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Passing a ball, in football, sounds like simply kicking the ball to your teammates, but deceiving opponents at the same time creating space and attacking opportunities for your teammates by passing the ball is not an easy thing to do, since direct pass from one player to another is very predictable and could be stopped easily by the opponents. Through ball, which is passing the ball through the opponents into an open field, then plays an important role in attacking for its advantages over direct pass in creating attacking space for your teammates and pulling away the distance from your teammates who sprint towards the ball and the defenders who have to turn around and chase the ball.

I’ve been watching and playing football games since a very young age, and I am often amazed of how those mid-field masters make unexpected pass to avoid opponents and then suddenly the only opponent before the striker turns to be the helpless goalkeeper. However, hundreds of thousands of hours that I have spent playing this sport as a mid-fielder tells me that it is extra hard to capture the right time to pass a perfect through ball, which really makes a difference if I can make the right choice. There was a game I had in high school that I remembered to pass a wonderful through ball which changed the score sheet. Though it was one of the many through balls I made that turned to be a crucial scoring opportunity, I was playing with my friends against a bunch of pro-players from the school team. That game was a total loss, and the only goal we had was the one to which I made the pass. Most of the times, when my team was on attack, defenders were often twice or three times than my teammates in my opponents’ half of field. As a CAM(Center Attacking Midfielder), I had plenty of choices when I was in their half: I could shoot when few opponents were around me; I could make a safe direct pass to my teammates who had few opponents around; I could also control and dribble the ball to wait for an better shooting or passing opportunity. But, I waited for a better chance to pass a through ball, because making direct passes or shoot the ball had the risk of giving back the attacking opportunity to my opponents if they cut the pass or caught the ball by their goalkeeper. When there was a space between the defenders, I signaled my teammate, who was on the side, with an eye contact and then passed a through ball ahead of him. Because he was prepared to sprint for the running ball, though he was a little further away to the ball than were his opponents, he shortly outpaced his defenders, who just realized the threat and turned around for the ball lately, and made the finishing shot. It seemed no big deal for the opponents to catch up, while everything happened in just few seconds, and the time it took for the opponents to turn around was already a huge disadvantage for them, when my teammate was facing the ball and prepared to chase the ball long before his opponent could. Apart from that, the area where I passed the ball to was just perfect, since it was close enough to the goal to take the shot, too far for the goalkeeper to take the risk of catching the ball.

A great through ball sometimes is the second last step towards a goal, and it often requires a decision making in just few seconds before the opportunity disappears, yet it is the one kick under careful consideration that makes scoring a goal a much simpler job.