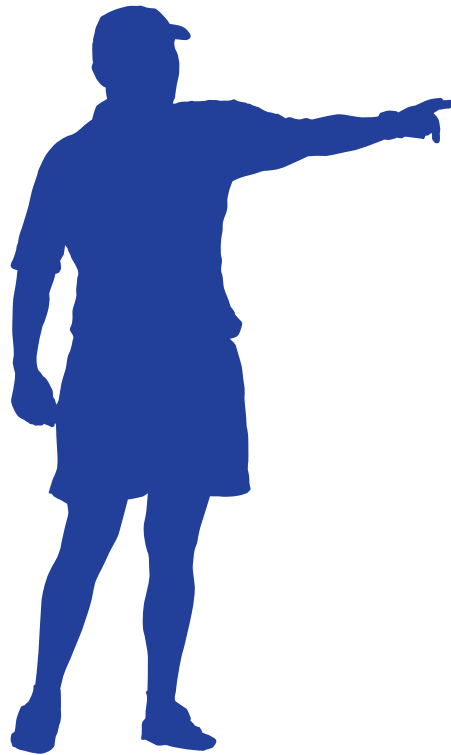




**WORLD  
RUGBY™**



# **COACHING KEY FACTORS**

Low graphics version

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# Individual skills - Running

## EVASIVE RUNNING WITH THE BALL

### The ball carrier should:

- carry the ball in both hands
- run into space whenever possible, evading contact
- when faced with opposition, try to dodge round them by moving them one way (known as fixing a defender) then changing direction (with a side step or swerve) and/or pace
- move into the space they have created
- accelerate forwards out of the space

## SIDE STEP

### The ball carrier should:

- target the nearest defender, running towards them to fix their position
- change direction close to them by quickly pushing sideways off one foot and changing direction to move in the other direction (i.e. the right foot to go left and the left foot to go right)
- accelerate away from the defender taking advantage of their hesitation

## SWERVE

### The ball carrier should:

- target the nearest defender, running towards them to fix their position trying to move them inside their line of running
- change direction away from them by veering away into the outside space
- accelerate away from the defender taking advantage of their hesitation

# Individual skills - Running

## RUNNING IN ATTACK – CLOSE SUPPORT OF THE BALL CARRIER

### The supporting player should:

- position themselves to support the ball carrier, ideally from behind which will enable them to react to the actions of the ball carrier
- communicate to the ball carrier that they are running in support
- anticipate their role in support and have their hands ready to receive an offload pass if given but also be prepared to enter a contact situation to clear a threat if necessary
- keep their distance to ensure they can react to the ball carrier's actions, accelerate into play and onto the ball/enter the contact area rather than slowing down to catch the ball/enter the contact area
- catch pass/clear contact area and continue play

## RUNNING IN ATTACK – RECOGNISING AND ATTACKING SPACE

### Players should:

- observe the defence in front of them and move into a position to make and attack space considering depth and width of attack
- identify how the defence is set up:
  - where there are gaps and potential mismatches, e.g. a centre versus a prop
  - defensive players' body position and formation – are they squared up to the attack and ready to move forward in defence or are they misaligned and still concentrating on the contact area?
  - is there space behind the defensive line to attack with kick through or over?
- keep eyes on opposition to react to defensive changes
- communicate defensive set up and gaps/mismatches to team mates
- attack space quickly and confidently with support to get over the gain line

# Individual skills - Running

## RUNNING IN DEFENCE

### The supporting player should:

- observe the attack in front of them and move into a position to defend space
- identify how the attack is set up:
  - where there are more attackers than defenders
  - where there are potential mismatches, e.g. a centre versus a prop
  - attack formation and alignment – are they flat, deep, narrow or wide?
- keep eyes on opposition to react to changes
- communicate attacking set up and gaps/mismatches/alignment to team mates
- reorganise defensive formation quickly to reduce the ball carrier's options:
  - match up width of defence with width of attack
  - move slower defenders towards the contact point
  - minimise mismatches
- when ready move forward to stop the attack, make an effective tackle and attempt to win the ball back

# Individual skills - Handling

## CATCHING THE KICKED BALL

### Players should:

- communicate with team mates to confirm they will be attempting the catch, e.g. "Jim's ball"
- move under the ball and keep eyes on it at all times
- assess whether the ball can be caught by staying on the ground or by jumping into the air to catch it
- if staying on the ground to catch:
  - move forward underneath the ball and adopt a strong, stable stance
  - position with their shoulder and hip towards opponents
  - extend their arms in the direction of the ball, keeping elbows together
  - catch the ball at eye level, watching it into their hands, arms and eventually into the body
  - be ready to move/play the ball/take contact as soon as the catch has been made
- if jumping into the air to catch:
  - move forwards onto the descending ball
  - time jump into the air taking off from one foot
- non-take-off leg can be used to protect from opposition - lead with the knee
- brace for potential collision with competing players
- extend their arms in the direction of the ball, keeping elbows together
- catch the ball at eye level, watching it into their hands, arms and eventually into their body
- be ready to move/play the ball/take contact on landing

## PICKING UP THE BALL

### Players should:

- approach the ball in a low, strong and stable position
- position above the ball side-on, straddling the ball with one foot to the front and the other behind
- sink at the hips and bend at the knees
- keep their head up in the neutral position
- steady the ball with the front hand and scoop it up with the back hand
- bring the ball into the chest
- be ready to move/play the ball/take contact on pick up

# Individual skills - Handling

## PASSING THE BALL

### The ball carrier should:

- hold the ball in two hands
- commit a defender
- prop on their inside leg
- turn side on to the defence to face the supporting receiver
- identify the 'target' area - chest height in front of the receiver
- keeping the ball up between waist and chest area  
move the ball quickly across their body by swinging their arms
- use their chest, shoulders, elbows and wrists to control the speed and flight of the ball as it is released
- follow through with their hands in the direction of the pass with fingers pointing to the target after release
- support the receiver once the pass has been completed

## RECEIVING THE BALL

### The receiver should:

- move forward onto the ball to make the catch
- extend their arms - reaching towards the passer giving a target to aim at (looking to catch the ball early)
- keep their hands up ready with fingers spread (thumbs close together)
- watch the ball all the way into their hands until certain all fingers and thumbs are in contact with the ball

# Individual skills - Handling

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## Different types of pass

### SPIRAL PASS

**The ball carrier should:**

- turn the ball so that its long axis is approximately 30 degrees to the horizontal
- in the passing action, use their top hand to give power and to impart spin
- use their bottom hand to provide stability and direction

### CLEARING PASS

**The ball carrier should:**

- approach the ball in a low, strong and stable position
- sink at their hips, bend at their knees
- place their right foot to the ball when passing with the right hand (left foot to the ball when passing with the left hand)
- place their other foot a comfortable distance away for stability, pointing in the direction of the pass
- keep their head over the ball, eyes focussed on the ball
- in one quick movement, 'sweep' the ball from the floor to the receiver, taking care not to make two movements (lifting then passing)
- when passing right, use their right hand for stability and their left hand for power and vice versa
- follow through with both hands pointing in the direction of the receiver



# Individual skills - Handling

## PASSING OUT OF THE TACKLE

### The ball carrier should:

- have a positive mindset to move the ball out of the tackle
- hold the ball firmly in two hands to withstand the impact of the tackle
- use evasive footwork to avoid taking a front on tackle and force a side on tackle
- once tackled, drive their legs to maintain forward movement
- keep their arms free above the level of the tackle and maintain a strong two handed grip on ball
- identify support players and pass before falling to ground
- if unable to pass before falling to ground, keep their elbows tucked into their body as they fall and pass to support
- if no support available, then present the ball on landing

## SCREEN PASS

### The ball carrier should:

- drive into a defender side on
- upon contact, remain standing
- turn their back on to the defender
- protect the ball from interference
- make a close pass to a team mate

# Individual skills - Kicking

## PUNT KICK

### Before the kick, the kicker should:

- adopt a balanced, stable, strong body position
- keep their opposite shoulder forward: if kicking with right foot - left shoulder; left foot - right shoulder
- hold the ball in two hands with one point aimed at the foot, the other at the sky
- extend their arms fully (elbows straight)
- keep their core strong, then cock their leg by flexing hip and knee
- drop the ball onto their foot keeping their posture tall and upright with their head slightly forwards

### During the kick, the kicker should:

- step onto their non-kicking foot, which should be in line with the target
- un-cock their leg by extending hip and knee
- keep their head down and forwards
- make contact with the bone on the top of the instep of their foot (laces of boot) and the point of the ball, keeping their toes pointing to the ground
- maintain their leg speed through contact

### After the kick, the kicker should:

- maintain their forward momentum with their body moving towards target
- follow through with their kicking foot to finish towards the target
- be carried forward, by momentum, from their non-kicking foot to land on the same foot
- follow through with their opposite arm to finish towards the target to maintain balance and direction
- keep their head down and forwards until follow through is complete

# Individual skills - Kicking

## DROP KICK

### Before the kick, the kicker should:

- hold the ball so that when it is dropped to the ground it bounces up in the same alignment
- extend their arms fully (elbows straight)
- keep their core strong, then cock their leg by flexing hip and knee
- turn the shoulder of their non-kicking foot towards the target
- drop the ball to the ground the width of the hips from their non-kicking foot

### During the kick, the kicker should:

- step forward onto their non-kicking foot aligning the line of the instep with the target
- un-cock their leg by extending hip and knee
- make contact with the bone on the top of the instep of their foot (laces of boot) and the lower part of the ball, keeping their toes pointing forwards and upwards
- for low kicks, strike the ball close to the ground; for high kicks, let the ball bounce higher

### After the kick, the kicker should:

- follow through in a natural arc onto the toes of their non-kicking foot
- use the arm of the non-kicking side of the body for balance

# Individual skills - Kicking

## PLACE KICK

### Before the kick, the kicker should:

- select a target between the posts
- tee the ball upright on a kicking tee with the valve of the ball pointing towards the target
- stand over the ball with their kicking foot placed close behind the ball and their non-kicking foot where it will be placed when they make contact with the ball
- move back to a position that is comfortable
- relax in preparation for approach
- commence approach by running in an arc to open up the hips to generate maximum power

### During the kick, the kicker should:

- move their opposite arm forward to turn the shoulder side on to the target
- place their non-kicking foot hip-width from the ball with the line of the instep of the foot (laces of the boot) in line with the target
- keep their core strong, then cock their leg by flexing hip and knee
- un-cock their leg by extending hip and knee
- make contact with the bone on the top of the instep of the foot (laces of boot) and the ball (target should be 1/3 up from the bottom of the ball)
- maintain their leg speed through contact

### After the kick, the kicker should:

- keep their head down and forwards
- follow through with their kicking foot to finish towards target
- be carried forward, by momentum, from their non-kicking foot to land on the same foot

# Individual skills - Tackling

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## Key points for players in every tackle situation

**Tackler - contact with opponent(s).** The tackler should:

- keep 'eyes up' looking at the ball carrier to keep head in the correct position
- track the movement of the ball carrier and get their feet close enough to make the tackle using the arms to 'wrap' around the ball carrier
- prepare for contact - adopting a body position that is strong, stable and low
- position their head behind or to one side of the ball carrier (never position the head in front of the ball carrier)
- release the tackled player, get back to their feet immediately and contest for possession

**Ball carrier - contact with ground.** The ball carrier should:

- carry the ball in both hands
- protect the ball - holding it tight to their chest with elbows in to sides
- make contact with the ground with their buttocks and then their shoulder
- not break their fall with their hand or the ball
- turn towards their team and pass, place or present the ball
- get back to their feet as soon as possible

All arriving players must enter the tackle area through the gate. Only players on their feet may compete for the ball.

**Players arriving at an attempted but incomplete tackle** should:

- maintain a strong, stable and low body position
- use their arms to grasp ball carrier
- avoid contact with other players' heads and necks
- bring the ball carrier safely to the ground

**If clearing or driving out defenders,** players should:

- maintain a strong, stable and low body position
- keep their chin off their chest, their head up, their hands up
- sight their target
- keep their spine in line with the direction of drive
- start their drive from a low body position
- make contact with defender using the shoulder and arms, not the head
- close arms around opponent
- drive the player away and clear the ball

# Individual skills - Tackling

## SHOULDER TACKLE - FRONT-ON

### The tackler should:

- keep 'eyes up'
- maintain a strong, stable and low body position
- target and make contact with their shoulder on the ball carrier's thighs
- squeeze their arms tight around the ball carrier's legs while driving with their legs
- continue to leg drive to bring the ball carrier to ground
- release the ball carrier
- get back to their feet quickly
- contest for possession

## SHOULDER TACKLE - SIDE-ON

### The tackler should:

- keep 'eyes up'
- maintain a strong, stable and low body position
- target and make contact with their shoulder on the ball carrier's thighs
- squeeze their arms tight around the ball carrier's legs, drive with their legs and bring the ball carrier to ground
- roll to finish on top of the ball carrier
- release the ball carrier and get back to their feet quickly
- contest for possession

## THE SMOTHER TACKLE

### The tackler should:

- plant their lead foot close to the ball carrier
- target the ball (should be between waist and chest height)
- try to wrap both arms around the ball carrier and in doing so trap the ball carrier's arms and the ball
- drive forward after contact

# Individual skills - Tackling

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## THE TAP

**The tackler should:**

- chase the ball carrier until within diving distance
- dive and make contact with the ball carrier's feet or ankles with an outstretched arm
- keep their head away from the ball carrier's feet

## TACKLE FROM BEHIND

**The tackler should:**

- chase the ball carrier until within diving distance
- wrap their arms around the hips/legs of the ball carrier
- with their head to the side, make contact with their shoulder and pull their arms towards them until the ball carrier is taken to the ground
- squeeze their arms tight and slide down the ball carrier's body (remembering to keep their head to one side) to finish on top of the ball carrier

# Unit skills

## LINEOUT

### The thrower should:

- adopt a stance with a stable base
- take a two-handed grip of the ball
- throw the ball from behind head, spinning towards target in one smooth action keeping elbows tucked in close together
- follow through towards target

### The jumpers/supporters should:

- communicate effectively with team mates
- outmanoeuvre opponents into space
- make an effective, quick jump reaching to catch ball with arms extended to full height
- deliver the ball accurately to team mates either in air or once landed
- provide safe, strong and stable support from in front of and behind the jumper to aid jump, control the jumper in the air and bring jumper back down to ground safely

## SCRUMMAGING

### Scrummaging players should:

- adopt a strong, safe and stable body position throughout the scrum (see Rugby Ready)
- bind legally, strongly and safely both horizontally, i.e. front row, second row and back row, as well as vertically, i.e. back row to second row to front row (see Rugby Ready)
- be aware of and be able to perform the correct engagement sequence
- be able to move forwards, backwards and sideways safely individually, as part of a mini-unit and as part of the whole scrum

### The scrum half must:

- throw the ball in straight down the middle of the scrum



# Unit skills

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## BACK LINE ATTACK

### Back line players should:

- understand the tackle line, gain line and their implications in attack
- possess scanning skills to identify the defensive set-up
- communicate effectively with team mates
- set the width of attack to maximise attacking space
- set and retain alignment relative to attacking intentions, e.g. attack out wide – deep alignment; attack closer in – flatter alignment
- be able to move and exploit the opposition through effective:
  - running
  - handling
  - support
- be able to penetrate gaps and finishing try scoring opportunities

## BACK LINE DEFENCE

### Back line players should:

- understand the tackle line, gain line and their implications in defence
- possess scanning skills to identify the attacking set up
- communicate effectively with team mates
- set and maintain the integrity of defensive system according to attacking set-up
- go forward in defence to deny attackers time and space
- possess sound individual tackle technique and the ability to defend space

## CONTINUITY – KEEPING THE BALL ALIVE

### All players should:

- understand that taking contact should only occur if the player cannot evade defenders or pass out of a tackle
- continue to 'go forward' in contact situations, maintaining momentum, whilst striving to beat defenders
- if tackle is inevitable, force the defender to make a side-on tackle, work hard to stay on their feet and move forward, allowing an offload pass
- if offload is not possible, go to ground and present the ball to team mates (as far from opposition as possible)
- if supporting, make the next decision based on defensive threats, e.g. pick up ball, pass ball, clear defenders

## RUCKING

### After the tackle, the ball carrier should:

- present the ball quickly in the direction of team mates (as far away from the opposition as possible)

### Arriving players:

- should maintain a low, strong, stable body position throughout the ruck. Head and shoulders must be above the hips at all times
- must join the ruck in a legal manner (from behind the foot of the hindmost team mate in the ruck)
- should be aware that they may need to clear out any potential threats to the ball
- should drive beyond the ball to make it more readily available

## MAULING

### During the maul, the ball carrier should:

- strive to maintain forward momentum and make the ball available to team mates

### Arriving players should:

- support the ball carrier, attempt to secure the ball by ripping or driving beyond the ball
- be bound together in a safe and legal manner with head and shoulders above the hips
- drive forward in a safe and strong body position
- move the ball, or the person on the ball, to the back of the maul once additional support arrives

### Once the ball is at the rear of the maul, the ball carrier can either:

1. continue driving
2. leave the maul
3. pass to a team mate

## KICK STARTS AND RESTARTS - THE KICKING TEAM

### The kicking team should:

- kick restart to regain possession and/or territory
- kick and chase effectively
- if short kick restart, ensure enough height to allow team mates enough time to compete for the ball
- if long kick restart, ensure accuracy of kick to enable an effective chase forcing the opposition into kicking the ball from the field of play or to run out of defence into an organised defensive system

# Unit skills

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## KICK STARTS AND RESTARTS - THE RECEIVING TEAM

### The receiving team should:

- as per catching a kicked ball, support the receiving player in the air if necessary (supporters must bring catcher back to ground in a safe manner)
- either catch the ball or tap it back towards team mates
- collect tapped ball or to play once the catcher lands – this may involve a contact situation depending on the chase from the kicking team

## COUNTER-ATTACK

### The counter-attacking team should:

- have trust and confidence in their team mates and a collective will to counter attack – the ball carrier must know they have support to try an attack
- communicate the best place to attack to team mates
- possess one-on-one skills to beat defenders
- possess support skills to offer attacking options as well as a desire to protect the ball carrier
- be able to cover the back field in case of turnover