.

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Alternative Positions

- Starting from their initial positioning, each player moves forward or down the pitch, and also moves from the full-back zone to the center back zone or from the center back zone to the full-back zone.
- The mobility on the pitch makes the 10 footballers have, besides their original position, 3 alternatives.
- Here's what was missing in the other football exercise: it lasts 40 minutes and manages (unlike the other) to put all players in the various positions of the "3-man defense", using the 4 existing forms: the drop of the defensive midfielder and the advance of the full-backs; the advance of 1 center back and the drop of 2 full-backs; and the other 2 ways, with the advance of one full-back, at the same time as the other one drops back.

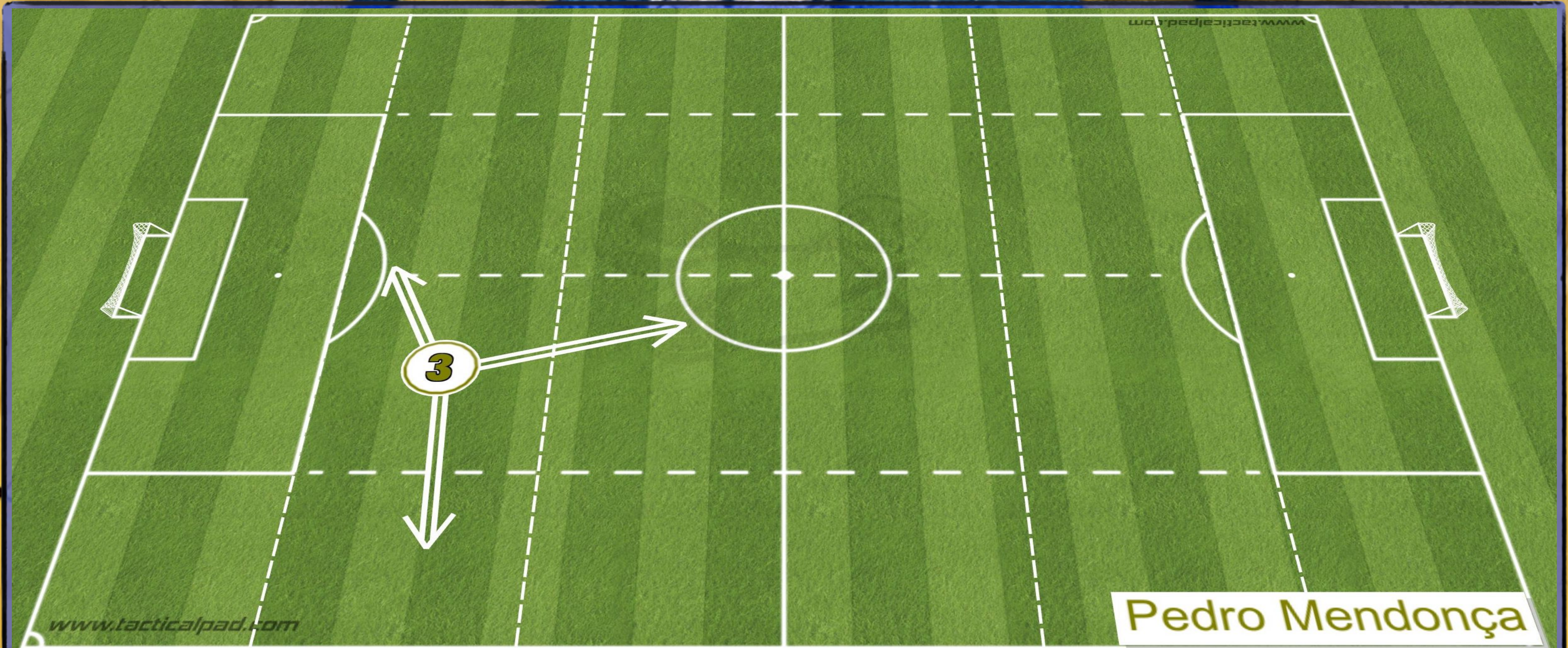
Alternative Positions (Right Back)



Starting from his natural position, the right full-back, when experiencing the 10 different game systems, will be able to be right center back (3-player defensive line), defensive midfielder and right winger.

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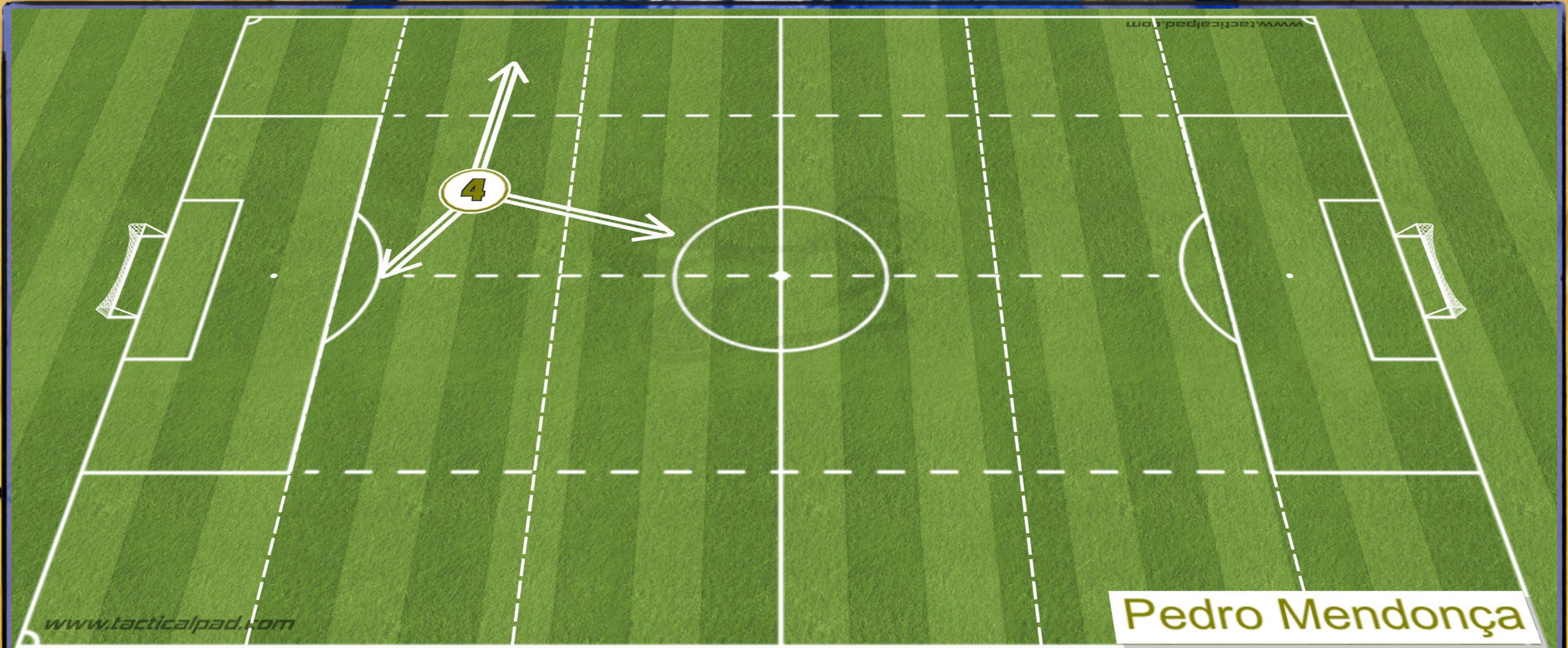
Alternative Positions (Right Center Back)



Starting from his natural position, the right center back, when experiencing the 10 different game systems, will be able to be center back in the middle (3-player defensive line), right full-back and defensive midfielder.

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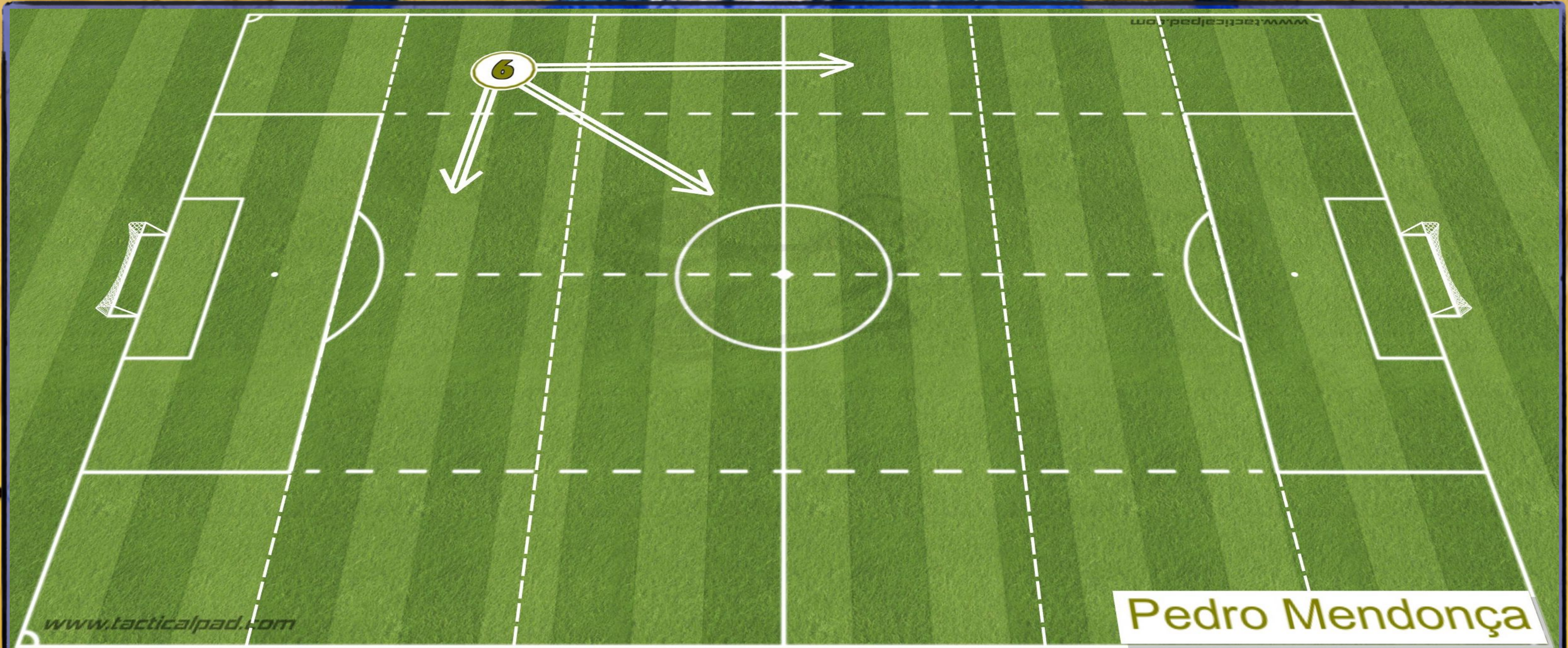
Alternative Positions (Left Center Back)



Starting from his natural position, the left center back, when experiencing the 10 different game systems, will be able to be center back in the middle (3-player defensive line), left full-back and defensive midfielder.

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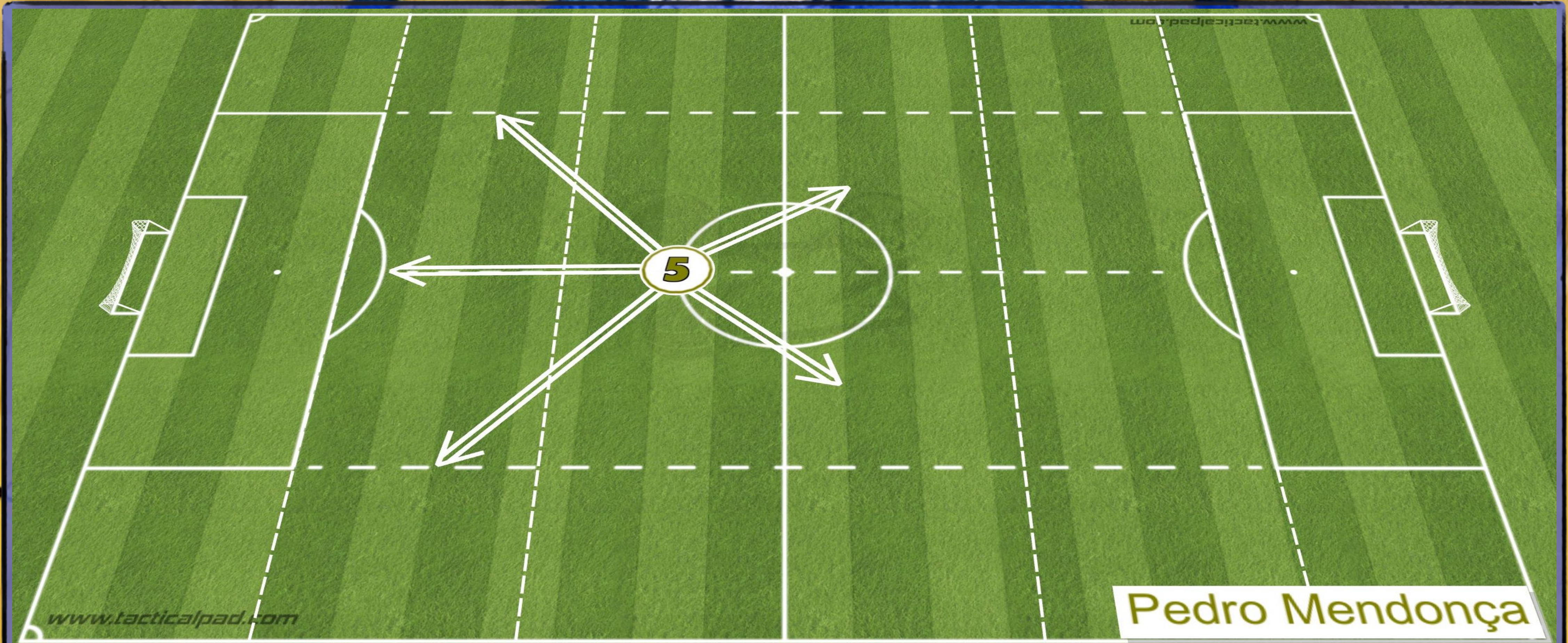
Alternative Positions (Left Back)



Starting from his natural position, the left full-back, when experiencing the 10 different game systems, will be able to be left center back (3-player defensive line), defensive midfielder and left winger.

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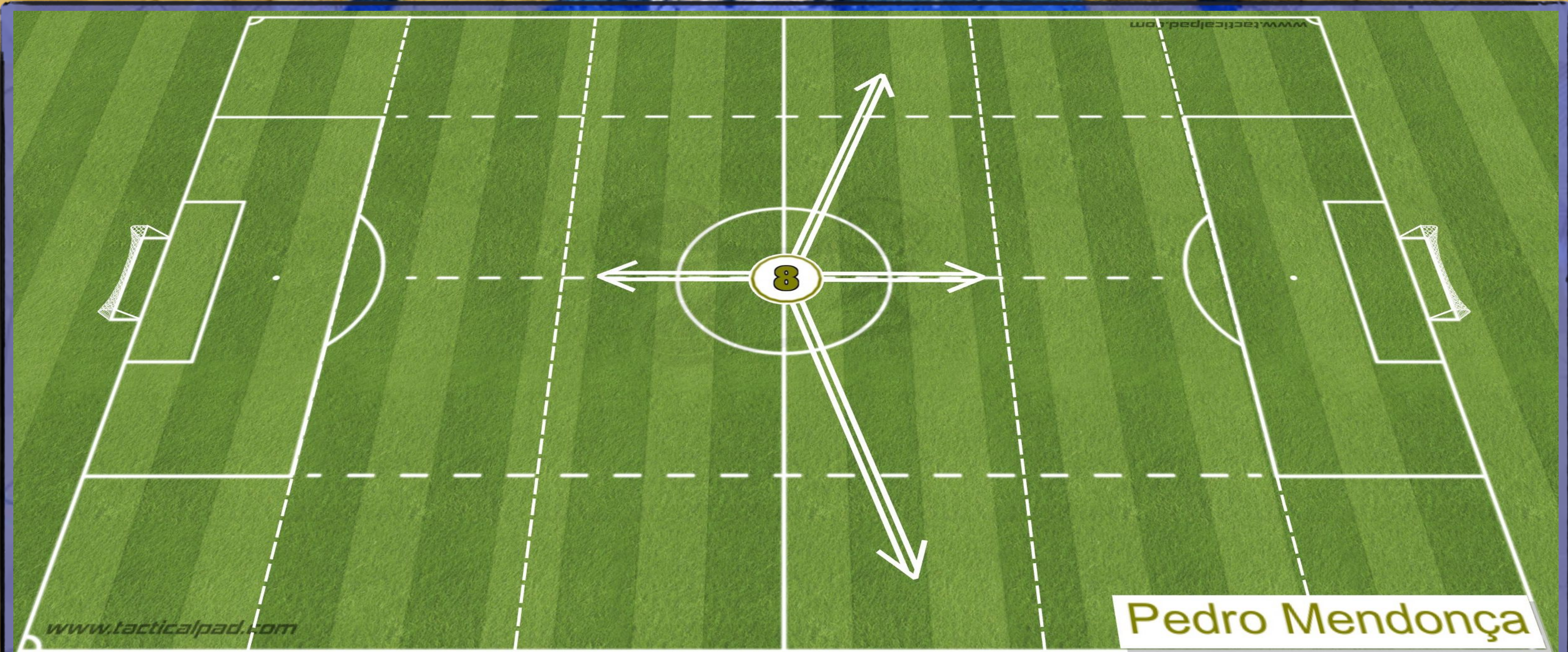
Alternative Positions (Defensive Midfielder)



Starting from his natural position, the defensive midfielder, by experiencing the 10 different game systems, will be able to be center back in the middle (3-player defensive line), full-back and center midfielder.

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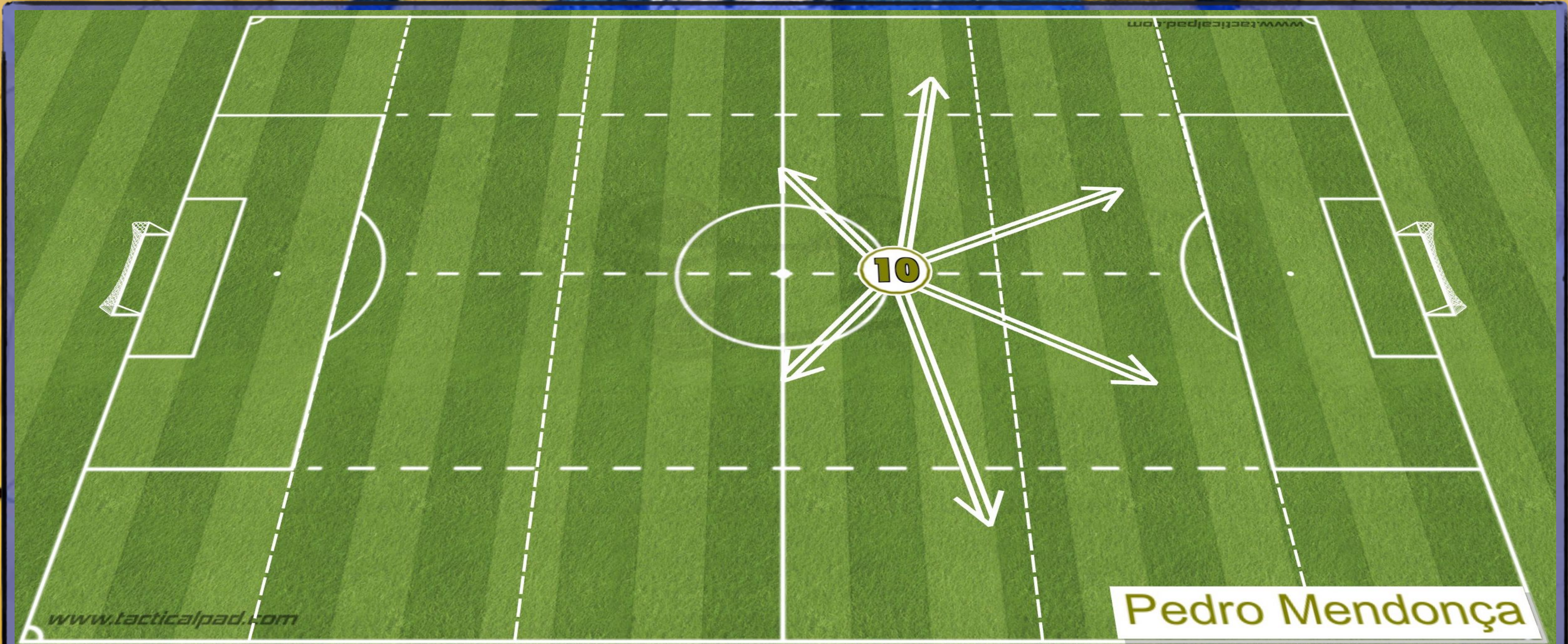
Alternative Positions (Center Midfielder)



Starting from his natural position, the center midfielder, by experiencing the 10 different game systems, will be able to be defensive midfielder, offensive midfielder and winger.

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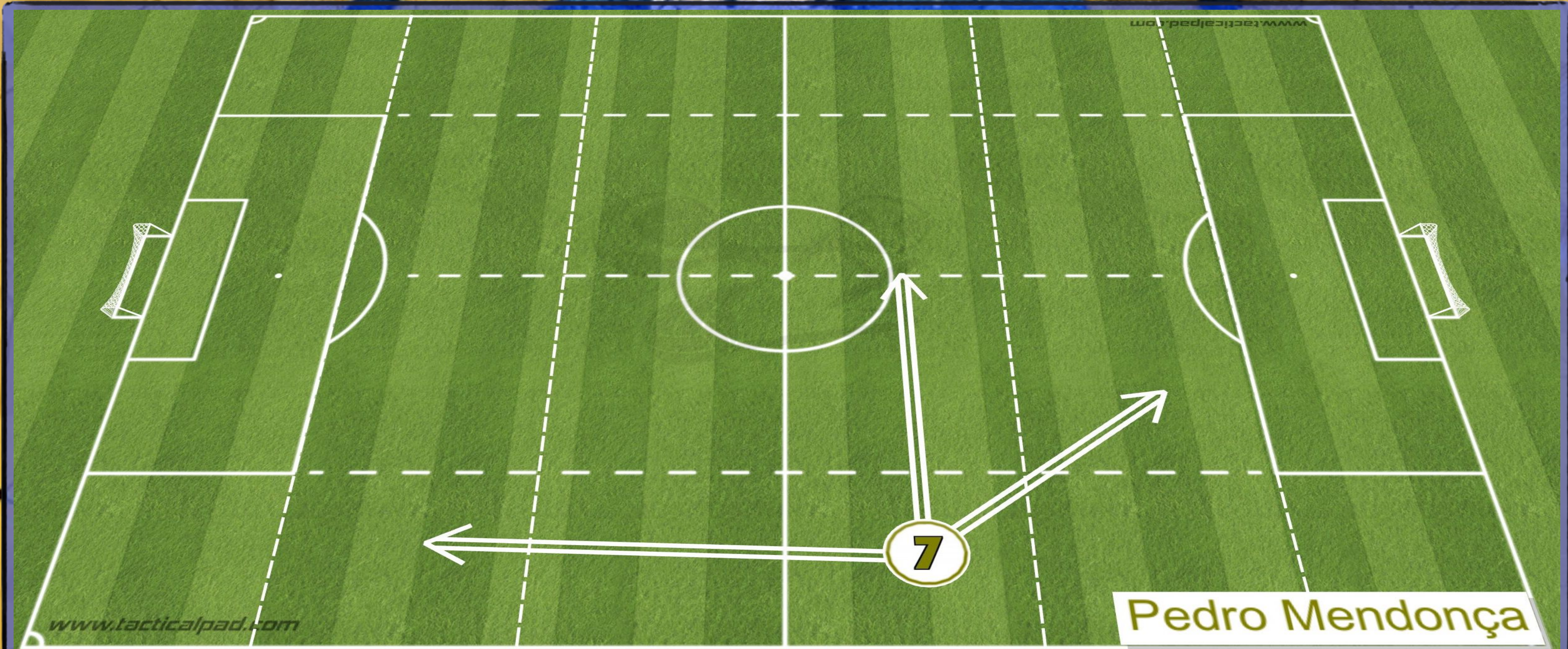
Alternative Positions (Offensive Midfielder)



Starting from his natural position, the offensive midfielder, by experiencing the 10 different game systems, will be able to be center midfielder, winger and striker.

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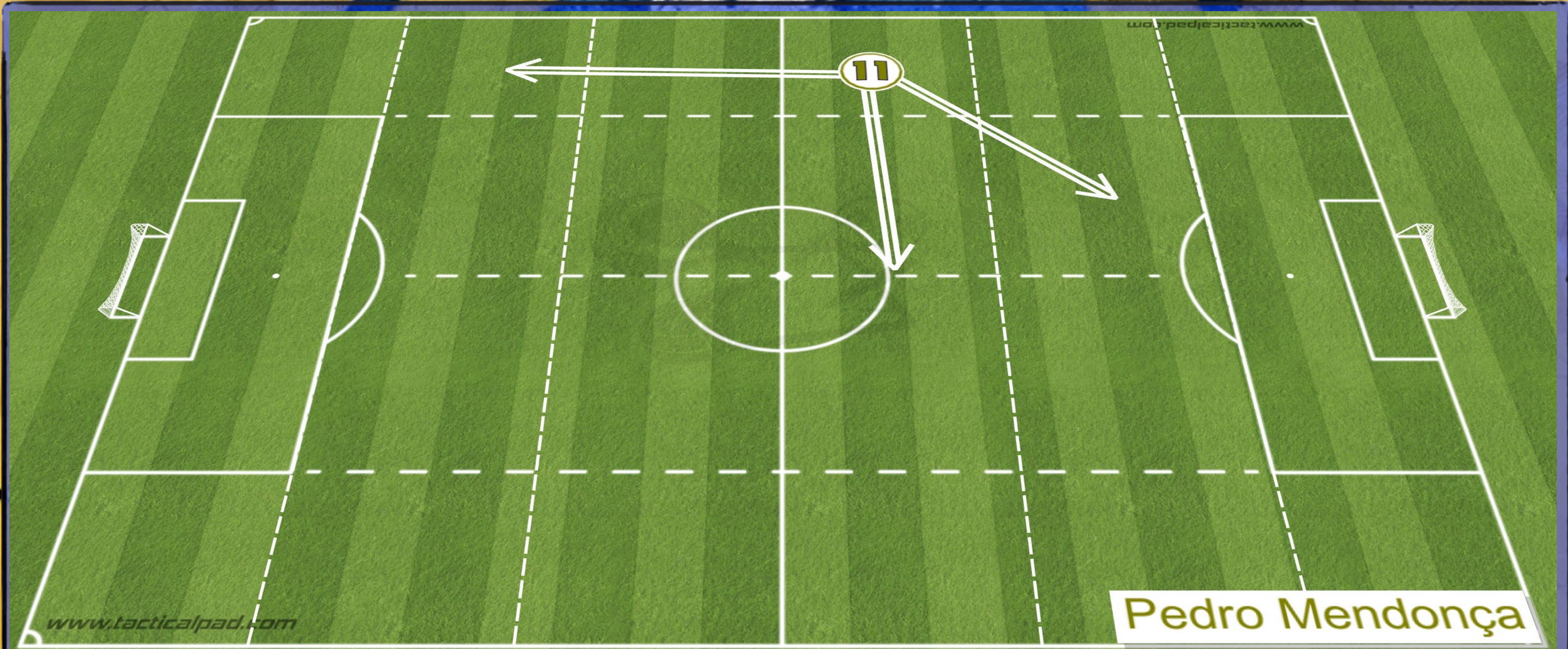
Alternative Positions (Right Winger)



Starting from the natural position, the right winger, when experiencing the 10 different gaming systems, will be able to be right full-back, offensive midfielder and striker.

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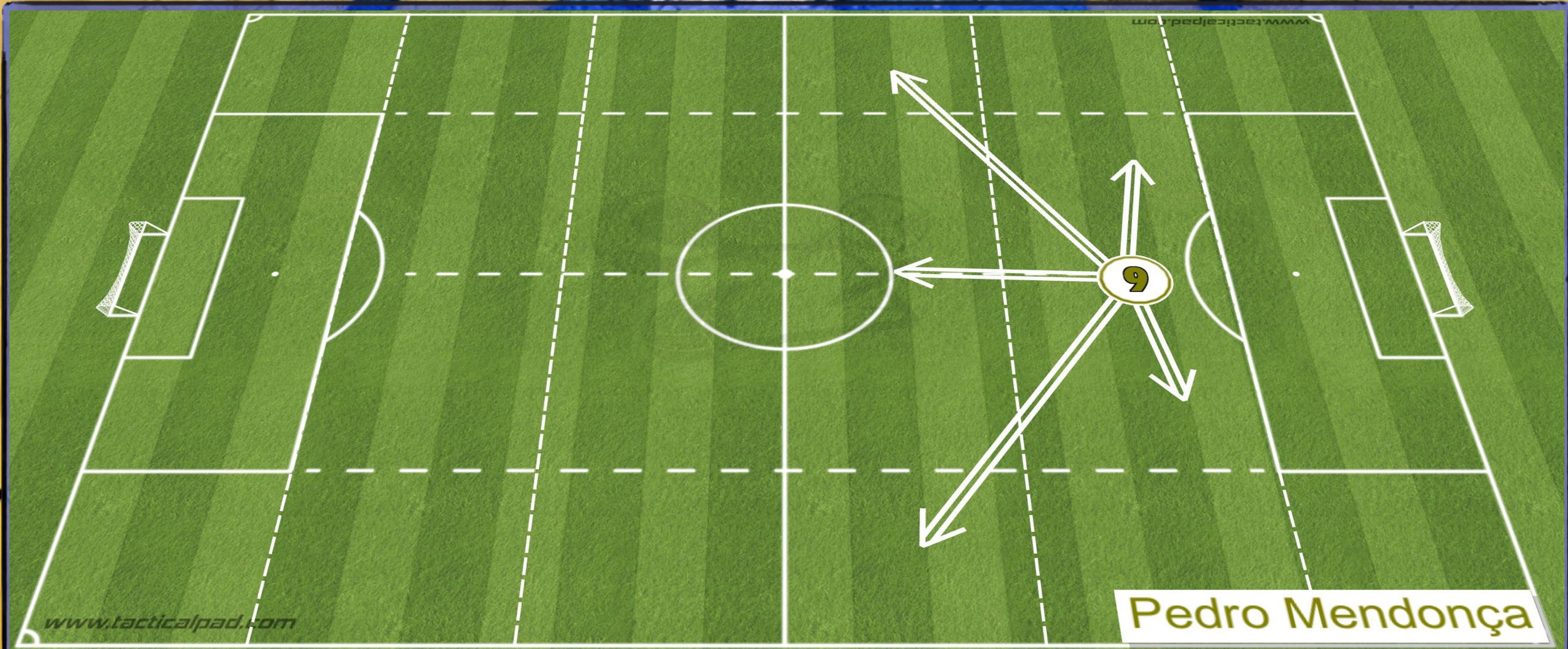
Alternative Positions (Left Winger)



Starting from the natural position, the left winger, when experiencing the 10 different gaming systems, will be able to be left full-back, offensive midfielder and striker.

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Alternative Positions (Striker)



Starting from the natural position, the striker, by experiencing the 10 different gaming systems, will be able to be offensive midfielder and winger.

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Positional Versatility in Football

- Positional versatility is executed by the best players.
- For football to grow, players must play more than one role on the pitch.
- Positional versatility is not a fixed position. They are moments in the game when there is mobility to adapt to the opponent or to attack.
- If, during the attacking movement, we don't change positions, if we remain static, the opponent is less troubled. It is also necessary to change the positions in training.
- In some positions, for example when we have a right-footed center back playing on the left side, we don't have a foot prepared to play the ball and that represents a difficulty. We cannot talk about tactics without talking about the player.

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Formal Football Exercise

Four formal football segments are necessary if we want to create and face:

- The 4 options planned to integrate the Defensive Line with 3 defenders.
- The 4 options planned to integrate the Offensive Line with 2 Strikers.

Training Exercises for the 10 Game Systems

- Previously, it took 6 segments of 10 minutes to experience the 5 game systems and reverse them. During 60 minutes, the 10 game systems are experienced or in 2 trainings of 60 minutes (so that the roles are inverted). With 4 formal football segments we can use the 4 options for the “Line of 3”. In 40 minutes, it’s possible to transmit all this.
- It seems complex in theory, but in practice it is easier (to put the players in the game system without special indications).



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