

Scrum Set Up

Aim:

To provide clarity around scrum set up through theoretical learning and practical application using it to test the referees understanding of this important step in the scrum sequence.

Resources Required:

- Projector and access to the provided clips.
- 3 group whiteboards or large presentation paper and pens
- This presentation is a good adjunct with the previous scrum resources which focus on decisions at the set and post set.
- This document or an adapted version will also work as a good resource to print and hand out to members.

How to Run the Session:

The majority of this session requires the presenter to be up the front and presenting the theoretical detail in the session. There will be need for groups to be made throughout so further discussion and reinforcement of learnings can be done.

Presentation starts with introduction on the evening's session and discussion on the background of the importance of scrums and the set-up of them.

Background

Scrum is an important restart in the game of rugby where the attacking team get to benefit from a mistake made by the opposition. It is a contestable part of the game that rarely lead to turnovers but where strong scrummaging teams can show dominance.

It is important that referees play their part of what they can control. This should be focussed solely on the setup, if the scrum is well set up through a clear process and understanding of what teams must abide to, there will be better outcomes.

This is a very contestable part of the game as the defence tries to disrupt and the attack tries to control the ball, so it is necessary that the referee must focus on a good set up so the outcome of the scrum is more positive and there will be a fair contest.

= Set up is key

Preparation and Pre-match

What basic things can you do as a referee to prepare yourself for scrums in the weekend?

By preparing well before your match, it will allow you to have a clear mind about particular issues you may be faced with in the scrum set up during the weekend. By either self- reviewing your previous game, using video footage from other matches, watching the teams or talking to the referee from the weekend before; will mean that you can start picking up on key parts of the scrum you may need to focus on with one or both teams.

Discuss and get examples of referees pre match talk. Do they set up the expectations of what is required clearly, especially around the set up?

1. I will ask hookers to be left of the mark and a comfortable distance from the opposition (=space apart and a channel for each prop is important)
2. My call will be slow and controlled and timing will be once you all are stable with a good bind and height (=Players don't want to be rushed, if they are given time, they are more likely to be stable)
3. Wait until you hear set to engage and push straight only once the ball is in the tunnel (=deliver clear expectation that it must be steady before the ball is in)

Scrum Set Up

Discuss now in groups the importance parts of the scrum set up (3 Calls = 3 Actions).

Parts of the scrum set up can be split into actions needed to be seen at the crouch, the bind and the set. When those actions don't occur, it will often mean referees either decide to reset or penalise. Most collapses at the scrum on the set call can all be traced back to issues in the set-up which are all in our control. So, by working hard on the set up, you will therefore minimise scrum collapses, it will become more obvious as to the cause of the scrum issues and you will get better ball out.

Positive Actions at the Set Up

- Crouch
 - Hookers start to the left of the mark, so players heads all have a channel to go into.
 - Hookers and props bind together and crouch so that they are at the same height as the opposition and not in a position where their shoulders are lower than their hips.
- Bind
 - Props correctly bind on the oppositions back and set themselves in a position to push so that there is stability.
 - Both teams may be evenly balanced
 - Locks are also in a position to push and are stable.
- Set
 - Front rows who are stable come together on the set call and quickly find balance before the ball is thrown in.



Positive action by both teams at each stage

Now we understand what teams must do at each phase, brainstorm what can go wrong at each phase.

- Crouch
 - Props head on head.
 - Shoulders cannot be tucked and must allow this channel.
 - Head and shoulders below hips.
 - Pre-binding early.
- Bind
 - Pre-engagement.
 - Preloading/leaning using head on shoulder or pushing with the arm.
 - Binding incorrect.
 - Standing up.
- Set
 - Early engagement.
 - Wheeling.
 - Early push.
 - Fading.
 - Height and hitting down.

Domino Effect

The scrum set up is the only part of the scrum that we have good control over. When it isn't controlled well, then there is a domino effect downstream that if left unsolved, can lead to major issues at the scrum for 80 minutes.



As seen in this clip – issues right from the start lead to a collapse.

One way to trouble shoot these issues is to break the process down into two categories:

1. Problems with **Pre-engagement** (crouch/bind)
 - A. Props head on head, Early engagement, Preloading/leaning – teams taking away the hit, Standing up etc
2. Problems with **Stability** (set)
 - A. Wheeling, Early push, Fading, Height etc

Using the above template, you will quickly be able to trouble shoot the issues by thinking –

1. What type of issue do we have? Pre-engagement or stability?
2. Who is in possession and what happened in the last scrum?

3. Where are we on the field?

By asking yourself these questions you will be able to quickly focus on what the most likely issue at the scrum is and then deciding how best to control it.

Trouble Shooting

Make sure that you have good width from the scrum so that you aren't tunnel visioned and can see the full picture.

1. **Pre-engagement:** This is often all about how the teams get ready to scrum against each other and you will be able to identify non-dynamic cues as to what the issue is.
 - a. Props head on head: make sure the hooker is left of the mark, shoulders aren't tucked by the props
 - b. Pre-engagement/leaning/standing up: are the teams too far apart or too close? Are the props being held back by their flankers or the number 8?
2. **Stability:** This is dynamic and often is the timing of your call that is the most important thing you can change here.
 - a. Early push, instability, height: Have I made sure that before I call set all the props and locks are stable with a good bind and no foot movement?
 - b. The timing between the bind to set call is a very important part of making sure there is stability – make sure everyone is stable, ready and not rushed.

If you have gone through this process by identifying the key issues in the set up, and worked with the players by telling them what it is what you are seeing and there are still issues; management is over and you can start making decisions and escalating as required.

In small groups break away and discuss the above topic. Are there any more things you would add to help you trouble shoot the issues at scrum set up?

Management of Players at the Set Up

It is important that the issue is explained clearly to the offending player. Your job is to clarify what you are seeing and giving them a chance to change. There is no point getting into a debate with the player.

Explain the issue -> what they need to do to change -> consequence if they don't -> do they understand?

Watch the following clips and with volunteer's role play certain situations and what language you would use to get better compliance by talking with the players and what you would say at the reset or next scrum.



What would you say if this was reset or the next scrum, what are the issues? Pre-engagement or stability issue?



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Escalation Process at Set Up

It is important to understand that the majority of decisions at the set up will be FK, and often the team who is awarded a FK just take the scrum again. This doesn't change the behaviour of the defending team, so it is important to understand the requirement to escalate quickly if required. You can see that by splitting all the decisions into the two categories of pre-engagement and stability, on the second offence of that group we can award a PK.



You have already FK for a pre-engagement issue, do you agree with this escalation?

Bringing it all together – Practice

Once you have a clear understanding of what you can control at the set up – then its easy you just have to practice and keep working on your process.



Finally, watch this series of clips and discuss after each scrum what phase you think the issue is at and what management or decision you would make? When and how would you escalate.