

CREATING AN OVERLOAD AND ATTACKING THROUGH THE CENTRE

1a. Wide Midfielder Creates an Overload by Moving into the Centre of the Pitch to Receive



The central positioning of Atlético's wide midfielders helps create overloads in specific areas. Attacking through the centre is a popular tactic for Diego Simeone's team.

The wide midfielder moves towards the centre in between the opposition's midfield and defensive lines and enters the zone of responsibility of the opposing centre back, who then has 2 players to deal with (see highlighted area).

This prevents the opposing centre back (white No.4 in diagram) from moving forward to press Atlético's left midfielder **Koke (6)**.

As soon as central midfielder **Gabi (14)** receives from the centre back **Giménez (24)** in this example, the left midfielder **Koke (6)** moves towards the centre and creates a 2v1 overload in a crucial area, as shown.

1b. Opposing Centre Back Retains Position and the Wide Midfielder is Able to Receive, Turn and Look for a Final Pass



This situation enables the left midfielder **Koke (6)** to receive free of marking and turn facing the opponent's goal.

As soon as the turn is carried out, the 2 forwards **Griezmann (7)** and **Torres (9)** move to receive a potential final pass, as do both full backs **F. Luis (3)** and **Juanfran (20)**, who are positioned near the side-lines to retain width.

The forward movement of both full backs triggers the central midfielder **Saúl (8)** to drop back and help retain a numerical advantage at the back.

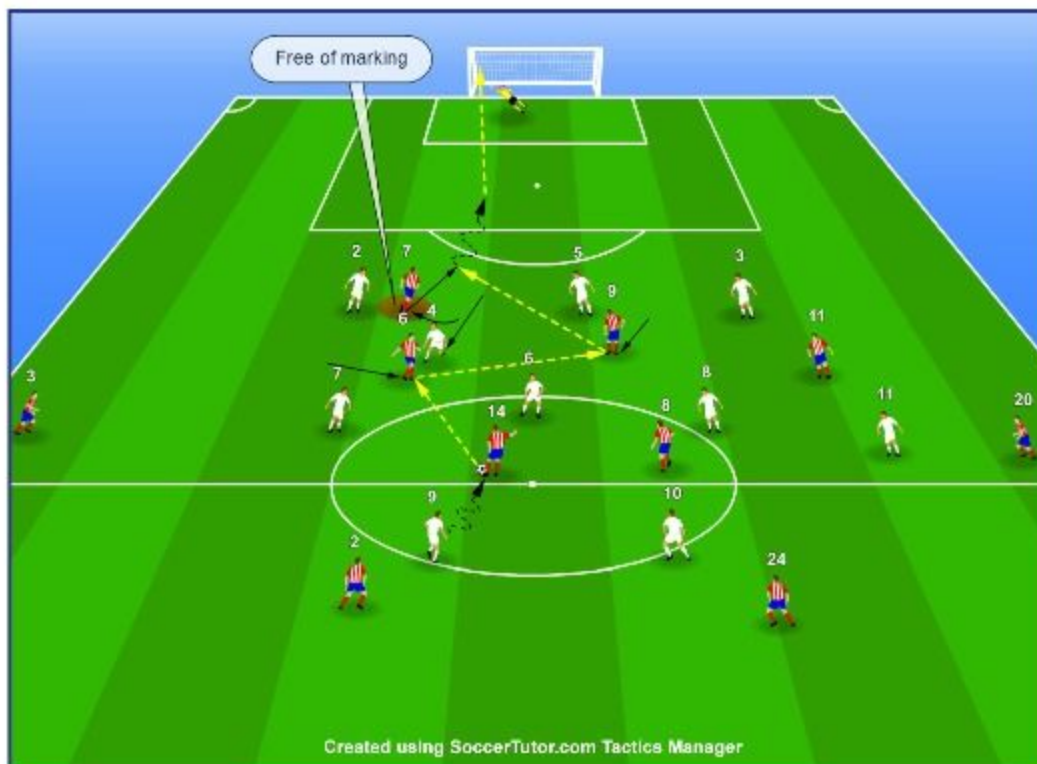
2. Opposing Centre Back Tracks the Wide Midfielder's Movement, who Plays First-time Pass in Behind



In a similar situation to the previous one, **Koke (6)** receives a forward pass from **Gabi (14)**, but the reaction from the white defenders is different.

Specifically, the white centre back No.4 decides to step forward and put **Koke (6)** under pressure, which leaves **Griezmann (7)** free of marking. **Griezmann (7)** opens up to receive a first-time pass from **Koke (6)**.

3. Opposing Centre Back Tracks the Wide Midfielder's Movement, who Uses a Link Player to Pass in Behind



This shows another option for how Atlético deal with the same situation using a passing combination.

As soon as **Koke (6)** receives under pressure from the white centre back No.4, the ball is directed to **Griezmann (7)** via the other forward **Torres (9)**, who moves close to **Koke (6)** to offer him a passing option.

PROGRESSION

2. Creating an Overload and Attacking Through the Centre in a Dynamic Zonal Practice



Description

- The practice starts within the marked-out low zone and the reds play 4v2 with the aim of moving the ball to a central midfielder unmarked beyond the white forwards.
- As soon as this happens, the wide midfielder on that side (**6**) moves towards the centre to create an overload and receive from the central midfielder (**14**).
- The wide midfielder (**6**) must decide whether to play a first-time pass in behind or receive and turn, depending on the white centre back's reaction.
- Please **see the previous practices and analysis pages** in this section for the correct decision making for the red wide midfielder.
- In this example, the opposing centre back No.4 moves forward to press the wide midfielder (**6**), so he uses the weak side forward (**9**) as a link player to pass to the other forward (**7**) in the space created behind No.4.
- If the white centre backs win the ball, they move the ball to the forwards and try to score in the mini goals within 12-15 seconds. If the white forwards win the ball within the low zone, they try and score within 6 seconds.

COUNTER ATTACK-MINDED POSITIONING OF THE FORWARDS

1a. Counter Attack-minded Positioning of Forwards with Ball in Centre



Over Diego Simeone's time at Atlético Madrid, they have mainly used defensive-minded positioning of the forwards during the defensive phase. However, they have used counter attack-minded positioning of the forwards in many matches, especially when **D. Costa (19)** plays.

Atlético have 1 forward in a very advanced position and there is more space for the opposition to exploit between the forward and midfield lines.

1b. Counter Attack-minded Positioning of Forwards with Ball Wide



When using defensive-minded positioning of the forwards ([see last 3 pages](#)), both forwards are able to contribute in the defensive phase.

When using counter attack-minded positioning, only 1 forward contributes in the defensive phase, which is **Griezmann (7)**.

The other forward **D. Costa (19)** is in a dangerous position to exploit a potential direct counter attack if the ball is won.

2a. Available Spaces to Exploit After Winning Possession in a Wide Area (Counter Attack-minded Positioning of Forwards)



Despite the available space between the forward and midfield lines which can be exploited by the opposition, this positioning of the forwards provides benefits for the transition from defence to attack.

The main target player **D. Costa (19)** is close to the opponent's goal and the available space that can be exploited is in the central area. However, taking advantage of this after winning the ball in a wide area is not easy. It is far easier when the ball is won in the centre, which we show on [pages 162-164](#).

In this example, the Atlético left back **F. Luis (3)** intercepts the pass to white No.7.

When winning the ball in a wide area, it is more likely that the space out wide and behind the opposing full back No.2 can be exploited.

However, with this counter attack-minded positioning of the forwards, **Griezmann (7)** is in a relatively deep position compared to the previous situation (normal defensive positioning of forwards) and the white full back No.2 can recover in time and fill the gap.

In addition, moving the ball into the available space in the centre for **D. Costa (19)** to exploit is not easy, as a perfectly accurate pass is needed.

