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# Coach Talk

## Andrew Farrar

St George - Illawarra Head Coach

*Andrew Farrar had a distinguished playing career with Canterbury Bulldogs, Western Suburbs, New South Wales and Australia, before joining the coaching ranks in 1995. After a year coaching Reserve Grade at the South Queensland Crushers, Farrar headed to Illawarra to coach the Steelers Reserve Grade side.*

*In 1998, Farrar took up the First Grade coaching position at Illawarra, and after a promising debut season, joined David Waite as Co-Coach of the newly merged St George Illawarra Dragons at the start of 1999 season.*

*In 2001, Farrar will take the reigns as Head Coach of the Dragons. He is yet another recently retired player tasting success as a First Grade coach, adding to the already healthy list which includes Mal Meninga and Royce Simmins. RLCM interviewed him to discover how he gets the best out of his players each week.*

### **RLCM Do you look at players as how they would respond to your method of coaching?**

**AF** I think so, you are probably looking at the mix of a team more than how a player will respond to my way of coaching. I think it is probably the building of a relationship more so than anything. Obviously there is give and take in any relationship but some players can be quite strong willed and probably as a coach you have got to give a little bit there. But, at the end of the day, the players have got to know who is running the show.

### **RLCM Where do you see the big changes in the game?**

**AF** The interchange has changed the game immensely. I don't know whether it is for the better, I'm a bit on both sides of the fence there, but I think that has been the major change.

### **RLCM The 10-metre rule?**

**AF** Well they said the 10-metre rule was going to open the game up. I don't think it does. I think it gives defence more of an advantage than it does the attack because with the five-metre rule it was quite easy to

draw and pass. Now you hear the terms 'slide in defence', 'drift defence' and 'inside out' because the defence has so much time to readjust. It is a lot harder to actually draw someone and let the ball do the work.

### **RLCM Explain your preparation on a weekly basis, and on match day. Do you have any set areas?**

**AF** Between the three coaches we had in 2000, Max's (Ninness) main area was the overall skill factor, like catch, pass and basic skills. David Waite's area was mainly the defensive side of it and I looked after what we did with the ball. In saying that, I probably had the easiest part because of the talent that is in the side. The hardest part was probably not to reign them in but to get them to value the ball and value possession a bit more. Even though they were our set areas, there is still a fair bit of crossover. David did not say 'that is not your area', if I had a tip for how to defend a certain player. So we bounced a lot of ideas off each other.

### **RLCM Match day preparation, do you have a set routine when you are on the road?**

**AF** Pretty much a set routine. We have breakfast and we usually get them out of the motel and have a game

of cricket or something that will get them moving. We have a bit of a meeting before we jump on the bus to go to the game. Match day we try not to be too heavy, whether it be physical or mental, we tend to let them find their own level on match day. If it is not in the computer by then, well it is never going to be in the computer.

***RLCM How much does video analysis play in your coaching style?***

**AF** From our side of the fence, we have a review tape of which I do our offence and David did the defence. We have statistics taken off the match tape and also individual tapes for the players. Each week the players get a tape of their own game, each action they do, which I think comes in very handy... I think the longest we have ever gone in review is probably an hour...I usually have first crack at them and I might have six or seven minutes of tape of where we went wrong and right in the game. I would have a chat about it and then David showed his cuttings of tape where we went right or wrong in stopping them. It does play a fair part in it...But I don't think we overplay our hand in the video room. It is a little bit like, it is good, but if it is too much it defeats the purpose.

***RLCM How important is feedback from your senior players?***

**AF** I have always been a great believer that the best judge are the people who run on the field, that's why in this day and age, they have started to go to the post match media conference. To me, I would rather go there and say I thought that was OK and back out. We have senior players who are very good at expressing their opinion, and are very smart football minds. They are the best judges and I think they're the people who should be talking about what the game was about because they were out there.

***RLCM Do game related skills play a big part in your training?***

**AF** It has always been the way I have coached. We are very game specific. We play a little game called scenarios, 'like it's the third tackle with two minutes to go, you are four points behind, what are you going to do to get us another set of six?' You're putting them right in there under the thumb, under the pressure that they would be under. Obviously, it is not a real game, but I think if you keep on repeating that, once

***With the right coaching any kid can be brought along and developed as long as he has got some athletic ability.***

they get into that situation, more than likely they will come up with the right decision... I think to win football games you need more right decisions than wrong decisions.

***RLCM Putting the opposition under pressure?***

**AF** I think we are fortunate because of our pace, agility and footwork when we've got the ball. In 1999 we ran in more tries from the back of the field than any other team, so playing against us, teams would feel under pressure whenever we got the ball. In saying that, I would like to see us be a bit more hard nosed. That comes from my days at Canterbury where defence built pressure.

***RLCM Is there a style of play that you try and surround yourself with?***

**AF** Yes without doubt, we try to play a reactionary style of play. We call it leading into space. It is a little bit along the lines of soccer coaches. In soccer you have got to lead into space to beat the offside trap. I think that is our main structure in how we want to play. We have got link players but you need people leading into space because a lead will cause some reaction in the defensive line and then you can play off that. I suppose it is just the talent in between the players' ears, their vision, their intelligence, their ability to judge distance, and how much time and space they have.

***RLCM Do you do much work on the play the ball, the ruck markers and dummy half plays?***

**AF** We do place a lot of emphasis on it in our training...We talk about winning the ground. You have got to win on the ground when they have got the ball, and you have got the ball. The importance of it has probably multiplied over the last few years with the rule changes that have been in place, but we used



# The Trainer

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SCOTT CAMPBELL Newcastle Knights Conditioner 2000

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*Written by Robert Rachow*

TRAINING a Rugby League team that includes the world's best player - Andrew Johns - and a host of other representative stars, means day-to-day life is an exciting proposition for Scott Campbell.

The Newcastle Knights conditioner is responsible for some of the most talented (not to mention expensive) bodies gracing the fields in the NRL. And just like all trainers throughout the competition, Campbell must be constantly on his toes to provide his troops with refreshing challenges and the latest in sporting innovations.

But despite the massive burden that rests upon his shoulders, Campbell has a simple view of his role within the team. Of course there are myriad tasks and situations for him to consider throughout the day - such as injuries, rehabilitation and fitness assessments - but in essence his job can be narrowed down to one concise description. He believes it is thus: "I identify physical deficiencies and then emphasise and correct them until they are no longer deficiencies."

These weaknesses can come in any number of forms. However, Campbell finds there are three main categories that they can be listed under - power, speed or aerobic capacity. In essence a player like Billy Peden, who has a high aerobic fitness, will have his training regime weighted towards the other two categories of power and speed, in order to compensate.

## **POWER**

Campbell likes to describe Newcastle's power program as working towards 'general strength'. By this he means increasing the players' power output to cater for a number of game-specific conditions, like wrestling in the ruck.

As with a lot of teams in the NRL, the Knights have three basic tests for general strength. They are the squat, the bench press and the power clean.

The beauty of such exercises is their simplicity to conduct and record and their generic application on the field. Campbell argues that with these three activities, every gym session in effect becomes a fitness test.

However the Knights conditioner warns against relying on any one activity too much. He says balance is the key and, more often than not, working only on your strengths can be detrimental.

"A lot of people arrive at a gym and straight away they jump into an exercise that they're good at or comfortable with," Campbell explains.

"In many ways that's human nature, but really they should be concentrating on areas they're not so skilled in. Within our training regime at Newcastle there is a fair amount of consideration for individual needs. We try to cater our program so that every one of the players has an opportunity to improve on areas they're not as powerful in. Weights are absolutely essential to the modern day Rugby League team and I suppose it is pretty obvious to say that is what sets our players apart from teams of the past. A player's strength and size are their 'equipment' and if they fail to do the work in the gym then they aren't fully equipped. The application of player shape at the defensive line, in both attack and defence, is integral to the outcome of the game."

## **SPEED**

Speed has become the basis of Rugby League for the 21st century. It applies to advancing from the defensive line, speed in the play-the-ball, in the open field or any number of other permutations.

Conditioners typically incorporate a lot of their speed training into their early pre-season fitness regime and then concentrate more specifically when an endurance base has been built. However, more and more teams

towards the elite level now have their own separate speed coaches and speed-specific training activities.

Speed, just like power and endurance, is one of those areas that if you aren't naturally blessed with it, you have to work hard to attain it. If a player misses large portions of speed training through injury and is not naturally quick, then they drop further and further behind the eight ball.

Campbell says full-time professionalism has helped Rugby League teams target areas like speed more thoroughly. But he also stresses that there is still a great deal of room for improvement.

"We call our players professionals, but they only work for around 30 hours a week," he says.

exertion with intense work and rest opportunities is more beneficial and challenging. For variation, locations with hills or different surfaces can be used. It is important however, like any other training situation, that conditions are safe and provide firm footing.

"I think sometimes it is important we get back to basics like running, because Rugby League really is a simple game," Campbell contests.

"That's not to say I don't like fitness drills when the players have the ball in-hand. Combining skills with fitness should be an important element in any trainer's regime. I just think that players like to have a time or a weight to beat and unless they have some sort of measurement, then they begin to doubt whether they

*"I think sometimes it is important we get back to basics like running, because Rugby League really is a simple game," Campbell contests.*

"On a week-to-week basis we don't push our players physically anywhere near what you would expect of an elite athlete. I suppose you have to consider the mental aspect of the game and what being belted does to a person's training output. But as far as being professional with nutrition, hydration and sleep...we have a way to go yet."

### **AEROBIC CAPACITY**

In recent seasons there has been a move away from traditional endurance activities like road runs and a shift towards skills-based fitness. However teams like Brisbane and the Knights have bucked the trend.

Newcastle still use a basic 30 minute run course with a baseline time that is expected of their players. Depending on whether a player can beat the baseline time or whether the conditioner thinks their aerobic capacity is great enough, they may do the exercise twice in the whole off-season or twice a week.

Campbell says any sort of long-distance run should include plenty of variation. This is important from both a mental and physical aspect. Flat, steady courses are hard on players' bodies as well as their minds. Conversely a route that includes periods of light

are actually improving or not. A number gives them something to aim at and it quantifies their fitness level at the same time."

### **VARIATIONS**

Of course, as with everyday life, there are reasons to wander away from the norm and readapt the usual approach to situations. Factors such as injury, boredom and over-training all play a part in restructured training regimes.

Basically the idea is to give players pretty much the same workout as usual, but to refocus the methods being used so that they revitalise the team. The cases - as with Paul Harrogan and Terry Lamb - where players don't train much at all because of injury, are few and far between. The majority of times an injured player is expected to replicate the intensity of their fully-fit teammates, but obviously not work in areas in which their handicap impedes them. Campbell suggests activities like boxing, cycling or swimming as ways to keep injured players fit while both assisting with recuperation and taking the strain away from the injured area.



# Two Codes Converging

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EDDIE JONES ACT Brumbies Coach

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*By David Haynes*

Ten years ago if someone said there were similarities in the way Rugby Union and Rugby League were played, it would have been met with raucous laughter. However, now that both codes have undertaken a metamorphosis in professionalism and rule changes, Rugby and League are converging closer by the day. Eddie Jones is one of the men that has helped the two games merge over the past years. As head coach of the ACT Brumbies, Jones and his predecessor Rod Macqueen, are renowned for their clever adaptation of League-style play to Rugby Union. Macqueen, now in charge of the Wallabies, even uses former League international John Muggleton as his defensive coach.

The convergence of the codes has seen players like

*In most cases, after  
15 to 20 minutes  
we will change our  
game-plan*

Andrew Walker, Duncan McRae, Peter Jorgensen, Ryan Cross and Joel Wilson switch comfortably between the two games. Despite many backs successfully making the transition between the codes, forwards have struggled, something Jones puts down to the different skills in Rugby. “For someone like Peter Ryan (ex-Brisbane Bronco) for instance, he has got good running and tackling skills, and they are becoming more important in Rugby,” he said. “But also he needs to scrummage, he needs to be able to know lineouts, lift and jump.” However, Jones says the transition is possible for forwards. “It was difficult for Peter and he is really starting to come through now, and I think if you are prepared to put enough time in and the players are prepared to learn, then they can make the transition.”

Jones says he is always looking at League for coaching ideas that can be utilised in Rugby. “Both Ewen (McKenzie - Brumbies assistant coach) and I have spent a bit of time with Brian Smith at Parramatta,” Jones said. “We have regular meetings with Mal Meninga in Canberra. We always try to get different ideas, and certainly one of the things we have looked at particularly in League is how they beat drift in defence, how they hold defence, and the number of attacking options they use. We link them directly into our game.”

The Brumbies have also used League defensive patterns, but as Jones outlines, defence in Rugby is in many ways unique. “The big difference probably between League and Union defence is that we try to take a lot more space off the opposition, because the game line is more important for us,” he said. “Ideally we want to catch them behind the game line all the time, so we don’t give them as much space as they do in League.”

Like in League, Jones says a good combination between the halves and the backrow is essential. “We try to do a lot of drills, that gets that interaction between our half and five-eighth and our back row,” he said. “We have got this drill we call ‘scrummage’... where we have a tackling side, maybe ten guys against nine defenders, and they will start from 30 metres and we will count the number of phases it takes them to score a try. So it is just repetitive stuff so we have got the nine and ten with the ball in the hand, and runners off calling all the options.”

Although halfbacks in both codes work closely with their backrows, the fundamental role of a halfback in League differs from Union. Where in Union the half is more or less a ball distributor, in League they work in the line, something Jones says is slowly changing. “A Union halfback is passing the ball more, our five-eighth is more like a halfback because he is the one taking it to the line but, George (Gregan) this year has started running a lot more,” he said. “We have

## *we felt if we can get them to make the right decisions at training, we'll get them to make the right decisions in the game*

actually got him to run and take the ball to the line as an option, so he is playing more like a League halfback than a traditional Union halfback, and I think that is the way the game will go.”

While the role of a halfback may be changing, Jones says the forwards’ is the same-to keep the team moving forward. “In League you are looking for the quick play the ball so the defence is going backwards, for us you are looking for ruck balls,” he said. “If we know on the second and third phase we can generate quick ruck ball then we are going to be in a very good attacking position and that is what we are looking for...creating momentum.”

The Brumbies also look to keep the opposition on the back foot by playing running rugby. “We keep the ball in hand,” Jones said. “We try to run with the ball, we don’t kick the ball much at all, and I suppose we rely strongly on the interaction between the backs and the forwards.” Despite many people tagging them the ‘entertainers’, their League style of play has been questioned from time to time. “We got criticised in the Super 12 Final because we didn’t kick the ball and people felt we should have,” Jones said. “But we had gone all the way through the Super 12 by playing that sort of football...we are very much a running team.”

Jones says he has also tried to instil patience into his team, a trait of any champion sporting team. “We again borrowed something from the Broncos in terms of being patient, and when you get the ball making the right decision,” he said. “We brought in a rule that if you drop the ball, half a mark goes against you. If you have one and half marks against you for the week, on Thursday, which is our Rugby free day, you have to come in and do ball extras. So that is how we developed it, we felt if we can get them to make the right decisions at training, we’ll get them to make the right decisions in the game, and it certainly works for us to a fair degree.” If this year’s Super 12 season was any indication the rule appears to be working wonders, with ACT narrowly losing 20-19 to the Canterbury Crusaders in the Final.

One of the things Jones would like to see introduced to Rugby is players’ off the ball statistics, similar to those used by some NRL clubs. “It (off the ball skills) is something we work really hard on to make sure the players have the right support lines, that they are not watching the play, that they are in motion, not only in attack but also in defence,” he said. “It is enormously important. The next thing in Rugby that we will be creating is stats, where you can say to a player. These are your off the ball stats, you haven’t been working - you haven’t been doing what you should be doing.”

Unlike most League coaches who sometimes stick to a rigid game-plan, Jones likes to vary the Brumbies’ plan. “In most cases, after 15 to 20 minutes we will change our game-plan,” he said. “Against the Crusaders in the Final, we wanted to play the ball a little bit wider but they were just drifting heavily. So in the second half we went to one off passes off the ruck and that is where we found space, and after that we got them to compress their defence a little bit, then we were able to shift the ball wider. So you have got to be able to make those alterations all the time.”

When he does decide to change the game-plan, Jones opts for a simple yet structured plan. “We have a way we want to play the game and then we have variations of that, and we will vary it for each game that we play,” he explains. “Our game plan is very much a collective arrangement. We have a group of senior players that on a Monday night we will meet with. The coaching staff will have a skeleton game-plan and sit down with those senior players and go through it. Then the next day the players will meet in two groups, and hopefully embellish that game-plan. Then we will have a final meeting, go through the game-plan and practise it.”

Beneath the surface Rugby Union and Rugby League share more similarities than you would think, except of course for the scrum. Jones’ thoughts on the modern-day League scrum go against the commonly held view, and would put League traditionalists in a spin. “I think that it is one of the most positive things that has happened to Rugby League, in that they have taken the referee’s position out of the game...you know who is going to win the scrum,” he said. “In Rugby...you don’t contest the ball you contest the quality of it and it is just ridiculous, it just became a farce in Rugby.”

As Jones and his Brumbies illustrate, it seems those of us who dared to laugh at the suggestion of integration between Union and League, have to wear it on the chin.

# Keeping them out

By Sean Cassidy - Redcliffe Dolphins Strength & Conditioning Coach

***Your team is defending their try line for the second set in a row. If your teams' defence is good enough they will keep them out.***

How good your teams' defence is, depends on a number of variables, including:

- Players' tackling skills
- Teams' defensive pattern
- Communication
- Attitude and commitment to defence
- Strength
- Level of physical conditioning

Attitude and commitment are the most important, however, *without a high level of physical conditioning* all variables will be affected. There are numerous times in defence where players are required to do large amounts of high intensity efforts, these efforts lead to accumulation of high levels of lactic acid and the depletion of energy stores.

*Accumulated lactic acid affects performance.* As a result, place a large emphasis of the physical conditioning training on *increasing the ability of players to tolerate lactic acid*, so they are more effective in defence.

There are obviously times in attack where players become fatigued due to the accumulation of lactic acid (amongst other sources of fatigue), however in defence, players are generally involved in more high intensity efforts close together, than in attack.

Examples of defensive efforts, leading to performance affecting fatigue:

- Whole team defending for multiple sets in a row
- Players making multiple tackles in a row

If a team is conditioned so that they are more able to tolerate lactic acid (physically and mentally) especially in defensive efforts, they will:

- Have less defensive errors related to an increase in fatigue (eg. out of position, lazy technique and no marker chase)

- Be better able to hold teams out for multiple sets
- Fresher for attack (your team won't need their time in possession to recover from defending)

While attacking, teams may use numerous strategies to penetrate your defence, such as:

- Train Tracks/Tram Trucks – Where they alternate forward runs to either side of the ruck. This can fatigue the big men defending around the ruck and increase their chances of making a defensive error.
- Concentrating numerous attacking plays at the play makers – running at the play makers may fatigue them enough to make them less effective in attack.

The effectiveness of strategies to exploit your defence (such as those above) can be reduced by improving your players' physical conditioning, in particular, *their ability to tolerate lactic acid*.

By exposing players to various levels of lactic acid, through training drills and games, they develop the ability to tolerate it better and it becomes less of a limiting factor in their performance.

In training, utilise a number of drills and games to assist players in improving their ability to tolerate lactic acid. A lot of these are aimed at overlooking the defensive aspects of the game, this is where the damage from fatigue can be caused. You only need to look at a game where one team has all the possession to see the effect on a side, of having to defend more than the other team.

## Training Drills

These drills are introduced in the off-season and in particular mid pre-season and throughout in-season. The volume and intensity of these drills varies throughout the training year.



# Turning your *Kick Chase* around

By David Haynes

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The age-old adage ‘a kick is only as good as its chase’ couldn’t be truer for New Zealand coach Frank Endacott. In his short stint with English glamour club Wigan, Endacott has spent “hours” drumming its importance into his chargers. For him, kick-chase is all about discipline and keeping the opposition under intense pressure.

“At Wigan we do drills religiously, about getting off the line and then kick-chase,” Endacott said. “Kick-chase is all about pressure and discipline.” The hard work has paid off. Currently, Wigan is running first in the UK Super League competition, with only Bradford having a better defensive record.

Endacott says the recipe for a good kick-chase is simple and revolves around kick placement. “It’s very important that when you put the kick down field it turns the fullback and wingers around,” he said. “The minute you’ve done that, you’ve done your job.”

While it sounds relatively straightforward, few teams have been able to master the art better than the Melbourne Storm. Like Endacott, Storm coach Chris Anderson says his side’s good kick-chase game stems from putting the opposition under pressure.

“We try to keep our kicks in play and keep the pressure on the opposition,” he said. “We don’t go for the touchline unless there is a 40-20 on... Keeping the ball in play makes the fullback work hard, puts the opposition under pressure and it probably takes the opposition three tackles to get organised.”

With quality outside backs with the speed and skill of Aaron Moule, Tony Martin, Matt Geyer and Marcus Bai this year, Melbourne invariably trapped opposition sides in their own half, enabling the team to gain momentum through good field position.

Although Anderson believes a kick is only as good as its chase, he cites a team’s platform as an essential ingredient to the kick-chase game. “The kick is only as good as the platform you set,” the dual premiership winning coach said. “If you kick when your team’s not going forward then the kicks going to be 30-metres less than it should be.”

To combat this, Anderson says the Storm kick up in the line to enable the kicker to gain maximum ground up field, while simultaneously keeping the chasers on-side. “We kick up in the line so when (Brett) Kimmorley kicked up field our outside runners were on-side, and don’t have to worry about waiting 10-metres,” Anderson offered.

St George Illawarra coach Andrew Farrar says Melbourne’s kick-chase game is unrivalled. “...They (Melbourne) kick-chase better than any team in the competition,” he said. Farrar also believes the Storm’s kicking game suits their style of play. “They play what we call kicking on the advantage line,” he said. “If you can get it right, like they get it most of the time, it is pretty intimidating. It works very well for the players Melbourne have.”

With his own side, Farrar says the kicking game varies depending on the opposition. “Against certain teams there is not much point kicking the ball long all the time because they play with three fullbacks and are very good at bringing the ball back,” he said. “So you probably try to find the line...I’m not a big fan of putting the ball into touch though... It goes back to my days at Canterbury where you always backed your fitness.”

As Endacott explains however, without the discipline of all 13 players on the paddock a good kick is fruitless. “If you put the kick in the corner and one player decides he’s going to be one-metre in front of the referee on play five and gives away a penalty, all that good work is gone out the door,” he said.

Once the hallmark of a great player, kick-chase is becoming the barometer of a great team. While it is an art to kick the ball down field so it beats the opposition wingers and fullback, it takes discipline to chase. Nowadays, not only do teams recognise that they have to dictate when, where and how opposition teams receive a kick. They are also aware of the huge territorial advantage gained by pinning the opposition in their own quarter. And like Melbourne, Wigan and St George Illawarra, can usually turn good field position into points on the scoreboard.

# Creating quality

By David Haynes

## Second-Phase Football

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It is no coincidence that two Melbourne Storm players, Russell Bawden and Robbie Kearns, were among the top offloaders in the game at end of the 2000 season. And when you consider the Storm's 'flat attack' style of play, it's not difficult to understand why.

Second-phase football is like grapes to wine for the Melbourne Storm. They rely on quick play the balls and offloads to keep opposition teams on their heels and continually reeling backwards. The Storm's 70-10 demolition of St George-Illawarra earlier in the year, and their thrilling come-from-behind win against the Dragons in last year's Grand Final, demonstrates how rampant they can be when they're able to offload in traffic and play on the advantage line.

Melbourne coach Chris Anderson says second-phase football is one of the keys to his side's game. "If you get second-phase footy then you've achieved what you want to achieve because you've got the defence standing still and you're going at them," he said. As most sides can testify, when the Storm get you going backwards it's like trying to stop a 10-tonne mac-truck going at full throttle.

But Anderson says his side doesn't plan on steamrolling their opponents straight away, they look to build pressure on their opposition. "Our aim is not to go out there and score tries early, our aim is to go out there and pressure the opposition and when they get tired that's when they make a few mistakes and you create your second-phase football," he said. "That may take 80 minutes, or it may take 30 minutes, but if you make a mistake yourself, you've taken the pressure off them."

While the importance of second-phase football can't be under-stated, Anderson believes it can sometimes work against the attacking side. "When you're setting up for something you don't want everyone trying to play second-phase footy," he explains.

"What you need is quality second-phase football, so when you create it you've got room to move with it. If you've got a front-rower that runs up and just shoots the ball out behind him, that is not good quality second-phase football, you don't gain anything from it...If you're not getting good quality second-phase football it buggers up your whole game-plan, because you're spreading the ball like chooks with your heads

cut off. You end up spreading yourself and not your opposition."

The Storm's 'flat attack' however, enables them to take full advantage when Kearns, Bawden or Stephen Kearney manage to offload the ball under strong defensive pressure. "If you're all up on the advantage line and you get second-phase play everyone's available for the football," Anderson explains. "If you play further back and someone gets second-phase football, then your 20 metres away from the footy, so your not taking advantage of it."

The dual premierships winning and Australian coach says creating damaging second-phase play comes back to working hard up the middle of the park.

"Set a platform and work to create second-phase footy," he offered. "You can do it by creating one-on-one tackles or creating angled runs or running big blokes at little blokes, or little blokes at big blokes so you get the quick play the ball."

Despite having a talented ball-distributing prop in Kearns, Anderson believes quality second-phase play stems from the back-row. "You don't see a lot of front-rowers creating second-phase footy, they set the platform," he said. "It's more your back-rowers working with your halfback."

Unlike some teams that look to pop miracle passes at their own end of the field, Melbourne's approach to second-phase play is a lot more disciplined. The Storm wait until they have good field position before spreading their wings in their opposition's half. "We're not looking for any second-phase football coming out of our own end," Anderson said. "From halfway you're looking for second-phase footy. You're looking for one-on-one tackles, with your halfback working with your back-rowers to try and create those one-on-one tackles."

Like most things, second-phase play is all about quality not quantity. Although, as Melbourne prove, it's not impossible to have both as long as you go about it in a strategic and disciplined way. As Anderson explains, the idea of second-phase football 'isn't to spread yourselves, but to spread your opposition.'

# PLAYERS WHO CO-ORDINATE WELL IN DEFENCE, BREED CONFIDENCE.

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By Ken Kennedy - ARL Level 3 Coach

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If 'catches win cricket matches', then one-on-one tackles win Rugby League games. After all, when a team isn't pressing the opposition's line in attack, they are working hard to defend their own line.

Nowadays, defensive patterns are formulated intricately, and it is a player's responsibility to understand and execute their role efficiently. As Frank Endacott says 'defence is a team responsibility, tackling is an individual responsibility'. To maximise themselves as a key cog in a defensive machine, players need to be equipped with certain principles, similar to these:

## **Delay**

## **Depth**

## **Balance**

## **Concentration**

When the opposition have the ball, defending players must -

1. Stop penetration
  - a) By forcing play backwards or sideways
  - b) By tracking all opponents who are making runs
2. Shut down the opponents working space as quickly as possible
  - a) By pressuring the ball quickly
  - b) By having players recover quickly to mark opponents and close up space.

Good defending often results in the opposition giving the ball away.

## **Tracking Players**

Attackers who are allowed to run free will create problems for the defence. All attackers, and especially those running into good positions must be marked. Unless another defender immediately assumes the duty, a defender should stay with his attacker if the attacker moves into a dangerous or good supporting position.

## **Shutting down on Opponents quickly**

The good player is the one who has time to perform leisurely. Therefore players who are pressurised are more likely to commit errors.

Where on the field pressurising takes place may vary according to:

- a) The tactics the team employs
- b) The type of opposition

Shutting down may occur:

1. Immediately the ball is lost
2. In the opposition's half of the field in order to win back the ball as quickly as possible.
3. Only in the defending team's defensive third, and it only begins to shut down on the ball and pressurise opponents in that area of the field.

## **FIRST AND SECOND DEFENDER**

In all cases the first defender is the player who shuts down on the ball.

The second defender is the player giving immediate support to the first defender. If the ball is played to another attacker the roles of the defenders may change.

## **DELAY**

1. First defender shuts down on the ball quickly in order to:
  - a) Reduce the space and time the attacker has to perform his technique.
  - b) Make the attacker concentrate on the ball so that he cannot look around and see his supporting players.
  - c) Try to force the attacker into a certain part of the field least advantageous to him and most advantageous to the defenders.
  - d) Try to slow down the attack so that recovering defenders may take up good defensive positions.

The first priority is to delay the attack so that the defence can consolidate.

The next priority is to try to isolate the player with the ball or make his next task (e.g. a dribble or pass) as difficult as possible.

2. If the ball is passed another player becomes the first defender and the player initially delaying the attack assumes a covering position or stays with his opponent if he attempts to run past him.

**DEPTH AND CONCENTRATION**

Square defences can be beaten with one pass and one well-timed run.

Depth in defence provides cover or a second line of defence.

Defenders need to -

- a) Provide cover and support in case the first defender is beaten.
- b) Try to keep the opposition attackers in front of the defence.
- c) Deny as much space as possible to attackers by not becoming strung out along and across the field. A tightly packed or concentrated defence is harder to penetrate than one where the defenders are spread over a wide area.

**RECOVERY RUNS**

On losing possession all players on the defending side should attempt to get goalside of at least one of the attacking team quickly. Most players should also attempt to get goalside of the ball if that is possible. Recovery runs can be specific i.e...when a player tries to provide cover for the first defender, but for most players running back into defensive positions the general rule on lines of recover is that -

- a) Players on the flanks make runs towards their own near post.

- b) Players in the middle of the field make runs towards their own penalty spot.

Players moving back behind the ball along these rough guidelines would provide for better concentration in defence.

**BALANCE**

Defenders have to be able to affect play. It is not enough merely for them to get back behind the ball. Good positioning can help to make penetration so much more difficult.

**THE CHAIN REACTION**

When defending, it is vital that the first defender always makes a positive move in relation to the opponent with the ball. This will spark off a reaction among his defending colleagues. They can adjust their positions to this action. Any hesitation or indecision by the first defender will cause a similar 'chain reaction' right through the defence.

**PASSING ON INFORMATION**

Talking to one another is an important part of the game. Players who encourage each other and pass on good useable information enhance their chances of success. E.g...'man on', 'take the runner'.

**NOTES**

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# *Understanding...*

## **THE RULES OF RUGBY LEAGUE**

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### *Part 2*

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In the first chapter of UNDERSTANDING THE RULES OF RUGBY LEAGUE we discussed the often neglected details of beginning a match successfully. In this instalment we cover the finer aspects of infringements and variations that may arise from penalty restarts. Our thanks to Ken Hagarty of the National Referees' Accreditation Scheme for his insight into the permutations resulting in these instances.

#### **OFFSIDE**

Under international rules, the defending team is to retire 10 metres from the play-the-ball to put themselves onside. The points used to determine this 10 metre distance are the back foot of the first marker and the front foot of the remaining defensive line (excluding a second marker). Anyone breaching this gap will be considered offside and a penalty will be awarded should they interfere with play. The referee will allow the defensive line to move forward once the ball has left the ruck area. This is usually considered to be once the man playing the ball has heeled it backwards after regaining his feet. However in varying instances, some referees may not determine the ball clear of the ruck until the acting half has touched it. As long as this is uniformly applied throughout the match and competition, no major problems should be created.

#### **OFFSIDE FROM THE KICK**

Players will also be considered offside when, from a kick, they are standing in front of their teammate who is kicking the ball. They shall remain at least 10 metres from the ball until such a time as the opposition travel 10 metres in possession (in any direction). Failure to do so will result in a penalty kick to the team in possession. A player offside from a kick will be considered onside once the kicker moves to a position in front of them. An offside player who makes every attempt to remove themselves from an interfering position, but is purposely pushed or touched by the opposition, will also be deemed to be onside.

#### **ACCEPTED TACKLES**

Rugby League accepts four different types of effective tackles. Two are when the attacking player is in a vertical position and the other two are when they are on the ground. When upright, an attacking player will be considered tackled once his forward momentum has been halted and he cannot offload the ball. Similarly, the attacking player will be deemed held if they submit in a tackle whilst a member of the defensive line has a hand placed upon them. On the ground, a player will be tackled if any part of the ball, hand or arm carrying the ball comes into contact with the ground while a defender has a hand placed on them. A fair tackle will also be ruled if an attacking player already on the ground (fielding a loose ball or having slipped over with the ball) is touched by a defensive player. Remember in all instances - except for the few times an attacker falls into a tackle - defenders are obligated to tackle below shoulder height. Any infringement of this law will result in a penalty to the attacking team and possibly the player responsible being sinbinned or sent off.

#### **INFRINGEMENTS IN GOAL**

Unintentional mistakes incurred within the in-goal area (such as knock on, losing the ball dead) from the defending team usually result in a drop kick from the goalline. However in the event of a penalty being awarded in goal - eg. drop kicking out on the full or offside from the drop kick - the penalty shall be given to the attacking team 10 metres out from the tryline parallel to the infringement. This is of course taking into account that any infringement within 10 metres of the sideline will also be moved in to the 10 metre mark. In the event of the attacking team being held up in-goal prior to the last tackle, a scrum shall be awarded to the attacking side 10 metres out from the tryline parallel to the incident.

#### **PENALTY TRY**

In certain instances where the attacking team appears certain to score a try but is fouled and unjustly prevented from doing so, a penalty try shall be

awarded. The mark for the penalty try is taken directly underneath the centre of the goalposts, with the kick to be taken from straight in front. The maximum score from a penalty try is 6 points as per normal (4 for the penalty try, 2 for the conversion).

### **EIGHT-POINT TRY**

Under even rarer circumstances, the referee may award an eight-point try to the attacking team. To be awarded such a penalty, the team in possession must be fouled in the act of scoring, but still manage to ground the ball properly. The mark for the try is where the ball was grounded, with a conversion to be taken in line with the mark and a penalty to be given in front of the posts. The maximum amount of points from the try is eight (4 for the try, 2 for the conversion and 2 for the penalty). Note - a player who is fouled AFTER scoring the try cannot be awarded an eight-point try. It is then up to the discretion of the referee whether the foul committed was worthy of a warning, 10 minutes in the sin bin or being removed from the game.

### **PENALTY KICK OPTIONS**

In the event of a penalty being awarded, the team receiving the penalty has five options available. They are as follows - kick at goal, punt, drop kick, place kick or tap. Any penalty kick that successfully finds touch, either on the full or after bouncing in field, will be subsequently given a free kick. Even an attempted shot at goal which misses and goes into touch will be awarded with a free kick 10 metres in from where it crossed the line. Conversely, a penalty kick which goes dead or touch-in-goal (including hitting the cornerpost) will result in a dropkick to the defending team from the centre of the 20 metre line. If a member of the defending team touches the ball before it goes dead or touch-in-goal, a dropkick from the centre of the goal line will be taken. In the instance where a defender touches a penalty kick before it goes over the field of play sideline, a scrum shall be taken 10 metres in from where the ball crossed the line, with the team taking the penalty kick to feed.

### **FREE KICK OPTIONS**

Free kicks are usually the result of either an unintentional in-goal infringement from the attacking side or from a penalty kick which finds touch. A free kick cannot be used to shoot at goal and must bounce within the field of play for the team taking it to remain in possession. Most sides elect to use a free kick for a tap restart, but a punt and a dropkick are also permissible. Not many coaches realise, but a free kick can be kicked into touch following a penalty kick for

[www.rlcm.com.au](http://www.rlcm.com.au)

touch. The advantage is in the extra yardage gained, however the fact that the free kick must bounce before entering touch is somewhat of a risk.

### **SCRUMS**

From unintentional infringements such as a knock on or forward pass, the referee will pack a scrum, with the loose head and feed awarded to the non-offending team. In the event of successive knock ons from either side, the scrum feed will be given to the team which offended second. Consisting of usually the six forwards, the scrum must be packed in a 3-2-1 formation when all 13 members of the team are on the field. It is of note that when a team cannot field 3 men for a scrum plus a halfback, the game will be called off (even though technically 9 people are needed to start the match). Once the ball is fed into the tunnel between the two opposing sides, all players must remain on their feet until the ball clears the scrum. Another obscure fact relating to the scrum is that teams may push forward with the ball provided the lock is responsible for holding the ball in. Therefore theoretically, scrums can be pushed over the tryline, with the lock diving on the ball to score. But if the ball is held in by the second rowers, hookers or props, a penalty shall be awarded against the offending team.

### **POINT OF INTEREST**

The definition of a knock-on is 'a ball being ACCIDENTALLY propelled forward towards the opposition goalline. This raises two interesting points. The first is that although an accidental knock-on results in a scrum feed to the opposition, a ball deliberately tapped forward (possibly over the defenders' heads for a regather) incurs a penalty. It is pretty much the same rule which governs accidental and intentional forward passes. The other point is that a ball dropped backwards that proceedingly bounces forward will not be considered a knock-on. In relation to the zero-tackle rule, a knock-on retrieved by the opposition will allow the team now in possession an extra tackle called 'zero'.



# FOOT FOR THOUGHT

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By Shay Green (Podiatrist)

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## Qualifications

Private practitioner (Brisbane and Brisbane Northern suburbs).  
Member of the Queensland Academy of Sport

Member of Podiatry Association Sports Group  
Member of Podiatrists Registration Board

Can you imagine an 11 year old boy being so depressed that he considers suicide a justifiable solution to his problems? This particular boy was suffering with chronic heel pain (over twelve months) and his mother had been advised that he should stop all sport for six months.

He couldn't play footy with his mates at school, he had been "dropped" from the team, he couldn't train or participate in club games. The pain, anxiety and subsequent depression this lad experienced should never have happened. This boy was back to football four weeks after starting a treatment regime. His problem was due to the combination of growth, sport and poor foot function. This scenario, although extreme, is not uncommon.

Much has been written about the susceptibility of the immature skeleton to injury. This is understandable when you consider that:

- the growth plates which are structurally weak can slip or fracture during vigorous sport,
- the growing articular surface in long bones is very vulnerable. The blood supply to the bone beneath the cartilage is critical. Injury or repeated micro trauma to this area may result in loose fragments of bone forming and irreversible joint damage,
- the soft tissues such as muscles, tendons and ligaments elongate **after** the bone has increased in length. Growth spurts therefore, can result in soft tissue tightness, increasing the risk of muscle overuse injuries and avulsion of body segments where the ligaments attach.

Rugby League is a code of football enjoyed by players of varying ages, skills and competition levels. The playing surface of grounds can vary enormously and be responsible for such injuries as ankle sprains or fractures due to a slippery or irregular surface, and shin pain if the ground is hard. Other contributing factors to on field injury include;

- Recklessness of the injured party
- Foul or illegal play by another

- Poor playing surface or inappropriate footwear or tag length
- Inappropriate body size or strength of members of the opposition team
- Inadequate fitness levels or postural problems
- Lack of, or defective, protective gear
- Incomplete recovery from a previous injury
- Poor supervision or refereeing
- Lack of adequate warm up / warm down

While many injuries occur from acute trauma due to body contact, trips and falls, a more subtle injury can develop due to poor foot function. Biomechanical problems such as "feet that roll in at the ankles, heels that turn out", some flat feet, knock knees etc will require compensation from within the foot or the leg, to enable the foot to perform. This results in overuse injuries to muscles and tendons and inflammatory symptoms in the foot, heel, leg and knee. Damage often extends to the cartilaginous surfaces which are designed to protect the joints. Such injuries can be sustained just from normal weightbearing activity but are exacerbated when sport is undertaken. Many practitioners find that these types of injuries are prevalent in pre season training, and in children during growth spurts, when muscle lengths are shorter and fitness levels are lower.

Smithers and Myers (1985) conducted research in three Brisbane hospital casualty facilities and found that 63% of all hospital casualty sporting injury presentations were due to the various football codes. The most common single injury was "sprained ankle".

Lower limb and foot injuries are to be anticipated in a sport such as Rugby League and coaches should take heed of the common causes of injuries, particularly when dealing with younger players. Because it is unrealistic to expect that playing grounds are going to be uniform, or that all football boots are going to provide the same sort of stability or protection for each player, there is an advantage of knowing what types of feet are prone to injury.

Podiatrists are skilled at examining and assessing foot



# What's in your sports drink?

In this two part series many of the well known "sports drinks" are compared with the Unipro Endura sports rehydration supplement.

Part 1

## The Importance of Magnesium.

Ready made "sports drinks" are very popular with many Footballers but they can do more harm than good. In the first of this two part series we look at the importance of magnesium in the rehydration process. Endura with its patented magnesium formulation Meta Mag™ delivers the levels of magnesium needed for rehydration and improved performance.

## The Problem with most sports drinks.

Most sports drinks are high in sodium, without the balance of other intra-cellular electrolytes to maintain muscle cell water levels. Replacing sodium levels in the blood lost through exercise helps maintain sweating rate, but it also has the negative effect of causing muscle cell dehydration and a loss of muscular performance.

*So while most commercial sports drinks have concentrated on providing energy and replacing the sodium and potassium lost in sweat, they have completely ignored the most fundamental aspects of muscle physiology and energy metabolism.*

Without doubt, the most important mineral for the maintenance of muscle function and energy production is **magnesium**. It plays a vital role in muscular energy (ATP) production. Magnesium deficiency causes swelling and disruption of the main energy-producing structures within the cells (the mitochondria). This is a major cause of exercise-induced muscle damage, and can be prevented by magnesium supplementation.

## Magnesium Replacement

Athletes often experience intracellular magnesium deficiency due to inadequate dietary intake and increased losses through sweat and urine during exercise.

A recent study performed on 20 highly trained men who took 72 hours to complete a 120km hike in temperatures of 20-26C, showed that their magnesium levels took

three months to return to pre-exercise levels.

This study indicates how strenuous muscular activity depletes magnesium reserves and the difficulty of restoring magnesium in training athletes. (Doley E, Burstein R, Wishnitzer R, Lubin F, Chetriet A, Shefi M, Deuster PA. *Longitudinal study of magnesium status of Israeli military recruits. Magnes Trace Elem 1991-1992;10:420-426.*)

***Magnesium therapy in athletes has been shown to have an oxygen sparing effect, increasing the clearance of lactic acid, muscle strength and power output, and also improving performance and preventing muscle spasm and cramping.***

*(Kappes P, Nowacki P, Golf S, Graef V, Temme H, Katz N. *Cardiorespiratory and metabolic performance of competitive female endurance athletes after long term magnesium supplementation in a double blind study. 15<sup>th</sup> Symposium der Gesseschaft fur Magnesium forschung September 1992*)*

Dietary surveys indicate that the majority of people are not ingesting the required daily amount (RDA) of magnesium. While the typical Australian diet produces 1/2-2/3 of the RDA (400 mg) of magnesium, it actually raises magnesium requirements to 500-800 mg due to its high content of magnesium-depleting factors. (Webb WL, Gehi M. *Electrolyte and fluid imbalance: neuropsychiatric manifestations. Psychosomatics 1981;22:1991-1203*)

Both alcohol and caffeine cause urinary increases in magnesium excretion, and high levels of fat have been shown to interfere with magnesium absorption. Increased phosphorous intake (e.g. the phosphoric acid in cola drinks) can cause an increased need for magnesium, as does a high sugar, salt, protein and fibre intake.

## Electrolyte regulation and cramping

As an electrolyte, magnesium appears to exert a regulatory influence by maintaining appropriate levels

*only supplementing potassium in people with low magnesium levels usually only increases muscle cramping.*

of potassium, calcium and sodium. Low magnesium levels are associated with low blood potassium and calcium and with increased muscle spasm and cramping. However, only supplementing potassium in people with low magnesium levels usually only increases muscle cramping. This is because the loss of potassium during magnesium deficiency is an attempt by the body to offset the spasm-inducing effect

*An electrolyte solution containing high levels of magnesium will replenish tissue levels of both magnesium and potassium and therefore reduce cramping.*

of low magnesium level. The loss of potassium reduces the potential of muscles to spasm when there is a low magnesium concentration, and supplementation with potassium will then generate cramping.

Athletes who experience regular muscle cramps can benefit from magnesium supplementation. Many electrolyte drinks contain

*Endura, with its patented formulation Meta Mag™ provides magnesium in the correct ratio for rehydration, improved performance and reduced muscle cramping.*

plenty of potassium and very little magnesium, if any. An electrolyte solution containing high levels of magnesium will replenish tissue levels of both magnesium and potassium and therefore reduce cramping.

Consequently, if your sports drink does not contain the right balance of magnesium, it has a greatly reduced effect on electrolyte metabolism, and all you are doing is drinking sweetened salt water. Endura, with its patented formulation Meta Mag™ provides magnesium in the correct ratio for rehydration, improved performance and reduced muscle cramping.

Endura is available from all good Pharmacies and Health Food stores, or contact Health World Limited directly on (07) 3260 3300 for your nearest stockist.

# Are you guilty of "A Salting" your body?

If you use many of the popular "sports drinks" you probably are. Because without magnesium and the proper ratio of electrolytes many "sports drinks" are simply sweetened salt water.

Endura with its scientifically advanced formulation provides the high level of magnesium and proper ratios of electrolytes that football players need for prolonged activity and muscle recovery.

With active minerals magnesium, calcium, potassium and sodium, Endura rehydrates the body quickly and helps relieve muscle cramping.

Ignorance is not a defence for "a Salt". Don't get caught out.

Check out now how much salt (Sodium or Na) is in your "sports drink".

## And use Endura!

Endura is available from all good Pharmacies and Health Food Stores or contact Health World Limited directly on (07) 3260 3300, for your nearest stockists.

*Always read the label.*

# Skills.....

**The following skills and drills are designed for Mini League & Mod Footy.**

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## ***Developing Speed & Agility***

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Two forms of training are utilised to develop speed and agility. These areas are:

- General speed and agility
- Specific speed and agility

### **General Speed & Agility**

General speed and agility training develops a player's straight line speed as well as the ability to run sideways and backwards.

This form of training is undertaken just before the beginning of the season and continued throughout the season.

General speed and agility helps improve a players change of direction skills and reduces the risk of joint injury.

Only a small number of drills, relays or games are needed to help young players improve their game.

*The publishers of RLCM, Shamrock Books wish to thank the authors Richard Beesley, Tim Rogers, Peter Corcoran OAM, artist Max Foley and the NSWRL for allowing the drills from the book "Fitness For Kids" to be reproduced.*

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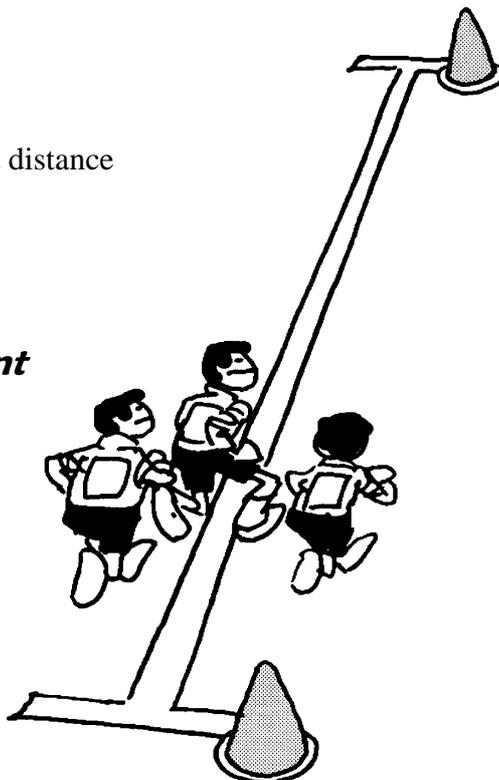
## General Speed & Agility Drills

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### Sprints

Players sprint over a set distance in a straight line.

*Players sprint  
over a set  
distance*



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	5 - 15
<b>Distance</b>	5 - 30m	5 - 50m
<b>Rest</b>	Walk recovery	Walk recovery

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Match teammates of similar speed

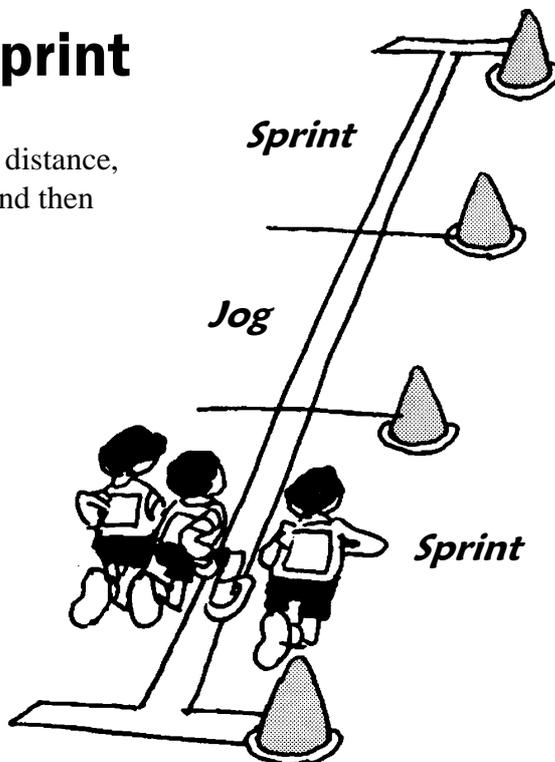
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## General Speed & Agility Drills

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### Hollow Sprint

Players sprint a set distance, jog a set distance and then sprint again.



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	5 - 10
<b>Distance</b>	10m/10m/10m	15m/10m/10m
<b>Rest</b>	20 sec	20 sec

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Players should decelerate in middle section

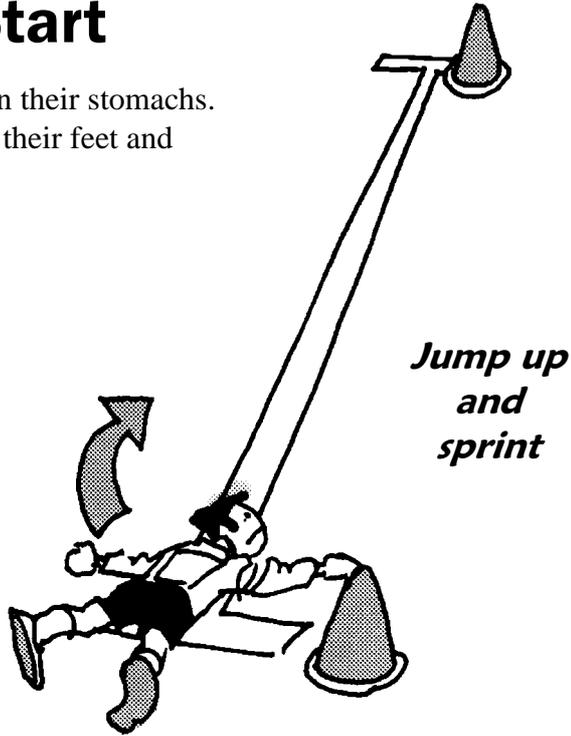
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## General Speed & Agility Drills

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### Stomach Start

Players start by lying on their stomachs. They scramble up onto their feet and sprint a set distance.



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	4 - 8	5 - 15
<b>Distance</b>	5 - 30m	5 - 50m
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Vary by having players also lie on their back.

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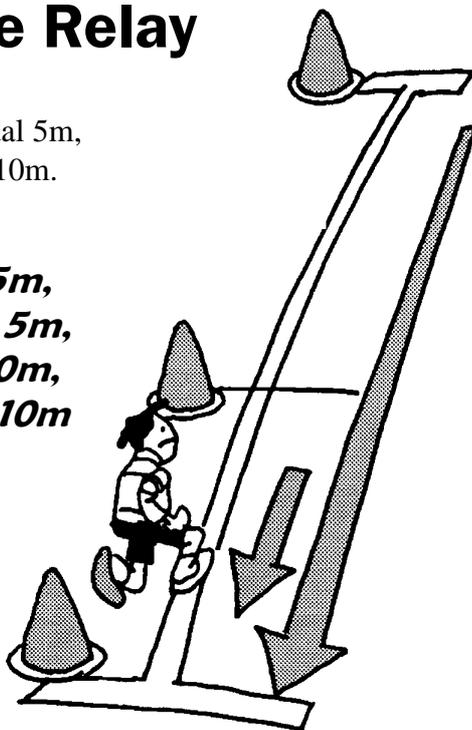
## General Speed & Agility Drills

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### Short Shuttle Relay

Players sprint 5m, backpedal 5m, sprint 10m and backpedal 10m.

*Forward 5m,  
Back Pedal 5m,  
Forward 10m,  
Backpedal 10m*



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	1 - 3	3 - 6
<b>Distance</b>	5/10m	5/10m
<b>Rest</b>	30 sec	20 sec

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Can be performed with the ball.

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## General Speed & Agility Drills

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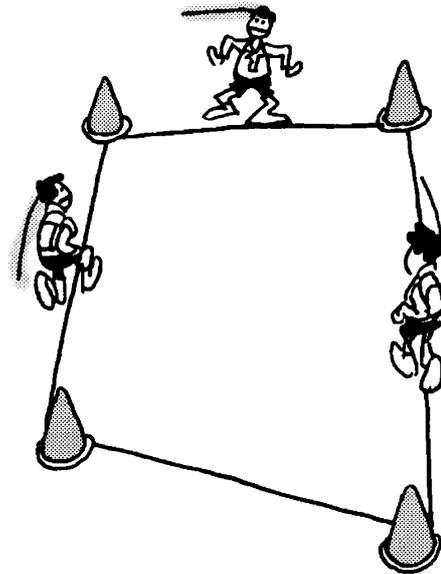
# Squares

4 hats are placed to form a square 5m x 5m

**5m Square**

Each player sprints to the first hat, runs sideways to the second, then runs backwards to the third.

The drill is then performed in the opposite direction. It can be performed with the ball.



***Sprint,  
go sideways  
then backwards***

<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	2 - 4	6 - 12
<b>Distance</b>	3m	5m
<b>Rest</b>	30 sec	30 sec

### **Coaching Tips**

A good drill to teach players change of direction.  
Run drill in pairs to increase competition

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## General Speed & Agility Drills

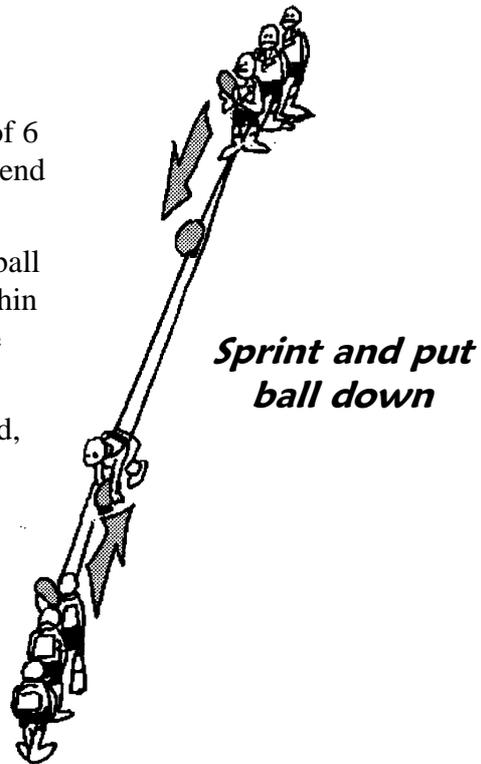
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### Ball Relay

Players are divided into groups of 6 with 3 players standing at either end of the track.

The first players sprint with the ball in two hands. When they get within 2m of the next player, they place the ball on the ground.

When the ball touches the ground, the next player turns, scoops it up and continues the drill.



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	6 - 10
<b>Distance</b>	5m x 5m x 5m	5m x 5m x 5m
<b>Rest</b>	30 sec	30 sec

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Can be changed to running sideways and backwards

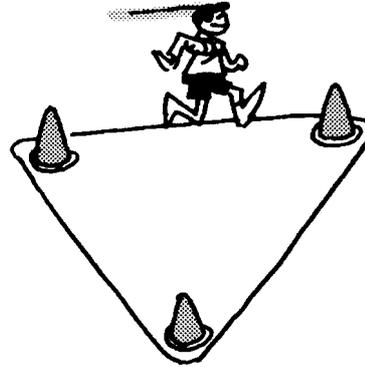
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## General Speed & Agility Drills

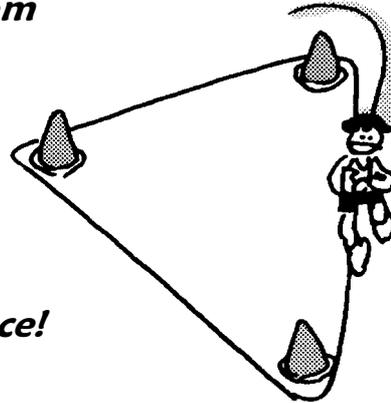
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### Triangle Race

2 triangles are set out 5m x 5m x 5m. The right players sprint around their triangle, trying to beat their opponent back to the start.



*Two  
5m x 5m x 5m  
Triangles*



*It's a Race!*

<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	6 - 10
<b>Distance</b>	5m x 5m x 5m	5m x 5m x 5m
<b>Rest</b>	30 sec	30 sec

### **Coaching Tips**

Can be changed to running sideways and backwards

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## General Speed & Agility Drills

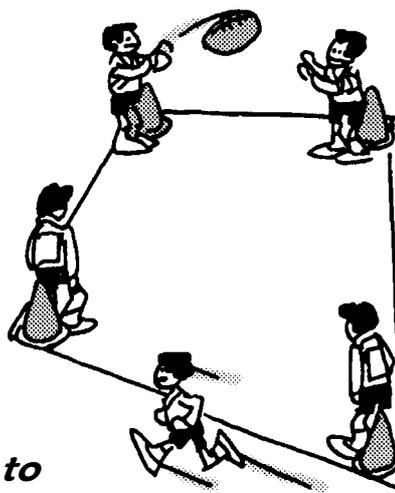
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### Football Relay

A square is set out 5m x 5m (Mini) or 8m x 8m (Mod) with a player on each hat and one player on the outside.

The 4 players pass the ball around the square and back while the outside player tries to run around the square before the ball gets back to the start.

*Ball passed  
around 4 players  
then back*



*Outside  
runner tries to  
beat ball*

<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	5	5 or 10
<b>Distance</b>	5m x 5m	8m x 8m
<b>Rest</b>	Change Over	Change Over

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Make sure players pass accurately Drill can be changed by using a grubber kick

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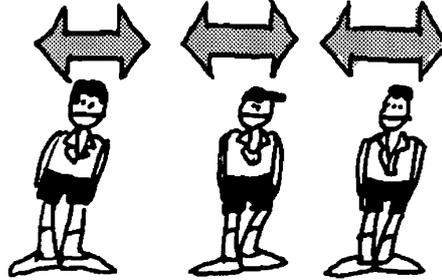
## General Speed & Agility Drills

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### Wave Drill

Players stand in one line facing the coach. On the coach's command the players move left or right.

Every time the coach calls a change in direction, the players touch the ground and then move as directed.



*When coach calls  
change of direction  
players touch the  
ground*

<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	6 - 10
<b>Distance</b>	10 sec	10 sec
<b>Rest</b>	30 sec	45 sec

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Keep players changing direction constantly. When changing direction, get the players to hit the ground on their chest

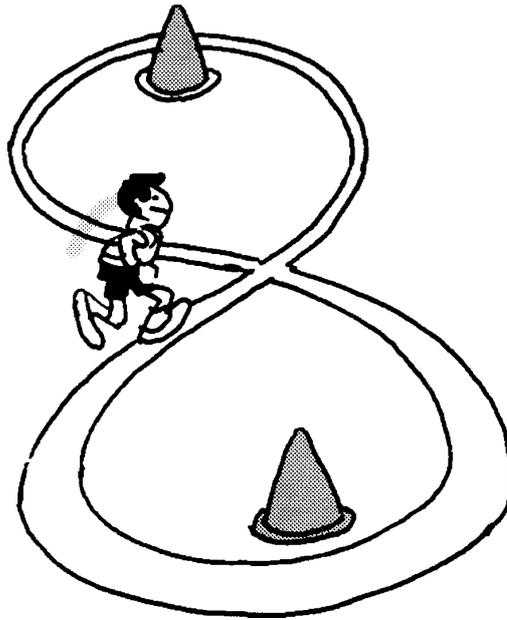
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## General Speed & Agility Drills

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### Figure Eight

2 hats are placed 10m apart. Starting in the middle of the hats, the player runs around the hats in a figure eight formation.



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	4 - 6	6 - 10
<b>Distance</b>		
<b>Rest</b>	30 sec	30 sec

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Run two stations so players can race each other. Can be performed with the players running around the edge of a hoola-hoop instead of a hat.

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## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

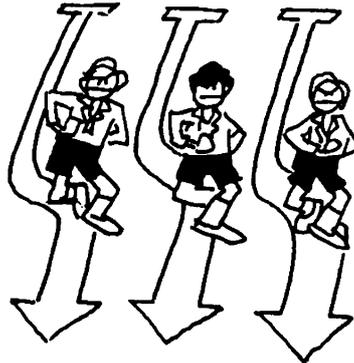
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### Sprint and Step

The players sprint forward for a short distance.

On the coach's direction the players quickly step off one foot, then continue sprinting.

This drill can be performed with or without the ball.



*Swerve on command*



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	6 - 8
<b>Distance</b>	10m approx	15m approx
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Make sure players practise stepping off both feet.

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## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

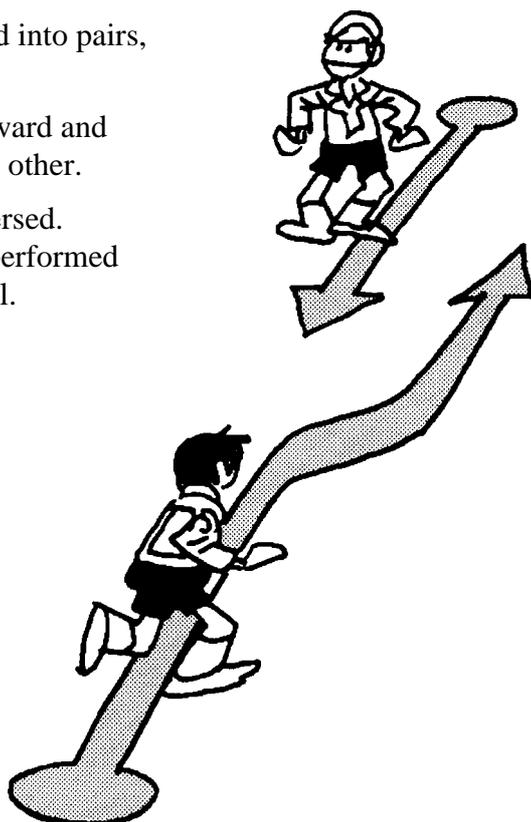
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### Step Opponents

The players are divided into pairs, standing 10m apart.

One player sprints forward and tries to step around the other.

The roles are then reversed.  
This drill can also be performed with or without the ball.



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	4 - 8	8 - 12
<b>Distance</b>	10m approx	10m approx
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

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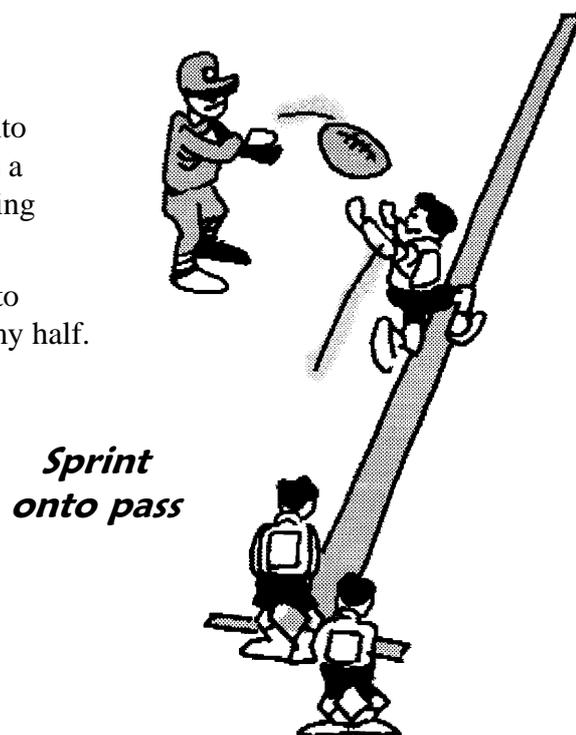
## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

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### Hit-Ups

Players are divided into groups of 6 or 8, with a coach or assistant acting as a dummy-half.

The players sprint onto a pass from the dummy half.



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	4 - 6	6 - 8
<b>Distance</b>	5 - 10m	5 - 15m
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
A good drill to teach kids to run onto the ball. Vary the side from which the players receive the ball.

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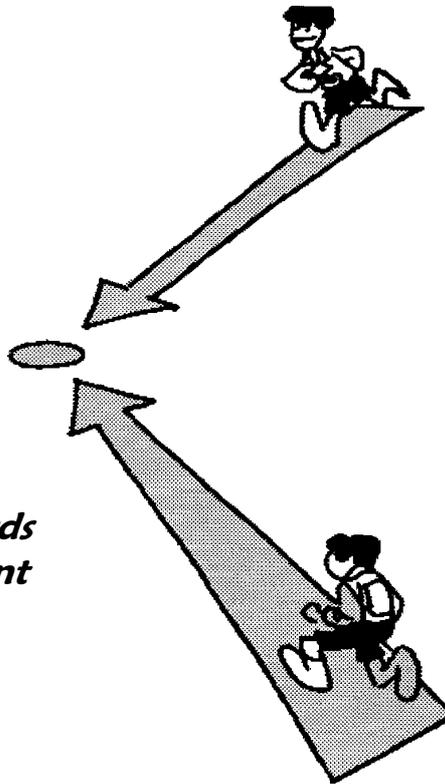
## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

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### Sprint to Point

2 players race each other to a set finishing point.

*Racing towards  
the same point*



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	2 - 6	5 - 10
<b>Distance</b>	5 - 10m	10 - 15m
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Vary players' racing partners.

---

## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

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### Loose Ball Chase

Players form 2 lines either side of the coach.

The coach rolls a football in front of the players. The front 2 players race each other to the ball.

Make sure the players do not get too aggressive when chasing the ball.



*Race to reach  
rolling ball*



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	4 - 6	6 - 10
<b>Distance</b>		
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Vary the distance and direction of each roll.

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## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

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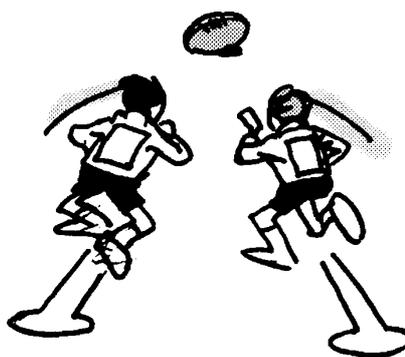
### Pair Passes

Players are divided into pairs standing 5m apart.

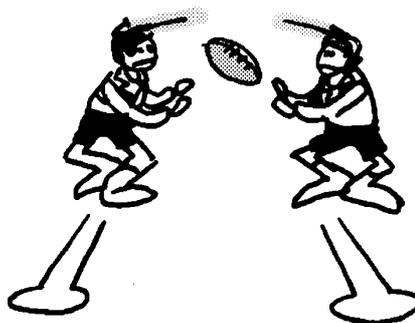
They sprint a set distance to a football which is lying on the ground.

One player picks up the ball and they sprint back to the start, passing the ball between themselves.

*Pair sprint to ball*



*Pass between them on way back*



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	6 - 8
<b>Distance</b>	10m	15m
<b>Rest</b>	30 - 45 sec	30 - 45sec

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Encourage players to sprint up to the ball as quickly as possible.

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## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

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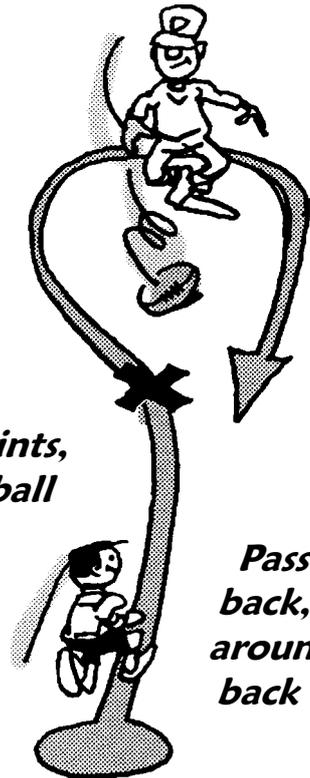
### Rolling Ball

Each player sprints towards the coach, who rolls a ball to the player.

Player picks up the ball, quickly passes it back, sprints around the coach and back to the start.

To vary the drill the coach can roll the ball to the left or right of the player.

*Coach rolls ball to player*



*Player sprints, picks up ball*

*Passes ball back, sprints around coach back to start*

<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	6 - 8
<b>Distance</b>	10m	15m
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

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## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

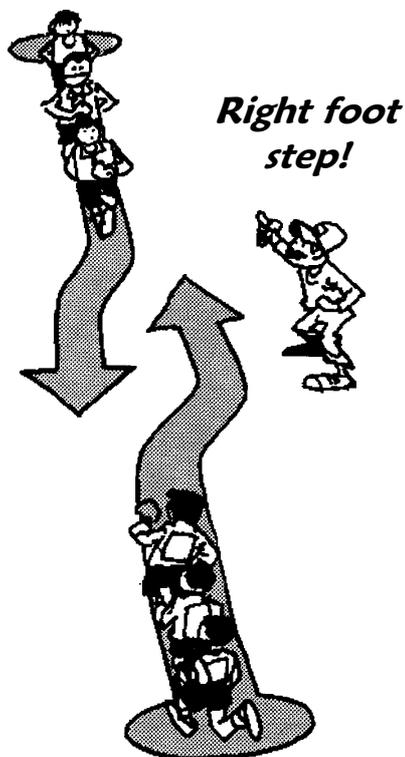
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### Head On

Players are divided into 2 lines, 10m apart.

The front players in each group run directly at one another. As they draw near; they perform a left foot or right foot step.

The coach will call on which foot the players should step.



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	6 - 10	6 - 16
<b>Distance</b>	10m approx	10m approx
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Start out slow, then build up pace as players perfect the step.

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## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

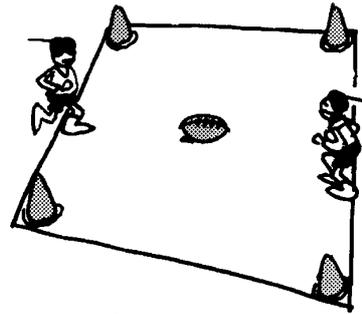
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### First In

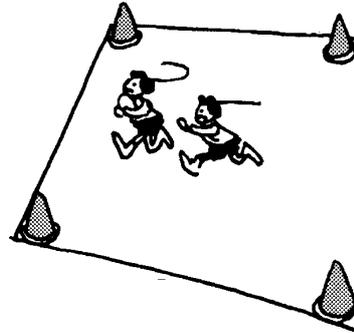
Players are divided into 2 groups, either side of a 15 x 15 square with a football placed in the middle.

On the call 'GO', the first players from each group sprint to the centre and try to get the ball. The player who gets the ball turns and tries to run back to the line, while the other player tries to tag.

*First to pick up ball*



*Return to start without being tagged*



<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	4 - 8	6 - 12
<b>Distance</b>		
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery
<b>Coaching Tips</b>		
A player is caught if tagged with two hands.		

## Specific Speed & Agility Drills

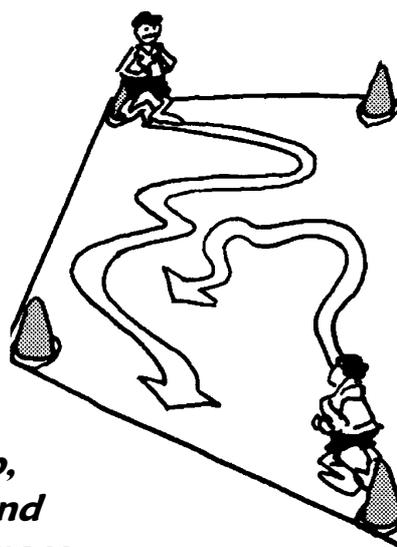
### Cut Off

2 groups of players are organised, standing at opposite corners of a 10m x 10m square.

One player, holding the ball, tries to sprint across the playing area without being touched by an opponent.

The players swap roles after each repetition.

*One player sprints across area without being touched*



*Use step, swerve and change of pace*

<b>Training Guidelines</b>		
	<b>Mini Footy</b>	<b>Mod League</b>
<b>Reps</b>	3 - 6	6 - 8
<b>Distance</b>		
<b>Rest</b>	Walk Recovery	Walk Recovery

<b>Coaching Tips</b>
Encourage players to use their step, swerve and change of pace to avoid being tagged.

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