

Ulster GAA – Coaching Workshop
Working with the Big Men
Mid Ulster Sports Arena – Wednesday 12th January 2005
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Aim: To encourage specialist work with big players who may have gone through the growth spurt early and are well above average height for their age group.

Objectives:

The objectives of this session is to

- Provide coaches with ideas that they can develop
- Illustrate how to develop footwork, agility and co-ordination
- Develop the technical skills required in each phase of catching the high ball
- Provide exercise to help improve peripheral vision to help enhance decision-making
- Demonstrate drills and games to help maximise jumping ability and decision-making

Equipment

Football, small balls, crates, ladders, hurdles, cones, tackle bags, agility belts, coaching boards, CDs

Welcome and Introductions

Warm-up

Exercise 1

Ladder work and cones set out in the shape of letter are incorporated to get players focused. Incorporate the movements they will use in the session and introduce a small ball again to get them focused.

- ✓ All players moving in square (20mx20m) small ball – focus and concentration
- ✓ Run through ladders every second square – catch ball at the end
- ✓ Move through sideways every second square
- ✓ Lazy leg – concentrate on high knee lift with active leg
- ✓ Variations of ladder work
- ✓ Develop Agility using Cones set out in shapes of letters – vary movement through the letters ie moving forward, back (tackling), sideways (side-step), rotating or spinning at cone (roll off)



Dynamic Stretch

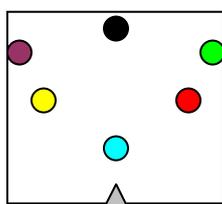
Exercise 2 (examples)

- ✓ Heel flicks and knees up
- ✓ Lunges
- ✓ High Kicks
- ✓ Shoulder rotations on the move

Peripheral Vision

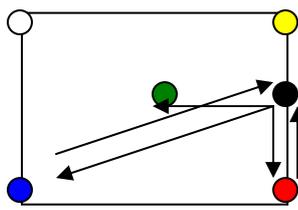
Exercise 3

Developing peripheral vision is important in all players. From a big players perspective at midfield or full forward it allow them to see support players without turning their head to look at them. They can off load balls caught or they can flick on to runners.



Player focuses on the Triangle and moves from the black cone to the red and back to the black before going to the next colour called by coach. Gradually the coach puts additional cones in so the player is developing his spatial awareness and his peripheral vision as well as his agility.

Measuring (crudely) Player's Vision and Agility



The coach has a predetermined pattern he wants the player to touch. He sets up a 5m square grid and he runs the predetermined pattern calling the colours in sequence. He times the player to see how long this takes. This is the benchmark that the player must improve on for the next time. Example: **Red, Blue, Green**, Red, Yellow, White, Red, Blue, Green, White. Make allowance for player who is colour blind by adjusting the exercise to direction or numbered cones

Developing specific skills in this session

1. Side step – to get out of trouble when you land
2. Roll off – to get out of trouble when you land
3. Developing jumping and using the arc
4. High Catch – land and drive – aerial fielding
5. High catch – turn – land and drive – aerial fielding
6. Catching and off loading the ball with fist or kick
7. Flick on / down using peripheral vision – when it is best option or when not in position to catch clean

Feint, Side-step and drive past the tackle bag

Exercise 4

- ✓ Emphasis placed here on a good feint with the outside foot, before stepping across and placing the foot and arm nearest the player close and behind the tackler before driving off.
- ✓ Second point is to secure the ball tightly away from the defender.

Step, Roll-off and drive past the tackle bag

Exercise 5

- ✓ Step across the defender and plant the foot before rotating and swinging the non-planted foot around and again behind the defender.
- ✓ Secure that ball tightly away from the defender.

Decision-making, take it through or round the tackle bags

Exercise 6

- ✓ Two players on the tackle bags – they either provide a channel for the player to drive through or they close it off.
- ✓ Player on the ball must make a decision – if channel is there use it, if not side-step or roll off the tackle bags.

Make the move, make the pass

Exercise 7

- ✓ Develop Exercise 6 by bringing in support players – having made the move off the tackle bags the player then make a pass to the support player.
- ✓ Develop this exercise by having two support players and one defender. The defender's job is to cut off one pass only, the big player must find the free support player

Having worked on some of the skills required when the player hits the ground, we move into the serial skills.

Jumping and turning

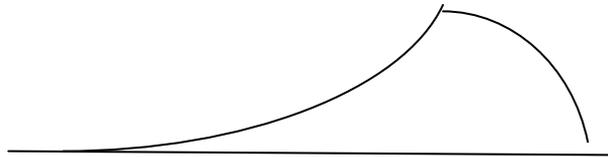
Exercise 8

- ✓ Jog and jump into the air on the whistle (without the ball)
- ✓ Focus on your last stride before jumping and make it longer – transfer lateral to vertical movement.
- ✓ Move on to concentrate on a good plant and drive the free leg up (no arms initially)
- ✓ Concentrate on keeping the toe up and the knee up to get some 'hang time' in the air.
- ✓ Introduce reaching for the ball when you have reached the top of your jump – improves 'hang time' if executed correctly – should allow player to hang a little longer.
- ✓ Jog, jump and rotate in the air using the shoulders and hip to move off at 90°
- ✓ Develop this to rotate a full 180°.

Jumping the Arc

Exercise 9

Making a drawing of the jumping arc is not an exact science. My thoughts are that the last step is a long step that takes up like a high jumper to the ball. The momentum takes you on slightly and down until you hit the ground



Set out the following to encourage players to jump the arc.

- ✓ Two collapsible cones about 2 m apart – players run and take off at the first and land beyond the second cone – jumping the river
- ✓ Introduce a hurdle in the middle of the river and encourage them to jump over it

Using the Crates

Exercise 10

To allow players the opportunity to take ball at the highest point, the coach stands on a crate or stepladder or the roof of a dug out.

- ✓ Player comes in and takes the catch as the coach holds the ball.
- ✓ Coach adjust the height so the player has to extend himself to his highest point
- ✓ Focus on footwork before, during and after landing for efficiency of movement.

Jumping the Arc and turning before landing

Exercise 11

- ✓ As above but develop this encouraging players to turn after they have caught the ball in mid air and go off at 90° and 180°
- ✓ Emphasis placed on rotation of shoulders and position of feet on landing

Taking the Catch – land and drive

Exercise 12

- ✓ Repeat the above and introduce the tackle bags
- ✓ Player must land and drive and use side-step, roll off, drive through the gap.
- ✓ Introduce variation on landing – before contact roll and drive off at 90°
- ✓ Introduce variation – bring in support player to off load to

The Flick

Exercise 13

Given the work done earlier on peripheral vision the player should have the ability to know what is happening around him and to flick on instead of catching if the opportunity exists.

- ✓ Set up 5 cones in a Star
- ✓ With a partner and a ball on player serves the other flicks.
- ✓ The player initially serves and moves to the cone on his right or left.
- ✓ Develop this by allowing the server to move tow cones to right or left.



Jump or Flick Drill

Exercise 14

This can be used as a speed endurance drill for big players. Set up a 20m square and put two players at different corners. The player in the middle in the person catching he ball. Servers serve the ball for a high catch then move to a free corner. The catcher catches takes it around the cone from where it was served and then finds the server and delivers a quality pass. He follows the pass and comes back into play and looks for the other server.

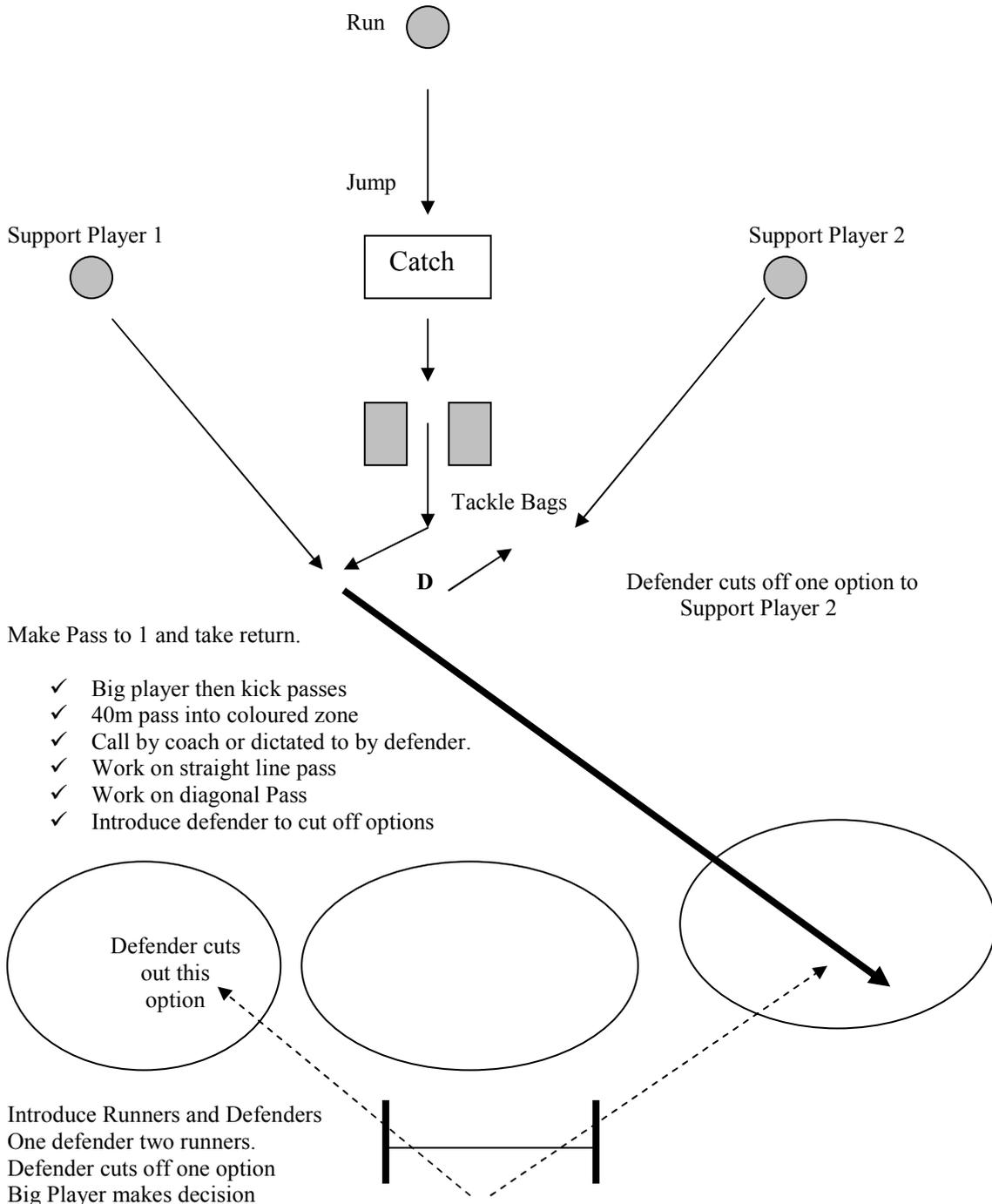


Variation: is that when the catch and make the pass and get the return the second player immediately comes into play and goes to look for the third player who serves the ball to them.

Variation: The catcher can call flick and the server can move toward the free cone, but the flicker must ensure that the flick meets the target.

Putting the Package Together

Exercise 15



Plyometrics

Exercise 16

Leaping and bounding are exercises that are required to increase power and jumping ability. Players must be physically ready to undertake this sort of exercise. 2ND February Workshop on this aspect.

Warm down

- ✓ With the small balls – focus and concentration – good first touch and quick hands.
- ✓ Other Variations in Big Man Sessions should include – working with weights and circuits, defending and tackling, Working with your back to the goal.