

La Pausa: Part 3 - Execution

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Part 3 of this series builds on the timing and positioning of "La Pausa" to detail the Execution.

La Pausa - Execution

If "La Pausa" is the delay and slowing down of the game to encourage opposition defenders to press and exploit the spaces created, the execution is the change of speed in the attack to catch the defensive units off-balance and create goalscoring chances or advance up field.

The execution is a key component of La Pausa as players first need the ability to recognise the options and space available, and secondly need to be able to execute their decision. This is important for coaches to understand when observing and developing players to use "La Pausa" as an attacking strategy.

For example, if a player in possession attempts to delay the attack but is dispossessed, the coach needs to determine if a) the attack broke down as the player did not recognise the options available, or b) the player recognised the options available but could not execute their decision appropriately.

This can be determined through relevant questioning between the coach and player, with interventions then adopted to help the player develop either their awareness and recognising "pictures" in the game or their technique to execute decisions.

Weight, Disguise and Angle of Attack

The execution of decisions relating to La Pausa can be broken down to the weight of the pass, disguise of an action and the angle of attack.

When the player in possession creates the time and supporting team mates are in position, the weight of the pass has to be played at the correct speed and flight for the change of speed in the attack to be effective.

If the ball isn't passed with enough speed or weight, then the ball may take longer to reach the intended player, allowing defenders to recover and closing down the space created through La Pausa. If the ball is played with too much weight then the receiving player may not arrive in time to control.

Execution - Changing the Angle of Attack with a Disguised Pass

The Disguise of an action also allows a player to execute their decision successfully. This can often be seen when a player's body shape and movement appears as if they are going to play in one direction and, as the defenders slide over to the protect this area of the pitch, the player then changes the angle of attack by quickly passing to a teammate in an advanced position.

Execution - Engaging Defenders to Create Space and Combine

Dribbling into advanced areas of the pitch can also act as a delay and create space to combine with team mates to play around defenders, as they press the player in possession.

The execution in the animation below is the wall pass, or one-two, between Blue 10 and Blue 8. The player in possession, Blue 10, needs to recognise the space behind the pressing Red 6, as Blue 8 takes up a position to be able to combine.

A player's ability in recognising when to delay the attack, through "La Pausa", is a vital part of their development. Game understanding including when and how to release players should be high on any youth development list and the reality is La Pausa can be executed by any player on the field.

When playing out from the back, defenders in possession may wait or entice the opposition press before releasing the ball into the middle third. Also, pivot holding midfielders may use the same approach to break the opposition midfield line and playmakers dribbling at defenders can also create spaces behind the units.

However, La Pausa isn't just waiting for the right moment; it is about creating the right moment by utilising timing, position and execution.