

RESTART KICKS BY BEN STURNHAM.

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Restarts are a vital part of set piece play and should always be seen as a piece of possession that *will* be won. They require much practice and all players need to know the calls at all stages of the procedures.

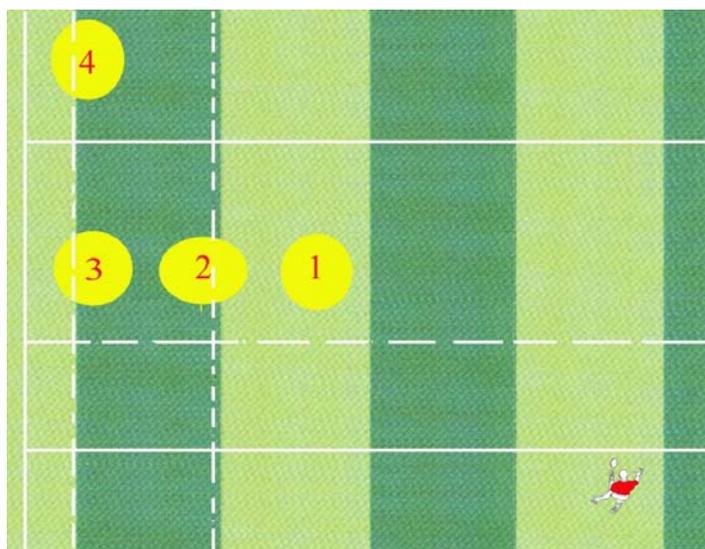
Too many restart practices go haywire because the kicker cannot regularly hit the target with enough hang-time. If this is the case, then the kicker has to practise on his own until he can lead a successful team practice where there is a high degree of accuracy.

Restarts at training are often the kiss of death for coaches when the kicker is inaccurate and the chasers lose their focus because they get tired at chasing a lost cause time after time. This begs the question of whether the right player is taking the kicks in the first place and it might be a good idea to try all players in the restart kicking role if the 'natural' choice (fly half, full back) is not competent.

If the best available kicker cannot hit the target regularly, perhaps the best solution is to kick long and organise an effective chasing policy that can at least put the opposition under pressure.

ATTACKING RESTARTS FROM HALFWAY

There are four basic kicks from halfway



- **1** - often the most successful restart in the sense that one receiver has two or possibly three attacking chasers competing whilst coming forwards in the air. Kicker must put as much hang time on the ball as possible to allow maximum chance to regain possession from either tap back or clean take.
- **2** - the standard restart. Generally 5 and 8 will challenge for the ball in the air whilst one player will go past the ball in case the opponents tap back.
- **3** – again, a fairly standard restart. This time 5 and 4 will compete for the ball in the air and 2 and 3 will stay a little deeper for the tap back.
- **4** - this time the kicker puts in a fairly deep kick into opposition 22 with as much hang time as possible to allow chasers to put maximum pressure on. There are two lines of chasers (i) back five in the scrum plus winger go up very quickly and (ii) front row form a second wave. Number 8 stays deep with the full back to help run back the deep kick return if the opponents use it.

Other possible options:

More complex restarts involve:

(a) A split formation where the forwards split to have four players on each side of the pitch. The kicker then decides where the least defended area is and kicks accordingly. The benefits here are that the opposition may not react quickly and this restart will catch them in a state of disorganisation.

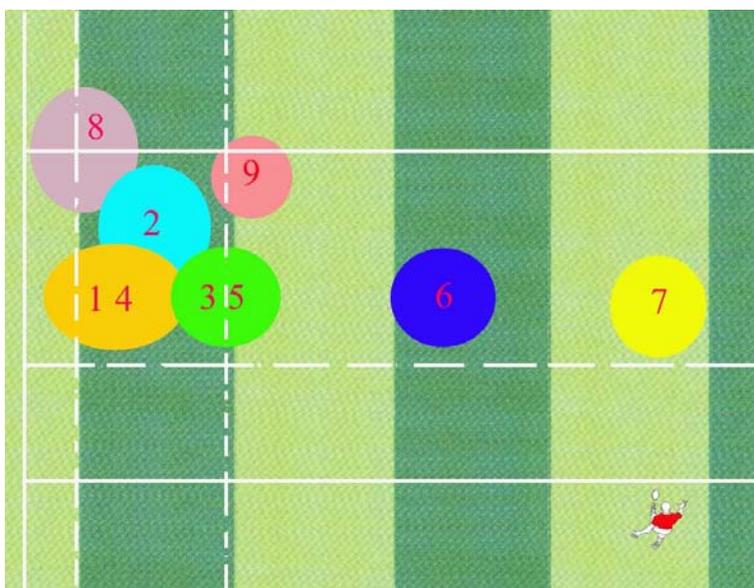
(b) A standard formation with the forwards lining up on the left (an option that has been used to great effect by England in particular) and the restart kick goes directly down the middle of the field. The primary chaser would be a centre, who would then put pressure on the ball receiver who would usually also be a back.

Key Points

- When chasing restarts, the attacking players should always send at least one player past the ball to maximise the chance of regaining possession if/when the opponents tap back or fail to secure possession.
- ‘Get up in the air’ chasers must compete for the ball in the air and make it as hard as possible for the receivers.
- The chasing team must keep a linear formation, especially on deep kicks. This will avoid one or two chasers being stepped or flanked by the opposition.
- Obviously, the kick must have as much hang time as possible.

RECEIVING RESTARTS FROM HALFWAY

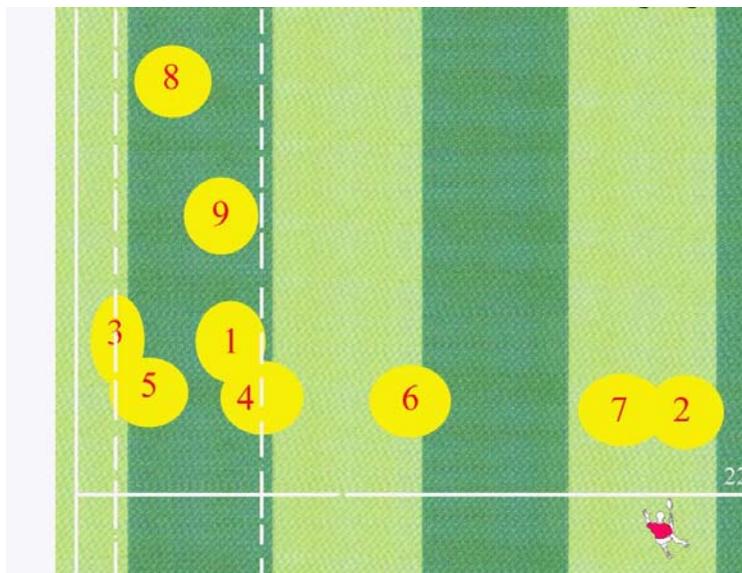
Possible Restart Formation



Key Points

- The circles show the area of ground that particular players should be able to cover.
- As can be seen from the diagram, some players' areas overlap. In these situations the receiver who calls last for the ball is '**king**' and in this situation other players around react and support him.
- The majority of attacking restarts in the modern game will be aimed to fall anywhere along the first line of receivers 7, 6, 5/3 and 4/1. Players 6 and 7 will be unsupported and quite isolated whilst jumping for the short 'dink' kicks.
- The key front formation players are 6 and 3. 6 must have the ability to receive a short kick himself while unsupported yet must also react and be ready/available to lift 5 if the over-call comes. 3 must primarily stay with 5 but on longer kicks must be able to react quickly and lift 4. This is a complex skill for a front row forward and does demand attention and practice.
- 2 and 9 have the responsibility of calling for deeper kicks that are over both 5 and 4. Generally they would look to offload the restart to a runner who can come from depth and is in a better position to carry the ball with some dynamism from a rolling start. This would generally be 8 or 11 who are coming at pace, changing the point of contact and allowing players in front of the ball to get back.
- For very deep restarts to 8 there are two options. Firstly, 8 could simply crash the ball back up, trying to get as close as possible to his players in front of him. The second option, depending on the hang time of the kick, would be to pass long to 10 or 15 who would then put in a good clearing kick to touch.

ATTACKING RESTARTS FROM THE 22



The Long Drop Out

There are two waves of chasers and it is very important to keep a good formation to cut down opposition time and options. 10 needs to hit the ball as long as possible with lots of hang time.

Short Drop Out to 6, 5 and 7

This high risk 22 restart involves a short hanging kick from 10 to allow chasers to exert maximum pressure and, hopefully, regain possession. Again, one player, perhaps 7, will go past the ball for the fumble or tap back.

Grubber Kick

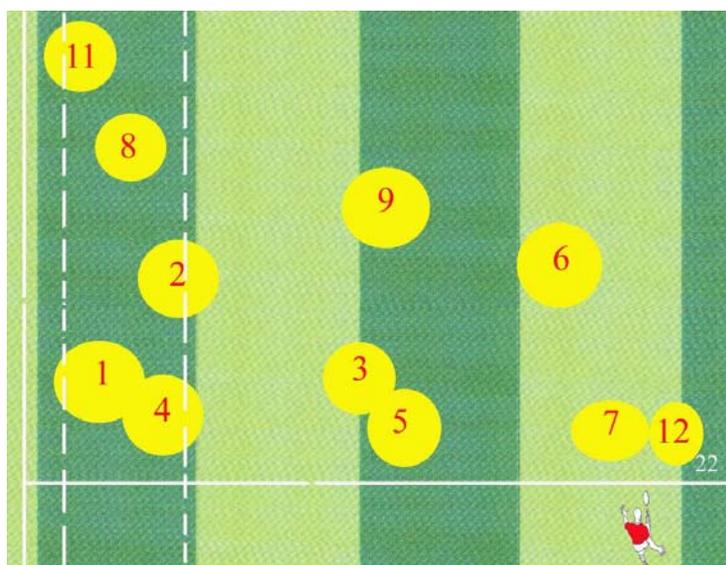
Dummy to suggest an orthodox kick, then grub kick. It is likely that the opposition hooker will jump in the air, attempting the charge down. Whilst the hooker is still in the air, the kicker grubs a little kick through behind the first line so that they have to turn. The kicker needs two support players very close and ready to run on to ball immediately. This is a high risk strategy but can be very effective for regaining possession and catching the opposition unaware.

Quick Drop out

The quick drop out, where the kicker kicks short and collects himself, i.e. a brief tap over the line and then re gather. Restart kickers often practise this relentlessly on the training field, but in the pressure of a game it often backfires and results in a knock on, much to the annoyance of the forwards!

RECEIVING 22M RESTARTS

Possible formation for receiving 22 drop out.



Key points:

- As with half way restarts, it is essential that all players react and get into position as quickly as possible. The same principles apply when calling for the ball, the last person to call is '**king**' and overrides previous calls. Everyone else reacts and supports that ball receiver.
- When receiving a 22 restart, it is very unlikely that the jumper will be lifted. This is because the ball does not have to travel ten metres as in a half way restart, therefore the receivers have less time to react.

- The formation is very similar to that of a conventional half way restart with the receiving players covering as much space as possible.

Number 7(sometimes 12) has a key role to put maximum pressure onto the opposition restart kicker, making all of the kick variations as difficult as possible. He must ensure that a cheeky grubber or very short kick cannot be used as his presence stops it.