

Jürgen Klopp's Pressing and Counter-pressing Philosophy



Direct from
Jürgen Klopp's
Training Sessions

PRESSING AND COUNTER-PRESSING

PRESSING

Pressing is when pressure is applied by the defending team on a player or team that has possession of the ball.

Pressing is used to rush the opponent's next action and limit the time and space available for good decision making.

The aim is to force the ball away from dangerous areas and win the ball from your opponents.

However, pressing is not only a defensive tactic used to stop your opponent from creating chances and scoring goals.

Pressing, counter-pressing and counter attacks provide defending and attacking tactics for a team, with the aim to apply pressure, win the ball and then launch a quick counter attack to score.

The higher a team recovers possession, the nearer the opposition goal is and the faster the ball is recovered after its loss.

In addition, the opposition may be unbalanced with limited time to cover space, which leaves gaps and lines available. In this way, counter attacks become a natural consequence of ball recovery.

COUNTER-PRESSING

Immediate pressing around the ball area just after losing possession to win the ball back as quickly as possible.

By using counter-pressing, your team are pressing a transition from defence to attack or counter attack from the opposition without retreating back, thus stopping their attack before it starts.

Counter-pressing Tactics

1. Overload the space around the ball.
2. Press the ball carrier while he is receiving and/or controlling the ball with one or two players.
3. Block passing lines for potential receivers.
4. Be compact around the ball area.
5. Try to force a mistake or at least force the play wide.

PRESSING AND COUNTER-PRESSING FOCUS IN LIVERPOOL'S TRAINING

Jürgen Klopp: "We want to attack the opponent non-stop when we have the ball, when we lose it and when the opposition have it."

RONDOS

The emphasis of Rondos is normally expected to be about possession, but at Klopp's Liverpool the focus is on pressing and counter-pressing.

As Klopp has talked about, defending is Liverpool's first attacking action. Their playing style is with a high line and pressing with high intensity to win the ball as quickly as possible.

Klopp's Assistant Coach Pep Lijnders has explained how rondos and possession games are all about pressing in Liverpool training sessions, explaining that they must "stimulate our counter-pressing vision where we try to disrupt the build-up of the opponent inside their first few touches."

When referring to the Rondos which are part of all of Liverpool's training sessions, Pep Lijnders remarks that the 5v2 rondo is a **Pressing Rondo**. He goes on to say:

"Our game is about movement and speed, and with only five players, those five have to run non-stop."

"The two guys in the middle are encouraged to intercept within the first six passes. If they succeed, they can both go out at the same time. Otherwise, only the player who intervened is allowed to leave the middle."

POSSESSION GAMES

Liverpool's possession games are focused on immediate fast transitions and making sure to never pause or delay after losing the ball, even for a second.

Pep Lijnders explains that "The players first have to understand the importance of counter-pressing to our team - that element comes back in every exercise."

"When a team lose the ball in training, you will hear me, Jürgen or Pete (Krawietz) screaming: 'Go! Get it back! Don't stop!'"

When observing Liverpool's rondos and possession games in their training sessions, the following is clear:

- The players keep count of the passes to maintain a high level of competition.
- In the rondos, the motivation to win the ball within 6 passes increases the speed and intensity of the pressing to replicate Liverpool's non-stop running counter-pressing philosophy.
- The Liverpool players react immediately to press the new ball carrier.
- The Liverpool coaches and players really focus on the counter-press, to act collectively as a team and try to win the ball back immediately after losing possession.

Pep Lijnders Quotes from: Renard, A - The Guardian. 2019. Interview with Liverpool's Pep Lijnders [Online]. [Accessed 30th October].

Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/dec/02/liverpool-pep-lijnders-jurgen-klopp-assistant-paddle-tennis-james-milner>

Pressing Rondos and Possession Games

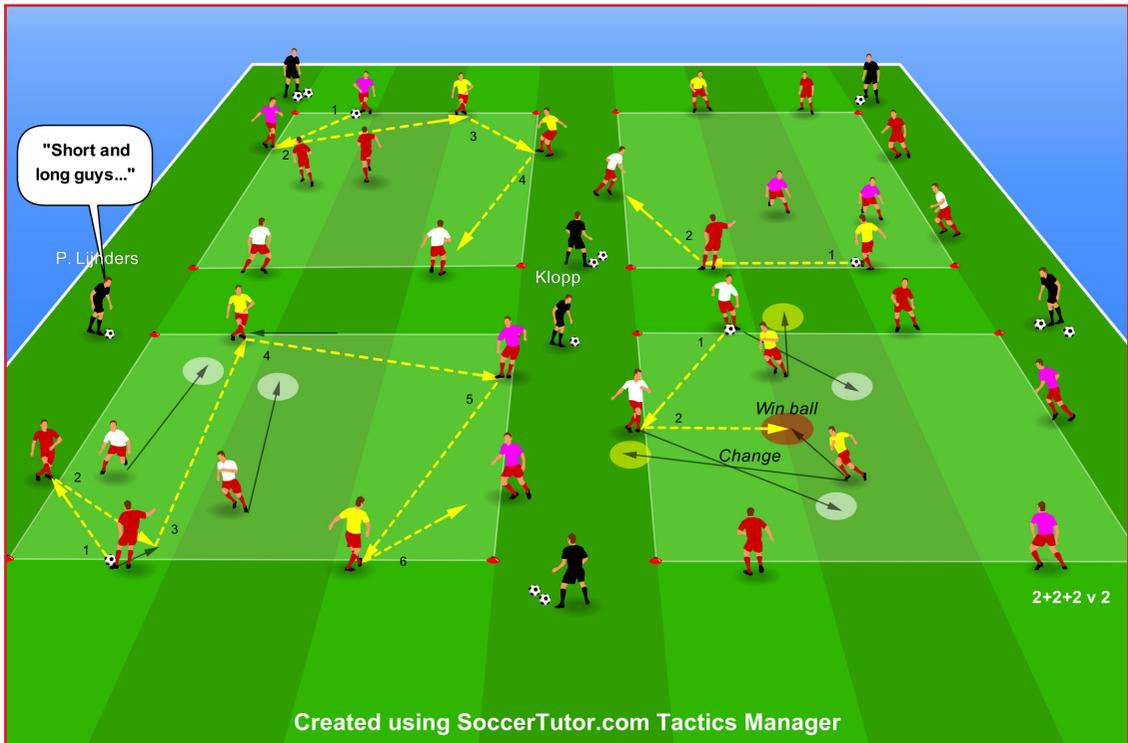


Direct from
Jürgen Klopp's
Training Sessions

**“Attack the opponent
with, but especially
without the ball - a chasing
attitude over 95 minutes.”**



7. 4-Team 2+2+2 v 2 Rondo with Fast Pressing and Transitions

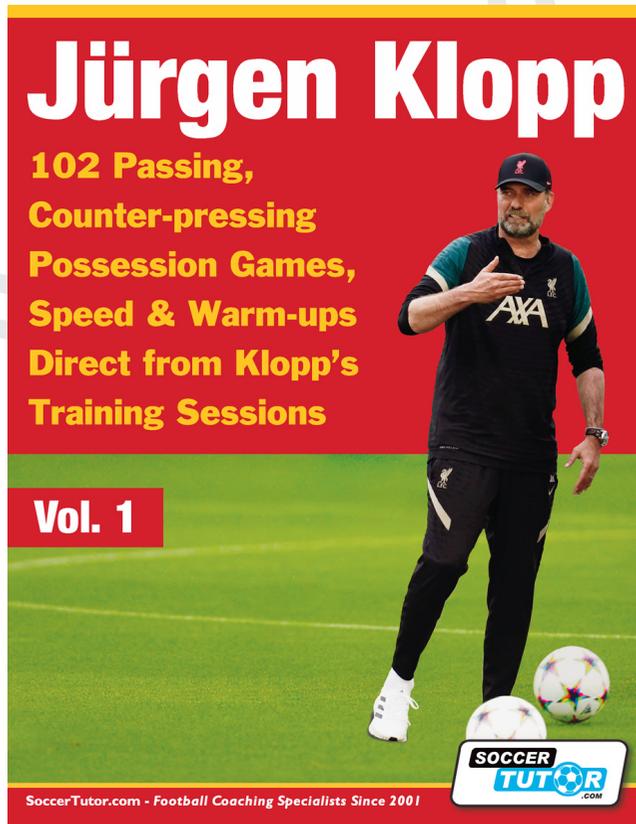


Practice Description

- In this 6v2 Rondo (2+2+2 v 2), the players work in groups of 8 in a 10 yard square. There are 4 teams of 2 players
- There are 2 players on 2 sides of the square and 1 player on the other 2 sides. They are positioned on the outsides but must still play within the area.
- The 6 outside players (3 teams of 2) aim to keep possession of the ball and are only allowed to use **1 touch**.

- The 2 inside players work together to press, close the angles for the potential passing lines and win the ball.
- **RULE:** If the defending team win the ball, they switch roles with the team that lost it and move to the outside. The team that lost the ball become the defending team in the middle.

Source: Jürgen Klopp's Liverpool training session at AXA Training Centre, Liverpool - October 2021



BUY NOW

Coaching Books Available in Full Colour Print and eBook!

PC | Mac | iPhone | iPad | Android Phone / Tablet | Chromebook



FREE Coach Viewer **APP**



SoccerTutor.com

