

RONDOS

SPECIAL TRAINING GUIDE

BY DAVID CLARKE



SOCCER COACH WEEKLY

**15 RONDOS GAMES TO TEACH
ACCURATE TEAMWORK AND
PASSING IN DEFENCE AND ATTACK**

POSSESSION • PRESSING • ONE TOUCH • INDIVIDUAL • TEAM

Rondos – Principles of Play

SOCCER COACH WEEKLY

Soccer Coach Weekly offers modern and easy to use football (soccer) drills, coaching sessions, practice plans, small-sided games, warm-ups, training tips and advice. The resources are created for the grassroots youth coach following best practice from around the world and insights from the professional game.

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Every coaching point you need

I hope you find the sessions on the following pages useful for coaching your teams. There are some simple ones and some advanced ones but you can tailor them to suit whatever age group you are coaching.

Below are the rondos principles of play which you should find will all be covered when using rondos.

If you need any advice or help with your coaching you can contact me at david2clarke@live.co.uk

PRINCIPLES OF ATTACKING

- Penetrate – breaking through defence
- Create width and depth – spread out side to side and top to bottom
- Support play – players support the man on the ball giving passing options
- Movement – making runs to draw defenders out of position
- Creativity – Skills and the element of surprise

PRINCIPLES OF DEFENDING

- Delay – stop the advance by pressing the ball
- Cover – players recover into defensive positions
- Balance – all areas need to be covered to stop penetration
- Squeeze width & depth – to compact the pitch
- Patience – discipline vital wait for the right moment to tackle



David Clarke, Head Coach



The more time your players spend on the ball, the better chance they have of playing fast one-touch football and emulating the skills of heroes such as Lionel Messi

As Head Coach of *Soccer Coach Weekly*, David Clarke provides thousands of subscribers worldwide with drills, insight, interviews and webinars covering all aspects of coaching.

Soccer Coach Weekly is now in its ninth season with over 440 issues produced.

David has coached grassroots teams, from U9 to U16, for 20 years, always with the goal of helping young players be the best they can.

He is the author of *Soccer Tactics Made Simple*, *The Ultimate Set-piece Play Book*, *Play Like Barcelona*, *Master Coach 1, 2 and 3*, *Touch of Genius* and many other soccer titles.

David's qualifications include: UEFA B license, FA youth module 1, 2 and 3 the Coerver Youth Module, and he has been a lecturer and presenter for the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA).

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Bayern Munich's Sebastian Rode (L) and Arjen Robben (R) watch as Philipp Lahm (on ground) plays the ball during a rondo training session

Rondos Explained

Watch Bayern Munich or Barcelona play rondos and you will see fast, one-touch passing and players using innovative ways to keep the ball or win it back

In Spanish Rondos means “round” Rondos are games where one group of players has the ball with overload advantage (3v1, 4v2, 5v2, 6v3) over another group of players. The basic objective of the group in overload advantage is to keep possession of the ball while the objective of the group with fewer players is to win the ball back.

Rondos are usually set up in a grid, which can be anything from 8x8 yards to a half pitch depending on the skill level of the players or the aspect of play you want to be worked on.

In a Rondo, there are key passes like a 1st line pass, a 2nd line pass, and a 3rd line pass.

The most common Rondo seen in Pep Guardiola's training sessions with Bayern Munich is in a 10x10 yards square in an 8v2 “Piggy in the Middle” game dynamic. Usually it is played with one

touch passing, but that can be changed depending on the parameters. The size of the square as well as the amount of players on each team are variable.

The goal is usually to reach 20 or 30 passes in a row without an interception. Once that is achieved the players all tease and applaud towards the players in the middle. If you watch any of the training videos uploaded by Bayern Munich on YouTube you can hear players like Thomas Muller counting each pass out loud.

They are based on a technical practice but they can also be set up to work on many tactical and positional aspects of play.

The size of the grids are relevant to the individual practices. Teams like Barcelona and Bayern Munich want to be playing passes 10 yards and less, and when all the players are this distance apart, they can press the ball intensely should they lose possession.

Words by:
David Clarke

“Everything that goes on in a match, except shooting*, you can do in a rondo. The competitive aspect, fighting to make space, what to do when in possession and what to do when you haven't got the ball, how to play one touch soccer, how to counteract the tight marking and how to win the ball back”

- JOHAN CRUYFF

*you can even shoot in these Soccer Coach Weekly rondos!

12

Key Benefits of Rondo Training

The development of a young player's tactical and positional work is key to rondos – but the technical side is also a big plus when you consider the benefits of using them

1 COGNITIVE

Players have to constantly make decisions in relation to things like teammates, opponents, position of the ball. Mistakes result in loss of the ball and a player going into the centre so it encourages players to make the correct decisions and quickly.

2 ONE AND TWO TOUCH PASSING

Rondos help create the environment where 1 or 2 touches is all you can have.

3 TECHNICAL

Due to the way that the rondo is set up, it is necessary to have control of the physical movements and technical skills with respect to time and space, the game, the ball and opponents.

4 RHYTHM OF PLAY AND TEMPO

Rondos can help players understand when to play quickly and when to put their foot on the ball and slow things down depending on how close the opposition player is.

5 TEAM BUILDING

With the type of work done in rondos, the understanding between teammates is improved, and the sense of "team" becomes the norm.

6 KEEP POSSESSION

Rondos are keep ball games. You have to keep the ball off the players in the middle. It's their job to get the ball, so you need to work together as a group – a key part of winning soccer matches.

7 CREATIVITY AND EXPRESSION

The set up of rondos forces the players to use various technical and tactical techniques to solve constantly changing situations within the game. This helps develop creativity.

8 IMPROVED CONTROL

The tight spaces forces players to have a good first touch to give them the time and space to keep control of the ball.



The FC Barcelona team go through their pre-match rondo routine.

9 COMPETITIVENESS

Competition between players is high. Players have to fight to make space, learn how to hold off a tight marking and how to win the ball back. Nobody wants to be the one making the mistake which leads to time in the middle.

10 SHORT PASSING

Rondos are all about short passing in tight areas of the game. Using rondos gives your players lot of practice playing passes at short distances under pressure.

11 PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

With rondos a team works on agility, balance and coordination by varying the space, time and number of players involved.

12 MOVEMENT OFF THE BALL

Players must understand that they continue moving after they have passed the ball – stay available for the ball to be passed back, or run into space to provide another option. In this way players always have a passing option.

Words by:
David Clarke

"It's all about rondos. Rondo, rondo, rondo. Every single day. It's the best exercise there is. You learn responsibility and not to lose the ball. If you lose the ball, you go in the middle. Pum-pum-pum-pum, always one touch. If you go in the middle, it's humiliating, the rest applaud and laugh at you"

– XAVI

Key Rondos Passes

In rondos there are three different types of passes that are key to the sessions and key to the style of play rondos encourage

1. First Line Pass

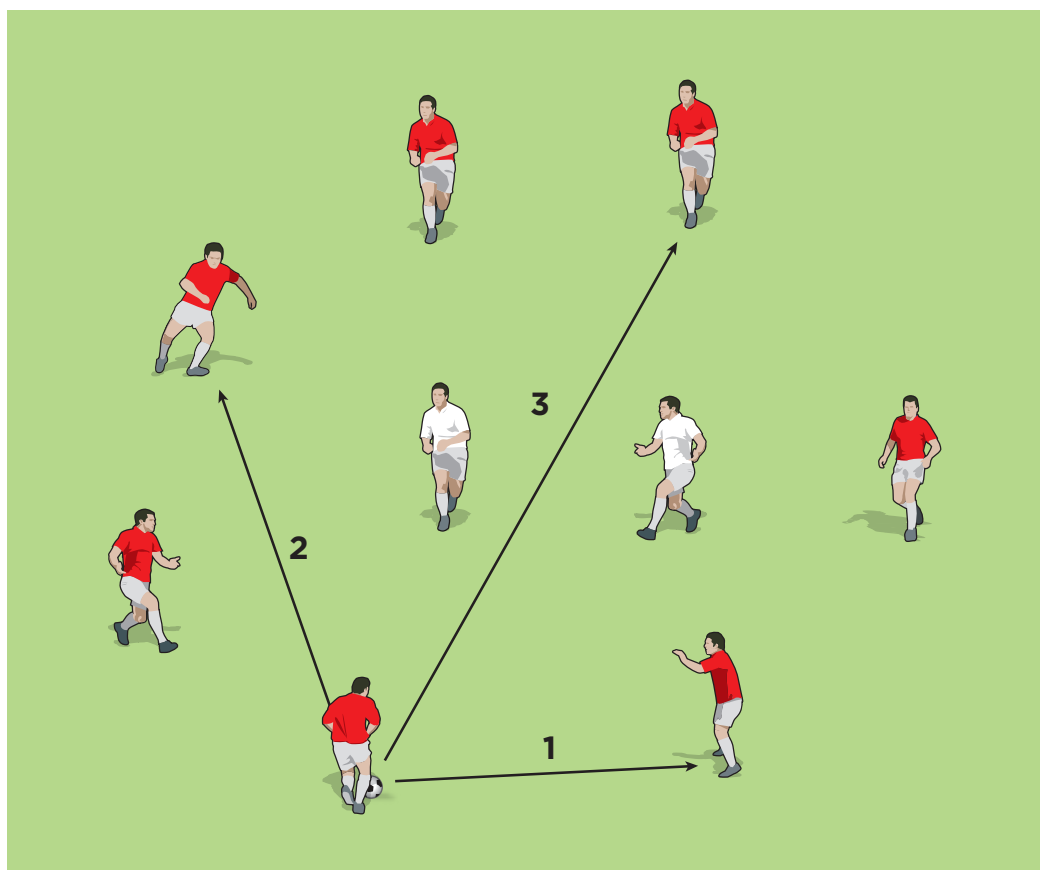
Pass to the person next to you. This is the easiest pass to make in rondos. It does not require a wide range of vision but is the pass that must be done correctly with good weight and direction.

2. Second Line Pass

The pass will bypass the person next to you but does not split defenders. The second line pass requires a greater passing vision and is more difficult than the first line pass but again all youth players must grasp this pass and execute with accuracy.

3. Third Line Pass

This is the creative pass that splits the defenders through the middle. This pass requires the most skill, creativity, vision and timing to pull off. In soccer the ultimate goal is to get the ball forward and score. Third line split passes help develop this skill.



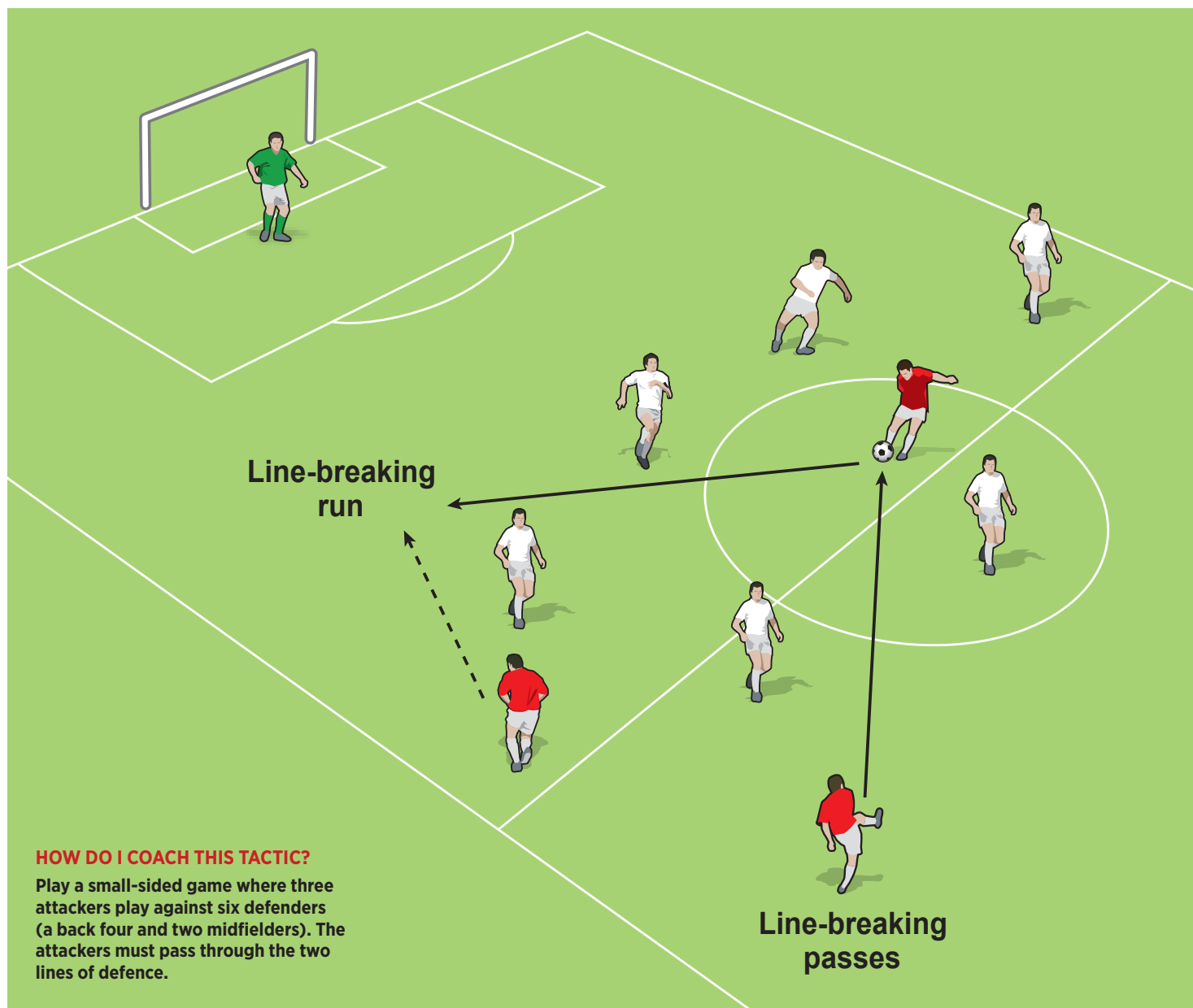
Rondos – Player Scoring Game



Introduce a greater element of competition to your rondos by awarding points for the type of pass made. The

harder the pass, the more points scored. Either keep a tally yourself or get the players to remember their scores

- 1. First line pass = 1 point
- 2. Second line pass = 3 points
- 3. Third line pass = 6 points



HOW DO I COACH THIS TACTIC?

Play a small-sided game where three attackers play against six defenders (a back four and two midfielders). The attackers must pass through the two lines of defence.

Line Breakers

The key rondos passes can be used in tactical play during matches to play between the lines with the key play splitting lines of defence to create goalscoring runs

Line-breaking passes are those that go through a line of the opposing team's formation.

For example, a pass that goes between two opposing defenders is known as a line-breaking pass because it breaks through the defensive line.

A line-breaking run is similar to a line-breaking pass, although in this case it is the player, not the ball, that breaks the line.

Line-breaking runs usually occur in the final third of the pitch when a forward or midfielder runs through the defensive line and into a goal-scoring position. Cristiano Ronaldo is an expert at making line-breaking runs.

Sometimes in soccer a line breaking

pass is referred to as the "killer pass". It's the pass that splits the defence and gets the attacking player behind the defence so they can take a shot or cross the ball to an open player. While it's great to keep possession of the ball, in order to score you'll need to make that

one pass that splits the defence.

Splitting the defense makes them turn their backs and run back towards the ball, which is dangerous for a defense because they are chasing the ball and can't see other attackers are making runs behind them.

Words by:
David Clarke

"Lots of coaches devote their time to wondering how they can ensure that their players are able to do a lot of running during a match. Ajax trains its players to run as little as possible on the field. That is why positional games are always central"

- LOUIS VAN GAAL

RONDOS

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WARM-UPS

Rondo Warm-ups

Rondos are the ideal way to warm-up young players, covering all aspects of outfield play, ticking the boxes for technical, tactical, creative and, importantly, social/fun

In my experience a good warm-up routine does not need any equipment; it is about engaging the players, and getting “buy-in” to everything you’re trying to get across to them. And that is usually focus, control of the ball and linking up with team mates. One of the ways Barcelona warm up before training or matches is using the rondo circles.

During the exercise the intensity and speed of the ball is extremely fast and requires great technique and concentration. The players constantly adjust the angle of their positioning in relation to their teammates, sometimes taking a step backwards or forward on the edges of the square, sometimes turning their hips in a certain way so that they can play the next pass or receive a pass efficiently. They can also move closer to their teammates in order to

invite pressure before playing a longer pass out of pressure to continue the passing streak.

There are various fundamentals that are trained very intensely during this game, like intelligence and technique under pressure. This applies to both the offensive players and the defenders in the middle. That is why Pep Guardiola uses this drill almost every single practice.

One of the important aspects of warming up is making sure it is done with your team’s playing style and tactical strategy in mind. Using rondos in this part of match day is one of the best ways to integrate the technical, tactical and positional aspects of your team’s play. In this way, when they run out on the pitch they are already seeing the passes and movement that will ensure they give their best straight from kick off.



Words by:
David Clarke

Pep Guardiola uses rondos in virtually every training session. An 8v2 overload is one of his preferred set ups

8 Top Tips For Rondo Success

1 Stay on the balls of your feet with an open stance ready to -receive the ball from any side or forward direction.

2 Get brains into gear – Be Focused

3 Speed of play, creativity, teamwork, sound technique and problem solving are all very important.

4 Success is keeping possession as an individual and team but look for opportunities to play Third Line Splitting Passes when they present themselves.

5 Clap and shout to celebrate the great passes and defensive plays! Teams that demand a high level of performance from each player get better faster.

6 Quick thinking – speed of play is decisive.

7 It’s not just development – FUN is key.

8 Establish a rhythm to the passing. The tempo of play and rhythm is critical for success.



Simple Rondo

Billy McAdam was Coach of the Month in Soccer Coach Weekly. He uses this high tempo rondo to help players develop possession skills in tight match situations

WHY USE IT

This is a great session to warm up your players through a high intensity possession-based skills practice, with players developing the technical aspects of their game that can be used in high-pressure match scenarios.

SET UP

Mark out a 25-yard circle. We've used 11 players in this session. You need balls, bibs and cones.

HOW TO PLAY

Players position themselves in a circle around two, three, or even four central players, whose job it is to intercept passes or pressure (not tackle) the players positioned on the outside.

The outside players should attempt to retain possession and keep their basic circular shape during play.

The players in middle should carry bibs and when possession is gained, the chaser winning the ball leaves his bib on the ground and swaps places with the player who lost possession. This player now carries the bib and becomes a chaser.

TECHNIQUE

Players should protect the ball on the side away from the chasers. Good for one- and two-touch play. The central players should look to force the play through the middle and into traffic.

Play starts with passing between the outer players, who must keep the ball from the centre players.

The centre players must press the outer players to try to win the ball by forcing a mistake

The outer players must look to use simple passes and good skill to keep the ball.

The player who lost the ball swaps places with the one that won it and play continues.

Here the pressing players have covered all the angles and the outer player has to pass across the centre where the ball is intercepted

Player movement 

Ball movement 

Run with ball 

Shot 

Full Squad Rondo

Use this session to improve the passing technique of your players so they can set up strikers with solid scoring opportunities close to goal

WHY USE IT

This is an activity for attackers that involves rebounds, one-touch and two-touch finishing around the six-yard box, and the kind of service that allows players like Samuel Eto'o to take their chances from close range.

SET UP

Mark out back-to-back penalty areas (36x44 yards). We've used 18 players. You need balls, bibs, cones and two normal goals.

HOW TO PLAY

Split the players into three teams of six. One team is positioned around the area and the other two play a 6v6 including goalkeepers. The players around the edge play two-touch apart from the players next to the goal who play one-touch.

Play starts with one of the keepers playing out to his midfield, who must pass to a player on the outside – the opposition players are passive until a player on the outside has touched the ball. A one-touch goal counts double, whether from a rebound or direct. Swap the outside team every three minutes.

TECHNIQUE

Finishing technique is important, with one- and two-touch passes needed to create scoring chances. Players look for clever movement and good anticipation to score.

Activity by: David Clarke

Play starts with a pass from one of the goalkeepers to a team-mate

The opposition are passive until the player passes to an outside player, then the game is live. The outside players on the side have two touches

The outside player next to the goal has only one touch and here he passes first time to an attacker in front of goal

The attacker has moved quicker than the defenders and reacts to a ball in the penalty area to score

Here the goalkeeper makes the save but the Eto'o player pounces to score with one touch and gets double points

Player movement ■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■→

Shot →

Final Pass Rondo

Creative play in and around the final third needs players to see opportunities to get the ball through to attackers behind the defence. This session helps develop their passing vision

WHY USE IT

This is all about getting the ball in and out of a group of players to set up attacks.

SET UP

Use the centre circle of your pitch or mark out a circle with a 20-yard diameter and another circle with a 10-yard diameter inside that. We've used nine players. You will need bibs, ball and cones.

HOW TO PLAY

Split your players into three groups of three players. Each group has a ball, with one player in the centre and two on the outside of the large circle. Start unopposed with players staying in their zones and passing from the outside to the inside and back.

Advance this so the middle players can come out of the area to receive the ball and dribble to the other team-mate.

Finally, make one trio defenders with two in the ring between the zones and one in the centre zone – they must try to intercept or block the pass.

TECHNIQUE

The player in the centre must open up his body to be able to see both team-mates, one to receive from and one to pass to. This is vital for any midfielder linking play from defence to attack. Movement is key to keeping possession.

Activity by: David Clarke

Play starts with three players on each team passing from the outside to the inside – and then out again

The third player must move so his team-mate in the centre can see him, making it easier to get a pass away

To progress the session, allow the centre players to move into the other zone to make it easier to get the pass

They can dribble around the circle and lay off a pass to the third player

To progress the session further, make one team defenders and they must try to intercept or block passes

Player movement 

Ball movement 

Run with ball 

Shot 

RONDOS

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PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Porto's players attend a rondo-style training session at Dragao stadium in Porto, Portugal.



Use Rondos to Develop Players

Players will develop their tactical support play as well as good technique to keep the ball from opponents helping to develop a team's style

The techniques worked on by rondo are passing, receiving and control. There is also the tactical element of where the defender is and where a player needs to pass the ball; the physical movement that fluctuates much like match pace; and the social side of the game where players are constantly talking and communicating between each other. So all in all, rondo is a winner.

Players love it and laugh and joke the whole time as they try to avoid going in the middle – but once they've made a mistake and have to take a turn, they work extra hard to get out again. But that's the beauty of the game. Let's also not underestimate the importance of the defenders learning to intercept or press players into making mistakes.

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

You can use rondos to help with the development of support play and the use of overloads in possession play. The number of players in the centre changes the ease of winning the ball back and players need to recognise on the pitch when and where this is happening so they have the ball for longer.

REPETITION

Remember the saying "Practice Makes Permanent" this is one of the benefits of repeating the use of rondos. The players learn good technique to keep the ball that becomes good habit and will be used to greater effect on the pitch. The great thing is that the repetition in rondos is not always from the same type of move.

Words by:
David Clarke

"Perfect passing, the fact that all their [Barcelona] players are comfortable on the ball, and their perfect technique. That must be a question of training, training and more training. Always with the ball"

- LOTHAR MATTHÄUS

Passing Pairs Rondo

Straight from the Fulham Academy training ground, this warm-up will help develop your team's ability to use both feet and to pass accurately

WHY USE IT

Steve Wigley says this is a great warm up to get your players passing the ball and working in sequences and passing patterns. Using a circle is a good way to get younger players passing with both feet and more advanced players linking and thinking ahead.

SET UP

Use the centre circle of an adult pitch or create a circle 20 yards in diameter. We've used 10 players.

HOW TO PLAY

Players work in pairs with the working pair in the middle of the circle. Change pairs every 45 to 60 seconds. Play starts with a pass from a player on the outside – the pass combination is as shown in diagram 1, with the final pass being made for a new player from outside to restart the passing combinations.

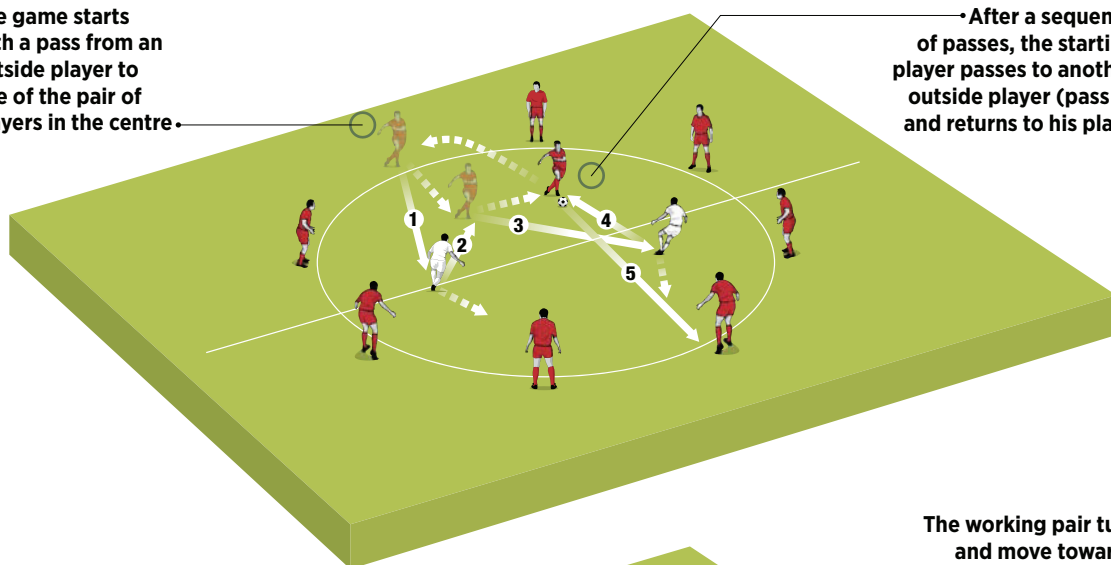
Progress it by getting the player making the first pass to overlap the player to the left or right before starting a passing combination with the working pair. You can vary the passing pattern with the players in the middle of circle.

TECHNIQUE

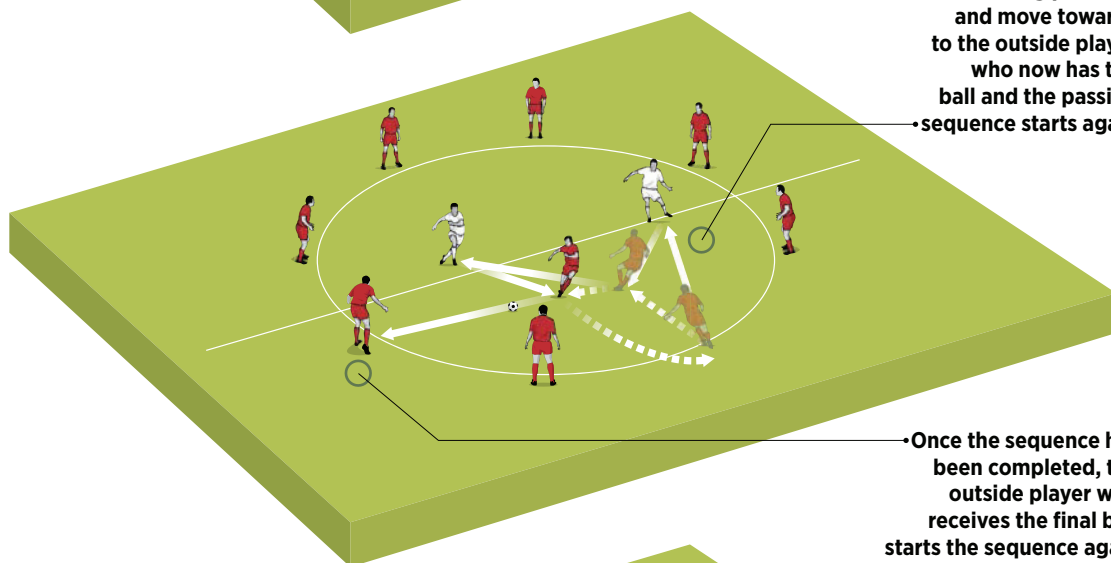
Things to look out for and correct are receiving skills and body shape; also get players to work on the weight and accuracy of their passing and to use both feet.

Activity by: Steve Wigley, head of coaching at Fulham FC Academy

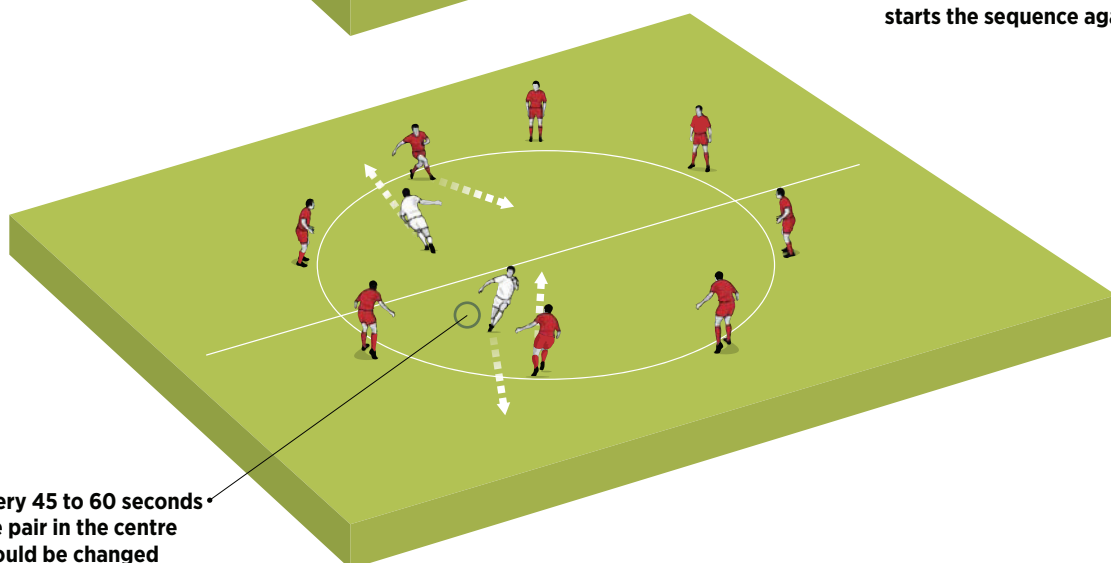
The game starts with a pass from an outside player to one of the pair of players in the centre.



After a sequence of passes, the starting player passes to another outside player (pass 5) and returns to his place



The working pair turn and move towards to the outside player who now has the ball and the passing sequence starts again



Once the sequence has been completed, the outside player who receives the final ball starts the sequence again

Every 45 to 60 seconds the pair in the centre should be changed to another pair

Player movement ■■■■➔

Ball movement ➔

Run with ball ■■■➔

Shot ➔

Pressing Rondo

If you want to improve your team's defensive performance, use this activity to teach players when to press and when to hold, so they can control play even if they don't have possession

WHY USE IT

This teaches players when they should press or hold, so during a match they can control play without the ball and so they don't dive in with an ill-judged tackle and allow attackers past.

SET UP

Set up a 60x50 yard areas with two 15-yard end zones. We've used 10 players.

HOW TO PLAY

Place a target player at both ends and play 4v4 in the middle. Start with a pass from a target man to a player who enters the end zone to collect it. Each team tries to move the ball from one end to the other, playing it to a runner in the end zone who scores by passing to the target. The target player returns the ball to the scoring team who attack in the opposite direction.

All points must be scored with passes made in the end zone. If the ball is won in the middle, the team can counterattack; if it is stopped in the end zone, it results in a turnover, starting with the opposite target player.

TECHNIQUE

Defending players should read the pass so they reach the receiver before his first touch. Other defenders should take up positions that prevent passes that endanger the goal.

Activity by: Justin Neese, soccer programmes manager at Houston Dynamo

The target player starts by playing the ball into the defensive zone. A player runs into the zone to collect it

Defenders should read passing and receiving cues and also assess their team-mates positioning to determine if they can press or if they need to hold

If the defenders can press, they move quickly together to force a mistake or win the ball and begin a counterattack

If the defenders nearest to the ball cannot arrive before the receiver's first touch in the end zone, they move to close down the attacking options and make it harder for the player on the ball to pass

Here the whites counter by playing the ball to a team-mate who runs onto the ball in the end zone and passes to the target player for a point

Player movement ■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■→

Shot →

Press The Ball Rondo

Real Madrid win the ball back quickly. They don't wait for opponents to make a mistake, they force mistakes so they can regain possession. With this session your team will too

WHY USE IT

This session is all about pressing play and winning the ball, and if your team has the ball, the opposition cannot score.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs and cones in an area of 60x30 yards split into two 30x30-yard areas. We used 12 players in the session.

HOW TO PLAY

Split the players into three groups of four. Two teams play 4v4 in one half of the pitch, with the other four players around the sides of the pitch. The team in possession can use these players to help keep possession.

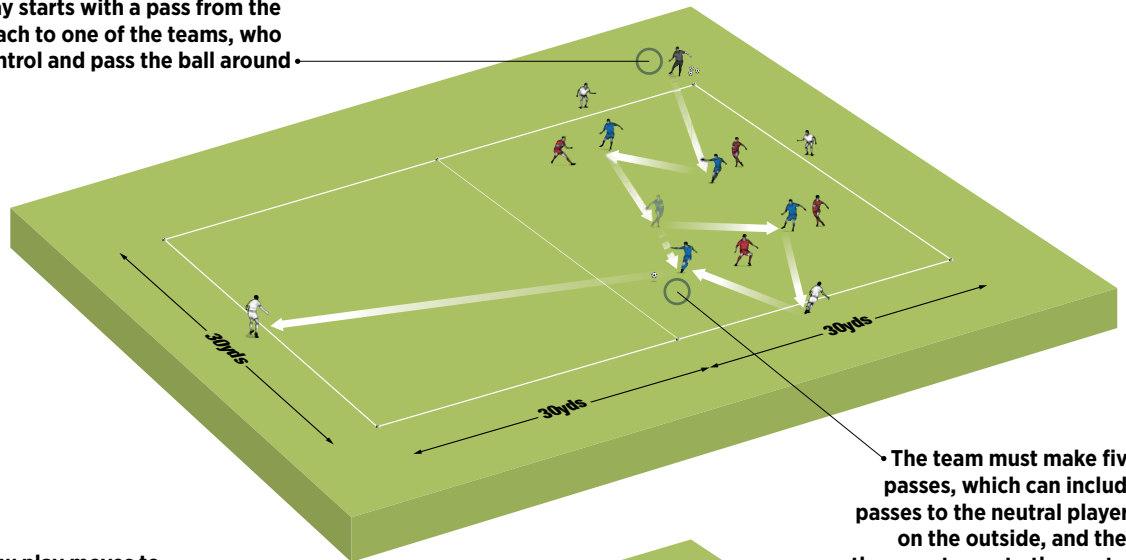
The team in possession makes five passes in a row and then the ball is played to the neutral player at the other end of the pitch and the game moves into that half, with possession remaining with the same team. If the defending team wins the ball, they must get it to the player in the other square and they keep possession.

TECHNIQUE

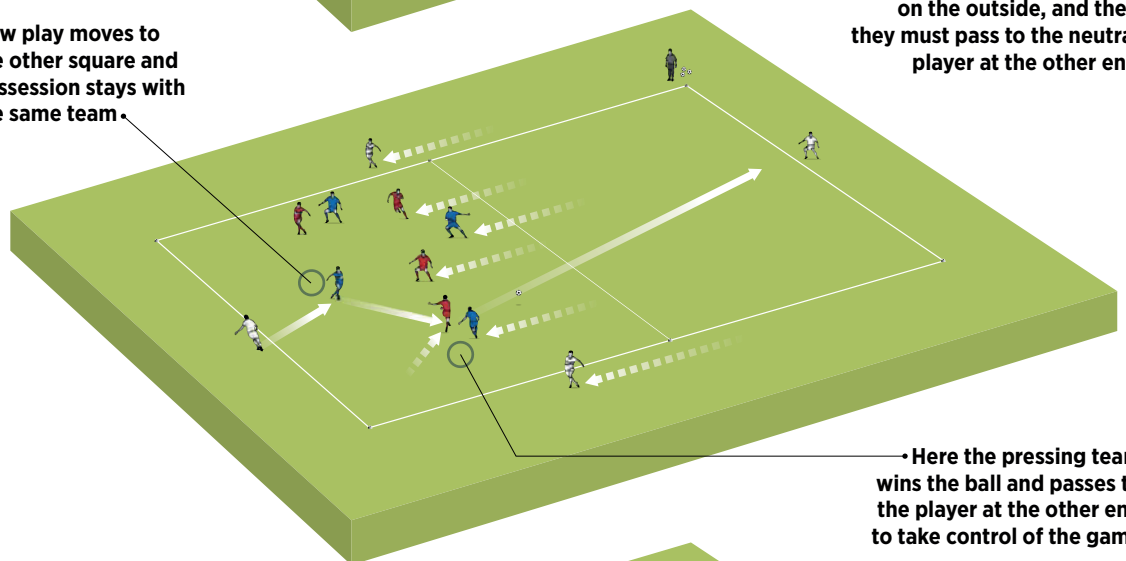
Good for possession play and getting players to try to quickly close down. It's also good for working on cutting down angles, intercepting and forcing mistakes, plus for attacking skills like shielding, first touch, passing and movement.

Activity by: David Clarke

Play starts with a pass from the coach to one of the teams, who control and pass the ball around

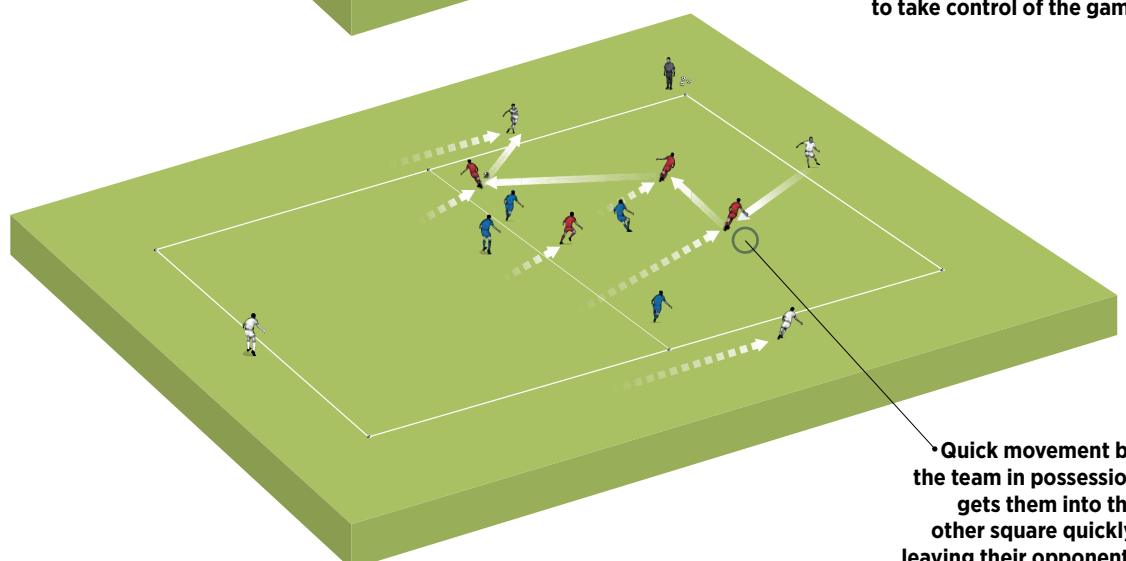


Now play moves to the other square and possession stays with the same team



The team must make five passes, which can include passes to the neutral players on the outside, and then they must pass to the neutral player at the other end

Here the pressing team wins the ball and passes to the player at the other end to take control of the game



Quick movement by the team in possession gets them into the other square quickly, leaving their opponents struggling to keep up

Player movement ■■■■

Ball movement ———

Run with ball ■■■■

Shot ———

Combination Rondo

Use this session to improve the link play between your midfielders and forwards and soon they will be combining like Germany's Mesut Ozil, Mario Gotze and Thomas Muller

WHY USE IT

Midfielders who are looking to get the ball to an attacker need to create space to thread passes through, while target men need to learn to receive and control the ball.

SET UP

You need balls and cones using a 15x10-yard area split into three five-yard zones. We used eight players.

HOW TO PLAY

Split players into a team of six attackers and a team of two defenders. Players stay in their zones during play but defenders move zones as the ball changes ends.

Start with three attackers against one defender in the end zone, with another defender in the middle zone and one attacker as a target at the far end (the other two attackers are not yet active at this time).

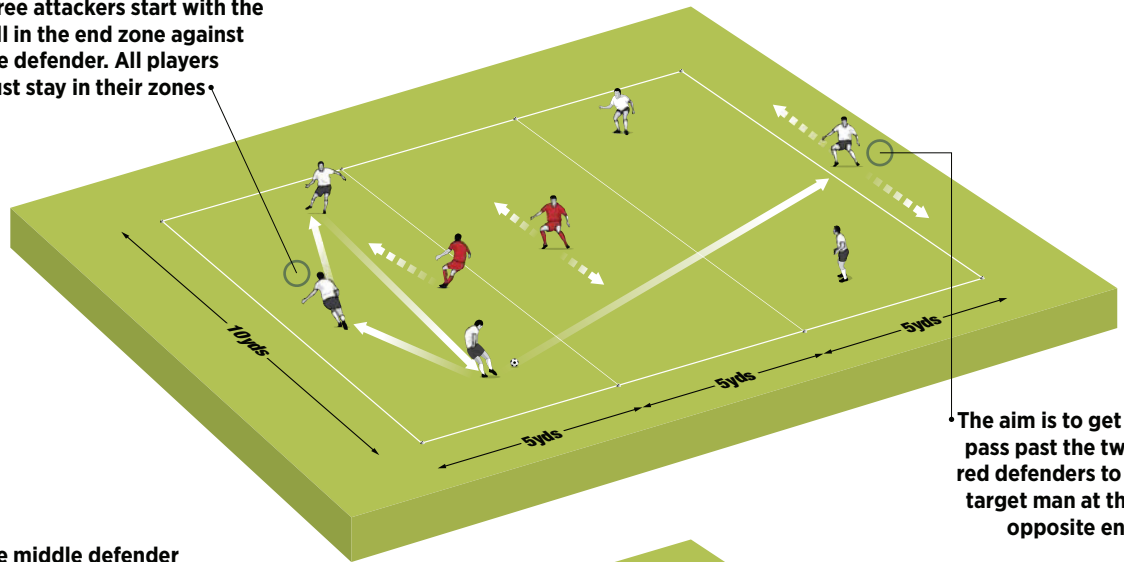
The three attackers in the end zone start and must make three passes before playing the ball to the target man at the other end. If the pass is successful, the two spare players at the end with the ball now become active, with only a target player remaining at the other end. Play is continual and starts are from the end zone.

TECHNIQUE

This is great session for getting players to pass quickly with a big overload in favour of the passing team.

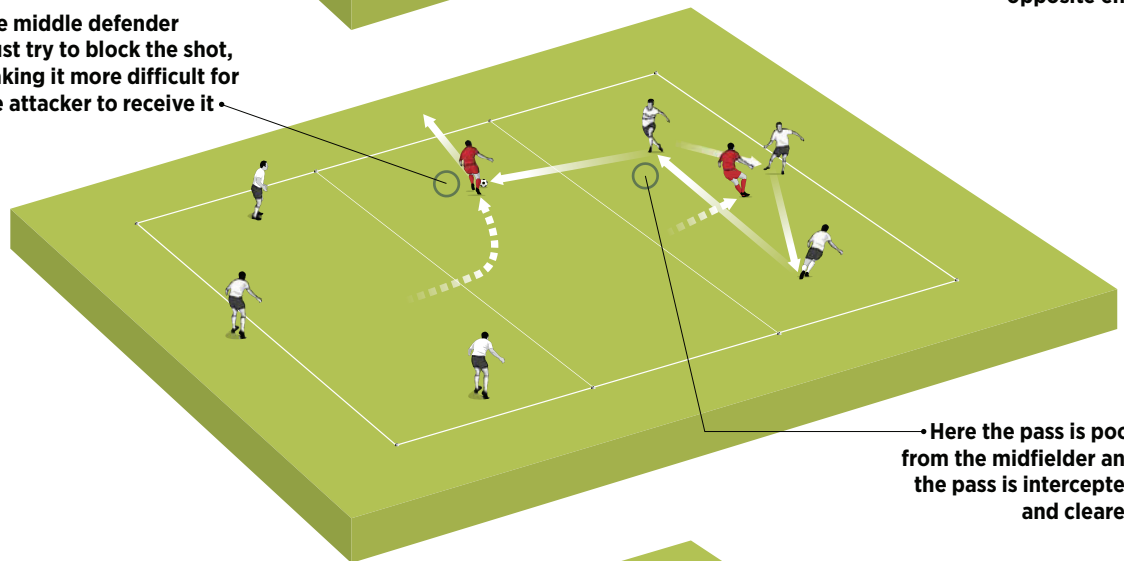
Activity by: David Clarke

Three attackers start with the ball in the end zone against one defender. All players must stay in their zones.

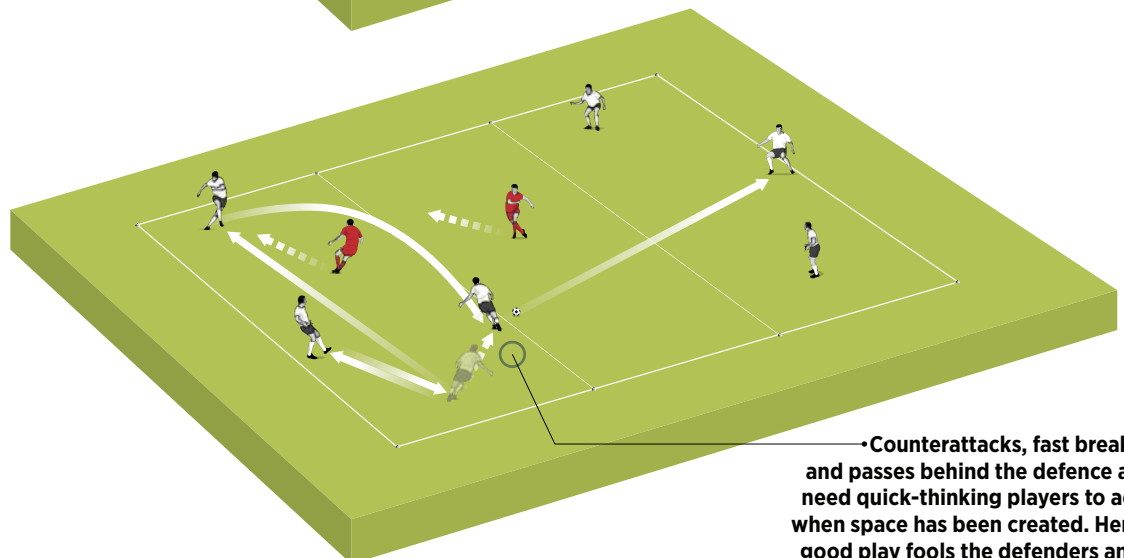


The aim is to get a pass past the two red defenders to a target man at the opposite end

The middle defender must try to block the shot, making it more difficult for the attacker to receive it.



Here the pass is poor from the midfielder and the pass is intercepted and cleared



Counterattacks, fast breaks and passes behind the defence all need quick-thinking players to act when space has been created. Here good play fools the defenders and leaves the area open for an easy pass

Player movement ■■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■→

Shot →

Control Game Rondo

A key to German play is retaining possession in midfield. Use this session to show your players how to keep hold of the ball like Bastian Schweinsteiger and his team-mates

WHY USE IT

Germany's midfield is great at holding onto the ball, as it's the best way to ensure opponents don't score. Passing and moving using good control is the first step to having a team that doesn't lose the ball.

SET UP

Use an 8x8-yard area with a 3x3-yard square in the centre and place cones in the corners of both squares. We used nine players. You need balls and cones.

HOW TO PLAY

Put one player on each cone and have an extra starting player – every cone should be occupied, with one player always on the move. The first player passes from an outside cone to the furthest centre cone on his right. That player then passes to the neighbour on his right and they in turn pass across to the next outside cone.

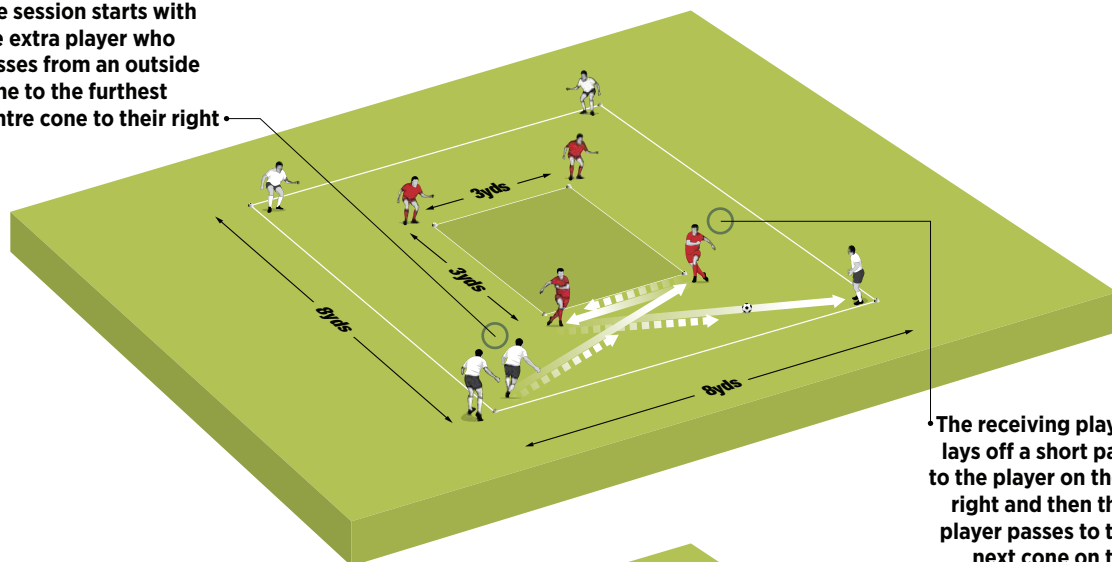
Each passing player follows the pass. Play moves around the square, with each set of passes taking players from one cone to the other. Time the first few goes and then get your team to try to beat their best time.

TECHNIQUE

A great session for weight of passing, accuracy, one-touch passing and intelligent movement. Players are under pressure from working at speed, adding to the dynamism of the session.

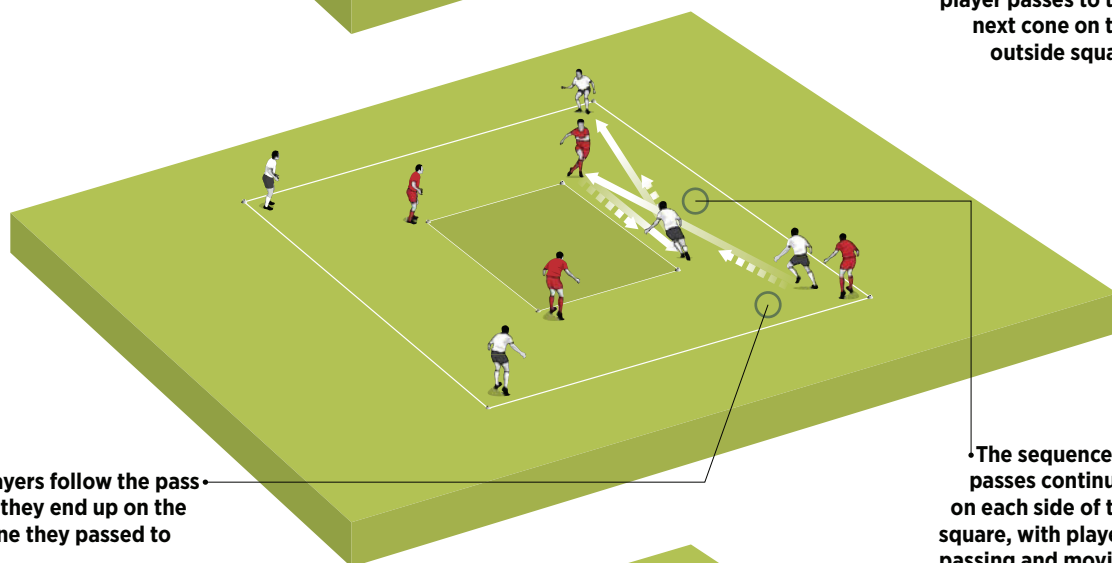
Activity by: David Clarke

The session starts with the extra player who passes from an outside cone to the furthest centre cone to their right

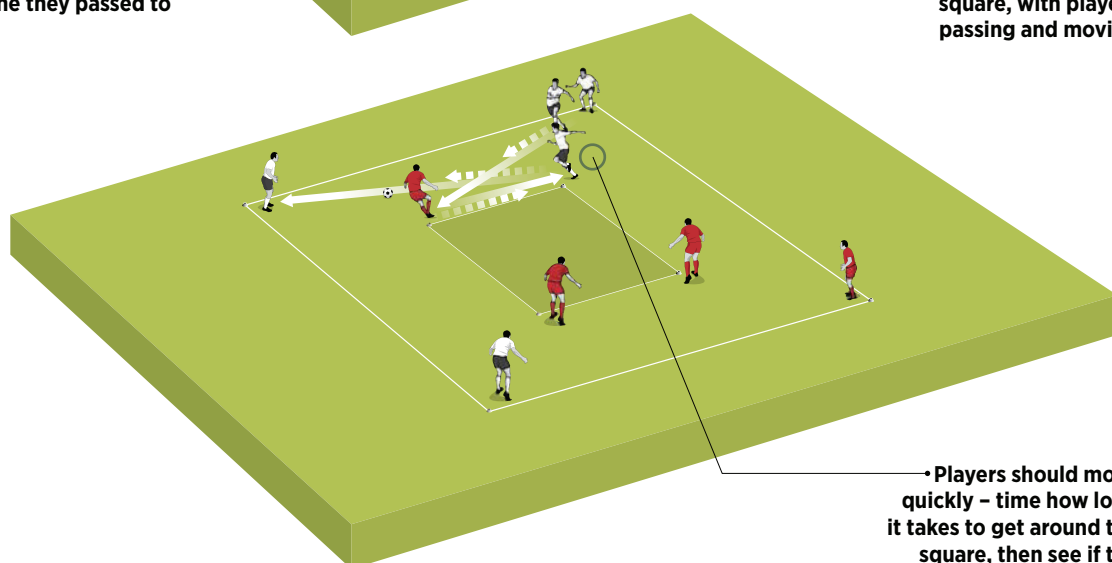


The receiving player lays off a short pass to the player on their right and then that player passes to the next cone on the outside square

Players follow the pass so they end up on the cone they passed to



The sequence of passes continues on each side of the square, with players passing and moving



Players should move quickly – time how long it takes to get around the square, then see if the players can beat the time

Player movement ■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■→

Shot →

Rondo Win The Ball

This is a rondo game set in a more match-like situation and it will help to get your players sharp and fit for the start of the new season

WHY USE IT

This uses all the elements of pre-season training: passing, communication, movement, control, and with the progression comes a tactical challenge. Players need to concentrate and react quickly, so it helps with general fitness too.

SET UP

Set up a 30x30-yard area split into two 15x30-yard zones. We've used 10 players plus the coach as a server.

HOW TO PLAY

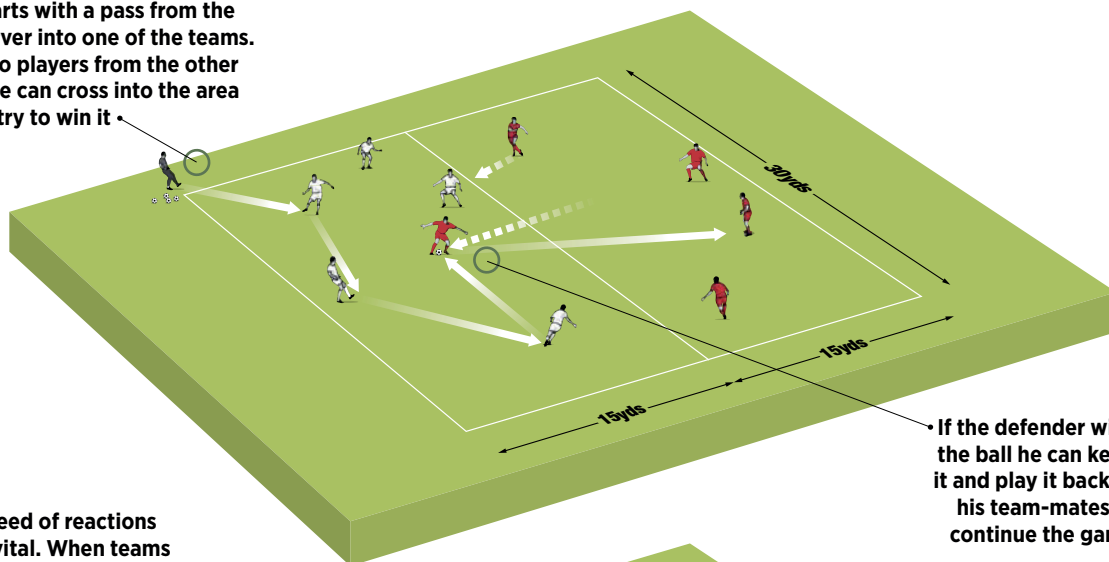
Split your squad into two teams of five. Give a ball to one team and allow the other team to send two players into the opposition half to get it back. If they win it they can play it back to team-mates, but with two players in the wrong half they must react quickly or the team that lost it could chase it quicker. The game is one touch and continuous.

Progress the game by giving both teams a ball. The winner is the team that can capture the other team's ball while keeping their own. In the progression, teams can send up to three players into the other half to win the ball, but that only leaves two players to look after their own ball. If it goes out of play a new ball is played into the opposite team.

TECHNIQUE

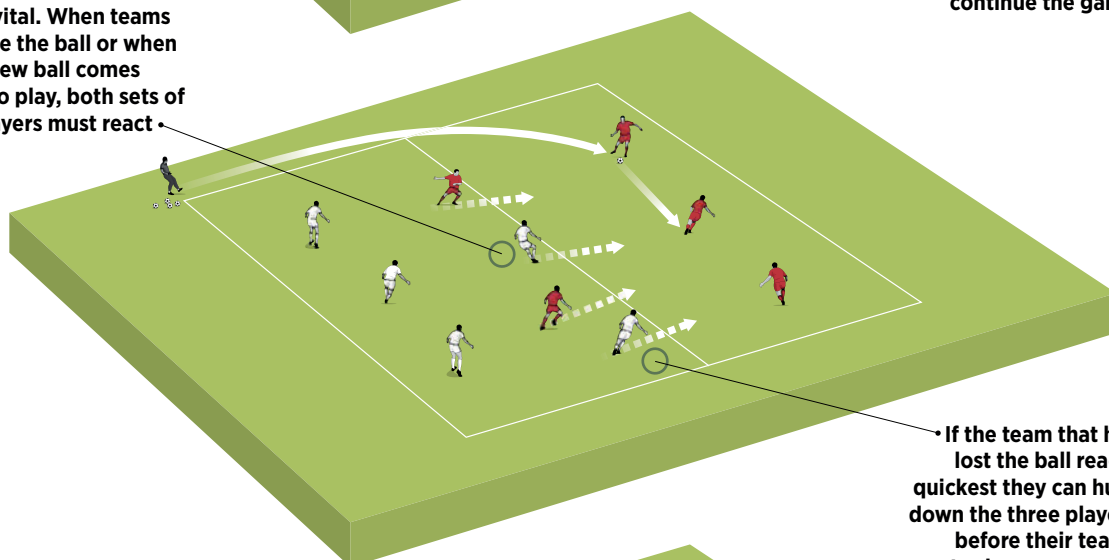
In the progression the emphasis is on fun, which is achieved using technique, tactics and communication.

Starts with a pass from the server into one of the teams. Two players from the other side can cross into the area to try to win it

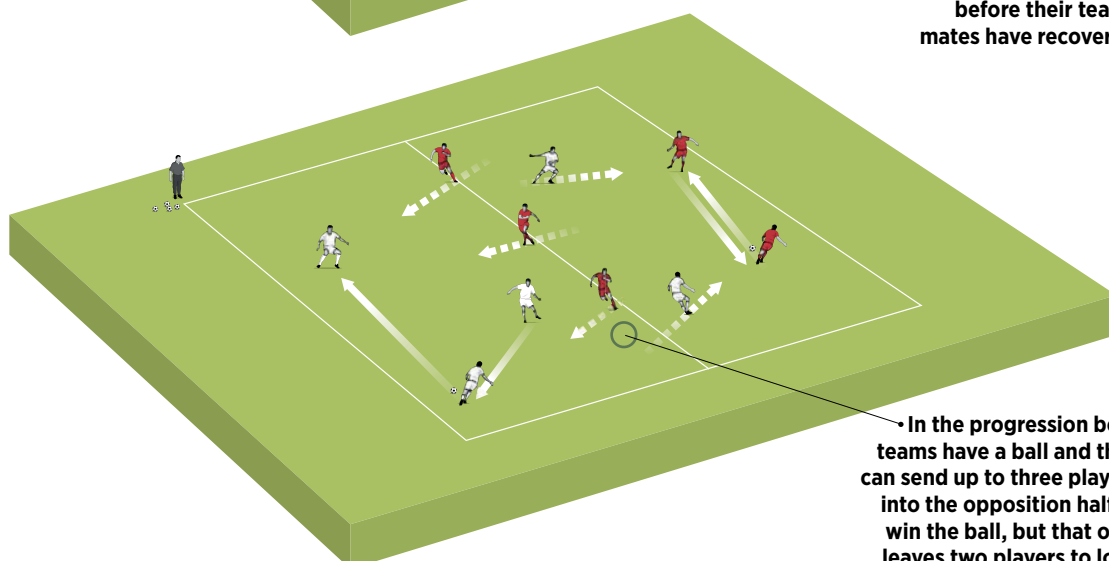


If the defender wins the ball he can keep it and play it back to his team-mates to continue the game

Speed of reactions is vital. When teams lose the ball or when a new ball comes into play, both sets of players must react



If the team that has lost the ball reacts quickest they can hunt down the three players before their team-mates have recovered



In the progression both teams have a ball and they can send up to three players into the opposition half to win the ball, but that only leaves two players to look after their own ball

Player movement ■■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■■→

Shot →

Rondo Shoot On Sight

If Carlos Tevez gets one chance in the box, he takes it. Use this fast-scoring game to teach your players how to latch onto goalscoring opportunities too

WHY USE IT

This session is all about scoring a goal before your opponents and knocking them out. It is a fast game with constantly changing teams, and it gets attackers to sniff out opportunities and capitalise on them.

SET UP

Set up an area of 15x15 yards with goals at each end and with the corners coned off from the edge of the goal to the centre. We've used 10 players. You need balls, bibs, cones and two normal goals.

HOW TO PLAY

Split the players into two teams of four plus two goalkeepers. Two players from each team play in the area, with two players each in the corner zones at the end their team is attacking.

Players can make use of their team-mates in the corner, who play one-touch, but if they do they must then swap places with that player, who comes onto the pitch. If a team scores, the opposing central players swap with their team-mates on the outside. The scoring team stays on and receives another ball from their keeper.

TECHNIQUE

This session gets players to use good technique at speed and under pressure conditions. It is good fun and all players are involved in using skills and technique to score goals.

Activity by: David Clarke

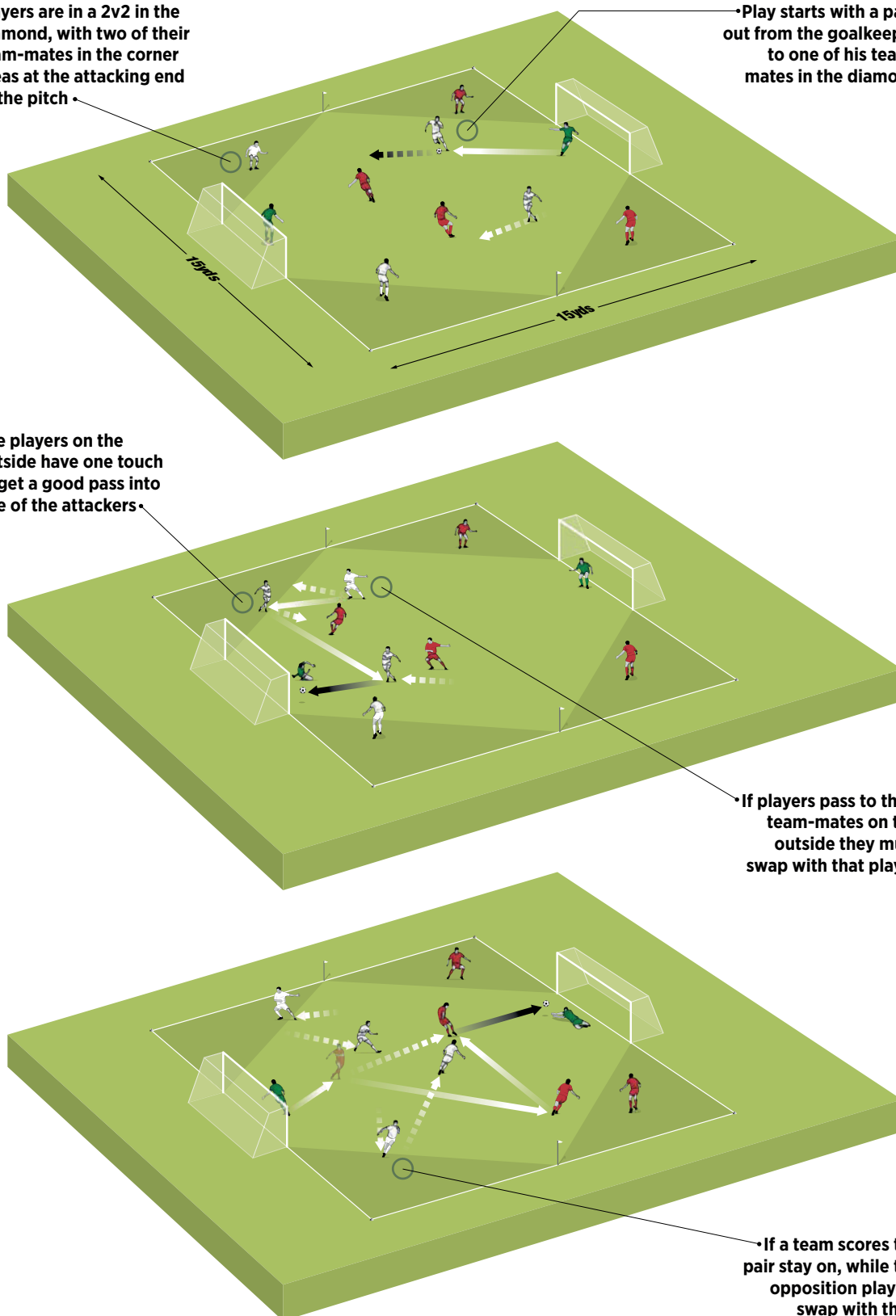
Players are in a 2v2 in the diamond, with two of their team-mates in the corner areas at the attacking end of the pitch

Play starts with a pass out from the goalkeeper to one of his team-mates in the diamond

The players on the outside have one touch to get a good pass into one of the attackers

If players pass to their team-mates on the outside they must swap with that player

If a team scores the pair stay on, while the opposition players swap with their outside team-mates



Player movement ■■■■

Ball movement ———

Run with ball ■■■■

Shot ———

RONDOS

SPECIAL TRAINING GUIDE

OVERLOAD DECISIONS



David Silva (R) fights for the ball with team mate Santi Cazorla (2nd R) during a rondo training session with the Spain national squad

Making Overload Decisions

Players with the ability to unlock defences with a single pass or skill can make a match-winning difference. Use overload rondo games to improve your players' technique

An overload is when you have more players than the opposition in the immediate space around the ball, e.g. 2v1 or 3v2 etc. Managers will create overloads in areas like the midfield so they can run the game from there. For example, in a 3-5-1-1 playing against a traditional midfield 4, there will be an overload that can be turned into a winning difference.

Some individuals make the best use of overloads. At Manchester City there is a belief that when David Silva plays well, the team plays well. The Spanish playmaker's technical ability is matched by few in the Premier League.

Players who can split open a defence with a perfectly weighted pass or create scoring opportunities though a phenomenal piece of skill are the sorts of individuals coaches dream of.

Silva's game is all about creativity in and around the penalty area. A master of the through ball, he can use overloads to his advantage – skills he has learned through playing rondos.

"Silva is a top, top player," his former coach at City Roberto Mancini has said. "I don't know why he didn't go to Barça or Real Madrid because he's Spanish, but we are lucky because he's here. He's different from Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo because they are strikers and

score a lot of goals but I think he's the same as [playmakers such as] Xavi and Iniesta."

The overload rondos on the following pages will help your players take on a creative mindset as they look to create like Silva. Learning a variety of passing styles in and around the area – be they through balls, chips, volleyed or swift passes that go through, around or over the opposition – could be the key to your side unlocking a defence.

Words by:
David Clarke

"I like to control games. I like to be responsible for our own destiny. If you are better than your opponent with the ball you have a 79 per cent chance of winning the game"

- BRENDAN RODGERS

6v4 Play Out Rondo

Try this game to give your players the incentive of a little goalscoring end product to their possession. It will teach them when to play forward and when to shoot

WHY USE IT

For your team to be successful in getting the ball into shooting positions, they must find a balance between exploiting space and not losing the ball. Patience is the key – keeping possession and delaying that scoring pass can often result in a better chance.

SET UP

Create an area measuring 40x20 yards. Play 6v4 with 12 players including two neutral keepers. You need balls, bibs, cones and goals.

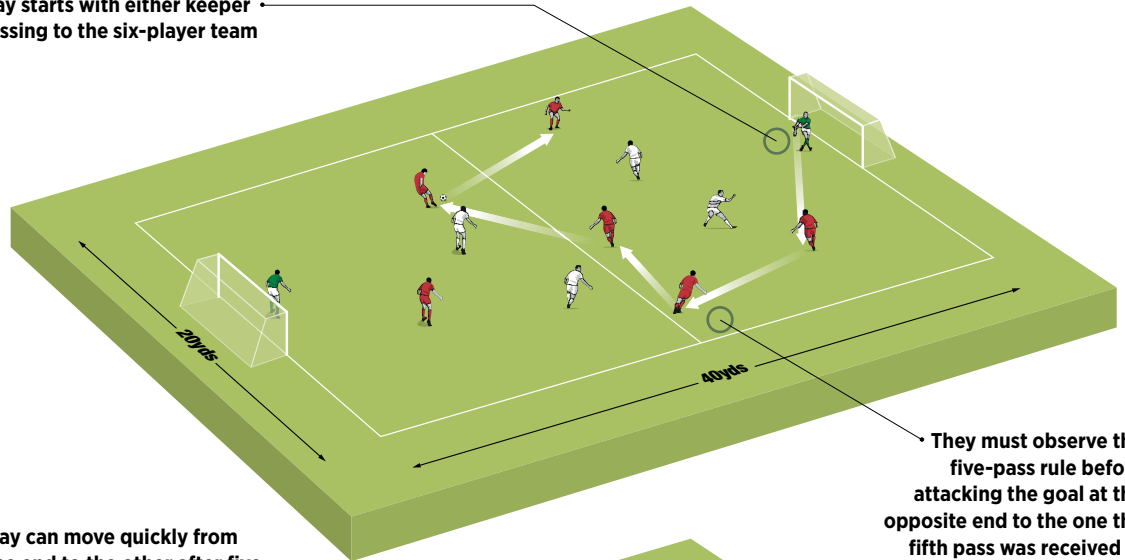
HOW TO PLAY

The team of six needs to make five passes before attacking. Once reaching five passes they can start looking for an opportunity to attack – but when ready they must attack the goal in the other half of the pitch from where the fifth pass was received. The team of four try to win the ball back and counterattack into either goal. Teams can score in either goal, so no offsidess.

TECHNIQUE

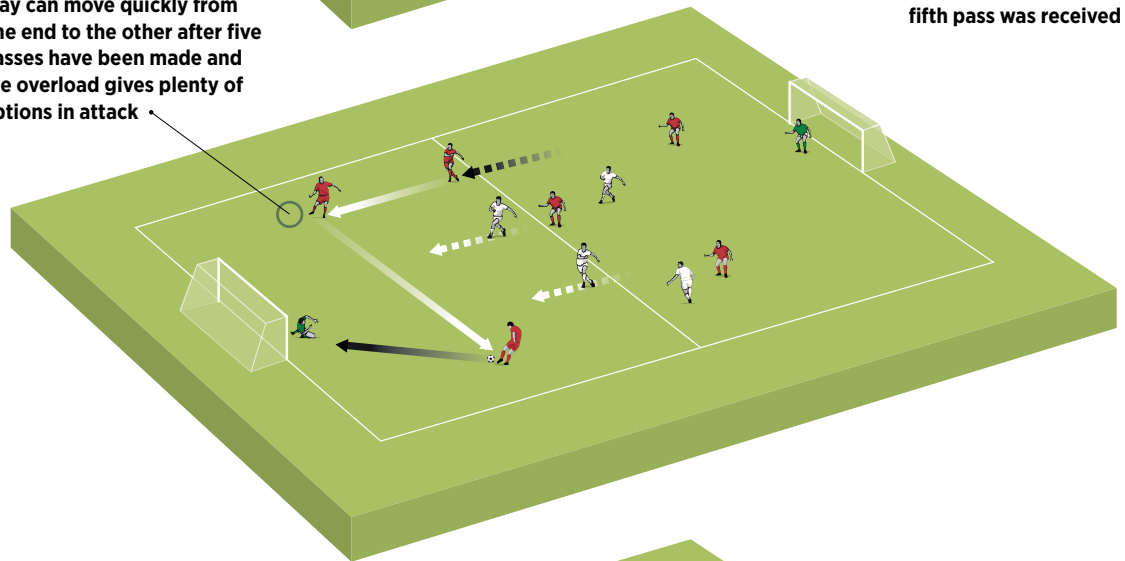
Players should recognise when to play forward and move to support the pass. They should play quickly to take advantage of the space from the overload situation. This means awareness of space is crucial. Coaches should look for players switching play or bringing the keeper into play.

Play starts with either keeper passing to the six-player team

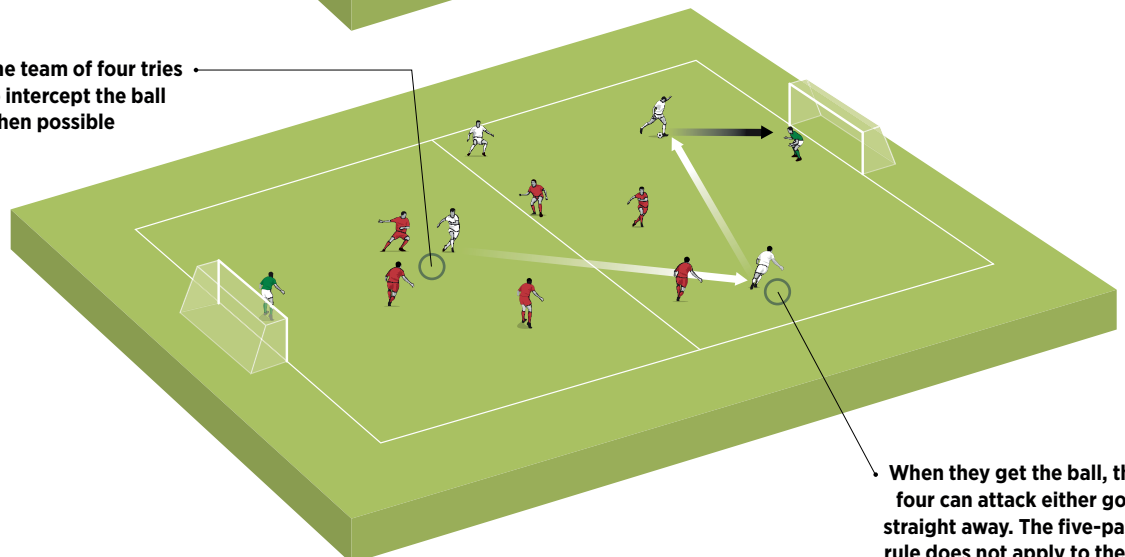


They must observe the five-pass rule before attacking the goal at the opposite end to the one the fifth pass was received in

Play can move quickly from one end to the other after five passes have been made and the overload gives plenty of options in attack



The team of four tries to intercept the ball when possible



When they get the ball, the four can attack either goal straight away. The five-pass rule does not apply to them

Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot

7v4 Creating Space Rondo

Follow our Pep Guardiola-style passing master class in order to get your players keeping possession and creating space for team-mates to exploit

WHY USE IT

Passing in small areas is vital to the style Guardiola will get his Bayern Munich team to play. He will get them to pass their way out of danger and to open up space for their team-mates to accelerate into.

SET UP

Use an area of 20x20 yards with a five-yard coned off box in the centre. We've used 11 players. You need balls, bibs and cones.

HOW TO PLAY

Split the players into seven attackers and four defenders. To score, the attackers must receive a pass in the box in the centre, but they can only be in there for a couple of seconds and they cannot stand still in the box or the goal doesn't count. Defenders cannot go into the box. If the four defenders win the ball they must either make three passes to score or dribble the ball under control out of the main area.

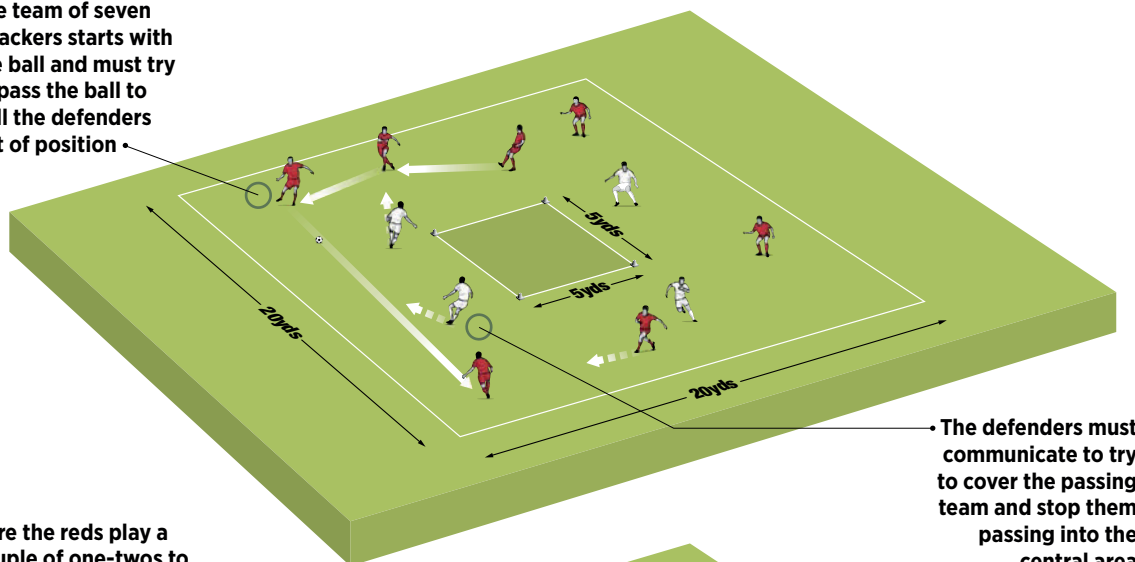
TECHNIQUE

When you see teams able to make four or five passes in a small area, keeping hold of the ball and creating space elsewhere on the pitch, it is because they have played games like this – and their team-mates can exploit the space created. At Barcelona, Guardiola's team constantly linked up to keep the ball in areas where others would clear it straight back to the opposition.

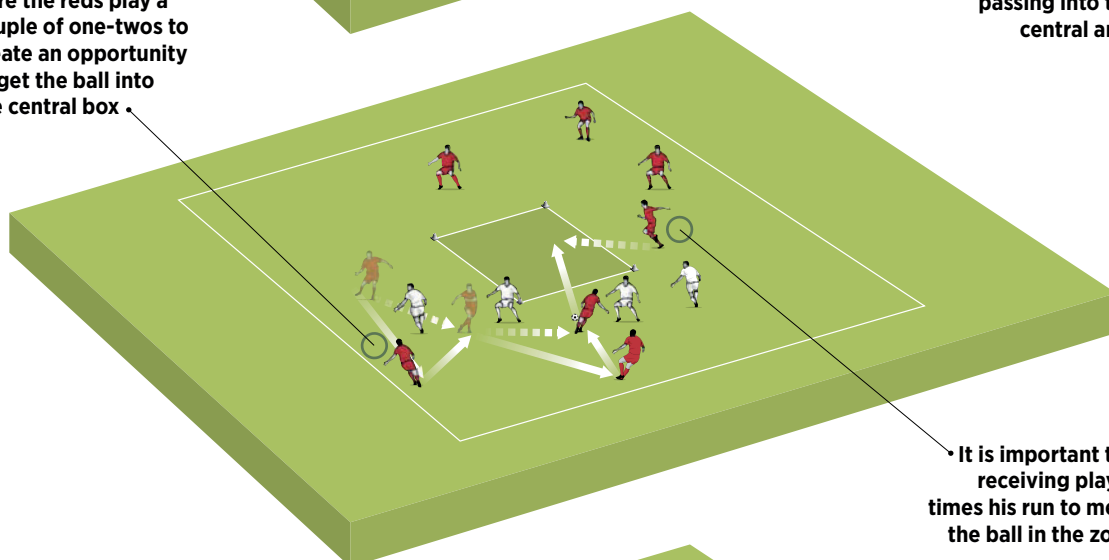
The team of seven attackers starts with the ball and must try to pass the ball to pull the defenders out of position

Here the reds play a couple of one-twos to create an opportunity to get the ball into the central box

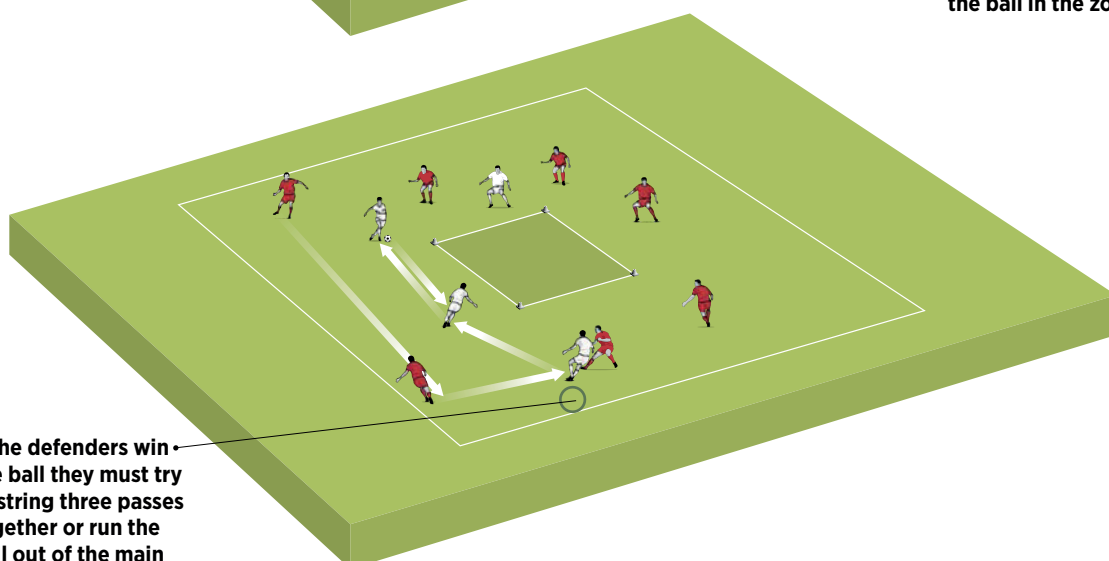
If the defenders win the ball they must try to string three passes together or run the ball out of the main area under control



The defenders must communicate to try to cover the passing team and stop them passing into the central area



It is important the receiving player times his run to meet the ball in the zone



Player movement ■■■→

Ball movement —→

Run with ball ■■■→

Shot —→

6v3 Combinations Rondo

Try this fun futsal training session to help your players develop their ball control skills, movement and their ability to hold onto the ball

WHY USE IT

The emphasis in a lot of futsal games is passing and dribbling. In this game there will be lots of touches of the ball and technique to get passes between players. Movement is also key to what happens in the session.

SET UP

You need a futsal ball and a 16x16-yard area. We've used nine players in the session. You will also need bibs and cones.

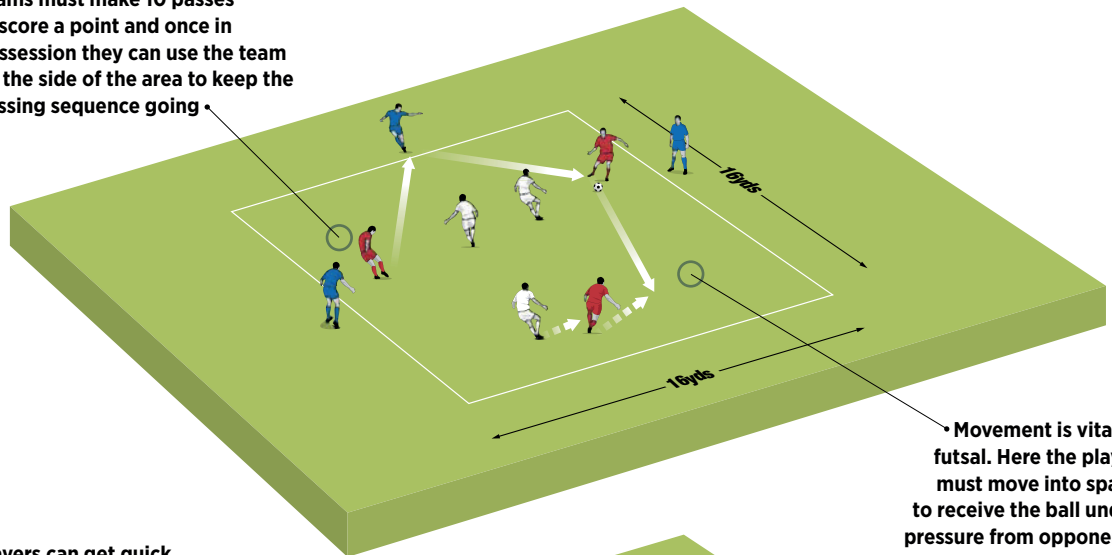
HOW TO PLAY

Split the play into three teams of three players. Play a 3v3 on the pitch – the third team support the team in possession but they can only move along the sidelines. When one team has made 10 passes they get to swap with the team on the outside of the pitch and rest.

TECHNIQUE

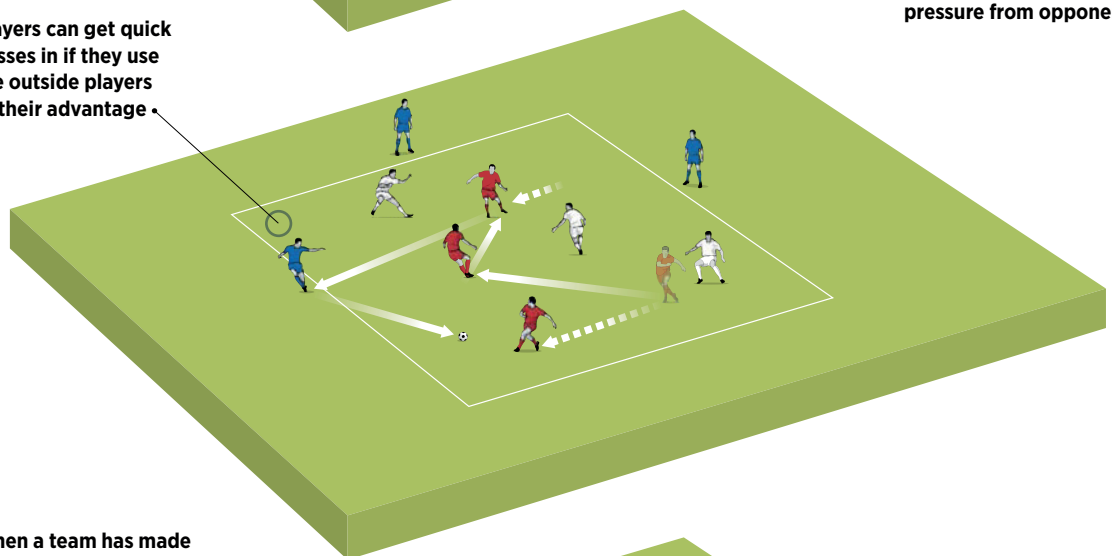
This is where control of the smaller, heavier ball comes into its own and helps to coach young players in the right techniques for possession play.

Teams must make 10 passes to score a point and once in possession they can use the team on the side of the area to keep the passing sequence going

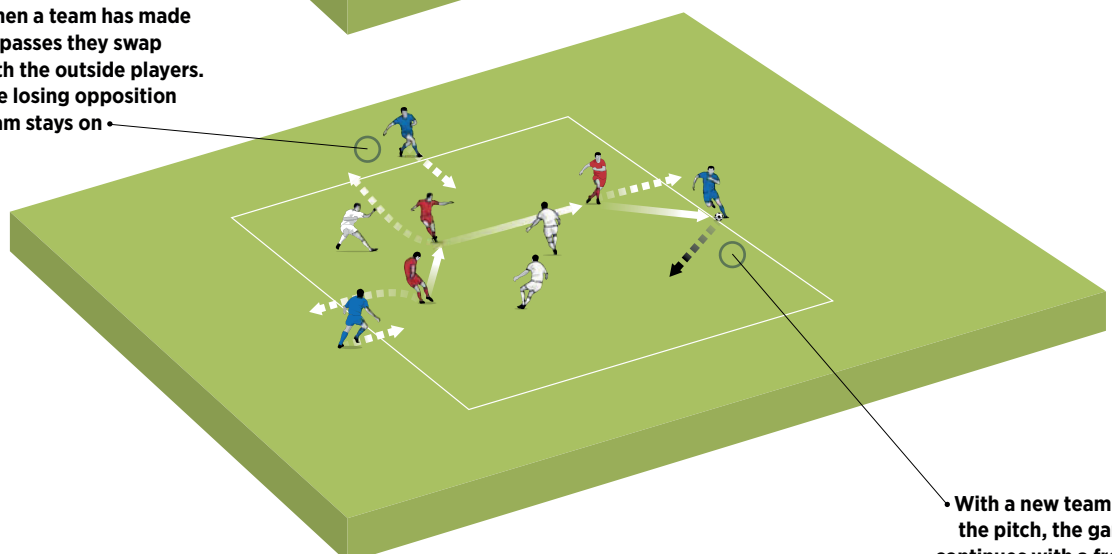


• Movement is vital in futsal. Here the player must move into space to receive the ball under pressure from opponents

Players can get quick passes in if they use the outside players to their advantage



When a team has made 10 passes they swap with the outside players. The losing opposition team stays on



• With a new team on the pitch, the game continues with a fresh 3v3 passing battle

Player movement ■■■→

Ball movement —→

Run with ball ■■■➔

Shot —→

5v2 Pass and Move Rondo

This fun rondo game has everything your team needs for a good pre-season workout. It offers plenty of movement for your players and sharpens their control and technique too

WHY USE IT

This covers all the elements of a good pre-season workout: technique through passing, movement and control, plenty of tactics to move and keep the ball from defenders, plus it also takes lots of teamwork and communication to move between the squares.

SET UP

Set up an area of 30x30 yards split into 15x15-yard quarters. We've used 14 players and you need bibs, balls and cones.

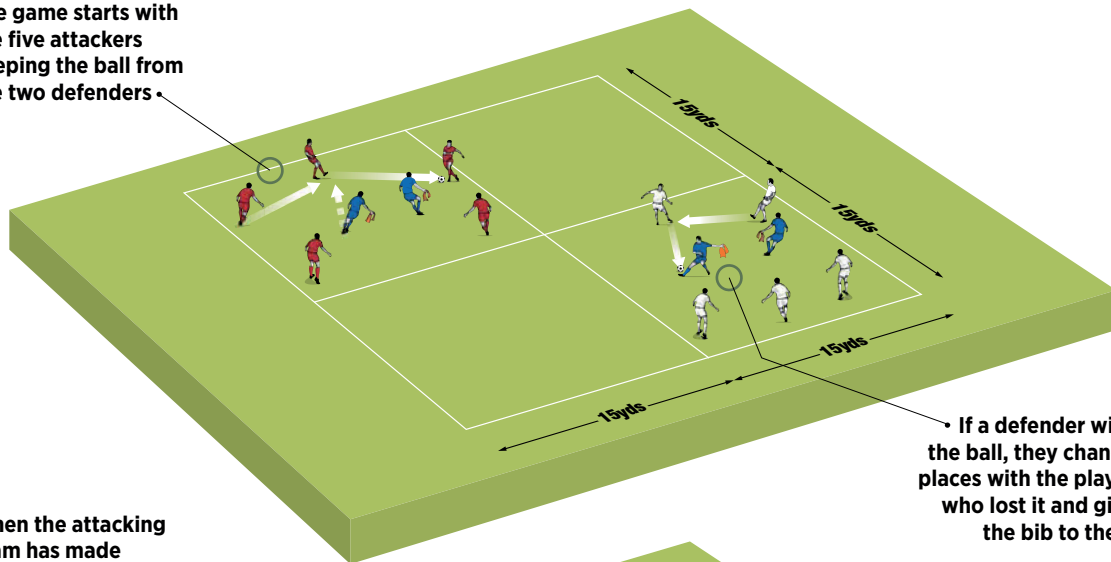
HOW TO PLAY

You need to split your squad into two groups of seven and start playing two basic 5v2 games in opposite boxes. The two defenders in each group have to carry bibs and after winning the ball they swap places with the player who lost it, giving the bib to that player. After three successful passes, the team has to move into a box not occupied by another set of players. That means each team is moving into different sectors as they try to keep the ball from defenders. Start with two touches but try to get them to use one touch as much as possible. If they are having trouble, make it 6v1 so they get more success.

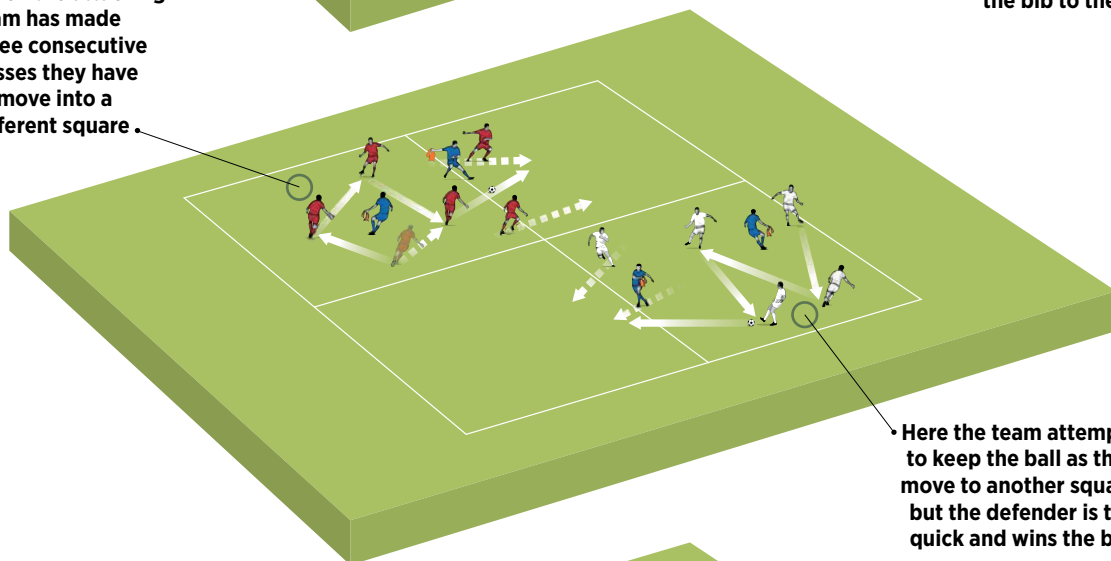
TECHNIQUE

This game has all the elements of rondo, but adds another decision into the equation, making it a good test of tactics as well as technique

The game starts with the five attackers keeping the ball from the two defenders



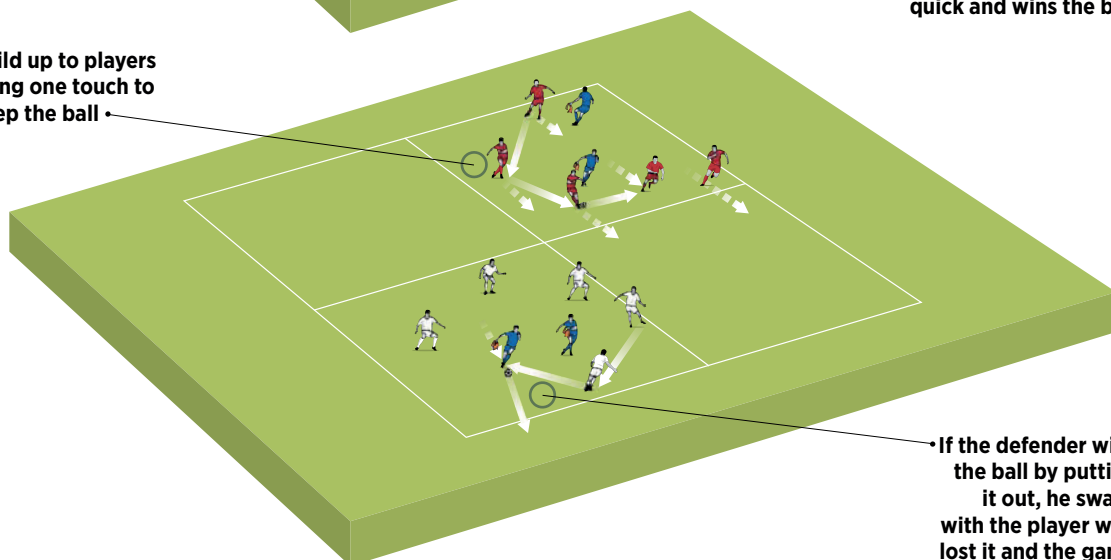
When the attacking team has made three consecutive passes they have to move into a different square



If a defender wins the ball, they change places with the player who lost it and give the bib to them

Here the team attempts to keep the ball as they move to another square but the defender is too quick and wins the ball

Build up to players using one touch to keep the ball



If the defender wins the ball by putting it out, he swaps with the player who lost it and the game quickly continues

Player movement ■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■→

Shot →

2v1/1v1 Decisions Rondo

Should players pass or go 1v1 with the defender? Ronaldo usually makes the right decision and, with this session, your players could learn how to make the correct choice too

WHY USE IT

Attackers must make use of space and make the right decisions to create goals. It's good for 1v1 and 2v1 situations to give attackers match-like practice.

SET UP

Set up an area of 40x20 yards including two 10-yard end zones. Place two target goals at one end and a normal goal at the other end, set back five yards. We've used 17 players.

HOW TO PLAY

Split the teams into two groups of eight with one goalkeeper. Players work in pairs. All the balls are with the team defending the normal goal. Teams have four players on either side of the pitch at their defending end.

Play starts with a player passing to the opposition, who send out two attackers. The player who passed defends on his own. If he clears the ball or if the opposition fail to score, his partner on the defending team dribbles from his end and tries to score in the target goals before the other team can recover. The original defender supports the counterattack and combines to score if needed.

TECHNIQUE

Ronaldo is superb in 1v1 or 2v1 situations, usually making the right decision about whether to pass or win the 1v1.

Activity by: David Clarke

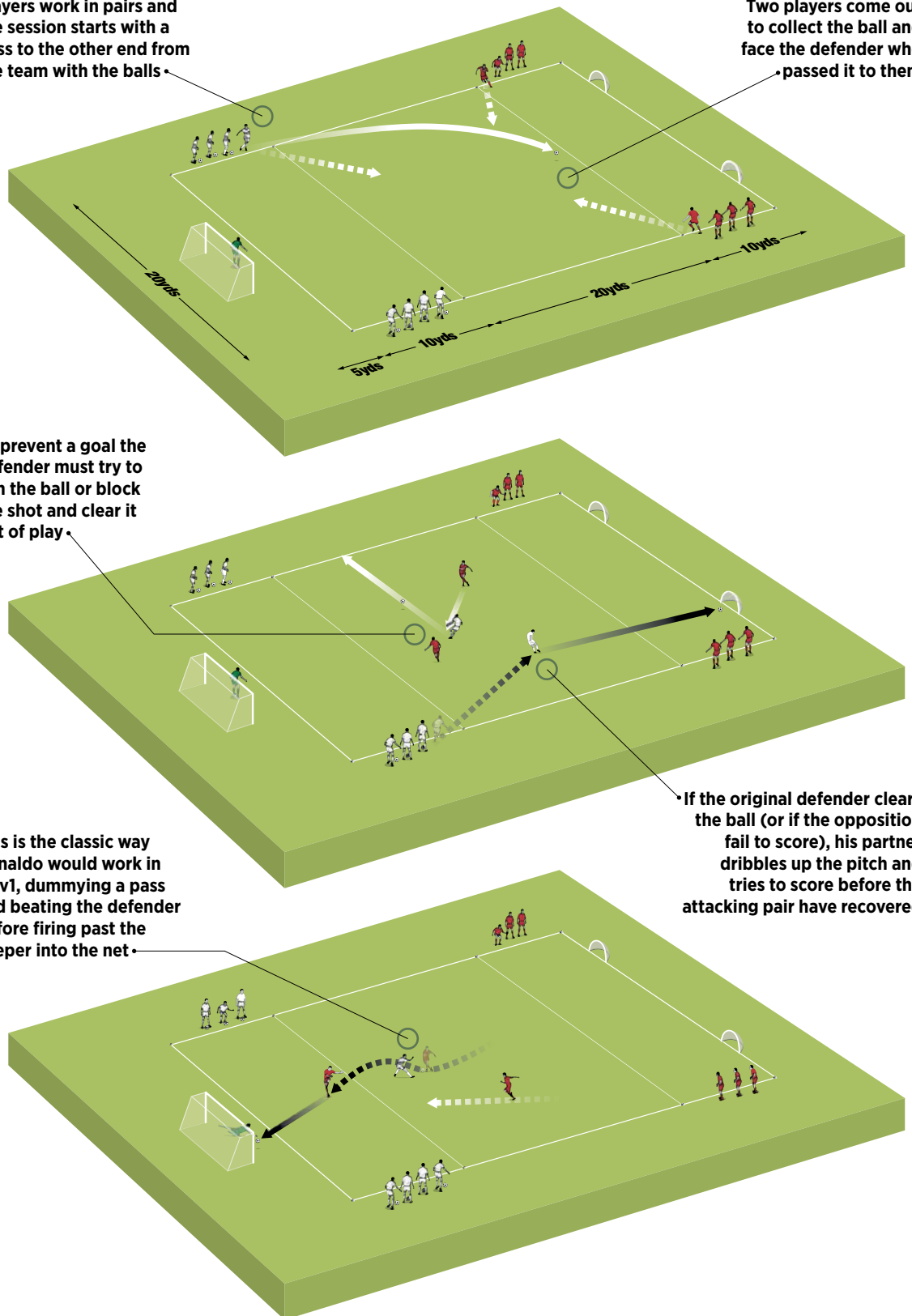
Players work in pairs and the session starts with a pass to the other end from the team with the balls.

Two players come out to collect the ball and face the defender who passed it to them

To prevent a goal the defender must try to win the ball or block the shot and clear it out of play.

This is the classic way Ronaldo would work in a 2v1, dummieing a pass and beating the defender before firing past the keeper into the net.

If the original defender clears the ball (or if the opposition fail to score), his partner dribbles up the pitch and tries to score before the attacking pair have recovered



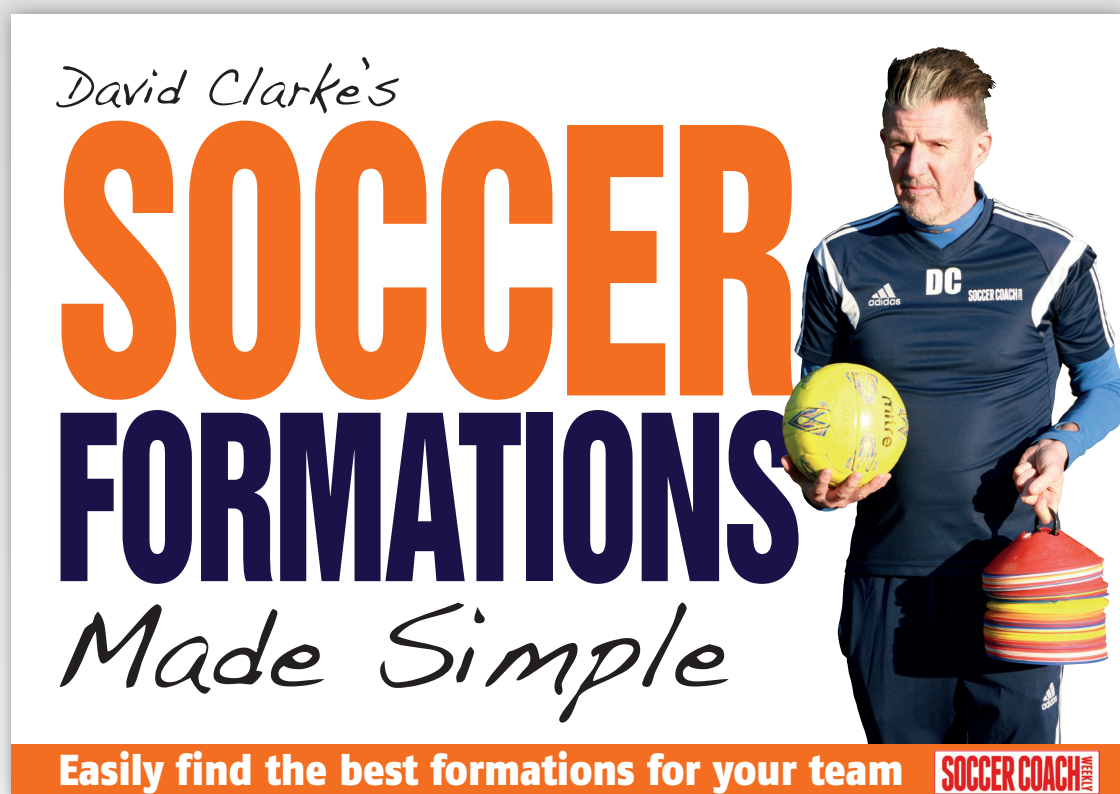
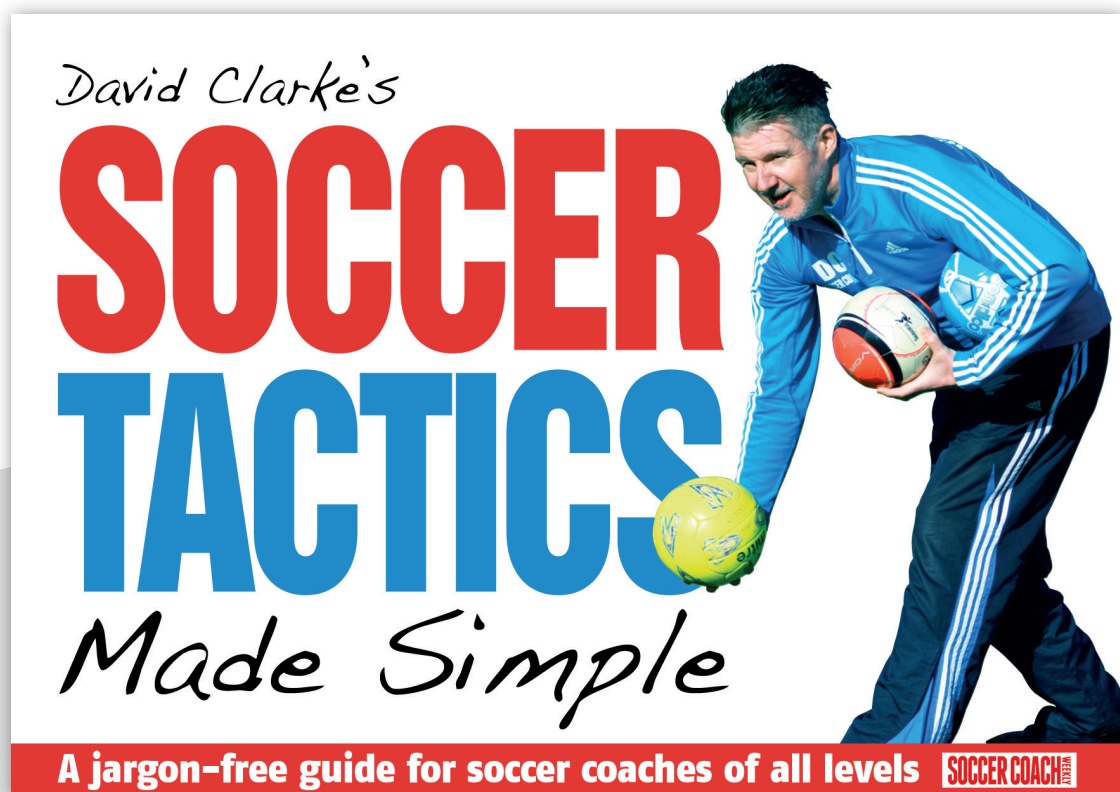
Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot

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