

THE SCRUM

The scrum is the most important set piece in rugby. Strong and powerful scrumming determines the success of line outs as well as rucks and mauls in a game. A solid and powerful scrum ensures quality ball but it also places the opposition under pressure. Let us look at the format of a scrum and the roles of the different positions

Front row(N0 1,2 and 3)

Binding

N0 1 Loose head prop – This prop binds first onto the hooker, whilst keeping his shoulder behind the hooker and pulling the hooker tight and closer.

Reason – The loose head is the main support for the hooker and protects the hooker from the opposition's tight head prop. He also brings the hooker closer to the mouth of the scrum and the ball. The hooker can now hook first and with ease.

Types of binding on the opposition

:

- 1) Long arm bind – This is to stop the opposition's tight head from scrumming in on your hooker. Observe the tight head's foot placement, for instance if his outside foot is forward then he will have to scrum in. The loose head must bind as far as possible on his opponent, pulling his backside outwards whilst scrumming hard in under the tight head. Now the power of the opposition is neutralized as he can't scrum forward.
- 2) Short arm bind – The loose head must bind under the arm of the tight head and pull his elbow back to his side. Important to lift the head as this will assist in keeping the back straight. Now the loose head is stronger, safer and he makes it difficult for the tight head to bind properly.
- 3) Foot placement – Comfortable, shoulder breadth apart with the outside foot slightly forward whilst binding. When scrumming both feet back. This improves balance and the loose head can scrum straight forward.
- 4) Legs – Players must bend the legs to enable the hips to be lower. It enhances the pushing power when the hips, heels and shoulders are in line. Now it places the opposition under pressure and the scrum is ready.

N0 2 Hooker – The hooker lifts his arms and the props bind onto him.

- 1) Binding over the shoulders with a tight grip under the armpits of the props.
- 2) Foot placement - Comfortable, shoulder breadth apart. No weight on the hooking foot. The non-hooking foot always points into the direction of the ball.

N0 3 Tight head prop- This prop binds toward the loose head onto the hooker. After binding, pulls his shoulder out behind the hooker and places it in the hooker's armpit. This is the best way to separate the hooker and loose head of the opponents

- 1) This prop binds over the opposition loose head onto his jersey, close as possible to the opposition's armpit. The prop tries to put pressure on the loose head with his shoulder. As soon as the tight head lifts his elbow higher than the shoulder of the opposition loose head, it release the pressure and give the loose head space. The tight head must ensure his head and shoulder are together and his shoulder keeps the pressure on the opposition neck.
- 2) Foot placing – Comfortable, feet shoulder breadth apart. The inside foot must be slight in front of the outside foot and this will ensure the tight head scrum straight ahead and not scrumming in.
- 3) Body position – Back straight ad shoulders slightly higher than the hips. This is in the rugby rules and it is for the safety aspect of the prop. Improved use of power whereby the prop scrum slightly up but forward.

SECOND ROW (N0 6, 4 ,5 and 7)

(Will be using the term loose head and tight head to indicate which side the flank and lock will scrum)

N0 6 Loose head flank –Binds with his shoulder behind the loose head prop. This flank is usually a good defender, when the flanker scrums well.

- 1) Foot placing – Both feet shoulder breadth apart and legs slightly bend. Once bound the inside foot slightly forward. On the opposition scrum feet placed the same as at the start for running the 100 meters. – Faster off the scrum.
- 2) Must scrum forward and not in.

N0 4 Loose head lock – Bind first onto the tight head lock. Legs must be shoulder breadth. Bind through the legs of the prop onto his jersey and shorts. Bind with his hand close as possible to his ear. By pulling his elbow back towards his chest but rather closer to his side.

N0 5 Tight head lock – This lock is the slightly bigger and heavier of the two locks. This helps to stop the natural swing of the scrum by the opposition. The binding is the same as the tight head lock.

N0 7 Tight head flank – This flank is normally bigger/taller than the loose head flank. Bind over the back of the lock, with his shoulder tightly locked in under the tight heads back side. Scrum forward and not in.

Last Feet (N0 8)

N0 8 Eighth man – Bind around the locks with his shoulders both tugged in under their back sides. His head between the two locks. Must scrum forward and is the link between the scrum and the backline. Shoulders must always be bound as if the N0 8 detach from the scrum then the ball is out.

POSITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES DURING SCRUM

Position	Actions
Tight head (N0 3)	Guide the scrum to point of contact Engage first Stabilize the scrum
Loose head (N0 1)	Bind tight and don't pull shoulder out Scrum slightly up when ball is throw in Stretch forward as far possible with left hand for quicker bind Place weight on opposition Keep the scrum the desired height Left arm must work hard
Hooker (N0 2)	Weight on left foot (own ball) Must win the ball from own put in Stay close to the loose head prop Hook the ball in different channels Coordination with the scrumhalf
Locks(N0 4 and 5)	Must crouch and bind with minimal foot movement Feet shoulder breadth apart Support the props with short bind actions Little pressure on the hooker, more on the props
Loose forwards(no 6 , 7 and 8)	Bind before contact to insure scrum a unit Eight man channeling of the ball Tactical play from the scrum

IMPORTANT ASPECTS IN CONTACT

- 1) Front row must sit back on the locks that are in a crouch position.
- 2) Hooker is the key player leading the forwards into the contact
- 3) With own scrum to get a right shoulder the tight head must lead to point of contact
- 4) Locks must assist with a short bind and with the “hit”
- 5) Loose head leads the scrum on the oppositions ball with the ‘Hit’
- 6) Feet must be placed before the HIT and when the scrum moves then must the foot placing take place.

CHANNELS IN THE SCRUM

There are three channels. The hooker must indicate to the scrumhalf in which channel the ball will be hooked (communicate with a sign). Only the hooker must hook the ball.

Channel 1 – This channel is used to ensure quick ball for the backline or tactical play from the scrum. The disadvantage is that the scrumhalf is under pressure as the ball is close to the opposition scrumhalf (Ball is channeled through loose head’s feet and between the loose head flank and lock.)

Channel 2 – This channel offers various options. The eight man or the scrumhalf can play the ball. It protects the scrumhalf with the body position of the eight man (The ball is channeled through the feet of the loose head and then to the eight man or between the feet of the tight head lock’s feet and exit by behind tight head flanks feet.).

Channel 3- This channel is used when the scrum is under pressure. This will secure the ball and can be used for tactical play. (The ball is channeled between the hookers feet ,and then exits between the tight head lock and flanks feet.