

Analysis and Comparison: Rodri Hernández vs. Declan Rice (Euro 2024)

I carried out a comparative analysis between Rodri Hernández and Declan Rice, two midfielders who played a central role for their national teams and led Spain and England to the Euro 2024 final. All performance metrics were standardized to per 90 minutes (P90), allowing for a fair comparison between both players.

The analysis shows how, despite occupying similar tactical roles, their styles are radically different. This contrast is reflected both in the metrics and in the bar charts and heatmaps of their actions.

Rodri Hernández

Rodri stands out for the security of his play, the precision, and the quality of his passing distribution.

His heatmap shows a high concentration of actions in central areas of the field, validating his role as the pivot of circulation and primary passing option for the defenders. His superiority in passing accuracy (94.27% vs 91.04%), progressive passes (18.0 P90), and key passes (1.0 P90) shows how central he is in controlling his team's gameplay and ensuring possession retention. Although his total passing volume is lower, his function is more selective: he prioritizes secure possession and maintains structural integrity over constantly seeking vertical progression. Defensively, while his recovery metrics are not as high as Rice's, he still plays an important role in risk prevention through intelligent positioning.

Rodri is a positional midfielder who adds value by creating associative play through the security and quality of his distribution.

Declan Rice

By contrast, Rice stands out for his dynamism, ball recovery, and verticality (evidenced by his superior metrics in recoveries and interceptions).

His heatmap is broader and more dispersed, extending into wide areas and advanced zones, which indicates a role that requires covering a lot of field and contributing to both phases of the game. He shows higher values in defensive metrics, particularly recoveries and interceptions, confirming his profile as a key disruptor breaking up the opposition's buildup. Offensively, he records a higher total passing volume (76.57 P90) and particularly excels in passes into the final third (19.71 P90), showing a clear intent to accelerate the game and connect directly with attackers. The data shows that Rice is heavily involved in regaining possession and initiating fast transitions.

Rice is a dynamic and vertical midfielder, with greater intensity, defensive involvement, and willingness to take risks through quick transitions.

Conclusion

This analysis demonstrates how two players in the same position can be equally vital to their teams' functioning with markedly different styles.

Each is key to enabling his team's game model. Rodri plays a leading role in ensuring ball security and control, focused on maintaining positional structure and patient circulation. In contrast, Rice takes on the main role in active disruption and rapid transitions, prioritizing intensity and verticality.