

# **Worcester Warriors Academy**



**WORCESTER  
WARRIORS**

**Developing Player Programme  
(DPP) & Player Development Group**

**Handbook 2018-19**

# **Table of Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction
  - 1.1 Current Situation
- 2.0 Academy Vision and Mission Statement
- 3.0 Overview of DPP Programme
- 4.0 Worcester Warriors Player & Talent Development Pathway
  - 4.1 Players
  - 4.2 Coaches
  - 4.3 Development Groups
  - 4.4 Assessment Process
  - 4.5 Exit Routes
  - 4.6 Communication
  - 4.7 Regional Structured Programme
  - 4.8 Representative Pathway
- 5.0 Developing Player Programme Session Content
  - 5.1 Session Delivery Breakdown
  - 5.2 DPP Age Structure & Playing Programme
  - 5.3 Development Group Programme
- 6.0 Worcester Warriors Junior Academy Centres
- 7.0 PDG & DPP Curriculum
- 8.0 Regional DPP Staff & Academy Contact Details

# 1.0. Introduction

## *Worcester Warriors Academy Programme Overview*

The Worcester Warriors Academy was established in 2001; operating within a development process in which the goal is to develop players capable of playing Premiership rugby for Worcester Warriors. A significant number of players have progressed through this system and gone on to represent Worcester Warriors and various international teams.



## **1.1 Current Situation**

The full time programme is underpinned by the Rugby Football Union (RFU) Academy licence agreement, which was signed by all Premiership clubs in 2002, 2008 & again in 2016. The RFU contributes to the financial management of the academy and allows the Academy the ability to recruit within a designated geographical area. This recruitment process is managed by the Warriors Academy that selects and identifies players from various sources from 13 through until 23 years of age.

## **2.0. Worcester Warriors Academy Vision & Mission Statement**

### **Vision**

The long-term vision of Worcester Warriors England Academy is that it is regarded as the most productive and efficient academy within the UK, with a constant stream of well-developed athletes augmenting the Worcester Warriors Senior squad and various England teams on an annual basis.

### **Mission Statement**

The aim of the Warriors Academy is to continually identify, recruit and develop, from all sources, the most talented young players and bring them through the academy into the 1<sup>st</sup> XV squad.

### **Key elements of delivery**

- To adopt a comprehensive recruitment policy across our region
- To provide the highest quality coaching by qualified staff to give each academy player the best opportunity to succeed.
- To provide the most appropriate individual player development, mentoring and support programmes.
- To provide the most appropriate competitive programme for each player and to constantly review performance in training and matches.
- To provide the best possible facilities for our players to succeed.
- To provide the opportunity for Warriors Academy players to continue in further or higher education.
- To build good working relationships with all players, clubs, schools, colleges, universities and other related parties.
- To teach responsibility, discipline and respect for themselves and the game.
- To set high standards for integrity, honesty and performance.

### **3.0. Overview of the Developing Player Pathway Programme**

The Worcester Warriors Academy has responsibility for developing Elite players in the geographical region that covers Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Black Country, Shropshire, Greater Birmingham and South Warwickshire. The DPPs are a step on the player development pathway with successful players progressing into the Worcester Warriors Academy Player Development Groups at 15 years of age.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Head Coach</b>
Worcestershire, Herefordshire & Black Country	Sixways Stadium	Trevor Bufton
Shropshire	Telford College	Dale Smallman
Greater Birmingham	Bournville RFC	Ben Weaver
South Warwickshire	Warwick School	Huw Thomas

For further information on Developing Player Programme (DPP), please read the Worcester Warriors DPP Regional Operating Plan.

## **4.0. Worcester Warriors Player Development Group (PDGs)**

### **4.1 Players**

Identified players will be invited to attend the PDG sessions at Sixways Stadium. Selection for the Warriors PDG is through a number of pathways including DU and CB games and progression from the Warriors DPP. Our PDGs comprise players from U15 to U18 age groups and meet regularly to work on core rugby skills and game awareness. Players continue to train and play with their clubs/schools, as well as representing their Domestic Union and Constituent Body if applicable.

### **4.2 Coaches**

A team of skilled coaches led by the Academy Manager run the PDGs supported by the full time Warriors Academy staff, including Strength & Conditioning Coaches, Physiotherapists and Nutritionist support as well as Education Officer.

### **4.3 Player Development Groups**

Every Tuesday, a group of selected players who have progressed from the DPPs will be invited to train at Sixways. This is an invitation into the Academy from players aged Under 15, Under 16 and Under 18. Players can be invited to join these Development Groups at any time throughout the season. The age range for these groups will be U16 and U18 until January. Post February the groups will U15, U16, U17, with a view to progression from the following season.

These groups will work with Academy coaches on various components of performance including workshops for parents on lifestyle management, nutrition, psychology and education pathways.

#### **4.4 Assessment Process**

During the season the Worcester Warriors Academy coaches will be observing games to watch potential players for the DPP and Player Development Groups. School/Club and County coaches may recommend any player they consider would justify a place in the DPP or Player Development Group. However, all correspondence to the player **MUST** go through the Worcester Warriors Academy staff and an appropriate invitation communicated.

Throughout the year Worcester Warriors Academy staff will visit the DPP Centres to assess how the players compare across the region.

#### **4.5 Exit Routes**

Players are normally involved within a DPP until Christmas of their Under 15 season. Following this, if players need to be released from the programme they will be given feedback from Worcester Warriors Academy staff. The players' parents and school/club coach will be notified, in order that the player can be managed back into the community game.

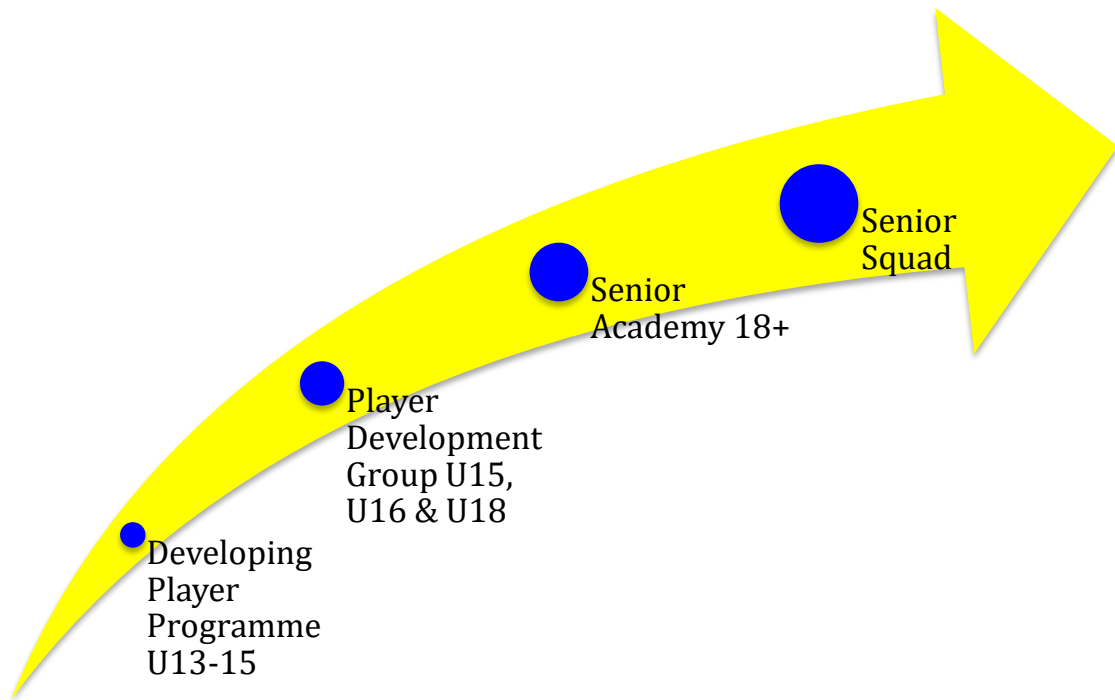
However, we do continue to monitor all players released at all age groups until they complete their Under 18 season. The Under 16 Player Development Group players will be released from the programme at the end of February. With this being the GCSE year, the release from the Player Development Group will allow players to fully focus on school without any additional commitments. The Under 18 Player Development Group players will be released at the completion of the Under 18 Academy League.

#### **4.6 Communication**

All information and communication regarding a player including invitation into the programme or release from it will be directed to the player's parents and not the player directly. Furthermore, communication will be issued to the player's school, when a player is invited into or released from the programme.

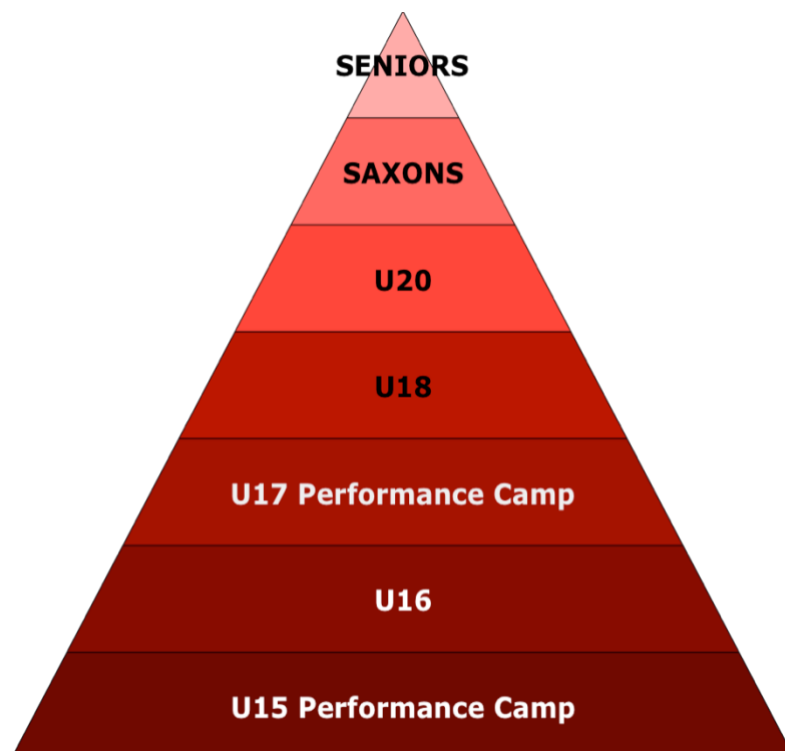


#### 4.7 Regional Structured Programme (Warriors Pathway)



#### 4.8 Representative Pathway

Below is the representative pathway for English Qualified players.



## **5.0. Player Development Group Programme Session Content**

### **5.1 DPP Programme**

The DPP is the entry level into a long-term development programme which in some cases will lead towards the very highest level of the game.

The role of the DPP is to work closely with the all clubs, schools, Domestic Unions and Constituent Bodies to identify players considered to have the talent to benefit from, and progress through, the programme.

Clubs and Schools are invited to nominate up to 5 of their U13 players who are considered to have the potential to progress in the sport over and above club/school level. These players will attend the Extended DPP Sessions, of which there will be 2/3 sessions between February and the end of the season. From these sessions, player will be assessed to be promoted into the Warriors DPP.

Players who were in the U13 Extended DPP Sessions for the previous season are automatically re-invited for the new season's U14 sessions. These players will be informed by direct email for the following season. Clubs and Schools can also nominate a limited number of other U14 players who were not in the previous season's U13 sessions.

Players will remain part of the Warriors DPP until Christmas of the Under 15 season, after which point, players will be informed directly with feedback, whether they have progressed to the Warriors Under 15 Player Development Group (PDG).

### **5.2 Player Development Group Programme**

#### **U15 Development Group Programme**

The main focus for the U15 will begin post Christmas and will lead up to a series of games that will have a fluid selection process. This will lead to a selected team that will represent Warriors U15 in a National Festival in May. An overview of our U15 Development Group playing programme is detailed below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Venue</b>
20 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	Bristol	Sixways Stadium
27 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	London Irish	Maidenhead
9 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Exeter Chiefs	Sandy Park
Date TBC	Cleve Festival	Cleve RFC
6 <sup>th</sup> May 2019	RFU Festival	Sheffield Hallam University

### **U16 Player Development Group Programme**

The main focus for the U16 will begin in pre-season and will involve a series of Warriors Academy matches between February and April. Players will be selected to attend the RFU BMW Wellington Festival Week. From a Worcester Warriors stance, the players selected to attend the Festival will be invited back during pre-season to train as part of the extended u18's squad.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Venue</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2018	Saracens	Sixways Stadium
22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2019	Cardiff Blues South	Cardiff Arms Park
22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2019	Saracens	Allianz Park
15 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Exeter Chiefs	Sixways Stadium
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Bristol Bears	Sixways Stadium
7 <sup>th</sup> April 2019	RFU Festival	Warwick School
13-18 <sup>th</sup> April 2019	BMW Wellington Festival	Wellington School

### **U17 Development Group Programme**

It was felt that some of the U17 didn't have much of an opportunity during the Academy U18 league for game time with the size of the squad we had. The additional 2 fixtures will allow everyone sufficient game time of a high quality, this also give us an opportunity bring the U17s & U16s together before pre-season when they become the U18s group.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Venue</b>
27 <sup>th</sup> April 2019	London Irish	Maidenhead RFC

### **U18 Player Development Group Programme**

The U18 programme is slightly more dictated by the RFU, we enter the Academy Under 18 competition each year, below are the fixture we will be playing in.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Venue</b>
15 <sup>th</sup> December 2018	Yorkshire Carnegie	Headingley
22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2018	Wasps	Henley Hawks
6 <sup>th</sup> January 2019	Northampton Saints	Sixways Stadium
19 <sup>th</sup> January 2019	Newcastle Falcons	Kingston Park
2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2019	Leicester Tigers	Sixways Stadium
9 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	Sale Sharks	Sixways Stadium

## **6.0. Worcester Warriors Junior Academy Centres**

Worcester Warriors Academy have nine Junior Academy centres, where the most talented rugby players in the Player Development Groups (PDGs) have access to some of the finest training environments in the country.

These centres enable Warriors' expert coaches to work with the best players involved in the different parts of the Club's Academy. Coaches offer a supervised strength and conditioning programme, physiotherapy support, nutritional and lifestyle education as well as individual skill development and game review feedback.

The centres are based at:

- Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School
- Ellesmere College
- King Edward's School, Birmingham
- Luctonians RFC
- Wrekin College
- Sixways Stadium
- Solihull School
- Warwick School
- Bromsgrove School

## 7.0. PDG & DPP Curriculum

<b>1. CATCH &amp; PASS</b>			
<b>WARM UP</b>	<b>TECHNICAL TEACH</b>	<b>FOCUS GAME</b>	<b>KEY FACTORS</b>
<p>Find Space: 15 X 15 grids.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 teams one start with ball, 10 consecutive passes equals a score</li> <li>- Ball turned over on any incomplete pass</li> <li>- On 10 completed passes, try is scored and possession given to the opposition</li> </ul>	<p>Catch and Lateral pass:</p> <p>Attacker runs down channel with pivots on left and right. Receives ball off left and passes across to right pivot. 3 sets of pivots down the channel.</p> <p>Repeat off left hand.</p> <p>Develop with 2 players running in channel.</p>	<p>Multi-Pass Touch</p> <p>Every completed pass, means that number of defenders are out of the game for the next phase.</p>	<p><b>CATCH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Thumbs together</b></li> <li>- <b>Hands up early</b></li> <li>- <b>Outside foot forward</b></li> <li>- <b>Push hands to the ball</b></li> <li>- Catch in shape (Round belly of the ball)</li> <li>- <b>Off chest</b></li> <li>- <b>Keep ball high, no 'U' shaped pass</b></li> </ul> <p><b>PASS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Thumbs on top of the ball</b></li> <li>- <b>Push thumbs down</b></li> <li>- <b>Outside elbow out</b></li> <li>- <b>Push off outside foot</b></li> <li>- <b>Push hands through the ball</b></li> <li>- <b>Point hands to target</b></li> <li>- <b>Pass for the player not to the player</b></li> </ul>

## 2. LINES OF RUNNING

WARM UP	TECHNICAL TEACH	FOCUS GAME	KEY FACTORS
<p><b>Two Touch Turnover</b>            2 x equal teams – half pitch - ball handed over if a pass cannot be made before a 2<sup>nd</sup> touch. Attacker cannot score if touched once so must find a pass to support runners.</p>	<p>2. Kick Return (3v2) (2v2) (1v1)            20m x 20m square – attackers receive ball in varying positions from a kick &amp; beat the 2 defenders – defenders set off as ball is kicked &amp; run around opposite cones on the outer edges of the square &amp; then defend.</p> <p>3. Breaking Down the 2v2 Roles (2v2) (2v2v1)            20m x 20m square – 2 defenders with 3 different start points to simulate drift, out to in &amp; man on man defence – 2 attackers with varying start points.</p> <p>☒ <b>Getting across the gain line = success</b></p>	<p>4. Small Sided Two Touch (Constant)            2 x equal teams – Attackers have to find a pass after one touch otherwise they cannot score, after second touch they must flick the ball up between their legs immediately. If attack scores they turn &amp; attack the other direction. If attack fails they hand the ball over to the defenders who then attack. To promote straight running, turnover if attacker runs across 2 defenders.</p>	<p><b>LINES OF RUN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head up, scan defence</li> <li>- Keep depth</li> <li>- Out to in / in to out (mirror ball carrier)</li> <li>- Hips square</li> <li>- Hands up ready to catch</li> <li>- Accelerate onto the ball</li> </ul>

### 3. DECISION MAKING

<b>WARM UP</b>	<b>TECHNICAL TEACH</b>	<b>FOCUS GAME</b>	<b>KEY FACTORS</b>
<p>Catch and Lateral pass: Attacker runs down channel with pivots on left and right. Receives ball off left and passes across to right pivot. 3 sets of pivots down the channel. Repeat off left hand. Develop with player / coach holding coloured cone at in front of attacker. A has to shout colour out between catching and passing the ball.</p>	<p>2v1 2x 5m wide channels 1 attacker in each defender stands at end of channel with back to attackers. Ball carrier calls 'play' and defender turns L or R channel. He stays in the channel. Attacker with ball must make decision to pass if marked or run if channel is empty. 10m wide channel with 1 defender. Lines of 2 attackers at both ends of the channel. Attackers try to get through channel without being touched and pass ball to next attackers who attack back. Defender works both directions until they force a mistake.</p>	<p>Overload touch: 8 v 4 Constant attack for 3 mins then change roles.</p>	<p><b>DECISION MAKING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ball in 2 hands</li><li>- Head up to scan defence</li><li>- Be aware of support</li><li>- Make a positive line of run</li><li>- Time pass or run off defenders' movement</li></ul>



## 4. CONTACT SKILLS ATTACK

WARM UP	TECHNICAL TEACH	FOCUS GAME	KEY FACTORS
<p>1. Ball wrestling exercises, Body manipulation exercises &amp; wrestling etc. 15m x 15m square – 2 teams – 10 passes in any direction – one touch turnover</p>	<p>3. <b>Contact skills practices</b> 1v1 wrestle to Long and strong presentation, 2v1 Long and strong &amp; Clear out, 2v2 Long and strong &amp; Clear out – different starting positions for support players &amp; attackers. <b>Ball Presentation</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Use of leg drive</li> <li>☑ Fight inside shoulder to ground</li> <li>☑ Long post away from body</li> </ul> </p>	<p>2. <b>Keep Ball progressions</b> 15m x 15m square – 2 x teams – keep ball for successive passes or for 1min, 2min etc – Pass any direction. Condition defence so it is 1v1 in contact &amp; tackle is waist &amp; above only. (footwork, fend, free hands). Progressions – 2v2 in contact, tackle 1v1 below waist only, contest on the ground, score at an end, bigger area, pass back (rugby!) 4. <b>Decision making through contact game (overload attack)</b> Narrow width – to start must Offload before or during contact  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– success = score</li> <li>– defence is conditioned to 1v1 &amp; below waist only tackle</li> <li>– tackle on ball carrier completed before offload = success for defence.</li> </ul>                     Progressions – Offload from the ground, 2v2 in contact, tackler +1 can compete for ball post tackle, minimum of 3 passes after breakdown, no conditions.                 </p>	<p><b>Ball Carrier:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use footwork before contact</li> <li>- Attack space between defenders</li> <li>- Push hands through the contact</li> <li>- Drive hips through to see offload option</li> <li>- Maintain leg drive</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep plenty of depth</li> <li>- React to ball carrier,</li> <li>- Run towards contact</li> <li>- Hands up for offload or adjust line to clear</li> </ul>

## 5. CONTACT SKILLS - BALL PRESENTATION AND CLEAR

WARM UP	TECHNICAL TEACH	FOCUS GAME	KEY FACTORS
<p>Ruck / Touch games, tackled player present ball, if done correctly attack keeps it, if not turnover ball. Strict Refereeing!</p>	<p>In 2s both players on their knees facing each other, one player with ball and other player with arms wrapped around the ball carrier Ball carrier then fights his way to the ground to present the ball Key Points Use of arms Fight shoulder to ground Long post away from body</p>	<p>5 v 5 Small sided contact game 30m x 40m Narrow grid to promote contact.</p>	<p><b>Ball Presentation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Control ball in 2 hands</li> <li>- Work to roll (towards defender) if isolated</li> <li>- Long and strong ball presentation for quick ball</li> </ul> <p><b>Clear:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set height on approach</li> <li>- Hips &amp; shoulders level</li> <li>- Hit with shoulders</li> <li>- Use arms to wrap opposition player</li> <li>- Drive through with hips &amp; chase feet.</li> </ul>

## 6. TACKLE AND POST TACKLE

WARM UP	TECHNICAL TEACH	FOCUS GAME	KEY FACTORS
<p>Press Ups – with openers            Bear Crawls            1 v 1 Press Up – Touch Hand            1 v 1 Player on his back with other player covering him, try to get back to his feet            1 v 1 Player lift            1 v 1 Wrestling for the ball standing up.</p>	<p>Tackle triangle, tackler encouraged to move forward quickly to close down the space of the attacker. The longer they wait the more space the attacker has. The tackler makes a head on tackle.</p>	<p>10 x 10 grid With Two even teams            Rugby League – Tackle game            Focus on low tackle technique.            Points awarded when defensive team makes 5 low tackles with shoulder contact, resulting in ball being turned over.            If tackle is completed with good technique no point is awarded.</p> <p>Progression Game            Ball Carrier to focus on correct presentation.            Tackler to bounce to feet and pop ball back to team in possession</p>	<p><b>Approach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head up</li> <li>- Hands up</li> <li>- Foot between opposition players feet</li> <li>- Control footwork</li> <li>- Quick –slow- quick</li> <li>- Keep feet moving</li> </ul> <p><b>Contact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Same foot, same shoulder</li> <li>- Foot in close</li> <li>- Hit with broad shoulder (open chest)</li> <li>- Head in close</li> <li>- Punch arms through &amp; grip</li> </ul> <p><b>Finish:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drive hips through</li> <li>- Move non tackling shoulder foot first</li> <li>- Land on top</li> </ul> <p><b>Contest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drive hips up to get body off the floor.</li> <li>- Regain feet (wide, stable base)</li> <li>- Go for the ball / win the space</li> </ul>

## 7. SET PIECE - FORWARDS

WARM UP	TECHNICAL TEACH	FOCUS GAME	KEY FACTORS
<p>Press Ups – with openers            Bear Crawls            1 v 1 Press Up – Touch Hand            1 v 1 Player on his back with other player covering him, try to get back to his feet            1 v 1 Player lift            1 v 1 Wrestling for the ball standing up.</p>	<p><u>Scrum</u>            Switch Core On            Strong body position            Chase Feet            Scrum Process</p> <p><u>Lineout</u>            Lift from knees            Jumper to Jump</p>	<p><u>3 v 3 Scrum Process</u>            1 Front rower and 2 behind, working in teams of 3            Walking over the ball</p> <p><u>3 v 3 Scrum Process</u>            Full Front Row</p> <p><u>6 v 6 Scrum</u>            3 Front, 2 Second row and Number 8</p> <p><u>Lineout Pods Touch Game</u>            Throw to Pods, ball off top or maul to advance. Throw in any direction</p>	<p><u>Scrum</u>            Scrum Process</p> <p><u>Lineout</u>            Lifters toe-to-toe            Fully extend on Lift            Jumpers – pencil</p> <p>Hookers – extend hands to target            Keep eyes fixed on target</p>

## 8. SET PIECE - BACKS

<b>WARM UP</b>	<b>TECHNICAL TEACH</b>	<b>FOCUS GAME</b>	<b>KEY FACTORS</b>
Wide Passing in 4s	Know your role Get over the gainline Ball out in front  Defensive Organisation	<u>Strike Game</u> 7 v 7 Attack 4 Attempts for each backline Points for getting over the gainline, linebreaks and tries	Hold the midfield defenders Wide players hold depth and width Ball out in front  Number up on Defence - 10 defend on 12 from set piece Extra man on blind side when defending scrums

## 9. DEFENCE SHAPE

<b>WARM UP</b>	<b>TECHNICAL TEACH</b>	<b>FOCUS GAME</b>	<b>KEY FACTORS</b>
Overload Touch Extra players on defence	First 2 players get around the corner and drop into guard and bodyguard, push other players out.  Line speed	Overload defence 10 defenders v 6 attackers 2 teams of attackers, one on each side with defenders in the middle	Line Speed Stay square Spacings

## 10. SITUATIONAL PRACTICE

<b>WARM UP</b>	<b>TECHNICAL TEACH</b>	<b>FOCUS GAME</b>	<b>KEY FACTORS</b>
Touch Game Even Sides Ball presentation	Game Understanding Manage Field Position	Changing History Game scenarios based on games that have been played.	Why did you make the decision? What was the outcome?

## **8.0. Worcester Warriors Academy & RFU Contact Details**

### **Academy Manager**

Chim Gale – [chim.gale@warriors.co.uk](mailto:chim.gale@warriors.co.uk)

### **Outreach Co-Ordinator**

Dan Lyne – [dan.lyne@warriors.co.uk](mailto:dan.lyne@warriors.co.uk)

### **Academy Coach Development Officer**

Jon Perks – [jon.perks@warriors.co.uk](mailto:jon.perks@warriors.co.uk)

### **RFU Player Pathway Officer**

George Glenn - [georgeglenn@rfu.com](mailto:georgeglenn@rfu.com)

### **Academy Address:**

**Worcester Warriors, Sixways Stadium, Warriors Way, Worcester,  
WR3 8ZE**



**For any information regarding Full time Senior Academy & U18 PDG please direct your enquiries to:**

Chim Gale

Academy Manager

01905 454183 – [chim.gale@warriors.co.uk](mailto:chim.gale@warriors.co.uk)

**For any information regarding U16 DPP please direct your enquiries to:**

Dan Lyne

Outreach Co-Ordinator

01905 454183 – [dan.lyne@warriors.co.uk](mailto:dan.lyne@warriors.co.uk)

**For any information Regarding Coach Development and XDPP please direct your enquiries to:**

Jon Perks

Academy Coach development officer

01905 454183 [jon.perks@warriors.co.uk](mailto:jon.perks@warriors.co.uk)