

COACH EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

WELCOME:

Welcome to the second issue of the NSW Rugby Union Coach Education Newsletter. It seems the season is getting away from us, as this Newsletter has turned into a bi-annual publication.

In Waratah-land we have had a change in coaching personnel with Chris Hickey (ex-Eastwood 1st Grade Coach) taking over the reins from Ewen McKenzie. This will be the scene at many clubs over the next few months but prior to that, September calls; so bring on the Finals!

GUEST COACH:

This month the Coach Education team would like to welcome Chris Hickey as our guest coach. Chris is a Level 3 Coach who is now in charge of the best provincial side in Australia – the NSW Waratahs. Chris has an expansive coaching portfolio with over 20 years coaching experience to draw from.

In NSW and Canberra Hickey has taken his sides to 11 Grand finals in 14 seasons, winning five Premierships along the way. He has also had Head Coaching experience with the Australian Under 21s and NSW A, as well as assistant to Rod Macqueen in 1997 at the Brumbies.

With the introduction of some of the ELVs (Experimental Law Variations) from August 1 in the Northern Hemisphere and the start of next season here in Australia, it is important to identify where we, as coaches, could make a positive impact on the game. One aspect of play I have worked hard on is successfully denying the opposition a driving platform from lineout ball; for me, this must always be done in a dynamic but safe fashion.

The introduction of the ELV on the maul states, “players are able to defend a Maul by pulling it down” meaning that if players form a driving maul then the opposition can attack it by legally bringing it to ground. The underlying principle will still be that it is brought down safely!

A simple method of stopping a driving maul is to halt prior to it beginning. This can be done in two ways, firstly, drive into the jumper and his supporter as they hit the ground, forcing them backwards and giving them less time to collectively form the maul. The danger with this is if the jumper shifts the point of attack by offloading to another player in the lineout, i.e. a ball caught at 2 and shifted to 4. Secondly, give players specific roles and responsibilities and have them execute them effectively.

For this drill you will need 6 players – 3 attackers and 3 defenders. Group 1 is your Jumping Pod of Supporter/Jumper/Supporter whilst Group 2 is your defensive unit. As Group 1 jump and catches, Group 2 aligns so that they can attack the space in between the Jumper and their Supporters. Upon the Jumper returning to ground, the players take the following roles:

- **Defensive Jumper = takes space between opposite Jumper towards attacking Supporter 2**
- **Defensive Supporter 1 = targets Jumper between Support 1**
- **Defensive Supporter 2 = targets Jumper between Support 2**

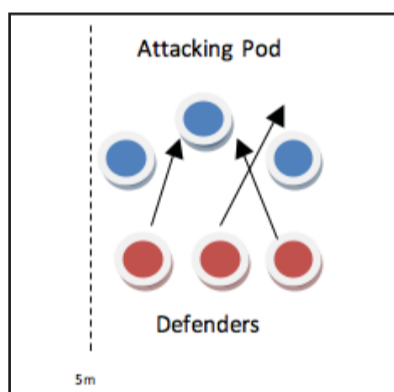
Important points to note are that the defensive players must deny the jumping pod the opportunity to form a cohesive unit when they bring their Jumper to ground. To do this they must be in a strong physical position, with their heads up and core muscles engaged and dynamically moving forward.

This drill can be extended so that two full packs have the opportunity to either perfect forming a Maul with the ball in a protected position, or denying the other team the opportunity to do this.

As coaches we have a responsibility to keep our players safe and in this respect it is most appropriate to focus on the technical aspects. Remember coach the skill not the drill!



Chris Hickey: Head Coach
– NSW Waratahs



REQUEST OF THE MONTH:

Luke (Not his real name) from Strathfield: Dear Coach Ed, I'm having a problem with my preparation for the final series. This year we've been travelling along nicely, but lately attendance at training has taken a dramatic dive. We're good enough to make the Grand Final in our competition but I fear that we'll fall short if we don't all turn up to training. Can you help!

Dear Luke, preparing a team for September is like preparing a team at any time: you have to drive it with your preparation. If you're not prepared and you're not showing enough discipline with regards to attendance, then the players will take advantage of you. The unfortunate thing about this is that when the season is done and the players haven't performed to their potential, the coach (you) will be the one to take the fall. Therefore, don't let it happen!

A couple of options may be to:

- (1) Put the team down in the room of mirrors and make them have a good, hard look at themselves;
- (2) Select players who are turning up (even if they have 4 feet);
- (3) Get a guest coach in to assist for a session or two; or,
- (4) If all else fails, put on a BBQ once a week and a few drinks to go along with it – that should get them back on the training paddock.

Hope this helps and good luck with the rest of your season.

If you have a Coaching Request please forward your request to CR.admin@nswrugby.com.au.

The Coach Ed team