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20 Rondos Training Guide

eBook

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RONDOS OVERVIEW

Rondos, also known as piggy-in-the-middle or keep-away, are a common practice drill in soccer that involve a group of players forming a circle and attempting to keep possession of the ball while one or more defenders try to intercept it.

The objective of rondos is to improve players' passing, receiving, and ball control skills while also enhancing their tactical awareness and decision-making abilities.

Rondos have become a staple of modern soccer training, and many professional teams include them in their daily training sessions. They are popular because they are a fun and engaging way to work on technical skills, and because they can be adapted to suit players of all ages and abilities. Rondos can be used as a warm-up exercise, a skill-building drill, or as a way to work on specific tactical concepts.

The basic structure of a rondo is simple. A group of players, usually between five and ten, form a circle and try to keep possession of the ball. One or two defenders are positioned in the center of the circle and try to intercept the ball.

Rondos can be adapted in many ways to suit different training objectives. For example, coaches might vary the size of the circle, the number of players, or the position of the defenders. They might also introduce additional rules, such as requiring players to complete a certain number of passes before they can shoot or limiting the number of touches each player can take.

By adjusting these variables, coaches can create rondos that focus on specific skills or tactical concepts.

One of the main benefits of rondos is that they help players develop their passing skills. Because the objective of a rondo is to keep possession of the ball, players must learn to pass quickly and accurately under pressure. They must also learn to anticipate the movements of their teammates and opponents and adjust their passing accordingly. Over time, these skills can be transferred to game situations, where accurate passing and quick decision-making are essential.

Rondos also help players improve their receiving and ball control skills. When a player receives a pass in a rondo, they must be able to control the ball quickly and effectively.

They must also be able to shield the ball from defenders and make quick decisions about where to pass it next.

By practicing these skills in a rondo, players can become more confident and comfortable with the ball at their feet.

In addition to technical skills, rondos also help players develop their tactical awareness and decision-making abilities.

Because rondos are played in a confined space, players must constantly be aware of their positioning and the positioning of their teammates and opponents. They must also be able to make quick decisions about when to pass, when to dribble, and when to shoot. By practicing these skills in a rondo, players can become more adept at reading the game and making smart decisions under pressure.

Rondos are also a great way to build teamwork and communication skills. In a rondo, players must work together to keep possession of the ball and create scoring opportunities. They must communicate effectively with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, in order to coordinate their movements and anticipate each other's actions. By practicing these skills in a rondo, players can become more cohesive as a team and develop stronger bonds with their teammates.



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UEFA B Coach, FA Level 3, FA Youth Modules 1, 2 and 3, Coerver Youth Diploma, SPAIN: Catalan Football Federation Smart Football, USA: United Soccer Coaches diploma. Sports journalist for the Sunday Mirror published author of several volumes of coaching books & international lecturer on soccer.

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF RONDOS

The term "rondo" originates from the Spanish word for "round", and it is believed that the drill was first introduced in Spain by the legendary Dutch coach Rinus Michels in the 1970s. Michels, who is regarded as one of the most influential coaches in soccer history, used rondos extensively in his training sessions with the Dutch national team and FC Barcelona.

Over time, rondos have evolved to become a standard training drill for professional teams and academies worldwide. The drill is now used at all levels of the game, from youth development programs to elite professional clubs.

BENEFITS OF RONDOS

Rondos offer several benefits for soccer players, which is why they have become such a popular training drill.

Some of the main benefits of rondos include:

1

Improving Ball Control and Passing Accuracy

Rondos require players to make quick, accurate passes while under pressure from opponents. This helps players develop their ball control and passing accuracy, which are essential skills in soccer.

2

Enhancing Decision-Making Abilities

In rondos, players must make quick decisions on where to pass the ball and how to move to create space for their teammates. This helps players develop their decision-making abilities, which are critical in the fast-paced and unpredictable environment of a soccer match.

3

Developing Fitness and Endurance

Rondos are an intense training drill that requires players to move constantly while under pressure from opponents. This helps players develop their fitness and endurance, which are crucial for performing at a high level for the full 90 minutes of a soccer match.

4

Fostering Communication and Teamwork

Rondos require players to communicate effectively with their teammates and work together to maintain possession of the ball. This helps players develop their communication and teamwork skills, which are essential for success in soccer.

How to Score in a Rondo

Rondos are great for developing player skills and for learning to take responsibility of the ball and not give it away.

Difficulty



10 Mins



7 P



2 Bibs



10 x 10 y

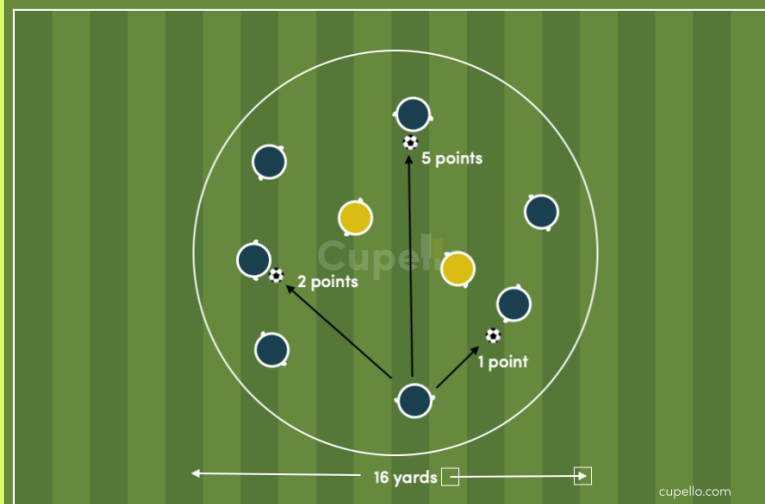
RONDOS

AGE: 8-15

COACHING OBJECTIVES

In a Rondo we are looking to develop one and two touch passing, tempo of play, movement, short and long passing and the ability to keep the ball under pressure.

Players work in the area trying to either keep or win possession.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

You use a 5 v 2 within the circle and get players to pass the ball keeping it from the 2 pressing players. When a pressing player wins the ball or it goes out of play the last player in the passing team to touch it swaps with the nearest defender.

Scoring

First line pass = 1 point

Passing to the person next to you is the easiest form of passing which requires little vision but can keep possession in tricky situations.

Second line pass = 2 points

Passing to the next but one person which doesn't split the defenders. Again it's a fairly easy pass but does require more vision than a first line pass.

Third line pass = 5 points

This requires the most vision and timing with a pass between the two defenders. It is where the creativity comes from in a passing move and shows the player is confident and clever in their passing.

COACHING TIPS

Good First Touch

Players need to be controlling the ball with one touch then turning and making an accurate pass with the other foot. The most accurate pass will be with the side foot after making the turn from a good first touch.

MODIFY SESSION

Put a rule on the game so it is one or two touch only or you can only use left or right foot. This makes it harder for the possession players.

Passing Players

Pay attention to the passes and the speed which the ball circulates at. Never lose control over the speed of the ball, speed up or slow down the ball's speed.

VARIATIONS OF RONDOS

There are many variations of rondos that coaches can use to keep training sessions fresh and challenging. Some of the most popular variations of rondos include:

1

Two-Touch Rondos

In a two-touch rondo, players are only allowed to take two touches of the ball before passing it to a teammate. This variation requires players to think quickly and make precise passes to maintain possession of the ball.

2

One-Touch Rondos

In a one-touch rondo, players are only allowed to take one touch of the ball before passing it to a teammate. This variation is even more challenging than the two-touch rondo and requires players to make quick decisions and precise passes.

3

Three-Touch Rondos

In a three-touch rondo, players are allowed to take three touches of the ball before passing it to a teammate. This variation is less challenging than the one- and two-touch rondos but still requires players to make quick decisions and precise passes.

4

Directional Rondos

In a directional rondo, players are required to pass the ball in a specific direction. This variation requires players to think about their positioning and movement to ensure they can make accurate passes in the required direction.

5

Double-Triangle Rondos

In a double-triangle rondo, two groups of players form a triangle and pass the ball to each other while a defender tries to intercept the ball. This variation is more complex than a standard rondo and requires players.

4v1 Boxes

Body positioning is key when receiving the ball and deceiving the defender, helping link play with teammates

Difficulty



10 Mins



5 P



1 Bibs



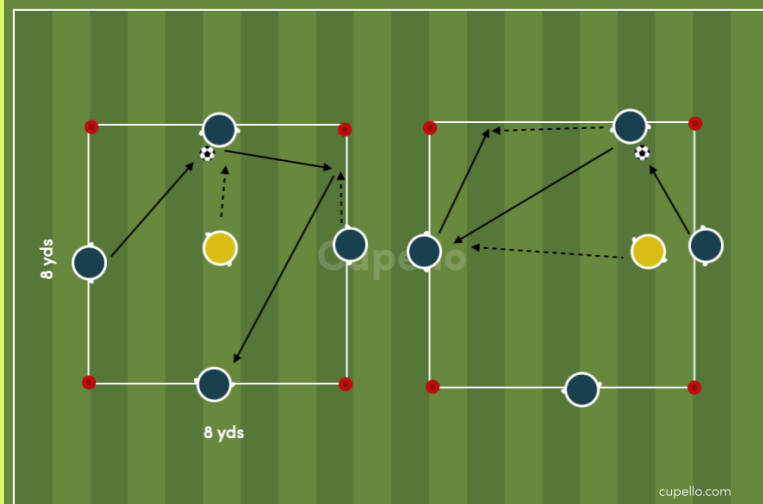
10 x 10 y

RONDOS

AGE: 7-19

COACHING OBJECTIVES

This is a great game for coaching body position to receive and body position to fool a pressing defender. The pressing player needs to be mobile and to press quickly.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Four players are keeping the ball away from one player in the middle. The four players go one on each line and can move from side to side, the other player is in the middle trying to win the ball.

This is the basic box for players to start a session with. Passing, pressing and good skills and techniques are the order of the day. Coaches can show players how to move along the lines to be open for a pass, and how the central player can block passing routes.

COACHING TIPS

Passing

Pass into the end zone must be the right weight and direction to make it easier for players to receive the ball. Players should be trying to make diagonal passes as they are more difficult to defend. If players are making bad passes get them to take an extra touch. Keep a close watch on the speed and accuracy of the short passes.

Ball Control

Players should be aware of the ball and not lose control over the speed of the ball. If the passes are too slow or too fast the chances of losing the ball are increased.

MODIFY SESSION

You can make the square bigger to make it easier and smaller to make it harder.

First touch is important so that control of the ball is much easier and is not bouncing off the players' feet.

Awareness

You want to see quick short passes and players receiving and moving to make the next pass.

Correct players without stopping play and use breaks to make more detailed coaching advice.

One Touch Rondo

One touch possession is a very difficult way to keep possession but if you coach your players this way it will accelerate their development.

Difficulty



15 Mins



8 P



2 Bibs



14 x 7 y

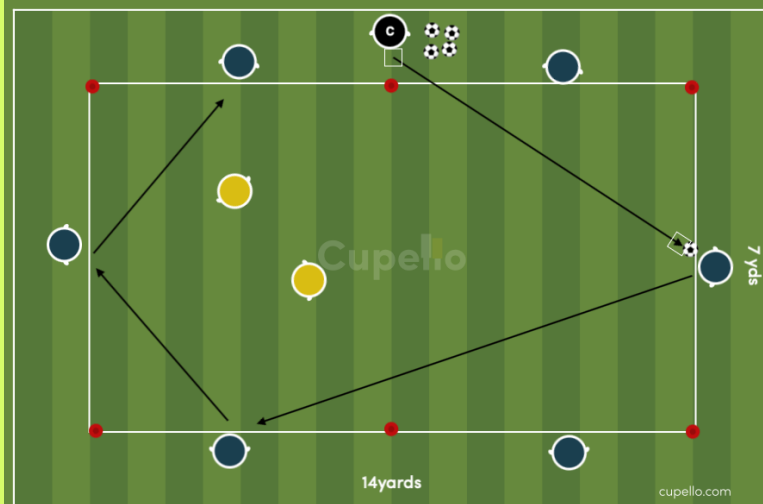
RONDOS

AGE: 11-15

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Keeping the ball one touch under pressure works on player reactions, anticipation, ball skills, passing and receiving.

Set up with 6 possession players on the outside of the area and 2 players on the inside.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

The six players try to keep possession of the ball using one touch. The players in the middle defend and try to intercept or recover the ball as quickly as possible. The player who loses the ball automatically becomes a defender, changing places with the player who has been defending for the most time. If 15 consecutive passes are completed the defenders are punished by have to defend for an extra round.

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

Don't just use short passes try longer ones as well.

After receiving a long pass look to play 2 or 3 short passes to slow down the speed of the ball.

Don't make more than 3 or 4 passes in the same area, it attracts the defenders and it will be harder to break out of the press.

MODIFY SESSION

Change the size of the area to make it harder or easier. A bigger area makes it easier to keep possession.

Speed of Passes

Pay attention to the passes and the speed at which the ball circulates.

Keep close control over the speed of the ball because too slow and it is intercepted too fast and it will be difficult to control it.

When the ball goes out of play pass another one in immediately to keep the game flowing.

2v2+1 Positioning Game

Creating triangles and keeping possession in small groups is more difficult but it helps players to be more creative in the tight areas of the pitch.

Difficulty



15 Mins



9 P



3 Bibs



10 x 20 y

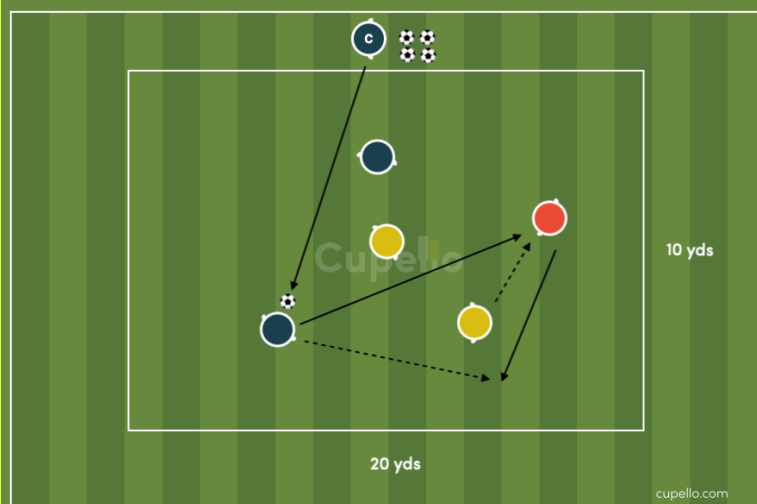
RONDOS

AGE: 11-15

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Good passing technique and ball skills are key in a 3v2 where the pressure is on players receiving and passing in such a small overload.

Play takes place within the area.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Play a 2v2 in the area plus a magic man who plays for the team in possession. Using triangles and interlink passing, shielding the ball and quickly recover the ball when it is lost. The team without the ball must try to win it and make possession theirs by recognising the best moment to press.

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

Try to move the ball quickly, using a maximum of one or two touches.

Try to get players to use one touch passing and only to depend on a second touch when they have to control a poor pass.

When we make the pass between the lines to the attackers it should be a firm pass.

Players should learn when to control the ball and slow the play down and when to play one-touch to speed the play up.

MODIFY SESSION

Make the area bigger to help the players and smaller to make it harder and use one or two touch to make it even harder.

Passing Technique

Timing of the pass is key to how the player receives the ball whether a through ball for the player to run on to or a switch of play.

Speed of play is important for receiving and passing. Good passing helps players to control the ball and make decisions easier

8v3 Possession Game

This game is played at a good tempo that the coach needs to control. It works on all possession and pressing skills.

Difficulty



15 Mins



11 P



3 Bibs



25 y

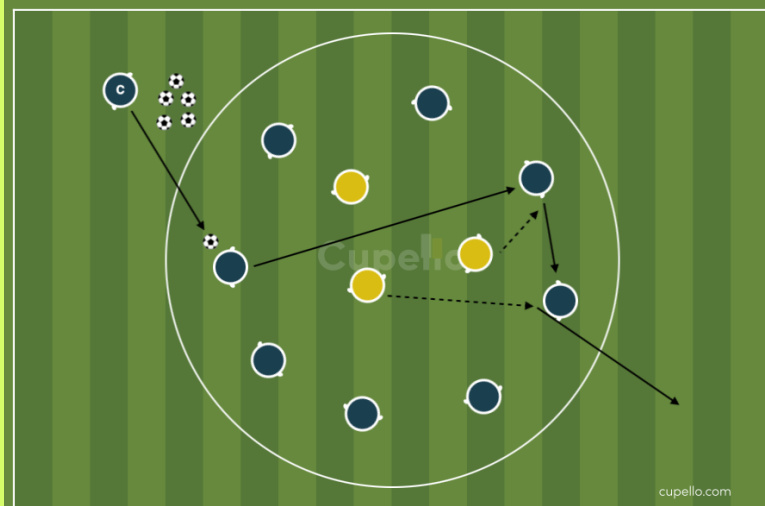
RONDOS

AGE: 16-18

COACHING OBJECTIVES

This is all about passing versus pressing with lots of ball skills involved to keep the ball away from the pressers. They must have one person pressing and two covering.

The game has 8 players on the outside of the circle with 3 players inside the circle.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

The team on the outside must keep hold of the ball from the three pressing players, with good passing. The aim of the game is to split the defenders with a pass which is worth 2 points all other successful passes are worth 1 point.

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

Try to move the ball quickly, using a maximum of one or two touches.

Try to get players to use one touch passing and only to depend on a second touch when they have to control a poor pass.

When we make the pass between the lines to the attackers it should be a firm pass.

Players should learn when to control the ball and slow the play down and when to play one-touch to speed the play up.

MODIFY SESSION

Make the area bigger to help the players and smaller to make it harder and use one or two touch to make it even harder.

Passing Technique

Timing of the pass is key to how the player receives the ball whether a through ball for the player to run on to or a switch of play.

Speed of play is important for receiving and passing. Good passing helps players to control the ball and make decisions easier

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL SKILLS

The rondo is an excellent way to work on a variety of technical skills, such as passing accuracy, ball control, and movement off the ball.

It is also an effective way to improve the players' decision-making skills, as they must constantly assess the situation and make split-second decisions about when to pass, when to hold onto the ball, and when to make a run into space.

In addition to its technical benefits, the rondo can also be used to develop tactical skills, such as positional awareness and defensive organization. By working on these skills in a small-sided game situation, players can develop a better understanding of how to maintain shape and work as a cohesive unit.

One of the key benefits of the rondo is that it is a fun and engaging way to train. Players enjoy the challenge of trying to maintain possession of the ball, and the competitive nature of the drill can help to create a positive and energetic atmosphere on the training ground.

There are many variations of the rondo that can be used to work on different aspects of the game. For example, coaches may choose to vary the size of the playing area, the number of players involved, or the restrictions on passing (e.g. only allowing one-touch passes). These variations can help to keep the drill fresh and challenging for players, and can also be used to target specific areas of weakness in the team.

One common variation of the rondo is the "piggy in the middle" drill, which involves three players. Two players stand facing each other and pass the ball back and forth, while the third player tries to intercept the ball. If the third player manages to win the ball back, they swap places with the player who lost possession, and the game continues.

Another popular variation of the rondo is the "double rondo", which involves two circles of players facing each other. The objective is for the players in one circle to pass the ball to each other without losing possession, while the players in the other circle attempt to win the ball back. If the players in the outer circle win the ball, they then switch places with the players in the inner circle.

KEY RONDO PASSES

The rondo is an excellent way to work on a variety of technical skills, such as passing accuracy, ball control, and movement off the ball.

One-Touch Pass: This pass is executed with one touch of the ball, and is often used to quickly move the ball around the defenders and maintain possession.

Through pass: This pass is used to send the ball through a small gap between defenders to a teammate on the other side. It requires precise timing and accuracy.

Wall Pass: This pass involves one player passing the ball to a teammate, who immediately passes the ball back to the first player. This can be an effective way to create space and get around defenders.

Switch Pass: This pass involves quickly shifting the play from one side of the field to the other, often used to catch defenders off guard and create space.

Backheel Pass: This pass is executed by using the heel of the foot to flick the ball behind the body to a teammate. It can be a creative way to surprise defenders and maintain possession.

One-Two Pass: One-two pass: This pass involves two players exchanging passes with each other, often used to quickly move the ball forward and get past defenders.



It's important to note that the specific passes used in a rondo can vary depending on the players and the situation. The key is to maintain possession of the ball and create opportunities to get past the defenders.

Possession, Position 4v2 Variation

In this drill we are working on attacking transition – it is a position and possession game with the defenders pressing and forcing play to try and win the ball in a version of the classic 4v2 Rondo.

Difficulty



15 Mins



6 P



2 Bibs



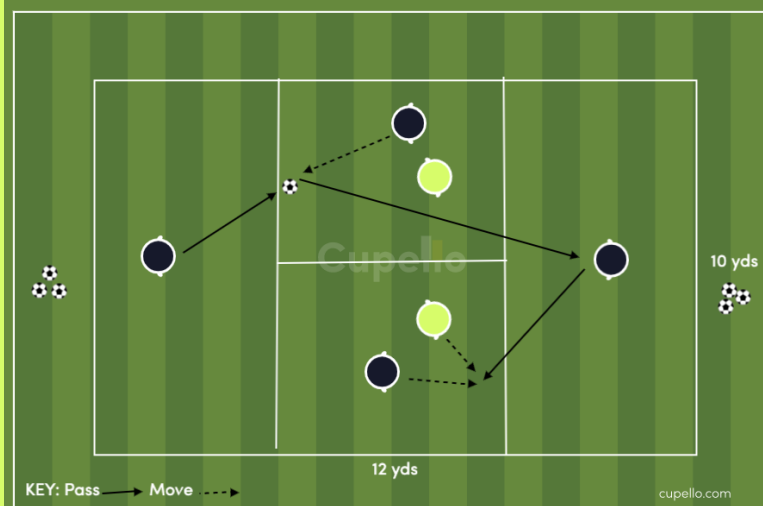
12 x 10 y

RONDOS

AGE: 4-18

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Speed of play – If the speed of the ball is wrong the chances of losing the ball are much greater. Body Position to Receive – Open body, receive on the back foot to enable taking less touches. Check Shoulder – Create good habits by checking before receiving the ball.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Play 4v2 with the four black players keeping the ball from the yellow to keep possession. The yellow players try to recover the ball.

Players stick to their zones – the players at each end are unopposed.

When a yellow player recovers the ball he/she switch with a blue player.

COACHING TIPS

Pressing

Trigger of when to is the ball leaving the foot of the passing player when he/she is looking at the ball. Defending player presses the receiving player by quick movement as the ball is travelling and then goes tight on the receiving player who must look up to see where to play the pass causing mistakes and missed passes or the presser blocks the pass. In each case the presser has a chance to win the ball.

Speed of the Ball

If the speed of the ball is wrong the chances of losing the ball are much greater and so this is one of the key elements to the drill, making sure the ball is moving at a good pace.

MODIFY SESSION

Make the area bigger to make it easier or smaller to make it harder

Make sure the passes are not in the air as this will make it harder to control

Ball Control

YTry to move the ball quickly, using a maximum of one or two touches. Try to get players to use one touch passing and only to depend on a second touch when they have to control a poor pass. When we make the pass between the lines to the attackers it should be a firm pass. Players should learn when to control the ball and slow the play down and when to play one-touch to speed the play up.

6v2 Positioning Game

In this game players are receiving on the back foot with good body shape to see the passer and the player that will receive the ball so body shape should be open to the play. Positioning is key to giving the passing player options for the pass.

Difficulty



20 Mins



8 P



2 Bibs



40 x 30 y

RONDOS

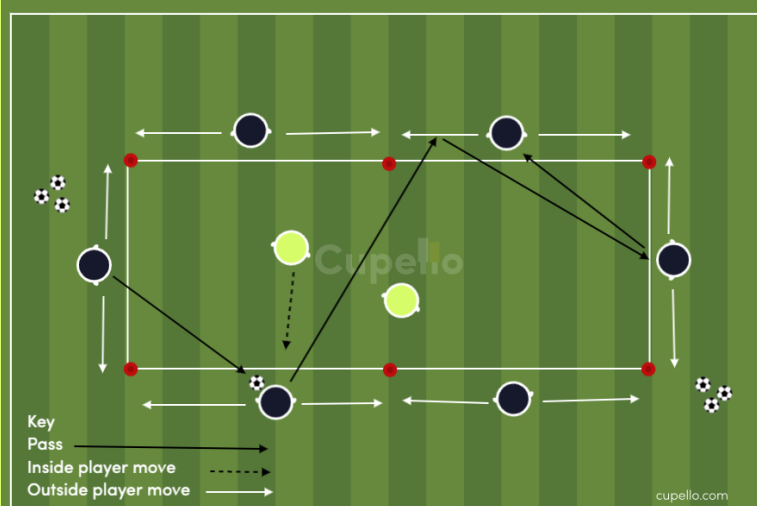
AGE: 8-18+

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Try to mix long and short passes

Control the speed of the ball in the Rondo with short passes after a long pass

Passing three or four times in the same area attracts defenders so try not to make more than two passes before moving the ball out of that area. Try to play diagonal passes



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

In this 6v2 the possession team tries to keep the ball for as long as possible. The two defending players are pressing to try and win the ball – nearest ball presses, second defender covers. Try to play one touch or if that is too difficult two touch or play all in. Players who lose the ball switch with the player in the centre who has won it, or the nearest defender if it is a bad pass. Switch the defending players regularly. The first line pass or horizontal pass is to the nearest team mate in order to make the pressing defenders move. The second line pass is beyond the nearest player, cutting out the defender. The third line pass is a through ball ideally played between the defenders to a teammate behind.

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

1. Try to move the ball quickly, using a maximum of one or two touches.
2. Try to get players to use one touch passing and only to depend on a second touch when they have to control a poor pass.
3. When we make the pass between the lines to the attackers it should be a firm pass.
4. Players should learn when to control the ball and slow the play down and when to play one-touch to speed the play up.

MODIFY SESSION

Make the area bigger to make it easier or smaller to make it harder.

Also make a rule you cannot play back to the same player, one and two touch – if the player used 2 touches the next player can only use one.

First Touch

1. Try to receive with an open body to allow you to play off one or two touches
2. Try to receive with different parts of your body

4v4+2 Possession

Utilising overloads and creating passing lanes will help players keep possession and dominate the opposition. This drill will allow players to work on these techniques.

Difficulty



30 Mins



10 P



10 Bibs



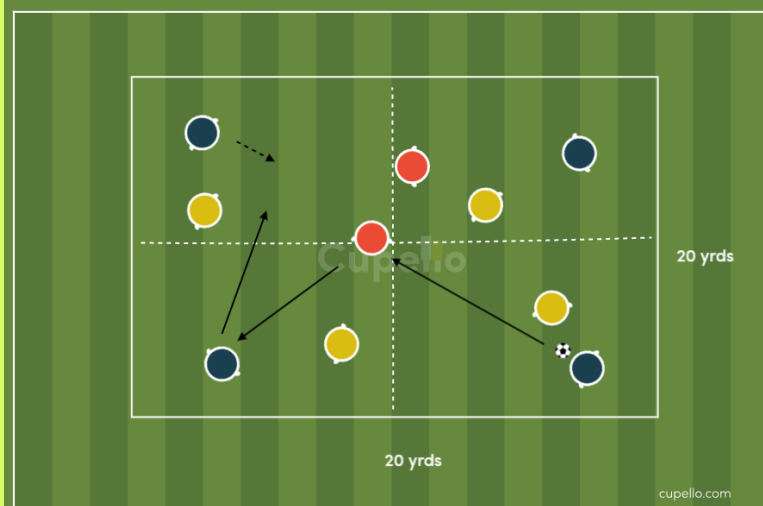
20 x 30 y

RONDOS

AGE: 8-18+

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Good technique on the ball and movement off the ball is key in keeping possession, finding passing lanes to receive is also important in order to dominate the ball and take advantage of the overload.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Area 20x20 - split into 4 equal boxes.

Players split into 2 teams of 4 with two 'magic' players who play with the team in possession. Aim of the drill is to keep possession, team in possession must have a player in each square at all times to encourage players to create space. Players are able to rotate at any time.

When defenders win the ball, they become attackers and continue to keep possession.

Swap 'magic' players after each round.

COACHING TIPS

Movement

Stretch the opposition by getting high and wide, this will create space to move in to.

Try to rotate with teammates to create space and passing lines.

Keeping Possession

Encourage players to receive with an open body so they can see all options

Quick play - try to play quickly, by either dribbling or passing to utilise the overload

Try to take up positions where you can receive between the opposition in order to break lines

MODIFY SESSION

Space: Bigger / Smaller area

Task: Add in 4 small target goals, positioned in each corner, players can score into the goals once they have completed a number of passes.

Equipment: Add goals

Player: Add more or less players to create different underloads or overloads

Support

Try to always have two passing options
Try to have a pivot player behind the ball and ahead of the ball to help connect play

USING RONDOS TO DEVELOP PLAYERS

Rondos are a popular training exercise in soccer that can be used to develop a range of skills, including passing, receiving, and movement off the ball.

Rondos are an effective way to improve the They involve a small group of players keeping possession of the ball while under pressure from defenders in a tight space.

Rondos can be an effective tool for player development, as they require players to use a variety of skills in a high-pressure environment. By participating in rondos regularly, players can improve their technique, decision-making, and ability to play under pressure.

However, it's important to note that rondos are just one of many training exercises that can be used to develop players. They should be used in conjunction with other drills and activities that focus on different aspects of the game, such as shooting, dribbling, and defending.

Additionally, rondos should be tailored to the age and skill level of the players involved. While rondos can be a great training tool for players of all ages, it's important to adjust the difficulty level of the exercise to ensure that it is

Squares and Circle Rondo

This drill is all about ball possession with players keeping possession by movement to create passing lines, scanning to see where the space is on the pitch, spreading out to give more passing options and reacting quickly in transition.

Difficulty



25 Mins



10 P



10 Bibs



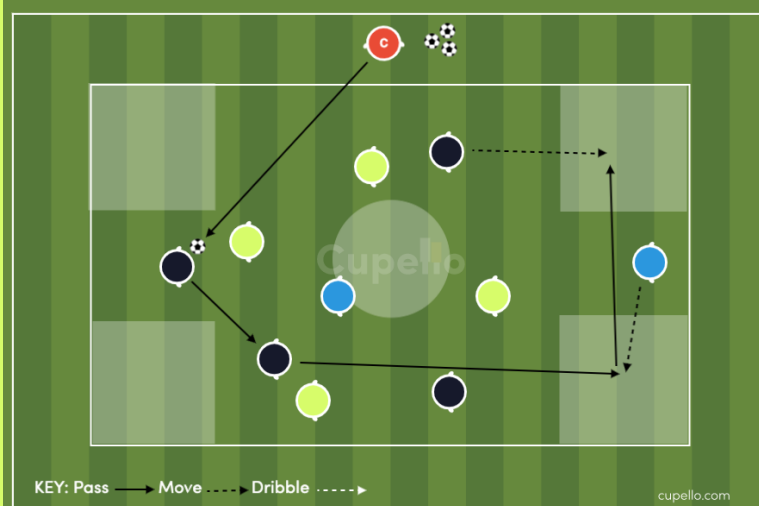
35 x 20 y

RONDOS

AGE: 11-18+

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Move the ball from one side of the area to the other to move the defending team. Scan to see the space on the pitch and anticipate where to pass or move. Dribble with the ball to move defending team and find passing lines. Passes inside create space on the outside



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Create three teams from your squad, an attacking team of 4, defending team of 4 and two magic men who play for the team in possession. Work on fast transition when teams win or lose the ball. The team in possession must try and pass into or dribble into each of the squares and the circle.

Score the game so the each move into a square is one point and the circle is 5 points and the first team who completes all four squares and the circle gets a 10 point bonus.

When a team loses the ball they do not go back to having to go into all the squares they start again where they left off when they lost the ball.

COACHING TIPS

In Possession

1. Speed of play – If the speed of the ball is wrong the chances of losing the ball are much greater

2. Body Position to Receive – Open body, receive on the back foot to enable taking less touches

3. Check Shoulder – Create good habits by checking before receiving the ball

Ball Control

Players should be aware of the ball and not lose control over the speed of the ball.

MODIFY SESSION

Make players one or two touch to make it harder, make the area smaller to make it harder or make the area bigger to make it easier.

If the passes are too slow or too fast the chances of losing the ball are increased.

Awareness

If you've lost the ball try and win it back in 5 seconds – if you don't, drop into a defensive formation. Think about body shape when defending 1v1 – side on, on balls of feet, crouch, ready to react. Check shoulders so you know if there is an attacker lurking behind you waiting for a through ball

Possession Waves 3v2 into 4v2

This is a great game for getting players thinking about keeping possession of the ball – it is quite a difficult overload as it is 3v2 to start with and then works into 4v2 but also included goals to score in when the defending pair wins the ball.

Difficulty



25 Mins



12 P



12 Bibs



20 x 15 y

RONDOS

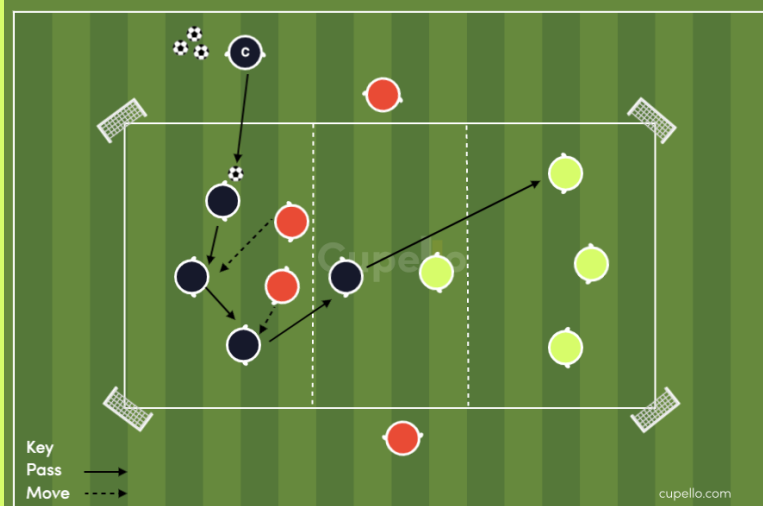
AGE: 8-18

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Focus on the players' positioning, movement and decision-making. Scan before receiving. Be diagonal to the ball. Pass into player's runs.

Receive on the back foot

Be open to the play when receiving. Vertical passes between the lines. Look to play passes to the correct side of our teammates to make the



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

This game plays 4v2 at each end with one of the four players in the central zone. The team must pass between them three times before passing into the player in the central zone who passes to the team at the other end. When this happens change the two pressing players with the two on the side. The pressing players in the middle defend and try to intercept or recover the ball as quickly as possible. If the pressing players win the ball they should try to score in the small goals. As it is 3v2 the pressers have a good chance of winning the ball. Play one and two touch with the team blue and yellows keeping the ball for as long as possible. Change the roles over regularly.

COACHING TIPS

Look to make sure all the players are participating, they are all looking to open passing lines and give options to the player with the ball. Nobody should be hiding, they all need to want the ball.

Speed of the Ball

If the speed of the ball is wrong the chances of losing the ball are much greater and so this is one of the key elements to the drill, making sure the ball is moving at a good pace. Make sure the passes are not in the air as this will make it harder to control.

MODIFY SESSION

Make the playing area bigger or smaller to make the exercise easier or more difficult.

Passing and Receiving

Try to play one touch but when a bad pass is made players can use an extra touch or control with the help of the other foot. The speed of pass will effect the receiving of the ball, too hard and it will be harder to control with one pass, too soft and the drill will be too slow.

Passing and Receiving

Trigger of when to is the ball leaving the foot of the passing player when he/she is looking at

6v3 Safety Possession

Keeping possession is much easier when all players are moving into space so there are options for the player on the ball to pass it

Difficulty



20 Mins



9 P



3 Bibs



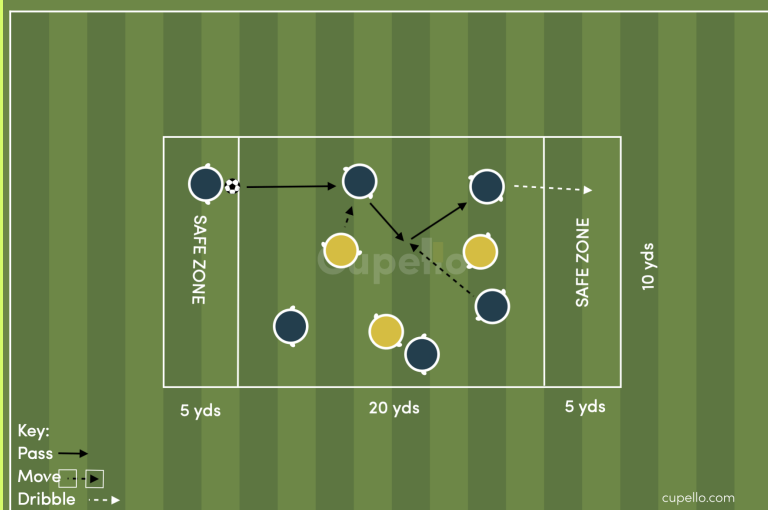
30 x 15 y

RONDOS

AGE: 8-12

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Possession of the ball means players must be moving into space to create passing options for team mates. Often the simple pass is the one that keeps possession.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Set up an area 30 x 10 yards including 5 yard safety zones at each end.

In the 6v3 the 6 players are holding onto the ball while the three players are pressing trying to win the ball. The idea is to work the ball from one safety zone to the other. The passing team cannot be tackled in the safety areas but when the ball is played out of the safety areas the receiver cannot pass it back so they turn or dribble the ball into areas where they can pass the ball. The aim is to get the ball to the other safety zone to score a point. The defending team wins a point by winning the ball and dribbling it into one of the safety zones.

COACHING TIPS

Passing

1. Passing must be precise and quick, using the inside of the foot, to beat the pressing defenders.

Movement

1. Players must look for space and move into it to create more passing options.

MODIFY SESSION

Make possession players one-touch to make it harder to keep the ball or make the area big to make it easier to keep the ball.

4v4+1 Positioning Game

Creating triangles with other team mates is key to this game but it has just a one player overload making possession more difficult.

Difficulty



15 Mins



9 P



9 Bibs



15 x 15 y

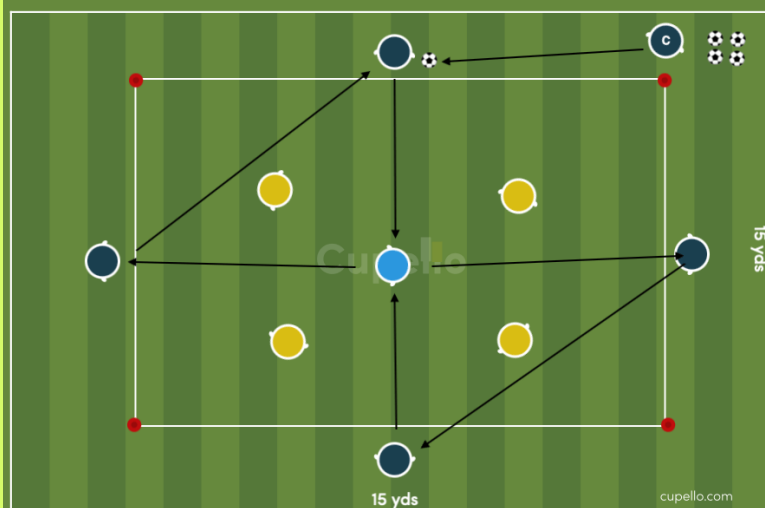
RONDOS

AGE: 8-12

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Good passing technique with players using the passing lanes and creating space in different areas of the pitch.

Play takes place within the area.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

You need two teams of 4 players and a magic man who plays for the team in possession making it 5 v 4 to whoever is in possession. Using triangles and passing lanes the team keeps the ball for as long as possible and recover it when it is lost. The team without the ball must try to win it and make possession theirs.

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

1. Try to move the ball quickly, using a maximum of one or two touches.
2. Try to get players to use one touch passing and only to depend on a second touch when they have to control a poor pass.
3. When we make the pass between the lines to the attackers it should be a firm pass.
4. Players should learn when to control the ball and slow the play down and when to play one-touch to speed the play up.

MODIFY SESSION

Make the area bigger to help the players and smaller to make it harder and use one or two touch to make it even harder.

Passing Technique

1. Timing of the pass is key to how the player receives the ball whether a through ball for the player to run on to or a switch of play.
2. Speed of play is important for receiving and passing. Good passing helps players to control the ball and make decisions easier

10 WAYS RONDOS DEVELOP SKILLS

Rondo training is a popular soccer training exercise that involves a group of players passing the ball around a small area, while one or two players try to intercept the ball.

1

Develops Technical Skills: Rondo training improves players' ball control, dribbling, passing, and first touch.

2

Improves Fitness: Rondo training is a high-intensity workout that helps players improve their stamina, endurance, and agility.

3

Increases Awareness: Rondo training helps players develop spatial awareness, allowing them to anticipate the movements of their teammates and opponents.

4

Enhances Decision-Making: Rondo training challenges players to make quick decisions under pressure, helping them develop better decision-making skills on the field.

5

Builds teamwork: Rondo training emphasizes the importance of teamwork and communication. Players must work together to keep possession of the ball and

6

Encourages Creativity: Rondo training encourages players to be creative with their ball skills, helping them develop a more diverse range of techniques and moves.

7

Develops Defensive Skills: Rondo training helps players improve their defensive skills, including tackling, intercepting, and positioning.

8

Boosts Confidence: Rondo training provides players with a safe and controlled environment to practice their skills, helping them build confidence on the field.

9

Increases Competitiveness: Rondo training is a competitive exercise that fosters a winning mentality among players, helping them develop a more competitive mindset.

10

More Enjoyable Training :Rondo training is a fun and engaging exercise that helps players enjoy their training sessions and stay motivated to improve their skills.

FIVE QUOTES ABOUT RONDOS

"The rondo is the heart of Barcelona's style. It's a game of keep-ball that sharpens your technique, and it's fundamental to our philosophy." - Pep Guardiola



"A rondo is not just a warm-up exercise, it's a microcosm of the game. You learn about space, pressure, angles, communication, and how to work with your teammates." - Jurgen Klopp

"The rondo is the foundation of everything we do at Ajax. It's a fun way to work on your touch and your vision, and it sets the tone for how we play." - Johan Cruyff



"The rondo is the DNA of tiki-taka. It's all about keeping the ball, moving it quickly, and playing with intelligence and precision." - Andres Iniesta

LINE BREAKING PASSES IN RONDOS

In a rondo, the "line breaking pass" refers to a pass that is played through the opposition's defensive line, with the intention of breaking through their defensive structure and creating a goalscoring opportunity. A line breaking pass is usually played along the ground, and requires precision, timing, and good vision from the passer.

In a rondo, players are often encouraged to attempt line breaking passes as a way of developing their ability to read the game, identify gaps in the opposition's defense, and exploit those gaps with accurate passes. However, attempting line breaking passes also carries some risk, as an inaccurate pass can result in a turnover and a counter-attack by the opposition.

Keeping Possession to Break Lines

Players need to be able to pass the ball quickly and break defensive lines for fast attacking overloads

Difficulty



20 Mins



6 P



2 Bibs



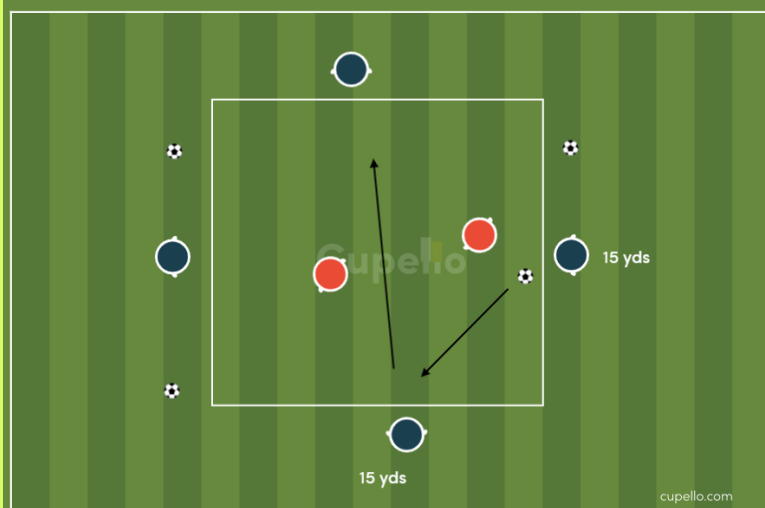
15 x 15 y

RONDOS

AGE: 8-15

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Being able to break lines with a pass will help teams create overloads and get into attacking positions.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

For this drill you need an area of 15x15, 6 players, bibs, balls and cones.

Players on the outside look to keep possession trying to play between the two defenders in the middle. When defenders win the ball, they look to try and dribble the ball and stop it outside of the area, the attacker on that side can try to stop them.

COACHING TIPS

Passing Players

1. Passes must be crisp and quick to prevent defenders intercepting.

Communication

Players must talk to each other, letting them know which is a better option.

Defenders must coordinate how best to press the ball.

MODIFY SESSION

Add in a goal, when defenders regain possession, they can shoot, attacking players become defenders and look to put pressure on the ball to stop the shot.

Rondo 6+2v3

Playing in a Rondo players work on passing under pressure and defending against transitions. Passing between defending players is a key element in attacking play and helps players to take advantage in counter attacks and overload situations.

Difficulty



15 Mins



11 P



3 Bibs



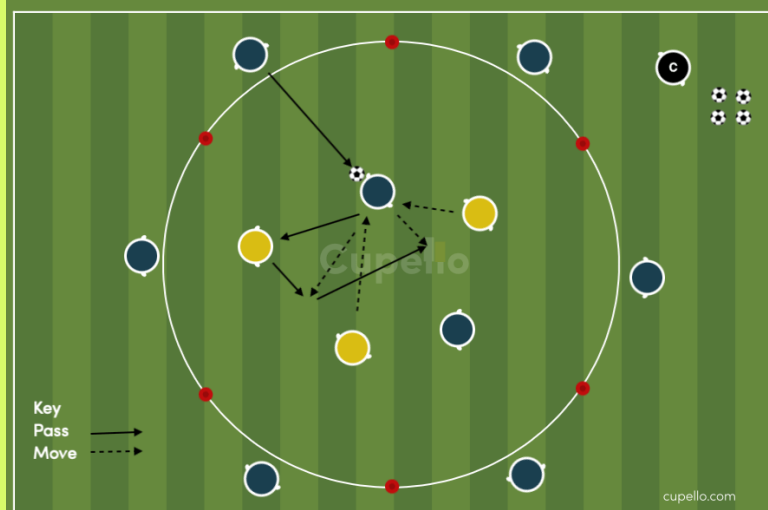
15 x 15 y

RONDOS

AGE: 8-15

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Look for good passing and receiving, first touch should be good enough to put the ball into a good angle for passing to an open player. All the elements of a game are present and should be looked for, movement, support, passing are key but also communication, and passing routes are important in keeping possession and ultimately making the overload count.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Six players are outside the circle with two team mates inside the circle. They are up against three pressing players who are intent on winning the ball. The 6 outer players and the 2 inside the circle must try to keep possession of the ball. Outer players are only allowed to pass between themselves two times before it must go back into the 2 player in the area. For the possession team 6 consecutive passes without a pressing player touching the ball is one point.

If the pressing players win the ball they must try to make three passes to score a point. Switch the pressing players after 2 minutes being sure to add up the points and see which trio of pressers are the best!

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

Don't just use short passes try longer ones as well.

After receiving a long pass look to play 2 or 3 short passes to slow down the speed of the ball.

Don't make more than 3 or 4 passes in the same area, it attracts the defenders and it will be harder to break out of the press.

MODIFY SESSION

You change numbers of player to make it easier or harder. If you change the number of players in possession so there are less players it will be easier for the pressing team. Take a presser away and it will be harder

Speed of Passes

Pay attention to the passes and the speed at which the ball circulates.

Keep close control over the speed of the ball because too slow and it is intercepted too fast and it will be difficult to control it.

When the ball goes out of play pass another one in immediately to keep the game flowing.

Square Rondos

Keeping the opposition away from the ball is one of the best ways at transferring the ball to dangerous positions. This will get your players keeping the ball like Manchester City!

Difficulty



20 Mins



12 P



8 Bibs



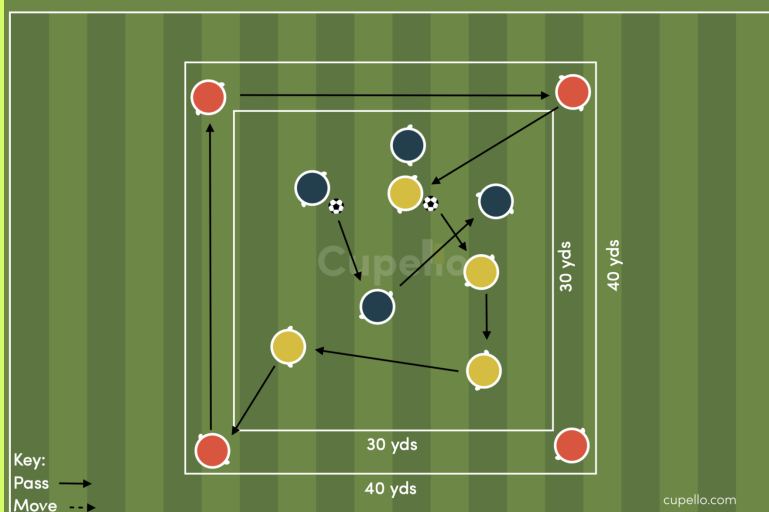
40 x 40 y

RONDOS

AGE: 11-18+

COACHING OBJECTIVES

This is all about keeping the ball, the team that is able to move it quickly and create space will be more successful.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Set up by using an area 40x40 yards, with a 30x30 yard square in the centre. You need balls, bibs and cones.

Split your players in to three teams of 4, two teams in the centre square and the other in the area between the outer and centre square.

Play begins with the two teams in the centre square, both with a ball, who must make 3 passes. They must avoid their opposition and then pass to a player outside of the centre square. The players outside must pass twice to a teammate before playing the ball back into the centre.

COACHING TIPS

Passing Players

1. Passes must be crisp and quick to prevent defenders intercepting.

Communication

Players must talk to each other, letting them know which is a better option.

Defenders must coordinate how best to press the ball.

MODIFY SESSION

Add in a goal, when defenders regain possession, they can shoot, attacking players become defenders and look to put pressure on the ball to stop the shot.

MAKING OVERLOAD DECISIONS

When making overload decisions in a rondo, there are a few things to keep in mind:

Look for numerical advantages: Try to identify areas of the field where there are more attacking players than defenders. These areas can be exploited by passing the ball into them.

Keep the Ball Moving: In a rondo, the objective is to keep possession of the ball, so it's important to avoid holding onto the ball for too long. Look for quick one-two passes to keep the ball moving.

Make accurate passes: To keep possession of the ball, it's important to make accurate passes. Try to keep the ball on the ground and pass with precision to avoid turnovers.

Be aware of your Surroundings: In a rondo, the defenders will be pressuring you to win the ball back. Be aware of where they are and try to anticipate their movements to avoid losing possession.

Be creative: Sometimes, the defenders will be difficult to break down. In these situations, it's important to be creative and try new things to create scoring opportunities. This could mean trying a trick or a skill move, or



Ultimately, the key to making overload decisions in a rondo is to maintain possession of the ball while looking for scoring opportunities. By being aware of your surroundings, making accurate passes, and being creative, you can help your team succeed in this training.

Overload Possession

Winning the ball in situations where there is an overload is something the most successful teams are good at; you can say to your players "try and win the ball back in 5 seconds"

Difficulty



20 Mins



10 P



2 Bibs



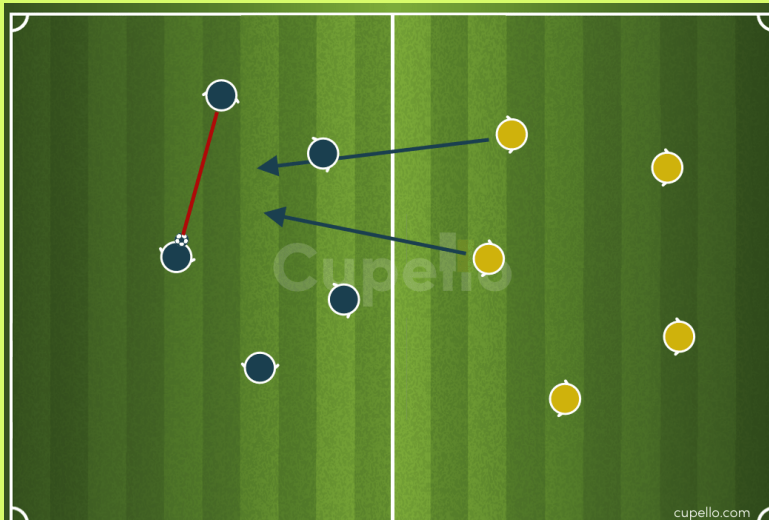
30 x 30 y

RONDOS

AGE: 8-18

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Winning the ball in overload situations and securing it with a safety pass.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

For this drill you need an area 30 x 30 yards split into two halves, 10 players, cones and balls. Play for 25 minutes. Create two teams of five players, with one team in one half and the other team in the other half. Play a ball into one of the teams and the other team send two players in to try and win it. When they win it, they must secure possession with a pass into the other half of the pitch where their three teammates are positioned, and the two players quickly go into the half of the pitch. Now two players from the first team go and press to try and win the ball. If the ball goes out of play a new ball is played into the team in the opposite side of the area and players must react to that.

COACHING TIPS

Passing Players

Players need to be controlling the ball with one touch then turning and making an accurate pass with the other foot. The most accurate pass will be with the side foot after making the turn from a good first touch.

Ball Control

Try to move the ball quickly, using a maximum of one or two touches.

Try to get players to use one touch passing and only to depend on a second touch when they have to control a poor pass.

MODIFY SESSION

To make it more competitive if teams make 5 passes, they score a goal. See which of the teams can score the most goals during the session. You can also make it one touch to make passing harder. Make it easier by simply making the area bigger.

When we make the pass between the lines to the attackers it should be a firm pass.

Players should learn when to control the ball and slow the play down and when to play one-touch to speed the play up.

5v2+1 Rondo Possession

This is a possession game where the overload team try to keep the ball for as long as possible from the two defenders. Players move to make passing angles and triangles with their team mate in the middle

Difficulty



15 Mins



8 P



2 Bibs



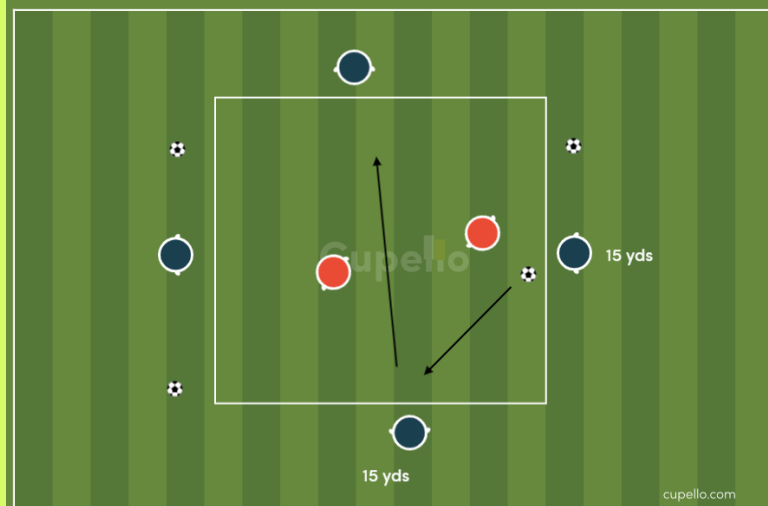
25 x 50 y

RONDOS

AGE: 8-15

COACHING OBJECTIVES

This is all about player movement to create angles for passing options. The player in the centre is there to give triangles that make passing easier so that player must work hard to be open to the pass. Players need good first touch and passing skills to keep the ball for 5 passes.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Play the game starting in one side of the area using two-touch. The player in the centre is there to create passing triangles. The two defenders try to intercept or recover the ball as quickly as possible. When the players with the ball play in the second box the defenders change to that box quickly. When the ball is played to another box the attacking players on the longer sides move to the other box quickly. The players cannot play the ball to the other box until they have completed at least 5 consecutive passes in the box they are in. The player who loses the ball automatically becomes a defender, changing places with the player who has been defending for the most time.

COACHING TIPS

Passing Players

1. Try to combine quickly off minimal touches
2. Create space to combine
3. Movement to lose and unbalance defenders in order to receive and combine with teammates

First touch

1. Try to receive with an open body to allow you to play off one or two touches
2. Try to receive with different parts of your body

MODIFY SESSION

Increase the size of the area to make it easier.

To make it harder change the number of touches players can make (one touch)

Force players to take two touches to make them use quick feet

Passing

1. Try to play one touch but when a bad pass is made players can use an extra touch or control with the help of the other foot. The speed of pass will effect the receiving of the ball, too hard and it will be harder to control with one pass, too soft and the drill will be too slow.

4v4+2 Positioning Game

Creating triangles with other team mates is key to this game with plenty of link up opportunities but beware the press it can catch you out!

Difficulty



15 Mins



8 P



2 Bibs



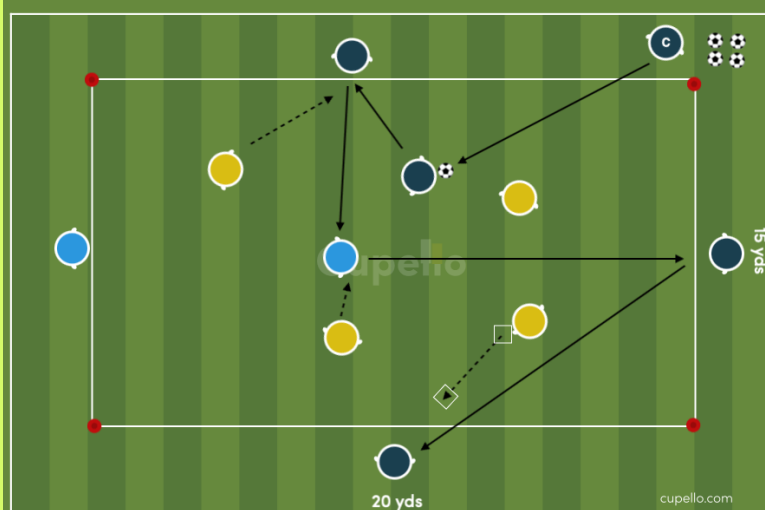
25 x 50 y

RONDOS

AGE: 11-15

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Good passing technique with players using the passing lanes and creating space in different areas of the pitch.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

You need two teams of 4 players and 2 magic men who play for the team in possession making it 6 v 4 to whoever is in possession. Using triangles and passing lanes the team keeps the ball for as long as possible and recover it when it is lost. The team without the ball must try to win it and make possession theirs.

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

Try to move the ball quickly, using a maximum of one or two touches.

Try to get players to use one touch passing and only to depend on a second touch when they have to control a poor pass.

When we make the pass between the lines to the attackers it should be a firm pass.

Players should learn when to control the ball and slow the play down and when to play one-touch to speed the play up.

MODIFY SESSION

Make the area bigger to help the players and smaller to make it harder and use one or two touch to make it even harder.

Passing Technique

Timing of the pass is key to how the player receives the ball whether a through ball for the player to run on to or a switch of play.

Speed of play is important for receiving and passing. Good passing helps players to control the ball and make decisions easier

HOW RONDOS CAN HELP YOUR TEAM

Rondos can be beneficial for soccer teams in several ways:

Improving Passing Skills: Rondos require players to pass the ball accurately and quickly in a small space, which can improve their passing skills and their ability to read the game.

Developing decision-making skills: Rondos can help players develop their decision-making skills by forcing them to think quickly and make split-second decisions on where to pass the ball.

Enhancing Teamwork: Rondos require teamwork, communication, and coordination among players to keep possession of the ball and prevent the defenders from intercepting it. Practicing rondos can help teams develop a better understanding of each other's playing styles and build trust and cohesion among teammates.

possession.

Improving Fitness and Conditioning: Rondos can be physically demanding, especially when played at a high tempo, which can improve players' fitness and conditioning levels.



Overall, practicing rondos can help soccer teams improve their passing, teamwork, decision-making, and fitness, which can translate into better performance on the field.

5v5+3 Turn Defence Into Attack

In this drill teams can turn defence into attack by winning the ball in the central areas and stopping penetration in these areas.

Difficulty



20 Mins



13 P



8 Bibs



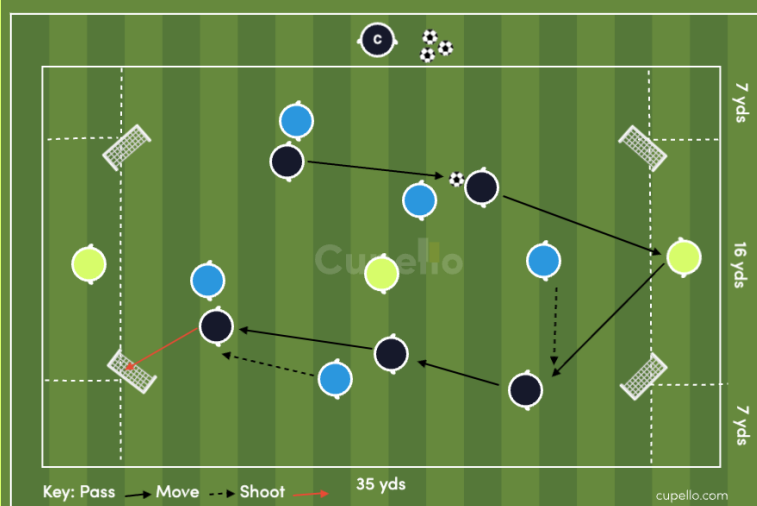
35 x 30 y

RONDOS

AGE: 11-18

COACHING OBJECTIVES

Players work on reacting together when they lose the ball in an effort to win it back. When they win it back the player's first touch should be away from pressure. Look for supporting players moving and making good angles for the pass. Awareness of team mates is a priority in moving the ball to keep



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

Use an area 35 x 30 yards wide set up as shown. Play a game with 5 possession players, pressing players with three magic men one in each of the unopposed end zones between the goals and one in the centre of the area.

Coach plays to the possession team who use the floaters to keep possession – they need to make 6 consecutive passes to score a point while the pressing team when they win the ball need to make 3 consecutive passes after which they can score in one of the mini goals.

Work in 2 minute games.

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

Trigger of when to is the ball leaving the foot of the passing player when he/she is looking at the ball. Defending player presses the receiving player by quick movement as the ball is travelling and then goes tight on the receiving player who must look up to see where to play the pass causing mistakes and missed passes or the presser blocks the pass. In each case the presser has a chance to win the ball.

First Touch

Try to receive with an open body to allow you to play off one or two touches

Try to receive with different parts of your body

MODIFY SESSION

Give players unlimited touches to make it easier or two touch to make it harder.

Speed of Ball

If the speed of the ball is wrong the chances of losing the ball are much greater and so this is one of the key elements to the drill, making sure the ball is moving at a good pace. Make sure the passes are not in the air as this will make it harder to control

Possession In 3v3 Waves

In this drill players are attacking and defending in waves with quick transitions that test the mettle of any possession-based team.

Difficulty



15 Mins



11 P



6 Bibs



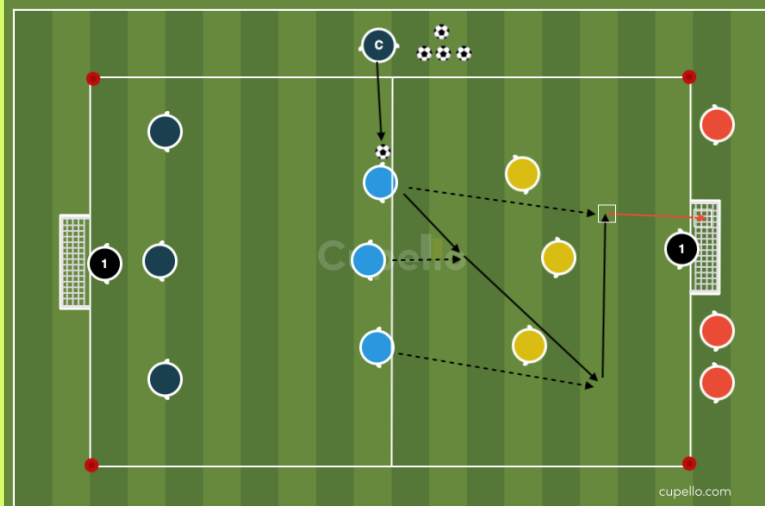
40 x 30 y

RONDOS

AGE: 11-15

COACHING OBJECTIVES

With a possession-based team there will always be periods without the ball so teams must be able to win it back quickly. In this game the possession of teams is tested with lots of individual battles.



WHAT THE PLAYERS DO

The ball is played into the three players in the middle who attack one end of the pitch in a 3v3. Once this attack is over if the team has not scored a goal, they swap places with the team at that end and become a defending team. The new team in the middle attack the opposite end and the same rule applies if they do not score, they swap roles. If the team does score, they immediately attack the opposite end. If the ball goes out of play the team that lost it becomes the middle team.

COACHING TIPS

Ball Control

Try to move the ball quickly, using a maximum of one or two touches.

Try to get players to use one touch passing and only to depend on a second touch when they have to control a poor pass.

Shooting Chances

Players should try to finish by taking into account the goalkeeper's position and the best place to put the ball. Players should always be alert for rebounds and poor clearances.

MODIFY SESSION

Increase the size of the area to make it easier and to make the exercise more difficult make all players one or two touch.

Passing Technique

Timing of the pass is key to how the player receives the ball whether a through ball for the player to run on to or a switch of play.

Speed of play is important for receiving and passing. Good passing helps players to control the ball and make decisions easier.



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