15. Three Man Blast

Best from
- A slow ruck.

Why it works
- A ball carrier and two supporters take a flat pass from 9 and drive through the defence to set up a quick ruck ball. Because the ball carrier has two supporters there is a good chance of physically outnumbering the defence momentarily.
- The three players drive forward, pushing the defence backwards and providing quick ball.

Good if you have
- A good ball handling forward who can attack gaps and organise others to work off him.
- Two or more support players who are good at driving a ball carrier.

What players should do
- The “pivot” player (in this example 8) organises two supporters either side of him. He takes a flat pass from 9 and attacks a gap between the defenders in front of him. He drives forwards before going to ground as his supporters tell him to. He presents the ball as far from his body as possible.
- The two supporters drive in behind the pivot, possibly binding onto him to give him extra weight. They don’t hold onto the ball. When the drive slows, they tell the pivot to go to ground and then drive out opposition players.

Common mistakes
- The pivot goes into contact with the ball in front of him rather than on his hip.
- The pivot and supporters drive in too high. The lower the better, as long as the ball carrier does not go to ground too soon.

Think about
- The pivot and one supporter setting up a maul. The first supporter rolls off with the ball and drives on with the other supporter.
- The pivot turning just before contact and feeding 9 coming round on a loop. The ball is then passed straight to a flat 10 who feeds a “three man blast” outside him.
Best from
- A slow ruck (though it can be effective off quick ruck ball as well).

Why it works
- 9 runs out and away from the ruck, taking the close ruck defence with him. He then pops or flicks the ball back inside to a forward who has arrived from the blindside and should therefore be unmarked. This should at least allow the forward to get over the gain line and restart the “go forward” for the attack. The defence will also have to get back onside.

Good if you have
- A quick witted 9 who likes to run off the sides of rucks.
- A quick forward who can bust through tackles, but also time his runs well.

What players should do
- 9 checks he has a forward in place. He then picks up the ball from the back of the ruck and runs out towards the second or third defender on the side of the ruck. Just before contact he turns the ball back inside to a forward (in this example 7) who has run from the far side of the ruck.
- A forward stands on the far side of the ruck or just behind it. When 9 moves out, he runs around to take a pass from 9 before forming a new ruck.
- 9 then clears the ball away or sets up the next move.

Common mistakes
- 9 runs too close to the edge of the ruck.
- 9 passes badly. Though he needs to disguise the pass, he also needs to make sure the receiver gets a good pass because the receiver is about to take contact.

Think about
- 9 flicking the ball out of the back of his hand.
- Another forward running from the openside to either support or take a pass before the second ruck forms.
17. Pick and Go

Best from

- A slow ruck.
- Quick ruck ball where the defence is already moving backwards.

Why it works

- A forward at the back of the ruck picks up the ball and attacks the nearest space at the edge of the ruck. This moves the ball closer to the gain line, with a good chance of providing an extra metre of "go forward" as the close defenders are put on the back foot.
- A good pick and go can be followed by another, which can create even better "go forward" as defenders struggle to get back into position.

Good if you have

- Strong ball handling forwards who can attack gaps, drive low through the contact area and require more than one defender to stop them.

What players should do

- 9 calls the "pick and go" and when he wants to pass the ball out.
- The forward who picks and goes (the "picker", in this example 8) gathers the ball at the back of the ruck and moves diagonally towards the side of the ruck in a low driving position. He takes small steps to stay on his feet and drive himself forwards.
- A supporter (in this example 6) follows the picker from the back of the ruck, with additional support from a player standing to the side (in this example 7). The supporters drive the picker on and protect the ball. If the ball comes free, a supporter may pick and go themselves.

Common mistakes

- The ball carrier goes into contact with the ball in front of him rather than on his hip.

Think about

- The first supporter binding on to the ball carrier and ball to create a "seal" and then driving together into the contact area.
- The ball carrier going to ground quicker than usual. The first two supporters drive out the defenders and the next player picks and goes again.
18. **Nagging**

### Best from
- Between the 22m lines, though a more adventurous side could attack from their own 22.

### Why it works
- The aim of “nagging” is to “tap and go” before the defence is ready, and so get in behind them. A good nagging side will all be aware of the opportunity to tap and go.
- It can force another penalty if the opposition team don’t retire 10 metres.

### Good if you have
- A weak lineout, so there is not much to be gained from kicking to touch.
- A poor line or goal kicker.
- A fast, nimble, small pack.
- An opposition that is slow to organise.

### What players should do
- The first player to reach the ball (the “tapper”, in this example 2) takes a quick tap penalty.
- **Either:** The tapper runs into the spaces besides retiring defenders, with forwards filling in behind.
- **Or:** The tapper immediately passes the ball to another player who also immediately passes it on. This is called “two pass nagging”. It moves the ball away from the bulk of the defenders and changes the focus of the attack.

### Common mistakes
- The tapper taps badly. They must put the ball on the ground, tap it with a foot and then pick it up, or bounce it up off the foot. The ball must go through the mark made by the referee and leave the player’s hands. It cannot be bounced off the knee.
- The first player runs into an opposition player and stops. Even if the opposition player is standing offside or is not retiring, the referee may not penalise him.

### Think about
- Designating three forwards plus 9 to be responsible for starting all nagging moves. This will help reduce possible confusion and knock-ons from the tap.
19. **Pivot**

**Best from**
- Near the opposition line.

**Why it works**
- The pivot provides two or more options for the defence to think about, so they have to spread out. The different angles run by 9 and others means that the defence will have to be well organised and disciplined to prevent gaps appearing.
- The pivot, however, must stand infield from where the 9 sets up.

**Good if you have**
- A quick 9 who can attack spaces and release players.
- A strong ball carrying forward who can bust through tackles.

**What players should do**
- 9 and the pivot set themselves up about seven metres apart (depending on the passing length of 9). 9 passes to the pivot and then follows the pass. He can either take a pass back from the pivot or be dummied. If he takes the pass, he can pass it out to a runner, or go himself.
- The pivot takes the pass from 9. He can then either dummy pass to 9 and give the ball to a forward running in another direction, or pass back to 9 as he loops around.
- The other forwards line up either side of the pivot to run different angles to take the pass.

**Common mistakes**
- Runners bumping into each other as they cross over. The intended receiver needs to be clearly identified before the move starts so other players can time their runs accordingly. If players start by walking and then jogging before accelerating, they will be able to see where the gaps are.

**Think about**
- 9 taking the ball from the pivot and switching with a forward or passing wide to the backs.
- The pivot turning his back on the opposition and kicking the ball over his head.
- Once 9 has gone past the pivot, the pivot throws a long pass the other way to a winger.
20. **8 Pick and Go**

**Best from**
- A scrum anywhere on pitch, though normally not too close to the right hand touchline.
- A situation where you want to create an easier ball to kick from inside your 22 or take the pressure off a poor scrum.
- A situation where you want to set up quick second phase ball and tie in their 6 and 7.

**Why it works**
- 8 attacks the space to the side of the scrum, where the nearest opposition player in open play is likely to be standing, probably at least 3 metres from the side of the scrum.

**Good if you have**
- An 8 who is quick from the back of the scrum.
- A scrum that can wheel or turn so the tighthead side can move up whilst the loosehead side stays steady. This takes your 8 closer to the gain line and away from the opposition back row.

**What players should do**
- 8 gets the ball on his right foot. He gathers it and drives off to the right, aiming to get beyond the opposition 6 and towards the opposition 10.
- 7 follows 8 and supports him for either an offload or more likely into a ruck. 5 follows, plus any other forwards, to secure the ball.
- 12 or 13 (whoever is nearest), but not 10, goes in to support 8 for either an offload or to ruck.
- 9 covers around and clears a pass to 10.

**Common mistakes**
- 8 runs too close to the side of the scrum and the opposition back row in particular.
- 8 turns away from support when he makes contact.

**Think about**
- 8 goes left, taking out the opposition 9. Good if your team is tight to the right hand touchline or the opposition 9 is poorly positioned.
- 8 runs a flatter angle infield, thus drawing the defence further away from the scrum.

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**BACK ROW MOVES**

**Rugby Attack! A Playbook of 27 Core Offensive Moves**
Best from
- A scrum in the opposition’s half at least 15 metres from the right hand touchline. It might not work near their line because most teams will put in another defender to cover the blindside.

Why it works
- From a scrum with a 15 metre or greater blindside, a swift 8 and 9 can quickly get into the space between the scrum and normally the lone defender. 8’s run draws a back row defender to create a 2 v 1 for your 9 and 14. With the defending 15 likely to be covering the midfield, this may give 14 a free run to the line.

Good if you have
- A quick 8 who can pass well.
- A quick 9 who can attack gaps.
- A fast 14.
- A scrum that can wheel slightly so the tighthead side gets ahead of the loosehead.

What players should do
- As soon as the ball is at his feet, 8 picks and goes right. He passes to 9 as that player comes round.
- 9 puts the ball into the scrum and then arcs round the back of it and to the right. He takes a pass from 8 and attacks the inside shoulder of the opposition 11. If the opposition 11 is drawn in, 9 passes to 14. Otherwise 9 continues his run.
- 14 stands close to the touchline. He waits until 9 receives the ball before running forwards to support 9, possibly to take the pass.

Common mistakes
- The scrum wheels the wrong way, so 8 has a long way to go to attack. In which case cancel the call.
- 8 runs too far with the ball.
- 14 stands too close or runs too early. He must maintain his position to keep his marker guessing.

Think about
- 14 looking to switch with 9.
- 9 kicking ahead for 14, especially if the opposition has put another defender on the blindside.
22. 9-10-8

Best from
- A scrum near the opposition’s line, between 15 metres in from the left hand touchline and 10 metres to the right of the posts.

Why it works
- 9 and 10 switch to draw defenders across from the scrum. This leaves enough uncertainty in the defence for 8 to bust through the gap left between 9 and 10, especially if both 9 and 10 take out their tacklers before each passes the ball.

Good if you have
- A quick footed 9, though he does not need to be fast.
- A subtle passing 10 who can run and then thread a pass to find 8 on the best running angle.
- A good ball carrying 8.

What players should do
- 9 picks up the ball at the base of the scrum and runs right and flat to switch with 10.
- 10 runs on a diagonal towards the scrum once 9 picks up the ball. He receives a switch pass from 9 and then quickly switches with 8 who is running from his left.
- 8 disengages as soon as 9 picks up the ball from his feet. He then arcs out to the right to take a pass from 10, running to the right of 10.

Common mistakes
- 10 does not judge the distance to stand from the scrum correctly. This depends on the speed of 9. The further out, the better, so the defence is stretched.
- 10 does not go forward after he receives his pass. It is easier for 8 to hit the line of defenders or find a gap if 10 has made some progress forward.

Think about
- 10 dummying with 8 and passing to a flanker (6 or 7).
- 9 dummying with 10 on the switch and then passing back inside to 8 with a flick pass.
23. **8-7**

**Best from**
- A scrum in the opposition’s half. You must have room to go right.
- A situation where you want to set up second phase ball behind the opposition scrum, so their defence is tracking backwards, causing disruption in their running lines.

**Why it works**
- 8 draws out the back row defence, leaving a gap beside the scrum. If 8 runs quickly and wide enough, the back row defenders will be out of position allowing a free run for 7 from the right side of the scrum.

**Good if you have**
- A quick 8 off the base of a scrum, with good handling skills.
- Already had your 8 run a move from the back of the scrum.
- A strong running 7 you want to get into the game.
- A scrum which can wheel slightly so the tighthead side gets ahead of the loosehead.

**What players should do**
- 8 gets the ball onto his right foot. He picks and goes to the right, angling away from the scrum. Once past the gain line, he commits the opposition back row and then passes the ball back inside to 7.
- 7 waits until 8 gets past him, before disengaging and receiving a pass on 8’s inside shoulder.

**Common mistakes**
- 8 delays the disengage.
- 8 runs too tight to the scrum or too laterally. He needs to go forward and create space.

**Think about**
- 7 passing to 6 who has run around from the left side of the scrum. In which case 8 and 7 need to pass well before contact, otherwise 6 has little chance of taking the ball cleanly.
Best from
- A scrum anywhere on the pitch. You must have room to go left.
- A situation where you want to set up either second phase ball or, in your 22, a ruck to clear with a kick. This is because the defenders have to wait behind the back foot of a ruck, rather than the opposition 9 putting pressure on the pass from the scrum.

Why it works
- Unusually for a back row move it goes left.
- 8 steps into contact with the opposition 9, taking him out of the game. 6 binds on to the inside, creating a “wall” so 4 can break off, either to bind on or attack the left hand channel. This could create a 2 v 1 with your 4 and 11 versus their 14.

Good if you have
- A big 8 who can hold up a defence.
- A fast ball handling 4 who can drive on through contact or make metres in open play.

What players should do
- 9 puts the ball into the scrum, but does not move from his position. This creates a barrier to the opposition defence on the right. 9 needs to make sure that 8 does not roll into him. He can also bind on to 8 following the pick and go.
- 8 picks and goes left, rolling round so he backs into the opposition 9. He then feeds the ball to 4 as he breaks from the scrum.
- 6 binds on to the inside of 8 to form the “wall”.
- 4 breaks from the scrum and either binds on or takes a pop pass from 8.

Common mistakes
- 8 goes too far and gets isolated. He must turn early and get into a strong body position to tie in the opposition and yet keep the ball available.
- 4 does not scrummage first. If the ball is slow or the scrum goes back a bit, he will not be able to get up effectively.

Think about
- 7 coming round to bind on with 8 and 6 (and maybe 4) to form a rolling maul.
25. **Short, Short, Wide**

**Best from**
- A set piece outside your 22.

**Why it works**
- The ball is moved quickly twice one way, close to each ruck. This should tie in their loose forwards and backs, leaving their slower forwards covering some of the field. Your 10 can then decide to keep on going the same way or attack the other way depending on the defence.
- If the ball is slow, then 10 can kick into a corner.

**Good if you have**
- A solid back row, because you need to support the second “short” run to create the opportunity for the “wide” phase.
- An aware 9 and 10, because you might need to go short a third time to tie in more defenders.
- A good 15 or winger to exploit the wide out space.

**What players should do**
- Use a close move to attack within 10 metres of the set piece. Make sure you do not commit all the forwards to the first point of contact.
- Run another close move to attack the same way.
- Once you have produced quick ball, 10 uses a wide move either left or right, depending on the amount of space available and the defence in front of him.

**Common mistakes**
- Forwards getting in the way of the return “wide” passes. They should either retire behind the back line, be prepared to be missed out in the passing movement, or get so far in front of the potential pass that they are neither blocking nor disrupting the play.

**Think about**
- If the ball is slow, 10 kicking into a corner.

---

**Sequences**

1. **Direction of play**
   - Close backs moves: 10-12 Switch, Dummy Switch Pop, Slice, Unders and Overs, Rangy, Lomu.
   - Close back row moves: 8-7, 8 Pick and Go.

2. **Direction of play**
   - Close backs moves: 10-12 Switch, Dummy Switch Pop, Slice, Unders and Overs, Rangy, Lomu.
   - Close back row moves: 8-7, 8 Pick and Go.

3. **Direction of play**
   - Wide backs moves: Miss 12, Miss 13, Dummy Switch Miss, Split Miss.

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Rugby Attack! A Playbook of 27 Core Offensive Moves
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26. **Flash Back**

**Best from**
- A scrum inside the 15m line or especially a lineout, because the front of lineout in any team tends to have bigger, slower forwards.

**Why it works**
- The first surge takes the opposition forwards one way. As the defenders get into position to cover the next attack, the change of direction wrong foots them. Your quicker attacking runners are then likely to find themselves facing slower forwards.

**Good if you have**
- A strong lineout to deliver quick ball “off the top”.
- A quick back row.
- A 10 who can quickly change the direction of an attack.
- Players with “big commitment” who can move the ball and themselves around the pitch.

**What players should do**
- Use a close move to attack within 10 metres of the set piece. Commit more forwards than normal to the first point of contact to pull in the opposition forwards.
- 9 clears the ball to 10.
- **Either**: 10 quickly changes the direction of his run to “flash back” towards the original set piece.
- **Or**: If you have already used “flash back” at least once before, 10 starts a wide move away from the original set piece.

**Common mistakes**
- The forwards linger from the previous breakdown. They must keep moving with the attack, first to support it and then to draw defenders.
- 10 changes direction too soon, not fooling the defence.

**Think about**
- Starting the sequence from slow ruck ball.
- Using flash back early on and then using the same set up to go the other way. For instance repeat the set up for a quick midfield ruck from a scrum or lineout, but this time pass the ball straight out to a winger.
27. Stretch

Best from
- A set piece between the 22m lines.

Why it works
- Keeping the ball moving from side to side of the pitch should spread the defence. This will either leave gaps wide out or in the midfield. It may also lead to speed mismatches, so a quick centre may face a slow prop in defence.

Good if you have
- Good passing players from 1 to 15.
- A small, quick team who can avoid contact.
- Players who can “go forward” in numbers in a narrow channel (in this case the 15m channel) and who can pass the ball out wide.

What players should do
- 10 uses a wide move from the set piece to shift the ball into the far 15m channel, where your nearest backs help create a quick ruck.
- Either: Use simple wide moves to then shift the ball back to the other 15m channel, before repeating the sequence.
- Or: Use a close move first, before getting the ball out wide again.
- If and when gaps appear in the midfield defence, your players look to break the line.

Common mistakes
- You keep spreading the ball across the pitch at the expense of going forward. It is sometimes worth using a short move to gain some “go forward” and tie-in more defenders, before spreading the ball wide again.

Think about
- Starting the sequence from slow ruck ball.
- Kicking into the spaces behind the defence, particularly if the defence spreads itself across the pitch to cover your moves.
What is a game plan?

A game plan sets out the plays you are going to use in the match, and then when and where. It takes into account the strengths of your team and an understanding of the opposition, as well as pitch and weather conditions.

The key is to create an attacking plan which plays to your team’s strengths and gets you into the areas where you have the advantage, whether on the pitch or in terms of player skill.

Planning set moves

*Rugby Attack!* gives you most of the attacking moves you’ll need for your game plan. On the following two pages you’ll find an example game plan and a blank game plan template. You can use these with the Moves Finder on page 8 to work out which attacking plays suit your team best.

Player input

A game plan without player input is difficult to “sell” to the team and is unlikely to be implemented as effectively. Consequently, it tends to be worthwhile to include the players in game planning decisions.

For instance, Rod Macqueen, the Australian World Cup winning coach in 1999, has said that he found it difficult to sell his game plan even to a single unit, such as the forwards. Instead he discussed and verified the plan with the key players first, before letting them go off to explain it to the other players. In this way the plan was quickly accepted and implemented.

Depending on the level of your players’ experience, you may need to guide them through the process.

Player sheets

Once you’ve finalised your game plan, you need to remind your players of their roles and responsibilities within it. To help you with this at the end of this section we have included an example player sheet, with a blank template for the players to complete with your guidance, let’s say during a team meeting.

The player sheets should challenge the players to consider their roles in each play and where they are going to be before, during and after each phase. They also should include goals for the players to implement in the match, such as making more two tackles than in the previous game.
Run all free kicks with 2 passes (nagging).
Counter attack from outside our 22m, otherwise kick against grain.
Use low risk moves in first 20 mins against this opposition.
50% kicking game in first half, review at halftime, otherwise use sequences.
Keep on going with Pick and Go to a maximum three times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEQUENCES</th>
<th>OWN LINE</th>
<th>OWN 22</th>
<th>22 TO HALFWAY</th>
<th>HALFWAY TO 22</th>
<th>THEIR 22</th>
<th>THEIR LINE</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCRUMS</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Pick and Go</td>
<td>Left: Cowboy Middle: 8 Pick and Go</td>
<td>Right: 8-9-14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Pick and Go</td>
<td>Left: 8-7 Middle: Cowboy</td>
<td>Right: 9-10-8</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No moves</td>
<td>Slice, Dummy Switch Miss, Split Hit</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST PHASE BACKS MOVES</th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pick and Go, Miss 12 (and kick for touch)</td>
<td>Unders and Overs, 10-12 Switch, 12-13 Switch, Slice</td>
<td>Dummy Switch Miss, Miss 13, Lomu Middle: Mid-field Move</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unders and Overs, 10-12 Switch, Dummy Switch Miss, Miss 12 Nutmeg</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECOND PHASE</th>
<th>Pick and Go, Miss 12 (and kick for touch), Miss 13</th>
<th>Unders and Overs, 10-12 Switch, Dummy Switch Miss, Miss 12 Nutmeg</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unders and Overs, 10-12 Switch, Dummy Switch Miss, Miss 12 Nutmeg</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLOW BALL</th>
<th>Three Man Blast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Example game plan

Rugby Attack! A Playbook of 27 Core Offensive Moves

Example
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR HALF</th>
<th>OWN LINE</th>
<th>22 TO HALFWAY</th>
<th>HALFWAY TO 22</th>
<th>THEIR 22</th>
<th>THEIR LINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OWN LINE</td>
<td>SEQUENCES</td>
<td>SCRUMS</td>
<td>FIRST PHASE BACKS MOVES</td>
<td>SECOND PHASE</td>
<td>SLOW BALL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Game plan template**

Rugby Attack! A Playbook of 27 Core Offensive Moves
### Example player sheet

**Name:**
Andy Player

**Position:**
5 - second row, right side lock

**Key position roles:**
Win lineout
Clear out second phase rucks

### Field Position Move Defence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Position</th>
<th>Move</th>
<th>Defence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In our 22</td>
<td>8 Pick and Go</td>
<td>Man on man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 to halfway</td>
<td>Short, Short, Wide</td>
<td>Drift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halfway to 22</td>
<td>Stretch</td>
<td>Blitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their 22</td>
<td>Flash Back from scrum</td>
<td>Pressure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Personal goals:
- Make a difference at rucks
- Make two more tackles than the last game

---

**Move**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move</th>
<th>My role at first phase and/or second phase</th>
<th>My focus</th>
<th>When we are going to use it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Pick and Go</td>
<td>Scrummage. Go into first ruck.</td>
<td>Low body position into ruck to take out defender.</td>
<td>In our 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Man Blast</td>
<td>Support runner into contact area. Drive out defenders.</td>
<td>Hold run to make better decisions.</td>
<td>Slow ruck ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash Back from scrum</td>
<td>Scrummage and then go into first ruck if we go right. Otherwise, step back. Be ready to support Flash Back.</td>
<td>Make sure I don’t get in the way of the scrum half.</td>
<td>Around their 22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Field Position Move Defence

In our 22

22 to halfway

Halfway to 22

Their 22

### Personal goals: