

Rugby Ontario Core Defensive Exercise How To Build a "BLUE WALL"

The following is an example of a Core Skills Defense Development Session that we would run at the Academy for Student Athlete Development (A.S.A.D.) and can hopefully become a staple for all Ontario Junior Age Grade Programs as well as a resource for Ontario High School and Club Junior coaches.

Please make reference to the accompanying video which can be found on the Rugby Ontario Coaches Corner Website.

INDIVIDUAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT EXERCISES (ME)

1. Split Step Footwork Warm-up.

- Key exercise in attack but even more importantly in defense.
- Footwork is probably the most important aspect of being a good defender.

KPI's:

- ✓ Feet stay between shoulders
- ✓ Accelerate: Go-Dance-Go
- ✓ Step In (Hoop)-Sink Hips-Fire Drive Leg Through
- ✓ Punch Arms Through

2. Kron Core Body / Neck Conditioning Exercises

- A strong body position is key for all contact situations.
- Strong Legs, Core, Neck and Shoulders will be very valuable in Scrum, Rucking and Tackling Situations.

KPI's:

- ✓ Athletic Stance
- ✓ 120 Degrees is Maximum Power Angle for Knees
- ✓ Big Chest-Shoulders-Back-Head in a "Neutral" position.
- ✓ Flat Neck: "Be a Turtle not a Goose"

- I. Grappling: Hands to Inside Position
- II. Face Slaps
- III. “Fireman” Around the World
- IV. “Trees and Branches”
- V. Partner Neck Work
- VI. Back Neck Lift with Partner
- VII. Step Up Position: Pull / Push / Side / Side
- VIII. “Piggy Bear”-Man on back rodeo style
- IX. Right and Left Shoulder Drive

3. Tracking and Footwork

- 4m x 10m Grid
- Attacker holding bag in one corner will run the length of the grid while the defender “Tracks” and executes a shoulder collision.

KPI'S

- Defender with hands behind back “dictates” the direction the attacker will run...protecting their “weak shoulder
- Defender works through cadence: **Go-Dance-Go**
Go-Line-speed to take away time and space
Dance: Read and React while moving forward (Balance)
Go-Re-accelerate into the contact point for a dominant tackle
- As defender approaches “attacker” he/she uses a “split step” planting lead foot into the “hoop”, dropping hips with BIG CHEST and Shoulders Back...while engaging shoulder into thighs. The “power back leg” then fires through the point of contact and we maintain leg drive.

4. Tracking and Footwork: Punch Through / Chase Back Leg / Lasso

- 4m x 10m Grid
- Attacker holding bag in one corner will run the length of the grid while the defender “Tracks” Go – Dance – Go.

KPI'S

- As shoulder makes contact, the defender “PUNCHES” arms through and “Chases” the back leg (Lasso: Pull legs in with a strong wrap) while maintaining leg drive in an attempt to achieve a dominant tackle.

5. Tackling the “Cut Back” Runner: Saving Your Head!

- 4m x 10m Grid
- Attacker holding bag in one corner will run the length of the grid while the defender “Tracks” Go – Dance – Go.
- As the defender approaches, the attacker “Cuts Back” on the defender’s weak shoulder

KPI's

- As the defender approaches, he/she must stay balanced...feet between shoulders, not to have “over-stepped” in the first phase tackle. When the attacker cuts, the defender uses a “Split Step” to re-engage on the opposite shoulder. Complete tackle with opposite shoulder as above.

6. “SIX” LIVE 1 VS. 1 TACKLES

- Every defensive session, we complete 6 live tackles (in a controlled environment) at 100%. We feel this is important as we attempt to develop “Confidence” in our abilities.
- 2 Right Shoulder
- 2 Left Shoulder
- 2 Cut Backs

7. Working together on Defense: Double Tackles

- 2 players holding different colour bags...three defenders.
- Coach calls “hit” followed by a colour.
- “Ball” defender makes a dominant thigh tackle while the tackle assist goes high.

KPI's

- Our policy states that if you are “On the Ball” your goal is to make a “dominate” thigh tackle.
- As the “tackle assist” your goal is to add weight (and leg drive) to the collision or target the ball to prevent the offload.
- Drive player to ground...pinch ball or hold up.