

Pitter-patter hands

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Keeping your head and hands up while passing.
- 2 Passing under pressure, but maintaining accuracy.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Accuracy first, so slowly into action.
- 2 Keep your head up, be able to see both passer, receiver and on coming danger.
- 3 Reach high and out for the ball to encourage the pass at just below shoulder height.



what to shout

- "Hips only slightly towards the pass."
- "Hands out towards where the pass is coming from."
- "Spot the target to pass to early."
- "Keep the ball off the chest."
- "Weight of the pass with the arms, accuracy with the finger tips."
- "Pull the pass back."
- "Hands follow through to target."



what to look for

- Players dipping as they receive and give the ball, reducing accuracy and the ability to assess approaching danger.
- Going too fast before they have mastered the skill. Players getting ahead of themselves – giving the pass before they've controlled the catch properly.

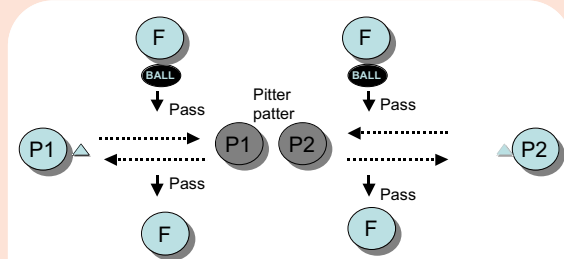


what to think about

Should all players be able to perform this drill and should allowances be made? How far can a quick pass be delivered? Can a quick pass be a spin pass as well? What sort of trick passes can be used to deliver a quick pass?

What you get your players to do:

Two players stand about 10m apart. Each player has two feeders stand about 3m away. One will pass the ball to the player and the other will receive it. The feeders stand about 7m apart and opposite each other. Each player will run towards each other, take and give a pass from the feeder. When they meet in the middle, they will clap hands, turn, running back to starting point, take and give a pass.



Players (P1,P2) run towards each other. As they pass the Feeders (F) they receive and give a pass. They meet each other in the middle, clap the others hands at shoulder height, fingers up, and then return, receiving and giving a pass on the way back.

Pitter patter can be swapped for different exercises; e.g. swerves, twist and spins, "bumps".

Development

- 1 Make the clap hands routine more complicated (hands high focus, minds off passing).
- 2 Instead of high hands, have low hands clap, and receive low passes from feeders.
- 3 Have a player run through two or more sets of feeders.
- 4 Stagger the feeders to change the difficulty of the pass.
- 5 Increase the distance the pass has to be given.

How would I put this into a game situation:

Attacking the blindside. From a lineout/scrum on one side of the pitch, attack the open side with a close move (e.g. switch or back row move). Recycle the ball and attack the blindside.

The teams can have a skeleton pack and back line. Overload the attack to start with. The defence has to first prevent the ball coming out of the 2nd phase and second stop the blindside break.

The attack is not allowed to use miss passes, or switch passes, but can use dummy passes to break down the blindside. Ideally the winger or outside player will receive the ball on the 5m line after going through 3 or 4 very quick passes, OR a player with the ball will go through a gap because their head is up.

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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