

“Freestyle” – a training game

One of the great advantages of basketball is that anyone can score and you all attack and you all defend. In rugby, though there are certain exceptions, most of the tries are scored by a small number of the players, with certain players having more opportunity than others. Psychologically, scoring points is very uplifting, so the game “freestyle” is a way of rewarding all the participants.

Introduction

The game itself is easy to set up and contains no more laws than the normal game of rugby. Two sides try to score tries as normal.

The key to “freestyle” is in the point scoring. Not only are points scored for tries, but also for demonstrating various core skills or pre-determined moves.

Setting up and playing “freestyle” Split the groups up into 4 or 5 players. You usually end up with 3 or 4 teams - give each team a letter or name. Each team shall keep their own scores.

Use a half or a third of a pitch, place two large tackle bags on the pitch, one to represent a line out and one to represent a scrum or breakdown. Move these around to simulate game situations.

The game is quick. Each team will attack and defend as called by the coach, for example “Team A attacking line out (line up on the tackle bag used to denote the line out), Team B defending.” Give the attacking team enough time to set up and maybe call a move then blow the whistle.

Don’t worry about the defending team, it’s up to them to get into position as quickly as possible. Once Team A has attacked, call a new combination for example “Team C attack scrummage, Team A defending”.

The objective is for the players to use core skills or moves to try to score. The more skilful or inventive they are i.e. miss moves, dummies, blind side winger on the burst, the more points they score.

There are points for scoring (1) and points for skills or moves (1,2 or 3).

The attacking team have two bites at scoring. If a tackle is made and the ball is quickly recycled they can then attempt to score a second time. If the attacking team gets held up or fails to score or the defending team steals the ball, then the defending team gets one point.

Moves Freestyle

If you have enough players to have bigger squads on the pitch then “freestyle” can progress towards moves. The aim is to encourage the backs to experiment with different moves and practice different angles of running and attacking. While the backs are waiting for their next turn attacking they can be preparing or working on a move.

Possible templates for points scoring according to “core skills”. Change them to suit your team and their ability.

Template for "handling freestyle"		
One point for	Two points	Three points
Normal pass	Player running onto pass	Pass out of tackle
Clean catch	Passer following pass	Switch pass
Template for "contact freestyle"		
One point for	Two points	Three points
Ball away from contact point when taking contact	Good presentation of ball	Turnover ball
Stable position	Next players arriving in a strong position	Retrieving ball from ruck within 3 seconds
Template for "footwork freestyle"		
One point for	Two points	Three points
Running onto passes	Changing angle of run	Successful sidestep
Balanced in contact	Arriving from depth	Successful spin