
CHAPTER 7

RENÉ MEULENSTEEN'S SPECIFIC TECHNICAL TRAINING (IvIs AND FINISHING)



MY APPROACH TO SPECIFIC TECHNICAL TRAINING WITH FIRST TEAM PLAYERS

"I never used the word CHANGE. Instead, I would always say: 'I'd like to ADD this to your game.'"



- When I came to work with the first team, I wasn't a new face to many of them. I knew how to approach working with players who were strong characters and serial winners.
- Imagine you say to a player: "Listen, we need to change something about your game."
- The first thing the player will think is: "Change? Why do I need to change? What am I doing wrong?" It's a negative approach.
- The word 'Add' means more. It means better. That way, you don't build a barrier between yourself and the player.

SOURCE: René Meulensteen's interview with coachesvoice.com

SPECIFIC TECHNICAL TRAINING WITH CRISTIANO RONALDO

“The aim was to bring Ronaldo from awareness to understanding in relation to scoring more goals.”



- Cristiano Ronaldo was someone I got to spend plenty of time with at the start of the 2007/08 season.
- I believed he was one of the best forwards at a young age (22), but he wasn't productive enough. We needed him to score more goals. I knew that was what he wanted too.
- My aim was to bring him from awareness to understanding, to recognise how he could get from where he was to where he wanted to be.
- It was also about the value of setting aims and targets, and explaining to him that people who have a clear goal – and devise a strategy to get there – will be by far more successful than those who say “I want that” and then wait and hope for the best.
- He was very receptive to anything that he knew could bring him closer to what he wanted.
- Top players need that freedom to express themselves and make their own decisions. They thrive on that.

SOURCE: René Meulensteen's interview with coachesvoice.com

THE METHOD OF SPECIFIC TECHNICAL TRAINING WITH FIRST TEAM PLAYERS



TECHNICAL TRAINING



FINISHING

RUUD VAN NISTELROOY

“The aim of the individual training sessions I had with Ruud were to make him more unpredictable in front of goal.

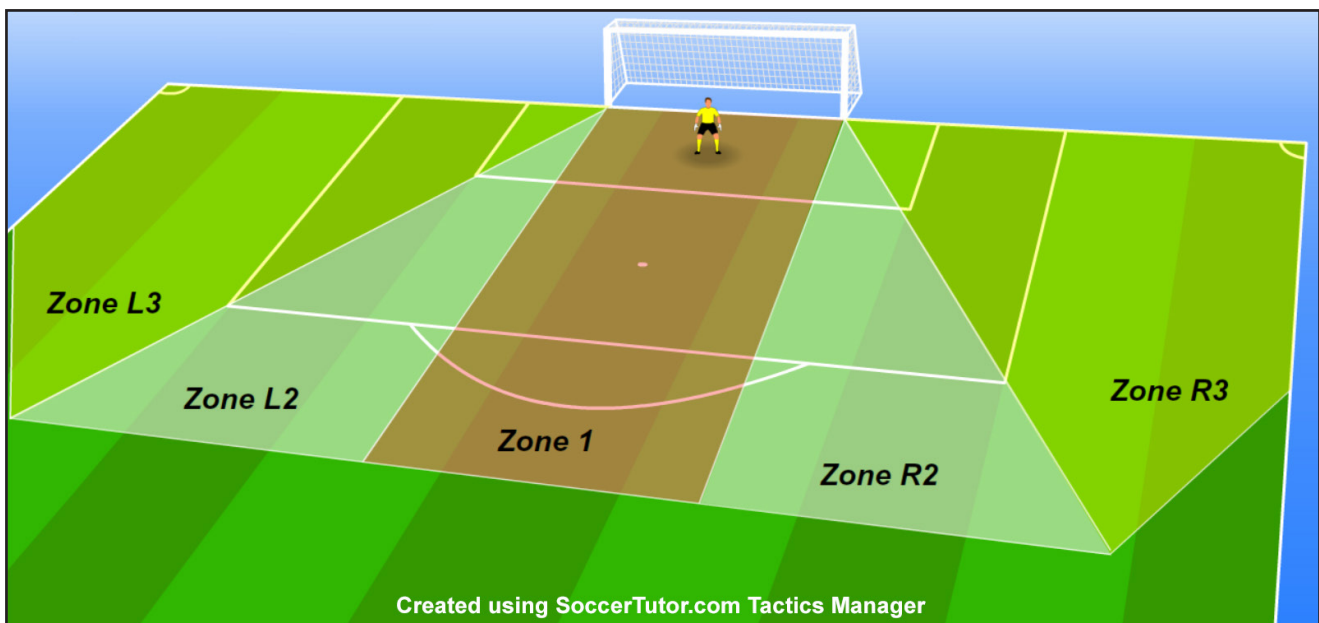
We worked specifically on technical aspects of his game as a striker. As the defenders would try to block his shot, Ruud would use a move or feint to get into a better goal scoring position and...SCORE!”



THE DIFFERENT SHOOTING ZONES

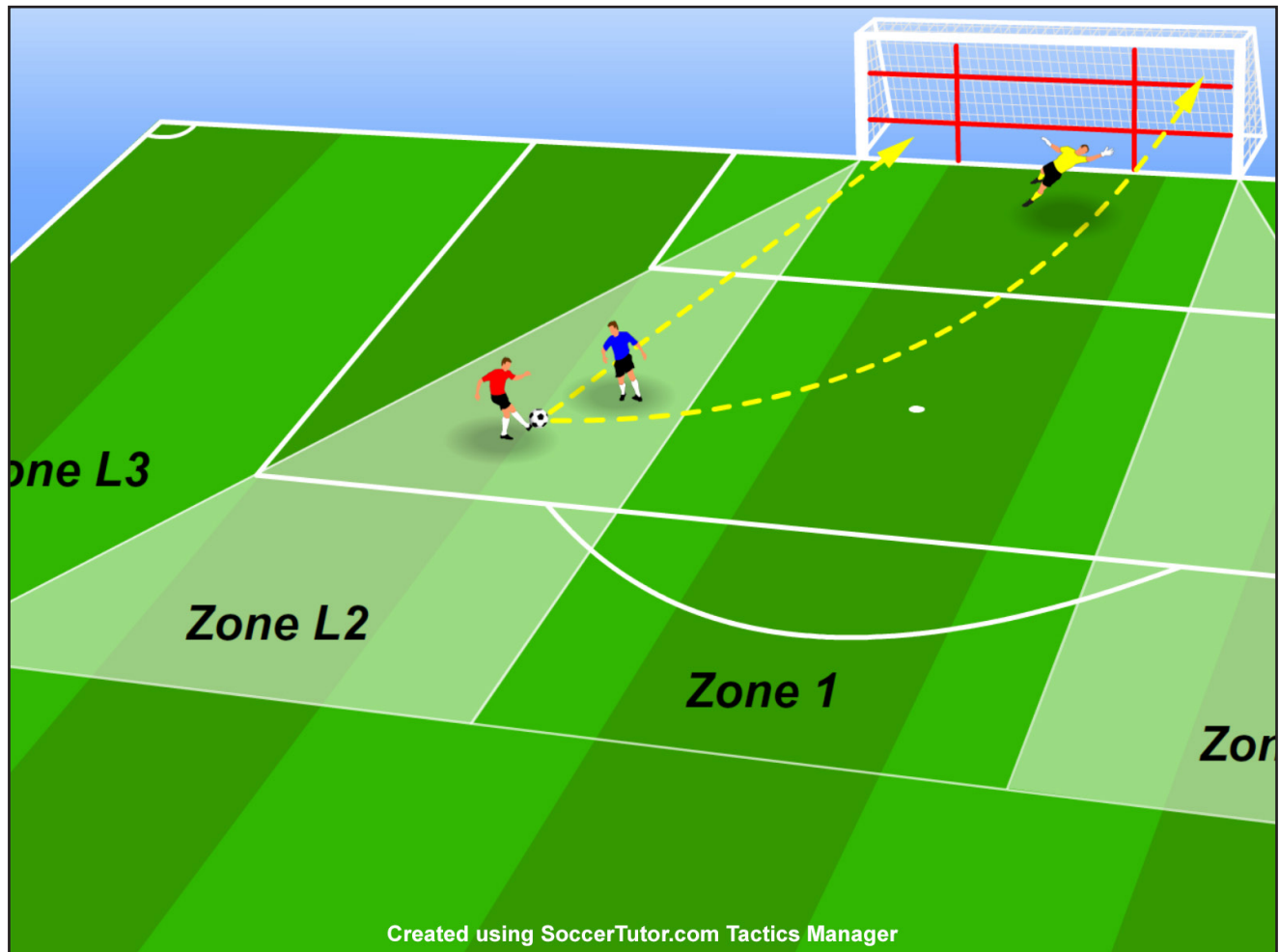
These are the 3 different shooting zones:

- **SHOOTING ZONE 1: CENTRE**
- **SHOOTING ZONE 2 (L2/R2): WIDE OF CENTRE**
- **SHOOTING ZONE 3 (L3/R3): WIDE**



- Remember - The goal never moves, but the goalkeeper does!
- The attacker must be aware of which finishing zone he is in.
- The attacker must also know his position in relation to the goal and the goalkeeper.
- With this awareness, the attacker will better understand his options to finish and SCORE!

FINISHING OPTIONS IN THE CENTRE LEFT AND RIGHT POSITIONS (SHOOTING ZONES L2/R2)



- This is the zone where most shots are taken from.
- The goalkeeper adjusts his position in relation to the attacker (and the ball) to save shots from different angles.
- When a defender is trying to block the line of the shot, it's important that the attacker has the skills and the ability to try to beat the defender on the inside (towards Zone 1), so his chances to score will increase.
- If the attacker decides to beat the defender on the outside, the angle to finish will change and so will the position of the goalkeeper.



TECHNICAL TRAINING



INDIVIDUAL FINISHING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

These practice examples are used to make sure players are aware and fully understand the following:

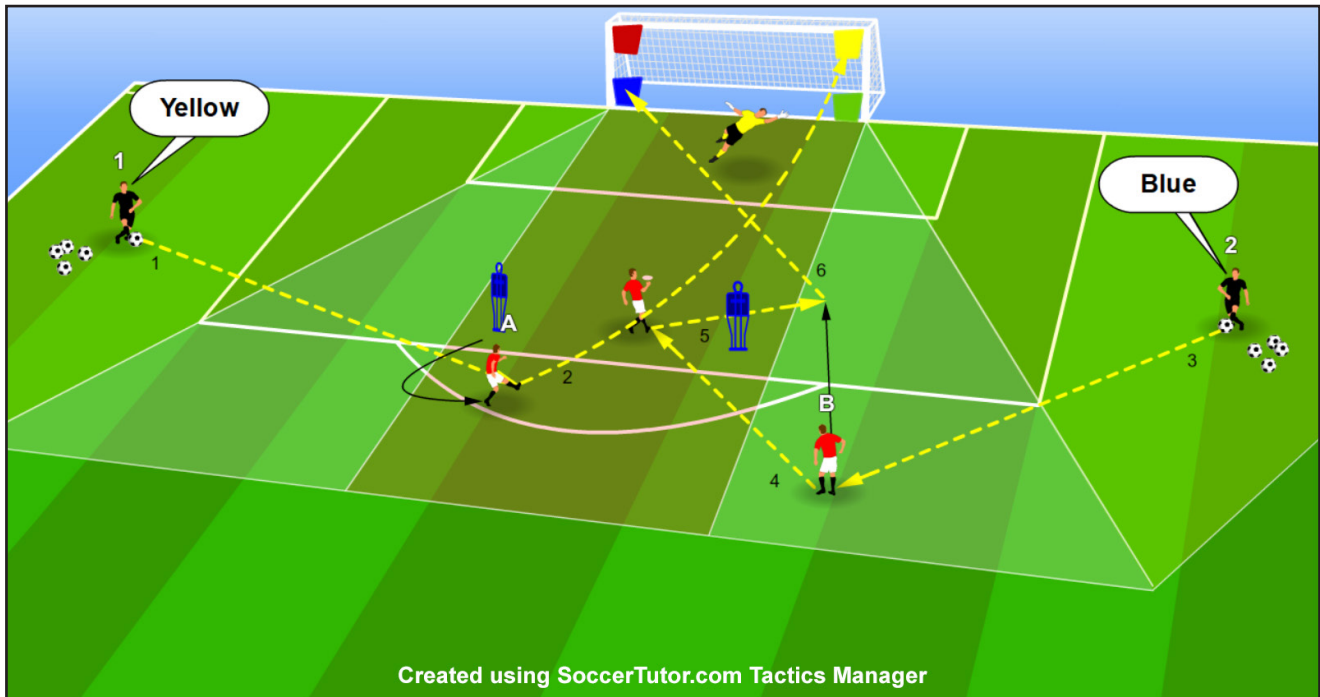
1. **Their position in relation to the ball and the opponent.**
2. **Their position in relation to the goal and the GK.**
3. **Pick and practice the best shooting techniques to finish.**
4. **Aim for the best target area to score a goal.**



4. Receiving the Ball Outside the Box and Finishing in Different Ways

15 min

4a. Open Up and Shoot + One-Two Combination and Finish



SET-UP: There are 2 Coaches and 3 red players, who start in the positions shown.

The Coach can also challenge the players by telling them which colour bib they should hit before they shoot (green, blue, red, or yellow).

Practice Objective: Players must demonstrate good technique, the correct decision making, vision, awareness, and high accuracy with their finishing.

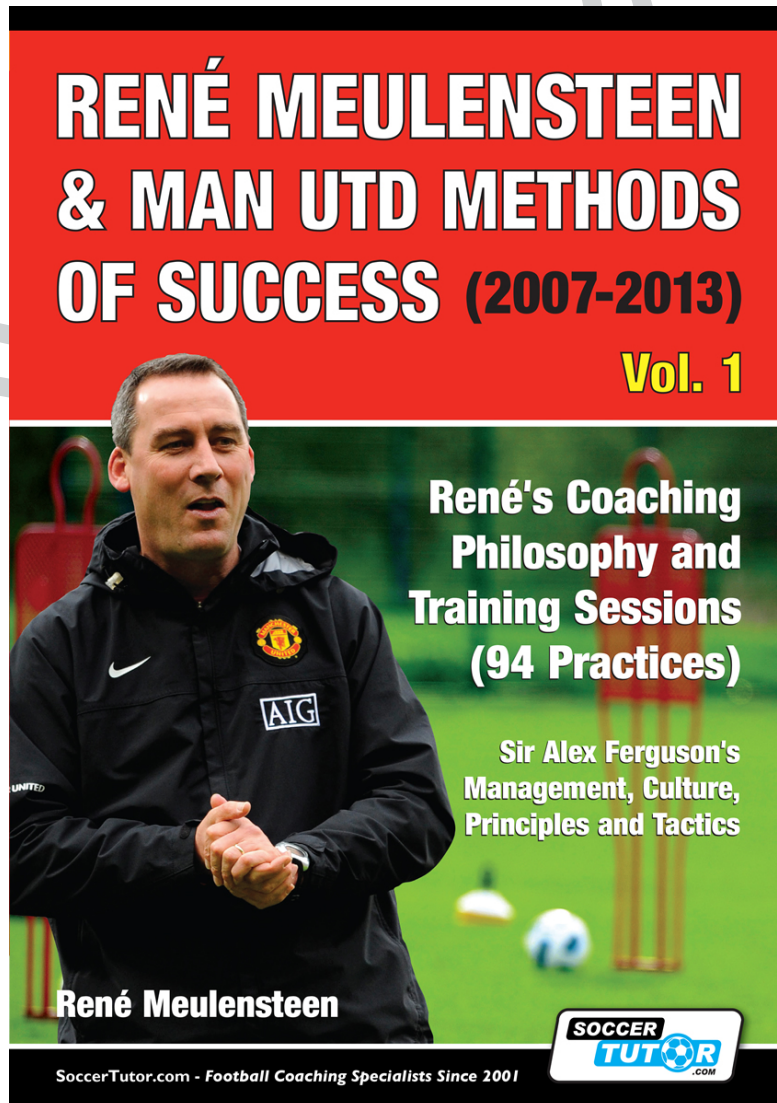
Practice Description

- Coach 1** passes the ball back at an angle to **Player A** on the edge of the box, who sets himself well to shoot first time.
- Coach 2** passes the ball back at an angle to **Player B** outside the box. He then plays a one-two with the forward, moves forward into the box to meet the return pass, and finishes using one touch.

Coaching Points

- PLAYER A:** Come off the mannequin and set yourself for a 1 or 2 touch finish.
- PLAYER B:** Use laces or instep to finish.

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



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