

# Central Penetration: Part 1

Written by The Coaching Manual

This series of articles focuses on how to coach a passing sequence, the Up-Back-Through, to successfully penetrate opposition units in central areas.

When using Rondo practices to deliver the principles of play, there should always be a realistic association between the positions where the principles apply and the area of the pitch.

The Up-Back-Through is a move that is commonly used in football to penetrate lines and draw opponents out of position in order to move forward and find space in between and behind opposition defensive lines, especially in central areas of the pitch.

## Up-Back-Through

**First Phase** - A player in possession plays a forward pass, the UP pass, to an advanced player who has moved to receive the ball and also draws opposition players towards them in order to create space to penetrate.

**Second Phase** - The receiving player then passes BACK to a team mate in a deeper position who can receive the ball comfortably and also recognise that space has been created for the penetrating pass.

**Third Phase** - The THROUGH pass is delivered by the deep-lying player and is designed to exploit the space created in the first phase to penetrate opposition units and allow players to receive the ball behind or in between units as the team advances towards goal.

## Game Situations

The Up-Back-Through can be used anywhere on the field, however there are key areas of the field where this passing sequence can be used more effectively, such as in central areas.

### Game Situation 1 - Penetrate Opposition Midfield

In this game situation the Centre Back (Blue 5) is in possession and looks to play forward and push up the field.

Attacking Midfielder (Blue 10) moves into a position to receive the UP pass and draws in Red 6, 9 and 11.

The BACK pass is played by Blue 10 to the Pivot (Blue 6), who is positioned centrally behind the ball and is facing forwards.

The Pivot (Blue 6) plays a THROUGH ball to the Centre Forward (Blue 9), who has dropped in to receive between the opposition midfield and defensive units, as the through pass penetrates Red 6 and Red 8.

### Game Situation 2 - Penetrate Opposition Defense

Another game situation would be playing the ball in behind a defensive unit and into space to play forward, creating a goal scoring opportunity.

In this example the Pivot (Blue 6) penetrates the opposition Midfield unit with an UP pass into the Centre Forward (Blue 9), who has moved off the defensive unit, as the Centre Back (Red 5) tracks the run.

The BACK pass is received by Blue 8 as the Left Forward (Blue 11) looks to move off the line and in behind the defensive unit.

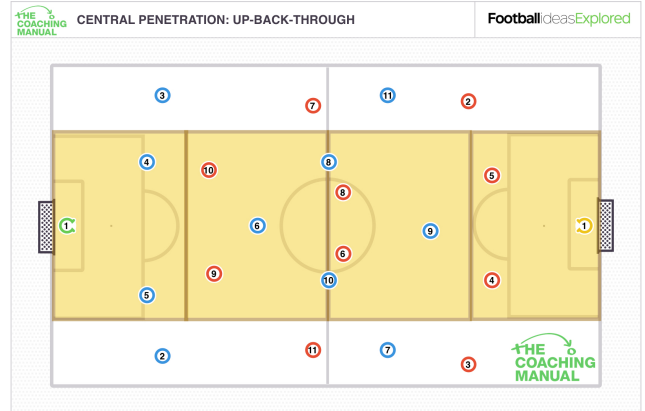
The THROUGH ball is then played by Blue 8 to penetrate the opposition Centre Back (Red 5) and Full Back (Red 2) through the space created by the movement of Blue 9. This releases Blue 11 behind the opposition defensive unit to finish on goal.

## 6v2 Central Penetration Rondo

### Set up

Area 20x12 divided into 2 halves (12x10) and 3 vertical channels (4x10) to provide reference points on the pitch. Pivot (Blue 6), Wide Forwards (Blue 7 & 11) and Centre Forward (Blue 9) can move along their designated lines.

Central Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10) are locked into their designated half and play against 2 x defenders (Red 6 and 8) who are also locked into their designated half.



## Task

Blue Team (Attackers): Maintain positions and possession of the ball with emphasis on utilizing the Up-Back-Through sequence to play from Pivot (Blue 6) to Centre Forward (Blue 9).

Red Team (Defenders): If the ball is won, play directly to Blue 6 to replicate a counter attack in a game, or maintain possession 2v2 as Blue 8 and 10 press to regain the ball.

## Key Coaching Points

1. Take up positions to provide depth and length for effective Up-Back-Through
2. Positioning and body shape of Blue 10 and Blue 8 to receive and advance forwards
3. Understanding of when to play backwards in order to advance forwards, using an Up-Back-Through passing sequence

## Detail

- Body angle to receive the pass
- Receiving areas of foot or body
- Angles, distances and areas of structure to penetrate effectively and patiently
- Understanding slow and quick play through the areas
- Timing of passes - La Pausa
- Ability to secure possession of the ball and link up with team-mates
- Understanding of the 3 passing lines (in front, around, penetrate)
- Passing options behind, ahead and around the ball
- Communication

## Focus - Length and Depth To Create Opportunities To Penetrate with Up-Back-Through

The Centre Midfielders (Blue 6, 8 and 10) need to understand movement and positioning to provide length and depth to the attack. This involves taking up positions on different vertical and horizontal lines, hence the channels and halfway line as reference points in 6v2 Rondo.

The animations below detail how movements providing length and depth can help the team advance forwards, using the Up-Back-Through sequence.

## Positioning on Different Horizontal and Vertical Lines

Understanding the timing of movements and passes is crucial for the central players (Blue 6, 8 and 10) so that they can take up positions on different lines, providing the player in possession with different passing angles and options.

## Penetrating Passes To Play Back and Advance Forwards

Once the opposition have been penetrated, the ball may still be played back as Blue 10 would be pressed again in a game and create more space for the through ball from Blue 8 to penetrate even further up the field.

## Avoid Players Positioned in Same Vertical Channel

When in possession players should avoid taking up positions in the same vertical, across all areas of the pitch, as this narrows the attack, restricts angled passing options and makes it easier for the opposition defensive units to see the players and the ball whilst staying compact.

## Focus - Moving The Opposition Out Of Position To Penetrate With Up-Back-Through

Here we can see how maintaining possession in front of the Defenders creates opportunities to play forwards, or UP, as Blue 10 receives. The Central midfielder then plays a pass BACK to Blue 8, who then plays a penetrating pass to the Centre Forward (Blue 9).

