DEVELOPING NUMBERING-OFF IN SEVENS.

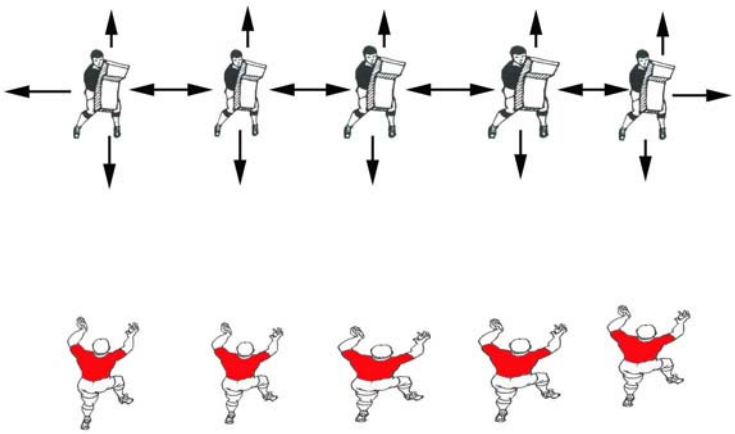
RFU Community Rugby arranged a seminar on sevens in 2002. The seminar explored various aspects of the game and each coach was invited to share knowledge with the other delegates.

Defence was a very important topic and the following drills were offered as a means of improving *numbering-off* and *moving as a line*.

They are crucial skills in sevens, but the work can be easily applied to fifteens as well.

DEVELOPING NUMBERING-OFF.

The players are positioned as in the diagram below with each tackle shield faced by a defender.



As the tackle shield holders, orchestrated by a call from the coach, move together left, right, backwards or forwards, the defenders shadow those movements. When the tackle shields are called forward the defenders move up in a line and tackle them.

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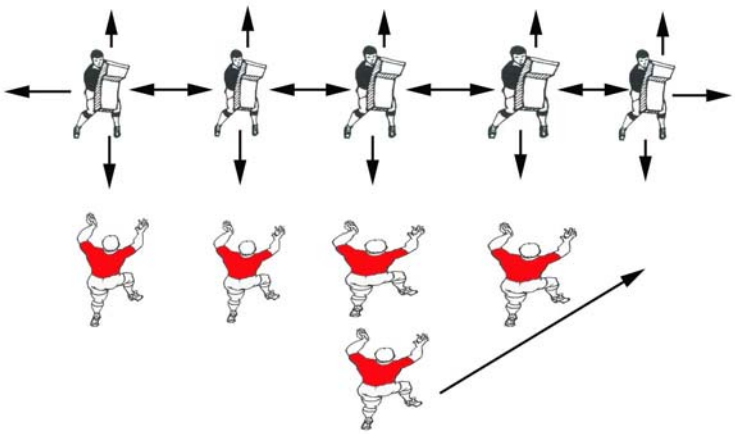
THE SWEEPER.



The players are positioned as in Diagram 1 but one defender takes on the role of sweeper.

As the tackle shield holders move to their left, there is automatically an unmarked space on the right of the defence. When the shields move to their right, there is an unmarked space on the left of the defence.

The sweeping defender has the responsibility to cover these spaces whenever they occur. When he comes in to defend there will be a ‘free’ defender at the other end of the line and he steps back to become the sweeper.

The players must be encouraged to communicate their moves so that the other players know who is doing what.

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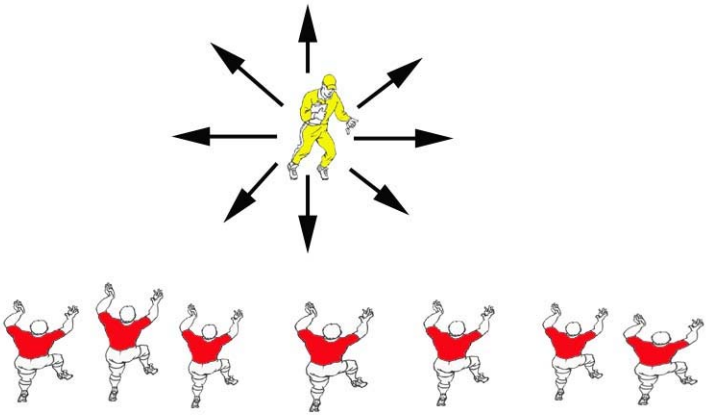
MOVING AS A LINE.



The coach moves at a trot and he can go in any direction. The players mirror-image his movements whilst they maintain their positions in line and their proximity to each other.

Whenever the line moves forwards, it must move very quickly for the first two paces before going back to a trot.

(A point that must be stressed to all players is that the fixed line does not apply when the opponents kick. When the kick occurs, all players have to try to get back as quickly as possible and then the line reforms when everybody gets back behind the ball. The fastest player back calls slower players into position.)

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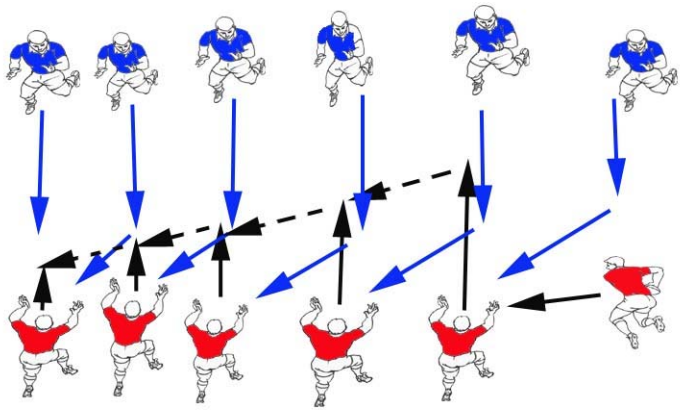
DEFENDING AS A LINE.

Six or seven attackers are faced with an equal number of defenders as in the diagram below.



Initially the defence is man-for-man and the line of defenders shadows the attackers as in previous examples (1 and 2).

Each defender points at his attacker and calls, “He’s mine”. As his particular attacker passes the ball, he pushes outwards to defend against the next man out or against the inside break.

If the ball is freed by a tackle, the defenders secure it and it is then their turn to become the attack.

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