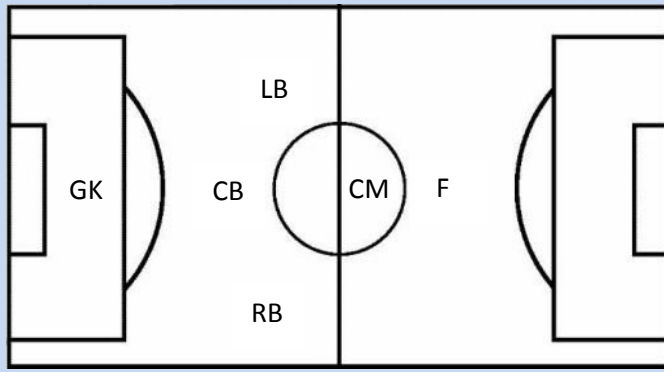


# Position Guide for TCYSA Junior Academy Players



Players in the Junior Academy should know what the positions on the field are, and how they are related to each other. The more understanding players have of their positions, the easier it is to keep team shape. The formation should be a 3-1-1; 3 backs, 1 midfielder, and 1 forward up top. A 3-1-1 gives the team strength in the back and through the middle of the field, and room for creativity up top. When attacking the shape will look more like a 1-3-1, with the outside backs pushing forward to attack. Players should have some space to dribble and opportunities to combine. This shape will also help prepare players to use a “3 line formation” like they will use at U11 and U12 to for 8 v 8, and get wide players used to covering the full length of the field.

## 1. Goalkeeper

All players should know the basics of this position, and no player should play a full half unless they ask to. GK needs to look to play to feet out of the box, either on a short pass out wide, or through a gap to a teammate higher up the field. Also can be available for a pass back; encourage the use of feet.

## 2. Center Back

Needs to be a player with discipline. Defending: “check their shoulder” to make sure nobody is behind them. Should be the last defender. Need to move from side to side depending on where the ball is, and should step and confront the ball in the middle of the field, or out wide if another player is beaten. Attacking: Should limit the number of runs forward. Can be a link from one side of the field to the other, or a player who can receive a back pass to relieve pressure. Support at an angle.

## 3. Outside Backs

Help build play from the back, provide team with width, prevent opponent attack. Defending: Very important to stay wider than the center back and not cross over. Should step and apply pressure on their side, if ball is on opposite side they should “tuck in” toward the middle to provide support. Attacking: Look to get forward, especially if the ball is on their side of the field. Should keep width to stretch out defense and not crowd space in the middle.

## 4. Center Midfield

Must play centrally! Cannot “float” out wide too often, or a large gap is left in the middle. Can use the center circle as a reference as to where they can position themselves. Defending: Needs to recover behind the ball to slow the other team down and provide assistance. Attacking: Should look to receive the ball whenever possible, and try to connect with teammates moving forward down the field. They should be a link between all players on the field.

## 5. Forward

Player needs to be very active in trying to get the ball, and especially try to find gaps between defenders and space behind defenders. Defending: Should work to get behind the ball and/or pressure from behind. First line of defense. Attacking: Needs to help provide width on the field so CM can stay central. Should move to whatever side the ball is on. Look to attack goal whenever possible, by being creative on the dribble or combining with teammates.