

# Screens & the double pivot

## What Is A Double Pivot

For those unaware the double pivot is a tactical approach used in football that involves two central midfielders playing in a holding role, protecting the defence and maintaining possession of the ball. This approach is often used to provide a solid foundation for the team, allowing them to control the midfield and build attacks from deep positions. One of the key benefits of the double pivot is that it allows a team to maintain a strong presence in the centre of the pitch, which is often a crucial area in terms of both attacking and defending. The two central midfielders are responsible for breaking up opposition attacks and distributing the ball to their teammates, as well as supporting the defence when necessary.

It can be particularly effective when used in conjunction with a pressing style of play, as it allows the team to win the ball back quickly and launch counter-attacks. It is also an effective way of nullifying the threat of opposition attacking midfielders, as it provides extra cover and protection for the defence. In terms of personnel, it typically consists of two central midfielders who are comfortable on the ball and capable of playing a range of passes. One of the two central midfielders is often a more defensive-minded player, responsible for providing cover for the back four and breaking up opposition attacks. The other central midfielder may be more attack-minded, responsible for linking up with the rest of the team and creating chances for the forwards. Recently since settling into the Premier League, Casemiro has shown himself once again to be one of the best defensive midfielders going – something Manchester United have been crying out for, probably since Sir Alex Ferguson left. In contrast to that you have their noisy neighbours who under Pep have managed to seemingly find players for both roles with relative ease – not

money-wise, but suitability-wise. Lets look at the more attack-minded of the two roles, Bernardo Silva is a great example as he is driven, determined, hungry and tenacious – add to that his intelligence and how dynamic he is the man is a pleasure to watch, and spends most of his minutes on the pitch in the central midfield role with the occasional wide role and some other short stints in other areas when needed.

There are a number of different variations of the double pivot, depending on the specific requirements of the team and the opposition. For example, a team may opt for a more defensive-minded double pivot in a particularly tough away game, while a more attacking double pivot may be used in home games where the team is expected to dominate possession. Arguably the biggest challenge of using the double pivot is finding the right balance between attack and defence. If the double pivot is too defensive-minded, the team may struggle to create chances and score goals. On the other hand, if the double pivot is too attack-minded, the team may be vulnerable to counter-attacks and may struggle to defend against opposition attacks.

### What Attributes Suit The Players In FM23

So how does that fit into FM? well as we know the attributes of a player can significantly impact their performance on the pitch. When it comes to the double pivot, there are a number of key attributes that are particularly important for each role.

For the more defensive-minded central midfielder in the double pivot, some of the key attributes to look for include:

**Tackling:** This attribute measures a player's ability to win the ball back through tackles. A high tackling attribute is important for a defensive-minded central midfielder, as they will often be responsible for breaking up opposition attacks.

**Positioning:** This attribute measures a player's understanding of the game and their ability to anticipate where the ball is

likely to go. A high positioning attribute is important for a defensive-minded central midfielder, as it allows them to get in the right place at the right time to intercept passes and make tackles.

**Work rate:** This attribute measures a player's overall level of effort and determination. A high work rate attribute is important for a defensive-minded central midfielder, as it allows them to cover a lot of ground and make a lot of tackles throughout the game.

**Teamwork:** This attribute measures a player's ability to work well with their teammates and contribute to the overall team performance. A high teamwork attribute is important for a defensive-minded central midfielder, as it allows them to coordinate with their teammates and work together effectively to defend as a unit.

For the more attack-minded central midfielder in the double pivot, some of the key attributes to look for include:

**Passing:** This attribute measures a player's ability to make accurate and effective passes to their teammates. A high passing attribute is important for an attack-minded central midfielder, as they will often be responsible for linking up with the rest of the team and creating chances for the forwards.

**Vision:** This attribute measures a player's ability to see and anticipate passes and opportunities that others might not. A high vision attribute is important for an attack-minded central midfielder, as it allows them to spot openings and make killer passes to unlock the opposition's defence.

**Dribbling:** This attribute measures a player's ability to control and manipulate the ball while running with it. A high dribbling attribute is important for an attack-minded central midfielder, as it allows them to take on opponents and create space for themselves and their teammates.

As stated the key attributes will depend on the specific requirements of the team and the opposition. However, the attributes listed above are generally considered important for

both the more defensive-minded and the more attack-minded central midfielders in the double pivot.

I am in the year 2031 on my current save, but using a search filter to the above attributes rated 12+ (to produce plenty of results). Camavinga ( at Liverpool on my save now) came up on the more defensive role side of things, but many of his attributes could help in the more attacking role also.

#### Which Players Have Had Success Playing In A Double Pivot Role

There are many players who have excelled in the double-pivot roles in football over the years. Here are a few examples of players who have excelled in the roles in the past 15 – 20 years:

**Sergio Busquets:** The Spaniard has played for Barcelona and the Spanish national team. He is widely regarded as one of the best defensive-minded central midfielders in the world, known for his excellent positioning, tackling, and ball-winning ability.

**N’Golo Kante:** The Frenchman has played for Leicester, Chelsea and the French national team. He is known for his tireless work rate and outstanding defensive qualities, making him one of the best defensive-minded central midfielders in the world. Since breaking onto the Premier League scene with Leicester, Kante for me has been the first player I think of when people mention defensive-minded midfielders.

**Luka Modric:** Modric has played for Real Madrid and the Croatian national team. He is known for his excellent passing, creativity, and vision, making him a key player in the attack-minded central midfield role.

**Kevin De Bruyne:** Manchester City’s Belgian midfielder is a regular in both their side and the Belgian national team. He is known for his exceptional passing ability and creative flair, making him one of the best attack-minded central midfielders in the world.

**Xavi:** Played for Barcelona and the Spanish national team. He was known for his exceptional passing and ball control, as

well as his ability to dictate the tempo of the game from deep positions.

These are just a few examples of players who have excelled in the double pivot roles. There are many countless others who have shown themselves to be more than equipped for the tasks required of the roles.

### What Should Be Avoided

On FM, the double pivot can be a very effective tactical approach, but it is important to avoid certain pitfalls in order to get the most out of it. Here are a few things to avoid when using the double pivot:

**Don't rely too heavily on one player:** While it is important to have strong players in the double pivot roles, it is also important to have a good balance between defence and attack. If you rely too heavily on one player to provide all of the defence or all of the attack, your team may become overly predictable and easier to defend against.

**Don't neglect the flanks:** The double pivot can be very effective in controlling the midfield, but it is also important to have a presence on the flanks. If you neglect the flanks, you may find it difficult to stretch the opposition's defence and create space for your forwards.

**Don't neglect the defence:** While the double pivot is primarily focused on controlling the midfield, it is also important to have a solid defence. If you neglect the defence, you may find it difficult to keep clean sheets and may struggle to defend against opposition attacks.

**Don't be too rigid:** The double pivot is a very structured approach, but it is important to have some flexibility within the system. If you are too rigid, you may find it difficult to adapt to different situations and opponents.

**Don't neglect the attack:** While the double pivot is primarily focused on controlling the midfield and protecting the defence, it is also important to have a strong attacking presence. If you neglect the attack, you may struggle to score

goals and create chances.

It is important to find the right balance when using the double pivot in FM, by avoiding these pitfalls, you can get the most out of this tactical approach and play some stunning football while doing it.

### What Formations Are Best To Use & Are There Any To Avoid

The answer here is there are many formations that work, but also some with issues – even the ones that work can be problematic. The double pivot can be used effectively and efficiently in a few roles in FM, Here are a few examples:

**4-2-3-1 formation:** We have seen this briefly earlier, the formation features two central midfielders in the double pivot roles, with a central attacking midfielder playing behind a lone striker. This formation is well-balanced, with a strong presence in both defence and attack. It allows the team to control the midfield and create chances for the forwards, while also providing cover for the back four.

**4-3-3 formation:** This formation features three central midfielders, with the two central midfielders playing in the double pivot roles. The third central midfielder is more attack-minded, playing further forward and linking up with the wingers and striker. This formation is very attacking, with a strong presence in both the midfield and the final third. It is well-suited to teams that like to dominate possession and create a lot of chances.

**3-4-3 formation:** This formation features four central midfielders, with the two central midfielders playing in the double pivot roles. The third and fourth central midfielders are usually more attack-minded, playing further forward and linking up with the wing-backs and striker. This formation is very attacking and allows the team to play a high-pressing style, with the wing-backs providing width and the central midfielders working to win the ball back quickly.

**3-5-2 formation:** In this formation, there are three central midfield players on the field. The first two central

midfielders are deployed in a double-pivot role, meaning they are responsible for providing stability and balance to the team's midfield. The third central midfielder is more attacking in nature, positioned further up the field to link up with the wing-backs and forwards. This formation is designed to be very attacking and allows the team to play a high-pressing style of play, with the wing-backs providing width and the central midfielders working to win the ball back as quickly as possible. The combination of these elements creates an aggressive and dynamic attacking unit.

**4-4-2 formation:** This formation features two central midfielders in the double pivot roles, with two wide midfielders providing width and support for the forwards. This formation is well-balanced and allows the team to control the midfield, while also providing cover for the back four and creating chances for the forwards.

The best formation and style for your team will depend on your specific requirements and the strengths of your players. However, there are certain formations and styles that may not suit it as mentioned earlier. Here are a few examples:

**3-4-3 formation without wing-backs:** The 3-4-3 formation can be very effective with a double pivot, as it allows the team to play a high-pressing style and win the ball back quickly. However, if the formation does not feature wing-backs, it may be difficult to provide the necessary width and support for the forwards.

**4-3-3 formation with two attack-minded central midfielders:** The 4-3-3 formation can be very effective with a double pivot, as it allows the team to control the midfield and create chances for the forwards. However, if both central midfielders are attack-minded, it may be difficult to provide enough cover for the defence and protect against counter-attacks.

**3-5-2 formation with two attack-minded central midfielders:** The 3-5-2 formation can be very effective with a double pivot, as it allows the team to play a high-pressing style and win the ball back quickly. However, if both central midfielders

are attack-minded, it may be difficult to provide enough cover for the defence and protect against counter-attacks.

4-4-2 formation with two defensive-minded central midfielders: The 4-4-2 formation can be effective with a double pivot, as it allows the team to control the midfield and provide cover for the back four. However, if both central midfielders are defensive-minded, it may be difficult to create chances for the forwards and score goals.

Avoiding the above should help to produce a successful style.

## Summary

In Football Manager, the double pivot can be a very effective way of controlling the midfield and building attacks from deep positions. Here are some of the key strengths and weaknesses of using the double pivot:

### Strengths:

Provides a solid foundation: The double pivot allows the team to maintain a strong presence in the centre of the pitch, providing a solid foundation for the rest of the team.

Controls the midfield: The double pivot allows the team to control the midfield and dictate the tempo of the game, making it difficult for the opposition to get a foothold in the game.

Allows for a pressing style of play: When used in conjunction with a pressing style of play, the double pivot can allow the team to win the ball back quickly and launch counterattacks.

Nullifies the threat of opposition attacking midfielders: The double pivot provides extra cover and protection for the defence, making it difficult for opposition attacking midfielders to influence the game.

### Weaknesses:

Can be vulnerable to counter-attacks: If the double pivot is too attack-minded, the team may be vulnerable to counter-attacks and may struggle to defend against opposition attacks.

Can struggle to create chances: If the double pivot is too defensive-minded, the team may struggle to create chances and



score goals.

Can be predictable: If the team relies too heavily on the double pivot, it may become predictable and easier to defend against.

So in a nutshell the double pivot is a very effective tactical approach for Football Manager, but it is important to find the right balance between defence and attack in order to get the most out of it. By understanding these strengths and weaknesses, you can stand a much better chance of it effectively helping you and your team achieve success.