

# SOCCER RONDOS

## The Key To A Better Training Session - Book 1 -

### 13 Rondos To Improve Your Training Sessions

Includes 13 Rondos with diagrams & key points to coach + Bonus full session from "Training Sessions For Soccer Coaches"

*"A player can touch the ball twenty to forty times in a 5 minute rondo. Plus they are meaningful touches that require players to adjust and pass the ball in a game scenario."*

**Chris King**

**Also available**



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## INTRODUCTION

**The drills in this book are explained step by step and include diagrams. If you're a new coach, or you're simply a coach that hasn't had the time to work on your sessions, this book will improve you immensely.** The drills are aimed at senior players (but they can be adjusted for juniors aged approximately 13 years and up).

**I've completed coaching courses and coached senior mens teams, ladies, youth and junior teams for over 30 years. The advice and drills in this book are extremely useful and will get you up and running straight away.**

Here's a bit about what a Rondo is and what you should be aiming to achieve and points to coach. Make sure to read this and then jump into the Rondos and start implementing them at the start of all your sessions!

Rondo's are small sided drills that improve players technique, touch, movement and awareness in tight areas. This book will show you the importance of the rondo and give you 13 rondos that you can implement straight away into your sessions.

They should be incorporated into EVERY training session that you run. After the warm up, get the players straight into a rondo. You will see their enjoyment and engagement improve almost instantly and it sets the standard for the rest of the session.

Rondos will help:

- Improves technique in tight areas
- Encourages intelligent movement
- Improve players passing in triangles
- Improve the players press with maximum efficiency
- Help players close passing lanes
- Improve the players enjoyment at training
- Improve payers ability to read the intentions of the opposition
- Improve the intensity of the training session

A player can touch the ball twenty to forty times in a 5 minute rondo. Plus they are meaningful touches that require players to adjust and pass the ball in a game scenario.

Compared to if it was a basic, static passing drill, players may only touch the ball 5-10 times and it wouldn't be in a realistic, pressure environment.

### General Rondo rules

- You want to have a large overload of players (ie 4v1, 5v2,8v2 etc) so that the defender/s are working hard and the others get plenty of touches.
- Have lots of balls spread around outside the area so that players can grab a new ball quickly and play is non stop.
- Players either swap into the middle when they make a mistake or keep the defenders in for a certain amount of time (ie 1 minute) or until they win the ball say 3 times before swapping.

Some other key points that Rondos help teach soccer players:

- Don't lose possession
- Think before you have the ball
- Don't take more touches if you can solve it with one touch
- Move the ball to move the opposition (defenders)
- Move the ball on purpose
- Find the right moment and break through

## When coaching a rondo, pay attention to:

- How the players position themselves (both body shape and where they move in the rondo)
- How they receive the ball
- Whether they control it with their left or right foot

One of the lessons that a rondo will teach players is how to play out of a tight, pressure situation. Players should therefore always be aware of what is around them, scanning who is available or who is pressing them so they know where their options are. **They should always be on their toes, balanced and ready to make quick movements.**

They should always **adapt an open hip position so they can receive and play passes from multiple directions.** This is a very important point - you don't want the player facing square on where the ball is coming from as they would only be able to pass it back to that player. **Impress on the players to have an open stance so they can take or pass the ball in either direction instantly.**

The players should be **playing the ball to their team mates back foot** so that player can take it away, or come back in, depending on what their options are. You don't want the players passing to their teammates nearest foot as this cuts down the option of them being able to play it out to their far side.

## Key points to encourage the players to do:

### Defenders

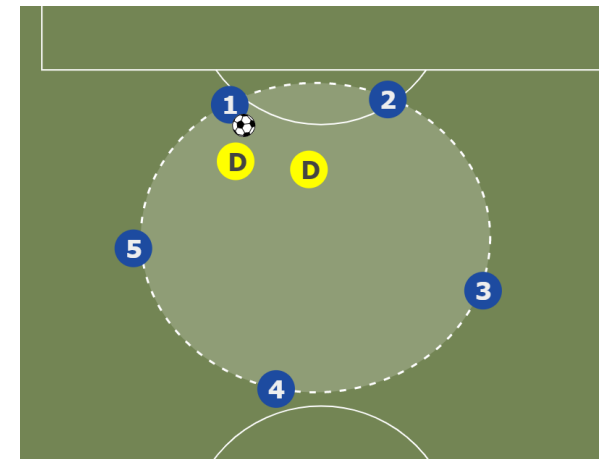
Defenders should press early - don't hold back. The best time to win a ball back is straight away as soon as you've lost it. This catches the other team out before they can get settled and spread out in their positions.

When working in twos, **tell the defenders not to get split by the pass.** Instead, they should be **pressing together and press to one side of a player** to corner the opposition player (see images 1 & 2).

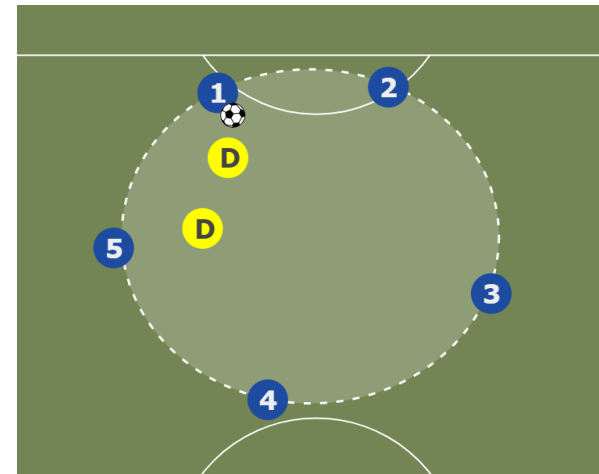
**CORRECT:** In the first image, the first defender is pressing slightly to the left which blocks off the attackers passing option on that side. So the second defender is coming in towards the right as that is where the ball will most likely be passed to. They are also blocking the passing lane (#1 can't pass to #3). The positioning is good as they won't get split by the pass.

**INCORRECT:** In image two the first defender has once again pressed slightly to the left but the second defender has come in behind him. This leaves easy options to pass out to number two or three.

**Image 1 - Correct**



**Image 2 - Incorrect**



## Attackers

Encourage the attackers to be **on their toes so they are ready to receive the ball on either foot or move forward or backwards quickly when required**. Also, as mentioned earlier, it is key for the attackers to have an open hip stance so they can receive the ball on either foot and pass to either side. If they have closed hips and are facing directly to where the ball is coming from, they will not be able to adjust and pass out to the other side quickly.

I'll say it again as this is a very important point - you don't want the player facing square on where the ball is coming from as they would only be able to pass it back from where it came. Impress on the players to have an open stance so they can take the ball in either direction or pass in either direction instantly.

## Terminology

**Passing Lanes** - These are simply the line that a player would look to pass to another player. So to block the pass you should get in the passing lane. It can be forward, sideways, backwards - where ever the oppositions team mate is, this is where a player should stand in to block the pass.

**Third Line Passing** - The penetrative pass between two defenders. This is important as if this pass is made two defensive players are taken out of the game. *First Line Passing* is the pass that goes sideways and *Second Line Passing* is the pass that goes to the side but forward.

No more talk, here are 13 Rondos to get you and your team passing, pressing and enjoying your soccer! Stick this book (or Ebook) in your bag (or Phone) and you'll always have a few drills to get your session started.

And if you need full sessions, get hold of my other books which have 4 full sessions in each book and are available on Amazon. Just search for:  
"Training Sessions For Soccer Coaches Books 1 & 2"

Happy coaching!  
Chris King

## RONDO 1 - ORIGINAL RONDO

**4v1, 4v2 & 5v2 (5 to 7 players). This can be played 4v1 or 5v2 - even 3v1 works well**

This is a standard Rondo that all other Rondos are based around. It can really be done with any amount of players and is easy to set up so it can be done in a small area anywhere on the ground.

### 4v1

Set up a square with dimensions of approx 6x6 yards. Players on the outside must stay on their lines. The defender presses until they win the ball. **Either swap with the player that made the mistake; keep the defender in for 1 minute each; or swap once they win the ball 3 times.**

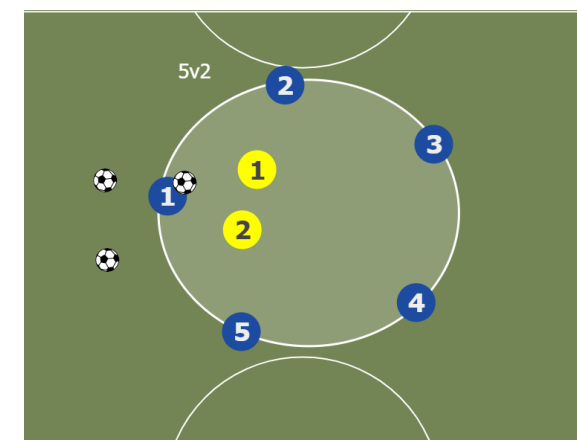
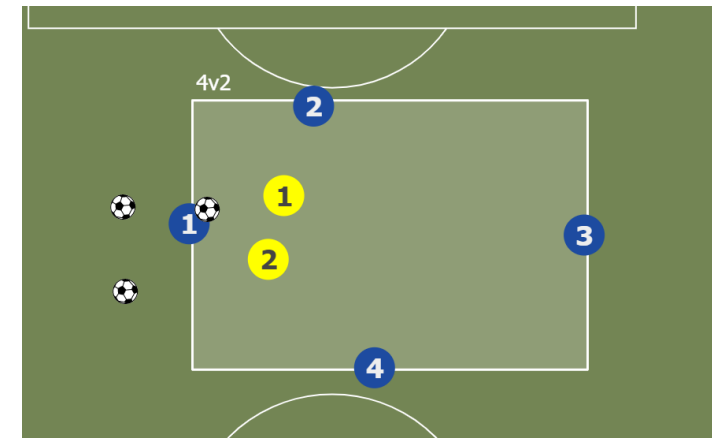
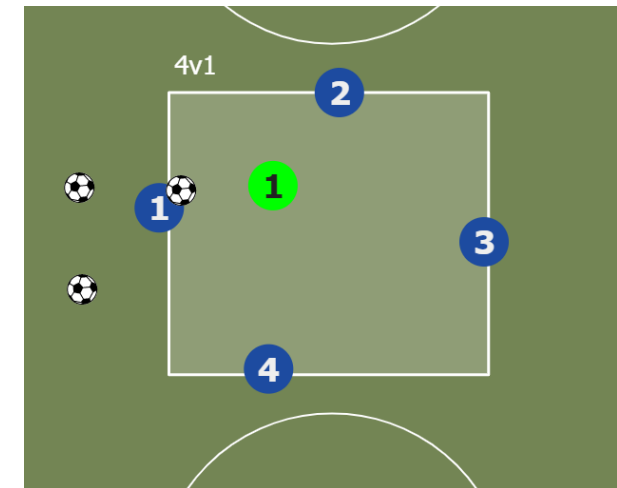
### 4v2

For a 4v2 rondo, simply make the square larger (approximately 8x8 yards). And for a 5v2 simply make a small circle with the players spread around it evenly.

### KEY POINTS:

Look to move the ball from end to end (as opposed to an easy side pass) where possible. We want to train forward passing because during a game this is the best way to get the ball forward for an attack. Playing 4v2 or 5v2 emphasises forward passing as players can look to split the 2 defenders.

Play to your teammates back foot (ie furthest) so forward passing is easier for them (if you play to their front foot it is harder to get it out of their feet and pass to the other side. Where as if you pass to their back foot they can go either way but most importantly move it forward).



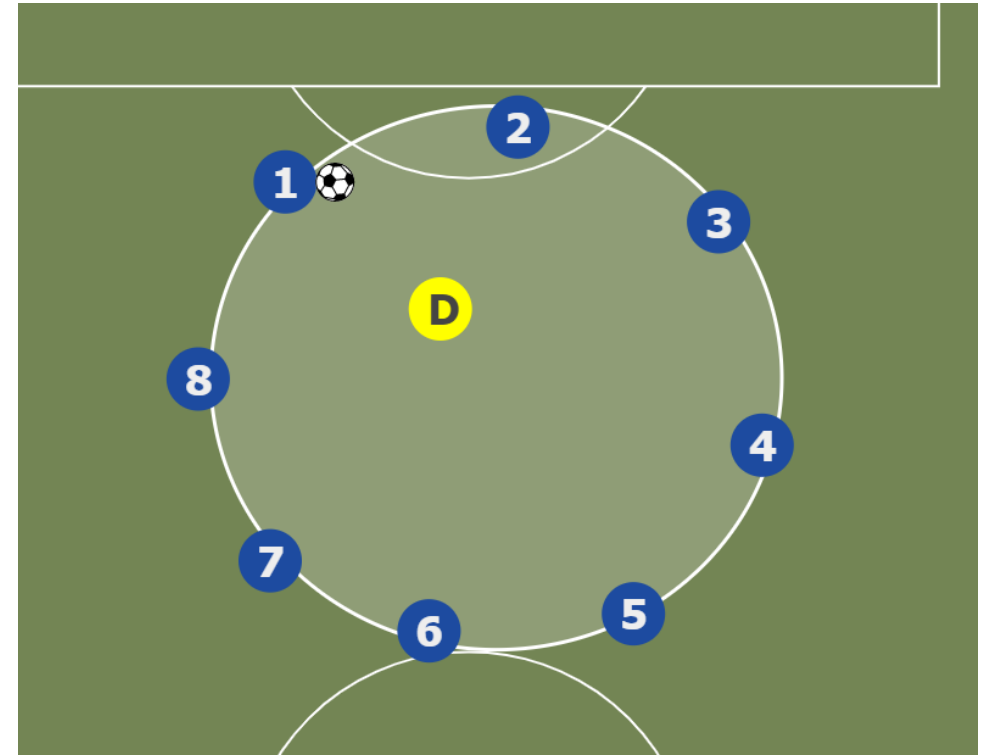
## RONDO 2 - IN THE AIR

**8v1 (7 to 10 players) Either 5v1 up to 9v1 or 10v2.**

Players must keep the ball in the air and use only one or two touches while moving it around the circle. This teaches players quality touches and techniques.

It also teaches them to pass at good heights (ideally at knee height or to the head so their team mates can pass first time).

If players have a lower skill level, take out the player in the middle or allow a bounce.



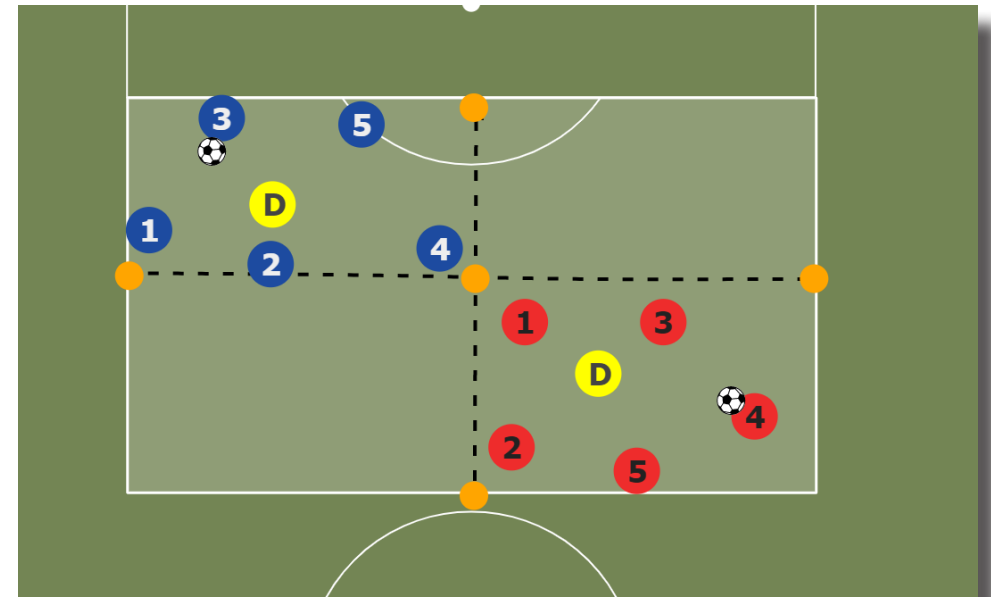
## RONDO 3 - SLIDING SQUARE

**5v1 (5 to 8 players) Either 4v1, 5v1, 5v2, 6v2**

Set up a large square with a cone in the middle which breaks up the square into 4 smaller squares (these should be approx 10x10 yards).

Two groups are playing at the same time (ie 4v1 in one square and 4v1 in another square). The two groups play keep off as usual but once they get a certain amount of passes (usually 3 to 5 passes) the group can move as a team to an empty square. If the defender wins it swap over with who ever made the mistake.

This rondo helps the players to scan the area around them. They must be aware of what square is empty to move into once they have made their 3 to 5 passes.



## RONDO 4 - INTENSE RONDO

### 7v4 (9 to 11 players)

This can be played with 4 players around the outside and then in the middle it can be: 3v4, 2v3, 2v2+1, 3v3.

I like this one - once it's up and running the intensity is good and the buy in from the players gets better the more they do it. Plus the 7 players in the middle all work extremely hard and then you swap 4 of them to the outside for a rest.

#### Setup:

4 players on each side of a large square (30x30) playing on the team of the 3 players in the middle. The other 4 players in the middle are defenders.

The 3 in the middle work together and use the outside players to pass to and receive the ball back.

The 4 defenders work to win the ball. When they win possession they keep it and play inside the square v the 3 attackers for as long as they can until the 3 attackers win back possession. Then play resets and play starts again.

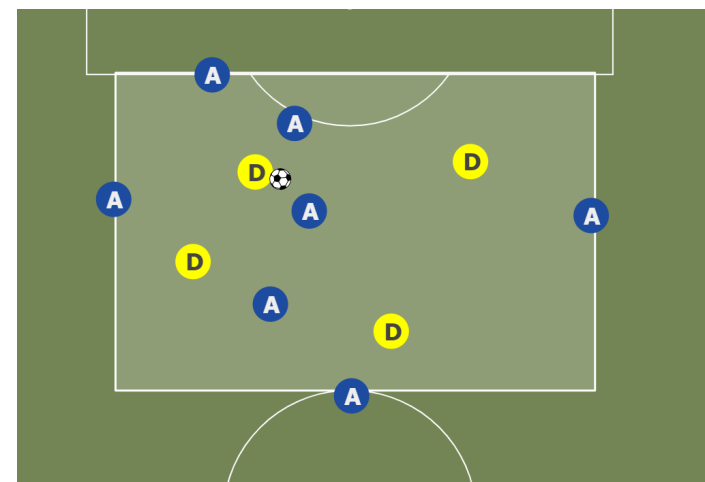
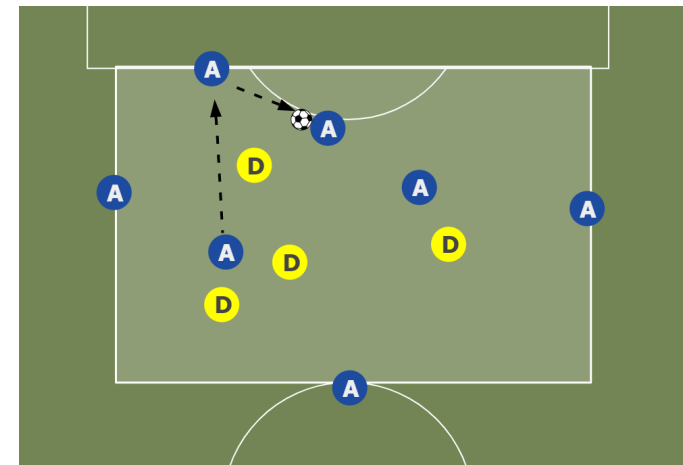
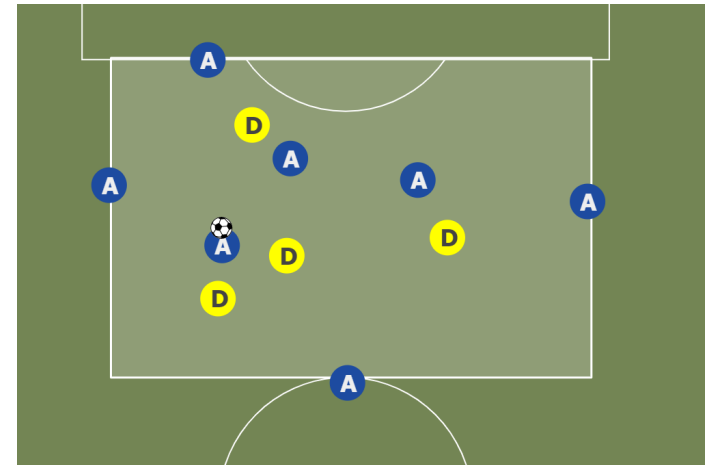
Once this drill is up and running and players have grasped it, it should be high intensity. Swap players every few minutes.

#### Key points:

The 4 defenders should be pressing as quickly as possible and once they win the ball spread out so it is hard for the 3 attackers to win back possession.

The 3 attackers should be using one and two touch passing to play short combinations with each other and the 4 on the outside while constantly moving, making it hard for the defenders to mark them. The players on the outside should be moving along their lines to support the players in the middle and play one touch if possible.

In the first image, play starts with the attackers in the middle.





## RONDO 5 - FINISH FIRST

**5v5 (8 to 18 players) Either 3v1, 4v1, 5v1, 6v1, 7v2**

### Setup:

Two circles approx 20 yards apart.

5 players in each circle with a ball in each circle ready to be played.

As soon as the coach says go, one player from each circle runs to the other circle and players start passing the ball as in a normal rondo (see second image - Blue 1 passes to Blue 2 and Yellow 1 passes to Yellow 2. At the same time one player from each circle runs over to the other circle to try and win possession). Once the player from the other circle wins the ball he runs back to his square to tag a team mate who runs to the other circle to try and win the ball.

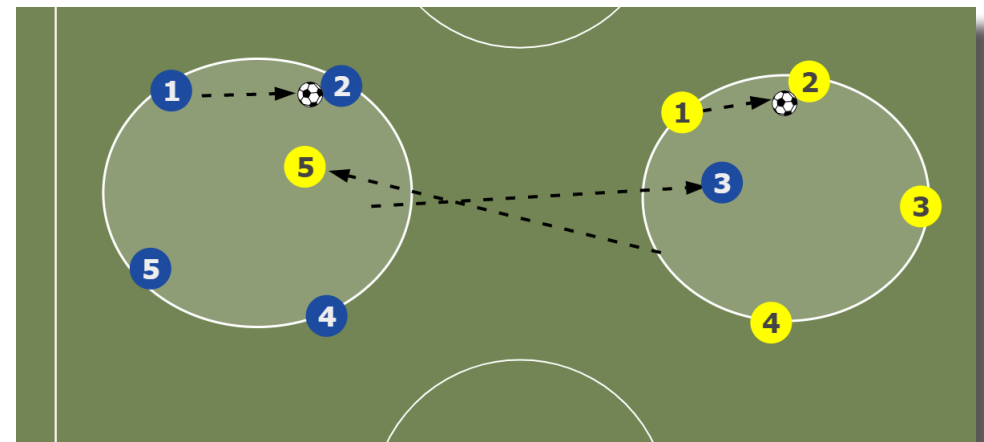
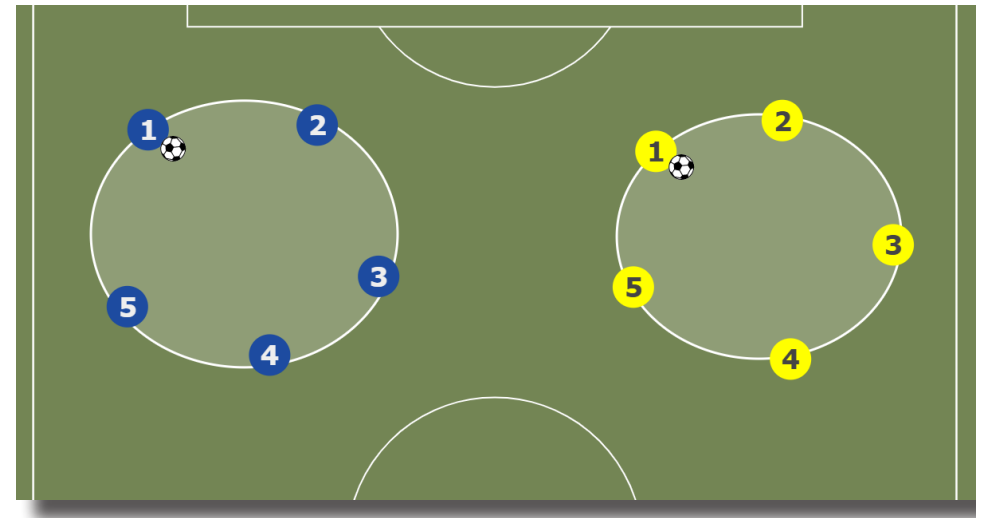
The first team to get each of their players to win the ball and get back to their circle wins. 20 push ups for the losing team.

This should be high intensity and players love the competitiveness of it.

### Key points:

Players should be constantly talking. Letting each other know who is to race to the other circle next or let each other know that there is an opposition player about to come into the circle etc.

This teaches players to press straight away and win it back in the least time possible which is what you want during a game.



## RONDO 6 - RUN, THROW AND CATCH

**5v2 (8 to 18 players) Either 5v2, 6v2, 7v2, 8v2**

\*Two tennis balls required if possible - otherwise just use soccer balls\*

### Setup:

Two circles approximately 20 yards apart.

5 players in each circle with a soccer ball in each circle ready to be played.

One circle has two defenders who try to win the ball as usual. Once they win the ball, the player that mucked it up and the player to the left of them run to the other circle to try and win the ball. The two defenders that just won the ball stay in this circle and become attackers.

While this is going on, the other circle doesn't have any defenders but instead will be throwing a tennis ball to each other as they pass the soccer ball around the circle.

This drill helps with awareness, talking and timing of passes.

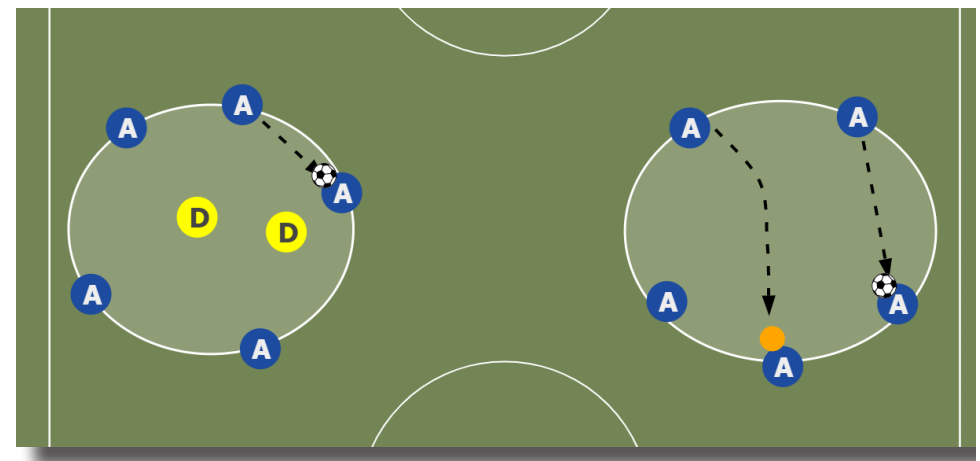
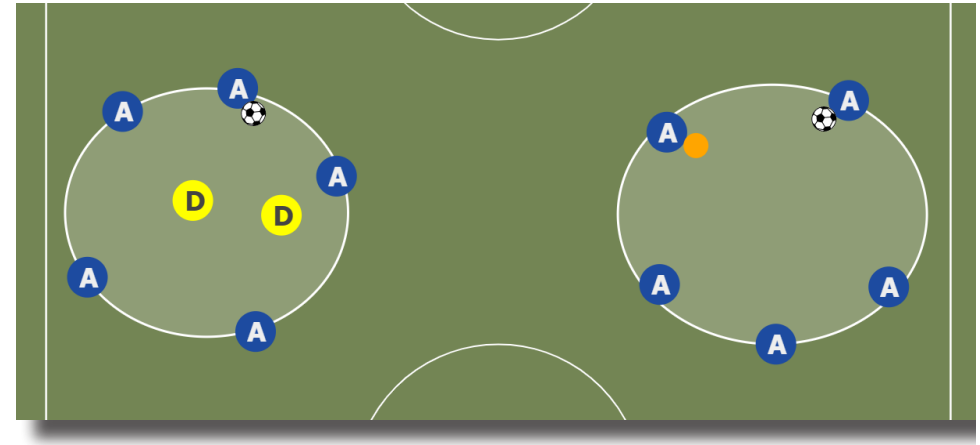
### Key points:

Players should be constantly talking. Letting each other know that there are opposition players about to come into the circle; telling each other who they're throwing the tennis ball to, etc.

### Alternative:

If no tennis balls throw a soccer ball.

Get the players to partner up at the start and then if they muck it up that person and their partner are in (instead of them and the person to their left).



## RONDO 7 - LINE BREAKING PASSES

8v2 (9 or 10 players) Either 8v2 or 8v1

### Setup:

This is played in pairs (the two partners being next to each other). If either of the partners don't break a line with their pass they both go in the middle.

This rondo helps players grasp the importance of breaking a line (passing forward as opposed to passing sideways).

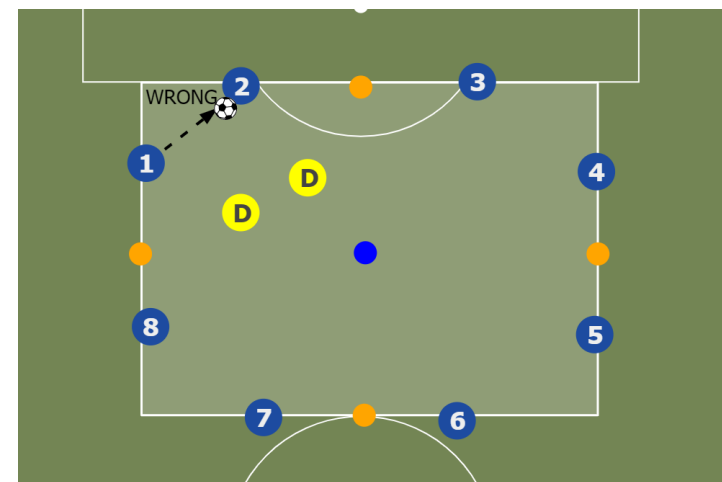
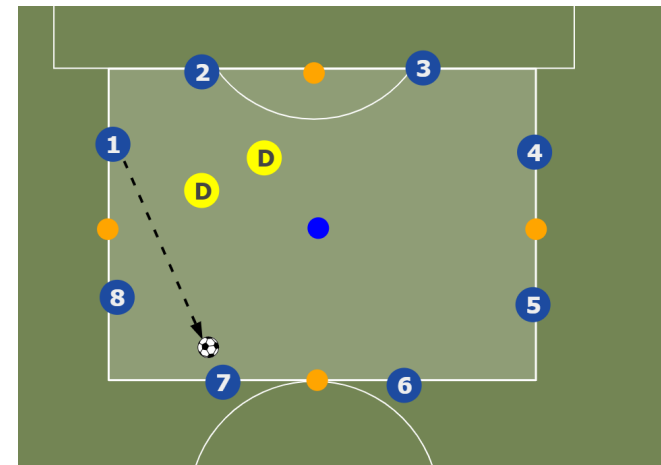
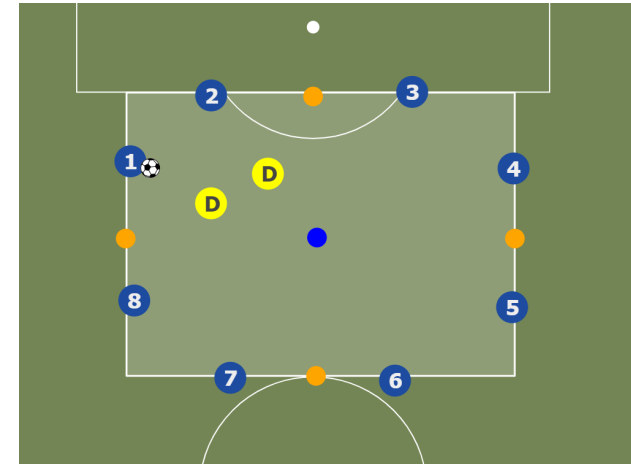
Instead of looking for the easy pass to the person next to you, in this drill the ball must cross across one of the 'lines'. It helps give the players a longer passing range and better vision.

Start with two touch and progress to one touch when players have adapted to the drill.

Here is what First, Second and Third Line Passing is:

Think of it as a back four - in the images 1 & 2 are the centre backs and 3 & 8 would be full backs. **A pass from 1 to 2 would be a First Line Pass**, a pass to 3 or 8 would be a **Second Line Pass**, and a pass between the defenders to number 5 would be a **penetrative forward pass** so therefore a **Third Line Pass**.

**Third Line Passing** - The penetrative pass between two defenders. This is important as if this pass is made two defensive players are taken out of the game. **First Line Passing** is the pass that goes sideways and **Second Line Passing** is the pass that goes to the side but forward.



## RONDO 8 - THROW AND CATCH

Up to 10 players. Either 5v1, 6v1, 7v2, 8v2

\*One or two tennis balls required if possible - otherwise just use soccer balls\*

### Setup:

One circle.

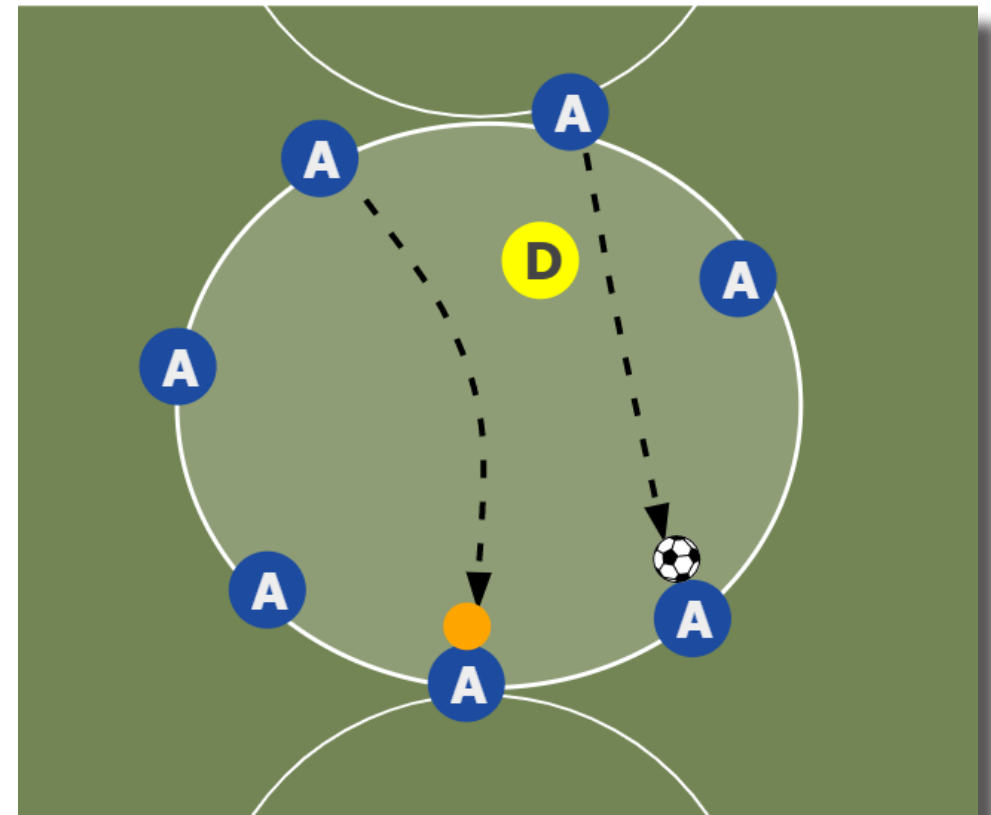
5 players around the circle with a soccer ball ready to pass and 1 or 2 tennis balls ready to throw to each other. One defender working in the middle to win the ball. Who ever gives the ball away goes in the middle.

### Key points:

Players should be constantly talking and calling the persons name who they are passing the soccer ball to or throwing the tennis ball to.

Timing is essential - players may have to wait a split second before throwing the ball just as the player makes a pass. Or they may have to throw it to someone totally different than they had planned as that person might have received the soccer ball.

This type of thing helps with the players cognitive development (their learning, judgment, reasoning, memory etc).



## RONDO 9 - THE RONDO PRESS

**5v5 (up to 16 players) Either 4v4, 5v5, 6v6, 7v7, 8v8**

### Setup:

One large rectangle (approx 30x20 yards)

5 players in one half and 5 in the other. One team starts with possession and as soon as they pass a player from the other half comes in to win the ball. If the team in possession make 3 passes another player from the other half can come in to help his team mate. This continues (ie every 3 passes another team mate may enter the other half to help).

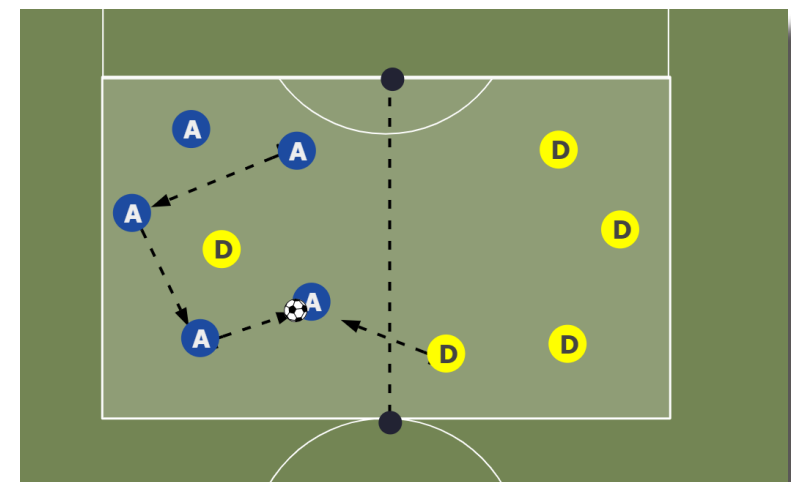
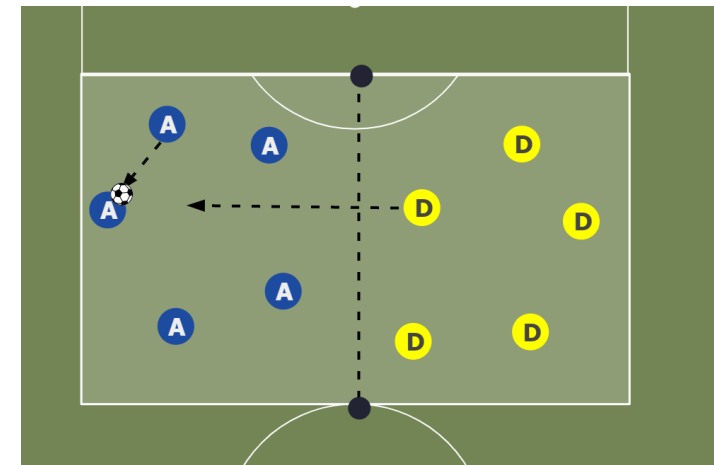
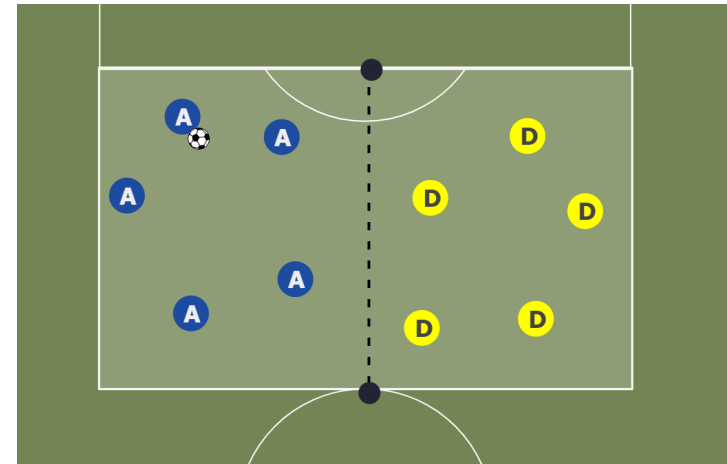
Once a player wins possession they pass or dribble back to their half and a player from the other half goes over to try and win it back.

It is continuous play. The team that has just lost it may try and win it back off the player before they make it back to their half.

This is an intense, competitive rondo that works on players really pressing hard. It is a good one to use pre-season to get players fitness and touch up.

### Alternative:

Two players go across to start with each time.



## RONDO 10 - TWO TEAMS VERSUS ONE

Up to 12 players. Either 2+2v2, 3+3v3, 4+4v4

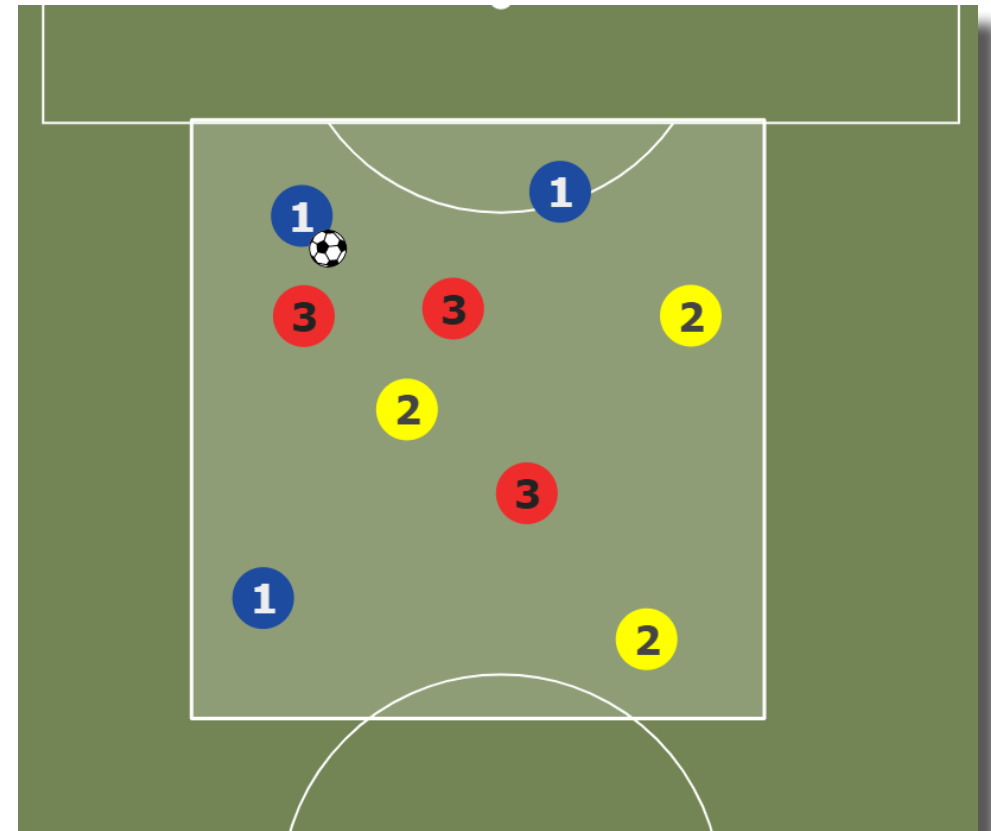
### Setup:

- One large square (approx 30x30 yards)
- Players in 3 different coloured bibs

This is a good one - Two teams keep possession against one team. For example, if there are 9 players, make it two teams of 3 (6 players) keeping possession against the one team of 3.

This can be played with either a time limit (ie one team works as defenders for one minute and then swaps) or when ever a team gives away possession they become the team defending.

If you go with the time limit, make it one to two minutes max so the defending team can work extremely hard and then get to swap. Make the two attacking teams keep count of how many passes they can get in a row before the defensive team win it. After every team has had a go as the defensive team see who got the most passes in a row. This keeps it competitive and keeps the intensity up.



## RONDO 11 - DIVIDE & CONQUER

Up to 9 players. Either 4v2, 4v3, 6v2, 6v3

### Setup:

- One large square or rectangle (approx 30x30 yards)
- Divide the square up into either 4 or 6 even sections

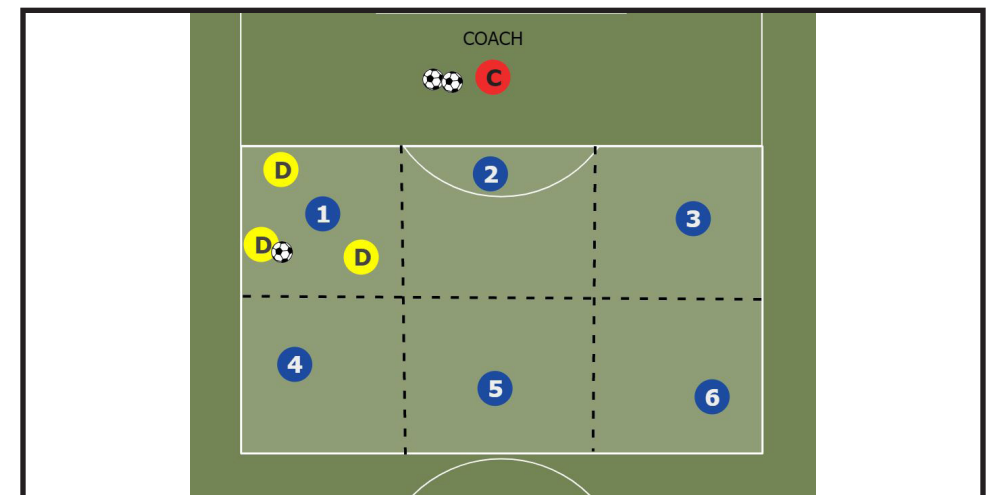
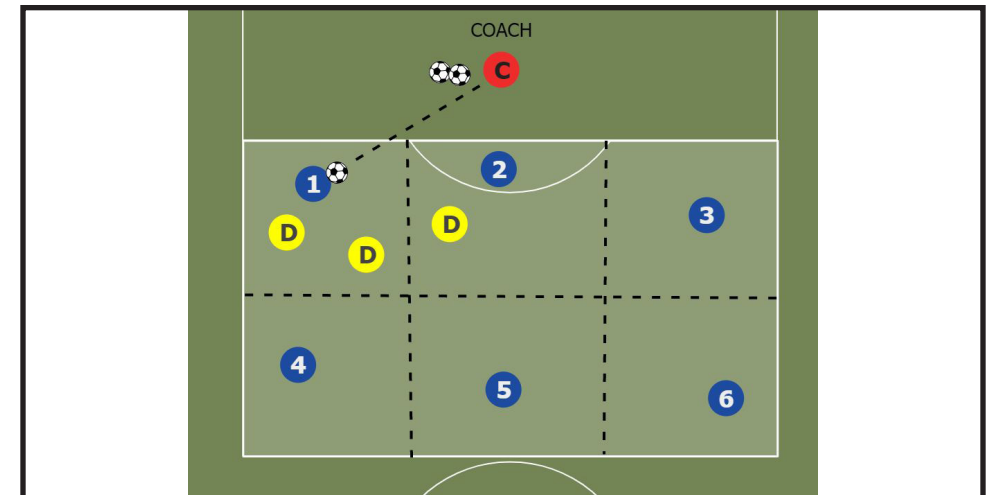
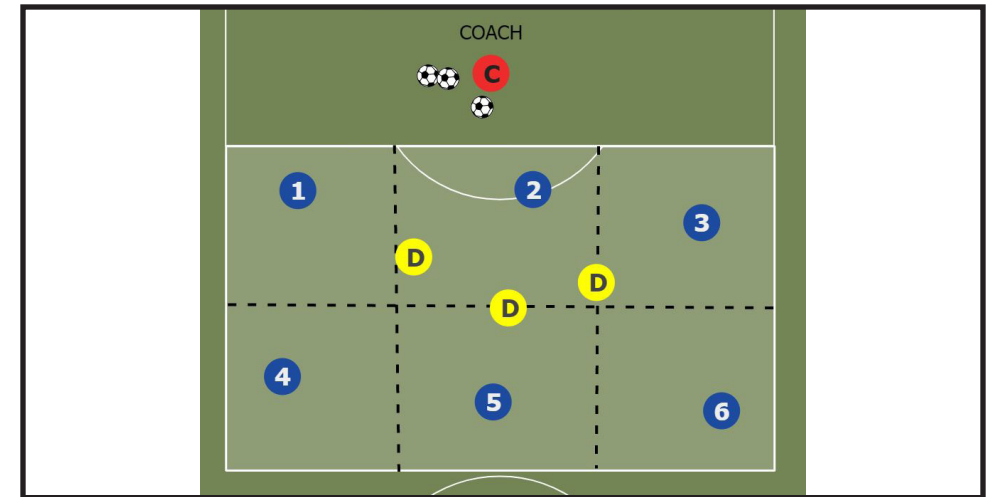
In this rondo, the attacking players must stay in their square and the defensive players are free to go and win the ball in any square.

Attackers play the ball one or two touch between squares with the defenders pressing them to try and win possession.

If the defenders win possession they play keep offs in that square v the one attacker until she wins it back. Then reset and start again.

### Key points:

Make sure that the defensive players press smart. For example if two are pressing closely make sure the third defender is also pressing or blocking to the side that the ball is most likely to come out to.



## RONDO 12 - BLOCK THE CHANNEL

Up to 12 players. Either 6v3 or 8v4

### Setup:

- One large rectangle (approx 40x30 yards)
- Make a channel in the middle approx 5 yards wide

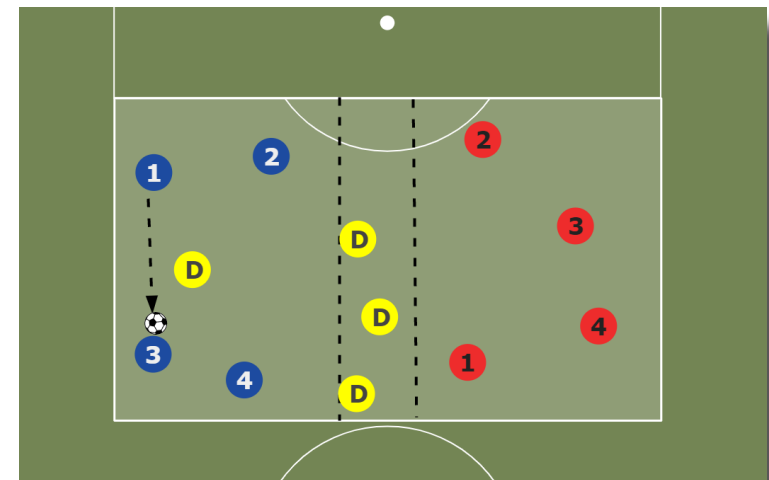
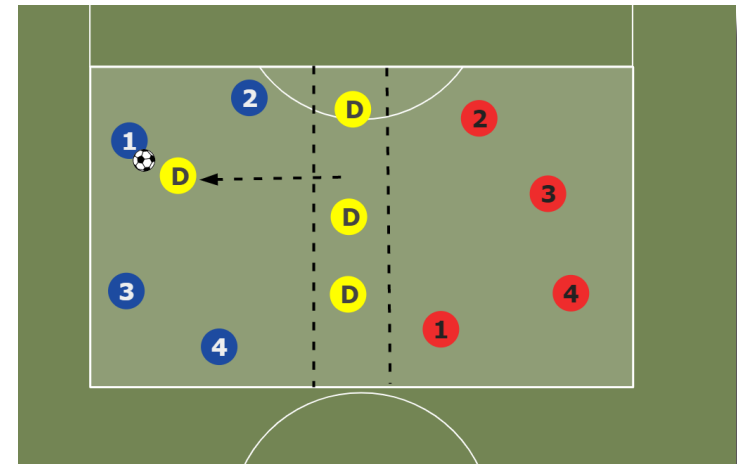
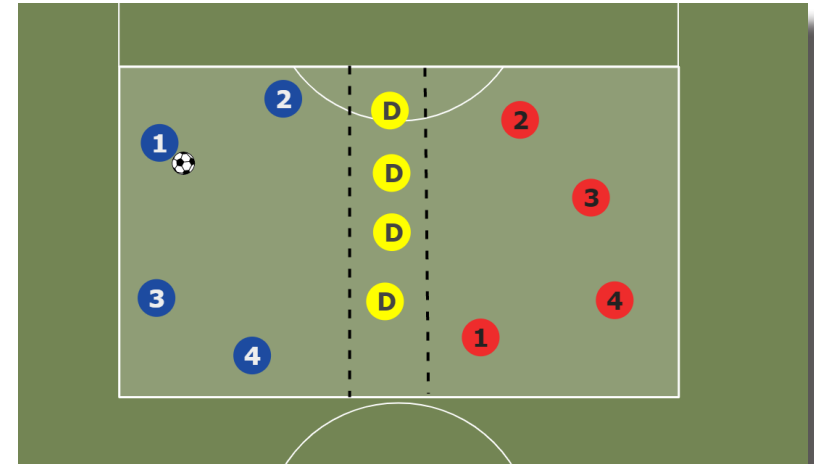
The defensive team starts in the middle channel section. As soon as the ball is played, one player goes into the attacking area to try and win the ball. The attackers pass to each other and look for an opening to get it to the other attacking team.

The other 3 defensive players slide side to side in the middle channel section, looking to pick off any passes the attackers try to make through to the other attacking team.

Once the defensive team win it three times swap over.

### Key points:

- The 3 players in the middle should be concentrating and moving as a unit and not allowing any easy balls through. They should be constantly moving to the side that the ball is on as they would in a game..
- Tell the players not to force the pass. Make sure they keep the ball moving until there is an opening and then make the killer pass to the other side.
- To make it more competitive, you can bring in a rule where if the attacking teams get it back and forth to the other side 3 or 4 times the defensive team have to do push ups when they finish.





## RONDO 13 - FOUR SQUARES

12 to 16 players. Either 9v3 or 12v4

### Setup:

- One large square (approx 40x40 yards) divided into 4 squares

There are 3 teams in 3 of the squares, each team with a ball. They work with each other playing keepings off. The 4th team splits and one player goes into each of the squares at the same time to make it a 3v1 situation and tries to win the ball.

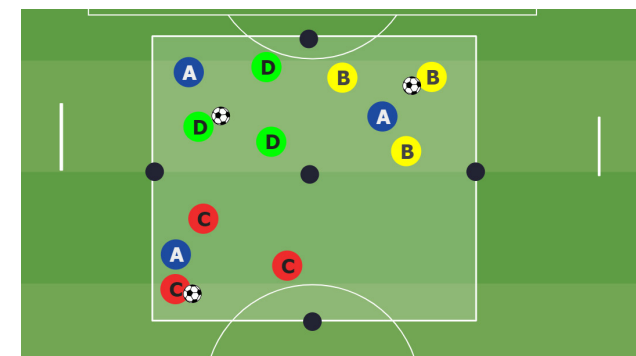
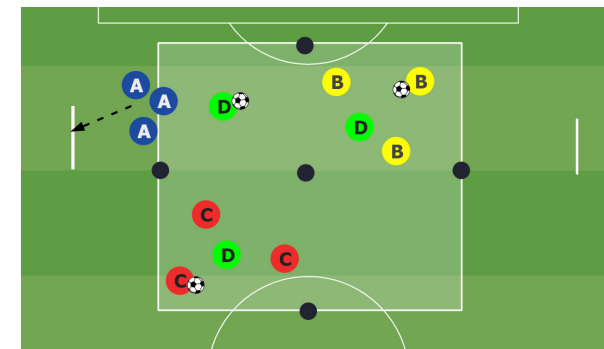
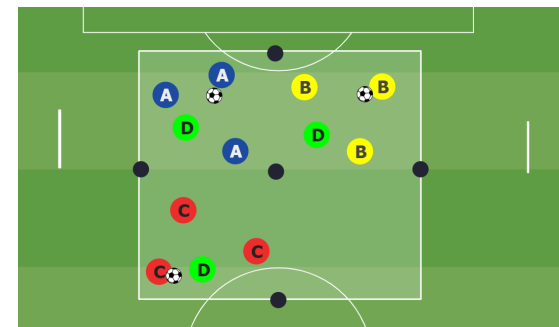
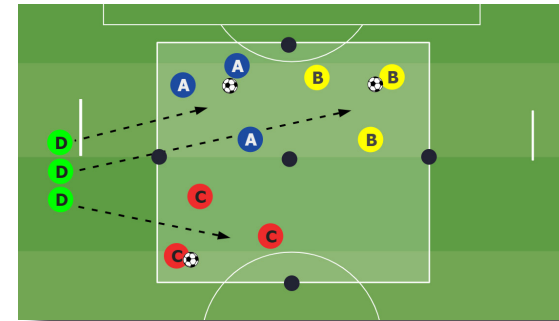
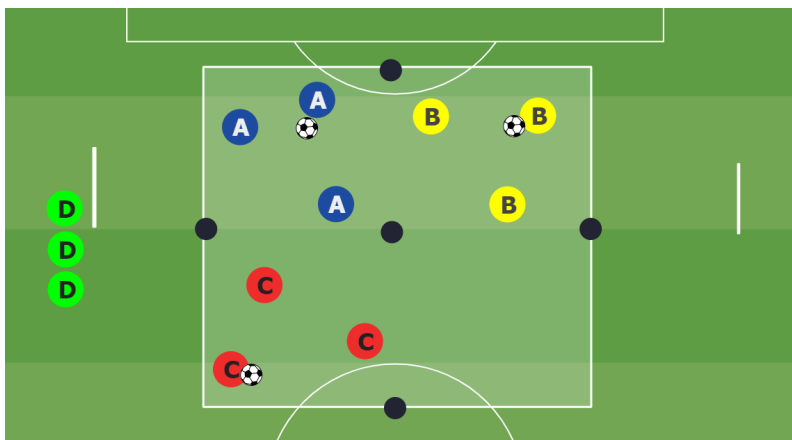
The first player to win the ball off the team calls out that colour and that team now turns into the defensive team.

The new team sprints around a pole or cone 10 metres away and then comes back in, splits and one player goes into each square and tries to win the ball off the other 3 teams.

NOTE: If you have 16 players it will be 4v1 in 2 squares and 4v2 in 1 square or just have 1 player from their defensive team sit out.

In the first image A,B and C start with the ball and team D runs around the pole and then splits in to each square.

A player from D wins it first off team A so team A leave and run around the pole and the D combine in a square.



That's all of the Rondos. These 13 should be enough to add variety to your sessions for the year and are all adaptable for different standards of groups.

On the next few pages I've included a bonus session from my first soccer book **"Training Sessions For Soccer Coaches Book 1"**. If you are looking to develop further as a coach and add some quality to your sessions, Book 1 & 2 are worth getting. They have 4 full training sessions in each, plus the FIFA 11 Official Warm Up and also some general coaching advice that I've picked up over the years.

## THANK YOU!

Thank you for buying my book, I hope you got some valuable information from it. If you've enjoyed this book, please log onto Amazon and spend one minute giving the book a rating to help others find my book.

'Til next time, thanks again and all the best with your coaching!



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## SESSION 3: MIDFIELD PLAY - FINDING SPACE BETWEEN LINES

Parts of the players game that will be improved from this session:  
Midfield positioning and awareness;  
Midfielders decision making on when to pass or dribble.

### SESSION 3 DRILL 1: WHEN TO DRIBBLE, WHEN TO PASS RONDO

#### PURPOSE:

- For midfielders to gain confidence and awareness of when to dribble or when to pass.

#### SET UP:

- 6 Players (alternatively 7 or 8 players: make the actual area 5 or 6 sided [ie a pentagon or hexagon] and add an extra player on each of these outside line. Don't make the area too large as there are only 2 defenders)
- 4 Cones
- 12x12 yard area
- 15 Minutes

#### THE DRILL:

1. Players pass between themselves on the outside, moving the defenders around and trying to pass between them when possible. At any time, players can dribble to another line but there must be another player switching to that vacated line (this is key as we are teaching players to make the decision of when to pass or dribble. So encourage them to mix it up based on if there is time or space to dribble or not).
2. If the outside players pass between the two defenders (split them) they get one point. If a player successfully dribbles to another line it's one point.
3. If the Reds win the ball, they must keep it and one Blue (who ever made the mistake) enters the area and tries to win the ball back. If the Reds make 5 passes they get one point and keep passing between themselves until Blue win it back.

1. Players are to work as a defenders for 90 seconds, then rotate. Add up the points and the losers do 10 push ups. Hard, short, sharp work.

#### KEY POINTS:

- When to dribble and when to pass.

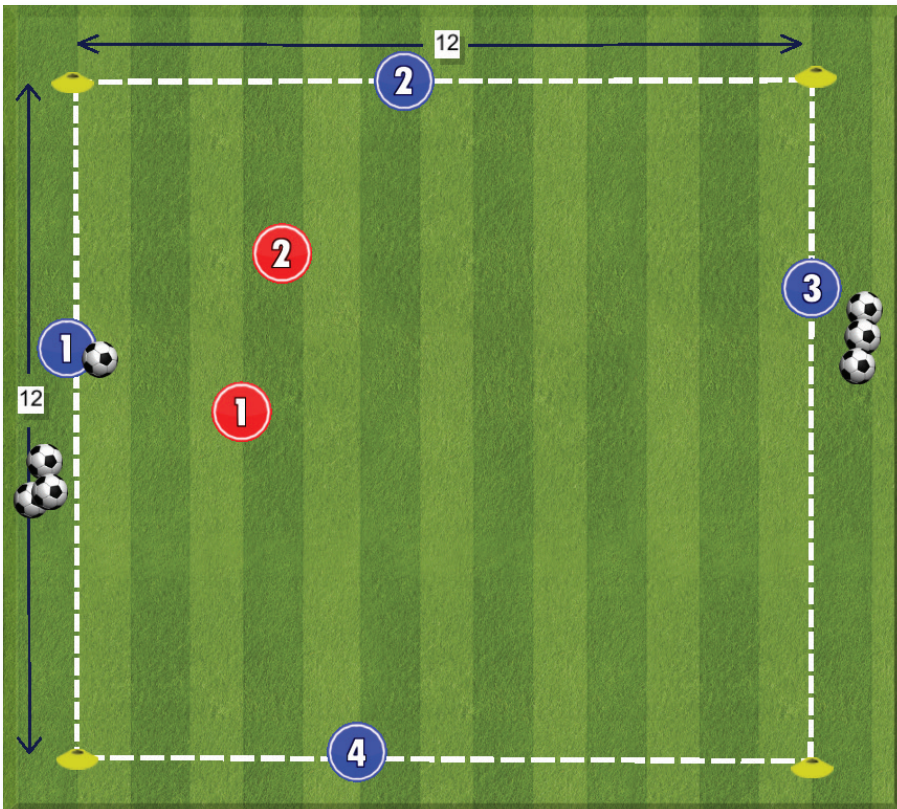
#### COACHES NOTES:

- Get all the players to talk!

#### CHANGES:

- Make the area smaller.
- Outside players have to dribble to 2 lines before a goal is scored.

**Starting Shape:** 4 Blues v 2 Reds. Blues can pass or dribble to any line but another Blue must change places if they dribble to their line. Reds press together trying to win the ball and trying not to get split by the pass. (Image: Session 3 - drill 1)



## SESSION 3 DRILL 2: FINDING SPACE BETWEEN THE LINES

#### PURPOSE:

- This drill will introduce the idea of finding space in between the lines (meaning, for example, finding the space between the oppositions defensive line and midfield line. This is important as in these areas you can receive the ball unopposed. Plus it creates confusion for the opposition defenders as they are unsure whether they should be marking you or not).

#### SET UP:

- 8 Players (alternatively 7 or 10 players: take out Blue #8 and the coach act as that player or put a small goal there instead. Or for 10 players, add another defender and midfield in the area)
- 10 Cones
- 20x10 yard area
- 15 Minutes

#### THE DRILL:

1. There is a 5x10 yard 'channel' set up in the middle to replicate the area in a match that would be 'playing in between the lines'.
2. There are 5 Attackers (Blue) in possession and play always starts with the Centre Back (Blue #5) on the end line.
3. 3 Defenders (Red) in the central area to prevent the Blue team playing from Centre Backs (Blue #5) to Centre Forward (Blue #8).
4. There are 3 Defenders (Red) in the centre. Red #9 & Red #10 in one half, Red #6 in the other half. Reds are not allowed in the yellow channel!
5. Centre Back (Blue #5), Full Backs (Blue #2 & Blue #3) and Centre Forward (Blue #8) can move along their designated lines only. Centre Midfielder (Blue #6) can move anywhere in the square including the central (yellow) zone. However, they can only stay in the zone for a maximum of 3 seconds and have a maximum of 2 touches (change depending on the age and ability of your players).



1. Once Blue #8 has received the ball, play restarts from Blue #5.

### KEY POINTS:

- Co-ordinated movements of the players.
- Quality of the pass.

### COACHES NOTES:

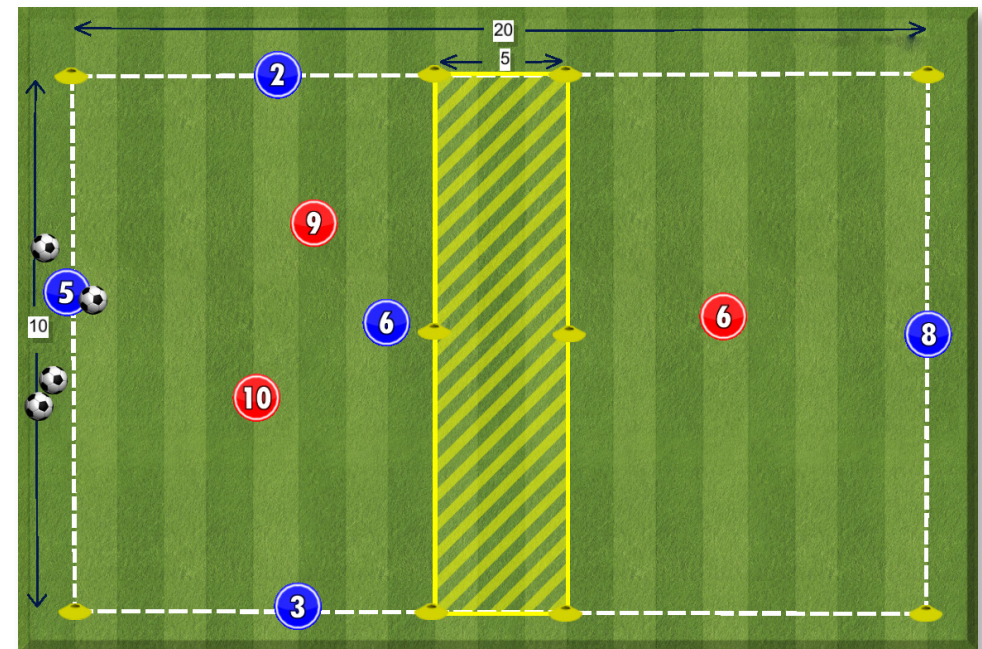
- Get the Blue #6 to be constantly 'head checking' to see where she is in relation to the defenders and what her options to pass to are. This is a key point for a midfielder, they should know ahead of receiving the ball what their options are.
- The Blue #6 can work anywhere in the area but she should be trying to get in between the lines in the yellow channel, especially when the fullbacks (Blue #2 & #3) have possession.
- Make sure to get the fullbacks (Blue #2 & #3) to work up and down their lines to support.
- Get the two Reds to work together and block passing lanes where possible.

### CHANGES:

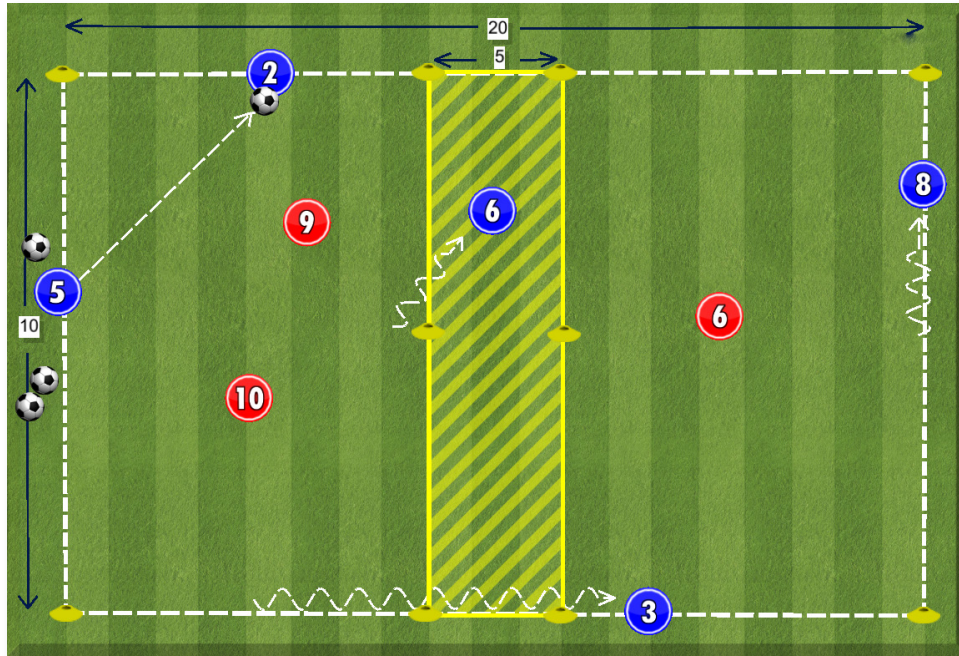
Make it harder:

- Challenge the players individually
- Make the areas smaller
- Take out the zones
- Limit touches
- Add defenders

**Starting Shape:** 4 Blues on the outside lines working up and down their lines. Blue #5 acting as the centre back playing it out to his fullbacks (Blue #2 or Blue #3) or to his deep midfielder (Blue #6). (Image: Session 3 - drill 2 - A)



**In Play:** In this example, Blue #5 has passed to Blue #2. Blue #6 moves in between the lines of the opposition so she can receive it from Blue #2. At the same time Blue #3 and Blue #8 have moved into positions where they can support or receive the ball.  
(Image: Session 3 - drill 2 - B)



## SESSION 3 DRILL 3: MIDFIELD PLAY - PLAYING FORWARD

### PURPOSE:

- For midfielders to work on their formation and play forward at every opportunity.

### SET UP:

- 18 Players (alternatively 14 to 22 players. When adding or removing players, take them from Zones A & C first).
- 8 Cones
- 30x50 yard area
- 20 Minutes

### THE DRILL:

- Players are to stay in each third as per the diagram.
- Play through the three thirds of the pitch (no long hopeful balls from Zone A to Zone C, make sure to get the players to build through the midfield in Zone 2).

### KEY POINTS:

- Play forward where possible! Get the players body shape facing forward where possible.
- Good first touch on the ball so the players can move it quickly.

### COACHES NOTES:

The points below should be communicated to the midfield in Zone B from both teams:

- When in possession of the ball you need to be in 2-1 or 1-2 shape (we don't want all three side by side)
- Allow yourself to get into a position where you can see your other midfielders (constantly head check to get awareness of opposition and team mates).
- Drop the shoulder** to deceive your opponent so you can get space to receive the ball. And also **drop off the shoulder** of your opposition player so they lose track of you and you get in their blind spot.
- Attempt to play forward where possible.



**Starting Shape:** Blues attacking left to right. Both teams set up with 3 defensive players (#2,3,5), 3 midfielders (#6,7,8) and 2 attackers (#9,10) plus goal keepers. If you have less or more numbers take a defender out or add one in for each team.  
(Image: Session 3 - drill 3)

