

# Game Sense Approach- Open Scrimmage

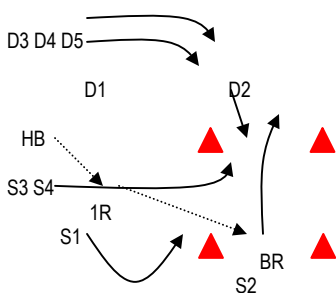
## 'Situational Attack v Defence'

Game Sense activities, which are commonly referred to as Open Skill drills, are regularly used for training and implementing the tactical & technical elements of rugby. Essentially they are decision making 'Mini-games'. The Waratahs are no exception when it comes to practicing in this manner.

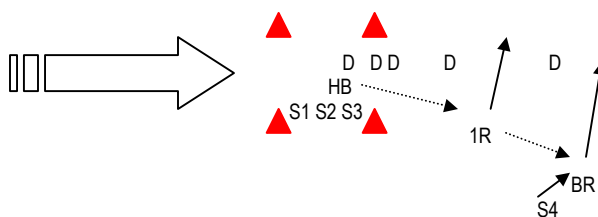
'Open Scrimmage' a term commonly referred to by the Waratahs is an Open Drill that can be performed over a number of phases or until the coach says otherwise. The elements of phase attack- including ruck, & maul, defence, and general play are combined to capture a typical game sense situation. The purpose of a drill-based environment is to allow the coach to have control over numbers of attackers and defenders; reaction time and speed of drill; the recovery time and the possible attacking options available to the players. A coach would be encouraging the players to practice possible plays and technical skills they are trying implement within the team, whether it be for a particular game or a regular theme. Open Scrimmage drills will also allow the coach to give constructive feedback to either individual players or select groups, such as the defenders, attackers, ball distributors, & primary supporters.

### Training Activities explained

No 1. Is a typical Open scrimmage situation that may involve a number phases at the coaches discretion.  
1.



**Figure 1a:** Break down scenario with a two-pass play to a ball runner.



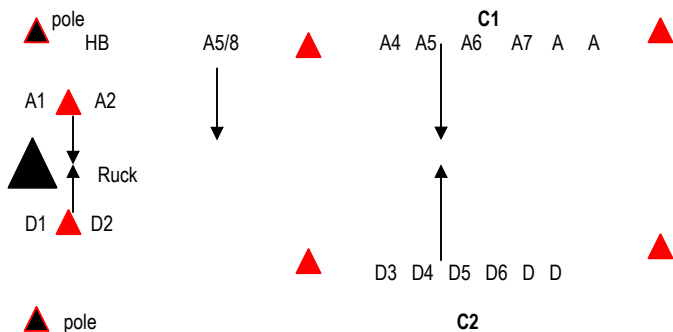
**Figure 1b:** Following on from 1a players then play next phase and react accordingly.

**Figure 1a-** Activity begins with a clearing pass from a halfback to a 1<sup>st</sup> receiver who passes to a designated ball runner. In this case the coach has a break down / tackle zone set up with markers where D2 makes the tackle. The emphasis is then placed on both the defenders D3, D4, & D5 as well as supporters S1, S3 & S4 to make the correct decision and act on it. The coach therefore must decipher and gives feedback on decisions made. Key coaching points will be focused on reaction time to break down & effectiveness at the tackle.

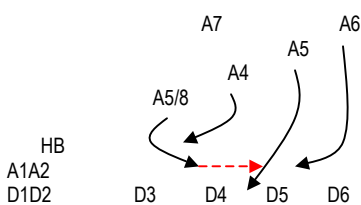
**Figure 1b-** Carrying on from 1a the coach may decide to progress to another phase of play. Both defending and attacking players are then forced to react to the next situation. The emphasis at this point may differ from the previous situation. Key coaching points would include; depth and alignment of attacking players (1R & BR); quality of pass; timing of run and angle of run; defensive positioning & alignment and decision making of support players. In this case 3 defenders were required to secure possession and S4 is supporting the ball runner in a standard pocket position.

No 2. Is an extended version of the above involving more players, possibly an entire team or squad.

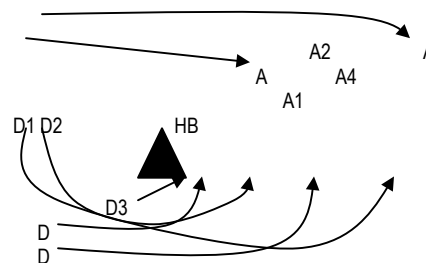
2.



**Figure 2a-** Shows the set up using a typical whole team scenario, involving a defensive and attacking coach.



**Figure 2b-** Shows the second phase in progress.



**Figure 2c-** Shows the third phase set up, including the defensive structure, prior to the HB clearing pass.

**Figure 2a-** The activity begins with the cue of the coach. Prior to this both the attacking coach (C1) and defensive coach (C2) will nominate how many attackers and defenders are to be involved. Any left over players are to run around the poles before entering the play.

A1, A2, D1 & D2 contest the ball of which the attackers must win. The halfback follows ready to make the clearing pass to A5/8.

**Figure 2b-** The nominated attackers and defenders then come into play. In this case there are four from both attack and defence. Key coaching points would be alignment of attacking players; possible team phase plays being utilized and the defensive alignment of the defenders.

**Figure 2c-** The focus of the third phase would be dependant on the decision making ability of all players as well as intense communication. It is important to note that left over players would now be re-entering the play as well. At this stage of the drill players would be typically out of position.

A scrimmage activity such as the above, forces players to think and react on the run. Attackers are forced to possibly play out of position. If phase plays are thrown into the equation, they will also be required to pick the best option available depending on positioning of the defence.

Coaches need to be confident that players are capable of performing the required technical and tactical aspects of training activity No1, before progressing to a multi phase scenario such as No2. Technical and Tactical aspects would include: Go forward in attack, taking the space in defence, tracking inside shoulder, covering all defensive roles at the break down; i.e. pillar, post & ball and completing phase plays under pressure; including picking the best option. Scrimmage activities are simply a combination of other related topics in this resource; Warm-Up (catch & pass); Phase Play Attack; General Play Attack and defence. Players need to be competent in each of these topics in order to perform Scrimmage effectively.