

I have been training with Conor since 2004. As a local rugby referee, I was aware that a few of my peers at the Wellington Rugby Referees Association had been using Conor's services and had found him to be very knowledgeable and effective in his training methods. At the time, I was somewhat lacking in my fitness levels, and knew that if I was to referee to the best of my ability, I needed to improve the speed with which I got around the paddock.

Over the years, my sessions with Conor have focused on three key areas.

First we worked on my **running technique**. Through the use of a wide range of drills and practical applications, we completely re-modelled my technique, resulting in significant efficiency gains. These drills focused on getting the mechanics of each running motion correct. After a couple of months, I had made noticeable improvements, and a number of my refereeing assessors commented that I seemed to be expending less energy during the game than I used to.



Second, we worked on **speed and agility**. The nature of refereeing rugby is that it is a very "stop-start". Periods of rest (lineouts, scrums, injury breaks, etc) are followed by intensive bursts of activity. Getting to a tackle/ruck quickly is vital to refereeing this difficult phase accurately. This means that a referee needs to have good speed off the mark, and the ability to change direction rapidly. Conor has employed a wide range of challenging drills to assist my speed and agility, using multi-directional plyometrics, hurdles, ladders and hill work. Some of these drills also incorporate interactive thinking, to test my brain's ability to react quickly and effectively under conditions of physical exertion. This has proved to be very useful for the last 10 minutes of close rugby games, where my concentration needs to stay at high levels despite physical tiredness starting to take effect.

Third, we worked on **base fitness/stamina**, particularly in the off season. The aim of these sessions was to ensure that by the time the rugby season came around, I was in as good a shape as possible. In turn this meant that I could focus on my decision making during games, rather than worrying about whether or not I could keep up with the players! These sessions included interval training around Oriental Parade in the summer sunshine.



Every session with Conor is challenging and interesting, and he always explains why he's asking me to do a certain exercise - everything is targeted at a specific outcome, and that has kept my motivation up. Each session is different, so boredom is never a risk. We have held our sessions in a range of locations, including the Botanic Gardens, Oriental Parade, Kelburn Park and Freyberg Pool, and Conor uses the natural environment very effectively to create unique circuits - I never knew there were so many paths and steps in the Botanic Gardens before I started training with Conor!

I've participated in individual, small group and large group sessions with Conor, and he has the ability to change his instructions according to the size of the group. He is perceptive, and able to identify when you need to be pushed a little harder, and when you need to reduce your intensity. He is patient and constructive when giving feedback and advice.

I've seen considerable improvements in my fitness since I started with Conor, and feel healthier and more energised as a result. I would highly recommend his services.

John Ballingall