

Burke Athletic Club Substitutes

FIFA introduced three changes to soccer at the 1970 World Cup Finals in Mexico. For the first time a spotted ball was used because goalkeepers and coaches were concerned that the thin air in Mexico City would allow talented players to put additional spin on the ball. The spots allowed players to read the spin on the ball earlier in flight. Yellow and red cards were introduced to bridge the communication problems between referees, players, coaches and fans. This came about because of the 1966 England – Argentina Semi-Final match when the German referee tried to send off the Argentinean captain, Antonio Rattin, and neither man understood a word the other was saying. (Ken Aston, who eventually persuaded Rattin to leave the field, got the idea for a color-coded system from a set of traffic lights he saw as he was driving home.)

But the biggest change of all was necessitated by the overtime Final between England and West Germany. Up to that point when a manager named the starting eleven he was also naming the ending eleven. The 1966 Final was played by the same twenty-two men for the entire 120 minutes. There was no mechanism or allowance for substitutes. If a player was injured the team would carry on with ten. If it were the goalkeeper a field player would have to take his place. The scene on the field when West Germany equalized in the last minute sending the game into overtime became legend concerning two fatigued teams. It also created a problem with the satellite time that FIFA had bought for broadcasting the game. One they didn't want to repeat.

FIFA was very concerned about the effect the high altitude would have on players. They envisioned the World Cup Finals as being a war of attrition. Players would become fatigued early on and the games would degenerate into a drab stalemate. To counteract this they introduced the idea of substitutes. At first it was limited to three and this way coaches would be able to introduce new blood into a sagging team, go for the winner in regulation time and get off of the air on schedule. (Luckily for the soccer public it seems to have had exactly the opposite effect. West Germany played both their quarter and semi-final matches in thrilling overtime.)

At the same time, Dettmar Cramer was setting up the basic philosophy for youth soccer in the United States. Part of what he saw was the need to insure that the suburban youth culture was based on participation, and not on competition. At least until this new sport could get off of the ground. His position in the World's soccer hierarchy was strong enough that the sports founding members here adopted this view. Everybody plays.

This presents today's coaches with several problems. How do you organize your team so that you can balance the needs of fair competition, balanced playing time and the educational demands of your top talents? How can you keep track of who's been where and how long have they played? How do you maximize the educational opportunities of the competitive phase, the weekend match? These are some of the practical questions that the following will address.

Don't wing it, write it down.

Step one is to commit to the habit of writing down what you want to do before you get to the game. (A form will follow.) This offers you several advantages:

1. It can give you a visual reference of who is where and when. This will save you from some of those coaches "uh-oh's" when you look out on the field and see a situation that you'd rather

not see.

2. It's easier to change a plan than it is to make one up. As the kids arrive you'll be able to mentally check off how close you've come to your plan. You'll have a starting team/s and the subs. You'll be able to make your adjustments and get back as close as possible to your starting plan.
3. You'll have a written record. You'll be walking into the game with documentation. With a few notations you can make, and record what you actually did. This will pay big dividends half way through the season when you're trying to remember who played what and for how long.
4. You'll be able to give your children useful information before a game. When everybody shows up you'll be able to give everyone a clear idea about what they'll be doing and when they'll be doing it. Their role in the game shouldn't come as a surprise.
5. You avoid a lot of confusion when players are on the field and ask, "Where am I playing?" You have it written down.
6. You are more likely to have the correct number of players on the field.
7. You'll be much more comfortable in your timing when to put your subs in. You'll know ahead of time when you want to change, not too early and not too late.

All of this requires some pre-game preparation on your part. At first it will take awhile. But after a few games it becomes routine and very easy to do. You start to repeat certain patterns that become obvious after you've been writing them down. You don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Plan your work, work your plan.

Now that you're committed to planning ahead let's look at some ideas for better preparation.

1. Youth players need to learn every position so it's important that they play in every position.
 - a. Well not quite. There are two important caveats to this myth.
 - i. They don't have to play every position in every game. This invites chaos and confusion. Use each game as a way to focus on a smaller portion of the game. Try to keep the children in at least a certain area or role for each game. For example, on the right side, in the center or on the left. As an attacker or as a defender. (Goalkeepers can share a half.) This way, when you tell a child something it's relevant to what they've done and what they'll be doing. (What value is feedback about attacking play when they'll spend the rest of the game in the back line?) Use the game to focus on a topic and learn more about it.
 - ii. When a child has made up their mind that they want to play somewhere why argue with them? (Unless you have to share the position.) If they want to play exclusively in the back let them. They can become an expert, enjoy their time there and change later on when they're ready. (Imagine a band teacher who switched musicians around because "you never know when a violinist might need to play the oboe.")

- Identify your key players and your preferred system of play. At the younger ages the latter isn't very important. But you must be able to place your children into a hierarchy. Now we'll look at the control sheets. The first will serve as an example for 7v7 to 11v11. The second will be for dual side by side games.

Burke Athletic Club Date: _____ Match: _____
 Match/Player Control Sheet

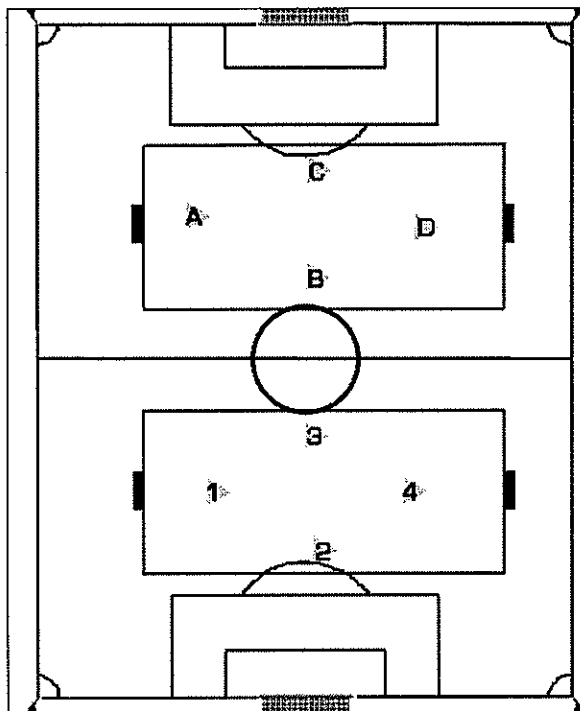
	Name	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
	Bill	7	7	-	7
	Troy	-	2	11	2
	Roger	2	-	2	-
	Gene	-	5	3	3
	Neal	3	-	4	4
	Pete	11	-	-	11
	Sam	5	-	5	5
	Pat R.	-	6	6	9
	David	1	1	-	6
	John	9	9	9	-
	Tony	-	3	7	-
	Allen	6	-	1	1
	Felix	8	8	-	8
	Alonzo	10	10	10	-
	Gabriel	-	11	-	10
Pat B.	4	4	8	-	

This example shows a team of 16 players playing 11 a side. The preferred system is a 1-4-3-3 or a 1-3-4-3. The key players are highlighted, Bill, Gene, Sam and Alonzo.

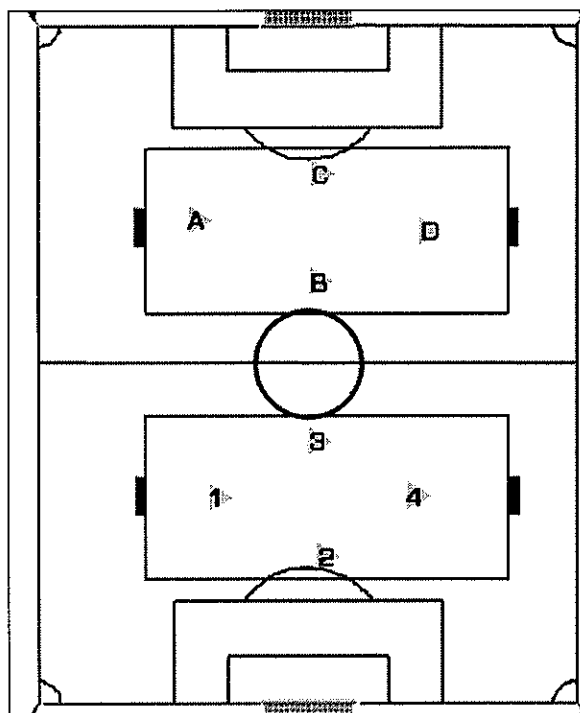
- Label and number the positions on the field diagram. This gives you a visual representation of how your team should look. Note the key positions and roles like the number's 1, 3, 5, 7 and 10.
- Assign the goalkeepers, David in the first half and Allen in the second. Now one key position is taken care of. (Recommend that you play these brave souls $\frac{1}{4}$ in the field as well as their time in the goal.)
- Assign the key players to the key positions. Each player gets $\frac{3}{4}$ of the game and make sure that three of them are on the field in each quarter. (Even when the game is played in halves think of quarters.) This insures that you don't have a period where you lose complete control. (You have to decide who are the key players and positions.)
- Fill in the rest of the team around the key players. You can look to combine certain players for certain situations.
- If someone doesn't show up you know exactly when he or she was scheduled, where they were playing and who can replace them. Plug in the new player/s and move on.

6. Next week you can make sure that the players who only got 1/2 of the game, Roger, Pete, Tony and Gabriel get 3/4 playing time. You'll have these sheets all season as a record.
7. You can easily scan the sheet to make sure that most of the players have consistent job responsibilities for the game.

Burke Athletic Club Date: _____ Match: _____
 Match/Player Control Sheet



Name	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Jane	X	O	X	-
Emily	X	O	X	-
Carla	X	X	O	-
Sarah	X	X	O	-
Joan	O	X	X	-
Kelly	O	X	X	-
		7m	14m	
		7m	14m	
Katherine	X	X	O	-
Jenny	X	X	O	-
Becky P.	X	O	X	-
Becky B.	X	O	X	-
Susan	O	X	X	-
Denise	O	X	X	-



Name	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Katherine	X	X	O	-
Jenny	X	O	X	-
Becky P.	X	O	X	-
Sarah	X	X	O	-
Joan	O	X	X	-
Kelly	O	X	X	-
		7m	14m	
		7m	14m	
Carla	O	X	X	-
Emily	X	O	X	-
Jane	X	X	O	-
Denise	X	O	X	-
Susan	X	X	O	-
Becky B.	O	X	X	-

For side by side games it helps if you can work out the relative strengths of the teams with the opposing coach beforehand. In this example we have a roster of twelve players playing 4v4 on two fields. X is playing and O is out.

1. Each sheet/table represents $\frac{1}{2}$ of the game. In the first half the team hierarchy is that the top six players are on one field while the bottom six are on the other. The opponents should be organized the same way so that the teams are at relatively equal strength.
2. Because of the short nature of the halves think of them being equally divided into thirds. Make the first change $\frac{1}{3}$ into the game, the second at $\frac{2}{3}$'s. This system will balance out the time evenly.
3. In the second half three players have switched between the two fields. Now the teams and the games will be different while the substitution pattern stays the same.

Having some structure before the game starts will bring you some peace of mind. Going in you'll know that you have a plan and that you'll have the information necessary to change when situations demand it.