

La Pausa: Part 2 - Positioning

Written by The Coaching Manual

In our second article discussing "La Pausa", we explore the component of Positioning and how it is used when recognising and exploiting space in attack.

Components of La Pausa

Part 1 detailed how La Pausa can be broken down into 3 categories within the framework of the game; Timing, Positioning and Execution. We also explored the first component of Timing.

La Pausa - Positioning

La Pausa is about purposefully delaying the play and waiting for the moment to find team mates in advantageous positions.

Players who have the ability to dictate the pace of games, find openings and launch the attacks need to be connected with their team mates as both need to understand the correct movements and potential areas to exploit the opposition.

This communication and connection skill-set is of the highest order in football and highlights the importance of team play to get the best out of individuals.

If the teammates of the player in possession cannot recognise when and where to move in order to create or occupy spaces that are presented to them, the attack may not progress in that instance, and the delaying player may be at risk of losing possession as they are pressed aggressively.

Central players who can manage the game (No. 6 or No. 10 for example) may utilise La Pausa to release players in positions to become an attacking threat.

For example, Real Madrid's Toni Kroos and Luka Modrić often use La Pausa strategies to find attacking players Ronaldo, Benzema and Bale, releasing them in threatening areas and 1v1 situations with open space to attack or behind units of play.

Positioning - Delaying the Attack for Teammates to Take up Positions

In the first animation below, we can see the Attacking Midfielder (Blue 10) dribbling with the ball and waiting for the Right Forward (Blue 7) to arrive in the optimal position to attack, behind the opposition Left Back (Red 3).

This pause, by maintaining possession and dribbling, draws the defenders towards the ball and the co-ordinated movement allows Blue 7 to receive in a position behind the line of pressure. As the opposition defensive unit attempts to recover, the Right Forward (Blue 7) plays the ball into the area for Blue 11 to finish.

Positioning - Decoy Runs to Release Players in Optimum Positions

Here we can see how a decoy run by Left Forward (Blue 11) can create space to release players in wide positions.

The player in possession (Blue 8) is responsible for recognising the space created and using La Pausa to correctly time the execution of the pass to release the Left Back (Blue 3).

Blue 3 also has to recognise and time their run to receive behind the opposition defensive line before driving into the penalty area and creating a goalscoring chance for Blue 10.