

Bus lanes

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Making the most of a situation where a slow player gets the ball in open play.
- 2 Developing continuity.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Slow player – make a decision: go forward or pass (loops, pops or offload).
- 2 Passer – follow the ball and get in behind slow player.
- 3 Other players – change pace of supporting runs not to over run slow player.



what to shout

- "Pass and support."
- "Slower players, avoid contact if possible, or take it on your own terms."
- "Slower players, change angles of run and turn early."
- "Last passer, try to get in behind ball carrier."



what to look for

- Slow player overdoing their role by trying to perform a difficult skill – simplify their roles depending on the ability of the player
- Other players overrunning the slow player – change angle as well as pace to be in a better position.

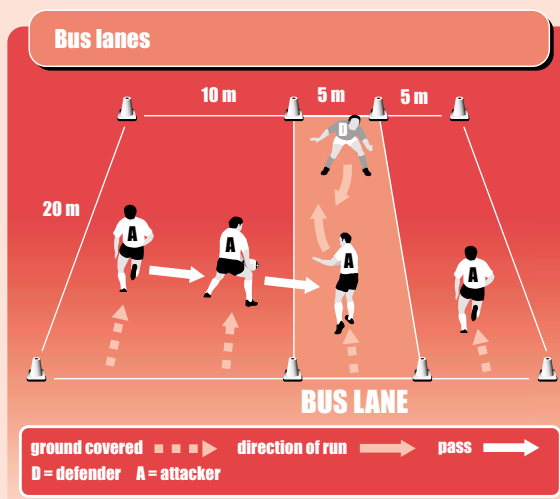


what to think about

Is it possible to identify which of your players should be in the "bus lane"? When should the slow player take contact and when should he make every effort to move the ball on? What are the likely reasons for one of your players to be in such a position (lineouts, scrums, 3rd phase)? Is this a situation you can avoid?

What you get your players to do:

Set out a box of 20 metres square. Inside the box, put a five metre channel about five metres to one side of the box. This channel is known as the bus lane. Get your players into groups of four, with at least one slow player (probably a forward) in each group. The players line up across the width of the whole box, with the slowest player in the "bus lane". The ball is passed across the box and the slow player performs one of the following options on receiving the ball. Give a pass, pass inside to a player who is looping round, give a block pass (pass behind just in contact) or go to ground.



Development

- 1 Add a defender in the "bus lane" (can use a ruck shield or tackle suit).
- 2 Add a full defensive line.
- 3 You release the ball to the four players at different heights and distances so they have to adjust.
- 4 Widen the box to create more pressure on the precision of the passes.

How would I put this into a game situation:

Split your side into two teams, with a mix of forwards and backs in each team. Within each team half the forwards and half the backs form subgroup one and the other players subgroup two. On a pitch which is twice as wide as it is long, subgroup one are only allowed to ruck, maul and pick and go. Subgroup two act as backs. Play a normal game with free kicks for all restarts. If you don't want full contact, then take out the first subgroup and play touch rugby. Change the dimensions of the pitch to encourage wide passes.

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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