

Additional evidence for 4.1 Rugby

Session plans = Rucking.

AHS A Level Leader Observation Form

Student:		School:	
Date:	Sunday 6 March 11am	Venue:	Rugby Club
Age group:		Assessor:	

Key Areas for Observation	Yes	No	Comments
Preparation			
Arrived on time to start session.	✓		
Dressed appropriately for the session.	✓		
Organized facility and equipment.	✓		
Greeted pupils appropriately.	✓		
Registers completed (N.B this may be completed by the school teacher).	✓		
Lesson plan completed.	✓		
Delivery			
Interacted effectively with pupils – excellent relationships.	✓		rappart excellent vg individual/team feedback
Ability to respond to the needs of individuals and the group.	✓		reassuring - takes time to explain to individuals
Developed the session progressively.	✓		Great strength of session
Utilized appropriate aids and equipment.	✓		
Given praise when appropriate.	✓		
Provided feedback on performance in a positive manner.	✓		Real strength
Motivated the pupils.	✓		
Implemented the session plan to suit the needs of the group.	✓		
Made effective use of the space available.	✓		
Made effective use of the time available.	✓		
Used teaching practices relevant to the needs of the pupils.	✓		excellent progression
Used teaching practices relevant to the activity being taught.	✓		Progressive practices for Rucking - Excellent
Used individual, pairs and group work.	✓		
Used teaching assistants effectively and directed them well.	✓		worked exceptionally well with 2 other coaches - complemented each other.

Strengths

- * progression of activity for rucking - end of session
- * reinforcing your standards + expectations - not frightened to stop session + reiterate points.
- * Question & dialogue - getting the boys to think + assess success - reasons for failure.
- * vg atmosphere - challenging + physically very active.
- * all boys on task + responding very well to you + the activities you have planned.
- * Vg pace to session.

Areas for development

This was an outstanding session - you should be very proud of your achievements in coaching this group of boys. Over the last 2 years you have grown in confidence and are producing work of the highest standard.

20
/ 20

Communication			
Effective positioning on the poolside <i>pitch</i>	✓		
Effective positioning in the water (if appropriate).	N/A		
Given clear and concise visual and verbal explanations.	✓		clear explained
Given accurate demonstrations.	✓		Demo's used with modelling
Provided teaching points relevant to the needs of all pupils.	✓		Kept instructions simple
Encouraged two way conversations.	✓		real strength Q + dialogue getting boys to think
Used different teaching styles – Command, Practice, Reciprocal, Self Check, Inclusion, Guided discovery, Problem solving.	✓		
Feedback and evaluation of performance by teacher.	✓		
Feedback and evaluation of performance by pupils.	✓		Boys work very hard for you - a physical & active session
Safety			
Outlined rules and safety issues.	✓		} very aware } maintained order } order for team
Maintained a safe session environment.	✓		
Maintained control of group.	✓		
Safe Departure			
Ensured safe exit from sporting area	✓		
Checked number of pupils at the end of the session.	✓		
Ensured equipment stored safely.	✓		
Outcomes			
Assessment of learners work is regular and consistent and makes good contribution to their progress.	✓		} superb session } from start to } finish
Teaching is confident, engaging, precise and well informed.	✓		
Pupils are challenged without inhibiting.	✓		
Learners are keen to get on with their work in a secure and friendly environment.	✓		

Signed

Teacher:

Verifier:

March 2011

A TECHNICAL GUIDE TO RUCKING

What is a ruck?

A ruck is 'a phase of play where one or more players from each team, who are on their feet, in physical contact, close around the ball on the ground.' (IRB LAW NUMBER 16)



A Player...

- Must join a ruck from the hindmost feet of their hindmost team mate through the 'gate'.
- Must bind with a full arm
- Cannot use their hands in the ruck
- Cannot put their feet on another player in the ruck
- If on the ground, must make every effort to move away from the ball

A successful end of a ruck is when...

The ball leaves the back of the ruck or a try is scored.



An unsuccessful end of a ruck is when...

The ball becomes unplayable. A scrum is awarded to the team moving forward before the end of the ruck.

Body Position (standing)



3 point stance (both feet and one hand touching floor) gives a strong starting base for entering a ruck as flexion at the knee creates a 120 degree angle so the player can use their quadriceps to drive the opponents back.

- The quadricep muscle changes from concentric to eccentric as the player pushes off the floor and drives forwards, giving the player more explosive power to enter the ruck with.
- The heels should be up, shifting the body weight forward so the player is ready to shift their weight forwards as they push off their toes to enter the ruck
- Arm that isn't touching the floor is flexed ready to bind with either a team mate before entering the ruck or an opponent.
- Straight back with the 'spine in line' makes players face the

opposition and means that when they drive, they are driving forwards and keeping the body position strong.

- The shoulders are above the hips; this is achieved by dropping the hips through flexion of the knees, allowing the spine to be straight and to create the low body position.
- Head and neck are straight and in line with the spine to prevent injury to the neck on impact of hitting the ruck.
- Players are looking up through their eyebrows to maintain the neck and head position but also allowing them to be able to see what is ahead.
- Body is generally in a low position to allow player to move in from low to high so they are use a great momentum to drive the opposition back.
- Feet are both parallel and facing forwards to ensure that when the player drives they will be constantly moving forwards and not sideways.



• Here the player isn't in a low enough body position as the player is in a vertical position with both arms and legs extended not flexed, also the shoulders and hips are not in place. This will provide them with a weak base for entering the ruck and will make it easier for the opposition to drive them back and gain possession of the ball.

- The head, neck and spine are not in line leaving the player vulnerable to injury on entering the ruck due to the impact.
- The feet are not parallel leaving the player with a weak base and stance which isn't strong enough to enter the ruck in, resulting in the player being easily knocked to the floor as the opposition drive over the ruck.

Body Position (floor)



The player is in a 'banana' or 'jack knife' shape on the floor with legs and feet tight into the body to create a closed body position.

- The width of the body position acts as the 'gate', this is the area where players are allowed to enter the ruck. By making this as small as possible it means that less players can get involved in the ruck, making it easier to gain possession (as there is less opposition).

- The player is facing his team so that it is easier to get the ball out of the ruck. Also, if he was facing the other way, the opposition wouldn't have to ruck over as much, as the ball would be more accessible, making it easier for possession to be gained.

- The arm on the underside of the player's body is flexed at the elbow to protect the player's head from opposition boots who will be driving over him.
- The other arm is extended to protect the ball and to offer it safely to his team mate. The ball is secured by the player's hand so that it won't roll away.
- By the player having his arm fully extended means that the ball is as close to his team as possible, making it harder for the opposition to gain possession.
- The legs are flexed at the knees, allowing the player to create a body position that is as small as possible.
- The feet are tucked under each other to ensure that the body position is small. Also so that the position is tight, so that other players don't fall over him.



- Here the body position is wide, creating a large gate.
- The head is not protected, making the player vulnerable to injury as the opposition and his team mates ruck over.
- The ball isn't protected making it easy

to the opposition to drive over and pick up the ball.

- The legs are fully extended and not close together, making the body position wide, resulting in a wider gate, allowing more players to get involved in the ruck.
- The spine is not in line, as it is twisted through the extension of the arms and twisting of the torso. This creates a weak trunk and therefore a weak body position. This increases the risk of injury as the player is not in a tight body position and not protected, so may get trodden on as players drive over him.

Binding (to a team mate)



- Both players have adopted a low body position by flexion of the legs, allowing them to use the quadriceps to drive them over the ruck.
- Their feet are facing forwards, allowing them to run and drive over the ruck in a straight line and towards their try line.
- The shoulders are above the hips, creating a straight back with the spine in line.
- The heads, necks and backs are all in line with each other, creating a strong base and a secure body position for when the opposition push them back. This position will reduce the risk of injury as the back is in line

and will absorb impact better as it gets hit.

- The players are using their full arm to bind to each other, from the finger tips to the armpit. This creates a strong bind that is less likely to be broken as they drive over.
- The players are gripping onto each other around the waist and holding onto the other's shirt to get a strong grip, so the bind is strong.



- Here the players are only binding with their fingertips, making it both illegal and weak. Allowing the opposition to break through them and drive over the ruck to gain possession.
- The body position of the players is also too high as their shoulders and hips are not in the correct position. The shoulders should be over the hips.
- The legs are also extended, making the body position too upright, resulting in the players not being able to get enough explosive power as the quadriceps won't be used effectively.
- The players' feet aren't facing forwards and therefore won't

allow the players to drive straight.

Binding (to the opposition)



- When binding to the opposition in a ruck situation, the body position must be the same as when binding to a team mate (low, bent legs, straight back, feet in line etc)
- The most important thing is how and where you bind to the opposite player.
- The player must use their whole arm (fingers to armpit) to get a strong grip of the opposite player.
- The player must also grab onto the player's shirt or shorts to ensure that the bind is strong.



Rucking Sequence

1



- The tackled player falls to the ground and gets into the correct body position (shown earlier in 'Body position-floor').

- The players must be also looking ahead at what will happen next, so that they can respond to it quickly.

- The tackler and a team mate must bind onto each other (as shown in binding-to a team mate) and step over the tackled player with thier outside foot, creating a 90 degree angle. This leaves

the inside leg behind the tackled player, this leg should be extended, allowing the players to use the quadriceps to keep driving over the ball once necessary.

- This is not yet a ruck, as there is no opposition to bind to.

2



- At this point, a player from the attacking team should bind to the opposition, forming a ruck.

- The players body position should be correct, allowing maximum strength and power enabling the player to drive through the ruck by attempting to step over his team mate and drive the opponents back.

- At this stage, this may not be possible, as the player is against two members of the

opposition and may not have the strength required to drive them back.

3



- At this stage, another team mate will join into the ruck to help drive over.

- This will provide the strength needed to make this a fair ruck in terms of power and strength, as both teams have an equal number of players in the ruck.

- The player who has just joined will need to get into the correct body position and bind legally to both his team mate and to the opposition.

- At this stage of the ruck, more players can join the ruck. There is no limit to the number of players that can be in the ruck, however, usually only forwards that are in the 'pack' (ie. The players involved in the scrum) will get involved as they are the players who have the strength needed

- Also, having too many players in the ruck is unnecessary and leaves no one to pass to once the ball is out.

4



- Once the ball has been rucked over it is the scrum half's job to get the ball out.
- To do this the scrum half must get their outside foot over the ball to secure it. They will then use their hands to pick it up, ready to pass it out.
- As a scrum half, you must be aware of what the fronts are doing (in the ruck) as

well as the backs. You must be aware about where the backs are on pitch and which way they will be playing, this will be obvious from the lines they are in.

- The scrum half must use their eyes at all times to be aware of this and make the right decision about which way out of the ruck they should pass the ball. This will determine which direction play will go in.

5

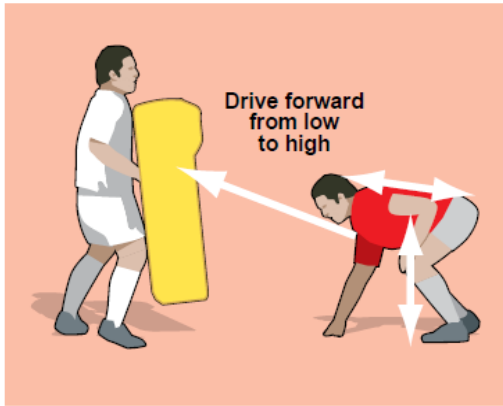


- Once the scrum half has got the ball out securely, he must pass it out to the fly half.
- The fly half should be in a low body position with bent legs, ready to run onto the ball as it is passed out from the ruck.
- The fly half must also have his arms out ready to catch.
- The hands must be up at chest height to provide the scrum half with a target of

where to pass the ball to.

- The fly half must also be communicating with the scrum half and telling him where to pass the ball to, which direction and what sort of pass he wants, for example 'Short ball out left'.
- Once the fly half has the ball he will then pass it down the line of backs and out into the space. This is where a new phase of play begins.

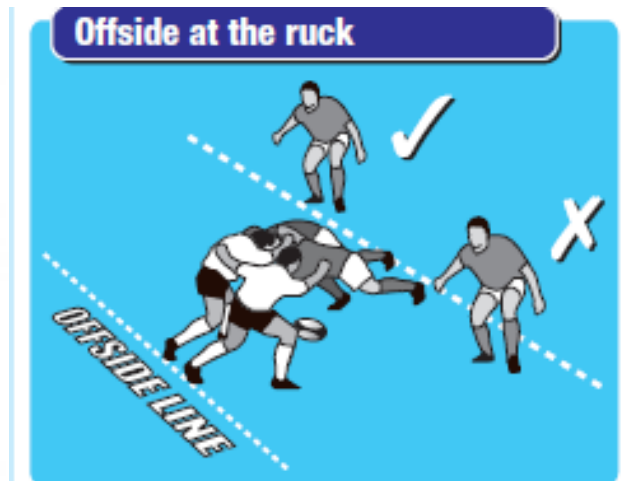
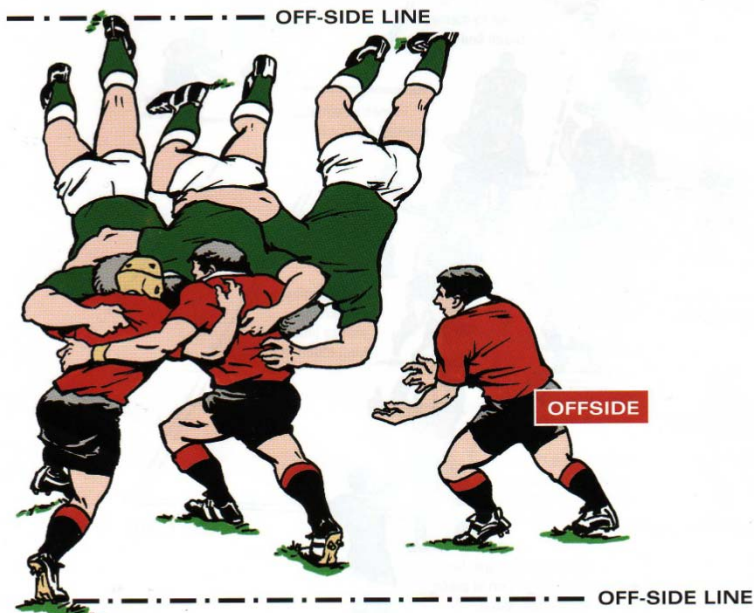
Entering the ruck



- When entering the ruck the player must be in the correct position as shown earlier.
 - They must then drive forwards from that low body position to high.
 - This will allow the player to use the strength from the quadriceps and core to drive over the ruck and drive the opposition backwards.



Offside at the ruck



REFERENCE: RFU, The Level 1 Certificate in Coaching Rugby Union

REFERENCE:
www.beterrugbycoaching.com

- The offside line at the ruck is the hindmost foot of the last team mate who has entered the ruck.
- Once players cross this line, they are offside and the whistle is blown and a penalty kick is given.
- Players must not loiter in front of this line.
- If a player is seen in front of this line but they are making effort to get back on side, no penalty is given.

Venue		Date	
Group/ Age range		Session topic	
Coach(es)			

Checklist

Location of the venue's health and safety policy?	
Location of the nearest telephone?	
Location of the nearest first aid kit?	
Name of appointed first aider?	

Please tick ✓ to confirm that the following items have been checked:

All equipment is safe and appropriate	
The playing area and facilities have been checked for actual or potential hazards	
A register of participants has been maintained	
Participant's previous experience established	
Participant's clothing, footwear, eyeglasses and jewellery checked as appropriate	

Please tick ✓ to confirm that the following have been explained to participants:

Health and Safety procedures	
The rules of the facility/venue/session	
Any potential hazards	
The emergency procedures	

Signed		Date	
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Mini and Junior Section
Risk assessment form

Name of assessor:	
Assessor's position within club:	
Date of check:	
<u>Playing/training area</u>	
Are the areas and surrounding areas appropriate for training/playing rugby? i.e. safe and free from obstacles.	Yes/no: <i>(If no, please outline the hazard, who may be at risk and any action taken.)</i>
<u>Equipment</u>	
Is all equipment safe and appropriate for training/playing rugby? i.e. in good working order and suitable for age group/ability.	Yes/no: <i>(If no, please outline the unsafe equipment, who may be at risk and any action taken.)</i>
<u>Players</u>	
Does each team have a complete list of players with up to date medical and contact information?	Yes/no: <i>(If no, please outline current state and any action taken.)</i>
Are all players wearing safe and appropriate kit for playing rugby? i.e. gum shield, rugby boots and warm or appropriate clothing. Head guards and shoulder pads are optional.	Yes/no: <i>(If no, please outline unsafe/lack of equipment/attire and any action taken.)</i>
<u>Emergency points</u>	
Are emergency access points operational so that emergency vehicles can access all areas of the club?	Yes/no: <i>(If no, please outline the issues and any action taken.)</i>
Is there a working telephone available for making emergency calls?	Yes/no: <i>(If no, please outline the issues and any action taken.)</i>
<u>Safety Information</u>	
Are emergency/evacuation procedures published and accessible to those with responsibility for sessions in the club?	Yes/no: <i>(If no, please outline what information is missing and any action taken.)</i>
Do all volunteers and staff have access to information relating to health and safety?	Yes/no: <i>(If no, please outline what information is missing and any action taken.)</i>

Does the club need to take any further action? (If yes, please specify.)

Signature of assessor:

DATE:

Print name:

Questionnaire Analysis

The questionnaire focused on 'knowledge, understanding and confidence in rucking'; below I will explore each of these areas in regards to the results that I found from over the ten week period. The questionnaire was given to five players at week 1, week 6 and finally at week 10. I took a random sample of players for each week to ensure that the test was fair. Consent was also given by the parents to undertake the questionnaire; as the players are under the age of 16.

Reliability: Issues with reliability were overcome by giving the same questionnaire out each time with no alteration, ensuring that the results would be consistent.

Validity: The test was valid as the same team was used each time, also there were no cheating as the players were tested on the spot so didn't have time to go and research the answers; making the results highly valid. There were no issues with demand characteristics or investigator bias as the same investigator was used each time and there was no interference; the only interaction with the players at the time of the experiment was asking them the questions and writing the answers. Therefore, internal validity was not affected.

Questionnaire results for K&U in rucking

This part of the questionnaire focused on knowledge and understanding and refers to graphs 1, 2 and 3.

From the graphs you can see a clear improvement in the number of questions answered correctly over the ten week period. This is shown as in week 1 only one question was answered correctly by all of the players, this rose to nine questions in week 6 and finally in week 10, fourteen questions were answered correctly by all of the players. This increase in the number of questions answered correctly shows how the players have learnt the laws regarding the rucking area but also how they have an improved knowledge base of the techniques involved in rucking.

The gradual increase over time represents how they were continually learning as the weeks progressed. Also, the fact that not all the questions were answered correctly by every player at the end of the ten weeks shows how the players still have room for improvement. I feel that repetition of the rucking sessions will further their knowledge and aid their learning.

Individual questions highlight this improvement. For example, question 11, which asked about the correct time to bind in the ruck: in week 1 none of the players answered the question correctly, however in week 2, six players answered it correctly and in week 10, four players had the correct answer. Binding was an area that was poor at the beginning of the 10 weeks and was therefore one of the focal points for my development plan, it was focused on mostly after week 6 and from the results from week 10, I can see that the coaching sessions have informed the players about the laws and techniques of binding.

Some easier, more fundamental questions such as question 1 and 5 were answered well throughout the ten week period, showing that the team did have some underlying knowledge before I started my development plan. However, question 20 was a more scientific question for the under 11's as it asked the players about which muscles they were using in the ruck and they had little background knowledge on this as only one player answered it correctly in week 1. However, in week 10 three players got it correct; suggesting that they have improved their physiological knowledge as well as technical. The results for this question may be lower than some others as it is a more difficult question for players of that age group and some may not have developed the intelligence to hold all of the more in depth information yet.



Questionnaire on Knowledge, Understanding and Confidence in Rucking in the under 11's team.

This questionnaire was created to help me better understand the players' knowledge, understanding and confidence in rucking. Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions and please be as honest as possible. Thank you.

1.) **In the ruck, is the ball on the ground or in the players' hand?**

- a) Ground
- b) Hands

2.) **How many players are needed to form a ruck?**

.....

3.) **Where is the offside line in a ruck?**

- a) A line running through the centre of the ball
- b) Behind the hindmost team mate

4.) **What is the area called where the players are allowed to join the ruck?**

.....

5.) **Is a player allowed to pick the ball up in a ruck?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

6.) **When does the ruck successfully end?**

.....

7.) **When is a ruck unsuccessful?**

.....

8.) **What is the first player's job when forming the ruck?**

- a) Bind with the opponent
- b) Pick up the ball
- c) Ruck over the ball

9.) **What is the purpose of the ruck?**

.....

10.) **What is a good body position to have when joining and participating in the ruck?**

.....

11.) **When is the best time to bind to a team mate in a ruck situation?**

- a) Before you approach the ruck
- b) at point of impact
- c) after you have started to drive

12.) **Which player should pass the ball out of the ruck?**

.....

13.) **When on the floor in the ruck, what position should a player be in?**

.....



14.) Which part of the arm should a player use to bind to their team mate?

- a) Hands only b) fingers c) hands to elbow d) hands to shoulder

15.) What action is taken by the Referee if a player is offside at the ruck?

.....

16.) Which direction should players' feet be facing in the ruck?

- a) To the side b) forwards c) any direction

17.) Where should a player be looking in the ruck?

.....

18.) When entering the ruck, which of these changes in position is preferable?

- a) Stay low at all times b) low to high c) high to low

19.) Where in the ruck is a player's feet not allowed to go?

- a) Over the ball b) over the gain line c) on another player


20.) Which muscles are mostly used to drive the ruck?

- a) Arms b) upper leg c) lower leg

21.) How confident do you feel at these stages of the ruck?

Forming a ruck	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Joining a ruck	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Passing the ball out	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Defending the ruck	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Thank you for your time.



Warm up



Rucking Exercises





Warm up & Cool down



Rucking Exercises



Game situations



Half time talks



Notational Analysis of Rucking in Under 11's team.

Overall rucking analysis:

	First Half	Second Half
Number of successful rucks		
Number of unsuccessful rucks		

Specific Ruck Analysis:

Ruck 1:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 2:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 3:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 4:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 5:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 6:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 7:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 8:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 9:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 10:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 11:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

Ruck 12:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

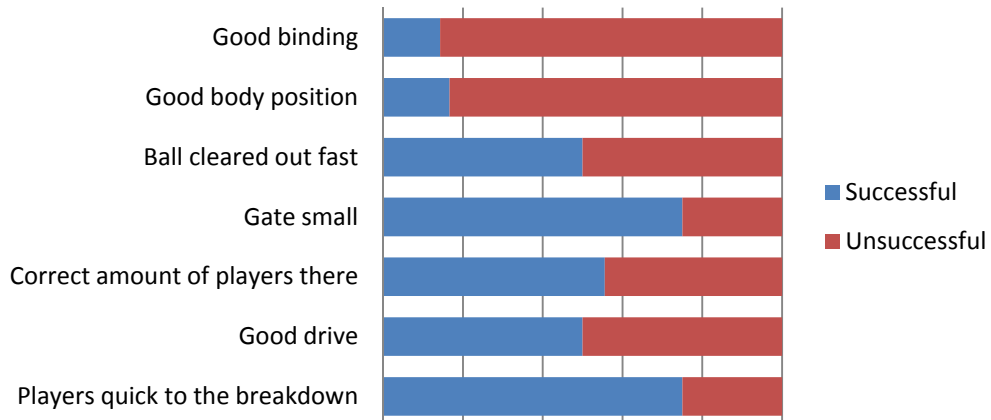
Ruck 13:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

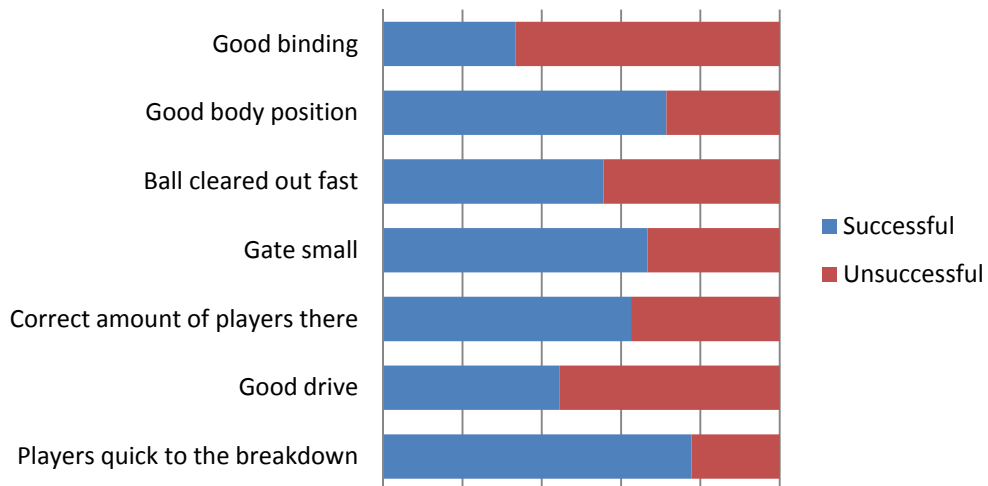
Ruck 14:

Successful?	Unsuccessful?
<i>Reasons:</i>	<i>Reasons:</i>
Players quick to the breakdown	Players too slow to the breakdown
Good power/drive	Not enough power/drive
Correct amount of players there	Not enough players there
Gate small	Too many players involved
Ball cleared out fast	Gate too wide
Good body position	Ball not cleared out fast enough
	Bad body position
OTHER:	

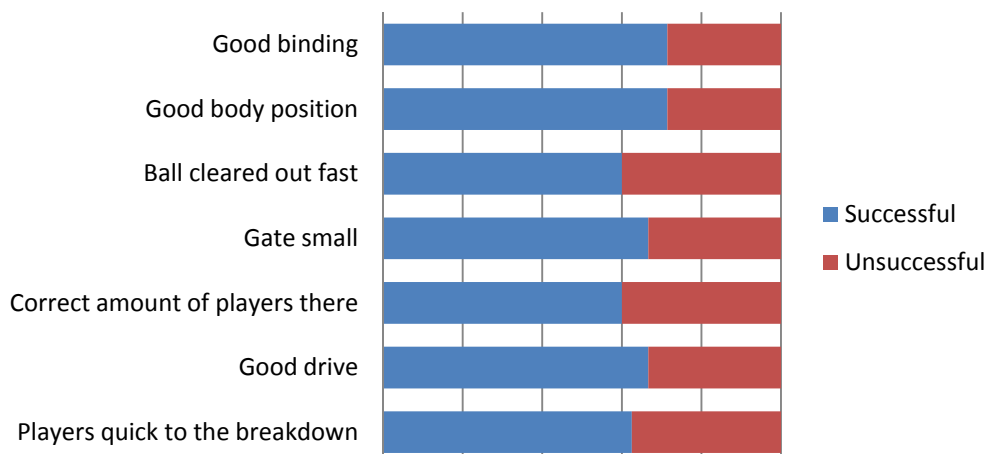
Week 1: The breakdown of rucking success and failures



Week 6: The breakdown of rucking success and failures

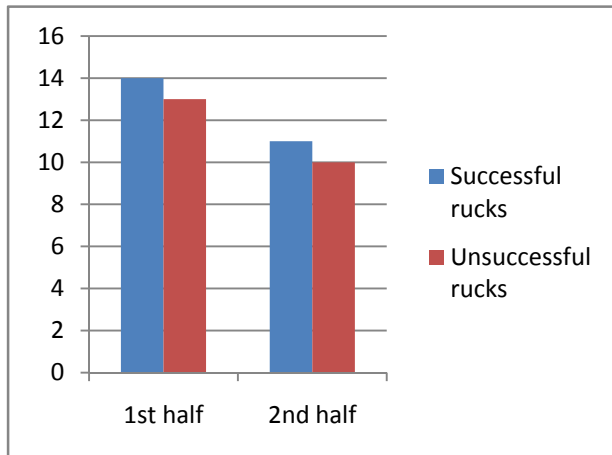


Week 10: The breakdown of rucking success and failures

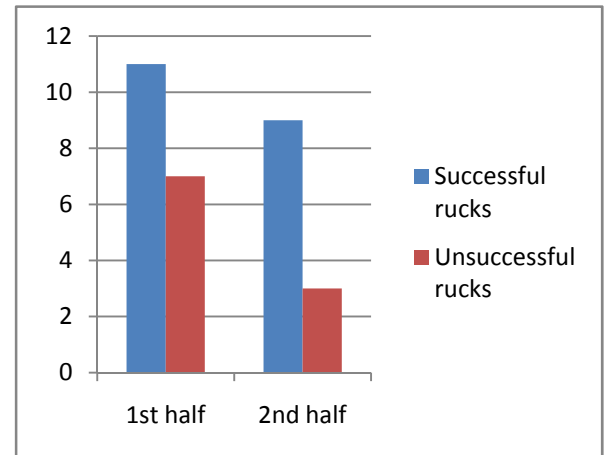


Notational Analysis Comparison

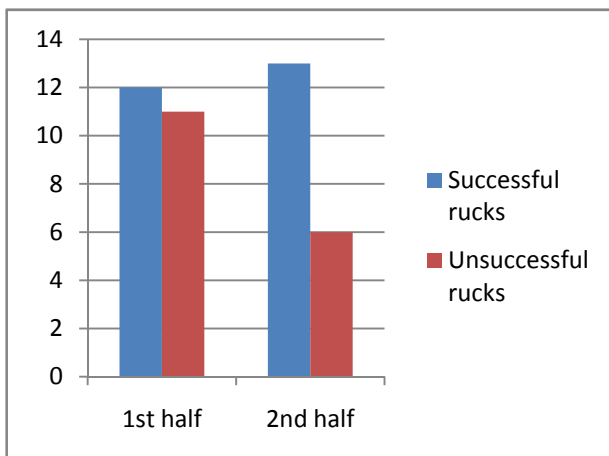
Week 1: LBRFC v Aylesbury



Week 6: LBRFC v Chinnor



Week 10: LBRFC v Dunstable



These statistics show the number of successful and unsuccessful rucks in each half of the three games.

From the graphs we can see that in each of the matches LBRFC had the most successful rucks compared to each of the oppositions. However, the number of unsuccessful rucks does decrease over the ten week period, as in week 1 the highest number of unsuccessful rucks was 13, compared to week 10 where the number decreases to 6; this number of unsuccessful rucks has decreased by half in ten weeks. Also, in week 6, the number of unsuccessful rucks reaches only 3 in the second half of the match- showing the team has improved generally as they are decreasing the number of failed rucks over the ten weeks.

Validity:

In particular **internal validity**- the ability to test the hypothesis that it was designed to test. This is a major issue when dealing with comparing results from notational analysis as there are many **confounding variables**- variables which may affect the results of the test, which can affect the internal validity. For example, each match had different oppositions, this is a confounding variable as the results may be altered by the performance of the opposition; if the opposition's strength was in rucking, then the performance of LBRFC may decrease.

Breakdown of Notational Analysis

From the three graphs that represent the breakdown of rucking success and failure for each match we can see a general increase in success.

When you look at the graphs, visually you can see that the amount of blue, which represents the factors being successful, does increase from week to week.

The graphs represent that some factors such as 'players quick to the breakdown' and 'gate small' remain fairly constant over the ten weeks. This is because these areas of the ruck are fundamentals and the players had previous knowledge of these areas, resulting in the success of these areas not altering much. The results from the questionnaire also back this up as the body position on the floor was a questionnaire that was answered well throughout the ten weeks, this body position results in a small gate; making the results between the tests constant and reliable.

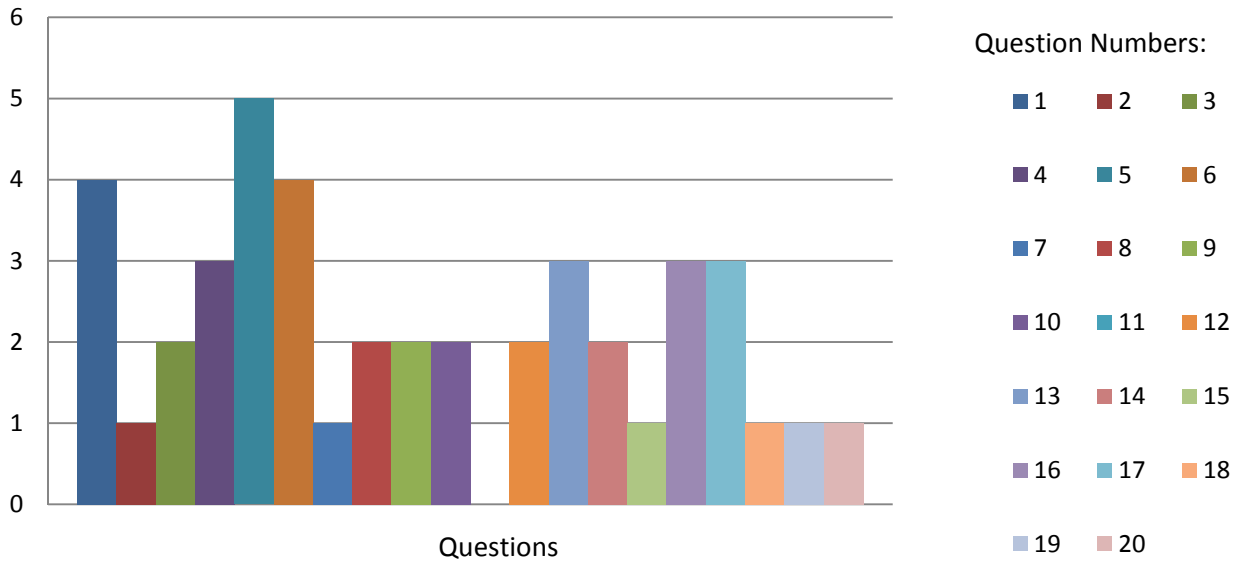
There are two areas which represent the most dramatic increase in success; these are 'good binding' and 'good body position':

'Good binding'- Binding wasn't a category on the notational analysis, however, in the additional information about the ruck, binding was an area that I found needed commenting on; so I decided to add it into the graphical representation. In week 1, only three rucks out of the full twelve that I assessed had good binding, highlighting that this was an area that was very weak. This increased to five in week 6 and finally in week 10, nine out of a possible twelve rucks had good binding. This increase does represent how the players have put their knowledge of binding that they learnt in training and put it into a game. Binding was an area that was highlighted by both the coaches' reports and the questionnaires that needed to be focused on; I feel that this increase shows a clear improvement.

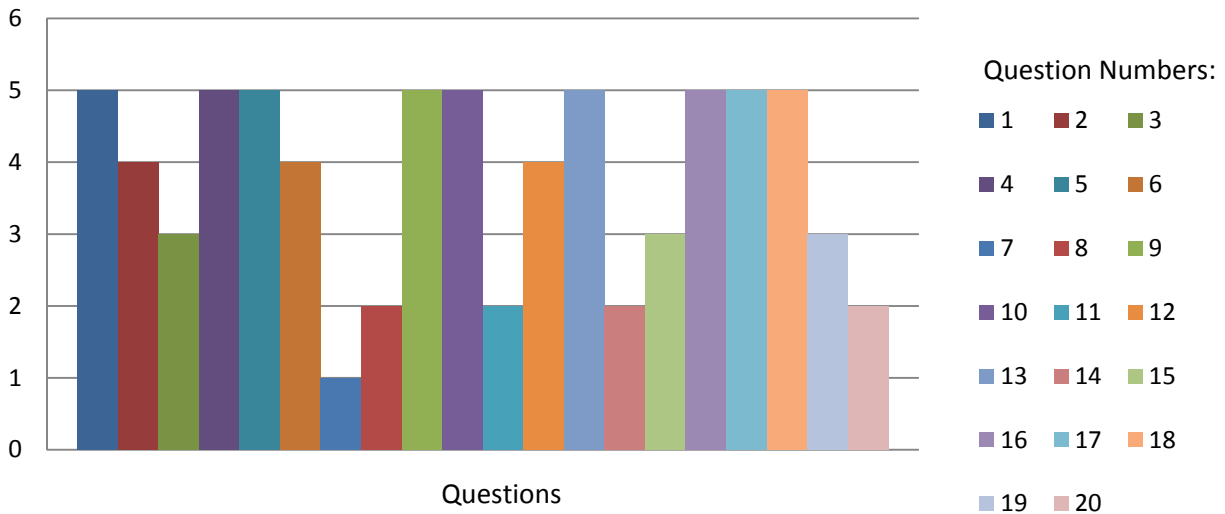
'Good body position'- This is the area that has shown the most improvement. It was, like binding, an area that was shown to be in need of improvement after the results of the coaches' reports and questionnaires. In week 1, three rucks had been successful with a good body position, in week 6 this rose dramatically to nine and stayed constant at nine in week 10. Lots of the sessions focused on or recapped body position at some point, this illustrates how the repetition of the exercise has led to an increase in success in this area in game situations.

To conclude, the breakdown of the ruck analysis shows an increase in each area which has led to a general improvement in overall rucking ability in game situations in the under 11's team. This increase shows that my sub aim number 4, to increase rucking success in game situations, has been met.

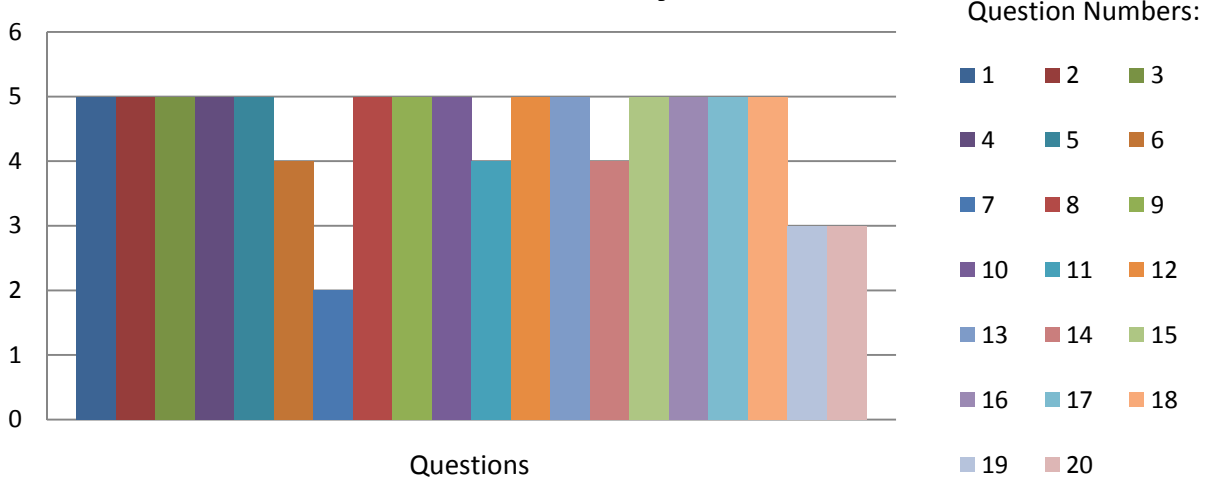
Week 1: Number of questions answered correctly



Week 6: Number of questions answered correctly



Week 10: Number of questions answered correctly



Questionnaire on Knowledge, Understanding and Confidence in Rucking in the under 11's team.

1.) In the ruck, is the ball on the ground or in the players' hand?

- a) Ground
 - b) Hands
- ground

2.) How many players are needed to form a ruck?

3

3.) Where is the offside line in a ruck?

- a) A line running through the centre of the ball
 - b) Behind the hindmost team mate
- b) b

4.) What is the area called where the players are allowed to join the ruck?

.....The gate.....

5.) Are you allowed to pick the ball up in a ruck?

- a) Yes
 - b) No
- b

6.) When does the ruck successfully end?

when they pass the ball out.....

7.) When is a ruck unsuccessful?

.....when you lose the ruck.....

8.) What is the first player's job when forming the ruck?

- a) Bind with the opponent
 - b) Pick up the ball
 - c) Ruck over the ball
- C

9.) What is the purpose of the ruck?

.....win possession and get the ball out.....

10.) What is a good body position to have when joining and participating in the ruck?

low

11.) When is the best time to bind to your team mate in a ruck situation?

- a) Before you approach the ruck
 - b) at point of impact
 - c) after you have started to drive
- b

12.) Which player should pass the ball out of the ruck?

scrum half

13.) When on the floor in the ruck, what position should you be in?

.....like a banana...put legs up you're your body should be sideways.....



14.) Which part of the arm should you use to bind to your team mate?

- a) Hands only
- b) fingers
- c) hands to elbow
- d) hands to shoulder

d

15.) What action is taken by the Referee if a player is offside at the ruck?

.....penalty.....

16.) Which direction should your feet be facing in the ruck?

- a) To the side
- b) forwards
- c) any direction

b

17.) Where should you be looking in the ruck?

.....up looking where you are driving.....

18.) When entering the ruck , which of these changes of position is preferable?

- a) Stay low at all times
- b) low to high
- c) high to low

b

19.) Where in the ruck are your feet not allowed to go?

- a) Over the ball
- b) over the gain line
- c) on another player

b

20.) Which muscles are used the most in the ruck to drive?

- a) Arms
- b) upper leg
- c) lower leg

C

21.) How confident do you feel at these stages of the ruck?

Forming a ruck	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7
Joining a ruck	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Passing the ball out	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Defending the ruck	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	9

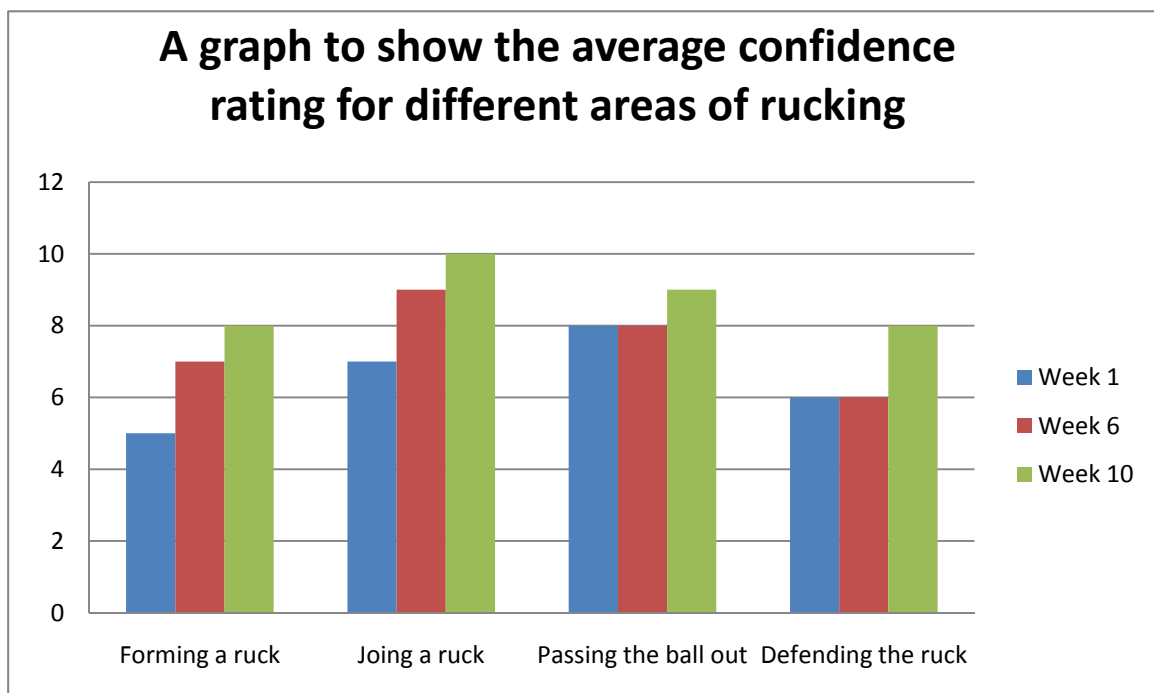
Thank you for your time.



Questionnaire results for confidence in rucking

A table to show the average confidence rating for different areas of rucking:

	Week 1	Week 6	Week 10
Forming a ruck	5	7	8
Joining a ruck	7	9	10
Passing the ball out	8	8	9
Defending the ruck	6	6	8



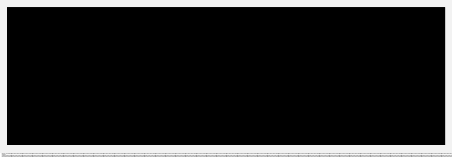
From the results we can see a gradual improvement in confidence in different areas of rucking.

The area that the players were least confident with in week 1 was forming a ruck, scoring an average of five out of ten, however, by week 10 the average score was eight. This is a large increase representing that the players feel hugely more confident in this area. Forming a ruck is the area of rucking which involves the most responsibility as you are the first person to ruck over the ball and bind to the opposition, I am therefore not surprised that it was the area which rated lowest in confidence. However, the increase shows how the practise of this in training sessions has led them to being more confident.

Again, the gradual increase shows that the players are gaining confidence with each session. This increase in confidence will be linked to the increase in knowledge and understanding; as knowledge and understanding increases so will the confidence to attempt the different areas of rucking.



Couch

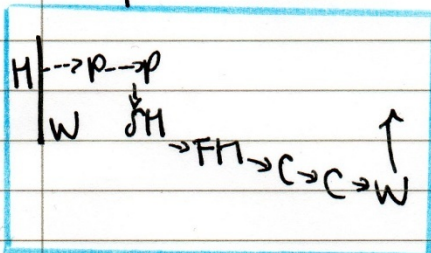


Competition 1: Match against Aylesbury 11th October.

Aim: to recap lineout + ruck.

* Lineout:

- Includes both props + back.
- Repeat drill x3.



Hooker throws in, props tap it out to scrum half, pass to fly half and down the line; wing receives and runs up the pitch with support from the backs.

Key points:

- Hooker must throw the ball straight.
- Props must be 2m back from the touch line.
- Backs in an attacking line and ready to support the winger.

* Ruck:

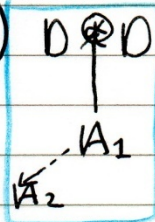
5 stages, up to 7 players involved each time.

1.)



• A1 runs at DD with the ball and gets tackled at ⊗.

2.)



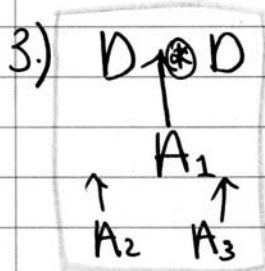
• A1 + A2 work together and run at DD.
• A1 passes to A2 and A1 gets tackled at ⊗.

A = attacker,
D = defender.

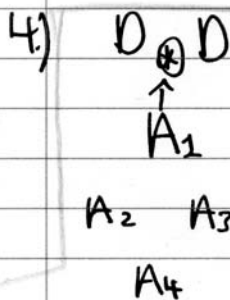
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Camp 1 cont.



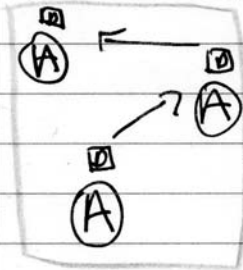
- A runs at D D and gets tackled and protects the ball at ⊕.
- A₂ + A₃ run at step over A₁ and contest for the ball whilst marking over.



- Same as above.
- A₄ (from half) then picks up the ball and passes out to A₅.

A₅

5.) Same situation / drill but repeated up the pitch



Key points:

- Drill + pump legs when marking over.
- A₂ + A₃ up quickly to the break down so they don't lose possession.

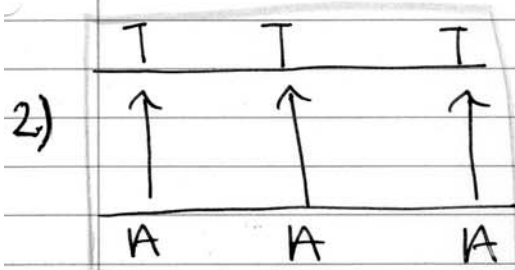
Coach [REDACTED]

Competition 2; match v Tabard ; 11 Feb.

Aim :: Recap rucking . (Plan in comp 1 sheet.)
· Tackling .

* Tackling: 4 stages .

- 1) · | v | tackling on knees.
- | v | tackling in crouch position.
- | v | tackling standing.



Attackers on one line and
Tacklers on another, attackers
run and be tackled.

- 3)
- | | |
|------------------|---|
| A ₁ → | D |
| A ₂ ← | |
- A₁ and A₂ have got to get past D
 - D has got to tackle A₁ or A₂ before they get to the line.

4) A A A A → [] → [] → []

- A's take it in turn to run at the line of tacklers.
- Tacklers must tackle + get up as soon as possible

Key Points:

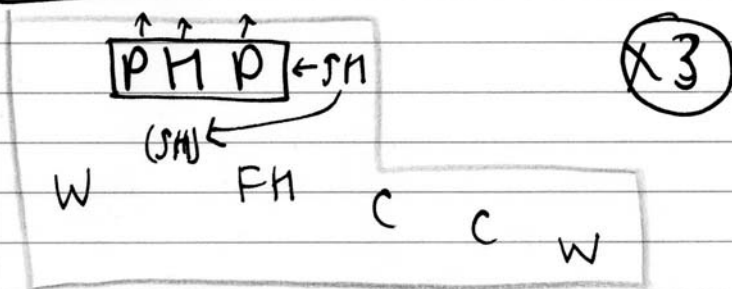
- 'Cheek to cheek' when tackling.
- Drive + pump legs to get max force.
- Get up asap after tackle.

coach:

Competition 3, Festival at Biggleswade, 21st March

- Aim:
- to recap tackling (on comp 2 sheet.)
 - to practise scrums + passing out.

* Scrum:



- Scrum half puts the ball in and runs back to the backs.
- Ball is hooked out.
- Scrum half passes ball out to fly half and to the backs.
- Repeat 3 times.

Key points:

- Scrum half must be quick + run behind the scrum after putting in the ball.
- Props must drive + pump legs to get max force.
- Backs must be in an attacking line + run onto the ball, rather than receiving it flat = max speed and ground gained.

Comparison of Coaches Report.

When comparing the coaches' reports from the beginning, middle and end of the ten weeks, you can see that a clear improvement has been made in the teams' rucking ability.

The areas that were focused on were body position and binding. Each of the coaches' reports has a section on these two areas.

Body Position:

In week one the coach says that 'most of the team don't have a correct body position when entering the ruck'. He emphasises how the position isn't low enough, resulting in there not being enough drive in the rucks. As we move to week six, the techniques I have used to try to correct the players' body positions are listed and the process in which I have done this. The coach states that 'the body position has improved' as 'the players have adopted a low position'. He goes on to say that further work is needed to get all the team to achieve this position; from this advice I decided to carry on focusing on body position as a main priority in training sessions. Repeating the sessions I had done with the players, as I learnt whilst researching and planning for my development plan, was the best way for the children to learn due to their age. In the final week, the report shows that the 'majority of the players are going into the ruck lower' which shows a great improvement from the first week.

The assistant coach, Darran, also agrees, 'we have seen a distinct improvement in players' body position which has resulted in LBRFC being very strong in the breakdown aspects of the game'.

Binding:

From week 1 it was clear that the underlying knowledge of the laws of binding wasn't known by the players as the coach says that the players 'aren't binding correctly'. I decided to focus on the laws of binding and how to bind effectively to provide a strong bind to create more force and strength at the ruck area. This was done by using drills and putting them into the game which was effective by week 6 as the coach states that in training 'it was often the case that the team with fewer numbers would win the battle over the ball due to their superior bind and therefore greater combined force moving forward.'

From the feedback at week 6 I saw that the timing of binding in the ruck is an area that needed to be looked at. As players were binding too early which wouldn't be realistic in a match situation. I took this advice and decided to put the binding drills into use by looking at binding in a game, pausing the game at each ruck, correcting the binding and then continuing the game. This allowed the players to fully understand how binding is applied to game situations. I feel that this helped as in week 10's report the coach says that there is an 'improvement in binding timings' as well as binding strength.

Coaching technique:

The first piece of advice in week 6 was to try a 'whole-part-whole' approach. I took this advice and planned some sessions around this and I did find it very effective; the coach then in week 10 comments on how he 'believes that it was very successful.

In week 10 the coach states how ' [REDACTED] does seek feedback from the players when wrapping up each section of the session'. I am pleased with this improvement as feedback was a weakness of mine at the beginning of the ten week period.

Darran also shows how my weakness of confidence has improved, 'One thing that I would say that has improved the most is [REDACTED]'s confidence- she now seems relaxed when coaching as well as in control; her true love for the game is reflected in her coaching.' I feel that this is the area that I have improved in most, although I believe that it is something that will also grow with experience and age.

From these results, I conclude that both body positioning and binding in the under 11's team has improved. More players have adopted the low position, are binding correctly and more effectively and more players are getting involved in the ruck; I would say that the aim has been achieved. I also believe that my coaching technique has improved; this is due to the research I did regarding the coaching styles and learning patterns of young players.

Timetable of Sessions

Date	Venue	Duration	Training or Match?	Aims:
9/01/2011	Aylesbury RFC	3 hours	Match V Ay RFC	To observe and analyse rucking in a game situation with notational analysis To assess rucking knowledge, understanding and confidence in rucking via questionnaires
16/01/2011	LBRFC	2 hours	Training	Introduce key factors of rucking and put them into a game situation
23/01/2011	LBRFC	2 hours	Training	To focus on body positioning and binding in rucking
30/01/2011	Milton Keynes RFC	3 hours	Match V MK & Northamptions	To recap main points in rucking and put into a game
6/02/2011	LBRFC	2 hours	Training	To recap body positioning and to focus on attacking at the ruck area
13/02/2011	Chinnor RFC	3 hours	Match V Chinnor RFC	Put the skills into a game. Assess rucking via notational analysis and questionnaires
20/02/2011	LBRFC	2 hours	Training	Focus on defending the ruck Ruck development and the stages of rucking
27/02/2011	LBRFC	2 hours	Training	Continue with ruck defence and put into a game situation
06/03/2011	LBRFC	2 hours	Training	Ruck progression. Focus on building the ruck in a game situation and recap all areas covered
13/03/2011	Dunstable RFC	7 hours	Beds Festival	Assess rucking in a festival situation with questionnaires and notational analysis

Coaches Reports:

██████████ Under 11's Head Coach at LBRFC. Level 2 qualified RFU Coach.

Week 1:

The main aim ████████ has put forward, and which I have agreed, is to improve the players rucking. The primary issues we face are these of the body position and of binding on in the ruck. The discipline around the offside line, however, has been generally good and the team are very rarely penalised for this offence, however, not all the players seem to understand the laws of the offside line; so some work on this is needed.

Body position: At the moment, most of the team don't have the correct body position when entering the ruck. Most of the team shy away from the ruck area and those who do attempt it go in with a position that is not low enough, meaning that they cannot drive and make a good attempt at winning the ruck.

Binding: The players do generally bind to each other; however, they aren't binding correctly. Most bind with their hands, not creating a strong enough bind. Work on this area is needed to ensure a strong ruck.

Week 6:

I have been very impressed with ████████'s coaching plan so far. She has focused on the key areas that were prioritised and the team have shown improvement in each one of the following:

Body position: ████████ has focused on this area in particular in attempting to improve the body position of players entering the ruck. ████████s, to focus on going from 'low to high', ensuring that the impact and force is therefore primarily forwards, and secondarily upwards - the latter being used for driving opposition players up and off the ruck, and out of a position of strength, by getting underneath their body.

The main technique initially used for demonstrating and enforcing this element was to use a corner flag parallel to the ground. The players would then run towards this, have to get below the pole without losing momentum and then drive forwards and up into another player holding a tackle shield.

The second element to this was by using two opposing and uneven sides, to compete for a ball. That is, to get a good body position over the ball in forming a ruck, resisting the temptation to pick up the ball and instead focus on securing it for their team through their work over the top of the ball.

After working on the body position, this element was taken into a game-based scenario, building up the construct of the ruck, but ensuring the players didn't forget the part about their body position.

Over the weeks of developing this, the body position has improved; however, it will be a constant issue of reminding players about this, no doubt!

Binding: In the second stage of the above, the 'drill' used lent itself to ensuring the players worked to bind together in an appropriate and strong manner, once assembled over the ruck. By doing so correctly, it was often the case that the team with fewer numbers would win the battle over the ball due to their superior bind and therefore greater combined force moving forward. An area where this could be improved, however, was that some players were looking to bind together before arriving at the ruck, knowing that this would help them win the ball, but is alien in an actual match scenario. So, it would be a useful area to look at in the next stage.

Again, focus on this will need to continue over time as the team develops.

Coaching technique: Overall the coaching technique and demonstration scenarios have worked well in improving the positioning of the players. I would advise trying to use a 'whole-part-whole' approach at times. That is, for example, play the rucking game that we regularly do through a game of touch. Then, when their body positions aren't good, pull them away from the game scenario into, for example, practicing getting low under the pole. And then, once mastered, taking them back into the rucking game with the emphasis on that body position. A similar thing could take place with the binding. This will help both them and [REDACTED] to add small parts of technique one at a time, rather than necessarily trying to get them to do all the parts in one go or accumulated, and *then* taking it into the game based scenario.

More broadly, during this process [REDACTED] has clearly planned these parts of the session in advance and has worked out what she is trying to achieve each time. I would suggest not being afraid to adapt things as you go, however. For example, if something doesn't prove to work terribly well, don't be afraid to change it as you go in order to make it work better.

Week 10:

Now we are at the end of the ten weeks that [REDACTED] has been focusing on rucking, I can see a clear improvement in the teams' rucking abilities; both in training and in games. This has been demonstrated by our recent 3rd place at the Beds Festival- a festival which we have never done well in before. The rucking sessions have improved the players' ability but also [REDACTED]'s coaching has shown improvement as she has found the confidence to try new things and over the weeks she has become more relaxed and adapted sessions as she goes along to make further improvements- this is a skill which has improved greatly since the beginning.

Body Position: This has improved greatly as now players are going into the ruck lower, allowing them to create more drive. This improvement has come from [REDACTED]'s coaching sessions and repetition of the core skills needed.

Binding: This area has shown improvement as the players now fully understand the laws behind binding in the ruck area.

Coaching technique: In terms of overall coaching technique, [REDACTED] does seek the feedback from the players when wrapping up each section of the session - something many coaches forget, but is important in aiding their learning. Feedback was something that [REDACTED] identified that she wanted to improve on and I would say that this has been a success as now her feedback is coherent and effective.

Her communication skills have been shown in this area and when getting feedback from the players, if they haven't picked up on something, [REDACTED] will be sure to take this and put it into her next coaching session. [REDACTED] also took the feedback from me with regards to the 'whole-part-whole' approach- she then focused more on this and I believe that it was very successful.

In terms of knowledge of laws and the general process of coaching, [REDACTED] succeeds in dealing with these without any issue, and their relevance and importance when taking on coaching elements of the game.

A comment from Darran reflecting on the 10 weeks of rucking sessions:

Darran Murtagh- Assistant Coach LBRFC under 11's. Level 1 qualified RFU Coach.

As part of our long term development of players a large part of this season has been directed at body position. We feel it is vital to continually work on this aspect as the body position that players adopt at scrummage, ruck and maul are very similar. [REDACTED] has been looking at the ruck and aspects of it.

One of the key issues with all athletes is that they have a pre conceived idea on how to push something, which doesn't look at the key aspects that we would use to ruck. Our children didn't disappoint and in seasons gone by the players have tended to join a ruck stood upright, pushing with their hands or are joining in a low position but with their body twisted, or their head down. Over the season [REDACTED] has devised a series of routines and drills that look at each aspect of the player's position. She has then put this into games where players get to understand what is being asked, but in a game sense, which is of course vital to their learning.

The full focus of [REDACTED]'s work has been on several key points: low entry, ie, "taking off", spine in line up the pitch, shoulders above the hips allowing the largest leg muscle groups to drive eyes forward and binding. Over the course of the season we have seen a distinct improvement in players' body position which has resulted in LBRFC being very strong in the breakdown aspects of the game. [REDACTED] has introduced some useful coaching techniques and has challenged the players to respond, by asking them technical questions as well as rugby law based questions around the entry to ruck points, hands on the floor etc. She asks a variety of open questions well and allows them to answer before offering praise and support, or direction.

By using the game sense to play, then coach, then play again, [REDACTED] has kept the players interest and I have never once heard a player say "not rucking again". At our last session we used a 20 minute full contact game to focus on joining and competing at the ruck area and players who have in the past stood back, were joining in. This is something that I was particularly pleased about, as more of the team now participate in rucking- not just the small number of players who used to do it by themselves. There is still much work to do but there is an excellent foundation and the players know what is required of them, even if they don't do it 100% of the time.

In the early stages I feel [REDACTED] felt a little intimidated by the rest of the coaching team and her confidence was a little low. However [REDACTED] as an ex player and a person who loves the game, has all the knowledge required and is now starting to bloom into the coach we all know she is. Her work with the players has been excellent and as a coaching team we are delighted with the progress our players are making. All players are returning every week and they do leave training in good spirits. We are also winning a lot more ball at ruck situations and this has come from [REDACTED]'s persistence and good coaching.

One thing that I would say that has improved the most is [REDACTED]'s confidence- she now seems relaxed when coaching as well as in control; her true love for the game is reflected in her coaching.

Evaluation

Did you meet your aims?

My main aim was:

- **To improve rucking in Leighton Buzzard under 11's team in training and in competitive situations.**

I feel that I have met this aim as my test results show that the team have made an improvement. The notational analysis shows that the players' technique has improved and this is due to increased knowledge, understanding and confidence in rucking. Also, the coaches' reports state that the teams have responded well to the rucking training and as a result rucking has improved in training and match situations.

My sub aims were:

1) To attend a 'Saracens Coach Education Course'

I have achieved this by attending a Saracens Coach Education Course on Tuesday 18th of January. The course was entitled 'Jazz with Faz' and focused on the fundamental skills through observing the under 19's Saracens' academy team train. The evaluation of this course (see appendix) indicates what I learnt from this and how I have put this knowledge into my own coaching sessions.

2) To improve my knowledge and understanding of coaching the laws and techniques of rugby.

This was achieved in different ways. Firstly, was through the coaching course mentioned above, as learning from highly qualified coaches taught me more about which coaching styles are effective. My knowledge of laws and techniques was extended through the research that I did prior to the coaching sessions. I used different resources such as coaching books and internet websites focusing specifically on coaching rucking to further my knowledge and to use this in my coaching sessions. Also, comments from the coaches' reports also indicate that my coaching skills have improved over the ten weeks.

3) To improve knowledge, understanding and confidence of rucking in training sessions.

I know that this aim was achieved as the results of the questionnaires (see questionnaire results graphs) indicate that the players now have a better understanding of the both the laws surrounding the ruck area but also have an improved knowledge of the correct techniques used within rucking. The results also showed an increase in confidence, especially in forming a ruck where the confidence is needed the most.

4) To improve rucking success in game situations.

The results from the notational analysis show that rucking technique has improved as the players' body positions and binding skills were poor to begin with leading to unsuccessful rucks, however by the end of the ten weeks, these were areas of the ruck that had improved and when done correctly, rucks were becoming more successful. Also the number of unsuccessful rucks was decreased by over a half over the ten week period (see notational analysis graph sheet); showing an increase in ability in games. This was also shown by the improvement of the basics that I focused on; these were binding and low body position. Comments such as 'poor binding' and 'body position too high' in week 1 then changed to 'good bind lead to a good drive' and 'very good body position- players learnt that getting low improves the drive'.

Do you think your development plan was successful?

From the results and explanations above, I conclude that I achieved all my aims and therefore my development plan was successful. This work on rucking may have also contributed to this seasons being the teams most successful season in 5 years. The team came 3rd in a festival in which we have never done well in before and we later, a few of weeks after the development plan ended, went on to win the major festival of the season- the Aylesbury Festival; our team has again never won this in previous seasons.

What went well and what went badly?

I feel that the planning for the sessions was something that went well as it made me more prepared for the session ahead. As I had a full plan in place before each session, I knew exactly what I was doing at all times with timings planned out allowing the session to flow. However, I feel that this also led to some of the sessions becoming too structured leading to me not adapting the session as it went along; I feel that I should have not stuck to my plans so closely.

Another thing that went well was being able to see the progression of the team each week and taking both the teams and individuals strengths and weaknesses and planning them into the next session. This was shown when half way through I decided to focus more on a 'game sense' approach to coaching changing most of my sessions to 'whole-part-whole' as I found that the players responded to this well and this led to improvements in their learning as they were able to easily apply the skills to the game.

One thing that didn't go as well as I hoped was the analysing of my tests results for the notational analysis. This was due to the confounding variables having a huge effect on the results, leading to the results of some matches, such as the last match against Dunstable, not reflecting the true performance of the under 11's team. Due to the individual differences in each test situation, it was harder to draw specific conclusions about the teams rucking ability and make close analytical points; although general points regarding the teams' improvements were clear.

How do your test results compare to other sports performers at your standard?

There are no other results to compare mine to, however, if I wanted to compare LBRFC under 11's results I could do a notational analysis of other teams in the local area and compare the results. This would give me an understanding of how well the team are doing, in the specific area of rucking, compared to other teams of their age group.

Did you complete all your sessions and recording sheets?

Yes, in previous seasons we have had problems with cancellations of matches and training sessions due to bad weather conditions or flooding of the pitches, however, this season all training and matches were on. I did manage to complete all my sessions that I planned and some weeks the sessions even lasted longer than first planned; leading to more time to train and to try to make the improvements that I hoped for. I also did complete all my recording sheets, shown by a safety check, session plan, evaluation and, if relevant, injury report for each coaching session. I did also conduct all tests on the dates said and then write them up in neat later to make them easier to analyse.

Did you remain motivated?

I was motivated from the start and as sessions went passed I became more motivated due to my new found confidence. This led to me enjoying the sessions more and therefore becoming more motivated to improve on previous sessions and to challenge both myself and the team.

If you were to repeat the development plan what would you keep the same and what would you change?

I would definitely have the same aims as I feel that they worked very well and were both realistic but still challenging for the team and myself. I feel that rucking was a good area to focus on as it plays a key role in every rugby game; at any level. It is an opportunity to gain or retain possession and ground, two things that need to be gained at every opportunity. I also feel that it is an area that if improved, can affect the whole teams' performance and easily lead to winning more games.

One thing that I would change however would be the time that was designated to the development plan. I feel that there is still more to improve in the under 11's team, however I have been carrying on the work on rucking for the remainder of the season as I want the team to improve further. I feel that for the ten week period only allowed me to focus on the core skills involved in rucking, there is still work to be done. Areas I would concentrate on would include repeating the core skills such as body positioning and binding but to also develop these and look at defending the ruck, a further use of guards and counter rucking. Rucking exercises could also be tied into other areas of rugby such as tackling when focusing on guards and defending the ruck. I would still keep it very simple due to the age group of the players, as more complicated areas to look at, for example, angle of attacks from the ruck, would not be suitable for this age group.

What observations can you make about your development plan?

As mentioned above, I think that a longer development plan would have been better as it would allow more time to show improvement. However, I think that within the time restrictions I planned my time well and decided to focus on the basic skills needed in order to ruck effectively. I feel that repetition of these skills weekly was the key to developing the players' rucking skills, as from my research and planning I found that at that age group, repetition and reinforcement is necessary.

What have you learnt about your coaching having completed your development plan?

The main thing that I learnt was that although I have coached since the age of 13, I found that having a specific focus for a set period of time helped me to find more confidence in my coaching and to enjoy it more, this development plan has helped me realise the importance of goal setting and the benefits that it can have on both the team and the coach. Goal setting allowed me to set sub aims for each coaching session (as shown in my session plans) and then reflecting on how well these aims went, this then affected my planning for the next session. This way of planning also affected the players as it is more specific and adapted to both the team and individuals needs.

I also observed that using a 'whole-part-whole' approach was most effective as this way the players firstly play as a large group when the skill is first introduced, this will enhance team work skills. Then when the skill is taken out of the game in the 'part' stage, the groups become smaller, allowing more individual work, resulting in the players getting closer coaching which is suited to their individual needs. The skills learnt are

then taken into the game again and the combination of learning the skills as well as being in your team result in a game sense approach to coaching which I find to most effective.

What were the biggest pluses of your development plan?

Being able to see the players develop each week was the biggest plus for me as I knew that it was my coaching that had led to those improvements; this then gave me confidence and motivated me to continue to try to improve them as either individuals or as a whole team. The intrinsic rewards gained from undertaking the development plan was the main benefit for me as a coach.

The fact that the team did improve also was a big plus as has led to them having more confidence whilst rucking as they are more informed about the rucking area; this will help them in general play and also help them to enjoy the game more, which at the ages that they are, should be the main focus.