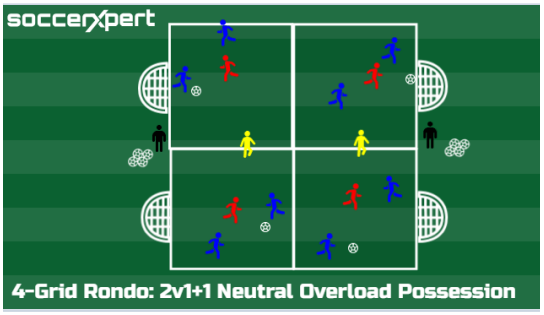

4-Grid Rondo: 2v1+1 Neutral Overload Possession Drill

Objective:
This drill builds two skills at once: tight possession play and the scanning habit every good midfielder needs. Attackers work 2v1 in a tight grid, so they must move the ball fast and support each other well. The real teaching point sits with the two neutral players. They have to read the game across two grids at once and decide, on their own, which team needs help right now. That is a decision soccer players make every match, and this drill forces it over and over in a small space. When a defender wins the ball, the drill flips instantly into a fast counter-attack on a small goal, so players also learn to transition the moment possession changes. Keep score with the point system and players will fight for every pass and every turnover.

Drill Quick Glance

Age: 12+	**Field:** 25x25
Players: 14	**Time:** 20 min.
Difficulty: Hard	**Focus:** Possession
Keeper: No	**Type:** Team
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Equipment

Disc Cones/Markers | Scrimmage Vests | Soccer Balls | Pugg Goal

Setup

- Mark out a 25x25 yard square and divide it into 4 equal grids (roughly 12x12 yards each) using cones or lines.
- Place one small goal on the outside edge of each of the 4 quadrants, facing into that grid.
- In each grid, set up a 2v1: 2 attackers against 1 defender, so 12 players fill the 4 grids (8 attackers, 4 defenders).
- Position 2 neutral players on the shared boundary lines between grid pairs, so each neutral can step into either of their two adjacent grids.
- Total group size: 14 players. Use pinnies in 3 colors (attackers, defenders, neutrals) and cones or flags to mark the small goals.

Instructions

1. Split the group into 4 attacking pairs (8 players), 4 defenders (1 per grid), and 2 neutral players who stand on the shared line between two adjacent grids.
2. In each grid, the 2 attackers try to keep possession against the lone defender, moving the ball quickly to find open passing lanes.
3. Each neutral player constantly scans both grids next to them and steps into whichever grid needs an extra body, turning that grid into a 3v1.
4. A neutral player may only help one grid at a time and should switch sides as soon as the other grid needs support more.
5. If the defender wins the ball, they immediately attack the small goal on the outside of their own quadrant and try to score.
6. Every time the attacking side completes 8 passes in a row, their team earns 1 point.
7. If a defender wins the ball and scores on the outside goal, their team earns 2 points.
8. Restart with the ball back at the attackers after any score or ball out of the grid, and keep running score for the full drill period.

Coaching Points

- Check that neutral players are really scanning both grids, not just parking themselves in one.
- Push for one or two touch play once players get comfortable, to speed up the rondo and raise the difficulty.
- Look for attackers spreading to the corners of their grid instead of bunching next to each other.
- Coach receiving on the back foot, so the first touch can go straight to the neutral player or open teammate.
- Remind defenders to press passing lanes and angles, not just chase the ball around the grid.

Variations

- Add a second neutral player per grid pairing to create a bigger overload for younger or newer players.
- Shrink the grid size to sharpen decision speed for older or more advanced groups.
- Put on a 2 touch limit once players have the pattern down, to force faster play.
- Let the neutral player also score by dribbling into an open outside goal, giving them their own attacking reward.