

THE DYNAMIC ROLLING MINI-MAUL BY NIGEL REDMAN.

Nigel Redman is the Worcester England Academy Manager and has coached England U21s since their World Championships in South Africa in 2002. He played for Bath from 1984 till 1997 and in that period played twenty times for England and represented the Lions in 1997.

My starting point was thinking about how we can play the game at tempo and with rhythm whilst driving, without necessarily driving too far into defenders at contact. This is no easy task for players and I have been impressed with the way some French sides do not *always* drive at the heart of a well-organised defence; they change the focus, searching for the weak point in that defence.

When a player arrives at contact and he has done everything he can to avoid it, he must try to stay on his feet. The first part of the dynamic rolling mini-maul is virtually the same as the way most sides set things up; the nearest player to the player who has been held up, whatever his playing position on the field, hits the ball as if setting up for the traditional mini-maul.



The key skill and coaching points at this stage are:

- The body height of the first player must be dynamic, low and strong.
- He must set the height of the maul with effective ball presentation between hip and knee.
- The second player must go forward, drive and force the defender(s) backwards.

In the normal mini-maul the ball would usually go the way that the second player is twisting. If he hits with his right arm, his natural movement is anti-clockwise and the ball would be played to the right. If he hits with his left arm on the left side of the tackled

player, he is naturally turning clockwise and the ball would usually be played to the left.



Right arm – anti-clockwise movement.



Left arm – clockwise movement.

- At this stage, the skill that I advocate changes and the third man to the contact assumes a very important role. He determines which way he wants the mini-maul to move and then hits his inside shoulder onto the second player's hip,
- holds the nearest defender with his outside hand
- and produces a dynamic pulling action which pulls the mini-maul away from the initial contact area. This action can take the possession outside the first guard, who may be expecting to be guarding the initial contact and may not be prepared for a new maul just outside him.



This process can be repeated, though there is always an available option of lifting the ball to a support runner.



The process is very similar to a shift-drive in the line-out and it can be utilised successfully there. There are various situations where it works well:

Slow ball at the tackle.

The dynamic rolling mini-maul can turn slow ball into dynamic possession as it changes the pace of the game and sucks in two or three players from a flat line defence. It can go against the grain of their quick organisation and commit the guard, leaving a space somewhere close to the original tackle.

No 8 breaks right from a scrum and is held up.

The pick and go may not be a productive option and the 9 pass to a close runner may be covered by the defence. The dynamic rolling mini-maul takes the game to the side of the first tackle and turns the guard inside. Runners can then be available from the original scrum. The ball is kept alive and most options are held open – handling, driving or shift and drive.

Front of line-out

Maul dynamically into the tramlines then drive.

Five man line-out with all players well back from the 5m line.

No 2 in the line-out catches, then the dynamic mini-maul takes the possession towards the tramlines with support running from the tail man in the line-out and the winger.

An option line-out ball close to opponents' goal line.

The ball is thrown to No 2 in the LO and he pushes or passes it to 4 in the LO. The No 8 is standing at scrum-half, the scrum half goes to the tail of the LO and is available as the first player to the man with possession. 7 (open side) and 9 (scrum half) step back as runners, the hooker comes round as third man to twist the mini-maul, defenders are attracted, then the ball can be moved away.

A post option.

The post can be set, then one or more dynamic rolling mini-mauls can change the point of the attack very quickly, especially if the original possession was becoming slow.

There is *always* the option to play the ball out of the first tackle by the first support player. The option to drive is always available throughout the movement. The dynamic rolling mini-maul can be any number of hits and does not *have* to be just one. Two set-ups in a quick sequence can ask questions of well-organised defences. Once perfected, the skill allows fluidity whilst keeping the defence guessing.