



# Cheetahs on the Pitch

Analyzing the tactics of Carlos Queiroz

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*This book is the 9th part of the book of the national team, which explains the summary of the tactics of the Iranian national team under the supervision of Carlos Queiroz. Here and at the end of the book, there is a link to download the book of the national team, if you wish, you can download and read the complete book by clicking on the link:*

[Cheetahs on the Pitch: Analyzing the tactics of Carlos Queiroz : Mollae, Kamran: Amazon.de: Books](#)

# Chapter 9

## Summary \* Team Melli's tactics

In this chapter, the tactics of Team Melli, which were used by the Cheetahs as known as main tactics are summarized and a brief description is covered about them.

### **Titles:**

#### **I. Offensive tactics in open play:**

- 1- Focus the attacks on several technical players (Shojaei, Dejagah, and Ghoochannejhad) (Iran-Argentina)
2. Making opponent commits a foul in the offensive third (Iran-Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- 3- Long-range shot (Iran-Qatar)
- 4- Long pass to the forward and joining of other players (Iran-Spain)
- 5- Counterattack (Iran-Portugal)
- 6- Deep play attacks (Iran-Yemen)
- 7- Controlled attacks (Iran-Yemen)
- 8- Pairing and triangulation in the middle channel (Iran-Vietnam)

- 9- Circumambient form in the phase of build up play in deep play attacks (Iran-Iraq 2019)
- 10- Patterns of teamwork in deep play attacks (Iran-Iraq 2019)
- 11- Pairing and triangulation in sideways channels (Iran-Oman)
- 12- Sending from the sides (Iran-Oman)
- 13- Fast break attacks after the press (Iran-China)
- 14- Long pass to the back of the opponent's defensive line (Iran-Japan)

## **II. Defensive tactics in Open play:**

- 15. Defending from the midfield (Iran-Nigeria)
- 16-Defense in the defensive third, outside the penalty area (Iran-Argentina)
- 17-Defense in the defensive third, inside the penalty area (Iran-Argentina)
- 18- Defense in the defensive third with the new 6-3-1 system, outside the penalty area (Iran-Spain)
- 19- Defense in the defensive third with the new 6-3-1 system, inside the penalty area (Iran-Spain)
- 20- Pressing in the opponent's field (Iran-Portugal)
- 21- Strategy of stopping the opponent at the farthest point of the home goal (Iran-Portugal)
- 22- Counter-press (Iran-China)
- 23- Defense in zone 2 (defensive third) with 5-1-3-1 diamond system (Iran-Japan)

## **III. Offensive tactics in Set pieces:**

- 24-Long goal kick to the side channel (Iran-Nigeria)
- 25-Using indirect offensive free-kicks (Iran-Bahrain)
- 26- Long goal kick to the middle channel (Iran-UAE)

- 27- Corner kicks (Iran-UAE)
- 28- Long offensive throw-in (Iran-Morocco)
- 29- Short offensive throw-in (Iran-Vietnam)

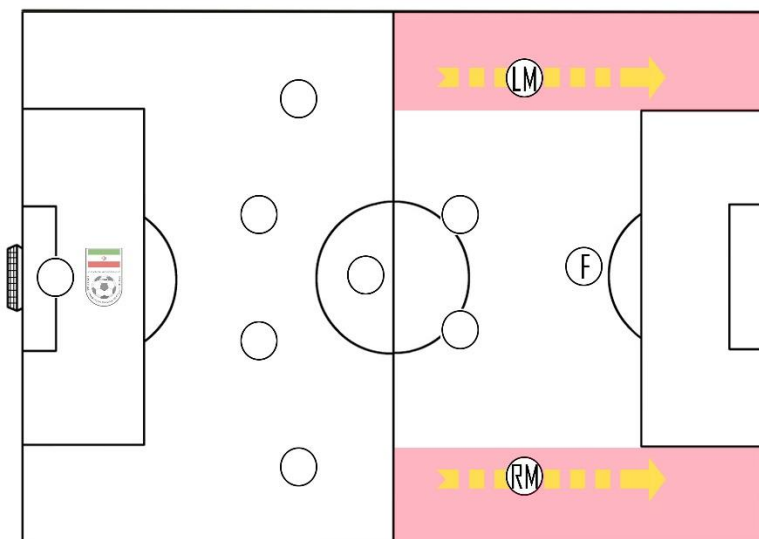
#### **IV. Defense tactics in Set pieces:**

- 30- Throw-in press in the opponent's field (Iran-Bahrain)
- 31- Defensive corner-kick (Iran-Morocco)

### **Brief description:**

- ❖ Focus the attacks on several technical players (Shojaei, Dejagah, and Ghoochannejhad):

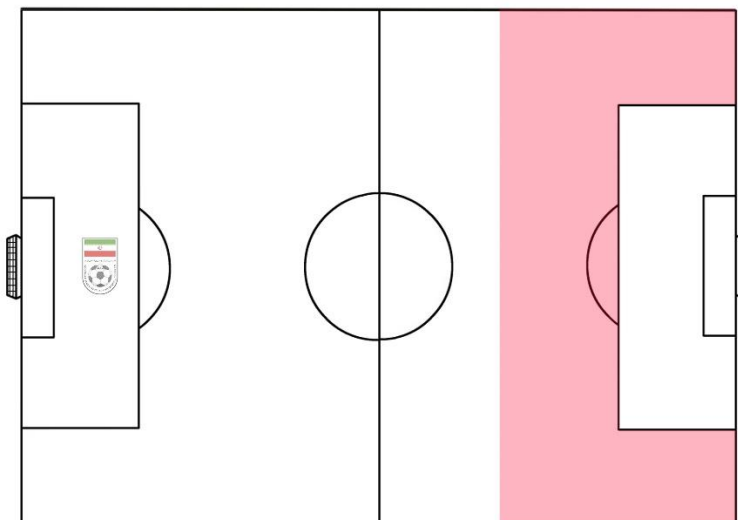
Game description: Iran-Argentina.



Brief description: Due to the fact that the defensive strategy of the Team Melli against strong teams requires more defensive players than usual, Queiroz uses several technical players for the offensive work. The focus of the attacks is on these technical players, and once the Cheetahs gain the ball pass it to these players. The space on the sideway causes the presence of target and pivotal players in these areas. In the game against Argentina, Shojaei, Dejagah, and Ghoochannejhad were the key players in the attack.

❖ Making the opponent commit a foul in the offensive third:

Game description: Iran - Bosnia and Herzegovina.

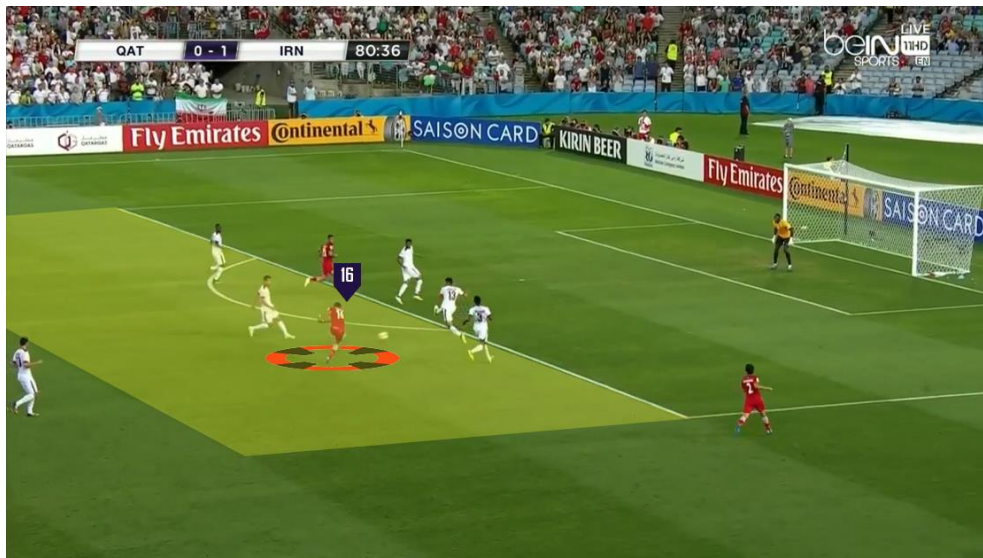


Brief description: Free kicks are one of the tactics that the Cheetahs have skill in performing. Bringing the ball to the front of the opponent's goal without the need for penetration into the penalty area is one of the advantages of free kicks. Therefore, the Team Melli players try to use these kicks to make the opponent commit a foul in the offensive third in one-on-one battles. This becomes even more important when the

opponent is stronger than Iran, which makes it harder for them to reach the penalty area.

❖ Long-range shot:

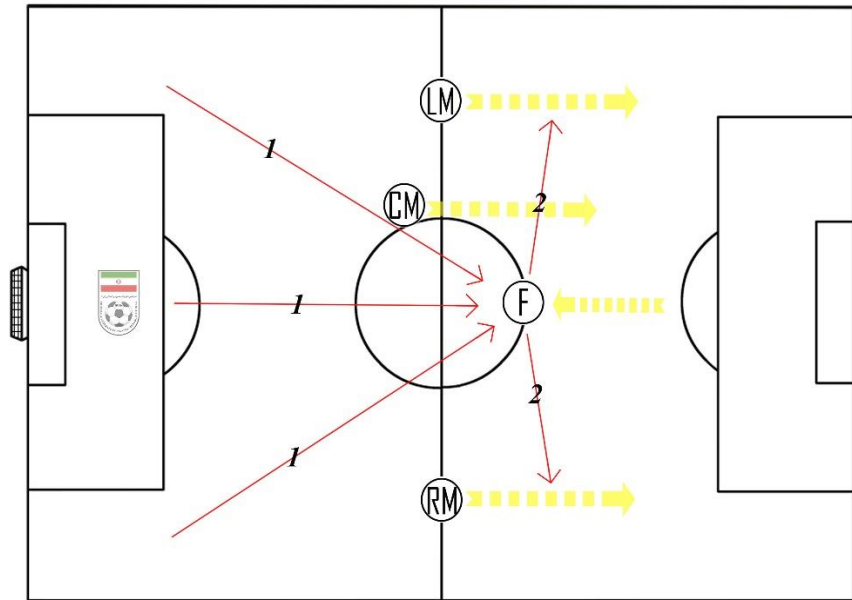
Game description: Iran-Qatar



Brief description: In the long-range shot tactic, the penetration phase is eliminated. This advantage makes the attacking team need fewer players to perform their attack. The shooter also has more space and time to shoot. Given these characteristics and the need for fewer players in the offensive work, the long-range shot tactic is very important for teams with a defensive strategy. Most of the long-range shots of the Team Melli players were from 25 meters distance from the goal line to the penalty area (the area shown in the picture above).

❖ Long pass to the forward and joining of other players:

Game description: Iran-Spain.

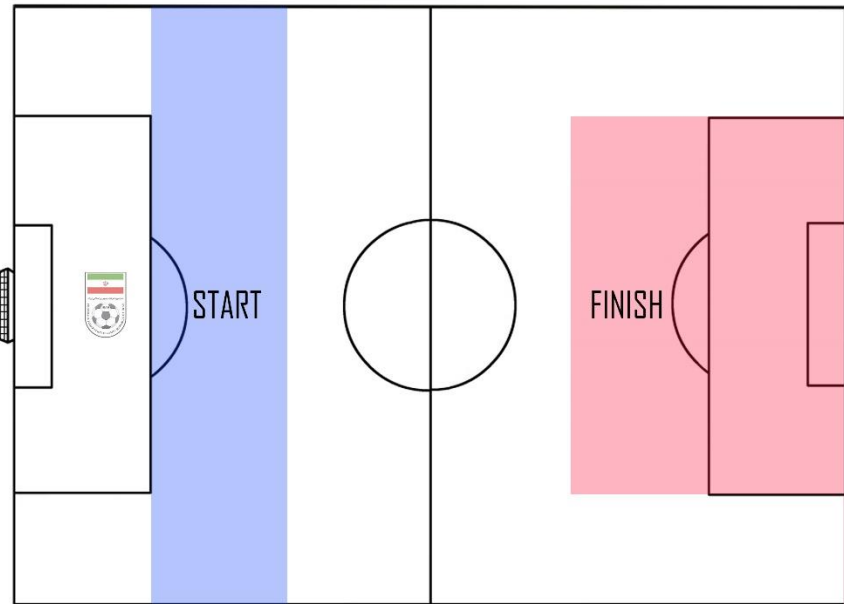


Brief description: One of the positive features of this tactic is fast transmission with increasing the probability of keeping the ball in attack. This tactic is performed in the two main phases, the first long pass and the second sideways pass. The first pass is received by the target player and then the ball is passed to the players who have been advanced quickly. In many counter-attacks, the Team Melli took advantage of the fast transmission of this tactic and formed its attack.

❖ Counterattack:

Game description: Iran-Portugal.

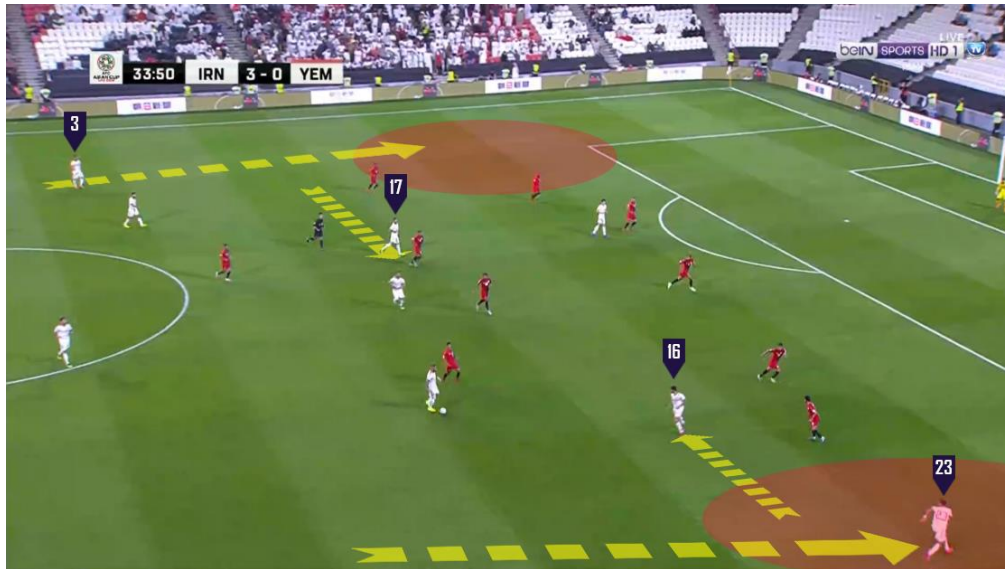




Brief description: Counterattack is the favorite offensive tactic of defensive teams. One of the most important factors in counterattack is how long it takes. The Cheetahs are performed well in offensive transmission and finished their counterattacks in about 10 seconds. Usually, a counterattack is formed by sending 2 or 3 passes which the first long pass is sent to Azmoun. Counterattacks which in most cases were performed with the presence of 4 players and usually started with sending the first pass from zone 2 and ended in zone 5 or 6. The statistics were from the review of the match against Portugal.

❖ Deep play attacks:

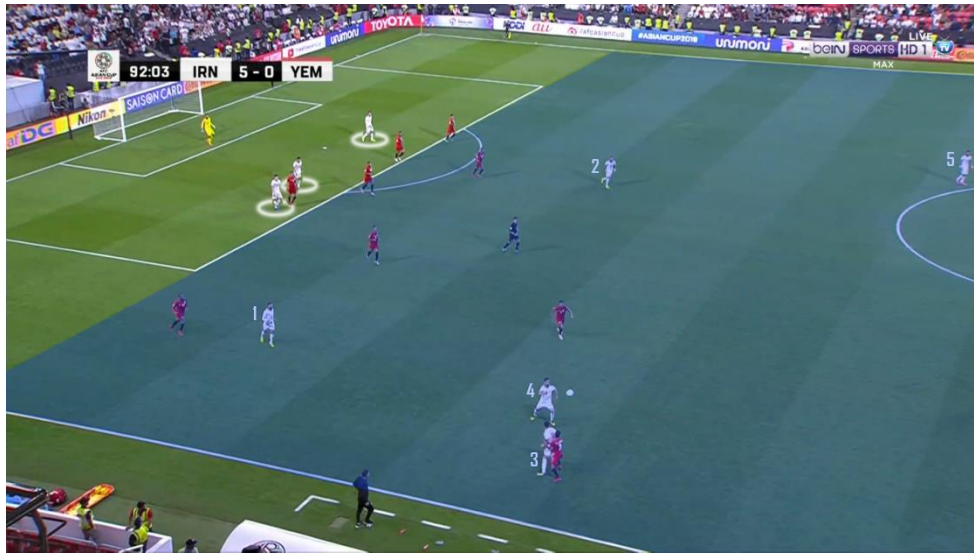
Game description: Iran-Yemen.



Brief description: In the new form of the Team Melli, Queiroz also uses deep play attacks. This tactic is performed against teams that are weaker than Iran, where the Cheetahs try to break the opponent's deep defense with deep play attacks. Most white-clad passes in this style of attack include normal passes (between short and long passes). They also use sideways and inswinging passes. The Team Melli formation in deep play attacks is 4-3-3 and 3-4-3 to be more successful by creating a more offensive form in the penetration phase.

❖ Controlled attacks:

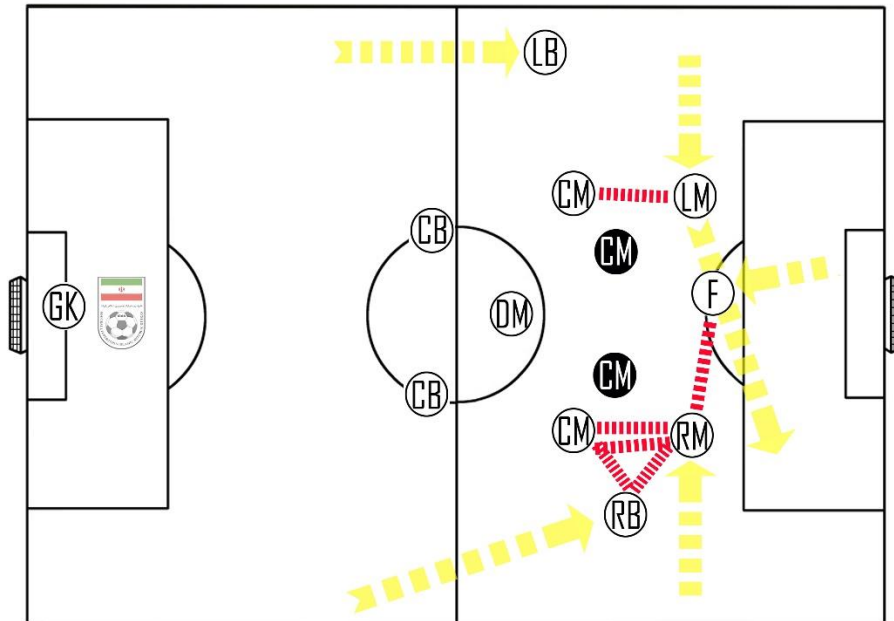
Game description: Iran-Yemen.



Brief description: Controlled attacks are a form of deep play attacks. In this tactic, by reducing the number of attackers in the opponent's penalty area, the risk of attacks is reduced, and by increasing the number of players outside the penalty area and thus increasing the probability of regaining the ball, the number of attacks and the percentage of possession of the attacking team increases. This tactic is completed by the post-attack press (counter-press). In the controlled attacks performed by the Team Melli 3 strikers is present in the penalty area and other players in zones 4 and 5 are waiting for the ball to regain and create a second wave of attack.

❖ Pairing and triangulation in the middle channel:

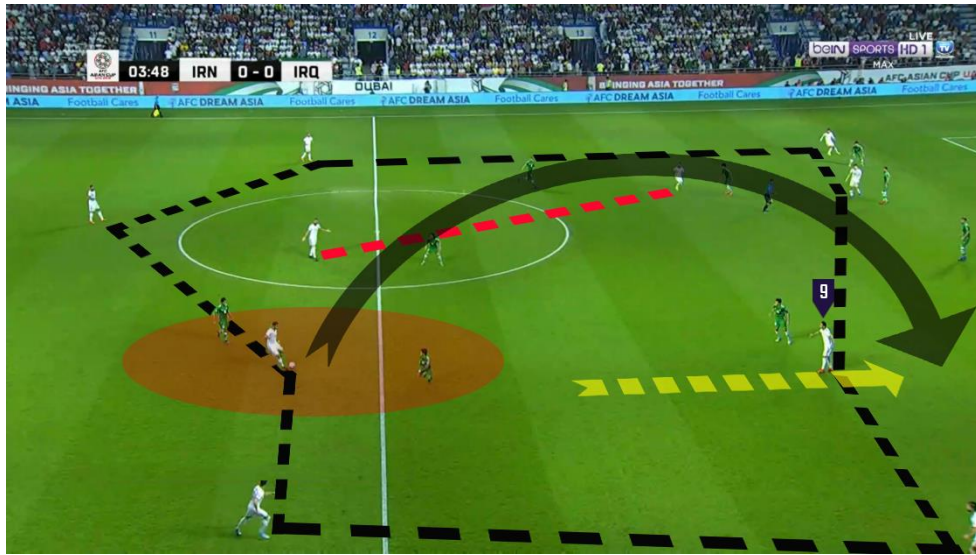
Game description: Iran-Vietnam.



Brief description: Pairing and triangulation in the middle channel are also used in the deep play attacks against weaker teams that use deep defense. The result of this tactic is to penetrate and reach the depth of the opponent's defense. The Team Melli performs this tactic by compacting midfielders and sometimes full-backs and creating pairs and triangles in the middle channel. The diagonal movements of the attackers into the penalty area are completed by the geometric shapes in zone 5 and make penetration possible. Numerical superiority and fast movement to small spaces is the key to the success of this tactic.

- ❖ Circumambient form in the phase of build-up play in deep play attacks:

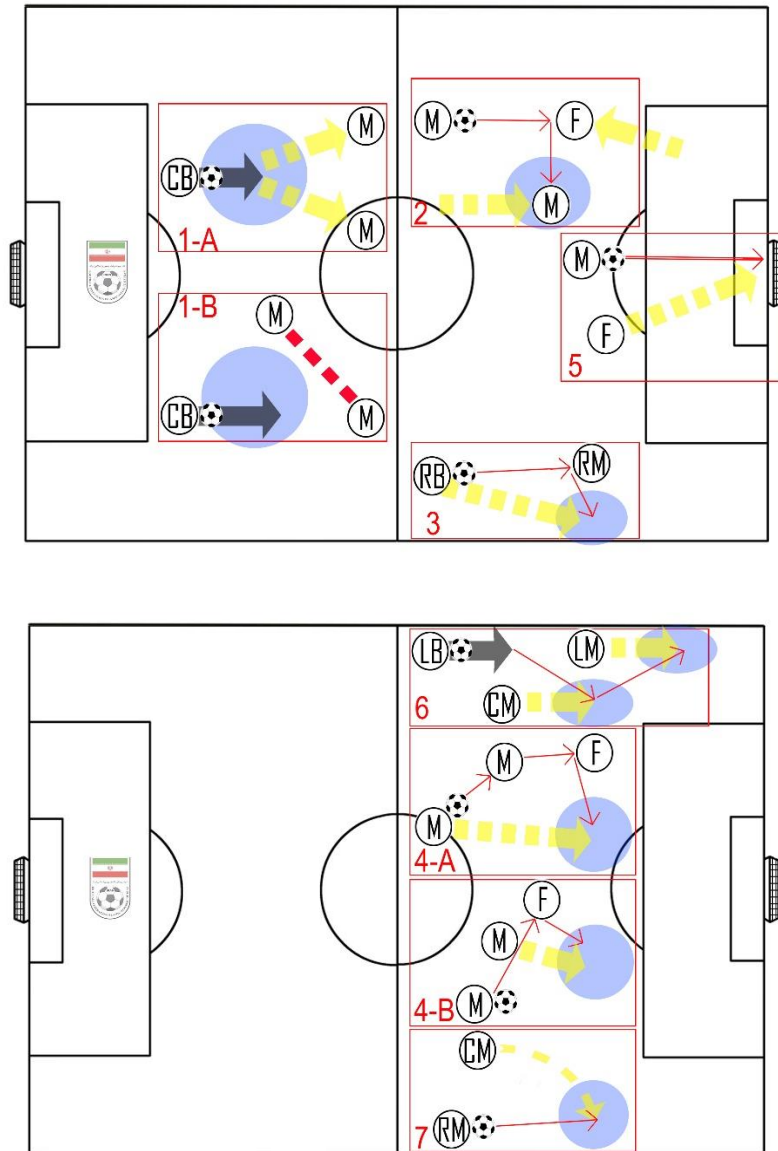
Game description: Iran-Iraq (2019)



Brief description: This tactic and geometric shape are one of the main forms in the playmaking phase of deep play attacks. The tactic also works well against teams that use pressing on Iran's defensive line. Players use the spaces by going around the field and long passes. The circular shape can be very effective for defensive teams with strong players. To perform this tactic, the Team Melli uses 8 players around and 2 players in the center of the circle (to connect the players and create balance in the geometric shape).

❖ Patterns of teamwork in deep play attacks:

Game description: Iran-Iraq (2019)



Brief description: The Team Melli uses these movement patterns in deep play attacks. According to the Iran style of play, players often use current spaces for the desired movement patterns. To use the current spaces, the players must be fast in running and thinking.

The Cheetah movement patterns include these 7 main items:

1. Creating space and moving forward
2. Wall pass

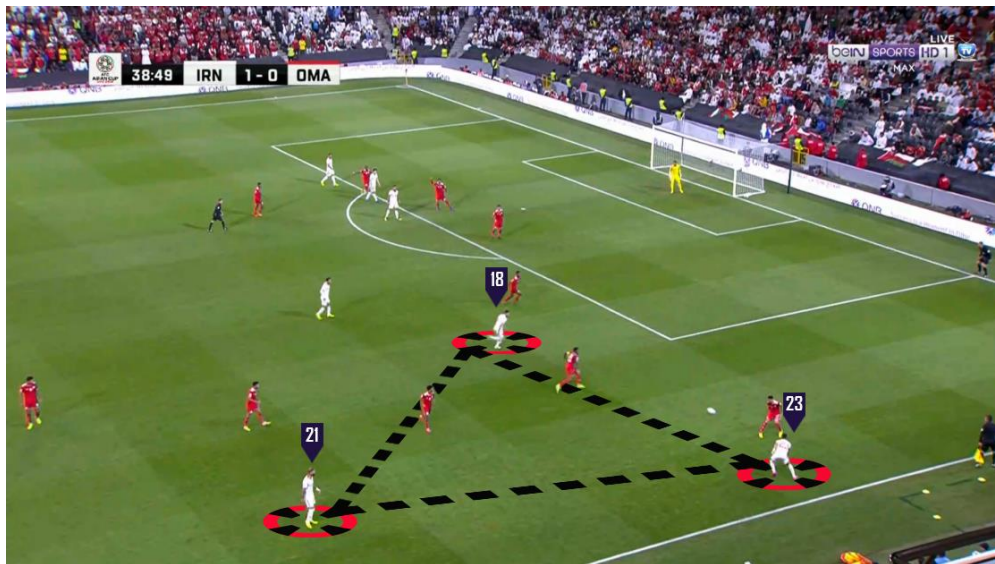


3. A one-two
4. A one-three
5. Shoot and rebound
6. Parallel movement
7. Arc move to the current space

The two images above show a schematic of the patterns.

❖ Paring and triangulation in sideways channels:

Game description: Iran-Oman

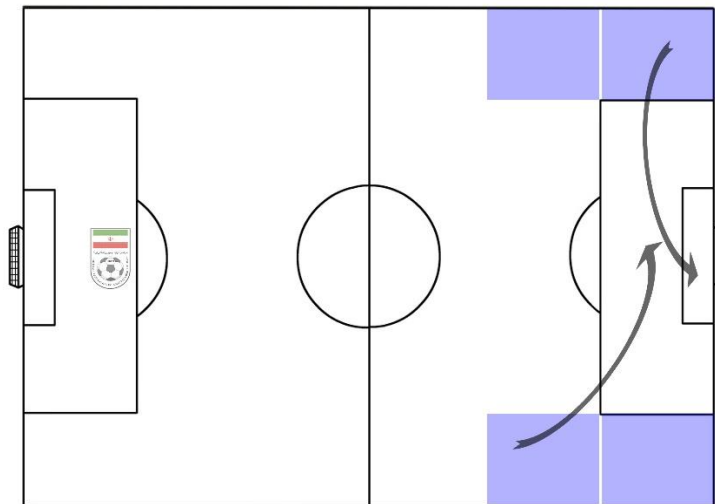


Brief description: In the 4-1-4-1 formation of the Team Melli, moving to the sideways by one of the central midfielders (the side where the ball is), pairing or triangulating by him with the fullback or side midfielder make the team ready to use the passes from the wings. Iran's central midfielders are usually fast players who can also play on sideways.

Thus, in the pairings by Queiroz's men in the corners, the post of the central midfielder and the side midfielder changes.

❖ Sending from the sideways:

Game description: Iran-Oman



Brief description: The main feature of the cross from the sideway is that the attacking team takes the ball in front of the opponent's goal without the need to penetrate to the crowded 18 yards area. Sending from the sideway tactic is divided into two categories: late crosses and early crosses. Late crosses have better quality and early crosses can increase the quantity (number). To succeed in this tactic, two factors are needed: players who have skilled in crosses and players who are well in heading and using these crosses in the penalty area. Asian teams use sending from the side to reach the opponents' goal many times. For the Team Melli, the side channels are also very important in offensive work.

❖ Fast break attacks after the press:



## Game description: Iran-China

Brief description: A fast attack is a form of attack in which the attacking team after gaining the ball from the opponent (the opponent who lost the ball in the build-up play phase) reaches the opponent's goal immediately (in less than 10 to 15 seconds). Fast attacks are very similar to counterattacks. Fast attacks are in two main forms: Starting from the home field and starting from the opponent's field. In the first form, there is more space and in the second form, the transmission is faster. A prerequisite for a fast attack is performing a good pressing tactic. Fast attacks have little dependence on the number of players, but the key to the success in this tactic is the fast transmission.

❖ Long pass to the back of the opponent's defensive line:

## Game description: Iran-Japan

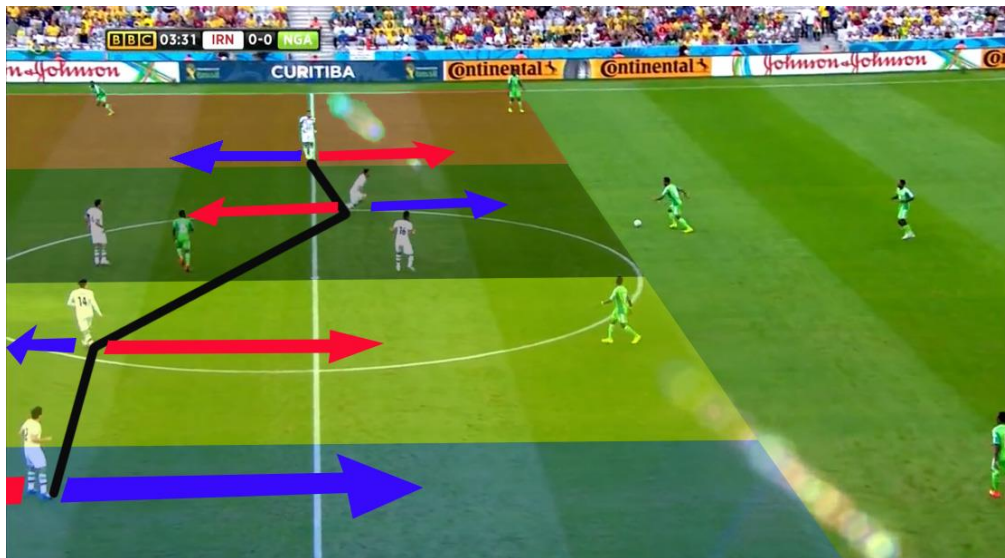


Brief description: This tactic is like a long-range shot tactic that is well used in counterattacks and fast attacks. This tactic requires the fast target player and teamwork between the crosser and receiver of the pass. One of the best uses is to cross back to the opponent's defense against teams

whose defensive line is played up and also against the opponent's presses.

❖ Defending from the midfield line:

Game description: Iran-Nigeria

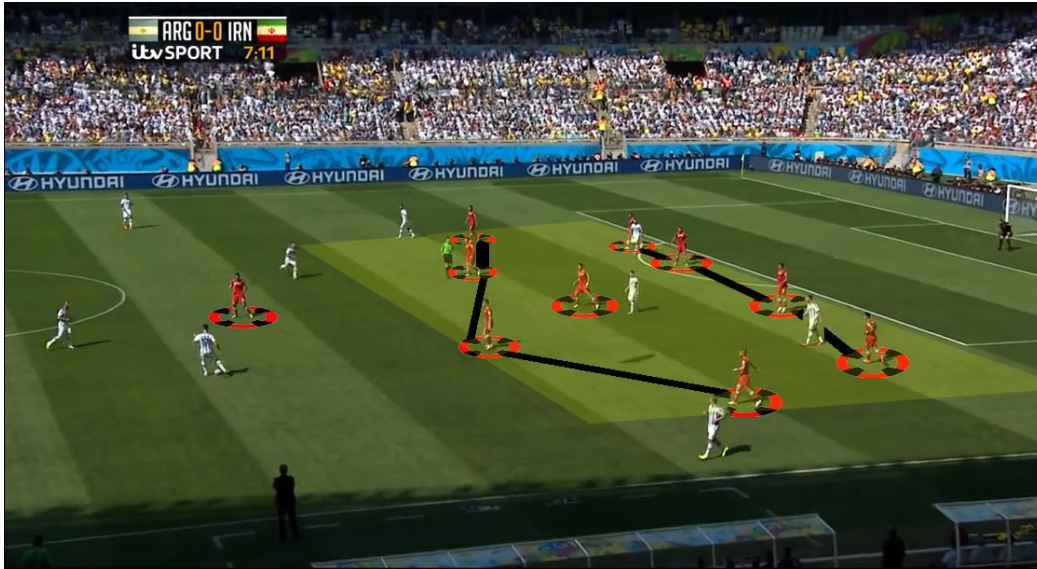


Brief description: Defending from the midfield was the most successful and one of the main tactics of the Cheetahs during the coaching of Queiroz. 4 midfielders in the 4-1-4-1 system form the confrontation line from the midfield and put pressure on the player who has the ball and passes the midfield and forces him to withdraw. The forward also helps two midfielders to put pressure on the opponent in the midfield channel. A single defensive midfielder and 4 other defenders also cover the confrontation line.

The sideways is divided into 4 channels, and each player in the confrontation line by the zonal defense must put pressure on the player who has possession of the ball in the channel in which he is present.

❖ Defense in the defensive third, outside the penalty area:

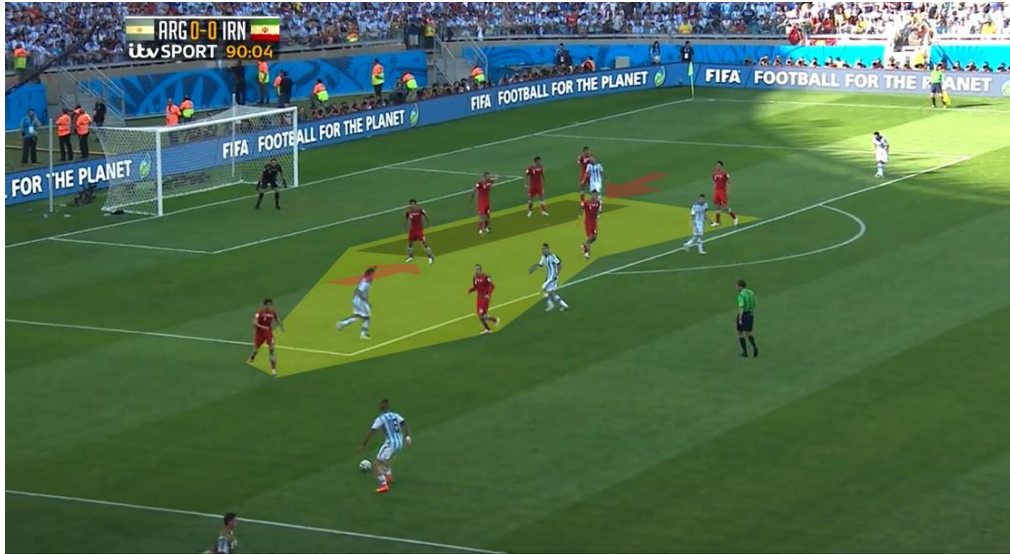
Game description: Iran-Argentina



Brief description: To prevent the opponent from penetrating the penalty area; the Team Melli players formed their defensive block in zone 2. The Cheetahs' defense in zone 2 varies depending on the opposing team's play style and uses 4-1-4-1, 5-1-3-1, 5-4-1, and 6-3-1 formation. Usually, the defense in zone 2 included the second phase of the defense by Queiroz's men, who were also very successful in performing this tactic.

❖ Defense in the defensive third, inside the penalty area:

Game description: Iran-Argentina

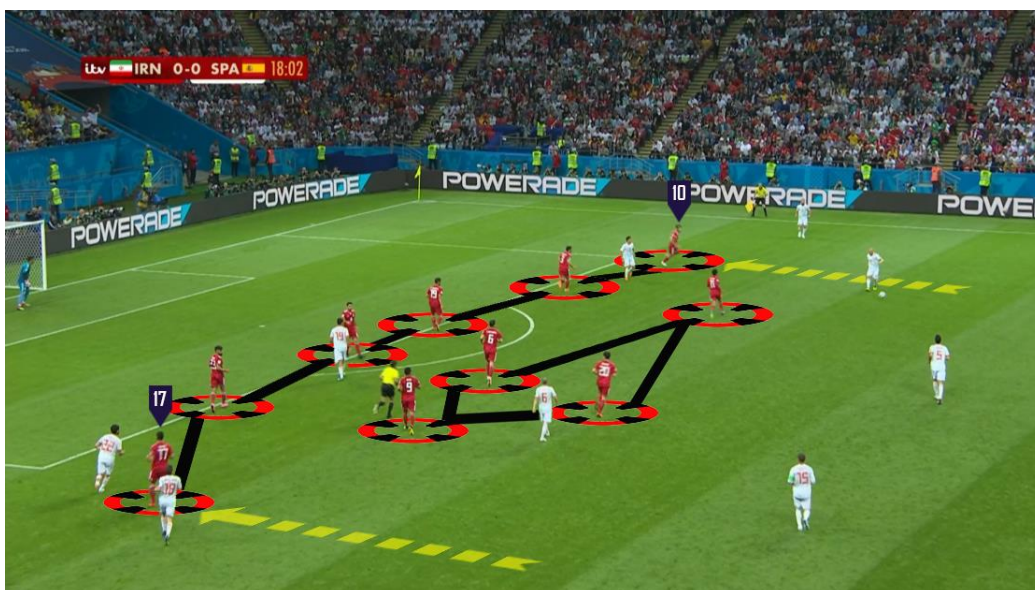


Brief description: Defense in the penalty area is the last phase of the Team Melli. The purpose of forming a defense in the defensive third outside the penalty area is to prevent the opponent's penetration phase and the purpose of forming a defense inside the penalty area is to prevent the opponent's scoring phase. Despite the Cheetahs' strong defense in the phases before the last phase, in some cases, they were forced to withdraw in 18 yards. One of the factors that made the Cheetahs successful in defense was their excellent defensive performance in the penalty area. The compact with 11 people in front of their goal and defeated the opponent by marking one-on-one.

- ❖ Defense in the defensive third with the new 6-3-1 system, outside the penalty area:

Game description: Iran-Spain





Brief description: The defense from zone 2 had a more defensive formation than the 4-1-4-1 lineup used by the Iran in the second period. The Cheetahs have always used the basic 4-1-4-1 system, but in a few cases, especially in the 2018 World Cup in zone 2, the flexible 4-1-4-1 system became 6-3-1. When the two midfielders withdraw, a 6-man defense line is created and completely neutralizes the opponent on sideways. In the middle channel, the diamond created by 4 other players prevents the opponent from penetrating from deep.

- ❖ Defense in the defensive third with the new 6-3-1 system, inside the penalty area:

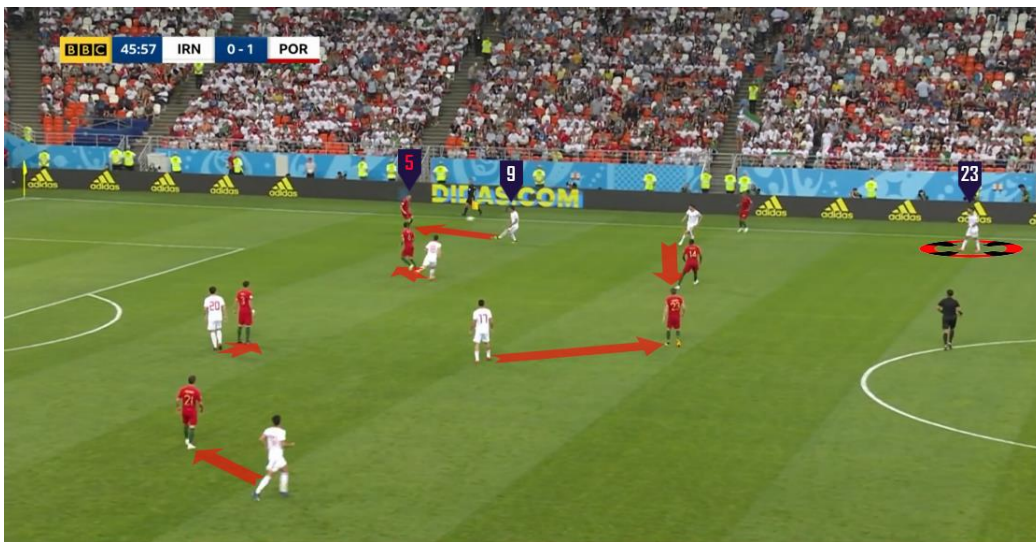
Game description: Iran-Spain

Brief description: The compact defense of the Team Melli in the penalty area was created by transferring the 6-3-1 formation from zone 2 to zone 1 after the opponent's penetrating, and it was the last defense phase of Iran. The Team Melli in the second period used this tactic in the 2018 World Cup. After the transmission of the Cheetahs defensive block to

the final phase of the defense, the single defensive midfielder joins the group of central defenders and compact the space in front of the goal. Two midfielders also cover the front of the penalty area.

❖ Pressing in the opponent's field:

Game description: Iran-Portugal



Brief description: There are two general goals of pressing on the opponent's field: first, stopping the opponent's attack and the second is fast break attack on the opponent's goal.

However pressing has two weaknesses: first, taking a lot of energy from the players, and second, if the press lines fail, the opposing team allow to attack.

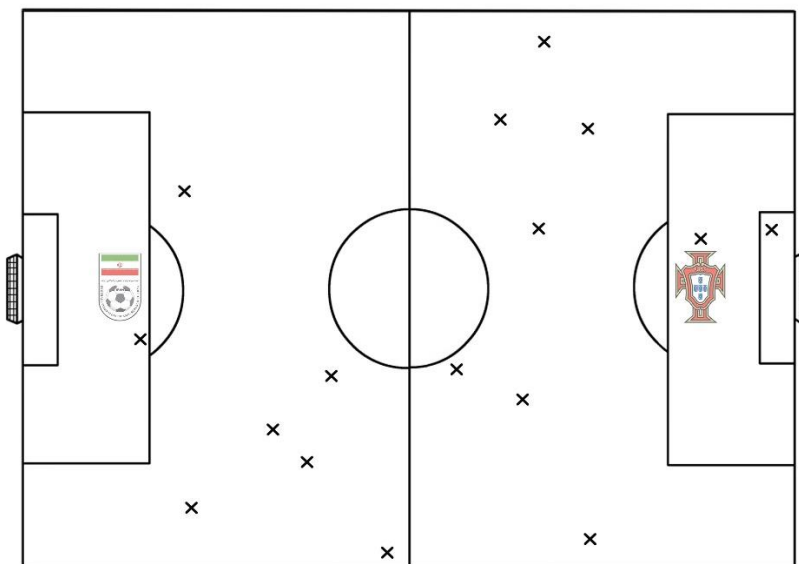
Pressing by the Cheetahs On the opponent's field usually performs regularly in zone 4 and irregularly in zone 5.

Types of Team Melli pressing:

- Pressing on build-up play:

- Pressing while the opponent performs the build-up play phase (in open play).
  - Defensive throw-in press on the opponent's field (in set pieces).
- Counter-press:
    - Counter press (pressing after the attack).
    - Gegen press (Pressing on the second ball).
- ❖ Strategy of stopping the opponent at the farthest point from the home goal:

Game description: Iran-Portugal

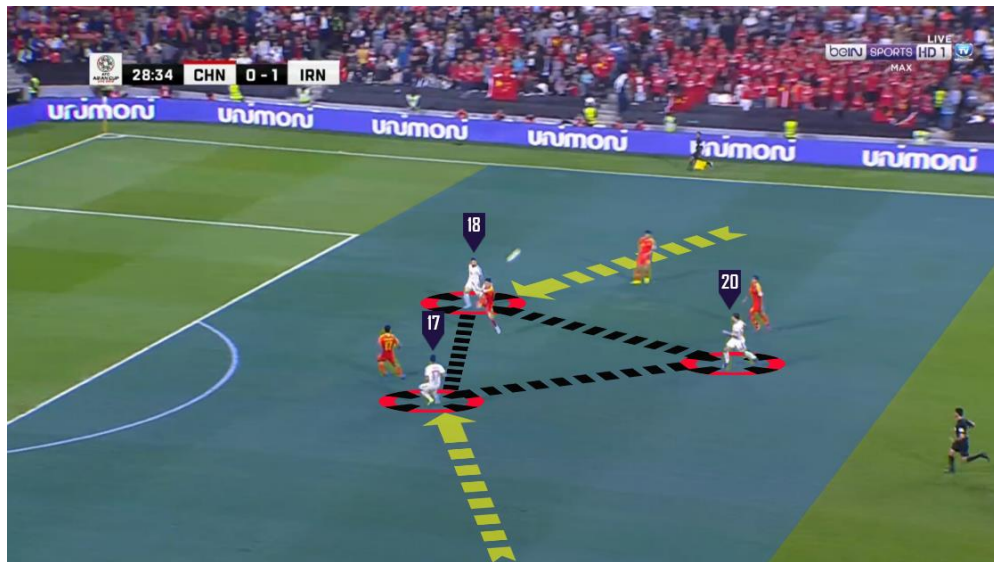


Brief description: One of the most obvious tactics of Carlos Queiroz is to keep the ball away from the home goal. For this reason, the Team Melli's defense line was always formed at the farthest possible point from the home goal. If the ball crosses the defensive line and it is not possible to delay and prevent the opponent's attack, it is reasonable to commit a foul without violence. These fouls must also be at the farthest

point from the home goal and are not allowed in the defensive third, as they give the opponent a free-kick opportunity.

#### ❖ Counter-press:

Game description: Iran-China



Brief description: counter-press is one of the types of pressing tactics that the team performs immediately after losing the ball. Iran used counter-press in the second period.

Counter-pressing by the Cheetahs was performed in two ways:

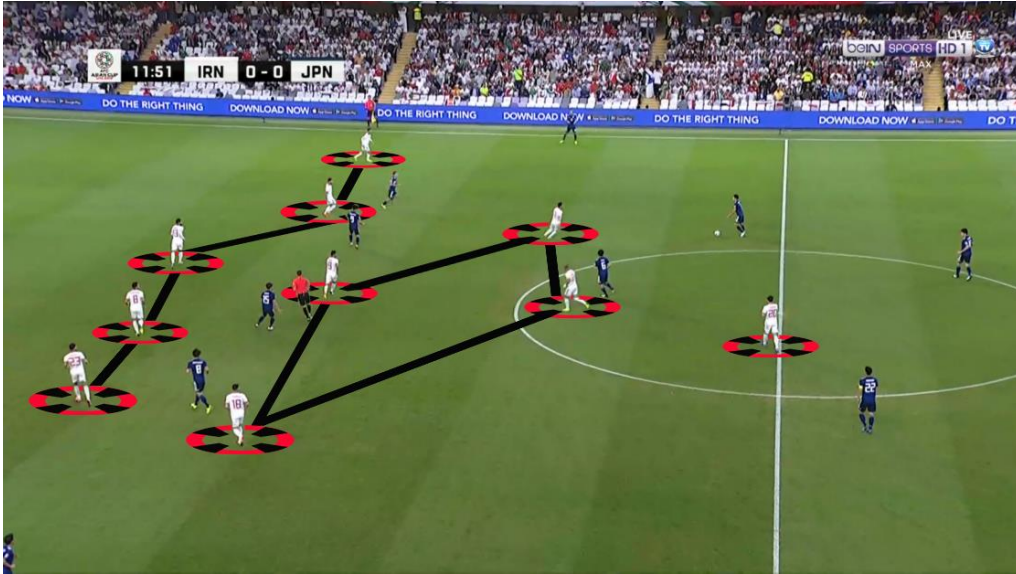
- Counter press: It was performed as a press after the attack.
- Gegen press: It was performed as a press on the second ball.

The most important factor in performing counter-press is time. Other factors include the placement of players after losing the ball and the participation of all players in pressing. The point that increases success in Gegen Press is, this tactic is purposeful; that should force the opposing team to take the ball to an area where has a weakness.



❖ Defense in zone 2 (defensive third) with 5-1-3-1 diamond system:

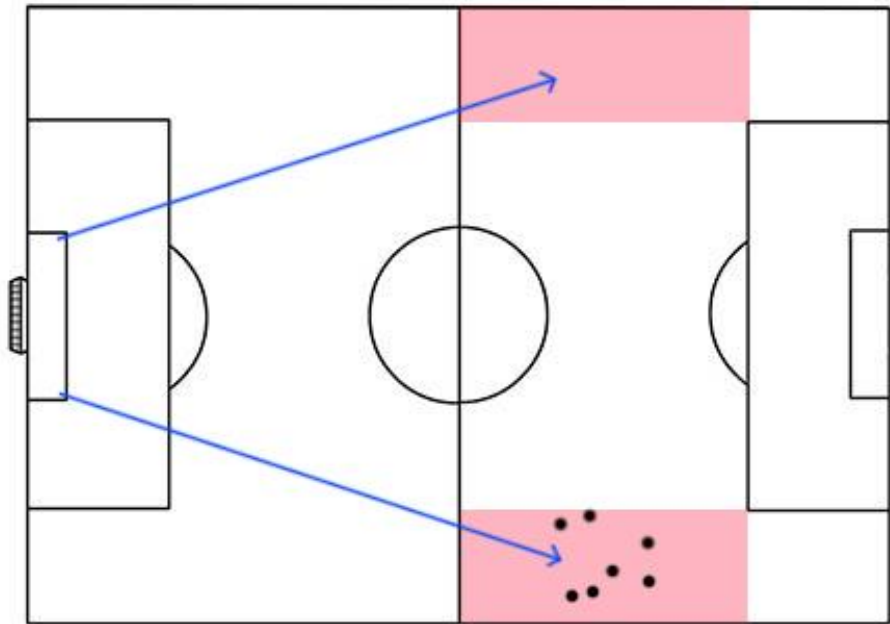
Game description: Iran-Japan



Brief description: Another defensive formation of the Cheetahs is in zone 2. In the 16 games that are reviewed, the system was used only against Japan in the phase before the last phase, and the form of defense is 6-3-1 against Spain. Due to the wide 5-man defense line, the Team Melli has been strengthened on the flanks. Also, the diamond in front of the defensive line makes the team strong in the depth of defense.

❖ Long goal kick to the side channel:

Game description: Iran-Nigeria



Brief description: The Team Melli used long goal kicks to the side channel against the teams that had a higher technical level. The Cheetahs compact in this channel to try to receive the first long pass or the second balls. In this form, the opponent allows counter-attacking by using the goal kicks, and if the ball goes out, the game starts on the opponent's field and is far from the home goal.

❖ Using indirect offensive free kicks:

Game description: Iran-Bahrain



Brief description: The positive feature of free kicks is that the attacking team can perform the desired tactic by arranging its players in the desired areas also without disturbing the crosser. Defensive teams that have physical players and players who are skilled in headers increase their power in indirect free kicks.

The Team Melli uses various tactics for indirect free kicks; the most important types are shown above.

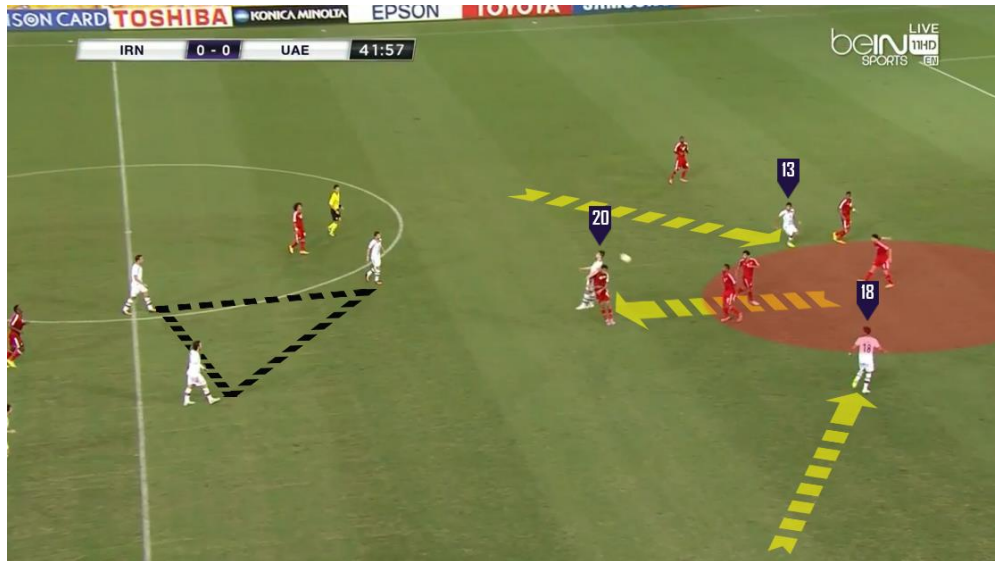
Key spaces in this tactic:

- Crossing from: offensive third sideways.
- Crossing to: second 6 yard -near post.
- Rebound: behind the penalty area.

Specific players in each area have been determined who must use these spaces with timely moves.

❖ Long goal kick to the middle channel:

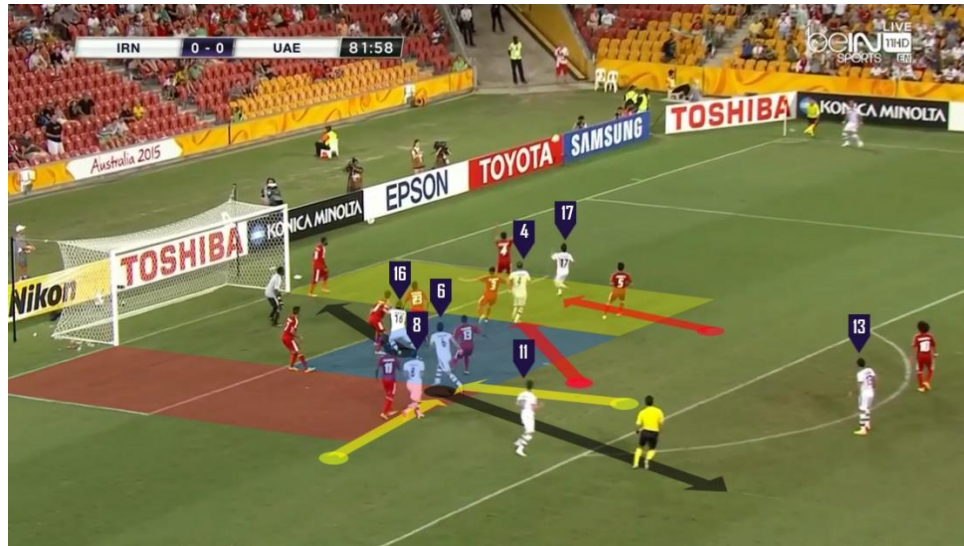
Game description: Iran-UAE



Brief description: Long passes (compared to short passes) have the advantage of sending the ball farther forward, despite the fact that they are less likely to reach the target. One of the most effective tactics based on long passes is the goal kicks that the players have a good formation in the opponent's field. Long goal kicks to the middle channel are more offensive than sideways channel. This tactic was performed in such a way that the target player withdraws one line and the other two players moved to the space created behind him to receive the second pass.

❖ Corner kick:

Game description: Iran-UAE

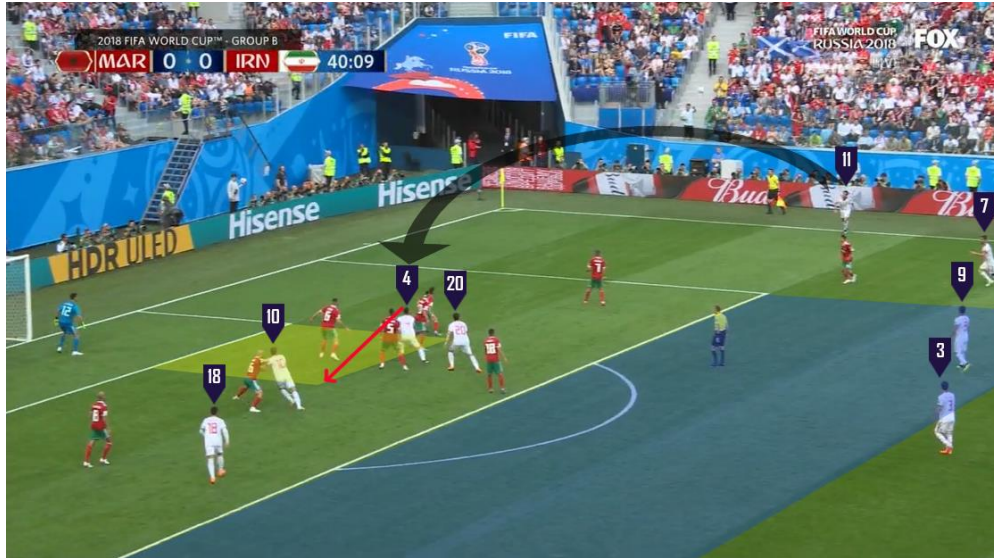


Brief description: Corner kick is one of the free kicks and has the positive features of these tactics. Team Melli has specific plans for corner kicks in the offensive work like other free kicks and uses them to reach the opponents' goal. In general, in performing this tactic, two categories of space are very important: first, the spaces used when crossing, which include the space in front of the near and far post, and the space in front of the goal in the second 6 yard, and second, the rebound phase spaces, which include the near and the far post and behind the penalty area. The number of white-clad players present in the opponents' penalty area depends on the need for a goal, which reaches 7 if needed, and if not, to reduce the risk of counterattacks is 4.

❖ Long Offensive throw-in:

Game description: Iran-Morocco





Brief explanation: as more balls are gone out, long throw-in in the attacking third is a good tactic in terms of quantity to create danger on the opponent's goal. In the long throw-in, the ball is thrown into the space in front of the near post in the second 6 yards and the target player in this area tries to bring it to the front of the goal for the use of other teammates with a header. Two other players are behind the penalty area for using rebound balls.

❖ Short offensive throw-in:

Game description: Iran-Vietnam



Brief description: short throw-in is sent all over the field, but here we mean throw-in that take place in the opponent's field. One of the characteristics of short throw-in is the lack of offside rule for them, which is a positive point for the attacking team. The Team Melli often uses this tactic in situations that require possession of the ball.

Cheetahs pursue two goals from short throws-in:

- Keeping the ball and continue possession.
- Penetrating the opponent's penalty area with good teamwork.

❖ Throw-in Press in the opponent's field:

Game description: Iran-Bahrain



Brief description: This tactic is an example of press that is used in defense in set pieces.

Two limitations in throw-in that encourage the defending team for a throw-in press on the opponent's field:

- Decreasing the angle of the player who throws the ball to 180 degrees.
- Less speed and range of throw-in than pass with the foot.

The Cheetahs are good for marking the opponent in throw-in and observing the principle of balance. If the ball crosses the press line, other players should not allow the opponent to attack fast.

❖ Defensive corner kick:

Game description: Iran-Morocco.





Brief description: In the review of 16 games, the Team Melli has not conceded any goals from corner kicks. The Cheetahs are as powerful in defensive corner kicks as they are in offensive corner-kicks.

The Team Melli uses zonal defense and zonal marking in defensive corner-kicks. They cover dangerous areas with a zonal defense and control the dangerous players of the opponent with defensive marking. Meanwhile, the good performance of the Team Melli goalkeeper with a timely exit is one of the factors of their success.

***If you like the book, you can read the full book here:***

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