

Maul function

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Retaining possession and going forward.
- 2 Committing opposition defenders to create space elsewhere.
- 3 Communicating where to go in a maul situation.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 All players need to maul effectively – keep the ball away from defenders and move forward.
- 2 A successful maul is due to the collective effort of all the players involved – communicate to work together.



what to shout

- "Four hands on the ball."
- "Short driving steps, not walking."
- "Ball carrier, tell the others who you are."
- "Low body positions."
- "Get the ball to the back."



what to look for

- Letting the other side get their hands on the ball – create a seal around the ball, by putting bodies between defence and the ball.
- The maul slowing down or stopping – look to change the axis of attack by rolling off in another direction.
- Getting the ball trapped in the middle where the scrum half can't get it when they need it – work the ball to the back of the maul.



what to think about

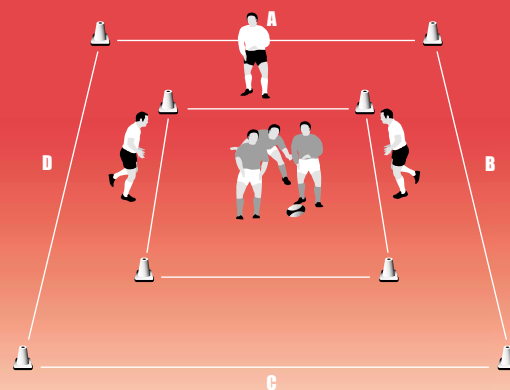
What is the role of the scrum half? Why should the backs practice mauling? How can you change a ruck into a maul? When should you use a maul in a game? What are the laws relating to the maul? When should the ball be released to the scrum half?

What you get your players to do:

Warm up Three v one mauls in a five metres square box. At walking pace, three players in maul against one player have to move from one corner to another without leaving the box.

Drill Three players inside a five metre square box pick up a ball and drive towards the side of a bigger box outside (15 metre square) you have indicated. Three defenders, who are not allowed in the box, defend. The ball is only allowed to be transferred by maul, that is no passing. When you shout change, the defenders become attackers and move to the smaller box. Repeat process.

Maul function



Development

- 1 Add an attacker, and have at least one attacker who is not attached to the maul.
- 2 Allow defenders to tackle before the maul has formed, thus encouraging players to stay on their feet.
- 3 Allow attackers three attempts, changing the "try line" each time.

How would I put this into a game situation:

On a narrow, but long pitch (for instance 10 metres wide and 50 metres long), place two balls five metres either side of the half way line. Split into two teams. Each team is nominated a ball. You shout the name of one of the teams. This team move to their ball and one player picks it up. The other team form a defensive line 2m away. When the coach blows the whistle the team with the ball attack by mauling only. When the maul breaks down, for whatever reason, the coach blows the whistle and the teams have three seconds to reset, the other team now attacks with their own ball.

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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