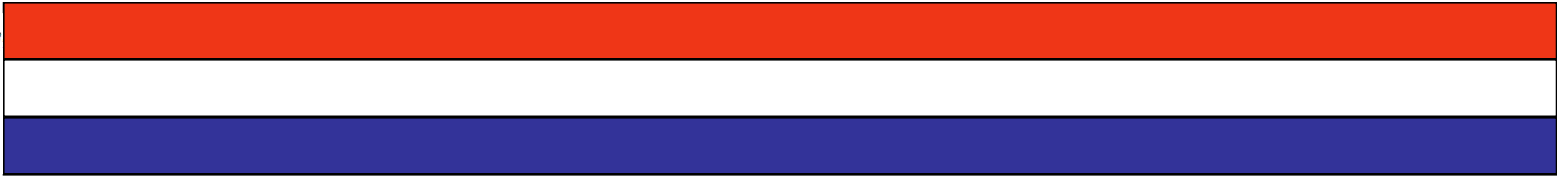




# Collegiate Introduction to Rugby Practice Guide

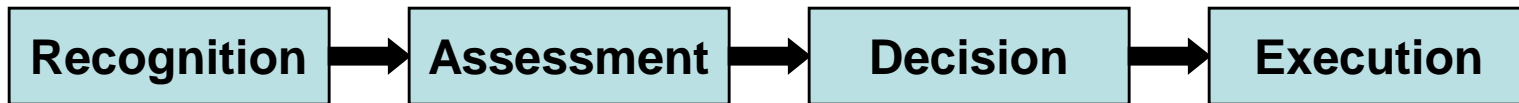
Pete Steinberg  
[psteinberg@usarugby.org](mailto:psteinberg@usarugby.org)



# Guidelines for Practice



# Model of Skilled Performance



Traditional rugby coaches only focus on execution.  
That is not usually the problem.

Practice should be focused on developing skilled players.



# We Need To Develop Players To:

- 👉 see try scoring opportunities
- 👉 create try scoring / stopping opportunities
- 👉 execute try scoring / stopping opportunities



# A Coaching Session Should Develop Our Players To:

- Recognize opposition defensive alignment?
- Act collectively to overcome the defense?
- Recognize the role of the ball carrier?
- Recognize where the support is?
- Make efficient & effective choices?
- Understand and improve the skills required for each choice?



# Accelerated Skill Development

Games-based approach is based around on recent research that shows:

- Skills learnt under game conditions are retained better
- Develops “game sense” – instinctive reactions
- More intense practice because of competition
- More fun



# Whole-Part-Whole

This does not mean there is no technical coaching. The process is:

1. Introduce game to test players skills
2. Identify areas of technical weakness
3. Address technical deficiencies
4. Re-introduce game

Player centered, focuses on what the players needs to improve.



# Developing Game Sense

PLAY GAME or  
Modified Activity



TACTICAL & SKILLS  
FEEDBACK  
(Questioning)



RETURN TO GAME

Coach Observe. But rather than telling players how to correct the errors the coach uses questions to draw answers and understanding from the players

Coach can 'condition' or manipulate the rules etc ..... To create the learning outcome required.



# Sessions should be

- Opposed if possible
- Delivered in the context of the game  
Player centered – allow players to solve problems by asking questions
- Progressive, building into a full game.



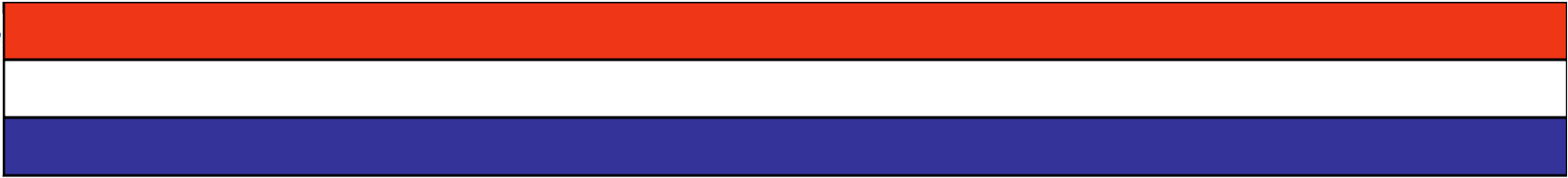
# Rookie Day

## Session 1

- Max pass
- Round the corner
- 1v1 driving
- Handling
- Introducing rugby

## Session 2

- Introducing Rugby
- Tackling from knees
- 3v3 no ball defense
- 4v4



# Week 1

## Practice 1

- 20 passes
- Round the corner
- 1v1 Driving body position
- Tackling from knees
- Side on tackle
- 8v1 full contact

## Practice 2

- Introducing Rugby
- 1v1 Driving position
- Head on tackle
- Tackle decision
- Continuity drill
- Channel game



# Week 2

## Practice 1

- 3v3 defense
- Support game
- Designer game
- Split
  - Forwards - scrums
  - Backs – 4v4








## Practice 2

- Canterbury Game
- 1v1 Driving
- Designer game
- Split
  - Forwards – scrum and lineouts
  - Backs – Kicking and back defense
- Team play

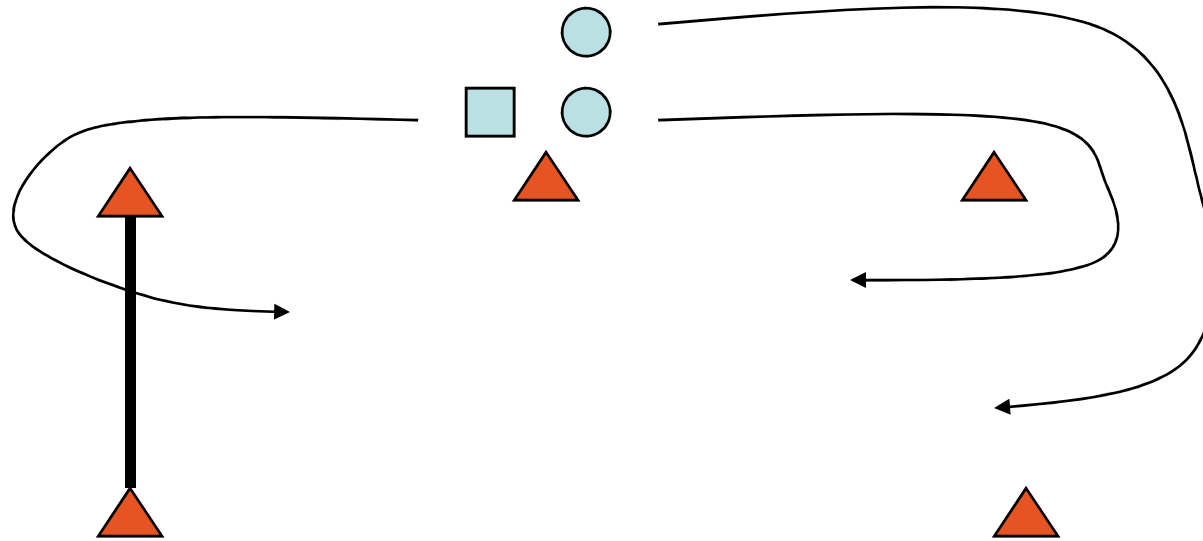


# Game/Drill Structures

- Key to symbols:

	Defender		Tryline
	Attacker		Ball
	Cone		
	Direction of run		
	Direction of pass		

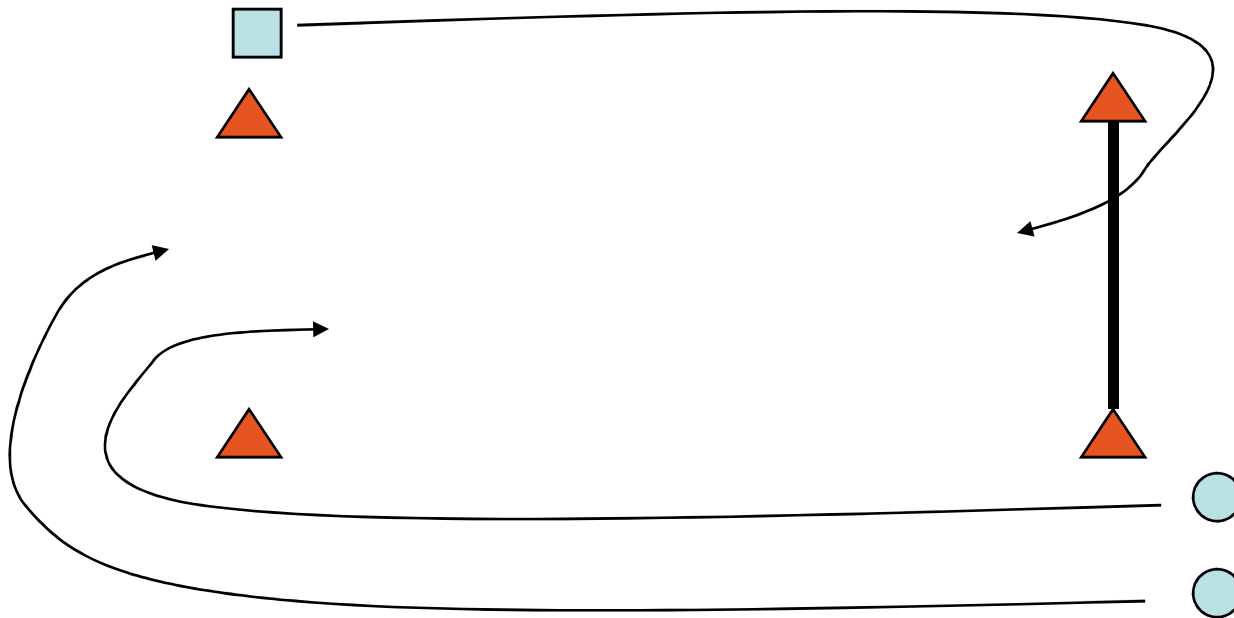
# Round the Corner



## Variations:

- Length of the grid manages intensity of drill
- Widen the grid to reduce difficulty
- Can have multiple levels of defense with more cones on defense
- Start can be:
  - Defender hands ball to attackers
  - SH pass to attackers once they are around the cone
  - Ball can be kicked (pop or grubber) and attackers must recover and attack

# Round the Corner B

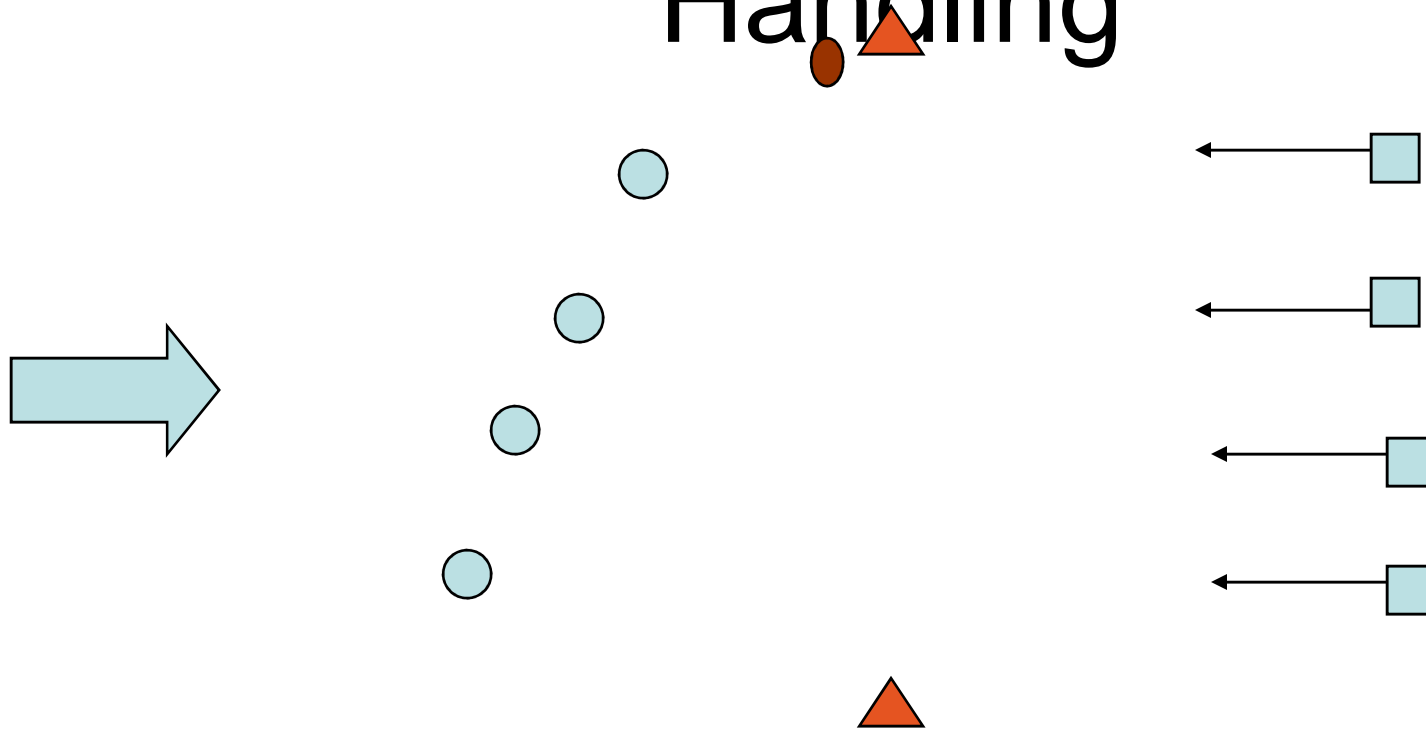


Variations:

- Same as round the corner A



# Handling



There are two lines of 4 or 5 and a SH at each cone. The lines alternate attack and defense. The defense is only there to give the sense of pressure. Once a line attacks it and moves the ball across to the other cone, it retreats and sets up as a defensive line, while the defending line sets up to attack. Need to change direction of pass.

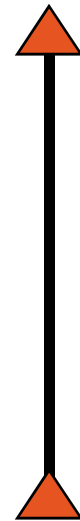
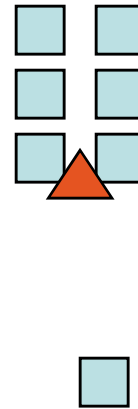
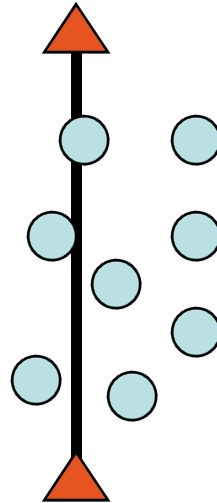


## “8v1”

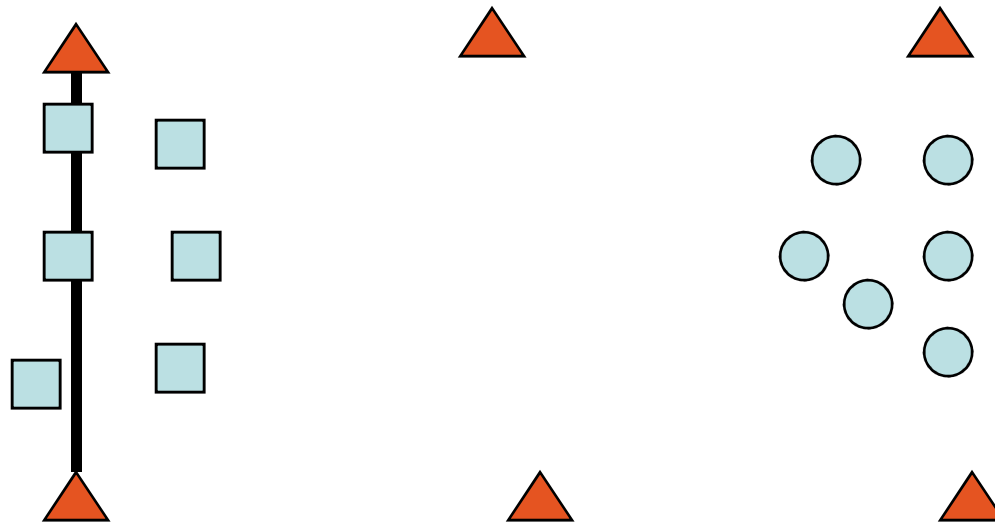
Does not need to be 8v1. Can be touch, grab or full contact.

Width is normally about 20m (can be the 22). Length determines intensity.

First defender kicks ball to Attackers and stays still until ball is fielded. The “8” attack and score on other end of grid. When the ball is touched down another player must pick up and attack the other way and another defender is added. This repeats until the coach decides the attacking team has failed to score.



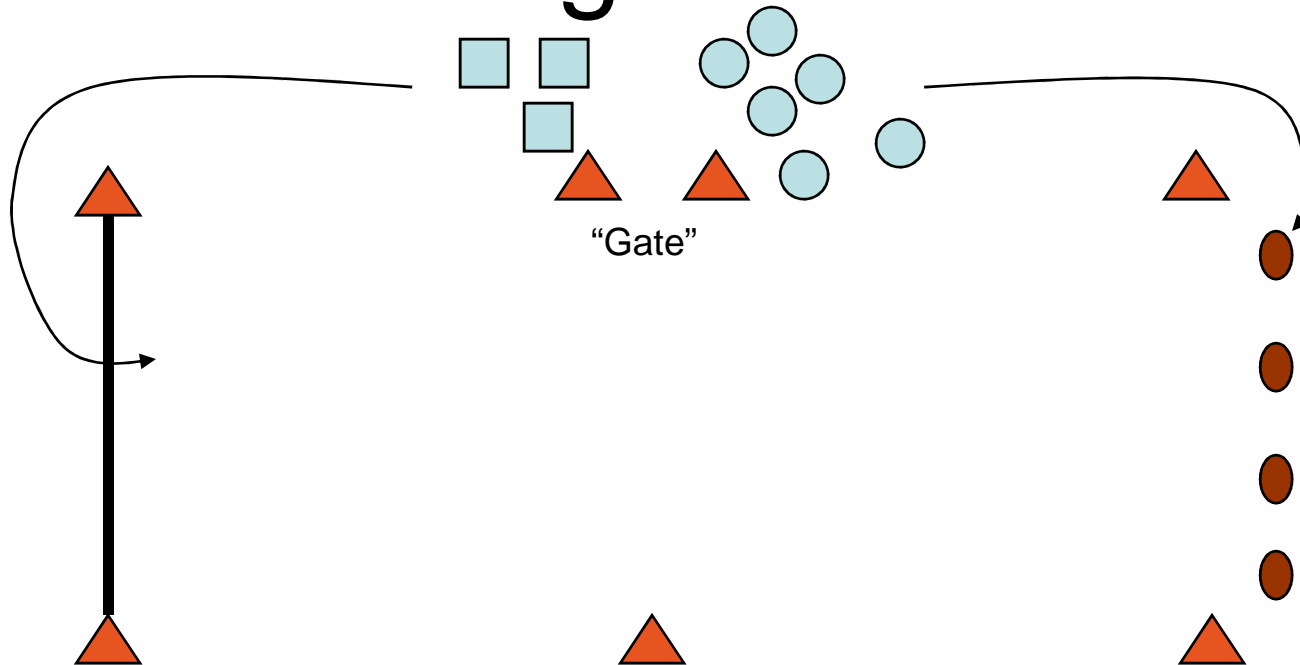
# Channel Game



This is a small sided game with limited numbers and space. Variations:

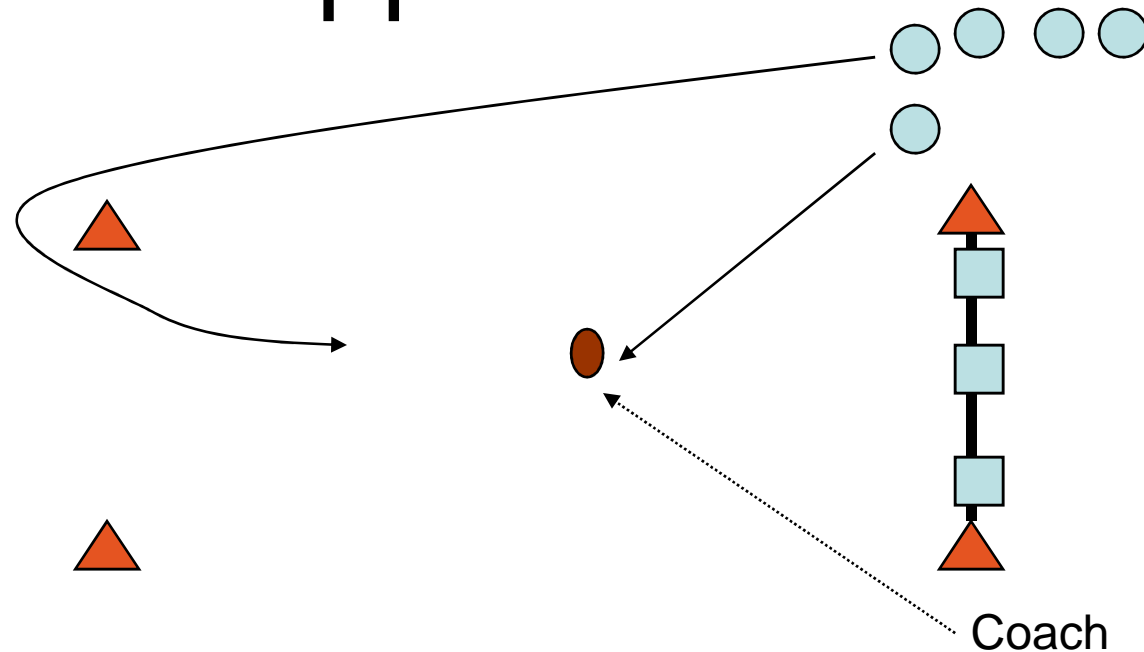
- Set up different defenses
- Change how the game is started – throw the ball behind, roll it in front, kick etc
- Manipulate starting position of offense and defense (lying on floor etc)

# Designer Game



Attack has to go around the cone pick up a ball and attack. The defense does the same. The attack continues until the coach calls the end of play or a try is scored and then both go through the “gate” and repeat. Number of balls and length of grid manages the intensity. Width and numbers determines the skills that will be practiced.

# Support Game

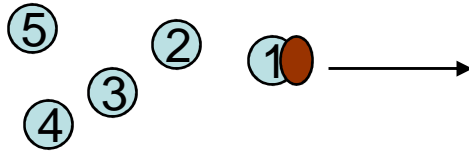


The coach rolls the ball out into the grid. The first attacker goes directly to the ball, the supporters must run around the end cone. The defenders may come up when the ball carrier has fielded the ball. If the ball is close to defenders the BC must buy some time. If the ball is far then the BC has support and can play.



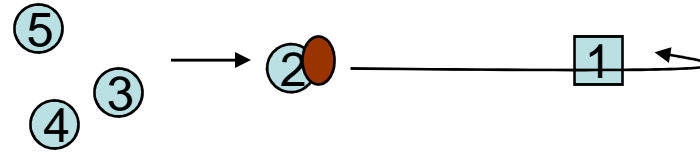
# Cycle Drill

1.



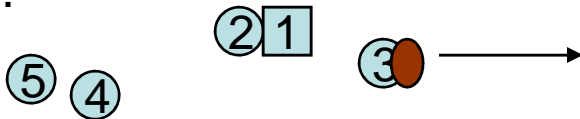
First player runs out and puts the ball down

2.



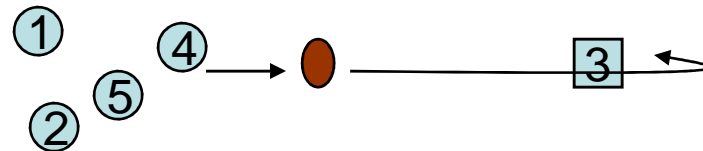
After he puts the ball down he runs on turns and becomes the defender. Next player picks up the ball

3.



The ball carrier engages the defender and the attackers beat the defender using the skill as designated by the coach.

4.



Whoever ends up with the ball runs on, puts the ball down and becomes the next defender. Cycle repeats

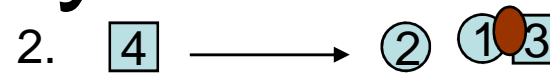
You can ask the BC to execute a particular technique or you can give the BC freedom and have the support react. More than one defender also will work with larger groups.



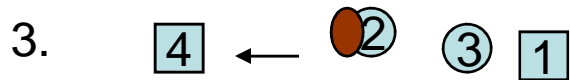
# Continuity Drill



First BC runs towards the defender with one supporter



He engages the defender and uses the technique as determined by the coach. The Other defender follows to reduce distance and intensity.



The supporter gets the ball and turns and engages on other defender



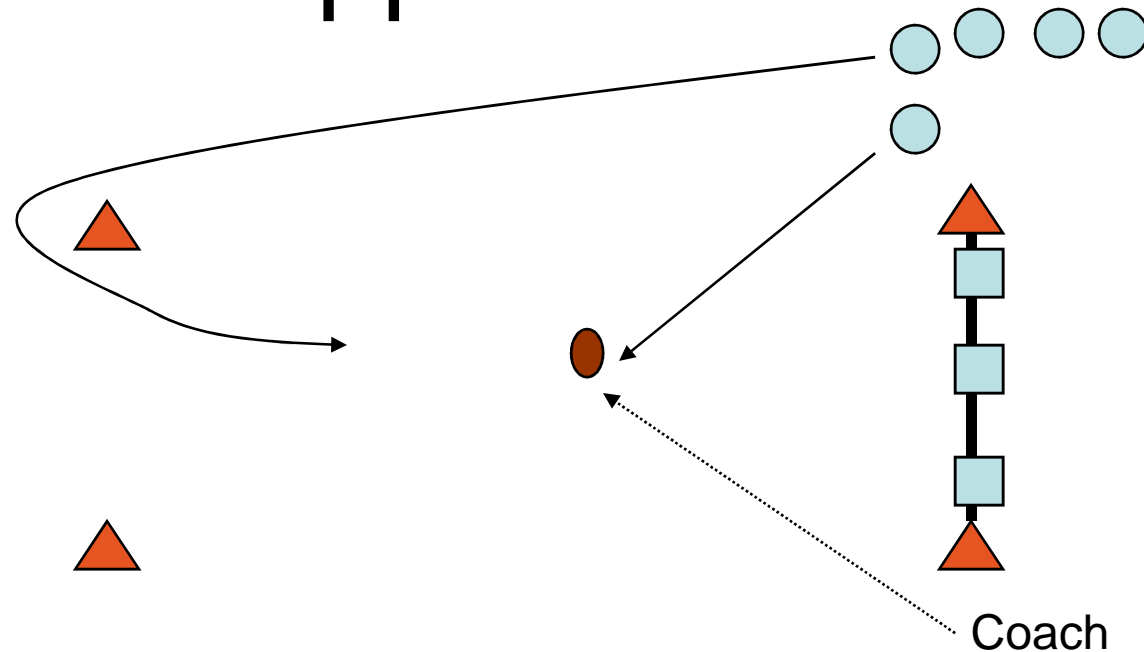
Step 2 is repeated.



Step 1 repeated

You can build so there are 3 or 4 people rucking or mauling against 2 defenders.

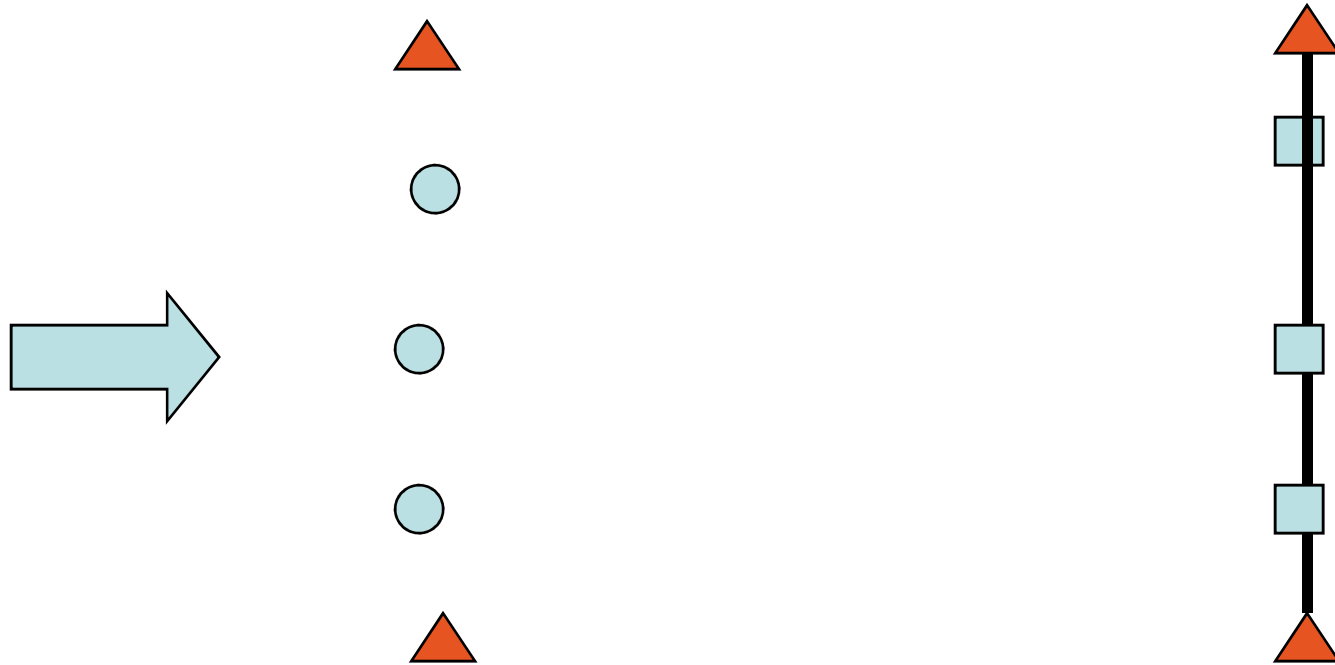
# Support Game



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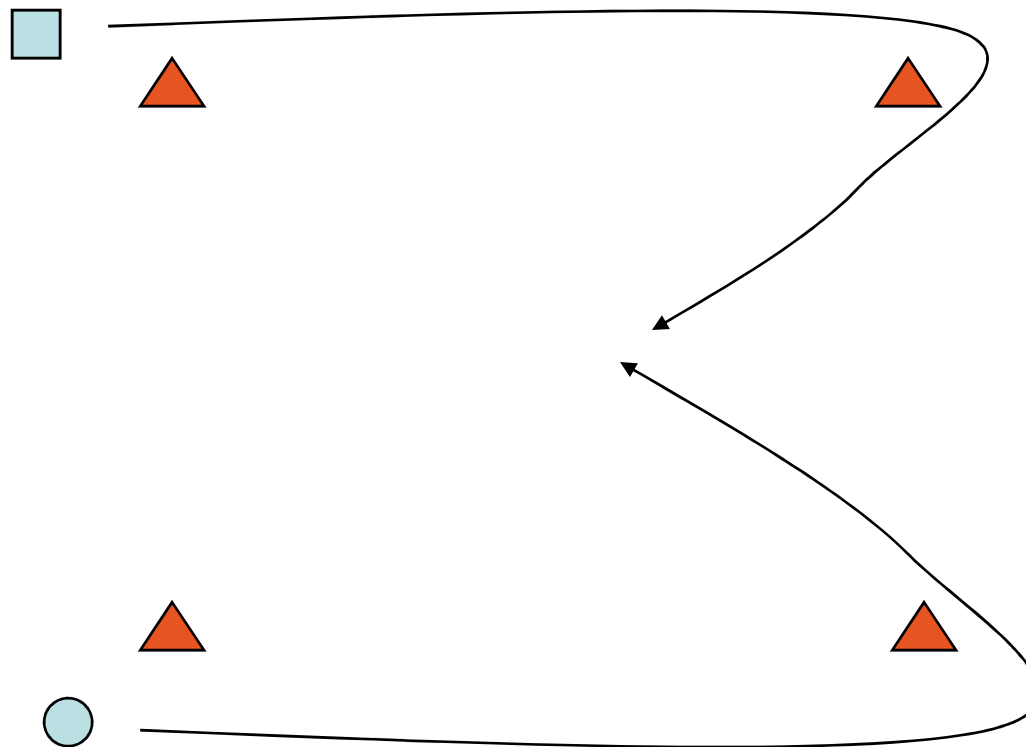
# 3v3 No Ball Defense



There is no ball for this drill, so the focus is one defender one tackle. The offense tries to run through the defensive line without being touched (2 hands below the waist). Defenders can only touch one attacker. Defense moves when offense starts. Offense is not allowed to discuss plays. Key points are: come up together, communicate, one person one tackle. Slide as attackers loop.



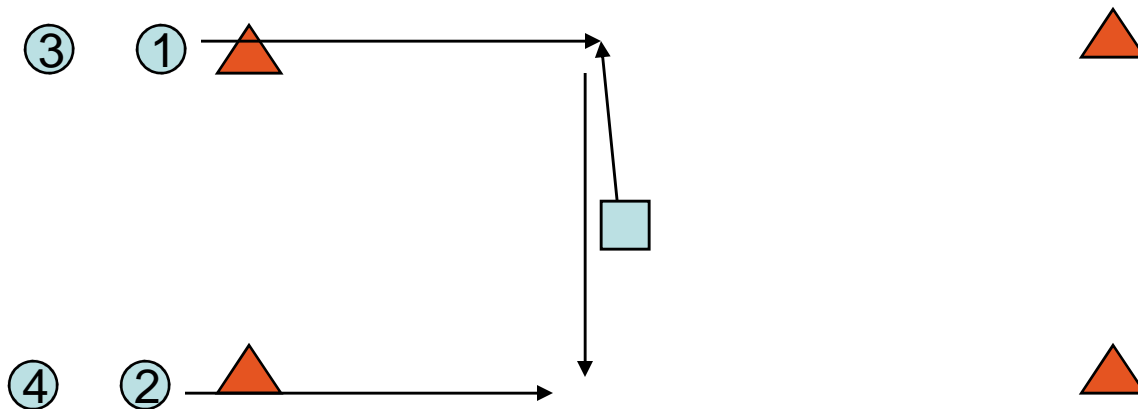
# Side-On Tackle A



Attacker and defender leave at the same time. Attacker must run across the grid towards the opposite cone to create side on tackle.

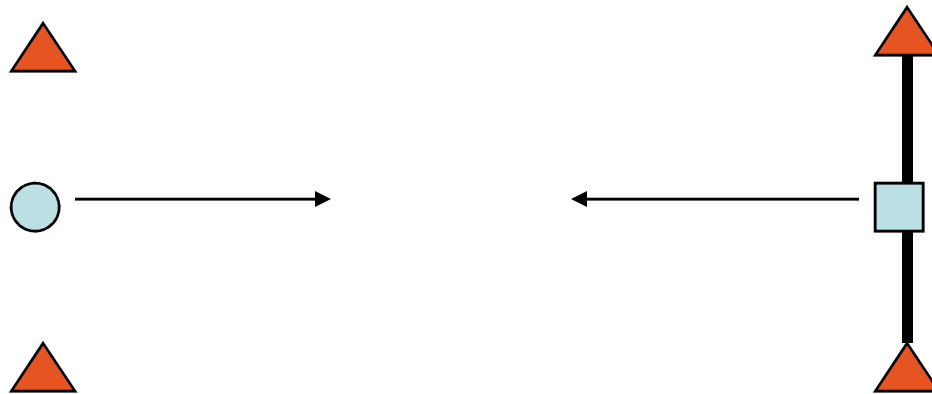


# Side-On Tackle B



Defender stands in the middle of the grid. Attackers are lined up on the cones. First attacker runs across the edge of the grid. Defender closes and executes a side on tackle. Once that tackle is complete a second attacker leaves from the other side – the defender has to get up and go across the grid to make a second tackle. Then the 3<sup>rd</sup> attacker leaves etc.

# Head-On Tackle Game

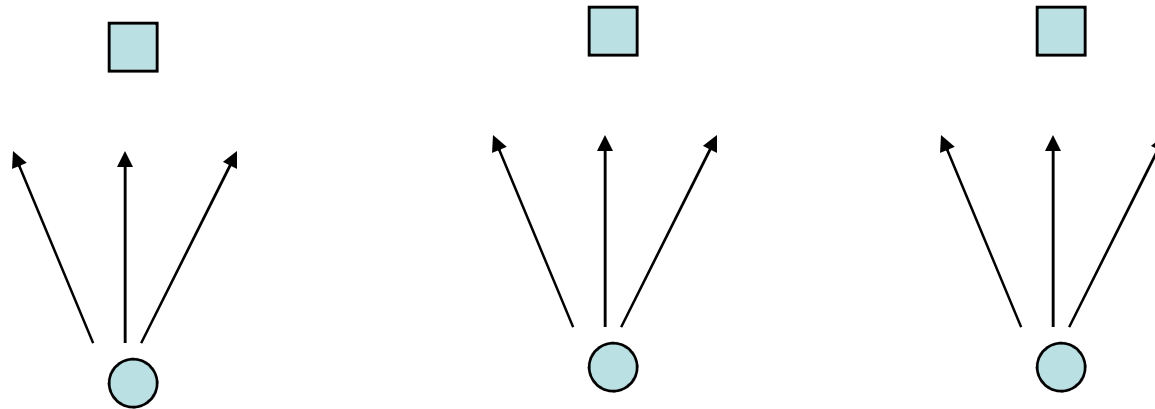


One on one in a very small field. Manage the length and width to manage the intensity. Few quality repetitions are good. 2m by 5m are good dimensions.



# Tackle Decision Drill

Coach

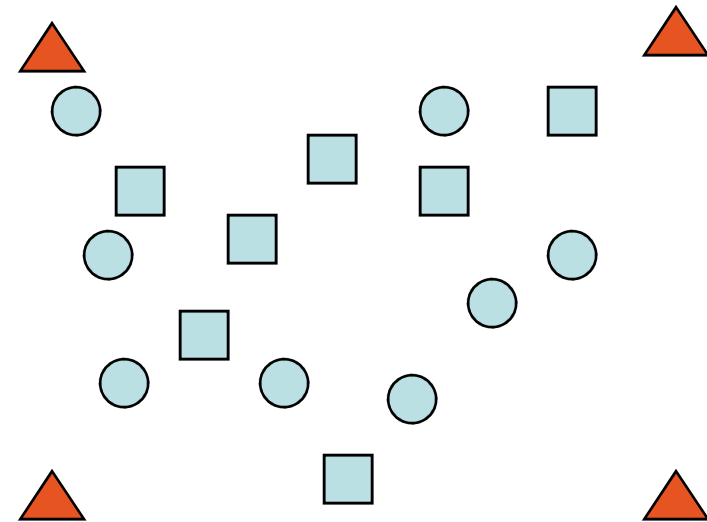


Coach stands behind the defenders and attackers to go left, right or straight ahead. Defenders have to react and execute either a side on or head on tackle.



# “20 Passes”

The group is split into two teams (they don't need to know who is on their team). The ball is turned over if they step in touch, the ball is dropped or knocked down in the air. The defense cannot knock the ball out of the hands of the offense and they cannot call for the ball if they are not on their team. The team wins if it gets to 20 passes.



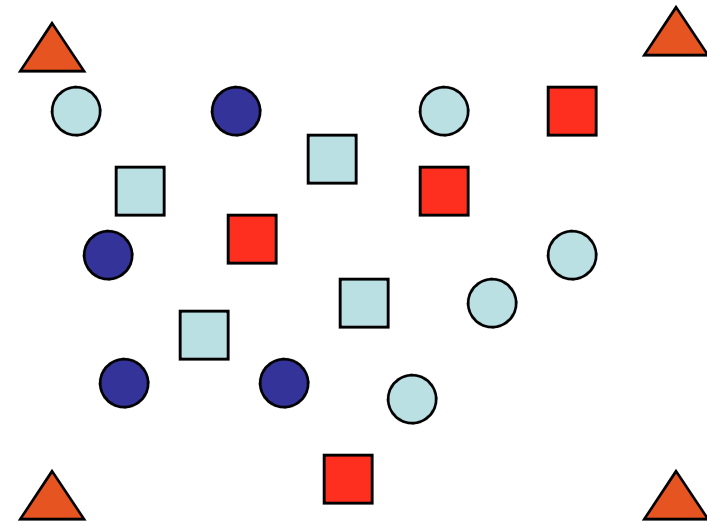


# “Max Pass”

There are teams of 4 or 5. They can run and pass in any direction. The goal is to make passes without dropping the ball or stepping out of bounds. If they “lose” the ball, 1<sup>st</sup> is 5 push ups, 2<sup>nd</sup> time 10 sit-ups and 3<sup>rd</sup> time is 5 squat jumps.

Progression:

- All 4 teams pass with no defense
- The teams can knock the ball down
- One team plays defense only – time a minute and the teams count the number of passes they can make.





# Introducing Rugby

Goal is to introduce rugby. Teams play in teams of 10 across 22. Goal is to score a try.

Progression:

- Pass in any direction with turn over when ball is dropped or they are touched with 2 hands below waist. Kicking allowed.
- Pass immediately when you are touched
- Pass backwards, when touched have to pass straight away
- Kicking allowed.