

Pressure passing

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Improving players passing under pressure.
- 2 Bringing focus back to passing skills following periods of other activities.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Game related so work hard between passes on whatever skills/exercises are being performed.
- 2 Attack 'defender' at pace and give an accurate pass where the receiver wants it.



what to shout

- "Accelerate toward defender."
- "Keep hands high to receive the ball and give the pass."
- "Follow your pass" – especially when passing further.
- Receiver: "communicate and give a target."
- "Follow through to target" – passer's hands should end up pointing at the target.



what to look for

- Players falling away from the direction of the pass.
- Players slowing down to pass too early before defender.
- Receiver having to adjust to take the pass, e.g. slowing down or reaching behind.



what to think about

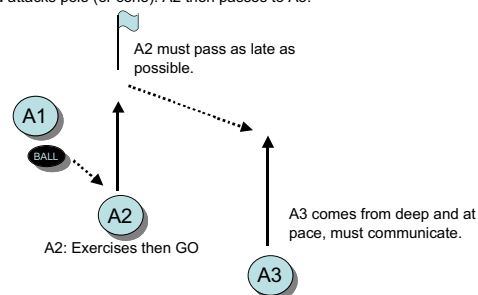
Who in the team are these skills most relevant for?
How do these skills vary for backs and forwards?
How should the passer make allowances for different receivers?

What you get your players to do:

Players work in groups of three, player A1 feeds the ball, player A2 works and player A3 acts as receiver. After each pass the players move positions A1 to A2, A2 to A3 and A3 to A1. Player A1 controls the drill, A2 performs a series of skills or exercises (see below), A1 then calls 'GO' and feeds the ball to A2 who attacks the pole and gives a flat pass to A3 coming onto the ball at pace.

Skills/Exercises: These are controlled by player A1 and can be varied to include whatever you want. Can include hitting a pad and driving, press ups and disorientation exercises (spinning round with closed eyes). Also A1 can vary the catching skill e.g. random passing, player A1 throws a variety of passes for A2 to collect and pass back (high, left & right, low, rolled). You can have fun yourself making up exercises for players to perform here.

A2 performs skill exercises (e.g. press ups or star jumps) controlled by A1, until A1 calls 'GO'. A2 receives ball (again can be any sort of pass) and attacks pole (or cone). A2 then passes to A3.



Development

- 1 Swap pole for a defender (possibly with a ruck pad) who varies the pressure put on the passer (working in groups of 4).
- 2 Receiver varies distance of pass (short or long off both sides).
- 3 Introduce a second receiver (1 short and 1 long) passer has to decide who to pass to.

How would I put this into a game situation:

Small-sided game in a wide area (15 – 20 metres), 4 v 3 (try scorer changes sides each time a score is made). The 4 attack a line and try to score; the 3 defend by moving side to side along the line (touch). The attackers attempt to fix defenders by running straight at them and passing to supporters coming from deep at pace. Try to give passes as late as possible. As players improve allow defenders to move forward and/or introduce contact.

Development: Each team stands 5-10m apart. The coach calls for an exercise to be performed and then throws the ball to the attacking side after a short interval.

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.



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Dan Cottrell

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