

MAKING THE MOST OF OVERLAP SITUATIONS

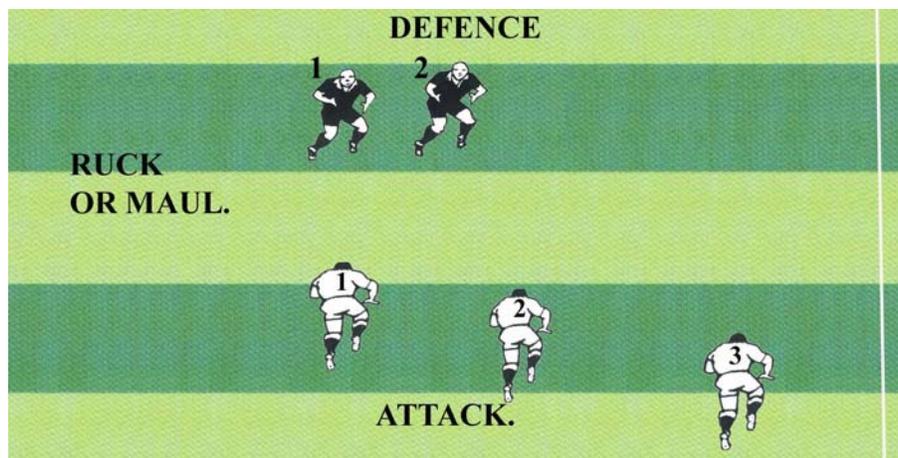
by

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THE SITUATION

- In the following situation an overlap has been created by several phases of play.
- Three attacking players (white 1, 2 and 3) are running into a fifteen metre channel which is defended by two players (black 1 and 2).



THE PROBLEM

- How do the attacking players preserve and not waste this situation?
- How do the two attacking players, A1 and A2, interest the two defenders sufficiently to release the overlap, A3, to have a free run?

THE SOLUTION

A1 and A2 must hold the defenders to prevent them drifting onto the overlap by:

- Their running angles.
- The type of pass they make.
- The timing of their passes.

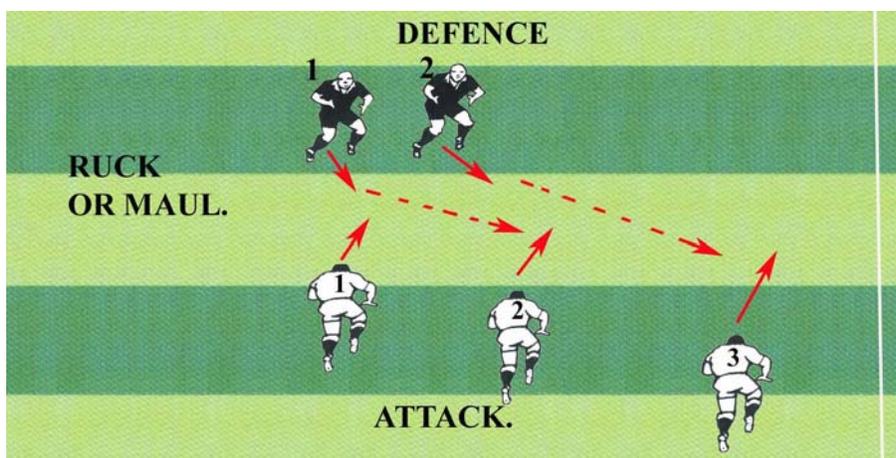
RUNNING ANGLES

If the attacking players **run across**, they

- Present the easier side-on tackle to the defenders.
- They cut down the space on the outside which they need to preserve for the overlap player.
- It is easier for the defenders to follow the passes and drift onto the overlap runner.

The attacking players, A1 and A2, must **run straight** and confrontationally at their opposite numbers

- To hold the defenders and stop them drifting on to the unmarked overlap player. The defenders cannot vacate their defensive channels to allow the attacking players to run on. They have to expect to tackle.
- If the defender looks as if he is more interested in moving on to the outside player, this direct running also leaves the ball carrier with the option of beating his opposite number on his inside.
- It saves the space on the outside for the overlap player to run into.



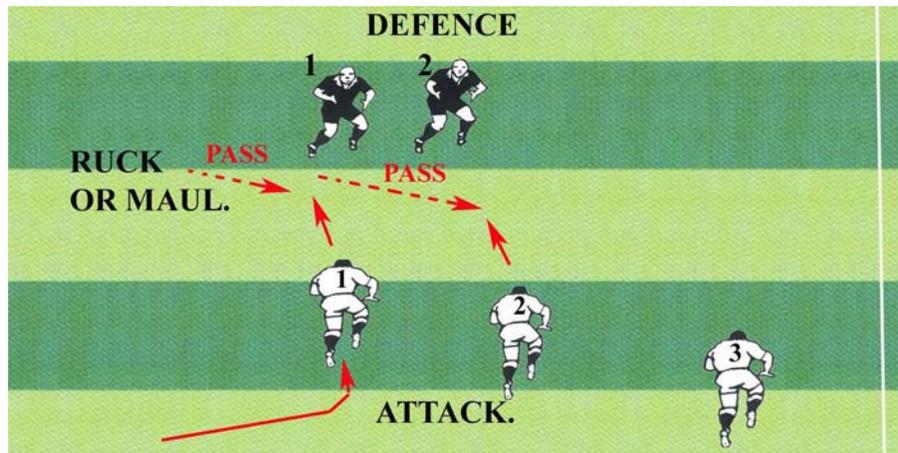
HOW TO ACHIEVE STRAIGHT RUNNING

Each player should be on a straight running line before he receives the pass. To get on this straight running line there are a number of factors to consider:

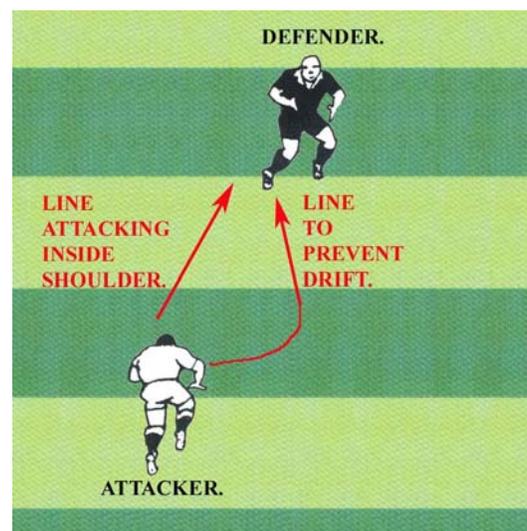
- The **outside shoulder** is the key. It should be pointing back in the direction the ball is coming from. The benefits of this are:
 - a. It straightens up the outside hip. The player is then running square and straight.
 - b. If a player drops a pass, the odds are that the ball will not be knocked on so

much as fall backwards because the palms of the hands are pointing back.

- **Step towards the ball.** This means that each attacking support player has to continually reposition himself on the ball carrier. If the support feels he is drifting away from the ball-carrier, he should step closer.

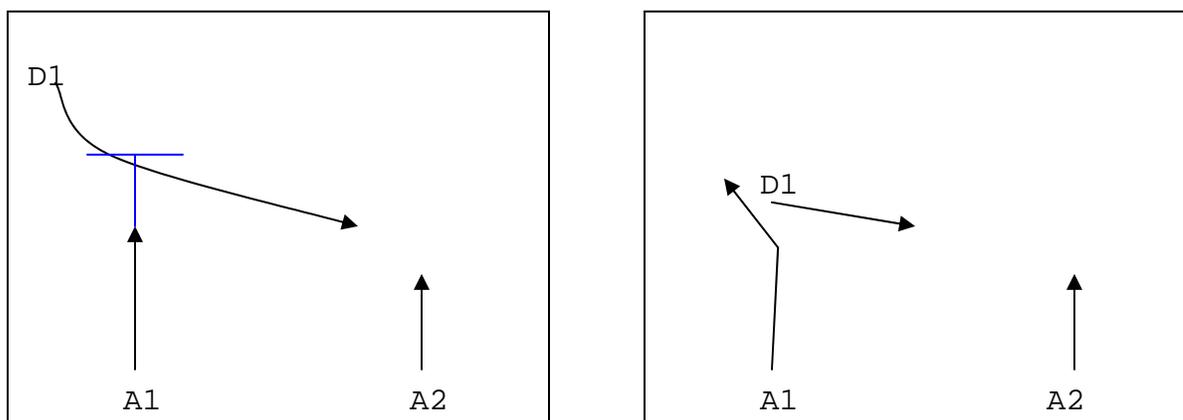


- **Aim at the inside shoulder** of the defender(s).
 - a. This makes them expect a tackle on their inside shoulder and prevents them from drifting.
 - b. Really attack the target with some direct and confrontational running.
 - c. To do this effectively, the ball carrier should get on the outside of the defender who is marking him (before he gets the pass) rather than attack his inside shoulder from the inside. (See following diagram.)



- Should a **defender cross the “T”** of the ball carrier and show the inside gap, the ball carrier should attack the hole that has been left.
 - a. The defender is presenting the weaker inside shoulder for the tackle; his shoulders will have moved away from the square (every tackler will stay square to the ball carrier so he can tackle with either shoulder and cover the inside as well as the outside break).

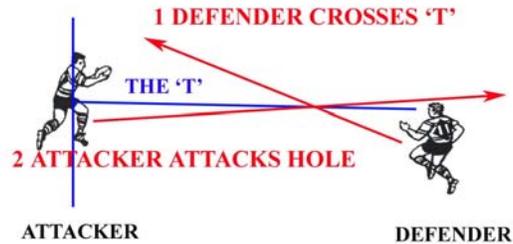
Crossing the “T” (An explanation).



The letter ‘T’ is formed by the attacker’s line of run as the vertical and the horizontal being an imaginary line that is parallel to the lines going across a pitch.

If the defender goes past the right shoulder of the ball carrier (A1), he has crossed the ‘T’ and is, therefore, showing the availability of an inside break for the attacker (A1). That player (A1) **must** attack the space that has been offered as in the second diagram immediately above.

DIAGRAM - DEFENDER
CROSSING THE 'T'.



THE CORRECT PASS

- The correct pass is **off the back foot** because
 - a. It preserves the straight running line.
 - b. It continues to fix defenders because it offers the possibility of an attacker selling a dummy and stepping inside the defender.
 - c. However, do not fall away after passing (the hip-sink-pass). It is too late to straighten the line after passing if the hip-sink action is used. It is also difficult to support the pass because the passer is going off in a different direction.
- The correct pass, which involves fixing the defender, is **not** the pass off the front foot.
 - a. If the ball carrier shifts his weight from the back foot (foot further from the receiver) to the front foot (foot nearer the receiver) and then gives the pass, he will not interest the defenders.
 - b. This shift of bodyweight is better for the long, spin pass, not for a short pass in this narrow channel.
 - c. By shifting the weight, the passer is indicating that he is definitely going to pass (an inside break is no longer an option) and this allows the defender a split second to change his running line and offer his attention on the receiver. It encourages the drift defence.

- The **target area** for the pass from A1 to A2 should be his hands. This allows A2 to get his pass away quickly if he is under pressure from his defender. The pass from A2 to A3, however, should be in front of A3 so he can run on to it. He has no need to make a pass – just run and score – if A2 and A3 have done their jobs properly!

THE TIMING OF THE PASSES

- Straight running also means that the players must be able to cope with the pressures involved. Their handling must be accurate and passes must be given at the correct time.
 - a. If the passes are made too early, defenders can merely follow the ball across the line and drift on to the overlap. These defenders have not been held/fixated to their channels.
 - b. If the pass from A1 is too late, the receiver, A2, gets caught with the ball.
 - c. If A1 finds his misreading of the time and space available have made him carry the ball too far, he should give a miss pass straight to the overlap, A3, knowing that A2 will get caught with the ball if he passes it to him
 - d. However, if A1 gives a miss pass early, the overlap opportunity is wasted. The defenders are not fixed and drift out. A 3 v 2 situation has become a 1 v 1.

DRILLS for OVERLAP PLAY.

DRILL: Around the grid.

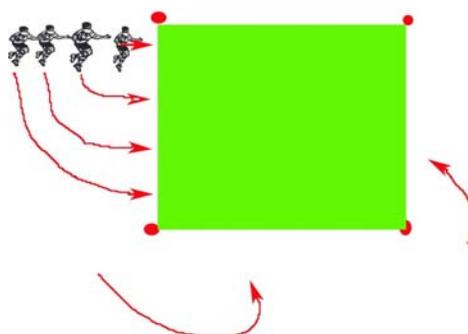
OBJECTIVES OF ACTIVITY:

To get on the correct running lines to fix defenders

ORGANISATION:

In 4s with ball.

Players lined up outside grid.



EXPLANATION:

Player 1 throws ball in air then players 2, 3 and 4 move into space to attack the grid line. Ball is passed laterally.

Players complete passing **before** they reach grid line.

Final player **must** receive the pass inside the corner cone.

The final ball-carrier places the ball at the cone.

The players re-align on that cone and repeat the passing drill.

COACHING POINTS:

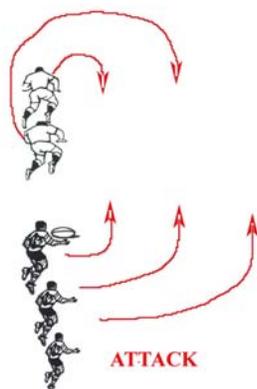
- Get the outside shoulders pointing back towards the source of possession.
- Get square.
- Step in towards the ball.
- Arc running so that players run back slightly into the ball that they are receiving.
- Personal space – avoid bunching and/or tripping over each other. Try to protect a one metre space around the ball carrier.

EXTENSION

Add defenders to the drill above.

First player at front of line throws ball in air then passes.

Players must spread to fill available space then pick up their running line.



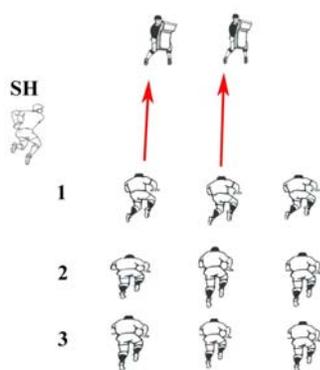
DRILL: 3 v 2 cyclic with passive defenders.

OBJECTIVES OF ACTIVITY:

To emphasize timing of passes and running lines.

ORGANISATION:

- Two shield holders and a scrum half.
- Scrum half with a number of balls.
- Waves of 3s in attack.



EXPLANATION:

First receiver takes pass from the scrum-half and gets the pass away under pressure (so does second receiver).

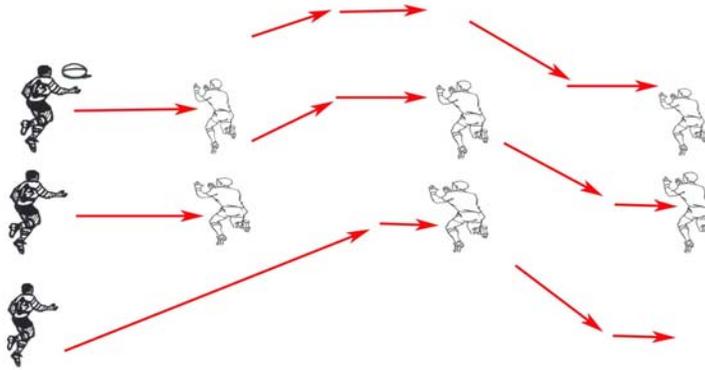
COACHING POINTS:

- How deep does first receiver take ball?
- How far does he carry ball before making his pass?

- Does first receiver give second receiver the opportunity to get his pass away?
- End player must maintain depth so he is running flat-out when he receives his pass.

EXTENSION

Lines of passive defenders; 3 v 2.



First, passing to right to create overlap. Pass in sequence 1 to 2 to 3.
 The overlap is created for 3, who then steps in to fix the first defender in the next line and the sequence of passes is 3 to 2 to 1; 1 is now the overlap.
 The next passes go in the sequence 1 to 2 to 3 to create an overlap for 3.

DRILL: 3 v 2 with active defence.

OBJECTIVES OF ACTIVITY:

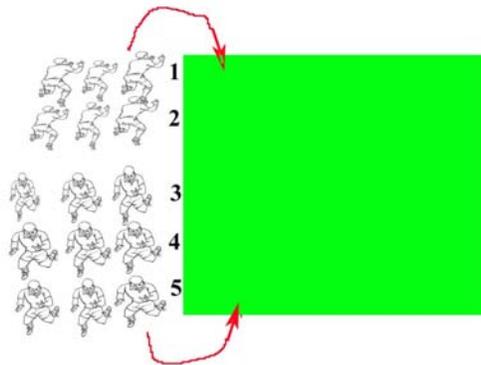
To increase pressure on running angles and timing of passes.

ORGANISATION:

Scrum-half with a number of balls.

Channel 15 by 15 metres.

Lines of 5 players.



EXPLANATION:

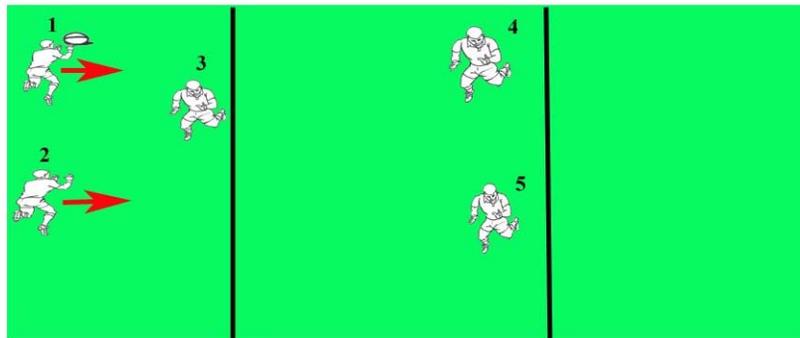
Three attackers run around one cone into the channel. At the same time two defenders run around the opposite cone to defend the channel.

Level of defensive activity is decided by the coach.

COACHING POINTS:

- Fix defender - run at his inside shoulder.
- Time the pass.
- Support must hold depth until the pass is being offered.
- If a defender drifts across the ball-carrier, the ball-carrier takes the space on the inside of that defender.
- Can attackers spot any cues that might indicate a defender's intentions?
- How can defenders take the initiative and force the ball-carrier into a trap?

EXTENSION



EXPLANATION:

- Two players run down the channel.
- They beat the first defender using the overlap.
- The defender immediately joins the two attackers as an attacker to create 3 v 2 situation.

DRILL: Fixing cross cover to release the overlap.

OBJECTIVES OF ACTIVITY:

To prevent defenders drifting.

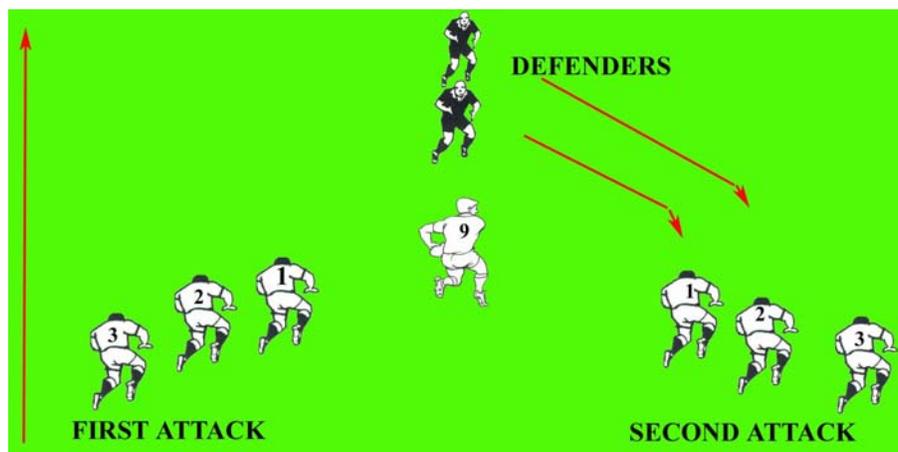
ORGANISATION:

Two channels 15 x 15 metres.

Scrum-half with two balls.

Two groups of three attackers.

Two defenders.



EXPLANATION:

Scrum-half gives the ball to the first group of attackers. D1 goes for A1, D2 for A2.

Attackers fix defenders and release overlap.

Coach shouts, “Break” and two defenders run across the grid to defend against the second group of attackers.

COACHING POINTS:

- Come from depth to accelerate on to ball.
- Final pass should be flat.
- Aim at inside shoulders of defenders.
- Run at defenders, not away from, to prevent the drift.
- Pass at appropriate time – can the next attacker get his pass away?

On the second attack, the first receiver should take a flat pass if defenders are running across in order to get behind them as quickly as possible.