

AS Roma 10 game study – Game 1 – Inter v Roma (week 6 Serie A)

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Roma play a 4-3-3/4-2-3-1 mixture in attack as Strootman and Pjanic can change lines, while Di Rossi stays as the holding midfielder. In defence, Roma used a combination of 4-3-3 and 4-2-3-1, depending on if Cambiasso was isolated in front of the back 3 – they play 4-2-3-1, or if Cambiasso had support, Strootman moves forward to make a 4-1-4-1, with Di Rossi between the lines to protect the defence. The commonly used a mid-block strategy, but would drop deeper if no pressure on the ball.

In this game, Roma's attacking game plan was to rotate positions in midfield to use the space in central midfield, use Gervinho's speed in 1v1 situations in wide areas, to use Florenzi's pace to support Totti when he drops deep to link play, and to only commit one full back forward at any time to ensure they maintained a 3v2 overload against the 2 Inter strikers in transition.

Defensively, Roma made sure they would stop passing lanes into, and to double up on Ricky Alvarez when he is in possession, as he is Inter's only real creative dribbler. When the ball was in the Inter defence, they would move into the mid-block and screen or mark Cambiasso, forcing the Inter back 3 to come forward with the ball and look for long passes as Roma covered the short passing lanes.

Roma have also a very flexible midfield 3, they have Strootman who is a good box-box midfielder, Pjanic who is the most creative player in the team along with Totti, and Di Rossi, who acts as the anchor man, who can balance the team in and out of possession, with good intelligence to drop deep and collect the ball when his midfield team mate are under pressure, or when one of the centre backs have moved out of position.

Roma Attacking movement areas



Di Rossi patrols the space in front of the back 4, while Strootman has more freedom to drift around the field. Pjanic drops deep and moves into attacking areas in the right central channel. The width comes from the right side of the attack, with the positional rotation coming when the centre

forward drops deep to play as a false 9. The positioning on the left allows for Strootman to drift wide into the space left by the left winger dropping deep.

Roma defensive shape – 4-2-3-1 becoming 4-1-4-1

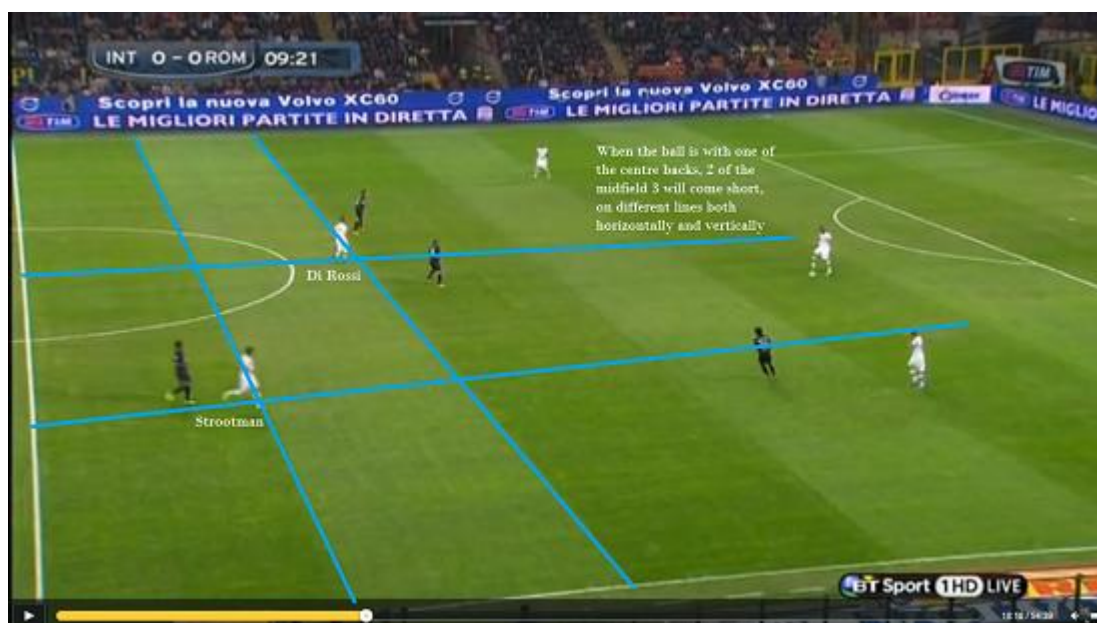


In defense, Totti presses high to force play into one side, and as Roma make sure that the central midfielder (Cambiasso) is covered, they allow one of the centre backs to bring the ball forward. When this happens, as he reaches the halfway line, Strootman will rush forward to close down the space, blocking off the forward pass to the man he leaves in the process.

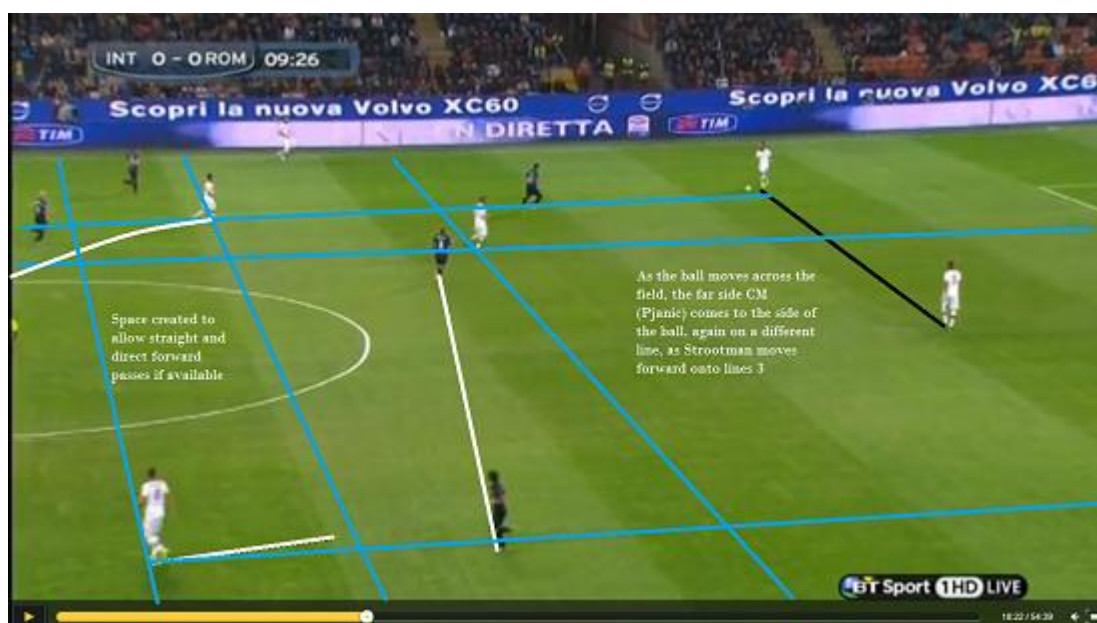
Roma Attacking Analysis

- Build up play from defence into midfield
- Patterns of play
- Positional rotation on the left side
- Gervinho's 1v1 scenario's

Roma build up play with a rotating midfield triangle – Di Rossi, Strootman and Pjanic

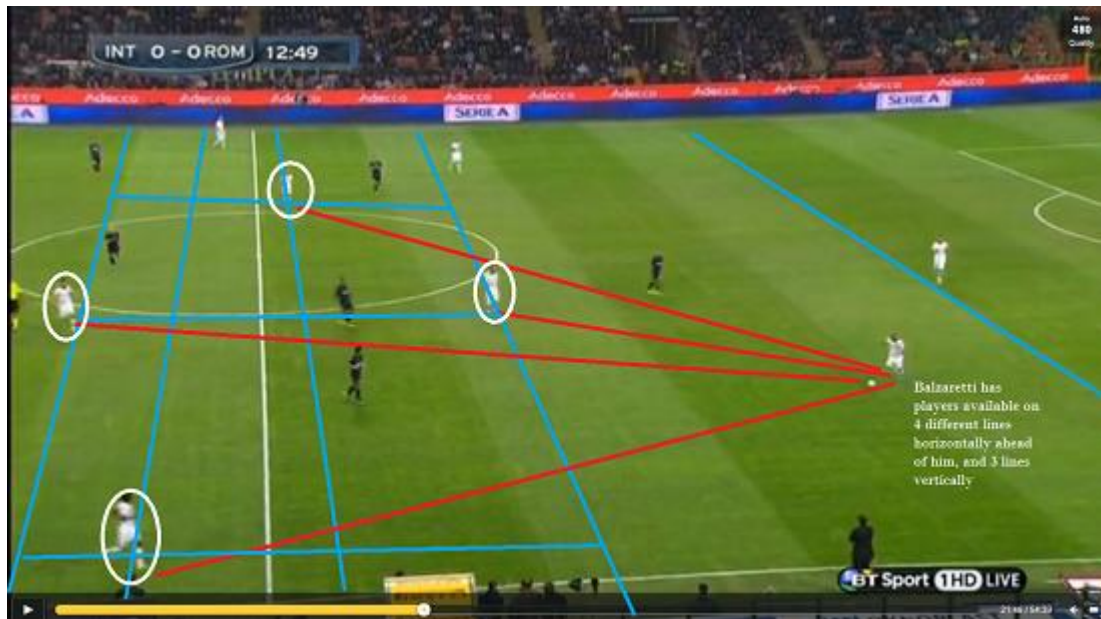


Strootman and Di Rossi play on different lines, both horizontally and vertically, giving different passing distances and angles, making it more difficult to press against due to the possibility of finding new angles between opponents and different supporting angles from each pass direction.

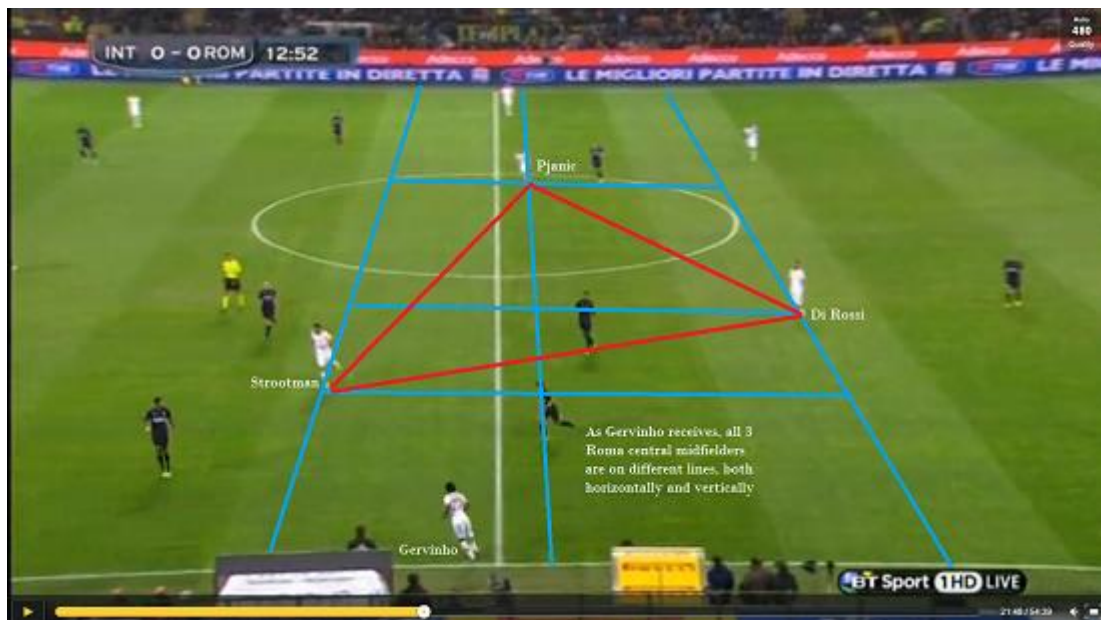


When the ball is transferred across the defence, Pjanic arcs around to help support Di Rossi and open up a 2nd line of passing options. As he does this, Strootman moves onto the 3rd line and opens up the field, making a gap and freeing the space for the return pass across the defence for a direct pass into Totti if he comes short, or Gervinho/Florenzi if they come inside from the touchline to help.

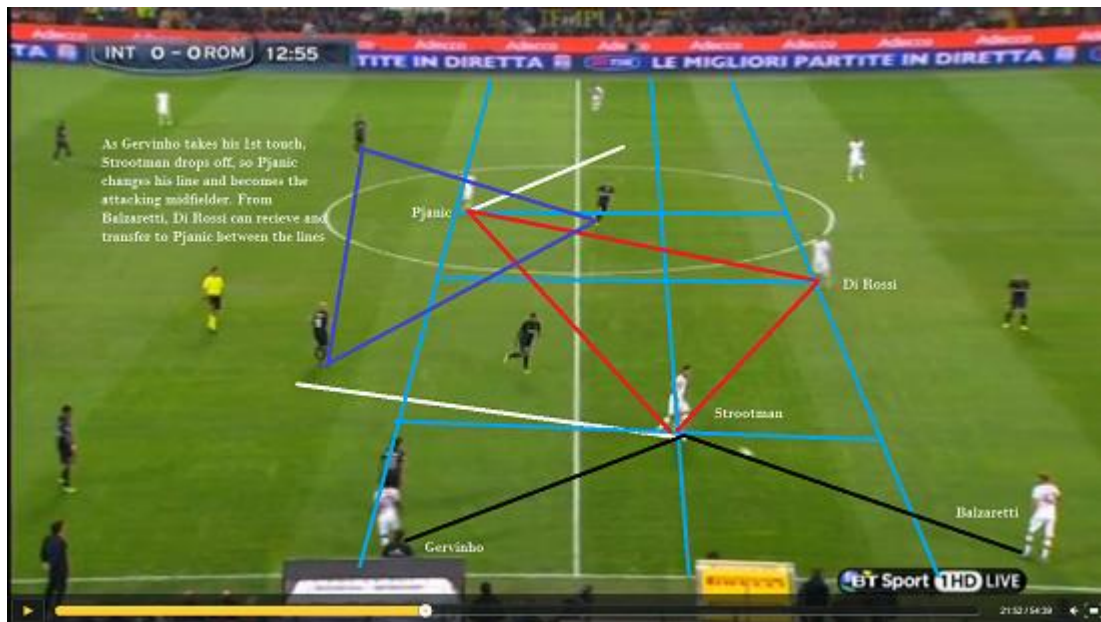
Building into midfield using different horizontal and vertical passing lanes



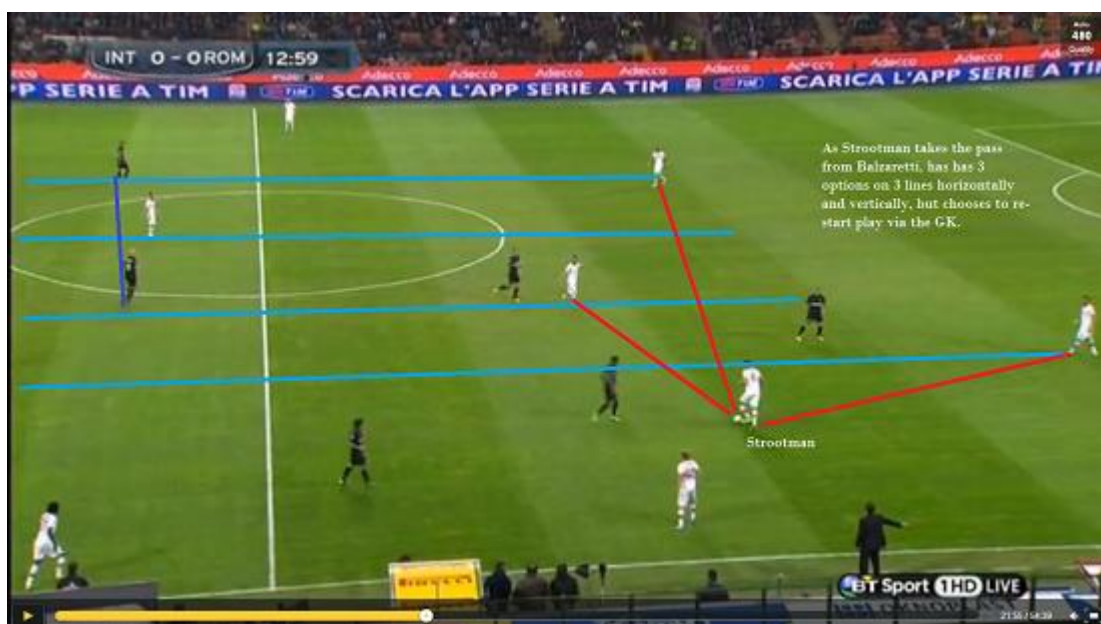
This time, the ball is with Balzaretti, who has 4 passing lines ahead of the ball, and 3 vertical lines to move the ball into. He chooses Gervinho on the left, which alters the positioning of Strootman (line 4 central) and Pjanic (line 2 right side).



As Gervinho receives, Strootman is available but with pressure from behind, so as Gervinho is pressed, Strootman will drop onto line 2, while Pjanic on the far side will change lines.

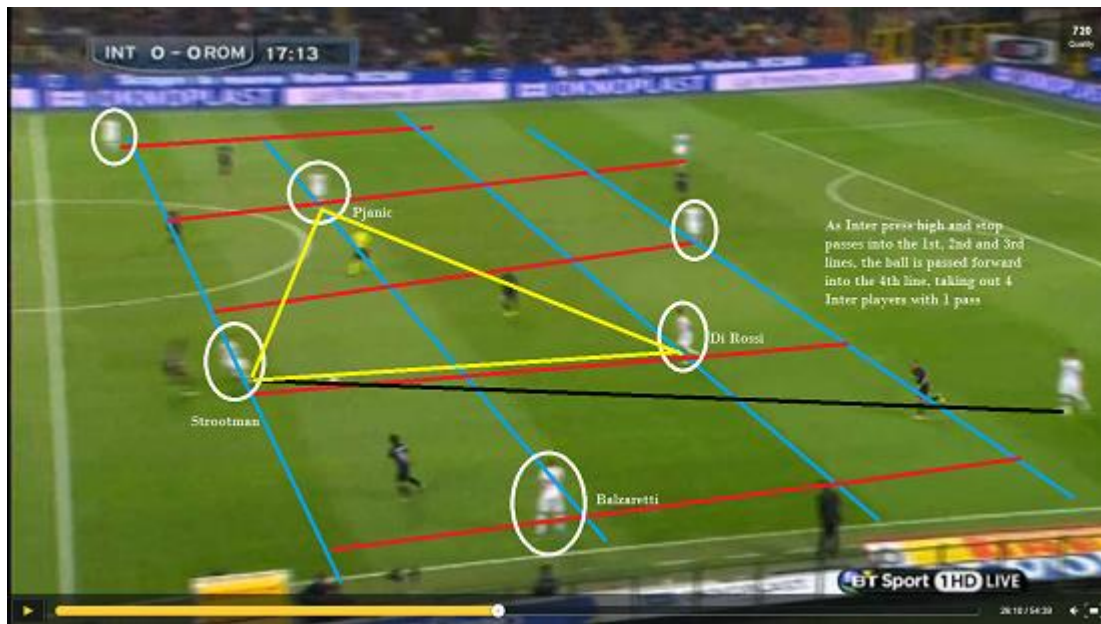


As Gervinho moves the ball back to Strootman on line 2, Pjanic has moved central onto line 3, but into the gap between 3 Inter players, allowing for a forward pass if Di Rossi receives from Strootman. Instead, Strootman plays the safe pass back to Balzaretti.



Strootman receives back from Balzaretti and can open up the field again with a switch pass to Benatia who is on line 4, with Pjanic on 3, Di Rossi on 2 and a deep passing option on line 1.

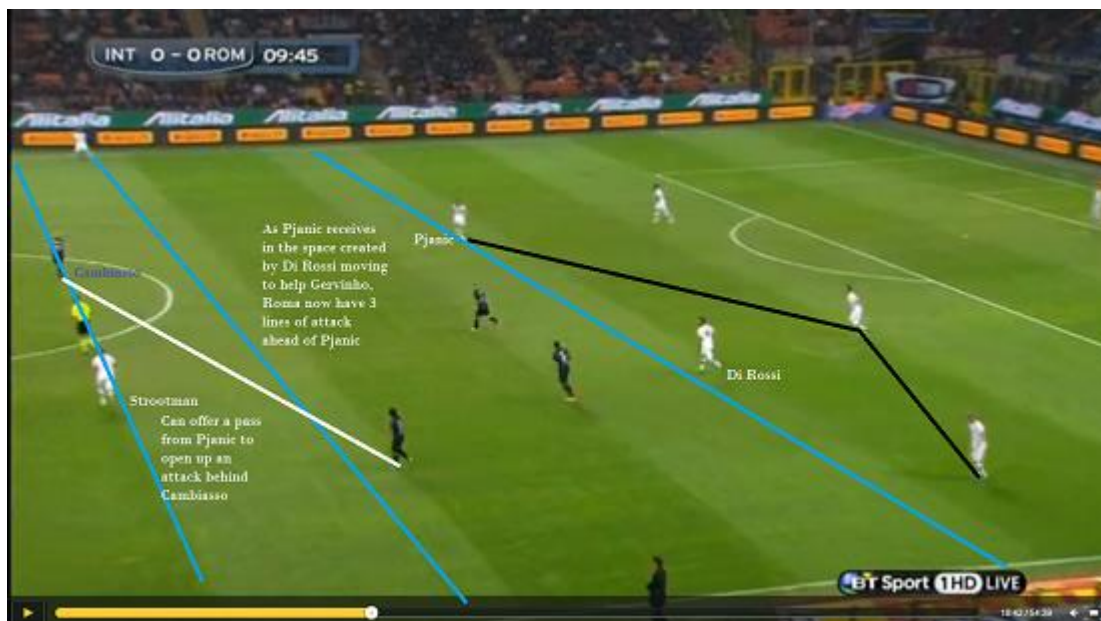
Pjanic's position is interesting, as he is occupying a number 10 position, forcing Cambiasso to stay deep, and opening up a large gap between the area of high pressure that he is unable to move into as he can't leave Pjanic free, as his team mate on his left has the advanced full back to deal with.



Here, the centre back is under high pressure, with Di Rossi, Balzaretti and Benatia all in positions of pressure to receive in. As there is high pressure on lines 1, 2 and 3, the longer pass into Strootman on line 4 can relieve pressure and take out players with one pass. Strootman could hold the ball in, win a foul or turn and find a forward pass. If not, Di Rossi and Pjanic can become supporting players for a lay off to build the attack.

Roma pattern of play

Pjanic in deep position to dribble, Strootman diagonal run across field, Totti drops deep



Here, the ball is moved quickly into midfield. As Pjanic and Di Rossi are on the same line, Strootman moves inside to offer a pass onto the 3rd line, and into a central position to make a 4-2-3-1.

Strootman's positioning is vital as he positions himself between 2 players for a longer pass from Pjanic to open up the field.



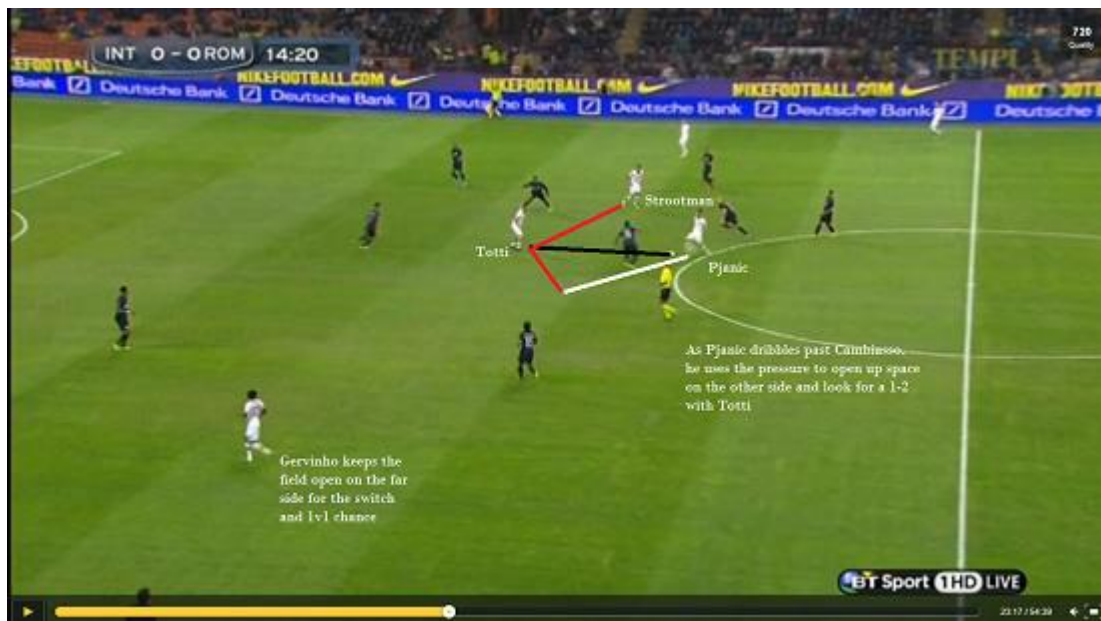
As Pjanic advanced with the ball, Strootman continues his diagonal run across the field, stopping Cambiasso from pressing Pjanic as he makes a 2v1 and 3v2 in the wide zone. As Strootman clears the space by dragging his marker with him, Totti drops deep to offer a pass between the lines. To occupy the back 3, Florenzi moves infield, leaving the full back and winger 1v1, which means that Strootman can continue his wide run, become the wide attacking midfielder and Totti becomes the central attacking midfielder.



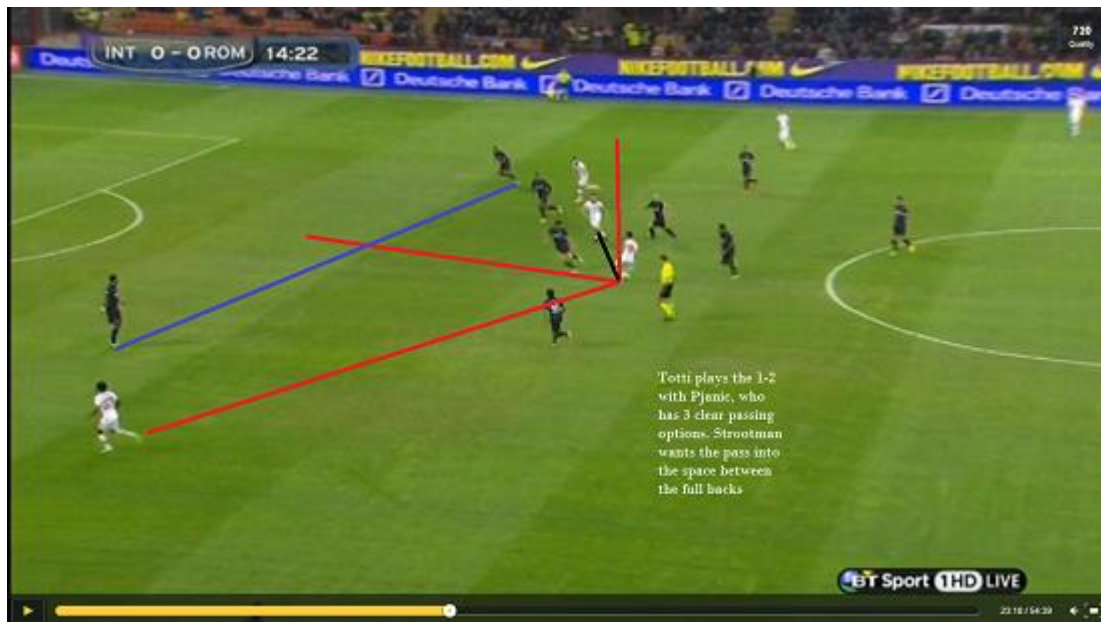
Again, Pjanic drops deep to support Di Rossi, and dribbles forward as Strootman makes his diagonal run across the field. Gervinho pulls wide to open up more space for Totti who is already on the move towards the space left by Strootman's run across the field to take away him marker and play 2v1 against Cambiasso with Pjanic.



As Strootman makes the run between the lines, so does Totti; on a different line. This gives Pjanic 2 central penetration options, or a wide pass to the right into Florenzi. The pattern of is to allow Totti to create space behind him for either a wide-central run from Florenzi to occupy the back 3, or to open up space behind the now back 4 for a run from Strootman – Pjanic needs to find Totti to draw out the pressure to open up the space, so Totti will play with minimal touches.



Pjanic delays long enough to tempt the opponent close to find a 1-2 with Totti, opening up the space for a 3rd man run from Strootman if the central defender comes out to press Totti.



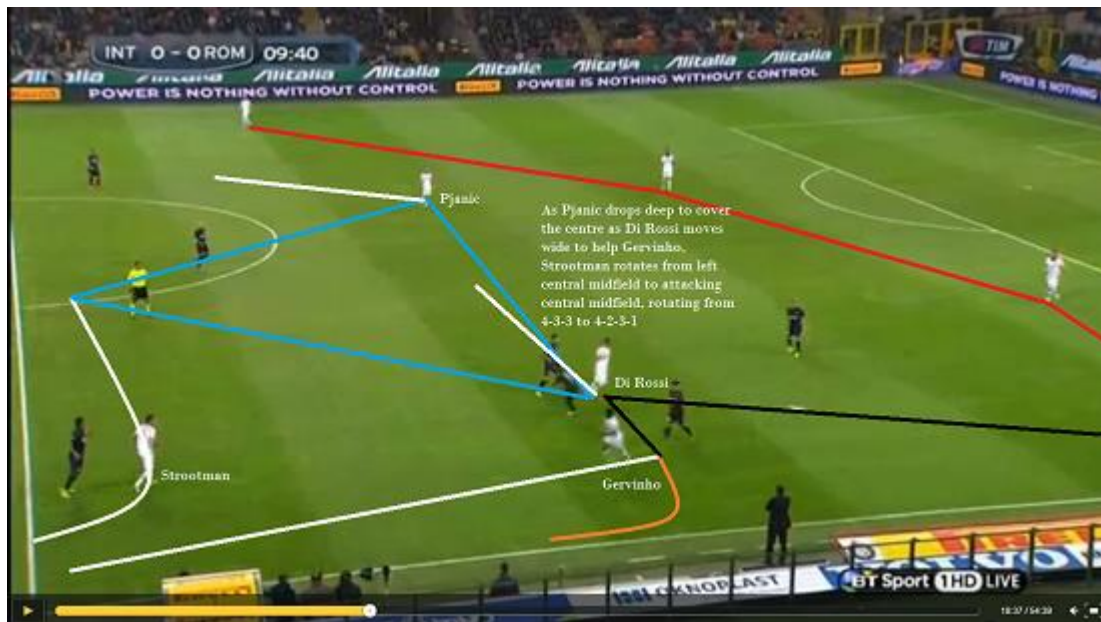
As Totti releases to Pjanic, he has 3 passing options – wide to Florenzi or Gervinho or into Strootman’s run behind the defence.

Rotations on the left side

Strootman using the space created by Gervinho



Strootman and Gervinho both offer passes, but Strootman’s run is a trap to lose his man. He will drop short and use the expected pressure to draw in his opponent then spin into the position Gervinho just left.



Here, Gervinho drops deep to offer a forward pass to Balzaretti. As Gervinho drops deep, Strootman runs wide into his position. As Gervinho dribbles inside to find Di Rossi, Gervinho sprints away from his marker, leaving Strootman to move inside with his marker – leaving Gervinho free on the touchline, or is the marker stays in the full back position to mark Gervinho, leaving Strootman free centrally.



Again, Gervinho drops deep to help Balzaretti, and as he does, Strootman clears the central space with a wide run into Gervinho's position.

Gervinho's 1v1 Scenario's



Here, Gervinho makes no effort to track Pereira, leaving that to the full back. As he stays 10m ahead of Pereira, he knows a counter attack is possible if Roma win possession.



As Benatia wins possession, Gervinho is already on the move, before the ball is won. This gives him a running start on Pereira who should track him to get back into defensive position.

Note Di Rossi filling in for Benatia at Centre Back.



Gervinho breaks into space with Support from Totti and Pjanic.



Gervinho is left alone to play 1v1 with Totti pulling away to make space for Pjanic who will play behind the ball centrally – a cut back option possibly?



The ball is switched wide and Gervinho is again left 1v1, keeping his space open to attack with pace.



Again, the ball is passed wide, with no support for Gervinho who enjoys the responsibility of playing 1v1 and attacking the spaces left for him.

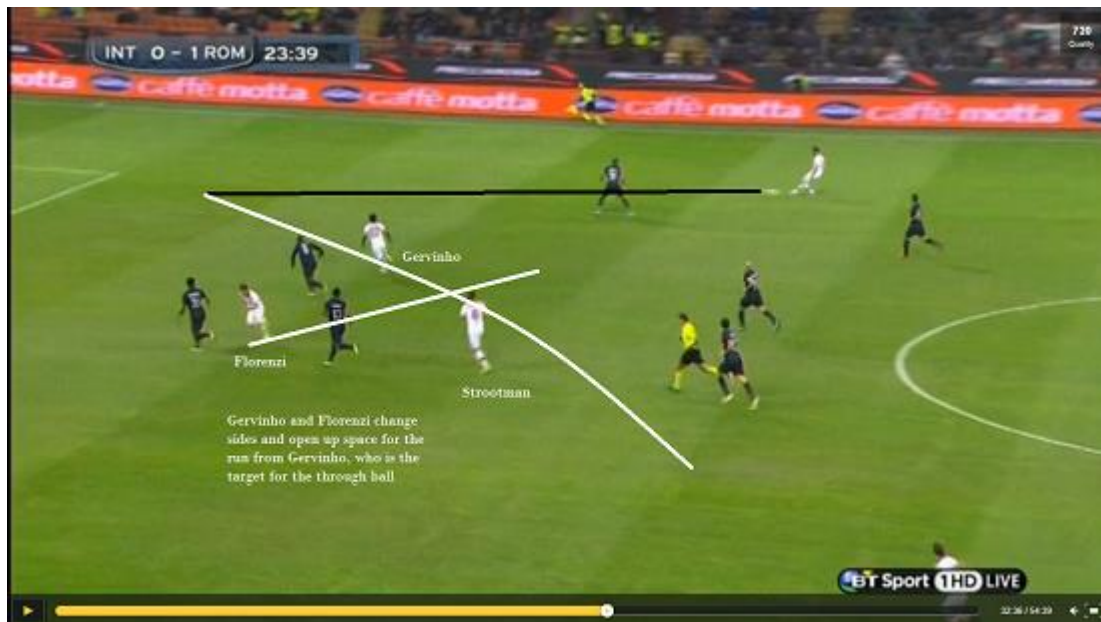
Gervinho rotating positions with Florenzi, with Totti in the false 9 position



As Totti drops to receive the ball, Gervinho drops between the lines to offer a short passing lane, with Florenzi stretching the play and moving the defensive line deeper.



As Totti turns, he switches play to the far side. Florenzi moves the defensive line deeper and allows both Gervinho and Strootman to play between the lines. As the ball reaches the far side full back, Gervinho will look to attack the space behind the far side full back as he moves out to close down the space.



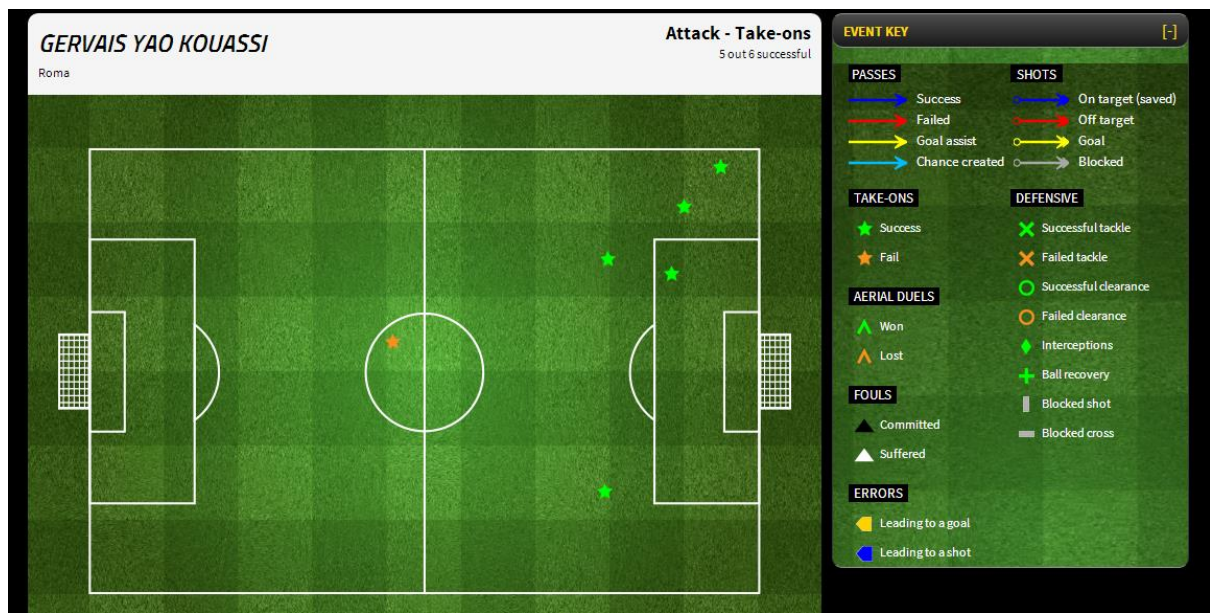
As the full back moves out to the ball, Gervinho exploits the space, and his speed advantage gets him into a scoring position, but the defender makes a great recovery tackle before he can score.

Gervinho looks for the long ball behind the defence



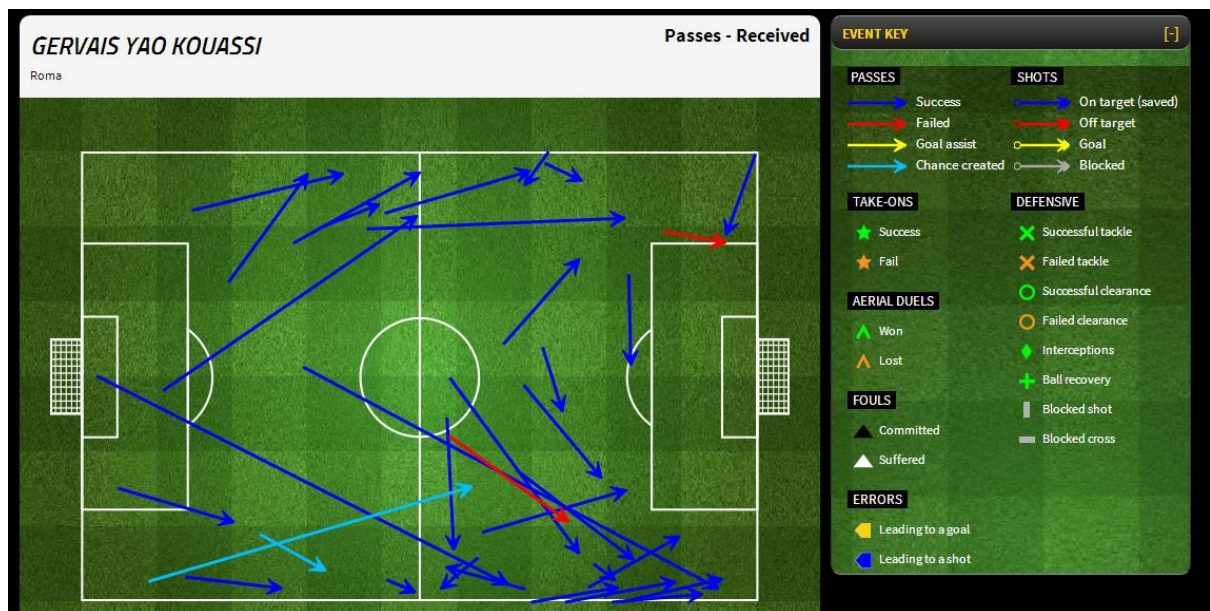
In transition, Gervinho's pace is a big asset, and Roma look to use it when the opposition play high. Here, the ball is won 25m from goal, and it is cleared over the defence, knowing that Gervinho will race to win the loose ball, pushing the defence back and getting Roma back into a mid-block.

Gervinho Take-Ons



We can see that of 6 1v1s, Gervinho was successful 5 times, all close to the Inter goal. He made the assist for Totti's 1st goal, then was also fouled inside the box for Totti's 2nd goal, showing his prowess in 1v1 scenarios when being left with space to attack. The fact he only had 7 direct attempts was down to Inter backing off, afraid of the burst of speed, which forced the defensive line deeper.

Gervinho Passes Received



We can see that Roma played a lot of long passes to Gervinho, which were generally successful. Two goal chances were created from passes to Gervinho and taking the ball for a run towards the goal.

Roma

Defensive Analysis

- **Defending in opponent half v Cambiasso**
- **Switches from 4-2-3-1 to 4-1-4-1**
- **Low Block defending with central attack protection**
- **Prioritization of closing down Ricky Alvarez**

Defending in the opponent half v Cambiasso

Anytime that Inter try to bring the ball out from defence, Cambiasso is always screened or marked. This is because he is their best central midfield playmaker, and keeping him away from possession makes it more difficult for Inter to build possession. Pjanic, Totti and Strootman all take turns of playing in the space Cambiasso plays in to restrict his space.



Pjanic plays high and stops Cambiasso, leaving another player who can be pressed by Strootman from behind.



Here, Cambiasso is pressed by Strootman with Di Rossi and Pjanic both covering on different lines in the midfield 3. Florenzi drops off to cover the player Strootman has left to press Cambiasso.

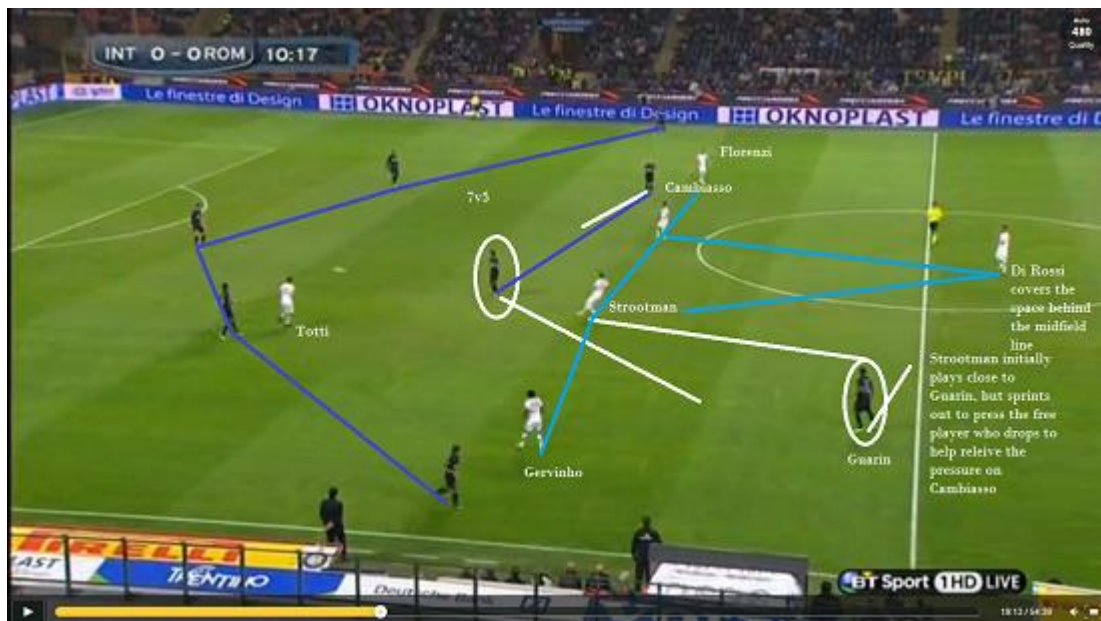


Roma switch to a 4-3-3 and keep Pjanic and Strootman high, as Totti pressed Cambiasso who has become an auxiliary centre back to get onto the ball.

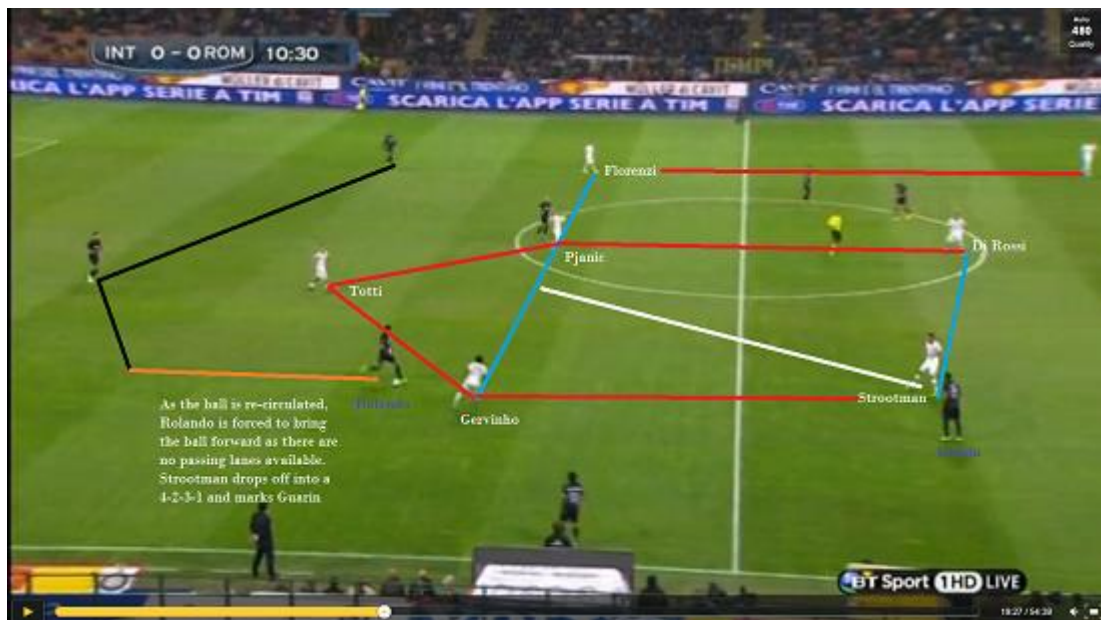


This time, Gervinho and Florenzi block the wide passing lanes, as Pjanic marks Cambiasso. Totti presses to force play one way and start the pressing triggers.

Roma switching from 4-2-3-1 to 4-1-4-1 defensive shape when Cambiasso has support



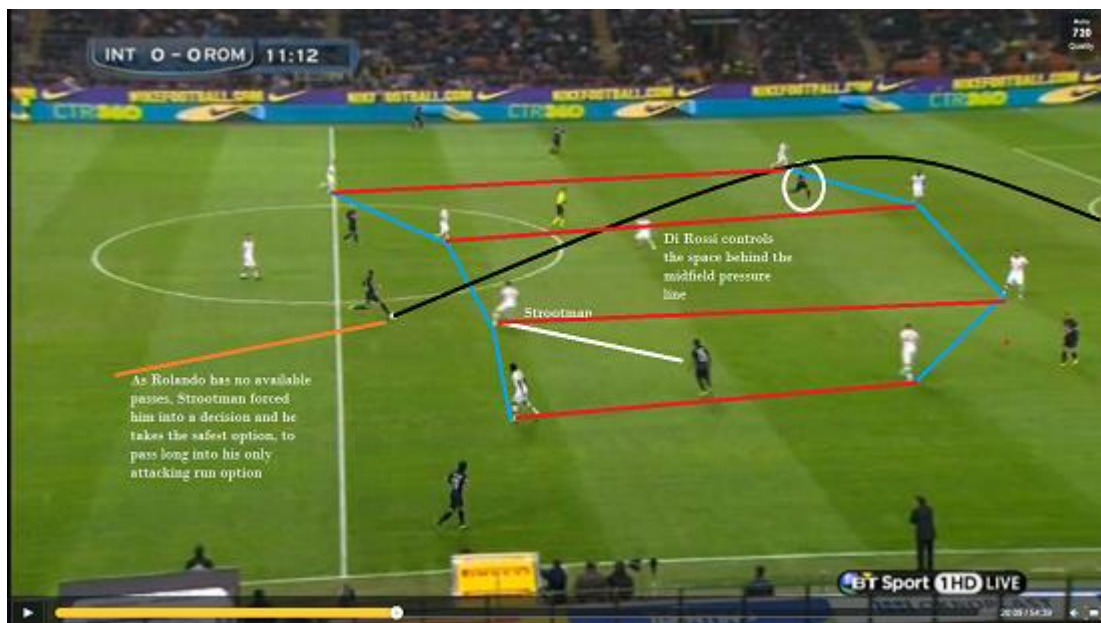
As the support for Cambiasso comes to try and play 2v1 against Pjanic, Strootman goes with him, leaving Guarín free. This is not dangerous as Totti forces play to go back across the defence. As the ball is transferred across, the player Strootman follows makes another run into the zone of Di Rossi.



Here, 12 seconds later, as Guarín becomes the spare midfielder, Strootman drops back into his position and forces Rolando to bring the ball out with no passing options. Di Rossi has 2 players in his zone, but he could intercept any passes from Rolando's position. Gervinho's body shape dictates that the 3v2 or 2v1 is stopped (on the touchline) as he forces Rolando inside.



In an almost identical example 40 seconds later, Rolando is in the same position, with no passing options, and the only available pass is a difficult long pass.

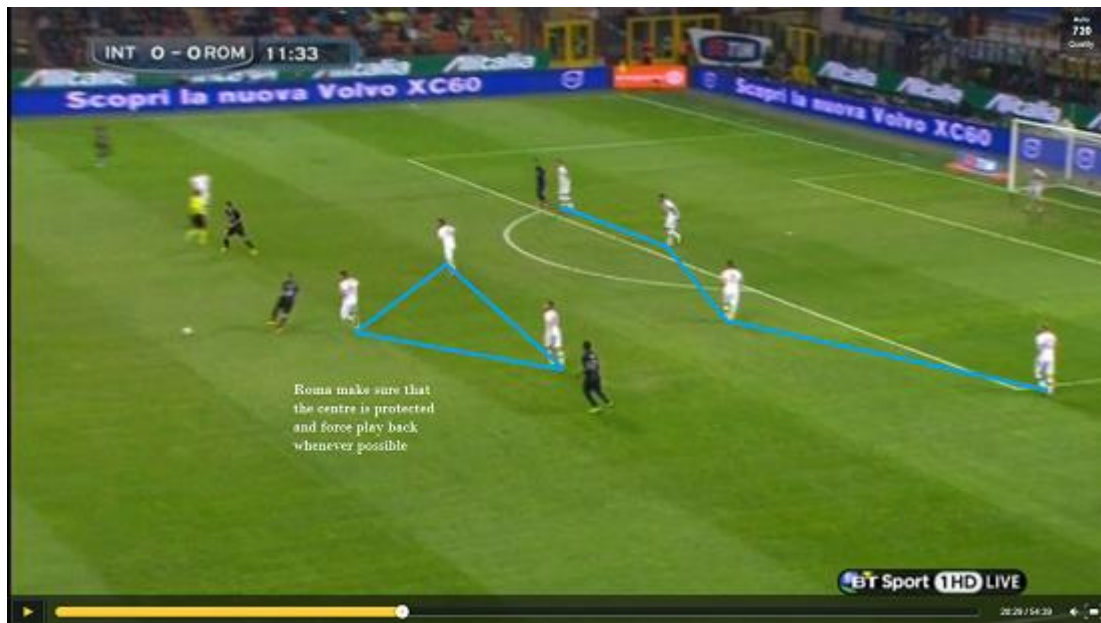


2 seconds later, as Rolando is going to cross the halfway line, Strootman closes down his space and leaves Guarin free, blocking the passing lane as he presses, making the option unavailable. Note that all Roma players are in lines with the defensive players, with Di Rossi covering the space between the lines, with nobody to mark. He could easily be dragged closer to Strootman to help against Guarin, but his tactical discipline allows him to stay in position and be difficult to play through.

Roma try to protect the centre of the field as much as possible, and look to form a defensive triangle to protect the back 4. Whenever possible, they press and force play back and away from danger.

Roma central protection in a low-block

When Inter have had a chance to build possession, Roma retreat into a low-block, with a prioritization on 2 things – Ricky Alvarez doesn't get time on the ball, and protect the centre of the field.



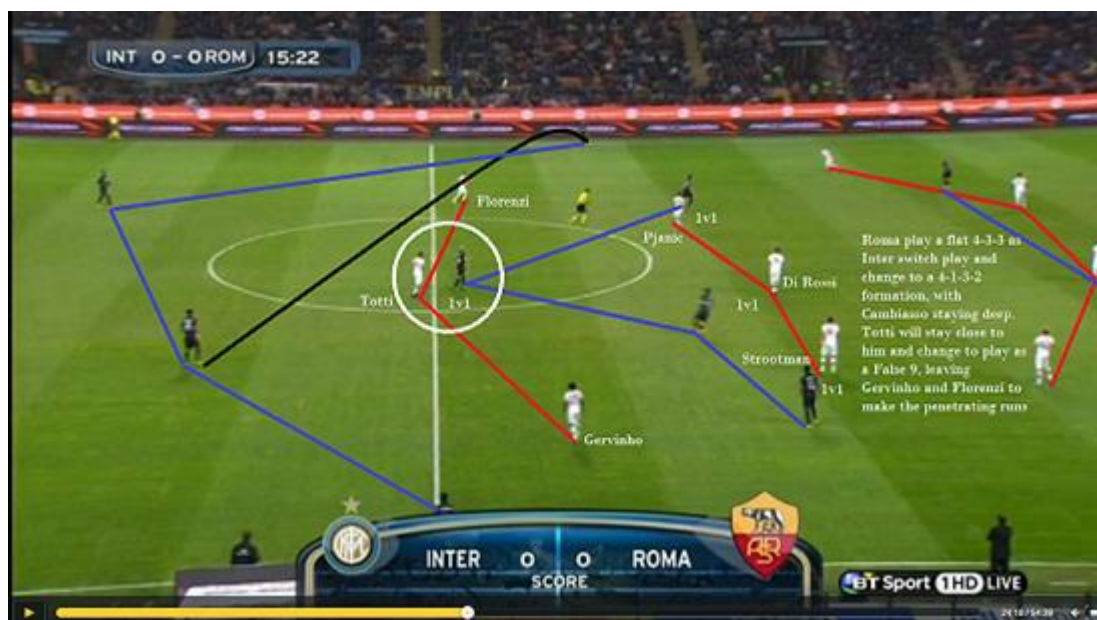
Here, Roma's 3 central midfielders tuck in and force play wide, to their right where Florenzi is positioned. They can't force play left as Gervinho and Totti have stayed high.

Roma making it difficult to find passes into midfield



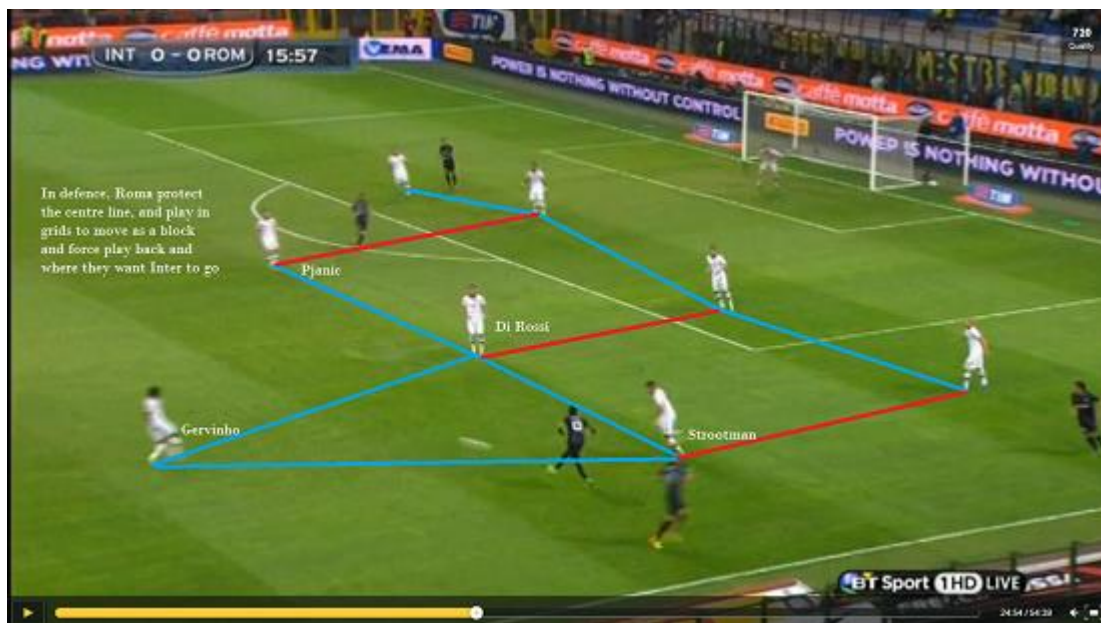
This time, Roma are playing in a low-block, in a 4-4-2 formation as Gervinho drops deep to help Pjanic. As Pjanic, Strootman and Di Rossi previously played in a deep triangle, Di Rossi has spotted he can no longer be the deepest player, and moves to the top of the triangle to close down the easy pass into midfield.

Roma changing shape slightly as Inter change formation

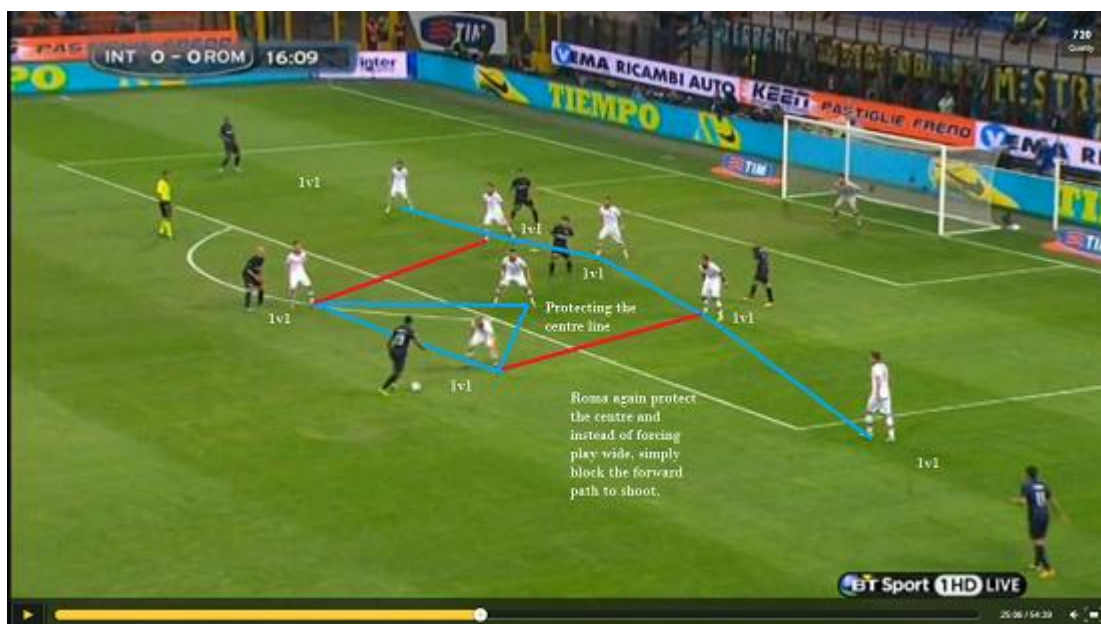


As Inter change to a 4-1-3-2, Roma adapt by moving Di Rossi further forward to play in line with Pjanic and Strootman, to all play 1v1 with the Inter attacking midfielders. To stop Cambiasso's space, Totti plays deeper as a False 9 and plays against Cambiasso.

Roma protecting the goal centrally in a low-block

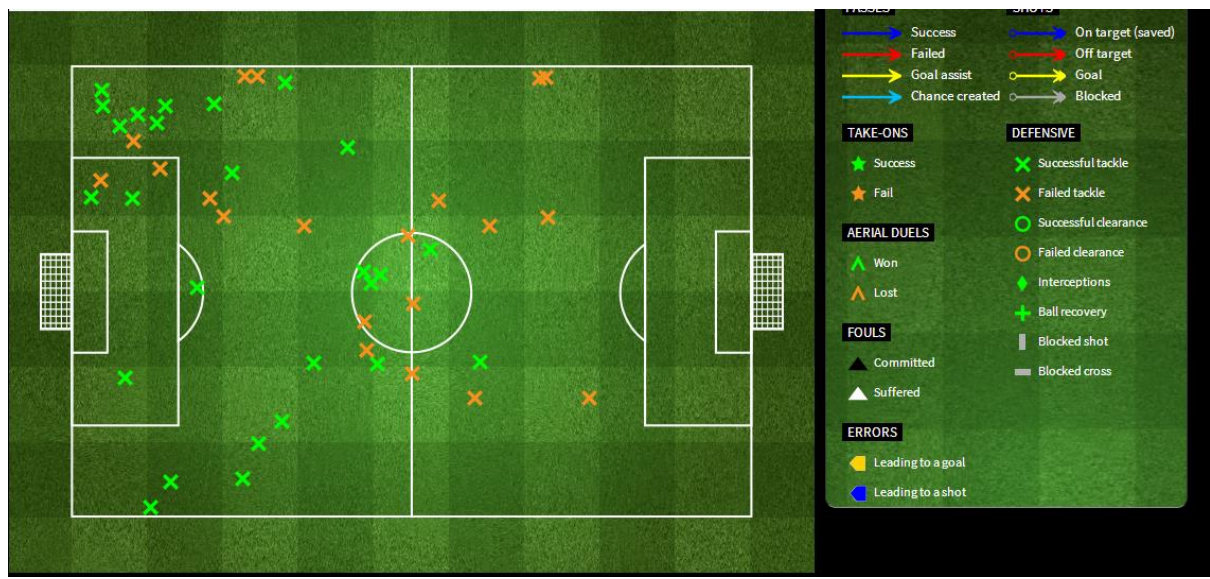


Here, Roma are defending a switch across the field, with 2 clear lines of 4 and 3, all players on the strong side are in line with each other. Pjanic is responsible for the closest man, as is Strootman. Di Rossi covers the centre and protects the back 4.



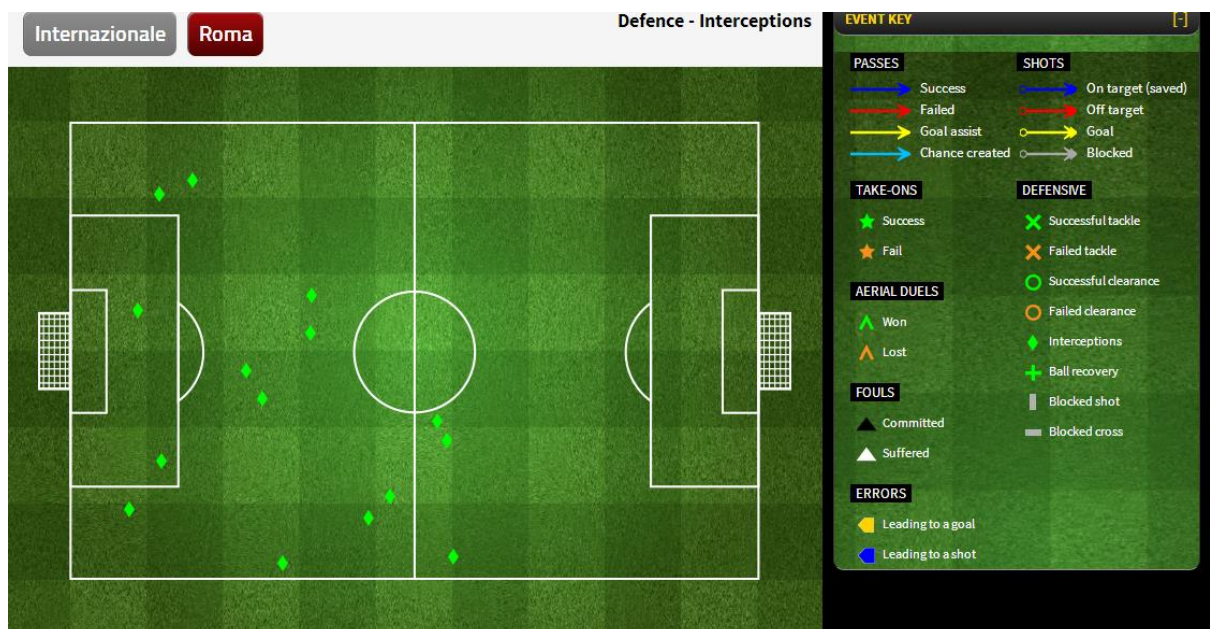
Here, Roma are really deep and can't get out, so they stay compact and defend the width of the 6 yard box, with Strootman away from the middle, Florenzi tucks in to do his role in the triangle, making it almost impossible to find a way through.

Roma Successful Tackles v Inter



We can see from the stats, that Roma were protecting the goal centrally and not making tackles, avoiding being eliminated and giving away free kicks. On the right, Torosidis made a lot of tackles, and on the left, perhaps Inter attacked this areas as they felt Balzaretti was prone to errors under stress, as had more 1v1 scenario's, but was largely protected well by Di Rossi and Strootman, despite a few fouls being given away in this area of the field. We can see that Roma made a few fouls around the centre circle, stopping Cambiasso and delaying the game was the cause of this.

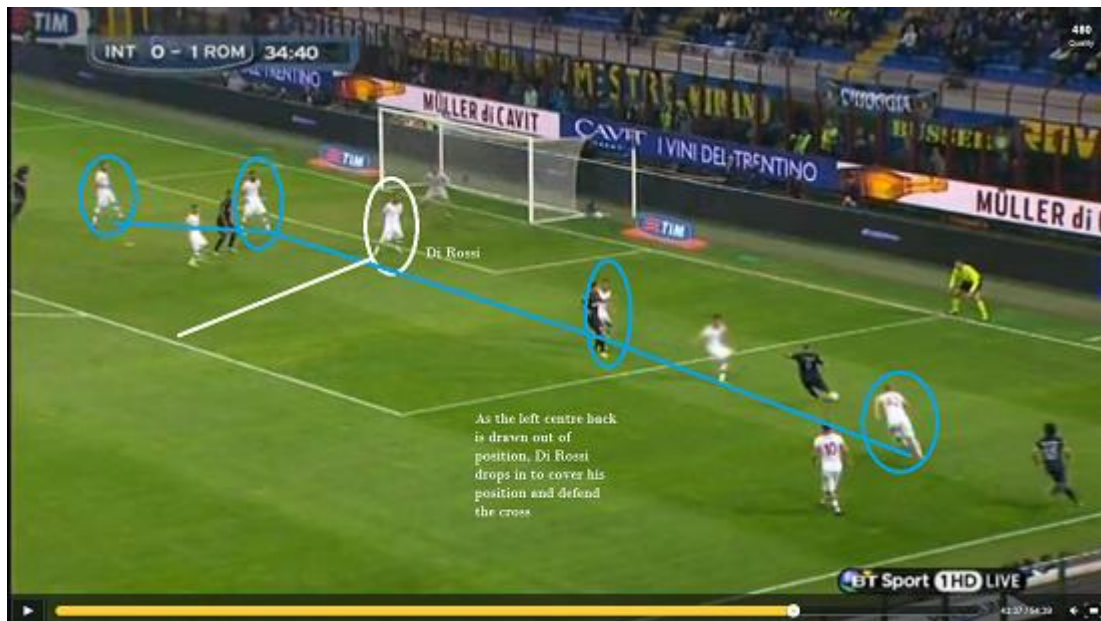
Roma Interceptions v Inter



Interestingly, Roma made 4 interceptions in the zone where they made no fouls, showing that protecting the area and forcing play back was a priority. When Inter did try to find a way through, Interceptions were made that could start counter attacks.

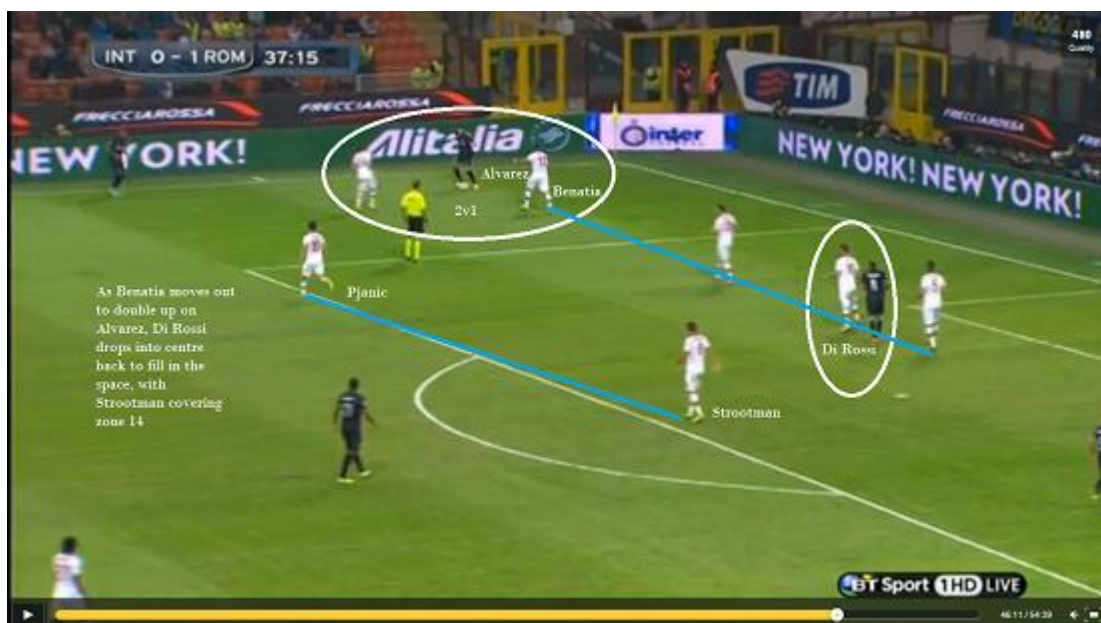
Di Rossi Covering at Centre Back

Sometimes a centre back will be drawn out of position to press the ball, or go with a runner, so it is vital that someone can cover the position. Roma have a player who is naturally comfortable playing in a back 3, so when one of the Roma centre backs moves away from their zone, Di Rossi will fill in.

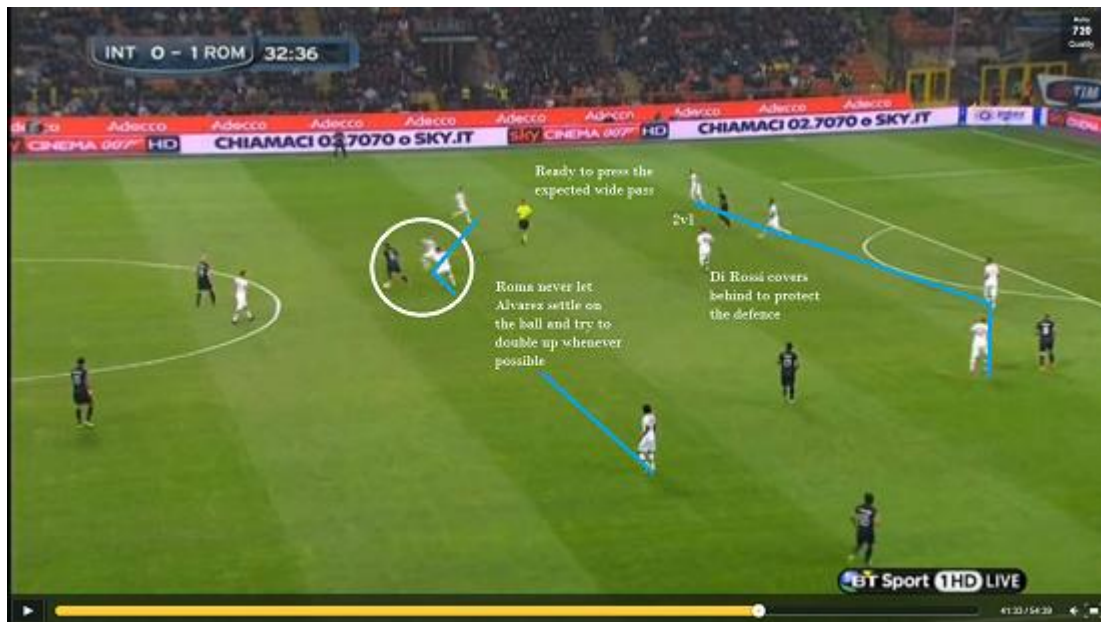


Here, a cross is made but with Di Rossi covering the front zone, he blocks the cross and stops Inter from making a scoring chance.

Doubling up on Alvarez (Di Rossi covers at CB)

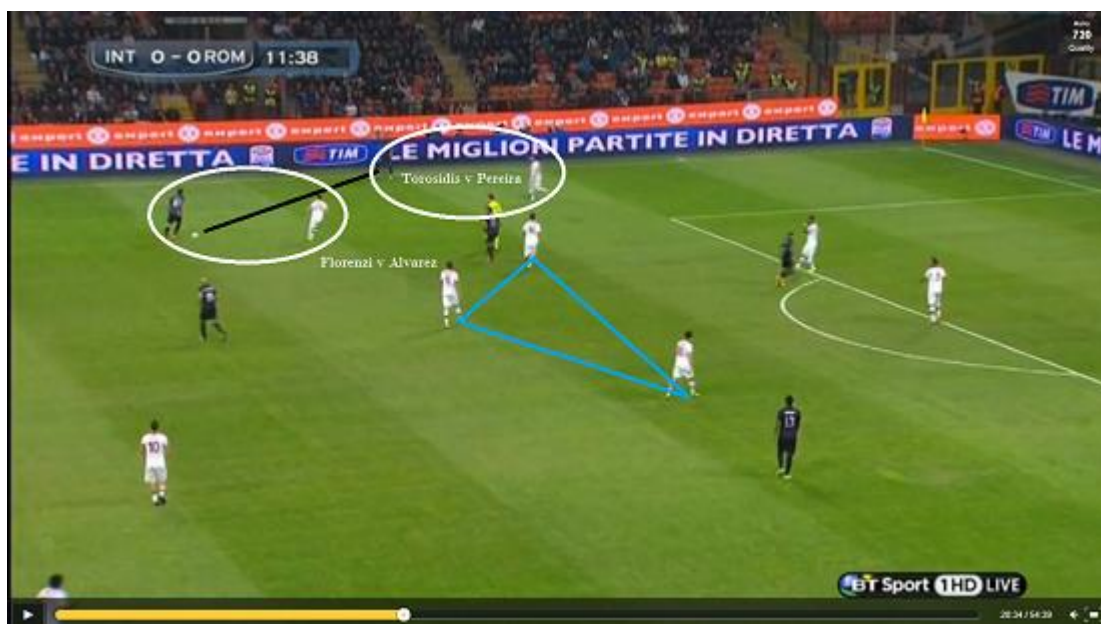


Alvarez has made a centre-wide run and is tracked by Florenzi, with Benatia coming out of centre back to make sure he isn't left 1v1 with Florenzi who is uncomfortable in defensive 1v1.



This time, Alvarez has dropped deep to get on the ball, and then possibly dribble to eliminate a midfielder from the defensive phase. Instead of playing 1v1, Strootman and Pjanic both squeeze Alvarez' space and force him back, with Di Rossi staying close to the back 4 to protect them.

Man-Marking Alvarez when he breaks forward



As Alvarez is tracked by Florenzi, Alvarez passes wide to Pereira who will be pressed by Torosidis, leaving a space behind the full back.



Florenzi does a good job by tracking the run and staying with Alvarez into the right back position. Di Rossi comes over to help play 2v1 if Alvarez receives the pass into the space.

Roma's game plan in the 1st half was successful as they took a 3-0 lead, and wrapped the game up, leaving Inter no space to attack into, intercepting passes and making tackles in the defensive 3rd on a regular basis.

Gervinho was a key player, receiving long passes and helping relieve the pressure on the defence, forcing Inter deeper and making them take longer to build an attack as Roma squeeze up the field and force the Inter back line into long passes that Roma defended easily.