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# CHAPTER 4

## MANCHESTER UNITED'S HIGH SPEED OF PLAY TRAINING - WAVES OF ATTACKS

# MANCHESTER UNITED'S HIGH SPEED OF PLAY:

## Speed, Power, Penetration and Unpredictability

Sir Alex Ferguson said, "I like to be entertained while watching Manchester United play and we have an obligation to the fans to be entertaining."

Sir Alex and I came up with our expectations together for Manchester United to attack with **SPEED, POWER, PENETRATION** and **UNPREDICTABILITY**."

If you analyse Manchester United's attacking style of play during my time as First Team Coach (2007-2013), you will see all 4 of these elements over and over again.



### Speed

- ▶ Training at a high intensity with a high speed of play.
- ▶ Ability of attacking players to run past opponents.
- ▶ One touch interplay, give-and-go, movement, and runs in behind.

### Power

- ▶ Strength of the players to overcome challenges.
- ▶ Powerful runs to go past or in behind opponents.
- ▶ Dynamic, powerful and quick reactions in the transition phases.

### Penetration

- ▶ Forward passes or carrying the ball into the space in front of you.
- ▶ Play through the opposition's midfield and defensive lines.
- ▶ Forward runs in behind the opposition's defensive line.

### Unpredictability

- ▶ Quick 1/2 touch combinations with good movement and runs in behind.
- ▶ Switch play to change angle of attack for chance to cross or create 1v1/2v2 situations.
- ▶ Ability to beat opponents in 1v1 situations through speed, skill, and disguise.

# HIGH SPEED OF PLAY



## 2, 3 AND 4-BALL ROUTINE PRACTICE EXAMPLES

## 2-BALL ROUTINE (VARIATION 3): One-Two, Pass in Behind + Cut Back After Overlap Run



**NOTE:** The cut-back after overlap run is used against deep defences positioned on edge of the box.

### Practice Description

- BALL 1:** Player A passes to B.
- Player B passes back to A (lay-off).
- Player A plays a through pass for the well-timed run of Player B in behind.
- Player B tries to score.
- BALL 2:** The Coach (or an extra player) passes a new ball to Player C (or D) as soon as B has had his shot. Player C receives the new ball and there is a variation with an overlap this time.
- Player C passes for the well-timed overlapping run of another wide player.
- The player receives high up the flank and cuts the ball back (7a) or crosses to back post (7b - blue).
- Players A and D make well-timed runs into the penalty area to try to score from the cross.

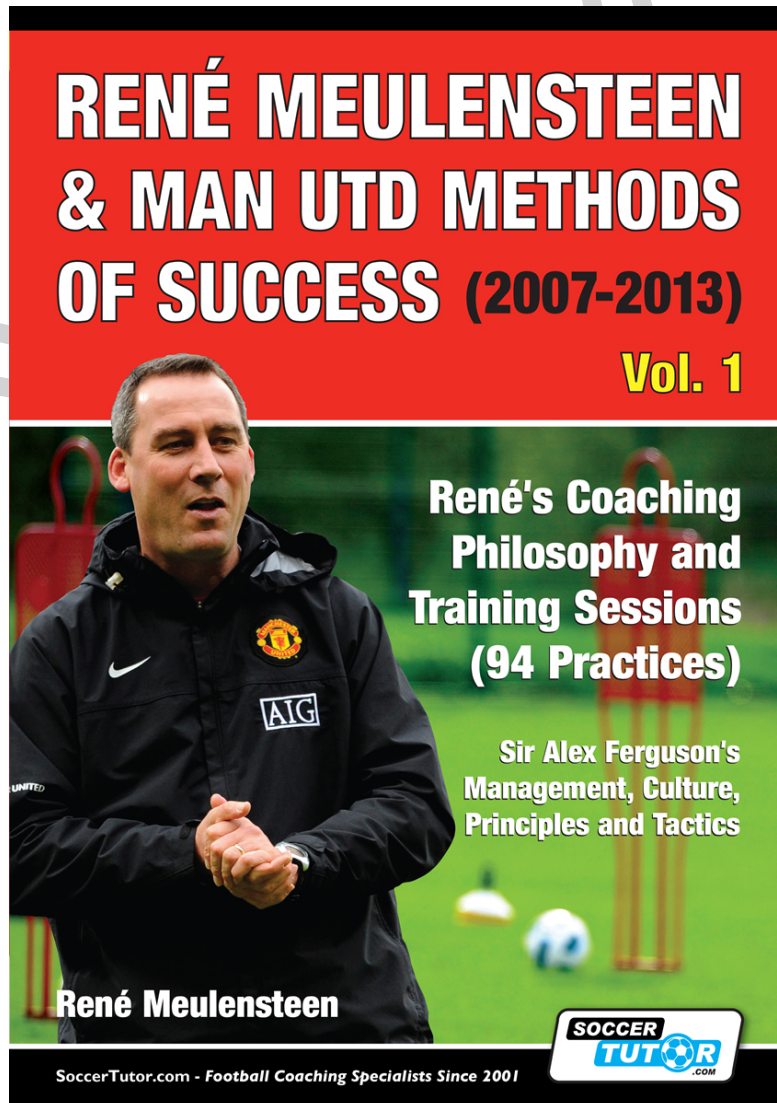
### Player Rotation

- Player A moves to B's position and Player B moves to position A.
- Player C and D continue working out wide, as does the player who makes the overlapping run.

### Coaching Points

- Players A and B focus on weight and accuracy of pass, with good lay-offs (take the weight off it).
- Quality finishing (see Chapter 7 for specific finishing training).
- Wide players receive on the front foot, engage the mannequin, and release their pass at the right time for the overlapping player.
- Quality final ball into the box (cross or cut-back).

**SOURCE:** René Meulensteen's Manchester United training sessions at Carrington Training Ground, Manchester - 2007-2013



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