



## LEVEL 1 COACH: VIDEO TUTORIAL NOTES

These notes accompany the video tutorials for Level 1 Coach.

### **Grip and carry**

How many times do we see a ball dislodged during a game? Far too many. This is the most fundamental of core skills; players must keep the ball secure. In the first part of the clip we see Leeds Rhinos centre and German international Jimmy Keinhorst demonstrating the correct grip. Barry Eaton, Leeds Rhinos assistant first team coach, then takes the players through some practices, both two handed and one handed grip and carry. Once players are comfortable carrying the ball and transferring it from one hand to the other we can then move on to carrying the ball into contact.

### **Pass and catch**

In the first part of this clip, the pairs practise, you will see the players passing exactly as we teach the pass on the Level 1 coaching course. Players grip the ball correctly, drop to the 'six o'clock position' rotate the hips and shoulders towards the catcher, pass over the leg nearest to the ball and follow through. Later in the clip, when passing down the line, on occasions players are passing over the opposite foot, which is the "Leeds Rhinos way". This is an advanced skill, and the reasons will be discussed on the Level 2 Coach course. But we must encourage beginners to look at the target, which they can only do by rotating the hips and shoulders and passing over the leg nearest to the ball.

### **Tumble pass**

A tumble pass is another name for the 'six o'clock pass'. This is the most effective pass over short distances; players do not need to spin pass when it is only a short pass, up to say 10 metres away. Here you see Leeds Rhinos scholarship players passing over the foot furthest away from the ball; the reason for this will be discussed at Level 2 but we teach beginners to pass over the foot nearest to the ball and rotate the hips and shoulders so that they can see the ball receiver. When passing on the run and at speed the distinction becomes blurred anyway.

### **Passing waves**

Passing waves are a very effective way of improving individual skills of passing and catching a ball. Here we begin with a very basic practice before progressing to lines of players passing through each other, thus making the players develop peripheral vision in order to avoid contact. Coaches should manipulate numbers and the distance between the passing lines in order to increase the pressure and

thus the skill levels. You can also vary the distance of the pass, mix up long and short passes, use cut out passes and have the centre dropping the ball off to the winger etc.

## **2 v 1**

Having mastered the basic techniques of passing and catching we can move on to skill development ie putting the technique under pressure. 2 v 1 exercises are the first example of this. Note how the coach manipulates the defender in order to achieve his intended outcomes. Also note how the passer of the ball immediately becomes the next defender, thus ensuring continuity in the practice.

## **Offside touch**

It is absolutely vital that coaches develop as many small-sided games as they can. Coaching through games is by far the most effective way to improve skill levels. Here you see Barry Eaton, Leeds Rhinos assistant first team coach, using a game of 'offside touch' to improve passing and catching skills. Notice how he changes the rules of the game as the session progresses in order to increase the skill levels. Coaches can also manipulate the size of the pitch and the numbers on each team in order to achieve the desired outcome.

The key to a successful game is to be very clear as to the outcome you are wanting, and devise the rules of the game accordingly.

## **Front and side tackle**

These are the two basic tackles that we introduce to beginners. The emphasis in both cases is on safety, getting the head in the right position. The front block tackle allows a smaller player to tackle a bigger player without getting hurt, thus instilling confidence in contact from the outset. In the front block tackle we use the ball carrier's momentum to effect the tackle, bringing him over our shoulder and then twisting to finish on top. In the side tackle leg drive is the key to finish the tackle. Refer to your Level 1 coaching points.

## **Play the ball and dummy half pass**

The play the ball is probably the most penalised area in the game so it is important that we coach it correctly from the outset. Notice in the commentary the emphasis on the laws of the game relating to the play the ball. The ball MUST clear the floor, it cannot be used as a lever, and it must be played with the foot. The players here are all Leeds Rhinos first team players yet you will notice one example where the play the ball is very clumsy if not incorrect. This serves to emphasise the need to practise core skills constantly whatever the level of player. Perfect practise makes perfect!! The other point to emphasise here is the importance of COMMUNICATION, both by the dummy half and by the players running on to the ball. Coaches need to emphasise this at all times; communicate in training and players will communicate during matches!

Refer to your Level 1 coaching points.

### **Play the ball**

You will notice various ways here that the players are getting out from under the tackle to get a quick play the ball. These are advanced skills. However, focus on the coach's description of the 'third hand', of keeping the ball secure so we don't lose control in the tackle and whilst playing the ball. Ball security means we can exercise 'snap, sweep and touch' effectively.

### **Dummy half pass**

Note here the coach's comment that it is important that everyone in the team can effect a good dummy half pass, because at some time in the game all players may be called upon to deliver one. The key coaching points are:

Scan - observe the defence as you approach the play the ball and make your decision ie pass or jump out

Sit - bend at the knees, keep your back straight

Point - point the foot nearest to the receiver in his direction; this clears a space for the pass

Pass the ball from the floor.

### **Grubber kick**

The kicker here is Jordan Lilley, Leeds Rhinos first team scrum half. Note the way he 'stabs' the ball into the ground. Get your players to practise both long and short kicks, working on what we call 'weighting' the kick; also practice for accuracy, aiming to stop the ball in the in-goal area for example

### **Ground ball retrieval**

The emphasis in the first part of the clip is on TECHNIQUE getting the correct approach to the ball, the feet and body in the right position to retrieve the ball. But in a game situation the ball is unlikely to be stationary, so we move on quickly to SKILL, where the player is under pressure because the ball is moving, because he is confronted with a defender who also wants to retrieve the ball. Then he has a decision to make; pick up or go to ground. Put your players in situations where they have to make that decision, get them used to retrieving the ball coming from different angles. At times they may need to trap it with their foot before picking up.

### **Loose ball recovery**

A very simple practice but a vital one. When a ball is loose and on the floor we need to get there quickly and 'kill' the ball. Notice the coach's instruction to get one's body over the ball rather than attempt to control it with outstretched hands. Increase the pressure on the retriever of the ball by having one or more defenders coming in to challenge for the ball.

### **Punt and catch**

For the punt kick follow through is key. The bigger the follow through the higher and further the ball will travel. The key is to look at the target first then focus on the ball. Drop the ball towards the foot; beginners and children often throw the ball up first. The first couple of catches are perfect examples of

how we want to coach the catch at this level. Later in the clip the catch is taken above the head. This is an advanced skill.

Refer to your Level 1 coaching points.