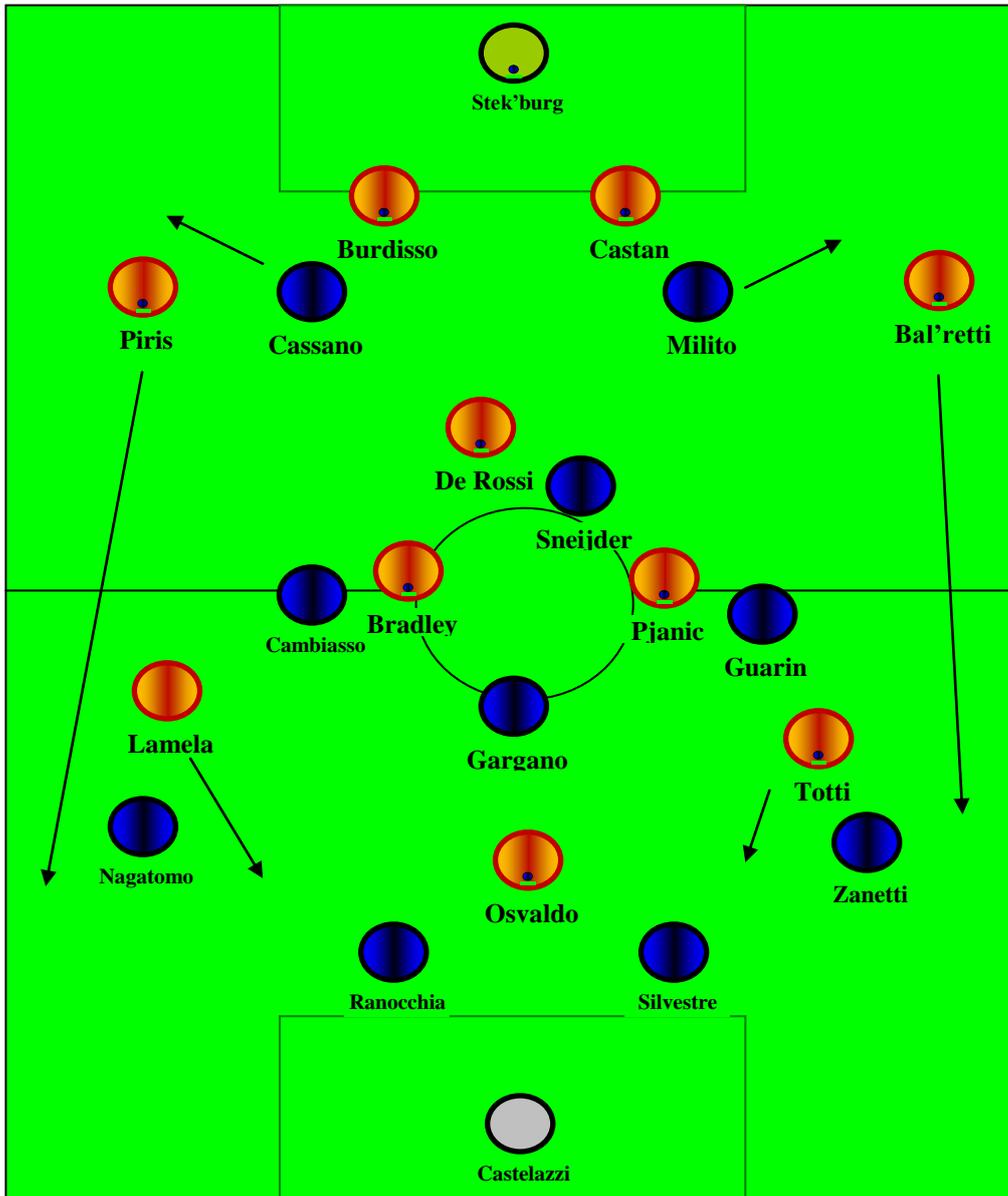


# Inter vs Roma: Match Preview: Zeman's 4-3-3 a different philosophy from Enrique's 4-3-3



This will be an interesting game with two contrasting styles.

Roma are playing a 4-3-3 like last year but Zeman's interpretation of this formation is completely different to Luis Enrique's. Under Enrique, Roma's passing became too horizontal with too much congestion in midfield. A comprehensive analysis on Enrique's 4-3-3 is provided here <http://www.zonalmarking.net/2011/12/14/luis-enrique-roma-tactics-barcelona/>. So what are the main differences?

Last year Roma became a high possession team that lacked penetration, the Barcelona model didn't work in Serie A for two main reasons. Firstly, in Italy most teams play with diamond midfielders with combative players filling at least three of those 4 positions. This differs in Spain where teams generally sacrifice the midfield to Barca. Enrique's Roma found it hard to create and their transition from defence to attack became too slow.

The second reason was that because 4 v 4 diamond battles (Totti in the false 9 position) became prevalent, Enrique's full backs would sit further forward (because Enrique insisted on numerical advantages in midfield) which left Roma massively open to counter attacks and defenders like Kjaer and Juan were hopelessly exposed.

This is not to say Zeman's teams don't concede goals, they do! The difference is his 4-3-3 is more verticle and is played at a quicker tempo. His full back's rush forward to provide overlapping runs, they are not used as almost stationary possession outlets. Zeman's team will create more scoring opportunities with less of the ball, however Roma's problems on the counter will still exist but at least this year they might score more goals than their opponents. Look at Pescara's record from last year it is amazing reading. Zeman himself has commented on the differences between his 4-3-3 and Enrique's: <http://blogs.bettor.com/Zdenek-Zeman-against-Luis-Enriques-style-of-playing-football-a161183>

"I am quicker, in the sense that with possession you also give your opponents time to get settled in defence. It's much more difficult to break down a defence that is closed rather than catching them unprepared."

Both manager's play attacking football but Zeman's above quote symbolises why Zeman understands Serie A much better than Enrique. Unlike Enrique, Zeman will concede the midfield; it just means his team has to start play from wide with speed.

Inter had trouble with Pescara who are still using Zeman's approach. Inter capitalised on poor mistakes in Pescara's defensive zone but were on the back foot for the first 19 minutes as Pescara attacked them on the flanks. So what adjustments does Stramaccioni make?

Inter may take the gamble of playing narrow and trying to retain the ball but they will find it difficult to create goal scoring opportunities if Roma defend well in general play. Inter's risk always is that if the ball is turned over they will leave their full backs isolated and Roma will be more aggressive in their pressing than Pescara was. If this does become the general pattern of play with Inter dominating possession than expect a low scoring game. I doubt this will happen.

Totti doesn't present the same danger that Weiss did last week for Zanetti, so Totti will be more reliant on Balzaretti's runs. Guarin and Cambiasso will need to be

prepared to sit deeper and help their full backs; something Inter didn't begin doing against Pescara last week and it hurt them when Pescara's full backs made overlapping runs.

Guarin and Cambiasso's necessary movements in combating Balzaretti and Piris's runs will have two connotations. If Roma are still able to hold on the ball and work it back in the middle, Gargano could get outnumbered 2 v 1 against Pjanic and Bradley. However, if Inter can win the ball back in those wide positions they could isolate Milito or Cassano 1 v 1 against Burdisso or Castan. This should provide a high scoring game. I think this will be the basic story of the night. I am predicting Roma to win 3-1 with Inter scoring the first goal. Expect a fast paced game.