This document aims primarily to cover the basic drills and games used by the coordinators to develop the athlete’s skills, strategy and knowledge of Rugby League. It is a resource that will provide ideas for the structuring of training sessions while focusing on this discipline. It will replace the standard program incorporated during past seasons allowing much greater fluidity and flexibility during our sessions, with the focus on the rewards aspect of ROAR.

Rugby League is the dominant sport at Merriwa Central and thus the biggest draw card of the ROAR program is the opportunity for members to participate in contact sessions. This sessions however are always heavily monitored to reduce risk to our athletes.

ROAR sessions are based around the game sense approach to coaching, relying on modified games to develop the athletes skill set and teach the fundamental strategies of the game. This approach increases motivation and team bonding, as the members are always partaking in activity that is challenging their skills and forcing improvement.

This is not to say that traditional skill development drills are never utilised, particularly if a significant number of members are found to be lacking in certain skill areas. Traditionally, tackling technique has been poor in the academy and is thus often taught solely focusing on developing technique without the pressure of an open learning environment.

The drills and games included in this resource have been collected from numerous sources many now forgotten. The ROAR program does not claim ownership for any activity included in this resource, but we have compiled them to be exactly that, a resource we can use to better develop our athletes. Please, feel free to use this resource to do the same with your athletes.
SPORT SPECIFIC WARM-UP ACTIVITIES FOR RUGBY LEAGUE

RESPECT. OWNERSHIP. AWARENESS. REWARDS.
Manly Drill

Using the corners of a square, players pass the ball around the perimeter. Once the ball is passed they follow in the direction of the ball to the next cone. A continuous drill.

Develop passing and catching technique. Coach specific requirements.

Variations

• Use two balls
• Change directions
• Turn players under
• Run Diagonally
• Use three balls
3 players pass along the line then drop off to the waiting three. A continuous drill. Can also run attacking moves in this drill.

Develop passing and catching and prepares the brain.

VARIATIONS

- Angles
- X Y
- Triangle formation
Continuous 5

Half-back, Five-eighth, hooker behind centre cone, Forwards left and right next two, outside backs on widest cones. Ball starts on centre cone, is passed to forward who passes to back you switches direction and throws it back to centre cone. The ball then travels in opposite direction. This is a continuous drill.

Develop passing and catching technique. Distance varies depending on ability.

Variations

- Forward drops back under
- Face ball across forward
SKIRMISH LINE

4 players start in one corner of the field in a line. Ball starts on outside and set off aiming for diagonal corner. Pass along the line, the outside player wraps around to inside of line.

Aim to run straight, pass and back up.

VARIATIONS

- Run attacking moves down field
- Drop under
In a large circle stand the team. Player 1 starts the race off by passing to the player next to him/her then quickly race around the outside of the circle and back to their position. The rest of the team pass the ball around the circle and try to beat the runner home. The game rotates around the circle.

**VARIATIONS**

- Change directions
- Run around an object out from the circle
- Certain passes
PASSING STAR

5 cones laid out in shape of star. Players run and pop the ball to their left, missing one cone.

VARIATIONS

- Two Balls
- Multiple Balls
- Smaller Star
6 players per group with two footballs. Balls start diagonally opposite each other. On signal the two balls are passed anti-clockwise, once passed the player must run to the opposite cone as indicated to be ready for the next pass.

Can also be used for conditioning.

**VARIATIONS**

- Swap directions
Bull Rush

Traditional game of evasion. One player starts ‘in’ the others on his/her command attempt to run to far end of field without being tagged.

Variations

- Once tagged join in
- Use a ball to tag runners
- Add more balls
- Taggers enter from the side of the field.
Juggling Circle

In a small circle, with two balls. Small numbers. Two players standing next to one another start by player one throwing ball into the air, while catching and passing ball from player two delivering to player on their other side, before catching the ball and passing in same direction. This continues around the circle. First ball goes in the air, the second ball is quick passed on.

Variations

- Add a penalty for failed attempts
PASSING KAMIKAZE

Similar to lines of three, however there are multiple threes on the course travelling in both directions, Players must catch and pass in traffic.

VARIATIONS

- Make area smaller and have only two groups
- Groups keep rotating through
Quick hands

Two players stand on the sidelines of grid while in pairs players run through tipping off using quick hands. They will turn at the end and come back the opposite way.

Variations

- Threes
- Fours
- Greater passing distance
Two players attack one defender in a defined space. The idea is for the ball carrier to draw the defender towards them before safely passing the ball to his or her support runner. This is best performed at speed.

**VARIATIONS**

- Add multiple defenders in a line with spacing between so that the duo have multiple instances of passing and backing up.
Object of game is to develop go forward play. Teams of 5, attack and defend. Play continues until the attackers force the defenders back over their try-line. After each tackle the defenders must retreat 10 metres. Allowed to markers. Attackers are only allowed two passes per tackle. Must play the ball off the ground.

**Variations**

- Limit to six tackles
- Points scored if force defenders over try line within six.
Low Front on Tackle

Defenders practise in a closed learning environment making first contact in a tackle low and effectively completing the tackle. This can be repeated on both shoulders numerous times until the athletes feel confident with performing this tackle.

Variations
- Start off walking
- Defenders start on knees
1 ON 1 TACKLE

Similar to low front on tackle, however area is made larger and the runner is now permitted to evade the defender making this an open learning environment that benefits both players. Should only perform when you feel defenders are ready.

VARIATIONS

- Stacked defenders teaching players not to stop once they have beaten a tackle.
Closed learning environment drill performed at increasing speed as skill improves. Attackers run out side step at first cone and run straight. The defender coming from the side practises completing a safe side on tackle. Ensuring head is placed behind bum and not in front of runners body. Contact is made with the shoulder and the defender slides down to force the tackle.

**Variations**

- Complete from both sides of the drill to give defenders the opportunity to practise on both shoulders.
Sideline Evasion

Attackers start on one of the corner cones, while defenders start on the centre sideline. Attacker with the ball attempts to evade, by side stepping or using speed, the defender.

Variations

- Swap around defenders and attackers and the cones that the attackers start from.
Two players set off from two cones spaced about 5 metres apart. The coach indicates which one is to tackle by throwing the other a ball. This is a tackle from behind, defender again needs to keep pace and focus on technique.

**Variations**

- Staggered start
- Add in a try line
Defenders line up with markers and two A defenders. Attackers line up with the play the ball, hooker and to first receivers. Play this structure down the field with markers working together with defenders and attackers looking for quick play the balls.

**Variations**

- Reset to standard position after each play.
**SHUT THE GATE**

Similar to above drill however, with ABC defenders and 1st 2nd and 3rd attackers on each side. Defenders concentrate on communication and slide defence closing the gate.

**VARIATIONS**

- Play a set of six
- Rotate positions
- Attackers use structured plays
Funnels

Pass to attacker hitting advantage line and using the funnel shape to beat the defender. Defender applies pressure but does not actively tackle. Shows players that the faster they run the more room they have to attack with. Shows defenders the faster they move up off their line the less room they have to defend.

Variations

- Add a supporting attacker for draw and pass and to highlight support play.
- Create a funnel on both sides of ruck to have more players moving more sooner.
Three attackers and two defenders start at half way and on the command set off to opposite ends of the rectangle, round the cone and run an attacking move. Additional groups are lined up ready to go.

**VARIATIONS**

- Throw the ball to the attackers once they have rounded the cone.
Three attackers start off to side of field run around bottom hat, than attack. Two defenders, inner most, must run and touch the base line return to their starting position and then defend. Hopefully the attack are applying pressure to remaining defender by the time the second defender arrives.

**VARIATIONS**

- Make areas smaller or larger
- Move outside cone closer giving the attackers more time before second defender arrives.
3 V 2 Reaction

Five players line up in the centre of the area, number the players 1 to 5. Coach call out two numbers to defend. Each player reacts by getting up off the ground and getting set in their appropriate position. Three attack, two defend.

Variations

- Roll the ball into the playing area
- Give the ball to selected players
Players line either side of a corridor and are numbered off. The coach announces 2 defenders and then three attackers. Once the last number is announced all players rush to their ends and play out a set move.

**VARIATIONS**

- Vary the number of attackers and defenders
- Give the ball to selected players
5 on 5 Challenge

5 attackers play staggered lines of 3 and two defenders. Aimed to address larger attacking structure, support players and effective line running. Defenders need effective communication and line structure.

Variations

- Modify the distance between the first and second line
6 attacker play an attacking move across three zones that impact on where the defenders can stand. 4 defenders are spaced with two in the centre zone and 1 in each of the side zones. The middle zone is 20 metres wide with the two sides 10 metres wide.

**Variations**
- Play 3 tackles per group
ARRESTING THE SLIDE

5 attackers and four defenders with pads in a 15 x 15 metre square. Defenders line up on the side line while attackers line up along the base line. On the command the attacker play by spreading the ball to their outside player while the defenders number up and attempt to lock down the play by sliding effectively.

VARIATIONS
- Delay the start of the defenders
- Defenders don’t use pads
Player kicks a cross field chip, grubber or bomb for a running supporter and then follows through along their line to the opposite cone. The receiver catches the ball and passes to the person waiting at the front of the line who then kicks in the other direction for their supporting player. Therefore the game is continuous.

**Variations**

- Style of the kick
- Points for successful catches
Player kicks for themself, regathers and then passes to support. The Support runner then does the same in the opposite direction. Forming a continuous loop.

**VARIATION**

- Use different types of kicking styles
GAME SENSE APPROACH
FOR
RUGBY LEAGUE

RESPECT. OWNERSHIP. AWARENESS. REWARDS.
Offside Touch

Two teams of about 10. Players try to progress the ball forward down the field without positions to score a try. Ball must be placed on the ground with downward pressure. Passes may go forward. Each team has two plays to score. If ball is intercepted tackle count starts from zero. Games develops communication, passing and catching and support play.

Variations

- One touch only
- Tackle
Two teams of about 8 or so. Similar to offside touch the ball can be passed forward. The first pass however must go backwards and every player must start onside. After first pass offside play is permitted. Each team gets 4 plays to score before a change-over. The defensive team line up 5 metres in front of the ball each play. Knock-ons regathered count as a play which encourages hustle after dropped balls.

**Variations**

- Introduce downs.
- Use Oz-tag belts
ONE TAG TOUCH

Played using normal touch, or rugby league rules, however emphasis is put on effective attacking plays as each set is only one tackle.

VARiations

- Allow time for attacking team to decide on plays.
- Allow intercepts to start from zero.
Game commences with a kick off. Each team is allowed a goal keeper, but all other players must stay out of goal area. Players may run with the football and pass it in any direction. Defenders try to intercept, knock the ball to the ground or force a changeover. No tackling or contact. After each goal the scoring team starts with a kick off to restart.

**VARIATION**

- Allow contact
Two Ball League

Play Rugby League as you would normally in a training situation. Players use one ball while the other ball is placed at another location on the field. Play commences and continues until the coach blows the whistle to indicate that the second ball is now ‘live’ and that the first team to reach the ball plays on. The original ball is ‘dead’ until the coach blows the whistle again.

Variations

- Size of field
- Number of players
LEAGUE BALL

The game is played along the lines of Baseball. The ‘batting’ team can punt, grubber or place kick the ball and run around the bases like normal. Fielders cannot run with the ball.

VARIATIONS

- ‘Batter’ can be tagged out by being struck by the ball.
**Ten Passes**

Two teams in a 10 x 10 metre square. One
starts with the ball and attempts to pass
amongst themselves for 10 consecutive
passes. The defending team attempts to
intercept, knock down or win the ball. Once
they gain possession the defenders now try to
passes of a count of 10.

**Variations**

- The ball can’t be passed back and forth between two players
- The attacking team has a certain time period (2m) to try and get 10 passes
Elimination Tag

Two teams in a 10 x 10 square. One starts with the ball and attempts to tag the other team by passing and moving the ball around the square. The ball must be held by a player when it makes contact with an evader. Evaders must stay in the confines of the square and move to the side when tagged. Teams swap roles when all evaders are eliminated.

Variations

- Tagged players join the passing team
- Tagged players do an exercise on the edge.
- If passers drop the ball one eliminated player is permitted to re-join the game.
Played like regular soccer except with a football. Aids with dribbling control, watching the bounce and team work. Ball should not be kicked above head height.

**VARIATIONS**

- Whatever necessary to focus on particular aspects beneficial to the team
Each team nominates one goalie before start of play. They are the only player allowed to protect the goals. Attacking team passes football amongst themselves in any direction. Goals are scored by attacker either passing or grubber kicking the ball past the goalie. A change over occurs if there is a dropped ball or a two hand tag.

**Variations**

- Make the goals larger or smaller
- Add players
Kick Tennis

Two teams are separated into the white and black cones. The game begins when one team kicks the ball above head height into their opponents area. The opponents must catch the ball on the full or are eliminated. The kicker must ensure that the ball is high enough or lands in the designated area or is eliminated. The last team with a player left are the winners. Play sets.

Variations

- The ball must bounce, but only once
- Increase the number of balls
KICK FAST BREAK

Similar concept to kick tennis, however each team is separated across the two areas and kickers must kick the ball to someone on their own team standing in the opposite area.

VARIATIONS

- Make the playing area either larger or smaller
- Increase the number of balls
In this version of kick tennis every player is given a number. The kicking side calls out a number as they kick the ball. The catching side player with that number must catch the ball on the full.

**Variations**

- Play in a larger area
Two teams face off towards each other and battle by grubber kicking the ball aiming to get it through the oppositions line.

**Variations**
- Multiple balls
- Wider stance
Kick Netball

Play like netball though instead of passing players use kicks. Create a shooting zone that teams must move the ball to, once a player catches the ball inside the shooting zone they may take a shot at a marked area outside the court.

Variations

- Use thirds
- No Movement with the ball
- Certain kicks
Two teams start facing one another on a large playing surface. One team starts by kicking the ball as far as they can. The opposing side stops the ball and returns it with the same intention. This continues until one team forces the other back beyond its try line.

**VARIATIONS**

- Add penalties for errors
Attacks have two plays to score a try in a designated area (size may vary) against defenders. However on each play they must include a kick in trying to score (grubber, chip etc).  

**Variation**

- Attackers keep the ball for 3 minutes before teams swap roles
DROP OUT TAG

Split squad into two teams. One defends the other attacks. Team s set up for a drop out. This is a progressive defence game. On the first drop out only one defender chases and defends the ball while the attacking team attempts to score. If the attacking team score the defending team drops out again but this time with three defenders. The game continues as such until the attacking team fail to score. Roles are then reversed.

VARIATIONS

- Keep score
- The attacking team faces the number of defenders they failed against on previous effort
SAFE ZONE

An attacker kicks the ball into a designated area and runs to the other end of the area. Defenders must retrieve the ball and running and passing, tag the kicker with the ball.

VARIATIONS
- Break squad into two sides and keep score
GRID ISLAND

Set up a smaller rectangle inside a larger one. Split squad into two teams with half in the inner rectangle and half spreading around the channel now created by the two rectangles. Select 4 players from the inside rectangle to line each side of the outside rectangle. In the inner rectangle players pass the ball around and try to pass the ball to an outside player. Each successful pass is one point. Players in the channel attempt to intercept the pass. The ball cannot be thrown over their heads.

VARIATIONS

- Turn island into a defensive drill by the inner players trying to score on the outside line. While the channel players defend
DOUBLE ZONE TAG

For defensive adjustment and communication. Play a game to coach’s rules. In the centre circle the attacker must be tagged by two defenders or both tags removed etc. to enforce players working hard in the centre of the field.

VARIATIONS

- Award greater points for scoring in the central third.
Normal touch rules except that the attacking side has unlimited tackles and continues attacking for a set period of time. Every minute have one player from the defending side drop off the field. Thus creating more room for the attackers and making the defenders work harder. Winning team is the one with the most tries.

** Variations  

- Time frames  
- Every time the attackers drop the ball they return to start line  
- Every time the attackers drop the ball they lose a player
Killer Defence

Two teams face off at halfway. On the call they turn and retreat to their try lines. The attackers collect a ball and have 4 tackles to score a try. Once a tackle is made all but one of the defenders must return to their try line before moving forward for the next tackle.

Variations

- With lesser skilled players play with tags.
Run The Gauntlet

Split squad into two teams. On a rectangle appropriate for age of competitors, one team lines the sides of the rectangle while the other runs up the centre. The defending side passes balls in from the sideline attempting to hit the runs who are using peripheral vision to avoid being struck.

Variations

- If a runner is struck they are out
- The team with the most laps of the court wins
**UNDER & OVER**

A two on two situation for ball player and receiver to use lines and change of direction to beat the defenders. Here we use the football posts as markers for which direction the players step. When Unders is called both players step towards the centre of the field or towards the goal posts. When Overs is called both players step toward the side line or away from the posts.

This play is performed at speed and is crucial that both players begin running straight in order to draw the defenders and not give away their line.

This play can also benefit from additional movement off the ball.
Requires a ball player with two attackers outside. The third attacker cuts between the A and B defender while the 2nd attacker either cuts between the B and C defenders or sweeps around the C defender. The ball player has three options of where they are passing with this play. The cutting runner must get through hard, expect the ball and create a decoy for the 2nd attacker.

This is a play that is flexible, either performed by the forwards or backs and within larger plays.
Requires a ball player with two attackers outside. Here the 2nd attacker cuts a line behind the ball player who has cut in front. The third attack either picks a short or long line. The ball player may choose to deliver the ball to either runner.

Again this play is flexible and can be performed by the forwards or backs and within larger plays.
This structure allows the ball carrier a number of options as he will have an attacking player either side of the targeted defender. This allows for X runs, inside balls, unders & overs and sweeping plays.
Diamond Structure

Provides more options for the ball carrier than the triangle structure and is best employed by the backs out wide or attacking lazy defenders. Requires a brave ball player that is able to read the defence and also lead his backs.