

Sleeping dogs

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Encourage players to compete for 50/50 ruck/maul ball and then make decisions on how to defend or attack.
- 2 Isolate poor technique and lack of knowledge of the laws of the ruck.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Compete for the ball as a pair, with one going for the ball, other protecting them.
- 2 Drive off competing players individually.



what to shout

- "Drive forward all the time."
- "Stay on your feet."
- "Bend at the knees and hips."
- "Head up to see where the weaknesses are."



what to look for

- Players not playing the ball on their feet – it is against the laws of the game, plus it does not allow them the flexibility to take the ball forward. Penalise tough – technique comes first.
- Players being driven back – make individuals think about getting their own hips and shoulders lower than the opposition players – "get under their chest".



what to think about

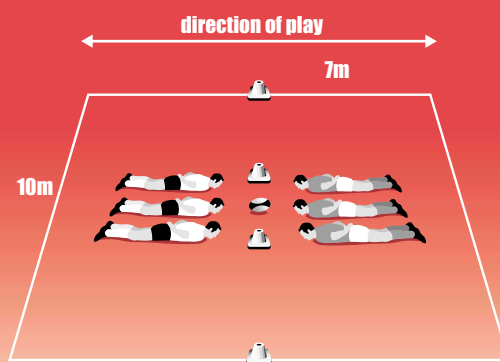
What sort of communication do you want your players to use – do you have standard calls for a "pick and go" where a forward drives off, or for a "ruck to maul", where a forward picks and turns to form a maul? How many players do you want to go into the contact area – some teams are happy with only four, others want more? How close to the edge of the breakdown area do you want your defender to stand?

What you get your players to do:

Warm up: two players lie down 1m opposite each other, with a ball in the middle and a cone behind their feet. One player is the trigger player. When he moves, they both compete for the ball. The winner is the first player to have the ball in their possession on their feet and driven beyond the other player's cone.

In a 20m by 7m long box, put two cones 3m apart on the boxes half way line with a ball on the floor. Two teams of three players lie down 2m away from each other inside the 3m cone area. When you shout "go" two players from each team compete for the ball, and the third supports, but cannot directly compete. The ball winners must try to score, either with a pick and go, or creating a mini-maul.

Sleeping dogs



Development

- 1 You roll the ball into the middle.
- 2 Have one side facing the other way – thus creating an attack and defence.
- 3 Overload one side.

How would I put this into a game situation:

A game of touch rugby which turns in to full contact: Play a game of double touch rugby (a player is tackled once he has been touched by two different defenders). The pitch width is between the two 15m lines on normal rugby pitch, and the length of the normal pitch. When you shout "down", all the players have to get down on their front, with their hands behind their backs. You then throw in a separate ball and the game restarts with this ball, with full contact, full width of the pitch.



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 box 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 box?

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.



50 GREAT BACKS MOVES

Dan Cottrell

Get your hands on a copy of my coaching guide: **50 Great Backs Moves**.

A single backs move can win a match. This **unique coaching tool** contains **50** blistering moves that could transform your team's backs play.

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