

RUGBY LEAGUE COACHING MANUALS

- 2 Coach Talk**
Peter Sharp - Northern Eagles Head Coach
- 6 Club Continuity**
Peter Sharp - Northern Eagles Head Coach
- 8 Attitude Needed in the Ruck**
Daniel Anderson - NZ Warriors Head Coach
- 10 Developing For The Future**
Daniel Anderson - NZ Warriors Head Coach
- 12 Train Harder or Train Smarter**
Tim Gabbett - Manager Sports Performance Unit, Tasmanian Institute of Sport
- 14 Various Defensive Formations**
Bob Wood
- 16 Women in Rugby League - Some Medical Considerations**
By Doug King - RCpN DipNg PGCertHealSc(SportMed) Sports Nurse
- 18 Energy For Stop and Go Sports**
Lawrence Spriet Ph.D.
- 20 League Coach Forum**
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/leaguecoach>
- 23 Basic Training Drills**
NSWRL Coaching Academy

www.rlcm.com.au

Coach Talk

Peter Sharp - Northern Eagles Head Coach

Season 2002 is Northern Eagles' coach Peter Sharp's fourth year in top-grade rugby league, but he's been on the periphery since 1990. A former back-rower with Maitland and Central Charlestown, Sharp has spent his time in the lower grades wisely, honing his education and preparing for the step up to the big time. In this edition of RLCM, we pin-point Sharp's philosophies on life as an NRL coach.

RLCM: You served a lengthy apprenticeship before breaking into the top grade. Is that the best way to go?

Sharp: I think so. I never actually played in the NRL so it was great for me to come up through the grades as a coach. I really enjoyed my time in

is at the end of the day, everybody wants to win the comp. You can say at the start of the year that all we want to do is put some foundations down or blood some young guys but as soon as the first game is on and you don't win it, you're under the hammer. It comes back to the expectations of the club, fans and media. It's something that can be hard to come to terms with. Gaining the ability to deal with it comes with experience – you obtain the ability to block out the negativity that you get and become less sensitive. When you first come into first grade you are mostly coming from a world of no pressure and all of a sudden you are in the spotlight so you need to learn to handle the negative press when and if it arrives – the quicker the better. But as far as the coaching itself is

The simple fact is that ball control wins games

the junior reps, the SG Ball and Jersey Flegg competitions. It was a great background and I got to meet some of the top players as they were coming through. Having said that I have to admit the step up from reserve grade to first grade is worlds apart – the intensity of the game and the speed of the game are just totally different but I think the hardest part of the step up is the external pressures.

RLCM: Can you expand on that?

Sharp: You really need to be able to handle the expectation of the media, the expectation of the club and the expectation of the fans. It's not the actual coaching of the side that becomes the most difficult aspect but more those external pressures that you suddenly find yourself placed under. I certainly found it a difficult adjustment. The fact

concerned, your principles remain the same no matter what grade you are coaching. And I also believe there are no hard and fast rules as the whether you should serve an apprenticeship before coming into the top grade, it's just that for me, I found it beneficial. I think the fact I didn't play NRL and never experienced it as a player, it was great for me to come through the ranks before taking the step up to head coach.

RLCM: Is there a step up between coaching an NRL player and coaching one of the game's elite?

Sharp: Basically not, everyone is looking for help and some knowledge, if you can provide those then it goes a long way to providing some credibility. It doesn't matter if it is a young guy coming into first

grade or one of the elite players, everybody regardless of their standing in the game has something to learn. The great part of coaching an elite player is the input the player can have in the side. If used correctly, the elite player can be a great coaching aid.

RLCM : The word momentum seems so important in the game today – the ability to mount and keep pressure on the opposition. How do you coach that?

Sharp: Pressure is a key ingredient in rugby league. You'll find the sides that are in the bottom half of the competition are the sides not able to maintain pressure for a long period of time. That's

As far as breaking up the intensity of those teams when you're out in the paddock I guess there's a few things you can try. I remember back in Parramatta in the good old days when I was with Brian Smith trying things to decrease the speed of the play – set starts, kicks for touch, slowing everything down, questioning the ref's decisions – all that sort of stuff can put a side out of their rhythm. It might work, but in saying that, quite often a team like Brisbane or Newcastle will come straight out and go bang, bang, bang, and it's 12-nil before you even get possession. So it becomes important for me to get some possession early in the game, it's critical. If you don't – if they can get four or five back-to-back sets on you early in

I think the short side is a great place to attack not only down the attacking end of the field but also in your own half

mostly because of inexperience with young guys who haven't obtained the ability to sustain pressure and then mount it back at them (opposition) be it offensively or defensively. In defence for example, you can apply pressure through field position – increasing your line speed, increasing your controlled aggression at point of contact to win the ground – all these little things. You can't do that down your own end when you're trying to defend your try line because it's all about survival then. Being able to change the tempo of the game is vital as well. For me, the Broncos are the masters of it. They can go quick, and then pull it back when they need a break and then go quick again. Newcastle is very good at this as well. They tend to start at a thousand miles an hour and blow sides off the park in the first twenty minutes. So as the coach you need to prepare your players to withstand that onslaught and be prepared for that speed and intensity of the game which they will find themselves in. All of the good teams in footy have continuity – the Broncos and Newcastle are two teams in particular that have had a lot of continuity for the last ten years, stable coaches, stable playing roster and they've worked into this speed of being able to play the game over a long period of time.

www.rlcm.com.au

the contest, then you'll find yourself on the back foot from then on. The Grand Final last year (Newcastle v Parramatta, 2001) is a perfect example. The Knights had a ton of ball early, controlled the speed of play and had continuity of possession – it was all over before you knew it.

RLCM: How do you prepare an inexperienced player to handle that intensity?

Sharp: That's a good question. Sometimes we have gone into games with six or seven players in our team who we need to make the adjustment quickly. You can simulate in training as best you can but the fact is a lot of it comes from game experience. Every time we play against those top sides our young players learn more and more – about halfback play from going against Alfie, about fullback play from Lockyer. In training you can only simulate it as best as you can. And as far as when you're out on the field the younger guys can keep up intensity for periods but they tend to lapse in and out from set to set of good intensity, where the experienced player can last the distance if required. Inexperienced sides tend to drift in and out of good football. I think it's really an issue with your mental toughness. The difference with

Andrew Johns and the rest is that he's tougher mentally. It's not a physical difference; I know that for a fact because I know him quite well – it's his mental toughness which sets him apart and with Joey it's astounding. And by mental toughness I'm talking about things like patience; not panicking if you fall 12 points down early, not going for the miracle play but being disciplined and working your way back into the contest.

RLCM: What guidelines do you set down as far as taking risks in your end?

Sharp: I think most sides are well structured when they're coming out of their own end. You'll find that when most sides can get down the other end they can score a try, that's not the problem – it's the sides that turn the ball over in their own half that are going to pay the price. We have structured sets, and that can come undone by poor decision-making. Finishing your yardage sets becomes very important for me – getting to your kick consistently on the back of good yardage makes a big difference in getting the ball out of your own end and away from your danger area (own 20 metres). The simple fact is that ball control wins games. If you can secure good field position and start and finish your sets in a better position than the opposition, you're a good chance of winning the football match. It's as simple as that. We struck problems in the trials this year where we found that we couldn't get out of our own half and there have been some games this year where some teams have almost played an entire half locked down their own end. To get field position you have to have good ball control – if you don't maintain possession you put your kickers under pressure – if you can get a roll on the kickers tend to find a groove.

RLCM: What have been the major impediments to the flat attack over the last couple of years?

Sharp: Interchange is one, and the ten-metre rule has also made a big difference. There is still a time and a place for it though – but I think now you need a better mix in your game as opposed to doing it all the time. Sometimes you need to play back from the line; sometimes you need to play at it. The flat attack is relevant to your go forward but I really think to do it successfully you need to mix things up. Now that we have to keep players on the field longer (due to limited interchange) and they are playing closer together (due to ten

metre rule) the players are under pressure themselves when they carry the ball and they have to do everything in the coalface. It's quality football but it's also high pressure – all the way from the player passing the football, to the player catching it, to the support players, because they are now so close to the line. As far as defending against it you simply have to make sure that you control the speed of the play the ball. You have to give your line a chance to get off the back foot. For example back when the Storm had Kimmorley and Hill coming at you with support runners in holes is very difficult to defend. They were brilliant at making the defence make decisions and combined with decent ball possession and good go forward, it was always going to be effective. So to control the play the ball you need to dominate the tackle. The flat attack is a very effective style of football but it's also fraught with risk.

RLCM: When you took Kimmorley to the Eagles in 2000, did you find you had to change him to suit the team, or the team to suit him?

Sharp: Well I like that style (flat attack) for starters so I wanted to play that way anyway. We had some problems with it and it's probably fair to say Kimmorley has had problems with it at Cronulla this year – so I think it's also fair to say we needed to find a better mix between Brett, myself and the team as well – a better mix in our game. I'm sure it would have happened if we had time to build on it, longer than just the one season. A halfback has always been critical to a team's success although I tend to think that might also be changing a bit as well. Parramatta for example is a multi-skilled team as opposed to the traditional half, five-eighth and lock doing the majority of the ball carrying.

RLCM: Are you an advocate of using structured play to attack the blindside?

Sharp: A lot of football is now reactionary based rather than being structured. The blindside is still a great place to attack – there is probably two objectives that come into play down a blindside. The first is to get an imbalance in the defensive line e.g. three on two, four on three. The second is to find a small or poor defender on the edge of the football field. Some areas to take into consideration when attacking the short side are the quality of your lead up plays e.g. your ability to shorten up the line and the skill level required

CLUB CONTINUITY

Getting the Little Things Right

Peter Sharp - Northern Eagles Head Coach

Written by Ashley Bradnam

It's spruiked every weekend from the bowels of losing dressing sheds all over the world. The same message over and over. Chiefly it's coming from the lips of the head coach. "We just didn't do the little things right".

Aussie singer/songwriter Paul Kelly even summed it up in lyric – 'From Little Things Big Things Grow' – it's debatable whether Kelly had rugby league on his mind when he penned the verse, but nonetheless it's been universally accepted and repeated in the rugby league coaches' vocabulary.

So what are the little things? Every coach has a different opinion. To some it's quick play the balls, to others ball possession, or field position, or limiting risks, or their defensive structure, perhaps it's their kick chase/returns, or all of the above. Whatever it is, it lays the platform. The top teams in the NRL, Parramatta, Newcastle and Brisbane have vastly different patterns of play, but there's one principle they share in common. They do the little things right.

But there's something else those teams have in common which has largely gone by unnoticed by success-driven supporters and headhunting media. It's continuity. Coaches don't mention it all that often, and Paul Kelly's never written about it, but according to at least one NRL coach, without it, you'll always be struggling to do the little things correctly.

"My big bugbear at the moment is continuity", says Northern Eagles mentor Peter Sharp. "If you don't have it then you miss the little things that lead to winning. And I'm not just talking about continuity on the field, but throughout the entire club – in your playing roster and in your support staff. If you have continuity in those areas, as opposed to a club that is constantly recruiting from outside, then your attention to detail is far greater because you don't have to spend as much time

covering the big things each year. It frees you up to focus more on the little things that ultimately make a big difference".

Sharp has a point. Take Newcastle as an example. The Premiers didn't recruit an outside player for this season. In fact, with Glen Grief going to Souths, they went into the new year lighter on paper than last. But their continuity and club structure meant they knew they always had the talent from within to remain a leading force. It's a situation Sharpe can only envy.

"I probably think the Knights are the benchmark, just a smidge ahead of Brisbane (in terms of continuity). This year they recruited no one so when they promote a young bloke he might be inexperienced in terms of first grade games, but he's very experienced in terms of the club and its system. The Broncos and the Eels are pretty much the same. To me, that's a far healthier position to be in than a club that has to go out at the end of each year and buy ten players from six different clubs. It erodes the club culture for one, and it makes it difficult to find time to focus on the little things and bring stability and confidence into the club. If you are out there at the start of each year teaching a bunch of new players your defensive and attacking systems you don't have the time to focus on the little things. At the top clubs the players learn it as they come through the grades. At the end of the day continuity leads to better club players, more loyal players, and cheaper players."

Leading Australian sports psychologist Phil Jauncey has worked with a number of elite sporting clubs, and he believes that without stability and patience, weaker clubs have little or no hope of improving their status.

"I think where Peter Sharp is coming from is spot on. If you look at the consistently strong clubs in

Attitude needed in the ruck

Daniel Anderson sees every ruck as a contest

Written by Ashely Bradnam

On TV, radio and in papers media types are incessantly decoding matches into confusing graphs revealing where losing teams lost the plot. “You’ll see it here”, they’ll bawl, as they sketch lavish circles and uneven squares around even more elaborate grids and diagrams, “This is where they fell away in their completion rates”.

The belief is a high completion rate translates into success, which is wrong. Something doesn’t add up!

Sure, good ball possession is important, limiting mistakes help and good kick-chases also contribute. But don’t be fooled into believing impressive statistics epitomize impressive performances.

Parramatta coach Brian Smith believes completion rates simply reveal the quantity of ball possession, not the quality. Other coaches agree. The New Zealand Warriors are currently enjoying one of their best seasons ever, however their completion rate is nowhere near as good as seasons past. In fact, in 2000, the Warriors finished the year with the best completion rate in the competition, yet sat just off the base of the ladder and well out of finals fever.

So where does the truth lie. Losing coaches frequently bemoan their victory chances went west

‘On the ground’, (i.e. in the ruck area). So what can coaches do to improve their performance in this crucial area?

“The main thing in this game is attitude”, counters New Zealand coach Daniel Anderson, “It outweighs all other aspects and I’ll take the right attitude over statistics any day”.

No one has derived a graph representing player attitude and is unlikely to ever do so. But Anderson believes if such a statistic was presented it would demonstrate a clear correlation between appropriate attitude and winning. It’s not that Anderson is uninterested in technical aspects of the ruck area rather he sees them as being intertwined with the player’s personal mind-set.

“The main thing about any team winning on the ground for me is how much resolve and how good your attitude is. If you have a real strong attitude and you’re motivated you’ll come out better on the field because you’ll do the things conducive to winning. The ruck is an ugly area – a lot of bodies are in there – and there’s various techniques you can adopt to keep things smooth and quick which would help you play the ball more rapidly for example. The same goes for tackling and off-loading and other areas of the ruck – there’s hundreds of little techniques which help you on

**Give your players
the edge**

Visit www.coachesedge.com.au

Specially designed to goive coaches like you the very latest information on all round sporting performance

**the
coaches
edge**

**Gatorade
Sports
Science
Institute**

the ground but the point is it all come back to attitude”.

The meat of Anderson’s message is this: You can teach the player what to do but his attitude will dictate if he does it in battle.

“We are constantly trying different drills at training making sure players can still play the ball quickly despite being trapped in heavy traffic or while coping shoulders. We train under different referee interpretations, finding the best evasive methods from the time the ref calls held to the time you play the ball and you still have players all over you. We have found if a player is stronger through the hip and gut area they can get rid of defenders easily and can fight for us to get penalties. Weaker players tend to get pinned longer and those that don’t have the proper techniques also spend longer than they should in the play the ball area and all that adds up to a loss of momentum. The best guy we have in this regard is Kevin Champion and he has learnt his techniques with a combination of learning the proper techniques and adopting the right attitude over a long period of time”.

Anderson sees every ruck as a contest – in defence or attack. He believes this is one battle that must be won before the game’s back is broken. In attack the aim is to play the ball quickly, in defence it’s to control the tackle and assert dominance thus providing time for your line. Accordingly one of his aims when he moved across the Tasman was to improve his player’s core strength.

“I use the example of a young player on all fours about to play the ball and if you push his hips when he’s in an arched position normally he’ll just roll over and be turtled. But the seasoned hard player will take the push in the hips and hold his ground – he wins the battle. That’s why strong and experienced players are so valuable in the ruck area”.

When Anderson talks about dominating the tackle he’s referring to the grey area of attacking without the ball.

The aim of every defensive system is to stop the ball carrier on contact. If the carrier goes through the defensive line after the point of contact, then that can be counted as a lost tackle.

If you don’t dominate a tackle with good technique or player numbers then your defensive line is under pressure to reset and move up. Most defensive systems and ours included aim to stop the forward momentum of the ball carrier as quickly as possible after collision.

Once again though, Anderson reiterates his mantra.

“If you don’t take the right technique and attitude into the ruck area you’ll find yourself giving away penalties. We lost to St George Illawarra this year and I don’t think we won a ruck all day. Our tackle technique was very weak, we went in too low and the Dragons were always on the front foot. Technically, there’s plenty of things we did wrong on the day but the main thing was our attitude was wrong”.

NOTES

NEW ZEALAND

Developing for the Future

Daniel Anderson - NZ Warriors Head Coach
Written by Ashley Bradnam

“It’s going to explode, guaranteed”.

It may sound like a beefy front rower overlooking a pot roast in cooking class, but in fact it’s something far more relishing.

It’s NZ Warriors coach Daniel Anderson crystal-balling the future of rugby league in New Zealand. Under Anderson’s scrutiny, the Warriors have reaped a record season, now firmly entrenched in the top eight and with a crucial top four spot a realistic expectation, the club has banked respect from all quarters. Most significantly, its country’s children are taking notice.

As always, the boys in black are big and strong –

“In New Zealand we really need to get back and start re-coaching the coaches. The coaching here (in New Zealand) is very, very basic and not developed to where I’d like to see it. As a result, the players are unskilled to a certain degree except for a few naturals”.

The introduction of an elite squad has assisted the standout youngsters, but there’s still a long way to go before all bases are covered.

“We have introduced an elite training squad where we get the twenty best 16-19 year olds and we begin drilling them in the techniques they would experience in the NRL so they can come through hopefully at a more rapid pace. I’ve coached some

Give the kids something to aspire to.

nothing new there. But these days they go the distance, toughing out the full eighty minutes with controlled aggression and freshly discovered discipline. The key for Anderson is to ensure the next generation of rising Kiwi stars are superior to the current crop. It’s a goal the former Parramatta lower grade coach knows won’t be easy. One area he has isolated as in need of burning attention is the coaching reserves at a local level.

good young Aussie players over the years and the Kiwi boys coming through are the equal to or better than all of them”.

Boom rookies Lance Hohaia and Iafeta Palea’aesina are both graduates of the elite training squad and Anderson conservatively estimates he’s holding onto at least another five of comparable calibre. Another five Lance Hohaia’s? Amazing.

“I really think things are about to explode here. It’s fantastic. In the next two or three years people are going to see that there’s some very, very, good footballers there (in New Zealand). As good as anything that’s coming out of Australia, that’s for sure”.

However, Anderson’s sanguinity is not shared by all league-lovers across the Tasman. The figures would tend to disagree as well. Statistics published



in a recent New Zealand paper revealed in the past six years league's numbers have fallen by 31%. In some areas the game has disappeared completely and the South Island now provides just 20% of the country's players. Following the arrival of the Auckland Warriors to the NRL the game enjoyed a brief explosion, infiltrating the sacrosanct domain of rugby-dominated schools. At its peak, 131 schools converted to rugby league. The figure has now diminished to 57.

But Anderson remains defiant. The key, he believes, is to give the kids something to aspire to.

"There's 30,000 kids out there", says Anderson. "If we can train them up properly, lift their skill levels and provide them with the coaching they need to rise up through the ranks, then we'll benefit (the Warriors), the NRL will benefit and ultimately the game here will benefit. We need to educate the rugby league player and the rugby league parent to the career path we can offer. Our kids who have come through the elite squad have mostly gone on to dominate their local competitions and as a result the other players who are outside of the squad can identify the areas they need to improve to be competitive. Things like

strength, catching, tackling and passing skills then begin to filter down through the system".

Which gets us back to re-coaching the coaches.

"There's not enough being done about it, that's for sure. We have got a standing invitation for local coaches in the Barter Card Cup or the NJC (National Junior Coaches) to spend some time with us. They can come and sit in on our sessions. A number of coaches have taken that invitation up and spent a week with us but I can only hope that is sufficient enough to developing their own skills. I haven't been able to get out and look at the coaches myself because I've been too busy putting structures in place for us at the Warriors.

Auckland continues to be New Zealand's rugby league stronghold. Its 438 teams nearly doubles the entire number of sides playing in the South Island and contributes 85% of the country's players. A successful NZ Warriors outfit based in Auckland can only enhance that monopoly, but if intelligent and swift steps are taken to link the North Island's success with the South Island's untapped talent base, then perhaps Anderson's prophecy will prove exact.

Stand back and savour the action – there's an explosion on the way.

NOTES

Should Rugby League Players Train Harder *or* Train Smarter?

Tim Gabbett - Manager Sports Performance Unit, Tasmanian Institute of Sport

The following article was written to provide a summary of recent research conducted by the author while employed as the Director of Performance of the Runaway Bay Rugby League Club. This article forms part of the ongoing 'Injury Prevention and Performance Enhancement Project' designed to reduce the incidence of injury in rugby league.

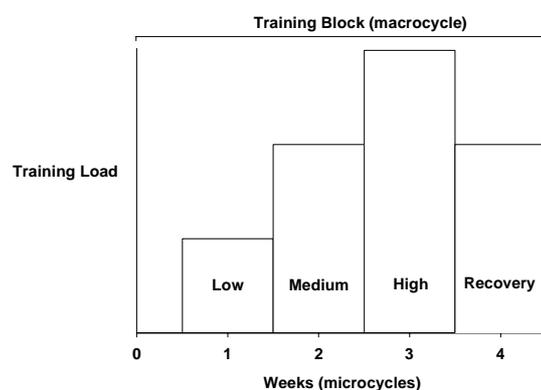
The question of how intense, how long, and how much training a rugby league player should perform, is a challenge often encountered by coaches. By implementing low intensity, short duration training sessions, coaches run the risk of having players 'underdone'. Excessively long, high intensity sessions may lead to overtraining, with players forced to compete in a fatigued state. From an injury prevention and performance enhancement perspective, how much training do players require to improve physical fitness while also minimising the number and severity of training injuries?

Periodisation

Periodisation refers to the application of sport science principles to coaching. Specifically, periodisation allows the coach to break down the overall training year to design and implement a plan for each session, each week, and each month of the season, so that peak performance can be reached at the correct stage of the season (e.g. finals). Some astute coaches have also introduced

a longer-term (e.g. three-year) periodisation plan based on the age or physical development of players. Periodisation allows conditioning coaches to monitor training intensity and training loads, in order to take away the 'hit and miss' component of training. Finally, while periodisation for rugby league is a relatively new concept, the implementation of a periodisation plan has been advocated as a method of avoiding unnecessarily high injury rates. Using a typical periodisation plan, a training block (i.e. macrocycle) usually includes three progressively harder weeks (i.e. microcycles), followed by one recovery week (See Figure 1). However, it is not uncommon for different teams to use shorter (e.g. three-week) or longer (e.g. six-week) macrocycles depending on the stage of the season, the standard of competition, the motivation of players, and/or the coaching philosophy employed by the club.

Figure 1. An example of a typical four-week periodisation plan



The training load applied during the first three weeks (microcycles) is progressively increased until the fourth week (recovery). The four microcycles make up one macrocycle.



CANBERRA RAIDERS
CANBERRA RAIDERS
Supporting Coaching & Development
www.raiders.com.au

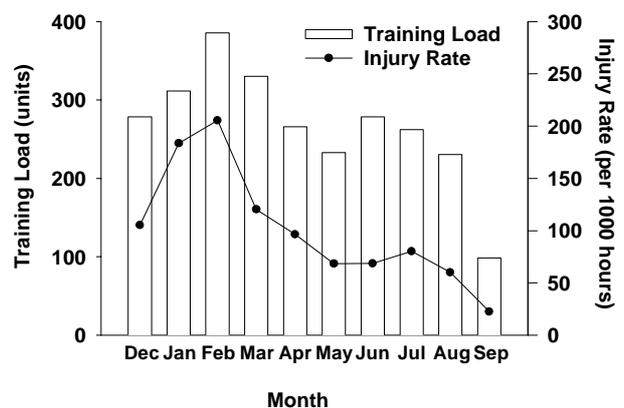
Do intense training sessions cause injuries?

Recent evidence from the Runaway Bay Rugby League Club *Injury Prevention and Performance Enhancement Project* suggests that injury rates may be closely related to the training load applied. Throughout the project, training intensity, training duration, and training load were monitored for each training session. In addition, all injuries sustained during training sessions were recorded. Training load increased from December through to February, followed by a progressive decline until September. Training injury rates followed a remarkably similar trend, increasing from December through to February, followed by a progressive decline until September (See Figure 2). These findings suggest that as training load is increased, injury rates are also increased. There are a number of possible explanations for the observed injury trends. Traditional training activities (i.e. running without the ball in hand) have typically been employed during the off-season and pre-season phases of the rugby league season, with game-specific activities introduced as the season progresses. It has also been shown that the greatest proportion (37.5%) of training injuries occur during traditional training activities. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, to find high injury rates from December through to February. Equally, given that game-specific activities are associated with a low incidence of injury (10.7%), the finding that training injury rates decrease during the competitive phase of the season is also to be expected. While the average distance covered in a rugby league match has been estimated to be between 7,466-10,052 metres (See Meir, *Rugby League Coaching Magazine*, 20), rugby league players are rarely required to run further than 40 metres in a single bout of intense activity. These findings question the specificity of traditional training activities for rugby league that provide an adequate training stimulus to enhance physical fitness and performance, without unduly increasing the incidence of injury.

Summary

The conditioning coach has traditionally been the 'disciplinarian' of the rugby league team, often implementing torturous training sessions to develop the 'mental toughness' necessary for playing success. Well planned, intense sessions are necessary to improve the physical fitness and performance of rugby league players. However, excessively intense training sessions may have an adverse effect on the fitness and subsequent performance of the player. Training loads appear to be closely related to training injury rates, with the incidence of injury increasing as the session intensity increases. Conditioning coaches should monitor training loads closely in order to optimise performance and minimise the adverse effects of injuries.

Figure 2. Relationship between training load and injury rate



Training loads and injury rates for each month of the 2001 rugby league season. The 'vertical bars' represent the training load while the 'dots' represent the injury rate. An increase in training load resulted in an increase in injury rate, whereas reductions in training load resulted in a reduction in injury rate. From a practical viewpoint, these findings suggest that the harder rugby league players train, the more injuries they will sustain.



Various Defensive Formations

A question posted on the League Coach Forum Website Answered by Bob Wood

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/leaguecoach>

Question.

“I’m a fairly new coach and you hear all these other guys talking about slide, umbrella, up and in, up and hold etc, could you spare me 5 mins of your time to explain the pros and cons of each one?”

Answer.

Depends what age group you are coaching. Most teams don’t need anything as complicated, but more on that at the end.

VARIOUS DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS:

SLIDE - NOW CALLED UP AND OUT

The object is to mark up **INSIDE** your opponent and slide him towards the sideline, used when you have a small pack of forwards and a very fast back line. You show the opposition space on the outside and tempt them to use it. When they do, you use your speed and the sideline, you are trying to keep the opposition from coming down the centre and if they do you are packing your forwards closer together to allow them to help each other. Used very successfully by the Canberra Raiders in the late 1980’s.

UP AND IN

Here you have a slower backline, but big strong forwards. You mark up **OUTSIDE** your man and drive them back into your killing zone where your big forwards can pound them, the winger will

actually mark up between his opposite centre and winger and get in between them to deny the ball going out wide. Used by Canterbury Bulldogs.

UMBRELLA

A real throwback to when the defence was only 5 yards back from the Play The Ball. Not used these days, people tend to think that Up and In is umbrella, but it isn’t, although there are similarities. Warren Ryan used umbrella with the Canterbury Bulldogs, they would rush up on the outside and form a big U shape, channelling everything into the ruck area. This caused the two Sydney Grand Finals where there were no tries scored and the results (from memory) between Canterbury and Parramatta were 4-2 and 6-2, all goals. After that defences were moved back 10 metres and it became physically impossible to keep rushing up and back for 80 minutes. Big gang tackles were a feature of this very hurtful defence, it was designed to intimidate teams and it worked, in it’s day.

UP AND HOLD

Now you are starting to get into the late 1990’s, here the teams would perform the Up portion of the UP and In or Up and Out which is to advance the first 3-5 metres very fast and then to slow down and adjust to what the opposition is doing. So if you are always running a slide defence, then the opposition can put on angles to beat a slide and same with Up and Out, but, Brian Smith when he was with St George developed the Up and Hold defence theory, wait until the opposition had performed all their angles and then tackle the final

SOUTH SYDNEY

District Junior Rugby League Ltd.

Supporting Coaching and Development

"COME AND PLAY OUR GAME"



**VICTORIAN
STATE
RUGBY LEAGUE**

**Supporting Coaching
and Development**

WOMEN IN RUGBY LEAGUE:

Some Medical Considerations

Doug King. Sports Nurse.

Women's Rugby League is slowly but surely raising some interest in all areas. Whilst the last Rugby League World Cup was playing and we all watched the teams from around the world play for the ultimate prize, there was a Women's Rugby League World Cup playing as well. These players didn't get the media coverage or Television

Physically they are obviously different from the male rugby league player, but medically they can have some problems that if not corrected or attended to can lead to life long complications well after their playing days are over. This is not to say that just women in rugby league have these problems as these can affect any female sports

A women in Rugby League presents us all with a very unique set of medical considerations

exposure that the male competition did, but they still played, trained and participated in the same conditions and some countries. Some teams actually paid for the privilege to participate. The same can be said for the Medical qualifications for the teams that participated as well. Some countries cannot afford to have the luxury of a specialized Medical Practitioner for both a mens and womens team and placed the care of the Women's team in the hands of the trainer who acted in the role of trainer, medical support person and probably many other roles.

The local competition often mirrors this where there is usually a Doctor for the club, but primarily this is for the greater population which traditionally is for the men's teams, or just for the top team depending upon the generosity of the Doctor and the clubs finances so the care of the women's teams usually falls down the ladder of priorities. But do we really need to have someone specialized in the care of Women's sporting participation or can someone who has general first aid training just go out and do this?

A woman in Rugby League presents us all with a very unique set of medical considerations.

participant. So how many of you can hold your hands up and say you are aware of these medical considerations and are able to keep an eye on the players for any signs and symptoms (I suspect that not many hands are being raised).

Generally there is no difference between the way that women in rugby league train and play the game but medically they need to take a few extra steps in their care to enable full active participation. These steps are the same for all players and they should not be discriminated against just because they are women. Sometimes there may be a need to have these players assessed by a qualified sports medical practitioner to deal with specific topics and areas particular to the female player.



There are both visible and non visible differences between male and female players. Visibly The typical female player is usually shorter in stature compared to the male by an average of 10 cms, has less body mass (on average 13.3 kg) and a higher proportion of fat tissue (on average about 12%). They are on average only two-thirds that of the males in strength (40 - 60% in the upper body and 70 - 75% in the lower body), have less muscle hypertrophy, poorer running economy and come under the influence of hormones different to that of males. They also have a lower maximal oxygen uptake (VO₂max) which is due to several related factors such as a smaller heart size, a higher heart rate, lower oxygen carrying capabilities (less red blood cells and haemoglobin) a smaller thorax resulting in less lung capacity and a lower basal metabolic rate.

Biomechanically women have a lower centre of gravity, increased forces in their legs due to a wider pelvis, increased flexibility, smaller anterior cruciate and an increased risk for foot pronation and patellofemoral problems such as knee injuries. They have a shorter arm length and an increased stroke rate for motion which results in the player having to swing their arms more times for running and increasing the risk of shoulder problems such as shoulder impingement and burn more energy.

Other areas that can present in the female athlete are signs such as tiredness, a drop in their level of performance and maybe staleness in their training capabilities. This may be related to a dietary intake alteration or other medical related problems that will need to be assessed in consultation with a sports doctor. They may also present often with sore feet and lower legs, usually diagnosed as a stress fracture and this also needs to be medically assessed as it can lead to life long complications if this is present with a few other factors that usually the female player may not want to openly talk about.

So what can you as the trainer, coach, player do? Well the best things are to casually monitor the progress and participation of the players and note for anything such as lack of energy in their training program. Observe for an increase in ball handling mistakes, especially when they have had good ball skills and can usually fully last the training session. Note for any sudden increase in their own training program but a decrease in their ability on game day, or the amount of injuries that they may be presenting with and repetitive injuries such as shin

splints and stress fractures (This is usually an indicator that their bone mass density is decreasing and they are prone for osteoporosis in later life if this is not corrected). If any of these become obvious then have them assessed by a sports medical practitioner as it could simply be the change in training that is having a flow on effect of the player and they may need some supplemental support to maintain them fully.

Simple measures such as what they eat, what they combine with their meals and the type of diet that they are consuming can quickly and easily aid in correcting these problems. For example, if they are not eating red meat, encourage them to consume the darker parts of chicken and fish as this contains more of the readily absorbable iron in it (but red meat is best for this) which aids in the oxygen carrying capacity of their blood. Don't drink tea or coffee directly with or immediately after the meal as this can decrease the availability of the iron to the body. Eat at least 2 - 3 servings of dairy products a day (low fat yoghurt, cheese, milk etc.) as this can supplement their calcium intake and assist in maintaining their bone mass density. Have a variety of vegetables both fresh and lightly cooked so as not to get rid of all of their minerals and vitamins and importantly consume at least 60% of the diet in carbohydrates such as rice, potatoes, pasta etc. For further advice it is best to have the player consult a sports dietician to enable full planning of the diet especially if they are training hard and building up to an important event.

Training and coaching a female team can be rewarding for all concerned especially when the players achieve the optimal goals both individually and as a team. These simple awareness measures can assist all in keeping the team together and keeping the players at their optimal best both in the short term and for the rest of their lives.

For more information consult your local sports medicine agency or a sports medicine specialist.



ENERGY FOR STOP AND GO SPORTS

By Lawrence Spriet Ph. D.

New research shows that the aerobic energy system is very important for peak performance in “Stop and Go” sports, as it contributes up to 40% of the energy used in sprints.

More importantly it plays a dominant role in recovery.

Dr Lawrence Spriet is Professor in the Department of Human Biology and Nutritional Sciences at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada.

He recently spent one year as visiting professor in the School of Health Sciences at Deakin University in Melbourne and has spent years researching “Metabolic Regulation in Human Skeletal Muscle During Exercise”.

So what exactly are Stop and Go Sports?

Many sports require stop and go efforts where athletes are constantly changing the pace and intensity of their movements in order to accomplish the goal of their sport. The Australian football codes - rugby, league and Aussie rules - are excellent examples of stop and go sports. It is common to be walking or jogging at one moment and sprinting or grappling with opponents the next. The constant transitions between low-intensity and high-intensity exercise place great demands on the ability of the skeletal muscles to rapidly respond to changes in the need for energy.

How is this energy generated?

The chemical, which provides energy to your muscles, is called adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and there are two ways you can produce it - aerobically and anaerobically - terms you have almost certainly heard before.

Aerobic ATP production occurs with oxygen, and carbohydrate and fat as the main dietary fuels. This system has the advantage of producing energy for long periods of time but at relatively low rates. This is the chemical process our muscles primarily rely upon during endurance sports.

Anaerobic ATP production means production

without oxygen and this happens through the degradation of the chemical phosphocreatine (PCr) or by using carbohydrate (glucose) that the body has stored. Anaerobic production happens very quickly, in a fraction of a second, and produces ATP at three times the rate the aerobic method does. Clearly this is why we can sprint but the downside, as we all know, is that stores run down quickly and there is increasing acidity, which makes it hard for the muscle to contract.

But what can we do to keep sprinting?

During a stop and go sport with repeated sprinting, there are three important things you should know [3, 4]:

- The PCr stored in muscle cells, is used quickly during a sprint, but can be replenished to about 80% by resting or doing light activity like walking or jogging for 30-60 seconds. This is possible because we borrow energy from the aerobic system.
- The longer you sprint and the more acidic the muscle becomes, the harder it is to continue producing anaerobic energy with successive sprints. Long sprints or grappling sessions early in a game are especially notorious for doing this and therefore should be minimised or avoided.
- The aerobic system contributes more energy with subsequent sprints - it remains partially activated for the start of the next sprint and also turns on more quickly.

So the aerobic energy system helps anaerobic sprinting? Sprint exercise is often referred to as “anaerobic exercise” as anaerobic energy production dominates these activities [3]. However, aerobic energy production also plays a large role in stop and go sports. This system is activated every time we sprint and contributes some energy for muscle contraction (up to 40% as the sprints continue). However, it plays a more

important role in the recovery periods between sprints. Specifically, it provides energy for the replenishment of the PCr store [4] and the clearance of waste products, including lactate [5]. Therefore, a well-developed aerobic capacity is essential for peak performance in stop and go sports.

Is the type of training important?

Good aerobic fitness provides a strong base for training regimens that incorporate intermittent sprint work. Sprints should be kept short, less than 6-10 seconds, to minimise acidity in the muscle and simulate game conditions. It's a fact that most sprints or periods of heavy exertion during a game last less than 6 seconds. Adequate recovery periods of 30-60 seconds (walking or jogging) are important to maximise recovery of PCr and clearance of waste products. Good aerobic fitness speeds up the recovery process and increases the potential for energy production in subsequent sprints.

A sprint training program built upon a sound aerobic base will increase anaerobic power during sprinting [1, 5]. The training program will also increase muscle mass, which means more muscle can contribute more anaerobic energy. The training also increases maximum aerobic power, which will help contribute aerobic energy during repeated sprints and will speed recovery. Collectively, these changes lead to increases in both speed and recovery between sprints. Clearly, combining sprint training, designed to maximise the provision of energy in muscle, with game skills such as ball handling, kicking, agility training, decision making, reading the field situation, etc. will improve all aspects of a player's performance in stop and go sports.

Will diet before and after Stop and Go sports affect training and performance?

Carbohydrate is a fuel for both aerobic and anaerobic ATP production. It is well known that performance of stop and go sports can be improved by making sure you have plenty of carbohydrate in the diet during the days and hours leading up to the match [3, 5].

More recently, research has also suggested that performance is improved by the ingestion of a carbohydrate beverage during the activity, even when muscle stores of carbohydrate are not fully depleted [2]. Other researchers at the University of Carolina studied men and women who were constantly repeating one-minute bursts of high-

intensity activity followed by three minutes of rest. The tests were done on a stationary bicycle, with the power bursts 20% to 30% beyond their anaerobic threshold.

One group drank an 18% carbohydrate concentration drink before exercise and a 6% solution every 20 minutes during exercise. A second group drank similar volumes of a placebo containing no carbohydrate.

The group that drank carbohydrates could maintain high-intensity effort for an average of 28 minutes longer than the placebo group [6].

While the metabolic mechanisms for these improvements are not currently understood, they may involve better maintenance of energy production in the muscles, or by assisting the central nervous system in the maintenance of its activity.

References

1. Nevill ME, Boobis LH, Brooks S, and Williams C. Effect of training on muscle metabolism during treadmill sprinting. *Journal of Applied Physiology* 67: 2376-2382, 1989.
2. Nicholas CW, Green PA, Hawkins RD, and Williams C. Carbohydrate intake and recovery of intermittent running capacity. *International Journal of Sports Nutrition* 7:251-260, 1997.
3. Spriet LL. Anaerobic metabolism during high-intensity exercise. In: *Exercise Metabolism* Edited by M. Hargreaves. Human Kinetics, Clapham, South Australia, 1995. pp. 1-40.
4. Trump ME, Heigenhauser GJF, Putman CT, and Spriet LL. Importance of phosphocreatine during intermittent maximal cycling. *Journal of Applied Physiology* 80: 1574-1580, 1996.
5. Williams C and Gandy G. Physiology and nutrition for sprinting. In: *Perspectives in Exercise Science and Sports Medicine. Vol. 7, Physiology and Nutrition for Competitive Sport*. Edited by D.R. Lamb, H.G. Knuttgen, and R. Murray. Cooper Publ. Group, Carmel, Indiana, 1994. pp. 55-98
6. Davis JM, Jackson DA, Broadwell MS, Queary JL and Lambert CL. Carbohydrate drinks delay fatigue during intermittent, high-intensity cycling in active men and women. *International Journal of Sports Nutrition* 7 (4):261-273, 1997.

League Coach FORUM

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/leaguecoach>

RLCM continues to reproduce questions and answers which have featured on the League Coach website. This website is available for all to use, if you are looking for any information regarding coaching, training drills or philosophies feel free to ask a question or join an existing discussion.

Question 1

Information required on abc defenders either side of the ruck & their duties/roles to the markers & defensive line.

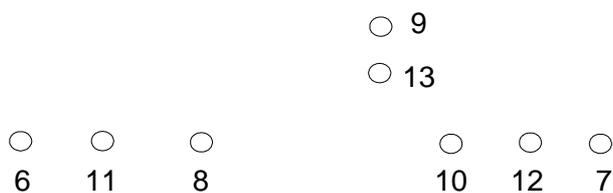
Answer 1

ABC defenders is a name given to the first three players in the defensive line on either side of the ruck. So lets say that you have a ruck defence that looks like this:

Markers : hooker and lock.

Right hand side counting out: Right Prop, Right Second Row, Half.

Left Hand side counting out: Left Prop, Left Second Row, 5/8 (or stand off). Visually that would look like:



6,11,8 are ABC if the attack is coming down YOUR LEFT side.

10,12,7 are ABC if the attack is coming down YOUR RIGHT side.

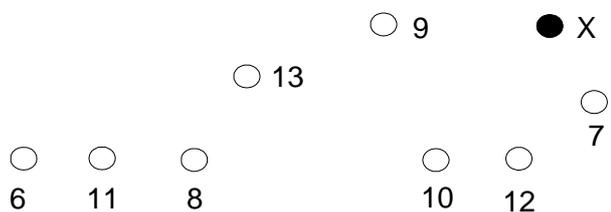
The purpose of nominating them ABC is to provide a defensive call - ABC's work ... generally for the first 3 tackles. To remind your ruck de-

fence to get up and meet them at the advantage line. The two players who tackled stay as markers and 9 & 13 fill in the holes left.

Markers roles depend on your defensive alignment ... I prefer 1st marker chases, 2nd marker holds ... the 2nd marker is holding in case a player steps back in or uses an inside ball ... the 13 in the above example would fill the hole behind the play the ball.

The roles in the defensive line are that the halves 7 & 6 control their side of the ruck and should arc up to form the horns of your ruck defence.

The example below shows what it would visually look like if they attack down YOUR RIGHT side.



Notice how with 9 moving across and 7 moving up a *bit* faster, we have created a trap for the attacker X ... he is about to get tackled.

13 has held to close the hole behind the play the ball and 6,11,8 have moved across to Shut The Gate.

Hope that helps.

Bob Wood



North Queensland
COWBOYS

Supporting Coaching & Development
www.cowboys.com.au

Question 2

I have been asked to coach an Under 8 local side, I have not had any experience with coaching such a young team and need a few tips for training. I am lacking basic skill building drills.

Answer 2 (a)

When coaching an Under 8 side the important things are:

- 1) The basics;
- 2) Fun

I actually had to work with an U/8's coach at the start of this season, who wasn't sure why she was back coaching, no-one was having much fun and they weren't winning many games. She was looking for some secret success, some really technical NRL secrets that other U/8 coaches didn't know.

I watched the first training session, which consisted of set drills which looked very impressive, like any other Rugby League coaching session. The players went through their patterns however they didn't learn anything, they were bored and fighting.

My advice to her was - you have an U/8's birthday party and the caterer's van has broken down, you have to wait for 45 minutes before the cake, videos and food arrives. Your son has invited 12 of his mates over and they are all looking at you, what are you going to do?

Her answer (as I'm sure most parents would be):
Play some games.

There is your training session - pick some kids games that they like ... What's The Time Mr Wolf, Rob The Nest. Talk to the parents of your team and learn some games, modify them to add a football and/or tackling and you have your training

session.

Give the kids a mini game at the end of the session. with a basic structure to follow e.g. who runs 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc.

And that's it.

By the way her team's results this year

Win,
Loss 18-19
Loss 12-19
Win 15-10
Win 39-5

Remember this is a team that wasn't doing too well last year and now they are playing games and still producing on the football field, learning skills and having fun ... they'll be back.

Answer 2 (b)

I have started this year coaching U7s. I Started with the basic plan

Rule 1. To have fun

Rule 2. If kids this age are having fun you can teach them anything.

Rule 3. Have no pressure on them from winning or losing (thats a big persons' thing winning or losing)

Rule 4. After games I don't tell them if they won or lost its not my expectation, it's how they play thats my expectation of them.

Rule 5. At the beginning of the season I set out the rules that I require them to follow at training and to their team mates.

Rule 6. As the season goes on I have worked on each of the kids separately to improve the things that they lack because you are teaching individuals that play in a team.

Rule 7. If all of the above fail refer back to Rule 1.



Question 3

Ok all you coaches out there, what do Great Britain do now?

Answer 3 (a)

You are all missing the point, the major reason they started ok but went downhill fast is because in the SL, they still use the outdated 6/4 subs rule, therefore they are not used to impact players coming off the bench and keeping up the speed and tempo of the game, scrapping the 6/4 rule and introducing the 12/4 NRL rule will definitely help in future, everything will be faster, thinking and anticipating etc.

Would've helped if Russell Smith had them back 10, instead of 13 metres.

Answer 3 (b)

I didn't quite understand the tactics used by David Waite & the GB side. They lacked variety & therefore didn't ask enough (if any) questions of the Aussie defence.

Compared to the tactical structure assembled for the first test of the Kangaroo tour last year where GB (in the orange zone) took a double shot toward the central field zone then threw a double pivot pass, dummied to the outside runner & turned the ball back in to an angled runner; GB was unimaginative. GB also used a lot more angled runners to break up the Aussie defence structure once in the green & their pass selection in choosing the correct runner was far superior. Defensively the GB side used an Up & In style whereas on Friday night they appeared to lose a lot of ground with an Up & Out.

I think that the one-off test for GB was always going to be a disaster considering that they had

one week to acclimatise & familiarise, their jet-lag factor was extended according to certain press sources, they selected a safe half-back option rather than an imaginative one in Ryan Sheridan, 3 or 4 of their world-class players were coming back from extended injury absences, but most of all they've got a very intelligent & tactically clever NON-BRITISH coach. I don't know how Mr Waite would go about stirring up national pride when he's speaking with the voice of the enemy? Also the Aussies were coming off a very closely fought State of Origin series.

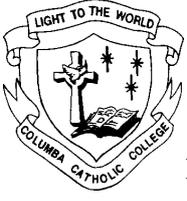
GB should be asking for any future tests to be played in Mother England (especially if one-off tests & mid-season), GB should be looking for a new national coach with David Waite as an adviser to this person & the overall English Super League. A possible candidate would be Brian Noble from Bradford.

Tactically GB could have targeted a few of the rookies & tried to exploit unfamiliar combinations which existed in the Aussie side. The ideal situation would have been to kick down their left corridor & have Tahu returning the ball rather than Tuqiri. Attacked Simpson's side continuously as this would have blunted Tallis' power of getting emotion surges from big tackles (he loves the big plays & it builds him up each one he does). GB need to go back to a more Up & In style defence as this suits a majority of their personnel, & Up & In is moreso about attitude than Up & Out - a big aggressive side like GB would thrive in this environment.

The tactics above are very similar to NSW's in S.o.O One this year & with the one-off situation details of opposition personnel & individual targetting takes on a much more magnified role.

I don't think all is lost for GB.

Rick



Columba Catholic College
CHARTERS TOWERS
QLD AUST
Continuing a proud
tradition as a
Rugby League Nursery
Email: columbaa@charters.net.au



**Burleigh
Leagues**
"For a Great Time Out"
Supporting Rugby League Coaching
Website: www.burleighbears.com
Email: bears@burleighbears.com

RLCM Drills

Basic Training Drills

RLCM wish to acknowledge the New South Wales Rugby League Academy and Coaching and Development Manager Martin Meredith for their kind support in allowing RLCM to reproduce these drills from their Official Rugby League Coaches Handbook (Printed 2001).

The coaching drills used in this issue are designed for skill acquisition for players between the ages of 5 to 14 years. Players will best acquire the skills of rugby league if given a fun environment full of activities, which best fit, the physical capabilities of each age group.

To increase the difficulty of these drills, coaches should consider:

1. Decreasing space of drill
2. Decreasing the time available to perform the skill
3. Increase the physical presence within the drill

[Published with the authority of the NSWRL Academy]

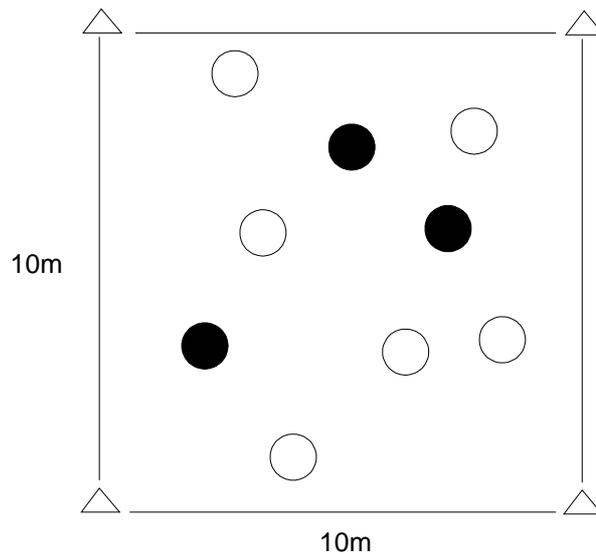


**ZED N ZED
JEWELLERS**

Allan still has all your favourite NRL watches, rings and pendants
NEW NAME - SAME GREAT SERVICE & PRICE!

SHOP 119 LEVEL 1 WESTFIELD SHOPPINGTOWN
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220
Ph: (02) 9579 2889 Fax: (02) 9579 1219

FROZEN TAG

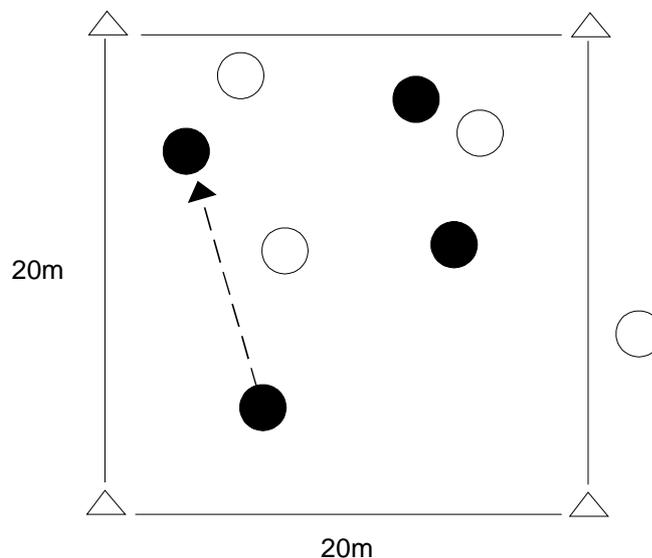


Setting

9 Players minimum, 10 x 10 Metre Grid, 4 markers

- The group is divided into three equal teams
- 1 team is nominated as the chasers, the other two teams must avoid being tagged (two handed grab) by Team 1
- If a player is tagged he becomes a frozen player and must stand still with his legs apart
- Team members of the frozen player must attempt to 'defrost' the player by crawling between his legs
- Once all players have been frozen by Team 1, the teams swap roles so Team 2 would become the chasers
- The team that can freeze the opposition in the shortest amount of time wins

CORNER TAG BALL

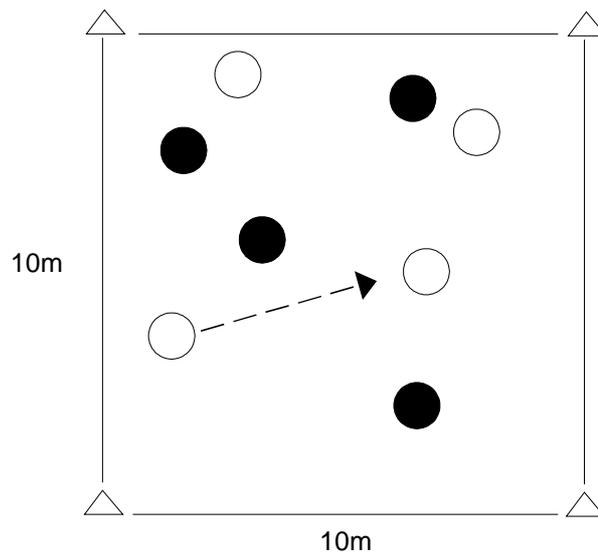


Setting

8 Players minimum, 20 x 20 Metre Grid, 4 markers

- Divide group into two teams
- Players in Team 1 must attempt to tag players in Team 2
- Team 2 must avoid being tagged
- Team 1 may run anywhere within the grid passing the ball to each other but may not run when in possession of the ball
- When attempting to tag a player they may only take one step and must hold the ball in two hands
- Once a player has been tagged he must move outside the grid
- Each time the ball is dropped by Team 1 one player from Team 2 may return to the game
- The coach should designate a period of time, at the end of this time the number of tagged players are counted

HOW MANY PASSES

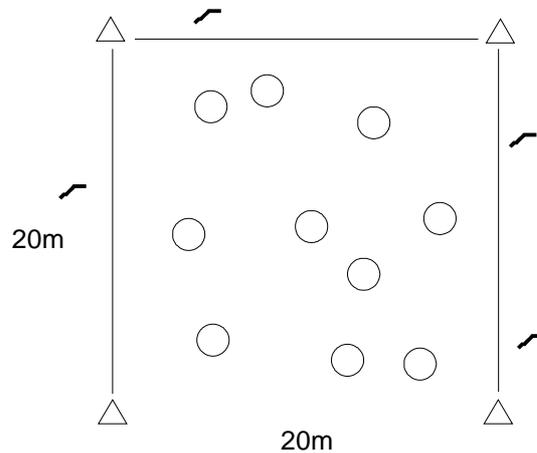


Setting

8 Players minimum, 10 x 10 Metre Grid, 4 markers

- Divide group into two teams
- Each team gets an equal amount of time to make as many passes as possible
- The player with the ball must stand still and find a support player who moves into position to receive a pass
- The opposition team must attempt to intercept the ball or knock down the pass

TAIL CHASE



Setting

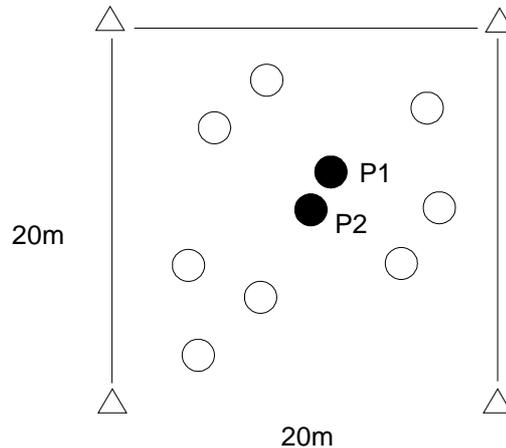
5 Players Minimum, Approx 20m X 20m Grid, 1 sock per player

- All players start the game inside the grid with one football sock placed in the back of their shorts
- On coaches command players attempt to snatch socks from other players and store them in a pile on the edge of the grid
- Players who lose their sock continue to snatch socks from other players
- When all socks have been snatched, count who has the most

PAPUA NEW GUINEA RUGBY LEAGUE

Supporting Coaching & Development

CHAIN TAG



Setting

5 Players Minimum, Approx 20m X 20m Grid

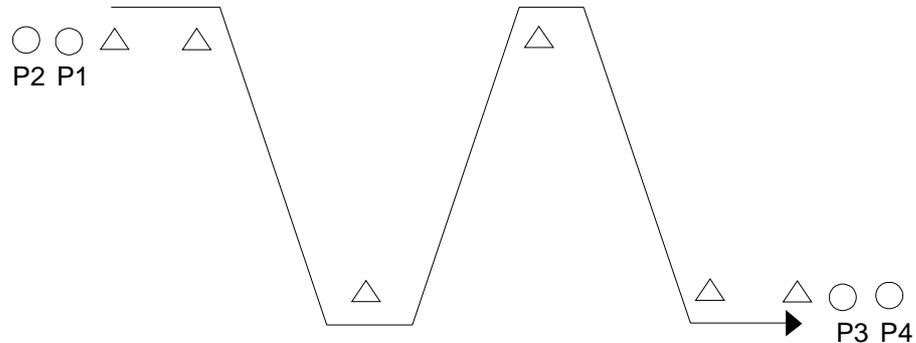
- All players start the game inside the grid
- 2 players (P1 & P2) join hands and are nominated as chasers
- P1 & P2 must attempt to tag other players
- Once a player has been tagged he must then join the chain
- The chain grows until all players have been tagged

**SPORTS SUPER CENTRE**
R U N A W A Y B A Y

- Fully Equipped Gymnasium • Boxing Station • Scrum Machine / Tackle Bags and Shields
- Full Size Synthetic Field • Sports Medicine Unit (Including Physio, Podiatrist, Dietician and Psychologist)
- Aquatic Centre • Accommodation For 300 • Dining Room with Nutritional Meals

07 5500 9988
www.sportssupercentre.com.au

ZIG ZAG TAG

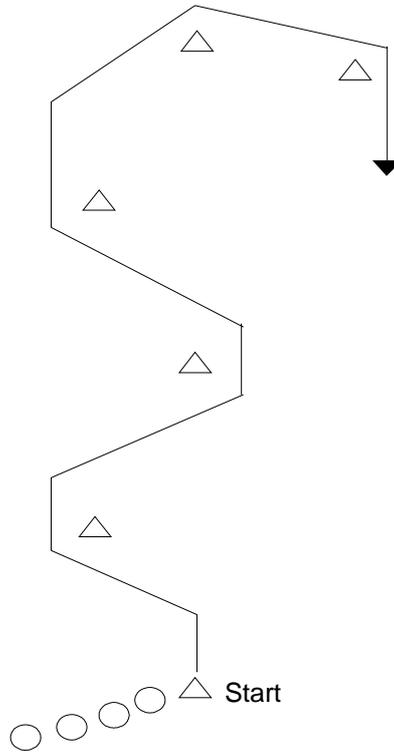


Setting

4 Players Minimum, 6 markers

- Set up markers as shown above
- Players line up in pairs with equal numbers at each end of the grid, all players carry a football
- On coaches command P1 runs the marked path, P2 starts once P1 steps the first marker
- P2 chases P1 and attempts to tag P1 with the ball
- When P1 and P2 reach the other end of the grid P3 and P4 start off back through the grid
- The chaser must tag the leader as many times as possible

EVASION MARKERS

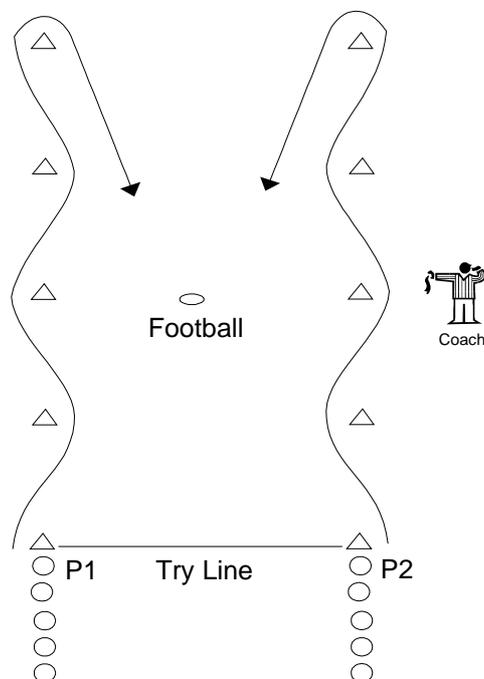


Setting

5 Players Minimum, 5 markers

- Set up markers as shown above
- Players run through the grid stepping at each one
- Initially start the drill at half pace
- Progress the drill by increasing pace
- Then introduce a football to be carried and handed off at the end of each run through

PURSUIT

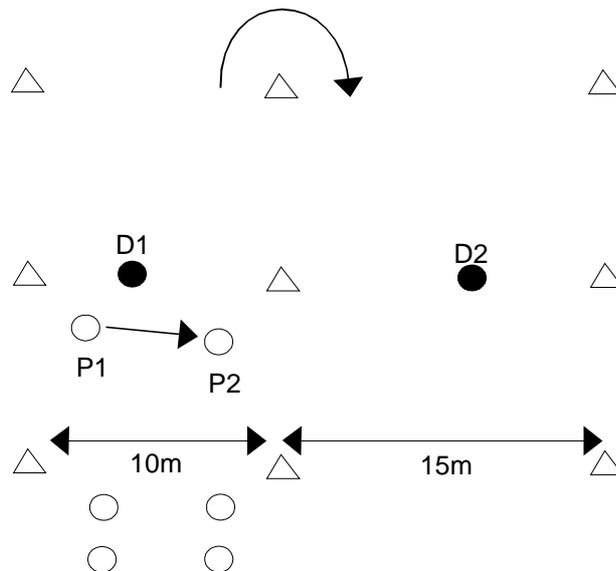


Setting

8 Players Minimum, 10 markers

- Set up markers as shown above
- Players line up in two equal groups behind start markers
- On coaches P1 & P2 run down the grid in zig zag fashion between markers
- After rounded the last witches hat, players run down the centre of corridor
- Both players attempting to pick up the football on the run and then score a try
- The player without the ball attempts to tag the player now in possession of the ball with two hands
- The next two players then continue the drill
- Add points for a try to introduce a game aspect
- Team members should encourage the runner

2 ON 1

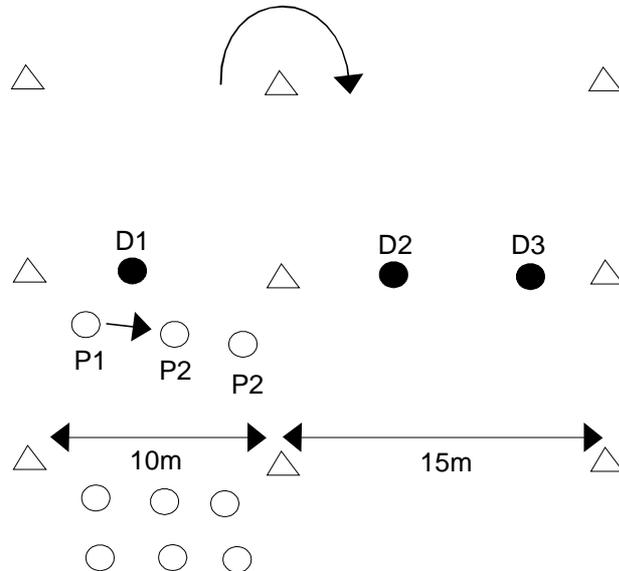


Setting

6 Players Minimum, 15 x 25 Metre Grid, 9 markers

- Two columns are set up one wider than the other
- Attacking players line up in pairs with 1 defender in each column positioned on marker
- The first pair (P1 and P2) run down the grid attempting a draw and pass on the defender
- P1 and P2 then round the end marker and return down the second column which is wider than the first
- Once again they attempt a draw and pass on the defender
- Defenders can only move left and right and not forward and back
- Progress by adding more defenders into the columns so attacking players must perform consecutive plays

3 ON 2

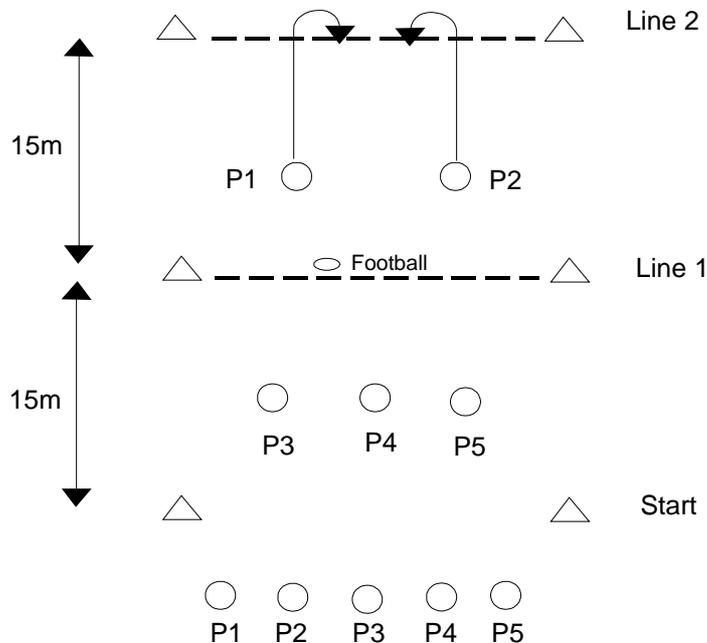


Setting

9 Players Minimum, 15 x 25 Metre Grid, 9 markers

- Continuation from 2 on 1
- Attacking players line up in groups of 3 with 1 defender in the first column and 2 defenders in the second column
- The first trio (P1, P2 & P3) run down the grid attempting a draw and pass on the defender
- The trio then rounds the end marker and returns down the second column which is wider than the first
- Once again the trio attempts a draw and pass but now there are 2 defenders
- Defenders can only move left and right and not forward and back

3 ON 2 (OPTION)

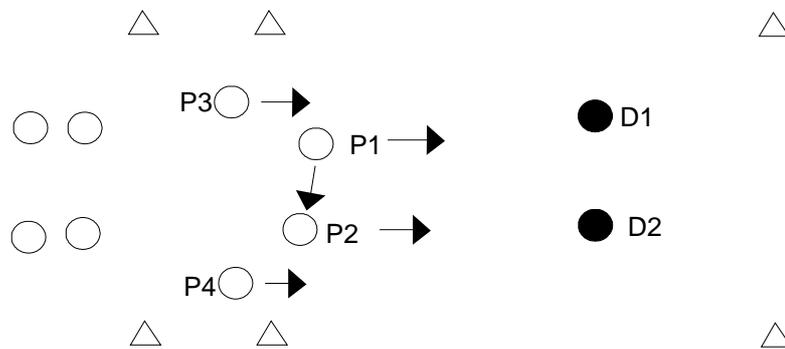


Setting

5 Players Minimum, 15 x 30 Metre Grid, 6 markers

- Players line across grid in a group of 5
- The first 2 players (P1 and P2) make a pair, and the other players make up a trio
- P1 and P2 run up the grid passing back and fourth
- When they reach the first set of markers the players with the ball places it on the ground
- P1 and P2 then proceed to line 2 where they must touch the ground, turn and then become defenders
- Once the first group has placed the ball P3, P4 and P5 proceed down the grid
- P3, P4 and P5 must pick up the ball and then attempt to beat the two defenders with a 3 on 2 play

SUPPORT SCURRY

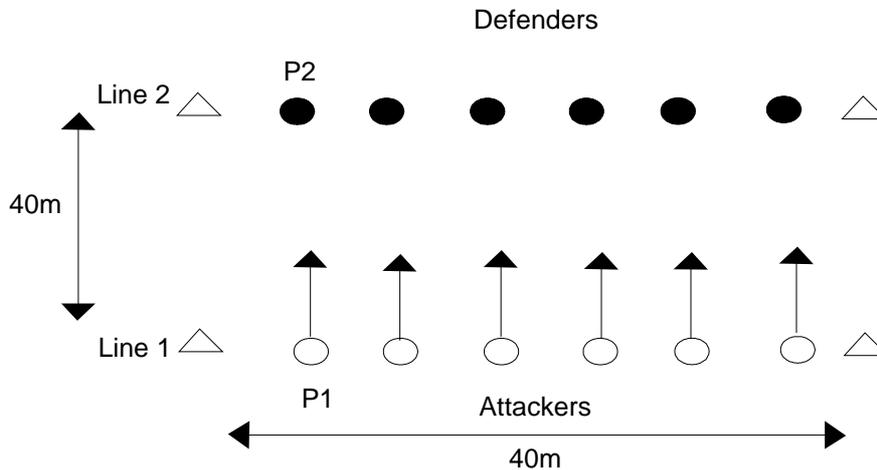


Setting

8 Players Minimum, 10 markers

- P1 and P2 run down the grid passing the ball back and fourth
- Once they reach the second set of markers P3 and P4 run down the grid
- P3 & P4 must join P1 and P2 in a support position creating a 4 on 2 situation on D1 and D2
- The group now consisting of 4 players attempts to score a try
- P1 and P2 become defenders and the drill continues

FRONT ON TACKLING



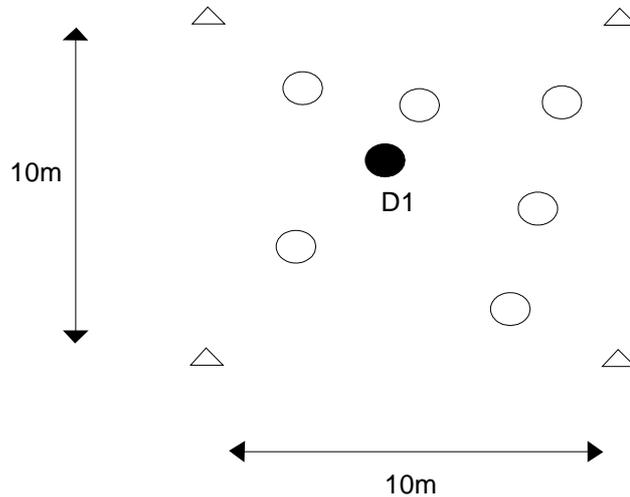
Setting

10 x 40 Metre Grid, 4 markers

- Players make two lines facing each other
- Players in line 1 (P1) carry a football, line 2 (P2) are defenders
- P1 advances towards P2, who, standing in a front on position makes a chest to chest contact with P1
- P2's arms extend around P1 to secure a strong hold on the attackers back
- P1 then uses his momentum to force both players to the ground
- Repeat the tackle using alternate shoulders and then swap attackers and defenders

www.rlcm.com.au

TIE THE CALF



Setting

7 Players minimum, 10 x 10 Metre Grid, 4 markers

- All Players start within the grid, 1 player (D1) is nominated as a defender
- D1 must attempt to tackle and force to the ground and onto their backs as many players as possible in 1 minute
- The defender gets 1 point for each grounded player
- Continue the drill so all players have a turn at being defender



Cabramatta
Rugby League Club

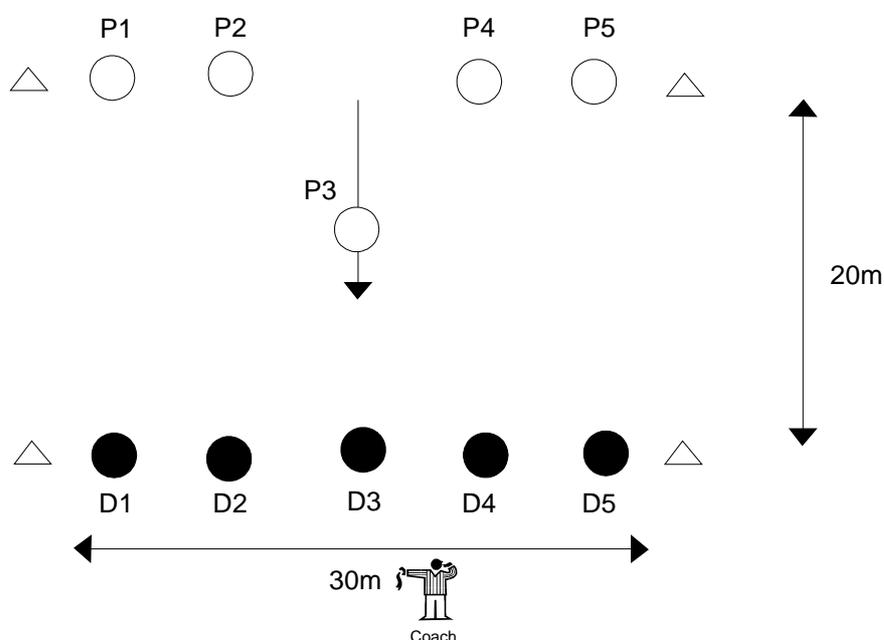
Supporting Coaching & Development

24 Sussex St, Cabramatta

Phone 9727 8788



MIRROR MIRROR



Setting

8 Players minimum, 30 x 20 Metre Grid, 4 markers

- Divide group into two equal teams (attackers and defenders)
- Teams line up opposite and facing each other
- Each attacking player is given a number
- The drill starts with the coach directing the attacking team to move left or right by raising his arm
- The defending team must adjust and nominate the attacker they are marking
- The coach calls a number (e.g 3) and player 3 must approach the defence with the opposing players making the tackle
- A ruck is formed, and play continues by a dummy half moving in and passing to his attacking line
- All players must adjust
- Each team has possession for six tackles then change roles

rlcm.com.au

The publishers wish to thank the Australian Rugby League and contributors for their assistance in compiling this publication.

Queensland
Suite 1F, Trust House
3070 Gold Coast Hwy
Surfers Paradise
QLD AUST 4217

PO Box 259,
Surfers Paradise
QLD AUST. 4217
Ph: (07) 5538 9377
Fax: (07) 5538 9388

New South Wales
Suite 111
353 King Street
Newtown
NSW AUST. 2042

Locked Bag 18/111
Newtown
NSW AUST. 2042
Ph: 1800 18 14 14
Fax: 1800 18 14 15

United Kingdom
Gatehouse Centre
Albert St, Lockwood
Huddersfield.
West Yorkshire U.K.
HD1 3QD

Publisher
Gary Roberts
rlcm@rlcm.com.au

Research
Keith Hookway
keith@rlcm.com.au

Advertising Manager
John Ryan
John@rlcm.com.au

Production
Reagan Roberts
reaganr@ozemail.com.au

Photographer
Matthew Roberts
photo@rlcm.com.au

Contributors
Peter Sharp
Daniel Anderson
Tim Gabbett
Martin Meredith
Doug King
Bob Wood
Lawrence Spriet
Glenn Bayliss

Writer
Ashley Bradnam

Endorsed By



DISCLAIMER

The information in this publication is given in good faith and has been derived from sources believed to be reliable and accurate. However, neither Shamrock Books, nor any person involved in the preparation of this publication accept any form of liability whatsoever for its contents including advertisements, editorials, opinions, advice or information or for any consequence for its use.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or ink-jet printing without prior written permission of the publishers.

Published by Senior Scene Pty Ltd
T/A Shamrock School Books
ABN 82 050 409 268

Rugby League Coaching Manuals
ISSN 1446-3628