

EasiCoachTM

RUGBY SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U9 & U10



Part of the **EasiCoach Skills Curriculum** – helping grassroots coaches deliver quality rugby skills coaching to young players

Also available in the
EasiCoach™ Rugby Skills Activities Series



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Activities following the EasiCoach Rugby Curriculum for the age groups U7 Mini-Tag & U8 Mini-Tag, including handling, attacking and defending.
By Andrew Griffiths and Dan Cottrell



ISBN: 978-1-910338-38-4

Activities following the EasiCoach Rugby Curriculum for the age groups U11 & U12, and U13-U16, introducing more advanced passing and tackling skills and lineout.
By Andrew Griffiths and Dan Cottrell

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By Andrew Griffiths and Dan Cottrell

with thanks to Martin Skelton



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Welcome to EasiCoach™ Rugby Activities – the parents’ survival guide to coaching rugby

Dear Beginner Coach, Volunteer Dad or Mum, or “Roped-In” Helper,

If the world of rugby coaching seems a little daunting, don’t worry, you are not alone! Like many parents involved in coaching their children:

- You volunteered to help, or were volunteered!
- You don’t know much about rugby, or coaching
- You don’t want to let the side down
- You want to do the best you can but don’t have time to go on a course
- You’re worried about coaching “the wrong thing”.

EasiCoach provides ready-made, age appropriate, safe training activities, set out clearly on a single page, that even a child could understand. They are simple and easy to follow, and will make your life easier. EasiCoach covers ten age groups, available in three separate manuals:

- U7 & U8 Mini-Tag (31 activities)
- U9 & U10 (60 activities)
- U11-12 & U13-16 (60 activities)

How does this help you? EasiCoach coaching activities will help you to:

- Quickly understand what it is you’re trying to achieve
- See what you need to do from just a few words and pictures
- Grasp the key dos and don’ts at a glance
- Check you have all the equipment you need (never more than basics)
- Cater for more or fewer players at your session
- Speak to your players with confidence

But here’s what’s really great about the EasiCoach approach. Follow all the materials in each manual, and your players will be learning the right skills for the right age group every season. They will be having more fun, and be on a gradual development pathway that should make them better, more skilful, players and continue playing rugby for longer.

Yours in rugby,



Andrew Griffiths



Dan Cottrell

Your EasiCoach Activity Sheets

Each of the activity sheets in this manual covers a simple rugby skill appropriate for U9 or U10 age groups.

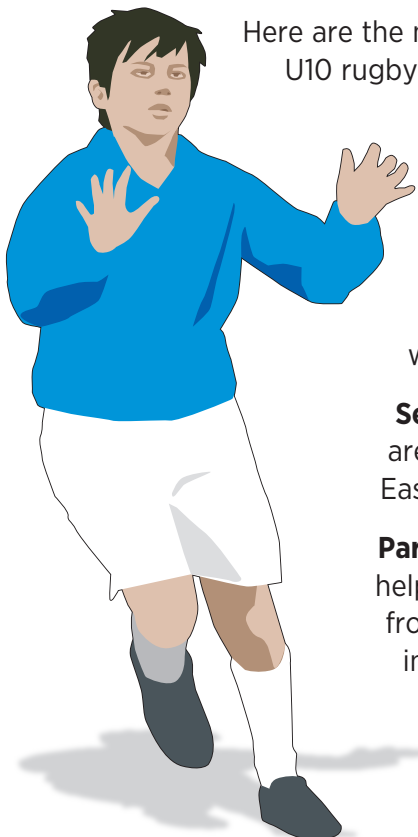
Some players in these age groups will have been playing Mini-Tag for up to two years – others will have just started rugby. Both groups are starting a new phase of the game (shedding their tags) so don't worry too much if you were not involved previously. Many things are new to everyone involved, and the main objective is for the players to have fun!

Here's what you do to help all the players under your guidance.

- Read the Beginners' Guide below.
- In your one and a half hour session, we suggest you run two or three activities from this book (depending on time), and then play a game.
- Use the illustration with each activity to show you (or your helpers) where to put the cones, balls and players in order to run the activity. (It's helpful if this can be done before the players arrive)
- Run a game for U9s or U10s based on the guidelines below.

The EasiCoach Beginners guide to U9 and U10 rugby

Here are the main things you need to know about coaching and organising U9 and U10 rugby. Don't worry, it's not as hard as you think. The good news is that coaching the game has just got simpler!



Length of the session. The coaching, training, games or matches combined should last for no more than 1 hour 30 minutes at U9 and U10. At a typical training session, you should plan for no more than three EasiCoach activities each taking 15-20 minutes including setup and water breaks, followed by a game, for 30-40 minutes. Simple.

Setup. Arrive earlier than the players if you can, to set up the playing area for the chosen activities for the session. Set up two or three EasiCoach activities and be ready for the players to arrive.

Parents. Keen though they are to make a difference, unless they are helping, parents are now recommended to stand at least 3m back from the edge of the pitch. If space allows, your pitch set up should incorporate a cone or rope barrier to show parents where to stand. Encouragement of players is welcomed and criticism frowned upon.

Refereeing and Game Coaching

You might hope not to have to get involved in refereeing, or “game coaching” as it is becoming known, or you might be dead keen to try. These days the objective is a free-flowing game, so the person with the whistle is more of a helper than a referee. Each side having a coach is no longer advised (a lot less shouting!), freeing up helpers to run other games. This is needed because there are smaller numbers of players per game.

The good news is that the U9 rules are not much different from Mini-Tag apart from the tackle. Then at U10s, you have to referee the ruck, maul and a simple scrum.

Free pass. This is used as a way of restarting a game. One player of the team that is awarded possession simply passes the ball to a team-mate to restart the game. To start the game for the

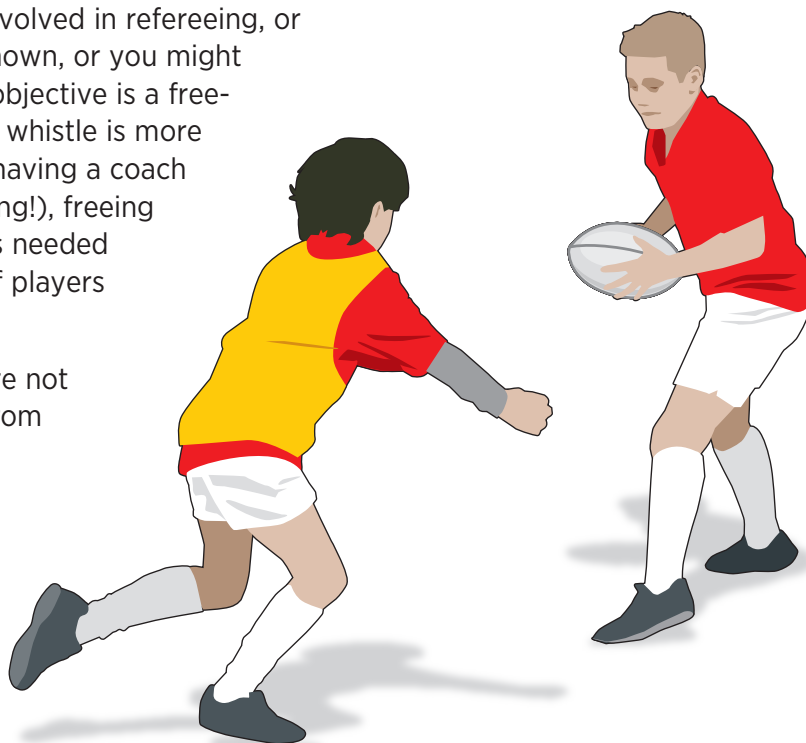
first and second halves, or after a try, the free pass is from the centre of the field. When the ball goes out of play, the free pass is from the place where the ball went out. The pass must be to a stationary player.

Scoring a try. A try is worth one point. Diving over the line is allowed.

Knock-ons and forward passes. A knock-on occurs when a player drops the ball or fumbles it as he attempts to catch it and the ball both goes forward towards the defenders’ goal line and drops to the ground. A forward pass is a pass that goes forward towards the defenders’ goal line. At U9, this infringement results in a free pass to the other team, and at U10 it results in a three-man scrum (see below for more details).

Using the whistle. Although the emphasis with these age groups remains on using the whistle as little as possible, it’s still valuable to start and stop games, highlight dangerous play, stop for injuries or when infringements occur. And it’s helpful for getting attention, too!

Kicking and diving. You’ll probably find that the ball still ends up on the ground quite a lot. Do NOT allow the players to kick any loose ball, and stop the game to make the point. Diving on the ball to gather it up is allowed.



U9 Game Guidelines

Number of players: up to 14 (can be 6 v 6 or 7 v 7 but must be equal numbers). With groups of up to 30, this requires at least two pitches to be set up for two games to be run, with at least one helper per game, preferably two. Avoid having players standing around, waiting to play, if possible.

Maximum pitch size: 30m x 60m. Don't worry if you haven't got this space – you can work with slightly smaller pitches with no problem. A 30m x 60m pitch can be fitted into one half of a standard rugby pitch. When the pitches are set up near goal posts, ensure that the posts have protective padding. If they are near corner or halfway marker flags, remove these before play starts.

Tackling. Introduction of the tackle. A tackle at U9 is defined as a tackle below the waist or a grasp anywhere below the armpits, according to England Rugby. Other authorities may have other definitions, which you may have to abide by. Scrag tackles (where the ball carrier's shirt is grabbed and the player swung round) are regarded as dangerous and are not allowed. When tackled, the ball carrier must be allowed to pass the ball, so the tackler can only tackle the player and cannot attempt to get the ball.



Offside. The offside line is where a tackle is made. Players offside are penalised by the other side getting a free pass.

No coaches on the pitch. The authorities are rightly taking action to ensure that adults interfere as little as possible in the free flowing of the game at this level.

Scoring: Players can dive to score a try.

Ball size: 3

Length of game or match: Play 15-20 minutes each way (30-40 minutes total), with a minimum two minute water break at half time.

U10 Game Guidelines

Number of players: up to 16 (can be 7 v 7 or 8 v 8 but must be equal numbers). Although these is the ideal, and the numbers recommended for fixtures and festivals, they are only recommended numbers. For example, with a group of 24 players it would be better to play two 6 v 6 games rather than leave eight players standing around. If you have only two or three more than 16, simply rotate players on and off the field every few minutes so that no one is left out for very long.

Maximum pitch size: 35m x 60m. Again don't worry if you have slightly less space available, you can still run a game.

Tackle contest. Competition for the ball is allowed in the tackle situation for the first time. One player can compete for the tackle ball and one player can support the ball carrier. This means rucks and mauls – albeit with limited numbers of players – are formed for the first time.

A maul at U10 is when an attacker binds onto a ball carrier on his feet being held by a tackler. The defence is allowed to add one more defender to the situation. In both cases, the referee calls maul. If the maul becomes stationary, the referee calls “once”. If the maul remains stationary or comes to a halt again, the referee calls “use it” and the attacking team must pass or run with the ball. If not, a scrum is awarded to the defending team.

A ruck at U10 forms when one player from each side is in contact over the ball on the ground. Most likely this will happen because of a tackle. The tackler may be the one player who competes over the ball, but it must only be one player from the defending team. The referee calls ruck. Once the ball is won, the team in possession have five seconds to move the ball away from the ruck. If not, a scrum is awarded.

Scrum. Introduction of the scrum. Made up of the nearest three players to the infringement – either a forward pass, knock-on, or a five second delay from a ruck or maul. The scrum is uncontested (the team putting the ball in wins).

No coaches on the pitch: same as for U9s, and for the rest of the age groups for that matter!

Ball size: 4

Length of game or match: 15-20 minutes each way (30-40 minutes in total) with a minimum two minute half time rest.

A 1-2-3 of Coaching Children

1. Use the 30 Second Rule

The 30 second rule works because children learn best by doing, not listening, and 30 seconds is about as much as most of them can take. So, with that in mind, let them do as much as possible and listen as little as possible. After 30 seconds, many of your audience will have stopped listening anyway, and very little if any of what you go on to say will be heard, let alone understood. Don't waste your time!

Only having 30 seconds to talk can make life easier if you are privately anxious about speaking, or concerned about saying the wrong thing, as it reduces the chance of making a mistake. Being time limited forces you to think carefully beforehand about what you are going to say. The outcome should be reduced waffle and getting to the point more quickly. Children like this simplicity. It is also worth bearing in mind that in chillier climates, players will get cold very quickly if they are standing round listening to you for more than a short period.



Just 30 seconds really only gives you the chance to pick up one point from the activity the players have been doing. While you are observing them, think about what you want to say. This can be praise or encouragement, or it can be to offer a suggestion to a common problem that is occurring. Use your 30 seconds to laser in on just one. That single message is far more likely to get through if it is on its own.

One trick to increase attention levels is to get young players as attentive as possible before you start talking, simply by asking them to be quiet, or standing silently waiting for them to quiet down. The rule is not always practical, though. Sometimes, when you are introducing something new, you will have to talk to the players for longer. In these situations, make sure you involve the players either by asking questions, giving them a break from your voice – or by getting volunteers to demonstrate. But if you can do it in 30 seconds – congratulations!

2. When and how to correct mistakes

If a young player is making a mistake, we feel duty bound to do something about it. However, we shouldn't always step in. Young people learn from their mistakes by themselves and from feedback from their peers. They don't want or need an adult telling them every time they don't get something right, or as good as it should be – they know!

You may notice as you start coaching young children that youngsters can be intimidated by corrections. The action of correcting can be counterproductive in itself, with some players not taking on board what they need to change.

There are some things that we must correct. Anything that can harm the player or someone else, such as kicking, punching, verbal abuse or any other sort of foul play. These are non-negotiable. Do not hesitate to blow the whistle to stop play and highlight the actions of the offender, so that everyone is aware of the issue and can learn.

Other areas we might correct are discretionary. Technical errors, such as poor hand positioning on the ball. More difficult might be decision-making errors such as wrong options. This is problematic because there are often a number of options.

Most people don't like criticism or corrections at all, let alone in front of others, and children are no different. If at all possible, take the player aside on a one-to-one basis to make a comment. If parents are nearby, you might feel it is appropriate to make the point in their presence. One or two words may be enough, but the key is to "talk" and not raise your voice.

3. Coach by gentle questioning

Research shows that learning comes from self-discovery. This means players realise how to solve problems and react to situations by finding their own solutions. Coaches should try to reduce the amount of time they spend "telling" the players what to do. Instead, through questioning, they should look to empower their players.



To aid good learning the coach needs to communicate well verbally. The choice of words is often not as important as the way they are told. Remember:

- Don't use jargon or sarcasm.
- Promote positive comments.
- Back up criticism with a way forward.
- Keep sentences short.
- Don't make too many points.
- Summarise at the end – some players may not have understood the first time around.

Gentle questioning

Asking questions is useful because it:

- Gains the attention of the players.
- Lets the coach learn what the players know.
- Involves the players in the learning process.
- Allows the players to express their opinions.
- Helps the coach check for understanding.

Asking the best questions

- Use open questions – questions that cannot be answered with just “yes” or “no”. Start questions with words, like “what”, “how” or “where”.
- Don't use “why”, because it can be construed as negative.
- Wait for the answer, don't hurry the player.
- Listen, don't anticipate the answer. Try not to rephrase the answer once given.

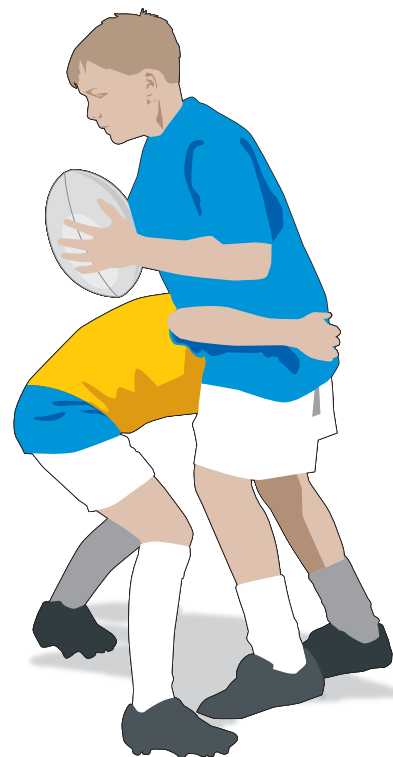
When to “tell” and when to “question”

Tell when:

- You have a short period of time to get your point across.
- Specific instructions are needed. For instance, health and safety issues or laws of the game.
- A larger group makes question and answer sessions unwieldy.

Question to:

- Check your players' understanding.
- Gain feedback.
- Improve your players' learning.



6 STEPS TO EASICOACH SUCCESS

1. Find the activity you need
2. Look at the pictures and read the text
3. Check what equipment you'll need when you get to the club
4. Take the book to training
5. Set up your activity
6. EasiCoach it!

The age group the activity has been written for

The title is a quick and easy description of the activity

The introduction tells you exactly what skills your players will develop by doing this activity

The activity is described in easy to follow steps, which tell you how to set it up and run it

The diagram shows you what the activity should look like on the pitch. There might be one, two or three parts of the diagram – whatever makes it easiest for you to understand

Detailed illustrations show how the skills should, and shouldn't, be performed

"You will need" tells you how to mark out the playing area and lists all the kit you'll need for the activity

"Got more players" tells you how you can adapt the activity if you have more players than are shown

"What to tell your players" gives you some key phrases to tell your players as they do the activity. They will help the players understand what they should be doing and how they should be doing it

U9 | EVASION 7

Spin out of contact

Get your players used to evading a tackle by spinning

- 1 Put a line of attackers, each with a ball, on one side of the area. Set up three defenders in a triangle formation inside the area, with one in front of the attackers and two behind him.
- 2 When you say "go", the first attacker runs at the front defender and spins off and round him, to the left or right (the attacker's choice). The defender remains passive at all times and doesn't try to stop the attacker.
- 3 The ball carrier then runs on to one of the defenders at the back and spins the opposite way – this means that he spins off both feet in quick succession.
- 4 Develop by getting the attacker to change hands between spins.
- 5 Develop further by making the defenders "live" and allow them to slap any ball they can reach to ensure the spins are technically correct.

✓ Spinning out of a tackle

Let the players work out their own way to spin out of a tackle. However, it does start with the ball carrier planting one foot near the tackler and then spinning away so that the ball is out of reach of the tackler.

You will need

- A 10m square area
- 1 ball per attacker
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

This activity moves quickly, so you can line up lots of attackers, or set up another game alongside.

What to tell your players

"Spin on the pad of the foot behind the big toe"

"Keep the ball away from the defender"

Key

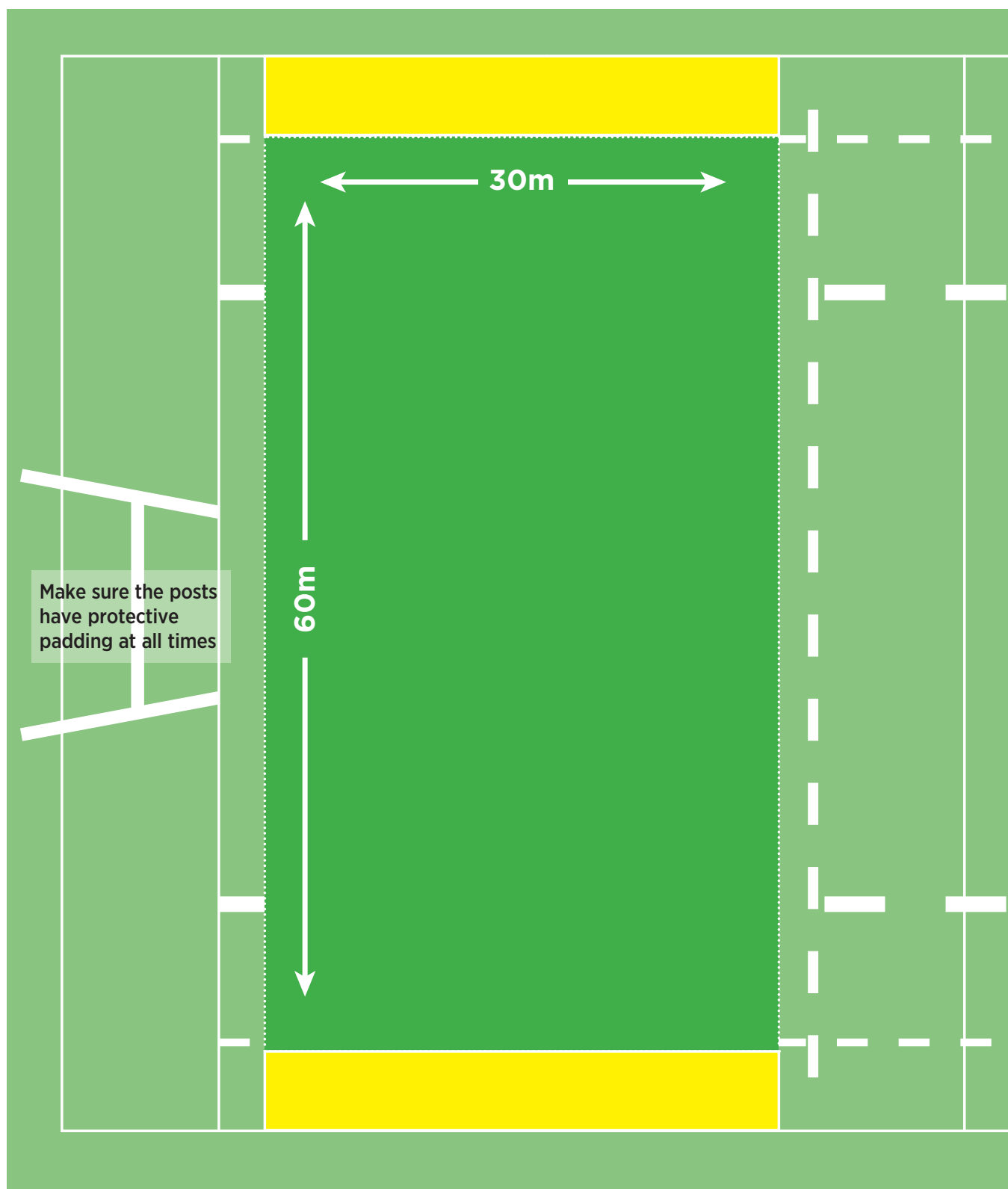
Ground covered

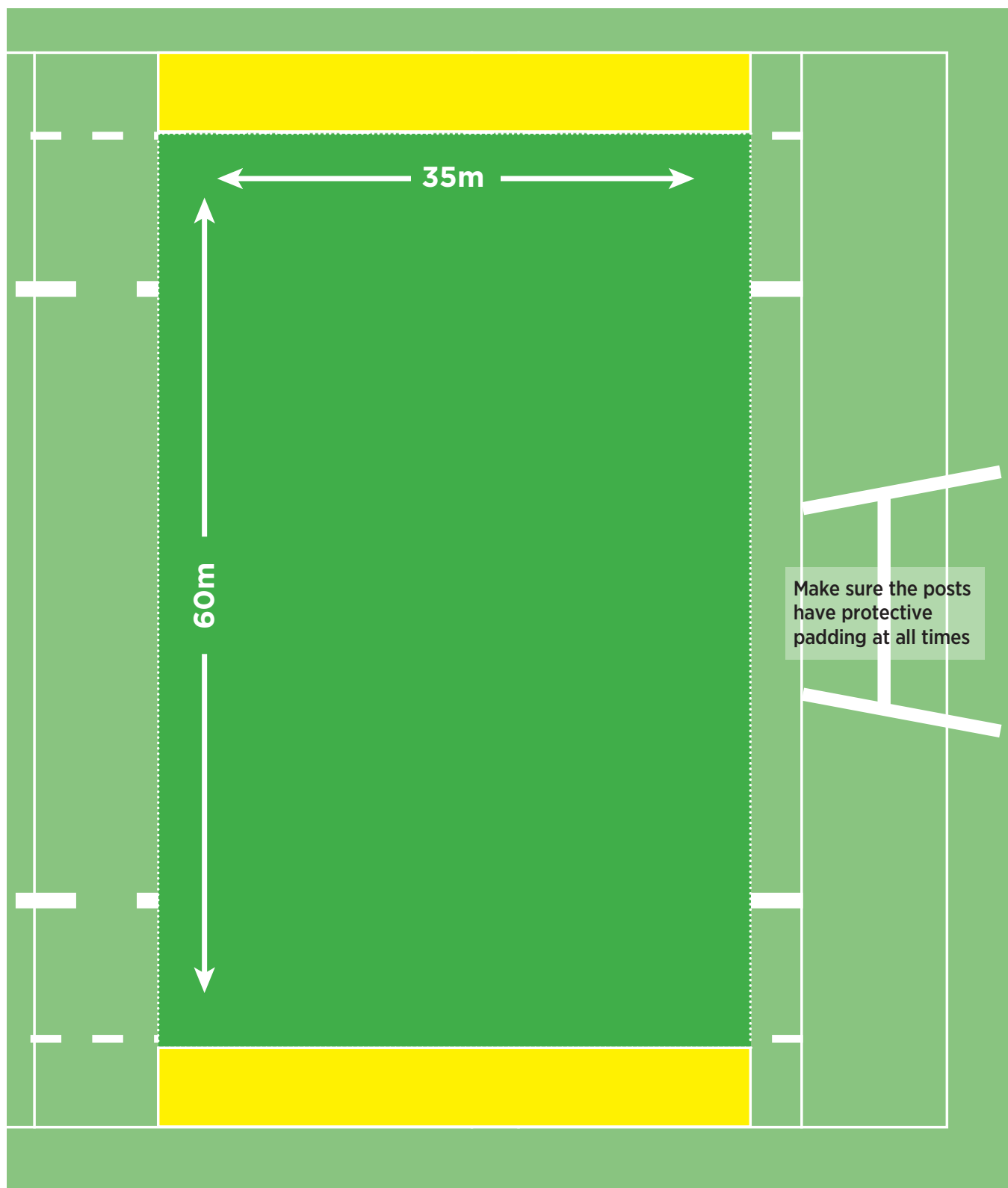
Direction of run

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The Key helps you understand the diagram – which way the players are running and where the ball is going





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RUGBY SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U9

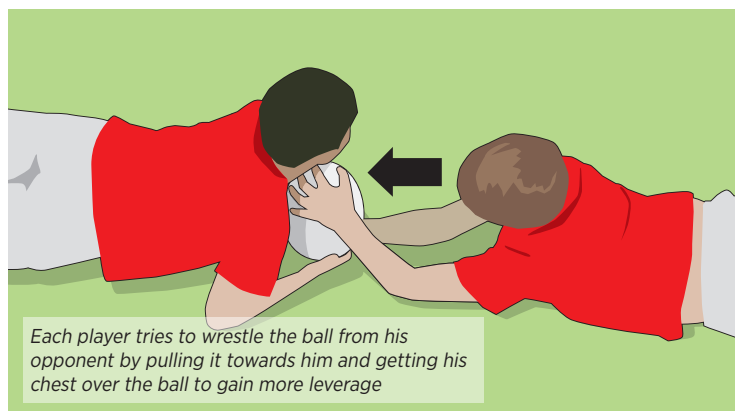
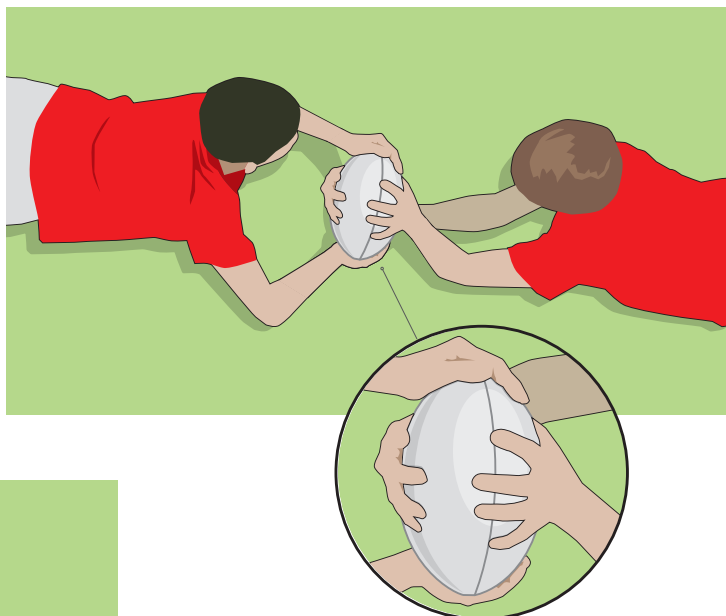
ACTIVITIES

Keep hold of the ball

Get your players used to holding the ball securely into and during contact and then present the ball quickly and cleanly

1 Split your players into pairs – try to make sure they are evenly matched in terms of size and strength.

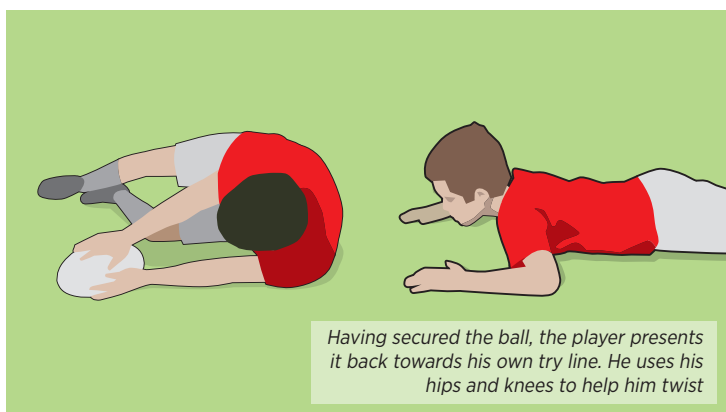
2 Place a ball on the ground. One player lies on his stomach and grips the ends of the ball. The other lies opposite with his hands on the top and underside of the ball.



3 When you call “go”, the players try to win possession of the ball by pulling it towards them and ripping it from the other player’s grip.

4 The winner is the player who wins the ball and then turns to present it.

5 Develop by having two players on their feet 1m apart. Player 1 throws the ball to player 2 who steps towards his opponent and attempts to go to ground to present the ball. Player 1 tries to wrestle the ball from player 2 before he goes to ground.



You will need

- 1 ball per pair

Got more players?

Just add more pairs, making sure they have enough space.

What to tell your players

“Wrestle for the ball and present it quickly”
“Stretch as far as you can when presenting the ball”

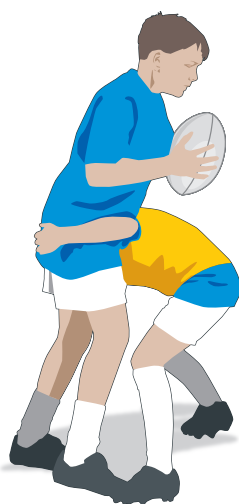
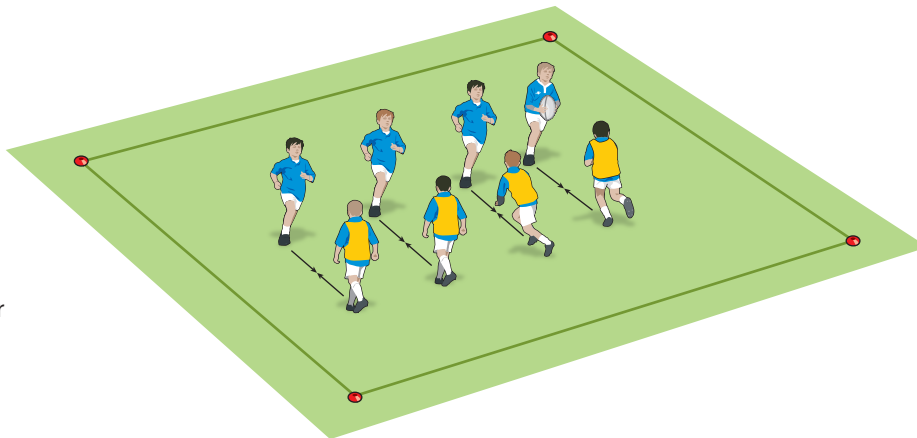
Pick, pop and rip

Get your players looking for options that keep the ball alive after contact

1 Play a game of 4v4 with full tackling and hold tackles. Players must be no more than 3m apart at all restarts.

2 When a ball carrier is held or tackled, call "tackle".

3 When "tackle" is called, the ball can be ripped off the ball carrier, or popped off the ground by the tackled player, or presented by the tackled player and picked up by a team mate.



✓ Making a hold tackle

The tackler must have a strong grip and get his feet close to the ball carrier. This gives him a solid base, which helps prevent the ball carrier breaking the tackle.

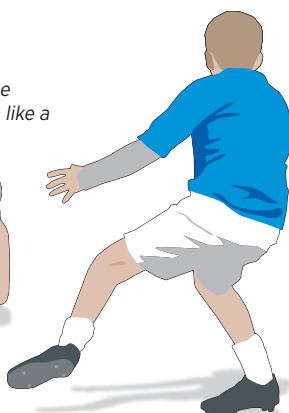
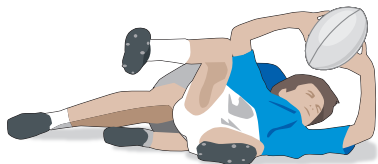


✓ Picking up the ball

The tackled player places the ball back towards his team. His nearest team mate swoops early to gather the ball, getting one foot close to the ball to help with balance and to protect the ball.

✓ Popping the ball up

The ball carrier "pops" the ball up from the ground, pushing the ball at his team mate like a netball pass.



✓ Ripping the ball

Rip the ball from the ball carrier by getting close, wrapping arms around the ball and ripping it down and away with the shoulders.

If the ball carrier and ripper are too far away, the ball can get dislodged or dropped.



You will need

- A 20m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

With more players, play no more than 5v5, then split into two games.

What to tell your players

"Turn in the tackle if held"

"Let the ball carrier know what you're going to do – pop, rip or pick"

Key

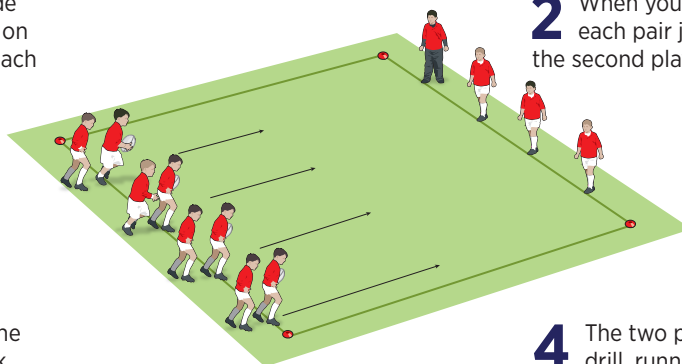
Direction of run



Presenting the ball

Get players used to falling correctly in the tackle to prevent injury and presenting the ball back to team mates quickly so they can play on

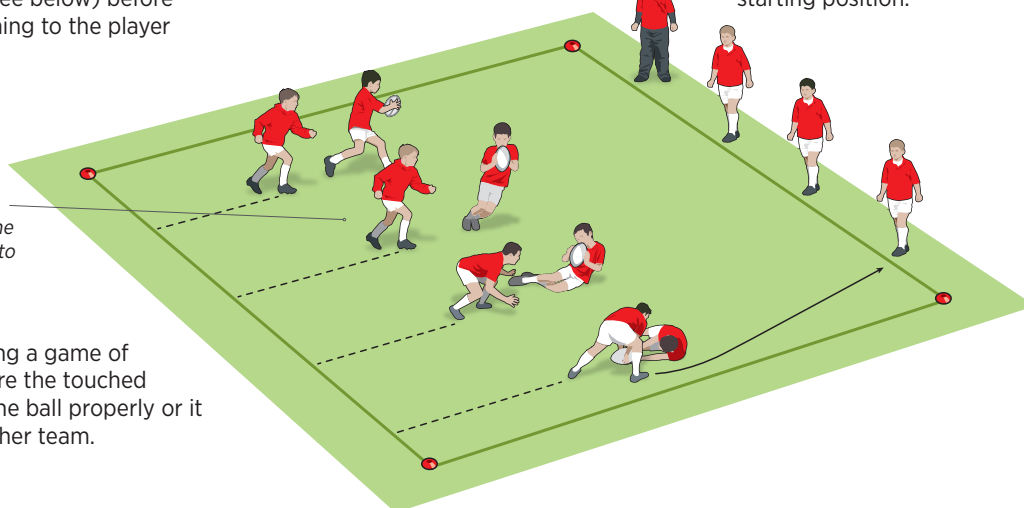
1 Put four pairs of players on one side of the area and four single players on the opposite side. Give one player in each pair a ball.



2 When you say “go”, the first player in each pair jogs 5m with the ball and the second player follows behind.

3 After 5m, the first player falls to the ground and presents the ball back. The second player waits until the ball is properly presented (see below) before picking it up and running to the player on the opposite side.

4 The two players then repeat the drill, running back the other way. The player on the ground runs back to his starting position.



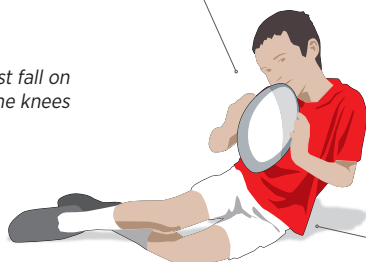
Start off jogging or walking, then falling down and presenting the ball before building up to running at pace

5 Develop by playing a game of touch rugby where the touched player must present the ball properly or it is a turnover to the other team.



Keep two hands on the ball

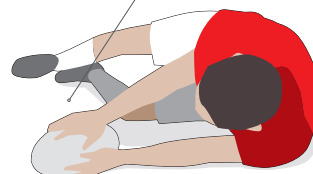
First fall on the knees



Second, fall on the hips

✓ Falling and presenting the ball

Once on the ground, the player must twist around the middle, using his hips and knees, so he can push the ball back towards his own try line



Third, fall on the shoulder

You will need

- A 10m square area
- 1 ball for every three players
- Cones

Got more players?

Make the area wider to fit in more players.

What to tell your players

“Keep two hands on the ball at all times”
“Remember to fall knees first, then hips, then shoulder”

Key

Ground covered

Direction of run

—————>

Under the arches

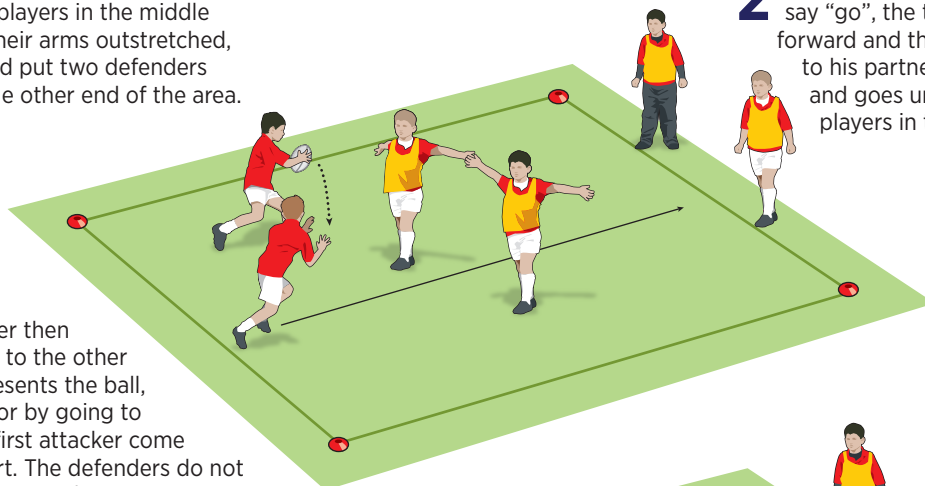
Encourage your players to maintain a low body position going into contact

1 Put two attackers at one end of the area, put two players in the middle of the area with their arms outstretched, holding hands, and put two defenders behind them at the other end of the area.

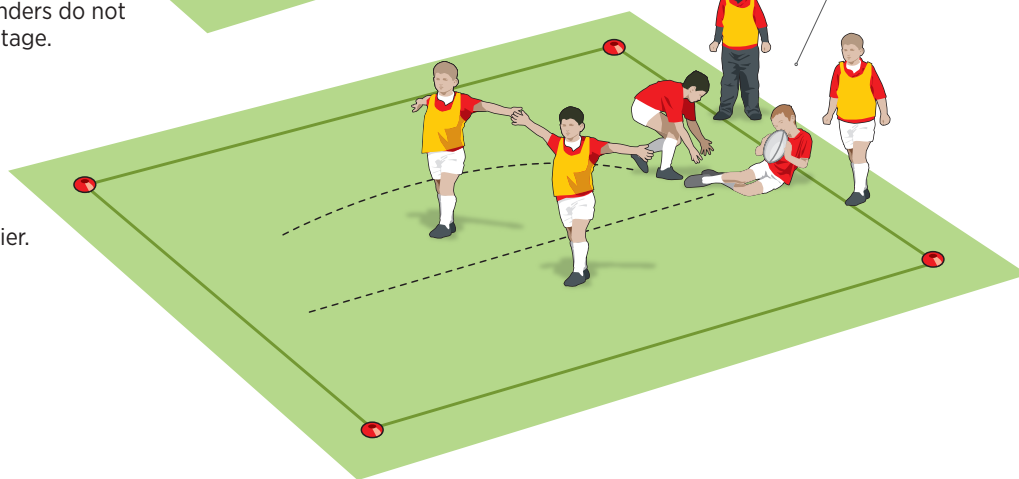
2 Give one attacker a ball. When you say "go", the two attackers run forward and the ball carrier passes to his partner who catches the ball and goes under the arms of the players in the middle.

3 The ball carrier then goes forward to the other defenders and presents the ball, either on his feet or by going to ground, with the first attacker come through to support. The defenders do not tackle the ball carrier at this stage.

4 Once the players are confident, make the defenders at the back of the area try to tackle the ball carrier.



When falling to present the ball, the player must keep two hands on the ball, fall on the knees, then the hips and then shoulder

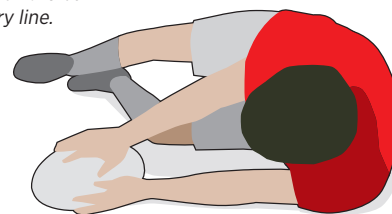


✓ Going into contact

A low driving position means the ball carrier is more difficult to tackle. He bends at the hips and knees, using short steps to go forwards. Ideally his hips are facing up the pitch before he turns in contact to present the ball

✓ Presenting the ball

Once on the ground, the player must twist around the middle, using his hips and knees, so he can push the ball back towards his own try line.



You will need

- A 6m x 4m area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

Run another game alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Get your hips facing forward”
- “Carry the ball in two hands”
- “Take short steps when lowering the body, bending at the knees and hips”

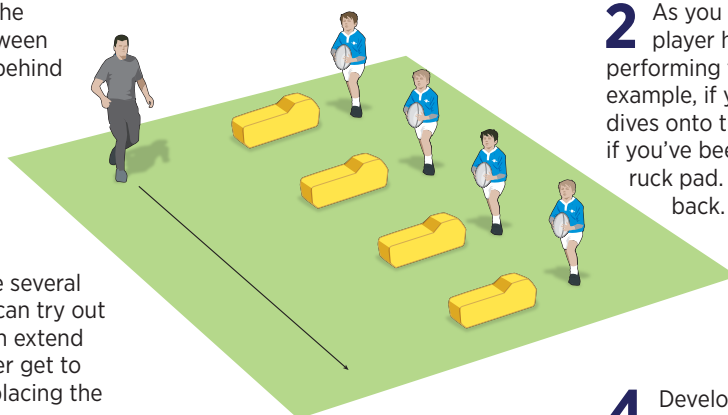
Key

- Ground covered ————
- Direction of run —————→
- Pass→

Different ways to fall

Get players used to falling in different ways and still present the ball properly

1 Put a line of ruck pads on the ground with about 2m between them. Put a player with a ball behind each pad.

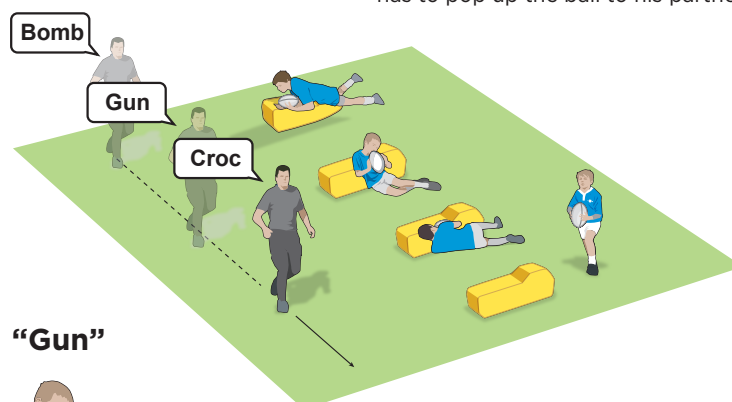


2 As you walk along the line, each player has to land on the ruck pad, performing the stunt you call out. For example, if you call "Bomb" the player dives onto the pad. "Gun" = collapse as if you've been shot. "Croc" = wrestle the ruck pad. "Fire" = put a fire out on your back.

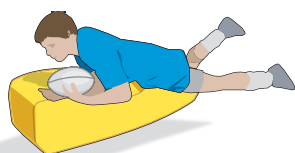
3 Walk up and down the line several times so that each player can try out each different fall. You can then extend the activity by having the player get to his feet as fast as possible, or placing the ball in a desired direction.

4 Develop by giving each ball carrier a partner. After the fall, the ball carrier has to pop up the ball to his partner.

5 Finally, play a game of touch rugby. After a touch, the ball carrier has to go to ground immediately and pop up the ball to a team mate.



"Bomb"



The player dives onto the ruck pad hold the ball in both hands before rolling off to present the ball.

"Gun"



The player collapses onto the ruck pad, as if shot.

✓ Popping the ball up

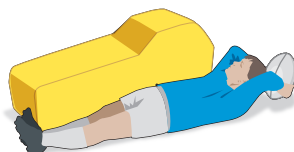
The ball carrier "pops" the ball up from the ground, pushing the ball at his team mate like a netball pass.

"Croc"

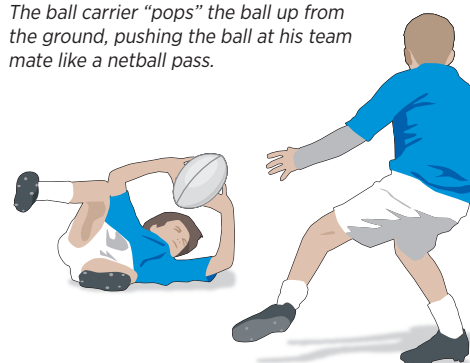


The player falls onto the ruck pad and wrestles with it as if wrestling a crocodile.

"Fire"



The player falls sideways onto the ruck pad, rolling on to the floor as if trying to put out a fire with his back.



You will need

- Balls
- Ruck pads

Got more players?

You can line up as many players as you have ruck pads and balls, or you can line players up behind each pad to wait their turn.

What to tell your players

- "Keep two hands on the ball when falling"
- "Keep control once you've hit the ruck pad"

Key

Ground covered

Direction of run

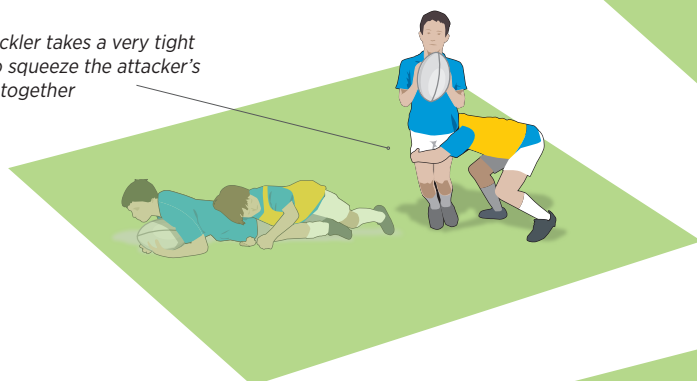
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Introducing tackling

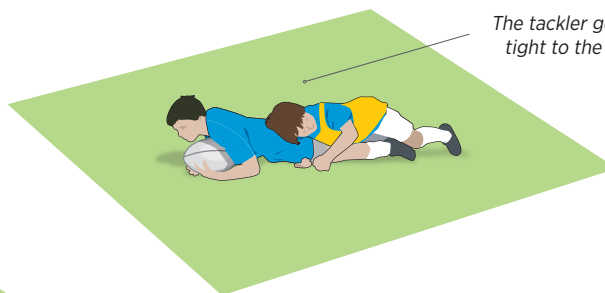
Get players used to making and taking tackles correctly by working backwards through the tackle

1 Put your players into pairs and ask them to get into space. Tell them to decide who will be the tackler and who will be the attacker. Start with the players on the ground, with the tackler in a good finish position and the attacker holding the ball.

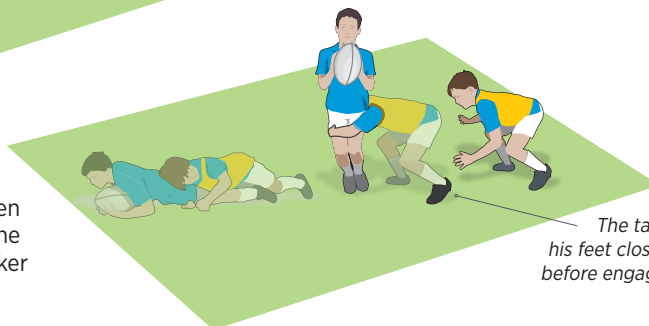
The tackler takes a very tight grip to squeeze the attacker's knees together



The tackler gets his head very tight to the attacker's shorts and grips hard



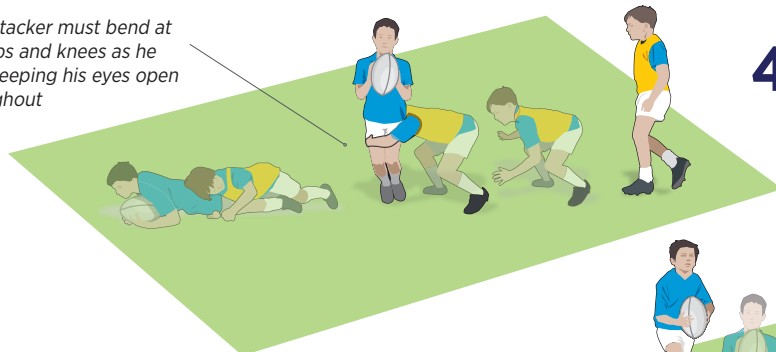
2 The tackler crouches and puts his arms around the attacker's legs. The attacker does a parachute roll and the tackler just topples over with him.



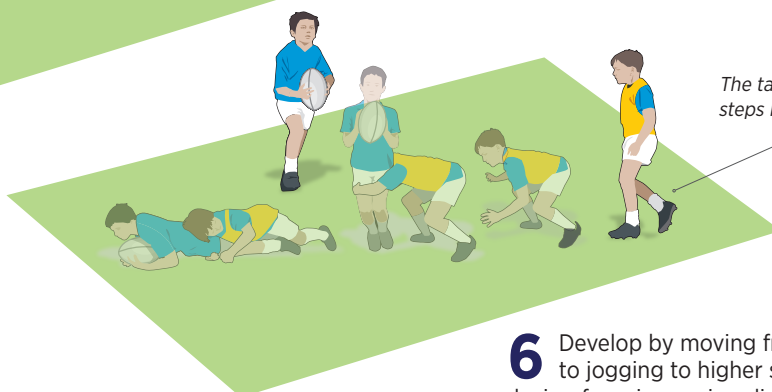
The tackler must move his feet close to the attacker before engaging his shoulder

3 The attacker starts upright, the tackler crouches with arms ready but not touching the attacker. Then the tackler moves forwards, nudges his shoulder into the attacker's legs and wraps his arms around them. Attacker falls with this momentum and the tackler lands on top.

The attacker must bend at the hips and knees as he falls, keeping his eyes open throughout



4 As step 3, but the tackler starts upright and steps into the tackle.



The tackler takes short steps before the tackle

5 The attacker walks forward towards the tackle and the tackler takes a step into the tackle and repeats step 4.

6 Develop by moving from walking, to jogging to higher speeds and closing from increasing distances.

You will need

- Plenty of space, preferably with soft ground
- 1 ball per pair
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Just add more pairs, making sure they all have enough space.

What to tell your players

"Keep your head behind or to the side of the attacker"

"Drive into the tackle with your feet"

Walking rugby

Get your players used to making tackles

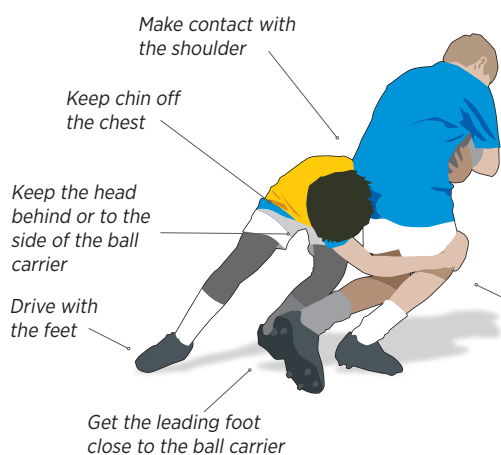
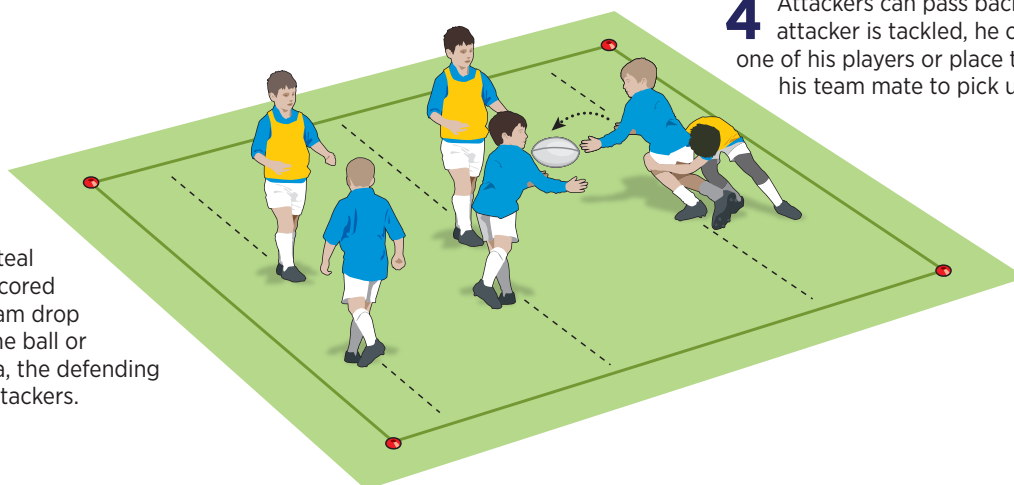
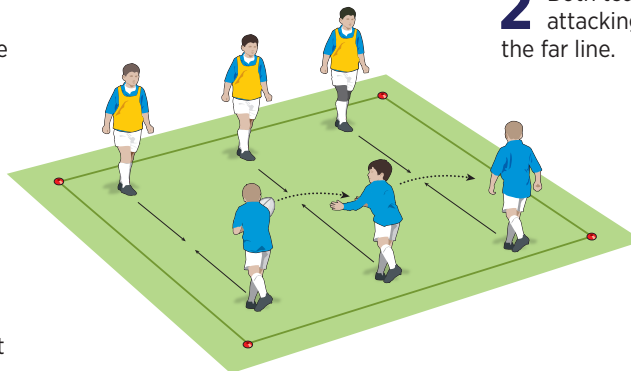
1 Split players into three defenders and three attackers. Place attackers on one side of the area and defenders on the other, facing them. One of the attackers has a ball.

2 Both teams walk forward, with the attacking team aiming to score over the far line.

3 The defending team can tackle above the knees and below the waist band and must not touch the ball.

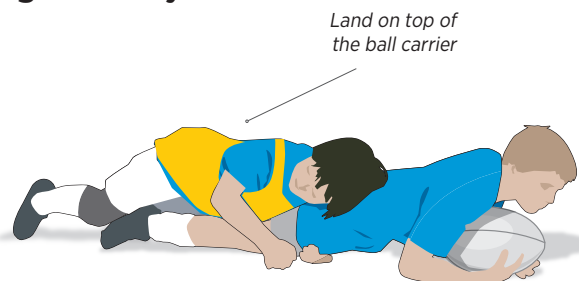
4 Attackers can pass backwards. If the attacker is tackled, he can pass to one of his players or place the ball for his team mate to pick up.

5 The defending team cannot steal the ball. If a try is scored or the attacking team drop the ball, run with the ball or step out of the area, the defending side become the attackers.



✓ Tackling correctly

Pull the ball carrier into the body with a "ring of steel" (that is a very tight grip) using the arms and chest



You will need

- A 5m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

If you have uneven numbers, play 4v3, 5v4 or 6v5 in larger areas. If you've 12+ players, run other games alongside.

What to tell your players

"Try and get a pass away when you're tackled"

Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Confident tackling

Get players used to making a low tackle against an attacker running at pace

1 Have a defender on one knee on the halfway line in the middle of the area, and an attacker on the sideline facing him.

2 The aim is for the defender to make five tackles on one side, in this case the right. He holds out his arm to show which side the attacker runs.

The attacker must attack the defender five times, getting slightly faster each time, in the following sequence:

1 Walk, 2 Fast walk, 3 Jog, 4 Fast jog, 5 Run

3 When you say "go", the attacker walks towards the defender's outstretched arm – his aim is to break through the tackle and continue to the far side of the area to score.

4 Once the attacker reaches the defender's right arm, the defender brings his left arm across to make the tackle. He grabs the attacker as tightly as possible, creating a "ring of steel" with his arms to stop the runner in his tracks.

5 No hand-offs or sidesteps allowed. Once both players have tackled on their right, change to the left.



✓ Making a low tackle

The tackler must aim to get his shoulder into the shorts of the attacker, with the head tight behind the shorts. Then wrap the arms around the legs and squeeze together – this is the "ring of steel". The momentum of the attacker will bring him over the tackler's shoulder and down onto the ground.

You will need

- A 4m x 3m area with a halfway line
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Get players in pairs performing the sequence simultaneously.

What to tell your players

"Make a 'ring of steel' around the attacker's legs"

"Keep your head tight to the attacker's body"

Key

Ground covered



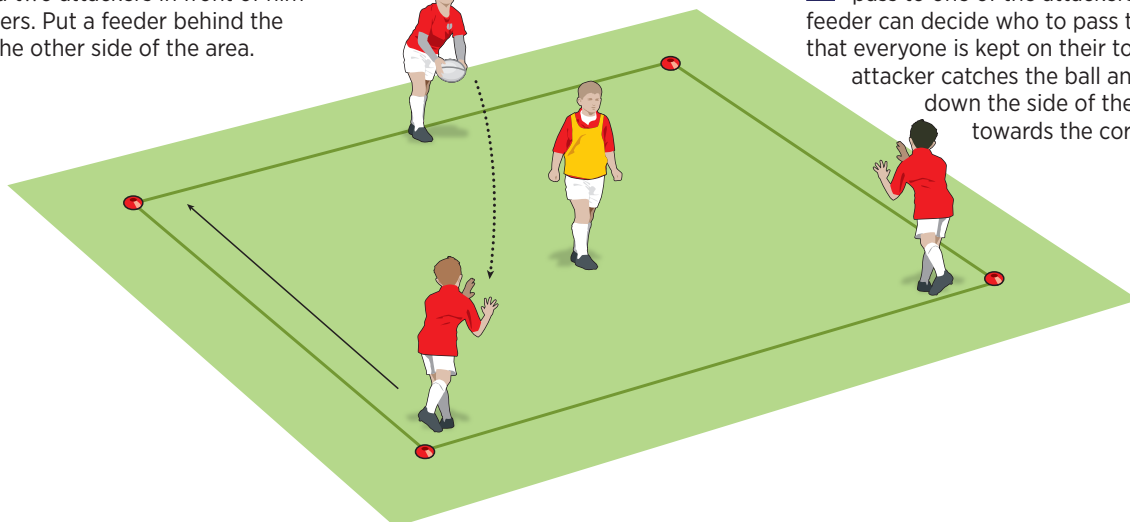
Direction of run



Side-on tackle reactions

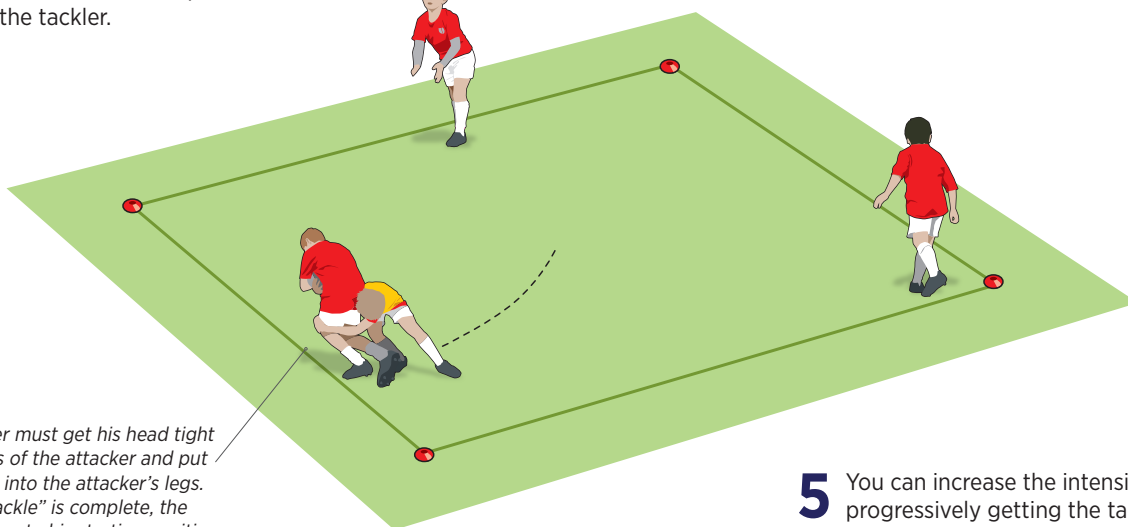
Get players getting the head tight to the shorts of the attacker and the shoulder into the attacker's legs when making a side-on tackle

1 Put a tackler in the middle of the area and two attackers in front of him on the corners. Put a feeder behind the tackler on the other side of the area.



2 When you say "go", have the feeder pass to one of the attackers. The feeder can decide who to pass to so that everyone is kept on their toes. The attacker catches the ball and runs down the side of the area towards the corner.

3 The tackler must react quickly and intercept the ball carrier before he gets to the corner. The tackler must get his head onto the shorts of the ball carrier in a tackling position, at which point the ball carrier stops and is released by the tackler.



The defender must get his head tight to the shorts of the attacker and put his shoulder into the attacker's legs. Once the "tackle" is complete, the tackler returns to his starting position

4 Have the tackler make at least four "tackles" before rotating players.

5 You can increase the intensity by progressively getting the tackler to grip the ball carrier, drive him out of the area and finally make a full tackle.

You will need

- A 4m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Set up more 4m squares and run the drill with other groups of four.

What to tell your players

"Get your head tight to the shorts"

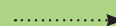
"Get your feet close to the ball carrier before putting your shoulder into his legs"

Key

Direction of run



Pass



Grapple tackle

Work on the strength of the grip in the tackle so that your tacklers can hold the ball carrier and then use their bodyweight to drag him down

1 Divide your players into pairs – make one of each pair an attacker and give him a ball. The other player in each pair is the tackler. Put three pairs in the centre of the area.

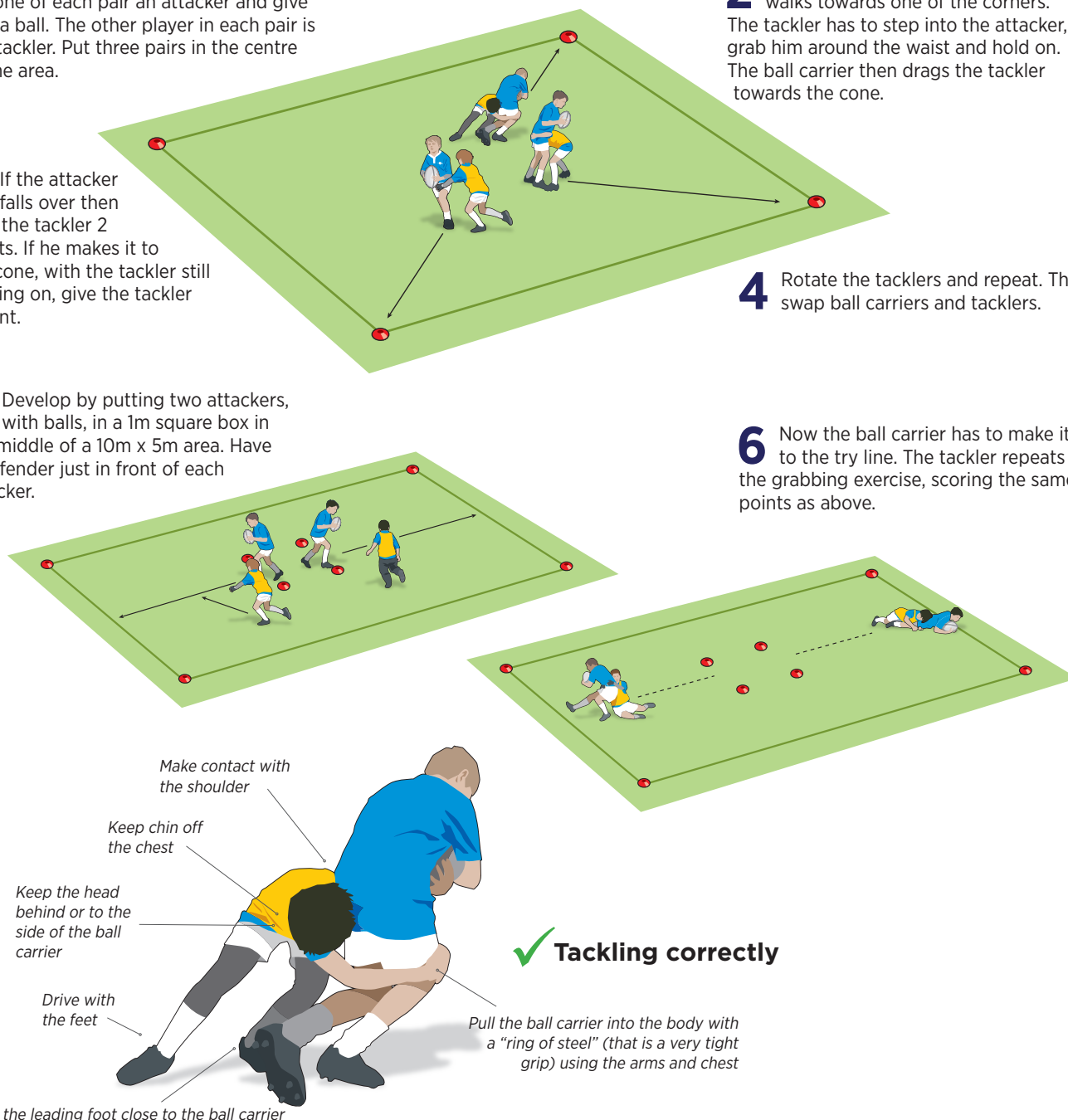
2 When you say “go”, each attacker walks towards one of the corners. The tackler has to step into the attacker, grab him around the waist and hold on. The ball carrier then drags the tackler towards the cone.

3 If the attacker falls over then give the tackler 2 points. If he makes it to the cone, with the tackler still holding on, give the tackler 1 point.

4 Rotate the tacklers and repeat. Then swap ball carriers and tacklers.

5 Develop by putting two attackers, with balls, in a 1m square box in the middle of a 10m x 5m area. Have a defender just in front of each attacker.

6 Now the ball carrier has to make it to the try line. The tackler repeats the grabbing exercise, scoring the same points as above.



You will need

- An 8m square area for the first part of the activity, then a 10m x 5m area with a 1m box for the second part.
- 1 ball per pair
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

Rotate players regularly, or run another game alongside.

What to tell your players

“Get your feet close to touch the player”
“Be light on your feet”

Key

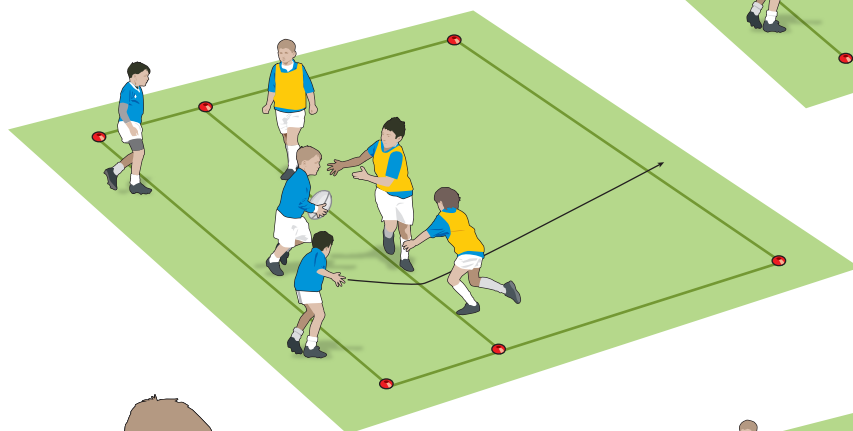
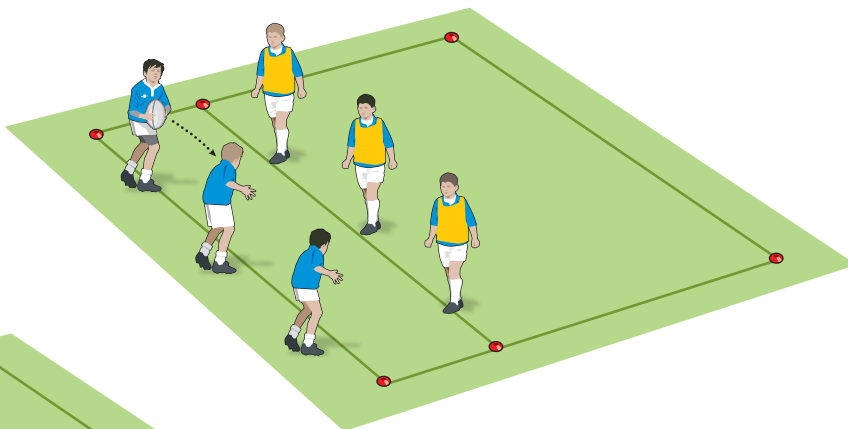
Ground covered ————
Direction of run →

Grab a tackle

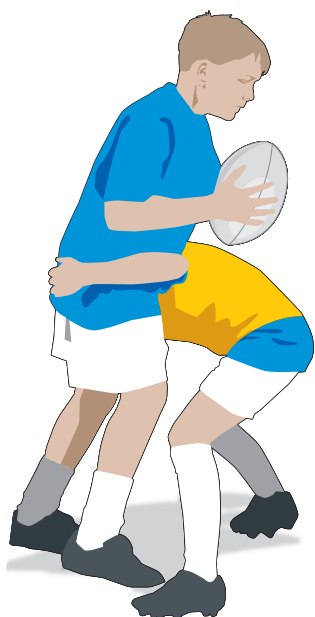
Get players grabbing and holding if they can't bring the attacker down

1 Divide your players into groups of three attackers and three defenders. The attackers line up on the edge of the area, and the defenders line up on the 1m in front of them.

2 The attackers pass a ball up and down the line between themselves. When you say "go", the ball carrier runs forward to try and score at the far side of the area.

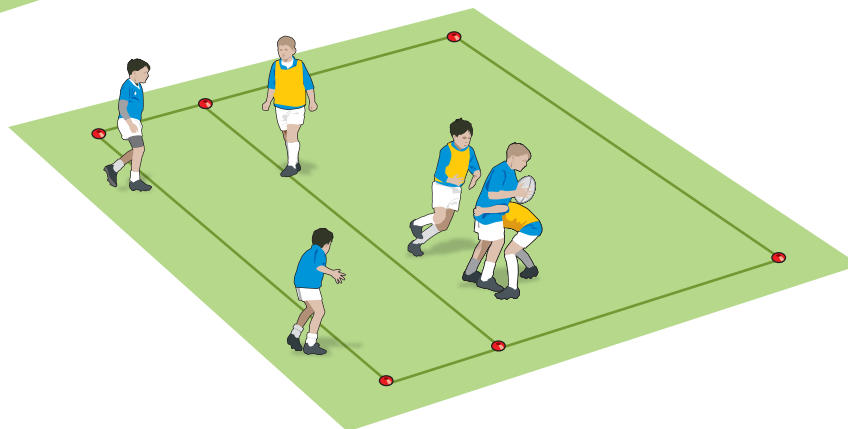


3 The defenders aim to grab and hold the attacker before he scores.



✓ Making a hold tackle

The tackler must have a strong grip and get his feet close to the ball carrier. This gives him a solid base, which helps prevent the ball carrier breaking the tackle.



4 After every tackle or score, return the ball to the start and go again. Change attackers and defenders every five attempts

You will need

- A 6m x 4m area with a line at 1m
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

Make the area wider and add more players up to 5v5, or run another game alongside.

What to tell your players

"Step into the ball carrier

"Get your shoulder into the ball carrier and then grip around his body"

Key

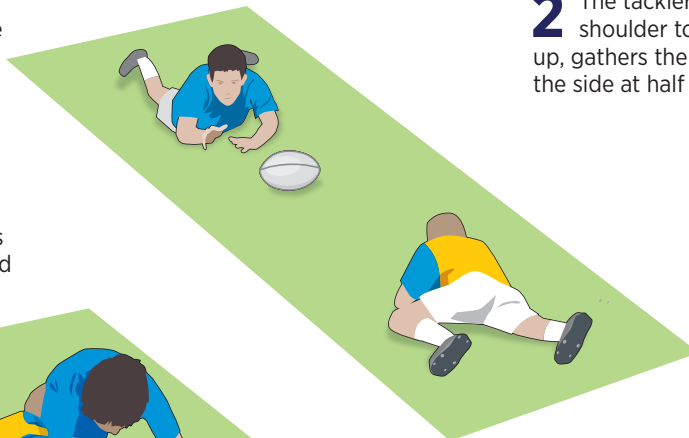
Direction of run



Tackling low

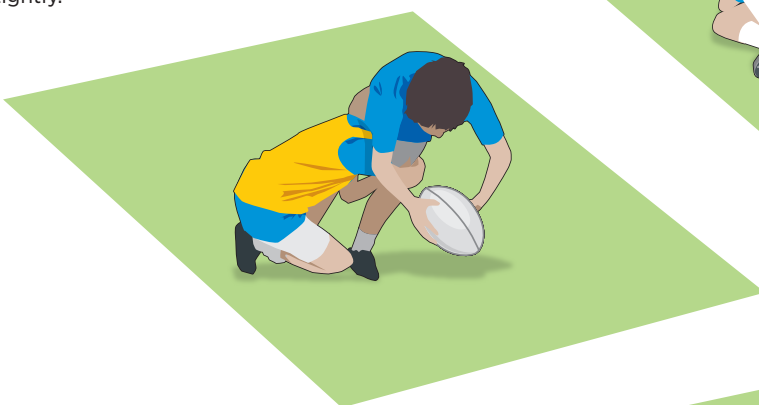
Get your players used to making low tackles and getting the ball carrier to ground quickly

1 Put an attacker on the ground on his front with a tackler, also on the ground, 3m away, facing him. Put the ball in front of the attacker.

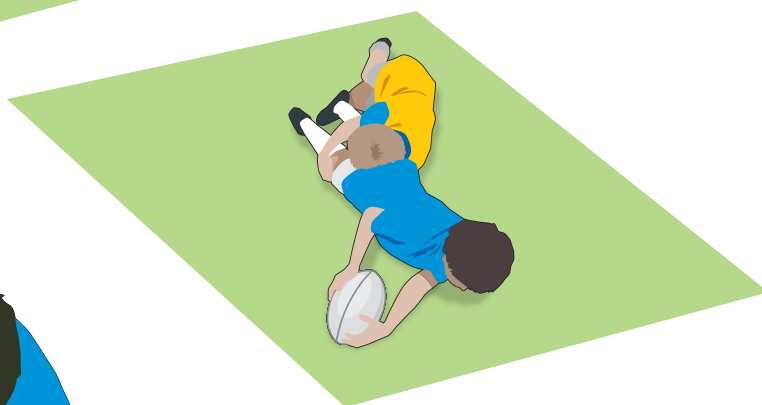


2 The tackler calls the attacker which shoulder to run to. The attacker gets up, gathers the ball and takes one step to the side at half pace.

3 The tackler gets to his feet and drives his shoulder into the thighs of the attacker just above the knee and grips tightly.



4 The tackler must finish with a tight grip with his head in hard on the attacker's legs (you, or another observer, check for this).



5 Players then swap roles and repeat. You can develop the activity by increasing the pace of the ball carrier, but don't let him step inside.



✓ Making a low tackle

The tackler must aim to get his shoulder into the shorts of the attacker, with the head tight behind the shorts. Then wrap the arms around the legs and squeeze together – this is the “ring of steel”. The momentum of the attacker will bring him over the tackler's shoulder and down onto the ground.

You will need

- A 10m x 5m area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

You can run this with as many pairs as you like but make sure they are at least 5m apart.

What to tell your players

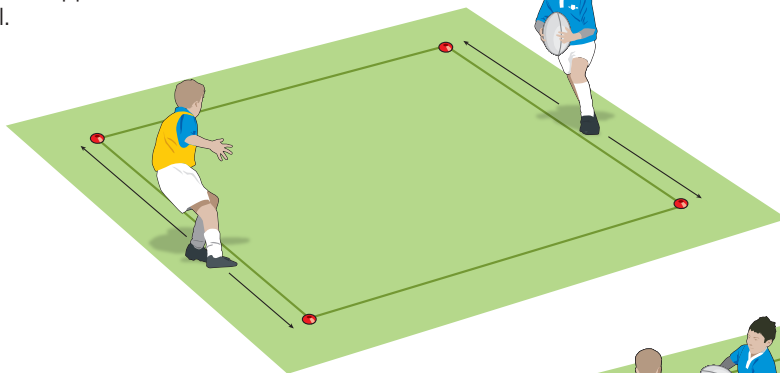
“Stay low and focus on the hips”

“Drive the shoulder into the side of the thighs and grip hard”

Front-on tackle tracking

Get your players used to getting in front of the ball carrier to make a strong front-on tackle

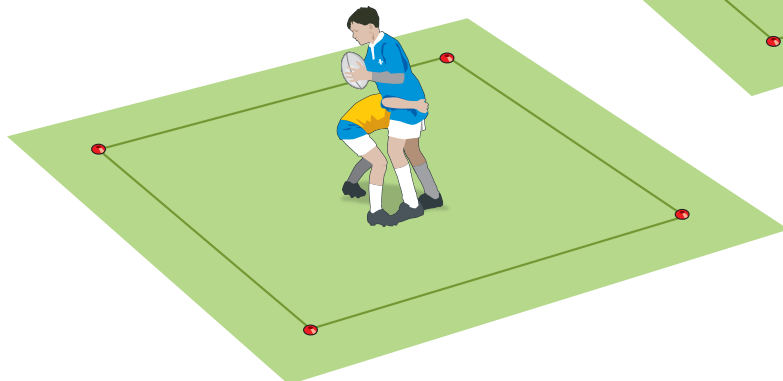
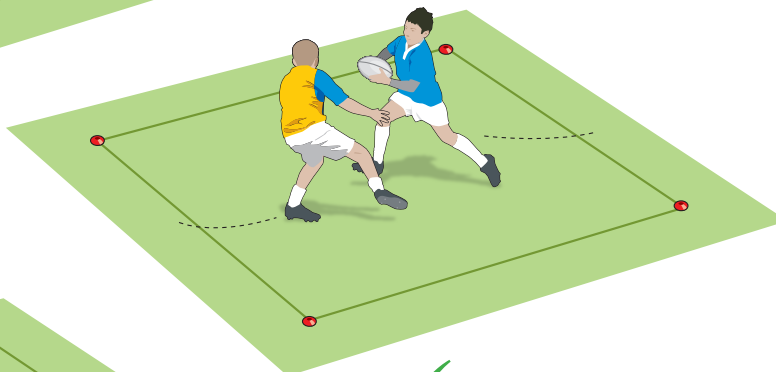
1 Mark out a 3m square area. Put an attacker on one side of the area and a defender on the opposite side. Give the attacker a ball.



2 When you say “go”, the attacker moves from side to side along his side of the area, while the defender tries to mirror his movements to stay opposite.

3 When the attacker thinks he has lost the defender, he runs forward and tries to cross the defender’s line to score.

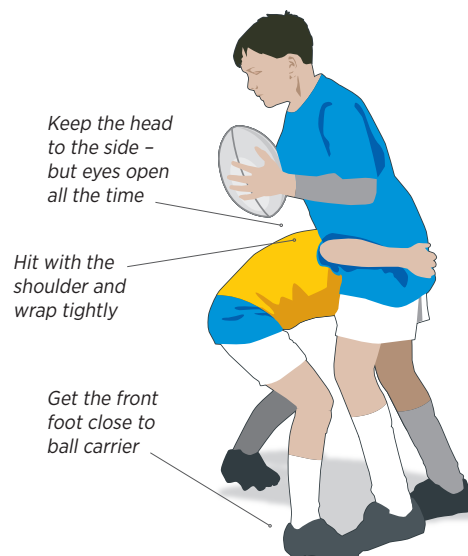
4 When the defender sees the attacker making his move, he moves forward to make the tackle.



5 Start at walking pace, then increase the speed.

6 Develop by having a feeder who passes to the attacker as he moves forward onto the ball.

✓ Making a front-on tackle



You will need

- A 3m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Set up more squares and run the drill with other pairs.

What to tell your players

“Work hard to stay opposite the ball carrier”
 “Get in front of the ball carrier and make front-on, not side-on, tackles”

Key

Ground covered



Direction of run



Shoulder tackling

Get your players to tackle safely with either shoulder

1 Mark out a 4m square area with cones halfway along each side. Put a line of ball carriers on one side of the area opposite a single defender.

3 The defender aims to approach the ball carrier from the side and make shoulder contact with his head behind the ball carrier's shorts, but not make a full tackle.

2 When you say "go", the defender jogs round one of the cones at the side of the area. When he reaches that cone, the first ball carrier runs forward into the middle of the area.

4 Once he has got into the correct position, the defender releases the ball carrier, runs back to his starting cones and then around the other cone to repeat on the other shoulder with the next ball carrier. At the same time the "tackled" player returns to the back of the line.

5 Give the defender up to six attempts before players swap roles. Increase the intensity by having the defender make a full tackle – gripping hard and taking the ball carrier to the ground.

✓ Shoulder tackling

The defender must get his head tight to the shorts of the attacker and put his shoulder into the attacker's legs – he doesn't drive the attacker the ground. Once the tackle is complete, the defender returns to his starting position.

You will need

- A 4m square area
- 1 ball per ball carrier
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Set up more squares and run the drill with other small groups.

What to tell your players

- "Get your feet close to the ball carrier"
- "Lead with your shoulder, keep your eyes open"
- "Get your head behind the ball carrier's shorts"

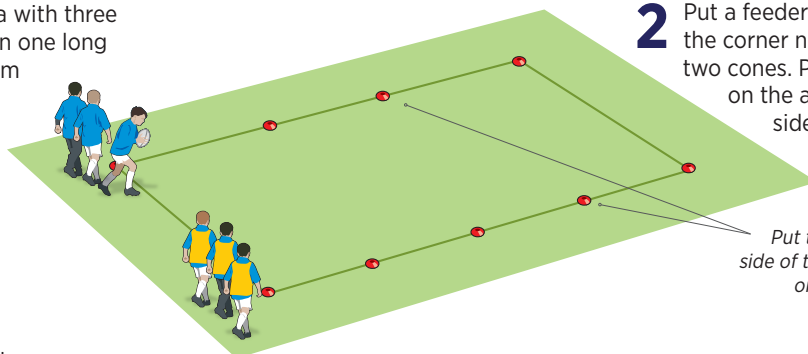
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	→

Double up in defence

Encourage players to reposition themselves in pairs to close down an attacker and stop his progress

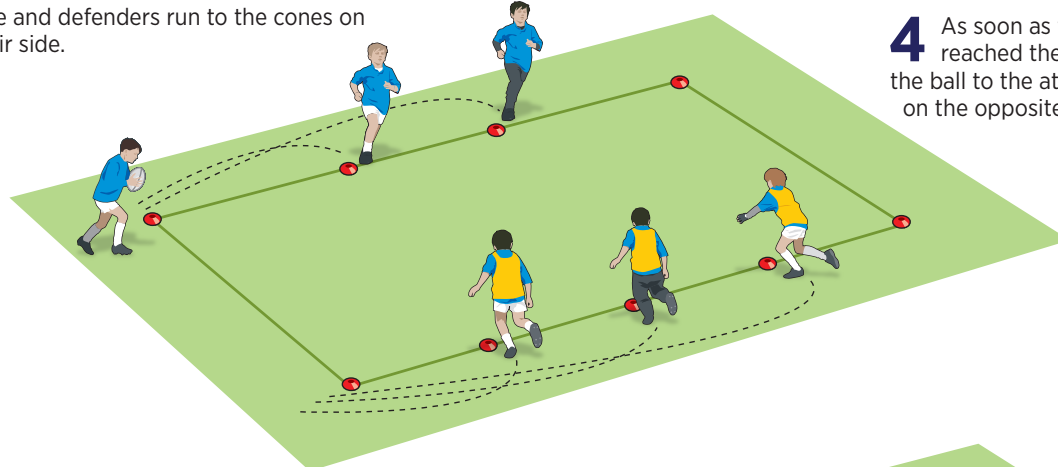
- 1** Mark out a 10m x 4m area with three cones spaced 2m apart on one long side and two cones spaced 3m apart on the opposite side.



- 2** Put a feeder and two attackers on the corner next to the side with two cones. Put three defenders on the adjacent corner on the side where there are three cones.

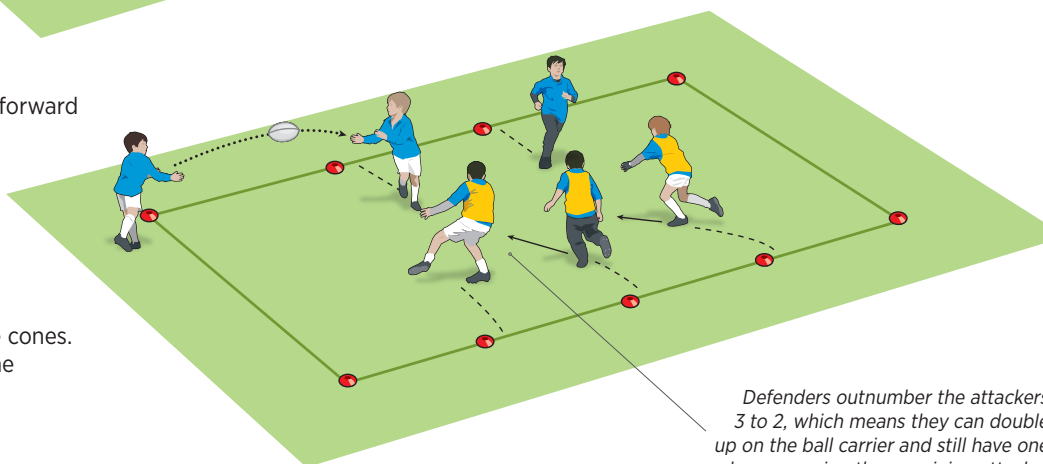
Put three cones on one side of the area, two cones on the opposite side

- 3** When you say “go”, the two attackers run to the cones on their side and defenders run to the cones on their side.



- 4** As soon as the attackers have reached the cones, the feeder passes the ball to the attackers who aim to score on the opposite side.

- 5** Defenders have to come forward and make a tackle, either individually or in pairs.



- 6** Develop by removing the cones. Then take away one of the defenders.

Defenders outnumber the attackers 3 to 2, which means they can double up on the ball carrier and still have one player covering the remaining attacker

You will need

- A 10m x 4m area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

This is a dynamic game so you can have players queuing to take their turn, or run another game alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Communicate which player you are marking”
- “Get feet close to the ball carrier”

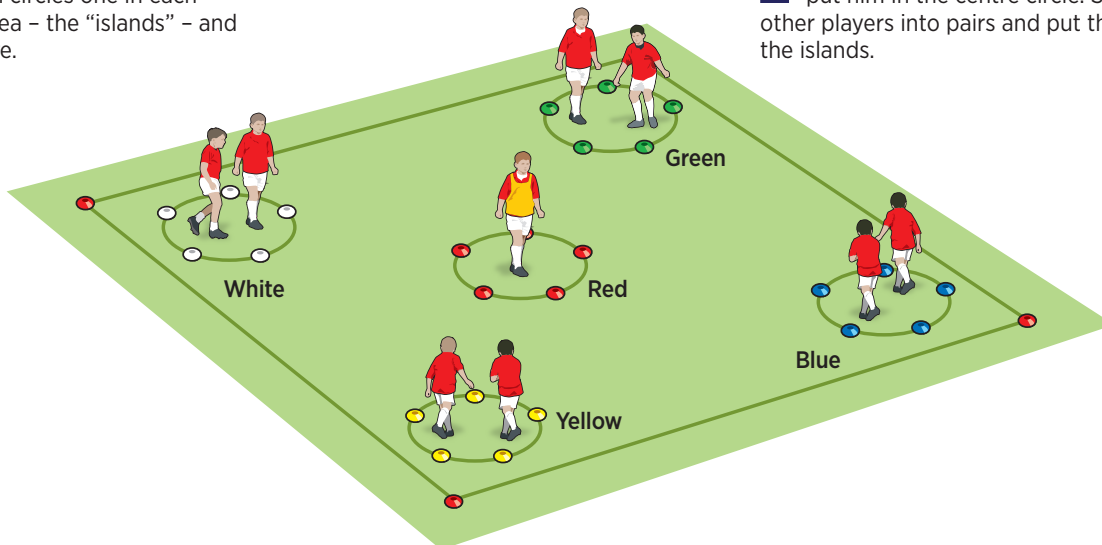
Key

- Ground covered ————
- Direction of run —————>
- Pass>

Shark attack

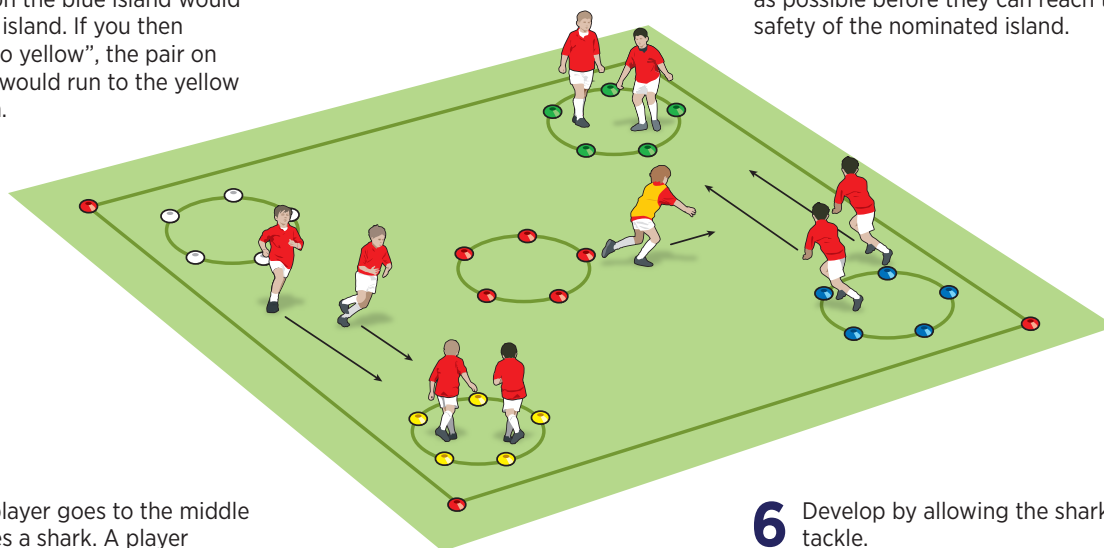
Get your players working on their evasion skills in attack and footwork skills in defence

1 Use cones to set up five different coloured 3m circles one in each corner of the area – the “islands” – and one in the centre.



2 Make one player the “shark” and put him in the centre circle. Split the other players into pairs and put them on the islands.

3 When you call out two colours, players must move from island to island. For example if you call “blue to green” the pair on the blue island would run to the green island. If you then shouted “white to yellow”, the pair on the white island would run to the yellow island, and so on.



4 At any time call “SHARK ATTACK” and the shark in the centre runs around and tries to touch as many players as possible before they can reach the safety of the nominated island.

5 A touched player goes to the middle and becomes a shark. A player who runs out of the area also becomes a shark. The game continues until all players are eliminated.

6 Develop by allowing the sharks to tackle.

You will need

- A 20m square area
- Coloured cones
- A bib for the shark (optional)

Got more players?

Make the area and circles bigger and start with three on each island and two sharks.

What to tell your players

“Be light on your feet”

“Keep moving forward, even if you have to evade a shark”

Key

Direction of run



Jailbreak defence

Get your players working hard to get close to other players, as if they were chasing a ball carrier

1 Divide your players into two teams and put one in each half of the area. The aim is for players to reach the opposite "jail" without being grabbed by a member of the other team. If a player reaches the jail and it's empty, his team wins the game.

2 When you say "go", all of the players start running – they have to be aware that although they are trying to reach the other side's jail, they also have to stop players getting to their own jail.

3 If a player is grabbed in the opposition's half, he has to go to their jail as a prisoner. A player's own half is a safe zone – he cannot be grabbed there.

4 A player in jail can be freed by a team mate breaking into the jail and taking him back to his own half.

5 When released, players are allowed to walk back to their own half without being grabbed, but they must hold onto each other as they do so and can't do anything else until they are back in their safe zone.

6 A team can also win the game if they capture all the members of the opposition team.

Players must think about both attack and defence – they are trying to reach the opposition's jail but also trying to stop opposition getting to their jail

You will need

- A 20m square area with a halfway line and a 5m square box – the "jail" – in a corner of each half (opposite corners)
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

5v5 or 6v6 are the ideal numbers. If you have more than 7-a-side then split into two games.

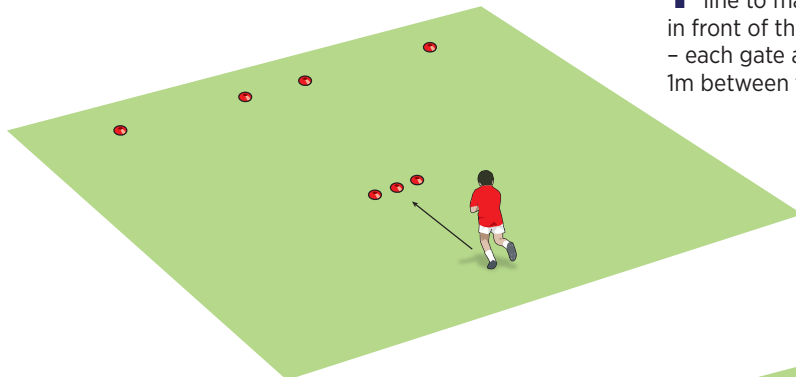
What to tell your players

"Get your feet close to touch the player"
"Be light on your feet"

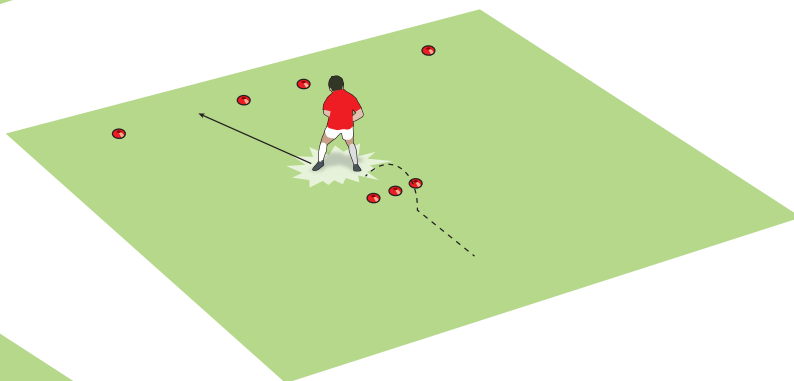
Sidestep jumps

Get players used to making sharp changes of direction by getting them to use a small jump before stepping left or right

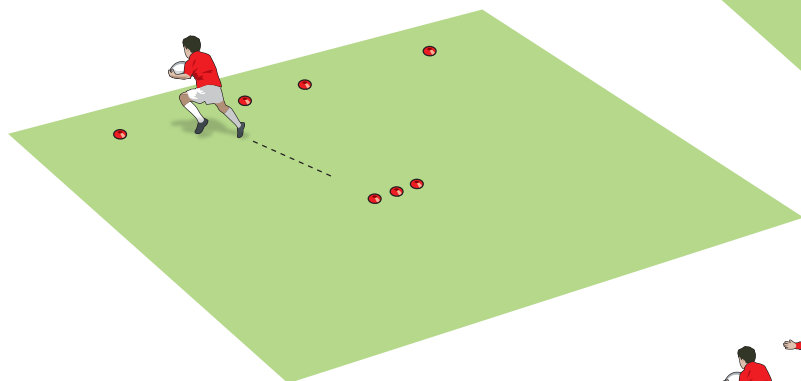
1 Put three cones close together in a line to make a little barrier. About 3m in front of them, put two gates of cones – each gate about 3m wide with a gap of 1m between them.



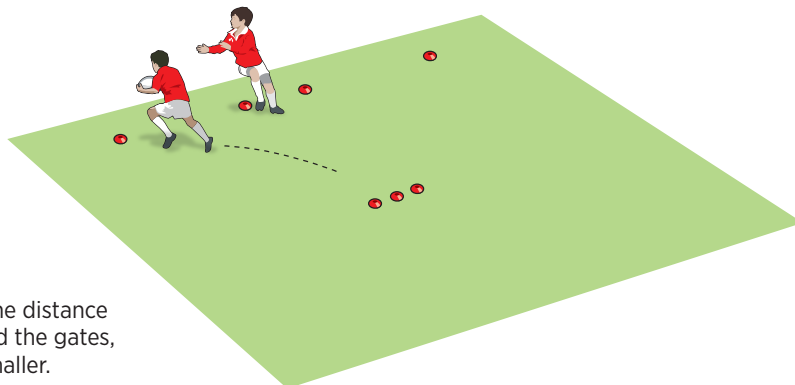
2 A player starts 2m in front of the cone barrier. Holding a ball in both hands, he runs forward and jumps over the barrier, landing on two feet.



3 The attacker then makes a dart either left or right through one of the gates (you can either let the player decide or call out which way you want him to go).



4 Make life difficult for the attacker by putting a defender in the gap between the cone gates. The defender cannot move his feet, but can stretch to try and grab the attacker.



5 Develop by changing the distance between the barrier and the gates, and by making the gates smaller.

You will need

- 1 ball
- Cones

Got more players?

This is a quick activity so you can have four or five lined up ready to go, or run more games.

What to tell your players

“Keep the ball in two hands to help maintain balance”

“Don’t leap, just make a small jump”

Key

Ground covered



Direction of run



Numbers game

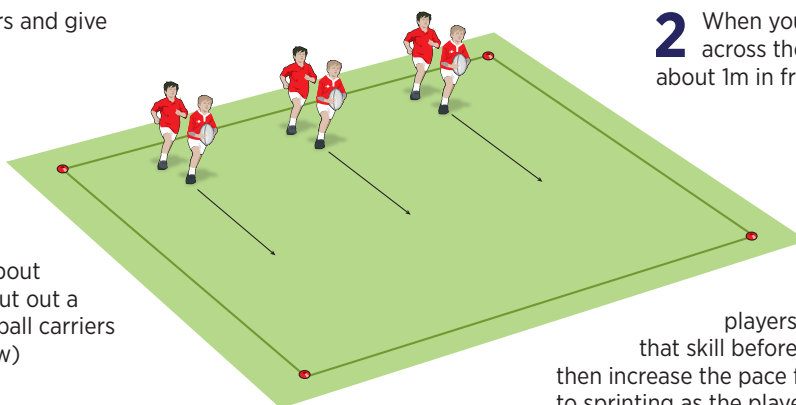
Get players used to getting into position to support the ball carrier

- 1** Split the players into pairs and give each pair a ball.

- 2** When you say “go”, the pairs run across the area, with the ball carrier about 1m in front of his partner.

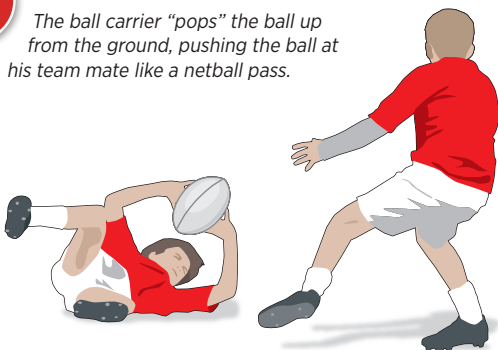
- 3** When the players are about halfway across, you shout out a number from 1 to 4 and the ball carriers perform an action (see below)

- 4** You can start by just calling one number until the players are comfortable with that skill before moving onto the next, then increase the pace from walking to jogging to sprinting as the players improve.



“1” Popping the ball up

The ball carrier “pops” the ball up from the ground, pushing the ball at his team mate like a netball pass.



“2” Picking up the ball

The ball carrier places the ball back towards his team mate who swoops to gather it up, getting one foot close to the ball to help with balance and to protect the ball.



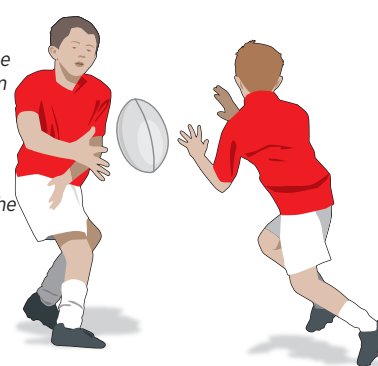
“3” Making a short pass

A short pass is also known as a “pop” pass where the ball carrier pops the ball up into the receiver. He turns his shoulders towards the receiver, who has his hands up ready to receive the ball.



“4” Making a short one-handed pass

Challenge your players to pass with one hand. This can help them pass around defenders. They cradle the ball between their hand and forearm and roll the ball off their hand towards the receiver.



You will need

- A 20m square area 2
- 1 ball per player
- Cones

Got more players?

If you have enough space (and balls) make the area wider and keep adding players.

What to tell your players

- “Keep two hands on the ball when running”
- “Call for the ball”
- “Pass for the player, not to the player”

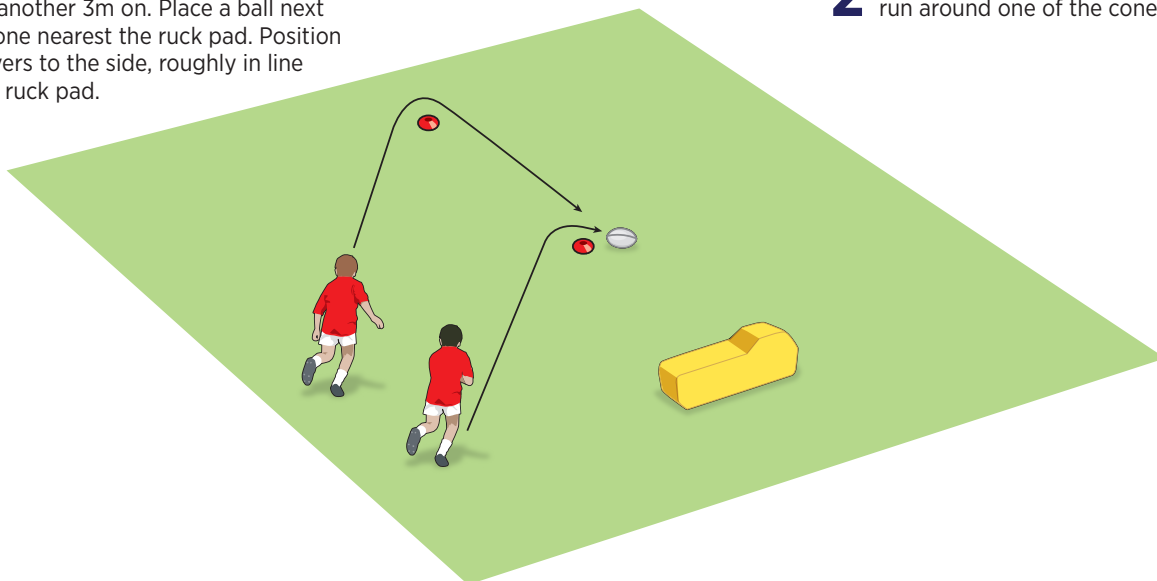
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Supporting at pace

Make players aware of the importance of support

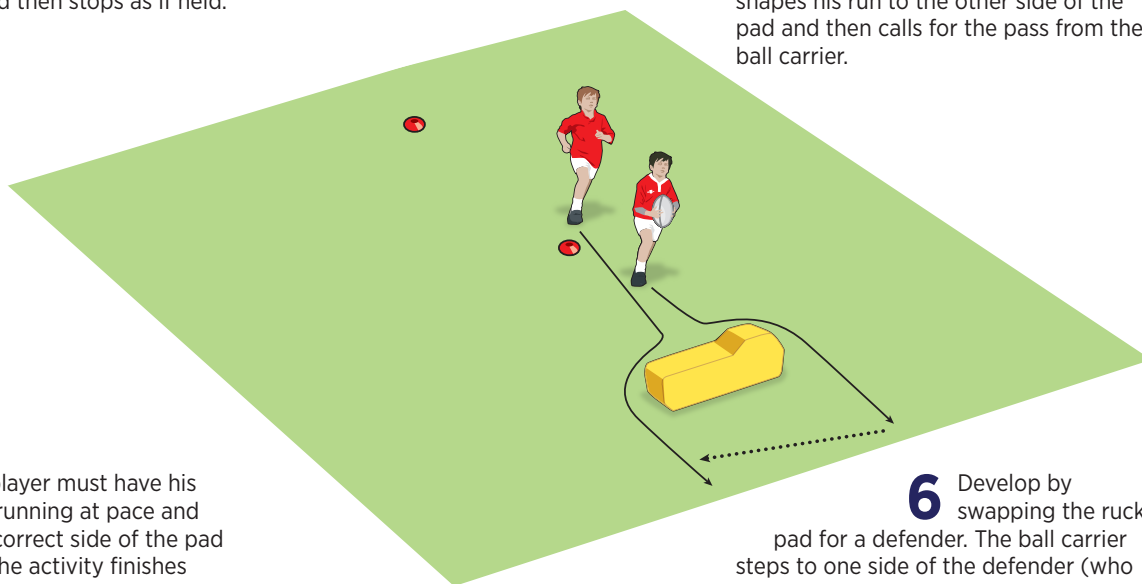
1 Place two cones 3m apart and a ruck pad another 3m on. Place a ball next to the cone nearest the ruck pad. Position two players to the side, roughly in line with the ruck pad.



2 When you say “go”, the players each run around one of the cones.

3 The player who runs round the cone nearest the ruck pad picks up the ball, runs to the ruck pad, steps to one side of the pad and then stops as if held.

4 Meanwhile, the player who runs round the far cone runs towards the ruck pad to support the ball carrier. He shapes his run to the other side of the pad and then calls for the pass from the ball carrier.



5 The support player must have his hands up, be running at pace and angle in from the correct side of the pad to take the pass. The activity finishes when the pass has been taken. Repeat with the roles reversed.

6 Develop by swapping the ruck pad for a defender. The ball carrier steps to one side of the defender (who must follow the ball carrier), and then passes to the support player.

You will need

- A 6m x 4m area with a line at 1m
- 1 ball
- Cones
- 1 ruck pad

Got more players?

Players can line up to take their turn, or you can set out other cones and pads for players to use.

What to tell your players

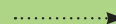
- “Turn the shoulders to pass”
- “Call for the ball”
- “Get your hands up to receive the pass”

Key

Direction of run



Pass



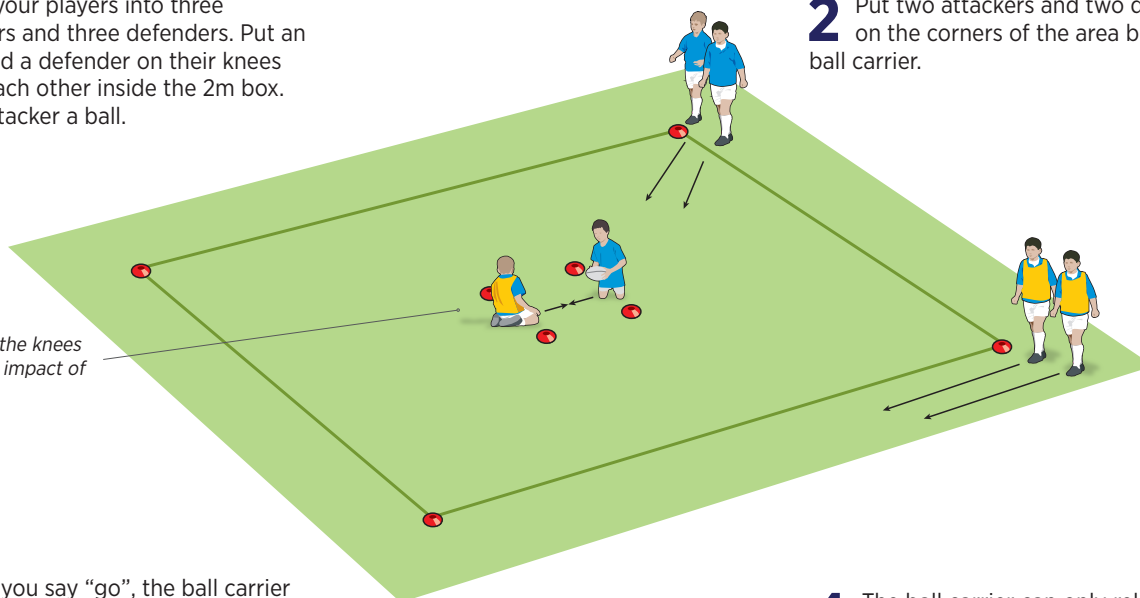
Best support options

Get players used to getting into position to take the ball from a tackled player

1 Divide your players into three attackers and three defenders. Put an attacker and a defender on their knees opposite each other inside the 2m box. Give the attacker a ball.

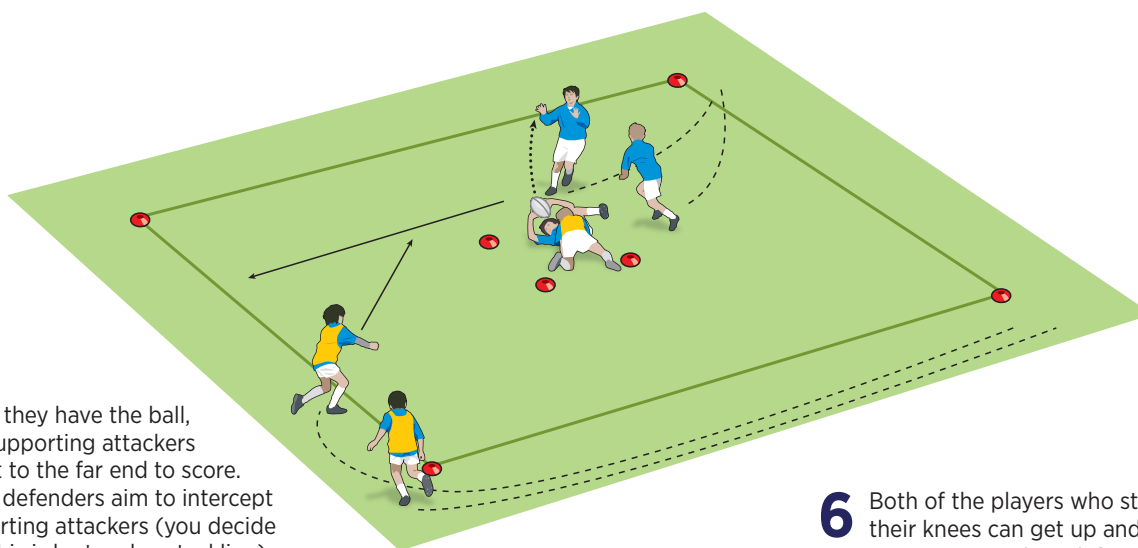
2 Put two attackers and two defenders on the corners of the area behind the ball carrier.

Starting on the knees reduces the impact of the tackle



3 When you say “go”, the ball carrier aims to get past the tackler by moving forward on his knees. The support players come to help him and the defenders race to the other end of the area before coming in.

4 The ball carrier can only release the ball once he is tackled. Support players can rip or pick up the ball or the ball carrier can make a pop pass from the floor.



5 Once they have the ball, the supporting attackers aim to get to the far end to score. The other defenders aim to intercept the supporting attackers (you decide whether this is by touch or tackling).

6 Both of the players who started on their knees can get up and join their team mates in attack or defence.

You will need

- A 10m square area with 2m square box in the centre
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

You can make the area bigger and add more players on each side, or run another game.

What to tell your players

“Tell the tackled player you are in support”

“Get in behind the tackled player so you can go either left or right”

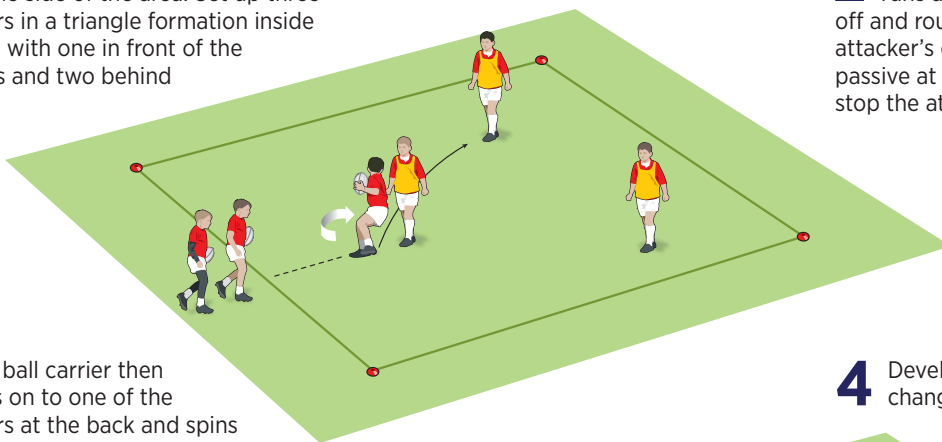
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Spin out of contact

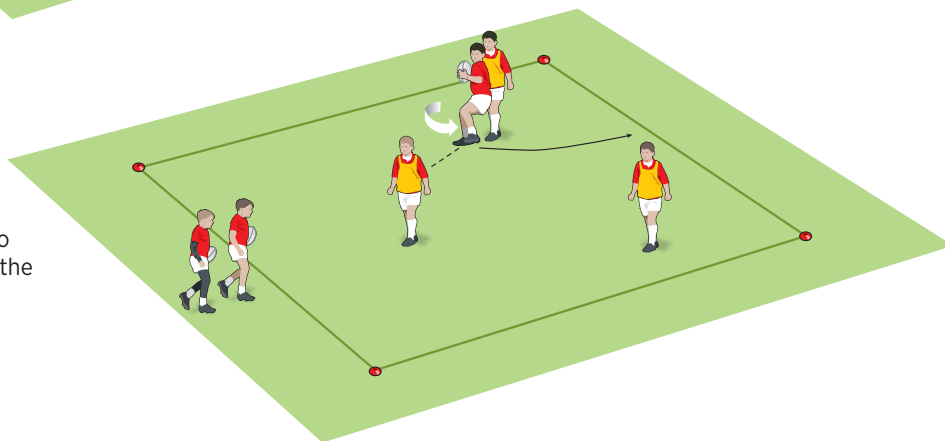
Get your players used to evading a tackle by spinning

1 Put a line of attackers, each with a ball, on one side of the area. Set up three defenders in a triangle formation inside the area, with one in front of the attackers and two behind him.



2 When you say “go”, the first attacker runs at the front defender and spins off and round him, to the left or right (the attacker’s choice). The defender remains passive at all times and doesn’t try to stop the attacker.

3 The ball carrier then runs on to one of the defenders at the back and spins the opposite way – this means that he spins off both feet in quick succession.

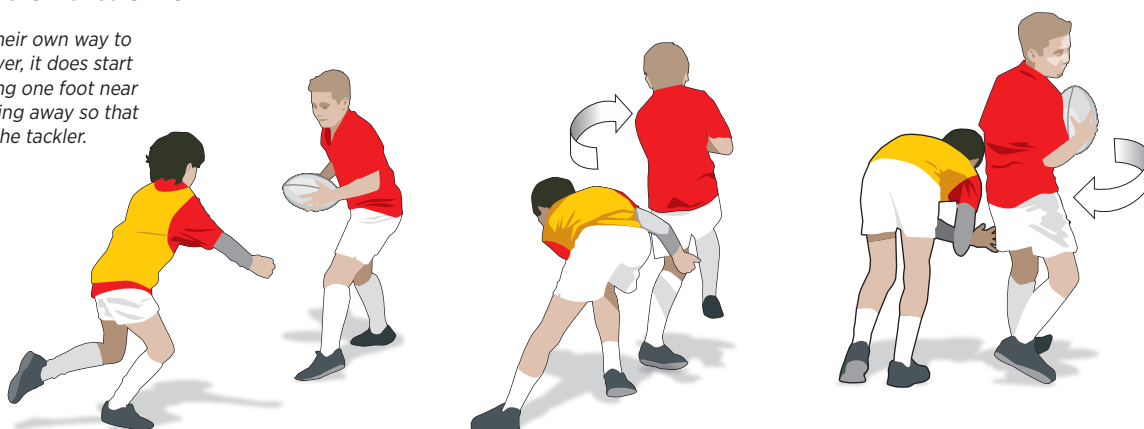


4 Develop by getting the attacker to change hands between spins.

5 Develop further by making the defenders “live” and allow them to slap any ball they can reach to ensure the spins are technically correct.

✓ Spinning out of a tackle

Let the players work out their own way to spin out of a tackle. However, it does start with the ball carrier planting one foot near the tackler and then spinning away so that the ball is out of reach of the tackler.



You will need

- A 10m square area
- 1 ball per attacker
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

This activity moves quickly, so you can line up lots of attackers, or set up another game alongside.

What to tell your players

“Spin on the pad of the foot behind the big toe”
“Keep the ball away from the defender”

Key

Ground covered



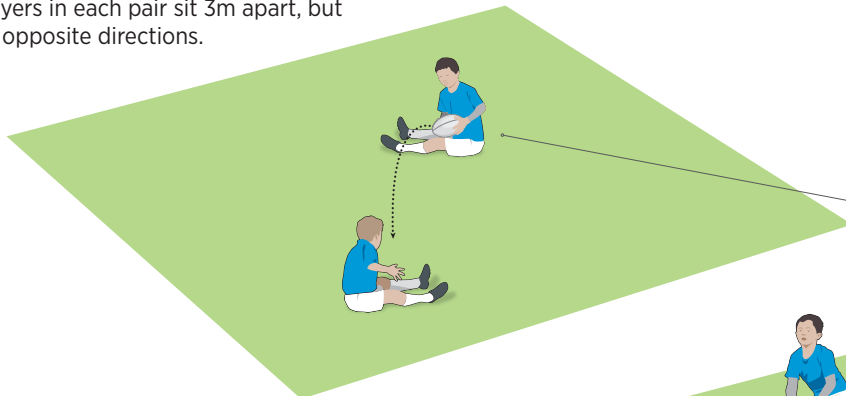
Direction of run



The basics of passing

Get your players passing the ball towards the target at the right height

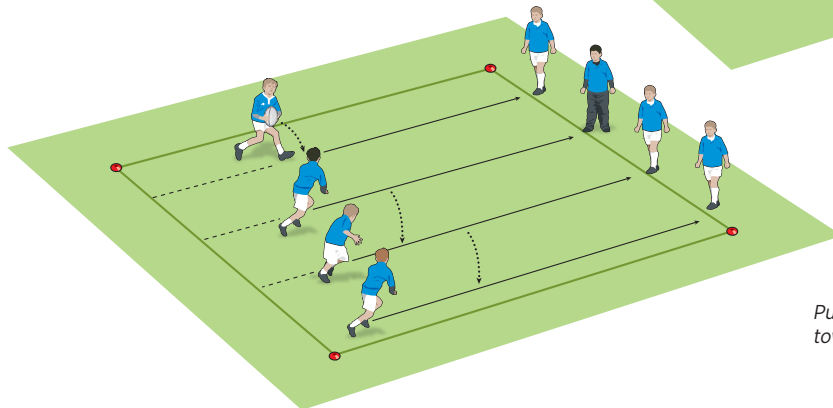
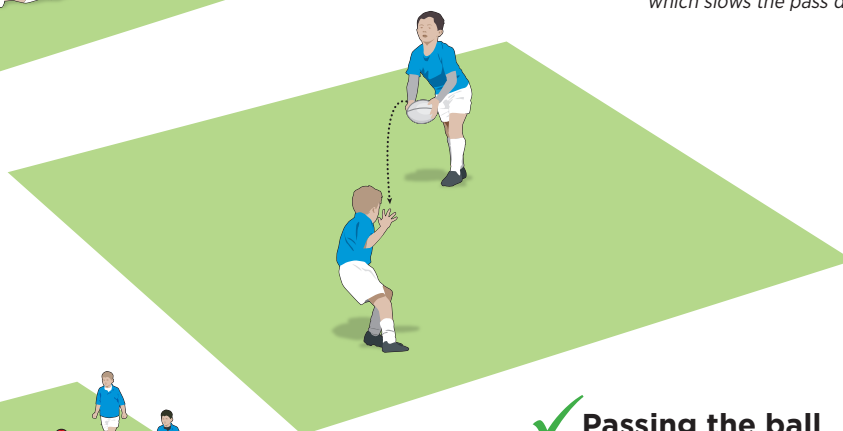
- 1** Split your players into pairs. The players in each pair sit 3m apart, but facing opposite directions.



- 2** The players pass a ball back and forth, each pass going to the chest of the other player. After 1 minute, ask players to turn around to change the hand they pass off.

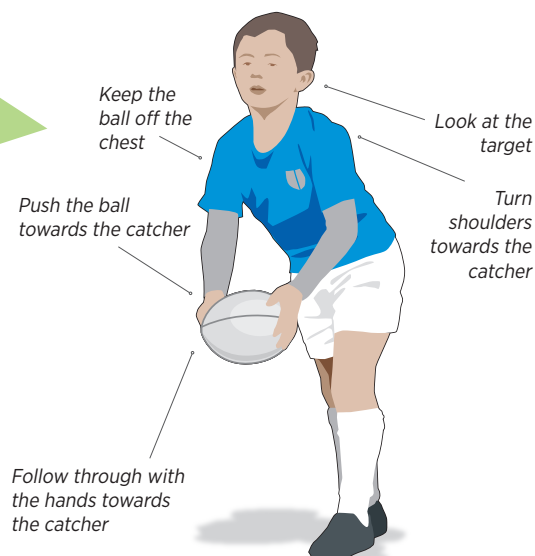
When sitting down, players are forced to pass the ball at the correct height. Sitting also keeps players' arms from swinging downwards, which slows the pass down

- 3** Once they are comfortable passing the ball from a sitting position, players get to their feet and continue passing, while still facing in opposite directions.



- 4** Finally, have groups of four players running through a 10m area passing along the line. When one group gets to the end, they hand the ball to the next group who repeat the exercise running in the opposite direction.

✓ Passing the ball



You will need

- 1 ball for each pair
- Cones
- A 10m square area for the final exercise

Got more players?

Not a problem when players are in pairs, but add another 10m area for the final activity.

What to tell your players

"Point the hands towards the target after releasing the ball"

"Keep the ball above the hips when passing"

Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Count your passes

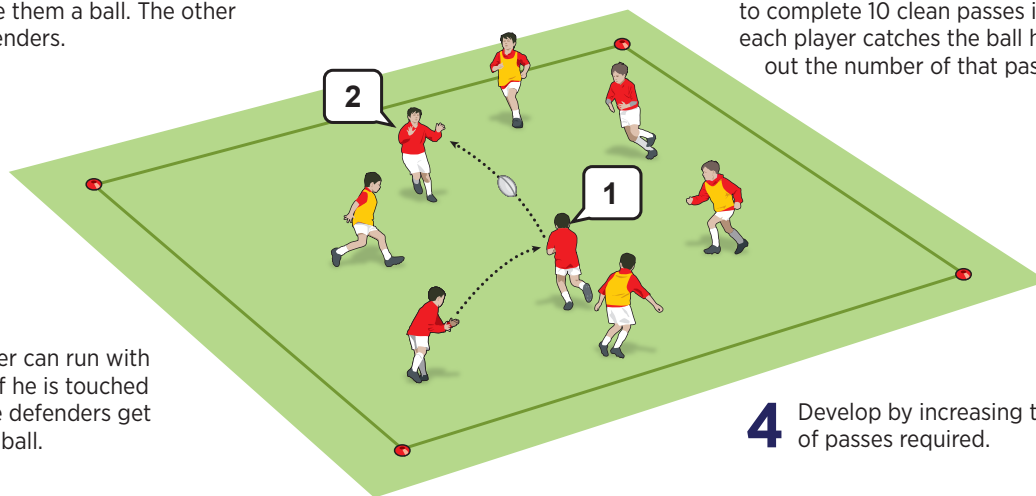
Get your players to look for team mates, call to each other and pass accurately under pressure

1 Split your players into two teams of 4- or 5-a-side. Make one team attackers and give them a ball. The other team start as defenders.

2 The attackers can pass in any direction to a team mate. Their aim is to complete 10 clean passes in a row. As each player catches the ball he must call out the number of that pass.

3 The ball carrier can run with the ball, but if he is touched by a defender, the defenders get possession of the ball.

4 Develop by increasing the number of passes required.



✓ Count your passes – the rules

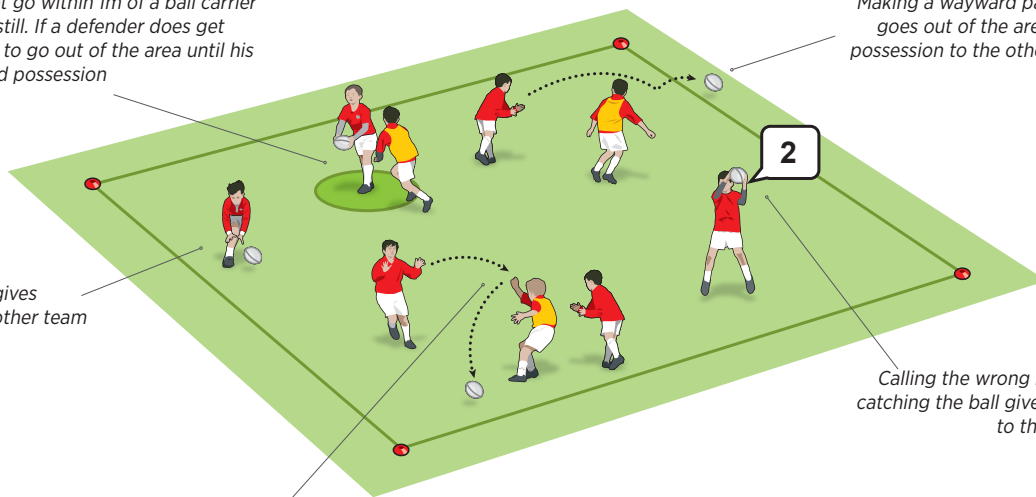
Defenders cannot go within 1m of a ball carrier who is standing still. If a defender does get too close, he has to go out of the area until his team have gained possession

Making a wayward pass that goes out of the area gives possession to the other team

Dropping the ball gives possession to the other team

If a defender knocks the ball down, he doesn't gain possession – the ball must be intercepted with a clean catch. The attackers keep the ball but start their count again from the beginning

Calling the wrong number after catching the ball gives possession to the other team



You will need

- A 20m square area
- Cones
- Bibs
- 1 ball

Got more players?

It's better to run two games with smaller sides than one big game with lots of players.

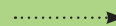
What to tell your players

"Point your hands towards the player you're passing to after releasing the ball"

"Move to space when you don't have the ball"

Key

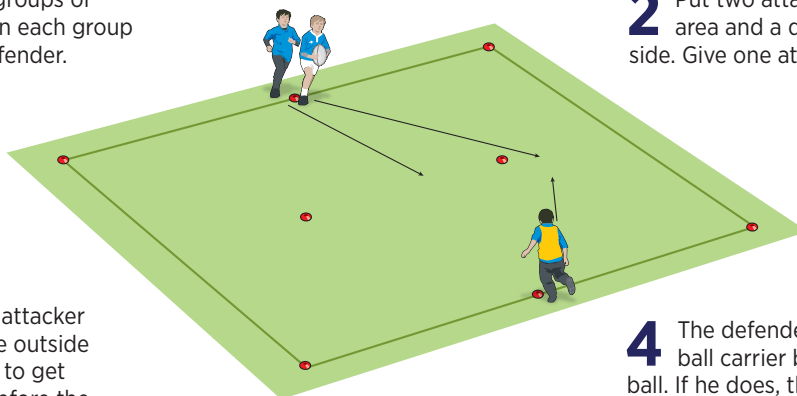
Pass



Gate chase

Get players used to drawing a defender towards them and then making a pass inside to a support player

1 Divide your players into groups of three. Make two players in each group attackers and the other a defender.

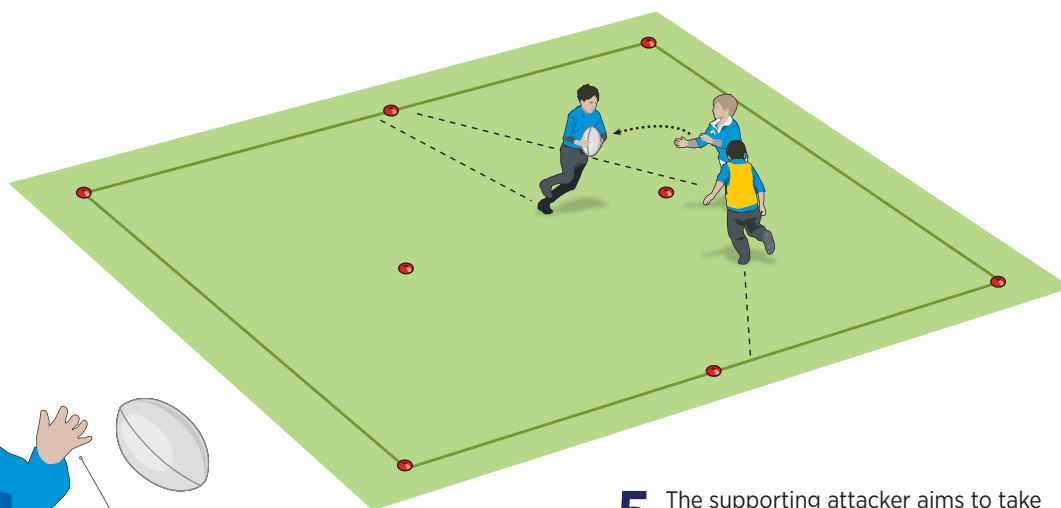


2 Put two attackers on one side of the area and a defender on the other side. Give one attacker a ball.

3 When you say “go”, the attacker with the ball races to the outside of one of the cones. He aims to get level with or past the cone before the defender reaches him and then pass the ball inside to the second attacker who is running in support.

4 The defender aims to tackle the ball carrier before he can pass the ball. If he does, then the defender has won that bout.

✓ Running onto a pass



Push hands out towards the passer



Keep fingers relaxed and pointing upward

Keep the ball off the chest when receiving the pass

5 The supporting attacker aims to take the pass through the middle of the cones and sprint to the other side of the area to score. Once through, the next group go.

You will need

- A 10m square area with a 4m coned gate in the centre
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Players can line up ready to take their turn, or you can run more games alongside.

What to tell your players

“Keep the ball in two hands
“Push the ball towards your team mate as you make the pass”

Key

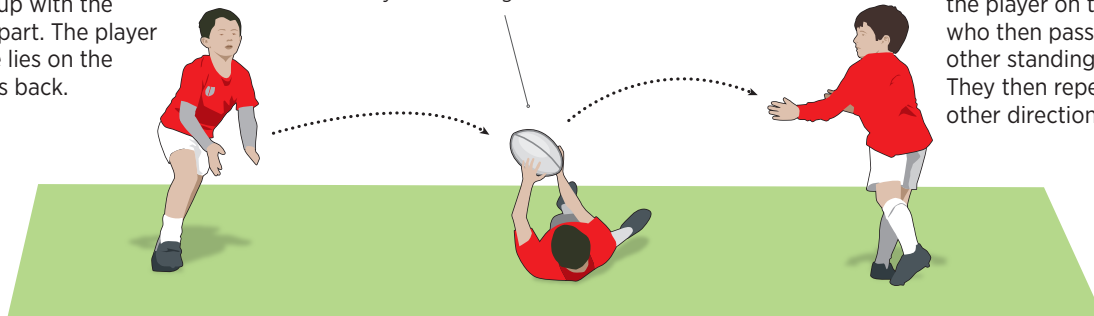
Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Passing with arms and hands

Get your players using the right body movements for proper passing actions

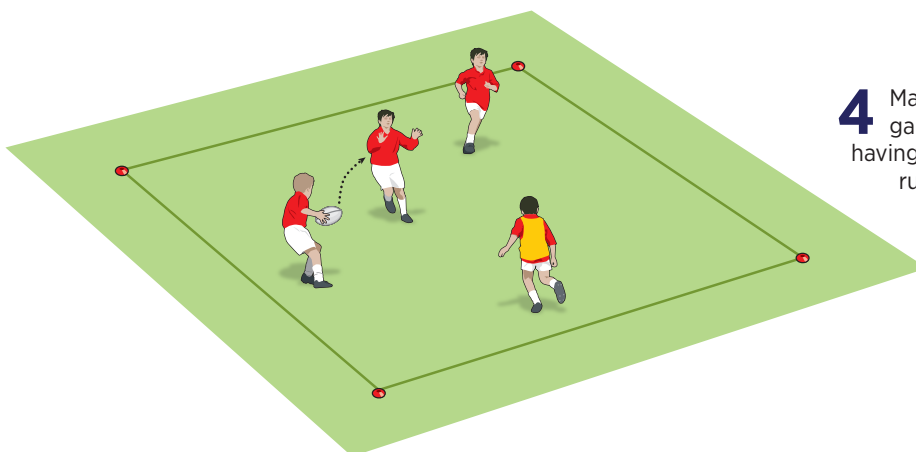
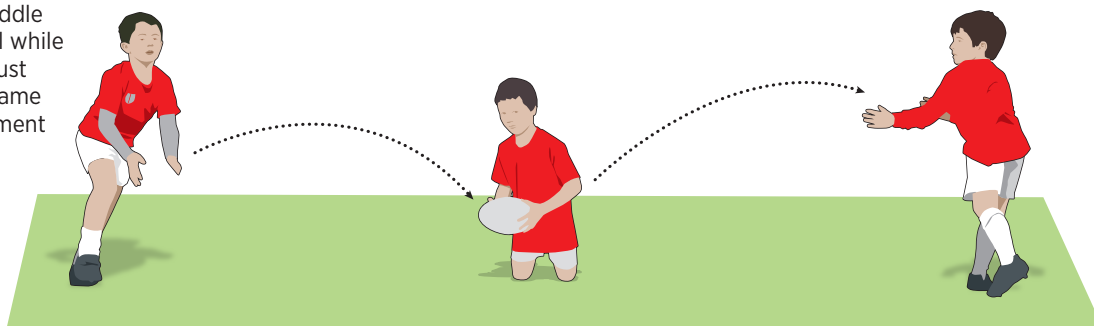
1 Divide your players into groups of three and give each group a ball. Get each three to line up with the players 5m apart. The player in the middle lies on the ground on his back.

At first the player on the ground will try to push the ball like a basketball chest pass, but remind him he must pass the same way as if standing



2 When you say “go”, the standing player on one side passes the ball to the player on the ground who then passes to the other standing player. They then repeat in the other direction.

3 Progress the activity by getting the middle player to kneel while passing. He must maintain the same passing movement throughout.



4 Make the activity more like a real game by adding a defender and having the middle player first walk then run with the ball before passing.

You will need

- A 5m square area for the last part of the activity
- 1 ball per three players
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

Keep adding groups of three, as long as you have the space and the balls

What to tell your players

“Put your hands out to receive the ball”

“Pass the ball across the body and release it to the next player”

Key

Pass



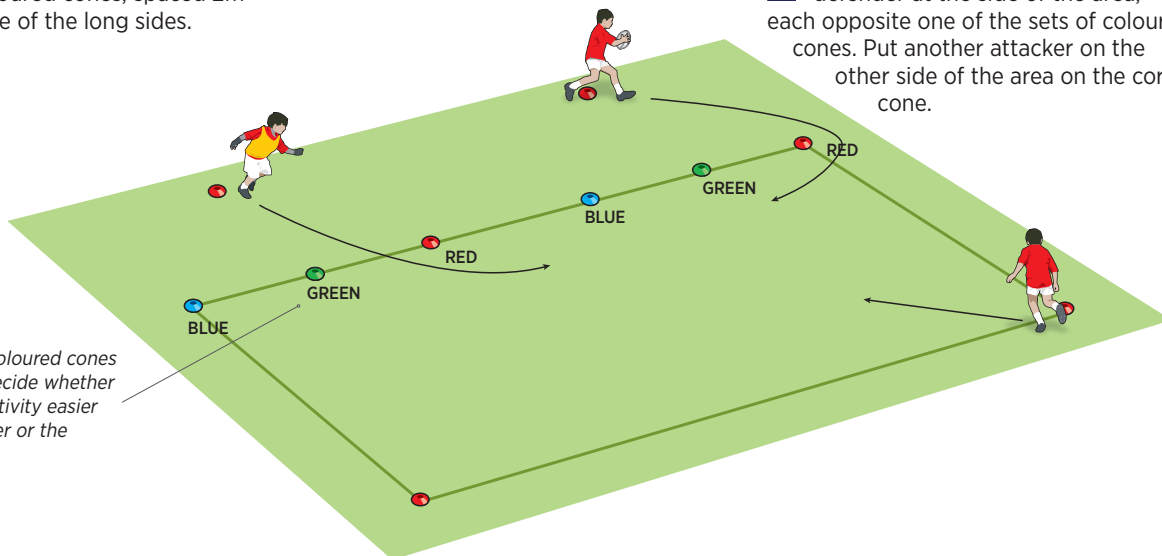
Draw to score

Get your players used to drawing the defender and passing to the player in support

- 1** Set out a 15m x 5m area with two sets of three coloured cones, spaced 2m apart, along one of the long sides.

- 2** Put an attacker with a ball and a defender at the side of the area, each opposite one of the sets of coloured cones. Put another attacker on the other side of the area on the corner cone.

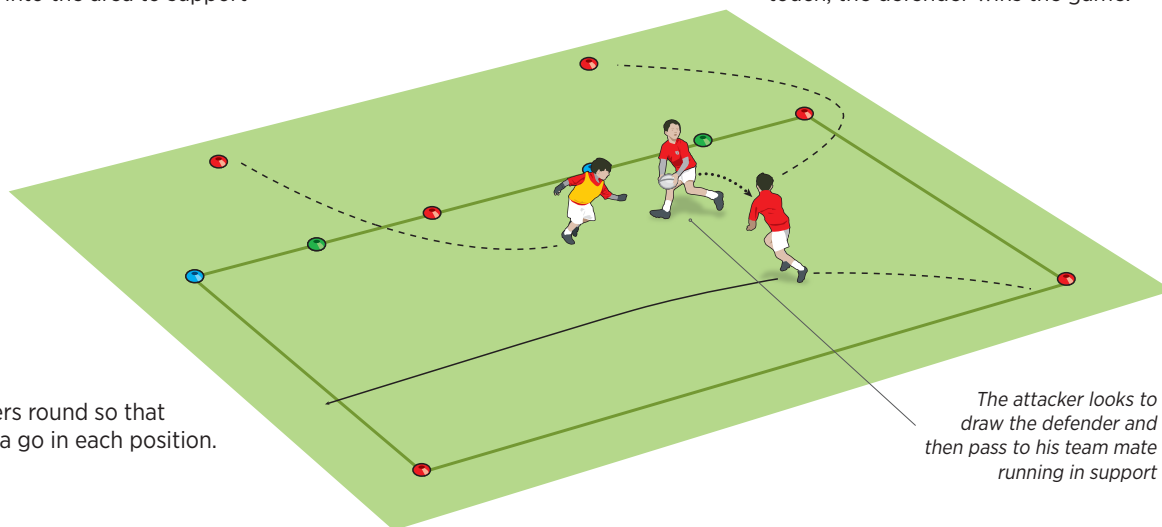
The different coloured cones allow you to decide whether to make the activity easier for the defender or the attackers



- 3** Shout out a colour – in this case “red”. The ball-carrying attacker and the defender have to each run round their red cone and into the area. The second attacker also runs into the area to support his team mate.

- 4** The attackers aim to get to the far end of the area to score. The defender aims to touch whoever is in possession of the ball – if he makes the touch, the defender wins the game.

- 5** Change players round so that they all have a go in each position.



You will need

- A 15m x 5m
- 1 ball
- Coloured cones

Got more players?

This is a fast game so players can line up to take their turn, or run another game alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Keep the ball in two hands
- “Run hard at the defender”
- “Attack the inside shoulder of the defender”

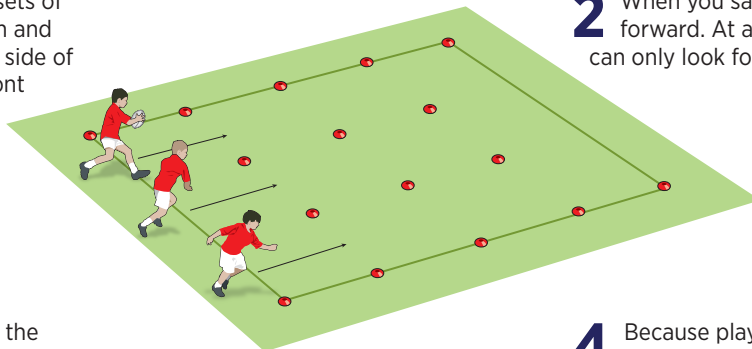
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Passing pace

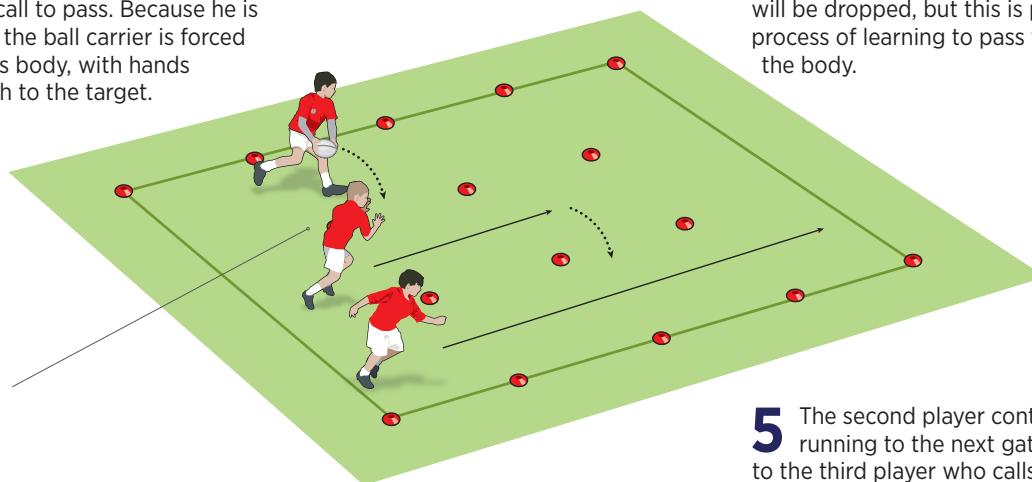
Encourage accurate passing and communication when running in support

1 Set out a 10m x 6m area with sets of three 2m cone gates at 3m, 5m and 7m. Put three attackers along one side of the area with the cone gates in front of them. Give a ball to a player at one end.



2 When you say “go”, the players run forward. At all times, the ball carrier can only look forward, not to his side.

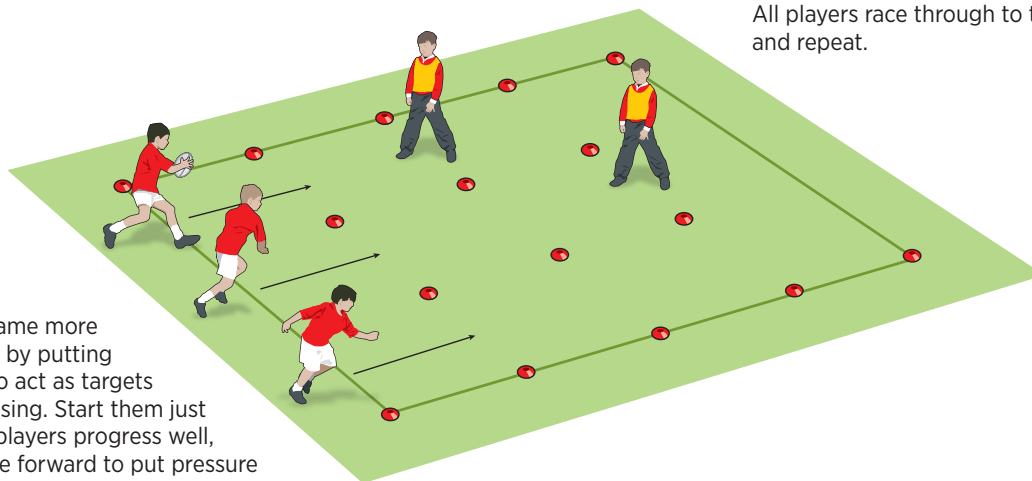
3 When the ball carrier reaches the first gate, the second player in the line gives him a call to pass. Because he is looking forward, the ball carrier is forced to pass across his body, with hands following through to the target.



4 Because players can only look forward, it's inevitable that the ball will be dropped, but this is part of the process of learning to pass the ball across the body.

5 The second player continues running to the next gate and passes to the third player who calls for the ball. All players race through to the line, turn and repeat.

6 Make the game more challenging by putting two defenders to act as targets to fix before passing. Start them just standing, but if players progress well, make them come forward to put pressure on the ball attackers.



You will need

- A 10m x 6m
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Run another game alongside.

What to tell your players

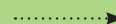
- “Pass softly, but with the hands following through to the potential target”
- “Run straight and call for the ball”
- “Put your hands out towards the pass”

Key

Direction of run



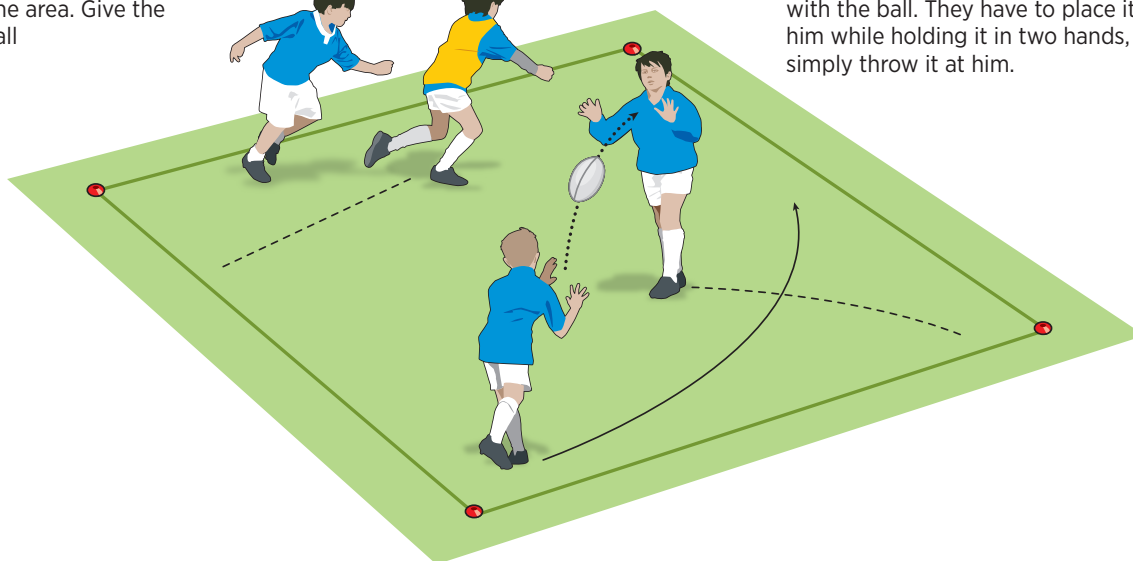
Pass



Corner ball

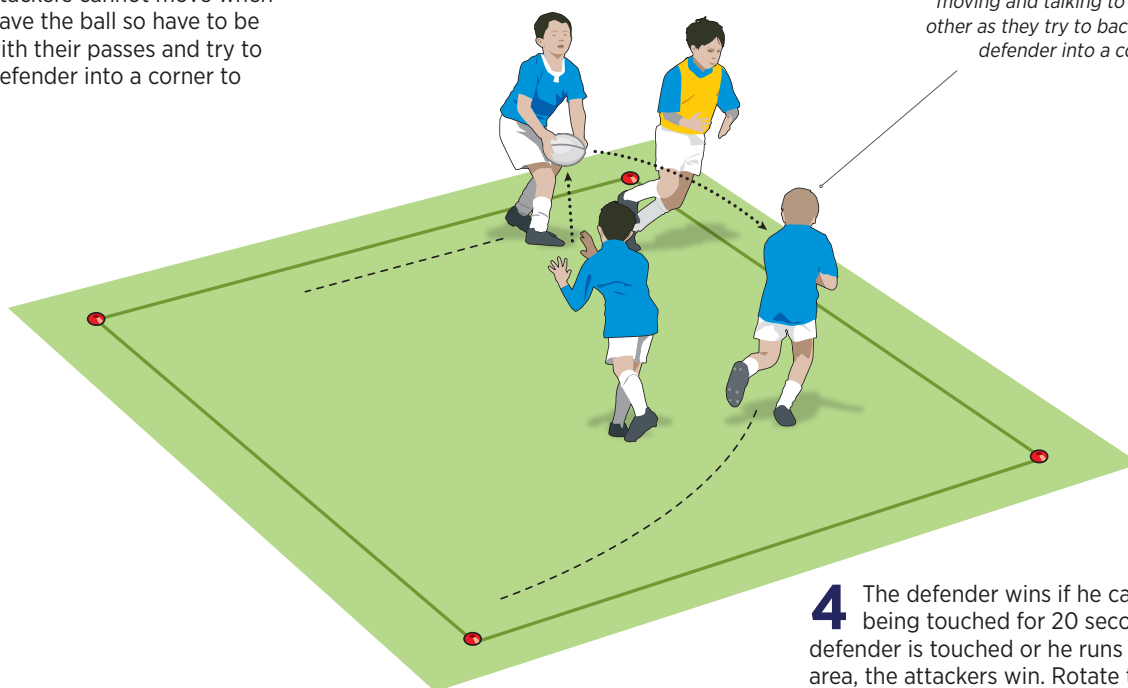
Improve players spatial awareness, communication and footwork when handling

- 1** Mark out a 5m square area. Put three attackers and one defender in the area. Give the attackers a ball



- 2** When you say “go”, the three attackers aim to touch the defender with the ball. They have to place it onto him while holding it in two hands, not simply throw it at him.

- 3** The attackers cannot move when they have the ball so have to be strategic with their passes and try to force the defender into a corner to touch him.



The attackers must keep moving and talking to each other as they try to back the defender into a corner

- 4** The defender wins if he can avoid being touched for 20 seconds. If the defender is touched or he runs out of the area, the attackers win. Rotate the players after each go.

You will need

- A 5m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Set up more squares and run the drill with other groups of four.

What to tell your players

“Move into space to be to receive a pass”
“Keep moving and make as many passes as possible”

Key

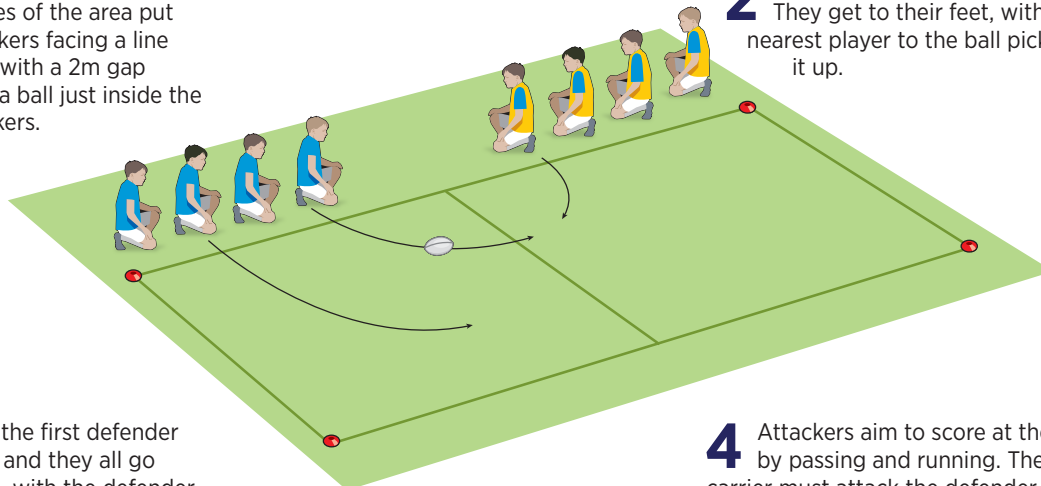
Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Fix and support

Get the ball carrier to “attack” the defender before passing or offloading the ball to the support player

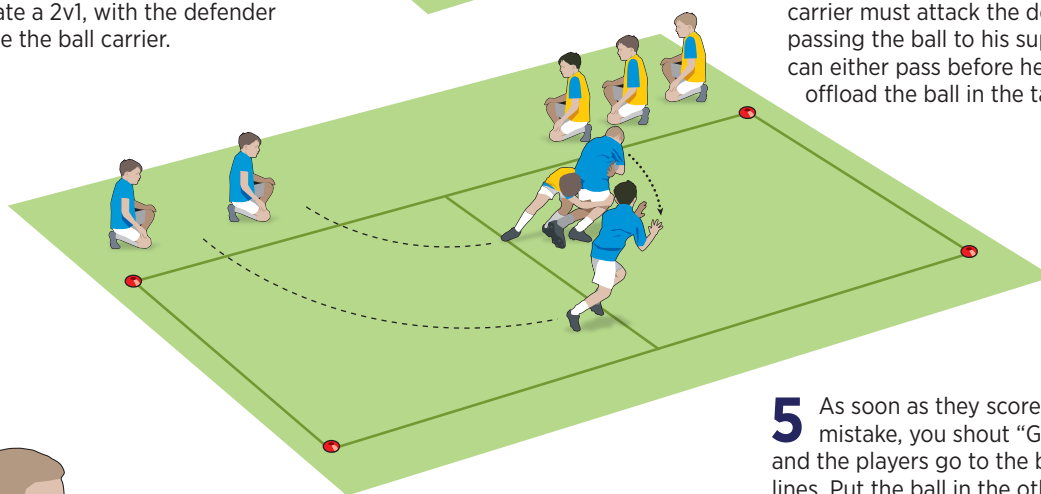
1 Mark out a 10m x 5m area. Along one of the long sides of the area put a line of kneeling attackers facing a line of kneeling defenders, with a 2m gap between the lines. Put a ball just inside the area close to the attackers.

2 Call out the names of attackers. They get to their feet, with the nearest player to the ball picking it up.



3 At the same time, the first defender in the line gets up and they all go forward to create a 2v1, with the defender aiming to tackle the ball carrier.

4 Attackers aim to score at the far end by passing and running. The ball carrier must attack the defender before passing the ball to his support player. He can either pass before he is tackled or offload the ball in the tackle.



5 As soon as they score or make a mistake, you shout “Get out of here” and the players go to the back of their lines. Put the ball in the other team’s half and run again with roles reversed.

6 Develop by calling out the name of any defender to come forward. Further develop by having more players come into the area.



✓ Offloading in the tackle

Always aim to beat the tackler first, so there is forward momentum. After the tackle, turn the shoulders towards where the pass is going and throw it up and towards the receiver.

You will need

- A 10m x 5m area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

You can play with up to 6v6, or run another activity alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Keep the ball in two hands
- “Call for the ball”
- “Try to pass before contact with the defender”

Key

- Ground covered ————
- Direction of run —————→
- Pass→

EasiCoachTM

RUGBY SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U10

ACTIVITIES

Introducing rucking

Help players learn about the battle over the ball when they are bound together in a ruck. Concentrates on the 1v1 ruck.

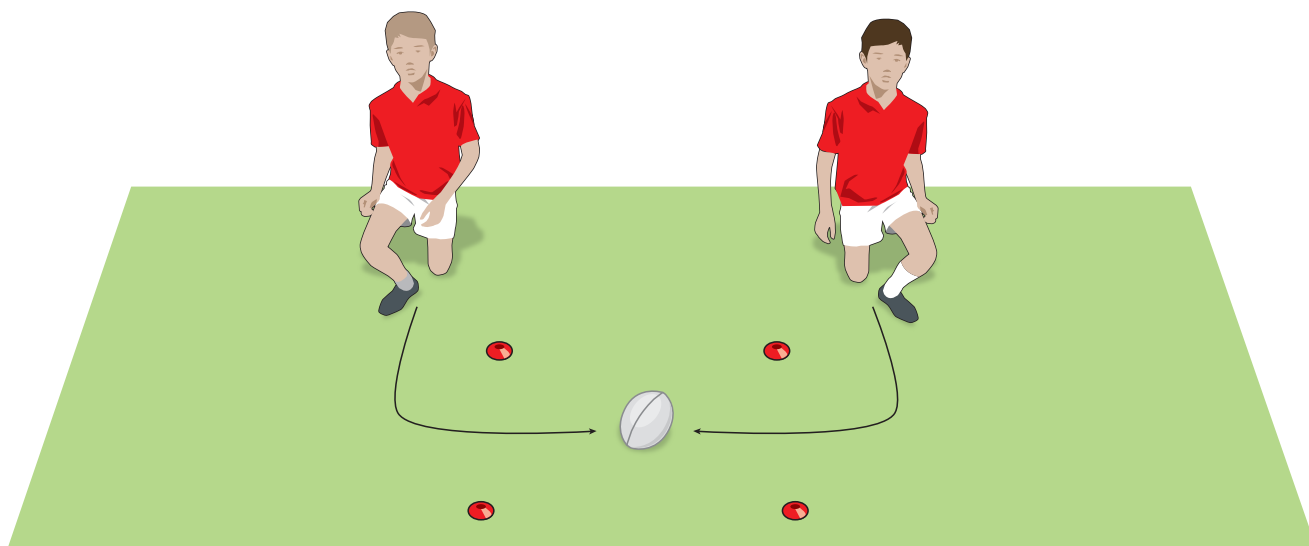
1 Put two players, each on one knee, touching distance apart, with a ball in between them.

2 When you say “go”, they each try to push the other player backwards, away from the ball.



3 The winner is the one who pushes the other player back and is able to step over the ball.

4 Keep swapping the players around so that they can test themselves against different people.



5 Finally, put the two players, again each on one knee, at the side of a 1m square box.

6 When you say “go”, they will again battle for the ball, but must first get to their feet and come through their own end of the box.

You will need

- A 1m square box
- 1 ball per pair

Got more players?

Set up lots of boxes.

What to tell your players

“Take short steps”

“The low man wins, so try to get under the other player”

“Keep driving forward”

Key

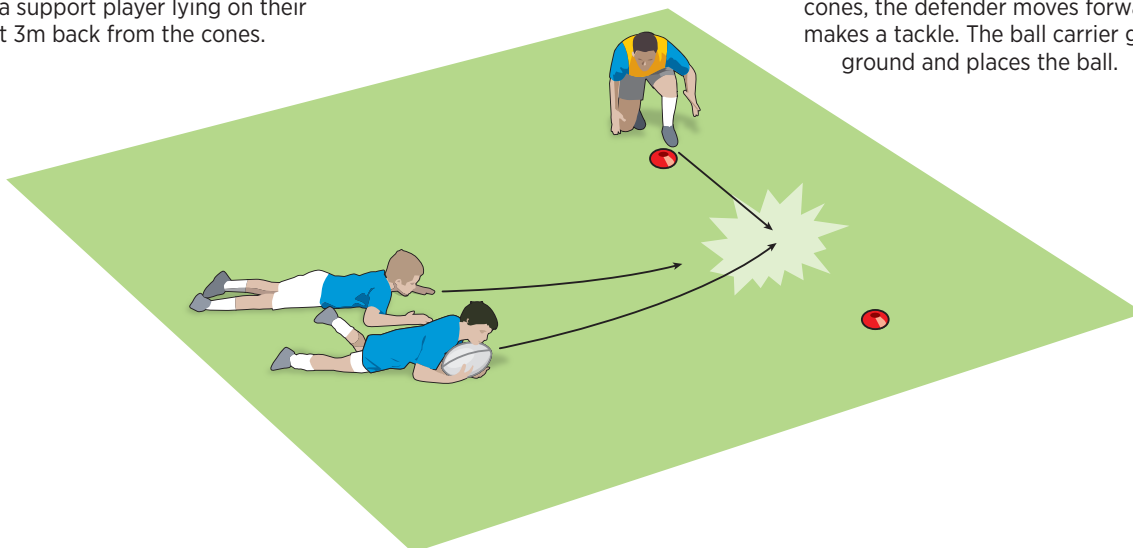
Direction of run



Place and protect the ball

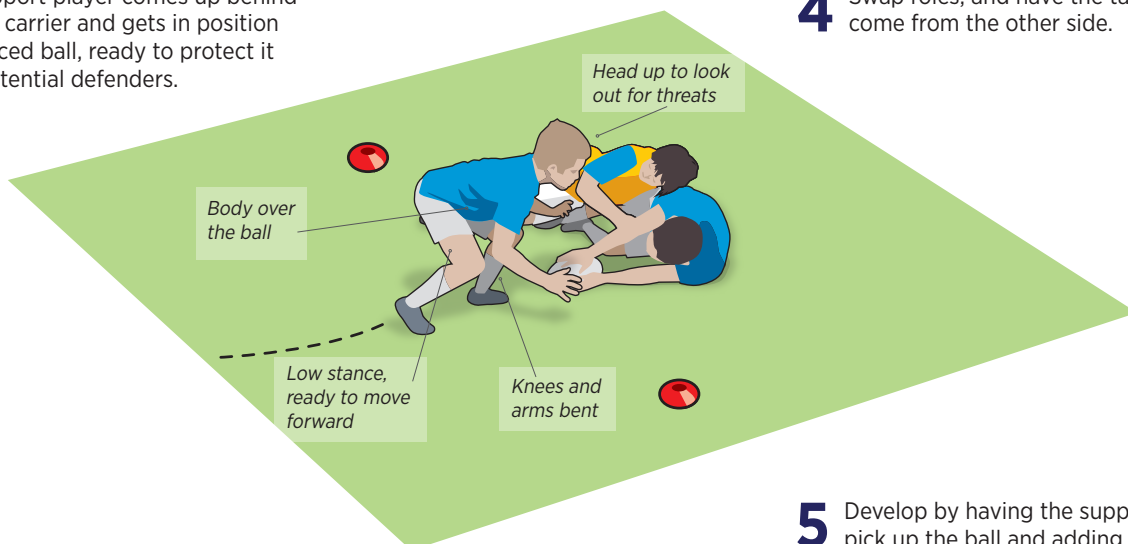
Get the tackled player to place the ball back and the support player to get in a strong position

1 Put a defender on one knee to the side of one of the cones. Have a ball carrier and a support player lying on their fronts about 3m back from the cones.



2 The ball carrier gets to his feet and jogs forward. As he reaches the cones, the defender moves forward and makes a tackle. The ball carrier goes to ground and places the ball.

3 The support player comes up behind the ball carrier and gets in position over the placed ball, ready to protect it from any potential defenders.



4 Swap roles, and have the tackle come from the other side.

5 Develop by having the support player pick up the ball and adding another defender who challenges for the ball.

You will need

- 2 cones 2m apart
- 1 ball for every three players

Got more players?

Add as many groups of three as you can fit in.

What to tell your players

“Push the ball back towards your team mate after the tackle, but under control”

“When in support, keep low and balanced over the ball carrier on the ground”

Key

Ground covered



Direction of run



Attacking ball placement

Get players used to placing the ball away from the body after a tackle and lying facing towards their own goal line

1 There are three ways that a tackled player can place the ball back: Sideways, jack knife and long, with long the best.

JACK KNIFE
Narrower gate and more likely to be safe if the tackled player is held by the tackler

2 Get players to practise lying in each of the positions so that they understand the shapes they need to make with their bodies.

SIDEWAYS

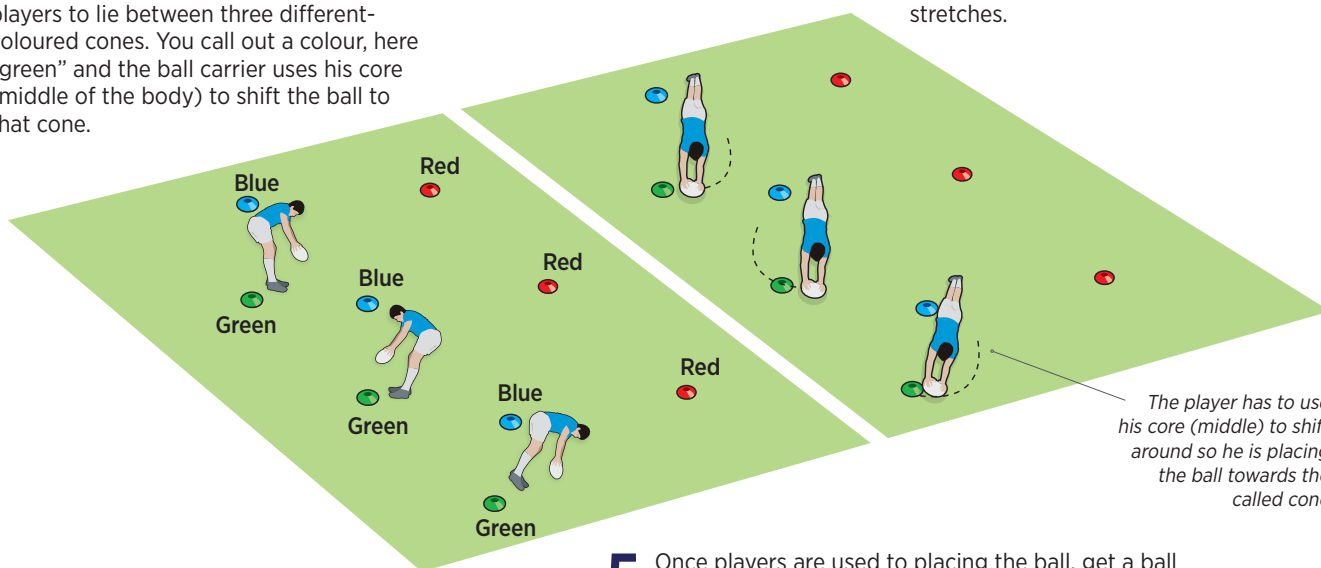
Easy for more than one defender to come through the tackle gate and steal the ball

LONG

The best, with the ball placed farthest from the defence

3 Once they understand how to get into the different positions, get players to lie between three different-coloured cones. You call out a colour, here "green" and the ball carrier uses his core (middle of the body) to shift the ball to that cone.

4 Spread the cones out at different distances, so some placements are stretches.



5 Once players are used to placing the ball, get a ball carrier to run into a ruck pad holder, drive him back 0.5m, go to ground and place the ball as far as possible from the ruck pad holder.

You will need

- 1 ball per player
- Coloured cones
- 1 ruck pad for the development activity

Got more players?

Run this with as many players as you like, as long as you have enough balls and cones.

What to tell your players

"Look to place the ball long, as far from the defenders as possible"

"Use of the core (middle of the body) is vital"

Key

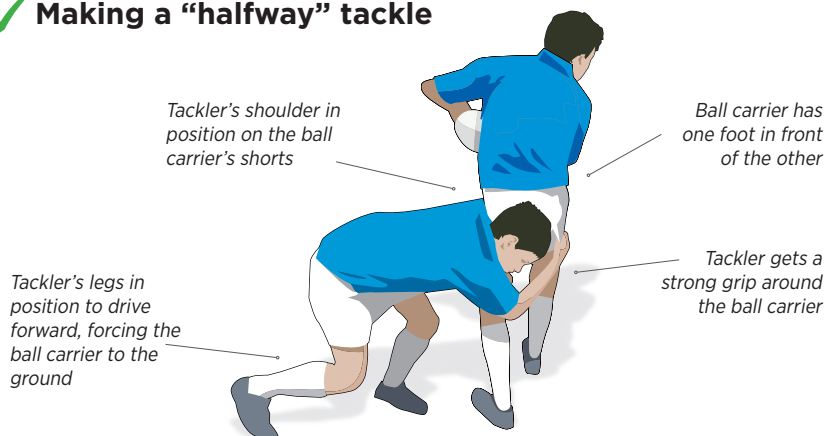
Ground covered

Tackling confidence

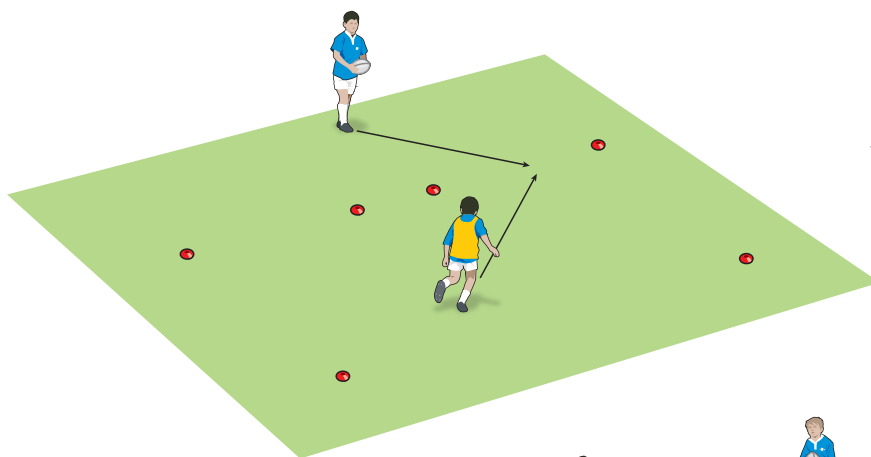
Get your players used to tackling side-on with either shoulder

1 Split your players into pairs, give them a ball and get them working on a “halfway” tackle. This means that the tackle starts halfway through, with the tackler already in position with his shoulder on the ball carrier. The tackler then drives the carrier to the ground to complete the tackle.

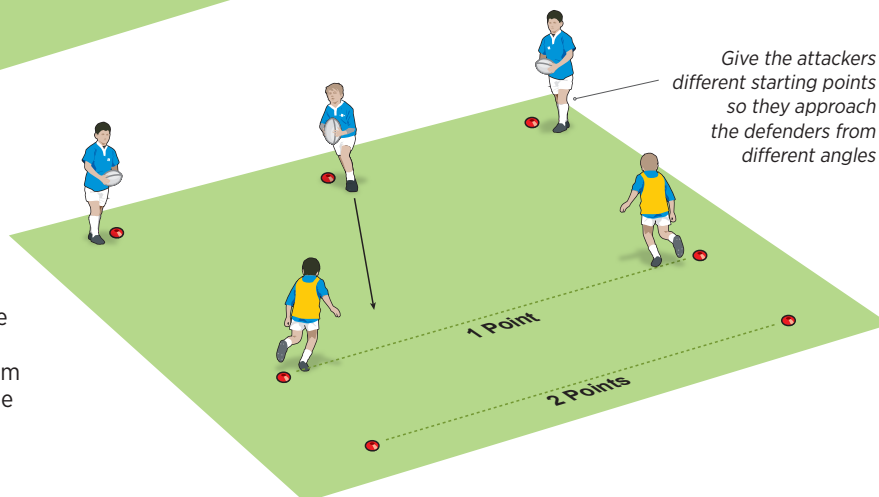
✓ Making a “halfway” tackle



2 When the players are confident with the halfway tackle, make one in each pair a defender and the other an attacker. Give the attacker a ball.



3 Put the defender in a 6m x 4m area that has left- and right-hand gates as entry points. The attacker starts from outside the area and jogs into it on either the left- or right-hand side. The tackler moves across to make a side-on tackle. Increase the speed and intensity as the players' confidence increases.



4 Finally, group your players in fives. Two defenders work together to defend first a gain line and then a try line 2m behind. Give three attackers a ball each and position them about 3m from the defenders. Call one of them forward at a time to try and break through the defenders and score. They get one point for getting over the gain line and two points for crossing the try line.

You will need

- A 6m x 4m area with two cone gates on one side
- 1 ball per pair of players
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Get as many pairs working on halfway tackling as possible, as long as you have enough balls.

What to tell your players

- “Make impact with the shoulder first”
- “Get a strong grip”
- “Get in close before making the tackle”

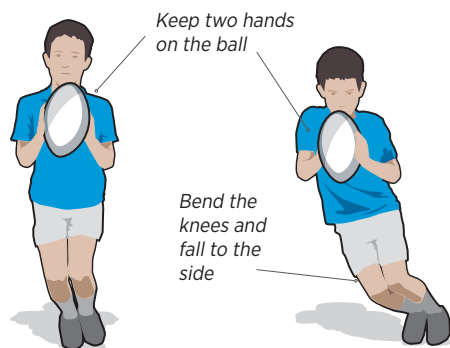
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Fall safely, present quickly

Get players using a parachute fall technique, which prevents putting out a hand to break the fall

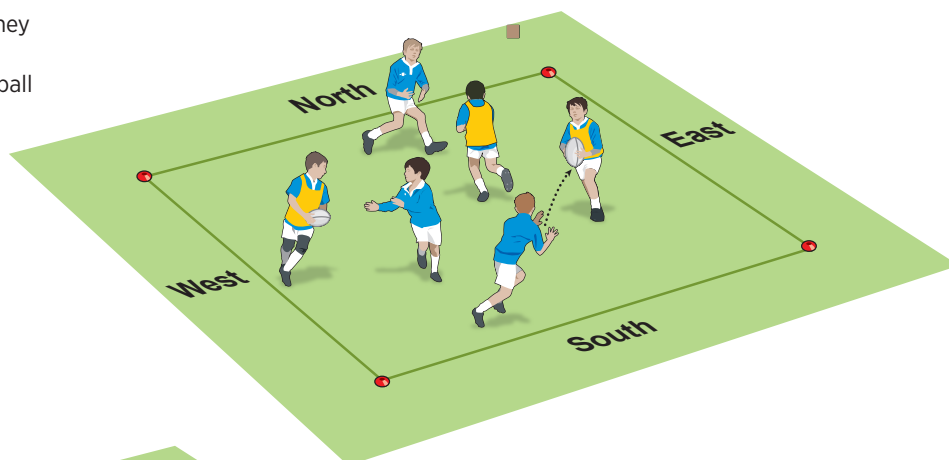
- 1 Start by demonstrating a parachute fall yourself, then put your players into pairs and let the players practise for themselves.



✓ How to do a parachute fall

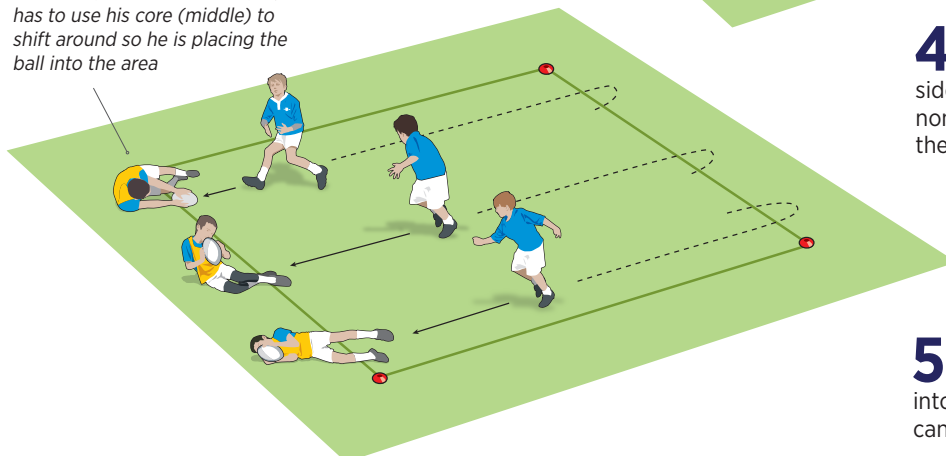
By falling in this sequence you spread the impact of the fall across the different parts of the body.

- 2 Once players are confident that they can fall correctly, put up to three pairs of players inside the area with a ball per pair.



- 3 When you say "go", the pairs run around the area passing the ball between them.

After the parachute fall, the player has to use his core (middle) to shift around so he is placing the ball into the area



- 4 Shout out a side of the box (such as "West"). The ball carriers run to that side and do a parachute fall, while the non-ball carriers run to the opposite side then back to their partners.

- 5 See whether the parachutists can fall correctly and present the ball back into the area before the non-ball carriers can get back to them.

You will need

- A 5m square area
- 1 ball per pair
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

You can run as many pairs as you like, as long as you have enough space and balls.

What to tell your players

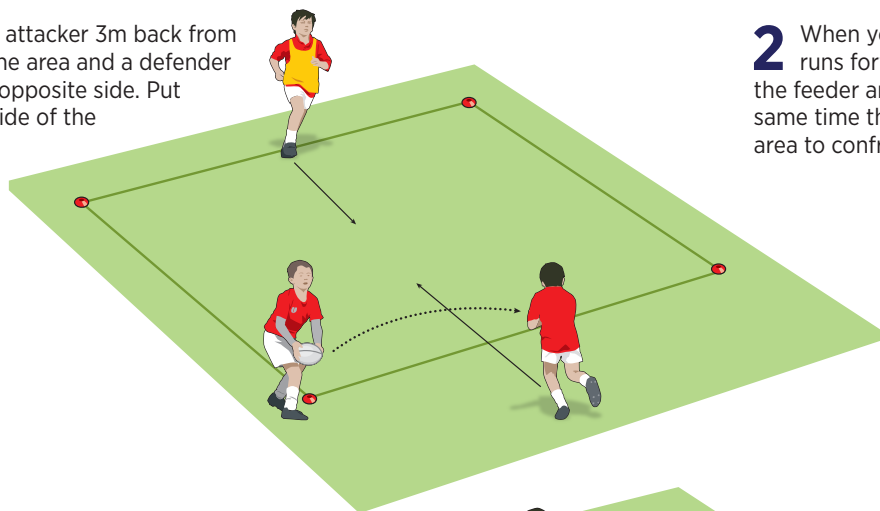
"Land on your knees, hips and then shoulders"

"Present the ball back as far as you can towards your own player"

Placing the ball

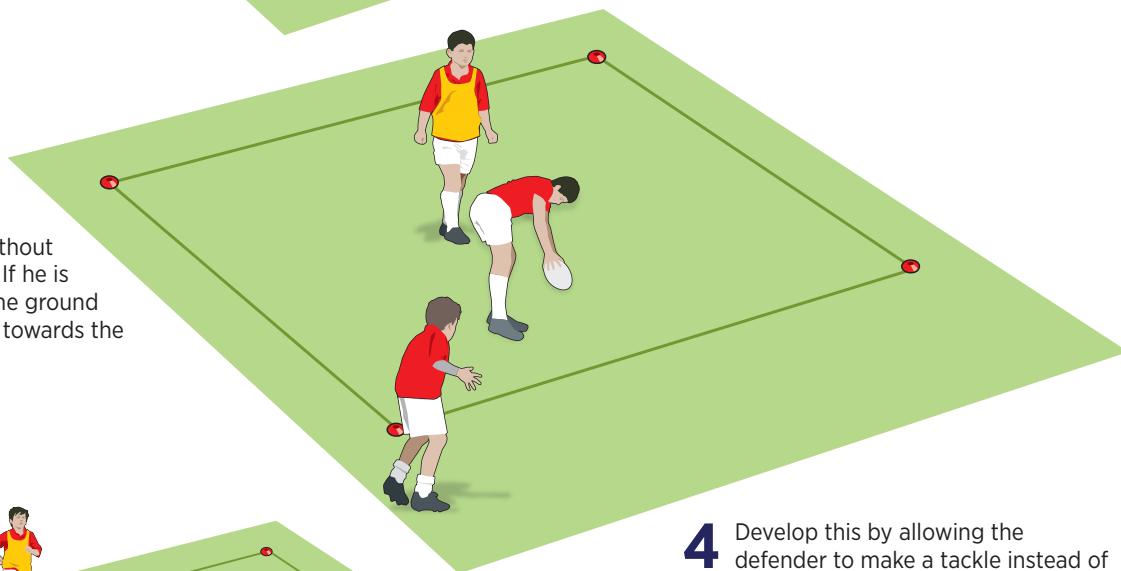
Get tackled players placing the ball away from the body and lying so they are facing towards their own goal line

1 Start with an attacker 3m back from one side of the area and a defender standing on the opposite side. Put a feeder to the side of the attacker.

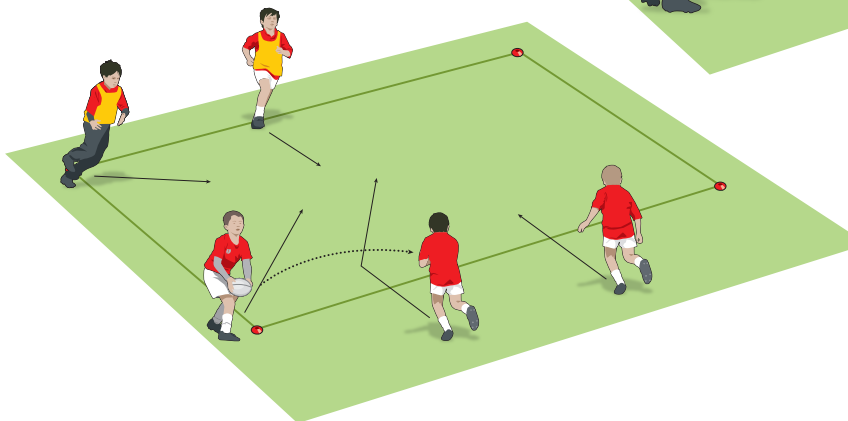


2 When you say “go”, the attacker runs forward, receives a pass from the feeder and enters the area. At the same time the defender runs into the area to confront the attacker.

3 The attacker aims to beat the defender without being two-hand touched. If he is touched, he must fall to the ground and present the ball towards the side he came from.



4 Develop this by allowing the defender to make a tackle instead of a two-handed touch.



5 Further develop by having a 2v2 in a wider box. Use either touch (as above or tackling). When the tackled attacker presents the ball, the other attackers aim to protect and win the ball.

You will need

- A 5m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- * Bibs

Got more players?

This is a quick drill so you can have other players waiting their turn, or set up other games alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Two hands on the ball when going to ground”
- “Twist and stretch back with the ball”

Key

Direction of run

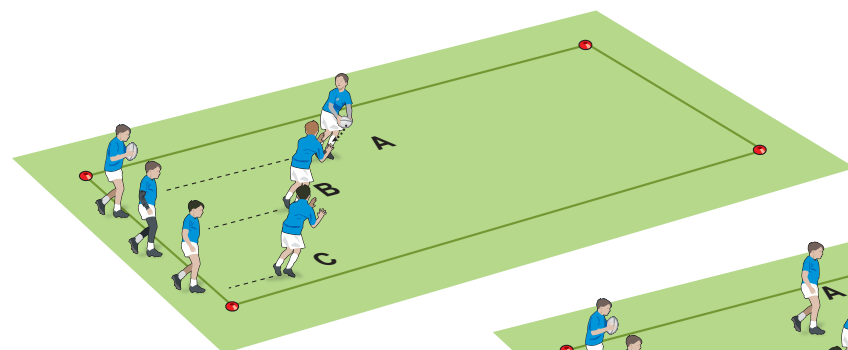


Pass

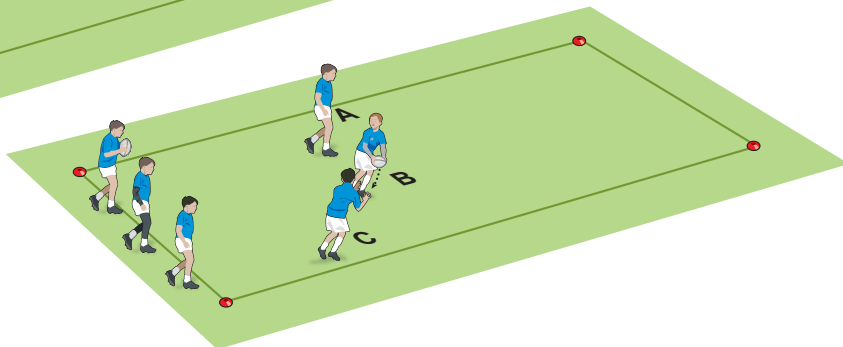


Ruck, react and protect

Get players used to protecting a tackled player and adopting a strong position in contact to prevent being driven off the ball



1 Put three players with the ball at one end of 15m x 5m area. Have them walk up the channel, passing down the line one way, then back in the other direction.



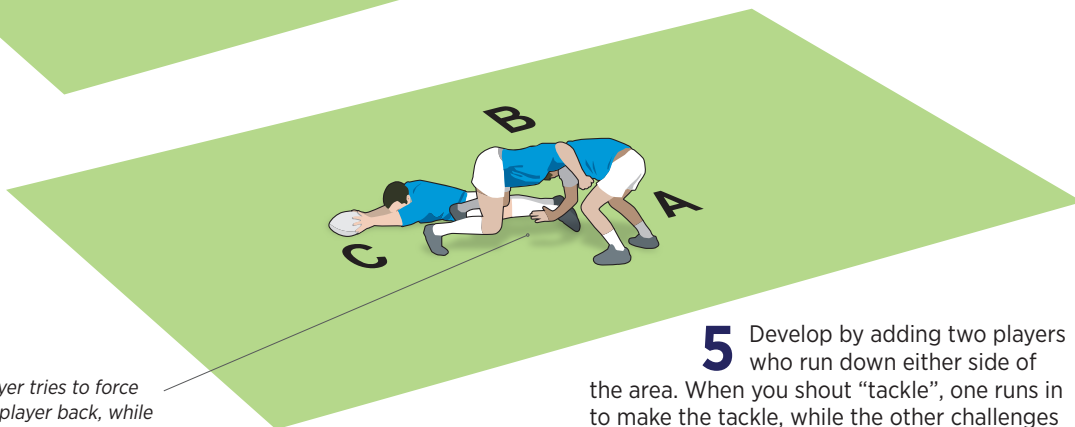
2 Shout "tackle" when the ball reaches one of the end players (here player C). That player goes to ground and presents the ball.

3 As the ball is presented, the middle player (B) becomes the support player and gets over the ball to protect it, while the third player (A) runs around and comes in to challenge for the ball on the ground.

The support player comes square into the tackle situation and goes over the ball

The "tackled" player makes a long ball placement

4 Once you feel the ball has been won or lost, shout "break" and the next three players come forward.



The support player tries to force the challenging player back, while the challenger tries to get his hands over the ball

5 Develop by adding two players who run down either side of the area. When you shout "tackle", one runs in to make the tackle, while the other challenges for the ball. The ball carrier takes the tackle, with the other two players protecting the ball.

You will need

- A 15m x 5m area
- 1 ball
- Cones

Got more players?

Line up groups of three to take their turn or set up another area and play alongside.

What to tell your players

"Place the ball long"

"Support get over the ball"

"Challenge hard to get your hands over the ball"

Key

Ground covered

Direction of run

—————>

Pass

.....>

Come back through the gate

Ensure your players enter the tackle contest legally square, arriving in a good position to win the ball

1 Use cones to set up a 2m box and put a line of three cones on either side about 4m away. Label the side cones A, B and C. Put a ruck pad inside the 2m box, and position a ruck pad holder just behind the box.

2 Have a line of players behind the side cones, with the front players on their knees.

The different cones replicate the different possible angles the player arrives at the tackle contest

3 Call out a player to come forward and to which cone. He gets up, touches that cone and then turns towards the box.

4 The player then squares up to go through the front of the box (the tackle gate) and then goes over the ruck pad as the ruck pad holder comes forward to offer some resistance.

5 The player must enter the box in a low, driving position to hit the ruck pad holder.

6 Develop by making it a race for the space over the ruck pad. Have another column of cones behind the ruck pad, take away the ruck pad holder. Four sets of players now line up and you shout which two players to come forward to compete for the ball.

You will need

- A 2m square box a line of three cones spaced 1.5m apart to each side
- 2 ruck pads

Got more players?

You can line up lots of players behind each line of cones and keep the activity fast and furious, or set up another playing area alongside.

What to tell your players

“Face the hips up the pitch at the gate”
“Go low just before the gate”

Key

Ground covered

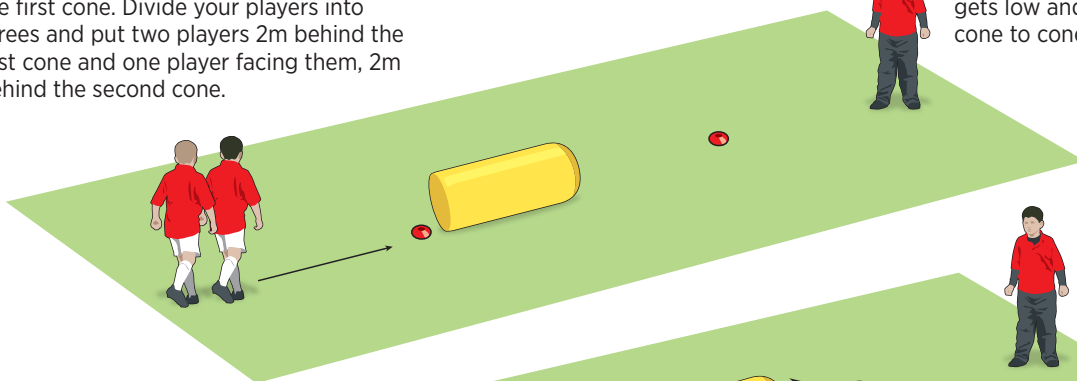
Direction of run

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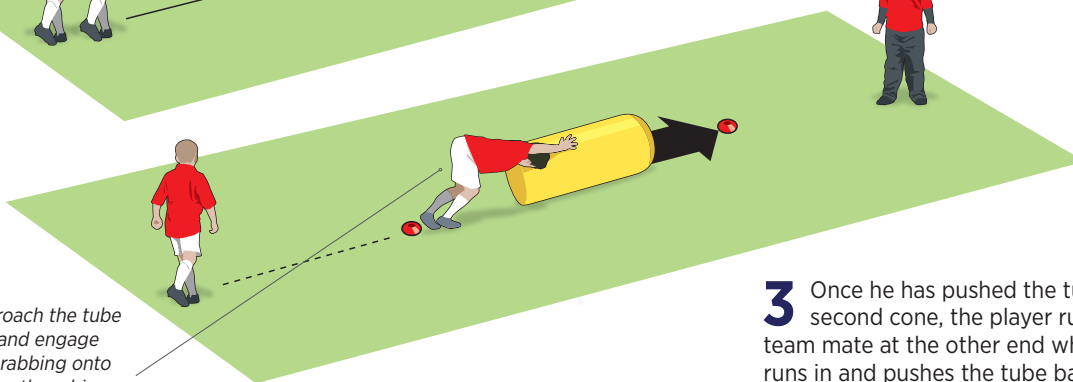
Rucking confidence

Get players used to maintaining a low body position and bracing the shoulder when moving into contact

1 Put two cones 3m apart and place a tackle tube between them touching the first cone. Divide your players into threes and put two players 2m behind the first cone and one player facing them, 2m behind the second cone.

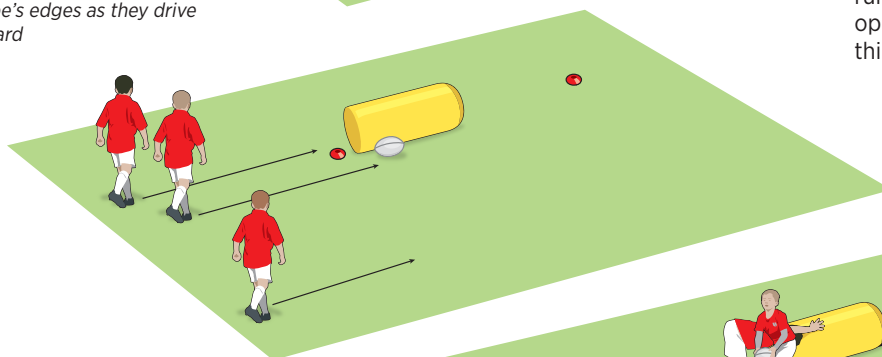


2 When you say “go”, one of the pair of players runs to the tube, gets low and pushes the tube from cone to cone.

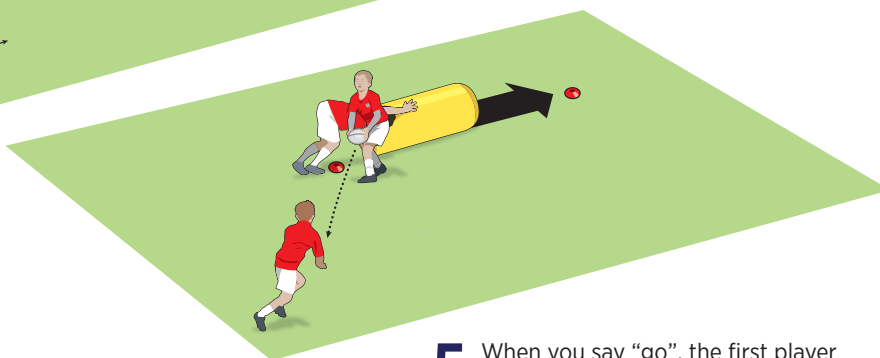


Players must approach the tube from a low angle and engage with a shoulder, grabbing onto the tube's edges as they drive it forward

3 Once he has pushed the tube to the second cone, the player runs to his team mate at the other end who then runs in and pushes the tube back in the opposite direction and repeats with the third player.



4 Once the players have gone through the first drill three times, line them all up about 2m behind the tackle tube and place a ball to the right of the tube.



5 When you say “go”, the first player drives the tube away but leaves the ball. The next player passes to a third player who takes the ball at pace to score a try.

You will need

- 1 ball
- Cones
- 1 tackle tube

Got more players?

If you have enough tackle tubes, set up more work stations alongside. If not, line players up to take turns and ensure swift rotation.

What to tell your players

“Push forward and not downward to make the tubes move”

Key

Ground covered -----

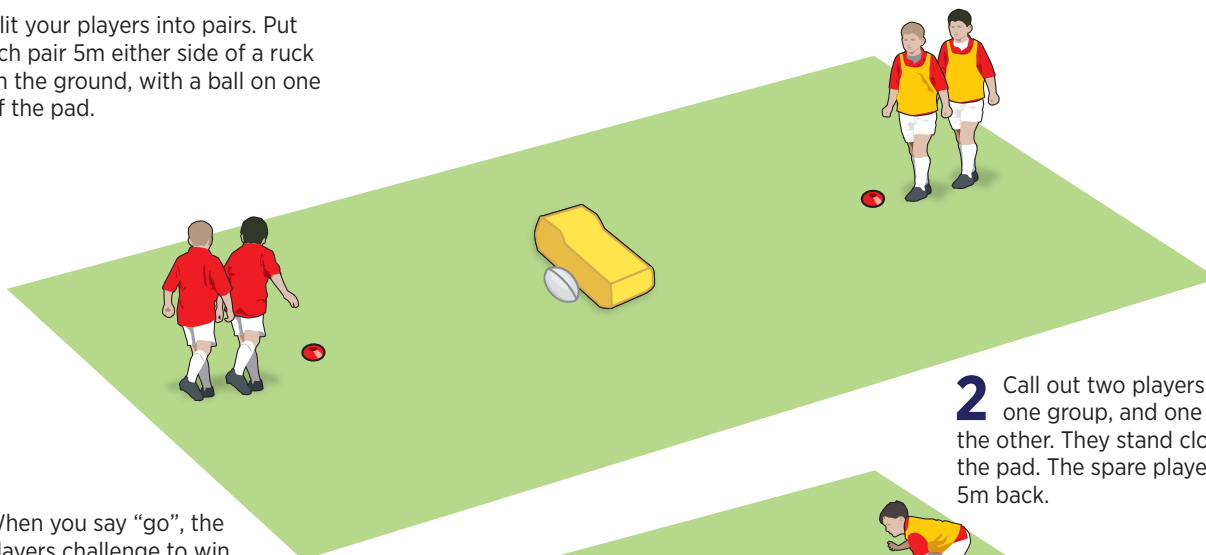
Direction of run —————→

Pass→

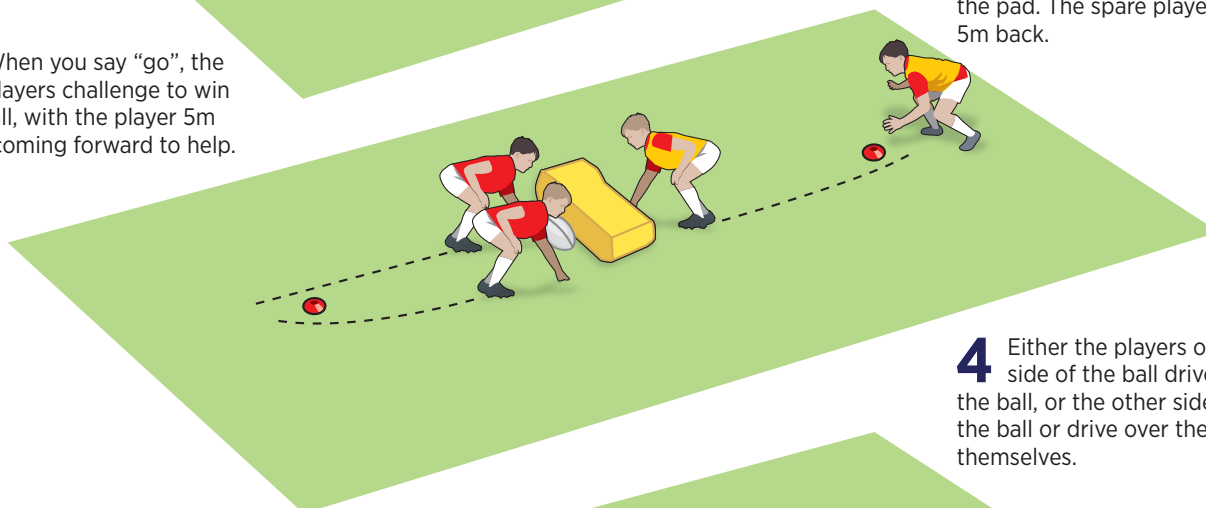
Hands out of the ruck

Help your players work out whether to drive over the ball or go for the ball

1 Split your players into pairs. Put each pair 5m either side of a ruck pad on the ground, with a ball on one side of the pad.

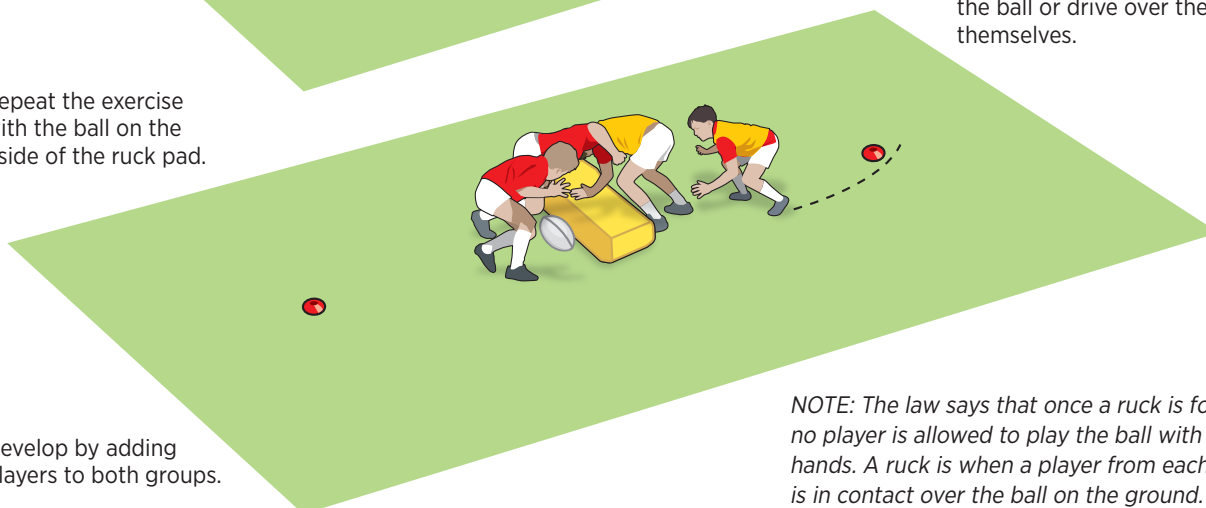


3 When you say “go”, the players challenge to win the ball, with the player 5m back coming forward to help.



2 Call out two players from one group, and one from the other. They stand close to the pad. The spare player stays 5m back.

5 Repeat the exercise with the ball on the other side of the ruck pad.



4 Either the players on the side of the ball drive over the ball, or the other side steal the ball or drive over the ball themselves.

6 Develop by adding players to both groups.

NOTE: The law says that once a ruck is formed, no player is allowed to play the ball with their hands. A ruck is when a player from each team is in contact over the ball on the ground.

You will need

- 1 ruck pad
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Rotate players quickly or, if you have enough ruck pads, set up more drills alongside.

What to tell your players

- “No hands in a ruck!”
- “Stay on the feet, short steps going forward”
- “Aim to get lower than the opposition player”

Key

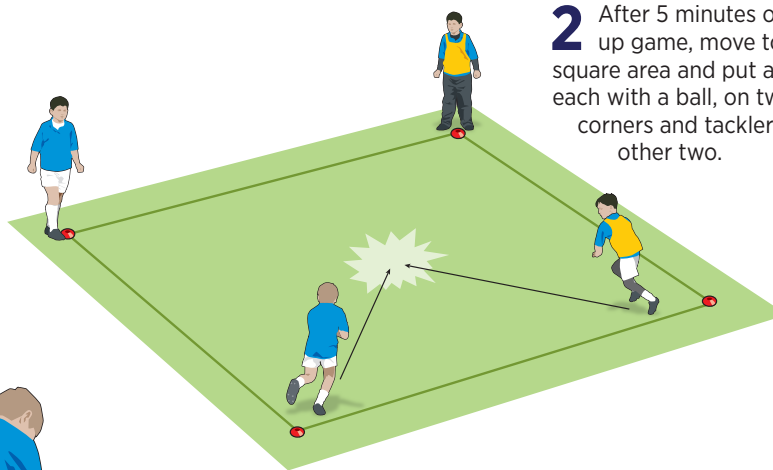
Ground covered

Get back into tackling

Remind players of the two main tackles – front-on and side-on

1 Warm up with full contact walking rugby between two even-sided teams in a 20m square area. Players are not allowed to move faster than walking pace. Normal passing, offloading and rucking laws for this age group apply. Ball carriers always carry the ball in two hands to stop hand-offs. Tackles must be one-on-one.

2 After 5 minutes of the warm up game, move to the 5m square area and put attackers, each with a ball, on two adjacent corners and tacklers on the other two.

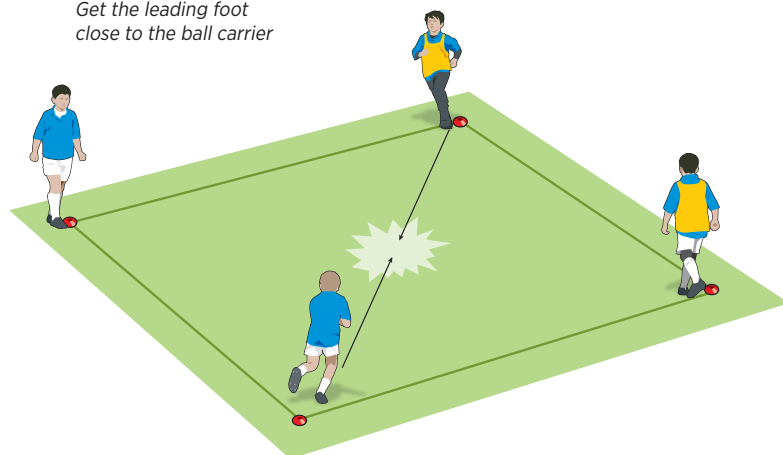


✓ Making a side-on tackle



3 When you say “go”, an attacker jogs out from the corner into the centre of the area. The tackler in the adjacent corner jogs out to make a side-on tackle

4 Next an attacker jogs out into the centre of the area and the tackler from the opposite corner jogs out to tackle him front on.



5 Alternate between walking rugby and the small tackle squares, constantly monitoring technique and working with individuals who are struggling.

✓ Making a front-on tackle

Keep the head to the side – but eyes open all the time

Hit with the shoulder and wrap tightly

Get the front foot close to ball carrier



You will need

- A 20m square area for walking rugby.
- 5m square areas for tackling activities
- 1 ball per square
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

Set up a new 5m area for every four players.

What to tell your players

“Get your feet close to the ball carrier”

“Look at the ball carrier’s waist – the target”

“Hit with the shoulder and wrap your arms tightly round ball carrier’s legs”

Key

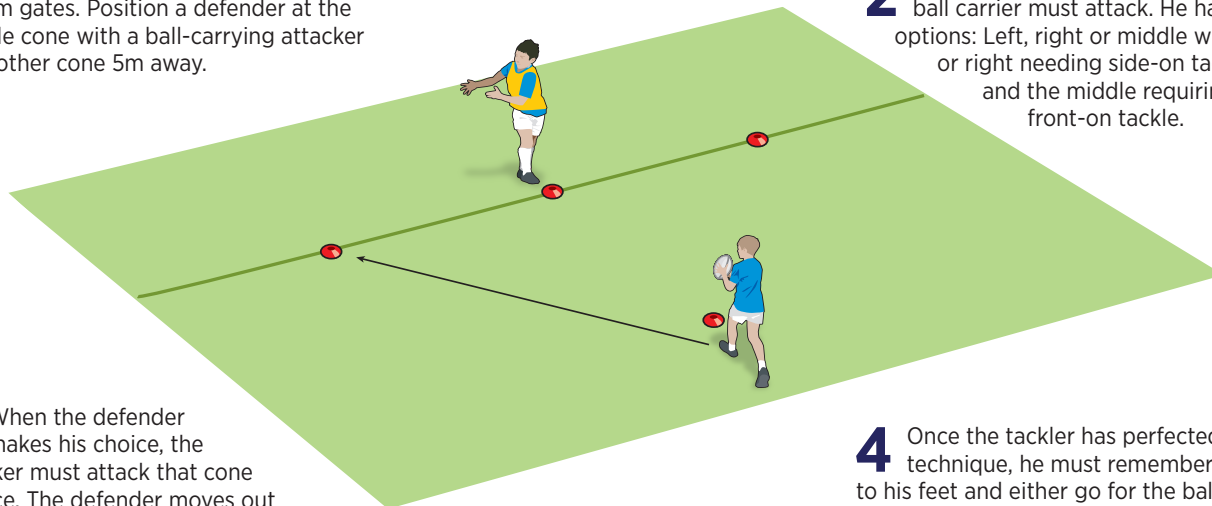
Direction of run



Tackle under pressure

Get the head behind the ball carrier or to the side and get feet in close to the ball carrier before engagement

1 Put down three cones to form two 5m gates. Position a defender at the middle cone with a ball-carrying attacker at another cone 5m away.



2 The defender points to a cone the ball carrier must attack. He has three options: Left, right or middle with left or right needing side-on tackles and the middle requiring a front-on tackle.

3 When the defender makes his choice, the attacker must attack that cone at pace. The defender moves out to make the appropriate tackle. The ball carrier must always be brought to ground.

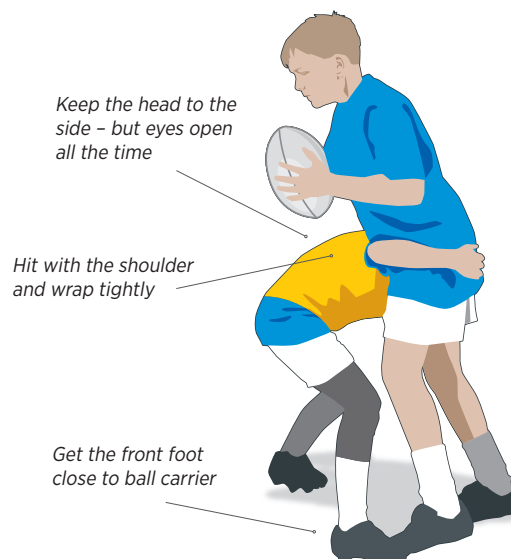
4 Once the tackler has perfected his technique, he must remember to get to his feet and either go for the ball or get into the space over the ball.

5 Develop by adding another attacker who arrives after the tackle.

✓ Making a side-on tackle



✓ Making a front-on tackle



You will need

- 1 ball per pair
- Cones
- Tackle suit (optional)

Got more players?

Set up lots of pairs.

What to tell your players

- “Identify the target”
- “Sink your hips and lean your upper body into the tackle”
- “Keep a low body position on entry”
- “Make contact with the shoulder, use a good strong leg drive and finish the tackle on top”

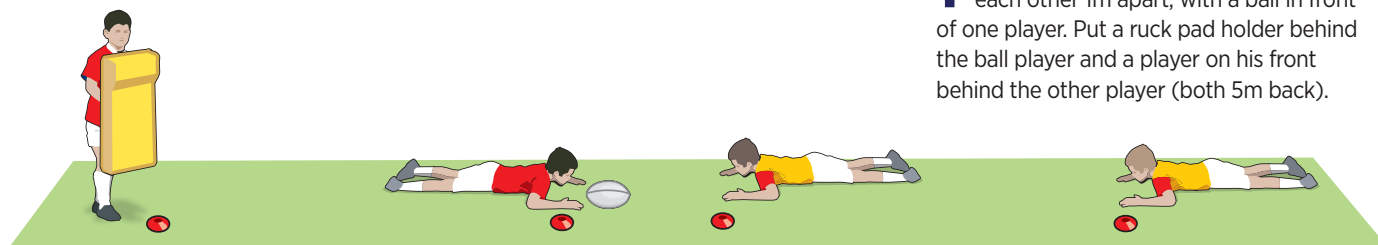
Key

Direction of run



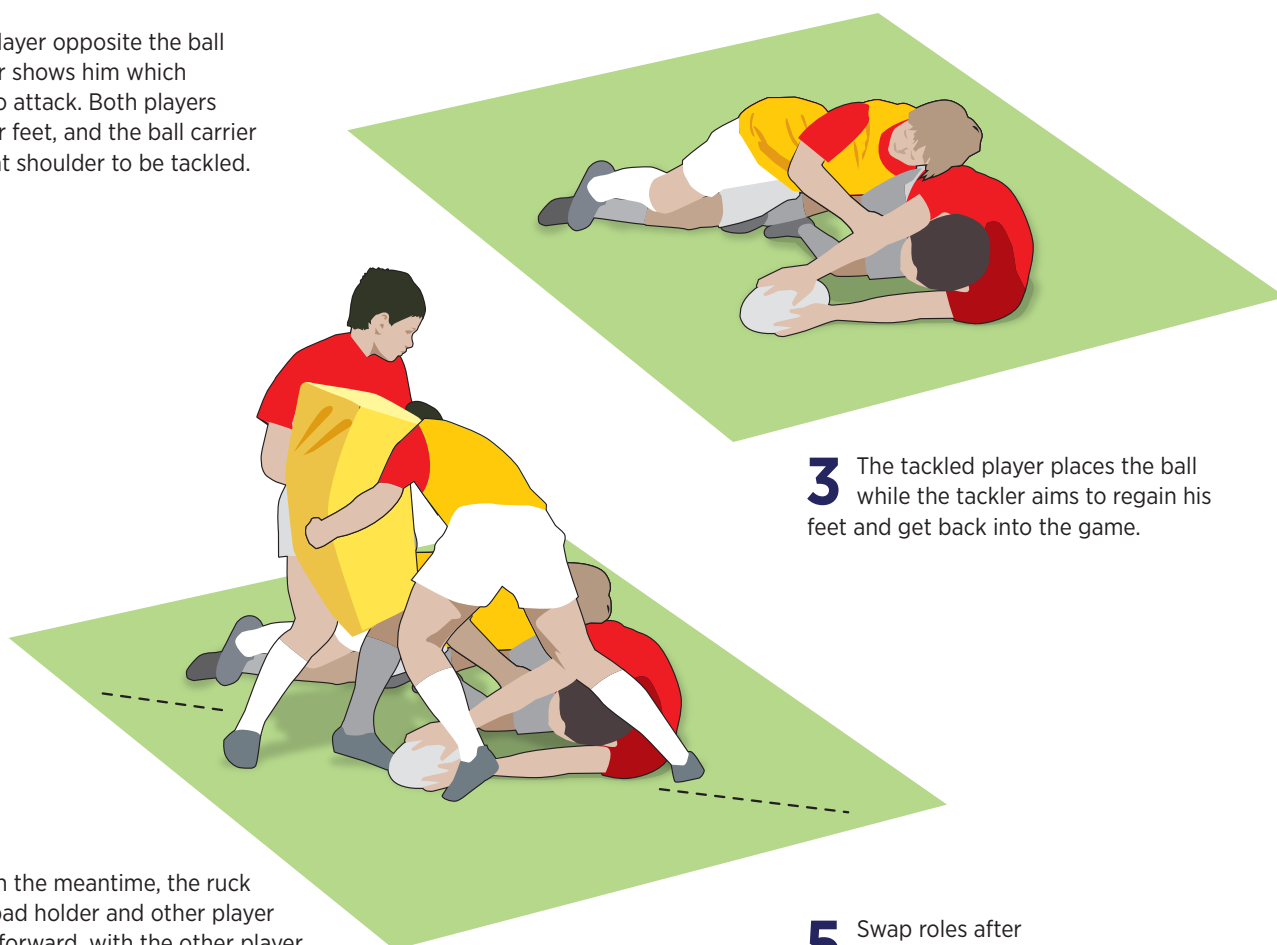
Winning the space over the ball

Get your players in a strong position after the tackle is made by getting over the ball



1 Put two players on the ground facing each other 1m apart, with a ball in front of one player. Put a ruck pad holder behind the ball player and a player on his front behind the other player (both 5m back).

2 The player opposite the ball carrier shows him which shoulder to attack. Both players get to their feet, and the ball carrier runs to that shoulder to be tackled.



3 The tackled player places the ball while the tackler aims to regain his feet and get back into the game.

4 In the meantime, the ruck pad holder and other player come forward, with the other player aiming to drive the ruck pad away from the ball.

5 Swap roles after every go.

You will need

- 1 ball per group of four
- Cones
- 1 ruck pad per group of four

Got more players?

Set up more stations.

What to tell your players

“Low man wins – stay on your feet and keep low over the ball”

“Get back into the game straight after the tackle”

“Keep the hips facing up the pitch”

“Get your head over the ball and then drive on”

Key

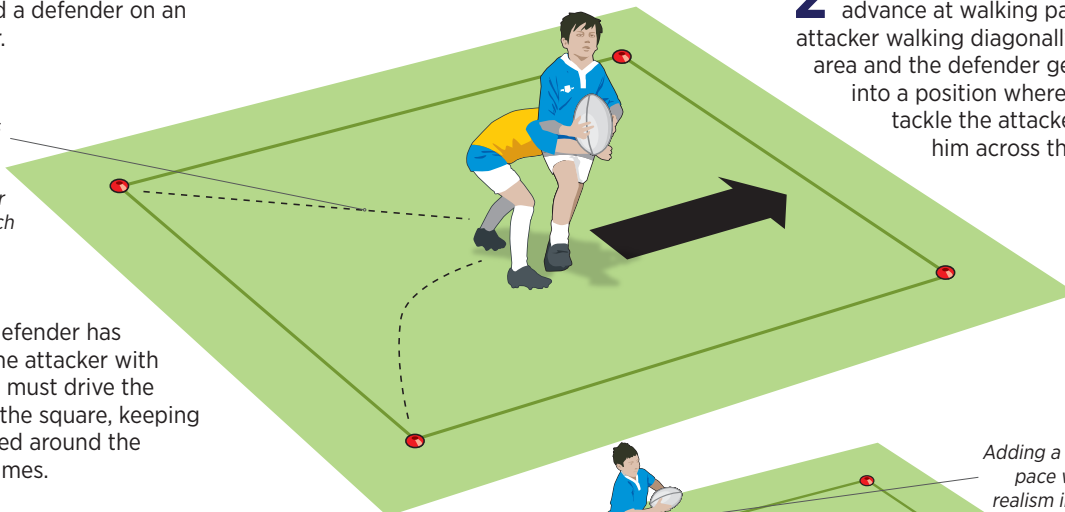
Ground covered

Perfect shoulder tackling

Get your players used to getting into position to make the perfect shoulder tackle

- 1** Put an attacker on one corner of the area and a defender on an adjacent corner.

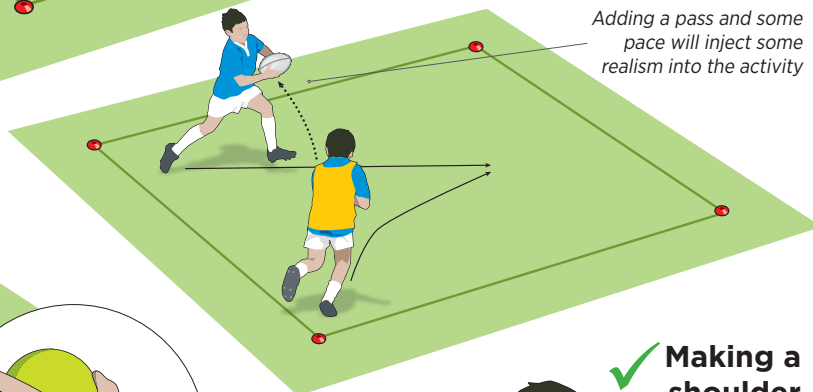
The attacker takes a diagonal line across the area, while the defender angles his approach



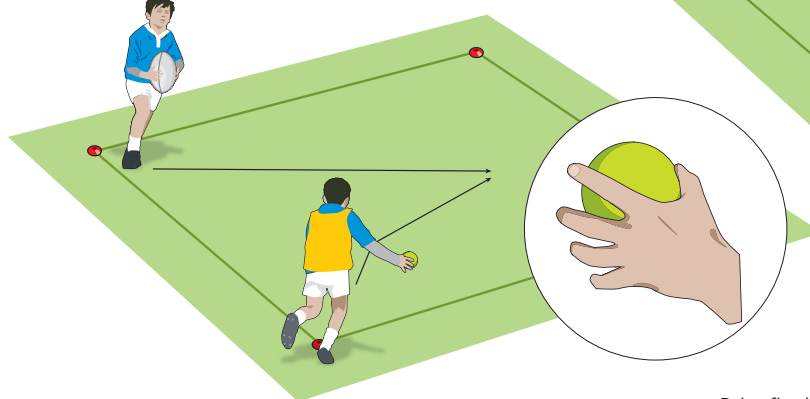
- 2** When you say “go”, the players advance at walking pace – the attacker walking diagonally across the area and the defender getting himself into a position where he can tackle the attacker and force him across the area.

- 3** Once the defender has engaged the attacker with his shoulder, he must drive the attacker out of the square, keeping his hands clasped around the attacker at all times.

Adding a pass and some pace will inject some realism into the activity



- 4** Develop by having the defender throw the ball to the attacker who can now run.



- 5** Finally, work on shoulder impact. The tackler holds a tennis ball in each hand. On contact with the ball carrier, the defender has no chance to “grab”, so the shoulder engages and arms wrap the attacker.

Make contact with the shoulder

Drive firmly at the shorts or thigh of the ball carrier

Drive with the feet

Get the leading foot close to the ball carrier

✓ **Making a shoulder tackle**

Pull the ball carrier into the body with a “ring of steel” (that is a very tight grip) using the arms and chest

You will need

- A 5m square area
- 1 ball
- 2 tennis balls
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Set up more squares and keep rotating the players so everyone tries both roles.

What to tell your players

“Have a split stance on contact”

“Make dynamic movements forward until the attacker is pushed out of the box”

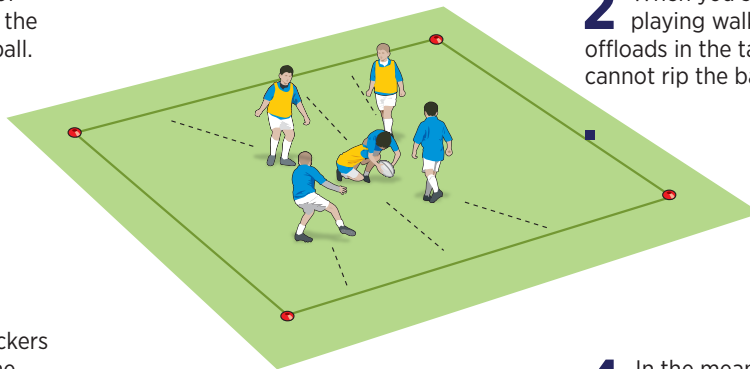
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Landing on top of the ball carrier

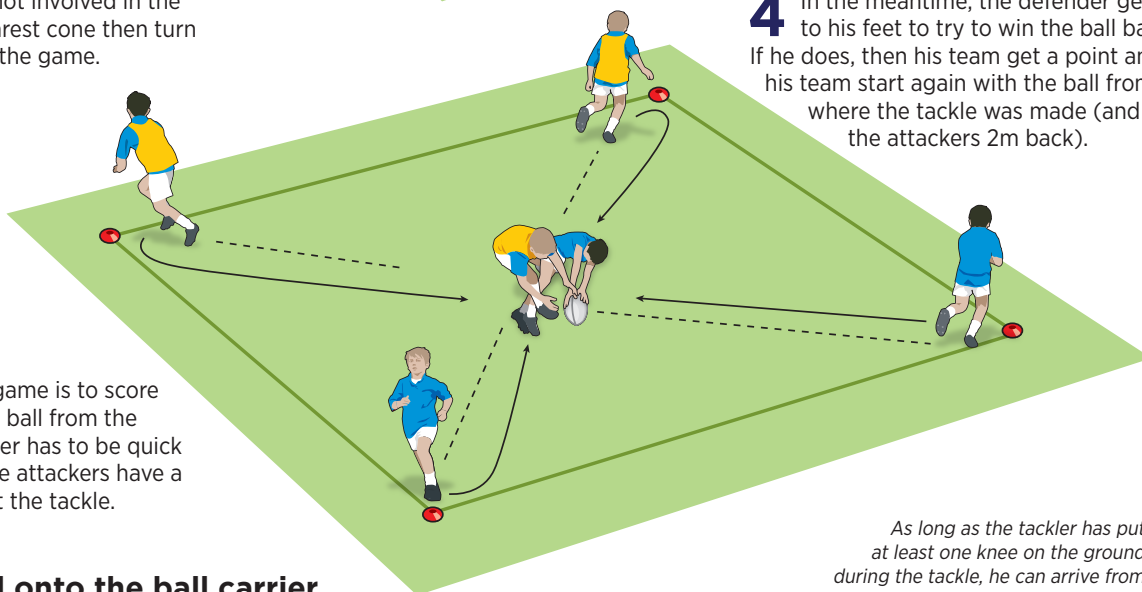
Give tacklers a chance of stealing the ball by getting them to fall on top of the ball carrier

1 Put three attackers on one side of the area and three defenders on the opposite side. Give the attackers a ball.



2 When you say “go”, the teams start playing walking rugby, but with no offloads in the tackle. The opposition cannot rip the ball from the ball carrier.

3 When a tackle is made, the attackers and defenders not involved in the tackle run to the nearest cone then turn and come back into the game.

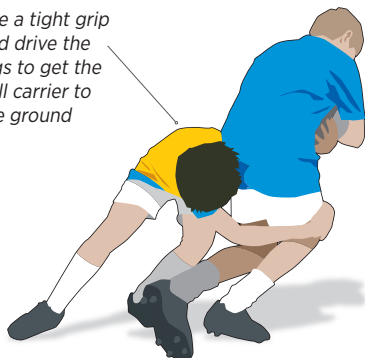


4 In the meantime, the defender gets to his feet to try to win the ball back. If he does, then his team get a point and his team start again with the ball from where the tackle was made (and the attackers 2m back).

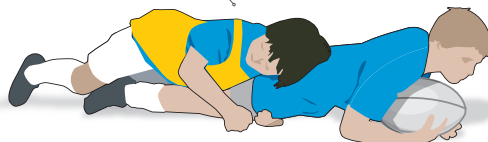
5 The aim of the game is to score a try. To win the ball from the opposition, the tackler has to be quick to his feet, before the attackers have a chance to be back at the tackle.

✓ How to fall onto the ball carrier

Use a tight grip and drive the legs to get the ball carrier to the ground



Twist the body to aim to land on top of the ball carrier



Bounce up to the feet to challenge for the ball

As long as the tackler has put at least one knee on the ground during the tackle, he can arrive from any angle to challenge for the ball



You will need

- A 10m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs

Got more players?

Play more than one game of 3v3 or go to 4v4 in a slightly bigger area.

What to tell your players

- “Grip and twist the ball carrier when falling”
- “Keep the feet active”
- “Bounce up and get over the ball”

Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Finishing the tackle

Get your players used to getting back on their feet and challenging for the ball after making a tackle

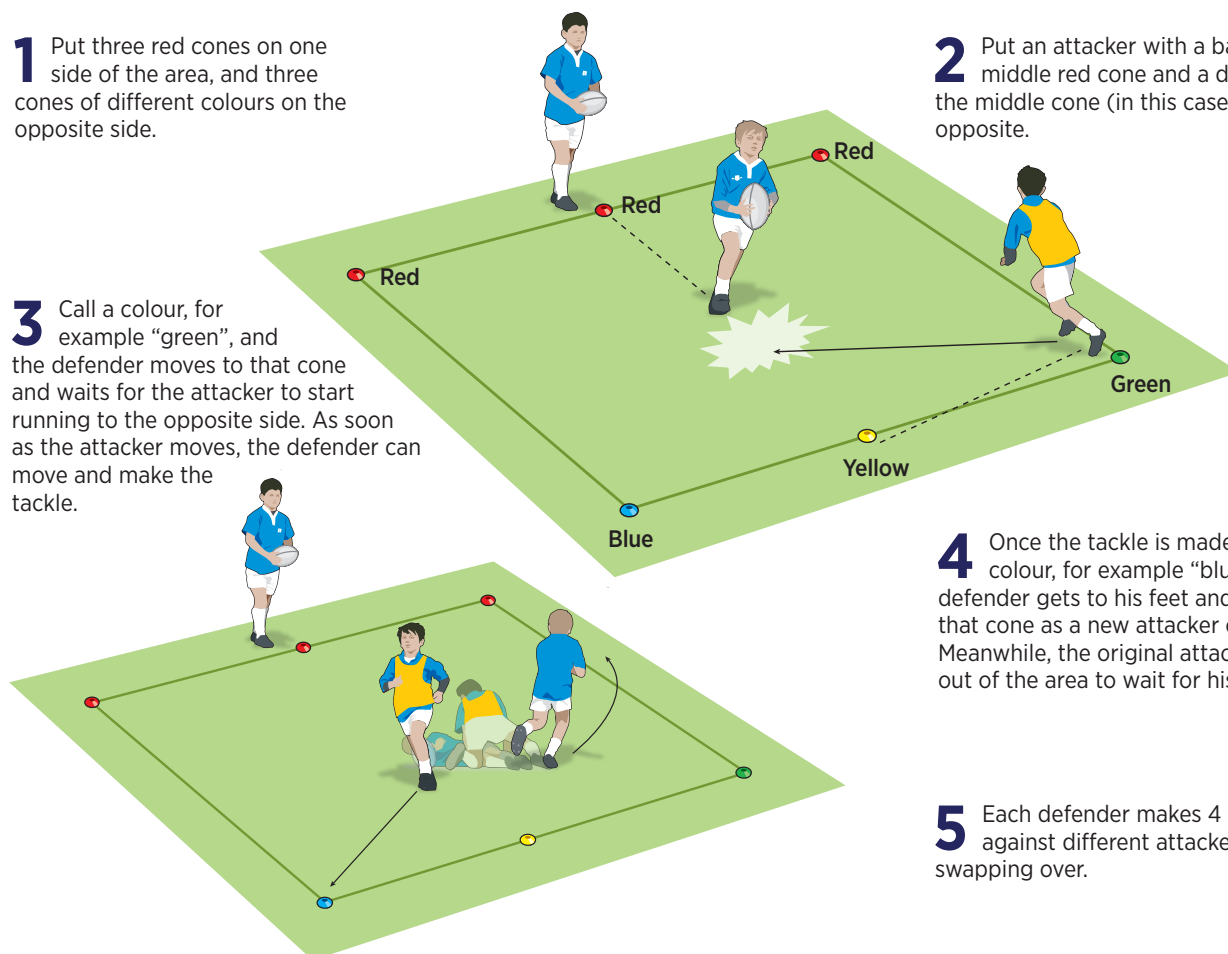
1 Put three red cones on one side of the area, and three cones of different colours on the opposite side.

3 Call a colour, for example “green”, and the defender moves to that cone and waits for the attacker to start running to the opposite side. As soon as the attacker moves, the defender can move and make the tackle.

2 Put an attacker with a ball on the middle red cone and a defender on the middle cone (in this case yellow) opposite.

4 Once the tackle is made, call another colour, for example “blue”, and the defender gets to his feet and runs to that cone as a new attacker comes on. Meanwhile, the original attacker moves out of the area to wait for his next turn.

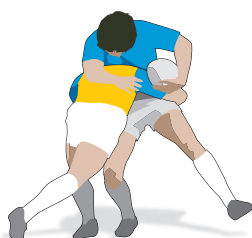
5 Each defender makes 4 or 5 tackles before swapping over.



Plant foot as close as possible to the attacker and hit low with shoulder on the same side



Drive legs through the tackle upon contact to unbalance the attacker



✓ Making and finishing the tackle

Drive the attacker to ground and finish on top of him



Get back on the feet in a strong low position as soon as possible to challenge for the ball



You will need

- A 3m square area
- Coloured cones
- 1 ball per attacker

Got more players?

You can line up attackers ready to come on, or set up another playing area alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Hit him low”
- “Drive through the tackle”
- “Get back on your feet quickly”

Key

Ground covered

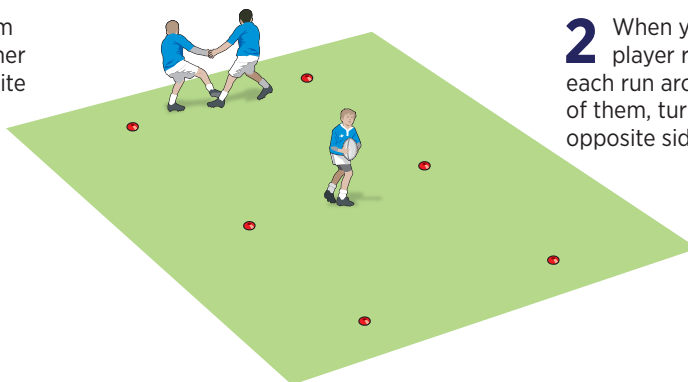
Direction of run

→

Tackle on the run

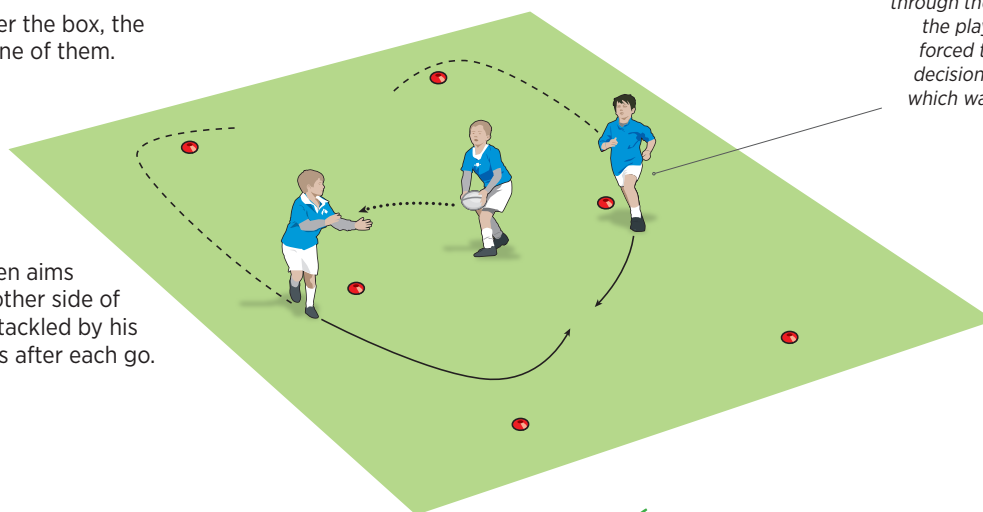
Get the tackler's feet close to the ball carrier before engagement

1 Put two players between the 3m cones. One player holds the other by the wrist and they pull in opposite directions. Put a feeder with his back to them on the edge of the 3m x 2m box.



2 When you say "go", the holding player releases the other player, they each run around the cone to the side of them, turn and run into the box from opposite sides.

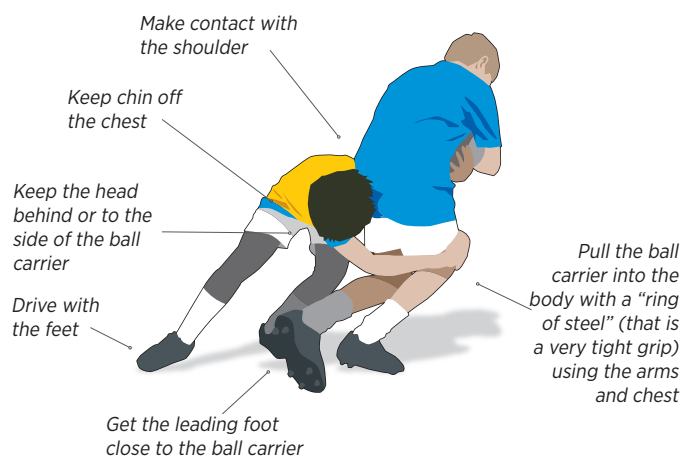
3 As the players enter the box, the feeder passes to one of them.



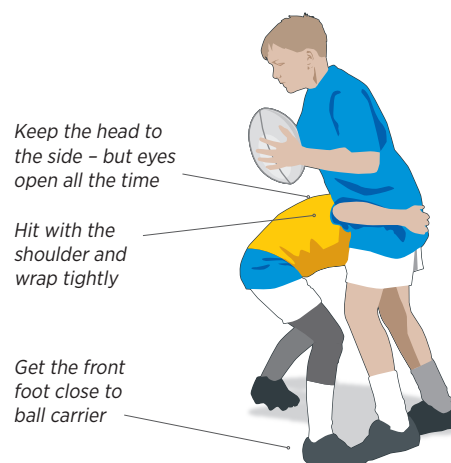
By coming in through the gates, the players are forced to make decisions about which way to go

4 The ball carrier then aims to make it to the other side of the box without being tackled by his opponent. Change roles after each go.

✓ Making a side-on tackle



✓ Making a front-on tackle



You will need

- A 3m x 2m box with two cones 3m apart placed 3m behind
- 1 ball

Got more players?

Rotate players regularly, or add more boxes and run further games alongside.

What to tell your players

"Keep coming forward inside the box and keep your eyes open as you make the tackle"

"Use footwork to avoid the tackle"

Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

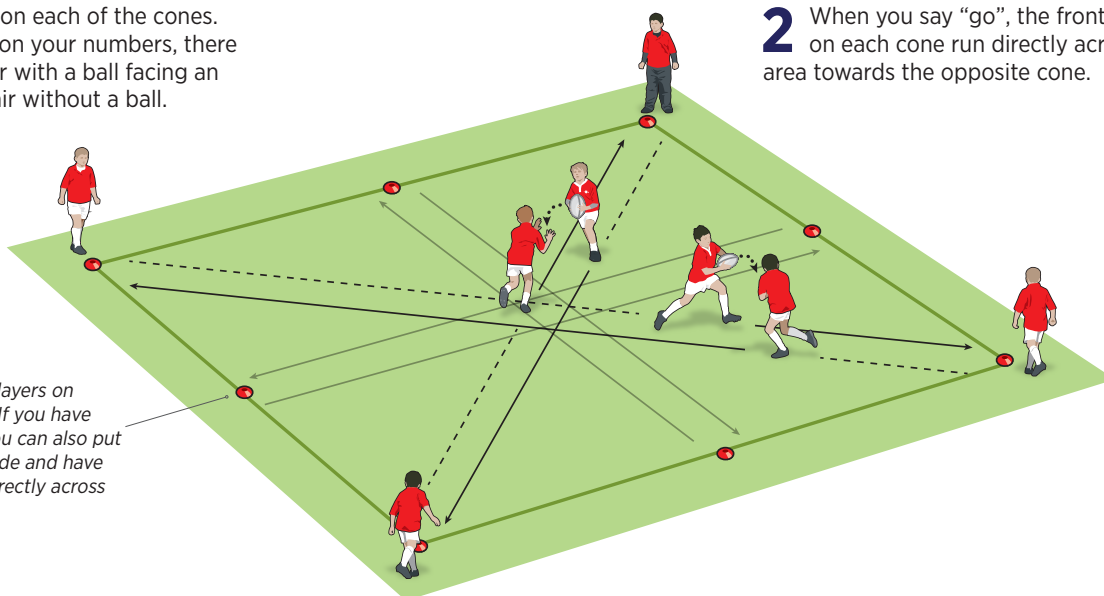
Star avoiders

Get players used to running forward with the ball in two hands and keeping the ball free if involved in contact

- 1** Put players on each of the cones. Depending on your numbers, there should be a pair with a ball facing an individual or pair without a ball.

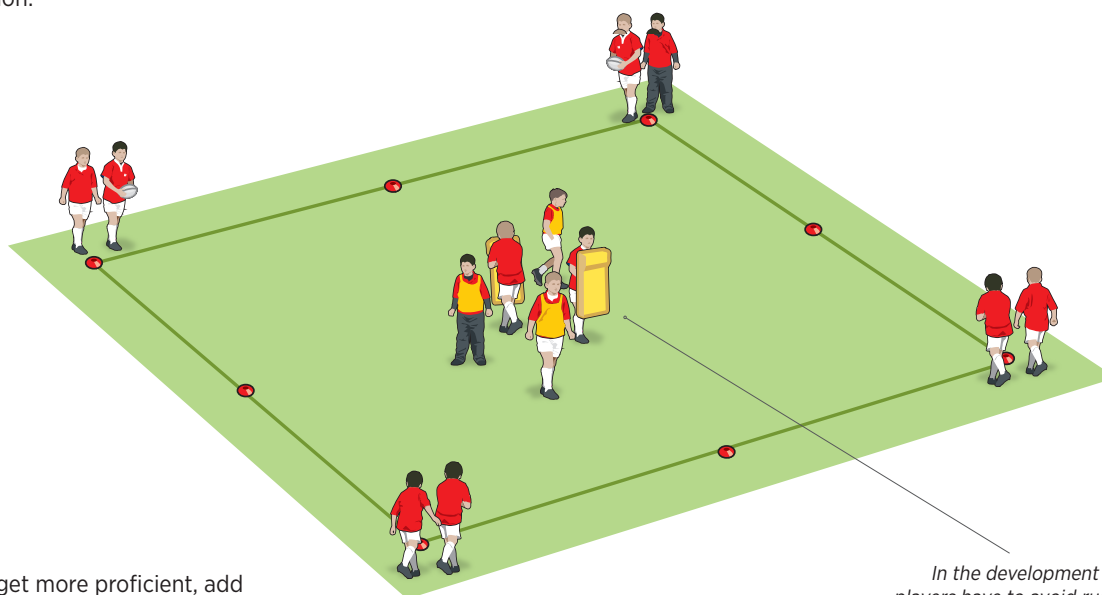
- 2** When you say “go”, the front players on each cone run directly across the area towards the opposite cone.

Start by putting players on the corner cones. If you have enough players you can also put cones along the side and have players running directly across the area



- 3** When at least two thirds of the way across the area the ball carriers pop the ball to the runners coming from the opposite direction.

- 4** After the pass, the players continue running and reset on the opposite cones, ready to go again.



- 5** As players get more proficient, add ruck pad holders and “ball grabbers” (who aim to grab the ball from the ball carrier) to encourage evasion skills.

In the development game, players have to avoid ruck pad holders and ball grabbers as they try to cross the area and still make their pop passes

You will need

- A 15m square area
- 4 balls
- Ruck pads for the development game

Got more players?

It's unlikely you'll have too many players for this game. The key is setting it up so that you have enough players on each cone to keep the activity moving.

What to tell your players

“Keep the ball in two hands when running”

Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Corridors

Get your players used to being light on their feet and looking for spaces not bodies

1 Set out a 3m wide, 20m long channel of cones for players to race to through – make sure the channel has some bends in it so it's not just a straight race.

2 Position a ball carrier at the start of the channel, with a defender no less than 2m behind him.

3 When you say “go”, both players sprint through the channel, with the ball carrier aiming to get to the other end without being touched by the defender.

4 Develop by using different starting positions, such as both players on their fronts, or on their knees.

5 Further develop by setting out two “ladders”, each made up of three cone “rungs”. Make each rung 3m apart and have a 5m gap between the ladders. Put a cone either side of the last rung of the defender’s ladder to form gates.

Allow about 3m between the rungs of each ladder. This makes players think about whether to run between them with small steps or try and leap across

6 Put a ball carrier at the end of one ladder and a defender at the far end of the other ladder.

7 When you say “go”, the ball carrier and defender step through their respective ladders at speed, with the ball carrier aiming to beat the defender and get through the gates to score. Use touch or full tackling.

You will need

- 1 ball per pair
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

You can line up pairs to race through the channel, or set up further channels if you have enough cones.

What to tell your players

“Stay light on your feet and upright”
“Maintain your pace”

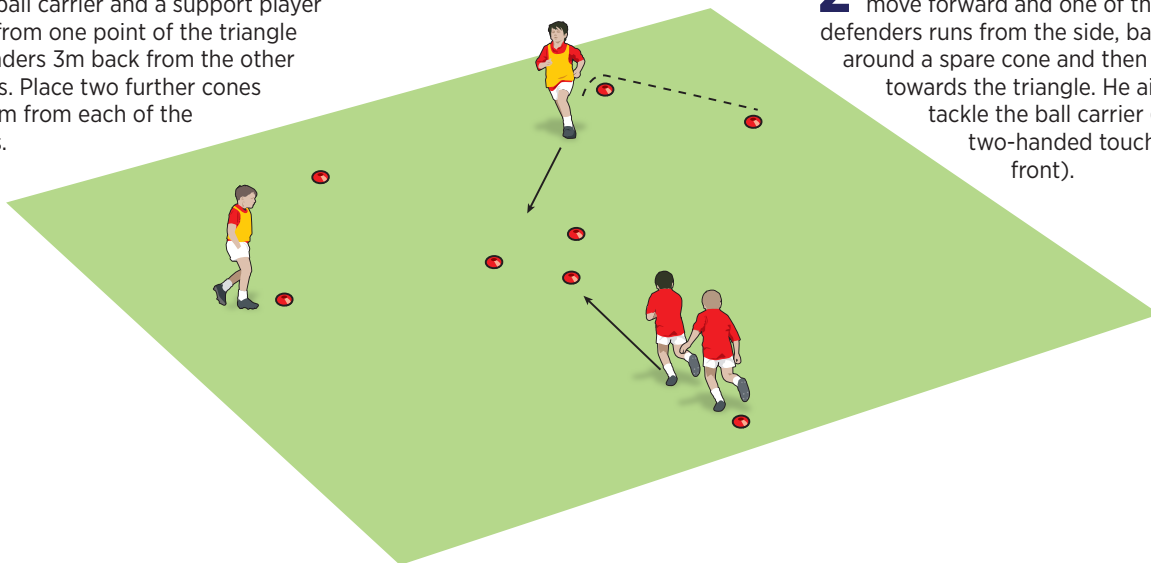
Key

Ground covered

Footwork before contact

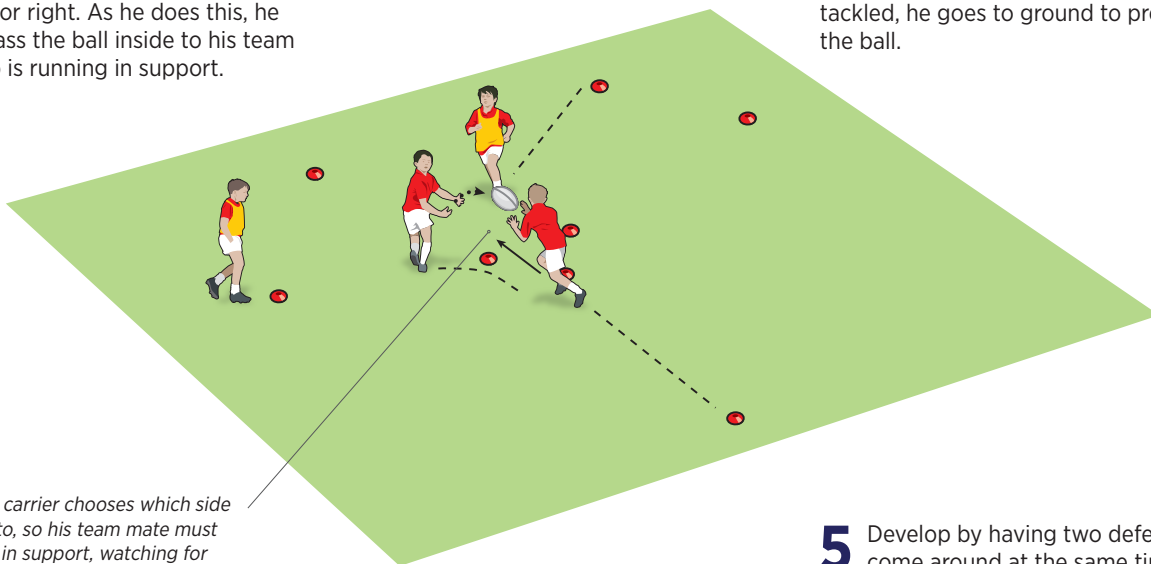
Get your players used to stepping left or right before the tackle and then either offloading the ball or taking contact

- 1** Make a 1m triangle from three cones. Put a ball carrier and a support player 4m back from one point of the triangle and defenders 3m back from the other two points. Place two further cones another 2m from each of the defenders.



- 2** When you say “go”, the attackers move forward and one of the defenders runs from the side, back around a spare cone and then on towards the triangle. He aims to tackle the ball carrier (or get a two-handed touch on his front).

- 3** The ball carrier runs to the point of the triangle in front of him and then steps left or right. As he does this, he aims to pass the ball inside to his team mate who is running in support.



The ball carrier chooses which side to step to, so his team mate must be alert in support, watching for his partner's move

- 4** If the ball carrier can't get the ball away because he is about to be tackled, he goes to ground to present the ball.

- 5** Develop by having two defenders come around at the same time, with another attacker in support of the ball carrier. Also, the defender can use a ruck pad instead of making a tackle.

You will need

- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs
- Ruck pad (optional)

Got more players?

Have attackers and defenders waiting in line for their turn, or set up another playing area.

What to tell your players

- “Carry the ball in two hands”
- “Step to take the defender with you”
- “Call for the ball in support”

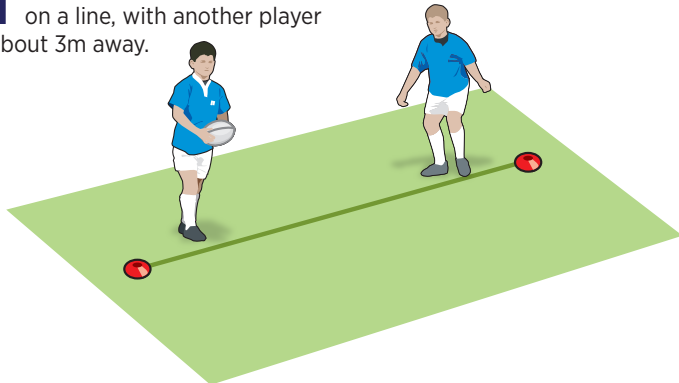
Key

- Ground covered -----
- Direction of run →

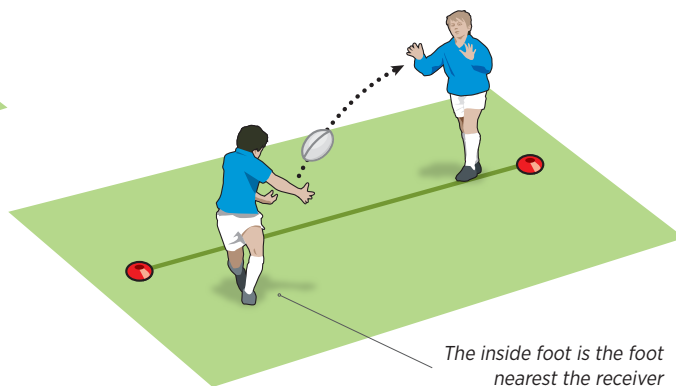
Step and pass

Get players used to passing off either foot – first from standing and then on the move

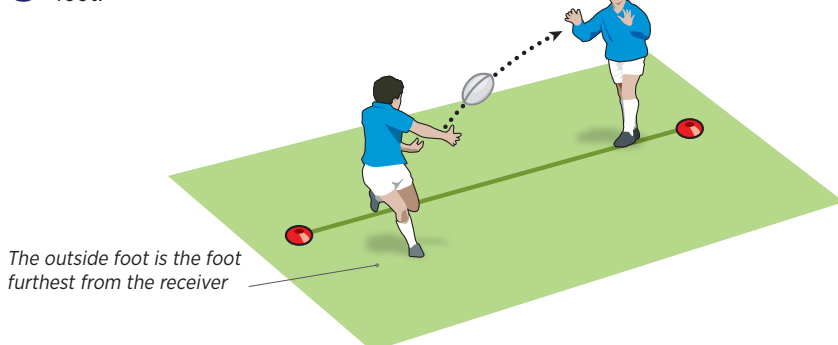
- 1** A ball carrier stands with his feet on a line, with another player about 3m away.



- 2** The ball carrier takes one step forward and passes off his inside foot.

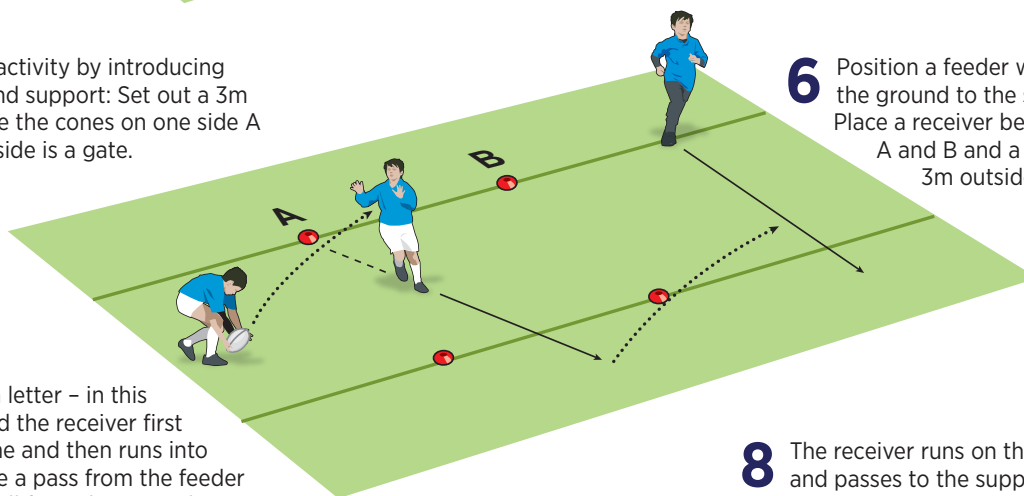


- 3** He then tries passing off his outside foot.



- 4** Repeat three times then have the players swap roles. Continue by having the players swap sides and then increase the distance between the players.

- 5** Develop the activity by introducing movement and support: Set out a 3m square area. Name the cones on one side A and B. The other side is a gate.



- 6** Position a feeder with a ball on the ground to the side of the area. Place a receiver between cones A and B and a support player 3m outside him.

- 7** You call out a letter – in this case “A” – and the receiver first moves to that cone and then runs into the area to receive a pass from the feeder who passes the ball from the ground.

- 8** The receiver runs on through the gate and passes to the support player who takes the ball at pace.

You will need

- 1 ball per pair
- Cones
- A 3m square area for the development game

Got more players?

Get as many pairs as possible practising the drill simultaneously.

What to tell your players

- “Turn your hips to the receiver as you pass”
- “Follow your hands through to the target”

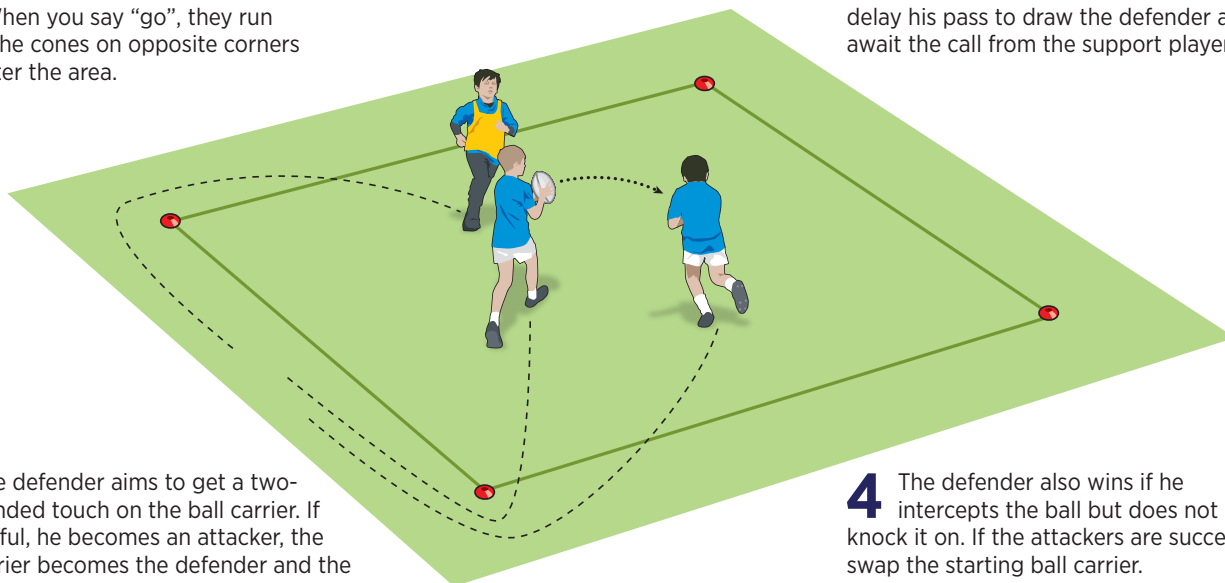
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Fixing the defender

Develop a basic decision-making 2v1 where the ball carrier draws the defender before passing

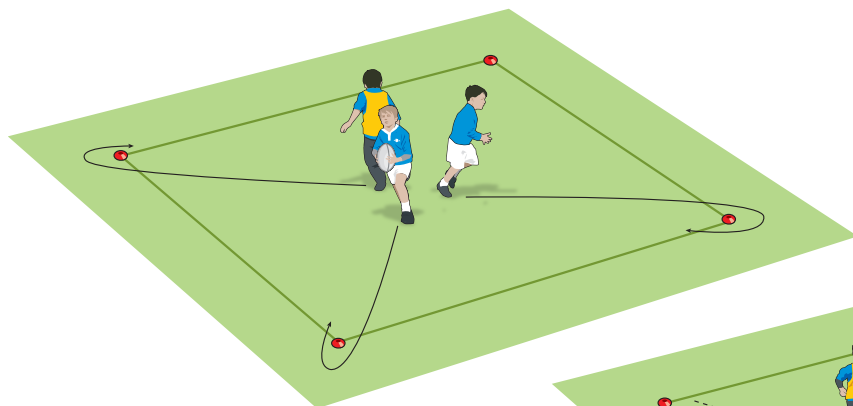
1 Put two attackers, one with a ball, and a defender at the side of the area. When you say “go”, they run round the cones on opposite corners and enter the area.



2 The attackers aim to get across the area to score. The ball carrier must delay his pass to draw the defender and await the call from the support player.

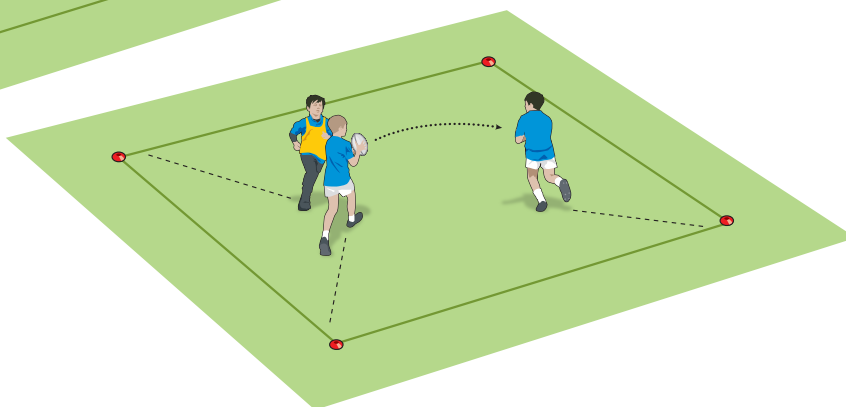
3 The defender aims to get a two-handed touch on the ball carrier. If successful, he becomes an attacker, the ball carrier becomes the defender and the players start again.

4 The defender also wins if he intercepts the ball but does not knock it on. If the attackers are successful, swap the starting ball carrier.



5 Develop the game by putting two attackers and one defender back to back in the middle of the area. When you say “go”, each runs around a cone and back into the area

6 As the players re-enter the area, the ball carrier has to draw the defender and either pass to the support player or use footwork to score by himself.



You will need

- A 5m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Set up more 5m areas and run more games.

What to tell your players

- “Keep the ball in both hands”
- “Start slowly before racing towards the open space in support”
- “Tell the ball carrier where you’re running”

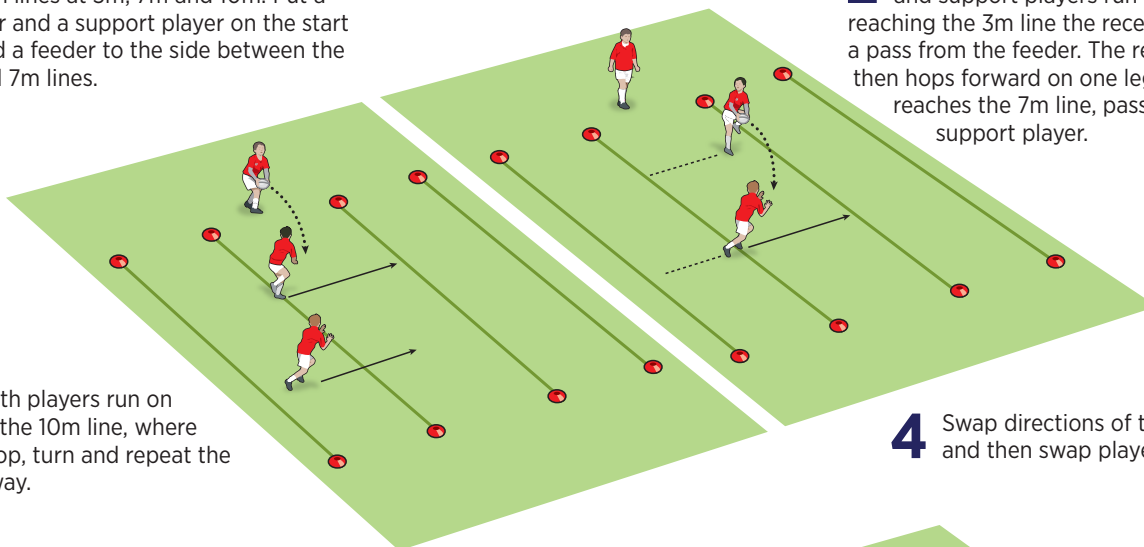
Key

- Ground covered ————
- Direction of run —————→
- Pass→

New handling offload

Get players used to making an offload while off balance so that they learn how to manipulate their bodies and hands to pass

1 Use cones to mark out a start line then lines at 3m, 7m and 10m. Put a receiver and a support player on the start line and a feeder to the side between the 3m and 7m lines.

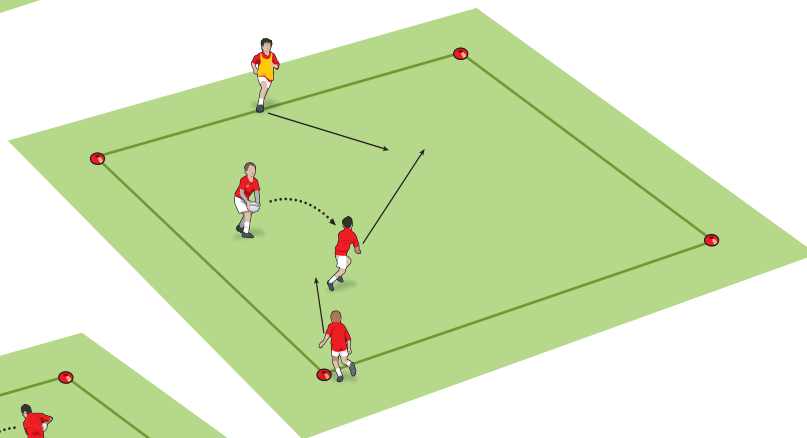


2 When you say “go”, the receiver and support players run forward. On reaching the 3m line the receiver takes a pass from the feeder. The receiver then hops forward on one leg and as he reaches the 7m line, passes to the support player.

3 Both players run on to the 10m line, where they stop, turn and repeat the other way.

4 Swap directions of the passes and then swap players.

5 Once players have got used to passing when off balance, move on to a 10m square area. Put two attackers on one side of the area at a corner, a defender on the other side about halfway along, and a feeder inside the area.



6 When you say “go”, the first attacker runs into the area with his team mate 3m behind in support. The first attacker takes a pass from the feeder and aims to beat the defender who makes the tackle.

7 As the defender makes contact, the ball carrier passes inside to the support player who runs on to score. Make the defender tackle at shorts height to start with.

You will need

- A 10m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones
- Bibs (optional)

Got more players?

Set up more than one “hopping” station.

What to tell your players

- “Turn shoulders to pass”
- “Work to the edges of the defenders”
- “Drive through the defenders before you pass”

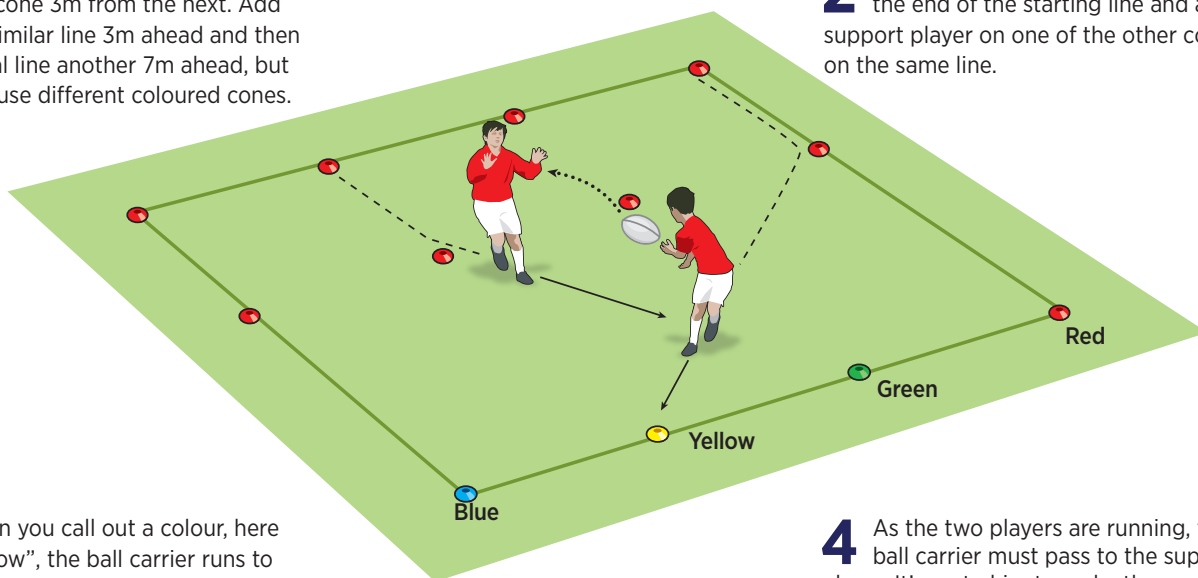
Key

- Ground covered ————
- Direction of run —————→
- Pass→

Angling for the next pass

Get your support players used to running different angles to take the pass from the ball carrier

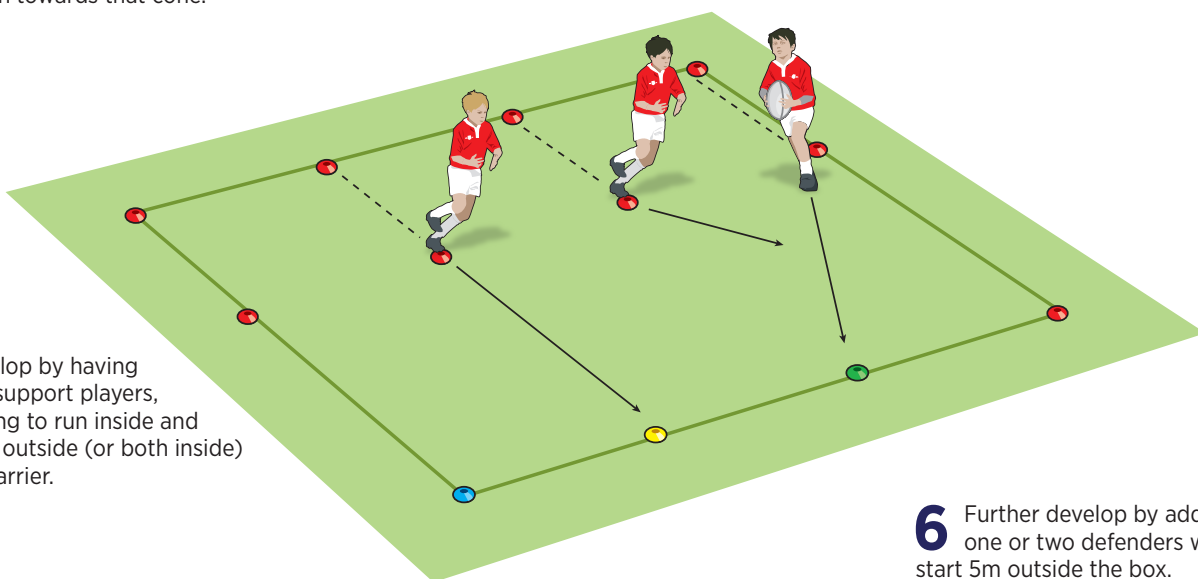
1 Set out a starting line of four cones, each cone 3m from the next. Add another similar line 3m ahead and then add a final line another 7m ahead, but this time use different coloured cones.



2 Put a ball carrier on a cone at the end of the starting line and a support player on one of the other cones on the same line.

3 When you call out a colour, here "yellow", the ball carrier runs to the cone 3m in front of him and then on towards the cone of that colour. As he starts running, you call out another colour, here "green" and the support player runs 3m and on towards that cone.

4 As the two players are running, the ball carrier must pass to the support player. It's up to him to make the pass at the appropriate time.



5 Develop by having two support players, one turning to run inside and the other outside (or both inside) the ball carrier.

6 Further develop by adding one or two defenders who start 5m outside the box.

You will need

- A 12m x 10m area
- 1 ball
- Coloured cones

Got more players?

You can line up players ready to take their turn, or set up other areas alongside.

What to tell your players

- "Carry the ball in two hands"
- "Turn the shoulders towards the receiver"
- "Pass FOR the receiver not TO the receiver"

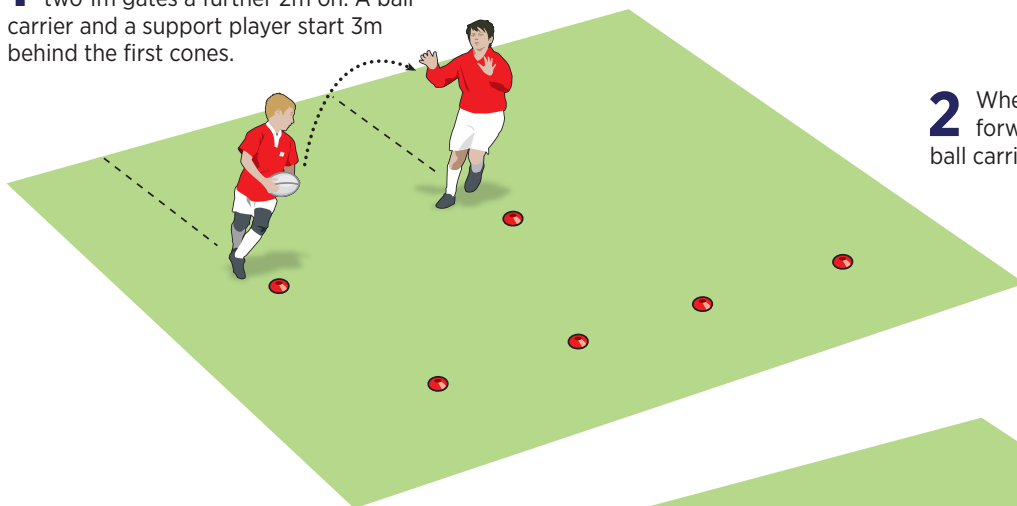
Key

- Ground covered -----
- Direction of run ----->
- Pass>

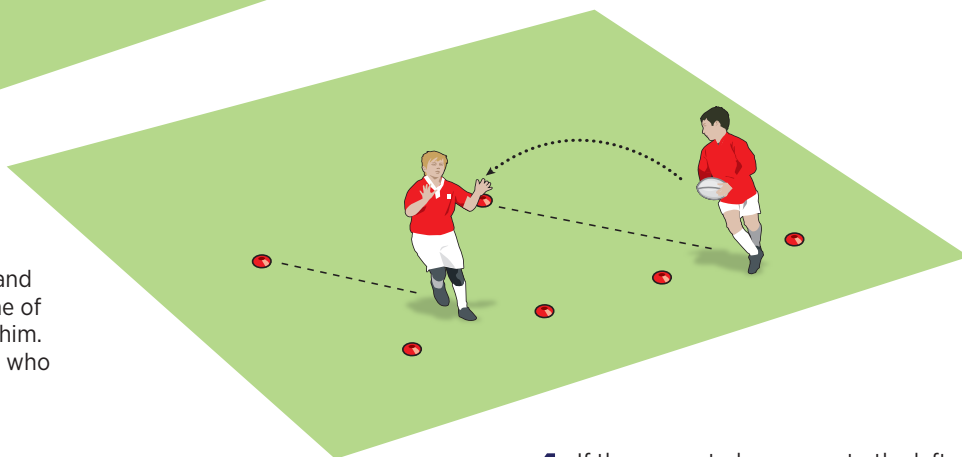
The loop pass

Get the passer running in support of the receiver after he has made the pass – either to get inside or outside him to receive the ball back

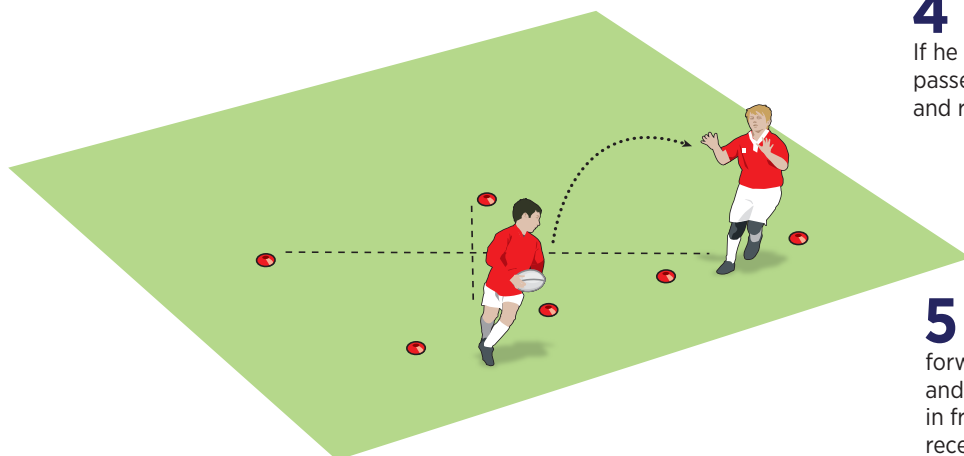
- 1** Set out two cones 3m apart and put two 1m gates a further 2m on. A ball carrier and a support player start 3m behind the first cones.



- 2** When you say “go”, the players run forward to the first cones and the ball carrier passes to the support player.



- 3** The support player takes the ball and cuts either left or right through one of the gates, depending on what you tell him. He then passes back to the first passer who is running through the other gate.



- 4** If the support player goes to the left gate he passes back off his left hand. If he goes to the right gate, the original passer runs behind the new ball carrier and receives a pass outside him.

- 5** Develop by adding defenders about 5m from the gates. They walk or jog forward to put pressure on the ball carrier and support player. The defender who is in front of the receiver always follows the receiver.

You will need

- 1 ball
- Cones

Got more players?

You can have players lined up to take their turn, or set up other cones and run more games alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Turn your shoulders to pass”
- “Communicate with each other”

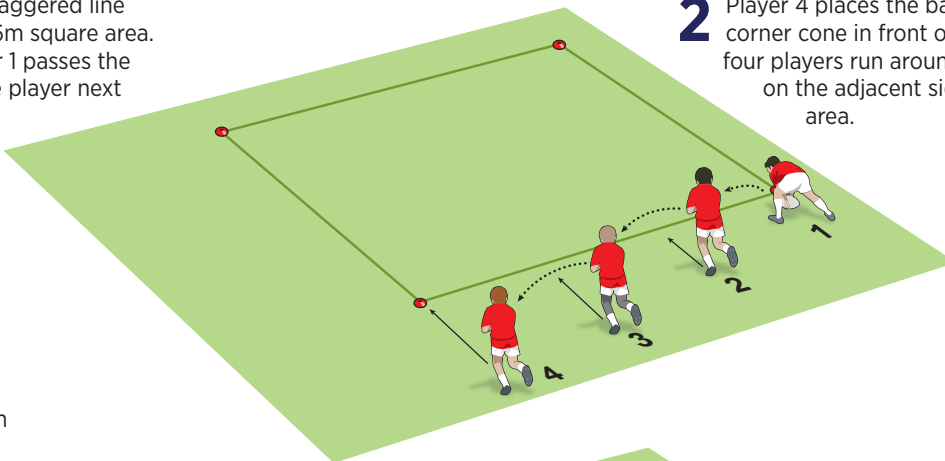
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

Attack and realign

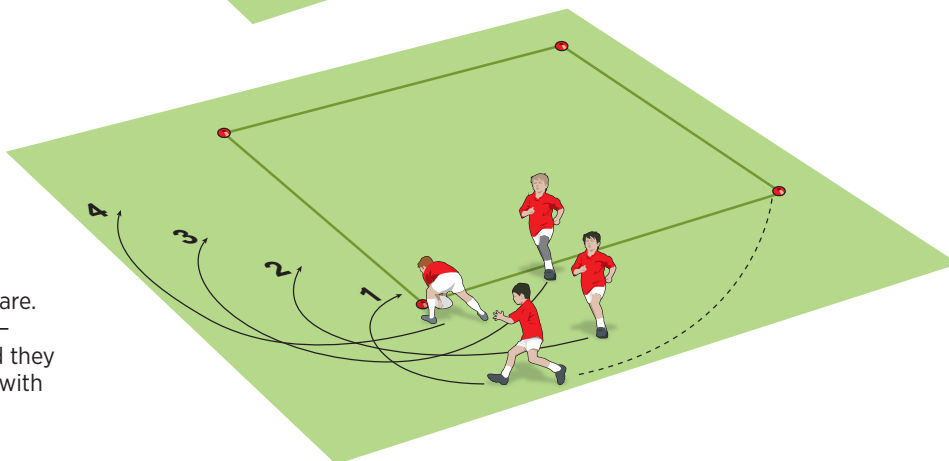
Get your players to create and keep depth in an attacking line and run onto the ball at pace

1 Put four players in a staggered line along one side of the 6m square area. When you say “go”, player 1 passes the ball from the corner to the player next to him. The ball is then passed down the line to the player 4.

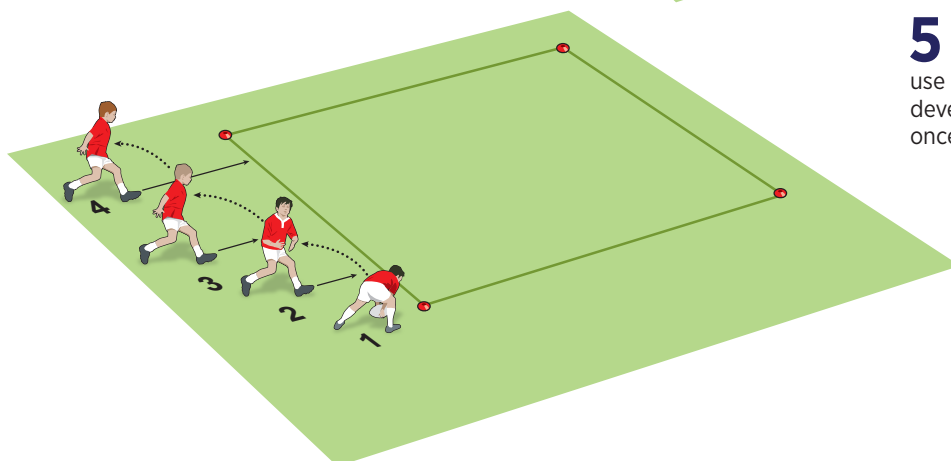


2 Player 4 places the ball on the corner cone in front of him and all four players run around to realign on the adjacent side of the area.

3 Players realign to form a new line starting at the cone where the ball was placed and repeat the passing sequence down the line.



4 Repeat around the entire square. Start with passing to the left – most players are right-handed and they will find this easiest – then repeat with passing to the right.



5 Develop by making the square larger to make the players pass further and use passing to the right as well. Further develop by having two groups going at once, chasing each other around the box.

You will need

- A 6m square area
- 1 ball
- Cones

Got more players?

Set up more squares to run further games alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Hands up ready to receive”
- “Look at the receiver’s hands when passing”
- “Look at the ball when receiving”

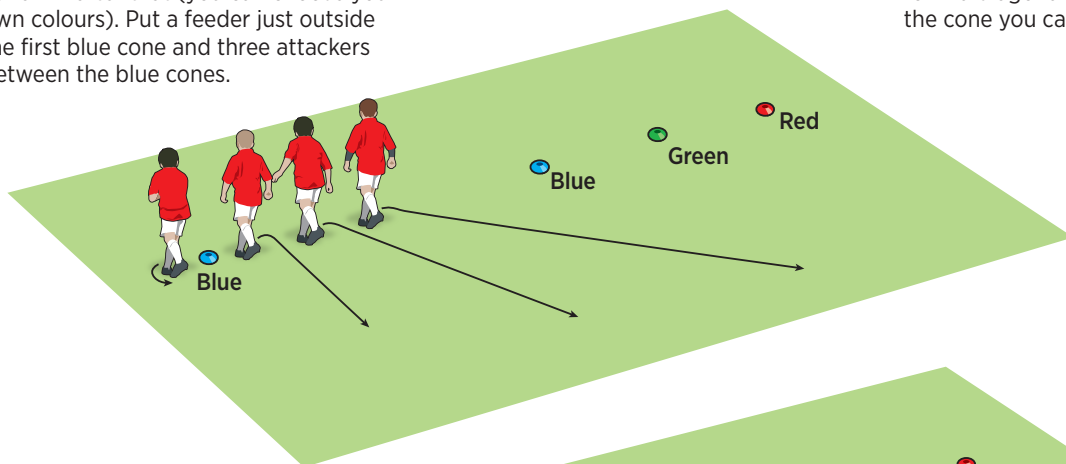
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————>
Pass>

Create depth in attack

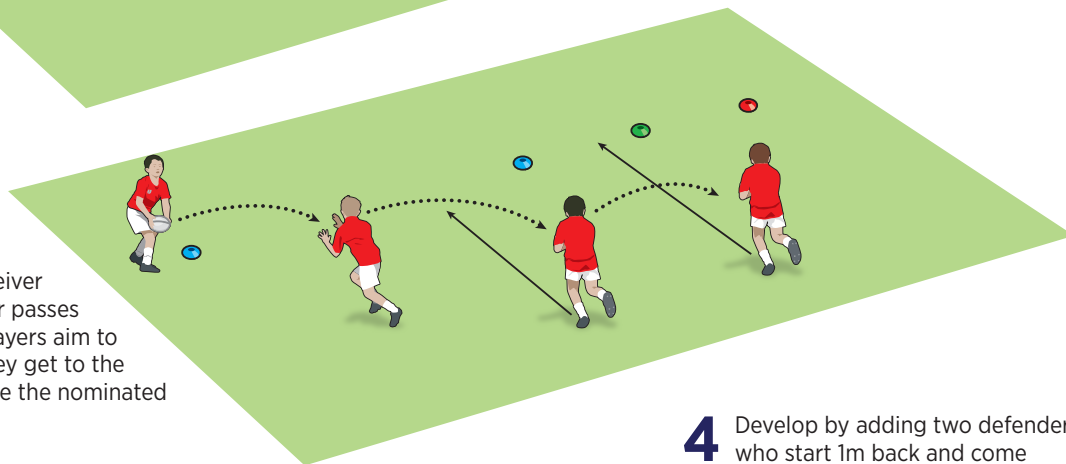
Get your players ready to run onto the ball

1 Put two blue cones 6m apart then a green cone another 2m on and a red cone 2m after that (you can choose your own colours). Put a feeder just outside the first blue cone and three attackers between the blue cones.

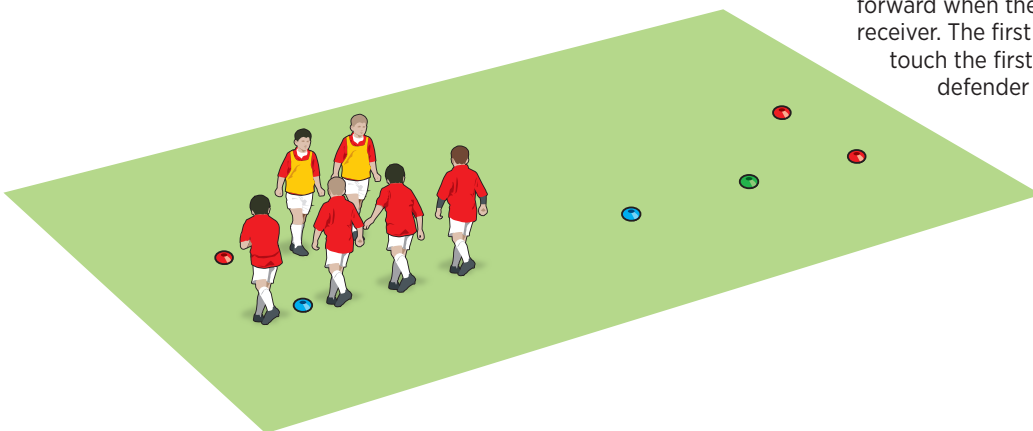


2 When you say a colour (here "green"), the attackers run back to form a diagonal line that stretches out to the cone you called.

3 When the first receiver is ready, the feeder passes him the ball and the players aim to run and pass before they get to the line of cones (and inside the nominated coloured cone).



4 Develop by adding two defenders who start 1m back and come forward when the ball is fed to the first receiver. The first defender can only touch the first receiver and the second defender the second receiver.



You will need

- 1 ball
- Coloured cones
- Bibs for the development game

Got more players?

Set out more cones and run other games alongside.

What to tell your players

"Get your hips facing up the pitch before receiving the ball"

"Line up so you can see the back of the player inside you"

"Put your hands out and towards the passer to receive the ball"

Key

Direction of run



Pass



Clearance passes

Get your players working on the skills and timing needed for a clearance pass

1 Set out three ruck pads, each with a ball alongside. The pads should be 3m apart and staggered by 2m. Put a cone 5m from the end of each ruck pad (so there are three cones, which are also staggered). Mark an end line beyond the last ruck pad and cone.

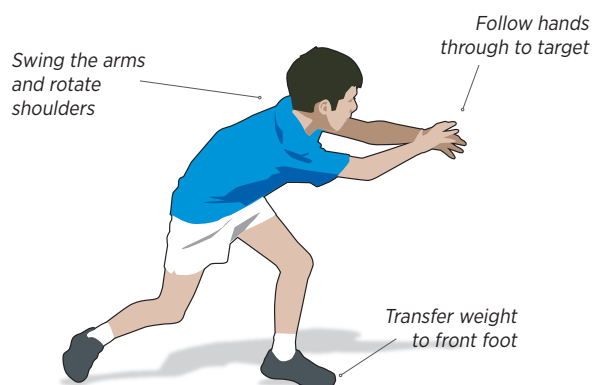
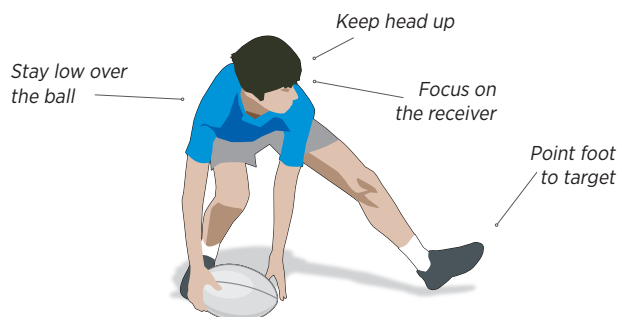
2 Put a clearing passer 1m back from the first ball and three receivers standing in a line 5m away, each in line with one of the cones.

3 When you say “go”, the clearing passer moves to the first pad and passes to the first receiver who runs to his cone, takes the pass and sprints to the end. The clearer then moves to the second pad and passes to the second receiver and then to the third.

4 All the players then jog back to the start, replacing the balls as they go, then move round one place. Once everyone has had a go, swap ends, so the passers can try passing off the other hand.

5 Develop by playing a game of 6v6 (or equal sides) touch rugby. When a player is touched, he puts the ball through his legs and his nearest team mate must make a clearance pass.

✓ Making a clearance pass



You will need

- 3 balls
- Cones
- 3 ruck pads

Got more players?

Set up more drills alongside - if you don't have enough ruck pads, use cones instead.

What to tell your players

- “Stay low over the ball”
- “Point foot towards your target”
- “Follow through with your hands”

Key

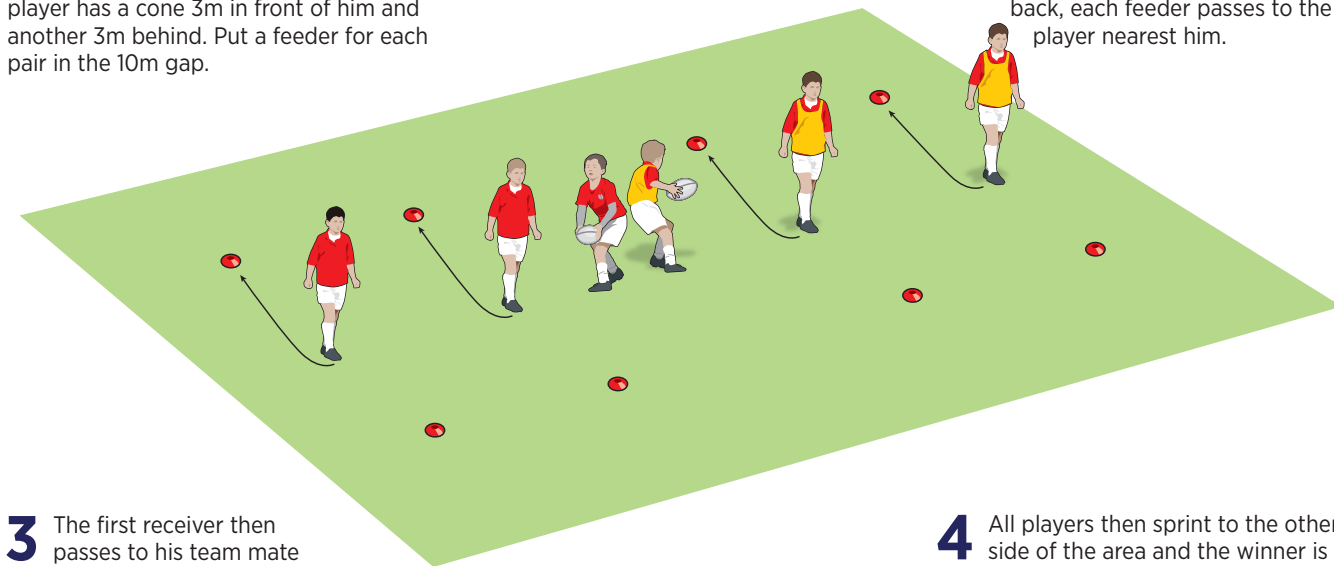
Ground covered	-----
Pass➔

Move onto a pass at pace

Get your players to realign quickly so they can come forward onto a pass at pace

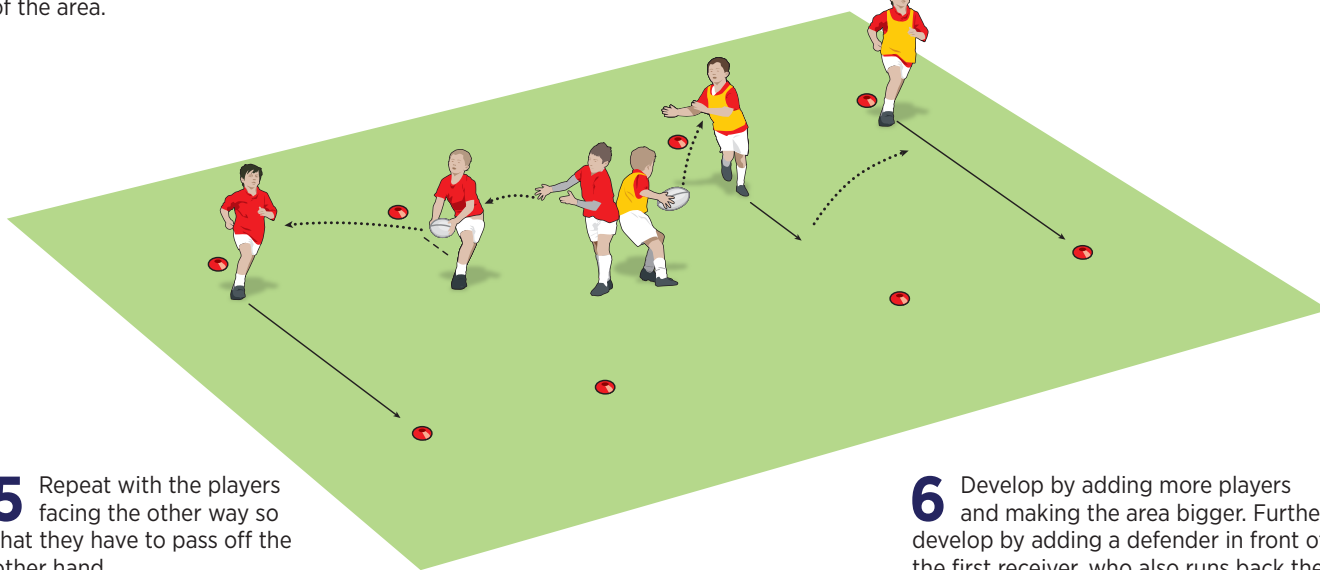
1 Line up two pairs of players. The players in each pair stand 3m apart with a 10m gap between the pairs. Each player has a cone 3m in front of him and another 3m behind. Put a feeder for each pair in the 10m gap.

2 When you say “go”, the players turn, run to the cone behind them, then back into the area. As the players run back, each feeder passes to the player nearest him.



3 The first receiver then passes to his team mate before they reach the middle of the area.

4 All players then sprint to the other side of the area and the winner is the first player across.



5 Repeat with the players facing the other way so that they have to pass off the other hand.

6 Develop by adding more players and making the area bigger. Further develop by adding a defender in front of the first receiver, who also runs back then forward, but in the other direction. Use touch tackling.

You will need

- A 15m x 6m area
- Cones
- 2 balls

Got more players?

Make the playing area bigger and add players, or set up another playing area alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Hands out towards passer”
- “Keep the pass off the chest”
- “Pass in front of the catcher”

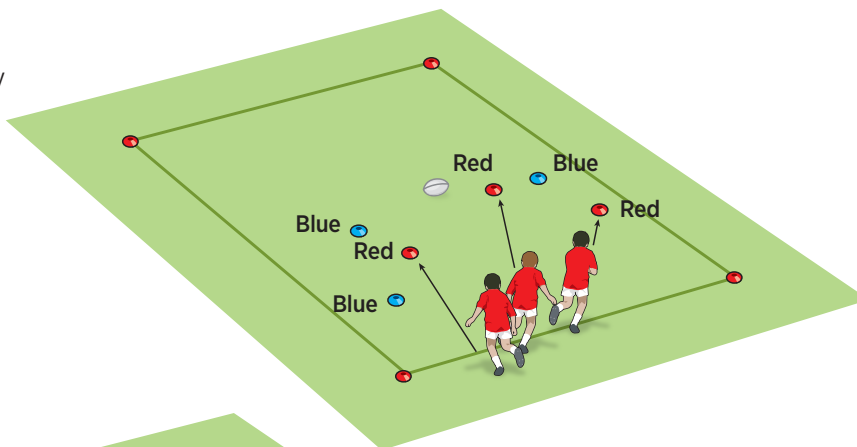
Key

Ground covered	-----
Direction of run	—————→
Pass→

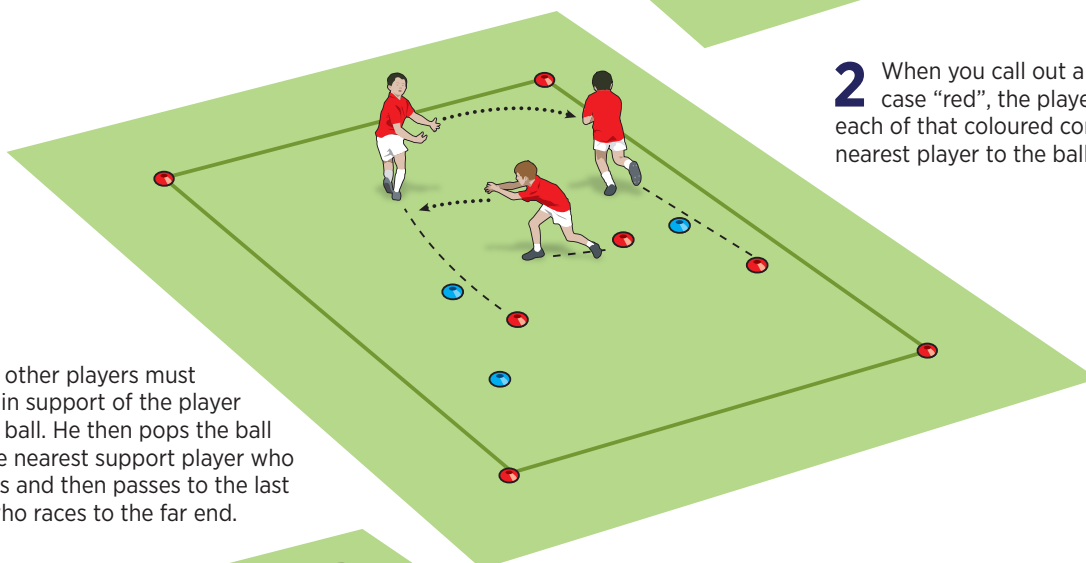
Pick, pass and support

Get players used to passing to support players arriving from different angles, as well as timing those support runs to take the ball at pace

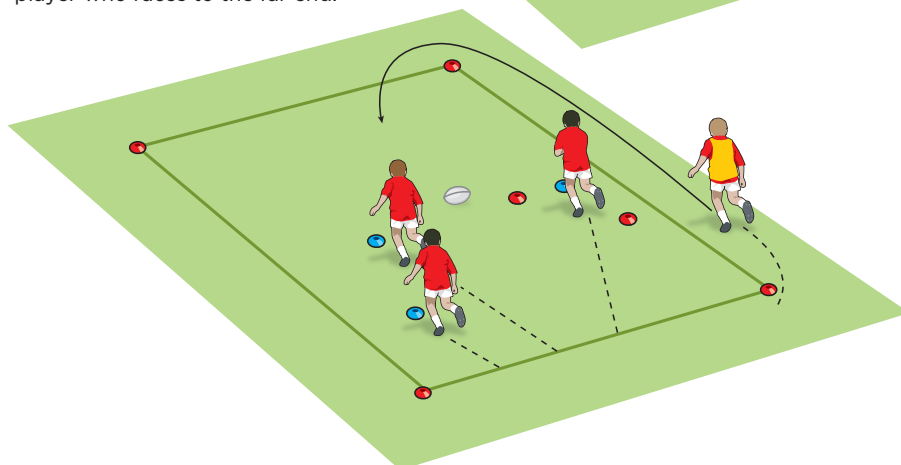
1 Put a group of three players at one end of the 6m x 8m area. Put six cones of two different colours, randomly spaced, inside the area 3-4m in front of the players and put a ball just beyond the cones in the middle of the area.



2 When you call out a colour, in this case “red”, the players run to one each of that coloured cone and the nearest player to the ball picks it up.



3 The other players must run in support of the player with the ball. He then pops the ball up to the nearest support player who advances and then passes to the last player who races to the far end.



4 Develop by adding a defender who starts level with the group of cones. On your call of a colour, he runs to the far end of the box and turns to defend, aiming to touch the ball carrier.

You will need

- A 6m x 8m area
- 1 ball
- Coloured cones

Got more players?

Line up groups of three to carry out the drill at pace, or set up another game alongside.

What to tell your players

- “Call for the ball”
- “Take the ball at pace”
- “Pass for the receiver to run on to”

Key

- Ground covered ————
- Direction of run —————>
- Pass>

Andrew Griffiths

Starting with limited rugby knowledge, Andrew coached his son's team for four years, gaining his Level 1 RFU coaching award, and learning the hard way about grassroots coaching. The experience of managing training for 25 boys and their parents prompted the creation of the EasiCoach Rugby Curriculum. Andrew is the editor of many rugby and soccer coaching manuals, and the managing director of Green Star Media Ltd.



Dan Cottrell

Dan has spent most of his adult life collecting and absorbing the most useful rugby coaching secrets he can find. He is a practising RFU Level 3 Coach, a Welsh Rugby Union Course Leader, head coach for Swansea Schools U15s and a Level 2 referee. Dan played first class rugby at Bath and Bristol and later became Director of Rugby at Cranleigh School in Surrey. He is best known as the editor of the successful free rugby coaching email *Better Rugby Coaching*, which has been published since 2003 and has 80,000 subscribers worldwide.



How EasiCoach Was Created...

EasiCoach Rugby Curriculum™ has been created by the people who publish Rugby Coach Weekly coaching magazine. We have been publishing sports coaching advice for grassroots coaches since 2003.

Covering the key core skills required for consistent player development across five age ranges from U7 to U16, EasiCoach follows the latest mini and youth guidelines on player development and has been approved by senior national coaching development officers.

As a coaching tool aimed at helping beginner coaches, volunteer assistants and helpers, EasiCoach offers a guaranteed programme of skills development activities every season.

EasiCoach is owned by Green Star Media Ltd, which provides informed, easy-to-follow advice for 450,000 rugby, football (soccer) and basketball coaches in more than 80 countries. For more information, please visit www.greenstarmedia.net



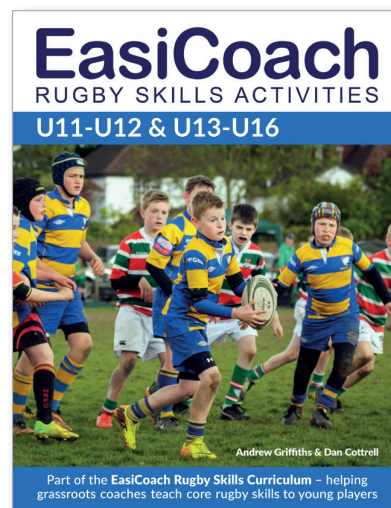
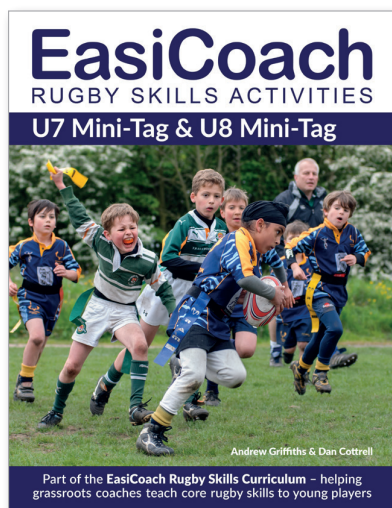
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Praise for the EasiCoach Rugby Curriculum™ series



Between January and April 2014, five clubs – Cranleigh, Brighton, Swansea Uplands, Stowmarket and Hadleigh – trialled EasiCoach in a pilot scheme. This is their feedback:

“The sheets were a good resource. The exercises were great, easy to understand and very useful over the weeks.”

Sheriff Dabiri, U6-U8 Mini Tag, Cranleigh RFC

“The kids enjoyed them and from a coach’s perspective it certainly eased the burden of having to come with ideas for each training session.”

Paddy Dangerfield, U6-U8 Mini Tag, Cranleigh RFC

“Very good coaching tool. Easy to understand, easy to implement, and relevant to age group – avoids having to trail through loads of exercises/drills that don’t apply to the age group.”

John Awdry, U11-U12, Brighton RFC

“I like the activities very much.”

Steve James, U10, Swansea Uplands RFC

“I am quite new to coaching and I found EasiCoach a valuable asset in preparing and running sessions. Players found the sessions enjoyable and importantly have improved their understanding of game play.”

Graham Allen, U13-16, Stowmarket RFC

“The players understood quite quickly what I was asking them to do without too much explanation. The content suited the age group that I am involved with and also assisted me in understanding different coaching methods. This was my first season as a coach (qualified) so your sheets gave me a lot of confidence working with my age group.”

Brian Anderson, U10, Stowmarket RFC

“The wording on the sheets was short and to the point and easy to set up. The boys really enjoyed all the drills, keeping the lads on their toes and thinking all the time. I’m going use the ideas again and again.”

Michael Fenner, U10, Hadleigh RFC

