

Buffalo Rugby  
July 14, 2019

# Deep Defense for Coaches

## Practicing the Pendulum Defense

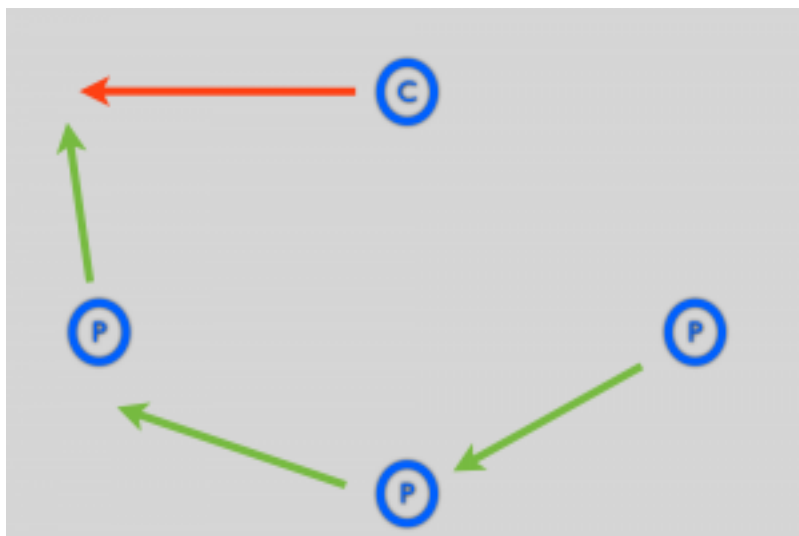
**Phil Larder's Pendulum defense practice at <http://bit.ly/pendulumdefensepractice>**

**Nick Hill Coaching**  
**Designing 'Deliberate Practices'**

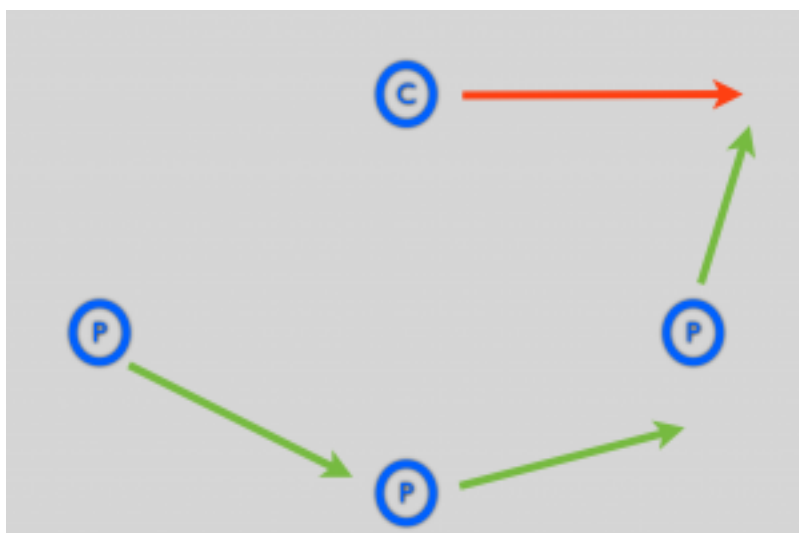
1. The Basic concept:-
  - Create the set-up in the diagram below:-
  - Setup up with 3 deep only
  - Alternate set up with 9 included <https://www.rugbycoachweekly.net/rugby-drills-and-skills/pendulum-defence/>



- The size of the area and/or the distance between the players depends on:-
2. The age of the players;
  3. The physical conditioning of the players;
  4. How hard you would like the players to work;
- The “coach” either grubber kicks the ball LEFT or RIGHT:-



Kicking to the left...



Kicking to the right...

- The players then move in sequence:-
- 5. "Openside" player moves up 1st to collect the ball;
- 6. "Middle" player moves across to cover the "Openside" player...;
- 7. "Blindsides" players moves across to cover the "Middle" player....
- Repeat the exercise on each side...

There are then 2 situations when the 'Back 3 Pendulum' Defensive System kicks in:-

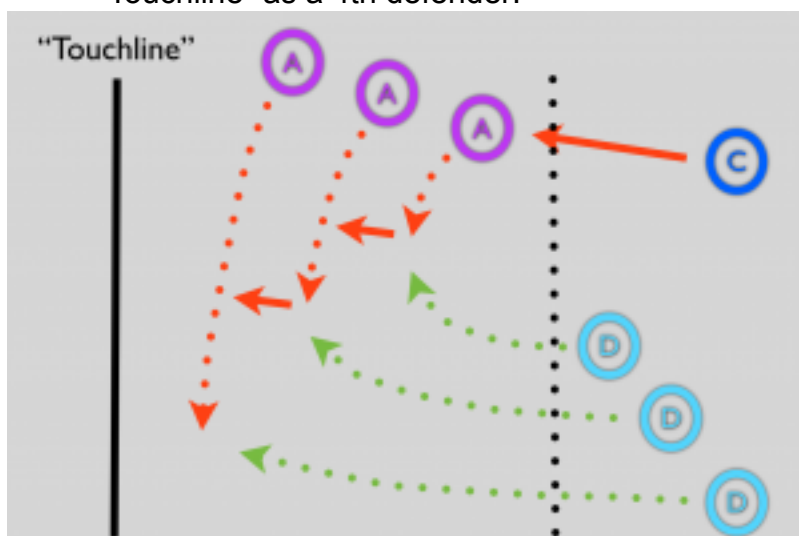
2. When the Attack break through out wide (left or right):-

e.g. Ugo Monye: Harlequins v. London Irish (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH-c3hYfU4k>).

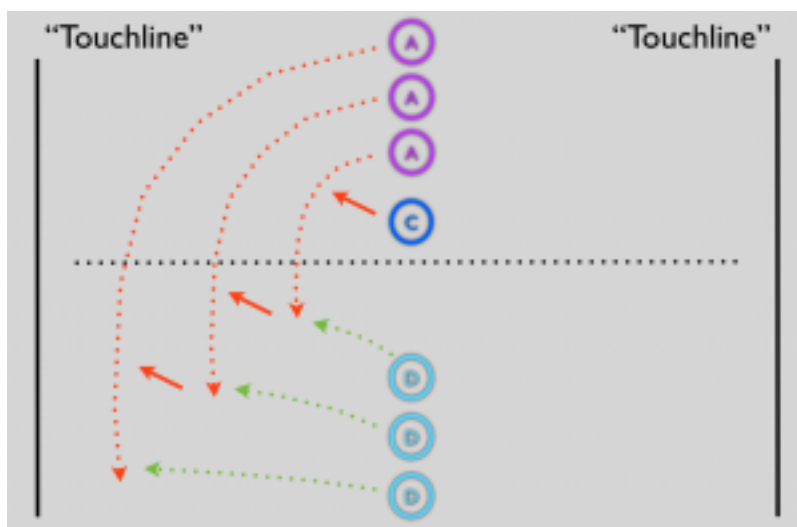
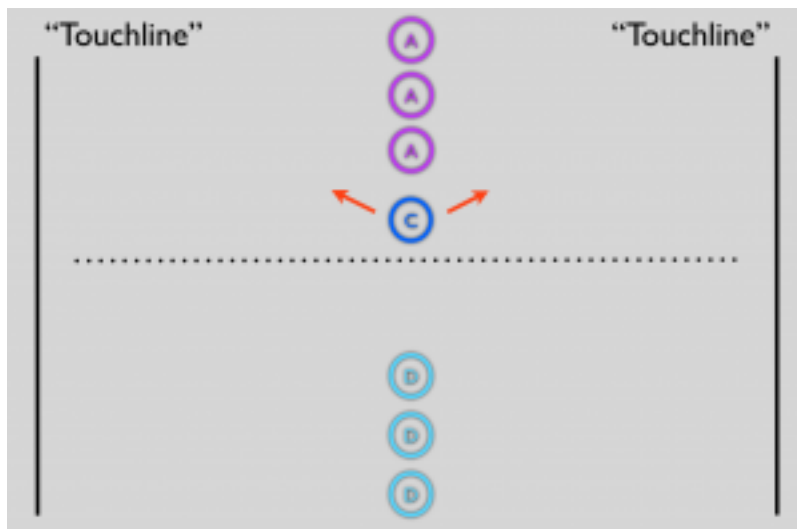
- The size of the area depends on the factors mentioned above, plus how "FAST" or "SLOW" you would like your players to carry out the 'Deliberate Practice'. (Slowing down the 'Deliberate Practice' is an excellent tool to help the players

with communication, timing, patterns, and getting used to the 'Back 3 Pendulum' Defensive System.)

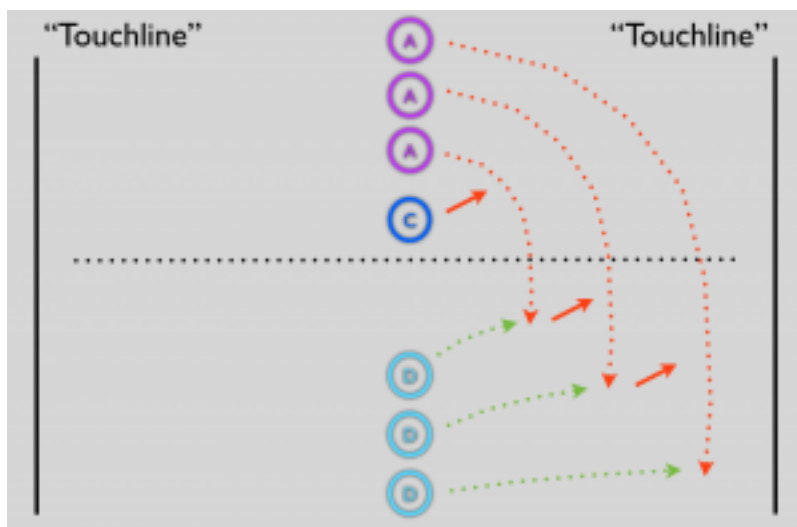
- The width of the channel again depends on all the factors mentioned above, e.g. if you are doing the 'Deliberate Practice' using WALKING then you will create a NARROW channel...if you are using SPRINTING then you will create a WIDER channel...;
- The 1st defender crosses the dotted line once the 1st attacker has caught the ball;
- The 2nd defender crosses the dotted line once the 2nd attacker has caught the ball;
- The 3rd defender crosses the dotted line once the 3rd attacker has caught the ball;
- The key for the defender is to TRACK the attacker correctly...by keeping INSIDE the attacker so that the attacker can not step inside...so that it forces the attackers closer and closer to the "Touchline"...allowing the defenders to use the "Touchline" as a 4th defender:-



- Repeat the process in BOTH directions...by just swapping the "Touchline" and dotted line around.
- To progress this 'Deliberate Practice' one stage further you could create the scenario where the attacking players could attack LEFT or RIGHT, creating some unpredictability...like the diagram below:-



To the left...



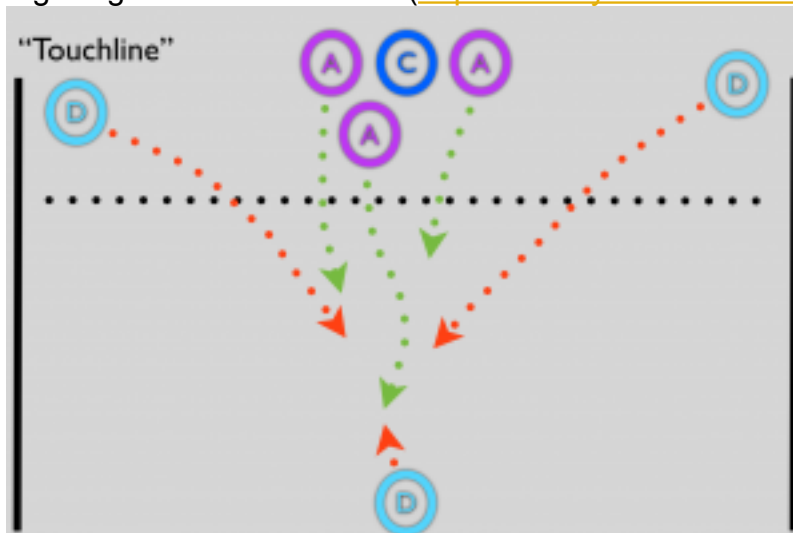
To the right...

- The distance between the 1st defender and the dotted line will depend on how FAST or SLOW you carry out the 'Deliberate Practice', i.e. the SLOWER the practice...the SHORTER the distance;
- The key for the defender each time is to TRACK the attacker correctly...by keeping INSIDE the attacker so that the attacker can not step inside...so that it forces the attackers closer and closer to the "Touchline"...allowing the defenders to use the "Touchline" as a 4th defender.

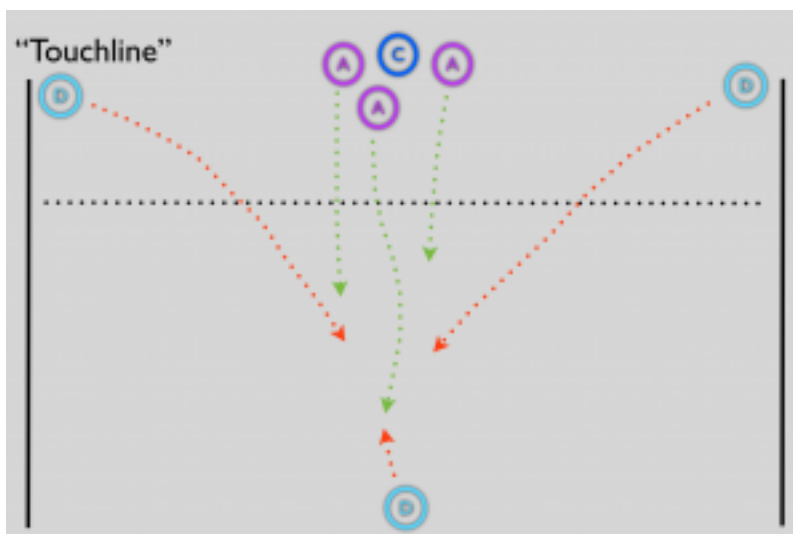
Ben Cohen shows an excellent example of this against Australia in the 2003 RWC Final which can be viewed here...(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tk4TKS77dM>).

3. When the Attack break through the middle:-

e.g. England v. South Africa (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B4p55PQhYQ>).



Walking...(smaller area)



Sprinting...(LARGER area)

- Again the size of the area depends on the same factors as mentioned above;

- The width of the channel again depends on the factors mentioned above, e.g. if you are doing the 'Deliberate Practice' using WALKING then you will create a NARROW channel...if you are using SPRINTING then you will create a WIDER channel...;
- The starting position of the "Middle" defender, i.e. the distance between the player and the dotted line, will depend on your 'Practice Design', e.g. if the players are sprinting then the distance would be around 40m;
- The starting position of the 2 "Wide" defenders is 5m or 10m behind the dotted line AND right next to the "Touchline" on either side;
- The starting position of the attackers is in the middle of the "pitch" 5m from the dotted line near the "coach";
- The "Middle" defender can start moving once the coach has passed the ball to one of the attacking players;
- The "Wide" defenders can start moving once the ball carrier has passed the dotted line;
- The key thing in this 'Deliberate Practice' is for the "Middle" defender to TRACK the attacker correctly...by slowing the player down...allowing for the "Wide" defenders to catch up...by trying to force the ball carrier to weave in and out = longer distance ran + slows the ball carrier down...while the "Wide" defenders sprint as fast as they can in a straight = short distance ran + catch up ball carrier...meaning that there are now 3 defenders trying to stop the attacking team...rather than one solo defender, i.e. the "Middle" defender...thus increasing the chances of the defending stopping the opposition from scoring and the attacking NOT scoring a try!

NSW show an excellent example of this in action against the Auckland Blues in the Super Rugby competition which can be viewed here...(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I05Tgb6iGXA>).

To highlight the importance and significance of the 'Back 3 Pendulum' Defensive System and I would go as far as to say that it is the most important part of the game because it is quite often the difference between winning and losing a match...