

Introduction To Coaching The Rondo

Written by The Coaching Manual

Rondo or Warm Up?

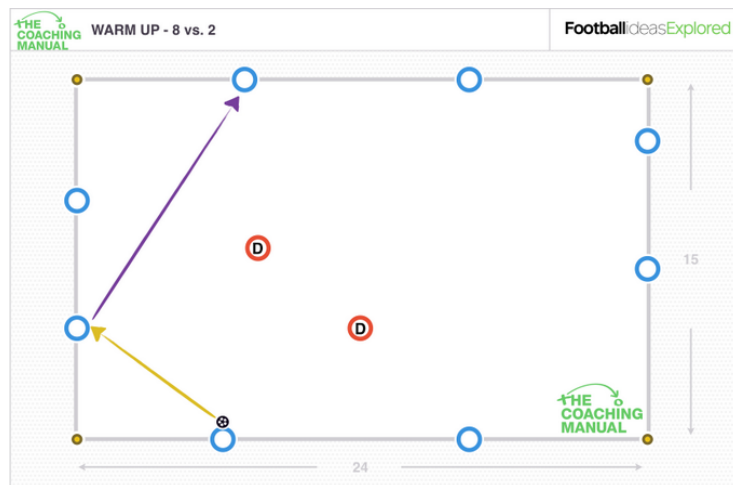
One activity that coaches regular class as a Rondo is 8 or 10 players standing around 2 Defenders in the centre, as the 2 Defenders chase the ball.

This is a "Rondo" in the loosest possible term and is more suited to a warm up activity that creates competition, fun and camaraderie within the dynamics of the group, rather than coaching the principles of positional play.

Interpreting the Rondo

Rondos can be interpreted as anything you want in line with the beliefs you hold as a coach. However, a Rondo by definition is a positional-based practice with an overload of players located in a particular area or zone on the field. These zones have clearly defined roles and purposes for the players that are within it.

Equally, the Rondo is used as an education tool to help players understand positional roles and requirements, both in and out of possession. Rondo's are primarily used to coach players when the team is in possession (although not exclusively) and promotes understanding around when, where and how to penetrate the opposition to advance up the pitch.



Formations and Shapes (Triangles)

Rondo's are not delivered in line with one specific formation, rather they introduce concepts for your players to then deliver on pitch. However, the 4-3-3 formation provides sufficient depth, length and width in a team along with creating passing triangles which may contribute to numerical and positional superiority in all areas.

Focus - Passing and movement to create triangles

Set Up

Area 9x7 with 3 x Attacking players (Blue) and 1 x Defender (Red). All players to play inside the designated area.

Task

Blue Team (Attackers): Movement to create triangles and pass/receive the ball with the emphasis on advancing forwards into the space behind the Defender.

Red Team (Defender): If possession is won, dribble to any line of the area to replicate a counter attack in a game.

Within this Rondo, the objective is to create superiority (numerical and positional) to help advance forward. This can be achieved by creating triangles around the defender to outnumber the opposition (numerical superiority) and also take up positions to receive the ball and force the defender to re-adjust and recover (positional superiority).

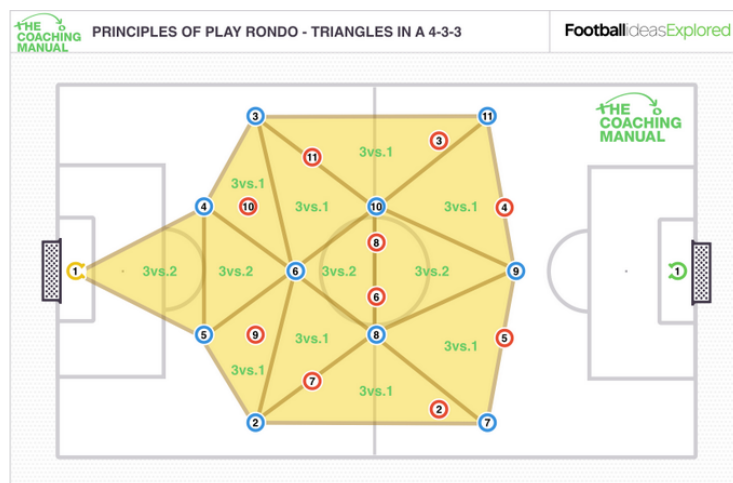
In the 3vs.1 Rondo, as in the game of football, the objective is to advance up the field. Therefore within this Rondo the ball would be passed and received in behind the defender for a passage of play to be successful.

Key Coaching Points

Angles and distances between the Attackers (game realistic)

Movements to create triangles and passing options

Quality, weight and decision of the pass (play around or retain)



Detail

Movement to receive

Body shape to receive

Angles and distances to combine

Timing of passes - "La Pausa"

Use the 2 passing lines (in front of Defender and around the Defender) to create opportunities to retain the ball and advance forwards

Passing options around and ahead of the ball

Communication

Phase 1

As the Defender (Red 8) presses the player in possession (Blue 6), Blue 10 moves to take up a position level with, or just behind, the Defender. As that happens, Blue 8 performs a run in behind the Defender to become the third man and receive the ball from Blue 10.

Phase 2 then begins as play continues with the triangle being reset and the Attackers once again aiming to take up positions to pass the ball in behind the Defender and advance forwards.

Progressions:

If the Attackers are having success in retaining possession and adopting positions to advance forwards, then the Rondo may progress to a 4vs.2 activity to introduce the third passing line - the penetrating pass.

Many coaches may be inclined to introduce a 2 touch or 1 touch condition, however this condition actually influences a player's decision on the ball, rather than encouraging the player to be able to recognise when to play in 1 or 2 touches and when to keep the ball and wait for team mates to take up advantageous positions ('La Pausa' - timing of passes).

As a Coach, we want quick play to unbalance the opposition, however it is more important that the players understand when to play quickly and when to slow the play down rather than force it upon them.

Formations and Shapes (Diamonds)

Just like triangles, diamond shapes in the game are a vital part of the Rondo exercise. This is where we can explore a 4vs.2 Rondo to coach penetration, one of the most important principles of a Rondo.

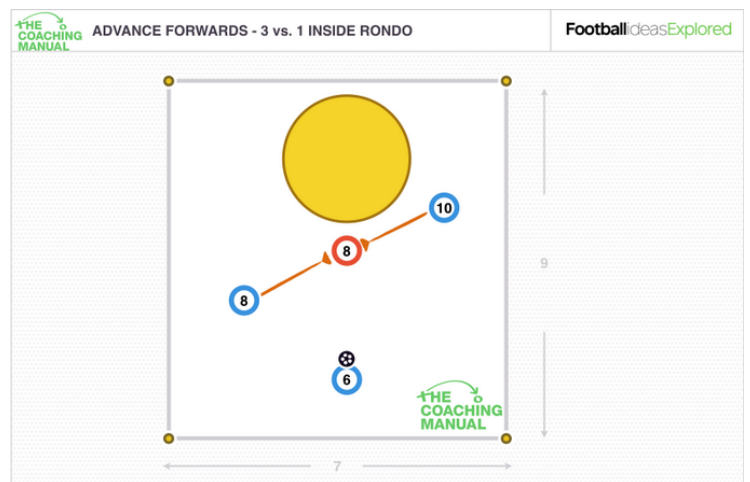
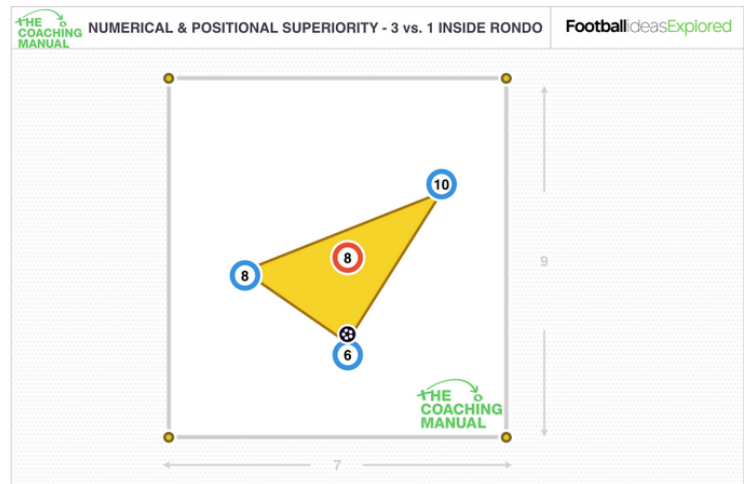
Focus - Passing and movement to create diamonds and penetrate the opposition

Set Up

Area 10x8 with 4 x Attacking players (Blue) and 2 x Defenders (Red). The Attackers on the outside (Blue 6, 8, 9 and 10) can move along the length of their designated line, whilst the Defenders (Red 4 and 8) attempt to close down the ball and regain possession.

Task

Blue Team (Attackers): Maintain positions and possession of the ball with the emphasis on going forward from Pivot Defensive Midfielder (Blue 6) to Centre Forward (Blue 9), either through a penetrating pass or playing around the Defenders.



Red Team (Defenders): If possession is won, play to Blue 6 as quickly as possible or dribble to any line of the area to replicate a counter attack in a game.

Positioning and shape are a key component in the 4vs.2 Rondo, with players encouraged to move and create passing options whilst providing length, width and depth to the unit, related to the game.

In this Rondo, the ultimate objective is to find the man furthest forward in the attack, in this case Blue 9, who would be the Centre Forward in a game. Players use the 3 passing lines (in front, around and through the defence) to pass to Blue 9.

Key Coaching Points

Angles and distances between the Attackers (game realistic)

Movements to create diamonds and passing options to penetrate the opposition

Quality, weight and decision of the pass (play around or retain)

Detail

Movement to receive

Body shape to receive

Angles and distances to combine and penetrate the opposition

Timing of passes - "La Pausa"

Use the 3 passing lines (in front of Defenders, around the Defenders and through the Defenders) to create opportunities to penetrate the opposition and advance forwards

Passing options around and ahead of the ball

Communication

Focus - Vertical and Horizontal Lines

The 4vs.2 Rondo also allows players to be introduced to the concept of vertical and horizontal lines.

Vertical and horizontal lines help to educate players on positions they can move to in order to receive the ball and combine to advance forwards and penetrate the opposition.

Phase 1

Attackers should be encouraged to take up positions on different horizontal and vertical lines than their team mates so that passing lines are not cut off by the Defenders.

Phase 2

With Pivot (Blue 6) in possession, the Centre Forward (Blue 9) takes up a position on a different vertical line to be an option to receive a penetrating pass. Centre Midfielders (Blue 8 and Blue 10) also take up positions on different horizontal lines to be options to receive around the Defenders (Red 4 and Red 8) to then advance forwards.

This movement and positioning in a game situation creates vertical passing options & "diamonds" to play around or through the opposition midfield. Balance must also be provided in games, with a Central Midfielder always providing an option behind the ball to protect against the opposition counter-attack, normally the Pivot (Blue 6).

Next up.....

Our next articles in the Rondo series will explore Pep Guardiola's use of the Rondo in a 4vs.4+3.

