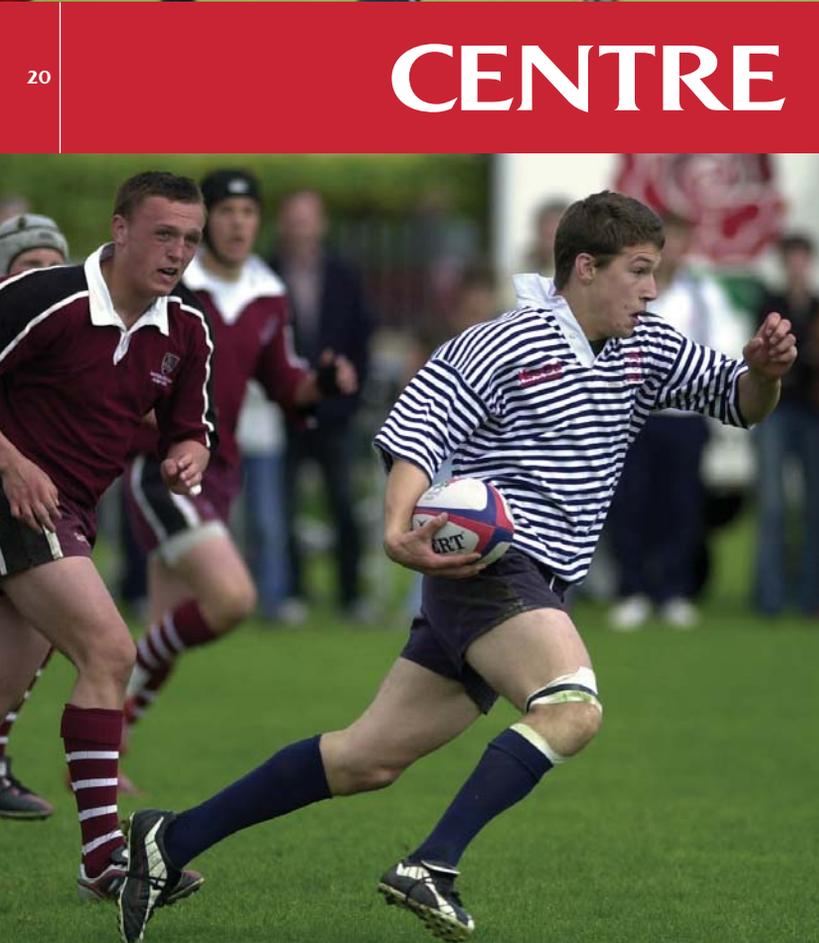




CENTRE



POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL

A centre is a key decision maker when his team are in possession. He must decide instantly whether to pass, kick, or make contact and retain the ball, or make a break. In defence, the centre is often required to tackle his opponent head on.

ATTACK

A centre should have the confidence to take on and beat his opponent and play the ball out of the tackle. Centres are often involved in set moves from the scrum and lineout. They should be prepared to read the game and anticipate what happens next from open play. The centre should be able to deliver a variety of short and long passes, kick diagonally, high or grubber style, to beat flat defences.

DEFENCE

The defence of the centres must be co-ordinated and watertight. As a general rule, centres should advance towards the opposition together in a flat line and on the 'inside' (nearest the breakdown) of their opponents to ensure that they are pushed away from their main support.

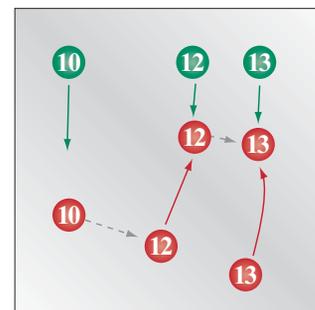
CONTACT

Centres need to have excellent contact skills. They are often the first tacklers in defence. They should be able to retain the ball in contact and support the new ball carrier after a pass.

PRACTICES

TECHNIQUE AND SKILL

- Practise receiving and passing the ball from left and right;
- Practise different lines of running by changes of direction into gaps, rather than running at opponents;
- Practise receiving a ball and making a break using explosive acceleration;
- Practise evasive running skills to avoid contact and beat defences.
- All types of kicks should be practised with either foot under varying pressure - using a series of targets.



Practise taking contact and making a pass afterwards (e.g. 12 is being tackled but still gets a pass off to 13).



WING

22



POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL

Chosen for flair, speed and elusiveness, a winger must also be reliable in defence and be able to kick and to deal with opposition kicks. Wingers must have a high work rate and go looking for the ball if it isn't coming in their direction. They should be able to read the game and anticipate what happens next.

ATTACK

The winger should have excellent handling skills, should be able to beat opponents by speed, change of pace, evasion and hand-off. He should be able to keep the ball alive by either taking a tackle and passing the ball to a supporting player, or staying on his feet as long as possible, or by initiating a counter attack with his other wing and/or full back. The winger should have excellent ball retention skills on contact and must contribute fully to maul, ruck and tackle situations.

DEFENCE

Defensively, from the scrum and lineout, the open-side wing may stand wide and deep to ensure that if the opposition kick diagonally, he will be able to gather the kick more easily. However, once the ball has gone through the attacking fly half's hands, he must rapidly move forward to be in a position to tackle in conjunction with his outside centre. Alternatively, the open-side wing could operate flat with his centres from the beginning. As a blind-side wing, he must understand his role in conjunction with his own back row and scrum half when defending in the 22 metre area and be prepared to cover across field if the attack goes open.

RECEIVING

Numbers 14 and 11 should be able to field a variety of diagonal, high or grubber kicks.

KICKING

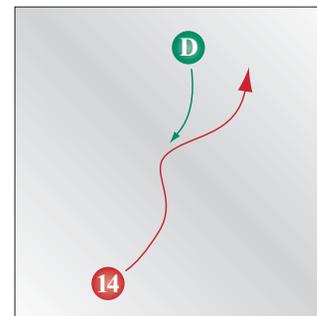
To deal with opposition kicks by

kicking clear to touch, by kicking long into opposition territory or by initiating a counter attack with the full back and/or other wing/centres.

PRACTICES

TECHNIQUE AND SKILL

- Practise, against opposition under varying pressure, taking a pass and then:
 - Running with the ball at pace;
 - Evading the opposition by change of pace, change of direction, sidestep and swerve;
 - Passing to support;
 - Chipping and chasing;
 - Making the ball available in a tackle.
- Practise, under varying pressure, both moving towards and away from his own line, fielding high balls into the box and diagonal, rolling balls to the wing.



Learn how to preserve space, pull defenders in and then swerve outwards to beat the defender (or pass to a looping support player).

23



FULL BACK



POSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL

The full back often has greater opportunity, time and space to read the game as it unfolds in front of him in attack or defence. The ability to read the game and to anticipate what happens next is a key quality in a full back.

ATTACK

The full back, whilst attacking, should look to be involved by either being a 'strike runner' (coming from depth into a gap and receiving a ball) or acting as a decoy runner to hold the attention of the defence. The full back can vary where he comes in to the line, but should do so at pace. If the ball is kicked into his own half, the full back should look to link up with other players such as his wingers and counter attack.

KICKING

The full back often has to execute a range of kicks, some to relieve pressure, some to counter attack.

DEFENCE

The full back is often the last line of defence. He should help to organise the defence, as he has a wider vision than most players. If a player makes a break, he should shorten the thinking time of the attacker by moving towards him in a controlled manner, shepherding him towards the touchline.

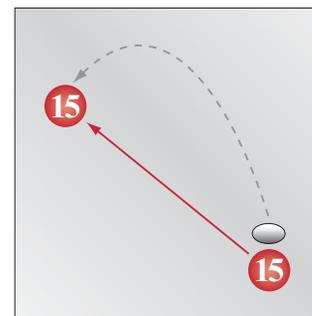
FIELDING/CATCHING

The full back has to deal with a range of kicks from opponents. Catching them in the air before they bounce is preferable; he will, however, have to deal with long kicks and pick up or fall on the ball whilst it is rolling along the ground.

PRACTICES

TECHNIQUE AND SKILL

- Practise, under varying pressure, both moving towards and away from his own line:
 - Fielding high ball into the box;
 - High balls under the post;
 - Diagonal rolling balls to the wing;
 - Grubber kicks through the centre;
 - Chip kicks.
- Practise, under varying pressure, from each of these fielding situations, the following:
 - Screw kicks;
 - Bouncing the ball into touch when outside the 22 metre line;
 - Running in counter attack, evading the tackle;
 - Kicking into effective areas (e.g. 'up and under', diagonal rolling ball to wing, including kicks which stay on the field and put pressure on opponents.
- Practise, with a partner, kicking towards a target/target area.



Practise your positioning under a high kick and learn how to time your jump to catch the ball whilst in the air.