

## Central Penetration: Part 3

Written by The Coaching Manual

In our final article on central penetration, we have devised a 9v5+GK Rondo game practice that connects the defensive, midfield and attacking units when looking to penetrate opposition teams in central areas.

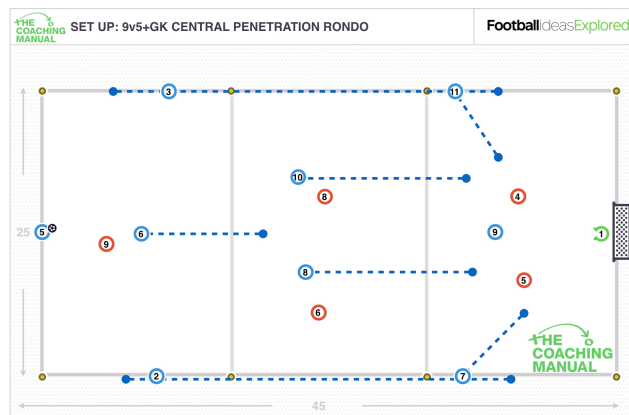
### 9v5+GK Central Penetration Rondo Set Up

Area 45x25 with a goal and Goalkeeper at one end and divided into thirds (15x25) to provide reference points on the pitch.

Centre Back (Blue 5) and Centre Forward (Blue 9) can move anywhere in their designated third, Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) can move the whole length of the 45 yard line and Wide Forwards (Blue 7 and 11) can move along the middle and final third lines and also invert to play inside the final third.

Pivot (Blue 6) can play anywhere in the defensive and middle thirds whilst Central Midfielders (Blue 8 and 10) play in the middle and final thirds.

The defensive team (Reds) are locked into their designated thirds with Centre Forward (Red 9) in the defensive third, Central Midfielders (Red 6 and 8) in the middle third and Centre Backs (Red 4 and 5) and Goalkeeper (Green 1) in the final third.



### Task

**Blue Team (Attackers):** Maintain positions and possession of the ball with, emphasis on utilising the Up-Back-Through sequence to play through the thirds from Centre Back (Blue 5) to Centre Forward (Blue 9) for a finish on Goal. Length and depth to be provided by Blue 6, 8, 9 and 10.

**Red Team (Defenders):** If the ball is won, play directly to Blue 5 to replicate a counter attack in a game, or maintain possession 5v5 as Blue 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 press to regain the ball.

### Key Coaching Points

1. Take up positions to provide depth and length for effective Up-Back-Through as the team advances through the thirds and towards goal
2. Positioning and body shape of Blue 6, 8, 9 and Blue 10 to receive and advance forwards and play/receive penetrating pass in the final third
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 through the thirds
- Understanding slow and quick play through the thirds
- Rotation and movement ahead of the ball to provide passing options
- 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
- Movements to drag opposition Defenders out of position and be an option to receive
- Communication

### Focus - Movements of the Striker and Wide Forwards to Penetrate Centrally

The Centre Forward/Striker (Blue 9) can move into positions to create space for themselves and for players around them, by moving the opposition Defenders out of position and creating space for the penetrating pass in the final third.

In this example, Blue 9 holding the ball up from Blue 10 and then passing back to Blue 8 draws in Red 4 and Red 5, allowing the Wide Forward (Blue 7) to invert and receive a penetrating pass behind the defensive line in the final third.

The Striker then has space to receive the pass from the Wide Forward and attack the ball to finish on goal, as the Defenders attempt to recover to Blue 7.

## **Small-Sided Game**

The concepts of central penetration and the "Up-Back-Through" can also be coached in a small-sided game, as the following practice allows players to identify when and how to release a team-mate into the final third through a dribble, pass, or forward run to finish on goal.

"Breaking into the final third"

## **To Conclude...**

Penetration is a key principle of the game when in possession, as ultimately all teams want to advance up the pitch and towards goal in order to create goalscoring chances.

This series of articles detailed how coaches can promote their teams to penetrate in central areas of the pitch whilst controlling and securing possession of the ball. This involves positioning, timing and decision-making of players and passing sequences such as the Up-Back-Through can be used effectively to draw opposition players out of position and create space for penetrating passes.