



RIO HILLEN

D.O.B: 05/03/2003 (23y 7m)

Height: 187cm

Nationality: Netherlands

Club: NAC Breda

Transfer Value: €600k

Contract Expiry: 30/06/2029



Report by Nathan Bark on 24/08/2026

Current Ability: 7.7 / 10

Starting player for mid to lower teams in top 6-10 European leagues (Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal etc.)

Potential Ability: 8.4

Starting player for mid to upper teams in top 6-10 European leagues.

Overview

Hillen is of average height and build. He possesses good acceleration over shorter distances, paired with an average top speed over longer distances. He is reasonably strong physically when holding off attackers and has a decent jump height.

Regarding his core strengths, Hillen wins a lot of aerial duels due to his good positioning and strength, using his physical presence to engage early and pin attackers too far forward to make first contact on incoming long balls and crosses. He also wins a lot of ground duels due to his physicality and aggression, particularly excelling in tight spaces where he can initiate physical contact, hold off runners, and compete hard when the ball is loose.

In terms of weaknesses, he can be too eager to win the ball, meaning he can be taken out of the game unnecessarily by biting too strongly on feints, getting caught square-on, or overcommitting when an attacker has full control. Additionally, he needs to direct headers into better areas when defending crosses and long balls, as his defensive clearances frequently head centrally to the edge of the box at a low trajectory without the necessary power or directional control to find safety. Lastly, he is sometimes a little slow when making forward passes, often slightly delaying line-breaking passes into midfield until the receiving player is tightly marked or hesitating on the ball before settling for safer options.

Defending Long Balls **B**

He displays good initial positioning when defending long balls, physically engaging opposition attackers early and using his strength to pin them too far forward to win the aerial duel. He regularly makes first contact with the ball, though his headers can often lack sufficient power and directional control. His jump height and timing are average overall, making it more difficult for him to win aerial battles if he fails to initiate physical contact early enough. Furthermore, his headers often go straight back through the middle of the pitch at a low trajectory, frequently falling to an opponent rather than finding teammates with angled clearances.

Defending Through Passes C

He maintains good body positioning when defending through-passes, establishing a side-on stance early to allow for quicker acceleration. His movement is more reactive than proactive, as he regularly reacts to the runner rather than anticipating the incoming pass from the player on the ball. He possesses good acceleration over short distances, but his top speed is only average, meaning he can struggle to cover deep space in behind against fast attackers if he fails to recognize the run or pass early.

Defending Crosses B

Hillen scans relatively frequently in different directions when required to assess surrounding danger. He uses this information to take up good positions, allowing him to block crosses coming from the left at the front post area or win aerial duels deeper in the box when the ball comes from the right flank. When an opponent is close enough, he uses his arms well to hold off the attacker and track their movement, while utilizing physical contact effectively to unbalance attackers during aerial duels. Additionally, he can use his strength to block an attacker's run into open space. However, his clearances often head centrally toward the edge of the box and frequently lack the necessary power to reach complete safety.

1v1 Defending C

Hillen prefers to get close to attackers to initiate physical contact, though he can occasionally get too tight and make it easier for the opponent to bypass him. He sometimes approaches attackers with his body square on, which hampers his ability to react to sudden changes of direction. This is particularly evident when an attacker uses a feint, as Hillen tends to overcommit to the initial movement, allowing the attacker to slip past. He is often overeager to make a challenge; when the opponent lacks full control, this aggression pays off and he invariably wins the ball. However, when the attacker has the ball under firm control, they can read his challenge and evade him more easily. Despite these issues, he excels in tight spaces where his aggression allows him to win duels at a high rate.

Leaving Position C

Vertically, Hillen rarely covers large distances when stepping out of his line. He will step up when an attacker drops deep, particularly when defending counter-attacks where space opens up in front of him. He is aggressive when pressing and making a challenge, though he can occasionally overcommit, leading to fouls or getting taken out of the game by a quick turn or sharp pass from the attacker. Laterally, his movement is more frequent, as he regularly drifts wide to cover runners moving in behind his full-back, though he only fully commits to the full width of the pitch when strictly necessary. He can also be a little slow in reacting and getting back into position if he was unsuccessful in his action.

Build Up Under Pressure C

He scans well, frequently looking up with the ball at his feet or taking a quick glance as the ball is traveling, though he rarely scans before the initial pass arrives. Under pressure, he often opts for a long ball down the left flank toward his striker, which is mostly unsuccessful due to inaccurate direction or awkward height and power for the attacker to control. He can carry the ball forward, but he releases it quickly after covering short distances, even when substantial space remains ahead of him. While he is capable of producing line-breaking passes, he rarely attempts them from deep within his own half, reserving these mostly for when he advances further up the pitch along the left flank. Consequently, he defaults to safer, simpler options when positioned deeper in build-up.

Build Up With Space and Time C

When granted time and space in build-up, Hillen still tends to play it safe with simple lateral passes. He can deliver line-breaking passes into the midfield, though he often delays slightly, missing the window to create a more dangerous situation for his team. He is happy to carry the ball forward into open space, albeit not always at high speed, and will attempt longer passes down the channel or directly into the forwards with mixed success. When the ball is deep with his goalkeeper, he creates passing angles well to offer an outlet; however, he fails to provide sufficient off-ball movement higher up the pitch, often watching the play unfold rather than deliberately moving to open up a better passing lane.

Recommendation

He would be a good signing for team around the level of mid-lower half team in a top 6-10 European league or equivalent level. He would suit the left sided central defender position in either a 2 or 3 man central defence. He would fit a team that plays with a high defensive line and a high press but does not require its central defenders to have a key role in build up.