

01.5

coaching tips & tricks from
the best in the game...

the waratah way...



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Core Skill:

Programming

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Core Skill: Programming

If a team is to be successful, then its players must have a solid core skill base. Coaches need to be able to identify the core skill level of their team and plan to rectify any deficiencies. High performance teams are continually identifying where skill deficiencies lie in their playing ranks and act accordingly. For the Club or School coach, this is one of the most important things they can do to improve player development.

Core skills are the basis of any rugby union game. Players that are competent through both technical and tactical skills have a better opportunity of progressing through the playing pathway and being successful on the field. The ARU has identified 'Technical Non-Negotiable Core Skills' and 'Individual Non-Negotiable Core Skills' that are appropriate for any U19 / Senior law group. A summary of these skills is as follows:

'Technical Non-Negotiable Core Skills'

- Catching
- Passing
- Contact
- Ball Carries
- Tackle Contest
- Tackling
- Ball Presentation
- Mauling

'Individual Non-Negotiable Core Skills'

- Kicking
- Throwing
- Jumping
- Supporting
- Scrum
- Catching
- Agility
- Handling
- Running Lines / Angles
- Ruck
- Maul

The coach's ability to produce a season plan is a definite way in assisting with core skill player development. Through a season plan the coach can identify the core skills that need to be worked on and place time slots on their implementation. In this way, training sessions will have a definite focus; with coach and players benefiting from the experience!

A daunting task you all think! Well not really – not if you have an understanding of the 'coaching points' associated with the skills.

Being able to give correct feedback to the players is paramount to developing their core skills. Preparing and selecting appropriate drills that identify the skills is also of importance. However, one major problem coaches have when running drills is "running the drill for the drills sake" and not for error correction purposes!

The following table overviews the key coaching points for each of the skills listed above and it should be the coach's responsibility to know and identify the skill deficiencies of their players, and correct them accordingly.

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'Technical Non-Negotiable Core Skills'	
'Core Skill technical Coaching Points'	
Skill	Coaching Points
Catching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fingers spread• Hands facing the ball / bent elbows• Elbows in and up for a high ball• Fingers spread after the ball is caught for quick transfer.
Passing	<p>Clearing pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Back foot in tight to the ball• Bent knees and backside down with weight transferred from the back leg through to front leg upon sweeping the pass (Ball to be passed off the deck)• Fingers to point at the target.• After the pass the support line is to follow the line of the ball. <p>Short Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elbows bent• Fingers spread around the ball for control• Hands follow the ball after the pass• Not a spiral?• Sequence is look at the ball, catch the ball, turn head and look at target / pass <p>Pop Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elbows bent• Fingers spread across the ball• Ball is placed up into a space as opposed to directed in front of a player.• Fingers will dictate the trajectory / positioning of the ball <p>Long Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elbows bent and move to full extension• Outside leg back when passing in order to avoid passing across the body• Fingers spread around the ball to ensure control• Sequence as above for catch and pass• Spiral pass is the fastest ball – bottom hand provides direction and top hand gives the power.• Upper body over the ball
Contact	<p>Controlling Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When contact is unavoidable or desired• Leg speed into and upon contact – dominant• Pick a point on the target / a shoulder / space• Body height low• Ball carry away from the defender• Lead arm in a position to fend / bridge with the forearm• Get the body through the hole and decide whether to maul the ball or to go to ground and place the ball for a ruck.• Aggressive with shoulder rolls and use of elbows on contact

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Contact	Avoiding Contact <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instigate the fixing of the defender• Using footwork / hitting a hole, attacker should aim for the space yet minimize big lateral movements.• Leg drive into the space• Body height low, depending on size of hole and width of defenders• Ball in outside arm to avoid defender and also present inside ball pop pass opportunities• Inside arm free to fend / balance
Ball Carries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hitting the ball at speed• Being able to make subtle changes in direction at speed• Body height• Maintaining speed into contact• Aiming for “small bits” or space.
Tackle Contest	Defence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enter from the back with head up.• Be aggressive in hitting the tackle contest or contesting the ball• If contesting the ball, stay in a low body position on the feet and lock chin up and NOT on the chest• 2 schools of thought with stealing the ball, either 1 leg over and grab the ball OR reaching over in a low position behind the tackled player• Match body height with attacking players / get in low• If attacking support player comes at speed there is the possibility of pull them through and stepping to the side.• Once contact is made with an opposition player the defender should use leg drive and hit the player the same as in defense – low to high, pick a point and stick.
Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st player secures the ball• On the clean out players enter from the back in a low body position and use leg drive to win the tackle contest – the decision whether to hold or continue the drive is a team philosophy• If a defender has hands on the ball, the attacker matches body height and hits with the shoulder whilst getting the arm under the defenders arm to lift it off the ball• On the clean out, players must hit and stick in order to be effective.• Steady (control feet) before entering in order to get balance and then hit the tackle contest with leg drive and aggression.• The ball is where the game is – this is the zone to focus on when cleaning out-
Tackling	Front On <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The size of the tackler and the size of the attacker dictate how offensive the player can be.• Tackler should use footwork to take the space and force the attacker onto one side / into a zone• The defender should pick a target area to hit and aim to drive 1m through that target• Shoulder contact is essential• Footwork in chasing the feet up under the body will ensure that the defender doesn't overextend on the tackle• Once contact is made there should be leg drive• Hit and stick (Aggressive in contact)• Finish in dominant position – team philosophy whether to put the player on the ground or try and hold them up and then drive.

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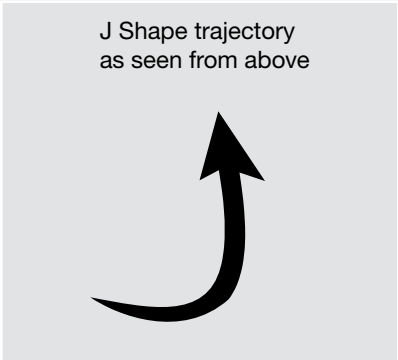
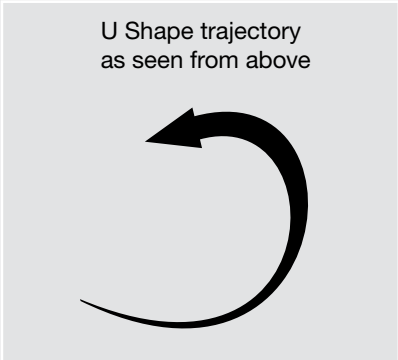
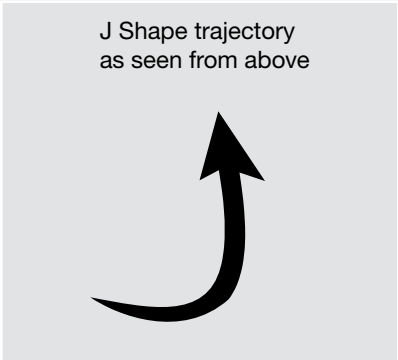
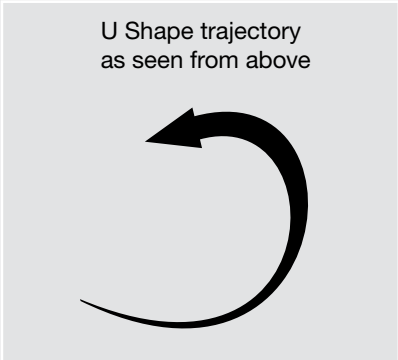
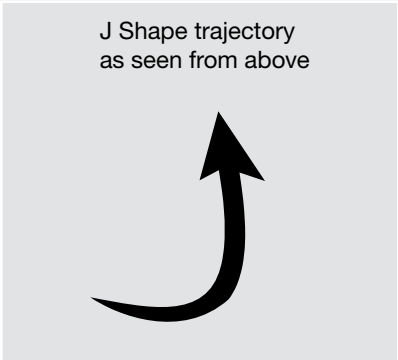
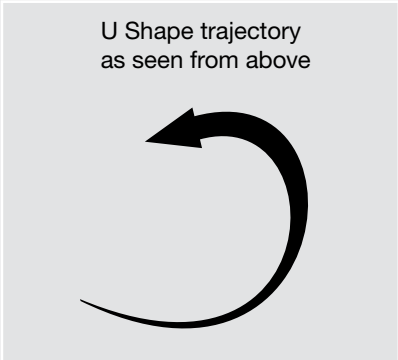
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Tackling	Side On <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get in tight to the attacker• Pick target area and aim to drive through it• Shoulder contact is essential• Footwork in getting in a position to make the tackle is essential. Continue cutting off the angle rather than diving early.• Leg drive if possible once contact is made• Hit and Stick (Aggressive in contact)• Finish in dominant position if possible – defender on top.
Ball Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision making in placing short or long relates to how effective contact was – option for presentation is team philosophy Long Place <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hit the ground while controlling the ball in TWO hands• Dynamically move body (shoulders & upper torso) into a good position to present the ball.• Two handed PUSH at a full arms length (also move torso) towards own team• Maintain control of ball until cleanout of ball distribution Squeeze ball – used when buying time. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hit the ground and flatten out.• Chin up at all stages (look forward – NEVER look back under body at ball.• Ball sits at the back of the pelvis• Use 1 arm to push the ball into this position.
Mauling Hammer	Traditional <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial set up should have a blocker on each side supporting the platform• Ball carrier bends to lower center of gravity and offers a large target area – the chest / sternum.• Ripper links in on ball carrier. If ball carried has back to opposition and the ball is in the left arm, ripper seals with left shoulder.• Blockers bind in tight so there is no gap between ball carrier and blockers and slightly forward so they are bound across the front.• Option for ball movement after the 1st player is a team philosophy.• Leg drive is essential to get the maul moving / keep it moving. Hammer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attack space to the fringe of defender (attack arms – not chest)• Transfer ball away from contact• Lower body height• Maintain square hips and leg drive through contact• Support player to 'latch / hammer' onto ball carrier (side of ball)• Support player to assume the same body shape as the ball carrier and continue leg

drive.
(Source: ARU HPU)

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‘Individual Non-Negotiable Core Skills’			
‘Individual Skill Technical Coaching Points’			
Skill	Coaching Points		
Kicking	<p>Box Kick</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Step Back at the base of the ruck / maul• Opposite arm to leg will aim at the desired trajectory• Contact with the ball can be on the end or in the bottom 1/3 for height or slightly above the middle for low running kicks.• Finishing position should be kicking leg nearly touching the opposite hand.• Chest slightly over the ball until contact is made.• Hard foot – it should be locked out <p>Drop Punt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kicking leg over and then through the ball• Upper body over the ball – just prior to contact opening the hips and straightening the upper body• Both hands on the ball• Contact point is the base of the ball• Kicking foot is locked out <p>Torpedo Punt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upper body should be over the ball – foot locked out• The drop of the ball is vital – it must be consistent and should fall the same way each time.• Holding the ball – It doesn’t matter how the ball is gripped as long as the ball drop is consistent.• In order to minimize the error margin between the ball drop and contact, lean slightly forward. This will narrow the gap between the ball and the foot as well as getting the upper body weight over the ball.• Why do we tilt the ball sideways – the reason for this is to open up the “sweet spot”. This runs down the spine of the ball and across the centre of the ball.• J shape Vs U shape. We use the term J shape to describe the kicking leg and the path that it has to take. In order to get power the leg and pelvis twist slightly yet on contact they straighten through the ball. The finishing position is where the kicking leg doesn’t come across the path of the non-kicking arm. Kicking in a U shape means that the player is kicking across the ball and the power is therefore dispersed.		
Kicking Cont...	<table border="0"><tr><td><p>J Shape trajectory as seen from above</p></td><td><p>U Shape trajectory as seen from above</p></td></tr></table>	<p>J Shape trajectory as seen from above</p> 	<p>U Shape trajectory as seen from above</p> 
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Kicking
Cont...

Place Kick

- Body weight must be forward at the start and during the kick.
- The approach should be the same on all kicks.
- The place foot should be no more than 30cm away from the ball (a foot length).
- The place foot ankle should be aligned with the ball – If it is too far in front the ball is sliced as the leg hasn't reached full extension – too far behind and it is hooked as a result of already going through the kick too early – these factors are also influenced by the plant foot being too wide as this can promote a slice. Too close can promote a hook.
- The kicker should pick a point on the ball to focus on before they kick (a particular lace). This is now the focus.
- Shoulders and chest should remain closed during the kick – opening the shoulders and chest promotes rotation, which promotes kicking across the ball.
- Flexibility in the hamstrings, ankle joint, hip flexors and abdominals is important.
- Kicking leg should not cross over the opposite arm. The pelvis should not drop during the kick as this takes away the power and control of the kick.
- Tilt of the ball either forward or external is a personal choice in order to open up the “sweet spot”.
- Contact should be made with a locked foot

High Ball (Bomb)

- Kicking position can either be front on or side on
- Opposite arm to leg will aim at the desired trajectory
- Contact with the ball can be on the end or in the bottom 1/3.
- Finishing position should be kicking leg nearly touching the opposite hand.
- Chest and head over the ball until contact is made to ensure weight transfer is through the ball.
- Flexibility in the hips and abdominal strength are needed to execute this type of kick.
- Foot should be locked out

High Ball (Torpedo Bomb)

- Starting position is body weight over the ball
- Ball is held in 2 hands and the angle of the ball is the same as the torpedo kick except the nose of the ball is facing up.
- Contact is through the middle of the ball.
- The ball is held at or above waist height to ensure the desired trajectory
- Flexibility in the hips and abdominal strength are needed to execute this type of kick.
- Foot should be locked out

Grubber

- Ball to be kicked on the end 1/3 for end on end effect or as per torpedo punt for the uneven bounce.
- If distance is desired the kick should be executed with the player starting over the ball and then fully extending so the finishing position is leaning back
- Opposite arm will counter balance the kicking leg
- Foot should be locked out

Drop Kick

- The plant foot should be in line or slightly behind the ball
- Ball drop should be consistent – if body weight is forward it means that weight is transferred through the ball as well as cutting the risk of the ball drop not being consistent
- Foot should be locked out.
- Kicking leg should touch the opposite hand post kick
- Contact on the ball is the bottom 1/3

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	<p>Restart (drop kick)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plant foot should be slightly behind the ball• Ball drop should be consistent – if body weight is forward it means that weight is transferred through the ball as well as cutting the risk of the ball drop not being consistent – as contact is made the head still faces down yet the leg comes up under and through the ball• Ball drop should be the same as drop kick yet allow the ball to bounce rather than making contact just after it has hit the ground• Foot should be locked out.• Kicking leg should touch the opposite hand post kick• Contact on the ball is the bottom 1/3 or the base of the ball.
Throwing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stance should allow thrower to be balanced / stable yet there should be no lower body movement as this will provide a cue for the opposition• Thrower should be able to throw 5-18m from this starting position• Elbows should be at shoulder width in order to minimize the margin of error as opposed to splayed elbows• Elbows should be locked out post throw.• Fingers out post throw• Thumbs down post throw to ensure full extension / follow through.• Grip on the ball should have the fingers spread and slightly on the back side of the balls centre.
Jumping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to react from a static jump / dynamic jump• Start with outside leg up in a split position – the outside leg should face in towards the lineout• Arms bent at chest level with the hands open.• Knees slightly bent• Weight forward on the toes and balls of the feet.
Lifting (supporting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start in a split position on the balls of the feet in order to react / get in tight quickly• Hands open and up – fingers spread• Knees slightly bent and the upper body leaning forward• Lifter gets in as tight as possible on the jumper and gets to full extension• Legs are at shoulder width and slightly split to ensure balance during and after the lift• Lifter picks the target area on the jumper and focuses on getting a grip and then lifting in the same way as doing a squat.
Scrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The front row is the 1st group to set up with the hooker and loose head binding 1st.• Locks then bind up and enter under the buttocks of the front rowers.• There should be as little a gap as possible in the hips of the front rowers where the locks join in – it should be tight.• Loose head prop binds onto the hookers far side jersey around the lats area. Tight head prop binds on the hookers waist at the top of the shorts. Hooker binds over the top on the waist of both props and pops the shoulders out so that they can move after engagement.• Tight Head prop leads the scrum in.• Binds to oppositions are negotiable – short / long / up / down.• Locks and ackrow follow the hit in and don't bounce.

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Catching	High Ball <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrive when the ball is reaching the mark to ensure momentum if a leap is required or to hit the ball at speed• Elbows and hands up so they are in the peripheral vision.• Elbows in• If under pressure side on so that if a tackle is made the defender hits all the hard bits – hip, elbow, shoulder.• Eyes on the ball at all times• Fingers spread to ensure maximum grip on the ball and for a pass to be executed quickly.
Re-Starts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catcher begins in a split position on their toes in order to react quickly• Hands up at chest level and open – thumbs pointing at each other.• The choice of getting to the zone is a provincial one – either greet the ball as it reaches the zone with momentum or get there early, set and then jump• Catcher should have arms at full extension and watch the ball all the way to the hands through the hole between the hands.• After the ball is caught, bring it down and place in tight to the body in order to ensure ball security.
Agility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Running / defending on the balls of the feet• Ability to turn the foot when changing direction• Lowering body height slightly when changing direction• Acceleration / not losing speed with directional changes
Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catching the ball with hands out and fingers spread.• Ability to reach for the ball at speed• Keeping the hands up running for a ball that is thrown low• Hands up with palms facing the ball for a ball that is high with focus on the ball into the hands.• Staying on the balls of the feet for a bouncing ball so that if it bounces up they can attack it and if it moves laterally they can react.
Running Lines / Angles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim for holes and to a shoulder rather than hitting the defender• Maintain FULL speed into the hole / angle / running line• Leg drive through the contact if there is any.• Lower body height slightly as defenders approach – ball in outside arm.• Ability to catch and pass at top speed• Accelerate out of angle changes at speed.• To run every line like they are receiving the ball in order to fix defenders.• Ability to pick the ball up under pressure and in contact• Basic ground skills – control ball on the ground, pick ball up and fall with the clean out once ball is stolen.• Ability to clean an opposition player out – pick a target, make contact the same as in defense and stick• Ability to move a player who is in a low position and on the ball – match the body height and hit the player with the shoulder and throw the arm under the players arm to twist them.

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Maul

- Correct locking procedure – if the ball carrier has the ball in the left arm then the next player binds on them with their left shoulder.
- In contact keep the feet with a lower base of support and continue leg drive if possible.
- Ball presentation – ½ turn to offer a target on the chest and also to keep the leg drive.
- Support players shoulder is tight on the ball carrier in order to provide greater leverage on the rip.

(Source: ARU HPU)

Subsequently, if a coach can plan each training session appropriately, then it will be beneficial to the players if the coach can correct their technique throughout the session. It is through coaching the skill, and not the drill, that coaches become successful and this is the essence of developing a core skill program for any club or team.
