

# Soccer Awareness

- ✓ ***Do you want to get to the next level in your soccer development? If so read on.***
  - ✓ *These specialized coaching and training programs by our professionally qualified head coaches with proven records of success are designed to cover: Technique; Skill; Physical; Tactical and Psychological / mental developmental training.*
  - ✓ *Small sided games, Functions and Phases of Play, using the Soccer Awareness method of development plus the actual “Barcelona of Spain” Model of YOUTH player development also. With a major focus on many forms of RONDO.*
  - ✓ *The game is getting faster using fewer touches on the ball, which creates the need for quicker thinking; quicker moving and better decision making players.*
  - ✓ ***THIS is EXACTLY what we will teach your child where their game will become “automatic”***
- ✓ LISTEN, LEARN, IMPROVE; ENJOY; HAVE FUN!!**
- ✓ LOOK / THINK / DECIDE / SUCCEED !!**

# **Scientific Proof this works:** **Speeding up and improving decision making and the thought processes in Futbol thru Myelin production:**

- ✓ Myelin and its relationship with guided discovery coaching: Inside the brain information is transmitted through neurons.  
Human skill is created by chains of nerve fibers carrying a tiny electrical impulse from the brain to the body through these neurons.
- ✓ Myelin: what is it?
- ✓ Myelin is the insulation that wraps around the nerve fibers in our brains and increases signal strength, speed and accuracy; that then speeds up decision making and reaction time.
- ✓ This makes the signal faster and stronger.
- ✓ What makes it grow?
- ✓ Myelin is produced by a person thinking about and analyzing skill situations themselves; hence why we work specifically on developing **self thinking players**
- ✓ **Mental training: Keep your focus**

Training your mind is an important step toward getting in the zone. Aspects of mental training for sports include increasing concentration and focus, controlling emotions, trying to feel relaxed but energized, being calm and positive, and aiming to feel challenged and confident.

- ✓ **A BALANCE BETWEEN RELAXATION ON THE BALL AND INTENSITY OFF THE BALL**

# The Continuums “Look and Think” Model of Development

## Word Association combining thought and deed

A, B, C; D and E have to be determined BEFORE the player receives the ball  
“Look and Think” MUST come first before everything else

- a) Look / Observe / Think (Before receiving the ball; assessing all options in “Anticipation” of; not in Reaction to)  
**If time allows take 2 or 3 looks because the situation may have changed**
- b) Skill: The Decision (Why; when and where of Technique; plus its success or not; and why?)
- c) Foot Preparation (Not flat footed but on your toes and ready for action)
- d) Body Position (Balanced and open)
- e) Communication (Verbal and visual)
- f) Control (If not a one touch pass on, the 1<sup>st</sup> touch control)
- g) Technique (The How: the pass, the run, the dribble, the turn, the shot; etc)
- h) Tactical Mobility: (Movement off the ball, finding space; 90% of the game)
- l) Mental Transition (Possession changes, Player tunes in immediately?)

Relating Word Association with Actions to identify the Strengths and Areas of Improvement needed in players.

Focusing particularly on teaching a **HALF / ONE TOUCH MENTALITY**

# So this is what will teach the players thru the Continuums Model of Development:

1. Looking before receiving the ball:
2. Looking away from the ball as well as at it:
3. Knowing options in advance of receiving:
4. Weighting the pass correctly to help the receiver:
5. Getting their foot preparation right (how many play flat footed?? This won't let them if they want to be successful).
6. Getting their body shape right, facing where the next pass is going; in advance of the ball:
7. Getting into position quickly "Off the ball" to help the player receiving; and it has to be before the receiver gets the ball as they only have one touch to move it on again either to feet or to space:  
They will recognize if the fault and failure to maintain possession was in the weight of the receiving pass, or in the next first touch pass by the receiver, or because of poor off the ball support or even the bad bounce of the field. It is not difficult to identify which it is. It will not be because of pressure or interceptions by defenders because in the early stages there will not be any defenders so the players can play without pressure.

## A Half / One Touch Mentality:

**What does it mean? It means every player thinks like they only have ONE touch; to “force” them to observe the field and their BEST option BEFORE they receive the ball. When they receive it the resulting decision may already actually be the opposite to One touch; maybe to dribble, to pass using 2 or 3 touches, to slow the game down and change the TEMPO, to run with the ball; or Even to play ONE TOUCH**

# What do Rondos Teach?

A rondo for example isn't just 4 players playing keep away from a single player and a bit of fun (though they Are fun), what you get out of a rondo is the following:

1. Soccer Awareness: Assessing options BEFORE receiving the ball: **The Think and Look**
2. Technique,
3. Mobility,
4. Agility and balance
5. Body position,
6. Foot preparation,
7. Communication,
8. The 1st touch,
9. The 2nd touch, and beyond
10. Teamwork,
11. Collective tactical understanding in a small sided game environment,
12. Positioning OFF the ball,
13. Problem solving,
14. And developing creativity and imagination,
15. Intensity of play,
16. Physically challenging;
17. Developing Angles of support;
18. Opening up passing lanes by movement off the ball;
19. Speeding up thinking and decision making, The SKILL FACTOR;
20. Ultimately providing a competitive environment where no one wants to give the ball away and finally,
21. They are fun to do.

# The Link of Rondos to the Continuums of Development Model:

All of what we teach in the game is based on the Continuum of development. Of the above list we can equate directly the rondo to the training model and what is needed to happen with the C of D.

- **Look and Think:** In the rondo players must be looking away from the ball assessing their options. Its easy here as they only have two decisions to make so an easy introduction.
- **Skill:** The Decision is made and before the ball arrives the player receiving has assessed the two options and has chosen the best one..
- The **Feet** are ready and in position, the back foot being the receiving foot. Left and right foot going right and right and left foot going left around the grid.
- **Body position** is open due to the back foot receiving of the ball which “forces” the body to open. Receiving player must move their body side to side to get open.
- **Communication:** Players should be talking to help each other “in advance” of the ball.
- **Control:** If a controlling touch is first but still knowing where the next touch will go.
- **Technique:** If playing one touch in the rondo, a good technique is needed for a successful pass to happen..
- **Tactical Mobility:** Now movement around the grid off the ball to get into position OFF the cone as the reference point to be in the right place to receive the ball.
- **Mental Transition:** A player loses the ball they become the defender and they must move quickly from attacking to defending

# Always increasing challenges as players develop and improve

1. All training is based around the CONTINUUM of DEVELOPMENT that highlights the thinking and bodily processes players develop and improve in aiming to reach their individual potential.
2. **Ongoing Challenges:** As we move up thru the curriculum and levels of development the coach should decide when and where he or she should increase the difficulty and challenges presented to the players.
3. Each individual group will need different challenges at different times based on the level of ability and developmental moment players are in.
4. It may be the **SAME** session repeated many times (because it is an important session to continually practice like the rondos) but at the next level much more is expected of the players and the challenges are greater in that same training session set up.
5. **Conditions to consider:** To reach the advancing expectations of players:
  - a) **Pressure or no pressure?** It Could be 1 touch passing and moving to begin with no opposition
  - b) **Focusing on Technique or Skill?** How to do it, or when, where and why to do it
  - c) **Number of touches on the ball:** Unlimited, 3, 2 then 1 touch when able increasing the difficulty, speeding up the thinking processes

# Always increasing challenges as players develop and improve

- d) **Size of the area played in:** Reduce it so less space, less time, quicker thinking and greater challenges created; more intelligent movement off the ball needed
- e) **Number of players on each team:** Do we need an overload or some neutral players to ensure both teams have more players in possession?
- f) **Specific conditions are applied to FORCE a theme:** Many examples are shown throughout the curriculum. This will be an ongoing process to ensure focus is achieved with players.
- g) **EVERYTHING DONE AT PACE (Both mentality and physically); with ACCURACY of play, and with good COMMUNICATION required**



# An example of how we develop a SA and Barcelona Rondo over time and increase the challenges

The following diagrams show the basic Rondo we begin with.

It is none pressured, unlimited touches, and presented in a simple way to allow the players to easily begin the process of education. **It is the attention to detail that is paramount in the learning process.**

The Ball must be passed around the square not across it. Players adjust their position based on the ball. They use the cones as positional points of reference.

Players **MUST** always open up their body stance to receive with their **BACK FOOT**.

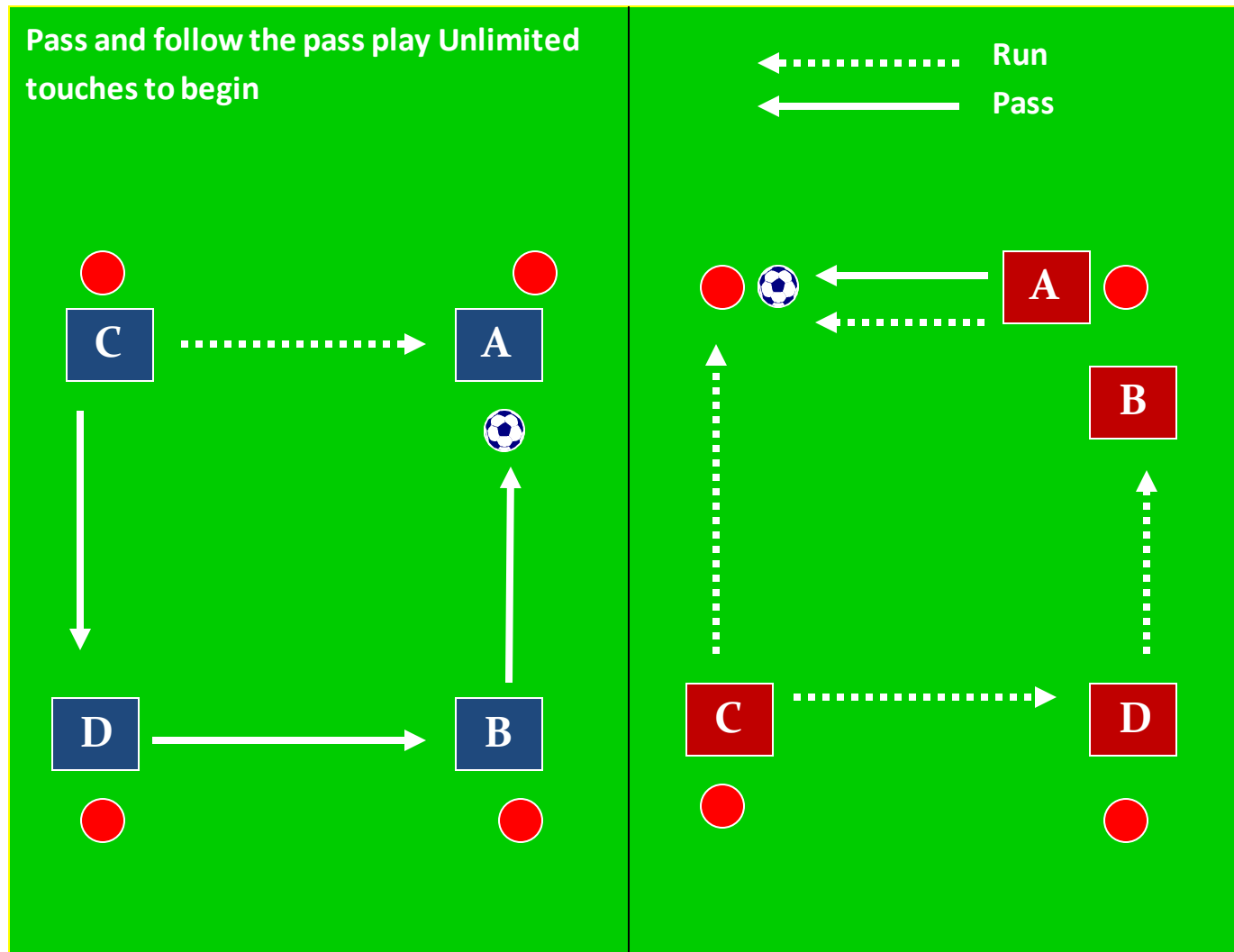
Ways to build the Rondo and increase challenges:

- a) Playing unlimited touches
- b) Playing 3 touches
- c) Playing two touches;
- d) Playing one touch when able but 2 touches maximum
- e) Adding a defender in the middle so 4 v 1 (can again go back to unlimited touches, 3, then 2, then 1 when able so many more progressions just within the 4 v 1 itself).
- f) Players change position and rotate on the outside
- g) Add another defender, now 4 v 2 (number of touches, size of area change etc)
- h) Challenge outside player to split the 2 defenders with a pass between them

# An example of how we develop a SA and Barcelona Rondo over time and increase the challenges

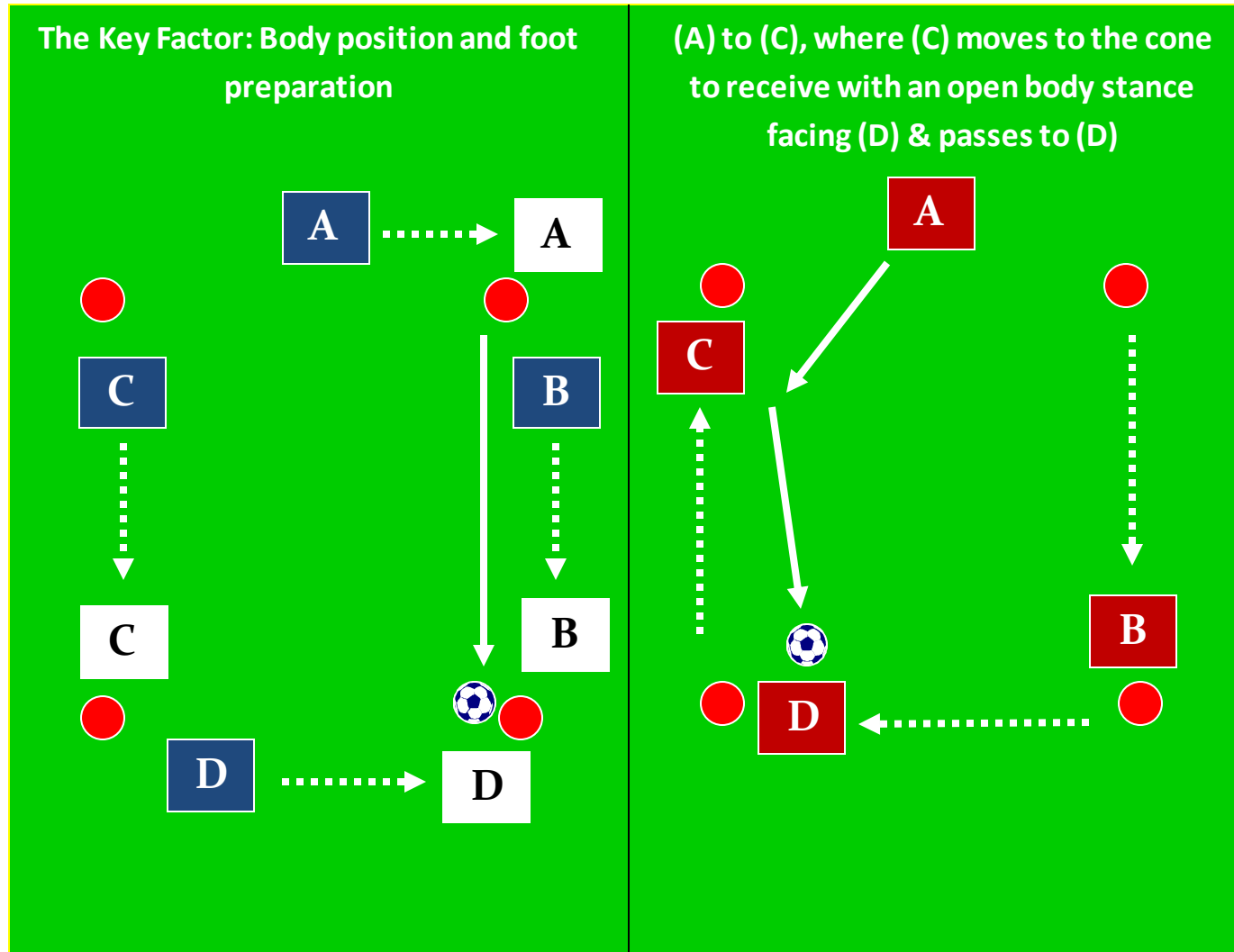
- i) Add a neutral attacking player in the middle who outside players MUST involve consistently so now 4 v 2 plus 1. Neutral player 3 or 2 touches only
- j) Neutral player ONE touch only
- k) Neutral player can rotate in and out with outside players; so very fast decision making in rotations of players added to the passing itself.
- l) Reduce to a 3 v 1 rondo and assess if the players are ready to play 1 or 2 touches yet.  
A very fast movement off the ball challenge now
- m) Decrease the size of the grid so less space, faster decisions needed; tighter passing lanes to find, better soccer awareness required.
- n) Can you think of any other progressions you could add to this to increase the challenge and intensity of the practice?
- o) Once players are EXCELLENT at all these progressions a logical move now would be to go to double rondos.  
More players, more options, more decisions, and now mental transitions happen more going from attacking to defending at pace.

## SA and Barcelona Rondos using two touches



It seems a very simple idea; and it is; but it is the attention to detail that is paramount in the learning process.  
The Ball must be passed around the square not across it. Players adjust their position based on the ball.  
They use the cones as positional points of reference.

# SA and Barcelona Rondos using two touches

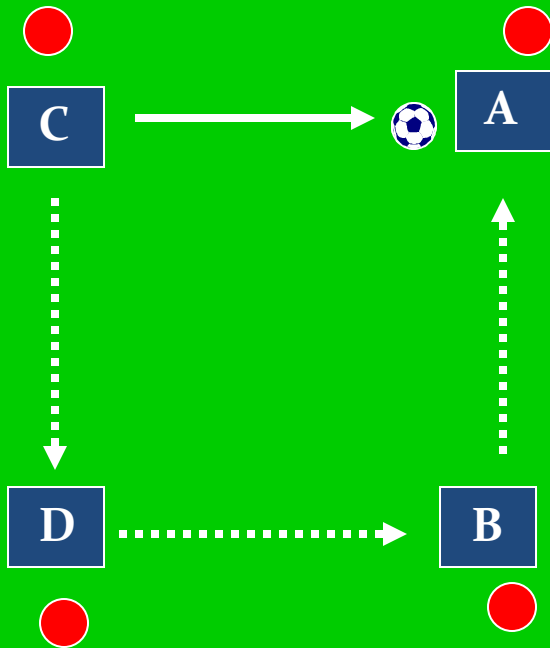


Players move to the cones to receive the pass. Moving left to right the player must position so they receive the ball with the **OUTSIDE / OPPOSITE / BACK** foot. This opens their body position up to be able to either pass back or in a different direction very easily and very quickly because they are already balanced and ready.

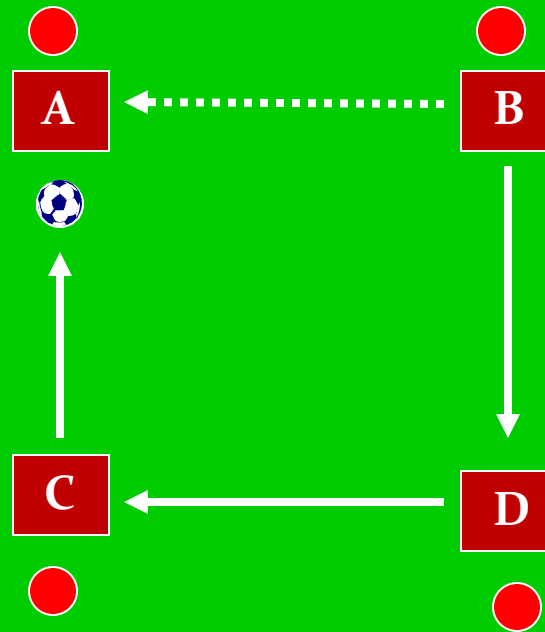
White players signifies their movement

# SA and Barcelona Rondos using two touches

Pass to the right and the player must move their body across to receive with the right foot



Moving the body across forces to feet to be in the correct position and forces the body to open up



So pass and follow pass to the right and you receive with the right foot and pass with the left foot, pass to the left you receive with the left foot and pass with the right foot. You can also change direction.

**EVERYTHING DONE AT PACE and with ACCURACY, with good COMMUNICATION required**

# **Xavi Hernandez of Barcelona says:**

**Xavi Hernandez of Barcelona and Spain says:**

When you arrive at Barcelona the first thing they teach is LOOK and THINK;  
LOOK and THINK; LOOK and THINK.

Speed is not necessarily the most important quality.

When the ball moves quickly, you are a quick player.

Rondo, Rondo, Rondo: Every Single Day. It's the best exercise there is.

You learn responsibility and not to lose the ball; always 1 touch.

**THIS IS WHAT WE TEACH, THE THINKING PART OF THE GAME:  
THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF SOCCER: TRAINING THE MIND**

**Teaching Players to play with “Intensity” and “Relaxation” at the same  
time; and to guide them to think for THEMSELVES to become self  
determining players**

**They recorded Xavi in 90 minutes and added how many times he looked AWAY  
from the ball? 841 times nearly once every 6 seconds. Say no more.**