

Midfield 3 Rondo: Part 1

Written by The Coaching Manual

Midfield 3

The focus within this session is on central play and how the Midfield 3 can control possession and positions in this area of the field, whilst combining with team mates to receive and advance forwards.

Our article "Coaching Midfielders in a 4-3-3" elaborates on the roles and responsibilities of the Midfielders in this set up, and can be found [here](https://www.thecoachingmanual.com/blog/coaching-midfielders-4-3-3) (<https://www.thecoachingmanual.com/blog/coaching-midfielders-4-3-3>)

9v4 Midfield 3 Rondo

Set Up

Area 26x15 divided in half to provide the Pivot (Blue 6) and Centre Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10) with reference points for when, where and how they can take up positions to dominate possession and advance forwards.

9 x Attackers (Blue) positioned along the lines or inside the area against 4 x Defenders (Reds) inside the area, with 2 x Defenders locked into each 15x13 zone when out of possession. The Midfield 3 (Blue 6, 8 and 10) can play anywhere in the 26x15 area.

Centre Back (Blue 5) and Centre Forward (Blue 9) can play along the length of their 15 yard designated line. Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) and Wide Forwards (Blue 7 and 11) can play along the length of their 13 yard line.

Task

Blue Team (Attackers): Maintain positions and possession of the ball with the emphasis on playing vertically through the Pivot (Blue 6) and Central Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10) whilst maintaining shape to offer passing options around, ahead and behind the ball.

Red Team (Defenders): If the ball is won, maintain possession 4v3 and attempt to dribble or pass the ball to Red 9 or Red 10 over the opposition"s defensive end line (Centre Back line).

Key Coaching Points

Midfield shape and positioning to create numerical and positional superiority in central areas (Different horizontal lines)

Midfield angles, distances and areas of structure to penetrate effectively and patiently

Support play of Full Backs to provide opportunities to switch play and stretch opposition

Detail

Decision making of player in possession - penetrate, play around or retain possession

Body angle to receive the pass and play forwards

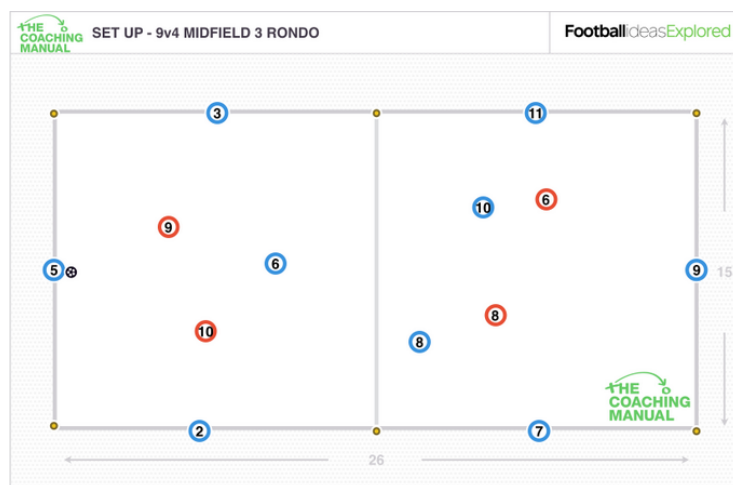
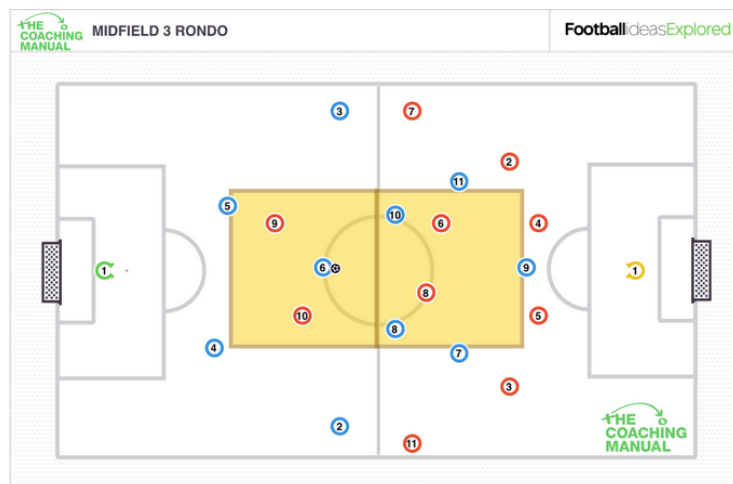
Receiving areas of foot or body

Understanding slow and quick play through the area to exploit space on opposite side

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 utilising the Midfielders

Passing options around, behind and ahead of the ball

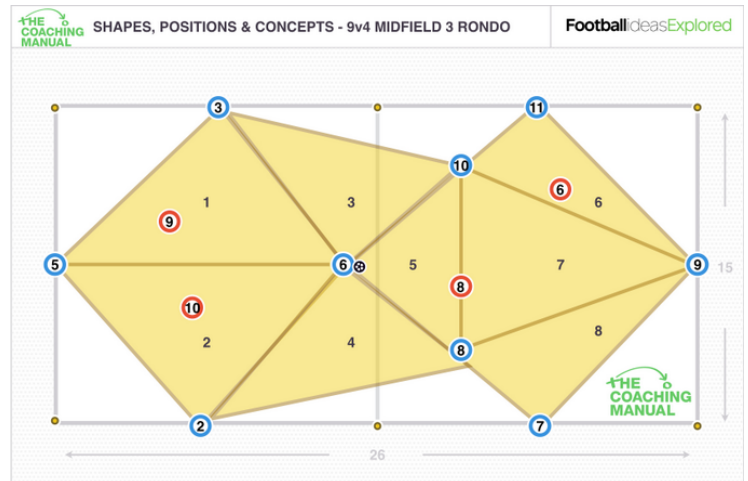


Focus - Shape, Positions and Concepts

With the attacking overload of 9v4, it is possible for the team to create a number of triangle and diamond shapes that offer passing lines to play forwards. The key to these shapes and lines being constructed is the movement and positioning of the Midfield 3, and connections with their team mates.

The triangle shape adopted in the above scenario provides the Pivot (Blue 6) with forward passing options (Blue 8 and 10), and the Pivot can also provide defensive security and a passing option behind the ball when play advances.

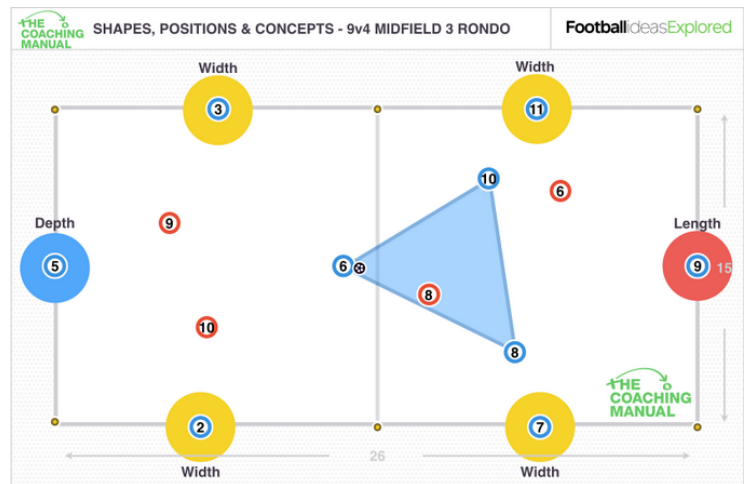
The positioning of the Centre Back (Blue 5), Wide players (Blue 2, 3, 7 & 11) and Centre Forward (Blue 9) also provides depth, width and length to the attack, stretching the opposition defence and allowing further triangle and diamond passing shapes to be formed in the next phase of the attack.



Focus - Connect with the Defenders to Play Out

With Centre Back (Blue 5) in possession, the first defensive line of Red 9 and 10 attempt to screen and prevent the penetrating pass to Pivot (Blue 6). Therefore, the Centre Back (Blue 5) combines with Left Back (Blue 3) to unbalance the Defenders and create an opportunity to play through to the Pivot.

Blue 8 also moves into the defensive half of the area and takes up a position on a different horizontal line to both Blue 6 and Blue 10. The concept of Midfielders playing on different horizontal lines creates vertical passing options and triangles to play around or through opposition units by providing numerical and positional superiority.



Focus - Midfield Rotation to Play Out

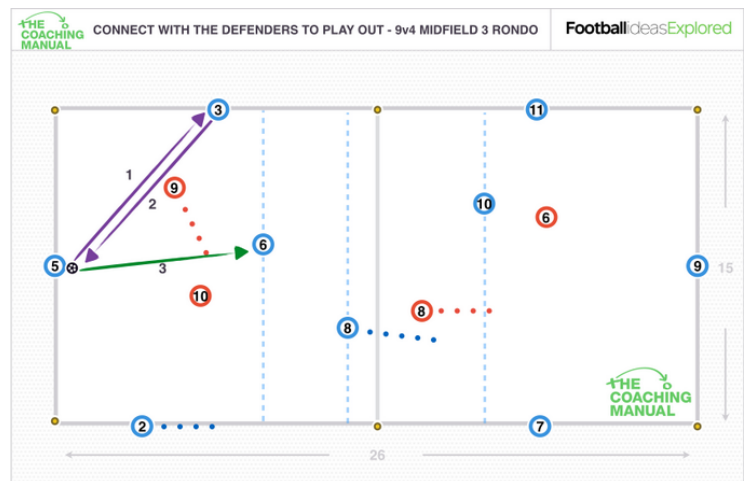
If the Red team are defending and screening well, rotation between the Midfield 3 players (Blue 6, 8 and 10) may occur to unbalance the Defenders and provide options to receive the ball, as demonstrated in the above scenario.

The player receiving in the Midfield 3 (Blue 8) rotates toward the ball as the Midfield unit take up positions on different horizontal lines to give vertical passing options in the next phase of the build up play.

Focus - Movement to Open Up Passing Lines

As the Pivot (Blue 6) advances into the attacking half of the area with the ball, movement is required ahead of the ball to create opportunities to penetrate the second defensive line (Red 8 and 6) and play to the Centre Forward (Blue 9).

The Pivot may look to play a penetrating pass directly to the Central Midfielders (Blue 8 and Blue 10) or attempt to shift the opposition by playing around the Defenders to the Wide Forwards (Blue 7 and 11).



Focus - Connect with the Wide Players

If the Pivot passes to the Wide Forward (Blue 11), Blue 8 and Blue 10 must move to create passing options for the wide player.

The above example shows Blue 8 providing an option ahead of the ball, as Blue 10 moves centrally to provide an option to switch play. Pivot (Blue 6) completes the diamond shape by offering support behind the ball and defensive secure if possession is lost.

To Conclude...

This Rondo coaches a Midfield 3 unit to take up positions to create passing lines and dominate possession in central areas, through positional and numerical superiority. Connections with supporting players is also vital to advance the pitch and stretch the opposition defensive units.

Next up we will progress the 9v4 Midfield Rondo into a Game Rondo, using the same area and dimensions.

