

# Rondo - Arc Of The Back 4: Part 1

Written by The Coaching Manual

## Arc of the Back 4

The roles of the modern defensive unit are physically and tactically demanding, as the Back 4 are tasked with providing width, depth and must be tactically aware to select positions and support the attack when the team have possession.

Out of possession, Defenders are still responsible for protecting and managing space, pressuring opposition Forwards, and must be comfortable defending in 1v1 situations.

Our focus in this article is the Back 4 and their ability to take up functional shapes in possession and develop connections with the midfield unit in order to penetrate the opposition and advance up the field.

## 7v3 Arc of the Back 4 Rondo

### Set Up

Area 24x15 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 support the back 4, provide balance and release or combine with the Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3).

7 x Attackers (Blue) positioned along the lines or inside the area against 3 x Defenders (Reds) inside the area, with only 2 of the 3 Defenders allowed in a half (15x12) at any one time to defend.

Centre Backs (Blue 4 and 5) and Centre Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10) can play along the length of their 12 yard designated line. Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) can play along the length of their 15 yard line and Pivot (Blue 6) can play anywhere in the 24x15 area.

### Task

**Blue Team (Attackers):** Maintain positions and possession of the ball with the emphasis on adopting shapes to advance forward from Centre Backs to Centre Midfielders through penetration and switches of play.

**Red Team (Defenders):** If the ball is won, maintain possession 3v1 and attempt to dribble or pass the ball to a Red player over the opposition's defensive end line (Centre Back line).

## Key Coaching Points

Positioning of Back 4 to provide arc shape and advance forwards

Support play of Midfielders to release the Full Backs and provide balance to switch play

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

## Detail

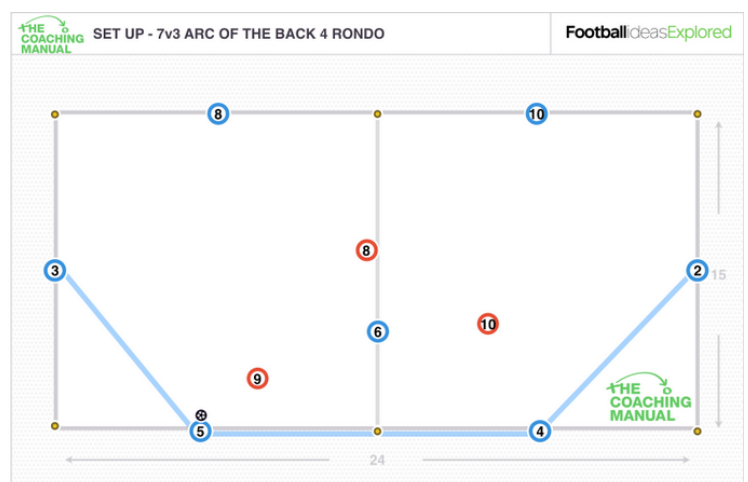
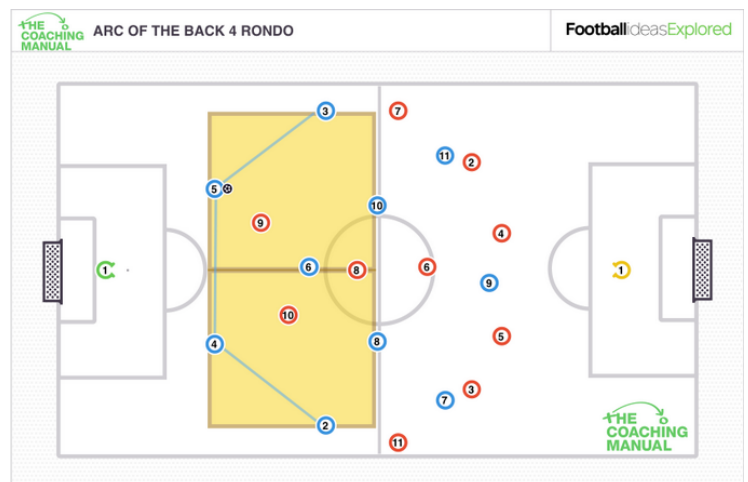
Body angle to receive the pass and play forwards

Receiving areas of foot or body

Angles, distances and areas of structure to penetrate effectively and patiently

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 Full Backs

Passing options around, behind and ahead of the ball

Communication

## Focus - Passing Lines & Arc Shape

Within this 7v3 Rondo, movement to take up positions that offer passing lines is key to proceed forwards with secured possession whilst providing support behind the ball.

The Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) advance forwards and provide width to the attack whilst giving a passing option around the Defenders. The Pivot (Blue 6) drops in to receive whilst also staying central to provide balance and an option to switch play. The Centre backs (Blue 4 and 5) offer passing options and support behind the ball.

## Focus - Exploit Space on the Weak Side

A key concept in positional play is to lure the opposition in to a specific area of the field, inviting them to press, to then expose the space created in another area.

In this example the Left Centre Back (Blue 5), Left Back (Blue 3), Centre Midfielder (Blue 8) and Pivot (Blue 6) look to keep possession in the left half of the area, drawing in 2 Defenders (Red 8 and 9).

This creates space on the right half of the area for the ball to be switched quickly through combinations for the Right Back (Blue 2) to exploit.

## Progression - Centre Midfielders Move Inside

When the Back 4 (Blue 2, 3, 4 and 5) are familiar with maintaining positions to provide forward passing options and combine with the Midfield (Blue 6, 8 and 10), the Rondo can be progressed to allow Blue 8 and 10 to move off their designated line and come inside the area, with the condition that they cannot occupy the same half at any one time.

This provides balance to the attack with a short passing option to switch play inside the area, and also releases the Full Backs to push even higher as security is provided centrally. The coaching points and detail remain the same as the initial 7v3 Rondo.

## Task

Blue Team (Attackers): Maintain positions and possession of the ball with the emphasis on adopting shapes to advance forward from Centre Back line to Centre Midfield line through co-ordinated movements from Centre Backs, Full Backs and Midfielders.

Red Team (Defenders): If the ball is won, maintain possession 3v3 and attempt to dribble or pass the ball to a Red player over the opposition's defensive end line (Centre Back line).

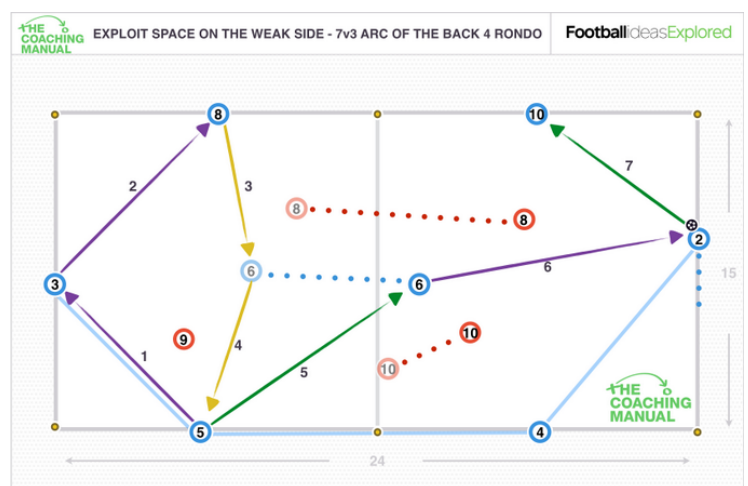
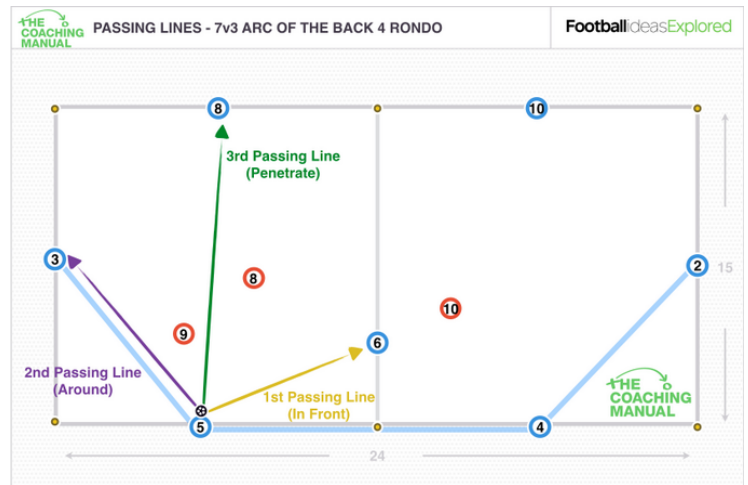
## Focus - Connections with the Midfield Unit

As Centre Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10) can move off their line and inside the area new shapes and patterns to penetrate the opposition are created.

The movement of the Pivot (Blue 6) and Blue 8 has again drawn in the opposition (Red 8 and 9). Blue 10 is not allowed to occupy the same half as Blue 8, and moves to become an option in the centre of the area to provide balance to the attack.

In a game situation this movement of the Midfielders would allow the Full Backs to push even higher up the field, and possibly invert, to create vertical passing options.

Coming next...



The second part of "Arc of the back 4" will progress the Rondo practice to larger sided formats.

