

Eye-Hand Coordination/Passing Drill (The Lydon/Calder Drill.)

By
Joe Lydon.

Joe Lydon played rugby league for Widnes and Wigan while winning thirty two Great Britain caps. He became assistant coach, then Director of Coaching, at Wigan before taking on the RFL position of Performance Director from 1992-2000.

In 2000 he came to the RFU as U19 coach/manager and has been in charge of the 7s squad for the past three years. He is now with the full international squad as a coach.

The drill used in the article comes directly from vision work done by Dr Sherylle Calder within England rugby. This is one of the drills that she designed for RWC preparation and it is still being used. The work that she has done on visual performance skills has greatly added to the coaches' and players' repertoire.



Objectives.

- To get the players to start to use their peripheral vision when receiving a pass on the understanding that the more senses (and the better honed those senses are) used to execute a skill while 'multi tasking' within the game (i.e. looking at the passer, reading the opposition, changing direction, aware of contact etc.), then the better the potential success of the action or skill. This is not to say that you don't want the player to look at the passer when receiving the ball.
- To get the player to listen for instructions (change of direction of pass on the coach's whistle) while concentrating on the task at hand. Again, honing the senses.

- To focus the player's attention on the upper part of the body when executing a pass. In so doing, you are making the players aware of the necessity of **rotating at the hips** when passing and passing using **the lower arms and fingers – elbow to wrist**. You also want to make them aware of the different roles of the outside and inside arm when passing the ball.
- To encourage *not* using the legs, to prevent the player from planting his outside foot or from drifting towards the receiver.
- To encourage control when passing, using feel rather than power. This dissuades the passer from spinning the ball over relatively short distances.
- To encourage the passer to put the ball in front of the receiver at head height. This allows the receiver to scan the opposition's defence while catching the ball. Too often, at all levels of the game, the pass goes behind or to the side of the receiver, making him slow down his run, change his angle of run and/or focus all his attention in catching the ball with no time to perform all the other necessary skills needed with which to 'attack'.
An extension to this is to get the receiver to take the ball early or allow the ball to pass across the front of him – that is, take it late. If the ball can be taken late it will encourage (i) the receiver's opposite defender to slide more aggressively and, in so doing, (ii) the potential for the receiver to attack the defender's inside shoulder.
- To focus the concentration and the senses by having different sizes of balls and of different weights.

Coaching points.

Feel for the ball.

Look ahead while catching and passing. (Remember, however, that this is not what you want them to do while executing the pass in the game.)

There is no need to spin the pass but the following points are **key**.

- Correct weight of pass.
- Correct speed of pass.
- Correct target of the pass – in front and at chin height.

