

Effective Cleaning Out At The Breakdown

It is crucial for players to learn correct and effective clean out techniques so the attack can receive quick “front foot” ball and dominate with a continuous flow of play. In this article we show several video examples of cleaning out techniques that can be used depending on the ruck and contest situation.

If a defending player is not cleaned out of a ruck quickly and effectively you will:

- 1. Get slow ball = giving the opposition defence more time to set their defence.**
- 2. Increase the possibility of being turned over = loss of possession.**
- 3. Increase the possibility of your team being penalized by trying to move a dominant player with illegal play = loss of possession.**
- 4. Waste valuable energy wrestling a defender for the ball = decrease in performance with the earlier onset of fatigue.**

If play is slowed down by effective fetchers this creates “static possession” and it is very hard to create momentum when static.

Three very effective ways of cleaning out the ruck are:

1. Leg Lift Clean Out
2. Hit & Roll Clean Out
3. Saddle Roll Clean Out

Leg Lift Clean Out:

When a defending player steps over a man to get hands on the ball they usually have an easy target for you pick on and that is the leg they used to step over. You have to target that leg, chop your stride when approaching the ruck and smash the player away with an effective leg lift and upward drive out.

Leg Lift Clean Out:



Hit & Roll Clean Out

Often defenders will lie on top of the player they have just tackled to slow play down. They do this at risk of being penalized but often refs let this happen for a few seconds and

Effective Cleaning Out At The Breakdown

sometimes a few seconds is all a team needs to get into position.

The key with this clean out is super low body position, make sure you put “hands on” the player you are cleaning out before you hit so you don’t get pinned for a shoulder charge then hammer the soft spot around the top of his shoulder while using a forward thrust to push the player away.

Hit And Roll Clean Out:



Saddle Roll Clean Out

When a defending player / fetcher has a low set and is burrowing in for the ball it is very tough to clean him out. If you over commit and charge in you will more than likely fly straight over the top and be penalized. The saddle roll is a wrestling technique that is often used to flip an opponent onto their back; it is very useful in this situation.

The key is the latch or grip around the fetchers torso ensuring your hands clasp at their sternum (mid chest) level, squeeze tight then use an explosive rotational pull to laterally roll the player away. If the opposing player has hands on the ball when you roll them away you can regain the advantage of having him “turtle backed” with the ball exposed for your teammates to poach.

Saddle Roll Clean Out:

