

Invisible channels

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Creating spaces between a line of defenders to attack, by revealing 'invisible channels'.
- 2 Used by All Black back line in Autumn internationals, in particular, Tana Umaga and Daniel Carter.
- 3 Using good handlers to release good runners.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Ball carriers are going to draw defenders out of position – try to isolate a defender.
- 2 Release ball level with or behind the defender (if contact is taken).
- 3 The invisible channel is where the defender was just defending, through and behind them.
- 4 Supporters are looking to take a pass very close to defender being attacked.



what to shout

- "Ball carrier, attack the gaps just beside the defender."
- "Attack means going beyond the tackler/defender before releasing the ball."
- "Drive your legs through the tackle."
- "Carry the ball high – around chest height."
- "Be strong in the tackle; be aware of the support."
- "Supporters, put yourselves in the channels by changing angles."
- "Supporters COMMUNICATE."



what to look for

- Attacking players not committing defenders: they need to change direction and accelerate close to contact.
- Ball carriers not releasing the ball at the best moment: must be delivered level with defender or from behind the defender.
- Supporters not hitting gain line at pace.



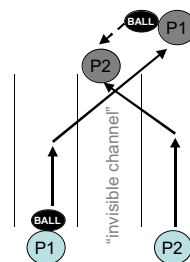
what to think about

Two handed or one handed passes, which works best? Should the ball carrier always expect the supporter to be in position? What is the best form of calling: "left" or "right" or just the name of the ball carrier?

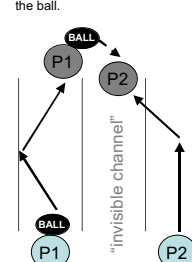
What you get your players to do:

In three very narrow channels, a ball carrier (P1) starts on the far left channel, moves forward then across to the far left channel. P1 then passes the ball back into the middle channel. P2 starts in the far right channel and then moves into the middle channel to take the ball. In the second drill, P1 moves in and out in the far left channel and then passes to P2 as P2 arrives on the shoulder of P1. P2 has started in the far right channel.

- 1 P1 runs up a very narrow channel, crosses over "the invisible channel" and passes the ball back to P2. P2 runs up right channel and crosses into the "invisible channel" to receive the ball.



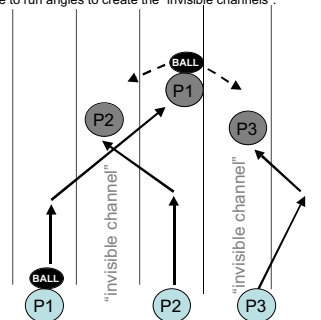
- 2 P1 runs up a very narrow channel, steps left to the far edge then right to the edge of "the invisible channel" and passes the ball very flat to P2. P2 runs up right channel and crosses into the "invisible channel" to receive the ball.



Development

- 1 Across five channels add another player and P1 has a choice of pass (inside or on the shoulder).
- 2 Add a defender (and then more) into the channels (static at first, then build the level of commitment.)
- 3 Change the side the attack is coming from.
- 4 Change the width of the channels.

Development:
P1 runs to attract defenders and passes to either P2 or P3 who have to run angles to create the "invisible channels".



How would I put this into a game situation:

Invisible channels are ideal to create space where the number of attackers equals the number of defenders. Use a 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 game. Start the teams quite a distance apart and see how the play develops. The ball should start at one edge of the pitch of a wide pitch.

How to use smart sessions

Print off the session and take it to training. It should take you less than five minutes to read the instructions, set up the session, and then you are ready to communicate what happens to your players.

Number of players

You only need six players to complete a session, though it can easily be expanded to meet your needs. With lots more players you could have a number of grids working at the same time.

Timings

The timings are for a twenty minute session, but it can be expanded or reduced to meet your needs. It's your call.

As a rule of thumb 10 minutes would be enough time for a well executed first drill, development and feedback. Any shorter and you have not explored the full skill range or asked enough questions of the players. Longer is fine as long as you feel the session is developing. The game related element adds another 10 minutes.

Equipment

The equipment used is simple. A set of cones (or trainers or tops) as markers and a couple of balls.

You can add in tackle bags, suits and rucking shields where you feel you need them – we just assume that you don't have them because sometimes the shed is locked or another coach is using them.

Training area

The size of the training area is left for you to decide. Smaller players need a smaller area, but the session will never need more than a 20m x 20m grid for initial drills. The smaller the area the more intense the training.

The standard and age groups

Smart sessions are based on the core skills of rugby. They will challenge any standard because a player can always perform the core better.

The "development" ideas can be used to differentiate between the different standards of your players; the "think about" section can challenge the more advanced; the "game related situations" can change the contact situations the teams face.

Elements of the session

What to tell your players the session is about:

This is your introduction and outlines the objectives of the session. Just read this out. The players then have an objective. Return to this at the end of the session to see if you have achieved your objectives.

What you tell your players to do:

This is how you want your players to achieve the objectives. You can tell the players straight away how to achieve the objectives, or you can tease it out of them as the session goes on.

What you get your players to do:

This shows you how the session is going to work. Depending on what is going to be achieved, it sets out what actions the players are going to take. There are no exact measurements, or complicated patterns – the approach is "simple, stupid, successful". Slow motion the first few patterns – get the drill right and the skill right first before speeding up. Use the "What to shout" prompts to keep the players focused. Use the "What to look for" to keep your eye on why the players might be failing.

Development

No session is worth doing unless there is some form of progression. Normally there will be an increase in pressure, say by adding more defenders, or by restricting the time available. Other areas for you to think about are: Where do I stand as coach? Do I throw the ball into the grid?

How would I put this into a game situation?

All the elements of the session are geared to the game, but this section puts the session one step away from a full game, with attack, defence and a goal line.

What to shout

Have the words handy, because apart from the usual words of encouragement, it is good to shout the key factors to players. Of course you can hold some of these "shouts" back and ask the players to identify how they can improve.

What to look for

You need to keep your eyes open for "best practice". This section helps you identify quickly where players might go wrong so you can quickly put them right.

Think about

Here you have the chance to challenge the players and situation, either by using feedback or just asking yourself the questions. It is a little more advanced and might not be appropriate for your players.

Where does it fit:

To help you file and order our coaching we have given you the core areas of individual and team skills that the session covers.



50 GREAT BACKS MOVES

Dan Cottrell

Get your hands on a copy of my coaching guide: **50 Great Backs Moves**.

A single backs move can win a match. This **unique coaching tool** contains **50** blistering moves that could transform your team's backs play.

"A must for any coach" Adrian Curran, Dhuibhne RFC, Ireland.

To order or to find out more go to www.rugby-coach.com/50bm
You can save an amazing £41 if you order both the hard copy and pdf file!