

Simple rucks

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Clear opposition players from the rucks quicker.
- 2 Secure quick and good ball for your scrum half.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Arrive at a ruck in a position to drive an opposition player backwards.
- 2 Imagine you are a plane taking off, not landing so your body angle on arrival keeps you on your feet.
- 3 Aim to drive on and grab an opposition's player's hook (an arm or leg) or handle (shorts, pockets or shirt).



what to shout

- "Chin off chest, helps keep your head up."
- "Look over the top of a pair of spectacles while keeping your back horizontal to the ground."
- "Short steps before the contact, keep balanced."
- "Target an opposition player to drive back."
- "Drive through and out to clear the players."



what to look for

- Miss hits at the contact area – players should keep their eyes open and put the same foot forward as the shoulder they are making contact with the opposition.
- Players falling over at the ruck – approaching too fast and off balance – emphasise "low to high" at the point of contact.



what to think about

Should ruckers bind with each other before contact – does this work for your players? Do you want to drive beyond the ball or simply stand over and protect it? How do you know if you should go into a ruck or not? If you arrive at a ruck and the ball has already been won, what are your options?

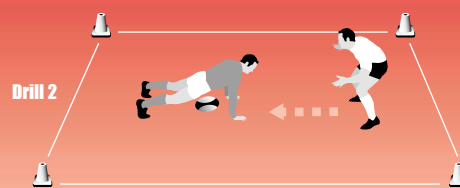
What you get your players to do:

Drill one: one player lies on his side on the ground and puts a ball in front of him no more than one metre from the hips. Two players, starting three metres away, have to lift and roll the player on the ground over the ball. Swap around as necessary.

Drill two: one player makes a bridge shape with the ball under their hips. Another player, starting two metres away, has to drive the player backwards, by focusing on a hook or handle, for instance an arm.

Drill three: set up four situations across the pitch where a team of four players has to perform a combination of drill one and drill two in the fastest possible time.

Simple rucks



direction of run ■■■▶

Development

- 1 Add more defenders into each situation.
- 2 Use ruck shields held so they are touching the ground to get players lower in the contact area.
- 3 Place a player acting as the tackled player next to the ball.

How would I put this into a game situation:

Three second ruck. In a narrow playing area, say 20 metres wide, split into two teams, with two extra players on the attacking side. The attacking side are given the ball and have to score at one end of the pitch. They are allowed three "rucks", which can only last three seconds on your count otherwise the attack has failed. Allow plenty of time for rest between attacks and changes of personnel. Develop the game by widening the pitch significantly and play the same rules.

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 sessions 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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