

Midfield 3 Rondo: Part 3

Written by The Coaching Manual

Rayo Vallecano Midfield Connection Rondo - 7v7+3

The following Rondo was delivered at a Rayo Vallecano Juvenil A (U19) training session during the 2015/16 season, by Coach Juanvi Peinado.

The video of the training practice can be seen [here \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8K4Vr3u2KMM\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8K4Vr3u2KMM).

This exercise was interesting as it incorporated all of the outfield players within the squad and included concepts of building from the back as well as connections between units, in order to maintain possession and positions.

Set Up

Area 30x20 with 7 x Attackers (Blue) positioned along the lines of the area. 3 x Midfield players (Yellow) link up with Blue team against 7 x Red Defenders inside the area. The Yellow and Red players can move anywhere in the 30x20 area.

Centre Backs (Blue 4 and 5) can play along the length of their 10 yard designated line. Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) and Wide Forwards (Blue 7 and 11) can play along the length of their 15 yard line. Centre Forward (Blue 9) can play along the length of their 20 yard line.

Task

Blue Team (Attackers): Maintain positions and possession of the ball with the Midfield 3 in possession, with emphasis on taking up shapes to offer passing options around, ahead and behind the ball.

Yellow Team (Midfield 3): Maintain positions and possession of the ball with the emphasis on playing vertically from the Centre Backs (Blue 4 and 5) to the Centre Forward (Blue 9), combining with the Blue team to create passing lines and shapes to advance forwards.

Red Team (Defenders): Compact space and recognise pressing cues to prevent opposition Midfield 3 advancing forwards, whilst looking for opportunities to regain possession. If the ball is retrieved, combine with Yellow players to create a 10v7 inside the area and attempt to dribble or pass to a team mate over the opposition Centre Back line, as the Blue team move inside to win the ball back.

Key Coaching Points

Midfield shape and positioning to combine with Defensive and Attacking units to create numerical and positional superiority

Midfield movements, angles, distances and areas of structure to penetrate effectively and patiently (3rd Man and Spare Man)

Support play to provide opportunities to penetrate and play through three opposition defensive lines

Detail

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

Movement and 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

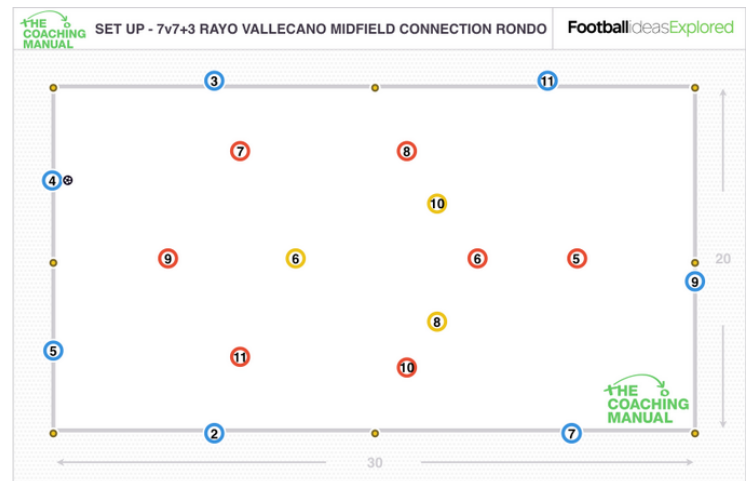
Understanding of positioning to connect the Defensive, Midfield and Attacking units

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 three opposition lines and advance forwards utilising the Midfielders

Passing options around, behind and ahead of the ball

Communication



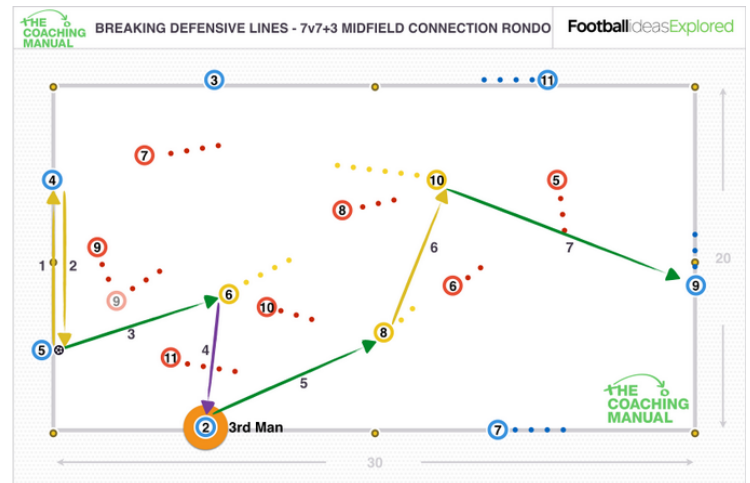
Focus - Breaking Defensive Lines

With the Defenders (Reds) set up in a number of defensive lines, the Midfield 3 (Yellow 6, 8 and 10) need to take up positions to offer passing options that penetrate the opposition, whilst staying connected as a unit.

In the above scenario, Centre Back (Blue 5) is in possession of the ball and combines with Blue 4 to receive back and unbalance Red 9, 11 and 7. This allows the Pivot (Yellow 6) to occupy positions to receive a penetrating pass from Blue 5.

The Support players (Blues) must also take up positions to receive and as the Pivot is tracked by Red 10, the ball is bounced off to the 3rd man run of the Right Back (Blue 2) to play a one touch pass forwards to Centre Midfielder (Yellow 8), leaving 5 x Defenders behind the ball and numerical superiority with a 5v2 attacking overload.

The Midfield unit are playing on different horizontal and vertical lines to provide positional superiority, allowing Yellow 10 to be a forward passing option and dragging across the last remaining Defender (Red 5) before the ball is played to the Centre Forward (Blue 9).



Focus - Midfield 3 Movement & Positioning

The "breaking defensive lines" scenario demonstrates how effective movements and positioning can help the team in possession to penetrate the opposition and progress towards goal.

The co-ordinated movements of the Midfield unit (Yellow 6, 8 and 10) creates a number of triangle shapes across the area with each receiving player always having a minimum of 2 passing options.

Also notice that a Central Midfielder (Yellow) is positioned in every passing triangle and connected to the Support players (Blues), as well as staying connected as a Midfield unit. This positioning is crucial to create numerical and positional superiority and allow for the ball to advance up the pitch.

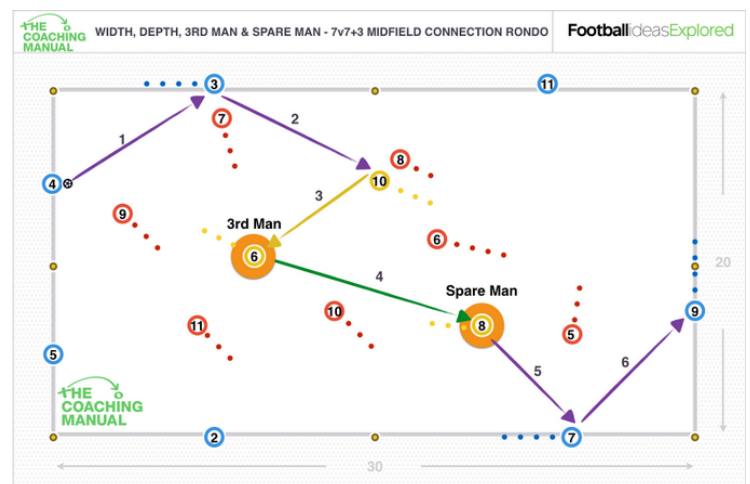
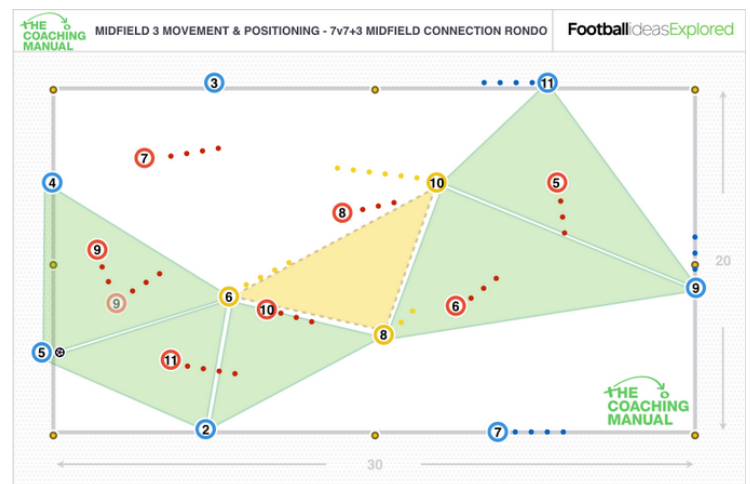
Focus - Width, Depth, 3rd Man & Spare Man

The positioning of the Support players (Blues) and Midfield 3 (Yellows) to create width and depth is also important to stretch the opposition Defenders and create the space to penetrate.

In the above scenario width is provided by Blue 2, 3, 7 and 11 and depth is provided by the Pivot (Yellow 6), who occupies central positions to offer an option behind the ball to switch play or penetrate with an up, back and through.

As the Centre Back (Blue 4) passes to Left Back (Blue 3) the Defenders are drawn across to the left side of the area. Yellow 10 drops in to receive from Blue 3, dragging across both Red 8 and 6 to create space for the 3rd man run of the Pivot (Yellow 6).

Yellow 8 recognises the space behind the opposition's line of pressure and advances to become the spare man and receive a forward pass from the Pivot. The supporting wide run of Blue 7 means that the Central Defender (Red 5) is outnumbered 2v1, and the ball can be played to find the Centre Forward (Blue 9).



Focus - Transition

If the Red team regain possession the Blue team transition to defend and press the ball and space as quickly as possible. The Red team can now combine with the Yellow Midfield 3 to create a 10v7 overload, as the team in possession attempt to dribble or pass the ball to a team mate over the opposition's Centre Back line.

Progression - Inverted Wide Players & Advancing Full Backs

As the Blue and Yellow players have success in maintaining possession and playing forwards, the session can be progressed to allow the Wide Forwards (Blue 11 and 7) to move inside the area to combine with the Midfield 3 (Yellow 6, 8 and 10).

This will also allow the Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) to advance along the length of the line 30 yard line and create attacking overloads in wide areas.

Focus - Attacking Overloads

By allowing the Wide Forwards (Blue 7 and 11) to invert and come infield more passing options and shapes are created in the attacking half, as the Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) can also advance and support the attack.

To Conclude...

In positional play, central areas of the field are sometimes left out of the construction of an attack due to the compactness and number of players occupying this space.

This series of Rondo"s allows the team to understand positions and structures to build attacks and penetrate through central areas, utilising the 3rd man and spare man concepts to create triangle shapes and passing lines to advance towards goal.

