

Stop the maul

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Giving players options to prevent the progress of the maul.
- 2 Safe and legal techniques to win back the maul.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Stop the maul before it starts.
- 2 Drive the maul backwards or sideways.
- 3 Try to split the maul.



what to shout

- "First defender, tackle ball carrier to ground."
- "Push and pull the maul to the nearest touchline."
- "Drive through the centre of the maul, not the sides."
- "Short sharp steps to gain momentum."



what to look for

- Players not making a contribution to preventing the maul moving forward – unbind a loose binder and rejoin through the back.
- Players making poor decisions when defending – in the slow motion part of a drill get the players to "talk" through what they are trying to do as they do it.



what to think about

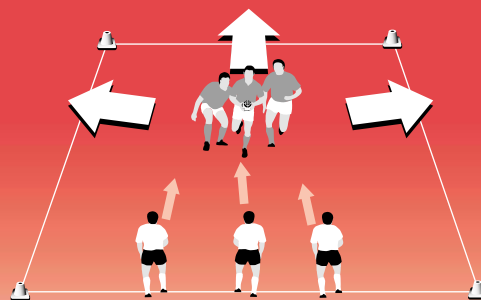
The defender in the maul nearest the ball may be able to work their hands in to grab the ball – a slow, feeling action can be better than a "smash and grab". Can your players twist the maul? How many players do you want to commit to defending the maul? Do you need your backs to practise mauling?

What you get your players to do:

- 1 In a five metre box, have two players start at one end with a ball. The first player binds onto the second player. A defender, who is starting at the other end walks forward and tries to tackle the ball carrier to the ground by grabbing them by the waist and pulling them down.
- 2 In the same box, three attackers and three defenders. The same happens, but the defenders need to drive the maul out of the box, using "stop the maul" techniques.

All drills start at walking pace, then progress in speed as the players become more adept.

Stop the maul



direction of run → push or pull direction for defenders →

Development

- 1 Change the balance of defenders and attackers.
- 2 Change the starting distances (sometimes only half a metre for example).

How would I put this into a game situation:

Lineouts: create some four v four (or more if you have the numbers) lineouts, where one side is guaranteed possession. With senior players, start them in the lifted position.

The attacking side has to score as if they are driving from a five metre lineout. If they are successful, then they move three metres further away and try again.

Be very vigilant on illegal attempts to stop the maul.



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.



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Dan Cottrell

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