

AUSTRALIAN RUGBY UNION



COACHING CONTACT RESOURCE BOOK

SMART *RUGBY*



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Acknowledgments: Compiled by Todd Loudon for the Australian Rugby Union. February, 2002.  
ISBN 0 9585356 5 5

## Introduction - Coaching Contact

An initiative of the Australian Rugby Union in 2002 is the introduction of 'SmartRugby', a 2-hour program for every player in 'Contact' technique. This initiative details the way forward for Australian Rugby Union in injury prevention and peak performance.

Traditionally Rugby Union has been a game where body contact was initiated from side on. Professionalism in the modern day game has seen the rapid improvement in defensive and attacking techniques, now making contact during a game predominantly 'front on'.

Just as the game has expanded and developed, so have the training techniques. This booklet presents the most up to date contact techniques and drills, in a simple format. Rugby Union is a progressive contact game in which coaches have a duty of care to help their player's minimise injury and reach peak performance in all aspects of the game.

This booklet, has been designed to help coaches implement the 'SmartRugby' program and adopt current contact practices, which will effectively help their players perform at their best, and enjoy the great game of Rugby Union.



## **2. Coaching Points**

The coaching points are the key focus areas of the drill. This section outlines player movements and body position. These coaching points ensure that the players execute the contact skill correctly.

Note: The coaching contact booklet, and the activity explanation contained within, have been designed to minimise potential injury and maximise performance. Therefore terminology focuses on injury minimisation, and may differ slightly from common drill descriptions.

## **3. Activity Description**

This section offers step-by-step instructions on how to complete the activity.

## **4. Activity Progression**

The activity progression is designed to allow the coach to adapt, and further develop the activity to the skill level they are coaching.

## **5. Diagram**

This section will give you a visual of how the activity should be performed. This will be a photograph or a directional diagram. It is important to focus on the correct techniques to ensure the activity is completed successfully.

## Contact as an integral part of the 'Warm Up'

### Modern Day Warm Up Technique – How and Why?

#### Warm up

1. Traditionally training has always started with a brief jog to warm up, followed by static stretching. In recent years this type of warm up has been replaced by a specific and time efficient practice. Instead of sending the team for 3 laps of the oval, which wastes time, have the team participate in a low intensity ball handling and running drill – corners pop passing for 2 minutes is adequate or select a key skill drill that lends itself to the desired outcome of training.

ie:- Defence was poor on the weekend so you have decided that you will concentrate on individual tackling technique. Choose a low intensity defensive footwork drill.

Touch football should not be used as many of the players will extend themselves, increasing the chance of injury.

2. Following the ball handling and low intensity running warm up, players should engage in a series of lower body dynamic stretches for a period of 5 minutes. Research tells us this is a better form of preparation for sporting activity as it moves the joints and muscles through their working range of motion. Static stretches (which we have all been doing for years) are designed to increase the length, and relax the muscle. These stretches should not be performed, as relaxed muscles are not desirable for participation in a sporting activity thus increasing the risk of injury. Muscles should be warm, ready to be activated intensely.
3. Following the lower body dynamic stretching another skill drill should be implemented for a period of 2 minutes. The drill should not only revise, but also extend the technique (theme of training session) of the first drill at the start of the warm up. This ensures that skill facilitation is sequential and enhances the learning opportunities of the players. This is also good coaching and teaching practice.
4. Run the team to another part of the field and have them participate in upper body dynamic stretching for a period of 5 minutes.
5. ***Preparation for contact activity should be implemented into the warm up, and again should be sequential to the other two skill drills. All warm ups should be specific to the types of activities that the players will be participating in during the session. Therefore, it is essential that the players experience the 3 types of contact that occur in Rugby (a. Ground, b. Opponents, c. Team Members) during the warm up. Technical coaching can be completed during the preparation for contact drills. Many of the drills are multi-skilled and should be coached accordingly. The time period will vary due to the amount of contact planned, however 5 minutes is ideal.***
6. Run the team to another part of the field, and again participate in dynamic stretching that incorporates whole body movements for a period of 2 minutes, completing stretches the player's feel they need to do.
7. Finally, the players should complete one more contact skill as a lead in to the main focus of the session. This drill should be sequential to the other drills and should be practiced at a higher intensity. Between 2 and 5 minutes is adequate.

## Glossary of Terms

### Ground Contact

Ground Contact -	Refers to any time a player comes into contact with the ground. Is one of the major components of coaching contact.
Ground Slap -	A technique used to distribute impact with the ground, by enlarging the surface area the body contacts.
Going to Ground -	When a player controls their fall to ground, with the aim of positioning their body with the ball.
Flatten Out Body -	Technique used so no one point of the body hits the ground, thus taking all of the impact of the fall. By flattening the body out the impact is dispersed over a larger area.
Chin Tucked -	Technique used to place head in correct position when falling to ground.
Tuck Arms to Body -	Describes body position used so that limbs are not flailing and making incorrect contact with ground.
Limit Extended Limbs -	Describes the safety precaution where a player draws in arms and legs to body to prevent injury.
Safety/Foetal Position -	Players place themselves in a position where arms and legs are curled up, close to body.
Split Kneel Position -	Player kneeling on the ground in a lunge position. One knee on the ground, one knee up.
Secure Bind -	Player draws opponent in contact closely and firmly, limiting gaps.
Hunch Shoulders -	Shoulder shrug, tensing shoulders.
Hips Square -	Hips should be front on to the point of contact.
Shoulders Square -	Shoulders should be front on to the point of contact.
Driving in Same Plane -	Driving movement should be straight and parallel to ground, and through the point of contact.

## **Contact With Opposition**

### **ATTACK**

Upper Torso Leaning Forward -	Lean upper body slightly forward, whilst participating in activity.
Footwork Short and Rapid -	Description of footwork technique. Short quick steps, using feet in maximum contact with the ground. These are very powerful and stable steps.
Shoulders and Hips Square -	Both the hips and the shoulder are parallel and both front on to the point of contact.
Tractor Steps -	Short, rapid steps, carried out with feet wider than shoulder width, in a stable, driving position with toes pointing forward.
Work to a Shoulder -	Player attempts to make contact to the side of the defender, limiting the contact rather than contacting the player front on, which would increase the impact of the contact.
Crossing of Feet -	When legs are crossed over, the player is in an unstable position.
Lead Leg -	The leg the player steps into the contact situation with.
Stepping Through -	Player attempts to step with their lead leg past opponent to gain a superior body position.
Drive Step -	Lead leg is placed as close to opponent as possible, with body weight over lead leg and into contact, thus driving forward.
Wide Stance -	Player stands with legs slightly wider than shoulder width, hips lowered to ground, maintaining low, stable body position.
Lock Under Armpits -	Binding under opponents arms.

### **DEFENCE**

Take Space -	Defender attempts to reduce time and area of which the attacker can use.
Stay Square -	Both the hips and the shoulders are parallel, and front on to the attacker.
½ Shoulder Width -	The defender attempts to keep within a ½ shoulder width range of the attacking player at all times.
Lead Leg -	The leg the player steps into the contact situation with.
Track the Attacker -	Defender places themselves in the correct field and body position to execute a tackle.
Shoulders Open -	Arms extended outwards, shoulder ready to make contact in a tackle situation.
Multiple Player Stability -	Multiple players bind and maintain a low stable base so the stability of the group is strong.
Low, Stable Base -	Describes the body position of wide stance and hips sunk to ground.
Clear Out and Support -	Player takes opponent away from ball by placing shoulder on the mid torso, utilising tractor steps to drive them away from the ball. Arms need to be locked and bound around the opponent. Player supports their own body weight against the opponent.



## SmartRugby Program Options

*The program is split into 4 progressive training sessions each of 65-minutes. Use the format below to design a 'SmartRugby' training session. It is important to understand that this session is an introduction and by no means a complete training program for contact skill acquisition. The activities in this booklet should be incorporated and expanded in future warm-up and training sessions.*

### Session 1 – 65 minutes

Contact Skill	Name of Drill	Time
1. Low Intensity Ball Handling Activity	_____	5 min
2. Dynamic Stretch Lower Body	_____	5 min
3. Attack Warm-up Games and Activities or Low Intensity Tracking Drills	_____	5 min
4. Dynamic Stretch Upper Body	_____	5 min
5. Low Intensity Falling to Ground and Body Position on Ground	_____	5 min
<b>Attack</b>		
1. Pre Contact Body Position Activity	_____	10 min
2. During contact	a) _____	7 min
	b) _____	7 min
3. Defensive and Offensive Activity	_____	10 min
4. Warm Down	_____	5 min

**Session 2 – 65 minutes**

<b>Contact Skill</b>	<b>Name of Drill</b>	<b>Time</b>
1. Low Intensity Ball Handling Activity	_____	5 min
2. Dynamic Stretch Lower Body	_____ _____	5 min
3. Defence Warm-up Games and Activities or Low Intensity Tracking Drills	_____ _____	5 min
4. Dynamic Stretch Upper Body	_____ _____	5 min
5. Low Intensity Post Contact Body Position	_____ _____	5 min
<b>Defence</b>		
1. Tracking and Pre Tackle Contact	_____	15 min
2. Tackle and Body Position	_____ _____	10 min
3. Defensive and Offensive Activity	_____ _____	10 min
4. Warm Down	_____ _____	5 min

**Session 3 – 65 minutes**

Contact Skill	Name of Drill	Time
1. Low Intensity Ball Handling Activity	_____	5 min
2. Dynamic Stretch Lower Body	_____	5 min
3. Attacking Warm-up Games and Activities or Low Intensity Tracking Drills	_____	5 min
4. Dynamic Stretch Upper Body	_____	5 min
5. Defence Warm up Activities	_____	5 min
<b>Contact with Team Members</b>		
1. Forming multiple player stability.	_____	10 min
2. Bumper Stability	_____	10 min
3. Defensive and Offensive Activity	_____	10 min
4. Set Piece Contact Stability, Scrum Technique and Maul	_____	10 min
5. Warm Down	_____	

**Session 4 – 65 minutes**

Contact Skill	Name of Drill	Time
1. Low Intensity Ball Handling Activity	_____	5 min
2. Dynamic Stretch Lower Body	_____	5 min
3. Attacking Warm-up Games	_____	5 min
4. Dynamic Stretch Upper Body	_____	5 min
5. Defence Warm-Up Activity	_____	5 min
<b>Attack</b>		
1. During Contact	_____	10 min
<b>Defence</b>		
1. Tracking and Pre-Tackle	_____	10 min
2. Tackle and Body Position	_____	5 min
<b>Offensive and Defensive Drills</b>		
1. Selected Activity	_____	10 min
2. Warm Down	_____	5 min

## **Ground Contact**

Ground contact is any contact that a player has with the ground. Correct technique and body position, when either going to ground or on the ground, is a skill which needs to be developed so it becomes an automatic response.

### ***Falling Backwards***

- × Create a bigger body area by slapping arms to either side.
- × Practice timing of ground slap – simultaneously with back touching the ground.
- × Flatten out body.
- × Chin tucked slightly to chest.

### ***Falling Forward***

- × Tuck arms and chin to chest.
- × Present side of body and back to the ground.
- × On impact with the ground, keep rolling and limit extension of limbs.
- × Do not throw hands forward to break fall.

## **Ground Contact from a Tackle**

### ***Defender***

- × Correct sequence of tackle technique is to be reinforced – looking up at target, lead foot close to attacker, head to the side, shoulder contact, arms wrapped, bind and draw opponent in.
- × Chin tucked and drive forward.
- × Keeping the attacker as close as possible. Go to ground, absorb impact and roll.

### ***Attacker***

- × On contact, lean into the defender, draw opponent in close with free arm.
- × Hug ball and defender as tightly as possible, keeping arms tucked in, go to ground, absorb impact and roll into a favourable position and exercise options.

## **Set Phase Ground Contact**

### ***Falling in Different Positions***

- × Tuck chin, hunch shoulders, present side of body and back to ground.
- × Hug ball, arms close to body.
- × Absorb and roll on impact.
- × Exercise options.

## GROUND CONTACT

### Falling to Ground - Judo

Y

#### Coaching Points

##### Falling Backwards

- × Create a bigger body area by slapping arms to either side.
- × Practice timing of ground slap – simultaneously with back touching the ground.
- × Flatten out body.
- × Chin tucked slightly to chest.

##### Falling Forward

- × Tuck arms and chin to chest.
- × Present side of body and back to the ground.
- × On impact with the ground, keep rolling and limit extension of limbs.
- × Do not throw hands forward to break fall.

#### Activity Description

##### Falling Backwards

- × Player to sit on the ground with knees as close to the chest as possible, roll back with chin slightly tucked (Novice).
- × Player starts in the squat position with their backside as close to the ground as possible. Player then rolls backwards (Intermediate).
- × Player to sit on the back of another player, player then rolls backwards (Advanced).
- × Slapping the ground should be done simultaneously as the back touches the ground. Spreading the arms and slapping the ground creates a bigger surface area and thus the impact is absorbed over a larger area.

##### Falling Forwards

- × Player starts on knees and practices falling fully forwards. As player falls they prepare for contact with the ground by tucking arms close to body and chin slightly towards chest.
- × Before impact roll torso to present the side of the body and back to the ground.
- × On contact with the ground, the player continues to roll and dissipate impact.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Practice sitting with knees close to chest.
- × Practice kneeling and falling forward with the ball.
- × Practice collapsing to ground and then side roll.

##### b. Intermediate

- × Squat and fall backwards with the ball.
- × Falling off the back of a player who is kneeling on hands and knees with the ball.
- × Forward roll with tucked shoulder and chin near the ball.
- × Tumbling rolls using slap technique with the ball.

##### c. Advanced

- × Standing, fall backwards with the ball.
- × Standing, fall forwards with the ball.
- × Jogging forward roll with the ball and transfer.

#### Other Activity

Simon Says

#### Backwards



#### Forwards



## GROUND CONTACT

### *Changing Body Position Under Force*

Y G

#### **Coaching Points**

- × Slightly tuck chin to chest. Tuck arms close to body.
- × Present side of body and back when going to ground, and roll.
- × Limit extension of limbs.
- × Arms and hands covering head.
- × Curl up into a safety position if possible (Foetal position).
- × Dispose the resistance by rolling to the side.
- × Movement sequence: Ground Contact, Position, Exercise Options, Curl-up.

#### **Activity Description**

- × Players pair up, one attacking, the other adding resistance. Attacking player starts on their hands and knees with the other player draped over the top of the attacking player.
- × On the coaches cue, the attacking player must lie in the position called by the coach, whilst their movement is resisted by the opposing player.
- × Once the attacking player reaches the correct position, they must place the ball on the ground, making it available, and then curl up into the safety position.

#### **Progression**

##### **a. Novice**

- × Practice the drill as described, but with no ball.

##### **b. Intermediate**

- × Attacking player starts on knees with a ball, and must get to ground in the position the coach has called.

##### **c. Advanced**

- × Add to drill player placing ball.
- × Attacking player stands with a ball, and must get to ground in the position the coach has called.

#### **Other Activity**

Sock Wrestling. Both players have rugby socks half hanging off their right feet. Objective of each player is to pull the sock off the other player.



## GROUND CONTACT

### *Attacker and Defender Going to Ground*

Y G R

#### **Coaching Points**

##### **Defender**

- × Correct sequence of tackle technique is to be reinforced – looking up at target, leading foot close to attacker, head to the side, shoulder contact, arms wrapped, bind and draw opponent in.
- × Chin tucked and drive forward.
- × Keeping the attacker as close as possible. Go to ground, absorb impact and roll.

##### **Attacker**

- × On contact, lean into the defender, draw opponent in close with free arm.
- × Hug ball and defender as tightly as possible, keeping arms tucked in, go to ground, absorb impact, roll into a favourable position and exercise options.

#### **Activity Description**

- × Players in pairs, one attacker, one defender. Players face each other in a split kneeling position, (one knee to ground, one knee up). Players should raise the same knee, e.g. right knee, thus creating a pocket.
- × The defender places their shoulder on the attacker as if tackling, head to the side, and wraps their arms around the attacker drawing them close in a secure bind with elbows tucked in.
- × The attacker wraps their free arm around the defender and draws the defender closer. The description above for the attacker and defender is the start position for this drill. Both players are to tuck their chin and the defender initiates going to ground.
- × Both players are to go to ground, absorb the impact and roll.
- × On the ground the defender is to roll away and the attacker is to exercise options.

#### **Progression**

##### **a. Novice**

- × Practice - kneeling at first without the ball.

##### **b. Intermediate**

- × Practice – kneeling with the ball.
- × Practice – standing.

##### **c. Advanced**

- × Standing, fall to ground.
- × Add multiple defenders.

#### **Other Activity**

- × King of the ring with ball.





## GROUND CONTACT

### Set and Phase Ground Contact

Y B

#### Coaching Points

##### Falling in Different Positions

- × Tuck chin, hunch shoulders, present side of body and back to ground.
- × Hug ball, arms close to body.
- × Absorb and roll and impact.
- × Exercise options.

##### Variation Set Piece Drill

- × Engagement sequence - crouch, touch, engage.
- × Hips and shoulders are squared to opponent with hips and knees bent. Weight on balls of feet.
- × Head up, chin off chest. Sight target area.
- × Keep binding and drive forward in same plane.
- × On cue players practice going to ground. Shoulders hunched.

#### Activity Description

##### Falling in Different Positions

- × Players work in pairs. Attacking player is held up off the ground at varying heights and positions (front, side, behind).
- × Attacking player is to practice with and without the ball, going to ground.
- × Attacking player initiates going to ground in a favourable position.

##### Variation Set Piece Activity

- × Players work in pairs and push against each other in a strong scrummaging position.
- × Players practice going to ground with hand support, bind, 2-hand bind, with knees and forehead.
- × Multiple players can be added.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Practice kneeling and falling in different positions with and without the ball.

##### b. Intermediate

- × Practice both activities.

##### c. Advanced

- × Practice both drills.
- × Practice with multiple people and positions.



#### Other Activity

Game - Building formations and going to ground on coach's cue. Players jog in a set area. On cue from the coach, the players are to get into a set number formation and fall to ground using correct technique, e.g. coach calls 5, players get into a group of 5.



## GROUND CONTACT

### Rugby Baseball Slide and Pickup

Y G

#### Coaching Points

- × On approach to retrieving the ball, player must bend at knees to get low to the ground.
- × Chin slightly tucked, shoulders slightly hunched.
- × Player slides onto side of body
- × Arm on opposite side to that on the ground is the ball arm.
- × Tuck non-ball arm tucked close to body.
- × Free arm gathers ball. Once the player has stopped sliding, the non-ball arm helps secure ball position.

#### Activity Description

- × Ball is rolled away from player.
- × Player then chases the ball.
- × Player slides feet first in order to secure possession.
- × Player then regains feet.
- × Practice different slide positions.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Practice slide without ball. Both sides.

##### b. Intermediate

- × Practice slide with ball. Regaining feet and changing direction. Both sides.

##### c. Advanced

- × Add a defender with shield and explore continuity and evasive techniques.

#### Other Activity

Game – Roll Netball



## Contact with Opposition - Attack

The activities included in this section cover the skill acquisition of attacking pre contact, during contact and post contact. The focus of these activities is to develop the technique of positioning the attacker to the side of the defender, and not the sternum. This allows the attacking player to gain a favourable body position, pre, during and post contact.

### **Pre Contact**

- x Ball in two hands. Upper torso leaning forwards.
- x Footwork – fast feet, short and rapid. Feet should never cross.
- x Shoulders and hips square.
- x If contact is imminent, ball needs to be transferred to outside arm, spare hand helps control the defender. Feet need to be as close to the defender as possible.
- x Tractor steps need to be used during and out of contact.

### **During Contact**

- x Ball carrier works to the side of the defender and takes a drive step into contact with weight over lead leg.
- x Lead shoulder drives into shield, with ball transferred to the back of the contact point. Hips and shoulders should be kept as square as possible and should drive through the same plane.
- x Exercise multiple player stability and options during contact and on the ground.

### **Post Contact**

- x Slightly tuck chin to chest. Tuck arms close to body.
- x Present side of body and back when going to ground and roll.
- x Limit extended limbs.
- x Arms and hands covering head.
- x Curl up into a safety position if possible (Foetal position).
- x Dispose the resistance by rolling to the side.
- x Movement sequence: Ground Contact, Position, Exercise Options, Curl-up.

**CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION - Attack**  
**Warm Up Games and Activities**

**Standing Arm Wrestle**

1. Players in pairs. Players face each other, holding partners wrists, above their heads.
2. The object of the game is to put the opposing player off balance by moving around and pushing/pulling each others arms.
3. Players must maintain stability not let their feet cross or trip over.
4. Players should always keep a strong base by widening their stance, sinking at the hips and crabbing in, to place pressure on opponent.

**Team Shuffle**

1. Group of four, three of whom join hands in a circle. The player not included in the circle is the defender.
2. The group based in the circle try to prevent the defender tagging a nominated player in the circle by shuffling around and evading the defender.
3. Defender to only use side lateral shuffle, not crossing feet or legs.
4. When successful, or on signal, change places.
5. Time limit (i.e. 20 seconds) for the defender to tag the nominated player. This adds pressure.

**Turtle Back – Wrestle**

1. Two players, one defending and one attacking. The defending player position themselves on their hands and knees.
2. The objective of the attacking player is to try and wrestle the defending player onto his back within a designated time limit.
3. Progression – Players start in various positions e.g. Start on backs and both must quickly move to catch the other out.

**Push Up Arm Pull – Wrestle**

1. Two players, in the push-up position facing one another.
2. The objective of the game is to pull the arm of the opponent, causing the player to fall to the ground.

**Tractor Steps**

1. Two players. The nominated attacker with ball in hand drives back a defender holding a shield using wide, rapid, short steps known as tractor steps.
2. Feet width to be initially wider than shoulder width and move closer together once going forward.
3. Variation – do not drive in a straight line and make sure the attackers feet do not cross over. Maintain stability.

**Big Steps Vs Little Steps**

1. Players in pairs. The nominated attacker attempts to drive the defender backwards using big steps.
2. The nominated attacker drives the defender backwards using smaller, more explosive steps known as tractor steps.
3. Variation – Use ground ladders before starting drill.

**Power Throw and Follow**

1. Player to throw medicine ball (similar to a power clean throw) as far as they can and retrieve it.
2. Player to jump forwards as the ball is thrown. Upon landing, the player instantly starts to accelerate using wide and short steps to retrieve the ball.
3. Variation - Player to run in a square pattern to pick up the ball or at an angle to the ball.

**Shoulder Struggle**

1. Players in pairs. One attacking, the other defending.
2. Attacking player holds the ball with one arm, and holds the shoulder of the defending player by taking grip of the jersey, with the other arm.
3. Defending player takes hold of the attacking players shoulder by taking grip of their jersey.
4. The defenders objective is to try and put the attacking player off balance, causing them to lose control of the ball.
5. Attacking player must keep stability and dictate when and how to go to ground.
6. Both players need to keep a strong base by widening stance and sinking hips, quick footwork, without crossing feet over.

**CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION – Pre Contact**  
**Attacking and Defending Contact**

**G R**

**Coaching Points**

**Attacker**

- × Ball in two hands. Upper torso leaning forwards.
- × Footwork – fast feet, short and rapid. Feet should never cross.
- × Shoulders and hips square.
- × If contact is imminent, ball needs to be transferred to outside arm, spare hand helps control the defender. Feet need to be as close to the defender as possible.
- × Tractor steps need to be used during and out of contact.

**Defender**

- × Defender needs to keep moving forward using fast feet.
- × Lead leg as close to the attacker as possible.
- × Keep eyes focused on target areas.
- × Firm push to attackers hips.

**Activity Description**

- × Players in pairs, one attacking, one defending. Drill area is 10m x 3m. The 3m lines are the try lines.
- × The attacking player runs towards the opposite try line, using correct footwork to work to a shoulder of the defender. If possible the attacker attempts to palm the defender.
- × Using correct footwork, the defender attempts to get a firm push on the attacker.
- × Players proceed to the opposite line, turn and come back to attack/defend again.
- × This is to continue for duration of 2 minutes.

**Progression**

**a. Novice**

- × Practice with defender in split knee position. Defender will have to change position as the attacker comes close.

**b. Intermediate**

- × Practice the drill as described.

**c. Advanced**

- × Defender to actually tackle attacker.

**Note**

- × This drill is a core drill and leads into many other defending and attacking drills.



**CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION - Pre Contact**  
**Footwork and Body Position before Contact**

G

**Coaching Points**

- × No big steps.
- × No crossing of feet.
- × Look at target rather than at the ground.
- × Ball in two hands.
- × Ball transfer to outside arm at each marker.
- × Torso leaning forward, hips sunk slightly toward the ground, maintaining a low, stable base.

**Activity Description**

**Ladder Drill**

- × Ladder drill – players to run through ladder taking short steps, leaning forward in a good body position. Coach to occasionally push the hips of the player during the run.

**Body Position Before Contact**

- × Players run through the designated agility drill, taking little steps / fast feet, to accelerate, decelerate and side step. Correct body position, leaning forward with ball in two hands, is essential. At various markers, coach or players are to push the hips of the runner.

**Agility Activity – see diagram**

- × *Player starts at one corner of the square, runs to the middle, around the marker in the middle and continues to the corner immediately on their right, around the marker, and back to the middle marker. Continue until player returns to the starting marker.*

**Progression**

**a. Novice**

- × Ladder drill – players to run through ladder taking short steps, leaning forward in a good body position. Coach to occasionally push the hips of the player during the run.

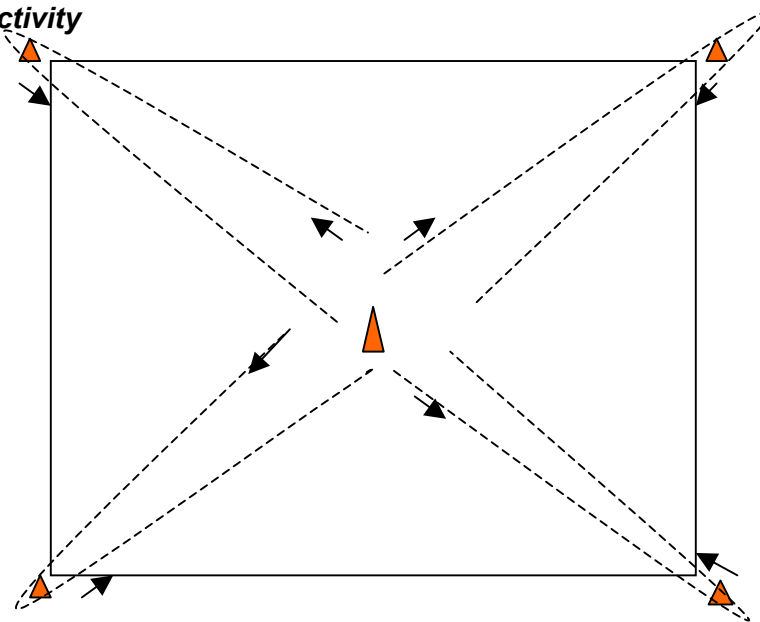
**b. Intermediate**

- × Spare players to pass ball to runners during the drill.
- × Players to transfer ball and palm the defensive players at each marker, without losing control, correct body position or the ball.

**c. Advanced**

- × Spare players to pass the ball to player during the drill.
- × Add players with shields at markers. Shield holders cannot move from the marker.

**Agility Activity**



**Coaching Points**

- × Ball in two hands. Upper torso leaning forwards.
- × Footwork fast feet/short and rapid steps. Feet should never cross.
- × Shoulders and hips square.
- × If contact is imminent, ball needs to be transferred to outside arm, spare hand helps control the defender. Feet need to be as close to the defender as possible.
- × Tractor steps need to be used during, and out of contact.

**Drill Description**

- × Players in pairs, one attacking, one defending. Players stand opposite one another 5m apart. The attacking player runs to a marker 1m in front of the defender.
- × Attacking player slightly changes direction so as to attack the outside left or right shoulder (not the sternum) of the defender.
- × Defender to push attacking player with tackling shield if possible. This simple drill also lends itself to evasive attacking techniques.
- × Take the marker away. Attacking player will still work to the outside shoulders of the defender. Body position of upper torso leaning forward with feet wide. Step action short and rapid – tractor steps.
- × Once the attacker has become familiar with the technique, defender is to kneel and push attacker off balance as they attempts to work to the side of the defender.
- × As above - This time the defender holds a hit shield and will try and put the attacker off balance.
- × Attacker can explore continuity options - stepping through contact – hit and spin – hang pass – gut pass – hit and around. All of these continuity options can be established through basic footwork first. Even if the attacker cannot side step the defender, the footwork will place the attacker in a dominant position to keep the ball alive. When the foot speed is at an optimum (through practice), the footwork will become an efficient side step.

**Progression****a. Novice**

- × Practice with defender on knees. The defender will push on the hips of the attacking player when possible.

**b. Intermediate**

- × Practice with the defender moving within a designated area and pushing the attacker on the hips.

**c. Advanced**

- × Add another defender to the drill.
- × Progress to a 1 v 1 tracking drill, within a designated area.



**CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION – During Contact**  
**Drive Possession Progression**



**Coaching Points**  
**Attacker**

- x Ball carrier works to the side of the defender and takes a drive step into contact with weight over lead leg.
- x Lead shoulder drives into shield with ball transferred to the back of the contact point. Hips and shoulders should be kept as square as possible, and should drive through the same plane.
- x Exercise multiple player stability and options during contact and on the ground.

**Defender**

- x Defender needs to keep moving forward using fast feet and short powerful steps.
- x Lead leg as close to the attacker as possible.
- x Keep eyes focused on target areas.
- x Firm push to hips or shoulder, contact and drive using tractor steps.

**Activity Description**

- x Team game. Split into odds and evens. Work in a 20m x 50m grid.
- x The object of the game is for the nominated attacking side to retain possession and score a try. The defenders aim is to turn over possession through a progression of choices.
- x *Progression 1:* Attacking players must protect the ball, hit and drive. A ripper is needed to distribute the ball. Defender must make a two handed grab and resist drive of the attacker.
- x *Progression 2:* Attacking team must work to the shoulder of the defenders, drive forward and drop to the ground. Add clear out of defensive player. Defending team use a push touch and try and step over the ball to secure possession.
- x *Progression 3:* Attacking team must add two players to seal the ball carrier and drive two defenders from the contact area.

- Note Defending team can secure possession in the following ways:
- Attacking team carries the ball in the wrong arm, loses possession, and the ball is obtained by the defending team.
  - Stepping over the ball on the ground.
  - Pushing or driving the attacker back.

\* This is a common drill and can be developed into a full-scale game of multiple skill focus.

**Progression**

**a. Novice**

- x Practice the basic drill, focusing on technique during the contact for both the attacker and defender.

**b. Intermediate**

- x Develop further progressions of attacking sequence. The focus for this drill is on attack, not so much defence.

**c. Advanced**

- x Develop attacking sequence and place time limit on possession. Play full field. Defenders can make actual tackle.
- x Limit defenders to specific type of tackle.



**CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION – During Contact**  
***Holding Player Up and Going to Ground***



***Coaching Points***

- × Both players to maintain a low centre of gravity with a stable base. Wide stance, hips sinking to the ground, fast feet.
- × Players learn how to move upper torso and drop body weight to ground.
- × Defending player to lock under armpits, and draw player in.
- × If the attacking player is going to ground, the defender needs to help control the fall.
- × Both players should exercise correct options on ground.

***Activity Description***

- × Players in pairs, one attacking, one defending.
- × Defending player binds around the attacking player and ball.
- × The attacking player attempts to go to ground with the ball, whilst the defending player tries to hold him from going to ground.
- × If the attacking player cannot get to ground, the defender wins.
- × If the attacker gets to ground, the defender must step over and secure a good position over the ball. Attacker can attempt to exercise options once on the ground.
- × Attacker should move into safety position when on the ground.

***Progression***

***a. Novice***

- × Practice kneeling first, without ball.

***b. Intermediate***

- × Practice standing, wrestle for 30 seconds – with ball.

***c. Advanced***

- × Use 30 second intervals and utilise a second attacker, who either clears out or receives pass from tackled player.
- × Various start positions, one arm bind under ball, defender and attacker then have to work to keep arm free or tie arm up.

***Other Activity***

- × Wrestling, Breaking the Palm and Double Lock.



## Contact with Opposition - Defence

The activities included in this section cover the skill acquisition of tracking, pre contact, tackle and post contact. The focus of these drills is to develop the technique of tracking an attacking player, allowing the defender to gain the correct field and body position to execute a tackle.

### Tracking

- × Defender must take space – use correct footwork to approach attacker.
- × Stay square with correct body alignment. Defender almost mimics the attacker and keeps square of the attacker ( $\frac{1}{2}$  shoulder width).
- × Lead foot and opposite shoulder should be as close to attacker as possible.

### Pre Tackle

- × Defenders to keep feet moving (very fast feet or bouncing). Defenders must not plant their feet.
- × Stay square with correct body alignment. Defender almost mimics the attacker and keeps square of the attacker ( $\frac{1}{2}$  shoulder width).
- × Lead foot and opposite shoulder are to be as close to the attacker as possible.
- × Head over lead foot and focused on target area – looking up.
- × Opposite shoulder to lead leg to make contact. Eg right lead leg, left shoulder to make contact



### Tackle

- × Head up, focusing on target area at all times. Shoulders open to receive attacking player.
- × Lead leg placed as close to the attacking player as possible. Back as flat as possible. Bent at the hips and knees.
- × Use opposite shoulder to lead foot to initiate contact.
- × Wrap arms and lock hand to elbow, tuck elbows in, head to side of thigh. Pull player close so there are no gaps.
- × Use tractor steps to attempt to drive forward.
- × Position the attacking player to the side and exercise falling to ground technique.
- × On the ground roll away and regain feet as quickly as possible.

## **CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION - Tracking**

### ***Warm Up Games and Activities***

#### ***Mirror Push Tag***

1. Players pair up. One is the attacker, the other the defender.
2. The players start by facing each other and stand 5m apart.
3. Holding a ball in two hands the attacker initially tries to 'off foot' the defender. The defender should try and mimic the attacker to keep in a good position to tag the attacker.
4. On coaches cue the attacker must attempt to get past the defender without being tagged.
5. The defender can only move sideways to tag the attacker. To complete the tag successfully it must be made with two hands.

#### ***Side and Front Tracking – Foot Race***

1. Played in a 15m x 15m grid. One player is the attacker, the other the defender.
2. The object of the game is for the attacking player to get past the defending player without being tagged.
3. For the defender to complete the tag successfully it must be made with two hands.
4. Front Tracking – Each player starts on their own try line.
5. Side Tracking – The attacking player starts from the corner of his own try line and attempts to get past the defender; who starts from the sideline of the grid, 5m from his own try line.

#### ***Partner Push Touch***

1. Playing area is 30m x 50m.
2. Players are split into two teams and paired with an opponent of similar foot speed.
3. Each player can only touch the player they have been paired with. If player touches another attacking player in defence, it is not legal and play continues.
4. The object of the game is for the defender to track their partner for the entire game.

#### ***One Tag***

1. Played in a 20m x 50m grid. Odd Vs. Evens.
2. Attacking side wears tag belts, with 1 tag on a nominated front thigh. (Coach nominates). i.e. if the tag is on the left thigh, the attacking side can only attack to the right side.
3. Defenders number up and track their opposite attacker. A tackle is made when the tag is pulled from the ball carriers belt. The defenders are not allowed to let attackers get on their inside.
4. Attackers have a set number of phases to score a try.

#### ***Shadow Running***

1. Players pair up with an opponent of similar foot speed. One player is the leader, the other is the shadow.
2. The object of the exercise is to follow the leader, who attempts to leave behind the player acting as a shadow. The shadow must mimic the leader while staying approximately 3m behind. The drill utilises the length of the field.
3. *Progression:* Have the leader turn around on cue and attempt to get past the shadow without being tagged

#### ***Peripheral Footwork Drill***

1. Played in 10m x 10m grid.
2. Three players. Two players are the sliders the other is the tracker.
3. The objective of the drill is for the tracker is to stay 90 degrees between the two sliders.
4. The sliders start, each on an adjoining side line and move up and down their individual line. The tracker has to keep in line with the slider in front, and to the side keeping an angle of 90 degrees between all of them.
5. Progression 1 - give each of the sliders a ball, sliders intermittently throw the tracker a pass. The tracker must return the pass to the slider who passed the ball, whilst remaining at 90 degrees with both players.
6. Progression 2 – When the tracker catches the ball they must attempt to get past the slider who passed the ball without being tagged.
7. In all drills the tracker must not cross their legs or feet, causing instability.

## CONTACT WITH THE OPPOSITION

### Tracking – Closing Down the Space

G R

#### Coaching Points

##### Defender

- × Defender must take space – using correct footwork to approach attacker.
- × Stay square with correct body alignment. Defender almost mimics the attacker and keeps square of the attacker ( $\frac{1}{2}$  shoulder width).
- × Lead foot and opposite shoulder should be as close to attacker as possible.

#### Activity Description

- × Uses a 10m x 10m grid
- × The attacker starts from one corner with a tackle shield and attempts to score.
- × The defender comes forward from the opposite corner of the 10m grid, tracks and proceeds to tackle the attacker.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Defender starts the drill with a push.

##### b. Intermediate

- × Attacker starts from various positions within the grid, and the defender tracks.
- × Make the grid bigger.

##### c. Advanced

- × Practice with another attacker.
- × Practice with defender facing the opposite way, turning and tracking from this position.



**CONTACT WITH THE OPPOSITION – Pre Tackle**  
**Team Tracking**

**G R**

**Coaching Points**

**Defender**

- × Defender must take space – using correct footwork to approach attacker.
- × Stay square with correct body alignment. Defender almost mimics the attacker and keeps square of the attacker (½ shoulder width).
- × Lead foot and opposite shoulder to be as close to attacker as possible.
- × Positive defensive communication is essential.

**Activity Description**

- × Teams of 5. Grid Size 15m x 15m.
- × On one try line three attackers line up behind each other. On the opposite try line, two defenders line up.
- × On the coaches cue the attackers attempt to score a try.
- × The defenders must communicate and use tracking skills to cover the three attacking players.
  
- × Progression 1: Attackers and defender run around a marker at either end of the grid, turn and proceed with the drill.

**Progression**

**a. Novice**

- × Practice defenders starting with a push tackle.

**b. Intermediate**

- × Defenders to actually make the tackle.

**c. Advanced**

- × Practice progression 1 (drill description).
- × Add more players to the drill.



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2



3



**CONTACT WITH THE OPPOSITION - Pre Tackle**  
*Pre Tackle Technique*

R

**Coaching Points**

**Defender**

- × Defenders to keep feet moving (fast feet or bouncing). Defenders must not plant their feet.
- × Stay square with correct body alignment. Defender almost mimics the attacker and keeps square of the attacker ( $\frac{1}{2}$  shoulder width).
- × Lead foot and opposite shoulder are to be as close to the attacker as possible.
- × Head over lead foot and focused on target area – looking up.
- × Opposite shoulder to lead leg to make contact.

**Activity Description**

**Drill 1:**

- × Three players. Two players holding a tackle bag, another player defending, standing 2m from the bag.
- × The defender touches the ground before making shoulder contact with the bag.
- × The objective of the drill is for the defender to demonstrate pre tackle body position. Leading foot close to side of bag, head up, eyes focused on target (side of tackle bag), opposite shoulder to lead foot to make contact with bag, lean into bag.
- × Practice both sides.

**Drill 2:**

- × Two players - one holding a shield, the other defending. Start 2m apart.
- × The defender bounces on feet, and the attacker runs at the defender, who gets into the correct body position prior to the attacker making contact.
- × Defender completes pre-tackle body position by shouldering into the tackle shield.

**Drill 3:**

- × Three shield holders take turns at running at defender.
- × Defender bounces on feet and uses correct body position to shoulder shields. Make contact into the shield with the correct technique.

**Progression**

**a. Novice**

- × Practice drills as described.

**b. Intermediate**

- × Take shields away and use contact suits.
- × Defenders practice actual tackle as well.

**c. Advanced**

- × Cut down the defenders time for preparation by making them touch the ground in front of them, or having them turn around and hit the bag or shield.
- × Have the players with the shields move.



**Coaching Points****Defender**

- × Defender must take space – using correct footwork to approach attacker.
- × Stay square with correct body alignment. Defender almost mimics the attacker and keeps square of the attacker ( $\frac{1}{2}$  shoulder width).
- × Lead foot and opposite shoulder as close to attacker as possible. Lock arms around.

**Attacker**

- × Ball in two hands. Upper torso leaning forward.
- × Footwork is fast feet, short and rapid. Feet should never cross.
- × Shoulders and hips square.
- × If contact is imminent, the ball needs to be transferred to outside arm, spare hand helps control the defender. Feet need to be as close to the defender as possible.
- × Tractor steps need to be used during and out of contact.

**Activity Description**

- × Players work in pairs. One attacker, one defender.

**Attacker**

- × Attacker attempts to score a try.
- × Attacker to practice footwork, deception and change of pace, in order to beat defence (Footwork should use short, rapid steps).
- × Change side of attack throughout the drill.

**Defender**

- × Defender attempts to work inside attacker and push them outside, defender makes a two handed push on the attacker.
- × First three steps of defender must be straight forward.
- × Defend on inside – this encourages the defence not to be beaten on the inside.
- × If attacker is using a shield, the defender performs tackle on shield without taking it to ground.

**Progression****a. Novice**

- × Practice drill as described.

**b. Intermediate**

- × The attacker can repeat this drill using a shield instead of a football.
- × Add more players.

**c. Advanced**

- × Add objective of attacking sequence or moves.



1



2



1



1



1

**CONTACT WITH THE OPPOSITION**  
**One Tag - Tracking**

**G R**

**Coaching Points**

**Defender**

- × Defender must take space – use correct footwork to approach attacker.
- × Stay square with correct body alignment. Defender almost mimics the attacker and keeps square of the attacker ( $\frac{1}{2}$  shoulder width).
- × Lead foot and opposite shoulder as close to the attacker as possible.
- × Positive defensive communication is essential.

**Activity Description**

- × Played in a 20m x 50m grid. Odd Vs Evens.
- × Attacking side wears tag belts, with 1 tag on a nominated front thigh. (Coach nominates). i.e. if the tag is on the left thigh, the attacking side can only attack to the right side.
- × Defenders number up and track their opposite attacker. To make the tackle when the attacker has the ball, they pull the tag from the belt. The defenders are not allowed to let attackers get on their inside.
- × Attackers have a set number of phases to score a try.

**Progression**

**a. Novice**

- × Practice drill as described.

**b. Intermediate**

- × Wear two tags, one on each thigh, and attack both sides of the defender.

**c. Advanced**

- × Wear one tag and attack both sides of the defender.





## CONTACT WITH THE OPPOSITION

### Front-on Tackling Technique



#### Coaching Points

##### Defender

- × Head up, focusing on target area at all times. Shoulders open to receive attacking player.
- × Lead leg placed as close to the attacking player as possible. Back as flat as possible. Bent at the hips and knees.
- × Use opposite shoulder to lead foot to initiate contact.
- × Wrap arms and lock hand to elbow tuck elbows in, head to side of thigh. Pull player close so there are no gaps.
- × Use tractor steps to attempt to drive forward.
- × Position the attacking player to the side and exercise falling to ground technique.
- × On the ground roll away and regain feet as quickly as possible.

#### Activity Description

- × Two players, one attacker one defender, facing each other, 5m apart. Initially the defender starts on knees and progress to standing as soon as possible.
- × As the attacker walks forward, the defender moves lead leg close to the body of the attacking player. The raised knee creates a pocket for the ball carrier.
- × The defender places their shoulder on the attacker, head over lead foot and on the side of thigh of the attacker.
- × Defender wraps their arms around the attacker, drawing the attacking player close in a secure bind with elbows tucked in. Players to exercise correct falling to ground technique.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Practice exercise as described, but progress to a standing start position as quickly as possible so that footwork and tracking can occur prior to tackle. Players on their knees can't move.

##### b. Intermediate

- × All tackle technique should be standing.
- × Allow the attacker to move within a confined space.

##### c. Advanced

- × Have defenders lift one of the legs of attacking player to destabilise them.

#### Other Activity

- × Number tackle. Two lines facing each other, 10m apart, numbered 1-7. On coaches cue the players called run around a marker at opposite ends of the lines. The attacker picks up a ball and attempts to get past the defender. Defender must tackle them before they get to the other end.



## CONTACT WITH THE OPPOSITION

### Side-on Tackling Technique

G R

#### Coaching Points

- × Head up, focusing on target area at all times. Shoulders open to receive attacking player.
- × Lead leg placed as close to the attacking player as possible. Back as flat as possible. Bent at the hips and knees.
- × Use opposite shoulder of lead foot to initiate contact.
- × Wrap arms and lock hand to elbow, tuck elbows in, head to side of thigh. Pull player close so there are no gaps.
- × Drive with legs using tractor steps to make firm contact with shoulder on the target.
- × Position the attacking player to the side and exercise falling to ground technique.
- × On the ground roll away and regain feet as quickly as possible.

#### Activity Description

- × Two players, one attacker one defender. The attacker walks across the face of the defender. Initially the defender starts on knees and progresses to standing as soon as possible.
- × As the attacker walks past, the defender moves lead leg behind the body of the attacking player, as close as possible.
- × The defender places the opposite shoulder to the lead leg, on thigh of the attacking player.
- × Head tucked on the backside of the attacker.
- × Defender wraps their arms around the attacker drawing them close in a secure bind with elbows tucked in.
- × Both players to exercise correct falling to ground technique.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Practice exercise as described, progress to feet as quickly as possible so that footwork and tracking can occur prior to tackle, players on their knees can't move.

##### b. Intermediate

- × All tackle technique should be standing.

##### c. Advanced

- × Have defenders lift one of the legs of attacking player to destabilise them, making the tackle easier.

#### Other Activity

- × Use an L shaped grid. Attacker and defender start in the middle of the L and run to opposite points. Attacker runs back the way they came. defender tracks the attacker to make a side on tackle.



## Contact with Opposition - Defence and Attacking Drills

The following activities incorporate the majority of skills to be executed during contact. These activities are multi-faceted and focus on the execution of contact skills in game like scenarios.

### ***Skill Acquisition Areas***

- x Players falling to ground
- x Body position on ground
- x Tracking
- x Attacking pre contact
- x Attacking during contact
- x Defensive pre tackle contact
- x Tackle

## DEFENSIVE and ATTACKING ACTIVITIES

### Evade the Defenders



#### Coaching Points

Refer to the key coaching points for:

- × Players falling to ground
- × Body position on ground
- × Attacking pre contact
- × Attacking during contact
- × Defensive pre tackle contact
- × Tackle

#### Activity Description

- × Four attackers, two defenders. 20m x 20m grid.
- × Two attackers begin at 2 corners of the grid with a ball, making up four attacking players.
- × Two defenders begin in the center of the grid.
- × The attackers combine together to beat the defenders.
- × Defenders can move as soon as attackers approach.
- × Once through the defenders (or play breaks down), attackers must round markers at end of grid, and run back to pick up ball and start again. Attack 5 times before rotating players.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Practice using one defender against two attackers

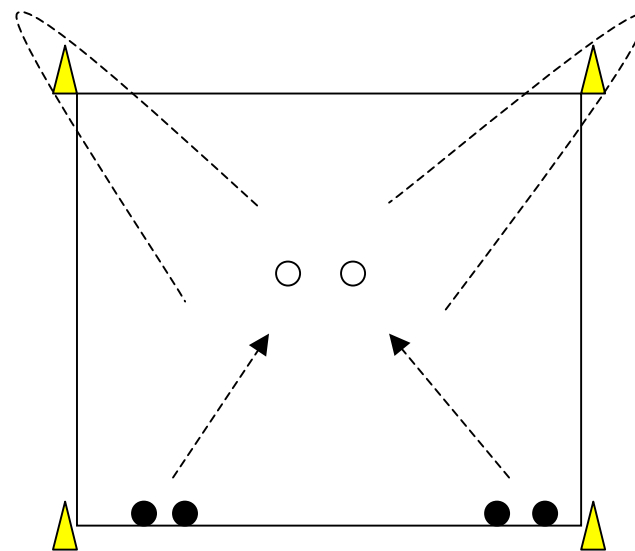
##### b. Intermediate

- × Practice drill as described.

##### c. Advanced

- × Add attacking sequence, such as loop, cross, or unders and overs.

#### Diagram



Attackers: ●

Defenders: ○

**DEFENSIVE and ATTACKING ACTIVITIES**  
**Funnel Drill Variation**



**Coaching Points**

Refer to the key coaching points for:

- × Players falling to ground
- × Body position on ground
- × Attacking pre contact
- × Attacking during contact
- × Defensive pre tackle contact
- × Tackle

**Activity Description**

- × Set out a funnel shaped grid.
- × Defenders are to stop a group of attacking players.
- × At the beginning of funnel, one player will defend against two attackers.
- × Once the attackers have passed the defender, the defender will turn and join the attackers, to attack two new defenders.
- × The drill will progress as these three attackers pass the two new defenders. These two defenders will join the group of attackers to face three new defenders.

**Progression**

**a. Novice**

- × Practice funnel progression with 1 V 1, then 2 V 1, then 3 V 2.

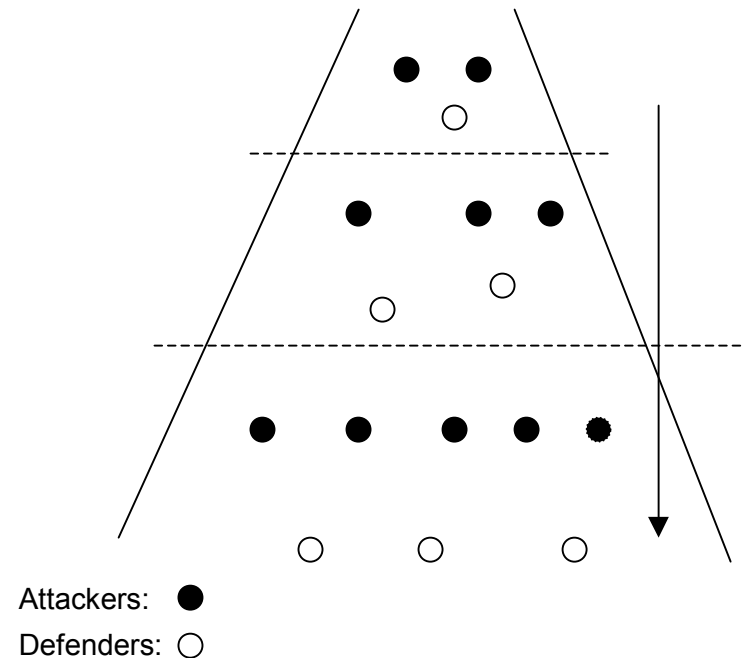
**b. Intermediate**

- × Practice drill as described.

**c. Advanced**

- × Add attacking sequence such as loop, unders or decoy runners.
- × Add contact scenarios.

**Diagram**



**DEFENSIVE and ATTACKING ACTIVITIES**  
*Direction Attack and Defence*



**Coaching Points**

Refer to the key coaching points for:

- × Players falling to ground
- × Body position on ground
- × Attacking pre contact
- × Attacking during contact
- × Defensive pre tackle contact
- × Tackle

**Activity Description**

Five attackers, three defenders

**Attackers**

- × The attackers run with a ball in single file towards a marker in the middle of the grid.
- × Upon reaching the marker, the lead attacker chooses to run to a marker in the corner of the grid. The other attackers follow to the try line of the chosen marker.
- × Upon reaching the try line the attackers turn and attack the opposite try line and attempt to score.
- × Attackers to practice committing defenders, support and switches, in order to beat defence.

**Defenders**

- × Defenders follow attacker to a marker.
- × The defenders react to the choice of the attackers and run towards the opposite marker and try line.
- × The defenders try and stop the attackers scoring a try. Defenders stop the attacker with a two handed tag.
- × Defend on inside – encourage defence not to be beaten on the inside. Inside defender must lead up. Defenders start compressed.

**Progression**

**a. Novice**

- × Use three attackers, two defenders.
- × Rather than executing a tackle, have players put a 2-handed heavy push on attackers.

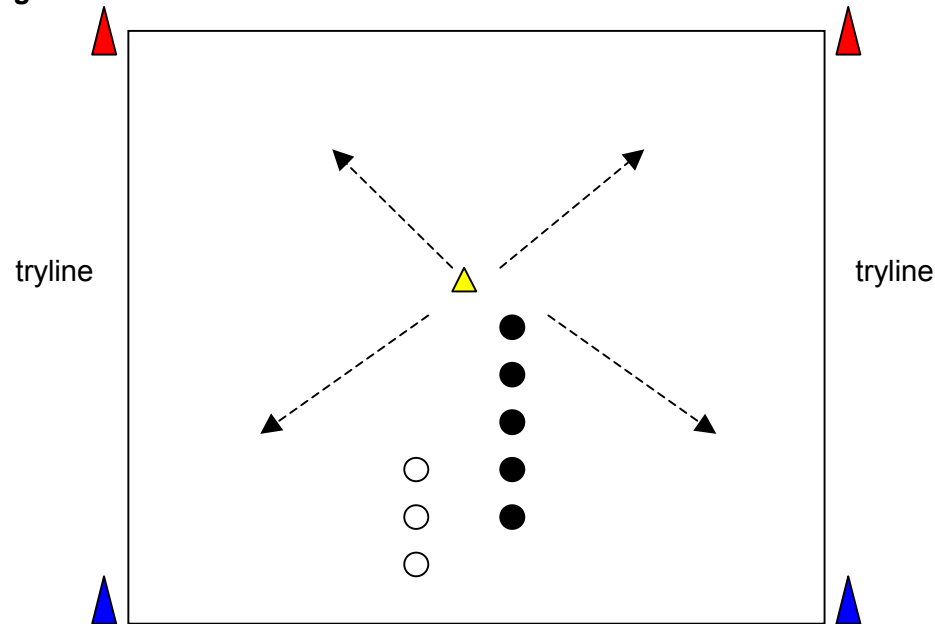
**b. Intermediate**

- × Play phases after the first tackle.

**c. Advanced**

- × Add numbers to both the attacking and defending sides. Attacking team must always have a larger team.
- × Add specific attacking sequences and play a number of phases.

**Diagram**



Attackers: ●

Defenders: ○

## DEFENSIVE and ATTACKING ACTIVITIES

### Flat Line Attack

G R

#### Coaching Points

Refer to the key coaching points for:

- × Players falling to ground
- × Body position on ground
- × Attacking pre contact
- × Attacking during contact
- × Defensive pre tackle contact
- × Tackle

#### Activity Description

- × Six attackers, four defenders.
- × Attackers attempt to score a try between 2 markers.
- × Defenders attempt to work inside attackers and push them outside. This enables four defenders to cover six attackers. Defenders are to put a 2 handed push on attackers.
- × The first 3 steps made by the defenders must be straight forward and inside the attackers. Inside defender must lead up in front of second defender and so on.
- × Upon scoring a try, being tagged, or play breaking down, the coach starts a five count. Both attackers and defenders align on the opposite side to start again after the 5 count is complete.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Practice drill with three attackers and two defenders.

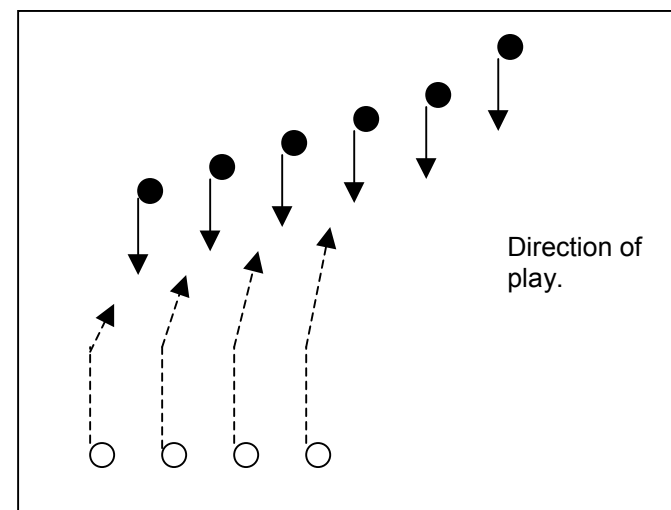
##### b. Intermediate

- × Practice drill as described.

##### c. Advanced

- × Increase numbers and working space to accommodate entire team in activity.
- × Progressively decrease workspace. i.e. distance between attack and defence to increase pressure.
- × Play 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> phase.
- × Shuffle defenders 1, 2, 3 and 4. All defenders run around the marker and take up a starting position to defend by shuffling players from inside to out.

#### Diagram



Defenders: ○

Attackers: ●

## Contact with Team Members

Contact with team members focuses on body position in set pieces and phase play. These activities also cover multiple player stability and going to ground in numbers.

### **Mauling**

- x Ball carrier to get in a low driving position and take a drive step into contact, with weight on lead leg.
- x Lead shoulder makes contact with defender. Ball is transferred to free arm, held away from point of contact, close to body.
- x Maintain low stable base, knees bent and hips sunk to the ground.
- x Drive using tractor steps, with hips and shoulders square, through the same plane.
- x Support player is to call 'drive', and drive the lead shoulder and arm over the ball.
- x Drive square onto the ball carrier using tractor steps, and support the initial ball carrier.
- x Other support players to bind and support either side of ball carrier.

### **Bumper Contact**

- x Each player is to maintain a low, stable base throughout the drill.
- x Body position is similar to a clear out. Eyes focused on target areas.
- x Players to maintain little steps at all times, thus keeping ground contact.
- x Players must maintain bind, locking in close to fellow players.
- x Combined players must move as one.
- x Players must not cross over feet.

### **Set Piece Contact / Going to Ground**

- x Engagement sequence - crouch, touch, engage.
- x Hips and shoulders are squared to opponent with hips and knees bent. Weight on balls of feet.
- x Head up, chin off chest. Sight target area.
- x Keep binding and drive forward in same plane.
- x On cue players practice going to ground straight. Shoulders hunched.



## CONTACT WITH TEAM MEMBERS

### *Driving Maul*

G B

#### **Coaching Points**

- x Ball carrier to get in a low driving position and take a drive step into contact, with weight on lead leg.
- x Lead shoulder makes contact with defender. Ball is transferred to free arm, held away from point of contact, close to body.
- x Maintain low stable base, knees bent and hips sunk to the ground.
- x Drive using tractor steps, with hips and shoulders square through the same plane.
- x Support player is to call 'drive', and drive the lead shoulder and arm over the ball.
- x Drive square onto the ball carrier using tractor steps, and support the initial ball carrier.
- x Other support players to bind and support either side of ball carrier.

#### **Activity Description**

- x Players work in groups of 5-6 along the length of a channel defined by the coach.
- x The players work in close quarters with the ball carrier running with the ball for 5m, before turning and allowing the support player to drive on the ball carrier.
- x The support player drives for approximately 5 steps and then rolls off to begin the run-drive-roll sequence again.
- x Players do much the same if a maul is formed as when a ruck is formed. However, because the ball is off the ground it can be moved down the field.
- x The bound forwards should anticipate sustaining the drive for a longer period of time. In a maul, delivery can be delayed if this will result in an advantage being gained. Once again, supporting forwards must bind and drive, keeping the ball with the first support player. If they do not, their body positions may be higher, they will not bind and there may be confusion as to who is holding the ball.

#### **Progression**

##### **a. Novice**

- x Practice as activity description.

##### **b. Intermediate**

- x Have attacking players run around a marker behind them, defending players approach the ball carrier as they come around the marker.

##### **c. Advanced**

- x Cut down time and space in which players form a maul.



## CONTACT WITH TEAM MATES

### Formation Drive

G R

#### Coaching Points

- × Ball carrier to get in a low driving position and take a drive step into contact, with weight on lead leg.
- × Lead shoulder makes contact with defender. Ball is transferred to free arm, held away from point of contact, close to body.
- × Maintain low stable base, knees bent and hips sunk to the ground.
- × Drive using tractor steps with hips and shoulders square through the same plane.
- × Support player calls 'drive', and drive the lead shoulder and arm over the ball.
- × Drive square onto the ball carrier using tractor steps, and support initial ball carrier.
- × Other support players to bind and support either side of ball carrier.
- × Communication of roll in driving maul by players is important and practice is essential

#### Activity Description

- × Three teams of five players.
- × Each team has a shield holder.
- × The remaining four members of the mini-teams are numbered 2-5 and proceed to practice forming a maul against the shield holder.
  
- × Progression 1: Players from each team are nominated by the coach to form a driving maul on each shield. This mixes up the player combinations.  
e.g. Numbers 2 and 4 are called to form a maul on shield B
- × Progression 2: Same as above, however the players that are not called out help the shield holder defend the driving maul.
- × Progression 3: The attacking players forming the maul are to run around various markers before forming a maul on each of the shield holders.

#### Progression

##### a. Novice

- × Practice progressions 1 and 2.

##### b. Intermediate

- × Practice progressions 1, 2 and 3.

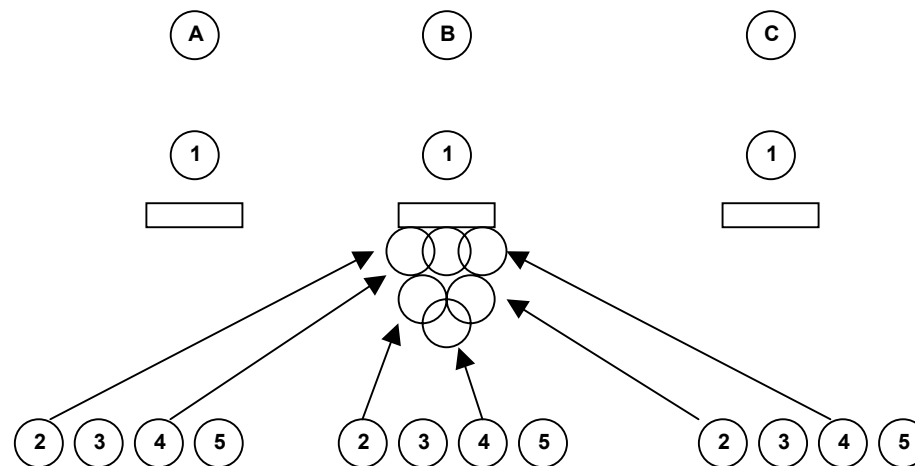
##### c. Advanced

- × Have defenders attempt to separate / splinter the maul.

#### Other Activity

- × Rip touch, progresses into mauling touch and sequence touch.

Numbers 2 and 4 are called to form a maul on shield B



## CONTACT WITH TEAM MEMBERS

### *Bumper Contact- Keeping on Feet*

Y G B

#### **Coaching Points**

- × Each player is to maintain a low, stable base throughout drill.
- × Body position is similar to a clear out. Eyes focused on target areas.
- × Players to maintain little steps at all times, thus keeping ground contact.
- × Players must maintain bind, locking in close to fellow players.
- × Combined players must move as one.
- × Players must not cross over feet.

#### **Activity Description**

- × Team is split into 3 groups of 5. The 5 are spread out along a channel approximately 5m apart in single file. Each player squats in a low stable position, using fast feet, running on the spot.
- × The player at the back of the line moves forward to the player in front using tractor steps and touches the ground before, binding onto the player.
- × The two bound players continue forward, touching the ground and binding with the next player.
- × Players continue until all 5 have formed a maul.

#### **Progression**

##### **Novice**

- × Practice drill as described.

##### **Intermediate**

- × Have the driving players change direction.

##### **Advanced**

- × Place obstacles on ground for the players to navigate around without falling.
- × Add defenders to separate / splinter the maul.



## Chronology / Competency / Technique Chart

		<i>Chronology/Competency/Technique</i>		
Coaching Contact Skill	Contact Skill Acquisition Groupings	<i>Novice</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
<i>Ground Contact</i>	<i>Ground Contact</i>	<i>Mini - Midi +</i>	<i>U/13 – U/19 +</i>	<i>Colts - Grade</i>
1. Falling to Ground	1. Falling to Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Falling to ground Judo Style</li> <li>x Rugby Baseball Slide and Gather</li> <li>x Attacker and Defender Going to Ground</li> </ul>		
2. Body Position on the Ground	2. Body Position On Ground	Midi +	x Changing Body Position under force	
3. Control of Body in Multiple Player fall	3. Post Contact – Body Position	Midi +		
<b>Contact with Opposition</b>	3. Set Piece – Going To Ground	Midi +	x Set & Phase Contact Activities	
<b>ATTACK</b>	<b>Contact with Opposition</b>	<b>Contact with Opposition</b>		
1. Stability & Footwork – for Contact	<b>ATTACK</b>	<b>Attack</b>		
2. Pre Contact – Body position	1. Warm Up Activities & Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Standing Arm Wrestle, Turtle Back Wrestle, Team Shuffle, Push Up Wrestle, Tractor Steps, Big Steps Vs Little Steps, Power Throw &amp; Follow, Shoulder Struggle</li> </ul>		
3. During Contact – Body Position Control	2. Pre Contact - Body Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Core Drill</li> <li>x Footwork and Body Position Before Contact</li> <li>x Lean and Pick-up Progression</li> </ul>		
4. Post Contact – Body Position	3. During Contact - Body Position	Midi +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Hit, Drive &amp; Clearout Support</li> <li>x Drive Possession Progression</li> <li>x Holding Player Up and Going to Ground</li> </ul>	
<b>DEFENCE</b>	<b>DEFENCE</b>	<b>Defence</b>		
1. Stability & Footwork – For Contact	1. Warm Up Activities & Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Mirror Push Tag, Partner Touch, Side &amp; Front Tracking Race, 1 Tag Ball, Shadow Running, Peripheral Footwork Drill</li> </ul>		
2. Pre Tackle – Body Position	2. Tracking & Pre Tackle Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Closing Down the Space</li> <li>x Multiple Tracking</li> <li>x Pre-Tackle Technique</li> <li>x Progression of Tracking Drills</li> <li>x One Tag Ball</li> </ul>		
3. Tackle – Body Position	3. Tackle Body Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Front Tackle Technique</li> <li>x Side Tackle Technique</li> </ul>		
4. Post Tackle – Body Position	<b>Defensive &amp; Attacking Activities</b>	<b>Defensive &amp; Attacking Drills</b>		
<b>Contact with Team Members</b>	1. Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Evade the Defenders</li> <li>x Funnel Drill</li> <li>x Direction Attack and Defence</li> <li>x Flat Line Attack</li> </ul>		
1. Forming Multiple player Stability	<b>Contact with Team Members</b>	<b>Contact with Team Members</b>		
2. Set piece Contact	1. Forming Multiple Player Stability	Midi +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Driving Maul</li> <li>x Formation Drive</li> <li>x Bumper Contact</li> </ul>	
3. Bumper Contact Stability	2. Bumper Contact Stability	x Formation Drive Support from Behind		



## State Union Contact Details



For more information, contact [www.rugby.com.au](http://www.rugby.com.au) or to find your nearest club log onto [www.rugbynet.com.au](http://www.rugbynet.com.au)

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