



NY Cosmos - Principles of Play

The principles of play are the fundamental strategies that a team uses to effectively adapt to any tactical situation during a game. They consist of concepts that coaches use to focus their team's objectives and to evaluate the performance of their players on the field.

The principles are classified as **attacking** and **defending**:

Attacking objectives:

- ✓ Score
- ✓ Advance forward
- ✓ Maintain possession

Defending objectives:

- ✓ Prevent scoring
- ✓ Delay the attack
- ✓ Regain possession

For every attacking principle employed in a game there is an equal defending principle to counter it.

Attacking Principles	Defending Principles
<p>Penetration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to get inside and behind the defense's shape. • Looking forward first and asking the question "Can we score or effectively play the ball forward?" 	<p>Delay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To "pressure" the attacker to reduce their time and space and prevent the ball from being played forward. • Slowing down the attack to allow the defense to reorganize when outnumbered.
<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To keep possession with support in front, side and behind the ball. 	<p>Depth/Cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide close support for the pressuring defender (i.e. 1st defender) and restrict/reduce space for attackers.
<p>Dispersal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to stretch and pull defenders out of position. 	<p>Compactness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assemble as quickly as possible as a team to protect areas of the field vulnerable to scoring opportunities.
<p>Mobility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The movement and interchanging of positions to unbalance defenses. • To create space and opportunities for attackers. 	<p>Balance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sealing of the space away from the ball in order to limit the opponent's attacking options. • Retaining team shape.
<p>Improvisation/Creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing the unexpected. • Break down defenses using individual soccer techniques or group combinations. 	<p>Control and Restraint (Patience)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being patient and waiting for the correct moment to win the ball. • Assess the risk before challenging for the ball.