Okay, so we're recording and we'll jump into the space management side, which we've talked about before. We've talked about space management on the attack with the ball. We have talked about space management on the defense. I was mostly without the ball and now we're going to talk a little bit about space management on the defense with a ball. So I'm going to tee up the same scenario for you as we typically do, excuse me, with the intent of being able to scale this, trying to give me guidelines to scale this, but my ask is, hey, you know, I've got seven other players here with me. So there are eight of us. We've got roughly an hour to work with. We want to work on space management specifically. Your question back to me is typically, what does the space look like? How much space do you have to work with? All that stuff. Let's assume that all of that, all the safety and prep aspects have been addressed and we just jump straight ahead to, in this case, I've got an unlimited space to work with. We're on a grass surface outside and what are my options? What game can I play? What's my first game? We've got a ball involved. Let's start with just how big do you want to make the field? How big is the field? What are the rules? I would defensively, you know, with every game you play, you kind of want to start with some degree of equity. So four a side, five a side, six a side, that's what I mean by that. And again, using a 15s model and if we work out from there, in all aspects of rugby, allow yourself roughly five or six meters of lateral width to cover. And then again, in real terms, so if you've got five a side, it's 25, 30 meters. And then vertical length and vertical distance, I kind of think 40 meters is an optimal space because in a game of rugby, there's very few people, you know, breaking out or covering more than that distance, even if you're covering a tangent, you know, the longest tangent you might cover, if you think about Pythagoras' theorem, is from across the hypotenuse, you know, from, let's say, touchline to touchline at an angle, say 45 degrees. That's about the longest thing you're ever going to see in running rugby apart from the obviously a few breakouts or intercepts that don't happen very often, which is why they're exciting. So if you come back to, you know, optimal length is 40 meters. So 40 meters is getting into, you're still in sprint mode and you can still catch someone. So staying on the defensive side, you know, people are still accelerating in some cases up to 40 meters and for your fast twitch muscles, your agility guys, it's a good distance to turn chase and practice chasing people down and you've still got time for tagging them. You put a longer distance in there, you're getting into more cardio work, which is okay because rugby is an endurance game, right? And it's really important not to look at these things in a linear sense, right? You don't just think 40 meters, that's the distance or 100 meters, that's the distance because you've got to remember rugby like football, association football flows. So with the ebb and flow, you're still covering yards, you know, up downs or whatever you want to call it, verticals, however you want to call it. So 40 meters is good, shorter than 40 meters, that's a lot of pressure on the defense because that means there's no margin of error if someone breaks out and they score. I break out and score, I break out and score. So that's a high stress game. Actually there's a good example. So I was doing a game the other night. So it was a standard game of what I call through ball touch. So you're on a small field, so it was actually five or six a side and it was 10, 20, 30 meters wide and about 15 to 20 meters deep. So for the defensive team, what I did with that is because it's very close, so it's kind of stressful for the defense to be effective, it's a two hand touch game. In the two hands of touch, the contact have to be in a zone on the body. So it's not fingertips, you've got to use the palm because that means they're practicing entry to tackle and it's got to be in a zone that's legal under the laws of the game. So on the torso, on the thighs, butt and thighs, lower leg, things like that, it's got to be two hands. And if they get close enough, they can put their hands on the ball as well. So what that does is it focuses the defender on managing the entry to contact and not having the fear or being safe from full on contacts that they practice, you know, targeting those areas and managing the space in a really tight zone. It also forces things like high level communication, but where things like communication fails, communicating is a hard skill to train. So when it fails, they've got enough space to defend him instinctively rather than deliberately in a communication. So they can be reactive without having to be tactical or struggling with those executive functioning aspects that we talked about before. So defensively, defensive game is very simple. You set up your D, you set up your space. So the shorter the space, the more agile and reactive the defense has to be. The longer the vertical space, the more recovery there is if there's a breakthrough. So there's a greater margin of error or allowance of margin of error and it allows you to change the roles. So keeping it simple, let's say you start with five a side and the offense keeps the ball alive. But if you tag them, they can still go through the space. They've got two or three seconds to go through the space, continue carrying the ball. So with defensive space management, you have to set your game up to, as I said, start with get your space right, you feel space breakdown correct and get the rules clear about what you're trying to achieve. But for defense to work effectively and over time, you know, you have to stress it and allow the defense to problem solve in the moment and give them roles so they can fix their own problems. So when you're setting the rules or the conditions out, you've got to be thinking about that stuff. So the two hand touch, ball carry, allows you to go through the space because that mimics what happens in a game of rugby players trying to go through the space. And these days, personally, for player welfare and health and safety, for multiple reasons we can dig into that topic at another time, but I encourage games to explore space rather than running into contact. So explore the ball carrier to explore evasion and invasion opportunities, which works the defense. If you go back to traditional rugby or roll ball touch, it just explores hitting the contact, hitting the contact, so it becomes very reductive. So coming back a couple of steps, though, what we have to think about, so defensive game, we talked about team equity, balance your team roughly, your space, a couple of things you need to consider, but the number one thing defensive objective is managing the threat and managing the potential threat. So the threat is obviously dynamic, it's the ball, and it's the ball moving across the field. So it's lateral or vertical movement of the ball, obviously with catch pass carriers, and then the players moving on or off the ball. So the threat, the direct threat is always, where's the ball, because if you leave it unmarked, someone's going to run through and score. The potential threat or indirect threat, if you want to call it that, is where's the next point of attack coming from. So defensive tactics with the ball, you have to have your team thinking about how do we manage threat, so that's kind of the people closest to it are the ones logically managing it. And then how do you manage potential threat to the rest of the team, what shape are they making to deal with where the ball's going to go, arguably. You go way back in rugby history as people talk about reading the game, no one talks about that anymore. So if you come fast forward to now, at this time of recording, the professional game, because it became so structured, and it dropped down that kind of overly structured playing, you can actively see players can't read the game anymore because they're doing what they're told within a pattern or framework. So there's that, they're handicapped because they don't have the intrinsic knowledge anymore. But they don't have the ability to play what they see. Yeah, play what they see or play around the corner, right, so deal with what's coming around the corner. So gaming, another benefit of gaming is you're building that knowledge. So whilst as a coach, you can't necessarily measure the outcome, which I'd argue is possible if you really care to, because everything can be measured somehow. If you have an objective you want to achieve, but the advantage of gaming is intrinsically layers in that space management experience, which is why you come back to the soccer example. Coaches can go in a park or round in the yard or just go outside and kick a ball around. And they can do that very easily all of their growing up lives, which is why soccer transcends so many countries and so many spaces, because it's just so easy to do that. Whether or not you develop skills, you're intrinsically managing space because you're playing with your mates. And that's what coaches lose sight of, that kind of intrinsic learning. So defensive space management, it's really important to have a game, not a drill, because the attacking pattern will change shape. It will change shape. Everything changes shape when pressure is applied to it. Humans do. Molecules do. A game of rugby is going to. So once pressure is applied to something, again, drills handicap players' abilities to adjust to situations, the fluid mechanics of rugby, so defensive game. Let's say we're four on four or five on five. So your defensive players, one, we've got to track the threat. When we get close enough to the threat, you're using the two hand tag approach. You can tag the ball, tag the body in the zone. So you're building up that entry to tackle or entry to contact awareness and agility that's essential. But like boxers sparring in the ring, again, another thing rugby falls down on. Boxers spar. They don't just go into a fight. This is the boxing equivalent for rugby. You've got to get in there, get that space management, the ability to weave left, right, to adjust the movement of the person or persons in front of you is essential. So then if you, how do you get a point? So if we remember, if we are setting up defensive games, then we have to reward defensive outcomes. Which again is counterintuitive for a lot of coaches because they can't think like that. They don't think like that. So you've got to, in the game, reward what you're trying to achieve, not something else. So you move away, let's move away, let's go right out on a limb, move away completely from scoring as a point because we're, every time you get the ball back, so what you could do, for example, is the attacking team scores a try, they get one point, easy, standard. Defensive team though, gets the ball back and they get a point for that. They get a point for every time they get the ball back. And you've got to be careful, you've got to be completely crazy. So if you say the defence, where does defence, what's the point of defence? It's force an error, get the ball back. So rewarding defence is something like that. If you give a point for every time they force an error or get the ball back, suddenly their points scoring opportunity racks up really, really quickly. Because it's a lot easier to, particularly on a, let's say a low level of skills, it's a lot easier to force errors and get a turnover than it is to say, score a try.   
  
So that's where you look at how do we reward defensive gaming and so you can and that's your final outcome because once you've got the ball back so then you could also if you really want to incentivize something like counter-attacking which I like to do because it's a totally neglected form of the sport right you can just see even at the professional level teams that counter-attack can win games and then there's teams that like they do half a job right and then they get the ball back and everyone's kind of spends two or three seconds looking at each other and what are we going to do now so one point for forcing an error or something like forcing an error is going to be a turnover anyway so one point for forcing an error a second point for two points if you get an intercept for example or three points if you score off a counter-attack so that means you've got you've regained possession and you've immediately triggered something. So in a game like this so let's say again I called you you're telling me you're explaining the first game to me so you're saying you know roughly five meters lateral space per player yeah we've got two teams of four players on a team so we've got about 20 20 meters in field width that we're working with we've got a field length that's roughly 40 meters for the logic that you shared there then since we're working on defensive space management we're talking about defensive team whoever it may be at the time they have to make two hand touches ball body like any like contactable zone in the game of rugby it's gonna be a solid touch palms of both hands sort of getting working up to a potential like contact session yeah and then how do I so this game I'm assuming is also somewhere between 10 and 15 minutes long how do I split up the teams do I allow one team to just attack for half the time and the other team is just working on the fence racking up points or you can do and there's multiple ways to do that so if you want to give teams time to build consolidate the tactical strength then you skew it in a way right you guys are gonna be defensive focused and we're gonna spend like five minutes on this get as many points as you can over five minutes and then turn it over give me a team the other team ago so you've got to make sure you're working both sides everyone has a fair chance at the same outcome or you can do it as you know people like fluidity you can have that game of touch going and you but you're just rewarding the defensive not the offensive and you want to be careful with that because people might just give the ball away right so they can get onto the defensive side and just start racking up those points so you kind of have to be you know because our fleets like anyone they like to gain the system so that's why I kind of like having either structured gaming right you're gonna be on the D for five minutes these are the three things we're awarding because these are the three things we're focusing on or we do one thing now out so throughout let's do it in progressions we're gonna play a few minutes five minutes and the first bit is just track and tag track and tag so if every time you get a tag you get one point doesn't matter who makes the tag as long as the tag is legitimate that's the team working together and the attacking team just got to keep the ball away so the attacking team that are moving vertically and laterally just got to keep the ball away now you can incentivize the attacking team by saying if you for two minutes right have zero tags over two minutes which is extremely hard to be fair but I'm just using that as an example zero tags over two minutes you get a point just for total evasion or you could say if you keep the tags under nine over five minutes all right then you get five points okay so that incentivizes both sides so one side it isn't always in the grind you can have a bit of fun with it and then it keeps it competitive like that see it's reversing the risk reward polarity and so they do that five minutes put it over to the other team right it's your turn in the defensive seat get as many points as you can that's ten minutes played that's a good workout and that's a dynamic game you've got going right there and then at the end of that you log it right so teammates got nine points and team B's got 15 points put that in right now what we're doing same condition but if you manage to get an intercept and for every intercept we'll give you another two points so then you're starting to get players intercepts a risk reward because if it goes wrong then you've got an overload in the offense right so you you're encouraging but you've got it how do you sharpen up that skill unless you practice it you can't sharpen it up so you've got to reward it so in a game of rugby it's a high risk high reward outcome so make it a high risk high reward outcome in your training so for example so if you make an intercept so they're looking for that double pointer just by making an intercept right but again what you can do remember you've got to encourage discipline game of rugby if I do a one-hand intercept and smack it down that's the yellow card so I try and keep games as close to the real game so if I see things like that I just say to the play they go in the bin yellow card I mean send them to the bin and then they handicap their team like they would in a real game right and it gets them and the yellow card in a short game can be ten seconds I like to make it 30 seconds because it's long enough for them to be out of the action and think I'm out of the action but not so long that they're calling down and need to warm up to come back in so it's got to be enough of a penalty for them to realize that they've cost their team right so and so there's your risk and reward and also your penalty your discipline and so you do that for another five minutes and both sides get a go so now they've got point you get one point for tagging because that's what we really need to do the tag is really important because you're chasing the threat you've got to close down the threat the intercept allows them to start looking where the potential threat might be so they're intrinsically managing space because they're now tracking where could the ball move to so instead of standing off the ball or away from the ball or the threat and doing nothing they're now actively looking for something to engage with which works all those synapses and all those executive functioning pieces that we can't drill. In a game like this and this may be a very silly obvious question but in a game like this when you've got four people play against four people and the tags get rewarded the attacking team is obviously still trying to go forward and score and maybe while the defending team is playing like every score is a subtraction in points as you suggested it's kind of that is maybe the easiest way to keep track of it yeah so you can do because scoring can become complex and it's hard to coach it and score if it's too complex I want to keep it relatively simple so yeah very simply and I think most players are honest when they get into a competition in my experience this is very few they'll game the system to try and find advantage which is okay but I don't think they'll cheat right so if you say to them track your tries and every time they got down at the end of five minutes they've dotted down three times you're gonna know intrinsically because you're gonna have recall if you're paying attention right so yeah so the defensive team scored nine minus three you're right if you're not there and it's just the players self-governing they should still be able to manage this by just yelling out loud what the points are and if points change right like yeah they can they should and it's good to make them give them a math problem right right if I'm playing a game of soccer I score a goal I know it's one point right I score another guy I know it's two points and as we're fatiguing we're doing simple math there's oh now we're two one up right oh now we're with two all right we need to you can do that as a collective right so this the principle of scoring and tracking your own system is right something that needs to be taught right because if you can't do it in a game how do you know where you are in the game right and as you grow in rugby and develop you need to be executing your own tactics under pressure and tracking your own scoring there's a lot of rugby they don't have a scoreboard they don't have an announcer tell them everything to do so it's a and it's good executive functioning it's a good life skill on top of all that so yeah make it simple so and there's something like an intercept is so rare that you know you've got in five minutes if you get to that's a lot right so if you can't do two times two I'll recall that you've probably got bigger problems so the question that I was actually building up to is I've got these two teams they will set simple enough that they can just self-manage and self-count yep the points that are being scored either attacking or defensively and I guess this is what I was going to refer to as the silly question but how do I how do I how will I manage to keep the defense from just absolutely flooding the attacking team so if I can I can easily see a group of four players kind of just flooding the attacking space you have to you have to sort of create the same dynamic that you have in a real game which is that offside line right so very simple simply put you're running towards me I'm a defensive player you're an attacking player I run up I tag you both hands mm-hmm that counts what do you want the defensive team to do at that point do you count that tag as are you treating that as a contact ball to ground in rugby and Iraq forms with the defensive team retreating depends what you want to achieve so in terms of progressions right if you just want to get your shape management first or your space management first just go tag that's the point but keep the game going keep it fluid you don't really want to stop it yeah you're not stopping and there's no there's no number of tags where the ball gets turned over or anything like that it's just tag player the ball carrier quote-unquote goes to ground or whatever the defensive team needs to then restructure their defense and it's and happens in a fluid way I'm just I guess what I'm asking is I can totally see if someone doesn't clarify this for me I'm the defensive team when my mate tags someone else and I'm one of the other defensive players I guess if someone doesn't say now there's an offside line I just completely flood that space in between them but that's space management right so you you know if you look in rugby so with all gaming particularly as a coach or facilitate it benefits if you understand the laws of the game right so because when you again coming back to the benefits of gaming whilst you're focusing on one side of the ball like defense or offense in this case defense the other side is still working right so people are intrinsically learning over there they've just got a you're not giving it the attention because those are things you can stack up later and deal with later so defensively if we're playing a game where the tag is a point right instinctively I'm gonna think I don't want to get tagged because it gives them a point and in a game you're giving the ball away or choking your attack so what's the logical thing to do you've got to keep the ball moving right so the next guy in D let's look for the potential threat and that means if you if you flood the space which is what you're going to do in a game of rugby right yeah flood the space right but until you're gonna flood the space and so you're not allowed to right which is a progression so the beauty of conditional gaming as you see how the game you've got to let the game evolve and then you can step back and go right what's my priority is my priority and giving the attack more advantage or is my priority allowing the defense to continue flooding the space and building a confidence to do that because when they're in a game you don't want to you've got to be very careful what you constrain right and they're coming back to what we said before coaches look at rugby through their lens and if a coach hasn't seen it in a game because they've never played it or they don't allow it you don't know what you're choking off so if your players are flooding the space that's awesome because the attack cannot reconstruct itself it's really under pressure so why would you tell them off for doing that or constrain it right you've got to allow it to get to a point now obviously the areas where you would step on that number one obvious area if the team is just so low skilled on the other side got to reconstruct your team maybe you've got your team balance wrong maybe there's not enough skills for this game to evolve so if the game is completely breaking down because of that what is the real problem is the real problem the fact that they're so smart that they're flooding the space in they're breaking down the offense or is the real problem that the teams are in balance so you've got team that is super slow against the team that's super fast and the super slow team also cannot catch pass but they can catch pass but it's just the teams aren't weighted properly so that you've got to look at all those aspects and one thing I do for team design is for example I say to the players group four groups and so split yourself into front five forwards and back row inside backs so 9 10 12 and outside backs 13 14 15 right and then

if you're doing an A versus B, you just go 1-2, 1-2, 1-2. So you're going to spread those players across both sides naturally. And there's no picking favorites, or Jimmy goes there and Bobby goes here. Or if you're playing three teams, you can still put them in the groups and just go 1-2-3, 1-2-3, and you play a round robin that way. So it's a bit more of a competition. And that's a very easy way to, in rugby terms, to break up teams and balance them. We can talk a little bit about the team design at some point. I think that'd be a good topic because if you're dealing with bigger groups, that may be necessary to change that approach a little bit. So if you've got, let's say you've got 15 or 20 players showing up, suddenly you need a lot of space and maybe you don't have enough space for the games that you want to play. And so you start creating three teams so you can do that round robin stuff. But the other thing that's very simple, even if you've got four a side or five a side, one of the other things I use is just say, right, stand on tallest to shortest. And then you just do 1-2, 1-2, 1-2 from the tallest to the shortest and you're going to get a fairly good player spread. And you're not doing anything that makes anyone feel left out or feel self-conscious because of their size. You just go, let's do it this way, boom. And folks generally see that as a fairly fair way of splitting it. I've done those two ways so many times and never had any issues with, well, our team's like blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It's not fair because they can see straight away. It's not a random selection, but it's a fairly equitable, again, coming back to equity, game equity. You've got to create equity for the players. Again, this is in a standard environment. The minute you're in a competitive prepping for a high-pressure contest or game, you're going to think differently. But in terms of just engagement and game equity, start there. Okay, so let's just pick a specific rule set then for the first game. So the first game, we've detailed how the contact happens, how the players get rewarded or how the teams get rewarded. And in the first game, you're not putting any constraints on how that defense can happen. They're allowed to flood the space. No offside line forms ever, essentially. It's a totally fluid game. One team has the ball half the time. The other team has the ball the other half of the time. Players are self-managing, self-refereeing, tracking the scores. Game one done. Everyone's getting together, drinking some water. What do we do in game two? We're progressing somehow or introducing some new rule. And it may be completely conditional. So I'll just maybe make up some player feedback here. I'll go, hey, Angus, we played the first game. Lots of fun. Everyone's nice and tired. We struggled a bit with the defense flooding the space. And we'd like to introduce something that creates a bit of a realistic offside line. Is there something we can do around the contact area that would simulate? Yeah. So you change, and that's very simple. And we change the dynamics. In the previous, the fluid game, you want fluidity. So the tag, I like to give people two seconds, two to three seconds, because that's a realistic, for the majority of people, that's a realistic time frame. So two seconds to offload the ball, blah, blah, blah. In the second progression, okay, we're going to change the dynamic because the defense needs to understand offside and it's got to work hard on realignment. It's got to realign and go again, realign and go again. Very simply, on the tag, you have to go to ground and present the ball. The very action of going to ground and presenting the ball will take about three to four seconds, which realistically gives the defense time to reset, but they're resetting under pressure. It's not too loose. So you're still not playing contact, because contact will slow it down. What you want is you still want your defense to work tactically together and then that allows another scoring element. So every time you consider their offside, offside's going to be the biggest deal, so you just penalize the offside, minus one point. And sometimes, if you're adept as a coach, you can do a running score. So if you purely focus on defense, that's one tag, one point, two tags, two points, three tags, that's three points, that's an intercept, that's now five points, really well done. Oh, they've scored a try against you, five minus one, you're at four points now. And that makes it kind of fun. Oh, you're offside, that's minus one, so you're now back down to three points. It's really simple. You just have to speak it out loud. And you could do that as, let's say there is no facilitator coach or someone standing out there to sort of manage this game and yell out those points. The players playing the game can yell out those things themselves. And also, they should actively do it because talking when you're playing is going to exercise cardio. And again, coming back to the benefits of gaming, we're moving dynamically, we're exercising, we have to learn to communicate when we're fatigued and think when we're fatigued and execute decisions when we're fatigued. So those small things, you can't drill them. Well, you could, but you'd spend hours in a classroom with a PowerPoint instead of, here's what you need to do, track your own score. If you get it wrong at the end, that's on you. Right, yeah. Yeah, the group will definitely self-manage that because they will self-regulate the fairness and any errors. Yeah, and it gets them working together as well. Collectively, someone can do it, someone can't do it, and that's okay. But someone in the team, right? And I've seen games break down, but fundamentally you can't mitigate against all things. No. If the players don't really want to play and enjoy it and get in the spirit of it, then they're not going to. It doesn't matter what you put in there. Right. And I've been at games of touch with older rugby players who are kind of past their prime, and you're supposed to be out there having fun, and within five minutes, someone's shouting at someone, they're bitching about stuff, on the most simple game. Something that could be 20, 40 minutes of fun, active exercise, with some very simple rules, you walk away from it in less than 10 minutes because I'm not out here in my spare time for this. And it's a really good lesson on how coaches disengage people. When you start in people's free time or spare time or they're paying to come to your club and be a part of your club for the service you provide, it's not appropriate to be shouting and being angry and giving them grief. How is that appropriate? It's not going to engage them. I don't pay money to go to the local hostelry to get shouted at by the staff. I want to go there with my friends and have a good time. That's sport as well. So if they're determined to... And that's why I say didactic coaches have to be very, very careful while you're shouting. What are you critiquing? Because in the real world, how much does this matter in real terms? We're there to grow. And if you've got a growth mindset, you respect that growth is incremental. Growth takes time. Look at the gym industry. The gym industry is always working on how do we keep people coming in because everyone wants to lift a super weight in no time, but you can't. You've got to work up to it. So the coaches are always pushing water uphill because they understand that growth is incremental. Therefore, you have to educate people on growth is incremental. Therefore, you have to work on having a space that they keep wanting to come back to because the growth itself is not immediate. It's the same in rugby. Growth is incremental. So the games do a lot of the work for you. You've just got to manage the attitude. And then as players, if you're out there self-managing, again, don't overcomplicate it. The number one thing for self-managing players is, one, start simple and move to complex. If it's too complex, just stop and come back to where you're all managing okay and having a good time and maybe just stay there. Do that for the rest of 20 minutes, 30 minutes. So, okay. So we're through game one. We're through game two. Yeah. And we've got one game. We've got time left for one game. Just before we go, sorry, game two, once you put the – just the very singular act of tag means you go to go and present the ball changes the whole shape of the D, changes the shape of everything just by doing one thing, which is why it's important. Sometimes when you change a condition, you just do one thing because you've got to give them time to adapt to the – understand the change that that creates and then solve the new problems that come out from that creation. And the main thing that that introduces aside from the shape changes is essentially for a couple of seconds, you have three versus four or whatever it is, right? Because you've got – excuse me. On the attack, you've lost one player. Yeah. While on the D, you haven't with that specific rule set, right? Like I make the tag. Attacking player goes to ground. I'm still up. I can still defend. Yeah. Game number three. My assumption is we can do a lot of things with that defensive player who just made the tag. One of my favorite games of all time is having that player who made the tag run all the way back to their own try line before they can rejoin. Yeah. I often have people play that game if I'm running a session sort of towards the end. Yeah. Everyone's nice and tired already. Yeah. There's a strong incentive for that defensive player to hustle to get back to their own try line so that they can rejoin the defensive effort. Yeah. And so if they're dragging their feet, they're essentially letting their teammates down. But that obviously doesn't have to be the rule. There are quite a few things you can introduce there. So let's just – I've called you on the phone. You're not there to see what's going on. The feedback you're hearing is game one and game two went pretty well. The teams are well balanced. People are having fun. What do you introduce for the rule for game three? There's two things there. There's one you just said. So the person who makes the tag is simulating a tackle. So you've got to get them out of the system because in the game of rugby, anything they do at this point is pretty much illegal. So having them run back or – yeah, you don't necessarily have to have them run back all the way because if you've got a 40-meter – if you're playing on a 40-meter length, that could be a lot of distance to cover and it's a bit unrealistic. But you can say to them, right, you tag out realistically. And if you think about it, you want them to think about you've got to get out of the tackle, get out of the contact zone. That's about five seconds. Then get back to your feet and then realign. So you basically – you either say go back a distance and what you could do is say you've got to go back five meters and then one of your buddies has to tag you back in the game. It's kind of like a free start kind of thing. So you're now stuck. You can get out, get on your feet. You can't move until someone tags you back in the game. So you're dead. Dead in the D, right, till someone – so it's like wrestling. You're tagging someone in. That's kind of a good dynamic because it forces communication. It forces risk mitigation but asset management as well. We've got to share the load, right? And again, as a defender, I've got to risk stepping out the line to get this guy alive because I need him back in the line but that leaves a space. So who does it, right? So again, it keeps you tracking on risk and reward. Where's the threat? So I'm not dealing with the threats. I can get out and tag the guy, get him back in. But then there's two of you out of the line. You've got a bit more space to deal with, which I think that's a fun progression. But then also now, third round, the attacking team is allowed to kick. Okay. So that means you have to cover the kick as well.

So you've created a new role with your sweeper has to think about covering space. Now, kick recovery, again, if you're playing a short field, a short vertical, that's kind of hard for the attack to grab a kick through into the space and recover it in that shorter space. So what, it's a good skill to learn. If you're playing on a longer vertical, that allows them to do a different type of kick, go kick it over the top, range finder or something. But either way, your defense has to now start thinking about what do I do if the kick comes through and who manages it? Right. So what I'm feeling in the conversation is that the progression or the progressions really have a ton of options. And like, especially in this last game, you can introduce all sorts of things. And if you're not there and you're not seeing the players do their stuff, you might ask me over the phone, right? Like we have a couple of options for the progression for this final game. You may wanna know, not being there, you may wanna know what type of players do you have there? Right, like, are you playing this with a bunch of forwards or maybe people that don't really have the skill set to be doing the kicking stuff. So you give them the option to do the freeze tag, right? And just that. But if it's an experienced group of players that you have worked with before or that they know the structure well, they've maybe done a couple of sessions where they've gone through these same progressions, it's not foreign to them, it's not their first time. Maybe for game three, you introduce both progressions, like the freeze tag kind of thing, plus the kicking. So if the attacking team is able to kick, defensively, I get rewarded if I recover that kick. If the attacking team gets to kick. Right. So it comes back to what I said before, why not? I mean, because again, it's hard work. So you wanna reward hard work, right? It's hard work to cover the field, cover across. It's hard work to scramble deep. Like, you gotta turn and accelerate. So you could, again, and again, depending on how good your math is or how much space and time you've got to work with or how fast they are, I would do something like, so the short answer is yes, reward it, but then think about how or why or what. What am I rewarding? Why am I rewarding? How am I gonna reward it? So I'm sitting here thinking, if my sweeper or my defender has covered the kick and catches it before it hits the ground, right? You can immediately counter attack. So that's a good skill to have. They're reading the game now. So you reward that. So give them a point for that. Or like I said before, if you catch it and counter attack and you score off the counter attack, then you get one point for the cover. And then if you score for a counter attack within let's say 30 seconds, you gotta make the time tight because counter attacking is really important you react. So you give them like 10 seconds, depending on your timeframe, 20 seconds, whatever it is to counter. And it has to be a counter attack. It can't be back into an attacking pattern. It's strike and score. So give them another point for that. So they're rewarded because they understand then the more you reward stuff, the more important it becomes to them. And so you've got to make sure, the rationale is why is this important? So, or you could, um, say if the kick goes through, you get two points if you get it cleanly, or you get one point if you scoop it after the first or second bounce, right? So they're still working it. Because the other thing is, you're not always going to get a clean kick or a clean catch. The ball and being in the ball shape that it is, you've also got to teach players how to track how the ball moves, right? And again, something you can't drill. Something coaches miss out all the time is the flight trajectory of the ball, with its shape, or the trajectory of the ball as it bobbles and bounces over the ground. So, but they'll be the first person to get really angry in game when someone is trying to chase a ball that they've never chased before, right? And it all looks ugly or goes wrong. Okay, so reward it. Reward the cleanup, for sure. Okay, so we've got, we've burned through that. And also, sorry, with that, again, thinking about the flip side, even though you're not directly coaching it, what you're indirectly doing is teaching the attacking team to therefore be a lot more tactical and accurate with their kicking. Right. Because if they know they can get it through behind the D-line and get away with it, that's one thing. But if they know that, if the person catches it cleanly or gets it within a couple of bounces or a few seconds, that's going to make them think extra hard about where they place the ball. And again, back to the benefits of gaming, it's really important to have those considerations because you can't drill that. Right. Or you could drill that, but if you drilled that, 70 to 80% of your players are no longer engaged because it's only those who want to or can kick. Right. You're allowed to do it. Right. Okay. That's a really fun set of games. I think... I'm thinking I might use those tonight because we have to have a really strong defensive game strategy. And I was thinking, talking about this, is how do I use that tonight? Because guys need to understand the defensive shape around the contact against a very heavy team. How many people will you have in your group tonight? Probably 30. That's a big group. Somewhere between 20 and 30. Okay. So let's say that happens. I show up and there are 30 people. Are you going to, would you have two groups against each other to keep everyone engaged or would you split it into three? Well, set two fields and have the same thing going on. On both sides? On both sides. That's good. Yeah. Yeah. I don't find that difficult. Ironically, here in the US, North America, 10 years, coaches can't let go of control. So I've never seen a coach have activity zone A and B set up. The same activity going on and letting the teams have two small teams in each. They just don't seem to be able to do that. But it's such a logical thing to do. And what you're doing as a coach is exercising your observation and analysis skills. So you're trying to make sure that the players get more time on ball, which is ultimately what we want them to do, or more time in the role, which is ultimately what we want them to do. So for a big group, set up two zones, same thing going on in the same zone. When you've got four teams, right, then you can have A versus B, C versus D, and then you can have A versus C, B versus D, and then you can have A versus D, and C versus B, and just, you've got a mini contest straight away, which the players are going to love. And they're all playing against different, same but different opposition, which means, hey, guess what? They get to mix it up and learn all the other stuff. Or if you want it on a single space, then if I got 30, that's three teams of 10. Or if I got 27, that's three teams of nine. Just have a three team round, Robin. Do the same stuff. Because, but the team, when they go off the field is, when you're off the field, you hydrate and you watch. When you come back on, and I think whether you're a facilitator or part of the player group, you should always stop when you hydrate and say, right, tactically, how are we playing this? Share the knowledge. Share the knowledge, become a force multiplier. Right, don't screw it all away. So don't forget to spend a bit of time saying, what, that was fun. Why did, what worked? Why did it work? And again, I think generationally, you have to encourage that, because what I was trying to say there is, I got caught between two thoughts. So number one, before or when you come back on, stop and talk about tactics. So if you're the observing team, what's working, or you can have a break and talk about it as a collective. Before social media, because the other thing is so many coaches or so many players, they see things on TV or a TikTok or an Instagram clip, and they just look at that and go, oh yeah, let's do that. They're looking at something in isolation. And before the social media frenzy, players would actually talk about, what did we just do? We played a game. What did we just do? Yeah, they'd gather in a bar or wherever and talk about and share the knowledge, because they want to go to the next game and be better. We've got a generation now who sees the whole world through a screen. So they look at things in isolation, then they want to drop it down in the game, and it doesn't work, and they don't understand, so they give up. So you've got to encourage that interaction and go about, as the facilitator, it's easier as a facilitator, if you stop and do it, when they're a self-managed group, just stop, talk about what you just did. What worked? Why did you like it? Why was it functional? How did you achieve success? I ask this to players all the time. How did you achieve that? Anyway, well, are we communicated? What does that even mean? How did you, you've got a thing in modern gaming today and modern coaching, but they never work through the process. They don't even understand the process. They can't even do root cause analysis of what did we just do? What did you do in the last 30 seconds that made this outcome? So that is a really important aspect of engagement is how did we achieve? How can you do anything in the world if you don't understand how you achieved your result? Now, sometimes results or outcomes are flukes. That's fine. Enjoy the moment. But at some point, if you want to consolidate success, whether it's your own personal, physical, emotional, or mental successes, or a team success, or a league success, you've got to consolidate that information. And then start putting it back together. And I do this right now for the team I'm coaching is I break down the game, put it in visuals, and say, look at this, look at this, look at this. Why did you do that? Why did you do that? But it's amazing how many struggle with actually breaking down data or even looking at a picture and saying, what does that tell me? And things like alignment is, which is why the danger for rugby, or which is why people leave sports is because we're forgetting the engagement piece. Remember right in this, we've talked many times, enjoy it, educate, and engage. So what are we learning? Let's revisit, what did we learn? Why was it good? Why did it work? That's part of the package. Because once people realize they're getting something out of something, guess what? They'll come back for more. When they're not getting something out of something, guess what? They're not going to show up. You know? And the weird thing about parents' mindsets, I've come across several countries. The U.S. is I think the biggest culprit for this. Oh, I'm paying thousands of dollars, so my kid has to go to football or to swimming or lacrosse or whatever. That's it. The kid's not engaged. They're just, oh. And the vendors of those services go, I put a massive premium on my product, and because the parents are playing it, they're going to force the kids to go. They leave it, that's the hook. That's terrible. Yeah. Because that's it. You know, the players are being forced into an environment they don't want to be in. So that's actually counterproductive. Yeah, it might be good for your bank balance, but it's counterproductive. And I'm not going to name names, but I know here in South LA, a friend of mine, he left the country, got fed up with it, worked for a very high-level soccer academy, is the director of training and education for one of the premiership soccer academies here. And he said, my biggest problem is parents think they, if they spend more money, like give me more money, write me a bigger check, their son or their daughter will be a better player. And when I say, no, this is a two-year process, two years plus process, their response is always, what if I give you more money? And that's the mindset. And that's when you come up to a more macro level, that's one of the biggest problems with engagement in sports. Adults who think if I throw money at something, the problem goes away. Coaches who take the money without understanding that the players want something more out of the environment. And both sides forgetting who's the real customer of the service. It's the player playing the game. The game is for the player. And that comes back to educate, engage, and enjoy. If you check three of those, in your design, your product design, you got back to the Pareto principle, 80-20, 80% of the people doing 80% of the things, 80% of the time. Yeah, it takes a bit more effort on your part, but fundamentally, you're gonna get a better return on investment. Okay, let's wrap this one up there. I'll stop it.