

RUGBY COACH WEEKLY

Learn • Train • Develop • Enjoy

6 September, 2017 Issue 536
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GAMES

- > 3D SQUARE ATTACK AND PLUSES
- > CATCH THEM OUT
- > THE EXTRA MAN

< UZAIR CASSIEM
SOUTH AFRICAN
FORWARD ON
THE BREAK



SESSIONS

- > CLEAR THE SPOILER
- > LINEOUT LEARNING
- > LINEOUT BREAKOUTS
- > PATTERNS OF PLAY
- > BALL ROOM BLITZ

PLAYS

- > TANK 10

STRETCH THE PLAYERS TO THE LIMIT



Issue 536
6 September, 2017

Rugby Coach Weekly offers proven, easy to use rugby drills, coaching sessions, practice plans, training games, warm-ups, tips and advice. The resources are created for the grassroots coach following best practice from around the world and insights from the professional game.

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Cover picture
Uzair Cassiem, South African forward

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Touchline Tales

All sorts play rugby, so coach for all sorts

Rugby is an attractive game for different people for different reasons. Personally, I love nothing better than some sweet sidesteps or pass under pressure. I can also appreciate a last-ditch cover tackle. If I'm watching a game on tape, I will speed through a lineout maul if I'm just viewing for pleasure, though I do actually slow them down when I want to see how it worked.

Other coaches and players will be more interested in the more physical aspects of the game. After all, this is a game for all shapes and sizes. So, and with this in mind, I think it's important to vary our coaching according to everyone's wants, not just our own.

This might go against our own predilections. I can remember very early in my coaching career telling my school U12 side never to kick. I believed we should run everything.

Looking back, I'm sure this had many benefits, though I now reflect it might have helped them relieve some defensive pressure. In a funny way, I wonder if this tactic came back to bite me. Six years later, this same team, who had won very little under my time

with them, turned over a rival school team at U18s, showing real grit and determination. The only downside was I was now the coach of that rival team.

With that U12 team, we certainly didn't work on lineout mauls. Even if it had been a lumpy team, I still wouldn't have. At the youngest age groups, you shouldn't worry too much about tactics, just give them a range of principles to play to. When you reach U16 and above, then you might want to play a more tactical game based on their strengths and weaknesses. Some more development and forward-looking coaches might not even be that prescriptive at this age, and wait until they are seniors.

However, there's no doubt you need to create training scenarios that match all the players' expectations. It can't be all rough and tumble, and it can't be just all fancy touch rugby. In other words, there should be something for everyone in every session.

Even props love handling. But they love scrummaging more



That doesn't mean you should compromise for the sake of keeping everyone happy. Instead, training should contain a full diet of skills and challenges. Some of these will suit all, some not all. When I've used Google Docs for feedback from sessions, and asked them what they felt they enjoyed the most, there's such a range of answers. This evidence points heavily to the fact that you have to keep your sessions full of variety.

The danger is that you try to cover too much. If the players are racing from one activity to another, they don't have a chance to develop their understanding within that activity. Yes, pressurise them with unusual events, but also give them space to experiment and discovery.



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LINK OF THE WEEK

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Fitting in the fight

Rugby training should be physical at times, and with that, the players must want to win contact situations. How do you create that atmosphere in a positive way in your sessions? **By Dan Cottrell**

Scott “Razor” Robertson, the breakdancing Crusaders coach, who featured on our front cover a few weeks ago, is a shrewd operator. As an uncompromising All Black back rower, he knew how to win possession as a player. Now, as one of the premier club coaches in world rugby, he also knows a thing or two about keeping his players fit for the whole season.

One of his mantras is that you need to save your ammo for the weekend. In other words, he doesn't do much contact training during the week before a match. He does this for two reasons. First, it keeps his players fit – less bone-on-bone contact certainly reduces injuries. Second, it keeps the players hungry. Their contact ammunition hasn't been used up in a Tuesday contact session.

I am sure he would be the first to admit that he uses this with a professional and well-motivated team that would happily knock seven bells out of each other during the week. With another team, and more probably the sorts of teams most of us coach, it's a lot different. They need to spend time “fighting” and learning how to operate in more physical situations.

In my days of playing a good level of rugby, a Tuesday session after a defeat was often very physical. And, even for a winger like me, extremely enjoyable. I'm not sure how much skill was involved, but there was certainly plenty of frustration vented. It wasn't unusual for the hookers to end up having a scuffle. Why is it always the hookers!

A fight is a good way to think about the contest, though I would be careful to keep that language to yourself. Instead, create an environment where the players are keen to win contests, which then pushes them to use the right skills to overcome their opponent.

It's a fight because often the initial contact skill doesn't land the decisive blow. It might gain the advantage, yet it still needs to be finished. For example, at the ruck, a defender might get their hands on the ball. They need to be strong and sturdy so they aren't driven off. Or, a tackler makes a good shoulder contact with the ball carrier. Continuing to drive their legs, tightening the grip and twisting in the finish gives the rest of the team a chance to turn over the ball.

The same is true when the situation is not so positive. Continued resilience can reduce the

CONTACT AGES 14+

Stop defences spoiling the ball

Defenders will come into the spoil your ball at the tackle, choosing their moments rather than just flying in. You need to create a system to prevent this. **By Dan Cottrell**

CHALLENGE
At the breakdown, many defences focus on scrapping rather than spoiling the ball. Callers get their hands on the ball. Create a wall around the tackled ball and give them a bit of defence time to spoil the ball.

TECHNIQUE
The first two players responsible for clearing space the tackled attack defences will beyond the ball and pull them on the ground.
If a player is off his feet, his ability to spoil is minimised (see picture 1).
Establish the “gate” well beyond the ball.
The further beyond the ball your clearance players can advance, the better. It changes the referee's perception of the offside line and the position of the “gate” for the defence.
Team, to the advantage of the team in possession (see picture 2).
Designate a “scanner”
Once the immediate threats have been knocked down, try to get a third player sitting directly above the ball (see picture 3). He:
1. Shows the tackle, especially if he is delaying release of the ball.
2. Scans for late counter-attacks by the defence.
Physical characteristics of the scanner
Typically this third player is powerful with a low centre of gravity, such as a prop or hooker.
The heavier and more powerful they are, the more difficult to ground from their strong position above the tackled player.

DEAL WITH THE SPOILER

1 Get over and beyond the ball if the spoiler is late

2 If the spoiler is early, get him off his feet and away from the ball

CHANGE THE GATE

1 Clearing well beyond the ball means a bigger gate

INSTALL THE SCANNER

1 Put a good “scanner” over the ball in a strong body position. Props and hookers are ideal “scanners”

Pass → Ground covered - - - - - Direction of run →

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outcomes for the opposition and sometimes even reverse the outcome in the favour of the better “fighter”.

Instil this attitude in sessions like **the stopping defences spoiling the ball on page 7**. The session and techniques are not all about “blood and guts”, but do help reveal resilience.

Two games to change the picture

Ten years of writing in *Rugby Coach Weekly* makes you reflective. I did use games 10 years ago. I invented some at the time, and still use variations of them. You would think by now I would have seen them all.

Thankfully no! Here are two more games, ones that I've “stolen” from football, and made them into rugby games. They might be out there already in some form, but you can see my versions on **pages 6 and 8**.

When you use them, as I discovered myself, you must adjust the pitch sizes to suit the circumstances. With the kick and catch game, I started with 10m boxes, but made them a bit bigger because the players were quick enough to move into position.

With the handling decision-making game, I originally didn't have the cones inside the box. The defenders were just covering around the outside. In the end, the defenders just

cut corners. So, instead of shouting at them, I allowed them to run anywhere they liked. However, they couldn't intercept passes and could only make a touch two steps from the try lines. It was a sort of player-coach solution as the players were breaking the rules so much.

The key was that it was a rule that didn't have much impact on behaviour. How many players have to turn around a box in a match situation? So, I relaxed this rule and the game became more fluid.

Thanks to football (how often can you say that!), for providing new ways to coach decision making. And remember that real decision making is not what you think is the best way to achieve an outcome. Instead it should be the players that select one of a number of solutions, some of which will be better than others. Then they will really understand when to use their techniques and how to do so.

CATCHING ALL AGES

Game: Catch them out

Use this game of catch, pass and movement to work on players' quickness, high ball awareness and ability to handle under pressure. You can add in lots of variations to the initial game. **By Dan Cottrell**

CHALLENGE
Oppose to take a high ball, like from a kick and end there and the opposition under pressure

SET UP
Mark out four 10m boxes as in the picture. They should be around 10m apart.

HOW TO
Split into two teams of three and put each team into a box.
Have one team kick or throw to the other team. The receiving team catch the ball and so each player touches the ball, with the last player kicking or throwing the ball into the designated box.
When the ball is in the air, the kicking team are designated a box to catch.
Repeat until one team drops the ball inside their box. If a catch/throw goes outside the box, the receiving team pick up the ball and kick from any point inside their box.
Variations
Play with just boxes, but further apart. The kicking team have their box once they have kicked.
Play with four players, and one player can catch the kick, as long as they start in their box as the kick is made.
With older players, the catchers call for effort. They score a bonus point for this.
Have the receiving team call out which box the opposition need to run to when the ball is in the air.

TECHNIQUE
Call early.
Kick or throw the ball, but preferably kick.

1 One group throws or kicks the ball into the box where the other group is

2 One player catches the ball. Ideally, they must jump to catch

3 Call out which box to move to, and the group moves

4 Each player in the receiving team must touch the ball

5 After two passes, the team in possession pass or kick the ball into the next box

6 Repeat the call for a new box to run to call earlier to create more pressure

Pass → Ground covered - - - - - Direction of run →

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Up-to-date lineout training

While most aspects of rugby coaching are becoming more game-led, unit sessions for forwards are still drill-based. Change that perception and make it about fun and movement. **By Dan Hemingway, Midlands U18s forwards coach**



Practise under pressure in training. Notice that the England players are low, with their legs flexed, ready to spring up

Most modern rugby coaches use games as the basis of training, yet this hasn't filtered down into a lot of forwards unit sessions. There are still too many "drills" and unopposed lineout plays. Here's how I've tried to bring in the ideas of fun and movement to improve my forwards, focusing on lineouts.

TYPICAL LINEOUT SESSION

I don't do many full lineouts in a session. Instead, I concentrate on the players getting the little bits right. That means putting them under pressure at the right times.

There's a careful balance here. You must match up the pressure capabilities to the level of player you have. For example, with my U18 representative side, we will be quite competitive quite quickly. With less able players, I will take it slower. However, there needs to be pressure.

Pressure: increase it by focusing on by being accurate or by beating the opposition.

Accuracy: Completing a number of repetitions
We can create pressure by overloading the players. For example, we might want to complete five accurate lifts in less than a

minute. As the players get tired, their accuracy might falter. You judge the amount of the overload depending on the level of players.
Opposition: Winning the ball
We create pressure by putting the players into game scenarios. You can modify the opposition by giving them more or less time to set up.

PLAYER POWER

The more the players can take control of their learning environment, the more they will be motivated to progress.

Here are some ways I use:

> **Box size.** The players set out the parameters for training. For example, the size of the playing area or the area in which they will perform. I give them the cones and they put them down.

I will challenge them to make it smaller or larger depending on what outcomes I'm looking for.

> **Technical feedback.** I will set out some core principles for better play (see the box). When they are training, I will ask them what's going well and what might they do better. They can reference the core principles, but then they must decide how they can improve.

BREAKING OUT

Lineouts can be practised in one long session, in breakouts and as one-offs. Sometimes, you will spend a good 15-20 minutes on one aspect of the lineout, building it up from first principles. Compress that into five minutes at a later date, because the players will be used to what's coming. This can be a breakout session.

However, you must also recognise that in matches, lineouts are one-offs. You can't go back to practise it if it hasn't worked out the first time. Work into your training a moment when players face a lineout they must win. They won't have another chance for some time.

CORE PRINCIPLES

- > **Tight is height – the closer the lifters are, the higher the jumper.**
- > **Hips forward – if the jumpers push their hips forward, they are easy to lift because their core is locked.**
- > **Lift with legs – dip down, using the legs to initiate the lift.**
- > **Explode – explode through the lift, finishing on the toes.**

Lineout breakouts

Use these three lineout exercises as part of your forwards session to check for technique while putting the players into “stressful” situations. It creates pressure for more accuracy from both lifters and jumpers. **By Dan Hemingway**

1. THREE PODS

Set up three pods of lifters and jumpers standing about 5m apart in a triangle. Throw the ball to the first pod as they rise up. The jumper catches and then throws the ball to the second pod, who rise up to meet the ball. This continues around the circle for five lifts each.

You can develop this by making it a square. Put a pod on each corner, so one corner is spare. Once a pod has made a catch and pass, it moves to a spare corner.

2. SQUARES

You ask a pod to put down a square of cones on the ground. They move into that square to lift and jump. The smaller the square the better because “tight is height”. In other words, the closer together the lifters, the higher the jumper gets.

As the players progress, they make the square smaller.

3. AROUND THE WORLD

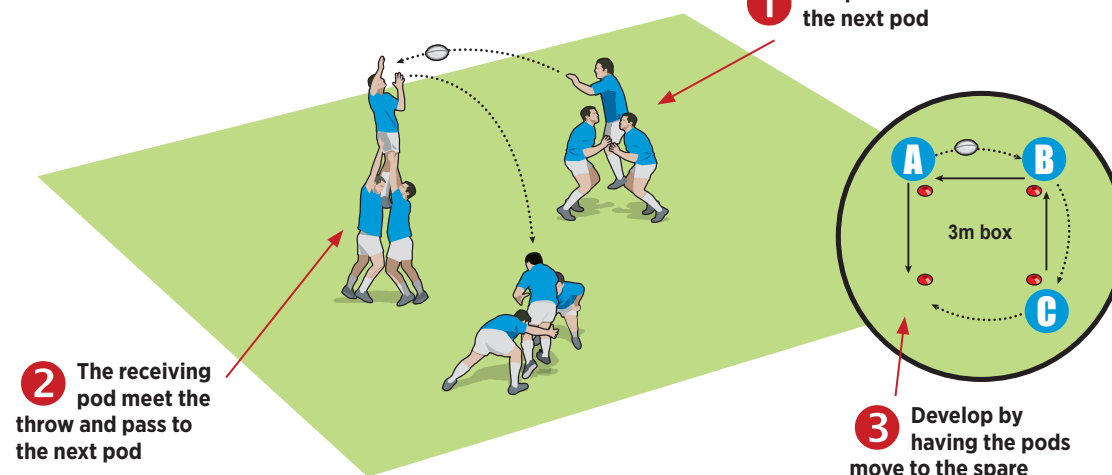
Put a pod in the middle of four cone squares (each with a colour). Have a hooker about 5m away from the front of the squares. The hooker calls a colour, moves opposite the square and sets to throw. The pod moves into that square to receive the throw.

TECHNIQUES

- > Tight is height
- > Drop height to lift
- > Explode in lift
- > Hips forward in jump

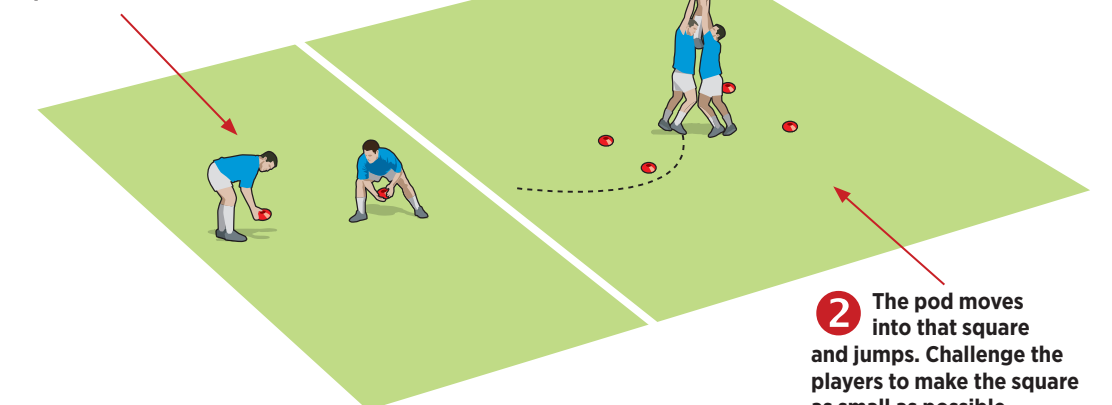
Dan is a Level 3 coach and U18 Midlands forwards coach.
Danhemingwaycoaching.com

THREE PODS



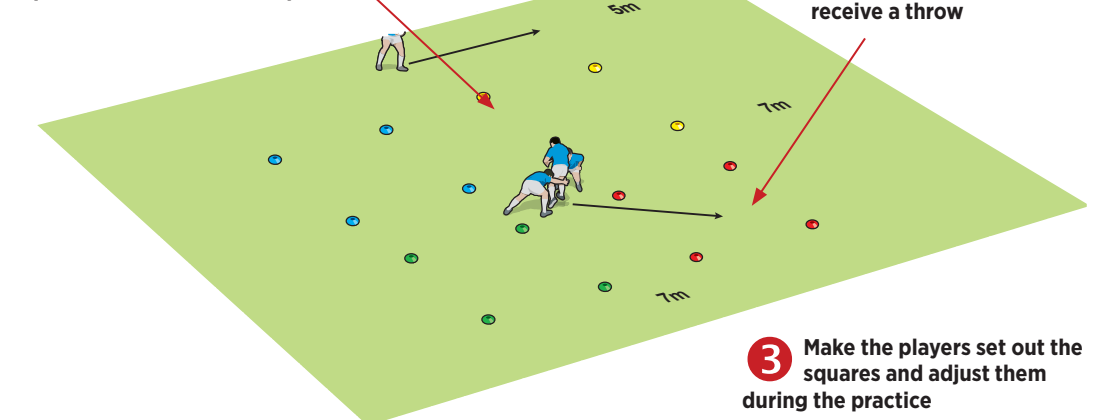
SQUARES

1 Get the players to mark out a square of cones



AROUND THE WORLD

1 A hooker calls the colour of a square, moves opposite that square and throws into the pod



Pass →

Ground covered - - - -

Direction of run →

Game: Catch them out

Use this game of catch, pass and movement to work on players' quickness, high ball awareness and ability to handle under pressure. You can add in lots of variations to the initial game. **By Dan Cottrell**

CHALLENGE

Organise to take a high ball, like from a kick off and then put the opposition under pressure

SET UP

Mark out four 10m boxes as in the picture. They should be around 10m apart.

HOW TO

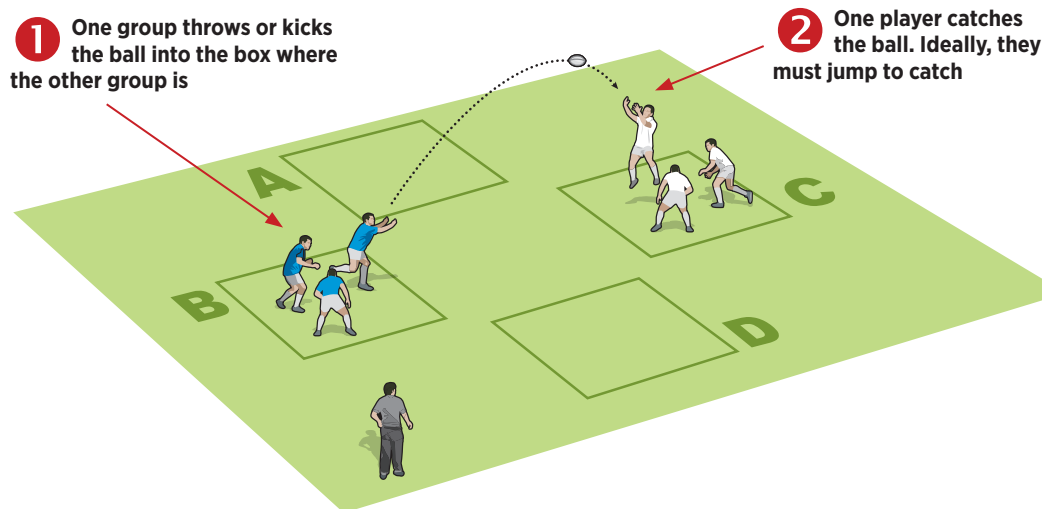
- > Split into two teams of three and put each team into a box.
- > Have one team kick or throw to the other team. While the ball is in the air, they run to a designated box.
- > The receiving team catch the ball, pass it so each player touches the ball, with the last player kicking or throwing the ball into the designated box.
- > Repeat until one team drops the ball inside their box. If a kick/throw goes outside the box, the receiving team pick up the ball and kick from any point inside their box.

Variations

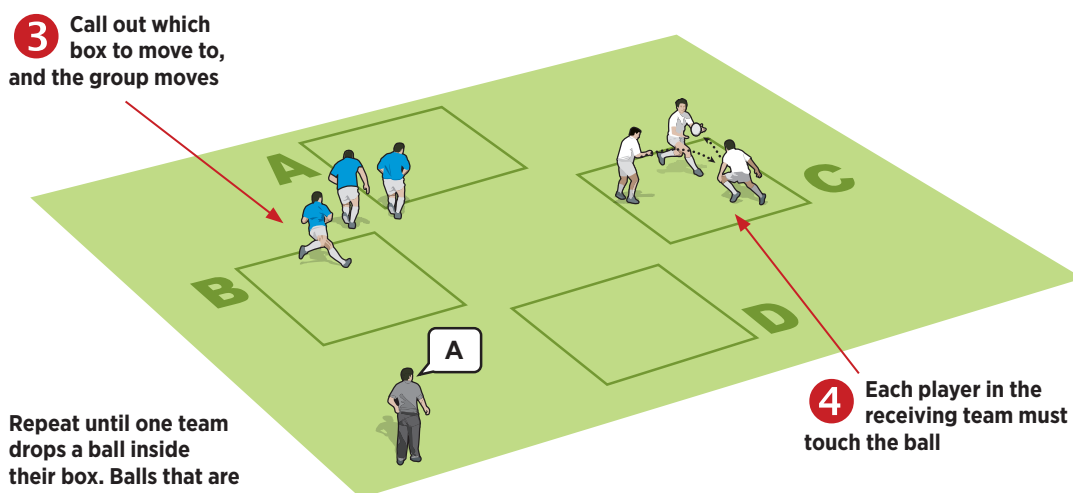
- > Play with just three boxes, but further apart. The kicking team leave their box once they have kicked.
- > Play with four players, and one player can chase the kick, as long as they start in their box as the kick is made.
- > With older players, the catchers can be lifted. They score a bonus point for this.
- > Have the receiving team call out which box the opposition need to run to when the ball is in the air.

TECHNIQUE

- > Call early.
- > Kick or throw the ball, but preferably kick.

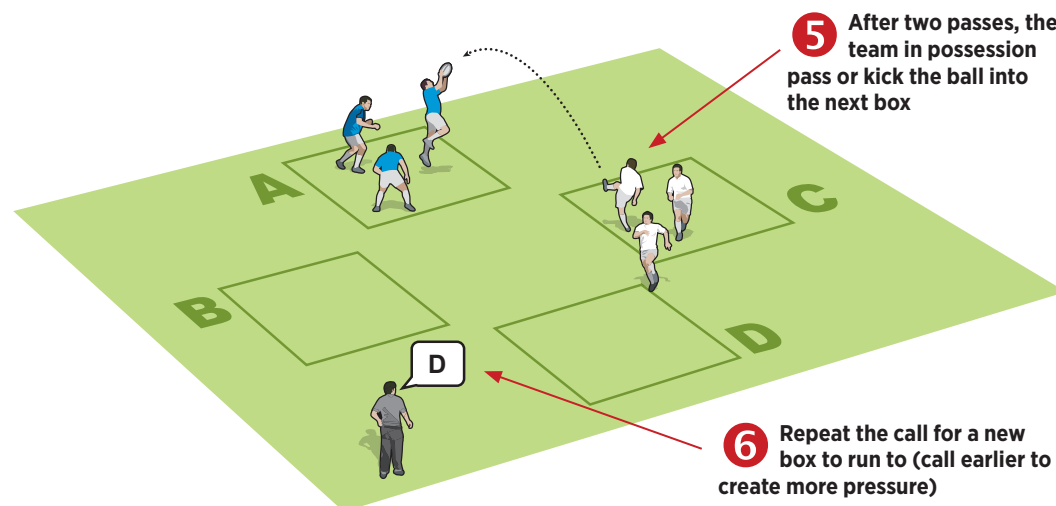


2 One player catches the ball. Ideally, they must jump to catch



Repeat until one team drops a ball inside their box. Balls that are thrown/kicked outside their box don't count

4 Each player in the receiving team must touch the ball



6 Repeat the call for a new box to run to (call earlier to create more pressure)

Pass →

Ground covered - - - -

Direction of run →

Stop defences spoiling the ball

Defenders will come into the spoil your ball at the tackle, choosing their moments rather than just flying in. You need to create a system to prevent this. You are also forming a ruck under the new laws, creating an offside line. **By Dan Cottrell**

CHALLENGE

At the breakdown, many defensive teams concentrate a great deal of effort on scanning then spoiling the tackle area before the attacking half-back gets his hands on the ball. Create a seal around the tackle ball and give your 9 a line of defence from the would-be spoilers.

TECHNIQUE

• Attack the spoilers beyond the ball

The first two players responsible for cleanout ignore the tackler, attack defenders well beyond the ball and put them on the ground.

If a player is off his feet, his ability to spoil is neutralised (see picture 1).

• Establish the “gate” well beyond the ball

The further beyond the ball your cleanout players can advance, the better. It changes the referee’s perception of the offside line and the position of the “gate” for the defensive team, to the advantage of the team in possession (see picture 2).

• Designate a “scanner”

Once the immediate threats have been knocked down, try to get a third player sitting directly above the ball (see picture 3). He:

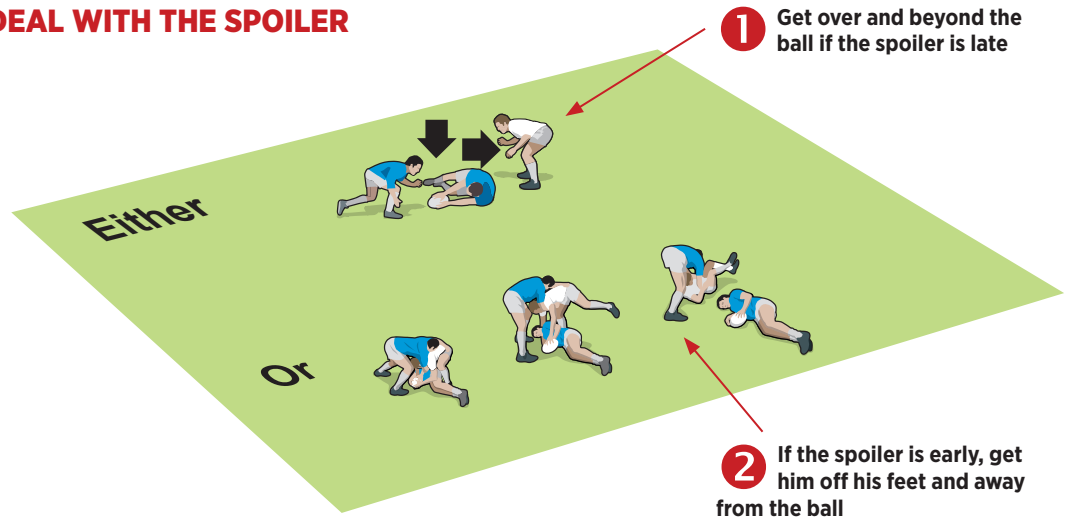
1. Removes the tackler, especially if he is delaying release of the ball.
2. Scans for late counter-rucks by the defence.
3. Forms a ruck by being over the ball, so creating an offside line IF no threats come in.

• Physical characteristics of the scanner.

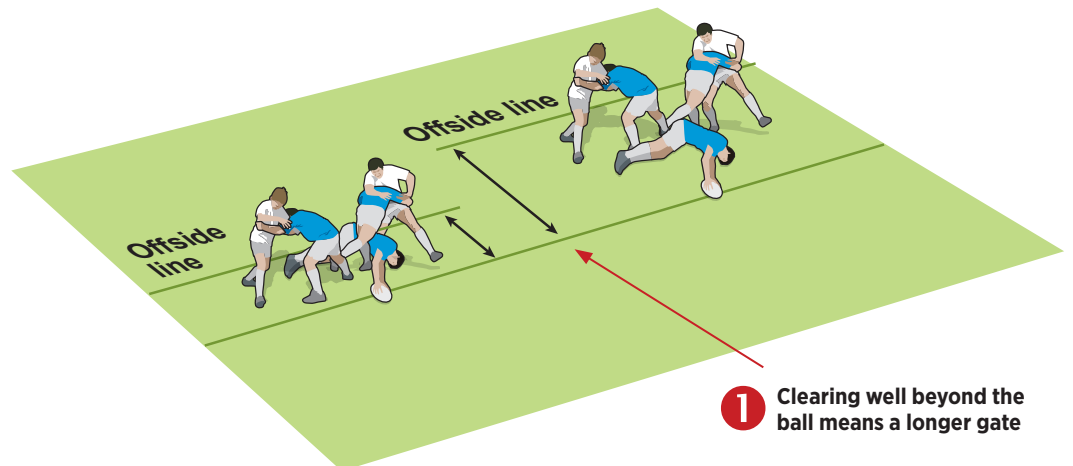
Typically this third player is powerful with a low centre of gravity, such as a prop or hooker.

The lower and more powerful they are, the more difficult to uproot from their strong position astride the tackled player.

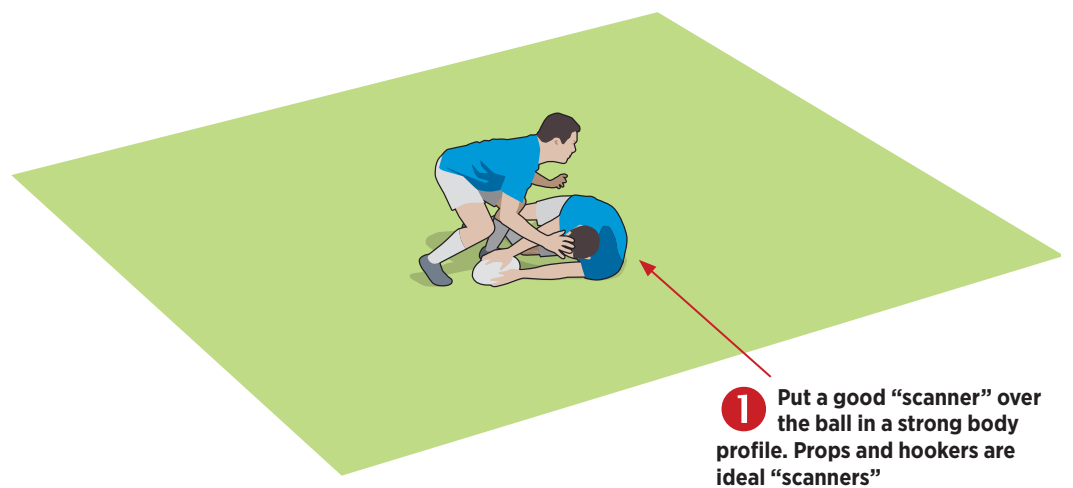
DEAL WITH THE SPOILER



CHANGE THE GATE



INSTALL THE SCANNER



Pass →

Ground covered - - - -

Direction of run →

3D square attack and pluses

Keep the players thinking about where to attack as the defence move around dynamically, adding in players as the attack becomes more successful.

By Dan Cottrell

CHALLENGE

To keep scoring as the pressure builds.

SET UP

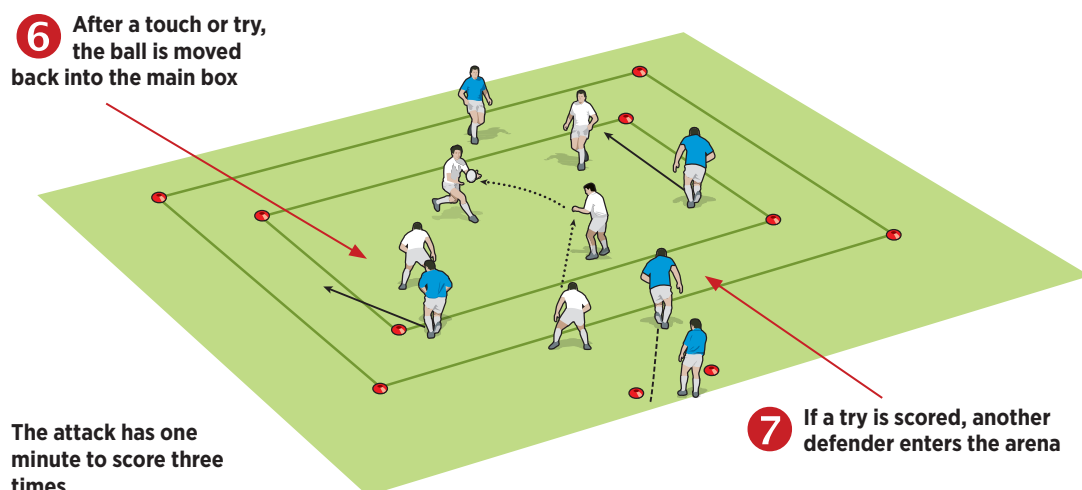
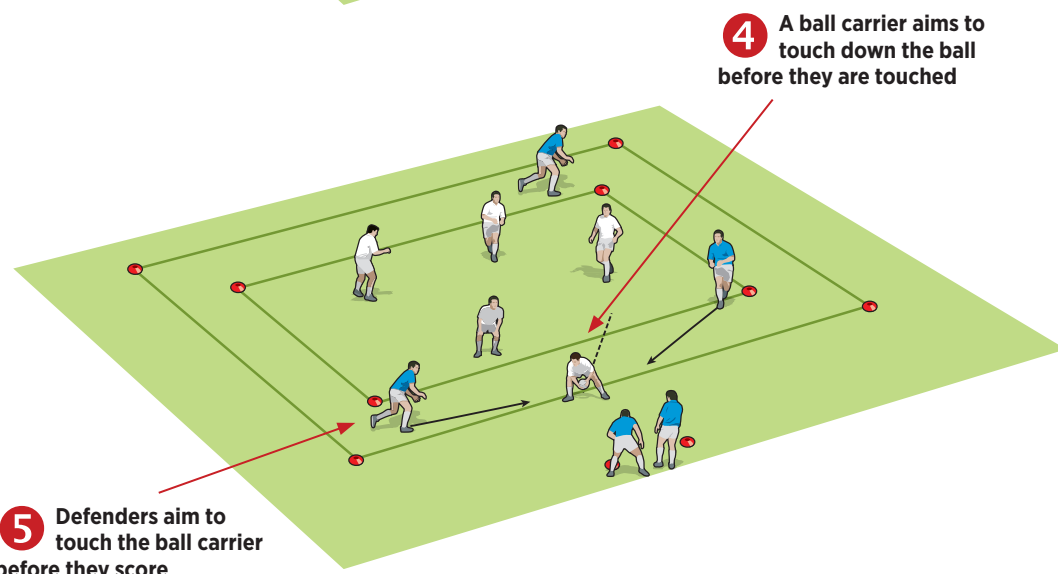
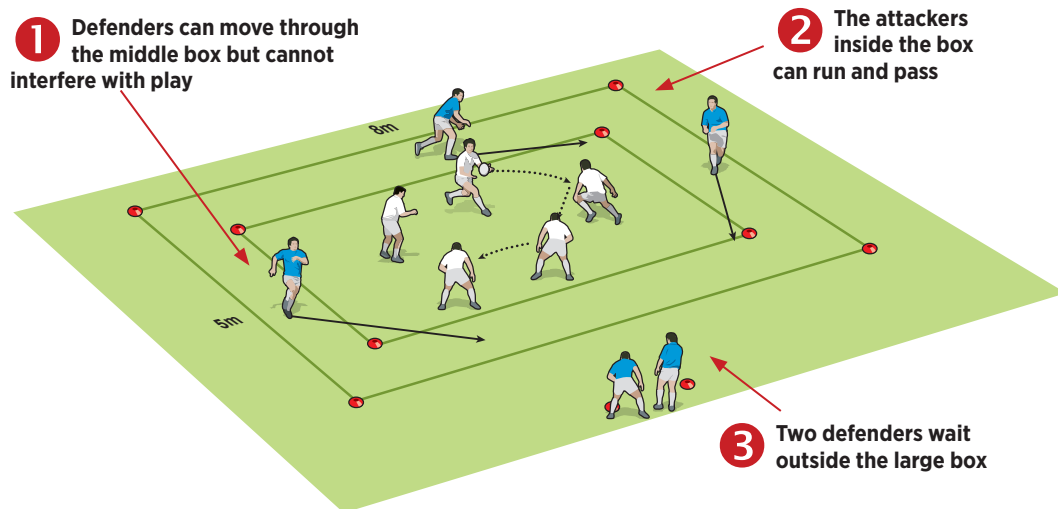
A 8m by 5m box (or larger depending on your players), with four cones about two steps in from each corner.

HOW TO DO IT

- > Put five attackers in the middle of the box.
- > Put three defenders around the edges, and two about 5m from the outside. The defenders inside can move anywhere, but are not allowed to intercept the ball.
- > The attackers can pass and run in any direction. They score on the outside of the box. If they do, they pass back in to middle.
- > Every time the attackers score, another defender enters the box.
- > If a defender touches an attacker within two steps of the try line, the attacker has to pass back into the middle box. The defender cannot make touches inside the middle box.
- > Give the attack one minute to score three times.

THINKING

- > Defenders can only be effective on the edges of the box. Do they step through the box to cover, or stay around the edges? Do they follow the ball?
- > Attackers need to keep the ball moving quickly. Do they do this with passes, pass and move or just movement?



Pass Direction of run ———

Ground covered - - - - -

Extra man

A snappy and effective exercise that helps players develop many key areas of their game, such as running, handling, support, communication and decision-making.

By **Damian McGrath**



WHAT YOU NEED FOR THIS GAME

- 6 Players
- 1 Ball
- 8 Cones

SET UP

Use the cones to mark out a playing area measuring 10m x 15m. Use more cones to mark out a 5m channel running across the area and another cone to indicate the 5m mark within the channel. One of the long sides will be the try line, as shown ❶.

RULES

Play two-handed touch rugby.

Each play ends when either a try is scored, the defenders take possession of the ball or the player in possession is tackled by a defender.

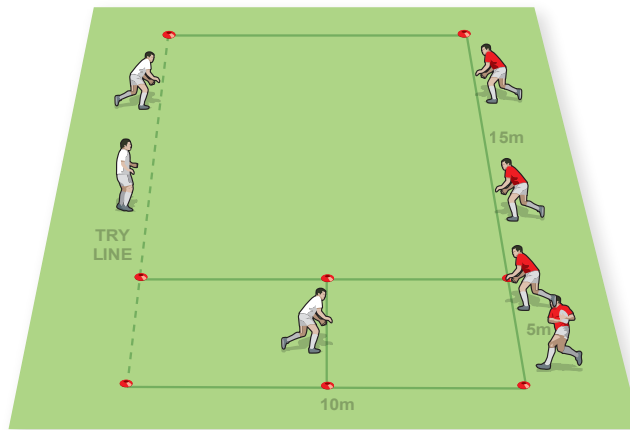
WHAT YOU DO AS COACH

- ❶ Position four attackers on the end line opposite the try line. Two of them should be standing inside the 5m channel markers with a ball, and the other two outside the channel. Place the first defender on the 5m mark inside the channel facing the ball-holding attackers, with two further defenders back on the try line outside the channel.
 - ❷ On your whistle, the first two attackers move forwards and the first defender moves to try and stop them. The second attacker can't leave the channel until he receives a pass from his team mate.
 - ❸ The other players can also move on the whistle to support their team mates. The middle defender must cover the possibility that the ball carrier could "dummy" the first defender and run straight up the 5m channel.
- The attackers have one play in which to score.

HOW YOU CAN PROGRESS THE GAME

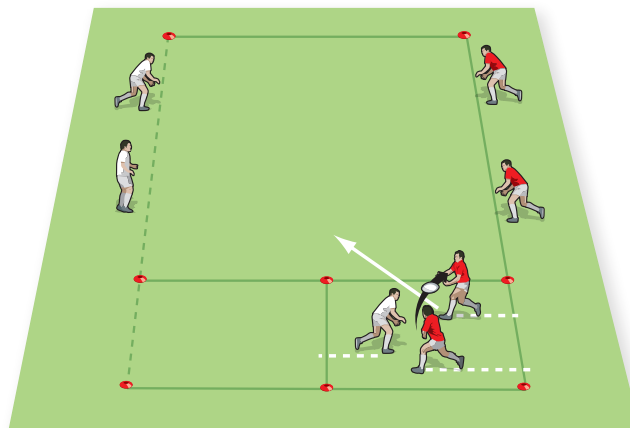
Pressure the players into making early decisions by narrowing the channel. Or give the attackers more space and time to think by making the channel wider.

Add a new dynamic to the game by allowing the attacking players to kick the ball.



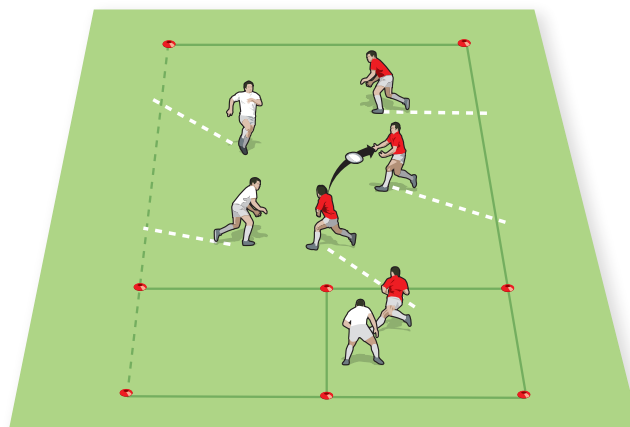
- ❶ Four attackers – two in 5m channel
▶ Three defenders – one on 5m line in channel.

EXPLAIN: Make the first two attackers aware of the importance of committing and beating the first defender.



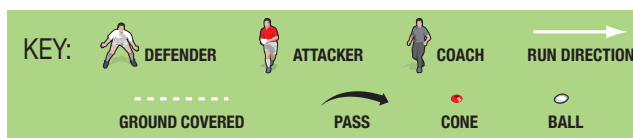
- ❷ Players in channel advance
▶ Second attacker stays in channel until he's passed to.

OBSERVE: When the outside attackers come into play, look to see if they demonstrate good lines of running to support their team mates.



- ❸ Players outside the channel come into play
▶ Attackers attempt to score in one play.

CALL OUT: Let the defenders know that they can be effective if they advance together, nominate and communicate their intent.



Tank 10

Exploit a quick 10 by holding the opposition midfield with a centre rush before releasing the 10 behind the centres to attack wide. Has options to attack tight as well, with 12 taking the ball to the line. **By Dan Cottrell**

BEST FROM

- The opposition half, but not too close to the line. Not a “gain line” buster, but a scoring move, probably from a scrum near the touchline. It gives a great opportunity for 15 to be running into wide open spaces.

WHY IT WORKS

- This move not only creates an extra man with the “loop”, it also slows the forward momentum of the defensive line. 13’s run at an angle against the grain holds the defenders, giving 10 time to move the ball wide.
- Ideal against the “rush/blitz defence”.

GOOD IF YOU HAVE

- A 10 who is a good distributor of the ball.
- A 15 who is a strong runner.
- Already made a “crash ball” run with 13, especially from 12.

WHAT PLAYERS SHOULD DO

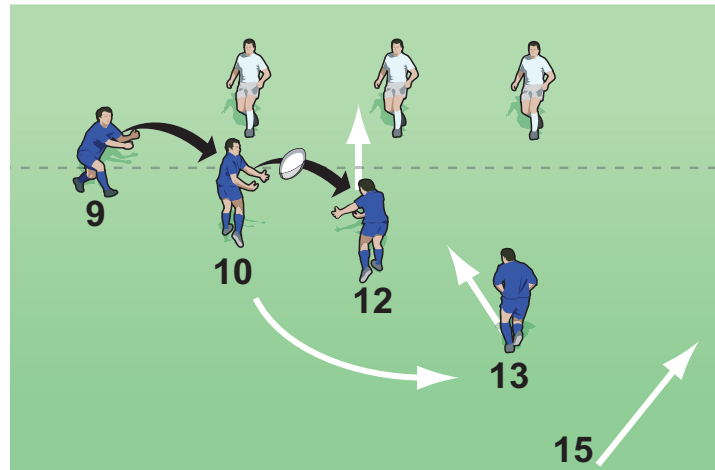
- 10 passes to 12 and “loops” behind to take a “loop pass” from 12 and then feeds 15.
- 12, standing flat, takes a pass from 10, then runs forwards a little before passing the ball behind 13 to 10 who has “looped” around.
- 13 runs as if to take a “pop pass” from 12.
- 15 delays his run until 10 has started the “loop” and then runs at a gap.

COMMON MISTAKES

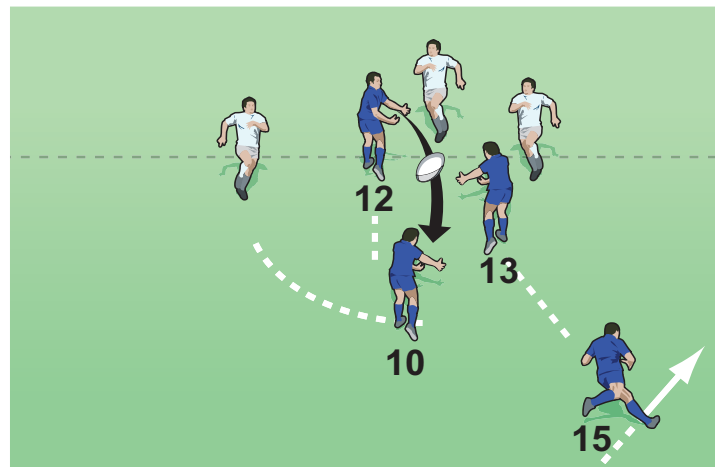
- 12 does not pass the ball far enough from 13, otherwise there could be crossing. 12 has to delay the pass and the best way is not to go forwards too much.
- 13 runs too early and too wide. He really needs to attack close to 12, but not get too far in front of the pass.

THINK ABOUT

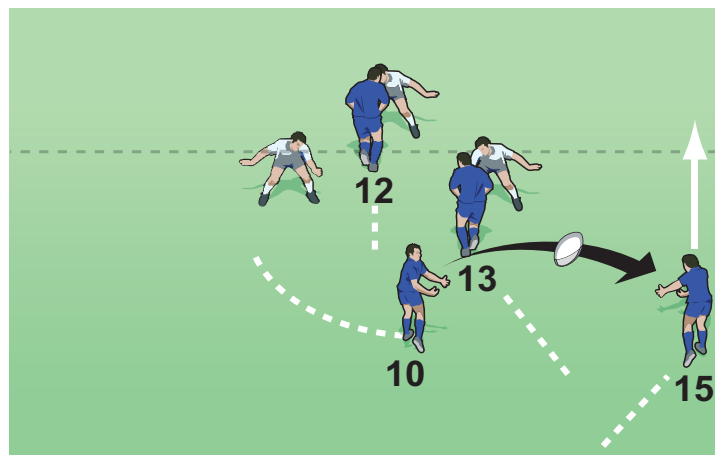
- 15 starting very wide and 13 starting very close to 12, but quite deep. This should open up the gap between 13 and 14 even more.
- 10 attacking the “tackle line” before releasing 15 with a short pass. This could exploit the speed of a quick 10 who might find some more space.



1 10 and 12 start close together, with 13 wide, and 15 behind 13. 10 passes to 12 and then starts to loop behind.



2 10 loops behind 12 and takes a deep loop pass. 13 runs close to 12, but does not run in front of 10. 15 runs wide.



3 10 passes long behind 13 and on to 15 as 15 arcs out.



Patterns of play

Develop your team's awareness of where to attack against different pictures of defence to create space to attack. **By Dan Cottrell**

WHAT YOU TELL YOUR PLAYERS THE SESSION IS ABOUT:

- 1 Developing simple patterns of play which can be used in games.
- 2 Learning to communicate and re-organise during phases of play.

WHAT YOU TELL YOUR PLAYERS TO DO:

- 1 Work as a team to execute set phases of play.
- 2 Get into your position quickly and accurately ready for the next phase of play.
- 3 Squeeze the game by attacking close to the breakdown.
- 4 Stretch the game by attacking far from the breakdown.

WHAT TO SHOUT

- "Attack the line"
- "Get the ball through the hands"
- "Pass then move into position"

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Players not sure where they need to be for the next phase.
- Players holding the ball for too long before passing.
- Players who don't understand the patterns of play or who struggle to communicate them effectively.

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

When in a game would you use these set patterns of play? What other simple patterns of play could you use?

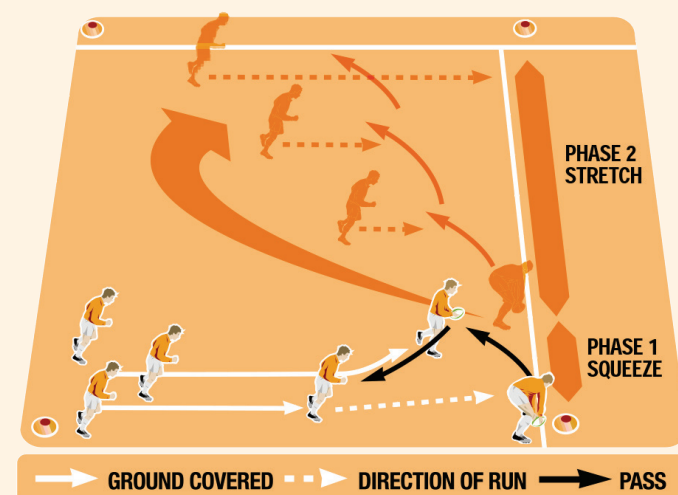
WHERE DOES IT FIT: **Individual skills:** Passing and support **Team skills:** Continuity after phases

WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO:

Players work in groups of five or six for three or four phases at a time. Start on one touchline and attack a line on the pitch (either the halfway or 22 metre lines).

The players start in the formation of your choosing.

You give the players the pattern of attack you want them to follow, depending on the type of game plan you are trying to develop with your team. For example: squeeze, squeeze, stretch. This means the players hit the ball up tight for two phases and then pass it wide. At the end of each phase the ball is placed on the original line. The players then realign for the next phase. One player acts as scrum half to get the next phase started.



DEVELOPMENT

- 1 Introduce the "switch" to the players, that is moves to change the direction of the attack.
- 2 Introduce imaginary rucks. Every time the ball is put down the nearest player must step over it as if clearing a ruck.

PUT IT INTO A GAME

Set up two equal teams to play touch rugby. One team starts on the 22 metre line at one of the touchlines and attacks the try line. The other team defends. When a touch is made, the ball must be placed on the ground and the defenders must get on side.

Set a scoring zone for the attacking team (marked with cones) and challenge them to score in the zone in a set number of phases. The attacking players need to work out the pattern of attack they are going to use to score in the zone.

The defending team can only have one defender directly in front of the scoring zone. The scoring player must run straight to get to the scoring zone – they can't run sideways into the zone.

Ballroom blitz

Improve your players' understanding and execution of a rush/blitz defence by using these scenarios. **By Dan Cottrell**

WHAT YOU TELL YOUR PLAYERS THE SESSION IS ABOUT:

- 1 Using a rush defence to pressurise the attack.
- 2 Identifying when to use rush (or blitz) defence.

WHAT YOU TELL YOUR PLAYERS TO DO:

- 1 Make sure you have at least equal numbers or better if you are going to use a blitz defence.
- 2 Focus on the players who are going to be "hit" in the blitz.

WHAT TO SHOUT

- "Go straight up, slightly outside your target."
- "Identify your targets early."
- "Lots of noise."
- "Trust your inside and outside co defender."

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Attackers stepping back against the blitz – the defenders must be balanced as they go forward with their shoulders square.
- Dog legging – line speed is vital, but the line must come forward at the pace of the slowest player.

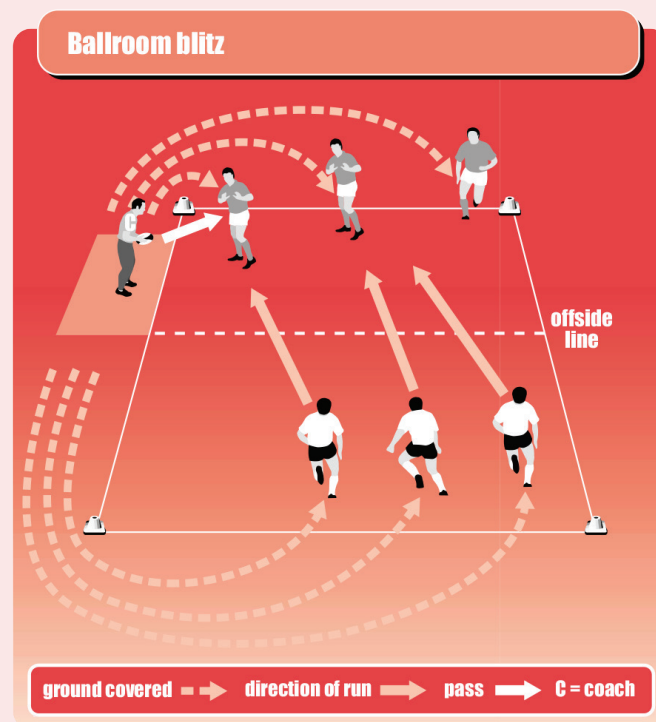
WHAT TO THINK ABOUT

Where on the pitch would you choose to use the blitz defence – it does depend on your risk aversion. What calls are you going to use to "initiate" the blitz? What space do you want between your "blitzing" players – finger tip distance or slightly wider?

WHERE DOES IT FIT: Individual skills: Tackle decisions **Team skills:** Aggressive defence

WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO:

- 1 Line speed warm up: three players stand in a line and move forward when you touch a ball on the floor. Check for pace, staying in line, spacing and communication.
- 2 Ballroom blitz: three attackers and three defenders (adjust if you have more) stand next to you in a small box. The ends of the box represent the back feet of a ruck. When you shout "go", both sides move into position as attack and defence. You release the ball when you are ready and the defence needs to cut down the attack before the ball reaches the second receiver.



DEVELOPMENT

- 1 Overload attack or defence. If defenders see more attackers, they should cancel "blitz".
- 2 Allow attack to try out "moves" like switches or miss passes.

PUT IT INTO A GAME

Split into two teams. Have one player (not scrum half) on each side with the ball. The ball carriers need to follow you as you run around the pitch. When you touch one of the ball carriers, then the play becomes "live". The other ball carrier stands out. When a ruck is formed, then you count down the time allowed for the ball to be released. Defences should decide whether to blitz the attack or not. If you want to overload attack or defence, call a number of players to stand with the non-playing ball carrier.