

Position - Specific Training - Full Backs: Part 1

Written by The Coaching Manual

Attacking Full Backs

Teams that deploy attacking Full Backs understand the impact this role can have, both in and out of possession.

In possession, the attacking Full Back often provides width to the team and allows Wingers/Wide Forwards to play inside, as the Full Back looks to overlap and deliver from wide areas.

Alternatively the Full Backs may look to invert inside and perform underlap movements as the wide players ahead of them hold their position.

Timing and positional understanding is vital for the Full Back, and this series of articles will help you coach your Full Back player within the 4-3-3 system, however these practices can be modified to suit any formation that incorporates attacking wide players from deep positions.

Tactical Understanding

The Full Back is now a pivotal part of the attack for teams and as such they should be tactically aware of when to advance and when to hold their position in defence.

Also, the No. 2 and No. 3 must be able to play accurate passes (long and short), deliver crosses from wide areas, possess speed and timing to advance forwards and recover, and have the ability to dominate 1v1 situations such as Bayern's David Alaba and Barca's at Jordi Alba.

Providing Width

Both Full Backs (Blue 2 and 3) and Wide Forwards (Blue 7 and 11) can provide width to the attack in order to stretch the opposition and create space to penetrate.

Overlaps and Underlaps

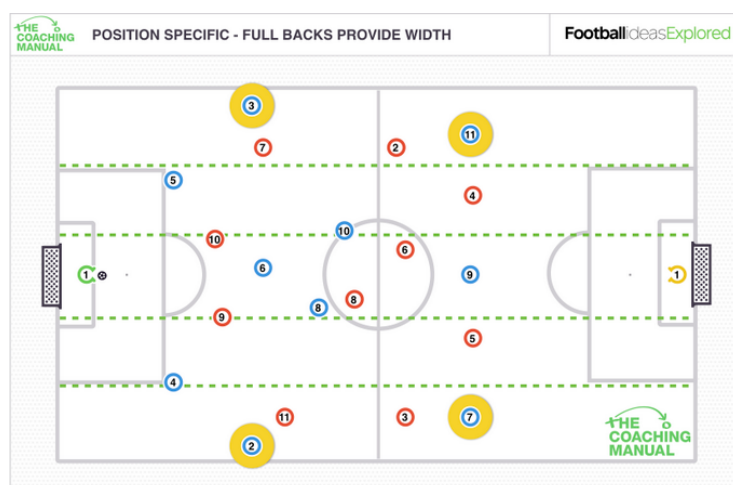
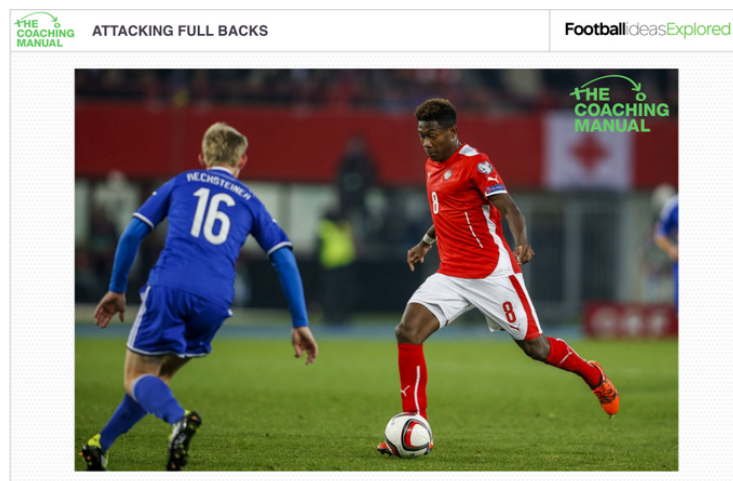
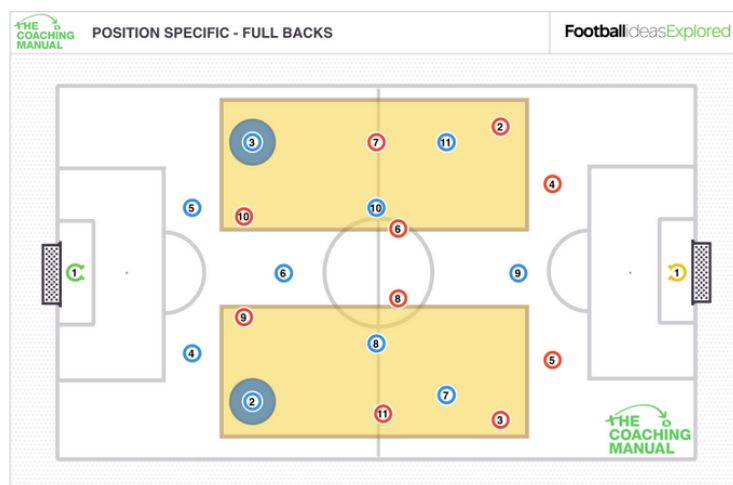
Modern-day Full Backs are also encouraged to take up positions high up the pitch, through overlapping and underlapping movements, to provide numerical and positional superiority around the ball and offer passing options on different horizontal and vertical lines.

This can be seen in the OVERLAPPING Full Backs as the players travel around the outside to provide width to the attack. This stretches the opposition and creates space centrally for the Wide Forwards to operate on different vertical lines.

When a team has Wingers/Wide Forwards who are effective in 1v1 situations and can isolate defenders in wide areas, the advancing Full Back may perform an UNDERLAPPING run inside to provide numerical superiority in central areas. Marcelo often performs such movements when linking up with Cristiano Ronaldo at Real Madrid.

Creating Numerical Superiority in Central Areas

If the timing of the movements by the Full Backs and Wide Forwards are co-ordinated, and the ball advances at the correct moment, central areas can be overloaded as the attacking Full Backs isolate the opposition Full Backs (Red 2 and 3), and a 3v2 is created in central areas (Blue 9, 11 and 7 v Red 4 and 5).



Our next article will detail a practice that encourages timing, positioning and movement of Full Backs in order to penetrate the opposition and advance up the pitch.