



To

Mr Allan Conen General Manager - Gordon's Sports Australia Pty Ltd.

From

Steve Ashkar, Coach of Aquinas Colts Under 13 Gold team.

Allan,

I just wanted to personally communicate to you our thanks for the donation of the new Edge Sport Training balls. We were introduced to this new technology training balls through Mr Jason Williams New Zealand International and former NRL player.

Jason explained the concept of the use of the new footballs in November 2020. We were very intrigued with these new footballs as the concept, innovation and technology is in my own opinion will give the game of Rugby League a 21st century State of Art piece equipment for the developments of innovative ways for developing skills for all players and in particular the development of skills for junior players and, the technology can be used in other sports that use some sort of ball.

We had 2 teams use these balls these being our Under 14 and Under 13 Gold teams which are the number one teams for our club in those age divisions.

The Under 13 team started using these balls in preseason training from November 2020 to March 2021 and were used for predominantly for passing, catching, and kicking skills.

The approach we took was to first assess each players ability to pass the ball, how far they could pass it, technique and then work out what we wanted to achieve from these for young men based on the positions they were going to play in.

1. What position E.G Dummy Half, Halves, middles, edges and set goals.
2. Dummy half - passing drills both our dummy half could pass a spiral Right to Left 5 metres and Left to Right just a basic pass.
3. Skill - play the ball - dummy half passes the ball and aims for the goal post upright left and right side starting at 5 metres either side spiral then in December Right to left 10 metres out and 5 metres from Left to Right using the Edge Balls made the player focus on getting the technique right before distance

4. Halves - we wanted the boys to be able to develop a long passing game minimum 10 metre pass to a goal of a 15-metre pass and we just used the basic passing drill of 4 hats with 2 then 3 players moving the ball across to each player. Once again the focus was on technique not distance.
5. We wanted both our middle and edge forwards to develop Off load skills with second phase off loads - Drill - we could not use pads due to Covid so we played Scrimmage games against the under 14 Gold team and we used the edge balls for this and both teams learnt quickly that this ball required them to throw a good pass with the correct technique otherwise they could see very quickly if the technique was not correct.
6. We also found that the Edge Balls could be used to good effect to develop a spiral kick and from this the Edge Ball can also be used for the Full Back to develop their catching skills from a high ball. The drill here was just the kick, run and catch

However, to see the development of all our players in particular the halves and dummy halves passing games have been very exciting specifically technique with the distance increasing slowly as the season progressed. Like any skill development it is all about practice and with that comes improvement and I personally have found that using the Edge Balls has given me as a coach an extra innovative tool to really focus on what we consider basic techniques for Rugby League but in reality, is the pure essence of the game. The pass and the kick are Rugby League, and we can see that these Edge Balls if used correctly will develop these skills to new levels.

We look forward to starting the pre-season as soon as we can, and all focus will be on pre-season skills and the Edge Balls will be key to this.

**Steve Ashkar - Aquinas Colts - Cronulla District Junior Rugby League.**