



Working in a School environment...

Enhancing Rugby Development..!

The Rugby Doctor returned to a Prep School in North West London for the 2011 'rugby term'

Invited to assist with the development of rugby at the school The Rugby Doctor began by writing a 'Rugby Framework' identifying priorities and targets for each Age Group from Y3 right through to Y8. This generic document was then supplemented on a weekly basis with a broad plan for lesson focus. During the Staff Inset prior to the start of term TRD delivered the RFU's 'Rugby Ready' course to all teachers involved with coaching rugby. Finally TRD provided hands-on coaching for every Age Group during lessons and at fixtures and tournaments.

Orley Farm School's Head of Sports wrote "This was the third year in which The Rugby Doctor has worked with Orley Farm, but this year (2011) it was in a far greater capacity. At the start of the season, TRD ran a Rugby Ready inset for staff and this prepared our department excellently for the season ahead. During the term itself, he worked with all age groups from U8 to U13 and implemented an Orley Farm specific Rugby Playbook. This was a massive task and we are fortunate enough to now have a working document that shows continuity and progression from our youngest to most senior players in the school.

The Rugby Doctor took the U8A, U9A, Colts A and 1st XV teams during the season with his main focus being spent on the latter team. He led them to a magnificent season, winning seven of our nine matches and was an outstanding and inspirational coach to have at the helm. His long term, weekly and individual lesson planning is meticulous and each session has been delivered according to the needs of the pupils. His knowledge of the game is second to none, his coaching (for both pupils and staff) is thorough, enjoyable for all and very technically and tactically astute. He has an enviable way with all those he teaches and we have been extremely fortunate to have had him on our staff this year."



Working in a School environment...

Delivering 'Taylor-made' coaching sessions...!

The Rugby Doctor coached at Merchant Taylors' School during the 2009-10 season

Having run introductory sessions at the end of the Summer term The Rugby Doctor returned to Merchant Taylors' School for pre-season and then delivered periodised training for the U15 squad from September until January. Finding a very capable group of players The Rugby Doctor created a Playbook that encouraged a structured yet flexible style of rugby to flourish and that stretched even the most capable within the year group. Latterly working in a development capacity with Merchant Taylors' younger players The Rugby Doctor concentrated on contact elements and the 'breakdown'.

Merchant Taylors' Director of Sport reported "The Rugby Doctor has now worked at Merchant Taylors' School for two terms and has impressed in all areas. In the first term he coached one of the school's Elite sides, the U15A, guiding them to the latter stages of the Daily Mail Competition (the first time the school has ever progressed to rounds after Christmas). In the spring term he has worked equally adeptly with our Junior sides - the U12s and U13s. Aside from his brilliant technical and tactical knowledge, I have been impressed with his meticulous approach, calm demeanour and organisational ability. He is outstanding at feeding back both to individuals and to teams, and always concentrates on the positive. When he talks rugby - school boys listen..!"

Addendum

The Rugby Doctor was asked to return to Merchant Taylors' School during the 2010-11 season and was pleased to accept the invitation and to deliver a similar programme of work.



Working in a School environment...

A "Perfect Season"..!

The Rugby Doctor returned to Harrow School as an External Coach during the 2009 season

Working predominantly with Harrow's U14 Silver Squad, The Rugby Doctor again undertook a 'development' role delivering bi-weekly coaching sessions, (with match days managed by Harrow School staff). Operating within a framework published by the Age Group Lead, The Rugby Doctor tailored the programme to suit the ability and level of development of the Y9 intake, adjusting content, intensity and delivery according to the group's position within the overall rugby programme.

Harrow School's Head of U14 Rugby wrote "The Rugby Doctor (TRD) has helped coach the U14 squads at Harrow School this past season. This is a difficult age group as over 150 boys arrive needing to be placed in appropriate squads and swiftly brought up to speed with the demands of secondary school rugby. In previous years there had been insufficient talent identification below the 'A' team, which left many talented boys hidden amongst the masses. Furthermore there was little continuity between the teams making any potential player movement very difficult. TRD was asked to address these issues and make sure that the players' skill development throughout the age group was realised.

I was hugely impressed with the contribution TRD made to Harrow U14 Rugby. External coaches, with no vested interest in a particular school or club, can often give the bare minimum, producing a competent session but offering no contact beyond that. TRD however bought into and supported our plans for the season with regular contact before and after each session. He showed a real understanding of how to pitch sessions with each one tailored to the demands of the particular team he took that week. TRD periodised his training with an emphasis on core skills at the start of the season, later developing into innovative and challenging game sense exercises.

U14 rugby has a tendency to be a bit 'all over the place' but by coaching the players to think about what they were doing TRD managed to achieve a level of sophistication in their game uncommon at this age. TRD also attended several Harrow matches on Saturdays, in his own time, showing his commitment to the teams. Not only did the players benefit but the Harrow coaches also developed hugely through working with TRD. School rugby coaches can tend to get a bit stale but TRD introduced modern playing skills and coaching techniques which helped ensure that we kept moving forward and ahead of the competition.

Harrow U14s went unbeaten for the first time in over ten years and TRD had a large part to play in the age group's success."



Working in a School environment...

“International” Rugby..?

During the 2008/9 season, The Rugby Doctor provided coaching services for two terms at an International School in London

Working predominantly with the U18 squad, but also assisting with the U16s, The Rugby Doctor spent initial weeks working on 'basic skills' building proficiency in all aspects of the game before moving on to introduce and develop a style of play appropriate to this particular playing group. By the 'business-end' of the season the squad could draw upon an array of plays from set-piece and understood and applied offensive and defensive patterns of play. The Rugby Doctor found the players to be hungry for knowledge and exhibiting great application and enthusiasm towards their training program and consequently was able to cover a significant number of topics and to see considerable development during the two term period.

The American School in London’s Head of Rugby wrote “The Rugby Doctor has been a tremendous addition to the ASL Rugby programme this year. He not only has a fantastic rugby background with up to date sports specific knowledge of the game, but has an unbelievable enthusiasm for the sport also. His main strength however is in his innate ability to connect with the students and he is one of the best communicators and motivators I have had the pleasure of working beside. His enthusiasm is infectious and the manner in which he imparts his knowledge is both highly professional and entertaining at the same time. Whether working on an individual skill or a team goal his sessions are thoroughly planned out and always progressive, giving the students the best chance of success whilst making them think and have ownership of the decisions they make on the field”



Working in a School environment...

Teaching teachers..!

Prior to the onset of the 2009 'rugby term' The Rugby Doctor delivered an Inset Day 'Coach Education' session to a group of teachers at a West London Prep School

Attendees ranged from regular 'Games Staff' to teachers with only occasional responsibility for covering rugby sessions. Topics covered included **Coaching Styles, Building Core Skills, Making Effective use of Warm-Ups** and **Utilising a Game Sense Approach**. The part classroom, part practical session was enthusiastically received by all and provided practical 'session plans' that were in many cases incorporated into the lessons that followed later in the week.

Orley Farm School's Headmaster commented "I thought that you would like to know how positive the Head of Boy's Games reaction to the session yesterday was. We had a good conversation about this and he was full of praise for it, seeing it as benefit to both experienced and less experienced colleagues."



Working in a School environment...

A level playing field..!

During the 2008 'rugby term' The Rugby Doctor was engaged as an External Coach at a prestigious Independent School in West London

An annual intake of some 170+ Y9 students presents an enormous logistical task, not least since entrants vary in rugby experience from established Prep School *1st-teamers* to those wholly new to the sport. After just a few sessions a formidable fixture list beckoned and The Rugby Doctor was asked to achieve a degree of 'equalisation' of basic skills amongst part of the year group, bringing rugby-novices up to a level where they could play the game safely and with a level of competence.

Harrow School's Director of Sport reported that all school coaches were very positive to the sessions delivered and applauded the structure added to the lessons.



Working in a School environment...

Introducing 'Contact' Rugby...

Towards the end of the 2007/8 season, The Rugby Doctor delivered a contact rugby 'taster session' to three groups of Y6 pupils in a First & Middle School in North West London.

Reproduced below is a selection of unedited comments from Vaughan School's Y6 pupils...:

- Really, really, really, really fun...
- Was phenomenal, would like to do it again...
- Really tiring, we learnt a lot, it was energetic...
- Fun to be able to be allowed to be rough, but in a good way...
- Really good, loved the part about it being contact, want to do it in school...
- I loved it, thought it was great fun...

Vaughan School's Head of Sports remarked "You have really enhanced our programme and I would like to thank you for that..."



Working in a School environment...

Coaching Rugby across the Age Groups...

During the 2007/8 season, The Rugby Doctor spent a term assisting at a Prep School in North West London

Y4

The Rugby Doctor delivered two standard modules, (one form at a time), introducing 'Contact' for the first time. The first module was conducted indoors and covered safe falling and basic tackling technique. The second module was run outside and further developed tackling technique (front, rear and side) and with the more advanced pupils touched upon offensive and defensive tackling.

Y5 and Y6

The Rugby Doctor worked with the A and B squads in a pre-term rugby-session, during two games lessons and one after-school session per week for a term. Basic rugby skills were developed using a 'game-sense' approach and a fundamental 'rucking-style' game plan was developed. The five-man scrum and simple lineout techniques were covered with the Forwards and basic alignment and running lines were introduced with the Backs.

Y7 and Y8

The Rugby Doctor worked with the A and B squads in a pre-term rugby-session, during two games lessons and one after-school session per week for a term. A programme was delivered which built upon existing strengths and that exploited playing assets. A 'rucking-style' game plan was implemented and a talented and receptive group of players were stretched with the introduction of formal restart moves and the adoption of a basic defensive system. The Rugby Doctor also refereed all of the 1st XV home fixtures. The 1st XV lost their first game of the season to a 'two-term' rugby school but went on to win every other game, claiming some significant scalps along the way...

At the end of the season Orley Farm School's Head of Boy's Games wrote "My thanks to The Rugby Doctor for all the outstanding coaching this term, especially with the Forwards, (and for the fair and honest refereeing of our home matches). Coach, you have been an inspiration to the boys and much of our success is firmly down to you. You have taken a potentially excellent team and turned them into real winners. Thank you..."