

Rondo - Playing Through The Pivot: Part 2

Written by The Coaching Manual

8vs.4 Pivot Rondo

Set Up

Area 24x15 with the defensive half (Green zone) of the area divided into 3 areas 12x5 to provide Centre Backs (Blue 4 and 5) and the Pivot (Blue 6) with reference points for when, where and how they can take up positions to maintain possession and play forwards.

8 x Attackers (Blue) against 4 x Defenders (Red) and only 2 Red defenders may enter the Green zone to defend.

Centre Backs (Blue 4 and 5) can move anywhere in the Green zone, Centre Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10) can move anywhere in the attacking half (White zone) and Pivot (Blue 6) can move anywhere in the area. Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) and Centre Forward (Blue 9) can move along their designated lines.

Task

Blue Team (Attackers): Maintain positions and possession of the ball with the emphasis on playing forward from Centre Backs (Blue 4 and 5) to Centre Forward (Blue 9) with the Pivot (Blue 6) dropping in between the Centre Backs to receive and pass forward.

Red Team (Defenders): If the ball is won, pass or dribble the ball over the Blue team's end line to simulate a counter attack in a game, or maintain possession for 5 passes as the Blues press.

Key Coaching Points

Pivot play - understanding when and where to drop in between the Centre Backs (use Green zones as reference points)

Co-ordinated movements to take up positions to receive the ball

Quality, weight and decision of the pass (play in front, play around or penetrate)

Detail

Body angle to receive the pass and play forwards

Receiving areas of foot or body

Quick combinations and limiting touches to think quickly

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

Understanding slow and quick play through the areas

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 Pivot

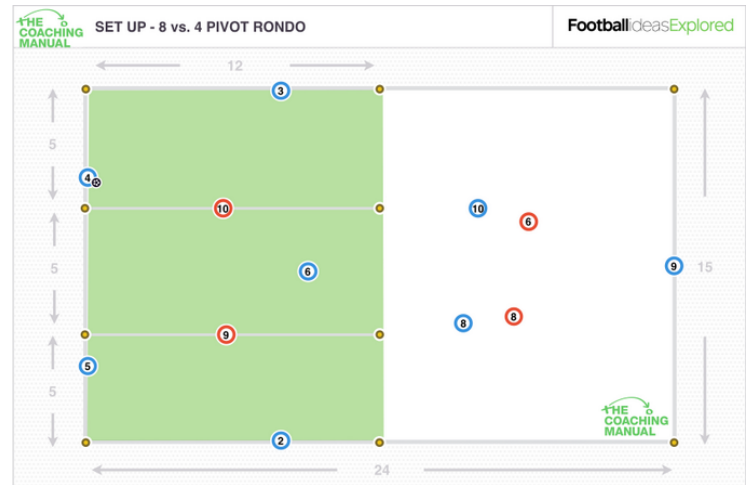
Passing options around and ahead of the ball

Communication

Focus - Pivot drops into back line

The Green zones in this Rondo provide reference points for the Centre Backs (Blue 4 and 5) and Pivot (Blue 6) to take up positions and play out against the pressing opposition Centre Forwards (Red 9 and 10).

In the above example, the Pivot drops deep into the central zone as the Centre backs split to the wide zones and a 3vs.2 overload is created.



This movement also frees up the Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) to advance forwards and creates space for the Centre Backs to receive and travel with the ball, or for the Pivot to play from deep.

Focus - Pivot angled movement into the back line

However, the Pivot (Blue 6) does not always have to drop centrally to support the back line and can utilise the Green zones to drop into a wide position. Again, this allows the Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) to advance as the Pivot is an option to receive and change the angle of attack.

Space is difficult to come by in the modern game, however, this angled movement by the Pivot allows the Full Backs to be aggressive and move forwards creating the desired space in wide areas to allow the Pivot to adopt good positions in the first phase of the move.

A Pivot player who I witness regularly performing this movement is Rayo Vallecano's Roberto Trashorras. The former La Masia graduate displays the Barça trait of "finding the space" rather than keeping structural limited positions, as the team regularly look to play through Trashorras.

Progression - 8vs.5 Pivot Rondo

When the Attackers (Blues) become familiar and successful with the concept of when, where and how they can take up positions to maintain possession and play forwards, the session can be progressed with an additional Defender included to create a 8vs.5 Rondo.

The key coaching points and detail remains the same as the 8vs.4 Rondo, however the area dimensions are increased to 30x21 and the Green zone now represents a third of the playing area.

To understand the movements and indicate reference points for the Centre Backs and Pivot, I have changed the bib colour of these players to Yellow when delivering this session, although this is not compulsory.

Focus - Movement to release the Full Backs

The movement of the Pivot (Yellow 6) into the back line should be a cue for the Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) to advance and create forward passing options, or combine with Central Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10) and Centre Forward (Blue 9).

Focus - Using the overload

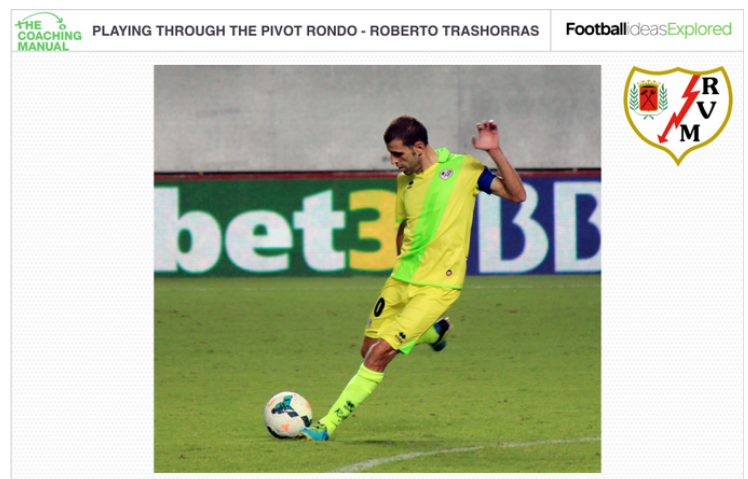
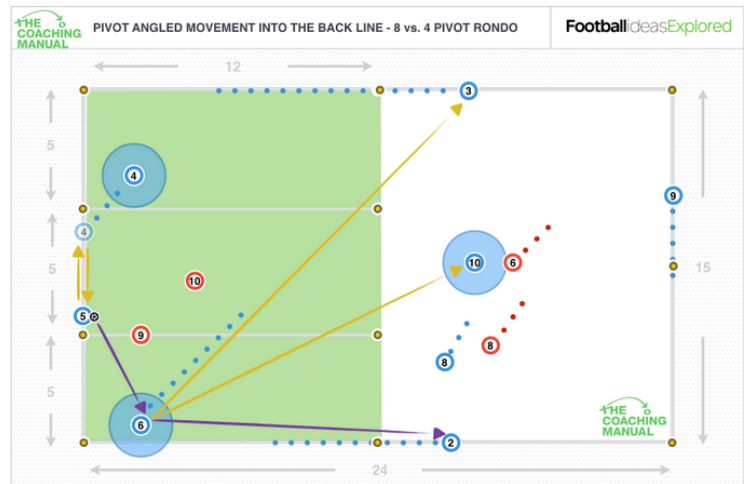
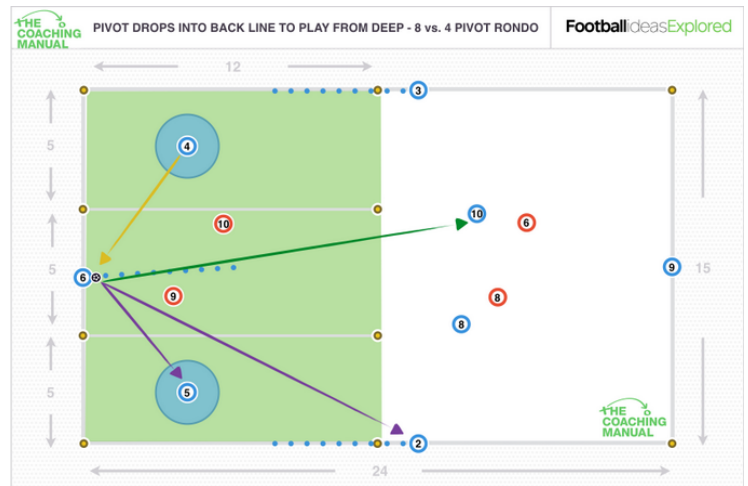
The key in all of the Rondo practices is to coach positioning and movement to create passing options and overloads. In the above example, the Defenders (Red 9 and 10) are drawn towards the ball and movement of the Pivot (Yellow 6).

The Centre Backs (Yellow 4 and 5) take up positions in the wide Green zones to receive the ball and play forwards to the advancing Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) or into the Central Midfield (Blue 8 and 10). This co-ordinated movement breaks the first opposition line and advances the team up the pitch.

Focus - Pivot positioned to receive between lines

If the opposition press is not organised the Pivot (Yellow 6) may not need to drop into the back line. The above scenario shows the disjointed press of the Defenders (Red 9 and 10) which allows the Pivot (Yellow 6) to make a movement to receive a penetrating pass from Yellow 5.

The Pivot is now an extra player in the second phase of the attack and can combine with the Central Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10), Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) or look for opportunities to play directly through to the Centre Forward (Blue 9).



The Pivot must understand the timing of the movement to exploit the space between the lines and receive, and there must also be a connection with the Centre Backs so they recognise when the penetrating pass is available.

Next up...

The final session on "Playing through the Pivot" will include all of the outfield players and the Goalkeeper with 10vs.6, 10vs.10 and 11vs.10 practices.

