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COACH Talk



Craig Coleman - South Sydney Rabbitohs

Craig "Tugger" Coleman was a creative halfback who played 199 games for South Sydney between 1982 and 1992. During 1998 he took over the role of head coach at his beloved club and his coaching has played a major part in the resurgence of the Rabbitohs during 1999.

In this interview you will read about 'Tuggers' thoughts and techniques on Rugby League coaching as he explains them to Keith Hookway.

RLCM What has brought about the resurgence of South Sydney?

C.C. No secret, but a lot of hard work. Pre-season training started in November and I knew from the beginning they were a very good football team and they responded by completing any task given to them without complaints. There are some very good footballers there, who have been there for some time such as Darryl Trindall who has never been coached before, he is enjoying it and is showing the benefits. He has always been a very good player and over the years any coach's game plan has always included Trindall. All I am doing is putting plenty of spirit into the team. The players are playing for contracts and the Club's survival in the future. My role is to talk positively to them and I am trying to be a players' coach as much as I can. I encourage them to try certain things and to do things and build their confidence up and not to restrict them from the talent they possess.

RLCM Do you have a coaching philosophy?

C.C. There is never an excuse to quit. I don't have any brilliant game plans, all I want the player to do is to give his best. Some games we will be beaten but at the end of it there is never an excuse to give up. I can't accept teams scoring 16 to 20 points in the last 5 – 6 minutes which is a sign of giving up and since I have taken over we have not done that.

RLCM How important is skill development in your players?

C.C. We do a lot of work on skills. From the beginning players have done a lot of fitness work with the ball in their hands. Things such as quick hand

drills, running angles, three on two, two on one so that they always have a ball in their hands, and players working in small groups. There are some good staff including Les Davidson who has that aura about him that lifts everybody. We have used some judo work in pre-season to help players tackle the opposition onto their backs and to help our players get up off the ground quickly. We had an instructor work with the team. The idea provided something different, players enjoyed the work and responded at training. They gained a lot from it.

RLCM You concentrate some of your training on game related skills. Can you elaborate on some of the drills you use?

C.C. One example is that I would start with four attackers Vs. four defenders, then I might change to four attackers against six defenders. The attackers would include Trindall, O'Neill, Wing and Loomans to try to create an overlap on the outside of defence.

Other game related drills would be four on four with play the balls and from that attackers put on a small play around that area.

Another one we use is nine defenders against thirteen attackers to allow players to appreciate all types of situations that could happen in the game.

These types of drills would be in every session, and we try to simulate all possibilities that could happen in the game, there is a lot of satisfaction in this type of work.

RLCM How important is impulse or reactive play Vs. structured play in your overall game plan?

C.C. The players are generally allowed to do what they like but we still have patterns of play. These patterns are kept simple to give them some direction, and allow the team to lay a good platform against the opposition to score tries with our good impulse players. I require the forwards to get to a field position to give us two or three shots at the opposition. I encourage all the skilful players to use their skill as much as possible. Craig Wing is the type of class player who likes to be in space and use his speed.

been able to achieve this against the big packs in the competition. If you want to be around in September this is the way to play the game.

RLCM Do you make use of videos?

C.C. Not a great deal. We will watch the whole game on a Monday after we play. On opposition teams, I edit theirs to look at some aspect of their play and keep it as short as possible. If I can get 15 – 17 minutes of meaningful information on the opposition that is enough. Some coaches can go overboard with videos but I think I have played long enough to know how a team plays. If you watch enough games you will know who does what. Every player gets a video of their

We encourage that when the opportunity is there, players take it.

RLCM The 20 metre scrum rule was introduced in an attempt to encourage short side attack. Do you make use of this area?

C.C. We don't use it enough, but I like the opportunity to use the space outside, as well as using the big forward such as Ian Rubin and Mark Carroll to hit around the fringes. The lock may take it out once in a while but every team is a wake up to it now. I like to use the areas where there is more space that players such as Darryl Trindall like to use so that he can run himself and put defence under pressure.

RLCM Your forwards are well drilled in advantage line running. Do you work on this part of your game?

C.C. Yes we do a lot of work on the advantage line and we will continue to build on this part of our game. Our aim is to give flat passes to go forward over the advantage line. Some passes may be touch and go but that is the risk you take to make sure it works properly. Our forwards work hard to develop this aspect of our game. Every one in our pack is around 110kg and over 2 metres in height so if they can get across the advantage line they take some stopping. Our aim is to get through the line then a quick play the ball and go again. If we can keep this going we will wear the opposition down, and we have

own game which they watch and if there are any problems they can come and see me, and I get some great feedback from that.

RLCM What is your opinion on game plans and patterns of play?

C.C. We encourage that when the opportunity is there, players take it. Our defence pattern may include inside out, rush defence where we attempt to dominate the early tackles to force an error in the oppositions quarter. Outside the 22m we will compress the line shoulder to shoulder and challenge the opposition to go around the defence. If they are good enough to go around the defence give them credit for that, as long as they don't go through the line. Inside our quarter we try to play man on man. In attack our plan might be to attack a couple of players, we may want to ruck too but other than that the players have the freedom to attack as they see necessary.

RLCM When talking about "off the ball skills" do you work on this aspect of the game?

C.C. It is part of our play. There is no better player to run the ball across the ruck than Darryl Trindall, he has great footwork, is very dangerous and has speed. Our play is when someone cuts across the ruck someone has to run inside to hold a marker. Players running decoys have to know when to run and

how to position themselves off the ball. We try to use our big forwards to develop one on one which allows them to off load or run through defence, so support has to be there.

RLCM The current interchange rule has some critics but you seem to use it effectively in rotating your big forwards. What are your thoughts on this rule?

C.C. I think it is a great rule and it suits us. Our forwards know their job and they also know what time they are on the field for. I tend to use them in shorter bursts than other coaches do. I use them in short bursts knowing that they can give everything for the time they are on the field. This keeps the bigger forwards fresher to be able to perform when needed.

RLCM Selecting a captain is an important on field performance factor. What qualities does Sean Garlick have?

C.C. He is an outstanding leader, the best in the business. I played with Sean, he is forever working on and off the field for the team which is a major part in him being club captain. His commitment and never say die attitude with his on field work rate is unbelievable. He always plays from the front, is a leader, a great talker, with a good football brain.

RLCM How do you mix with your players off the field?

C.C. I mix with them as much as possible and we do things together but there is a time when I know to back off. I have a drink with them after the game and enjoy their company very much but then I will go with my wife and friends. The hardest part of dealing with players is telling them they have been dropped from the side. I don't like that at all.

NOTES

I encourage all the skilful players to use their skill as much as possible.

RLCM Are there any changes you would make to the game to make it more attractive to players and spectators?

C.C. I think the game is going great. The rules are great but maybe make the scrums a contest again. I would like to see the referees be allowed to make more of their own decisions instead of using video replays.

RLCM How do you see Rugby League in the next 5 years.

C.C. It is going to get stronger and stronger. It is a game I grew up to love and will continue to support and be involved in. I would like to see the Sydney clubs maintained as I believe that is where the strength of Rugby League is.

RLCM What advice would you give to coaches wishing to coach at the higher level.

C.C. It is harder than most people think, with a lot of pressure, and a lot of different personalities to handle. To aspiring coaches be enthusiastic, persevere, speak respectfully to your players, don't talk down to them and be honest.

Skill Scene

Hit & Spin Spin & Unload

By Don Oxenham
ARL Level 4 Coach

This particular skill has a very useful role in some aspects of the game. It has been used by players to evade or beat one on one defender, or close support play particularly where defence lines would be hard to break, and to develop second phase play in attack.

This is a technique which requires the co-ordination of many movements of the body that consistent practice will develop. In a situation where support players are involved they have an important role in off the ball play and should be coached in timing their run in support to arrive at the correct place at the right time to receive the pass.

To do this they should be made aware of cues given by the ball carrier as to when he will be ready to pass the ball.

Coaching points and correct technique

- Ball to be held in two hands
- Player approaches defender (with spin pad), if hit and spin is to be made with left shoulder the approach is made on the defenders right side.
- Player shortens steps to help maintain balance when contact is made.
- Contact is made with the shoulder blade onto the defender's chest and the same side leg forward close to defender.
- As contact is made player turns (spins out) and continues in a forward run (motion).

1. Spin Turn Relays

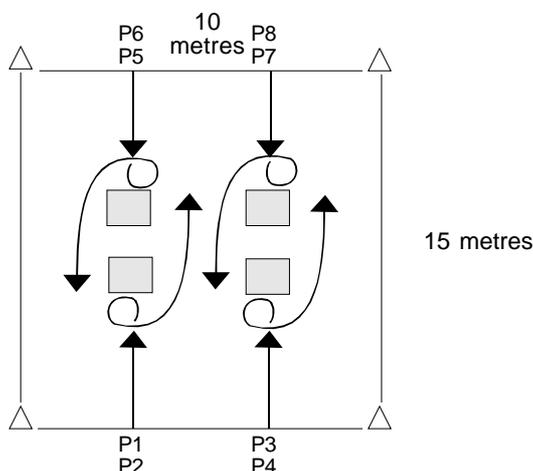
Setting: Channel 15 x 10M, 4 markers, 8 players, 1 football for each runner, 4 spin pads.

Two sets of two players hold spin pads and stand back to back, facing a column of players 5M away.

- Players 1, 3, 5, 7 all run together, hit, spin and then move to join line at the opposite end.
- The sequence continues until the coach is satisfied that players are able to hit and spin competently.

Players should drive out of the spin.

To increase pressure and alertness move the columns closer together.



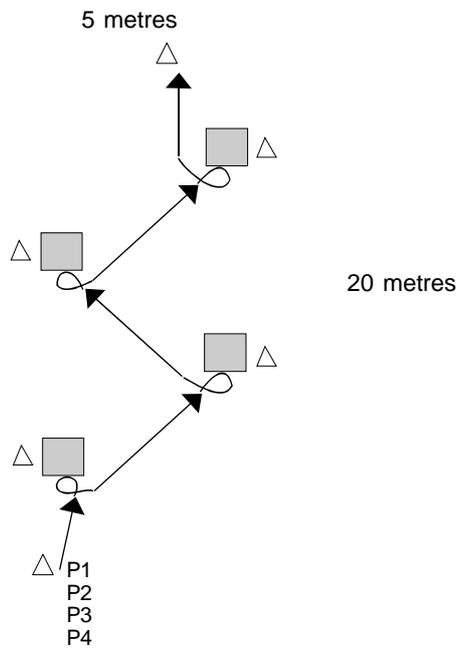
2. Continuous Shoulder Hit and Spin

Setting: Channel 20 x 5M, 6 markers, 4 spin pads, 1 football for each player.

Four padmen line up on the sides of the channel and are 5M apart.

- Runners contact the pad with the right shoulder, spinning to the right.
- After spinning out they move to contact the next pad with the left shoulder, spinning off the left foot to the left.

After completing the course players return down the channel..



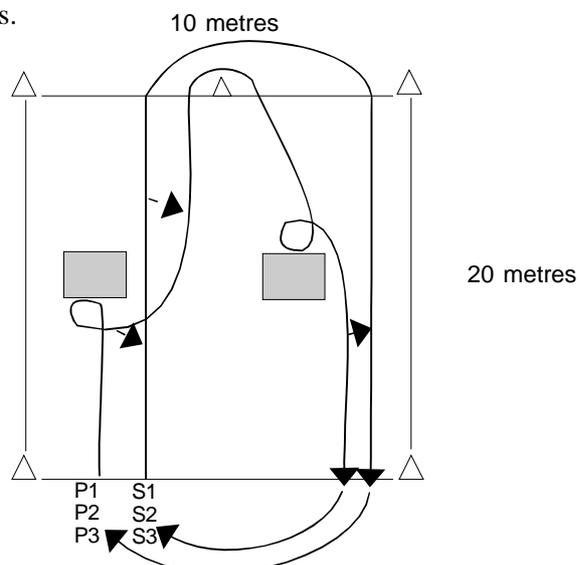
3. Spin and Unload to Support

Setting: Channel 20 x 10M, 5 markers, 2 spin pads, equal number of players, 1 football for each two players.

Players form in pairs behind the base line. P, players carry a ball.

- P1 runs forward with S1, hits and spins to the right and unloads to S1.
- P1 backs up in behind S1 to receive a return pass.
- Both players run around the end marker and P1 straightens, hits and spins to the left of the second padman unloading again to S1.

P1 and S1 rejoin the starting line and swap roles.



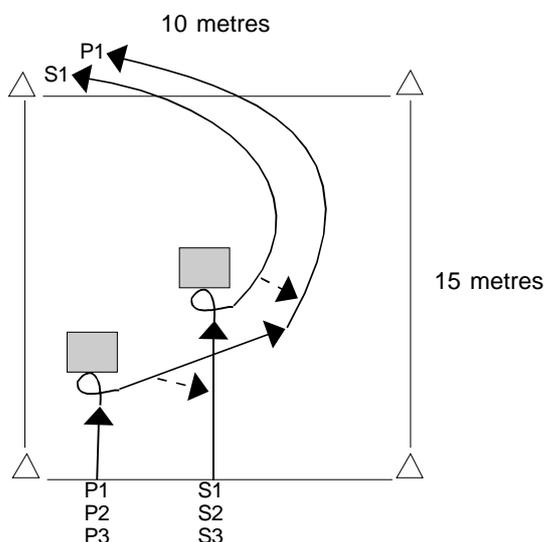
4. Pairs with Run Around to Back-up

Setting: Channel 15 x 10M, 4 markers, 2 spin pads, equal number of players, 1 football for every two players.

Players form in pairs behind the base line. P, players carry a football.

- P1 runs forward, hits and spins on the padman and unloads to S1.
- S1, hits and spins on the second padman and unloads to P1 who has run around him to receive the pass.

Players return to base line, swap roles and drill continues.

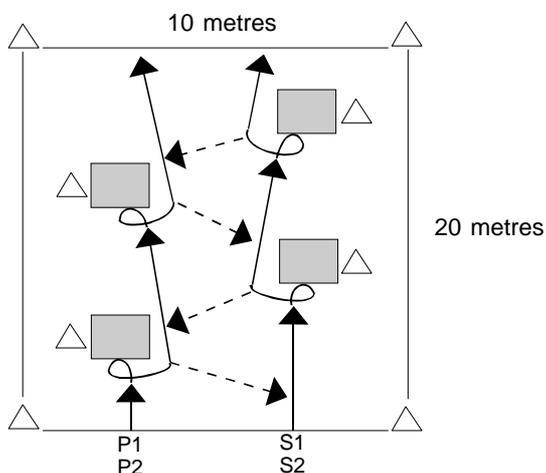


5. Shoulder Hit and Spin

Setting: Channel 20 x 10M, 8 markers, 4 spin pads, players form into pairs, 1 football for each pair.

The end markers are 3M from the base lines and the centre markers are 6M apart.

- P1, with the ball moves off with S1 in support.
- P1 drops his right shoulder, spins in that direction and unloads to S1.
- S1 drops his left shoulder, spins in that direction and unloads back to P1.
- This routine continues down the channel and at the end of the run, players swap sides and return to spin in the opposite direction.
- Practice the drill at half pace and build up speed gradually.
- Players moving out of the spin should keep their feet moving with fast pumping action.
- Support players practice their positioning and timing by having some depth to move onto the ball, and receive the pass at speed.



GAME SENSE

By Nicole den Duyn,
Coaching Consultant,
Australian Coaching Council

The 'Game Sense' approach to coaching and teaching has received much publicity over the past 12 months in Australia. The 1996 visit to Australia by Rod Thorpe, advocate of the 'Game Sense' approach from Loughborough University in the UK has been a catalyst in promoting this approach more widely. The use of games, particularly in team sports, is not a new concept. Games have been used with much success by some of Australia's leading coaches (eg Ric Charlesworth – Australian Women's Hockey coach, David Parkin – Carlton AFL coach and numerous Rugby League coaches). So what is 'Game Sense' and why is it useful to coaches and teachers at all levels?

WHY IT MAKES SENSE TO PLAY GAMES

THE GAME SENSE CONCEPT

Game sense is an approach to coaching that uses games to develop tactical / strategic thinking, as well as skill development. How often have we seen techniques being taught in isolation, not requiring players to think and bearing little resemblance to the skill required in the game? [Note: Thorpe distinguishes between technique and skill. A simple equation to explain this difference is $\text{Technique} + \text{Pressure} = \text{Skill}$]. I'm sure we have all seen players practising technique – undertaking numerous repetitions of a tennis swing, or religiously practising shots for goal.

While technique itself is an important part of the overall skill, coaches are questioning the value of technique practice that doesn't take into account the other factors involved in executing the skill (eg making a decision on which shot to play or, deceiving the goal keeper on the shot for goal).

Probably the best reason for adopting a game sense approach is that games are challenging and fun! How many times have coaches heard the cry from their players 'when can we play a game?'

But as well as being fun, games can be the best teachers of many of the tactical aspects of the 'real' game. Coaches often spend a great deal of time teaching technique, but not much time on teaching aspects such as decision making, risk, deception, spatial awareness, understanding / counteracting an opponent and recognising scoring opportunities.

AN OVER EMPHASIS ON TECHNIQUE

Traditionally, coaching has been very 'technique based'. While this may be appropriate for some of the more 'closed skill' sports (for example, rowing), for other sports it is an over emphasis. One of the interesting aspects of the game sense approach is that www.rlcm.com.au

incorrect technique is not necessarily seen as a 'bad' thing that must be immediately changed. If the athlete is achieving the desired result, then a technique change should be carefully considered. Many elite athletes use unorthodox techniques that still achieve the right result (and often bamboozle their opponents!).

If a technically 'incorrect' presentation is hindering the players development, then the coach probably needs to work with the player to change the technique. However, before changing a players preferred style, the coach should ask questions such as: 'can I make the correction in the time available?', 'have I got the ability to fix it?', 'will changing it affect the end result?'. Sometimes it may be better to teach a 'new' technique rather than fixing the old one, eg adding a new shot to the players repertoire.

WHERE DO GAMES FIT INTO THE TRAINING SESSION

During his visit to Australia, Thorpe challenged coaches to look at the format of their training sessions and where games are placed within the training.

The traditional training session has looked something like this:

- warm up
- skill practise (often just technique)
- drills
- minor game / game practise
- cool down

An alternative model proposed by Thorpe is:

- warm up
- game sense game
- (what are we trying to do?)
- (how can we do it better tactical, perceptual, decision making – only then technical)
- back to game
- progression of game (additional challenges)
- repeat the game sense cycle

games are challenging and fun!

THE COACH'S ROLE

As important aspect of the game sense approach is the role that the coach takes in relation to players. Traditionally, training sessions have been coach dominated, with players being told where to stand, how to defend a situation etc. The emphasis with the game sense approach is on the players making decisions rather than the coach. The coach's role is that of a facilitator who creates situations where players have to think out the solutions for themselves (ie problem solving). Self reliance is an attribute that most coaches would agree is desirable. But do we practise it in training? Most educators would agree that finding out the answer for oneself is far more effective for long-term learning than being 'told' the answer.

The emphasis on the game sense approach is the players making decisions rather than the coach.

QUESTIONING

One of the key roles for the coach is the use of questions. The coach should ask the athlete questions which will promote tactical thinking. For example:

- 'where is the best spot to stand?'
- 'where will it be more difficult for your opponent to score from?' and 'how can you force them inside or outside?'
- 'what is the best way to defend between two attackers?'
- 'if your opponent is faster, what will you do?'
- 'is it better to pass or run with the ball in this situation?' 'why?'

But before asking questions such as these, the coach must be able to create a situation or game where problem solving can take place. So how does the game sense approach work in practical terms?

MODIFICATION FOR EXAGGERATION

For many years now in Australia, we have modified sport to cater for the needs of our young players. In a game sense approach the coach also modifies, but to exaggerate or emphasise particular tactical aspects. For example, to emphasise the front and back spaces between the 10 metre and dead ball lines, the field can be modified to be long and thin. The players will then gain an understanding of how to move their opponent to the front and back spaces of the area to off-set effective 'bombs'.

Rugby League Coaching Magazine

Modification a coach can make include:

- the dimensions of the ground/practice area
- positioning of goal posts (and more than one set of goal posts per team?)
- number of passes allowed
- number of players in attack and defence
- penalty or bonus points for particular plays
- time allowed
- adding / deleting normal game rules (eg allow only three possessions).

Rules can be added to the game (or removed) as it increases in complexity.

DEVELOPING GAME SENSE

Some examples of the tactical aspects that can be emphasised and developed using game sense games are listed below.

Many of the basic 'games' that can be used within a game sense approach already exist within sports. For many coaches the key will be modifying them to emphasise tactical aspects, and using questions to enable players to find the answers for themselves.

For those wanting to develop new game sense games, a few key questions:

- what is the aspect / tactic / skill you are trying to develop within this game?
- what modifications / exaggerations can I make, to best set up this situation?
- are there aspects of another sport I can 'borrow' to enhance this?
- what are the key questions I need to ask the players?
- am I catering for all the individuals – do I need to give some choices in equipment and skill execution?
- how will I place the game within the training session?
- what progressions can I make to increase the complexity?
- can I give the players some choices in these progressions?

The game sense approach has a number of benefits for both the coach and player. Coaches may find that it challenges some of the traditional ways they have been taught to coach. However, they may well find that the coaching process and the games themselves are more challenging for themselves and their players.

RLCM wishes to thank Nicole den Duyn for her unselfish support and permission to reprint this, the first of two articles that will be reproduced on Game Sense. This approach to coaching Rugby League should be considered. We recommend that coaches understand this approach and the benefits it can give to developing our players particularly through their junior years.

Tackling COMMUNICATION

Part 2

Written by Vanessa Arthur

Peter Corcoran - National Rugby League Director of Coaching and Referees

“I’m a good coach. My team is leading the competition and we are in a strong position to take out the premiership.”

Sound familiar? A coach haphazardly presumes that because his team is posting victories, he is excelling as a coach. Occasionally, this may be so, but in some cases the coach of any losing side may be just as good a coach as his opposition counterpart. It can not simply be deduced that because a team is at the top of the competition ladder, the coach is automatically skilled coach.

A stand-out coach must be an excellent communicator who holds a strong knowledge of himself, his players and of the game itself. There is constant evaluation of performance to eliminate all identifiable faults. According to Peter Corcoran, National Rugby League Director of Coaching and Referees, the latter is what breeds ‘good’ coaching: “If relative perfection is not what we are about, then why are we coaching?”

Speaking at an ARL Level Three Rugby League Coaching Course at the New South Wales Academy

be revisited time and time again. It also stands as a memory jogger and provides a benchmark against which a coach’s performance can be measured. “We spend a tremendous amount of time with videos, statistics, assistants and so on and we don’t seem to give much thought to how we perform. That’s a tremendous pity.”

Given that clear, planned communication is a necessary basis of good coaching, Corcoran says coaches should constantly examine their performance in this area. It may even be useful for coaches to devote an entire page of their diary to this topic each week. Take for example the ensuing interpersonal qualities that a coach should endeavour to promote:

- (a) Courtesy;
- (b) Tact;
- (c) Tolerance;
- (d) Keep cool;
- (e) Expressiveness;
- (f) Constructive criticism;
- (g) Sincerity; and
- (h) Loyalty

Communication can be seen as the soul of coaching

of Sport recently, Corcoran was amazed at how little thought some coaches gave to analysing their own performance. In his opinion, performance evaluation is imperative in raising the ability of a coach.

This leads to the first stage of the self-reflection process – **keeping a diary**. Corcoran says this record book need not be a very detailed account of every single thing that occurs, but merely a skeletal outline of the day’s pertinent events, such as the dropping of a player or injuries sustained. Such data makes it possible for the particular coach to evaluate his effectiveness. And because it is a permanent record, the information can

A coach should use the knowledge of what coaches aspire to and, with the use of a self-reflection diary, note where they could improve – it may, for example, be that tolerance levels leave a lot to be desired. Corcoran says that by detailing a problem area and determining an appropriate solution, a coach will have far greater chance of rectifying the situation. “If you want to become the professional coach I sincerely hope you would all want to be, a performance evaluation diary will give you scope for problems to be detected and curbed before they develop into concerns.”

Corcoran says that for the self-reflection process to

operate most effectively, there are two other aspects that should be considered and implemented.

- i.e (1) Mentor coaching; and
(2) Video self-analysis

The former is an offshoot of the self-reflection diary. It is the same analytical process, but conducted by an outsider or independent. Corcoran defines a **mentor** as a well-regarded coach who could provide tremendous assistance to the way in which a coach instructs the team: “You are not an island, you need help and cannot exist on your own – four eyes are better than two.” As far as the mentor coaching system works, he says that once a mentor is selected, the pair (mentor and coach) should meet on a reasonably regular basis to discuss how the coach is performing and where improvement can be achieved. It is important in this instance for the duo to compare notes on what the mentor thinks is going wrong, and what the coach sees as faults. This makes it possible for the coach to learn not just how to recognise deficiencies, but also to know how to overcome them.

Corcoran also says it is imperative for the **self-reflection cycle** to be taken into account. This cycle, he says, begins with noting the **action**. To use an example, the action may be demonstrating a conventional pass from the ground. The next phase is **analysis and evaluation with mentor**. A simple question such as ‘Could the team see what I was doing?’ may lead to the discovery that only 50 per cent of the team were in a position to see what the coach was demonstrating. Enter the third step – **Identification of methods to overcome the problem**. The coach would be best advised to be positioned so that the entire team could learn from the actions. This may mean demonstrating the move several times in various positions, to ensure all players comprehend what is being taught. Finally, a coach should **plan for improvement**. The coach may find that new drills would give a fresh approach to the coaching sessions. So the cycle continues.

Mentor coaching which incorporates the self-reflection cycle, Corcoran firmly believes, can pave the way for successful coaching. He says that eventually coaches will reach a stage where they no longer require a mentor to assess actions, for the embedded faults will have

been eliminated: “You will be able to say, ‘I’ve got that action down to as good a performance as I will ever get it or anybody will ever be able to advise me to do’.” Of course, no coach is perfect and there is always room for improvement, but Corcoran says mentor coaching will enable coaches to rise to a level where they will be capable of acknowledging and assessing their own pitfalls. Indeed, “you must know yourself and your capabilities if you want to be a good coach of others.”

Once capable of determining personal performance in relation to standards set by the mentor, Corcoran says opportunities for **video self-analyses** arise. The use of such technology is extremely useful, in that it gives coaches a look at their conduct throughout the game and at training. By reflecting on personal performances,

“you must know yourself and your capabilities if you want to be a good coach of others.”

coaches may realise they are becoming aggressive in their communication or forgetting to instil key messages into the minds of their players. This may not have been evident to the coach, or even outsiders, who relied only on memory to conduct analysis. Watching the players strut their stuff time and time again, on video, can reveal mistake after mistake – similarly the vision of a coach at work can disclose loopholes in performances. And when undertaking self-analysis, Corcoran suggests coaches look beyond the score and ask themselves some of the following questions.

- Am I using the resources properly?
- Do I plan properly?
- Do I conduct my sessions properly?
- Do I relate to my players well?
- Do I give them an opportunity to think and to speak? and
- How do I conduct team meetings?

Simple questions, like these, may reveal coaches are

OFF THE BALL PLAY

Written by Ashley Bradnam

BY PHIL GOULD

In a recent talk with the Rugby League Coaching Magazine, Sydney City's first grade coach Phil Gould elaborated on an aspect of the game which is being given more and more attention in coaching: off-the-ball play.

Research into Rugby League has shown that the average footballer has either possession of the ball or is tackling for around 6 – 8 minutes in the game. What the player does with the remaining time of the game is known as off-the-ball play.

“A player is either physically involved or around the ball for less than 10% of the game.”

“It's the other 90% that determines whether they are a good player or not,” Gould said.

With this in mind, it is no wonder that the concept is looked into extensively, particularly by first grade clubs where individual players are being paid large sums of money.

NRL teams have methods of recording how well their players work off-the-ball.

“We take a lot of wide-angle camera shots of our team in both attack and defence to see what our players are doing. The coverage that you see on television isn't a good indication of a player's off-the-ball capabilities because the camera primarily follows the path of the play.

“I try to attend as many of the games as possible and pay special attention to what other sides are doing off-the-ball.”

Sydney City have calls purely for off-the-ball play, reminding players to be in their position either in defence or in attack. But as Gould states, off-the-ball play can involve a lot of anticipation, the player anticipates where they have to be in defence to shut down the opposing side's play, or in attack by positioning himself so that he can hit the gap or be in a position to support the tackled player.

Off-the-ball play can pertain to an individual position. For instance, forwards are going to be positioning themselves in order to make space for the backs. Likewise, the backs will have to position themselves in accordance with what direction the forwards are taking the play.

Off-the-ball play has been present ever since the game has been played, however, it is only recently that it has come to be recognised as a vital coaching concern.

Players should also work on their off-the-ball play, as Gould says, “Careers can be decided by one yard : it all depends on whether

VIDEOTAPING

JUNIOR GAMES

By Ray Howitt,
ARL Level 2 Coach

Whilst a videotape record of games for NRL First Grade and other elite level teams is a vital component in the overall coaching operation, don't underestimate the value of videotaping of games for the Junior coach. It has the following benefits:

1. An entire match can be viewed objectively and accurately. Positive or negative emotions during and after a match can divert the coach from perceiving actually what went on during the match. It is important for coaches to be accurate and fair in assessing a performance. Too often this is impossible when the coach is either ecstatic or angry with a performance of a team immediately following a match.
2. Individual performances can be more accurately recorded. Statistical record of tackles does not always tell the true story of a player's performance on the field. Many little things can be overlooked in a performance, but which can come to light in viewing the tape of the game.

Particular incidents of a game can be viewed in slow motion to assess their significance. Coaches intently interested in teaching young players correct techniques may have access to basic video equipment to assess the players techniques as they are performed during the game. As a coaching tool the video tape can be used in this way as long as the coach understands the most productive use of them and how to gain the value especially in the interests of the players development.

3. Particular incidents can be viewed in slow-motion to assess their significance. Some time ago a player was penalised for a head-high tackle in which the tackled player was injured. The boy received plenty of criticism from the parents of the opposition and was also rebuked by the coach at the break who had a reputation in the district as a coach who never had his boys playing 'dirty'. The coach was distressed about the incident over the weekend. Reviewing the videotape of the game the coach was pleasantly surprised to see in slow-motion that the tackle was, a perfectly legal ball-and-all tackle. Even though it happened in front of the coach – it was over so quickly he missed what actually happened and consequently made an incorrect judgement. The tackled player injured his chest when he fell on top of the ball and there was no contact with the neck or head! The coach apologised to the tackler at the next training session and his claims of innocence were justified. A videotape replayed in slow motion was the only accurate record of what actually happened that day.
4. At the end of each season it is easy to gather all the tries scored, all the great try-saving tackles, hard tackles and humorous or significant plays from each match tape and put them onto one 30-minute videotape. This tape can then be given to each player as a gift. Parents comment that the boys play this tape over and over through the summer season and that it helps them to maintain their enthusiasm. Kids love to see themselves playing on videotape. It takes a little time to edit the sequences from one tape to another, but you don't need expensive equipment – just a patient use of the pause and record buttons. Inexpensive tapes from the supermarket are sufficient for the gift tape.

Maybe one of your players will become an NRL champion in years to come and you could have a videotape record of his early life in football! □



Kids love
to see
themselves
playing on
videotape.

PHYSICAL TRAINING

By Jim Box
ARL Level 2 Coach

DURING THE COMPETITIVE PHASE OF THE SEASON

The start of the competitive phase of the Rugby League season requires a change in the physical conditioning priorities for your players.

To help improve cardiovascular endurance and to maintain it at a high level you must exercise hard enough to keep your heart rate at a level which will bring about the 'training effect'. This level is called the 'threshold of training' and is calculated as 60% to 85% of adjusted maximum heart rate (calculated maximum heart rate is 212 minus players age). Monitoring the heart rate during exercise is important so that players are working effectively enough to raise the heart rate to this required level. Encourage players to measure their heart rate by taking a pulse rate so that they become aware of, the amount of work that should be performed.

While the pre-season training revolves around building an aerobic base for the season and involves players undertaking low intensity exercises over a longer period of time (heart rate from 140 – 160 bpm for a period of up to 30 minutes), competitive season conditioning requires:

1. Short, high intensity activity and
2. Speed work

A close examination of a game of rugby league reveals that the activity in the game consists of short duration (3-10 seconds), high intensity work repeated over a period of 1 to 4 minutes, followed by a short rest period. A typical example could be a repeat set of six tackles followed by a set in possession. A scrum or relieving penalty provides the rest period.

This game scenario involves players making tackles and running back and forward in defence and running in attack with the ball. Typically, the players are working anaerobically (without oxygen) which builds up high levels of lactic acid leading to muscle fatigue.

Competitive season training must allow the players to tolerate this type of short duration, high intensity activity. The training allows players to:

1. Build up lactic acid at a slower rate and
2. Tolerate higher levels of lactic acid in their muscles before they are forced to reduce their work rate.

The best method of training to produce these results is interval training. This involves a period of high intensity work (heart rate above 170 beats per minute) followed by a short rest interval. (recovery)

The intensity of the activity must ensure that the players are working anaerobically. That is, above their anaerobic threshold (i.e. the intensity of effort at which lactic acid accumulation approaches maximum level), at a point where their oxygen supply is unable to supply their energy needs and lactic acid is accumulating in their muscles.

Ideally, the activity should be game specific. For example, high intensity tackling drills or speed drills that mimic situations that arise during a game. The activity should be of 5 to 90 seconds duration with a suitable rest interval. For activity of 60 to 90 seconds duration the intensity should be approximately 170 – 180 beats per minute with a rest interval of 1:1. Such activities could include:

- 400 metre repetitions
- sets of six tackles on a tackling bag
- a continuous 6 on 4 attack drill of six tackles

Four to seven repeat sets of the activity would be sufficient to produce a training effect. Shorter duration, higher intensity activity also builds anaerobic endurance suitable for the rugby league player. With this type of activity the effort required needs to be 95 – 100% with the heart rate reaching 190 – 200 beats per minute. The rest interval is usually 1:5-10. This type of training is usually achieved in the form of specific speed work. As speed work is one of the essential fitness components of the rugby league player it needs to be trained.

Speed training also promotes anaerobic fitness. An example of speed training could be:

Backs	6 by 50 metres at maximum effort starting every 40 seconds
	6 by 30 metres at maximum effort starting every 25 seconds
	6 by 10 metres at maximum effort starting every 10 seconds
Forwards	6 by 30 metres at maximum effort starting every 30 seconds
	6 by 20 metres at maximum effort starting every 20 seconds
	6 by 10 metres at maximum effort starting every 10 seconds

During a training week anaerobic training needs to be undertaken at least twice. Combined with the anaerobic effort involved in the game the players will quickly increase their anaerobic fitness and noticeable improvement will be seen in their game performances.

PERFORMANCE MONITORS

Assessing Behaviour and Attitudes of the Rugby League Player

PART I



By Steve Anderson
Assistant Coach
Melbourne Storm

Introduction

The author has worked professionally in Rugby League now for some ten years and been exposed at an elite level to some very astute and well respected coaches of the Modern Era. During this time he has identified a common thread that “successful coaches have an ability to understand the need for performance evaluations both at an individual and team level”.

“Performance Monitors” in this regard refers to an evaluation process encompassing all facets of the Rugby League player which affect his ‘game day’ performance. Basically, discussion focuses on both physiological and psychological influences and how the player’s thinking contributes to and affects his performance. Secondly, how to utilise various mechanisms to monitor, gauge and enhance performance.

Understanding the meaning of these issues, the psychological component, provides unlimited benefits to the coach, player and team. Performance monitoring and subsequent discussions on progress with players provides a determined and identifiable pathway, allows a more settled response from players and leads to an on-going education and acceptance by the player as to the benefits of ‘psychology’ in the totality of their being professional players.

This Part one (of three) will focus predominantly on injury management but with the intention of conveying to the reader the use of performance monitors in all areas of the game – more importantly how detailed or basic these can be.

Methodology

Basically, to commence any form of evaluation it is necessary to identify the field under examination and then isolate the components in that area which directly

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affects and relates to the players environment. There are several approaches which could be adopted in gathering information. These include:

1. Quantitative-research noting reactions and behaviour as an observer
2. Qualitative – where information is gathered individually through discussion and observation, or
3. Adopt a ‘model’ as a guide contrasting the various results attained.

Qualitative research in this field is an approach which is extensive but ensures a thorough understanding of the individuals needs in establishing recognisable indicators.

Treatment of fields referred to below will hopefully convince coaches that ‘performance monitoring’ can offer valuable insights into the areas of developing and gauging an individuals progressive stages to professionalism. Areas or fields recognised as vitally important to both player and coach, and which can be broken down into components that can progressively measure behaviour and performance include:

1. Attitude to physical demands of training and playing.
2. How the player relates to the various mechanisms of being in a team environment.
3. General attitudes in terms of social demeanour which may affect overall performance.

Having identified the areas, a method for rating the various components in each field needs to be formatted to enable statistical and progressive measures over a set period or time frame. This enables an easily identified gauge on performance and allows the player to understand the link between attitude and performance.

Monitoring Attitude to the Physical Demands of Training and Playing

Observing players behaviour and responses to the various physical demands of preparation can at times reveal conflicting 'attitudinal' responses if certain parameters are not set. Principally the concept of performance monitoring is to offer the player 'stimuli' that will improve performances. For this reason isolating the various components is not all that has to be provided to the player. Specific areas within the physical framework determine how to approach the monitoring of behaviour, where application and the environment are considered significant to the team and the individuals needs and progress. These include such diverse areas as flexibility, speed, strength, power, diet, endurance, injury management, time, effort, conflict, fatigue. In other words the requirement of these areas and then the impact of those requirements.

Physical demands can contribute to both loss of form of the individual or the team – this may be an obvious 'out' for the coaching staff but further analysis will often show other influences should be considered. It is these other influences which, through observation can provide valuable insights and information on form reversal. For example, the players attitude to 'Injury Management' is crucial, particularly at this level where the player is subjected to a season which lasts some nine (9) months.

'Injury Management' will be used to outline how best to describe the benefits of monitoring player responses and how this information can assist the player regain confidence through the various stages of rehabilitation and injury. Particular transitional stages of attitude can be observed with players and can be broadly categorised into three key phases:

- 'Careless' attitude largely detected in the in-experienced player.
- 'Carefree' attitude of the low-maintenance player.

(Those that naturally adjust to the demands of elite sport.)

- 'Inconvenient' attitude of high achievers.

These categorisations often pose similar attitudinal reactions but performance expectations offer the distinction between each. Following is a brief outline of approaches which can be utilised in identifying

individual type of players and how monitoring their reactions can be a valuable coaches aid.

'Careless' Attitude

Inexperienced players need to be taught that injuries at this stage of development can cause frustration, anger, disillusionment, and anxiety. False expectations and even inappropriate treatment can lead to further injury aggravation because of a misunderstanding of the injury. All of the proceeding is due to an inability to come to terms with the injury and it is the job of the coach in this instance to:

- Identify the problem
- Initiate liaison with the player to discuss adverse emotional reactions
- Seek information which may assist the player in dealing with these problems

Education in this instance requires patience in assisting players know how to deal not only with the injury but recognising the injury and accepting its repercussions including lay-off periods and time spent in recovery stages. Monitoring the players reaction to this one area should be based on qualifying your expectations of the player in regard to steady and gradual progress of the injury and performance emphasising no pressure. How the player reacts to the various stages of the injury should be recorded with particular note on his reactions to rehabilitation activities – both negative and positive responses should be recorded for future reference.

'Care-Free' Attitude

Low maintenance players who suffer injury often are able to adapt to the reality of injury but it is the area of return to the playing field and performance expectations which can cause problems for the player. Further, low maintenance players often find returning to the game quite easy after injury having accepted the lay-off period. However, due to the ease in which this type of player previously accomplished training and game tasks, traumatic responses can occur as a result of his failure to meet peak performance levels quickly – his own high expectations. This can lead to a loss of form and confidence. As coach education and understanding improves, these problems need to be monitored and highlighted to the player.

Through this period, evaluating player responses can assist the player in the transition period between injury, rehabilitation and regaining acceptable performance levels. Records in this situation should be of a nature which identifies the players notable negative responses throughout post-injury evaluations. This will establish a week to week basis for referral, treatment and counselling enabling progressive targets to be set for performance.

BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE GAME & NEVER STOP BEING A STUDENT OF THE GAME:

- Know the rules thoroughly
- Watch other successful teams play and try their moves
- Ask experienced coaches for help
- Read numerous coaching manuals
- View skill drill videos to get new ideas

Handbook COLLECTION

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*The Rugby League Coaching Magazine's aim is to assist in the development and education of coaches and players at all levels. To aid in this aim the **Handbook Collection** has been produced to compliment the coaching magazine and we hope you find all products beneficial to your coaching.*

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Cut —

- The coach may be the only positive person of significance in that child's life.
- The impact words have on some children may be life-changing or very long-lasting. Be careful what you, as a coach say.

BE PROFESSIONAL:

The Rugby League coach represents:
 The image of the game to the public
 The club or school that he coaches
 The players
 The parents

If a coach cannot avoid:

- publically criticising players when they make mistakes
- 'bagging' or 'baiting' the referee
- 'bagging' players on the other team
- responding to the taunts of spectators from the other team

OR

Thinking it's okay to allow you players to:

- constantly question the referee's decisions
- use foul language
- deliberately injure other players

THEN

Coaching is not for you!

Coaches are powerful role models for children.

The days of the loud-mouthed coach who condones thuggery are over!

CONTENTS

- ② Conducting a Modified Footy Training Session
- ⑧ Tackling
- ⑭ Play-The-Ball and Pass from the Ground Drills
- ⑯ Ruck Play Drills
- ⑳ Game Situation Drill
- ㉑ The Pass Off the Ground
- ㉔ The Play-The-Ball
- ㉖ The Modern Junior Rugby League Coach

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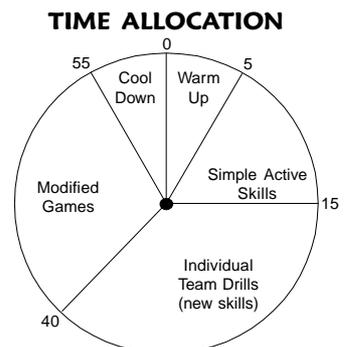
Conducting a MODIFIED FOOTY TRAINING SESSIONS

Enjoyment, participation, skill development, teamwork and competition, in that order, should always be the prime objectives when planning a training session for modified games players.

A session should take no longer than 60 minutes (shorter for mini players) and can be undertaken in as little as a 30 square metre area. The longer the session, the less effective it becomes, the larger the area, the less control the coach has over the players.

With simple planning, a session can progress from one activity to the next with very little disruption.

Include time for drink breaks during the session (2 to 3 if necessary). These can give the coach time to reset the field or look at the training schedule sheet.



- make more mistakes and therefore 'punish' the team on the scoreboard (Criticism then becomes counter-productive, i.e. produces the opposite result to what was intended).

- lose respect for you as coach
- player loss of self-esteem (his most valuable possession)

People with high self-esteem are more likely to succeed in life.

BUT

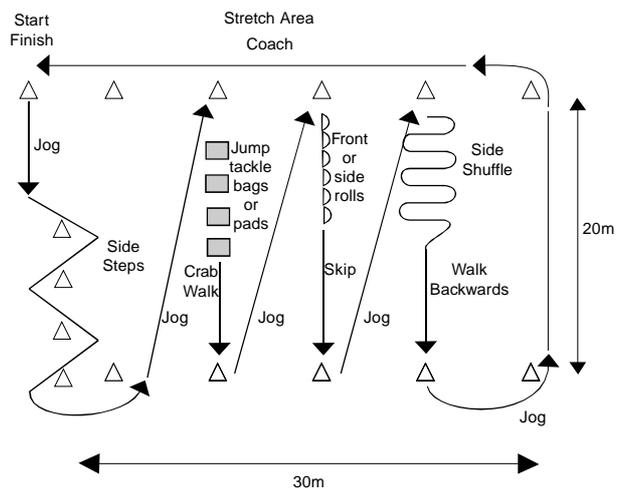
People with low self-esteem will find things far more difficult

* Criticise the mistake - not the person

- Players look to you for approval - not condemnation
- Most parents hate to hear a coach 'bagging' their child.
- Coaches will quickly get offside with parents if they are publicly critical of their children.
- At the end of a match which the team has lost, be just as supportive as if the team won.
- Players will be upset enough without the coach making their day even more miserable.
- Always be positive and view mistakes and losses simply as opportunities to improve the skill level of the players and to eliminate weaknesses in team play.
- The best way to destroy a player's love for the game of Rugby League is to crush their spirit by criticising them constantly.
- Unless they move to another club or another coach they will likely give the game away rather than expose themselves to criticism each week.

WARM UP CIRCUIT

- Make the warm up as interesting as possible with a variety of gross motor activities.
- Clearly demonstrate what is required.
- Have the players run in pairs to encourage each other. (Try using a stop watch)



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Cut —

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- There is nothing worse than for a parent to run their child to two training sessions through the week only to have their child play for 10 minutes on Saturday.
- Coaches philosophy on fairness can be severely tested in important matches when poorer-skilled players replace better players during a match.
- Every team have players of varying size, strength, skill, intellectual ability and temperament.
- It is unfair to have too high an expectation of any individual player.
- More should be expected of highly-skilled players.
- Less should be expected of less-skilled players.
- It is unfair to overuse a particular player just to win a match.
- It is unfair to leave less-skilled players out of any plays whatsoever.

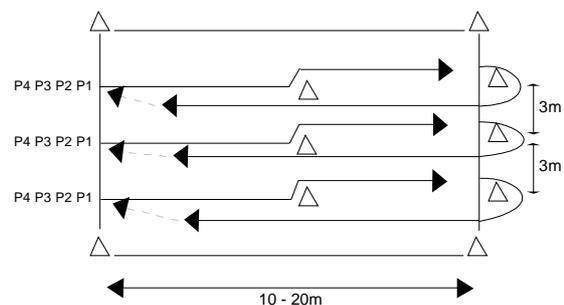
BE SUPPORTIVE:

- Your players will make many mistakes such as knock-ons, missed tackles, forward passes, offside plays, etc.
- It is important that you assist players overcome these.
- However, you must encourage them to forget these mistakes and to do better next time.
- 'Bagging' a young player over a mistake will only increase the potential for that player to:
 - become discouraged
 - play nervously

RELAYS

- Group explanations and control are easier if all the players at one of the relay line.
- When explaining new drills, have all the players sitting down.
- Limit each line to no more than 4 players to maximise player involvement.
- Variations of skills that can be performed include:

Throwing the ball above the head and catching, picking up the ball, grubber kicking, play the ball, passing on the run.



Coach stands to the side where he can see all the players.

- Mini-Leaguer training sessions should have a strong element of skill development and virtually no fitness training
- Older-Leaguer training sessions should maintain skill development but have an increasing element of fitness and endurance because of the bigger field to cover and the longer periods of playing time.

BE PREPARED:

Players should know their positions

Players should know their roles (e.g.Capt./Organiser)

Players should know team calls

Players should know who is on the bench and when interchanges will take place

Players should know when it's their turn to kick for goal
Do not expect players to 'spread out' in a match if you haven't practiced it in training sessions.

For younger players keep the game plan simple.

Young players cannot remember complex moves. For example: very few 7-12 year-olds can spot a gap out wide and prepare to run for it. (Remember that children up to the age of about 10 have only about 30% of the width vision as adults - they tend to have 'tunnell' vision)

BE FAIR:

- Children have a strong sense of justice.
- The coach must not only be fair, but appear to be fair.
- Try to maximise the amount of time each player spends on the field.

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COMMUNICATING YOUR PHILOSOPHY:

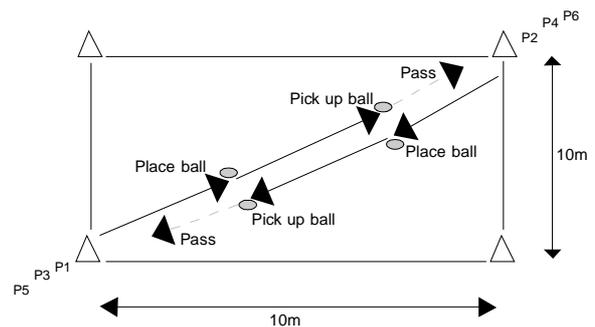
- Tell your kids what you believe.
- Tell your parents what you believe.
- Coach and deal with your players in a manner consistent with your beliefs.

BE ORGANISED:

- have all your equipment ready to go e.g.
- individual water bottles,
- basket with kicking tee, nail clippers, tape, spare studs,
- Match Stats Sheet
- Video camera and tripod
- Manager well-briefed
- Trainer well-briefed
- Training sessions should be a mixture of skill drills and ballwork which closely simulate what the players will have to do in matches.
- Aim to teach at least one new skill and one new rule each week/fortnight and practise that skill/rule until it is mastered.
- Training sessions should be carried out with enthusiasm, with no spare time for players to get bored or start misbehaving.
- Training sessions should be 'fun' whereby players practise skills in games situations without realising it.
- Pre-match warm-up and stretching activities should be well-drilled and become a habit for the players to perform.

GRIDS

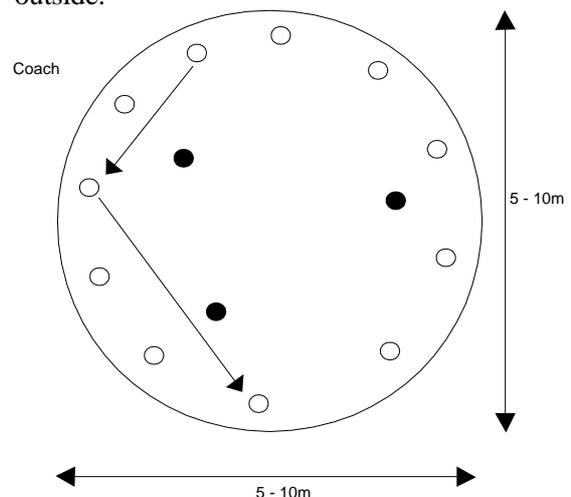
- May be used for a variety of skills, such as handing – off, reverse passing and swerving. Players may run diagonals or around the square.
- Sample grid, below emphasises picking up and placing the ball.
- Use 4 footballs and start at both corners.
- Increase complexity by introducing runner from all four corners.



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CIRCLE ACTIVITIES

- These are ideal for passing games.
- The coach can co-ordinate the skills from within the circle or by walking around the outside.



- Players try to intercept passes
- A player can not pass to the player standing closest next to him

The Modern Junior Rugby League Coach

By Ray Howitt
ARL Level 2 Coach

- Must: Have a sound philosophy towards coaching Rugby League
- Must: Communicate that philosophy
- Must be: Organised and well-prepared
Fair
Supportive
Professional
- Must have: Knowledge of the game and continue to grow in knowledge

PHILOSOPHY: (What do I believe)

What is your motivation for coaching?

- Were you pressured into the job?
- Is coaching just another challenge?
- Do you have a vision of what you can achieve?
- Are you super-competitive?
- Are you a 'Winning is everything' coach?
- Are children mere tools for your experiments/ego/frustrations/anger?
- Is club loyalty important to you?
- Will you accept a mediocre group of players to coach or will you go out and 'poach' good players from other teams to strengthen your own team?
- Are you embarrassed when your team constantly loses?
- Do you find it difficult to say positive things about your players following a thrashing by the opposition?
- are you there because you want to help kids?

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Cut —

He then:

1. Bends his left leg and brings it up under his body. (Figure 1.)
2. Turns to a half sitting position, placing his right hand on the ground. (Figure 2)
3. Swings his right foot up and half stands, bringing the ball up off the ground. (Figure 3)
4. With his head forward for balance, places the ball on the ground in front of his left foot and pushes it back with the foot to the acting (dummy) half. (Figure 4)

(Young players should be encouraged to maintain control by using 2 hands when placing the ball.)

Keep in mind that the aim is to work toward a quick and smooth play-the-ball.

THE ACTING – HALF BACK PASS

The pass from the ground should be dispatched in the fastest and most efficient manner possible. This is best accomplished by using the following method.

1. Keep eyes on ball as it is being collected and immediately adjust hands for passing.
2. Place the foot furthest from the receiver close to the ball and step with the other foot in the direction of the pass.
3. Sweep arms up through and extend them in the direction of pass. Eyes should be on target.

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FIELD LAYOUTS FOR DRILLS, SKILLS & MODIFIED GAMES

Sample field layouts are shown on the following pages, with sample activities that illustrate that not only is a small field sufficient, but more manageable. Sizes will vary depending on the age of the players. If for example passing is involved, the coach would not expect a 7 year old to pass more than 3 metres. When possible, use field markings such as trylines or touchlines.

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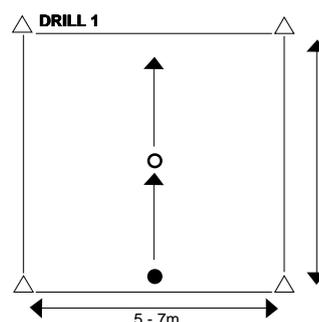
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7

TACKLING FROM BEHIND

Key Coaching Points

- **Contact**
Shoulders should be under the buttocks with the head across the buttocks and the arms wrapped tightly around the thighs.
- **Leg Drive**
Defenders should dive towards the attacker to prevent him getting out of reach.
- **Landing**
After securing a tight grip, slide down the attacker's thighs securing the runner at the knees.



Both players crawl on knees in the same direction. Progress to standing, then walking and jogging in the same direction

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THE PLAY – THE – BALL

Even at the elite level, the rucks decide.

The ruck area in the modern game can be a deciding factor to the end result at all levels.

As one respected coach remarked, “It’s the centre of the universe in Rugby League.”

For the purpose of this article the ruck area will refer to the play-the-ball and the two acting halves in senior football, and the acting half back in modified league for the team with the ball.

Obviously the areas to develop in attack are:

1. the speed and quality of play-the-ball
2. the speed and accuracy of the acting half back’s pass.

The coach should look to a play the ball method that ensures both control and minimum number of movements to fulfil the requirements of the movement.

Assume that the player tackled prefers to play-the-ball with his left foot. As the tackler releases him he rolls quickly on to his left hip.

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Cut—

constantly practice and play ruck games so as to evaluate the skill of ruck play so that the first receiver is also able to move with the ball. Statistics will show that in a senior game there is upwards of 300 play the ball movements. Proportionally one can assume that there is approximately 200 in a junior game, 150 in a mod game and 110 in younger age groups. These figures indicate the importance of performing the play the ball correctly and efficiently.

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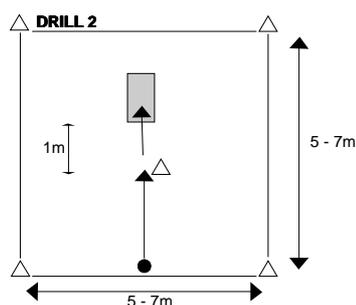
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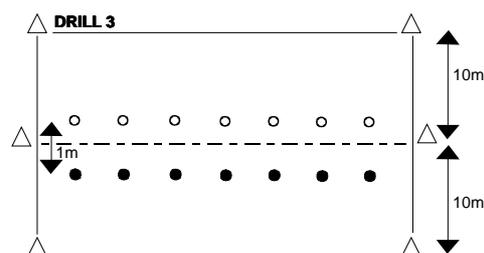
Robert Smythe
Mona Vale Rugby League Club

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Tackling from Behind Continued



Defender must dive from before the marker to hit the bag at waist / buttock height.



Two teams nominated black or red facing each other with evenly sized partners.

Coach calls either black or red. That side turns and runs towards their tryline, the other side chases and attempts to tackle to score.

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FRONT ON FALLING BACK TACKLE

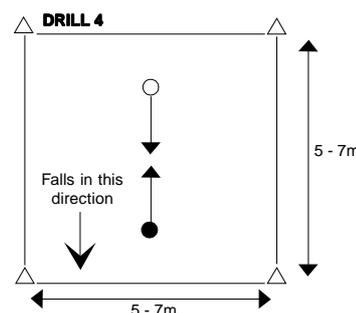
Key Coaching Points

- **Technique**
Same as side on tackle, except the head is placed to the side of the tacklers body (not across body).

Falling Back

- Use attacker’s momentum to bring the attacker to the ground, falling with him to land on top of his legs.

(The “driving” tackle is recognised but is not considered appropriate for inclusion in a modified footy segment.)



Start with Defender in kneeling position. Progress to Attacker walking and then jogging towards defender

THE “PLAY THE BALL” and THE “2 PASS RULE”

Two areas of the modified game that raise a concern with many coaches regarding the coaching of the game and of players are (1) the play the ball and (2) the “two pass” rule.

A situation often encountered is where the play the ball is slow or clumsy and followed by a deep pass to a standing “pivot” (1st receiver) and then a further pass to a 2nd receiver who is standing and catches the ball before attempting to run. Often the opposition defence has claimed the 2nd receiver before he is able to go forward. In fact most coaches will drill their players to move up quickly as a defensive manoeuvre. This results in the team in possession going backwards, so much so that teams will often gain more ground in defence than in attack.

Coaches need to help players with a relatively quick and smooth play the ball. Coaches also need to show players how the 2nd receiver more ably handles this position. Coaches must address these situations as early as possible in young footballers (under 7’s). Coaches need to

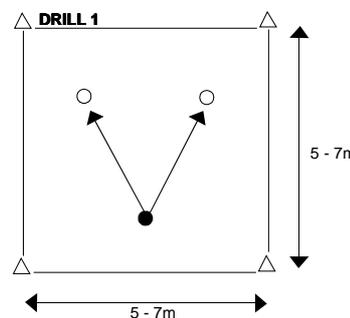
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SIDE ON TACKLE

Key Coaching Points

- **Target Zone**
Lower than the hip and above the knee (the thigh)
- **Body Position**
Upper body slightly bent over, eyes raised and head tilted so as to be behind the attacker’s body, eyes focused on the contact point, arms spread, ready.
- **Contact**
Shoulders should make first contact with the contact point, followed by the arms wrapping around the body with a tight grip.
- **Follow through**
Drive with legs so as to land on top of the attacker.



Both Attackers and defenders in kneeling position. Practice tackling in both sides.

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THE PASS OFF THE GROUND (The Dummy/Ruck – Half Pass)

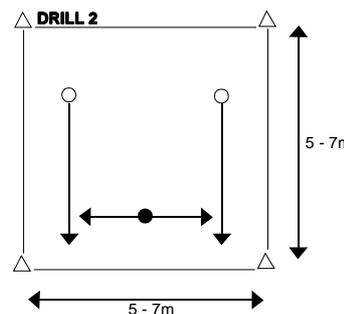
For 1st and 2nd receivers to have time, they must receive a snappy pass from the ruck-half.

Coaching Points:

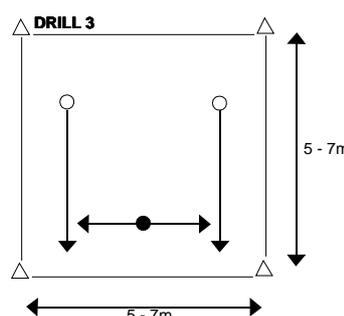
1. Look at the positioning of the intended receiver to ascertain the distance of the pass.
2. Spread the feet and bend at the knees so as to get down over the ball. If passing to the right the left foot will be near the ball as it is played and right foot will be pointed towards the receiver. (The ball is between the feet.)
3. Hold the ball in two hands with fingers spread about the centre of the ball. The pass is from the ground and should be smooth and even.
4. Turn the head and upper body towards the receiver.
5. Pass from the ground without lifting the ball or standing up.
6. Follow through with the arms with the fingers directing the pass to the receiver.

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Side on Tackle Continued



Defenders kneel on one knee, attackers walk passed. Progress to crouched position.



Attackers jog on coaches command. Defender tries to force attacker into touch using shoulders only and driving with the legs.

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GAME SITUATION DRILL

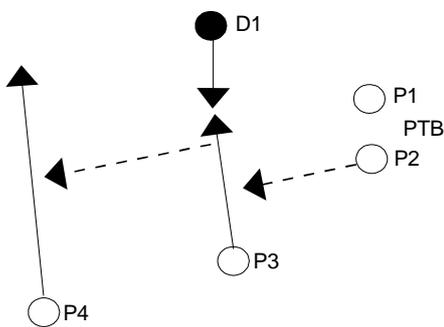
P1 plays the ball to P2 who passes from the ground to P3 on the run.

P3 runs to draw the defender D1 and passes to P4 on the move.

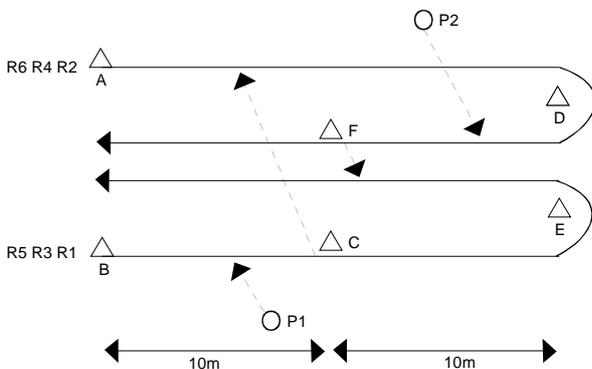
P4 then takes the position of D1.

D1 goes to position of P1, P1 to P2, P2 to P3, P3 to P4. The drill is to be done on both sides of the play the ball.

The use of markers as a substitute defender or to indicate correct positioning may be necessary for the novice player.



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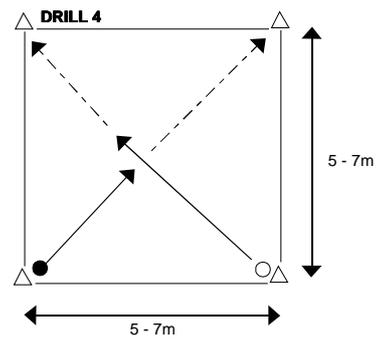


where they should pass to support players. Gradually eliminate the markers and introduce defending players under controlled conditions, simulating match situations.

All of the previously mentioned factors:-

- the play the ball
- the pass off the ground
- the movement and passing of 1st and 2nd receivers - go to make up the final execution of a 2nd receiver moving onto the ball. These are now placed in the "game practice" below.

Side on Tackle Continued



Defender attempts to tackle attacker as he runs towards opposite corner.

Attacker running in straight line tries to reach other corner.



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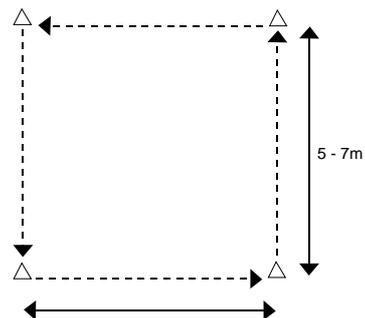
PLAY-THE-BALL AND PASS FROM THE GROUND DRILLS

1. Single file play the ball drill

Have 3 or 4 players form up in single file. The players perform the play the ball skill, commencing always from a position on the ground as if tackled. As the player plays the ball the next player being the acting-half, picks up the ball, runs a few metres and then rolls the ball out in front, dives on it and plays the ball and so on. Time: 5 mins.

2. Pass from the ground drill

Have players in groups of four, forming a grid about 3m x 3m. Players perform the pass from the ground and around the grid. Ensure the players' feet positions are correct.



2. Run and 2 Pass Drill

Time: 10 – 15 mins.

Have players form 2 lines of 3 players.

Commencing at markers A-B, R1 runs forward and receives a pass from P1 (pass to be from the ground), R1 continues to marker C where he passes to R2 running in support.

R2 runs and places the ball at the feet of P2.

R1 and R2 continue on to markers E-D and turn around.

R2 runs and receives a pass from P2 (pass to be from the ground), R2 continues to marker F and passes to R1 running in support.

R1 then runs and places the ball at the feet of P1.

R1 and R2 then run to the end of the lines swapping their starting positions.

R3 and R4 continue the drill and so on.

Initially the passing distance should be only one to two metres, as competence improves, gradually increase distance.

When coaching players on game positioning regarding ruck play, set out markers to indicate to players (a) where they should be (b) where they should run to and (c) approximate position from

3. Play the ball / pass from the ground relay

Have your players break into groups of 6 (as per diagram).

P1 starts on the ground, plays-the-ball to P2, who passes from the ground to P3.

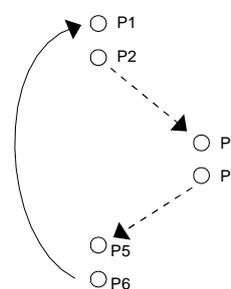
P3 rolls the ball forward a short distance, dives on it and plays it to P4, who passes from the ground to P5.

P5 rolls the ball forward, dives on it and plays it to P6.

P6 picks up the ball then runs to the position of P1.

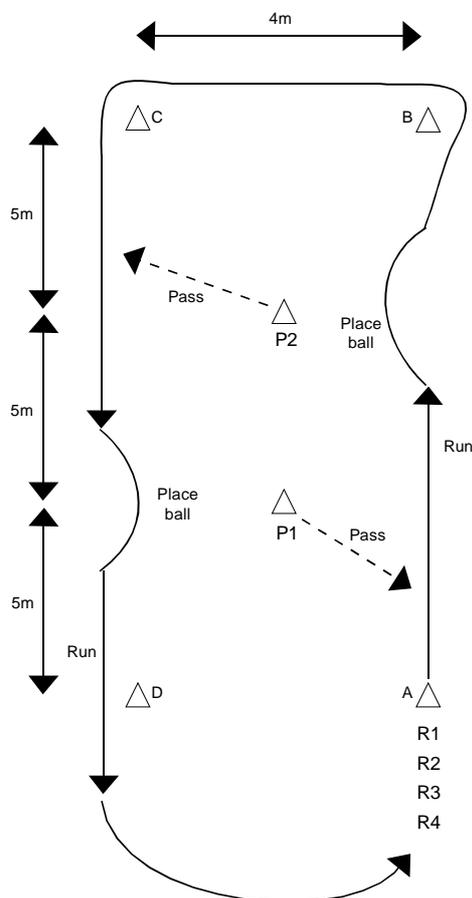
P1 goes to P2's position, P2 to P3 and so on. P6 rolls the ball forward, dives on it and the drill continues.

It is a good idea whenever a team is playing the ball at training to insist that the correct method of playing the ball is used and that it is always done from a position on the ground as if tackled. Also ensure that each time a pass is given from the acting half position that the correct method of passing from the ground is performed.



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RUCK PLAY DRILLS

Time: 5 mins

1. Running onto the pass drill

Players should always be moving onto a ball even if the movement is minimal – a player moving with the ball attracts the attention of the opposition.

Have your players line up single file in groups of about four (4). Commencing at marker A, R1 runs forward and receives a pass from P1. (Pass to be off the ground).

R1 runs and places the ball at the feet of P2 and continues on to marker B and then through to marker C.

R1 then runs to receive a pass from P2 (pass to be off the ground), continues on and places the ball at the feet of P1 and moves through to marker D. R1 then joins the end of the receiver's line.

Receivers can run through the drill at suitable intervals. This will depend on the number of footballs available.

Initially the passing distance should be only one to two metres. As competence improves, gradually increase the distance. (Do drill in both directions, so that the ball is passed and received on both sides.)

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